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Schirrmacher Love is the Fulfillment of Law

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Thomas Schirrmacher

# Love *is the Fulfillment* Law

Essays in Ethics

**Thomas Schirrmacher**

**Love is the Fulfillment of the Law**

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**Thomas Schirrmacher**

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**RVB**

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**Content**

**Preface ..... 9**

**Part I Love and Law – General Biblical Ethics ..... 11**

**Love Is the Fulfillment of the Law ..... 11**

    The Sermon on the Mount..... 11

    A New Age of Love?..... 13

    “You shall Love Your Neighbor as Yourself” ..... 14

    What is Love?..... 18

    To Love God is to Keep His Law..... 19

    Gospel and Law? ..... 20

    Without the Law Dies Love ..... 21

**Trinity and Work ..... 23**

    God is a God Who Works ..... 23

    God is the Hardest Worker because He is the Highest Authority..... 26

    God’s Work Will Receive its Wages..... 29

    God’s Work is Work for God..... 32

    The Toil of Work..... 35

    God’s Work is Divided Labor ..... 37

    God’s Work is Service to one Another..... 38

**A Biblical View of the Law of God (1995) ..... 41**

**God’s Law in the Millennium..... 47**

    God’s Law in Old Testament Texts on the Millennium ..... 47

    God’s Law and Chronological Questions..... 50

**‘Lex’ (Law) as Another Word for ‘Religion’ ..... 53**

**What is Legalism? (1993)..... 57**

**The Pharisees among us (1993) ..... 61**

**Do absolute Values exist? A Lesson from Camus (1993) ..... 67**

**What is Religion? (1993)..... 71**

<b>Part II Biblical Ethics – Special Topics .....</b>	<b>77</b>
<b>On Swearing in New Testament Times (1993/2000).....</b>	<b>77</b>
1. The Sermon on the Mount (Mt. 5:33-37) and James 5:12 .....	77
2. God Swears.....	85
3. Jesus and Paul Swear .....	87
4. Oath Formulas and Practices .....	89
5. The Meaning of ‘Oath’ .....	93
6. Amen .....	101
7. Benediction.....	102
<b>Human Rights and Christian Faith (1997).....</b>	<b>105</b>
Man as Creation and Image of God.....	105
The Christian Roots of Human Rights.....	106
Enlightenment or Forgiveness and Repentance? .....	107
Human Rights Precede the State .....	108
The Meaning of Romans 13 .....	109
On the Separation of Church and State.....	110
God Knows no Partiality .....	111
<b>The Old Testament vs. Abortion (1993/2000) .....</b>	<b>115</b>
Abortion is Murder .....	115
The Prohibition of Murder in the Ten Commandments.....	116
Children are a Blessing.....	117
The Unborn Child has a Relationship to God.....	117
Exodus 21:22-25.....	120
<b>Bribery and Corruption (1998) .....</b>	<b>123</b>
<b>Twenty Arguments Against Pornography (1994).....</b>	<b>127</b>
<b>The Biblical Prohibition from Eating Blood (1994).....</b>	<b>131</b>
<b>Part III National Socialism, Pietism and Problems of Germany.....</b>	<b>135</b>
<b>National Socialism, Pietism and Problems of Germany (1990) .....</b>	<b>135</b>
Atheistic Religions .....	135
The Study of Comparative Religions .....	138
Pietism and Creation.....	140
Pietism and Statism .....	141
Hegel’s Salvation by the State.....	144

Content	7
National Socialism as Religion.....	144
East Germany (the GDR) .....	150
<b>Hegel’s Salvation by the State (1993).....</b>	<b>153</b>
<b>The Myth of the End of Communism (1993).....</b>	<b>155</b>
<b>Modern Fascism: A Review (1994) .....</b>	<b>157</b>
<b>Four Problems with Germany’s Reunification (1991) .....</b>	<b>159</b>
<b>Problems in the Unification of Europe (1992).....</b>	<b>163</b>
<b>‘The Law of an Elite’.....</b>	<b>167</b>
<b>The United States of Europe vs. the People (1993) .....</b>	<b>169</b>
<b>About the Author.....</b>	<b>171</b>
Biography .....	171
Books by Thomas Schirrmacher in chronological order (With short commentaries) .....	173



## **Preface**

This is a selection of my articles on ethics published or distributed since 1979, which were originally written in English or translated from German into English. All articles are reprinted in their original form, with only minor changes where mistakes had to be corrected. This explains the different style of quotations, footnotes, headings and Scripture verses (e. g. with the German comma between chapter and verse). As several articles have been reprinted by different journals with different styles, I had to choose one version which is always the first mentioned when the source is quoted. The footnotes do not always follow the original numbering.

As the articles have not been updated, readers are asked to keep the year of publication of a certain article in mind. In most cases a German version with updated footnotes exists but only in much longer articles or in books. As most literature quoted is German literature only readers who can read German would have appreciated fuller footnotes in this volume. (See the list of my books at the end of this volume.)

The older articles have been translated by myself, the articles published after 1994 have been translated by **Cambron Teupe**, M.A. **Rev. Mark E. Rudolph** has read all essays and gave valuable advise. I thank both for their efforts!

All corrections are welcome and should be sent to my address Friedrichstrasse 38, D-53111 Bonn, Germany or to [DrThSchirmacher@bucer.de](mailto:DrThSchirmacher@bucer.de)

All articles may be reprinted if you send two copies of the original printed volume to my address. You also can order a file if you want to publish an article in the Internet.



**Part I**  
**Love and Law – General Biblical Ethics**

**Love Is the Fulfillment of the Law:  
With the Law Dies Love (1993)<sup>1</sup>**

The Sermon on the Mount

As we begin to think about law and love, let us consider the controversy about the Sermon on the Mount. Is Jesus here giving a new law or is He restating the Law of the Old Testament? Those who believe that Jesus is proclaiming a new law in the Sermon on the Mount, show a lack of knowledge 1) of Jesus' answers to the Pharisees, 2) the text of the Sermon itself, and especially (3) of the commandments of the Old Testament.

1) Jesus always used the Old Testament to refute the Pharisees. How could He use the Old Testament as His authority against the Pharisees if the Pharisees represented the Old Testament? Jesus again and again rebuked the Pharisees and scribes for misinterpreting, misusing and rejecting the Old Testament. This can be seen especially in *Mk 7,1-5 (Mt 15,1-13)*. Here Jesus says for example: *“For laying aside the commandments of God, you hold the tradition of men ... You have a fine way to set aside the commandments of God in order to observe your own traditions” (Mk 7,8-9)*. In the ‘woes’ on the Pharisees and scribes in *Mt 23* just before His prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem in *Mt 24*, Jesus pronounced: *“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cumin, but you have omitted the weightier matters of the Law, judgment, mercy and faith. These you ought to have done not leaving the other things undone” (Mt 23,23)*.

2) The same can be found in the Sermon on the Mount itself. The list of subjects each beginning with *“You have heard it said ... But I say unto you ...” (Mt 5,21-48)* is introduced by a clear statement that Jesus came to fulfill the Law: *“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets. I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them” (Mt 5,17)*. He

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<sup>1</sup>Lecture at the Twelfth Northwest Conference for Christian Reconstruction in Seattle May 2, 1992. Reprinted from “Love is the Fulfillment of the Law”. *Calvinism Today* (now: *Christianity and Society*) 3 (1993) 2 (Apr): 7-11+32. A shortened version was published in the book ‘God Wants You Learn, Labour and Love’.

came to establish even “*the least of these commandments*” (Mt 5,19, read Mt 5,17-20). Is it possible that Jesus began this list with this statement and went on to prove which parts of the Law He would abrogate or change? Shouldn’t we expect that Jesus now proves in detail that even the smallest commandment must be fulfilled? Do we not expect examples for the wrong righteousness taught by the Pharisees and the true righteousness of Jesus?

3) The examples themselves prove that our expectation is correct. The repeated “*But I say unto you*” in the Sermon on the Mount is not directed against the Old Testament but against the theology of the Pharisees and their interpretation of the Old Testament. When Jesus quotes “*You have heard it said ...*”, He is not quoting the Old Testament, but the tradition of the Pharisees and their interpretation of the Old Testament. He does not say “*It is written ...*”, because what is written is the same as the “*But I say unto you ...*”.

When Jesus tells His hearers “*But I say unto you: Whosoever looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart*” (Mt 5,28), He does not invent a new concept of inner sin against an outward orientation of the Old Testament, but reminds His hearers that the Decalogue not only contains the seventh commandment against adultery, but also the tenth commandment “*You shall not covet you neighbors wife ...*” (Ex 20,17; Dtn 5,21). The tassels on the garments had the purpose that “*you remind all the commands of the LORD, that you may obey them and not prostitute yourselves by going after lusts of your own hearts and eyes*” (Num 15,39). Job says “*I made a covenant with my eyes, not to look lustfully at a virgin*” (Job 31,1). And Solomon warns against adultery with the words: “*Do not lust in your heart after her beauty and do not take her captive with your eyes*” (Prov 6,25). How poor must people’s knowledge of the Old Testament be when they say that the concept of sin in one’s inner heart is a new concept! They even do not know the tenth commandment which by the way also forbids the inner sin of envy leading to theft (the eighth commandment).

The same is true when Jesus reminds the Jews that God not only forbade real murder but also murder through thoughts and words (Mt 5,21-26). In the Old Testament, hatred and anger are those inner sins which lead to unlawful killing (e. g. Est 5,9, Prov 27,4, Amos 1,11, Gen 49,6-7, Dtn 19,6, Prov 16,14). As in the Sermon on the Mount, the Old Testament allowed killing only in self-defense, in case of war and by sentence of a law court, but not by a single person on his own. The duty of the State to judge criminals is restated by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5,25-26; see the

parallel in *Lk 12,57-59*). “*An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth*” (*Mt 5,38*) was never given as a command for private vengeance but as one of the basics for righteous judgments in law courts<sup>2</sup> (*Ex 21,23-25; Lev 24,19-29; Dtn 19,21*).

Jesus does not forbid the taking of oaths, but swearing by someone or something other than God Himself: “*Do not swear ... by Heaven ... or by the earth ...*” etc. (*Mt 5,34-35; Jam 5,12*), as the parallel in *Mt 23,16-22* proves. The Old Testament commands: “*You shall swear by His name*” (*Dtn 6,13; 10,20*) and states: “*All who swear by God’s name will praise him*” (*Ps 63,11*). Therefore Paul uses an oath several times when writing to fellow Christians (*2Cor 1,23; Phil 1,8; 1Thess 2,5, 10; Rom 1,9*; compare *Acts 21,23ff*). (Incidentally, according to *Is 65,16* there will be oaths in the Millennium: “*who will swear in the land, will swear by the faithfulness of God*”; similar *Is 19,18*.)

If oaths were forbidden because now all Christians always tell the truth how should we explain that God Himself swears hundreds of times in the Old Testament<sup>3</sup>, why Jesus swears again and again, the “*Amen, Amen*” (“*Verily, verily, I say unto you*”) being only one of the oath formulas He used? According to *Hebr 6,19* God swore to Abraham, “*because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of His purpose very clear*” (*Hebr 6,19*), because an “*oath confirms what is said and puts an end to all argument*” (*Hebr 6,18*). An oath does not simply state the truth but creates facts which cannot be broken or taken back. An oath creates a covenant with blessing and curses, which cannot be the case with every true word we say. If oaths were forbidden in the New Testament, it would not be possible to marry, since marriage is a covenant by oath (*Prov 2,16-17; Mal 2,14*; cf. *Ez 16,8; Jer 5,7*).

### A New Age of Love?

The last example is the most important for our topic. “You have heard it said: You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy. But I say unto you: Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good those who

<sup>2</sup>Eugen Hühn. Die alttestamentlichen Citate und Reminiscenzen im Neuen Testament. J. C. B. Mohr: Tübingen, 1900. pp. 8-9 has shown that the Pharisees wrongly made this law into a private matter and that Jesus is not quoting the Old Testament directly but the interpretation of this sentence through the scribes.

<sup>3</sup>According to Georg Giesen. Die Wurzel sb’ “schwören”: Eine semasiologische Studie zum Eid im Alten Testament. Bonner Biblische Beiträge 56. Peter Hanstein: Königstein, 1981. p. 2, the word ‘to swear’ (Hebr. sb’) alone is used 215 times in the Old Testament, 75 of which have God as its subject.

hate you ...” (Mt 5,43). Does Jesus here introduce a new age of love? No! May it never be! Anyone with even a little knowledge of the Old Testament should know that the command “love your neighbor and hate your enemy” is against the word and spirit of the Old Testament. It represents the teaching and practice of some Pharisees and scribes, as Otto Michel says:

“Jesus makes reference to a certain interpretation of the Old Testament here, but not to the Old Testament itself. Generally Jesus forbids His disciples to revenge hatred with hatred: ‘Love your enemy, do good to those who hate you’ (Lk 6,27)”.<sup>4</sup>

Love of the enemy is deeply rooted in the Old Testament. It is God’s right to take revenge upon His enemies. He has delegated this task in part to the State, which punishes criminals by the power of the sword, and to the Church using the sword of the Spirit through proclaiming the Law, through church discipline and through prayer. But no private person was ever allowed to hate his private enemy. One was not allowed to rejoice over the fall of one’s enemy (*Prov 24,17*), and Job proclaims that he never did so (*Job 31,29*). “*If your enemy is hungry give him food to eat, if he is thirsty give him water to drink*” (*Prov 25,21*)<sup>5</sup>. The Law states that one should return the ox or donkey of one’s enemy when it was lost and, “*If you see the donkey of someone who hates you fallen down under its load*” the believer had to help the donkey together with his enemy (*Ex 23,4-5*).

My father once was asked to lecture on the question of whether the God of the Old Testament and of the New Testament is the same. He started by quoting dozens of Scripture passages proving that the God of the Old Testament was a God of love and mercy who would set aside His vengeance. Then he turned to the Book of Revelation showing that the God of the New Testament is a God of vengeance who never will love His enemies. Then he asked his listeners how we could ever harmonize the loving God of the Old Testament with the judging God of the New Testament. The listeners first were confused but soon understood the lesson.

### “You shall Love Your Neighbor as Yourself”

Did Jesus replace the Law by love? Was the cruel Old Testament replaced by the New Testament which has the love-command at its center?

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<sup>4</sup>Otto Michel. “miseo”. pp. 687-698 in: Gerhard Kittel (ed.). *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament*. 10 vol. W. Kohlhammer: Stuttgart, 1990 (reprint of 1933-1979). vol. IV., p. 694

<sup>5</sup>The reason for this was not only mercy but also the coming judgment (*Prov 25,22*).

How could this be possible since the central command of the New Testament “*You shall love your neighbor as yourself*” is an Old Testament quotation?

Let us have a look at the Old Testament quotation itself. In Lev 19,17 we read: “You shall not hate your brother in your heart, but you shall rebuke your neighbor earnestly that you do not bear his sins”. Indifference and lack of concern are the opposites of love. Either you hate your brother or you will rebuke him according to the Law of God. It is only the next verse that says: “you shall love your neighbor as yourself, I am the LORD” (Lev 19,18). The neighbor is not only the Jewish neighbor but also the foreigner: “But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and you shall live as yourself” (Lev 19,34). Those two verses close a longer passage repeating all of the Ten Commandments with additions detailing some of them (Lev 19,1-18). The Ten Commandments state what God means by loving one’s neighbor, and it is not only love to live according to those commandments, but also to rebuke brothers and sisters not living in harmony with those commandments. Lev 19,18 summarizes the commandments, especially the Ten Commandments.

Let us now have a look at the many places where Lev 19,18 is quoted in the New Testament. Let us start with Jesus Himself. In *Mt 19,19* Jesus summarizes the Ten Commandments, which He quotes in a short version to the rich young ruler with Lev 19,18. In *Mt 22,35-40* Jesus is asked by an “*expert of the Law*” (*Mt 22,36*) from the group of the Pharisees (*Mt 22,35*): “*which is the greatest commandment in the Law?*” (*Mt 22,36*). Jesus answered by combining Lev 19,18 and Dtn 6,5: “*Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. But the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself’. The whole Law and all the prophets hang on these two commandments*” (*Mt 22,37-40*).

Jesus is talking here about the Old Testament. The Old Testament depends on love towards God and on the love of men coming from this love towards God. Without this love the Law would not exist. In a parallel passage in *Mk 12,28-34* Jesus quotes the same two commandments and adds “*There is no commandment greater than these*” (*Mt 12,31*). The scribe asking the question affirms this answer is correct: To love God and one’s neighbor “*is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices*” (*Mt 12,33*). Therefore Jesus tells him “*You are not far from the kingdom of God*” (*Mt 12,34*). Every scribe could have known that all the commandments were only regulations of love, and again I want to emphasize that Jesus is talking here about Old Testament Law, not about something new.

The center of the parable of the Good Samaritan is also Lev 19,18. Here Jesus asks a scribe who wanted to know how to “*inherit eternal life*” (Lk 10,25): “*What is written in the Law? ... How do you read?*” (Lk 10,26). The scribe again answers with the double commandment of love (Lk 10,27) and Jesus approves this with the words “*Do this and you will live*” (Lk 10,28). Only now Jesus tells the parable of the Good Samaritan, because the scribe wanted to make excuses by applying his definition of the term “*neighbor*”. Incidentally, after the parable Jesus does not ask ‘Who was the neighbor’, which would lead to the answer ‘the one falling into the hands of robbers’, but in bitter irony asks: “*Which of these three do you think was a neighbor ...*” (Lk 10,26). The scribe had to acknowledge that the one showing mercy was the neighbor, and Jesus told him: “*Go and do likewise*” (Lk 10,37).

To love is the highest command in the Law of the Old Testament. No commandment can be understood apart from love. And love cannot be understood apart from the Law.

Paul followed the example of the Old Testament and of His Master Jesus Christ. After naming the works of the flesh (Gal 5,19-21) he speaks of love as the fruit of the Spirit: “*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance*” (Gal 5,22-23). But why does Paul add “*against those there is no law*” (Gal 5,23)? Because if you practice love, you never will break any commandment. The Law is the rule of love. *To love and to do something against the Law is a contradiction in itself, and is impossible by definition!* That this is what Paul wants to say is established by his quotation of Lev 19,18 some verses earlier: “*My brothers and sisters<sup>6</sup>, you were called to be free. But do not use your freedom as an occasion for your flesh, rather serve each other in love, because the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, which is ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself’*” (Gal 5,13-14). The freedom of the Christian is not a freedom to transgress the Law but the freedom to love and to express love in an incredible variety.

The clearest statement of this message can be found in Rom 13,8-10: “*Let no debt remain outstanding except the debt to love one another, for he who loves the other one has fulfilled the Law. The commandments ‘Do not*

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<sup>6</sup>In many languages the plural of ‘brother’ or of ‘sister’ is used to group together all male and female children of the same parents. In German the old plural of ‘sister’, ‘Geschwister’ is the name for brothers and sisters. Often the Greek plural of ‘adelphos’ (‘brother’), ‘adelphoi’ (‘brothers’ or ‘brothers and sisters’) is used to speak of brothers and sisters at the same time. There is no other word to mark brothers and sisters together. (The plural of sister ‘adelphai’ is only used for sisters.)

commit adultery’, ‘Do not murder’, ‘Do not steal’, ‘Do not covet’ and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself’. So love does not do harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of Law”. Paul quotes the Ten Commandments in brief, but adds that he is talking about “every commandment”.

Every commandment is governed by love, comes out of the spirit of love and only states what love will do. One who really loves, will never steal, murder, covet or commit adultery! *If Christians do not return to this rationale and motivation for the Ten Commandments and the whole Law they will apologize for the Law of God because they do not know themselves why they observe all its details.*

Western Humanistic thinkers have taken over the centrality of love from Christianity, but they only took the word itself because they want to decide for themselves what love commands, what love is. *They want freedom from the Law not freedom in the Law and therefore produce a love apart from Law not a love according to the Law.* The last time we find Lev 19,18 quoted is in the letter of James. James simply establishes this relation of freedom and Law.<sup>7</sup> James rebukes his readers because they favored the rich, and discriminated and exploited the poor (*Jam 2,1-8*). How does he prove this ecclesiastical, social and economic matter? He writes: “*If you really fulfill the royal Law according to Scripture: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself’, you are doing right. But if you have respect to persons, you commit sins, and are convicted by the Law as transgressors. For whoever keeps the whole Law and yet stumbles at just one [commandment], is guilty of breaking all of it. For he who said: ‘Do not commit adultery, also said: ‘Do not murder’. If you do not commit adultery, but you murder, you have become a lawbreaker. Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the Law of freedom ...*” (*Jam 2,8-12*).

The Law, especially the Decalogue, is once again summarized by Lev 19,18. The command to love is called “***the royal Law***”. The royal Law is the law governing all other laws. This royal Law is also called “***the Law of liberty***”. God’s love, God’s Law and God’s freedom are the same. You either have all three of them or you have none. There is no love without

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<sup>7</sup>James is writing here to New Testament Christians! Can anyone explain how the teaching that the Old Testament Law is no longer the moral rule of Christians could emerge in view of a statement like this? Luther was consistent in setting aside the letter of James to maintain his view of the inferior character of the Old Testament Law.

freedom, no law without love, no love without the Law and no freedom without the Law.

## What is Love?

Wilhelm Lütgert writes in his *'Ethics of Love'*:

“The command to love implies that love is a duty. Love is commanded and is obedience. It is objected – this objection was especially taken over by [the German philosopher Immanuel] Kant – that you only can command outward deeds, but not love.”<sup>8</sup>

Kant said that love is a decision of a free will and a deep inner, even unconscious impulse. Lütgert rejects this but he accepts that love is something we cannot produce:

“Therefore love can only be commanded by someone who can awake this love. Love is first something given before it is something commanded. Love is a gift before it becomes a task. It is granted before it is decreed. It can only have its origin in love, it is always love in return. For this reason it only can be the love of the Creator, an echo of His love. As the love of the Creator Himself this love will be creative. Concerning love the rule of Augustine is valid: ‘Give what you command and then command whatever you want’.”<sup>9</sup>

We need to clarify the nature of love to understand the relation between love and Law.

1) Love is a duty, because we have “the duty [or: debt] to love one another” (Rom 13,8; 1John 4,11).

2) Love is obedience. According to 1Pet 1,22 we “purify” ourselves through “obedience” “to unfeigned love of brothers and sisters”<sup>10</sup>. Even Jesus showed His love to His Father by obeying him: “... just as I obeyed my father’s commandments and remain in His love” (John 15,10).

3) Love is an act of our heart and will. We are told to have “the same mind and ... love” (Phil 2,2), which is “the same mind which is also in Christ Jesus” (Phil 2,5).

4) Love is concrete, real, actual, practicable, and it is deed and action. 1John 3,17-18 states: “If anyone has the goods of this world and sees his brother in need but shuts his bowels of compassion for him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not have love with words or

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<sup>8</sup>Wilhelm Lütgert. *Ethik der Liebe. Beiträge zur Förderung christlicher Theologie.* Reihe 2, vol. 29. C. Bertelsmann: Gütersloh, 1938. p. 30

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>See ref. above concerning ‘brothers and sisters’

tongue but with actions and in truth”. John establishes this by the example of Christ. The love of Jesus is not proven by some inner feelings, nice words or big programs, but by what He did for us. “This is how we know the love [of God]: Jesus Christ laid down His life for us” (1John 3,16; similar Rom 5,8; John 3,16; Eph 5,25). In Eph 5,25-33 the husband proves his love to his wife as Christ proves his love to the Church in being willing to die for her and by nurturing and protecting her. Paul tells us that “in Jesus Christ” the only “power” “is faith which works through love” (Gal 5,6). In Rev 2,4-5 the church of Ephesus is commanded to return “to your first love” which it left: “Repent and do the first works”. In Rev 2,19 Jesus knows “your works and your love and your faith”.

### To Love God is to Keep His Law

Now we understand better why love is the fulfillment of the Law. Again and again the Bible states that the whole meaning of the Law is to define and to further love. Paul writes to Timothy: “*The goal [Greek: ‘telos’] of the commandment is love out of pure heart and of good conscience and of unfeigned faith*” (1Tim 1,5).

To fear, serve and love God and to love His Law and its commandments is always equated in the Old as well as in the New Testament. “*Love the LORD your God and keep His requirements, His decrees, His laws and His commands always*” (Dtn 11,1). “*If you carefully observe all these commands I have given you to follow, to love the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and to hold fast to him ...*” (Dtn 11,22). “*... because you carefully follow all these laws I command you today, to love the LORD your God and to walk always in His ways ...*” (Dtn 19,9).

In the Ten Commandments, God promises to give His “grace” and blessing to those “who love me and keep my commandments” (Ex 20,6; Dtn 5,10). Dan 9,4 and Neh 1,5 speak about “God, who keeps His covenant of love with all who love him and obey His commands” (similar Dtn 7,9). In 1Kings 3,3 it is stated: “... Solomon loved the LORD so that he walked in the statutes of his father David”.

Is this the language or the spirit of the Old Testament only? Surely not. Listen to the same statements from the mouth of the lawgiver Jesus Christ Himself: “*If you love me you will keep my commandments*” (John 14,15). “*Whoever has my commandments and keeps them is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my father ...*” (John 14,21). “*If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching ... He who does not love me will not obey my teaching ...*” (John 14,23-24). “*As my father loved me, so I have loved you. Now remain in my love. If you obey my commandments you will*

*remain in my love, just as I obeyed my father's commandments and remain in His love. ... This is my command: love one another as I have loved you"* (John 15,9-10, 12).

John, who recorded all this, writes in his own letter "This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out His commandments. This is the love of God: to obey His commands. And His commandments are not burdensome" (1John 5,2-3). "We know that we have come to know him if we obey His commandments. The man who says: I know him and does not do what He commands, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. If anyone obeys His Words, God's love is truly made complete in him" (1John 2,3-5). "And this is His command, to believe in the name of His son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as He has commanded us. Those who obey His commandments live in him and He in them" (1John 3,23).

Does this mean that we have to earn our eternal salvation? Surely not. If the Law of love, love to God and love of God are the same you cannot love without God. If we had to love first before God could love us, love would be impossible. "*God demonstrated His own love for us thus: Christ died for us while we were still sinners"* (Rom 5,8). But if you are loved and chosen by God, this love can never be lived and defined apart from the Law.

"*God is love"* (1John 4,8, 16). He is "*the God of love"* (2Cor 13,11) and Jesus is "*the love of God among us"* (1John 4,9). Therefore love can have its origin in God only, as John says: "*the love is out of God"* (1John 4,7). Therefore it is the same to be in God and to be in his love: "*God is love and whoever remains in love, remains in God and God remains in Him"* (1John 4,16). It is also the same to know God and to love Him: "*Everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He that does not love God, does not know him, for God is love"* (John 4,7-8). When God states through Hosea that "*there is no faithfulness, no love, no acknowledgment of God in the land"* (Hos 4,1), he is not talking about several problems, but about one and the same thing.

## Gospel and Law?

The whole unfruitful discussion about Gospel and Law has obscured the biblical message that the Law is the manifestation of God's love. There is no Gospel without love. But if love is manifested and regulated in God's Law there cannot be a Gospel without Law. Take just two examples where Paul is speaking about the "*law*" and the "*gospel*" in the same text:

In *1Tim 1,9-11* Paul talks about the misuse and the godly use of the Law. Then he names examples of lawbreakers like “murderers” or “slave traders”, who are condemned by the Law, and goes on to say: “... and for whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine that conforms to the glorious Gospel of the blessed God” (*1Tim 1,11*). In *Rom 2,12-15* Paul explains the judgment of the Jews and the Gentiles through the Law and closes this discussion with the words: “This will take place on the day when God will judge men’s secrets through Jesus Christ, according to my Gospel” (*Rom 2,16*). Do you own a scalpel to separate Gospel and Law in these texts? *God’s Law is a Gospel to His children and His Gospel is a terrible threat to His enemies.*

Gospel and Law only stand against each other – especially in the letters of Paul – if ‘law’ is understood as salvation by Law, but not if Law is understood as God’s written Law in the Old and New Testament.

### Without the Law Dies Love

Love and Law belong together. Therefore lawlessness always leads to *lovelessness*<sup>11</sup> (unkindness). ***Love is the fulfillment of the Law and with the Law dies love.*** This is true for all God-given covenants. Without the Law there will be no love in marriage and the family. Without the Law there will be no love in the Church. Without the Law there will by no love in work relationships and economy. Without the Law there will be no love in society. Without the Law there will be no love in lower and higher government. There is no text in the Old and New Testament which defines this more directly than Jesus’ prophecy in *Mt 24,12*: “***And because lawlessness shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold***”.<sup>12</sup>

I think there is no Bible verse which describes more precisely, briefly and directly the main problem of present day Humanism as well as the present day Evangelical scene than this: “*And because lawlessness shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold*”. Only a return to God’s love and to God’s Law can bring back love to our families, churches, work relationships, societies and governments. Only a return to God’s love and to God’s Law can lead to a reconstruction of every area of life. Therefore let us love

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<sup>11</sup>German uses the word ‘*Lieblosigkeit*’, ‘having no love’, which is constructed like ‘*Gesetzlosigkeit*’, ‘having no law’. Therefore I use the word *lovelessness*, since ‘unkindness’ is too weak for my subject.

<sup>12</sup>I used the King James Version but changed “*iniquity*” to “*lawlessness*”, a better translation for the greek ‘*anomia*’, “*being without law*”. All other Bible texts have been translated by the author from Greek text.

God more and more and live in His Law and proclaim it to a lawless and loveless Church and a lawless and loveless society.

So what are the consequences, when we talk about love, without being allowed to define any sort of rules or laws? There are many everyday examples of this sort of ‘liberty’. Imagine a football game in which the only rule is ‘Be fair!’<sup>13</sup> Fairness is a good thing in sports, but without rules, it is both meaningless and useless. Every player would define it differently.

If love is the motive and goal of the Law, we shall not only love the author of the Law, God Father, God Son and the Holy Spirit, but will love His Law itself, as we find it in the Psalms again and again. “*I have the desire to do your will, O my God, your Law is within my heart*” (Ps 40,8 – Paul uses this verse in Rom 7,22). “*O how I love your Law! I meditate on it all day long*” (Ps 119,97; cf. Ps 119,47-48, 113, 119, 127-128, 159, 163, 165, 167). After singing about Creation and its Creator in Ps 19, David goes on with a hymn of the Law, with which I close:

“The Law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward. Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults. Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression. Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer” (Ps 19,7-14, KJV).

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<sup>13</sup>From Erwin Lutzer. *Measuring Morality: A Comparison of Ethical Systems* (Dallas, Tex., Probe Ministeries Int., 1989) p. 36

# **Trinity and Work: A Critique of the View of Daily Work in Other Religions and in Marxism (1992/1996)<sup>14</sup>**

We want to discuss a biblical theology of work to show the importance of the dogma of the triune God for our ethics and for the reconstruction of society.

All employee morals, every work ethic, is an echo of the god of a society and its workers. I want to give some examples how the nature of the triune God of the Old and New Testament is reflected in the biblical Laws concerning the work of man. Each time we will also ask what we lose if another god or another religion or world view takes the place of the Creator revealed in the Bible.

Most times I will use the word triune instead of Trinity. The German word ‘Dreieinigkeit’ (threeness, triunity) shows very well that Trinity has two enemies: the ‘one’ stands against polytheism, the ‘three’ against monistic monotheism. Polytheism will vitiate biblical faith as much as nontrinitarian monotheism. The English term Trinity does not emphasize this while ‘triune’ does. ‘Triunity’ would be a good alternative for Trinity.

## **God is a God Who Works**

*1. The triune God is a God who works.* In the Bible, man’s work has a high value, because it reflects a God who is working Himself. The triune God had been working prior to men’s existence in Creation. Because He is triune, He even worked in eternity before Creation came into existence. The Persons of the Trinity worked with and for each other.

In the Bible everything good comes from the Trinity. Because the members of the Trinity speak to each other and Jesus is the Word, we can talk to each other. Because the Persons of the Trinity do not live for themselves, but live for each other, men can be told to do the same. Because the Persons of the Trinity discuss with each other, not to decide things totally alone is a biblical principle. In the Trinity, obedience exists without any-

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<sup>14</sup>Lecture at the Twelfth Northwest Conference for Christian Reconstruction in Seattle May 2, 1992. Reprinted from “Trinity and Work: A Critique of the View of Daily Work in Other Religions and in Marxism”. *Christianity and Society* 6 (1996) 2: 14-20. A shortened version was published in the book ‘God Wants You Learn, Labour and Love’.

body being forced to do something: love and Law are identical. Communication, love, honoring each other and working to a goal outside of ourselves come from the Trinity. But the Trinity existed before the world was created. So loving, talking, helping, listening and obedience exist eternally. God does not need men to exist or to be good.

For many other adherents of monotheistic religions like the Muslims or those Jews who do not accept that the Trinity is rooted in the Old Testament (I am talking about Jewish theology, not about a biblical view of the Jewish people) this is different. Of course God existed before the world was created. But he can only love Creation. There was nobody to love before he created someone. Both religions can only speak about how God deals with Creation. Christians have the revelation about how God deals with Himself because He is triune.

Man's work has a *dignity* in the truest sense of the word. In the Ten Commandments work is commanded by God for the following reason: "*You shall labor six days and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. ... For in six days the LORD made the heaven and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but He rested on the seventh day*" (Ex 20,9-11). In fact the Creation Account states that God "*rested from all His work*" (or "*from all His labor*") (Gen 2,2) on the seventh day of Creation. The Bible often speaks about the work and labor of God. So David prays for "*the works of your hands*" (Ps 138,8), Solomon calls God a wise "*craftsman*" (Prov 8,30, similarly Ps 104,24) and the psalmist says: "*the one watching over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep*" (Ps 121,4).

Work and labor are a major part of the image of God. If man and woman were created in the image and likeness (Gen 1,26) of a working God they must be working themselves.

If a god or the highest authority of a society's law does not work himself, there is no dignity of labor. Buddhism is the best example. The Buddhist ethic of work is inspired by a god who is demonstrating by his very image as a fat, sitting idol, that the goal of everything is *not* to work but to "*slumber and sleep*", and nevertheless to be rich and well-fed. Buddhism even does not have a word for 'work' and work is no topic in Buddhist

ethics<sup>15</sup>. Buddhism and Socialism have a lot in common when it comes to work and economy, as several Buddhist authors have clearly stated<sup>16</sup>.

Two quotations from antiquity will show that the god of a society is the source of its evaluation of labor:

“In Greek society labor was viewed as an inescapable fate imposed by the gods. To be like the gods meant to live free from labor. In the world of the ancient Orient, labor was viewed as a burden, as slave labor for the gods, who therefore were free from labor. The goal was to withdraw from this service, from this labor as far as possible. Labor was a burden without dignity.”<sup>17</sup>

“Classical antiquity assigned the task of labor to the unfree, outlawed classes. It viewed the emancipation from the necessity to work for wages alone being worthy of a human. Thus it dishonored labor connected with bodily strain.”<sup>18</sup>

This view later heavily influenced Christian theology as another quotation will show:

“Thomas Aquinas held the view that only necessity forced people to work. It is no wonder that the Middle Ages saw the use of work in overcoming laziness, in taming the body and in earning one’s living. Beside this there is a tendency to be seen to take over the Greek (mainly Aristotelian) view to emphasize contemplative life and to disregard an active life. Thus it was legitimate that the members of the classes of knights and priests were free from bodily labor.”<sup>19</sup>

In spite of this heathen influence, we have to agree with Hermann Cremer who adds to his evaluation of the Greek and Roman view of work:

“It was only Christendom respectively the religion of revelation, the world has to thank for another view of the nature and value of labor.”<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>See Peter Gerlitz. “Buddhismus”. pp. 100-118 in: Michael Klöcker, Udo Tworuschka (ed.). Ethik der Religionen – Lehre und Leben: vol. 2: Arbeit. Kösel: Munich & Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht: Göttingen, 1985, p. 101

<sup>16</sup>See *ibid.* pp. 112-115

<sup>17</sup>Heiner Ruschhaupt. “Bauen und Bewahren”. Der Navigator Nr. 13 (Mai/Juni 1987): 2-3

<sup>18</sup>Hermann Cremer. Arbeit und Eigentum in christlicher Sicht. Brunnen Verlag: Gießen, 1984. p. 8

<sup>19</sup>Friedrich Trzaskalik. “Katholizismus”. pp. 24-41 in: Michael Klöcker, Udo Tworuschka (ed.). Ethik der Religionen – Lehre und Leben: vol. 2: Arbeit. op. cit. p. 33

<sup>20</sup>Hermann Cremer. Arbeit und Eigentum in christlicher Sicht. Brunnen Verlag: Gießen, 1984. p. 8

Alan Richardson showed how the Reformation revived the biblical view of work:

“The Reformers, Luther and Calvin, were the first to use the terms calling and vocation for the daily tasks and positions in life of men. It is important to note that they did this in protest against the use of language in the Middle Ages which was restricted to the call to a monastic life. They wanted to destroy the double standard of ethics and to show that God can be glorified in the world of workdays also.”<sup>21</sup>

Christian missions exported this Protestant work ethos to all continents. Gustav Warneck, the German father of Protestant missiology, wrote:

“... Christian world missions showed, through word and example, that labor (which through slavery carried the stigma of infamy), was based on a commandment of God ...”<sup>22</sup>.

### God is the Hardest Worker because He is the Highest Authority

2. The Triune God works more than anybody else. Therefore, the more responsibility one carries the more work he has.

The example of Buddhism or the Greek and Roman view made clear the goal of these societies to become like their gods, which is to become free of labor. If the one on the very top is not working at all, hard work will be found at the bottom only. The higher you rise, the more people will live by the work of others. Exploitation is unavoidable in such a society.

In the Bible it is just the other way round. We already saw that God “*neither slumbers nor sleeps*” (Ps 121,4). Because the triune God has done and does more than anybody else, He is the example that responsibility means work. Was it not Paul the apostle who wrote twice “*I labored more than all the others*” (1Cor 15,10; 2Cor 11,23)? This was no boasting but the natural result of his high responsibility as an apostle. Being an apostle did not mean more leisure time, many servants or greater wealth, but more tears and labor and less sleep. This was the reason why Martin Luther, in the beginning of the Reformation, when he still believed in the possibility of changing Papalism, wrote a letter to the Pope rebuking him that he should work more towards the well-being of the Church than any monk or priest including Luther himself. He asked the Pope how he could sleep in peace

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<sup>21</sup>Alan Richardson. Die biblische Lehre von der Arbeit. Anker-Verlag: Frankfurt, 1953. p. 27

<sup>22</sup>Gustav Warneck. Die Stellung der evangelischen Mission zur Sklavenfrage. C. Bertelsmann: Gütersloh, 1889. p. 67

in view of the responsibility of a worldwide church in turmoil. In spite of his responsibility, the Pope spent much time for pleasure and feasts.

If you lose the triune God, the Christian attitude that more responsibility brings more work will change into the humanistic and tyrannical attitude that people in low positions work for people in high positions so that they do not need to work themselves.<sup>23</sup>

Marxism blames society for the exploitation of the lower classes, so it seems to have a negative view of people in high positions who let others work but do not work themselves. But Marxism has no other definition of work. Work is always the exploited work of the lower class. As Marxism only has 'matter' and 'history' as its gods there is no way to overcome exploitation. No wonder Socialist governments and societies are the best examples for the Humanistic principle that the higher you climb, the less hard work you have. No wonder that Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels never were workers but lazy employers. Marx himself really earned money only once for a very short time – as the owner of a Marxist newspaper. Later on he lived on the money of Engels who was rich because he inherited factories from his father. There is not the slightest hint that Marx or Engels ever had a guilty conscience using the money they had won from the hard work of workers, or that Marx was sad about his life which was as unproductive as possible, if you do not take into account some thick books which never got ready in time. Konrad Löw states:

“According to their own theory, Marx and Engels always lived by money they did not deserve.”<sup>24</sup>

That in Communist states the production and the quality of the products continually decline the time is not only the result of Statism and wrong State management. A major reason is the employee morals as the ethic of work is an echo of the atheistic religion. If hard work is seen as exploitation how will Marxism explain workers that this is different if the employer is a Marxist State?

