



Rise and fall of Christianity - what should we know?

From Christianity to Secularism

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1 Abstract

500 years ago, Christianity had its flowering time. Through faith in God, the western society were born. But why did people start criticizing Christianity years later? The criticism became so big that after 300 years it was rejected by society. Christianity had been banished to the corner of religion. Society was secularized. It went so far that Christians were discriminated and even persecuted. Today Christians are considered fundamentalists or racists if they still stand by the values that our Western society had built up. The influence of Christianity is neglected by Western professors and intellectuals.

People in history have acted with the conviction that God exists. This led them to act and ultimately to write history. Things happened because people were moved by their faith in God.

Most historians today cannot understand this. They will interpret the events of history differently, because for them God does not exist. Therefore, the question arises whether they can understand or judge history at all. The West seems to be in a dilemma. It is struggling to interpret history correctly. History is no longer history¹.

This book will interpret the story from the 16th century, the time of the Reformation, to the 20th century. Out of a perspective that there is a God. The book shows the influence on the spheres of society by the reformers and during the time of Enlightenment. It also discusses the consequences of the loss of Christianity in the different spheres of society up to the present day.

Perhaps you have never heard this view before. There would certainly be things to add and maybe you will interpret this or that in a different way. It is also not written to criticize people from the past or to deny them Christianity. We are no better today. But I hope that it can help you to think about what really happened in history.

Perhaps this book could help to start a discussion about what the real history is. It could help to understand how a sustained reformation could take place in our time and place.

Without the influence of the Bible, the West would probably be in deep poverty, oppression, without education and legal security, without technical progress, as a large part of the Indian population of the country still is today².

¹ History = His story = The creator's Story

² Vishal Mangalwadi is an Indian philosopher, book author, speaker, social reformer, politician and professor of theology.

2 Introduction

2.1 What can we learn from history?

Back then, when I came to work without a measuring stick as an apprentice carpenter, I could go straight home again. A carpenter needs the measuring stick to be able to judge and check whether what he is building is right. Without the measuring stick, he is useless and can go home.

It is the same with history. Without an absolute measurement we cannot interpret history. Only facts and figures remain. But history is therefore meaningless and unimportant. It needs an absolute truth, just as the carpenter had his measuring stick to evaluate history and know what was good and what was not.

History needs an interpretation, but who is allowed to give the measure of what is right or wrong?

Before secularisation, 150 years ago, it was Christianity that set this standard. But what is it today? Secularism abolished Christianity and claimed to be neutral. How are we to judge history today without an absolute right or wrong? Secularism took the measuring stick away from the carpenter and sent him back to work.

It seems that secularism is in a dilemma. The Swiss have recognised that something has to change.

The new curriculum in Switzerland should now help out of this dilemma³. It changes the main objective of history. In the old curriculum the aim was to know and date the various events. The new curriculum now has the objective that children must evaluate history. Why did this happen and was it good or bad? So, the new aim is to interpret the story and not just to know the events and the facts. This is a good insight, but it raises some questions. If the aim of the story is to judge whether it was right or wrong, then someone must give the teachers a measuring stick again. Just as it was done 150 years ago. But can the school do this if it claims to be neutral? No, it cannot.

So, with the new curriculum, the school is again setting up a new measuring stick. The school is therefore no longer neutral. Students now have to believe what the school declares to be right or what it declares to be wrong. The question now is, what is the new reference point of secularism by which history is measured?

So, the school cannot come to a correct interpretation of the story. It takes a new measuring stick to judge the old one. Therefore, its conclusions must be wrong.

2.2 How is history judged?

Let us first look at what the new benchmark is. What makes an interpretation of history possible? Democracy, human rights, freedom, equality and the freedom to choose one's gender are some of them. This is how history is interpreted. But is that right?

³ Curriculum 21 <https://www.lehrplan21.ch/>

Democracy

The Swiss curriculum states that democracy and human rights are the fundamental values of freedom.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea, called North Korea, is just one example of many. Is this a democracy? Of course not, especially not in our understanding of what a democracy should be. Do they have freedom? No, it is a brutal dictatorship that violates human rights. The biggest democracy is India. But also the biggest corrupt nation

In the last century, most African nations became independent. They were given a constitution and a parliament. One was given a democratic system as the West knows it. But almost every country became a dictatorship, even though the name democracy was on its label.

The Americans spent a lot of time in the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. But it seems to be worse than before. They are spending money to help them build a democracy. A system like the one the West has. A system where people can live in freedom and prosperity. But it has not worked. In the end, the Taliban and ISIS took the country and destroyed it. Why could this vision of the West, of a democracy, not work for them?

We see that the name democracy cannot guarantee freedom. Even if this is written on paper, it does not make North Korea a nation in freedom.

May some think that the French Revolution brought democracy and freedom. It is an application of democracy where everyone could do what they wanted. But it was terrible. It was an anarchy in which everyone ended up killing each other. There was no legal certainty at all. Napoleon jumped into the vacuum and restored order. But instead of the promise of Liberté, Fraternité, Égalité, there was brutal dictatorship. Europe became a new empire under Napoleon and was swallowed up by Napoleon's ideology. The idea of French anarchy did not work. Instead of freedom it brought oppression and war instead.

Democracy comes from the Greek word demo. Demo means the people, and -cracy means to govern. The people is the government, the ruling power⁴.

The word democracy was first used by the Greek thinker Cleisthenes in 508 BC. Greece invented the word but Greece was never a democracy. In the glorious days of antiquity, Greece became a democracy. However, never more than 10% of the population or probably much less were involved in political decision-making. Only the citizens, those who owned property, had a voice. The rest of the population were women, children, slaves, farmers or foreigners who had no rights. This cannot be compared with today's idea of democracy. Today, everyone has rights. So, everyone is equal before the law. Everyone has the right to life, freedom of belief or freedom of speech.

The young democracy in Greece soon began to be shaken. Socrates blamed the politicians for the power game they were playing in this so-called democratic system. He therefore proposed an aristocracy⁵. The aristocracy places power in the hands of a small, privileged ruling class. Rule of the best, and that would be the philosophers. They would have the most

⁴ Greek: δημοκρατία, dēmokratía literally "rule of the people".

⁵ Greek: ἀριστοκρατία aristokratía, from ἄριστος aristos "excellent", and κράτος kratos "power".

understanding of how peace and prosperity could be created. The politicians did not like Socrates and forced him to drink poison or leave the city. He chose to drink the poison. He was aware that leaving the city meant becoming a stranger without rights.

The Greeks had no human rights. They did not understand that everyone is equal. There was no constitution and no right outside of them to which they could refer. There remained the arbitrariness of those who had power. It ended up in a power game where people tried to convince others through rhetoric games or money. In the end, Greece disappeared.

The literal application of democracy is anarchy. Everyone is free, is not forced by anyone and has all the rights? If a government still ruled the people and restricted them, they would not be free. But anarchy has never been the solution in history. It always ended in chaos. When people are no longer able to do what is right or wrong, they need rulers to tell them what is right and wrong. But because it is not enough to tell them what is right and wrong, they must force them. But then the question arises: who controls those who control? Because throughout history man has always had the tendency to preserve his own interests first, the idea of anarchy has always led to disaster.

The Greeks thought they had found the solution to replace the monarchy. It did not work. It seems that the great idea of the Greeks had a real problem.

The Chinese look to the West and think these people are crazy. In the West, everyone has the right and freedom to say what they want to say. They believe that society cannot function in this way. The Chinese are probably right. It cannot work that way. But even the Chinese do not understand the heritage of Western culture. Democracy just would work when people still believed in an absolute truth.

Democracy is no guarantee of freedom. If people can live together in freedom, a democratic system can emerge. So, democracy is not a fundamental value of freedom. Democracy is a fruit of people's behaviour. The basis of freedom is the behaviour of people. It is not a system that can produce it. It is the heart of the human being that can create freedom and order. The West has confused cause and effect, and so it is no longer able to multiply its system of democracy in other parts of the world.

The most influential of our Western political system was the idea of Lex Rex. The king is under a law. No one can put himself above the law. The law remained above all people. In a democracy, the majority of people make the law. If the law is to be above the people, then it must not be created by people. Then it must come from somewhere else.

Democracy does not fundamentally change the system of dictatorship. In such a system, the majority remains, always above the minority. People are above people. Those who have the most influence and the most money will win the debates.

The Christians had an answer to this dilemma. Through the Bible, the revelation of God, they had something higher than man. This is the greatest achievement of the West.

The most important element in making this idea a reality was the translation of the Bible into the local languages 500 years ago. Everyone now had the opportunity to check the laws. With the Bible in their hands, people could even rise up against kings. There was now something that had more authority than people. Not the powerful, not the majority, not dictators could change it. It was for everyone and everywhere.

The professors in the West no longer tell us that. The problem is not necessarily that they don't know. The problem is that they cannot imagine that there is a God. The reputation of the church is often so bad that intellectuals reject the Christian. The church became corrupt and abused its authority. Christians often sought their own interests rather than those of their neighbour. Often the churches became so irrelevant and alien. It is understandable that intellectuals reject this. The church must understand this and find its way back into the world of intellectuals.

The idea that everyone must remain under the law is only possible if there is a God. If there is something about man. 500 years ago, when the Bible was translated, people were given a measuring stick like the carpenter on the building sites and could judge what was right and what was wrong. A measuring stick for everyone. It was the Bible that made human rights possible in the first place.

John Wycliffe wrote in the 14th century in the preface to his Bible that democracy is government of the people by the people and for the people⁶.

There is a great danger to democracy today. Everyone wants rights, but no one wants to take on responsibilities. Everyone claims their own rights, and compromises are no longer possible. The various political parties are blocking each other. They can no longer find unity or a majority government. Everyone just wants their ideas to be realised. There is no more common ground. The one with the most power to influence the media and the most money will impose his ideas on others.

Because of possible chaos, people are willing to give up their rights. They will be increasingly willing to renounce democracy and entrust themselves to strong leaders. They believe the promise of freedom, and in doing so, they will do away with what the West has built up over the past centuries. The West has disempowered the powerful and we are giving them back the crown. As Francis Schaffer said. The West will be ready to give up all its rights only for the promise of personal freedom and personal prosperity.

"An elite, an authoritarianism as such, will gradually impose a form on society so that it does not slide into chaos. And most people will accept it - out of a desire for personal peace and prosperity, out of apathy and a longing for order to ensure the functioning of any political system, the economy and the affairs of daily life. This is exactly what Rome did with Caesar Augustus".⁷

If this happens, as it does today, then, to quote Eric Hoffer: "If freedom destroys order, the longing for order will destroy freedom".⁸

What we can see in Donald Trump, Erdogan, Putin Xi Jinping or Boris Jonson is proof of this. The corona virus has shown that people are willing to give up all their freedom and rights just to feel saved by a big brother.

⁶ <https://www.brainyquote.com/authors/john-wycliffe-quotes>

⁷ Francis Schäffer, How should we then live?

⁸ Eric Hoffer 1902 1983 was an American moral and social philosopher. He was the author of ten books and was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in February 1983.

Democracy is not the guarantee of freedom. Freedom is the guarantee of democracy. The professors have twisted it because for them God is not possible. It is probably clear to everyone that with such a view history can no longer find the right interpretation.

Human Rights ⁹

Where do human rights come from? If in a democracy the majority always wins over the minority. Where does it come from that the majority cares about the minority?

Why does the West care so much about the disabled and the weak who cannot influence the majority? It cannot emerge from a democratic system. It needs another source.

Does it come from nature? I cannot see that either. When people look at nature, it is obviously different. The lion kills the goat. The Vulcan destroys the city. Nature does not care about the weak. If people would just react like nature, they would react more like Hitler or Stalin. Like animals killing each other. From a natural point of view, what would be wrong with the Nazis?

But we believe that Hitler was wrong. Where did we get this idea? Hitler was given democratic power. He did exactly what nature and the philosophers preached.

The West believes today. If it's all right for you, it's all right for me. It can't work if everyone only wants to have their own right. It is an absolute illusion to believe that everyone can simply have rights. What does secularism actually do to people who do not respect human rights? Does such a person lose the right to human rights?

What about abortion? Why does the West allow the killing of that which needs the most protection? What kind of society is the West if it does this for a pragmatic reason? They kill what cannot defend itself, only for economic reasons. Because it does not meet their expectations. In the Middle Ages, kings only did what was right for them. Don't people do the same today.

If human rights no longer protect those who cannot protect themselves, what are human rights for? Human rights are there for those who are more powerful, not just to do what they want. Human rights must protect that which cannot protect itself.

Was it not the West's greatest invention that every human being has the right to live unconditionally? Do we actually still have anything like human rights?

Every right also needs an obligation. An obligation requires accountability, but to whom or what? We claim to live in a democracy where people are free and accountable only to themselves. Or we are in a regulated order and have to be accountable to people who are not accountable to anyone. Of course, there is the separation of powers, which should prevent abuse. But it does not work, because there is no absolute point of reference. Abortion is the good example. What was protected in the past can no longer be protected today. There is no longer an absolute. People simply decide against those who cannot protect themselves because people have the power to do so.

The Christians had a solution. They believed in a creator. He revealed himself through the Bible. Everyone had to submit to this word and give account. The Bible can give absolute

⁹ Democracy and human rights are fundamental values of our society and, together with the rule of law, form the guiding principles of our policies.

human rights. Rights that cannot be changed by any majority, minority or powerful. But the Bible also gives obligations. Whoever does not abide by these obligations, loses these rights.

In the preamble of the American Declaration of Independence it is written that all human beings are created by the Creator.¹⁰ Therefore, all have equal rights.

In the Bernese government hall, a Bible from the 16th century is still on the table in front of all the government councillors. Henry Dunant, founder of the Red Cross was inspired by the Bible and thus laid the foundation for the Geneva Convention¹¹. Even today the symbol of the Red Cross, the Red Cross of Jesus Christ, is still on display. Rene Cassin, the author of the 1945 Declaration of Human Rights, wrote that they are an application of the Ten Commandments of the Bible¹².

Secularism claims that human rights came from the Greeks and the French Revolution. The Greeks had some idea of democracy, but no understanding of human rights. The French claim that everyone has rights, but it ended in anarchy and chaos. They could not give human rights to people who would protect people who could not protect themselves. Instead of Liberté, Fraternité, Égalité, a brutal bloodshed prevailed.

Long before the Greeks, the Israelites were already living under the counsel of the Bible. They had a functioning system. That is why Rene Cassin claimed that human rights came from the 3500-year-old writings of the Israelites, the 10 Commandments. Because they turned away from God, it did not work for long.

Human rights need an absolute standard about men, to whom man is accountable. If there is no such standard, human rights are in a great dilemma. Man is not in a position to say for himself what is right and what is wrong. He will oppress the weaker or the one who cannot stand up for himself. The barrier between rich and poor is growing ever wider. The powerful decide and win, and corruption and injustice arise. A world we know from Africa and Afghanistan.

Why can the professors no longer tell us this? Because they can hardly believe that there is a God.

Same sex

Teachers in Switzerland must now assess the sexual understanding of children. The children have to accept that heterosexual and homosexual partnerships have equal value. That everyone can choose their own sexual orientation. The children are not allowed to believe that this is not right¹³.

If something happened in the world where the legalisation of homosexuality appeared, that was good. If something happened where it was restricted, then it was bad. Gender equality is the new benchmark. People need to believe it without looking at the facts. The fact that AIV has mainly come about through homosexual practice is no longer allowed to be discussed. Men who claim to be gay or bisexual have a 100 times higher risk of HIV infection than men

¹⁰ The American Declaration of Independence (1776)

¹¹ Geneva Convention of 1876 the creation of the Red Cross

¹² René Cassin 1948 of the 10 Commandments on Human Rights (www.udhr.org/history/tencomms.htm)

¹³ Pupils can describe and question gender stereotypes and must not discriminate against sexual orientations, hetero- or homosexuals, partnerships.

who are heterosexual¹⁴. This must no longer be mentioned. The fact that the best privation for AIDS is to have sex in marriage must no longer be said. Homosexuality will not bring the future. It cannot create a new life. They could not make history. They will not get beyond one generation. They live only for themselves.

There are many topics that should be discussed, but it is no longer allowed because the religion of free sex forbids it. Professors condemn people who have held on to absoluteness in the past and history is written differently.

Historians have said that the idea that men and women together form a community in which they undertake to stay together for life has made the West strong¹⁵. This unity gave children security and built a stable society.

Now the children must believe that wherever gender equality has been restricted, it has been a success. History becomes a philosophy of gender equality. To abolish God is to abolish history and turn all facts into myths.

History will be twisted. Karl Marx understood this very well¹⁶. He knew that if we changed history, we could build a new world. If someone has the power to change history, he can change people. Without history, people have no orientation. The only thing they have is themselves.

The main problem is not to understand history. The main problem is that the professors in the West hardly can believe that there is a truth. That there is a God.

Equal Rights

Today, history is seen as successful when equality has been achieved. People have repeatedly abused their position and power. It is like a red thread running through history. The communist idea that man would become good if there was no more hierarchy was an illusion. Communism has proved to us that this does not work. People remain evil. It has even exacerbated the problem. Everyone should be equal. Not more or less. Those who had more were seen as the enemy. Comparisons were made.

Aren't people different, and that is a good thing? If all people were the same, then some would have to do what they cannot do and others cannot do what they should do. One side is forced to do things, the other side is forbidden to do what it can do. A farmer does not go out, measure his grain and pull out every grain that is not the right height. And he will not cut everything to the level of his measure. All the grain would be the same, but half the harvest would be gone.

Paul, a Christian philosopher, said: "One is the hand and the other is the ear"¹⁷. We all need each other. But we must not look down on others. In such a perspective people can use creativity and will be a blessing to the community. But they do not look down on others who cannot do the same. It needs them all. One cleans the toilet, and one is a king. Someone has

¹⁴http://www.bundesaerztekammer.de/fileadmin/user_upload/downloads/Haemotherapie_MSM_Erlaeuterung_final.pdf or http://www.dijg.de/homosexualitaet/wissenschaftliche-studien/hiv-aids-schwule_bisexuelle-maenner

¹⁵ Vishal Mangalwadi, the book that made your world, 2011.

¹⁶ <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1852/18th-brumaire/ch01.htm>

¹⁷ 1 Cor 12.12-31

to cook; someone has to farm; otherwise the king has nothing to eat. But not everyone can be king.

Everyone is created in God's image and has the same value. It did not depend on what people do. People's identity is in God and not in what they do. If people are in a higher position, they will not gain more value. People have value because they are made in God's image. There is nothing to add to the identity of people. This view made the West different from the rest of the world.

Paul laid the foundation for equality. He writes that Jews as well as Gentiles, Slavs or Free have the same value before God¹⁸. All were created in his image as man and woman. But not only that. We are all sinners. There is none better or worse. We have all failed. This worldview has brought the foundation of equality. It does not mean that all have to be equal. It means that all have the same value. All are created by God, but all are guilty to Him. No one can boast.

The communists could not give value to man with their material world view. For them value was bound to material things. They degraded man to a machine but man could not live like that.

Communism still owes the world its promises of freedom and prosperity today. They thought that when everyone will be equal and no one will have private property, the source of evil will be killed. But the communists produced exactly the opposite of what they had promised.

Every communist country ended in a catastrophe. Equality did not work and could not create freedom and prosperity. Therefore, with this view, history will not be understood. You measure with a measure that has a wrong scale.

2.3 Conclusion

The West seems to be in a dilemma. It is struggling to interpret history correctly. History became a story. A story told by the philosophy of today.

Doesn't secularism need to rethink? Vishal Mangalwadi said that without the influence of the Bible, the West would probably be in abject poverty, oppression, without education and legal security, without technical progress, as a large part of the Indian population of the country still is today¹⁹.

The West considers, belief in God is absurd. But that is why they cannot understand the story of people who believed in a God.

Many people do not believe in God because they see so much evil around them. But when people say that there is no hairdresser because people on the street don't have hairstyles, it is absurd. It is wrong to conclude that there is no God because there is so much evil in the world.

Others are hurt by Christians. People claim to be Christians, but they are not. I think many people reject God because they have had a bad experience. But to claim that God cannot

¹⁸ 1 Ko 12.13

¹⁹ Vishal Mangalwadi, The book that made your world, 2011

exist because of that is not right either. God is not the problem. The problem is rather his people.

Darwin, Marx, Feuerbach and many other philosophers were hurt by the Christians. Even if they grew up in churches, they rejected Christianity. Because many Christians represented a false Christianity, the philosophers more and more began to reject the Creator and began to look for other answers.

Secularism cannot explain Western society. It cannot explain why some things worked and others did not. It Secularism cannot teach us the truth.

There is a cake on the table. But why? Scientists can research everything about the cake. But why is it there? They don't know unless they ask the person who baked it, Aunt Marta. Aunt Marta must be able to speak and explain why the cake is there, otherwise no one would know. There would only be possibilities, but nobody could claim the truth.

Without a Creator there would be no answer to why we are here and what the reason for life is. But there would also be no absolute measuring stick to judge between right and wrong. Something from the outside must explain the truth to mankind. It must be someone who can speak. It must be a personal being.

If we have a wrong measuring stick, we will get a wrong result. People and history cannot be measured by the view of today. Therefore, the book will now try to illuminate history from the perspective that there is a truth.

In the next chapter we learn to see history from the 16th century, the time of the Reformation, to the 20th century from the perspective that there is a God. You probably see some things differently and would add things. Of course, it is not complete.

But maybe these thoughts could make you rethink. It will probably help to start a new discussion about what the true history.

3 Why was the Reformation so successful?

Christianity had its heyday 500 years ago. The Reformation was so promising for the whole world. Martin Luther brought down the power game of the Catholic Church, and society found a new way of living together in freedom and order. Geneva was completely transformed by the new social order in just one generation. "Post Tenebras Lux" is still the motto of the Reformation of Geneva. It means "after darkness, light". People wanted to go to Geneva to see heaven on earth. A place where people could live together in freedom and order. Johannes Calvin, the Reformer of Geneva, is called the father of modernity²⁰. He laid the foundations for a new culture. Geneva became a beautiful and prosperous place where people could live together in freedom and peace.

The refugees who came to Geneva then brought this worldview back to their home town. The French and Spanish speaking world suppressed the Reformation by all means. The change in society in these parts of the world was very slight. However, the English-speaking world embraced the Reformation. As the English world gained more and more influence in the world, the Reformation eventually brought change in many parts of the world. Even today the ideas of the Reformers remain the foundation of society.

Christians had of course influenced society before the Reformation, but now they had found a new approach to truth that made a great positive change possible.

Before the Reformation, the Catholics oppressed the people. Corruption and abuse were commonplace. The church and the kings lived in luxury, but most people were poor and abused. It was clear that a reformation had to take place.

Martin Luther never wanted to build a new church. He wanted to reform the church. But things turned out differently.

The most important thing for the future would probably be that the Reformed and the Catholics come together again. This would be the best example for the secular world to show that Christianity has the real answer for freedom and order in the world.

3.1 The view of man: people can change the world?

Priesthood of all believers

The priesthood of all believers was an understanding of the Reformers. It appeared through the book of Martin Luther²¹. It became known as a key principle of Protestant Christian doctrine. Every believer is a priest, and therefore there is no longer any need for a mediator between God and man. Everyone can come directly to God and understand Him. They should all read the Word of God. Therefore, the Bible must be translated into every language.

²⁰ Huizinga Klaas, Johannes Calvin. Reformer and founder of modernity

²¹ While Martin Luther did not use the exact term "priesthood of all believers", in his book "To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation" of 1520 he introduced a general priesthood in Christendom to reject the medieval view that Christians in today's life should be divided into two classes: "spiritual" and "secular". He established the doctrine that all baptised Christians were "priests" and "spiritual" before God:

Man can go directly to God and not first to the priest. Priests cannot forgive sins. Only God can forgive them, and no priest has to confirm or deny them. This understanding made the West different from the rest of the world.

All believers have the Spirit of God?

The socialist Max Weber explored why Western civilisation²² had taken such an enormous step 500 years ago. He discovered that the Reformed and especially the Calvinist communities of the world were much more successful than the Catholics. The Reformers were able to overcome nature. They did science and developed new technologies to make life easier and more efficient. They started businesses, created jobs and helped many people out of poverty. He recognised that it was because the preaching of the Reformers that made this development possible. I doubt that Weber fully understood the reformers' sermon, but his observation was absolutely correct.

