



The report of the 2016  
**STATE OF EUROPE  
FORUM,**  
Zuiderkerk,  
Amsterdam,  
May 8&9

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# THE PARADOX OF FREEDOM

HOW CAN WE SUSTAIN EUROPE'S FREEDOMS  
IN THE FACE OF MULTIPLE THREATS?

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**WITH CONTRIBUTIONS FROM:**

JONATHAN CHAPLIN, GERARD KELLY, VISHAL MANGAWADI, MINK DE VRIES, AD VAN LUYN, STEFAN WAANDERS, JEFF FOUNTAIN, JENNIFER TUNEHAG, PRABHU GUPTARA, JULIAN LINDLEY-FRENCH, JARNO VOLMER, JOHANNES DE JONG, NOEMI MONTES, CHRISTEL NGNAMBI, EMBERT MESSELINK, KATHIA REYNDERS, JULIA-DOXAT PURSER, MARNIX VISSCHER, JIM MELLIS, BERT DE RUITER, RICHARD TURNBULL, RIMA TÜZÜN, PAUL DE KLOE & WIM RIETKERK





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## CONTENTS

- 5 FOREWORD: Why this forum? - *Jeff Fountain*
- A CELEBRATION OF FREEDOM** - SUNDAY MAY 8, 15.30
- 8 The spiritual roots of Amsterdam's DNA - *Jeff Fountain*  
& *Kathia Reynders*
- 11 Freedom, Erasmus and the Modern Devotion - *Mink de Vries*
- 12 The paradox of Europe's diversity and unity – *Vishal Mangalwadi*
- 16 Freedom For (*meditation*) - *Gerard Kelly*
- 17 Who won the peace? – *Jeff Fountain*
- 19 Panel: Threats to Freedom in Europe today – *Jennifer Tunehag,*  
*Noemi Montes, Stefan Waanders, Jonathan Chaplin*
- OPENING PLENARY** - SUNDAY MAY 8, 19.30
- 22 The truth will set you free (*meditation*) - *Gerard Kelly*
- 26 What is the EU for? - *Jonathan Chaplin*
- SECOND PLENARY** – MONDAY MAY 9, 9.00
- 35 Humanifesto for freedom (*meditation*) - *Gerard Kelly*

**MORNING SEMINARS**

- 36 *POLITICS:* Christianity & the ‘Souls’ of Europe – *Jonathan Chaplin*  
 43 E-Utopia - *in Quest of Europe* - *Stefan Waanders*
- 55 *ECONOMICS:* The Moral Challenge of the Market - *Richard Turnbull*  
 62 How Free is the ‘Free’ market? - *Prabhu Gupta*
- 73 *REFUGEES:* The plight of the Syrians - *Rima Tüzün*  
 79 Looking for Europe’s freedom - *Noemi Montes*
- 85 *MIGRANTS:* Living with Muslims - *Bert de Ruiter*  
 98 New European bridges - *Jim Mellis*
- 103 *SECURITY:* Responding to terrorism – *Jarno Volmer*  
 105 A counter-terrorism strategy - *Johannes de Jong*  
 115 East-West tensions - *Julian Lindley-French*
- EUROPE & THE CHURCHES:*  
 121 The Churches’ role in Brussels - *Ad van Luyn*

**AFTERNOON SEMINARS**

- 131 *RELIGIOUS FREEDOM: THE ASYLUM CRISIS: THREAT OR OPPORTUNITY?*  
 - *Julia Doxat-Purser & Marnix Visscher*
- 138 *TRAFFICKING:* Freedom’s dark side - *Jennifer Tunehag*  
 142 Twelve Challenges - *Tamme de Leur*
- FAMILY & MARRIAGE:*  
 145 Long and happy - *Paulien Timmer/Richard Kane*
- CREATION CARE:*  
 146 The urgency of the topic - *Embert Messink*  
 152 The pursuit of the commons - *Kathia Reynders*
- 156 *EDUCATION:* Relational education - *Paul de Kloe*

**CLOSING PLENARY – MONDAY MAY 9, 17.30**

- 159 Europe: holding on & letting go - *Wim Rietkerk*  
 163 Speakers and Contributors

## FOREWORD: WHY THIS FORUM?

THE STATE OF EUROPE FORUM IS HELD ANNUALLY AROUND EUROPE DAY, THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE SCHUMAN DECLARATION OF MAY 9, 1950, THE RECOGNISED BIRTHDATE OF WHAT HAS BECOME THE EU.

It is held in the capital of the country holding the presidency of the EU, (Budapest 2011, Copenhagen 2012, Dublin 2013, Athens 2014, Riga 2015... and this year in Amsterdam.

The Forum aims to evaluate Europe today in the light of the vision of EU Founding Father, Robert Schuman, for Europe as a 'community of peoples deeply rooted in Christian values': equality, freedom, solidarity and peace. It is open for politicians, church leaders, civic leaders, educators, academics, media specialists, activists, and all concerned with the future of Europe.

On May 9, 1950, Robert Schuman, the French Foreign Minister, proposed to his German colleague, Konrad Adenauer, that their two nations should together form a European Coal and Steel Community, inviting other European nations to join them in placing their coal and steel industries under a shared sovereign authority. The purpose was to consolidate post-war reconciliation and to prevent the emergence of any future war machine driven by those industries.

This was a first bold step towards today's European Union. Although several 'fathers' of today's EU are recognised including Adenauer, De Gasperi, Monnet and Spaak, Schuman is the only one officially named 'Father of Europe' by the European Assembly (now Parliament).

Yet Schuman's vision for Europe was of a 'community of peoples' deeply rooted in Christian values. In correspondence between himself and Adenauer, these two devout believers spoke of the providential opportunity they had been given to rebuild Europe on Christian foundations.

These origins of this great political experiment that has irreversibly changed the lives of Europeans have been forgotten in secularised accounts of EU history. In recent years, Schuman's fellow patriots resisted mention of Christian roots in the proposed EU constitution, in the name of *laïcité*, a uniquely French approach to the separation of church and state.

The State of Europe Forum aims to promote the 'original vision' for this 'community of peoples', demonstrating that it represents an authentic extension of Europe's past, a viable foundation for Europe's future, and a credible framework for engaging the challenges of the present.

*Jeff Fountain*

**Isaiah 2:3, 4**

*Many peoples will come and say,*

*“Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord,  
to the temple of the God of Jacob.*

*He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths.”*

*The law will go out from Zion, the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.*

*He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples.*

*They will beat their swords into plowshares  
and their spears into pruning hooks.*

*Nation will not take up sword against nation,  
nor will they train for war anymore.*

**Galatians 5: 1, 13-18, 22-25**

*1. It is for **freedom** that Christ has set us **free**. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.*

*13 You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be **free**. But do not use your **freedom** to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love. 14 For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: “Love your neighbour as yourself.” 15 If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.*

*16 So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.*

*17 For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.*

*22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. 24 Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.*

## A CELEBRATION OF FREEDOM

ZUIDERKERK - SUNDAY, MAY 8, 15.30

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‘WELCOME TO AMSTERDAM, CITY OF FREEDOM!’ Amsterdam has for centuries been known as a city of freedom. NYTimes writer, Russell Shorto, calls it the most liberal city in the world. This year we celebrate 71 years since the end of the last occupation, by Nazi Germany.

Freedom is one of the EU’s stated values. But what does it mean? And how much do we believe in it? Freedom for all, or only freedom for ourselves? It’s time to examine the paradoxical nature of freedom which requires boundaries and sacrifice to sustain.

On the eve of the 66th anniversary of the Schuman Declaration, on May 9, 1950, recognised as the official birth of the EU, politicians, church leaders, civic leaders, educators, academics, media specialists, activists and others concerned with the future of Europe gathered in the Zuiderkerk from across the continent and from many church traditions to reflect on the state of Europe today, in the light of Robert Schuman’s vision for ‘a community of peoples deeply rooted in Christian values’.

The year 2016 has been declared both the *Erasmus Year* and the *Year of the Bible*, in commemoration of the 500th anniversary of the publication of the great Renaissance scholar’s Greek and Latin parallel text New Testament in Basel, March 1516. This publication helped catalyse the Reformation, and provided the basis for German, English, Dutch, French and Spanish translations of the Bible in ensuing years.

Europe Day, May 9, follows soon after Memorial Day (May 4) and Liberation Day (May 5) in the Netherlands; May 7 was the occasion of the Modern Devotie Feast celebrated in numerous Dutch locations. All these themes were woven into the public celebration, the opening event of this year’s Forum.

## THE SPIRITUAL ROOTS OF AMSTERDAM'S DNA: *a visual presentation by Jeff Fountain & Kathia Reynders*

AMSTERDAM HAS A LONG HISTORY OF FREEDOM. WHAT WERE THE ROOTS OF THAT FREEDOM? IN THE 16TH CENTURY, WILLIAM OF ORANGE, LEADER OF THE DUTCH REVOLT AGAINST SPAIN, PROTESTED: "I CANNOT CONDONE THAT RULERS DESIRE TO RULE THE CONSCIENCE OF THEIR SUBJECTS, REMOVING THEIR FREEDOM OF FAITH..." (1564)

The Union of Utrecht, The Dutch Republic's 'constitution' of 1591 stated: 'Each person shall remain free, especially in his religion...'

After an intensive debate concerning tolerance and conformity, eventually the idea prevailed that religious freedom and freedom of thought would strengthen, not weaken, the state. This religious freedom made the Dutch Republic unique, the most progressive and diverse culture of its time.

This freedom attracted many refugees and migrants, exploding Amsterdam's population. Jews flocked from Iberia, Germanic lands and Central Europe. Many Protestants and Jews fled to Amsterdam after Antwerp fell to Spain in 1585. Up to 100,000 French Huguenot refugees fled to Holland. One in four Amsterdammers was Huguenot. English dissenters came to Amsterdam including the first Baptists and the Pilgrim Fathers.

Amsterdam attracted traders from Armenia, Turkey, Iran, Syria, Russia and the Baltics. These newcomers often dressed flamboyantly, spoke foreign languages, and practiced different religions.

