

National Socialism, Christian Reconstruction and the Future of Germany

by Dr. Thomas Schirmacher

Calvinism Today 1991/Symbiotica 1991

Copyright © 1991 Dr. Thomas Schirmacher

Atheistic religions

The fall of men in **Gen 3** teaches us several very important messages. The one which is important for our topic now is: **You can only destroy faith and confidence in God, if you offer faith and confidence in someone else.** According to modern neutral thinkers, Eve could have said: “Well, serpent, it could be that God is not trustworthy and did not tell us the real story. But what about you? If God's word has to be subject to critical inquiry, I think the same should happen with your word. I rather do not believe anybody!” But this did not happen and it could not have happened. **Eve could only give up her faith in God because she had faith in Satan.** Eve could only claim God's words to be a lie, because she claimed Satan's words to be the truth. **There is no neutrality.** Eve could not listen to both, God and Satan and then see what would happen. She had to decide. She could not believe both or be obedient to both.

This principle is repeated in the Bible again and again. Jesus said for example: “*You cannot serve two masters...*” (**Mt 6:24**) and James reminds his Christian readers that: “*Anyone who chooses to become a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God*” (**Jam 4:4**). Higher critics again are a good example. They do not only destroy faith in God and His word, and live as agnostics who do not believe anything—which of course is impossible. They produce new theologies all the time. And although they oppose people who believe that the biblical world-view is truth and reality they still want you to believe that they understand the world and that their theology of liberation, theology of ecology or whatever theology is modern at the moment, is worth reading and taking for granted. So the students of the theological faculties of the German state universities normally never have read the Bible as a whole once, but they have read thousands of pages of the thoughts of their teachers.

The same principles of the fall you can see in the first chapter of Romans. The main sin of man is that he exchanges the creator for the creature. But whatever new God man creates, this God will lead to a new ethics. If you exchange theology you exchange ethics, and

Paul's example of homosexuality proves that exchanging ethics is perverting the creation. Pervert ('per-vertere') is just the Latin translation of the Greek word we translate as 'exchange'. Pervert theology and you pervert ethics. Pervert the truth about the creator and you pervert the truth about creation and its laws. It is interesting that according to Paul the main sin of man—not to honour, thank and serve God—starts in the thinking of man and then spreads to all other parts of his personality. This is just the opposite of the Catholic belief that man's fall touched all parts of the personality except his thinking.

But it is important to observe that Romans 1 has a much wider scope than what we normally call 'religion'. Rom 1 does not just apply to the well organized religions like Islam or Hinduism. It also establishes the religious nature of all philosophies, world views and beliefs. **Christians have lost many battles because they have not realised that a rival religion does not need to be organised like one of the so called 'world religions'. If a system purported to be something totally different to a religion, then Christians all too often just accepted this instead of exposing the religious character of this system.**

Take for example the already quoted statement of Jesus: “*You cannot serve God and mammon*” (Mt 6:24; Lk 12:34). How can Jesus put serving mammon on the same level as serving God? Is mammon not just a way of living while serving God is a religion? No! Rousas Rushdoony wrote in his *Institutes of Biblical Law*: “in any culture the source of the law is the god of society”.¹ Mammon seems to be an atheistic system, but it is still a rival religion. Mammon is just a part of creation and if you serve and give thanks to money or wealth as the highest value of life, you have exchanged the creator for the creature.

Take for example **the German federal constitution**. It contains the wonderful passage “Marriage and Family are under the special protection of the state order”.² Now in 1949 this meant the Christian view of marriage and family. The constitution begins with the acclamation “In conscience of their responsibility before God and men ...”³ and speaks about the “moral law”.⁴ The mentioning of God was the idea of an atheist who wanted to save Western morality after having experienced National Socialism. Of course this Catholic and Lutheran natural moral law does not make the constitution a Christian one and it is an illusion that you can save Western morality by claiming God without believing that he does exist. But still the protection of the family by the state meant that abortion, homosexuality, incest, pornography and other things were forbidden by law.

Today the God of the constitution has changed: mammon has become the highest value in Germany. (Do not confuse mammon with free market. West Germany never had a real free market but always a mixture between private enterprise and severe state control and state ownership.) If you read contemporary commentaries on the German constitution regarding the protection of the family you even will find some of them arguing that

1 Rousas J. Rushdoony, *Institutes of Biblical Law* (Nutley: Craig Press, 1973), p. 4

2 Karl-Heinz Seifert, Dieter Hömig (ed.), *Grundgesetz für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 19852), article 6, paragraph 1

3 Ibid. preamble

4 Ibid. article 2, paragraph 1

according to this article the taxes of a couple and a family always need to be lower than those of single people! Others only talk about financial matters.⁵ Protecting the family means paying for it and the German government pays you a lot if you have a child. But at the same time nothing is done against the enemies of the family. Instead those enemies are payed also. Change the God of society and the same word in the same constitution, as in law in general, will have a perverted meaning.

