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## POLITICAL THEOLOGY RE-CONCEPTION BIBLICAL PREMISES

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**Ljupco Ristovski**

INTEGRA Institute for Virtues and Value Based Politics, ristovski@integra.mk

**Abstract:** Practical theology is an academic discipline which reflects on the involvement of theology in the real life of mankind. There is a need for discerning the differences between practical theology and pastoral theology, as well as the differences between practical theology and applied theology. The study of the applications of these three types of theology should be extended to as many areas of human life as possible, with the attentiveness not to impinge on systematic theology.

Political theology is an important branch of theology and of political sciences which deals with the influence of theology upon societies, politics and particularly upon the political order and political systems.

The Bible is full of instructions given directly by God for organizing societies appropriately. There are many messages that could be useful and replicated into the political sphere, as foundation for a successful society.

Political theology already has an impact over society in general. There is a need for a reshuffling the system from the left wing politics toward the competitive society where everyone should get a chance under equal starting conditions.

The Biblical message should be a basis for further shaping the democratic and developed western societies in the image of democracy.

**Keywords:** politics, society, theology, political theology, Bible

### 1. INTRODUCTION

“Early Christian practice suggests a two-fold understanding of “theology” i.e. the knowledge of God. At the most basic level, it was understood as a “habitus” of the Christian believer, a cognitive and affectional disposition or orientation toward God, others, and creation. . . There is a need to define the task of theology in its second major sense: the discipline of study, instruction, and shepherding directed toward forming theology/habitus in believers. The focus of such theology/discipline was on understanding and communicating the nature of the interaction between God and humanity.”<sup>102</sup>

Theology in general, has somehow become alienated from the real life and everyday needs of people, particularly in the contemporary world. The primary task of theology needs to be mediation between present and future praxis, i.e. becoming a more practical discipline - “a scientia practica” (Helmut Gollwitzer, 1977)

Catholic theological thought had an impact on the social conditions of people trying to balance the growing difference between rich and poor, hence liberation theology emerged to the scene.

The Biblical message has likewise influenced the sphere of politics; on that account many theologians tried to develop a new branch called political theology.

### 2. REVIEW OF THEORETICAL THOUGHT

For Luther, “True theology is practical . . . speculative theology belongs to the devil in hell.”<sup>103</sup> The themes that were the focus of the practical theological work of the theologians of the days of Luther were the Decalogue, vices and virtues, moral theology, the process of making moral decisions etc.

Maddox contemplates that the impact of the Enlightenment, and the work of Kant in particular, upon the model of practical theology as moral theology was a complex process. Thus construed, practical theology became the moral application of theoretical theology. (Maddox, 1990; p. 650–672)

The issues that need to be resolved are whether practical theology should remain essentially moral theology. The Enlightenment process emphasized individualistic moral issues, nonetheless practical theology embarked on the course of inquiring into the socio-political realm, thus political and liberation theology surfaced. Such a move toward the social and political dimensions of Christian life was very important and it has become a mark of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century.

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<sup>102</sup> Maddox, Randy L.: “*The Recovery of the Theology as a Practical Discipline*”; Theological Studies 51 (1990); p. 650–672

<[https://divinity.duke.edu/sites/default/files/documents/facultymaddox/39\\_Recovering\\_Theology\\_as\\_Practical.pdf](https://divinity.duke.edu/sites/default/files/documents/facultymaddox/39_Recovering_Theology_as_Practical.pdf)>

<sup>103</sup> Stevens, R. Paul: “*The Other Six Days: Vocation, Work, and Ministry in Biblical Perspective*”; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing (2000), p. 14

“Theology is known as a practical activity, characterized by its concreteness in dealing with particular events, stories, and witnesses rather than limiting its role to the analysis of general concepts of existence and tradition.”<sup>104</sup>

John Wesley made an assertion that theological activity should be related not only to orthodoxy but also to orthopraxis, i.e. seeking to norm not only ideas and confessions, but Christian action in the world as well.

