

The idea of work: from Luther to Pentecostals in recent protestant authors

Idea pracy: od Lutra do zielonoświątkowców
u najnowszych autorów protestanckich

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Abstract: For Luther, work was a vocation, while Calvin emphasised the need to glorify God through work. Since the proposal of Weber and Troeltsch, the theology of work and the origin of capitalism has been discussed and studied in different Protestant denominations such as Lutherans, Calvinists, Puritans and Methodists. In this selection of some recent Protestant theologians, we appreciate continuity and evolution in the theology of work that lead us to the Pentecostal inheritance in our days. Some perspectives go back to the *contemptus mundi* that Luther refused, but the discovering of the action of the Holy Spirit in the daily work needs a Pentecostal theology of the work.

Keywords: ordinary work; worship; Lutherans; Calvinists; Puritans; Methodists; Pentecostals

Streszczenie: Dla Lutra praca była powołaniem, Kalwin zaś przez pracę podkreślał potrzebę uwielbienia Boga. Od czasu propozycji Webera i Troeltscha teologię pracy i pochodzenie kapitalizmu omawiano i badano w różnych denominacjach protestanckich, takich jak luteranie, kalwiniści, purytanie i metodyści. U niniejszych wybranych kilku ostatnich teologów protestanckich doceniamy ciągłość i ewolucję w teologii pracy, które prowadzą nas do dziedzictwa zielonoświątkowego w naszych czasach. Niektóre perspektywy powracają do koncepcji *contemptus mundi*, którą odrzucił Luter, jednak odkrycie działania Ducha Świętego w codziennej pracy wymaga zielonoświątkowej teologii pracy.

Słowa kluczowe: zwykła praca; kult; luteranie; kalwiniści; purytanie; metodyści; zielonoświątkowcy

Ruf, Anruf, Beruf, Berufung: calling, work, vocation; these are closely related words in Luther's vocabulary. Since the proposal of Max Weber (2000, 82-129) and Ernst Troeltsch (1923),¹ the theology of work and the origin of capitalism have been discussed and studied in different Protestant denominations as Lutherans, Calvinists, Puritans and Methodists, and not only as religious sociology based on psychological and religious background (Weber 2000, 82-134, 188-276, 52-55, 353-381, 408; Van Hoorn and Maseland 2013, 1-12). We need now the systematic theological approach developed by some recent Protestant theologians. In this selection, we can appreciate continuity and evolution in a doctrine that has been decisive in the Protestantism. We start from recent authors and we arrive to the Pentecostal inheritance in our days, not always considered. We will prospect it beginning from the Bible and continuing with the reform, the renewal and the development of the pneumatological dimension as a proposal.²

Scripture

Tyler Atkinson belongs to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and published in 2015 *Singing at the Winepress*, where he suggests that "holiness is the universal ethical principle underlying lawgiving and covenant making, and it is central to all other ethical reflections in the Old Testament" (Atkinson 2014, 4). This proposal shows how *Ecclesiastes* might refine some existing theologies of work: "I move to consider the relevance of *Ecclesiastes* for contemporary theologies of work," and he tries to prospect the topic through protology, eschatology and christology (Atkinson 2014, 22). In this work, the author opposes two theologians:

Bonaventure suggests that the so-called *carpe diem* passages in *Ecclesiastes* originate in the mouth of the fool, thus anticipating the reading of *Ecclesiastes* as a diatribe. Theologically, this interpretive move enables Bonaventure to promote the monastic life from within *Ecclesiastes*. Luther, on the other hand, reads these passages positively, and for him, they are normative for Christian economic-political ethics. [...] Luther completes Bonaventure's contemplative reading by moving eschatological fulfillment to the present: not only exposing the *contemptus mundi* ideal, but also recovering the doctrine of creation (Atkinson 2014, 12.21, 31).

¹ In the following years, some Protestant theologians have gone deeper on this topic (Brunner 1932).

² My thanks for this work also go to Dirk G. Lange, secretary of the Lutheran World Confederation, the *Karl Barth Archiv* in Basel, the *Hauptbibliothek* and the library of the theological faculty of the Universität Basel, as well as the hospitality of Professor Sven Grosse of the Universitätäre Hochschule Basel and Pedro Nari of the Ecumenical Institute Bossey, in Switzerland.