‘Atheistic Capitalism’ – as I call a Capitalism which denies God’s Laws and becomes a religion of Mammon – soon reaches the same situation as Marxism, Buddhism and other religions. Many people in Western society have the goal of being rich in the sense of being free of work. If the results of this growing attitude cannot be seen at once, the reason is that the bibli-

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<sup>23</sup>See the chapter on the ethics of work in my book *Marxismus – Opium für das Volk?* Schwengeler Verlag: Berneck, 1990

<sup>24</sup>Quoted from Konrad Löw. *Marxismus Quellenlexikon*. Kölner Universitätsverlag: Köln, 1985. p. 321

cal Protestant ethic of work is still functioning in many areas, although the foundation of it has been lost. A President, Chancellor or Prime Minister is still expected to work harder than a normal citizen. He would not get many votes if he would act like the kings of Absolutism and the Enlightenment who most of the time engaged in feasting and pleasure. (One French king only received diplomats while on the toilet!)

That more power leads to more labor, is a unique Christian principle because every authority comes from God, who is the infallible example to everyone in authority, that authority means to work for the good of others. Parents have authority over their children. Does this save work? No, it causes them labor and costs them much sleep. Woe to parents who want authority without labor. Woe to anyone who wants the rights of authority but not its duties! God only delegates authority together with the duty to work!

This is also true of work in general. The duty of men to subdue the earth (*Gen 1,26-30*), was the command to work. The garden of Eden was no land of Cockaigne, no fool's paradise, as the paradise of Marxism or Islam is. In Islam man did not work in Paradise, his work did not come under a curse and he will not be serving in Heaven<sup>25</sup>. "*The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and to take care of it*" (*Gen 2,15*). (God here names the two sides of every work, which is change and continuity, shape and preserve. Humanism always emphasizes one or the other, the Bible keeps them together.) Before the Fall, we see a variety of work Adam and Eve had to perform. They had to water and grow the plants (*Gen 2,5*), had to get gold and precious stones (*Gen 2,10-13*), had to provide their food (*Gen 2,9*) and had to give a name to every animal (*Gen 2,19-20*). Adam was the first scientific biologist. It is incredible that the Creation Account states that God gave Adam the right to name the animals and God was to use Adam's names: "*and whatever the man called each living creature that was its name*" (*Gen 2,19*). Listen to a summary of the Old Testament and Jewish view of work.

Work "is not the result or the punishment of sin – according to the unanimous view of Jewish exegetes of *Gen 3,17-19* it is only the hardness and the repeated failure which stand in opposition to the ease and freedom from care in Paradise. Bodily labor in general is not despised among the Jews as it was among the Greeks and Romans."<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>See Monika Tworuschka. "Islam". pp. 64-84 in: Michael Klöcker, Udo Tworuschka (ed.). *Ethik der Religionen – Lehre und Leben: vol. 2: Arbeit. op. cit.*, pp. 67+69

<sup>26</sup>Johannes Wachten. "Judentum". pp. 9-23 in: *ibid.*, p. 10

Wilhelm Lütgert similarly writes:

“Not work itself but the disproportion of work and returns or result and pain and toil which stand in no proportion to the output, are the results of sin.”<sup>27</sup>

By the way: According to Isaiah in the Millennium (see Is 65,17-25) work and labor will no longer be in vain: “They will build houses and dwell in them, they will plant vineyards and eat their fruit. No longer will they build houses and others live in them, or plant and others eat. ... my chosen ones will long enjoy the works of their hands. They will not toil in vain ...” (Is 65,21-23).

### God's Work Will Receive its Wages

In the Bible, work has dignity and worth as such whether it is paid or not. But the Law quoted frequently and often referred to: “*The worker deserves his wages*” (1Tim 5,20; Lk 10,7) is the result of this. *Work is not worth something only if it is paid but work is paid because it is worth something.*

How seriously the Bible takes the commandment to pay any work is seen in Jer 22,13: “woe to him who builds his palace by unrighteousness, his upper rooms by injustice, making his countrymen work for nothing, not paying them for their labor”.

Therefore all work is worth a reward, but this reward need not be money. Every person can decide which reward he wants or renounce earthly rewards. Take, for example, the praise of the good wife in Prov 31. Work paid for and work not paid for directly stand side by side. The work of this housewife is of full value.

God's command to work six days, as we find it in the Ten Commandments, is a general command for men and women. People should not sit around, but work, except on Sunday. Work is not merely a natural law and a natural necessity, just because otherwise we would starve, but a created order. Therefore “one of the most severe charges of the prophets is against rich people (e. g. Amos 6,3-6)”<sup>28</sup>. You may be rich but you may not be lazy. It is the will of God and He has given us Creation for this purpose.

What can an unemployed worker do? Work, of course! Although we do not want to play down the problem of unemployment the unemployed man

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<sup>27</sup>Hermann Cremer. Arbeit und Eigentum in christlicher Sicht. op. cit. p. 9

<sup>28</sup>Alan Richardson. Die biblische Lehre von der Arbeit. op. cit. p 16

can do many jobs without wage. He can help his family, the needy or his church. Lethargy or blaming others is no solution to unemployment.

What has Marxism to say concerning just wages? Nothing! For Marx in Capitalism all wages are unjust but none has the right to change this. The difference between a Christian social reformation and a Marxist revolution becomes especially clear in Marx' paper 'Critique of the Declaration of Gotha' ("Kritik des Gothaer Programm") written when he was an old man and commenting on the party platform of the Social Democratic Party of Germany. The demand of this Socialist Party "that the whole product of work has to belong according to equal right to everybody according to his need while everybody has the duty to work"<sup>29</sup> – in itself full of contradictions – is totally denied by Marx, because it is still based on some concept of law and justice. Marx writes: "It is the right of inequality concerning its content as all right is"<sup>30</sup>. He goes on: "The equal right here is still, in principle, the bourgeois right ..."<sup>31</sup>. This cannot be accepted because it still "silently accepts a difference of individual gifts and therefore of different efficiency of workers as natural privileges"<sup>32</sup>.

Marx studied law at the university of Bonn and so he knew what he was talking about. He did not want to change any legal positions but wait for his prophecies to become true. His prophecies conclude that the Communist society will not bring immediate results:

"But these grievances are unavoidable in the first phase of the Communist society as it has come out of the capitalistic society after long labor pains."<sup>33</sup>

(In German Marx is here speaking in prophetic perfect, as the prophets of the Old Testament often did!) Engels states it even more directly:

"We give up any attempt to make clear to the stubborn jurist, that Marx never demanded the 'right to the full yield of work' and that he never articulates any legal demand of any kind in any of his theoretical writings."<sup>34</sup>

He goes on:

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<sup>29</sup>Ursula Schulz (ed.). Die deutsche Arbeiterbewegung 1848-1919 in Augenzeugenberichten. dtv: Munich, 1981<sup>3</sup>. p. 200

<sup>30</sup>Karl Marx. Friedrich Engels. Werke. 42 vol. Dietz Verlag: Berlin. 1956ff. vol. 19. p. 20

<sup>31</sup>Ibid.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid. p. 21

<sup>33</sup>Ibid.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid. vol. 21. p. 501

“Marx realizes the historical unavailability, which is the right of the ancient slave-master, the feudal lord of the Middle Ages etc., as a lever of human development for a certain historical period. He acknowledges the right of exploitation for some time ...”<sup>35</sup>.

No one who thinks that Marx was fighting for the rights of the workers, has read Marx or Engels. According to both the worker must submit to the historical necessity and wait until the war of the classes comes to its next stage. Justice cannot be sued for. Marxism blames Christianity for consoling people with a heavenly hope, because he does not understand that this hope is the base for changes in this world and for any justice. But Marx himself consoles people with his prophetic vision. But Paradise will come only after the Marxists of today have died. No Marxist has ever gotten anything for his hope, either on earth or in Heaven!

For example, Marx fought against the British and German laws against the slave-like work of children. He said laws like this were “reactionary”<sup>36</sup>, because they are incompatible with Capitalism and large industries – he was proved wrong by history – and because it slowed down the development of the last phase of Capitalism. Marx did not want to help the weak but to see his prophecies come true. Marx did not say any word about the exploited children themselves, but saw only the problem that Marxists would lose a major force for revolution if children were to grow up under good conditions<sup>37</sup>.

The boundless disregard of the rights of workers and every act towards a just relationship between employers and employees can be proven by many quotations from Marx and Engels<sup>38</sup>. Marx wrote about the German Parliament:

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<sup>35</sup>Ibid.; see the whole page

<sup>36</sup>Ibid. p. 32 (“Allgemeines Verbot der Kinderarbeit ist unverträglich mit der Existenz der großen Industrie und daher leerer frommer Wunsch. Durchführung desselben – wenn möglich – wäre reaktionär, da, bei strenger Regelung der Arbeitszeit nach den verschiedenen Altersstufen und sonstigen Versichtsmaßregeln zum Schutze der Kinder, frühzeitige Verbindung produktiver Arbeit mit Unterricht eines der mächtigen Umwandlungsmittel der heutigen Gesellschaft ist.”)

<sup>37</sup>We just want to show the position of Marx, not to discuss labor of children or the right of the State to regulate it.

<sup>38</sup>Konrad Löw. *Marxismus Quellenlexikon*. Kölner Universitätsverlag: Köln, 1985. pp. 221-222

“Because you may use the parliament only as a means of agitation, you never may agitate in it for something reasonable or something being of direct interest for the workers.”<sup>39</sup>

Marxism has the same problem as atheistic Capitalism. Both call for just labor, but have no law governing this justice. While Marx does not accept any justice put into laws, his capitalistic friends try to put their views into laws. But the religion of Mammon can only realize justice in the form of money. Justice always means getting more money for working less. They forget that justice only can be justice, if it regulates every area of life, not just money matters.

### God's Work is Work for God

*If the triune God did not work for us, we could not work at all. Although man was created to work and not to be lazy, the command to work is only part of the command to serve God. In the Bible, human work is always limited. In spite of its dignity, work is never the first task but always the second. Work is never an end in itself! It is a unique Christian view to combine the highest praise of work as nothing less than working in the image of God, with the limitation of work, so that man is never totally swallowed by work, but keeps work under his and God's dominion. Only if you see both sides at the same time can you understand the effective results of a biblical work ethic.*

This is the meaning of the Sabbath. The Sabbath reminds man, that he can only work on “*the six workdays*” (Ez 46,1), because his Creator works for him and has given him Creation for his use. God also knows that to work day and night without exception is not good for man.

We already discussed religions with a low view of hard work. But there are also religions with a high view of labor which miss the correction of work ethics by a whole day without labor. A Japanese lawyer's association states that in Japan 10,000 people die every year through overwork<sup>40</sup>. ‘Death through overwork’ is accepted by the Japanese Minister of Labor as official cause of death. There is an special word for death through overwork in the Japanese language, ‘karoshi’. Death through overwork is said to be the result of too much overtime work and missing recreation. Often “the home is becoming a mere sleeping-place”<sup>41</sup>.

<sup>39</sup>Karl Marx. Friedrich Engels. Werke. op. cit. vol. 32. p. 360

<sup>40</sup>D. P. “Zu Tode gearbeitet”. Der Kassenarzt No. 12/1991, p. 32

<sup>41</sup>Ibid.

The seventh day without work reminds men that without God they could not work at all. “Unless the LORD builds the house, its builders labor in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the watchmen stand guard in vain. In vain you rise early and stay up late, toiling for food to eat, for He grants sleep to those He loves” (Ps 127,1-2). Prov 10,22 says it even shorter: “The blessing of the LORD brings wealth, and no trouble does add anything to it” (see also Mt 6,24-34). And Jesus tells His disciples: “for without me you can do nothing” (John 15,5).

Pietistic and liberal exegetes alike see verses like this as referring to religious duties, some spiritual blessing or some symbolical house. The Pietist believes that he cannot evangelize without Jesus or cannot grow His Church without Jesus. Of course this is true, but the quoted texts concern *all* work, everything men do and of course his daily job! According to *Ex 31,2-6* and *35,31* the artists could build the beautiful tabernacle, because God had given them His Spirit with the gifts of their crafts.

Therefore to be thankful is a necessary part of every work. “Is 28,23-29 says that the outcome of the farmers ploughing, sowing, planting, riping, treshing, mowing and baking bread go back to God’s teaching”<sup>42</sup>: “*His God instructs him and teaches him the right way*” (Is 28,26)<sup>43</sup>.

There are several other instituted ways of expressing the truth that work is not everything, and that man needs to thank God for the ability to work. The tithe comes exactly from what a man earns. The tithe is not just a portion of the income but it is the *firstfruit* of our work to demonstrate that God and thanksgiving comes first before we use the results of our work. The same is true of the sacrifices. Gustav Friedrich Oehler has pointed out that all the plants and animals for sacrifice were “the ordinary food the people would win through their normal work”<sup>44</sup>. This can be seen in the first recorded sacrifice in history by Abel and Cain who both offered the firstfruits of their profession. This again shows the close relationship between daily work, service and thanksgiving to God.

No work is done for oneself or one’s family or one’s employer but in the last analysis for the supreme Employer<sup>45</sup>, God Himself. Thus Paul says:

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<sup>42</sup>Alan Richardson. Die biblische Lehre von der Arbeit. op. cit. p. 15

<sup>43</sup>See the details in the context

<sup>44</sup>Gustav Friedrich Oehler. Theologie des Alten Testaments. J. F. Steinkopf: Stuttgart, 1891<sup>3</sup>. p. 437

<sup>45</sup>In German ‘employer’ [‘Arbeitgeber’] has the meaning of ‘the workgiver’, ‘the one giving work’. In German we can say that God is the great ‘Arbeitgeber’, the supreme One giving work to men.

“*And whatever you do whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him*” (Col 3,17). Again this may not be narrowed down in a Pietistic sense. This is proved by one of the following verses written to the slaves, but valid for everybody: “*Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Jesus you are serving*” (Col 3,23-24).

“The nobility of work no longer flows from *what* you do but from *why* you do it. Because of the commission to service by God and the service character of work to one’s neighbor, the least technical work has the same value as ‘intellectual’ work.”<sup>46</sup>

Many people blame the New Testament because it commands the slaves to be good workers (e. g. *Tit 2,9-11; Eph 6,5-9; Col 3,22-4,1; 1Tim 6,1-2; 1Petr 2,18-25; 1Cor 7,21-24*). We already heard the reason for it. The slave works for God, not for his employer. This is real freedom! “*Slaves, obey your masters in all things not with eyeservice or as menpleasers, but with a sincere heart and reverence for the Lord*” (Col 3,22). There is no dirty or bad work in the Bible, except those works and professions which are directly forbidden by God like prostitution. The human employer is not the real giver of wages, but the great Employer of Creation. *Only because God, the general Employer, gives a just wage, must human employers do the same.*

The same Paul that tells the slaves to be good workers, writes to them: “Each one should remain in the calling wherein he was called. Were you called being a slave, do not let it trouble you. ***But if you can gain your freedom, do so.*** For he who was a slave when he was called by the Lord is the Lord’s freedman; likewise he who was a free man when he was called is Christ’s slave. You were bought at a price, do not become slaves of men” (1Cor 7,20-23). In the letter to Philemon Paul works toward the release of a slave. Is this a contradiction? No, because Paul says: “But if you can gain your freedom, do it”. But the slave does not need to wait a life long until he can live a fruitful life. He is called by God, called to His Heavenly kingdom, but also called to His work. Not the slave’s work for men makes his life worth living but his being called by his Creator and redeemer.

*The penetrating power of the Christian faith in history* is based on this fact. The Christian can serve God as a slave without any change of the

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<sup>46</sup>Emil Brunner. *Das Gebot und die Ordnungen*. Zwingli Verlag: Zürich, 1939<sup>4</sup>. p. 373

outward circumstances, and he can obtain freedom, and work for release and change the circumstances. He has life in the fullest sense in every situation. Because he has everything already, he can change everything.

In *Col 3,25-4,1* we find strict admonitions for the lords of the slaves. They are reminded of their lawful duties because God does not have regard for the person. The Christian slave does not however need to wait until his lord becomes righteous. He can live according to God's will here and now! He does not need to wait until the world has changed totally, as thought in Hinduism, Buddhism, Marxism and other religions!

For the Marxist, man and work are actually identical. He cannot imagine work apart from man, as he denies a God who could be working also; and he cannot imagine man apart from work which makes something like the Sabbath, recreation or a Sunday service impossible. Friedrich Engels writes:

“Work is the source of all wealth, the political economists tell us. Yes, it is, besides nature which offers the material which work changes to wealth. But work is infinitely more than this. It is the first fundamental condition of human life and this in such a measure that we must say in a certain sense: work has created man himself.”<sup>47</sup>

That work created men is only another way of saying that man created himself as the following quotation from Karl Marx proves:

“Because for Socialist man the whole of so-called world history is nothing else than the begetting of men through human labor, this is the rising of nature through men, he has the vivid and irresistible evidence of his birth through himself, of his own process of origin.”<sup>48</sup>

If man and work are identical and work is the highest value of society, this work will not be a positive value approved by all, but a tyrannical value hated by all but a few. Because work is not under God's dominion and under the responsibility of man, it becomes a terrible tyranny. Marxism tries to fight without really offering any way to escape. If work and man are identical, how can man escape the tyranny of work without losing himself?

## The Toil of Work

Work is always work for God. And one cannot talk about work without talking about God. That is the only reason why the curse for the sin of Man

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<sup>47</sup>Karl Marx. Friedrich Engels. Werke. op. cit. vol. 20. p. 444

<sup>48</sup>Ibid. vol. 40. p. 546

in the Fall was a curse of Man's work (*Gen 3,17-19; 5,29*). Man thought he could have the authority of dominion and work without the One making both possible, namely God. Because of the curse, Man is reminded day by day what it means to despise the Creator. Whoever wants labor without problems denies the Fall and denies that only God can be the source of work which leads to full results and to true rest. Without the sacrifice of the second Person of the Trinity there could be no hope that this situation would ever change. Meanwhile Christians take even the stress and toil of work out of the hand of God. *"What does the worker gain from his toil? I have seen the burden God has given to men"* (*Eccl 3,9-10*). The toil is given by God. Solomon does not come to the conclusion that it is better not to work at all but that we are happy about the results of our work as a gift from God: *"I know that there is nothing better for men than to be happy and do good while they live. That every man may eat and drink, and find satisfaction in all his toil, this is a gift from God"* (*Eccl 3,12-13*).

The Bible commands us to take the toil upon ourselves and not to put the burden on others. A thief only puts the burden on others as does the State using taxes to redistribute wealth from one to the other. Paul's admonitions do not need long explanations: *"We urge you, brothers and sisters"<sup>49</sup>, ... make it your ambition to live quietly, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you, so that you walk honestly toward those who are outside and so that you will not be dependent on anybody"* (*1Thess 4,10-12*). *"We hear that some among you walk disorderly, working not at all. They are busybodies. Such people we command and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to work in quietness and to eat their own bread"* (*2Thess 3,11-12*). What Paul taught others he and his co-workers did himself: *"For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example. We were not disorderly when we were with you, nor did we eat anyone's food without paying for it. On the contrary, we worked day and night, laboring and toiling so that we would not be a burden to any of you"* (*2Thess 3,7-9*).

Again, God is the best example. He took the whole sorrow, toil and pain of the work of redemption on Himself. God gave his only Son to redeem us from the Fall. He did not put His burden on us but carried our burden to the

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<sup>49</sup>In many languages the plural of 'brother' or of 'sister' is used to group together all male and female children of the same parents. In German the old plural of 'sister', 'Geschwister' is the name for brothers and sisters. Often the Greek plural of 'adelphos' ('brother'), 'adelphoi' ('brothers' or 'brothers and sisters') is used to speak of brothers and sisters at the same time. There is no other word to mark brothers and sisters together. (The plural of sister 'adelphai' is only used for sisters.)

Cross. If theology loses the triune God, it loses God, who carried the burdens of His chosen people. Neither Islam nor Marxism, neither Buddhism nor Statism have anything to offer instead.

### God's Work is Divided Labor

3. *The work of the triune God is divided work.* The Persons of the triune God divide their labor and do not all have the same task and job, as *1 Cor 12,4-6* clearly shows. Because their work is different, yet directed to one goal, the Trinity demonstrates what true fellowship in love and help, word and discussion, plan and fulfillment means, even prior to Creation. This is the infallible *diversity in unity*. Only if you have diversity in unity and unity in diversity, only if you believe in the biblical *God of the uni-verse* (unity in diversity), work can be a way to serve each other. God wants men to serve each other, as the Persons of the Trinity serve each other. We depend on each other because we have different callings, different abilities, different gifts, and different tasks. The emphasis on the gifts of the Spirit for the Church proves this beyond doubt. God does not want everybody to do the same – except keeping His commands – but wants a diversity of tasks, deeds, and actions, in the Church and elsewhere.

The family is an excellent example of the centrality of divided work in life. In the family, people learn the difference of the genders – or they do not learn it at all. In the family people learn the different work of parents and children, of old and young people – or they do not learn it at all. In the family people learn how different people are under one common God – or they do not learn to accept that men are different. In the family, people learn that life and work means to serve one another – or they never learn it.

It is interesting that Marx saw the division of labor as the Fall of mankind with the immediate result of marriage and private ownership. Man was created through his labor, but the alienation of man from work took place through the division of labor. Exploitation comes through divided work, through marriage and through private ownership. (By the way: Marx talks about the introduction of divided labor, marriage and private ownership as the ‘economic fall’ using the German technical term (‘Sündenfall’) for the Fall of man recorded in Gen 3. He consciously put his ‘fall’ in place of the biblical Fall which would be evidence enough that he founded a revival religion, not just an economic theory. It takes as much faith to believe in the biblical Fall as it does to believe in the Marxist fall.)

Marx was right in seeing that there is no marriage and no private ownership without the division of labor. But because he calls sin what the Bible declares to be the good Creation of God, he cannot offer any help to over-

come exploitation. His only help is his prophecy that one day the division of labor will end. He wrote:

“In a higher phase of the Communist society, after the enslaving submission of individuals under the division of labor and with it the contrast between intellectual and bodily work have disappeared; after work is no longer a means to live but has become itself the first condition of life; after all springs of collective wealth flow fuller through the development of the individuals and his powers of productivity; only then can the narrow bourgeois horizon of justice be crossed and the society can write on its banner: Everyone according to his abilities, everyone according to his needs!”<sup>50</sup>

Marx never explained how this will be possible without the division of labor. He never answered the question whether the end of divided labor means that everybody has to do the same. He never answered how a society will function without divided labor. He just prophesied his unitarian hope because he hated the triune God, the source of all true diversity.

### God's Work is Service to one Another

*In the Trinity the Persons work for each other. In and after Creation, God works for Creation.* Work is never only work for the benefit of the one working. It is always at the same time work for oneself and for others. It is the triune God who makes it possible that work for oneself and work for others do not stand in opposition to each other but always go hand in hand. As God's work towards His own glory is always at the same time work for another Person of the Trinity and/or for His Creation, so man's work is designed to help himself and to help others.

*Work is service.* Our languages have taken over this concept under Christian influence. We use the Latin word for servant, ‘minister’, to name the pastor as well as a politician in high position. How can the worker in a position of authority get the honorary title ‘servant’? Because the highest authority, Jesus Christ Himself, is a servant. We talk about ‘civil service’, about military service, about ‘length of service’ and ‘years of service’ instead of years of work.

Therefore the wages are never used for the worker only.

“The New Testament does not underestimate the fact that work serves to provide one's own costs of living (Eph 4,28; 1Thess 4,11; 2Thess 3,8, 12).

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<sup>50</sup>Ibid. vol. 19. p. 21 (In German the sentence is even more complicated. That is typically for Marx.)

But on the other side, the wages are not only intended for the one doing the work.”<sup>51</sup>

A fixed part of the income, the tithe, belongs to God. The community and the State may lawfully take taxes (even though surely not as much as today). Whoever does not pay for the living of his family, including his parents, is worse than the heathen (*1Tim 5,8; Mk 7,9-13*). There are other social duties.

The best example is Paul’s admonition to former thieves: “He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need” (Eph 4,28). Paul even does not mention that the former thief lives on his income, although this is implied. Paul only talks about the possibility to help others if you work.

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<sup>51</sup>Hermann Cremer. *Arbeit und Eigentum in christlicher Sicht*. op. cit. p. 11



## **A Biblical View of the Law of God (1995)<sup>52</sup>**

1. No man can live without law. It is never a question of law versus no law or of God's Law versus no law, but always a battle between God's Law and the different laws of peoples, religions and ideologies.

2. The question is not, therefore, whether someone wants to submit to a law or not, but only which law is binding for him: "the standards of the nations" or the Law of God (Ez 11,12; see Jer 10,3, 8; Lev 18,3-5). This also continues to be valid for Christians, who should not derive their standards from other religions, other cultures or from their environment, but from God and his Law alone.

3. The centrality of ethics for the definition and essence of a religion can be demonstrated by several languages in which the word for what we today call 'religion' was the same word as for 'law'. The meaning of the term 'religion' in its modern sense is the result of the French Revolution and the Enlightenment. In the Middle Ages and before, the term 'lex' ('law') was used more often than any other term to give a common name to the different religions.

4. God's rules are rooted in God's character. Therefore God's characteristics, as depicted in the Old and NT, correspond with God's Law and the word of God. Although God alone is "holy" (Rev 15,4), "good" (Mark 10,18) and "righteous" (2Chr 12,6; Ps 11,7), "the Law" is also "holy, righteous und good" (Romans 7,12), because it stems from the mouth of God.

5. No view of biblical Law can be valid in which the Law is not fully seen as the very Word of God equal to any other part of the Bible. The Law is no lower part of the Bible.

6. Antisemitism is only possible where the OT, especially OT Law, has been put aside. A love for the OT and its Law is the best protection against Antisemitism.

7. Did Jesus replace the Law by love? Was the cruel OT replaced by the loving NT? How could this be possible since the central command of the NT, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself", is an OT quotation? For Paul the Decalogue and "every commandment" is governed by love (Rom 13,8-10) and only states what love will do. One who really loves will never steal, murder, covet or commit adultery! If Christians do not return to this

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<sup>52</sup>Reprinted from Chalcedon Report Nr. 367 (Febr 1996): 16-18

rationale and motivation for the whole Law they will continue to apologize for the Law of God.

8. Jesus always used the OT to refute the Pharisees. He again and again rebuked the Pharisees and scribes for misinterpreting, misusing and rejecting the OT and its Law. This can be seen especially in Mk 7,1-5 (Mt 15,1-13) and Mt 23,23. “You have a fine way to set aside the commandments of God in order to observe your own traditions” (Mk 7,9).

9. The same can be found in the Sermon on the Mount. The list of subjects each beginning with “You have heard it said ... But I say unto you ...” (Mt 5,21-48) is introduced by a clear statement that Jesus came to fulfill the Law better than the Pharisees did (Mt 5,17). He came to establish even “the least of these commandments” (Mt 5,19, read Mt 5,17-20). When Jesus tells His hearers, for example, “Whosoever looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart” (Mt 5,28), he does not invent a new concept of inner sin against an outward orientation of the OT, but reminds his hearers that the Decalogue not only contains the seventh commandment, but also the tenth (Ex 20,17; Dtn 5,21).

10. Without the Law, there would be no sin (Rom 4,15; Rom 5,13; Rom 7,8; 1Cor 15,56). Therefore, the role of the Law is to reveal sin (Rom 3,20; 7,7, 9-10; Gal 2,19). Thus it becomes clear that violating the Law is a clear-cut fact independent of any personal feelings or emotions. God asks us to do only what He commands us to do in his revelation. Only those things are forbidden, which are forbidden by the Law of God (Dtn 10,12-14). Whoever goes beyond what God has defined as sin, declares himself to be a legislator equal to God (Jam 4,12) and at the same time makes the law a human-made and unbearable yoke (Mt 23,4; Acts 15,10).

11. There is no natural law without revelation. The heathen are “without the law” (Rom 2,12); they are “Gentiles who do not have the law” (Rom 2,14). If instead a so-called natural law takes the place of God’s law in writing, then it is, in the end, the decision of the philosophers or lawyers (humanistic ethics), of the church (Catholic ethics) or of the theologians (Lutheran ethics), what natural law really includes, and which biblical standards are still in force and which are not. The result of the teaching of the natural law is normally that the ‘Zeitgeist’ or the present state law becomes the law of God.

12. The Law cannot create eternal life or salvation and thus believers do not have their eternal life from the Law. This is even more true for those who are spiritually dead (Gal 3,21). The Law can not revive. Where sin rules, the Law can only bring about death, but not revive the dead to life. This is already made clear in the OT (e. g. Hab 1,4). The introduction of

the Decalogue proves that the grace and the covenant of God come first and the Law second. Man can only live according to the Law under the grace of God and after receiving forgiveness through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

13. Gospel and Law only stand against each other if 'law' is understood as salvation by the Law, but not if the Law is understood as God's written Law in the Old and New Testament. In 1Tim 1,9-11 and Rom 2,12-15, Paul sees the pronouncement of the details of the Law and God's judgment on specific sins as part of his "gospel".

14. The Law does not improve those who have come to know it, but only drives them deeper into sin. Without the Spirit of God, even the Christian can at best want to do good, but not do it (Rom 7). If God does not help through his Spirit (Rom 8,3-4) and fulfill His Law in us, then we as Christians are also able to commit the worst. The abolition of the Law would not have eliminated the dilemma of Rom 7. Then God would have changed his own holy standards and confessed that even He could not change man. But now God fulfills his own Law in us through the Holy Spirit. Thus, both requirements are kept: God's holy unchangeable commandments are still valid together with the fact that only God can keep them! Rom 8,3-4 is therefore the fulfillment of the OT promise of a new covenant, where God's Spirit puts God's Law into the heart of His people (Ez 18,31; 36,25-27; Jer 31,3; Hebr 8,10; 10,16).

15. The Law regulates the covenant between God and man. The Law is embodied in God's covenant with man. In many texts, the term "covenant" is used for "law" and vice versa (e. g. Hos 8,1; 2Chr 34,14; Ps 78,10; Dtn 28,69, 58).

16. All covenants in the history of salvation (e. g. Noah, Abraham, Mose, David, Jesus) are eternal, because God's oath and promise are irrevocable. God's promises remain in force, and from time to time, new promises are added to the old ones. Therefore, the New Testament takes it for granted that all Christians of today are at the same time included in God's covenant with Noah, Abraham, Mose, David and Jesus Christ. The New Covenant is more glorious than the Old Covenant, just as every period of the history of salvation excels former periods of its glory and extent of revelation. Every progressive step in God's history of salvation leads to changes in how God's covenant with men is put into practice, but neither do God's moral laws change, nor the spiritual principles underlying the outward practice of the covenant.

17. The fate of any given people is decided by its attitude towards God's commandments. This is especially obvious in the covenants described in

Lev 26 and Dtn 27-32, which are connected with curse and blessing. The commandments of God and their application leads people to advancement and growth (Dtn 28,13). The violation of God's commandments leads to decline and dependency (Dtn 28,43-44). The texts of the OT dealing with curse and blessing are often mentioned in the NT (e. g. Rom 10,6-8, 19; 12,19; 15,10; Hebr 10,28-31).

18. There is a difference between moral and ceremonial law which is visible in the OT and rooted in the NT (e. g. 1Cor 7,19; Rom 2,28-29). With the moral Law also its punishments remain in force. The regulations for punishment for violating the ceremonial Law are fulfilled together with the fulfillment of the ceremonial Law. They should no longer be applied.

19. The ceremonial Law is fulfilled in the life of Jesus Christ, but this must not lead to the conclusion that it had been of inferior quality, that ceremonies as such are unspiritual or that the principles on which the ceremonial Law are based on may be neglected (e. g. the sweeping out of the leaven, the circumcision of the heart or keeping Sunday holy).

20. The Old Testament rules for a just jurisprudence (e. g. two witnesses, without favoritism, sentence only because of laws) are the divine frame for a just jurisdiction for all peoples. Therefore, these rules are often quoted in the New Testament, and they are also applied to other institutions of the covenant, like the church.

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22. There is no question, that in the OT God's rule extends not only to the king of Israel, but also to all rulers of the world. Theocracy means in the first place that all authorities in their official acting are bound to God's word; secondly, it means the conviction that it is the church's duty to judge the actions of the authorities according God's word and to exhort the authorities prophetically. 'Theocracy' should not be mixed up with 'hierocracy' ('ruling of the priests'). God can rule peoples and their State directly and through His Law without the necessity that the institutionalized Church rules over the state. The biblical division between Church and State must not lead to a division between God and the State and between God's Law and the State.

23. In the OT Law, different levels for a certain law (from the overall principle until the concrete example or case law) can be distinguished: 1) Basic principle; 2) Basic law; 3) Regulations for carrying out; 4) Case law for human beings; 5) Case law for animals. Let's take the example of 'reward': 1st level: "God's decree" (Rom 1,32); 2nd level: "each will be rewarded" (1Cor 3,8) 3rd level: Each man will be rewarded for his own

work; 4th level: case law application to the elders; 5th level: case law with the oxen (1Tim 5,17-18 contains the forth, fifth and third level).

24. God has given different covenant forms of government: self-government (self-discipline), family, church, economy and the state. Each of these governments gets its authority by being enacted by God's Law, is under God's Law and yet has a different set of structure, tasks, goals, rules and punishments.

25. God's Law will play a central role in the Millennium. Normally it is the postmillennialists who emphasize this. But all eschatological positions must explain when, where and how the Law of God will play such a prominent role among all the nations, as e. g. in Mi 4,1-4; Is 2,2-4; Is 51,4-5; Ez 37,24. According to Mi 4,1-4; Is 2,2-4 there will be political and personal peace and there will be just, safe and widespread personal ownership, which always go together.

This is true, no matter to which eschatological position one holds and does not in itself recommend a certain position.



# **God's Law in the Millennium: Where A-, Pre- and Postmillennialists Should Agree (1992)<sup>53</sup>**

## God's Law in Old Testament Texts on the Millennium

While there is a broad variety of opinion concerning the so-called Millennium, one is astonished that more or less the same texts are used by all parties.

The following article does not want to discuss the question of the Millennium itself. It does not give exegetical arguments for any position. But the article wants to show that there is a vital aspect of the Millennium which is often lost in the heat of the chronological and general debate on the Millennium.

If someone does not believe in any Millennium on earth at all but in a heavenly one, he still believes in the Millennium and should read this article. (The term 'amillennialist', from Greek 'a' = 'without'/'no', was coined by the enemies of this position. Most amillennialists would emphasize that they also have a Millennium and do believe in texts like Rev 20,1-9, but that they have a different understanding of it than pre- and postmillennialists.)

What I want to emphasize here is the central role of the Law of God in the Millennium. Normally it is those postmillennialists who believe in God's sanctions in history according to the Law (e. g. Deu. 27-30) who emphasize this. But all other positions have to explain also when, where and how the Law of God will play such a prominent role among all the nations. Take the best known text on the Millennium ('swords into plowshares'):

"But in the last days it will come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the LORD will be established in the top of the mountains, and it will be exalted above the hills; and people will flow unto it. And many nations will come, and say: Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths. *For the Law will go forth of Zion*, and the Word of

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<sup>53</sup>Reprinted from "God's Law in the Millennium: Where A-, Pre- and Postmillennialists Should Agree". Chalcedon Report No. 328 (Nov 1992): 11-12

the LORD from Jerusalem. And He will judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they will beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks. Nation will not lift up a sword against nation, neither will they learn war any more. But they will sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none will make them afraid; for the mouth of the LORD of hosts hath spoken it” (*Mi 4,1-4*; with the exception of the last two sentences, the same text is found in *Is 2,2-4*).

Postmillennialists believing in God’s sanctions in history will argue that here two things are the result of the spreading of the Law through evangelism. There will be political and personal peace and there will be just, safe and widespread personal ownership (which, by the way, always go together).

Other texts on the Millennium also teach the central role of the Law of God during that period. (I use texts which normally are used by a-, pre-, and postmillennialists alike to prove their position. If you judge that one of the texts speaks about eternity or the present Church etc., just use your own texts on the Millennium mentioning the Law of God. Not even within each position is there final agreement concerning the question as to which texts speaks about which time.)

Take, for example, the following two texts:

“Hearken unto me, my people; and give ear unto me, O my nation. *For the Law will proceed from me*, and I will make my judgment to rest for a light of the people. My righteousness is near; my salvation is gone forth, and mine arms will judge the people; the isles shall wait upon me, and on mine arm they will trust.” (*Is 51,4-5*)

“And David my servant will be king over them; and they all will have one shepherd. *They will also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them.*” (*Ez 37,24*)

*Other postmillennialists* do not believe in God’s sanctions in history and see the Millennium as a result of evangelism *only*. But those other postmillennialists have to explain the same texts. Why is it that the preaching and acceptance of the Law will change the world? If peace will come when people accept God as Savior and His Law, does this not explain why there is no peace now? And if the Law is the only thing that can and will bring peace in the future, does this not bear on the present time too? If a postmillennialist does not accept the political aspect of the Millennium, he still has to see that the Millennium means that God will teach all nations His Law. If He does this personally one by one only, He still does it. *Let those post-*

*millennialists teach the individual person every aspect of God's Law and watch the results!*

If postmillennialists do not take into account the role of the Law in the Millennium and its bearing on the character and purpose of the Law in history in general, they cannot argue validly that their reason for doing this is that they do not want to become postmillennialists believing in God's sanctions in history. They rather have to deal with their antinomian (from Greek 'anti' = 'against' and 'nomos' = 'law') position, which does not allow them to realize the central role of the Law in the Millennium, even if their favorite texts on the subject teach it.

*Premillennialists* mostly argue against postmillennialists that the Millennium is the result of God's grace, not of men's work. If Jesus comes back before the Millennium, He will be the one who inaugurates it. If He comes after the Millennium, they argue, it is men who inaugurate it. (No postmillennialist would accept this description of his position. He would prove God to be the central figure of the Millennium just by the very texts we are discussing at the moment. But this is not our topic here.) If Jesus comes back before the Millennium, Mic 2,1-4 and Is 2,2-4 still mean the same. For a premillennialist they mean that Christ will spread the Law (here the Old Testament Law, as we discuss Old Testament texts). It is through the Law that Christ will change the lives of the nations. It is through the Law that Christ will bring peace and wealth to the earth. The Millennium does not appear through a miracle, in the sense that there will be peace without anybody knowing how it developed, but the Millennium comes through the miracle that God spreads His Law to all peoples and causes their hearts to accept the Law.

If premillennialists do not take into account the role of the Law in the Millennium and its bearing on the character and purpose of the Law in history in general, they cannot argue validly, that their reason for doing this, is that they do not want to become postmillennialists. They rather have to deal with their antinomian position, which does not allow them to realize the central role of the Law in the Millennium, even if their favorite texts on the subject teach it.

*Amillennialists* will argue that the Millennium either is a description of the heavenly state of the Church, or is to be understood spiritually as description of the Church on earth. If this is true, our texts have an important message: the mark of the Church on earth or in Heaven is that God teaches His Law to her and she obeys! If the Millennium is to be understood spiritually, the lesson of the texts is that to be spiritual means to be changed by God and His Law and to live according to His Law!

