



MBS TEXTE 191

Thomas K. Johnson

Is Human Dignity Earned or is Human Dignity a Gift?

*A Contribution of the Evangelical
Faith to Human Rights Discourse*



Theological Accents

Theologische Akzente

Table of Contents

Inhaltsverzeichnis

Is Human Dignity Earned or is Human Dignity a Gift?	3
Annotation.....	9
Bibliography.....	9
The Author.....	14
Imprint	15

Is Human Dignity Earned or is Human Dignity a Gift?

A Contribution of the Evangelical Faith to Human Rights Discourse

Thomas K. Johnson

This is a lightly revised version of a human rights lecture that Thomas K. Johnson originally delivered in May 1996 with the title “Why Is Human Life Valuable?” at a symposium of Russian- and English-speaking professors at the Livadia Palace in Yalta, Crimea—the palace where Stalin, Churchill, and Roosevelt met at the end of World War II. From 1994 to 1996 Johnson served as visiting professor of philosophy for the European Humanities University (EHU) in Minsk, Belarus. EHU was started in 1992 as an openly pro-democracy university by scholars who had worked for the collapse of communism. It came into conflict with the Belarussian authorities as Belarus moved toward authoritarianism, starting in 1994. In 2004, the Belarussian government forced EHU to relocate to Lithuania because of its continued outspoken support of democracy.

As we come to the end of the twentieth century, one of the greatest intellectual questions we face is “What is a human being?” In one way or another, this question is being discussed in many

of the different academic disciplines: law, psychology, economics, sociology, art, philosophy, and theology. And the answers we find to this question are very important not only for our personal life but also for our life together in society, as neighbors. We need to understand the peculiar dignity and “humanness” of humanity, as we also need to understand the peculiar inhumanity of man to man.

In this essay I want to explore one small part of the question of human nature, namely, “Why is human life valuable?”—a question that can be made more pointed when phrased as, “Is human dignity earned or is human dignity a gift?” Differing views in this area lie immediately behind many of our other important questions, such as why we should protect human rights, why we should practice humanitarian aid and medical care, and why we should be concerned about the safety of the individual in daily life. And it is clear, I believe, that this is not only a question of metaethics; it is also a problem of basic philosophy. Any philosophy without a satisfactory explanation of the value of human life needs serious revision.

In modern thought there tend to be two types of answers to why human life is valuable; some would claim that the dignity of the person is earned by some human function or ability while others claim that human dignity is a gift that is given in a relationship. The first approach can be called “functionalism,” the second “personalism.” Functionalist views of human value tend to arise within a naturalistic worldview. Personalist views of human dignity are usually found among theists. Functionalist views of human dignity sometimes lead to viewing *homo sapiens* who lack certain crucial functions as being sub-human and discardable. A personalist view of human dignity may lead us to significant sacrifices for our neighbors. This distinction between differing views requires explanation, first by illustrating functionalism, then personalism.

An interesting variety of functionalism is found in the writings of Michael Tooley, who inquired into “what properties a thing must possess in order to have a right to life.”¹ Obviously a right to live is foundational for any other rights one might have. His answer goes something like this. He quotes Joel Feinberg: “The sorts of beings who can have rights are precisely those who have (or can have) interests.” This means that “an entity cannot have any rights at all, and *a fortiori*, cannot have a right to life, unless it is capable of having interests.”² And in order to have interests, it “must necessarily be a subject of conscious states, including experiences and

desires.”³ And in order to have a desire for a continuing life, it must have a concept of a continuing self.

This all sounds eminently reasonable, but the problems become apparent once one sees how Tooley uses his principles. Obviously he can defend abortion with this system. He also defends infanticide, because infants apparently do not have a concept of a continuing self. But many higher animals probably do have a right to live, presumably a right equal to that of human beings, because they seem to have an interest in and a concept of a continuing self. It is interesting that he uses the term “murder” to describe the killing of higher animals. And one is forced to suspect that a person in a short coma would not have any rights in his system. What started as a theory of human rights leads to the conclusion that killing babies is morally acceptable, but eating meat or wearing leather shoes is murder. This is a good indicator of the problem of starting with a human function, in this case having an interest, as the basis for the value of a person.

