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WHERE THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS, THERE IS FREEDOM: A CRITIQUE OF LIBERAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

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WHERE THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS, THERE IS FREEDOM:
A CRITIQUE OF LIBERAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

MASTER'S THESIS

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THE FACULTY OF THE SCHOOL OF DIVINITY
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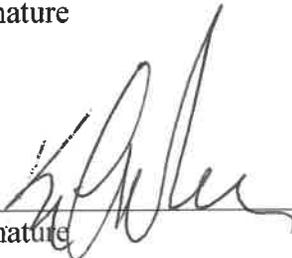
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ABSTRACT

We seek to develop a theological and metaphysical critique of the liberal understanding of religious freedom that is juridical in nature, revealing that what it can only mean by both “religion” and “freedom” are inadequate under the light of Christian orthodoxy. Not only is inadequate, but it does not allow orthodoxy to flourish under it, swallowing up all would-be competitors under its own liberal monism. This study pulls heavily from Roman Catholic *Communio* theology and its already broad critique of liberalism and liberal religious freedom, but also correlates those enlightening critiques with Pentecostalism, bringing an analogous critique of liberal religious freedom from a distinctly Pentecostal theology. In the end, we show that Pentecostalism will have to remove some internal contradictions in order to fully move into a post-liberal and distinctly Christian vision of religious freedom, but that those stumbling blocks can be removed by moving deeper into its truly Catholic elements, bringing forth interesting horizons for ecumenical dialogue that move beyond the scope of this study’s argument.

Key Words: political theology, first amendment, religious freedom, ontology, actuality, potency, receptivity, gift, *communio*, Catholicism, Pentecostalism

For Fred and Cindy Dollenger

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INTRODUCTION

The Thesis and the Task

“America seems to be at once the most religious and most secular of nations.”¹ This line, written by Will Herberg in his famous sociological study of American religion in the 1950s, captures the paradoxical essence of the American experiment. On one hand, America is filled with religious fervor and piety, often described as being the only western liberal nation-state that has defended itself from becoming ensnared in the secularism that dominates much of contemporary Europe. On the other hand, it is the pinnacle of the liberal state and its removal of God from every day public life, truly embodying the practice of an existence under the Nietzschean vision that God is dead, killed by humankind itself. How is it that one single political order can manifest dialectical opposites at the same time? Alasdair MacIntyre, in his magisterial *After Virtue*, showed the emptiness of modern ethics by unveiling its failed attempt to hold on to remnants of Aristotelian and Thomist virtue ethics while removing classical ontology and teleology.² At the heart of the American paradox is a similar issue, with a deep Christian moralism operating within the secular ontology of modernity that has removed classical ontology, which was fulfilled in Christianity, resulting in a complete loss of stable ground as notions of the human person as fundamentally ordered to the good, meaning to God Himself, by their very *nature*, have been lost. Replacing that ordering is an ontology of indifferentism, meaning that it views being autonomously and outside any relation to the divine, which is atheistic at its deepest core, de-stabilizing the ground of the political and reducing religion to the “lowest common denominator.”³

¹ Will Herberg, *Protestant, Catholic, Jew: An Essay in American Religious Sociology* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1955), 3.

² Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981).

³ Pope Benedict XVI, qtd. in Carl A. Anderson, “America and Religious Freedom,” *Communio: International Catholic Review* 40 (Summer-Fall 2013), 366.

The indifferentism that is written into the foundations of liberal order unveils itself most fundamentally in the right that can truly be said to be the beating heart of liberal political order, that being the institution of the “natural” right to religious liberty. In fact, this right has often been described as *defining* the liberal project.⁴ One can quickly get a sense of this fact by listening to responses when this right is challenged in any way. Since the liberal order justifies itself by constantly telling the world that it is the only foundation for peace in a “pluralistic world,”⁵ which is a pluralism that it not only supposedly solves but also births,⁶ any affront to the liberal understanding of religious freedom calls into question the entire infrastructure that liberalism has built itself upon.

Challenging the common understanding of this right within an American theological paradigm is not something that leads to much popularity since it is Christians that often think that it is the *protector* of Christian orthodoxy. Can Christians actually call religious freedom into question after it seems as if it has been forever affirmed in the Second Vatican Council’s *Dignitatis Humanae* and the National Association of Evangelicals’ crucial role in the legislative approval of The Religious Freedom Restoration Act? This study is not denying the rich Christian understanding of religious liberty that is specifically seen through the lens of the Christian tradition (which is what *Dignitatis Humanae* actually affirmed), but specifically the *liberal*

⁴ D.C. Schindler, *The Politics of the Real: The Church Between Liberalism and Integralism* (Steubenville, OH: New Polity Press, 2021), 86.

⁵ On the historical argument that the secular liberal regime uses to justify itself, see William Cavanaugh, *The Myth of Religious Violence* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2009).

⁶ Liberal political theorists do not hide this, see John Rawls, *Political Liberalism* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1993).

rendering of religious freedom that sees itself as both neutral and un-traditioned, when in reality it is entirely substantive, filled with a substance that is anathema to Christian orthodoxy.⁷

The liberal understanding of religious freedom that this study will call into question and then repudiate is entirely *juridical* in its orientation, meaning that it attempts only to secure procedural mechanisms for protection while denying that it holds any substantive claims. It's supposed goal is to stand as "articles of peace,"⁸ allowing the needed space to be left open for persons to fill that space with whatever beliefs, or none at all, that they so choose without hurting one another. It refuses to discuss religious freedom in its full ontological understanding because that would seem to present "articles of faith," undermining its claim to neutrality and its hold as the only true open society devoid of the sacred, supposedly solving the problem arising from the post-reformation religious wars.⁹ The problem with this vision, which will be discussed in more detail below, is that it subtly hides the entirely secular substantive claims that are behind its understanding of the human person.¹⁰ It posits an understanding of the human person that is most fundamentally (ontologically) devoid of relation, an atomized self that does not have any natural relation to a creator God or that is part of an order that finds its telos in the divine life. As David Bentley Hart states, "It [modern society] requires us to place our trust in an original absence

⁷ It's interesting that the post-modern world denies any attempt to have an un-traditioned God-like view of the world while also fiercely defending a pluralism that stands in a God-like position over the world. On the actual *tradition* of liberalism, see Alasdair MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988).

⁸ John Courtney Murray makes the distinction between religious freedom being articles of peace and articles of faith, arguing for articles of peace in *We Hold These Truths: Catholic Reflections on the American Proposition* (Oxford, UK: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005).

⁹ On the problem of this justification, see again, Cavanaugh, *The Myth of Religious Violence*.

¹⁰ Missing the fact that liberalism (or any political order) cannot be neutral is why project's like Miroslav Volf's public theology, which follows Nicholas Wolterstorff, fails entirely and re-imbeds a deeper secularism. See Miroslav Volf, *A Public Faith: How Followers of Christ Should Serve the Common Good* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2011).

underlying all of reality, a fertile void in which all things are possible...and before which we may consequently choose to make ourselves what we choose.”¹¹

Under this ontology, Christianity and the human person’s fulfillment in Christ can only be an *addition*, something that is chosen by autonomous individuals to stack on top of a fundamentally *a-theistic* self.¹² Whereas Christ said, “The whole law is summed up in this: ‘Love God with all your being and love your neighbor as yourself,’” liberalism says: “The only law that matters is this: ‘Love your right to love God however you choose and love whomever you choose.’” This is extremely problematic for Christian orthodoxy because Christianity’s understanding of itself becomes unintelligible once human persons are extracted from their natural, created end found in God through Christ and once the receptivity of gift is replaced with voluntaristic choice.

Historically, deep uneasiness about the specific problems that liberal religious freedom (and liberal order more generally) presents to Christianity have taken place mainly among Catholics. Protestantism, with its individualistic metaphysic and rooted voluntarism cannot for obvious reasons raise *fundamental* issues with the current state of secular order and the liberal right to religious freedom that in many ways grants liberalism its power.¹³ Interestingly however, Pentecostalism sits in a space that cannot be defined in its entirety by either Catholic or Protestant theology. Paradoxically, Pentecostalism, at least in its most recognizable forms, is at once the most modern and pre-modern traditions within Christianity, resulting in wide overlaps

¹¹ David Bentley Hart, *Atheist Delusions: The Christian Revolution and its Fashionable Enemies* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), 21.

¹² David L. Schindler, *Heart of the World, Center of the Church: Communio Ecclesiology, Liberalism, and Liberation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996), 68.

¹³ Brad S. Gregory, *The Unintended Reformation: How a Religious Revolution Secularized Society* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012).

with other ecclesiastical traditions. While certain Pentecostal scholars have engaged Eastern Orthodoxy and found common ground,¹⁴ this study will follow the insights from certain scholars that have seen how truly Catholic certain aspects of Pentecostalism are.¹⁵ In so doing, this study will draw heavily on Catholic sources and the broad Catholic critique of the liberal order, while also bringing into that dialogue a fundamentally catholic (or Catholic?) Pentecostal understanding of itself that will open up new avenues for a similar Pentecostal critique of liberal religious freedom, while also revealing certain inadequacies that Pentecostalism will have rethink in order to help it move passed liberal religious freedom that does not truly align with Pentecostal notions of itself.

Structure and Flow of the Argument

There is a growing awareness among American theologians, and those in the west more generally, that the liberal order that was taken to be the pinnacle of progress, enlightenment, and justice is in fact the manifestation of the opposite, a viciously secular regime that has zero tolerance for Christian orthodoxy. This study follows these growing voices and seeks to show how the liberal understanding of religious freedom is not just inadequate, as it remakes religion and freedom in its own image, but that it actually does not allow for a truly orthodox understanding of Christianity to manifest itself within its confines, requiring a rejection from Christians where it has taken root. The movement of the argument will go as follows: First, we will discuss how liberal religious freedom redefines all religion and remakes them in a form (or

¹⁴ See, Daniela Augustine's full bibliography, as well as Edmund Rybarczyk, *Beyond Salvation: Eastern Orthodoxy and Classical Pentecostalism on Becoming Like Christ* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2004).

¹⁵ Daniel Castelo quotes Stanley Hauerwas saying "your tradition is more akin to Roman Catholicism than Protestantism" in *Pentecostalism as a Christian Mystical Tradition* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2017), Pg. xiii.

better, a *non-form*) that is rooted in ontological indifferentism, nominalism, and voluntarism. Second, we will explain how Christianity understands itself, especially drawing on *Communio* theology to look at the doctrine of the incarnation,¹⁶ as well as the Pentecostal ecclesiology of eschatological embodiment that accompanies the incarnation, to show how the revelation of God in Christ in history is radically in contrast with liberal “religion.” Third, we will draw heavily from the work of the Catholic philosophical theologian D.C. Schindler to show how modern freedom has inverted the classical and then elevated Christian understanding of the relationship between *act* and *potency*, leading to the destruction of the intrinsic relationship between truth and freedom, as well as the social element in classical notions of freedom. Fourth, we will contrast the potency that stands at the pinnacle of modern freedom with the actuality of freedom in Christianity, that being a state of being, an ontological reality that holds together freedom’s necessary relation to truth and other persons. Fifth, and finally, we will reveal how liberal religious freedom actually does not allow for the *form* Christianity takes in history, revealing that it needs to be rejected by advocating for a truly Christian religious freedom that completely moves beyond the confines of liberal political order.

¹⁶ This is the theology behind the journal of the same name, started by Joseph Ratzinger, Henri de Lubac, and Hans Urs von Balthasar. It has been especially continued and extended through the theologians at the Pontifical John Paul II Institute for Marriage and the Family at Catholic University of America.

CHAPTER ONE

THE MOCKERY OF LIBERAL “RELIGION”

Introduction

When American political order, or any liberal political order for that matter, says that it protects religious liberty, what understanding of “religion” is it saying that it protects? There is little doubt that most liberals would say that it protects the freedom of all religions, but is this actually the case? There have been theologians that have pointed out that religious liberty can only be the absolute freedom to “merely believe” things, not a freedom to actually have those religions embodied in specific practices that make them intelligible.¹ In fact, liberals themselves do not deny this and are willing to state clearly that the whole purpose of America’s political arrangements are to subordinate the passions of religion to the political order, to swallow up “religious turbulence” through the promotion of self-interest and material gain.² So what *forms* of religion are not allowed to be embodied? Or the better question may be, does it allow *forms* at all? In order to arrive at the answer to these crucial questions we have to look at the presuppositions that liberal order starts with, and therefore, what liberal religious freedom posits as the answers in regards to fundamental questions: Who is God? What is nature? What is the human person? What is truth? What is freedom? To ask “what is?” questions demands that we go to the metaphysical foundations of liberal order, leading to what it will inherently establish as that which it regards as religion.³

¹ Stanley Hauerwas, *In Good Company: The Church as Polis* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995), 201.

² George Will, *The Conservative Sensibility* (New York, NY: Hachette, 2019), 463-4.