Methodological questioning is important, because every path to praxis originates in some theory or other. Bastian demands that theory and praxis, plus a scientific account of their interrelationship, be the chief motifs and bases for further theories in practical theology.”<sup>105</sup>

“...One of the weightiest topics in the recent scientific dialogue regarding practical theology relates to the time-honored question: What, precisely, is "theology"? ... Theology studies statements of faith critically (in the sense of being analytical and synthetic). Faith and theology are sometimes seen as incompatible, or else theology is viewed as a peculiar mixture of scientific statements and certain confessional and unevaluated intersubjective beliefs”. (Ibid., p. 85-101)

In that sense theology and faith are compatible and both are in line with the Biblical instructions. According to the bible, The Epistle to Hebrew, chapter 11, verse 1...faith is assurance...and continuous proving of what is not seen...”Faith makes us sure of what we hope for and gives us proof of what we cannot see.”

“Thus, practical theology was the builder of bridges between the theological theories of the other theological disciplines and the practice of the church. It became a technical subject (theologia applicata): The question of how to preach or teach, and how to reconcile theoretical knowledge with the practice of faith, became the working area for practical theology...has had the task of equipping people with the skills ....” (Ibid.)

According to Van der Ven, only through the study of religious praxis does theology have access to God, for it is only men's response, reception, and reaction to God's revelation that can be the object of theological research...according to Elaine Graham, the discipline of Practical Theology should be related to...the authoritative bodies of knowledge for the practice of care, particularly use of the Bible, and the role of ethics...<sup>106</sup>

John Milbank's *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason* has attracted much debate in relation to the future of theology after postmodernity. Like many secular social theorists, Milbank emphasizes the violence done by technical rationality in the realms of spirituality, affectivity, and tradition”. (Milbank; 1993, p. 105-106; 338)

This view of Milbank is in favor of the Church as an organized religious institution and does not reflect the individual faith of believers.

“...There are calls to relocate the focus of care back into the communal context of the regular gathered Christian congregation. However, this also raises the question of the responsibility of the Christian Church for the wider world;...Is the aim of care the amelioration of existential and personal distress and trouble, or the pursuit of proactive projects to establish social justice?.” (Ibid. p. 53)

### 3. BIBLICAL PREMISES FOR PRACTICAL POLITICAL THEOLOGY

#### 3.1. Liberation Theology

The theology of liberation belongs to the Catholic Church' left social circles. The movement emerged as a need for coming to the aid of all those who are at a disadvantage in their lives, without any difference in regard to the reasons behind their disadvantages and levels of consequences they suffer..

“...The desire for liberation finds a strong and fraternal echo in the heart and spirit of Christians. Thus, in accord with this aspiration, the theological and pastoral movement known as "Liberation Theology" was born, first in the countries of Latin America which are marked by the religious and cultural heritage of Christianity, and then in other countries of the third world, as well as in certain circles in the industrialized countries.”<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Chopp, Rebecca S.: “*The Praxis of Suffering: An Interpretation of Liberation and Political Theologies*”; Orbis Books (1986); p. 140

<sup>105</sup> Wyk, A. G. Van: ‘*From "Applied Theology" to "Practical Theology"*’; Andrews University Seminary Studies (Spring 1995), Vol. 33, No. 1, 85-101; Andrews University Press.  
<[http://docs.adventistarchives.org/docs/AUSS/AUSS19950401-V33-01\\_\\_B.pdf](http://docs.adventistarchives.org/docs/AUSS/AUSS19950401-V33-01__B.pdf?q=docs/AUSS/AUSS19950401-V33-01__B.pdf)>

<sup>106</sup> Graham, Elaine: “*Transforming practice: Pastoral Theology in an Age of Uncertainty*”; Wipf and Stock Publishers (2002); p. 44

<sup>107</sup><[http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc\\_con\\_cfaith\\_doc\\_19840806\\_theology-liberation\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19840806_theology-liberation_en.html)>

According to the same source, the theology of liberation is in favor of the poor and of the victims of oppression; adjunctly it is characterized by a commitment to justice. The normative basis for such special concerns for the disadvantaged segments of society is in the OT and the NT. The central Biblical theme as a theological reflection is connected to the terms liberation and freedom.