Mammon is a part of creation and according to Romans 1 serving the mammon is serving the creation instead of the creator. No wonder that people live as if mammon is like God: "*invisible being, His eternal power and His divine nature*". These three attributes of God (**Rom 1:20**) are revealed in the creation and manifest to every man. Take two other well known examples of atheistic religions:

In **evolution theory** creation is called 'nature'. Nature has created itself. It is eternal and powerful. It is an old idea that nature brings forth nature. This is condemned in Jeremiah 2:27, where people are rebuked for saying that wood is their father and they were born of the stones.

In **Marxism** creation is called 'matter'. It is one of the fundamental beliefs of Marx that matter is eternal. It brings forth man and history, which is the agent of matter. Marxism is a giant rival religion prophesying the course of history till its end, giving a purpose to the life of those who work for this future, and being the foundation of a perverted ethics. Several people have started therefore to collect the testimonies of Marxists concerning how they became Marxists. They sound like evangelical testimonies and prove beyond doubt that Marxists have changed their religion, not just their attitude towards economy or politics.

The study of comparative religions

I have to confess that it was the study of comparative religions, not the study of theology, that brought me to Christian Reconstructionism with its holistic world-view and seeing God's word as ethical condition for the existence of this world. Reformed theology was unknown to me. While studying at an evangelical seminary in Switzerland, 'Reformed' was to me just a label used in church history. The neo-orthodox seminary in the Netherlands, where I did my Th.D., did not give me with any knowledge about the Reformed confessions. As there is no Reformed denomination in Germany believing in the infallibility of the Bible, and no literature from a Calvinistic perspective, it is hard to get any idea of the difference between Calvinism and Arminianism.

When I was pastor of a church in Bonn, the director of our denomination Ulrich Affeld left me a three volume edition of Calvin's *Institutes of Christian Religion* on his death bed, because he thought I would be the only of his pastors to be interested in such theology. It was a treasure because it is hard to get the work in German. (At present moment there is almost no book by Calvin on the German market!) Nevertheless, I put the book onto my book shelf and forgot about it. As one fighting against higher criticism I

5 E. g. Dieter Hesselberger, *Das Grundgesetz*, (Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 19885) pp. 94-97

attacked the most liberal churches of the world, the German Protestant state churches, and this meant to me fighting against their tradition, including Luther, Calvin and all confessions. (Later on I was of course happy to have my own German copy of *Institutes of Christian Religion*.)

Meanwhile I had started to study comparative religions and cultural anthropology, focusing on the religious character of the so called 'secular religions'. I was astonished to learn that more and more of these scholars change to a broad definition of religion which more or less equates religion and culture. The sociology of religion in Germany is run by very strong and convinced atheists who work with the illusion that they can study religions from a neutral standpoint. But they understand that you only can define religion if you define its function in society. If you define religion by content you never will get a definition which covers all existing religions. Take for example Buddhism. In the original version it had no God, no priests, no church. The message was: redeem yourself. And still it has every function of an religion although some German scholars decided not to study it as a religion. Take the following definitions: Niclas Luhmann writes:

“The specific function of religion is to provide the ultimate, foundational reductions, which change the undetermined and indeterminable world into a determined ...”⁶ world, in which one can live.

According to Luhmann man cannot live in the world 'as it is'. He gets his definitions and values out of values and things, which he cannot reduce further. According to Ulrich Berner:

As religious system we define every connection of mental elements ..., which have the function to provide man with an explanation of his world, which cannot be further reduced, and with unreducible norms for his behaviour.⁷

He defines further:

Religion is not the same as neither world-view or ethics, but is a peculiar union of both components.⁸

Therefore Berner's conclusion is that atheistic systems are religions in the full sense if they provide a world-view together with ethics.

Thomas Luckmann even defines religions as “what makes man to man”.⁹ This is not a joke; it shows there is no man as such—except for God and His revelation. Before man can start thinking he has to define who he is, and this definition comes from his religion.

