

Markus Vogt / Lars Schäfers

Christian Social Ethics as Public Theology

The gods are back - but were they really gone? In the sociology of religion and in society, people had long settled into the theorem of a progressive secularization, a displacement and privatization of religion through progress, science and modernization. At the same time, religion in Germany has never completely left the public sphere, despite the disentanglement of religious and thus, in this country, primarily Christian faith and modern culture. In particular, the increasing presence of Islam in Western societies has been and continues to be a driver of controversy about the public role of religion. Religion matters - it attracts media attention and provokes public disputes and conflicts. Some appreciate religious values and religious commitment, while others criticize religious double standards or new fundamentalist excesses. Especially as a topic of conflict, there is a new kind of public presence of the religious today.

It has long been a matter of religion in the plural: the "return of the gods"¹ is occurring as a polyphony in which religious and cultural pluralism has become a principle. However, this is accompanied by a variety of fears, whether in the form of a generalized suspicion of fundamentalist and violent Islam or in the form of new varieties of anti-Semitism in connection with conspiracy theories long thought to be outdated. Representatives of the monotheistic religions in particular raise their voices in the struggle for public recognition. In the modern liberal-democratic constitutional state of religious freedom, they are allowed to do so - but whether and in what form they should do so is a constant social controversy. In short, post-secularity and secularity coexist in an ultimately confusing mix of social change processes.

The comeback of public religion on the stages of the late-modern world also affects church and theology. The public speech of God through the

proclamation of the gospel is, after all, an elementary part of the church's mission. Jesus Christ emphasized during his interrogation before the high council: "I have spoken openly before all the world. I have always taught in the synagogue and in the temple (...). I have spoken nothing in secret" (John 18:20, Einheitsübersetzung). Christianity, in the sense of the Gospel, does not belong to the private sphere. It should and wants to be a public religion by its self-understanding. This is reason enough to reflect anew on the role of theology as a scientifically reflected form of Christian speech about God in the public sphere of today. This is not about defending privileges, but about the religious dimension of social cohesion.

The present issue offers such a contribution to reflection, drawing on the concept of public theology. Our discussions take place from the perspective of the theological discipline of Christian social ethics. This subject-specific perspective is obvious for this topic, since social ethics is the theological discipline that reflects the mixed situation of public concerns outlined here in the context of the ambivalent developments of simultaneously secular and post-secular, increasingly pluralistic societies and societies characterized by a new longing for homogenization through compartmentalization. The digital structural change in the construction of the public sphere also requires normative reflection in a special way. In dealing with these issues, Christian social ethics engages in a fundamental form of theological "public relations work" in the literal sense.

Which public spheres we mean, in which church and theology move or should move, we will illuminate in a first step with special regard to the digital change of public communication. Against this background, we will introduce the concept of public theology as an answer to the public discourses that have been moving in a post-secular direction for years. This is followed by the profiling of Christian social ethics as public theology and, finally, some reflections on the digital scientific communication of Christian social ethics.

1 Church and Theology in Which Public Spheres?

If theology and the church want to work in and on the public sphere, i.e. to speak perceptibly and competently in public, they should ascertain what the public sphere actually is for them. First and foremost, it is a central good and a basic prerequisite of modern liberal democracies. However, the classic ideal of a sphere of "public" that can be clearly defined in terms of space, time and content and that is distinct from corridors of privacy has long since become unrealistic. Jürgen Habermas, as a distinguished public sphere theorist, has understood it essentially as a network for the communi-

cation of content, opinions and the like, in which the communication flows condense into "bundled public opinions"². Thus, the public sphere is not merely a particular state of affairs, but even more an ensemble of communicative practices and processes of exchange about common life in a society in the form of principled unrestraint.³ In modern societies, however, this ensemble of communication is highly fragmented - in that sense, there is not "the" public sphere, but various (partial) public spheres. In today's pluralistic society with its fundamental right to freedom of opinion and freedom of the press, the self-observation of society, as public communication is commonly called, takes place from a wide variety of perspectives. In addition to this understanding of the public sphere as a social space or social institution, which in fact only exists in the plural, the public sphere can also be thought of as a particular mode of communication.⁴ Such a mode of communication "public sphere" requires said institutions as forums of social conversations. These, in turn, require a media public sphere that, in the best case, mediates, connects and integrates these "time conversations."