*'Amsterdam reaps the benefits of freedom. (Here) people from all nations and with all possible beliefs live together harmoniously.'* Spinoza (1670)

Descartes lived in the Dutch Republic from 1628 to 1649: *'In what other country could find you such complete freedom, or find armies at the ready to protect you, or find fewer poisonings, or acts of treason or slander?'*

Yet freedom had its dark side. While all could worship free from persecution and violence, Catholics, Lutherans and Mennonites were forced to do so in 'hidden churches', *schuilkerken*. Still, this freedom was revolutionary in the 17th century. Prostitution was tolerated to protect female citizens. While extolling 'freedom', Amsterdam engaged in slavery for over 250 years, which produced two-thirds of Amsterdam's income.

Amsterdam's freedom was rooted in the religious freedom embraced by the fathers of the Dutch republic. But who influenced the Prince of Orange?

For the 'Year of Erasmus' exhibition in Gouda, a special film was made depicting a passionate speech held by William of Orange to the State Council on New Year's Eve, 1564. The speech was so shocking that the secretary had a heart attack on his way home. The prince spoke for an hour and laid the basis for freedom of religion and expression in the Republic. William of Orange revealed the influence on his thinking of the Dutch scholar Erasmus, quoting him directly: 'In a free state, tongues too should be free.'

Note here the spiritual content of the Dutch national anthem, showing the Biblical context of the prince's thinking:

*Wilhelmus van Nassouwe  
ben ik, van Duitsen bloed,  
den vaderland getrouwe  
blijf ik tot in den dood.  
Een Prinse van Oranje  
ben ik, vrij, onverveerd,  
den Koning van Hispanje  
heb ik altijd geëerd.*

*In Godes vrees te leven  
heb ik altijd betracht,  
daarom ben ik verdreven,  
om land, om luid gebracht.  
Maar God zal mij regeren  
als een goed instrument,  
dat ik zal wederkeren  
in mijnen regiment.*

*Lijdt u, mijn onderzaten  
die oprecht zijt van aard,  
God zal u niet verlaten,  
al zijt gij nu bezwaard.  
Die vroom begeert te leven,  
bidt God nacht ende dag,  
dat Hij mij kracht zal geven,  
dat ik u helpen mag.*

William of Nassau, scion of  
a German and ancient line,  
I dedicate undying faith  
to this land of mine.  
A prince am I undaunted,  
of Orange, ever free,  
To the king of Spain  
I've granted a lifelong loyalty.

I've ever tried to live  
in the fear of God's command  
And therefore I've been driven  
from people, home, and land,  
But God, I trust, will rate me  
His willing instrument  
And one day reinstate me  
into my government.

Let no despair betray you,  
my subjects true and good  
The Lord will surely stay you  
though now you are pursued.  
He who would live devoutly  
must pray God day and night  
To throw His power about me  
as champion of your right.



### 'JAZZ IS FREEDOM'

**THE PRONG JAZZ COMBO LED IN A SING-ALONG RENDITION OF THE WILHELMUS, WHILE THE AMSTERDAM-BASED AFRO-CHOIR INSPIRATIONAL SINGERS PROVIDED COLOUR, RHYTHM AND JOY THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAMME.**

"Jazz is freedom," declared the great Duke Ellington. It is an exhalation of the human spirit, like all music, but uniquely textured by the African American cry for freedom: long-suffering, exuberant, and sensuous. While jazz is an indigenous art form that began in New Orleans, the author notes that it evolved "out of music already in the air," marrying the complex rhythms of Africa with the harmony and instrumentation of Europe. From racially integrated bands to compositions of black pride to protests during the civil rights movement, jazz has functioned as a great leveler in our democracy. The true spirit of jazz is a joyous revolt

from convention, custom, authority, boredom, even sorrow — from everything that would confine the soul of man and hinder its riding free on the air. The Negroes who invented it called their songs the "Blues," and they weren't capable of satire or deception. Jazz was their explosive attempt to cast off the blues and be happy, carefree happy, even in the midst of sordidness and sorrow. And that is why it has been such a balm for modern ennui, and has become a safety valve for modern machine-ridden and convention-bound society. It is the revolt of the emotions against repression.

*Christopher Benson, review of Why Jazz? in CHRISTIANITY TODAY, FEB 2011.*

## FREEDOM, ERASMUS AND THE MODERN DEVOTION - A FORGOTTEN LEGACY

### *Mink de Vries*

*What were the deeper roots of Amsterdam's freedoms? Mink de Vries relates the impact of the Modern Devotion movement on the city (and the whole country) in the 15th and 16th centuries, introducing concepts of equality, respect, tolerance and freedom; how Erasmus, schooled in this movement, spread these ideas further, shaping the thinking and actions of William of Orange and thus the Dutch Revolt against Spain, and finally the establishment of the Dutch republic.*

THE MODERN DEVOTION MOVEMENT, FOUNDED IN THE 14TH CENTURY BY GEERT GROOTE IN DEVENTER AND ZWOLLE, BROUGHT MAJOR CHANGES IN NORTH WEST EUROPE FOR CHURCH, CITIES, EDUCATION, GOVERNMENT, CIVIL SOCIETY, SPIRITUALITY AND BELIEF.

For some 200 years this renewal movement in the Catholic Church greatly influenced government, social welfare, trade, education, agriculture and spirituality. Geert Groote strove for democratisation, for the people's right to have a say, strong communities and for a culture of love instead of fear.

In Amsterdam, the movement strongly influenced all but one of the twenty monasteries with their teaching and values, creating a strong culture of compassion, tolerance and social engagement. Indicators of the movement can still be seen in Amsterdam, including the St Agnieten Chapel (used for graduations ceremonies of the UvA), the Amsterdam Museum, the Wallonian Chapel, and the lane, *Gebed zonder End* (Endless prayer).

It was a start of democratisation in the cities. The Modern Devotion was and is a movement of the Spirit of God. In the past, here and now, and in the future. The character of the Modern Devotion is a personal relation with God and an active life in the civil society. The movement emphasised personal and simple devotion, prayer and bible reading, and values including inclusion, equality, solidarity, cooperation, compassion, free choice and responsibility.

Erasmus, a Modern Devotion follower, attended the Latin School in Deventer (1478-1484) where the Modern Devotion movement exercised a strong influence on education.

Erasmus made it his lifework to produce better Latin and Greek translations of the Bible so that everyone could recite the Bible by heart. 'God Word lives, breathes and speak to us in the Gospels and the letters of the Apostles,' he

wrote. His translation inspired Luther's German Bible, Tyndale's English Bible and the first printed French, Dutch and Spanish Bibles.

Free education and free choices are very important in Europe for religion, culture, social life, politics, but always in relationship. Because there is no personal freedom without social freedom, and there is no social freedom without personal freedom. The Bible gives us freedom. It is a spiritual freedom and personal freedom always in relation with a cooperation and community—a community personally, socially and spiritually connected!

You can be prisoner, like Dietrich Bonhoeffer in Second World War, but he was free, spiritually free! He prayed for the German soldiers. Many Christians in Asia and Africa are in prison in their own country. But they are spiritually free and prayed for us in Europe, where many people are material prisoners and slaves.

Hospitality in relationship with other people is a keyword in the Modern Devotion. It is an example of love in responsibility.

The revival of the Modern Devotion is starting again in Deventer and Zwolle, 600 years after the start with Geert Groote.

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## THE PARADOX OF EUROPE'S DIVERSITY AND UNITY

*Vishal Mangalwadi*

NOT ONLY WAS THE BIBLE THE WELLSPRING OF SPIRITUALITY FOR THE MODERN DEVOTION MOVEMENT; AS VISHAL MANGALWADI ARGUES IN HIS BOOK, *THE BOOK THAT MADE YOUR WORLD* (2011), THE BIBLE WAS 'THE BOOK OF FREEDOMS' WHICH HAS INSPIRED LIBERATION AND EMANCIPATION THROUGH THE AGES, PRODUCING RADICALLY DIFFERENT IDEAS THAN THOSE WHICH SHAPED HIS OWN ASIAN CULTURE.

Europe celebrates diversity because it follows many teachers. If Europeans share some 'genes' in common—that is, ideas that make Europeans different from Muslim, Hindu, and Buddhist cultures—then it is because historically they have one spiritual father: Paul.

Pagan Europe crucified Jesus after declaring him ‘Not-Guilty.’ It’s philosophies and myths proved incapable of inventing the liberating concept of inalienable rights to life and liberty. The life-giving command, ‘You shall not murder’, came from Mt. Sinai to Europe.

How did Christ save a savage Europe? He sent Paul to liberate the Graeco-Roman world with his weapons of Love and Truth. That is, with *the cross*—the emblem of suffering and shame, and *Truth*—observation and understanding of revelation.

### ***Obedience to Truth Sets Free***

Three centuries prior to Paul, the Greeks had grasped that Philosophy was a futile path to Truth. In desperation they had fallen prey to storying. Paul countered European myths with witness to truth. The Lord Jesus had told him, ‘Take courage, for as you have testified to the facts about me in Jerusalem, so you must testify also in Rome.’ (Acts 23:11, ESV)

Greek democracy had killed Socrates; surrender to truth began to set Europe free. It took centuries, but surrendering to the authority of revealed/concealed/understood truth created the modern world of liberty, science and history.

After confronting Athens, the source of Europe’s intellectual *endarkenment*, Paul came to Rome—the mainstay of Europe’s military might. The Liberator sent Paul as a prisoner to set Caesar free. The Messiah invited Paul, the persecutor, to choose suffering in order to move forward the divine mission to liberate Europe.

### ***‘Nation’ Liberated Europe from Empire and Enslaved it to Fascism***

The inquiring Athenians were victims of philosophy as well as of the pagan (Babylonian/Persian/Graeco-Roman) idea of Empire. Through them Paul gave to Europe the idea of nation—the divine prescription of international peace, prosperity, and liberty. Paul said that God ‘made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him . . .’ (Acts 17:26-27)

Why did it take a redeemed Jew to inject the concept of freedom into European genes? It was because the Jewish experience of Exodus from the house of slavery began the process of compiling the Bible—Europe’s sourcebook of liberty.