A somewhat similar variety of functionalism is found in the philosophy of Mary Anne Warren. She asks, “What sort of entity, exactly, has the inalienable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness?”⁴ Though she is obviously quoting the American Declaration of Independence, her overall point of view is, I think, quite different from that of the Declaration. She suggests that we have to make a distinction between genetic humanity and

personhood, and that only persons, not genetic human beings, have moral rights. She says,

Imagine a space traveler who lands on an unknown planet and encounters a race of beings utterly unlike any he has ever seen or heard of. If he wants to be sure of behaving morally toward these beings, he has to somehow decide whether they are people, and hence have full moral rights, or whether they are the sort of thing which he need not feel guilty about treating as, for example, a source of food.⁵

In answering this question, Warren suggests that the traits of personhood are roughly the following:

1. consciousness, especially the capacity to feel pain,
2. reasoning,
3. self-motivated activity,
4. the capacity to communicate,
5. the presence of self-concepts and self-awareness.

Warren does not think an entity needs to meet all five criteria to be a person. The first two may be sufficient. But the absence of all five would surely indicate, she claims, that an entity is not a person and therefore has no moral rights.

Her list of traits of personhood has much value. These are, of course, traits we normally find in people. But the crucial question is whether one has to earn the status of personhood by means of having the normal functions and abilities or if the status of personhood is given as a gift. Clearly her approach is a functionalist approach, and her

answers will lead to the same problems as do Tooley's. She very candidly says that humans at the beginning and end of life may not be persons and that they are without moral rights.

A third good example of functionalism is found in the writings of process philosopher John B. Cobb, Jr. He claims that "although the right of a human being to life is quite fundamental, it is not absolute. It is derived from, and therefore subordinate to, the right of people to carry out their own projects."⁶ Having projects to carry out is what gives distinctive value to human life and what confers rights on a person.

Cobb clarifies his view by way of two sharp contrasts. He contrasts the life of a person with the life of an infant and with the life of an animal. An infant on the way to personhood goes through two major transformations. The first is that while an infant lives fully in the present, a "child comes to have his or her own projects that demand respect."⁷ The second is that in infancy, all experience is unified in serving the body, whereas a child uses the body to implement projects. And, Cobb believes, animals do not generally make the transition to using their bodies to fulfill projects beyond preservation of their bodies.

The problem with such a theory is that humans who do not yet or no longer have projects do not have the moral status of personhood, and therefore their lives have no particular moral value. On the other hand, some animals might cross the line to become persons.

It is a clear example of functionalism, albeit with a distinctive perspective on what function is needed to earn human dignity.

These three examples are enough to illustrate that functionalism of one variety or another is widespread today. It is used to defend abortion, infanticide, active euthanasia, and animal rights. In every case, a person has to demonstrate certain abilities or functions in order to earn the status of personhood in the eyes of other people or of society at large. If one fails to earn the status of personhood, then one's life is not to be particularly protected morally or legally.

Obviously, all the philosophies mentioned represent Western individualism in some way. But a functional approach to the value of a person can easily be given a different ideological orientation. With the slightest bit of imagination, one can easily change which functions or abilities are needed to earn "personhood." The functions selected can be economic, racial, religious, or related to one's value to the state. And then the definition of what makes human life valuable can be used to legitimate all sorts of atrocities, usually against some group of people not liked by the powerful. An analysis of the totalitarian ideologies of the people in the twentieth century who have committed the great crimes against humanity will yield a tragic set of variations on the same theme: personhood is something not all can earn. Functionalist ideologies have contributed to genocide and

concentration camps. The philosophies of functionalism usually come with the high moral tone of explaining why human life is valuable, but they tend to end by explaining why the lives at the margins of some particular society are not to be valued. This calls into question the whole method and approach of functionalism.