In times of the megatrend of digitization, the existence of such arenas has long been guaranteed not only by the traditional journalistic media, but increasingly also by the Internet and digital platforms such as forums, blogs and social media. However, the emergence of filter bubbles in the sense of segregated discourse corridors in which fake news, conspiracy theories and spirals of hate thrive is currently their most obvious downside. It has long been a truism that public communication has changed radically through digitization and continues to change - for better or worse. The claim of Christian social ethics to promote responsible contemporaneity therefore requires constant reflection on the structural changes in the way the public sphere is produced.

Constructively Shaping the Change in the Public Presence of the Church

From a Christian point of view, the "return of the gods" is highly ambivalent, since it is by no means associated with an increased popularity of the popular churches. In stock market jargon, one could rightly speak of a "profit warning"⁵ here, because the return of religion is a highly fragile profit that is associated with considerable loss potential for the churches. For the Christian faith, post-secular society is neither bear nor bull market. The only speculative bubbles that need to burst are exaggerated hopes of "re-Christianization" on the one hand and gleeful forecasts of a supposedly imminent demise of the churches in Germany on the other.

It is undeniable that the large churches are increasingly becoming marginalized. They are losing influence on individual questions about the good life and public questions about the just shaping of society. This development is enormously reinforced by the loss of credibility, especially of the Catholic Church, in the context of the abuse debate and the dispute over church reforms. The church is not the subject of controversial public debates through no fault of its own. It must therefore constantly clarify its role in public beyond apologetic Catholic lobbying, as the Central Committee of German Catholics (ZdK) recently pointed out in its remarkable position paper "Aufbruch statt Rückzug" ("Departure instead of retreat").⁶ The church ultimately learns to understand the gospel better itself if it does not shy away from a critical, open and also learning dialogue on the areopagus of today's public. In doing so, it acts without the exaggerated habitus of a "moral agency"⁷, which is increasingly called into question and is actually alien to its religious mission, and is more credibly able to provide meaning and orientation in public questions. The simultaneity of the post-secular public interest in religion and the increasing marginalization of the churches is in any case the defining feature of the development in Germany. It calls for a readjustment of church and theological forms of communication.

The new, multi-layered structural change of the public sphere and the changed public role of the churches also have an impact on academic theology and theological ethics. Today's change in the public sphere is rubbing off, or should rub off, on the content, forms, and especially modes of communication of theology. This does not only apply to its presence in the scientific community, the scientific public. It also applies to scientific communication as the transfer of the results of theological research and academic debate into social discourses and their language games. It goes without saying that theology and the church should not bury their heads in the sand in view of these contemporary diagnostic findings, but should take up these developments creatively and constructively. After all, according to Pope Francis, Catholic theology should be a "cultural laboratory" (*Veritatis gaudium* No. 3) that embraces new developments with a spirit of innovation and engages in all-round dialogue. One particular model of Christian theology is particularly suitable for this purpose: public theology.

2 Understanding and Genesis of Public Theology

The concept of "public theology"⁸ as a reflection on the relevance of Christian orientations in the public discourse space of today's plural, post-secular society was first established within evangelical theology. This understanding of a public theology combines two central concerns: accountabili-

ty for its genuinely biblical-religious foundations as well as the argumentation for Christian positions in public discourses with "the greatest possible communicability"⁹, accompanied by a critical reflection of these discourses and their communication cultures.

The focus of Public Theology is the proactive reflection on the changed publicity of religion outlined above. It ties in with the basic ideas and methods of political theology, but is more strongly oriented toward civil society communication and interaction and less toward directly influencing state action.

