

**Charles University**  
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**Doctoral Thesis**

**By**

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**The Myth of the *Analogia Entis*:  
Karl Barth's Doctrine of Secular Misery in Weimar Context**

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**Program of Study: Theology**

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I, Eric J. Titus, declare that the contents of this dissertation in concept, research, and composition are my original work, utilizing only the sources cited in the paper.

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Charles University  
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Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Abstract

### The Myth of the *Analogia Entis*:

#### Karl Barth's Doctrine of Secular Misery in Weimar Context

Eric J. Titus

##### Abstract:

To understand the content of Barth, one must understand the context of Barth. This paper begins with an effort to effectively tie Barth's doctrine of the *analogia entis* to the realities of Barth's Weimar context. Only by binding these two elements together does a clear picture emerge of Barth's understanding and utilization of the *analogia entis*. Egressing from this picture is that Barth's rejection of the *analogia entis* is not esoteric rhetoric against Roman Catholic theology. It is a theological rejoinder rather born out of engagement with the ethos of National Socialism and connatural ideologies which delivered the Protestant Church and German Society over to a "secular misery" via the myth of the *analogia entis*. This contextual understanding demonstrates that Barth viewed the *analogia entis* as *primarily* a Protestant issue and only *tangentially* as a Protestant-Catholic issue. The study concludes with an examination of the evangelical movement in the United States as a contemporary case study for the need to recover Barth's contextual formulation of the *analogia entis*.

*Truth is beautiful, without doubt; but so are lies.*

*Ralph Waldo Emerson*

## Note to the Reader

Whenever possible, the usage of specialized terminology has been noted in the text in which it appears or in a footnote related to it. However, a few additional notes are in order. When citation is made directly from foreign languages, e.g., German, a directly translated quotation is placed in quotation marks. This indicates that it is the author's translation. When quotations are used, unless otherwise noted, any emphasis (e.g. *italics*) is a part of the original text. Also, while trying to make the paper in general gender inclusive, much of the quoted material reflects the usage of its *Zeitgeist* and no alterations have been made to direct quotations. This does not reflect the author's viewpoint on gender inclusiveness, but rather the necessity of being faithful to the predilections of the era and accuracy in citing quotations. Whenever biblical citations are made, they are from the New Revised Standard Version, unless otherwise noted.

The use of *Church*, *Catholic Church*, *Protestant Church*, and *church* should be explained. This paper is primarily about the Protestant (Evangelical) Church. When the Church universal (Orthodox, Catholic, and Protestant) is intended the designation *Church* is used. When referring to the Catholic Church or Protestant (Evangelical) Church in particular both the modifier and *Church* are in capitals. When *church* or *churches* appears in lower case it is referring to the Protestant Church.

The use of *Evangelical Church* with relation to the Protestant Church in Germany can also be a bit difficult for readers in the United States. Evangelical Church, reduced to the simplest understanding in this context simply means Protestant Church, and by and large indicates the union of



churches from the Lutheran and Reformed traditions in Germany. Evangelical and Protestant, used with respect to Germany has this meaning, and lacks features that are presupposed when one is said to be “evangelical” in the United States. Being evangelical in the United States is typically an identification with conservative Christianity, a born again (think Billy Graham) theology and an inerrant or infallible view of scripture. Often an inner piety and outward zealousness are features of the term evangelical as well. Additionally the Charismatic movement and its unique features have been more and more identified and/or incorporated into evangelicalism as a whole. This is described further in Chapter 11.

## Preface

John Greenleaf Whittier, the abolitionist Quaker, forwards in his *Ballad of Mary Garvin*: “Better heresy of doctrine than heresy of heart.”<sup>1</sup>

While I understand and can even empathize with Whittier, I am not sure the axiom holds up. It fails in this way: if I have a heresy of the heart, is there not standing behind this a doctrine of some form or another? What I would say is that it is easier to come to terms with a doctrinal heresy, one that is clearly articulated, than a heresy of the heart, with which one must grapple and struggle, sometimes without end in order to then bring it to some clear articulation. Give me a doctrinal heresy open and honest over against the greased pig of the heresy of the heart any day. Heresies of the heart are emotive, driven by passion, and often lacking rationality (although they seem perfectly rational to those holding them!). They can present themselves in a thousand ways and the quixotic individual that would go after the thousand presentations will, of course, simply be met with the Heruclean task of defeating the Lernaean Hydra. When coming to terms with a heresy of the heart, it is preposterous to try to make a clarion call: “It’s this. It’s that. It’s also this, and also that. Furthermore it’s this, and still further, it’s that!”

Usually lurking at the heart of the matter is a singular root issue.

Considerations such as these started for me several years ago, in the summer of 2003 to be exact, as I sat as a delegate to my denomination’s General Synod. The rather *outré* nature of the synod is a story in itself, but a singular development left me disquieted. My denomination had adopted,

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<sup>1</sup> John Greenleaf Whittier, “The Ballad of Mary Garvin,” *The Complete Poetical Works of John Whittier Greenleaf* (Boston: Ticknor, Fields, Osgood & Co.), 148.

many with giddy excitement, an approach to ecclesiology that was, in my estimation, overtly anthropocentric. It carried with it the express intention that “we” could save the church; in the process, God was benched. At the same synod, the decision was made to effectively create another level of pastors, a level that would require little to no formal education, and subsequently a diminished capacity to reflect significantly upon the relationship between doctrinal content and pastoral practice. This seemed (and seems) to be a formula for catastrophe.

Predating the 2003 synod, another development had been vexing me: the growing choler of the religious right in the United States and correlated to that, the insistence of the religious right that the government should not only be sympathetic to the causes of the religious right but should in fact engage in the occupation of the church. This seems to me one of those impossible possibilities since the mission and task of the Church cannot be transferred to another institution, and yet time after time, issue after issue, the religious right seems dead-set on this transfer or at least sharing its mission with the State. This has led in my estimation to the thought, along the lines of Steigmann-Gall, that what was emerging in the United States was not a political religion, but a religious politic.<sup>2</sup> This, along with the religious right’s never-ending predilection to conflate the Puritan era of colonial America with the later Constitutional era, thereby creating a *Heilsgeschichte* for the United States and tangential to that a divine mandate, sent me again looking for the doctrinal connection (disconnection!) that was occurring. Added to this was that the

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<sup>2</sup> Richard Steigmann-Gall, *The Holy Reich: Nazi Conceptions of Christianity, 1919-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003). Steigmann-Gall’s thesis applies to the NSDAP during and after its rise to power.

doctrine of biblical inerrancy/infallibility and the doctrinal fallacies and political policies arising from this position also were also giving me pause. Finally, the bellicose and the transparently propagandist effectuation of these ends has only added to my uneasiness with the current state of affairs.

While these things seemed unrelated, I felt at some level they were deeply related. So I began to search. As it turns out, the search stretched into years, and then to a consideration of Barth's understanding of the *analogia entis*. This brings us to the matter at hand. This study is not about either of the two struggles just mentioned, but they did lead me to a consideration of the *analogia entis*. What is more, they led me to the particular method that I employed to see if it could shed any light on Barth's handling of the *analogia entis*, that is, a contextual one. I had originally planned upon a rather univocal approach of tracing analogy in general through its development, ontogenetically through the discussions that currently frame the dialogue. To be sure some of those elements are present, and even if not present in ink, they have certainly informed the conclusions herein.

If I was thinking contextually about my situation and reflecting doctrinally about it, it seems to me that Barth did nothing less. In point of fact, this is a presupposition of Barthian studies related both to the *analogia entis* as well as natural theology. Both doctrines have been related to the events that surrounded Barth, but it seems to me a stronger interpretation through the lens of context is needed and more substantial links between Barth's use of the *analogia entis* and his context are warranted. I consider this so because I believe these links connected at some level with my own searching and struggles.

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**The Myth of the *Analogia Entis*:**  
**Karl Barth's Doctrine of Secular Misery in Weimar Context**

## A Narrative Prologue

**The Myth of the *Analogia Entis*: Its Meaning and Use.** Myths are narrative archeological shards carried along in the liminal soul of a culture or humanity. They are ancient, antediluvian in nature. They are fragmentary narratives that remain with resilient resolve, almost as if they themselves could attain cognizance and roam as great golems among us at times protecting and supporting us, but when employed in an iniquitous fashion delivering all manner of destruction upon us. Myths may quicken us to astounding action; likewise, they may also incite us to riot. Myths are about others with whom we can identify or vilify, sometimes simultaneously. Myths are often about the gods, and myths encourage us to believe that the gods are much like us, driven by the same passions and vicissitudes, pandering for power, overwhelmed by selfish desires. Reciprocally myths also encourage us to believe that we are much like the gods. Because myths are compelling, we repeat them. We embellish them, and we customize them culturally. Cultures are in fact frequently built upon myth. Myths can be rooted in some truth, some remnant of fact in the vestige of a tattered tale. Myths can also be entirely false, built upon mere fantasy and fabricated into fable. They can instruct, construct, and deconstruct. Myths can also contain myths and be

surrounded by other myths. Myths can hide, cryptically crouched in culture influencing it in salutary or insidious ways.

This is the story of a myth. It is an account of a particular myth and a particular theologian's understanding of how this masked myth was corrupting his context. It is the story of how he sought to expose this myth and address the eroding effects it was having on his culture, church, and institutions of higher learning. It is also a cautionary tale in as much as this myth with Herculean strength is ever reinventing itself, reviving, and in recidivist style reinserting itself into the lifeblood of individuals, churches, and nations.

Karl Barth (1886-1968) is the Swiss theologian under discussion and the myth, which he saw as a threat to all aspects of life, was that of the *analogia entis*, that is, the analogy of being. It is said of Barth, in almost every treatment of him that he was one of the greatest, and with very little margin of error, perhaps the greatest theologian of the twentieth century. He is at any rate one of the greatest theologians in the history of the Church. The myth, the *analogia entis*, has a unique history with respect to Karl Barth. To this day arguments ensue and symposia are held to discuss the relationship of the two and how that relationship has impacted theological discourse. Books and articles flood libraries and periodical literature without pause. In order to understand this relationship and its dynamics, it is necessary to understand, at least in a small way at the outset, what is meant by *analogia entis*, and more importantly what Barth meant by this term and how he employed it. This too is part of the story.

At the most foundational level, analogy is: 1) the “inference that if two or more things agree with one another in some respects they will probably



agree in others” and 2) the “resemblance in some particulars between things otherwise unlike: similarity.”<sup>3</sup> It is a form of proportionality. When something is analogical, it is said to be somewhat like and yet somewhat unlike another thing. It marks a point that arbitrates between that which is univocal and equivocal. Reducing the argument to its essentials, it can be said that that which is *univocal* is applied with the same meaning to two or more things, but it can also mean that two or more things are univocal in nature by means of an essence that is predicated of the two or more things. That which is *equivocal* signifies or predicates two or more entirely different meanings to a thing or things. These terms have more to do with language; however, even that is important in the discussion. By way of example, do we say that God is good and humanity is good *univocally* or *equivocally*? Simply stated the equation is referred to the category of analogy. This statement is using *good* somewhat univocally and somewhat equivocally, so neither term works and therefore an *analogous* coordination between the two is born. But there is more than just semantics involved here, more than naming names. Once names are named, or things and essences are signified, then predication comes into our purview. When we say that something is predicated of something (e.g. wetness to water, the water *is* wet), we are naming something –*x*– as belonging to another – *y* – in essence, attribution, or perfection. This predication can happen either univocally or analogically. Analogical predication is what we are concerned with. Analogical predication is the attribution of quality, essence, or perfection which is in part the same and in part different when the same attribution of quality, essence, or perfection is

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<sup>3</sup> Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary 11<sup>th</sup> Edition, “Analogy” (Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, Inc., 2007).

used with respect to another. This is the heart of what is meant by analogy.

Analogous predication has already been anticipated in the tandem term *analogia entis*, that is, the predication of the quality, essence, or perfections of one being are analogous with those of another.

Jung Young Lee captures in clear and concise terms the essential features of Barth's understanding of *analogia entis*. Lee delineates four motivating factors that led to Barth's rejection of the *analogia entis*:

- 1) The *analogia entis* eliminates the qualitative distinction between God and man and reduces them only to a quantitative distinction. Thus man and God belong to the same category of being.
- 2) The *analogia entis* assumes man's receptiveness to God's revelation apart from God's grace. Thus, it conceives that the knowledge of God is capable in natural man *prior to* and *apart from* God's encounter.
- 3) The *analogia entis* reverses the direction of Divine-human encounter. Instead [of starting] from God to man, it begins from man to God. . . .
- 4) Finally, the *analogia entis* makes out of the 'He' an 'It' and of the 'Becoming' a 'Being.' God, who is static and impersonal, is quite contrary to our God, who is always personal and dynamic in His relation to man.<sup>4</sup>

These are the features of the *analogia entis*, as Barth understood them, and the governing reasons behind his rejection of it. However there is more to it than simply that. As Lee observes, Barth also rejects the *analogia entis* because "the *analogia entis* is the inner core of natural theology," serves as the "vehicle of the natural theology," and "is the root of natural theology."<sup>5</sup>

Natural theology is understood here as any "attempt to know God by reason and experience apart from any special revelation"<sup>6</sup> though natural theology can take on multiple understandings as the individual reasons back toward God via cognition and experience derived from the created order.

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<sup>4</sup> Jung Young Lee, "Karl Barth's Use of Analogy in His Church Dogmatics," *Scottish Journal of Theology*, Vol. 22, No. 2 (June 1969), 136.

<sup>5</sup> Lee, "Barth's Use of Analogy," 133-34.

<sup>6</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Reformed Faith*, "Natural Theology," Donald K. McKim, ed. (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992).

Related, also in a direct manner, is the doctrine of the *imago Dei*. What does it mean that humanity is (or was!) created in the image of God? Barth's thought, as well as the greater body of Protestant thought, has maintained through the centuries that humanity is utterly fallen and the *imago Dei* is completely broken. No part of the nature of humanity is an exception to this axiom. Catholic thought however begins from a significantly different anthropological understanding, namely that humanity has not lost the *imago Dei* but only the *dona superaddita* (likeness of God or the super-added gift) and *perfectio originalis* (perfection of the original). This means that reason was left intact and unaffected. This understanding of the *imago Dei* is key to understanding the breach between some varieties of Protestantism and Catholicism, at least with respect to natural theology. Furthermore, it most definitely is a factor in Barth's rejection of *analogia entis*.

We return now to the idea of myth. This term is utilized inasmuch as it conveys what Barth thought of the *analogia entis*, simply that this doctrine was a myth. Barth's position on the *analogia entis* is evinced in this critique:

This theory is the myth, *the* great anthropological myth, the myth of apostasy and revolt, *the* great lie, because deity that is taken up in our will is no longer deity, no longer the Creator. That the 'finite is capable of the infinite' means in this respect, too, that there is no God because we ourselves are God.<sup>7</sup>

The *analogia entis* is for Barth a myth in the basic sense that it is an untruth. But more than this, Barth understood that the myth was not recognized as a myth but was rather the essential liminally accepted understanding of worldview, the lie that was encroaching upon every facet of life in his context.

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<sup>7</sup> Karl Barth, *Ethics*, Geoffrey Bromiley, trans. (New York: Seabury Press, 1981), 210. A thorough review of *Ethics* will be given in chapter seven. Barth here is at loggerheads with deism, but it was for him simply another reflection and offshoot of the *analogia entis*.

The myth of the *analogia entis*, to employ William Doty's term, was *maieutic*, that is, a nurturing factor in Barth's context.<sup>8</sup> Continuing in Doty's line of thought it should be understood that "myths are not merely matters of individual interest" but "[turn] into societal glue, under girding the ways their performance, and the rituals of which they are often constituent parts, do indeed charter or found social self-understanding and hence worldview."<sup>9</sup> This understanding of myth, combined with the aforementioned definitions of the *analogia entis*, are foundational to this study. The myth of the *analogia entis* was the very thing that Barth saw taking root in his context. This is the primary understanding of the myth.

There is also a secondary myth beside this myth, and that is that the myth that the *analogia entis* was and is today primarily an issue between Protestants and Catholics. That is not to say that all Protestants are of the mind of Barth on this, far from it, but discussions are frequently directed in this manner, especially when Karl Barth on the one hand and the *analogia entis* on the other are brought together. However, the myth of the *analogia entis* was for Barth and is still today a *primarily Protestant* issue. That the Protestant Church, a rising religious nationalism, and even religious National-Socialism were embracing the myth of the *analogia entis* in the Weimar Republic years (1918-1932) of Germany led Barth to deem it a secular misery led by a Protestant clergy, Protestant theologians, and Protestant politicians of the burgeoning neo-conservative movements in Weimar.

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<sup>8</sup> William Doty, *Mythography: The Study of Myths and Rituals* (Tuscaloosa, AL: The University of Alabama Press, 2000), 67.

<sup>9</sup> Doty, *Mythography*, 67-8.

There is a tertiary myth. That is that the myth of the *analogia entis* is simply not of concern to anyone but academics and is the merely within the purview of pundits. To be sure the *analogia entis* is not dripping off the lips of many pew dwellers nor is it the fodder of evening commentary. Still, the myth of the *analogia entis* lives and it lives large, especially among Protestants in the United States. Because of this, even if the term *analogia entis* is not tripping off the tongues of the denizens of Christendom, the substance, concepts, and realities arising from it should be.

The myth of the *analogia entis* and Karl Barth's relation to it is a captivating chronicle in and of itself, but is all the more so as the myth is passed from one generation to the next. This is part of that account: *The Myth of the Analogia Entis: Karl Barth's Doctrine of Secular Misery in Weimar Context*.

h Marie Remarque, *All Quiet on the Western Front* (New York: Fawcett Crest, 1958), 238.

<sup>1</sup> Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics 1.1* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark 1932), xi. From here on *Church Dogmatics* will be cited as *CD*.

<sup>1</sup> Barth, *CD I.1*, xi.

<sup>1</sup> Walt Whitman, *Thoughts*, <http://classiclit.about.com/library/bl-etexts/wwhitman/bl-ww-thoughts3.htm>. (accessed June 4, 2010).

<sup>1</sup> This term is employed to reflect the widespread, negative ideologies that arose in the Weimar era.

The ideologies and conspiracy theories related to them were numerous. *Idealistic inter-reactionary*

*ideologies* is used as a descriptive catchall. The term *idealistic* refers to the ground of German idealism out of which many of these theories grew. Idealism has at its heart the following features: 1) ethics and knowledge are derivatives of the autonomous mind and spirit. Paul Franks, "German Idealism" in *Concise Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 312. 2) "Spiritual values are the ultimate shapers of reality." T.L.S. Sprigge, "Idealism," in *Concise Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 379-380. 3) Related to point two is the idea that "the external world is somehow created by the mind." Anthony Flew, *A Dictionary of Philosophy* (New York: Gramercy Books, 1979), 160. 3) Morality is established as authoritative through the exercise of human volition. The term *idealistic* is further employed as it points to the concept of an idealized notion of the German state, religion, church, and individual. The second term, *inter-reactionary* is used to convey two things: 1) The idea that the ideologies are inter-related and inter-dependent upon one another in their conceptions of state and church and spiritual and physical realities. 2) The ideologies interact in their reactionary positions. The term *reactionary* is placed in tandem with *inter* because in their overall movement these ideologies are reactionary in nature. They are reactionary toward the perceived treachery of Weimar government, the dogmatically hidebound church, or the conspiratorial cabal of the non-Aryan races, especially the Jews. The ideologies are reactionary against all that is seen as "unGerman." Finally although these ideologies are inter-related and inter-dependent, they are not one ideology, but several acting in concert with one another, therefore the plural *ideologies* is utilized. The nature and meaning of these ideologies will be taken up in the course of this paper. Even reduced to this term, *idealistic inter-reactionary ideologies*, is still rather unwieldy, so at points the term is shortened to *inter-reactionary ideology*, and at points given proper grammatical support, simply *inter-reactionary*. Where these shortened forms occur, the entire conceptual construction should still be understood.

<sup>1</sup> Barth, *CD I.1*, xiii.

<sup>1</sup> Matthew Rothschild, "Chomsky Warns of Risk of Facism in America," *The Progressive*, April 12,

2010.

**Part One:**

**Contextual Reconstruction — The Secular Misery of Weimar**

## Chapter One

### Ideological Instaurations:

#### Referential Ideologies as Foundations of the Myth

Far in the obnubilated past, ideological foundations were being laid that would have profound impact on the Weimar Republic. The Weimar Republic (1918-1932) was a fledgling government, a socialist democracy that had emerged from a revolution out of the rubble and defeat of Germany in the Great War. It survived less than fifteen years and was replaced with Germany's Third Reich. This did not happen overnight nor was Weimar a monolithic enterprise. The ideologies that brought forth the possibility of a National Socialist regime reached back across the ocean of time and landed on the shores of the soul and psyche of the German *Volk*. They took root especially in the soil of German Protestantism, invading the global life of the Weimar Republic, society in general, ecclesiastical dimensions of life, as well as its academic institutions. The Swiss theologian Karl Barth lived in this Weimar context and understood the foundations of the myth with which he would mightily wrestle in the Weimar era. Two forms of ideologies are considered here: referential and derivative. These two forms of ideological foundations led to a contextual collapse for the Weimar Republic and also provided for the noetic-ontic grounding of the myth of the *analogia entis*. The



treatment here is far from comprehensive, but it helps to open a window through which one can gaze and understand the ideological foundations that led to the ethical-existential manifestations of the Weimar era and in turn the myth of the *analogia entis*.

Referential ideologies will be considered first. They refer to those ideologies upon which derivative inter-reactionary ideologies educe many of their concepts. As such, these ideologies are points of reference for those inter-reactionary ideologies that had been evolving and took “ethical” form during the Weimar Republic. As it is not within the scope of this work to give a comprehensive treatment of this subject, not all referential ideologies can be covered. Instead concepts from various periods that are more pronounced and transparent will be used for demonstrative purposes. These include Joachim von Fiore, Meister Eckhart, Johann Gottlieb Fichte, Georg Wilhelm Hegel, and The Luther Renaissance.

### **1.1 Joachim von Fiore (1135-1202): *The Reich of the Holy Spirit*.**

Joachim von Fiore was a mystic of the twelfth century and a part of the Cistercian order. In *Status und Zeitalter*, Joachim proposes that there were three ages: “the first was the age under the law, the second the age in grace, and the third the age in richer grace.”<sup>10</sup> Joachim continues to describe the features of each age, which are readily seen in Appendix 1. Of note here is the concept of three ages or kingdoms. The third of these is typified as the apex and fulfillment of the other two. This third age was to be one of fullness, deeper and richer in grace from the proceeding two.<sup>11</sup> It was to be

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<sup>10</sup> Joachim von Fiore, *Das Reich des Heiligen Geistes* (Bietigheim: Turm Verlag, 1977), 82.

<sup>11</sup> George La Piana, “Joachim of Fiore: A Critical Survey,” *Speculum*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (April 1932), 266. As La Piana states: “The most important of the three ages is obviously the third

characterized by the ideal, the completion of the harvest. This age was to be summer and the time of full light after walking in darkness. It was to be the age of the Spirit. Part of emerging “Joachism” from the thirteenth century to the fifteenth century was the development of “the legend of a returning emperor.”<sup>12</sup> The Joachimst legend spread from Italy to Germany where with dynastic encouragement it came to live in the soul of the German people.<sup>13</sup> Accordingly, “the national and social aspects of the Imperial legend are intensified by the ‘shadow’ antitype of the future ideal Empire.”<sup>14</sup> The early aspects of Joachim’s thought evolved to include the legend of the returning emperor, a person that would usher in this third realm.

The contrast of what came before to the realization of the kingdom of the Spirit was what fired the imagination and use of Joachim. As will be seen in the contextual study, the Treaty of Versailles could easily be seen for those in the Weimar Republic as the first kingdom, one of slavery, under the law, misery, and fear. Though the imagery of the third kingdom or age plays against this, Moeller van den Bruck found this imagery inspiring and used it to inspire others. This was explicitly Christian imagery, and van den Bruck employed it to give inspiration to his concept of The Third Reich, which will be examined shortly. Joachim gave this third age the imagery of oil, which is representative of anointing, appointment and divine sanction. Later the idea of divine consecration, an appointment by God of a Third Reich and the German

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still to come; for the age of the Father and the age of the Son are but a preparation and imperfect image of the age of the Spirit.”

<sup>12</sup> Ruth Kestenberg-Gladstein, “The ‘Third Reich’: A Fifteenth-Century Polemic against Joachism, and Its Background,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, Vol. 18, No. 3/4 (December 1955), 252.

<sup>13</sup> Kestenberg-Gladstein, “The ‘Third Reich,’” 254.

<sup>14</sup> Kestenberg-Gladstein, “The ‘Third Reich,’” 254.

*Volk* to complete the *missio Dei* in the world would emerge. Joachim's solitary referential contribution was that of an ideal third age or kingdom into which a people in bondage and misery would emerge, a kingdom that was a final and complete fruition of those that came before. This idea was capitalized upon more than 700 years after Joachim von Fiore had mystically envisioned it under entirely different circumstances, with entirely different intentions in order to fire the imaginations of the German *Volk*. First van den Bruck used it; then so did those that espoused inter-reactionary ideologies, particularly the *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* (NSDAP/National Socialist German Worker's Party).

### **1.2 Meister Eckhart (1260-1327): Union of God and Humanity.**

Like Joachim von Fiore, Meister Eckhart's theology would be appropriated by those espousing inter-reactionary ideologies, but Eckhart's thought would be found throughout many works of the Weimar era. Like Joachim von Fiore, Eckhart was a mystic. Whereas Joachim's work had made its way into the German *Volksseele*, from Italy, Eckhart was a German, and this alone elevated Eckhart's work amongst the Weimar inter-reactionary proponents. Eckhart's theology is marked by a reified interiority in which human and divine find union. It must be added, however, that this interiority was to find virtuous exterior expression.<sup>15</sup>

Eckhart's theology is rooted in a thorough going natural theology: "God's invisible attributes are seen and understood from the creation of the

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<sup>15</sup> Meister Eckhart, *Meister Eckhart, from Whom God Hid Nothing: Sermons, Writings, and Sayings* (Boston: Shambala, 1996), 3.

world in the things that he has made, as well as his everlasting power . . .”<sup>16</sup>

The creation stands in analogical relationship to God since, for Eckhart, that which stands is in analogical relationship to its source. With respect to that which is produced, it is “always inferior, of lower grade, less perfect, and unequal to its source.”<sup>17</sup> However, humanity stands in special relationship over against the created order. The creature is the darkness into which the true light shines, this refers “namely to God [“shining”] in creatures.”<sup>18</sup>

The light shining in the darkness leads humanity to submit in humility to the full will and being of God within the soul. This utter humility of humanity means that God and humanity become identified with each other, in a univocal way. This utter identification is asserted by Eckhart in sermon 15:

The sun in its highest part corresponds to God in his unfathomable depths, in the depths of humility. Yes, the humble man does not need to entreat, but he can indeed command, for the heights of the divinity cannot look down except into the depths of humility, for the humble man and God are one and not two. This humble man has a power over God as he has over himself; and all the good that is in all the angels and in all the saints is all his own, as it is God’s own. God and this humble man are wholly one, and not two; for what God performs he performs too. . . . If this man were in hell, God would have to come down to him in hell, and hell would have to be for him the kingdom of heaven. God must of necessity do this, he would be compelled so that he had to do it; for then this man is divine being, and divine being is this man.<sup>19</sup>

This is summarily understood in the axiom: God’s ground and the soul’s ground are one in the ground of the soul.<sup>20</sup> This univocity is seen in the identification of begottenness of the Son with humanity in general: “It is more

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<sup>16</sup> Meister Eckhart, *The Essential Sermons, Commentaries, Treatises, and Defense*, The Classics of Western Spirituality, translated by Edmund Colledge and Bernard McGinn (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1981), 123.

<sup>17</sup> Meister Eckhart, *The Essential*, 124.

<sup>18</sup> Meister Eckhart, *The Essential*, 155.

<sup>19</sup> Meister Eckhart, *The Essential*, 190.

<sup>20</sup> Meister Eckhart, *The Essential*, 192.

precious to God to be born spiritually from every such virgin or from every good soul than that he was bodily born of Mary. In this we must understand that we must be an only son whom the Father has *eternally* begotten . . .”<sup>21</sup> Further, God “gives birth to his Only-begotten Son in the highest part of the soul. And as he gives birth to his Only-Begotten Son into me, so I give him birth again into the Father.”<sup>22</sup>

This correspondence is also seen in Eckhart’s development of the doctrine of the *imago Dei*. The *imago Dei* is more than a similitude inasmuch as “two things can be like one another without being images of each other.”<sup>23</sup> This means two equivalent substances are not the images of each other, but are derived and proceed from an archetype.<sup>24</sup> Forman states that for Eckhart, an image “does not exist of itself but ‘takes its being solely from that of which it is the image without means, has one essence with it and is the same essence.’”<sup>25</sup> Therefore, Forman concludes, “The image is thus both other than the archetype in appearance as well as identical with its being and essence.”<sup>26</sup> The *imago Dei* for Eckhart is within the soul: God is in the image, and the image is in God.<sup>27</sup>

This radical identification points mystically to more than an *analogia entis*, but when the creature is found to be completely humble, a univocal correlation occurs between creature and Creator. This identification of the creature and Creator, and more so the idea of the God within that must “of

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<sup>21</sup> Meister Eckhart, *The Essential*, 193.

<sup>22</sup> Meister Eckhart, *The Essential*, 194.

<sup>23</sup> Robert Forman, *Meister Eckhart Mystic as Theologian: An Experiment in Methodology* (Rockport, MA: Element Press, 1991), 201.

<sup>24</sup> Forman, *Meister Eckhart*, 201.

<sup>25</sup> Forman, *Meister Eckhart*, 201.

<sup>26</sup> Forman, *Meister Eckhart*, 202.

<sup>27</sup> Forman, *Meister Eckhart*, 205.

necessity” act as the creature wills, separated from the complete thought of Eckhart, leads to a God that is human, and submitted to human will. To find God, one must search within, to find the will of God, one must exercise sovereignty over the God found in the soul, inasmuch as both divine image and essence are located there. It is apparent that Eckhart’s thought was ripe for abuse in the “ethical” applications of the practitioners of inter-reactionary ideologies present in the Weimar Republic.

### **1.1.3 Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762-1814): Inculcating**

**Nationalism.** In 1806 in Jena, Napoleon defeated the Prussian army in the War of the Fourth Coalition. A year later, Fichte delivered his *Addresses to the German Nation* to educators and intellectuals in Berlin, still stinging from the defeat and under the oppression of foreign rule. Fichte’s solution to the problem was to aggressively address the educational situation in new broad strokes. The new education was to be “the deliberate and sure art of cultivating the pupil to pure morality.”<sup>28</sup> Certainly education was also about the education of the mind, but preeminently education was about “imparting a moral culture.”<sup>29</sup> Fichte connected knowledge with the spiritual life, counting it as a law “grounded in God” in which the spiritual life, which was “the divine life itself . . . is revealed only in living thought.”<sup>30</sup> In totality this approach would cultivate the student to religion, “and this religion that consists in living our life in God should indeed prevail and be carefully

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<sup>28</sup> Johann Gottlieb Fichte, *Addresses to the German Nation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 35.

<sup>29</sup> Fichte, *Addresses*, 35.

<sup>30</sup> Fichte, *Addresses*, 36.

nurtured in the new age also.”<sup>31</sup> In the new situation, “education to true religion is hence the final business of the new education.”<sup>32</sup>

Education was to be the caretaker of religion, and more than this, education was to be the harbinger of an “entirely new order of things, a new creation,” a new humanity.<sup>33</sup> The institution of this vision was to be the mission and responsibility of the Germans who were to “inaugurate the new age, as pioneers and exemplars for the rest of humanity.”<sup>34</sup> There was to be a spiritual culture formed from this education, a spiritual culture flowing from God to humanity and continuing development of humanity “according to their archetype.”<sup>35</sup> Philosophy was to be the cornerstone of such a program as it “grasped scientifically the eternal archetype of all spiritual life.”<sup>36</sup> Education, the medium of a new age and a new humanity, was to instill a moral and spiritual culture into students, and philosophy was to be the foundation of this new mission.

A primary objective in this education to spiritual and moral culture was the recovery of all things German. As Fichte observes, much of what ailed Germany and a great part of its weakness was the influence of foreign elements. So pervasive and insidious was this foreign infestation that Fichte broadly announced to his audience: “that all the evils which have led to our ruin are of foreign origin, yet were bound to bring disaster only when allied with German seriousness and the German capacity to influence life.”<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Fichte, *Addresses*, 36.

<sup>32</sup> Fichte, *Addresses*, 37.

<sup>33</sup> Fichte, *Addresses*, 42.

<sup>34</sup> Fichte, *Addresses*, 43.

<sup>35</sup> Fichte, *Addresses*, 61.

<sup>36</sup> Fichte, *Addresses*, 61.

<sup>37</sup> Fichte, *Addresses*, 67.

Certainly one of the things to be recovered was the Reformation of the Church (which was itself understood as a recovery).

Fichte characterizes the Reformation of the Church as the “last great . . . completed world-deed of the German people.”<sup>38</sup> Originating in Asia, Christianity slumped into a religion “preaching dumb submission and blind faith.”<sup>39</sup> Through the centuries, Christianity became darker, yet as Fichte saw it, the kernel question of Christianity remained: “What must we do to be blessed?”<sup>40</sup> Christianity eventually found its way to German soil, a soil that was not dead as other countries that were “Christian” but rather “an originally living soil” where the people had a “firm will to become blessed.”<sup>41</sup> This environment led to the exposure of the corruption of Christianity and its many deceptions. While others had attempted to break this power and return Christianity to its “kernel form,” it was the “greater intellectual clarity” which shone “into the soul of that German man, Luther” that made this possible.<sup>42</sup> It was his scholarship, his elegance, his will, and his seriousness of German soul that had prevailed. This was the cultured man of Fichte’s educational ideal. This was a model of the way things should be. As Fichte observed: “Germany has had through its reform of the Church a general and lasting influence on foreign countries; and through this influence arranged it so these countries became once more its precursor and its own stimulus to new creations.”<sup>43</sup>

This is the primary contribution of the educational-cultural ideal known as the

German Reformation:

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<sup>38</sup> Fichte, *Addresses*, 73.

<sup>39</sup> Fichte, *Addresses*, 73.

<sup>40</sup> Fichte, *Addresses*, 75.

<sup>41</sup> Fichte, *Addresses*, 75.

<sup>42</sup> Fichte, *Addresses*, 75.

<sup>43</sup> Fichte, *Addresses*, 79.



True religion, in the form of Christianity, was the germ of the modern world and its entire task was this: to transfuse this religion into the prior culture of antiquity and thereby to spiritualize and sanctify it. The first step on this path was to abolish from this form of religion its reliance on freedom-robbing external authority and also to introduce to it the free thinking of antiquity. The foreigner provided the stimulus for this step, but it was the German who took it. The second step . . . is this: to discover this religion, and with it all wisdom, within ourselves.<sup>44</sup>

The German Reformation occurred because Germans who had remained in their homeland had inherited “all the virtues that were once native to their soil: loyalty, integrity, honor, simplicity,”<sup>45</sup> yet their spiritual life was impoverished by a debased Christianity, and in this they triumphed as well, reforming Christianity into a cultural form true to the values of the homeland soil. This was a part of what it meant to educate in terms of a moral and spiritual culture. It meant also that there had to be a sense of a great love and loyalty for the fatherland, a sense that German culture was the apex, or was to be the apex of cultural achievement and that the German people were to be people of world-deeds, such as the Reformation, to impact the entire world.

In order for this to happen, the German people must “cultivate the imperishable in the temporal itself – not merely in a manner beyond comprehension . . . but in a manner visible even to the mortal eye.”<sup>46</sup> The German people must cultivate themselves in this higher way. The people themselves must begin to see themselves from the viewpoint of the spiritual world. In so doing they would see with Fichte that a *people* is: “the totality of men living together in society and continually producing themselves out of themselves both naturally and spiritually; which collectively stands under a

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<sup>44</sup> Fichte, *Addresses*, 81.

<sup>45</sup> Fichte, *Addresses*, 82.

<sup>46</sup> Fichte, *Addresses*, 101.

certain special law that governs the development of the divine within it.”<sup>47</sup>

Fichte’s concept bears repeating, *the divine was to be developed in the people*. Fichte continues on this theme as he speaks about the love of the nation (people). To love country, the people one is tied with nationally, means that the individual “respects, trusts, rejoices in it, [and] takes pride in his decent from it.”<sup>48</sup> Further, “the divine has appeared in the people, and that which is original has deemed it worthy to make this its vesture and direct means of flowing into the world; therefore the divine will further break forth from it.”<sup>49</sup>

Special notice must be made of the preceding statement. The divine and the *Volk* are seen to be analogous, indeed even univocal. Here at the level of the nation an *analogia entis* is supposed. Love of God then must necessitate love of homeland. Love of fatherland means the desire that the eternal and divine (people?) may flourish in the world and also that when the fatherland manifests in the form of a state, that the fatherland must set before the state a higher spiritual purpose.<sup>50</sup> The love of fatherland is not simply an adherence to civic law and duty, but rather a “blazing flame of higher love of fatherland that embraces the nation as the vesture of the eternal . . .”<sup>51</sup> This in totality was to be conveyed, instilled, cultivated, and integrated into the very fiber of the education of the German university student. It is worth noting that three years after delivering these addresses related to education and the German people, Fichte became the first rector and chair of philosophy at the newly founded University of Berlin.

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<sup>47</sup> Fichte, *Addresses*, 103.

<sup>48</sup> Fichte, *Addresses*, 104.

<sup>49</sup> Fichte, *Addresses*, 104.

<sup>50</sup> Fichte, *Addresses*, 106.

<sup>51</sup> Fichte, *Addresses*, 107.

**1.3.1 Excursus: The Fichte Society of Weimar.** Fichte's *Addresses to the German Nation* were largely forgotten shortly after being delivered. However, Fichte's thought experienced a revival at the time of World War I and more so after the founding of the Weimar Republic. Nelson Edmondson provides insight into the activity of the Fichte Society as it related and contributed to inter-reactionary ideology in the Weimar era.<sup>52</sup> As Edmondson notes, the conservative movement in Weimar did not mean that all conservative revolutionaries were with the NSDAP, "nonetheless, as the 1920s progressed, the movements represented by the two groups became more closely entwined."<sup>53</sup> This was the case with the Fichte Society. As nationalism grew during the late 1800s Fichte was referred to more and more as a source for national ideology as well as justification for religious nationalism. The Fichte Society of 1914 set as its goals to "put into motion . . . [Fichte's] plan for national education, thereby to inspire the German people with a new perception of their national singularity. . . ."<sup>54</sup> In 1917 Fichte College was established "as an evening school for adults."<sup>55</sup> A variety of courses were offered, but the goal was to instill a German (Fichtean) worldview. During the Weimar era, the Fichte Society established many such schools, the largest being in Leipzig which, "by the mid-1920s . . . numbered several thousand enrollees annually."<sup>56</sup> It is estimated by Edmondson that during the Weimar era, the Fichte Colleges enrolled between 40,000 and 50,000 students.<sup>57</sup> Another aspect of the Fichte Society was its Christian character. Members of the society were by and large Protestant Christians. Accordingly: "the prescription of the Fichte Society for meeting the awesome problems that Germany faced in the postwar era was to attune the sensibilities of the people anew to a distinctly German culture. The keystones of that culture were conceived to be Lutheran Christianity and idealist metaphysics in the tradition of Fichte and Hegel."<sup>58</sup> In addition to this Christian Fichtean nationalism, there was "an element of anti-Semitism."<sup>59</sup> The Fichte Society consciously sought a nation-fellowship (*Volksgemeinschaft*) that would "prepare the way through its various educational activities" for the Third Reich as conceived by Moeller van den Bruck.<sup>60</sup> Of no small importance is the fact that numerous

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<sup>52</sup> Nelson Edmondson, "The Fichte Society: A Chapter in Germany's Conservative Revolution," *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 38, No. 2 (June 1966), 161-180.

<sup>53</sup> Edmondson, "The Fichte Society," 161.

<sup>54</sup> Edmondson, "The Fichte Society," 165.

<sup>55</sup> Edmondson, "The Fichte Society," 165.

<sup>56</sup> Edmondson, "The Fichte Society," 165.

<sup>57</sup> Edmondson, "The Fichte Society," 175.

<sup>58</sup> Edmondson, "The Fichte Society," 174.

<sup>59</sup> Edmondson, "The Fichte Society," 166.

<sup>60</sup> Edmondson, "The Fichte Society," 174.

Protestant clergy were either members of the Fichte Society or aided in one way or another its institutions and goals.<sup>61</sup>

#### **1.4 Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803): Further Roots of**

**Nationalism.** D'O Rohan Butler traces the ideological roots of German nationalism (in fact National Socialism) to Johann Gottfried Herder.<sup>62</sup> Herder proposes concepts that find themselves in later nationalist ideologies. For example, he forwards the notion that not every government is fit for every people: "The so-called best form of government, which has unfortunately not yet been discovered, certainly does not suit all peoples, at once, in the same way; with the yoke of badly imported freedom from abroad a foreign people would be incommoded in the worst possible way."<sup>63</sup> Further Herder also formulates the idea of the *Volksstaat*, a nation composed of the people. Each individual has a proper place within society, but the *Volk* is the governing idea behind the state:

There exists in the state only a single class: the people (not the rabble) – to it belongs the king as much as the farmer, each in his place, in the circle destined for him. Nature creates noble, great, wise men, education and occupations form their abilities – these are heads and leaders of the people (aristodemocrats) arranged by God and the state. Any other application or division of this excellent name is and should ever remain a term of abuse.<sup>64</sup>

Butler interprets this idea of Herder's in this way: "Herder replaced the traditional conception of politico-juridical state by that of the folk-nation, which was represented as an organic historical growth. Each nation was an

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<sup>61</sup> Edmondson, "The Fichte Society," *passim*.

<sup>62</sup> D'O. Rohan Butler, *The Roots of National Socialism 1783-1933* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1968), 25.

<sup>63</sup> Johann Gottfried von Herder, *Philosophical Writings*, ed. and trans. by Michael N. Forster (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 413.

<sup>64</sup> Herder, *Philosophical Writings*, 364.

organic personal whole.”<sup>65</sup> Butler also identifies patriotism as a major point in Herder stating: “Patriotism for him was almost the touchstone of individual worth.”<sup>66</sup> This is certainly true enough, but it is also true that the patriotism of Herder was a far cry from the patriotism that emerged from later Germany and certainly from that of the National Socialists.<sup>67</sup> To be sure Herder did regard patriotism as a necessary thing. Each nation: “must learn to feel that it becomes great, beautiful, noble, rich, well ordered, active, and happy, not in the eyes of others, not in the mouth of posterity, but only in itself, in its own self; and that both foreign and later respect then follows it as the shadow follows the body.”<sup>68</sup> That is, a nation must have pride in itself before other nations will come to respect it. But this is far from the extreme expressions that Chancellor Theobald von Bethmann-Hollweg referred to when he wrote: “In the course of the last 25 years, the soul of our people has been poisoned by jingoism to such an extent that our people would probably become cowards if deprived of such arrogant self-praise.”<sup>69</sup> Herder’s patriotism had been altered and become distorted.

Herder’s philosophy also gave rise to another concept that would have rather strong repercussions in the Weimar era, that of analogy. Herder held a

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<sup>65</sup> Butler, *Roots*, 25.

<sup>66</sup> Butler, *Roots*, 25.

<sup>67</sup> Compare with Herder’s idea of pure patriotism: “Patriotism must necessarily more and more clean and purify itself of dross. . . . With this feeling there is necessarily bound up horror and contempt for every empty invasion of your people into foreign lands, for useless interference in foreign quarrels, for every empty aping and participation that disturbs our business, our duty, our peace and welfare. It must become ridiculous and contemptible when native inhabitants quarrel with each other, hate each other, persecute each other, vilify each other, and slander each other over foreign affairs which they neither know nor understand, in which they can change nothing, and which are none of their business at all.” Herder, *Philosophical Writings*, 406.

<sup>68</sup> Herder, *Philosophical Writings*, 406.

<sup>69</sup> As quoted in Eyck, *Weimar*, vol. 1, p1. Bethmann-Hollweg served as chancellor of the German Empire from 1909-1917.

firm analogy between the created and the creator. Herder asserts: “What we know we know only through analogy, from the creation to us and from us to the Creator. So if I should not trust Him who put me into this circle of sensations and similarity, who gave me no other key for penetrating into the inside of things than my own impress or rather the reflected image of His mind in my mind, then whom should I trust and believe?”<sup>70</sup> Herder amplifies this analogy between creature and creator saying: “The quiet similarity which I sense and intuit in the whole of my creation, my soul, and my life; the great spirit [*Geist*] that breathes upon me and shows me a single course, a single sort of laws, in what is small and what is large, in the visible world and the invisible world – this is my seal of truth.”<sup>71</sup>

In speaking of cognition and volition (two elements which for Herder comprise the energy of the soul) he maintains that love is the “noblest cognition” (and therefore also of volition).<sup>72</sup> But this cognitive and volitional love means: “to love the great Creator in oneself, to love one’s way into others, and then to follow this sure pull – that is moral feeling, that is conscience.”<sup>73</sup> Love of the creator, who is located in one’s self means love of self. Herder in this instance brings divine immanence to its vertex.

Herder contributes yet another thought that would work its way down the corridors of history, this being the idea that Christianity had lost its soul and had taken on cumbersome baggage over the centuries:

To whom has it not become apparent how in each century so-called “Christianity” entirely had the shape of or analogy with the constitution with or in which it existed! How precisely the same Gothic

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<sup>70</sup> Herder, *Philosophical Writings*, 188.

<sup>71</sup> Herder, *Philosophical Writings*, 188-189.

<sup>72</sup> Herder, *Philosophical Writings*, 214.

<sup>73</sup> Herder, *Philosophical Writings*, 214.

spirit also penetrated the inside and outside of the church, formed clothes and ceremonies, doctrines and temples, sharpened the bishop's crosier into a sword when everyone wore swords, and created priests' livings, fiefs, and slaves because such were all there was everywhere. Let one imagine to oneself from century to century those monstrous institutions of priestly offices of honor, monasteries, monastic orders, finally later even crusades and the clear rule over the world – monstrous Gothic structure!, over-freighted, oppressive, dark, tasteless  
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The Church must rid itself of centuries of non-Christian accumulations in order to be truly Christian. Christianity no longer accurately reflected its true soul. These concepts of Herder's made up part of the ethos that was passed through the generations as Weimar rose. Opposition to Weimar, in all its perceived strangeness, would turn to many of these more "German" concepts as it appealed to the German *Volk* to return to a pure Germanic way of life. Undoubtedly, like others to follow, Herder would find much of what had been done with his thinking, unthinkable.

**1.5 GWF Hegel (1770-1831): Confluence of Church and State.** It is somewhat bromidic to say at the beginning of a discussion on Hegel, that Hegel is unmanageable if not impenetrable. This is especially true in short discourses. As this is a short discourse on Hegel, by necessity, only fragments of his thought can be brought into the discussion. This of course can lead to misconceptions, neither fair to Hegel, nor intended by the writer. Hegel's ability to view elements in distinction from one another and then again as a whole and contrariwise to be able to zoom in to a particulate and then to zoom out so that the universe itself may be viewed is, to say the very least, symphonic. His masterpiece to construct a philosophical history and a historical philosophy is a great *tour de force* in the history of philosophy itself.

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<sup>74</sup> Herder, *Philosophical Writings*, 306.

Given this, there are a couple of concepts that need to be covered, albeit in fragmentary manner.

In his inaugural address at the University of Berlin, Hegel stated: “All that holds human life together, all that has value and validity, *is spiritual in nature*; and this realm of the spirit exists solely through consciousness of truth and right, through the comprehension of Ideas.”<sup>75</sup> This concept of the spiritual nature being the coherence and inherence of everything is demonstrative of Hegel. Reason underlies this spiritual nature. Reason is the substance, the infinite power, the infinite material which is implicit in “all the natural and spiritual life which it originates.”<sup>76</sup> Reason is “the infinite complex of things, their entire Essence and Truth.”<sup>77</sup> Reason, as understood by Hegel, is not a mere cognition, but rather a principle by which the world is governed. Therefore the unfolding of history is a rational process. Reason exists in relation to Spirit, and history “belongs to the realm of the Spirit.”<sup>78</sup>

Spirit, as defined by Hegel, must be understood against its opposite – matter. Matter is composite in nature and gravitates to a central point. It consists of elements which by nature exclude each other, but nonetheless strive toward unity. Matter strives after its *Idea*; it must realize its ideal.<sup>79</sup> The Spirit on the other hand is itself a center, comprised already of a unity and exists “in and within itself.”<sup>80</sup> The Spirit does not seek itself since it already knows itself in completeness. Because of this, the Spirit is absolute freedom.

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<sup>75</sup> Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Political Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 185.

<sup>76</sup> Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Philosophy of History* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1956), 9.

<sup>77</sup> Hegel, *Philosophy of History*, 9.

<sup>78</sup> Hegel, *Philosophy of History*, 16.

<sup>79</sup> Hegel, *Philosophy of History*, 17.

<sup>80</sup> Hegel, *Philosophy of History*, 17.



Because of this self-knowing in freedom, the Spirit is free to realize its potentiality, to “make itself *actually* that which it is *potentially*.”<sup>81</sup> The relation of universal history to the Spirit is “that it is the exhibition of Spirit in the process of working out the knowledge of that which it is potentially.”<sup>82</sup> The Spirit then is in history, is revealed within history, and actualizes itself in history. But the objective, the principle, the goal of the Spirit is something that Hegel deems to be “merely general and abstract.”<sup>83</sup> These “aims and principles . . . have a place in our thoughts,” but are not yet realized. This is where the Will emerges. This is the motivating power that impassions humanity to put these aims and principles to work. It is the instinct and inclination of humanity and of particular individuals in humanity. This is the spiritual world, coming into form in the substantial world, the actualization of the Spirit, via the Will, in the realm of humanity, which is governed by Reason. As Hegel asserts: “The History of the World begins with its general aim – the realization of the Idea of Spirit – only in an *implicit* form that is, as Nature . . . and the whole process of History . . . is directed to rendering this unconscious impulse a conscious one.”<sup>84</sup> Through various “volitions, interests, and activities” are found the means and instrumentalities by which the Spirit finds its objective in the world, it is thereby denoted by the term World-Spirit.<sup>85</sup> But this process of the World-Spirit actualizing potentialities is not without struggle. In the sphere of history, there are those “momentous collisions between existing, acknowledged duties, laws, rights, and those

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<sup>81</sup> Hegel, *Philosophy of History*, 17.

<sup>82</sup> Hegel, *Philosophy of History*, 17.

<sup>83</sup> Hegel, *Philosophy of History*, 22.

<sup>84</sup> Hegel, *Philosophy of History*, 25.

<sup>85</sup> Hegel, *Philosophy of History*, 25.

contingencies which are adverse to this fixed system; which assail and even destroy its foundations and existence.”<sup>86</sup> Those that bring such a confrontation are *World-Historical Individuals* and they are vital in the evolution of the World-Spirit and its Idea.<sup>87</sup> These individuals may be self-serving or altruistic, barbaric or civilized, sacred or profane, but their particular goals “involve those large issues which are the will of the World-Spirit.”<sup>88</sup> But they are focused on their particular goal and as Hegel prophetically puts it “so mighty a form must trample down many an innocent flower – crush to pieces many an object in its path.”<sup>89</sup> Here is the picture of a leader driven by personal passion yet creating what the World-Spirit wills in the arena of history.

It must be remembered that there is a governing principle at work in all of this: *Reason*, and humanity is an object of existence because of this, the “Divine which is in him.”<sup>90</sup> Among other things this divine element within humanity is the motivating factor behind religion and morality, it is what makes humanity *reasonable*. This is why there is good and not utter chaos in the world. *Reason* is in its most “concrete form” God, and it is God that governs the world. There is a reasonableness by which the individual in concert with the Will becomes a “moral Whole.” This is where Matter seeks to unify in the Idea of the Spirit; Hegel calls this synthesis the State. It is “that form of reality in which the individual has and enjoys his freedom; but on the condition of his recognizing, believing in, and willing that which is common

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<sup>86</sup> Hegel, *Philosophy of History*, 29.

<sup>87</sup> Hegel, *Philosophy of History*, 29.

<sup>88</sup> Hegel, *Philosophy of History*, 30.

<sup>89</sup> Hegel, *Philosophy of History*, 32.

<sup>90</sup> Hegel, *Philosophy of History*, 34.

to the Whole.”<sup>91</sup> As Hegel maintains: “The State is the Divine Idea as it exists on Earth.”<sup>92</sup> Further, “The State is the Idea of Spirit in the external manifestation of human Will and its Freedom.”<sup>93</sup> The State is the “basis and center” of all other aspects of life, e.g., art, law, science. However the highest of these aspects of life is religion, whose “office is to render visible the Divine; presenting it to the imaginative and intuitive faculty.”<sup>94</sup> The implications of this use (misuse!) of religion in the light of Hegel’s understanding of State are writ large. First, while Hegel uses the terms Spirit, Reason, Idea, and Will in rather idealist and enigmatic fashion, there is little doubt that he equates them one way or another with that which is divine. Whether in the individual or the State, these concepts become at some point or in one manner or another manifested. As Richard Kroner notes: “Nature is God in His external manifestation, in His utter self-denial. In the human mind or by the human mind the divine spirit of the world returns from nature to its inner center, and nature returns by way of the human mind to its origin, to its truth, to God. Man thus is the turning-point of the whole development.”<sup>95</sup> Further, it is also apparent that *World-Historical individuals* in and of themselves and as State rulers may manifest these concepts. Second, religion is an aspect of life, arising from the State. It is easy to construe from all this that religion *might* be understood to be the office which then proclaims the State and even the embodied ruler thereof. Hegel presents one with both the possibility of a political religion and a religious politic, given the close

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<sup>91</sup> Hegel, *Philosophy of History*, 39.

<sup>92</sup> Hegel, *Philosophy of History*, 39.

<sup>93</sup> Hegel, *Philosophy of History*, 39.

<sup>94</sup> Hegel, *Philosophy of History*, 49.

<sup>95</sup> Richard Kroner, “God, Nation, and Individual in the Philosophy of Hegel,” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (December 1941), 192.

analogy if not utter identification of both the individual and the State with the essence of the divine.

This is brought out further in Hegel's particular discussion of the German World. Christianity is the "abstract principle innate in the German peoples."<sup>96</sup> However, one needs to bear in mind that the individual is bound in community and that the primary relationship this entails is the State and from the State arises the highest aspect of life, religion. Hegel makes a tangible observation of this in his *Tercentennial Address of the Presentation of the Augsburg Confession* (June 25, 1530). Hegel placed emphasis on the fact that the State (princes of Germany) had made the proclamation at the Diet of Augsburg, the State thereby having priority claim, asserting the right of the highest aspect of life to be free.<sup>97</sup> The State, therefore, in Hegel's understanding, is the arbiter of duties and rights. The State is "the soul of the entire body" and constitutes "the permanent basis of the whole."<sup>98</sup> Certainly, there is no doubt on Hegel's side that "the Spirit of God lives in the Church . . . But it is in the World that the Spirit is to be realized."<sup>99</sup> It is "in the World . . . that Spirit finds the goal of its struggle and its harmonization," that is, "it finds that secular pursuits are a spiritual occupation."<sup>100</sup> It is true that the Church's mission is to the world; however, this is not what one has in Hegel. Rather, because of the unique analogy of the State as the manifestation

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<sup>96</sup> Hegel, *Philosophy of History*, 351. Hegel uses this with respect to his understanding of *Gemüt* (heart, soul, or disposition); it is idiosyncratic, general, and indeterminate in nature. This is, as a side note, why and how "Hegel . . . believes his philosophy to be in perfect agreement with Christianity." Richard Kroner, "God, Nation, and Individual," 191.

<sup>97</sup> Hegel, *Political Writings*, 181-196, esp., 188.

<sup>98</sup> Hegel, *Philosophy of History*, 354.

<sup>99</sup> Hegel, *Philosophy of History*, 354.

<sup>100</sup> Hegel, *Philosophy of History*, 355.

of the Spirit, the Church is an expression of the State, and its teleology is accomplished in the goals of the State.

**1.6 The Luther Renaissance: Order and Ethics.** Most scholars are in agreement that the Luther Renaissance began with Karl Holl (1866-1926).<sup>101</sup> Holl infused Luther research with a new scholarly impetus. Prior to Holl's work on Luther, and especially with German unification in 1871, the Reformation, and particularly Luther, had been touted as points of nationalistic pride, as well as points of reference for the *Missio Dei* in Germany. Karl Kupisch relates the sentiment at the time of unification citing that: "Adolf Stoecker, the divisional pastor and later court chaplain, exclaimed enthusiastically: 'The Holy German Evangelical Empire is now achieved . . . in this we can see the hand of God from 1517 to 1871!'"<sup>102</sup> Such was the view of the Reformation in general, and its leader Martin Luther in particular.

Holl's 1917 public address at the University of Berlin on the occasion of the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 95 *Theses* changed the way Luther was approached.<sup>103</sup> This was a marked departure from the rank nationalism of the Bismark era to 1917. The lecture *What Did Luther Understand by Religion?* "initiated the rebirth of Luther research which came to be known as the 'Luther Renaissance.'"<sup>104</sup> Even so, Holl could not entirely avoid being a child of his time: "He shows himself a German patriot who tended to idealize his

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<sup>101</sup> Karl Holl, *The Cultural Significance of the Reformation*, Introduction by William Pauck (New York: Meridian Books Inc., 1959), 7-19; Karl Kupisch, "The 'Luther Renaissance,'" *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 2, No. 4 (October 1967), 41-42; Harold J. Grimm, "Luther Research Since 1920," *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 32, No. 2 (June 1960), 105-106.

<sup>102</sup> Kupisch, "Luther Renaissance," 41.

<sup>103</sup> Karl Holl, *What Did Luther Understand by Religion?* Edited by James Luther Adams and Walter F. Bense (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), 1.

<sup>104</sup> Kupisch, "Luther Renaissance," 42.

own people and as a nationalist who seems not to have sensed that many of his judgments which he regarded as historically correct and morally sound were inspired by a provincial conviction that his country could do no wrong.”<sup>105</sup>

Holl is the fountainhead of the Luther Renaissance, and in spite of his nationalism, he truly infused Luther scholarship with a new quest, the recovery of Luther’s theology and his historical setting. This was the first phase of the Renaissance. However, as Kupisch notes, the Weimar era especially at its end, brought in a second phase of the Renaissance. What became apparent was “that the neo-conservative tendencies which had been undermining social and political life since the foundation of the republic, possessed a moral ally in Lutheranism . . .”<sup>106</sup> Paul Althaus was a Lutheran theologian that helped to bring the Renaissance to its second phase.

Before turning to Althaus, however, some basic positions of Luther’s need to be stated. The first of these are the so-called “orders of creation.” Luther set these out in his lectures on Genesis. Dealing with the creation narrative, Luther sees the church as the first order of creation, followed by household government and civil government.<sup>107</sup> These were set in motion from the beginning and correspond to creation. Second, Luther’s understanding of ethics spilt onto two tracks based upon his division of the kingdom of God and the kingdom of the world. There is a tension in this ethic, inasmuch as the Christian must live, exist, and be active in both realms. Luther tries to resolve this tension in the following manner:

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<sup>105</sup> Comment by William Pauck, from the introduction. Holl, *Cultural Significance*, 18.

<sup>106</sup> Kupisch, “Luther Renaissance,” 41.

<sup>107</sup> Martin Luther, *Luther’s Works: Lectures on Genesis 1-5*, Vol. 1 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1958), 103-104. Also, Martin Luther, “Temporal Authority,” *Martin Luther’s Basic Theological Writings*, Timothy Lull, ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), 660; related to civil government as order of creation.

In this way the two propositions are brought into harmony with one another: at one and the same time you satisfy God's kingdom inwardly and the kingdom of the world outwardly. You suffer evil and injustice, and yet at the same time you punish evil and injustice; you do not resist evil, and yet at the same time, you do resist it. In the one case, you consider your neighbor and what is his. In what concerns you and yours, you govern yourself by the gospel and suffer injustice toward yourself as a true Christian; in what concerns the person or property of others, you govern yourself according to love and tolerate no injustice toward your neighbor.<sup>108</sup>

Finally, there is the matter of Luther's fanatical anti-Semitism. Luther recommended that in dealing with the Jews a "sharp mercy" should be employed.<sup>109</sup> Among other things this "sharp mercy" included: 1) setting fire to their schools and synagogues and then burying whatever will not burn, 2) destroying their houses, 3) taking their "prayer books and Talmudic writings from them," 4) forbidding rabbis "to teach henceforth on pain of loss of life and limb," 5) abolishing completely "safe-conduct on the highways," 6) requiring hard labor for the young Jew since Gentiles should not be toiling while the Jews "idle away their time behind the stove, feasting and farting."<sup>110</sup>

In his consideration of the orders of creation, Althaus held that nationality was an extension of the concept of created order, a sort of logical extension of Luther's theology. Further Althaus states that "Luther explicitly asserts that this is also true of a people in the sense of a national group (*Volk*)."<sup>111</sup> This meant too that if God was revealed in creation, God was no less revealed in the *Volk*. As Kupisch states it: "This may have sounded quite harmless and 'truly Christian,' yet it carried unconcealed social implications.

