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Did the Reformation Help to Create Europe?

The Ironic Relationship of the Reformation to European Development

Theological Accents

Theologische Akzente

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This study was prepared for a conference celebrating the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation held the Hanoi (Vietnam) Bible College, December 4–5, 2017, entitled "The Evangelical Protestant Faith: Historic Milestones and Current Trends." It was presented under the title, "The Ironic Relationship of the Reformation to European Development." The conference featured scholars from North America, Europe, Hanoi Bible College, the Vietnam National University, and the Hanoi School of Social Sciences. After the conference Dr. Johnson observed that the event was not only an historical commemoration but also a positive expression of growing religious freedom for Protestants in Vietnam. The scholars representing the Vietnamese government and communist party mixed freely with the Christian scholars. Departing far from the old communist line, that "religion is an opiate for the people," Johnson heard the communist party scholars describe a positive role for Christianity in the development of Vietnamese society.

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Did the Reformation Help to Create Europe?

The Ironic Relationship of the Reformation to European Development

Thomas K. Johnson

Martin Luther loved using an ironic turn of phrase to express his deepest convictions. This is nowhere better seen than in the dual theses of his important treatise "The Freedom of the Christian" (1520). He wrote, "A Christian is a perfectly free lord of all, subject to none. A Christian is a perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject to all."[1] An appreciation for such irony is needed, I believe, if we wish to grasp not only the key religious themes of the Reformation but especially the influence of the Reformation on European society.

Luther did not make it his life goal to influence or contribute to the development of Europe as a society, economy, or civilization. The main question that drove Martin Luther to reconsider everything he had learned was how he could be certain that God had forgiven his sins, so that he could know, without false certainty or inappropriate pride, that he was in a proper relationship with God. The answer Luther found, after years of studying the Christian Bible, was justification by faith alone, meaning trust in the promises of God, especially the promise of the gospel, that Jesus had died and risen to pay for our sins.

Notice that Luther's quest had nothing to do with developing European identity or society. Luther was concerned with the relationship between the individual and God. Nevertheless, seemingly by accident, the Reformation, largely initiated by Luther, led to vast developments within Europe and beyond.

My observations about the ironic relation of the Reformation to development in Europe are similar to Emil Brunner's observations from the late 1940s, when two devastating wars had raised questions about the future of Europe. As Brunner began a series of twenty fascinating lectures on the topic of Christianity's influence on Western civilization, he noted the lack of interest in this topic shown by Jesus and the New Testament:

> *"Anyone who approaches the New Testament with the intention of getting instruction about the relation between Christian faith or doctrine and civilisation or culture from the most authoritative source cannot fail to be astonished, bewildered, and even disappointed. Neither the Gospels nor the letters of the apostles, neither the teaching of Jesus*

himself nor that of his disciples, seem to encourage us in any way to investigate this relation. Jesus teaches about the kingdom of God and its righteousness, about its coming, its essence, and the conditions of the partaking in it in a way which does not seem to betray any interest in any of those things which we include under the terms civilisation or culture."[2]

The same is largely true of the Reformation. The Reformation's contributions to European development were ironic in two ways: (1) they were unintended; (2) the Reformation both strengthened and redirected contributions to European development that had already started under previous generations of Christians before the separation into Protestant and Roman Catholic streams of Christianity.

The unintended character of the Protestant contribution to European development is evidenced in the pivotal distinction used in that same Luther treatise of 1520. He wrote, "Man has a twofold nature, a spiritual and a bodily one."[3] And for him, justification by faith and assurance of his acceptance by God were matters of his spiritual nature, experiencing freedom in relation with God; therefore, aspects of one's bodily nature, such as whether one was a servant or prince, Pope or laity, had no spiritual significance. Being an Emperor, servant, or monk was merely a matter of one's bodily nature and had no effect on how one must relate to God.

This was an acceptance of the social and economic order of Europe at his time, or so it appeared at first glance. One can be forgiven for failing to recognize—after all, Luther himself did not recognize it—what this doctrine would do to society. It was not only that all people were now granted equal status before God, created with dignity but needing forgiveness. It was not only that all people should have equal access to the gospel and the sacraments. In addition to these important spiritual breakthroughs, the process of rational reflection on, articulation of, and defense of the newly rediscovered Christian message dramatically enhanced the importance of rationality and learning within European society, setting off wide-ranging developments.[4] Although some distinctive themes of Reformation teaching, such as "faith alone" or "Scripture alone," sound irrelevant to social development, the spiritual nature of humanity, as understood in the Reformation, included reading, thinking, questioning, discovery, and the application of new truth claims. By promoting the application of rationality and learning, the doctrine of "faith alone" helped to empower the development of Europe. I know this claim may seem surprising, so let me explain.

