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Thomas Schirmacher God Wants You to Learn, Labour and Love

GOD

Wants you to Learn, Labour and Love



Dr. Thomas Schirmacher

Thomas Schirrmacher

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Labor, and Love**

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God wants you to learn

Jesus as Master Educator

In the Old Testament, the term ‘disciple’ or ‘student’ is often used to designate a person who believes in God. “The LORD God has given me the ear of the learned ... He awakens me morning by morning, He awakens My ear to hear as the learned” (Isa. 50:4-5). The word ‘disciple’ is derived from the Latin term ‘discipulus’ and means ‘a pupil’. The New Testament first uses the term ‘mathetes’ to designate the twelve apostles (beginning with John 2:2 and in general in this gospel) and then to describe all followers of Jesus (Luke 6:17, Acts 9:25). The Great Commission, which also uses this word, expressly speaks of teaching and of doing what has been learned, “... make disciples of all the nations ... teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you ...” (Mt. 28:18-20). Christians are students who never stop learning, a characteristic typical of wisdom. The more one knows, the more one realizes how little one knows and how much more there is to learn, “... The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding” (Proverbs 9:8-10).

The best example of the significance of training and of education is the training of the twelve apostles, which was built on a detailed pedagogical program which we can only sketch here. More detail would require information on the chronology of the material Jesus covered in the three years and a description of his behavior in individual and group counseling.¹ At any rate, His program dovetailed instruction and life, everyday life and lecture, teaching and individual counseling, resulting in a comprehensive education. In the world, often a pupil should know what his teacher knows. Lawrence O. Richards² mentions Jesus’ statement to His disciples, “A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is perfectly trained will be like his teacher” (Luke 6:40). “A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. It is enough for a disciple that he be like his teacher, and a servant like his master” (Mt. 10:24-25). After washing His

¹Still the best study is A. B. Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve*, Grand Rapids: Kregel Publ., 1971 (originally publ. 1894)

²See Lawrence O. Richards, *A Theology of Christian Education*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975, See also Lawrence O. Richards, *A Theology of Church Leadership*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979, and Lawrence O. Richards, *A Theology of Personal Ministry*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981

disciples' feet, He tells them, "For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. Most assuredly I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him" (John 13:15-16). Richards comes to the conclusion, "Much of education is concerned with helping people know what their teachers know, Christian education is concerned with helping people become what their teachers are."³

The Twelve had already heard Jesus preach before their conversion. All twelve apostles first became general followers of Jesus. Not until later were they elected out of the larger group to become apostles. (Examples for the general calling are the calling of Peter in John 1:35-42 and Luke 5:1-11; the calling of Levi/Matthew in Matthew 9:9-13, Mark 2:13-17 and Luke 5:27-32. Compare the calling of other disciples in Matthew 4:18-22 and Mark 1:16-20).

All three synoptic gospels describe the special calling of the Twelve, including a complete list of their names (Matthew 10:1-4, Mark 3:13-17, Luke 6:12-16). Let us take a look at the three accounts. "And He went up on the mountain and called to Him those He Himself wanted. And they came to Him. Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses and to cast out demons" (Mark 3:13-16. The list of names follows in verses 16-19); "And when He had called His twelve disciples to Him, He gave them power over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease" (Matthew 10:1. The list follows in verse 2-4). In Luke 6:12, Jesus prays all night, then calls His disciples and chooses twelve, "whom He also named apostles" (Luke 6:13. The list of names follows in verses 14-16). Jesus must have had more followers than, who were not chosen to be one of the twelve apostles. We can see this in various ways. Luke 6:17 distinguishes between the "great multitude of people" and the "crowd of the disciples", which also included women who accompanied the Lord (Luke 8:2-3). When Jesus spoke of the requirements of discipleship, many turned away, but many, including the Twelve, remained (John 6:66-69. The Gospel of John uses the term 'disciple' to designate only the Twelve, unlike the other Gospels).

Three factors were of importance in the selection of the Apostles:

1) Jesus limited himself to a small number, for, just as a father can only properly care for a small number of children, he could provide adequate training to only a few followers at a time.

³Lawrence O. Richards, *A Theology of Christian Education*, p. 30

The Twelve had been chosen to be with Him and to share His life, but no one can share his life with a larger group of people. Marriage, the closest human relationship, is limited to two people. The number of children in a family is larger, but still manageable. Jesus' conscious restriction can also be seen in the decreasing concentric circles of the groups of His friends, the smaller groups having more intensive contact with Him. He even had a favorite, John, the "disciple whom He loved" (John 19:26, 20:2, 21:7, 20, 19:27).

The two pairs of brothers, James and John and Peter and Andrew experienced many events not shared by the others (Matthew 4:21, 10:2, Mark 1:19, 3:17, 10:35,41, Luke 5:10, 6:14, 9:54, Acts 1:13, 12:2). All four brothers were present in Mark 1:29, 13:3, three of them with Andrew missing in Mark 5:37, 14:33 and Luke 8:51 and particularly at the Transfiguration, Matthew 17:1-3, Mark 9:1-4, Luke 9:28-30 and later, as a pillar of the church in Galatians 2:9).

The Concentric Circles around Jesus

Largest Number (= all), loosest relationship

- * The crowd
- * the group of disciples
- * all the disciples who accompanied Him, including the women
- * the Seventy
- * the Twelve
- * the four disciples, Peter and Andrew, James and John
(the two pairs of brothers or, sometimes only Peter, James and John)
- * His favorite disciple, John

Smallest Number (= one), closest relationship

2) Jesus chose the Twelve, "that they might be with Him and that He might send them out". The goal of the intensive fellowship with Jesus and the dependence on Him was the preparation for their mission.

The disciples were not to remain in this intense relationship with Jesus, but were to go out alone and continue His work. Jesus had been 'sent' by His Father (John 3:16-18, 8:16,26,29, 12:45-49, 16:5,28, 17:3,8) and sends out the Holy Spirit in His place (John 14:15-31, 16:5-11, 12-17). He transfers His commission to the apostles. In John 17:18, He tells His Father,

“As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world”. In John 20:21, He tells the Twelve, “As the Father has sent Me, I also send you”.

He had intended from the very beginning to prepare them for the Great Commission, to “... make disciples of all the nations ... teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you ...” (Matthew 28:18-20). They were to do the same thing in the world that He had done with them – preach the Gospel to the masses, elect disciples out of the larger group of converts, and by sharing their lives and by teaching, train the chosen to become spiritual leaders.⁴

The prayer in John 17 clearly demonstrates that Jesus had a specific assignment to be carried out with the Twelve beside the commission to achieve salvation on the Cross. In verse 4 He says, “I have finished the work which You have given Me to do” and adds the reason, “Now they have known that all things which You have given Me are from You. For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received them, and have know surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me” (Verses 7-8). Jesus wanted the disciples to not only know what He knew, but to live as He had lived. The goal of His training program was for them to follow in His steps (except for His divinity and for His sacrificial death on the Cross). He had repeatedly taught this to them.