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<sup>108</sup> Luther, "Temporal Authority," 662.

<sup>109</sup> Martin Luther, "On the Jews and Their Lies," *Luther's Works: The Christian in Society IV* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), 268.

<sup>110</sup> Martin Luther, "On the Jews," 268-272 (points 1 through 6).

<sup>111</sup> Paul Althaus, *The Ethics of Martin Luther* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007). Althaus' books on Luther were based upon lectures which he gave during the Weimar Years (and later).

This much was certain: the anti-democratic leanings of broad sections of German Protestantism were reinforced by the theory of ‘divinely created categories’ and its application to the concept of the nation.”<sup>112</sup>

Moreover, Hans Tiefel maintains that Lutheranism was given to an almost innate nationalism and a “predisposition to obedience to the state . . .”<sup>113</sup> Additionally Tiefel holds that Lutheran pietism focused upon “personal redemption” that “usually fails to carry Christian principles into political life.”<sup>114</sup> Lutheranism was uncritical of the state at the very least, or was “caught up by nationalist fervor” at most.<sup>115</sup> Tiefel demonstrates that the doctrine of the orders of creation, and the ethical constructs of Lutheranism led to a conundrum. The duality of law and gospel in the ethical life meant that there was a twofold revelation of God taking place in law and gospel and also in created order and gospel.<sup>116</sup>

Theologians of the second phase of the Luther Renaissance saw this in similar ways. Paul Althaus saw that the “law is revealed in an original revelation . . . which as a part of creation, is known to all men.”<sup>117</sup> Ethics for Althaus then are found in a “general revelation which is pre-Christian.”<sup>118</sup> Werner Elert maintained that “the law of God confronts man in history and nature.”<sup>119</sup> Most radical of the second phase theologian was Emanuel Hirsch, a student of Holl’s. Hirsch asserted that God “manifests himself first in nature

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<sup>112</sup> Kupisch, “Luther Renaissance,” 47.

<sup>113</sup> Hans Tiefel, “The German Lutheran Church and the Rise of National Socialism,” *Church History*, Vol. 41, No. 3 (September 1972), 330.

<sup>114</sup> Tiefel, “The German Lutheran Church,” 330.

<sup>115</sup> Tiefel, “The German Lutheran Church,” 330.

<sup>116</sup> Tiefel, “The German Lutheran Church,” 331.

<sup>117</sup> Tiefel, “The German Lutheran Church,” 331.

<sup>118</sup> Tiefel, “The German Lutheran Church,” 331.

<sup>119</sup> Tiefel, “The German Lutheran Church,” 331.



and history and only secondarily in the gospel. As creator, God can be known in the life of nations and in history . . .”<sup>120</sup> Finally Friedrich Gogarten postulated that the concepts of *Urphänomen* and *Ursprungsmächte*; these are revealed in blood and soil,<sup>121</sup> terms that played well in *völkisch* circles. Tiefel quite correctly sums up the consequences of such an ethic: “Once the law is thus cut loose from Christian and biblical considerations, nothing stands in the way of defining God’s law along nationalistic and racial lines.”<sup>122</sup> This ethical failure, grounded in the doctrine of the orders of creation also leaves, as it did Luther himself, open to the possibility of anti-Semitism. This was certainly an outcome for the second phase of the Luther Renaissance. In many ways, the second phase of the Luther Renaissance justified in the ranks of the Protestant Church the prior referential ideologies, and provided a bridge to the inter-reactionary ideologies that were arising and simultaneously grounding their neo-conservatism in the ethos of those referential ideologies up to and including the second phase of the Luther Renaissance.

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<sup>120</sup> Tiefel, “The German Lutheran Church,” 331.

<sup>121</sup> Tiefel, “The German Lutheran Church,” 332.

<sup>122</sup> Tiefel, “The German Lutheran Church,” 332.

**Chapter Two**  
**Ideological Instauration:**  
**Derivative Inter-reactionary Ideologies**  
**as Foundations of the Myth**

Referential ideologies allowed for a foothold for derivative inter-reactionary ideologies to legitimize themselves. While referential ideologies might appeal to the educated and elite, the inter-reactionary ideologies derived from them could pull at the strings of the general populace. Two of the derivative ideologies considered here attempted to bridge the chasm of the educated elite and the general populace, and both works were tremendously popular in the Weimar era. They played no small role in shaping the ethical-existential outcomes of Weimar. They also played no little part in adding to, and further defining, the myth of the *analogia entis*. Their impact upon the German Protestant society and the Weimar context cannot be overestimated. The derivative inter-reactionary ideologies considered here are those of Houston Stewart Chamberlain's *Foundations of the Nineteenth Century* and Alfred Rosenberg's *Myth of the Twentieth Century*. A third derivative and inter-reactionary ideology will also be considered here, that is the more general conspiratorial ideologies. Although they are based less upon the

referential ideologies than those of Chamberlain and Rosenberg, some such elements are present and therefore they will be treated here.

**2.1 Chamberlain's Foundations.** The first of these sources was a monumental work by Houston Stewart Chamberlain, *Foundations of the Nineteenth Century*.<sup>123</sup> Chamberlain was decidedly a disciple of Richard Wagner. Oddly enough he was a transplanted Englishman with a fierce streak of German nationalism running through him. He lived in Bayreuth after marrying Wagner's daughter, Eva.

*Foundations* was originally written in 1899 and went through numerous editions during the Weimar period. *Foundations* was not another stale review of history; it was from the outset the book that others built from and to which others referred as a definitive authority, especially regarding the themes of nationalism, race, and religion. According to Chamberlain's biographer Field, "*Foundations* was the literary fad of 1900 and maintained its tremendous appeal for several years."<sup>124</sup> It was a cultural hit. In 1915 total sales were in excess of 100,000, and the book was widely quoted by supporters of *völkisch* ideology.<sup>125</sup> Chamberlain's readers, according to Field, "were chiefly from the middle class: teachers, lawyers, businessmen, students, and pastors."<sup>126</sup> In fact, numerous pastors wrote to Chamberlain praising his

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<sup>123</sup> Houston Stewart Chamberlain, *Foundations of the Nineteenth Century*, Vols. 1 & 2 (Boston: Elibron Classics, 2005).

<sup>124</sup> Geoffrey Field, *Evangelist of Race: The Germanic Vision of Houston Stewart Chamberlain* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), 226.

<sup>125</sup> Field, *Evangelist*, 225. Field notes also that: "In the pre-1914 era Chamberlain found a sizable audience because he overlapped recent Protestant writing at many points, but it was especially after 1918 that *völkisch* Christian organizations looked to him along with Paul Lagarde, as one of their chief prophets." 302.

<sup>126</sup> Field, *Evangelist*, 276.

work.<sup>127</sup> Even luminaries across the Atlantic, such as Theodore Roosevelt, had read the book,<sup>128</sup> thus demonstrating the panoptic reading it received. The concern here, however, is not the more general audience but that of pastors and theologians.

Protestant groups and individuals (e.g., Prof. Baentsch of Jena) were divided on *Foundations*, with some Protestant papers being incensed (among them the *Protestantblatt* and *Kirchliche Wochenschrift für Evangelical Christen*).<sup>129</sup> According to Field, those that found themselves in this group “were visibly disturbed at the way racial nationalism threatened to become a powerful religious substitute, promising salvation in a vague, secular form yet masquerading behind conventional Christian terminology.”<sup>130</sup> The themes of nationalism, secularism, and language are all terms that resurface in Barth’s “*Quousque Tandem . . . ?*” and “*Die Not der evangelischen Kirche*,”<sup>131</sup> and also in Barth’s renunciation of *analogia entis*.

On the other hand, one also finds growing support for Chamberlain’s ideas within the ranks of the clergy during the years of the Weimar Republic. An example of such support comes from Pastor Christlieb in his review of *Foundations*:

We theologians have even now failed to take up a real position but for the present continue to operate calmly with the notion of equality for all men before God, as if this also includes equality with each other.

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<sup>127</sup> Field, *Evangelist*, 240.

<sup>128</sup> Theodore Roosevelt, *History as Literature* (New York: Charles Scribner’s sons, 1913); Bartleby.com, 1998. [www.bartleby.com/56/](http://www.bartleby.com/56/). Roosevelt’s review, was not as positive as Field’s seems to understand it. Roosevelt does state that the work was “noteworthy” but takes much umbrage with Chamberlain’s obvious racial hatreds.

<sup>129</sup> Field, *Evangelist*, 237.

<sup>130</sup> Field, *Evangelist*, 237.

<sup>131</sup> Both essays appeared first in the journal *Zwischen den Zeiten* and subsequently in Karl Barth, *Der Götze wackelt: Zeitkritische Aufsätze, Reden und Briefe von 1930 bis 1960* (Berlin: Käthe Vogt Verlag, 1961), 27-32 and 33-62 respectively.

However, the emphasis on race expresses a new important knowledge for our time. Today even the Jews . . . no longer hide (this fact) as more and more they give vent in public to the racial consciousness which they have always had.<sup>132</sup>

Given the influence of *Foundations* and its divisive nature, an overview of its related tenants is warranted. The grand themes are race and religion. The synthesis of these themes is brought together in Chamberlain's introduction: "Should we ever become true Christians, then certainly that which is here merely suggested . . . would become an historical reality, for it would mean the birth of a new race."<sup>133</sup> Chamberlain was fusing together religion (Christianity) and race, and *Foundations* "provided a convenient bridge between . . . growing national and racial prejudices and . . . basic Christian beliefs."<sup>134</sup> Chamberlain's view went so far as to assert that Teutonic culture had become sick because of the admixture of foreign elements to Germanic Christianity.<sup>135</sup>

Because of this, Chamberlain in numerous places pleads for a return to pure Germanic Christianity. He attempts two things in this respect: 1) to divorce Christianity from the moorings of the Church, and 2) to demonstrate that the "mythological" elements in Christianity are really more ancient than the dogmas of the Church and that this *mythos* is Aryan in nature. In the first instance, Chamberlain holds that the "whole superstructure of the Churches

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<sup>132</sup> Field, *Evangelist*, 240.

<sup>133</sup> Chamberlain, *Foundations*, lxv. This synthesis is found throughout the *Foundations*, e.g.: "On the other hand, according to all Christian testimony the customs and morals of the Teutons are immeasurably higher than those of the Catholic Romance peoples. It is the moral purity of a still uncorrupted people as opposed to an absolutely rotten culture," 555. This is a quotation Chamberlain uses from Karl Müller's *Kirchengeschichte*.

<sup>134</sup> Field, *Evangelist*, 244.

<sup>135</sup> Chamberlain, *Foundations I*, lxxviii-lxxvix.

has hitherto been outside of the personality of Christ.”<sup>136</sup> Further, undercutting the Church almost from its inception, Chamberlain concludes: “There has never been a less Christian age – if I am allowed the paradox – than the centuries in which the Christian Church originated.”<sup>137</sup> The most telling of Chamberlain’s conclusions is:

We need to tear away the foreign rags and tatters that still hang upon our Christianity as the trappings of slavish hypocrisy . . . we need the creative power to construct out of the words and the spectacle of the crucified Son of Man a perfect religion fitting *the truth of our nature, our capacities, and our present culture* – a religion so directly convincing, so enchantingly beautiful, so plastic, so eternally true, and yet so new, that we must give ourselves to it as a maid to her lover.<sup>138</sup>

The new Christianity would be one stripped of all of its early influences whether Jewish or Hellenistic and remolded by the Teutonic mind to fit the Teutonic nature, the Teutonic will, and the Teutonic culture: that is, a Christianity made in a Germanic image and likeness without the problem of doctrine or creed getting in the way. It would be the material of Jesus’ sayings, devoid of ecclesiastical interpretation, shaped formally to match the expectations of Teutonic formal structures.

Indeed this was not simply a whimsical notion for Chamberlain. It was a divine mandate upon the German people, a holy narrative that must be accomplished, a national mission, and a duty that must be carried out in the entire world. Chamberlain had the ear of many to be sure but no ear higher in the social ladder than Kaiser Wilhelm, and it was in a letter to Wilhelm that he expressed the content of this mission: “Yet only if Germans embraced a

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<sup>136</sup> Chamberlain, *Foundations* 2, 13-14.

<sup>137</sup> Chamberlain, *Foundations* 2, 21.

<sup>138</sup> Chamberlain, *Foundations* 2, 134

purified Germanic Christianity could they carry out their divine racial mission.”<sup>139</sup> Field comments that Germany:

had a special mission: to rediscover and safeguard the vital essence of Christianity. Testimony to this was the sheer number of geniuses vouchsafed the *Volk* – Kant, Goethe, Beethoven, Wagner, the Hollenzollerns – all of them revelations of the divine more brilliant than anything that had occurred on Sinai so many centuries ago.<sup>140</sup>

What Field points to is quite significant. It meant that divine revelation was understood to come through the *Volk*, a theme which repeats itself throughout pre-Weimar and later Weimar theology. In carrying out this mission, Chamberlain also makes an observation, almost a prognostication, related to the Weimar government that was, at the time of the first edition of *Foundations*, still nineteen years in the future: “the modern assumption that every Church can harmonize with every system of politics is madness.”<sup>141</sup>

So in “tearing away” things that had jeopardized that which was pure and Teutonic in nature, Chamberlain recast Christianity as Germanic or Aryan in nature with a divine Germanic mission in tow. Figures of or related to Teutonic Christianity also had to fit within this Germanic national-religious understanding of Christianity. William of Ockham (English and therefore by extension Teutonic according to Chamberlain) is seen by Chamberlain as “proving that the most important Church dogmas are actually absurd” and that “he fought for Teutonic nationalism against Roman universalism.”<sup>142</sup> Luther is not to be confused with Lutheranism, another instance of Christianity being torn away from the Church. Luther’s religion, according to Chamberlain, was

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<sup>139</sup> Field, *Evangelist*, 259.

<sup>140</sup> Field, *Evangelist*, 257. See also Chamberlain, *Foundations 1*, 193, “The coming of Christ signifies . . . the coming of a new human species.”

<sup>141</sup> Chamberlain, *Foundations 2*, 371.

<sup>142</sup> Chamberlain, *Foundations 2*, 402.

a living power which flowed from within him and “Luther’s fervent patriotism was a part of his religion.”<sup>143</sup> His first assertion about Luther fell in line with what Chamberlain viewed as the kernel and whole truth about pure and therefore Germanic Christianity: “The Kingdom of God is within you.” Before returning to this theme, there was one final mooring from which Chamberlain had to divorce Christianity in order for Christianity to be acceptable to the German Church: the Jewishness of Jesus. In a large section of *Foundations* under the heading “The Revelation of Christ,” a rather nuanced argument regarding this topic is found. It is not necessary to trace the argument here, only to see its end.<sup>144</sup> Chamberlain’s conclusion was simply: “as we see, not the slightest foundation for the supposition that Christ’s parents were of Jewish descent.”<sup>145</sup> More pointedly one finds:

Whoever makes the assertion that Christ was a Jew is either ignorant or insincere: ignorant when he confuses religion and race, insincere when he knows the history of Galilee and partly conceals, partly distorts the very entangled facts in favor of his religious prejudices or, it may be, to curry favor with the Jews. The probability that Christ was no Jew, that He had not a drop of genuinely Jewish blood in his veins, is so great that it is almost equivalent to a certainty.<sup>146</sup>

Given such anti-Semitic rhetoric, it is hard to imagine that Chamberlain would find any good thing about the Jewish race. He had even concluded that Jesus had come to destroy Judaism, to fully negate it.<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> Chamberlain, *Foundations* 2, 375.

<sup>144</sup> Chamberlain *Foundations* 1, 200-213. See also Susannah Heschel, *The Aryan Jesus: Christian Theologians and the Bible in Nazi Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008). Heschel deals with later periods of the development of this doctrine, but also provides background information at the beginning of her work. Chamberlain’s argument focuses on the idea that Galilee was ethnically separate from Judea and that influence and resettlement after exile had definitely demonstrated that the region was cut off from the Jewish purity found in the rest of Israel. While not affirming that Jesus was Aryan, he did not disallow this prospect. Jesus was intellectually and culturally Jewish but not Jewish by race.

<sup>145</sup> Chamberlain, *Foundations* 1, 206.

<sup>146</sup> Chamberlain, *Foundations* 1, 211-212.

<sup>147</sup> Chamberlain, *Foundations* 1, 221.



However, one thing the Jews had preserved and that Jesus used to establish his new religion was the power to will. The Jews had an iron will, but with it they had only turned against God. Jesus, according to Chamberlain, had exercised imagination and the freedom of will, to will a new destiny, a new religion. The revelation of Christ and the core of his religion was: “the Kingdom of God is within you.” This is the great truth Chamberlain thought he had found. As has been seen, Chamberlain had appropriated Luther to undergird his discovery. He found support also in Meister Eckhart, the thirteenth century Dominican friar from Hochheim in Thuringia, maintaining that Eckhart had held that “man should not seek God outside himself . . . whoever therefore sacrifices his personality loses the God whom he could have found only within himself.”<sup>148</sup> Chamberlain saw support in the thirteenth century Paris professor of theology, Amalrich of Chartes, for rejection of the Old Testament and sacraments and acceptance of “only the direct revelation of God in the heart of each individual.”<sup>149</sup> Chamberlain’s use of Luke 17:20b-21 keeps a steady metronomic beat throughout *Foundations*, for it is here that Chamberlain wants to make all the weight of Christianity rest.

Chamberlain’s “positive” Christianity then contains the following elements: 1) A conflation of the mission of God and the mission of the German *Volk*. This mission would regenerate the German individual and the German state. 2) A divorce of Christianity from its grounding in the Church and its doctrines and creeds. 3) The disassociation of Jesus with the Jewish race and of Christianity with Judaism. 4) The concept of German Christianity, when returned to its roots, being pure Christianity. 5) The idea that God and

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<sup>148</sup> Chamberlain, *Foundations* 2, 401.

<sup>149</sup> Chamberlain, *Foundations* 2, 417.

the Kingdom of God are found within the heart of the individual that has the will to abandon the false claims of the church and to seek the revelation of God inwardly. *Foundations* became the bedrock for much of the thought that was to follow.<sup>150</sup>

**2.2 The Mythical Superstructure of Rosenberg.** Alfred Rosenberg, author of *The Myth of the Twentieth Century*,<sup>151</sup> was a chief ideologue of the NSDAP although his work was never officially recognized as part of the Nazi canon.<sup>152</sup> Rosenberg headed the NSDAP as the *Gauliter* for the Thuringia *Gau* of the NSDAP. Rosenberg also briefly led the party during Hitler's imprisonment after the failed Munich Putsch. He was influenced heavily by the ideas of Chamberlain as well as Paul Lagarde.<sup>153</sup> His *Myth* was first published in 1930 and the book had sold 500,000 copies by 1936.<sup>154</sup> The impact of the book on the theological debate of the time should not be

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<sup>150</sup> The entry in Joseph Goebbels's diary for May 8, 1926, gives us some indication of the esteem and affection with which he was held: "To Houston Stewart Chamberlain. His wife, a daughter of Wagner, asks me in. Shattering scene: Chamberlain on a couch. Broken, mumbling, with tears in his eyes. He holds my hand and will not let it go. His big eyes burn like fire. Greetings to you, spiritual father. Trail blazer, pioneer! I am deeply upset. Leave-taking. He mumbles, wants to speak, can't – and then he weeps like a child! Long, long handshake! Farewell! You stand by us when we are near despair. Outside the rain drums on the pavement! I want to cry out, to weep. My heart aches." Helmet Heiber, ed., *The Early Goebbels Diaries: 1925-1926* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1962), 83. Hitler had also paid homage to Chamberlain and the Wagner family traveling on several occasions to Wahnfried.

<sup>151</sup> Alfred Rosenberg, *The Myth of the Twentieth Century: An Evaluation of the Spiritual Intellectual Confrontations of Our Age* (Torrance, CA: Noontide Press, 1982).

<sup>152</sup> As Klaus Scholder notes, *The Myth* did not hold any official status within the NSDAP and Hitler "repeatedly and decisively dissociated himself from the book." Nevertheless "along side of Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, *The Myth* was the most widely circulated programmatic work of National Socialism." Klaus Scholder, *The Churches and the Third Reich, Volume 2: The Year of Disillusionment 1934 Barmen and Rome* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), 103.

<sup>153</sup> Paul Lagarde was an ideological forerunner of Chamberlain. He saw himself as a theologian and was even referred to as one of the important theologians of his time. Fritz Stern remarks concerning Lagarde: "Lagarde's conception of the nation was a mystical corollary to his Germanic religion. A people can become a nation only through the collective acceptance of its divinely ordained mission." Stern also reflects: "In some ways . . . Lagarde's religion was little more than a mystical nationalism with a Christian veneer." Fritz Stern, *The Politics of Cultural Despair: A Study in the Rise of the Germanic Ideology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1961), 35, 52, and 56.

<sup>154</sup> Rosenberg, *Myth*, lxi.

underestimated.<sup>155</sup> Before exploring the substance of Rosenberg's argument, it is important to understand what he meant by the term *myth*, for in essence Rosenberg's argument is attempting to define the *mythos* of the German *Volk*.

Myth is often understood in negative terms, especially in the arena of theology. Rosenberg, however, meant something positive. The term for him was transcendental in nature and pointed to things that defined a *Volk* and yet were in many respects indefinable and intangible. As James Whisker points out in his introduction to *Myth*, myth is a number of things that come together:

No one factor accounts for a myth. It is a part of one's whole heritage. It is born in the person. Even if an individual becomes part of another culture he is called, deep down inside, by his own myth. It is a sum total of the culture, mores, folkways, customs, art, traditions, legends, history, experience and will of his own race. . . . It is the contributions, defeats, failures, hopes, aspirations and accomplishments of the ethnically-related members of the group.<sup>156</sup>

As Whisker goes on to observe, myth is: "the superstructure on which all these other things are constructed . . . But without the ordering of a myth the people are merely a helter-skelter of all these various facts and facets."<sup>157</sup> It is precisely this ordering of all aspects of German life and society that Rosenberg was attempting.

Like Chamberlain, Rosenberg was not anti-Christian *per se*, but rather anti-Church. Rosenberg's solution was not unlike Chamberlain's: the creeds and doctrines of the Church must go, and a new, pristine, ancient Christianity of German character must arise in its place. Rosenberg saw this as nothing

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<sup>155</sup> Rosenberg (even setting aside his rank egotism) correctly assesses the impact of his book in the ranks of the church during late Weimar: "My book has also called forth a violent upheaval in Evangelical (Protestant) circles. Countless articles in newspapers and journals prove that it clearly touched upon very sensitive spots. At Evangelical synods, at congresses of the Evangelical League, the *Myth* often stood at the center point of debate." Rosenberg, *Myth*, lvii.

<sup>156</sup> Rosenberg, *Myth*, xxxi.

<sup>157</sup> Rosenberg, *Myth*, xxxi.

more than the conclusion to which one must come if the current trend of historical-criticism were followed to its finale. In a telling point of lucidity for Rosenberg, he states: “Nothing reveals more clearly the futility and falseness of our churches than that they prate of things which have nothing to do with religion and that they still defend doctrines in which they no longer believe.”<sup>158</sup> Given this bankruptcy, it was time for the renewal of the *Volk* Church. The regenerated *Volk* Church was to be a synthesis of a “pure” or “positive” Christianity, and a regeneration of the Nordic spirit. Rosenberg’s “positive” Christianity departed from that of his progenitor Chamberlain. While Chamberlain saw the death of Christ as integral to the new Christianity, Rosenberg taught that it was Christ’s “life which possesses significance for the Germanic man, not his tortured death.”<sup>159</sup> This approach naturally cut at the heart of traditional doctrinal Christianity.

However, it is important to realize that Rosenberg also felt it necessary to ground his vision of Christianity in the soil of the Germanic past and so he turned to the thought of Meister Eckhart. There is no uncertainty in reading Rosenberg that he felt that Eckhart was a prophet of the new German national *Volk* religion that Rosenberg envisioned. Rosenberg looked for the second-advent of Eckhart: a leader that would help in “awakening Germany to make efforts in service of the myth of the nation to create a German *Volk* church.”<sup>160</sup> Eckhart was called by Rosenberg the “greatest apostle of the Nordic West.”<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> Rosenberg, *Myth*, 73

<sup>159</sup> Rosenberg, *Myth*, 379. Another striking difference between Chamberlain and Rosenberg was that while Chamberlain had some reservation about Paul he generally speaks with positive admiration of Paul (see *Foundations 2*, 57-71). Compare this with Rosenberg: “Paul completed the subversion of Christianity independently of Mark” Rosenberg, *Myth*, 380.

<sup>160</sup> Rosenberg, *Myth*, 379.

<sup>161</sup> Rosenberg, *Myth*, 129.

This Nordic apostle had restored a fundamental truth to Christianity and “gave us our religion . . . which awakens the God within our own bosom; the Kingdom of God is within us”<sup>162</sup> This analogue of God and humanity is developed throughout *Myth*. Continuing to utilize the “Nordic” apostle as inspiration and authority, Rosenberg sought to establish the complete identification of God with humanity or at least the human soul. By way of further example, Rosenberg states: “The ‘sacred union’ of God and nature is the primal ground of our being, represented in the freedom of the soul, crowned by the fruitfulness of its works. And the driving power behind all is – the will.”<sup>163</sup> Here again we are faced with an inverted Christianity, one deriving from the soul of humanity and returning to the soul of humanity. This, for Rosenberg was the pure Christianity sought after by Eckhart a “Nordic-European creed . . . (which) has always been: as the man, so his belief,” which runs counter to traditional Christianity’s “as the faith so the man.”<sup>164</sup>

Given this complete analogical identification of God with the human soul by Rosenberg, it may strike one as odd that he takes such aim at the *analogia entis* as well as Przywara in his section on “Mysticism and Action.” Rosenberg’s motives can only be understood in the light of what has already been shown. His objection to the *analogia entis* was that it denoted a compromise. As the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 had stated in Canon 2:

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<sup>162</sup> Rosenberg, *Myth*, 129.

<sup>163</sup> Rosenberg, *Myth*, 137. Note also the following assertions from *Myth*: “The truth on the contrary is that man’s soul is like unto the spirit of God,” 140; “God is created as new object of the soul in order ultimately to announce the identical value of the soul and God,” 131; “Eckhart says to them: ‘Believe me; it is also a part of perfection that a man exalts himself in his works, so that all his works form one whole. This must happen in the Kingdom of God where man is God. There all things will respond to him in a godly manner, there, also, a man is master of all his works,’” 136.

<sup>164</sup> Rosenberg, *Myth*, 81.

“between the Creator and the creature there cannot be a likeness so great that the unlikeness is not greater. If therefore anyone presume to defend or approve the teaching of the aforesaid Joachim on this point, let him be repressed by all as a heretic.”<sup>165</sup>

Rosenberg finds the problem not with the similitude of the creator with the creature but rather with the dissimilitude clause. It is a remnant of what Rosenberg refers to as Syrian-African belief. The idea of dissimilitude was simply a Jewish idea conjured up in the concept of an “unapproachable terrifying God enthroned over all; the Jehovah of the so-called Old Testament.”<sup>166</sup> This was naturally contrary to the “Kingdom within” of Chamberlain and Rosenberg. It was certainly a negation of the “Nordic spiritual values (which) existed in the consciousness not only of the God-likeness, but the God-identity of the human Aryan soul.”<sup>167</sup> The doctrine of *analogia entis*, was for Rosenberg then, nothing more nor less than a tactic of the Roman Catholic Church to suppress the Nordic spirit and cover the true and positive nature of Christianity as forwarded through his interpretation of Eckhart. Interestingly what is seen in Rosenberg’s objection is rather like a mirror image of the umbrage that would be later taken up by Karl Barth in his famous statement against the *analogia entis*. This then is the heart of Rosenberg’s Christianity: a god that is within us, a god that is reflected in our soul and work, a god that manifests in *Volk* values, a god that shines forth in

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<sup>165</sup> H. J. Schroeder, *Disciplinary Decrees of the General Councils: Text, Translation and Commentary*, (St. Louis: B. Herder, 1937), 236-296. Przywara linked Canon 2 of the Fourth Lateran Council directly to his understanding of the *analogia entis*. See, Erich Przywara, *Polarity: A German Catholic’s Interpretation of Religion* (London: Oxford University Press, 1935), 31-34. See also: Erich Przywara, *Schriften Band III: Analogia Entis*, (Freiburg, Johannes Verlag Einsiedeln, 1996), 251.

<sup>166</sup> Rosenberg, *Myth*, 146.

<sup>167</sup> Rosenberg, *Myth*, 146.

the *Volk* state and culture, a god that must shine forth in the true *Volk* church, and the true *Volk* church that must have its symbols restored.

There was no doubt in Rosenberg's mind, that the Roman Church had subsumed in its structure the symbols that which was ancient Nordic. After all, he reasoned:

The festivals of the Christian Church appeared on the same day as the early peoples celebrated them, whether these were the festival of the fertility goddess Ostara, which became the Easter Resurrection festival, or the festival of the winter solstice, which became the birthday of Jesus.<sup>168</sup>

The pantheon of the Nordic gods had no less undergone such ecclesiastical sublimation.

The Nordic gods were figures of light with spear and radiant cross and swastika, the symbols of the sun, of fertile ascending life. Since long before 3000 BC, Nordic folk waves carried these symbols . . . Minutius Felix is zealous against the pagan cross; until finally the Roman (T-shaped) gallows upon which Jesus was nailed, had to be recast to this pagan now "Christian" cross and the pagan sun or cross of heaven appeared as saintly light above the heads of church martyrs or messengers of the faith.<sup>169</sup>

Christianity had overtaken symbols and simultaneously vanquished Nordic values. Primary among those values was heroism, which was seen as fundamental to the Nordic character.<sup>170</sup> Honor was another characteristic. This was not simply personal honor although it was that. But it had to do more with national honor. Anyone who stood against the honor of the German nation had abdicated the rights of being a citizen, and in so doing could certainly not serve with the civil ranks of government (e.g. judges,

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<sup>168</sup> Rosenberg, *Myth*, 95.

<sup>169</sup> Rosenberg, *Myth*, 93-94. One of the Christian figures to which Rosenberg gives reference is that of Saint Oswald the Holy. Rosenberg states that symbols of Odin surround him, such as Odin's ravens along with Christian symbols of palms and shepherd's staff. In fact, Rosenberg draws a number of parallels between the Odin figure and Christian narrative and symbol. See, *Myth*, 93.

<sup>170</sup> Rosenberg, *Myth*, 76.

teachers, clergy, military).<sup>171</sup> In considering the priorities of a truly *Volk* church then, heroism (such as that displayed by Eckhart and Luther) as well as honor were required. The *Volk* church should: “cultivate the values of honor, pride, inward freedom, ‘aristocracy of the soul’ and faith in the indestructibility of the soul of man.”<sup>172</sup> At the same time the way to a German church meant that Germans must “reach back . . . [to] the greatness of soul of Meister Eckhart . . . and the field gray hero under the steel helmet . . . [These are] for us one and the same experience and myth.”<sup>173</sup> Rosenberg puts this all in rather hubristic terms when he declares: “it is not Christianity which has brought us civilization but that Christianity has to thank Germanic character for its lasting values.”<sup>174</sup>

If heroism and honor were foundational to the Nordic spirit and therefore a new German church, what was to be done with love, which after all occupied a central tenant of Jesus’ teaching (Aryan or not). Simply stated, a redefinition of neighbor must occur. Neighbor could only mean one’s race. But more than this, honor still remained preeminent, and love was to be subordinate to honor. Any action by anyone that jeopardized the national honor should not be tolerated since this would in turn jeopardize the *Volk* in general.<sup>175</sup> To bring dishonor to the nation or *Volk* then would also mean that love had not been exercised in the first place. Because of this priority of honor over love, Rosenberg concluded that: “we [must] lay down indissoluble opposition to an outlook which openly declares that bonds to the church stand

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<sup>171</sup> Rosenberg, *Myth*, 340.

<sup>172</sup> Rosenberg, *Myth*, 378.

<sup>173</sup> Rosenberg, *Myth*, 391.

<sup>174</sup> Rosenberg, *Myth*, 401.

<sup>175</sup> Rosenberg, *Myth*, 382.



higher than those of the nation.”<sup>176</sup> This meant that the Church would be subordinate to the nation or *Volk*. These Nordic values, to defend the Nordic blood and honor (which is also to “defend the divine nature of man in general”) carried in Nordic veins, would represent the new-ancient “*Mysterium*” which would overcome and replace the “older sacraments.”<sup>177</sup>

What one finds in Rosenberg is an extension of Chamberlain. If Chamberlain provided the kernel of positive Christianity, Rosenberg built the superstructure upon the foundation Chamberlain laid. Rosenberg wanted a Christianity and Germany rooted in ancient Nordic tradition, one that paid honor to the Nordic spirit, and that saw within the Nordic spirit, the ancient concept that Jesus had willed to reveal: “the Kingdom of God is within you.” To do this he had relied heavily upon Meister Eckhart von Hocheim. In Eckhart he found a hero who dared honor the German soul as a soul identical with the soul of God. Because of this identification, Rosenberg saw the need to refute the dissimilitude clause of the Fourth Lateran Council and the *analogia entis* of Pryzwara. A *Volk* church must forward the values of the *Volk* and therefore must be subordinate to the nation of the *Volk*.<sup>178</sup>

In Chamberlain and Rosenberg we have exemplars of the theology of positive Christianity before the party platform of the NSDAP was drafted and after it was drafted. Both theologies were drafted by non-theologians, and yet they both had profound impact not only on the political debate of the time but

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<sup>176</sup> Rosenberg, *Myth*, 382.

<sup>177</sup> Rosenberg, *Myth*, 62.

<sup>178</sup> A rejoinder was made by Rudolf Homann to Rosenberg’s *Myth*. The response assailed the major points of argument in Rosenberg’s work, quoting him extensively and then giving answer. Homann’s work, however, did not appear until 1935. Rudolf Homann, *Der Mythos und das Evangelium: die evangelische kirche in Abwehr und Angriff gegenüber dem Mythos des 20. Jahrhunderts von Alfred Rosenberg* (Witten: Westdeutscher Lutherverlag, 1935).

also in the inter-dialogue of the Evangelical Church in Germany — both ipsilateral and contralateral. What was arising was a new ideology, a new theology, and one that threatened to drain the content of the doctrinal Christian faith in favor of a Christianity entirely grounded in German *völkisch* concepts, ideas, culture, and symbols. It was a Christianity that was to have the will to look inside and find in one's soul also god. But this Christianity was not to remain a matter of quiet rumination or individual mediation because in like manner the *Volk* had a soul, and this soul had also a mission, a divine mission.

The *Volk* had been given the mission to spread this gospel, to show Teutonic people everywhere the truth of the pure gospel, the regeneration of the Germanic *Volk*. The German church was to have a role in this great revelation to spread *Volk* values of hearth and home, heroism and honor, to recover the sacred message that the “Kingdom of God is within us.” There was no analogy to be made between *Volk* and God, because *Volk* and God were one in essence, existence, and mission. The *analogia entis* was pushed to a breaking point. In summary it may be said that Chamberlain and Rosenberg had seen God. It is not too much to say, especially in the case of Rosenberg, that “in the beginning was the *Volk* and the *Volk* was with God and was God and the *Volk* became flesh and dwelt among us. But only those with a strong will could apprehend this mystery.” While it was merely an ideology, a theoretical construct, that construct was already having mortar applied in the life of the Protestant Church in Germany. A breeze that began in the distant past had picked up speed in Bayreuth and was now forming into a cyclonic whirlwind.

**2.3 Conspiratorial Ideologies.** Anti-Semitism has a long history. In Europe that history is present to greater and lesser degrees in every country. Much of anti-Semitism was fueled by the Church over the centuries, beginning at a very early stage in ecclesiastical history.<sup>179</sup> Naturally, because of the atrocities of the Nazis the onus and emphasis has been upon the anti-Semitism in Germany, but it is not *per se* simply a German phenomenon. It is, however, terribly clear that anti-Semitism reached a zenith with the birth of the Third Reich. This did not happen overnight, as there was in Germany a long period of incubation for anti-Semitic thought and an environment that nurtured that incubation. One of the most thorough studies of anti-Semitic development comes from Uriel Tal who analyzes the connections between Christianity and Judaism in the period prior to the Weimar Republic.<sup>180</sup> This traces the historical and philosophical bases of anti-Semitism present in the atmosphere of the Weimar Republic. The general populace, and especially the radical right wing of the Weimar period, however, had their imaginations fired by something else: the conspiracy theory contained in the infamous *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.

The *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* is “the supreme expression and vehicle of the myth of the Jewish world-conspiracy” as Norman Cohn states it.<sup>181</sup> The modern basis of the *Protocols* is traced to Abbé Barruel a French cleric who was working on a world conspiracy in 1797 that postulated that the

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<sup>179</sup> For an account of this anti-Semitic evolution in the Church see: James Parkes, *The Conflict of the Church and the Synagogue: A Study in the Origins of Anti-Semitism* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1964).

<sup>180</sup> Uriel Tal, *Christians and Jews in Germany: Religion, Politics, and Ideology in the Second Reich, 1870-1914* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1975).

<sup>181</sup> Norman Cohn, *Warrant for Genocide: The Myth of the Jewish World Conspiracy and the Protocols of the Elders of Zion* (London: Serif, 2005), xiii.

French Revolution was “the culmination of an age-old conspiracy of the most secret of secret societies.”<sup>182</sup> This is the point where Freemasons are charged with being part of the world conspiracy.<sup>183</sup> For Barruel, the conspiracy was primarily Masonic in nature, until he received a letter in 1806 from an army officer in Florence going by the name of J.B. Simonini.<sup>184</sup> Nothing is known about this Simonini, and Barruel was unable to establish contact with him. Simonini informed Barruel that he had in his five-volume work missed the part of the Jews in all this.<sup>185</sup> Simonini related the following account.<sup>186</sup> Simonini had infiltrated Jews by telling them that he was born Jewish but had been separated from the Jewish community in childhood. At this point the Jews showed him treasures and promised to make him a general if he became a Freemason. The Jews related to him that Jews founded the Freemasons. In addition many clerics, bishops, and cardinals in the Catholic Church were Jews, and they soon hoped to have a Jewish pope. Everywhere Jews passed themselves off as Christian and held positions in politics and economics. They would eventually buy up all lands and properties and then rule the world, crushing and subjugating Christianity and establishing the Jewish religion. This was the foundation of the legend which was to become part of *Protocols*. This material eventually worked its way into the novel *Biarritz* by a Prussian postal worker, Hermann Goedsche, who wrote under the pseudonym Sir John

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<sup>182</sup> Cohn, *Warrant*, 30.

<sup>183</sup> This concept of Freemasonry existed in the Weimar Republic and the Third Reich. Freemasons were considered by the right wing as subversive and unpatriotic. Rafl Melzer, “In the Eye of the Hurricane: German Freemasonry in the Weimar Republic and the Third Reich,” *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions*, Vol. 4, No. 2, Autumn 2003, 113-132. As Melzer notes, “Anti-Masonry had long been integrated in an anti-Semitic context and, moreover, the rejection of Freemasonry was part of a cultural code in which anti-Masonic, anti-Jewish, anti-democratic and anti-liberal views coincided,” 122.

<sup>184</sup> Cohn, *Warrant*, 31.

<sup>185</sup> Cohn, *Warrant*, 30-32.

<sup>186</sup> This account of Simonini is found in Cohn, *Warrant*, 30-33.

Retcliffe.<sup>187</sup> This novel contains the clandestine meeting of Jewish elders in the Prague Jewish cemetery, who gathered to plot world domination and to take oaths together to accomplish this objective. From this point the legend passed from fiction into “fact.” In Moscow in 1876 a pamphlet titled *The Jewish Cemetery in Czech Prague* appeared and eventually evolved into *Protocols*.<sup>188</sup> In 1904 and 1906 versions of *Protocols* were published in Russian papers. It was also widely held that the Russian population had been overrun and compromised by Jews, and that therefore the communist government was of Jewish origin. So, “The *Deutsche-soziale Blätter* rejoiced that this powerful weapon from the ideological arsenal of German antisemitism was helping the Russian people to liberate itself from its ‘mortal enemy,’ the Jews.”<sup>189</sup> The Weimar populace became exposed to these ominous theories which generated more conspiratorial material such as *What is the Jewish Spirit?* and Theodor Fritsch’s *Handbook of the Jewish Question* of 1887.<sup>190</sup>

The Jewish world-rule conspiracy, which was fostered by the fallacies of *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, should be considered to be the coordinating and controlling conspiracy theory of the Weimar right-wing since all other inter-reactionary ideologies either stem from this or return to it. This is demonstrated in the next conspiratorial ideology to be considered, that of

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<sup>187</sup> Cohn, *Warrant*, 38.

<sup>188</sup> Cohn, *Warrant*, 43.

<sup>189</sup> Cohn, *Warrant*, 43.

<sup>190</sup> Theodor Fritsch, *Handbuch der Judenfrage, die wichtigsten Tatsachen zur Beurteilung des jüdischen Volkes* (Leipzig: Hammer-Verlag, 1942). This was originally published under the title *Antisemiten-Cateschismua* in 1887 under the pseudonym of Thomas Frey.

*Dolchstoß*.<sup>191</sup> After Germany's unanticipated loss in the war, theories abounded as to how this catastrophic event could have been possible. The *Dolchstoß*, according to Friedrich Meinecke, "appeared in the right-wing camp [and] . . . alleged that victory was snatched from Germany because of the revolutionary disruption on the home front, under pressure of which the army commanders then had to lay down their arms."<sup>192</sup> This was essentially what Field Marshall Paul von Hindenburg testified to before a parliamentary subcommittee organized in October 1919 to inquire into the reasons behind the loss of the war. In his testimony given on November 19, 1919, Hindenburg put forth the *Dolchstoß* theory. Hindenburg's testimony was first: "The concern as to whether the homeland would remain resolute until the war was won, from this moment never left us . . . At this time, the secret intentional mutilation of the fleet and the army began . . . The obedient troops . . . they had to carry the battle the whole time."<sup>193</sup> This was the first part of the *Dolchstoß*, the failure of the home front because of revolutionary strife, the revolution that would eventually bring in the Republic. The second part of Hindenburg's *Dolchstoß* theory was: "Thus did our operations necessarily miscarry; the collapse was inevitable; the revolution only provided the keystone . . . An English general said with Justice: 'The German army was

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<sup>191</sup> *Dolchstoß*, or dagger-stab, was the term applied to this conspiracy. It is also referred to as *Dolchstosslegende* or the Stab-in-the-back legend/theory. Works on this include: Boris Barth, *Dolchstosslegenden und politische Desintegration: Das Trauma der deutschen Niederlage im Ersten Weltkrieg, 1914-1933* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 2003); Benedikt Bärwolf, *Die Dolchstoßlegende in der Weimarer Republik - Eine Gesellschaft verarbeitet die Kriegsniederlage* (München: Grin Verlag, 2007).

<sup>192</sup> Friedrich Meinecke, *The German Catastrophe: The Social and Historical Influences which Led to the Rise and Ruin of Hitler and Germany* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1950), 31.

<sup>193</sup> "Testimony of Field Marshall Paul von Hindenburg," *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook*, Anton Kaes, Martin Jay, and Edward Dimendberg, eds. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 15.

stabbed in the back.”<sup>194</sup> The result of the *Dolchstoßlegende* was that the emerging Republic was blamed for war loss and was seen by many on the right wing as treasonous. As Meinecke states it:

This democratic form of government created by the Weimar Constitution of 1919 appeared in the scornful light of the stab-in-the-back legend as the product of disloyalty to the nation, as an unheroic attitude of mind, and as the selfish exploitation of a defeat caused by the treachery of the masses in their lust for power.<sup>195</sup>

The *Dolchstoßlegende* appealed all the more to the German psyche inasmuch as it drew upon an allusion from the twelfth century German poetic epic *Nibelungenlied*. This was a poem about the heroic Siegfried who was stabbed in the back by Hagen von Tronje as he drinks from a spring.<sup>196</sup> The image would have been in the popular imagination as well through Richard Wagner’s *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, in the last of the four operas *Götterdämmerung* (Twilight of the Gods). This would have especially appealed to the right wing, since Wagner was a nationalist, a forerunner of their aspirations. This Germanic chauvinism which was usually expressed through his music also found its way into an essay by him, *On State and Religion*.<sup>197</sup>

It is no far journey to arrive at the conclusion that those who saw Jews in the light of a worldwide conspiracy would not fail to link them to the *Dolchstoßlegende*. Right wing propaganda at the time also establishes that this was the case. Two editorial cartoons demonstrate this. The first is from the *Arbeiter Zeitung*. Here a Jew wearing a Star of David on his hat is shown

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<sup>194</sup> “Testimony,” 15-16.

<sup>195</sup> Meinecke, *German Catastrophe*, 31.

<sup>196</sup> “How Siegfried was Slain,” *Nibelungenlied*, Online Medieval and Classical Library, <http://omacl.org/Nibelungenlied>, [accessed, April 13, 2010].

<sup>197</sup> Richard Wagner, *On State and Religion* (Kessinger Publishing, nd). This essay postulates among other things, a total commitment of church and individual to the state, the state being the *Volk*. Wagner also asserts that religion is found in the inmost heart of the individual.

coming up with a knife behind a German soldier in the trenches.<sup>198</sup> The second cartoon is from *Vorwärts* where Phillip Scheidemann (who proclaimed the beginning of the German Weimar Republic) is shown coming up behind Germans in the trenches holding a knife in position for stabbing.<sup>199</sup> The Jewish world conspiracy coupled with the *Dolstoßlegende* fueled much of the right wing rhetoric during the Weimar era. It also was a reflection of the myth of the *analogia entis* that was taking root in the general, ecclesiastical, and academic settings in Weimar, especially in their Protestant forms.

**2.4 Additional Ideological Considerations.** Before leaving the section on the ideological instaurations of Weimar, it is worthwhile to consider two other contextual items: illiberalism and propaganda. The first is an ideological consideration, the second a method.

Illiberalism is a term employed by Fritz Stern to define the character of Germany after 1878.<sup>200</sup> Illiberalism according to Stern was:

not only the structure of the political regime, suffrage restrictions, or class chicanery, but a state of mind. For just as liberalism bespeaks a state of mind so does its negation. Illiberalism first of all constituted a commitment in mind and policy against any further concession to democracy, even at the price of one's political independence. Any concession in any realm might undermine the authority, prestige, and status of the entire system.<sup>201</sup>

Illiberalism then would have been the outlook of the right wing in the Weimar Republic, combating incursions of democracy, and further, any movement in any "realm" would be seen as a threat. Weimar, in many ways meant a shift

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<sup>198</sup> *Arbeiter Zeitung*, March 26, 1919.

<sup>199</sup> *Vorwärts*, May 3, 1923. *Vorwärts* was the press organ of the SPD, the editorial cartoon was a reproduction of a right wing cartoon to demonstrate what the government was being accused of.

<sup>200</sup> Fritz Stern, *The Failure of Illiberalism: Essays on the Political Culture of Modern Germany* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), xxvi.

<sup>201</sup> Stern, *Illiberalism*, xxvi.



in most arenas. This illiberalism came to the fore in the Republic through a “deep . . . nostalgia for an idealized past, because of a traditional disdain for politics and social egalitarianism, the upper classes, . . . ministers, teachers, and bureaucrats, remained aloof from the Republic.”<sup>202</sup> Stern also observes that accounts of the rise of the NSDAP “omit the role of Protestant clergymen and German academics who were overwhelmingly hostile to Weimar democracy, and who either accepted or failed to disavow the idealistic pretensions of Nazism.”<sup>203</sup>

Not only was illiberalism set against the winds of change in Weimar, but as Stern continues:

The amazing quality of German illiberalism was its pervasiveness. The political system may have formally imposed it, the class antagonisms may have sharpened it, the revered army may have embodied it, the schools and universities may have taught it, but it had evolved for a long time and was part of a cultural style. At every juncture in his career, a German would learn illiberal attitudes or see illiberal models in positions of authority: there were few, if any, accepted models of playfulness or tolerant dissent.<sup>204</sup>

This pervasiveness is of significance in the present discussion. Since illiberalism was a part and parcel of the German ethos, it may be proposed that it was at the same time harder for a German to perceive it and easier for an outsider to understand the contours of it. Barth stood in a unique position of having spent a good deal of time in Germany studying, and yet as a Swiss outside “outside” the ethos of German illiberalism.

Illiberalism also had effect upon the Protestant church. There was according to Stern a “gradual secularization of religion through culture, the

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<sup>202</sup> Stern, *Illiberalism*, 163.

<sup>203</sup> Stern, *Illiberalism*, 204.

<sup>204</sup> Stern, *Illiberalism*, xxvii.

substitution in a sense of one for the other.”<sup>205</sup> As will be discussed, both the conservative DNVP and the radical NSDAP had coordinated their political polity with Protestant Christianity to a lesser or greater degree. This coordination was also reciprocated within the life and message of the church, with respect to the inter-reactionary ideologies in the culture at large. Stern sees this taking place in a complex process that: “involved the approximation of religion, more accurately of Protestantism, to culture and metaphysics, by stripping religion of supernatural and the mysterious, of sin and redemption, reducing it to an ethical essence, to a universal core that was immune to higher biblical criticism.”<sup>206</sup> What was involved here particularly was “the elevation of the aesthetic and intellectual aspects of culture . . . to be the supreme revelations of the human spirit, and the substitution of the moral commands of German Idealism, of Kant in particular, for older universal and religious commands.”<sup>207</sup> Part of the dilemma and crisis that faced the church in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century in Germany was that “Protestant groups played the pre-eminent role in German intellectual life, even as the Protestant Church steadily declined.”<sup>208</sup> If illiberalism was the general mind-set of the Weimar era, propaganda was one of the factors that helped concretize it in the minds of the populace.

Another contextual reality for Barth was the use of propaganda to spread inter-reactionary ideologies and the mindset of illiberalism. Julius Yourman identifies seven different propaganda strategies employed by the

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<sup>205</sup> Stern, *Illiberalism*, 8.

<sup>206</sup> Stern, *Illiberalism*, 9.

<sup>207</sup> Stern, *Illiberalism*, 9.

<sup>208</sup> Stern, *Illiberalism*, 10.

NSDAP.<sup>209</sup> They demonstrate not only the part of the indecorous elements present in Weimar, but also the shrewd effectiveness with which inter-reactionary messages were conveyed to the general populace. The seven techniques as identified by Yourman are: 1) Name calling, 2) Glittering generalities, 3) Transfer, 4) Testimonial, 5) Plain Folks, 6) Card Stacking, and 7) Band Wagon.<sup>210</sup>

Naming calling is employed when one is asked to form an opinion or make a judgment without “examining the evidence on which [the judgment] should be based.”<sup>211</sup> During the Weimar period, words such as communist, un-German, Jewish, and liberal were terms that were used to bring immediate judgment calls into the minds of the populace.

Glittering generalities “is a device by which the propagandist identifies his program with virtue by the use of virtue words.”<sup>212</sup> The terms, honor, *Volk*, *völkisch*, blood and soil, were part of this lectionary. But the language used in this method went further. As Yourman points out, the term science was used as a glittering generality “to sanction practices, policies, beliefs, and races it wants approved.”<sup>213</sup>

Transfer occurs when the propagandist wishes to carry over “the authority, sanction, and prestige of something we respect and revere to something he would have us accept.”<sup>214</sup> This is found in the 1927 Nuremburg rally speech of Joseph Goebbels:

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<sup>209</sup> Julius Yourman, “Propaganda Techniques within Nazi Germany,” *Journal of Educational Sociology*, Vol. 13, No. 3, November 1939, 148-163.

<sup>210</sup> Yourman, “Propaganda,” 148-163.

<sup>211</sup> Yourman, “Propaganda,” 149.

<sup>212</sup> Yourman, “Propaganda,” 150.

<sup>213</sup> Yourman, “Propaganda,” 150.

<sup>214</sup> Yourman, “Propaganda,” 151.

There are two kinds of propaganda, one aimed at the understanding, the other the feelings . . . Worldview movements aim for the feelings. The force behind worldview movements has never been understanding, but rather faith. For Example: Christ never wrote a party program, but did preach the Sermon on the Mount. In it he laid the foundations of a new world . . .<sup>215</sup>

Here of course is the transfer of Christianity to the cause of NSDAP propaganda. In another speech Goebbels uses transference again in relation to Christianity: “Christ’s goal was clear and simple: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ He gathered his followers behind that straightforward statement.”<sup>216</sup> Often, “the prestige and authority of God [were] used to sanction the National Socialist party . . . bending to its will labor, agriculture, business, and all ideals, including those of Christianity.”<sup>217</sup>

Testimonial is employed when the propagandist wants “to make us accept anything from a patent medicine or a cigarette to a program of national policy.”<sup>218</sup> The propagandists in this case seek to ply the will of the people to their own. Only on their authority will the conclusions of science, belief, arts, or policy be ratified or condemned. Further, they are ratified or condemned, not on the basis of evidence, but rather on the basis of other propaganda techniques, especially name-calling, transfer, and card-stacking. The propagandist rules by “decree how men and women shall live their lives.”<sup>219</sup>

Plain Folks is an appeal by leaders in politics, business, labor, education, and/or religion to “win our confidence by appearing to be people

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<sup>215</sup> Joseph Goebbels, “Speech at the 1927 Nuremberg Rally,” *German Propaganda Archive*, at <http://www.calvin.edu/academic/cas/gpa/rpt27c1.htm> [Accessed October 15, 2009].

<sup>216</sup> Joseph Goebbels, “Knowledge and Propaganda,” *German Propaganda Archive*, at <http://www.calvin.edu/academic/cas/gpa/goeb54.htm>. [Accessed October 15, 2009].

<sup>217</sup> Yourman, “Propaganda,” 152.

<sup>218</sup> Yourman, “Propaganda,” 153.

<sup>219</sup> Yourman, “Propaganda,” 154.

like ourselves.”<sup>220</sup> This is an appeal not to the intellect, but rather to raw emotion. In Weimar where xenophobia was at a height and name-calling was employed to enforce German chauvinism, plain folks was a run to the similar and familiar. Those not like us, not “plain folk,” were under suspicion because of their lack of “folksiness.” The more the politician in Weimar could appear to be patriotic and German, the greater identification and sympathy could be evoked within the general populace.

Of all the weapons in the propaganda arsenal of the NSDAP in Weimar, Yourman says card-stacking was: “the device which played the most important part in National Socialist propaganda.”<sup>221</sup> It is the device in which the propagandist uses “all the arts of deception to win our support for himself, his group, nation, race, policy, practice, belief, or ideal. He stacks the cards against the truth. He uses underemphasis and overemphasis to dodge or evade facts.”<sup>222</sup> Card stacking is backed by the specter of real or imagined threats to personal security or well-being.

Regarding the character of propaganda, Goebbels notes that it is popular, not intellectual, and that it adapts to the audience to which it is speaking.<sup>223</sup> Further, he observes: “It makes no difference if propaganda is at a high level. The question is whether it reached its goal.”<sup>224</sup> Hitler in *Mein Kampf* noted that: “Propaganda must always address itself to the broad masses of the people. For the intellectual classes, or what are called the intellectual

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<sup>220</sup> Yourman, “Propaganda,” 154.

<sup>221</sup> Yourman, “Propaganda,” 155.

<sup>222</sup> Yourman, “Propaganda,” 156.

<sup>223</sup> Goebbels, “Knowledge and Propaganda.”  
<http://www.calvin.edu/academic/cas/gpa/goeb54.htm>.

<sup>224</sup> Goebbels, “Knowledge and Propaganda.”  
<http://www.calvin.edu/academic/cas/gpa/goeb54.htm>.

classes to-day, propaganda is not suited, but only scientific exposition.”<sup>225</sup>

Further, Hitler in symphony with Goebbels states: “The art of propaganda consists precisely in being able to awaken the imagination of the public through an appeal to their feelings, in finding the appropriate psychological form that will arrest the attention and appeal to the hearts of the national masses.”<sup>226</sup> It is also of interest to note that a variety of means was meant to flood the consciousness of the people. Colorful posters, leaflets, films, slides, and marches in party regalia all formed part of putting forward inter-reactionary ideologies in Weimar.<sup>227</sup> Propaganda was meant to have a permeable and consistent influence upon the minds of the *Volk*, and each of the varying techniques and vehicles of propaganda were to help advance that goal.

The darker side of the Weimar period was one of political intrigue, conspiracy, inter-reactionary ideologies, an illiberal mindset, and the rise of right-wing parties who to greater or lesser degrees took the images and redacted message of Christianity into their folds. The narratives of Christianity and referential ideologies were used inter-textually by the NSDAP and others supporting inter-reactionary ideologies in order to transfer the authority of Christianity to their own *Heilsgeschichte*. At the same time the goal was not to supplant Christianity, but that Christianity might be returned

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<sup>225</sup> Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (London, Hurst and Blackett, 1939), 147.

<sup>226</sup> Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (London, Hurst and Blackett, 1939), 148.

<sup>227</sup> Goebbels thought that radio was the greatest vehicle for propaganda. See Joseph Goebbels, “The Radio as the Eighth Great Power,” *German Propaganda Archive*, <http://www.calvin.edu/academic/cas/gpa/goeb56.htm>, [Accessed October 15, 2009]. It is interesting to note that “talk radio” in the United States is perhaps still the greatest tool employed with respect to propaganda techniques. See: David Barker and Kathleen Knight, “Political Talk Radio and Public Opinion,” *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 64, No. 2 (Summer, 2000), 149-170.

to its “*Urevangelium*.” Their messages were advanced by the means and methods of propaganda. The NSDAP in particular used all of these devices to greatest measure, and thus the myth of the *analogia entis* was taking wing into the ethical-existential world of the Weimar Republic.

**Chapter Three**  
**Contextual Realities:**  
**The Ethical-Existential Effects of the Myth**  
**in General Weimar Environs**

The earliest of the ideological designers could have been little aware of how their philosophical and theological ruminations were going to be developed and employed down the corridors of time. It was in 1921 that the 35-year-old Karl Barth began facing this ideological inter-reactionary giant taking shape, incarnating, not only in the theological arena of Barth's world, but in all facets of life. The myth of the *analogia entis* was manifesting in cultural, ecclesial, and academic arenas.

Only two years prior to Barth's arrival at Göttingen, this giant was conceived by Anton Drexler under the name *Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* (German Workers' Party) shortly thereafter to become the *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* (National Socialist German Workers Party, NSDAP) which would come to be led by Adolf Hitler. A small and inconsequential party at its inception, the NSDAP was a microcosm of the era's reactionary ideologies that were gaining ground in the life of post-War and Weimar era Germany. It is in this setting that Karl Barth began his teaching career. The NSDAP will often be cited in the contextual side of the studies, not only



because it is reflective of the outcome of the myth, but because it is reflective of the inter-reactive ideologies of the Weimar period.

**3.1 Framing the Approach.** To understand the content of Barth, one must understand the context of Barth. While much time has been invested in examining the ontogeny of Barth's various doctrines, this has been done with a limited view of Barth's context and rarely with a view that context had significant impact on Barth's doctrinal development. This is, of course, not to say that contextual connections have not been made nor understood, far from it. It is commonplace to give place to Barth's context with respect to his doctrine, but the impact and emphasis of the context is quickly dealt with in passing onto ontogenetic studies. But, Barth's ontogenetic development is not simply an internal theological debate, any more than it is an isolated reaction to the much ballyhooed nineteenth century liberalism. This is perhaps nowhere more evident than when examining Barth's understanding of *analogia entis*. Barth is a theologian of context.<sup>228</sup> His rejection of the *analogia entis* is not esoteric rhetoric against Roman Catholic theology; it is a theological rejoinder rather born out of engagement with the ethos of National Socialism which had begun in the Weimar period, infiltrated the Church, and delivered the Protestant Church in Germany over to a "secular misery"<sup>229</sup> via the myth of the *analogia entis*.

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<sup>228</sup> An example of this is brought out in Daniel Migliore's introductory essay to Barth's *Göttingen Dogmatics*: "All these exercises in dialectic are no 'useless scholastic triflings' for Barth. . . . As he explains in his letters, his dialectical approach arose in response to the ethical crisis of the time. It was a means of resistance to the easy identification of God with popular movements and dominant ideologies in contemporary culture." Daniel Migliore, "Karl Barth's First Lectures in Dogmatics," in *The Göttingen Dogmatics: Instruction in the Christian Religion* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1991), xxxi.

<sup>229</sup> Barth, *CD I.1*. xiii.

