



The foundation of our judiciary

Why is something right or wrong in a society

by Markus Reichenbach Dez, 2018
Introduction to a Biblical Christian Worldview

Content

1	<i>Introduction</i>	4
1.1	Why do we study the law of the Old Testament?	4
1.2	Why is Deuteronomy so important?	5
2	<i>The foundation of our judiciary</i>	5
2.1	Are our actions based on what we believe?	5
2.2	Which biblical laws are still relevant today?	7
3	<i>The moral laws</i>	8
3.1	The first law; everybody is under one law	8
3.2	The second law; the limitation of power	10
3.3	The third law; being accountable	12
3.4	The fourth law; the right to rest	13
3.5	The fifth law; right to respect and equality before the law	15
3.6	The sixth law; the right to life	16
3.7	The seventh law; the right to a stable family	17
3.8	The eighth law; the right to private property	19
3.9	The ninth law: the law of truth	21
3.10	The tenth law; the right to have more than others	22
3.11	The Bible, the foundation of today's society	24
4	<i>The civil order</i>	26
4.1	The individual (being responsible for oneself)	27
4.2	Family (love and fellowship)	28
4.3	The Church (Unity, fellowship, teaching)	30
4.4	The State (order and justice)	31
4.5	Conclusion	32
5	<i>Applied laws</i>	32
5.1	Personal laws	32
5.2	Private laws; regulations between individuals	32
5.3	Church laws: the individual and the church	41
5.4	Public laws; between the individual and the state	44
6	<i>Ceremonial laws</i>	47
7	<i>Conclusion</i>	48

Abstract

A lot of people believe the Bible is a good book with some moral advice. Especially the New Testament and the life of Jesus Christ teach a lot about good behavior. Reading the Bible might help people reflect on their own actions and maybe change some things in their lives. But if people see the Bible only this way they might just as well look to Mahatma Gandhi or Nelson Mandela. However, if the Bible is true it must have a different status than the moral writings of other people.

John Calvin thought that the Bible has three main areas of application. First, the Bible teaches that people are not perfect and need the forgiveness of Jesus Christ. Second, the Bible helps for personal growth and development, like a coach who helps an athlete become better and win the first prize. Third, the Bible gives a civil order whereby communities and nations can have a good, functioning system in which people can live in freedom and order.

The Bible doesn't just teach how people can have a good relationship with God. It actually lays the foundation for the civil order in all spheres of society too. The reformers believed this and the Bible became the foundation of today's civil order in the Western World. Even though Westerners often forget that the Bible made their culture strong, this book still has a strong influence in the world.

This paper will examine how biblical law from the Old Testament - laid the foundation of the Western civilization.

I think Christians have to find a fresh, new way of applying the biblical advices in today's society. Therefore, this paper will explore these questions and will help the reader understand how the Bible can build a foundation for a stable and strong society even today.

1 Introduction

1.1 Why do we study the law of the Old Testament?

Christians need grace. But grace is not enough. They need also to know the difference between right and wrong.

A farmer has to figure out what the best time for sowing is. If he sows his seeds at the wrong time, he will never be able to harvest any crop. Grace will not help to understand what the right time for sowing is. The farmer needs to study the law of nature. Not only does he need to love agriculture, but he also needs knowledge about the inner workings of nature.

Humans have to study the law of humanity given by the Creator if they want to understand how people can best live together. The law of the Creator gives people direction. Laws guide people so that they can know what is right or wrong. It helps them in choosing the right path and in doing things right. The law has been given to people by the Creator. Therefore, it is very important to understand the law of the Bible.

Of course, we know that Jesus fulfilled the law but he also said that¹ he hadn't come to abolish the law but to fulfill it. Should we therefore stone all those who commit adultery and cut off people's hands when they steal bread for their children?

Paul wrote² that people are delivered from the law. But he also claims³ that we must still uphold the law and says⁴ that the law is holy, righteous and good.

How can this work out in a Christian's life?

In fact, a lot of Christians think that the New Testament is the new guideline for them. The Anabaptist and Pietist churches in particular focused largely on the New Testament. Some communities began to call themselves New Testament churches or wanted to live like the first Christians. But the very first churches didn't even have the New Testament: The New Testament in its present form only emerged in the 4th century. When the first Christians wanted to live according to scripture, they looked to the Old Testament. These churches were not perfect. In the letters of the New Testament and throughout biblical history we can see that people did not live according to God's will. The important thing would be to study why they did what they did and not just what they did. Through this, the Old Testament could become a source of good Christian morals.

The New Testament actually doesn't make any sense without the Old Testament. We cannot understand Salvation without first understanding creation and the law.

People don't live in a perfect world. They live in a fallen world in which most people don't know the Creator anymore. In such a world it is not easy to implement the biblical laws. Therefore, living out the biblical laws in this world will probably never be perfect and needs a lot of grace. Christians often have the tendency to focus too much on Grace and to forget the law. They may think that the law cannot function in this world. Therefore, Christians think Grace is the most important value. People with this attitude lose God's vision for a better world and are more and more influenced by the world's law. Therefore, a Christian must have a clear biblical Christian worldview but also be able to find a compromise in the application.

I think it is really important to understand the connection between the Old and the New Testament and especially the relevance of the Old Testament laws.

John Calvin⁵ thought that the law of the Old Testament had three main areas of application. First, the law is a mirror for people, through which they see that they need God and that they

¹ Mat 5:17-20

² Rom 7:6

³ in Rom 3:31

⁴ In Rom 7:12

⁵ Huizinga Klaas, Johannes Calvin. Reformator und Begründer der Moderne

are not perfect. The law shows how evil people are. The law already points towards Jesus and demonstrates that people need more than what the Pharisees were doing. They were not able to follow the law out of their own strength. Paul said⁶ that the law brings about knowledge of sin.

Second, Calvin thought that the law was for personal growth. Paul said⁷ the law is a tutor and is important to discipline people; like a coach who helps an athlete become better and win the first prize. By studying the law, people are constantly trained to live a good life according to God's will.

Third, the law is the basis for civil order. It helps communities and nations in having a well-functioning system where people can live in freedom and order. This application of the law is often forgotten. The Bible doesn't just teach how people can have a good relationship with God. It actually lays the foundation for our civil order in the spheres of society.

In this paper, we will focus on the third type of application. How did the law of the Bible lay the foundation for the Western World?

1.2 Why is Deuteronomy so important?

The first five books of the Bible are the legal books. The Jews called it the Torah and it was the fundamental revelation of God. Deuteronomy was written by Moses before Israel entered the Promised Land. After 40 years of wandering through the desert, Moses gave a summary of the first four books to the new generation of Israelites. Only Caleb and Joshua had been with Moses when he gave the Israelites the previous laws that are written in the first four books. Therefore, he had to repeat almost every single law to the new generation. Deuteronomy is a summary of the other four books. Therefore, it is very important to study Deuteronomy since it is the summary of the Old Testament law.

In Deuteronomy, God revealed the principles of how a nation should work in a fallen world with fallen people. The rest of the Bible just repeats the law or shows what happens to the people who obey it and to those who don't.

The historical books of the Bible show the practical application of the Torah. In these books, there is no revelation of new laws, mainly explanations as to why the Israelites were successful or unsuccessful. The wisdom books of the Bible don't give new laws. Instead, they reveal the law in artistic ways such as songs or proverbs. The Prophets didn't give new laws. They just teach people the consequences of not repenting and turning back to God's advice.

The first five books in the New Testament tell about Jesus and his disciples. Jesus didn't come to abolish the law: he fulfilled it. The New Testament does not reveal new laws. Rather, it shows people how to interpret the laws of the Old Testament in the light of Jesus Christ. The New Testament letters do not give new laws either. They explain to the Churches how they can live out of faith in the light of Jesus Christ. In the end we find the Revelation of Jesus Christ. This book doesn't reveal a new law. It teaches how Christians should live after the Ascension of the Messiah when evil is still in the world.

2 The foundation of our judiciary

2.1 Are our actions based on what we believe?

The biggest lie of the world that people believe is that their actions will not have consequences. God said⁸: Today I have set before you life and death. Therefore, choose the right thing love the Lord and follow his commandments so that you may live a long life.

⁶ Rom 3:20

⁷ In Gal 3:1

⁸ Deut 30:15-20

People's actions will determine their future. This is a spiritual law similar to a natural law that humans cannot change it. If someone jumps out of an airplane without a parachute, he will die. He cannot change the law of gravity. When somebody drinks too much alcohol, there will be consequences. However, people often don't believe that.

People probably think like this because the consequences of spiritual laws are not immediate. With natural laws the consequences are immediate: If people jump out of an airplane they die immediately. But in the long term the spiritual law will also have an effect. If people don't take care of their marriages, those marriages will decay and end in a divorce. Even though it might take a long time until it happens. If people don't take care of their bodies they will suffer in later years. But people do not think that this is true because they do not see the consequences right now. Therefore, this spiritual law gets often lost.

The new generation has to understand the following spiritual principle: If people choose to do the right thing, they will be successful; if they choose to do the wrong thing, they will receive the curse. Because this law will give them life, even everlasting life.

Moses told the Israelites to go up to Mount Ebal and Mount Garizim⁹. The first group on Mount Gerizim should shout the following: you shall be blessed if you follow the commandments of God. The other group on Mount Ebal shouted: if you do not follow the law of God you shall be cursed. This core message of the law was not just told to the people and written down. Moses let them play a theater about it, so that they could hear it, experience it and see it.

The Torah¹⁰ shows that people can choose the blessing or the curse on their own. Good or bad things don't just happen: people will bring about the blessing or the curse through their own behavior.

This is the core of the law. If people follow the commandments of the Lord they shall be blessed. If they do not follow the commandments they shall be cursed. Therefore, if people want to have a good and stable nation where they can live in freedom and order, they have to follow God's commandments.

Deuteronomy claims that there is no other nation who has great laws like the Israelites do¹¹.

This core theme appears again and again in the Torah¹²: God wants to bring his people to a Promised Land where milk and honey flow. He wants to give the Lost Paradise back to them, but on the condition that they follow his law. Living is not possible if people do not follow the spiritual law and just do whatever they want to. The statement that people will live forever in his Promised Land if they follow the law of God is mentioned more than 300 times in the Old Testament¹³.

But the people never reached this promise. Now, through Jesus Christ, this became possible and people will get to the Promised Land. But the condition is still the same: they have to follow the law of God.

In fact, Jesus does appear in Deuteronomy: In chapter 16, the Passover lamb is a symbol for Jesus. The blood of the lamb protected the first-born sons when the Israelites were in Egypt. They did not die because they as they fled from Egypt. Therefore, they should do this every year to remind what God did. Today we remember Jesus' blood protect his children so they don't have to die.

Moses spoke about a prophet who will come out of their midst¹⁴. People have to obey and follow him otherwise they have to face the consequences.

⁹ Deut 11:29

¹⁰ Deut 30:18-19

¹¹ Deut 4:8

¹² Some examples: Deut 4:40, Deut 11:8-9, Deut 5:29, . Deut 11:26-28

¹³ Some examples: Jer 17:25, Jer 25:5, Jer 37:25, Joe 3:20

¹⁴ Deut 18:15-19

Deuteronomy emphasises the circumcision of the hearts¹⁵. Often, Christians think the Old Testament is about justice and the law and the New Testament is about love. But the Torah teaches to love God is the beginning of everything. This statement appears again and again in the Torah. Jesus once said that the most important thing is to love the Lord with all your heart. This is in fact a quote from Deuteronomy¹⁶.

The main point in the Torah is not the law but the right attitude towards God and the community. It is emphasised that the Israelites should trust the Lord and love him with their whole heart. In the Old Testament, the Israelites often followed other gods. They trusted in them and started to love them. They looked for help from other gods.

2.2 Which biblical laws are still relevant today?

Are the laws of the Old Testament still relevant today? Some laws cannot be applied today but some probably can. But why do people think some laws are still relevant and some not? The Torah differentiates between different types of laws. Not all laws had the same importance or the same impact on society.

2.2.1 The moral laws

The Ten Commandments are emphasized the most in the Bible. They appear two times: In Exodus 20 and in Deuteronomy 5 and they are more or less exactly the same in those two passages. Only the fourth law is different: Exodus tells that the Sabbath is ordained because God rested on the seventh day. In Deuteronomy, Moses said that God ordained the Sabbath because he freed the Israelites from Egypt.

After God spoke the Ten Commandments¹⁷ the Bible says that all the Israelites heard God speaking the Ten Commandments. They Israelites said that Moses should go to God and receive the rest of the law on his own. They would obey Moses.

God spoke the Ten Commandments directly to the people but not the other laws, which is mentioned in Exodus 20 as well.

The forefathers believed that God only wrote the Ten Commandments on the stone tablets. In all the paintings and illustrations only the Ten Commandments are on the tablets. The people heard the Ten Commandments directly from God and God himself wrote them on stone tablets on the mountain.

Therefore, the Ten Commandments are emphasized more in comparison to the other biblical laws.

The conventions, the constitutions and Human Rights are based on the Ten Commandments and not on the other laws of the Bible. Therefore, the Ten Commandments had the most influence throughout history.

Therefore, the Ten Commandments can be called the moral law. They are something like the constitution of the Torah. These laws have been put into practice until today and therefore Christians can claim their absolute validity still today. The moral laws lay the foundation and teach the principles but they do not tell how we should apply them.

One of the laws states that people should not kill. But what happens when someone is killed? How can people apply this moral law in their situation? In order to answer these questions, God gave applied laws.

The moral law is the foundation of the laws, the constitution of the Bible.

¹⁵ Deut 30.6

¹⁶ Deut 6.5

¹⁷ Deut 5:22-27

2.2.2 The applied laws

The applied laws specify how to apply the moral law in different times and cultures. Those laws cannot be applied in the same way in another cultures and times.

People should study how the Israelites applied the moral law in *their* time and *their* culture. Through this they will better understand how to apply the moral law in today's culture. The applied laws were told by God and delivered by Moses.

Christians are called to understand the principles of the applied law and to figure out how to put it into practice in their own culture. The practical application in today's time and culture will be different.

2.2.3 Ceremonial laws

The ceremonial laws define how the Israelites should approach the Lord. Jesus fulfilled all the ceremonial laws on the cross. Christians don't need to make sacrifices and offerings. They don't need to go to the priests any more in order to approach God.

Not all the people were able to fulfill these laws: The foreigners and heathens did not have the opportunity to act them out. Poor people did not have the possibility to pay for the sacrifices. Not all the people were able to come to the one place of worship.

Jesus is now the everlasting offering, the pure offering, which was able to break this curse. Everyone can now approach God. It doesn't matter if they are rich or poor, handicapped or not, in America or Europe. Everybody can come and people do not have to go to one specific place.

The ceremonial laws were just a shadow of Jesus Christ and are not applicable anymore today. However, it is still important to understand them. It helps Christians in having a better understanding of what Jesus did for them on the cross. But they do not have to keep these laws any more.

3 The moral laws

Often, Christians see the Bible merely as moral or personal advice. But the Bible has the potential to change an entire society. Therefore, in this paper I interpret the law in terms of what it says about society. Of course, there is a lot more to it. But in order to understand how people can live together according to God's will, we should first study the moral biblical laws.

3.1 The first law; everybody is under one law

You shall have no other gods before me¹⁸.