The disciples’ training for the mission field, by living and working several years with the prototype of the missionary, Jesus Himself, was not haphazard, but followed Jesus’ clear plan. The chronological order of His program makes this clear. First, He preached by Himself, then preached while the disciples observed. Then He let them preach while He observed. After that He sent them out in groups of two, discussed the results with them and finally sent them out alone⁵ (remaining with them as Risen Lord – Matthew 28:18-20). The Twelve continued by doing the same with other Christians. This scheme works well, not only in the training of church workers, but in every kind of education which sets itself the proper goal, independence under God.

⁴See Robert E. Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelisation*, Old Tappan: Revell, 1963

⁵The first, short term assignment is described in Matthew 10:1-11, Mark 6:7-13, Luke 9:1-6. See also the sending out of the Seventy in Luke 10:1-16 and His discussion with them about their experiences in Luke 10:17-21.

On the Way to Independence

- 1) Jesus preaches by Himself
 - 2) Jesus preaches while His disciples observe
 - 3) The disciples preach while Jesus observes
 - 4) The disciples are sent out for a short term assignment
 - 5) The disciples are sent out on a permanent assignment
 - 6) The disciples preach while others observe
 - 7) et cetera
- 1) I
 - 2) I and You
 - 3) You and I
 - 4) You try alone, I comment
 - 5) You are completely alone
 - 6) You and another
 - 7) Another and you
 - 8) et cetera.

3) Jesus' training program for the disciples included the full scope of instruction and life, theory and practice, individual and group counseling, personal and public activity, activity and rest, profession and private life. Teaching and counseling were a unit.

One might object that this intensive sharing of life and work with a small number of spiritual children is restricted to Jesus and to Paul. 2 Timothy 2:2 refutes this assumption, however, by commanding discipling as an ongoing program for church and missions: "And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also". Jesus' example is made into an obligatory program for training workers. Christ's church expands through the intensive occupation of mature, spiritually minded Christians with small groups of believers, not by the attempts of one responsible leader who tries to do justice to dozens, hundreds or even thousands at once. True spiritual growth and fruitful training occurs when spiritually-minded, mature Christians concentrate on a small group of spiritual children, with whom they share life and instruction until the children have become independent adults, themselves capable of taking on responsibility for others. This is the

best way to fulfill the Great Commission, "... Make disciples of all nations ... teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:18-20).

Definition of Discipling⁶

Every line describes a major point

- *Discipling others*
- *is the process,*
- *by which a Christian with a*
- *life worth emulating*
- *commits himself*
- *for an extended period of time*
- *to a few individuals*
- *who have been won to Christ,*
- *the purpose being*
- *to aid*
- *and to guide*
- *their growth to spiritual maturity*
- *so that they can reproduce themselves*
- *in a third spiritual generation,*
- *which they build up through discipling.*

We find many chains of models in the Bible.

Examples of Chains of Role Models

Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges: Moses – Joshua – the elders
1 Peter 5:1-3: Jesus – Peter – the elders – the disciples
2 Timothy 2:2: Paul – Timothy – “faithful men” – “others also”
1 Thessalonians 1:6-7: Paul – Timothy & Silvanus – Thessalonians – Province of Achaia – the whole earth

Beside Jesus and the Twelve, the best-known example for a discipling process which includes life and instruction, teaching and counseling, pattern and imitation, is that of Paul and his colleagues. The Epistles to the Thessalonians are the most beautiful testimony that not only Paul, but his colleagues (Paul, Silvanus and Timothy), both not only preached the Gospel, and were prepared to share their own lives (1 Thessalonians 2:8) as models. Naturally all three proclaimed with words and with doctrine. Oth-

⁶This definition is an adapted version of the definition in Allen Hadidian, *Successful Discipling*, Moody Press: Chicago, 1979. p. 29. The book is a good introduction to discipling in the local church.

erwise, how would their audience understand the meaning of their example? These letters demonstrate how Timothy and Silvanus, trained by Paul as their model, became models themselves for the Christians in Thessalonica who were also to become models in their turn.

Silvanus and Timothy are included, for 1 Thessalonians 1:6 tells us, “And you became followers of us and of the Lord”. Many have found this statement offensive. How can Paul compare himself with Jesus? But the Scripture itself recommends models to emulate God’s example. And is that not the true case? A child’s understanding of God depends on the example of his parents, whether it is good or bad. Spiritual children are influenced by the good or bad example of their spiritual parents’ relationship with God. Everyone is a role model. It is never the question whether to be an example or not, but one can only choose between being a good example or a poor one. Every church leader and every politician is an example and can only choose what kind of example he wants to be.

Discipling is significant for the training of spiritual leaders and workers in the church and in world missions. Although the examples of Jesus and Paul, or of Old Testament leaders, can only be imperfectly carried over into modern life, this is still the best way to train and form the leaders of the future.

Who is a Role Model?

The following texts all use the word 'model' (Greek 'typos', 'hypotyposo') and the terms 'imitator' or 'to imitate' (Greek 'mimetes', 'mimeistai' or 'symmimetai').

1. God

Ephesians 5:1 "Therefore be imitators of God as dear children".

2. Jesus Christ

1 Thessalonians 1:6 "And you became followers of us and of the Lord."

1 Corinthians 11:1 "Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ."

3. The Apostles etc.

Philippians 3:17 "Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern."

1 Thessalonians 1:6-7 "And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit, so that you became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia."

2 Thessalonians 3:7 "For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us, for we were not disorderly among you."

2 Thessalonians 3:9 "... not because we do not have authority, but to make ourselves an example of how you should follow us."

1 Corinthians 11:1 "Imitate me, just as I imitate Christ."

1 Corinthians 4:16 "Therefore I urge you, imitate me."

4. Men and women of history

Hebrews 6:12 "... that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises."

Hebrews 13:7-(8) "Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct."

5. Our spiritual father, who introduced us to Biblical truth

1 Corinthians 4:(14)-16 "For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. Therefore I urge you, imitate me."

6. The elders

1 Peter 5:(1)-3 "The elders who are among you I exhort, ... Shepherd the flock of God ... not as being lords over those entrusted to you; but being examples to the flock."

7. Young men who are true

1 Timothy 4:12 "Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity."

8. Other churches

1 Thessalonians 2:14 “For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God which are in Judea in Christ Jesus”

1 Thessalonians 1:7 “so that you became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe.”

9. The Old Testament and its people

1 Corinthians 10:6 “Now these things became our examples”

1 Corinthians 10:11 “Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition (Compare the Old Testament examples in verses 1-13)

10. Sound Doctrine

Romans 6:17 “... yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered.”

2 Timothy 1:13 “Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love, which are in Christ Jesus.”

11. All which is good

3 John 11 “Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good.”

Titus 2:7 “... in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works.”

God wants you to work

Trinity and Work

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 'Dreieinigheit' (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 anybody 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 ethics⁷. Buddhism and Socialism have a lot in common when it comes to work and economy, as several Buddhist authors have clearly stated⁸.