If amillennialists do not take into account the role of the Law in the Millennium and its bearing on the character and purpose of the Law in history in general, they cannot argue validly, that their reason for doing this, is that they do not want to become pre- or postmillennialists. They rather have to deal with their antinomian position, which does not allow them to realize the central role of the Law in the Millennium, even if their favorite texts on the subject teach it.

### God's Law and Chronological Questions

In the discussions about chronological questions (important in the right place), the central role of God's eternal Law has often been forgotten.

Take as an example Is 42:

"... He will bring forth judgment unto truth. He will not fail nor be discouraged, till He has set judgment in the earth: *and the isles will wait for His Law*. ... the LORD ... will keep thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles ..." (*Is 42,3b-4, 6b*)

"The LORD is well pleased for His righteousness' sake; He *will magnify the Law, and make it honorable*." (*Is 42,21*)

Are Isaiah and God speaking here about the present Church age or about some time still in the future today? Has Jesus, "my servant" (*Is 42,1*), fulfilled this on the Cross completely, did He begin to fulfill it there, or will He begin to fulfill it in the Millennium, or can you find all elements in *Is 42*? The question is important (and I believe in the last position finding several elements here and teaching a growing fulfillment between the Cross and Great Judgment Day), but this chronological questions may not eliminate the overall message of the text: Through His "servant" Jesus Christ, God will bring His Law to the last islands of the earth. Through Jesus God brings His lawful judgment to all nations. Through Jesus God magnifies the Law and makes it honorable. If this is the task of Jesus Christ, it is His task in all ages.

If someone believes that this took place completely through the Cross and the Resurrection, how can he still think that Jesus is the end of the Law? Must he not realize that God magnified His Law through Jesus and wants it to be spread to the most distant islands? The same is true if someone believes that *Is 42* concerns the present Church age. Where are his books on the Law and its details if the Church is to bring it everywhere?

If someone believes that *Is 42* speaks about Heaven, why does he not teach that it will be a place where the Law of God will be done perfectly and provide a perfect world, showing that the Law is eternal and 'does

work'? If someone believes this to take place during the Millennium he should take into account everything said about the Millennium in this article.

If an eschatological text is speaking about the Law of God, we should be very careful that no antinomian principles lead us to discuss every aspect of the text except the centrality of the Law and its bearing on Christian ethics. *The Law of God and God's righteousness, judgment and vengeance have a central place in all eschatological texts. This has to be explained by a-, pre- and postmillennialists (and all their subdivisions) alike. Whoever does not speak about the Law when he speaks about (realized or future) eschatology is missing the point, no matter which position he holds.*



## **'Lex' (Law) as Another Word for 'Religion': A Lesson from the Middle Ages (1992)<sup>54</sup>**

Preface by Rousas J. Rushdoony: "We regard this as one of the most important analyses we have published."

The centrality of ethics and law for the definition and essence of a religion can be demonstrated by several languages in which the word for what we today call 'religion' was the same word as for 'law'.

The old German word for religion 'e' or 'ewa' means 'godly law' or 'order'. Other religions were seen as other laws. After the Christianization of the German tribes this word and meaning was not lost at once. 'E' became the name for 'testament' in 'the Old Testament' ('*diu alte e*') and 'the New Testament' ('*diu niuwe e*').<sup>55</sup>

The meaning of the term 'religion' in its modern sense is the result of the French Revolution and the Enlightenment. As Ernst Feil has shown<sup>56</sup>, the term was not the major term to group together different faiths and gods. In the Middle Ages and before, 'lex' was the term which was used more often than any other to give a common name to the Christian, Jewish, Muslim<sup>57</sup> and sometimes other religions.

Augustine could speak of '*christiana lex*' (De vera religione 27,20) when speaking about the Christian religion or the Christian faith compared to other 'laws' and religions. '*Religio*' is for Augustine only one word among others to name other religions.

John of Salisbury (1115-1180) also uses 'lex' parallel to '*religionis cultus*' or '*fidei professio*' (Policratus IV, 6; VI, 17; VIII, 13). Raimundus

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<sup>54</sup>Reprinted from "'Lex' (Law) As Another Word for 'Religion': A Lesson Learned from the Middle Ages". Chalcedon Report No. 320 (March 1992): 7-8 = "'Lex' (Law) As Another Word for 'Religion': A Lesson Learned from the Middle Ages". Calvinism Today (now: Christianity and Society) 2 (1992) 2: 5+14

<sup>55</sup>Hans Eggers. Deutsche Sprachgeschichte I: Das Althochdeutsche. rowohlts deutsche enzyklopädie 185/186. Rowohlt: Reinbek, 1963. p. 125 and Günter Lanczkowski. Einführung in die Religionswissenschaft. Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft: Darmstadt, 1980. pp. 22-23

<sup>56</sup>Ernst Feil. Religio: Die Geschichte eines neuzeitlichen Grundbegriffs vom Frühchristentum bis zur Reformation. Forschungen zur Kirchen- und Dogmengeschichte 36. Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht: Göttingen, 1986

<sup>57</sup>See Ernst Feil. Religio. *ibid.* pp. 233+274-275

Lullus uses ‘*lex*’ and ‘*fides*’ (‘faith’) interchangeably (e. g. *Liber de Gentili et Tribus Sapientibus* 1, 94b).

Pope Pius II (1405-1464) uses ‘*lex*’ in his book comparing Islam with Christianity. For him the ‘*lex mahumetana*’ (*Lettera a Maometto* II 109+115+116) cannot be the base for any union, because the ‘*christiana lex*’ (115+158-159) is much older.

This use of ‘*lex*’ is not only found in orthodox circles. Roger Bacon (1220-after 1292), trying to harmonize several religions with the help of astrology, still holds the ‘*lex Christiana*’ (*Opus majus* II, 388ff, compare 386), which is the Christian religion, to be superior. He calls pagan religions ‘*lex Antichristi*’ (II, 370)<sup>58</sup>.

Erich Feil has given more examples for the time from Augustine to the eve of the Reformation. As I do not know of any investigation into the Reformers’ works showing which term they used to denote different religions it is hard to say whether this use of ‘*lex*’ went on in and after the Reformation. (One thing is sure: the term ‘*religio*’ was not used for this purpose.)

The meaning of the Roman term ‘*religio*’ was vague from the beginning, and its original meaning is still discussed today, lying somewhere between ‘to be bound (to God)’ (e. g. Laktanz) and ‘serving (a God) diligently’ (e. g. Cicero).

The term ‘*religio*’ made sense when used in a specific Christian context and was used as one term among others parallel to words like ‘*cultus*’ or ‘*ritus*’ speaking of the Christian serving God in general or in a church service. So Augustine and Luther used the term ‘*religio*’ to speak of the Christian relying on God and serving him. But the term was and is rather poor for comparing different religions with each other. ‘Law’ instead shows where the real differences lie and that there is no such thing as a theoretical religion but that every religion has a law system which reflects its gods and takes shape in culture.

The Enlightenment did the right thing – judging from its own perspective – to make the term religion prominent in its modern sense, because it was so vague. From this time on, Christians lack a term which really designates the major difference between their faith and other religions.

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<sup>58</sup>See especially Erich Heck. *Roger Bacon: Ein mittelalterlicher Versuch einer historischen und systematischen Religionswissenschaft. Abhandlungen zur Philosophie, Psychologie und Pädagogik* 13. H. Bouvier: Bonn, 1957. pp. 92-95

Peter Antes has shown that religions normally use an overall term for all faiths. This term derives from their own judgment of other religions and defines the concepts they believe to be central for the comparison of religions<sup>59</sup>.

The Muslim word used in place of the Western term religion is '*din*' (pl. '*adyan*'). It has a wide range of meanings, all showing what is central to Islam: 'judgment, obedience, vengeance, ordinance, dominion and guidance'<sup>60</sup>.

The Sanskrit term used in place of religion is the well-known term '*dharma*' used also for the central idea of Hinduism. '*Dharma*' is the law of the world, which fixes the circles of reincarnation. It again contains a variety of meanings: 'righteousness, the right thing, law, norm, the way'<sup>61</sup>.

Rousas Rushdoony wrote in his Institutes: "... in any culture the source of the law is the god of society"<sup>62</sup>. Following this line in several publications<sup>63</sup> I tried to prove from the Bible that a religion can have an atheistic faith. Any law rival to the word of God is a religion. Marxism and National Socialism and their laws are my main examples. There is no law without religion and no religion without law. If we still used the term 'law' when speaking about religions, everybody would realize this without discussion and Christians would understand that Humanism, Marxism or the vision of New Age are rival religions to Biblical Christianity like Islam or Buddhism.

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<sup>59</sup>Peter Antes. "'Religion' einmal anders". *Temenos: Studies in Comparative Religion* 14 (1978): 184-197

<sup>60</sup>ibid. pp. 189-192

<sup>61</sup>Ibid. pp. 192-194

<sup>62</sup>Rousas J. Rushdoony. *Institutes of Biblical Law*. Presbyterian and Reformed: Phillipsburgh (NJ), 1973. p. 4

<sup>63</sup>E. g. On Marxism: *Marxismus – Opium für das Volk*. Schwengeler: Berneck, 1990; "Der Kommunismus als Lehre vom Tausendjährigen Reich", *Factum* 11/12/1986: 12-19;

on National Socialism: "National Socialism ...". *Calvinism Today (now: Christianity and Society)* 2 (1991) 2 (April): 16-23; the same article in *Symbiotica: The Journal of the Institute for Christian Economics Europe* 1 (1991): 2: 23-29; "Die Religion des Nationalsozialismus", *Factum* 11/12/1989: 506-511; "Adolf Hitler und kein Ende", *Factum* 6/1989: 252-255; in general: "Reinkarnation und Karma in der Anthroposophie", *Factum* 11/12/1988: 473-482



## What is Legalism? (1993)

‘Legalism’ is rapidly becoming a slogan used to reproach anyone who appeals to Biblical Law. Is the term Biblical? Does the Scripture express such criticism? Since the word itself – a corresponding Greek or Hebrew word, that is – does not occur in the Bible, those who use it as a term of reproach ought to define its Biblical substance.

Although I would prefer to eliminate the expression from our vocabulary altogether, I could agree to limit it to the meaning given it by the Church Fathers, ‘the endeavor to achieve justification by works of the law’. This is, however, neither what is usually meant, nor is it suitable.

Gordon H. Clark assumes that in the course of theological history, ‘legalism’ described the opinion that man could win salvation by keeping the Law. The opposite then is salvation by faith. Clark continues, “In this century the term legalism has been given a new meaning. Situation ethics despises rules and laws. Anyone who conscientiously obeys God’s commandments is regarded as legalistic. Therefore Joseph Fletcher approves the breaking everyone of the Ten Commandments. He thus transfers the evil connotation legalism to the morality of Protestantism.”<sup>64</sup>

It is sad that this is true not only for situation ethics, but also for Fundamentalists who believe the Law to have been abolished and who then declare any ethical system built on the Law legalistic. Legalism cannot, however, be overcome by lawlessness. Greg L. Bahnsen writes, “The answer to legalism is not easy believism, evangelism without the need for repentance, the pursuit of a mystical second blessing in the Spirit, or a Christian life devoid of righteous instruction and guidance. Legalism is countered by the Biblical understanding of true ‘life in the Spirit.’ In such living, God’s Spirit is the gracious author of new life, who convicts us of our sin and of our misery over against the violated law of God, who unites us to Christ in salvation that we might share His holy life, who enables us to understand the guidance given by God’s word, and who makes us to grow by God’s grace into people who better obey the Lord’s commands.”<sup>65</sup> Alfred de

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<sup>64</sup>Gordon H. Clark. “Legalism”. p. 385 in: Carl F. Henry (ed.). *Baker’s Dictionary of Christian Ethics*. Baker Book House: Grand Rapids (MI), 1973; reprinted in Gordon H. Clark. *Essays on Ethics and Politics*. Trinity Foundation: Jefferson (MD), 1992. p. 150

<sup>65</sup>Greg L. Bahnsen. *By this Standard: The Authority of God’s Law Today*. Institute for Christian Economics: Tyler (TX), 1985. pp. 67-68

Quervain writes in a similar strain, “It has been said, that binding our actions to Scripture creates legalism, that man is only free of legalism when he gives himself the law. The Scriptures, however, teach us the reality, that he who in his own pride uses the Law according to his own opinion, *acts legalistically*. That is the case whether he intends to keep the letter of the law or whether he abandons the written law and sets up his own.”<sup>66</sup>

The Scripture is never legalistic. No one who derives his values from the Word of God can be considered legalistic. Emil Brunner expressed this well, without, however, applying the principle in his own ethical system, “Just as the Scripture without the Spirit is Orthodoxy, the Spirit without the Scripture is false Antinomism and fanaticism”<sup>67</sup>.

Legalism should never be used as a slogan against those who speak of God’s commandments, but must be defined according to the Bible and then rejected accordingly.

If we interpret ‘legalism’ to mean the misuse of the Law, we must explain, using the Scripture, how the Law can be misused and how it should be used. For this reason, the two tables show five forms of legalism as well as five proper applications of the Law.

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<sup>66</sup>Alfred de Quervain. *Die Heiligung. Ethik Erster Teil*. Evangelischer Verlag: Zollikon, 1946<sup>2</sup>. p. 259

<sup>67</sup>Emil Brunner. *Das Gebot und die Ordnungen*. Zwingli Verlag: Zürich, 1939<sup>4</sup>. p. 79

**What is Legalism?**

The New Testament describes five ways to misuse the Law

1. Keeping the Law in order to be justified and saved (See Rom. 3:21-4:25, Eph. 2:9-10)
2. Imposing the ceremonial law on others (Gal. 4:9-11, Col. 2:16-17, the Book of Hebrews)
3. Adding human rules and traditions to divine Law. (Mk. 7:1-15, Mt. 15:1-9)
4. Forgetting essentials in favor of lesser matters (Mt 23:23)
5. Being only concerned with external obedience to God's Law (Mk. 7: 18-23, Mt. 15:15-20, Mt. 23:27-28)

**What Legalism is Not**

The New Testament does not condemn the following:

1. Assuming that God's moral law is incomparably good, just, holy and spiritual (Rom. 7:12, 14, 1 Tim. 1:8. Compare Psalm 19, 8-12, Psalm 119)
2. Wishing to keep God's moral commandments in a spirit of sonship (not a spirit of slavery) and in the power of the Holy Spirit. (Rom. 8:2-4, 3:31)
3. Admonishing others on the basis of divine Law, when this is done with the right attitude (Eph. 6:1-4)
4. Appealing to the moral Law of God (James 2:6-12, Rom. 13:8-10)
5. Exercising church discipline (Gal. 5:18-23; 1 Tim. 1:5-11)



## **The Pharisees among us (1993)**

One of the first contentions which I experienced as pastor of a church concerned the outfit to be worn by a preacher in the pulpit. Fortunately, I was not myself the object of the criticism, but a guest preacher who had appeared – in the heat of summer – with neither tie nor suit jacket. Several members insisted that the Scriptures taught that a preacher must be properly dressed when standing in the pulpit. I was consternated, for the Bible mentions neither our modern pastor, nor our concept of ‘Sunday’ nor the question of proper dress. How can three issues not even mentioned in the Bible be made into more important standards of a preacher’s spiritual condition than the contents of his sermon?

But there are thousands of examples. Every Christian discovers that his brothers in Christ make demands not found in the Bible. This is no new development but seems to be part of pious nature to be dissatisfied with God’s commandments and to wish to complete them with new regulations.

The contention in the New Testament often concerned the Jewish traditions accompanying the Old Testament. Paul expressly rejects these ‘traditions of the fathers’, which he had fervently defended before his conversion (Gal. 1:14), but he does not reject the Old Testament itself. He espouses the Law continually, but renounces the demands of Jewish tradition which had added to it.

This conflict is particularly apparent in the Gospels, which report Jesus’ arguments with the scribes and the Pharisees. (The Sadducees largely denied both the oral traditions and much essential Old Testament subject matter, such as the resurrection of the dead).

Many people have only the vaguest understanding of the dissension between Jesus and the religious authorities of His day. Some consider them merely theological disagreements typical of mankind, while others believe the term ‘Pharisees’ to simply designate the Lord’s enemies, and are surprised to discover that many Pharisees and priests later believed in Him (Acts 6:7, 15:5; see also Paul’s conversion – he had also been a Pharisee, Acts 23:6).

There is probably no Scripture in the New Testament which more clearly demonstrates the essence of Jesus’ conflict with the Pharisees as the account in Mark 7:1-13 (or Mt. 15:1-9). The text liberates us from the domination of human rules and traditions, for no human tradition, no local culture can claim divine status. Only God’s Word is compulsory on all men.

Both Testaments sharply contrast the tradition of divine law with God's Word itself, for tradition, raised to the status of criterion, makes it ineffective (Mk. 7:13). Jesus quotes Isaiah 29:13: "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: 'This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.' For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men ... " (Mk. 7:6-8).

The text in Mark intensifies the accusation that the Pharisees value their own tradition above the Bible (the Old Testament). Jesus begins, "For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men ... (7:8). Human religious tradition becomes essential; God's Word, which one supposedly preaches, is abandoned.

A possible solution, one might imagine, would be to follow both the tradition and the Word of God. However, this is impossible. Jesus augments his objection, saying, "You reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition" (7:9). In order to keep concrete traditions, man must annul concrete commandments of the Lord. Divine commandments and the pious regulations of religious traditions cannot co-exist peacefully, nor do they complement each other, but invalidate each other. Whoever binds men to anything which God has not commanded, has, willingly or not, abrogated God's decision.

Another possible solution might be to retain only those traditions which leave God's Word untouched. This is not possible, either, as Jesus' final amplification shows, "... making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down. And many such things you do" (7:13). The very existence of the tradition casts doubt not only on the individual commandment, but on the Word of God in its entirety.

What if every driver were to add his own rules and exceptions to traffic law? Traffic law would no longer exist, for everyone would be able to justify himself with his own additional paragraphs. Every legal system exists on the basis of its law-giver's authority. He who makes laws binding on all men, declares himself to be God and casts doubt on God's legislative sovereignty. "He who speaks evil of a brother and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy (God). Who are you to judge another?" (James 4:11-12).

The Lord condemns the Pharisees and the Scribes, for example, for substituting their duty to support their parents with a special offering for the Temple, the 'korban' (Mk. 7:11-13). If then, one wished to do his duty, as God had commanded, then the priest would demand the sum for the Tem-

ple. The problem still exists in similar form. The responsibility for the family is often neglected, so that one can dedicate more time for ‘serving God’, since that is believed to be more important. Full-time Christian workers, above all, suffer under this difficulty, for they intend to give their all for the Kingdom of God (which also includes the family). God has, however, made the care of the family to a imperative of high priority (See 1 Tim. 5:8: “But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever”), but has never ordered us to give more than the tithe or to be continually in action at the family’s expense. He who does not rule his family well, is forbidden by Paul to become a leader in the church, no matter how much time he might invest in the church!

1 Corinthians 7:34 distinguishes between virgins, who, like Paul, can dedicate their energy to the Lord’s work and married women, who must care for the things of the world – “how she may please her husband”. As a bachelor, Paul could travel and even put his life at risk. As a married man, he would have been limited by other responsibilities.

Nowadays, modern Pharisees advocate additional laws in the Name of God in the ostensible endeavor to preach His Word. An anecdote told by C. H. Spurgeon illustrates the situation. An American related in his greeting to the Tabernacle, that he had given up smoking. Spurgeon replied, that he had often relaxed with a cigar, and had more than enough to do to keep the Ten Commandments, until he discovered an eleventh, “Thou shalt not smoke.” Being a convinced non-smoker myself, I do not intend to disregard smoking’s dangers for our health, but we must realize, that we are not dealing with divine law. C. Everett Koop, the Evangelical Surgeon General (Secretary of Health) to Ronald Reagan, set distorted priorities by campaigning against smoking, but not changing the abortion situation<sup>68</sup> – and that in the face of his own excellent book against abortion<sup>69</sup>, which, with the film of the same name, was the reason for his appointment to the office.<sup>70</sup> Other Christian voices, which cooperated in the call for Prohibition in the Twenties, guaranteed that the consumption of all alcoholic beverages was declared illegal, above and beyond God’s commandments, while

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<sup>68</sup>This is criticized by David Chilton. *Power in the Blood: A Christian Response to AIDS*. Wolgemuth & Hyatt: Brentwood (TN), 1987. pp. 93-96

<sup>69</sup>Francis Schaeffer, Charles Koop. *How Shall We Than Live?* 1981; German: Francis Schaeffer, Charles Koop. *Bitte, laß mich leben!*. Hänssler: Neuhausen, 1981

<sup>70</sup>See C. Everett Koop. “Unterwegs nach Auschwitz” (1977). S. 31-51 and Ronald Reagan. “Recht zum Leben: Abtreibung und Gewissen” (1983). S. 17-30 in: Ronald Reagan. *Recht zum Leben: Abtreibung und Gewissen*. Hänssler: Neuhausen, 1994

other, more serious ethical changes in American culture, were ignored by temperance advocates.

The Evangelical movement is also likely to renounce the legislation of divine ethics while practicing a tacit, but often more bitterly defended human ethics. Klaus Bockmühl has observed, “The subject of ethics often plays an insignificant role in the course offerings of Evangelical seminaries. This is astonishing, when one considers the strict morals and the exact behavioral regulations of many Evangelicals”<sup>71</sup>.

Eduard Böhl, whose significant Systematic Theology of the last century has lately been reprinted, emphasizes the importance of God’s Law, for only on its basis can Christians recognize false laws and traditions. “We may not bann the Law from the relationship between God and the believer; we may not seek new regulations for our behavior or make our own will to the standard of law. We have not been redeemed in order to live according to particular ethical rules or doctrines of perfection, but in order to obey God’s commandments (1 Cor. 7:19, Gal. 5:6, Rom. 8:4, 13:10). Although it is Scriptural, that the believer must be kept on the right road of sanctification by the Holy Spirit, the Spirit uses the Word of God, particularly the Ten Commandments as guiding principle and rule for our life.”<sup>72</sup>

It is much easier to live according to God’s commandments than to try to keep the multitude of pious traditions, which prescribe what a good Christian supposedly is to do or not do, to think or not to think. God’s commandments liberate us from this oh-so-pious but false legalism. Surely, we must oppose the liberal surrender of divine authority, but we must also see clearly, that the Bible also teaches that the Law is likewise abandoned when devout people add further pious standards and regulations to the few, but reasonable commandments given by God.

In order to avoid being misunderstood, let me note that this world requires natural laws which cannot be directly derived from the Word of God. Only the Law of God, however, may regulate the delegation of such legislation to human authorities and the limitations of that authority. God’s covenant, for example, gives parents the right to legislate laws for their children, as long as these laws correspond to God’s ideals of education and discipline. A parent’s rules are only valid for his own children, and only until the child attains the age of legal maturity (in the Old Testament, the age of twenty). Similarly, the State may pass only laws corresponding to the sphere of its God-given re-

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<sup>71</sup>Klaus Bockmühl. *Christliche Lebensführung: Eine Ethik der Zehn Gebote*. TVG. Brunnen: Giessen, 1993. p. 12

<sup>72</sup>Eduard Böhl. *Dogmatik: Darstellung der christlichen Glaubenslehre auf reformirt-kirchlicher Grundlage*. Scheffer: Amsterdam, 1887. S. 515 (reprinted 1995)

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sponsibilities, and the Church may regulate some aspects of congregational life, such as the liturgy, since God desires order in the worship service (1 Corinthians 14:33). The authority to pass laws for certain persons and certain situations 1. must be derived from the Law of God, 2. is only permissible within the limits of responsibility given by God to the legislating party, 3. must never contradict God's Law and 4. may never be declared obligatory on all men for all time.



## **Do absolute Values exist?**

### **A Lesson from Camus (1993)**

Many a Christian has experienced changes in his conversations with his friends about his faith. When explaining which values were particularly important to him in his personal life, as well as in the Church and in Society, the discussion used to concentrate on specific values and issues. Nowadays, such questions are often uninteresting, for the debate now revolves on the question of the individual's right to force his own values on another. The question of the universality of values has already arisen before specific values have been mentioned.

It is easy to claim that there are no absolutes. The question is, whether this assertion can be maintained. One does not need to search very long before ascertaining the personal values of one's opponent. He does not reject values altogether, but has his own ethical system.

Few philosophers have dared to completely think through the idea that there are no absolute values, and that everything is relative. One of the most significant was the French philosopher, Albert Camus (1913-1960), who molded a whole generation of students, although few were willing to go as far as he had gone.

Camus created a 'Philosophy of the Absurd', which rejected absolute values altogether. He was conscious of the consequences of a relative value system.

"If one believes in nothing, if nothing has meaning, and if we can confirm no values, everything is possible and nothing of importance. There is no For and no Against, the murderer is neither just nor unjust. One can light the furnaces as readily as one devotes care to the leper. Evil and virtue are by chance or whim."<sup>73</sup>

Almost none of our contemporaries would be prepared to accept the consequences of rejecting absolute values altogether – fortunately!

But Camus' apparently logical conclusion is not the last word on the subject. Can a human being live without morals? No, not even Camus! In his diaries, he wrote,

"If I had to write a moral dogma, the book would be 100 pages long, but 99 of them would be blank. On the last page, I would write, 'I know only one

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<sup>73</sup>Translated from Albert Camus, *Der Mensch in der Revolte*, (Reinbek: rororo, 1973), p. 9

duty, the duty to love.’ And to all else, I say No.”<sup>74</sup>

“Ultimately, I have chosen Liberty. For when justice cannot be realized, then Liberty protects the capacity to protest against injustice, and thus saves society.”<sup>75</sup>

Camus’ propositions contradict each other. If, according to the first statement, no meaning and no values exist, then the assertion that everything is equal in value cannot be made, for it evaluates, even if negatively. The contradiction in the second remark is more apparent. The ‘duty to love’ is a basic, absolute, ethical principle. The statement in the preceding sentence makes it no moral dogma, but shields it from discussion and scrutiny. Camus’ very insistence on preaching no ethical system makes his system absolute and non-questionable, his ‘duty’ the origin of all thought.

Besides, the idea that the duty to love is the highest norm, is the basic principle of Christian ethics. The atheist, Camus, does not surpass his Christian opponents, whatever he may mean by ‘love’.

The third quotation finally demonstrates that Camus indeed had an ethical system, which his Theory of the Absurd, however, renders undebatable. If everything were really relative, then Camus could not make the judgment given above, not even the judgment that everything is relative, since this statement would be relative as well. Camus then speaks of ‘injustice’, ‘the duty to love’ and of ‘liberty’ – definite ethical principles which he presents as non-ethical.

Camus’ example demonstrates that a person who claims to do without ethics may indeed teach an absolute ethical system. It also demonstrates that every human being has an ethical system, even if he believes that he has abolished it. Morals and ethics are necessary elements of human existence. Our thinking would otherwise have to be considered non-existent, for it consists of inner discussion, considerations and decisions. Finally, Camus is an example for the fact that ethical Absurdity can be postulated, but not thought out or lived.

The plays of the ‘Absurd Theater’<sup>76</sup>, which apply Camus’ philosophy, show how meaningless human existence is. A meaningless life, according to the playwrights, need not, however, be automatically worthless and unhappy. In his play *The Myth of Sisyphos*, Camus describes Sisyphos as a

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<sup>74</sup>Translated from Albert Camus, *Tagebücher 1935-1951* (diaries), (Reinbek: rororo, 1980), p. 36

<sup>75</sup>Ibid. p. 119

<sup>76</sup>See my article about Samuel Becketts ‘Waiting on Godot’: “Zum Weltbild des absurden Theaters”, *Factum* 2/1986: 8-10

ideal, who must as punishment push a stone uphill, only for it to roll back into the valley just before the goal.

“I leave Sisyphos at the foot of the mountain! His burden is to be found again and again. He teaches us the greater loyalty, which denies the gods, and rolls stones. He too believes that all is well. This universe, which knows no lords, seems neither infertile nor worthless to him. Each grain of the stone, each splinter of this eternal mountain, is for him alone a whole world. The battle against the mountain top may fill a human heart. We must hold Sisyphos for a happy man.”<sup>77</sup>

Which is to say, in Camus’ view, Sisyphos lives on his hate for the gods. The atheist finds the meaning of his life in the war against religion. That, however, is a religion which itself lends meaning to life.

This reflects our present situation. The rejection of Christian values gives rise to new ethical schemes, which prescribe new ethical values or adopt disguised Christian values, but vehemently claim not to assume absolute values at all. Just as mathematics can exist only by assuming the truth of the unproven, unprovable equation, “ $1 + 1 = 2$ ” (which Mathematicians call an axiom), so man can only think by using assumptions. All thought requires ethical judgment. Thus, everyone is a Fundamentalist on certain issues, since he would have to otherwise question his own thought. We can only be tolerant on issues that do not question our own inviolable fundamentals. Every human being, even the Christian, assumes unquestioned values, but is more or less tolerant on other matters. We differ only in our absolutes, not in our observance of them. Christians who are convinced of their faith refuse to compromise only on certain issues, but can be perfectly flexible and tolerant on others – assuming that they believe the Bible. One of the Scriptures’ basic dogmas is that God created the world with great variety and that He desires no dull uniformity. God’s creative order allows an immense liberty to shape life freely and to develop new ideas.

After a lecture at the University of Bremen, a liberal theologian and a Buddhist insisted that I had erred in beginning with an absolute assumption. They believed that I should respect the teachings of all religions and ideologies as being right in their own way, for all had the same goal.

“Very well,” I argued, “if all have the same goal, the same Good, then there is a standard for evaluating all ideologies after all – their common goal, which is the absolute assumption of those who consider all religions equal.” Can mankind really exist without such a standard for judging oth-

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<sup>77</sup>Translated from Albert Camus, *Der Mythos von Sisyphos: Ein Versuch über das Absurde*. (Reinbek: Rowohlt, 1959<sup>1</sup>), p. 101

ers? Can we accept National Socialism or Stalinism just because they are ideologies?

My arguments continued. If my opponents really assume that we must accept all philosophies, and that all beliefs are actually right, they must accept my statement that God, the Creator, and His revelation are absolute fixed points in our thought. No, of course not, for they would then not have disagreed with me. But why? Because their concept of tolerance is their absolute. Everyone, they believe, is right, as long as he does not contradict their concept of tolerance.

Man cannot live without an absolute standard for his thought and actions. A Christian cannot be distinguished from his contemporaries by the fact that he has an absolute starting point, for everyone does. The difference is the fact that he is aware of his absolute value system and admits it. His starting point is the Creator and His revelation. Since his opponents cannot admit their own starting point, discussion becomes very wearying.

## **What is Religion? (1993)**

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus Christ says, “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon” (Mt. 6:24). Careful reflection makes clear that Jesus is criticizing more than people who live only for Mammon; he compares it with a religion contrary to Biblical faith.

Had He considered Mammon to be only a non-Christian god, He would have said that we can worship only one God, either the God of the Bible or the divinity, ‘Mammon’. Mammon represents, however, not a divinity, but money, wealth and capital. In Luke’s narration, Jesus had just identified Mammon with money used in business (Luke 16,9-10), indicating that The ‘Religion of Mammon’ can supplant faith in the God of the Bible. How is that possible? The faith in money has no gods, no priests and no temple – at least none that we would recognize as such. It is, however, an ‘a-theistic’ religion, a religion without (a-) a god (theos). Is the Lord equating two things which are not comparable? Isn’t ‘God’ a religious matter, ‘Mammon’ an economic one?

The answer implies serious consequences, for it concerns the further question, “What is religion?”. In the Bible, religion is no theoretical concept. Whether a movement, an ideology or a life-style considers itself a religion or not is insignificant; the question is, what absolute values actually (not merely formally) determine our lives.

This is equally true for the belief in the God of Scripture. The question is not whether one ‘believes’ that God exists. In both Testaments, the concept ‘to believe’ signifies ‘to trust’, ‘to have faith in’, ‘to consider reliable’. If we believe in God, we consider Him absolutely reliable, take seriously all He has said and done as Creator and Savior, and establish our lives according to His existence and His commandments.

Consequently, religion is anything that competes with Scriptural faith. What do I rely on completely? What gives my life its significance and meaning? What governs my heart? What is the ultimate authority for me? What is my standard? What do I love most? What is the basis of my wishes?

In the light of these questions, it becomes clear that Mammon can compete with God. Not money in itself, nor its use distinguish Mammonism, but “love of money” (2 Tim. 6:10). Money – or possessions in general –

determines our lives. The road to wealth calls the tune in this religion. Wealth determines everything – morals, our relationship to other people, everyday life. All one’s hopes, as well as the meaning of one’s life is centered on money. It doesn’t matter how much one really owns – the poor are often fanatical members of this faith.

We have now seen that, in the Bible, a belief need not have gods, priests, temples or services, or even call itself a religion, in order to be one. Mammonism is an inconspicuous cult, which would seem to be merely a lifestyle, an attitude to economic matters, a personal issue. In reality, it is a camouflaged religion, as Carl Bry once said, a religion that teaches that impersonal Material, a principle, or an atheistic ideology can supplant the God of the Bible in our hearts.<sup>78</sup>

The most detailed text in the Bible on this issue is the first chapter of Romans. Paul explains why there is a condemnation from which we must be saved and why all, without exception, are liable. He begins, “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness” (Rom. 1:18). God’s anger is directed towards 1. man’s lacking relationship to Him, Atheism (godlessness) and 2. man’s missing relationship to each other, unrighteousness. This double aspect of sin corresponds to the Ten Commandments, which first deals with man’s relationship to God and then his relationship to his fellow man. Mankind – already under divine wrath, not just in the Last Judgment – suppresses the truth by unrighteousness. Which truth does Paul mean? How can he accuse all mankind of suppressing the truth? “... because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them” (Rom. 1:19). The truth depends on the fact that something about God can be recognized.

But how is that to be understood? What is it that everyone can recognize about God? The Bible teaches that God is invisible, doesn’t it? Paul knew this, of course, and continues, “His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead” (Rom. 1:20). Paul does not mean that God is physically visible, but that there is still something that we can perceive about Him. Ever since the Creation, Man can see and know (The Greek word speaks about ‘thinking’) that a divine personality with infinite power must be behind Creation. As the saying goes: ‘Nothing comes from nothing’. This wonderful universe, subject to Time and Space as it is, must have an origin. Physics

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<sup>78</sup>Carl Christian Bry. *Verkappte Religionen: Kritik des kollektiven Wahns*. Ehrenwirth: München, 1979 (reprint of 1924)

demonstrates that information always originates with a sender, a person. The person behind the immense amount of information in the universe cannot be subject to Time, but must be beyond it, must be eternal. The power of this personality must be far above that of the whole creation.

But what does that have to do with God's anger? Paul continues, "... so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man – and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things" (Rom. 1:20-23). Paul is clearly not merely concerned with the question of God's existence, but questions whom we honor, whom we serve, who determines our thinking. Man, refusing to thank God for what he receives, rejects not a theoretical concept, but a real, extant Creator. In order to avoid thanking the Creator, Man must invent a substitute religion.

In Paul's opinion, mankind thinks up nowhere else so much nonsense as when he tries to concoct religions in order to not have to thank God. Man prefers to worship dead images of animals, thus sinking even deeper in the hierarchy of Creation. Paul notes that idolatry often subjects the individual not merely to an animal, but to its image. Man worships things which he could himself destroy and that are actually subject to him. He worships other things instead of God, but he must have something to worship.

Can the individual really recognize the eternal Creator in His Creation? Yes and No. Yes, since God condemns him for failing to do so. No, for Paul also demonstrates that all mankind refuses God the honor due Him. The fact that all men can conceive of a Creator is proven by the fact that every human being has a substitute for Him. There are no people without any religion, which, according to the Bible, is the result of the necessity of grappling with the issue.

In Romans 1:25, Paul summarizes, "... (they) exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen." Paul speaks of others who do not honor God, which he can do, however, because he has received forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ, and adds praise to his argumentation. The question about God is never merely a theoretical topic which one can consider objectively, but always an issue which affects us personally. It is not surprising that the question of thankfulness and honor is decisive.

Man 'exchanges' the Creator for Creation. One could also say, that we 'pervert' them or 'turn them upside down'. The Old Testament uses the expression to describe Israel who "changed their glory into the image of an

ox that eats grass” (Psalm 105:20. Compare Jer. 2:11). Man perverts the worship of the Creator into the worship of the Creation, making a religion of his own, by ascribing divine attributes, such as ‘eternal’, ‘powerful’ or ‘creative’, to some part of the Creation. It doesn’t matter whether he elevates himself to the ‘measure of all things’, honors another human being as divine, whether he worships an image of a dead person, such as Mary, whether he worships an animal or its image, whether he substitutes the Creation itself under another name (‘Matter’, ‘Nature’ or ‘Being’) or whether he devises a religion like Mammonism. Whatever he chooses, he has substituted a part of Creation for the Creator.

The question, who or what is worshipped, is also decisive, according to Paul, for ethics. Ethics teaches what is Good and Evil, Right and Wrong, Acceptable and Not Acceptable, what is to be desired and what is to be avoided. Whoever invents a new religion must also create a new ethic (Rom. 1:24-27). Paul uses the same term, ‘exchange’ or ‘pervert’ to describe the substitution of the Creation for the Creator, and to describe the substitution of an unnatural system of ethics of religions for the divine order of Creation. Homosexuality is a good example (1:26-27), although all sin can be explained in the same way (1:29-31). A perverted ethic is possible because God gives man up to uncleanness (1:24, 26). The worst judgment for mankind is to be “left to himself” (1:24, 26), for he is incapable of self-control. He destroys himself and others. Only a Christian, who has received forgiveness of sin and has the aid of the Holy Spirit, can develop the self-control which the New Testament considers the mark of the believer (2 Pet. 1:6, Gal. 5:23). Man’s sin is thus not just the cause of judgment, but judgment itself. Man is his own worst enemy.

A new religion implies a new ethical system. No one acts by chance, but according to his value system, whether he honors a deity or not. State laws are determined by values just as is grocery shopping – or how else do we decide what to buy? Advertising tries to persuade by promising us happiness, success and recognition; political movements try to influence our decisions as well. No one can ignore his view of humanity, his attitude to wealth and his social attitudes (to world hunger, for example) when shopping. We can only fail to consider these things by making our own well-being our personal standard. Paul speaks of those, “whose god is their belly ...” (Phil. 3:19). The same is true of science and of philosophy. Many philosophers reject ethics in general, but particularly the Christian system, only to develop their own rules as to what man may and may not do. And what terrible consequences some scientific theories have had for mankind! Think, for example, about the unbiblical opinion that only white people, or that only men are human. Or consider the theory of evolution, which is

indirectly responsible for millions of victims of National Socialism or Communism, which both dreamed of a higher development of humanity.

Paul takes another major step. Up to this point, he has claimed that every man can recognize the eternal Creator behind Creation, so that no one has an excuse for rejecting God. This he believes to be the origin of religions and of their moral systems. Now, he continues, "... knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, (they) not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them" (1:32). Now it becomes clear why Man needs to be saved. On the one hand, having been left to himself, he can neither control himself nor protect himself from damage. On the other, he is under the death penalty.

What reasons does Paul give for his assertion that Man, even if he practices the ethical system of a substitute religion, knows God's righteous expectations? The second chapter of Romans is dedicated to this question. We will restrict ourselves to one argument.