(New) Political Theology as a "Mother Concept"

The concept of political theology has its roots in the Stoa. In ancient Rome, the "theologia civilis" (Varro) served to legitimize state power. In the Renaissance, Machiavelli and Hobbes took up this political metaphysics of the state. In the 19th century, it found resonance especially in France, as well as throughout Europe in the restorative idea of a "Christian state" of political romanticism.

To be distinguished from this is the more recent, strictly theological use of the term political theology by Johann Baptist Metz. His understanding is rooted in a "theology of the world"¹⁰ and a re-evaluation of the Enlightenment and the liberal differentiation of state and society, as well as in a principled critique of theological legitimation of power as a consequence of the disastrous experiences of the Holocaust. The goals of this New Political Theology are to wrest Christian talk of God from privatization, to reformulate the eschatological message of Christianity under the conditions of a structurally changed public sphere, to define the church as an institution of the socio-critical freedom of faith, and to characterize Christian spirituality in its unity of mysticism and politics. Metz's "mysticism of open eyes" urges working for more humanity, for peace and justice, and for the preservation of creation. Accordingly, the new forms of political theology recall the (social) prophetic character of the Christian message and its society-changing power. a substantial part of Pope Francis' social proclamation can also be assigned to this tradition.

God's speech in the post-secular society

A new framing of the discourse on the legitimacy and limits of God's speech in late-modern society was triggered by the paradigm shift already mentioned, which Habermas summarizes in his Peace Prize speech "Faith and Knowledge"¹¹ under the guiding term post-secular society. The philosopher assumes that the cohesion of society and an appropriate understanding of its basic concepts cannot be secured solely by abstract moral

standards formulated in a religion-abstinent manner. In Habermas's sense, religions also have the right to feed their offer of orientation into the public discourse in their genuine language:

"Secularized citizens, insofar as they act in their role as citizens of the state, may neither fundamentally deny religious worldviews a potential for truth, nor deny fellow citizens of faith the right to make contributions to public discussions in religious language. A liberal political culture can even expect secularized citizens to participate in efforts to translate relevant contributions from religious into publicly accessible language."¹²

The basic concepts of modern Western societies such as morality and morality, person and individuality, freedom and emancipation are - according to Habermas - not seriously understandable without reference to the salvation-historical thinking of Judeo-Christian tradition.¹³ In the horizon of this thinking, public theology is not concerned with a restorative romanticism beyond the Enlightenment or with a supposed monopoly of interpretative competence, but rather with keeping the normative ideas of reason, humanity and human dignity open to the horizon of the transcendent.

3. public theology in the tradition of political theology.

The churches should consciously take up this Habermasian encouragement with the help of theo-logy. Especially the concept of a public theology, as it was decisively shaped in the area of German-speaking Protestant theology, can be a source of impulses for the shaping of public communication of the Christian in today's society. The chairman of the EKD Council, Heinrich Bedford-Strohm, formulates the following five concise guidelines for public theology:¹⁴

1. the church's speaking must be grounded in its tradition - the importance of biblical and theological-ethical accountability.

In order to be authentic, public theology must not put its spiritual profile behind its ethical profile. Public theology stands by its religious "seat in life" and makes it transparent. On the other hand, the loss of an identity recognizably rooted in its own sources through self-secularization can lead to Christians no longer being perceived as attractive interlocutors who productively bring the Christian perspective of meaning into public discourse.

2. the church's discourse must be bilingual - the importance of biblical justification and the justification of reason.

Similarly, public theology must also align its contributions with the idea of public reason. It must both provide information about its sources and speak

a language "that can be understood by the public at large" in order to show "that biblical perspectives are comprehensible even to non-Christians and are capable of providing helpful guidance beyond religious traditions."

3. the speaking of the church must be relevant - the importance of inter-disciplinarity.

Public theology must live up to the claim of speaking appropriately of realities. An ecclesiology that starts from the universal priesthood of believers offers a resource that should not be underestimated: Christians, especially with their diverse practical and professional competencies, are members of the churches and contribute their respective expertise both to the inner-church dialogue and to the public speech of the churches.

4. the church's speech must be critical-constructive - the importance of political consultation.