The alternate to functionalism is personalism. The belief that unites personalists, in the midst of very different ways of speaking, is that the value of human life is a gift, and the value of this gift is a "given" that is present even if particular human abilities or functions are missing. Generally, personalists think within the Judeo-Christian intellectual tradition and see their theories as an explanation of the biblical claim that human beings are created in the image of God.

A prominent example of personalism in the political realm is the American Declaration of Independence. Warren failed to mention the part that says that all people are "endowed by their Creator" with unalienable rights. In eighteenth-century Anglo-American political discussions, some people said human rights were alienable, that they could be lost. This was one of the supposed moral defenses of slavery, and it bears a strong resemblance to functionalist views of human value. In conscious contrast to this, Thomas Jefferson and his colleagues claimed that human rights were inalienable because they were a gift from God. In this way of thinking, the value of a person is not

earned by any function or ability, and therefore the value of the person cannot be lost. To repeat the point, the dignity of a person is simply a gift from God.

A very different kind of personalism is found in the writings of Soren Kierkegaard (1813–1855), the nineteenth-century Danish philosopher often called the father of existentialism. In *Sickness unto Death* he writes,

The gradations in the consciousness of the self with which we have hitherto been employed are within the definition of the human self, or the self whose measure is man. But this self acquires a new quality or qualifications in the fact that it is the self directly in the sight of God. This self is no longer the merely human self but is what I would call, hoping not to be misunderstood, the theological self, the self directly in the sight of God. And what an infinite reality this self acquires by being before God! A herdsman who (if this were possible) is a self only in the sight of cows is a very low self, and so also is a ruler who is a self in the sight of slaves—for in both cases the scale or measure is lacking. The child who hitherto has had only the parents to measure itself by, becomes a self when he is a man by getting the state as a measure. But what an infinite accent falls upon the self by getting God as a measure.⁸

Kierkegaard claims that the value of the person is a relational notion, that value is given to the person by relations in which one stands. Then, if all people stand in some relation to God, whether conscious or unconscious, positive or

negative, that relation gives infinite value to the person. Clearly this value is a gift independent of functions.

A great modern personalist was the German Evangelical theologian Helmut Thielicke (1908–1986), who wrote his treatises on ethics largely in reaction to the abuses of the Nazi era. He claimed that human dignity is always an *alien* dignity that comes as a gift from outside the self and not from any ontological qualities within the person, whether freedom, personality, responsibility, conscience, or any other capacity. His reason for thinking this was his claim that humans are relational entities, created in the image of God, created for a relationship with God. The image of God in man, he claims, does not have to do with attributes or properties of mankind. “It has reference rather to the alien dignity which man possesses by way of his divine prototype [*Urbild*], that original which is present in Christ alone.”⁹ When he uses the term “alien” to describe human dignity, he is consciously following Martin Luther’s theology. Luther said we cannot be acceptable to God on the basis of any inherent, internal goodness within ourselves, or on the basis of anything we do, but only on the basis of an alien, external righteousness credited to us as a gift in Christ. Thielicke claims that our dignity, like our righteousness, has to do with “God’s remembrance of us,”¹⁰ not with something internal within us. And because God remembers us, he speaks to us in creation and in Christ so that “The divine address constitutes the person.”¹¹

Even if a person is not aware of God, the fact that God has spoken to humanity constitutes the dignity of every person so that the dignity and value of each person is something that cannot be lost. Even if many normal human functions are lost, the value or dignity of the person is not lost, because it depends on God's remembrance of the person and God's speech to that person. And if human dignity is the result of God's speech to us, the fact of human dignity implies an important task, that of actualizing this relationship on the human side.¹²

Clearly a personalist view of human value will lead to very different conclusions about many dimensions of contemporary life than will a functionalist view. Medical care, human rights, humanitarian aid, and personal safety are only a few of the areas that look different if seen through personalist eyes. And it should also be clear that func-

tionism is usually part of a materialist or naturalist worldview, while personalism is usually part of a theistic worldview. Although there may be atheistic personalists and perhaps also theistic functionalists, those combinations of beliefs would present severe internal contradictions.