Atkinson defends the conception of work as co-creation, not as something that has been created *ex nihilo* but formed from what God has already created: we can see it in relationship with God, and not for being a god. “I suggest – he concludes – that the most significant point of departure in Luther’s reading of Ecclesiastes is not in his positive valuation of creation as such, but rather in his positive valuation of economic-political existence, rooted in his doctrine of vocation” (Atkinson 2014, 32).³

Luther’s *Notes to Ecclesiastes* (1523–32) (*Luther’s Works* 1958, 15:93),⁴ explained in the aftermath of the Peasants’ Rebellion, in which the Reformer – against the penitential interpretation of Bonaventura – places emphasis on Solomon’s authority as a wise king, more closely resembling 2 Chron. 1-7. Atkinson also detects an Augustinian background in Luther’s comments (“How could anyone, even the most eloquent, adequately describe the enormous vanity of this man’s heart (*cordis*)?” (*Luther’s Works* 1958, 15:19) and the Sermon of the Mount, and he concludes that “for Luther, the *only* way effectively to condemn the evils in the world is precisely to live in its midst (*in media res*) and not to succumb to anxiety, instead soberly embracing God’s gifts of food, drink, fellowship, marriage, government, and work” (Atkinson 2014, 143-144). And also, “in the middle of the sermon” on Eccl 5:1–7, addresses “a salutary exhortation to those who are not traveling on the middle road but are either too negligent of their work or too concerned about it” (*Luther’s Works* 1958, 15:74). According to the doctrine of the *drei Stände*, the German reformer rejects the *contemptus mundi* of the monks, and he suggests the Christians take care of the *politia* and the *oeconomia*, but with the necessary ethical principles: “I am not condemning work nor approving of laziness, comments Luther. In fact, I approve both of riches and of wisdom, but I prefer wisdom to riches because it gives life to man” (*Luther’s Works* 1958, 15:118). Atkinson proposes a *via media* in politics and economy: according to Luther, “along with avarice, political ambition reflects the works-righteousness of the papists. [...] Works-righteousness banks on the merits of one’s good works in the future while failing to have present faith” (Atkinson 2014, 161.167).

“Thus, the very attempt to relate human work to the work of God in the new creation, though seeking to purify work in the face of capitalist desire, actually succumbs to the *concupiscentia futurorum* against which Luther warns and which characterizes capitalist motivations for work” (Atkinson 2014, 216). With each increasingly intense repetition of the refrain *accipe horam*, which punctuates the narrative of various economic-political injustices, the worker is reminded that no power is great enough to prevent God from doing some-

³ About biblical foundations, see Bienert (1956).

⁴ From *Vorlesungen über Prediger Salomonis und 1. Johannesbrief 1526/27; Predigten 1526, WA 20* (1898).

thing new through the Word in God's time, even in the midst of heartbreaking situations (Atkinson 2014, 223). For Atkinson Qoheleth does not merely subordinate wisdom to salvation history, but applies the theological motifs of salvation history for everyday's life. He exposes work situations as sites of divine activity itself, and makes a proposal that it would do well to consider how *Ecclesiastes* can sharpen its own response to the contemporary socio-economic climate of the West: "Finally, I will suggest a reading of *Ecclesiastes* in which both protology and eschatology are read through christology, offering a vision of human work within the work of God that challenges and enhances contemporary visions for work". We need to learn to sing the chorus of Qoheleth as a song of protest and praise: "singing at the winepress" is an experience of God's newness in the mundane experiences of the present, which entrusts future outcomes to God (Atkinson 2014, 206, 22, 216).⁵