The Bible's idea of 'nation' inspired the Dutch to initiate the Eighty Year War against Spain's 'Holy Roman Empire'. Formally, Europe yielded to God's idea of nation only in the 1648 'Peace of Westphalia.'

Divorced from the Bible, Nationalism led Europe and the world into terrible wars.

*The EU – a Model For Resolving the Paradox of Nation and Caliphate?*

During WW1, in 1916, through the Sykes-Picot Agreement, Europe divided the Ottoman Empire into nations. It was an attempt to replace the Islamic idea of Caliphate with the European idea of nations . . . but without the Bible.

Just as secularization of 'nation' plunged Europe and the world into wars, now the European idea of secular Islamic 'nations' has plunged the Muslim world into a horrible mess – the devastation could last for a long time.

However, the EU could become a model for the Middle-East, for South Asia, as well as for the Americas struggling with their issues of illegal immigration. The EU's attempt to unite nations through peace, without becoming an empire that obliterates nations, is exactly what Paul taught Romans about God's mission to bring peace to the nations.

After Moses (Genesis 10-22; Deuteronomy 32:8 etc.), it was Isaiah who best explained how the Messiah will bring peace to the world by replacing empires with nations-in-peace:

*It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established as the highest of the mountains, ... and all the nations shall flow to it,*

...

*"Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord... that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths."...*

*He shall judge between the nations,... and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore. (Isaiah 2: 2-4)*

And again, Isaiah predicted that, *"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone..."*

*For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end." (Isaiah 9:2-7)*

### ***To Bless Europa, Paul Made Abraham Her Theological Father***

Genetically, Abraham fathered Ishmael and Israel. One of Paul's greatest achievements was to make Abraham Europe's theological father. For Paul did not think that God promised heaven to Abraham. He told Europeans that God's 'promise to Abraham and his offspring [was] that he would be heir of the world . . . the father of many nations' (Romans 4: 13-17).

It was from the book of Genesis that Paul figured out God's plan to give Europe to Abraham and to bless Europe with great nations.

*Then Abram fell on his face. And God said to him, 'Behold, my covenant is with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations. No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make you into nations, and kings shall come from you'. . . And God said to Abraham, 'As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. I will bless her, and moreover, I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall become nations; kings of [nations] shall come from her.'* (Genesis 17: 3-6 and 15-16).

### ***Righteousness of Faith Made Abraham the Heir of the World***

Europe began to be reformed five centuries ago because Martin Luther rejected Aristotle and became Paul's pupil. Paul's Epistle to the Romans taught him the crucial non-humanistic lesson that Abraham inherited (not heaven but) Europe and the world because he was justified by faith (Romans 4). The Europe that Paul saw had been enveloped by diabolical moral and social darkness. For it suppressed the truth with unrighteousness and relied upon the futility of naturalistic/humanistic thinking (Romans 1: 18-32).

### ***The Paradox of Peace and Spiritual Conflict***

Paul's readers in Rome were living in Satan's kingdom. He sowed the seeds of Europe's optimism. The obedience of faith to the God of peace, he wrote, will enable the righteous to crush Satan under their feet )prior to the Second Coming):

*The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet... Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel... according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages but has now been disclosed and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith.* (Romans 16: 20-27)

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**FREEDOM FOR**

*The first of three meditations by poet, author and speaker,*

***Gerard Kelly***

TRUE FREEDOM IS FREEDOM IN RELATIONSHIP, NOT FREEDOM FROM RELATIONSHIP.  
THIS IS A KEY ASPECT OF THE BIBLICAL ACCOUNT OF HUMAN FREEDOM.

Drawn by the cords of kindness, I bind myself today  
To be tied and tethered to the tender care  
Of the one who declares me free

To be fastened to you is freedom God  
To be anchored is emancipation  
Held hard to a heart that hammers for me  
Hemmed in by the pulse of your passion  
This is the recipe for authentic liberty  
To relinquish my rights, and find intimacy

By choice I lay down my licence to choose,  
Resolving to use  
The sacred instruments of privilege and power  
To take pleasure in the preference of others

Ceding self-obsession to sow seeds of celebration  
I will seek out the meek, I will bless the oppressed.  
I will find and free the dispossessed.  
I will tell the inheritors that all this will be theirs.  
White; black; slave; free; employer and employee  
Young and old; sick and well; parent, child; male, female  
I will seek in differences not enmity  
But energy for love

Through the bars of our cages we see you God:  
An eagle in flight, defining freedom  
The ground beneath our feet is groaning  
Crying out for liberation  
Yet louder still we hear your voice  
Singing out the names of slaves unchained

Drawn by the cords of kindness, I bind myself today  
To be tied and tethered to the tender care  
Of the one who declares me free

## WHO WON THE PEACE?

*Jeff Fountain*

SINCE THE DAYS OF WILLIAM OF ORANGE, AMSTERDAM HAS LOST HER FREEDOM TWICE: TO NAPOLEON, AND MORE RECENTLY TO HITLER.

THE GENERATION THAT REMEMBERS THE GERMAN OCCUPATION IS DYING OUT. MOST OF US DO NOT KNOW WHAT IT IS TO LOSE OUR FREEDOM. WE TEND TO TAKE IT FOR GRANTED. WHICH IS WHY DAYS LIKE REMEMBRANCE DAY ARE SO IMPORTANT.

THE ZUIDERKERK WAS USED AS A MORTUARY FOR BODIES WHICH COULD NOT BE BURIED DUE TO THE FROZEN GROUND, DURING THE TERRIBLE HUNGER-WINTER OF 1944-45. THIS BRINGS THE REALITY OF THE LOSS OF FREEDOM CLOSE TO US ALL.

•

TOMORROW, MAY 9, IS THE OFFICIAL BIRTHDAY OF THE EUROPEAN UNION!

And she's only 66 years young. At least, that's according to the decision of EU leaders meeting in Milan in 1985, when they decided to recognise this day as the birth of the movement that has led to the current EU.

However, this birthday remains one of Europe's best kept secrets. Few Europeans are aware that on May 9, 1950, the first move was made towards the creation of what is now known as the European Union.

This past week across Europe celebrations were held in many countries commemorating the end of World War Two. We're all familiar with the photos of the Allied soldiers liberating towns and villages, giving out chocolate and kissing the girls. But once the chocolate and kisses had been given out, did everybody simply go home and live happily ever after?

While we know who won the war, do we know who won the peace? The five years after the war were tumultuous years. Hatred and bitterness, mistrust and fear was rife. Hearts, lives, families and communities were broken. Most of Amsterdam's Jews had been taken away to the gas chambers.

An Iron Curtain came down across Europe; the Berlin Airlift had to be mobilised to save a besieged city. Trade unions in France, Italy and the Ruhr Valley, masterminded from the Kremlin, did their utmost to bring governments down and to create chaos generally.

Europe was suffering a severe case of post-trauma stress disorder.

Against this background, the French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman surprised the world on the evening of May 9 by announcing a plan for France, Germany and other European countries to pool together their coal and steel production as 'the first concrete foundation of a European federation'.

Calling upon those countries that had almost destroyed each other, he proposed the creation of a supranational European Institution to manage the coal and steel industry, the basis of any military power.

That day was the turning point in post-war European history. Hence the decision to celebrate 9 May each year as '*Europe Day*'.

Europe of course has existed for centuries, even millennia. But over those centuries, many terrible tragedies have happened. What began on May 9, 1950, was a process to break the old cycle of vengeance and violence, and a movement to build a community of nations.

Schuman envisioned 'a community of peoples deeply rooted in the basic Christian values of equality, freedom, solidarity and peace'. He wrote that 'loving your neighbour as yourself' was a democratic principle which, applied to nations, meant being prepared to serve and love neighbouring peoples. If Christianity taught that we were all children of the same God, he wrote, 'regardless of race, colour, social status or profession', states too should be treated as equals. No race or nation could claim greater importance in God's eyes.

But this community, he warned, 'cannot and must not remain an economic and technical enterprise; it needs a soul, the conscience of its historical affinities and of its responsibilities in the present and in the future, and a political will at the service of the same human ideal'.

The European Movement would only be successful, he argued, if future generations 'managed to tear themselves away from the temptation of materialism which corrupted society by cutting it off from its spiritual roots'.

So if Schuman were here today, would he be celebrating Europe's 'birthday'? On the one hand he would be delighted by the unbroken sixty-six years of peace among the EU members, and by its expansion into Central Europe.

But surely he would be appalled by the false ethic of greed in the financial sector, and the 'culture of death' expressed in youth suicides, pre-natal infanticides (abortions), assisted suicides (euthanasia), low birth rates, rising murder rates, signs of deep spiritual poverty.

Surely he would be gravely concerned about the threats to our freedom today.

**PANEL: THREATS TO FREEDOM IN EUROPE TODAY**

TODAY, OUR FREEDOMS ARE UNDER THREAT FROM WITHIN AND FROM WITHOUT. WHAT ARE THESE THREATS AND HOW CAN WE RESPOND IN CHRISTIAN LOVE AND TRUTH? •NATIONALISM? •SECULARISM? •TRUMP? •ISLAMISM? •'FREE'-MARKET? •CLIMATE CHANGE? •PUTIN? •ELITISM? •LOSS OF VALUES? •ERDOGAN? •BRUSSELS? •TERRORISM? •BANKERS? •TRAFFICKING? •REFUGEE-INVASION?

A PANEL OF SPEAKERS CONTRIBUTING TO THE FORUM WHICH BEGAN THAT EVENING OFFERED BRIEF OBSERVATIONS ON ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED IN MORE DEPTH OVER THE FOLLOWING 24 HOURS.

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**Jennifer Tunehag**, *Stockholm, European Freedom Network:*

When need to see the influx of refugees not as a threat; these are people themselves who are under threat. Extremely vulnerable to exploitation, they deserve special attention and care from us. Anywhere that we allow the rights and freedom of people to be reduced, we create a society that is in great danger for everyone. How many of us have seen people begging? Nearly everyone. How many of us suspect that the money collected goes to someone else. How many have seen children begging, even in the middle of the day? How is it that we are aware these people are not free, yet continue with our daily lives? Any time we tolerate the enslavement of people in our countries, we encourage health threats, the growth of organised crime, and the loss of freedom.