Paul says, "Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself, for you who judge practice the same things" (2:1). Man knows that everyone must answer for his actions. No one, even the atheist, can live without judging others. We are moral beings and prove this every day in our unkind remarks about our neighbors, just as much as in our state laws and courts. Even the worst dictatorship has a legal system, not to mention the harsh, unwritten laws of anarchic groups which want to eliminate all state authority altogether. Who doesn't know what the politicians may and may not do? Who doesn't continually feel unjustly treated? Paul sees this as proof that Man knows that he is not an animal, but that he is responsible to a higher authority. But who is this higher authority? Paul later mentions the conscience, "... their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them (2:15). The 'con' in 'conscience' means 'with'. The conscience is an authority in our decision-center (the heart), which registers our thoughts and deeds and tries them according to certain criteria. These standards are exchangeable, but the function of the conscience remains, and according to Paul, is inseparable from our thinking. The way a person thinks is, for Paul, evidence that Man is an ethical being, who continually answers to himself, for what we call 'thought' is actually an inner discussion: our thoughts "accuse" each other or "excuse" themselves, as Paul writes. We discuss the ethics of even the smallest details with ourselves. When shopping, we deliberate continually, what to buy or why not to buy. When we read, we evaluate the text. When we plan, we weigh the arguments for and against our schemes. We can

only discuss with each other, because we discuss with ourselves. We accuse ourselves and excuse ourselves. For Paul this is proof that every person knows that he is responsible for his thoughts and deeds. But to whom? The only answer can be a higher authority. Paul has already identified this authority in the first chapter as the Creator.

**Part II**  
**Biblical Ethics – Special Topics**

**On Swearing in New Testament Times  
(1993/2000)**

1. The Sermon on the Mount (Mt. 5:33-37) and James 5:12

Most theologians agree on the expectations Jesus' intends in concrete examples in the Sermon on the Mount, but not on His attitude towards Old Testament law. Do His commandments confirm Old Testament law or change it? All concur that He condemns adultery in the heart, for example, but did the Old Testament do so, as well?

By providing a criterion for Jesus' attitude towards Old Testament law, the issue of swearing oaths demonstrates how His instructions are to be understood and applied today. Did He confirm its commandments or alter them? *In modifying the Law's rules on this issue, He would have abolished the Old Testament's closely defined usage of oaths.*

If we assume that Jesus is contrasting Old Testament Law with the Pharisee's and scribes' use of oaths, then we discover that not the oaths themselves are not the problem, but only those oaths already forbidden in the Old Testament.

<sup>79</sup>. *The Old Testament permitted only and solely oaths made in God's name.* Moses had commanded, "You shall fear the Lord your God ... and shall take oaths in His name" (Dt. 6:13; 10:20). At the same time, this was a command to make oaths. This is even clearer in Ps. 76,12: "Make vows to the Lord your God, and pay them," or in Ps. 63:12, "Everyone who swears by Him shall glory." Is this no longer valid for New Testament believers?

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<sup>79</sup>Theodor Zahn. *Das Evangelium des Matthäus* (Leipzig, Germany: A. Deicher, 1922. repr. Wuppertal, Germany: R. Brockhaus, 1984), pp. 243-249. For excellent arguments on oaths in the Bible see: Walter C. Kaiser. *Towards Old Testament Ethics* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1983), p. 65; John Bunyan Shearer. *Sermon on the Mount* (Richmond, Va.: 1906), pp. 70-74.

A ‘vow’<sup>80</sup> is a voluntary oath (Dt. 23:23), which was not required, although God preferred it. Once made, however, an oath must be kept (Dt. 23:22-24; Ec. 5:4-5). There were obligatory oaths, as well, e.g. in court, in entering an office or in marriage. Vowing (‘binding oneself’) was a kind of ‘swearing’ or ‘oathmaking’ (synonymous expressions), for Ps. 132:2 and Nu. 30:3, 14 use the term as a parallelism for oaths and swearing (see Gn. 28:20-22; Nu. 21:2; Jdg. 11:30ff.; 1 Sa. 1:11; 14:24; Jon. 1:16, 2:9; 2:20; Acts 18:18; 21:23; 23,12ff.).

In Jesus’ day however, people swore by everything imaginable and qualified the validity and earnestness of the vow by the thing sworn by. Jürgen Kuberski sums up the errors in Jewish-Pharisaical practice as following:

1. The Pharisees differentiated between oaths which had to be kept and those which did not, a distinction unknown in the Old Testament. 2. They avoided using God’s name, although the Old Testament required it. 3. They employed substitutes, which, according to Jesus, made no difference,: an oath must be kept, whether God’s name is mentioned explicitly or not.<sup>81</sup>

In this case, Mt. 5:34-35 should be translated, “You should not swear by Heaven at all ..or by the earth ...”. Jas. 5:12 would then mean, “Do not swear by heaven nor by earth ...”.<sup>82</sup> The complete text of Mt. 5:34-37 would be, “I tell you, however, you should not swear by heaven at all, for it is God’s throne; nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King; nor should you swear by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. Your words should be Yes, yes! or No, no! Anything else is from the Evil One.” Jas. 5:12 reads, “Above all, brothers, do not swear either by heaven or by earth or with any

<sup>80</sup>See the laws on vows in Numbers 30:1-16; Gordon J. Wenham. *Numbers. Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries* (Leicester, England: IVP, 1981), pp. 205-209.

<sup>81</sup>Jürgen Kuberski. *Darf ein Christ schwören? Bibel und Gemeinde* 91 no.2 (1991), p. 148. See also: Klaus Bockmühl. *Christliche Lebensführung: Eine Ethik der Zehn Gebote* (Gießen, Germany: TVG. Brunnen, 1993), p. 87. Bockmühl writes, “... He addresses the complicated casuistry and the laxity in the misuse of oaths by Jews who (like children who cross their fingers behind their backs when they make promises), developed all sorts of evasions and exemptions into their oaths in order to break their binding power.” Bockmühl fails to draw the logical consequences of this view, but insists that Jesus forbids all kinds of swearing. If the problem is false casuistry, why should all oaths be prohibited, not just false swearing? Besides, Bockmühl applies Jesus’ prohibition to private oaths, made in reference to the future, not to public oaths about past affairs. I find however no scriptural distinction between these aspects.

<sup>82</sup>See Robert L. Dabney. *Systematic Theology* (1875, repr. Edinburgh, Scotland: Banner of Truth Trust, 1985), p. 365. See also pp. 364-365.

other oath (or with an oath by anything else). Let your yes be yes and your no be no, so that you not come under judgment.”

The parallel in Mt. 23:16-22 expresses this idea more clearly: “Alas, you blind leaders, who say: if someone swears by the temple, it is not binding, but if he swears by the gold in the temple, it is. Fools and blind men! What is greater, the gold or the temple which makes the gold holy? And, if someone swears by the altar, it is not binding, but if he swears by the offering which lies on the altar, it is. Blind men! What is greater, the offering or the altar, which makes the offering holy? If a person swears by the altar he swears by it and by everything lying on it. Whoever swears by the temple, swears by it and by Him Who lives there. And when someone swears by Heaven, he swears by the throne of God and by Him Who sits upon it.” Jesus does not object to oaths themselves, but criticizes those which were made on things other than God and whose obligatory force was classified according to the things sworn by.

An oath must always be made by something higher than oneself or the highest Being, God being the only exception. He swears by Himself, because “there is no one greater to swear to” (Heb. 6:13). Because every oath automatically recognizes the one sworn by as Lord and as superior authority, God forbids swearing by other gods and takes all oaths seriously, even those not made in His Name. He either considers the oath maker bound, or, should the oath require evil, punishes the person especially for not only desiring, but also vowing to do evil.

German law permits the leaders of the State to decide for themselves whether they want to make their oath of office with or without a religious affirmation (Grundgesetz § 56 and 64). From a Christian point of view, however, an oath which refers to no higher authority unthinkable. Helmut Thielicke has demonstrated that an atheist cannot make any oath at all, since an oath made without calling on God’s Name has no validity.<sup>83</sup> Nevertheless God will judge politicians by their oaths.

Jesus pointed out that the Pharisee’s oaths must always reflect the truth; that their statements must always be “Yes, yes! No, no!” (Mt. 5:37), which James renders, “Let your Yes be yes, your No be no!” (Jas. 5:12). If God requires the truth for every day speech, how must more must oaths be truthful!

As a matter of fact, the words ‘Yes, yes!’ (Gr. *Nai, nai!*) and ‘No, no!’ (Gr. *Ou, ou*) may themselves be oath formulas. The Greek term ‘Nai, nai’

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<sup>83</sup>Helmut Thielicke. *Theologische Ethik*, Vol II, Part 2: *Ethik des Politischen* (Tübingen, Germany: J. C. B. Mohr, 1958), pp. 462-464.

may be the translation of the Hebrew ‘*Amen*’, in Rev. 1:6 and 22:20,<sup>84</sup> for example, where ‘*Nai*’ (New King James. ‘*Even so*’) is parallel to ‘*Amen*’. In 2 Cor. 1:17, “that with me there should be Yes, Yes and No, No.” (NKJV) Paul uses the same phrase as in 2 Cor. 1:20<sup>85</sup>, where the expression indicates the unequivocal fulfillment of God’s promises in Christ (2 Cor. 1:17-22; compare the mention of the sealing in verse 22). In Mt. 5:18, Jesus used the expression ‘*Verily, verily*’ or ‘*Amen, amen*’ which are oath formulas. Assuming that ‘Yes, yes and ‘No, no’ were indeed oath formula, their usage here confirms our proposition. Jesus then forbids us to swear by things and substitutes a simple oath with ‘Yes, yes’ and ‘No, no’ without ulterior motives or restrictions.

Luke T. Johnson and Walter C. Kaiser have ascertained that James’ epistle is primarily an exposition on Lv. 19:12-18 and may include a sermon on this text. A comparison of the two texts shows that Jas. 5:12 refers to Lv. 19:12, the Old Testament commandment against swearing falsely, but not against swearing at all. James does not alter the Old Testament Law, he applies it (see box on opposite page).

Jesus’ use of the Old Testament to contradict the scribes (Mt. 5:33-37) can also be seen in the quotations in His evaluation of the things sworn by. In verse 34, he quotes Is. 66:1: “Heaven is My throne, and earth is My footstool.” Verse 35 recalls Ps. 48:2, which describes Mount Zion as the “City of the great King.”

Note that few of the interpreters who believe that Jesus prohibits swearing altogether are willing to apply the restriction to all cases. Walter Künneth, for example, considers the Sermon on the Mount an “indication that a completely new pneumatic situation has begun for those who are determined to follow Him,”<sup>86</sup> but considers the political oath indispensable. Adolf Schlatter believes that Mt. 5:33-37 forbids swearing but allows a return to the Old Testament position under critical circumstances.<sup>87</sup> Arthur Volkmann rejects New Testament oaths altogether, but tells government officials who are to be sworn in, “it would be a misunderstanding of Jesus’

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<sup>84</sup>Walter Bauer, Kurt and Barbara Aland. *Griechisch-deutsche Wörterbuch zu den Schriften des Neuen Testaments* (Berlin, Germany: de Gruyter, 1968). Col. 1078 defines the “Yes” in Rev. 1:7 and 22:20 as a ritual pledge.

<sup>85</sup>*Ibid.*, col. 1079.

<sup>86</sup>Walter Künneth. *Politik zwischen Gott und Dämon: Eine christliche Ethik des Politischen* (Berlin: Lutherisches Verlagshaus, 1954), p. 367.

<sup>87</sup>Adolf Schlatter. *Die christliche Ethik* (Stuttgart, Germany: Verlag der Vereinsbuchhandlung Calwer, 1914), p. 120, note 1.

purpose to feel oneself bound to a new law.”<sup>88</sup> Is Jesus forbidding swearing or not? If there is no restriction for government officials, why then for others? Why shouldn't the individual take an oath under certain circumstances?

<b>Parallels between Leviticus 19 and James</b>	
<p>Leviticus</p> <p>19:12: “You shall not swear by My name falsely ...”</p> <p>19:13: “You shall not cheat your neighbor, nor rob him. The wages of him who is hired shall not remain with you all night until morning.”</p> <p>19:15: “You shall not be partial to the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty. In righteousness you shall judge your neighbor.”</p> <p>19:16: “You shall not go about as a talebearer among your people.”</p> <p>19:17: “You shall surely rebuke your neighbor, and not bear sin because of him.”</p> <p>19:18: “You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against</p>	<p>James</p> <p>5:12: “... do not swear,”</p> <p>5:4: “Indeed the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out; and the cries of the reapers have reached the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.”</p> <p>2:1: “My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality.”</p> <p>2:9: “But if you show partiality, your commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors.”</p> <p>4:11: “Do not speak evil of one another, brethren. He who speaks evil of a brother and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law and judges the law.”</p> <p>5:19-20: “Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way, will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.”</p> <p>5:9: “Do not grumble against one another, brethren, lest you be con-</p>

<sup>88</sup>Arthur Volkmann. “Was ist Schwören” *Die Wegweisung* 29 no 10 (1989), pp. 407-410.

the children of your people.” 19:18: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself. “	demned.” 2:8: “If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself’, you do well.”
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Few Christians who prohibit swearing practice accordingly. Otherwise, no believer could serve as a government official or representative or could give evidence in a court of law. Why should we allow ourselves to make an exception in this matter? Why should state affairs be different?

Volkman has great difficulties in proving that the New Testament contains no oaths. On Jesus’ response to the Council, he writes, “Jesus answers with a simple ‘As you have said,’ which confesses and confirms but does not swear.”<sup>89</sup> The fact is, however, that Jesus is under oath and employs the usual formula (see below) in his reply. In reference to Paul, although he admits that, “Paul uses expressions similar to oaths,” Volkman insists that the apostle is not actually swearing, but merely underscoring his statement for pastoral purposes.”<sup>90</sup> Are there ‘non-actual’ oaths? And what evidence have we for the idea that an oath made for pastoral purposes is no longer an oath?

The oath made by officials in Nord-Rhein Westfalen, for example, runs, “I swear, that I will administer the office bestowed on me with the best of my ability and to the best of my knowledge, that I will obey and defend the law and the Constitution, conscientiously fulfill my duty and exercise justice towards all. So help me God.”<sup>91</sup> The last statement is not required. Should the official prefer not to swear due to religious convictions, he can substitute the formula, “I promise ...” for “I swear ...,”<sup>92</sup> which means the very same, according to Biblical principles! What counts in God’s eyes is not the formula, which is often changing even in biblical times, but the solemn commitment.

Ashley Montagu, who has studied swearing in many cultures in the world, believes that the practice, which is common to Western society, reflects a strong Old Testament influence.<sup>93</sup> Christian cultures were respon-

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<sup>89</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 408.

<sup>90</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>91</sup>Quoted from *Praxis der Verkündigung* (Ocken: Kassel) 2-1984: 10.

<sup>92</sup>*Ibid.*,

<sup>93</sup>Ashley Montagu. *The Anatomy of Swearing* (New York: Macmillan, and London: Collier-Macmillan, 1967) p. 20. Montagu has found evidence of oaths and swearing in the whole world, including ‘primitive’ cultures, but with great differences in its meaning. He discusses the history of oath taking in Great Britain in great detail.

sible for bringing the Old Testament concept of the oath to the rest of the world.

In his discussion of the Sermon on the Mount, August Dächsel concludes that, "...the Law and the One Who fulfilled it (Mt. 5:33ff.) forbid only perjury and thoughtless, vain oaths."<sup>94</sup> Ernst Luthardt comes to a similar conclusion,

The early Church misunderstood the Sermon on the Mount when it interpreted Christ's words to intend an absolute, although restricted prohibition of oaths, even in the legal regulation of civil life.<sup>95</sup>

Even Martin Luther taught that Jesus had not forbidden swearing,<sup>96</sup> and, prevailed against the Anabaptists, who rejected not only oath taking but any other religious activity undertaken for the State. In his comments on Deuteronomy 6:13 ("You shall take oaths in His name."), Luther writes,

There are two things to be observed. First, that Christ prohibits swearing completely in Matthew 5:34; here God commands it. But we have said elsewhere that the use of oaths is twofold; one by which we swear lightly without cause; Christ forbids this usage entirely; the other, when we swear out of faith and love for the glory of God, the well-being of our neighbor or for confirmation of the truth."<sup>97</sup> Luther never admits any possibility of any sort of contradiction between Jesus and the Old Testament, but refers to Matthew 23,16:22 and explains in detail the extent to which an oath can serve God.<sup>98</sup>

Not only Luther but other Protestant theologians of the Reformation expressed similar ideas about oaths. Article XXIX of the Anglican Church's Common Book of Prayer, 1549, says,

As we confess that vain and rash Swearing is forbidden Christian men by our Lord Jesus Christ, and James his Apostle, so we judge that the Christian Religion doth not prohibit, but that a man may swear when the magistrate re-

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<sup>94</sup>August Dächel. *Das Neue Testament mit in den Text eingeschalteter Auslegung. Die Bibel ...* Vol. 7 (Leipzig, Germany: Justus Naumann, 1881), p. 6.

<sup>95</sup>Chr. Ernst Luthardt. *Kompendium der theologischen Ethik* (Leipzig, Germany: Dörffling & Franke, 1921), p. 287.

<sup>96</sup>Rousas J. Rushdoony. *Institutes of Biblical Law* (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1973), p. 287.

<sup>97</sup>Martin Luther. "Anmerkungen zum fünften Buch Moses" *Martin Luthers Sämtliche Schriften* Vol 3 (ed. Joh Georg Walch. 1910. repr. Groß Oesingen, Germany: Verlag der Lutherischen Buchhandlung H. Harms, 1986), col 1429.

<sup>98</sup>*Ibid.*, col. 1428-1430.

quireth in a cause of faith and charity, so it be done according to the Prophet's teaching in justice, judgment and truth.<sup>99</sup>

The Heidelberg Catechism, after rejecting all false oaths (Questions 99-100), expressly refers to Matthew 5:34-36 and James 5:12 in Questions 101-102,

Question: May a pious man swear an oath in God's Name?

Answer: Yes, when the authorities require it of their subjects, or when otherwise necessary in order to maintain and foster the glory of God and the well-being of one's neighbor. For the swearing of such oaths is established in the Word of God, and is therefore rightly employed by the saints in the Old and the New Testament.

Question: May one swear by the saints or by other creatures?

Answer: No, for a lawful oath is an appeal to God, the only examiner of the heart, to testify to the truth and punish me, when I swear falsely; no creature merits such reverence.<sup>100</sup>

And Article 22.1-7 of the Westminster Confession, 1647, concludes,

A lawful oath is a part of religious worship, wherein, upon just occasion, the person swearing solemnly calleth God to witness what he asserteth or promiseth; and to judge him according to the truth or falsehood of what he sweareth.

The name of God only is that by which men ought to swear and therein it is to be used with all holy fear and reverence; therefore, to swear vainly or rashly by that glorious and dreadful name, or to swear at all by any other thing, is sinful, and to be abhorred. Yet, as in matters of weight and moment, an oath is warranted by the Word of God, under the New Testament as well as under the Old; so a lawful oath, being imposed by lawful authority, in such matters, ought to be taken.

Whosoever taketh an oath, ought duly to consider the weightiness of so solemn an act, and therein to avouch nothing but what he fully persuaded is the truth. Neither may any man bind himself by oath to anything but what is good and just, and what he believeth so to be, and what he is able and resolved to perform. Yet it is a sin to refuse an oath touching anything that is good and just, being imposed by lawful authority.

An oath is to be taken in the plain and common sense of the words, without equivocation, or mental reservation. It cannot oblige to sin; but in anything not sinful being taken, it binds to performance, although to a man's own hurt; nor is it to be violated, although made to heretics or infidels.

<sup>99</sup>“The Articles of Religion”, *The Common Book of Prayer* (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, LTD 1956).

<sup>100</sup>Reformierter Bund, ed. *Der Heidelberger Katechismus* (Neukirchen, Germany: Buchhandlung des Erziehungsbundes, 1934), pp. 56-57.

A vow is of the like nature with a promissory oath, and ought to be made with the like religious care, and to be performed with the like faithfulness.

It is not to be made to any creature, but to God alone: and, that it may be accepted, it is to be made voluntarily, out of faith, and conscience of duty, in way of thankfulness for mercy received, or for the obtaining of what we want; whereby we more strictly bind ourselves to necessary duties, or to other things, so far and so long as they may fitly conduce thereunto.

No man may vow to do anything forbidden in the Word of God, or what would hinder any duty therein commanded, or which is not in his own power, and for the performance whereof he hath no promise of ability from God. In which respects Popish monastical vows of perpetual single life, professed poverty, and regular obedience, are so far from being degrees of higher perfection, that they are superstitious and sinful snares, in which no Christian may entangle himself.<sup>101</sup>

## 2. God Swears

Often it is said, that oaths are only necessary, if one does not want to say the truth. *But if, since we are always to tell the truth, oaths are unnecessary, why does God make them so often in the Old Testament* (Gn. 22:16; Mi. 7:20; Ex. 6:8; Ezk. 20:5; Ps. 95,11)? Or why does the angel in Dn. 12:7 swear “by Him who lives forever,” an expression also used in Revelations 10:6? (We will discuss the real meaning of oaths under 5. The Meaning of ‘Oath’.)

George Giesen classifies the 215 Old Testament citations of the word ‘to swear’ (Heb. *sb*) into four groups.<sup>102</sup> In 75 cases, the word designates secular oaths between human beings,<sup>103</sup> in 14 cases judicial-religious oaths in legal matters or vows,<sup>104</sup> in 41 cases covenants made to God by individuals<sup>105</sup> and in 82 cases covenants made by God.<sup>106</sup> Three citations belong to none of the above classes. Giesen calculates that God Himself made 38% (= 82 times) of the Old Testament oaths. There are many other divine oaths designated by other terms. God observes His own rule by swearing only in His own Name, as explained in Heb. 6:13, “For when God made a promise

<sup>101</sup> *Westminster Confession of Faith* (M. S. Bushnell electronic version, 1991).

<sup>102</sup> Georg Giesen. *Die Wurzel sb’ “schwören”*: Eine semasiologische Studie zum Eid im Alten Testament. Bonner Beiträge 56 (Königstein, Germany: Peter Hanstein, 1981), p. 2.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 113.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 377.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 224.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 368.

to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself ...”.

### **To whom does God swear?**

#### **Texts which mentions God ‘swearing’ an oath:**

God swears to Noah that He will let the earth endure: Is. 54:9  
 God swears to bless Abraham because of his willingness to sacrifice Isaac: Gn. 22:16  
 God establishes the Covenant with Abraham: Gn. 26:3; Ps. 105:8-9; Lk. 1:73; Heb. 6:13  
 God establishes the Covenant with Isaac: Ps. 105:9-11; 1 Ch. 16:16  
 God establishes the covenant with the patriarchs: Mi. 7:20; Je. 11:5: “... that I may establish the oath which I have sworn to your fathers, ...”  
 God swears to give Israel the Promised Land: Ex. 6:8; 32:13; Ezk. 20:5-6  
  
 God swears that the unbelieving Israelites will not enter the Promised Land: Dt. 1:34-35; Num. 32:10-11; Ezk. 20:15; Ps. 95:10-11 = Heb. 3:11; 4:3: “I swore in my wrath ...”  
 God swears that the house of Eli will not be forgiven: 1 Sa. 3:14  
 God swears to David that his descendants will sit on the throne forever: Ps. 89:4-5, 36-39; 132:11-12; Acts 2:30  
 God swears to judge Samaria: Am. 4:2  
 God swears to judge Jerusalem: Am. 6:8: “The Lord GOD has sworn by Himself, The LORD God of hosts says: “I abhor the pride of Jacob, And hate his palaces; Therefore I will deliver up the city And all that is in it.”  
 God swears to judge Israel by scattering the peoples into the whole world: Ezk. 20:23.  
 God swears to gather Israel from out of the nations: Ezk. 36:7-8  
 God ‘swears’ a covenant with Jerusalem: Ezk. 16:8  
 God swears to give His Son an eternal priesthood: Ps. 110:4 = Heb. 7:21, 28: “You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek “  
 God swears that all will swear by His name one day: Is. 45:23-24: “I have sworn by Myself; The word has gone out of My mouth in righteousness, And shall not return: That to Me every knee shall bow, Every tongue shall take an oath. He shall say, ‘Surely in the LORD I have righteousness and strength’. To Him men shall come, And all shall be ashamed Who are incensed against Him.” Rom. 14:11 cites Isaiah, adding the introduction, “As I live ...”.

### Texts in which God raises His hand to take an oath<sup>107</sup>

God swears that Israel will inherit the land of Canaan: Ex. 6:8; Nu. 14:30-31; Ezk: 20:5-6 (3x); Ezk. 20:28; 47:14

God swears to judge the heathen: Ezk. 36:7: “Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: ‘I have raised My hand in an oath that surely the nations that are around you shall bear their own shame.’”

God swears to judge His enemies. Dt. 32:40: “For I raise My hand to heaven, And say, ‘As I live forever’ ... “.

### God swears by Himself

*Gn 22:16-17*: “By Myself I have sworn, says the LORD, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son – blessing I will bless you ...”

*Heb. 6:13-14*: “For when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, saying, ‘Surely blessing I will bless you and multiplying I will multiply you.’”

*Je. 44:26*: “Behold, I have sworn by My great name”

*Ex. 32:13*: “Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Your servants, to whom You swore by Your own self ...”

*Am. 6:8*: “The Lord GOD has sworn by Himself”

*Am. 4:2*: “The Lord GOD has sworn by His holiness ...”

*Dt. 32:40*: “For I raise My hand to heaven, And say, ‘As I live forever ...”

*1 Sa. 2:30*: “But now the LORD says: ‘Far be it from Me ...”

*Rom. 14:11*: “As I live, says the LORD, Every knee shall bow to Me ...”  
(citation of *Is. 45:23* see above)

“I have sworn by Myself” *Is. 45:23*; *Je. 22:5*; *Je. 49:13*

“but truly, as I live ...” *Numbers 14:21,28*; *Dt. 32:40*; *Is. 49:18*; *Je. 22:24*; *Je. 46:18*; *Ezk. 5:11*; *Ezk. 14:16, 18, 20*; *Ezk. 16:48*; *Ezk. 17:16, 19*; *Ezk. 18:3*; *Ezk. 20:3, 31, 33*; *Ezk. 33:11, 27*; *Ezk. 34:8*; *Ezk. 35:1, 6*; *Zp. 2:9*; *Rom. 14:11*: (See further examples in the Table “Names of God in oaths”.)

### 3. Jesus and Paul Swear

*The fact that oaths are made for spiritual reasons in the New Testament corroborates the theory that neither Jesus (Mt. 5:33-37) nor James (Jas. 5:12) forbid swearing itself, but only swearing by anything or anyone but God Himself. Jesus swears frequently, for the expression, “Verily, verily I say unto you,” is an oath formula (see the table “Oath Formula” below). When the High Priest put Jesus under oath, He answered immediately (Mt.*

<sup>107</sup>Some translations eliminate the expression “to raise the hand”.

26:64-65), even so he refused to speak prior to the oath. Paul also made frequent oaths, not only to the State, *but to other Christians*, as well (2 Cor. 1:23; Phil. 1:8; 1 Thes. 2:5, 10; Rom. 1:9; Acts 21:23ff.). Oaths will also be sworn during the Millennium, “And he who swears in the earth Shall swear by the God of truth ...” (Is. 65:16; similarly Is. 19:18).

### Jesus Swears

“*Verily, verily*”: Jn. 1:51; 3:3, 5, 11; 5:19, 24-25; 6:26, 32, 47, 53; 8:34, 51, 58; 10:1, 7; 12:24; 13:16, 20-21, 38; 14:12; 16:20, 23; 21:18

“*Verily*”: Mt. 5:18+26; 24:2+34; Mk. 13:30; Lk. 21:32

*Mt. 26:63-65*: “But Jesus kept silent. (Jesus remained silent until He was put under oath.) And the high priest answered and said to Him, ‘I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!’ Jesus said to him, ‘It is as you said.’” (Once He was under oath, He immediately answered. His ‘confirmation’ of the accusation makes the evidence of witnesses unnecessary.)<sup>108</sup> “‘What further need do we have of witnesses?’”

Compare *Dn 12:7*: Some theologians believe the Angel who swears to be the Angel of the Lord, Christ before His Incarnation.

‘To charge someone’ is another term for ‘putting someone under oath’. An example (beside Jesus in *Mt. 26:63-65* and Paul in *1Thess 5:27*) can be found in *Ct. 2:7; 3:5; 5:8-9* and *8:4*: “I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem ... Do not stir up nor awaken love Until it pleases.” When a wife was suspected of adultery, the priest was to “put the woman under the oath of the curse” (*Dt. 5:21*), which means the same as if the woman had spoken the words herself.

### Paul swears and charges others

*2 Cor 1:23*: “Moreover I call God as witness against my soul, that to spare you I came no more to Corinth.”

*Rom. 1:9; Phil. 1:8*: “For God is my witness, ... .”<sup>109</sup>

*1 Thes 2:5*: “nor a cloak for covetousness – God is witness.” (The hyphen is often used, because the oath formula stands outside the sentence.)

*1 Thes. 2:10*: “You are witnesses, and God also, how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among you who believe;”

<sup>108</sup>See Theodor Zahn. *Das Evangelium des Matthäus, op. cit.*, pp. 248-249; 705-706; 244 note 15.

<sup>109</sup>This formula was influenced by Old Testament usage, not by rabbinical practice. Paul Billerbeck: *Die Briefe des Neuen Testaments und der Offenbarung Johannis erläutert aus Talmud und Midrasch*: Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch 3 (ed. Hermann L. Strack, Paul Billerbeck. Munich: C. H. Beck, 1926), p. 27.

*1 Thes. 2:11-12*: “as you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father does his own children, that you would walk worthy of God.”

“*Certainly not!*” (actually “May it not happen”!): Rom. 3:4, 6, 31; 6:2, 15; 7:7, 13; 9:14; 11:1, 11; 1 Cor. 6:15; Gal. 2:17; 3:21; 6:14

### Nazirite Vows

*Acts 18:18*: “He had his hair cut off at Cenchrea, for he had taken a vow.” Paul had taken a Nazirite vow (Nu. 6:1-21), which was initiated by an oath.

*Acts 21:23-24*: Paul was arrested in Jerusalem because of the Nazirite vow, which he had taken with four other Jews, paying the fees for having their hair cut. The Jews assumed that he had done this for Gentiles (*Acts 21:27-29*). NKJ *Acts 21:27*: “Now when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews from Asia, seeing him in the temple, stirred up the whole crowd and laid hands on him, ...”.

## 4. Oath Formulas and Practices

In order to demonstrate that all texts mentioned above indeed involve oaths (see the summary in the tables below),<sup>110</sup> we must now investigate Old Testament oath formula:

### Oath Formulas

\* = verses which expressly mention oaths, and can be used as proof that they refer to oaths and oath formulas.

“*If*” (Hebrew ‘*Im* ‘ or ‘*Im Lo*’) \*Ezk. 36:7; Is. 22:14 (both spoken by God); Gn. 14:23; Nu. 14:28; Jb. 27:4-5 (“If my lips will not speak wickedness, Nor my tongue utter deceit.” The sentence is not continued, but the next verse begins with the oath formula, “Far be it from me!”).

<sup>110</sup>Otto Michel affirms “May it never be” to be an oath formula in *Der Brief an die Römer*. Vol. 4 *Kritisch-Exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament* (Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978), p. 138, note 6. See also: John Murray. *The Epistle to the Romans*. Vol. 1 *The New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmanns, 1968), p. 94, note 1; Friedrich Blass et. al. *Grammatik des neutestamentlichen Griechisch* (Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979), p. 311, note 2 (Compare Paul Billerbeck. *Die Briefe des Neuen Testamentes*, *op. cit.*, p. 133.); with restrictions; C. E. B. Cranfield. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* 2 Vols. Vol. 1 *The International Critical Commentary* 11 (1979 repr. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1989), p. 181.

“*Far be it from*” ‘you’, ‘me’, ‘us’ etc.: Gn. 18:25; Gn. 44:7; Jos. 22:29; Jos. 24:16; 1 Sa. 2:30; 1 Sa. 12:23; 1 Sa. 20:9; 1 Sa. 22:15; 2 Sa. 23:17; Jb. 34:10 (about God); 1 Ch. 11:19; Jb. 27:5; 2 Sa. 20:20

“*The LORD forbid that I should do this thing ...*” 1 Sa. 24:6; 1 Ki. 21:3; 1 Sa. 26:11;

“*Far be it*” and the formula “As the Lord Lives”: 1 Sa. 14:45;<sup>111</sup> 1 Sa. 26:10-11.

“*Certainly not!*” (literally ‘may it not be!’) Lk. 20:16; Rom. 3:4, 6, 31; 6:2, 15; 7:7, 13; 9:14; 11:1, 11; 1 Cor. 6:15; Gal. 2:17; 3:21; 6:14 (here ‘from me’). Paul’s expression, “*My it not be!*” corresponds to the Old Testament expression “*Far be it from me!*” The Septuaginta translates ‘*May it be far from me!*’ with ‘*me gonoito*’ in Gen. 44:7, 17; Jos. 22:29; 24:16 and 1 Ki. 21:3 (LXX 20:3). Otherwise it uses ‘*medamos*’, ‘not at all’, etc. The formula ‘*amen*’ is translated ‘*genoito, genoito*’ (Ps. 72:19; LXX 71:19). The Old Testament expression ‘*far be it*’ is derived from the word ‘to desecrate’ and means, “May it be desecration for me before God, if ...”.<sup>112</sup>

“*As the Lord lives*”: Jdg. 8:19; Ru. 3:13; 1 Sa. 14:39, 45; 19:6; \*20:3; 20:21; 25:26, 34; 26:10, 16; 28:10; 29:6; 2 Sa. 4:9; 12:5; 14:11; 15:21; 1 Ki. \*1:29; 2:24; 17:1.12; 18:10.14; 22:14; 2 Ki. 2:2.4.6; 3:14; 4:30; 5:16.20; 2 Ch. 18:13; \*Je. 4:2; \*12:16; 16:14, 20; 23:7-8; \*38:16; 44:26; Ho. 4,15

“*As God lives*”: \*2 Sam. 2:27; Job 27:2

“*As the Lord God lives*” “*As the Lord of hosts lives*”: 1 Ki. 18:15

These expressions are used 44 times.<sup>113</sup>

The heathen version: “*As your god lives.*” *Am. 8:14* (2x). Similarly in Gn. 42:15-16 “*By the life of Pharaoh*” (The Egyptian Pharaohs were considered divine).

See the references above to God’s oaths, “*As I live*”.

“*The LORD do so to me and more also, ...*”: Ru. 1:17

“*..., so do God to me, ...*”: 1 Sa. 3:17; 14:44; \*2 Sa. 3:35; \*1 Ki. 2:23; 2 Ki. 6:31; compare “*May God do so to Abner, and more also,*” in 2 Sa. 3:9; to Jonathan 1 Sa. 20:13; to David’s enemies 1 Sa. 25:22

The heathen version: “*So let the gods do to me, and more also,*” 1 Ki. 19:2; 20:10

“*Truly*” (‘*Amen*’ or ‘*lulam*’) in combination with other formula: 1 Sa. 20:3; 1 Sa. 25:34

<sup>111</sup>The people’s oath invalidates the oath made by Saul in 1 Sam. 14:24.

<sup>112</sup>Georg Giesen. *Die Wurzel sb* ‘schwören’. *op. cit.*, p. 43.

<sup>113</sup>Jerzy Wozniak. “Bedeutung und Belege der Schwurformel *haj Jahwe*”. *Biblische Zeitschrift* 28 (1984), 2:245-249.

“Truly” “If” (Hebrew ‘*Im*’ or ‘*Im Lo*’) Ezk. 36:5; The formula used in Gn. 22:16 “By Myself I have sworn, says the LORD” is rendered with “Amen” in Heb. 6:14, which designates the statement following (vs. 14-15) an oath (vs. 16).

“Amen was the answer of the person being sworn in; he swears in saying ‘Amen’.”<sup>114</sup>

“*I have raised My hand in an oath*,”: Ezk. 36:7; “Therefore thus says the Lord GOD, “I have raised My hand in an oath, that surely (‘*Im Lo*’) the nations that are around you shall bear their own shame” (See further examples above).

The most common oath practice was to raise one’s hand towards Heaven (Gn. 14:22; Ex. 6:8 [in original]; Nu. 14:30; Dt. 32:40 [in original]; Ne. 9:15; Ezk. 20:5-6, 15, 28, 42; Ezk. 36:7; 47:14; Dn. 12:7; Rev. 10:5-6 (see boxes above). Another possibility was to lay one’s hand on the loin or hip (Gn. 24:2-3, 9; 47:29).

Some texts include the reason for the oath. God swears “in His wrath” (Ps. 95:11. Cited in Heb. 3:11; 4:3. Compare Nu. 32:10; Dt. 1:34; 4:21). On the other hand, Ps. 89:49 speaks of the “grace which you swore to David in your truth”. In 1 Sa.20:17 Jonathan has David vow, because of his love.<sup>115</sup>

Oaths, described with a variety of designations in the Bible, could only be taken in God’s Name. Besides the expressions listed above in the tables, “God swears by Himself” and “Oath Formulas”, oaths employed expressions which describe His activity or character more distinctly.

### Examples of Designations for God in Oaths

(Besides the commonly used names, ‘God’, ‘Lord’ etc.)

#### God describes Himself

*Is. 62:8*: “The LORD has sworn by His right hand And by the arm of His strength”

*Je. 51:14*: “The LORD of hosts has sworn by Himself ... (Literally, “by His life”)", (Compare *Am. 6:8*).

*Am. 4:2*: “The Lord GOD has sworn by His holiness”

<sup>114</sup>Adolf Schlatter. *Der Evangelist Matthäus* (Stuttgart, Germany: Calwer, 1948), p. 155

<sup>115</sup>Georg Giesen. *Die Wurzel sb’ “schwören”*. *op. cit.*, p. 21.

*Ps. 89:35*: “Once I have sworn by My holiness”

*Je. 44:26*: “Behold, I have sworn by My great name”

*Am. 8:7*: “The LORD has sworn by the pride of Jacob” (God is Himself the pride of Jacob)

### **Human Designations of God’s Attributes**

*Gn. 31:53*: “‘The God of Abraham, the God of Nahor, and the God of their father judge between us.’ And Jacob swore by the Fear of his father Isaac.”

*Gn. 24:3*: “and I will make you swear by the LORD, the God of heaven and the God of the earth.”

*Je. 38:16*: “As the LORD lives, who made our very souls”

*1 Ki. 1:30*: “by the LORD God of Israel”

*1 Ki. 17:1; 1 Ki. 18:15; 2 Ki. 3:14, 2 Ki. 5:16*: “As the LORD of hosts lives, before whom I stand ...” (Elijah)

### **Angelic Descriptions of God’s Attributes**

*Dn. 12:7; Rev. 10:6*: Angels swear “by Him who lives forever and ever.”

In contrast to oaths in the Name of the Lord, the Bible definitely forbids taking oaths in the name of other gods, which implies submission to their lordship.

## **Prohibition to swear by other gods**

### **Prohibition**

*Jos. 23:7*: “and lest you go among these nations, these who remain among you. You shall not make mention of the name of their gods, nor cause anyone to swear by them; you shall not serve them nor bow down to them.”

## **Disobedience of the Commandment**

*Je. 12:16*: “And it shall be, if they will learn carefully the ways of My people, to swear by My name, ‘As the LORD lives,’ as they taught My people to swear by Baal, ...”

*Je. 5:7*: “Your children have forsaken Me And sworn by those that are not gods.”

*1 Ki. 19:1-2*: Jesebel on the judgment at Carmel, “So let the gods do to me, and more also” (Heathen variation of Israelite oath formula see above.)

*Zp 1:5*: “Those who worship and swear oaths by the LORD, But who also

swear by Milcom, ...”