It is often said that among Western intellectuals, belief in God died in the nineteenth century and belief in humanity died in the twentieth century. Contrary to the hopes of Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900), the death of belief in God did not lead us to become superior beings, or *Übermenschen* in his terminology; it led us to see each other as *Untermenschen*, as less than fully human. But as we now can clearly see both the cultural failure and the intellectual incoherence of atheistic naturalism, maybe we can hope that belief in both God and humanity can be recovered.



Dr. Johnson meeting with Dr. Georges Carillet after Russian soldiers forced the closure (2014) of Crimean-American University and other institutions founded by Dr. Carillet that hosted philosophical conferences.



A Russian language newspaper advertisement of the conferences at which Dr. Johnson spoke.

Annotation

Anmerkungen

¹Michael Tooley, "In Defense of Abortion and Infanticide," in *Applying Ethics*, 4th edition, ed. Jeffrey Olen and Vincent Barry (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1992), p. 176.

²Ibid., p. 178.

³Ibid., p. 181.

⁴Mary Anne Warren, "On the Moral and Legal Status of Abortion," in *Ethics: Theory and Practice*, ed. Manuel Velasquez and Cynthia Rostankowski (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1985), p. 249.

⁵Ibid., p. 250.

⁶John B. Cobb, Jr., *Matters of Life and Death* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1991), pp. 74, 75.

⁷Ibid., p. 83.

⁸Quoted by Helmut Thielicke, *Modern Faith and Thought*, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), p. 487.

⁹Helmut Thielicke, *Theological Ethics*, vol. 1, *Foundations*, trans. and ed. Wm. H. Lazareth (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979) pp. 151, 152.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 165.

¹¹Ibid., p. 164.

¹²Ibid., p. 158.

Bibliography

Bibliografie

Books

Human Rights: A Christian Primer, volume 1 in the Global Issues Series of the World Evangelical Alliance (Bonn: VKW, 2008). Online at: <http://www.worldevangelicals.org/resources/view.htm?id=282>.

Natural Law Ethics: An Evangelical Proposal, volume 6 in the Christian Philosophy Today series (Bonn: VKW, 2005). Online at <http://www.worldevangelicals.org/resources/view.htm?id=231>.

What Difference Does the Trinity Make? A Complete Faith, Life, and Worldview, volume 7 in the Global Issues Series of the World Evangelical Alliance (Bonn: VKW, 2009). Online at <http://www.worldevangelicals.org/resources/view.htm?id=287>.

The First Step in Missions Training: How Our Neighbors Are Wrestling with God's General Revelation, volume 1 in the World of Theology series published by the Theological Commis-

sion of the World Evangelical Alliance (Bonn: VKW, 2014). Online at: http://www.bucer.org/uploads/tx_org/WoT_1_-_Thomas_K._Johnson_-_General_Revelation.pdf.

Christian Ethics in Secular Cultures, volume 2 in the World of Theology series published by the Theological Commission of the World Evangelical Alliance (Bonn: VKW, 2014). Online at: http://www.bucer.org/uploads/tx_org/WoT_2_-_Thomas_K._Johnson_-_Christian_Ethics_in_Secular_Cultures.pdf.

Edited, *Global Primary Sources: Freedom of Religion or Belief, Human Rights, and Responding to Persecution*, 2016, http://iirf.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/PDFs/GlobalPrimarySources_Discussion8.pdf.

Two of the book series of the World Evangelical Alliance in which Dr. Johnson is an editor, the *World of Theology* series published by the Theological Commission and the *Global Issues*

series published by the International Institute for Religious Freedom, are available as free downloads at <http://www.bucer.de/ressourcen/wea-cd.html>.