God is the Creator of the world and he knows best how people can live together in a good way. There is no one else who knows better. Therefore, God the Creator must be our only absolute reference point.

Only when a community has only one God, can they live together in freedom and order. Of course, this one God must be the Creator and not just any other god. Even though people believe in God they may still believe in all their self-made gods. How can we know for sure that this God that people believe in is in fact the Creator, the one God? It needs a law given from God.

It is necessary that all people of a community believe in one single God and in one law. Otherwise, a nation cannot function. Nowadays, almost every Nation has a constitution, a single law that keeps everyone accountable to the same degree. Today, people understand that principle: A nation can only develop in a healthy way when it has a law common to all.

¹⁸ Deut 5.7

The first commandment shows this principle. If every member of the community had their own god, everyone would have different ideas as to how things should be done.

If one person believes in Mammon and another person believes in God, they will not agree on what is important. They will not agree on the direction in which a nation should be headed. But if everyone has the same God - the Creator - and trusts in him, everyone would have the same understanding about what is important and what is right or wrong. They would therefore have the same laws, which can keep a community together. This community will prosper and live in freedom and order.

What happens when everybody does not believe in the same God?

The Creator made men and women in his image, as male and female¹⁹. Everyone believed in this and saw it as absolute. Nobody debated it. But in the last few decades, this thousand-year-old idea has been shaken.

Scientists have found more than thirty different genders. If people abolish God, they abolish the concept of male and female. The loss of God has consequences and the thousand-year-old ideas of the West are lost more and more.

The Western World does not have a clear definition of what humans are anymore. New scientific methods allow for the creation of new lives and brought about new methods such as the genetic modification of embryos or preimplantation genetic diagnosis. Genes can be modified according to the wishes of the parents. All these new methods have increasingly become an ethical threat. Should scientists do everything just because it is possible? What is good, allowed or right? Science cannot provide an ethical or moral absolute. In the end, scientists become like God: They decide what is right or wrong.

No one can define life arbitrarily and decide who should be allowed to live. Humans are not merely a product of science and matter.

In a secular world, everything is just a possibility or an opportunity. Because of the loss of God, there is no moral absolute anymore. The foundation of the West, built mainly by the reformers, has been lost. As Nietzsche said: without God there will be no more morality. People using their power is what will be considered moral²⁰.

When people don't have one single God society will end in a power game. Because they abolished God, they might face that which the West never wanted to see again after the Second World War.

Practical application in today's society

Thus, the application of the first law translates to having a constitution. For this reason, the modern states have created constitutions. The constitution stands as a supreme authority above the executive, legislative, and judicial branches and above all other stakeholders in a state. There are a variety of tasks in a state but all must abide by the same law.

The principle of a constitution has been derived from the Ten Commandments. It is an application of the principles of God. The first adequate democracy was the church of Geneva, which was based on a constitution: the Geneva convention. These Ideas quickly found their way into the constitutions of Scotland, England, Holland, America and all the modern states of today.

The reformers understood that a nation needs a common law, a constitution. But this law cannot come from men because it has to stand above them and everybody has to be accountable to it. Otherwise, it is merely a law made by the powerful.

In a secular democracy the powerful will always hold the majority. In such a society, the powerful will be above the weak. They will just do whatever they deem right according to

¹⁹ Gen 1.26

²⁰ Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche 1844-1900, the will of power, 1882

their opportunities. In contrast, a constitution makes it clear that everybody is under the same law, including the majority. A constitution has to be derived from God; otherwise it cannot claim to be a constitution and to provide Human Rights.

The Ten Commandments found their way into the world. A functioning democracy was only possible when the reformers translated the Bible in the common languages- the revelation of God - readable for all. Like many others, the Swiss Federal Constitution begins with the words: "In the name of God the Almighty." Peace and order were possible when all men lived under the same law and donors.

Democracy had never worked out before the reformers made the constitution of God available to all. One with the Bible in his hand could stand before the King and said what you are doing is wrong. The Bible had the highest authority. Even in today's secular world, the influence of the reformation holds our societies together. But what will happen when this influence is lost completely?

3.2 The second law; the limitation of power

You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them; for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments²¹.

The second commandment forbids anyone to paint a picture of God or his creation. It is not literally about painting a picture but it is about making something absolute and worshipping it. For example, People can make money their absolute and worship it. They become very concerned about it and money determines their lives. Money determines what they do or don't do. Those people make money into a graven image and make it god.

The Israelites were always in danger of looking to a graven image instead of looking to God. Today, we often think that the Israelites were silly to trust dead stones more than a living God. But are we any better today? People don't pray to a stone anymore but they put their trust in dead gods too: into the state, money, cars, sports or a lot of other things. The gods have changed but the danger is still the same.

Others made themselves the center of the universe. People become dictators, popes or kings who decide everything. They made a graven image of themselves. No one is able to see the whole picture on their own and create a god or become gods themselves. Nobody sees everything.

Practical application for the Israelites

In Israel, the people chose their leaders.²² Thus, the Israelites confirmed Moses²³. When the leaders did not please the Israelites, they would choose another one. In their system, there was a representative who was elected democratically. The power was limited. Nobody could decide everything by themselves.

God didn't want a king in Israel. He wanted to be their king. But the Israelites wanted to have one just like all the other nations around them²⁴. They thought they would have a better life, a better economy if they were like the other nations. In fact, the reverse was true: They had better law than all the other nations.

Before the Israelites had a king, everyone did what they wanted to do. The fear of God was gone and they were no more able to live in freedom. The unity in Israel was lost. Instead of

²¹ Deut 5:8-10

²² Deut 16:18

²³ Deut 1:14, 5:4-5 and 22-31

²⁴ 1Sam 8:5

taking responsibility, acting morally and living according to God's law, they asked for a king who would guide them. The Israelites thought that the other nations had a more secure and stable system. Instead of having freedom based on a law they ended up in a system defined by arbitrariness and the oppression of people.

God knew that a king would become God and the son of the king would always be the next king. Perhaps, at first the king would be a good king but at some point, he would become worse. This is what happened in Israel's history. The only way to get rid from a king is now to kill him. In such a system it is not possible to limit power without violence. But if people use violence to get rid of violence, they are no better than their tyrants. Both will end in failure.

Saul, the first king of the Jews, misused his power by making sacrifices instead of waiting for Samuel the priest. The Bible sets forth a clear separation of power. The political and the religious power should not be in the same hands. They should be separated. Saul needed Samuel and Samuel needed Saul. But Saul did Samuel's job alone and became the supreme power over all.

Saul, the first king, was a failure and God started again with a new family. David, the second king, was a good king but his son was problematic. Two generations after David the kingdom fell apart and later, they were taken into exile.

Another aspect was that the law was administered by the priests²⁵. The ruler was not supposed to be above the law. The Priests were always allowed to go to the ruler and show him that what he did was wrong. It was a separation of the executive and the legislative branch. The law was primarily given by God but the interpretation was done by the priests and not by the king or the ruler.

When there was an argument about a certain legal case, people had to go to the priests or to the judges at a specific place²⁶. The judgment was supposed to be given by judges or priests. This was the judiciary power. God's advice, the separation of power and it is still the best structure for a well-functioning nation.

Moses' father in law, Jethro, advised him to not rule all the people on his own²⁷. He should divide the people into groups of one thousand, one hundred, fifty and ten. The people should choose a representative and put him in charge of their territories. In Deuteronomy²⁸ God commanded Moses to do the same thing. Therefore, this advice is not just Jethro's idea it is God's idea. But at that time Jethro, he understood God better than Moses.

God's advice is that it is better to give responsibility to the people who do the work and not to the rulers or judges somewhere else, because it is not possible that on single person sees the whole picture. This idea resulted in Israel's policy of a clear separation of power, which is a concept that other well-known nations at this time did not have. As long as everyone held this second commandment the nation was safe. The Bible shows that putting the second law into practice means having a horizontal and vertical separation of power.

Those principles can be found everywhere in the Bible but also in God himself. Christians believe that God is and was never alone: he has always been in a trinity. He is three persons living together in freedom and order. The idea of the separation of power can be found in God himself. These three persons live in subordination to one another and thus became a model for today's communities.

Practical application in today's society

Today, people call this concept the separation of power in a federalist system based on a constitution. This is common in every nation even if it doesn't always work in practice. The idea of the modern state can already be found in the Bible.

²⁵ Deut 31:24-28

²⁶ Deut 17:8-11

²⁷ Ex 18 17-27

²⁸ Deut 1.12-18

Especially the reformers understood those ideas from the Old Testament. The church of Geneva became the first democratic community based on the separation of power and on a constitution²⁹.

Nowadays, those principles are translated into the well-known separation of power into the executive, legislative and judiciary branches. This tripartite system does not directly come from the Bible, but rather from Montesquieu³⁰ who was influenced by the principles of the Bible. It is a good way to apply the principle of the separation of power in today's society.

Another other example can be found in Switzerland. In 1848 the Swiss decided that their nation should not have one single president. Therefore, the executive leadership consists of a team of seven members. The Federal council incorporates the biggest parties from the right to the left. These seven people have to find unity in diversity. The constitution makes it clear that they must find unity. The Swiss thought that this is much better than being ruled by just one person, switching between the right and the left. This unique system exemplifies the idea no one can see the full picture on their own. It made Switzerland strong and stable. The Swiss believed that the best policies would be achieved when different parties talk to each other, listen to each other and find a compromise.

The Bible and the course of history demonstrate this principle very clearly: A society can function best when the power in a nation is divided among many, which is now requirement for any modern state. This second moral law is not just meant for the state. It will function in every community: In families, churches or societies.

This moral law found many ways of application in the Bible, throughout history and in different spheres of society. It was not always put into practice in the same way but always based on the principle of the second law: people should not make a graven image of something other than God. Pauls described this as follows: humans are looking into a broken mirror where they can only see a part of the whole³¹.

The Bible shows that people tend to make something else absolute besides God. It can be the state, oracles or money. It has always been a danger: People look to such images instead of trusting the living God still today.

3.3 The third law; being accountable

You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain³².

How do people misuse the name of the Lord? Priests could advise people for their own sake. People believe in them because of their authority. Those priests misuse the name of the Lord. A police officer can misuse his position too: People trust him because of his uniform. One way that police officers misuse their position is asking people to pay money in order to be granted their rights. Misusing the position that God gives to people is therefore not allowed. It will lead to corruption. Therefore, everybody needs the fear of God.

God advised the Israelites to vote in the leaders. They had to choose wise people³³. The leaders in the Bible were tested and had to be accountable. They had to be morally stable and responsible just as Paul advised Titus³⁴. They had to be people who don't misuse the name of the Lord and who would not look to out only for themselves. They had to be leaders who served the people.

²⁹ John Calvin wrote the first Catechism of Geneva 1537. Later he made it more understandable in the second Catechism 1542.

³⁰ Charles-Louis de Secondat, Baron de La Brède de Montesquieu 1689-1755 (de l'esprit des loix 1748)

³¹ 1 Cor 13.12

³² Deut 5:11

³³ Dt 1.12-17, 16 18-20

³⁴ Titus 1.4-16

People can misuse the name of the Lord when they adorn themselves with borrowed plumes, claiming something for themselves in order to achieve a better position, a position that they do not deserve.

Practical application in today's society

Laws in the West were made according to God's advice. Politicians have to be accountable to others and everything they say is made public so that people can test and criticise it. Politicians will be elected in a fair way: when they misuse their position people will not vote for them anymore.

The romans already had the idea of a republic. The court cases were held in public. This was supposed to guarantee that people didn't misuse their position. However, it didn't work out in Rome because they didn't have a constitution that represented only one God. Rulers could say in public what they wanted, because nobody could hold them accountable. Pilate could condemn Jesus to death, although he testified that he was not guilty. There were no Human Rights or constitution that would hinder such arbitrary decisions.

In our society, it is not allowed to copy others without mentioning it. When students do it, they will not pass their exams at the university. Leaders can be tested and criticised according to God's word. This will surely make the world a better place.

Misusing the name of the Lord hinders others to be granted their rights and to achieve the positions they deserve. God knew that people in a fallen world would tend to look out for themselves first. Therefore, he gave them this law.

The three first laws lay the foundation for the following laws. Jesus said that people should first love God and then their neighbours³⁵ Scholars saw this passage as the summary of the Ten Commandments. The commandment to love God summarises the first three laws and the commandment to love your neighbour summarises the last seven laws.

The first three laws show who God really is: God himself is a trinity, unity in diversity - a community that functions in freedom and order. Because he made humans in his own image, a community can only live together when they live according to the law of the Creator; when they walk in the image of the Creator; when they accept only one God and one law; when people work in teams and not as kings, when they won't misuse their position for their own sake. Then, a community can live together in freedom and order.

3.4 The fourth law; the right to rest

Observe the Sabbath day, to keep it holy, as the LORD your God commanded you. Six days you shall labour and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter or your male servant or your female servant, or your ox or your donkey or any of your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates, that your male servant and your female servant may rest as well as you. You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore, the LORD your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day³⁶.

In Exodus³⁷ God gave the same ten laws but with a small difference. Only the fourth commandment has a difference. In Exodus the Israelites were told to keep the Sabbath because God rested on the seventh day; in Deuteronomy, it is because of the liberation from Egypt.

Work and rest are both a part of God and because people are made in his image work and rest are a part of humanity as well. It is a Human Right. Not only should people rest, they are

³⁵ Mt 22.37-39

³⁶ Deut 5:12-15

³⁷ Exodus 20.8-11

also responsible for their employees and family members being able to rest. Workers have a right to rest on the Sabbath.

When they are working six days, it is important for people to rest on the seventh day. Work is a service for God. It means to serve people. Work is a service to people and not only a means to earn money, which is what many people think. When Christians only work for money they do not really work. They have now the desire to serve God on the Sabbath. But they should rest on the Sabbath.

Christians should worship God on the Sabbath, meaning they should honour him, bow down on their knees and kiss his hand³⁸. There are two different styles of worshipping God: One is the service to the children of God. The Hebrew word refers to this worship too³⁹. The other one is to bow down before God and adore him.

Work is not a curse as many people may think. Work was created before the Fall and is the destiny of humans. The desire to serve God is deep within them. They cannot live without work, without serving people.

In the Old Testament God punished the people who did not keep the Sabbath⁴⁰. The people who did not follow the Sabbath forced others to work too. Therefore, these people opposed God and humans.

God knows that it is necessary for people to rest. There will be consequences when people do not follow this commandment. In a fallen world, people have a tendency to want more success and more money. They force other people to work for their own benefit. Because of this, God gave this law.

God saw the stressed people in Egypt. They had to follow the way of the Egyptians and they had to work a lot. He liberated them from it and brought them into peace. This is not only valid for the Israelites. It is valid for today: People are stressed and have to follow the way of the world. But God wants to liberate them to find rest in him. It is not just something you do on one Sunday it is an attitude. The writer in Hebrews promised people continual rest in God and not just on a Sunday⁴¹. This actually happened through Jesus: People can find rest in him and are free from the way of the world.

Jesus healed people and picked crops on a Sabbath. It appears that Jesus didn't obey this law. He said that the law is not for the Sabbath; it is for people⁴². It is always good to help and to do good things. The Jews made the Sabbath into a legal obligation but they didn't understand the idea behind it. Because they didn't understand it, they applied this principle the wrong way and it became a curse for people.