*Am. 8:14*: “Those who swear by the sin of Samaria, Who say, ‘As your god lives, O Dan!’ And, ‘As the way of Beersheba lives!’” (The sin of Samaria is the false god worshipped by Israel.<sup>116</sup>)

*Ezk 21:23*: “And it will be to them like a false divination in the eyes of those who have sworn oaths with them.” The Babylonians believe their oaths to be more effective than the prophesy of divine judgment, which they consider ‘a false divination’.

### Calling Witnesses (Examples)

*Dt. 4:26; 30:19; 31:28*: “I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day ...”

*Joshua 24:22*: “You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen the LORD for yourselves, to serve Him.”

*2 Cor. 1:23*: “Moreover I call God as witness against my soul, that to spare you I came no more to Corinth.”

*Rom. 1:9*: “For God is my witness, ... that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers.”

*1 Thes. 2:10*: “You are witnesses, and God also, how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among you who believe.”

Further Examples: *Dt. 31:19+26; Jos. 22:27+34; Ru. 4:9-11; Jb. 16:19*

## 5. The Meaning of ‘Oath’

What significance does an oath have? Since the vow is a typically Jewish-Christian convention, we must seek the answer in the Bible. In his study of oath-taking in the various cultures of the world, the anthropologist Ashley Montagu has discovered that swearing is not at all universal. Neither the Japanese nor the American Indians nor the Melanesians use oaths. And even where you find similar rites, the vows of many cultures are not absolutely binding and mostly appeal to no higher deity.<sup>117</sup>

If most of the oaths taken in the Bible are made by God or Jesus swear, then an oath’s significance cannot lie in the distinction between truth and

<sup>116</sup>*Ibid.*, In The Song of Solomon 2:7; 3:5 vows are taken by the “gazelles or the does of the field.” According to Schlatter, *ibid*, this may be a poetic allusion to God, since the words closely resemble divine Names.

<sup>117</sup>Ashley Montagu. *The Anatomy of Swearing, op cit.* Cited in Rousas J. Rushdoony. *Institutes of Biblical Law, op. cit.*, pp. 10-18 & 106-107.

falsehood. The statement, “An oath is only necessary when the speaker’s truthfulness is in question,”<sup>118</sup> contradicts everything Scripture has to say about the question. God Himself swears oaths most of all, followed by the greatest men of faith in both Old and New Testaments. Must we therefore question the truthfulness of God’s assertions? Where does Scripture advise us to use oaths only when the truth is unclear?

But what does an oath mean? Let us look at a few examples. Whereas the Old Testament Levitical priesthood was not based on an oath (Heb. 7:20-21), the eternal priesthood of Christ, according to the order of Melchizedek, was (Ps. 110:4). “And inasmuch as He was not made priest without an oath (for they have become priests without an oath, but He with an oath by Him who said to Him: The LORD has sworn And will not relent, ‘You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek’), by so much more Jesus has become a surety of a better covenant” (Heb. 7:20-22). The Levitical priesthood could end, because it was not instituted eternally by oath, but Jesus’ priesthood cannot end, because it is sealed by an oath forever.

The same writer explains God’s oath as following, “For men indeed swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation is for them an end of all dispute. *Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath*, that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us.” (Heb. 6:16-18). ‘Immutability of His counsel’ is the best ‘definition’ of an oath.

In Is. 45:23-24, God defines His oath as: “The word” that “shall not return.” Ps. 110:4 tells us, “The LORD has sworn and will not relent.” Ps. 132:11 says, “The LORD has sworn in truth to David; He will not turn from it,” and in Ps. 119:106, David states, “I have sworn and confirmed ...”.

God may change His mind, even after He has made a pronouncement, as the Book of Jonah demonstrates. Once He has sworn, however, He will not alter His word!

Prophetic announcements not bound with a divine oath could be annulled or changed. Jonah’s prophecy that Niniveh would be destroyed in forty days (Jonah 3:4) was annulled by the people’s repentance. In spite of his annoyance, Jonah had been perfectly aware that God acts in this manner, “Ah, LORD, was not this what I said when I was still in my country? Therefore I

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<sup>118</sup> Arthur Volkman. “Was ist Schwören?”, *op. cit.*, p. 409.

fled previously to Tarshish; for I know that You are a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, One who relents from doing harm.” (Jon. 4:2). Similarly God tells Eli, “I said indeed that your house and the house of your father would walk before Me forever. But now the LORD says: Far be it from Me; for those who honor Me I will honor, and those who despise Me shall be lightly esteemed” (1 Sa. 2:30). God’s promise was conditional, but at this point, He swears an oath (‘Far be it from Me’) that Eli’s house must irrevocably come to an end.

God’s unfathomable grace is expressed in the fact that He seldom seals His announcements of judgment with an oath, but announcements of grace all the more, not only in the Covenant with Noah, that such judgment would never visit the earth again (Gn. 8:20-9:17). The same principle applies to the history of the people of Israel. Is. 54:9-10 relates the two to each other, “For this is like the waters of Noah to Me; For as I have sworn That the waters of Noah would no longer cover the earth, So have I sworn That I would not be angry with you, nor rebuke you. For the mountains shall depart And the hills be removed, But My kindness shall not depart from you, Nor shall My covenant of peace be removed,” Says the LORD, who has mercy on you.” (Is. 54:9-10).

1. In the first place, an oath is distinguished from a normal statement of truth in that it creates irrevocable facts and includes the requirement to precisely examine the past or the future.

An oath is not given merely in order to authenticate the truth, for then God would never need to swear. An oath, in contrast to a simple statement of truth, creates immutable truths and institutes irreversible responsibilities.

Let’s assume that some unforeseen accident prevents someone to fulfill a mere promise to provide a life essential medication. The failure to fulfill a simple promise is not the same as if the promise had been confirmed by oath. Before swearing an oath, one must carefully consider the possibility of mishap. At the scene of an accident, a witness may state that he saw a red car out of the corner of his eye, but if he swears to the statement in court, the driver of the red car could be convicted on that evidence.

An oath can thus only be annulled by confession of guilt and forgiveness, as Lv. 5:4-6 instructs us, “Or if a person swears, speaking thoughtlessly with his lips to do evil or to do good, whatever it is that a man may pronounce by an oath, and he is unaware of it – when he realizes it, then he shall be guilty in any of these matters. And it shall be, when he is guilty in any of these matters, that he shall confess that he has sinned in that thing; and he shall bring his trespass offering to the LORD for his sin which he has committed, a female from the flock, a lamb or a kid of the goats as a sin offering. So the priest shall make atonement for him concerning his sin” (Lv 5:4).

A covenant based on an oath could also be ‘broken’ – If one party failed to keep the conditions of the agreement (See Jos. 2:20 on the conditions to the agreement with Rahab), or if the conditions of the oath did not occur (see Gen. 24:8, 41), the other party was released from his obligations.

God’s oath to make Jesus’ priesthood an eternal one demonstrates the eternal nature of the oath. In the same way, the vow between Jonathan and David calls on the Lord to be an eternal witness: “Go in peace, since we have both sworn in the name of the LORD, saying, ‘May the LORD be between you and me (as witness, author’s note), and between your descendants and my descendants, forever” (compare 2 Sa. 21:7).

2. “An oath is the invocation of a curse upon one if he breaks his word (1 Sa. 19:6) or if he is not speaking the truth (Mk. 14:7-11)”.<sup>119</sup>

This definition, from a Bible dictionary, corresponds to the results of Ashley Montagu’s anthropological study: “Oaths are used as a precaution against a curse, which might explain the general tendency to confuse swearing with cursing.”<sup>120</sup> The ancient Germanic oath can be defined as following: “The oath was originally a conditional curse over oneself, made according to a ritualistic, sacral-magical form.” For this reason, Germanic society had no difficulties in accepting the Christian use of oaths.

The nature of the oath formula as a precaution against a curse is particularly evident in the expression, “The LORD do so to me and more also,” (or “May God do this with me and add that to me.” (1 Sa. 3:17; 1 Sa. 14:44; 1 Sa. 25:22; 2 Sa. 3:35; 2 Sa. 19:13; 1 Ki. 2:23; 2 Ki. 6:31. See specific examples in the tables above. With “Lord” see Ru. 1:17. With the names of specific persons, see the table above.) The expression, “If not” is generally used with an incomplete sentence. (Ezk. 36:7; Is. 22:14; Gn. 14:23; Nu. 14:28; Jb. 27:4). Altogether, there are twenty-six examples which call for judgment without defining a specific punishment for breaking the covenant.<sup>121</sup> The formula, “May it be far from me!” is used in a similar fashion (See tables above), particularly when “... if I ... “ is added without ending the sentence (1 Sa. 14:45; Jb. 27:5; 2 Sa. 20:20).

<sup>119</sup>J. G. S. S. Thompson. “Oaths.” in *The New Bible Dictionary*, ed. J. D. Douglas (1962, repr. Grand Rapids, Mich., Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1979). Rousas John Rushdoony expresses the same sentiments in *Law and Society: Institutes of Biblical Law 2* (Vallecito, Cal.: Ross House Books. 1986), p. 118. For further advocates of this view, see Georg Giesen. *Die Wurzel sb’ “schwören”*. *op. cit.* p. 26, note 26. Giesen himself rejects this interpretation, however.

<sup>120</sup>Ashley Montagu. *The Anatomy of Swearing. op.cit.*, p. 35.

<sup>121</sup>*Ibid.*

In cases of suspected adultery, “then the priest shall put the woman under the oath of the curse, and he shall say to the woman – ‘the LORD make you a curse and an oath among your people ...’” (Nu. 5:21), should she prove to be guilty. The curse was fulfilled in physical disability (Nu. 5:11-31).

1 Sa. 4:24-28 quotes Saul’s oath four times with the word, “Cursed ...”. In Ne. 10:29, Israel “... entered into a curse and an oath ...”. Nehemia later “... contended with them and cursed them, ... and made them swear by God” (Ne. 13:25). In Jos. 9:20, the leader suggests, “We will let them live, *lest wrath be upon us because of the oath which we swore to them.*” Dn. 9:11 confesses, “Yes, all Israel has transgressed Your law, and has departed so as not to obey Your voice; *therefore the curse and the oath written in the Law of Moses the servant of God have been poured out on us, because we have sinned against Him.*” God’s enemies will “leave your name as a curse to My chosen; For the Lord GOD will slay you, all” in opposition to those who “blesses himself in the God of truth ...” (in Is. 65:15-16).

The idea of cursing oneself in an oath can also be found in the New Testament. Paul calls “... God as witness against my soul ...” (2 Cor. 1:23). The Jews “bound themselves under an oath” to kill Paul (Acts 23:12) and in denying Jesus during His trial; Peter “began to curse and swear, saying, ‘I do not know the Man!’” (Mt. 26:74 = Mk. 14:71). Of course, both these last citations refer to oaths taken with sinful intentions, but they clearly illustrate the fact that an oath implied a curse upon oneself.

Dt. 19:16-19 illustrates the seriousness of a false or broken oath. A perjurer is to receive the same punishment which the defendant would have suffered as a result of the false evidence.<sup>122</sup>

The Bible also relates examples of people who cursed themselves rashly or under coercion. The Jews, for example, declare, “His blood be on us and on our children.” (Mt. 27:25), and experience the fulfillment of the curse in the Jewish wars and the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD.

Other texts describe people cursing themselves through parables. When David, the highest judge in Israel, condemns his own crimes of adultery and murder, Nathan, the prophet, replies, “You are the man!” (2 Sa. 12:5-7). After narrating the parable of the traitorous vinedressers, Jesus asks the priests and the Pharisees what they would have done with the wicked stew-

<sup>122</sup>See Walter Schick. “Eid. II. Rechtlich... “. Col. 371-374 in: *Evangelisches Staatslexikon*. ed. Hermann Kunst, Siegfried Grundmann (Stuttgart, Germany: Kreuz Verlag, 1966). Schick discusses modern German perjury law.

ards. Not until they have suggested the death penalty do they realize that they have condemned themselves (Mt. 21:33-45; Mk. 12:1-12; Lk. 20:9-19).

Self cursing played an important role in cases in which no witnesses could be found to testify to the events. If something a man had been keeping for another were stolen, the keeper had to swear to his own innocence (Ex. 22:9-11). When the dead body of an unknown victim were found close to a city, the elders had to testify under oath, that they knew nothing about the matter (Dt. 21:1-9). Paul also calls God as witness to invisible facts, such as his private prayers for the chance to visit the church in Rome (Rom. 1:9) or his attitude toward the church in Philippi (Phil. 1:8).

3) An oath always ratifies a covenant, bringing the rights and obligations defined specifically in the oath or those already set by God.

No covenant is made without an oath. (see the covenants in Jos. 9:15; 2 Ch. 15:12-15). Some texts use parallelisms to equate ‘covenant’ with ‘oath’ (Gn. 26:28; Dt. 29:11, 13; 2 Ki. 11:4; Ps. 105:9; Ezk. 16:59; Ezk. 17:13-19). Others equate swearing with the covenant (Dt. 4:31; 7:12; 8:18; Ps. 89:3; 105:9; Ezk. 16:8: “Yes, I swore an oath to you and entered into a covenant with you.”).

We can see the relationship between covenant and oath where a representative swears a covenant for others. In Jos. 9:15-16, for example, the elders swear to a covenant which binds the people as a whole.

*Marriage is also an oath and a vow and a ratification of a covenant* (Pr. 2:16-17; Mal. 2:14; compare Ezk. 16:8; Je. 5:7). The difference between marriage and living together is the difference between simply announcing one’s intentions of staying with one’s partner and making a covenant based on an irrevocable oath before God and man. *Those who deny that the New Testament teaches swearing oaths must therefore also abolish marriage ceremonies and substitute a simple promise for the marriage vow.*

Only when we forget the vital significance of Biblical covenants sealed by oath (relationship with God, marriage, Israel, church, state, work contract), can we condemn swearing. I believe that Christians would do well to reclaim the oath, to remind politicians and government officials of the weight of the inauguration oath, which can only be made before God.

The Old Testament lays particular value on the inauguration based on God’s law. (Ezr. 10:5; 2 Ch.15:12-15; 1 Ki. 2:43; Dt. 29:10-15. See all references to the 10 Commandments). This vow to keep the Law could be made by an individual; “I have sworn and confirmed That I will keep Your righteous judgments.” (Ps. 119:106). A group could also ratify a covenant

for a nation by taking such an oath, as in Ne. 10:28-29, “Now the rest of the people ... and all those who had separated themselves from the peoples of the lands to the Law of God, their wives, their sons, and their daughters, everyone who had knowledge and understanding – these joined with their brethren, their nobles, and entered into a curse and an oath to walk in God’s Law, which was given by Moses the servant of God, and to observe and do all the commandments of the LORD our Lord, and His ordinances and His statutes.”

The eighteenth century American revivalist and Calvinist theologian, Jonathan Edwards, considered the believer’s first confession of faith at or after his conversion to be an oath according to Dt. 6:13 and Dt. 10:20.<sup>123</sup> *I believe that the actual oath is taken in baptism which ought to immediately follow the first confession of faith:* “There is also an antitype which now saves us – baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer<sup>124</sup> of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.” (1 Pet 3:21).

One Old Testament prophecy connects repentance with an oath: “If you will return, O Israel, ... And you shall swear, ‘The LORD lives,’ In truth, in judgment, and in righteousness; The nations shall bless themselves in Him, And in Him they shall glory.” (Je. 4:1-2). Ruth also emphasizes her conversion to the People of Israel (“Your people shall be my people, And your God, my God”) with the oath: “The LORD do so to me, and more also ...” (Ru. 1:16-17).

*The swearing of oaths to God can thus be considered a mark of the People of God.* Dt 6:13 and 10:20 use the swearing of oaths in God’s name as a parallel to “serving” and “fearing” Him. Is. 48:1 correlates “swearing by the Name” of the Lord with “confessing the Lord”.<sup>125</sup> In the same way, the worship of false gods can be defined as confessing their names, swearing by them, serving them or bowing down before them (Jos. 23:7). Swearing by other gods is considered idolatry and defection from the Lord (Je. 5:7; Zp. 1:5-6; Am. 8:14). The prophets warn all who serve other gods, not to “swear an oath, saying, ‘As the LORD lives.’”

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<sup>123</sup>See Peter Kawerau. *Amerika und die orientalischen Kirchen: Ursprung und Anfang der amerikanischen Mission unter den Nationalkirchen Westasiens*. Vol. 31 *Arbeiten zur Kirchengeschichte*. (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1958) pp. 42-45.

<sup>124</sup>Or ‘covenant’. See Alexander Schweizer. *Hinabgefahren zur Hölle als Mythos ohne biblische Begründung durch Auslegung der Stelle 1.Petr. 3,17-22 nachgewiesen*. (Zurch, Switzerland: Friedrich Schultheß, 1868), p. 36. Schweizer translates the Greek term ‘eperotema’ with ‘oath’.)

<sup>125</sup>Although in this text their oaths and confession are not sincere, and therefore sinful.

Even if the Pharisees' erred only by swearing by other things, it is not enough to simply swear in God's Name. The oath must be sincere. Swearing falsely profanes the Lord's Name (Lv. 19:12) as God's Name must never be misused at all (Ex. 20:7; Dt. 5:11). This automatically means that all oaths must be taken in the Lord's Name; false oaths are no alternative!

An oath should be made "with all one's heart" (2 Ch. 15:15), "in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness (Je. 4:2). It is a terrible thing to swear "But not in truth or in righteousness;" (Is. 48:1). Swearing "rashly" or "deceptively" is condemned repeatedly (Lv. 5:2-4; 19:12; Je. 5:2; Je. 7:9; Ze. 5:3-4; Mal. 3:5), for it profanes the Name of God. No one who swears falsely is permitted to enter the Temple (Ps. 24:3-4; Ps. 15:1, 4). Scripture continually condemns "perjurers" (Je. 7:9; Ze. 5:3-4; Mal. 3:5; 1 Tim. 1:10). Jürgen Kuberski writes:

Bearing false witness is strictly forbidden in Old Testament law: Ex. 20:16 (one of the Ten Commandments!); Lv. 19:11-12; Ps. 15:4; Je. 5:2; 7:9; Ho. 10:4; Ze. 8:17; (See the perjury against Jesus in Mt. 26:59ff.)

Mosaic law required that a perjurer (who bears false witness against another person) receive the same punishment as the innocent party, who would have been condemned as a result of the evidence, would otherwise have received: Dt. 19:16-19. Perjury could thus be very severely punished! (The people who gave false evidence in Jesus' trial should therefore have been crucified!)<sup>126</sup>

The Ninth Commandment, "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor," (Ex. 20:16) refers in principle not to saying something wrong about a person, but to giving false evidence under oath in a court of law.<sup>127</sup> The verb used means 'to answer' or 'to testify in reply to a question.'<sup>128</sup> Ex. 23:1 expressly forbids perjury as well as slander: "You shall not circulate a false report. Do not put your hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness."

Keeping an oath is naturally essential (Nu. 30:3; 6:1-21; Lv. 27:2-25; Dt. 23:22; Jdg. 11:35; Ec. 5:3-4). Ps. 15:4 permits "He who swears to his own hurt and does not change;" to enter the Lord's presence (see also 1 Samuel 25:22 and 32-34).

<sup>126</sup>Jürgen Kuberski. "Darf ein Christ schwören?", *op. cit.*, p. 147.

<sup>127</sup>Klaus Berger: *Die Gesetzesauslegung Jesu. Part I: Markus und Parallelen*. Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament (Neukirchen, Germany: Neukirchener Verlag, 1972), pp. 332-341.

<sup>128</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 333.

*The abuse of oaths does not nullify its usage.*<sup>129</sup> Whoever swears righteous oaths in the Name of the living God with his whole heart, can be sure of God's approval, for it is "the righteous" and "the good", who "takes an oath", and "the wicked" and "the sinner" "who fears an oath" (Ec. 9:1-2). Je. 5:1-2 equates "executing judgment" and "seeking truth" with swearing sincerely<sup>130</sup> (See also Ze. 8:16-17<sup>131</sup>). He who does not swear, cannot "swear loyalty to God" (Is. 65:16).

"Then they took an oath before the LORD with a loud voice, with shouting and trumpets and rams' horns. And all Judah rejoiced at the oath, for they had sworn with all their heart and sought Him with all their soul; and He was found by them, and the LORD gave them rest all around" (2 Ch. 15:14-15).

## 6. Amen

"Amen" is actually an *oath of affirmation*, which confirms the statement preceding it (see 1 Ki. 1:36, for a good example) and is usually translated, 'so be it'. A better translation would be "It stands firm and is valid." (according to H. Schlier).

"Amen was the answer of the person over whom the oath was made. He confirmed the oath by saying 'Amen'."<sup>132</sup>

That 'Amen' is an oath formula has been proved above already. It has been mentioned that the oath formula in Gen 22,16 is given as 'Amen' in Hebr 6:14. It is called an 'oath' in Hebr 6:16. In the Old Testament, "Amen" is used to ratify divine curses (Nu. 5:22; Dt. 27:15-26; Je. 11:1-5; Ne 5:13), and to confirm praise to God (1 Ch. 16:36; Ne. 8:6), particularly at the end of individual books of Psalms (Ps. 41:13; 72:19; 89:52; 106:48).

In the New Testament, Jesus uses "Amen" to introduce many of His discourses ('verily, verily' or 'truly, truly I tell you.'<sup>133</sup>). In the same way, the

<sup>129</sup>James Henley Thornwell. "Vows," *The Collected Writings of James Henley Thornwell*, Vol. 2., *Theological and Ethical* (1875/1974. repr. Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1986) p. 596. Thornwell writes on vows, "The Church of Rome has perverted, and Protestants have neglected, them." His treatment of the subject is an excellent study of the significance of vows for modern ecclesiastical practice.

<sup>130</sup>Georg Giesen. *Die Wurzel sb' "schwören"*, *op.cit.*, p. 39. with the reasoning "that the prophet's polemics oppose perjury."

<sup>131</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>132</sup>For the argumentation, that "Amen" is an oath formula, see the table above on oath formulas.

<sup>133</sup>In the Gospels, 25 double Amens and about 50 single ones.

church uses the term as a response to prayers (church on earth 1 Cor. 14:16; church in Heaven Rev. 5:14). The apostles use it to conclude their books (Rom. 15:33; 16:27; Gal. 6:18; Rev. 22:20) and their doxologies (Rom. 1:25; 9:5; 11:36; 16:27; Gal. 1:5; Eph 3:21; 1 Tim. 1:17; 6:16; 2 Tim. 4:18; Heb. 13:21; 1 Pet. 4:11; 5:11; Jude 25).

Jesus Himself is called God's "Amen" (2 Cor. 1:20; Rev. 3:14; compare Isaiah 65:16), because He is absolutely true and faithful (trustworthy), because His is the one "faithful witness" (parallel to "Amen" in Rev. 3:14, confirmed by "Amen in Rev. 1:5-6). All God's promises are fulfilled in Him.<sup>134</sup>

It is thus a perfectly Biblical custom for the congregation to respond with 'Amen' to the 'Amen' at the conclusion of a prayer and for the church to respond to the reading of the consecration of the elements in Communion with "Yes, Amen", as is the custom in some congregations. In doing so, the church confirms that it believes what has been said and claims the power of the sacrament for itself; a custom described by Justin Martyr (circa 100-165 AD).<sup>135</sup>

The 'Amen' is particularly appropriate in Communion, a covenant sign, for Old Testament covenants were always sealed and renewed by oath. Jesus identifies Communion as a sacrament in the words of consecration, "This is the new covenant in my blood" (1 Cor. 11:23-26; Mt. 26:26-28; Mk.14:22-24; Lk. 22:19-20). Baptism is the sign of the beginning of our covenant with God, and the Lord's Supper is the sign of the continuing covenant.

## 7. Benediction

Because a benediction<sup>136</sup> also includes an oath, it is generally concluded and confirmed with an 'Amen'.

<sup>134</sup>See Rousas J. Rushdoony. "Jesus Christ as the Witness," *Institutes of Biblical Law. op.cit.*, pp. 572-575. On oaths, see also pp. 101-127.

<sup>135</sup>Justin Martyr. 'Apology 65'. Cited in Alfons Heilmann (ed.) *Texte der Kirchenväter. 5 Vols., Vol. 3* (Munich, Germany: Kösel, 1964), pp. 276-278.

<sup>136</sup>See Friso Melzer. *Unser Sprache im Lichte der Christus-Offenbarung.* (Tübingen, Germany: J. C. Mohr, 1952) pp. 420-425.

**Benediction Formula, Benedictions and Blessings in the Bible  
(examples)**

*Gn. 48-49; Dt. 33:1-7:* Jacob's and Moses' last blessings on the tribes of Israel.

*Numbers 6:23-27:* "Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, 'This is the way you shall bless the children of Israel.' Say to them: 'The LORD bless you and keep you; The LORD make His face shine upon you, And be gracious to you; The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, And give you peace.' So they shall put My name on the children of Israel, and I will bless them."

*Ruth 2:4:* "Now behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said to the reapers, 'The LORD be with you!' And they answered him, 'The LORD bless you!'"

*Psalms 129:8:* "The blessing of the LORD be upon you; We bless you in the name of the LORD!"

*Hebrews 13:20-21:* "Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen."

*Philippians 4:7:* "And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

Further examples: 1 Thes. 5:23-28; 2 Thes. 3:16-18. frequently as greeting at the beginning or the end of New Testament epistles.



## **Human Rights and Christian Faith (1997)<sup>137</sup>**

### Man as Creation and Image of God.

On December 10, 1948, the Soviet Union signed the General Declaration of Human Rights passed by the General Assembly of the United Nations. The declaration states that all human beings possess the same dignity (Article 1) and forbids all discrimination due to race, color, sex, language, religion or political conviction (Article 2). Because all men have the right to life and liberty (Article 3), both slavery (Article 4) and torture (Article 5) are prohibited. All are equal before the law and may be condemned only according to established law, only after being heard in a court of law (Articles 7-11). All are free to emigrate and to choose their place of residence (Article 13), and to request asylum in other countries (Article 14). Every human being is free to choose his spouse, and the family, as the “natural and basic unit in society”, must be protected by the State and by society (Articles 16+26). The Declaration also demands the right of private property (Article 17), the right to liberty of conscience and religion, which includes the individual’s right to change his faith (Article 18), the right of opinion and information (Article 19), the right to congregate and to form associations (Article 20), the right to vote (Article 21). Everyone has the right to security in social matters (Articles 22+25+28), to labor with just remuneration (Article 23) and to education (Article 26).

Closely related to the idea of human rights is the claim that all people have the same right to be treated as persons – whatever race, religion, sex, political persuasion or social or economic status they may be. What is the basis of human equality, if not the fact that all were equally created by God? Thus, a Christian argument for human rights must begin with the biblical account of Creation, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own

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<sup>137</sup>Thomas Schirmmacher. “Christlicher Glaube und Menschenrechte” (Russisch). POISK: Ezemedel’naja Vsesojuznaja Gazeta [Journal of the Russian Academy of Science]. Nr. 48 (446) 22.-28. November 1997. p. 13; reprinted as “Christlicher Glaube und Menschenrechte” (in Russian). Utschitjelskaja Gazeta (Russische Lehrerzeitung). No. 2 (9667) 3.1.1998. S. 21 + No. 3 (9668) 20.1.1998. p. 21 + No. 4 (9669) 3.2.1998. p. 22. Written for the Konferenz Evangelikaler Publizisten (Conference of Evangelical Journalists and Mediapeople).

image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them” (Gen. 1:26-27). The fact that Man was created in the image of God plays a major roll in the relationships of human beings to each other. Genesis 9:16, for example, requires murder to be punished, for it injures the image of God. “Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.” (Genesis 9:6)

Creation exists for the glory of God and has its meaning from God. This fact holds all the more for the ‘Crown of Creation’, Mankind was created according to the divine order of Creation to fulfill the purpose given him by God. God made him ruler over the earth, but also gave him the responsibility for the preservation of the earthly creation. The psalmist writes, “Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet: All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field;” (Psalm 8:6-7).

For this reason, human rights include only those privileges which God has given Man, no other rights which mankind may choose or claim for himself.

Christians may not, therefore, automatically identify the human rights catalogs formulated by western countries with those in the Bible. Scripture prescribes the right to an orderly court procedure according to clearly stated laws, to the hearing of witnesses, to judges who have not been bribed and to legal defense, as we will see. Such legal proceedings cannot, however, be automatically identified with Western jurisdiction. Supposing they could be—with which system? The German system, the British, the French, the American? We all know that these systems are quite different! There is plenty of room for a variety of legal systems which differ due to the cultural and historical traditions of their people, yet still guarantee human rights.

### The Christian Roots of Human Rights

No one disputes the fact that human rights, given to protect the individual, are derived from Christian thought. The General Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations, of December 10, 1948, clearly demonstrates its Christian roots. The bans on slavery and torture, the principle of equality before the law, the right to rest and recreation—as seen in the Sabbath or Sunday rest—come from Christian traditions and not by chance are the governments which confirm these rights and anchor them in their constitutions mostly in Christian countries. Even Karl Marx acknowledged this, for he rejected human rights as a product of Christianity (for example, Marx and Engels Works, Vol. 1).

No state and no legal system can survive without a minimum of common, and necessarily ‘metaphysically’ based values. A legal system assumes a value system, for law is derived from moral standards which exist prior to and outside itself.

The guarantee of human dignity assumes that Man is more than that which he perceives about himself. He cannot be comprehended by the means and methods of natural science. He is metaphysically open. The modern State, with its legal system, depends on requirements that it cannot itself guarantee.

### Enlightenment or Forgiveness and Repentance?

According to the philosophies of the Enlightenment in the eighteenth century, which attempted to found human rights without God and against the Church, all Good, including human rights, could be derived from Nature and from Reason. Rousseau’s identification of ‘Reason’ and ‘Nature’ is peculiar to Enlightenment thought. The attempt to base human rights on Nature has failed, however, for no one can agree on the meaning of ‘Nature’ or on how its laws can be discovered. Wolfgang Schild, professor for penal law, writes, “The Enlightenment cannot and must not be the last word, our last word. Its rationality and functionality must be taken to its limits, for social life with a dignity worthy of Man is otherwise impossible. Even and particularly penal law cannot limit itself to rational means in order to achieve peace and order at any price: it requires the recognition of the human dignity—even of the felon – as its fundament and its limit.”

The thought that human beings could be improved by education, and that human ills could be solved by intellectual enlightenment, is a basic problem of Greek philosophy, of Humanism and of the Enlightenment. The Humanist ideal of education owes its existence to the idea that morals could be raised through education, for it assumes that the individual does wrong only because he is ignorant or because he thinks wrongly, not because his will is evil and because he is incapable of doing good on his own strength. These philosophies try to reduce the ethical and responsible aspect of thought, words and deeds to the question of knowledge, which hold a man responsible, only when he knows what he is doing.

Yet we are surprised to learn that doctors smoke as much as laymen do, that people maintain unhealthy life-styles, and that women continually become pregnant in spite of a flood of information about birth control. We all know from our own lives, that knowing the right answer, even being convinced of it, in no way guarantees that we live accordingly. A politician who vehemently defends monogamy as the foundation of society in Par-

liament does not necessarily insist on marital fidelity in his private life, and is not immune to adultery or divorce.

The Bible teaches that human sin affects not only our thoughts, but also our whole being, and that above all, our wills, which are opposed to God, lead us to act and think falsely, so that more thought and consideration are in itself insufficient. We must clear up our old, sin-encumbered past. Christians believe that God Himself died in Man's place, when Christ died on the Cross for our lack of love and our egotism. When we acknowledge that we cannot save ourselves by our own strength and our own reason, but rely on Christ's fulfillment of our penalty, we can overcome our evil will by faith in Jesus, and renew our will and our mind according to God's will (Romans 1:20-25; 12:1-3). True renewal occurs when the power of God works in our inner selves; not through educational campaigns, but by God's love and forgiveness.

### Human Rights Precede the State

Human dignity and human rights are part of man's being as God's creation. Thus, the State does not create human rights, it merely formulates and protects them. Since the right to life belongs to the very essence of the human being, man does not receive them from the government, and no government has the right to decide that its citizens have no more right to live, but can be executed at the ruler's whim. Nor does the State confer the right to have a family, for the State does not own the family, it merely acknowledges the duty implied in the order of Creation to protect marriage and the family.

There are, therefore, rights which existed prior to the State, and there are rights above the State, rights derived from nature, both from human nature and from the various types of human society. The government must respect these rights and accept the limitations implied by these natural, divinely given rights of the individual, the family, the employee (or the employer!) and other human social groups.

Since human rights are rooted in a moral code prescribed to the State, this code equally forbids a false appeal to human rights, because it also defends the human dignity of others. No one has the right to express his own personality through murder or arson, for example.

Human rights assume a State with limited powers and a law valid for all mankind, a law which limits the powers of government. Were this not so, man would indeed receive his rights from the State. The individual would then have only the rights and the claims to protection which his govern-

ment assured. This is the socialist view, which leaves no place for criticism or correction of a State which has declared itself to be God.

### The Meaning of Romans 13

The most important scripture about the role of the State is the thirteenth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, which was written by the apostle Paul, who brought Christianity to Europe and Asia in the first century AD: “Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. For this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God’s ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.” (Romans 13:1-7)

This text makes it clear that no one who opposes the State on principle can appeal to God’s authorization. On the contrary: he is opposing God’s law, and is rightly liable to legal proceedings (Rom. 13:2). Since the State has the duty to stem and to punish evil, Christians must do good, if they wish to avoid conflict. If a Christian does wrong, he is justly punished by the State. For the government, as God’s minister, has the duty of vengeance (13:4). As a result, the Christian pays his taxes and gives government officials proper respect (13:6-7).

But the question is, who defines what is good or evil? Did Paul leave this up to the State? Can the State declare anything good and demand it from its citizens? No. When Paul spoke of goodness, he defined it according to God’s will, and defined evil as that which was condemned by God’s law. “Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people.” (Proverbs 14:34).

The Bible thus gives us clear limitations and directions for taxes, military service and the police. John the Baptist, for example, told the tax inspectors and the police (One body served both as police and as military): “Exact no more than that which is appointed you” and “Do violence to no

man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages.” (Luke 3:12-14).

From Paul’s statements, we can derive two essential thoughts:

1. *The government can judge only what people do, not what they think.* It is responsible for good or evil ‘works’, with doing. It is not the duty of the State to control all sin, only those sins whose activity can be observed and which damage public order, which the State has the responsibility to maintain and to protect.

2. *The State may not distinguish between Christians and other people, i.e. between believers in different faiths, as long as they pursue their beliefs in a peaceful manner.* Since God forbids partiality in legal matters, Christians must be punished just as severely as unbelievers when they break the law. The State cannot distinguish between Christians and members of other religious groups, for it may judge only on the basis of deeds.

Human rights are protective; they serve not so much to define the privileges of the individual, as to limit the powers of the State and of other institutions which deal with the lives of individuals. For this reason, Paul limits the State’s duties to specific aspects of life, rather than giving it the right to regulate and penalize all of man’s thought and life.

*The State is not to be identified with society,* as the socialist governments have done ever since the French Revolution. In such states, all aspects of society including the family and the Church are subject to the government. Society is more than the State. The State does not have authority over all parts of society.

## On the Separation of Church and State

Just as the State may not dominate a church or a religion, it may not itself be subject to any church or religion. The separation of Church and State does not contradict the Christian faith, but arises naturally out of it, for the Bible makes it the duty of the State to enable people to live in peace, whatever they believe. It is the responsibility of the Church and of religion to point to eternity, to provide moral stability and to encourage man’s relationship to God.

The historian Eugen Ewig therefore speaks of the Old Testament Doctrine of Two Powers. Eduard Eichmann, also an historian, writing about the Old Testament division of powers between priest and king, “Along with the sacred Scripture, Old Testament views have become common property of the Christian West.”

Jesus confirmed this separation in the words, “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.” (Mark 12:17). Because this rule comes from God, Who is above the emperor, the religious institutions of God on earth, the organized People of God, are not above the emperor. The first priority is obedience to God, Who determines and limits what belongs to Caesar. Caesar has no authority to determine or limit what belongs to God. This does not, however, mean that the ruler is dependent on the Church, for God has given him the responsibility for all the people in his realm, not only for the members of one religious group.

The separation of Church and State does not mean that their duties never overlap, or that neither institution needs the other. On the contrary, the Church may advise the government and teach it God’s law, as Jehoida taught Jehoash. “And Jehoash did that which was right in the sight of the LORD all his days wherein Jehoiada the priest instructed him.” (2 Kings 12:2). It is sad that the modern Church has given up this critical office and prefers to howl with the pack.

The separation of Church and State does not become a war against Christianity until the State forgets its obligation to God’s law and begins to persecute the faith.

### God Knows no Partiality

Centuries ago in the Bible, God made fair judicial proceedings a human right. A just judge is necessary to determine justice, and God is the prototype of the just judge (Deut. 10:17-18; Psalm 7:9+12; 9:5; 50:6. See also Psalm 75:3+8), “for the LORD is a God of judgment” (Isaiah 30:18). He is the defender of justice. Those who judge fairly act in God’s Name. The Old Testament tells of the just king Jehoshaphat, “And said to the judges, Take heed what ye do: for ye judge not for man, but for the LORD, who is with you in the judgment. Wherefore now let the fear of the LORD be upon you; take heed and do it: for there is no iniquity with the LORD our God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of gifts.” (2 Chronicles 19:6-7).

A judge must be aware of the fact that God is observing him and stands by the innocent: “To turn aside the right of a man before the face of the most High, to subvert a man in his cause, the Lord approveth not.” (Lamentations 3:35-36).

For this reason the Bible has many directions concerning just, humane judicial proceedings. Prosecution, for example, requires at least two witnesses (Numbers 35:30; Deuteronomy 17:6; 19:15; Mat. 18:16; John 8:17; Heb. 10:28; 1 Tim 5:18), so that the accusation is brought by two or three

witnesses (Deut 10:17-18). Violent witnesses are not to be heard (Psalm 35:11).

The judge's ruling must be completely impartial (Deut. 1:16; 2 Chr. 19:7; Prov. 18:5; 24:23; Job 13:10; Col. 3:25; Eph 6:9), for God is Himself impartial. (Deut 10:17-18). Only wicked judges are partial (Isa. 10:1-2; 3:9).

The ruling is to be made without prejudice (1 Tim. 5:21), after the judge has carefully examined all the evidence (Deut 17:4). "Execute true judgment," God says in Zecharia 7:9; so that the ruling need not be repealed.

"If there be a controversy between men, and they come unto judgment, that the judges may judge them; then they shall justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked." (Deuteronomy 25:1). Bribery must not influence the judge's opinion. "A wicked man taketh a gift out of the bosom to pervert the ways of judgment." (Proverbs 17:23). God is the great example. "For the LORD your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward:" (Deuteronomy 10:17). "Wherefore now let the fear of the LORD be upon you; take heed and do it: for there is no iniquity with the LORD our God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of gifts." (2 Chronicles 19:7)

Scripture generally approves of gifts, when given to delight or to help others. Sometimes, the Bible realizes, gifts may even be necessary, if people are to achieve valid goals. The wise teacher tells us, "A man's gift maketh room for him, and bringeth him before great men." (Proverbs 18:16) and "A gift in secret pacifieth anger: and a reward in the bosom strong wrath." (Proverbs 21:14). Should an innocent person be confronted with corrupt officials, he has no hope of achieving perfectly legal goals. If he has no opportunity of overcoming this corruption in any other way, he can get his rights with gifts. Only when he buys injustice, is he himself guilty of corruption. He who is forced to bribe others will certainly strive to eliminate corruption, particularly in the Church, or in other religious institutions.