**Noemi Montes**, *Madrid, researcher, refugees and migration:*

Spinoza, born within walking distance of where we are sitting now, said: *The smaller the freedom for the expression of opinions in a state, the more violent is the government in that place. Amsterdam for example reaps the benefits of this freedom hence its growth, which all nations admire. In this thriving and favoured city state people from all nations and with all possible beliefs live together harmoniously.*

Many people through the centuries had been looking for a place where they could live in peace, where they could be free. Spinoza's Jewish family had to flee to Amsterdam from Spain.

Today we could still say that Amsterdam, the Netherlands, Europe, is a place where people come looking for shelter, for freedom, for peace. Last

summer I met Mohammed, a Syrian Doctor who came to the Netherlands seeking shelter for him and his family. When I told him that I was Spanish, his first question was, "Do you know Spinoza, the Spanish Sephardic Jew who was a political philosopher?" He was so enthusiastic because he had visited Spinoza's house in Leiden and he had even gone to the public library to photocopy the biography of Spinoza.

When we asked him why he left Syria, he told us that he ran away from ISIS, from Islamic extremism, from religious and political intolerance.

When I asked Mohammed why he had come to the Netherlands he said because he admired the Protestant Reformers like Luther and Calvin. He came looking for freedom. As I listened to him talking about the amazing freedom here in The Netherlands and Europe, where he wanted to raise his children, I was afraid because I see he is going to be disappointed. Because as we listen to our politicians, we see they believe in human rights and freedom - but only for us. Because Europe thinks freedom is only for Europeans. We talk about freedom of expression, freedom of religion, and freedom of belief, and these are important. But we need to talk about freedom of movement, because when a person cannot go anywhere we really lack all kinds of freedoms: freedom of work, freedom of education... When you read Hannah Arendt's book, *We refugees*, she highlights that the loss of freedom of movement is the beginning of losing all kinds of freedoms. In Lesbos, the welcoming centre for Syrian refugees has become a prison again after the EU deal with Turkey.

**Stefan Waanders** *Den Bosch, former director, Thomas More Foundation*

What threatens our freedom? Many things. One, we don't know any more what democratic politics is about. It is certainly not running a business company. Neither is it the sum of gut feelings of unqualified opinions. It is also not pushing one's own private preferences, but it is about dealing with the common good, *bonus commune*. In our system of representative democracy it's up to the politicians to come up with a solid vision of the common good and to persuade citizens of the validity of this vision. And it's up to the citizens to get the right information and to judge it for the sake of the common good and if necessary to take distance from its own prejudices. European citizens should have the courage to educate in this direction.

**Jonathan Chaplin:** *Cambridge, co-author, God and the EU*

Freedom is very difficult to define because it consists of so many good things: possibilities, opportunities, capacities and potentials. Equally, threats to freedom are multifaceted, coming in many forms, some of them are easier to see than others. Obvious threats to freedom are those that take the form of physical, legal or political constraints; or serious economic deprivation and extreme poverty.

Other kinds of threats to freedom are more insidious and harder to detect, such as the West's addiction to consumerism. We don't tend to think of us being in the grip of a cultural addiction. And we are rapidly exporting that to non-western cultures and seeing the same pathologies springing up in those cultures.

Consumerism is an addiction to constantly acquiring new material things – more, better, latest – which occupies so much of our time, space, mental, spiritual and social experience that we often don't realise that so much of our behaviour is oriented simply to the business of consumption.

And it has many debilitating effects on our freedom. It stifles us psychologically, weakens us relationally, separates us socially, corrupts us morally, weakens us politically. Those of us preoccupied with consumption cannot form stable strong eyeball-to-eyeball relationships. We don't think we have the time or energy or attention to commit themselves to the kind of democratic politics.

People in the grip of that kind of consumerism are easily manipulated by politicians but also by the background global economic system in which all of us are caught up.

So let's think about the full range of threats to freedom: the visible and obvious, but also the more invisible, insidious threats that get inside us and sap our moral potency. Without that moral potency, freedom for us becomes useless.

**CLOSING: EUROPEAN ANTHEM: TUNE - ODE TO JOY**

*Thankfully we come before You, King of nations, Lord above  
Grateful for the gift of freedom, and for your redeeming love.  
From the shame of human folly You've restored our dignity  
Granted peace among the nations, Helped us find new unity.*

*We confess we've often wandered from your path of truth and light  
Trusted human understanding, set our hopes on mortal might.  
Lord, restore us to our senses, bring us back to Father's heart,  
Visit us anew, O Spirit, every nation, every hearth.*

*With the vision now before us of a true community  
Of all European peoples, rich in our diversity,  
Let us pray and work together for our solidarity,  
Peace, equality and freedom, rooted in your charity.*

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## FORUM OPENING PLENARY

ZUIDERKERK - SUNDAY, MAY 8, 19.30

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### THE TRUTH WILL SET YOU FREE

**Gerard Kelly**

*The second of three meditations*

**LOOKING AT THE SEVEN STORIES THAT MAKE UP THE SWEEP OF THE BIBLICAL NARRATIVE, WE SEE FREEDOM AT EVERY STAGE.**

In **CREATION** God declares his human creatures free, and asks that they love and serve him through freedom in relationship. It is in the place of trust and dependance that the true meaning of freedom is found. This is the foundation of the Bible's story, and the very root of the freedoms we so desperately seek today. "*Freedom is not a quality of man,*" Dietrich Bonhoeffer writes, "*Nor is it an ability, a capacity, a kind of being that somehow flares up in him. Anyone investigating man to discover freedom finds nothing of it. Why? because freedom is not a quality which can be revealed - it is not a possession, a presence, an object, nor is it a form of existence - but a relationship and nothing else. In truth, freedom is a relationship between two persons. Being free means "being free for the other," because the other has bound me to him. Only in relationship with the other am I free.*"

In **VOCATION** God invites specific human beings - first personified in Abraham and Sarah - to walk with him in freedom. The model is covenantal, not contractual. God in his freedom loves us and asks us in our freedom to love him in return. Honoured as the ancestors of one third of the world's population - Christians, Muslims and Jews - Abraham and Sarah show us what it means for us to hear from our maker the call to freedom. Their desire to be free and their willingness to move in search of that freedom is the prototype of much that we take for granted in world cultures - and arguably the seed of the Western dream.

In **LIBERATION** the God of the Exodus demonstrates his personal, passionate, unwavering commitment to human freedom. God shows himself to be the one who brings us out from slavery. Since freedom, as Genesis has told us, is a prerequisite of covenant love, it follows that for Israel to be a people after God's heart they must be free. It is from their freedom that God will ask them to obey and love him: covenant and slavery are mutually exclusive. "The God of our story is not woodenly acting out a pre-determined script," Philip Greenslade suggests, "He is living out a passion for His people and for the

world's redemption. ... This is a God who is passionately aroused by injustice, and plunges into emotional involvement with His people. ...God hears and feels, sees and knows, remembers and acts to save His people."

In **FORMATION** we see how God, from tabernacle to temple and priests to prophets, calls his people to follow him with all their hearts. It is love, not law that will form them as his people, because love is a free response to covenant. Worship is central to the human journey because it is the place in which the heart, in free surrender, allows God access. We become who we are meant to be by honouring God for who he is.

In **LIMITATION** the God of the exile frees his people even from the prison of their own religious expectations. Jerusalem is too small for him - he wants the whole world free. It is in exile that the promise of a Messiah truly forms - a people stripped of their small sanctuary begin to dream of a "kingdom" as wide as the world. Exodus and Exile are the two wheels on which the story of Israel carries us to the story of Jesus - God uses both to teach us the true meaning of freedom. As poet Maya Angelou has written, "The caged bird sings with a fearful trill, of things unknown but longed for still, and his tune is heard on the distant hill, for the caged bird sings of freedom."

In **INCARNATION** God himself takes on the nature of humanity to deliver us once and for all from our alienation. Jesus embodies in his birth, life, death and resurrection What it means to be truly human, to be truly free, and in our freedom, to love and obey our maker. That which the creator looked for from the very start is now delivered and fulfilled, so that the Apostle John can say, "if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed." Jean-Paul Sartre described freedom as "what we do with what is done to us" - the perfect description of the sacrificial life and death of Jesus.

Finally, in **RESTORATION** God shows us through the gift of his Spirit that we, too, can live this life of free obedience. The reign of God becomes the rain of God as the Spirit falls on human beings, and Peter is able to say that "This is that" - all that God has promised is fulfilled as his Spirit fills human lives? Why? Because the promise always was that we would do what is right not because the law demanded it but because our hearts desired it. This is the ultimate goal of every civilised society, that its members love and care for one another not because they must but because they may. "It is no good giving me a play like Hamlet or King Lear and telling me to write a play like that," Archbishop William Temple said, "Shakespeare could do it, I can't. And it is no good showing me a life like the life of Jesus and telling me to live a life like that. Jesus could do it, I can't. But if the genius of Shakespeare could come and

live in me, then I could write plays like this. And if the Spirit could come into me, then I could live a life like His.”

These seven stories then, show us just how deeply human freedom runs through the biblical narrative - and how relevant the bible’s story is to our longings for freedom today. In a culture in which liberty is understood as freedom *from* restriction, the biblical worldview offers us a different path: that of freedom *for* responsibility.

Where freedom to pursue monetary gain without restraint leads to corruption in human cultures; where freedom to buy and sell without restriction leads to the buying and selling of people; where freedom to produce and consume without limit leads to the destruction of our planet; where freedom to seek power at any price leads to the devaluing of human lives; where freedom is pursued without the mediating agency of relationship, diminishing the human Spirit, how deeply do we need to find this different path?

If you intend and seek nothing but the will of God and the love of your neighbour, *The Imitation of Christ* tells us, ‘You will be truly free’.