When we compare and contrast religions, one of the key questions is the degree to which a religion emphasizes a specific pattern of doctrine that is related to rational truth claims. In the polytheism of ancient Greece and Rome, there was little regard for truth

claims about the gods and their relations with humanity. Such polytheistic religions were vulnerable to the rational critique found in much Greek and Roman philosophy; many of the philosophers ridiculed polytheism as irrational. Ancient Judaism did not deny that doctrine could be expressed in rational truth claims, but the emphasis in Judaism, from its early days to the present, has been on laws to obey and rituals to follow. Islam, in spite of its great internal diversity, is often similar to Judaism in its emphasis on laws and rituals.

From its beginning, Christianity was distinguished from other religions by its use of rationality to both teach and defend its truth claims. The earliest of these truth claims was about the resurrection of Jesus, but soon the discussion turned to doctrines about the natures of Christ as both God and human. Already in the first century, Christian spokesmen were making carefully reasoned presentations of their doctrines in debates with representatives of Greco-Roman religion, Stoic philosophy, Epicurean philosophy, Pharisaic Judaism, and Sadduceeic Judaism, and humble converts were baptized into Christianity while confessing the complex understanding of God as Trinity. From that time onward, we see a multi-faceted link between Christianity and rationality. Within the Christian communities, there was a strong emphasis on the rational comprehension of complex Christian beliefs; in dealing with outsiders, the Christian communities used rational argumentation to defend their beliefs.

This multi-faceted link between Christianity and rationality became a distinguishing characteristic of European culture as it developed after the decline of the Roman Empire. On a theoretical level, this positive link can be observed in great thinkers such as Augustine (354–430), Anselm (1033–1109), and Aquinas (1225–1274), who were simultaneously deeply pious religious writers and also elite philosophers using methods derived from ancient Greece. But given the orientation of Christianity toward the common man, the positive link between rationality and religion was repeatedly turned in such a way as to benefit the lower classes. And this use of religiously motivated reason usually happened in two ways that often merged: to make daily life easier and to extend the benefits of education to as many people as possible. The second especially happened after the Reformation.

In Europe, the era once called the Dark Ages was really an era of tremendous technological growth. Between the years 500 and 1300, one saw the widespread application of watermills and windmills, the effective use of horses for agriculture and travel, the development of deep plows that revolutionized farming, eye glasses, compasses, and clocks. This technological growth was simultaneous with the gradual Christianization of Europe. In noting these developments, sociologist Rodney Stark commented:

> *"All of these remarkable developments can be traced to the unique Christian conviction that progress was a God-given obligation, entailed in the gift*

> *of reason. That new technologies and techniques would always be forthcoming was a fundamental article of Christian faith. Hence, no bishops or theologians denounced clocks or sailing ships—although both were condemned on religious grounds in various non-Western societies. Rather, many major technical innovations probably were made by monks and were eagerly adopted by the great monastic estates."*[5]

This religiously motivated rationality, which was already playing an important role in European development, was substantially upgraded by the Reformation. One can see an example of the impact by comparing the length of the new Reformation confessions of faith with the pre-Reformation confessions. The Nicene Creed, in the final AD 381 version used by Christians across Europe, contains just over 200 words; the Augsburg Confession of 1530, written by Luther's colleague Phillip Melanchthon, extends to 13,000 words, roughly 60 times as long. The main Roman Catholic responses to the Protestant Reformation came from the Council of Trent (1545–1563); a recent edition of the documents of Trent contains more than 200 pages.

It would be an exaggeration to say that the normal length of one's religious confession went from 200 words to 200 pages. Nevertheless, the situation of contending versions of Christianity drove all parties to use rationality and educational tools to articulate and defend their convictions, even beyond what had been done previously. This growth in the length of one's religious confession was assisted by the widespread use of the relatively new printing press; one of the significant uses of the new print technology was to produce not only Bibles but also highly reasoned defenses of the competing confessions. And as in the previous centuries, the use of religiously motivated rationality was not confined to a narrowly religious sector of life. The articulation and defense of one's religious confession played an organic but leading role in an increased application of reason and learning to all of life. I will give specific illustrations in three areas: economic development, justice, and general education.