Public theology must be wary of serving as a legitimizing ground for ideological convictions and of siding unilaterally with a particular political agenda. In the sense of the New Political Theology, it exercises radical criticism where inner-worldly things are made absolute. However, it always does so in the interest of practical solutions to problems and does not refuse the democratic necessity of compromise.

5 The speaking of the church stands in a global context - the importance of ecumenism and interreligiousness.

Another characteristic of public theology is its universal horizon. This aspect finds its core in the Christian commandment of love, "which is precisely not oriented to the people, but transcends the barriers of international and cultural boundaries." This fact must be taken into account in every public pronouncement and judgment. Public theology takes place in the horizon of the universal church and interreligious as well as intercultural openness.

In response to criticism of public theology, it has been further developed on the Protestant side into the concept of a public Protestantism.¹⁵ If this is not to lead to a relapse into confessionalism, which is just the opposite of the original concept, an ecumenical broadening of this discourse through a thorough reception of the idea of public theology is also needed on the Catholic side. In this context, the profiling of a public Catholicism could substantially enrich the discourse by bringing into the discussion the sources of Catholic social teaching, the discipline of Christian social ethics established in this form only in the context of Catholic theology, and the tradition of the New Political Theology. In this context, reference to the

politically long and effective tradition of German social Catholicism, which has played a decisive role in shaping democracy and civil society in the Federal Republic of Germany, should also be considered.

4 Christian Social Ethics as Public Theology

Because public theology is not only about the question of the public role of religion, but often especially about social-ethical topics and questions, the subject of Christian social ethics is especially suited to be profiled as public theology. It is Christian social ethics that can plausibilize the relevance of the Christian faith for a just shaping of society in the sense of an ethical-political real presence of the Gospel. It does not abandon its theological identity in such participation in public reason, but understands it as a source of social commitment. Such commitment is still inspired among Catholics by social-ethical orientation under the brand of Catholic social teaching, which is still tried and tested especially in church preaching and educational work. Public theology gains its specifically Catholic character from the triad of the closely interwoven, though by no means conflict-free, relationship of social doctrine, scientific reflection and social practice.

With their social-ethical competence on this side as well as on the other side of Catholic social teaching, the church and theology fortunately repeatedly speak out publicly, for example in the debates about inequality, migration, climate change, populism, bioethics or vaccination justice in times of the corona pandemic, to name only a few of the ethical topics publicly discussed today. Christian social ethics is thus, in the best case, both theological and journalistic-worldly. First of all, it is therefore obvious to think about a theology of social ethics, about its specific theo-logic.¹⁶

The Re-Theologization of Christian Social Ethics

In the background is the dominant influence of social ethics in its beginnings from the neo-Scholastic doctrine of natural law. In the two-story thinking of natural world truths and supernatural truths of faith at that time, Christian social ethics in the traditional garb of Catholic social teaching had to take up residence primarily on the "secular first floor". For a long time, an explicitly theological foundation was dispensed with, which was justified above all with the connectivity of a theology-abstinent natural law social ethics to extra-church philosophical and social-scientific discourses. Since it is no longer possible to score points in such discourses with natural law of a specifically Catholic character, social doctrine and social ethics have taken the opportunity since the Second Vatican Council with its readjustment of the church's self-understanding and relationship to the world to become more theological again.

One consequence is that the Bible, with its prophetic social criticism and Jesus' message of the kingdom of God, has since received a new status in social ethics, without its norms being claimed to have exclusive validity for believers alone. On the contrary, it is precisely the Christian horizon of meaning with its "fragrance of the Gospel" (Pope Francis in *Evangelii gaudium* No. 39) that gives social ethics a critical, stimulating and inspiring power. And it is on this power that a social ethics that sees itself as public theology, as proposed here, relies. After all, it is not only abstract moral justifications, but often also the underlying, mostly religiously shaped world and human images as well as meaning-giving "grand narratives" that give validity to a morality. The decisive factor here is to keep modern concepts of life and society open to the horizon of the unavailable.