WEA Statements

The Bad Urach Call: Toward understanding suffering, persecution, and martyrdom for the global church in mission, 2010. This is a call to action addressed to the global evangelical movement which summarizes the larger Bad Urach Statement. Online at: <http://www.worldevangelicals.org/resources/source.htm?id=394>.

“Xenophobia, Hospitality, and the Refugee Crisis in Europe,” September, 2015, <http://www.worldea.org/news/4599/xenophobia-hospitality-and-the-refugee-crisis-in-europe>.

Dr. Johnson was the primary author of Efraim Tendero’s speech on “The Gospel and Religious Extremism,” March, 2016, http://www.worldea.org/images/wimg/files/The%20Gospel%20and%20Religious%20Extremism.pdf?utm_source=iContact&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=WEA%20Media%20Releases&utm_content=.

Booklets and essays on the WEA website

Adam and Eve, Who Are You? 2004, <http://www.worldevangelicals.org/resources/view.htm?id=84>.

Deceptive Philosophy, 2004, <http://www.worldevangelicals.org/resources/view.htm?id=112>.

Human Rights and Christian Ethics, 2005, <http://www.worldevangelicals.org/resources/view.htm?id=120>.

Progress, Knowledge, and God, 2005, <http://www.worldevangelicals.org/resources/view.htm?id=133>.

Interpreting the Ten Commandments: A Study in Special Hermeneutics, 2005, <http://www.worldevangelicals.org/resources/view.htm?id=123>.

<http://www.worldevangelicals.org/resources/view.htm?id=123>.

Sex, Marriage, and Science, 2005, <http://www.worldevangelicals.org/resources/view.htm?id=138>.

Paul’s Intellectual Courage in the Face of Sophisticated Unbelief, 2006, http://www.worldevangelicals.org/resources/rfiles/res3_132_link_1292365517.pdf.

Christ and Culture, 2007, <http://www.worldevangelicals.org/resources/view.htm?id=110>.

Biblical Principles in the Public Square: Theological Foundations for Christian Civic Participation, 2008, <http://www.worldevangelicals.org/resources/view.htm?id=79>.

Foundational Political Values to Guide Governmental and Family Care of Children, 2008, <http://www.worldevangelicals.org/resources/view.htm?id=78>.

What Makes Sex So Special? 2009, <http://www.worldevangelicals.org/resources/view.htm?id=146>.

The Moral Crisis of the West, 2009, <http://www.worldevangelicals.org/resources/view.htm?id=141>.

The Spirit of the Protestant Work Ethic and the World Economic Crisis, 2009, <http://www.worldevangelicals.org/resources/view.htm?id=143>.

Human Rights and the Human Quest, 2009, <http://www.worldevangelicals.org/resources/view.htm?id=121>.

Rights, Religions, and Ideologies, 2009, <http://www.worldevangelicals.org/resources/view.htm?id=137>.

Law and Gospel: The Hermeneutical/Homiletical Key to Reformation Theology and Ethics, 2009, <http://www.worldevangelicals.org/resources/view.htm?id=140>.

Triple Knowledge and the Reformation Faith, 2009, <http://www.worldevangelicals.org/resources/view.htm?id=145>.

“Thinking Twice about the Minaret Ban in Switzerland,” 2009, <http://www.worldevangelicals.org/resources/view.htm?id=248>.

“Why Evangelicals Need a Code of Ethics for Missions,” with Thomas Schirmacher, 2010, <http://www.worldevangelicals.org/resources/source.htm?id=293>.

Translated, edited, and expanded “Defection from Islam: A Disturbing Human Rights Dilemma” by Christine Schirmacher, 2010, <http://www.worldevangelicals.org/resources/view.htm?id=339>.

Translated and edited “Islamic Human Rights Declarations and Their Critics” by Christine Schirmacher, 2011, <http://www.worldevangelicals.org/resources/view.htm?id=340>.