³ D.C. Schindler, *Politics of the Real*, 3.

A Technological and Indifferent Ontology

Upon arrival at the metaphysical foundations of liberal society, one finds that the supposed ontologically neutral liberal order is actually filled with a technological ontology born out of the scientific revolution, with its genealogical roots in the nominalism of William of Ockham. This is why Michael Hanby, in his sweeping critiques of liberalism, starts with the revolution in metaphysics, theology, and natural philosophy that liberalism is the political outgrowth of.⁴ He shows that it is rooted in a thoroughly nominalist and Newtonian vision of nature, seeing all things as indeterminate matter devoid of form and finality, moved by an external voluntarist God and “laws of nature” that govern things evacuated from any sense of their intrinsic natures.⁵ Nature becomes fully mechanistic, while God becomes an extrinsic potency that governs a nature that is now autonomous in its relation to the divine, and man, made in the image of this newly thought up god, becomes the Lockean individual that can be defined as an “indeterminate will presiding over an intrinsically meaningless material nature.”⁶ Here is the ontology that undergirds liberalism in its entirety, setting the stage for the individual as most fundamentally a chooser, with nothing outside of himself to determine him, and God becoming an extrinsic entity, a single power, that can be chosen if one so desires, but nevertheless is not the grounding of all things or the origin and end of one’s existence, in whom freedom, nature, and being find their fulfillment.⁷ It shouldn’t be shocking that accompanying this god of extrinsic potency, key

⁴ Michael Hanby, “The Birth of Liberal Order and the Death of God: A Reply to Robert Reilly’s *America on Trial*,” *New Polity* 2, no. 1 (February 2021), 56.

⁵ Michael Hanby, “Absolute Pluralism: How the Dictatorship of Relativism Dictates,” *Communio: International Catholic Review* 40 (Summer-Fall 2013), 551.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*, 553.

American founders prophesied that all young Americans would die Unitarians,⁸ followers of an external spiritual force that gives the political order its needed authoritative grounding, but which bears little resemblance to the Triune God of Christian orthodoxy.

Once God, nature, and man have been re-defined under this technological ontology, all religion under the liberal order is re-made within this paradigm: it becomes nominalistic, voluntaristic, and fundamentally an *option* that individuals (as most fundamentally choosers) choose, not the reception of that which one was created for or by nature ordered toward. This loss of relation and receptivity, the loss of gift at the heart of being, is the key to understand the American paradox as conveyed by Herberg. D.C. Schindler states, “Any pattern of life or form of thought that denies the significance of receptivity or indirectly undermines its primacy is therefore secular logic...no matter what one’s intentions may be, this pattern is an implicit atheism.”⁹ It is implicit atheism because as Schindler goes on to argue, a god who becomes relevant only after being chosen, as if God was a market commodity that one could choose to use or not use depending on the benefits conferred upon oneself, cannot be the true God in actuality and it cannot be the God who has actually entered into history in the incarnation.¹⁰ The god made relevant by the voluntaristic man can only be a god made in man’s own image, an idol that is instrumentalized for man’s own purposes, and the religion that is produced by it can only be at root the worship of man who has become the god over the world he has created for himself, an

⁸ Thomas Jefferson, “To Benjamin Waterhouse,” in Merrill D. Peterson (ed.), *Thomas Jefferson: Writings* (New York, NY: The Library of America, 1984), 1458-9.

⁹ D.C. Schindler, “Beauty and the Holiness of Mind,” in *Being Holy in the World: Theology and Culture in the Thought of David L. Schindler*, ed. Nicholas J. Healy Jr. and D.C. Schindler (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011), 15.

¹⁰ D.C. Schindler, *Politics of the Real*, 193; D.C. Schindler, *Freedom From Reality: The Diabolical Character of Modern Liberty* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2017), 272.

indifferent dispenser of meaning, even to that which utterly transcends him. No matter the attempts to argue that the American liberal regime is distinctly *classically* liberal and is fundamentally open to religious influence, the loss of gift and man's ontological relation to God before one's choice reveals that no religion can any longer be seen as an ontological participation in a prior actuality.¹¹ This ontological indifference aligns perfectly with the continental progressive liberalism of *laicite*.¹²

When this ontology is not confronted, all of the common *moral* critiques of American religion and extreme aspects of liberalism end up failing because they are still caught up in the same ontological indifferentism that grounds all of liberal religion, that itself being *substantively* secular. These common critiques can be powerful and truthful articulations of certain moral failings of American religiosity, but they do not go deep enough, dealing instead with moral outworking's, but never moving to the root of the problem. This can be seen clearly in James K.A. Smith's critique of liberalism in *Awaiting the King*, where he confronts certain aspects of liberalism that he recognizes as de-formative for the human person, those being radical autonomy, expressive individualism, and nationalism.¹³ He discusses how Christian's often lose their evangelical witness that is meant to point the city of man towards its telos in the *City of God* because Christians themselves are (de-)formed by "secular liturgies," those practices of the state and the market.¹⁴ William Cavanaugh and Stanley Hauerwas make similar critiques,

¹¹ D.C. Schindler, *Freedom From Reality*, 173.

¹² Angelo Scola, "The Nature and Scope of Religious Freedom in our Contemporary Culture," *Communio: International Catholic Review* 40 (Summer-Fall 2013), 326. *Laicite* is the specific principle of secularism written into France's constitution.

¹³ James K.A. Smith, *Awaiting the King: Reforming Public Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2017), 120.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 54, 110.

showing how the supposed “disenchantment”¹⁵ of the world has really been a mis-enchantment, the taking over of religion by the god of the modern nation-state.¹⁶ All of these critiques of idolatry are something that Christians need to take heed of, but they miss the *metaphysic* of liberal religion that is secular even when Christians are well-intentioned, thoroughly pious, and not partaking in the civic religion of America. Pure moral arguments cannot adequately respond to Will Herberg’s poignant remark that the “secularism dominating the American consciousness is not overt philosophy; it is an unconscious orientation of life and thought.”¹⁷ The inability to move beyond morality is why David L. Schindler points out that Anglo-America is uniquely blind to and unaware of the possibility or reality of structural dimensions of sin.¹⁸ The presupposed ontology of liberal order that even devout Christians operate under is neither questioned nor thought of, it is the air breathed in, evading the awareness of all that partake of it.

The purely moral critique is also what gives credence to the common argument that there is a fundamental difference between classical liberalism, which is seen as having been present at the time of the American founding, and progressive liberalism, which is viciously anti-religious. Smith’s argument follows Oliver O’ Donovan to this understanding and it is also common within Catholic neo-conservative circles.¹⁹ The diverse answers given from these vastly different groups all tend toward some return to the true form of classical liberalism, which is claimed to have promoted the goodness of religion, its influence in the public sphere, and properly conceived

¹⁵ The term was used by Charles Taylor to explain the removal of religion in the modern age, see Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007).

¹⁶ William T. Cavanaugh, *Migrations of the Holy: God, State, and the Political Meaning of the Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011); Stanley Hauerwas and William H. Willimon, *Resident Aliens: Life in the Christian Colony* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2014).

¹⁷ Will Herberg, *Protestant, Catholic, Jew*, 1.

¹⁸ David L. Schindler, *Heart of the World, Center of the Church*, 180.

¹⁹ Smith pulls heavily from Oliver O’ Donovan, *The Ways of Judgement* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005), 75.

social bonds.²⁰ The founders political vision, as well as their hope of religious freedom, was rooted in “Nature’s Law” and “Nature’s God,” revealing that Christianity should be supportive of the liberal project that was supposedly instituted in relation to it.²¹ As Tracey Rowland points out however, one must always understand what one means by *nature*, *law*, and *God*.²² Language is not univocal and while similar semantics may be used, they often carry drastically different meanings. While it can be acknowledged that many classical liberals held on to certain remnants of Christian moralism and may have felt that the Christian religion was needed in the public sphere, revealing surface differences with the continental version that ferociously removed Christianity from public relevance, what is missed again is the shared destruction of the classical participatory and relational ontology.²³ What replaced that ontology in both liberalisms was the ontology that sees being as indifferent and as mechanistically-conceived, while only affirming the singular as foundational, instituting this metaphysic at the heart of all “religion.”²⁴

Individualism and the Loss of the Common Good

The individualistic *metaphysic* (not just a moral issue) that is at the foundation for the liberal project does not allow for any understanding or implementation of religion that sees itself as a *res publica*, or that “public thing” which embodies the *common good*.²⁵ Many modern

²⁰ It is often pointed out that some colonies had established churches at the time of the founding, but what type of religion was being established must be taken into account.

²¹ For a thorough critique of this deeply misguided judgement, see D.C. Schindler, “America Unfounded: The Emancipation of Nature’s God,” *The Political Science Reviewer* 43, no. 2 (2019): 487-503. The reason that a pure moralism is inadequate is that it reduces Christ’s redemption to the level of subjective intentionality, never going to the ontological and cosmological depths of creation.

²² Tracey Rowland, “Natural Law: From Neo-Thomism to Nuptial Mysticism,” *Communio: International Catholic Review* 35 (Fall 2008), 375.

²³ Michael Hanby, “The Birth of Liberal Order,” 71.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ D.C. Schindler, *The Politics of the Real*, 69-109.

theologians still advocate for the need of members in the community of faith to share one's possessions with others, to choose to come together with one another, and work for the common good, but the traditional understanding of that term has changed drastically. The common good at the heart of most modern notions is viewed as deriving purely from the individual members using their freedom (conceived as power) to bring it into actuality within the community, and deriving from that, the whole world.²⁶ The problem with this common (mis)perception is, as D.C. Schindler points out, that a distinctly common good cannot metaphysically derive merely from the interests of private individuals, even if all agree on it.²⁷ Thomas Aquinas made this clear when he stated that it is metaphysically impossible for actuality to be reduced from potentiality, unless it is from something already in the state of actuality.²⁸ The common good, and goodness itself, by definition, must precede the individuals that make up the community as a reality that is already given, a whole that each one of the members are invited into.²⁹ Even though the technological order tries to fight this, the whole is always greater than the sum of its parts. Liberal "religion," with its individualistic metaphysic, can only allow communities that are the aggregation of individual choosers, not the embodiment of the common good that the community is already enacting before the individuals choose to partake in it.

What this means in practice is that the Church, or any other religion that has understood itself as the embodiment of the common good, cannot in fact live into the reality that makes it intelligible. In fact, there can be no Church in its full manifestation, when that is properly understood in all of its depths as the extension of the body of Christ sacramentally across space

²⁶ Volf discusses the common good in this way in *A Public Faith*, 96-7.

²⁷ D.C. Schindler, *The Politics of the Real*, 89.

²⁸ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* 1.2.3, qtd. in Schindler, *The Politics of the Real*, 85.

²⁹ D.C. Schindler, *The Politics of the Real*, 94.

and time, God incarnate in history, that embodies the common good by preceding and transcending one's choosing.³⁰ It is not shocking then that in order to compensate with this loss of intelligibility, this loss of the Church, certain theologians have had to distance themselves entirely from the patristic emphasis on the Church as a "She," that "She" meaning that the Church was understood to transcend the mere aggregation of individuals (ecclesiology was *fundamentally* different than a bowling club). In fact, as Henri de Lubac has shown, the "I" in the "I believe" of the Apostle's Creed is first and foremost that of the Church, with the subsequent "I" of persons' being a participation in the "I" that precedes them.³¹

In contrast to this Patristic and Medieval emphasis, theologians that support liberal religious freedom have had to argue explicitly that the "Church is not a collective subject, but the communion of persons."³² From one vantage point this may be correct, but this narrow and one sided focus ends up placing ecclesiology in the wider ontology of the secular that has reduced everything to the sum of its parts.³³ Even when these same theologians often go on to provide differing critiques of certain aspects of neo-liberal economics, such as private self-interest, their understanding of the Church as a community that does not precede and transcend the individuals is no different from the neo-liberal's understanding of the utilitarian benefits of aggregated self-interest resulting in a further good of all. The Church, in order for it to be *the* Church, must be

³⁰ D.C. Schindler, *The Politics of the Real*, 9.

³¹ Henri de Lubac, *The Christian Faith* (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1986), qtd. in Aidan Nichols, *Divine Fruitfulness: A Guide Through Balthasar's Theology Beyond the Trilog* (Washington, DC: CUA Press, 2007), 200.

³² Miroslav Volf, *After our Likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 145.