Practical application in today's society

One way that this has been put into practice in the Western world is the fact that on Sunday the shops are closed. In Switzerland people are required to keep quiet after 10:00 pm. When their neighbours are too noisy after 10:00 pm people can call the police. On weekdays between 10:00 pm and 6:00 am in the night trucks are not allowed to drive; on Sunday, even the whole day. Unions stood up to limit working hours and the workers are entitled to a certain amount of free days and holidays. All of these examples are an implementation of the fourth law. In cultures not influenced by Christianity those structures are mostly missing.

Farmers didn't work on Sundays because they trusted in God's provision. God would give them enough even though they lost ten hours of work. People didn't do business on Sundays even though they lost customers. Even from an economic perspective it was not profitable to

³⁸ shaw-khaw' Deut 4.19

³⁹ law-bad'

⁴⁰ Exodus 4 15,32ff

⁴¹ Heb 4.1-10

⁴² Mk 2.27

do so. They didn't work because of the fear of God. It was a commonly accepted idea and people lost their reputation when they worked on Sundays.

Restaurants and hospitals are open on the Sabbath. But this is not necessarily a negative thing: Those workers can rest on another day.

However, nowadays this starts to change and shops are open 24/7. People always argue that it is necessary for good business. But do they not destroy communities? With the shops closed, families could sit together and could have fellowship.

Even though people have a day off on Sunday they are often driven by many different activities, entertainment and sports. Even the church is often no longer a place of peace. This law was implemented not just in the Bible but also in Western society.

Rest is a spiritual concept. If people lose God, they lose the Sabbath and the practices that are derived from it. Without God the highest value is simply to raise the Gross Domestic Product. But by doing so humans lose their humanity more and more.

The main idea is that humans need rest. It is not good to only work. People need quiet times. The question remains if people can find rest in God. Calm down and don't always stress about getting more. Can people tune out from everyday obligations, burdens and unnecessary information? Do people find rest today or are they constantly busy? Do they find rest so that they can take care of their spirituality and find God?

This law found its way into our society and became the foundation of the world's understanding of today. But if we lose the fear of God this idea of the fourth commandment will be lost as well.

3.5 The fifth law; right to respect and equality before the law

Honour your father and your mother, as the LORD your God commanded you, that your days may be long, and that it may go well with you in the land that the LORD your God is giving you⁴³.

Children have to honour their parents. In Proverbs it says that the children should obey their parents⁴⁴. This will make them wise. In the New Testament, Paul tells the children to obey their parents⁴⁵.

Honour is first an attitude and not a legal obligation. People should be ready to subordinate themselves to one another in every community. Communities cannot work when there is no structure. But first the attitude has to be right. People must be ready to listen and subordinate themselves to one another according to the position God gave to them because this is God's created order.

This order found its application in the New Testament: children have to obey their parents. Paul delineated the hierarchical structure for families in the New Testament⁴⁶.

The notion that the man is the head of the family is not explicitly mentioned in the Old Testament probably because it was not up for debate. In the Old Testament culture, it was absolutely clear that the man is the head of a family. But because this notion was questioned in the New Testament, Paul had to clarify the structure. But we can assume that it was always God's idea for family.

This commandment makes it clear that husband and wife are on the same level. They have the same value and lead the family together as a team. "God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created them; male and female He created them⁴⁷."

⁴³ Deut 5:16

⁴⁴ Proverbs 6, 20-23

⁴⁵ Eph 5.1

⁴⁶ Eph 5.23

⁴⁷ Genesis 1.27

Men and women are both made in the image of God. They have the same value, but not the same role. The husband is the head of the family but he does not have more value than his wife. The wife is the helper. But both are commanded to rule and govern the world. The man can debate and argue with the woman. The man doesn't have more wisdom. But he is the boss, but a boss like Jesus, who is ready to serve and to die for the wife.

God didn't teach anarchy or communism. He gave people clear advice: a hierarchy where people have to obey one another. This is not just confined to families. It can be applied in any community, business, church or government. Since God himself is a team in a hierarchical structure, every community would work best in this way. But everybody has to have a clear role and clear responsibilities.

Practical application in today's society.

This law has been applied in almost every constitution in the world and also in Human Rights. Everyone, both men and women, are equal before the law. In nations that were not influenced by Christianity men and women often do not have the same rights. This law laid the foundation of Western civilisation. People are equal before the law.

Today, politics embrace Human Rights. A right has to do with an obligation. In this case, obligation means to submit to others according to the role God has given to a person. Christians think that everybody has value, which is independent of what they are or do.

But who can guarantee that someone's value is respected, when God is abolished? In such a world, people only feel be valuable when they fit in or when they are profitable and successful. Now, people fight for their own rights but they are no longer willing to submit to one another. Therefore, have equality before the law can only be granted when people subordinate to each other.

The idea of Human Rights will not work if everyone is only concerned with their own rights. Every right entails an obligation. But what is that obligation if there is no absolute moral standard anymore which people adhere to? When the fear of God is gone, people won't feel accountable to an absolute law anymore. They just do things for their own gain or in order to achieve what they want.

Moreover, the idea of Human Rights will not work without God: More and more the powerful will determine who is right and who is wrong. Human right will be only given when people subordinate themselves the spiritual law of the Creator.

3.6 The sixth law; the right to life

You should not murder⁴⁸!

God protects the life of every human being. The Israelites were not allowed to murder each other. But what happened if someone was murdered? The actual term used in this passage is "murder" and not "kill", as it is often translated. Murder is different from killing. Murder. Mean killing without intent. But even before God said that people who murder other must die⁴⁹.

In a fallen world God knew that the strong would often misuse their position and murder others and that there had to be a consequence for that.

If someone murdered someone else, they had to pay with their own life. The death penalty was applied only when the offender was found guilty. A murderer could flee to a place of refuge, where he was protected by the law, until a court looked into their case. If the person had been killed by accident, the accused was set free. But if the killing was intentional, they had to pay for it with their own life; because in God's eyes life is holy and has to be protected.

⁴⁸ Deut 5.18

⁴⁹ Gen 9.5

Practical application in today's society

The sixth commandment affected all modern constitutions. In Article 10.1 the Swiss Federal Constitution states: Everyone has the right to live. The death penalty is prohibited. This was the great invention of the West: Everybody has the right to live. No one is allowed to put themselves above this principle, not even a king or a pope.

A Human Right means no one can change it or relativize it. But now the West is abolishing this invention again: What about abortion? According to the Swiss constitution, it would be considered a criminal act.

Women decide on their own whether or not their baby should live. Doctors or scientist define whether or not a baby should live. Nowadays, the people in power or the democratic majority defines when life starts and when it ends. Does the West not go in the wrong direction? Does the West not go back to the Middle Ages where kings and popes made decisions as to who can live and who cannot?

When God is forgotten as a giver of life then the definition of life becomes arbitrary. The power of definition will be in the hand of the powerful, the people who have the right tools or opportunities to influence others.

3.7 The seventh law; the right to a stable family

And you shall not commit adultery⁵⁰.

A marriage is when a woman and a man promise each other to stay together whatever happens. This is the best representation of who God is in the world. Therefore, God ordained a law to protect this precious unity. He knows that in a fallen world this unity is under great pressure. But since people are not able to see God anymore, they do not see the importance of it.

One day, the Pharisees wanted to test Jesus and they asked him why Moses allowed divorce, if it is in fact not the will of God⁵¹. The Pharisees emphasised that Moses allowed it and not God⁵². Jesus told them Moses allowed it because of the hardness of their heart. People live in a fallen world and mostly look out for themselves first. In a marriage, two people are involved and perhaps one of them doesn't want to follow God. In such a case, divorce might be the lesser of two evils, even though in principle God does not approve of it.

In the same verses Jesus says that in the beginning God created husband and wife. A man shall leave his father and his mother to live with his wife and they will be one flesh. That which God has joined together men should not separate. This is the will of God, the moral law, but in a fallen world it is implemented in an imperfect way.

When people get a divorce, they hurt themselves because they are distancing themselves from the original design; from the purpose they are made for; from the image of the Creator. God did everything to protect this unity and Christians should do the same.

If a man has harems he can always go to other women when one of them does not please him. If he has only one wife, he has to listen to her. But in God's eyes man has to learn to settle conflicts and to not walk away. He cannot send her away. She can be bold and say things he might not like without having to fear him leaving her. This is an act of discipleship. They both grow into the image of God and grow closer to the original design. They will both grow and become stronger.

Practical application in today's society

Most constitutions state that a man and a woman make a family. Fifty years ago, the state forbade unmarried couples to live together. The state protected marriages. The churches

⁵⁰ Deut 5:18

⁵¹ Matt. 19, 4 - 10

⁵² Deut 24.1-4

taught that sexual relationships belonged in a marriage. There was a commonly held view of what a family is and the teaching of the churches held it together. The government protected families. But now the international community wants to change that: In most Western countries it is up for debate.

Today, more than 50% of marriages in the West end in divorce. It is no longer clear what a family is. Is it man and woman or man and man? What was deemed bad 50 years ago seems to be common today. A family is a spiritual concept and without the fear of God families will disappear.

Why did the West become so strong? Historians say it was because of the families. The family is the best representative of the original image of humanity. It fits creation and reality best and is therefore the best unity to form a strong society. A society is never stronger than healthy families are. Luther's table talks created the foundation of marriage⁵³. Luther said that one year of marriage was more discipleship than an entire life in the monastery.

The family had made Europe strong and it became superior to the Ottoman Empire throughout the Middle Ages.

When Christianity lost its roots in 19th and 20th centuries, the idea of the family became muddled. America has kept this idea more or less until today. In the last century the American women became superior to European women. Europe on the other hand celebrates adultery. The poets praise the adulterers. In America no one can become president if he does not have a proper marriage. But a president in Europe can travel around with his mistress.

Women became strong in the West because men could not separate from them or have other lovers or women. Sexual freedom weakened women. They became weak and could not confront their husbands anymore without the risk of being divorced. But today everything is different. It has even become a matter of honour how many lovers someone has.

In Islam, husbands can beat their women. If they do not obey, they will be punished. This is how the Islamic culture keeps the family together. It's not good, but it's probably better than in the West. Western men do not beat their wives, but the families break apart. Islam does not have a definition of the equality between man and woman but families are kept intact. In Islam, women are forced to have children. In the West people abort their children and dismiss their wives. Families break apart. Secularism will probably become worse than Islam. The West will decay because families are falling apart.

The Bible states that a husband should love his wife and that the wife should submit to the husband. But in a fallen world, it seems impossible that families stay intact. Therefore, a lot of people think it is best to separate. Young people have seen many bad examples. They gave up and they don't believe in families anymore. Western culture and media support it and destroy the idea of the family. Politicians want to support families with money and day care facilities, but they will destroy them. Families cannot be saved with money alone.

But Christians have another viewpoint. They understand God. He wants to heal relationships. Relationships are the core of humanity. God does not want marriages to break down. He wants to bring healing to them. Jesus made it possible. Forgiveness and healing can happen. That which seems impossible for humans is possible for God. Since man is not able to love his wife out of his own strength Jesus did it on the cross.

A family is a spiritual concept and it cannot work without God or without the cross. The cross makes it possible. But if people abolish God there is no foundation for the family anymore. The biggest threat to the West is not Islamist terrorism - it is the loss of those moral values that had strengthened Europe.

⁵³ Martin Luther 1483-1546

http://www.reformed.org/master/index.html?mainframe=/documents/Table_talk/table_talk.html

3.8 The eighth law; the right to private property

And you shall not steal⁵⁴.

No one is allowed to take something that her or she has not been given. Stealing is not allowed. God allows private property. It increased the responsibility of the individual and became the foundation of a stable growing economy.

When someone stole goods that do not belong to them, they had to face the consequences. Those consequences were regulated by the applied laws. People could be confident that no one would take away their possessions.

God gave humans dominion over his creation. Man is the co-owner of what God created and not just the employee. Man has to take ownership and is God's business partner. It is not just God's creation – it is his creation too. Man is the owner and steward.

In the parable with the talents⁵⁵ Jesus told to be trustworthy with what we have and to increase it. God gave something to each person. People should not hide it they should multiply it. Like this, his creation will work.

Practical application in today's society

A missionary told a story about Mozambique: he said that in this country many fields lie fallow and are not used because private property is not protected. Those who plant a tree will hardly be able to eat its fruits. Everyone else will steal the fruits, because in Mozambique everything belongs to everybody. Therefore, no one plants a tree because it will not be profitable for him or her. Why should people toil when everyone else will just steal their fruit? In this worldview, stealing is not illegal or considered a moral offense. People are just allowed to take anything they like.

The principle of God was not applied in Mozambique and therefore civilisation could not develop. Mozambique depends on foreign aid from the West. It is not able to feed its own inhabitants, although its soil is much more fertile than many Western countries. As well in whole Africa, billions of people have no political right to own private property. Africa has more riches and natural resources than the rest of the world. However, people cannot gain any additional value from them. There is hardly any multiplication of these resources because people are afraid of losing the products. Hardly anyone is doing something with them. God protects private property.

Nations influenced by Christianity put God's law into practice and turned their land into private property. Through this, the people could be confident that no one would take away their income. Prosperity grew rapidly in those nations. Stealing was an offense against God and a threat to humanity. This moral commandment found its way into almost every constitution of the world: A person has the right to own property.

Socialism didn't work

Nevertheless, this principle was called into question by socialism. The socialists thought that private property was immoral and lead to injustice. To the socialist every owner was a thief who stole the goods from the community. If there were no God the socialists would perhaps be right. Without God there is no giver of goods and therefore there is no private property. But there is a God. To abolish God was the biggest mistake the socialist made.

In the socialist worldview, the root of evil was the fact that some people owned more than others. Therefore, the socialists abolished God's law: if no one owns any private property stealing becomes impossible. But it was a theory. It never worked out in practice. People did not become better without private property. The opposite was the case. People became jealous, compared themselves to others and didn't allow people to own more than they did.

⁵⁴ Deut 5:19

⁵⁵ Mt 25:14-30

Instead of learning from those who have more they blamed them. It ended in oppression and control.

The socialists didn't take care of the land anymore because the land did not belong to them. Why should they work for the community when others did not work? People were frustrated. They had to work for others. Socialism destroyed responsibility. They faced the same situation as Mozambique. There was no motivation to work. Therefore, every socialist country decayed and became poor.

In the West, people buy things with their credit card or they do business on the stock market. The state protects its property, even if it is just an intangible trade. Through this protection, the economy improved and this benefited all people. This would not be possible in socialist state. God wants his Kingdom to increase. He wants a society where people will be encouraged to work and to harvest the fruit of their labor.

Stealing decreases the Gross Domestic Product

What happens when people take goods that do not belong to them? The owners get angry. They have lost something. When it happens again and again people become frustrated. They stop working. If people plant a tree and can never harvest its fruits, they will never plant a tree again. The production decreases through stealing. A country, which cannot protect the property of its citizens, decreases its productivity more and more.

If the state does not protect private property, the owners have to protect their goods in a costly way instead of investing in production. The owners will leave the country or cease production and the nation becomes poor.

Also, stealing diminishes the value of goods. When thieves steal a mobile phone, they cannot use it in the same way as the original owner. They cannot use the data of the original owner. Instead, the thief has to reconfigure the phone. Knowledge is lost and the value of the stolen mobile phone diminishes.