Lutherans

Ian Hart stated in 1995 that Luther – influenced by Tauler and the *Devotio Moderna* movement – insisted that, in order to be holy, it is not necessary to become a monk or a nun, but in one's ordinary work and in normal family life, one can live a life which is fully pleasant to God: not "good works" (prayers or devotions) but "a good work when a man works at his trade, walks, stands, eats, drinks, sleeps" when it proceeds from the faith.⁶ So the normal daily actions are in themselves good, and not only those who regard to the church. In this way, he insists in the general priesthood of all Christians, and that "man was created not for leisure but for work, even in the state of innocence" (*Luther's Works* 1958, 1:103).⁷ And there is also a kind of equality between the different works: "In this faith all works become equal, and one is like another, and all distinctions between the works fall away," because "the Word of God hallows and makes divine everything to which it is applied". (*Luther's Works* 1966, 44:26; 1958, 13:71). That provides a necessary dimension of service to

⁵ In fact, at the end, Atkinson puts in relation Scripture, liturgy and ordinary work, maybe without an special justification: "As with the psalmist who intersperses memories of divine assistance into complaints about present calamities, "singing at the winepress" is the way in which the Church may remember God's own memory of us, extending the liturgical logic of the Eucharist even to those pressing the grapes long before consecration" (Atkinson 2014, 225).

⁶ LW45:24, specially "Treatise on Good Works" and "On the Good Works of the first Commandment". LW45:27-32: „Von den Guten Werken," WA 1:39-41, and also „Von dem guten Werken des ersten Gebotes", (1520): WA 1:41-8. See also for this specific point of view Meireis, „Arbeit, Identität und Verheißung", 110-121; id., „Drei Irrtümer über die Arbeit," 27-29; Zwingmann and Utsch, „Spiritualität und Soziale Arbeit", 129-130; Puhl, „Zur Spiritualität der Arbeit", 438-449.

⁷ See Blanco-Sarto (2008 , 733-776). "El ministerio en Lutero, Trento y Vaticano II," 733-776.

the fellowmen: "A Christian is a perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject to all" and the work is also *remedium peccati*, as it also was understood in the ascetic tradition of the church (for example in John Chrysostom, Augustine and others) (*Luther's Works* 1966, 31:344, 31:369). So Hart concludes: "It is probably true to say that in Luther's theology obedient service in one's calling is the first duty of a Christian" (Hart 1995a, 38).

As we have seen, Luther used the word "calling" very frequently when he spoke about a person's work, paraphrasing 1P 4 and 1Co 7:17.2.24. Hart considers that the word *Beruf* is applied in German to the normal work because of the Luther's preaching. Each work is really as useful and necessary as priest's one, and is also an opportunity for serving the others. Our recent author thinks that "there was a great gulf between the Catholic view and what Luther stood for." And "I believe that Luther's teaching about work not only had a religious impact, helping multitudes to do their daily work in an attitude of worship, but also an economic one". (Hart 1995a, 46-47.48). He wanted also to give guidance to Christian lay-people about moral issues connected with business and work in a situation at the beginnings of a capitalist economy, and he was quite radical in his critics: "If the trading companies are to stay, right and honesty must perish; if right and honesty are to stay the trading companies must perish" (*Luther's Works* 1966, 45:260). On the matter of profit, Luther preached: "The rule ought to be, not "I may sell my wares as dear as I can or will," but "I may sell my wares as dear as I ought or as is right and fair"" (*Luther's Works* 1966, 45:251). He criticized the trickery of the merchants, and "fulminates at length on the evil of demanding interest on a loan you make to someone," and indeed he recommended that they should fix a maximum interest of 5%. But "the most obvious and important element in Luther's overall teaching about work is the high valuation he placed upon it: the life God wants most people to lead is the life of daily work, and therefore such a life is holy and sacred and fully pleasant to God" (Hart 1995a, 50-51).

Calvinists

Hart also studied the differences in the theology of work between Luther and Calvin, who treats it entirely under the heading of self-denial. Joyful and pleasant to Adam, the labor became burdensome after the fall, getting then a pedagogic value and leading man to repentance. Work is transformed as the result of being done "unto de Lord", and man's dominion over this world, is restored to men in Christ. "Although this emphasis on man's restored lordship over the world was not mentioned by Weber or Troeltsch, in my judgment this emphasis played some part in breeding the aggressive, confident, and committed

economic and political activity which they rightly identified in societies deeply influenced by Calvinism” (Hart 1995b, 123). On the other hand, Calvin – like Luther – described a man’s everyday work as a calling: “This word – preaches the reformer of Geneva – ‘vocation’ also means ‘calling’; and this calling means that God points his finger and says to each one: I want you to live thus and thus”.⁸ Calvin has believed that it was possible for each person to discover what kind of work wanted him to do, and the relationship with the idea of providence and predestination is clear” (Hart 1995b, 123-124): God calls each one to a particular job for life in order to give him stability and protect him from unsettled, restless flitting from one job to another” (Hart 1995b, 125).⁹