It has been noted in Vatican documents that, in the Old Testament, the prophets after Amos kept pronouncing the requirements of justice and solidarity and the need to decree a very severe verdict upon such rich who oppress the poor. They come to the defense of the widow and the orphan. They threaten the powerful: the accumulation of evils can only lead to terrible punishments. Faithfulness to the Covenant cannot be conceived without the practice of justice. Justice as regards to God and justice as regards to mankind are inseparable. God is the defender and the liberator of the poor. These requirements are found once again in the New Testament, in the discourse on the Beatitudes.

Liberation theology, also called a Children theology, due to its brief appearance in the early 1970s, was accepted worldwide much faster than expected. Its presence is not seen only in theology and in institutional churches, but also in the quest for answers to various social and political issues.<sup>108</sup>

Latin America and the Caribbean are areas where the impact of Liberation theology is felt most strongly, for this reason it has even earned the name "Latin American theology." The traditional understanding of the relationship between religion and politics, for most researchers of modern society, is permuted by the new kind of religious thought which enters the horizon.<sup>109</sup>

Thinkers of this movement analyze the social problems associated with the improper distribution of wealth, followed by the restrictive and repressive government policies in that regard. These analyzes are combined with the furtherance of the moral obligation to animate the participation of the poor and to justify their involvement in various reformist and revolutionary political activities.

Within the movement activities, religious beliefs are used as a standard for criticizing economic and social conditions and trends of participation in politics, as well as administrative systems burdened with injustice; aiming to cause positive changes of the situation, as an ethical act of good conscience. This movement includes church officials from both the Catholic and Protestant Churches.<sup>110</sup>

The philosophical dimension is reflected from the elements of justification for political action and motivation for engaging in politics striving to change its context.<sup>111</sup>

The importance of these processes is in terms of the changes that take place in the functioning of the political orders, regardless of the achieved level of socio - economic development. The changes are a direct product of the theological thought of the Christian doctrines.

### **3.2. Bible Based Political Order**

Political theology is connected to political philosophy and theology, particularly practical theology. It tries to explore the relationships within society (within the civil body politics) from a theological point of view, providing analyses and offering solutions from the theological or religious frame of reference, particularly in the political sphere.

Throughout history, the Christian Church has been often trying to impose its doctrines upon the state. Many times the attempts were unsuccessful. Generally, whenever the church was intervening in state matters the result was negative for the society. The marriage between the church and the state has been historically proven as a negative relation of bad outcomes.

Negative or positive, the theological and religious influence upon society is obvious. In that regard, theology, particularly Christian theology used in politics could possibly bring positive developments for the people and society in general. Thus political theology becomes practical theology in the political realm.

"The basic principle of the Catholic social teaching is that all public authorities and members of the civil society should work together to establish and maintain specific requirements for the common good. The Second Vatican Council, in its pastoral constitution of the church in the modern world ("Gaudium et Spes"), defines the common

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<sup>108</sup> Boff, Leonardo and Clodovis Boff, Paul Burns: *"Introducing Liberation Theology"*; Orbis (1987)

<sup>109</sup> Pottenger, John R.: *"The Political Theory of Liberation Theology: Toward a Reconvergence of Social Values and Social Science"*; State University of New York Press (1989)

<sup>110</sup> Smith, Alexa: *"Latin American Christians Reshape Liberal Theology"* (Presbyterian News Service)  
<[http://www.villagelife.org/church/archives/pres\\_latinaamerican.html](http://www.villagelife.org/church/archives/pres_latinaamerican.html)>

<sup>111</sup> Pottenger, John R.: *"The Political Theory of Liberation Theology: Toward a Reconvergence of Social Values and Social Science"*; State University of New York Press (1989)

good as a general summary of those conditions of social life which allow social groups and their individual members relatively and in every respect, access to their own realization."<sup>112</sup>

Hollenbach argues that what Christians do, plays a very important role in society, not just for Christians, but for everyone else as well, because it refers to the common good of all people including non-Christians. Thus, they are working to build up the social order, while taking care not to compromise the Biblical truth and beliefs. (Ibid, p. 133)

Luther recognized that the commandment to love one's neighbor, in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 22:40) is actually a political requirement of the law and the prophets, an ethical principle of government, and of life in general.