What did the reformers preach? The Reformers preached that man is created in the image of God. Because man has the same spirit as God, he is above nature. He is not only of nature. He has the spirit and therefore stands above it. That is why the Reformers were able to twist and shape nature. In the end they were able to overcome the law of gravity and built an aeroplane.

Weber remarked that this positive belief led people to overcome the limits of nature and society. For the reformers it was the spirit of God. Man is not only matter, but also spirit. This idea enabled the reformers to find new ways and new technologies to overcome pain and suffering in the world. Nature could not determine the reformers as it was common in the Middle Ages. They could free people from the bondage of nature. They could do things that their ancestor never dared to dream of.

People in the Middle Ages had a tendency to be fatalists. They feared nature, as many people in Africa or Asia still do today. Fatalism hinders civilisation and cultural development is almost impossible.

An example from Africa makes the fatalism very clear. Every year a river in Mozambique floods a city. But the people did not build a dam to protect the city. They believed it happened because the god of water was angry. They thought that the gods control nature, and therefore they cannot physically do anything to protect the city. What they could do was to please the god of water. They sacrificed goods to the gods and made them happy again. They built altars, but they did not build dams. The next year the river flooded the city again and people began to rebuild it. No civilisation developed out of fear of nature.

But the reformers were convinced that they could build a dam to tame nature. They did not have to build a city every year. That why, civilisation could develop.

They believed that the Creator made them a junior partner to overcome the evil in nature. The reformers believed that they could control nature. They overcame the fear of nature, and Western civilisation grew faster than any other place in the world.

4000 years ago, Abraham, the father of Christians, Muslims and Jews, dug for water when he reached the desert. He became the richest man and the Palestinians feared him. He believed that God sent him to the desert. But he also believed that he gave him the creativity

²² Maxi Weber, *The Protestant Ethics and the Spirit of Capitalism*, 1905

to search for what is not yet there. So, he dug for water and found it. He believed that he is not determined by nature, as the Palestinians did. They did not dig for water because they believed that the gods of nature would punish them if they did. So, the Philistines began to refill the wells of Abraham. The Philistines lived as fatalists, fearing their gods of nature. They were not able to achieve what Abraham did²³.

This worldview was not an invention of the reformers. It is the 4000-year-old worldview of the Bible. The reformers brought this worldview back to Western civilisation when they returned to the teaching of the Bible. The West changed extremely fast and grew faster than the rest of the world.

Resources were not limited, people lived in an open system

The reformer believed that God will always give them enough. Resources are not limited. If people live within the limits and rules of the Creator, He will provide them with everything they need. They lived in a world without borders, and that made the West different. They believe: "Yes, we can make it".²⁴

God is a giver and creator. He can create more than what people see and have today. Because man has the same spirit, he can create new things himself. Man became an entrepreneur who created new things.

A good illustration of this worldview would be. You put a water wheel into a river. In doing so, it created more resources. He still had the same amount of water but added electricity. He added the spirit of the creator. After the Reformation people started to create something new because they believed in this creative, spiritual power. Of course, they also suppressed the weaker ones with this innovation. Man did not simply get rid of his lust and sinfulness. The reformation and what came out of it was not ideal. But as long as the Bible and the preaching of the church were at the centre of the Western world, the abuses could be limited. This worldview brought the West to the top. Therefore; Weber claimed that the reformers brought the spirit of capitalism.

People are made into good works

Another fact that Weber discovered is the strong work ethic that John Calvin preached in Geneva. He claimed that it made Calvinist communities more successful than Lutheran ones. Luther preached the five Solas; Sola Scriptura, Sola Fide, Sola Gratia, Solus Christus and Soli Deo Gloria²⁵. Calvin in Geneva, on the other hand, preached strongly the obligation to do good work. By these works a Christian can recognise whether he is a Christian follower. Through Calvin's preaching, grace had a condition. The behaviour of people will prove whether they are saved or not. Weber found that Calvin was able to teach a stronger work ethic than Luther. This fear of God laid the foundation for greater success.

For the reformer, every area of society was sacred, not just the church. The church was the training camp for equipping people for the kingdom of God. People attending church services

²³ Genesis 26.12-22

²⁴ Deut 11,8-9

²⁵ Sola scriptura ("solely through the Scriptures") Sola fide ("solely through faith") Sola gratia ("solely through grace") Solus Christus ("solely Christ") Soli Deo gloria ("Glory to God alone")

considered their daily lives sacred. A Christian is obliged to do good. Also, in the family, at work and in his free time too²⁶.

The fear of God, which was preached in the churches on Sundays, kept society together in freedom and prosperity. That is why Weber titled his book "The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism".

Nothing is in vain what they have done

Many of the great cathedrals in Europe are more than 700 years old, and they are still standing. They stand firmly on their foundations, towering over the cities and still being used for their original purpose. Much has changed in the last fifty years and churches are now restaurants, museums and concert halls. It seems that in the last generation the vision of the past has been lost.

The construction of a cathedral took several centuries. The architects will never see the finished work themselves. Nevertheless, the builders had hope for their descendants, for future generations who would complete the work they had begun. Builders from the past could look far into the future. Generations later, people would use what they had begun.

How could these people in the past have such a belief? How could they be so sure that building the cathedral was not for nothing. To invest so much money and energy when they themselves will never see the result?

Antony Gaudi is the architect of the cathedral of Barcelona, Sagrada Família²⁷. This huge building is still under construction. Gaudi was not able to finish it. In the last years he built alone on this magnificent monument. What difference could he make in all these years on this great monument? Why did he not give up, even though he was left alone.

All these builders believed in the resurrection. Nothing is in vain what they do, because it has eternal value. Luther said: "If I knew that tomorrow was the last day, I would still plant my apple tree"²⁸. What is the point of planting a tree if tomorrow everything is gone? The Reformers knew that it would have a purpose because of the resurrection of all his creation. They believed that everything they did today would have eternal value. One day Jesus will come back and everything will be brought back to life. Then Antoni Gaudi and the builders of the past can see it. People invested in the future, in the next generation and in eternity. They believe that after their resurrection they will see the finished cathedral. This has given them the strength not to give up.

The West developed long-term thinking because it believed in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. In other cultures, people only see the today. Historians claim that the lack of long-term thinking keeps Africa in poverty. No other religion or worldview could develop such thinking as Christianity. A civilisation will die out when people have no hope for the future when there will be no sustainable thinking.

The reformers were able to look to the future and build a long-term thinking. This thinking took precedence over all the others, who were concerned only with the present.

²⁶ His work in church and society 1509 Johannes Calvin, Martin Sallmann, 2009

²⁷ Antoni Gaudi 1852-1926, J. Castellar-Gassol, 1999, <https://archive.org/details/gaudilifeofvisio0000cast/page/8>

²⁸ <https://www.zitate.eu/autor/martin-luther-zitate/5656>

They believed in a happy ending

The Reformer believed that the world would be constantly transformed by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This is the Reformed idea par excellence: "Heaven" touching the world". They believed in a happy ending, even if there is much pain in the world. But they believed and had hope, they could overcome the pain and turn it to good.

The idea of a happy ending was a strong pillar of western society. The reformers did not wait for heaven like other religions and sometimes Christians too. Heaven was already here for them through the work of Christ.

During the Reformation, people wanted to go to Geneva to see the new Jerusalem emerging. It was probably not a perfect place, but people felt it was much better than any other. They believed that everything would have a happy ending. If only they followed God's instructions. Struggles and pain could not stop them from continuing. So, they did not give up. They started to look for a medicine that could heal diseases. They developed technologies that made people's lives easier.

The reformers believed in the Bible that the good side will win. It was the belief that the good power is stronger than the evil one. This belief made Europe special. Even Europe has no fewer problems than others, but this belief gave people the strength to overcome evil.

For them, the Kingdom of God has already begun and people are living in it. It may not be perfect, because death and suffering are still present. But everything that people do in obedience to God will have a happy end. Even death was not strong enough. The reformer believed in the resurrection. Even in the resurrection of all creation. Death was not the end. Therefore, the West created a long-term perspective, a perspective that could look beyond death. Through this belief, the West was elevated above the other parts of the world.

The fear of God

The most important element of this rapid development was the fear of God. Max Weber believed the spirit of capitalism made this great change possible. But what was behind it was the fear of God.

This story shows very well how the fear of God worked. A farmer and a butcher went to the same church. The preacher shouted in a loud voice and with a serious facial expression that people should not steal or cheat. The farmer looked up at the butcher and made him understand. Did you hear the pastor? You shall not cheat or steal from me. Next time you bring me a calf, give me all the meat and don't put any of it in your pocket. If you do that, you'll have problems with God. The butcher looked at the farmer and thought the same. If you bring me the calf, give me the right one and not an old one. Otherwise you will have a problem with the Almighty. Because the fear of God was there and nobody wanted to have a problem with God, the system worked. People could live in a regulated world.

But when the fear of God is gone, people need a controller. Laws, regulations, administration, and that will cost a lot of money. They are not free anymore and have to fight against an infinite number of laws and regulations. In the end it will not be the laws that will regulate them, but a lawyer who still understands the complicated laws. The farmer and the butcher who do the work have nothing more to say and have to fight their way in a complicated regulated world. In a world where good and honest work is almost no longer possible.

The fear of God kept people together and they could live in freedom and order. The farmer and the butcher could be sure that the other would not betray them because they did not want to have any trouble with God. This deep fear of God kept evil within limits. People generally behaved better as a result. People could trust each other. The reformers were able to bring in a deep trust in Western society through their preaching. They could do it more than any other religion or belief could ever do.

3.2 The Church: The cross made them free

Through grace people are forgiven

History has shown that people are not only good. They usually look after themselves and their interests. That always ends badly and is frustrating. Evil was always in people, and it was hardly possible to deal with it. I think that it is no different today.

The reformer preached not only the innovative and royal in man. They also preached that people are sinners. Man is evil and needs redemption. The Reformers found the lost key to solving this deep human problem. Through the grace in Jesus Christ people receive a pure heart. He takes away what man could never do alone.

The general view of the church before the Reformation was that people had to do something to be pleasing to God. Buy a letter of indulgence, make a pilgrimage to Rome, not get married, sell their possessions or enter a monastery. Martin Luther did all these things. But he always fought again and again whether he was accepted by God. Then he found the key. It is not by achievement, but by grace alone. This understanding became the basis of the Reformation.

This view changed society. Reformist theology taught that the cross can do what people cannot do by themselves. They applied this world view in their daily lives. The forgiveness of the cross helped them in all situations. When people could not do the right thing themselves, they knew that the cross could help them. Because they did not only look at their limits, they were able to do things that were not possible for people. They believed that their hearts could be changed

People could change, even if they were the worst people. Through the forgiveness of Jesus Christ, they were forgiven. They believed that through Jesus Christ broken relationships could be restored and people could be brought together again. Arguing parties found together.

They believed that man needs this renewal of hearts. What other religions could never do; Christianity could do. Of course, not everyone would believe in it. Many Christians did not act with a renewed heart. But the Reformation proved that, by believing in God, they could reform society as a whole much better than all other religions and worldviews.

The cross took away all shame

The western world is a culture of guilt. If they do something wrong, they are guilty, they have to put it right. But then they are free again. In shame culture this is different. In such a culture, paying back does not solve the problem. Because, the real problem is that they are still ashamed. This shame remains even if the debt has been paid back.

In the western world, it represents greatness when people were able to stand by their mistakes. In large companies they only employ people who have already made mistakes. Greatness is to make mistakes, to stand by them, to stand up and not to do it anymore. People will learn from their mistakes. If they would hire someone who claims to be perfect and has never failed, one can assume that this person cannot admit to mistakes or really has no experience. Such a person cannot take on much responsibility. It would be unwise to hire such people.

In a culture of shame, standing up for mistakes means showing weakness. If you do that, you are not a good leader. In such a culture it is about not being embarrassed and not letting anyone know that you made a mistake.

In the West, Christians followed the great example of Jesus. He went to the cross, humiliated himself and was punished like a criminal. He took all the shame upon himself. He overcame the shame by his perfection and was able to kill this great enemy. To take the shame upon himself was the act of a hero. It is heroic to stand by mistakes, and that made the West different from other cultures.

People who understand the cross can learn from mistakes. The boss can tell his employees that making mistakes is allowed. But we have to stay for them. People probably learn more from mistakes than from good lessons. In a company where people have to hide their mistakes, the company will not grow. They hide problems, and the problems will grow.

I heard a story that someone was sent home by the military when he fell asleep during the night watch. The commander was asked if this was not a bit harsh. Just to send a person home because of these mistakes. To destroy his whole career. The commander explained that this was not because he had fallen asleep, but because he could not stand by his mistakes.

What Jesus did in the Western world cannot be applied in a non-Christian society. Jesus was able to take away the shame by dying on the cross and set Christians free. They were not ashamed and could take the shame upon themselves. The people who have received what Jesus did are free. The West was freed from shame, which no other religion could do.

The secular world claims that there is no God. Everything that is there is only matter. But where does the shame come from? The scientist can try to ignore or suppress it. But it will not disappear. Isn't shame one of the greatest potential for conflict and war in the world?

Christian-influenced cultures made the cross visible when they established clear structures of responsibility. It regulated how people had to pay back their punishment. A functioning court, which mediates conflicts, put the cross in place and set people free.

The Lord's Supper reminded the Christians every time on the cross. Over the years, this ritual has shaped the Western world view. People became self-responsible and trustworthy like in no other part of the world.

Through the Reformation, Christianity found its way back to the original power of the cross. This view changed society. The reformers became people who could do more than people who did not understand the power of the cross.

The Bible has the highest authority

The sermon was now delivered in the national language of the people. The pastor spoke in their language so that they could understand the stories of Jesus and the Bible. It was no longer abstract in a language the people could not understand. The people could understand it and use it in their lives.

The listeners could follow the teaching in their Bible. They could ask questions and test the pastor. The pastor could no longer teach for his own benefit. It was no longer the pastors and the church who represented the truth. It was now the Bible that was only presented by the pastor. The Bible was placed on the front of the altar in every church as a symbol of this. A symbol to show what the highest authority has.

For Calvin, the Old Testament was the basis for living together and building a civil order. He claimed that without the Old Testament, man cannot understand the New. For this reason, Calvin was called the advocate of the Old Testament.

The church was given a constitution. Everyone had to give account on the basis of the Bible. Clerics, pastors, kings. Everyone now had the right to refer to the Bible and to be tested by the authorities. Anyone could stand up against the church and even against kings with the Bible in their hands.

The foundation of democracy - working in teams

With the Bible in hand, the world received an absolute measure of what is right and what is wrong. No one with power, in one position, majority or minority could change this. It was a law outside of man. This later led to a constitution and human rights. Everyone is under the law. Even the king is under the law²⁹. It was the long battle through the centuries that the West fights to find a law to which everyone is accountable. With the translation of the Bible into the common languages, people now had this tool to which everyone had access.

In the Geneva church, power was divided among pastors, theologians, deacons and elders. The elders were elected by each district. The pastors were elected by the council. The church was governed by the council, which consisted of the pastors and 12 lay people. They were accountable to the Council of State. All were obliged to follow the moral standard of the Bible. All had to sign the Geneva Catechism, otherwise they were not allowed to take the Lord's Supper. Calvin demanded high integrity and honesty. Whether priest, peasant or rulers, everyone had to account for his deeds and be punished if he had done evil. The Reformed Church in Geneva was the first functioning democracy based on the separation of powers and a constitution in the world³⁰.

Calvin taught that no church should become a state church. Otherwise the other churches would be less appreciated. Calvin was interested in a synod of churches in Europe. He was very committed to it and tried to resolve the conflict between other reformers. For example, he tried to calm the emotions of Lutherans and the Swiss reformer regarding the Lord's Supper.

Anyone could confess their sin directly before God and did not have to go to a priest. It was an important step that confession to the clergy was abolished. With this confession the

²⁹ Lex Rex instead of Rex Lex (the law is above the king and not the king above the law)

³⁰ Huizinga, Johannes Calvin. Reformer and founder of modernity

Catholic Church makes people dependent on itself. The church knew about people who they probably should not have had, and had something in its hands to control them. The Reformed stood against such a hierarchy. For them, people were all free. But had to account to each other. They were all measured by the absolute standard of the Bible.

People were trained to sing. They should attend the services and worship God with their voice. The reformers wrote hymns and explained how to sing to the people³¹. The service became a time of common prayer instead of an abstract ceremony from the front. With songs and music behind the words, the teaching of the Bible found a faster way into the hearts of the people. The reformers understood that this way of learning was much more effective than what they had done before. Today it is common for people to sing songs in church. Even in schools, songs are used for learning. This new pedagogical view changed the whole western civilisation.

Before the Reformation, monks and monasteries were responsible for caring for the sick and poor. This became a very expensive social system. Many abused it for their own benefit. They became lazy and profited from the monasteries. But according to Calvin's biblical thinking, everyone was responsible. Anyone in need had to go to their family or neighbour first and ask for help. The poor had to be accountable to their families or neighbours who supported them. The richer ones had to look after their family members and neighbours who were in need. It was a system of accountability and relationships. If people could work but did not want to change their attitudes, they did not receive any help. People had a duty and not just a right. That reduced the cost of the welfare system enormously and helped many people out of poverty.

The reformers laid the foundations of democracy. They build a system of horizontal and vertical accountability and responsibility. It became the foundation of today's federalism and separation of powers. Decisions are to be made where the people have the responsibility. This later led to the system of democracy known today.

Many people believe it came from the Greeks or the French Revolution. Many people believe in human rights and a constitutional state. But most people today do not understand where it really comes from. Democracy never worked until the reformers found the key to it.

Teamwork became the idea of western culture. They believed that it was better for equal partners to find a better solution than strong rulers. Switzerland has seven federal councillors but no president. It probably implemented this view the best.

Democracy cannot function without God. Democracy requires a common absolute, which lies outside the human being.

Conclusion: The churches preached the view of man

The view of man is the basis for a nation to change. It is the worldview of the people that makes reformation possible. Often people think they can change structures and thus change a society. They then wonder why this is not the case. Change is only possible if people change first. Structures cannot change a person. But they can help a person to succeed. But

³¹ A famous song by Martin Luther, A mighty fortress is our God "" (Original German; "Eine Feste Burg ist unser Gott")

first the faith of the people has to be changed. What does we believe? Who is man? What is possible and what is not? What is right and wrong?

It was the understanding that there is a God who has spoken and given commandments. It was the understanding that man is a king, but also a sinner. It was the Biblical-Christian view of man that made possible this amazing change in Western society 500 years ago.

3.3 Education: All should be educated

People learned to read and write

The translation of the Bible into the German language was important³². For the first time, people had a book, even a library of 66 books in their hands to inform themselves and to get involved in discussions about right or wrong. Anyone with the Bible in their hand could appeal to the powerful.

Martin Luther's translation into German was not the first. But with his translation he created a uniform written language for the common people. With his translation he touched the hearts of the people. They understood it. Luther claimed to look at the mouth of the people. It was not an abstract writing, like some translations before. It was the language of the people. Luther's Bible had illustrations to the texts. It was understandable even for people who could not read very well. Through the pictures people learned to understand the text. With his translation, Luther created the German common language of today.

With the advent of the printing press it was possible to distribute the Bible throughout Germany. This uniform writing spread rapidly. Thus, a unified German language was created. And the people had a common written absolute. They all had the same thing in front of them and could now debate the content. People read about an absolute word and had to think about what it meant. Another one had a different interpretation and so a debate arose. A debate about the truth. That is how the intellectual West came into being. People not only learned by heart, but also had to think about what was it meant.

It was the translation of the Bible that enabled people from all levels of society to learn to read and write. To discuss politics and laws. Today there are translations of the Bible in most common languages.

A common term today is hocus-pocus. It is often used as a magic word or when things are not understandable. But it comes from the church before the reformation. People used to say: "I only understood hocus-pocus". It probably comes from the Latin mass. The priest said in the Eucharist "Hoc est enim corpus meum", which means: "This is my body. Because people did not understand Latin, they only understood hocus-pocus. The term has remained until today.

Preaching is useless if people do not understand what has been said. To understand what is said is the basis for understanding and learning. Language is one of the most important things that a culture can develop. But to build a culture stably, there must also be a common written language. So that contracts can be made. Decisions must be written down. Judgments must be based on written rules. The writing of Martin Luther played a major role in the rapid development of the Western world.

³² Martin Luther translated the Bible into German (1522 the New Testament and 1534 the Old Testament)

The sermon was now written in the common language and with the Bible in the hand.

For the reformers, it was clear that if some can read and write, they will always have advantages over those who cannot. People who cannot read and write cannot understand the law of government or a letter from a king. They cannot understand a treaty or the Bible. Those who understand the words are at an advantage. They interpret from their perspective what is written and the other person cannot contradict that.

For the reformers, man in general is evil. Therefore, he who can read will sooner or later take advantage of others who cannot. In order to enable all people are on the same level, everyone must be able to read and write. It is the basis of democracy and human rights. If we have human rights, but people cannot read them, they are worthless. People now had a common absolute. human rights that everyone had to account for.

Many ancient writings were also translated during this period, but the Bible remained the foundation of the West until the 20th century. Only in the 19th century did the Greek scriptures replace the Bible more and more.

Colleges and universities for everyone

In Geneva, Johannes Calvin opened the first public school where girls could also attend school³³. Never before had girls gone to school. The discovery of the Bible made it clear that education is for all people. Before the Reformation, schools were for kings and clergy. But the reformer believed that God wants to educate all people and even children. In Geneva it was compulsory to send children to school.

Many famous universities in the world were built during the Geneva Reformation. The refugees trained at the Geneva Academy brought these views of the Reformers to the whole world. Among the examples are Yale and Harvard (USA), Heidelberg (Germany), Leiden, Antwerp and Amsterdam (Netherlands) University. Universities spread rapidly throughout the world. Education became the foundation of Western society.

In 1872, the Academy was relocated and became the present University of Geneva.

The reformer Johann Amos Comenius 1592-1670³⁴ was borne in what is now the Czech Republic. He is considered the father of modern pedagogy. His didactic methods have remained the basis of pedagogy until today. Comenius published the first picture book for children in 1658. It was published in Latin and German and had the title "Orbis Sensualium Pictus" (The World of Things).

He had to flee as a religious refugee and ended up in Poland. He gained respect among philosophers and intellectuals throughout Europe and even in North America. At the invitation of Samuel Hartli, he went to England, where he presented his pedagogy to the

³³ The Collège Calvin, formerly the Collège de Genève, is the oldest public secondary school in Geneva, Switzerland. It was founded in 1559 by John Calvin.

³⁴ Johann Amos Comenius, 1592-1670, who is considered the father of modern education. His book "Didactica Magna" laid the foundation for a biblically based pedagogy. As an educator and theologian, he directed schools and advised governments throughout Protestant Europe until the middle of the seventeenth century.

establishment³⁵. His pedagogy became the basis for schools and universities all over the world.

The banner of the famous Harvard University shows three books: The Bible, Creation and the Spirit of God (Logos)³⁶. First: God gave us his word, second: his creation and third: his spirit (logos). The three books make up the word veritas. Veritas means truth in Latin. They symbolise the full revelation of the Creator's truth. This idea became the basis for all subjects at the university. University means unity in diversity. University is unity and versity means diversity. Unity was God as one. The diversity, the different subjects, represented God as the Trinity. Theology was not separated from the other subject. It was the basis of all knowledge.

The first secular university was in Zurich in 1833. Before that every university or school was run by Christians. But the Zurich universe was not separated from the content of Christianity. The flag of the university still shows the cathedral in its centre. In the last 150 years, however, the content has become increasingly secularised. Today, most educational institutions are far away from the church.

University and education would never have been able to develop in this way without the Bible.

3.4 The family: the bearer of society

Men and women are created in the image of God

Luther also had a great influence on the understanding of what a family is. Man and woman are equal opposites, both created in the image of God. Luther said: "One learns more from Christ when one is married and raising children than in a whole life in a monastery³⁷. Therefore, men should marry instead of trying to please God by abstinence. Luther abolished the monasteries and dismissed the nuns and monks. They went home and began to marry.