Pluralism and the equal dignity of differences

The decisive communication condition of Christian ethics in the claim of public theology today is pluralism as the sign of postmodern societies, which is a condition preceding all post-secular tendencies.¹⁷ The pluralization of religious attitudes is confronted with an equally differentiated variety of secular options. In addition, there is the phenomenon of Christianity being used by right-wing anti-pluralist-identitarian meta-politics, which publicly propagates the narrative that Europe's identity as the "Christian West" must be defended against the outside world, especially in the form of Islam and refugee migration.¹⁸ Basic motifs of Christian social ethics such as willingness to engage in dialogue, human dignity and the option for the poor are thereby turned into their opposite. This is another important reason for theology and the church to intervene in public discourses about the social role of religion and to maintain the sovereignty of interpretation of the self-understanding of Christianity or to criticize misinterpretations.

Moreover, it is necessary to bring out the very meaning of pluralism: "It is in the equal dignity of the diverse that the Christian faith advocates from the awareness that all human beings are responsive beings called to account for the use of their freedom."¹⁹ Applied to the experience of difference in our plural society, this means respect for mutual difference and respect for the respective uniqueness of the other. "Pluralism in such a situation means nothing other than the explicit affirmation, convinced promotion, and legal enabling of the coexistence of the diverse." The term "diverse" is used deliberately rather than "diversity". For dignity can only be granted to its bearers, the persons, not to difference as such. To keep open the horizon of meaning of the belief in this unconditional dignity of the human being in his uniqueness and diversity is a central task of Christian social ethics, which is highly topical and explosive especially in view of the increasing

phenomena of isolation.²⁰ In this strong concept of human dignity the social-ethical principle of personhood culminates.

If theological social ethics wants to be taken seriously in public discourses, pluralism competence, which mediates between theological and secular language games in social questions, is an increasingly important communication condition. In order to be able to act polyglot in this sense, Christian social ethics is dependent on an intensified reception of communication science findings. Such an emphasis is not least obvious against the background that journalism and communication studies are still underrepresented in the interdisciplinary discussion of Christian social ethics, despite the immense importance of medial communication in today's (media) society.

5 Outlook: (Digital-)medial science communication of Christian social ethics.

"Societies can only assume responsibility for their future if they have places for communication-oriented discourse in which, as far as possible, all those affected are involved from different perspectives. Christian social ethics with its academic, social and church discussion forums has been such a place in the past and has helped shape the basic ethical-political orientation of the Federal Republic of Germany."²¹

The church also benefits from Christian social ethics as a university-based and interdisciplinary theological subject with its wide-ranging fields of research. It helps the public speaking of the church to avoid a rash moralization of political discourses by a well-sophisticated trivial morality. Social ethics does this by taking into account the complexity of social questions and problems with its socio-analytical competence and, on this basis, providing church preaching with differentiated and well-founded ethical standards, taking into account the specific rationality of the political. A politically sensitized Christian style of faith that cultivates a mysticism of open eyes requires scientific analysis of what it observes as signs of the times in society in order to arrive at a carefully thought-out normative judgment that serves as a convincing orientation for action. In this sense, seeing - judging - acting continues to be the guiding social-ethical method. As public theology, Christian social ethics constantly mediates between seeing current social diagnoses, judging in the light of the Gospel as well as ethical distinctions, and acting in complex fields of social conflict.

The fact that even in today's secular-post-secular society there is still an interest in this social-ethical perspective of church and theology is reflected not least in the ethical education work as well as in the demand of state

institutions, parties, associations, trade unions and companies for ethical advice on social issues. In the future, however, the reception of church social-ethical positions in the breadth of society will only succeed if the church and theology are also more present than before in digital places. They can and should contribute to using the specific digital media logics of attention and communication for understanding-oriented public discourses.

Digital communication channels in particular enable representatives of the socio-ethical discipline to attract greater public attention with their socially topical and explosive issues than before. Digital scientific communication can break down communication barriers between experts and laypersons. In this way, academic and ecclesiastical discourse can be transcended, and Christian social ethics with its orientation knowledge can be made accessible to more interested parties than before. It is also about access to the young digital natives, who are almost no longer reached by the traditional communication formats. Science PR can take advantage of a wide range of opportunities on the Web to present science knowledge in an audio-visual and generally understandable way. Virology in particular has shown what good science communication can look like in the wake of the corona pandemic - just think of Christian Drosten's successful NDR podcast or the award-winning science journalism activities of chemist Mai Thi Nguyen-Kim.