On the other hand, the Sermon on the Mount is the most disputed text in the New Testament in context of using it as a political message. This reference is used by those critics who argue that the Bible has no political applicability at all.

Arguments opposed to these criticisms say that the ethics that the Sermon on the Mount propagates do apply personally to the individual, but in correlation with the environment in which that individual lives. Thus, within that relationship, what is certainly needed is an application of these principles. Considering the fact that every individual is a political being, and that every community is a political community as well, then the application of these principles in a wider context has a strong political connotation that requires a political form of implementation and a process of standardization across institutions and the political order in general, basically through the normative harmonization of the legislature and through political programs and policies.

The first form of imperial governance in the world in general, appears with Nimrod, upon whom after the flood God bestowed the rulership over everything on earth, which actually reveals the political dimension of the message. Nimrod manages to create a powerful kingdom and to inaugurate himself as a powerful ruler, nonetheless in his fervor for human glory among the people, he ran away from God and ventured into the adventure of building the Tower of Babel which, according to the Bible, God perceived as an evil act of disobedience. In this context, according to the book of Genesis, we can conclude that the power of a single person over an entire society is a task mandated by God. A man acts as it seems right to him, as appears to be the best way in his own eyes. (Judges 17:6, 21:25, 18:1 and 19:1)

When we draw a parallel to the organization of a political community, there is obviously a need for limiting the possibility for an excessive power of those who govern. Nevertheless a legitimate government must always reflect God's will and the invaluable worth of any human life.<sup>113</sup>

Furthermore, in his commentaries, Elazar says that the Bible is an eminently political book, in the classic sense of the word. He believes that even in the so called historical books of the Bible (the Torah) and the books of the late prophets, there are discussions on political affairs with a special focus on the structure and purpose of the body politics of Israel, the Israeli parliament or the people i.e. the so-called "Adat Bnei Yisrael".<sup>114</sup>

In Elazar's opinion, a wise society is essentially a polity (political system, state) which is politically organized on the basis of values and virtues, primarily since the people and the relationships between them inevitably involve power which must be distributed fairly, effectively and authoritatively. (Ibid.)

The Bible, and especially the New Testament message, reveal many new aspects useful for regulating the relations between people, and the social aspect associated with mercy and love of God, such as issues of fair wages, unfair trade, oppression of widows, economic injustice and corruption. (Matthew 12:40)

"The moral test for any government is how are treated those who are at the beginning of life, children, those in the twilight of their life, the elderly, those who are at the end of their life, heavenly ill, disabled and handicapt." (Hubert H. Humphrey)<sup>115</sup>

In John 18:36: "Jesus answered, 'My kingdom is not of this world; If my kingdom were of this world, then would My servants defended me, to not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not here.'"

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<sup>112</sup> Brugger, E. Christian: "*Loyola University, New Orleans at Christian Social Thought; Review for the book The Common Good and Christian Ethics by David Hollenbach*"; Cambridge University Press ( 2002 ); p. 132 <[www.acton.org](http://www.acton.org)>

<sup>113</sup> Cavanaugh, William T. and Jeffrey W. Bailey and Craig Hovey (Editors): "*An Eerdmans Reader in Contemporary Political Theology*"; Eerdmans Publishing Co. (2012) / Reading the Bible Politically by Richard Bauckham (p. 38)

<sup>114</sup> Elazar, Daniel J.: Bereshith: "*A Political Commentary*" <<http://www.jcpa.org/dje/articles2/bereshithpolcom.htm>>

<sup>115</sup> Hubert Horatio Humphrey, Jr. (1911-1978), 38th U.S. vice president during the rule of President Lyndon B. Johnson; <<http://www.britannica.com/topic/276362/supplemental-information>>

In the book of the prophet Micah 6:8 is written: "...O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" These verses instruct believers to act upon the demand of an active participation into each and every area of life in a society and thus confirm the message of the Word for the active involvement of all faithful individuals in all segments of society. Believers are called to go into the world and spread the values and virtues promoted by God's Word.