6 Niklas Luhmann quoted in: Ulrich Berner, *Untersuchungen zur Verwendung des Synkretismus-Begriffes, Göttinger Orientforschungen*. (Wiesbaden: O. Harrasowitz, 1982), p. 83

7 Ibid. p. 84

8 Ulrich Berner. “Gegenstand und Aufgabe der Religionswissenschaft”. *Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte*, 35(1983): pp. 97-116, here p. 104, see also Ulrich Berner, "Das Christusverständnis als Gegenstand universalgeschichtlicher Betrachtungen". *Saeculum* 34(1983), pp. 187-243, here p. 190

9 Thomas Luckmann quoted in: Ulrich Berner, “Religion”, pp. 531-532 (here p. 532) in Hans Waldenfels (ed.), *Lexikon der Religionen* (Freiburg: Herder, 1987)

The difference between man and animal is not something which we just 'see'. From a Christian perspective the difference between man and animal leads to a totally different ethics than from a Hindu and evolutionistic background, where the difference between them is only gradual if it exists at all.

Of course those definitions are at the same time a refutation of their authors. **If every man has his world-view and his ethic and cannot live without it, than scholars who study comparative religions only can only judge other religions from the standpoint of their own religion.** They do what **Ludwig Feuerbach** did:¹⁰ He took the judgement of the Bible that all religions except the biblical revelation are man made, applied it to Christianity itself and instead made an exception for his own new religion, which he called 'the religion of man' or 'anthropology instead of theology'. When **Marx** followed him, he blamed Feuerbach for not applying his theory to his own religion, but than Marx made the exception for Marxism. For Marx all religions are man made and the outcome of matter except Marxism itself, which is the truth and reality. **To criticise religions is as inescapable for everybody as it is to spare one's own religion.**¹¹ Now we are back to the fall and to Romans 1. You can only criticise a religion if you have another religion.

Pietism and creation

Of course the liberal theologians never liked the message of Romans 1. But Wilhelm Lütgert¹² has shown that German pietism did not like the message of Romans 1 either. Pietism's evangelistic method,¹³ which became prominent after the revolution of 1848, started its message with claiming a bad conscience and Jesus as the solution to get rid of it. Sin was what produced a bad conscience. This made sin a subjective feeling. There was no discussion about the objective law which must rule and guide the conscience. There was no discussion about sin being sin even if one was unconscious of it. And the discussion did not start with the reality of the creator, but with conscience as a feeling.¹⁴

Since for centuries millions of protestants learned the Ten Commandments through Luther's Small Catechism this evangelistic method did work for some time. In Catholic areas the problem was much greater, as this evangelistic methods bound and binds Catholics back to their church. That this evangelistic method is devastating in the long

10 Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Theologische Religionskritik*, (Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 1982) has shown from the perspective of Barth's theology that Feuerbach and Marx followed the theological criticism of religions of the Bible, Luther and Christian theology till the Enlightenment. See also H. Fried, "Ludwig Feuerbach", pp. 78-92 in Karl-Heinz Weger (ed.), *Religionskritik von der Aufklärung bis zur Gegenwart*, (Freiburg: Herder, 1983), an excellent biographical lexicon of 93 critics of religion from a Catholic perspective.

11 For details on religions criticising religions see my book *Marxismus - Opium für das Volk*, (Berneck: Schwengeler, 1990)

12 Wilhelm Lütgert, *Schöpfung und Offenbarung*, (Giessen: Brunnen, 1984) (19341)

13 Of course all the following judgements on pietism are only true in general. There always have been exceptions and especially some of the few Reformed pietists (e.g. in Bremen and Wuppertal) have protested against of typical thoughts among pietists.

14 For details on the biblical view of the conscience see my article "Das Gewissen in der Bibel", *Querschnitte* 2(1989): 2/19-22 and Hans-Joachim Eckstein, *Der Beriff Syneidesis bei Paulus*, WUNT 2/10 (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1983)

run can be seen nowadays because today most German consciences do not even make judgements on the basis of some Christian oriented natural law. Pietism could not claim God's law to govern the whole creation. God rules the individual heart, and the heart was defined together with Goethe, Schiller and other German classics more as a feeling, than—as it is in the Bible—as the centre of thought, decision and judgement. So for pietism Jesus only dealt with part of the inner life, not with the thought and work of the whole person, not to speak about the family, the church or the state.

We have to understand this if we want to understand why pietism was so often ready to preach salvation through the state. We only have time to look at three examples.