The tendency to keep Barth and his theology disassociated from his surroundings, culture, and his world is rather pedestrian. It is based upon a premise that Barth walked through his days blissfully unaware of what was taking place around him in Göttingen, Münster, and Bonn where he taught. Of course this is an overstatement of the matter, but one must give due consideration to the context of Weimar if one is to avoid the assumption that Barth did not read his newspaper or that he never saw party propaganda posted upon poles or at train stations.<sup>230</sup> This tendency to disassociate Barth from his context is to imagine that as he walked the streets that he never saw nor picked up propaganda fliers blowing around after the numerous rallies held in city squares or read the numerous publications coming from churches. It is to entertain the notion that Barth was not shocked by the hyper-nationalistic writings of his Göttingen colleague Emanuel Hirsch. It is to hold the idea that Barth walked the streets of the Weimar Republic oblivious to the rising tides of “positive” Christianity within the church. It is to believe that he existed in university settings where conservative student associations, including those of the NSDAP, began to pressure his colleagues out of positions and that he remained aloof. It is in the end to believe the impossible about any ordinary person and is much more inconceivable when one is considering such an extraordinary personality and intellect as Barth.

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<sup>230</sup> For example, one organization, the *Deutschvölkischer Schutz und Trutzbund* [DVSTB] achieved a mass mobilization of the *völkisch* movement and had a membership of 280,000 by 1922. In 1920 the DVSTB distributed “7.6 million pamphlets, 4.7 million handbills, and 7.8 million stickers.” The DVSTB was “organized into some 600 branches, the *Bund* . . . engaged in wide-ranging activities, including efforts to infiltrate schools, universities, and cultural institutions, [and] campaigns to influence church elections to achieve the appointment of anti-Semitic church officials and clerics.” Geoffery Field, *Evangelist of Race: The Germanic Vision of Houston Stewart Chamberlain* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), 414.

This portion of the study endeavors to portray the environment and personalities which were in Barth's immediate environment and to demonstrate how these influences were responded to, especially in Barth's formulation of the myth and the rejection of the *analogia entis*. This work does not avoid phylogenetic study, but it traces it to a concrete setting-in-life with which Barth was dealing. Ontogenetic studies of Barth are needed to be sure, but they do not provide us with the theology of the church, that is the "so what," the lessons that Barth would want the church to learn and the errors he would desperately wish the church to avoid in the future. For this reason, Barth studies need to take seriously not simply the raw theory of Barth, the text of Barth, but rather the context which the text addressed. This study endeavors to be a contribution in this direction.

**3.2 Historical Boundary of the Study.** In speaking of Karl Barth and his relation to National Socialism, it has sometimes been the wont to begin those discussions after the period of the NSDAP's seizure of power (*Machtergreifung*) in 1933 and even more so to focus the composition of the Barmen Declaration in 1934. However, this understanding does not take with seriousness the context within which Barth was constructing theology from the time he arrived in Germany to his forced departure from the Faculty at Bonn in 1935. For this reason, this treatment focuses on the developments in the Weimar period, which began in 1918 and lasted until the *Machtergreifung* of the NSDAP in 1933. This time frame largely coincides with Barth's teaching tenure in Germany, from his arrival at the Faculty in Göttingen in 1921 to the pivotal 1932 publication of *Dogmatics I.1*, in which he makes his controversial renunciation of the *analogia entis*. Naturally in the context of

examining this period it is necessary at points to cross the border on each side of the *terminus a quo* and the *terminus ad quem* given.

As stated above a good deal of work has gone into the analysis of the evolution of the various methodologies and doctrines of Barth, but aside from passing observations the historic context and its impact upon Barth's theology has not drawn a stark enough picture of the Protestant situation and its relation to the *analogia entis*. When such a picture is drawn, what emerges is that the context dictates that Barth understood the *analogia entis* as a *primarily* Protestant issue.

**3.3 Jeanround's Theory as Exemplar of the Problem.** Jeanround is an example of how one separates Barth's personal activity from his theological construction: "Barth's personal involvement in political activity . . . must not divert our attention from this diagnosis: Barth's theological method makes the development of a political theology impossible."<sup>231</sup> Jeanround maintains that Barth's theology had "remained detached from the world that it wanted to save."<sup>232</sup> The indictment in Jeanround's final analysis is that Barth had personally resisted the NSDAP but that "his theology did not at this time help promote a constructive resistance beyond the mere critique of all worldly movements."<sup>233</sup> Contrary to Jeanround's assessment, it will be demonstrated that given the strategies of the NSDAP as well as the developments in the church and university settings

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<sup>231</sup> Werner G. Jeanround, "From Resistance to Liberation Theology: German Theologians and the Non/Resistance to the National Socialist Regime," *The Journal of Modern History* vol. 64, Supplement (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), S188. Compare this understanding of Barth to an extreme of the other end found in Mark Lilla's nescient, quirky, and surrealistic linking of Barth with inciting National Socialism. Mark Lilla, *The Stillborn God: Religion, Politics, and the Modern West* (New York: Knopf, 2007).

<sup>232</sup> Jeanround, S190.

<sup>233</sup> Jeanround, S190.

(including its members, adherents, and sympathizers) in the Weimar period, that Barth deployed perhaps the best theology of resistance that could have been conceived in response to such strategies. The theology of Barth most effective in this period of early struggle with the NSDAP, as well as ideologies that were related and ran parallel with them, was his rejection of the *analogia entis*. As will be seen, the so-called “invention of the Anti-Christ”<sup>234</sup> was far more than the assault on Catholicism it has been made out to be. In order to understand why this is the case, the consideration of Barth’s Weimar context must first be undertaken. It is also why Barth’s rejection of the *analogia entis* cannot be fully understood without intensively investigating the circumstances and ground from which it arose. In order to get a picture of this context, the approach will focus on the macrocosm of the general situation related to the ideologies within the Weimar Republic.

**3.4 General Weimar Environs.** The architecture of the Weimar Republic began to take shape on November 9, 1918, with a proclamation from Phillip Scheidemann, an official of the *Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands* (SPD/Social Democratic Party of Germany). Its demolition was completed January 30, 1933, with the inauguration of Adolf Hitler as chancellor of Germany and the accession to power of the NSDAP. In its fifteen-year life, the Weimar Republic was a government and a society of sharp contrasts, a panoply of paradoxes, a breeding ground of conspiracies, real and imagined, a cultural, aesthetic, and intellectual juggernaut, a doomed and troubled child from its parturition. The Weimar era is a cacophony of political, economic, and ecclesiastical complexity and intrigue. For the

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<sup>234</sup> Barth, *CD I.I*, xiii.

purposes of this paper, the picture of Weimar must of necessity be selective, attenuated, and generalized.

It might be fairly said that the rise of the Weimar Republic was the last shock of the Great War to hit the *Volk* and *Vaterland*. Germany had after all been a monarchy, imperial in nature, unconquerable in the last of its major wars.<sup>235</sup> The Germans had been advancing as recently as the spring of 1918. Now, seemingly overnight, imperial Germany was a Social Democracy. The pleximetry of it must have left the general populace wondering if they had heard things correctly. Nonetheless the Weimar Republic had become a reality. The first political movements of the new Republic raised choler from representatives of both the radical left as well as the right. Rosa Luxemburg, for instance, insisted that the SPD had abandoned “the international principles of socialism.”<sup>236</sup> The newly appointed minister of interior Hugo Preuss immediately received a petulant response from the right when he recommended that the German nation would no longer be run from a separate centralized Prussia, but rather Germany would be grouped as states within a nation.<sup>237</sup>

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<sup>235</sup> The first of these is the Second Schleswig War (or the Danish War of 1864) which, with the treaty of Vienna, ended with Denmark ceding the duchies of Schleswig and Holstein to Prussia and Austria. Fritz Stern, *Gold and Iron: Bismark, Bleichröder, and the Building of the German Empire* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977), 41-47. The *Deutscher Krieg* (Austro-Prussian War) of 1866 brought the dominance of Prussia over German lands and destroyed Austria’s power in Germany. This war also marked pride of place for Bismark inasmuch as it was considered his victory as a “conservative statesman acting on the behalf of a militaristic monarchy.” Stern, *Gold and Iron*, 81. The end of the Franco-Prussian war in 1871 and the Treaty of Frankfurt brought the complete unification of Germany. Stern, *Gold and Iron*, 130-145.

<sup>236</sup> Erich Eyck, *A History of the Weimar Republic Volume 1: From the Collapse of the Empire to Hindenburg’s Election*, trans., Harlan P. Hanson and Robert Waite (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1962), 48. Rosa Luxemburg was the cofounder of the *Spartakusbund* (the Spartacist Union), which became the *Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands* (KPD/Communist Party of Germany). Rosa Luxemburg was murdered by *Freikorps* in Berlin in 1919.

<sup>237</sup> Eyck, *Weimar Republic*, vol.1, 56.

**3.4.1 The Promise of Weimar.** Out of the transition emerged both a cultural and a political Weimar Republic, and both were ever under the right-wing's cloud of suspicion and eye of scrutiny. The cultural Weimar saw the propagation of literature, theater, film, and art. Certainly names that are readily recognized today arose to fame (or infamy!) during the Weimar period. In the world of art, the names of Wassily Kandinsky, Max Beckmann, and Paul Klee stand out. In film, the actress Marlene Dietrich and director Fritz Lang capture attention. In the arena of architecture the works of Erich Mendelsohn (with the Einstein Tower) and Walter Gropius (on the renowned Bauhaus) are well known. In physics, Albert Einstein and Max Plank distinguish themselves. In the field of literature, Bertolt Brecht, Thomas Mann, Rainer Marie Rilke, Herman Hesse, and Franz Kafka (although living in Prague) are representative. In the popular realm, the Comedian Harmonists held pride of place. The list could be extended to almost all fields of discipline and endeavor. Yet, given all this, Weimar as a whole was not received well, or in many cases received at all from the right. There are multiple and complex reasons for this, converging and eventually bringing the demise of the Republic.

It is a myopic failing of Western democracies that they often cannot understand that other nations would not wish democracy if it were offered. But in the Germany of the 1920s one finds this scenario. Germany was imperial, monarchial, ordered. Many in Germany perceived Social Democracy as categorically un-German in nature. It was not an expression of the *Volksseele* or the German spirit. Germany and Germans, before their

political and geographic unification in 1871 had understood their unity to be contained in their culture.

**3.4.2 Post War Wobble.** As the smoke of the Great War settled, the Weimar government was trying to stabilize itself, to become rooted. Several things made this difficult, if not impossible. The economy, political unrest, vast conspiracy theories, defiance and outright disloyalty to the Weimar government led to destabilization as all these factors interplayed and fed off of one another.

Following the war, Weimar was subject to incredible rates of inflation. Germany had followed a course of war with the understanding that victory was the only possible outcome. Karl Helfferich (Minister of Finance, 1915-1916), with this understanding of victory, thought that as victor Germany would be able to force payment for the war onto the vanquished. This idea was the rationale for the incredible amount of war debt generated by Germany.<sup>238</sup> However, Helfferich's policy of ponderous loans to fund the war were not the only factors in the runaway inflation experienced by Weimar during its early years.

The Treaty of Versailles that ended the Great War had stipulated that initial war reparation payments begin in May 1921. This initial payment amounted to 20 billion gold Marks.<sup>239</sup> This payment was negotiated and it was decided that Germany would pay three billion gold Marks per annum over the next five years.<sup>240</sup> Still the amount of reparations would contribute significantly to the hyperinflation. When reparations failed to be made,

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<sup>238</sup> Eyck, *Weimar*, vol.1, 115, 130-132.

<sup>239</sup> Eyck, *Weimar*, vol.1, 170-171.

<sup>240</sup> Eyck, *Weimar*, vol.1, 171.



France and Belgium occupied the Ruhr in January 1923.<sup>241</sup> This was a major industrial area, producing coal, steel, and other raw materials. This action further crippled the German economy.

In addition to the war reparations that could not be met, Versailles had at the outset deprived Germany of 13% of its territory and 10% of its population,<sup>242</sup> in addition to the 2.5 million casualties Germany sustained.

The course of the rising inflation is traced by Lewis Hill, et al.: “The wholesale price index, with a base of one in 1913 . . . had advanced to 14.4 in January 1921 . . . the index stood at 101 in July 1922 . . . and an astounding 750 billion on 15 November 1923.”<sup>243</sup> Further none of the conventional trade-

offs for inflation were occurring. Employment dropped to around 70% in December of 1923, and due to lower employment rates, production dropped as well.<sup>244</sup> There was at least one winner in the runaway inflation of early

Weimar: “the wealthy industrialists, financiers, speculators, and profiteers.”<sup>245</sup>

Some of the worst hit in the mix were the civil servants of higher rank, which would have included both clergy and university professors. Their income in 1923 had dropped to approximately 45% of their pre-war income.<sup>246</sup> In

addition, labor, pensioners, and the middle class were losers to inflation.<sup>247</sup>

The Lewis report concludes that the wealthy industrialists were more likely to be conservative and to finance right-wing causes, and as was the case with

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<sup>241</sup> Eyck, *Weimar*, vol. 1, 232-233.

<sup>242</sup> Lewis E. Hill, Charles E. Butler, and Stephen A. Lorenzen, “Inflation and the Destruction of Democracy: The Case of the Weimar Republic,” *Journal of Economic Issues*, Vol. XI, No. 2, June 1977, 300.

<sup>243</sup> Lewis, et al., “Inflation,” 301.

<sup>244</sup> Lewis, et al., “Inflation,” 301-302.

<sup>245</sup> Lewis, et al., “Inflation,” 302.

<sup>246</sup> Lewis, et al., “Inflation,” 304.

<sup>247</sup> Lewis, et al., “Inflation,” 302.

industrialist Fritz Thyssen, these conservative industrialists saved the NSDAP at one point from economic collapse.<sup>248</sup> The Lewis report leads also to other conclusions.

On the one hand industrialists may have been conservative, but it is also the case that one group that was profiting was Jewish. While non-Jewish industrialists could fund right-wing causes, and were likely to do so if for no other reason than that they felt communism was knocking at the door, the Jewish industrialists and financiers that were also profiting would receive the bitter reaction of those suffering under hyperinflation. This would feed into conspiracies and ideologies that were already pre-disposed to “Weimar-phobia,” and anti-Semitism. As the Lewis report notes: “by allowing great inflation to run its tragic course to total disaster, the democratic Weimar Republic made its enemies rich and powerful, while its friends became impoverished and alienated.”<sup>249</sup> Eventually the Dawes plan would stabilize the economy, which it succeeded in accomplishing, but by then the die was cast<sup>250</sup> and positions had hardened.

**3.4.3 Emil Gumbel and *Four Years of Murder*.** Amidst the economic chaos and its consequences, political unrest naturally found a home. At the outset of the Republic KPD (German Communist Party) co-founders Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht had been assassinated, interestingly enough, not by the right, but rather in an attempt by the SPD to consolidate

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<sup>248</sup> Lewis, et al., “Inflation,” 305-306.

<sup>249</sup> Lewis, et al., “Inflation,” 306.

<sup>250</sup> The Dawes plan had several elements that would help to stabilize the Weimar economy. First, a loan of 800 million gold marks was made, chiefly from the United States. Second, some control of industry in the Ruhr was ceded back to Germany. Third, a new currency was issued that was to be backed by a percentage of gold reserve. Fourth, avenues of trade were expanded. Finally, Germany was to be admitted to the League of Nations. See Eyck, *Weimar*, vol. 1, 300-323.

power and steady the overall political and societal situation. Perhaps no other document so clearly points to the political unrest testified to by violent action than that of Emil Gumbel's *Four Years of Political Murder*, a document which itself earned Gumbel the ire of the right wing. During the first four years of the Weimar Republic, 354 murders had been committed by the political right and another 22 by the left according to Gumbel.<sup>251</sup> Convicted murderers on the right were quite often given sentences that amounted to no more than a fine, and others were simply set free, while those on the left were sent to the scaffolds.<sup>252</sup> Calls for the murder of a pacifist was not treated as a crime at all in the midst of all this.<sup>253</sup> Gumbel, in his book documenting these murders, called the court complicit with the political right in this. As Gumbel points out: "If a member of a leftist party is murdered by the right, even the judge is instinctively incapable of ridding himself of the notion that the murdered person was his enemy, and because of his, the victim's beliefs deserved a severe penalty."<sup>254</sup> Further Gumbel concludes: "Woe, however, to the murderer who is on the left. The judge, who himself belongs to the former upper classes, has an age-old familiarity with the thought that this economic order must be defended."<sup>255</sup> Economic chaos had led to a plethora of political murders and also exposed right-wing favoritism in the judicial system.

**3.4.4 The Assassination of Rathenau.** Perhaps the most notable of these murders in the first four years of the Weimar Republic occurred the year

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<sup>251</sup> Emil Gumbel, "Four Years of Political Murder" in *Weimar Republic Sourcebook*, Anton Kayes, Martin Jay, Edward Dimendberg, eds. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 101.

<sup>252</sup> Gumbel, "Political Murder," 102-103.

<sup>253</sup> Gumbel, "Political Murder," 102.

<sup>254</sup> Gumbel, "Political Murder," 104.

<sup>255</sup> Gumbel, "Political Murder," 105.

after Barth's arrival in Göttingen in 1921. It was that of Walther Rathenau who served as the Minister of Foreign Affairs under Chancellor Karl Joseph Wirth. Rathenau's murder was committed in broad daylight on the morning of June 24, 1922. A phaeton pulled along side Rathenau's car on Königsallee, Berlin. Two men were present in the phaeton in addition to the driver. One opened fire with a submachine gun while the other threw a hand grenade into Rathenau's open air auto leaving a horrific scene. As Eyck describes it: "The assassination was a complete success. There was nothing but a shattered, bleeding corpse for the chauffeur to bring back home."<sup>256</sup> The Rathenau murder stands out because it was such a high profile murder. The murderers were two ultra-nationalists by the names of Kern and Fischer, each twenty-five years of age. Kern was shot and killed avoiding capture, while Fischer shot himself to avoid capture.<sup>257</sup> Both were later honored by the NSDAP with a monument where they died.<sup>258</sup> The driver, Ernst Techow, twenty-one was captured. His trial reveals something of the thought process behind these young men. Techow's defense was based not on standard evidentiary grounds, but rather on ideological ones. Techow claimed, for instance, that "Kern had told him Rathenau was a supporter of creeping communism."<sup>259</sup> Techow also said that Kern had said: "Rathenau had revealed himself as one of the three-hundred 'Elders of Zion.'"<sup>260</sup> Rathenau was also a German-Jew, which only contributed to apparent guilt in the eyes of his assassins. Chancellor Wirth, greatly disturbed by the murder of Rathenau said finally

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<sup>256</sup> Eyck, *Weimar*, vol.1, 213.

<sup>257</sup> Eyck, *Weimar*, vol.1, 213.

<sup>258</sup> Eyck, *Weimar*, vol.1, 213.

<sup>259</sup> Eyck, *Weimar*, vol.1, 214.

<sup>260</sup> Eyck, *Weimar*, vol.1, 214.

what was felt by many but articulated by few, the enemy of Germany was not the left but rather: “there stands the enemy, where Mephisto drips his poison into a nation’s wounds; there stands the enemy and there can be no doubt about it: the enemy stands on the Right.”<sup>261</sup> In tandem with the blight of political murders, especially from the right, came two infamous putsches associated with the political right. The first is the Kapp-Lüttwitz Putsch of 1920, the second the Beer Hall Putsch of 1923 in Munich.

**3.4.5 The Kapp Putsch.** The Kapp Putsch was the first significant attempt to overthrow the Weimar government. Involved in the Kapp Putsch were: Wolfgang Kapp, Kurt von Kessel, Gottfried Traub, General von Lüttwitz, and Count Westrap.<sup>262</sup> Each of these men had positions within the National Assembly, or Prussian Assembly, with the exception of Lüttwitz. All were Nationalists and had some ties or sympathies with the *Deutschnationale Volkspartei* (DNVP/German National People’s Party). Kapp and company set up a cabinet in Berlin. This was done with the military backing of Lüttwitz who had sided with Kapp et al. When he was ordered by Gustav Noske (Secretary of Defense) to dissolve two brigades, he refused.<sup>263</sup> One of these brigades marched through the Brandenburg Gate on the morning of March 13, 1920. Other troops were present, as was General Ludendorff, but no exchange of fire occurred between them. In the end the *coup d’etat* was short lived. In Eyck’s account, the Kapp Putsch from the outset “was nothing but the work of overgrown juvenile delinquents.”<sup>264</sup> And further, Kapp “could find no more to

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<sup>261</sup> As quoted in Eyck, *Weimar*, vol.1, 217.

<sup>262</sup> Lewis Hertzman, *DNVP: Right-Wing Opposition in the Weimar Republic, 1918-1924* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1963), 96, 104.

<sup>263</sup> Eyck, *Weimar*, vol.1, 149-150.

<sup>264</sup> Eyck, *Weimar*, vol.1, 150.

do with power that was suddenly his than make a few arrests, issue a few absurd proclamations, and, for the rest, have his soldiers parade the Berlin streets with hand grenades and helmets, shooting a bit when they pleased.”<sup>265</sup> Still, idealistic inter-reactionary ideologies had taken a hand and even if the Eyck assessment is correct, and Kapp and company were juvenile delinquents, they were nevertheless juvenile delinquents with troops and weapons at their disposal. The Kapp Putsch demonstrated that the Republic was at risk, not simply from a myriad of assassinations, but also because people in the government and the military were willing to overthrow it. The DNVP attempted to distance itself from the putsch, but the party never truly condemned it either. Many within the DNVP were in favor and supported the coup, but there were calls after the putsch to dissolve the party, though those calls were denied.<sup>266</sup> Although the DNVP had something of a public relations disaster to deal with at the moment, it still by 1924 became the “principal party of the right” and the second-ranking party in the Reichstag.”<sup>267</sup>

**3.4.6 The Hitler Putsch.** It was three years later that another putsch took place, November 8-9, 1923, this time in Munich. This was the *Hitlerputsch* or the so-called Beer Hall Putsch. This was the attempt of a lesser yet more radically right political party than that of the DNVP, the NSDAP, to seize the government in Munich. Whereas General Ludendorff had remained ambivalent in the Kapp Putsch, he took action in the Beer Hall Putsch. Gustav von Kahr was serving as General States Commissioner in

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<sup>265</sup> Eyck, *Weimar*, vol.1, 151.

<sup>266</sup> Hertzmann, *DNVP*, 106-120.

<sup>267</sup> Hertzmann, *DNVP*, 3.

1923; he had formally served as Prime Minister of Bavaria.<sup>268</sup> He was both right-wing and a monarchist.<sup>269</sup> Kahr had called a meeting in the *Bürgerbräukeller*. The exact purpose of the meeting remains unclear although Eyck conjectures that perhaps Kahr was going to propose reconciliation with Berlin.<sup>270</sup> Whatever the Kahr agenda, it was overtaken by Adolf Hitler who came into the *Bürgerbräukeller* fired a shot in the air, announced that the national revolution had begun, and escorted Kahr and others to another room.<sup>271</sup> While waving his pistol, he extorted an agreement from Kahr. Ludendorff came on the scene as the others emerged from the side room appearing before the assembly in what seemed to be a “firm and sincere alliance”<sup>272</sup> with Hitler at the helm. This however was simply a ruse to extricate Kahr from the situation, and once free he immediately nullified the agreement, demonstrating its inanity with the army in support of him.<sup>273</sup> Nevertheless, Hitler and Ludendorff marched in Munich on the morning of November 9, were confronted with a police squad of lesser numbers, and were defeated. Fourteen of Hitler’s men were killed and both he and Ludendorff were eventually arrested. Among the dead were a “high provincial judge” and members of the *Reichswehr*.<sup>274</sup> The Beer Hall Putsch not only further demonstrated the risk to which Weimar was exposed, but also that the NSDAP had penetrated to some extent the political and military apparatus of Weimar. Their program and ideology was taking a foothold. The trial for Hitler began

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<sup>268</sup> Karl Bosl, ed., “Gustav von Kahr,” *Bosl’s Bayerische Biographie: 8000 Persönlichkeiten aus 15 Jahrhunderten* (Regensburg: Verlag Friedrich Pustet, 1983), 401.

<sup>269</sup> Bosl, “Kahr,” 401.

<sup>270</sup> Eyck, *Weimar*, vol.1, 272.

<sup>271</sup> Eyck, *Weimar*, vol.1, 272-273.

<sup>272</sup> Eyck, *Weimar*, vol.1, 274.

<sup>273</sup> Eyck, *Weimar*, vol.1, 275.

<sup>274</sup> Eyck, *Weimar*, vol.1, 276.

February 26, 1924, and he was released from prison on December 20, 1924: this his punishment for trying to topple the government.

Both right-wing parties involved in the putsches call for a bit of attention in setting the general context of Weimar: the first because it was the largest and most dominant of the two throughout most of the Weimar era, the DNVP, and the other because it is the party which takes power and marks the end of the Weimar government, the NSDAP. Both shared much of the same inter-reactionary ideologies that dominated the right during the Weimar era, and they both had interaction with at least a party platform relating to Christianity.

**3.4.7 The DNVP and Christianity.** It is a rather common and popular notion that the Church did not need to concern itself with the NSDAP until well into the Weimar period, even to the point of the NSDAP's seizure of power. Many treatments of the Church struggle or specific parts thereof, launch from this point. There is certainly nothing wrong with this approach, and it is certainly true that things only became more dark and dire for the Church after this point. But this is to also overlook that the ideologies from 1933 and on were most definitely present in the general milieu of the Weimar period, especially within right-wing parties, the right wing of the church, and within the universities. But the political dominance of the DNVP and the steady, gradual rise and acceptance of the NSDAP as politically legitimate demonstrate the active presence and social acceptance on the part of many of the concepts embodied by these two parties. One would need to be duncical to have not seen these ideologies being played out. One might agree or disagree, but to miss that assassinations, murders, and putsches were driven by right-



wing ideology would be out of the question. That these two parties were involved in much of it was obvious even when in some cases it was not evidentiary.

The DNVP, like many aspects of the Weimar Republic, was far from monolithic. This conservative party sought to bring in, in the aftermath of the November 1918 revolution, as many conservative factions and former parties as possible in order to counter the triumph of the SPD. It was a move decidedly made for the purpose of survival. This question of survival had “hastened the positive co-operation now of Conservatives, Free Conservatives, Racists, Christian Socialists, pan-Germans, and other assorted agrarians and ‘patriots,’” according to Lewis Hertzman.<sup>275</sup> The party was not to be an alliance of old conservative parties, but a new party entering into the new situation.<sup>276</sup> Count Westarp, a nationalist, wanted the party to be known as the party of the “farthest Right of the political spectrum.”<sup>277</sup> But given the scope that the party hoped to take in, this for the time being was impossible. There were many divergent elements to the party, and not only the political make-up of the party, but its governing ideology was at times highly dependent upon the composition of the local party apparatus.<sup>278</sup> What is of interest is that inter-reactionary ideologies were present in those diverse elements which constituted the DNVP.

Van den Bruck is most frequently associated with the National Socialists because of his book *Germany's Third Empire* (i.e., *Das Dritte*

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<sup>275</sup> Lewis Hertzman, “The Founding of the German National People’s Party (DNVP), November 1918-January 1919, *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 30, No.1 (March, 1958), 25.

<sup>276</sup> Hertzman, “*Founding the DNVP*,” 26.

<sup>277</sup> Hertzman, “*Founding the DNVP*,” 27.

<sup>278</sup> Hertzman, “*Founding the DNVP*,” 30-33.

*Reich/The Third Reich*),<sup>279</sup> a term and concept which was effectively utilized by the NSDAP. He is dealt with in this section on the DNVP for several reasons. First, van den Bruck was a part of the neo-conservative movement after the emergence of the Weimar Republic. Van den Bruck through this movement sought to be non-partisan while thoroughly conservative. Second, and perhaps most importantly, he was a nationalist, but as is apparent from *Germany's Third Empire* also a monarchist, although highly critical throughout his life and *Germany's Third* of the Wilhelmine Germany. This monarchial bent is demonstrated in *Germany's Third Empire* with such statements as: "Weimar is slow to recognize that it can only win a right to endure if it is able to make itself the continuation of the monarchy, not its negation. We repeat: it can only survive if it succeeds in being for the nation what the monarchy was of old: a democracy with a leader – not parliamentarianism."<sup>280</sup> In defining his position, van den Bruck says conservatism: "stands for security of the nation, preservation of the nation, devotion to the monarchy . . ."<sup>281</sup> Third, van den Bruck had once heard Hitler speak and reportedly stated: "I would rather commit suicide than see such a man in office."<sup>282</sup> This was hardly a resounding endorsement for the NSDAP. Four, van den Bruck and the DNVP had a "hatred of the Social Democratic

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<sup>279</sup> van den Bruck, *Germany's Third Empire* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1934). Originally published in German in 1923.

<sup>280</sup> van den Bruck, *Germany's Third Empire*, 133.

<sup>281</sup> van den Bruck, *Germany's Third Empire*, 214.

<sup>282</sup> In Fritz Stern, *The Politics of Cultural Despair: A Study in the Rise of the Germanic Ideology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1961), 237. Ironically van den Bruck committed suicide in 1925, eight years before Hitler came to power and brought van den Bruck's concept of The Third Reich to fruition.

Party . . . and the subsequent peace treaty.”<sup>283</sup> Those within the DNVP were positively bonded by “the view of the Bismarckian monarchy as the best and most suitable form of government for the German people.”<sup>284</sup> One would be hard pressed to find much beyond praise for Bismark in the pages of *Germany’s Third Empire*.<sup>285</sup> One example of this view of Bismarckianism is van den Bruck’s affirmation that: “our old, enduring mission is a continuation of the task of . . . the Bismarckian Empire.”<sup>286</sup>

The establishment of Moeller van den Bruck ideologically with the radical wing of the DNVP is important. It is important because of the DNVP’s relative position of power within Weimar, and that ideologies usually associated with the NSDAP were not a marginal issue arising only to a crisis point in late Weimar. Van den Moeller’s last major literary work, *Germany’s Third Empire*, is a window into ideologies which were to be found within the ranks of “the rank and file” of the largest conservative party, within the early Weimar period.

Van den Bruck carried all of the conspiracy theories of the Weimar context. Reading through *Germany’s Third Empire* is a *passim* of anti-Semitic, anti-Republic, anti-pacifist, and anti-liberal comments, as well as the *Dolchstoß* theory.<sup>287</sup> More than perhaps any other writer van den Bruck is vehemently suspicious of the role of Freemasonry in the demise of Germany,

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<sup>283</sup> Attila Chanady, “The Disintegration of the German National People’s Party 1924-1930,” *Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 39, No. 1 (March 1967), 69. Both Chanady and Stern would no doubt disagree with affiliating van den Bruck with the DNVP, however, the ideological breadth of the party along with the defining characteristics would not have found van den Bruck an outcast there.

<sup>284</sup> Chanady, “Disintegration,” 69.

<sup>285</sup> Examples of this pro-Bismarckian position can be found in: van den Bruck, *Germany’s Third Empire*, 19-20, 89, 105-106, 120, 184, and 245.

<sup>286</sup> van den Bruck, *Germany’s Third Empire*, 245.

<sup>287</sup> Examples of this may be found on pages 24, 27, 29, 43, 77, 82, 86, 112, 133, 186, 233 in van den Bruck, *Germany’s Third Empire*.

reflecting the link present in the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* between Freemasonry and Judaism.<sup>288</sup> In addition to his more conspiratorial views were his inter-reactionary viewpoints.<sup>289</sup> Van den Bruck viewed himself as a disciple and progeny of Houston Stewart Chamberlain.<sup>290</sup> As such he sought for a spiritual renewal and a new race of Germans.<sup>291</sup> Van den Bruck held that the church had done much to dilute and destroy Christianity. He hoped for a restoration of Christianity, the “Christianity of anger and will, which would be the true Christianity of our humanity.”<sup>292</sup> Van den Bruck was not seeking a political religion, as is Stern’s contention,<sup>293</sup> but rather the religious politic of Steigmann-Gall’s thesis, which will be considered in a moment. He perceived, like others of the right wing of his time, that “Christianity had failed to realize Christ, or to convey his message to men, and has allowed His redeeming power to be filtered away in a war of creeds.”<sup>294</sup> The echo of Chamberlain’s complaint against the Church is heard in van den Bruck’s complaint. In its “true” form, Christianity revealed what The Third Reich was to be. Like Christianity, it was to be “eternal” in its pursuit of unattainable perfection.<sup>295</sup> Likewise, communism, the enemy of all things German, had all things against it even “the most intimate revolution in history – the appearance

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<sup>288</sup> van den Bruck, *Germany’s Third Empire*, 82. Van den Bruck believed that all involved at Versailles were Freemasons.

<sup>289</sup> Certainly van den Bruck would bristle at this term being applied to him as he viewed himself as conservative and in the sixth chapter of *Germany’s Third Empire* pours considerable scorn upon reactionaries. Nevertheless, in the framework of this study the term is apropos.

<sup>290</sup> Houston Stewart Chamberlain, *Political Ideas*, Intro. and trans., Alexander Jacob, (Lanham: MD: University Press of America, 2005), 35ff. Also Stern, *Cultural Despair*, 187.

<sup>291</sup> van den Bruck, *Germany’s Third Empire*, 23.

<sup>292</sup> van den Bruck as quoted in Stern, *Cultural Despair*, 199.

<sup>293</sup> Stern, *Cultural Despair*, 255-265.

<sup>294</sup> van den Bruck, *Germany’s Third Empire*, 42.

<sup>295</sup> van den Bruck, *Germany’s Third Empire*, 44.

of Christ and the introduction of Christianity.”<sup>296</sup> Christianity in this sense sided with the cause of van den Bruck against the great opponent of the German *Volk*. The failure of the monarchy and its inability to reestablish itself was for van den Bruck a coordination of an absence of things “royal” and “Christian” in Germany and because of this “there is no king.”<sup>297</sup> According to van den Bruck “the idea of monarchy involves the idea of consecration: which the last of our monarchs desecrated.”<sup>298</sup> Further, “loyalty to the monarch and loyalty to God reinforced and complemented each other, forming a unity on which the state was founded.”<sup>299</sup> Both however “became mere customs and lost their consecration; they became formulas which had lost their content.”<sup>300</sup>

The establishment of The Third Reich would mean the restoration of a consecrated monarchy (which might take various forms) and the restoration of a pure, original Christianity freed from the dogma of creedal “wars.” As much as German politics was to transcend parties, German Christianity in The Third Reich was to transcend confessions.<sup>301</sup> Van den Bruck concludes by asserting: “This is only ONE EMPIRE, as there is only ONE CHURCH. Anything else that claims the title may be a state or a community or a sect. There exists only THE EMPIRE. German nationalism fights for the possible Empire.”<sup>302</sup> Moeller van den Bruck, while non-partisan, does reflect at least in part the thinking of

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<sup>296</sup> van den Bruck, *Germany's Third Empire*, 233.

<sup>297</sup> van den Bruck, *Germany's Third Empire*, 227.

<sup>298</sup> van den Bruck, *Germany's Third Empire*, 227.

<sup>299</sup> van den Bruck, *Germany's Third Empire*, 247.

<sup>300</sup> van den Bruck, *Germany's Third Empire*, 247.

<sup>301</sup> van den Bruck, *Germany's Third Empire*, 254.

<sup>302</sup> van den Bruck, *Germany's Third Empire*, 263. Capitalization reflects the original.

many in the DNVP, and also gives a glimpse into the inter-reactionary ideological interplay with the DNVP and Christianity.

The Free Conservative Seigfried von Kardorff during an early public meeting of the DNVP in Berlin declared: “Our party in which friendly right-wing parties have united, has no past . . . We have a present and, if God will, a good future,” a member in attendance added the rejoinder: “but without Jews!”<sup>303</sup> Kardorff continued outlining the interests of the party “upholding the rights of monarchy, of agriculture, the middle class and the church.”<sup>304</sup> Perhaps most important is Kardorff’s assertion that the DNVP was not a party of Lutheran Orthodoxy but “rather we find recognition wherever living Christianity is found.”<sup>305</sup> Living Christianity, however, meant Protestant Christianity. Gottfried Traub in a flier for the party stated: “Germany must be governed by Germans. No Romish intrigues are going to rob us of our heritage of the Reformation. Protestant spirit must remain strong in our Fatherland.”<sup>306</sup> In this short statement Traub had openly implied several salient points: 1) The government of the Weimar Republic was un-German, i.e., Jewish/communist. 2) Catholics were un-German, inasmuch as they did not reflect the Protestant spirit, and this Catholicism was conspiratorial in nature in attempting to subvert the Protestant spirit. 3) The DNVP was Protestant in character. Another DNVP flier demonstrates this third point more fully: “Evangelical voters, men and women! . . . Your Catholic fellow Christians are represented by the Center Party. Where are you, Evangelical

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<sup>303</sup> Hertzman, “*Founding the DNVP*,” 29-30.

<sup>304</sup> Hertzman, “*Founding the DNVP*,” 30.

<sup>305</sup> Hertzman, “*Founding the DNVP*,” 30.

<sup>306</sup> Hertzman, *DNVP*, 45.

Christians to turn? Your solution can be only this: German National.”<sup>307</sup> This too demonstrates a further political reality in Weimar. It was understood that people would vote not simply along political ideological lines, but also along religious lines, although the distinction between those lines was vague at best and indiscernible in the worst case.

Within its platform the DNVP called for a “strong German nationality” which “consciously preserves its nature and essence and keeps itself free of foreign influence.”<sup>308</sup> While early in the party’s history there was a constant struggle regarding anti-Semitism, the party program eventually came to articulate it stating: “we resist the undermining, un-German spirit in all forms, whether it stems from Jewish or other circles. We are emphatically opposed to the prevalence of Judaism in the government and public life . . . .”<sup>309</sup> With respect to religion, some separation between church and state was to be observed; however, the DNVP also stressed that it was “from a deepening of Christian awareness we expect the moral rebirth of our people which is a fundamental condition of its political resurgence. Religion is a national issue.”<sup>310</sup> The DNVP, despite the disparate conservative voices within its rank and file, gave expression in its own way to the idealistic inter-reactionary ideologies of the Weimar era. This is of importance given its standing from the beginning of the Weimar Republic in 1919 when it won, rather unexpectedly, 42 seats in parliament (of 421), to the height of its influence in

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<sup>307</sup> Hertzman, *DNVP*, 45.

<sup>308</sup> German National People’s Party, “Program of the German National People’s Party,” *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook*, Anton Kaes, Martin Jay, and Edward Dimendberg, eds. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 350.

<sup>309</sup> German National People’s Party, “Program,” 350.

<sup>310</sup> German National People’s Party, “Program,” 350.

1924 when it controlled 103 seats.<sup>311</sup> The DNVP is significant in that before the rise of the NSDAP, idealistic inter-reactionary ideologies were already substantially in play.

**3.4.8 The NSDAP and Christianity.** If the DNVP was the dominant right-wing party of in the first part of the Weimar Republic then it was the NSDAP that came on the scene to capture that position in the second part of its existence. As has been stated, a good deal of study has been dedicated to the relationship of the NSDAP to Christianity after the 1933 seizure of power but far less to the situation of Christianity to the NSDAP, or for that matter inter-reactionary ideologies that were reflective of NSDAP positions.<sup>312</sup> It is in fact now well established that the NSDAP had from its outset throughout the so-called “peaceful” period of the Third Reich (1933-1938) a rather ambiguous and cagey relationship with the church and Christianity. The NSDAP, with respect to Christianity, was not monolithic. On the one hand Goebbels’ early diary is filled with references which refer in positive, if insouciant fashion, to Christianity. His entries on November 1, 1925, November 23, 1925, December 5, 1925, May 13, 1926, for example all make mention of ecclesiastical days: All Saints Day, Penance Day, Christmastide

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<sup>311</sup> Eyck, *Weimar*, vol. 1, 299. Also Martin Otto, “Reichstagswahlen in der Weimarer Republik,” <http://www.zum.de/psm/weimar> (accessed October 27, 2009).

<sup>312</sup> For treatments of Christianity and the NSDAP after the seizure of power, the reader is directed to the following studies: Doris L. Bergen, *Twisted Cross: The German Christian Movement in the Third Reich* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996); Susannah Heschel, *The Aryan Jesus: Christian Theologians and the Bible in Nazi Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008); Robert Erickson and Susannah Heschel, *Betrayal: German Churches and the Holocaust* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999); Arthur C. Cochrane, *The Church’s Confession Under Hitler* (Pittsburgh: The Pickwick Press, 1976); Kevin Spicer, *Hitler’s Priests: Catholic Clergy and National Socialism* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2008). *The Persecution of the Catholic Church in the Third Reich: Facts and Documents Translated from the German* (Fort Collins, CO: McCaffrey Publishing, 1941).



(with a *Gloria in excelsis Deo* added), and Ascension Day respectively.<sup>313</sup> On the day the Locarno Treaty negotiations ended (October 16, 1925), Goebbels comments: “why were those nations converted to Christianity. Just so they could squander it!”<sup>314</sup> If Christianity could be squandered, then it must have had value in the eyes of Goebbels and one could hardly get closer to the heart of the NSDAP than Goebbels. He also comments on November 14, 1925 (which he notes is Corpus Christi Day), that he met Dietrich Klagges and remarks that Klagges was working on a book about Christ.<sup>315</sup>

In this book, Klagges states that he hopes to add to the contributions of Houston Stewart Chamberlain, Alfred Rosenberg, Kurd Niedlich, and Paul Lagarde.<sup>316</sup> Klagges is an example of attempts to come to terms with “positive Christianity.” For instance, Klagges maintains that Christianity as it presently stands in Germany cannot be taken in lump sum as German religion or reflective of the German soul. Much of it is of foreign origin (!); nevertheless, there is to be found in it genuine German fruit.<sup>317</sup> Luther for instance is such a German element in his contribution of the concept of the freedom of the Christian.<sup>318</sup> Like Chamberlain and Rosenberg, Klagges looked to Meister Eckhart for a solution to positive Christianity. Klagges states that Eckhart taught that if one seeks God outside one’s self, than that is precisely the wrong place to look. If one is to find God at all, then it is in inner search where one

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<sup>313</sup> Helmut Heiber, ed., *The Early Goebbels Diaries: 1925-1926* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1962), 46, 52, 85.

<sup>314</sup> Heiber, *Goebbels Diaries*, 42. The Locarno Treaty negotiations concluded with an agreement that Germany, Belgium, and France would not attack one another, and also included arbitration treaties with Poland and Czechoslovakia.

<sup>315</sup> Heiber, *Goebbels Diaries*, 49.

<sup>316</sup> Dietrich Klagges, *Das Urevangelium Jesu, der deutsche Glaube*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Leipzig: Armanen Verlag, 1933), iv.

<sup>317</sup> Klagges, *Urevangelium*, 8.

<sup>318</sup> Klagges, *Urevangelium*, 8.

will find God since “God is in me.”<sup>319</sup> This immanence is demonstrated in the way Klagges rejects the Hebraic creation narrative in favor of that contained in the *Poetic Edda* where the “universe evolves from the ground up on its own power and law.”<sup>320</sup> Odin is the embodiment of the father of life and the world, which is inherent in everything created from the inside out.<sup>321</sup> Further, Klagges holds that because of this God and the World are one with the German spirit, the evolution of the World is the evolution of God, and the destiny of the world is God’s destiny.<sup>322</sup>

Jesus, for Klagges, was an example of the outworking of this inward positive Christianity which had for its “Old Testament” the *Poetic Edda* and Meister Eckhart its Germanic prophet. The *Urevangelium* for Klagges did not begin with the Evangelists Matthew and Luke’s account of Jesus’ nativity narrative but rather at the baptism.<sup>323</sup> Jesus in arising from the Jordan “saw with his inner eye the heavens opened . . . and [with] his inner ear heard the words: *Du bist mein lieber Sohn, in dir will ich es!*”<sup>324</sup> Jesus awakens to an inner experience, that God has willed him to be his beloved son, but this is rather the story of humanity, or at least the German *Volk*. And it is from the German *Volk* movement that this new Christianity will come from the

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<sup>319</sup> Klagges, *Urevangelium*, 8.

<sup>320</sup> Klagges, *Urevangelium*, 9.

<sup>321</sup> Klagges, *Urevangelium*, 9.

<sup>322</sup> Klagges, *Urevangelium*, 9.

<sup>323</sup> Klagges, *Urevangelium*, 66.

<sup>324</sup> Klagges, *Urevangelium*, 69. This has been left in German for comparison. Note that *Markus* 1.11b in the *Einheitsübersetzung* reads: “*Du bist mein lieber Sohn, an dir habe ich Gefallen gefunden.*” In the *Luther-Revision von 1984* it reads: “*Du bist mein lieber Sohn, an dir habe ich Wohlgefallen.*” The *Luther-Bibel von 1534* has: “*Du bist mein lieber Son an dem ich wolgefallen habe.*” It is also a departure from the Greek: “Σὺ εἶ ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός, ἐν σοὶ εὐδόκησα.”

movement and passion of the *Volk*. It cannot arise from the church as long as the church clenches unrelentingly to its moribund and foreign dogmas.

Goebbels' comments on May 29, 1926, that he is reading Klagges' *Original Gospel of Jesus* which he maintains is "perhaps an epoch making book."<sup>325</sup> Given the material, it is little wonder why Goebbels thought it to be so. It also demonstrates that Christianity was not anathema to many in the NSDAP leadership, but Christianity was going to look much different under the NSDAP program of "positive Christianity." What Goebbels' early diaries, along with his admiration for Klagges' *Urevangelium*, demonstrate is that references to God and Christ were not "a simple deism divorced of Christian content; Christ held a central place in his worldview."<sup>326</sup>

This idea of Christianity was not simply confined to Goebbels; rather the idea of Christianity having a place in some form or fashion within the NSDAP is seen within the Nazi literature of the period.<sup>327</sup> The *Völkischer Beobachter* (*VB*) was the NSDAP's official newspaper. In the February 26, 1925, edition of the *VB*, Hitler takes pains to make clear that the NSDAP's opposition to the *Zentrumspartei* (*ZP*/Center Party-Catholic) is not because of its Christianity or its Catholicism but rather because it is Marxist, or at least supports other Marxist parties.<sup>328</sup> It is rather self-evident from this that Hitler is at the very least trying to appear non-confrontational toward Christianity. If he were hostile, it would seem logical that the NSDAP oppose the *ZP* on both

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<sup>325</sup> Heiber, *Goebbels Diaries*, 88

<sup>326</sup> Richard Steigmann-Gall, *The Holy Reich: Nazi Conceptions of Christianity, 1919-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 14.

<sup>327</sup> This stands in contrast to Hajo Holborn's notion that Hitler's "radical anti-Christian attitude was well established." Hajo Holborn, "Origins and Political Character of Nazi Ideology," *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 79, No. 4, December 1964, 543.

<sup>328</sup> *Völkischer Beobachter*, February, 26, 1925.

political *and* religious grounds. An even more open association with Christianity is found in the August 5/6, 1928, issue of *Die Neue Front* a supplement to the *VB* where the writer informs us that Jesus brought his redemptive Gospel in to the dying ancient world creating an island of new life in the midst of death and destruction.<sup>329</sup> A parallel is then made as the writer declares that each time affirmation and devout certainty are found the Gospels are opened anew.<sup>330</sup> In an interesting article titled “Forerunners of National Socialism” there is present an attempt to link Adolf Stoeker (1835-1909) and his Christian Social Movement with the NSDAP.<sup>331</sup> What is of particular interest is that not only is Stoeker’s anti-Semitism pointed out, but also his attempts to renew cultural Protestantism in Germany and to create an opposition party to the *ZP* which represented Catholic interests.<sup>332</sup> These were some of the traits the progeny of the forerunner was attempting to claim as inheritance. Again it is not a distancing from Christianity, but an attempt to claim a peculiar form, or at least parts of Christianity and especially German Christian heritage that interested the NSDAP. Even in the “ethos” of the *VB*, one finds the ambient “noise” of at least cultural Christianity. In the advertising section of the April 18/19, 1930 *VB*, a painting is offered for sale.<sup>333</sup> The picture is a depiction of a man rising, holding a swastika flag. In the corner of the picture are streams of light coming from heaven. The title of the piece is “Resurrection to the Light.” The allusion is of course to Christ’s

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<sup>329</sup> *Die Neue Front*, August, 5/6, 1928.

<sup>330</sup> *Die Neue Front*, August, 5/6, 1928.

<sup>331</sup> *Völkischer Beobachter, Politik/Belehrung/Unterhaltung*, September 1, 1928. Adolf Stoeker was the court chaplain to Kaiser Wilhelm and the founder of the Christian Social Party.

<sup>332</sup> *Völkischer Beobachter*, September 1, 1928.

<sup>333</sup> *Völkischer Beobachter*, April 18/19, 1930.

resurrection; the implication is that God has resurrected Germany by way of the NSDAP. This advertisement is reminiscent of the editorial cartoon in Julius Steicher's *Der Strümer* in 1929.<sup>334</sup> This cartoon has members of the Nazi *Sturmabteilung* carrying swastika flags parading and saluting as they pass in front of the crucified Christ. In the foreground a Jew is seen fleeing. Here again we have the NSDAP identifying with Christian images, even identifying their cause with "Christ's cause." Furthermore, the Christian and NSDAP alliance is depicted as anti-Semitic. In the *VB* August 25, 1932, issue, a photograph with the cut-line "We lowered the flag over 300 times" appears, referring to the number of NSDAP faithful who lost their lives in the struggle for power.<sup>335</sup> The central and dominant figures in this picture are two clergymen. In the December 25/26/27, 1932 *VB* the lead article is "Lord Make Us Free."<sup>336</sup> It is an article that talks about the Christ, about family gathering around the Christmas Tree at the time of Christ's birth on "Holy Evening." There is certainly an ethos of Christianity that pervades the *VB*. Finally, while just outside the contextual window of this study, the March 22, 1933, issue of *VB* is supportive of the general concept that the NSDAP in the Weimar era was not at any pains to distance itself from Christianity *per se*. March 1933 was the time of the Enabling Act which granted Hitler absolute powers. Two church services were reported on, one Protestant and one Catholic. The title of the article is "If God Is For Us Who Can Be Against Us?"<sup>337</sup> NSDAP notables present at the services were: Hermann Goering

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<sup>334</sup> *Der Strümer*, No. 13, 1929. In addition to publishing *Der Strümer*, Julius Streicher was *Gauleiter* of Franconia *Gau* during the Weimar era (beginning in 1925).

<sup>335</sup> *Völkischer Beobachter*, August 25, 1932.

<sup>336</sup> *Völkischer Beobachter*, December, 25/26/27, 1932.

<sup>337</sup> *Völkischer Beobachter*, March 22, 1933.

(head of the German Air Force), Alfred Hugenberg (Finance Minister), Franz Seldte (Leader of the *Stahlhelm*), and Konstantin von Neurath (Foreign Minister). They were all in the front row at the Protestant service, where Otto Dibelius preached. At the Catholic liturgy were Heinrich Himmler (SS Leader) and Franz Joseph von Papen (Vice Chancellor).<sup>338</sup>

The upshot is not that the NSDAP was a Christian organization; it most decidedly was not. Two points of significance, however, do emerge from party literature. First, there was a general ethos related to Christianity that was present in the NSDAP, and furthermore people within the NSDAP saw no contradiction – and on the part of some even an absolute and indissoluble, necessary connection – between the NSDAP and Christianity. Christianity, as long as it did not interfere with, and certainly if it promoted the goals of the NSDAP, was tolerated. Second, the NSDAP sought during its rise to power in the Weimar years, to forward some notion of Christianity as an overall piece of the NSDAP’s program. This is also demonstrated in Steigmann-Gall’s observation that: “leading Nazis put great stock in the strengthening of institutional Protestantism, above all as a bulwark against the Catholic Church.”<sup>339</sup> Further, the “infighting that took place over the policing of Nazi ideology reveals that Nazism, as a whole, although increasingly hostile to the churches, never became uniformly anti-Christian, displaying instead deep ambivalence and contradiction by the end.”<sup>340</sup>

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<sup>338</sup> *Völkischer Beobachter*, March 22, 1933.

<sup>339</sup> Steigmann-Gall, *Holy Reich*, 11.

<sup>340</sup> Steigmann-Gall, *Holy Reich*, 11.

Article 24 of the NSDAP's policy platform had from the outset set the stage for an association of Christianity within the NSDAP. The whole of article 24 reads:

We demand freedom of religion for all our religious denominations within the state so long as they do not endanger its existence or oppose the moral senses of the Germanic race. The Party as such advocates the standpoint of a positive Christianity without binding it confessionally to any one denomination. It combats the Jewish-materialistic spirit within and around us, and is convinced that a lasting recovery of our nation can only succeed from within on the framework: the good of the state before the good of the individual.<sup>341</sup>

This is the official NSDAP party platform drafted in 1920 by Gottfried Feder.

However the Party convention in Weimar in 1926 desired a programmatic discussion of the platform. Feder obliged, and as he observes, Hitler read over the manuscript.<sup>342</sup> In section E, Cultural Policy, of the programmatic discussion, Feder expands on the concept of "positive Christianity." Feder first notes that there are "numerous foolish and clumsy attacks on Christianity."<sup>343</sup> He states that it is easy to "judge the political church"<sup>344</sup> and the wrongs done in the Inquisition and Witch Trials. Feder concludes however that most Christians recognized these as mistakes, and that the mistakes of the institutional church cannot be laid at the doorstep of each Christian. For millions and millions of Christians, Feder maintains, the "Christian religion has meant hope and spiritual elevation and transported them from human suffering to God."<sup>345</sup> One meets after this, what is a repeated theme within the NSDAP's ideological circle concerning positive

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<sup>341</sup> Louis Snyder, *Hitler and Nazism* (New York: Franklin Watts, Inc., 1961), 19-20.

<sup>342</sup> Gottfried Feder, *Das Program der NSDAP und seine weltanschaulichen Grundgedanken* (München: Zentralverlag der NSDAP, 1935), 4. While this is the sixth edition, Feder himself comments that little material change had occurred.

<sup>343</sup> Gottfried Feder, *Das Program*, 60.

<sup>344</sup> Gottfried Feder, *Das Program*, 60.

<sup>345</sup> Gottfried Feder, *Das Program*, 61.

Christianity: “One must always distinguish between the spiritual nucleus of Christianity and the distortions of its secular manifestations.”<sup>346</sup> This idea, which was seen in the consideration of Chamberlain’s work, is that there is a Christian “kernel” as well as Germanic elements within Christianity that constitute positive Christianity. Feder emphatically maintains that the NSDAP “as a whole stands on the ground of positive Christianity.”<sup>347</sup>

Regarding the quest for a new way to acknowledge God, Feder states, that these concerns are rather remote “from even such a revolutionary program as ours.”<sup>348</sup> However, Feder concludes the section by stating that because the party had maintained from its outset that it was *for* a positive Christianity that the NSDAP: “declines to identify itself with efforts to resurrect the Wotan cult, as certain political clerics have claimed.”<sup>349</sup> This meant that Christianity, in whatever form it might eventually take, was the acknowledged religion of the NSDAP. Neo-paganism might exist and be practiced by many within the party and even at points form a syncretism with Christianity, and Adolf Hitler might even be viewed as the Messiah, but the *name* that was attached to whatever religious aberration came out of this mix of the NSDAP and Christianity was going to be Christianity. The church, holding onto many of the same inter-reactionary ideologies as the NSDAP, recognized that the NSDAP was not derogating or demolishing Christianity but rather in many respects acknowledging it and its legitimate place in German culture.

In years following the drafting of the NSDAP program, Hitler made repeated references to Christ, as Steigmann-Gall has documented well:

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<sup>346</sup> Gottfried Feder, *Das Program*, 61.

<sup>347</sup> Gottfried Feder, *Das Program*, 61.

<sup>348</sup> Gottfried Feder, *Das Program*, 61.

<sup>349</sup> Gottfried Feder, *Das Program*, 61.



In a speech delivered in front of a Nazi audience in April 1922, Hitler made a . . . more explicit reference to Christianity, referring to Jesus as “the true God.” He made it plain that he regarded Christ’s struggle as direct inspiration for his own. For Hitler, Jesus was not just one archetype among others, but “our greatest Aryan leader” . . . At a Christmas celebration given by the Munich branch of the NSDAP in December 1926, Hitler maintained that the movement’s goal was to “translate the ideals of Christ into deeds” . . . On another occasion . . . Hitler proclaimed the centrality of Christ’s teachings for his movement: “We are the first to exhume these teachings! Through us alone, and not until now, do these teachings celebrate their resurrection!”<sup>350</sup>

Again, this is not saying that Hitler was in any way a Christian, merely that Christian concepts and language were being used within the NSDAP and at the highest levels, and that a culture of Christianity that was present within Germany had remained inasmuch as Germans constituted the NSDAP.

This Christian ethos even played a part in the formation of NSDAP ceremony and narrative. In remembrance of the martyrs of the failed November 1923 putsch, the ceremony of the blood-flag was formed.<sup>351</sup> The blood-flag had been carried and stained by the blood of those Nazis killed during the Beer Hall Putsch. Simon Taylor, in delineating the blood-flag ceremony, states: “The Bloodflag is a transparent allegory of the Christian cross, especially in its representation of the process of historical salvation for a nation or people through the blood-sacrifice of another . . . But the blood of the martyrs, like the blood of Christ, was also a means of transfiguration.”<sup>352</sup>

Perhaps the greatest piece of narrative engineering came with the death of Horst Wessel. Wessel was the son of a Lutheran pastor, who had come to believe deeply in the program of the NSDAP. Wessel felt so strongly that the

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<sup>350</sup> Steigmann-Gall, *Holy Reich*, 27.

<sup>351</sup> Simon Taylor, “Symbol and Ritual under National Socialism,” *British Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 32, No. 4, December 1981.

<sup>352</sup> Taylor, “Symbol and Ritual,” 509.

NSDAP could help the people that his heart went out to “the hungry, the unemployed, the poor, and the suffering.”<sup>353</sup> He wrote the song which was to become the NSDAP anthem. He was elevated to command of Storm V of the SA and turned it into a crack unit,<sup>354</sup> but his involvement with a prostitute marked the end of his rising star. He moved in with her, and his activities with the SA declined drastically.<sup>355</sup> Wessel was shot on January 14, 1930, and eventually died in the hospital on February 23, 1930.<sup>356</sup> While the exact circumstances of Wessel’s death remain a mystery, Goebbels portrayed it as the work of communist conspirators and painted Wessel as a great shining heroic martyr in the NSDAP cause.<sup>357</sup> In the February 27, 1930, issue of *Der Angriff*, Goebbels describes him thus: “Horst Wessel has passed away. His earthly remains lie here mute and silent. But I feel it in my bones – I’m absolutely sure of it – his soul was resurrected, to live among us all . . . he is marching in our columns.”<sup>358</sup> Indeed the funeral was a regalia spectacular and Goebbels spoke: “I can see columns marching, endless, endless. A humiliated people rises up and begins to stir . . .”<sup>359</sup> Baird observes that: “from this point on, the myth of resurrection and return became standard fare in the Nazi propaganda repertoire.”<sup>360</sup> Films were later made about Wessel. In the film *Hans Westmar: One of Many*, the character playing the role of Wessel (Westmar): “is totally prepared to deliver victory or die in the attempt. Jesus

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<sup>353</sup> Jay W. Baird, “Horst Wessel and the Myth of Resurrection and Return,” *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 17, No. 4 (October 1982), 635.

<sup>354</sup> Baird, “Horst Wessel,” 636.

<sup>355</sup> Baird, “Horst Wessel,” 638.

<sup>356</sup> Baird, “Horst Wessel,” 638.

<sup>357</sup> Baird, “Horst Wessel,” 639.

<sup>358</sup> Baird, “Horst Wessel,” 639. This is reminiscent of the cartoon in *Der Strücker* which appeared a year prior to Wessel’s death, see note 89.

<sup>359</sup> Baird, “Horst Wessel,” 641.

<sup>360</sup> Baird, “Horst Wessel,” 641.

has called him to aid the cause of delivering Germany from the Golgotha of Versailles and the Weimar Republic . . .”<sup>361</sup> The significance of the Horst Wessel incident, and the narrative to which it gave birth, was that it produced “a synthesis of Nazi, Teutonic, and pseudo-Christian components which offered cohesion to an otherwise amorphous Party ideology.”<sup>362</sup> The blending of these elements was an expression of “positive Christianity.”

As will be demonstrated in the section on the church in the Weimar Republic, many welcomed the ideologies that were reflected by the NSDAP, and as much as the NSDAP had “adopted” a form of Christianity, the church would in turn adopt a form of National Socialism. Yet for others, no matter which side of this mirror one looked, it was a highly distressing development and reflected nothing of orthodox Christianity. It reflected instead a variety of inter-reactionary ideologies in Christian clothing.

The NSDAP has a complex relationship with Christianity. It has been argued that the NSDAP’s intention was the elimination of Christianity and that the NSDAP was in fact anti-Christian in nature. It has also been suggested that the NSDAP wished to eventually replace Christianity with its own form of political religion.<sup>363</sup> Steigmann-Gall’s argument centers around the thesis that the National Socialist’s did not represent a political religion, but rather a religious politic.<sup>364</sup> National Socialism in this case was not anti-Christian nor had it set out to de-Christianize German or to become a political religion

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<sup>361</sup> Baird, “Horst Wessel,” 643.

<sup>362</sup> Baird, “Horst Wessel,” 646.

<sup>363</sup> For an analysis of the literature related to this, see: Richard Steigmann-Gall, “Nazism and the Revival of Political Religion Theory,” *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions*, Vol. 5, No. 3 (Winter 2004), 376-396. Also, Steigmann-Gall, *The Holy Reich*. Steigmann-Gall points to both Detlev Peukert and Gerhard Ritter as proponents of this theory.