In Matthew 6:10 it is written: "...Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." God needs people who are brave, equipped and willing to carry out His principles, values, virtues, laws and standards, which He has revealed to mankind through the Living Word. This means that Christians must include themselves in the process of making laws, in politics, business, culture and other areas where they should set a norm, and should instate their behavior as a standard for others and for motivating further active involvement into societal activities by as many people as possible.

Calvin sees the government as the highest potential vocation of every Christian. First Timothy 2:1-3 instructs: "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour." On the basis of this reference, Calvin developed his idea of vocation or calling for Christians to come out publicly in society and to promote their Christian ethics in all spheres of societal life.

At the same time, there are numerous examples in which God's people carry the roles of great managers and rulers such as Joseph and Daniel, besides, David became king of Israel. There are instances of the high priests in the Old Testament period holding high civic positions in the society in which they lived. The Bible introduces as a historical fact the first theocratic model of governance. Melchizedek, which means "my king is righteous" or "royal justice" is the first king who was a priest at the same time. He was king of Salem – a royal city of ancient times, that the Jewish tradition has identified with Jerusalem and the highest priest who operates in that area as under the leadership of El Elyon - God 's Highest, the Most Spectacular.

According to the Word of God, the government is obliged to request and carry out justice and fairness, as that of Solomon, in order to get blessings from God (1 Kings 3:5-15)

Noah Webster, one of the founding fathers of the USA and author of the first American Speller and the first Dictionary stated: "The moral principles and precepts contained in the scriptures ought to form the basis of all our civil constitutions and laws. . . All the miseries and evils which men suffer, actually suffer from vice, crime, ambition, injustice, oppression, slavery, and war, which proceed from their despising or neglecting the precepts contained in the Bible."<sup>116</sup>

Many crucial historical documents have been influenced by the Biblical truth. The so-called "Mayflower Compact"<sup>117</sup>, is the first document for an establishment of a government on American soil, in the colony Plymouth, (1620-1691)<sup>118</sup>. The contents of the document clearly show the source of the idea for a new type of organization of the colony, i.e. a new society in Plymouth based upon the Biblical premises and promises. In the document it has been stated: "In the name of God...by the grace of God...for the glory of God, and advancement of the Christian faith...in the presence of God,...covenant and combine ourselves together into a civil body politic...and by virtue hereof to enact, constitute and frame such just and equal laws, ordinances, acts, constitutions and offices...for the general good of the colony" (Ibid., p. 121)

The first state constitution in America is considered the "Fundamental Orders of Connecticut"<sup>119</sup>, from 1639, which was deeply founded in every aspect, on the basis of the Bible. This document is actually a model for other constitutions, including that of the United States;<sup>120</sup> it has practically followed the previously, centuries ago established "Magna Carta", as well as "The Great Charter of the Liberties of England, and of the Liberties of the Forest", and the "Coronation Charter". All these documents reflected the strong influence and presence of the church and clergy in England, and of the Bible and the value model that derives from it, in the preparation and inauguration of these legal doctrines in political and legal orders in England and in the new American nation.

There are many judicial and political concepts that are at place in modern societies today, which were taken from the precepts of the Bible. For example, the concept of the rule of law is directly taken from the Ten Commandments or the so-called Jewish law of the Decalogue. Alongside the concept of inalienable rights from

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<sup>116</sup> <<http://www.free2pray.info/5founderquotes.html>>

<sup>117</sup> <<http://www.ushistory.org/documents/mayflower.htm>>

<sup>118</sup> Young, Alexander: "*Chronicles of the Pilgrim Fathers of the Colony of Plymouth from 1602 to 1625*" (1841), p. 120-121; <<https://archive.org/details/chroniclesofpilg00youn>>

<sup>119</sup> <<http://www.law.ou.edu/hist/orders.html>>

<sup>120</sup> DeMar, Gary: "*America's Christian History*"; American Vision (1995), p. 57-58

God to each individual, it laid the foundations for building a society in which the role of an individual will be highly respected.