³³ This is why I believe Protestant critiques end up failing because liberalism's ontology, rooted in the change in natural theology as exposed by Hanby, is the same thing that grounds Protestant ecclesiology: attempting to derive a whole from its parts. First, individuals are saved and then derivative of that fact comes the Church. This was a massive change theologically from the patristic and medieval ecclesiology and it is crucial for understanding the rise of liberalism.

the *She* that is in nuptial union with Christ, two *subjects* becoming one flesh in a reality that is so mysteriously intimate and unified, the only image that captures it for Paul is the conjugal union between man and woman (Eph. 5:31-32).³⁴

Any religion that denies the validity of this technological and individualistic metaphysic undergirding the liberal understanding of community, arguing that it is not in fact a real community, cannot operate within this order. All religions that root their self-understandings in the truth of nature and the relation to God that this necessarily entails will necessarily be re-defined under liberalism as just another outworking of individual choosers that have decided to come together out of their own making.³⁵ The religious communities within the liberal order can only be those communities that see themselves as their own authors, ordered “from below,” and not those that see themselves as divinely instituted “from above.” This is why the liberal order tends to turn all religions into a species of Protestant congregationalism.³⁶ It should not be shocking that as liberalism has spread around the globe, the world has seen a “congregationalizing” of all religion.³⁷ Liberal pluralism is a myth that the liberal regime uses to

³⁴ Balthasar states, “The Church becomes a body through sharing in the real, sacrificed flesh of Christ and in his blood that was shed – and this is not primarily an organizational, sociological “body,” but a real “body” that is brought into existence through the Eucharist (1 Cor 10:16). A little further reflection shows that it is only on the basis of the Eucharist that it is possible to conceive of the mystery whereby Christ the Bridegroom is “one flesh” with his Bride the Church (Eph. 5:21). Otherwise it would remain merely an edifying image, whereas for Paul it is the conjugal union that is the image, referring to the accomplished reality of the unification between Christ and the Church.” See Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Laity and the Life of the Counsels* (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 2003), 15.

³⁵ David L. Schindler and Nicholas J. Healy Jr., *Freedom, Truth, and Human Dignity: The Second Vatican Council’s Declaration on Religious Freedom* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2015), 63.

³⁶ Michael Hanby, “American Revolution as Total Revolution: Del Noce and the American Experiment,” *Communio: International Catholic Review* 48 (Fall 2021), 471.

³⁷ Volf, residing within a Protestant ecclesiology, believes this to be a positive development in *After Our Likeness*, 13. It is really the logical endpoint of all Protestant ecclesiology and its upheaval of the whole/part distinction.

justify itself, when in actuality it reduces all religious truth claims to “options,” fundamentally destroying the actual lived traditions and intelligibility of each and every religion that it comes in contact with, with the logical outcome of liberalism’s growth being the transformation of all religion into the worship of liberalism itself.³⁸ This is the inherent illiberalism of liberalism, the imperialism that is written into its foundations, hidden behind the cloak of substantive neutrality.

³⁸ D.C. Schindler, “Challenging the Terms of Liberalism: On *The Politics of Virtue*,” *Nova et Vetera* 16, no. 4 (Fall 2018), 1361.

CHAPTER TWO

CHRISTIANITY: ACTUALITY, RELATIONALITY, RECEPTIVITY

Introduction

How does Christianity understand itself in relation to this liberal notion of religion? Does it even understand itself as “religious,” when that word already presumes the modern building of the secular? As Andrew Willard Jones has laid out in detail, the modern understanding of religion already starts with the presupposition that it resides *within* the secular, that it could be removed from a society or a person, with those realities essentially remaining the same as they are only “accidentally” religious.¹ Religion, under the modern construction, always leads back to the liberal view of it as an addition upon neutral and indifferent individuals, nominalistically conceived, with the religious realm focused on the transcendent as placed extrinsically on top of the immanent, the reality of grace moved outside of the material.² Contrary to this reading, Christianity is actually then not “religious,” for it is concerned with the *wholeness of reality*, the actuality of God within creation that brings the whole cosmos into one whole ascent into the divine life, which is the origin and end of a creation that was always already relationally ordered to find its fulfillment in God.

Incarnation, Eschatology, and the Actuality of God

Unlike liberal “religion” and its reduction of all religion to an individualistic and voluntaristic act of sheer will to affirm a god of absolute potency, the Christian Church receives, proclaims and embodies the pure actuality of the God who entered into history in the person of Jesus Christ, bringing about both the revelation of the transcendent God and, because of that divine

¹ Andrew Willard Jones, *Before Church and State: A Study of Social Order in the Sacramental Kingdom of St. Louis IX* (Steubenville, OH: Emmaus Academic, 2017), 3.

² *Ibid.*, 11.

transcendence, the revelation of immanent nature, including human nature, with its beginning and end in the Triune God through Christ. This is the incarnational logic at the heart of Christian orthodoxy that immediately begins to put it at odds with the liberal understanding of religion. The true God of Christianity is not claimed to be some generic *potentia absoluta* outside of nature,³ but the God who enters nature, fulfilling what it was (by its nature, already ordered to a further opening up to grace) designed to arrive at teleologically, through the particularity of a first century Jew, and therefore, a tradition that follows the universal manifesting itself within that scandalous particularity.⁴ Christianity is therefore an actuality established in the real order of history,⁵ in which all people have been invited to partake in, since it is Christ alone that is the Way, the Truth, and the Life that the entire cosmos was created to be summed up in. This is why Stanley Hauerwas correctly sees Christianity as fundamentally political,⁶ but one needs to add that it is cosmological and ontological, reconciling and restoring the deepest parts of the entire creation to God, with no realm falling outside of that reality.⁷

Coming through the actuality of the incarnation is also the reality of the eschatological inauguration in Christ, the beginning of new creation in Christ's resurrection from the dead that the Church then embodies as the primary foretaste of this mysterious reality that has broken out

³ This deist god of the Enlightenment that many of the founders affirmed is what is meant by the common term "Nature's God."

⁴ Tracey Rowland, *Culture and the Thomist Tradition: After Vatican II* (London, UK: Routledge, 2003), 15, 146; D.C. Schindler, *The Politics of the Real*, 64. For Catholic theology, especially Communion theology, nature, by its nature, is *intrinsically* ordered to the fulfilling and perfecting work of grace, meaning that it is not *violently imposed* from the outside, which would result in a dualism.

⁵ D.C. Schindler, *The Politics of the Reals*, 27.

⁶ Hauerwas, *Resident Aliens*, 30.

⁷ Balthasar emphasizes how crucial to the Church's identity is its opening up to all things in *Engagement with God: The Drama of Christian Discipleship* (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1975), 82-93. Hauerwas often de-emphasizes this reality to uphold his anabaptist ecclesiological leanings.

within history. While Catholicism focuses heavily on the incarnational aspect of the Church for its actuality in history, Pentecostalism analogously participates in its fundamental critique of the god of generic potency that individuals choose by proclaiming an eschatological faith that has been brought to bear, not outside of history, but as a reality within history that fundamentally changes history. As Chris E.W. Green states, “Resurrection is eschatological, not merely historical. It is not one more thing that happens to Jesus, but the happening of Jesus to all things.”⁸ Pentecostalism as a Spirit-driven movement stems from the impartation of the Spirit through the Christ event, a reality that is claimed to have happened in time, that also points beyond time. Frank Macchia notes that Pentecostalism rises “to the reality of the Kingdom of God dawning in the world,”⁹ which means that it in fact cannot be most fundamentally seen as an *option*. It either happened as a reality in and to the world or it did not. While Eric Voegelin correctly warns against “over-immanentizing the eschaton,”¹⁰ a common occurrence among certain millenarian groups throughout history,¹¹ there is also the problem of an under-immanentizing, failing to see the resurrection and the pouring out of the Spirit on Pentecost as the confirmation that new creation was inaugurated within and to history. This eschatological reality brought in by God cannot be consummated by human power, although it does *involve* human participation, with subjective choice being a joining up with what God has *done*, a deed that cannot itself be anchored by the individual’s sovereign choice.

⁸ Chris E.W. Green, *All Things Beautiful: An Aesthetic Christology* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2021), 115.

⁹ Frank Macchia, “The Church of the Latter Rain: The Church and Eschatology in Pentecostal Perspective,” in *Toward a Pentecostal Ecclesiology* ed. John Christopher Thomas (Cleveland, TN: CPT Press, 2010), 258.

¹⁰ Eric Voegelin, *The New Science of Politics* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 121.

¹¹ Norman Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1961).

The Church as Embodied Actuality

Intrinsically tied to the Christian claim of God acting in history is the *Church*, which is the extension of the incarnation and kingdom of God across space and time, the community that continues to embody these actualities and can therefore not be understood as something that comes to exist by the voluntaristic potency of human will. Joseph Ratzinger correctly points out that the Church is not a club, it is by its *nature* public, a *res publica*, that's commitment and authority precede one's entry and choosing of it.¹² Faith itself, which is most fundamentally a gift, cannot be understood when it is evacuated from the reality of the Church that is crucial to the distinctive mediatory aspect of the Christian faith revealed in the incarnate God in Mary's womb.¹³ Baptism is the entry marker into the faith, into Christ (Gal. 3:27), which for orthodoxy means into the Church, as it brings each person into the community that is already committed to the common good.¹⁴ As the body of Christ in history, the *form* it takes is that of an integrated whole, as Christ's universality and fulfillment of all human nature *in* and *through* the intrinsic particularity of a specific culture "at the fullness of time" (Gal. 4:4) reveals Christianity's *intrinsic integration* of Greek nature, Roman polity, and Jewish revelation.¹⁵ This is the form that each person is invited into, but which refuses to be reduced under a technological order to the

¹² Joseph Ratzinger, *Called to Communion: Understanding the Church Today* (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1996), 77.

¹³ D.C. Schindler, "Mediation: The Distinguishing Mark of Christianity," *Communio: International Catholic Review* 48 (Spring 2021), 13.

¹⁴ Henri de Lubac, *Catholicism: Christ and the Common Destiny of Man* (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1988), 51-4.

¹⁵ This study follows von Balthasar's understanding of the *form* Christianity objectively takes in history. It is important to note that this form can still manifest in different *contexts* in ways that may look slightly different. See, Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Seeing the Form*, vol. 1, *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics* (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1982), 26; *The Realm of Metaphysics in Antiquity*, vol. 4, *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics* (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1989), 249-313.

sum and aggregation of its individual members. When Christianity proclaims God in the flesh, it is within this radical vision of the incarnation as the center of all history, with all prior things seen as leading up to it and all after it viewed through the lens of it.

The rich understanding of the Church as the extension of Christ's presence across time *must* therefore be denied in modernity, with certain Pentecostals in their more modern leanings attempting to move to a purely pneumatological understanding of the Church, even though this ends up undermining itself.¹⁶ For a tradition that is trying to move beyond some of its historical missteps, the pinnacle of which was its extreme nature/grace dualism, its renewal on the focus of embodiment cannot coincide with the denial of the incarnational aspect of the Church, since that just rewrites the same dualism and actually leads to the destruction of the Church. Frank Macchia has raised concerns about the understanding of the Church as the “prolongation” of Christ in history, opting purely for the church of the outpoured Spirit, but that risks a de-naturalizing of the faith.¹⁷ As Balthasar has explained, the purely pneumatic approach loses all solidity and structure, resulting only in sociological renderings of the Church, which is to wildly denigrate the presence of Christ that is present within and holds His body together.¹⁸ Balthasar notes that the Spirit comes to confirm and explain the Word, the *Logos*,¹⁹ meaning that any disconnection between the outpouring of the Spirit and the physicality of the Logos made incarnate, embodied sacramentally and continually in His Church in time, is inadequate. He states, “What the New

¹⁶ Frank Macchia, “The Church of the Latter Rain: The Church and Eschatology in Pentecostal Perspective,” in *Toward a Pentecostal Ecclesiology*, ed. John Christopher Thomas (Cleveland, TN: CPT Press, 2010).

¹⁷ Macchia, 254.

¹⁸ Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Truth is Symphonic: Aspects of Christian Pluralism* (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1987), 72.

¹⁹ Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Love Alone is Credible* (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 2004), 46.

Testament calls *pneuma* does not blow exclusively in a *logos* stripped from its *sarx*.”²⁰

Christianity is an incarnational, embodied faith that demands the concrete community of His body as the primary means of grace, which is encountered in the material. “Pneumaticization always increases in direct proportion to incarnation,” as Aidan Nichols has pointed out. While Macchia’s concern may be that an over-simplification of an identity with Christ loses the Church’s sinfulness, a proper Christological ecclesiology recognizes its inherent sinfulness because Christ himself “became sin” (2 Cor. 5:21).²¹ Balthasar, in his reading of Maximus the Confessor, recognizes that “for sin to be overcome from within, it had, in some way or other, to be found ‘within’ Christ.”²² This reality, alongside the Marian factor of the Church, interpenetrate one another to hold together both the fact that it is “without spot or wrinkle or any such thing” (Eph. 5:27) and that it hopelessly falls short.