Religious reason and economic development

For a century, scholars have been analyzing Max Weber's classic essay, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*.[6] Theologians complain that Weber misunderstood Reformation theology, while historians note that both capitalism and a Christian work ethic existed long before the Reformation, contrary to what Weber may have thought. Economists note that there are significant differences between the capitalism which Weber described and any economic system used today. However, Weber rightly observed the connection between the increased application of religiously motivated rationality, in the form of the Protestant work ethic, and the economic development of Europe.

Weber asked why parts of Western civilization developed distinctive patterns not found in other cultures at that time. There was, he thought, a certain "spirit," meaning a distinctive definition of rationality, in modern northern Europe, which led to a distinctive approach to work and business. According to Weber, greed is not distinctive of capitalism and is neither the cause nor the effect of capitalism. People are always greedy. What is distinctive about modern capitalism is the pursuit of profit, especially ever-renewed profit, by means of continuous, rational enterprise. Capitalism, he claimed, has three external characteristics: (1) rational industrial organization; (2) the separation of business from the household; and (3) the use of rational bookkeeping. But, Weber claimed, these external characteristics alone do not fully explain the economic growth arising from the capitalism he assessed; that type of capitalism was also characterized by an internal ethic according to which people found meaning through their work. The systems of meaning found in many cultures have religious sources, even if the common people have forgotten those religious roots; even people who are not consciously religious may continue to live and react in ways they regard as "rational" or "natural," but which are influenced by distinctive religious traditions. In this way religions influence cultures while cultures influence economic decisions and patterns, without denying the converse, that economic conditions can also influence culture and religion. Weber thought the economic development under the capitalism he described was made possible by an ethic according to which people find meaning in part through self-denial (worldly asceticism) in their work.[7] This meaning-providing work ethic is, Weber claimed, the Protestant work ethic, carried on in a secularized manner, "the spirit of capitalism."

Commenting on Weber's work, John T. McNeill, a distinguished historian of Protestantism, agreed that Reformation ethics contributed to economic development. He articulated the Calvinist version of that work ethic concisely:

> *"There is no realm of life that is exempt from obligation of service to God and man. … The layman's calling is not secular or religiously indifferent. We are not our own: every Christian is to live as one dedicated. … Calvin makes much of humility and the abandonment of assumptions of superiority and all self-love as basic to Christian behavior. In grateful response to God's love, we love and serve our neighbor, who, good or bad, attractive or repulsive, bears the image of God. … Calvin would have us abandon all thought of seeking material prosperity for ourselves. Whatever worldly goods we handle or possess, our function with them is one of stewardship. We and our possessions together belong to God. This view involves the hallowing of each man's vocation. It is 'the post assigned,' to be faithfully exercised."*[8]

I believe that the Protestant work ethic was one of the main causes of economic growth in the West, though I

do not want my claims to be exaggerated. Other factors also contributed to Europe's development, but this work ethic was surely a factor in many situations including families, businesses, and some local communities. To avoid being one-sided in our historical interpretation, it is best to see the Protestant work ethic as building on the previous influences noted by Stark (which continued in the Catholic regions of Europe), and to acknowledge that even before the Reformation, progress by means of the application of practical reason was already perceived by many in Europe as a God-given duty. And McNeill is surely right that the main Reformers, including both Martin Luther and John Calvin, saw work as a primary place to love one's neighbor.

Religious reason and justice

Another part of the Reformation notion of rationality, sometimes missed by sociologists, relates to justice. According to both Luther and Calvin, although the gospel of justification by faith alone is known from Scripture alone, there are universal principles of justice that can be known to all people by means of reason, regardless of their faith status. To describe these universal principles of justice, Luther and Calvin used the terminology of a "natural moral law," meaning by that phrase foundational principles of justice and morality that are not based on a particular culture or tradition, but are universally binding for all humans.[2] This terminology had previously been emphasized by Thomas Aquinas almost three centuries before the Reformation, though it appears repeatedly in earlier Christian philosophy. The use of this moral terminology illustrates the way in which elite Christian scholars in Europe were using methods of analysis learned from ancient Greek and Roman philosophers. With only small modifications of the terminology used by Thomas Aquinas, both the Lutheran and Calvinist streams of the Reformation promoted the conviction that principles of justice can be found by the proper use of rationality.