But at the same time, according to Hart’s analysis, the purpose of a calling was that each one should serve his fellowmen, and in turn be served by them. Work therefore is a bond which unites a person to his neighbors, and provides mutual contact and communication also with the Creator: “God sets more value on the pious management of a household, – writes Calvin – when the head of it, discarding avarice, ambition, and other lusts of the flesh, makes it his purpose to serve God in some particular vocation”.¹⁰ Any professional skill is given by the Spirit: *in eo Dei Spiritusoperator*.¹¹ This remarkable view gives great spiritual dignity to ordinary work, and also it is implicit in the concept of the calling that all kinds of work have equal value in God’s sight: “If a chamber-maid sweeps the floor, if a servant goes to fetch water, and they do these things well, it is not thought to be of much importance. Nevertheless, when they do it offering themselves to God..., such labor is accepted from them as a holy and pure oblation”.¹² The success of work depends upon God’s blessing, and he understands Dt 8:3 and Mt 4:4 not in spiritual but in material sense: “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word which proceeds from the mouth of God”.¹³ Calvin went beyond Luther’s understanding of work mainly in his stress upon the need of God to bless man’s work, and his idea that Christians in their work restore the world and bring to the glory of God (Hart 1995b, 131-135).¹⁴

⁸ *Sermon XLIV on Harmony of the Gospels, ad loc* Mt 3:11-12.

⁹ Roberta de Monticelli explains this perspective in Max Weber, who understands *Beruf* as “vocation” (De Monticelli 1997, 54). And later writes this Catholic author: “Car la force du puritanisme, nous dit Weber en reversant le mot du diable goethéen, es la force qui toujours veut le bien et toujours crée le mal: à savoir, les tentations du repos, de la jouissance, de la possession. Telle es la triste richesseducalvinisme” (De Monticelli 1997, 55).

¹⁰ Inst., 4:XIII:11, 16.

¹¹ *Mosis libri V, ad loc.* Ex 31:2.

¹² *Sermon on 1Co 10:31 – 11:1*; cited in Wallace (1959, 155).

¹³ Cf. *58th Sermon on Deuteronomy*.

¹⁴ For this spiritual dimension of the work it is necessary the ethical and technical perfection of it. Like Luther, Calvin inveighed against fraudulent business practices. For example, Calvin

Puritans

Hart also published in 1995 a new article about the work from the Puritan perspective, in which explains that they followed Luther and Calvin using the word “calling” to refer to one’s job, and they gave it a similar content: “there should be some special business... wherein the Christian should for the most part spent the most of his time, so that he may glorify God”.¹⁵ So a Christian’s work is the most important thing he does in life, and in fact the most conscious and spiritual activity. “For the Lord will have us serve him religiously, as well as actions civil, not religious, as holy” (Rogers 1983, 295). As Hart pointed, “the Puritans saw clearly that a person’s working life must be transformed by his Christian faith into a continual expression of surrender to God” (Hart 1995c, 197).

The Puritans’ teaching was fairly close to that of Luther and Calvin in this point, but they give an advice about how one was to choose a job. In fact, the Puritans’ doctrine of Providence was less overwhelming than that of the first Reformers. Specially the Calvinist doctrine of Predestination gives less space to personal choice, and also in these more recent times the world of work was more open to one’s freedom. It was recognized that there were special circumstances in which it would be right to change jobs. All the jobs had the same value “as touching to please God”, as William Tyndale (c. 1494-1536) preached. The insistence of the dignity of menial jobs tended to a practical end: remain in your present work (Hart 1995c, 198-200).¹⁶