Luther believed that the Bible teaches that man and woman were created in the image of God. When a man makes a covenant with a woman, they represent the image of God more than anything else. The family became the institution that transformed people into the ideal image of God.

The best way to build a society is to find out how the Creator planned it. It was a family. People pledged to stay together no matter what happened. This relationship best represents the Creator and His ideas.

God created human beings as female and male. God is neither female nor male. He has no gender. He chose to divide Himself as man and woman. Now when two men enter into marriage, it is not the same. For they do not represent the fullness of God. It is not the original plan of the Creator. This is a misinterpretation and therefore God forbids this. A family is a spiritual concept and not just an institution. Without this spiritual understanding, people will never realise the importance of marriage between man and woman as the only ideal.

³⁵ Samuel Hartlib 1600 -1662 of German origin, who lived and died in England. He was an active promoter and specialist author in many fields, interested in science, medicine, agriculture, politics and education.

³⁶ <https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2015/05/seal-of-approval/>

³⁷ <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/627597-one-learns-more-of-christ-in-being-married-and-rearing>

But people did not have enough strength and love to hold this ideal community together. That is why Moses allowed the Jews to divorce in various circumstances. Jesus explained that this is because people's hearts are evil. Jesus did not promote divorce. He only saw that people are not able to love each other. So, he created another way.

He came to transform hearts through the power of the cross. Jesus created a way for couples to stay together in times when people cannot do it on their own. The power of the cross has helped people to stay together. It was the faith in the Son that kept families together. History shows that Western families became stronger than in other parts of the world. Especially the position of women has developed differently. However, feminism seems to go too far. Instead of promoting same value, they want equality. Although it is obvious that men have different bodies and muscles, they demand equality. They demand that everyone should be able to choose their own gender. They want to make everything possible, but they lose the truth. When everything is equal there is no more importance. Everything can be but also not be. There is only the world of all possibilities. No right or wrong. Nobody knows anymore if he is on the right way.

As long as people believed that the Creator had the best understanding of how people could live together, marriage had the highest value in society. People have done everything to achieve this goal. A family became the most valuable element in creating a stable society.

But today people no longer believe in the power of the cross. They face the reality that people do not have the strength to stay together. They have legalised divorce and promoted same-sex relationships. They have abolished God and are therefore not able to understand what made the West strong.

3.5 The economy: The spirit of the economic success

The spirit of economic

Calvin understood both the situation of the social aspect and the functioning of the financial market. Unlike the Catholic Church, the reformers did not regard money and private property as evil. The problem is not the money itself, but it had to be used properly. Wealth is a gift of God and not of one's own efforts. People are not allowed to use money just as they wanted to. Man is responsible for sharing his wealth and blessing others who are not so blessed.

Calvin said: "God tests the hearts of the rich and the poor. The rich must open their hearts to the poor, and the poor should not steal and rebel³⁸".

Before the Reformation, farmers worked for princes and the king. The prince and the king were responsible for their safety in return. As long as they trusted the noble lords and he did not oppress them, they were willing to pay taxes. But when the princes lived more and more in luxury and oppressed the peasants, they were no longer willing.

The kings and princes had to pay for the many feasts. Because the expenses became more and more, they also needed more and more taxes. The peasant suffered from the enormous taxes and the king could not pay his expenses. The feudal system was at an end. The people needed a new order.

³⁸ Huizinga Klaas, Johannes Calvin. Reformer and founder of modernity

Before the Reformation the land belonged to princes, kings or even more to the church. The Reformation ensured that the land went back to the farmers. The farmers became their entrepreneurs. The Reformation enabled the businesses to grow. People no longer worked for the noble lords, but for themselves. This had brought with it enormous creativity and innovation.

In 1528 the citizens of Bern, the reformers, Zwingli and the bishops met in the cathedral for a debate. There were four main topics connected to the acceptance of the Reformation. Firstly, the churches must return the land to the farmers, secondly the abolition of serfdom³⁹, thirdly the reduction of taxes and fourthly the right of citizens to have a say in political decisions. These four issues are better suited to a Reformed Church than to a Catholic one. The Reformed won the debate and the Catholics had to give up their power. Bern was reformed in a pragmatic, peaceful way.

The freedom of business and innovation sprouted throughout the nation, and the free market brought enormous growth.

The sociologist Max Weber said that the spirit of capitalism came from Calvin⁴⁰. Capitalism is derived from the Latin word "capitale". It means head or spirit. It is still used today in the Latin languages. Through this spirit, God created the world and let new things arise. God was a capitalist for them. God blew his "capitale" into creation and made him the bearer of his capital.

The Enlightenment two hundred years later brought the capitalism of today. The idea that striving for profit is the most important value. It brought the world into great injustice and abuse of people. Many people were oppressed, worked long hours and lived in terrible social conditions.

The Reformation, on the other hand, brought the focus on development, but always with social responsibility. Using capital was always in the interest of the common good. To help people to develop their abilities. But when people forgot the teachings of the Bible, the view of society became biased.

Calvin taught that free enterprise is possible, but only with social responsibility under the teaching of the Bible. God's law protects both sides, the poor and the rich. The rich must be careful not to oppress others and be willing to be generous. The poor are challenged not to become lazy and jealous and steal from others.

Credit and interest

Before the Reformation, the Catholic Church had prohibited the charging of financial interest. During the Reformation a banker wrote a letter to Calvin and asked what the Bible said about lending money and charging interest. Calvin discovered in the Bible that this is not forbidden and wrote back⁴¹. The Bible only mentions that no interest may be charged with usury. It is not allowed to charge more than 4%. The 4% was a practical application of how much usury is.

³⁹ Like slaves the farmers belong to the princes

⁴⁰ The sociologist Max Weber 1864-1920

⁴¹ Letter to Claude de Sachins, Moral after Calvin: Theodore Bezas Christian Censor and Reformed Ethics, Kirk M. Sommers, 2017

Lenders were encouraged to borrow money because they got something in return. They received something for their capital. The lender became a part of the company and had a share in the profits of that company. It was a win-win situation, as we used to say today.

It was possible for resourceful people to get capital, which was not possible before the Reformation. Before the Reformation it was only possible for the rich to start something new. They could do business and became richer. The division between rich and poor became bigger and bigger. Through credit lending, business was started and the economy grew. Many people grew out of poverty as a result. A broad middle class developed.

Calvin only allowed interest to be collected from people who started a business. It was not permitted to charge interest on poor people who needed money to survive.

John Calvin's advises remained in force for 400 years, until the idea of central bank in the 20th century.

This had created an economic and social superiority over those places that did not accept the Reformation. For example, in the economic superiority of North America over South America. Both have resources, although South America has even more. But the reformed North became more prosperous than the South. Why? The reformed places lived in the freedom to do business, make profits and develop. Max Weber observed this phenomenon and recorded it in his book.

Work ethics

Being a good Christian did not only mean going to church and praying. It has to do with your whole life. They were accountable to God in their families and at their workplaces. They were disciplined by God to do good work. The workers began to do good, trustworthy and excellent work, even if they were not controlled by anyone. The fear of God encouraged them to do good work. The reformers quickly became good and trustworthy workers and were famous all over the world.

Calvin preached that if people do not do their work faithfully and credibly, then their Christianity is not right. Calvin was able to bring work and the Bible together, and this made the difference in the work ethic in those places where the Calvinist worldview was superior.

People were free to contribute their creative ideas, but were not under the control of the church or kings. This brought about a stronger development as in other parts of the world and ultimately a superiority over the unreformed places.

This work ethic became the foundation of Western civilisation and made it strong. Even today one wonders why one does not immediately trust African work. If historians did not understand the spirit of the Reformation, they could not understand these differences. It was the faith of the people that created the difference.

Katharina von Bora⁴², the wife of Martin Luther, had a great influence on his students. The students ate at her table and saw how man and woman dealt with each other. They heard not only a sermon about it. What they learned was not only theory. They saw it and experienced it. The family dining table became the most important tool for teaching children morality.

⁴² Catherine of Bora 1499 - 1552

As a former nun, Katharina did not pray for money. Although she had no idea about economics, she had started to build up a business at home. She worked for it but became successful. She earned and saved money, invested it. She learned to make more of what she had. She started farming, building a hostel. She had bought land and even ran a health centre. Katharina became a successful businesswoman. She was probably the great heroine of economic reform and laid a new foundation for modern society.

Private property was a very important tool for the Reformer to grow up in the image of God. It leads to self-responsibility and creativity. People become more responsible when they know that it is their own. This element was very important for the Reformers. The Reformers turned workers into owners. They believed that they could receive more if they were disciplined and honest. But they also believed that they were not owners of the property, but only administrators of his property. In the end, they believed that it was for his kingdom and for his honour.

As long as this view was connected in a biblical ethic, it prevented them from becoming capitalists who were only in search of themselves. But when the fear of God disappeared, people had only their selfish urge to gain more. It was no longer the Spirit of God that drove them to creativity, it was their own human spirit that drove them to have more and more. They began to believe that the strongest will survive. Instead of building his kingdom, they began to build their kingdom. They still believed in God, the Bible and His principles, but the Spirit of God was forgotten. The fear of God held society together. As long as the sermon was at the centre, it worked.

3.6 Politics: Living in freedom and order

Today almost every nation is convinced that a government needs a constitution and a separation of powers. This has not always been the case. Our constitutions are not more than 250 years old. The first constitution of an entire nation was written in America in 1784. But this system of a constitution has been known for many years. The Jews wrote 3500 years ago that a political system should be based on separation of powers and a constitution.

It is written down in the Bible, which is still available today. The Bible teaches that every person is a sinner and therefore should not have too much power. People with too much power are in danger of being abused, and therefore the power must be separated.

Through the Reformation the Bible was translated and teaching found its way back into the world. Calvin structured the Reformed Church in Geneva 500 years ago according to biblical understanding. It was the first democracy based on the separation of powers and a constitution⁴³. The foundations of the modern western political System were laid by the Huguenots, refugees from France.

Democracy was not introduced to have good government. Democracy turned out to be the best system because man is a sinner. Democracy ensures that people do not abuse their position. Calvin said that it was very dangerous to have too much power. It is dangerous for oneself and for others. This political system turned out to be the well-known word democracy. But it is based on the assumption that we are sinful. Those who cannot explain

⁴³ Geneva Catechism 1545

the sinfulness of men will not understand democracy. People without a influence of Christianity can't understand how democracy is better than a central government.

Nobody knows how people react when they are in power. That is why the system needs a life belt. If those in power do not do good, the people can vote them out. So, democracy became a panacea.

The Latin word for sin can also be translated as "*corruptio*". Corruption in German is a word that we know all over the world. It could be described as depravity, bribery. The whole world believes that corruption is wrong. But I doubt that they have understood its origin. But the reformers understood and were able to build a political system that best prevents corruption.

The Geneva Bible ⁴⁴

The Geneva Bible became the foundation for the English-speaking world. With this Bible in hand, America was built.

King James I argued against the Geneva Bible⁴⁵. He also had conflicts with the reformers in Scotland, particularly with Andrew Melville⁴⁶. The Geneva Bible says that people do not have to obey the orders of a tyrant if they do not obey the law of God⁴⁷. In the Geneva Bible, the king is often compared to a tyrant. But not in the King James Bible. King James thought that this Bible would weaken his position. So, he had a new English translation printed, the King James Version⁴⁸. King James was defeated in the English Civil War in 1642. The Parliament under Oliver Cromwell won and the King was beheaded. Later Cromwell took power and again restricted the parliament. The young Republic of England had had great problems. But America, with the Geneva Bible in its hands, became independent and this became the basis for the new modern political system.

The iure magistrate⁴⁹

The theologian Théodore de Bèze, successor to John Calvin and reformer in Geneva, wrote in this book about the importance of the indecency of the court. He was a refugee from France and saw the brutal abuses of the Church and the King. His writings paved the way for the Bill of Right in America and human rights around the world. He opposed the idea of Thomas Aquinas⁵⁰ who said that only higher authorities could dismiss the King. Like the Pope or Caesar. Bèze said that the Bible teaches that everyone must be accountable to people by an absolute standard.

He wrote that civil servants or parliament are not in the service of the king, but in the service of the people. So, they could dismiss the king. It led to an electoral system. This book was a revolution for that time. It shook the world, but brought humanity into a new age.

⁴⁴ The Geneva Bible 1557 written by William Whittingham 1524-1575

⁴⁵ King James of England 1566-1625

⁴⁶ Andrew Melville 1545 - 1622 was a Scottish scholar, theologian, poet and religious reformer

⁴⁷ Daniel 6.22

⁴⁸ King James Bible 1611

⁴⁹ The theologian Théodore de Bèze 1519-1604 Fugitive from France, successor of John Calvin and reformer in Geneva, wrote his book *De iure magistratum* 1573

⁵⁰ Thomas Aquinas one of the church fathers 1225-1274

Fraco Gallia⁵¹

Prof. Francois Hotman, a refugee who fled to Geneva before the Bartolomeo night in Paris, wrote this amazing book. He believed that the King is no more than anyone else. The government is there to protect the people and not the other way round. The king is only one of many and remains only as a representative of the people. In the service of the people and in the end in the service of God.

Power is distributed on three levels. The King, the Parliament and the representative of the people. The King is only the President of the Parliament. He parliament can dismiss the rulers at any time. He leads to the Parliament in England or the Congress in America. His writings and his book have become the basis of modern political systems throughout the world.

Vindicae Contra Tyrannos⁵²

It is not clear who wrote this book. But it also became an important book for political development in the West. Perhaps it was written by Huguenots, refugees from France.

The idea of the American president comes from this book. The president is only one of many. He is the representative of the people and must obey God. The people must obey the government, but only if the government obeys God. Even today in America, the President takes his oath on the Bible.

It is astonishing that the refugees, mostly from France, have laid the foundations for political change in the world. In Geneva in particular, progress and prosperity are due to the reception of refugees. Many of them were craftsmen and scientists. With the Reformed doctrine Together, these refugees have made a significant contribution to our Western culture.

The Bible has reformed the world

Scotland 1573 : Scotland was reformed in 1560 by John Knox, who returned from exile in Geneva. He brought the new worldview from Geneva to Scotland. After the Bartolomeo night in Paris, the Scots rose up and defeated Mary I⁵³. The Scottish government was reformed and became a republic. Scotland became the new model for the modern world, based on the idea of the Geneva Reformers.

Holland 1576 : Many refugees from Geneva went to Holland. Utrecht became independent from Spain in 1576 under William I and was reformed⁵⁴. In 1581 the seven northern provinces were also reformed and became independent from Spain. Holland is based on the same ideas of the reformers from Geneva. William I later became King of England and laid the foundations for the new constitutional monarchy that we see today.

The Peace of Westphalia 1648: The Peace of Westphalia ended the Thirty Years' War in Europe and the Eighty Years' War between Spain and the Netherlands. The conflict between the Catholics and the Reformer was resolved. But it would be honest to say that the ideas of the reformers won. Europe was no longer the same. The idea of a political reorientation was

⁵¹ Prof. Francois Hotman, refugee from France 1524-1590, wrote to Fraco Gallia 1572

⁵² Written by probably refugees in Basel 1579

⁵³ It was called Bloody Mary 1516-1558.

⁵⁴ Prince of Orange the Silent 1533 - 1584

born. Even if it would take many years before it reached all of Europe and finally the whole world.

Two contracts were signed in Münster. Between Emperor Ferdinand III and France and the Emperor and Queen Christina of Sweden. It was the first international treaty in Europe. The Netherlands and Spain signed the peace agreement and the United Provinces of the Netherlands became independent of Spain and the Holy Roman Empire.

It regulated the political order of Central Europe for the next hundreds of years. They were recorded in the Reichstag in 1654 and became part of the constitutional order of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation until 1806. It was the basis for peace in Europe until the outbreak of the French Revolution.

Switzerland 1648: The peace treaties also regulated the independence of the Swiss Confederation. Switzerland sent a delegate to Münster to find out how Switzerland will now position itself in this new situation. The occasion was the imperial court, international law and freedom of trade. After lengthy negotiations, the representatives of the Emperor, France and Sweden voted in favour of Swiss independence. In particular the independence of the imperial courts⁵⁵. Switzerland was granted full freedom and independence from the Empire. Switzerland thus became the first sovereign nation in Europe. It gained complete independence from the imperial courts, which Holland did not achieve.

Glorious Reformation 1688: The Reformation movements led to a revolution in England in the 17th century⁵⁶. The attempt for a republic had failed under Cromwell. England understood that a king would not bring long-term freedom to a country. But to take power from the king by force is no better than if a king rules by force.

The reformer found himself in a dilemma. But they had a brilliant idea. They could make William I of Holland King of England. He had royal blood and was the great reformer of Holland. This agreement worked, and King William I of Orange voluntarily surrendered his power to Parliament.

This reform became the bloodless revolution. Reformation instead of revolution. The reformers reformed England. This system has survived to this day. Britain is a constitutional monarchy where the power to make the laws lies with Parliament and not with the King. The king can only present the country, but not govern it. It is a great example of separation of powers and has become a model for many countries in the world.

American independence in 1787. The Puritans fled to America as refugees to build the New Jerusalem, the Kingdom of God according to the Geneva model. Thomas Jefferson was the father of the Constitution of America. He was strongly influenced by the Puritans, who had brought the idea of separation of powers based on a constitution from the teachings of the reformers.

The 10 Commandments became the basis of constitutions and rights. America became a model for the whole world. It gained more and more economic and political superiority over the rest of the world.

⁵⁵ Art. VI IPO = § 61 IPM

⁵⁶ the glorious reformation 1688-1689

For the reformers, the core of a political system was not democracy. This word did not come from the reformers. It came later from the philosophers who looked to ancient Greece. For the reformers, it was the separation of powers and an absolute moral law that could hold a stable nation together.

The Reformation was able to create a political system in which order and freedom were possible. It has remained the system in almost all countries of the world to this day. In many countries it does not work because they do not know the biblical background.

But it can be said that since then no other religion, philosophy or belief has made it possible for people to live together in a better form, in freedom and order. This understanding made the West the centre of the world. In many ways the Reformation was not perfect. But the positive has far outweighed the negative.

3.7 Science: a huge interest in research has emerged

Modern academic science was born in England in the 16th century. With the freedom of the reformation, science was able to grow in an extraordinary way.

Scientists like Isaac Newton Francis Bacon were convinced Christians and became the fathers of modern science.

Because God had promised that the universe would exist forever, they began to search for absolute natural laws. Before the Reformation there was no great science. Christians believed God had nothing to do with science. They had no great interest in studying science.

In the Middle Ages, the people of Europe believed in arbitrary gods that ruled the world. For them it was impossible that absolute laws of nature could hold the world together. For them, nature could always change. It was the gods, or God, who determined what should happen in the world. But when the reformers began to understand that science is under God, the view of the world changed. They believed that God had created the laws of nature. Because they could trust the Creator, they could also have this absolute trust. Now they could not only be sure of salvation, but also be sure that God's creation was trustworthy according to God's commandments. Now it makes sense to find out these laws that hold the universe together.

They believed that God had written two books. The Bible and its creation: both are valuable to study. Scientists became worshippers of God who worshiped the Creator by finding out how He created the world. People did not have to go to church to worship from God. They went to the laboratory and worshipped God there.

Galilei Galileo 1564-1642 was not allowed to publish his research. Galileo adhered to Copernicus' worldview and claimed that the world was not in the middle of our universe. It is the sun, and the world revolves around it.

Catholics believed that the planets and the sun hung in the sky and revolved around the world. God's world is outside the visible universe. But with Copernicus and Galileo the Catholic world view was shaken. If the sun is in the centre and the world revolves around the sun. Then, where is God?

For Catholics, God's world was not in this world. But Galileo brought God into the world. He is not only outside our universe. He is in the middle of it.

This view did not contradict the Bible. But it was a heresy against the Catholic Church. It would undermine the power of the church. Galileo had to withdraw his claim. When he left the courtroom, he whispered to one of the guards, and yet it revolved around the sun.

The West was the first culture to apply modern science. This science differed from the others because it brought several practical applications to the real world. Technologies in the West have only just sprung up. And sometimes it seems as if the rest of the world stood still then.

3.8 The art: people could live out their creativity

The Reformer taught people how to sing and use their creativity to worship God. They wrote songs and painted pictures to worship God. They found new ways to use their creativity to bring God's love to people.

Painting

Rembrandt was one of the great painters of the Reformation⁵⁷. He began to paint biblical stories with real people. The paintings were real. Not only abstract and symbolic. Jesus on the cross was a real person with wounds on his hands and feet. With his paintings he brought heaven and earth together. He brought life from the street into the church. The painters of the Reformation wanted to show God in the real world. People could see God through the pictures, touch and experience Him. God was not far away. He was among them.

Music

Music was often controlled or forbidden in the church. Gifted musicians had to practice their talents on the street. But with the Reformation, music came into the church in a new way. All people, with any level of education, could worship God. All together could praise God and were equal before God. Singing brought unity back into the church. Even today singing is still a part of every service.

The Reformers wrote plays and taught the people to sing. A famous song of Martin Luther is still known in many churches today⁵⁸.

One of the greatest musicians of this time was Johann Sebastian Bach⁵⁹. He became famous under the name; the author of the fifth gospel⁶⁰. He wrote the Gospel not as a text, but as music. He composed the St. John or Matthew Passion. What the author of the Gospel did in words, he did in music. He became the father of classical music. He brought a new form to the harmonies and rhythms. A new style of music emerged. To this day much in music is influenced by him. We can say that he discovered the music of God and that he touched the hearts of people with it. He found a new way to the hearts to the people.

⁵⁷ Rembrandt 1606-1669

⁵⁸ A mighty fortress is our God "" (Original German; "Eine Feste Burg ist unser Gott") between 1527 and 1529, from Psalm 46

⁵⁹ Johann Sebastian Bach 1685-1750 a German composer and musician of the baroque period.

⁶⁰ In 1929 the Swedish bishop Nathan Söderblom had described Bach's cantatas as the fifth gospel

Friedrich Händel also composed a great work of art with the Messiah⁶¹. People were free to use the gifts they had received from God. The freedom of the Reformation opened doors for the artist.

This freedom, which came with the Reformation, created the arts in several aspects and continues to influence the world today.

4 The power of the Enlightenment

In this book you will not present all aspects of history and not all philosophers and scientists of this particular time. Perhaps you think that other personalities are more important than those mentioned. Maybe you know much more about these personalities than what is reported here. Maybe you think that some personalities are only presented from one perspective and you would also mention the other side. There would certainly be much more to discover.

However, the focus is not so much on individuals as on understanding how Western thinking, the worldview, changed during the Enlightenment. Why have people started to think differently than before? Why have they distanced themselves from the faith of the Reformers and the Bible. Why was Christianity so discredited and people began to reject Christianity?

4.1 Science: The birth of modern science

Francis Bacon 1560-1626

Francis Bacon blew the trumpet and everyone listened. He was one of the pioneers of classical empiricism and was strongly influenced by the teachings of the Reformer and the Bible.

Bacon was an admitting Christian. Only the trust in a God who promised that the world would not exist only through arbitrary movements but through God's control could give him the certainty of absolute natural laws.

Bacon said that God had written two books. The Bible and Creation and both are worth studying. To him, a scientist is a priest who does the same thing in a laboratory as a priest does in a church. A scientist finds God's law in nature and the pastor in the Bible. He believes in the priesthood of all believers.

Bacon believed in the Creator God. The God who created the universe and holds it together with natural laws. He claimed that man had lost two things through the Fall. His innocence and his dominion over creation. One he can restore through religion and the other through science.

The Creator created the universe with absolute laws. People just have to find them. In his book he published his new ideas⁶². The precise observer can find out everything in life. Everything is in the category of cause and effect. Man can study nature to find out how to use it to make life easier and better.

⁶¹ George Frederick Handel 1685-1759

⁶² Francis Bacon 1560-1626, *Novum organum scientiarum*

For him the first missionary work was to cultivate the world. Be lord over the fish in the ocean, the birds in the sea⁶³.

Bacon laid the foundation for the modern world. But the church was not so prepared for it and was not aware of the side effects of this new thinking. If people follow this method consistently, then the people are no more than cause and effect. What is love in such a system? Does man have free will or is everything caused?