Pentecostalism’s pneumatological and eschatological vision of the Church therefore cannot be extracted from its *intrinsic* connection to the integrated whole that overcomes all rejections of the Church as the continuation of the actuality of the incarnation, which if denied, completely undermines the reality that the Church is not merely one organization among others in a “secular,” indifferent world. Balthasar knew that a hollowed out understanding of the Church would begin to creep in with too broad an understanding of the Spirit’s mysterious work outside of the Church (which has happened among certain Pentecostal scholars),²³ leading to the

²⁰ Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Office of Peter and the Structure of the Church* (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1986), 185.

²¹ Cavanaugh convincingly argues along these lines in *Migrations of the Holy*, 154-61.

²² Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Cosmic Liturgy: The Universe According to Maximus the Confessor* (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 2003), 263.

²³ A good example of this is Amos Yong, *Beyond the Impasse: Toward a Pneumatological Theology of Religions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003), 29. He states, “A pneumatological paradigm transcends [Christological and therefore soteriological and ecclesiological] categories.”

inevitable attack on the structures of the Church that are then seen in merely sociological terms and as having no intrinsic relation to the Church's intelligibility and mission.²⁴ To view the Church in that manner is to already accept the terms that liberal secularism demands of Christians. Religion's come and go, while the secular is presumed to be the true reality, the eternal horizon that religions and the Church operate within.²⁵ In complete contrast to that, Christianity claims the whole of reality, looking at all things through the lens of the Logos that has assumed human nature, which as *fundamentally* social, means that the incarnation is ecclesial.²⁶ That is why Balthasar says that "there can be no bodily Christ apart from his body, the Church, with its organs."²⁷ The Patristic and Medieval emphasis correctly saw that the Church's essence was to sum up all of space and time, from creation to eschatological consummation, into the reality of Christ, meaning that the Church itself was not just the means of salvation, but also the goal of salvation.²⁸ The Holy Spirit that was poured out on all flesh at Pentecost is the Spirit of Christ's body and that body is ecclesial, "the fullness of him who fills all in all" (Eph. 1:23). The truth of this body will always be scandalous.

The Actuality of God Revealing Man to Himself

This actuality of God's coming into history in Jesus Christ not only reveals God to His creation, but it also reveals the human person to himself, bringing to light the ontological relations between creatures and the Creator that is radically at odds with liberal "religions" that can only

²⁴ Balthasar, *Engagement with God*, 4; The loss of intrinsic relation, coupled with a loss of analogy, is why Pentecostals see the relativity of hierarchical ordering.

²⁵ Andrew Willard Jones takes this view to task in *Before Church and State*.

²⁶ Andrew Willard Jones, *The Two Cities: A History of Christian Politics* (Steubenville, OH: Emmaus Road Publishing, 2021), xvi.

²⁷ Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Truth as Symphonic*, 75.

²⁸ See de Lubac, *Catholicism*, 8, 23; *The Splendor of the Church* (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1999).

be mere additions to an ontologically indifferent person. *Gaudium et Spes*, itself crucial to proper interpretation of *Dignitatis Humanae*, states, “The truth is that only in the mystery of the incarnate Word does the mystery of man take on light.”²⁹ The *nouvelle theologie* of Henri de Lubac is strikingly evident within this rendering, since it was de Lubac that said, “Where there is no God, there is no man either.”³⁰ Balthasar explains why, arguing that because the world was created in the Logos, it can only be understood in light of the Logos.³¹ The very fact that Christianity proclaims creation means that it already reads nature (including human nature) in relation to the creator God. Creation, all of finite being itself, is a gift flowing from Absolute Being in the Trinitarian God. The gift of being and its receptivity in the creature is fundamentally relational. There is no being that does not derive from Being, no autonomous sphere that is somehow outside of God. As Antonio Lopez states, “The unity of being is paradoxical because, as we are born into a communion that precedes us, we are born in and to the promise of being, which is fulfilled through a relation with what we are not.”³² A human’s innermost identity, the core of their “I,” is but a gift from and for another.³³

Pentecostalism comes alongside this Catholic critique and rebuts the liberal ontological indifferentism that is written into the heart of liberal order since it too only understands *being* in

²⁹ Vatican II Council, “*Gaudium et Spes*: Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World,” par. 22, Solemnly Promulgated by His Holiness Pope Paul VI on December 7, 1965, https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html.

³⁰ Henri de Lubac, *The Drama of Atheist Humanism* (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1995), 65.

³¹ Balthasar, *Love Alone is Credible*, 17; Origen explains that this is what is meant in Genesis by “In the beginning,” that being not a temporal beginning, but rather, “In the Savior.” See Origen, *Homilies on Genesis and Exodus* trans. Ronald E. Heine (Washington, DC: CUA Press, 1982), 47.

³² Antonio Lopez, *Gift and the Unity of Being* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2014), 3.

³³ Joseph Ratzinger, *Introduction to Christianity* (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 2004), 190.

terms of ontological relation. While Pentecostalism is often thought of only in pneuma-centric ways, it finds inner coherency only by keeping hold of Christ's revelation of all things, pouring out the Holy Spirit to continue the work of His reconciliation of the cosmos. There is a firm awareness that "from Him, through Him, and to Him are all things" (Rom. 11:36), that no person can be fully understood outside of the fact that they are a creature, created to find their end in the life of God and experienced now through the power of the Holy Spirit that Christ sent to His Church to bring participation in the divine life and true *koinonia*. Wolfgang Vondey confirms this Christocentric focus for a proper theological anthropology, understanding the human being "first of all in relation to God, created in God's image and utterly dependent on God."³⁴ Daniela Augustine also touches on this self-understanding when she discusses God's gift of creation as unconditional hospitality, himself the dwelling place where the "other" lives, moves, and has their being.³⁵ While she does follow Moltmann in advocating that this creative act requires God's withdrawal, an opening up of space, holding on to the analogy of being makes it paradoxically clear that it is the creation's participation in God, not in some autonomous sphere outside of God, that opens up the true integrity of the creation as most radically distinct from God. It is the utter generosity of the Father as creator that opens up for the radical receptivity and ontological relation of a creation that finds its origin as already ordered to its end in the life of that which holds it together, the divine life itself. As Chris Green states, "God's life is simply gift from beginning to end. And creation exists and consists within that endless, boundless giving, receiving, and reciprocation of gift."³⁶

³⁴ Wolfgang Vondey, *Pentecostal Theology: Living the Full Gospel* (London, UK: Bloomsbury, 2017), 175.

³⁵ Daniela C. Augustine, *Pentecost, Hospitality, and Transfiguration: Toward a Spirit-inspired Vision of Social Transformation* (Cleveland, TN: CPT Press, 2012), 54.

³⁶ Green, *All Things Beautiful*, 171.

Receptivity and the Gift

Under this primacy of relationality and receptivity within being and a Pentecostal anthropology, the ramifications of this as it is transferred into a deeper Pentecostal theological politics shows how truly post-liberal Pentecostalism is. Too often have Pentecostal scholars left out this fundamental contrast between the indifferent ontology of liberalism in order to justify liberal politics and the secular state, leading to its own negation. A good example of how this happens is in Amos Yong's *In the Days of Caesar*. In many ways an insightful engagement with politics from a distinctly Pentecostal perspective, Yong engages with Catholic neo-conservative Michael Novak's discussion on neo-liberal economics and ends up with a similar affirmation under the banner of human creativity and initiative.³⁷ Without denying the goodness of creativity and initiative that are inherent to creatures made in the *imago Dei*, the fundamental ontology and anthropology behind Pentecostalism (and Catholicism) is not first human *doing*, but *receiving*.³⁸ The primacy of gift must be held onto in its correct place, with that primacy then flowing outwards through human participation and initiative within the created hierarchy of being in order to partake in the common good that one is invited into. The secular ontology has no place for this relational and receptive core, it instead justifying the primacy of the choice, initiative, and self-willed life of the human person. Pentecostalism, like Catholicism, cannot greenlight this false primacy, with the only outgrowth of that affirmation being the destruction of its own self-identity, furthering the secular vision.

³⁷ Amos Yong, *In the Days of Caesar: Pentecostalism and Political Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010), 285.

³⁸ David L. Schindler upends neo-liberal economics by pointing this out in *Heart of the World, Center of the Church*, 114-43.

Human persons that are from the beginning defined ontologically as in relation to God, are invited to open themselves up to a deepening of grace in the redemptive life of Christ through his Church. They become part of the one people of God, the bride, through regenerative baptism and the Eucharist that are not only markers of one's faith in Christ the king, but are also the very means of grace that persons receive to facilitate the way toward beatitude. Again, the active participation of each person is crucial in the cultivation of virtue and the continued growth toward looking more like Christ. Yet, the ontologically prior reality is receptivity, the receiving of the faith, the receiving of the Lord's body in the Eucharist, which thereupon opens up the dynamism of creating and doing within God's gift of creation. Each individual is taken up into participation in the divine life through the Church that understands itself eucharistically and pneumatologically, rooted in the gift of Christ's body and the Spirit that is the Spirit of Christ's body. The gift of the eucharistic meal becomes the genuine reality that all of life is read through, which is why Medieval exegesis read all of Sacred Scripture through the lens of the *Logos* who invited deeper participation in *reality*.³⁹ Since the Church provides a foretaste of the reality that all the world is headed towards when God will bring the whole cosmos into the divine life to feast at the marriage supper of the Lamb, "the Church is Eucharist,"⁴⁰ mediating the gift of Christ to His bride. Through that reception, it is then empowered sacramentally to be that gift, the "primal sacrament," to the whole world.

The gift that is Christ himself, mediated to the world through the Church, reveals the actuality that the world was created in and what it is bound to receive. There is little to no

³⁹ Joseph Ratzinger, *God is Near Us: The Eucharist, The Heart of Life* (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 2003), 88; Henri de Lubac, *Medieval Exegesis*, vol. 1, *The Four Senses of Scripture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 15-75.

⁴⁰ Ratzinger, *Called to Communion*, 75.

semblance of the liberal understanding of religion in this radically intimate embodiment of God's marriage to His people through the actuality of Christ's coming in history and the pouring out of His Spirit. It is not a self-determined faith in a god that is merely an option, but the fulfillment of what had already been more interior to us than we are to ourselves, the God who is Being itself, from which we have our being by sheer generosity. Chris Green, dialoguing with Saint Augustine, recognizes the paradox that occurs when the creature comes to its end in God, revealing that what was sought after was always already there, the ground of one's very being.⁴¹ That revelation unveils the fact that to return to ourselves as a person happens not by means of proclaiming human autonomy from God, self-determination, or self-generation, but only in the return to God. Christianity, and specifically the Church that it cannot be understood apart from, embodies this origin and end of humanity, sacramentally mediating Christ's presence that will flood the cosmos and bring creation into what it was already always in relation to and moving towards.

⁴¹ Green, *All Things Beautiful*, 29.

CHAPTER THREE

THE MOCKERY OF LIBERAL “FREEDOM”

Introduction

Beyond figuring out what the liberal order must mean when it says religion, one must also look at what it means when it says that is the only political ordering that has granted true freedom. This necessarily raises the question, how does it define freedom? When the liberal order grants religious freedom, is it naming a freedom that is intelligible to the Christian tradition or does it involve semantic overload and actually mean something quite different? The word “freedom” has been used across the history of human philosophical thought, from the classics through the middle ages, up until modern times (where it supposedly defines all of life). It can be easy to read philosophers of modernity and think that with their use of similar words, they fundamentally share the same foundations of thinking as previous eras, even if they take those foundations in slightly different directions. Following the work of D.C. Schindler, this study will suggest that this is a fundamental misreading of how radical the shift was in modernity, with modern freedom being a complete inversion of the classical and Christian (Catholic and Pentecostal) understanding of freedom.¹ This fundamentally plays itself out in the switch, in Aristotelian terms, from the primacy of act over potency to the primacy of potency over act. Outgrowths of this inversion are the destructions of the notion that truth and freedom are intrinsically related and that freedom is only had in relation to others, not individualistically.

Modern Primacy of Potency

In order to understand the radicality of the inversion of potency over act, one must first understand the differences between the classical distinction between the realities of act and

¹ D.C. Schindler, *Freedom From Reality*, 13-63.

potency, explicitly picked up and placed within a distinctly Christian theology most famously by Thomas Aquinas in the Middle Ages. Actuality, in classical thought, was the “state of perfection,” what the good *is*.² This is why God, under the traditional rendering, was seen as *actus purus*, pure act. D.C. Schindler also discusses how classical and Thomist thought differentiates between first and second actuality, which is the differentiation between substance, defined by form, and being’s self-enactment as it achieves its telos, meaning that actuality itself necessarily involves self-transcendence.³ This was the Christian radicalizing of Aristotelian nature, which as John Milbank explains, reveals how the most intimate property of an *ens* could be accidentally imparted to it.⁴ From a state of actuality, potency, which can be defined as power or possibility, becomes intelligible as it is integrated into the larger whole of actual goodness, but if and when it becomes cut off from its grounding in actuality, it loses its coherence and exalts itself above act.⁵ The very reality of act as a philosophical distinction becomes lost within the social imaginaries, resulting in the building of false worlds where all that is understood, all that is granted is sheer power. This study follows Schindler in finding this core in modern freedom.⁶

As one reads the philosophers of the modern period that are crucial in order to understand and grasp what liberal religious *freedom* means, one quickly sees that the only understanding of freedom within their vision is one of potency, pure power and the possibility to choose. John

² Ibid., 4.