<sup>364</sup> Steigmann-Gall, “Nazism,” 385.

which would eventually co-opt Christianity. Steigmann-Gall maintains that the NSDAP had Christianity in its platform, in its ethos, and in its Protestant support: “In the case of Nazism, the overwhelming attraction among Germany’s Protestants, similarly cutting across class lines, would justifiably qualify the NSDAP as a Protestant Centre Party, fulfilling long-held ambition to rally together a disparate Protestant electorate around an ideological *Volkspartei*.”<sup>365</sup>

A point of clarification should be made here. Steigmann-Gall builds his thesis in part upon the composition of the vote for the NSDAP in the Weimar period. The vote does lend support to this idea; however, in Burstein’s study (one to which Steigmann-Gall points), Burstein notes that this clear confessional vote is not apparent until very late in Weimar.<sup>366</sup> The Burstein study does, however, support a confessional vote early, particularly when economic factors played into the picture. This is asserted by the Burstein study and supported by the O’Loughlin, et al., study.<sup>367</sup> Whether early or late,

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<sup>365</sup> Steigmann-Gall, “Nazism,” 384. Loren K. Waldman, brings an interesting point to light. In this study a distinction is drawn between integrated Protestants (those that were active in a congregation) and non-integrated Protestants (i.e., cultural Protestants). While Waldman demonstrates that Protestant leadership was “unofficially favorable” toward the NSDAP, integrated Protestants were less likely to vote for the NSDAP than non-integrated Protestants, where one might have expected just the opposite to occur since leadership would have greater access to integrated rather than non-integrated Protestants. Loren Waldman, “Mass-Society Theory and Religion: The Case of the Nazis,” *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 20, No. 2 (May 1976), 319-326.

<sup>366</sup> William Burstein, *The Logic of Evil: The Social Origins of the Nazi Party, 1925-1933* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 21-25, 202. This is also seen in: John O’Loughlin, Colin Flint, and Luc Anselin, “The Geography of the Nazi Vote: Context, Confession, and Class in the Reichstag Election of 1930,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, Vol. 84, No. 3 (September 1994), 353, 356. Also: Thomas Childers, “The Social Basis of the National Socialist Vote,” *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 11, No. 4 (October 1976), 26-28.

<sup>367</sup> Burstein, *Logic of Evil*, 28; O’Loughlin, et al., “Geography,” 356. Burstein maintains that the NSDAP was voted for because of reasons of the self-interest of the voter. Often this was reflected first by economic factors, as well as other sub-factors such as confessionalism.

the Protestants did eventually vote “confessionally” for the NSDAP, the NSDAP then becoming as Steigmann-Gall states the party of Protestantism.

The question Steigmann-Gall places before his readers is that since Nazism could not represent both the enemy which desired to destroy Christianity and “simultaneously derive its ideology from Christian convictions . . . did the Nazis view themselves as a replacement for Christianity, or as its restorer?”<sup>368</sup> In choosing for the later, Steigmann-Gall is compelled to deal with what he feels are exceptions to this understanding, most notably in Himmler and then also in Rosenberg. Steigmann-Gall deals with Himmler as sort of a side-show freak with his neo-pagan approach, a laughing stock even to those in his own command.<sup>369</sup> Rosenberg is treated with higher respect but also on the fringe of the NSDAP. While it may be the case that Himmler was a full neo-paganist, Rosenberg cannot be so cast. Rosenberg, as has been demonstrated, sought for a restoration of “seminal or kernal” Christianity, and to blend it with neo-pagan elements. This has also been seen with Klagges’ treatise. In reality what can be said thus far is that the NSDAP’s policy of “positive Christianity” was reflected in a number of ways. Some thought the NSDAP was going to restore true Christianity and strengthen the Church. This was the hope of many in the Protestant church leadership. Others sought a more individual Christianity expressed by the pietistic theme of seeking the Kingdom of God within oneself and by extension with the *Volk*: these were “kernel” Christians. There were also Christians that wished to conflate neo-pagan elements with “kernel” Christianity. So there were a variety of “Christianities” being expressed

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<sup>368</sup> Steigmann-Gall, “Nazism,” 385.

<sup>369</sup> Steigmann-Gall, “Nazism,” 386-389.

within the NSDAP and also within the Protestant church. Most Protestants probably did not feel as though they were going against their Christianity in voting for the NSDAP, and in fact may have felt as though they were doing the opposite, given the NSDAP's program and proclamations.

Where Steigmann-Gall's understanding fails is not a failure of historical interpretation but of theology. At the beginning of his book, he takes Doris Bergen to task for her assessment that German Christians were "ultimately non-Christian."<sup>370</sup> Steigmann-Gall's thesis is that the NSDAP and those that voted for them were Christian. This is true enough in an historical sense, in a cultural sense, even perhaps in the deepest belief in the hearts of those that named themselves both National Socialist and Christian. But, when one moves from the historical to the theological, the proposition changes. Just because something bears the name Christian or Church, does not necessarily make it so in essence or in substance. Stephen Eldridge provides a synthesis of these concepts. First he states that: "During Hitler's rule, nearly all German citizens (95 percent) considered themselves Christians. More than half (55 percent) were Protestant. Thus, most Germans who welcomed Hitler's rise to power and witnessed his terror were self-professed Christians."<sup>371</sup> This then is in line with the Steigmann-Gall thesis. Eldridge also offers this assessment of Christianity and National Socialism:

Like a slithering snake, Nazi ideology crept into the very heart of German Protestantism . . . At stake during Hitler's tyranny was nothing less than the very fabric of German Reformation Christianity. Like a quickly replicating virus, National Socialism began to weave itself into

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<sup>370</sup> Doris Bergen, *Twisted Cross: The German Christian Movement in the Third Reich* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 192.

<sup>371</sup> Stephen Eldridge, "Ideological Incompatibility: The Forced Fusion of Nazism and Protestant Theology and its Impact on Anti-Semitism in the Third Reich," *International Social Science Review*, Vol. 82, Nos. 3 and 4, 152.

the soul of Protestant theology, ultimately blurring the line between worship of nation and worship of God.<sup>372</sup>

Eldridge is correct in that what was at stake was the very core of Reformed Christianity, that is, its substance. However, Eldridge's view would establish that National Socialism wove its way into Christianity, thereby destroying its substance. The primary problem with this understanding is that it lends itself too easily to the idea that the National Socialists were responsible for the co-opting of the Protestant church. On the contrary, National Socialism did not "slither in" the back door secretly as an unwelcome houseguest. What is readily apparent is that ideologically the Protestant church had already prepared the table setting for the NSDAP. What the National Socialists did, in large part, was to bring to fruition the ugliest aspects of inter-reactionary ideology to which the church was already susceptible. It was a marriage between an ideologically predisposed church and a political party. The Protestant church had compromised its essence by combining Christianity with the *Realpolitik* of the NSDAP. Nazis could be and were "Christian," and "Christians" could be and were Nazis. This was the situation by the end of the Weimar Republic.

The perceived decadence of the Weimar society also provided common ground for many in the church and the NSDAP. More will be said about this in the next chapter dealing with the church in Weimar, but the NSDAP program like that of the DNVP reflected this concern. As Feder states it in the program discussion: "of greater practical importance is the outcome of our struggle against cultural decadence. We are engaged in a struggle against cultural decadence against cultural disintegration and

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<sup>372</sup> Stephen Eldridge, "Ideological Incompatibility," 151.

contamination in the fields of art, literature, science, theatre, movies, and before all else, the press.”<sup>373</sup> This moral, cultural contamination is graphically depicted in the April 15, 1931, issue of *Die Brennessel*,<sup>374</sup> where two farmers are shown dumping manure over the theaters of Germany.

Other than the moral decay, there were ideas in play in the Weimar Republic that led many to the conclusion that Germany was at risk under a Weimar government, and that if Germany were at risk, German Christianity and the Protestant German Church were at risk. Karl Barth sensed that the Protestant Church was in dire straits as well but for entirely different reasons. The myth of the *analogia entis* and its noetic-ontic structures were taking form in the general environs of Weimar, as well as the two pre-dominantly Protestant political parties. The general atmosphere of Weimar was reflected as well in its cultural microcosms. These microcosms, church and university, were also the microcosms with which Barth had lived and worked during the Weimar period. Attention will be given first to the ecclesiastical context.

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<sup>373</sup> Gottfried Feder, *Das Program*, 61.

<sup>374</sup> *Die Brennessel*, April 15, 1931.



**Chapter Four**  
**Contextual Realities:**  
**The Ethical-Existential Effects of the Myth**  
**in the Protestant Church**

The November Revolution of 1918, which followed Germany's defeat at the end of World War I, brought the Social Democrats into power (in coalition with others especially Independents). It marked the beginning of a fifteen-year struggle both within the new government of the Weimar Republic, a Socialist Republican Democracy, as well as within the Evangelical Church. Karl-Wilhelm Dahm paints the picture well when he states that the disorientation of the revolution was not confined to the Church, but was a broader phenomenon of the time.<sup>375</sup> The Evangelical Church was never at rest during the Weimar era, theological and power struggles coming within its ranks at all times from all quarters. There was an ongoing struggle for political and thereby ideological supremacy within the church throughout the Weimar period. This was a struggle which Karl Barth observed and in which he took part.

Prior to the Weimar government, the Protestant Church had enjoyed the protection of the crown as well as substantial subvention of the state. With

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<sup>375</sup> Karl-Wilhelm Dahm, *Pfarrer und Politik* (Köln: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1965), 27.

Weimar came immediate uncertainty regarding the future of the church. From the very outset, the Weimar government was viewed with suspicion and within the Evangelical Church the ambient sounds of conspiracy against the Republic were whispered but more often shouted from the mountain tops. The perception was that: “the revolution felled the *Volkskirche*’s ally and protector, the monarchial ‘Christian’ state and introduced the ‘religionless’ Republic.”<sup>376</sup>

**4.1 The Theological Problem of War.** At the beginning of Weimar, the church was in theological crisis over the loss of what was perceived as a God-sanctioned war. The loss of the Great War was inconceivable since the prevailing view was that God had commissioned the German people in a holy cause. Sermons during the war triumphed and maintained that “not only justice but God Himself was on the German side . . . and therefore it [the war] could not be lost.”<sup>377</sup> It was even stated in the pages of the *Allgemeine Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirchenzeitung*: “We needed guns and ammunition for the last assault on the enemy in the west. God knew that we needed it. So He gave it to us freely, for God is munificent: 2,600 guns, 5,000 machine guns, etc.”<sup>378</sup> After all, the motto of the Second Reich was “*Gott mit uns*.”

Yet, “the holy war had come to a thoroughly unholy end.”<sup>379</sup> The loss of the war had sent so-called war theologians into a tailspin. It could not be that God had failed the people, but rather the people had failed God. There must be an explanation for the loss. Karl-Wilhelm Dahm numbers the reasons

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<sup>376</sup> Daniel Borg, *The Old-Prussian Church and the Weimar Republic: A Study in Political Adjustment, 1917-1927* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1984), 1.

<sup>377</sup> Karl-Wilhelm Dahm, “German Protestantism and Politics,” in *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol.3, No. 1 (January 1968), 30.

<sup>378</sup> Dahm, “German Protestantism,” 30.

<sup>379</sup> Dahm, *Pfarrer und Politik*, 173.

being forwarded by church conservatives and war theologians for Germany's defeat:

From the conservative-nationalist perspective, the war was not lost due to a hopeless military situation, rather it was lost because of a moral failure of home and front; on the basis of party-egotism, betrayal, *Dolchstoß*, fratricide, in final analysis because of the effectiveness of unholy, demonic powers.<sup>380</sup>

Someone must be to blame, besides God, and besides the *Volk*. So the process of demonizing, labeling, scape-goating, and witch-hunting began, and Weimar with its perceived Bolshevist and Jewish elements provided an expedient, and in its twisted way, logical resolution. Weimar was labeled a religionless Republic that threatened to undermine the fabric of what it meant to be German and to be a Christian in Germany. The Republic was viewed as amoral if not immoral. The Evangelical Church pondered the prospects of its existence under this new form of government, alien to the "German Spirit." Complicity with Weimar in the end meant for many complicity with the very elements that had brought the *Kaiserreich* to its demeaning and mortifying end.

The Great War had brought to the surface within the Protestant Church any nascent nationalism that had not yet emerged. The war was seen by some church leaders as a *Missio Dei* as well as a point of theology. Waves of nationalism overtook portions of the church. Sermons were given toward German nationalism on one level or another. The historian Martin Schian identified themes within wartime sermons, most avoiding over exuberance, but nevertheless expressing a war theology. The sermons fell into the categories of victory, hope and trust, and *völkisch*, which pointed to the special

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<sup>380</sup> Dahm, *Pfarrer und Politik*, 173.

role that God had for Germany through the war.<sup>381</sup> Some declarations of pastors, Schian maintained, “reflected colossal national egoism.”<sup>382</sup> William Pressel in his collected volume of sermons from the war years comes to the conclusion that war theology was the ascendant tendency in the preaching of the war period. In general support for the war effort and the assumed justness of the German position is demonstrated in a letter sent from the *Evangelischer Oberkirchenrat* (EOK) to the *Generalsynodalvorstand* (GSV): “We have regarded it as our patriotic duty during the war to invest all liquid capital, insofar as it is not needed to meet our urgent needs, in war loans.”<sup>383</sup>

War theologies, such as those proposed by Paul Althaus and Emanuel Hirsch maintained that in the activity of war God “blessed or condemned people . . . by their response to His challenge in war. . . . Here was a basic assumption of war theology that was now generalized into a theology of history. War was inherent in nature.”<sup>384</sup> Hirsch states this supposition forthrightly: “war is, without somehow glorifying it, understood as a necessary part of the divine creation, a necessary phenomenon of the historical life of humanity.”<sup>385</sup> Likewise, Althaus “assumed that God worked through historical events (such as war) to lead and chasten the folk.”<sup>386</sup> War theology stressed the communal obligations of individual to community.<sup>387</sup>

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<sup>381</sup> Borg, *Old-Prussian Church*, 37.

<sup>382</sup> Borg, *Old-Prussian Church*, 37.

<sup>383</sup> Borg, *Old-Prussian Church*, 305 n. 18. The EOK was the supreme council and was composed of church officials and clergy. See J.R.C. Wright, *Above Parties: The Political Attitudes of the German Protestant Church Leaders 1918-1933* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974), 22.

<sup>384</sup> Borg, *Old Prussian Church*, 180.

<sup>385</sup> Emanuel Hirsch, *Deutschlands Schicksal* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1925) p. 95. Author’s translation.

<sup>386</sup> Borg, *Old-Prussian Church*, 191.

<sup>387</sup> Hirsch, *Schicksal*, 93-94.

Failure of the war also meant reevaluation of war theology itself. While Socialists were “pilloring war theologians for heedlessly helping to prolong the war,”<sup>388</sup> war theologians themselves were busy interpreting the meaning of God’s revelation in the war. Two basic positions arose in this respect: 1) The *Volk* had failed God, and God was judging this moral failure.<sup>389</sup> 2) The Judas effect, that is that the *Volk* had been betrayed by enemies within.<sup>390</sup>

Before leaving the discussion, two other things should be noted. First, a good number of pastors and theologians, even those in the Christian socialist camp, found “their sympathies were with the ‘patriotic’ right wing”<sup>391</sup> when it came to the war. *The Manifesto of the Ninety-Three German Intellectuals* at the beginning of the war was a document that was pro-war to be sure, but was also nationalistic in tone.<sup>392</sup> Among the ninety-three signatures are included those of the following “liberal” theologians: Adolf Deissmann, Adolf von Harnack, Wilhelm Hermann, Friedrich Naumann, and Adolf von Schlatter.<sup>393</sup>

This document met the eyes of Karl Barth, then pastor of the Safenwil parish. It shattered him that his former professors (with the exception of Martin Rade) had signed this document. He described it as “the twilight of the

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<sup>388</sup> Borg, *Old-Prussian Church*, 4.

<sup>389</sup> Borg, *Old-Prussian Church*, 54, 191, 268.

<sup>390</sup> Borg, *Old-Prussian Church*, 54-55. It is interesting to note that the “first known articulation of the stab-in-the-back theory” was during a sermon by Bruno Doehring in February 1918. This was not the last or even best known declaration of the *Dolchstoß* theory. In 1919 then General Field Marshall von Hindenberg also articulated the *Dolchstoß*. “*Stenographischer Bericht über die öffentlichen Verhandlungen des 15. Untersuchungsausschusses der verfassungsgebenden Nationalversammlung*,” in *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook*, Anton Kaes, Martin Jay, Edward Dimenber, eds. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 15-16.

<sup>391</sup> Borg, *Old-Prussian Church*, 24.

<sup>392</sup> *Manifesto of the Ninety-Three German Intellectuals*, World War I Archives, [www.lib.byu.edu/index.php/Manifesto\\_of\\_the\\_Ninety\\_Three\\_German\\_Intellectuals](http://www.lib.byu.edu/index.php/Manifesto_of_the_Ninety_Three_German_Intellectuals), [Accessed November 18, 2009.]

<sup>393</sup> *Manifesto*.

gods.”<sup>394</sup> For Barth, “Their ‘ethical failure’ indicated that ‘their exegetical and dogmatic presuppositions could not be in order.’”<sup>395</sup> They had collapsed in the face of war ideology. Yet, it is important to keep in mind, that these men did not belong to the right wing conservatism that was beginning to take hold of the Evangelical Church. They were the moderates, the liberals, and Barth had weighed them and found them lacking. The right wing of the Old-Prussian Union Church would also prove to be a source of dismay.

Second, while it is true that war theology was in play, it should also be noted that:

War theology colored statements of churchmen even when they did not clearly subscribe to it. But this view of war fell far short of dominating the Old-Prussian church. Religious socialists and some liberals condemned anything smacking of war theology. Appalled by the unbridled nationalism and carnage of the recent war, they held modern-day ‘Lutherans’ responsible for dissolving the dualistic ethic and for sanctioning war without question.<sup>396</sup>

Even given this observation, such nationalist feelings and the theology that war was a necessary part of the order of creation are of concern. That these views held sway among some of the most prominent theologians of the time is troubling. William Pressel’s assessment that: “War theology reduced the sphere of ethical activity to the folk, conceived as a vessel through which God revealed His will,”<sup>397</sup> leads to the next aspect of earlier ideologies to make their way into the thought and practical life of the Evangelical Church. With defeat in war and the dissolution of the Second Reich came a new role for the

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<sup>394</sup> Eberhard Busch, *Karl Barth: His Life from Letters and Autobiographical Texts*, trans., John Bowden (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1976), 81.

<sup>395</sup> Busch, *Karl Barth*, 81.

<sup>396</sup> Borg, *Old-Prussian Church*, 180.

<sup>397</sup> Borg, *Old-Prussian Church*, 38.

Old church, that of the vessel of the *Volk* and all things *völkisch* and an understanding that God was revealing God's self in the *Volk*.

**4.2 The Problem of Weimar.** The response of the Evangelical Church was almost predictable given its constituency and leadership. The leadership of the Protestant Churches between 1918-1933 was conservative and thus at odds with the Weimar Republic, sympathetic to the opponents of Weimar up to and including, in the latter days of the Republic, the National Socialists.<sup>398</sup> A membership crisis had helped to festinate and solidify this conservative disposition of the church over and above the inherent paranoia which already set the negative tone between Weimar and the Evangelical Church. The first of these was a membership that had shrunk from pre-war numbers of approximately 40 million to Weimar period levels of 11 million.<sup>399</sup>

Exacerbating the crisis of membership and deepening the suspicions of the church with respect to the Republic came three artless and ill-conceived ideas from the ecclesiastically antagonistic head of the new Socialist *Kultusministerium* Adolf Hoffmann.<sup>400</sup> Hoffmann forwarded and supported three policies for the *Kultusministerium*: 1) In relation to schools, public prayers and religious celebrations were to be prohibited and religious

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<sup>398</sup> J.R.C. Wright, *Above Parties*, v.

<sup>399</sup> Wright, *Above Parties*, vi. This figure however, must be mitigated with the projections of Otto Dibelius who in 1927 "estimated that perhaps as many as 1 percent of the Evangelical population in Berlin and 3 percent in much of Northern Germany attended church on the average Sunday." Borg, *Old-Prussian Church*, 5. Additionally Borg membership projections are slightly higher than those of Wright, Borg placing membership in the Evangelical Church around 19 million between 1917 and 1927, comprising about thirty percent of the population. Borg, *Old-Prussian Church*, ix. Borg's numbers are perhaps more accurate in that they are based upon 1925 census data and broken down into the various *Landkirchen* regions. In any case the drop in membership was catastrophic and certainly raised the specter of extinction in the minds of many church leaders.

<sup>400</sup> Hoffmann shared the appointment with Konrad Haenisch, one from the majority party (SPD) and the other from the Independent Socialists (USPD). Bernard Fürst von Bülow, "Revolution in Berlin," in *Weimar Republic Sourcebook*, Anton Kaes, Martin Jay, and Edward Dimendberg, eds. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 58.

education was no longer to be required,<sup>401</sup> 2) the severing of state subvention of the church, and 3) the discontinuation of clerical supervision of public schools.<sup>402</sup> While none of these measures prevailed in their original forms, they did entrench from early on the notion that the Weimar government was no friend of the church. The right wing of the church, no matter their particular form of conservatism, rallied against such measures for the preservation of the church.

The leadership of the Evangelical Church was prompt to understand the implications, especially financial, in these measures. Given the high inflation rates, the unstable economy, and the occupation of the resource-rich Ruhr region by France, Weimar politicians were seeking ways of cutting the budget.<sup>403</sup> Eliminating the clerical class from the payroll as well as Church property maintenance would come to a considerable amount. While a complete separation of church and state had been declared in theory (a theory Hoffmann intended to make a reality), financially the church was bound to the state.<sup>404</sup> Not being able, however, to completely offend and lose the support of the Protestant and Catholic Churches, provision was made in order that the churches might continue on state subvention and also have the right to collect taxes since they were “recognized by the state as corporations of the public

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<sup>401</sup> Borg, *Old-Prussian Church*, 58-59.

<sup>402</sup> Borg, *Old-Prussian Church*, 57-60. These measures were met with equal disdain by both the Catholic as well as the Evangelical Church. Scholder adds that The Law on Facilitating Departure from Church and Jewish Synagogue Communities was also a factor in this disapprobation. Scholder, *The Churches 1*, 16. Scholder also states that the appointment of Hoffmann without any of these factors “could only be seen by the churches as the most forthright declaration of war.” *The Churches 1*, 16. See also Wright, *Above Parties*, 13.

<sup>403</sup> For an analysis of Weimar’s economic position see Erich Eyck, *A History of the Weimar Republic*, volume 2 (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1962), 109-125.

<sup>404</sup> Chapter 2, Section 3, Article 137; “The Constitution of the German Republic” in *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook*, Anton Kaes, Martin Jay, Edward Dimendberg, eds. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 50. The Weimar Constitution was adopted August 11, 1919.



law.”<sup>405</sup> To get an idea of how dependent the church was upon the state, one must consider that the general subventions for both the Catholic and Evangelical Church for 1925 were 148 million RM (Reichmark). In 1928 this figure came to 164 million RM.<sup>406</sup> This figure is exclusive of the tax revenue the churches could raise. In 1927 this tax amounted to 240 million RM.<sup>407</sup> By way of comparison 345 million Reichmarks were budgeted for welfare insurance in 1926-1927, exclusive of unemployment insurance.<sup>408</sup> This is indicative of the stakes behind early Weimar attempts (in the person of Hoffmann) to cut the Church away from the mooring in the state. Positions, power, and not a few *pfennig* were at stake.

**4.3 The Problem of Weimar Morality.** If the loss of the war and its challenge to the *völkisch* ideologies of the era and the economic threats were not enough, the perception of Weimar morality did not help the matters with the church. The repulsion toward much of what was occurring in the Weimar Republic is expressed in the DNVP party platform of 1931, Section 2, on religion:

We are fighting for the purity of German spiritual life, for a stronger emphasis on moral values in economics and politics. We are fighting against *filth* and *trash* in all manner of representation, against the spirit of easy pleasures and effortless acquisition, against dishonesty and corruptibility.<sup>409</sup>

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<sup>405</sup> Roger H. Wells, “The Financial Relations of Church and State in Germany, 1919-1937,” *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 53, No. 1 (March, 1938), 37.

<sup>406</sup> Wells, “Financial Relations,” 41.

<sup>407</sup> Wells, “Financial Relations,” 43. These amounts are after the introduction of the Dawes plan. The Rentenmark had become worthless due to hyperinflation. The Reichmark (or new Rentenmark) was introduced. Exchange was made at the rate of 1 Reichmark for each 1,000,000,000,000 (1 trillion Rentenmark). The new Reichmark was to be backed in value by at least 30% German Gold Reserve. These steps served to stabilize the Weimar Economy, at least until the global market crash at the end of the decade. See Eyck, *Weimar Republic*, vol. 2, 113ff. and vol. 1, 293ff.

<sup>408</sup> Eyck, *Weimar Republic*, vol. 2, 116.

<sup>409</sup> “Program of the German National People’s Party” in *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook*, Anton Kaes, Martin Jay, and Edward Dimendberg, eds. (Berkeley: University of California

Weimar values had clashed with everything Wilhelmian. New modern art forms twisted images and celebrated decadence; the artistic works of Max Beckmann, Paul Klee, and Wassily Kandinsky were evidence of this.<sup>410</sup> Thomas Mann's *A Death in Venice* about the pedophilic lust of a man was indicative of the Republic's perceived immoral posture.<sup>411</sup> Appeals and calls for more freedom of expression in the realm of sexuality (and homosexuality) contributed to the disapprobation of the Weimar Republic.<sup>412</sup> The nascent Republic invited opposition from the right wing because of such ideas. Weimar's liberal policies of contraception, abortion, democracy, civil unions, education, and capitalism had forged, at the very least, a conservative coalition that was agreed upon one thing: it was anti-republican and Weimar-phobic.<sup>413</sup> These factors, with the theological confusion resulting from the loss of the war, the economic and political threat from the Republic, and the perceived

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Press, 1994), 350. The DNVP (*Deutschnationale Volkspartei*/German National People's Party) was conservative and pro-monarchy. They also wished to embrace Christian ideals. Within the party anti-Semitism was embraced by most in some form or another. The DNVP was also strongly nationalist. See Lewis Hertzmann, *DNVP: Right-Wing Opposition in the Weimar Republic, 1918-1924* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1963), 52, 77, and 88. Author's italics.

<sup>410</sup> In his "Creative Credo," for instance, Beckmann contended against the current classical forms of art: "We hope we have gotten rid of a lot of what was there before. Emerging from a thoughtless imitation of the visible, from a feeble, archaic deterioration into empty decoration, and from false and sentimental, tumorous mysticism, we are hopefully arriving at a transcendental objectivity, which can issue from a deeper love for nature and people..." Max Beckmann, "Creative Credo," in *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 489.

<sup>411</sup> Although *A Death in Venice* was written prior to the establishment of the Weimar Republic, a rather Weimarian attitude that was nascent would see full light after 1919. For a discussion of this phenomenon see Peter Gay, *Weimar Culture: The Outsider as Insider* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2001), 1-8.

<sup>412</sup> For example, the call for lesbians to join the League of Human Rights in: "Aufruf an all gleichgeschlechtlich liebenden Frauen," in *Die Freundin* 12, no. 5 (September 1929), and a call for the decriminalization of homosexuality in: Magnus Hirschfeld, *Sexual-Katastrophen: Bilder aus dem modernen Geschlechts- und Eheleben* (Leipzig: A.H. Payne, 1926), 42.

<sup>413</sup> Will Saunders, "Cross and Swastika: The Nazi Party and the German Churches," *History Review* (September 2003), 10. See also Borg, *Old-Prussian Church*, 1, where Borg points out that the views of churchmen divided according to their position in the spectra of both church parties and political parties. Yet the large bulk ranged themselves in the political Right of the church and state alike."

immoral milieu of Weimar Culture in general led the Evangelical Church to integration of nationalism, anti-Semitism, and above all pro-Germanic “positive” Christianity. All of this came sweeping through the Evangelical Church through a variety of venues.

While there were suggestions that the Evangelical Church should form a political party of its own to meet the challenges coming from the Republic, it instead tended to rally to established conservative parties in the arena of politics while forming groups, societies, and unions within the church which would in turn support one party or another which most closely reflected its objectives.<sup>414</sup> What the Weimar Republic represented for the Evangelical Church was a demon to be exorcised and an opportunity for the church to reverse its fortunes while doing so. The hope was that a Christian *völkisch* world-view bearing with it conservative Christian values could bring the resurrection of the Protestant Church from the grave.<sup>415</sup> In looking for opportunity to arise: “Old-Prussian churchmen anxiously scanned the horizon of public life in the Weimar Republic and summoned their wrath to condemn forces destructive of the Christian folk.”<sup>416</sup>

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<sup>414</sup> Borg, *Old-Prussian Church*, 79.

<sup>415</sup> Borg, *Old-Prussian Church*, 8. The usage of Old-Prussian Church is favored by Borg over Evangelical Church in that it more specifically identifies the Churches involved: “The word *union* in the name of the Old-Prussian church refers to the union that the Prussian king began to forge in 1817 of the largely Lutheran population and of the Reformed (Calvinists) concentrated in the western provinces. Since most congregations formally retained either Lutheran or Reformed identities, the union remained incomplete in the Weimar period as an organizational, sacramental, and liturgical union. The union to allay differences between Lutherans and the Reformed by referring to both as Evangelical (meaning biblically based) . . . the term also distinguished Protestants collectively from Catholics,” xiii. Borg also wants to make clear that “the words *Evangelical Church* do not connote in their German context a crusading, evangelizing church, as some historians of American history are apt to employ the term,” xiii.

<sup>416</sup> Borg, *Old-Prussian Church*, 8.

**4.4 God with us, God within us.** Friedrich Julius Stahl (1802-1861), an ecclesiastical lawyer ironically of Jewish parentage, would play a role in the theology developed in the Weimar Period through his understanding of Luther. Stahl's political theory, while conservative, also called for rights of freedom of expression, the rights of power being shared by various social strata, and the concept that political power has inherent value only when it serves a higher communal value.<sup>417</sup> It is the final contribution which Stahl makes that is of interest here. Luther had made a division between the orders of the heavenly and earthly realms, dividing the second into orders of creation.<sup>418</sup> In this subdivision of the earthly, Luther identified governing authorities as belonging to the earthly realm. The governing authorities, the domestic arena, and the church with its authorities all belonged to this realm, which is itself an order of creation.<sup>419</sup> The obedience to secular rulers was required by both non-Christians and Christians.<sup>420</sup> In his political theory, Stahl had added an additional category to the order of earthly creation – the folk.<sup>421</sup> In his works, Stahl had “postulated the reality of a Christian moral continuum developed historically through the folk, that should bind the errant individual to the community.”<sup>422</sup>

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<sup>417</sup> Peter F. Drucker, “Friedrich Julius Stahl: His Conservative Theory of State,” in *Society* (July/August, 2002), 57.

<sup>418</sup> Martin Luther, “Temporal Authority,” in *Martin Luther's Basic Theological Writings*, Timothy F. Lull, ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), 662, and 665.

<sup>419</sup> Luther, “Temporal Authority,” *passim*, 660.

<sup>420</sup> Luther, “Temporal Authority,” *passim*. Although the secular order of creation is necessary for only non-Christians, Christians for their sake must be subject to secular authorities and may only disobey when matters of divine command and Christian conscience negate the command of temporal authority.

<sup>421</sup> Borg, *Old-Prussian Church*, 17.

<sup>422</sup> Borg, *Old-Prussian Church*, 16. See also Drucker, “Stahl.” “There also follows, for the Conservative theory of the state, knowledge of the imperfection of man which demands justification by faith. Man's sinfulness calls for firm authority, for binding ties in state and church, and knowledge of man's need and weakness calls for association within the

Julius Kaftan, professor of theology in Berlin and Vice President of the EOK, pointed out the “religionless nature” of the Republic at the Church Federation Assembly in 1921.<sup>423</sup> Kaftan reasoned, partly from Stahl’s political theory that: “since the *Volkskirche* functioned as the custodian of German culture, the state must consciously promote Christian values and eschew religious neutrality.”<sup>424</sup> The *Volkskirche* was then the steward of the German *culture*. Given the interpretation of Luther’s order of creation, it was then surmised that the community, in this instance *Volkskirche*, must uphold the *Volk*. By this interpretation of Luther, that of making the *Volk* an order of creation, *völkisch* church leaders had:

recognized a second value system that did not easily mesh with traditional Christian social ethics . . . one could not simply relate faith to folk as an order of creation, as Luther had linked faith and the other orders. The folk was not just a created structure to facilitate orderly life, but also the generator of its own values.<sup>425</sup>

This sort of reasoning was endorsed by church leaders such as Dr. Joachim Niedlich, a leader in the German Church movement.<sup>426</sup> That the *Volk* was generator of its own values was a proposition Niedlich capitalized on. In Niedlich’s and other German Church leaders’ understanding “God revealed Himself through the differing values of the races he created.”<sup>427</sup> This of course

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community of both close and extended family, of rank, nation and religion,” 57.

<sup>423</sup> Borg, *Old-Prussian Church*, 18.

<sup>424</sup> Borg, *Old-Prussian Church*, 18.

<sup>425</sup> Borg, *Old-Prussian Church*, 194. An examination of Ernst Troeltsch’s *Religion in History* demonstrates how far Lutheranism had broken away from its ethical formulations with this sort of hyper-dualistic system of ethics. Ernst Troeltsch, *Religion in History* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991) 173-209, 321-342. Also, Ernst Troeltsch, *The Social Teaching of The Christian Churches*, 2 vols. (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1950) vol. 2, 523ff.

<sup>426</sup> Scholder commenting on Niedlich says: “war and defeat marked the dividing line. What before the war had been the opinion of individuals and hardly taken seriously, rapidly gained significance after the War as a result of the formation of groups and the founding of associations. Thus in 1921 the Berlin schoolmaster Dr. Joachim Niedlich founded the Alliance for a German Church.” Scholder, *The Churches 1*, 117.

<sup>427</sup> Borg, *Old-Prussian Church*, 183.

was a concept found in both Chamberlain and Rosenberg. “Accordingly, the Aryan or German could experience God in Germanness as revealed in folktales and myths as well as through ‘prophets’ of the folk as varied as Luther and Beethoven.”<sup>428</sup> It should be noted that folklore, introduced as a means of revelation, was an important step in allowing the German Church to bridge the gap between Christianity and those that favored a return to Nordic myth. Folklore was seen as a common means of binding together the unique narrative of the *Volk*.<sup>429</sup>

The idea of a revelation in the *Volk* combined with a ‘positive’ Christianity that maintained that the revelation of Jesus was that the “Kingdom of God is within you” set up a denial of a “transcendent revelation through a divine Jesus.”<sup>430</sup> This managed to “confine revelation to the folk”<sup>431</sup> which in turn meant that the revelation of God was entirely immanent. What was Christian was German, and what was German was Christian. This then paved the way for German Church leaders to deny the validity of the Old Testament, affirm the Aryan Jesus, and justify the mission of the German *Volk*.<sup>432</sup>

By the end of the 1920s the Evangelical Church had turned a corner leading to disaster by letting these developments go essentially unchallenged. This is not to say there was not opposition. Indeed liberal church leaders such as Martin Rade did try to stem the tide; however, the milieu of Weimar

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<sup>428</sup> Borg, *Old-Prussian Church*, 183.

<sup>429</sup> Christa Kamenetsky, “Folklore as a Political Tool in Nazi Germany,” in *The Journal of American Folklore*, Vol. 85, No. 337 (Jul.-Sept., 1972), 221-235.

<sup>430</sup> Borg, *Old-Prussian Church*, 185.

<sup>431</sup> Borg, *Old-Prussian Church*, 185.

<sup>432</sup> Borg, *Old-Prussian Church*, 185. One of the practical outcomes of this theology was in the area of missiology. Borg notes that some missionaries concluded “pagans could presumably apprehend the Gospel only through folkish values implanted by God,” 187. This sort of folkish divine spark theology had some analogies to Catholic missiology.

allowed conservative church papers such as the *Kreuzzeitung* to accuse them of “betraying their church to the religionless state just as the ‘Socialists betrayed the fatherland for the sake of the party.’”<sup>433</sup> Rade himself was “appalled by the abuse heaped upon the republican state” by the right wing of the church. In the end that “the churches seemed to promote hatred rather than peace signaled to Rade the bankruptcy of Christendom.”<sup>434</sup> Even the more moderate conservative parts of the Evangelical Church, perhaps the majority of whom might have been heard, did nothing to stem the tide. They tended to tolerate the rising German Christians as “excessive nationalists [rather] than a heresy to be condemned . . . they tolerated them for practical reasons.”<sup>435</sup>

George Santayana’s assessment might serve to provide analysis of the complex situation facing the church of the Weimar era:

German religion and philosophy are homesick: they wish to be quite primitive once more. And they actually remain primitive in spirit, spontaneous and tentative, even in the midst of the most cumbrous erudition . . . primitive, puzzled, and oppressed. Such a naïve but overloaded mind is lost in admiration of its own depth and richness; yet, in fact, it is rather helpless and immature; it has not learned to select what suffices, or to be satisfied with what is best.<sup>436</sup>

As a theologian Karl Barth was not content to let the ruminations and direction of the Protestant church lay unchallenged. He saw what was happening as nothing less than a conspiracy which sought to overwrite the narrative line of Christianity and destroy its foundations. It was nothing more and nothing less than the myth of the *analogia entis* rooted deeply in the heart and theology of the Protestant Church. Karl Barth’s question was how long this charade was to

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<sup>433</sup> Borg, *Old-Prussian Church*, 105.

<sup>434</sup> Borg, *Old-Prussian Church*, 41.

<sup>435</sup> Borg, *Old-Prussian Church*, 193.

<sup>436</sup> George Santayana, *The German Mind: A Philosophical Diagnosis* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1968), 27.

go unchallenged. Christianity had been inverted, and it was time to set it aright. The problem however did not end with the Protestant Church. Barth also taught in three universities in the Weimar period, and the universities were no less plagued with the myth than the church.



**Chapter Five**  
**Contextual Realities:**  
**The Ethical-Existential Effects of the Myth**  
**in the University Context**

The milieu of the Evangelical Church during Barth's professional tenure in Germany has provided an insight into the quagmire of Barth's context. The university, the setting in which Barth actually worked provides a further understanding of his context and how the content of his theology was being shaped by this context.

Steven P. Remy, in his trenchant work on National Socialism at Heidelberg University, has pointed to two theses that have been proposed related to the conduct of university professors during the National Socialists' rise to power as well as their behavior after their seizure of power.<sup>437</sup> These are the theses of Gerhard Ritter, a historian at Freiburg University, written immediately after the fall of the Third Reich, and that of Max Weinreich, founder of the Yiddish Scientific Institute.

Ritter's thesis was essentially that German professors had not participated with nor helped the National Socialists with their political

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<sup>437</sup> Steven Remy, *The Heidelberg Myth: The Nazification and Denazification of a German University* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 2.

program or ideological campaign.<sup>438</sup> The sum of the Ritter argument is that the universities were seized by National Socialist ideologues that forced their will, agenda, and ill-trained professors into the ranks of the universities. The “standing” professors, with the exception of a notable few, simply went about their duties during a time that was hostile to them until the end of Nazi rule.<sup>439</sup> They then removed those National Socialist professors and collaborators at the end of the war.<sup>440</sup>

There is a two-fold difficulty in approaching the account of Ritter. First, the thesis is a personal account that is extended to cover the academic community in general. Second, there is a proscription at the end of the essay that essentially prohibits investigation of the general situation: “No foreigner can fully understand what a heartbreak and what a perversion of patriotic sentiment all this was for us Germans who were opposed to National-Socialism and who had to sacrifice our own blood and the blood of sons for a hated cause.”<sup>441</sup> These two factors undoubtedly contributed to the lasting nature of Ritter’s picture. Who after all would deign to question a personal account and emotional appeal from one who is known to have resisted the Third Reich? However, over time, beginning as early as 1946 with Weinreich, objective ground giving a fuller picture of the academy has emerged to redress what is wanting in Ritter’s description.

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<sup>438</sup> Gerhard Ritter, “The Professor in the Third Reich,” *Review of Politics*, 8, no. 2 (April 1946), 242-254.

<sup>439</sup> The contentions of Ritter are also found in Fritz Stern who states: “Many retreated once more to an unpolitical idealism, not as in previous generations to gild the existing regime by a transcendental ideal, but to condemn the existing Republic in the name of the unattainable, mystical ideal . . . The educated German went his way, unpolitical, usually utterly contemptuous of the Republic.” Fritz Stern, *The Failure of Illiberalism: Essays on the Political Culture of Modern Germany* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 23.

<sup>440</sup> Remy, *Heidelberg Myth*, 2.

<sup>441</sup> Gerhard Ritter, “The Professor in the Third Reich,” *Review of Politics*. No. 8 (1946), 254.

Ritter's account maintains that a number of factors led to the relatively "untouched" nature of the academy or at least the faculty within the academy. National-Socialist administrative incompetence, Nazi ignorance and oafism, couching anti-Nazi statements within historical lessons, and the protection provided by good rectors are all forwarded to demonstrate "how it was possible for a professor with a substantial reputation for learning to remain in office without giving up his anti-Nazi convictions."<sup>442</sup> What is at question here is not whether or not one was opposed to the totalitarianism or tactics of the National Socialists, but to what extent one participated in the malformed ideology that contributed to their foothold in government, church, and academy. The picture of Ritter's that only a few universities, students, and professors were so compromised simply does not stand up in the light of contextual studies that have emerged since the downfall of the Third Reich.

As Remy notes, Ritter's version of history has stood until recently although other accounts, which more accurately portrayed the reality of the situation, existed.<sup>443</sup> Because of this understanding (which also existed regarding the Evangelical Church in Germany), Barthian studies have concluded that Barth's university situation was more placid than it was. A more realistic appraisal, and one that sheds light on Barth's doctrinal formations especially with respect to his position on the *analogia entis*, is found within theories that countered Ritter's durative thesis.

Perhaps one of the earliest studies to challenge Ritter's representation of professors was proposed by Max Weinreich. Weinreich's work, *Hitler's Professors*, paints a picture of university professors whose actions and

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<sup>442</sup> Ritter, "The Professor," 242-254.

<sup>443</sup> Remy, *Heidelberg Myth*, 2-3.

attitudes, lectures and leanings, supported and spread the flame of National Socialist ideology through the heart and soul of the German university system.<sup>444</sup> As Weinreich states it: “German scholarship provided the ideas and techniques which led to and justified this unparalleled slaughter.”<sup>445</sup>

Weinreich notes that it was not only the National Socialist German Students Union which in the Weimar years were “highly instrumental in bringing the universities into the Nazi network . . . [but] even more so the National Socialist German University Instructors Union.”<sup>446</sup> It is Weinreich’s theory which is now in ascendancy. This is reflected more in the studies of Fritz Ringer (1969),<sup>447</sup> Michael Steinberg (1973),<sup>448</sup> Alice Gallin (1986),<sup>449</sup> and the aforementioned study of Stephen Remy (2002).

Reconstruction of this *Sitz-im-Leben* will follow this path: 1) A consideration of the global context of the university professor in the Weimar Republic, following the arguments of Ringer, 2) a review of the thesis of Michael Steinberg related to student life and activity in the pre-Weimar/Weimar period, and 3) an examination of Alice Gallin’s thesis related to faculty life and activity in the pre-Weimar and Weimar period. This will demonstrate that secular misery via the *analogia entis* existed too in the academic setting.

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<sup>444</sup> Max Weinreich, *Hitler’s Professors: The Part of Scholarship in Germany’s Crimes against the Jewish People* (New York: Yiddish Scientific Community-YIVO, 1946), *passim*. Also, Remy, *Heidelberg Myth*, 2-3.

<sup>445</sup> Max Weinreich, *Hitler’s Professors*, 6.

<sup>446</sup> Max Weinreich, *Hitler’s Professors*, 17.

<sup>447</sup> Fritz Ringer, *The Decline of the German Mandarins: The German Academic Community, 1890-1933* (Hanover, NH: The University of New England Press/Wesleyan University Press, 1969).

<sup>448</sup> Michael Steinberg, *Sabers and Brown Shirts: The German Students’ Path to National Socialism, 1918-1935* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977).

<sup>449</sup> Alice Gallin, *Midwives to Nazism: University Professors in Weimar Germany, 1925-1933* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1986).

**5.1 Ringer's Global Presentation: University Professor in the Weimar Republic.** Ringer portrays pre-Weimar/Weimar professors as a highly specialized group of professional people with a particular picture of themselves, their mission, and their place in society. Each of these factors contributed if not to an outright support of National Socialist ideology to at the very least creating an atmosphere in which it could take root and be nurtured.

Ringer uses the term German mandarin not only as a descriptive term but as a sort of title. It is used to evoke a particular image in the reader along the lines of the scholarly class in China.<sup>450</sup> The title, as defined by Ringer refers to “a social and cultural elite which owes its status primarily to educational qualifications, rather than to heredity rights or wealth.”<sup>451</sup> The mandarins wish to elevate their social standing, but in order for this to occur certain conditions must exist at a particular time in the development of their country.<sup>452</sup> They viewed themselves as people of culture and cultivation, a “sort of spiritual nobility” through which “its existence, and expansion, can be justified only through the culture and spiritual values that flourish under its care.”<sup>453</sup>

The academy of the mandarins exists in and of itself for the spiritual upbringing and nurturing of the nation and this purpose is the “life-blood of the nation.”<sup>454</sup> The echo of Fichte is heard here. The purpose of the academy is not contained in relevance nor simply to convey technical knowledge. It is

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<sup>450</sup> Ringer, *German Mandarins*, 5.

<sup>451</sup> Ringer, *German Mandarins*, 5. For Ringer, this group consists of all categories of intellectuals associated with the German University including: “doctors, lawyers, ministers, government officials, secondary school teachers, and university professors,” 5.

<sup>452</sup> Ringer, *German Mandarins*, 6.

<sup>453</sup> Ringer, *German Mandarins*, 9-10.

<sup>454</sup> Ringer, *German Mandarins*, 11.

rather the idea of advancing knowledge for knowledge's sake and of fostering the cultural and spiritual dimensions of students' lives, so that they might in turn nurture and foster the cultural and spiritual life of the nation. This had been the self-understanding of the German academic since the inception of the university in Germany. This idea of the cultivation of the life and spirit of student and nation is for Ringer one of the reasons that the Enlightenment era in Germany differed from the Enlightenment in France or England.

The German academy developed its Enlightenment, not along the lines of a strict scientific method, which they looked at askance as a banal utilitarianism and "practical manipulation,"<sup>455</sup> but rather along the lines of a spiritual renewal. The more "western" Enlightenment, with its sharp, cold, and critical analysis of Christianity was met by the German *Aufklärer*<sup>456</sup> with their project which "sought above all to rescue the spiritual and moral implications of the Christian religion by grounding them safely outside the threatened frameworks of the orthodox creeds."<sup>457</sup> As has already been seen this sort of approach to Christianity was suggested by Chamberlain, Rosenberg, and other leaders within the ecclesiastical community during the pre-Weimar/Weimar period.

The pressure of the western Enlightenment led to renewed thinking on the part of the German *Aufklärer* regarding their mission. It remained practically as already understood but with clearer definition brought by the likes of Swiss educator Johann Pestalozzi and philosophers Karl Jaspers and Immanuel Kant. Among other things were the concepts of *Bildung* and

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<sup>455</sup> Ringer, *German Mandarins*, 85.

<sup>456</sup> *Aufklärer* is used here since an English equivalent does not exist or reads awkwardly, e.g., "enlightenments."

<sup>457</sup> Ringer, *German Mandarins*, 83.

*Kultur. Bildung* consisted in soul-formation, which in turn consisted of individuality as a point of departure, the “understanding and experiencing of cultural values,” and an “inner unity and firmness of character.”<sup>458</sup> The university was to instill the values, morals, and “soul-formation” of the student. German university education then was not a matter of the pragmatic or utilitarian transmission of knowledge to equip students for a singular task in society. It revolved rather around the cultivation and nurture of the inmost aspects of the student. It could rightly be said that the pedagogy at play was that of transcendent transformation above immanent implementation. It also left the university professor in a unique role. As Ringer would have it: “the intellectual leaders of the cultivated elite filled the role of intermediaries between the eternal and temporal realms. But they could perform this function and hold their place only as long as no one lost faith in their idealistic *Weltanschauung*.”<sup>459</sup>

Playing in concert with this conception of the academy was the idea of the state, specifically the cultural state. The state was to serve the needs of culture, it would in fact, be a “vehicle . . . for the preservation and dissemination of spiritual values.”<sup>460</sup> The academy and the mandarins in turn promoted this state dissemination of values. These spiritual values contained the idea of the *deutsche Geist*. This spirit both ascended and descended. When the action of the cultural-spirit ascended it did so because the German

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<sup>458</sup> Ringer, *German Mandarins*, 86. These are derived from *Der Große Brockhaus*. N.B.: “Seit Pestalozzi Grundbegriff der Erziehungswissenschaft, bedeutet Formung der Seele durch die Mittel der umgebenden Kultur. . . . Totalität, d.h. innere Geschlossenheit und Charakterfestigkeit.” *Die Große Brockhaus: Handbuch des Wissens in zwanzig Bänden*, 15 Aufl. (Leipzig: F.A. Brockhaus, 1929), 729.

<sup>459</sup> Ringer, *German Mandarins*, 113.

<sup>460</sup> Ringer, *German Mandarins*, 117.

spirit reflected upon itself and led to the realm of the eternal. When the spirit descended it apprehended its meaning, existence, and values.<sup>461</sup> These values were not as such a mandated doctrine, but rather a way of being, a reflection of the sum of what it meant to be German, it was a grand theme played not by each individual but by the symphony of the *Volk* as a whole. These themes were “generally stated in moral and spiritual terms.”<sup>462</sup>

The German mandarin interacted with this idea of a cultural-state. However, this interaction was perceived primarily in an apolitical manner. Two related concepts within the mandarin understanding strengthened this apolitical interaction. The first of these was the idea of a transcendental-interdependence of life. The individual is taught (cultivated) to reach a “higher spiritual state,” and the individual must “voluntarily accept and assimilate” with respect to the state.<sup>463</sup> The second was like the first differing by adding the idea of a critical submission of individual to the state in the process of the individual’s cultivation.<sup>464</sup> In the ideology of “cultivation” the German mandarins saw themselves as contributing to the state while remaining aloof and apolitical. As has been seen, this outlook is relatively close to the one forwarded by Ritter.

However, the goal of being truly apolitical rarely matched the critical reality within which the academy, or indeed individual professors, found themselves. In the Weimar Republic, the ideologies of a cultural-state and a cultivated individual yielding him or herself to the state became more than the fad of an educated elite class of society. With the general contempt of the

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<sup>461</sup> Ringer, *German Mandarins*, 118.

<sup>462</sup> Ringer, *German Mandarins*, 121.

<sup>463</sup> Ringer, *German Mandarins*, 122.

<sup>464</sup> Ringer, *German Mandarins*, 122.



Weimar government swirling in the societal milieu, the academy had adapted the idea that if the state had abandoned the cultural mission, then German culture must be preserved in the academy. This was, as has been seen, a reflection of the general attitudes and struggles taken up in the Evangelical Church. Far from being truly apolitical in character, the German mandarins were aligning themselves with political views held by various parties if not becoming members of those parties themselves.

With the November Revolution of 1918, a new reality solidified in the ranks of the German university and the academic elite. According to Ringer: “The academic community as a whole did everything in its power to resist the new regime. The orthodox majority of professors . . . sympathized with the German National People’s Party.”<sup>465</sup> This did not mean that all professors and academics leaned toward this sort of nationalist ideology; however, even among those that did not, a considerable number were also not all out pro-Weimar in outlook. A group of scholars could be seen as Weimar accommodationists. These were mandarins that were more practical and realistic in outlook. This group was “republican through reason, not republican at heart,”<sup>466</sup> and they referred to themselves by the designation *Vernunftrepublikaner* (republicans by reason). What is of importance here is that even the non-extremist members of the mandarin class wished to make a distinction between being republican (pro-Weimar) at heart and being republican by way of accommodation to the current reality. Adherents to this

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<sup>465</sup> Ringer, *German Mandarins*, 200-201.

<sup>466</sup> Ringer, *German Mandarins*, 203.

movement included Franz Schnabel, Friedrich Meinecke, and Adolf von Harnack.<sup>467</sup>

The general attitudes related to Weimar within the German universities, and the blame attached to them for every ill of German society, led to strong right-wing attitudes being cultivated among professors and thereby students. As Ringer notes: “In this climate of opinion, the German Universities became strongholds of right-wing opposition to the new regime. The anti-republican hysteria of professors and students continually led to incidents.”<sup>468</sup> This is then the more global atmosphere which was taking shape within the German academy. An environment was created in which the mandarin community had “willingly cultivated an atmosphere in which any ‘national’ movement could claim to be the ‘spiritual revival’” of German nation and *Volk*.<sup>469</sup> The development of the particular arenas of students and professors within this cultivated ideological environment is seen within the complementary theses of Steinberg and Gallin.

### **5.2 Steinberg Thesis: *German Students’ Path to National Socialism.***

Steinberg’s work on the student milieu in the Weimar Republic came out four years after Ringer’s more global treatment of the German university and academic elite.<sup>470</sup> The content of the work demonstrates that “student support for Nazism preceded widespread electoral support in the population at large. Indeed, anti-democratic action characterized student life from the inception of

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<sup>467</sup> Ringer, *German Mandarins*, 202-203.

<sup>468</sup> Ringer, *German Mandarins*, 215.

<sup>469</sup> Ringer, *German Mandarins*, 446.

<sup>470</sup> Steinberg, *Sabers and Brown Shirts: The German Students’ Path to National Socialism, 1918-1935* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977). Steinberg’s work was originally published in 1973.

the Weimar Republic in November 1918.”<sup>471</sup> Given the “global” environment of the academy, Steinberg comments that: “it is not surprising that many students, encouraged by their professors to seek panaceas for Germany’s problems in a moral reawakening rather than in pragmatic reform programs, were attracted to fascism.”<sup>472</sup>

The student during the Weimar years was steered to the right by two general factors, already noted with respect to the church and the university as a whole: “the general tone of university education and the importance of antidemocratic thought within Weimar Germany.”<sup>473</sup> This attitude was experienced by the student within the environment of the university in attitudes of professors who “expressed open opposition to the Republic in the lecture halls” including the exclusion of reference to the Weimar Constitution by law professors.<sup>474</sup> The contribution of the professors to this university environment will be taken up in the next section. A second influence upon these factors was the milieu of student life at the university, which contributed as much to the students’ ideological leanings, if not more than the professors themselves. The first of these influences considered by Steinberg were the fraternal orders in the university. The fraternal structures of the German university had two functions: 1) the “social organization of student life in the university” not otherwise addressed by the university structure, and 2) as “political groups in times of stress.”<sup>475</sup>

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<sup>471</sup> Steinberg, *Sabers*, 1.

<sup>472</sup> Steinberg, *Sabers*, 20.

<sup>473</sup> Steinberg, *Sabers*, 2.

<sup>474</sup> Steinberg, *Sabers*, 18-19.

<sup>475</sup> Steinberg, *Sabers*, 12.

The *Burschenschaften* were fraternal groups which had integrated a fervent nationalism. In the later half of the nineteenth century moving into the Weimar period, student interest in politics was high but it tended to a “bombastic nationalism.”<sup>476</sup> This group was the younger of the student groups. Preceding the *Burschenschaften* were the *Landmannschaften*, which would later become the *Corps*. This was the “most elite of the fraternities.”<sup>477</sup> The *Corps* had in fact been modeled somewhat after the German Officer Corps, adopting their values, among which stood that of “dismissing the importance of individual freedom apart from the needs of the group and nation.”<sup>478</sup> The exclusiveness of the *Corps* might lead to the conclusion that other fraternities might react against this. This was not the case. The *Corps* was the model which others emulated, including the *Burschenschaften* and in 1881 the emerging *Kyffhäuser Verband der deutscher Studenten*.<sup>479</sup>

The *Kyffhäuser Verband* reached across fraternity lines bringing to voice goals in common with students. Those goals included: 1) protecting Christianity, German culture, and at the time of their formation, the monarchy, 2) “serving the Christian *Weltanschauung*,” 3) renewal of pan-Germanism, and 4) linking “racism and nationalism with a social program.”<sup>480</sup> These were the same ideological goals that were taking root in the society at large, the Evangelical Church, and other fraternities. Both the *Burschenschaften* and *Landmannschaften* were “adopting *völkisch* tenets” and were “politically

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<sup>476</sup> Steinberg, *Sabers*, 21.

<sup>477</sup> Steinberg, *Sabers*, 37.

<sup>478</sup> Steinberg, *Sabers*, 37.

<sup>479</sup> Steinberg, *Sabers*, 38.

<sup>480</sup> Steinberg, *Sabers*, 39.

close to the German National People's Party."<sup>481</sup> As noted by Steinberg, a student "might enter a fraternity for social reasons," but the student was "unlikely to leave it without absorbing some of its values and its nationalist politics."<sup>482</sup> These student groups provided the milieu which nurtured more active roles against the Weimar Republic on the part of some students. Students had been to one degree or another involved in both the Kapp putsch of 1920 and the Hitler putsch of 1923.<sup>483</sup> The students involved in the Munich putsch of 1923 belonged to another student group which began taking shape in 1919, the *Hochschulring*.

The *Hochschulring* was a joining together of several regional student organizations brought together to "become the center of the *völkisch* student movement."<sup>484</sup> The *Hochschulring* could generally count on the support of the three major groups already discussed. This organization also sought to coordinate student elections to capture as many seats as possible on student councils at both local and national levels. It is interesting to note that in 1921, the year that Barth came to Göttingen that *Hochschulring* students with their *völkisch* nationalism held 75 percent of the seats on the student council in Göttingen. The *Hochschulring* contributes to the overall picture of the gathering storm in the university scene. Steinberg's comments:

"Overall, the *Ring* helped prepare for the Third Reich by teaching the greater part of a generation of students to distrust parliamentary government. . . . It was the principle medium through which antidemocratic thought, so important to undermining the Republic, reached the students. . . . Its principles led it into informal relationships

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<sup>481</sup> Steinberg, *Sabers*, 44.

<sup>482</sup> Steinberg, *Sabers*, 47.

<sup>483</sup> Steinberg, *Sabers*, 50-51.

<sup>484</sup> Steinberg, *Sabers*, 51.

with the adult nationalist movement: the paramilitary *Bünde*, the German National People's Party, and the Nazis."<sup>485</sup>

In addition to the fraternal groups and the *Hochschulring*, the Weimar government was encouraging democratic student government. Each university established its student government and councils, but additionally student government was being organized at the national level. This national organization was known as the *Deutsche Studentenschaft*.<sup>486</sup> While democratically conceived as a way to help students understand the new government and to provide a representative form of government, the *Studentenschaft* quickly "lost its nonpartisan character and became a right-wing political organization."<sup>487</sup>

The shift to a right-wing orientation came not only as a result of the greater environment but also due to an ultimatum issued by Carl Becker, the Minister of Culture.<sup>488</sup> Becker issued a letter on December 24, 1926, essentially requiring the *Studentenschaft* to discontinue its pursuit of a pan-German student organization and to become limited to being a program of the German state proper.<sup>489</sup> Becker had made this move since the more radical right elements of the *Studentenschaft* were in territories such as Austria and parts of the *sudetenland* in Czechoslovakia. Becker put it to a student vote, essentially promising to cut off state funds and no longer recognize the *Studentenschaft* if the vote did not support the ultimatum.<sup>490</sup>

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<sup>485</sup> Steinberg, *Sabers*, 60.

<sup>486</sup> Steinberg, *Sabers*, 61.

<sup>487</sup> Steinberg, *Sabers*, 61.

<sup>488</sup> This was the Minister of Culture from whom Barth received his directive to teach Reformed theology at Göttingen. Busch, *Karl Barth*, 128.

<sup>489</sup> Steinberg, *Sabers*, 67.

<sup>490</sup> Steinberg, *Sabers*, 67-69.

The result was an unmitigated disaster for Becker and Weimar. The right-wing was organized, and the vote was a resounding no with the exception of a few universities that voted in favor. The result of all this was that the *Studentenschaft* was now no longer reliant upon Weimar, and Weimar really had no hold over the *Studentenschaft*, save to say that it was not an official organ of the Republic. However, the *Studentenschaft* continued to function with no real oversight from the government. This left the *Studentenschaft* in a precarious position in which “the state governments were powerless to arrest the drift of the student opinion toward the Right.”<sup>491</sup>

In 1925 the first of the National Socialist student groups was founded in Leipzig, and by 1926 twenty chapters were in existence, under the name *National-sozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund*.<sup>492</sup> National Socialist students were quick to sponsor events, were active in speech making, and of course the spreading of their ideology. But Steinberg’s observation here is incisive: “many students were not entirely sure how the beliefs of prominent exponents of the *völkisch* view differed from National Socialism.”<sup>493</sup> Their methods were different, viewed as uncivilized by many, but ideologically they were to the right and the prevailing wisdom of the day was that there were no enemies to the right.<sup>494</sup> Because of this “Nazi students flourished in an environment that was critical of their style, not their message,” and so “they were accepted as a part of the larger nationalist movement at the university.”<sup>495</sup>

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<sup>491</sup> Steinberg, *Sabers*, 71.