For this reason, there must be no double standard, such as one set of laws for the wealthy and another for the peasants. The Old Testament required the same penal system for both nationals and for foreign residents: (Exodus 12:49). "Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment: thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honour the person of the mighty: but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbour." (Leviticus 19:15). Because God defends "the cause of the poor," (Prov. 29:7) and "the cause of the poor and needy." (Prov. 31:8), Proverbs 31:8-9 enjoins us, "Open thy mouth for the dumb in the cause of all such as are appointed to destruction.

Open thy mouth, judge righteously, and plead the cause of the poor and needy.”

The Bible thus measures the justice of a country by its protection of the weak. Not only the condition of the wealthy or the ruling class, but also the condition of the simple citizens is to be considered. Not only the condition of the State Church is significant, but also the condition of the smaller Christian groups. Not only the condition of the judges with money and power to defend their rights, is important, but also the condition of the poor, the widows and the orphans in court.

God is the Creator and the Lord of all mankind. He wishes us to treat with each other as His image and His creatures—human beings dealing with human beings, not animals with animals.



## The Old Testament vs. Abortion (1993/2000)

### Abortion is Murder

Dietrich Bonhoeffer once expressed the traditional view of abortion with the following well-chosen words, “Marriage is inseparable with the recognition of the unborn child’s rights, rights not in the parents’ disposition. When these rights are not recognized, marriage ceases to be marriage, and becomes a mere relationship ... To kill the fruit in its mother’s womb offends against the child’s God-given right to live. The question whether the ‘fruit of the womb’ is already human or not only confuses the issue. The fact is, that God intended to create a human being, and that this human being has been robbed of its life. What is that if not murder?”<sup>138</sup>

No situation, however difficult, changes this fact. Bonhoeffer continues, “That the motives for such a deed can vary, that the responsibility may lie more with society than with the individual, when the deed results from the depths of human abandonment and despair, that money can cover up quite a lot of foolishness, while the poorest of the poor, who have not chosen to go ahead with the deed without great deliberation; are more easily caught, this definitely concerns the personal relationship of the counselor to the individual, but it changes nothing in the fact that murder has been committed.”<sup>139</sup>

Cardinal Josef Ratzinger has pointed out that only a ‘theonomic view’ of law (i.e. that law is founded in the law of God), can guarantee the inviolability of the human being under all conditions. The will of society is insufficient.<sup>140</sup> The Christian opposition to abortion, and the identification of the killing of an unborn child with the murder of a born human is based:

1. on the general prohibition of murder in the Ten Commandments,
2. on the biblical description of the ‘fruit of the body’ as a blessing,

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<sup>138</sup>Dietrich Bonhoeffer. *Ethik*. Chr. Kaiser: München, 1949. S. 118. See also Henri van Straelen. *Abtreibung*. Abtreibung: Die große Entscheidung. Josef Habbel: Regensburg, 1974. op.cit. p. 70-71 on Bonhoeffer und Karl Barth’s position on abortion.

<sup>139</sup>Dietrich Bonhoeffer. *Ethik*. a. a. O. S. 118-119. Bonhoeffer objects to abortion, even when the life of the mother is in danger. *Ibid.*, p. 119, note. 6.

<sup>140</sup>Lucio Brunelli. “Ratzingers Plan für die Enzyklika”. *30 Tage und die Welt* 2 (1992) 5 (Mai): 28-31, here p. 31

3. on the biblical view of the unborn child as a human being capable of a relationship with God,

4. on Exodus 21:22-25.

God has never given any institution the right to kill unborn children, who are innocent in the eyes of every legal law court.

### The Prohibition of Murder in the Ten Commandments

The Ten Commandments state, “You shall not kill (Or murder).” (Exodus 20:13; Deut. 5:16; Matt. 5:21), which includes all illegal killing. Exceptions are permissible only where God himself has expressly permitted or commanded it, as is the case with a judicial death penalty (Gen. 9:5-6; Exodus 21:21; Rom. 13:3-4; Acts 25:11), self-defense (Ex.22:1-2) or defense of the country (Neh. 4:8+14; Rom. 13:4).<sup>141</sup> God has never given any institution the right to kill unborn children, who are innocent in the eyes of every legal law court.

The Old Testament law does not even permit parents to judge their children. Young people who threatened their parents, and who were impervious to ‘discipline, were to be taken to court. The punishment was carried out by the State (Deut. 21:18-21). Parental authority was limited to ‘discipline’ (Prov. 19:18). Only the State has the power to exercise severe punishment.

The Romans allowed the father unlimited power over his children, before and after birth, so that he could even execute them.<sup>142</sup> Oehler writing on the Old Testament, says, “Even the human right of the parent over his children is – in contrast to the laws of other ancient peoples – limited; the father has namely no rights over the life or death of his children, as in Roman law ...; the parents are to bring their rebellious son to court.”<sup>143</sup> Many other nations permitted families to execute their own members.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>141</sup>See also. Ray R. Sutton. *Who Owns the Family: God or the State?* Biblical Blueprints Series 3. Dominion Press: Ft. Worth (TX); Thomas Nelson: Nashville (NY), 1987. S. 40-50; Rousas J. Rushdoony. *The Institutes of Biblical Law*. ob.cit., p. 185-191

<sup>142</sup>Achim Keller. *Die Abortiva der Römischen Kaiserzeit. Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte der Pharmazie* 46. Deutscher Apotheker Verlag: Stuttgart, 1988. p. 23

<sup>143</sup>Gustav Friedrich Oehler. *Theologie des Alten Testaments*. J. F. Steinkopf: Stuttgart, 1891<sup>3</sup>. p. 372 (sic)

<sup>144</sup>Examples and documentation in Carle G. Zimmerman. *Family and Civilization*. Harper & Brothers: New York/London, 1947. p 359-383

He who gives parents the right to abortion denies everything the Bible teaches about the duties and the meaning of parenthood.

### Children are a Blessing

The psalmist Solomon considered a child a reward from God before its birth (Ps. 127:3-5): "Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward." In Ps. 128, 3+6, children and grandchildren are part of God's special blessing. Jacob thus speaks of the blessings of the breasts, and of the womb," (Gen. 49:25). God's blessing on the fruit of the womb is a special gift (Deut. 7:13-14), one of the consequences of obedience to his law (Deut. 28:4). To give parents the right to abort their unborn children is to deny all that the Bible teaches about the duties and the meaning of parenthood.

Only God can give us children, as the Old Testament clearly demonstrates in its treatment of barrenness. The matriarchs of Israel; Sarah, Rebecca and Rachel, were all barren at first, and only conceived when God interfered. When Rachel demands the miracle from her husband, "Give me children, or else I die.", Jacob replies, "Am I in God's stead, who hath withheld from thee the fruit of the womb?" (Gen. 30:1-2). Hannah, the mother of Samuel, experiences the same thing (1 Sam. 1-2), and praises the Lord with great joy after her son's birth (1 Sam. 2:1-10). In Ps. 113:9, God is praised, "He maketh the barren woman to keep house, and to be a joyful mother of children. Praise ye the LORD." Children are an honor and the joy of their parents, (Ps. 144:12).

In the Bible, the unborn child is a human being with a relationship to God.

### The Unborn Child has a Relationship to God

The Bible is not merely concerned with the narrow biological

<b>The Unborn Child has a Relationship to God</b>
<p><b>1) Belief in God</b></p> <p>Psalm 71:6 By thee have I been holden up from the womb: thou art he that took me out of my mother's bowels: my praise shall be continually of thee.</p> <p>Psalm 22:10 I was cast upon thee from the womb: thou art my God from my mother's belly.</p>

## 2) Calling and Sanctification

Jeremiah 1:5 Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.

Romans 9:11; Gen. 25:22-26 (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) 12 It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. 13 As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. (Neither child had done anything wicked, but Jacob was already called by God before his birth)

Luke 1:15 (An angel tells Zacharias about his unborn son, John the Baptist) For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb.

Luke 1:41-44 (The yet unborn John the Baptist greets Jesus, who is still in Mary's womb) And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost: And she spake out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy.

Judges 13:5-7 (an angel about Samson) For, lo, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and no razor shall come on his head: for the child shall be a Nazarite unto God from the womb: and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines. Then the woman came and told her husband, saying, A man of God came unto me, and his countenance was like the countenance of an angel of God, very terrible: but I asked him not whence he was, neither told he me his name: But he said unto me, Behold, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and now drink no wine nor strong drink, neither eat any unclean thing: for the child shall be a Nazarite to God from the womb to the day of his death.

Isaiah 49:1 Listen, O isles, unto me; and hearken, ye people, from far; The LORD hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name.

Galatians 1:15 But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace,

## 3) Created

Job 10:8 Thine hands have made me and fashioned me together round

about; yet thou dost destroy me. 9 Remember, I beseech thee, that thou hast made me as the clay; and wilt thou bring me into dust again? 10 Hast thou not poured me out as milk, and curdled me like cheese? 11 Thou hast clothed me with skin and flesh, and hast fenced me with bones and sinews. 12 Thou hast granted me life and favour, and thy visitation hath preserved my spirit.

Psalm 139:13 For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. 14 I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. 15 My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. 16 Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.

Job 31:15 Did not he that made me in the womb make him? and did not one fashion us in the womb?

Isaiah 44:2 Thus saith the LORD that made thee, and formed thee from the womb, which will help thee; Fear not, O Jacob, my servant; and thou, Jesurun, whom I have chosen.

Isaiah 44:24 Thus saith the LORD, thy redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb.

#### **4) Sin, Original Sin**

Hosea 12:3 (about Jacob) He took his brother by the heel in the womb, and by his strength he had power with God:

Psalm 51:5 Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.<sup>145</sup>

Psalm 58:3 The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies.

Isaiah 48:8 Yea, thou heardest not; yea, thou knewest not; yea, from that time that thine ear was not opened: for I knew that thou wouldest deal very treacherously, and wast called a transgressor from the womb.

*[Remark: The unborn child has committed no sinful deeds, for Romans 9:11 says clearly that neither Jacob nor Esau had done either good or evil before their birth (see above).]*

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<sup>145</sup>Cf. about this text esp. Kenneth L. Gentry. The Christian Case Against Abortion (Buch). a. a. O. S. 24-43

question of when human life begins;<sup>146</sup> the unborn child is a human being with a relationship to God, both for good and for evil.<sup>147</sup> The separation from God caused by the Fall affects the child in its mother's womb, for "in sin my mother conceived me" (Ps. 51:5;<sup>148</sup> see also Ps. 58:3 and Isa. 48:8). Jacob cheated his brother in the womb (Hos. 12:3).

At the same time, the unborn child is already God's personal creation (Ps. 139:13.16; Job 31:15; Isa. 44:2+24). Prophets and men of God were called and sanctified before birth (Jer. 1:5; Judges 14:5+7; Isa. 49:1; Luke 1:15+41; 1:44-44; Gal. 1:15). John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Spirit and leapt for joy in his mother's womb, when Jesus entered the room in Mary's womb (Luke 1:41-44). Jesus was already truly God and truly Man, the Messiah of the Jews and the Savior of the world from the moment of His conception, for He was begotten by the Holy Spirit.

Because body and soul are inseparable in the Bible, there is no point in time at which the soul enters the body, which was the view of Greeks, Romans, Hellenistic Jews and some of the Church Fathers. The pagan idea of the entrance of the soul into the body, long rejected in favor of the Christian view, has recently been revived by proponents of the abortion limit, which considers the embryo not yet fully human.

### Exodus 21:22-25

Only one legal text in the Old Testament, Exodus 21:22-25, deals with the judicial aspects of abortion.<sup>149</sup> The regulation does not deal with a deliberate abortion, but with the unintentional killing of an unborn child through careless violence against the mother. Should this text, however, equate the killing of the unborn child with the murder of an adult, the ruling can be transferred to abortion.

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<sup>146</sup>See also the excellent discussion in John Ankerberg, John Weldon. *When Does Life Begin?* Wolgemuth & Hyatt: Brentwood (TN), 1989, as well as the standard work by Mrs. J. C. Willke. *Handbook on Abortion*. Hayes: Cincinnati (OH), 1979<sup>3</sup>

<sup>147</sup>Werner Neuer. "Wann beginnt das menschliche Leben?". *Factum* 9/1982: 27-29

<sup>148</sup>On application of Psalm 51 as an Argument against abortion in "Report of the Committee to Study the Matter of Abortion". S. 83-122 in: John M. Frame. *Medical Ethics: Principles, Persons and Problems*. Presbyterian & Reformed: Phillipsburg (NJ). 1988. p. 94-95+106-107

<sup>149</sup>Gordon Wenham. "Law and the Legal System in the Old Testament". p. 3-23 in: Bruce Kaye, Gordon Wenham (Ed.). *Law, Morality and the Bible*. Inter-Varsity Press: Leicester (GB), 1978, p. 33-34 (and the bibliography).

Unfortunately, interpreters disagree on the meaning of the text; some believe it equates the killing of the unborn child with that of an adult, but others believe that it requires the maximum penalty only for the death of the mother, while the death of the unborn child is to be penalized only by a fine. In either case, let us note, the person who caused the death of the child is liable to legal penalties!

“If men strive, and hurt a woman with child, so that (First case) her fruit depart from her, and yet no mischief follow: he shall be surely punished, according as the woman’s husband will lay upon him; and he shall pay as the judges determine. (Second case) And if any mischief follow, then thou shalt give life for life, Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, Burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.” (Exodus 21:22-25)

The point of disagreement between the two views concerns the distinction between a miscarriage (the children are discharged ) and a premature delivery (the children come out).

a). Some theologians interpret the text to mean that the children ‘are discharged’, which is then to be recompensed by a fine. The ‘damage’ concerns only the mother. If she suffers any harm, then the penalty is to be set according to ‘lex talionis’,<sup>150</sup> which could go as far as ‘life for life’, which is the death penalty. The guilty party is penalized by a fine for the death of the child, with the maximum penalty for the death of the mother.

b) Other interpreters translate the term to mean that the children ‘come out’, and are thus viable. If they survive, the guilty party must pay a fine. Any physical damage to the mother or child, including their death, makes the guilty party liable to the ‘lex talionis’, including the death penalty, if child or mother dies. The law equates the child with an adult.

Christians long considered the second solution a definite argument against abortion, but because of the text’s central significance, historical criticism has developed the first solution, which turns the meaning of the text on its head. In my opinion, since there are sufficient reasons for the second interpretation, we can continue to insist without any reservations that the traditional view is God’s law.<sup>151</sup> There is no linguistic justification

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<sup>150</sup> ‘Lex talionis’ was normally not carried out literally, but settled by fines.

<sup>151</sup> Exegesis and applications of the second interpretation to ethics:: Carl F. Keil. *Genesis und Exodus*. Brunnen Verlag: Gießen, 1983<sup>4</sup> (Repr. 1878<sup>3</sup>). p. 525-526; Umberto Cassuto. *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus*. Magnes: Jerusalem, 1974. p. 275; Norman Geisler. *Christian Ethics: Options and Issues*. Baker Book House: Grand Rapids (MI), 1989. S. 145; Gleason L. Archer. *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties*.

for a translation of verse 22 which limits the damage to a miscarriage,<sup>152</sup> even if many translations accept the first solution by rendering it as ‘the fruit of the womb is discharged.’ The text does not say, “fruit of the womb,”; the term is clearly ‘children’, and the translation, ‘are discharged’, completely limits the meaning of the text, which the translation ‘come out’ does not.

Should this text, however, equate the killing of the unborn child with the murder of an adult, the ruling can be transferred to abortion.

The Synod of the Presbyterian Church of America argue for the application of this text to abortion as following:<sup>153</sup>

1. The term ‘child’ (Heb. ‘yeled’) is never used for the unborn child, but for the child which has already been born. The first case clearly concerns a child which has been born.

2. The expression ‘come out’ (Heb. ‘yatza’) defines the normal birth of a child, not its death (Gen. 25:26; 38:28-30; Job 3:11; 10:18; Jer. 1:5; 20:18) and never a miscarriage. The only exception, Numbers 12:12, describes a stillbirth.

3. The word ‘damage’ (Heb. ‘ason’) applies to both mother and child.

Walter C. Kaiser points out, that Hebrew has word for a miscarriage or abortion. ‘meschalet’, which is not used in this text.

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Zondervan: Grand Rapids (MI), 1982. p. 247-249: 2Mose 21,22-25; Walter Kaiser. *Towards Old Testament Ethics*. Zondervan: Grand Rapids (MI), 1978. p. 168-172+102-104; Gary North. *Tools of Dominion*. op.cit. (Index); James B. Jordan. *The Law of the Covenant: An Exposition of Exodus 21-23*. Institute for Christian Economics: Tyler (TX), 1984. p. 113-115; Kenneth L. Gentry. *The Christian Case Against Abortion* (Buch). op.cit.,. 62-68; Jack W. Cottrell. “Abortion and the Mosaic Law”. *Christianity Today* 17 (1972-73): pp. 602-605

<sup>152</sup>Ibid. S. 604

<sup>153</sup>Opinion of the Presbyterian Church of America, cited in: Joe Morecraft. ‘With Liberty and Justice for All’: *Christian Politics Made Simple*. Onward Press: Sevierville (TN), 1991. p. 182-184. The Orthodox Presbyterian Church came to the same exegesis and conclusion 1971: “Report of the Committee to Study the Matter of Abortion”. op. cit., p. 95-102+107-108 (The best exegesis and discussion of Ex. 22:21-25 I know of) See also. Report on Abortion To The New York & Philadelphia Synod November 1977. Reformed Episcopal Church: Philadelphia (PA), 1977.

## **Bribery and Corruption (1998)<sup>154</sup>**

Our return flight from Jakarta, capital city of Indonesia, had been properly booked, paid for and confirmed, but when we checked in, we were told that all seats had already been taken. Our protests were in vain, so we spent an uncomfortable week of the Indonesian rainy season. Fortunately, we were able to live with Christian friends. Every day, the same experience—all seats were full. Finally, my brother-in-law, who lives in the country, explained the problem: when checking-in, the counter has two layers. You lay your ticket on the top and your gift underneath. We got our seats immediately. The officials at the desk earn only a small salary, since the government assumes that they will naturally improve it with bribery – a guarantee for a never-ending circle.

That was fifteen years ago, and we were glad to return to ‘reliable’ Germany. But sensationalist articles and law cases reveal that corruptions and corruptibility are on the rise here, in small matters like our example and in larger affairs. Rainer Barzel’s chancellorship failed by two votes, because those delegates were bought by East Germany – the Fall of the Berlin Wall brought the affair to light. Things we used to hear only from the Third World or from Italy are becoming common, everyday affairs. The incorruptible official, once the ideal of Prussian discipline, is disappearing from the scene. Even though the judiciary seems to have spared such cases of bribery, palm-greasing is on the rise among the police, customs officials, civil servants and supervisory institutions. Few are aware that this is the logical consequence of our departure from Christianity. “A wicked man accepts a bribe behind the back to pervert the ways of justice.” (Prov. 17:23) Whoever rejects the Christian God, abandons His ideal of the highest judge, whose absolute justice and incorruptibility are the point of departure for the rejection of every perversion of justice due to the lust for money or for power, for the God of the Old Testament is again and again described as impartial, as the “the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality nor takes a bribe.” (Deut. 10:17) “For there is no iniquity with the LORD our God, no partiality, nor taking of bribes.” (2 Chron. 19:7)

The temptation of Jesus is the New Testament equivalent. At the beginning of His ministry, He had to prove His integrity. Neither bread nor power could bribe Him. Even when the Devil promised Him all power

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<sup>154</sup>Reprinted from “Bribery and Corruption”. Christianity and Society 8 (1998) 1: 5

over all the kingdoms of the earth – the greatest bribe ever offered – Jesus was not seduced by the desire for power or wealth, but obeyed the will of His Father in Heaven. He submitted to God, not to His own desires.

This shows that the Bible considers bribery, corruption and perversion of justice not peccadilloes but a predominating subject. The theme of corruption demonstrates how little personal sin and social sin can be separated from each other. Corruption always involves individuals, but it is always an evil which involves a whole net of evil structures, and which can destroy a whole society, since the leaders of all aspects of society – the Church, the economy and the state – are devoured by it.

The Hebrew root of the word which we translate as ‘bribe’ actually means ‘ruin’. The word ‘corruption’ means ‘ruin’ or ‘destruction’. Not by chance does the Latin Bible use the word ‘*corruptio*’ for original sin, for Adam and Eve were seduced by the hope of power and knowledge (“You will be like God”) and rebelled.

Perhaps no other scripture better describes the way corruption devours all aspects of life and destroys society from above, than an accusation by the prophet Micha: “The prince asks for gifts, the judge seeks a bribe, and the great man utters his evil desire; so they scheme together.” (Mic. 7:3) ‘One hand washes the other’ until in the end society is caught in the grip of a monster whose arms grow back as quickly as one can cut them off.

### **Further Prophecies against Corruption**

Isa. 1:23 Your princes [are] rebellious, And companions of thieves; Everyone loves bribes, And follows after rewards. They do not defend the fatherless, Nor does the cause of the widow come before them.

Isa. 5:23 Who justify the wicked for a bribe, And take away justice from the righteous man!

Amos 5:12 For I know your manifold transgressions And your mighty sins: Afflicting the just [and] taking bribes; Diverting the poor [from justice] at the gate.

Once the differences between deceit and corruption have been eliminated in the institutions of authority, the Church and the people of God cannot escape, for they have shown partiality and have failed to speak out against corruption and lust. Micha upbraids the leaders of Israel, “Her heads judge for a bribe, her priests teach for pay, and her prophets divine for money.” (Mic. 3:11)

Not that either the Old Testament or the New objects to gifts, when they help or give pleasure to others. Scripture also very objectively recognizes that gifts are sometimes necessary to the achievement of justified goals. Proverbs says, “A man’s gift makes room for him, and brings him before great men” (Prov. 18:16), and “A gift in secret pacifies anger, and a bribe behind the back strong wrath” (Prov. 21:14). When a Christian is confronted by corruptible officials and has no opportunity to eliminate the corruption at the moment, he can feel free to obtain his rights with gifts (as we did in Indonesia). Only when he purchases unfair advantages, does he make himself guilty. But even the Christian who is forced to pay will fight against corruption and begin by revealing and by exterminating all forms of bribery and corruption in the Church.

#### **Other Texts against Corruption and Bribery**

Ex. 32:8 And you shall take no bribe for a bribe blinds the discerning and perverts the words of the righteous.

Deut. 16:19 You shall not pervert justice; you shall not show partiality, nor take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and twists the words of the righteous.

Deut. 17:25 Cursed is the one who takes a bribe to slay an innocent person.

Psalms 15:5 praises the man who does not “take a bribe against the innocent.”

Prov. 25:27 He who is greedy for gain troubles his own house, but he who hates bribes will live.

Eccl. 7:7 Surely oppression destroys a wise man’s reason, and a bribe debases the heart.

Isa. 33:15 He who walks righteously and speaks uprightly, He who despises the gain of oppression, who gestures with his hands refusing bribes.



## **Twenty Arguments Against Pornography (1994)**

1) Pornography humiliates Woman and degrades her to the level of a commodity. It biases men's attitude towards her and robs her of her basic right to be human.

2) Pornography forces women to conform to an ideal in order to please men and thus reduces her liberty to act according to her own nature.

3) Pornography creates a double morality. Few men would be prepared to accept for themselves the same standard of perfection that pornography forces on women.

4) Pornography makes us dependent on ideals which none can fulfill.

5) Pornography fabricates an image of beauty which almost no one really possesses. The flawless woman in the touched-up photographs does not really exist. This 'standard' prevents some men from being able to enjoy the appearance of their own, 'real' wives, and women from accepting their own bodies.

6) Thus, pornography destroys a woman's self-respect.

7) Pornography makes the youthful body the standard and leads to disdain of older or disabled people.

8) Pornography treats the elderly, the handicapped, the overweight and the disfigured with contempt. Ultimately, who doesn't it scorn?

9) Pornography burdens children with problems which they cannot handle, neither consciously nor subconsciously. They are impressed with an ideal which makes them unable to deal with harsh reality.

10) Pornography destroys the partnership between man and woman because the 'ideal woman', a hidden criterion on the wife's appearance, always lurks in the background. Many couples cannot have sex without pornography, and many women must allow their husbands pornography in order to prevent their infidelity.

11) With its all-pervasive presence, pornography forces itself even on those who renounce it. It robs people of the freedom to decide for themselves for or against the values and attitudes it propagates.

12) Pornography looks down on other cultures and life-styles and makes porno-culture the absolute standard. No one can escape it. People from the whole world, even those in non-Western cultures, are forced into a monoculture.

13) Pornography is the complete marketing of the most private thing in the world. It makes sexuality into a worthless commodity. Those who earn millions on pornography<sup>155</sup> will go to any length to earn more. For them, every ruined relationship is business. "Pornography has become a billion dollar business world-wide, one that is controlled to a great extent by organized crime."<sup>156</sup>

14) Pornography depersonalizes sexuality. My companion is no longer a beloved person, but an anonymous, dead, commercial, mass product.

15) Pornography so dominates people's thoughts, that they make decisions under its influence which they later regret. This process begins with everyday advertising, which would probably be less successful without the influence of pornography, and ends with the destruction of good relationships.

16) Pornography makes the human body to the highest standard and destroys the inner worth of a relationship. A human being's value is measured by his appearance.

17) Pornography evaluates a human being according to something beyond his control. No one can choose his own appearance or age.

18) Pornography creates a fantasy world, which makes the individual incapable of dealing with harsh reality. Instead of investing oneself in another person and accepting responsibilities as the price for happy relationships, one only needs to escape into a Fantasy Land. Afterwards, the disappointment at the emptiness is even stronger.

19) Pornography is the first step into the world of the drug 'free sex', which denies all responsibility for one's own actions.

20) Pornography suggests that man has infinite freedom to satisfy his sexual desires without any consideration of any other human being. Rape<sup>157</sup>, and the sexual abuse of children are examples for a sexuality which makes its own desires its moral standard.

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<sup>155</sup>. Reiner Gödtel, *Sexualität und Gewalt*, (Hamburg: Hoffmann and Campe, 1992, p. 67. According to this writer, the annual sales of pornography in the older states of the Federal Republic of Germany reached appr. \$1.5 billion. Besides, 20,000 people earned their living by producing and selling pornographic material.

<sup>156</sup>. Frank Kaleb Jansen, Ed., *Target Earth*, (Pasadena: University of the Nations, Hawaii and Global Mapping International, 1989), p. 68.

<sup>157</sup>. Rousas J. Rushdoony, "Images, Ikons, and Pinups", *Journal of Christian Reconstruction*, Vol. 1, (Summer 1974), Symposium on Creation, pp. 141-144. Rushdoony sees hard pornography as an invitation to rape. He points out that feminists have also

Last but not least, a personal experience. I was in the process of spraying black paint over an oversized pornographic ad hung up next to our house, when I heard a group of masculine contemporaries ridiculing my efforts, making risqué suggestions, and getting rather annoyed. As they reached me, however, the one woman in the group spoke up. She found my act wonderful, wished that there were more people with such courage, and thanked me for my contribution to the protection of women's rights. Her very vocal male friends were suddenly very quiet...

These arguments sound very reasonable and convincing. But we should be aware of their implicit Christian assumptions.<sup>158</sup> They appeal to reason, but are convincing only within a Christian context.

In a pamphlet on pornography published by the Worldwide Evangelical Alliance, John H. Court has collected many arguments against pornography and discussed the relationship between the trade and the rising rate of certain crimes.<sup>159</sup> In spite of his subtitle, 'A Christian Critique', he does not point out clearly that many of his arguments are only plausible on the basis of Christian principles. Because he also fails to suggest a cohesive Biblical-Christian explanation for condemning pornography, the major emphasis of his reasoning deals with its results,<sup>160</sup> which are certainly alarming. But what would we think of pornography if its results were less serious? Both Court and I, in my twenty propositions, assume that our readers share

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made this accusation. Why he defends Rubens' nudes on page 142 is a mystery to me. Reiner Grödtel, op. cit., pp. 64-67, demonstrates that the feminist movement-Alice Schwarzer, for example-also believes pornography to be a prelude to rape. See also Alice Schwarzer, *PorNo: Opfer und Täter...*, (Cologne: Kiepenhauer and Witsch, 1994).

<sup>158.</sup> See: J. N. D. Anderson, *Morality, Law and Grace*, (London: Tyndale Press, 1972), pp. 43-46.; and Rousas J. Rushdoony, op. cit., for Christian arguments against pornography. Edythe Draper, (Ed.), *The Almanac of the Christian World*, (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House, 1990), pp. 793-799 includes an excellent defence of the rejection of pornography by the National Coalition Against Pornography, as well as addresses of American organisations.

<sup>159.</sup> John H. Court, *Pornography: A Christian Critique*, (Downers Grove, Ill.: Inter-arsity Press and Exeter, G. B.: Paternoster Press, 1980).

<sup>160.</sup> See also; Päpstlicher Rat für die sozialen Kommunikationsmittel, *Pornography und Gewalt in den Kommunikationsmedien*, Arbeitshilfen 71, (Bonn: Sekretariat der Deutschen Bischofskonferenz, 1989). This pamphlet argues on the basis of natural law. On page 12, note 5, the authors list good material of Italian and American government institutions which present evidence of the brutalising influence of pornography in the media.

Christian principles. If we reject Christian ethics, what is wrong with despising the elderly or the disabled?

Biblical arguments against pornography can be drawn from texts on nakedness, and from the commandment against the covetous, lustful glance: “Whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.” (Mt. 5:28). Jesus’ command originates with the Tenth Commandment, “You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife ...” (Ex. 20:17). Job 31:1 says, “I have made a covenant with my eyes; why then should I look upon a young woman?” Numbers 15:39 reminds Israel to remember the Law: “... that you may not follow the harlotry to which your own heart and your own eyes are inclined,” Proverbs 6:25 warns against the prostitute, “Do not lust after her beauty in your heart, nor let her allure you with her eyelids.” A more exact translations might read, “... that she not attempt to put her beauty into your heart.”<sup>161</sup> To sexually desire a woman other than one’s own wife is therefore theft. The Tenth Commandment thus originally meant that to desire another woman is to steal from one’s neighbor<sup>162</sup> and from his marriage. Pornography, which forces us to desire women unlawfully, causes us to commit the worst form of robbery.

As divine judgment, a woman’s exposure of her body to her lovers often leads them to despise her (as in Lam. 1:8). Sexual liberality thus leads to scorn, but also to the incapability to enjoy sex in private. A book on heart disease suggests:

“Sexuality is no longer considered a natural letting go, an affectionate attention between lovers led by their feelings, but as an ‘achievement’, presented in sex movies and pornographic magazines as a norm. Some convey this expectation into their private lives, which may well be a decisive reason for the impression of many heart patients that they are no longer up to achieving the norm, which is, in reality, elimination of emotion and the degradation of love.”<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>161</sup>. Translated from the German of Klaus Berger, *Die Gesetzesauslegung Jesu, Part I: Markus und Parallelen*, Wissenschaftliche Monographie zum Alten und Neuen Testament 40, (Neukirchen, Germany: Neukirchener Verlag, 1972), p. 345.

<sup>162</sup>. Ibid., pp. 343-345.

<sup>163</sup>. Karl M. Kirch, *Krankheiten von Herz und Kreislauf*, (Cologne-Braunsfeld: Rudolf Müller, 1977), p. 83.

## **The Biblical Prohibition from Eating Blood (1994)<sup>164</sup>**

Does the prohibition from eating blood (Gen 9:4-5; Lev 7:26-27; 17:10-12, 14; 19:26; Dtn 12:16, 23-24; 15:23; Acts 15:19-20; concerning sacrifices only<sup>165</sup> Lev 3:17) and the prohibition from eating the meat of animals that have not been slaughtered or still contain their blood (Ex 22:30; Lev 17:15; Dtn 14:21; Acts 15:19-20) concern a ceremonial order of Jewish times which need only be a guide for our spiritual wisdom today, or are those prohibitions moral commandments still valid today without any changes?

There are three reasons why I believe the latter.

First, the command was given first to Noah (Gen 9,4-5)<sup>166</sup> before Israel existed.

Second, the apostolic council prohibited the eating of blood and of unslaughtered animals (Acts 15:19-20): "... that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood".

The decision of the apostolic council is much disputed. Some think the decision merely repeats the commandments given to Noah (Gen 9). But some of them are actually missing in Acts 15. Others believe that the decision contains a list of all moral commandments still valid for heathens. Does this mean that non-Jewish Christians may kill, steal and lie? Some believe that the commandments only concern non-Jewish Christians as long as they live together with Jews or Jewish Christians. But should we avoid idolatry and fornication only because this offends people from Jewish background?

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<sup>164</sup>Reprinted from "The Biblical Prohibition to Eat Blood". Chalcedon Report No. 355 (Febr 1995): 34-35

<sup>165</sup>In Lev 3:14-17; 7,23-25 it is not only forbidden to eat blood, but also to eat fat. But only those parts of all the fat of an animal were meant, that were used in case of a sacrifice. The law was only valid as long as Israel was on the move and had to slaughter all animals at the tabernacle. As soon as it settled down, it could slaughter the animals in every city and could eat the fat (Dtn 12:15-16).

<sup>166</sup>That Gen 9:4 contains this prohibition is defended by Carl F. Keil. Genesis und Exodus. Brunnen Verlag: Giessen, 1983<sup>4</sup> (reprint of 1878<sup>3</sup>). p. 124 (see English edition of 'Keil/Delitzsch')

The best explanation why the apostolic decision only forbids four specific sins seems to be that the decision was answering a catalog of specific questions. Out of the catalog the apostolic council choose those commandments which bind the non-Jewish Christians, and left out others. Thus, the text can be reconciled with the other meeting of the Apostles with Paul and his co-workers in Galatians 2. Here another catalogue of issues were in question and the Apostles ruled that circumcision was not necessary for non-Jewish Christians, but helping the poor was.

I see no reason in any available explanation of Acts 15,19-20 why this decision should be invalid today. Even a Dispensationalist who only accepts commandments if they are found or repeated in the New Testament, must take this decision seriously.

Third, and of course, of less power than those two biblical arguments, the early Church viewed Acts 15:20 as a valid prohibition. The second and third argument have to be proven in detail.

In 1903 and 1907, Karl Böckenhoff studied in detail the history of the two food laws in Acts 15,19-20 in the first five centuries A. D.<sup>167</sup> and in the Middle Ages<sup>168</sup> and proved that the early Church understood the food laws in Acts 15,20 to be valid commandments. The prohibition from eating blood and unslaughtered animals was repeated in the Councils of Gangrene (325 A. D.), Orleans (536), Constance (692) and by Pope Leo VI. (886) and Calixtus II (1120).<sup>169</sup> In the Eastern and Orthodox Churches the prohibition has been seen as valid from the church fathers till today.<sup>170</sup> In the Western Church the prohibition was in force till the beginning of the 12th century.<sup>171</sup> Not until the time of scholasticism was the prohibition first discussed and than neglected,<sup>172</sup> most openly by Robert Pulleyn in 1140 A. D.<sup>173</sup> In many places, like Geneva, the prohibition was in force at least till

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<sup>167</sup>Karl Böckenhoff. *Das apostolische Speisegesetz in den ersten fünf Jahrhunderten.* Ferdinand Schöningh: Paderborn, 1903

<sup>168</sup>Karl Böckenhoff. *Speisesatzungen mosaischer Art in mittelalterlichen Kirchenrechtsquellen des Morgen- und Abendlandes.* Aschendorffsche Buchhandlung: Münster, 1907

<sup>169</sup>P. J. Verdam. *Mosaic Law in Practice and Study Throughout the Ages.* J. H. Kok: Kampen, 1959. p. 19 agrees with this.

<sup>170</sup>See in detail Karl Böckenhoff. *Speisesatzungen.* 1907. pp. 37-40

<sup>171</sup>Ibid. pp. 62-65+66-70

<sup>172</sup>Ibid. pp. 118-120

<sup>173</sup>Ibid. pp. 120-122

the Reformation<sup>174</sup>. There is no proof that the prohibition from eating blood was a later ‘Roman-Catholic’ addition to the early Church, but much proof that a biblical prohibition accepted by the whole Church from the beginning for at least one thousand years has been put aside without even an attempt at justification.

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<sup>174</sup>See P. J. Verdam. *Mosaic Law in Practice and Study Throughout the Ages*. *ibid.* p. 19



## Part III

### National Socialism, Pietism and Problems of Germany

## National Socialism, Pietism and Problems of Germany (1990)<sup>175</sup>

### Atheistic Religions

The Fall of man in *Gen 3* teaches us several very important messages. The one important for our topic is: *You can only destroy faith and confidence in God, by offering faith and confidence in someone else.* According to modern neutral thinkers, Eve could have said: “Well, Serpent, it could be that God is not trustworthy and did not tell us the real story. But what about you? If God’s word has to be subject to critical inquiry, I think the same should happen your word. I would rather not believe anybody!” But this did not happen, and it could not have happened. *Eve could only give up her faith in God because she had faith in Satan.* Eve could only claim God’s words to be a lie, because she claimed Satan’s words to be the truth. *There is no neutrality.* Eve could not listen to both, God and Satan, and then see what would happen. She had to decide. She could not believe both and could not submit to both.

This principle is repeated in the Bible again and again. Jesus said for example: “*You cannot serve two masters ...*” (*Mt 6,24*) and James reminds his Christian readers that: “*Anyone who chooses to become a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God*” (*Jam 4,4*). Higher critics again are a good example. They do not only destroy faith in God and His Word, and live as agnostics who do not believe anything – which of course is impossible. They produce new theologies all the time. And although they oppose those who believe that the biblical world view is truth and reality, they still want you to believe that they understand the world and that their theology of liberation, theology of ecology or whatever theology is modern at the moment, is worth reading and taking for granted. Normally, students of theological faculties at German State universities never read the Bible as a

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<sup>175</sup>Lecture at the Second International Conference on Christian Reconstruction in London 27.10.1990. Printed in *Calvinism Today* (now: *Christianity and Society*) 2 (1991) 2 (April): 16-23 and in *Symbiotica: The Journal of the Dutch Institute for Christian Economics* 1 (1991): 2: 23-29

whole. Instead they read thousands of pages of the thoughts of their teachers.

The same principles of the Fall can be seen in the first chapter of Romans. According to Rom 1,18-32 the main sin of man is that he exchanges the Creator for the creature (Rom 1,19, 20, 25). But whatever new god man creates, this god will lead to new ethics. If you exchange theologies, you exchange ethics. Paul's example of homosexuality proves that exchanging ethics perverts Creation (Rom 1,26-27). Pervert ('per-vertere') is just the Latin translation of the Greek word we translate as 'exchange' in Rom 1,25, 26). Pervert theology and you pervert ethics. Pervert the truth about the Creator and you pervert the truth about Creation and its laws. It is interesting that according to Paul, the main sin of man (i. e. not to honor, thank and serve God) starts his thinking and then spreads to all other parts of his personality. This is just the opposite of the Catholic belief that man's Fall touched all parts of the personality *except* his thinking.

But it is important to observe that Romans 1 has a much wider scope than what we normally call 'religion'. Rom 1 does not just apply to well-organized religions like Islam or Hinduism. It also establishes the religious nature of all philosophies, world views and beliefs. *Christians have lost many battles because they have not realized that a rival religion does not need to be organized like one of the so-called 'world religions'. If a system purports to be something totally different from a religion, Christians all too often just accept it, instead of exposing its religious character.*

Take, for example, the statement of Jesus: "*You cannot serve God and Mammon*" (Mt 6,24; cf. Lk 16,9.11.13; 12,34). How can Jesus put serving Mammon on the same level as serving God? Is Mammon not just a way of living but serving God a religion? No! Rousas Rushdoony wrote in his *Institutes*: "in any culture the source of the law is the god of society"<sup>176</sup>. Mammon seems to be an atheistic system, but it is still a rival religion. Mammon is just a part of Creation and if you serve and thank money or wealth as the highest value in life, you have exchanged the Creator for the creature.