³ D.C. Schindler, *Freedom From Reality*, 4.

⁴ John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 2006), 221.

⁵ D.C. Schindler, *Freedom from Reality*, 4.

⁶ Which is why the “post-modern turn,” while problematic for its own reasons, does upend modernity on modernity’s own terms. Since the moderns posited potency as the most ultimate thing, the post-moderns take that self-understanding to its logical endpoint, positing power (which post-moderns incorrectly read as inherently evil) and injustice at the foundation of all things.

Dewey explicitly states, “Liberty is power, effective power to do specific things.”⁷ While someone like Hayek denies this rendering since he believes it moves toward freedom as wealth, meaning redistribution follows necessarily, he still goes on to say, “If we knew how freedom would be used, the case for it would largely disappear...It [freedom] describes the absence of a particular obstacle.”⁸ Put aside the common differentiation between positive or negative liberty, which will be discussed below, and notice that Hayek’s total horizon for freedom is the same as Dewey’s: the power to bring about something, deriving from the sovereign individual. What the power brings about is not important, its horizon is literally nothing. It is the power to choose itself, extracted completely from truth or goodness, meaning that each person becomes the unmoved mover Aristotle posited at the heart of explaining ontological contingency, never moved from without, but that which moves all else.⁹ In order to begin to envision freedom in this manner, one must deny both the ontological and chronological precedence of beauty to the sheer act of the will, which not only denies reality but negates it.¹⁰

Freedom as power is specifically why critiques of so-called negative liberty and the call for a positive liberty are not radical *enough*, since both still operate under the same banner of power and possibility, with the only difference being the end of which that power is pointed. Negative liberty, which is freedom that defines itself merely as the absence of external coercion, is contrasted with positive freedom, the *freedom for* those ends which are good.¹¹ The point is

⁷ John Dewey, “Liberty and Social Control,” *The Social Frontier* 2 (November, 1935): 41-2, qtd. in F.A. Hayek, *The Constitution of Liberty* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 67.

⁸ Hayek, *The Constitution of Liberty*, 70, 83.

⁹ Schindler and Healy, *Freedom, Truth, and Human Dignity*, 61.

¹⁰ Antonio Lopez, “Christian Culture and the Form of Human Existence,” *Communio: International Catholic Review* 40 (Summer-Fall 2013), 475; Schindler, *Politics of the Real*, 42.

¹¹ Adrian Pabst and John Milbank make this move in their otherwise profound book, *The Politics of Virtue: Post-Liberalism and the Human Future* (London, UK: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016), 15.

well-taken, but even the “freedom for” is under the assumption that freedom is still a potency that must aim at the good. Stanley Hauerwas provides a good example of this common critique trapped in the modern paradigm, stating, “Freedom in and of itself is not a good.”¹² As will be discussed later, freedom truly is a good when it is first thought of under the primacy of actuality, a state of being, but because Hauerwas is still viewing freedom as a power to do what one wants, he has to deny its *intrinsic* goodness. As a potency under the Hauerwasian critique shared by many others, freedom may be good or bad depending on what the subject chooses, meaning that it is reliant on those outcomes that are achieved by that power, making freedom and the good extrinsic to one another.

In order to understand how modern liberty was redefined in such a thoroughly different way than the classical and Christian understandings of the term, to the point that Christians themselves often fall into the trap of presupposing the modern definition, one must look at the philosophical changes that occurred surrounding the question of the will in modernity. Servais Pinkaers, in his *The Sources of Christian Ethics*, explains that in modernity, the will was no longer understood as the attraction toward the good that was exercised in love and desire, but instead completely excluded nature from the free act, rejecting any remnant of dependence or determination.¹³ The end of the willful action was stripped from its place as that which pulls at the human subjective will. In fact, for someone like John Locke, *volition*, which is that which grounds the free act, “no longer terminates in things, but in actions.”¹⁴ In order to posit power as the primary thing in reality, which D.C. Schindler states is at the heart of “Locke’s metaphysics,

¹² Hauerwas, *In Good Company*, 202.

¹³ Servais Pinkaers, *The Sources of Christian Ethics* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1995), 332-9.

¹⁴ D.C. Schindler, *Freedom From Reality*, 19, 35.

epistemology, and anthropology,”¹⁵ any attraction to the good, or to anything at all must be cut off, leaving an indeterminate will that images the abstraction of God’s *potencia absoluta*, the distinctly modern emphasis on God’s sheer power to suspend or change the “laws of nature” at any time.¹⁶ In fact, key to Locke’s philosophy of will was both the exaltation of “unease” and “suspension,” which for Locke meant that the mind always had the power to halt any satisfaction of one’s desire and no matter what someone ended up willing in actuality, the subject always *could* have said “no.”¹⁷ It is the presence of an absence.¹⁸ These fundamental changes in thinking about the will gives Locke what he needs to put forward a will that is the original source of its own power with truly nothing that lies beyond it.

Freedom understood in the modern way of absolute potency, backed by a will that is determined by nothing other than itself, negates reality and proves itself *powerless*, opening the door for the worst kinds of extrinsic determinism by a state that has been given tacit consent over a state of war.¹⁹ David Bentley Hart captures how the will is actually negated under modern renderings of freedom by stating, “If the will determines itself principally in and through the choices it makes, then it too, at some very deep level, must also be nothing: simply a pure movement of spontaneity, motive without motive.”²⁰ The will, now that it has been essentially reduced to nothing and placed alongside the power to “suspend,” the holding on to the ability to have chosen otherwise, becomes the vacuum that is filled with all forms of absolutism. All determinations that in principle must have been able to be rejected, end with the outcome of all

¹⁵ Ibid., 19.

¹⁶ Simon Oliver, “Motion According to Aquinas and Newton,” *Modern Theology* 17, no. 2 (April 2001), 180.

¹⁷ D.C. Schindler, *Freedom From Reality*, 26-37.

¹⁸ Ibid., 59.

¹⁹ D.C. Schindler, *Freedom From Reality*, 115-6, 121.

²⁰ Hart, *Atheist Delusions*, 22.

determinations being seen as choices.²¹ The absolutely free sovereign individual who is granted the empty power to choose at will, devoid of any participation in anything that precedes or transcends him, truly becomes the “monad held together in the body of the Leviathan.”²² It is a totalitarianism brought in by a state of nature of indeterminate and empty wills in war with each other that paradoxically gives tacit consent (through one’s mere existence) to the state, while also claiming that the indeterminate wills of individuals hold the power to void the “contract,” meaning that both the individual is wholly subject to the state and that the state of war has just been hidden, not rectified.²³ The ontological endpoints of the modern reduction of freedom is always the same, the atomized individual and the totalitarian liberal state.²⁴

Freedom and Truth Made Extrinsic

Another ramification for thinking about freedom under the primacy of potency is that the sheer power that it implies necessarily makes truth *extrinsic* to freedom. Due to the reality that truth, by definition, may limit the endless power or possibility to choose whatever one wills by providing form and order, truth under the liberal vision becomes inherently *unfree*. This is just another outworking of the exaltation of enclosure in the liberal political order, whether that be in terms of public space, in rights, or in terms of the human person as closed off from their necessary ordering by and to truth. One can see this extrinsic relationship presupposed and consistently taken as self-evident throughout the work of John Courtney Murray, something that he himself does not explicitly acknowledge, but with the obvious outgrowth on this thinking

²¹ For how this fact leads to philosophical confusion on if Locke was a compatibilist or determinist, see D.C. Schindler, *Freedom From Reality*, 39.

²² Patrick Deneen, “Religious Liberty after Liberalism,” *Communio: International Catholic Review* 40 (Summer-Fall 2013), 629.

²³ D.C. Schindler, *Freedom From Reality*, 105.

²⁴ Patrick Deneen, *Why Liberalism Failed* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2018), 38.

being his consistent call to focus only on the juridical aspect of religious freedom and to limit the Church's focus on the truth.²⁵ First, one is granted freedom, which then opens the door for them to search for truth and goodness that are viewed as things outside the bounds of freedom's internal understanding, its interior form.²⁶ Man's freedom therefore becomes man's self-destruction, the tearing asunder of that which cannot by nature be pulled apart. Interestingly, for all of liberalism's view of itself as that philosophy most opposed to an integralist reading of the *City of God*, this separation between freedom and truth is the exact same inversion that undergirds integralist order.²⁷ In the end, this extrinsic reading of truth and freedom not only undermines true freedom in actuality, it also completely erodes any deep search for truth and ends with the destruction of reason itself.²⁸

Freedom and Personal Relations Made Extrinsic

Not only does truth become extrinsic to freedom, but other people do as well, with the logical result being an understanding of the free individual as one that is most closed off and isolated from other people. This happens due to the nature of modern rights with their subjective grounding, which despite arguments to the contrary, are fundamentally different than the Medieval objective *ius*, losing their social recognition rooted in justice and replacing it with a pre-social state of nature (a fantasy) that absolutizes the claims of atomized individuals *against* other social relationships.²⁹ They in turn become a sort of cordoning off of political space,

²⁵ Murray's presuppositions are exposed and critiqued thoroughly by Nicholas J. Healy Jr., "Religious Freedom and Truth," 410-414.

²⁶ Nicholas J. Healy Jr., "Religious Freedom and Truth: The Contribution of Pope Benedict XVI," *Communio: International Catholic Review* 40 (Summer-Fall 2013), 414.

²⁷ Lopez, "Christian Culture," 502.

²⁸ Schindler and Healy, *Freedom, Truth, and Human Dignity*, 67.

²⁹ John Milbank, "Against Human Rights: Liberty in the Western Tradition," *Oxford Journal of Law and Religion* 1, no. 1 (2012): 216-221.

analogous to the vision of Lockean property enclosing public space, with every act of someone's freedom having the potentiality to obstruct another's indeterminate and absolute freedom to do whatever one chooses.³⁰ However, due to the radical potentializing of political space through an abstract equality, that understood univocally and quantitatively, it makes all human relationships that in actuality maintain difference into invasions on one's freedom.³¹ All relationships become contracts that allow person's to cross one another's fences for specific purposes, voiding all true social bonds and writing ontological violence into all things. Therefore, under the potentializing of freedom, the promise of Christianity's proclamation of ontological peace that John Milbank has focused so heavily on, is inoperable.³² All manifestations of social relationships, of *koinonia*, are mere facades of an underlying conflict among all persons, a cease-fire, that is never truly overcome, but hidden for the benefit of the State that resides over the social contract.

While the liberal order uses the word "freedom" and operates as if it is a univocal concept that is the product of modern order breaking free from classical and Christian orders that stifled it, in reality the modern conception of freedom is entirely contingent on certain philosophical renderings of the term that are not even a millennia old, with those renderings being complete inversions of what the word had previously meant. There is little doubt that the radicality of the liberal conception of freedom has in its wake undermined certain injustices of the past, but this reality cannot hide that it itself has brought in its own massive injustices, fracturing nature and the human person as it undermines and upends reality. Without a grounding in the reality of

³⁰ For a powerful critique in this regard, D.C. Schindler, *The Politics of the Real*, 109-39.

³¹ D.C. Schindler, *Freedom From Reality*, 85.

³² John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory*, 382-442.

things, freedom quickly becomes unfree and totalitarian, ushering in a needed retrieval of what Christian orthodoxy truly means by freedom.³³

³³ Hannah Arendt famously discussed how the ideal subjects of totalitarianism were the people that had lost the distinction between true and false (i.e. the reality of things). See, Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin, 1968), 474.

CHAPTER FOUR

WHERE THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS, THERE IS FREEDOM

Introduction

While many Christians often seem to think that the word freedom is univocal and speak of it in many of the same ways just described under its rendering as a power, the truth is that freedom for Christians is much more than that. This study is going to set out that freedom understood within Christianity is ontological, meaning that it follows the classical tradition in the primacy of act over potency. Due to the fact that freedom is seen first under act, it allows Christianity to hold on to the intrinsic relationship between truth and freedom, as well as the fact that freedom is fundamentally relational. Within this dynamic and classical Christian understanding, one will quickly see just how fundamentally different the Christian and liberal definitions of freedom are, reminding us that while liberal order may often use similar language to Christianity, making it seem as if it was thoroughly affected by the “craters...of Christ’s dawning glory,”¹ in reality there was a radical re-interpretation of freedom which took liberal religious freedom in directions that Christian orthodoxy cannot follow.

