

# Rebels at the Lectern and in the Pulpit: Hegemony, Harmony, and the Critical Dimensions of Intellectual and Theological Integrity<sup>1</sup>

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## ABSTRACT

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Originally presented as the 2018 Johan Heyns Memorial Lecture, this article reflects on the concepts “public” and “organic” intellectuals, and the contribution of intellectuals within the context of ongoing struggles for liberation in South Africa. In part utilising an autobiographical lens, and using the work of Antonio Gramsci, the article reflects on the work of Albert Luthuli, Johan Heyns, Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Steve Biko to probe the role of public/organic intellectuals in the South African context. The author argues a), that there is a crucial difference between public and organic intellectuals and theologians, b), that it is organic rather than public theologians that can make the more meaningful contribution to the struggles of ordinary South Africans in their ongoing quest for genuine freedom; and c), it is the organic involvement of intellectuals, rather than merely their public stance, that define the critical dimensions of their intellectual, theological and public integrity.

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At the start of the new semester at the Theological University of Kampen, the Netherlands in 1973, I had a considerable difference of opinion with my professor over the new subject for my doctoral dissertation. At the beginning of that year, we had agreed on a study of what I would call “*Usus Eschatologicus*: Toward an Eschatological Use of the Law.” Lutheran theology acknowledges two uses of the Law, (the Torah), Reformed theology knows of three: the *usus theologicus*, (the theological use of the Law); the *usus civilis*, (the civil use of the Law); and, specific to the Reformed tradition, the *usus elencticus*, (the edifying, educational use of the Law). I would explore the possibility of a fourth. For both of us it was

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