<sup>492</sup> Steinberg, *Sabers*, 74-75.

<sup>493</sup> Steinberg, *Sabers*, 79.

<sup>494</sup> Steinberg, *Sabers*, 120.

<sup>495</sup> Steinberg, *Sabers*, 103.

In this well-organized position, the *Nationalsozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund* had two objectives: First was to capture as many seats as possible on the university student councils as well as on the national level of the *Deutsche Studentenschaft*. Secondly was to rid the universities of students and professors that did not correspond to *völkisch* world-view or those who were collaborators with the Republic.

The first of these goals was quickly achieved. National Socialist students won elections because they acted on their convictions rather than merely producing rhetoric that changed nothing. They also tied themselves to national politics and turned “student elections into political referenda.”<sup>496</sup> National Socialists were not about building membership; their objective was to capture seats and positions of influence, especially the university press.<sup>497</sup> Their success in achieving this objective is demonstrated in the percentage of seats within the universities by 1931/32. Of the 28 universities that Steinberg has statistics for, twelve showed clear majorities for the National Socialists, another nine had 40 or more percent for National Socialists, the rest are in the mid-thirties with only two falling below 30 percent representation.<sup>498</sup> The bold presence of the National Socialists was becoming alarming to some administrators at the schools, yet attempts to control them through such measures as banning the wearing of party uniforms was largely a farce ignored on the one side and unenforced on the other.<sup>499</sup> Violence was more pronounced at the university, especially toward groups that did not share the goals and outlook of the National Socialists. Even so, university officials

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<sup>496</sup> Steinberg, *Sabers*, 91.

<sup>497</sup> Steinberg, *Sabers*, 92-93.

<sup>498</sup> Steinberg, *Sabers*, 92.

<sup>499</sup> Steinberg, *Sabers*, 96.



were hesitant to take matters into hand or to notify authorities about violent outbreaks.<sup>500</sup> As Steinberg notes, the academic authorities were “caught between a government they disliked and students whose confidence they feared to forfeit.”<sup>501</sup> It may be concluded then that the capturing of the student councils not only gave National Socialist students greater control over student affairs, but that they were also using their influence to govern, albeit in a limited manner, the faculty.

The second objective of the *Nationalsozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund* comes into focus at this point, ridding the system of non-German elements. During their grab for power in the universities, National Socialist students would often sponsor talks on various topics. The purpose of those talks was of course to identify and degrade positions not in sympathy with *völkisch* principles. Identified among those positions was the dialectical theology of Gogarten, Barth, and Brunner, but especially that of Gogarten given his Christian universalism.<sup>502</sup> This assessment was contained in a letter from the *Nationalsozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund* in Göttingen to the national leadership. In addition a theological student at Göttingen in 1929 had in the same vein noted “National Socialism was the natural heir of Christianity. Christianity, like Nazism . . . strengthened the bonds between individual and community; love of one’s neighbor was Christianity’s greatest gift.”<sup>503</sup> Steinberg notes that this statement must have met with displeasure with Party officials.<sup>504</sup> However, as has already been demonstrated the

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<sup>500</sup> Steinberg, *Sabers*, 98-99.

<sup>501</sup> Steinberg, *Sabers*, 99.

<sup>502</sup> Steinberg, *Sabers*, 79.

<sup>503</sup> Steinberg, *Sabers*, 79.

<sup>504</sup> Steinberg, *Sabers*, 79.

opposite reaction is more likely to be the case as statements such as these helped to assuage the fears of vast numbers of church leaders and laity alike that National Socialism was anti-Christian. In addition to this more sedate demonizing, came more overt acts.

The cases of professors that were tormented by National Socialist students were foreshadowed the fate of others to come after the 1933 seizure of power by the Nazis. Theodore Lessing was targeted for “offending national honor.”<sup>505</sup> Law professor Hans Nawiasky was bullied, threatened, and experienced disruptions during his lectures for a comment he made about the Treaty of Versailles. He needed to be escorted from his class under the protection of the rector.<sup>506</sup> E.J. Gumbel came under fire for his book which exposed political murders in the early Weimar government, and the theological professor Günther Dehn was vilified for pacifism. Barth was involved in interventions on behalf of both Gumbel and Dehn. A closer look will be taken later at the Dehn case, since Barth’s involvement there was the greatest and is more directly related to his doctrinal formations. Having looked into the student milieu of the university, attention will now be given to the role of the university professor in creating the environment of the academy in the Weimar era.

### **5.3 Gallin Thesis: Weimar Professors as Midwives to Nazism.**

Gallin’s thesis is the counterpart of Steinberg’s study. In Gallin’s study, Ritter’s claim is once again brought into a fuller perspective. It is Gallin’s contention that because the university professors had taken an “apolitical” attitude, while all the time trumpeting German nationalistic themes and failing

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<sup>505</sup> Steinberg, *Sabers*, 99-100.

<sup>506</sup> Steinberg, *Sabers*, 100.

to work with moderates, they had become in fact midwives to National Socialism.<sup>507</sup> Much of what Gallin says about the general university environment has already been covered in the examination of Ringer and Steinberg. However, a consideration of Gallin's work with respect to the contribution of the professors also helps to provide a clearer picture of the context in which Barth was working.

Gallin uses the analogy of midwife for a couple of reasons. First, she states that one does not attribute the birth to the midwife but to the parents. In like manner, one does not blame the midwife for how the child develops in later life. However, one cannot overlook that a midwife brings her skill and training to bear at a critical moment in the birth process in a way that "facilitates the birth and helps to bring the child into the world."<sup>508</sup> Through attitude, action, and inaction this is precisely the role the professors were playing in relation to National Socialism in the Weimar Republic.

Gallin sees this happening in essentially three ways. First, university professors aided this birth by refusing to "accept political responsibility within the Weimar Republic . . . that is they claimed to be 'apolitical' while being strongly German Nationalist."<sup>509</sup> Second, "they uncritically promoted a mode of speaking that glorified the so-called German virtues, denounced parliamentary democracy, and invoked visions of future German glory."<sup>510</sup> Finally, "they clung to a rigid structure of elitist government and a curriculum that demonstrated little relevance to the interests and needs of students."<sup>511</sup>

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<sup>507</sup> Gallin, *Midwives*, 6.

<sup>508</sup> Gallin, *Midwives*, 6.

<sup>509</sup> Gallin, *Midwives*, 7.

<sup>510</sup> Gallin, *Midwives*, 7.

<sup>511</sup> Gallin, *Midwives*, 7.

Further, it is of interest that Gallin “found cells of resistance in the army, the intelligence circles, the labor unions, and the churches, but none in the universities.”<sup>512</sup> The exception to this, notes Gallin, was the Scholl group in Munich, a student resistance group which began in 1942<sup>513</sup> and produced resistance fliers under the signature “*Die Weiße Rose*,” but even this university resistance group is not truly an exception given Gallin’s focus on professors.

This is not to say there were no objections to the rising tide. In 1926 an invitation was sent by “a handful of professors to their colleagues” to attend a meeting in Weimar to discuss the situation. The invitation “began with an admission that the professors had, on the whole, been playing a very negative role in the political life of the nation.”<sup>514</sup> The admission read:

All too strong among the university professors have been the voices of mistrust and the negative attitude toward the new order in our civil life. All too great has been their effect on the spirit of the students and their influence in turning the honorable and strong national will into unhealthy, yes even perverted channels.<sup>515</sup>

Only about 50 to 60 professors came to this meeting and as Gallin describes little note was taken of it on any level and there was “no evidence that the meeting had any impact.”<sup>516</sup> This demonstrates perhaps a lack of concern on the part of the professors, an apathy, an inability to grasp the seriousness of the situation, or a disagreement with the analysis offered by the statement. Certainly it was an admixture of all of these, but the last is perhaps the most telling.

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<sup>512</sup> Gallin, *Midwives*, 4.

<sup>513</sup> Simon Henderson, “*The White Rose and the Definition of 'Resistance'.*” *History Review* no. 53 (December 2005), 42-47. While the movement was begun by students Hans and Sophie Scholl, the role of Professor Kurt Huber cannot be overlooked.

<sup>514</sup> Gallin, *Midwives*, 9.

<sup>515</sup> Gallin, *Midwives*, 9.

<sup>516</sup> Gallin, *Midwives*, 13.

The professors of the Weimar period were, like the general populace, unable to come to terms with the loss of the war. They viewed the Weimar Republic “as a hiatus in German history, a temporary aberration from the true German State.”<sup>517</sup> Indeed the palaver of the professorate was nothing other than a reflection of the conspiratorial milieu which was engulfing the rest of Germany during the time of the Republic. The university professors’ rhetoric carried with it the *Dolchstoß* theory, the strong nationalistic message, and the idea of betrayal in the signing of the Versailles Treaty.<sup>518</sup>

If the rhetoric against the Republic was one aspect of the message being conveyed by professors, an idealism about the future and romanticism with the past also guided their outlook. Weimar Professors “were not only anti-democratic; they were pro-something” as Gallin puts it.<sup>519</sup> In short this pro-something was a *Reich, Führer, Volk, and Kulturmission*.<sup>520</sup> In analyzing the speeches of rectors that were given on the anniversary of the founding of the Reich Gallin uncovers:

the same concepts and language that were later heard in the speeches of Hitler and Goebbels. Idealization of the German *Volk*, of the *Reich*, of the *Einheit* of the German nation . . . the hero who would be the *Führer*—all these were the idiom in which they spoke and wrote.<sup>521</sup>

In a 1923 letter to Thurneysen, along with asking for Swiss newspapers so he can get a perhaps more objective read on the French occupation of the Ruhr, Barth comments that Emanuel Hirsch was awful, as he had (once again)

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<sup>517</sup> Gallin, *Midwives*, 14.

<sup>518</sup> Gallin, *Midwives*, 14, 64.

<sup>519</sup> Gallin, *Midwives*, 25.

<sup>520</sup> Gallin, *Midwives*, 25.

<sup>521</sup> Gallin, *Midwives*, 109.

referred to the German people as the “one holy German people.”<sup>522</sup> His statement about the attitudes of German theological professors puts it in summary fashion: “the German professors are really truly masters, clever in grounding brutality in morality and Christianity.”<sup>523</sup>

There is little doubt that Gallin’s thesis is essentially a correct assessment of the German professorate in the Weimar Republic. In her final appraisal Gallin asserts:

Had the professors realized that they could not be ‘above politics’ by simply willing to be so, they might have forced themselves to come to terms with the proper role of their universities at such a moment of crisis. Instead they clung to outmoded patterns of thought and action, strengthening myths and undermining the political process; and in this disowning of the present and future, they facilitated the birth of the Third Reich. In this lay the tragedy, for without desiring it or intending it, they became midwives for Hitler.<sup>524</sup>

Before leaving this subject a special note of the role of theological professors should be made. While professors in many disciplines may have been able to retreat into the recesses of the university as Ritter suggested, this would have been less a possibility for the professor of theology. Almost every major ideological point arising in the Weimar Republic pressed directly into the arena of theology. The question of church and state, the state as the Kingdom of God, the question of race (especially Jewish) on Christianity, the place of the Old Testament, etc., all would have demanded theological response in turn. While others might have been able to withdraw, the theologian would have a more difficult time doing so. Some theologians came to the fore in support of the Weimar-phobic, pan-German, pro-nationalist,

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<sup>522</sup> Karl Barth, “Barth, 23 Januar 1923,” *Karl Barth-Eduard Thurneysen Briefwechsel, Band 2: 1921-1930* (GA 5.4), 131.

<sup>523</sup> Karl Barth, “Barth, 23 Januar 1923,” 131.

<sup>524</sup> Gallin, *Midwives*, 114.

*völkisch* ideology which took its most loathsome form in the National Socialists. Others would attempt to walk a moderate line. Still others would act directly and construct doctrine that would deny the National Socialists the theological ground they wanted to claim. Certainly Karl Barth acted so and constructed so. This will be shown in the next section when some exemplars of Barth's action and theological construction in the ideological wake of his ecclesiastical and academic settings are considered. It will also begin to establish the connection between Barth's context and his rejection of the myth of the *analogia entis* and his understanding of this myth as the secular misery just visited in this contextual study.

**Part Two:**

**Doctrinal Constructions — The Myth of the *Analogia Entis***



## Chapter Six

### Direct Ethical Contextual Responses

Barth understood that ethical existence in Weimar arose from referential and derivative ideologies. Doctrinal beliefs had led to an unbearable ethic arising from Protestant soil. Barth also responded to the ethical crisis in his context, and his responses were based upon his doctrinal formulations. Barth's direct ethical contextual responses are of import inasmuch as they indicate that Barth was taking action and speaking out against the mendacities of the general, ecclesial, and academic contexts and was not merely a theologian satisfied with constructing theology detached from context. The myth of the *analogia entis* had to be addressed not only in doctrinal formulations but also in more direct and less subtle ways. The contextual responses of this chapter point to this outworking of doctrinal formulation into ethical response.

Before turning to Barth's material proper, a note on the chronology is warranted. While chronologically Barth's doctrinal formation stands before his ethical response (or at the very least concurrently with it), for the sake of continuity, his direct ethical interactions (his contextual ethical responses) will be considered before his doctrinal formations out of which those ethical responses arose. Chronologically the doctrinal formations of *Ethics* and "Fate

and Idea” precede the direct ethical responses of “*Quousque Tandem . . . ?*” “*Die Not der evangelischen Kirche*,” and the Günther Dehn incident. *Ethics* (text A) was delivered in Münster during the 1928-29 academic year.<sup>525</sup> “Fate and Idea” is from the 1928-29 period and also reflects a doctrinal construction. “*Quousque*” came out in 1930, “*Der Not*,” in 1931, and the Dehn case began in 1928 and lived a life of several years reaching into the era of the Third Reich. Therefore, while direct ethical responses are considered first, they are grounded in doctrinal formulations that have chronological priority.

### 6.1 *Quousque*: Response to the Myth in the Ecclesiastical

**Conspiracy.**<sup>526</sup> On November 8, 63 BCE, Marcus Tullius Cicero stood before the Roman senate and using regnant rhetoric, impugned and objurgated the actions of Lucius Sergius Catilina who had sought conspiratorially to seize the consulship of Rome. The feature that stands out with respect to the Catilinarian conspiracy is its interior nature. Catilina was a senator that plotted against the Roman Empire from within. Enemies from the outside were expected even anticipated, but an attack from within the leadership of Rome struck at the very heart of all that was Roman. The incipit of Cicero’s first discourse against Catilina was “*Quo usque tandem abutere, Catilina, patientia nostra*,” that is, “How long will you abuse our patience Catilina?” It is not only Barth’s title that is an allusion to the discourses of Cicero to the senate, rather throughout *Quousque Tandem* references to the Catilinarian conspiracy are found. Barth saw that the abuses of leadership within the Protestant Church were no less a threat to the substance of the church than

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<sup>525</sup> Barth, *Ethics* (New York: Seabury Press, 1981), viii. The *Ethics* lectures were given also in Bonn in 1930-31 (text B). Text B has contains only minor adjustments to text A.

<sup>526</sup> See Appendix 2 for the author’s translation of Barth’s essay, “*Quousque Tandem . . . ?*”

Catilina's conspiracy to overthrow the government in Rome in Cicero's time. Both were attacks from within. While enemies from the outside are distressing, it is the enemy within that is particularly pernicious and insidious. This was exactly what Barth saw happening in the context of the Weimar church, a Catilinarian conspiracy and *Quousque* was the discourse he used to expose this ecclesiastical treason.

The document is of particular importance for a number of reasons. First, it bears out what has previously been indicated regarding the ecclesiastical milieu of the Weimar period. Further, it indicates in no uncertain terms that Barth objected to the general trend of the Protestant church. It furthermore demonstrates, in at least one statement, that the milieu of the university discussed earlier was in the state described by the theses of Ringer, Steinberg, and Gallin. It also further establishes that Barth's primary concern at the time was not Roman Catholicism. Finally, *Quousque* rages against a church that had wished to domesticate God within its language of success and triumphalism.<sup>527</sup>

Scholder characterized *Quousque Tandem* as "one of the sharpest pieces of polemical criticism ever formulated by Barth."<sup>528</sup> This is no overstatement on the part of Scholder. Barth himself, after setting the reason – that is, the straw that broke the camel's back, said that the crisis had reached such a point that he must "disregard all professional formality, consideration,

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<sup>527</sup> I am indebted to two sources for the idea of the domestication of God. The first is my colleague Prof. George Harper, who brought this term to my attention. The second is, William C. Placher, *The Domestication of Transcendence: How Modern Thinking About God Went Wrong* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1996).

<sup>528</sup> Scholder, *The Churches*, v.1, 122.

and caution.”<sup>529</sup> The entire document, written in 1930, begins with a rebuff for an observation made about the decade of 1918-1928, up to the present, i.e., the better part of the Weimar years. Prof. Johannes Schneider in tandem with Walther Wolff, the president of the Evangelical Synod, had both made statements that Barth found objectionable, but more or less reflective of the general atmosphere in the church.<sup>530</sup> Taken together Schneider and Wolff had made the following assertions in Barth’s assessment: 1) The church, in its own might and ingenuity, had overcome threats to its existence under the Weimar government. 2) The church despite many attempts to extinguish it had “nevertheless” prevailed. 3) The religious thought deeply grounded in the folk-soul of the German people was the driving force behind this triumph. 4) The church had gained new freedom, new power, and had re-evaluated values to the increase of its own value. 5) The church had passed the worst of times.<sup>531</sup>

Barth was convinced that what was transpiring in the church was no small matter. The Evangelical church had adopted language and posture that were exposing the church to danger at its core, and creating an unsafe environment within Germany.<sup>532</sup> The language and posture were, as Barth puts it, “swelling on as if nothing were happening.”<sup>533</sup> There was, for Barth, a tragic irony to what was taking place in the church. On the one hand, the

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<sup>529</sup> Barth, *Quousque*, 28.

<sup>530</sup> Schneider had made his statement in his *Kirchliche Jahrbuch*: Johannes Schneider, ed., *Kirchliches Jahrbuch für die evangelischen Landeskirchen Deutschlands* (Gütersloh/Bertelsmann, 1914-1929), and Wolff in a book of collected essays: Walther Wolff, “Die deutschen evangelischen Kirche,” in *Zehn Jahre deutsche Geschichte, 1918-1928* (Berlin: O. Stollberg, c. 1928).

<sup>531</sup> Barth, *Quousque*, 27-28.

<sup>532</sup> Barth, *Quousque*, 28.

<sup>533</sup> Barth, *Quousque*, 28.

church had been fighting against a variety of exterior threats, be they phantasmal or concrete in nature. On the other hand, in battling these perceived threats by phantoms or flesh, the church had conspired against itself, its very substance. Where language and posture were deployed, in the manner they had been, this is where the true, the internal, the Catilinarian conspiracy really lay. This was the “dangerous conspiracy against the substance of the Evangelical Church.”<sup>534</sup> Barth’s assessment of the Catilinarian crisis is of particular import inasmuch as it dwarfed all other concerns of the church of the Weimar era. It was more dangerous than “the most dangerous” things the Soviet-Atheists, Jews, Freemasons, or Catholics could manage against the church.<sup>535</sup> That is no mean statement. It shows that Barth was fully aware of the goings-on of the Evangelical Church at the time. He is aware of the conspiracy theories, and he adroitly uses the material of conspiracy to awaken the senses of his audience. While all other conspiracies might rail against the church, only this one could undo it, and wipe its substance away, leaving only a soul-less empirical shell standing in its place.<sup>536</sup> For all the external attacks on the church, they could not get at the substance of the church. In fact, Barth maintained that in spite of these attacks the church would only “increase ten-fold and a hundred-fold.”<sup>537</sup>

The substance of the church for Barth was “the promise given it and the faith in this promise.”<sup>538</sup> The conspiracy was in contrast to the promise

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<sup>534</sup> Barth, *Quousque*, 29.

<sup>535</sup> Barth, *Quousque*, 29.

<sup>536</sup> In his introduction to Barth’s *God in Action*, Homrighausen notes that Barth viewed Communism as antagonistic to the church and National Socialism as subversive. Karl Barth, *God in Action*, intro., Elmer Homrighausen (Manhasset, NY: Round Table Press, 1963), xxiv.

<sup>537</sup> Barth, *Quousque*, 28.

<sup>538</sup> Barth, *Quousque*, 28-29.

and faith grounded in the promise. The church had persevered over the course of the Weimar decade, in the minds of the church leadership, not because of divine promise and faith in that promise but rather because the German *Volksseele*, rooted in the religious thought of the church and the people, had prevailed.<sup>539</sup> The promise became to be understood, in this instance, not as divine but the religious thought grounded in the German people and church and the *Volksseele* expression of this religious-thought. Everything the church touted had come not from faith in the promise of God or for that matter from God at all. The action involved was that the church claimed to “represent the things of God” while at the same time doing “the same things everyone else is doing.”<sup>540</sup> The church in its so-called “ten-year masterpiece” had desired to make itself possible, build itself, and praise itself.<sup>541</sup> The church might “go unpunished for a hundred years,” but in the end it would nonetheless be true that the church had been abandoned by its leadership, which in its traitorous language and posturing, had in turn abandoned God.<sup>542</sup> The church had set up a “marketing booth . . . advertising and calling out next to others” and in so doing had “stopped being the church.”<sup>543</sup> Barth maintained that a church which wills itself, builds itself, and praises itself only does so at its own peril and with a “bad conscience.”<sup>544</sup> The church because of this stood in disgrace before both the world and God. The church must reject the “world-conquering, self-assertion . . . squabbling with the Catholics, and striving after

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<sup>539</sup> Barth, *Quousque*, 29.

<sup>540</sup> Barth, *Quousque*, 30.

<sup>541</sup> Barth, *Quousque*, 30.

<sup>542</sup> Barth, *Quousque*, 30.

<sup>543</sup> Barth, *Quousque*, 30.

<sup>544</sup> Barth, *Quousque*, 31.

the German *Volksseele* rooted in religious thought”<sup>545</sup> in order to remove its disgrace. The only course for the church was to do what it had failed to do in the beginning – to preach the Gospel unpretentiously, uprightly, and purely.<sup>546</sup> The church could not, in Barth’s estimation, do both: “One cannot serve God and hedge one’s bet with the devil and the world by such reinsurance.”<sup>547</sup> Alluding to the *Dolchstoß* conspiracy, Barth in his final *sortie* states that “someone should have stabbed the empirical church in the back earlier.”<sup>548</sup> It is little wonder that in his letter to Barth after the publication of *Quousque*, Bultmann responded that “he has seldom been so grateful to Barth as for this summons. He hopes it will be heard and not just become a sensation.”<sup>549</sup> Barth was not only aware of his ecclesiastical context with all of its conspiratorial complexity, he was passionate about addressing it, seeing it as the greatest crisis which faced the church, or rather arose from within its ranks. Yet, even given the great passion within *Quousque*, there were still underlying theologies that needed to be named and addressed, theologies that had led to such a Catilinarian conspiracy. But the church was not the only context within which Barth operated that had fallen to such conspiracy, and Barth was no less aware of his university context than that of the church.

In *Quousque*, Barth’s awareness of his academic environment is apparent when he remarks: “the church cannot put forth propaganda – shame and disgrace – even if the university begins to go down these paths.”<sup>550</sup> As has

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<sup>545</sup> Barth, *Quousque*, 31.

<sup>546</sup> Barth, *Quousque*, 31.

<sup>547</sup> Barth, *Quousque*, 31.

<sup>548</sup> Barth, *Quousque*, 32.

<sup>549</sup> Karl Barth, “Bultmann: Marburg, 3 February 1930,” *Karl Barth - Rudolf Bultmann: Letters 1922-1966* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1981), 48.

<sup>550</sup> Barth, *Quousque*, 30.

been shown, the university had already gone down those same paths, driven by the same ideologies and conspiracy theories.

**6.2 Günter Dehn: A Casualty of the Myth.** One of the casualties along this path was Günter Dehn. Dehn had delivered a lecture on November 6, 1928, two years before the publication of *Quousque*. Barth was to become involved in this incident as well. The lecture “Church and National-Reconciliation,” was given at Ulrichskirche in Magdeburg.<sup>551</sup> The lecture would stand as the primary “evidence” against Dehn during his appointment process at the University of Halle.

The controversy is usually formed around the idea that Dehn was a pacifist.<sup>552</sup> His assertion that “we must come to the conclusion that war does not belong in God’s world”<sup>553</sup> was one such statement that placed him at odds with war theologians as well as the growing student government, which was becoming dominated by National Socialist students. It needs to be understood that Dehn’s “pacifism” was a qualified pacifism. While one could not speak of a “just” war or a “holy” war, one might be able to speak of a necessity for war in defense of God-given life.<sup>554</sup> One might possibly take part in a war where innocent victims were in the balance.<sup>555</sup> For these situations Dehn relied upon a Barthian “perhaps yes, and perhaps no.”<sup>556</sup> The point of the matter is that Dehn was not an unqualified pacifist. The *Magdeburgischen Zeitung* in its report on the lecture said that Dehn “recommended a moderate

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<sup>551</sup> Günter Dehn, *Kirche und Völkerversöhnung: Dokumente zum halleschen Universitätskonflikt* (Berlin: Furche Verlag, 1931).

<sup>552</sup> Steinberg, *Sabers*, 101; Gallin, *Midwives*, 76.

<sup>553</sup> Dehn, *Kirche*, 10.

<sup>554</sup> Dehn, *Kirche*, 18.

<sup>555</sup> Dehn, *Kirche*, 18.

<sup>556</sup> Dehn, *Kirche*, 18.



pacifism for the Evangelical Church.”<sup>557</sup> Just how moderate Dehn’s pacifism was is reflected in the pacifism of Helene Stöcker. Stöcker was a member of the *Gruppe Revolutionärer Pazifisten* which had a six point program.<sup>558</sup> The program consisted of: “1) opposition to all war; 2) general disarmament, including personal disarmament; 3) opposition to conscription; 4) formation of a more effective international law body to replace the League of Nations; 5) outlawry of war by all nations; and 6) resistance to military service and war work.”<sup>559</sup>

Nevertheless, Dehn’s understanding of war, and the Christian’s participation in it, held many restrictions and cut deeply into national ideologies and war theologies of the time, enough so that he was deemed by many to be an enemy of the German *Volk*. The appellation *pacifist* was enough to fuel the fires against Dehn. While the rallying cry against Dehn was pacifism, Dehn’s lecture reflected many of the themes of Barth.

Dehn maintained that the most basic teaching of the Reformation had not been followed: “our righteousness did not lie within our nature, but rather within the judgment of God alone.”<sup>560</sup> This abandonment of reformation principle had left the church exposed to a hubris regarding the world, a misunderstanding of the political: “We do not have the Kingdom of God under us, rather the Kingdom of God is in heaven, and when it comes, it comes through the power of God and not through our doing.”<sup>561</sup> This statement certainly was at odds with all the ideology that had been utilized to

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<sup>557</sup> Dehn, *Kirche*, 26.

<sup>558</sup> Regina Braker, “Helene Stöcker’s Pacifism in the Weimar Republic: Between Ideal and Reality,” *Journal of Women’s History*, Vol. 13, No. 3 (Autumn 2001), 75.

<sup>559</sup> Braker, “Stöcker’s Pacifism,” 75.

<sup>560</sup> Dehn, *Kirche*, 12.

<sup>561</sup> Dehn, *Kirche*, 12.

justify and equate the German state with the mission and Kingdom of God. War would not establish the Kingdom of God, because God would “first destroy the chaos of this life and the dis-order of war.”<sup>562</sup> War could not then be said to bring the Kingdom of God because it was not an order of God, reflecting instead the sinful dis-order of humanity. This all would have come as a horror and a heresy to many students and professors in the university, especially to many in the Protestant faculties, whose theologies of state (and thereby war) and church were deeply tied to Luther’s orders of creation. This is, as will be seen, the reason that Barth rejected Luther’s theology of church and state as orders of creation, in favor of them being understood as orders of grace.<sup>563</sup>

Dehn’s assessment of the context was that “one does not take God seriously when one says: ‘What God has said to us is all very nice and good, but just now we do not need it. We will put God’s gift for the time being in a bank and later take it out and rejoice over it.’”<sup>564</sup> This was the convenience of manipulating a domesticated god that was being sought after by those supporting the rising tide of nationalism and Christian nationalism of this time.

After the lecture, a flurry of press, decisions, protests, and letters followed. Dehn was called before the Evangelical Consistory of Brandenburg, Berlin section, on July 22, 1929. The decision regarding Dehn was passed by Martin Dibelius to the faculty senate of the University of Heidelberg at their request. There is in essence an ambiguity about the decision, which amounted

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<sup>562</sup> Dehn, *Kirche*, 12.

<sup>563</sup> Karl Barth, *Ethics* (New York: Seabury Press, 1981), 517-518.

<sup>564</sup> Dehn, *Kirche*, 12.

to the pronouncement that Dehn may have used words that led to unfortunate misunderstandings.<sup>565</sup> Gottfried Traub, upon hearing about the call of Dehn to Heidelberg, published in his *Eiserne Blätter* a list of the objections to Dehn. Dehn had said in his lecture that the plaques that memorialized the war dead did not belong in the church, since soldiers went to war with the intention to kill. Dehn had also said (apparently in a conversation afterward with a woman) that this led to the possibility of immortalizing even murderers in the church. Just how serious this second charge against Dehn was is brought out in Janina Fuge's article which details the growing use of days such as *Volkstrauertag* (Memorial Day) and *Totensonntag* (Sunday of the Dead/Remembrance Day) in Protestant-Nationalist circles which were providing the foundations for a *Heldenkult* (hero cult).<sup>566</sup> Thirdly Traub listed Dehn's proposal that the right to decide for or against war service should be left with the church and each individual Christian. Traub's paper had the phrase "with God for King and Country" on it. The paper was therefore obliged, especially since the University of Heidelberg was already burdened with Professor Gumbel to keep a sharp eye on any incoming faculty appointments.<sup>567</sup> This report is perhaps more than any other factor what caused the faculty senate, with the exception of Martin Dibelius, to withdraw support for Dehn.<sup>568</sup>

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<sup>565</sup> Dehn, *Kirche*, 34.

<sup>566</sup> Janina Fuge, "Ohne Tod und Sterben kein Sieg: Die gefallen Soldaten des Ersten Weltkriegs in der Hamburger Erinnerungskulture der Weimar Republik," *Historical Social Research*, Vol. 34, No. 4 (2009), 356-373.

<sup>567</sup> Dehn, *Kirche*, 39.

<sup>568</sup> Arthur A. Preisinger, "The Church Struggle in Nazi Germany, 1933-34: Resistance, Opposition, or Compromise" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Texas Tech University, 1991), 57. In 1925 Emil Gumbel a professor at Heidelberg had created an uproar with his statement that the soldiers killed in the World War had "lost their lives in a dreadful way." Ringer, *Mandarins*, 217. Gumbel was temporarily suspended and a statement issued by the faculty that they

The incident would hardly rest. Following the Heidelberg call, came a call from the University of Halle to the position of ordinary professor in practical theology. In addition to the charges outlined by Traub, the National Socialist German Student Union added that Dehn was undesirable as a theology professor since he would teach German children this blatant and cowardly pacifism.<sup>569</sup> The question for the Student Union was if such a pacifist could love the German *Volk* or *Vaterland*.<sup>570</sup> It is in relation to this incident that several university professors spoke in support of Dehn. In the *Theologische Blätter*, some of Dehn's colleagues signed in personal support, and others signed in personal and material solidarity with Dehn's position.<sup>571</sup> Barth was one of the latter. Barth's involvement in this matter did not end with the statement in the *Theologische Blätter*.<sup>572</sup> Barth also wrote an article for the *Frankfurter Zeitung* in 1932.<sup>573</sup> In this article Barth writes in response to Dehn's publication of the documents related to his struggle. In essence Barth maintains that all the things Dehn had said at the now well-known Madgeburg lecture of 1928 were the same things that he had been saying and lecturing about for some time.<sup>574</sup> Barth's point was that Dehn was not the

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“considered Dr. Gumbel's membership in the faculty thoroughly displeasing.” Ringer, *Mandarins*, 217. The German Student's League (nationalist and anti-Semitic) sent a letter of protest to the Corporation of German Universities, who according to Ringer, sided too readily with the German Student League. A counter letter critical of the Corporation's stance with the students was sent. Karl Barth was among the signatories of that letter. Ringer, *Mandarins*, 217.

<sup>569</sup> Dehn, *Kirche*, 46.

<sup>570</sup> Dehn, *Kirche*, 46.

<sup>571</sup> Dehn, *Kirche*, 77. Material support should be understood as a doctrinal agreement in this instance.

<sup>572</sup> Over and above simply signing the document, Barth solicited the signatures of others, most notably Rudolf Bultmann. It is interesting to note that thirteen signatures came from Marburg. Barth, “Barth: Bonn, 17 October 1931,” in *Karl Barth - Rudolf Bultmann: Letters 1922-1966* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Company, 1981), 66.

<sup>573</sup> Karl Barth, “An die Frankfurter Zeitung, 1932,” *Offene Briefe 1909-1935* (GA V. 35).

<sup>574</sup> Barth, “Frankfurter Zeitung,” 171 *passim*.

enemy, and that if an open discussion was to happen then it should be a broader “attack” on dialectic theology as a whole, not a personal attack on Dehn for holding those views.<sup>575</sup> The tactics of the National Socialists in the controversy are denounced by Barth as well.<sup>576</sup> The article concludes with a call for Hirsch to discuss the matter in a theological manner since the issues were related to theology rather than to play power politics.<sup>577</sup>

The article demonstrates that Barth understood by this late stage in the life of the Weimar Republic that the NSDAP as well as the Protestant church had merged their two lines into a single front. The church was arguing and promoting a political agenda through their religious interpretation of right-wing ideologies, which at this point were solidly coalescing in the NSDAP. The NSDAP for its part was taking on ecclesiastical and theological issues through the lens of its inter-reactionary understanding, forcing the church and Christianity through the capturing of power, to come into line with its understanding of the church and Christianity.<sup>578</sup> What is clearly seen in both *Quousque Tandem* and the Dehn responses is an understanding on Barth’s part of the emerging pattern *Gleichschaltung* (coordination) which would play a major role in the National Socialist program after the Enabling Act in 1933 gave Hitler essentially unlimited powers. What was occurring was an *Entsprechung*, that is, a correspondence, an analogue between the actions and ideological conceptions of the NSDAP and Christianity. *Quousque* demonstrates that Barth understood that the ideology had penetrated the church, and the Dehn case demonstrated that the NSDAP, especially the

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<sup>575</sup> Barth, “Frankfurter Zeitung,” 175-179.

<sup>576</sup> Barth, “Frankfurter Zeitung,” 180.

<sup>577</sup> Barth, “Frankfurter Zeitung,” 183.

<sup>578</sup> Barth, “Frankfurter Zeitung,” 180.

powerful student union, had used its understanding and influence to determine, not *if* Christian theology were going to be taught, but what *type* of Christianity was going to be taught.

### 6.3 The Myth and The Plight of the Evangelical Church. Barth's

"*Die Not der Evangelische Kirche*," was written in 1931, the year after *Quousque* appeared.<sup>579</sup> The article begins with a simple proposition:

The plight of the Evangelical Church, which is spoken of here, is a duet. There is a plight, which is absolutely in the essence of that which is called the Evangelical Church. The Church cannot be alienated from this essence. Whoever cannot see this, also cannot see the Church. Whoever wants to avoid or circumvent this, separates themselves from the Evangelical Church or works for its destruction.<sup>580</sup>

The first part of the plight of the Evangelical Church then concerned its essence. Barth makes it clear that he sees the problem as being at the point of essence and because essence is at stake, "the promise, blessing, (and) glory of the Evangelical Church" are also at stake.<sup>581</sup> The second plight of the Evangelical Church is "the plight of its current existence."<sup>582</sup> The church's essence and existence are inseparable. In Barth's understanding, the essence of the Church was the theoretical and the existence of the church the practical. The church's plight is grounded in its essence. If the first plight of the church, its essence, is eschewed, denied, or abandoned, the second plight of the church, existence undergoes the same fate.<sup>583</sup> The questions for Barth were:

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<sup>579</sup> Karl Barth, "Die Not der Evangelischen Kirche," *Der Götze wackelt: Zeitkritische Aufsätze, Reden und Briefe von 1930 bis 1960* (Berlin: Käthe Vogt Verlag, 1931).

<sup>580</sup> Barth, "Die Not," 33. *Not* is translated as plight because it gives not only the sense of distress, but implies the idea of need and dependence in the midst of that distress. In the midst of its distress the church has two necessity conditions, essence and existence. Plight also conveys a future aspect, that of outcomes if essence is embraced on the one hand or abandoned or denied on the other.

<sup>581</sup> Barth, "Die Not," 33.

<sup>582</sup> Barth, "Die Not," 34.

<sup>583</sup> Barth, "Die Not," 34.

Must the existence of the Evangelical Church always be concerned with its essence? Can it not just live in obedience and then bow down in the joy of that obedience?<sup>584</sup> Naturally Barth's conclusion is that this is entirely impossible.

The impossibility of this divorce of essence and existence comes with Barth's definition of what is meant by the essence of the Church: "This is the inextinguishable characteristic of the essence of the Church: that it is the Church under the cross . . . where it is not the Church under the cross, it is not the Evangelical Church."<sup>585</sup> The Church cannot be partially under the cross, it is either completely under or not at all. Likewise, the Church's existence is either confession or denial of this essence, completely or not at all.<sup>586</sup>

By way of example, Barth cites the report from a Provincial Church Congress, which drew more than 35,000 participants.<sup>587</sup> The report included a description that the devotion of those days were "ablaze with *vaterländischen Gefühle*" (patriotic feelings for the Fatherland) and it confirmed for all "a vow for restless devotion in the power of Jesus Christ."<sup>588</sup> Here, the Church was for Barth clearly not completely under the cross. The combination of these themes at a Church congress was intolerable. Did one really imagine that by such a synthesis one could serve the Fatherland? Further, was it possible for the Church to address a national need or hope by "bringing strange fires to the Altar?"<sup>589</sup> Because of the nature of essence and existence, it was, for Barth

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<sup>584</sup> Barth, "Die Not," 34.

<sup>585</sup> Barth, "Die Not," 34-35.

<sup>586</sup> Barth, "Die Not," 35.

<sup>587</sup> Barth, "Die Not," 56.

<sup>588</sup> Barth, "Die Not," 56.

<sup>589</sup> Barth, "Die Not," 56. This is also why Barth rejected so-called hyphenated Christianity. The notion of a Nationalist-Christian, Democratic-Christian, Socialist-Christian, etc., was impossible for Barth, since these all moved the Church (or Christian!) from being completely under the cross.

quite impossible for the Church to exist in this way without losing its essence, since the Church cannot devote itself to two masters, the state and Christ. That is, it could not be partially under the cross. As Barth states the matter: “a Church, which will not exist, and a Church, which will not correspondingly exist with its essence, is threatened with extinction.”<sup>590</sup>

This inseparable connection between essence and existence, the question of being and act with respect to the Church was essential for Barth. The being of the Church consisted in its position with God, which was determined by the crucified Christ. Being is the ground of act inasmuch as the act must come out of the essence. Act is the correspondence of existence with being. The Church could not act in one way and be in another. This is precisely why any attempt to coordinate the inter-reactionary ideologies of the NSDAP, or any right-wing movement in the Weimar context, was anathema to Barth. The Church could not at once be under the cross and take upon or within itself another message or essence that was an outworking and consequence of the myth of the *analogia entis*. The relationship of essence to existence, being and act were of fundamental importance for Barth. This relationship is taken up further in the next chapter on Barth’s *Ethics*.

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<sup>590</sup> Barth, “Die Not,” 57.



## Chapter Seven

### *Ethics and the Myth of the Analogia Entis*

Barth's direct ethical responses were not separated from doctrinal formation but arose from such doctrinal consideration and construction. His *Ethics* clearly demonstrates that Barth considered ethical behavior the natural consequence of doctrinal formation and belief, those acting out of inter-reactionary ideologies in the Weimar Republic being a case in point. *Ethics* is a *tour de force* against the myth of the *analogia entis*. Although Barth did not employ the term directly in these lectures, it is quite clear that what Barth understood as the *analogia entis* is manifestly present throughout his construction.

Barth's lectures in ethics were first delivered in 1928/1929 at Münster and again at Bonn in 1930/1931, with additions to the 1928/1929 text.<sup>591</sup> *Ethics* cannot be considered a direct context response in the same way that *Quousque*, the actions and writings on behalf of Dehn, and *Die Not* were. There is a special place however that *Ethics* fills. Whereas the *Göttingen Dogmatics* was written in 1924 in the early or beginning middle period of Weimar, *Ethics* covers the entire period of responses from the Dehn controversy until the year before Barth's statement regarding the *analogia*

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<sup>591</sup> Barth, *Ethics*.

*entis*. Further, while not a direct response, it deals with some of the inter-reactionary issues related to the Weimar context, within the development of an affirmative construction rather than a “negative” response. *Ethics* also deals with the categories of being and act and their relationship to one another. In *Ethics* what is displayed is a fuller picture of what began to emerge in *Die Not*. Through an examination of *Ethics*, it will be shown that a dialectical schema between the ontological and the ethical is constructed. This dialectical then sets the stage for the determination that the *analogia entis* and its counter-part *analogia fidei* were theological constructions, which rose in response to Barth’s Weimar context. That dialectical theology was more than just a theoretical chimera for the sake of theological construction alone is seen in Daniel Migliore’s introduction to the *Göttingen Dogmatics* where he observes that Barth’s “dialectical approach arose in response to the ethical crisis of the time. It was a means of resistance to the easy identification of God with popular movements and dominant ideologies in contemporary culture.”<sup>592</sup> This statement is true also of *Ethics* and in the understanding of *analogia entis*. In *Ethics* under the concept of Creator as wholly other than creature and creation, Barth is effectively able to address the heart of the inter-reactionary ideologies present in the Weimar era.

**7.1 Dogmatics and Ethics.** Methodologically, Barth sets out to affirm that dogmatic and ethics are not separate elements but exist in correspondence with one another. Systematic and practical theology are not distinct but

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<sup>592</sup> Karl Barth, *The Göttingen Dogmatics: Instruction in the Christian Religion*, Vol. 1 intro., Daniel Migliore (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1991), xxxi.

synthetic concerns within the discipline of theology.<sup>593</sup> That is, even formally, the essence of theology cannot be unplugged from praxis. It is not that theology speaks about God and then humanity considered as a subsequent topic, but rather that first what “God has done for and to us” is considered and then the matter of “what we have to do is considered.”<sup>594</sup> Barth maintains that the Word of God is “not just spoken” for the sake of being spoken, but is spoken to humanity and for humanity.<sup>595</sup> The question of human goodness is for Barth then not only an ethical question, but an ethical question which is rooted in theological soil. Again, formally as well as materially, “ethics is not possible as an independent discipline along side of dogmatics . . . the concern of ethics is a proper concern of dogmatics.”<sup>596</sup>

The ethical question is the question of human goodness and as such it is “in an eminent sense the question of human *existence*.”<sup>597</sup> Here the vital connection is made by Barth: “As we will, we *are*. What we do, we *are*. Man does not exist and also act. He exists as he acts . . . The question whether and how far he acts rightly is thus none other than the question whether he exists rightly.”<sup>598</sup> The question of human ethics is attached directly and inextricably to the Word of God. It is not possible to speculate about God metaphysically or philosophically and understand this as divorced from human existence or in a deistic manner. Any God that is deemed as having no claim on human existence is no God at all: “even though he be the triune God of Nicaea or the

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<sup>593</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 7. Also, “Theological ethics is itself dogmatics, not an independent discipline alongside it,” 18.

<sup>594</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 15.

<sup>595</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 16.

<sup>596</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 16.

<sup>597</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 16.

<sup>598</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 16-17.

God so fully described by Luther and Calvin, he is not God but a human idol, a mere concept of God.”<sup>599</sup>

**7.2 Roman Catholicism and Ethics.** It is here that Barth wishes to distinguish between his approach to ethics and that of the Roman Catholics. Catholic ethics, Barth maintains, is a two-tiered system which is integrated. The first or “lower” rung of this ethical system is that of moral philosophy, the second being moral theology.<sup>600</sup> The bipartite elements of nature and grace are reflected in moral philosophy and moral theology respectively. As Barth understands it, moral philosophy “perceives the basic principles of moral action with the light of natural reason . . . the imperative being rooted in the *being of man as such*” albeit derived from revelation.<sup>601</sup> Humanity in its humanity has a determination to glorify the Creator and this moral good is accomplished in the Aristotelian categories of wisdom, justice, courage, and moderation.

This understanding is derived from Aquinas’ treatment on the “Attainment of Happiness.” According to Aquinas, “Man’s natural resources then are enough to gain for him virtue and the partial happiness that follows virtue in this life; but not man’s nor any creatures natural resources are enough to gain for him ultimate happiness.”<sup>602</sup> Natural reason cannot therefore reach the ultimate goal of happiness (seeing God), but nature, by not being able to fulfill humanity’s ultimate goal, turns the free will of the person to God. Nature achieves here “utmost perfection, even though needing external help to

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<sup>599</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 17.

<sup>600</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 28.

<sup>601</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 29. Italics mine.

<sup>602</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae: A Concise Translation*, Timothy McDermott, ed. (Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, Inc., 1989), 181. Classical reference, II.5.5.

do it. . . .”<sup>603</sup> This natural resource is intrinsic to humanity. This natural reasoning follows the eternal law of God, which “bears the imprint of a natural tendency to pursue whatever behaviour and goals that are appropriate to it.”<sup>604</sup> For Aquinas it follows that reasoning creatures “share in the eternal reasoning itself that is imprinting them with their natural tendencies to appropriate behaviour and goals.”<sup>605</sup> This is the “light of natural reason by which we tell good from evil . . . is itself an imprint of God’s light in us.”<sup>606</sup> Grace is needed as the completion to all of this because “we need new light supplementing the light we have by nature only to know truths beyond our natural ability to know.”<sup>607</sup>

It is this very construction, which Barth must reject in whole, not because it is Catholic but because the Catholic understanding of moral philosophical and theological ethics simply were not capable of answering the inter-reactionary ideologies present in Weimar. In fact, Catholic ethics were susceptible to abuse. This is not to say that current Protestant formulations were particularly better; in fact Barth remarks, in the section analyzing Roman Catholic ethics, that Aquinas “cleverly avoided . . . the crass errors of apologetics and isolation which recent Protestant ethics has committed.”<sup>608</sup> And further adding: “What are finally the Protestant mistakes but coarser forms of the refined error that we must see in the union of Aristotle and Aquinas as such?”<sup>609</sup> While indicative of Catholic theology, Barth did not see

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<sup>603</sup> Aquinas, *Summa*, 181; II.5.5.

<sup>604</sup> Aquinas, *Summa*, 281; II.91.2.

<sup>605</sup> Aquinas, *Summa*, 281; II.91.2.

<sup>606</sup> Aquinas, *Summa*, 281; II.91.2.

<sup>607</sup> Aquinas, *Summa*, 307; II.109.1.

<sup>608</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 33.

<sup>609</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 33.

this as only or even primarily a Catholic issue. It should be mentioned here, that while this paper deals with the Protestant perspective in Weimar, the Catholics were not immune to inter-reactionary ideologies nor the NSDAP. Kevin Spicer in his work *Hitler's Priests* details the role of the so-called "Brown Priests" in both the Weimar and post-Weimar period.<sup>610</sup> The Catholic paradigm and its "crasser" Protestant counterpart were both wholly inadequate to meet the ideological and contextual realities of the time, both vulnerable to misuse, misinterpretation, and gross adaptation.

The coordination of moral philosophy and theology were susceptible since "the fundamental Roman Catholic conception of the harmony [was] rooted in the concept of being between . . . nature and grace, reason and revelation, man and God."<sup>611</sup> This meant that even in the face of the fall of humanity "knowledge is fundamentally able to master true being, the supreme good, i.e., God . . ."<sup>612</sup> There is in this in the relationship of moral philosophy and theology a "relic of man's relation by creation to God . . . the created order which remains in spite of sin is then the point of contact to which moral theology must orient itself."<sup>613</sup> If this is the case, then moral philosophy naturally precedes and has precedence over moral theology. Because of this natural knowledge and this relic of creation, Barth brings two questions into the equation. First, how is it that God is knowable to us in God's being and yet "not in and as his act?" And second, if God can be so grasped in God's

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<sup>610</sup> Kevin Spicer, *Hitler's Priests: Catholic Clergy and National Socialism* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2008).

<sup>611</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 30.

<sup>612</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 30.

<sup>613</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 30.

being by humanity, “does this entity deserve to be called God?”<sup>614</sup> Moral, ethical construction based upon the order of being, was for Barth an unsuitable place to begin, inasmuch as “divinely ordered obligation” must be grounded in the divine and not in humanity, lest it become weakened, watered-down and destroyed.<sup>615</sup> Nature, therefore, is factored out of the equation for Barth. Furthermore, humanity’s fellowship with God, its ethical relationship with God, had to be understood solely as grace, and grace “rules out any attempt to snatch God’s being beyond his act.”<sup>616</sup> Barth, having dismissed the Catholic position as untenable proposes what he calls the Protestant Axiom:

God’s grace . . . is either full, total, and exclusive grace or it is not divine but at best a demonic power and wisdom. In the idea of grace that can be bypassed and that serves only to kindle a previously existing light, we do not recognize the serious exclusiveness of the biblical concept of revelation and reconciliation in its analogy to the creation of the world out of nothing.<sup>617</sup>

Theological ethics, in the Protestant sense, then must not proceed from any internal standard or nature. It is a phenomenon completely exterior to humanity. Theological ethics as, Barth formulates them, is the place “we have to seek and find the goodness of human conduct in the event of an act of God himself toward man, namely, the act of his speech and self-revelation to him. Man does good acts when he acts as a hearer of God’s Word, and obedience is the good.”<sup>618</sup> This frames theological ethics as a command from God and the response in faith of the hearer of God’s word. It means that the hearer does not hear the call of nature, so to speak, but rather the external call of God to “follow me” (Matt. 4.19).

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<sup>614</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 31.

<sup>615</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 31.

<sup>616</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 31.

<sup>617</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 32.

<sup>618</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 49.

**7.3 The Word and Command of God.** The Word of God in theological ethics is “understood as an *event*.”<sup>619</sup> It is not a being upon which one, after much metaphysical reflection, might infer a necessary imperative and then rest easily in this deduction. Rather, “God’s Word *gives* itself to be known, and in so doing it is heard . . . man is made responsible, and his acts take place in that confrontation. The Word of God is the Word of God only in act. The Word of God is *decision*. God acts.”<sup>620</sup> Here the earlier concept of the grounding of ethics in theology is seen. Ethics is the command of God given to the hearer who acts in faith (not nature) in correspondence to this act of the Word of God. This is the backdrop upon which Barth constructs his ethics.

Since ethics is an inseparable component of theology, it is necessarily for Barth a trinitarian ethic. That is, the command of God is the command of Creator, Reconciler, and Redeemer. The command of Creator is that the creature is commanded to live, and this command is not properly understood “without understanding that the life of the creature in general is willed by God . . .”<sup>621</sup> In dealing with the issue of creation, Barth is immediately up against the question of naturalism. Is not “to live” an obvious, natural course, unencumbered by the need for anything further? Barth deals with this problem by turning toward the trinitarian construct:

In Christ we have to do with the Creator, and in the Creator we have to do with Christ. What the Creator really commands is not a ‘natural’ but a Christian command . . . All abstractions between the ‘natural’ and the Christian command lead to a weakening of either the one or the other and therefore necessarily of both.<sup>622</sup>

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<sup>619</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 50.

<sup>620</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 50.

<sup>621</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 117.

<sup>622</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 119.



Humanity is therefore not set under “natural” ethics even at the start. The beginning point is not with the creature but that humanity is the creature of *God* and as such the acts of humanity are “set under the judgment” of the command of the Word of God – live.<sup>623</sup> Ethics therefore cannot even establish the question of *what* shall we do, since the *what* is grounded in the command of the Creator. This command to live carries with it, inherent in its nature, the fact that existence of the creature is in complete “distinction from the being of God.”<sup>624</sup> The whole being of the individual is claimed in this distinction: there is no withholding of body, soul, will, or passion from this command. It is only good will if the individual wills his or her life “in obedience to the Will of God the Creator.”<sup>625</sup>

This command to live is not held just within the individual nor is the created order confined to the individual. There is contained within the command a “Thou shalt not kill” (Ex. 20.13).<sup>626</sup> This command of life “protects man from man” and “makes man an object of respect.”<sup>627</sup> Barth states that the command “Thou shalt not kill” is one of the most original and powerful ways in which the command has always reached man and grasped him.<sup>628</sup> This command for the respect of life is in its negations surrounded by extreme restraints and represents a “borderline possibility” which is surrounded by “all kinds of possible question marks.”<sup>629</sup> In general Barth says there is a growing openness that was not present in times past to question the

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<sup>623</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 118.

<sup>624</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 122.

<sup>625</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 124.

<sup>626</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 143.

<sup>627</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 143.

<sup>628</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 144.

<sup>629</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 144.

possibilities of the violation of the command. Despite this openness, the questioning itself does not overcome “the *horror* at the thing which is growing today . . . the horror *also* at all attempts to justify it ethically and theologically.”<sup>630</sup> The attempt to suppress the question marks surrounding the command, the question of the tightening of the restraints of this “borderline possibility” by contemporaries is met with incredulity by Barth who comments that “it is one of the most incomprehensible absurdities in the history of theology that theology has dared to refer to the divine order of creation in order to beat down and silence the concern largely represented here by children of the world, indeed, by publicans and sinners of all kinds.”<sup>631</sup> Additionally, while Barth maintained that ethics of his time could not be governed by pacifism (or by any other ism), he found it particularly stressing that given the climate in Weimar, ethics and theology should be dominated and find its most articulate expression in an explicitly “militaristic theology.”<sup>632</sup>

**7.4 Ethical Particulars and Weimar.** This brings Barth to the contextual question: If God commands me to live and the other to live, what happens if the other and I perceive that the other must die in order to live?<sup>633</sup> The consideration of this question is taken up under the categories of self-defense, capital punishment, and war. What is of interest here are the categories of self-defense and war.

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<sup>630</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 145.

<sup>631</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 145.

<sup>632</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 145.

<sup>633</sup> Prior to this question, Barth has already dealt with the concept of sacrifice and the idea that the Creator might call on one to die in order to fulfill a summons to life, and here the question of Christology is applied within the doctrine of creation.

After treating the main body of the argument, Barth considers two rather odd categories under the concept of self-defense. The first of these is the duel, the second tyrannicide. Both of these are consanguineal with the Weimar period. The first, dueling, was a practice within the university fraternities. It took different forms and was illegal in the Weimar Republic, but the law was rarely enforced.<sup>634</sup> One of the forms was the *Mensur*: “essentially a fencing match in which the element of danger is not removed . . . if [a student] flinched or revealed fear during the contest . . . he was defeated and had to restore his honor in a second match or face expulsion or ostracism. The facial scars incurred, the *Schmisse*, were . . . a token of honor.”<sup>635</sup> While Barth is speaking primarily of dueling with pistols, there is a correspondence with *Mensur* inasmuch as both risk bodily harm and life (although infrequent but not unheard of in the fraternity setting) for the sake of honor. As Barth states the matter: “the logic of the duel rests, as is well known, on the equation of life and honor.”<sup>636</sup> The first point in addressing this issue is that a threat to honor *must* be equivalent to the threat against life. The one taking the life must be absolutely certain that honor is equivalent to life. When considering the question, the person who seeks to have his honor restored in this way must say: “in spite of my respect for the life of another I believe I must shoot.”<sup>637</sup>

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<sup>634</sup> Steinberg, *Sabers*, 38.

<sup>635</sup> Steinberg, *Sabers*, 38.

<sup>636</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 148.

<sup>637</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 149.

In like fashion, Barth discusses tyrannicide, and in so doing references the assassinations of Erzberger<sup>638</sup> and Rathenau, who was discussed earlier in the paper. Barth deliberates that “In this case the people responsible were not concerned about their own honor but about the honor and freedom of the German people and fatherland which they thought Erzberger and Rathenau had betrayed; their task being to avenge the betrayal, whether because of their oath of loyalty to the Kaiser or for some other reason.”<sup>639</sup> But this form of “honor killing” had for Barth even exceeded the questions burdening dueling insofar as the assassins were also responsible:

(1) for the equation of their own lives and the threat to them with the cause of Germany and the betrayal of this cause; for the decision then, whether they themselves might be appointed avengers of this crime, and (2) for the correctness of the judgment that a crime had taken place, that Germany really had been betrayed by Erzberger and Rathenau . . . .<sup>640</sup>

As Barth points out, tyrannicide is found in the Bible (Judg. 4-5 and Jdt. 8-13 are examples Barth cites, in addition to Calvin’s *Institutes* 4.20, 30-31).

However, the person undertaking such a task must have been very sure of two things: “(1) that he can justify himself factually, and (2) that he can really appeal to a call.”<sup>641</sup> Both these rather peculiar ethical topics point to contextual concerns and they are also rather oddly related. The dueling fraternities were expanding after World War I, and according to Steinberg, “the fraternity system epitomized the reactionary ethos that undermined Germany’s first experiment in democracy. At their best, the fraternities

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<sup>638</sup> Matthias Erzberger was Minister of Finance in the early Weimar period. He was assassinated by the same group as Rathenau. It is probable that his presence and consent at Versailles were the reasons behind his death, beyond being a minister in the Weimar government.

<sup>639</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 149.

<sup>640</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 149.

<sup>641</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 150.

tended to isolate their members from progressive groups at the universities; at their worst they reinforced . . . militaristic values, and the narrowest chauvinistic nationalism.”<sup>642</sup> The same has been seen in conjunction with the Rathenau case where idealistic inter-reactionary motives were in play. Dueling and tyrannicide, as demonstrated in the Erzberger and Rathenau cases, are contextual events that are addressed by Barth. But note must be taken that Barth does not address them politically but rather theologically. In both instances Barth throws the questions back onto the command of life, which proceeds from the Word of God in act, the act of God in unity with the being of God. This is utterly distinct from human nature. Neither assassination was deemed by Barth as being either justified or condemned from the order of creation or from the perspective of nature or a relative good. Each act can either correspond – not with a natural inclination nor an order of creation – but only and solely to the command of God. Dueling and tyrannicide from this perspective become far more remote relative to “borderline possibility” and restraints.

War is the second item of interest here, with much of the Weimar context focused upon the ethical reflections before and after the war. Barth speaks of the need of not “pushing a demand for conscientious objection,” as this is an ethical question of life and call directed to the individual. Barth is far more concerned about the urgent contextual phenomenon in which ethics “is made an instrument of the warring state by devoting itself to providing spiritual munitions for the forces or giving the general staffs the desired repose

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<sup>642</sup> Steingberg, *Sabers*, 38.

of a good conscience concerning those who must actually aim and shoot.”<sup>643</sup>

In the last war (WWI), Barth maintained that the cause of Christian ethics “was publicly betrayed” in a “scandalous fashion.”<sup>644</sup>

Barth does not panoptically condemn war; he does not, however, affirm it when what is at stake is a “will for unity on the basis of common race, language, culture, or history, nor . . . a will to maintain certain national symbols such as the almost mystical idea of the German Rhine or (for German and French alike) possession of the Stasbourg Cathedral . . .”<sup>645</sup> This was a direct assault at the heart of the inter-reactionary ideologies present within the Republic, the Protestant Church, and much of the University community. This sort of justification or ethical rationale for war attest that “the will for unity and the will for certain symbols arise only because and so far as there lies behind them a will for power. As the will of a people the will for power means: We will . . . we will because we need and we need because we will.”<sup>646</sup> Some of this arises out of necessary resource but the summit of all of this amounts to the will and need for “prestige, world status, respect for our colors as the presupposition of future and wider actualization of our will for power.”<sup>647</sup> What is required in approaching war from the ethical is a deep need to dispense with mystical idealism, national symbols, chants for unity, and the like. What is needed is to see war in its “true reality.”<sup>648</sup> That reality drives the ethical question back to the command of the Creator. A reductionism of sorts is called for here, away from the so-called supreme

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<sup>643</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 158.

<sup>644</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 158.

<sup>645</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 159.

<sup>646</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 159.

<sup>647</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 159.

<sup>648</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 159.

values of unity, race, mysticism and such to the truth that one nation is looking upon another and saying our need to live is greater than yours. This reduction away from the militaristic idealism to the command of Creator retards the heartstrings of hyper-patriotism which leads to militaristic nationalism. In Barth's estimation, "Military nationalism is less likely to perish, if it ever does, from direct ethical attack than from ethical starvation."<sup>649</sup> The second reflection must be a serious understanding over and above all else that "soldiers must diligently and carefully shoot at the enemy soldiers."<sup>650</sup> The appeal to supreme, idealistic values is but another example of grounding existence in the essence of the divine which is taken to be resident within a group or an individual.