Freedom as Actuality

In contrast to the idea of freedom as sheer power to bring something about, Christian orthodoxy affirms freedom as most fundamentally an ontological reality, a state of being reconciled to God through Christ and invited to participate in the life of the Triune God.² Due to the ontological relationship to God that grounds the Christian ontology of gift that is posited *a priori*, the

¹ Oliver O’ Donovan uses this phrase to try to “save” certain aspects of the liberal project by connecting it to Christianity in *Desire of the Nations: Rediscovering the Roots of Political Theology* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 212.

² D.C. Schindler, *The Politics of the Real*, 183-5.

existence and fulfillment of that relationship must be the destiny for which man was created, meaning that which makes man free. One can see that this is true in the famous statement from Paul to the Galatians, “It is *for* freedom, Christ set us free” (Gal. 5:1). The *for* is crucial in that statement from Paul, revealing that freedom itself is the end of man.³ While this freedom as actuality may derivatively include within it the necessity for power or potency, it is more than the sum of those.⁴ Just because someone is granted the power to choose whatever one wishes and may be offered a wide assortment of possible choices, these are ontologically subsequent to the actuality of freedom itself.

While Pentecostalism claims freedom incessantly, it has been suspiciously silent on actually defining the term in any adequate way, which has led to certain blind acceptance to the problematic understanding of freedom as potency,⁵ when in fact its truest inner logic is keenly aware of and *must* hold to the primacy of the actuality of freedom. Any Pentecostal that is asked the question of what true freedom is will generally formulate some answer that resembles the experiencing of the incredible love of God poured out on His people through the power of the Holy Spirit. Just having the option to choose otherwise is not what freedom is most fundamentally about for Pentecostals. There is no freedom for creatures that are not taken up into the divine life itself, eschatologically fulfilled in perfection, but no less experienced now as a foretaste of God’s Spirit flooding the entire cosmos. Andrew Davies hints at the actuality of freedom in the Spirit, stating, “The Holy Spirit creates, refreshes, renews, and restores; his

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid., 91.

⁵ Manifested clearly in its rejection of forms, or objective shapes, whether they are liturgical, theological, hierarchical, which philosophically is rooted in the fact that those forms necessarily invade on the sovereign individual to have a freedom in faith as potency, not something needed to be formed into. Will Herberg discusses this fact in much of American religion in *Protestant, Catholic, Jew*, 106.

presence brings, and inevitably *results in*, freedom.”⁶ The heart of Pentecostal freedom is this very reality, the drawing up of human nature (that was always created to transcend itself) into the divine freedom of the Triune God by grace, leading to the perfection of nature.

Pentecostalism, as a tradition of eschatological embodiment, can therefore no longer play by the rules that liberalism has set for it in regards to an inadequately defined freedom. To choose something other than God himself (which itself is first a receiving), encountered among His people through the Spirit that operates *primarily* in the Church is not a manifestation of freedom but bondage.⁷ It is to miss that which makes humans most human: union with God in Christ. The person of Christ, through his Spirit, is what Pentecostals eagerly show up weekly expecting to encounter because there is the recognition that He is their end and the freedom that they have been set free *for*. There is no instrumentalizing of God at Pentecostalism’s true core,⁸ since what is yearned for is God himself, who poured out His Spirit at Pentecost in a radical manner and what Pentecostalism fundamentally believes He has continued doing ever since. There is no satisfaction with anything other than God because that is what it means to be a creature: to find one’s end, given by nature, in the creator God and to experience the true freedom that each was created for. Pentecostals, insofar as they are faithful to the wisdom of their tradition, are deeply aware that the true God is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the slave-freeing God that brought Israel out of Egypt to experience the freedom in covenant with

⁶ Andrew Davies, “The Spirit of Freedom: Pentecostals, the Bible, and Social Justice,” *JEPTA: Journal of the European Pentecostal Theological Association* 31, no. 1 (2011): 63.

⁷ Balthasar talks about the fundamental truth that while the Spirit can be seen as working outside the Church, the primary residence of the Spirit in the Church cannot be lost. See, *Engagement with God*, 2.

⁸ Which is why Pentecostals betray their own essence when they obsess over the manifestations of the Charismata, instrumentalizing God for the gifts He brings, rather than being focused on their end in God alone.

God. Now in the New Covenant that was brought in by Jesus Christ, fulfilling and elevating the Old, Israel's God in the flesh has ransomed the whole cosmos and will bring all creation into freedom *in* the divine life. As the patristic and medieval theologians emphasized, *Deus fit homo ut homo fieret Deus*, "God has become man so that man could become God," and that actuality is what true freedom is and how it is affected.

There does need to be clarification that freedom as actuality is also intrinsically connected to the opening up of potency, allowing for a proper understanding of choice that ontologically *derives* from the actuality of freedom. The reality of freedom in the life of God, by definition, cannot be forced onto someone from without. While this fact needs to be recognized, we will again emphasize the proper ordering of act and potency here because it is what is made primary that affects everything.⁹ As we have seen, if potency is exalted as primary it will invert itself and fail to bring in the intrinsic goodness of freedom that precedes each person. When act is given primacy, it demands by the very nature of freedom to require conscious decision and therefore, opens itself up internally to potency without succumbing to the inversion that takes place when act is removed from its proper metaphysical ordering.¹⁰

One of the clearest examples in the Christian tradition of this correct ordering and its consequence for true freedom is Augustine, often seen as the first person that posited an empty will to choose, but rather sees the will as both fundamentally ordered to the good and retaining the power to determine itself under the idea of *consent*.¹¹ Both David and D.C. Schindler, following Servais Pinkaers, set out an understanding of the will rooted in the thought of

⁹ D.C. Schindler, *Freedom From Reality*, 279-93.

¹⁰ D.C. Schindler, *Freedom From Reality*, 306-8.

¹¹ D.C. Schindler, "Freedom Beyond our Choosing: Augustine on the Will and its Objects," *Communio: International Catholic Review* 29 (Winter 2002), 637.

Augustine that is intrinsically connected to reason and the human telos that not only comes *at* the end, but must *precede* its arrival.¹² This is because pure self-determination by the will could only be conceived in a world devoid of any intrinsic value, something that Christians cannot for obvious reasons affirm, as it would be to side with pure nihilism. It is the good that attracts the will toward the rest it is destined to have in it, stemming internally from *within* and not imposing itself from *without*.¹³ Utter determination is avoided because Augustine, stating that the will is love, opens the way for the idea of consent, or co-act, which both originates from the consenter and from a source outside the consenter as a gift from God.¹⁴ Without analogy this is not possible because God and the creature necessarily become in competition under univocity, whereas analogy keeps the reality that it is both fully a gift from God, received by (and therefore preceding) the human person that consents to the drawing toward the good (or rejection of that drawing leading to sin, so not true willing), and fully the act of the human subject.¹⁵

Receptivity and Freedom

From this understanding of the will as a co-act of consent that is fundamentally receptive of the good, also placing obedience at the heart of freedom, one can then understand why true freedom in the creature comes to fruition most clearly within the Catholic faith in the life of Mary through her *fiat*.¹⁶ Mary is the first to learn that ours is both an absolute dependency on God and a consenting equality with God – not one without the other, each for the sake of the other. We are God’s *children*, God’s *servants* and God’s *friends* and *co-regents*. She is the pinnacle of

¹² D.C. Schindler, “Freedom Beyond our Choosing,” 624; Schindler and Healy, *Freedom, Truth, and Human Dignity*, 59.

¹³ Schindler, “Freedom Beyond our Choosing,” 639.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 640.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 638.

¹⁶ David L. Schindler, *Heart of the World, Center of the Church*, 90-2.

creaturely freedom, receiving the Son of God in her bosom through the Holy Spirit with the words that end up defining her, “Let it be done to me according to your word” (Luke 1:38). It was not her authoritative individual sovereignty, her radical autonomy under an empty will that made her free, but her incredible willingness to receive from God the gift of His eternal Son to realize the divine mission. The reception of that which she could not bring about by her own strength, the letting be of what God was drawing her into, was that which freed her to be truly what she was created and destined to be: *theotokos*, Mother of God.

While many Pentecostals would shrink back at Catholic discussions of Mary, Pentecostalism itself at its roots resides within the *Marian* character of Christianity. Within the understanding of its founding, it does not see itself as deriving from the sovereign and autonomous acts of willful men, but in the waiting and receiving of the Holy Spirit poured out at Azusa Street. Pentecostals know that true freedom comes in the reception and letting be of that which truly transcends humanity, thereby opening up humans to become more fully human. Wolfgang Vondey emphasizes the rich understanding among Pentecostals in regards to their practice of tarrying, or waiting on the Holy Spirit, with services often lasting hours as the church’s press into the most sought after time in a Pentecostal church: the altar experience of calling on the Spirit to fall on His people through faithful waiting and prayer.¹⁷ The moments of radical freedom experienced during these times cannot be brought in by human willpower, but can only be received. All one can do is call on the Lord with hands open wide, repeating those famous words from the virgin yet again, “Let it be done to me according to your word.”

The receptivity and gift that are at the center of the lives of Pentecostals, placed alongside those of Mary and Augustine, confirms the vital nature of the *analogia entis* for a true

¹⁷ Vondey, *Pentecostal Theology*, 61.

understanding of freedom, holding together God's will as being fulfilled through His providential action, while not destroying humanity's free will in the reception of that freedom that precedes one's choosing. Pentecostalism, to stay true to its own self-identity that resides in the utter gratuity of God's gift and humanity's call to participate in it, must break away with the Protestant rejection of analogy,¹⁸ which is then replaced within a univocal conception of being that fundamentally places creatures and the creator in competition with one another. The logical endpoints of that reduction is either a complete theological determinism (Calvinism) or the destruction of classical theism under process theology or open theism that turns God who is the source of all things into a contingent reality.¹⁹ Analogy properly reveals that the God who is truly transcendent is also more fundamental to the world than the world is to itself.²⁰ It shows that intrinsic to nature, by its nature, is a fundamental opening up to that which transcends it, the grace that elevates nature to new heights in the divine life. Balthasar eloquently puts it, "Nature's forms spring forth from creation, rising up and opening themselves in Spirit and love to the infinity of fructifying grace."²¹

The Intrinsic Relation Between Truth and Freedom

As nature is intrinsically linked to opening up of grace through a proper holding together of analogy, so are truth and freedom intrinsically linked together, with truth opening up in freedom

¹⁸ Most famously with Barth, who claimed that the analogy of being was the anti-christ because he did not see it as deriving from revelation. Apart from the problematic dualism between faith and reason, Balthasar overcomes Barth by showing how Jesus Christ is the *concrete analogy of being* in *A Theology of History* (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1994), 69-70.

¹⁹ For a thorough presentation of the classical view of God, see David Bentley Hart, *The Experience of God: Being, Consciousness, Bliss* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013), 13-46.

²⁰ Michael Hanby, "For and Against Integralism," *First Things* (March 2020), <https://www.firstthings.com/article/2020/03/for-and-against-integralism>.

²¹ Balthasar, *Love Alone is Credible*, 126.

and freedom opening up in truth. Despite the attempts of liberal freedom to make these two realities extrinsic to one another, which leads to the inevitable conclusion that truth hinders freedom, the reality is that “there is no freedom without truth and no truth without freedom.”²² The problematic and unrecognized presupposition of John Courtney Murray is that these two realities are extrinsic by nature, resulting in his juridical understanding of religious freedom that must bracket out truth, then thought of merely in terms of information humans possess or an ensemble of notions.²³ However, truth as a transcendental property of being opens up the intrinsic relationship between freedom and truth because truth becomes the conforming to reality, with reality itself only being known in Christ who is Truth.²⁴

Pentecostals are themselves fundamentally aware of this intrinsic relationship, seen clearly in Jesus’ words to the crowd, “Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free” (John 8:32). Truth seen under this much more rich light is necessarily, in Balthasar’s terminology, “symphonic,” revealing the analogous participation of differing “sounds” in the transcendental unity.²⁵ The reality of the symphonic nature of Truth does not rid the church of the need for dogma,²⁶ but it helps break free from modernity’s destruction of true knowledge, which resulted in the reduction of a relational, loving knowledge of wholes that claimed the whole person, into bits of information stored in computer-like minds, again revealing the technological ontology at the core of the liberal project.²⁷ Instead of re-unifying Truth, freedom,

²² Pope John Paul II qtd. in Healy, “Religious Freedom and Truth,” 412.

²³ Scola, 331; D.C. Schindler, *Love and the Postmodern Predicament: Rediscovering the Real in Beauty, Goodness, and Truth* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2018), 67-82.

²⁴ D.C. Schindler, *Love and the Postmodern Predicament*, 66.

²⁵ Balthasar, *Truth as Symphonic*, 7-15.

²⁶ Balthasar lays out that dogma always contains the one, entire mystery, that being unfolded into countless propositions. See *Truth as Symphonic*, 68.