The thief has to sell the goods on the black market for a lower price than the retail price. The economy of a nation declines. The thief wins but the Gross Domestic Product decreases. There is a loss of value and by and by the country ends up in poverty.

The thieves have to hide, lie and cannot be honest anymore. Thieves who cheat and steal are fearful of others doing the same to them. A lot of energy and money is being used to protect one's own goods and not to increase value. People cannot trust one another anymore. This will destroy the foundation of the economic system. People trade with one another because they trust one another. Stealing destroys this foundation and a free, fair market is no longer possible. Trading can only be done in a controlled environment, where private property is protected.

Corruption makes trading much harder. When people have to bribe to get their rights, they are kept from investing this money into their businesses. The nation will not produce new resources or more goods. The money gets into corruption instead of inventions. Those who want to produce goods will be hindered and the corrupt ones will win. Corruption holds business back and makes those people rich who don't work for it. Money is not invested in goods but in evil. The economy will decline and by and by the country will have to face poverty.

Today, thieves don't have to rob banks anymore. They can do rob people with clever computer programs and special finance products. They cheat and seduce people and the laws of the West cannot protect the owner anymore. The West is in danger of losing more and more value.

The state becomes more and more expensive because it increases the taxes to pay for all the social welfare expenditure. The people who work are frustrated. It is often no longer profitable to work or to start a business. And since the taxes and the administrative costs are too high many companies leave the country and move to a tax haven.

People always wish to have money. They might win it in the lottery. But what happens to those people years later? They don't become rich. They only have money. But money has no value in and of itself. Why do people always want something that has no value? Statistics show that 10 years after having won in the lottery those people lose everything. Their character didn't develop and they could not handle it.

People cannot give generously if they don't have anything. It is necessary for people to draw profit in order to support others. Without profit there is no new business and no growth. Socialism wants to distribute the goods, but without producing goods there is nothing to be distributed.

Often, Christians think like socialists: Rich people are considered to be thieves and therefore they should give their money to the poor. This is the Robin Hood strategy. But God does not protect the poor from the rich: he protects people's work and goods.

Ownership and private property require responsibility and stewardship. People are involved in creating value and they invest in multiplication. In the parable of the talents, Jesus made it clear that this is God's idea⁵⁶, the first step into discipleship. People have to learn to take on responsibility and then God will give them more. The Israelites were admonished to increase their goods and value and to pass it on to the next generation.

Today, God gives Christians something to develop and increase. They take care of what little they have and then more will be given to them.⁵⁷ John Calvin had this understanding and he became the originator of the Western work ethic.

Stealing from the next generation

In the 49th year, the Israelites had to give their land back to the original owners⁵⁸. A house or other goods can be replaced. But land cannot be replaced. The land was not supposed to be owned by just a few people: it was for the next generations. Therefore, God made a distinction between goods and land. The people should not misuse the land by agricultural mismanagement or even by defiling it. He decreed that the land needed rest every seventh year⁵⁹. This law found its way into today's society: We should not produce too much or use bad fertiliser. We should not destroy the land because it is meant for the next generation.

People should take care of the environment by cleaning the land and the rivers from impurities and trash. Nowadays, many stretches of land and many rivers are dirty. Heaps of trash are stacked up in a lot of places. The land is being defiled and it is stolen from the next generations and from God. It is a Christian's duty to clean the streets and rivers and to put an end to the pollution of our environment.

The Bible remains the best basis for a healthy economy, which is when people own private property and nobody is allowed to take it from them. This law found its way into all modern constitutions and laid the foundation for the growing Western economy.

3.9 The ninth law: the law of truth

And you shall not bear false witness against your neighbour⁶⁰.

Lying is normally defined as saying something while knowing that it is not true. However, the things that people say can hardly be tested if there is no empirical evidence. But God can test it, since he can see inside people's hearts.

Scientists may use a lie detector to determine whether or not people tell the truth. But can they do it? And does that keep people from lying? Lying is a spiritual concept and can only

⁵⁶ Matt 25.14ff

⁵⁷ Luk 19.13ff

⁵⁸ 3.Mose 25,8-55

⁵⁹ Lev19.23

⁶⁰ Deut 5:20

be understood in relation to God. The fear of God kept evil in check: People generally acted better when they feared God.

A farmer and a butcher sat in a church. The preacher was shouting with a loud voice and with a stern look on his face he told people that they should not steal or cheat. The farmer turned to the butcher and said: "Did you hear the pastor? You should not cheat me or steal from me. Next time I bring you a calf give me all the meat and do not take some of it for yourself. If you do so, you will have problem with God." The butcher looked at the farmer and thought the same. "If you bring me the calf give me a good one and not an old one. Otherwise you will have problem with the Almighty One." This shows that the fear of God held the people responsible. This system worked and people were able to count on one another to tell the truth.

But when the fear of God disappears, people need another form of control: laws, regulations, administration and this will cost a lot of money. People will no longer be free and they will be overwhelmed by a heap of laws and regulations. In the end, only lawyers who understand the complicate laws will control the world. The farmer and the butcher who are actually doing the work don't have a say anymore. They would live in a controlled world, where good, honest work would be impeded.

But how do we actually define a lie? People often do not have the same understanding of it. If people have differing worldviews, they have different concepts of what a lie is.

I used to work with youth from the Balkan. If I asked them, whether they stole the money, they said no even if they had indeed taken it. However, to them this was not stealing: It was the mistake of the person who had left his or her wallet on the bench. In their view, it was ok to take it when they had the opportunity to do so. Saying that they didn't steal, would be considered a lie in the Western understanding but not to them.

To cite another example, Hannibal Gaddafi testified to have done nothing unjust when he had beaten his maids in a hotel in Geneva. He didn't lie, since according to Islamic law, a man is allowed to do so. He did not act against his law and could not understand why Switzerland brought him to justice. But Switzerland has laws, which forbid such violence. Thus, how people determine what is right or wrong, is a question of what their law is.

Without a common law that determines what is right and wrong, lying is just an emotional cultural sensation. In order to hold sway over people, justice needs an absolute standard.

Practical application in today's society

In an American courtroom witnesses have to give evidence under the following oath: "Do you solemnly swear that you will tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?" This law has been very influential in our society.

The foundation of a civilisation is having a common law, which helps people to trust one another. They can be sure that others do not lie to them. They all have the same understanding of what one should or should not do. The reformers were able to bring to the modern world what no other religion or worldview had ever been able to do. It was the translation of the Bible, which provided a common law for all the people. This law was not *from* people. Everybody was held accountable to it. Everybody knew what the truth was and therefore it was clear what a lie was. As long as the people had the fear of God, society was held together.

3.10 The tenth law; the right to have more than others

And you shall not covet your neighbour's wife. And you shall not desire your neighbour's house, his field, or his male servant, or his female servant, his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbour⁶¹.

⁶¹ Deut 5.21

God gave a law that tells not to covet what others have. God knew that stealing does not only mean stealing something physically. Instead, evil starts in people's hearts, for instance when people covet something that does not belong to them. The physical act is just the acting out of the evil in the heart.

People tend to look to the things they do not have, things that belong to others. They lose a lot of energy by dreaming about something they do not have instead of using this energy to increase what God gave them. People can only increase the things that they already have.

People who covet do not see what God gave them. It leads to irresponsibility, to laziness and it breaks relationships. They do not take care of what they have and instead they look for what they do not have. In the end, those people become bitter.

Even if people think they have nothing, they always have themselves and can do something. They can greet others with joy and respect. They can speak words of encouragement. They can pray for others. They can be trustworthy in relationships and help others. They can brush their teeth and clean their house. They can clean the streets or write a letter to their relatives.

If people are faithful in the little things, God will give them more. Perhaps, some people don't have more because they would not be able to handle it. People who have more than they can handle will have a deep fall. It's not people's responsibility to worry about how much they have, but it is their responsibility to think about what they do with it.

Be thankful for the little things you have. Thankfulness brings about good stewardship. Thankfulness and loyalty are the basic principles for a positive development. It stands in direct opposition to coveting.

People often see this problem, but they cannot change it. They can only change what is in their circle of influence. People must learn to focus on the things that they can influence, things that they are responsible for and that are given to them.

People can also misuse their position and hinder others instead to set them free. People should aim to help others rather than protecting their own position. They should not hold others back from achieving their position. This can also be a type of coveting in that people do not allow others to take up the position that God gave them. Christians know that God will give them more if they follow his commandments and not because they protect their position. If other people do things better and in cheaper way than they do, it should be seen as a good thing. It keeps the prices balanced. People should not hinder others in being creative. In the long term, a monopoly always leads to less productivity and more poverty.

A patent protects the owner's idea. In Switzerland, there was no patent protection until 1888 and for the chemical industry until 1907⁶². Today, patent law often led to monopolization. The chemical industry par example focused on drugs to cure diseases. However, the prices have gone up and people now pay too much because other companies cannot copy the drugs and hence there is no competition. The patent holders' fear to lose profit will hinder new developments.

Perhaps, a patent law may be adequate for some years: The investors get their money back. This is a useful solution to protect ideas and investments. People payed a lot to develop something new and should get their investment back. Therefore, in a fallen world it makes sense to allow for a patent law for a limited period of time so that those who have not created it cannot take the invention.

However, the call to not covet what others have can hardly be controlled merely by law or by the authority of other people. It is a spiritual concept. Through preaching this law found its way into the hearts of Westerners. This law led to responsibility and ownership and thus it made the West strong.

Some philosophers stated that if there were no law there would be no evil. They propose to abolish all laws. However, the anarchy they propose didn't work: Evil was still a part of the

⁶² René Pahud de Mortanges: Schweizerische Rechtsgeschichte. Ein Grundriss, Dike, St. Gallen und Zürich 2007

world. Rousseau was one of those philosophers⁶³. The French Revolution took him seriously and killed all the authorities, believing that anarchy will bring about freedom. But it didn't work. It ended in chaos. People were not able to live without boundaries and laws.

God knows that humans are evil and cannot keep this law. Therefore, he sent Jesus Christ so that people's hearts would be changed through the cross. Jesus took their hard heart and gave them a soft one. They overcame coveting through Jesus Christ and it changed the West.

3.11 The Bible, the foundation of today's society

Many biblical laws, especially the moral laws, found their way into our constitutions and bills of rights. They constitute the foundation of what we now know as Human Rights.

René Cassin (1887-1976) was the author of the Declaration of Human Rights. He also received the Nobel Peace Prize. In 1948 the General Assembly of the UN in New York signed his Declaration. He wrote an article entitled "From the 10 Commandments to Human Rights". Just like the reformers, he thought that Human Rights must have a deeper foundation than just human reason. He wrote that over the course of thousands of years the moral authority of the Bible has not changed and is still relevant in our days⁶⁴.

Practical application for the Israelites

We already discussed some rights: It was not allowed to oppress others. Everybody had a right to have free time and rest. Everybody had the right to live. Everybody is equal before the law and has a right to private property. The law gives security for children and women. It helps family to stay together. It made sure people did not lie or covet their neighbours' goods. Widows, children and foreigners were allowed to eat from the fields for free⁶⁵. People had a right to a fair court⁶⁶. Slaves were not slaves in the modern sense. They had rights and had to be treated like employees.

In general, it was a Human Right that everyone who lived in Israel, foreigner or slave, had rights and was protected by the law. But also, everyone had to be responsible for themselves.

The people in Israel had Human Rights but also obligations. If they did not fulfill their obligations, they lost their rights. If they killed others, they lost their right to live. Every right necessarily needs a corresponding obligation. This is what is missing in our conception of Human Rights today: Everybody wants to have rights but no obligations.

The international Human Rights are more and more under pressure. There are certain nations in the UN Human Rights Council who do not respect Human Rights. They aim for more rights but do not fulfill their obligations to grant those rights to others. The West is faced with a dilemma. In fact, Human Rights can only work if there is an absolute standard above the people, which they are held accountable to. However, with the decline of the fear of God, Human Rights lose their influence more and more.

One of the biggest lies that people believe is that actions will not have consequences. People do things even though they know that those actions will harm or even kill them. They are not aware of the consequences or they simply don't take it seriously. They don't believe in this universal law anymore.

⁶³ Jean Jacques Rousseau, France 1712-1778

⁶⁴ Centuries have passed. Judaism has, throughout unparalleled trials, preserved its passion for justice and its desire to contribute to the defence of the rights of men of all races and origins, along the lines of the very principle with which it was entrusted two thousand years ago. The Ten Commandments, the first Code of the essential duties of man, have suffered many an outrage in history and continue to suffer. Their moral authority remains intact.

⁶⁵ Deut.20.19-20

⁶⁶ Deut.18.18

The Ten Commandments are spiritual laws similar to a natural law. Humans cannot change it. A central message of the Torah is that all people must understand the spiritual principle and start to obey the law, because this law will bring life, everlasting life.

"Look, today I have set before your life and what is good, along with death and what is evil. That's why I'm commanding you today to love the LORD your God by walking in his ways and by observing his commands, statutes, and ordinances, so that you may live long, increase, and so that the LORD your God may bless you in the land that you are about to enter to possess. "But if you turn your heart away, and do not obey, but instead if you stray away to worship and serve other gods, I'm declaring to you today that you will surely be destroyed. You won't live long in the land that you are crossing the Jordan River to enter and possess. "I call heaven and earth to testify against you today! I've set life and death before you today: both blessings and curses. Choose life, that it may be well with you—you and your children. Love the LORD your God, obey his voice, and cling to him, because he is your life—even your long life—so that you may live in the land that the LORD promised to give Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."⁶⁷

This is the universal law: Whatever people do will have consequences. If they follow the law of God they will be blessed and if they do not there will be negative consequences.

This notion brought about a strong sense of responsibility for one's own actions. People knew that if they did not follow the law they could not complain about the consequences. They had to change their attitude and follow the laws of God.

Moses was advised to make sure that the next generation would understand the law of God⁶⁸. The older people were to repeat it again and again in every place and to write it on their doors so that the next generation would not forget it.

God told Moses to write the laws down. To date, no older alphabet was found as the Hebrew. The Hebrew language seems to be the oldest alphabetic language in the world. The Ten Commandments were never found but a stone with a calendar on it, dated 1000 B.C.⁶⁹.

We can assume that the writing of Moses was the first alphabetic writing in the world. Perhaps, God taught him the Hebrew language by way of the model of the Ten Commandments. Moses then wrote down the regulations that God had told him in this language: the history of the Jews and the law in the five first books of the Bible. God told Moses how important it is to write it down so that the next generation could read and remember it.

From a historical perspective, this advice from God was lost until it was revived by the reformation. The reformers knew how important this was: They understood that the Bible needs to be translated into the native language so that people can understand it and teach it to the next generation.

There are two statues on the facade of the parliament building in Switzerland: Two writers who are sitting. One writes in a book and the other shows the book to the public. They symbolize that everything discussed in the parliament will be written down and shown to the public. Everyone has a right to know what the members of parliament said.

Nowadays, people think the Romans invented the idea of the Republic, based on the principle that everything the leaders discuss has to be made public. But it was the Bible that laid the foundation for a Republic 1000 years before the Romans.