One of the problems with war, or any ethical question, is when a resolution is sought through grounding the act in the name of the Church or Christianity. Again this becomes a problem when the Church or Christianity (or the Christian) is assumed to be analogous in nature with God. This can occur when the individual (or group) attempts to "evade responsibility for the militant character of [their] actions by appealing to [their] *good intentions* in performing them. The end does not sanctify the means."<sup>651</sup> The goal of many enterprises is to use the name of Christianity in order to make the act or venture holy or the person or group engaged in such acts appear to be doing a divine thing. What Barth cautions against here is the application of the name "Christian" to everything that can be done. Christian politics, Christian

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<sup>649</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 159.

<sup>650</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 160.

<sup>651</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 166.

newspapers, Christian unions are all examples Barth cites.<sup>652</sup> Barth also mentions the Evangelical Bank in Berlin, a bank founded by Adolf Runck, in the midst of the economic chaos of the early Weimar Republic with the purpose of providing Christian customers an alternative to banking with “Jewish” institutions.<sup>653</sup> All of these attempts to attach the name Christian to the acts performed must end with Christianity being allied with causes and existences which are in fact not Christian in the least. There must be a circumspectness and ethical reflection before the “Christian flag” is hoisted “for at every smallest step we take the danger is great that we shall at least compromise severely the Christian name.”<sup>654</sup> If in an act the doer of the act seeks to ground the act in the Church or Christianity, and if the understanding of Christianity is that humanity is in some way, even by vestige like, God then the action is traced to God and an assessment of God in God’s self is equated with the human act. This is what must be avoided, this analogy of human act (and therefore being) with the divine being (and therefore act).

**7.5 The Command and Correspondence.** Correspondence is to be found in a different way for Barth. For as much as a divine-human analogy of being cannot for Barth be posited, nor can it simply be said that the human (Christian) act is entirely independent of God. As Barth states it: “the correlation between the command and my what and how is not to be taken to mean that my what and how are self-grounded . . .”<sup>655</sup> This correlation is indeed a partnership, but a partnership of that which is totally dependent toward that which is utterly independent. The Creator does not orient action

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<sup>652</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 167.

<sup>653</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 167.

<sup>654</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 167.

<sup>655</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 174.



or being with respect to the creature, rather, the creature must orient itself to the Creator. There is no question of the possibility of “reversing the order” since humanity exists only through life on loan from God and therefore has “no right to control God’s command.”<sup>656</sup> Yet, humanity does have a specific relationship to this command of God. Human existence, in its absolute dependence upon God, is contained in its *what* and *how*, that is its essence and existence, its being and act. This specific relationship comes in calling.

God’s “asking and answering” relate to humanity’s “responsible action.”<sup>657</sup> God does not simply ask “What are you *doing*?” but also “Who *are* you?”<sup>658</sup> These two questions are asked simultaneously since they cannot be separated in any way: “the first question remain obscure if the second does not come along with its claim and is not heard and drawn into ethical reflection.”<sup>659</sup> This question is given to the individual who must stand as an “I” in the presence of God’s “Thou.” God speaks God’s command not as a vacuous generality but rather into the reality of each particular individual. The reality of the individual, the Church, and the State are all positioned with respect to God’s command. One cannot ethically, and therefore theologically, reflect apart from one’s reality. Dismissing or considering ethics in a general sense does not excuse one; this is not a possibility. The command is given to “me” and therefore the reality in which the “I” stands. This also means that the “I” has responsibilities to answer when the position of “I” finds itself standing in relationship to the group, e.g., of Church and State. One cannot on this account say: “well the government did that, it was not me.” The “me”

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<sup>656</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 177.

<sup>657</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 176.

<sup>658</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 176.

<sup>659</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 176.

here has an ethical responsibility to stand with those who have so acted on behalf of all the “me-s.” The reality wherein the “I” stands then may be in isolation, but it also may be in a greater societal reality. In any case the “I” is addressed in all of its specific forms and cannot divorce itself from them:

In other words, we cannot hear it [the command of God] unless we are willing to hear it at our specific and limited place in creation. My calling is the limitation and definiteness in which I live among other men and creatures, to the extent that this is not a matter of chance or fate and is not therefore silent in relation to the command that comes to me; to the extent that the command that comes to me attests and declares itself in it; to the extent, then, that it points to God’s command if I will see and understand its sign. To take oneself seriously in the sense just indicated is thus to be ready to see and understand this sign of the definiteness in which we all live, to take one’s *calling* seriously, not to see one’s what and how as neutral or indifferent, but to see it as the direction to God’s command which will not deny them to us.<sup>660</sup>

The individual then must take his or her context seriously as the place where God asks both “what are you doing” and therefore a dialectical “who are you.” There are three general aspects of the command of God that relate to the specific calling of the individual in the questions of “what are you doing?” and “who are you?”

First, the calling must be understood from the “fundamental insight that we are men.”<sup>661</sup> That is the context in which one lives is from beginning to end human. Humanity as “created and dependent [does] not have a share in the life of God by being a member of the intelligible world, by having a life of mind and soul as well as body.”<sup>662</sup> Further, “humanity is the broad basis of divine calling which we cannot *not* take seriously if we are reached by God’s command as the command of God the Creator.”<sup>663</sup> This contextual reality

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<sup>660</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 177.

<sup>661</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 178.

<sup>662</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 178.

<sup>663</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 179.

means that the command of God cannot be understood as inherently a part of a natural order implanted in the structure of humanity, as something that is analogous to the divine being. “The will to live and respect for life, insofar as they are obedience to the command of God, are at any rate characterized as *humanity*.”<sup>664</sup> What is at stake in the command is not the divinization of humanity that obediently follows the command, insofar as it does so, but rather its humanity itself. When humanity’s will to live and respect for the life of others is compromised because life is lived on the edge of brutality or sinks into the midst of savagery altogether, what is imperiled is humanness and humanity itself.

Humanity implies not only the “I” but also the “Thou.” This is the second insight. It is not simply a matter that “I” am human and live but that “I” live life with a respect of the life of the “Thou” gathered to itself. This is the concept of friendship, which is grounded in the concept of neighbor.<sup>665</sup> Friendship is not predicated upon blood but soul and spirit, wherein “my *fellowman* is characterized by the fact . . . that his soul and mine have come together, even though there is no blood or sexual relationship between us.”<sup>666</sup> In the friend and neighbor one finds one’s dialectical partner in humanity, one’s “alter ego” as Barth puts it.<sup>667</sup> In the neighbor and the friend, life cannot be lived egocentrically. This relationship is reflected in the concept which follows, a concept deeply relevant to the Weimar context of Barth, that is the category of kinship.

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<sup>664</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 179.

<sup>665</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 188.

<sup>666</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 189.

<sup>667</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 189.

Kinship, in differentiation from friendship, is not based upon a choice; it is a given factor.<sup>668</sup> Kinship, as used here, extends to clan, tribe, and nation. For Barth however, in the last analysis, kinship is only an appearance.<sup>669</sup> Given the admixture of races there is no basis on which not to take the question of humanity in earnest. Even if it were possible to secure a “national purity,” this would still not nullify the fact that all humanity was related to one another in the common root called Adam.<sup>670</sup> The human bond stands in priority, therefore, with respect to all other bonds. Any group of kin, clan, tribe, or nation stands immediately with and not against other groups, kin, clans, tribes, or nations in their humanity. The life of one is met again in the tandem concept of the respect of the life of others: “even the deepest loyalty to kin and people cannot close our eyes to the fact that both these inner circles are enclosed by an even wider circle of blood relationship in which we stand by our virtue of our calling by creation, which also claims our loyalty, and by which our conduct is also measured.”<sup>671</sup> Of particular interest is that Barth invokes the idea of the stranger in the gate (Exod. 20:10) indicating that it is precisely they “who tell us, if we have not heard it before, that the true concern even in blood relationship is *humanity*.”<sup>672</sup>

Barth saw in all of this the contextual issues of anti-Semitism and conscious nationalism.<sup>673</sup> Both concepts, within this framework, are put into *crisis* relationship with the command of God. The command of God in the calling of creation brings these two inter-reactionary ideologies into a conflict

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<sup>668</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 194.

<sup>669</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 194.

<sup>670</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 195.

<sup>671</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 195.

<sup>672</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 195.

<sup>673</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 195.

with the command of God to live with respect for other life. Conscious nationalism and anti-Semitism stand in rebellion to this fundamental creed of human existence (and therefore essence) found in the command of God. The “ethical” enacting of these two inter-reactionary ideologies end in the negation of the humanness not just of the “Thou,” the stranger in the gate, but also the essence of the humanity of those employing anti-Semitism and nationalism since these negated existing in the command of God.

**7.6 The Myth of the *Analogia Entis*.** Following the consideration of the general human contextual questions, Barth returns to the consideration of the relationship that exists between Creator and creature. First are the negations. In the command of God, Barth maintains that: “We have to do with a *will* that *meets* our *will* with the demand that our will bow before it, be subject to it, be in conformity with it. This demand is justified and meets us imperiously because it is the will of the Creator, and our will is that of the creature which would not even be and could not even be and could not continue for a moment without the Creator.”<sup>674</sup> The Creator’s will meets human will, but there is no ontological analogy in these two wills although there is an ethical correspondence involved.

The command of the Creator cannot be anything other than that which is ontologically and ethically proper to the creature. Natural and ethical law, so considered, are commanded by God, while demanding “nothing other than what is demanded by the nature of the creature as God created it.”<sup>675</sup> This does not mean for Barth that natural theology is a possibility, even less so its foundation in the *analogia entis*. Natural law is a part of the created order,

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<sup>674</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 209.

<sup>675</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 209.

created by God, natural to humanity but never analogously reporting about God. Nor is natural law even a thing that can be rightly appropriated by the creature:

Yet we cannot infer from this, as many have done, that the event of the revelation of the command consists of the ability of the creature to direct the demand of the Creator to itself [the creature]. While the law of God is in fact no other than the law of nature created by him, it does not follow in any sense that we have the power to know and establish it.<sup>676</sup>

This sort of reasoning for Barth leads to the calamitous construction of an anthropological and “deistic” myth. This myth leaves the creature in a position certainly distinct from the Creator but also entirely independent of the Creator. This brings with it also an epistemological exigency. Knowledge of will, on the side of the creature, is understood to be no more or less than the knowledge of the will of God itself. The outcome of such epistemology is that the creature would “for its own sake and on the basis of its own authority, tell itself what God wills.”<sup>677</sup> This is the proposition which provides patronage to disobedience to the command of the Creator. It also leads to nothing less than an atheism grounded in the deception of human deity. This theory is summed up by Barth using a modified line from Friedrich Schiller: “Take up divinity into your own will and it will come down from its heavenly throne.”<sup>678</sup> The theory is objurgated by Barth in one of his most forceful statements:

The theory is a myth, *the* great anthropological myth, the myth of apostasy and revolt, *the* great lie, because deity that is taken up into our will is no longer deity, no longer the Creator. That ‘the finite is

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<sup>676</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 210.

<sup>677</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 210.

<sup>678</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 210. Schiller’s poem “The Ideal and Actual Life” has the following line: “And with divinity thou sharest the throne, Let but divinity become thy will!” Friedrich Schiller, “The Ideal and Actual Life,” *The Poems of Friedrich Schiller: The Third Period* (Project Gutenberg, 2004), <http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/6796#downloads>. [accessed March 1, 2010.]

capable of the infinite' means in this respect, too, that there is no God because we ourselves are God.<sup>679</sup>

Humanity then becomes the lawgiver but in so doing creates a dissonant relationship between the natural and spiritual arenas, between "the ideal and the real, the visible and invisible."<sup>680</sup> Such a God might be "correctly perceived" as an "anthropological reality, and he may also, of course, be a demon."<sup>681</sup> The myth also may be said to have a dialectical component, at least from the deistic side. If humanity is the lawgiver, it may be the case that God has "commissioned" humanity to this task. This of course means that humanity stands in dialectical position with respect to the divine command, that is God's command is understood as humanity's command, obedience to self then would imply obedience to God.<sup>682</sup> The myth would have it that the dignity of God is apportioned with humanity, leaving humanity unto itself with nothing more on the divine side of the equation than an "emeritus God."<sup>683</sup>

The myth in fact imperils the creature at this very point. Since the dignity, as well as the essence and existence, of the creature is wholly dependent upon obeying the command of God, this grand larceny can only end in the creature "denying its own true nature."<sup>684</sup> The myth imperils the creature at another point. Since God is a unity, and God's will a unity, the departure of the creature from the command of God in favor of the myth manifests itself in the fragmentation of the human will. This means

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<sup>679</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 210.

<sup>680</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 210.

<sup>681</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 210.

<sup>682</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 211.

<sup>683</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 211.

<sup>684</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 211.

equivocation in the will of the creature. It is not to say the creature in its lapsed state is by any means uniform but rather when grounded in the command of God humanity can “acquire a uniform determination.”<sup>685</sup> The myth, which sets the human will back upon itself, necessarily means that the creature is surrendered to the capriciousness of multiple wills since it is cast adrift from its grounding in the command of God. This is a fractured will already set in opposition to God and therefore set upon a journey of opposition and apposition.

The great anthropological and deistic myth is none other than the *analogia entis*. The myth is a phantom phenomenon which when actualized leads only to an ontological impossibility. Human *being-ness* is hopelessly compromised when in its act it regards equality with God a thing to be grasped (Col. 2:6). In trying to jump the boundless chasm between human act to divine being, and/or from human *being-ness* to divine act, humanity ambuscades its essence. The myth, presented in multifarious manner, included notions of the god-within, the light within, a point of contact with the divine, etc. The myth is both ontological *and* ethical in nature.

What is more, the myth was and could be an individual matter, that is, the “I.” But the implication from Barth’s discussion of the ethical dimension of contextual reality is that the myth also contains no less the aspect of “we.” Idealistic inter-reactionary ideologies leading up and into the Weimar Republic had provided the noetic essence for the religious ethic being implemented in Barth’s context. This meant of course that for the “we” the command of God had been usurped for the anthropological myth. Every

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<sup>685</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 213.



admonition that God resided within the *Volk*, that the will of God was revealed in the *Volk*, and every assurance of “kernel” Christianity (the Kingdom of God is within you) brought with it also the negation of the essence and existence of the nature of humanity as it stood in the “we” of the German *Volk*. This meant also the will of the German people fragmented against the will of other nations and the necessity of denying the common root of humanity as a priority claim in the command of God. It meant the determination that the will of the German people was the will of God and that Germany was setting forth, inasmuch as it was ethically carrying forward inter-reactionary ideologies on an oppositional and appositional journey. The myth of *analogia entis* had taken root in the fertile soil of the Weimar Republic and not only the stranger in the gate was in jeopardy but also at risk was the humanity of those ethically employing the myth whether in society at large, the church, or the university. The myth, represented in the inter-reactionary ideologies, had become a prevalent phenomenon in Weimar at all levels and amongst all classes of people in some form or other. The oft times brutal and chaotic events in Weimar, the uptake of nationalism and intake of “new-ancient” kernel Christianities in the campaigns and compositions of many in the church, and the *völkisch* and anti-Weimar philosophies spewing from the universities were all constituent elements in the composition of the myth of *analogia entis*.

**7.7 The Verity of the *Analogia Fidei*.** Before moving to some credible responses contemporary to Barth, a few words should be said regarding the correspondence that was possible in Barth’s theology related to essence and existence. Since human existence is grounded in the command of God and not in an ontological analogue, where does humanity correspond to

God? God is what God does, and humanity is what humanity does. Humanity fulfills a human function in its act of obedience. Barth speaks of this as a fulfillment of the Lord's Prayer: "Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6:10b). This is the action of the creature in the finite, in the created order, in the limits of temporal time. This is the correspondence of humanity, the analogy in play, and "the conformity with God's own action in heaven."<sup>686</sup> However, this action of God in heaven is "always distinct from our action as heaven is from earth. It is inappropriate, then, to describe the doing of the good as a union of man's will with God's."<sup>687</sup> The ὡς (from the γεννηθή τω τὸ θεῖ λημά σου, ὡς ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς of Matt. 6:10) is not to be understood as a "repetition or doubling of it."<sup>688</sup> Rather, the ὡς stands as a correlative with καὶ, that is, it is an imitative act: "to do the Good does not mean to take God's place with our goodness. God claims us for the doing of his will as his *creatures*, not as those who are like him either now or in hope . . ."<sup>689</sup> Whenever the good is carried out by the creature, it is always done so "unambiguously within the limits of the creature *on earth* . . . in agreement with what is done in heaven by God . . ."<sup>690</sup> The creature does not perform divine action, but only that action that is right and proper to humanity in relationship to the divine command. How this is accomplished is contained in the concept of faith.

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<sup>686</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 250.

<sup>687</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 250.

<sup>688</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 250.

<sup>689</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 250.

<sup>690</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 250.

This is where the role and function of faith come into play, in this correlation of the  $\acute{\omega}\varsigma \dots \kappa\alpha\iota$  . According to Barth:

Faith bridges the distance between creature and Creator without removing it. Faith bridges the distance even as it overcomes it. Faith is the step, but always the step of man to God. Faith is in antithesis to every mysticism of head, stomach, *and* heart, to all uncritical mystical idealism. It is, then, an affirmation of God which also resolutely and unreservedly affirms the finitude, creatureliness, and incommensurability of men over against God.<sup>691</sup>

This an example of Barth's use of the *analogia fidei*. Under this main category of *analogia fidei*, are sub-categories which help to demonstrate the formal relationships utilized.<sup>692</sup> The usage here falls under Pöhlmann's category of the *analogia proportionalitatis extrinsecae*. According to Pöhlmann, Barth does not overtly develop these forms but his usage, but with respect to the *analogia fidei* Barth's usage frequently falls within these types.<sup>693</sup> These classical types are as follows where  $x = \text{God}$  and  $y = \text{humanity}$  and are expressed: (1)  $\square!x:\square y \text{ analog } \exists y:\square!x$ . (2)  $\square!x:\square!x \text{ analog } \exists y:\exists y$ . (3)  $\square!x:\exists y \text{ analog } \exists y:\exists y$  or  $\square!x:\square!x \text{ analog } \square!x:\square y$ .<sup>694</sup> The first of these is an analogy of symmetrical proportion. The examples that Pöhlmann provides for this type of *analogia proportionalitatis extrinsecae* are the love that God has for humanity and the love that humanity has for God and the freedom of God for humanity and the freedom of humanity for God.<sup>695</sup> This is the most difficult of the three proportional concepts. It is the opposite-side proportionality and does not infer an ontological/attributional analogy between

<sup>691</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 250.

<sup>692</sup> Horst Georg Pöhlmann, *Analogia entis oder Analogia fidei: Die Frage der Analogie bei Karl Barth* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1965), 107.

<sup>693</sup> Pöhlmann, *Analogia*, 108.

<sup>694</sup> Pöhlmann, *Analogia*, 108. Note this treatment has added the notations  $\square!$  and  $\square$ .

<sup>695</sup> Pöhlmann, *Analogia*, 108.

the love which God has and that which humanity has. The same is true of freedom. Because of the difficulty of this analogy, and the potential for misunderstanding it is seldom used by Barth to express the *analogia fidei*.<sup>696</sup> The second of the *analogia proportionalitatis extrinsecae* is denoted by Pöhlmann as “eine rein indirekte Analogie,” that is, *analogia pure indirecta*.<sup>697</sup> This is the most straightforward of the proportional analogies. As Pöhlmann notes however, while this analogy: “expresses well the transcendence of God-World . . . That this analogical-form is almost never found in Barth speaks to the overcoming of the dualistic principle of Barth’s crisis-period and his post-critical period.”<sup>698</sup> The example used here is that: “God relates to God as humanity relates to humanity.”<sup>699</sup>

Any of these classical constructions of *analogia proportionalitatis extrinsecae* can and are used by Barth to establish the *analogia fidei*. What these various categories demonstrate is what Barth means in saying:

Good action, then, is human action which is a pleasure to God because on earth, in the created world, it does not perform God’s own action, which he himself does, but it does represent it, it is its reflection and image. It is human action which brings God joy because in it he can see his own will again as in a finite, creaturely, and temporal mirror, but still a real one. In this moment we do the good where God finds us, engaged in the temporal fulfillment of the eternal thought . . . In this moment we live, not a divine, but a real human life together with all other life as God intended it.<sup>700</sup>

Whether one speaks of  $\square!x:\square y$  analog  $\exists y:\square!x$ ,  $\square!x:\square!x$  analog  $\exists y:\exists y$ , or  $\square!x:\exists y$  analog  $\exists y:\exists y$  or  $\square!x:\square!x$  analog  $\square!x:\square y$ , what is occurring is the *analogia fidei* since the creature stands properly as the creature in the space

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<sup>696</sup> Pöhlmann, *Analogia*, 108.

<sup>697</sup> Pöhlmann, *Analogia*, 108.

<sup>698</sup> Pöhlmann, *Analogia*, 109.

<sup>699</sup> Pöhlmann, *Analogia*, 109.

<sup>700</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 250.

and time of the creature (which are contained in divine space and time<sup>701</sup>), faith being an “existential affirmation of God” an “acknowledgment of God . . . as an act of existence. Faith is obedience.”<sup>702</sup> Faith, in all of the possible *analogia proportionalitatis extrinsecae*, which understood as obedience to the divine command, is the “overcoming of the qualitative antithesis of the creature to the Creator, yet the overcoming in which the antithesis is maintained.”<sup>703</sup> Faith maintains these distinctions. It is the Word of God spoken, that is, humanity is addressed by God from without, and humanity through the power of the Spirit of God confirms what it is already convicted and convinced of.<sup>704</sup> Faith is the good act in correspondence to and obedience to the command of God.

By way of concluding this segment, note is taken of John Macquarrie’s observation that Barth, in making ethics a part of dogmatics, tied his theology to “the situations of everyday life” and as Macquarrie asserts Barth’s ethic “was what enabled him to stand up to the ideology of the Nazis.”<sup>705</sup> This much is correct. However, this again is a comment that is related to the integration of the *Ethics* into *CD II.2* not released until 1942, when of course the NSDAP was clearly a matter of concern for the entire world.<sup>706</sup> Hood, for whose work Macquarrie penned these words in his foreward, deals early on

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<sup>701</sup> Barth, *CD II.1*, 440-490 and 608-675.

<sup>702</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 251.

<sup>703</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 251.

<sup>704</sup> Barth, *Ethics*, 251.

<sup>705</sup> Robert Hood, *Contemporary Political Orders and Christ: Karl Barth’s Christology and Political Praxis*, Foreward by John Macquarrie (Allison Park, PA: Pickwick Publications, 1985), ix.

<sup>706</sup> Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics: The Doctrine of God II.2* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1957), x.

with the criteria for ethical action, although he also does this from *CD II.2*.<sup>707</sup> However, the ethical-political criteria which Hood wants to establish came about earlier. It is not the intention of Hood's work to draw this out but rather to establish that Barth's theology had a political application. The importance of *Ethics* is that it is situated contextually in the Weimar period and is, in the vein of Macquarrie's comment, a response to Barth's context, a context that was inundated, generally, ecclesiastically, and academically, with inter-reactionary ideologies and the myth of the *analogia entis*. Barth's direct "acts" were in keeping with his ethics, since they were grounded in a theology, which refused to adopt the myth of *analogia entis* in any way. In 1928/29 (and again in 1930/31) *Ethics* deployed a full understanding and exposé of what Barth meant and therefore rejected in the concept *analogia entis*. Simultaneously Barth employed the concept of *analogia fidei* to demonstrate the extrinsic proportionality with which humanity corresponds to God in existential affirmation to the command of God. *Ethics* is the formal statement of essence and existence, being and act, the ontological and the ethical, not simply in theory, but as theology was being lived out in Barth's life, and as he saw it negatively emerging in his context. *Ethics* is the confluence of all these aspects, and it marked Barth's contradiction of the myth of *analogia entis* with the possibility of correspondence in the verity of the *analogia fidei*.

**7.8 Excurses: "Fate and Idea."** Barth's essay "Fate and Idea"<sup>708</sup> is a bridge between Barth's major works. It was penned in 1928-29, the same academic year the second part of *Ethics* was delivered in lectures at Münster. The essay appeared after the dialogue with Przywara. Further, it is an essay that bridges between *Ethics*, Przywara, and *Dogmatics I.1*. Barth in this

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<sup>707</sup> Hood, *Political Orders*, xiv.

<sup>708</sup> Karl Barth, "Fate and Idea," *The Way of Theology in Karl Barth: Essays and Comments*, H. Martin Rumscheidt, ed. (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 1986).

essay states numerous places that he is addressing the situation of *Protestant Theology*.<sup>709</sup> Barth wrestles with the three concepts that are for him bound together, namely, the relationship of theology to philosophy, natural theology, and *analogia entis*. Much of the essay is programmatic of Barth's theology. Barth is clear that he can only explicitly address a Protestant theology and can only speak of theology from the vantage point that "theology can know about God to the extent that God makes himself accessible to us, but to that extent theology really does claim to know about God."<sup>710</sup> The comparison that Barth makes between philosophy and theology utilizes the imagery of the confrontation of Aaron and the Pharaoh's magicians. Aaron "with his clever trick cannot avoid taking his place in a brotherly way beside the Egyptian magicians. It turns out that of himself he can do no more than they can do."<sup>711</sup> Theology can then either match trick for trick with philosophy, or it must be conceded that theology can "come into being only under the presupposition of God's gracious miracle."<sup>712</sup> Without this presupposition, theology is reduced to nothing more than a sub-category of philosophy. Barth maintains that the temptation is great for theologians to become just such philosophers, and that theologians have at times "frankly felt compelled to be not only in the world . . . but also really and recognizably of the world."<sup>713</sup> To be sure theology "is a technical discipline concerned about God" and further, it is "a human discipline."<sup>714</sup> Barth's treatment of the *analogia entis* states the dissimilarity and similarity premises of Przywara and says that: "*Analogia Entis* means the dissimilarity and similarity to God which I myself have as knower and the thing outside me . . . [which is] the known."<sup>715</sup> This of course is unacceptable to Barth and posits a relationship of philosophy to theology that is untenable. As such, all things theological could be reduced in the manner of Georg Wobbermin (1869-1943),<sup>716</sup> wherein "faith is history, and history is faith."<sup>717</sup> Barth also affirms another proposition related to his *Ethics* in this essay, that is in revelation God reveals who God is, since, "act means being

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<sup>709</sup> Barth, "Fate and Idea," on page 26 three times and 37, 38, 39.

<sup>710</sup> Barth, "Fate and Idea," 27.

<sup>711</sup> Barth, "Fate and Idea," 29.

<sup>712</sup> Barth, "Fate and Idea," 29.

<sup>713</sup> Barth, "Fate and Idea," 31.

<sup>714</sup> Barth, "Fate and Idea," 32.

<sup>715</sup> Barth, "Fate and Idea," 33.

<sup>716</sup> Wobbermin was a professor of theology at the university of Heidelberg, an anti-Semite, an opponent of the Weimar Republic, and a support of inter-reactionary ideologies. Barth, in *Dogmatics I.1* often refers to Wobberin in the negative. See: Karl-Heinz Fix, *Universitätstheologie und Politik: Die Heidelberger Theologische Fakultät in der Weimar Republik* (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag C. Winter, 1994), 119-20.

<sup>717</sup> Barth, "Fate and Idea," 34.

and being can only mean act.”<sup>718</sup> If this is so then revelation is something different than the postulates of Wobbermin and Przywara. If, as Barth states it, the basic orientation is that “God can be found in a subjective-objective givenness,” and therefore that the *similitudo Dei* occurs in the knower and known, is not revelation then nothing more than a confirmation of “a naively presupposed human capacity?”<sup>719</sup> Again of course Barth rejects this since, “God is therefore given to us neither in the givenness of history and nature nor in that of our own consciousness.”<sup>720</sup> Finally, Barth acknowledges that theology operates in the same context as philosophy, and that it too must “come to terms with the two boundaries of human thought . . .”<sup>721</sup> Those two boundaries are idealism and realism. Barth notes danger lurks on either side of the equation: “theology can be predominantly realist or predominantly idealist. . . . In the one case theology is blurred with natural science, in the other with humanities. Demonology results from the first blurring, ideology from the second.”<sup>722</sup> Protestant theology then must avoid becoming philosophy, from adopting a natural theology, and accepting the proposition of the *analogia entis*.

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<sup>718</sup> Barth, “Fate and Idea,” 36.

<sup>719</sup> Barth, “Fate and Idea,” 38.

<sup>720</sup> Barth, “Fate and Idea,” 40.

<sup>721</sup> Barth, “Fate and Idea,” 52.

<sup>722</sup> Barth, “Fate and Idea,” 52.



## Chapter Eight

### Responses to the Response: Przywara and Brunner

Even though Barth dispelled the myth of the *analogia entis* did not mean of course that other legitimate theologians contemporary with Barth's Weimar context would do the same. While Barth was fighting *primarily* against inter-reactionary ideologies, especially as they manifested in political parties as well as the Protestant church and university communities, he had in so doing put the axe to the root of Catholic theology as well. If Catholicism was more distant to Barth, it was no less a concern with respect to the *analogia entis*, all the more so when Barth saw this doctrine taking root inside of his own theological camp. The two greatest contemporary representatives of these camps and this time period were the Jesuit Erich Przywara (1889-1972) and dialectical theologian Emil Brunner (1889-1966).

**8.1 Relationships and Background.** In the translator's preface to Przywara's *Polarity*, A.C. Bouquet makes two salient observations. First, that "Przywara's essay lies . . . side by side with one from the pen of Emil Brunner."<sup>723</sup> This was the position that Brunner would later qualify, putting him at odds, too, with Barth. The second observation by Bouquet, was "in

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<sup>723</sup> Erich Przywara, *Polarity: A German Catholic's Interpretation of Religion*, translated by A.C. Bouquet (London: Oxford University Press, 1935), v. This work was originally published in 1926, see, Erich Przywara: *Erich Przywara Schriften Band III: Religions-Philosophische Schriften* (Freiburg: Johannes-Verlag, 1962).

view of the present crisis in German Protestantism, that we should give audience to a German Catholic . . . who regards the whole problem from an angle which is neither that of an Anglo-Saxon Liberal, nor of a Nazi . . .”<sup>724</sup>

What we have in Bouquet’s statements are an indication of why the breakdown between Barth and Brunner was so catastrophic to Barth and that Bouquet understood Barth’s critique of the *analogia entis* to be related to the NSDAP and the inter-reactionary ideologies related to it.<sup>725</sup> Przywara’s account is important in the context of this discussion for the same reason that Brunner’s is. Barth saw *any* opening to natural theology, which had as its cornerstone the *analogia entis*, as a breach in the wall that would open the floodgate to all that wanted to use it to justify anthropocentric ideologies.

Przywara’s work attempted to interpret the *analogia entis* and Barth’s position in such a way as to turn the tables in Catholicism’s favor. *Polarity* must be seen not as an attempt to join Barth in his concern against the rising tide of inter-reactionary ideologies but rather as an apologetic for Catholicism’s foundation, which for Przywara was contained in the concept of *analogia entis*. A few factors were in play, or rather in favor of the Catholic Church, which did not expose it to the ideological dangers that Protestantism experienced during Weimar. As already noted by Bouquet, German Protestantism was in crisis, and it may be said that the Catholic Church too was in crisis during the Weimar period but in different ways. First, Catholics were not political wayfarers during Weimar as were the Protestants, who had lost with their Kaiser their political identity and support after the Great War.

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<sup>724</sup>Erich Przywara, *Polarity*, vi.

<sup>725</sup>For a detailed account of the complex relationship of Barth and Brunner see: John W. Hart, *Karl Barth vs. Emil Brunner: The Formation and Dissolution of a Theological Alliance, 1916-1936* (New York: Peter Lang, 2001).

The Catholics had a political party of their own, *Zentrum*, which held coalition power with the majority *SPD* and *DDP*. Secondly, their church, having episcopal polity, was not exposed to the vagaries of the less autocratic Protestant polity. Given Catholicism's more centralized nature, it was also less susceptible to doctrinal diffusion. Still there were grave political and doctrinal issues confronting Catholicism and these came from inter-reactionary ideologies targeting the Catholic Church from without as well as "brown priests" within who had affiliated early on not only with inter-reactionary ideologies in general, but also with the NSDAP in specific. Tübingen theologian Karl Adam serves as a prominent example of the "brown priest."<sup>726</sup>

In these circumstances, Przywara must be truly seen not as a static mind, simply delivering a Catholic polemic, but as one that was fluidly engaged not only with minds of the past, as in his work that so readily synthesized Augustine and Aquinas, but with the themes of the Reformation, as well as the minds of his contemporaries, both Catholic and Protestant.<sup>727</sup> Przywara, like Barth was concerned about his context. As O'Meara asserts: "The time after World War I was philosophically rich, culturally innovative, and politically unstable. Erich Przywara lived amid those worlds: far from being a withdrawn cleric or a confrontative Catholic apologete, he sought . . . the renewal of Protestantism and Judaism."<sup>728</sup> However, he did seek this on

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<sup>726</sup> For more related to Karl Adam and the NSDAP see: Kevin Spicer, *Hitler's Priests: Catholic Clergy and National Socialism* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2008), 11, 15, 184-93, 240-41. Also, Robert Krieg, "Karl Adam, National Socialism, and Christian Tradition," *Theological Studies*, Vol. 60 (1999).

<sup>727</sup> Thomas F. O'Meara, *Erich Przywara, S.J.: His Theology and His World* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2002), 99.

<sup>728</sup> O'Meara, *Przywara*, 99.

Catholic terms. He also recognized, like Barth, that “there needs to be a Catholic response to the times . . . something like dialectical theology, something more than Neo-Scholasticism. What Protestants view as particularly Catholic . . . is not an expression of the times but a scandal, an enemy of the times.”<sup>729</sup> Przywara might truly have been the Catholic counterpart of Barth in the Weimar world, and perhaps this accounts for their understanding and respect for one another. They were both churchmen with a knowledge that inter-reactionary ideologies were coming at the Church like wolves upon an unguarded lamb.

Przywara has further interest on two scores. First, Charlotte von Kirschbaum, Barth’s assistant, had reported to Barth that Przywara “was the only opponent he had to fear and that he was a formidable one.”<sup>730</sup> Secondly, it is apparent that Barth was forming a friendship with his most feared opponent and had plans even to invite him to debate the whole matter with him face to face.<sup>731</sup> Barth’s summation of Przywara’s visit in February of 1929 was that Przywara “shone for another two hours [after his lecture] in my seminar . . . and finally ‘overwhelmed’ me for two whole evenings here.”<sup>732</sup>

The friendship of Przywara on the one side and the disintegration with Brunner on the other may be attributed to the fact that while Przywara was an ecumenical Catholic partner in dialogue, Brunner was seen by Barth as a

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<sup>729</sup> O’Meara, *Przywara*, 102.

<sup>730</sup> Suzanne Selinger, *Charlotte von Kirschbaum and Karl Barth: A Study in Biography and the History of Theology* (University Park, PA: University Press, 1998), 62. Karl Barth, “Barth, 21. Dezember 1928,” *Karl Barth Gesamtausgabe: Karl Barth - Eduard Thurneysen Briefwechsel, Band II: 1921-1930*. GA V.4 (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag Zürich, 1974), 638. Barth also remarks in this letter that Przywara is a “clever one,” who has “played all our most beautiful registers.” Indeed Barth’s assessment was that he had completely reworked and repacked Aquinas.

<sup>731</sup> Selinger, *Kirschbaum*, 62. Also, Busch, *Barth*, 182-83.

<sup>732</sup> Busch, *Barth*, 182-83.

comrade in arms in defending the Protestant Church against inter-reactionary ideologies against which the Catholic Church to a great extent was self-insulated. Brunner then, it might be said, was guilty of *Dolchstoß* in Barth's eyes.<sup>733</sup> This issue was the battle ground as is demonstrated by Barth's comment to Charles McFarland, at the conclusion of Barth's October 30, 1933, lecture. He told McFarland that the Anglo-Saxon churches could best support the Confessing Church in its struggle against the NSDAP "by showing theological solidarity with its struggle against natural theology."<sup>734</sup> But Przywara's thought is treated respectfully by Barth and is without a doubt why Barth allots the elision clause of legitimacy to the Catholic Church in the preface to *CD I.1*. This then sets the stage for a consideration of Przywara's understanding of *analogia entis*.

**8.2 The Phenomenon of Religion.** Przywara initiates his consideration of religion in general by dividing it into two categories and problems, *Sosein* (essence) and *Dasein* (existence).<sup>735</sup> Essence is the phenomenology of religion and existence the realogy (*Realogie*).<sup>736</sup> Przywara divides the phenomenological question of essence into three types:

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<sup>733</sup> In contrast to the fallout with Brunner, Bultmann and Barth maintained a lifelong friendship although they had significant differences in theological opinion and approach. Perhaps, in part, this is attributable to Bultmann's rejection of natural theology. Bultmann rejects natural theology because it would view Christianity as nothing more than a purer and higher form of all other religions, evolving as the apex of spirituality. This meant for Bultmann that Christianity from a standpoint of humanity was nothing but a higher form of God-consciousness on humanity's side. Rudolf Bultmann, "Das Problem der natürlichen Theologie," *Glauben und Verstehen*, Erster Band (J.C.B. Mohr-Paul Siebeck, 1980), 303.

<sup>734</sup> Busch, *Barth*, 231. Busch notes that McFarland (American and ecumenist churchman) was going to a meeting with Hitler following the lecture.

<sup>735</sup> Przywara, *Polarity*, 2. Erich Przywara, *Religionsphilosophische Schriften*, Erich Przywara Schriften Band II, 376.

<sup>736</sup> Przywara, *Polarity*, 2.

immanence, transcendence, and transcendentalism.<sup>737</sup> These types might also be thought of in terms of emotion, cognition, and volition.

Immanence is rooted in a primal-sensation (*Urgefühl*) in which one abides passively until it becomes clarified “as the content of thought.”<sup>738</sup> This is expressed by Schliermacher’s feeling of dependence (located by Przywara as a sub-category of immanence) in which “the infinity of consciousness, *becomes wholly within* God, that is to say, finds Him in the mysterious depth of the sea of consciousness out of which the evanescent waves uplift themselves, and into which they sink back.”<sup>739</sup>

Transcendence, like immanence can manifest in a number of ways. However, transcendence is at its root a deism for Przywara, grounded in the presupposition that thought “is directed upon a Reality which is independent of thought.”<sup>740</sup> The divine in this construction is ironic for the divine is not in actuality afar off but becomes instead, since it is the instantiation of thought, “the ultimate ground in the process of the creaturely sphere of existences which are thought about . . . the [divine] element in the train of that thought which is directed upon itself.”<sup>741</sup> Of the various thinkers that Przywara finds representative (in various categories of transcendence) are Hegel (the soul in the process of thinking is divinized), Plotinus (experience of light), and Solomon Maimon (divine as pure idea).<sup>742</sup>

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<sup>737</sup> Przywara, *Polarity*, 4.

<sup>738</sup> Przywara, *Polarity*, 5.

<sup>739</sup> Przywara, *Polarity*, 7.

<sup>740</sup> Przywara, *Polarity*, 8.

<sup>741</sup> Przywara, *Polarity*, 8-9.

<sup>742</sup> Przywara, *Polarity*, 9. Moses Maimonides was the medieval hero of Solomon Maimon (who took his surname from Moses Maimonides). Maimonides himself expressed this idea of transcendentalism in his *Guide for the Perplexed*. He states (given certain parameters!) that

Transcendentality is the third type Przywara considers under essence as the phenomenology of religion. This category is located between immanence and transcendence. Here is found an attempt to synthesize the two previous types, denoted by emotion and cognition. What is found here is the striving of becoming to Being. In this case “God stands thus related to His creation as Being to becoming.”<sup>743</sup>

These three views are considered to be the foundational questions for Przywara that religion in general must deal with. What is being asked in each of these phenomena is “what is the relation of God to the world?” Deeper and perhaps more personally and what Przywara says is really the ultimate question is, “What is the relationship of the soul to God?”<sup>744</sup>

Pressed to its extreme, the question of essence “conceals within it[self] the basic question of the problem of existence.”<sup>745</sup> The basic question to be considered is: “Does religion, as relation between Deity and humanity, come into being from above downwards, as ultimately ‘Act of God,’ or is it formed from below upwards, from men, and therefore ultimately as ‘Act of Man?’<sup>746</sup> Przywara’s proposition is that there is no straightforward correspondence between the questions of essence and existence since “all three possible ways of describing the religious relationship, immanence, transcendence, and transcendentality, can be comprehended as ‘Act of God’ from above downwards, or as ‘act of man’ from below upwards.”<sup>747</sup> Przywara deals with

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“the intellect is not a thing distinct from the thing comprehended.” Moses Maimonides, *The Guide for the Perplexed* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 2004), 184.

<sup>743</sup> Przywara, *Polarity*, 9.

<sup>744</sup> Przywara, *Polarity*, 10.

<sup>745</sup> Przywara, *Polarity*, 21.

<sup>746</sup> Przywara, *Polarity*, 22.

<sup>747</sup> Przywara, *Polarity*, 22.

proposed solutions for the problem of lack of correspondence. Immanence is “resolved” by infinity of consciousness” wherein immanence “fulfills itself in the complete submergence of the human being into itself” as well as fulfilling “itself in the exaltation of human life.”<sup>748</sup> Przywara’s critique on the transcendence side lands squarely in Barth’s camp, when he speaks of the “soleness [*Allein*] of revelation (on the objective side), and the soleness of faith (on the subjective side).”<sup>749</sup> In Przywara’s estimation: “Revelation here is essentially self-revelation of Deity as self-subsistent; and faith is in consequence not precisely the *reception* of this revelation (since that would be an act of man), but the purely passive occurrence and diffusion of the self-revelation of Deity in man.”<sup>750</sup> Przywara equates this with “God’s thought in mankind,” which has found its expression in Islamic philosophy, Spinoza, and Romanticism leading right to Hegel’s lectern.<sup>751</sup> It is of course evident that Barth would have rejected these as pseudo-revelations and not *The* revelation of God.

Przywara critiques the final type, transcendentalism, the mediation category, as being nothing more than a supernaturalist transcendentalism. Here God is the “Ideal-Meaning of humanity . . . who draws humanity to Him in infinite movement.”<sup>752</sup> It is associated with ideas of “consuming zeal,” “being flowed through,” and “being caught away by grace.”<sup>753</sup> Naturally for Przywara none of these approaches to the problem of religion really works nor do any attempts at trying to find a point of coordination between essence the

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<sup>748</sup> Przywara, *Polarity*, 23.

<sup>749</sup> Przywara, *Polarity*, 23.

<sup>750</sup> Przywara, *Polarity*, 23.

<sup>751</sup> Przywara, *Polarity*, 23.

<sup>752</sup> Przywara, *Polarity*, 24.

<sup>753</sup> Przywara, *Polarity*, 24-25.



phenomenology of religion and its counter-part existence in the realogy of religion. Fortunately for all concerned, Przywara postulates that Catholicism has such an answer, and it is known as the *analogia entis*.

**8.3 The *Analogia Entis* of Przywara.** Przywara lays the groundwork by maintaining that Catholic theology is typified by an “open upward” posture.<sup>754</sup> This has two consequences: God is “*wholly beyond . . . and beyond comprehension,*” and that “*revelation of God [is] from above hitherward . . .*”<sup>755</sup> In this second there is *likeness* in the creature. This likeness testifies that the divine is “beyond similitude”<sup>756</sup> in a revelatory understanding. Being in the likeness means also that there exists a distinction of the divine and all that is, and yet there is nothing which is not “in its essence and existence derived *from Him.*”<sup>757</sup> This leads Przywara to the proposition that “the entire creation is without exception the similitude of His own Being . . . and yet in no way *necessary* to Him, as that by which God was permitted to realize Himself, but a perfectly and permanently free act of creation on his part . . .”<sup>758</sup> This is the definition to which Przywara attaches the term *analogia entis*. It was also expressed as Przywara notes in the decree of the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) in the formula “between Creator and creature there is no similarity which does not at that point posit a greater dissimilarity.”<sup>759</sup> The problem of the correspondence between Creator and

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<sup>754</sup> Przywara, *Polarity*, 29.

<sup>755</sup> Przywara, *Polarity*, 30.

<sup>756</sup> Przywara, *Polarity*, 30.

<sup>757</sup> Przywara, *Polarity*, 31.

<sup>758</sup> Przywara, *Polarity*, 31.

<sup>759</sup> *Inter creatorem et creaturam non potest tanta similitudo notari, quin inter eos major sit dissimilitudo notanda.* Twelfth Ecumenical Council: Lateran IV, 1215: *Medieval Sourcebook*, Fordam University, <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/lateran4.html> [accessed, May 5, 2010].

creature is a problem of the question of essence and existence within the creature.<sup>760</sup> This is what Przywara refers to as an “open tension.”<sup>761</sup> The resolution of this tension between essence and existence is resolved by analogy. In the Creator, essence and existence are found in unity, but this unity denotes identity. Essence and existence are found also in the creature but they exist in tension. God has being, that is, God is fully actualized. Act, where the creature is becoming, is a potential being. However, between the Creator and the creature there does exist an *analogia entis* since both possess “being” in essence and existence. This is the similarity. However the manner in which they possess them, one in identity the other in tension, is the point (*eos*) of dissimilarity. Przywara encapsulates this by noting that it is the difference between the “Is” of God and the “is” of creature.<sup>762</sup>

It is at this point that Przywara moves to demonstrate how the three types of religious phenomenon are resolved by the Catholic schema of the *analogia entis*. All three types: immanence, transcendence, and transcendentality, “make Deity ultimately a *function* of consciousness,” this is the fate of any philosophical position that does not “take the *analogia entis* as its foundation.”<sup>763</sup> The consciousness of the creature must therefore experience a determinate point which is a point of unity beyond itself.<sup>764</sup> Deity, therefore, and not transcendentality is a “Deity who proceeds ‘from above downwards,’ freely bestowing Himself upon the creaturely

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<sup>760</sup> Przywara, *Polarity*, 31.

<sup>761</sup> Przywara, *Polarity*, 32.

<sup>762</sup> Przywara, *Polarity*, 32-33.

<sup>763</sup> Przywara, *Polarity*, 38.

<sup>764</sup> Przywara, *Polarity*, 38.

consciousness.”<sup>765</sup> Przywara’s conclusion from this is: “It follows that for the Catholic foundation of religion, which is the *analogia entis*, all other bases for religion count as immanent. *The God of Catholicism alone is the truly transcendent Deity.*”<sup>766</sup>

This transcendent Deity who “freely bestows Himself on the creaturely consciousness” is represented in “God in me and I in God” on the side of immanence.<sup>767</sup> It can do so because the character of the *analogia entis* is such that “the relationship between God and man is not a function of man’s activity but God’s condescension.”<sup>768</sup> Catholic immanence is distinguished from other forms in its “naïve” tradition of mysticism expressed in the *Imitatio Christi* of Thomas à Kempis or the *unio mystica* found in St. John of the Cross’ *Dark Night of the Soul*.<sup>769</sup> These all speak of a “*creatio continua*” wherein the *analogia entis* is seen in the Deity who in Being is involved (immanence) in the becoming of the creature. God in completeness “stretches the soul in order that in its yearning it may expand so as to comprehend more . . .”<sup>770</sup> *Analogia entis* in this case demonstrates in its praxis the resolution of immanence over against all other forms of immanentism.

Przywara continues to the second of the problem children, as he considers the resolution of transcendence with respect to the *analogia entis*. Transcendence in Catholic theology, Przywara maintains, is unique in that “it prescribes [a transcendence which] is essentially . . . transcendence as

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<sup>765</sup> Przywara, *Polarity*, 38.

<sup>766</sup> Przywara, *Polarity*, 38.

<sup>767</sup> Przywara, *Polarity*, 40.

<sup>768</sup> Przywara, *Polarity*, 40.

<sup>769</sup> Przywara, *Polarity*, 40-1

<sup>770</sup> Przywara, *Polarity*, 42.

presented to experience.”<sup>771</sup> This transcendence proceeds “from above downwards [and is] dependent upon the self-revelation of Deity in the *act of creation*.”<sup>772</sup> In rather quixotic language Przywara notes that in this act of creation, God is understood as “transcendent over Himself,” transcendent “within Himself,” and God’s self-revelation proceeds “away from Him.”<sup>773</sup> Transcendence is an intellectual experience of God emerging from the shadow of naïve mystical innocence wherein the creature begins with the “positive theology of the attributes of God, as they mirror themselves by similitude in the creation . . .”<sup>774</sup>

The cultus of the Catholic Church is another type of the *analogia entis*. It is within the cultus that the divine “breathes the spirit of mystic intimacy.”<sup>775</sup> The church is the place of mediation “between the naïve and the reflective experience of Deity.”<sup>776</sup> The church is open and dynamic. It is a reflection of the continuing creation, that is, endless striving. The church is constantly renewed and ever renewing. The liturgy of the church is not static “but ever allows streams of contemporary personal piety to flow into the main channel of cultus. It fulfills therein only its basic law of the *analogia entis*.”<sup>777</sup>

The endless striving, in the creature and the church, is foundational to Przywara’s understanding of the *analogia entis*. It is foundational inasmuch as it is an indication of the likeness between creature and Creator. This endless striving, indicative of likeness, means that “God is in a certain sense *like* the

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<sup>771</sup> Przywara, *Polarity*, 43.

<sup>772</sup> Przywara, *Polarity*, 43.

<sup>773</sup> Przywara, *Polarity*, 43.

<sup>774</sup> Przywara, *Polarity*, 44.

<sup>775</sup> Przywara, *Polarity*, 48.

<sup>776</sup> Przywara, *Polarity*, 48.

<sup>777</sup> Przywara, *Polarity*, 49.

ideal of the creature.”<sup>778</sup> In the Catholic sense of things, all of the world, culture, civilization, the actualization of humanity, moral and ethical reflection are a part of this striving.<sup>779</sup> Endless striving also means that in the *analogia entis* there is also unlikeness. This is the distinction between “what is and what ought to be.”<sup>780</sup> This means that the image of God grows in humanity with humanity’s experience. God in turn is “experienced as He who stands as the inward relation of an Absolute point to the ultimate tensions of the concrete ego, and who is effective in them and revealed in them, yet both effective and revealed as beyond them and beyond comparison with them.”<sup>781</sup> God is then revealed in the tensions of the ego, an immanence, while remaining distinct from them and a fixed point over against them.

Przywara’s themes on the *analogia entis* are like a rondo each restating and building upon the next. *Polarity* presents itself as an endless striving, an “is” seeking a similitude with the “Is” of divine and eternal truth. In using the category of *analogia entis*, Przywara sought to justify the very foundations of Catholicism, while constructing a truly Catholic theology that could be responsive to the times by holding in tension a divine transcendence and immanence that did not become somehow a religious deity grounded and deriving essence and existence in the human psyche. While Przywara was sympathetic to Barth’s cause<sup>782</sup> and understood the crisis within Protestantism, he also knew that Catholicism must give answer in a Catholic manner.

Przywara did this in his innovative use of the *analogia entis*. Barth and

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<sup>778</sup> Przywara, *Polarity*, 52.

<sup>779</sup> Przywara, *Polarity*, 52.

<sup>780</sup> Przywara, *Polarity*, 52.

<sup>781</sup> Przywara, *Polarity*, 69.

<sup>782</sup> O’Meara, *Przywara*, 101.

Przywara undoubtedly had many of the same objectives, but Barth was struggling for the life of true Reformation principles and the Protestant Church itself. Przywara was the Catholic mirror of this. Strictly speaking, Barth and Przywara had done reciprocal acts to one another. Barth disqualified the foundation of Catholic theology by identifying inter-reactionary ideologies with the *analogia entis* in order to nullify them and return Protestantism to its Reformation foundations. Przywara on the other hand had disqualified the theology of a completely transcendent self-revealing God in order to set Catholicism on firm ground against religious notions of God rooted completely in the self-consciousness of humanity, whether immanent, transcendent, or in transcendentality. While this might be justified in Barth's mind on the Catholic side of the matter, indeed the elision clause of the preface seems to point to this, it was totally incompatible with the approach mandated on the Protestant side of the equation. Enter stage right: Emil Brunner.

**8.4 The Break with Brunner.** The dispute and break of Barth and Brunner from one another is generally viewed as reaching its apex with the 1934 exchange over natural theology, in Brunner's essay "Nature and Grace," and Barth's response "No!" This document will show the culmination of the tensions that were already growing in the years running up to it. John Hart sees the dissolution of the alliance coming in 1929-1932.<sup>783</sup> Part of the division was related to the relationship of philosophy to theology, part to the issues of natural theology and the *analogia entis*, and accordingly ethics. The break with respect to ethics, Hart maintains, is minor, based primarily upon

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<sup>783</sup> Hart, *Barth vs. Brunner*, 101-133.

Brunner's use of the orders of creation "and their role in the later context of Nazi ideology."<sup>784</sup> While Hart sees this as a "later" issue, it has been demonstrated that this was not the case for Barth, it was very much a "now" issue with respect to Nazi and related ideologies. Hart correctly points out that Barth's own ethics originally contained orders of creation, however two important orders in Lutheran doctrine were rejected by Barth as being orders of creation—the Church and the State. In any case, ethics cannot be assigned a "minor" role since they were, for Barth, the very outworking of doctrine and a reflection of doctrine in praxis. The relationship of theology to philosophy and essence to existence would have pressed Barth to consider the former first in dealing with Brunner since ethical outcomes would depend upon whether or not theology in the first place had been correctly constructed or not.

**8.5 Brunner and Orders of Creation.** In the introduction to *The Divine Imperative*, Brunner begins to lay the foundations of "The Orders" of creation.<sup>785</sup> The created order is the place in which the creature acts, and it is also the arena in which "the Good" is actualized.<sup>786</sup> It is also here where the creature meets the "will of God" even though this is "only in a fragmentary and indirect way."<sup>787</sup> This of course would be of concern to Barth, since the command and will of God are external to the creature. The implication for Barth with Brunner would be the anthropological possibility (impossibility!) of the creature "finding," or worse justifying, its will based upon its

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<sup>784</sup> Hart, *Barth vs. Brunner*, 101.

<sup>785</sup> Emil Brunner, *The Divine Imperative* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1947), 291. The German edition was published in 1932.

<sup>786</sup> Brunner, *Divine Imperative*, 291.

<sup>787</sup> Brunner, *Divine Imperative*, 291.

discernment of the will of God in the contemplation or reflection on the created order.

In his rather provocative consideration of the State as an order of creation, Brunner, on the eve of the NSDAP seizure of power, asserts that: “Over every State there broods something of the light of the divine creation and a heavy cloud of anti-divine forces.”<sup>788</sup> The light of divine creation belonging characteristically and foundationally to *every* State is the myth which Barth wished to dispel early on, when “orders” were still a part of his thinking, although he excluded the State from those very orders of creation from the outset. In Brunner one finds that the State “is based upon the material power of persons.”<sup>789</sup> However large or small the cabal of those constituting the power of the State, the will of God, if the State is an order of creation, must be found by definition within those people no matter how “fragmentary or indirect” it may be in such an instance. Of course there is and was at the time of Brunner’s writing, a very real possibility that divine will could and would belong in the hands of one person.

To be sure, Brunner was certainly cautious about the material power of the State, recognizing its power to demonize and oppress. “The State” says Brunner, “is a secular order; it is not sacred . . . it possesses real authority by divine appointment in spite of all that we have said about the unholy way in which all States have come into existence.”<sup>790</sup> Indeed, there is also within Brunner, a solid understanding of the religious and political syncretism happening within the Weimar context: “Material power makes the State

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<sup>788</sup> Brunner, *Divine Imperative*, 446.

<sup>789</sup> Brunner, *Divine Imperative*, 447.

<sup>790</sup> Brunner, *Divine Imperative*, 447.



terrible; religious power makes it horrible.”<sup>791</sup> Religious power, in the hands of the State, “leads to a daemonic misuse of the holy.”<sup>792</sup> Further Brunner asserts that religious power: “appears in its most dangerous form in the idolatry of the power of the State, that is, when the power of the State is confused with the Absolute, with the Holy itself.”<sup>793</sup> These observations however, certainly would not have abated the wariness of Barth, who would have found in the correlation of the State with the created order a place where the will of God and the will of humanity might be confused or misused by those holding power. Out of this doctrinal base, an ethic could and did emerge that justified Brunner’s assessment that the State was terrible according to material power and horrible according to the religious politics that were developing.

**8.6 Nature, Grace, and *Nein!*** Along with this was the final break, just after the demise of the Weimar Republic, which was reflective of the dissolution already taking place between Barth and Brunner in late Weimar. Barth saw that Brunner in “Nature and Grace” had conceded to natural theology according to its foundation stone *analogia entis*. Even in this work, Brunner reflected back to what he had done in *The Divine Imperative* saying that Barth had rejected his “refracted concept of orders, corresponding to the refraction in the *theologia naturalis* of the Reformers.”<sup>794</sup>

While Brunner gives Barth credit for having early on pointed out the “political dangers” of some constructions of the orders of creation, and that in

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<sup>791</sup> Brunner, *Divine Imperative*, 448.

<sup>792</sup> Brunner, *Divine Imperative*, 448.

<sup>793</sup> Brunner, *Divine Imperative*, 448.

<sup>794</sup> Barth and Brunner, *Natural Theology: Comprising “Nature and Grace” by Professor Dr. Emil Brunner and the reply “No!” by Dr. Karl Barth* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2002), 51.

those concepts (which have been designated here as inter-reactionary ideologies) “there was hidden a whole political and cultural programme of a distinctly authoritarian stamp.” Yet, this is where Brunner parts company.

Brunner conceives of the *imago Dei* in both formal and material aspects. The formal aspect is, for Brunner, that humanity is distinguished from the rest of creation and set above it.<sup>795</sup> In this position humanity has a special relationship toward God, and part of that relationship is to “bear his image.”<sup>796</sup> Because of this, humanity is a subject before God and still bears responsibility.<sup>797</sup> As a subject of God, humanity can be addressed by God. In point of fact, this is what makes humanity responsible before God. Humanity then has the capacity for words and responsibility. The material side of the *imago Dei* is the “*justitia originalis*” and this original state of justification is completely and utterly destroyed.<sup>798</sup> Formally the *imago* is never touched however materially humanity is “completely lost.”<sup>799</sup> This distinction leads Brunner to conclude that humanity can know God in the created order, but that it “will not know the God who so clearly manifests himself to them.”<sup>800</sup> Here Brunner’s famous “point of contact” comes into play, for the formal *imago Dei* is the point of contact “for the divine grace of redemption.” It is “the point where humanity’s capacity for words and responsibility” is located.<sup>801</sup> Humanity can know that it is a sinner before God through this formal image, but nothing past this. In distinction to this is Brunner’s summation of the

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<sup>795</sup> Barth and Brunner, *Natural Theology*, 23.

<sup>796</sup> Barth and Brunner, *Natural Theology*, 23.

<sup>797</sup> Barth and Brunner, *Natural Theology*, 23.

<sup>798</sup> Barth and Brunner, *Natural Theology*, 24.

<sup>799</sup> Barth and Brunner, *Natural Theology*, 24.

<sup>800</sup> Barth and Brunner, *Natural Theology*, 25.

<sup>801</sup> Barth and Brunner, *Natural Theology*, 31.

Catholic position that humanity has not lost the *imago Dei* “through sin at all but only the *dona superaddita* . . . the *perfectio originalis*.”<sup>802</sup> It is because of this undamaged Catholic *imago* that “the *theologia naturalis* is derivable from reason alone.”<sup>803</sup> This is in contrast to Barth, wherein the *imago* is utterly corrupted formally and materially, and without the revelation in Jesus Christ humanity cannot understand its serious and complete sinful position before God. Brunner is then in something of a middle position between Barth and Przywara. What Brunner readily admits is that *theologia naturalis* as he understands it has serious implications for both ethics and theology.<sup>804</sup> It is at this point that Brunner addresses Barth’s approach to the *analogia entis*. By way of summary, Brunner states that Barth is the first theologian to use the “principle of analogy . . . as a contrast between Protestantism and Roman Catholicism.”<sup>805</sup> Brunner refers to it as Barth’s “strange doctrine that there is no creature which has in itself any likeness to God.”<sup>806</sup> Brunner refers to this as a “piece of theological nominalism, in comparison with which that of William of Occam appears harmless.”<sup>807</sup> Brunner maintains that Barth, at the point of cognition, must use the very analogy that he rejects since there has to be in Barth’s theology a point of ontological correspondence between the reason of humanity and the reason of God. Brunner concludes that the Barth’s theology rests “*de facto* upon the doctrine of the formal *imago Dei*.”<sup>808</sup>

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<sup>802</sup> Barth and Brunner, *Natural Theology*, 46.

<sup>803</sup> Barth and Brunner, *Natural Theology*, 46.

<sup>804</sup> Barth and Brunner, *Natural Theology*, 53.

<sup>805</sup> Barth and Brunner, *Natural Theology*, 53.

<sup>806</sup> Barth and Brunner, *Natural Theology*, 53.

<sup>807</sup> Barth and Brunner, *Natural Theology*, 54.

<sup>808</sup> Barth and Brunner, *Natural Theology*, 55.

