

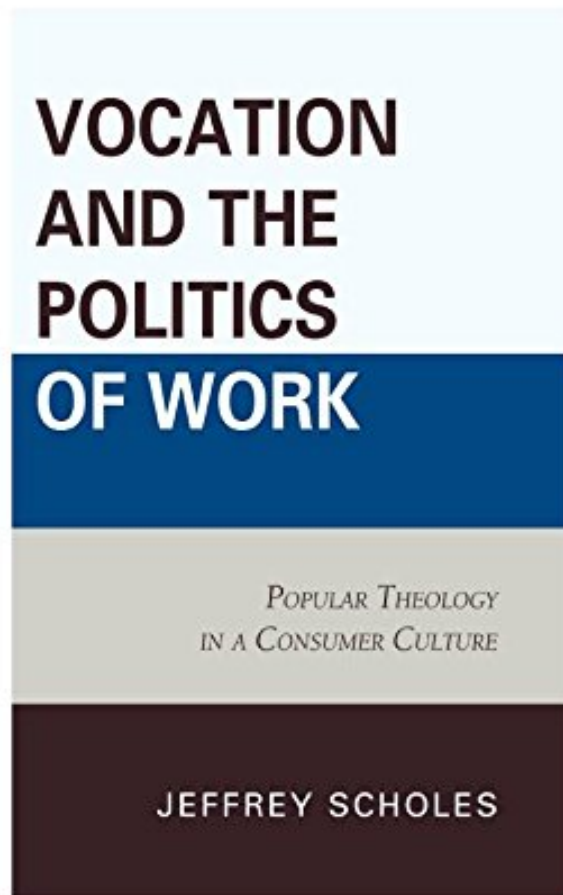
(Read ebook) Vocation and the Politics of Work: Popular Theology in a Consumer Culture

Vocation and the Politics of Work: Popular Theology in a Consumer Culture

Jeffrey Scholes

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Jeffrey Scholes : Vocation and the Politics of Work: Popular Theology in a Consumer Culture before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Vocation and the Politics of Work: Popular Theology in a Consumer Culture:

Since Martin Luther, vocations or callings have had a close relationship with daily work. It is a give-and-take relationship in which the meaning of a vocation typically negotiates with the kinds of work available (and vice-versa) at any given time. While vocation language still has currency in Western culture, today's predominant meaning of vocation has little to do with the actual work performed on a job. Jeffrey Scholes contends that recent theological treatments of the Protestant concept of vocation, both academic and popular, often unwittingly collude with consumer culture to circulate a concept of vocation that is detached from the material conditions of work. The result is a consumer-friendly vocation that is rendered impotent to inform and, if necessary, challenge the political norms of the workplace. For example, he classifies Rick Warren's concept of purpose in his best-selling book, *The Purpose-Driven Life*, as a functional equivalent of vocation that acts in this way. Other popular uses of vocation along with insights culled from traditional theology and consumer culture studies help Scholes reveal the current state of vocations in the West. Using recent scholarship in the field of political theology, he argues that resisting commodification is a possibility and a prerequisite for a political vocation, if it is at all able to engage the norms that regulate and undermine the pursuit of justice in many modern workplaces.

This book takes you by surprise! It is at once a penetrating critique of the corporate work world and consumer culture and an entirely original contribution to the burgeoning field of political theology. Jeffrey Scholes proves himself to be as steeped in Protestant theology as he is sensitive to the political challenges of our time. This is no neo-traditional theology of work. Instead, it is generating an entirely new concept of the political vocation for our post-secular age, and thereby provides an indispensable tool or dare I say, even a weapon in workplace politics and beyond. (Jeffrey W. Robbins, Lebanon Valley College, author of *Radical Democracy and Political Theology*) Most of us spend most of our lives working, but in an era of stagnant wages and mass unemployment, finding meaning and fulfillment on the job seems like an increasingly distant dream. To the extent that theology has addressed this situation at all, it has too often offered up little more than de-politicized self-help pabulum. In *Vocation and the Politics of Work*, Jeffrey Scholes fills this theological void. Boldly reclaiming the concept of vocation, Scholes constructs a compelling political theology of work. (Adam Kotsko, Assistant Professor of Humanities, Shimer College) With an uncommon interdisciplinary grace, Jeffrey Scholes offers a singular reply to the spiritless workaholic detachment of contemporary American labor. Bandyng between the questions of political theology and the presumptions of cultural studies, Scholes rallies his readers to reject an understanding of work as a means to material ends. Instead, he argues that our workplaces are sites for political wakefulness where we might reply to the silken briar of consumer culture. He movingly calls for a return to practices of democratic disobedience that might arouse us from our laboring malcontent. (Kathryn Lofton, Yale University) About the Author Jeffrey Scholes is assistant professor in the Department of Philosophy at the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs and the Director of the Center for Religious Diversity and Public Life.