The reformers translated the bible into the vernacular languages. Martin Luther translated it into the common spoken language of the Germans and created a written language that people could understand. It is important that people could understand what they read. Nowadays, this principle is endangered: Every law is written down and probably even translated into all the local languages but the people do not understand it anymore. It is too

⁶⁷ Deut 30:15-20

⁶⁸ Deut 6:7-9, Deut 11 18-23,

⁶⁹ Gezar calender

complicated and almost only lawyers understand it. This is a development in the wrong direction, because only those who understand the law will be able to implement it and thus to lead others. The same happened to the Catholics who only had the Latin Bible. The population couldn't read or understand it. Through this, they oppressed the people. Those who can read, write and understand will be the ones who control. This is what the reformers wanted to change. They understood that everybody has to be able to read and understand. Only then democracy will become possible. Perhaps, we should rethink the development our laws are undergoing.

The Ten Commandments laid the foundation of the Western World. God advised his people to have a common law if they wanted to live together in freedom and order. Nobody is above the law. Everybody is accountable to it. Therefore, today's nations have constitutions.

The Ten Commandments show how a community can best work together. God didn't want a king who is above others, because no one sees the full picture of what is true. Therefore, it would be best to work together in teams. It leads to the separation of power in a horizontal and vertical manner in almost every country.

The Ten Commandments provided a structure and a set of responsibilities for the communities. But this can only work if people submit to one another according to the position God gave them. God forbids misusing the position he gave to the people.

The Ten Commandments provided the basis for Human Rights: We are not allowed to oppress others. Everybody has a right to free time and rest. Everybody has a right to life. Everybody is equal before the law. Everybody has a right to private property. The law gives security to children and women. It helps families stay together. It makes sure that people will neither lie nor covet.

The Ten Commandments are the spiritual law of the world, the constitution of humanity. They cannot be avoided.

But what happens when the West loses the fear of God? Will our constitution and our Human Rights still work?

4 The civil order

The best way to understand the teaching of the Torah is to categorize the laws and principles into different areas of responsibility.

In the last few years several Christians – for instance Loren Cunningham⁷⁰ or Bill Bright⁷¹ – have taught about this and started to read the Bible in seeing it in different categories. Youth with A Mission created a schema that helps to read the Bible in the light of the different spheres of society⁷².

I see that the Old Testament have four different areas of responsibility, which hold the Kingdom in this time together. In these different areas, the Bible provides structure and hierarchy where people subordinate to one another. The four areas of responsibility are the following: the individual, the family, the church and the state. Everybody is accountable to God, children have to obey their parents and people have to obey their leaders or priests.

And also, the New Testament does not support anarchy which some Christians want to believe. The Letter to Titus or Timothy are good examples. Paul advised in it to his followers how to create an order. The husband is the head of the family. Children should obey their parents. People should obey the leaders and elders in a church. Workers should obey their masters and people should submit to the government. Anarchy is therefore not a biblical teaching.

⁷⁰ Founder of Youth with a mission (YMAM) 1940-

⁷¹ Founder of Bill Bright 1921-2003

⁷² The source available online Bible by YWAM

Today there are more than only these four categories of responsibility that the old testament thought. Today there are a lot more communities. Like businesses, associations, societies or organisations. But the principle stays. God's Kingdom has an order. People have to subordinate to one another according to the role that God gave them.

Today it can be seen like this. The individual is directly accountable to God. Every individual lives in a family. Also, individuals live and work in other bigger communities such as businesses and associations. The Church is even bigger and brings the different individuals, families and organisations together. It unites the Christians. The biggest community is the state. The state brings all the individuals, families, organisations and churches together, both Christians and non-Christians alike.

In all these areas of responsibility God gave laws, rules and regulations. He gave principles to show people how to live together in freedom and prosperity.

The Bible teaches that all of the areas of responsibility must be equal and directly subordinated to God and that none of them should be valued more than the other.

Before the reformation the Church was above the others. People had to approach the Church in order to find out what is right or wrong. Through the translation of the Bible into the vernacular languages all the people could now investigate and verify God's idea for society. Everybody in every area of society was now seen as first subordinated to God and not to the church. People could directly go to God to find out what is right or wrong. With the translation of the Bible there was a common standard, which built freedom and order. No one was above the law and everyone was accountable to God. With the Bible in their hand, people could stand up before Kings and tell them that what they did was wrong. The areas of responsibility were all directly subordinated to God. However, this principle can only work if there is indeed a God who is above the people and the institutions.

An exclusively secular society runs the risk of having the state above everything else. The state has to exert more and more control because people don't feel accountable to a common spiritual law anymore. If there would be no state control anarchy will rise. The state has necessarily to exert control and becomes the common moral law. People must follow now the rules of the state until freedom is under pressure. In the end the question arises, who will control the ones who control.

Christianity demonstrated that the biblical worldview was the only one which was able to provide the basis for a democratic society with freedom and order.

4.1 The individual (being responsible for oneself)

The smallest area of responsibility is the individual. Every individual is responsible for themselves and is subordinated directly to God. This view strengthened Western culture.

The covenant is not only meant for the fathers or leaders; it is for all the people⁷³. It will make people responsible for themselves. People cannot just follow their leaders. Every individual must follow God's commandments, love the Lord and trust him. When people live with this attitude and will first look to the Lord then community works best.

God made it clear that the fathers should not die for the sins of their children and vice versa⁷⁴. Everybody is responsible for themselves and their own actions. In the non-Christian influenced cultures this notion is not a commonly held view: When someone from a tribe does something wrong the whole tribe is excluded.

The view of man

The foundation of a strong community is the individual. God created the world and its resources. Because humans are made in his image, they can create new things too.

⁷³ Deut 5.5

⁷⁴ Deut.24.16

Believers are not merely dependent on the resources of the world. The Creator, with his endless resources, can give them what they need. They need only follow the Lord's commandments and then he will give them what they need⁷⁵.

One Example might be, people installing a wheel in a river in order to produce electricity. Through this, they create new resources. People still have the water of the river but also electricity. People can create new resources by using their mind. This came about by the strong conviction that people are above nature and can produce more than what is already there. People are not just made of matter; they are part spirit. Man is not just from nature; he is able to transform and shape nature. In the end, he was able to overcome the law of gravitation and could build an airplane.

It was the believe in the spirit of God that made it possible to look for new ways and new technology to overcome pain and suffering in the world. To set men free to do things that their forefather never dreamed of. Nature could not determine the people of God.

The socialist Max Weber⁷⁶ researched, why the Western civilisation made so an enormous step further 500 years ago. He could see that these people started to overcome nature and started businesses, science and new technology. He claimed that Calvin had preached; all people are made in God's image and are able to produce more and overcome the needs in the world. People started to believe it and an enormous grow of civilisation happen. The Calvinist communities had more success than the others. Max Weber understood that the success of the West was rooted in the view of the individuum of the bible.

This idea laid the foundation for a growing civilization in the West. People lived in an open system where the spirit of God in man constantly intervenes and provides more resources. Believers are not in danger not having enough. They know that God can provide them with endless resources.

This view caused people to be more responsible. They were not just consumers they became producers. They stood up and produced even it was not there; they became people who could produce additional value.

Such people are not greedy and do not covet because they see their God-given potential and are able to multiply it. Because of this idea of an open system people didn't have to fight since there are enough resources for everyone. They built up democracies and Human Rights. They made laws to protect minorities and outcasts. They were willing to give up power and accepted their deposition.

People who don't have God and don't follow him are stressed about survival and loss of power. They only see the resources in the world and think that it is not enough for all. Instead of looking to God, they look to the resources and the opportunities of the world.

Westerners believed the bible and they became the most prosperous people in the whole world. The Christian view made people responsible more then any other culture or religion in the world.

4.2 Family (love and fellowship)

The word "family" is not a word from the bible. The Greek word used in the Bible is "oikos" which means "my house". At that time, family was not seen the way we understand it today. It was a social community who cared for one another. Families had businesses and ran the economy. It was much broader than our understanding today.

Men and women chose one another and became one flesh. This unity was protected by God. A family promises to stay together whatever may happen. It is a space of security and

⁷⁵ Mt 6.33

⁷⁶ Maximilian Karl Emil Weber 1864 –1920, German sociologist, philosopher, jurist, and political economist. From his book *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*.

fellowship. People know that even if they make mistakes the family will always be there and stand by them. The family gives people security and this in turn makes societies strong.

The foundation of a functional families was already discussed in the fifth law of the Ten Commandments. Please have a look first into 3.4 before reading further.

The Torah said: "Honor your father and mother"⁷⁷. In the New Testament, Paul states that children should obey their parents and that the father is the head of the family⁷⁸. God advised the structure for a family in the Old and New Testament.

The philosopher Jean Jacques Rousseau believed that evil came from hierarchies. People have to be free from all authorities then they will have a perfect society. Even fathers should hierarchical not stand over their children. He himself gave his children to an orphanage. They should grow up independently from the parents. He became the father of antiauthority education and is still a foundation for pedagogic educations today. His ideas never worked out.

In the last 200 years a strong movement emerged wanting to abolish hierarchy and traditional families. Even the socialists couldn't accept the traditional idea of families. More and more the hierarchies became the supposed enemy of the West.

To a Christian, hierarchy is not necessarily a problem. The problem is the evil in the hearts of the people.

God said that men should not dress like women⁷⁹. The family was responsible to dress children to represent the male or female.

Nowadays, some churches forbid women to wear trousers. But in today's culture the situation has changed. Trousers are no longer a symbol of the male. However, if you go to a specific culture where women only wear skirts it would be advisable to wear skirts.

After the sixties people rebelled against the predominant culture. They did everything their parents had not done. They wanted to be different from their parents. They didn't honor the culture of their parents. It was not about wearing different clothes but about rebellion.

Clearly, the clothing that people ought to wear is not an absolute law. The moral law behind it states that children should honor their parents. A community can only live together when people honor the past, their parents and their leaders.

Another principle behind was that girls are girls and boys are boys because God made them like this. People should not disorder what God made in order. Today it is often not so clear what is a girl or a boy. They can change their sex if they feel like it. A family can today be between man and man or woman and woman. It is no longer clear what a family is. People don't follow any longer this law. It would be so important for our days but this requires that people would believe in God and the bible. But the state cannot hold families together.

God said that when a man dies his brother must marry his wife⁸⁰. This is a typical example for an applied law. It will not fit our society. To the Israelites, this was social welfare: Widows would have had nothing in their society and would not have been able to survive on their own. Nowadays, a woman can go to work and can live on her own. Women are independent and most countries have a social welfare system to support those in need.

This example shows that families had responsibilities. Nowadays, there is a tendency to abolish the responsibility of families. Individual has more and more rights before the state and become independent of the family. Families become more and more irrelevant.

God's idea of a functioning society has always been people taking responsibility for themselves, for their families, their churches and then for the state. If the state has to take care of every individual it must employ social workers, create an endless amount of laws, pay

⁷⁷ Deut 5:16

⁷⁸ Eph 6.1

⁷⁹ Deut.22.5

⁸⁰ Deut.25.5-10

lawyers and control people so that they don't misuse the system. Would it be not better to have small communities who can be responsible for each other? But today the state takes on more and more responsibility and the costs go through the roof.

In the beginning God said: "Be fruitful and multiply"⁸¹. The Israelites were to increase in numbers⁸². Families are responsible of having children, multiplying in numbers and investing in the next generation. But this too seems to be declining: In the Western World, the birth rate is much lower than where it should be so that the community does not die out. Often people believe that they income cannot supply for a person more. They don't believe in God they just orient themselves according the resources in the world. Perhaps, Christians should to rethink their approach to this question.

Family is a spiritual concept and when people lose the fear of God this structure will crumble too. The smallest unit that made the West strong is in a danger.

4.3 The Church (Unity, fellowship, teaching)

The tribe of Levi was chosen by God to serve in the temple. When it came to the temple, there was a different approach to choose the leaders. The political leaders were chosen by people but the Priest mainly by God⁸³. The priests had to be born into the tribe of Levi.

How did they find out whom God chose? The Priests probably drew by lots as they often did in other situations⁸⁴. It was therefore not a choice made by humans. They believed that God let them by way of the lots.

Nowadays, the leaders in the churches should not just be elected like politicians. People should pray and ask God whom he has in mind. The leader has to live up to a moral standard, just as Paul told Titus in the New Testament.

The Israelites were only allowed to choose one place of worship⁸⁵. In those times, it was dangerous that people worshiped their own God in their homes. God saw this danger and taught them to worship in one single place in order to prevent such danger. They could only sacrifice and worship in the chosen place.

Nowadays, the Church replaced the Temple. It is the gathering of the believers. The church is no longer a building. The church replaced the temple and the Church is the community of all Christians. Therefore, they have several different gathering places all over the world.

Often Christen think that the hierarchy hold them back form real worship. They rebel against Churches and want better to meet in little house groups with not a lot of hierarchy and structure. Probably Christian have a bad image of hierarchy because they observed it in the world. Hierarchy without God will end in oppression and dictatorship. But for God hierarchy is not an enemy. God gave a structure for the churches to hold it in order and Christian have to honor it.

The Israelites were to be different from other Nations⁸⁶. Nowadays, the Church and the Christians should be different from other people. Not just in moral matters but also in how they act and how they think. Christians should have fellowship in the church that others probably don't have. They should be a good example to the secular world in living and taking care of one another.

In the Roman Empire, Christians became famous because they looked after one another and took care of others. If the Romans wanted to get justice they went to the bishop. They were trust worthier than the Roman courts. They did things differently and that visibly. It would be dangerous if Christians became just like everyone else around them. It is not good when

⁸¹ Gen 1.27

⁸² Deut.7.22

⁸³ Deut. 33:8-10

⁸⁴ Lev 16.8

⁸⁵ Deut 12.11-14

⁸⁶ Deut.14.1-21

non-Christians cannot see the difference anymore. Churches should be different in what they look like and what they do.

Churches are the gathering places of Christians where they have fellowship, receive teaching and are encouraged to build God's Kingdom in their daily lives. They celebrate together, take the Lords supper and hear encouraging stories. The church replaced the temple and became a vessel where people could find help and protection.

4.4 The State (order and justice)

The Israelites had the best structure and legal system of every nation. If they obeyed this law they were at the top. When people follow God's law nations work best⁸⁷. The West applied these laws and became the dominant culture in the world.

The foundation of a functional system was already discussed in the moral law. Please have a look first into 3.1-3 before reading further.

The idea that everyone is directly accountable to God and to his word made freedom and order possible. Everyone is accountable to an absolute moral law, namely, the Bible. No one individual should have too much power.

How can people live in divided power? There had been many similar ideas before the reformation, but it had never worked out. But with translation of the Bible in the common local languages make it possible. It brought an absolute standard whereby everyone could test what was right or wrong. These laws were not man-made and no one could change it: Neither minorities nor majorities, neither the rich nor the powerful. It was a common law for everybody. This made living in freedom and order possible, as long as the people lived under the fear of God.

The church of Geneva 500 years ago became the first adequate democracy based on the separation of powers and a constitution: the Geneva Convention. These Ideas quickly found their way into politics.

The theologian Théodore de Bèze (1519-1604), successor of John Calvin, wrote⁸⁸ about the importance of an independent court and an official should not be in the King's service, but in service of people. This developed over time into the Human Rights and the Bill of Rights in America. A Huguenot named Francois Hotman (1524-1590), who fled from the Bartolommeo night to Geneva, wrote that the King is just the chairman of the parliament⁸⁹. These ideas laid the foundation for the parliament in England and the congress in America. The parliament should always have the opportunity to remove the King. The idea of America's president came from *Vindicae Contra Tyrannos*, written by Huguenots in Basel (1579). The ruler must first obey God and his word.