At the conclusion of his argument Brunner makes a broad assertion: “the *analogia entis* is not specifically Roman Catholic. Rather it is the basis of every theology, of Christian theology as much as of pagan.”<sup>809</sup> This observation, however, rather than invalidating Barth’s argument in fact furthered Barth’s point. Christian theology, in Barth’s thought, cannot be based upon the same foundation as every other religion. This would be precisely what had led to the contextual crisis.

Barth’s “angry introduction” reflects his unhappiness that Brunner beginning in the late Weimar period had returned to the compromising stance of the Evangelical Church in Germany and would as a consequence of this turn bring all other Evangelical Churches into the same direction.<sup>810</sup> Barth was so greatly distressed that he says that Brunner’s pamphlet had been praised as a “gold-mine” in the *Deutsche Pfarrerblatt* (a German Christian publication) with “the thanks of Althaus . . . and all other half- or three-quarter German Christians.”<sup>811</sup>

In turning to Brunner’s argument proper, Barth reproaches Brunner’s formal *imago Dei* using an anecdote: “If a man had just been saved from drowning by a competent swimmer, would it not be very unsuitable if he proclaimed the fact that he was a man and not a lump of lead as his ‘capacity for being saved?’”<sup>812</sup> Barth expresses consternation and confusion at Brunner’s assertion that “humanity is a responsible person, even as a sinner.”<sup>813</sup> Barth says of course humanity is responsible but this is hardly a

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<sup>809</sup> Barth and Brunner, *Natural Theology*, 55.

<sup>810</sup> Barth and Brunner, *Natural Theology*, 72.

<sup>811</sup> Barth and Brunner, *Natural Theology*, 72.

<sup>812</sup> Barth and Brunner, *Natural Theology*, 79.

<sup>813</sup> Barth and Brunner, *Natural Theology*, 80.

necessity for formulating a formal doctrine of *imago Dei*. Moreover he is at a loss to know how “the assertion of this fact serves at all to make revelation something more than divine grace?”<sup>814</sup> The formal *imago Dei* is nothing more than the notion that “somehow” and “to some extent” humanity has the ability “to know and do the will of God without revelation.”<sup>815</sup> In the end “the natural knowledge of God is neither a true knowledge of *God* nor a true *knowledge* of God.”<sup>816</sup> This of course was what was at stake for Barth, Przywara, and Brunner in the Weimar context. Brunner’s embrace of a formal *imago Dei*, a capacity for revelation, and a point of contact demonstrated to Barth that Brunner had in the end capitulated to the German Christians. This capitulation of his one-time comrade in arms meant that Brunner had again opened the door to disaster and the conclusion to this would be what is contained in these words of Barth: “If we base ourselves upon what is possible to us, we shall always *believe* in these our possibilities and always *have to believe* in them. Hence, we shall not *be able* to destroy ‘the fictions of *Weltschauungen*.’”<sup>817</sup> That is, the myth of the *analogia entis* would win the day.

**Review and Recap:** Before moving to the discussion of *Dogmatics I.1*, it is appropriate at this point to trace the course of the discussion. The sum of the argument has been as follows: 1) Evolving referential ideologies within the German culture provided the foundation for an *analogia entis* which forwarded an ontological reference point between God and humanity, either in

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<sup>814</sup> Barth and Brunner, *Natural Theology*, 80.

<sup>815</sup> Barth and Brunner, *Natural Theology*, 90.

<sup>816</sup> Barth and Brunner, *Natural Theology*, 113.

<sup>817</sup> Barth and Brunner, *Natural Theology*, 117.

the individual, the *Volk*, the State, or as manifested in history via individual, *Volk*, and/or State. These were called the referential ideologies which funded the noetic essence of the myth of the *analogia entis*. 2) These referential ideologies were used to fund the derivative inter-reactionary ideologies of the nationalist neo-conservative movement within the Weimar Republic. 3) The contextual realities of Weimar's existence were an ethical outcome of the noetic essences of both referential and inter-reactionary ideologies, and this ethical existence was played out in the general environs of Weimar, and particularly in Barth's microcosms of church and university. 4) Barth's direct ethical responses to the myth dealt with immediate contextual realities and as such were direct forms of response to the myth of the *analogia entis*. 5) Barth's *Ethics* lectures were designed in the contextual realities of the Weimar republic, both its inter-reactionary ideologies (with its credulous noetic essence as foundation) and the manifest expression of these noetic essences in the ethical existence arising from them. *Ethics* exposed the myth of the *analogia entis* which establishes that ethical acts are tied to doctrinal formulations which effectively place humanity in ontological correspondence to God and/or the act of humanity into *ontological* commensurateness with God. The *Ethics* emphatically separates these, maintaining the transcendence of God over the creature and God's absolute sovereignty over the creation. *Ethics* demands a correspondence of humanity with God at the point of divine command; humanity's act of faith to the divine command being the place of correspondence — the *analogia fidei*. 6) Responses to Barth's formulations are seen in two exemplars: the Catholic response to Przywara, whom Barth admired and befriended, and Emil Brunner his one-time Protestant ally and

then spurned betrayer of the Protestant cause. While the Catholics could argue in such a manner for the *analogia entis* (from a completely different launch point), the Protestants simply could not do this without falling to the myth of the *analogia entis*.

## Chapter Nine

### *Dogmatics: A Preface to a Problem*

**9.1 *Dogmatics I.1: Preface.*** In the preface of *CD I.1* Barth makes reference to his earlier dogmatic endeavor, i.e., the so-called *Göttingen Dogmatics*. In so doing Barth remarks that the “intervening changes in the theological, ecclesiastical, and general situation” were such that he could no longer continue with the former enterprise and that he must “begin again from the beginning.”<sup>818</sup> He notes that this “change of plan has been forced on me by the pressure of outer and inner necessities!”<sup>819</sup> It has already been noted in the contextual section what “intervening changes” were occurring in the theological (academic), ecclesiastical, and general situation of Weimar. What is apparent is that Barth is a contextual theologian responding to the existential realities of his time. Barth notably is also anxious to avoid entangling theology with philosophy and he states: “I have excluded to the very best of my ability anything that might appear to find for theology a foundation, support, or justification in philosophical existentialism.”<sup>820</sup> This was a problem dealt with in *Ethics* since it leads to a natural theology and therefore

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<sup>818</sup> Barth, *CD I.1*, xi.

<sup>819</sup> Barth, *CD I.1*, xi.

<sup>820</sup> Barth, *CD I.1*, xiii. This was also taken up by Barth more extensively in: Karl Barth, “*Schicksal und Idee in der Theologie 1929*,” *Vorträge und kleinere Arbeiten 1925-1930*, GA 3.24 (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag Zürich, 1994), 334-392.



an ethic based upon the *analogia entis*. Further, Barth reminds his readers that he has had to speak “with some vigor against, or rather on behalf of, the Church.”<sup>821</sup> This of course was seen in his *Quousque Tandem . . . ?* as well as his *Plight of the Evangelical Church*. The preface represents a *tout ensemble* of the discussion contained in this work. This brings the discussion to the *analogia entis* clause:

I can see no third alternative between that exploitation of the *analogia entis* which is legitimate only on the basis of Roman Catholicism, between the greatness and misery of a so-called natural knowledge of God in the sense of the *Vaticanum*, and a Protestant theology which draws from its own source, which stands on its own feet, and which is finally liberated from this secular misery. Hence I have had no option but to say No at this point. I regard the *analogia entis* as the invention of the Antichrist, and I believe that because of it it is impossible ever to become a Roman Catholic, all other reasons for not doing so being to my mind short-sighted and trivial.<sup>822</sup>

Within the given contextual realities Barth says there is an *exploitation* of the doctrine of *analogia entis*. The current exploitation leads back to theology finding its foundation outside of theology (the Word of God), and this Barth marks as a contemporary *resumption* of the sort of theology which finds its grounding outside theology (e.g., Schleiermacher, Ritschl, Hermann). This exploitation is one possibility, which is, of course, no possibility at all for Barth. This exploitation is also typified by the greatness and misery of natural theology.

This is one option, to let things continue unabated contextually, ethical expression being derived from inter-reactionary ideologies grounded in the myth of the *analogia entis*. This is one option for *Protestant* theology and ecclesiology. The second option is the rejection of this exploitation and to

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<sup>821</sup> Barth, *CD I.1*, xiii.

<sup>822</sup> Barth, *CD I.1*, xiii.

ground theology in the Word of God thereby rejecting the myth *in toto*. Protestant theology in the crisis at hand had to be able to find its way. As long as it followed the myth of *analogia entis*, it was not going to be able to “stand on its own feet.” It would always be subject of a mythology which confounded and confused creature with Creator, the reconciled with Reconciler, the redeemed with the Redeemer with respect to essence and existence, being and act. In so doing the Protestant Church was continually exposed to the temptation of pointing at their essence and act and saying “here is God.”<sup>823</sup> There was no room for a “Brunnerian” third way. The *analogia entis* was no basis for Protestant theology, no foundation upon which the church should build.

What Barth was certain of was that following the myth of the *analogia entis* was leading into a secular misery of greatest proportions, the Church becoming lost in its own Catalinian conspiracy inspired by the *analogia entis*. What Barth had been seeing unfold before him in the contextual realities of the era was a doctrine, not just an unfortunate result but an actual theological doctrine, inextricably linked by cause and effect to the secular misery. This is the *primary* and *paramount* concern of Barth’s rejection of the *analogia entis*. It was a concern arising from a *Protestant* ethos. The myth of the *analogia entis* was more “dangerous than the most dangerous things” anyone else could do or conceive as he put it in *Quousque Tandem*.<sup>824</sup> This danger trumped anything any Protestant gave worry to, whether it be Bolshevik, Jewish, or Catholic in nature.

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<sup>823</sup> One is reminded that Barth worked with a copy of Matthias Grünewald’s painting of the crucifixion over his desk. John the Baptist is at the foot of the cross pointing to Christ saying “He must increase and I must decrease.” See Busch, *Barth*, 116.

<sup>824</sup> Barth, *Quousque Tandem*, 29.

This leads to the consideration of the Catholic statements in the *analogia entis* clause. The Catholic elision clause situates itself between the impossibility of a Protestant exploitation of the doctrine and the necessity of its rejection in order that Protestant theology might “stand on its own feet.” The elision clause is of special note since it *legitimizes* the *analogia entis* only on the basis of Roman Catholicism. Here one must see the affinity and force of the Przywara argument for the *analogia entis* being displayed. The *analogia entis* was legitimate given the presuppositions of Catholicism, especially as this related to the understanding of *imago Dei*. However, this presupposition did not exist in Protestant theology, and as has been seen in the discussion of the Barth-Brunner debate, Barth remained entirely unconvinced that Brunner had legitimately established such a presupposition for Protestantism. Protestantism following such a course collapsed back onto itself, proclaimed incarnations in the individual, the *Volk*, and/or the State. In short, the doctrine of secular misery led directly to the doctrine of anti-Christ within Protestant theology and ecclesiology. In keeping with Barth’s stark language it can easily be said that his concern for the Protestant Church was that the Church of Christ was conspiring against itself doctrinally providing contextually a situation wherein it was in very real danger of becoming the sanctuary of Satan.

The accusation of anti-Christ is not directed at the Catholic Church, but rather at the exploitation of the *analogia entis* on the part of the Protestant Church. However, at this point the reader runs aground in the non-elision clause with respect to Catholic theology. If what has been said to this point is correct, then why the impossibility of “because of it [*analogia entis*] it is

impossible ever to become a Roman Catholic?" The most apparent answer is that while for Barth it was legitimate on the basis of Roman Catholicism, it was still based upon a presupposition that he as a Protestant rejected at the most fundamental level. Given the presupposition of Catholic theology, Barth found an exception so that the *analogia entis* had a perfectly legitimate place; however, given the presuppositions of Protestantism, it was an illegitimate exploitation. For Barth, naturally, the presupposition is that humanity is either completely and utterly devastated by sin in all aspects or humanity is not so broken. Humanity is in need of justification in all its nature or not. For Barth it was an all or nothing proposition regarding this position of humanity before God. Barth's context daily reinforced to him the correctness of this Protestant axiom referred to in the *Ethics*. Catholicism therefore is allotted an elision clause on the one hand and denied an elision clause on the other. The myth of the *analogia entis* must be understood in Barth's context and usage as a Protestant issue, and only *tributarily* for Barth as a Catholic matter. The significance of this will be addressed when attention is given to responses to the Barth's doctrine of *analogia entis*.

Working out of the *analogia* clause, Barth makes another statement relevant to this study. He states that he no longer regards Church History as beginning in 1517, but rather would plumb the depths of Church History unapologetically. This may be seen in the light of the second phase Luther Renaissance and its suppositions that the German Luther had resumed where the apostolic fathers left off. Church History proper being restored at Wittenberg. The halt of Protestant theological reflection at the doors of Wittenberg had led to "worthless substitutes" and falling victim to, among

other things the German Church and that many of Protestantism's pastors and members had "learned to discover deep religious significance in the intoxication of Nordic blood and their political *Führer*."<sup>825</sup>

Barth was fully aware of the criticism he was opening himself up to in addressing the myth. He was aware that the authorities of the Protestant Church were basically unconcerned with the need for a healthy ecclesiology.<sup>826</sup> He was aware that the current doctrinal concerns of the Protestant Church were directed to other issues, as has been demonstrated in the contextual study. He was aware that he might be accused of being disconnected from the concerns that were fueling and "filling heads and hearts of all today" and that what he was offering might be regarded as "stones . . . instead of bread."<sup>827</sup> Barth was acutely aware of all these things. Yet he also understood that if the Evangelical Church wanted truly to be taken seriously this embrace of the myth of the *analogia entis* had to be dispelled totally and without reservation. Barth's assessment of the situation and his proposed approach was:

I believe that to the very day of judgment we shall wait in vain for an Evangelical Church which takes itself seriously *unless* we are prepared to attempt in all modesty to take the risk of being such a Church in our own situation and to the best of our ability. I believe that I understand the present-day authorities of the Church better than they understand themselves when I ignore their well-known resentment against what should have been their most important task, appealing from authorities badly informed to authorities which are better informed. I am firmly convinced that, especially in the broad field of politics, we cannot reach the clarifications which are necessary today, and on which theology might have a word to say, as indeed it ought to have, without first reaching the comprehensive clarifications in and about theology which are our present concern.<sup>828</sup>

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<sup>825</sup> Barth, *CD I.1*, xiv.

<sup>826</sup> Barth, *CD I.1*, xv.

<sup>827</sup> Barth, *CD I.1*, xv.

<sup>828</sup> Barth, *CD I.1*, xv.

Barth believed firmly that a “better Church dogmatics might well be finally a more significant and solid contribution . . . even to such questions and tasks as that of German liberation . . . than most well-meant stuff theologians think in dilettante fashion . . .”<sup>829</sup> This was then the solution to the myth of the *analogia entis*, not to put out each and every brush fire set by it, in a negative chorus of responses, but rather to comprehensively affirm that theology must be rightly grounded. In a cultural and theological tsunami, Barth was not going to treat the thousands of symptoms presenting in the Protestant Church. He had identified the base cause, named it, and was determined to uproot it for the sake of the church. In this task, Barth was resolute and willing to weather the storm. It was an almost impossible undertaking given all the conditions attached to it but Barth forwards that in this task “I hold myself forbidden to be discouraged.”<sup>830</sup> The myth had to go and the truth had to be made to stand.

**9.2 Dogmatics I.1 §§.** In the prolegomena of *I.1*, statements regarding the Roman Catholic Church and *analogia entis* are also found. The first one is related to the “presupposition . . . that the being of the Church, Jesus Christ, is no longer the free Lord of existence, but that He is incorporated into the existence of the Church, and is thus ultimately restricted and conditioned by certain concrete forms of the human understanding . . .”<sup>831</sup> This conception of the Church, and the understanding of the existence of Christ within it, is a form of the *analogia entis*, and a form which would have been particularly ominous given the movement of the Evangelical Church in Weimar. Barth naturally had to move away from such conceptions. Barth maintains that such

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<sup>829</sup> Barth, *CD I.1*, xvi.

<sup>830</sup> Barth, *CD I.1*, xvi.

<sup>831</sup> Barth, *CD I.1*, 40.

ideas can only be viewed as belonging to “another faith” (*anderen Glaubens*) and as a “foreign Dogmatics” (*fremden Dogmatik*).<sup>832</sup> Barth goes so far as to say that “our fellowship with *this* faith is broken by the way in which grace here becomes nature, the action of God immediately disappears and is taken up into the action of the recipient of grace, that which is beyond all human possibilities changes at once into that which is enclosed within the reality of the Church.”<sup>833</sup> It is here that Barth delivers his most direct predication of the *analogia entis* while naming it as such:

The Roman Catholic faith believes this transformation. It can recognize itself and God’s revelation in this constantly available relationship between God and man, in this revealedness. It affirms an *analogia entis*, the presence of a divine likeness of the creature even in the fallen world, and consequently the possibility of applying the secular “There is” to God and the things of God as the proposition, again ontological, of that change or transformation, of that depriving of revelation and faith of their character as decision by evasion and neutralisation.<sup>834</sup>

Barth asks a question, related to the discourse of the preface. In essence, if this is not our faith, i.e., then what is? In other words if the church is not able to point and say, “There is faith” or “There is revelation,” what is the Protestant faith? Again one is led to what Barth understands as the only option for Protestant theology, and again there is no “third option.” Immediately following his definition of *analogia entis* as the presence of a divine likeness of the creature even in the fallen world, Barth sets the boundaries around the Evangelical faith: “The only possibility of a conception of dogmatic knowledge remaining to *us* on the *basis* of Evangelical faith is to be marked off on the one hand by the rejection of an existential ontological possibility of

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<sup>832</sup> Barth, *CD I.1*, 40. *CD I.1* renders *fremden Dogmatik* as alien dogmatics.

<sup>833</sup> Barth, *CD I.1*, 41.

<sup>834</sup> Barth, *CD I.1*, 41.

the being of the Church and on the other hand by the rejection of the presupposition of a constantly available absorption of the Church into a creaturely form, into a ‘There is.’”<sup>835</sup> These are then really two impossibilities for Protestant theology. But special note must be taken here of the *us* and *basis* both of which are tied to Evangelical faith. It seems here too that Barth wants it understood that the *analogia entis* is not a possibility for the Protestant faith; it is a foundation which is built upon the sand so to say. In doing Evangelical theology, the *analogia entis* must be factored out in whatever form it takes in the creaturely sphere. Since it is not a possibility for Evangelical theology, therefore “Evangelical dogmatics cannot proceed along these lines.”<sup>836</sup>

The problem of the *analogia entis* meets then the problem of knowledge or natural theology. If the *analogia entis* in its various representations is entirely rejected, how does humanity know God at all? The rejection of *analogia entis* sweeps away the thesis of natural theology. It is not the intent here to enter into the wider scope of the discussion of the possibility or impossibility of natural theology. However, there are some matters related to this discussion within Barth that have import here.

Attention is given first to Barth’s exegesis of I Corinthians 2:6f:

In 1 Cor. 2<sup>6f.</sup> we are told that the wisdom of God in Christ is a σοφία ἡ ἐν μυστηρίῳ ἡ ἀγνωστὴ τοῖς ἀρχαῖς τῆς αἰωνιότητος, ἡ ἀφανὴς τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς, ἡ ἀκατάληπτος τοῖς ὦτι, ἡ ἀκρίβη τοῖς ἄνθρωποις, ἡ ἀκατάληπτος τοῖς ἀνθρώποις, ἡ ἀκατάληπτος τοῖς ἀνθρώποις, ἡ ἀκατάληπτος τοῖς ἀνθρώποις. It is not, then, accessible to the ψυχικὸς ἄνθρωπος who as such does not have the πνεῦμα and who cannot know what is accessible only to the πνεῦμα and through the πνεῦμα: οὐδέχεται, οὐδύναται Man must receive (λαμβάνειν) not only the Word from

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<sup>835</sup> Barth, *CD I.1*, 41. Emphasis added.

<sup>836</sup> Barth, *CD I.1*, 42.



Christ but also the πνεῦμα by which it is known, or he will not know it at all.<sup>837</sup>

If knowledge of God is not available on the basis of a form of *analogia entis* then it must be elsewhere established. It is also important to comment that knowledge of God cannot be pursued as a banalistic epistemology. I Corinthians 2 provides insight into this uncommon form of knowledge. The passage is located within a discussion of the proclamation of the Gospel by Paul and gives support to Barth's argument inasmuch as he views the Church as "the presupposition of the knowledge of the Word of God,"<sup>838</sup> proclamation being the task of the Church. In verses 4-5, which proceeds the section to which Barth wishes to call attention in the above citation, Paul asserts that his proclamation is: "καὶ ὁ λόγος μου καὶ τὸ κήρυγμά μου οὐκ ἐν πειθοῖ [ς] σοφίας [λόγοις] ἀλλ' ἐν ἀποδείξει πνεύματος καὶ δυνάμεως, ἵνα ἡπίστυξ ὑμῶν μὴ ἧ ἐν σοφίᾳ ἀνθρώπων ἀλλ' ἐν δυνάμει θεοῦ" (I Cor 2:4-5). This carries with it two implications for Barth's understanding. First, divine knowledge is not predicated on the same presuppositions as general epistemology. Paul does not come with the "persuasion of wise words" but rather in "the demonstration of the Spirit and power." Proclamation is not therefore contingent upon building an argument that is so rational that one must reasonably succumb when it is spoken. It is of significance that in the synchronic evolution of this text that verse 4 rates a {C} from the 4<sup>th</sup> edition of Nestle-Aland GNT, in as much as variant reading "πειθοῖς ἀνθρωπίνης σοφίας λόγοις" is carried in  $\aleph^2$ , A, C, and  $\Psi$  among

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<sup>837</sup> Barth, *CD I.1*, 42.

<sup>838</sup> Barth, *CD I.1*, 188. Further, "In particular Church proclamation implies that God's Word can be heard by men and spoken by men themselves." Barth, *CD I.1*, 188.

others.<sup>839</sup> This variant strengthens the concept since it emphasizes *human words of wisdom*. There is little doubt that Barth would reflect positively on this variant.

The second implication of Barth's reading of the passage is that faith is established via proclamation in the ἄ ποδεί ξει of the Spirit and power. The ἄ πόδειξεις should be understood as the cognitional substantiation via the intervention by the divine.<sup>840</sup> This is underscored and supported by the supposition that Paul wants faith not to be grounded in the wisdom of humanity (ἴ να ἡ πί στις ὑ μῶν μὴ ᾗ ἐ ν σοφί α ἄ νθρώπων) but rather in the power of God (ἀ λλ' ἐ ν δυνά μει θεοῦ ). There is present here a teleology that must not be missed. That is, there is a certain purpose to the grounding of epistemology in the latter, ἀ λλ' ἐ ν δυνά μει θεοῦ , rather than the former, μὴ ᾗ ἐ ν σοφί α ἄ νθρώπων. The wisdom which is spoken by Paul in proclamation (τὸ κή ρυγμά ) is spoken with the goal, not of establishing or conveying the wisdom of the age (οὐ τοῦ αἰ ῶνος τοῦ του) nor of the rulers of the age (οὐ δὲ τῶν ἀ ρχό ντων τοῦ αἰ ῶνος τοῦ του). BAG understands this to be a possible reference to “evil spirits whose hierarchies resembled human political institutions.”<sup>841</sup> It may be reading too far into Paul or Barth to reach such an understanding, but this interpretation is not far from the realities that either of them were dealing with. On this second point, Barth emphasizes that there is a mystery involved. The wisdom of the age is comprehended by humanity. But, as Paul states the matter, “δὲ ἀ πεκά λυψεν ὁ θεὸς διὰ τοῦ

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<sup>839</sup> Barbara Aland, Kurt Aland, et al., *The Greek New Testament*, Fourth edition (USA: United Bible Societies, 1983), 570.

<sup>840</sup> Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, edited and translated by William Arndt and Wilbur Gingrich, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 89. Referred to in text and in footnote as BAG.

<sup>841</sup> BAG, 114.

πνεύματος: τὸ γὰρ πνεῦμα πάντα ἐραυνᾷ, καὶ τὰ βάθη τοῦ θεοῦ.”

The revelation of God comes via the Spirit, not through human knowledge or capacity. Humanity may know humanity with such an epistemology (I Cor 2:11), and contrariwise, it is impossible for anyone to know God outside the Spirit of God (οὐτως καὶ τὰ τοῦ θεοῦ οὐδεὶς ἔγνωκεν εἰ μὴ τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ θεοῦ). As Barth puts it in the summary of his excurses: “Thus by the one little word ‘knowing’ as by a mighty thunderclap is all doctrine smitten down which is founded on man’s work, spiritual orders or divine service . . .”<sup>842</sup>

Barth wants to move from the current understandings and possibilities inside of Protestant theology that are grounded in, as he puts it, “Cartesianism.”<sup>843</sup> This is an understanding that Barth links to Georg Wobbermin and Erich Schaeder who Barth mentions in numerous passages in *CD I.1*.<sup>844</sup> The question here is reversed. That is, once the individual has been addressed by the Word of God, what then? Is there not established “the Cartesianism of the believing Christian?”<sup>845</sup> If so, would this “believing ego, the known Christian believer” not become “the criterion and standard of its statements about God’s Word?”<sup>846</sup>

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<sup>842</sup> Barth, *CD, I.1*, 195.

<sup>843</sup> Barth, *CD, I.1*, 195.

<sup>844</sup> Wobbermin was a systematic theologian and fanatical nationalist even in the early years of Weimar. Given that his doctorate was awarded from Göttingen, it is likely he was influenced by the thought of Emanuel Hirsch. See: Mattias Wolfes, *Protestantische Theologie und moderne Welt: Studien zur Geschichte der liberalen Theologie nach 1918* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1999), 327ff. To understand where Wobbermin stood he became a member of the NSDAP in May 1933 and was also a member of The Institute for the Study and Eradication of Jewish Influence on German Church Life: Susannah Heschel, *The Aryan Jesus*, 174, 88.

<sup>845</sup> Barth, *CD, I.1*, 213.

<sup>846</sup> Barth, *CD, I.1*, 213.

Barth says that this understanding is present not only in the pietistic community but was indicative of the “Church at large.”<sup>847</sup> The problem was, in Barth’s estimation, that he could win agreement with Protestant Church leaders with respect to the experience of the Word of God if the course ran from God to humanity.<sup>848</sup> He could also gain concession that before faith – epistemologically – the course must also be God to humanity.<sup>849</sup> But,

tell them that this epistemological order applies also and particularly to the religious man, that he also and particularly has no possibility, not even a perceived possibility, but can only receive the possibility of experience of God’s Word, can use it only as it is conferred in the actuality of reception, tell them that this possibility is and remains God’s possibility and does not pass out of His hands into any other hands, tell them this and at once bitter and irreconcilable controversy breaks out. When we tell them this, when we oppose to that thesis our counterthesis, which is separated from it only by a blade’s breadth and yet by a chasm’s depth, then an impressive majority among both the leaders and the led in the modern Evangelical Church is passionately against us.<sup>850</sup>

Here again one is faced with impossibility. Indirect Cartesianism posits that in the act of acknowledgement that one has been addressed by the Word of God, that the Word of God becomes some form of “emanation” whereby the “*influxus*” of the Word of God to humanity becomes a predication of humanity’s existence and that the Word of God slips from the hands of God into possession of the religious individual’s consciousness.<sup>851</sup> As Barth describes it: “When we try to find the content of divine Spirit in the (pardoned) consciousness of man, are we not like the man who wanted to scoop out in a sieve the reflection of the beautiful silvery moon from a

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<sup>847</sup> Barth, *CD, I.1*, 213.

<sup>848</sup> Barth, *CD, I.1*, 213.

<sup>849</sup> Barth, *CD, I.1*, 213.

<sup>850</sup> Barth, *CD, I.1*, 213.

<sup>851</sup> Barth, *CD, I.1*, 214.

pond?”<sup>852</sup> Whenever this sort of indirect Cartesianism, the Word of God as the possession of the religious individual comes into view, the assessment of Barth is: “if a man, the Church, Church proclamation and dogmatics think they can handle the Word and faith like capital at their disposal, they simply prove thereby that they have neither the Word nor faith.”<sup>853</sup> In either case, from a Barthian standpoint, there is no possibility of a natural theology, inasmuch as there is no possibility for an *analogia entis*. The contextual situation of Weimar with respect to inter-reactionary ideologies was a continued attempt to finally be able to enable the church and/or state to be the possessor of the will of God, whether that be on the front end of the equation or the back end of the equation. The continued response of Barth to the myth of the *analogia entis* at least from a Protestant dogmatic was to place a “no entrance” sign on both doors. If Barth defined the *modus operandi* behind the secular misery of his Weimar context as the myth of the *analogia entis*, then there was also a competing concept, the verity of the *analogia fidei*.<sup>854</sup>

**9.3 Analogia fidei.** This also left of course the basic question still open. How can one know God? The operative word here for Barth is *can*. The question is not how *does* one know God? but rather, how *can* one know God?<sup>855</sup> If it is not possible through *analogia entis* and thereby natural theology, how at all? The answer for Barth for both the dogmatic and ethical question is faith. Both the essence and existence of humanity, the being and

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<sup>852</sup> Barth, *CD, I.1*, 216.

<sup>853</sup> Barth, *CD, I.1*, 225.

<sup>854</sup> Verity in this context is used in the sense of a necessary religious, aesthetic, or ethical truth.

<sup>855</sup> Barth, *CD, I.1*, 225.

act of the individual are tied to faith, and faith is tied to knowledge, or rather knowledge is tied to faith. Faith (πίστις) as denoted by Barth:

is the real event which rests on the will and Word of God and relates to the will and Word of God, in which is also included at all events the fact that the proclamation of Christ confirms itself to men, in which men, touched by its truth, themselves become its bearers, and in which knowledge of God becomes real. Πίστις says more than γνώσις but in all circumstances it says γνώσις too.<sup>856</sup>

While Barth notes that Augustine, Aquinas, Bonaventure, as well as Luther and Calvin essentially hold this view, he moves to “the event of faith according to the understanding of the New Testament peculiar to the Evangelical Church . . .”<sup>857</sup> Again, it must be stressed in this discussion that Barth is aimed at the Evangelical Church. Three items are of note. First, faith is acknowledgment of God’s Word and is a real experience, which is put in effect in humanity by the effect of God’s Word.<sup>858</sup> Second, the propositions that the “*finitum non capax infiniti*” and “*peccator non capax verbi divini*” must be observed.<sup>859</sup> Finally, the individual exists as a believer entirely by the object of faith, i.e., the Word of God. This means that the individual does not create their own faith, but that it comes to them and the “Word has created it.”<sup>860</sup>

Under the first understanding, faith is an accepted acknowledgment on the part of God, not because it is perfect or complete or even that the individual has been able to properly render this acknowledgment of the divine object but rather because what the individual can do is acknowledged by the

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<sup>856</sup> Barth, *CD, I.1*, 229.

<sup>857</sup> Barth, *CD, I.1*, 229.

<sup>858</sup> Barth, *CD, I.1*, 229.

<sup>859</sup> Barth, *CD, I.1*, 238. These are, that the “finite does not have the capacity for the infinite,” and the “sinner does not have the capacity for the word of God.”

<sup>860</sup> Barth, *CD, I.1*, 244.

Word of God, which has been acknowledged.<sup>861</sup> Faith is faith because the “Word, Christ” presents himself to faith as its object.<sup>862</sup> There is of course the possibility that faith is placed elsewhere. Faith is not faith “merely by the fact that it has a reference.”<sup>863</sup> In fact, faith is faith and becomes a real experience only when it is grounded in Christ, its only appropriate ground and referent. Faith may be directed to other referents but at that point it ceases to be faith at all, since it has acknowledged myth over against verity.

The second understanding, that the finite does not have capacity for the infinite, nor the sinner for the Word of God, demonstrates a further peculiarity of Evangelical theology for Barth. It is also at this point that the longest discussion of *analogia entis* occurs in *Dogmatics I.I*. Barth is emphatic that faith is a real experience of humanity, but he is just as emphatic that the two principles, of *finitum* and *peccator* are fully employed. God’s Word “transcends and brackets” them.<sup>864</sup> The capacity for the Word of God in faith is not to be viewed as one of the various “capacities of man whether native or acquired.”<sup>865</sup> There is only one possibility here (again for Evangelical theology): “The possibility of faith as it is given to man in the reality of faith can be understood only as one that is loaned to man by God, and loaned exclusively for use.”<sup>866</sup> Faith loaned from God to humanity brings the possibility that humanity might be conformed to God.<sup>867</sup> This must not in any case be understood as an *apotheosis* since transformation or deification of the

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<sup>861</sup> Barth, *CD, I.I*, 230.

<sup>862</sup> Barth, *CD, I.I*, 230.

<sup>863</sup> Barth, *CD, I.I*, 230.

<sup>864</sup> Barth, *CD, I.I*, 238.

<sup>865</sup> Barth, *CD, I.I*, 238.

<sup>866</sup> Barth, *CD, I.I*, 238.

<sup>867</sup> Barth, *CD, I.I*, 238.

individual into the divine is out of the question.<sup>868</sup> This would lead back to the indirect Cartesianism of point one, among other things. There is a conformity of the individual to God in faith, which is proper to humanity, yet does not invest the individual with divinity or the capacity to be divine, simply to be completely human.

At this juncture Barth adopts language that has otherwise been for him anathema, or at least viewed as coming from the arsenal of the opposition. He states: “There can be no receiving God’s Word unless there is something common to the speaking God and hearing man in this event, a *similarity for all the dissimilarity* implied by the distinction between God and man, a *point of contact* between God and man, if we may now adopt this term too.”<sup>869</sup> Here of course are two terms, one related to the Fourth Lateran Council via Przywara, and the second to Brunner. Barth rejects Brunner’s point of contact, since it violates the Evangelical peculiarity of both *finitum* and *peccator*, leaving intact an innate capacity within humanity that can, in and of itself, come into conformity with God.<sup>870</sup> The point of contact is the event of Jesus Christ. This act of reconciliation between God and humanity “also includes or already begins with, the restitution of the lost point of contact. Hence this point of contact is not real outside of faith; it is real only in faith.”<sup>871</sup> It is not grounded in creation, as Brunner would have it, since everything was lost in the fall, inclusive of all of humanity’s possibilities before God. Faith, the prospect of being conformed to God is the restoration of *imago Dei*, the possibility of receiving the Word of God: “To the image of

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<sup>868</sup> Barth, *CD, I.1*, 240.

<sup>869</sup> Barth, *CD, I.1*, 238. Emphasis added.

<sup>870</sup> Barth, *CD, I.1*, 238.

<sup>871</sup> Barth, *CD, I.1*, 239.



God in man which was lost in Adam but restored in Christ there also belongs the fact that man can hear God's Word."<sup>872</sup>

With this understanding, Barth knows that he is speaking analogically, but he does not have issue with analogy *per se*.<sup>873</sup> He even states that "we have to realise that at this point we are only a hair's breadth from the Roman Catholic doctrine of the *analogia entis*."<sup>874</sup> But this is not an analogy wherein the being of creature and Creator share in spite of their dissimilarity. Rather, it is "an act that is inaccessible to any mere theory, i.e., human decision, [which] is in faith similar to the decision of God's grace for all its dissimilarity."<sup>875</sup> Barth, as with Brunner's point of contact, is willing to talk in the language of similarity and dissimilarity, and even in the language of analogy. That is his concession to both sides of the debate. However both "point of contact" and "similarity, dissimilarity, and analogy" are coordinated in faith, which has its point of origin not in human capacity or being, but in the Word of God. God dwells with humanity in the act of faith, and humanity dwells with God in this same act, this is included in what Barth refers to as the *analogia fidei*.<sup>876</sup>

The final peculiarity of Evangelical faith is that faith is created via the Word of God. Barth is especially brief concerning this point. Faith is

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<sup>872</sup> Barth, *CD, I.1*, 241.

<sup>873</sup> Barth, *CD, I.1*, 243.

<sup>874</sup> Barth, *CD, I.1*, 239.

<sup>875</sup> Barth, *CD, I.1*, 239.

<sup>876</sup> Barth, *CD, I.1*, 242. In this assertion Barth remains cautious but clear on the matter of indwelling and union: "This mutual indwelling or union is the knowability of the Word of God, the possibility of Church proclamation whether from the preacher's standpoint or the hearer's, and therefore the possibility of dogmatics too. As the Church provides the ministry of proclamation and as we pursue dogmatics, we confess that we believe this possibility. For all the menacing proximity of the *analogia entis*, mysticism and identity philosophy, and in spite of all the so-called dangers, we have every reason to speak out clearly on this point." Barth, *CD, I.1*, 242.

grounded in the divine object rather than the human subject. An individual does not create his or her own faith, it is understood as being created by the Word of God.<sup>877</sup> One does not “come to faith” rather faith comes to the individual.<sup>878</sup> Faith is “an event in the freedom of man” and yet it is not the product of human freedom.<sup>879</sup> Barth finishes the subsection by a reference to Revelation 3:20. While it is true that the individual must open the door, this act happens with respect to all other aspects discussed, and takes place with respect to “the work of Christ who stands outside.”<sup>880</sup> Even at this, Barth reminds the reader that it is also “unconditionally true that the risen Christ passes through closed doors (Jn. 20:19f).”<sup>881</sup> This is the verity of the *analogia fidei*.

**9.4 *Vestigium Trinitatis*.** The *vestigium trinitatis* is approached by Barth in two ways. First, it is observed that the *vestigium* is none other than the myth of the *analogia entis* in its purest sense. Secondly, Barth considers it to be a linguistic conundrum of the early Church, much of which has by necessity and theological phylogeny been rendered obsolete. Barth locates the origin of the doctrine with Augustine who in his *On the Trinity* states:

When therefore we regard the Creator, who is understood by the things that are made we must needs understand the Trinity of whom there appear traces in the creature, as is fitting. For in that Trinity is the supreme source of all things, and the most perfect beauty, and the most blessed delight. Those three, therefore, both seem to be mutually determined to each other, and are in themselves infinite.<sup>882</sup>

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<sup>877</sup> Barth, *CD, I.1*, 244.

<sup>878</sup> Barth, *CD, I.1*, 244.

<sup>879</sup> Barth, *CD, I.1*, 246.

<sup>880</sup> Barth, *CD, I.1*, 247.

<sup>881</sup> Barth, *CD, I.1*, 247.

<sup>882</sup> Augustine, *On the Trinity*, 4.10, <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/130106.htm> [Accessed May 18, 2010].

Barth makes the rather curious statement that this understanding of the *vestigium* is not dealing “(unfortunately) . . . with the distinction imparted to a creaturely reality in revelation, in virtue of which a man, an angel, a natural or historical event, human words or actions, and supremely, finally, and yet also as the epitome of all the creatures thus distinguished, the *humanitas Christi*, becomes a divine organ or medium.”<sup>883</sup> The tenor of the passage connotes in its echo an “if only this is what we were dealing with!” Rather, what is being dealt with is over and above this. The *vestigium* was not dealing with these types of concepts, but rather “with an essential trinitarian disposition supposedly immanent in some created realities quite *apart from* their possible conscription by God’s revelation.”<sup>884</sup> In other terms Barth says this doctrine was concerned with “a genuine *analogia entis* with traces of the trinitarian God in being as such, in its pure createdness.”<sup>885</sup> What Barth is indicating by this is that the *vestigium* is a real, authentic, but more a direct form of *analogia entis* as compared to the former statements about creaturely reality in revelation, which might be considered a more indirect form.

In the proceeding section (§7) Barth had already established the single ground or root of the doctrine of the trinity. The question for Barth in considering the *vestigium trinitatis* is whether or not there could be a second such root. Three questions arise from this consideration: 1) Is the trinity to be seen in the created order apart and distinct from biblical disclosure? 2) If point one is the case, then which “root” is the primary and which the secondary? 3) Would biblical disclosure become relegated to nothing more than a

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<sup>883</sup> Barth, *CD, I.1*, 334.

<sup>884</sup> Barth, *CD, I.1*, 334.

<sup>885</sup> Barth, *CD, I.1*, 334.

confirmation of the revelation of created order and would it not thus be relegated to the dust pile as rather unnecessary? These questions lead to a final supposition on the part of Barth:

[T]hen it is difficult to omit the final question whether these *vestigia* on which the doctrine of the Trinity is really based are in fact to be regarded as the *vestigia* of a Creator God transcending the world and not as determinations of the cosmos which must be viewed as strictly immanent and, because the cosmos is man's cosmos, as determinations of man's existence; whether we should not then erase the concept of natural revelation as well as biblical revelation and adjudge the doctrine of the Trinity to be a bold attempt on man's part to understand the world and ultimately himself, i.e., adjudge it to be a myth.<sup>886</sup>

This is to be certain an argument *reductio ad absurdum*. The point in any case should not be missed. The logical full application of *vestigium trinitatis* creates an unbearable tension between the natural theology from which its epistemology rises and biblical theology, which is threatened with superannuation given the primary and anterior role of the *vestigium* within the created order. In this case the “real and authentic” myth of the *analogia entis*, denoted by the *vestigium*, declares the doctrine of the Trinity itself to be a myth. Barth asserts that in the *vestigium* the idea of the . . . ancient Trojan horse which one day . . . was unsuspectingly allowed entry into the theological Ilium.”<sup>887</sup> Continuing with this analogy he says: “we can hear a threatening clank, so that we have every cause to execute a defensive movement . . .”<sup>888</sup> Naturally myth was attacking verity, and this could not stand.

The *vestigium trinitatis* had been variously “found” in different spheres. As Barth enumerates them: nature, culture, history, religion and the

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<sup>886</sup> Barth, *CD, I.1*, 335.

<sup>887</sup> Barth, *CD, I.1*, 336.

<sup>888</sup> Barth, *CD, I.1*, 336.

human soul.<sup>889</sup> In nature Barth cites Anselm's Father, Son, and Spirit with the "spring, stream, and lake, which as a united whole might be called the Nile."<sup>890</sup> In culture he gives the example of Luther's grammar, logic, and expression as the *vestigium* of Father, Son, and Spirit.<sup>891</sup> In history Barth hits upon the contextual element of this treatment citing Moeller van den Bruck's idealized and spiritualized concept of the Third Reich being a *vestigium* of Father, Son, and Spirit as derived from von Fiore.<sup>892</sup> Religion gives for the *vestigium* of the Father, Son, and Spirit; faith, reason, and contemplation.<sup>893</sup> Finally, the human soul, Augustine postulates as a *vestigium trinitatis* in: "the power of inward apprehension . . . the power of outward apprehension . . . and the power to relate the one to the other and thus to complete apprehension."<sup>894</sup> What Barth reduces most of this to is the attempt on the part of the early Church to bring language to the trinity, not to overturn biblical theology. Barth maintains that the formulations of *vestigium trinitatis* were not:

[A] matter of apologetics or polemics, not of demonstrating the possibility of revelation in the world of human reason but of establishing the actual possibilities of the world of human reason as the scene of revelation. *Vestigia trinitatis in creatura*, they said, but perhaps what they really had in mind was *vestigia creaturae in trinitate* – naturally in the Trinity of self-revelation, in the Trinity inasmuch as it takes creaturely form.<sup>895</sup>

If it was conceived of in any other fashion, it would mean the triumph of the myth of the *analogia entis* via *vestigium trinitatis*. There would be an undeniable reduction of the trinity to the concept of three, three being some

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<sup>889</sup> Barth, *CD, I.1*, 336-7.

<sup>890</sup> Barth, *CD, I.1*, 336.

<sup>891</sup> Barth, *CD, I.1*, 336.

<sup>892</sup> Barth, *CD, I.1*, 337.

<sup>893</sup> Barth, *CD, I.1*, 337.

<sup>894</sup> Barth, *CD, I.1*, 337.

<sup>895</sup> Barth, *CD, I.1*, 341.

transcendental number which was deified for the sake of its multiplicities in the cosmos as humanity through observation added to the number. In short: “To derive the Trinity consciously and intentionally from the scheme of man’s consciousness or from some other creaturely order instead of Scripture is not the same thing as to derive it from Scripture . . .”<sup>896</sup> There is a true *vestigium* just as there is a true analogy, the true *vestigium* is the *vestigium creatura in trinitate*. As with analogy there is no other root, and no other road down which Protestantism could travel without taking the myth of the *analogia entis* into itself.

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<sup>896</sup> Barth, *CD*, I.1, 346.

**Part Three:**  
**Contemporary Considerations — The Secular Misery**  
**and the Myth Redux**

## Chapter Ten

### Barr and Betz: Two Post-Reich Approaches to the Myth

The discussion now returns to the conceptions that provided impetus for this study. On the one hand there is the approach wherein Barth's doctrine of *analogia entis* is treated as primarily a Protestant-Catholic issue. On the other hand the context of Barth has not been taken with the seriousness which it demands and accordingly not enough stress has been placed on the connections arising from the Weimar context and the effect this has on the formation of the doctrine of *analogia entis*. Consequently, the idea that Barth's treatment of the *analogia entis* must be seen as *primarily* an issue confronting the Protestant Church and dogmatics has been neglected in the wake of ecumenical dialogue. Two examples of how this *primary* issue has been neglected are now taken into consideration: a Protestant approach and a Catholic approach.

**10.1 Barr's Bollix.** There is little secret that James Barr approaches Barth's understanding of natural theology with no piffling amount of disdain. Barr does make the correct and critical observation that Barth's natural theology, at least in part, was linked "with the pro-Nazi position of the



‘German Christian’ movement.”<sup>897</sup> From this point on, however, Barr fails to understand many of the contributing factors or ideologies that were converging in the Weimar era. Barr states for instance: “It is not clear that there is any essential or necessary link between German National Socialism and natural theology. Why should there be?”<sup>898</sup> Barr further blisters Barth saying:

To attach the label of ‘natural theology’ to the hoarse and inchoate utterances of the DC [German Christians] – who were in any case a limited element within the German Protestant population, had no unitary theological views, and in the long run were not very important historically – is a quite disgraceful smear on the careful, rational, and philosophical discussions which have generally been intended when the term is used.<sup>899</sup>

Given the study presented herein, it is really unfathomable how anyone can come to the conclusion that the German Christians, or those forwarding inter-reactionary ideologies in the Weimar era, or the NSDAP on the religious-political side of the matter were “hoarse.” Even the term *inchoate* gives one pause insofar as it lacks, or at least ignores, the long lineage of the evolution of the ideologies in play, not simply the derivative ideologies more immediate to Weimar, but those philosophies which served as their referential base.

Barr’s arguments against equating National Socialism and natural theology are 1) that supporters of National Socialism were on average those who had a “revelational theology,” and 2) the absence of rationality and universality of the NSDAP.<sup>900</sup> It is here that Barr is playing with terminology to make his case. First, as Barr himself points out, the revelation that the

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<sup>897</sup> James Barr, *Biblical Faith and Natural Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 111.

<sup>898</sup> James Barr, *Natural Theology*, 111.

<sup>899</sup> James Barr, *Natural Theology*, 112.

<sup>900</sup> James Barr, *Natural Theology*, 112.

NSDAP and supporters of their ideology were using was a revelation in events, in people, in history, that is, a form of *natural theology* and not a revelation of the Word of God. The NSDAP et al., could not in this sense be marked as carrying a “revelational theology,” without at the very least in fairness to the accuracy with which the term is used, attaching the revelation Barr is talking about within natural and/or anthropological phenomenon. Barr must have been cognizant of the relationship between natural theology and general revelation; any other understanding is at the very least to terminologically confuse the entire issue and at the very most is simply venal.

In the second point, Barr is misguided in his assessment that the ideologies being considered lacked rationality and universalism. First, while incredibly insidious and sinister in nature, as has been demonstrated, there was a rationality involved here, politically, theologically, and organizationally. Barr in his haste to arrest and prosecute Barth simply fails to consider the nature of evil. With respect to universalism, the assessment of Barr is equally limited in scope and vision. While Barr does have the understanding that the NSDAP and German Christians were closed to outsiders, he erroneously identifies this as a non-universalism.<sup>901</sup> Those supporting inter-reactionary ideologies were in fact quite universal, albeit Germanic in their universalism. The term which Barr should have employed to convey the concept to which he is referring is xenophobic.

Barr’s final assessment of Barth’s resistance to National Socialism is a rather back-handed compliment. Barr states on the one hand that “Barth’s

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<sup>901</sup> James Barr, *Natural Theology*, 112.

opposition to Nazi ideology was fully genuine . . .”<sup>902</sup> On the other hand, Barr maintains that Barth’s rejection of natural theology and theological constructions against the NSDAP were propaganda devices used to cynically to advance Barthianism in the midst of the struggle.<sup>903</sup> Indeed Barr does not even hesitate to place upon Barth the onus of National Socialism itself, by the reasoning that one must inevitably take on the characteristics of the one, one is combating. The logic, of course, means in the end that Barr must be Barthian.

While Barr correctly and strongly ties Barth’s arguments of natural theology with its proper “conversational partner,” he radically (to use his own words regarding Barth) misdiagnoses the relationship and responsibility that natural theology played in inter-reactionary and National Socialist ideologies. What Barr serves up is a Protestant revival of the myth of the *analogia entis* and its concomitant doctrine of natural theology.

**10.2 Betz’s Über-Catholic Reading of Barth.**<sup>904</sup> Betz’s etiology of the death of the *analogia entis* by the secret conspiracy of Barth and Heidegger<sup>905</sup> is at best, from a Protestant standpoint, simply a spectral lacuna. The *analogia entis*, if it was ever the victim of *Dolchstoß*, is also an ideology that is Lazarus-like inasmuch as it will not remain in the tomb. The *analogia entis*, ironically seen from a Catholic vantage point as struggling for survival, seems forever rejuvenated in the ranks of Protestantism. The same sorts of

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<sup>902</sup> James Barr, *Natural Theology*, 116.

<sup>903</sup> James Barr, *Natural Theology*, 116.

<sup>904</sup> For a comprehensive treatment of the dialogue between Catholicism and Barth see: Joseph Palakeel, *The Use of Analogy in Theological Discourse: An Investigation in Ecumenical Perspective* (Rome: Editrice Ponticia Università Gregorina, 1995). On the question of Thomas Aquinas and Barth, Eugene Rogers, *Thomas Aquinas and Karl Barth: Sacred Doctrine and the Natural Knowledge of God* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995).

<sup>905</sup> John Betz, “Beyond the Sublime: The Aesthetics of the Analogy of Being (Part One),” *Modern Theology*, Vol. 21, No. 3 (July 2005), 367.

ideologies that thrust the *analogia entis* forward in Protestant Weimar continue to do so in the Protestant *Zeitgeist* of the present.

Betz's posture seems to be that the foundation of Catholic theology has been endangered by Barth's detail destitute elision of the *analogia entis* as the antichrist as well as Heidegger's onto-theology,<sup>906</sup> a twist of Scotus, Ockham, and the refusal of the leaders of the Reformation to heed Cajetan's polemic (imagine that!). Additionally, the Jesuit Francisco Suarez is also culpable in this indictment.

What really seems to vex Betz is that because of Barth's pronouncement Przywara did not get his day in court. One can only assume that Betz is nonplussed that Przywara did not get his day in Protestant court, for how could the "rhetoric and prolixity"<sup>907</sup> of a Reformed theologian stop a gifted Jesuit dead in his tracks in the Catholic Church? Umbrage is also offered by Betz, albeit in a genial and indirect fashion, in his implication that those who are wrestling with Barth have taken the easy path in order to avoid the "labor of interpreting Przywara's difficult book."<sup>908</sup> Surely the deduction must be that if only they (Protestants) would read Przywara, then elucidation and illumination would come! However, even after one (Protestant) has grappled with the true genius of Przywara, one is brought back to two issues: first, the inability of Catholic thought to understand or, at times, even to acknowledge Protestant lapsarian doctrine, and second, the lack of understanding that what one is dealing with in Barth's *analogia entis* is primarily a Protestant concern arising from contextual elements surrounding

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<sup>906</sup> Betz, "Beyond the Sublime, Part 1," 367.

<sup>907</sup> Betz, "Beyond the Sublime, Part 1," 369.

<sup>908</sup> Betz, "Beyond the Sublime, Part 1," 369.

Barth in Weimar. It is true that Betz does give a tip of his hat to Barth's inveighing "against a theology that was ultimately complicit in the rise to power of the Nazis,"<sup>909</sup> but from this point on his is really an egocentric concern from the point of Catholicism. What is important here is that Betz understands precisely what is going on, that Barth was struggling against a Protestant theology that gave rise to the NSDAP, and what is more, that Barth's employment of the *analogia entis* was directed at this theology. But this contextual understanding is articulated in such a fashion that one is left with a great Catholic "by the way" and "ho-hum" hanging in the air. Because of this Betz misses one of the most basic aspects of Barth's rejection of the *analogia entis*, that is, the onto-ethical construction that arises from his *analogia fidei*, which is, despite the remonstrations of Betz, a true analogical formulation.

Rather than concentrate on the substance of Barth's ontic-ethical formulation, Betz weaves a subtle argument via Kantian aesthetics to post-modern French philosophy which (despite its sequestered mootness and ensconced irrelevance) will single-handedly bring on the destruction of Christianity.<sup>910</sup> Barth was of course, in Betz's analysis, complicit in this nefarious plot.<sup>911</sup> Betz's thesis is grounded in the use of the aesthetic categories of the beautiful and sublime to hypothesize that Barth's transcendence in the end simply collapses into an utter creaturely immanence, and in so doing to transform Barth into the very demon he sought to dispossess. Barth is described by Betz as having an "overarching discourse of

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<sup>909</sup> Betz, "Beyond the Sublime, Part 1," 369.

<sup>910</sup> Betz, "Beyond the Sublime, Part 1," 372.

<sup>911</sup> Betz, "Beyond the Sublime, Part 1," 372.

the sublime” but he is simply a “token” compared to the “strident declamations of the French postmodern philosophy.”<sup>912</sup> They are both traced back to German idealism (!) and the “Kantian sublime” and the “aesthetic mediation of absolute knowledge.”<sup>913</sup> This means that Barth maintains a favoritism of the sublime over the beautiful, or to put it in more theological terms the triumph of the transcendent over the immanent. Betz puts this in the classic distinction of the Greek philosophers Parmenides and Heraclitus.<sup>914</sup>

This somewhat strained juxtaposition and suggestion of capitulation by Barth to the Kantian sublime brings with it its own difficulties, not the least of which are those of nomenclature and whether or not Kantian terminology can be used (or is being used) univocally in Barth’s system. The second is whether or not the Kantian categories can be used to critique Barth in the manner intended by Betz. In the first part of the *Critique of Judgment* (The Critique of Aesthetic Judgment), Kant examines the analytic of the

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<sup>912</sup> Betz, “Beyond the Sublime, Part 1,” 371.

<sup>913</sup> Betz, “Beyond the Sublime, Part 1,” 371.

<sup>914</sup> Parmenides of Elea (c. 475 BCE) is typically associated with arguments of immanence. An instance of this immanence is indicated in Parmenides’ observation: “Nor is Being divisible, since it is all alike, nor is there anything (here or) there which could prevent it from holding together, nor any lesser thing, but all is full of Being. Therefore it is altogether continuous for Being is close to Being.” Kathleen Freeman, trans., *Ancilla to the Pre-Socratic Philosophers: A Complete Translation of the Fragments in Diels* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1948), 61. Heraclitus of Ephesus (c. 500 BCE) is often viewed as the mirror of Parmenides, although the nature of his fragments are such that as Herman Diels states it: “Bei unserm geringen Bestand von Fragmenten liegt die Gefahr, falsches zu verbinden und daher falsch zu interpretieren, näher als das Gelingen.” Hermann Diels, *Herakleitos von Ephesus: Griechisch und Deutsch* (Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1901), ix. Indeed, it is not simply the small pool of material that one must struggle against, but even that the various statements in different sections can lead one to imply for Heraclitus at times a tendency for immanence while at others transcendence: c.f., “Although intimately connected with the Logos which orders the whole world, men keep setting themselves against it, and the things which they encounter every day seem quite foreign to them” (under On the Divine), with: “Immortals become mortals, mortals become immortals; they live in each other’s death and die in each other’s life.” William Harris, trans., *Heraclitus the Complete Fragments: Translation and Commentary and Greek Text* at <http://community.middlebury.edu/~harris/Philosophy/heraclitus.pdf> [Last accessed May 23, 2010].

beautiful.<sup>915</sup> Kant designates the beautiful as “that which apart from concepts, is represented as the object of a universal delight.”<sup>916</sup> The beautiful is a subjective judgment, based upon the “taste” which is non-cognitive in nature, that is, “everyone has his own taste.”<sup>917</sup> Beauty becomes universal in nature as the subject regards her or his judgment of the beautiful “as resting upon what he may also presuppose in every other person; and therefore must believe that he has reason for demanding a similar delight from everyone.”<sup>918</sup> It then proceeds that because of this universal assumption that beauty is no longer perceived as a matter of subjective taste, but the subject then “will speak of the beautiful as if beauty were a *quality of the object* and the judgment logical . . . although it is only aesthetic.”<sup>919</sup> Universality is not then an objective matter, but rather what is in play is a subjective universality. Betz deals with only the subjective and not subjective universality, in order to derive the Kantian egocentrism he is after. This is neither here nor there, Betz is fundamentally accurate in this matter. Beauty, in Kantian terms is rudimentarily subjective. However, at this point Betz creates a *non sequitur*:

Rather than reflecting the beauty of God and so drawing the self *outside* itself toward the One who is ever more beautiful, beauty is now the occasion for a *reflexive* movement back to the self, which is given a foretaste, in its capacity for disinterested judgment, of its own practical freedom over nature. In short, beauty is now an occasion for the self to delight not in the handiwork of God, but in the spontaneity of *its own* powers . . .<sup>920</sup>

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<sup>915</sup> Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Judgment*, Mortimer J. Adler, ed., James Creed Meredith trans., *Great Books of the Western World* 49 (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica Inc., 2003). *Critique of Judgment* will be cited as *CJ* with its subsection, e.g., *CJ*, §3, since subsections remain sequentially numbered through out *CJ*.

<sup>916</sup> *CJ*, §6.

<sup>917</sup> *CJ*, §7.

<sup>918</sup> *CJ*, §6.

<sup>919</sup> *CJ*, §6.

<sup>920</sup> Betz, “Beyond the Sublime, Part 1,” 371.

While it is true enough that Kant is speaking of the internal processes that happen within the individual in the judgment of beauty, it does not follow that the individual involved in such a process is reveling in the beauty of that process rather than on beauty. In reducing Kant in this manner, Betz has had to disregard Kant's assessment of taste. One is still left with the distinct difficulty of individual assessment of beauty, which seems to exert its will upon humanity. For example, let it be the case that John Betz (whether or not it is so) thinks dandelions are the most beautiful things he has ever laid his eyes upon, and perhaps leads him to epiphany of (a) God. This does not negate the fact that for another they are simply a stinky ugly weed and that if it were not for that weed they might consider belief in (a) God. Unless a congregation for beauty is established which mandates what the beautiful is, this question still needs to be met somehow by Betz. Further, Betz maintains that Kant's understanding prohibits this contemplation of the beauty of God. However, Betz's desire still does not deal with the fact that contemplation of God must involve a process and judgment proper to the subject as well. There is a fine line here. One can look at nature and via a judgment of taste call it beautiful. One can also look at nature, still subjectively, see the beautiful and call it God.

With respect to the beautiful, it is not entirely accurate to maintain that in terms of Kant's critique, that beauty is *entirely* subjective. At the end of the analytic of the beautiful one finds Kant asserting: "the sole foundation of the judgment of taste is the *form of finality* of an object," and "the judgment of taste cannot rest on any subjective end as its ground."<sup>921</sup> This is really the

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<sup>921</sup> *CJ*, §11



entanglement of Betz's thesis since, "the beautiful in nature is a question of the *form of the object* . . ." <sup>922</sup> In other words, the form of the object does possess beauty, and because of this it elicits an *aesthetic* judgment (as opposed to the cognitive!) that still retains its subjective nature and yet is grounded in the form of the object. There is then a rhythm in the Kantian analytic of beautiful.

Betz next considers Kant's use of the sublime. Betz is certainly correct in his assessment that for Kant the sublime has reference to the reason. <sup>923</sup> In the analytic of the sublime Kant begins by dividing the category of the sublime into the mathematically sublime (related to the faculty of cognition) and the dynamically sublime (related to the faculty of desire). The sublime is defined by Kant as "the name given to what is absolutely great" and the absolutely great is "what is beyond all comparison great." <sup>924</sup> This is used by Betz in terms, with respect to Kant, and especially of French Post-modernists as a sort of totalitarian transcendence (that plummets back into immanence in the end). In the section treating the mathematically sublime, Kant states two things that are of relevance. First that the sublime cannot be compared to any object or standard outside itself, but its greatness is "comparable to itself alone." <sup>925</sup> It cannot be located in the "things of nature, but only in our own ideas." <sup>926</sup> Second "the sublime is that, the mere capacity of thinking which

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<sup>922</sup> *CJ*, §.23. Also, *CJ*, §23.

<sup>923</sup> Betz, "Beyond the Sublime, Part 1," 384. Also *CJ*, §29.

<sup>924</sup> *CJ*, §25.

<sup>925</sup> *CJ*, §25.