There are already practical examples of digital communication of Christian social ethics. One example is the successful theological online feuilleton www.feinschwarz.net, where social ethical topics are also regularly discussed. Another example is Ordo socialis, the scientific association for the worldwide promotion of Christian social teaching, which reaches out to people interested in social ethics in many different countries with its digitalized range of publications. The Catholic Social Science Center has also considerably expanded its web presence with the online ethics portals www.gruene-reihe.eu and www.corona-ethik.de, including its own podcast format. The *Jahrbuch für Christliche Sozialwissenschaften* (Yearbook for Christian Social Sciences) has been accessible in open access without delay since 2020. The Forum Sozialethik, as a network of young scholars, has also further expanded its website and social media channels. It thus offers a digital platform on which current news, conferences, and calls for papers from the Christian social ethics cosmos as well as from neighboring disciplines can be found in bundled form.

Christian social ethics as public theology needs such web presences to remain visible. In general, it needs strategically reflected scholarly commu-

nication and a perceptible social presence in the analogue as well as in the digital.

On the one hand, Christian social ethics should humbly acknowledge that it is only one scientific and social voice among many in pluralism. The massive loss of trust in the Catholic Church also casts its shadow on Christian social ethics and limits its reach. Therefore, if it wants to be publicly perceived as an independent voice that also accompanies the church itself as a social entity in a social-ethical-critical way, it should further strengthen its digital communication channels. In terms of methodology, the above-mentioned five criteria of public theology can point the way to offering social-ethical orientation fed by Christian faith and thought in a self-confident and profiled manner. Especially in the partially disruptive development processes of late-modern society, which generate diverse fears as well as a need for normative orientation, the voice of Christian social ethics as public theology can be a sought-after discussion partner both within and outside the church.

The authors

Prof. Dr. Markus Vogt, holder of the Chair of Christian Social Ethics at the Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich.

Mag. theol. Lars Schäfers, scientific officer of the Catholic Social Science Center (KSZ) in Mönchengladbach and research assistant at the Seminar for Christian Social Teaching at the Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn.

¹ Cf. Friedrich Wilhelm Graf: *Die Wiederkehr der Götter. Religion in Modern Culture*, Munich, 2004.

² Jürgen Habermas, *Faktizität und Geltung. Beiträge zur Diskurstheorie des Rechts und des demokratischen Rechtsstaats*, Frankfurt a. M. 1992, 436.

³ Cf. Horst Pöttker, *Der Beruf zur Öffentlichkeit. Über Aufgabe, Grundsätze und Perspektiven des Journalismus in der Mediengesellschaft aus der Sicht praktischer Vernunft*, in: *Publizistik* (2010) 55:107-128; DOI 10.1007/s11616-010-0083-4 (accessed Feb. 15, 2021), 110f.

⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, 110.

⁵ Cf. Hans-Joachim Höhn, *Gewinnwarnung. Religion - after its return*, Paderborn 2015.

⁶ Cf. Central Committee of German Catholics, *Aufbruch statt Rückzug. The Roman Catholic Church in the Public Sphere Today*. Download at: <https://www.zdk.de/veroeffentlichungen/reden-und-beitraege/detail/Aufbruch-statt-Rueckzug-Die-roemisch-katholische-Kirche-in-der-Oeffentlichkeit-heute-448j/> (accessed 15.02.2021).

⁷ Cf. catchy Jochen Sautermeister (ed.), *Kirche - nur eine Moralagentur? Eine Selbstverortung*, Freiburg i. Br. 2019.

⁸ On the concept of public theology, see especially José Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World*, Chicago 1994, as well as the series "Öffentliche Theologie" edited by Heinrich Bedford-Strohm and Wolfgang Huber at the Evangelische Verlagsanstalt Leipzig, now comprising 38 volumes.