In 1573, Scotland was reformed and became the first democratic nation in the world. Holland was reformed in 1576, became a democracy and gained independence from Spain.

In 1689, the reformer King William of Orange voluntarily gave his power to the parliament of England, unlike the Kings during the French Revolution, whose power was taken by force. The reformers understood that when people act in rebellion against injustice, they are no better than the people who did wrong in the first place. This reform became the bloodless revolution, a reformation instead of a revolution. Even today, Great Britain is a monarchy where the power is with the parliament and not with the king or queen.

Many constitutions begin with the phrase "in the Name of God". The moral law and the principles of the Bible laid the foundation for the Western World.

The structure of the modern states came from the bible. God made states and gives structures that work the best in practice. If his people follow these instructions, they can live

⁸⁷ Deut.4.8

⁸⁸ De iure magistratuum 1573

⁸⁹ Fraco Gallia 1572

in freedom and order. Power could be divided and justice could be given because the bible laid the foundation principle of a state⁹⁰.

Powerful people lost the fear of God and the biblical state order decrease more and more. The state does not protect people any more. A lot of people lost their faith in their state. The danger is that people will rebel against the state and the state have to centralize more and more his power and force the people. The 500 years old order of the state seems to be in a big danger.

4.5 Conclusion

The understanding of the Bible brought a clarity of responsibilities. A hierarchy is not a power game. It is important that people know who is responsible for what. The Bible advises to build up a society based on different areas of responsibility, beginning with the individual who takes on responsibility and is accountable to God. Families are the smallest communities in a state, bringing individuals together and giving them security. Individuals live and act in other, bigger communities such as businesses and societies. The Church is even bigger and unites the different individuals, families and organizations. The Church brings the Christians together. The biggest community is the state. The state brings all individuals, families, organizations and churches together. It unites both Christians and non-Christians.

In all these areas of responsibility God gave laws, rules and regulations. He provided principles to show the people how they could live together in freedom and prosperity. This structure made the West successful. But what consequences will the West face when it loses the fear of God?

5 Applied laws

These laws were an application of the moral law at their time and in their culture. The culture is different today and therefore the application of the moral laws will be different.

Some laws talk about the relationship between the individuum and God. Called the personal laws. Some laws regulated the issues between different individuum. Those are the private law. Other laws regulate the relationship between the individual and the church. Those are the church laws. Finally, there are laws, which regulate the relationship between the individual and the state. Those are the public laws.

5.1 Personal laws

Those laws were for every individuum. Everyone was first responsible before God and could not just blame others. The fear of God kept society together. We have already discussed about the personal responsibility in this writing and will not deeper discuss it here.

Let's now look at the applied law that regulates the relationships in a society.

5.2 Private laws; regulations between individuals

5.2.1 General rights

Rights for the poor

The Bible gave the Israelites the law of the tithe. With it the social welfare was paid. Every third year the tithe was given to the poor⁹¹. The temple was responsible for the distribution to

⁹⁰ Explanation of the structures and the law of a state is in capture 3

⁹¹ Deut.14.28-29, 26.12-15

the poor. The budget for the social system was limited: It was the third part of the tithe, 3.33 % of the gross domestic product.

Today, the state is responsible for welfare. This is not necessarily wrong. If social welfare helps people to take responsibility for oneself, it is a good system. If social welfare produces laziness, it is a bad system. Christians should fight for steering the system into the right direction.

The Israelites had to leave some of the harvest to the poor such as foreigners, widows and orphans⁹². The Israelites were responsible to give generously? The poor who could work didn't just receive goods or a portion of the harvest. They had to work for their income. They were allowed to eat the grains and grapes they picked on their own⁹³. They had to take responsibility for themselves. It gave them an identity and value. They were encouraged to be active and felt valuable.

God created people in order to be creative and take care of his creation. If they cannot work, people cannot be satisfied. Work is not a punishment. It is a blessing to assume responsibility and grow in one's own abilities.

God advised not to give blindly to everybody. The Israelites had to make a distinction between the lazy and the poor⁹⁴.

At the time when people had the fear of God, their preachers reminded them of God's laws. The fear of God held them accountable. Today, one cannot read other people's minds. Sometimes the lazy ones misuse the system. Because of that, the state has to force people to pay more taxes in order to support the poor. As a consequence, those who do work become frustrated and they tend to cheat or leave the country. In Israel, those who could work had to go to the fields to pick up the crops. The poor who could work were obligated to work. Also, today people should not give blindly to any good causes because that will promote laziness.

Today, a lot of foreigners and refugees cannot work. The state pays everything but they are not satisfied and don't have opportunities to grow. They cannot contribute anything of value. They become frustrated. Also, a lot of people cannot work because nobody wants them.

Another option for the poor was to sell themselves as slaves for seven years⁹⁵. After seven years, they were released and paid out to help them get started again. It was a social welfare system suited to their time and their situation.

Slaves could flee and they were protected if they did so⁹⁶. The owner was not allowed to do whatever he wants with his slaves otherwise they had the right to leave.

Slaves had to submit to their owner otherwise he could send them away and they were left with nothing.

If the owners hurt their slaves, they had to set them free⁹⁷.

Our modern understanding of "slaves" is not the same. Back then they had rights and obligations and their working conditions were similar to those of employees today. In general, all who lived in Israel, foreigners and slaves, had rights and were protected by the law.

God's vision of a nation is to not have any poor people. But the reality is quite different. If people would obey God there would be no poverty amongst them. But because people do not obey there will always be poor people amongst them⁹⁸.

⁹² Deut 24 19-20 Lev 19,9f.; Lev 23,22

⁹³ Deut.23.24-25, 24.19-24

⁹⁴ lat. discriminare „make a difference

⁹⁵ Deut.15.12-18

⁹⁶ Deut. 23.16-17

⁹⁷ Ex 21. 26-27

⁹⁸ Deut 15.11

Rights for children

Parents were able to go to the state to accuse their child⁹⁹. Nobody wanted to do it. The whole family and all their friends were under pressure. Therefore, parents had to make sure that such a thing would never happen. This law was most probably never put into practice and was only a preventive measure.

It was also a Human Right for the children. The legal cases came under the authority of the city. Perhaps, the child was not guilty. The parents had to give account in public. The children were right to a good education. The parents did not have absolute control.

Rights for education

The Israelites were responsible for teaching their children God's law¹⁰⁰. They were to teach their children in the temple, in their homes and in public¹⁰¹.

History and rituals were very important for the education¹⁰². They were to hold the festivals every year, again and again. Through rituals, children could see, touch and experience it. Children and adults learned much more through experience and repetition. Learning by experience and repeating it is much more effective than just hearing it in a classroom.

Today, the government is responsible for the education system. This is not wrong in itself. The Bible doesn't necessarily tell people to do home schooling. But the parents cannot simply delegate this to the state or the church. If the state school is not doing its job properly, parents must look for another solution.

If the parents do not take responsibility, the church has to take it and in the end the state. However, if there are circumstances, which prevent parents from doing so, there is a structure in place where they can find help: the churches or the state. Children have the right to a good education. At least, John Calvin understood it in this way¹⁰³. Today we can probably apply it in this way. If tutoring or parental care are not healthy any more, children would have the right to live with their relatives or in a children's home.

Danger of losing the truth

Today the schools are secularized and religion is nothing but a minor subject. The public schools in particular are silent about what made the West strong.

But if God is abolished, the Truth is abolished. If there is no absolute standard of right and wrong anymore, it will be no longer be important to learn what is right or wrong. It only makes sense to ponder a moral question when it is clear what is right or wrong. Without God education becomes arbitrary. Children will only study the best practice for people. But what is useful for some might be a curse for others.

What should children learn about a family if it is no longer clear what a family is? What can children learn about themselves, if it is not clear how many genders there are? How can they understand humans, if they see themselves as nothing but a developed monkey? What should children learn about a good attitude? Without God there is no morality, no absolute standard of right and wrong. The greatest danger of the West is the loss an absolute truth. What will be left is just the survival of the fittest.

A scientist cannot say "all people die" as an absolute statement. If he did so, he would have left the realm of scientific reasoning. He only can say that until this moment in time, everybody has ended up dying. Something that everybody knows to be true becomes

⁹⁹ Deut 21,18-21

¹⁰⁰ Deut.32.45-47

¹⁰¹ Deut 6:7-9, Deut 11 18-23,

¹⁰² Deut 4.32-40

¹⁰³ Johannes Calvin, Teaching in the Christian religion

uncertain when science becomes absolute. Science on its own cannot replace God. There are a lot of things in life that cannot be explained scientifically.

Nowadays, there is a danger that education will no longer be about truth, but rather about what is convenient to influential people at that moment.

5.2.2 Family

After getting married, a man was to stay home and was not allowed to engage in military service or public duty¹⁰⁴. This idea could also be applied today. It need not be one year but it would be good for men to have some days off when they get married. They should not take on projects in politics or church. They should have time to build up a family. The same goes for women.

At that time, God told them not to marry people from other cultures who worshipped other gods¹⁰⁵. This law is in the Bible because intercultural marriages became a problem for the Israelites: It was one of the reasons why Solomon left God.

This principle can be applied today: When a man marries a non-Christian woman, it can become very difficult for them. He wants to follow Jesus and his wife opposes it. They will not walk in the same direction and it can lead to conflict. A marriage will work best if people have the same goals and the same vision. They should have the same values and the same understanding.

Inheritance

The firstborn was to receive a double share of the inheritance.¹⁰⁶ This was a practical application of the social system. The parents and the unmarried siblings lived in the house of the first-born¹⁰⁷. He had more responsibility than his siblings. The Israelites had a social welfare system.

Today, the state assumes responsibility for the elderly. The West places the elderly in retirement homes and that is why the costs increase more and more. Is this really better than the system of the Israelites? Perhaps, Christians should find a new way of applying biblical principles in this area. Of course, a solution must always go in the direction of people taking on more responsibility for themselves and their families.

In Israel, the parents passed their possessions on to their children. The Israelites increased their possession over time. Inheritance was very important for a growing economy.

Today, people think it is fair for the state to take part of the inheritance in order to give it to the poor or to use it on state spending. People think that this is necessary otherwise the poor would have no help. But is the state really more socially minded than its individual members? This system merely increases the administrative cost and in future the costs may increase more and more. The state cannot control people and hold them accountable as their relatives would.

The cost of social welfare increases and the West may have to rethink this system. But for this to work people need a moral standard above them, a moral law which held them accountable. However, because the fear of God has been lost, the process of rising costs will most likely keep going.

¹⁰⁴ Deut.24.5

¹⁰⁵ Deut.7.3

¹⁰⁶ Deut.21.17

¹⁰⁷ Lev.22.10-20

Regulation of sexual relationships and marriages

When people had sex together, they were viewed as married.¹⁰⁸ If people engaged in sexual intercourse, they had to marry otherwise it was considered adultery. In some cases, the Israelites had to stone the people involved¹⁰⁹. Stoning was an applied law applied at the time of the Israelites and can no longer be applied in today's time.

Sexual relationships belong to marriages. A sexual relationship is something very intimate and personal therefore it needs a secure and safe environment. An environment like a marriage where a woman and a man promise to stay together whatever may happen.

Family was the most pressures thing and therefore God protected it as we already say in the moral law in point 3.7. Therefore, the law was very strict. It was a preventive law meant to protect families. Today, the state doesn't protect families anymore. They legalize red light districts and celebrate adultery.

Intercourse with relatives¹¹⁰ or sexual relationships between man and man or man and an animal were forbidden¹¹¹. God made it clear that sexual relationships outside of marriage were not good. This notion found its way into our laws. But since the sixties this has been heavily contested, even though these laws made the West strong¹¹².

Today, a marriage can be anything: Man and man, woman and woman or both. People have every possibility to do what they want. But people don't have a clear orientation anymore. The West broadened the definition of the family more and more until the concept didn't make sense anymore. The family needs to be clearly defined again.

When the fear of God is gone and people no longer know the Creator, there is no clear concept of the family anymore. The world abolished the Creator and his creation was turned upside-down. Without a Creator everything is just arbitrary, good or bad. No one really knows what is good. There are only various opportunities.

It was forbidden to have sexual relationships with slaves¹¹³. Probably it was mentioned because slaves worked closely together with their owners. There was a very real danger to commit adultery. The same danger probably exists for a beautiful young female secretary who is often around her boss. This law is relevant today: Christians should be aware of this danger and create a system to prevent temptations and to protect women from sexual abuse.

A man was allowed to have two wives but he had to love both of them the same way¹¹⁴. A man had to marry the wife of his brother when he died, which meant that he now had two wives. But there may have been other reasons for having two wives. In general, it was a social welfare system that helped widows.

In actual fact, God wanted one wife and one man to be together. But in a fallen world and for the purpose of social security God allowed men to have two wives.

5.2.3 Trading

The Israelites had to control the scales¹¹⁵. Therefore, the nation got regulations and laws. It was not just the state who controlled the scales. Everybody was responsible before God. But when a nation loses the fear of God, they need more and more laws and regulations so that people will not cheat. The fear of God allows a society to live in freedom without excessive legal restrictions, useless laws and costly administration.

¹⁰⁸ Deut. 22.30

¹⁰⁹ Deut.22.22-30

¹¹⁰ Lev.17.11-12

¹¹¹ Lev.18.22-23

¹¹² See the seventh moral law

¹¹³ Lev.19.20-22

¹¹⁴ Ex.21.10.11

¹¹⁵ Deut.25.13-15

The right to private property

The state protected private property as we already discussed in the section on moral law in point 3.8. People are not allowed to steal. If people do so anyway, they are penalized.

Lost property needs to be restored¹¹⁶. It is not allowed to take something that does not belong to oneself. Even though nobody may be around and no one knows to whom it belongs, people cannot just take it. In the West, this is legally regulated: People have to bring it to the lost and found. After some time, if nobody comes and claims it, they can take it for themselves.

If someone steals an animal and it dies, he has to pay back more than the original price¹¹⁷. If the animal is still alive, he has to pay double the price¹¹⁸.

If someone steals something or refuse to give it back, he must confess, give it back and give 20% more¹¹⁹.

Today, we could apply these laws: If someone steals something, he has to restore it to the owner and pay back an additional percentage of its value. If someone steals something that people need for their work, such as an animal, they must return the animal but also reimburse the owners for their loss of income, due to them being unable to keep working. At the time of the Israelites, this sum was double the value. Today, it would perhaps be different depending on the damage the thief caused. These principles found their way into today's law books.

People have to replace what they damage¹²⁰. They have to take responsibility. When something is broken or damaged, they have to put it in order again. In the West, this is a common worldview and it is implemented through the laws. People replace what they damage. It is different in non-Christian areas. The fear of God holds the people accountable. In the Western system, a person's culpability was cancelled when they had paid the fine.

The West has clear boundaries for ownership. Stealing is not allowed. When someone does it, they have to pay it back. However, this is often not the case in other parts of the world.

The Western world is a culture based on guilt: individuals are responsible for their own mistakes. If they do something wrong, they have to pay it back and then the problem is solved. Some African or other cultures are different. They are based on shame. Simply paying something back does not solve the problem. The feeling of shame remains and that is the main problem.