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

⁷See 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

⁸See *ibid.* pp. 112-115

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.”⁹

“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.”¹⁰

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.”¹¹

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.”¹²

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.”¹³

⁹Heiner Ruschhaupt. “Bauen und Bewahren”. Der Navigator Nr. 13 (Mai/Juni 1987): 2-3

¹⁰Hermann Cremer. Arbeit und Eigentum in christlicher Sicht. Brunnen Verlag: Gießen, 1984. p. 8

¹¹Friedrich Trzaskalik. “Katholizismus”. pp. 24-41 in: Michael Klöcker, Udo Tworuschka (ed.). Ethik der Religionen – Lehre und Leben: vol. 2: Arbeit. op. cit. p. 33

¹²Hermann Cremer. Arbeit und Eigentum in christlicher Sicht. Brunnen Verlag: Gießen, 1984. p. 8

¹³Alan Richardson. Die biblische Lehre von der Arbeit. Anker-Verlag: Frankfurt, 1953. p. 27

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 ...”¹⁴.

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 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.¹⁵

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

¹⁴Gustav Warneck. Die Stellung der evangelischen Mission zur Sklavenfrage. C. Bertelsmann: Gütersloh, 1889. p. 67

¹⁵See the chapter on the ethics of work in my book *Marxismus – Opium für das Volk?* Schwengeler Verlag: Berneck, 1990

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.”¹⁶

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 biblical 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

¹⁶Quoted from Konrad Löw. *Marxismus Quellenlexikon*. Kölner Universitätsverlag: Köln, 1985. p. 321

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 Heaven¹⁷. "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."¹⁸

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."¹⁹

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

¹⁷See 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

¹⁸Johannes Wachten. "Judentum". pp. 9-23 in: *ibid.*, p. 10

¹⁹Hermann Cremer. *Arbeit und Eigentum in christlicher Sicht. op. cit.* p. 9

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)”²⁰. 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 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

²⁰Alan Richardson. Die biblische Lehre von der Arbeit. op. cit. p 16

need while everybody has the duty to work”²¹ – 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”²². He goes on: “The equal right here is still, in principle, the bourgeois right ...”²³. This cannot be accepted because it still “silently accepts a difference of individual gifts and therefore of different efficiency of workers as natural privileges”²⁴.

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.”²⁵

(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.”²⁶

He goes on:

“Marx realizes the historical unavoidability, 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 ...”²⁷.

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

²¹Ursula Schulz (ed.). Die deutsche Arbeiterbewegung 1848-1919 in Augenzeugenberichten. dtv: Munich, 1981³. p. 200

²²Karl Marx. Friedrich Engels. Werke. 42 vol. Dietz Verlag: Berlin. 1956ff. vol. 19. p. 20

²³Ibid.

²⁴Ibid. p. 21

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Ibid. vol. 21. p. 501

²⁷Ibid.; see the whole page

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”²⁸, 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 conditions²⁹.

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 Engels³⁰. Marx wrote about the German Parliament:

“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.”³¹

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.

²⁸Ibid. 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 Vorsichtsmaßregeln zum Schutze der Kinder, frühzeitige Verbindung produktiver Arbeit mit Unterricht eines der mächtigen Umwandlungsmittel der heutigen Gesellschaft ist.”)

²⁹We just want to show the position of Marx, not to discuss labor of children or the right of the State to regulate it.

³⁰Konrad Löw. Marxismus Quellenlexikon. Kölner Universitätsverlag: Köln, 1985. pp. 221-222

³¹Karl Marx. Friedrich Engels. Werke. op. cit. vol. 32. p. 360

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 overwork³². '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"³³.

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

³²D. P. "Zu Tode gearbeitet". Der Kassenarzt No. 12/1991, p. 32

³³Ibid.

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, ripping, treshing, mowing and baking bread go back to God’s teaching”³⁴: “His God instructs him and teaches him the right way” (Is 28,26)³⁵.

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”³⁶. 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 Employer³⁷, God Himself. Thus Paul says: “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

³⁴Alan Richardson. Die biblische Lehre von der Arbeit. op. cit. p. 15

³⁵See the details in the context

³⁶Gustav Friedrich Oehler. Theologie des Alten Testaments. J. F. Steinkopf: Stuttgart, 1891³. p. 437

³⁷In 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.

of work to one's neighbor, the least technical work has the same value as 'intellectual' work."³⁸

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 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!

³⁸Emil Brunner. Das Gebot und die Ordnungen. Zwingli Verlag: Zürich, 1939⁴. p. 373

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.”³⁹

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.”⁴⁰

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 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

³⁹Karl Marx. Friedrich Engels. Werke. op. cit. vol. 20. p. 444

⁴⁰Ibid. vol. 40. p. 546

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 sisters⁴¹, ... 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 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 *1Cor 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.

⁴¹In 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.)

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 universe* (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 overcome 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!”⁴²

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). But on the other side, the wages are not only intended for the one doing the work.”⁴³

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.

⁴²Ibid. vol. 19. p. 21 (In German the sentence is even more complicated. That is typically for Marx.)

⁴³Hermann Cremer. Arbeit und Eigentum in christlicher Sicht. op. cit. p. 11

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.

God wants you to love

Love Is the Fulfillment of the Law: With the Law Dies Love

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 tithes 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 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-courts⁴⁴ (Ex 21,23-25; Lev 24,19-29; Dtn 19,21).

⁴⁴Eugen 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

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 Testament⁴⁵, 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 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:

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.

⁴⁵According 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.

“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)”.⁴⁶

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)⁴⁷. 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? 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

⁴⁶Otto 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

⁴⁷The reason for this was not only mercy but also the coming judgment (Prov 25,22).

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, be-

cause 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, longsuffering, 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 sisters⁴⁸, 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 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”.

⁴⁸In 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.)

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.⁴⁹ 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 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’:

⁴⁹James 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.

“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.”⁵⁰

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’.”⁵¹

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”⁵². 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 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

⁵⁰Wilhelm Lütgert. Ethik der Liebe. Beiträge zur Förderung christlicher Theologie. Reihe 2, vol. 29. C. Bertelsmann: Gütersloh, 1938. p. 30

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²See ref. above concerning ‘brothers and sisters’

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*⁵³ (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*”.⁵⁴

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

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 –

⁵³German 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.

⁵⁴I 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.

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).

God wants you to help

Social Responsibility in the New Testament Church according to Acts 6

The appointment of deacons in Acts 6 and in the New Testament church in general is of great significance. It is surprising, that besides the offices of overseers (bishops) and elders, who were responsible for leadership and teaching, the church had only one other office, that of the deacons and the deaconesses, whose duties were exclusively social in nature. The social responsibility of the church for its members is so institutionalized in the office of the deacons, that a church without them is just as unthinkable as a church without leadership or Biblical teaching.

1) The church carries fully the social responsibility for its own members, insofar as the individual's family is unable to do so. This duty consists in more than donations or symbolic assistance for a few, but in responsibility for all.

2) Therefore the church must distinguish clearly between its social obligations toward fellow Christians and its social responsibility for others. The former has been institutionalized in the office of deacons and is binding, insofar as funds and possibilities are available (assuming that the individual has not willfully brought the situation upon himself). Proverbs 3:27 speaks of both cases, "Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in the power of your hand to do so". Galatians 6:10 speaks of our duties toward all men, but emphasizes the priority of the believers: "Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially the those who are of the household of faith".

