

Human Rights and the Theology of the Metropolitan of Pergamon: Continuity and Discontinuity

Recent theological criticisms of human rights language emphasize its connection to modern notions of the subject that inevitably lead to hyper-individualism, hyper-consumerism, unfettered freedom of choice, and nihilism. These criticisms argue that a relational notion of rights is self-contradictory. This paper will restate my argument in *The Mystical as Political* for an Orthodox understanding of human rights based on the theology of personhood of Metropolitan John Zizioulas. Even if human rights language cannot realize all that God has made possible for being human, it has the capacity to forge relationships of irreducibility and ecstatic freedom that are analogous to ecclesial personhood. I will then compare this Ziziouleian basis for human rights language to the relational notion espoused by Rowan Williams in his recent book, *Solidarity: The Work of Recognition*.

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