Jesus was able to take the sin and all shame of the world away. Because Jesus knew, he was not guilty, he was not ashamed and was able to take all shame upon himself. Therefore, the people who accept Jesus fix their mistakes and have not to be ashamed any more.

That is why the Lord's supper is distributed in the churches. It always reminds people of what Jesus did on the cross for them. Throughout the years, this ritual formed the Western worldview and its structure.

A functional court system regulates the conflicts, applying the principle of the cross. The Christian influence made the West different compared to the other parts of the world. What Jesus sacrifice did for the Western World cannot be applied in non-Christian societies.

Cultures influenced by Christianity implemented the idea of the cross. It regulated how people had to pay back their debt or rectify their mistakes.

In the Old Testament time the offerings took the shame away. The offerings are now replaced by Jesus' sacrifice.

¹¹⁶ Deut.22 1-4

¹¹⁷ Ex 22.1

¹¹⁸ Ex.22.4

¹¹⁹ Lev 6.2-5

¹²⁰ Ex.22.6

A law regulates the property lines of the Israelites' ancestors¹²¹. Even today, Western states have their boundaries listed in a book and no one can remove or change them. If private property is not protected, people will not invest.

If there are only the laws of the state to regulate ownership, people try to pull tricks and skirt the laws. They hire lawyers to make sure that what they are doing is still legal, even if it is stealing. Without God a society stays in danger to lose the concept of ownership.

The right to a salary

A worker has right to a salary. The employer had to pay it every day¹²². The workers and employers were equal before the law.

Today, this principle is an international consensus but it is often not applied in many nations. There are unions who fight for those rights. The unions fight for what the Bible long ago already taught. But the Bible has an advantage: the fear of God preached on Sunday is able to change people. The cross could change the hearts of the people, which that law could not do. Today, the only way to do this is through laws, strikes or fights.

Regulations of loans

Charge not your brother with usury, with too much interest¹²³. The Hebrew original word¹²⁴ means to oppress, with a strike or a sting like a snake. It is important to know this because some Bible translations say that people are not allowed to take interest.

In fact, the Bible does allow it, but also establishes conditions for it. One being that the loan has to be paid back. In the Bible the deadline was seven years¹²⁵. This could merely be a symbolic number. But the essential principle is to pay the loan back.

When the debtor was not able to pay it back, the debts were cancelled. Thus, the creditor had to make sure that the debtor would be able to pay it in less than seven years back. If that was not the case, it was advisable to not lend him any money otherwise creditor may easily lose what he invested. The financial backer had to trust the one who took out a loan. It was based on personal relationships. The financial backer assumed the final responsibility. This system was important, in that it ensured that people do not end in poverty¹²⁶.

Nowadays, it is different: the financial backer earns money. He is not interested in making sure that people can pay him back, because people's debts are his income. Through the debt, people become dependent and lose responsibility for themselves. But God did not want people to live in debt. Therefore, he limited it.

The Israelites could not charge too much interest. Otherwise the debtor was not able to do business well and, in the end, would not even be able to pay it back. Calvin stated that 4% would be a good limit, which was a good implementation of the biblical principle.

Foreigners were handled differently because they didn't live under the same law. The Israelites couldn't trust foreigners in the same way, because they were not accountable to God and could do things that the Israelites were not allowed to do. Therefore, they could charge them with more interest to account for the added risk and uncertainty.

The concept of interest brought back by the Reformers made the West strong. People without money and resources were able to buy something and be productive by taking out a loan. It was the engine of the Western society.

¹²¹ Deut.19.14

¹²² Deut.24.14

¹²³ Deut.23.20-21

¹²⁴ naw-shak

¹²⁵ Deut.15.1-2

¹²⁶ Deut.15.4-6

Limitations concerning bonds and deposits

It was not allowed to take a tool as a deposit. The things that people needed for work and production could not be taken otherwise they would never be able to pay their loans back¹²⁷.

A deposit had to be returned to its owner, if he or she needed it for their livelihoods¹²⁸. It was also not allowed to take the garment of a widow¹²⁹.

Also, the Bible states that one should not take the mother bird from a nest with young birds.¹³⁰ Those laws meant that people should not destroy possibilities of growth. They should not take the tools of someone so that he cannot produce anymore. The mother would raise new birds and life could go on. These advices changed the worldview of the West and protected the weak in a society.

Obligations for safety

The Israelites had to build railings around a construction site¹³¹. God advised them to have security. People had to take good safety measures. When someone dug a hole, he had to protect people from falling into it¹³². These laws found as well the way into our civilisation.

When an animal kills someone the animal has to be put to death¹³³. If the owner had been warned beforehand, he must die although he could pay a fine to save his life. If an animal kills another animal, the owners were to divide the meat¹³⁴. If the owner had been warned he had to refund the owner of the dead animal.

The owner is responsible for it. Nowadays, the keeping of dangerous animals is forbidden or restricted in many countries.

Obligations concerning promises

God takes our vows very seriously¹³⁵. People must think carefully before they commit to something. They should think about it and consider the potential costs before making an agreement for an instance. The agreements people enter into will be taken seriously. If they break their promises, they will have to face the consequences. People have to keep their word and deliver on their promises.

Today's laws state that if there is a price shield in the shop window, the seller has to sell his or her product for that price, even though it might have been a mistake. He promised that price in the shop window and therefore, he has to sell the product for that amount.

Please take also notice about the moral law do not lie in 3.9.

5.2.4 Environment care

Obligations concerning hygiene

People had to do their business outside of the camp and had to put in the ground¹³⁶. It was because of hygiene. A bad hygiene system will cause sicknesses and diseases. People will need drugs and the medical costs will increase. They spend a lot of money on medicine

¹²⁷ Deut.24.6

¹²⁸ Deut.24.12

¹²⁹ Deut.24.17

¹³⁰ Deut 22.6-7

¹³¹ Deut.22.8

¹³² Deut.21.33-34

¹³³ Deut.21.28-31

¹³⁴ Deu. 21.35-36

¹³⁵ Deut 23.21-23 Deut. 16.16.-17

¹³⁵ Deut.16.1

¹³⁵ Deut. 16.16.-17

¹³⁶ Deut.23.13-14

instead of investing it in education or business. People become sick and weak and could not work. A bad hygiene system leads to poverty. This idea also found its way into our regulations and laws of the West: People are responsible for hygiene and environment care.

The ceremonial law could be brought to bear upon hygiene as well. In the Middle Ages, the Black Death spread throughout Europe and killed a third of the population. But it didn't touch the Jewish communities. The Jews lived in closed communities and followed the ceremonial laws. Therefore, their hygiene system was much better than the systems found in the rest of Europe.

John Calvin advised the people to clean the city, because it was in really dire circumstances and the river and the streets were filthy. A lot of people died because of the poor hygiene conditions.

Nowadays, a lot of places could learn from this. Christians are still responsible for the setup of good hygiene systems. But it is not enough to merely install hygiene systems: people also have to maintain it and use it properly.

A missionary went to Africa and started a hygiene project. He told the locals to wash their hands because the bacteria in the dust and the dirt may be harmful and make people sick. Therefore, people were to wash their hands so that they wouldn't bring bacteria into their food and consequently into their mouths. The Africans attended the nice presentation and did what he told them. They also came because they received good food. After a while the missionary went back home on holiday. Three months later he came back to Africa to look after his project. But what did he find? Did the Africans still wash their hands? No. He got angry and went to the chief of the village. He argued and complained. The chief told him: "You are a nice person and you give us good food. But you do not understand the world. You say the bacteria we cannot see make us sick. I will tell you what makes us sick. The gods are angry and therefore people get sick." The missionary argued with him and tried to tell him there is no such thing but to no avail.

Why should Africans believe in something they cannot even see with their own eyes? This is a question of worldview. Since the missionary could not address this issue, he could not change the situation and the Africans continued in their old ways without believing in the danger or bacteria. Those people still live in terrible circumstances. Their fatalism hinders them from building a stable hygiene system.

To change circumstances means therefore to first address the worldview of the people. If development workers cannot change the worldview of the people, they cannot change their circumstances.

Often, people want to help emotionally. They give a lot of resources and money to the poor and wonder why nothing changes in the long term. The West has spent a lot of money on foreign aid but things have not changed much in Africa. Some historians even say that the situation is now worse than before. Why is it like this. Because the people didn't change their worldview and still live in fear of their gods. If people do not face first the worldview question, they will never understand why the Western system is not working in Africa.

Obligations concerning the environment

The Israelites were responsible to take care of the Land. After seven times seven years they had to give it back to the original owner¹³⁷. The Land didn't belong to them. It belonged to God and it was the inheritance for the next generation. It means that the present generation have to make sure that the land is still usable for the following one. They have to take care of the environment and the resources.

¹³⁷ 3.Mose 25,8-55

Moses told them not to defile the land¹³⁸. Some think that this only refers to ceremonial laws. But the word "defile" means to "pollute". At the time of the Israelites, environment protection was not an issue but, in our times, when millions live in one and the same city it becomes an issue. The Israelites had to take care of it because it was the Lord's land. The land was intended for the next generations and not just for them. They were to find long-term solutions for environment protection. Water has to be clean. Life cycles in nature must be able to run smoothly. God lets things grow, cleans the air through photosynthesis and lets it rain. Christians have to take care of the earth so that it remains a livable place for generations to come. They have to think about renewable resources.

Taking care of the environment is a spiritual act. Since God created the world for eternity, he wants to restore the whole creation through Jesus Christ.

The media tells that our planet is on the verge of collapsing: Global warming and natural disasters will have destructive effects. The Fiji Islands will be flooded. If people believe that, why should they take care of the environment? Why should they invest in the Fiji Islands if it is now too late anyway? "Let us drink and eat for tomorrow we die". But in fact, the world will not collapse because God promised it. God wants to restore the entire creation and the devil will not conquer it.

There are some cities that face extreme environmental damage. Their situation seems to be hopeless. But Christians may have a different perspective. They see the spiritual dimension. Evil will not win. God wants to restore that which has been destroyed and it is indeed possible. Therefore, Christians will be encouraging and will stand up and take action. They are not dependent on the circumstances. They are able to stand above the circumstances and find new ways to solve the problem through their spirit. They will roll up their sleeves and get to work to clean the city.

God told the Israelites to take care of environment and develop new technologies to face the problems of their time. Christians should do the same today.

5.3 Church laws: the individual and the church

The obligation to preach the word of God

The law is implemented by the priests and not by the leaders¹³⁹. They were in charge of the interpretation of the law. Moses wrote everything in one book and gave it to the priests. They were to write it down and keep it safe it¹⁴⁰. The church and the state were separated. It was a practical application of the second moral law. Nobody is able to see the whole of reality on their own. People need each other.

The Priests had to preach the laws of the Bible,¹⁴¹. They had to remember the Israelites to hold all commandments and regulations. The preached the blessing and the curse, to all Israelites, children and even foreigners. They had to teach and make sure that people don't worship other gods¹⁴².

Today, the church replaced the temple. Therefore, the church is responsible for teaching people about the laws in all spheres of life and not just about salvation.

Christians were called to be priests. They have direct access to God through the cross. Christians themselves replace the priests and the temple. Therefore, they are responsible for implementing and interpret the laws.

During the reformation, Christians taught the people how society should work according to God's law. The reformers laid the foundation of Western laws. Today, laws are made based

¹³⁸ Num 35.34

¹³⁹ Deut.31.24-26

¹⁴⁰ Deut 27.1-8

¹⁴¹ Deut 12.11-14 Deut.11.26-32, Deut.27.9-26

¹⁴² Deut 17.2-5

on a secular understanding. The church and the process of law making are separated. But shouldn't Christians stand up and think about how to apply the laws in our society?

The priest had special clothes and worked in the tabernacle full of symbols¹⁴³. The symbols reminded people of God. The churches should do the same. In every city in Switzerland, there is a church tower. It is the biggest building in a city and it can be seen from far away. Whenever the bells sound people are reminded that there is a God. It was a symbol used to remind people of God. Christians' responsibility is to teach God's word to the world with all the opportunities of symbolism they can find.

The Priests had to show the way to salvation, that is, how the Israelites were to perform their sacrifices in order to approach God. In light of the New Testament things have changed. People don't have to perform these rituals anymore because they have access to God through Jesus Christ. Thus, the Churches' responsibility is to show the way of salvation to the people and to explain the gospel to them.

However, Christians must still submit to the leaders of their churches. Rules and rituals could be very helpful. They bring regularity and order into a community. Order is a practical application of God's idea of submitting to one another. Regulations and rituals may be different in different cultures. But members of a church have to submit to these regulations because of order. Not because it is a moral law coming from God, but because it brings freedom and order to a community

Today, churches welcome everyone and they can behave in whatever way they want. At the time of the Israelites it was different: If they didn't follow the rituals and the laws they were punished. During the Reformation, the church in Geneva excluded people from the communion when they behaved badly. The Calvinists are still famous for their strict church rules. In our postmodern world it is not common anymore to discipline people. But is that a good idea?

False prophets must be killed¹⁴⁴ even if they perform miracles. If they are guilty, they must be put to death even if they are relatives. The Israelites had to test the theology of a prophet and not just watch their performance.

At that time, it was a big lose of reputation when somebody had to step down from his duties: They lost all of their reputation. Another example would be Socrates who rather wanted to die than leave the city, because to him, being an outsider would have been worse than dying. But killing was always a public issue and could only be done when at least two or three people testify it. The temple may not kill people.

Today, people are not allowed to kill false prophets anymore. It was a law made for the time of the Israelites. Instead, Christians have to test the theology of their leaders. When it becomes clear that they don't teach the Gospel and doubt God, they can no longer be in a leading position in the Church. They have to step down.

The church doesn't have to please all people. Their main goal should be to teach people who God is and to bring believers together in order to encourage and educate them in building the Kingdom of God.

Festivals

The priests were in charge of organising the festivals¹⁴⁵. The festivals were a tool used to remember what God had done for Israel. They had three main festivals every year: Passover¹⁴⁶, the Harvest festival¹⁴⁷ and the Shelter festival¹⁴⁸, which they had to celebrate with the priests, orphans, widows and foreigners.

¹⁴³ Ex. 28

¹⁴⁴ Deut 13.1-9

¹⁴⁵ Deut.16.1

¹⁴⁶ Deut 16.9

¹⁴⁷ Deut 16.13-17

¹⁴⁸ Deut.14.22-26

Nowadays, the church is still responsible for Easter, Christmas, Ascension or Pentecost. The festivals changed in light of Jesus' sacrifice but the principle remains the same. Festivals are a time of fellowship and remembrance of what God has done for us. The Israelites celebrated them together with the foreigners. Christians should invite non-Christians to celebrate with them and they should let them see why Christians celebrate those festivals. The festivals are very important in shaping a culture. The festivals of a nation will determine what its future will look like.

Rituals help people understand who God is. One was the Lord's Supper. It is a ritual to remind people of what Jesus Christ did on the cross. The churches are responsible to perform such rituals in order to remind people of what God has done for them.

The tithe - taxes

People have to pay the tithe to the Lord¹⁴⁹. They tithe was used for several things. They used it to celebrate the festivals before the Lord and support the Levites and Priest with it. If the place was too far away, they were allowed to change their tithe into money and payed the costs for them self and the priesthood. God advised them not to forget the poor. They had to pay for them that they could celebrate with the others together.