The command in Matthew 25:45 should also be understood in this sense. Jesus is speaking of believers, not of everyone. Were the "brethren" mentioned in verse 40 intended to mean all men, this would be the only text in the New Testament that uses the term figuratively to indicate anyone other than church members or fellow Christians.⁵⁵

A comparison with the question of peace-making will help clarify the matter. The Scripture obliges Christians to live in peace with fellow-believers. If they do not, than the church leadership is to interfere. As far as

⁵⁵. Kurt Hennig, "Beim Wort kommt es auch auf die Worte an", *Das Fundament*, (DCTB) 1, 1991, pp. 9-24 (particularly pp. 22 and 19-24).

the relationship to non-Christians is concerned, Paul says, “If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men” (Romans 12:18). The New Testament church is based on a covenant binding on all members. The expectation that the believer is obliged to care for all men stems from a false understanding of fairness and justice, for the the Bible requires the believer to provide first for his own family, next for the members of the local congregation, finally for the world-wide church. Only when these obligations are fulfilled, does he have any responsibilities for other people.

3) Acts 6 gives great priority to the social obligations of the church towards its members, but the responsibility for proclaiming the Word of God and prayer remains more important and is institutionalized in the offices of the elders and the apostles.

The apostles give the following reason for refusing to accept this “business” (Acts 6:3), “we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word” (Acts 6:4). Prayer and proclamation of the Word, which always belong together, have priority over social engagement and must never be neglected. The combination of prayer and teaching is not new. Long before, it had been the ministry of the prophet Samuel and other Old Testament leaders to “pray” and to “teach” (1 Sam. 12:23).⁵⁶

The provision for the socially weak was also considered a matter of course in the Early Church, which universally reserved special funds for social purposes.⁵⁷ Its provision for widows was exemplary.⁵⁸ As a matter of fact, more money was spent on social concerns than on the salaries of the elders and pastors. According to the Church Father, Eusebius, the church in Rome in the year 250 A.D., for example, supported 100 clergymen and 1500 poor people, particularly widows and orphans. Alois Kehl writes,

“Never, in the whole of antiquity, had there been a society or a religious group which cared for its members as the Christian Church did.”⁵⁹

By the way: The responsibility of the wealthy, above all, for the provision for the poor, gave the donors no special rights in the congregation. For this reason, James 2:1-13 energetically attacks their attempts to exploit their position in the church.

⁵⁶. Compare the combination of prayer and watching in Neh. 4:9.

⁵⁷. Adolf von Harnack, *Die Mission und Ausbreitung des Christentums in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten* (VMA-Verlag: Wiesbaden, o. J., reprint 1924⁴), pp. 178-183, and the chapter, “Das Evangelium der Liebe und Hilfsleistung”, pp. 170-220.

⁵⁸. Ebd. pp. 184-186.

⁵⁹. Ebd. pp. 182-184.

God wants you to Go

Biblical Reasons for Evangelical Missions: 31 Propositions⁶⁰

Note 1. The following propositions are not intended to present the author's own theological position, but to formulate Biblical justifications for a doctrine common to the majority of Evangelical missiologists. The author is aware that such a generalization can never satisfactorily reflect all views, and that his own opinion will always be evident. For this reason, he has chosen the title, "Biblical Reasons" rather than "*the* Biblical Reasons", as if he represented Evangelical missiology in general.

Note 2: The following propositions do not intent to present a summary of Christian doctrine. They assume acceptance of the Apostolic Creed, of the great dogmas of the Early Church (the Trinity, Jesus truly man and truly God) and of the Soteriology of the Reformation (Salvation by Grace and the Scriptures as sole authority for faith and salvation), etc.

Part I: World Missions are an essential part of Christianity

Proposition 1: God was the first missionary.

God was and is the first missionary. After the Fall of Man, the history of mankind appeared to come to an end. God, however, did not leave things as they were, but came Himself, in His grace and mercy, to the Garden of Eden to seek Adam and Eve (Gen. 3:8-9). He proclaimed to them both the Judgment and Salvation to come (Gen. 3:14-21).

Proposition 2: Jesus is the prototype of the missionary.

God the Father sent Jesus as a human being to earth to carry the punishment on the cross, and to bring about and proclaim salvation. Before the Creation (Eph. 1:4), God had already decided not to abandon mankind to

⁶⁰This propositions were presented as a common formulation of evangelical missiology to the tenth jubilee of the journal "Evangelikale Missiologie" of the "Association of German evangelical missiologists" (AfeM) in 1994 and published in the jubilee edition of this magazine as well as several other evangelical magazines in the German speaking world and the Netherlands. This is an updated version, making 31 propositions out of the original 30.

his fate, but to send Himself into the world as a missionary in Jesus (John 3:16).

Proposition 3: The mission of Christ's church is rooted in God's original sending of Himself into the world as a missionary (Missio Dei).

The New Testament sees the sending of the disciples (the apostles) as the direct continuation of God's sending of Christ (Mt. 10:40, Mk. 9:37, Luk. 10:16, Acts 3:20, 26; about 50 times in the Gospel of John; first in Jn. 3:17. See Is. 48:16) and of the Father and the Son sending the Holy Spirit (Jn. 14:26, 15:26, Luk. 24:49). In John 17:18, Jesus says, "As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world". In John 20:21, he addresses the disciples personally, "As the Father has sent Me, I also send you". God the Father sends His Son and His Spirit as the first missionaries. The church carries on this task through world missions. This is the reason for the existence of the New Testament church. Christian missions are rooted in the triune God and in His sending of Himself.

Proposition 4: Jesus chose the Twelve only for the purpose of preparing them for their commission in the world.

Jesus chose the disciples "that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach" (Mk. 3:13). From the very beginning, the goal of their intensive training through living and working with Him was to prepare them for the Great Commission. Their training as missionaries was not arbitrary, but clearly according to His deliberate plan. Take for example the following steps. 1). Jesus first preached alone; 2). then preached while the disciples observed; 3). then let the disciples preach while He observed. 4). Next, He sent them out for a short mission (Mt. 10:1-11, Mk. 6:7-13, Luk. 9:1-6); discusses the results with them and then finally; 5). sends them out alone (although He is, as resurrected Lord, still with them. Mt. 28:20). The disciples then began to do the same with other Christians. Thus, training towards independence is a central element of missions.

Proposition 5: Jesus' most important concern between the resurrection and His ascent into Heaven was world missions.

All four Gospels include some form of the Great Commission given in the period of time following the resurrection (Mt. 28:16-20, Mk. 16:15-20, Luk. 24:13-53, particularly vs. 44-49, Jn. 20:11-23, particularly vs. 21-23, Acts 1:4-11). The various commissions indicate that Jesus proclaimed

world missions, made possible by His sacrificial death on the Cross, for the most important aspect of His suffering, death and resurrection.

Proposition 6: Pentecost demonstrates that world missions in the power of the Spirit is the most significant characteristic of Christ's church.

Jesus had often commanded the disciples to wait for the coming of the Holy Spirit before beginning to evangelize the peoples of the world (Mk. 16:15-20, Acts 1:4-11). The Spirit was to come order to convince the world of the Gospel in Jesus' place (Jn. 16:7-11). With the coming of the Spirit, both the New Testament church and world missions had their beginning. On the day of Pentecost, as the apostles began to speak in the languages of hearers from different parts of the whole world, and as their audience was able, to understand them, it became clear that the Gospel was able through the power of the Holy Spirit, to overcome all barriers of culture and language.