After describing the level of spiritual insight involved in the recognition that God exists, as well as the higher level of spiritual insight that learns to know God as a Father in Christ, Calvin wrote:

> *"There remains the third aspect of spiritual insight, that of knowing the rule for the right conduct of life. This we correctly call the "knowledge of the works of righteousness." The human mind sometimes seems more acute in this than in higher things. For the apostle testifies: "When Gentiles, who do not have the law, do the works of the law, they are a law to themselves … and show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their thoughts accuse them among themselves or excuse them before God's judgment" [Rom. 2:14–15]. If Gentiles by nature have law righteousness engraved upon their minds, we surely cannot say they are utterly blind as to the conduct of life. There is*

nothing more common than for a man to be sufficiently instructed in a right standard of conduct by natural law."[10]

To be sure, both Calvin and Luther knew that human reason, especially when applied to questions of fundamental justice, was far from perfect. Pride, self-interest, and terrible mistakes in moral reasoning can easily mislead even serious moral thinkers, such that a humble person reading the Bible may have a better grasp of right and wrong than a university professor. Nevertheless, this philosophical starting point, found in the Reformation notion of rationality, made a huge contribution to the development of European (and later North American) ideas and systems of justice. It encompassed the idea of a higher, ultimate law by which any reasonable person can evaluate the laws of a nation.

A few examples must suffice. Under the influence of Protestant notions of justice (usually shared by Roman Catholics), prominent people in Europe began to wonder if many wars were fundamentally unjust, even if the war had been declared by a government and was fought by professional soldiers. In doing so, they were appealing to a standard of justice higher than a government and knowable by moral reason, even by people who might not be very religious. A similar pattern can be seen regarding the abolition of slavery and the slave trade, which were fully legal in Great Britain and some other European countries at various points in history. The argument to end slavery usually involved an appeal to a law above the law of the state; according to this higher law, known by moral reason, slavery had to be ended, even if this meant changing the laws of nations. A similar pattern can be observed in the change to allowing women to vote. Ironically, it was often very devout Evangelicals, with a glowing faith fresh from religious revivals, who had the spiritual zeal to insist that rational justice be pursued. We can regard this as another application of faith-empowered use of rationality.

Immediately after the Holocaust (1933–1945), both Protestant and Catholic scholars in Europe took up the topics of justice and the natural moral law. Emil Brunner echoed the 400-year-old words of John Calvin: "Justice, then, is a topic where Christian and non-Christian thinking meet, where they have a common ground without being identical. For this reason alone it is possible to have a civil order, the justice of which can be judged by Christian as well as non-Christian citizens, and an international order agreed upon by Christian as well as non-Christian nations."[11] Brunner's critique of the Nazi regime arose from his concept of justice. He thought that such a genocidal state could only exist "in the moment when the *jus divinum* is abolished, when the state is sovereign in the sense of not being limited by any higher power, when it can declare whatever it likes to be law, when there are no rights of man which precede positive law and are valid whether positive law proclaims them or not."[12]

To Brunner's observations one must add that the classical notions of universal justice found in Aristotle and the Stoics were kept alive in Europe largely because of the efforts of Christian scholars, both Protestant and Catholic, for centuries before Brunner. These ideas, the texts containing these ideas, and the commentaries on these ideas might have died out were it not for the Christian monasteries, then the cathedral schools, and later the medieval Christian universities where such ideas were debated and the relevant texts were copied and printed.

In my work as a Protestant moral philosopher, one of my life goals is to contribute to the recognition and application of universal principles of justice. I believe that there is still much work to do to apply Reformation notions of rationality to the development of justice in the West. I am sure many others participating in this conference share similar concerns about justice. I would be most grateful to emerge from these meetings having established close communication with colleagues from Vietnam and other cultures who are seriously interested in universal principles of justice. I do not believe that a particular form of government guarantees justice.

Religious reason and universal education

In 1521, Luther translated the New Testament into German, with large-scale distribution starting in 1522. The Old Testament followed in 1534. This was not the first German Bible, but it quickly became the most important one and established a pattern that would unfold in several European languages between 1520 and 1690. The driving force was the conviction that all people in Christendom should have the opportunity to read the Bible. This conviction led to a first translation of the Bible, or to better translations of the Bible, in many European languages, followed in turn by widespread efforts to teach everyone how to read.