“In Context: Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World: Recommendations for Conduct,” 2011, <http://www.worldevangelicals.org/resources/source.htm?id=293>.

Sabbath, Work, and the Quest for Meaning, 2011, <http://www.worldevangelicals.org/resources/view.htm?id=441>.

Education and the Human Quest: The Correlation of Existence and History, 2011, <http://www.worldevangelicals.org/resources/view.htm?id=440>.

“May Christians Go to Court?” With Thomas Schirmacher, 2011, <http://www.worldevangelicals.org/resources/view.htm?id=340>.

Dutch Reformed Philosophy in North America: Three Varieties in the Late Twentieth Century, 2012, <http://www.worldevangelicals.org/resources/source.htm?id=446>.

The Protester, the Dissident, and the Christian, 2012, <http://www.worldevangelicals.org/resources/view.htm?id=443>.

Other booklets and essays available online

“That Which Is Noteworthy and That Which Is Astonishing in the Global Charter of Conscience,” IJRF 5:1, 2012, 7-9, [http://www.iirf.eu/index.php?id=103&no_cache=1&tx_](http://www.iirf.eu/index.php?id=103&no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=102&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=1626)

[ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=102&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=1626](http://www.iirf.eu/index.php?id=103&no_cache=1&L=%25255C%25255C%25255C%2525271&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=102&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=2733).

“Religious Freedom and the Twofold Work of God in the World,” IJRF 6:1/2 2013, 17-24, http://www.iirf.eu/index.php?id=103&no_cache=1&L=%25255C%25255C%25255C%2525271&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=102&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=2733.

“Dualisms, Dualities, and Creation Care,” with Thomas Schirmacher, November, 2013, <http://wrfnet.org/sites/default/files/Dualisms%20Dualities%20and%20Creation%20Care%20%283%29.pdf>.

Dialogue with Kierkegaard in Protestant Theology: Donald Bloesch, Francis Schaeffer, and Helmut Thielicke, 2013, http://www.bucer.de/uploads/tx_org/mbstexte175_a_01.pdf.

The Trinity in the Bible and Selected Creeds of the Church: Resources for Study, 2013, <http://www.bucer.org/resources/details/mbs-texte-179-2013-the-trinity-in-the-bible-and-selected-creeds-of-the-church-resources-for-stud.html>.

Foreword entitled “The Holistic Mission of William Carey,” in *William Carey: Theologian—Linguist—Social Reformer*, edited by Thomas Schirmacher, volume 4 in the World of Theology Series of the WEA Theological Commission, 2013, http://www.bucer.org/uploads/tx_org/WoT_4_-_Thomas_Schirmacher__Ed.___William_Carey_-_Theologian_-_Linguist_-_Social_Reformer.pdf.

“The Crisis of Modernity and the Task of Moral Philosophy,” World Reformed Fellowship, April, 2014, <http://wrfnet.org/articles/2014/04/crisis-modernity-and-task-moral-philosophy#.VxDefPlcSko>.

“Faith and Reason Active in Love: The Theology of Creation Care,” with Thomas Schirmacher, World Reformed Fellowship, May, 2014, <http://wrfnet.org/sites/default/files/The%20Theology%20of%20Creation%20Care%20by%20Johnson%20and%20Schirmacher.pdf>.

“The Church’s Complex Relationship with the Idea of Wealth and Need,” a speech given at the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences, the Vatican, June, 2014, <http://wrfnet.org/articles/2014/07/wrf-member-thomas-johnson->

speaks-vatican-churchs-relationship-wealth-and-poverty#.VxDdn_lcSkp.

“Why Is Religious Extremism So Attractive? Life Together and the Search for Meaning,” IJRF, vol. 7 1/2, 2014, 9-12, http://www.iirf.eu/index.php?id=103&no_cache=1&L=%25255C%25255C%25255C%2525271&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=102&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=10481.