Proposition 7: Without the Holy Spirit, all world missions and mission strategies would be futile and come to nothing.

Only the Holy Spirit can convict men of their guilt (John 16:7-10), lead them into the knowledge of God and salvation through Jesus and make them new creatures in Christ (John 3:5). Although God permits Christians to take part in world missions and wants them to use their intellect in order to reach others (see e. g. Paul's many detailed travel plans as well as his general strategy, e. g. in Rom. 1+15), mission strategies can only be successful when God has decided to let them succeed (1 Cor. 12:4-6; Rom. 1:13).

Proposition 8: Jesus guaranteed the success of world missions as the result of His invisible Lordship. The success of world missions confirms His Lordship.

Jesus' Great Commission in Matthew's Gospel justifies world missions by the assurance, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth" (Mt. 28:18), and that he will always be with His church (Mt. 28:20). Thus, the Great Commission is not only an assignment but also a promise. Jesus Himself carries the responsibility for discipling all nations, for, He says, "I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it" (Mt. 16:18).

The Book of Revelations proclaims repeatedly that people of all languages and cultures belong to the numberless congregation of the re-

deemed. “And they sang a new song, saying: ‘You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals; For You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and have made us kings and priests to our God’” (Rev. 5:9-10. See also Rev. 7:9, 10:11, 14:6).

Proposition 9: Expansion is a characteristic of the Kingdom of Heaven, as is made clear especially in prophetic imagery in the Book of Daniel and in Jesus’ parables.

Nebukadnezar’s dream ends with a stone rolling down from Heaven to destroy the statue of the empires, and then to become a great mountain which filled the earth. Daniel comments, “And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever” (Dan. 2:34-35, 44). Similarly, Daniel also dreams of empires portrayed as beasts (Dan. 7:9-14, 26-27). These kingdoms come to an end when the Son of Man, later Jesus’ name for Himself, ascends to Heaven (the Ascension of Christ), where He receives “dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations and languages should serve Him” (Dan. 7:14). This kingdom will be eternal (Dan. 7:14, 27).

As a matter of fact, Jesus established His kingdom, beginning with the disciples and the Church, in the time of the Roman Empire. In many parables Jesus prophesied that His kingdom will grow until it fills the whole earth (e. g. the parable of the weeds: Mt. 13:24-30, 36-43; the parable of the mustard seed: Mt. 13:31-32; the parable of the yeast: Mt. 13:33-35). The promise of growth in both Testaments is universal, internal and external, spiritual and numerical, for the individual and for the group.

The internal and external growth of the Kingdom of Heaven and of the Church of Jesus Christ does not mean that every single Christian church, denomination or group automatically takes part in this expansion. God sometimes disciplines His Church or lets unfaithful churches die out (see Rev. 2:5; Rom. 11:20-21).

Proposition 10: The growth and the final success of the Kingdom of Heaven does not exclude, but includes the suffering of the Church of Jesus Christ. Christianity does not insure a life without problems.

Paul is not arrogant because of His “peace with God” through the mercy of Jesus Christ (Rom 5:1-2), but writes: “We also rejoice in our sufferings,

because we know that suffering produces perseverance ... because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit ..." (Rom 5:3-5).

The parable of the wheat and the tares (Mt. 13:24-30, 36-43), which describes the growth of the Kingdom of God, demonstrates that not only the Kingdom of God, but also the kingdom of evil will mature. The weeds, however, can only last until the wheat has ripened. The evil may only grow because God grows his church. If there would be no church in the world, the world would be ready for final judgment (cf. Gen. 18:22-23).

Proposition 11: The New Testament justifies world missions not so much with the Great Commission, but with quotations from the Old Testament.

In studying the New Testament discussion on the justification of world missions, one realizes that, in nearly all cases, the Old Testament is quoted instead of the Great Commission, which was the starting signal that God's plan, which had already been announced and prepared, was now to go ahead. The Great Commission is the fulfillment of the Old Testament. The whole book of Romans, especially Chapter 15, is an obvious example because Paul quotes the Old Testament continuously in this letter in defense of missions.

When Paul and Barnabas had been rejected by the Jews, and wanted to justify preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles of Antioch instead, they did not cite the Great Commission given by Jesus, but the Great Commission to Isaiah, "For so the LORD has commanded us: 'I have set You as a light to the Gentiles, that You should be for salvation to the ends of the earth'" (Acts 13:46-49, quoting Is. 49:6). The context of the verse in Isaiah shows that the apostles were appealing to an Old Testament Commission, "It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved ones of Israel, I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, that You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth".

James also concluded the council of Jerusalem by justifying Paul's plan to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles with Amos 9:11-12 (Compare Is. 61:4, Ps. 22:27-28, Zech. 8:22), in which the tabernacle of David – for James the Church – is rebuilt by adding the Gentiles to the remnant of Judah. Peter defends the conversion of Cornelius with a reference to the Old Testament, "And He commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is He who was ordained by God to be Judge of the living and the dead. To Him

all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remissions of sins” (Acts 10:42-43).

Proposition 12: The Old Testament justification for New Testament missions demonstrates that world missions are a direct continuation of God's activity from the Fall of Man and the election of Abraham on.

Jesus confirmed the Old Testament justification for New Testament missions in the Great Commission of Luke. “These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.’ And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. Then He said to them, ‘Thus it is written and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And you are witnesses of these things.’” (Luke 24:44-48) According to these words, all parts of the Old Testament speak not only of His coming and of the Cross and the resurrection, but expressly also of world missions: forgiveness must be preached to all nations.

Proposition 13: The choosing (election) of the Old Testament covenant people was made with the thought of all nations in mind, so that the theme of world missions was already present in the Old Testament.

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were elected, so that all nations of the earth should be blessed through them. (Gen. 12:3, 18:18, 22:18, 26:4, 28:14). The promise made to the patriarchs is thus referred to in the New Testament as justification for the evangelization of non-Jews (Luk. 1:54-55, Acts 3:25-26, Rom. 4:13-25, Eph. 3:3-4, Gal. 3:7-9, 14, Heb. 6:13-20, 11:12).

Proposition 14: For this reason, the Old Testament includes many examples of non-Jews who heard God's message from Jews and came to a saving faith in the one true God. At the same time, many texts in the Old Testament prophetic books are addressed to heathen nations.

The Book of Ruth, for example, reports the conversion of a heathen, the Book of Jonah the prophet's successful missionary journey to Nineveh. Almost all Old Testament prophets call heathen nations to repentance.

Naaman, the Syrian, Jethro, Moses' father-in-law and the prostitute, Rahab are only three examples of heathens converted to the Living God. The Old Testament frequently records proclamations of world rulers which praise God and are directed to all peoples (above all in Ezra, Nehemia, Esther and Daniel).

Proposition 15: Thus, world missions cannot be divorced from the Old Testament, from the history of the people of Israel and from the Old Testament salvation history but must be practiced and interpreted in the light of its teaching.

Paul confirms this in Romans 9-11. The relationship between world missions and the Jewish people has two sides: first, the election of the Jews, and second, their disobedience, "Concerning the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but concerning the election they are beloved for the sake of the fathers" (Rom. 11:28). Paul shows that the future conversion of the Jews to their Messiah, Jesus Christ, will have immeasurably positive effects on the evangelization of all nations (Rom. 11:15,24-26).