Before Luther's German Bible came along, there were dozens of Germanic dialects, making communication difficult with people who lived more than a couple villages away from one's place of birth. But as people began reading the new German Bibles, they all learned a standardized version of German. In a matter of decades, people from across the region who spoke the various Germanic dialects at home could also begin to speak and write to each other in the new literary German.

Though Luther's initial desire was to teach people about justification by faith, the effects of basic literacy and a standardized language were massive and wide-ranging. A common written language made it possible to do business with far more people and to use far more complex business transactions. It enabled broader political discussions. And it also led to more production of literature and poetry in the now-unified language groups. When he translated the New Testament, Luther wanted people to be able to read the Bible for

themselves so that they could understand justification by faith alone; but the resulting literacy and common language also furthered social, economic, and political development.

The Indian philosopher and historian Vishal Mangalwadi made important observations about the social effects that ensued after King Henry VIII of England allowed a copy of the Bible to be placed in every parish (1539). Henry hoped that the Bible would make the people more docile and easy to rule, but his plan did not work as expected:

> *"Almost every alehouse and tavern turned into a debating society. People started questioning and judging every tradition of the church and every decision of the king. People could question religious and political authorities because they now had in their hands the very Word of God. The Word of God was an authority higher than the authority of the church and the state combined. Upset that the Bible had created such intellectual ferment, Henry tried to put the genie back into the bottle. He drafted a second edict withdrawing his permission to read the English Bible. But it was too late; the masses had been aroused."*[13]

The distribution of the Bible in English led to political disruption. Some of what happened was very disturbing. There were terrible excesses including violence, but those excesses were closely tied to the unique social situation in England at that time: Christianity was the majority religion, there were not yet multiple Christian churches, and the King personally played a large role in church affairs. Seen from a distance, the distribution of the Bible in English was part of opening a new era of development. One can hardly imagine the rapid growth of England as a country in the following centuries without this step. The Bible prompted a higher use of rationality by prompting rational debate.

Another example comes from the Czech lands of Bohemia and Moravia, today just a few hours' drive south of Luther's home in Wittenberg. Before Luther's time, there had been a significant religious movement within the Czech-speaking churches of which Jan Hus (1369–1415) was the most prominent leader. The execution of Hus at the Council of Constance (1415) alienated many Czech-speaking Christians from the Catholic Church, causing them to start alternate churches, including "The Unity of the Brethren." From the mid-sixteenth century, the Czech Protestant churches were in contact with both the German-speaking and French-speaking Protestant churches. This contact included sending students to universities in neighboring lands. One such student, Jan Amos Comenius (1592–1670), spent all his travel money on books while studying in Heidelberg; as a result, he had to walk some 600 kilometers on foot to get home in Moravia.

Comenius became both a school teacher (1614) and a pastor in his church (1616), illustrating the tie between Reformation churches and education. The Thirty Years' War broke out in 1618,

reaching his town of Fulnek in 1623. His wife and children died of the resulting plague. His house, church, and library were burned. He became a refugee, first within Bohemia, then fleeing to Poland in 1629. Rather than become embittered, in a manner reminiscent of Luther's focus on the inner man, Comenius found consolation in God. In a book Comenius wrote shortly after his terrible losses, seeking existential rest and a place of refuge for the soul, he pictures God saying to the refugee, "Return to the home of your heart and shut the door behind you."[14]

But then came one of the remarkable times when the contribution of the Reformation to European development transitioned from being unintentional to become a conscious program of civilizational renewal. After finding peace in the home of his heart, Comenius reopened the door to society that he had once closed. He began the most comprehensive plan Europe had yet seen to redesign education, with a specific purpose in view: to overcome the devastating results of the Thirty Years War and to try to prevent further such wars. He called his program pansophy, which means "universal wisdom." It included not only what people should learn but also striking new insights into how people can best learn different subjects and at different ages. In an age when only sons of wealthier families went to school, he demanded that both boys and girls from all economic classes should go to school.