Take, for example, *the German Federal Constitution*. It contains the wonderful passage "Marriage and Family are under the special protection of the State order"<sup>177</sup>. In 1949 this meant the Christian view of marriage

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<sup>176</sup>Rousas J. Rushdoony, *Institutes of Biblical Law* (Phillipsburgh: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1973), p. 4

<sup>177</sup>Karl-Heinz Seifert, Dieter Hömig (ed.), *Grundgesetz für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 1985<sup>2</sup>), article 6, paragraph 1

and family. The Constitution begins with the acclamation “In conscience of their responsibility to God and men ...”<sup>178</sup> and speaks about the “moral law”<sup>179</sup>. The mention of God was the idea of an atheist who wanted to save Western morality after having experienced National Socialism. Of course, this Catholic and Lutheran natural ‘moral law’ does not make the Constitution a Christian one, and it is an illusion that you can save Western morality by claiming God without believing that He exists. But still, the protection of the family by the State meant that abortion, homosexuality, incest, pornography, and other things were forbidden by law.

Today, the God of the Constitution has changed: Mammon has become the highest value in Germany. (Do not confuse Mammon with the free market. West Germany never had a real free market but always a mixture between private enterprise and severe State control and State ownership.) If you read contemporary commentators on the German Constitution regarding the protection of the family, you will even find some of them only arguing that according to this article, the taxes of a couple and a family always need to be lower than those of singles! Others only talk about financial matters<sup>180</sup>. Protecting the family means paying for it, and the German government pays you a lot if you have a child. But at the same time nothing is done against the enemies of the family. Instead, those enemies are paid as well. Change the God of society and the same word in the same Constitution, as in law in general, will have a perverted meaning.

*Mammon* is a part of Creation, and according to Romans 1 serving Mammon is serving Creation instead of the Creator. No wonder that people live as if Mammon were like God: “*invisible being, His eternal power and His divine nature*”. These three attributes of God (*Rom 1:20*) are revealed in Creation and manifest to every man.

Take two other well-known examples of atheistic religions.

In *the theory of evolution*, Creation is called ‘nature’. Nature has created itself. It is eternal and powerful. It is an old idea that nature brings forth nature. This is condemned in Jeremiah 2:27, where people are rebuked for saying that wood is their father and they were born of the stones.

In *Marxism*, Creation is called ‘matter’. It is one of the fundamental beliefs of Marx that matter is eternal. It brings forth man and it brings forth history, which is the agent of matter. Again Creation has created itself.

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<sup>178</sup>*Ibid.* preamble

<sup>179</sup>*Ibid.* article 2, paragraph 1

<sup>180</sup>e. g. Dieter Hesselberger, *Das Grundgesetz* (Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 1988<sup>5</sup>), pp. 94-97

Marxism is a giant rival religion prophesying history until its end, giving a purpose to the life of those who work for this future, and being the foundation of a perverted ethic. Several people have started therefore to collect testimonies of Marxists concerning how they became Marxists<sup>181</sup>. They sound like Evangelical testimonies and prove beyond doubt that Marxists changed their religion, not just their attitude towards economy or politics.

### The Study of Comparative Religions

I have to confess, that it was the study of comparative religions, not the study of theology, that brought me to a holistic world view and its view that God's Word is the ethical precondition for the existence of this world. Reformed theology was unknown to me. While studying at an Evangelical seminary in Switzerland, 'Reformed' to me was just a label used in church history. The neo-orthodox seminary in the Netherlands, where I did my Th.D., did not give me any knowledge about the Reformed confessions. As there is no Reformed denomination in Germany believing in the infallibility of the Bible and no literature from a Calvinist perspective, it is hard to get any idea of the difference between Calvinism and Arminianism.

When I was pastor of a church in Bonn, the director of our denomination, Ulrich Affeld, left me a three volume edition of Calvin's *Institutes of Christian Religion* on his death bed, because he thought I would be the only of his pastors to be interested in such theology. It was a treasure, because it is hard to get the work in German. (At the moment there is nearly no book by Calvin on the German market!) Nevertheless, I put the book onto my book shelf and forgot about it. As one fighting higher criticism, I attacked the most liberal churches of the world, the German Protestant State Churches, and to me this meant fighting against their tradition, including Luther, Calvin and all confessions. (Later on of course I was happy to have my own German copy of *Institute of Christian Religion*.)

Meanwhile I had started to study comparative religions and cultural anthropology, focusing on the religious character of the so-called 'secular religions'. I was astonished to learn that more and more of these scholars change to a broad definition of religion which more or less equates religion and culture. The sociology of religion in Germany is run by very strong and convinced atheists who labor under the illusion that they can study religions from a neutral standpoint. But they understand that you can only define religion by defining its function in society. If you define religion by

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<sup>181</sup>e. g. Konrad Löw, *Warum fasziniert der Kommunismus? Eine systematische Untersuchung* (Köln: Deutscher Instituts-Verlag, 1983<sup>3</sup>)

content you will never get a definition which covers all existing religions. Take, for example, Buddhism. In the original version it had no God, no priests, no church. The message was: redeem yourself, but still it has every function of a religion, although some German scholars have decided not to study it as a religion.

Take the following definitions. Niklas Luhmann writes:

“The specific function of religion is to provide the ultimate, foundational reductions, which change the undetermined and undeterminable world into a determined ...”<sup>182</sup> world, in which one can live. According to Luhmann man cannot live in the world ‘as it is’. Man gets his definitions and values out of values and things, which he cannot reduce further.

According to Ulrich Berner:

“We define as a religious system every connection of mental elements ..., which have the function of providing man with an explanation of his world, which cannot be further reduced, and is an uneducable norms for his behavior.”<sup>183</sup>

He defines further:

“Religion is not the same as either world view or ethics, but is a peculiar union of both components.”<sup>184</sup>

Therefore Berner’s conclusion is that atheistic systems are religions in the full sense if they provide a world view along with ethics.

Thomas Luckmann even defines religions as “what makes man into man”<sup>185</sup>. This is not a joke; it shows there is no man as such – except for God and His revelation. Before man can start thinking he has to define who he is, and this definition comes from his religion. His presuppositions are his religion. The difference between man and animal is not something which we just ‘see’. From a Christian perspective, the difference between man and animal leads to a totally different ethic than a Hindu or evolution-

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<sup>182</sup>Niklas Luhmann quoted in: Ulrich Berner, *Untersuchungen zur Verwendung des Synkretismus-Begriffes*, Göttinger Orientforschungen (Wiesbaden: O. Harrasowitz, 1982), p. 83

<sup>183</sup>*Ibid.* p. 84

<sup>184</sup>Ulrich Berner. “Gegenstand und Aufgabe der Religionswissenschaft”. *Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte* 35 (1983): pp. 97-116, here p. 104, see also Ulrich Berner, “Das Christusverständnis als Gegenstand universalgeschichtlicher Betrachtungen”. *Saeculum* 34 (1983): pp. 187-243, here p. 190

<sup>185</sup>Thomas Luckmann quoted in: Ulrich Berner, “Religion”, pp. 531-532 in Hans Waldenfels (ed.), *Lexikon der Religionen* (Freiburg: Herder, 1987), here p. 532

ist perspectives, where the difference between man and animal is only gradual – if it exists at all.

Of course those definitions of religion are at the same time a refutation of its authors. If every man has his world view and his ethic and cannot live without it, then scholars who study comparative religions can judge other religions from the standpoint of their own religion only.

They do what *Ludwig Feuerbach* did<sup>186</sup>: He took the judgment of the Bible that all religions except the biblical revelation are man-made, applied it to Christianity itself but made an exception for his own new religion, which he called ‘the religion of man’ or ‘anthropology instead of theology’. When *Karl Marx* followed him, he blamed Feuerbach for not applying his theory to his own religion, but then Marx made the same exception for Marxism. For Marx, all religions are man-made and the outcome of matter except for Marxism itself, which is truth and reality. *To criticize religions is as inescapable as it is to spare one’s own religion*<sup>187</sup>. Now we are back to the Fall and to Romans 1. You can only criticize a religion if you have another.

### Pietism and Creation

Of course, liberal theologians never liked the message of Romans 1. But Wilhelm Lütgert<sup>188</sup> has shown that German Pietism did not like the message of Romans 1 either. Pietism’s evangelistic method<sup>189</sup>, which became prominent after the revolution of 1848, started its message with proclaiming a guilty conscience, and Jesus as the solution to get rid of it. Sin was what produced a guilty conscience. This made sin a subjective feeling. There was no discussion about the objective law which must rule and guide conscience. There was no discussion about sin being sin even if one was

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<sup>186</sup>Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Theologische Religionskritik*, (Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 1982) has shown from the perspective of Barth’s theology that Feuerbach and Marx followed the theological criticism of religions of the Bible, Luther and Christian theology till the Enlightenment. See also H. Fried, “Ludwig Feuerbach”, pp. 78-92 in Karl-Heinz Weger (ed.), *Religionskritik von der Aufklärung bis zur Gegenwart* (Freiburg: Herder, 1983<sup>3</sup>), an excellent biographical lexicon of 93 critics of religion from a Catholic perspective.

<sup>187</sup>For details on religions criticizing religions see my book *Marxismus – Opium für das Volk*, (Berneck: Schwengeler, 1990)

<sup>188</sup>Wilhelm Lütgert, *Schöpfung und Offenbarung*, (Giessen: Brunnen, 1984<sup>2</sup>) (1934<sup>1</sup>)

<sup>189</sup>Of course all following judgments on Pietism are only true in general. There have always been exceptions, and especially some of the few Reformed Pietists (e. g. in Bremen and Wuppertal) have protested against typical Pietist thoughts.

unconscious of it. The discussion did not start with the Creator as a reality, but with conscience as a feeling<sup>190</sup>.

For four centuries, millions of Protestants learned the Ten Commandments through Luther's Small Catechism. The evangelistic method of Pietism worked for some time. In Catholic areas the problem was much greater, as this evangelistic method bound and binds Catholics back to their Church. That this evangelistic method is devastating in the long run can be seen nowadays as most German consciences do not even make judgments on the basis of some Christian-oriented natural law. Pietism could not claim God's Law to govern the whole Creation. God rules the individual heart, and the heart was defined together with Goethe, Schiller and other German classics more as a feeling, than – as it is in the Bible – as the center of thought, decision and judgment. So for Pietism, Jesus only dealt with part of the inner life, not with the thought and work of the whole person, not to speak about the family, the Church or the State.

We have to understand this if we want to understand why Pietism so often was ready to preach salvation by the State. We have time to look at three examples only.

### Pietism and Statism

1) The first example is from the *18th century*. At the beginning of Prussian State education stands one of the fathers of Pietism, *August Hermann Francke*. He founded huge Christian schools which for a long time educated the best Prussian officers, officials and politicians. But in order to achieve an education for all children, he forced the Prussian State to educate all children in State schools and did not ask Christian parents to shoulder the task<sup>191</sup>.

2) The second example is from the *19th century*: the Prussian and later German chancellor *Otto von Bismarck*. During my studies I wrote a paper

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<sup>190</sup>For details on the biblical view of the conscience see my article "Das Gewissen in der Bibel", *Querschnitte* 2(1989) 2: 19-22 and Hans-Joachim Eckstein, *Der Begriff Syneidesis bei Paulus*, WUNT 2/10 (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1983)

<sup>191</sup>On Prussian State education and its influence on the USA see Samuel L. Blumenfeld, "Is Public Education Necessary?". *Journal of Christian Reconstruction* IV(1977), vol. 1(summer 1977), pp. 108-120, here pp. 110-112; Samuel L. Blumenfeld, *Is Public Education Necessary?* (Boise: The Paradigm Company, 1985<sup>2</sup>/1989), pp. 158-164; Samuel L. Blumenfeld, *NEA: Trojan Horse in American Education* (Boise: The Paradigm Company, 1984/1989)

about Bismarck's Pietism<sup>192</sup>. I argued that he was born again and that he read his Bible and prayed daily. His wife was a truly pious woman<sup>193</sup>. Of course I had difficulties to understand why Bismarck never really belonged to a local church. But I must confess that I had no insight into his politics and was unembarrassed by his views of law.

Today, I know that Bismarck was one of those politicians who turned Germany into a country increasingly dominated by the State and obstructed the influence of church and family on German everyday life and culture. As the unite of Germany, he gave the world a model, 'Realpolitik', a practical political system not following principles and ideas, but the real situation. The State was to choose the best among the possible, not to follow any ethical goal. The real value was the 'Volk', the nation, which had to become one, no matter what that meant.

During Reunification of Germany you could see that the 'Volk' still is a religious value in Germany, even among the Evangelicals. A lot of Pietists, who normally keep out of politics and do not believe in a God who rules history, suddenly praised God in special services for Reunification. The political parties in the German Parliament only agreed on the Reunification treaty because it allowed a major change in the abortion laws. Although protest against the abortion laws is normally the only political and moral topic which stirs up the Evangelical world in Germany, they suddenly kept silent and praised the 'Volk' becoming one, even though this Reunification was only possible by taking over the devastating legacy of East German abortion laws.

Back to Bismarck. In order to fight the Socialist Party, he founded the state-run social security system, which in the long run made Germany the forerunner of a State secured future which forces nearly every citizen to pay into the different State assurance policies all his life. Most Evangelicals think that this is evidence of his Christian influence in politics!

In order to oppose the influence of the Pope and the Catholic Church, Bismarck also brought all private and mainly Christian schools under the control of the State<sup>194</sup>. From his time on, every teacher had to be approved

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<sup>192</sup>*War Bismarck Christ? Ein Urteil im Spiegel der Geschichte*, Master thesis (Basel: Freie Evangelisch-Theologische Akademie, 1982), reprinted under the same title (Lörrach: Institut für Weltmission und Gemeindebau, 1982)

<sup>193</sup>See the biography Sophie Charlotte von Sell, *Fürst Bismarcks Frau* (Berlin: Trovitsch, 1915)

<sup>194</sup>For a general overview over this so-called "Kulturkampf" see Karl Kupitsch, *Kirchengeschichte V* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1986<sup>2</sup>), pp. 51-69 and Ronald J. Ross, "Enforcing the Kulturkampf in the Bismarckian State and the Limits of Coercion in

by the State, no matter where he taught. From then on everybody had to marry at a State office, so that the Christian or religious marriage became an optional ceremony with no legal value. With this and other new laws Bismarck hit mainly the Protestant churches, because the Catholic Church was much stronger through its international connections. The Protestant churches did not protest, because liberals and Pietists alike were in favor of Protestantism being the uniting factor of the new Germany. They loved their Emperor Wilhelm I, the only man above Bismarck, because he confessed his Protestant belief personally to the Pope; they were unconcerned that he was not only the protector of the Prussian Protestant churches, but at the same time the protector of German Freemasonry, a position held by most Prussian Kings since Frederic II, called the Great<sup>195</sup>.

3) The third example is from the *20th century*. In 1966 the left-wing Social Democratic Party became partner in government of right-wing Christian Democratic Union which had governed Germany since 1949. In 1969 it took over the government until 1982. The Minister of Justice, who became president of Germany later, was a well-known Christian lawyer, *Gustav Heinemann*, who had belonged to the Confessing Church during the Third Reich. He was not a Pietist in the strict sense, but was heavily influenced by it. Arguing that Christians could not force their ethics on non-Christians, he started to get rid of nearly all German laws that had something in common with the Ten Commandments. Soon it was no longer forbidden to speak blasphemous about the Christian God – a typical start. Later the laws on abortion, homosexuality and divorce were changed, to name just a few examples, and with the exception of the problem of abortion most Evangelicals do not even know any longer what the law forbade 30 years ago. To most of them it seems impossible and incredible that the State outlaws things seen as criminal acts in the Old Testament, although many of those laws were still in force till the sixties. (Of course this does not say that they were still applied on a broad level.)

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Imperial Germany”, *The Journal of Modern History* 56(1983): 456-482. For general characteristics of Prussia, see Oswald Hauser, *Vom Wesen des preussischen Staates* (Kiel: F. Hirt, 1962)

<sup>195</sup>On the Freemasons see Hermann Neuer, *Die Freimaurer: Die Religion der Mächtigen* (Berneck: Schwengeler, 1991)

## Hegel's Salvation by the State

The German atheistic philosopher Ernst Topitsch has shown<sup>196</sup> that National Socialism and Marxism are only the best-known examples of the right and left-wing totalitarian State ideas that followed Hegel's philosophy, which saw the Prussian State as the final outcome of the spirit governing world history. Hegel's philosophy was heavily influenced by the French Revolution and Freemasonry, as some of his followers have shown in order to relieve him from responsibility for the Prussian and German idea that the State is above everything, and that people should live for the State. But they did not understand that the left and right revolutionist understood the same message of Hegel as the Prussian kings and the Marxists and National Socialists had after they had come to power: salvation comes through the State. And this message is still at work in reunited Germany, which is now attempting to bring all of Europe under an even greater – European – State, since this is thought to bring even more salvation. If this plan, the United States of Europe, does not succeed, it will be because the religion of nationalism in the European States, which also believe in salvation by the State, is too strong. These two rival statist religions can only be overcome by the “*kingly Law of freedom*”, as James calls it. They can only be overcome if a Reformation takes place, being based 1) on the presupposition of a Creator, 2) who revealed Himself in His infallible Book, which contains 3) His Laws as ethics for the whole world, 4) salvation according to Reformed understanding and 5) the hope and faith that this earth will one day wholly serve God.

## National Socialism as Religion

Let us now have a look at one of the two political religions that have been in power on German soil and attempted to bring salvation by the State: National Socialism and Communism.

It is impossible to count how many billion times the Germans said ‘Heil Hitler’ during the Third Reich. To greet with ‘Heil Hitler’ was required by

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<sup>196</sup>Ernst Topitsch, *Die Sozialphilosophie Hegels als Heilslehre und Herrschaftsideologie* (Munich: Piper, 1981<sup>2</sup>); Ernst Topitsch, *Gottwerdung und Revolution*, UTB (Pulach: Verlag Dokumentation, 1973). On Hegel's religious background in Freemasonry and his influence on right und left totalitarianism see also: Jacques D'Hondt, *Verborgene Quellen des Hegelschen Denkens* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1983<sup>2</sup>) (from the French); Jacques D'Hondt, *Hegel und seine Zeit* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1984<sup>2</sup>) (from the French); Gerd-Klaus Kaltenbrunner (ed.), *Hegel und die Folgen* (Freiburg: Herder, 1970); Karl R. Popper, *Die offene Gesellschaft und ihre Feinde vol. 2* (Tübingen: Francke, 1980<sup>6</sup>) (title of English original: *The Open Society and Its Enemies II*)

a strict law, and people were put into concentration camps because they refused. But only a few non-Germans realize that 'Heil' is the German word for 'salvation', which is extensively used in the German Bible translations. 'Salvation Hitler' or 'Salvation by Hitler' was the daily message every German, including nearly all Christians, preached to his neighbor daily. Although some tried to explain 'Heil Hitler' as wishing salvation for Hitler<sup>197</sup>, the official meaning was clear: Hitler is the salvation for Germany and for the world.

That there was nearly no resistance to use this 'German greeting' among Christians shows the condition of the German churches after hundreds of years being influenced by the Humanistic philosophy of Freemasons like Lessing, Hegel and Goethe<sup>198</sup>, and by the aggressive theology of higher criticism started by Freemasons like Reimarus, Strauss and Renan<sup>199</sup>. The so-called 'free churches' – including the Dispensationalist churches – cried 'Heil Hitler', removed converted Jews from their congregations and took over the 'Führer'-principle which Hitler forced on all organizations. Most 'free churches' merged into one large denomination by order of the Nazis. The Lutheran churches did not want to get involved in politics. The mainly Lutheran, so-called 'Confession Church' was a mixture of Bible-believing Christians like the Reformed Heinrich Jochums and strong liberals like Rudolf Bultmann.

The only real resistance came from neo-orthodox Reformed theologians in Switzerland and Germany and from Reformed Christians in the Netherlands. Karl Barth was the only professor of theology who continued to start his lecture with a prayer instead 'Heil Hitler'. Nor was he willing to swear an oath to Hitler<sup>200</sup>, even though he changed his mind later, when it was

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<sup>197</sup>For example the professor of German literature in Bonn, Hans Naumann, *Rede zum Geburtstag des Führers*, Bonner Akademische Reden 27 (Bonn: Scheur, 1937), p. 17; see my dissertation *Hans Naumann als Volkskundler im Dritten Reich*, PhD-thesis (Los Angeles: Pacific Western University, 1990) (published as Bonn: Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft: Bonn, 1992), p. 291

<sup>198</sup>I am not referring to any theory of conspiracy, but to the historical fact that more German Humanistic philosophers and thinkers were Freemasons than not. I only count those thinkers whose belonging to a lodge is not doubted by historians.

<sup>199</sup>Again I refer to the historical fact that nearly all leading higher critics in the beginning were Freemasons. They were not critical in general, only against Christianity, because they believed in a rival religion. See beside the mentioned book, footnote 21.

<sup>200</sup>Hans Prolingheuer, *Der Fall Karl Barth 1934-1935: Chronographie einer Vertreibung* (Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 1977)

already too late<sup>201</sup>. But Barth was deserted by the ‘Confession Church’, which told the Nazi State that it saw no problem in swearing an oath to Hitler. Only then was the Nazi State ready to dismiss Barth!<sup>202</sup> Even though Barth is to be rejected because he denies biblical history<sup>203</sup>, he argued for resistance to the Nazi State because he saw Jesus from a Reformed perspective as Lord over every area of life, which is the clear message of the otherwise mixed Declaration of Barmen. Please do not misunderstand me. I am not advocating Karl Barth. But to understand the situation in Germany we must understand that until the end of the sixties Barth was offering the most conservative theology you could buy on the open market.

Incidentally, the attitude of the Dispensational and Lutheran churches toward Hitler and the Jews compared to those of the Reformed Christians is a striking argument against Hal Lindsey’s rude attack that Christian Reconstructionism and Reformed theology in general will lead to a second holocaust<sup>204</sup>. Normally, it is the Dispensationalist who will not step in for others, because this would mean becoming involved in politics or economics. Lindsey must be reminded that love in the Bible is to be measured by deeds (1John 3,18), not by nice words, proclamations or best-selling books.

That ‘Salvation Hitler’ was only a small, but revealing part of the Socialist message and practice of a new anti-Christian religion can be demonstrated in several ways. We could discuss the roots of Hitler’s thinking, which lie in occult orders and sects<sup>205</sup>. We could discuss the parallels between the salvation history of orthodox Christianity and of National Social-

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<sup>201</sup>*Ibid.* This is often neglected, although Prolingheuer proves it from Barth’s own writings.

<sup>202</sup>*Ibid.* See also my dissertation Hans Naumann als Volkskundler im Dritten Reich, op. cit. pp. 197-202

<sup>203</sup>I agree with the judgment of Gary North, *Dominion and Common Grace* (Tyler: Institute for Christian Economics: Tyler, 1987), p. 151, that Barthianism believes together with antinomianism that God does not speak to any specific problems in history.

<sup>204</sup>Hal Lindsey, *The Road to Holocaust* (New York: Bantam, 1989). See the refutations of Lindsey’s theories on Christian Reconstruction in Gary DeMar, *The Debate over Christian Reconstruction* (Ft. Worth: Dominion Press, 1988; Gary DeMar, Peter Leithart, *The Reduction of Christianity* (Ft. Worth: Dominion Press, 1988); Greg L. Bahnsen, Kenneth L. Gentry, *House Divided* (Tyler: Institute for Christian Economics, 1989); Steve Schlissel, David Brown, *Hal Lindsey and the Restoration of the Jews* (Edmonton: Still Waters Revival Books: Edmonton, 1990)

<sup>205</sup>See the literature in my article “Adolf Hitler und kein Ende”, *Factum* 6/1989, pp. 252-255

ism. But surely the most impressive argument is the everyday songs, the poems, official rituals and lectures of the Third Reich. The Nazis never disguised or hid the religious character of their actions. Take, for example, the following statement:

“National Socialism is a religion, born out of blood and race, not a political world view. It is the new, only true religion, born out of a Nordic spirit and an Arian soul. The religions still existing must disappear as soon as possible. If they do not dissolve themselves the State must destroy them.”<sup>206</sup>

The Nazi Chief of the united trade unions proclaimed openly:

“Adolf Hitler! We are united with you alone! We want to renew our vow in this hour: On this earth we believe only in Adolf Hitler. We believe that National Socialism alone is the saving faith for our people. We believe that there is a Lord-God in Heaven, who created us, who leads us, who directs us and who blesses us visibly. And we believe that this Lord-God sent Adolf Hitler to us, so that Germany may become a fundament for all eternity.”<sup>207</sup>

The high SS officer Schulz stated in a lecture called “Ours is the kingdom and the power and the glory”<sup>208</sup>:

“I do not want to become guilty of blasphemy, but I ask: Who was greater, Christ or Hitler? By (the time of) His death Christ had twelve disciples, who did not even stay faithful. But Hitler today has a people of 70 million behind him. We cannot tolerate that another organization, which has another spirit than our’s, should come into existence. National Socialism seriously lays this claim: I am the Lord, your God, you shall have no other gods beside me ... Our is the kingdom, because we have a strong army (“Wehrmacht”), and the glory, because we are a respected people again, and this, if God wants it, ‘in eternity’. Heil Hitler”<sup>209</sup>.

In Cologne, the children receiving meals from the Nazi State during World War II prayed before meal. This prayer follows typical German Christian blessings before meal and is originally written in rhyme:

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<sup>206</sup>Lecture at a course for the few leaders of the youth of the German States, quoted from Johann Neuhäuser, *Kreuz und Hakenkreuz, part 1* (Munich: Verlag Katholische Kirche Bayerns, 1946), p. 261.

<sup>207</sup>Confession of Faith of the “Reichsarbeitsführer” Robert Ley, quoted from *Der Schulungsbrief: Das zentrale Monatsblatt der NSDAP und DAF*, 4 (1937) 4: 124

<sup>208</sup>Taken from and put against the liturgical ending of the Lord’s prayer “Our father in Heaven ...”, which is found from the second century on and taken partly from Dan 2,37; cf. 2Chr 29,11-12.

<sup>209</sup>SS-Obergruppenführer Schulz, quoted from Johann Neuhäuser, *Kreuz und Hakenkreuz*, p. 255.

“Fold your hands, bow your head and think about Adolf Hitler. He gives us our daily bread and helps us out of every misery.”<sup>210</sup>

Because of our short time I cannot go on to quote further examples<sup>211</sup>. Yet there are hundreds and thousands of documents like this. I also want to assure you also that the religious overtone does not depend on my translation. The case is just the opposite: I found it difficult to translate the strongly religious language into English. These shocking songs, prayers and confessions were no secret, but part of everyday life in Nazi Germany. For comparison, the last example will be taken from a truly ‘secret document’, which shows that the documents already quoted were a mild version for the public. The text is a secret document from 1943, written only for Hitler<sup>212</sup>. His signature shows that the text was approved by him with the words “the first useful outline” and then sent to Goebbels.

“Immediately and unconditional abolition of all religions after the final victory (‘Endsieg’) not only for the territory of Greater Germany but also for all released, occupied and annexed countries ... proclaiming at the same time Hitler as the new messiah. Out of political considerations the Muslim, Buddhist and Shintoist religion will be spared for the present. The ‘Führer’ has to be presented as an intermediate between a redeemer and a liberator, yet surely as one sent by God, who must receive divine honor. The existing churches, chapels, temples and cult places of the different religions have to be changed into ‘Adolf-Hitler-consecration places’. The theological faculties of the universities have to be transformed according to the new faith. Special emphasis has to be laid on the education of missionaries and wandering preachers, who should proclaim the teaching in Greater Germany and in the rest of the world and must form religious bodies, which can be used as centers for further extension. (With this the problems in the abolition of monogamy will disappear, because polygamy can be included into the new teaching as one of the statements of faith.)”<sup>213</sup>

If the Christian churches in Germany (and in many other countries) did not realize that they had been taken over by a rival religion called National Socialism, which explicitly called itself a religion, how can you convince

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<sup>210</sup>Quoted from Gerhard E. Stoll, “Gebete in publizistischer Umgestaltung”, *Publizistik* 3(1958): 337-352, here p. 346. The article discusses ‘secular’ forms of German prayers used in press and propaganda.

<sup>211</sup>See 14 documents in my article “Die Religion des Nationalsozialismus”, *Factum* 11/12/1989: 506-511

<sup>212</sup>A so-called “Führervorlage”

<sup>213</sup>Quoted from the photograph of the original in Wilfried Daim, *Der Mann, der Hitler die Ideen gab* (Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 1985), pp. 216-218. p. 299 discusses the genuineness of the document.

them today that they are taken over by rival religions which deny that they are religions, such as Socialism and Marxism<sup>214</sup>, Freemasonry<sup>215</sup>, Rudolf Steiner's Anthroposophy<sup>216</sup> or other forms of Humanism?

One of the main reasons why the German churches did not fight against Hitler's rival religion and his Antisemitism was the low view of the Old Testament. *Antisemitism is only possible where the Old Testament and especially Old Testament Law has been put aside.* A love for the Old Testament and its Law is the best protection against Antisemitism. This is the major mistake of Hal Lindsay who compares Christian Reconstruction and Reformed theology in general to National Socialism. National Socialism hated the Old Testament, while Reformed theology is surely much closer to the Old Testament than hyper-Dispensationalist Hal Lindsey. Alfred Rosenberg, Hitler's agent for world view affairs, saw it the biggest mistake of Protestantism that Martin Luther translated and spread the Old Testament and took an oath on the Old and New Testament before the Emperor Worms in 1520<sup>217</sup>. (Of course Luther had a vague view of the Old Testament, praising it on the one side, and seeing it as a dark time of law without gospel on the other. Again, his furious Antisemitism can only be explained by his view of the Old Testament.). I explained already that Pietism based its preaching on the conscience, not on the Law. Pietism could easily live without the Old Testament, although this was never stated.

Liberal theology hated the Old Testament, and professors of Old Testament have done everything to undermine the application of the Old Testament today, in spite of their massive studies of the text itself. Adolf von Harnack, a foremost liberal theologian and close ally of Emperor Wilhelm II, wrote a famous sentence in his book on Marcion, rejecting the Old Testament as the work of another god:

“To reject the Old Testament in the second century was a mistake which the great Church refused rightfully; to keep it in the sixteenth century was a

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<sup>214</sup>For arguments for the religious character of Marxism see my book *Marxismus – Opium für das Volk*, and my article (together with my wife Christine): “Der Kommunismus als Lehre vom Tausendjährigen Reich” (Communism as teaching about the Millennium), *Factum* 11/12/1986: 12-19

<sup>215</sup>For arguments for the religious character of Freemasonry see Hermann Neuer, *Die Freimaurer*

<sup>216</sup>For arguments for the religious character of Anthroposophy see my article “Reinkarnation und Karma in der Anthroposophie”, *Factum* 11/12/1988: 473-482

<sup>217</sup>See Hans Schlemmer, *Evangelische Gedanken zu Rosenbergs ‘Mythos’* (Görlitz: Hutten-Verlag, 1935), pp. 18-19

fate which the Reformation was not able to escape; but to conserve it after the nineteenth century as a canonical text in Protestantism, was the result of a religious and ecclesiastical paralysis.”<sup>218</sup>

One of Hitler’s first actions was to force the churches to get rid of their Jewish-Christian members. So all Jewish members of all churches were disciplined. This in churches where church discipline had nearly totally faded! This most gigantic act of church discipline in history took place quietly and without much protest. Another religion had taken over the churches.

The theologians had prepared the way<sup>219</sup>. A typical example is Hans Schlemmer, who wrote a book against Alfred Rosenbergs main book, sometimes called ‘the Bible of National Socialism’. This meant risking his life! He writes, that Rosenberg went too far by dropping the Old Testament altogether. The Old Testament is for him ‘the Word of God’. But still he agrees with Rosenberg, writing:

“It will be the task of theology to combine the submission to the Word of God with the perception which truthfulness demands, that the origin of the canon was a rather human event and that the Old Testament contains not a few unpleasant things and that its place is far below the faith of the New Testament.”<sup>220</sup>

### East Germany (the GDR)

We can see this also when we look at Marxism, which ruled part of Germany until recently. The Germans in the former GDR (East Germany) first lived under National Socialism, and after 1945 under Communism. They lived under tyranny for 56 years! But only few see a religious and ethical problem here. Most, including most Evangelicals, consider this to have been a political problem, which only troubles fundamentalist churches, because they were persecuted. (Most liberal churches think in Socialist terms anyway.) People neither realize nor want to realize what National Socialism and Communism have always had in common.

Incidentally, some of the concentration camps in the territory of the former GDR were simply taken over from the Nazis by the Communists.

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<sup>218</sup> Adolf von Harnack, *Marcion: Das Evangelium vom fremden Gott* (Leipzig, 1921), p. 248

<sup>219</sup> See especially Robert P. Ericksen, *Theologians under Hitler* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985)

<sup>220</sup> Adolf von Harnack, *Marcion: Das Evangelium vom fremden Gott* (Leipzig, 1921), pp. 19-20

They even left Communists in the camps if they did not follow party line. We visited the cruel concentration camp Buchenwald while it was still under Communist rule. It was near Weimar, the city of Goethe, Schiller and other so-called Humanist thinkers. It was one of those camps which had been taken over by the Russians. The camp had been liberated by American soldiers, but then given over to the Russians who used it for another decade.

We do not have the time to prove in detail that Marxism is also a religion. Francis Nigel Lee and Gary North have done this in detail<sup>221</sup>. The German churches did not realize that Marxism is a rival religion as they did not realize the true character of National Socialism. They leave it to the politicians to rebuild the former GDR. There is not the slightest hint of a Christian renaissance in the former GDR after the Reunification of Germany. Let us pray that the richest churches in the world, the churches in Germany, wake up and understand their task to reconstruct family and Church according to God's Law, and thereby to change the whole society.

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<sup>221</sup>I have done it in German in the mentioned books and articles.



## Hegel's Salvation by the State (1993)<sup>222</sup>

It is well-known that the Minister of Propaganda of the National Socialist government, *Joseph Goebbels*, was a Marxist and a Socialist before he became a National Socialist. Ulrich Höver in his outstanding book *Joseph Goebbels as National Socialist*<sup>223</sup> has shown that Goebbels stayed a Socialist all his life. Judging from the common left-right spectrum, people are shocked to hear that a Fascist like Goebbels was a Socialist at the same time. But has there ever been a Fascism and a nationalism that was not Socialist and Statist? And has there ever been a Socialism and Statism that was not nationalistic and Fascistic? Was the Russian Socialism of the Soviet Union really an international Socialism? Was it not a Russian National Socialism? Ask other ethnic groups in the former Soviet Union how 'international' this kind of Socialism was. On the other hand, Hitler's National Socialism was 'international' – Hitler wanted to reign the whole world after the final victory ('Endsieg') of World War II. He planned to send German National Socialists as protectors to every country of the world.

The common root of National Socialism and Marxist Socialism is Hegel's philosophy of salvation by the State. The German atheistic philosopher Ernst Topitsch has shown<sup>224</sup> that National Socialism and Marxism are among the best known examples of the right and left-wing totalitarian State ideas that followed Hegel's philosophy, which saw the Prussian State as the final outcome of the spirit governing world history. Hegel's philosophy was heavily influenced by the French Revolution and Freemasonry, as some of his followers have shown in order to relieve him from the respon-

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<sup>222</sup>Reprinted from the first half of *The Nature of Our Crisis*. Chalcedon Report Nr. 337 (Aug. 1993): 29-31; this is a fuller version of a text under the same subheading in "National Socialism, Christian Reconstruction and the Future of Germany" (reprinted in this volume)

<sup>223</sup>Ulrich Höver, *Joseph Goebbels als nationaler Sozialist* (Verlag Bouvier: Bonn 1992)

<sup>224</sup>Ernst Topitsch, *Die Sozialphilosophie Hegels als Heilslehre und Herrschaftsideologie* (Munich: Piper, 1981<sup>2</sup>); Ernst Topitsch, *Gottwerdung und Revolution*, UTB (Pulach: Verlag Dokumentation, 1973). On Hegel's religious background in Freemasonry and his influence on right und left totalitarianism see also: Jacques D'Hondt, *Verborgene Quellen des Hegelschen Denkens* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1983<sup>2</sup>) (from the French); Jacques D'Hondt, *Hegel und seine Zeit* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1984<sup>2</sup>) (from the French); Gerd-Klaus Kaltenbrunner (ed.), *Hegel und die Folgen* (Freiburg: Herder, 1970); Karl R. Popper, *Die offene Gesellschaft und ihre Feinde vol. 2* (Tübingen: Francke, 1980<sup>6</sup>) (title of English original: *The Open Society and Its Enemies II*)

sibility for the Prussian and German idea that the State is above all and that the people live for the State. But they did not understand that the left and right revolutionist believed the same message of Hegel as the Prussian kings and the Marxists and National Socialists did after they had come to power: salvation comes through the State.

This message is still working in reunited Germany, which now tries to get all of Europe under an even larger – European – State, which is believed to bring even more salvation. If this plan, the United State of Europe, does not succeed, then the only reason will be, that the religion of nationalism is too strong in the European countries, which also believe in salvation by the State. Only if a reformation takes place, being based 1) on the presupposition of a Creator, 2) who revealed Himself in His infallible Book, which contains 3) His Laws as ethics for the whole world, 4) salvation according to a Reformed understanding and 5) the hope and faith that this earth once will wholly serve God, can the two rival statist religions be overcome by the ‘kingly Law of freedom’<sup>225</sup>, as James calls it.

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<sup>225</sup>Combined from James 2:9 and 2:12; cf. 1:25

## **The Myth of the End of Communism (1993)<sup>226</sup>**

For most people in the West, the end of the rule of the non-elected Communist governments in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union is the end of Communism or at least the end of Communism's worldwide influence. But this is a myth. *Only a particular form of Communism* broke down. Stalinism and all the forms of Communism which grew out of it disappeared in most countries.

Some people even thought Michail Gorbachev had abandoned Communism, although he only fought against Stalin and always claimed Lenin to be his example and the father of *perestroika*, a claim he repeated in his newest book of 1992.<sup>227</sup>

Communism is more than Stalinism. And Communism is more than establishing a Communist government without election. Communism is a world view, a religion, which can come to power by dictatorship or by democracy, by revolution or by evolution, officially or underground.

As National Socialism fought its way to power on 'legal' roads through the democratic system, so today Communism is gaining political power through democratic elections and democratic rules. In recent elections, few of the Baltic States elected the parties which made them independent from Russia, but voted for the Communist Party. Lenin monuments had to be erected again. Although Rumania removed its brutal dictator by civil war the majority of the people voted for the follow-up organization of the Communist Party. Most of the former States of Eastern Europe or the States of the Soviet Union today have 'democratic' Communist parties with a majority in parliament. The former Communist Party in the Soviet Union, which was forbidden and dissolved by Boris Yelzin, is allowed to exist again and will recover all its property (except what belonged to the State) according to a decision of the highest Russian lawcourt. The Russian Parliament still has a high majority of former members of this Party. (East Germany is the only exception, because it was united with West Germany which sent billions of marks to the East.)