John Owen (1616-1683) warned against the obsession of thinking, planning and worrying all the time about the details of the job, because there is the danger of overwork (cf. Mt 6:24, Lk 17:28-30; 21.34). Even work is a service of God, it is not enough, because prayer and worship are also essential: “Beware you do not lose your God in the crowd and hurry of earthly business”. This quote demonstrate that Puritans did not make work a kind of religion, be-

preached about the importance of an employer paying proper wages, and spoke of the sin of charging more than the goods are worth. But the difference with Luther comes when the lambasting of interest and trade is missing in Calvin, except when it is so excessive or to a poor man. He recognized that the system of lending at interest which he found already in Geneva. In sharp contrast to Luther, Calvin was perfectly happy with trade and commerce: riches were an earthly blessing given to us by the kindness of God (cf. Inst. 3, X, 5). The Swiss Reformer says God’s material blessings in this life are ladders for us to climb up, step by step, to the crowning blessings of the heavenly life (cf. *Commentary on Psalms, ad. loc.* Ps. 128:2).

¹⁵ Cotton Mather (1663-1728), *A Christian at his Calling*, cited by Ryken, (1986, 27).

¹⁶ The quotation is in Tyndale’s *Works* 1:102. The extreme caution about changing jobs had no doubt the same roots as it had for the first Reformers: a strong doctrine of Providence, the 1Co 7 command to remain in one’s calling, a desire to spare Christians the ambition linked to job-hopping, and a rigid model of society in which a jobless person was quite strange.

cause the “particular calling” to one’s work was always subordinated to one’s “general calling” to be faithful disciple of Jesus Christ (Hart 1995c, 201).¹⁷ In fact, they emphasized that work was to be regarded as service of others. As William Perkins wrote, “the end to man’s calling is [...] to serve God in serving man”, and Hart states that “work as a solemn social obligation was a major Puritan emphasis, and it was powerfully pressed home from hundreds of pulpits” (Hart 1995c, 202).¹⁸

“I think – concluded Hart – the Puritan preachers were right to permit the walking of larger profits, especially since they surrounded this new permission with so many limits and warnings” (Hart 1995c, 206). In the *Westminster Confession of Faith* (1649), a good expression of Puritan thinking, the Chapter XVIII titled “Of Assurance of Grace and Salvation” states as the main grounds the promises of God and the inner testimony the Spirit, and the “conscience of duty” is only one of the several sources of the grace. Here once more the believer’s personal holiness and ongoing sanctification are seen to contribute to his or her assurance, and work could be considered to be a possible example of holiness. On the contrary, “a man may as well go to hell for not working in his calling, as for not believing” (Watson 1965, 98).¹⁹

Methodists

Methodists also consider work in their writings, as in the book *Transform your work life: Turn your ordinary day into an extraordinary calling*, that stems from Graham Power’s query to Dion Forster with the question: if I love God above all things, should I become a pastor? The answer is clear but it should not always be so, because – he answers – God calls many to their work. The authors try to argue that man must know what he has been created for, so that

¹⁷ The quotation of John Flavell is in Tawney (1926, 245).

¹⁸ The quote is in *Perkin’s Works*, II:126. But money is also important: if you “choose a less gainful way, you cross one of the ends of your calling, and you refuse to be a God’s steward” (Baxter 1707, I:357). It follows that even the rich, who do not need to work to support themselves, should work. But Puritans did not feel guilty about making or having money, because they regarded the right use of money as part of their stewardship. “On the other hand, the Puritan writings abound in warnings against greed and any sharp practice” (Hart 1995c, 2002). The Puritan preachers constantly dampened the desire for wealth by warning that it brings the Christian in danger-zone. “Poverty works for good to God’s children”, but “poverty also hath temptations” (Watson 1971, 251; Baxter 1707). Against this idea, see Tawney (1926, 248).