Pietism and statism

The first example is from the **18th century**. At the beginning of Prussian state education you will find one of the fathers of pietism **August Hermann Francke**. He founded huge Christian schools which for a long time educated the best Prussian officers, officials and politicians. But in order to get an education for all children he forced the Prussian state to educate all children in state schools and did not ask the Christian parents to shoulder the task.¹⁵

The second example is from the **19th century**. It is the Prussian and later German chancellor **Otto von Bismarck**. During my studies I wrote a thesis about Bismarck's pietism.¹⁶ I argued that he was born again and that he read his Bible and prayed daily. His wife was a truly pious woman.¹⁷ Of course I had difficulties understanding why Bismarck never really belonged to a local church. But I must confess that I did not have any insight about his politics and was unembarrassed by his views of law.

Today I know that Bismarck was one of those politicians who increasingly turned Germany into a country dominated by the state and obstructed the influence of church and family on German everyday life and culture. As the uniter of Germany he made what became a model to the whole world: 'Realpolitik', a practical politic not following principles and ideas, but the real situation, meaning choosing the best among the possible. The real value was the 'Volk', the nation, which had to become one, no matter what this meant. During the re-unification of Germany you could see that the 'Volk' still is a religious value in Germany, and even among the evangelicals. A lot of pietists, who normally keep out of politics and do not believe in a God who rules history, suddenly praised God in special services for the re-unification. The parties in the German parliament only agreed on the re-unification treaty because it allowed a major change in

15 On the Prussian state education and its influence on the USA see Samuel L. Blumenfeld, "Is Public Education Necessary". *Journal of Christian Reconstruction* IV(1977), vol. 1(summer 1977), pp. 108-120, here p. 110-112; Samuel L. Blumenfeld, *Is Public Education Necessary* (Boise: The Paradigm Company, 1985/1989), pp. 158-164; Samuel L. Blumenfeld, *NEA: Trojan Horse in American Education* (Boise: The Paradigm Company, 1984/1989)

16 *Was Bismarck Christ? Ein Urteil im Spiegel der Geschichte*, Master Theses (Basel: Freie Evangelisch-Theologische Akademie, 1982), reprinted under the same title Lörrach: Institut für Weltmission und Gemeindebau, 1982)

17 See the biography Sophie Charlotte von Sell, *Fürst Bismarcks Frau* (Berlin: Trowitsch, 1915)

the abortion laws. Although protest against the abortion laws is normally the only political and moral topic which stirs up the evangelical world, they suddenly kept silent and praised the 'Volk' becoming one, even though this re-unification was only possible by taking over the devastating legacy of East German abortion laws.

Back to the pietist Bismarck. In order to fight the socialistic party he founded the social security system run by the state, which in the long run made Germany the forerunner of a state secured future which forces nearly every citizen to pay into the different state assurance policies all his life. Most evangelicals think that this is evidence of his Christian influence in politics!

In order to oppose the influence of the pope and the Catholic Church Bismarck also brought all private and mainly Christian schools under the control of the state.¹⁸ From the time of Bismarck on every teacher had to be state-approved, no matter where he taught. From now on everybody had to marry at a state office, so that the Christian or religious marriage became an optional ceremony with no legal value. With this and other new laws Bismarck hit mainly the Protestant Church because the Catholic Church was much stronger through its international connections. The Protestant Churches did not protest, because liberals and pietists alike were in favour of Protestantism being the uniting factor of the new Germany. They loved their Kaiser Wilhelm I, the only man above Bismarck, because he confessed his Protestant belief personally to the pope; they were unconcerned that he was not only the protector of the Prussian protestant churches, but at the same time the protector of German Freemasonry, a position held by most Prussian Kings since Frederike II, called the Great.¹⁹

The third example is from the **20th century**. In 1966 the left-wing Social Democratic Party became partner in government of the right-wing Christian Democratic Union which had governed Germany since 1949. In 1969 it took over the government until 1982. The minister of justice, who became president of Germany later, was a well known Christian lawyer, **Gustav Heinemann**, who had belonged to the confessing church under Hitler. He was not a pietist in the strict sense, but was heavily influenced by pietism. With the argument that Christians could not force their ethics on the non-Christians he started to get rid of nearly all German laws that had something in common with the Ten Commandments. Soon it was no longer forbidden to speak blasphemously about the Christian God - a typical start. Later the laws on abortion, homosexuality and divorce were changed, to name just a few examples, and with the exception of the problem of abortion most evangelicals do not even know any longer what the law forbade 30 years ago. To most of them it seems impossible and incredible that the state outlaws things that are seen as criminal acts in the Old Testament, although many of those laws were still in force till the sixties. (Of course this does not say that they were still applied on a broad