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## WHAT IS THE EU FOR? A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE

*Jonathan Chaplin*

MY THEME IS THE 'STATE OF THE EU' RATHER THAN THE 'STATE OF EUROPE'. I AM GOING TO FOCUS MY REMARKS ON THE EUROPEAN UNION AS A POLITICAL INSTITUTION. I'M NOT GOING TO SAY MUCH ABOUT 'EUROPE' AS A CULTURE, A CIVILIZATION, OR A GEOGRAPHIC SPACE. AND, STRICTLY SPEAKING, WHEN WE SPEAK OF 'EUROPE' IN THOSE BROADER, COMPLEX AND MULTI-LAYERED SENSES, WE SHOULDN'T SPEAK OF '*THE EUROPEAN PROJECT*'. CULTURES OR CONTINENTS ARE TOO BIG, DIVERSE AND SPRAWLING TO HAVE 'PROJECTS'. BUT WE CAN SPEAK SPECIFICALLY OF THE 'PROJECT OF EUROPEAN POLITICAL INTEGRATION'. THAT IS WHAT THE EU IS AND THAT'S WHAT I WILL ADDRESS.

I want to begin by reminding us of the mounting crises the EU is facing. Then I'll ask the core question what the EU as a political institution is actually for. I'll conclude by turning to the theme of 'the paradox of freedom'. I'll propose that we get a better grasp of 'the state of freedom' in Europe and how it can be protected against its threats when we can give a clear answer to the question of what the EU is. My title speaks of 'a' Christian perspective. Of course there isn't only one, but I hope many of you find echoes of what I say in your own traditions.

In 2004, the European Commission published a little-known 18-page document on the overall health of the EU, at the time when the accession of several east European countries was about to take place. It was called *The Spiritual and Cultural Dimension of Europe* and it was produced by a 'Reflection Group' of senior political and intellectual figures from across the EU.<sup>1</sup> I would encourage everyone to read this short document. It was not an official statement of Commission views. Perhaps that is why it was so interesting. It offered a penetrating analysis of the crisis of identity and purpose facing the EU as it prepared for the immense challenge of embracing 10 new member states and 75 million new citizens bringing with them very different political, economic and cultural experiences and expectations to those of existing member states. You could say that the document was attempting to revive the discussion of a 'soul for Europe' launched by former Commission President

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<sup>1</sup> [https://cordis.europa.eu/pub/citizens/docs/citizens\\_michalski\\_091104\\_report\\_annexes\\_en.pdf](https://cordis.europa.eu/pub/citizens/docs/citizens_michalski_091104_report_annexes_en.pdf)

Jacques Delors over a decade earlier but which had gone quiet. The document offered a careful diagnosis of the direction of European integration. The forces of economic integration that had been driving the EU, it said,

do nothing to bring Europeans any closer together. They do not and cannot establish the internal cohesion that is necessary for the European Union; nor... can [they] alone provide cohesion for any political identity. To function as a viable and vital polity, the European Union needs a firmer foundation.... Economic integration simply does not, of itself, lead to political integration because *markets cannot produce a politically resilient solidarity*. Solidarity—a genuine sense of civic community—is vital because the competition that dominates the marketplace gives rise to powerful centrifugal forces. Markets may create the economic basis of a polity and are thereby an indispensable condition of its political constitution. But they cannot on their own produce political integration.... The original expectation, that the political unity of the EU would be a consequence of the European common market has proven to be illusory.

That was remarkably candid admission and, I believe, a true one. But that was 2004. Even those wise authors could not then foresee that the prospects for a ‘politically resilient solidarity’ across the EU would be so much more precarious a mere 12 years later. They could not have anticipated the tumultuous shocks that lay ahead: the rise of nationalistic and xenophobic movements across many EU states, the global financial crisis, the Eurozone crisis and the prospect of a Grexit, the resurgence of Russian nationalism, the catastrophic refugee crisis—and, as we speak, the genuine possibility of a Brexit—opinion polls are currently divided very evenly – and the serious risk of a subsequent unravelling of the EU that could follow.

Some EU leaders are now acknowledging the depth of the crisis. At a panel in Rome on Thursday, three senior figures conceded that there had been a stark decline in EU-wide solidarity in recent years. Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker lamented that, “In former times we were working together ... there was a shared sentiment that....we were in charge of a big piece of history. This has totally gone.” He went on: “We have full-time Europeans when it comes to taking and part-time Europeans when it comes to giving.... Now we have too many part-time Europeans.” These “part timers,” he said, were often those who received most from EU funds, by which he apparently meant new member states from the east.<sup>2</sup> But he might as well have had

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<sup>2</sup> [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_SPEECH-16-1673\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_SPEECH-16-1673_en.htm)

Britain in mind, which I regret has often been a part-time member. Martin Schulz, the president of the European Parliament, put it more bluntly: "We have a lot of salesmen in the European Council and only a few statesmen." Council President Donald Tusk went even further: "The idea of one EU state, one vision ... was an illusion."<sup>3</sup>

There is that word again: illusion. But now I want to remind you that the original Christian founders of the EU were not under any such illusions. Figures like Robert Schuman understood very well that the project of European integration was political before it was economic and that it would fail if the political ends of the project ever came to be dominated by the economic means. Schuman said that European integration "cannot and must not remain an economic and technical enterprise; it needs a soul, the conscience of its historical affinities and of its responsibilities in the present and in the future, and a political will at the service of the same human ideal."<sup>4</sup> The creation of the European Coal and Steel Community was not a mere industrial policy but a decisive political act of reconciliation – a truly visionary leap into a future where hostile nations would actually lay down the means of waging war against each other. For those Christian statesmen, perhaps it was also a glimpse through the eyes of faith of a future vision in which 'swords would be beaten into ploughshares'. Indeed they held that not even political unity would be enough: such unity would have to be grounded in a common European heritage of Christian faith, the faith that had actually given 'Europe' its unique identity.

That was 66 years ago, when Europe was still overwhelmingly Christian – at least in profession, if not practice. Today we live in an extensively secularized Europe and increasingly pluralistic Europe – posing the questions whether and how the EU project can actually be sustained now that it has departed so far from its own heritage. I return to that question up in another session.

But this evening I want to ask the question: what is a *non-illusory* way to see the European Union? What is a clear-eyed, realistic vision of the EU? To

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<sup>3</sup> <http://tvnewsroom.consilium.europa.eu/event/panel-discussion-in-rome-on-the-future-of-the-european-union-5732ecd213ff0/president-tusk-at-the-state-of-the-european-union-panel-disc-572b981ce3a5b#/gallery/0>

<sup>4</sup> Robert Schuman, *For Europe*, p58 (Foundation Robert Schuman, English edition 2010), quoted in Jeff Fountain, *Deeply Rooted: The Forgotten Legacy of Robert Schuman*, p83 (Schuman Centre for European Studies, 2010)

answer that question we need to ask an even more basic one: *what is the EU for?* What type of entity is it? And what can we reasonably expect from this type of entity? I want to explore what it means to say that the EU is *one type of political institution*, acting with the instruments of law and policy, and reaching decisions through difficult, democratic compromises.

*What is a non-illusory way to see the European Union? What is a clear-eyed, realistic vision of the EU? To answer that question we need to ask an even more basic one: what is the EU for? What type of entity is it? And what can we reasonably expect from this type of entity?*

Now, by identifying the EU as a *political* institution, we are also saying that it is not some other type of thing, that some purposes do *not* belong to it. Political institutions do not include everything in society within them. States do not absorb 'the nation', but are one part of it, the part that serves the whole—as Jacques Maritain nicely put it. They are only one kind of social institution and not inherently more important than others. There is much they cannot do, much they should never attempt to do and much we should never empower them to do. They have an important job but it is a limited one. For example, political institutions like the EU are not essentially *economic* entities, like a market. This has great significance for the Brexit debate, which is overwhelmingly concentrated on economic benefit. For even if it could be demonstrated that membership of the EU will benefit Britain economically more than separation, that fact alone should not decide the issue. Evidently a certain level of secure economic resources is presupposed if a political community's core political tasks are to be discharged. But, as the Reflection Group correctly saw, economic purposes should be kept subservient to political objectives.

This insight has long been central to Christian political thought, and we need to revive it and reaffirm it today. In the Christian tradition, political institutions do not exist to make their citizens rich, only to create conditions in which citizens can engage in their own economic activities. We can go further: nor do political institutions exist to defend the interests of an ethnic majority or a majority culture against minorities; to protect indigenous residents against foreigners; to create virtue in their citizens' souls. Those and other tasks are all outside their authority. Rather, political institutions exist to establish a framework of justice, peace, solidarity and freedom in the public realm of society. They do that by establishing a just legal order within which all citizens and all other institutions – families, neighbourhoods, educational

and cultural groups, economic organisations – the institutions of ‘civil society’ and the market – can be free to pursue their own responsibilities and purposes securely. These are the unique tasks of the institutions we call ‘political’. We might say these tasks are the specifically political components of ‘the common good’ of society. And they are not the whole of the common good – most of what falls under ‘common good’ is down to us.

But Christianity does not see political institutions as a necessary evil, as secular libertarians suggest. Nor are they the solution to all social problems, as secular social democrats sometimes imply. They are, as the apostle Paul says in Romans chapter 13, “servants of God for your good.” In that short phrase, Paul both affirms the legitimacy of political institutions against those who see them as hopelessly corrupt, while also debunking the imperial claims of the pagan Roman state. Most of us have little problem recognising these purposes – public justice, peace, solidarity and freedom – at the level of our nation-states. We can probably also grasp that it’s true of our local and regional governments, even in very mundane pragmatic matters like – as, in my own village, whether speed bumps on the road work or not: that is protecting local justice, the rights of residents to safe public space. But it’s vital that we also see international and trans-national institutions as called to these noble tasks – the UN, the WTO, NATO, and, indeed, the EU – however poorly they sometimes perform them. We need to see that each of these bodies has been established to make a specific contribution to securing justice, peace, solidarity or freedom, but now in public space beyond the borders of any one nation state. That is their *raison d’être*, and that is the benchmark by which their performance should be critically assessed.