¹⁹ And concludes our author: “my own (tentative) opinion is that the Puritan teaching and preaching [...] was actually quite well safeguarded against this distortion which Weber claims to have occurred”. Also in Calvin the idea of Predestination through one’s own work(s) is surely subordinated. “Puritan theology not only does not forge a link between hard work and assurance of salvation; it actually seems to leave little need, or even room, for such a link.” (Hart 1995c, 209).

his life will take on full meaning, so this has to do with calling. First of all it is considered that few people realize that, because they were carefully constructed for a purpose, they can never fully honor their Creator, or find inner peace, until they do what they were designed to do. Like every great designer, inventor and engineer, God rejoices to see His creation do what He planned for it to do. God wants to invest even more of His love and creative power in man's life. All he needs to do is work for what God made him to do. Then let him begin to do it with passion, commitment and intention, and watch how God does the rest (Power and Forster 2010, 9-10.14-15).

But “the outcome of this perspective on ministry is that most Christians never even consider that their most significant ministry opportunity may be in the place where they spend most of their week – their workplace!” (Power and Forster 2010, 11). So the question is: “onto the pulpit or into the world”? Power asks Forster if he should be a pastor, since it is thought that, if he really loves God and wants to serve Him, he should become a pastor of the church. “The simple truth is that, although God intended every Christian to be a minister, He never intended every Christian to be a pastor!” (Power and Forster 2010, 13). To bring glory to God, most Christians believe that the best exercise of ministry should be in the place where they spend most of their week, in their place of work. Moreover, rather than having to learn new skills for ministry, God may want to use what you already know and do well to serve his kingdom. Forster often asserts that God does not waste experience (Power and Forster 2010, 29-31).²⁰

And now there is a second question: “Why should I take Jesus to work?” (Power and Forster 2010, 20) God calls man to work, and every Christian should bring Jesus to his work, for he should bring him wherever he is: “From God's perspective there is no separation between work and worship”, and the work is considered as worship (*work-ship*), according to Rm 12:1 Power and Forster 2010, 40). It is considered often their “God stuff” to be worship in certain places (such as church buildings) and at certain times (such as on Sundays, or on the solemnities of Christmas and Easter). They also see it simply as “my stuff” which has very little to do with worship. Thus, their work,

²⁰ The text describes how Graham Power's life has evolved, as he has lived his business vocation as an obedient act of worship to God, and that then some remarkable miracles began to take place. The first reward is the peace of knowing that he is obeying what God intended for his life. In addition you can see how God uses aspects of his “divine design” to transform your life and the lives of others. The Christian must remember that he was carefully and deliberately created for God to act in him and through him where he spends most of his day. Graham had realized that by “taking Jesus to work” with him, he had transformed work into an ongoing act of worship: the worship switch remained on. Moreover, his work life had suddenly taken on a whole new meaning, and as he sought God's guidance, direction and help to impact people and systems with the Gospel, he was partnering with God in mission.

friendships, and relationships with others are outside the sacred. But all that the Christian has and that he is to be done for God, and sacred and profane must be seen together. From God's perspective, there is no separation between work and worship: when the Christian begins to look at his workplace and the people he works with from God's perspective, he can discover an incredible mission that he can carry out right there, Monday through Friday (Power and Forster 2010, 40-41).²¹

The Wesleyan-Arminian Ben Witherington III remembers that Bible speaks not only about God working but "also about God's people working". "It will perhaps surprise you to discover how little theologians have actually discussed work", and he receives the Volf's proposal of the "work under the inspiration of the Spirit in the light of the coming of a new creation" (Witherington 2011, XVII-IX; Volf 2001, 79). He considers work as a new creation and the eschatological building of the kingdom of God. "But there is laboring even in Paradise that came and is to come!" (Witherington 2011, XVI) *An Opus that is Magnum* is the work that is in our hands, because it is not the result of fall but part of God's original design, as Witherington grounded in Gn 1-3. God is "a vigorous worker in the world", as "a constant worker", as can be seen in the "portrait of Jesus in John 9:4" and the image of God as a potter (Witherington 2011, 5.7). The *telos* of the world "certainly involves us working, indeed working hard for the Kingdom", because the "work involves calling, vocation". "Work whether it involves plumbing a sink or plumbing the depths of the cosmos, in the hands of a Christian is a ministry", because of the priesthood of all believers and considering also the ethical limits of work (Witherington 2011, 11.12.13; 23-52). Work is "a sacred one originally ordained by God, and so it must be overtaken in holy ways. [...] 'Good enough' is not 'good enough' when the standard of excellence is the example of Christ the worker" (Witherington 2011, 14).