After the Reformation, science was mainly used for the benefit of the people. And it was amazing what science could do. But more and more science was separated from Christianity. Before, people went to the priest to pray, but now the scientist could help.

To be able to explain everything by cause and effect brought a new Christian direction. It was deism. Sir Isaac Newton and René Descartes, upheld "that the physical laws he had uncovered revealed the mechanical perfection of the workings of the universe to be akin to a watch, wherein the watchmaker is God⁶⁴." The main idea behind it was that the Creator created the world, but no longer intervened in creation. He gave man the task of solving the problem of the world himself. To find medicine for the sick and technology to free hard work and poverty. England was initially the driving force behind this theology.

Isaac Newton 1643-1727

Isaac Newton was also born in England in 1643. It was the year in which Galileo Galilei died⁶⁵. After his studies he became professor at Trinity University of Cambridge.

Newton was brilliant. He laid the foundation for the law of light at the age of 23. He strongly followed Francis Bacon. He believed that everything in the universe could be explained by science.

Once, during his student days, Newton looked out the window and saw an apple falling from the tree. He thought about it. He understood; actually, the apple does not fall, the earth pulls the apple to itself. It was probably the greatest revelation for the world. He received the law of gravity. He became the father of modern science.

Newton was a professing Christian and held fast to the Reformed Church. He believed that God was the supreme ruler who created the world through scientific laws. Through mathematics, man must fathom the mystery of God, the laws of nature. He could explain to man how God created the universe. His physics was theology. The motivation was always to find the Creator.

Newton began to study the Bible more and more. Later he became more interested in theology and prophecy than in science. Even when he concentrated more on the Bible, he rejected things he could not explain.

Science was born of theology, but more and more the foundation of the Bible was lost. Because the people of the time were so focused on science, the Church had not recognised this ever-widening gap.

⁶³ Gen 1.28

⁶⁴ McMahan, David L. (2008). The Making of Buddhist Modernism.

⁶⁵ Galileo Galilei 1564-1642

God and the Bible could not be explained by natural law. Neither can the resurrection, the trinity or the beginning of the world. God created the laws of nature. Therefore, the laws of nature can never explain the creator of the laws. Miracles can happen. But they cannot be explained by the laws of nature. When people began to doubt these things, they cannot explain the Bible. Christianity began to be shaken.

As long as these principles were only applied in natural science, it did not directly contradict Christianity. But since the law of cause and effect has been applied to humanities fields such as politics or economics, it directly attacked Christianity. People do not want to live in a world in which everything is determined by cause and effect. Man lost his humanity.

Now the philosophers took the place of Christianity. They tried to feel the vacuum.

4.2 Politics: expanded ideas of the Reformation

Human rights and constitutions

The American Declaration of Independence of 1776 testifies in its preamble that all human beings are created by the Creator. The Swiss Constitution begins with the words "In the name of God Almighty". René Cassin, the initiator of the United Nations and inventor of the 1948 Declaration of Human Rights, wrote in his final declaration that the 4000-year-old Jewish scriptures laid the foundation for human rights⁶⁶. In 1905, Paul Robert painted "Justice of the Nations" in the old building of the Swiss Supreme Court in Lausanne. "Justice is represented as a woman with a sword pointing to the Bible, the basis for right or wrong. When the judges and defendants entered the courtroom, they passed by this painting. It reminded them that all must speak and give account of the Bible before God. Even today, people swear on the Bible before the court or the association before the state. In the Bernese government hall, the bible from the 16th century is still on the table in front of all governors. The Bible laid the foundation for politics. But more and more ideas from the scientific method found their way into politics.

Thomas Hobbes 1588-1679⁶⁷

Hobbes was probably the first to use science in politics. He wrote the book *Leviathan*⁶⁸. He called for a social contract. He thought humans were like wolves and needed a superior power to keep them together. But who would do that? According to his idea, it would be the people who had the best education and the highest university degree. People who can scientifically find out why people act the way they do. Through experience and observation these people would be able to understand why people behave in a certain way.

The reformer believed that people in political office should lead a morally correct life. The most important thing is character, not knowledge. It was a question of the heart, not the brain. But with Hobbes, at the latest, this has changed. From now on, the one who has the most knowledge should rule.

History has shown that those in power have usually abused their power. People are evil. But evil is not a scientific concept. The reformer thought that evil can only be changed by

⁶⁶ Rene Cassin received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1968 for the 1948 Declaration of Human Rights

⁶⁷ Thomas Hobbes England 1588-1679

⁶⁸ *Leviathan or the matter, origin and power of a church and civil Commonwealth*

changing the heart. With Hobbes it changed. People can be good if they have a good education and enough knowledge.

Hobbes' thought the social laws are not given by God. They can be found out through science. The reformer believed that the Bible gave them the principle. An absolute moral law. It is not of men. It is a revelation from the Creator. These principles are absolute and cannot be changed by powerful people, scientists or human wisdom. Because people are evil, they are not able to give these laws. They are not able to create a system out of themselves.

The reformer believed that without the Bible, the people would end up in a power game of the powerful. The one with the most influence oppresses the others. As has so often been the case in history. The reformers believed that the Bible could limit the power of the powerful. It limited the power of the people, and so all were absolutely accountable to it.

The reformers started a revolution against the idea of a king and a centralised political system. But Hobbes distanced himself from the reformer's view. The quantum leap in politics was again called into question by him.

He believed in the Creator and in Jesus Christ. He believed that Jesus died on the cross to redeem us from our sins. But he thought like a deist. He was convinced that man has the ability to achieve peace and freedom himself. All you need is good scientific research.

For him, Christianity was only there to save souls. He created a great gap between church and world. He brought a separation of faith and science. The Bible was therefore no longer a book of Revelation, but only a book with a good example from history from which people could learn.

His view separates politics from Christianity. Politics became something that could be studied at universities and Christianity in the churches. Most of the reformers also believed in a separation of church and state, but for them both were under God's law.

John Locke⁶⁹1632-1704

Locke influenced the Declaration of Independence of the United States, the Constitution of the United States, the Constitution of revolutionary France and most of the constitutions of the states today. In his work⁷⁰ he argues that a government is legitimate only if it protects the natural rights to life, liberty and property. If the government cannot respect these conditions, the people have the right to resist and revolt. Locke called for the separation of powers and remained in opposition to Hobbes.

He has a strong attachment to Christianity. He quoted much from the Bible. He was particularly fascinated by the doctrine of creation. For him, God created human beings in his image to take care of the world. He gave him a mind to understand the world around him. He gave him a mind to build a good order.

But he no longer built on the Bible. Instead, he built on spiritual-scientific knowledge that had been created by the philosophers of the time. These laws would hold society together. Man was no longer obliged to give account to a transcendent being. The universally valid,

⁶⁹ John Locke 1632-1704 an English philosopher

⁷⁰ Two treatises on government

absolute outside of man had disappeared. Man now had to create justice from his observation and reason. Locke reduced politics to cause and effect.

Since they were all Christians and went to church, the church had not recognised the problem. Over time Christianity lost its influence in politics. It will come to the point that in some parts of the world, the political systems which created by Christians, will persecute Christians.

Charles de Secondat Montesquieu 1689-1755

At the end of the 17th century the centre of knowledge slowly shifted from England to France. Montesquieu was one of them. Mostly the Catholics no longer had a strong relationship with the Bible. He called for the separation of powers and the sovereignty of the people in his book "De l'esprit des lois" 1748. Based on the same humanistic ideas of Locke⁷¹. He is often mentioned as the father of the separation of powers.

Montesquieu was greatly influenced by the reformers, although he would never admit it. The reformers believed that the Bible laid down the principles of separation of powers. They held this system to be basically the best, because man is a sinner. So, it is not good that people have too much power.

Montesquieu believed in a law of nature that says that the best system is the separation of power. But later we will see that this will not work. To separate power, you need a common absolute law. A law by which all must be measured. It needs a God who is above man. Otherwise there will never be human rights. Without an absolute, pragmatism will always determine what is right and good. Montesquieu doubted the ideas of the reformers and we will see later which ones will follow.

Politics was developed by the Reformers and the Bible. The principle and the system have remained until today. But the spirit of the Bible slowly disappeared. The Bible became more and more just a historical book with stories.

Niccolò di Bernardo dei Machiavelli ⁷²

Machiavelli had a great influence on Western thinking. He came from a Catholic background and lived before the Enlightenment. But it seems right to put him on the same level with the Enlightenment. His ideas have survived to this day and are in opposition to the ideas of the reformers. In 1532 he published his book "The Prince in Italy"⁷³.

The Reformation did not reach Italy, and Italy held on to the old system of power. He described that politics is only the superiority of the most powerful. True politics is power. Those who want to stay in power must use their power. He showed that without the understanding of an absolute moral law, the only way of a political system is to exercise power. When the Bible lost its value in society, I upheld the ideas of Machiavelli. Many countries have been able to preserve the political system of the reformers until today. But the countries that proclaimed atheism have been involved in the power games described by Machiavelli.

⁷¹ Charles de Secondat Montesquieu 1689-1755 , wrote 'De l'esprit des lois'. (About the spirit of the laws)

⁷² Niccolò di Bernardo dei Machiavelli 1469 1527, Italien

⁷³ The Prince, NiccolòMachiavelli, 1714

But will our political system be able to survive if the Bible is increasingly relegated to the background? Our fathers still believed this strongly but it does not seem to have arrived in the next generation. What happens to our political systems when people no longer know where our political systems comes from? Why does it work?

He was in direct opposition to the reformers. His ideas found their best expression in Napoleon Bonaparte. Machiavelli's book has remained an important lecture at universities to this day. The idea has not died out. The expression finds more and more resonance with powerful leaders like Donald Trump, Boris Jonson or Xi Jinping. The biblical idea of responsibility, separation of powers and servant leadership remains more and more in danger.

The Enlightenment promised to free people from the old dusty machinations and medieval oppression. The Enlightenment claimed to have enlightened the people. The name in English describes it very well. "Enlightenment". They think they have found the button of light and lit the light on humanity. But the question is not whether they have extinguished the candle that was lit during the Reformation.

4.3 The economy: expanded ideas of the Reformation

The economy grew extremely fast in western society. They began to build colonies. In 1492 Christopher Columbus sailed to South America. He brought back the goods and the Catholics established their colonies. The Catholics did much evil in South America. The reformers did it a bit better. Especially England, Holland or later Germany. In the beginning the colonization was done in the spirit of Christianity. They wanted to bring the ideas of the Bible to the whole world. But as the morality of the bible got more and more lost, injustice came up. The Europeans oppressed the people and exploited them. They stole their goods and made them slaves. The West wanted to build the economy on a scientific basis, but the consequences were evil.

Bernard Mandeville 1670-1733⁷⁴

He was one of the first to apply the methods of science to business. Mandeville wrote the fable about bees in 1714. In a brilliant way he used a story with bees to describe that bad behaviour leads to the benefit of society. Every society needs greed and selfishness, even if we do not like it⁷⁵. A society cannot become prosperous without evil. The doctor has to sell expensive medicines that don't work, and the carpenter doesn't have to fix the door properly. This bad behaviour leads to more business, and this would end up in prosperity.

The reformers built on the Bible. If you behave morally correct, do good works and serve people, God will give you prosperity. The basis of an affluent society was behaviour. But Mandeville reversed the moral standard of the Bible. Now the greed is the guarantee for success.

But where do these ideas lead? A customer who finds out that the carpenter didn't repair the door properly gets angry. He can no longer trust the carpenter. Everyone would only pursue his own interests. Selfishness inevitably becomes the basis of the economy. It later led to

⁷⁴ Bernard Mandeville, or Bernard de Mandeville 1670 -1733, was an Anglo-Dutch philosopher, political economist and satirist. He was born in Rotterdam, Netherlands, but lived most of his life in England.

oppression and slavery and exploitation of the weaker ones. Everybody would only pursue his own interests.

The reformers did good work because they wanted to please God and serve others. A carpenter repaired a door, as would be customary for a king. For if people do something for the least in society according to God's view, they do it for God. Because he did good work, he got more customers and his business grew. But from Mandeville's point of view, this behaviour will not create wealth.

He was only a philosopher who played in his thoughts. But the people after him will apply this in the real world and it will have evil consequences.

Even when he was still in a Christian, he theoretically abolished God and the Bible. He prophesied the world of pure capitalism after him. When the Bible disappeared completely, all that remained was the horror of survival of the fittest.

Adam Smith 1727-1790⁷⁶

Adam Smith probably had the greatest influence in the Western economy. He was strongly influenced by Bernard Mandeville. Smith became very famous for his writings⁷⁷.

Smith asked why people everywhere want to exchange goods and start businesses. Why are people so committed to economic growth and want to get rich?

Smith said that most people are selfish and seek to benefit themselves first. Selfishness is not bad for him. It is the inner engine that drives the economy forward.

He saw that two people do not exchange with each other voluntarily. Unless they see a benefit for themselves. The independent drive is this invisible hand that pushes people without them noticing. This famous invisible hand of Smith is the unstoppable drive for growth.

Smith believed that humans could apply the laws of nature to business. He wrote down his ideas in the famous book "The Wealth of the Nations". " For example, the law of supply and demand.

Smith contradicted Mandeville's idea that sin or evil would bring prosperity. As a Christian, this idea contradicted his faith. But in the end, he said the same thing. He was a deist who believed that God created the world, but no longer intervenes in the world. He made the economy a mathematical system of supply and demand. People had to redeem the world themselves.

The most important thing for him is that people are happy⁷⁸. For him everything we do serves the goal of happiness. The state has the task of setting the limits to make it possible.

He believed in a closed system where resources are limited. The reformer believed in an open system in which God can give as much as he wants. People are prosperous because they follow his ways. And not because they are wise. God will give rain and make it grow if

⁷⁶ Adam Smith 1727-1790

⁷⁷ The wealth of nations, 1776

⁷⁸ he asked: "Which is more important: general, social happiness or personal, individual happiness? The general, social happiness was maximised by the individual happiness of each person. Therefore, individual happiness is more important.

people obey him. For them, good relations and moral action were the basis for a strong economy.

Smith brought about a general change in people's worldview at that time. For him the basic of the economy is no longer God but the laws of the economy.

After him, capitalism became the leading world view of the powerful for the next hundreds of years. People called him the father of capitalism. But this capitalism was quite different from the reformer's capitalist thinking. The most important thing was no longer the behaviour in the laws of God. The new law was the rise to happiness and wealth. Everything that produces this is good, and everything that does not produce it is bad for society.

Smith was probably the one who survived the longest. His ideas are still spread all over the world. He was a smart thinker. And he changed the world. We shouldn't blame him too much. But the church could not deal with it and was not aware of the side effects of his views. Instead of distancing itself from him, the church embraced his teachings. But the pity for the church was enormous. Many churchgoers found themselves in a dilemma between their business and the moral teachings of the Bible. Many Christians distanced themselves from the public church and met in smaller groups. It led to a schism in the church. Many new forms and directions of church life emerged. One might say that Smith divided the church.

Thomas Malthus⁷⁹

Malthus observed an explosive development of the world population. On the other hand, he noted that resources only develop linearly. He thought that people would end up in a great catastrophe when the two lines crossed. He drew up a model for the future and formulated what no one could imagine before. Previously, the prophets of the Bible had predicted the future, but in the Enlightenment, it was the scientists.

His theory claimed that poverty in the world could be overcome⁸⁰. It is called the Malthusian catastrophe. Only the strong survive. Natural disasters will kill the weak once and so poverty can be overcome. These thoughts are still relevant today.

But what were the consequences? One application was the communist idea of the one-child policy in China. The one-child policy was seen as successful. Henry Kissinger says that the greatest hope for the future is to control the population⁸¹. Today China has a demographic problem. The one-child policy has led to abortion of girls. But now they have too many boys who cannot marry. Don't these ideas lead to the terrible genocides? Birth control still had a big influence today.

Years later it was found that his calculation was not correct. In Malthus' second edition 1803 he changed some of his views.

The reformers believed that resources come from God and not from nature. God is the provider. If they follow Him and obey His laws, He will give them enough. The idea of

⁷⁹ Thomas Malthus wrote 1766-1834 in his book "An Essay on the Principle of Population"

⁸⁰ Thomas Robert Malthus was the first economist to propose a systematic population theory. He articulated his views on population in his famous book "Essay on the Principle of Population" (1798), for which he collected empirical data to support his thesis.

⁸¹ That population growth is necessarily limited by the means of subsistence,
This population will inevitably increase as the means of subsistence increase, and
That the superiority of the population is suppressed by moral restraint, vice and misery

reducing humanity raises ethical and moral questions. Who then decides who is too much? Is it the powerful and the strong? Is it not a frontal attack against human rights? The human rights claim that everyone has a right to live. No matter whether he is rich, poor, powerful or weaker than others. This theory puts the West in a dilemma.

He believed in a closed system in which nature predicts how many people the world can support. He did not believe that God could still intervene and give more than nature can produce. He turned away from the reformist view and became a naturalist. After him, the human spirit will never be the same again.

But didn't Malthus also undermine the foundations of Western civilisation? The letter of the American Declaration of Independence testifies that all human beings were created by the Creator. Therefore, everyone has the same rights. Every human being has a right to life. No one can change it. Life is given by God and cannot be defined by man. Life is sacred and nobody can discuss it. No one has the right to kill others. With the Reformation this became the basis of the West, which is now beginning to totter again.

Malthus believed that man must control who is allowed to live. But how is it decided who is too much and who is not? Does he not open the door to the brutal killing machine of communism or national socialism in the 20th century? If disasters are a means of limiting people, where only the strongest will survive, then Hitler or Stalin simply followed this principle. The only difference to Malthus was that they caused the catastrophe themselves and did not wait for a natural disaster to happen. But the basic idea was the same. If you can tame nature so that the river does not overflow its banks, you can also limit humanity.

Has it not abolished the deep Western foundation of humanity? Wouldn't it be a terrible world if people decided who was allowed to live and who was not? Malthus did indeed leave this to nature. But isn't it terrible to simply not know what nature is doing? Just to know that I have to be stronger than the others to survive?

Even with Malthus, the church did not react and was not aware how deeply these thoughts would penetrate the church and later destroy Christianity.

4.4 Education: expanded ideas of the Reformation

Heinrich Pestalozzi ⁸²

Pestalozzi grew up in a strongly influenced, pietism Christian home in Switzerland. He was also very impressed by Jean Jacques Rousseau and took up many ideas of him.

People like to listen to him. He recognized the needs of the people. He was not only a philosopher. He built schools for the poor and needy. He was compassionate for the outcasts in society. He was ready to serve and help them. He believed that a new educational system had been revealed to him, how children can come out of poverty⁸³. He wanted to help

⁸² Heinrich Pestalozzi 1746-1827, Swiss reformer of the education system

⁸³ He also believed that man is governed by two forces. The sensual nature and the higher nature. The sensual nature is guided by instincts, just as animals do, and it is the higher nature that makes man unique and superior to animals. Man can think, show love, believe in God, develop a sense of beauty by being creative, and take responsibility, which animals are not able to do. The higher nature can overcome the sensual nature and guide it. This would be the aim of education. His thoughts are obviously influenced from his early childhood on.

children make by themselves their own products. His thoughts strongly influenced western thinking.

He developed the pedagogical theory of the holistic approach. Heart, head and hand should work together. The head observes the environment and finds the truth. The hand must do it so that what is heard fully understands it.

He believed that man is governed by two forces. The sensual nature and the higher nature. The sensual nature is guided by instincts as with animals. The higher nature makes man unique and superior to animals. Man can think, love, believe in God, develop a sense of beauty, be creative and take responsibility. Animals cannot do all these things.

The higher nature can overcome the sensual nature and guide it. This would be the aim of education. His thoughts were obviously strongly influenced by his early childhood.

Pestalozzi was always a convinced Christian. He did not believe in the doctrine of the churches. He did not believe that Jesus is God either. For him Jesus was the perfect image of God, but not God. He distanced himself from the teaching of the Bible that Jesus died on the cross for our sin. He did not believe in the five Solis of Luther. Jesus did not simply wash away sin with his death on the cross. But Jesus gave us an example of how people should treat each other.

He believed that man was bound by his selfishness and, like Jesus, had to become free through social work. He also doubted that the Bible was the only revelation from God or from God at all. Christianity does not mean dogmas. It is the action of the heart.

He observed the legalistic lifestyle of his church. The church was concerned only with abstract dogmas, as with acting for the poor and looking at the needs of the world. Pestalozzi believed that people should feel God in their hearts, not by using their intellect or clinging to religious teachings.

Pestalozzi was impressed by the teachings on life after the death of Rousseau and Plato⁸⁴. They all believed that man can have a certainty about life after death. But it is not a physical life, as the reformers thought. It is a life in an immaterial world. The soul is eternal, but the body and the material world would disappear. Pestalozzi thought that this beyond depends on the worldly life of man, on his social actions. This would be the motivation to do good in life.

He believed, in contrast to the reformers, that man must save himself. He is not saved simply by grace. Pestalozzi doubted the orthodox, Christian faith. In fact, he broke with Christianity. He was called the father of humanism. He believed that man is not only capable of bringing salvation to the world, but also salvation for life after death.

The world lost the Creator. The church did not recognise or see the consequences. It accepted them because he spoke of God and acted like Jesus. But the world view of the western world changed.

⁸⁴ Plato 428/427 or 424/423 - 348/347 B.C. Father of all philosophy from Greece believed that the real world does not consist of matter.

The church had done too little for social issues. Instead of following Jesus, they were more concerned with their own profit. Of course, one cannot blame the philosophers for this; the church abolished itself probably because it did not do its work.

In the future, society will probably follow more in the footsteps of Pestalozzi than the church.

Jean Baptise Lamarck ⁸⁵

Lamarck is a French philosopher who will bring about a paradigm shift in the next generation. In the 6th century B.C., the Greek philosopher Anaximander put forward the theory that humans descended from common ancestors. Through several transformations, the man we know today was born. Through the time of Christianity these ideas almost completely disappeared. But in the eighteenth century these ideas experienced a renaissance. In 1809, Lamarck argued that "the transformation of species occurred through the inheritance of adaptations that living beings acquire during their lives" (Lamarckism)⁸⁶. These ideas were seen in England as a threat to the political and religious order and were fiercely opposed by the scientific establishment.

He explained in a logical way why the giraffe has a long neck. The giraffe eats the lowest leaf of the tree. Next time, they have to stretch their neck more to eat the leaves above. Over time, their necks became longer. In the next generation, the giraffe had a longer neck. These were passed down from generation to generation until the present-day giraffe was born. It was a new explanation for the beginning of life and humanity.

Lamarck believed in God as a motionless mover. He is the creator of the world and its laws. But he rejects this God who can give revelation or miraculously intervene in his creation. Therefore, God created matter or any kind of living being. But then, through a natural process, nature brought into existence the living beings of today. So, God did not create the giraffe of today. He only created the origin of life.

He was a Christian naturalist. Everything in nature was the result of several natural processes. God was no longer the creator of living beings, but only the giver of the sources.

The church was not aware of this fundamental change. But 100 years later, a man named Charles Darwin will rise up and declare the Creator God as dead. With Darwin, the theory of evolution will also reach all spheres of society. God will then be abolished not only in natural science, but in all humanities. It will be the birth of secularism and atheism.

The world was emancipated more and more from the Creator through this time. But what were the consequences?

4.5 Families: based on the ideas of the reformers

The freedom of the Reformation brought with it a great freedom for women in particular. Especially through the example of Martin Luther's wife Katharina. Many women administered businesses. Women were educated and had a great influence in society. With the view of feminism this topic is often underexposed. Families were the strong pillars in this time.

⁸⁵ Jean Baptise Lamarck French Philosopher 1744-1829

⁸⁶ Philosophy Zoologique, Our exhibition, 1809

However, it will still take centuries before women will also be given the freedom to enter politics.

Historians also said that women had a decisive influence on politics. Because in families they made politics and the husband was only the representative who brought it to the public. Often strong women told their husbands which decision they should make. As long as the Bible was the foundation, the family was seen as a team in which the partners discussed with each other. But with the loss of the Bible this view will disappear. Women will stand up and demand the same rights as men. The idea of secularization will make families unnecessary. At this time there will only be individuals who want to have all rights before the state.