The Bible denounces slavery in Exodus 21:16, then in First Timothy 1:10, Genesis 1:27, First Corinthians 12:13, Galatians 3:28, it offers a unique framework for equality between people.

Nevertheless, despite the difficulties in forging ahead for the truth of the Bible in political practices during history, Christians managed to change the societal order more efficiently than ever before. Slavery was gone, freedom came on the scene.

The purpose of civil government, according to the Bible, is for it to be God's servant, to prevent evil and reward the good. The Epistle of Paul to the Romans 13:1-7 instructs that every individual should respect the authorities because they are vested with power by God.

There are still segments in the dominant democratic political orders today, which are opposing the Biblical truth in certain areas of life. Capital punishment is one of them. The USA, as a most prominent western democracy, is still controverting the Bible in regard to this issue. The Bible teaches us that the life of an individual is a right given by God and that no one can take this right away violently, except God. The final judge is only God. A man cannot take God's primacy, for God is the only supreme ruler of human life.

One of the most convincing examples in the Bible related to the nonsense of the existence of the death penalty is the case of the notorious thief on the cross who repented for his crimes right before his death. Jesus promised that this thief will be saved and spend eternity in the kingdom of Heaven (Luke 29:32-33, 39-43).

The inevitable dilemma of death penalty in the United States is a heavy burden to the American model of democracy. This is a wrong message sent to the rest of the world that aims to follow the American principles of democracy. The right to life is the sovereign right of God and no one else but God has the right to interfere in the issue of whether someone will live or not and under what conditions that person will live or not.

The death penalty in the USA is a continuous subject of a serious debate and fiery. Unbelievable for a society with strong Christian Biblical background, a majority of 62% (Gallup polls) resist God's provision for the preciousness of life in God's eyes and support murder as an official way of punishment of the difficult crimes.<sup>121</sup>

During the Reformation, Protestantism produced relevant political principles for organizing societies. Luther offered his view in this regard. Namely, the origin of the state is divine, just as much as the creation of men is. The nature and form of government that should be established are a matter of human choice, but a line of divine notion. The sovereignty and authority of the State possess legislative, executive and judiciary power. The third primary objective of the state, according to Luther, is to protect the good, to punish the wicked, and to maintain the public order. Then, another function of the state is to educate young people, not only in secular education, but also in moral and religious knowledge; it should care for the poor, it needs to protect citizens against monopolies, blackmail, public immorality etc. The state must not tolerate any forms of limitations in regards to the religious and civil freedoms, speech, and media, which are inalienable rights of every individual.

From the very beginnings of the organized society of Israel there emerges the necessity of establishing a court system, because once the laws are established by God, they should be implemented, and the implementation should be provided and controlled by some mechanism. The need for establishing a certain kind of judicial system transpired. This system was introduced as early as Biblical times, for the first time through the priest Jethro, a father in law of Moses, the father of his wife Zipporah.

Jethro gave Moses the idea of delegating duties and responsibilities to the most qualified and prominent representatives of the people.

He recommended the following: People will have to learn the laws and regulations; there is a need to choose representatives of the people; the representatives must have certain qualifications, to be honest, sensible, capable, to have fear of God and to hate bribe and corruption; there must be separation of power, in order to avoid concentration of too much power in the hands of a select few; these select few will be elected from among those qualified individuals who know the laws and regulations, and they will be appointed as leaders of thousand (nationwide), of hundreds (region), of fifty (District) and of tens (local community); disputes and claims which can not be solved by means of the court system of the designated representatives shall be handed over to Moses for solving; (DeMar 2011, p. 92)

In relation to contemporary systems, an impact has been accomplished in the normative part of the structure of political institutions. The three documents which were discussed previously were formed under the influence of the Christian thought by influential faithful Christians; these Bible-based documents are the Magna Carta of

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<sup>121</sup> Masci, David: "The Death Penalty in America", Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life (December 19, 2007)

England (1215), the Declaration of Independence (1776) and the U.S. Constitution (1787).<sup>122</sup> These documents are a proven result of applying the political connotations of the Bible. There are also examples of wrong Biblical interpretation and use.