For universal norms of justice, peace, solidarity and freedom are God’s will for all humanity and their claims do not stop at national borders – indeed sometime they stand in judgment over those borders, as Palestinians rightly insist. In addition to governments’ first responsibilities for their own citizens, they also hold responsibilities for citizens and nations elsewhere, especially those who are most at risk of injustice or whose peace, solidarity or freedom are threatened. Thus some of us in the UK are urging our fellow citizens – indeed our fellow Christians – not to view EU membership primarily in the narrow, shrivelled language of the ‘British national interest’. But this, I regret

is *entirely* how the government wants them to see it, as is seen from their official leaflet that was recently posted to every household in Britain.<sup>5</sup>

Christians must rise above those narrow horizons. We reject the secularist liberal assumption of the primacy of individual self-interest in national politics. We should reject the equivalent assumption in international politics – and urge our fellow citizens to reject it as well. There should be no automatic primacy of one’s own ‘national interest’ over the interests of other nations: this is precisely what is blocking a just resolution of the EU response to the refugee crisis. Indeed Christians should be prepared to argue for positions which advance the international common good even at the apparent expense of their national interests – as the statesmen who launched the project of European integration did with such courage and foresight.

We should view the EU, then, as an institution with a necessary, honourable and demanding moral vocation: to promote conditions of justice, peace, solidarity and freedom across European public space.

*I am convinced that the crises facing Europe, and the world, demand such an institution (as the EU): the refugee crisis; threats to national security such as jihadist terrorism; technological threats to human personhood; structural deprivation; environmental degradation; regional and global peace-making, and many more.*

I am convinced that the crises facing Europe, and the world, demand such an institution: the refugee crisis; threats to national security such as jihadist terrorism; technological threats to human personhood; structural deprivation; environmental degradation; regional and global peace-making, and many more.

But in case you think I am a hopeless Europhile, let me make one critical observation on the early language of the founders—the aspiration of ‘ever closer union’. We can easily see why, in the aftermath of terrible war, this language was used. I suspect it was inspired by an awareness of the depth of the challenge of reconciliation that lay ahead. But it has now become counter-productive. Actually, the phrase has no special legal force. No extension of EU competence has ever been justified simply because the EU is committed to ‘ever closer union’ – so the British Prime Minister’s ‘victory’ in his recent negotiations is only symbolic. But the phrase has become the focus of anxiety for those who worry about the loss of ‘sovereignty’ of

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.eureferendum.gov.uk/why-the-government-believes-we-should-remain/eu-referendum-leaflet/>

member states. What can we say in response? We can rightly speak about the 'sharing' or 'pooling' of sovereignty – that certainly sounds less worrying than 'loss'. But it is the case that membership of the EU does involve a 'loss' of sovereignty *in the sense of national legislative autonomy* in those areas where the EU has legal competence. But national politicians and EU elites have not always been sufficiently honest about this. I think this is because they have lost confidence in the larger moral vision which alone justifies the transfer of aspects of national sovereignty to a body like the EU. We urgently need to regain clarity about and confidence in that vision. Only then can we compellingly show how membership of the EU also confers an immense 'gain', in the capacity to exercise effective collective political responsibility for public justice, peace, solidarity and freedom in the face of the challenges that confront us.

We should not defend 'national sovereignty' for its own sake, as if it were self-justifying. Such sovereignty has, in any case, always been limited and today is greatly restricted by many international obligations, as well as by empirical factors such as economic globalization or the rise of 'global civil society'. Rather we should frame the question this way: *what distribution of (many kinds of) legal competence, across all tiers of political community, best enables governments and citizens to discharge their various duties of justice, peace, solidarity and freedom in the face of the compelling challenges of our times?* Even the Reflection Group document I mentioned earlier does not pose that question sharply enough. The question can only be answered on a case by case basis – not by operating with the default assumption that more integration is always better, and still less by appealing to the vague idea of 'ever closer union'. In some cases we will need to argue for more EU powers – I think that is the case in the refugee crisis, environmental policy and aspects of foreign policy. In other cases we will need to argue for more subsidiarity: that might be the case as regards the protection of essential national industries.

I realise that what I've said doesn't specify any particular policy outcomes, but it does suggest a way of framing the debate about European integration – and the very purpose of the EU – in clearer moral and political terms: terms which, we might add, while rooted in Christian faith are fully intelligible in public debate. And this was part of the genius of the Schuman Declaration.

To conclude, how does this all relate to 'the paradox of freedom'? I suggest that, from a Christian perspective, there is no *inherent* paradox of freedom.

Understood in Christian terms, 'freedom' is first of all *space for responsible mutual service* – a field for the exercise of solidarity. It not firstly about stopping others from interfering with our choices, although it includes that in some important cases (we don't want governments telling us how to exercise our freedom of religion or freedom of movement). But we are most deeply 'free' when we enjoy secure public space to pursue our diverse responsibilities: for our own good, for the good of our family, friends and the institutions of which we are members, and for the common good. Freedom in the Christian tradition is not merely setting boundaries around the pursuit of private, self-chosen interests. It seeks those chiefly to make possible that mutual service through which alone human fulfilment is realised. It is to this vision of freedom that we as Christian should witness, and to which we should call the EU.

Now freedom requires many things not provided by political institutions: adequate levels of personal morality, a sufficient degree of relational and social stability, a reasonable amount of civic pride, mutual respect, forbearance, trust, and other public virtues. These are the moral and cultural conditions of freedom. Such conditions are undergoing serious erosion across much of Europe, due to moral disorientation, individualism, consumerism, xenophobia, and relational breakdown across many fronts. But political institutions, whether nation-states or transnational bodies like the EU, cannot be mainly responsible for repairing these conditions. If we look first to them to fix these problems, we shall be disappointed, and we'll direct our energies in the wrong places.

Like the common good, nurturing the conditions of freedom is mostly down to us: to persons, to families, to civil society, to faith communities. But political institutions do play an indispensable role in maintaining the freedom both of individual citizens and of the many social institutions needed for a healthy society. Their unique role is to establish the secure, enforceable, impartial legal infrastructure which enables the free pursuit of other personal and social goods. The special responsibility of the EU for European freedom is to attend to the *transnational conditions* required to protect and promote that freedom. Most of what makes

*Like the common good, nurturing the conditions of freedom is mostly down to us: to persons, to families, to civil society, to faith communities. But political institutions do play an indispensable role in maintaining the freedom both of individual citizens and of the many social institutions needed for a healthy society.*

for freedom across European nations is actually outside the competence of the EU, and of its member states. Our task is to identify what is the unique if limited contribution of the EU to that larger goal and to urge it to make that contribution.

Finally, freedom is not the first or the most important goal of political institutions – you may have noticed I put it last in the list of political tasks: justice, peace, solidarity and freedom. If freedom is divorced from those other goals, it becomes merely the self-interested grasping for individual autonomy and then, certainly, it becomes paradoxical and self-defeating. If it is embedded in them, pursued alongside them, it will contribute decisively to personal, social and political flourishing across European society.

May that be our goal as we engage as Christian citizens, as European citizens, with the risky, faltering, dysfunctional but necessary and visionary project that is the European Union.

## FORUM PLENARY

ZUIDERKERK - MONDAY, MAY 9, 9.00

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### HUMANIFESTO OF FREEDOM

*Gerard Kelly*

*The third of three meditations*

I want to be a grace guerilla, no longer a chameleon of karma;  
the time has come to stand out from the crowd.

I want to give forgiveness a fighting chance of freeing me,  
to live in love and live it out loud.

I want to drink deep of the foolishness of wisdom  
instead of swallowing the wisdom of fools,  
to find a source in the deeper mines of meaning.

I want to search out the unsearchable, to invoke the invisible,  
to choose the truths the TV hypnotists aren't screening.

*No camouflage, no entourage, no smoothly fitting in.*

*I want a faith that goes further than face value  
and a beauty that goes deeper than my skin.*

I want to be untouched by my possessions  
instead of being possessed by what I touch,  
to test the taste of having nothing to call mine,  
to hold consumption's cravings back,  
to be content with luck or lack, to live as well on water as on wine.

I want to spend myself on those I think might need me,  
not spend all I think I need on myself.

I want my heart to be willing to make house calls.  
Let those whose rope is at an end find in me a faithful friend.  
Let me be known as one who rebuilds broken walls.

*No camouflage, no entourage, no smoothly fitting in.*

*I want a faith that goes further than face value  
and a beauty that goes deeper than my skin.*

I want to be centred outside the circle, to be chiselled from a different seam.  
I want to be seduced by another story and drawn into a deeper dream,  
to be anchored in an undiscovered ocean, to revolve around an unfamiliar sun,  
A boom box tuned to an alternate station, a bullet fired from a different gun.

*No camouflage, no entourage, no smoothly fitting in.*

*I want a faith that goes further than face value  
and a beauty that goes deeper than my skin.*

MORNING SEMINARS: Monday, May 9, 9.30

## POLITICS: reframing the European project

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### CHRISTIANITY AND THE 'SOULS' OF EUROPE

*Jonathan Chaplin*

YESTERDAY I ADDRESSED THE QUESTION, 'WHAT IS THE EU FOR?' I SUGGESTED THAT, AS A POLITICAL INSTITUTION, THE EU IT HAS THE UNIQUE RESPONSIBILITY OF PROMOTING THE GOALS OF JUSTICE, PEACE, SOLIDARITY AND FREEDOM ACROSS EUROPEAN PUBLIC SPACE, IN WAYS SUITABLE FOR A TRANSNATIONAL POLITICAL INSTITUTION. EUROPEAN POLITICAL INTEGRATION, SO FAR AS IT IS NECESSARY, IS INTEGRATION AROUND THOSE GOALS. THAT IS WHAT EUROPEAN POLITICAL UNITY INVOLVES, AND IT IS IN PURSUIT OF THOSE SPECIFIC GOALS THAT AN EU-WIDE IDENTITY SHOULD BE PURSUED.