²⁷ D.C. Schindler, *Love and the Postmodern Predicament*, 67-74.

and the human person in the centrality of participation in the Transcendent that intrinsically open each up to one another, post-modernity has only made them more extrinsic. In reality, as Ratzinger discusses, truth and freedom are gifts that are disclosed in the encounter of love, both necessary to uncover the fullness of each.²⁸

Freedom Experienced Together

The relational aspect of truth and freedom helps unveil another key relational aspect of true freedom, that being the fundamental relations between persons that is key to living in a state of actualized freedom. Contra Lockean enclosure of all public space through his fundamental re-definition of rights, especially the right to property, true freedom is only had together. Like human persons themselves, it is fundamentally social. True Christian freedom cannot view rights in terms of a state of nature where one person's rights necessarily invade on another's rights, with the sovereign state residing over all contracts among persons (which become all relationships under the liberal order) and choosing which right and whose freedom triumphs over the other.

The modern isolated vision is another problematic outgrowth of the loss of analogy, with its intrinsic opening up of realities that maintain their distinctiveness, resulting in the externalizing of all goods that the power of an indeterminate will chooses. As Alasdair MacIntyre explained, all goods that are seen as extrinsic to one another, which will always be the case when freedom is seen primarily as potency, will necessarily be seen as competitive in nature.²⁹ On the other hand, goods that are internal or intrinsic, can be enjoyed by all, meaning that they are common goods that the community is already committed to as given from that

²⁸ Joseph Ratzinger, *Ecclesia in Medio Oriente* 27 qtd. in Healy, "Religious Freedom and Truth," 417.

²⁹ MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 190-1.

which transcends it.³⁰ In fact, true freedom, which comes in perfection in the eschaton, can only be social due to its ontological and cosmological character. Chris Green correctly positions salvation eschatologically in this way, re-positioning an often un-Aristotelian and un-teleological Protestant view of salvation into the fullness of the classical teleological understanding toward eternal beatitude by arguing that until all things are made new, we ourselves cannot be said to be fully saved.³¹ True salvation is that which occurs when all things are brought into the divine life and into perfect freedom, a reality experienced *together* with the entire cosmos.

While perfect freedom will have to wait until the eschaton, the foretaste of that reality is experienced presently in the Church, the primary means of grace to the world and the temple of the Holy Spirit, the place that opens up the actuality of freedom to a world that desperately attempts to find it, yet always falls short. This is because, as Balthasar states, “God’s free revelation of himself in Jesus Christ is an invitation into the realm of absolute and divine freedom, in which alone human freedom can be fully realized.”³² Since the divine freedom is the opening up and invitation to the whole world, the human freedom fulfilled in the actuality of the divine must itself be open to the whole world. Human beings will either experience true freedom together or not at all. The human person that has enclosed himself off from the world, focused solely on not letting anyone else’s existence impede his own, is not free in any true sense of the word, but is isolated in utter bondage, or in what Chris Green calls “diseased fantasies.”³³

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Chris E.W. Green, “Transfiguring Preaching: Salvation, Mediation, and Proclamation,” in *Towards a Pentecostal Theology of Preaching* ed. LeeRoy Martin (Cleveland, TN: CPT Press, 2015), 66.

³² Balthasar, *Engagement with God*, 6.

³³ Green, *All Things Beautiful*, 22.

CHAPTER FIVE

LIBERAL TOTALITARIANISM AND THE PATH FORWARD

Introduction

Upon completion of the devastating critique just laid out, the common rebuttal that immediately springs up among certain groups of liberals (as well as many Christians!) is that while the metaphysics of liberalism are not neutral and may be problematic, resulting in both a bad rendering of religion and freedom, liberalism and the liberal understanding of religious freedom is merely a political arrangement that gives space to believe what one will, even the belief that liberalism's ontology is wrong, with all the ramifications of that. This argument has been termed the *political* common good argument.¹ The idea is that what was just described as the major differences with how Christianity understands itself, its ontology and the outgrowths of it, form the *integral* common good that still has the ability to operate within the liberal paradigm for religious freedom.² This study finds that this common rebuttal is deeply flawed and fails to recognize how the liberal understanding of the world, the person, nature, and religious liberty becomes the true integral common good that transcends all things, itself being the only rendering that is truly allowed under a liberal order as it negates all things that would challenge it.³ Therefore, it demands that Catholics (and Pentecostals that recognize how truly Catholic they are) reject the liberal rendering of religious freedom and move toward an understanding of religious freedom that operates through the tradition of Christianity itself.

The Liberal Monism

¹ Martin Rhonheimer, *The Common Good of Constitutional Democracy: Essays in Political Philosophy and Catholic Social Teaching* (Washington, DC: CUA Press, 2013).

² *Ibid.*, 135.

³ This follows D.C. Schindler's in-depth critique in *The Politics of the Real*, 69-109.

Focusing first on how the liberal order fundamentally reduces all things to an image of itself, we must reassert that both religion and freedom under liberal religious freedom become merely options, with no real discussion or refutation towards liberalism's first principles allowed. This is due to the indifferent and mechanistic ontology discussed above, where all religions become mere additions to indifferent individuals with indeterminate freedom to choose. Despite the common assumption that liberalism rejects monism's, it itself is a unified and integrated monism, a monism that is fundamentally heretical to the Christian faith, rejecting the transcendence of beauty, goodness, and truth.⁴ The inherent rejection of the transcendental properties of being within liberalism leads to a civilly enforced nihilism built on the void that Pope John Paul II has adequately termed the "culture of death."⁵ The Church, as well as many other religious traditions, simply cannot accept a civil and legal order set up in such a manner, but the modern "pluralist" discussions do not actually treat anything as rival to it since it forces every one of them to adopt the liberal paradigm for religion and freedom in order to engage in public discussion. There is no hospitality in this rendering, only conquest.

Upon uncovering this reality, the curtain is able to be pulled back on how liberalism ends up failing even on its own terms of being *liberal*, for it is in the exaltation of itself over all that lays bare the fact that it alone claims not just the political common good, but the integral common good that all other things, including religion (and thus Christianity) must fall under.⁶ The claim that the liberal political common good argument makes is that the liberal juridical order is not meant to claim the *whole* (the integral good), but just a *part*, the machinery one

⁴ Schindler and Healy, *Freedom, Truth, and Human Dignity*, 151.

⁵ John Paul II, "Evangelium Vitae: On the Value and Inviolability of Human Life, par. 12, https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_25031995_evangelium-vitae.html.

⁶ D.C. Schindler, *The Politics of the Real*, 98.

might say, that can be filled with the wholes of differing traditions.⁷ D.C. Schindler convincingly reveals this to be a delusion however, by showing how the liberal order necessarily becomes the whole that all things must come under as mere parts.⁸ The clearest manifestation of this is the fact that if the liberal order was merely a part, it *must* allow the Church to have true authority that transcends it, with all the political outgrowths of that reality.⁹ The fact that this is unthinkable to moderns, even many modern Christians, confirms what Andrew Willard Jones has noticed as the heart of all modern sovereignty, that “there is no beyond it among men.”¹⁰ It becomes the mediator in all aspects of life, taking the place reserved for God as Absolute Being in which we live, move, and have our being. There is no actual cordoned off space, the so-called civil society, that is free from the unified liberal monism that for all legal and political purposes, is absorbed by the sovereign state under the one single banner of indifference.¹¹ The fact that the liberal order itself is the whole, the true integral common good, is attested to by the fact that for all the talk of actual pluralism, federalism, and local particularity, Tocqueville realized that American society was filled with a mind-numbing uniformity.¹²

A Catholic Pentecostal Horizon?

⁷ Alasdair MacIntyre argues that the mere service claimed by liberalism would render the call for military service to sound like asking people to “die for the telephone company.” See Alasdair MacIntyre, “A Partial Response to My Critics,” in *After MacIntyre: Critical Perspectives on the Work of Alasdair MacIntyre*, ed. John Horton and Susan Mendus (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994), 303.

⁸ D.C. Schindler, *The Politics of the Real*, 91-5.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 96.

¹⁰ Andrew Willard Jones, “The End of Sovereignty: An Essay in Christian Postliberalism,” *Communio: International Catholic Review* 45 (Fall-Winter 2018), 411.

¹¹ Schindler and Healy, *Freedom, Truth, and Human Dignity*, 66.

¹² Tocqueville stated, “I do not know of any European nation, however small, that presents more homogeneity in its different parts than the American nation” in *Democracy in America and Two Essays on America* (New York, NY: Penguin, 2003), 197.

While there is little doubt then that the Catholic vision of the Church as an actuality in history must move beyond the liberal monism that is built upon the artifice of liberal religious freedom, the actuality of the eschatological vision of Pentecostalism also demands that it look toward a post-liberal future of true religious freedom through the lens of the Church itself. Since it is the *form* Christianity takes in history that is banished by liberal religious freedom, how can Pentecostalism stay true to the eschatological actuality it proclaims while it is precisely the *form* that cuts right through the heart of Pentecostalism in a kind of contradiction? Again, the Christian form holds together Jewish revelation, Greek nature, and Roman polity. In terms of Jewish revelation and theology under the word of God, it is central to Pentecostals, with major Catholic elements already evident within recent developments in Pentecostal hermeneutics that have focused both on communal interpretation and a move beyond the hegemony of historical-criticism, opening up Scripture in ways reminiscent of the classical senses of Scripture within Catholicism.¹³

As it relates to Greek nature, contrary to some renderings and directions that are being advocated for, Pentecostalism's focus on teleology and embodiment make it uniquely fitting for Greek nature and reason that moves passed both the rationalism of modern thinking and the post-modern deconstruction of meaning that come from the same source in a nominalist and technocratic vision of the world that views knowledge as the gathering of bits of information and nature as indeterminate matter. A truly metaphysical realism that undergirds Pentecostalism demands that more scholars dialogue with the sciences, not within the already presupposed view of nature as mechanism, but within an analogical and participatory Platonic ontology that holds

¹³ See Kenneth J. Archer, "Pentecostal Hermeneutics: Retrospect and Prospect," and Rickie D. Moore, "A Pentecostal Approach to Scripture," in *Pentecostal Hermeneutics: A Reader* ed. LeeRoy Martin (Boston, MA: Brill, 2013).

on to the Aristotelian vision of formal and final causality, alongside the natural hierarchy of being. James K.A. Smith has already attempted to place a Pentecostal ontology within a similar understanding as de Lubac, stating, “Pentecostals do not merely expect God to ‘interrupt’ the so-called order of nature; rather they assume that the Spirit is always already at work in creation.”¹⁴ He does argue that *nature* should be removed from the common lexicon, which may signal a loss of the Spirit’s connection to the *Logos*, the loss of stable natures into an atomism that is just another outgrowth of the nominalism that refuses to follow the causal efficacy and the *intrinsic* ordering of all reality within an analogical hierarchy.¹⁵ Pentecostals however, despite the common perception among them, do not need to run from the hierarchical ordering of nature since it is what holds the difference within creation that Pentecostals cheer.

The recognition of the goodness of the hierarchy of being inherent to Greek nature does unveil the major dilemma for Pentecostals as it comes to the *form* Christianity objectively takes in the world,¹⁶ with major implications for if Pentecostalism can break free from the liberal order so opposed to it, that being the Roman polity and its hierarchical ordering in relation to a Pentecostal history that has shunned all hierarchy. Pentecostalism’s most modern leanings come into view once analogical hierarchy is mentioned because the tradition has accepted the radical egalitarianism inherent to the modern absolutizing of sheer potency, as well as the post-modern

¹⁴ James K.A. Smith, “Is the Universe Open For Surprise? Pentecostal Ontology and the Spirit of Naturalism,” *Zygon* 43, no. 4 (December 2008): 890.

¹⁵ Frederick Christian Bauerschmidt, “‘All Things Counter, Original, Spare, Strange’: Liberal Society and Pluralism,” *Communio: International Catholic Review* 40 (Summer-Fall 2013), 532-4.

¹⁶ Schindler, following Balthasar, is clear that the form is lost if all three aspects are not integrated together in unity, with liberalism itself having no problem with any of these held in a fragmented way. See Schindler, *The Politics of the Real*, 9-15.

lens of *tyrannical* power relations.¹⁷ While Pentecostalism and moderns/post-moderns claim to affirm and celebrate difference, their univocal and quantitative understanding of equality actually destroys all difference.¹⁸ Nature as analogical, and therefore hierarchical, has to do with unity in multiplicity and multiplicity in unity, not the qualitative dignity of the different orderings themselves. The natural ordering of the particularities of the cosmos entails one communal and analogical ascent, from the lowest non-living matter up to humanity as God's image bearers, all of which mediate, communicate, and give themselves to each other in a way that both enriches and is enriched in multiple directions of the movement, all towards the final destination of life in the Triune God.¹⁹

Once the actuality and inherent goodness of the hierarchy of being is recognized and Pentecostalism remains focused on the primacy of actuality within its understanding of eschatological embodiment and freedom, for Pentecostalism to actually flourish as uniquely distinctive beyond the confines of liberalism, it requires that it comes under the *actuality* of objective *authority* in history that at first may seem shocking: the papacy. For many Pentecostals, if not all, this statement will most likely come off as appalling, but it is actually the only way for the Pentecostal tradition to rectify the contradiction that runs right down the middle of it: its theology recognizes the primacy of actuality and embodiment of the Spirit in history, but under

¹⁷ Andrew Willard Jones points out that Foucault is not wrong to see *power* relations everywhere, but is wrong because he sees *tyrannical* power everywhere. See Andrew Willard Jones, "The Priority of Peace and the Problem of Power," *New Polity* (January 2022), <https://newpolity.com/blog/the-priority-of-peace-and-the-problem-of-power>.