Proposition 16: The book of Romans shows that world missions must be rooted in sound, thorough Biblical teaching, and that healthy, systematic Biblical teaching always leads to world missions.

Paul wrote the book of Romans in the midst of mission work and justifies the necessity of the worldwide proclamation of the Gospel. At the same time, the Book of Romans is the most systematic Biblical presentation of the Gospel and the Christian creed in the Bible. In the book of Romans, Paul plans to come to Rome (Rom. 1:14-17), because he wants to proclaim the Gospel to all men without exception, regardless of language, culture and race ("Greeks and non-Greeks"), education or social class ("the wise and the foolish"). Following this description of his missionary plans, he begins his 'actual' subject. The well-known verses which introduce his doctrine (Rom. 1:16-17), begin with "For ...". At the end of his letter (Rom 15,14-16,27) Paul returns to his concrete missions plans. The chapters between are simply a dogmatic justification of his plans. The 'obedience of faith' must be delineated first, so that it can be proclaimed to all nations.

Whoever practices missions only pragmatically, without reference to 'doctrine', does so in his own name, because he ignores God's directions. Whoever teaches 'doctrine' without reference to missions, teaches his own ideas and ignores the reasons why God has given for His Word.

Part II. Missions and Cultural Diversity

Proposition 17: The variety of peoples and cultures is not the result of sin, but was planned by God. According the Scripture, we need to reject only those elements of a culture which expressly contradict His holy will.

Cultural diversity is neither negative nor the consequence of God's judgment by means of the confusion of languages following the erection of the Tower of Babel (Gen. 11:1-9). By confusing man's languages, God enforced His own command, to scatter all over the earth ("fill the earth", Gen. 1:28, 9:1), which automatically resulted in the division of mankind into a multitude of families and nations, as well as professions, capabilities and cultures. In building the Tower of Babel, man tried to establish a single, uniform worldwide culture. As the Book of Revelation and the Antichrist in both Testaments make clear, this has always been Satan's plan. The 'Beast' of Revelation receives his power from the 'Dragon': "It was granted to him to make war ... And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation" (Rev. 13:1-10). God, however, wants neither a single uniform city, a single worldwide government, nor a worldwide uniform Humanism. His Word guarantees the unity of the world, but not any visible earthly structure. He "scattered" mankind "over all the earth" (Gen 11:9).

From the sons of Noah onwards "the whole earth became inhabited" (Gen 9:19) and people "spread out ... according to their nations" (Gen. 10:5, cf. 10:32). God is therefore Creator of all nationalities, because "from one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live" (Acts 17:26, similarly in Deut. 32:8, Ps. 74:17).

Proposition 18: Christians are free from any cultural pressure. They do not have to accept any human tradition or commandment besides those given by God.

This is especially evident in Mark 7:1-13, where Jesus criticizes the Pharisees for raising their own human culture to the level of divine Law.

Proposition 19: Christians are able to judge other cultures according to Biblical standards, once they have learned to distinguish between their

own culture (even their own Christian culture) and the overall valid commandments of God.

Mark 7:1-13 explains this best. The Pharisees had honorable, pious motives for creating obligatory regulations in addition to God's Law which many of these rules actually contradicted. Jesus severely criticizes the sect for equating their own customs with divine Law: "They serve me in vain, because they teach commandments of men" (Mark 7,7; Mat. 15:9).

Proposition 20: Because Christians belong to Christ alone and must submit to His Word alone, they can view their own culture and that of other people's critically, but are obliged by love to adjust to other's cultures.

In 1 Cor. 9:19-23, Paul explains the necessity of adjusting to other cultures while evangelizing: "For through I am free from all men, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more; and to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the law, as under the law, that I might win those who are under the law, to those who are without law, as without law (not being without law toward God, but under law toward Christ), that I might win those who are without law; to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. Now this I do for the gospel's sake, that I may be partaker of it with you."

A Christian can be so heavily involved in his own culture, that he does not realize that at the best he is not understood and at the worst he is a "barrier" (1 Cor. 9:12) for others to understand the Gospel.

Proposition 21: We are not only responsible to tell other people the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ, but also to insure that people have understood the message.

This is the reason, why the Bible other than the Quran may be translated into every language and that the Gospel may and should be proclaimed in every dialect and cultural form.

Proposition 22: World missions does not ignore the existing social situation, but use it strategically. For this reason, Paul founded churches at the great merchant junctions and population centers, left the evan-

gelization of the surrounding areas to these churches and moved on to unreached areas by the Gospel to found new churches.

Paul usually founded churches in the great cultural centers, soon appointed elders trained by him to lead the churches, and then moved on, leaving the penetration of the surrounding areas with the Gospel to the new church. He writes to the Thessalonians, "... you became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe. For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place. Your faith toward God has gone out, so that we do not need to say anything" (1 Thess. 1:7-8).

When Paul says, "from Jerusalem and round about to Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ" (Rom. 15:19), he does not mean that he had proclaimed the Gospel to every individual in the area, but that he had founded churches in strategic places. This is also true of the statement that he has no place in these parts (Rom. 15:23). He seeks not areas where Christ is already named, nor where others had preached (Rom. 15:20-21), but where no one had proclaimed the Gospel and where there were no churches.

Proposition 23: All partiality – whether due to culture, economic status or for any other reason – contradicts God's character and the Christian faith.

Because God is completely impartial, both the State and the New Testament church must be impartial (Deut.1:17, 10:17-18, 16:18-20, 2 Chr. 19:7, Prov. 18:5, 24:23, Job 13:10, Col. 3:25, Eph.6:9, Jas. 2:1-12). James writes, "my brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality ... If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself,' you do well; but if you show partiality, your commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors ... So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty" (Jas. 2:1, 8-9, 12).

Proposition 24: Dialogue is a Christian virtue when it means peaceful discussion, honest, patient listening and learning from others.

A dialogue between convinced Christians and believers in other religions is possible, insofar as Christians are willing to speak peacefully about their faith with others ("always be ready to give a reason for the hope that is in you but with meekness and fear", 1 Pet. 3:15) and listen to others (Jas. 1:19). They wish to learn from others' experiences in many aspects of life

(See esp. the Book of Proverbs) and are willing to call themselves and their behavior into question.

Proposition 25: Dialogue which surrenders Christianity's assertion of absolute truth or abandons world missions is inconceivable, for it gives up Christianity itself.

Dialogue which requires the Christian to temporarily or principally waive the claims of absolute truth about Jesus Christ (John 14:6), the Gospel (Rom. 1:16-17, 2:16) or the Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16-17, Heb. 4:12-13, John 17:17, so that Biblical revelation is equated with the beliefs of other religions, cannot be reconciled with Christian missions or with the essence of Christianity itself.

Christianity's assertion of absolute authority is above all expressed in the doctrines of the Last Judgment and of Eternal Life. Hebrews 6:1-2 describes the "resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment" as two of the six most important elements of our faith, as the Apostolic Creed says, "... from whence he will return to judge both the quick and the dead".

Part III. Conversion and Social Change

Proposition 26: Peace between the individual and God – personal salvation through the merciful atoning sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross – is the first and foremost goal of missions and the prerequisite out of which all others develop.