I said that this is a visionary and a noble task – however poorly we think it is actually being performed right now. But I also said it is a limited task: it does not include promoting every European good, organising all of European civil society, or fixing every social problem. Much belongs to other agencies: individual citizens, families, markets, and the many organisations of civil society. Today I want to suggest two things: first, that this limited remit of the EU means that the EU also cannot officially represent or promote any one faith, one 'soul', even Christianity; and second, that nevertheless Christians must actively and confidently seize all the opportunities they have to contribute their insights on the task of EU in the public realm. They must put their heart and soul into the EU. These two things are not only opposed to each other, they support each other.

Many of you will know these words of Commission President Jacques Delors from over twenty years ago:

"If in the next ten years we haven't managed to give a Soul to Europe, to give it spirituality and meaning, the game will be up"

- *'Speech to the churches'*, Brussels 4 February 1992.

Under Delors and others the idea was taken further in official EU projects, but these now seem to have wound down. As far as I know the phrase 'soul for Europe' is mainly used today by non-official or semi-official bodies, and largely in a cultural rather than a spiritual sense. That is how President Barroso meant it in a conference speech he gave in 2014. His speech was titled,

'Europe's cultural dimension 10 years on' – that is, 10 years on from the founding of a semi-official project which is called 'A soul for Europe' but which seems to have little interest in religion.

Well, we are nearly 25 years on from Delors' statement: has the EU now got a soul, and if not, is 'the game up'? I think the answer to both those questions is 'no'. But it is certainly true, as I said yesterday, that the EU is facing a deep crisis of purpose and identity – a crisis of 'soul' in the sense – so the question remains even more urgent today than it was in 1992.

In 2003 in a very profound document, *Ecclesia in Europa*, Pope John Paul II lamented the "loss of Europe's Christian memory and heritage;" Europeans were, he said, living like "heirs who have squandered a patrimony entrusted to them by history." Many of us will share that lament, see its consequences on a regular basis, and hope and pray that one day Europe might rediscover that patrimony again. But note that Pope John Paul was referring not specifically to the EU per se but to Europe as a culture or civilization. Now we might well say that European culture (assuming we can define it clearly enough – which is no easy task) needs something like a 'soul' – a unifying spiritual dynamic to give it life – if it is to retain its identity and energy. I won't discuss that large question today. I want to ask the more specific question of whether a *political institution* with a limited purpose like the EU needs a 'soul', and what it would mean for it to have one – or more than one.

Sixty years ago Robert Schuman described the new structure he had helped birth as 'community of peoples deeply rooted in Christian values'. What do we make of that aspiration in today's extensively secularized and religiously pluralistic EU? Let me turn again to the European Commission Reflection Group document I quoted yesterday, *The Spiritual and Cultural Dimension of Europe* (2004). The Group's concern was to recover a new spirit of political unity in the face of the challenges facing the EU following years of concentration on economic integration, and as 10 new countries were about to accede. They said this:

'The needed 'forces of cohesion' to support this political unity must be found in Europe's common culture. A mere list of values, as in the Charter of Fundamental Rights ['the indivisible, universal values of human dignity, freedom, equality, and solidarity'] would not be enough.'

Let me add that these were ratified in 2002 and since then incorporated into the Treaty of Lisbon. But, the authors went on,

‘every attempt to codify “European values” is inevitably confronted by a variety of diverging national, regional, ethnic, sectarian, and social understandings’.

That is, the very core values on which the EU is founded can be interpreted very differently due to the pluralistic nature of the EU. I think the authors were right to highlight this challenge. It means that not only particular policies but also the very meaning of the EU’s core values will be continually contested, with diverse spiritual and philosophical communities reading them very differently, arguing about them, seeking to push the EU towards one or the other interpretation. The EU as a political body will necessarily reflect the pluralism of its underlying culture and in the societies of its diverse nation states. The EU is pluralistic at its heart. It is, inevitably, a community of *souls* - plural. It does not and, I think, cannot share a single, unifying ‘soul’.

But I want to suggest that even if European culture did consist of a single soul, a single faith-based culture, its political institutions should nevertheless make space for a plurality of souls. Political bodies like the EU have a limited remit, and that remit does not include promoting spiritual unity – the faith of Europe’s citizens is not a matter for political institutions but for faith communities operating in the free space of civil society. The EU cannot possess, and should not seek, a single ‘soul’, but should be an open forum in which a plurality of ‘souls’ can constructively debate and cooperate. The EU should refrain from *officially* promoting any particular religion or belief and treat all as even-handedly as possible, within the limits of the law. And that is what it seeks to do. Even in the 1950s, it was already doing so. It had little choice, for already for 200 years Christianity had shared European public space with secular humanism, and neither tradition could monopolise the new institutions. That is one reason why the Schuman Declaration rightly contains no theology – even though we can recognise it as breathing a deeply Christian spirit. Since the Enlightenment Europe has had two souls, sometimes in deep conflict, sometimes in cooperation. By the early 21<sup>st</sup> century that space has been joined by many other faith traditions, including several significant minority religious traditions, many with roots beyond Europe. And it has rightly sought to accommodate them in shared European public space, again within the limits of the law.

It’s important to note that at its founding the EU did not adopt the model of the confessional state existing in some of its member states (e.g. Italy, the UK, Greece, Ireland, Finland). But, contrary to perceptions of some, nor did it adopt the model of strict separationism that keeps religion out of the public

sphere (as in French *laïcité*). While the EU does not have official competence over religious policy as such, it has in fact been moving slowly towards what is called a ‘cooperationist’ model seen in member states such as Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands and the UK. This model includes official state neutrality and extensive religious freedom, while also being open to a religious presence in the public square and constructive partnerships with religious organisations in the delivery of public services such as education, welfare and health, or in the media. This development was ratified at the Treaty of Lisbon and is to be welcomed and encouraged.

In the light of this, I think it was right that the preambles to the proposed European Constitution, and later to the Lisbon Treaty, did not grant special constitutional status to Christianity. Several member-state constitutions do this and we might debate if that is a good idea. But it was not appropriate for the EU. Now if there was to be such a preamble mentioning the roots of European culture, it certainly could and should have recognised the predominant historical influence of Christianity. Former French President Giscard D’Estaing, who chaired the constitutional process, was not going to have that. But to have accorded privileged constitutional status to only one of the EU’s faith traditions – even Christianity – would have breached its duty of impartiality. As one legal theorist puts it:

“[T]he absence of Christian values in the EU Treaty and Charter of Fundamental Rights is not to be interpreted as a thundering silence, but instead...as a positive affirmation of a secular approach that values diversity and cherishes all world-views while refraining from embracing any of them” (L Zucca, 2012: 88).

I propose that the unity and identity of the EU should, then, derive from common commitments to its specific constitutional values and political objectives– even when their meaning is constantly debated. But it might be replied: can the EU even agree on these narrower objectives in the absence of a shared soul or faith? Won’t its citizens’ and its leaders’ commitments to these values and objectives be fragile if they are divided over the grounds on which they are based? The answer to that is: yes, possibly. But that is not a deficiency that EU institutions themselves can remedy. That challenge is, again, one for civil society, for faith communities, and for each of us. We are the ones who have to work to shore up the spiritual foundations of the EU. It won’t do it for us, and it shouldn’t. Having said that, it is vital to note that even in spite of the spiritual pluralism at the heart of the EU, there is a significant degree of workable consensus on many of the EU’s core constitutional values and political objectives. It’s essential to recall this at a time when the EU is so

deeply divided on its most recent crises. For example, the Charter does enshrine many such commitments – it contains a lot more than the abstract list of values I cited earlier. Beyond that the EU is also committed to many other crucial political objectives: human rights and democracy – and on those it has given great help to the new democracies of southern and eastern Europe; environmental protection – on which it has been a pioneer; foreign aid – it is the second largest donor to sub-Saharan Africa via its European Development Fund; religious freedom – as expressed, for example, in the important 2013 ‘Guidelines’ on religious freedom governing the External Action Service. These are solid bases for common action and they should be the focus of the kind of political integration we seek: not at the level of souls, but at the level of political principles and practice.

Let me add here that this has vital implications for how we see the place of Islam in Europe, and specifically Turkish accession. Whatever we make of ‘Europe’ as an essentially Christian civilization, in contrast to Islamic civilization – and the contrasts are real – the EU cannot regard Islam as inherently external or alien to it. Apart from anything else, that would turn millions of existing EU citizens, the vast majority of them peaceful and law-abiding, into second-class citizens. Worse, it would risk fuelling the sense of grievance that makes some segregated Muslim communities in some parts of Europe a breeding ground for extremism. It would play directly into the anti-western narrative of Salafism. It is right, therefore, that the formal terms of accession of new members, including Turkey, should be political and constitutional and not religious. That Turkey is a majority-Muslim state is not in itself enough to bar it from membership. As it happens, it is doing quite enough to exclude itself on narrowly political grounds from membership at the moment. I acknowledge that here there are different Christian views. For example, former Council President Herman van Rompuy said:

‘It’s a matter of fact that the universal values which are in force in Europe, and which are also the fundamental values of Christianity, will lose vigour with the entry of a large Islamic country such as Turkey’.

But even if he is right, that is still not yet enough to bar Turkey in principle. For I am arguing that it is not within the power or competence of political institutions to generate all the underlying values on which they rest – that is mostly a task of civil society. And let’s be honest, these European universal values have already lost much of their vigour because Europeans themselves have lost confidence in them, partly due to their own secularization, including the self-secularization of Christianity. There is an important debate to be had

here, but I tend to agree with the members of the Reflection Group, who said this:

‘The only feasible path toward a solution of the problems posed by Islam in Europe consists in understanding the consequences of transplanting Islam into a European context, not in a frontal confrontation between the abstractions of “Christian Europe” and “Islam”.’

The struggle for the soul of the EU – or rather the struggle among the plural souls resident in the public spaces of the EU – is not something that the EU itself as a political institution can take the lead in, but rather this falls to European civil society, in which of course, Europe’s faith communities play a crucial part.