⁹ Heinrich Bedford-Strohm, *Public Theology in Civil Society*, in: Ingeborg Gabriel (ed.), *Politics and Theology in Europe. Perspektiven ökumenischer Sozialethik*, Ostfildern 2008, 340-357, here 345. For an application of these criteria to a comparative analysis of Catholic publications in the environmental field, see Julia Blanc, *Ökokatholizismus. Sozialethische Analysen zu ausgewählten Ländern und Institutionen in Europa*, Marburg 2017.

¹⁰ Johann Baptist Metz, *On the Theology of the World*, Mainz 1973; Johann Baptist Metz: *On the Concept of the New Political Theology*, Mainz 1997.

¹¹ Cf. Jürgen Habermas, *Glauben und Wissen. Friedenspreisrede 2001*, in: Ders., *Zeitdiagnosen. Zwölf Essays* (Frankfurt 2003) 249-262.

¹² Jürgen Habermas, *Zwischen Naturalismus und Religion. Philosophische Aufsätze*, Frankfurt 2005, 115.

¹³ Thus already Jürgen Habermas, *Nachmetaphysisches Denken. Philosophische Aufsätze*, Frankfurt 1988, 23; cf. comprehensively also the two-volume work on old age: Ders., *Auch eine Geschichte der Philosophie*, Berlin 2019.

¹⁴ Cf. on the following Bedford-Strohm (2008), *op. cit.* 349ff.

¹⁵ Cf. Christian Albrecht / Reiner Anselm, *Public Protestantism. Zur aktuellen Debatte um gesellschaftliche Präsenz und politische Aufgaben des evangelischen Christentums*, Zurich 2017.

¹⁶ Cf. on this and the following Markus Vogt, *Die Theo-Logik Christlicher Sozialethik*, in: Johann Platzner / Elisabeth Zissler (eds.), *Bioethik und Religion. Theologische Ethik im öffentlichen Diskurs*, Baden-Baden 2014, 143-173; cf. also the contributions in Markus Vogt (ed.), *Theologie der Sozialethik (Quaestiones disputatae vol. 255)*, Freiburg i. Br. 2016.

¹⁷ Cf. Arnd Küppers, *Postmodern Pluralism and Theological Ethics*, in: Peter Schallenberg / Arnd Küppers (eds.), *Interdisziplinarität der Christlichen Sozialethik. Festschrift zum 50-jährigen Jubiläum der Katholischen Sozialwissenschaftlichen Zentralstelle in Mönchengladbach (Christliche Sozialethik im Diskurs Bd. 4)*, Paderborn 2013, 181-197; Markus Vogt, *Bereichsethische Gliederung im Zeichen des Pluralismus*, in: Wilhelm Korff / Markus Vogt (eds.): *Gliederungssysteme angewandter Ethik*, Freiburg i.Br. 2016, 613-641.

¹⁸ Cf. Lars Schäfers, *Europe, Refugees and the Appropriation of the Stranger. Eine christlich-sozialethische Analyse auf der Grundlage des Europabildes Rémi Bragues (Forum Religion & Sozialkultur vol. 30)*, Berlin 2016.

¹⁹ This and the following quotation are taken from Wolfgang Huber, *Ethik im Pluralismus*, in: Friedrich Graf / Christoph Levin (eds.), *Die Autorität der Freiheit*, Munich 2011, 17-29, here 27.

²⁰ Cf. Francis, *Fratelli tutti. Encyclical Letter on Fraternity and Social Friendship (Announcements of the Apostolic See 227)*, edited by the Secretariat of the German Bishops' Conference, Bonn 2020, esp. nos. 9-52.

²¹ Arbeitsgemeinschaft Christliche Sozialethik, *Die Bedeutung Christlicher Sozialethik für Gesellschaft, Universität, Theologie und Kirche*, in Marianne Heimbach-Steins (ed.), *Jahrbuch für Christliche Sozialwissenschaften (JCSW) 59/2018*, 381-389.