A central goal of Comenius's educational program was the development of moral and spiritual character. He released a flood of books, written in multiple languages, and played a crucial role in reforming education in Poland, England, Sweden, and Hungary. One Czech commentator on Comenius, writing during the communist era in Czechoslovakia, noted, "Only a fundamental change of all human affairs could release the world from turbulence, wars, pain, and despair."[15]

This son of the Reformation is known in Europe as "the Father of Modern Education." We can take his legacy as representative of the contribution of the Reformation to development in Europe, with the exception that in Comenius the contribution to development had transitioned from being ironically unintended to being consciously envisioned.

In his retrospective work on "The Expanding Effect of Christianity" during the era after the Reformation, historian Kenneth Scott Latourette noted the extent to which the effects of the Reformation went beyond the narrowly religious realm and also influenced the Catholic-majority parts of Europe:

> *"Perfection did not come with the Reformation, whether in Protestantism or in the Roman Catholic Church. Not all the clergy, whether Protestant or Roman Catholic, were well educated or were of high moral character. … Yet the Reformation wrought distinct improvement, both in the areas served by Protestants and in the Roman*

Catholic fold. … For the rank and file of the laity the level of intelligent comprehension of the Christian faith was lifted by both the Protestant and the Catholic Reformation. … For the instruction of church members catechisms for their respective constituencies were prepared by both Protestants and Roman Catholics. Among Protestants the circulation of the Bible in vernacular translations markedly increased."[6]

Latourette then sketched the expanding effect of Christianity in non-religious dimensions of life resulting from the Reformation. He noted the post-Reformation beginnings of international law, the attempt to say that the relationships among states should be regulated by something other than military force (such as moral or legal reasoning), and with it the claim that there are moral norms, even if rarely followed, that apply even to decisions such as whether one may go to war and how a morally justifiable war may be fought. He went on to describe the wide-ranging benefits of post-Reformation Christianity through social activism, including aid for the sick and poor, orphanages, prison reform, exalting the role of women, and promoting marriage (by having married clergy). This was paralleled by spectacular growth in intellectual life including the natural sciences, mathematics, and philosophy, not to speak of the great growth of theology as a field of learning, all of which was intermixed with growing support for popular education and the establishment of schools for all children.

Comments:

The history I have recounted is a short version of what should be taught in a good Reformation-oriented theological school, but outside those circles this history may be unknown. The West sometimes forgets the contributions of Christianity to its own development, and this forgetfulness is detrimental. Recognizing the positive contributions of Christianity to society will tend to strengthen those contributions.

At the time of the Reformation, Christians in Europe did not comprehend the extent to which Christianity was growing in Asia, but today, no thoughtful observer of religions can ignore the extent to which Christianity has become a major religion on all continents. I am delighted that the National University of Vietnam has scholars who are studying the unfolding of Christianity. I believe that you will find many ways in which Protestant Christianity is making a positive impact in Asian societies including Vietnam, in terms of social and economic development as well as spiritually. Some of those impacts may be "ironic" in the sense discussed in my message, in that people primarily seeking to help themselves and others find peace with God are producing broader social consequences. I hope that you will find most of them to be positive. In any case, I am eager to hear what you have learned.

Annotation
Anmerkungen

[1] Martin Luther wrote this treatise in both Latin and German. It is available today in various languages and multiple English editions. This quotation is taken from *Martin Luther: Selections from His Writings*, edited with an introduction by John Dillenberger (New York: Doubleday, 1948), p. 53. In this edition, the English translation was by W. A. Lambert, revised by Harold J. Grimm.

[2] Emil Brunner, *Christianity and Civilisation*, First Part, Foundations, Gifford Lectures delivered at the University of St. Andrews, 1947 (published in New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1948), pp. 6–7.

[3] *Martin Luther: Selections from His Writings*, p. 53.

[4] Here I am emphasizing one set of positive contributions of the Reformation to Europe. There are other legitimate historical paradigms by which to assess these contributions, such as looking at the relations among social institutions or by unfolding the influence of the Protestant understanding of human nature. I also recognize that representatives of the Reformation made terrible mistakes, saying and doing things that led to horrible suffering.

[5] Rodney Stark, *The Victory of Reason: How Christianity Led to Freedom, Capitalism, and Western Success* (Random House: Kindle Edition, 2007), locations 896–900.

[6] Max Weber's study was originally published as an essay entitled *Die protestantische Ethik und der Geist des Kapitalismus* in 1904 and 1905 in volumes XX and XXI of the *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik*. It was republished in 1920 in German as the first part of Weber's series *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie.* It was published in English as *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, translated by Talcott Parsons, with a foreword by R. H. Tawney (New York: Scribner, 1958; reprint New York: Dover, 2003).