¹⁸ D.C. Schindler, "Perfect Difference: Gender and the Analogy of Being," *Communio: International Catholic Review* 43 (Summer 2016), 196-7; Bauerschmidt, "All Things Counter," 532.

¹⁹ For a robust discussion on the classical and Medieval vision of reality as analogical, see Andrew Willard Jones, "A Liturgical Cosmos," *New Polity* (October 2020), <https://newpolity.com/blog/a-liturgical-cosmos>.

an ecclesiology that goes on to reject that actuality by taking no objective *form* in history. That is the fundamental problem with having no true authority that is embodied in actuality, preceding the individual potency of members that can then be actualized in the community. This is the ecclesiological equivalent of Vondey's eschatological critique of disembodiment when he states, "Human nature cannot exist as pure spirit, but only as embodied spirit."²⁰ Under current Pentecostal ecclesiology, it is an actuality that never actually takes embodied form and so denatures itself, pushing all authority beyond space and time, which consequently allows for the round-about modern exaltation of potency as the focus shifts entirely to the gifts that persons have as proof of God's call on their life for ministry. As Joseph Ratzinger famously states however, "Ordination is not about the development of one's own powers and gifts."²¹ Rather, it is precisely in the "nothing" that one shares with Christ (John 15:19) that reveals the sacramental character of the office surrounding the gift: giving what one cannot give.²² The actuality of God as pure gift manifests in the actuality of the Church (and its offices) as pure gift.

Without coming under the actual authority of the Roman Church in history, this contradiction at the heart of Pentecostalism will actually hinder its true distinctiveness and trap it within the confines of liberal religious freedom, constantly shuffling it amongst extremes without the semblance of unified stability. While it is beyond the scope of this study, ecumenical discussions moving forward among Catholics and Pentecostals should focus on how it could maintain certain aspects of its distinct character while still falling under the authority of the Church rooted in the apostolic succession, meaning that it objectively embodies the actuality of

²⁰ Vondey, *Pentecostal Theology*, 198.

²¹ Ratzinger, *Called to Communion*, 115.

²² Ratzinger, *Called to Communion*, 115.

God's coming into history, holding on to *physical touch*.²³ Not only is this crucial to the mediatory aspect of Christianity that marks it as distinctive among other world religions, but it also fulfills the incarnational logic that Pentecostalism claims to embody and establishes the actual authority of the Church in history that continues Christ's mission of bringing all things under his dominion.

If this vacuum is left open without an actual authority that Pentecostalism resides under, the unified authority of the liberal order will continue to perpetually negate the Pentecostal understanding of itself, not allowing it the space to manifest the integral common good that is ontologically relational, teleological, and eschatological. This is why the rival *authority* is key. Without it, Pentecostalism has no other authority to come under except the liberal authority, which will erode it as a tradition and turn it into a mere replica of its true self, its religion becoming just one more manifestation of liberal religion and its Pentecostal freedom becoming a liberal freedom. Under its current ecclesiological setting, it cannot and will not flourish as a rival tradition (like the early Church did under pagan rule), but like all things that try to challenge liberalism's first principles, it will become just one more aggregated group of isolated individuals that agree on a specific idea, only publicly interacting within the liberal order as a moralism that stands in contest with other moralism's.²⁴

The actuality of the rival authority in objective history would finally allow Pentecostalism the ability to completely move beyond liberal religious freedom into a

²³ D.C. Schindler, "Mediation," 12.

²⁴ Herberg recognized that all religions under liberalism manifest as mere moralism's that often becoming rigidly legalistic after the "revival" ceases, despising all forms that would actually rival the liberal state in *Protestant, Catholic, Jew*, 108. For how this sort of moral legalism has manifested itself in Pentecostalism, see Arlene Sanchez-Walsh, *Pentecostals in America* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2018), 34-52.

fundamentally post-liberal one that it is not mere nostalgia, but that realizes new contexts will always mean that things will come into fruition in new ways. Contrary to the dualism that is at the heart of both integralism and liberalism, a truly Catholic Pentecostalism could follow the *Communio* school that sees the relationship between the Church and the political order *analogically*, that being an understanding of unity within ever greater diversity.²⁵ Both orders, which are asymmetrically ordered hierarchically in a qualitative way, are focused on the whole of their orders that are deeply unified with one another, while that reality also paradoxically opens each up to their distinct integrities apart from one another.

True religious freedom as Pentecostals and Catholics understand it could be held together by something similar to the Gelasian dyarchy, the Church that holds authority (*auctoritas*) and a political order that holds power (*potestas*).²⁶ John Milbank explains the crucial distinction, stating that “while Church members were subordinate to the secular arm in worldly affairs, nonetheless the *potestas* remained subject to the ultimate judgement of the *auctoritas*, as the body of Christ.”²⁷ The authority of the Church would mainly be about *truth*, defining what terms mean. The political order does not define nature, God, person, religion, and freedom, but resides under the context of the truth that the Church provides, while the political order operates mainly as the holding of coercive force, pointing the political toward justice and the common good. The order concerned with truth transcends this order, while also remaining in an analogical unity that grants the “state” with the gift of ruling.²⁸ The analogical nature of the relationship between the

²⁵ D.C. Schindler, *The Politics of the Real*, 99.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 241-93.

²⁷ Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory*, 229.

²⁸ John Milbank, “The Gift of Ruling: Secularization and Political Authority,” *New Blackfriars* 85, no. 996 (March 2004), 238.

two orders is crucial to hold off any dualisms or extrinsic orderings that necessarily end up with one order taking over the entirety of all things.²⁹

The United States may claim *E Pluribus Unum*, “from many one,” but only the true catholicity of the Church that holds proper authority can maintain the true pluralism and true religious freedom that liberalism fails at because the Church sees the intrinsic value of the search under a proper ontology and anthropology. The Church has never seen itself as one player among others and it never can without negating itself, but the universal vision of the Church and its unity is the only context where true religious freedom comes into being, even among those that vehemently disagree with it. If the Church does not hold to this reality, it is necessarily implying that the goods of secularism are deeper than those of the truth of Jesus Christ. This is a falsehood. Only the context of divine freedom in the Trinitarian life that the Church sacramentally embodies truly frees, with the truth of divine love being the only ground that remains committed to that freedom because it is intrinsically connected to its goal. The truth of God, as David L. Schindler has recognized, “affirms the intrinsic, hence abiding, goodness of the search itself.”³⁰ The cease-fire of juridical liberalism cannot sustain freedom long term because it denies intrinsic value to the search (or that there should even be one), but it also never even granted pluralist dialogue to begin with and it never will, for it only abides in a univocal unity that swallows up all difference within its own monism. Religious freedom can only truly be held under the vision of the ontologically ordered person that is by nature created to find its end in God through Christ, with that reality birthing a moral duty for the search, which alone protects

²⁹ This, arguably, is the defining problem with Kuyperian “sphere sovereignty” that reads the distinction between orders univocally, ending up with the same political triumph over the integral common good and reinstating the liberal hegemony in through the backdoor. See Abraham Kuyper, *On the Church* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016), 302-5.

³⁰ Schindler and Healy, *Freedom, Truth, and Human Dignity*, 154.

the right to the search.³¹ All other attempts at granting religious freedom outside of the deep ontological meaning of the terms will fail to protect even the most shallow meaning of the terms.

³¹ Schindler and Healy, *Freedom, Truth, and Human Dignity*, 100.

CONCLUSION

This study hoped to provide a clear broadside on liberal religious freedom in a way that made it evident that orthodoxy demands Catholicism, as well as Pentecostalism, move passed the juridical understanding of those terms as articles of peace. As was discussed, the terms of liberal religious freedom are truly articles of faith, with these articles of faith not just manifesting themselves in slight differences, but as fundamentally *incompatible* with orthodoxy. Augustine made it clear that there is no such thing as neutrality among human beings and the social orders that they reside in by nature. There are only two options: the city of man or the city of God. Since the city of man is defined by wrong worship, meaning that the religious nature of the city is fundamentally false, it cannot be anything other than *unjust*. Therefore, its internal understanding of religion and freedom are truly anathema to the true Christian faith that was “once for all handed down to the saints” (Jude 3), resulting in its failure to ever uphold its duty to the common good that is foundational to the Christian ordering of the political.

The terms of liberal religious freedom demand that all religion be understood within an ontology of indifferentism that is nominalist and technological, leading to constant revolution that disallows and erodes all *forms* of faith that reside as an actuality in history that transcend the private individual. Christians that blindly advocate for it are coincidentally advocating for a space devoid of God’s presence, which means advocating for the void. The only religions that are allowed under this vision must posit a world that Christ can only be an extrinsic addition to, but not its origin or its end, the very thing it was created *for*. Persons and nature become concepts that are able to be defined completely outside their ontological relation to God revealed in Christ, rather than what Christian orthodoxy affirms to be the case, which is that reality itself is *fundamentally* Christian, only finding itself, ourselves included, when we are invited into Christ

and therefore, His Church. Christianity, de Lubac correctly says, “is the form that humanity must put on in order to finally be itself.”¹

The freedom that is posited alongside this false religion under the liberal rendering of religious freedom is that of potency, the absolute sheer choice of indeterminate willpower. Lost under this vision is the actuality of freedom, the state of being redeemed in Christ and brought into His Church, the bride of Christ that is the primary place that the Spirit resides as the extension of the incarnation in history. The receptivity and relations at the heart of true freedom then are forever banished from public intelligibility and allowance. The *Marian* freedom in the fiat and the Pentecostal reception of freedom in the Spirit are re-written as more fundamentally voluntaristic choices from individuals. Freedom slowly becomes isolation, set against and extrinsic to both truth and interpersonal relationships, rather than seeing them as interior to its fulfillment. The modern enclosure of space is absolutized into the political and all that is left of humanity is a mere shell of itself, a people that finds itself drifting over an abyss.²

Another clear goal of this study was to show how this inadequate vision does not give the space for Christian orthodoxy, held by Catholics and Pentecostals, to flourish and function under the guise of liberal religious freedom. The cosmic vision brought in by the actuality of God in history that encompasses the whole of reality cannot be a *whole* under liberalism’s political settlement, but merely a *part*. Liberal religious freedom grants each person the uncoerced ability to bring destruction to their own tradition’s understanding of itself by turning them into commodity’s to choose from. This happens all while hiding it’s a priori first principles that are

¹ de Lubac, *Catholicism*, 298.

² Ratzinger, *Introduction to Christianity*, 42-4.

not optional, with those principles then replacing true faith and becoming the integral common good that all religions must give allegiance to.

Since it is built on falsity, the eventual demise of liberalism and the liberal understanding of religious freedom should not bring cynicism, but hope in new horizons for not only Catholicism, but Pentecostalism as well. This study has tried to show why these Pentecostal horizons are truly Catholic in orientation, which would paradoxically not eradicate Pentecostalism's distinctiveness but let it shine brighter, pushing deeper into what it claims to embody while also removing the contradictions that have resided within it for too long. Either Pentecostalism will move toward a rich Catholic ordering of all things within the city of God or it will slowly eradicate its own self-identity. Huge swaths of people may continue to enter through its doors around the globe, but it will be a Pentecostalism that paradoxically removes receptivity, the gift, and all creation's natural relation and ordering to the Triune God that is the source and end of all things. It will be a Pentecostalism that can only allow God to be an object of one's optional choice as if He is just another commodity to add to indifferent persons that can be defined and known outside of Him. What this means is that it will be a *secular* Pentecostalism, which is no true Pentecostalism at all.

The coming together of Catholics and Pentecostals under a united political ecclesiology residing under the only true rival authority in history is what is truly needed for the Church to begin to push back against the ever-growing secularism, including the secular faith that Herberg found to be so prevalent. Only the renewal of the Church as that which sums up all things in Christ as the actuality of God in history, working and pointing all things toward the city of God that has its perfection in the Church triumphant, can the Church be the body of Christ that manifests the destiny of the entire cosmos that will be flooded by His presence. Only in that true

ecclesiological ordering can the Church be part of ripping down the idols of the liberal nation state, with its heretical renderings of both religion and freedom under its vision of religious freedom, until the “former things have passed away” (Rev. 21:4) and God is all in all.

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