Horizons, 50, pp. 444–464. © College Theology Society 2024

THEOLOGICAL ROUNDTABLE

Theological Roundtable on the Written Scholarship of Paul Lakeland

Editor's Note: Paul Lakeland's many and significant contributions to the church and theological scholarship cannot be underestimated. His retirement at the end of the 2022–2023 academic year was, therefore, an occasion to be marked. On April 27, 2023, Fairfield University colleagues from a variety of departments, students (former and current), colleagues from various institutions, friends, and family gathered at Fairfield University to celebrate and congratulate Paul Lakeland not only for his forty-plus decades of teaching, scholarship, and service for the Fairfield University community but also for his remarkable career, which has nourished and challenged his theological colleagues and the church. This editor was present for part of the retirement festivities. With his signature warmth and theological precision, John Thiel, Lakeland's long-time Fairfield colleague and friend, presided over the panel that is the basis for this roundtable. In his introductory remarks, he said that he "must begin with the in-house testimony that Paul has always been a very fine teacher. For the past forty-two years, he's nurtured a couple of generations of students, many of whom have become trusted friends, grateful for his wisdom and guidance when they were undergraduates and even thereafter." Thiel recounted only a small portion of Lakeland's achievements, keeping his remarks brief to maximize time for the panelists. From being voted "Teacher of the Year" by Fairfield students in 2005 to his several book awards to his 2020 ACCU Monika Hellwig Award for advancing Catholic intellectual life, Paul Lakeland keeps writing, teaching, and working for a church that begins and ends with the dignity of the baptized, a kenotic church that honors the human dignity of every person on the planet and acts on their behalf for justice and the common good. To preserve the atmosphere of professional admiration, affectionate tone, and palpable friendship evident during the presentations, the remarks of the speakers have been only lightly edited for clarity and the texts retain their first-person address and spoken tone. This editor wishes Paul Lakeland many more years of writing, congratulates him on his

https://doi.org/10.1017/hor.2023.45 Published online by Cambridge University Press

retirement, and thanks him for his vision of a fully participatory and engaged laity.

ELENA PROCARIO-FOLEY
10.1017/hor.2023.45

I. Fundamental Theology

Paul Lakeland finished his doctorate at Vanderbilt University in 1981, the same year he joined the Theology Department at Fairfield. He has consistently contributed to the discipline of theology for more than forty years. This panel has the pleasant task to review Paul's work and pose questions that might stimulate his own reflection on his work.

Given the size of this panel, we decided to divide Paul's work into three distinct themes that developed chronologically but are more interrelated than serial sequence. The three topics encompass, first, his basic framework for pursuing theology; second, his study of the church; and, third, his attention to the laity in the church.

The first theme of the framework of theology was set in works published before the year 2000 and treated issues that underlie systematic or constructive theology. They deal with worldview and philosophy in relation to theology, questions of the context of theology, and the relation of faith to society. The second theme, church, defines a domain of theology where Paul has made a distinctive mark. Massimo Faggioli will focus on this aspect of Paul's work. The third theme concerns the members of the church, the laity in contrast to ordained ministers and office-holders. Elizabeth Johnson will highlight Paul's major contribution to a theology of the laity. I turn now to what I call "fundamental" issues that define the framework of Paul Lakeland's theology.

Looking back at the corpus of an author one can find common themes that run all through it; these themes may even function as consistent basic principles for the whole body of writing. But, in fact, writing most often emerges piecemeal; each work flows from current events, or an invitation to address an issue, or just a bright idea. This sets up a creative tension between Paul's opinions at any given time and the deeper convictions that color all his theology. I find in the four books he published between 1984 and 1997 four basic principles that characterize his theology and remain crucial for theology today. Together they provide a skeleton for a coherent treatise on the fundamentals of the discipline of theology.

I draw a first principle from Paul's thesis at Vanderbilt, which he published as *The Politics of Salvation: The Hegelian Idea of the State*.[1] I don't think of

[1] Paul Lakeland, *The Politics of Salvation: The Hegelian Idea of the State*, Hegelian Studies Series (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1984).

https://doi.org/10.1017/hor.2023.45 Published online by Cambridge University Press