18 For a general overview over this so called "Kulturkampf" see Karl Kupitsch, *Kirchengeschichte V* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 19862), pp. 51-69 and Ronald J. Ross, "Enforcing the Kulturkampf in the Bismarckian Sate and the Limits of Coercion in Imperial Germany", *The Journal of Modern History* 56 (1983): 456-482. For general characteristics of Prussia see Oswald Hauser, *Vom Wesen des preussischen Staates* (Kiel: F. Hirt, 1962)

19 See my book on the Freemasons Jochen Neuer, *Die Freimaurer: Die Religion der Mächtigen* (Berneck: Schwengeler, 1991)

level.)

Hegel's salvation through the state

The German atheistic philosopher Ernst Topitsch has shown²⁰ that National Socialism and Marxism are only the best known examples of the right and left wing totalitarian state ideas that followed Hegel's philosophy which saw the Prussian state as the final outcome of the spirit governing world history. Hegel's philosophy was heavily influenced by the French revolution and Freemasonry, as some of his followers have shown to relieve him of responsibility for the Prussian and German idea that the state is above everything and that the people should live for the state. But they did not understand that both the left and right revolutionist understand the same message of Hegel as the Prussian kings and the Marxists and national socialists after they had come to power: salvation comes through the state. And this message is still at work in reunited Germany, which is now attempting to get all of Europe under a even greater—European—state, since this is believed to bring even more salvation. If this plan, the United State of Europe, does not succeed, it will be because the religion of nationalism in the European states, which also believe in salvation through the state, is too strong. These two rival statist religions can only be overcome by the “*kingly law of freedom*”, as James calls it. Only if Christian Reconstruction takes place based 1) on the presupposition of a creator, 2) who revealed himself in His infallible book, which contains 3) His laws as theonomic ethics for the whole world, 4) the salvation according to Calvinistic understanding and 5) the hope and faith that this earth at large will one day serve God.

National socialism as religion

Let us now have a look at one of the two political religions that have been in power on German soil and attempted to bring salvation by the state: National Socialism and communism.

It is impossible to count how many billion times the Germans said 'Heil Hitler' during the Third Reich. To greet with 'Heil Hitler' was a strict law, and people were put into concentration camps because they refused to use this greeting. But only a few non-Germans realise that 'Heil' is the German word for 'salvation', which is extensively used in the German Bible translations. 'Salvation Hitler' or 'Salvation through Hitler' was the daily message, every German, including nearly all the Christians, preached to his neighbour daily. Although some tried to explain 'Heil Hitler' as wishing salvation for

20 Ernst Topitsch, *Die Sozialphilosophie Hegels als Heilslehre und Herrschaftsideologie* (München: Piper, 19812); Ernst Topitsch, *Gottwerdung und Revolution*, UTB, (Pullach: Verlag Dokumentation, 1973). On Hegel's religious background in Freemasonry and his influence on right und left totalitarianism see also: Jacques D'Hondt, *Verborgene Quellen des Hegelschen Denkens* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 19832) (from the French); Jacques D'Hondt, *Hegel und seine Zeit* (Beerlin: Akademie-Verlag, 19842) (from the French); Gerd-Klaus Kaltenbrunner (ed.), *Hegel und die Folgen* (Freiburg: Herder, 1970); Karl R. Popper, *Die offene Gesellschaft und ihre Feinde* Vol 2 (Tübingen: Francke, 19806) (title of English original: *The Open Society and Its Enemies II*)

Hitler,²¹ the official meaning was clear: Hitler is the salvation for Germany and for the world.

That there was nearly no resistance to use this 'German greeting' among Christians shows the condition of the German churches after hundreds of years being influenced by the humanistic philosophy of Freemasons like Lessing, Hegel and Goethe²² and by the aggressive theology of higher criticism started by Freemasons like Reimarus, Strauss and Renan.²³ The so called free churches—including the dispensationalist churches—cried 'Heil Hitler', removed the converted Jews from their churches and took over the 'Führer'-principle which Hitler forced on all organisations. Most free churches merged into one big denomination by the order of the Nazis. The Lutheran churches did not want to get involved in politics. The mainly Lutheran so called 'confession church' was a mixture of Bible believing Christians like the Reformed Heinrich Jochums and strong liberals like Rudolf Bultmann.