Every third year, the tithe was given to the needy¹⁵⁰. The Israelites gave it to the priests and the priests distributed it to orphans, foreigners and widows. The priests could keep the shoulder, jaw, stomach and the first share of the grain offering for themselves¹⁵¹. The first-born offering was to be eaten by the priesthood before the Lord and not at home¹⁵².

Is the tithe still relevant today? Nowadays, most people don't work in agriculture anymore. They cannot bring their grain or the tithe of the crops. The circumstances have changed. The tithe was a practical application of a biblical principle – expressing who God is - at that time. He is the Creator and he let the crops grow. Thus, this law reminded people of the fact that their income comes from God and not from themselves. They should always give a part of what they received back to God and also provide for the poor.

The state provides social welfare, something that used to be paid every third year from the tithe. The Israelites were allowed to use the tithe for festivals. They also used the tithe for the offerings, which they could partly eat as well. Thus, the question of the practical implementation of the tithe is not easy to answer.

But the principle remains useful. People give generously in order to be reminded of God as their provider. They give to the churches and to the poor but also use this money generously in order to celebrate Easter, Christmas, Ascension or Pentecost. It is good for the church to remind people again and again by having an offering every Sunday. People should not forget where their sustenance comes from. However, Christians themselves must determine the exact amount.

Some churches teach that 10% should be given to the church. It can be ok but this is not a law of the bible.

The Levites did not own land¹⁵³. They were allowed to cultivate land for their daily bread but not for business. Today, everybody is a priest and therefore this law is no longer applicable. It is not a socialist concept. However, one way of implementing this law today might be that pastors don't work for their income. They might have a garden for themselves but not a business, so that they have enough time to investigate the Bible and its laws and to organize the gatherings. Thus, preachers would live on the offerings and the tithe that people give to the church.

¹⁴⁹ Deut.14.28-29, 26.12-15

¹⁵⁰ Deut.18.1-8

¹⁵¹ Deut.15.19-23, 26.1-1.1

¹⁵³ Deut.12.12

But because Jesus called all Christians to be priests, the pastor's role is not necessarily exactly the same as the priest of the Israelites: If pastors own a business it is not necessarily be wrong.

Health care

In the case of skin diseases, the Israelites were to follow the instructions of the Priests¹⁵⁴. Today, unlike the Israelites, we have had professional Doctors. This was a private law and is no longer applicable in the same way anymore.

But even today it would perhaps still be wise to first pray and go to counsellor before approaching a doctor. God can heal. A lot of sicknesses have to do with a person's mind. Christian counsellors probably understand this better than secular doctors because they have a different view of man. They are able to help because they can see from a better perspective. Christians should not separate the body and the spirit. In fact, they could provide a great alternative to the growing health costs, if they reintroduced the spiritual factor into today's health care system.

The Priest also examined houses if they have a mold¹⁵⁵. The priests were specialist for taking care that not disease spread out in a country.

5.4 Public laws; between the individual and the state

God's principles were unique and brought a better justice system compared to all other nations. No other nation had a justice system like the Israeli system. Please have a look into capture 3 where already the moral principle of a stable government and human rights was laid.

In the old supreme court of Switzerland there is a large mural painting¹⁵⁶. Justice, personified by a woman, does not point her sword into the air as she usually does in other depictions. She points her sword to the Bible. Everyone who went through the court hall had to pass by this amazing painting and would be reminded that people are under God's law and that they are accountable not just to humans but also to God. This is a good way of implementing the biblical principle in our day and age and it taught people the fear of God.

The implementation of these laws can be different in different nations. The Bible does not make it absolutely clear when the state should regulate something and when people can act responsibly of their own accord.

The structure of responsibility in the Government

The people of Israel chose their own leaders.¹⁵⁷ They chose wise people in all the cities and tribes, honest judges who would neither be partial nor take bribes but rather be just and fair. If they did not fulfill these requirements people would not vote for them. God gave them a system that limited evil and malpractice and it became the foundation of modern nations.

However, the Israelites did not want to be responsible for themselves. Instead, they wanted to have a leader and they chose Moses¹⁵⁸. The same thing happened in Samuel's day: the Israelites wanted a King just like all the other nations. But God didn't want to give them a King. He wanted to be King and he wanted them to follow him. God's original idea of a government system was different but Israel chose Moses and later Saul.

God personally wrote the Ten Commandments on stone tablets. It is most likely that Moses wrote the implementation of the Ten Commandments, probably on papyrus or parchment.

¹⁵⁴ Deut.24.8-9, Lev 13.1-46

¹⁵⁵ Lev 13.47-59

¹⁵⁶ From Paul Robert 1906, The justice of Nations

¹⁵⁷ Deut.16.18, Ex.18.20-22

¹⁵⁸ Deut. 5.4-5, 22-31

The original divine law is still missing to this day. However, in a fallen world the laws of the Israelites were the best practical application of his Law.

The people should agree with the leaders¹⁵⁹. This means that it was not enough for someone to be elected. The people also had to agree with the leaders. This is the case in most democratic countries today.

The laws guaranteed the separation of power on a vertical level. If the issue was too big to handle on their own, the people went to Moses. Moses appointed rulers and judges on many levels of responsibility, that is, over 1000, 100, 50 and ten men. If the cases were too difficult to solve, they brought them to the next level, until they came before Moses¹⁶⁰. The separation of power in a vertical dimension is called federalism and it is common in most countries today¹⁶¹.

The law was interpreted by the priests¹⁶². During the reformation, it was possible for anyone to stand up to their leaders and tell them what they are doing was wrong because the Bible was the highest authority. In the parliament building of the Canton of Berne there is still a Bible on a table in front of the members of council. It refers back to the time when the pastor could come to the government and rebuke them based on the word of God.

The leaders had to teach the law but they were always under the control of the priests¹⁶³. Today, we live in a secular world where the church can no longer intervene in the process of law making.

These ideas lead to the separation of power in a horizontal way, namely, today's executive, legislative and judiciary branches.

Representatives

The leaders were representatives¹⁶⁴. They represent God and the people they are sent by. They couldn't do whatever they want. They must obey the will of the majority. Today, the members of parliament should be representatives and not rulers, which is something that happens often.

The institution of the prime minister is one way of implementing this principle. Originally, the "prime minister" meant the "first servant", which refers to Jesus. The minister is a servant and not a ruler. This principle came from the Huguenots who wanted to replace the ruler, who tends to become a dictator, with the ideas of the Bible.

The Judiciary

The judges must not take bribes¹⁶⁵. Orphans and foreigners must be treated fairly. Today's constitutions apply this principle by stating that all are equal before the law.

God saw that leaders might be in danger of being bribed from people who want a favor. Thus, God didn't allow it¹⁶⁶. In Switzerland there is a law, which states that members of parliament are not allowed to accept a gift of more than 200 Swiss francs. This is an example of how this principle can be applied in a modern nation.

The state should not differentiate between foreigners and Israelites. Everyone must keep the same law. Therefore, all are equal before the law¹⁶⁷.

¹⁵⁹ Deut.1.14

¹⁶⁰ Deut.17.8-9, see the second moral law

¹⁶¹ explained in the moral law 1-3

¹⁶² Deut.31.24-26

¹⁶³ Deut.1.1-4

¹⁶⁴ Deut.1.13-14, 16:18

¹⁶⁵ Deut.10.17-20, 24.17-18

¹⁶⁶ Deut.16.19

¹⁶⁷ Lev.24.22

People had the right to a fair court case¹⁶⁸. The judges were to investigate and examine the issue carefully. In our laws today, it says that everyone has a right to fair court case.

Judges have to be people with recognized skills¹⁶⁹. Judges should be wise and experienced. They should not bear false witness.¹⁷⁰ Is should still be the case today?

5.4.1 Criminal laws

The Bible regulated what should happen if someone did not follow God's instructions. In this chapter I mention all regulation that came necessarily before the court. It was everything that have to do with the death penalty. The other issues it didn't came directly before the court. People could solve it by them selves. Only when they found an agreement it comes before the court.

The criminals had a right to a fair court case¹⁷¹. It was not allowed to beat the culprit more than four times.¹⁷² Every death had to be investigated¹⁷³. People had a right to know who did what and the criminal had to receive the punishment. People could flee to a refuge city until the case was investigated. They were protected by the law. Today, the state has implemented those ideas in the judiciary and protects people until the court decides on their case. In every non-Christian influenced nation this could be really different.

For each case, two or three witnesses were needed¹⁷⁴. One was not enough. If there was a false accusation, the testifier had to accept the punishment he had asked for¹⁷⁵. In this case, the principle was an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a life for a life or a hand for a hand.

The difficulty in a secular world is that one cannot look into someone's heart. Bearing false witness or asking for favors from others can often not be investigated. All this advice concerning criminal justice only works properly if there is a God whom people are accountable to¹⁷⁶. Since the people had the fear of God and were afraid of God's punishment, the system was held together and they could live in freedom and order.

The witness must throw the first stone¹⁷⁷. Perhaps, this law was meant to prevent a conviction of the innocent. There were several steps for the court to ensure that this did not happen. First, more than one witness was necessary. Second, if someone bears false witness, they have to carry the punishment themselves. Third, they have to throw the first stone. The one who throws the first stone is the one who is responsible for the death penalty. They could not delegate this to someone in a hidden room. They had to do it themselves and this needs a certain amount of boldness. There were several security checks before a verdict was put into practice.

If people murdered a thief in the night in order to defend themselves, they were not considered guilty¹⁷⁸. People had the right to defend themselves. It was legal in America. People had weapons to defend themselves. But when a nation loses the fear of God it might become dangerous for everyone to have weapons at home. If the absolute moral standard is gone and everyone uses their weapons according to their own moral standard then it can become dangerous.

Human trafficking was punishable by death¹⁷⁹. Selling someone was considered just as bad as murder. Selling someone was like murdering that person: their whole identity was taken. It

¹⁶⁸ Deut.18.18

¹⁶⁹ Deut.1.14

¹⁷⁰ Deut. 5:20

¹⁷¹ Deut 4.41-43

¹⁷² Deut.25.1-3

¹⁷³ Deut 21.1-9

¹⁷⁴ Deut.19.15 17.7

¹⁷⁵ Deut.19.16-21

¹⁷⁶ Deut.19.20

¹⁷⁷ Deut.19.15, 17.7

¹⁷⁸ Ex 22.2-4

¹⁷⁹ Deut 24.7

was even worse than killing someone. The death penalty was also used to punish rapists¹⁸⁰ or magicians.¹⁸¹ It was a practical application of God's law at that time.

It doesn't have to be done that way today but the question remains: What should nations do with criminals who kill people, do human trafficking or damage hundreds?

When states are not based on God's law it could be dangerous to have the death penalty because there would be not guarantee that everyone gets a fair court case. Therefore, it might be better to fight for the abolition of the death penalty even though it might be warranted in some cases.

The laws of the bible were implemented in Western culture and the Western culture is still different compared to other cultures. The laws of the Bible made the West strong.

6 Ceremonial laws

People don't have to keep the ceremonial laws anymore. Jesus fulfilled these old laws on the cross. But the laws also speak to aspects of hygiene: It is a good idea to wash your hands before eating. Thus, the ceremonial laws give advice on hygiene even today. It would absolutely be wrong to keep these laws in order to become holier or to get closer to God. But one can still learn something from them.

Circumcision

As a sign of the covenant with God boys were circumcised on the eighth day¹⁸². It was a law for the Israelites at their time but it doesn't have to be done today. The ritual probably had an effect on hygiene as well, but the main reason was to confirm the covenant with God.

The circumcision could be seen as similar to the baptism of babies. However, many Christians saw infant baptism as a heresy. They thought that people could only be baptized when they are old enough to make that decision on their own. The reformers thought that infant baptism was a commitment by the parents. Through this, they committed to investing in their child so that the child would find God. At the confirmation the child has to confirm this decision. But a lot of people were killed because of this controversy.

Today, the children are blessed when they are little and are baptized when they are old enough to make the decision on their own. Was that worth fighting for? Christians should not argue so much about rituals; they should rather aim to understand the principles behind the rituals.

The Bible forbids tattoos¹⁸³. This was an application of the moral law that people should have only one God. At that time, people got tattoos as an act of worship to their gods. It was a very common ritual in their gatherings. But since the Israelites should not be identified with such people, they were not allowed to do it. Nowadays, people live in a different cultural setting where tattoos are not necessarily connected to such rituals anymore.

But people have to be aware of the fact that they cannot be removed. People grow older and in ten years they might believe something else. It would not be good if people had something fixed on their body that they no longer believe in. It would therefore be better not to get tattoos. If people really want to do it, they should consider it really carefully and not rush into it.

¹⁸⁰ Deut.22.22-27

¹⁸¹ Deut.18 11-14

¹⁸² Lev 12.3

¹⁸³ Lev.19.28

Eating the right thing

The Israelites were responsible to eat meat in the right way¹⁸⁴. They were not allowed to eat all animals. The law told them to eat the meat fast and not to store it.

They didn't have fridges and thus meat was spoiled very quickly. Therefore, this was probably a hygienic law at that time. Some say pork in particular is not a healthy type of meat and therefore one should not eat it.

Neither were the Israelites allowed to eat blood, which is something that we can do today¹⁸⁵. In fact, the New Testament allowed it, probably because the hygienic circumstances had changed and it was not a problem anymore.

Eating meat and blood was always strongly connected to the offerings and was therefore regulated by the ceremonial laws. I think God wanted to make it clear that the Israelites were to be different from other nations and therefore he forbidden some things and not others.

But one principle will certainly remain until today: the family is responsible to teach their children good eating habits. This is indeed important in terms of hygiene and health.

7 Conclusion

The laws in the Old Testament laid the foundation of the Western World. It is the source of today's rights and laws. It formed the Western understanding of structure and responsibilities. It gave rights and obligations. Through these laws, the West was able to build a strong culture and the Western worldview became the paramount worldview in the world.

The law of the Old Testament provides universal moral laws available to every culture and every time. They are mainly the Ten Commandments. It is the constitution of the world and found its way into almost every constitution or convention and into the conception of Human Rights.

Aside from the moral laws, the Old Testament teaches laws that were an application of the moral law. Those laws were meant for the Israelites and their time and culture. They cannot be implemented directly today. Nowadays, the laws are different but the principles remain the same. These laws helped the Western society to build up their own applied laws.

The Bible laid the foundation of our modern world and shaped the understanding of what is right and wrong. Western culture is a concept from the Bible. The question is, what will happen when the Western world loses the fear of God. Will this system still work without God?

Since the absolute moral standard is disappearing, people look for alternatives. People will lose their freedom more and more and be brought under the control of infinite laws and strong governments. Francis Schaeffer¹⁸⁶ said so fifty years ago; the West will lose its freedom and end in a dictatorship, as always was the case in history. People will become willing to give up their rights for the promise of affluence and personal freedom.

Is it not time to rethink where our culture came from?

Thank you so much for reading my thoughts about the Bible. There would be much more to discover and also some things that people might see differently. But I hope it prompted you to start thinking about our world. If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact me.

¹⁸⁴ Deut 5.3-20

¹⁸⁵ Deut 12.15-16

¹⁸⁶ Francis Schaeffer, *how should we then live*, 1978