"Does my activity promote the cause of Christ? Does this activity glorify God, and can be offered to God in thanksgiving?" Because "dirty jobs (understood as "manual labours of all sorts") have dignity" (Witherington 2011, 14.15). The problem in our days could be that "we have lost our sense of connection between work and the world in which we work", the contrary as

²¹ Methodist authors come to regard work as an act of worship, as can be deduced from the etymology of the word, which comes from an old English word worth-ship (to acknowledge or attribute value to someone or something, i.e. to a person with divine wisdom and authority worthy of respect). When one worships, one is acknowledging that God is worthy of special attention, obedience, sacrifice and love. Worship can, of course, be as wonderful as a heartfelt prayer of adoration or a song of praise, but it can also be making a choice according to God's will. Moreover, the Christian can worship God in every choice, in every relationship, in every meeting, with every client; in short, he or she can use every moment of every day to worship God. So, if Jesus had your job, how do you think he would approach the tasks and people you encounter every day? (Power and Forster 2010, 42).

do farmers and gardeners. “We are stewards of God’s property, and this must change entirely our view of work” (Witherington 2011, 17.21). This world is our world, God’s world, must the Christians say. For his theology of work as vocation, the author goes back to the Lutheran doctrine of providence and the two kingdoms, that “relies in the notion of God as *Deus absconditus*, the God who is hidden in everyone life, hidden in human vocations and always work” (Witherington 2011, 26).²² He also criticizes its internal division between inner vocation and outer work, as well as the excessive distinction between faith and works. On the other hand, service to others is service to Christ, and vocation is a gift that God lays on our hands. Witherington does not make difference between vocation and charism, because they grow together, as it is bond with the ministry. He is at the same time theocentric and ecclesiological (not “ecclesiocentric”), and also proposes an ethics and an aesthetics of the work (“How Christians Should Work”, “Ethics and Vocation”, “Work as Art, Art as Work”). “Perhaps creativity, including the arts, is the quintaessential way the image of God can mirror the Creator God himself?” (Witherington 2011, 51; 53-77). In considering the ministerial dimension of the work (“Work as Ministry, Ministry as Work”), our author establishes the conditions for work as blessing and vocation: “if it is done to God’s glory and for Christ’s Kingdom” (Witherington 2011, 81).²³

Pentecostals

And last but not least, Pentecostals. The similarities between the Lutheran reformation and the Pentecostal outpouring have been studied, although “the Pentecostal movement is closer to a renewal movement than a movement of broad reformation”, and Luther seems to be too sacramental for the author’s

²² There he follows Veith (2002).

²³ The sanctification proper to ministry comes in work when we have our focus on the will of God, and the earthly consequence is that work is “culture making”. The faith becomes culture through our work: “Christianity, in order to be truly Christian, has to go public, has to become a shared public good, not merely a private self-help program for the already convinced” ((Witherington 2011, 106. Christians must work hard to produce the best culture products, and the model will be again God Creator: “God in fact expects creativity out of us, not least because we are created in God’s image” ((Witherington 2011, 114). But creating culture is also building the Kingdom: “whether we are at our work or we are at worship in our church, we are at work constructing and helping to advantage the Kingdom of Christ – or not” ((Witherington 2011, 119). And then the culture will be purified and rescued and will build the New Jerusalem, but this have to be done little by little, as Jesus did with 3, 12, 72, 120... From the existential point of view, it is proposed a balance between work, rest and faith, according to the ethics of the work: our work must be a response to God’s creative love, and keep the relationship between work and worship (Witherington 2011, 129-154, 160-166; Jensen 2006, 135-145).

view (Kay 2017, 87, 89). There is also here a virtual attitude against the ecclesiastical ministry: “The priesthood of all believers brought every believer into a direct and unmediated relationship with God but it did not negate the need of ministers” (Kay 2017, 91). But the greatest contrast is “the importance attributed to the outpoured Spirit”. In fact, “for modern Pentecostals the outpoured Spirit empowers ordinary believers to live a daily contact with the supernatural” (Kay 2017, 91). But in this case there is no mediation, neither sacramental one, and Kay ends his comparison with this words: “On a practical level, Lutheran theology provides an enormous intellectual resource for Pentecostals and much of their core doctrine, thought it comes fairly directly from John Wesley, comes also through the reformers and their forensic and prophetic understanding of the New Testament”, including of course that regards the theology of the work (Kay 2017, 95).