The only real resistance came from neo-orthodox Reformed theologians in Germany and from Reformed Christians in the Netherlands. Karl Barth was the only professor of theology who continued to start his lecture with a prayer instead with 'Heil Hitler'. He was also not willing to swear an oath to Hitler,²⁴ even though he later changed his mind, when it was already too late.²⁵ But Barth was left alone by the 'Confession Church', which told the Nazi state that it would not be a problem to swear an oath to Hitler. Only then was the Nazi state ready to dismiss Barth!²⁶ Even though Barth is to be rejected because he denies biblical history,²⁷ he argued for resistance to the Nazi state because he saw Jesus from a Reformed perspective as Lord over every area of life, which is the clear message of the otherwise mixed Declaration of Barmen. Please do not misunderstand me. I am not advocating Karl Barth. But to understand the situation in Germany you have to understand that until the end of the sixties Barth was offering the most conservative theology you could buy on the open market.

(Incidentally the attitude of the Dispensational and Lutheran churches toward Hitler and the Jews compared to those of the Reformed Christians is a striking argument against Hal

21 For example the professor of German literature in Bonn Hans Naumann, *Rede zum Geburtstag des Führers, Bonner Akademische Reden 27* (Bonn: Scheur, 1937), p. 17; see my dissertation *Hans Naumann als Volkskundler im Dritten Reich*, PhD-Thesis (Los Angeles: Pacific Western University, 1990), p. 291, in preparation for print (Bonn: Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft: Bonn, 1991)

22 I am not referring to some theory of conspiracy, but to the historical fact that more German humanistic philosophers and thinkers were Freemasons than not. I only count those thinkers whose belonging to a lodge is not doubted by historians. See my book mentioned above.

23 Again I refer to the historical fact that nearly all leading higher critics in the beginning were Freemasons. They were not critical in general, but only critical against Christianity, because they believed in a rival religion. See beside my mentioned book

24 Hans Prolingheuer, *Der Fall Karl Barth 1934-1935: Chronographie einer Vertreibung* (Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 1977)

25 Ibid. This is often neglected, also Prolingheuer proves it from Barths own writings.

26 Ibid. See also my dissertation *Hans Naumann als Volkskundler im Dritten Reich*, pp. 197-202

27 I agree with the judgment of Gary North, *Dominion and Common Grace* (Tyler: Institute for Christian Economics: Tyler, 1987), p. 151, that Barthianism believes together with antinomianism that God does not speak to any specific problems in history.

Lindsey's rude attack that Christian Reconstructionism will lead to a second holocaust.²⁸ Normally it is the dispensationalists who will not step in for others, because this would mean becoming involved in politics or economics. Lindsey has to be reminded that love in the Bible is to be measured by deeds, not by nice words, proclamations and best selling books: see 1John 3,18).

That 'Salvation Hitler' was only a small, while revealing, part of the socialistic message and practice of a new anti-Christian religion can be demonstrated in several ways. We could discuss the roots of Hitler's thinking, which are in occult orders and sects.²⁹ We could discuss the parallels between the salvation history of orthodox Christianity and of National Socialism. But surely the most impressive argument is the everyday songs, the poems, official rituals and lectures of the Third Reich. The Nazis never hid the religious character of their actions. Take for example the following statement:

National Socialism is a religion, born out of blood and race, not a political world-view. It is the new, alone true religion, born out of a nordic spirit and an aric soul. The religions still existing must disappear as soon as possible. If they do not dissolve themselves the state has to destroy them.³⁰

The Nazi-chief of the united trade unions proclaimed openly:

Adolf Hitler! We are united with you alone! We want to renew our vow in this hour: On this earth we believe only in Adolf Hitler. We believe that National Socialism is the alone saving faith for our people. We believe that there is a Lord—God in heaven, who created us, who leads us, who directs us and who blesses us visibly. And we believe that this Lord—God sent Adolf Hitler to us, so that Germany becomes a foundation for all eternity.³¹

The high SS officer Schulz stated in a lecture called “Ours is the kingdom and the power and the glory”:³²

I do not want to become guilty of blasphemy, but I ask: Who was greater, Christ or Hitler? By (the time of) His death Christ had twelve disciples, who even did not stay faithful. But Hitler today has a people of 70 million behind him. We cannot tolerate that another organisation, which has another spirit