Marx had a wrong perception of reality and God's involvement in world affairs. He tried to offer an economic theory on the basis of some weak Biblical information and understanding. The issue of private property and treating it as evil and as a source of all injustice and stratification in society, class alienation, class differences, contradictions and conflicts, comes speciously close to some of the Biblical messages. It may be assumed that his theory could be possibly based upon the assumption derived from the Biblical text in Luke 12:13-34, where Jesus Himself speaks about the wealth and private property and possession of material goods. The text says that a human life does not depend on the "abundance of his possessions" and that there is no need "to collect treasure" suggesting a release of the private property: "Sell your properties and give it for charity...for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

On the basis of these verses, most probably Marx assumed private property is an inherently evil category and concluded that it should be eliminated from existence in a society. Henceforth, he builds an ideology of communism where societal state property will be dominant and the private sector will be excluded from society. Furthermore, in this context, Marxism wrongly introduced the concept of forced by law nationalization and confiscation of any bigger private and business property thus by law eliminating from the system any private ownership.

The assumption is that the remaining ideological elements of Marxism are a product of misunderstanding the texts related to the living practices of the early Christian church. In the Biblical text of Acts 2:44-45 it is written: "And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need." The same instruction is similarly repeated in the same text in chapter 4:32-37. Hence, the slogan "according to each one's needs" became the core ideological essence in a number of states and nations from the communist block and wider. Societal state ownership became a fetish, alongside the collective responsibility over state-owned property, led by the "working class" or the proletariat. This was the newly offered society structure and the 'new man' concept established by Marx's model of social engineering. It is an inevitable impression that most of the principles of this ideology were constructed on the basis of the Biblical message.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Political practical theology, based on Christian doctrines derived from Biblical truth, though still a young discipline, has the perspective of maturing into a serious branch of theology and political science.

Religious issues have a dominant role in many societal transformations and challenges in the contemporary world. The overall perception that other religions, outside of the Christian body, have negative impact on the general development of many regions, should be further critically assessed. Historically, it has been proven that the most bloody wars were among Christians, and going step forward, among the Protestant Christians. The period of bloody crusades by the European armies was full of untenable religious influence. Many Jews, Christians and Muslims were killed in the name of Christ. Two thirds of the Christian population of Europe was slaughtered by Christians, during the Counter Reformation era, which is considered the bloodiest era in history. The African slave trade claimed the lives of more than 10 million people, the Colonial conquests by Christians led to killing of more than 20 million Native Americans over a period of three generations, in North, Central and South America.<sup>123</sup> These are frightening figures. Christianity has a long negative historical file.

At the same time, Christianity brought more societal progress than anything else ever did throughout all of history.

Church involvement into the regulation of state relations, empirically proven, always brings negative consequences. Problems become unavoidable.

The distinction should be clearly made between institutional church involvement and the progressive Christian doctrinal involvement into societal development that is based on the Biblical truth and wisdom. The Bible has always had a positive impact, not only upon individuals, but upon societies as well. The role of the official Church and the Church – state relations and symbiosis is the most dangerous element of erroneous practicing of theology.

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<sup>122</sup> Grudem, Wayne: "Politics according to the Bible: A Comprehensive Resource for Understanding Modern Political Issues in Light of Scripture"; Zondervan (2010)

<sup>123</sup> <<http://www.crusades.org/index.php/the-bloodiest-civilization/91-crusades/crusades>>

Hence, only the original Biblical message should be a basis for continual and progressive development of the link between the Christian Biblical theology and the Political sphere, thus developing furthermore the doctrine of political practical theology, for the sake of the well-being of the society in general.

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