Families are in accordance with the Bible. The family is actually the smallest political vessel. It is in families that decisions are made. If the decisions are too big to be made, they will come to a higher level, the churches. If they are too big for the church, they will come to the state. This was the federalist idea from the Bible, which was implemented by the reformers. Johannes Calvin built the church and city of Geneva according to this model⁸⁷. Decisions should be made where the work is done. The best policy is when decisions are made at the lowest possible level. That brought with it a lot of personal responsibility. Every family was responsible to God.

Later, when families become irrelevant, each individual is responsible to the state. The state grants every right. With it the personal responsibility is lost. People think the city solves all problems for him. He demands more and more from the state until the state can no longer bear this. The individual will be dependent on the state. He will no longer, as the reformers believed, be able to find a solution himself. The state should decide everything. With this view not only the personal responsibility but also freedom will decrease. The state will become more and more God.

However, it will take centuries before this becomes visible. Then it will no longer be clear what a family is.

4.6 The churches: Between Christianity and Enlightenment

History cannot be divided into good or bad times. In all these times good things and bad things happened. People did good things and bad things. Just as it is probably still the case today. But it is very important to learn from the mistakes of history. To reflect on history and perhaps be able to avoid making the same mistakes again.

The impression should not be given that the reformer was good and the others all bad. The Reformation could develop many good things, but it also had negative sides. We do not want to simply categorise between good and bad times. This book tries to find out why Christianity lost influence and prestige during the Enlightenment. It is intended to help the church of today to reflect, to reflect and perhaps to help to do certain things differently. It should help the church to regain the battlefield which it has lost over the past centuries.

Over time, the teachings of the Bible were lost in the Western world and the ideas of the Enlightenment became a threat to the Church. Christian business people went to church, heard the gospel, but had slaves and abused their employees. Rich Christians lived in big

⁸⁷ Johanes Calvin Sein Wirken in Kirche und Gesellschaft, 2006

houses and in luxury, but many people lived next door in terrible circumstances. Christianity brought this success and helped people get rich. But some get forgotten. It seems that what once looked so successful is now becoming a disadvantage for the church.

Even though most scientists were Christian, science became more and more independent. The world began to believe that science could heal the world in all areas. Christianity is only there to heal souls. People believed that the sciences no longer needed the revelation of God.

Science developed many things and tools to help people. Science was the hero who could save the world. People believed that science was doing more to people than the church ever had. If there was a problem with health, people went to doctors and no longer to priests. In the end, science replaced Christianity.

As long as science was only applied in the field of natural science, it was not such a great threat to the Church. But as scientific methods reached all sectors of society, Christianity became more and more adversaries.

Many Christians gave up the idea of the reformers. A Christian reform for the world seems more and more impossible. Many Christians have distanced themselves from the reform movement. What the churches often preached and their members did contradict their understanding of Christianity. Christianity was in danger of returning to its pre-Reformation state. Many different movements emerged. They founded their own communities.

Christianity changed with the Reformation. 100 years ago, Christians believed they could change society. But many Christians could no longer believe this. Christianity changed from a reformed Christianity to a personal Christianity. The emphasis was no longer on social reforms, but on leading a morally good life. For this reason, they often drew on society and lived in close brotherhood.

John Wesley 1703 - 1791⁸⁸

The last great reformer was probably John Wesley at the beginning of the 18th century. He is mentioned here because he was still in harmony with the Reformer. He was indeed able to reform the Reform Church. He brought back what had been lost in Christianity through the Enlightenment.

He had countless followers, preached several thousand sermons and reached many people. As he was not allowed to preach in church, he preached in the forest or on the road. His sermons were fresh and full of enthusiasm. People felt God's loving heart in his words.

He succeeded in bringing England back to morality. Historians say that England would not be the same today without Wesley. He was able to build a new movement, the Methodists. Because this group led a strict moral life, people used a swearword and called them Methodists. They were based on the moral standard of the teaching of Jesus Christ. Through this movement morality came back into the world. The movement brought many reforms.

⁸⁸ John Wesley 1703 - 1791 was an English cleric and theologian who founded Methodism together with his brother Charles and his clerical colleague George Whitefield.

Anabaptism after 1517⁸⁹

Shortly after Luther's reformation some Christians became very sceptical about the state, the church and the hierarchy. They felt that the reform had not gone far enough. There are still many communities in the world, such as the Amish, Mennonites, Hutterites and the old German Baptist Brothers, which have emerged from this division.

The early Anabaptists formulated their beliefs in 1527 in the Schleithem confession⁹⁰.

They concentrated on the New Testament and not, like the Reformer, on the whole Bible. For the Reformers, especially from Geneva, the principles for a reformation came from the Old Testament. Mainly from the Ten Commandments. They believed they had a mandate like Moses. He had to lead the people into the promised land and build a divine society. So did the reformers. Geneva was called the New Jerusalem. They actually fought to build on the eternal promise of the Kingdom of God.

In the beginning the movements were strongly against infant baptism. They believed that baptism can only be sustained if people can decide for themselves. They were also very sceptical about authority. The Anabaptists were often seen as rebels and were banished. Some were persecuted or even killed. They suddenly posed a threat to the Reformation. This was the beginning of a multitude of different churches.

The question arose whether Christians should stay away from this evil world or influence it. Should Christianity build a strong institution to influence the world, or should they rather live in small groups, living a morally simple life? This question separated the churches, into the so-called reform churches, from the evangelistic churches. This division grew ever greater over the next few centuries. Both sides were in danger. One side was no longer relevant to the world, and the other side could no longer articulate why Christianity is different from just social commitment.

Pietism; Philipp Jacob Spener 1635-1705 ⁹¹

Spener began a counter-movement against the Thirty Years' War and the Enlightenment. The war brought much pain and the Enlightenment brought much injustice. Pietists rejected this humanistic Christianity, which wanted to bring peace with weapons. Spener wanted to reform the Lutheran Church.

His followers became very sceptical of culture and rejected rationalistic discussions about the Bible. They emphasised personal conversion more than reasonable ethics. These Christians thought that religion was a matter of the heart, not the head. They strove for simplicity in their worship and for a life without luxury. To live in small communities and have love for one another. They preferred preachers who were not ordained as pastors. It was a reform of the traditional church. They built up a strong scepticism towards hierarchy and institutions.

The Pietist movement concentrated mainly on the New Testament and especially on the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew. Jesus preached about loving people and being a servant. The Pietists focused a lot on social justice. But they could hardly believe that the institution of

⁸⁹ Anabaptists after the Reformation, is a Christian movement that has its origins in the Radical Reformation.

⁹⁰ [https://anabaptistwiki.org/mediawiki/index.php?title=Schleitheim_Confession_\(source\)](https://anabaptistwiki.org/mediawiki/index.php?title=Schleitheim_Confession_(source))

⁹¹ Philipp Jakob Spener 1635 - 1705 was a German Lutheran theologian who essentially founded what was to become known as Pietism. Later he was called the "Father of Pietism".

society could be reformed. The politics. Business and science became increasingly independent of Christianity.

Zinzendorf, Nikolaus Ludwig Count von (1700-1760)

Spencer was one of the godfathers of Zinzendorf, the leader of the Moravian Brethren Church in Germany.

His movement is in confrontation with the Enlightenment. They do not want to be as rational as the people of that time. They want to experience God's spirit, which was lost. They presented their lives completely to Jesus and thought they could reach the whole world with the gospel. A strong missionary movement broke out into all countries.

They were a great role model for many people and had had great influence. However, they no longer believed in the reforms of social institutions.

They were against the doctrines and the theology of the Reformation. They were strongly focused on the interior and not so much on the principles in politics, science or economics. Even though they did a lot of social work, they were very sceptical about the other sectors of society.

Christians were still strongly committed to education, caring for the poor and sick. For example, the Salvation Army and many others brought God's love to the people. They sacrificed their lives to help others. But through the time, Christianity has increasingly distanced itself from politics, economics, science or even art. Through the time of the Enlightenment the thinking of Christians became more and more divided. Christianity was in great danger.

Even today the Reformed Church in the West is still part of society. Most of the free or pietist churches, however, are often not noticed by state and society.

4.7 The view of man: rationalism has taken the place

Christianity suddenly found itself in a two-front war. On the one side were the scientists who wanted to explain everything with natural laws and on the other side were the philosophers who increasingly criticised the church.

The 16th century philosopher asked the question: Is the physical world real?

Michel Eyquem de Montaigne 1533-1592

France became the centre of philosophy in the 16th century. Paris was the centre of the establishment. One of the first of these new philosophers was Eyquem de Montaigne. He grew up in the Roman Catholic Church. He took his father's place in politics and became mayor of Bordeaux. But then he decided to stop and lived in a small tower to find out more about humanity and reality.

An absolute reference point would be required. But even that would have to have a point of reference. Which is not possible. This is why Montaigne believes that he is not aware of the truth through the senses.

He concludes that sensory perception is a highly unreliable act. People cannot be sure. False perceptions, illusions or even hallucinations deceive him. People cannot even be sure

that they are dreaming. Perceptions and the question of the meaning of life and truth must be separated.

Montaigne opened the door to a world where people no longer have any certainty or truth. Everything is possible. Completely detached from the truth. From an absolute creator. He became the father of the Enlightenment.

He doubted the meaning of life proclaimed by the Catholic Church and became increasingly sceptical about Christianity. He built up his thinking from his own rationalism. The people listened to him. With him modern rationalism was born, and Christianity came into great danger.

Rene Descartes 1569-1650

Descartes is considered the father of modern philosophy. He was a natural scientist and mathematician. He had been trained by Jesuits in France and served as a paid soldier in the Thirty Years' War. Obviously, he had been so badly affected by the war that he no longer believed in bourgeois society. He wondered what had brought mankind so far into this catastrophe. He thought about a new way of thinking that should prevent people from ever starting a war like that again.

He doubted the scientific approach of the British. This will only end in war. He claimed that people cannot find the truth through observation. The Enlightenment made man believe; that man can achieve anything through observation and reasonable conclusions. But there are things in life that we cannot know or understand through our observations. He realised that this would only lead to pessimism.

Descartes was not against Christianity. He was always a convinced Catholic and wanted to reform Christianity. He was looking for a Christianity that would not end in war and injustice.

Descartes wanted to understand everything on the basis of his mind. He went into a room, and did not leave until he found the answer. His principle was that he doubted everything he could perceive. Everything he was not sure of, he put on the left side. Everything he knew, on the right side. Can a man be sure that he has a body? He doubted it and wrote it on the left side. In the end, all that remained was the thinking on the right side. That is why he said, "I think; therefore I am."

He never accepted the truth before he could prove it rationally. Every problem must be systematically investigated. Everyone should follow his principles to find out the truth. He was the turning point from English empiricism to French rationalism. The mind is absolute. What contradicts the mind can be the truth.

The body is pure matter. The soul is divine. Only the brain can unite both. He believed that we would always be uncertain in our observation, but that we could have divine clarity in our mind. He was convinced that this spirit cannot deceive man.

Therefore, religious truth no longer needs visible justification. It does not doubt Christianity or religion. He was not an atheist, but thought that religion did not need to be justified. Anyone can believe what he wants, as he pleases.

But could not reason deceive us? Do not the people in history have an absolutely wrong understanding? Why did Plato and Aristotle contradict each other when both had a clear mind?

What if people are only what they can justify? Wouldn't it be a terrible world. What would it be like if there were no more law outside of man to keep him from doing the things that are not good? Descartes cut the soul out of man and left the world to pure matter. He put a sword into the soul of man and split his heart.

Voltaire 1694-1778

Voltaire was not only a philosopher. He was also critical of the political establishment. He opposed the powerful and stood up for the weaker members of society. Therefore, he had to flee from France to England.

He could see that the constitutional monarchy guaranteed people's freedoms much better than the absolute monarchy in France. He imagined these freedoms, which England had, also in France. He was impressed by the bloodless revolution in England. But he rejected the basis of the Reformation. He did not believe in the Bible and wanted to bring about a reformation in a humane way.

Together with Marquise he analysed the Bible and concluded that much of its content was uncertain. The Bible is full of people who lie, steal and cheat, so it cannot give us a moral foundation. With the Bible as a basis, the world would end up in corruption. He began to doubt the Bible and the church. For him the establishment the church was only corrupt. The Bible still gives them the justification to exploit others. Voltaire replaced the bible with philosophy.

He demanded freedoms for everyone. Freedom of religion, freedom of opinion and an enlightened government. Many people think that the basic freedoms originate from Voltaire's ideas.

His ideas became the basis of the French Revolution. He was the mastermind of the French Revolution. The French Revolution ended in chaos and not like the revolution in England. Voltaire could not create a basis for right and wrong. Man, no longer had an absolute point of reference. He was left to himself. This led to the chaos in the French Revolution. Everyone simply insisted on their own subtleties and rights. There was no longer any common one. No absolute truth. Everything could be or not be. In the end, the one who could assert himself prevailed. A world in which chaos ruled. Where there was no more certainty at all.

Jean Jacques Rousseau 1712-1778

Rousseau wrote the famous essay "Emil". In it he claimed that man is good by nature. With a good education, man can rediscover his true nature, which is denied to him by civilisation. He became the father of postmodernism and anti-authoritarian education. He was a philosopher, but also a revolutionary.

He grew up in Geneva in a strongly Calvinist environment. His father fled France because of persecution by the Catholic Church. Rousseau saw the history of Geneva and the great reform that took place there. Like Calvin, who implemented the Reformation in Geneva, he wanted to implement the Reformation in France.

Rousseau recognised the problem. He saw that the Enlightenment would lead to pessimism. People would change a lot and achieve a lot, but they would not find the meaning of life.

Rousseau thought that if a man wanted to find meaning in life, he had to follow his feelings and his heart. The truth is not outside of man. It is within man himself. It is the source of

man's ethics and actions. If a man lives like this, he will be real and himself. But culture oppresses man, and therefore he is not himself. Therefore, he has to flee from civilisation. Fleeing from authority and boundaries.

He hated the idea of sin and repentance. For him this idea of the church was there to control people. For him the opposite was true. The doctrine of sin made people bad at first. He feels bad and can never find himself. That is why people feel guilty and in pain.

Man can choose for himself what is good or bad. The conscience of man always tells him what is good. When man is free, he is no longer evil. He wanted to free man from evil. It was Rousseau's new redemption story.

Rousseau was convinced of this concept. He thought he was the new man who was completely free. He is the man who can be free and now do what he wants.

He condemned any authority. Be it the state or the parents. It is precisely because of these authorities that man is not free. He demanded total freedom. A total anarchy.

It would be absurd to leave a child alone. To take away any authority and leave it to itself. He had left his children outside the orphanage. He knew that the child would die if nobody cared for it. Why did he not leave the child alone in the forest? His world view was not consistent enough. His ideas did not match with reality.

Rousseau accepted the teachings of Jesus because they touch hearts. People can learn from the stories of Jesus. But he did not accept the Bible as a revelation of the Word of God.

Rousseau believed that man has free will. This will move the universe and give life. Rousseau calls this will "God". He believes that his own existence must be subordinated to his will. Therefore, he worships and serves him. His will is everything. He feels it in himself. He thought that the feeling of doing something is superior to the mind.

According to Rousseau, man has two senses. One is searching for eternal truths, love, justice and morality. He finds these in religion. This sense will be eternal and will live on after death in an immaterial world. The other sense is that man is dominated by his senses and passions. In this, man is free to follow his passion as long as it is his will.

He believed in eternal life. But not in a resurrection, as the reformers did. He believed in an immaterial world where the soul of man lives forever. With this view he completely turned away from Christianity.

His idea found its way into all levels of society.

The film Titanic showed the upper class and the lower classes. They are strictly separated from each other. But a woman broke out of the upper class and came onto the lower deck of the ship. She saw ordinary people dancing and enjoying life. This is a very well-made analogy to Rousseau's thinking. People flee from civilisation, which keeps people within limits. There are no boundaries and manners here. But away from civilisation is life. The message of Rousseau is, become free and join these ordinary people. We no longer have to follow all the rules that civilisation has taught them. We can just be ourselves.

These romantic ideas became the worldview of the people. Romanticism was the new religion.

He believed in the good in people. But in reality, people were not good, and this romantic view was not reality. It ended in the romantic view of the French Revolution. In the end

everybody killed everybody. There was no legal certainty any more. "Egalite, Liberite Fragmentite", unity, equality and brotherhood through reason ended in chaos. History showed that people become animals when they are left to themselves. It will be a world where the strongest will survive. The French Revolution and later Napoleon wanted to turn Rousseau's ideas into reality.

The French Revolution is in contrast to the English Revolution. The English Revolution ended in a bloodless revolution and the division of power between the King and Parliament. The French Revolution ended in chaos and in the next dictatorship under Napoleon.

Hobbes and Rousseau had similar thoughts. They said that we have autonomous individuals who voluntarily enter into a social contract. Hobbes believes that it is the man himself who does this, and Rousseau believes that the king must enforce it. So, Napoleon found in him his perfect ideas. These ideas will later be taken up by communism.

Until today he is mentioned in many books and people believe in his ideas. But it has always remained just a philosophy or a dream. His ideas had never worked in reality. Where people tried to build a society with his worldview, it became a catastrophe. It did not work because it was based on the idea that people are good. That man does not have to give an account to an absolute one.

Rousseau's idea of the perfect society never became reality. Even today his thoughts are still spread throughout society. Special young people believe in this romantic view of man.

Both the reformers and Rousseau wanted to change society, but in the opposite direction and with opposite results.

The 18th century philosopher asked the question: Is there a truth?

Hume David 1711-1770

Hume pulled people into deep darkness. He not only doubted the material world. He also doubted the metaphysical world. He doubted whether there is any truth at all. He saw that both the path of empiricism and the path of rationalism led to pessimism. He realised that everything would disappear, the physical and the metaphysical. He was not only anti-religious. He was against everything. Anti-rationalism and anti-empirism. He believed that everything was fate. The only knowledge is superstition. But people can never take anything for the truth.

The previous philosophers could no longer find meaning in the physical world. Therefore, they jumped into a rational world. But Hume also jumped from the rational world into darkness, into the absolute nothingness.

He wrote an essay against the miracles in the Bible⁹². For him everything is impossible that cannot be scientifically proven. He said that the Bible is wrong because miracles are not possible. He was a pessimistic humanist.

He thought that right is only right if it is helpful for the other person. He also lived out this humanity. He was a pragmatist. A precursor of postmodernism, so to speak. Postmodern

⁹² Of Miracles" is the title of the section by David Hume entitled A Study of Human Understanding (1748)

man thinks there is no truth. It makes no sense to go in search of truth. The only thing he likes to do is simply to do what is best for him or for society at the moment.

Man learned that everything was based on cause and effect. The scientists can be sure that a stone would always fall the same way? But what happens next time? Can he be sure that it will happen again in the same way? Science can never predict that it will always be like this.

A scientist was asked whether we all have to die. He replied, I don't know. All I know is that so far everybody has died, but I have no empirical studies on whether it will be the same in the future. Science cannot say. That is why science is not absolute.

He considered himself a philosopher because science could not give him any certainty about the universal. But philosophy could not help him either. He believed that people could never understand the universal.

What was left was feeling or instinct. This led to absolute relativism. So, people could never be sure. He based his whole psychology on that. The only truth was only what people felt.

He refused to accept anything supernatural, any truth or moral absolute. For Hume, reason does not rule ethics, nor does God. It is the emotions that give man security and direction. For him, morality is exactly what everyone feels and is right for himself. But people can never be sure that there is a universal. He separated morality from the universal.

Before him, cause and effect were strongly linked. But with Hume this principle was destroyed. Everything that people before him believed in was destroyed. The only thing that remained were feelings.

But what consequences will this have? What would the world look like if everyone did what they thought was good? Do you want to live in such a world? It will be a world where the powerful take over. Where dictators will oppress the others and the most corrupt will win.

Hume now landed in a world that the West did not know before. In a world of relativism and hopelessness. In a world in which many live today.

Immanuel Kant 1724-1804

Immanuel Kant was born in Germany East Prussia (Kalingraad) in a strongly pietistic family. He was one of the greatest philosophers in the world. In 1781 he wrote the book " Critique of Pure Reason" ⁹³. He completely broke the still existing connection between Christianity and science.

He still believed in a God who created the world. But he doubted it. He thought that man probably created God himself. But he understood that man needs religions to have absolute morality?

But how can man know the Absolute if there is no God? He saw that man has a tendency to evil. He was not an atheist. He was an agnostic. But he destroyed the idea of an absolute moral law and thus the idea of a God.

A universal law would help. He thought, he had found it: Man must do what he wants, what others do to him. That would actually come from the Bible, but he thought it could work

⁹³ Emanuel Kant, Kritik der reinen Vernunft, 1781

without God. That is the new world law, the will to do things that would help others. It wanted to bring better morality than Hume.

But that means being good for others. Who will give the definition of what is good? If it were good for people to kill all disabled people, would that be good? But would it not be terrible to live in such a world?

Is it your own definition of what is good or bad? If man is evil by nature, what could stop him from doing evil?

Kant said that the will is the absolute starting point. A good will is when someone simply does something because it is right. Morality is only action. He must do his duty simply because it is right. Without a reference point outside and without justification. He wanted to help people to learn to think for themselves (*sapere aude*).

Therefore, a person will simply do what he feels or instinctively knows what he should do. This was in contrast to the old order, where people believed that there was an absolute moral law about which they had to account.

Kant started a Copernicus revolution. He placed the human spirit at the centre of the universe. Kant did not start with an external truth. He began with the mind. He began with the assumption that people know what makes the most sense.

He wanted to bring people back from the scepticism of Hume. Man is more than just predicted by nature. He can be himself. Morality is not something that is driven by our interests or circumstances. The will is on a higher plane.

He understood that people need a moral law. But he thought that it would come out of the person himself. He contradicted the reformers' idea that man had fallen, and therefore could not find the truth simply from within himself. The idea that man can develop such a moral law from within himself has never worked.

His idea has not changed mankind. Humanity could not find an absolute moral law. He opened the door for the killing machine in the 20th century. Dictators who did not have to account for what they did, because they simply did what they thought they have to do..

Johann Gottlieb spruce 1762-1814

From shepherd to one of the greatest philosophers in the world. The German phosphorus Johann Gottlieb Fichte is one of the founders of German idealism. He claimed that the world does not exist, it exists only in our imagination.

Fichte said that the world is not determined by nature, it is exactly what we believe it is. Man is free and not dependent on what he sees. He can change it. Only what can be seen rationally is truth. Man is free to create the world himself. He has the freedom to create and design whatever he wants. Man is no longer bound to creation. The limits of creation are only something that deceives us and wants to hold us back.

Fichte turned away from rationalism when he lost his position at the University of Jena. He asked himself: Why do we live? He was looking for something that is omnipotent and does not depend on reason. He found it and came to the same conclusion as Kant. For Kant it was the will and for Fichte it was consciousness. It is the voice of consciousness that is the new religion. To listen to and obey his consciousness is the only meaning of life. When people follow this voice, they become a part of the universal.

For him the Bible does not prescribe moral laws. Morality arises from moral action. The whole world is our own creation. The world is not what we see and what we perceive with our senses. We can create a world in our mind.

He concluded that this is the Kingdom of God? The Kingdom of God is not visible, it is only in our imagination.

It seems that Fichte made a conversion to Christianity, or rather to spirituality. He has never denied God. But he contradicts Reformed and Orthodox Christianity. He has withdrawn Christianity from objectivity. He created a new religion that exists only in the human spirit.

With Hume and Kant, it has already begun that the philosopher doubted not only Christianity but also the physical world. With Fichte the physical became only an illusion. With him a new world began, and many will follow him.

Gotthold Ephraim Lessing 1729-1781

Lessing thought; the spirit is not in the letter, and the Bible is not religion. The Bible was the absolute truth for the Reformed Church. The Bible was for him the flute with which the Holy Spirit blew. For him, people did not need a written law. The law is written on our hearts.

During his time, religion became very pragmatic. It concentrated on application, but no longer answered the deep questions in life. The world in his time became very static, focused on cause and effect. Lessing wanted to change that. He did not want to demolish Christianity, but he opposed the static definition and brought a new understanding of Christianity.