<sup>926</sup> *CJ*, §25.

evidences a faculty of mind transcending every standard of sense.”<sup>927</sup> In the dynamic sublime Kant states that:

Sublimity, therefore, does not reside in any of the things in nature, but only in our own mind, insofar as we may become conscious of our superiority over nature within, and thus also over nature without us. . . . Everything that provokes this feeling in us, including the might of nature which challenges our strength, is then, though improperly called sublime, and it is only under presupposition of this idea within us, and in relation to it, that we are capable of attaining to the idea of the sublimity of that Being which inspires deep respect in us, not by the mere display of its might in nature, but more by the faculty which is planted in us of estimating that might without fear, and of regarding our estate as exalted above it.<sup>928</sup>

What is truly seen in Kant is not a tyranny of the sublime, but rather an aesthetic natural theology.<sup>929</sup> By looking at the created order, one makes an aesthetic judgment via taste on the level of the beautiful (immanent), but the sublime must be attended to via cognition. In Kant too, as in natural theology, one is confronted with the capacity (Brunner!) of knowing the sublime via reason. Ironically the beautiful and sublime that are present in Kant and such a threat to Christianity, according to Betz, are the very elements present in natural theology.

Kant’s categories are simply not functional nor interchangeable with those of Barth. The ambiguous sublime of Kantian rationale is a far journey away from the transcendent God of Barth. For Barth God is a definite Being,

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<sup>927</sup> *CJ*, §25.

<sup>928</sup> *CJ*, §28.

<sup>929</sup> “Natural theology is generally characterized as the attempt to establish religious truths by rational argument and without reliance upon alleged revelations. It has focused traditionally on the topics of the existence of God and the immortality of the soul.” “Christianity.” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 2010, Encyclopædia Britannica Online. <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/115240/Christianity> [Last accessed May 24, 2010]. Also: “Truths about God that can be learned from created (nature, man, world) things by reason alone.” Walter Elwell, *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1984), 752. If these or something close to these is adopted as the definition, then proximity to Kant’s aesthetic is present.

who is self-revealed (not constructed by reason out of that which is created). It is simply a “violence” to superimpose Kantian terms (and thereby Post-modern French philosophy) onto Barth’s theological construction. For Barth, God is a real transcendent Being that *is* not some theoretical of the sublime that can be reduced by the philosophical whims or constructions of the French or anybody else for that matter. The reduction of the sublime to the immanent, while it does matter a great deal to Catholic theology because of natural theology, cannot set its foot within a Barthian system because the transcendent God is not reducible nor is God accessible to the caprice or whim of philosophy of any stripe since for Barth theology stands upon its own feet as a discipline.

Finally, before leaving Betz, a brief consideration must be made of his understanding of Barth’s doctrine of *analogia fidei*. He uses the second edition of Barth’s *Epistle to the Romans* to establish his basic assessments of Barth’s analogy: 1) “the world stands in contradiction to God (to the point of extreme Manichaeism),” 2) “the creature is but a placeholder of divine revelation, to which it contributes nothing” and 3) “the act of faith is ultimately *only* an act of divine self-revelation.”<sup>930</sup> However, the *analogia fidei* is not that humanity is an automaton, but a being that must act in response to the command of God in faith. As God speaks humanity hears and correspondingly *acts* in faith.<sup>931</sup>

In Betz, one is left with a truly Catholic perspective on Barth, albeit a highly sophisticated argument that attempts to collapse Barth into his

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<sup>930</sup> John Betz, “Beyond the Sublime: The Aesthetics of the Analogy of Being (Part Two),” *Modern Theology*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (January 2006), 6.

<sup>931</sup> Barth, *CD*, I.1, 227-247.

adversary. This is part of the myth of the myth *analogia entis*, that is, the myth of the myth is that Barth's conception of the *analogia entis* must be seen as a Catholic issue, and therefore Barth must be dealt with. The second part of the myth of the myth is that since we are no longer confronted with inter-reactionary ideologies, especially in the form of the German Christian movement or the NSDAP, that we should no longer have to seriously consider the context within which Barth formulated his reaction to the *analogia entis*, that one may merely give a nod of the head to the whole matter and be done with it. But understanding the myth in this way is neither wise nor prudent. The observation of George Santayana is highly applicable here: "we need not wonder that the costly experiments and disillusionments of the past have not yet produced a complete enlightenment."<sup>932</sup> There is a myth about the myth that wishes to expunge the myth (as exposed) and that is an unwise move for Protestant theology as will be seen in the next chapter, and in the end the overcoming of the myth of the *analogia entis* as exposed by Barth, is salutary for no one, Catholic or Protestant.

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<sup>932</sup> George Santayana, *The Life of Reason* Vol. 1, Project Gutenberg, February 14, 2005, [http://wikipremed.com/reading/philosophy/The\\_Life\\_of\\_Reason.pdf](http://wikipremed.com/reading/philosophy/The_Life_of_Reason.pdf). [Accessed February 25, 2010].

## Chapter Eleven

### Myth Redux: An American Revival

The myth of the *analogia entis* is a Protestant issue and reinserts itself in cultural contexts where Protestant doctrine bases itself on the myth. The myth of the *analogia entis* must not be reduced to a matter of Protestant-Catholic dialogue on the one hand or dismissed as a historical-theological relic on the other. The myth is recidivist in nature, and the re-emergence of the myth in the contemporary evangelical movement in the United States speaks of the need to understand Barth's doctrine of *anaogia entis* from its context in order that correct interpretation and application may be applied in other contexts.

**11.1 De Tocqueville on Religion in America.** In 1835 Alexis de Tocqueville remarked regarding the American clergy "that they are careful to keep clear of all parties, shunning contact with them with all the anxiety attendant upon personal interest."<sup>933</sup> This, de Tocqueville surmised, was part of the strength of American Christianity. Compared with the current state of affairs in the United States, de Tocqueville would undoubtedly be struck

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<sup>933</sup> Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America, Great Books of the Western World* 44 (Chicago: Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 2003), 155.

speechless. But it is really the further observations of de Tocqueville that capture attention. He states: “I wondered how it could come about that by diminishing the apparent power of religion<sup>934</sup> one increased its real strength, and I thought it not impossible to discover the reason.”<sup>935</sup> And still another penetrating observation: “religion can at times rely on the artificial strength of laws and the support of the material powers that direct society.”<sup>936</sup> However, the profound thunderclap comes when de Tocqueville declares: “There have been religions intimately linked to earthly governments, dominating men’s souls both by terror and by faith; but when a religion makes such an alliance, I am not afraid to say that it makes the same mistake any man might; *it sacrifices the future for the present, and by gaining a power to which it has no claim, it risks its legitimate authority.*”<sup>937</sup> When this happens, when Christianity allies “itself with any political power, religion increases its strength over some but forfeits the hope of reigning over all.”<sup>938</sup>

De Tocqueville issues both prognostication and then an analysis of this forecast. When Christianity links itself to political party and power and stakes its hopes there, puissant consequences await since: “Even those political powers that seem best established have no other guarantee of their permanence beyond the opinions of a generation, the interests of a century, or often the life of one man.”<sup>939</sup> When the Church so affiliates itself, building political alliance in exchange for influence and agenda, it has sold its soul for the moment and

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<sup>934</sup> de Tocqueville, uses the term religion, and does mean it in a universal sense on the one hand, but it is also by inference that he is clearly speaking of Christianity, that is, whenever de Tocqueville uses religion, Christianity is implied and can be read just as well in its stead.

<sup>935</sup> de Tocqueville, *Democracy*, 155.

<sup>936</sup> de Tocqueville, *Democracy*, 155.

<sup>937</sup> de Tocqueville, *Democracy*, 155. Emphasis added.

<sup>938</sup> de Tocqueville, *Democracy*, 155.

<sup>939</sup> de Tocqueville, *Democracy*, 155.

lost it for eternity. The evangelical churches in the United States have chosen, almost univocally, for such myopia. This alliance, this state of myopia occurs:

So long as a religion derives its strength from *sentiments, instincts, and passions*, which are reborn in like fashion in all periods of history, it can brave the assaults of time, or at least it can only be destroyed by another religion. But when a religion chooses to *rely* on the interests of this world, it becomes almost as fragile as all earthly powers. Alone, it may hope for immortality; linked to ephemeral powers, it follows their fortunes and often falls together with the passions of a day sustaining them.<sup>940</sup>

There is a final irony in all this. The evangelical community in the United States often points to the demise of Christianity in Europe as an omen and foreshadowing if the nation (!) does not turn back to its “godly heritage.”<sup>941</sup>

However, de Tocqueville’s critique of the demise of European Christianity has nothing to do with pietism, but rather that: “European Christianity has allowed itself to be intimately united with the powers of this world. Now that these powers are falling, it is as if it were buried under their ruins.”<sup>942</sup> And yet, there is a promise: “A living being has been tied to the dead; cut the bonds holding it and it will arise.”<sup>943</sup>

It must be kept in mind that de Tocqueville’s analysis was not that these were features of American Christianity, but rather from his vantage point in 1835, they were not characteristic of American Christianity, and because of this American Christianity had vitality and a vigorous voice.

Evangelical Christianity in America still has a vigorous voice; however, the tone of that voice is dire. What is more, all of de Tocqueville’s reflection about the alliance of politics and Christianity would be anathema to

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<sup>940</sup> de Tocqueville, *Democracy*, 155-56.

<sup>941</sup> For an example of this line of thought see the nationalist work: Peter Marshall and David Manuel, *The Light and the Glory* (Old Tappan: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1977).

<sup>942</sup> de Tocqueville, *Democracy*, 157.

<sup>943</sup> de Tocqueville, *Democracy*, 157.

most contemporary evangelicals in the United States. While nationalism has been with America since its colonial era in the 1600s, traits in current evangelical Christianity are significantly different, context being only one of those factors.<sup>944</sup>

Before further consideration of the topic, a brief explanation is in order. The term *Evangelical Christianity*, with reference to the United States, is not used in the fashion that it is used in Europe, meaning essentially Protestant. Whereas one can speak of the Protestant *Church* in Europe (taking in a number of confessions), one can really only speak of a *movement* in the United States, a modification of Fundamentalism. It is impossible to paint Evangelical Christianity in the United States with a single stroke, but it generally has these features: 1) A deep sense of individualism and piety before God with a very particular understanding of a born again experience. 2) A passionate drive that everyone is converted according to their understanding of the born again experience. 3) An end-time apocalyptic that is often (although there are numerous exceptions and variants in Evangelical eschatology) millenarian and frequently dispensational in outlook. 4) It is an ethos, mindset, and theological outlook that spans all Protestant denominations but is growing exponentially into non-denominational churches. 5) It is conservative culturally and socially and supports a politically conservative agenda. 6) It has immense commercial culture in print, music, conferences, seminars, and all other forms of media including multiple radio and television stations with significant global coverage reaching into the multi-millions of

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<sup>944</sup> Hans Kohn in *The Idea of Nationalism*, identifies colonial American Puritanism as “the first example of modern nationalism.” Hans Kohn as quoted in: Winthrop Hudson, *Nationalism and Religion in America*, (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1978), xxviii.



U.S. dollars annually. 7) It runs its own colleges and universities, many of these requiring attendees to sign statements of full doctrinal agreement.<sup>945</sup> 8) It holds a doctrine of biblical inerrancy/infallibility. 9) Some among Evangelicals see the separation between Church and State as a threat to Christianity. 10) While evangelicals in the United States could be the single largest interest group in politics,<sup>946</sup> they tend to view themselves in terms of the minority that is under siege by the “liberal establishment.” The evangelical movement herein also includes the part of the movement known as charismatic (although these branches are at points hardly distinct anymore, but rather reflect integration of many characteristics of Pentecostalism into the greater evangelical movement).

### **11.2 The Myth of Inerrancy/Infallibility as the Myth of *Analogia***

*Entis*. Before the current context is considered, that is the ethical-existence of contemporary life in evangelical America, it is necessary first to establish whether or not a noetic-essence, natural theology, and or *analogia entis* provides the ground for this existence. Foundationally, and at the heart of the evangelical movement stands the proposition that the Bible is

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<sup>945</sup> For example, from Denver Seminary’s website: “Denver Seminary is committed to the great truths and abiding fundamentals of the Christian faith. Each year trustees, administration and faculty are required to affirm and sign Denver Seminary’s doctrinal statement without mental reservation,” at <http://www.denverseminary.edu/about-us/what-we-believe/>. [accessed May 12, 2010].

<sup>946</sup> The number of individuals fitting the category in the United States in recent polls is staggering: “In the broadest sense, according to Gallup polls, the number of persons in the United States who described themselves as either Evangelical or Born-Again between 1976 and 2001 fluctuated between 33 percent and 47 percent with a reasonable estimate being 35 percent of the population or just over 102 million people in 2003. There seems to be a small long-term increase in the number of people reporting themselves in this category with 34 percent in election year 1976 and 45 percent in election year 2000.” <http://www.publiceye.org/magazine/v17n2/evangelical-demographics.html>.

inerrant/infallible in nature, and furthermore that the Bible is the revelation of God.<sup>947</sup>

If one wants to cause an immediate flurry within American evangelicalism, one need only challenge the proposition of biblical inerrancy/infallibility. Inerrancy is characterized by Carl Henry (1913-2003), one of the founding individuals of modern American evangelicalism, by four characteristics. 1) “Verbal inerrancy implies that truth attaches not only to the theological and ethical teaching of the Bible, but also to historical and scientific matters.”<sup>948</sup> 2) “Verbal inerrancy implies that God’s truth inheres in the very words of scripture, that is, in the propositions or sentences of the Bible.”<sup>949</sup> 3) “Verbal inerrancy implies that the original writings or prophetic-apostolic autographs alone are error-free.”<sup>950</sup> 4) “Verbal inerrancy of the autographs implies that evangelicals must not attach finality to contemporary versions or translations.”<sup>951</sup>

There are more than a few difficulties with approaching the Bible in this fashion, not the least that the role of human agency is, despite protests to the contrary, effectively obliterated, and the Bible becomes a “high place,” a veritable Christian Delphi. It also creates the very condition that the evangelicals set out to “correct” when the doctrine was manufactured in the early twentieth century. In pressing inerrancy back to the autographs (none of which of course are extant), Henry (and others, e.g., J.I. Packer) have left a

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<sup>947</sup> Inerrant and infallible are placed in tandem, as the implications for the discussion here are the same. There are differences and nuances between these positions, but both are predicated on essentially the same epistemological foundation.

<sup>948</sup> Carl Henry, *God, Revelation, and Authority: God Who Speaks and Shows*, Vol. IV (Waco, TX: Word Books Publisher, 1979), 205.

<sup>949</sup> Carl Henry, *God, Revelation, and Authority*, 205-06.

<sup>950</sup> Carl Henry, *God, Revelation, and Authority*, 207.

<sup>951</sup> Carl Henry, *God, Revelation, and Authority*, 209-10.

great shadow hanging over the reliability of the scriptures, as we currently have them, that is, translations. In attempting to restore confidence in the Bible that they viewed as being compromised by the liberalism and higher criticism of the nineteenth century, they had in effect undercut the authority of the Bible as it stands today. These, however, are not the main concerns.

In trying to establish authority via *sola scriptura* in this manner, Henry had co-opted the entire Reformation project of *sola scriptura* since it was now completely dependent upon *natural theology*. Given propositions (1) and (3) of Henry, evangelical Christianity was now placed in the awkward position of having to apologize for the scripture, that is an entire project of apologetics had to be invented to establish the validity of proposition (1) and (3). In point of fact an incredibly vast program of apologetics surrounds this point (or its cousin infallibility).<sup>952</sup> It is dependent upon natural theology inasmuch as the authority of scripture must be established through the application of rigorous argument from “reason.” All the discrepancies (usually referred to as “alleged discrepancies” by evangelicals) must now be rationally reconciled in order to validate the content and reliability of scripture. Proposition (2) implies that the propositions *in* the Bible (not the propositions behind the scripture) are truth. This means that the truth of the existence of God resides in the Bible and is contingent upon the success or failure of the apologetic project, again a natural theology. Furthermore it marks an *analogia entis* given that the direction is from below up, even though evangelicals would suppose that the situation is contraindicated. There is contained in all of this a fundamental

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<sup>952</sup> For an example of this approach see: Gleason Archer, “Alleged Errors and Discrepancies in the Original Manuscripts of the Bible,” *Inerrancy*, Norman Geisler, ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980), 57-82.

dishonesty since it starts with an anthropological base in reasoning rather than in faith created by God.

On the one hand the evangelicals wish to put beyond reach *any* possibility of open and honest biblical critique. For example Gleason Archer states in concurrence with Henry: “God’s written revelation came in inerrant form, free from discrepancies or contradictions, and this inerrancy contributes to its achieving its saving purpose.”<sup>953</sup> Aside from problematic idea that the Bible has a saving purpose (!) rather than this being solely and entirely *God’s* purpose, this position leads to Gleason’s contingent proposition: “For this reason there is no such thing as an inconsequential scriptural error. If any part of the Bible can be proved to be in error, then any other part of it – including the doctrinal, theological parts – may also be in error.”<sup>954</sup> This leads to an intolerable view of scripture, either God must totally and completely consume the human agent in the composition of scripture (otherwise Archer has problems with his doctrine of the fall) or it also leads to an absolutely static view of the divine. But more than this, this approach leads to a highly radicalized view of the *analogia entis* (if it can even be called this). That is, if the scripture is errorless, this means that something other than God is errorless, in this case a book, which however Archer wants to approach it, means a human agent was involved, and this must be factored in as well.

The question of interpretation is now at hand. Even with inerrancy/infallibility, the problem of interpretation is still present. If in fact inerrancy/infallibility is established for the Bible as a proposition of its inherent nature, who should interpret this inerrant/infallible document? For

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<sup>953</sup> Gleason Archer, “Alleged Errors,” 59.

<sup>954</sup> Gleason Archer, “Alleged Errors,” 59.

the Catholic Church of course, the Church establishes the interpretations. But Protestants are all over the spectrum, “everyone doing what is right in their own eyes” (Judg. 21:25) with respect to interpretation. There is of course a Reformation principle that is commonly sighted in this regard. This is known as the analogy of faith (which should not be confused with Barth’s *analogia fidei*). This concept is rooted in the notion that scripture is unified, coherent, and rational.<sup>955</sup> This tripartite approach leads to an axiom: “no part of Scripture may be interpreted in such a way as to bring it into contradiction with another part of Scripture. Here is the Scripture-interprets-Scripture principle in action.”<sup>956</sup> A particular crisis arises at this point. An inerrant/infallible document (the Bible) is held to interpret itself, but again human agency is eradicated, which is of course derisory. Someone has to apply the principle of the analogy of faith and additionally would then need to interpret that principle. This also means that whoever is the arbiter of this interpretation ultimately *controls* what is understood to be divinely inerrant and infallible. While the Protestant Churches may revel in their interpretative freedoms, they are certainly subject to the tyrannies of those that control the media of communication. This is of course the evangelical movement in America. It means in the end that they are the locus and arbiters of the divine inerrant/infallible message. And because it is divine inerrancy/infallibility, there is no room for compromise or dissent with their view. The view in finality is both an *analogia entis* and a natural theology. It serves to demonstrate further why the *analogia entis* is more than a Protestant-Catholic

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<sup>955</sup> R.C. Sproul, “Biblical Interpretation and the Analogy of Faith,” *Inerrancy and Common Sense* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1980), 120-23.

<sup>956</sup> Sproul, “Biblical Interpretation,” 127.

issue. This is a problem within Protestant circles since Protestantism does not have an effective hierarchical system within which to check and balance biblical interpretation. And, as has already been demonstrated, the Bible can be employed by anyone, anywhere, and for any purpose. In addition, the Protestant Church in the United States has a contemporary antipathy against both denominationalism (which however anemic would at least provide a vehicle for doctrinal check) and intellectualism/education (which would help clergy to understand not only doctrine but provide the tools to understand the effects of doctrinal application). The church is left with a catastrophic chasm that is giving birth to an unimaginable confluence of populism and a forced proscription against those who do not maintain homogeneity with the vision of evangelicalism. In the end, it is a Papal Protestant Oligarchy which controls what is and what is not part and parcel of the evangelical inerrancy/infallibility interpretative and connotative canon.

### **11.3 The Myth of Evangelical Pietism as the Myth of the *Anaglogia***

***Entis.***<sup>957</sup> The view of scripture as inerrant/infallible is one aspect of evangelicalism that is ultimately grounded in the myth of the *anaglogia entis*. The myth is also contained in a second aspect that is at the heart of evangelicalism: this is the experience of God within. Roy Eckardt has described part of this phenomenon as folk religion. American folk religion, or rather folk Christianity is “simply the religion of the ‘folks’. . . it is a form of piety which seeks to promote individual and group welfare.”<sup>958</sup> As Eckardt

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<sup>957</sup> The observations in this section reflect the author’s conclusions based upon two years of active participation in a fundamentalist denomination, and six years as a student and graduate fellow in an evangelical-charismatic university.

<sup>958</sup> Roy Eckardt, *The Surge of Piety in America: An Appraisal* (New York: Association Press, 1958), 43.

notes, this individual piety has among its rather explicit claims the notion that piety (Christian) “can resolve basic human problems of both a personal and social nature, and this without very great difficulty.”<sup>959</sup> The emphasis of this folk piety “falls upon the individual” and “proclaims a gospel of personal happiness, adjustment, and success.”<sup>960</sup> God, in this Christian American folk piety, is viewed to a great extent as “a helpmate, guide, and friend.”<sup>961</sup> This is expressed in all forms of American culture including popular music. An example of this is the song by country artist Glen Campbell “Jesus and Me.” The line “under heaven the greatest love story Jesus and me” is exemplary of this folk piety.<sup>962</sup> Eckardt further notes an important quality of this Christian American folk piety:

Essentially, God is on the side of the people, or more accurately, he is on the side of certain persons or a particular community or a particular nation. He is not necessarily happy with everyone but he is pleased with those who are his folk. We demonstrate that we are his folk by both moral and religious means. On the one hand we seek to lead good, clean lives and, on the other hand, we say our prayers, read our Bibles, and attend church regularly. We are explicitly religious in ways that must be recognized as good.<sup>963</sup>

Here one is confronted not simply in the thought of the inner pious experience of the revivalist theology (especially of Charles Finney) of taking Jesus into one’s heart, but that this God within has a counterpart of God within the American Experience in general and the history of the United States in

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<sup>959</sup> Eckardt, *Surge*, 43.

<sup>960</sup> Eckardt, *Surge*, 44.

<sup>961</sup> Eckardt, *Surge*, 49.

<sup>962</sup> Glen Campbell, “Jesus and Me,” *Show Me Your Way*, compact disc, New Haven Records, 1991.

<sup>963</sup> Eckardt, *Surge*, 49.

particular. Of first concern is the idea of the individualistic pietism mensuration that runs through the evangelical movement.<sup>964</sup>

The connotative canon of the evangelical movement is not in the end the confrontation of the Word of God against the resistance of the individual and the individual's constituent ideologies, bringing a transformation and revolution within the individual. Rather, the connotative canon of the evangelical movement superimposes its social, political, and theological opus upon the Word of God, and arrogates and assumes those ideologies to and for God. Let the matter be stated this way in terms of what occurs in the conversion experience of somebody completely outside of the evangelical movement since conversion into the evangelical movement is the point at which someone is an initiate (conversion does not mean by necessity that one is converted to Christianity but rather that one has come to a point of accepting the connotative canon of the evangelical oligarchy). The individual in this case undergoes a socio-political-theological shift that brings him or her into alliance with the interpretative norms of the evangelical oligarchy and via this into community with the greater evangelical moment and its multi-million dollar subculture and the message and understanding promoted by that affluent oligarchy.

This might be unimpeachable, however, in a thoroughgoing reality, the myth of the *analogia entis* enters the project. Present in the evangelical

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<sup>964</sup> This revivalism means that the individual comes into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, that is, non-contingent upon ecclesiology, there is simply no understanding of *extra ecclesiam non sit salus*, only a *extra Christus non sit salus*. Jesus becomes a possession in the heart of the believer via the agency of the Holy Spirit. It is seen as an intense pious relationship, intimate in nature. Usually one "accepts Christ." This can either be done in a religious service, having a friend (or stranger) lead one to Christ, or one can even do this completely alone. The consequence of this acceptance is that one is saved and is now in right relation to God. Frequently one hears within the evangelistic movement on the basis of this pietism phrases such as "God told me," "God revealed to me," "God gave me insight," etc.



movement and rooted in an unfaltering pietism, which is undergirded via the proposition of inerrancy/infallibility, is an insouciant ideology of analogous attribution. Analogous attribution is the postulation of “an imperfect of a simple relation or connection of the secondary analogues with the principle analogue. Some property of the principal is attributed to the secondaries because of a real or imagined connection between them.”<sup>965</sup> This of course is the *analogia entis*. But what is considered here is not that God is the primary but rather that God is the secondary and that the attributes and ideological predilections of humanity are in fact the attributes and predilections of God. This of course means that the positions of Ludwig Feuerbach are, albeit perhaps unwittingly, being adopted.<sup>966</sup> Feuerbach says for instance in his third lecture on the essence of religion: “Theology is anthropology: in other words, the object of religion . . . God, expresses nothing other than the essence of man . . . God is nothing other than the history of man.”<sup>967</sup> He also expresses much the same direction in his book *Der Mensch schuf Gott nach seinem Bilde*, where he states that “humanity is the beginning, center, and end of religion.”<sup>968</sup> In short because of the understanding of individualistic piety, God and I are in union. Furthermore, having been adopted into the evangelical movement, and therefore the inerrancy/infallibility proposition and its outcomes, God must share the same *Weltanschauung* as me. This means that divine concepts of love, justice, peace, war, repugnance, political outlook,

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<sup>965</sup> Bernard Wuellner, *Dictionary of Scholastic Philosophy* (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1956), 6.

<sup>966</sup> Ludwig Feuerbach, *Lectures on the Essence of Religion* (New York, Harper & Row, Publishers, 1967), 17.

<sup>967</sup> Feuerbach, *Lectures*, 17.

<sup>968</sup> Ludwig Feuerbach, *Der Mensch schuf Gott nach seinem Bilde* (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1958), 23.

must be at least somewhat like mine although I concede to some notion of proportionality with respect to the divine perfection and quantity of these things, that is, there may be some *dissimilarity* but on the whole the pendulum swings closer to *similarity*. What is more, within the evangelical movement is a vital, sometimes subtle, yet often quite overt insinuation that God is more *similar* to “our” agenda and *Weltanschauung* and by deduction *dissimilar* to “them.” In both the presuppositions, premises, and propositions of the inerrancy/infallibility and piety of the fundamental/evangelical movement, the presence of both natural theology and the myth of the *analogia entis* are not only deeply entrenched, they are also vivacious and vibrant.

Inerrancy/infallibility and piety are both referential ideologies that are driving the noetic-ontic engine of the evangelical movement in America, representing some 100 million of the populace. While all of this may seem a bit detached from any point of concern, attention is now turned to the derivative ideologies and ethical-existential outcomes that are manifesting not only on the far right of the evangelical movement, but also in the influential and malleable middle of the movement.

#### **11.4 The Myth as History, Folk Christianity, and Epiphenomenon.**

There is a third component that plays a role in the myth of the *analogia entis* in Protestant Christianity in the United States. These are the aspects of history and folk in correspondence to American Christianity. The evangelical movement has a strong propensity to interpret United States history in terms of a *Heilsgeschichte*. There is no need to go into detail here regarding this aspect, since multiple treatments, both for and against this particular

interpretation have already met this purpose.<sup>969</sup> The narrative holds that America has a special divine history, a unique divine history. Colonial America was settled by Christian Puritans, who did have a vision that America would be a place where the Kingdom of God upon earth would be established and that their settlements would be founded and governed upon the laws of God and biblical truth. The appellation “A city set upon a hill” has been used throughout the political history of the United States to conflate the vision of the United States with the divine mandate of the Kingdom of God. Documents such as the Mayflower Compact of 1620 (a document of Colonial and not Constitutional America) and others through the course of history in America have reinforced the idea that the United States is, or at least was envisioned to be a “Christian” nation. More recently “In God We Trust,” first placed upon United States currency in 1864 during the Civil War, and adopted as a motto in 1956 (during the height of the fundamentalist/evangelical campaign to bring America back to its “Christian” base), and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag (composed in 1892) had the words “under God” added in 1954. Many documents, including the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States have taken on a sacred nature, that is, they are often seen as an extension and a national-natural theology arising from the canon of scripture itself. Because national documents are held in this respect,

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<sup>969</sup> For works related to this theme see: Marshall and Manuel, *The Light and the Glory*, which provides a good example of how evangelicals approach the theme; Winthrop S. Hudson, *Nationalism and Religion in America: Concepts of American Identity and Mission* (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1978), which is helpful in that it provides a diversity of segments of original texts that are used to proof text United States *Heilsgeschichte*; H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Kingdom of God in America* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1937) provides a penetrating analysis of how Protestants reconciled their theological project with the project of America and a consideration of by-products in that enterprise. More recently, Gregory Boyd has written a significant book addressing the issue: Gregory Boyd, *The Myth of a Christian Nation: How the Quest for Political Power is Destroying the Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005).

they themselves are often close, by way of extension, to being covered under the inerrancy/infallibility of the piety of the evangelical oligarchy. National documents, as interpreted by the evangelical oligarchy, are nothing shy of establishing the narrative of the divine uniqueness and are defended with the same zeal as biblical canon. To put it another way, if the canon of the Old and New Testaments are what establishes the Church of Jesus Christ, then the Mayflower Compact, Declaration of Independence, Constitution of the United States, Pledge of Allegiance, and the National Motto emblazoned upon the currency of the United States (along with others), comprise the canon which is cited to establish *the nation of Jesus Christ*. This is at the national level natural theology in a most insidious form, and the *analogia entis* in a disquieting manifestation. The myth of the *analogia entis* here is that there is a nation that can be called Christian to begin with. There simply is no such thing as a nation of Jesus Christ. It is nowhere to be found in scripture, there is *only* the Church of Jesus Christ, and this is the *only* institution left in the temporal sphere by Jesus Christ. This is summarized well by Gregory Boyd in his analysis of the problem:

The myth of America as a Christian nation, with the church as its guardian, has been and continues to be, damaging both to the church and to the advancement of God's kingdom. Among other things, this nationalist myth blinds us to the way in which our most basic and most cherished cultural assumptions are diametrically opposed to the kingdom way of life taught by Jesus and his disciples. Instead of living out the radically countercultural mandate of the kingdom of God, this myth has inclined us to Christianize many pagan aspects of our culture. Instead of providing the culture with a radically alternative way of life, we largely present it with a religious version of what it already is. The myth clouds our vision of God's distinctly beautiful kingdom and thereby undermines our motivation to live as set-apart (holy) disciples of this kingdom. Even more fundamentally, because this myth links the kingdom of God with certain political stances within American politics, it has greatly compromised the holy

beauty of the kingdom of God to non-Christians. This myth harms the church's primary mission.<sup>970</sup>

What Boyd points to here is the reality of what the conflation of the evangelically constructed divine narrative of American history has accomplished. Whether the document comes from the Plymouth Colony of 1620 or the “under God” of 1954, it is all part of the sacred canon of American nationalism which is political, deutero-canonical and secondary only to the protocanonical writings of the Old and New Testaments, which in turn verify them. Thus natural theology and *analogia entis* have infected the evangelical churches of the United States and produced this nationalism. The mission of the evangelical movement can be none other than to “win” the nation of the United States, *as a political entity as the nation of Jesus Christ*, back to its evangelical narrative. The reasons for this lie not only in this national *Heilsgeschichte* but also within another assumption, which political theorist Carl Schmitt (1888-1985) pointed out with clarity in his *Political Theology* in 1922.<sup>971</sup>

Before turning attention to Schmitt, Richard Niebuhr's concept of epiphenomenon is of relevance. Niebuhr considers the protean nature of

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<sup>970</sup> Gregory Boyd, *The Myth*, 15.

<sup>971</sup> Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985). It should be noted that Carl Schmitt was considered to be one of the keenest Political theorists of the National Socialist, and served a one-year sentence in an internment camp following WW II. He was nevertheless, before and after the Nazi era, held to be one of the greatest political theoreticians of his generation. His theories have most recently been tapped by the neo-conservative movement in the United States, especially the legal decisions of former U.S. Attorney General Alberto Gonzales (see: Abraham, David, *The Bush Regime from Elections to Detentions: A Moral Economy of Carl Schmitt and Human Rights* (May 2007). University of Miami Legal Studies Research Paper No. 2007-20. Available at SSRN: <http://ssrn.com/abstract=942865>). His axiom “Sovereign is he who decides on the exception,” (*Political Theology*, 5) i.e., the decider decides, has been especially significant. His theories have played a part in the thought of Hannah Arendt, Eric Voegelin, Jacques Derrida, and Walter Benjamin among many others. Schmitt was, “The father of numerous pivotal political ideas – including the ‘total’ (or, as it was later known, ‘totalitarianism’).” *Political Theology*, from the introduction by George Schwab, xxxviii.

American Christianity and seeks to discover what patterns might emerge. Related to that he shows that the diversity of American Christianities have led to inquiries “into the connection of Christianity with the secular institutions and movements of the New World [that is] . . . the relations of church and state, of gospel and church, of Christian and civil liberty, of the faith and democracy, of Protestantism and capitalism, Christianity and nationalism, of religion and popular education.”<sup>972</sup> One pattern that Niebuhr says emerges clearly, is that “Christianity in America . . . is an epiphenomenon.”<sup>973</sup> That is, “Faith is part of the defense mechanism of racial, sectional, and, above all, economic groups.”<sup>974</sup> Further, Niebuhr conjectures: “it is seen that the underlying sociological or economic pattern has been faithfully reproduced in the dogmas and liturgies of faith . . .”<sup>975</sup> Niebuhr’s theory is essentially this: in the United States, the social and economic structures are not derived from faith, as in the well-known thesis of Weber that capitalism followed Calvinism<sup>976</sup> but rather that faith is epiphenomenal to social, economic, and it might be added political phenomenon in a culture. This thesis is crucial to the understanding that the myth of the *analogia entis* and its vehicle natural theology is quite alive in the evangelical movement in the United States. Rather than faith being an encounter with the Word of God bringing the individual and the Church into existential crisis, Niebuhr’s theory of epiphenomenon clearly delineates the direction of the movement as he asserts: “when the behavior of Christian groups in times of political or economic crisis

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<sup>972</sup> H. Richard Niebuhr, *Kingdom of God*, 3.

<sup>973</sup> H. Richard Niebuhr, *Kingdom of God*, 4.

<sup>974</sup> H. Richard Niebuhr, *Kingdom of God*, 4.

<sup>975</sup> H. Richard Niebuhr, *Kingdom of God*, 4.

<sup>976</sup> This thesis is put forward in: Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1958), *passim*.

is studied, then the evidence in favor of the sociological hypothesis begins to carry conviction.<sup>977</sup> There is no better case for this than the context of Weimar. More importantly however, and again it is important to keep Weimar in sight, Niebuhr asserts: “Whether the society in question be a national, a sectional, a racial or economic group its religion does appear to be largely dependent upon its secular interests and *designed to protect them.*”<sup>978</sup> The rather sobering aspect in this is that the evangelical movement always perceives itself as in a crisis or better a “war” with anything that is antithetical to its nature and outlook. Niebuhr’s thesis demonstrates what is the case with the evangelical movement in America. The conclusion of this epiphenomenal factor is:

What is true of the nation as a whole with its recurrent faith in national destiny, more or less religiously conceived, is then true also of the separate parts, of sections and *groups who find and form a faith which enables them to preserve their solidarity and to defend their peculiar institutions.* The kingdom of God in America, so regarded, is the American kingdom of God; it is not the individualization of a universal idea, but the universalization of the particular. *It represents not so much the impact of the gospel upon the New World as the use and adaptation of the gospel by the new society for its own purposes.*<sup>979</sup>

This can be done and rationalized in the end because of course our purposes are God’s purposes, our will is God’s will. Again the myth of the *analogia entis* washed ashore upon the banks of the New World.

Carl Schmitt provides the last insight, before the discussion turns to the existential-ethical context considerations, into why the myth of the *analogia entis* is so entrenched in the church as well as the religious politics of the United States. As Schmitt notes: “In America [the national consciousness]

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<sup>977</sup> H. Richard Niebuhr, *Kingdom of God*, 6.

<sup>978</sup> H. Richard Niebuhr, *Kingdom of God*, 6-7. Emphasis added.

<sup>979</sup> H. Richard Niebuhr, *Kingdom of God*, 9. Emphasis added.

manifested itself in the reasonable and pragmatic belief that the voice of the people is the voice of God.”<sup>980</sup> This is immanence in the voice of the people, and the volition of God is exercised in the volition of the people. Melinda Merton, who has strong objections to these ideas, has summed up this evangelical worldview stating that the outlook says: “the goals of my nation are the goals of God Almighty and God Almighty will make sure that the will of the sovereign God is fulfilled through the action of this nation.”<sup>981</sup>

This becomes more so since the evangelical movement itself through inerrancy/infallibility and piety views itself narrowly (in its broadness!) as the bearers not only of the inerrancy/infallibility position with respect to the Bible but also of the true Christian heritage of the United States. The result is that divine transcendence is dissolved and is no longer tolerated and the “concept of God,” is thereby drawn “into the world” in a Hegelian sense.<sup>982</sup> This means that when America speaks on the world stage, so long as it is in line with the interpretative evangelical oligarchy, the evangelical movement sees this as the voice and sword of the Lord.

### **11.5 The Merging Myth in America: Radical Right and Right.**

Only a brief allotment of space was given the complex issues of the noetic-ontic structures behind the referential ideologies behind the myth of the *analogia entis* as it has been emerging in the United States over the past decades. If time and space allotted it would be of little matter to demonstrate that in all forms of media radical-right derivative ideologies and inter-

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<sup>980</sup> Schmitt, *Political Theology*, 49.

<sup>981</sup> *Silhouette City*, Michael W. Wilson, director (Los Angeles: Social Satisfaction Media, 2008). It should be mentioned that Melinda Merton is a retired U.S. Air Force Chaplain and a former Minuteman 2 strategic line officer.

<sup>982</sup> Schmitt, *Political Theology*, 49.



reactionary ideologies are certainly present and ubiquitous. *The Turner Diaries* for instance, linked with Timothy McVeigh and the Oklahoma City bombing of the Murrah Federal building on April 19, 1995, is an example. In one passage it states: “The Christians are a mixed bag. Some of them are among our most devoted and courageous members. Their hatred of the System is based on – in addition to the reasons the rest of us have – their recognition of the System's role in undermining and perverting Christendom.”<sup>983</sup> Another book that has had an impact on *Christian Identity*<sup>984</sup> groups is *Adam's Bible: Astounding Revelations Concerning the Holy Race of Northern Europeans*.<sup>985</sup> Numerous neo-Nazi and KKK websites fill the Internet. The Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) reports that there are over 900 active hate groups in the United States, a majority portion of these being Christian radical-right groups.<sup>986</sup> Many of these groups including Christian radical right groups are militia groups that are heavily armed, and their numbers are rising.<sup>987</sup> Political Research Associates places the number of militia troops between 50,000 and 60,000.<sup>988</sup>

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<sup>983</sup> Andrew McDonald, *The Turner Diaries*, <http://www.solargeneral.com/library/turner-diaries.pdf>. [Accessed November 8, 2008].

<sup>984</sup> Christian Identity is a complex grouping and not by any means monolithic. They do hold fundamentalists beliefs of the inerrancy/infallibility of the Bible, Mosaic law as *the* law that should be used as a legal system, an anti-Semitism, a belief that the United States government is ruled by a corrupt liberal Jewish establishment trying to impose a homosexual agenda upon them and destroy true Christianity by infiltrating it with progressives. In addition they hold to apocalyptic conspiracies of a one world government, and prepare for the coming “Armageddon” by stock piling weapons and provisions. Christian Identity has become a unifying term for a number of neo-Nazi, Aryan, and KKK groups.

<sup>985</sup> Frank Weltner, *Adam's Bible* (St. Louis: House of Adam Book Publishing, 2003).

<sup>986</sup> See Southern Poverty Law Center at <http://www.splcenter.org/get-informed/hate-map>.

<sup>987</sup> Southern Poverty Law Center at <http://www.splcenter.org/get-informed/intelligence-report/browse-all-issues/2010/spring/rage-on-the-right>.

<sup>988</sup> Political Research Associates at <http://www.publiceye.org/tooclose/chapter-excerpt.html>.

The documentary film *Silhouette City* provides an important link contextually.<sup>989</sup> While it may be easy (although one is at a loss to know how) to ignore the radical Christian right as insignificant and marginal, what *Silhouette City* establishes is that while the *methods* of the radical Christian right may be appalling, seem brutish, and uncivilized, the *message* and milieu of the radical Christian right and the “moderate” evangelical message are in fact horrifyingly close. Because they adopt a theology rooted in the myth of the *analogia entis* and its particular expression in the United States, the Protestant Church in the United States is dancing upon a horrifyingly “Weimarian” precipice in its “war against everything liberal and ungodly.” Michelle Goldberg speaks about this newer form of individualism and piety and its presence in contemporary America. It has characteristics unlike past American Christian revivalism:

The United States has always been a pious country, given to bursts of spiritual fervor, but Christian nationalism is qualitatively different from earlier religious revivals. Like America’s past Great Awakenings, the Christian nationalist movement claims that the Bible is absolutely and literally true. But it goes much further, extrapolating a total political program from that truth, and yoking that program to a political party. It is a conflation of scripture and politics that sees America’s triumphs as confirmation of the truth of the Christian religion, and America’s struggles as part of a cosmic contest between God and the devil. It claims supernatural sanction for its campaign of national renewal and speaks rapturously about vanquishing the millions of Americans who would stand in its way.<sup>990</sup>

While Goldberg’s analysis is accurate, what must be reiterated here, is not simply that the religious right is creating this, that is, it is not a one-way

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<sup>989</sup> *Silhouette City*.

<sup>990</sup> Michelle Goldberg: *Kingdom Coming: The Rise of Christian Nationalism* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2007), 6. The close connections and the history tying the fundamentalist/evangelical movement in the United States to the upper echelons of political power in the United States is well presented in: Jeff Sharlet: *The Family: The Secret Fundamentalism at the Heart of American Power* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2008).

street, as we saw at the outset with de Tocqueville and later with Niebuhr. The Protestant Church in America has undoubtedly made an unholy alliance with politics in order to advance its agenda, and likewise political powers have adopted a religious politic to their own ends. It is as James Luther Adams (1901-1994) states that: “The fundamentally critical modern man has come to interpret the church as merely performing the function of providing divine sanction for the status quo in economic and social arrangements.”<sup>991</sup> Having mentioned Adams, this chapter will also end with Adams, as his assessments regarding the Christian Right, and its relation to the contextual issues related regarding the Weimar context are inescapably eerie.

Adams was a minister and professor of theology at Harvard Divinity School. Chris Hedges, one of Adams students, relates details of Adams in his recent book.<sup>992</sup> His material related to Adams is significant and therefore will be quoted in completeness:

Dr. James Luther Adams, my ethics professor at Harvard Divinity School, told us that when we were his age – he was then close to 80 – we would all be fighting the ‘Christian fascists.’ The warning, given to me nearly 25 years ago, came at the time Pat Robertson and other radio and televangelists began speaking about a new political religion that would direct its efforts at taking control of all institutions, including mainstream denominations and the government. Its stated goal was to use the United States to create a global Christian empire. It was hard, at the time, to take such fantastic rhetoric seriously, especially given the buffoonish quality of leaders in the Christian Right who expounded it. But Adams warned us against the blindness caused by intellectual snobbery. The Nazis, he said, were not going to return with swastikas and brown shirts. Their ideological inheritors in America had found a mask for fascism in patriotism and the pages of the Bible. Adams was not a man to use the word ‘fascist’ lightly. He was in Germany in 1935 and 1936 and worked with the underground anti-Nazi church, known as the Confessing Church, with dissidents

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<sup>991</sup> James Luther Adams, “What Kind of Religion has a Place in Higher Education?” *Journal of Bible and Religion*, Vol. 13, No. 4 (November 1945), 190.

<sup>992</sup> Chris Hedges, *American Fascists: The Christian Right and the War on America* (New York: Free Press, 2006).

such as Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Adams was eventually detained and interrogated by the Gestapo, who suggested he might want to consider returning to the United States. It was a suggestion he followed. He left on a night train with framed portraits of Adolf Hitler placed over the contents inside the suitcase to hide rolls of home movie film he took of the so-called German Christian Church, which was pro-Nazi, and the few individuals who defied them, including theologians Karl Barth and Albert Schweitzer . . . . He saw in the Christian Right, long before we did disturbing similarities with the German Christian Church and the Nazi Party, similarities, he said that would, in the event of prolonged social instability, catastrophe or national crisis, see American fascists, under the guise of Christianity, rise to dismantle the open society.<sup>993</sup>

What is crucial in Adams' observations is that his insight into the current structure of the evangelical movement in America is a reflection of the dangers Barth saw inherent not in the most radical aspects of the inter-reactionary ecclesiastical rhetoric in Weimar but in those that were holding views that were quite average and normal for neo-conservatives in Weimar. Barth saw implicit dangers there, the same sorts of dangers that de Tocqueville thought America just might avoid, the very dangers that Adams instinctively knew Protestant Churches in America under the huge movements of fundamentalism and evangelicalism in fact had not avoided. American Churches have sold their future for the present and bought with their capital the myth of the *analogia entis*. Because of this, Protestantism cannot afford to simply treat the *analogia entis* as an artifact of a bygone era or an item on an ecumenical agenda.

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<sup>993</sup> Hedges, *American Fascists*, 197-98.

## Conclusion

Hans Küng relates that in private conversation with him, Barth intimated that he had rejected his own rejection of *analogia entis*.<sup>994</sup> This of course not only is inadmissible as an academic refutation; it is as well as highly improbable. It is not that one must assail Küng's veracity of the event, just perhaps the interpretation of what precisely Barth meant. It demonstrates a Catholic eagerness to overcome a monumental difference in the Protestant-Catholic divide.

What has been endeavored herein is not an attempt to bring resolution to the Protestant-Catholic divide but rather to demonstrate that because of the unique set of circumstances surrounding Barth and the formulation of his theology, that the Protestant-Catholic divide over the *analogia entis* was in fact a secondary concern for Barth, and that the myth of the *analogia entis* that was spreading in the Weimar Republic's general, ecclesiastical, and academic environs were of far more concern to Barth than the Protestant-Catholic divide. In point of fact, Barth conceived of the *analogia entis* as a problem plaguing Protestantism, not Catholicism. It has further been stated that while the connection between Barth's context and his theological formulations of the *analogia entis* have been made, they are currently only treated with a passing

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<sup>994</sup> Hans Küng, *Great Christian Thinkers* (New York: Continuum, 1994), 192.

acknowledgment on the way to the Protestant-Catholic aspects of the problem, as the crisis of the inter-reactionary ideologies, embodied most infamously in the NSDAP, had passed, thereby leaving only the Protestant-Catholic issues with which to deal.

However, the myth of the *analogia entis* is a problem that forever lingers at the doorstep of Protestantism, waiting for the door to open that it may enter and once again bring its havoc into the house of Luther and Calvin. In the final chapter, it was demonstrated, using the evangelical movement in the United States, that in new forms both radical right Christians and moderate evangelicals are advancing a similar message, albeit, via different methods with the radical right taking on more overtly brutish forms. Both ideologies and movements, though, are advancing through the vehicles of natural theology and the *analogia entis*.

The advice that Barth gave to the American churchman about how the churches of the United States could best assist the Confessing Church which was resisting the NSDAP should be heard again: “Join our struggle in rejecting natural theology.” The ethical-existential behavior of the NSDAP and the German Christians, Barth was convinced, arose out of a noetic-ontic theology of natural theology, in which being and action were inseparably tied together.

Charles Farah, a former professor of mine, was fond of saying that poor theology is a cruel taskmaster. The axiom is true. Theology can brutally break the backs of the masses, leading good people to devastating ends. A bad theology can of course be imposed with the best of intentions or the most cynical of motives. The myth of the *analogia entis* is bad theology for the

Protestant Church; it is a cruel taskmaster for the masses, and yet little is said. It is to use another phrase from earlier, “as though nothing were wrong.”

The myth of the *analogia entis* and its presence in the Protestant Church in the United States is a “scandal that cries to the heavens.” And yet, it is as though nothing were happening. Certainly numerous books have been written related to the problem of Christian Nationalism in the United States, and those written by Hedges, Goldberg, Sharlet, and Boyd are significant contributions. The documentary film *Silhouette City* is also an important contribution to the dialogue. However, (with the exception of Boyd’s work) all of these contributions approach the problem with the consequences to the *nation* front and center. Something else entirely is needed.

There is a Catalinian conspiracy that must be addressed. The Protestant churches in the United States have bought into the myth of the *analogia entis* and this noetic-ontic factor is playing out in ethical-existential ways in culture. There is little doubt of this. The crisis exists at the point that problems may be unmasked, but no affirmative counter-theological position is articulated. Truly, even if the efforts of Hedges, Sharlet, Goldberg, et al., managed to sweep the house clean, the Protestant Church would simply be left with seven more hydraic demons that would take its place. The myth of the *analogia entis* would live on. This is why it is crucial that Protestants reevaluate Barth’s approach to the *analogia entis*, not as a Protestant-Catholic issue, but primarily as a theology that plagues Protestantism contextually. Therefore, it is also critical to begin a reassessment of Barth’s program, giving particular attention to the contextual matrix from which it arose. This is vital to the life, not only of the Protestant Church, but to the contexts in which those

churches live since the myth of the *analogia entis* in its midst promises only a secular misery to the society in which it is situated, instead of a pure proclamation the God who loves in freedom.



## Appendix 1

<b>The Ages of Joachim von Fiore</b>
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The First Age	The Second Age	The Third Age
Under the law	in grace	in richer grace
Science ( <i>Wissenschaft</i> )	power of wisdom	in the perfection of realization
fellowship of slavery	the service of the sons	freedom
misery	action	contemplation
fear	faith	love
condition of slavery	condition of freedom	condition of friendship
boys	men	aged
starlight	dawn	full daylight
winter	beginning of spring	summer
brings nettles	brings roses	brings lilies
brings grass	brings stalks	brings wheat
brings water	brings wine	brings oil
Father	Son	Holy Spirit

Source: Joachim von Fiore, *Das Reich des heiligen Geistes* (Bietigheim: Turm Verlag, 1977), 82-84, 86.

## Appendix 2

### *How Long...?*

#### A Translation of Karl Barth's "*Quousque Tandem . . . ?*"<sup>995</sup>

Through our church and community newspapers which have come out in the past few weeks – certainly caused by one of those damaging “Evangelical Press Releases” – the following passage, with which the university prof. D. Schneider allegedly introduced an essay about the current situation in the Church in the latest volume of his Church Yearbook: “the Evangelical Church has overcome the tremendous threat vital to her existence,” so President D. Wolff<sup>996</sup> writes with correctness in the collected work: *Ten Years of German History 1918-1928*. There has been a time, where the church’s (at the least its outer organism) literal destruction was threatened, a time, in which atheism itself truly and honestly prepared to give the Church’s eulogy. Some of the reckless chatters from the rank/class of “Intellectuals” have already indicated the texts. Even comments of pitying sympathy were heard. The *Folk* were really at first strangely still, as though paralyzed, unable to grasp the entire experience immediately. But then one realized that there was still a *Kirchenvolk*. In the beginning there was a time when the Standard-bearers wanted to grab hold of timidity. It will occur to us at times, as if we are about to forget all of this too quickly. One thing has been shown back then – and one thing has been proven. It has been shown that the religious thought was more deeply rooted in the folk-soul than it has become outwardly evident. The holy “nevertheless” has prevailed. What has

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<sup>995</sup> I am deeply appreciative of the efforts of Rev. Andrea Langh who graciously edited my translation of this work. All final choices and translational errors should be attributed to me.

<sup>996</sup> Präses is the title of the President of the Evangelical Synod.

been proven is what we call the empirical Church, both in its continuous power as well as in its flexibility. The church leadership of the last decade was a masterpiece – even the critics become more and more aware of that. Later this will be seen more clearly than it is presently. But the fact that the Church has remained, preserved as though to spite all powers – that it has gained new freedom and new strength, that it by the “re-evaluation of all values” proved its value, yes increased it, should and must not make us blind to the presence of the whirlwind confronting us. We are far from being over the hill, but we passed the bottleneck and see before us a free field.

Disregarding all professorial formality, consideration, and caution, I would like to say the following: It is a scandal that cries to heaven, that the German Evangelical Church continuously speaks this language. The German Evangelical Church, so far as she outwardly, speaking responsibly, gets a voice. There is also a German Evangelical Church, which, drowned out by the persistent scandal of this language, does not speak in that manner. Even so, this is how their responsible representatives speak. So, in this language, we others must let ourselves be represented to those outside, we, the *Kirchenvolk*, without being able to guard ourselves against it. We become represented in this way before the workers, before the educated, before the rest of the world. Out of this conviction we must allow ourselves to be preached to. Prof. Schneider stands for dozens and dozens of our church leaders and for hundreds and thousands of our pastors. I have nothing against him and all the others, but I have everything against the language, in which he and countless others like him, make the country unsafe. And I am fed up keeping silent in

this matter. For indirect theological concerns these circles have obviously no time, no receptivity, and no will. It is at the end of the ten years, rejoicing in their masterpiece, that they dare to boast, that the holy “nevertheless” has allegedly prevailed – in these ten years it has often enough been spoken indirectly, theological. The scandal of this language continues on, no, swells on as if nothing has happened (were happening). When I had read the mentioned omission till the sentence of the holy nevertheless, it was clear to me that the moment has (had) come to become gruff.

And so I will be gruff and say: where this language is spoken, there is Catilina, there is the actual, dangerous conspiracy against the substance of the Evangelical Church. More dangerous than the most dangerous things which the Catholics, Jews and Freethinkers after the horrible news reports, with which you constantly seek to keep your *Kirchenvolk* out of breath, could ever be up to against her. [It is] more dangerous than anything that, for example, the Soviet-Atheists can venture and accomplish against “Christianity.” May such attacks against the church accomplish what they can and might; however, one thing they will not be able to do nor accomplish: the substance of the church they will not even be able to touch let alone injure. The church cannot only be preserved to spite them, but will under their onslaught increase ten-fold and a hundred-fold. The substance of the church is the promise given to her and the faith in this promise. When would have the promise not been greater, clearer, brighter than now under a real challenge from outside? When would faith have had a better opportunity to prove and raise itself as faith, if not under such challenge? “What can people do to us?” “If God is for us, who can be against us?” Why is it that the leaders of our church do not shout this

to the Christians, if they really mean to see, that the church today stands in challenge? What they are really stating to her is the denial of the promise and of faith and means the destruction of the substance of the church, which can only succeed from the inside. And it succeeds here. They tell us that people cannot do anything to us, because we ourselves are about to do, so vigorously, so purposefully, so successfully, what is necessary for her defense. They say to us that God is for us because of the fact and in this way that we ourselves (represented by them, the church leaders) are constantly for ourselves. They say to us that the “holy nevertheless” has enforced itself in that manner, that the religious thought which is rooted in the German *Volksseele* has shown itself and the empirical church has proven itself. The agreement, that it is appropriate today to speak like that and to say that, I call the real and dangerous, Catilinarian conspiracy against the substance of the church. If that is permitted to be said persistently and unchallenged among us, if that should be heard and believed, then the church at its core has ceased to live. The Soviet-Atheist, or the new Roman persecution, with which you occasionally want to make us frightened, may break out after all. The church will then be insubstantial (without purpose) and any of its martyrs will then certainly not be Christian martyrs. If those who are in possession today of the name of the church, of the apparatuses, of the voice of the Evangelical Church, these do with the church what pleases them – if it should be ultimately allowed to them, to make that out of the church, then it is time to say to all the people, that the church is over, and that they get deceived, if one asked of them to see, to honor, to believe, to love this church. The Evangelical Church today is already surrounded by a dark cloud of mistrust. Whoever is not blind sees it.

But her leaders are blind and they don't see it. They enjoy the confidence, which seems to be brought to them by a handful of *Kirchenvolk*, in the way that they time and again sit at their feet on Sundays and holidays full of expectation – and do not see, that also and especially by these good “small-citizen” *Kirchenvolk* it is a matter of a remnant of trust, which also still can and will disappear, when the irrelevance of the whole of ecclesiastical affair should once be proven. But it is proven, when the church for a while still with impunity and undisturbed continues to speak like that. For this opium even the “little-citizens,” who are still the consolation of the pastors, will be thankful one day. And if they did not do that immediately and if these goings-on/ and this activity would go unpunished for a hundred years or more, it would still nevertheless be true, that this church, the church, which should be legitimately represented through this voice, is abandoned by God along with every traitor of the church (and not only the church), who has “led” her to that place.

Why is this manner of “leading“ intolerable? Why must one, completely and certainly without the claim of a prophet, take the responsibility to scream against it as long as there is still time? Why is it true, that the church that speaks in this way denies the promise as well as the faith? Because with such words and actions, as unambiguously as possible, the church wants herself, builds herself, praises herself and only differs from those rallied around different flags and banners. And she does that – inflated by the claim to represent God's cause – more unsubmitive, more boastfully, more unrestrainedly than all the others. If the church was concerned with God's cause, would she then be allowed to speak of the happy past time with such calm, as though looking back at the recovery from a flu because she was quite

literally threatened by destruction? And with this self-complacent mockery (as if the great pile of garbage was only the fault of others!) of those atheists, intellectuals, and windbags who have all allegedly been so thoroughly mistaken back then? And with this vast pleasure (as if that was not a wretched phrase) of the “religious thought” which is deeply rooted in the German *Volksseele*? And with this blasphemy verging security of the prevalence of the holy “nevertheless?” And with this vanity of the “after ten years completed or nearly completed masterpiece” of “church leadership?” And with this hard-heartedness (as if there was no housing shortage and no unemployment in Germany) from the fact that she, the church has allegedly made it through the worst (“out of the bottleneck”)? The person who is concerned about (goes about ) his affairs, his business, his party, his standing, and the like, this person may and is allowed to speak in this way. A competent advertising executive of a nearly but still not yet fully bankrupt old firm may and is allowed to speak in this way. He would probably do so with more spirit and good-taste. It is not how, but the fact that the church does act in this manner, that is outrageous. When the church does this, when it shifts to this and lingers there as a marketing booth among others (as it has happened with the shockingly unhappy memory of the “press”), advertising herself and boasting herself , then the church has simply and completely stopped being the church. The church cannot put forth propaganda – shame and disgrace – if the university begins to go down these paths!

The church cannot will herself, build herself, or praise herself as others do. The staff upon which the church leans there will pierce through her hand. Because with this bad conscience with which it does this (and the church can

only do this with a bad conscience), it cannot be otherwise than that she will do it worse than all others and in the end – as with all defectors to the enemy – she will stand there disgraced more than ever, disgraced before God and before the world. And meanwhile, one can depend on it, that what the church should and could do, it failed to do, the preaching of the Gospel: the totally unpretentious, not world-conquering, not self-asserting, not the willing of winning-over the youth and the workers, not with the “forward” charge, and not squabbling with the Catholics, and not straining after the religious thought rooted in the German *Volksseele*, but the honest and sincere preaching of the Gospel. One cannot serve God and enter such reinsurance with the devil and the world. No new discovery of the Reformation message, no liturgy or hymnal reform, no Luther film and no violet “century of the church,” no Christian youth movement or community work, no ecumenical ideologies and machinations are going to help the slightest: a church that is admittedly busy proving her (her!) worth, yes – even increasing it, a church which enters into the Jubilee year of the Augsburg Confession with cheering, that she (she!) once again has made it through the worst (is past the bottleneck), such a church cannot be credible in any word of her Christmas – and Easter – and Sunday sermon. When the church says “Jesus Christ,” one must and will, and when she has said it a thousand times, hear the church’s own richness and security, and she should not be surprised (wonder), when she with all of her “Jesus Christ” talking in the wind, missing the real need of the real people, just as she has, missing to hear the Word of God, made of all the admonition, consolation and doctrine of the Bible and the Reformers water on her own small mills. Therefore, because the church is about to plug and poison her own



wellspring through a hopeless lack of objectivity, therefore one must oppose her with the last bit of wrath.

One has to oppose her with the last bit of wrath, especially if one loves her. I dread the flood of celebratory speeches, sermons, and festivals which the year 1930 will with certainty bring. According to human estimation, more or less all of them are going to be in tune with the intolerable sound of Professor Schneider and his peers. Or they will still be far from confronting him; confronting him with such anger as alone would be appropriate for a real celebration of the Augsburg Confession. And when this flood for once will be subsided, the conceit will have become inwardly and the lie outwardly, larger and stronger. Someone should have stabbed the empirical church in the back earlier. Someone should have spoken it out earlier that we are not on the right path; that it won't work this way under any circumstances. At the risk to "do injustice" to all kinds of polite people! But even the most polite people are silent with respect to the horror of a language that is an offense to Christianity. I wish, someone else had, loving the Christian church more than "Christian love," said to the faces of the responsible leaders of our church and to the co-responsible "church-folk" with them at the beginning of this year: it is high time to stop going down this path and to turn back!

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