Family/Sexual Chaos and the Evangelical Faith, November, 2014, a booklet prepared on behalf of the Theological Commission of the World Evangelical Alliance and submitted to the Vatican Synod on the Family, published by the World Reformed Fellowship, <http://wrfnet.org/sites/default/files/Family%20and%20Sexual%20Chaos%20and%20the%20Evangelical%20Faith.pdf>.

“Lessons from Paris 2015: Clash of Civilizations or Battling Nihilisms?” January, 2015, <http://wrfnet.org/articles/2015/01/wrf-member-thomas-johnson-asks-about-lessons-paris-clash-civilizations-or-battling#.VxSf0P197IV>.

Foreword entitled, “The Moral Structure of the Condemnation of Slavery in Amos,” in *The Humanisation of Slavery in the Old Testament*, edited by Thomas Schirrmacher, volume 8 in the World of Theology Series of the WEA Theological Commission, 2015, http://www.bucer.org/uploads/tx_org/WoT_8_-_Thomas_Schirrmacher_ed._._The_Humanization_of_Slavery_in_the_OT.pdf.

“Religious Terrorism, Brussels, and the Search for Meaning,” March, 2016, http://evangelical-focus.com/blogs/1487/Religious_Terrorism_Brussels_and_the_Search_for_Meaning.

Books edited by Dr. Johnson

Edited and wrote a foreword entitled “The Bible and Global Social Problems,” Thomas Schirrmacher, *Racism, With an Essay by Richard Howell on Caste in India*, the WEA Global Issues Series, volume 8, 2011, http://www.bucer.org/uploads/tx_org/WEA_GIS_8_-_Thomas_Schirrmacher_-_Racism.pdf.

Edited and wrote a foreword entitled “The Father of Modern Education,” Jan Habl, *Lessons in Humanity: From the Life and Work of Jan Amos Komensky*, 2011, on the WEA CD zip file, <http://www.bucer.de/ressourcen/wea-cd.html>.

Christine Schirrmacher, *The Sharia: Law and Order in Islam*, the WEA Global Issues Series, 2013, volume 10, http://www.bucer.org/uploads/tx_org/WEA_GIS_10_-_Christine_Schirrmacher_-_Sharia.pdf.

Thomas Schirrmacher, *Human Trafficking: The Return to Slavery*, the WEA Global Issues Series, volume 12, 2013, http://www.bucer.org/uploads/tx_org/WEA_GIS_12_-_Thomas_Schirrmacher_-_Human_Trafficking.pdf.

Edited and wrote a foreword entitled “Ethics for Christians in the World,” Thomas Schirrmacher, *Leadership and Ethical Responsibility: The Three Aspect of Every Decision*, the WEA Global Issues Series, volume 13, 2013, http://www.bucer.org/uploads/tx_org/WEA_GIS_13_-_Thomas_Schirrmacher_-_Three_Aspects_of_Every_Decision.pdf.

Thomas Schirrmacher, *Fundamentalism: When Religion Becomes Dangerous*, the WEA Global Issues Series, volume 14, 2013, http://www.bucer.org/uploads/tx_org/WEA_GIS_14_-_Thomas_Schirrmacher_-_Fundamentalism.pdf.

Thomas Schirrmacher, *Advocate of Love: Martin Bucer as Theologian and Pastor*, volume 5 in the World of Theology Series, 2013, http://www.bucer.org/uploads/tx_org/WoT_5_-_Thomas_Schirrmacher_-_Advocate_of_Love_-_Martin_Bucer_as_Theologian_and_Pastor.pdf.

Thomas Schirrmacher, *Culture of Shame/Culture of Guilt*, volume 6 in the World of Theology Series, 2013, http://www.bucer.org/uploads/tx_org/WoT_6_-_Thomas_Schirrmacher_-_Culture_of_Shame_or_Guilt.pdf.

Edited and revised Thomas Schirrmacher, *The Koran and the Bible*, volume 7 in the World of Theology Series, 2013, http://www.bucer.org/uploads/tx_org/WoT_7_-_Thomas_Schirrmacher_-_The_Koran_and_the_Bible.pdf.