We are probably all familiar with the world-famous novel "Nathan the Wise"⁹⁴, which was first performed in 1783 in the Berlin theatre. The story of the three rings. This story is probably not his, but through him it found its way into the whole world⁹⁵. Nathan answered Saladin's question with a parable. This parable is the key passage in the novel and tells us the equality of the three monotheistic religions. A man had a ring, but three sons. This ring symbolised power. To whom should he now give the ring? This man made three copies and gave one to each of his sons. Each son thought it was the original. But they found out that all the rings could not be real. Now which one is the real one.

The idea of tolerance was already illustrated by Boccaccio in the 14th century⁹⁶. But now the world seems ready to adopt it. His parable shows that all religions teach us the same thing. So, Christianity is good to teach us certain lessons, but Christianity is not the only religion.

Mendelson, a Jewish musician, was one of his best friends. Lessing thought that the Jewish people were equal to the Christians, that they had the same value, which was not usual at that time. We assume that this relationship influenced his entire philosophy.

⁹⁴ Nathan the Wise, dramas of ideas by Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, 1779.

⁹⁵ This parable can already be found in the third story of Giovanni Boccaccio's "Decamerone". The history of the three indistinguishable rings can be traced back to the year 1100. It was probably invented on the Iberian Peninsula by a Jew.

In the figure of Nathan the Wise, Lessing set a literary monument to his friend Moses Mendelssohn, the founder of the Jewish Enlightenment.

⁹⁶ Boccaccio tells the story of the father who traditionally passes on a ring with which its wearer "feels at ease" before men and before God, among the sons he loves most.

The Reformer thought that Revelation reveals to us that there is only one way to God. But Lessing believed that we will come to the time when people no longer need revelation because reason will be faster than revelation. Christianity is only one way to find it.

Lessing believed that no man can claim to possess the only true religion. This only makes them fanatical and unpopular. But it is also wrong to abolish religious education. They all teach the same thing. But they come from a different direction. The best thing, therefore, is that everyone keeps their faith, but does not stand against others. Every religion has its origin in God. He reduced religion to reasonable tolerance, moral action and love.

For him the Old Testament was the time of the law. The New Testament is the time of dogma and now is the time of the spirit. The time of the religion of reason.

If God would ask him what do you want: the truth or the way. He would say: the truth is only for God, so give me the way. Man is always in search of the truth but will never possess it.

All potential lies in Christianity to advance in the time of the Spirit. Right religion is reasonable and requires moral action. And so, any religion can come to this point.

Lessing believed that history is on the same scale as mathematics. This means that history can only be truth if it has mathematical proofs. But can history be tested by mathematics?

There is no mathematical proof of the resurrection, and therefore it does not have to be the truth? John Lock also said that the resurrection has no proofs⁹⁷. We are uncertain, so we have to believe it. He thought that the only access to knowledge about something is rationalism.

A judge must give his judgement based on the evidence, facts, witnesses and written law. He cannot judge according to mathematics, otherwise he cannot be a judge or will not be right. In exactly the same way, you cannot prove mathematically that you are loving your neighbour.

Lessing's conclusion is: "All positive and revealed religions are therefore equally true and equally false".

Lessing said that Spinoza was the real theologian who influenced me⁹⁸. He believed, like Spinoza, that God is only a part of nature, but no longer outside of nature.

He was also a revolutionary on the second level. He destroyed the history of the people. There was no more true history. Today almost all students read his book. Educated people agree with his teaching. His story influenced the whole world.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe 1749-1832

He was the famous German writer and wrote the book Faust. He did a lot of research with plants and wanted to find the original plant. He was never interested in the details.

⁹⁷ John Locke 1632-1704 was an English philosopher and doctor, widely regarded as one of the most influential thinkers of the Enlightenment and commonly referred to as the "Father of Liberalism".

⁹⁸ Baruch Spinoza 1632 - 1677 later Benedict de Spinoza was a Dutch philosopher and modern Bible critic of Portuguese origin. Spinoza was a leading philosophical figure of the Golden Age of the Netherlands

In his novel Faust, he complained that he had observed everything but still did not know what holds the universe together. He wanted to find out what was behind it, what the universal was.

In "Faust" the devil thinks that all people are equal: They use their minds to get power. In the end it is not good that wins, but death. There is no more hope. The world is evil, and evil will triumph. He broke the Christian idea of a happy ending. He observed the evil world and no longer believed in a happy ending. Evil will triumph, and that is the reality we must face.

He left his listeners in hopelessness. Many more will follow him.

Johann Christoph Friedrich von Schiller 1759-1805

Together Goethe and Schiller create German literature of the 18th century in Weimar. The question was, how do free will and nature go together? He found the solution.

Schiller thought that two forces, the spirit (beauty) and nature (lust), determine man. But how can man be free when he is driven by nature, by his own wishes and desires. Man is free because he has a spirit. This spirit is able to find out what is good or bad. But the Spirit was not the living, personal God, as was the case with the reformers. The spirit was the beauty. Man is guided by beauty and not by his desires. Therefore, he is free and not determined by nature. But the question arose what beauty is.

The highest standard is beauty. It describes what is good and right. Art became the new absolute standard. People no longer needed to justify beauty. He can do what he does if it is beauty.

But who says what beauty is? Doesn't everyone have a different understanding of it? Man can therefore create his own moral absolutes according to his understanding of beauty. But in such a world there were no more absolutes. With this view, people will no longer find common ground.

He brought a new religion. The god of beauty. He is the new moral standard. All must submit to him and obey him. If it is beauty, then it is all right. His ideas have found much application in contemporary art. The artist can do what he wants. No matter how absurd or evil it is. There is no longer a point of reference where one could reject or criticize certain things.

The objective world around the people got more and more lost. What remained was a world in which everything is possible but nothing is truth any more.

Friedrich Schleiermacher 1768-1834

More and more scholars began to criticise religion. Schleiermacher now wanted to give these people an answer. Christians can give an answer, but they no longer need the Bible. In his book on religion, he criticised the Bible⁹⁹. Reason cannot explain the origin of everything. The Bible cannot explain God. People who only follow a rational path will fail. It is not reasoning that guides people. The spirit alone does. It was a shock to people in his time.

Without church, people can probably be more spiritual. But they must follow their spirit. But what is the spirit?

⁹⁹ Speeches to his cultivated despisers 1799

He explained: "The spiritual is knowing that we are dependent, needy and pure and need this spiritual guide. He is a gift of nature. He thought everyone knew about eternity, but we cannot see it completely because people are broken.

The Bible is a help and not a dogma. They are stories that make it clear that we are broken and cannot see the true God. Faith is a way of understanding without knowledge. Letters are only death. His idea is that he senses that God is here, and for that no justification is needed any more.

He believed that Christianity is simply truth because he felt it in his heart. He thought that if reality is only empirical and rational, Christianity will disappear. Christianity is about feelings and not about facts. It is a feeling that makes people dependent on God. Christians do not think, they believe.

He did not want to hear any more arguments about God. It has no value. Knowledge does not make people religious. Christianity does not need facts and knowledge.

His idea was a revolution at that time. But in the centuries to come it will reach the whole of society.

Willhelm Friedrich Hegel 1770-1831

Hegel recognised this dilemma. A world without an absolute end in a catastrophe. He wanted to bring hope back to the world. He claimed that everything comes from one spirit. People cannot see it, but it is real. This spirit is in nature, and actually it is nature itself. Everything is in a process and happens under the law of nature. People are in a process; the world and history are in a process.

He turned people's brains upside down. Nothing is safe anymore. Nothing can be taken for granted. Everything is in a natural process determined by nature. The process itself is absolute. In such a world, man is only a product of nature. He would have no free will.

He has brought the world back to an absolute. He called this absolute spirit, but in the end, it is nature. The world is in a natural process until it reaches the state that nature has determined.

Christianity freed the Western world from arbitrariness and superstition. From a world of spirits, where people walked in fear and panic. They could never know if the gods would not change their behaviour. Through Christianity they became free. God made them their junior partner. They were no longer just victims of their gods. They became co-creators of this world.

Through the denial of the Creator through the Enlightenment, people were left behind in a purely materialistic world. In a world without humanity. With Hegel they now jumped out of the materialistic world back into the animus. They jumped back into the trench from which they were rescued. The spirit is now no longer the gods but nature.

4.8 The art: the philosophies spread into the world

Many philosophers and artists dreamed of a romantic world. They could not live in a static world of cause and effect. They thought that the world was not good enough for people.

In the begging scepticism existed only in the realm of philosophers. But now it reached music and art. Especially through Mendelsohn as a brilliant musician. The painters also began to

move in this direction. They doubted more and more that what people can perceive or see is the real world.

Felix Mendelsohn 1809-1847

Felix Mendelsohn also wanted to save Christianity. His music speaks a lot about salvation. His focus was no longer on the daily problems in the world. He wanted to help people to get out of their problems. To flee from them. Christianity should therefore take care of peace and salvation. For him Christianity no longer gave the ethical guidelines for the world.

Christians went to church to receive salvation and sing songs, but in their work, they no longer followed the principles of Christianity. Mendelsohn, like many philosophers, jumped into a romantic world as a musician. A world that was not visible, but which people could live in their senses.

Mendelson made Christianity a Far Eastern religion. For the Christian, the world was God's creation, and people have a responsibility to care for it. The Eastern religions are in stark contrast to the West. For them the world is only an illusion. They want to escape the world. Many philosophers and artists have begun to seek the truth in these religions. Christianity was no longer interesting for them. The Christians had not succeeded in making their religion appealing to the people of that time. It could no longer answer people's questions satisfactorily.

Claude Monet 1840-1929

Claude Monet was one of the first impressionists. They began to paint landscapes only blurred. The viewer should not remain trapped in the visible world. He should get access to a deeper world. He should be able to see behind the visible. To look through the painting into the real world.

In the following years the paintings became more and more abstract and it ended in absurdity. The artist tried to take the viewer deeper and deeper into the invisible world. The painter left the visible world more and more until he reached the point where everything can only be or not be. The viewer was now completely free from the fetters of the visible world. He was completely free and could create his own reality in his head.

Nature and man were no longer real. There was no more truth. Everything could be possible or impossible. Man was free. But can he live in such freedom? Such a total freedom also means lostness. When nothing is any longer certain to be true or false, man is lost. Man without the limits of creation is lost. The freedom that the painters wanted to bring ended in lowliness. It is a world in which people float disoriented in an infinite universe. Without direction and hope.

In the next century this message of pessimism from philosophers and artists will reach all sectors of society.

5 The birth of atheism

Feuerbach, Ludwig Andreas 1804-1872

Feuerbach began as a theologian, but lost his career because he criticised the church. For him there can be no absolute. Therefore, the church cannot claim to have the truth.

Feuerbach is one of the first atheists. Before him the philosophers did not call themselves atheists. But he called himself an atheist. All before him believed in gods or absolutes. Feuerbach claimed, however, that to believe in a truth is generally wrong.

In 1843 he published a book. Christianity is a mythology. In it he claimed that if there was no biblical supernatural, there would be no eternal. So, there is only the now, history and matter. Everything is matter, and man is nothing more than that. In materialism there is nothing stable. Everything is only relative. If there is nothing absolute, everything remains relative. We see everything in a process and in a relative sense. Man is just a lump of mud without destiny and without a sense of life. Materialism became the new religion.

He was strongly against the Christian religion. Feuerbach believed, as Schopenhauer said, that you cannot serve both masters. Either you neglect one or the other¹⁰⁰¹⁰¹. Feuerbach claimed that one either serves God or man. One neglects either one or the other. He thought that the idea of God was the problem. People made a projection of God to find hope in life. They need something for their well-being. They became dependent on their own creation. Now man must become free of it again. That is why we must abolish Christianity and the idea of a God. Man must free himself from his own bondage and urgently grow up.

Years later Karl Marx will go one step further. He will bring the religion of materialism from philosophy to social application.

Nietzsche Friedrich Wilhelm 1844-1900

He was one of the most profound thinkers of the last centuries. He was born the son of a priest. His father died, and the people told him that this was a punishment from God. He was only five years old at the time. Perhaps his early life experience had such an impact on his life that he began to doubt Christianity. Later he studied theology and wanted to find God.

But then he began to believe that religion is only what people themselves invented. They invented it to exercise control. God is death. The philosophers are now the new representatives of truth.

Nietzsche said that without God there is no morality. Morality is only what the powerful do, what they have to do.

He came to the same conclusion as Kant. If man has the power to do something, it is his "moral" obligation to do it. Man, must do what he can do until someone comes along who has more power and prevents him from doing what he had to do. He predicted the horrors of the 20th century.

He was impressed by the Christian idea of a saviour. But he created a new superman who became a model for the Nazis. In his drama Zarathustra he tried to bring a new Jesus¹⁰². He wanted to build a society without God, without morals and values.

¹⁰⁰ Arthur Schopenhauer, German philosopher 1788-1860

¹⁰¹ One man cannot serve two masters: either reason or scripture. Schopenhauer

¹⁰² Zarathustra (c. 630-550 BC). Zarathustra was trained as a priest. His doctrine can be summarised in two basic beliefs: the monotheistic worship of Ahura Mazda ("Wisdom of God") and the ethical dualism in which truth and lies lie throughout the universe. These teachings were handed down in the Gathas, a part of the Holy Scriptures of Parsy, the Avesta.

He found peace in the music of Richard Wagner¹⁰³. Wagner was very strongly influenced by Nietzsche. He called himself an atheist. He was a revolutionary and threw the classical order of Bach and Handel overboard. Wagner's music does not end in a resolution and does not bring harmony. His music ended in tension and disharmony. He had stolen the audience's hope for a happy ending. After his concerts people were shocked and confused.

He broke with the soul of man. Bach's music brought man to rest. He found peace in the Creator. Wagner deliberately wanted to destroy this false hope, which, according to him, were false.

Music was all based on the classical music of the reformers. But somehow Christianity seems to have failed here too. Christianity had such a bad reputation that now the artists also started to fight against Christianity. They preferred pessimism. That is how great their anger against Christianity seems to have been. Why were the Christians not able to help these people? And let them find a way out of pessimism?

5.1 The view of man: Man without God

Sigmund Freud 1856-1939

Freud said: "I have the clear feeling that I have found the great mystery of nature". He once compared himself to Copernicus. Freud burned all his earlier treatises and said we had to rethink. He was one of the greatest revolutionaries of the late 19th century.

He was a Jew, but did not want to be seen as a religious person. For him, religion only oppressed people through its rules and regulations. He wanted to liberate people from the limits imposed by culture. This meant the culture of Christianity. His idea was that every religious belief made by human beings¹⁰⁴. Therefore, religious beliefs are "illusions".

People get sick because they have to be the way society wants them to be. They accept the corset of society and get sick. People no longer have to go to the priest to confess. They go to a psychotherapist and become free. Psychoanalysis is now the tool to bring enlightenment to the world.

People suffer from neurosis and therefore behave in an abnormal, special way called hysteria. Neuroses occur because people suffer from unfulfilled desires. People want something, but they do not get it. They are released from it by talking to a therapist. Freud claimed it was scientific, but it was only a theory. Although it was not science, his theories found their way into education and science.

Freud assumed that the mind is divided by the IT (Id), the I (Ego) and the superego (super-ego). The ES was the primitive subconscious in which all kinds of desires, wishes and instincts lived. The EGO is the person itself, which establishes the contact to the environment. The super-ego, consciously or unconsciously, remains outside a person and acts with rules on him.

¹⁰³ Wilhelm Richard Wagner 1813-1883

¹⁰⁴ in *The Future of an Illusion* (1927), in which Freud argued that religious faith has the function of psychological comfort.

A conflict between superego and ego now leads to neurosis. The person, has to go to a psychiatrist and he finds out why the patient is suffering. He digs in his unconscious and reveals it. He helps the patient to find his real IT.

Neuroses are the problem of man, of unresolved conflicts. For him the main conflict began in sexuality. Even children suffer from sexual non-satisfaction, which has not been fulfilled. It did not have to be a sexual act. It could also only be in the imagination of the people. In their fantasies, dreams and hidden wishes. This is why people suffer from neuroses and are mentally ill. He always attached great importance to sexual freedom.

He was a child of the Enlightenment. He claimed to serve science, although he had served the irrational. Under the influence of drugs (cocaine) and hypnosis he came to many of his conclusions.

Like so many before him, Freud wanted to solve the problem of guilt. Actually, he wants the same thing as the Christians only with scientific methods. He turned the human psyche into a machine. A machine of cause and effect. Christianity has lost another area of society. In the following years. The clinics and psychiatrists will declare war against Christianity.

Carl Gustav Jung 1875-1961

If people had a problem during this time, they went to a psychologist. Jung was one of them. He was Swiss and strongly influenced by Freud¹⁰⁵. He said that man and his behaviour were based on the so-called collective unconscious.

Jung claimed that modern man lives in a world of rational concepts that he has created himself. The therapist helps him to find his way back to the so-called collective consciousness.

Young was not only a precursor of the so-called New Age movement. He practised it. His therapy led to occult practices.

He agreed with Freud that religion is wrong. But he still considered it necessary for a healthy human psyche. He did not follow Freud, who wanted to justify everything scientifically. He still believed in a spiritual sphere. The therapist now helps the patient to come out of the bonds of society and science, into the spiritual collective consciousness.

With him the western world felt transported back to the oldest religion of Hinduism. Man is becoming God by realising the collective.

Jung was probably one of those who had the greatest influence on the hippies and the New Age movements. He wanted to liberate man, but he plunged him into a deep darkness. A world where nothing is true or false. Where everything is possible, but nothing is true. In a world without certainty or security. In a world where man was lost in an infinite universe. Sitting alone on a planet, without purpose or meaning.

Jean-Paul Sartre 1905-1980, man is only his own existence

Sartre thought that everything begins with feeling. To find the truth is to free yourself from the shackles of a physical world and find out what you really feel. Man is exactly what he feels.

¹⁰⁵ In a footnote to his 1909 work Analysis of a phobia in a five-year-old boy, Freud had said that the general fear of castration was provoked in the uncircumcised when they perceived circumcision, and that this was "the deepest unconscious root of anti-Semitism".

There is nothing objective around him. The truth comes from within himself and not from the outer form to which society has always been bound.

In the past, man had his identity from what God had given him. Now man has his identity from what he himself has created. Man looks inside himself and sees nothing but emptiness. Today people are concerned about themselves: self-image, self-knowledge, self-realisation. Outside the human being there is no longer any objectivity.

He said: "Every human being is born without reason, lives in weakness and dies by chance. Life is a random lottery of senseless tragedies from which we cannot escape"¹⁰⁶.

The question arose whether man can create himself. With Sartre man is completely emancipated from a physical world. But without any connection to the physical realities, man was absolutely lost. Instead of considering man, man was lost in an absolute nothing. The number of mentally ill people increased traumatically. The 20th century began with optimism, but ended in pessimism. The visible world no longer exists.

Sartre is a thinker of the Cultural Revolution. In his world there is nothing good or bad. The only thing is that you have the feeling that it is all right. The French Revolution was a good example for him. People do what they do out of passion, even if it is against all tradition and cultural acceptance. It is allowed to do what philosophy allows. Sartre's ideas lead to terrorism, which we have all over the world today.

It began as early as the 17th century that philosophers criticised Christianity. Later they criticised the Bible. They criticised that there would be a book written by God. Later they criticised the Creator and finally in the 19th century they abolished God. But with the abolition of God they also abolished creation. With the abolition of the Creator, man could no longer be sure of his own creation. In the 20th century they abolished themselves.

The reformers' view of humanity has changed considerably. Man was no longer created. He wanted to create himself but he could not. Man wanted to be whatever he wanted.

Western civilisation will be strongly influenced by this philosophy. The West today allows people to do what they want. People can even choose their own gender. If they feel like a woman, they can change it in their passport. These ideas lead to a whole new world. But what will be the consequences?

5.2 The church: it is in a dilemma

Adolf von Harnack 1851-1930, the critical historical method

Harnack played an important role in the Kaiser Wilhelm Society and became its first president in 1911.

In the 19th century criticism also flourished among theologians, especially in Germany. They established the historical-critical method as the scientific standard for the interpretation of the Bible. The historical-critical method had been common practice for years before, but Harnack made it known to society. Harnack's work represents a reformation for Christianity.

¹⁰⁶ <https://www.brainyquote.com/authors/jean-paul-sartre-quotes>

Theologians found out that the great dogmas from the Church are not from the Bible, but from the Churches themselves. Harnack reconstructed them and wanted to show the true biblical message. To do this, he took out everything from the Bible that could not be scientifically proven. Everything that came from the acceptance of the Church Fathers must be taken away in order to find the true message of Jesus.

Miracles and the resurrection are things that cannot be scientifically proven historically. Jesus was a historical person, but he was not God himself. Jesus is only a messenger of God. But not only the only one. All these things that were not scientifically proven he pointed out. He thought to find the original meaning of the bible.

With his theology he abolished the Bible as the Word of God. The Bible was now only a written historical document. He followed the philosopher when he wanted to reform Christianity. Like the philosophers who took away all objectivity and left man alone in a dark universe, Harnack took away objective revelation from the Creator and left man alone in the endless universe.

The new freedom is under the Spirit and no longer under the teachings of the churches. The soul is the only partner of God and acknowledges the loving Father. The reformation must continue. He criticises the Reformed Church for having fallen behind Luther.

Christianity is now a religion of the interior. But with this view Christianity no longer has any influence on a real world, on the physical world, which is determined by natural laws.

A lot of theologians could not help Christianity and fell into the same trap as the philosophers. The consequences for the church were dramatic.

Soren Kierkegaard 1813-1855, spiritual Christianity

If Kierkegaard had made films, people would leave the cinema, walk to the next bridge and jump down there. He said we want to be ourselves, but we never find ourselves. He reacted against the realism and the dead orthodoxy of the Germans. Even though he was a convinced Christian, it did not help him to overcome his deep fear and great insecurity.

He is still very famous and many churches quote his existentialism. Why he did not return to Christianity, what would give him support, carry him and advise him, is not clear.

Kierkegaard became a theologian without being a pastor and a writer without selling his books. He had enough money to live on, and so he never had to face the real world. He was always a concerned person. He always went with fear.

He thought that Christianity was only irrational. With rationality man never finds the truth. One can also know nothing about the historical Christ, if one knows something, it is no longer Christ. That is why we must look behind the physical, rational world. This quality is called faith. He believed that without faith it is not possible to please God. We need faith. With more faith we can please God more. The less rational the behaviour is, the greater the witness for Christ.

Firstly, people live according to their sensual choices. Secondly, man lives by his responsibility for creation. Third, the mind must be crucified, and then it enters into an

existential relationship with God. Only then does he understand true humanity. "Crucifixion of the mind" ¹⁰⁷

It is not important what you believe, but that you believe. It is simply important to make a decision. He believed it was important to do something, but it doesn't matter what you do. The world of experience determines what is true. Kierkegaard turns the experience into God.

For him, an irrational faith brings optimism, but he never found it. He demanded a leap into faith beyond our reason. He did so and ended up in deepest fear.

He made his own existence absolute, and then he found out that he was a nobody. He never found the exit from the trap he had set for himself. It would be the end of the world if people followed Kierkegaard. For him there was no solution. He had a great conflict in his mind that he could never solve.

He wanted to save Christianity, but he abolished it. He made Christianity an irrational philosophy that could no longer bring hope to the world.

He was called the existentialist of Christianity. The church has begun to abandon its rationality. The church could see Kierkegaard and his life, and yet followed him into irrationality, fear and depression.

Philosophy divided Christianity. On the one hand they became irrational people trying to find the fulfilment of life in an invisible world. On the other hand, they wanted to live a life like Jesus. They wanted to do good social work, but lost more and more the power of the cross. Christianity was divided and thus lost more and more influence in society.

Christianity was in great danger. Years later, Christian heritage and values will become the enemy of society. People who cling to them will be called fundamentalists, extremists and racists. What could help to ensure that the Christian heritage is not completely lost in the Western world?

5.3 Education: An education without God

Rudolf Steiner 1861-1925

Steiner was an Austrian philosopher, social reformer and architect. He became a social critic at the end of the 19th century. In the 20th century he founded a spiritual movement, anthroposophy. It has its roots in German idealism and builds on the ideas of Rousseau. Between 1899 and 1905 he was also involved in the Marxist school of Rosa Luxemburg.