In Mt. 16:26, Jesus expressed clearly that the salvation of the soul is more important than anything else: "For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?"

In the Epistle to the Romans, Paul accordingly explains why Jews and Gentiles are lost in sin, and why only Jesus could achieve salvation. Romans 5:1-2 concludes, "Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand ...". Only then, does he turn to questions of personal, social, cultural and political ethics.

Proposition 27: The priority of the goal of personal salvation for missions does not eliminate further goals, but lends them their significance

The Great Commission in Matthew 28:18-20 includes the command to make all men “pupils” (disciples). The first step is personal conviction and repentance. Baptism in the Name of the Trinity must be experienced personally. Still, this is the way God has chosen to win whole ‘nations’. Thus, the goal of converting high percentage of a people does not contradict the need for personal repentance.

Conversion does not mark the conclusion, but the beginning of personal renewal, as well as the renewal of the family, church, economics, state and society. Every individual should become a pupil (‘disciple’) of Jesus Christ. In the command to teach “them to obey everything I have commanded you”, the Great Commission includes the exhortation to teach the whole range of biblical ethics. In transforming the individual, his everyday life and his environment, mission overcomes sinful structures and visible injustice.

Proposition 28: Social service within the Christian church, particularly in view of cultural differences, was institutionalized from the very beginning in the office of deacon.

The appointment of deacons in Acts 6 and the New Testament church in general is of great significance. It is remarkable, that besides the offices of overseers (bishops) and elders (presbyters), who were responsible for leadership and teaching, the church had only one other office, that of the deacons (Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:8-10) and the deaconesses (Rom. 16:1; 1 Tim 3:11-13), whose duties were exclusively social in nature. The social responsibility of the church for its members is so institutionalized in the office of the deacons, that a church without them is just as unthinkable as a church without leadership or Biblical teaching.

The church carries fully the social responsibility for its own members, insofar as the individual’s family is unable to do so (1 Tim. 5:1-4). This duty consists in more than donations or symbolic assistance for a few, but in responsibility for all.

The charge in Matthew 25:45, to help the least of the brothers, is also to be understood in this sense. The ‘brothers’ are Jesus’ brothers and sisters-believers, not just anyone. Otherwise, this would be the only text in the New Testament which uses the term ‘brother’ metaphorically to indicate anyone other than church members and fellow Christians.

Proposition 29: Acts 6 makes social responsibility an important role of the church, but the proclamation of God's word and prayer remain the foremost tasks, institutionalized in the office of elder and apostle.

The apostles' reason for refusing the "responsibility" (Acts 6:3) for support of the widows in addition to their other duties was so that they could "... give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word" (Acts 6:4). The service of the presbyters and overseers is more important than that of the deacons, as in the Old Testament the service of the priests was more important than that of the Levites. Prayer and preaching take priority over social engagement. The Word and prayer belong together. Even Samuel's ministry was prayer and teaching (1 Sam. 12:23).

Proposition 30: Christians' social responsibility for their brethren must be distinguished from their social responsibility towards others.

Social help for the brethren is a duty institutionalized in the office of deacons, whereas social service is offered to others symbolically, where possible and insofar as means are available. Additionally, the person who requests help should not be the cause for his need. "Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due when it is in the power of your hand to do so" (Prov. 3:27). Galatians 6:10 challenges believers to serve all men, but emphasizes the priority of fellow believers, "Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith".

Because they wish to express God's love towards their enemies, and are to bless those who curse them (Rom. 12:14), Christians help impartially wherever they can. They are willing to assist in situations of concrete need, as well as to expose sinful social structures by use of the Scriptures, and change them when possible, but without force.

Proposition 31: Mission work begins within the Christian church and family by being an example, through education and by teaching the Word of God to the next generation.

The proclamation of God's word to people outside of the church must not take place at the cost of the Christian family. A sound Christian family is a prerequisite for all leading positions in the New Testament church (1 Tim. 3:4-5, 12-13, Tit. 1:6-7). When Christian parents relinquish the raising of their children to others, they can give up their endeavors to influence the

Church, the State, the economy and society, for they have abandoned the best road to achieving that goal.

Appendix: Bribery and Corruption

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 in 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 institutes. 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 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.

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)

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.

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.

Psalm 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.

Ecl. 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.

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 Schirmacher 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 Schirmacher, 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), 1984¹, 1986², 1990³, 1996⁴. VTR: Nürnberg, 2006⁵. 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), 1990¹, 1997². 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, 1991¹, 2003². 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, 1992¹, in one volume 2000². 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? Hänszler: Neuhausen, 1992, VTR: Nürnberg, 2000² (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, Kephalaria, 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), 1993¹, 1994²; 1997³; 2001⁴ (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, 1993¹, 1994², 1995³, 1997⁴ 168 pp. Revised: VTR: Nürnberg, 2002⁵
[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, 1994¹; Hamburg: RVB & Nürnberg: VTR, 2001². 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, 1994¹. 2 vol. 883 & 889 pp.; Hamburg: RVB & Nürnberg: VTR, 2001². 3 vol. 2150 pp.; 2002³. 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, Ausdruckswesen, 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 Trabajes y Ames. Funad: Managua (Nikaragua), 1999¹; 2000²; RVB International: Hamburg, 2003³. 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 foundation 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, 2000¹; 2001². 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 Theology. 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, 2002⁵. 130 pp.

Revised version. See commentary on first edition 1993¹.

Paul in Conflict with the Veil!? VTR: Nürnberg, 2002¹; 2007². 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 Schirrmacher, Christine Schirrmacher 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 Schirrmacher wrote the section on Christianity ('Lexicon of Christianity', pp. 8-267) and Christine Schirrmacher 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'.

Im Gespräch mit dem Wanderprediger des New Age – und andere apologetische Beiträge. VKW: Bonn, 2003. 210 pp.

[In Discussion with the Itinerant Preacher of the New Age] *Essays and reports on non-Christian religions, New Age, reincarnation, manicheism from two decades of apologetic debates.*

Verborgene Zahlenwerte in der Bibel? – und andere Beiträge zur Bibel. VKW: Bonn, 2003. 200 pp.

[Secret Numbers in the Bible?] *Essays and articles on Bible Numeric's, the importance of Hebrew studies, Obadiah, the Psalms and other Bible related topics from 2 decades of studies.*

Feindbild Islam. VKW: Bonn, 2003. 111 pp.

[Bogeyman Islam] *May Arab Christians call God 'Allah'? Is Allah the Father of Jesus? How Political Parties in Germany misrepresent Islam.*

Religijos mokslas. Prizmės knyga. Siaulai (Litauen): Campus Fidus, 2004. 106 pp.

[Secular Religions] *In Latvian: Essays on Religions, Marxism, National Socialism and the devil in Art and Literature.*

Bildungspflicht statt Schulzwang. VKW/VTR/idea: Bonn et. al., 2005. 90 pp.

[Compulsary Education or Compulsary Schooling] *A scientific evaluation of homeschooling.*

Der Ablass RVB/VTR: Hamburg, 2005. 144 pp.

[The Indulgences] *History and theology of the Catholic view on indulgences.*

Die Apokryphen RVB/VTR: Hamburg, 2005. 92 pp.