28 Hal Lindsey, *The Road to Holocaust* (New York: Bantam, 1989). See the refutations of Lindseys theories on Christian Reconstruction in Gary DeMar, *The Debate over Christian Reconstruction* (Ft. Worth: Dominion Press, 1988); Gary DeMar, Peter Leithart, *The Reduction of Christianity* (Ft. Worth: Dominion Press, 1988); Greg L. Bahnsen, Kenneth L. Gentry, *House Divided* (Tyler: Institute for Christian Economics, 1989); Steve Schlissel, David Brown, *Hal Lindsey and the Restoration of the Jews* (Edmonton: Still Waters Revival Books: Edmonton, 1990)

29 See the literature in my article "Adolf Hitler und kein Ende", *Factum* 6/1989, pp. 252-255

30 Lecture at a course for the few leaders of the youth of the German states, quoted from Johann Neuhäuser, *Kreuz und Hakenkreuz*, part 1 (München: Verlag Katholische Kirche Bayerns, 1946), p. 261.

31 Confession of Faith of the "Reichsarbeitsführer" Robert Ley, quoted from *NS-Schulungsbriefe*, Heft 4/1937

32 Taken from and put against the liturgical ending of the Lord's Prayer “Our father in heaven ...”, which is found from the second century on and taken partly from 2 Chr 29,11-12.

than ours, should come into existence. National Socialism seriously lays this claim: I am the Lord, your God, you shall have no other Gods beside me ... Our is the kingdom, because we have a strong army (“Wehrmacht”), and the glory, because we are a respected people again, and this, if God wants it, 'in eternity'. Heil Hitler”³³

In Cologne, the children receiving meals from the Nazi state during the Second World War prayed before the meal. The prayer follows typical German Christian prayers before meal and is originally written in rhyme:

Fold your hands, bow your head and think about Adolf Hitler. He gives us our daily bread and helps us out of every misery.³⁴

Because of our short time I cannot go on to quote further examples.³⁵ You have to believe me that there are hundreds and thousands of documents like this. I also want to assure you also that the religious overtone does not come from my translation. The case is just the opposite: I found it difficult to translate the strongly religious language into English. These shocking songs, prayers and confessions were no secret, but part of everyday life in Nazi Germany. For comparison the last example will be taken from a real secret document, which shows that the documents already quoted were a mild version for the public. The text is a secret document from 1943, written only for Hitler.³⁶ The signature of Hitler shows that the text was approved by Hitler with the words “the first useful outline” and then sent to Goebbels.

Immediate and unconditional abolition of all religions after the final victory ('Endsieg') not only for the territory of Greater Germany but also for all released, occupied and annexed countries ..., proclaiming at the same time Hitler as the new messiah. Out of political considerations the Muslim, Buddhist and Shintoist religion will be spared for the present. The 'Führer' has to be presented as intermediate between a redeemer and a liberator, yet surely as one sent by God, who has to get godly honour. The existing churches, chapels, temples and cult places of the different religions have to be changed into 'Adolf-Hitler-consecration places'. The theological faculties of the universities have to be transformed into the new faith. Special emphasis has to be laid on the education of missionaries and wandering preachers, who have to proclaim the teaching in Greater Germany and in the rest of the world and have to form religious bodies, which can be used as centres for further extension. (With this the problems with the abolition of monogamy will disappear, because polygamy can be included into the new teaching as one of the statements of faith.)³⁷

33 SS-Obergruppenführer Schulz, quoted from Johann Neuhäuser, *Kreuz und Hakenkreuz*, p. 255.

34 Quoted from Gerhard E. Stoll, “Gebete in publizistischer Umgestaltung”, *Publizistik* 3(1958): 337-352, here p.346. The article discusses the 'secular' forms of German prayers used in press and propaganda.

35 See 14 documents in my article “Die Religion des Nationalsozialismus”, *Factum* 11/12/1989: 506-511

36 A so called “Führervorlage”

37 Quoted from the foto of the original in Wilfried Daim, *Der Mann, der Hitler die Ideen gab* (Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 1985), pp. 216-218. p. 299 discusses the genuinity of the document.

If the Christian churches in Germany (and in many other countries) did not realise that they have been taken over by a rival religion called National Socialism, explicitly calling itself a religion, how can you convince them that they are taken over by rival religions which deny that they are religions, such as socialism and Marxism,³⁸ Freemasonry,³⁹ Rudolf Steiner's anthroposophy⁴⁰ or other forms of humanism?