In fact, in another study, Dale M. Coulter argues for continuity between Pentecostals, Wesley, and Protestant Reformers on *sola fide*. A way of identifying the “heart of Pentecostalism” is to consider “the emphasis on Word and Spirit (*sola fide, sola gratia*), the priesthood of all believers (*solus Christus*), and the church as the locus of scriptural interpretation for the sake of reform (*semper reformanda, sola scriptura*)” (Coulter 2017, 124). But, although its insistence on sanctification, there is no special mention to our topic but more general ones: “This emphasis led to a fusion of *sola fide* with sanctification as an ecstatic movement of gracious initiative that deepens the journey toward God” (Coulter 2017, 126). Here the “transformation of the affections” have an important feature in early Pentecostalism: *ita fides et spes distincti affectus sunt*, wrote Luther (*Luther’s Works*. 1958. 27:24). “The emphasis on orthopathy within Pentecostalism is an outworking of the view that faith is an affective movement that emerges from a moment of encounter between Word and Spirit” (Coulter 2017, 131).²⁴

On the other hand, D. F. Sebastian proposes a theology of the gift, and provides a Pentecostal response to the calcified economic logic in society. He describes the former system with these words: “Priests, prophets, and magicians

²⁴ Pentecostals remain deeply connected to the Protestant reformers, so their theology of work must be also present to their own teachings, although Archer maintains that “Pentecostalism globally speaking is one of the major four traditions, the other three being Roman Catholicism, Orthodoxy families, and Protestantism”. And he puts also together the concepts of work, witness and worship: “The Spirit empowered the community for witness, and work, and enabled the community to enter into deeper expressions of worship” (Archer 2016, 5). But he explains not further in what consists this relationship, and the work here seems to mean specially “missional work”: “When we worship the Lord God as a community, we are the redemptive presence of Christ to the world, hence our communities worship is a form of witness and is an act of work. [...] Our work is to worship and witness as we care for creation and model God’s shalom to the nations” (Coulter 2017, 11; in this line also Petersen 2014, 254-271).

all employ different strategies, but they all hope to gain a ‘monopoly’ on lay persons as their means of acquiring the capital”. And then Sebastian proposes a new paradigm: “Scarcity is the foundational characteristic and the explanation of every action”, “desire and need, that provides the motivation necessary for economic growth” (Sebastian 2019, 69-70). This could seem a way for designing a sustainable economy, according to our present times, and also develops a culture of the relationship in the society. But the pneumatological dimension of the creation could also be an inspiration for the theology of the work, recovering that “sabbath is a performance instituted by the God of possibilities as a part of creation”. This is the logic that our author follows: “By abandoning the call of scarcity and instead practicing rest, Christians can renew their relationship with God” (Sebastian 2019, 75).

In this sense, we can conclude, are we going back in favour of the *contemptus mundi* that the monks defended, and Luther refused? Is capitalism sustainable? And has it a really a Christian origin? Many Protestant authors refuse the idea of a Christian origin of capitalism, also in its psychogenesis, or in its psychological atmosphere. The Weber’s theory about the Protestant origins of Capitalism must be reviewed or nuanced. It is correct to understand that the Protestant idea of work developed the economy in these countries, but this proposal must be deepened from the theological point of view. It is such a good idea that requires a wider and profound development. For example, the discovering of the action of the Holy Spirit in the daily work – as Volf suggests – is in fact a such a good proposal that needs a Pentecostal theology of the work. But what has to do work with the whole Christian life, with the social, ethical, aesthetical and ecological responsibility, with the worship and the liturgy, and the consciousness of being son or daughter of God? Here there are some suggestions for all Christian Theology, and the richness and actuality of this topic makes it an interconfessional point for theological and ecumenical dialogue.

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