Ken Gnanakan, *Responsible Stewardship of God's Creation*, the WEA Global Issues Series, volume 11, 2014, http://www.bucer.org/uploads/tx_org/

WEA_GIS_11_-_Ken_Gnanakan_-_Responsible_Stewards.pdf.

Edited and wrote a foreword entitled “The Holocaust and German Thought on Human Rights,” Thomas Schirrmacher, *Human Rights: Promise and Reality*, the WEA Global Issues Series, volume 15, 2014, http://www.bucer.org/uploads/tx_org/WEA_GIS_15_-_Thomas_Schirrmacher_-_Human_Rights.pdf.

Edited and wrote a foreword for Jan Habl, *Teaching and Learning Through Story: Comenius' Labyrinth and the Educational Potential of Narrative Allegory*, 2014, on the WEA CD zip file, <http://www.bucer.de/ressourcen/wea-cd.html>.

Christine Schirrmacher, *Political Islam: When Faith Turns Out to Be Politics*, the WEA Global Issues Series, volume 16, 2016, http://www.bucer.org/uploads/tx_org/WEA_GIS_16_Christine_Schirrmacher_-_Political-Islam.pdf.

The Author

Über den Autor



Thomas K. Johnson is a graduate of Hope College (Michigan), and Covenant Theological Seminary (St. Louis). After a research fellowship at Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen (Germany), he received a Ph.D. in ethics from the University of Iowa. He 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 Special Envoy 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, the International Institute for Religious Freedom, 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.

Imprint Impressum

Martin Bucer Seminary is not a university under German law but only offers courses and lists those courses in a transcript. South African School of Theology (Tlhbane, North West Province) and Whitefield Theological Seminary (Florida, USA) and other schools outside of Europe accept those courses under their own legal responsibility for granting their degrees to students. Much of the teaching is by means of Saturday seminars, evening courses, extension courses, independent study, and internships.

The work of the seminary is largely supported by the contributions of donors. North American supporters may send contributions to our American partner organization, Global Scholars. One may write a check or make a donation with a credit card using the following methods.

By post: Write a check to "Global Scholars" with a note mentioning MBS and mail it to:

Global Scholars

P.O. Box 12147, Overland Park, KS 66282-2147, USA

Credit card donations at a secure site: <https://www.global-scholars.org/give-to-global-scholars/> When making a credit card donation, designate Martin Bucer Seminary in the appropriate place online after Prof Johnson's name.

EU:

IBAN DE52 3701 0050 0244 3705 07
BIC PBNKDEFF

Es erscheinen außerdem folgende Reihen:

(The following series of MBS Texts are also being published:)

Reformiertes Forum (Reformed Forum), Pro Mundis, Geistliche Impulse (Spiritual Impulses), Hope for Europe, Ergänzungen zur Ethik (Ethics), Philosophische Anstöße (Philosophical Initiatives), Vorarbeiten zur Dogmatik (Preliminaries for a Systematic Theology)

Study Centers:

International Study Centers: Berlin, Bielefeld, Chemnitz, Hamburg, Munich, Pforzheim

National Study Centers: Delhi, Helsinki, Istanbul, Prague São Paulo, Tirana, Zlin, Zurich

Publisher:

Thomas Schirrmacher, Prof. Dr. phil.
Dr. theol. DD.

Editor:

Ron Kubsch, M.Th.

Editorial Committee:

Prof. Thomas K. Johnson, Ph.D.;
Thomas Kinker, Th.D.; Titus Vogt

Contact:

mbsmaterialien@bucer.org
www.bucer.org

MBS-TEXTE (MBS-TEXTS)

Theologische Akzente
(Theological Accents)



MARTIN BUCER SEMINAR

We have published extensive information about our various courses, study centers, priorities, and research programs on our website that will answer most questions. All important technical data can be found at <http://www.bucer.org>.



MARTIN BUCER SEMINAR