One of the main reasons why the German churches did not fight against Hitler's rival religion and his antisemitism was the low view of the Old Testament. **Antisemitism is only possible where the Old Testament and especially the Old Testament law has been put aside.** A love for the Old Testament and its law is the best protection against antisemitism. This is the major mistake of Hal Lindsay who compares Christian Reconstruction to National Socialism. National Socialism hated the Old Testament more than anything else. Alfred Rosenberg, Hitler's agent for world-view affairs, saw it as the biggest mistake of Protestantism that Martin Luther translated and spread the Old Testament and took an oath to Old and New Testament before Caesar in Worms in 1520.⁴¹ (Of course Luther had a vague view of the Old Testament praising it on the one side and seeing it as a dark time of law without gospel on the other side. Again his furious antisemitism can only be explained by his view of the Old Testament.). I explained already that pietism did base its preaching on the conscience not on the law. Pietism could easily live without the Old Testament although this was never stated.

Liberal theology hated the Old Testament and the professors of Old Testament did everything to undermine the application of the Old Testament today in spite of their massive studies of the text itself. Adolf Harnack wrote a famous sentence in his book on Marcion, who rejected the Old Testament as the work of another God:

To reject the Old Testament in the second century was a mistake which the great church refused rightfully; to keep it in the sixteenth century was a fate which the reformation was not able to escape; but to conserve it since the nineteenth century as canonical text in Protestantism, was the result of a religious and ecclesiastical paralysis.⁴²

One of the first actions of Hitler was to force the churches to get rid of their Jewish-Christian members. So all members of all churches from a Jewish background were disciplined and this in churches where church discipline had nearly totally faded! This gigantic church discipline took place quietly and without big protests. Another religion had taken over the churches.

38 For arguments for the religious character of Marxism see my book *Marxismus - Opium für das Volk* and my article (together with my wife Christine): "Der Kommunismus als Lehre vom Tausendjährigen Reich", *Factum* 11/12/1986: 12-19

39 For arguments for the religious character of Freemasonry see my book Jochen Neuer, *Die Freimaurer*

40 For arguments for the religious character of anthroposophy see my article "Reinkarnation und Karma in der Anthroposophie", *Factum* 11/12/1988: 473-482

41 See Hans Schlemmer, *Evangelische Gedanken zu Rosnbergs 'Mythos'* (Görlitz: Hutten-Verlag, 1935), pp. 18-19

42 Adolf von Harnack, *Marcion: das Evangelium vom fremden Gott* (Leipzig, 1921), p. 248

The theologians had prepared the way.⁴³ A typical example is Hans Schlemmer who wrote a book against Alfred Rosenberg's main book, sometimes called 'the bible of National Socialism' which meant risking his life! In this he writes that Rosenberg has gone too far by dropping the Old Testament altogether. The Old Testament is for him 'the word of God'. But still he will agree with Rosenberg when he writes:

It will be the task of theology to combine the bending under the word of God with the perception which truthfulness demands that the origin of the canon was a rather human event and that the Old Testament contains not a few unpleasant things and that its place is deep under the faith of the New Testament.⁴⁴

East Germany (the GDR)

We can see this also when we look at Marxism, which ruled part of Germany until recently. The Germans in the former GDR (East Germany) lived first under National Socialism and after 1945 under communism. They lived under tyranny for 56 years! But only few see a religious and ethical problem here. Most, including most evangelicals, consider this to have been a political problem, which only troubles fundamentalist churches, because they were persecuted. (The most liberal churches think in socialistic terms anyway.) People do not realise and do not want to realise what National Socialism and communism had and have in common.

Incidentally, some of the concentration camps in the territory of the former GDR were just taken over from the Nazis by the Communists. They even left communists in the camps if they were not communists of the party line. We visited the cruel concentration camp Buchenwald while it was still under communist rule. It was near Weimar, the city of Goethe, Schiller and other so called humanist thinkers. It was one of those camps, which were taken over by the Russians. The camp was liberated by American soldiers, but then given over to the Russians who used it for another decade.

We do not have the time to prove in detail that Marxism is a religion also. Francis Nigel Lee and Gary North have done this in detail. The German churches did not realise that Marxism is a rival religion as they did not realise the true character of National Socialism. So they leave it to the politicians to rebuild the former GDR. There is not the slightest hint of Christian Reconstruction in the former GDR after the re-unification of Germany. Let us pray that the riches churches in the world, the churches in Germany wake up and understand their task to reconstruct family and church according to God's law and through this to change the whole society.

43 See especially Robert P. Ericksen, *Theologians under Hitler* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985)

44 Adolf von Harnack, *Marcion: das Evangelium vom fremden Gott* (Leipzig, 1921), pp. 19-20