

A suggestion for a practical hermeneutics for political theology.

By

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ABSTRACT

This thesis looks at the ways in which political theologians relate to the Bible.

It surveys current thinking on hermeneutics and critical theory to suggest some basic requirements of any theory of hermeneutics. It examines several metaphors for the way in which we relate to the Bible, and finally proposes the metaphor of a conversation as a practical, pragmatic, hermeneutic which satisfies those basic requirements.

It suggests that this conversation with the Bible carries responsibilities, and that the extent to which these are fulfilled is a measure of the adequacy of a theologian's conversation with the Bible. This will allow the analysis and assessment of competing interpretations.

This methodology is tested on two political theologians (the Black Theologian James H Cone, and the advocate of democratic capitalism, philosopher/theologian Michael Novak) by putting to their works a series of questions relating to the responsibilities of their conversations with the Bible.

A survey of other conversations in which Cone and Novak are involved with other theologians allows a comparison with this approach and an assessment of its effectiveness.

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