[The Apocrypha] *History and theology of the Catholic view on the apocrypha and an apology of the Protestant position.*

Thomas Schirmmacher et al. Christ und Politik: 50 Antworten auf Fragen und kritische Einwände. VKW: Bonn, 2006. 125 pp.

[Christians and Politics] *Schirmmacher and three members of parliament from Switzerland answer questions around the relation of church and state and the political involvement of Evangelicals.*

Der Segen von Ehe und Familie: Interessante Erkenntnisse aus Forschung und Statistik. VKW: Bonn, 2006. 125 pp.

[The Blessing of Marriage and Family] *Introduction to 200 scientific studies and statistics, that prove the blessing of longterm marriage and stable family.*

Multikulturelle Gesellschaft: Chancen und Gefahren. Hänssler: Holzgerlingen, 2006. 100 pp.

[Multicultural Society] *A history of multiculturalism (especially Muslims and Russian-Germans) in Germany and its political, economic and religious implications for the future of Germany.*

Die neue Unterschicht: Armut in Deutschland? Hänssler: Holzgerlingen, 2007. 120 pp.

[The New Low Cast] *A sociology of low cast people in Germany, the differences in culture to low cast people one hundred years ago, tasks for churches and the State.*

Hitlers Kriegsreligion: Die Verankerung der Weltanschauung Hitlers in seiner religiösen Begrifflichkeit und seinem Gottesbild. 2 vol. VKW: Bonn, 2007. 1220 pp.

[Hitlers Religion of War] *A research about the religious terms and thoughts in all texts and speeches of Hitler of Hitler, pleading for a new way of explaining Hitlers worldview, rise and breakdown.*

Moderne Väter: Weder Waschlappen, noch Despot. Hänssler: Holzgerlingen, 2007. 96 pp.

[Modern Fathers] *Presents the result of international father research, explains the necessity of the father's involvement for his children and gives practical guidelines.*

Sheria au Roho? Trans-Africa Swahili Christian Ministries: Mwanza, Tanzania, 2007. 96 pp.

Kiswahili-Version of 'Law and Spirit' about Galatians.

Koran und Bibel: Die größten Religionen im Vergleich. Hänssler: Holzgerlingen, 2008. 96 pp.

[Quran and Bible] *Compares the differences between the Muslim of the Quran as the 'Word of God' and the Christian view of the Bible as the 'Word of God'. A classic on the inspiration of the Bible.*

Christenverfolgung heute. Hänssler: Holzgerlingen, 2008. 96 pp.

[The Persecution of Christians today] *Gives an overview over the persecution of Christians worldwide and presents a short theology of persecution as well political reasons for the fight for religious freedom.*

Internetpornografie. Hänssler: Holzgerlingen, 2008. 156 pp.

[Internet pornography] *Intense study of spread of pornography, its use amongst children and young people, its psychological results and dangers, including steps how to escape sex and pornography addiction.*

As editor (always with own contributions):

Patrick Johnstone. Handbuch für Weltmission: Gebet für die Welt. Hänssler: Neuhausen, 1987², newest edition 1993⁶ (together with Christine Schirmmacher). 811 pp.

[Handbook on World Mission] *Adapted German version of 'Operation World', a handbook and lexicon on the situation of Christianity and missions in every country of the world.*

Gospel Recordings Language List: Liste der Sprachaufnahmen in 4.273 Sprachen. Missiologica Evangelica 4. Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft: Bonn, 1992. 120 pp.

List of 4273 languages in the world, in which evangelistic cassettes are available.

„Die Zeit für die Bekehrung der Welt ist reif“: Rufus Anderson und die Selbständigkeit der Kirche als Ziel der Mission. Edition afem: mission scripts 3. Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft: Bonn, 1993. 134 pp.

[The Time of Conversion is Ripe: Rufus Anderson and The Independence of] *Articles by Schirmmacher and by theologians from the 19th century about Rufus Anderson, leading American missionary statesman, Reformed professor of missions and postmillennial theologian – together with the first translation of texts of Anderson into German.*

William Carey. Eine Untersuchung über die Verpflichtung der Christen [1792]. Edition afem: mission classics 1. Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft: Bonn, 1993 (together with Klaus Fiedler). 100 pp.

[An Inquire into the Means ...] *First German translation of the book by the Calvinist Baptist William Carey of 1792, with which the age of modern Protestant world missions started.*

Bibeltreue in der Offensive: Die drei Chicagoerklärungen zur biblischen Unfehlbarkeit, Hermeneutik und Anwendung. *Biblia et symbiotica* 2. Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft: Bonn, 1993¹; 2000². 90 pp.

German translation of the three Chicago-Declarations on biblical inerrancy, hermeneutics and application.

Im Kampf um die Bibel – 100 Jahre Bibelbund. *Biblia et symbiotica* 6. Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft: Bonn, 1994 (together with Stephan Holthaus). 168 pp.

[The Battle for the Bible] *'Festschrift' for 100 years of „Bibelbund“.* *Articles on biblical inerrancy and on the history of the major German organization fighting higher criticism, the „Bibelbund“ (Bible League), and its theological journal „Bibel und Gemeinde“, edited by Schirrmacher 1988-1997.*

Eduard Böhl. Dogmatik. Hänssler Theologie. Hänssler: Neuhausen, 1995; 2nd ed.: Hamburg: RVB & Bonn: VKW, 2004. 508 pp. [Dogmatic Theology] *A Reformed Systematic Theology from the last century edited by Thomas Schirrmacher; with an lengthy introduction on Böhl's life and work.*

Der evangelische Glaube kompakt: Ein Arbeitsbuch. Hänssler: Neuhausen, 1998; 2nd ed.: Hamburg: RVB & Bonn: VKW, 2004. 246 pp.

[The Protestant Faith in Nuce] *German translation of the Westminster Confession of Faith, adapted and with commentary and changes in Presbyterian, Congregationalist and Baptist versions.*

Werden alle gerettet? Referate der Jahrestagung 1998 des AfeM (with Klaus W. Müller). Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft: Bonn, 1998. 160 pp.

[Will All Be Saved?] *The proceedings of a missiological consultation on the relationship between Christianity's mission and other religions.*

The Right to Life for Every Person / Lebensrecht für jeden Menschen. Abortion – Euthanasia – Gen Technology: Proceedings of

the 1st European Right to Life Forum Berlin, 1998. Abtreibung – Euthanasie – Gentechnik: Beiträge des 1. Europäischen Forums Lebensrecht Berlin, 1999 (with Walter Schrader, Hartmut Steeb). Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft: Bonn, 1999. 310 pp.

Basic articles on biomedical topics, includes reports on the prolife movements in most European countries.

Kein anderer Name: Die Einzigartigkeit Jesu Christi und das Gespräch mit nichtchristlichen Religionen. Festschrift zum 70. Geburtstag von Peter Beyerhaus. Verlag für Theologie und Religionswissenschaft: Nürnberg, 1999. 470 pp.

[No Other Name: The Uniqueness of Jesus Christ ...] *Festschrift for Prof. Peter Beyerhaus, the leading evangelical authority on missions, ecumenical issues and on other religions and an evangelical elder statesman. Covers all aspects of the relationship of Christian faith to other religions.*

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

Shorter version of the former Festschrift for mass distribution

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