He asked; is there more than just what we see. More than what our senses perceive. What can give us hope in life? He came to the conclusion. There is the world that we see and discover, and there is an invisible world that we cannot see. This invisible world is real, but only for the human mind and not for the eyes.

He was interested in Kant and read his book again and again. But he rejected Kant. Kant said that there are limits to the human mind. But Steiner believed that man should be free and completely independent to create his own world in his mind.

¹⁰⁷ Philosophical Bites, Soren Kierkegaard, 1989

He wrote the introduction of the book by the Swiss occultist Karl Heise¹⁰⁸. For him the First World War was a European necessity. This work was later recorded by the National Socialist Heinrich Himmler. It was only after the Second World War that Steiner's anti-Semitism was criticised.

Steiner based his pedagogy on an anthroposophical view of humanity. Today there are 1149 anthroposophical schools worldwide. 779 of these are in Europe¹⁰⁹. Steiner did not want to make pedagogy dependent on the performance of the pupil, but to relate it purely to the development of the child.

He claimed that the faith of Christians only shows the weakness of man. Man created God because they do not want to take responsibility for evil.

Later Steiner turned to the Goetheanum, the centre of anthroposophy, in Munich and Dornach near Basel. The Goetheanum expresses Steiner's philosophy very well through its art and architectural forms¹¹⁰.

His view on education

His philosophy, Anthroposophy, was created to learn more about the spiritual world. It cannot be recognised through observation and perception. But education should now help to find this inner world. It is the way to become awakened. Education is to receive a fire.

When students learn to discover, they will enjoy learning. In primary school, the teacher has to bring the world closer to the children by feeling, by observing them. In secondary school they then start to think about it. The aim is to enter a new world of transcendent truths.

He divided man into spirit, soul and body. He divided the soul into thinking, feeling and wanting. He said that he would never talk about anything he had not experienced.

He came into contact with a shaman and reincarnation at an early age. The Hindu faith became very attractive for him. He believed that everything has an influence on what we do and think. This will also have an effect in our next life. We can say that he brought Hinduism to Europe.

He believes that nothing is determined from the outside. Everything can be designed by people themselves. Anthroposophy has always had a great interest in helping the disabled. People have to help them to survive in this life in order to have a better life afterwards. Those who have helped will also have a better life afterwards because of their attitude. His idea was very close to Christianity, but he did not return to Christianity. Christianity was ridiculous for him. That a person simply has to believe in Jesus and will be saved was not acceptable to him. Man has to save himself, and so he deeply opposed Christianity.

He abolished the Christian roots in education. Without God, there is no longer a creator who would tell people how the universe should function. Because there was no God for him, people have to discover everything from within themselves. He must find and interpret the world through himself alone.

¹⁰⁸ The Entente Freemasonry and the World War (1919)

¹⁰⁹ Waldorf Schools. Waldorf education, also known as Steiner education, is based on the educational philosophy of Rudolf Steiner, the founder of Anthroposophy. Its pedagogy strives to develop pupils' intellectual, artistic, and practical skills in an integrated and holistic manner..

¹¹⁰ The Goetheanum is a building in Dornach in the canton of Solothurn, about ten kilometres south of Basel.

His pedagogical approach was an alternative to the strict performance-oriented schools in the West. The West always wanted more technology and progress. Students had to work hard and some did not succeed. His alternative pedagogy which emphasises the human being rather than performance was very humane and attractive to the West. His school is very well known in Europe. Many pupils find more support in such a school than in a performance-oriented school.

He wanted to find true humanity but separated man from his Creator. He has made man God, which will have serious consequences in the years to come.

He was not a pure humanist. For him the spiritual world was as real as the physical world. But the spiritual world was not that of Christianity.

Probably he had not had good experiences either. But he introduced the new age to the West, which later many young people will embrace. The world of spirituality and the Far Eastern religions.

5.4 The family: they are in great danger

The idea that there is no God has spread through philosophy, art and education to all areas of society. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels were probably the greatest pioneers of this atheistic reform.

Karl Marx 1818-1883

Karl Marx is one of the great reformers of history. He turned the ideas of the philosophers into reality.

He grew up in a German Jewish family. His family turned to Christianity and was part of a Pietist church. But he was not impressed by Christianity. He saw so much injustice from Christians. He saw and experienced the negative consequences of industrialisation. Many poor people were exploited, lived in a terrible situation and had to work in the factories. Which were mainly run by Christians. This is probably why he sought the truth from the philosophers and not from the Christians. He was impressed by Feuerbach's atheism.

He believed that the world was in an ongoing material process. This process will continue until it reaches the level of perfection. But this process is not guided by God. It is a purely materialistic process. He said that man is an evolutionary animal. The most developed animal, but no more than an animal. Man is no more than matter.

He believed in a dialectical process in which thesis and antithesis collide and a new thesis is born. The history of Marx progressed until there was a worldwide order of communism. He believed in a global communism, a utopia, world peace

Marx says that there are different stages in history. There were the hunters and the hunted, the slave owners and the slaves, the feudal lords and the peasants. The oppressed were always able to overthrow this system and create a new order. Now there is a struggle between the bourgeoisie, the capitalist and the ordinary people, the proletariat. The capitalists oppress the ordinary people. But they will rise up and overthrow them. They bring the last stage of history, communism. In communism there would be peace, freedom and no more poverty. No more violence and injustice. There would be no more police and no more

state order. It would be the perfection of anarchy. So, we will be witnesses of a utopian classless society.

But to achieve this utopia, ordinary people must snatch power from the hands of the capitalist. They will not do this voluntarily. There will be a revolution until the ruling class gives up its power. Marx taught how to interpret history, and most people have believed him until today.

The moral of socialism, which was supposed to bring about communism, is essentially that those who have power should exercise it. The will to change the world is the morality of Marx.

During the communist era, all countries were described as socialist rather than communist. Marx said there will be no communism until all nations are changed by socialism. Communism will be a global new world order. As Marx said: We are creating a new man in a new world order.

His views will have grave consequences. He opened the gates of the revolutions and wars of the 20th century.

Friedrich Engels 1820-1895

Engels was the partner of Marx. Both developed a new world order without the idea of God. They believed that the problem of the world was God himself. He wrote many revolutionary books, reports and articles in newspapers. In 1848 he published the communist manifesto together with Marx.

Marx and Engels studied in Berlin. Engels was a Protestant Christian. Engels sought answers to the unjust world in the church, but the priest could not answer him. The church was not aware of the injustice. It rather protected the establishment, which oppressed ordinary people. His father probably owned the first industrialised factory in Wuppertal, Germany. Engels experienced the injustice of the Enlightenment in his own family. Together with Marx they came to the conclusion that the old world order, built by the Christians, will never bring freedom. They committed themselves to changing the world. They committed themselves to it and they did it.

Family under communism

Karl Marx published "The Holy Family" in 1845¹¹¹. The "Holy Family" preaches the revolt against state, church, family, laws, religion and property. The best future has the most radical and strongest communist. The new holy family. The family is no longer man and woman with children. The new family is the global communist community. This is true humanism and brings freedom and justice.

They opposed the philosophers Hegel and Bruno Bauer, his former mentors. They wanted to show that a revolution of society could not be carried out with a kind of apparent humanism. Society can only be changed if we emancipate ourselves completely from a spiritual world. The intention of the authors is to profess "real humanism". A true materialism.

¹¹¹ The Holy Family is a book written in 1845 by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels.

"Do you reproach us for wanting to stop the exploitation of children by their parents? We plead guilty to this crime". But, you say, we are destroying the most sacred of relationships when we replace domestic education with social education. The communists did not invent the intervention of society in education, we are only saving education from the influence of the ruling class. The bourgeois family will disappear anyway as capital disappears.¹¹²"

This quotation from the communist manifesto gave families a new direction. The main philosophy of the communist is that the ruling classes took away the resources of the world from the bourgeois families.

They justify their position before God, who is the giver of all goods. He gave them the goods because they obeyed Him and are the chosen ones. Therefore, the main problem of this injustice is God himself. People use God to justify their injustice. To abolish God is therefore the beginning of the search for justice in the world.

The main idea of the communist is the turn to absolute materialism. It means that there is no God, no giver of goods, so that nobody can claim to possess anything. If there is no longer a giver of goods, nobody can claim to own property. People who do so are thieves and robbers. If no one is allowed to have property, then everyone has the same. They own nothing, and that is justice. The main theme of socialism today is still that everyone must be equal. No one must have more than others.

When people can no longer have private property, families disappear. No one must say, this is my wife and these are my children. Everything belongs to the world community. Everything is under a global social materialism. Bourgeois families became the enemy of socialism. Therefore, the main goal for the communist was the abolition of bourgeois families. Which meant abolishing diversity. If families continue to teach their children, this will never bring communism. Some children would have more than others. That would never create equality. Every child must receive the same education. Family education would only bring the world back to the old system.

Equality became the most important value under communism. Everything that does not lead to equality is bad. Everything that leads to equality is good. A new world was born. After Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, the world will never look the same again.

Before atheism, marriage meant that a woman and a man committed themselves to a lifelong relationship. The Bible describes that man and woman were created in God's image. When a man enters into a covenant with a woman, the divine becomes visible on earth. When marriages are divorced, this was the greatest pain for Christianity. When divorced, the image of God was upset. For the Chartists, society was never closer to God than with strong, healthy families. That is why marriages are the most valuable thing in a society for Christians. They defend this view to this day, often with all means.

Why the West became so strong?

Historians claim that it comes from middle-class families. Families best represent the image of the Creator, and that is why the world works best. The West built strong families and was far superior to the Ottoman Empire throughout the Middle Ages.

¹¹² Manifesto of the Communist Party of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels February 1848

When Christianity in Europe lost its roots in the 19th and 20th centuries, America overtook Europe? America has kept it until today. Europe celebrates adulterous love. Nobody cares when a president is divorced. In America, no president is elected if he or she cannot control the marriage. But a president in Europe can travel around with his mistress. Today it is even heroic for people to have lovers everywhere.

Muslims beat their wives. If they do not obey, they are punished. Islamic culture can hold their culture together. The West does not beat their wives, but families no longer stay together. Families crumble in the West. So, which is better?

The West drives their children away. A woman gets pregnant and is left alone. The West pushes off its children and dismisses its women. The West abolishes itself because they have no young people left. But Islam is growing in the world. Is secularism really better than Islam?

In Islam there is no definition of equality between men and women. But the secular world no longer has any definition at all.

The threat to the West is not terrorism. What destroys the West is the abolition of values and its historical foundations. The threat is what wants to destroy what has made the West strong.

Family is not a contract, but an alliance. A family is built on a spiritual foundation and is not simply held together by a contract or structure. If the West loses Christianity, it will also lose families. If you take away the foundation of a house, the house will fall.

The question remains whether Western society can have a future without families? But often the churches no longer represent the Christian view of the family. It seems that the family no longer has a strong advocate.

Just like Engels quoted. "The most important condition for the realisation of socialism is the abolition of the bourgeois family"¹¹³. For them, every step towards the destruction of families was a step forward in history.

We have seen many different movements in the 20th century. Feminism or free sexual movement. Being able to choose same-sex marriages and the choice of one's own sex are normal today. A child should be able to choose whether it wants to be a boy or a girl. The old system of hierarchy became more and more the enemy of the world. Equal rights became the foundation of humanity. National and international laws are constantly being adapted. Even if the homosexual community is below 2%, it has made the whole society accept it. They accept it because the philosophy of socialism has spread throughout the world. But not because they want to practise it. It sounds so human to want everyone to be treated equally. When everyone has the same rights.

Every individual has rights before the state and ultimately before the international community. A small federal institution such as the family will hinder this equality and must be abolished. Absolute moral values can no longer be represented. Otherwise, people will become racists.

¹¹³ Abolishing the family, <https://destroycapitalismnow.wordpress.com/2017/03/26/abolish-the-family/>

Everything that under communism gives the impression of being predestined by the Creator must be created. The new world is a world without a youthful order without hierarchy.

The Church has often generously embraced socialism. They have not realised that communism has undermined the foundations of the Church, and has enticed them into the trap with flattering words. It seems that in the 20th century families are facing great hardship.

Frankfurt School, Max Horkheimer 1930 ¹¹⁴

In the middle of the 20th century, social democrats will continue the ideas of communism. They opposed the violence of communism, but they believed in its cultural revolution. They wanted to bring a revolution without weapons, but they wanted to destroy the old institutions of society through political debate.

Horkheimer became professor at the "Frankfurter Schule" in 1930. He followed Marx and Engels. Horkheimer was a social democrat. The idea of socialism now reached the whole of Western society.

He believed that a cultural revolution had to begin in the family. Societies held together by power must be destroyed. Families were also held together by the authority and privileges of some. Parents regard their children as their property. Through this given authority, the father abuses his position to impose his interests. Freedom can only exist if a society no longer produces the old family type. When all members of a family are free under the state. This misunderstanding of families must now be overcome by social democracy.

Today, these ideas are constantly influenced by education and social media. It has gone so far that it is no longer allowed to represent a view of a family, of man and woman, in public. People who do so are called racists and extremists. Those who created Western culture are now considered enemies of society.

Eric Fromm was also one of the leading figures of this movement¹¹⁵. He believed that the democratisation of the world was the highest good. Democratisation in the sense of equality for all. This means that the bourgeois family must be gradually abolished. Those who oppose it are on the same level as a racist or anti-Semite.

The idea of a democracy is twisted. Democracy was no longer a guarantee for abuse of power. To ensure that everyone, from the president to ordinary people, is accountable to the higher law. Democracy through the communists became a tool to destroy what made the West strong.

5.5 The economy: socialism conquers the world

Marx and Engels published the book *the Capital* in 1844¹¹⁶. In the book they claim that the economy will be the main engine for this material process. There is nothing stable -

¹¹⁴ Max Horkheimer 1895 1973 was a German philosopher and sociologist, member of the 'Frankfurt School', famous for his work in critical theory. Among his most important works is *Eclipse of Reason* (1947)

¹¹⁵ Erich Seligmann Fromm 1900 –1980, was a German Jew who fled the Nazi regime and settled in the US. He was a social psychologist, psychoanalyst, sociologist, humanistic philosopher, and democratic socialist.

¹¹⁶ *The capital. Critique of Political Economy* June 2013 by UNESCO in the World Register of Document Heritage. The first volume was published in 1867 and Friedrich Engels compiled two further volumes from Marx's

everything is in development. There is no real place on which people can build. Everything will change and be different. There are no values or human rights that people can hold on to. The truth is the process itself. Tomorrow everything will be different. The perfection of it is communism.

Under communism, nobody will ever claim that anything belongs to them again. There will no longer be a single property. Everything belongs to the world community.

Marx and Engels wanted to change this unjust world. With them, God and sin were abolished. But the evil was still in the world.

People used to believe that they were sinners and had to change their bad attitude. They have to change their heart and live according to moral principles. For the communists, injustice was not a spiritual problem, but a material problem. People become angry, hateful and angry because others have more than they have. People become proud, arrogant and selfish because they have more than others. The solution was that everyone must have the same. If this were the case, there would be freedom and peace in the world. It will be heaven on earth. This can only become a reality when no one can say that it is mine. Everything simply belongs to the global communities.

They were convinced that they had solved the mystery of the world. What the Christians wanted to achieve with forgiveness on the cross, Marx and Engels tried to achieve in a purely materialistic way.

They believe that capitalism was a helper to get into socialism. So, capitalism will help them to build up enough resources to get into the state of socialism. But the goal of production must now be changed to socialism.

The fact is that all countries that turned to socialism ended up in poverty. Like the entire USSR, Cuba or Venezuela. Their ideas had never worked. People had not worked for nothing. When the state took away their property, creativity and productivity declined very quickly. Even if it often sounded very human and good, it was horror for many people.

The attempt to eliminate evil has ended in disaster. Instead of promises, people have suffered bitter poverty and oppression. The communists would have to honestly admit that they have failed. They would have to admit that Christianity was far superior to them. Christianity was not perfect, but it could help people out of poverty.

The Communist Manifesto 1848

Engels and Marx also wrote the communist manifesto. "The working class will use its political domination to gradually wrest capital from the bourgeoisie, centralise everything in the hands of the state and increase production as quickly as possible¹¹⁷.

They open the Communist Manifesto with the words: A spirit is chasing Europe. The spirit of communism. The spirit of revolution is ready. It is the wake-up call for the people. They end

manuscripts after his death (1883). In 1885 he published Volume 2: The Circulation Process of Capital. In 1894 followed volume 3: Der Gesamtprozess der kapitalistischen Produktion.

¹¹⁷ <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/index.htm>

the Manifesto with the words: "Workers of the earth stand up, you have nothing to lose but your work".

Here is a summary of what the main statements of the Communist Manifesto are.

1. Abolition of ownership
2. Abolition of the law of succession
3. Expropriation of the property of all rebels and emigrants
4. Centralisation of credit in the hands of the State through a national bank with state capital and exclusive monopoly.
5. The most important condition for the realisation of socialism is the abolition of the bourgeois family.
6. But, you say, we create the most peculiar conditions by replacing social education with the place of domestic education.
7. The working class has nothing to protect from yours, it must destroy all previous privacy.
8. We followed the more or less hidden civil war within the existing society up to the point where it broke out into open revolution and, through the violent overthrow of the bourgeoisie, founded the communists.

The main concern of the communists is the unjust distribution of resources throughout the world. They want to abolish this inequality with weapons. This must be done with a revolution and a civil war. Because the ruling class would never give up power and property.

With this philosophy it opened the door to all communist dictators. The dictators have started to enforce their rights. Exploiting people. Taking away the peasants' possessions. Eliminating the influential and educated. They robbed the people of their freedom and creativity and destroyed self-responsibility.

It was no longer allowed to produce faster and better. Every creative innovation was held back or destroyed. The communists not only destroyed private property, they destroyed humanity. In a socialist country everyone must look the same, act the same and grow the same. No one was allowed to walk faster or dress differently. Instead of a world of freedom and peace, it ended in a nightmare.

The bad guys in society are the value-oriented people. People who create order and laws. People who exercise authority. The rich who exploit the poor. The poor are always the victims. It was a general assumption that the one who has something is the bad guy.

Are the poor always the good guys? What is good? Good is a question of perspective or philosophy. Marx had established a new morality. A morality that the philosophers had foreseen.

Good and bad was a spiritual concept for the reformers. A question of the heart. People who have much can be great people, and people who have nothing can be evil. Bad and good was not material to them. Although material goods make people evil, it was not the origin for evil.

The Socialists still owe us their promises. Socialism has always been a nightmare. It never works in the world.

5.6 Politics: Belief in a revolution

Time of the revolution 1789 -1849

At the end of the 18th century the western world was shaken. It will never be the same again. Not only were many new things invented, but mankind began to implement the thoughts of the philosophers. People began to think in a completely new way. They no longer wanted to understand the world of the Creator. They wanted to build a world without a creator.

French Revolution 1789

Pierre Laplace¹¹⁸ was one of the most important mathematicians of his time. He refuted Newton's proof of God. He claimed that Newton needed God to fill the gap. Napoleon Bonaparte once asked him where God is in our world. He said that we do not need God. There is no God who created the universe - everything is created by a natural process. He put forward the idea of Jean Baptise Lamarck who had already thought up the theory of evolution. It was the view behind the French Revolution.

The French Revolution was the beginning of a new age without the Church and God. They proclaimed a new calendar. History was no longer dated to the birth of Jesus. The goddess of reason became the new truth and was to replace Christianity. Over one million people died.

The Reformation brought forth a middle class. In France, however, there was still a wide gap between rich and poor. The king controlled everything to maintain his position. The people wanted a better world and no longer to be oppressed by the king. The ideas of Rousseau and Voltaire were now put into practice. Jean Jacques Rousseau was impressed by the Reformation in Geneva and Voltaire by the glorious revolution in England. Both ideas came from the Reformed Christians. But this reformer in France rejected Christianity and wanted to implement a reform based on just human wisdom.

People cried out for freedom and equality. They killed the authorities in the belief that this would bring freedom. But instead of freedom, chaos reigned. Everyone was looking only for his own interest. Everyone killed everyone. In this chaos, Napoleon Bonaparte intervened, crowned himself Cesar in 1804 and reigned again as dictator. Instead of freedom came dictatorship again.

He wanted to reform the whole of Europe according to his ideas. He ruled as dictator and forced the people to believe his system. In the end Napoleon was banished to an island and Europe had to be restored at the Congress of Vienna in 1815. The revolution lost and the old system of kings was re-established. The revolution did not work.

July Revolution 1830 (1832)

The French started a revolution again in 1830-32. Now they thought they had found out the main problem of the French Revolution. The musical "les Miserables" was set in the revolution of 1830-32 and described the main problem "Marius, you are no longer a child. What do you care about your soul? We are fighting for a higher goal?"

¹¹⁸ Laplace Pierre Simon Marquis de (1749-1827) French mathematician and astronomer

The individual life is no longer important. People must fight for something higher in life. It was a religious ambition.

Their goal was revolution. The goal is that the entire establishment had to be overthrown. It is the higher goal. To achieve this goal, all other things must submit to this goal. From now on, a goal justifies the end. The morality of the old days was overcome. It was the new morality for the coming century.

In Christianity every person had a value. It stands before everything else. Now, if man no longer has any value, then Lenin Stalin and Hitler were right. People can be killed, maltreated in prison camps. Everything is allowed that leads to the goal. The question is only who defines the goal when there is no more God.

There are two possible ways of reform. A revolution or a reformation. A reformation changes and reforms, which is not good. It will hold on to what is good and reform what is bad. A revolution tears down the old. It will create everything new. But a revolution has always had a big problem in its approach. They want to force freedom and justice by force. This contradicts itself, and so it can never succeed.

Revolution 1848/1849

In the middle of the 19th century in Europe, a famine brought a crisis. It reached its peak in 1847. Great fear and tension paralysed Europe. In this time the revolutionary idea now spread throughout Europe. Europe was now ready to believe it. The people wanted to finally depose the king. They wanted to live in freedom. The hunger crisis probably brought this barrel to overflowing. In 1848 Europe was once again on fire.

People wanted an independent nation governed by a parliament. A constitution and fundamental rights for all. But the democratic, liberal revolutionary is being pushed back and Europe is finding itself in the old structures. The people were given some rights, however, but the monarchs were back in office. Germany and Italy were centralised and got an emperor. Instead of having individual rights, they were given an emperor who ruled over the various kingdoms. The revolution failed again.

While all other countries remained in the old system of kings and rulers, in the middle of Europe, Switzerland founded the federal state in 1848. Switzerland received the first lasting constitution in Europe.

Why did the revolutions not succeed?

The main idea of the reformers was that man is a sinner. It is therefore not good if man has too much power. For popes, kings or emperors, power must be limited. Everybody looks first of all at himself and sooner or later it will lead to oppression and exploitation. Man is sick inside, and only the separation of power can keep him within limits.

The best system is when power is separated and people have to work together as a team. They are responsible for each other and cannot simply do what they want. They have to face the critical question of their opponents and must be able to seek the best of all. Not only of the best, which in their opinion would be the best. They believed in a win-win situation and in the power of synergy. A team together can go further and is stronger than adding up all the strength of each individual.

The idea of the Trinity made the West strong. God himself shows himself to be a Trinitarian God. As Ellis Potter¹¹⁹ used to say: "God is the only God, but he is not alone". This concept became the foundation of the West. The Divine is a team. None of them has power over the other. Father, Son and Holy Spirit have different roles but are united. It was the idea of diversity in unity. Our university also goes back to this concept. The unity in diversity.

What now holds this diversity together is the agape love. If someone wants to be the leader, he should be a servant. The concept of the prime minister also originated from this understanding. The prime minister is the first servant, as Jesus was. He does not seek for his own sake, but for the sake of others. That is the power of synergy. It was the power of love that made Western society so successful. Even if not everything was good, this worldview was far superior to the others.

When people came together and believed in it, the power of synergy was released and they could do amazing things. Like in the English Revolution. The king was the one who was ready to hand over power to parliament, thus laying the foundation for the separation of powers. It will only work if people believe in it and willingly give up power. Without separation of powers, a democracy will not work.

The West wanted to establish democracy in the Middle East and Afghanistan, and it did not work. Why, because the world view behind it is not the same.