The West denies this. 'Democracy' and the freedom of election was all the West propagated against Communism. When Communism is voted for

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<sup>226</sup>Reprinted from "The Myth of the End of Communism". Chalcedon Report Nr. 334 (May 1993): 20

<sup>227</sup>Michail Gorbatschow. Zerfall der Sowjetunion. C. Bertelsmann: Gütersloh, 1992. pp. 201-207

in free elections, the West does not know what to say. If it would realize that Communism is still in power in many of the Communist countries, they would have to ask themselves what the difference is between Communist and non-Communist countries. They would have to see that Statism is the heart of Communism, and not lack of democracy. They would have to ask themselves how much Statism has been voted for in the countries of the West. No one is interested in that.

## **Modern Fascism: A Review (1994)<sup>228</sup>**

Gene Edward Veith, Jr. *Modern Fascism: Liquidating the Judeo-Christian Worldview*. Concordia Scholarship Today. Concordia Publishing House: St. Louis (MO), 1993. 187 pages

Veith wants to prove that “Fascism is back” (p. 11). Although I believe that Fascism – whatever it is – is alive and never has been dead, I do not think that Veith really proves that Fascism is back. But before criticizing his research let us state the good side of his work:

1. It is good that Veith shows that it is wrong to speak about right and left-wing parties (esp. pages 26-27), as National Socialism was a real Socialism aimed at one nation only.

2. It is good that Veith shows that Hitler, Mussolini and their allies and followers wanted to liquidate the Judeo-Christian world view, and that they founded not only political parties, but rival religions to Christianity.

3. It is good that Veith shows how many philosophers and liberal theologians were in favor of Hitler and Mussolini.

The book has two topics. One is the discussion of Germany and Italy from 1930 to 1945 which comprises most of the text. Veith does not use any German or Italian research, which is a must if you write about German and Italian Fascism and about German philosophers and theologians. He is not even really acquainted with English literature on National Socialism. The examples he uses come only from the literature he happened to read, but in most cases he overlooks much better and more important examples.

The other topic of the book discusses the present comeback of Fascism. Veith does not spend much time here, but seems to follow the press. Do the so-called Neonazis on German streets (at the moment about 3.000 young people and not the majority of the Germans) really hold to the world view of National Socialism? Is any extreme right-wing party fascist? This has to be proved first, but Veith does not even start a discussion.

The problem is that ‘Fascism’ always has been a Socialist term for fighting conservative groups and is purposely used as vague as possible. Veith nowhere really defines ‘Fascism’. Most of his statements about Fascism are therefore true for any anti-Christian and any Socialist movement.

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<sup>228</sup>Reprinted from “Is Fascism Back?”. *Contra Mundum* No. 11 (Spring) 1994: 76

Veith does not really prove that Fascism is well and alive today. If Fascism is Socialism, it is still alive. If Fascism is any program to liquidate the Judeo-Christian world view, it is still among us (Veith mentions Heidegger, Nietzsche, Marx and Freud, page 127). If Fascism is the 'will to power' (Nietzsche) it will be there till the end of history. But if Fascism is the special world view of Mussolini's Italy and Hitler's Germany, Veith did not really prove his case.

He proves e. g. that many modern thinkers like Martin Heidegger have been in favor of National Socialism. But he also shows that their pupils and followers are shocked when they hear this. Does this prove that all followers of Heidegger and others are fascists?

Incidentally, what does Veith mean when he writes "The American system ... is still intact" (page 156). Does he really believe this?

## **Four Problems with Germany's Reunification (1991)<sup>229</sup>**

The lesson of the German 'Wirtschaftswunder' after World War II was not learned by the German Reunification

Following World War II, Germany was rebuilt out of nothing into one of the richest countries of the world through the hard work of (nearly) everybody. This phenomenon is known as the 'Wirtschaftswunder' (economic miracle). The American armies and their allies established a functioning democracy and at least tried to solve the problem of justice through the 'Entnazifizierung', bringing thousands of former Nazis to American and Allied and later to German law courts.

Yet, in the Reunification of West and East Germany, German leadership has forgotten nearly everything they could have learned from the lesson of the time after Hitler's (national) Socialism. Four examples may prove this:

1. The false promise, that the results of 40 years of Socialism could be overcome within few years by means of tax money.

In general and especially during the November 1990 Reunification election, all parties and the government agreed, that East Germany could be brought to the same level as Western Germany in the time of one parliamentary period (four years), although they know that most parts of the former German Democratic Republic (GDR) were in the same condition Hitler left them in 1945 (i.e. the GDR still used Hitler's motorways, railways and telephone system!). They forgot that the former Communist parts of Germany cannot be rebuilt with tax money but *only with hard work*. When the Western parts of Germany were rebuilt and became the Federal Republic of Germany, there was no tax money available (except credits etc., from the USA!). People had to work hard, and this for years. *Most of the people in the former GDR still believe the old Socialist dream that poverty can only be overcome by the State*. The German government is very weak in arguing against this mentality. It sends billions of Deutschmarks and promises wealth to the people without calling them to hard work. This

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<sup>229</sup>Reprinted from "Problems with Germany's Reunification". Antithesis: A Review of Reformed/Presbyterian Thought and Practice 2 (1991) 3 (May/June): 3 = "Four Problems with Germany's Reunification". Chalcedon Report No. 323 (June 1992): 16-17 = "Four Problems with Germany's Reunification". Symbiotica: The Journal of the Institute for Christian Economics 1 (1991): 2: 4-5

would be unpopular. (There are also those people in the GDR that could not work at all, although they had to go to their factory and sit around all day. There is a good joke regarding this: After the Reunification a former GDR citizen starts to work at the assembly line of Mercedes. At 10 o'clock he tells his co-worker: "I am tired. We are already over time, the material usually runs out by now!".)

2. The false idea that it will bring 'social freedom', if there is no 'persecution' of leading members of the former Socialist Party (SED).

Legal justice has not been restored in the former GDR. Restoring justice is left to the press, which will find horror stories about anybody not accepted by them. Until today people are waiting for great law suits like Germany had them after World War II. Thousands of the leading members of the SED are criminals even according to the old law of the GDR. (Legally, the law of the Western Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) was always binding for the area of the GDR.) But there is no freedom without legal justice. For months a general amnesty for all German Communist spies has been discussed with no result.

During the 'Entnazifizierung', not all Nazi criminals were found or sentenced, but nevertheless justice became a part of everyday mentality. Former Nazis kept quiet because they knew that otherwise anybody could go to the law courts and denounce them. The former Socialist criminals in the GDR have no such fear. Some of them still direct many factories, city administrations, universities and even law courts and can work against 'capitalist' citizens. Most former citizens of the GDR are afraid to talk about crimes they know of, because at the moment there is nearly no chance of a law suit.

3. The false idea that you can reunite two States without mentioning ethics.

The government, and even most churches, hesitated to talk about ethical questions during Reunification. They did not want to endanger the process of Reunification. The result is, that most citizens in the former GDR have no idea why and how they should change their morals. (Of course the real reason is that the FRG has no binding ethics itself and the Law of God is rejected – even among a lot of Evangelicals.) Although the German Constitution and most of the laws of the FRG became law in the former GDR, some laws were left, most notably the right to abort children till the third month. Women from the West are free to travel to the former GDR and abort their child according to old GDR law, while in the West it is still harder to abort, because doctors and the State have to confirm that the mother's situation permits abortion. But the Reunification treaty States that

the abortion law of the FRG must be changed within two years, which of course means that it will become easier to abort.<sup>230</sup>

4. The wrong morality that the Statism of the former GDR is blamed, while Statism in the FRG is not discussed.

Germany has a lot of State monopolies, some of them official (post, telephone, railway, local transport, university and school education), some of them by way of ownership (airways, electricity, local transport) and some of them through very restricted laws (distance transport – you need a permit to run a company transporting goods further than 50 km, which is hard to get!). Germany has one of the largest so-called ‘social nets’. Everybody has to pay into the State insurances for health, unemployment and pension. Although a recent study in the country of Nordrhein-Westfalen has shown that local services (water, garbage collection, local transport etc.) run by the State are three times as expensive as those run by private companies, still most of those services are in the hand of the cities, counties and countries.

German politicians from the West therefore have a hard time explaining the difference between Socialism (Statism) and real ‘Capitalism’ to people from Eastern Germany. Of course they call it ‘social market economy’, but ‘social’ is a euphemism for the old promise, that the State will pay if you are ill, unemployed, old, in need, or just not willing to work. This is what the former GDR promised its citizens and what they still expect. This is what the new government promised them in order to win the election. But this is also what will hinder a second ‘Wirtschaftswunder’.

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<sup>230</sup>This was written in 1991



## **Problems in the Unification of Europe (1992)<sup>231</sup>**

At the moment, nobody knows how a united Europe could ever function, because the values, traditions and legal systems of the European countries are so different. But parliaments and politicians are deciding nearly every week on new laws which try to unite the member countries of the 'European Community' (EC) in certain areas, like the production of beer, the use of cars, taxes or the question of political refugees. Many Europeans see only the economic advantages. They will probably soon change their mind, if they belong to one of the countries which will increase sales taxes to the new European standard (in Germany probably from 14 to 17%). But there is very little discussion on the ethical side of the question. The values and laws of the different countries are taken as the product of chance, which can be changed and adapted to a common standard without further discussion. But anyone believing in God's Law as the standard for the ethics of every State and the relationship between States can easily see serious ethical problems in the unification of Europe, some of which I will mention briefly.

*1. The economic spirit is still the old State-oriented and high-tax attitude:* All European countries have protected their market for centuries. More and more they realized that the different laws and taxes ruling trade between the countries have ruined their economies, but they did not want the easy solution, a real free market economy. Instead they just created a larger market – Europe – with the same old economic boundaries and restrictive laws at its borders.

*2. The lowest level of ethical values in one country becomes the standard of all countries:* Equal rights for all Europeans does not mean that all Europeans come under God's Law, but that the lowest standard dictates the 'rights' in other countries. If an Italian is allowed to do something forbidden for me in Germany, I can go to the European law court and fight for my 'rights'. At the moment I may not always succeed, but this will change in 1993/94, if all plans become reality. In Great Britain, it is forbidden to marry if you 'changed' your sex getting a new name and passport, because it is felt to be (and it *is!*) homosexuality. Not so in the Netherlands. A British woman recently went to the European law court to fight for her 'rights'.

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<sup>231</sup>Reprinted from "Problems with the Unification of Europe". Chalcedon Report No. 323 (June 1992): 15-16

She did not succeed, but everybody knows that she only needs to try it again in some years.

Take as another example the Lord's Day. We have countries with strict laws protecting Sunday, even though for different reasons. In England, it is the Reformed heritage. In Germany there are many laws restricting shopping hours and working hours for factories. All of those restrictions include laws on Sunday. But there are also European countries with much looser regulations for Sundays. Some of them, like Scotland, have no such laws, because the Sunday has always been accepted. Today the majorities are failing to make laws as England did, because there have always been problems with Sunday! In other countries the Sunday was never really enforced at all. Under a possible Unification, Sunday might cease to be a special day in favor of a so-called 'equal economic competition'.

*3. The difference between Protestant and Catholic ethics and countries is being ignored:* This problem is especially true for the difference between the Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant countries of Europe. Certain Laws of God will be lost in the long run on both sides. Sometimes some Catholic countries have laws that enforce God's standards more than more Protestant countries, for example, concerning abortion and family. At other times the Protestant countries are more on the side of God's Laws, for example, concerning economics, law courts or the rights of Evangelical churches. Now the good will be given up to gain the 'rights' of every criminal act allowed in another country. Only sometimes will the good triumph. In Greece, for example, the persecution of Evangelical Christians through the State and the Greek Orthodox Church nearly came to an end after Greece became member of the European market.

To me, the European market is also an attempt to get rid of the differences between a Catholic and Protestant ethic of work. Nobody wants to know why Catholic countries are much poorer. People in former Communist East Germany felt poor although East Germany was richer than Spain or Italy!

Especially Germany pretends there isn't any difference between the different Christian heritages, because it was always divided into a Catholic and a Protestant part, although the Catholic part was usually dominated by the 'Prussian spirit'. The fact that the ethical values and fundamentals of a State are always derived from religious values, is neglected, although most of the different European Constitutions mention that they were written "in responsibility to God and men" (so the German Constitution, the Irish Constitution even mentions "the Holy Trinity"). How much the architects of United Europe ignore the religious background of the member states is

proven by the discussion on Turkey's possible membership. (Turkey is associated with the EC already.) At the moment it is *not Islam* that keeps Turkey out, but the persecution of the Kurds and the low level of income: it would cost the other European members too much.

4. *Regions and States within the countries:* Another big problem with the unification of Europe is that most of the Protestant countries, especially Germany and Great Britain, are federations of States, while most Catholic countries, especially France, are much more centralized. In the federal republics, some states (e. g. Bavaria or Wales) hold certain rights. Scotland still has its own law system. In Germany, for example, the States govern education, certain taxes, the law courts, the bank system and the building of streets. Suddenly, those States realize that they are losing certain rights when the central government tries to adapt laws to the laws of the other member countries. Centralization is on the march not only in the overall picture with a coming European government, but also on the local level.

If the European countries were to concentrate on their God-given task and right to fight crimes and evil according to God's Law, instead governing economics and giving away billions of dollars to its people, it would be easier to combine local government with a free market, but soon the economic difference between countries with a 'Protestant work ethic' (Max Weber' term) and other countries would show up, and nobody is interested in being reminded that religion makes a difference ... Instead of fighting criminals the United Europe will give them a field day! The criminals have a free market, but the police and the law courts still cannot cross the borders. (Imagine German police acting and shooting on French soil!)



## **'The Law of an Elite', or: Problems in the Coming European Unification (1992)<sup>232</sup>**

'The Law of an elite' is the title of a commentary in 'Die Welt' (the world), one of the major German newspapers. The commentary complains that Germans (and citizens of other European countries, of course) have to live more and more according to laws that were never voted on in a parliament, nor openly discussed and often are not even known to the national judges. 'European Court' decisions automatically become law in all member countries of the 'European Community'. When European bureaucrats, the new elite governing Europe, formulate a new law to harmonize the different national laws, this very often becomes a binding national law without any further notice. Writes the author Joachim Neander about the 'European Court': "It is something like a constitutional court but without a constitution, with an influence which is without parallel internationally".

Neander is right in seeing the dangers of the new European legislation. But he does not see the whole picture. It is not only legislation which no longer is under the influence of a parliament or an elected government. It is the European structure itself. For example, in Germany you cannot vote against the treaties between the European countries which make up the European Community. Those treaties are no normal German law that can be changed by majority, but are binding on every government and include hard sanctions should you try to get rid of them. If the treaty states that every government of the member countries has to pay a certain percentage of the agricultural budget of the European Community, all countries have to pay, no matter how many billions are being wasted.

The European Community is in favor of strong protectionism for agricultural products, guarantees a fixed price for all agricultural products produced in Europe, and lifts the low prices of products from outside of Europe. Even those member countries of the European Community fighting this kind of Socialist protectionism internationally have to finance this gigantic European protectionism themselves because of older treaties. Nobody seems to know a way out. The European bureaucrats coming from

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<sup>232</sup>Reprinted from "'The Law of an Elite', Or: Problems with the Coming European Unification". Chalcedon Report No. 323 (June 1992): 19-20 = "'The Law of an Elite". Symbiotica: The Journal of the Institute for Christian Economics 2 (1992) 2: 4

the different countries (according to a certain percentage of the citizens of each country) are not interested in any changes, because they live on the necessity of thousands of officials for this protectionism.

This growing elite of European officials planning the future of Germany have never had to face an election, are not responsible to any government, but only to other European officials, and are far beyond any real control. Not even the 'European Parliament' itself has the power to stop them.

The main problem, however, is not the situation itself, but the fact that the citizens of most member countries have gotten used to it and are not interested in the ethical question behind this uncontrolled law making.

To them, law is nothing holy, but simply the product and decision of an ever changing majority in the parties and the parliaments, who in turn try to satisfy as many pressure groups as possible. Most issues could have been decided the other way round. Every pressure group in society tries to fight for some specific laws, and no one cares how all those different laws fit together. In Germany, for example, the law on genetical research protects the human life of the unborn child outside a mother very strongly, but the law on abortion and on harming children in the womb does not consider the unborn to be a human.

The idea that behind single laws stand untouchable, holy laws, which legitimate the whole legislation, has been totally lost, even though the German Constitution confirms it.

Law has become a game in which several large and some small fractions of the population try to win points. There is no overall perspective, no ethics above or behind the laws. And so the Europeans are ready to give away their freedom to just another group playing this game without democracy or responsibility. If certain laws are the result of legislation roulette, no one cares whether those laws have been authorized by a parliament and whether they are justified. It does not matter if those laws have been put together by bureaucrats trying to satisfy the political situation in some countries at the very moment, and that the authors of those laws never will be made responsible for their decision.

But the saddest thing is that European Evangelicals have no alternative. As they do not study Biblical Law in detail or take it seriously, they have no overall personal ethics to offer – not to mention social and political ethics. This can be proved by the fact that there has not been an Evangelical ethic available since World War II till today from any theological perspective.

“Where there is no revelation, the people perish: but he that keepeth the Law, happy is he” (Prov 29,18, KJV).

## **The United States of Europe vs. the People (1993)<sup>233</sup>**

From the beginning of 1993 on, there will no longer be controls at the borders between the member countries of the European Community<sup>234</sup>, a further step on the way to what might be called ‘The United States of Europe’. The treaty of Maastricht contains the next steps: a single currency and one central bank for Europe, and for the first time parts of a common executive power. Nobody really seemed opposed to such a process with the exception of some politicians in Great Britain.<sup>235</sup>

Suddenly the European governments are shocked, because elections show that their people do not like the concept of ‘United States of Europe’ as much as their politicians do. Only a tiny minority of the people in all member countries favor the treaty of Maastricht.

In Denmark the majority of the people voted against the treaty of Maastricht. According to the treaty itself, it can only become binding law, if all member countries vote for it. So now the treaty has been declined! But the politicians are unimpressed. They want Denmark to repeat the election. They do not take their own words seriously.

In Ireland and France a tiny majority favored the treaty of Maastricht in elections. What is most important is the fact that there are counties in France in which nearly half of the voters are against Maastricht although all parties, the government, the parliament and every major political and economic institution favor it! Those who reject one gigantic political Europe do not seem to be represented by any party, labor union or democratic institution! This is even the case in Germany, but in Germany the Parliament can vote on such a treaty without holding a referendum. The German Parliament voted for the Maastricht treaty with all of its members.

The same is true in those countries which prepare for entering the European Community by becoming members of the economic treaties of the Community only. In Switzerland a majority of the people voted against becoming a member of the European economic market (EWR), although

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<sup>233</sup>Reprinted from “The United States of Europe vs. The People”. Chalcedon Report Nr. 334 (May 1993): 19-20

<sup>234</sup>This actually become true in April 1995.

<sup>235</sup>See Rodney Atkinson. “Maastrechery”. The Salisbury Review 12 (1993) 1 (Sept): 15-16

the Swiss government had already asked for membership and signed all treaties.

The governments do lip service to democracy, but they have already decided on the future of Europe. Even if the people do not follow, they move on unimpressed.

The Catholic Lepanto-Institute in Italy wrote:

“The treaty signed in Maastricht on the 11 December 1991 is the greatest threat for the European national States, and consequently for the European culture since the time following the war ... The history of this treaty is to be found in those utopian and Socialist thoughts, which in modern times want to set up against a Christian culture the myth of a worldwide State of equality without confession, and therefore, as a result, an atheistic and pantheistic State.”<sup>236</sup>

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<sup>236</sup>Maastrich: Ein Vertrag gegen Europa. Lepanto-Bote Suppl. 122/123 11 (1992) No. 2. p. 2

# About the Author

## Biography

Thomas Schirmmacher holds a chair in theology (ethics, missions, world religions), is rector of Martin Bucer Theological Seminary (Bonn, Hamburg, Berlin, Zurich, Innsbruck, Prague, Zlin, Istanbul), director of the International Institute for Religious Freedom (Bonn, Cape Town, Colombo) of the World Evangelical Alliance and president of Gebende Hände gGmbH (Giving Hands), an internationally active relief organisation, as well as owner of a publishing house and co-owner of a consulting company.

Born in 1960, Schirmmacher studied theology from 1978 to 1982 at STH Basel and since 1983 Cultural Anthropology and Comparative Religions at Bonn State University. He earned a Drs. theol. in Missiology and Ecumenics at Theological University (Kampen/Netherlands) in 1984, and a Dr. theol. in Missiology and Ecumenics at Johannes Calvin Foundation (Kampen/Netherlands) in 1985, a Ph.D. in Cultural Anthropology at Pacific Western University in Los Angeles (CA) in 1989, a Th.D. in Ethics at Whitefield Theological Seminary in Lakeland (FL) in 1996, and a Dr. phil. in Comparative Religions / Sociology of Religion at State University of Bonn in 2007. In 1997 he got honorary doctorates (D.D.) from Cranmer Theological House, in 2006 from Acts University in Bangalore.

He was pastor of the 'Protestant Society of Germany' in Bonn and Erftstadt, 1982 to 1986, co-theologian of the 'Evangelical Free Church' in Bonn 1992-1998, and 1998-2000 pastor of the Free Reformed Church in Bonn. Nowadays he is active in the 'Church on the Rhine' in Bonn.

Schirmmacher taught Missions, World Religions and Cultural Anthropology at FTA Giessen (Germany) from 1983-1989 and from 1990-1996 ethics, missiology, comparative religions and cultural anthropology at 'Independent Theological Seminary' in Basel ('Staatsunabhängige Theologische Hochschule Basel' – STH Basel). He held and holds different chairs, e.g. 1994-1999 'Philadelphia Theological Seminary' (PA, USA) (professor of missions), 1995-2000 at Cranmer Theological House (Shreveport, LA) (professor of missions and ethics), since 1996 at Whitefield Theological Seminary (Lakeland, FL) (professor of Systematic Theology and Apologetics), since 2000 at William Carey University (Bangalore, India) (professor of International Development), and since 2006 at State University of Oradea, Romania.

He is internationally active pro family and against abortion (as director of the Institute for Life and Family) and against persecution of Christians (as director of the Institute of Religious Freedom of the World Evangelical Alliance and as director of the Commission for Religious Freedom of the German and the Austrian Evangelical Alliance and member of the same commission of the World Evangelical Alliance).

He also is involved in all kinds of publishing activities. He has been editor of 'Bibel und Gemeinde' and editor of 'Evangelikale Missiologie', co-editor of 'Contra Mundum: A Reformed Cultural Review', and of 'Reflection: An International Reformed Review of Missiology'. Since 1986 he owns the publishing house 'Culture and Science Publ.' ('Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft'), which publishes scientific books on language, culture, religion and missions, and co-owns Consulting Schirmmacher GbR, a business and educational business company.

He has written or edited 74 books on ethics, missiology and cultural anthropology, which were translated into 14 languages. In 2002 he was named 'Man of Achievement' by the International Biographical Center Oxford for his achievements in the area of the ethics of international development.

He is listed in Marquis' Who's Who in the World, Dictionary of International Biography, International Who is Who of Professionals, EU-Who is Who, Who is Who in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, 2000 Outstanding People of the 21st Century, 2000 Outstanding Intellectuals of the 21st Century, International Who's Who in Distance Learning, and other biographical yearbooks.

He is married to Dr. Christine Schirmmacher, professor of Islamic Studies and director of the Islam Institute of the German Evangelical Alliance, and author of a two-volume standard introduction to Islam. The couple has two children.

## Books by Thomas Schirmacher in chronological order (With short commentaries)

### As author:

Das Mißverständnis des Emil Brunner: Emil Brunners Bibliologie als Ursache für das Scheitern seiner Ekklesiologie. Theologische Untersuchungen zu Weltmission und Gemeindebau. ed. by Hans-Georg Wüch and Thomas Schirmacher. Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Weltmission und Gemeindebau: Lörrach, 1982. 54 pp.

[The misunderstanding of Emil Brunner] *A study and critique of Emil Brunner's ecclesiology and of the bibliology and hermeneutics of dialectical theology.*

Mohammed: Prophet aus der Wüste. Schwengeler: Berneck (CH), 1984<sup>1</sup>, 1986<sup>2</sup>, 1990<sup>3</sup>, 1996<sup>4</sup>. VTR: Nürnberg, 2006<sup>5</sup>. 120 pp.  
[Muhammad] *A short biography of the founder of Islam and an introduction into Islam.*

Theodor Christlieb und seine Missionstheologie. Verlag der Evangelischen Gesellschaft für Deutschland: Wuppertal, 1985. 308 pp.  
[Theodor Christlieb and his theology of mission] *A study of the biography, theology and missiology of the leading German Pietist, professor of practical theology and international missions leader in the second half of the nineteenth century. (Thesis for Dr. theol. in missiology.)*

Marxismus: Opium für das Volk? Schwengeler: Berneck (CH), 1990<sup>1</sup>, 1997<sup>2</sup>. 150 pp.  
[Marxism: Opiate for the People?] *Marxism is proven to be a religion and an opiate for the masses. Emphasizes the differences between Marxist and Biblical work ethics.*

Zur marxistischen Sagen- und Märchenforschung und andere volkskundliche Beiträge. Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft: Bonn, 1991<sup>1</sup>, 2003<sup>2</sup>. 227 pp.  
[On the Marxist View of Sagas and Tales and other essays in folklore and cultural anthropology] *10 essays and articles on the science of folklore and cultural anthropology in Germany. Includes a critique of the Marxist interpretation of tales and sagas, and studies on the history of marriage and family in Europe from the 6th century onward.*

„Der göttliche Volkstumsbegriff“ und der „Glaube an Deutschlands Größe und heilige

Sendung“: Hans Naumann als Volkskundler und Germanist unter dem Nationalsozialismus. 2 volumes. Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft: Bonn, 2 volumes, 1992<sup>1</sup>, in one volume 2000<sup>2</sup>. 606 pp.

[Hans Naumann as Anthropologist and Germanist under National Socialism] *Discusses the history of German cultural anthropology and folklore under Hitler, especially the leading figure Naumann, professor of German language, whose scientific theory is shown to be very religious in tone. (Thesis for a PhD in Cultural Anthropology.)*

War Paulus wirklich auf Malta? Häussler: Neuhausen, 1992, VTR: Nürnberg, 2000<sup>2</sup> (together with Heinz Warnecke). 254 pp.

[Was Paul Really on Malta?] *The book shows that Paul was not shipwrecked on Malta but on another island, Kephallenia, and that the report in Acts is very accurate. The Pauline authorship of the Pastoral Epistles is defended with theological and linguistic arguments against higher criticism.*

Psychotherapie – der fatale Irrtum. Schwengeler: Berneck (CH), 1993<sup>1</sup>, 1994<sup>2</sup>; 1997<sup>3</sup>; 2001<sup>4</sup> (together with Rudolf Antholzer). 150 pp.

[Psychotherapy – the Fatal Mistake] *A critique of secular psychotherapy, showing that psychotherapy often is a religion, and that most psychotherapists call every school except their own to be unscientific.*

Paulus im Kampf gegen den Schleier: Eine alternative Sicht von 1. Korinther 11,2-16. Biblia et symbiotica 4. Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft: Bonn, 1993<sup>1</sup>, 1994<sup>2</sup>, 1995<sup>3</sup>, 1997<sup>4</sup> 168 pp. Revised: VTR: Nürnberg, 2002<sup>5</sup>  
[Paul in Conflict with the Veil!?] *Exegetical examination of 1. Corinthians 11,2-16, following an alternative view of John Lightfoot, member of the Westminster assembly in the 16th century.*

„Schirmacher argues that from the biblical teaching that man is the head of woman (1 Cor 11:3) the Corinthians had drawn the false conclusions that in prayer a woman must be veiled (11:4-6) and a man is forbidden to be veiled (11:7), and that the wife exists for the

husband but not the husband for the wife (11:8-9). Paul, however, rejected these conclusions and showed in 11:10-16 why the veiling of women did not belong to God's commandments binding upon all the Christian communities. After stating the thesis and presenting his alternative translation and exposition of 1 Cor 11:2-16, he considers the difficulties in the text, presents his alternative exposition in detail (in the form of thirteen theses), discusses quotations and irony in 1 Corinthians, and deals with other NT texts about women's clothing and prayer and about the subordination of wives." (*New Testament Abstracts vol. 39 (1995) 1, p. 154*).

Der Römerbrief. 2 vol. Neuhausen: Hänssler, 1994<sup>1</sup>; Hamburg: RVB & Nürnberg: VTR, 2001<sup>2</sup>. 331 + 323 pp.

[The Letter to the Romans] *Commentary on Romans in form of major topics of Systematic Theology starting from the text of Romans, but then going on to the whole Bible.*

Der Text des Römerbriefes: Für das Selbststudium gegliedert. *Biblia et symbiotica 7*. Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft: Bonn, 1994. 68 pp.

[The Text of the Letters to the Romans] *The text of Romans newly translated and structured for self study.*

Ethik. Neuhausen: Hänssler, 1994<sup>1</sup>. 2 vol. 883 & 889 pp.; Hamburg: RVB & Nürnberg: VTR, 2001<sup>2</sup>. 3 vol. 2150 pp.; 2002<sup>3</sup>. 8 volumes. 2850 pp.

[Ethics] *Major Evangelical ethics in German covering all aspects of general, special, personal and public ethics.*

Galilei-Legenden und andere Beiträge zu Schöpfungsforschung, Evolutionskritik und Chronologie der Kulturgeschichte 1979-1994. *Biblia et symbiotica 12*. Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft: Bonn, 1996. 331 pp.

[Legends of Galileo and other Contributions to Creation Science, Criticism of Evolution and Chronology of the History of Culture 1979-1994].

Völker – Drogen – Kannibalismus: Ethnologische und länderkundliche Beiträge 1984 – 1994. Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft: Bonn, 1997. 218 pp.

[Peoples – Drugs – Cannibalism] *A collection of articles on cultural anthropology, especially on Indians in South America, cannibalism and the religious use of drugs.*

Die Vielfalt biblischer Sprache: Über 100 alt- und neutestamentliche Stilarten, Aus-

drucksweisen, Redeweisen und Gliederungsformen. Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft: Bonn, 1997. 130 pp.

[The Diversity of Biblical Language] *A hermeneutical study, listing more than 100 specific language techniques in the Bible with several proof texts for each of them.*

Gottesdienst ist mehr: Plädoyer für einen liturgischen Gottesdienst. Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft: Bonn, 1998. 130 pp.

[Church Service is More] *An investigation into biblical proof texts for liturgical elements in Christian Sunday service.*

Gesetz und Geist: Eine alternative Sicht des Galaterbriefes. Reformatorische Paperbacks. Reformatorischer Verlag: Hamburg, 1999. 160 pp.

[Law and Spirit] *This commentary emphasizing the ethical aspects of Galatians wants to prove that Galatians is not only fighting legalists but also a second party of Paul's opponents, who were totally opposed to the Old Testament and the Law, and lived immorally in the name of Christian freedom, a view especially endorsed by Wilhelm Lütgert's commentary of 1919. Paul is fighting against the abrogation of the Old Testament Law as well as against using this Law as way of salvation instead of God's grace.*

Law and Spirit: An Alternative View of Galatians. RVB International: Hamburg, 2001. 160 pp.

*English version of the same book.*

God Wants You to Learn, Labour and Love. Reformation Books: Hamburg, 1999. 120 pp.

*Four essays for Third World Christian Leaders on Learning with Jesus, Work Ethic, Love and Law and Social Involvement.*

Dios Quiere que Tú Aprendas Trabajos y Ames. Funad: Managua (Nikaragua), 1999<sup>1</sup>; 2000<sup>2</sup>; RVB International: Hamburg, 2003<sup>3</sup>. 70 pp.

[God Wants You to Learn, Labour and Love] *Spanish version of the same book.*

37 Gründe, warum Christen sich für eine Erneuerung unserer Gesellschaft auf christlicher Grundlage einsetzen sollten. Die Wende, 1999. 40 pp.

[37 reasons for Christian involvement in society and politics].

Christenverfolgung geht uns alle an: Auf dem Weg zu einer Theologie des Martyriums. Idea-Dokumentation 15/99. Idea: Wetzlar, 1999. 64 pp.

[The Persecution of Christians Concerns Us All: Towards a Theology of Martyrdom] *70 thesis on persecution and martyrdom, written for the International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church on behalf of the German and European Evangelical Alliance*

World Mission – Heart of Christianity. RVB International: Hamburg, 1999. 120 pp. *Articles on the Biblical and systematic fundament of World Mission, especially on mission as rooted in God's being, on 'Mission in the OT', and 'Romans as a Charter for World Mission'. Shorter version of German original 2001.*

Eugen Drewermann und der Buddhismus. Verlag für Theologie und Religionswissenschaft: Nürnberg, 2000<sup>1</sup>; 2001<sup>2</sup>. 132 pp. [Drewermann and Buddhism] *Deals with the German Catholic Author Drewermann and his propagating Buddhist thinking. Includes chapter on a Christian Ethics of Environment.*

Ausverkaufte Würde? Der Pornographie-Boom und seine psychischen Folgen. Hänssler: Holzgerlingen, 2000. (with Christa Meves). 130 pp.

[The Selling Off of Dignity] *The psychological results of pornography.*

Eine Sekte wird evangelisch – Die Reformation der Weltweiten Kirche Gottes. Idea-Dokumentation 11/2000. Idea: Wetzlar, 2000. 56 pp.

[A Cult Becomes Protestant] *Detailed report on the reformation of the Worldwide Church of God (Herbert W. Armstrong) from a sect to an evangelical church.*

Legends About the Galilei-Affair. RVB International: Hamburg, 2001. 120 pp. *Shorter version of the German book 'Galilei-Legenden' mentioned above with essays on the Galilei-affair and creation science.*

Human Rights Threatened in Europe: Euthanasia – Abortion – Bioethicconvention. RVB International: Hamburg, 2001. 100 pp. *Updated Lectures on euthanasia and biomedicine at the 1st European Right to Life Forum Berlin, 1998, and articles on abortion.*

Menschenrechte in Europa in Gefahr. RVB: Hamburg, 2001... 110 pp. [Human Rights Threatened in Europe] *Updated Lectures on euthanasia and biomedicine at the 1st European Right to Life Forum Berlin, 1998, and articles on abortion. See slightly different English version above.*

Aufbruch zur modernen Weltmission: William Careys Theologie. RVB. 64 pp.

[Be Keen to Get Going: William Careys Theology] *First discussion of Carey's theology in length, explaining his Calvinistic and Postmillennial background.*

Be Keen to Get Going: William Careys Theologie. RVB: Hamburg, 2001. 64 pp. *Same book in English.*

Darf ein Christ schwören? RVB: Hamburg, 2001. 140 pp.

[May Christians Take an Oath?] *On Swearing and on its meaning for covenant theology. Taken from 'Ethik', vol. 1.*

Christus im Alten Testament. RVB: Hamburg, 2001. 84 pp.

[Christ in the Old Testament] *On Christ and the Trinity in the Old Testament and on 'the Angel of the Lord'. Taken from 'Ethik'.*

Wie erkenne ich den Willen Gottes? Führungsmystik auf dem Prüfstand. RVB: Hamburg, 2001. 184 pp.

[How to know the will of God] – *Criticizes the inner leading of the Spirit. Taken from 'Ethik'.*

Love is the Fulfillment of Love – Essays in Ethics. RVB: Hamburg, 2001. 140 pp. *Essays on ethical topics, including role of the Law, work ethics, and European Union.*

Mission und der Kampf um die Menschenrechte. RVB: Hamburg, 2001. 108 S.

[Mission and the Battle for Human Rights] *The relationship of world missions and the fight for human rights is discussed on an ethical level (theology of human rights) as well as on a practical level.*

The Persecution of Christians Concerns Us All: Towards a Theology of Martyrdom. zugleich Idea-Dokumentation 15/99 E. VKW: Bonn, 2001. 156 pp.

*70 thesis on persecution and martyrdom, written for the International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church on behalf of the German and European Evangelical Alliance*

Irrtumslosigkeit der Schrift oder Hermeneutik der Demut? VTR: Nürnberg, 2001. 82 pp.

[Inerrancy of Scripture or 'Hermeneutics of Humility'] *Debate with Dr. Hempelmann on the inerrancy of scripture.*

Beiträge zur Kirchen- und Theologiegeschichte: Heiligenverehrung — Universität Gießen — Reformation / Augustin – Böhl — Spurgeon — Brunner. VKW: Bonn, 2001. 200 pp.

[Essay on the History of church and Dogma] *Articles on topics from church history like 'The beginning of the veneration of saints' and on the named theologians.*

Weltmission — Das Herz des christlichen Glaubens: Beiträge aus 'Evangelikale Missiologie'. VKW: Bonn, 2001. 200 pp.

[World Mission – Heart of Christianity] *Articles on the Biblical and systematic fundament of World Mission, especially on mission as rooted in God's being, on 'Mission in the OT', and 'Romans as a Charter for World Mission'. Shorter version of German original 2001.*

Säkulare Religionen: Aufsätze zum religiösen Charakter von Nationalsozialismus und Kommunismus. VKW: Bonn, 2001. 140 pp.

[Secular Religions] *Articles on the religious nature of National Socialism and Communism. Includes texts of prayers to Hitler.*

Paulus im Kampf gegen den Schleier!? VTR: Nürnberg, 2002<sup>5</sup>. 130 pp.

*Revised version. See commentary on first edition 1993<sup>1</sup>.*

Paul in Conflict with the Veil!? VTR: Nürnberg, 2002<sup>1</sup>; 2007<sup>2</sup>. 130 pp.

*Same book in English.*

Hoffnung für Europa: 66 Thesen. VTR: Nürnberg, 2002

*Official thesis and study of hope in the Old and New Testament for Hope for Europe of the European Ev. Alliance and Lausanne Europe.*

Hope for Europe: 66 Theses. VTR: Nürnberg, 2002

*Same book in English.*

*Also available in Czech, Dutch, Spanish, Rumanina, Portugese, French, Russian, Italian, Portugese, Hungarian, Lettish, Latvian.*

ABC der Demut. RVB: Hamburg, 2002

[ABC of Humility] *Notes and bible studies on humility in alphabetical order.*

Führen in ethischer Verantwortung: Die drei Seiten jeder Verantwortung. Edition ACF. Brunnen: Gießen, 2002

[Leading in ethical responsibility] *An introduction into ethics for economic and other leaders for the Academy of Christian Leaders.*

Der Papst und das Leiden: Warum der Papst nicht zurücktritt. VTR: Nürnberg, 2002. 64 pp.

[The Pope and Suffering] *A study of the writings of Pope John II. on suffering and an evaluation of their exegetical basis. Gives reasons why the pope does not resign.*

Erziehung, Bildung, Schule. VTR: Nürnberg, 2002. 88 pp.

[Instruction, Education, School] *The chapters on rising of children, example, education, and Christian school from 'Ethics'.*

Thomas Schirmmacher, Christine Schirmmacher u. a. Harenberg Lexikon der Religionen. Harenberg Verlag: Düsseldorf, 2002. 1020 pp.

[Harenberg Dictionary of World Religions] *In a major secular dictionary on world religions, Thomas Schirmmacher wrote the section on Christianity ('Lexicon of Christianity', pp. 8-267) and Christine Schirmmacher the section on Islam ('Lexicon of Islam', 'pp. 428-549).*

Studies in Church Leadership: New Testament Church Structure – Paul and His Co-workers – An Alternative Theological Education – A Critique of Catholic Canon Law. VKW: Bonn, 2003. 112 pp.

*Contains the named five essays. The first essay is translated from vol. 5 of 'Ethics'.*

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Missionswissenschaft im Zeichen der Erneuerung: Ehrengabe zum 70. Geburtstag von Peter Beyerhaus. Sonderausgabe = Evangelikale Missiologie 15 (1999) Heft 2 (together with Klaus W. Müller und Christof Sauer) (1999) afem

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