[7] In this discussion worldly asceticism, sometimes called *intramundane* asceticism, is contrasted with types of religious asceticism that may involve some type of withdrawal from society or self-denying religious exercises that provide no societal benefit. These other types of religious self-denial are often called *extramundane* asceticism.

[8] John T. McNeill, *The History and Character of Calvinism* (Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 221. Though he lived a couple centuries after the Reformation, John Wesley nicely summarized the Protestant work ethic in his sermon "The Use of Money." He preached, "Gain all you can," but do so in a way that does not hurt yourself or your neighbor. "Save all you can," but not for the sake of your own pride or selfishness. Therefore, one must also "Give all you can," so one could give a good account of one's life to God. For many of Wesley's converts, this ethic replaced alcoholism, crime, and indolence. John Wesley, "The Use of Money," reprinted 1983 by *Christianity Today/ Christian History* magazine, available online at www.christianitytoday.com/history/issues/issue-2/wesleys-sermon-reprints-use-of-money.html (accessed September 15, 2017).

[9] Emil Brunner commented, "It is the idea *of jus naturale or lex naturae* in which the two main lines of our cultural tradition, the Christian and the Greek heritage, are combined in a synthesis of exceptional power. For more than two thousand years the idea of *lex naturae or jus naturale* has been the basic conception within the European understanding of justice and one of the pillars of European civilisation. Its origin is pre-Socratic Greece. Solon the great law-giver of Athens pronounced it as the norm of his legislative activity. To him as well as to his successors the idea of the φύσει δίκαιον, translated by the Roman Stoics into *lex naturae,* was intimately and inseparably connected with the idea of divine justice." *Christianity and Civilisation,* vol. 1, p. 107.

[10] John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), II, ii, 22.

[11] Brunner, p. 108.

[12] Brunner, pp. 109, 110.

[13] Vishal Mangalwadi, *The Book That Made Your World: How the Bible Created the Soul of Western Civilization* (Thomas Nelson: Kindle Edition, 2012), p. 87.

[14] *Labyrint světa a ráj srdce* (1631), as quoted by Jan Hábl, *On Being Human(e): Comenius' Pedagogical Humanization as an Anthropological Problem* (Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick, 2017), p. 20.

[15] Pavel Floss, *Nástin života, díla a myšlení Jana Amose Komenského* (Přerov : Vlastivědný ústav, 1972), p. 11, as quoted by Habl, p. 72.

[16] Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of Christianity,* revised edition, vol. II: A.D. 1500—A.D. 1975 (Harper & Row, 1975), p. 972.

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Prof. Thomas K. Johnson, Ph.D., has served as pastor of three evangelical churches, including serving as a church planter. He taught philosophy or theology in eleven universities and theological schools in nine countries, including the dissident, anticommunist European Humanities University in Minsk, Belarus, and Charles University in Prague. Dr. Johnson is presently Vice President for Research, Martin Bucer International School of Theology and Research Institutes; Senior Advisor to the Theological Commission of the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA); Special Advisor for the International Institute for Religious Freedom (WEA); Professor of Philosophy, Global Scholars; member of the Royal Ghassanid Academy of Arts and Sciences; Board President of the Comenius Institute (Prague); and an ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church in America. In March 2016, he was appointed Religious Freedom Ambassador to the Vatican, representing the World Evangelical Alliance and its 600 million members. In December 2016 he was honored for his international human rights efforts with a knighthood from the Sovereign and Imperial House of Ghassan, the only Christian royal family in the Middle East.

The first edition of Johnson's *Human Rights: A Christian Primer* (2008) became a standard evangelical resource. The second edition (2016) was jointly published on behalf of the WEA and the Vatican-based *Dignitatis Humanae Institute*. He has written five other books and some two hundred fifty articles, essays, and book chapters, many of which are available on the websites of Martin Bucer Seminary, the World Reformed Fellowship, and the World Evangelical Alliance. He has edited 25 books on ethics and issues of religion and society, as well as numerous human rights reports. He lives in Prague with his wife, Leslie P. Johnson. She was the first director of the Christian International School of Prague and is now an educational consultant for the Association of Christian Schools International. They have three grown children as well as several grandchildren.

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