As Vishal Mangalwadi said It would be better for America to have sent 10,000 missionaries to Iraq and Syria than 10,000 soldiers.

The revolutionaries wanted to achieve reform. They saw all the abuse and oppression by the powerful and were angry about it. But they did not understand why man is evil. So, they wanted to repay evil with evil. And this did not work. If it is any wonder.

The separation of powers became a divine principle. Just like the family, separation of powers represented the Creator here on earth.

They want human rights and limited power, but they have abolished God. They probably still believed in a God, but no longer believed in the revelation of the Bible of God. Democracy cannot work without the Bible. Democracy is the best political system in the world. It keeps evil within limits.

Democracy means that power is with the people. If absolute power is with the people, then it is anarchy. But that will not work. And it will end in a chaos like the French Revolution.

The reformer had the solution. They could separate power because an absolute law of the Bible held them together. The commandments of the Old Testament or especially the law, Jesus could give the world a foundation. The one who wants to be the leader should be the servant. We should seek the best of the others.

They are reminded of this in the sermon every Sunday, and this kept the society together. With the Lord's Supper every Sunday they are reminded that people are not able to become good by their own efforts. They need a renewal of their heart.

¹¹⁹ Ellis Potter is a Christian apologist, lecturer, minister and an independent missionary based in Basel, Switzerland. He is the founder of Eastern European Renewal.

The Swiss have no presidents. They have seven Federal Councillors. According to the Constitution, they must work together. In 1848, the reformers believed that it was better to build a system in which not just one person had power.

But when people abolished God, the reformers wondered why it no longer worked. A revolutionary sees evil in the system and not in the hearts. Especially not in the heart of himself. He did not believe in sin and in the absolute authority of the Bible. The revolution brought the next dictatorship instead of freedom.

Because people are sinners, it will not work. If everyone can do what they want. We'll end up in chaos. So, everyone just wants to have rights and build their own world. For a revolutionary, everything that is not in his world view is evil. But to solve a two-party conflict, you always have to listen to both sides and find an intermediate way.

The revolution did not accept this and saw only itself as the right thing to do. That was the main problem why the revolutions could not work. And probably will not work today either. A reform can only take place if the parties to the conflict come together and find a win-win situation.

Western society cannot be understood without Christianity. The love of God and the cross hold society together and have made the West successful. The question would remain:

Democracy is under threat. It seems that people are beginning to doubt whether this is the best way forward. The Chinese president is laughing at the West because he believes that democracy does not work. In Europe, everyone can do and say whatever they want. That cannot work. China is going a different way and succeeding. China is increasingly becoming a role model for the West. How can the West survive? Can China give us human rights and democracy?

England is a good example. They could not find a compromise for the Brexit under Theresa May. So, they chose Boris Johnson. A completely different person, with a different worldview. He believes he is right and the others are wrong. He is a type after Donald Trump and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. But the people want him. People who have power and can put their promises into practice.

Today the world is looking for strong leaders. Not leaders, who leads a morally correct life. Not one who seeks compromise.

For 1000 years people have fought to prevent the powerful from exercising too much power. Man has succeeded. But it seems that man has given up this belief. He has forgotten history. Does he want to return to the Middle Ages?

5.7 Science: The world was created without God

Theory of Evolution 1859¹²⁰

Charles Darwin was a British natural scientist and founder of the modern theory of evolution¹²¹. His works will strongly influence the next generations.

¹²⁰ On the emergence of species through natural selection or the preservation of preferred breeds in the struggle for life, 1859, by Charles Darwin

¹²¹ Charles Darwin 1809-1882

Darwin came up with the idea of common descent. Every living creature originally had the same ancestor. But he did not develop the whole theory on his own. He read the book by Jean-Baptiste Lamarck¹²², who claimed that life was created by purely natural processes. Darwin refined his theory of common ancestry and called it the theory of evolution.

He observed finches in the Galapagos Islands. He found that the finches with a thin beak could survive in dry seasons and that the other population was dying out. From these observations, he concluded that the organisms best suited to their natural habitat would always be those that would survive. This process creates new living organisms. Nature selects the strongest, most suitable organisms - just as the breeders would do. Unlike the breeder, who did this through an active human process, Darwin claimed that this process takes place in a purely natural way.

Darwin believed that organisms that fit into their environment would survive and organisms that are not suitable would die out. Nature would choose the strongest. This is called "survival of the fittest".

Breeding actually illustrates the limits of natural selection. Natural selection never produces a higher organism. Francisco J. Ayala¹²³ refers to the discovery of Darwin's finches in the Galapagos Islands. The population of birds with narrower beaks increased when there was no rain. These birds were able to survive in the dry season. But when the rain returned, the weak population returned too. But nothing really developed. Darwin's observation does not explain that natural selection can successfully produce a new complex organism? Some doubted Darwin's scientific conclusion, claiming that he just wanted to prove what he already believed.

Darwin was asked the following question: If this theory is correct, why do we only find fossils of organisms that died out or of organisms that are still alive today? Why don't we have fossils showing the transition between the organisms of the past and those that are still alive today? Darwin thought that all these fossils would only be discovered in the future. But palaeontologists only found plants and animals that were already extinct. There are indeed certain transitional forms such as Archaeopteryx, a bird that has certain reptile characteristics such as claws on its wings and teeth on its back. But in "Darwin's tree of life", birds are on a different branch from reptiles. Even with the feathered dinosaurs, the troodontids, one would have to wonder whether they have developed into birds. If this common theory of evolution is correct, millions upon millions of transition fossils should have been found by now. But palaeontologists have hardly found any. Therefore, the fossil record clearly contradicts this theory of common ancestry. Darwin's idea was wrong.

The whole title of Darwin's book is: The origin of the species by natural selection or the preservation of the privileged breed by the struggle of life. He was a racist and supported dictators in the next century.

Darwin was no atheist. He gave up his Christian faith because his daughter probably died. He said that if there was a God, it would not have happened. It was preferably not due to

¹²² Jean-Baptiste Pierre Antoine de Monet, Chevalier de Lamarck (1744-1829), a French naturalist, presented his theory in the book *Philosophy Zoologique*, 1809

¹²³ Francisco J. Ayala, *Darwin's gift to science and religion*, 2007

logical considerations that he rejected God. It was his experience that he could not categorise.

Evolutionary processes are observed in nature and can be scientifically proven. But to the theory of evolution, Ayala said, "Evolution in a second sense is very uncertain. The evolution of organisms is generally accepted by biologists, while the mechanism of evolution is still being actively researched and is the subject of much debate among scientists". He admits that this assumption is based on uncertain ground and that science cannot reconstruct it.

It cannot be explained how higher organisms can develop through purely natural processes. Since higher organisms cannot develop, we can therefore also conclude that no living being can develop. Life must have a different origin.

So, the theory of evolution may have more to do with religion than with science. According to Ayala, "Darwin's greatest achievement was to show that complex organisms and the functionality of living beings can be explained as the result of a natural process, natural selection, without having to resort to a creator or other external agent. "Darwin abolished God. Unfortunately, reality has shown us something else. Natural science shows that there must be something higher, because it cannot explain everything.

Scientists claim that Darwin was not a scientist. He only proved what he believed anyway. Because it fits into society, it was accepted by the people. Darwin believed that people would later find the empirical evidence, but they did not. With the discovery of DNA, it became almost certain that this theory contradicted science. Since people no longer want to accept God, this theory remains valid to this day. For them, there is no other alternative.

Darwinism argues with the development of complex life through natural selection. If this is true, then death is a necessity for the evolution of life. The stronger organisms survive and the weaker ones die out by natural selection. But this idea has had a significant impact on our society. It is called Social Darwinism. If man is the same as other organisms that have merely survived the evolutionary process, why should we think differently? Why should people not behave like their ancestors?

Why does the West care so much about the weak? If Darwinism is true and there is nothing from outside nature to guide us in our moral behaviour, people should act according to nature. But people are committed to human rights and do not simply follow the natural "survival of the fittest".

So why shouldn't man act according to nature? Kill when they feel like killing and hate when they feel like hating. Dictators should conquer and kill, and the strongest would survive. Why should a dictator who eliminates the weak be wrong? Man would become something like an animal. He would have no free will, and his behaviour would be predetermined by the forces of nature. He would become a victim of nature.

But people in the West think that Hitler was wrong. This contradicts Social Darwinism and Darwinism as such. But if it were no longer clear that Hitler was wrong, the question arises whether there is any moral standard at all?

Darwinism brought us Social Darwinism. It destroyed all moral norms by saying that death was just a normal occurrence. Death is only a part of reality and brings progress. Darwin brought a new social understanding.

Before that, Christians preached to stay against natural tendencies by not only following their feelings and instincts. Killing was not allowed. But for Karl Marx, who firmly believed in Darwinism, it was clear that the end justifies the means. The elimination of the weak is only a necessary process to reach the next evolutionary stage.

Darwinism destroyed all the thousand-year-old beliefs of society. It is destroying the Western world. These ideas led to the brutality of the 20th century. In revolutions and world wars.

Professor William Craig's criticism¹²⁴ is appropriate. "Darwin had not acted scientifically in the first place, but only wanted to show that there is no God. His observations had to justify his stubborn theory: There must not be a God".

5.8 The art: art without truth

Cubism 1904

Cubism is a modern art of painting that emerged at the beginning of the 20th century. Cubism was founded by Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque. It was a turning point in painting. It led from impressionism to abstract painting. In Impressionism, form and shape still corresponded to physical reality, even if it was confused and blurred. But Cubism left this behind. It changed from a holistic to defragmented elements. Everything is flat. People can see every corner. All forms should go back to simple stereometric bodies like cylinders or pyramids. With the painting "Les Femmes d'Alger" Pablo Picasso created Cubism in 1907, followed by Braque in 1908 with "Houses at L'Estaque". 1914 Cubism reached its peak with many different painters.

The unit was lost. The painters before wanted to find unity behind the visible. But the Cubists had given it up completely. They no longer believed in truth. For them there was only diversity. A world full of possibilities. But nothing to hold it together. The painter ended in pessimism.

Now the ideas of pessimism have reached the artists. The loss of visible truths has brought with it the belief in an absolute truth. The loss of Christianity has left its marks. The secular world could not fill this vacuum. Without God there is no more unity. Only possibilities and diversity.

This was also reflected in music, literature and film. The message of pessimism reached the people. Whereby the medium of film suddenly reached many more people than the philosophers and artists ever before.

Abstract Art 1910

In the following times the painter also lost the forms and simply painted what he wanted to paint. It could be this or that. Just a place full of possibilities. The viewer could see everything. It was no longer determined by the painted picture. The painting was only meant

¹²⁴ William Lane Craig, born in 1949, is an American philosopher of religion, theologian and Christian apologist. He is currently Professor of Philosophy at the Talbot Evangelical School of Theology, Biola University in La Mirada, California. Craig is a member of the Center for Science and Culture at the Discovery Institute, the centre of the Intelligent Design movement. On his website, however, he argues that Christians should always consider theories of the Intelligent Design movement in the light of biology.

to help the viewer to refrain from absolutes. Man could interpret what he perceived himself. For one person it was this for another.

The best painter was now the greatest philosopher who could sell his ideas. It was no longer the art of painting but the art of philosophy. It went so far that a black painting had been sold for 20 million dollars¹²⁵. It was only black. But it was worth as much as the artist was able to sell the philosophy behind it.

Man wanted to find a way through the particular to the general but did not find it. So, there was only the leap into the irrational to find meaning and significance. But here they met reality. In the irrational there is no definition of good and evil any more. Of true or untrue. Real or false. Of sense or nonsense. What remains is that man has been sent on a journey in which he searched for meaning and significance in life, but will never find it.

It does not mean that abstract arts are always wrong from a biblical point of view. But according to the biblical view, the art should always help people to see the real world. An abstract painting can help people to see the real physical world. But most artists have lost that hope. Their painting served the opposite purpose. They wanted to free people from the captivity of reality and to transport them to the world of the irrational. Into a world of nothing. Of infinity and darkness. It was a cruel world. Without hope and life.

It began with the philosopher who criticized the church. Their criticism was not always unjustified. But they did pour out the bath with the child. With the criticism of the church, the Bible and God were also questioned. In the end the philosophers abolished truth. The attempt to find it was in vain for these people. The loss of truth will now in the 20th century show its consequences.

6 Outlook into the 20th century

The 20th century had begun so hopefully. People believed that the world would get better every day. In 1899 the first world expedition opened its doors in France. The people presented all their innovations. The Eiffel Tower was a masterpiece of human intelligence. Cars, trains, planes and shipping developed rapidly. Suddenly people were mobile, could travel anywhere. The industries produced more and more goods. People could afford wealth and luxury. There was peace and freedom.

On 15 April 1912 the RMS Titanic sank and more than 1500 people died. The international rule required lifeboats for 1000 people. But the rule was made for ships up to 1000 people, not 2200. They followed the law. They obeyed the rules. But was it morally right?

With the Titanic the conflict became visible. The technical world has abolished morality. The loss of morals and religion was probably the main reason why the 20th century will take such a warlike course. People will now build a killing machine. They will tear themselves apart with planes and bombs.

Europe was the most developed area in the world. People could read and write. They went to school, studied and graduated. And yet it could not stop them from such cruelty.

¹²⁵ Kasimir Malevich, 1915

Two years later, after the loss of the Titanic, the world completely lost sight of humanity. In 1914 the Europeans marched into the First World War with cheers and a bang. They believed the war was a necessity to take society one step further. They believed in a world where people could live in peace. In a world without borders. Man can govern himself from now on. Everything will always be better. Optimism sent people into the First World War. But the war painted a different picture, and Europe was torn apart.

30 million people have died. Violence and ideologies had plunged Europe into the abyss. On 1 May September 1939 the Second World War broke out, killing 70 million people. In addition to the horrific massacres, the Soviets set up an extermination machine. The Communists had over 20 million killed between the First and the Second World War. They shot them or destroyed them in gulags. All those who did not want to accept socialism or atheism were executed. After 1945 came the Cold War between the West and the USSR. It claimed another 22 million lives. The real end of the world wars probably came with the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989.

In addition to the West, up to 11 million people died in the Chinese civil war and 25 million died in the Sino-Japanese conflict. Millions died in the ongoing conflicts in Africa and the Middle East. There were also a large number of smaller conflicts.

The Communists in China executed millions of people. There are no official figures. In all the other Communist countries, millions of bloods have been shed. The last century went down as the bloodiest century in human history, causing some 200 million deaths through violence and wars.

It was the atheistic ideologies of Nietzsche, Darwin and Marx that turned people into wild animals. Man had emancipated himself from the Creator and it led to the catastrophe of the 20th century.

In the first half of the 20th century, Christians once again pulled themselves together. An American pastor founded the movement "Moral Armament". In 1960 the centre was built in Caux, Switzerland, above Lake Geneva. Pastor Frank Buchman was of Swiss origin and was convinced that he could liberate the world from misery. In view of the malice he attributed to capitalism and the atheistic communists, Buchman considered a "moral rearmament" necessary.

After 1945 it developed a programme for the moral and spiritual reconstruction of the world. The moral rearmament did not try to change the world through weapons, violence or system. It wanted to change the hearts of the people. They believed that humanity must rediscover morality so that such murders could be prevented. They were convinced that the loss of God had led humanity to the crash.

This call was followed by thousands of high-ranking personalities from business and politics from all over the world. They met and committed themselves to this renewal.

The German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer or President Charles de Gaulle, probably the two most important heads of state in Europe in the middle of the century, have declared their support for the movement. In 1951 they signed an agreement which ended the enmity between Germany and France. The European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC). Steel and coal are the basic elements for the production of weapons. The two gentlemen had created this treaty so that no country could produce weapons unnoticed. The treaty happened on a moral basis. Man is a sinner and needs control. It was a treaty of sovereign states. They

were not building an empire. They understood the human soul and therefore they could find a solution.

Both were Catholic, convinced Christians. Behind the political developments was the deep insight that we need more than techniques and structures. This Treaty later became the basis for the European Community. Pope Pius XII promoted reconciliation after the end of the Second World War and represented these ideas. The catastrophe of the 20th century was never to happen again.

This time the Catholics have reformed Europe. The French under Charles de Gaulle have now taken this into account in their constitution. In 1958, France too was given a stable constitution.

The President of the United States, Franklin D. Roosevelt, made a second attempt during the Second World War to create a peacekeeping organisation. With the British Prime Minister Winston Churchill signed the Atlantic Charter. On 1 January 1942, 26 states referred to the principles of the Atlantic Charter in the United Nations Declaration.

On 25 October 1945, after long negotiations, 51 nations signed the Charter of the United States. The birth of today's peace. Henry Cabot declared: "The purpose of the United Nations is not to create heaven on earth, but to prevent hell".

The statue in front of the headquarters symbolises the foundation of the United Nations. It is a quotation from the Bible that appears in several prophets. And I will make swords into ploughshares.

René Cassin was the principal author of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations (UN) in Geneva in 1948, and for which he also received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1968. Cassin believed that the Bible was the basis of human rights. The same source, then, that the Reformers had referred to¹²⁶.

These leaders have understood that a world where everyone can do what they want will not work. It needs a moral absolute reference point. We need a God above us to hold us together.

This Christian renewal movement has given the world the next 70 years more or less peace. The Catholics and the Reformer reformed the world, even if they had different approaches.

Now these reformers of the last century are slowly dying out. A new elite, shaped by the philosophies in the universities, are now coming to power. The loss of Christianity shows its consequences. Western culture is now experiencing a post-Christian generation for the first time. Their children have forgotten what history could teach them. Christianity has left the stage of society.

It seems that man goes back to where he came from. The Reformers were so successful because they made the Creator visible to all. They brought heaven and earth together.

¹²⁶ "Centuries have passed. Through all the persecutions of a kind never seen before, Judaism has preserved its passion for justice, and also its desire to stand up for the rights of people of every race and origin, according to the principles entrusted to it four thousand years ago. The Ten Commandments, the first code of man's fundamental obligations, have caused much controversy throughout history and continue to do so. Yet their moral authority remains".

Christianity freed man from the constraints and arbitrariness of nature. With the translation of the Bible, legal foundations could be created. With the belief in a reliable God, modern science was brought to life.

But what happens if this faith in God now disappears completely. Would it not be necessary, to rethink?

7 Conclusion

Many historians would claim that modern Western culture began in the 19th century. Today, Christianity is seen only as a religion, and is no longer relevant to society. The influence of Christianity is neglected by Western professors and intellectuals. The story is told from today's world view. From the perspective of how people think today. But this is unjust. With this perspective one cannot understand why people acted this way back then. With this perspective one cannot understand the foundations of Western culture. With this perspective, therefore, the storytelling is also wrong.

This book tried to remedy this situation. It tried to tell the story from the perspective of how people thought back then.

The West was freed from superstition and arbitrariness by the missionaries. They found Jesus Christ, who freed them from fear and insecurity. Through Christianity the West was civilised.

Christianity experienced a renaissance in the 16th century. Faith in a God who had spoken and revealed his word to them changed the world. Man was freed from the shackles of the Middle Ages. He felt like a junior partner of God who has the ability to overcome nature. They began to build dams to stop floods. They discovered medicine to heal people. Many people came out of poverty. A middle class of citizens emerged in Europe

Geneva, a ramshackle city, became heaven on earth thanks to the Reformers. In just one generation, Geneva has developed into an exemplary, prosperous city.

The Puritans emigrated to America and believed they could build the New Jerusalem there. They believed it and did it.

The Bible made the separation of powers possible. Everyone had to submit to a law that was not man-made. It was a law that stood above all people. Over pope, emperor and king. Nobody could change it. No majority, no minority and no dictator. It was the basis for human rights.

Man was given a tool with which he could distinguish between right and wrong. He could form an opinion. He could even oppose the opinion of kings. This freedom and legal certainty brought them success in all areas.

The reformers have found the key to peace and order. It led to the English Revolution. The Revolution did not lead to chaos. It was a bloodless revolution in which the King voluntarily gave power to Parliament.

But through time they have forgotten that the giver of all things is God. They believed they could find out everything themselves. Through observation they wanted to explain all things in the world. Especially in the human sciences they reached their limits. It soon became clear that not everything in the world can be explained. In such a system, man becomes a

machine. He is nothing more than cause and effect. It led to people being exploited and treated badly. Slaves have been kept. And all this under a Christian cover.

Man recognised this dilemma and searched for a new truth. He sought it in rationality. In the invisible world. In the world of thinking and feeling. He became a romantic who created a perfect world in his head. But in this world man was less and less connected to reality. Finally, this romanticism led to the French Revolution.

Influenced by the French Revolution the people believed that a revolution would bring progress, even if the French Revolution ended in chaos. Despite the revolution, the political system in Europe did not change and the old monarchs were still in power.

It was only after the third French Revolution in 1871 that a republic was established. But it took almost another hundred years until France had a stable constitution in 1958. It was then amended 24 times until 2008. On average every second year. It took a long time for France to get a constitution. France had to understand that a revolution could not work.

In the 19th century the philosophers abolished Christianity. Friedrich Nietzsche in philosophy and Richard Wagner in music. They claimed that God was dead. Karl Marx and Engels drew up a new plan for a society without God. Charles Darwin claimed that the world was not created by God, but only by a purely natural process. Engels read Darwin's book and wrote to Marx that this was the scientific proof that their socialism was the truth. It was the birth of atheism, where philosophy and science found each other.

The Parthenon, one of the largest Greek monuments in Athens, represents Athena, the state goddess. The Parthenon is synonymous with a new era for mankind. The strong vertical stone pillars support the horizontal. The people can carry the truth. The truth is no longer with the gods. It has come to the people. 2500 years ago, the Greeks were the first society that thought that the old dusty times with all the supernatural gods were over. The Greeks believed that the world was now subject to man. A humanism was born, called Hellenism.

This architectural style found its way into Western culture at the beginning of the 19th century. Many government buildings and universities were built in the neoclassical style, in reference to the Greek classical period. People wanted to free themselves from superstition and now wanted to decide for themselves what is good or bad. They stood against this supernatural God of the Christians. The people now thought they could save the world by their own efforts. People wanted to shake off the dust of the Middle Ages.

The flowering season of Christianity seems to be doomed. In the middle of the 19th century, philosophers began to turn away from God. God was blamed. Atheism was declared. But it did not stop with the philosophers. Atheism crept into all areas of life.

Secularism became the foundation for Western culture. Christianity was banished to the corner of religion. Society was now built on atheism and Christianity was despised. Indeed, it was even fought and banned. Christians are now persecuted, killed and humiliated.

It will be another 150 years before the philosophies of atheism reach all sectors of society. Then people will no longer be sure who is a man or a woman. They should now be able to decide this for themselves. There will no longer be a definition of family either. Everything is possible or impossible. There will be no more truth and no more definitions. There will be no more certainty and legal bases. Politics and business will change. Science would come in a

judge crisis. Everyone can now decide for themselves. It is called the post Christen time. But do we want to live in such a world?

The world of today

No one in the world would claim that the world is fair. The gap between rich and poor seems to be widening more and more. Of course, there have been many successes, but it still seems that few people own the most.

Millions live in abject poverty. The question remains how moral the rich countries are in relation to the others.

Globalisation seems to create more and more wealth. But it also brings with it many problems. In fact, it is the strong who benefit most. Human trafficking, child labour, environmental problems and so on.

A lot of money is sent to Africa and developing countries. But what it produces is corruption and independence. The West thinks it is better to do project-based development aid, but this leads to building football stadiums or highways that they do not need. So much money has been put into Africa, but Africa seems to be worse off than before.

The state or international organisations now want to demand this morality from people. They invent countless laws and regulations. But is this possible? They have kept the justice that Christianity brought, but they no longer want Christianity. They believe that this morality can be created with institutions. But the problem remains, who controls those who control? Wasn't it just the great achievement of the West not to give too much power to kings and institutions? Isn't the West abolishing what it once achieved with difficulty?

The world experiences a lot of injustice, nobody doubts that. The only question is by what means we want to fight it.

Should the West not have to think again about what made it strong. In other parts of the world Christianity is experiencing a renaissance. Christianity seemed not to have died. But the question will arise as to what consequences this will have for the West. Could it be that Europeans will one day have to seek asylum in Africa?

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