To develop this point about civil society, let me quote again some valuable words from the Reflection Group and then draw some implications for Christian witness. They write this:

“Europe itself is far more than a political construct. It is a complex – a “culture” – of institutions, ideas and expectations, habits and feelings, moods, memories and prospects that form a “glue” binding Europeans together – and all these are a foundation on which a political construction must rest. This complex – we can speak of it as *European civil society* – is at the heart of political identity. It defines the conditions of successful European politics, and also the limits of state and political intervention. In order to foster the cohesion necessary for political unity, European politics must thus support the emergence and development of a civil society in Europe.”

The authors also specifically endorse a positive role for religion in this regard.

‘The presence of religion in the public sphere cannot be reduced to the public role of the churches or to the societal relevance of explicitly religious views. Religions have long been an inseparable component of the various cultures of Europe. They are active “under the surface” of the political and state institutions; they also have an effect on society and individuals’.

And while warning against the risks of some kinds of public religion, they urge that:

‘The community-fostering power of Europe’s religious faiths should be supported and deployed on behalf of the cohesion of the new Europe’.

They perhaps should have added too, that religion might not always add to cohesion. Prophetic religion might sometimes need to disrupt it too, when the EU breaches its own core commitments to justice, peace, solidarity and freedom.

Christians should take up this invitation enthusiastically, confidently seizing the openings available in European civil society to commend their own distinctive insights on the purposes and policies of the EU. Since the Treaty of Lisbon, the door is officially open to this. Article 17 provides for a 'regular, open and transparent dialogue' of the EU with religious and philosophical associations. Christian churches and civil society organisations are already well engaged in that dialogue and they should seek new ways to do so. But beyond this elite level there are many other places at which they can exercise direct or indirect formative political influence on the EU and they should engage in those up too. As they do so, they should keep two goals in mind.

First, they should be prepared to address the full range of the Union's substantive policy concerns and not only those that directly impinge upon the churches' own interests or that immediately happen to resonate with their own supporters, such as family, gender and sexual ethics, education or medical and bio-ethics, vitally important though those are. In fact from the earliest interactions with EU bodies, churches have indeed taken up a remarkably wide range of issues, and they should continue to do so: the refugee crisis, environmental concerns, religious freedom abroad and at home, and many more. Each individual, church and organisation can of course only do what they can in the spaces and with the resources available to them. Second, wherever possible they should seek to work ecumenically. The forces of secularization and the many opponents ranged against Christianity across European civil society, and indeed within EU institutions, mean that Christians simply cannot afford the luxury of remaining in the ecclesial silos or, worse, working against each other politically. They should also where possible work with other faith communities on common objectives.

As Rabbi Jonathan Sacks has said, often we make more progress working 'side by side' on practical concerns than talking 'face to face' across faith traditions. Much good ecumenical cooperation already happens but there is room for more. We cannot wait for agreement on religious doctrines before exploring avenues of practical cooperation. The State of Europe Forum exists to allow exactly for this. I commend its work and I pray it will inspire many other such initiatives across Europe.

## E-UTOPIA - IN QUEST OF EUROPE

*Stefan Waanders*

*Are you coming with me to get lost? I know the way! - Loesje*

EUROPE PUZZLES ME. I CONSIDER HER AS A PERSPECTIVE OF HOPE. BUT SINCE THE DRAMA OF SREBRENICA (1995) I CAN'T IGNORE THE QUESTION: WHAT IS THERE ABOUT EUROPE THAT THIS COULD HAPPEN AGAIN? EUROPE AND THE EUROPEAN UNION ARE NOT IDENTICAL, BUT THERE IS A RELATION. I AM CONVINCED WE CAN'T AFFORD A FAILURE OF THE PROJECT EU. BUT THE PROJECT HAS BECOME BOGGED DOWN AND NEEDS A NEW IMPULSE. I AM GRATEFUL FOR YOUR INVITATION TO DIALOGUE ON WHAT THIS NEW IMPULSE MIGHT BE.

A little note on this Forum, where English is the leading language. From the former German Ambassador Otto von der Gablentz I learned the following: a European should speak at least three languages—his/her mother tongue, the neighbour language and a major international language. He not only preached it, but practiced it by holding his lecture in solid Dutch.<sup>6</sup> If Von der Gablentz is right, this forum still has a way to go to become European. I am giving my lecture in English, also as a courtesy to our western neighbours who are puzzling whether to stay or to leave the European Union. It's not my first language, so please forgive me if it sounds sometimes like double Dutch.

To begin with I quote a wise European thinker, Romano Guardini.

“When dealing with the essential questions of existence, it is more important to work through the problem than to choose a dodgy ‘solution’. Because that is often paid for by simplification and the living consciousness feels it and becomes suspicious. When the problem is unfolded in its true extent, our spirit knows it is being confronted with reality and that is much more beneficent even if no solution is achieved.”<sup>7</sup>

For decades our world was paralysed by the softly killing perspective of a ‘brave new world’. Thank God we say goodbye to that future. We are living in a less boring time. Our future is very much unknown and maybe that makes it more worthwhile to live it. Under this condition we are confronting ourselves with reality and don't shy from our contemporary challenges.

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<sup>6</sup> Frans Andriessen, kardinaal Danneels, Otto von der Gablentz, Donald Loose, Frans Maas, Ad Peperzak, Stefan Waanders (red.), *Europa, werkelijkheid en opgave. Verkenningen in het spoor van Romano Guardini* (with summaries in English), uitgeverij Damon Budel 2004, pg. 45-61.

<sup>7</sup> Romano Guardini, *Vom Leben des Glaubens*, Matthias-Grünwald-Verlag Mainz 1935, pg. 77.

We are living in a moment of great historical changes. It's not easy to understand these changes while we are in the middle of them and we need distance to see them. We have to do our very best to understand them and should try to read and understand the signs of the time.

I am confident that the direction which gives us perspective and hope has a name... that of 'Europe'. Doing so I introduce my second point of unknowing. This lecture tries to focus on this as yet unknown perspective. It's not the story of someone who knows the answer, but a very much an open-ended story; some raw sketches pointing in one direction we should move towards. I am looking forward to a dialogue with you in quest of Europe; an adventurous quest that should explore new ways – with a wink at the playful quote of Loesje at the beginning of my lecture.

### **Exploring the historical context**

First of all: Europe is one of the five continents of the world. But it's the only one that is not actually a continent. Africa is a continent, so is America, Australia and Asia. Maybe it's better to speak of the Eurasian continent, of which Europe is just an peninsula – smaller than India. So Europe is not clearly outlined. Yet it has become recognised as a continent because of her history and her own dynamic. Europe stands for values that places her under a standard that transcends her and includes self-critique. And the struggle for the validity of these values is marked by a dramatic past.

Two years ago we remembered the beginning of a war a century ago – by some called the ultimate catastrophe of the 20th century. Finding the right name took some years. First it was called the Great War. Twenty years later it was renamed in connection to a serial number, as a second round started: we call it First World War (1914-1918) and Second World War (1939-1945). And some call it 'The Thirty Years War of the 20th century' – pointing to the other destructive war (1618-1648) where one third of the population in Germany died.

The cruel reality of the world wars had a different character than all other wars. The first round had an industrial accent and mobilized whole the society which gave it a total character. In the second round a systematic extermination of ethnic groups occurred that surpassed all imagination. This war ended with the unconditional surrender of Germany and Japan, but not with a peace treaty. Really a different war than other wars. The First World War implied the decline of Europe. The balance of powers of the European concert, as arranged in the subsequent peace treaties (Westphalia Peace 1648, the Treaty of Utrecht 1713 and the Congress of Vienna 1813-1815) collapsed and didn't work anymore as a principle or order.

European history shows a repeating dynamic trying to restore in a certain way the Roman Empire. In the Middle Ages we had the Holy Roman Empire. In modern times we had different forms (Spanish, Austrian, British, French) until it fell apart in a plurality of national states all with their own imperial ambitions (Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Italy), each playing the beautiful wild beast trying to conquer as big as possible a part of the world. Because Europe is too small for several offensive empires, it resulted in the catastrophe of the world wars. The Peace of Versailles (1919) did not succeed in creating a new stable order. The Second World War nearly completed this European suicide. After 1945 this dynamic stopped. It seemed as if the name of Europe had disappeared.

At the liberation the name of Europe rose again. General Eisenhower gave his memoirs the title *Crusade in Europe*. This liberation just succeeded half way – in double sense. Because not only was Europe was split up by the Iron Curtain from 1945 to 1989: the east was occupied by the Soviet Union, while the west had freedom. Also it must be mentioned that Europe from a continental perspective ‘was’ liberated – passive form. Protected by a foreign power, western Europeans could play ‘sovereign state’ in their sandbox.

The German philosopher Peter Sloterdijk marked this period 1945–89 as one when Europe was absent.<sup>8</sup> Withdrawing into an unreal climate, traumatised, incapable of facing reality, Europe tried to interpret her political irrelevance in vacuum ideologies. For instance, philosophical-literary existentialism with Jean-Paul Sartre as an icon. His motto that man is ‘condemned to freedom’ shows this traumatic sentiment of time. Man didn’t feel solid ground under his feet. Because what kind of freedom is it, if you didn’t fight for?

The decades of the seventies and eighties made a transition from existentialism to consumption. According to Sloterdijk, this was just another variety of post-war nihilism. Without any project, we were just driven by the rhythm of industrial innovation. Sloterdijk saw a *Zeitvernichtungsgeist*<sup>9</sup>, where lack of earnestness became lifestyle and proclaiming the world unreal became dogma. This was our post-modern condition. ‘Wir sind bodenlos, weil wir zwischen vierzehn Arten von Dressings wählen müssen.’<sup>10</sup>

Sloterdijk saw an ideology of absence, where Europe wandered around in semi-consciousness. Used to being the master of the world over 500 years, Europe now had declined into political irrelevance. In this vacuum Sloterdijk observed the ideology of absence blossoming in Europe. Existentialism as well

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<sup>8</sup> Peter Sloterdijk, *Falls Europa erwacht*, Suhrkamp Verlag Frankfurt 2002, pg. 12 ff.

<sup>9</sup> Sloterdijk, pg. 19.

<sup>10</sup> Sloterdijk, pg. 20.

as consumption were varieties of a sense of the unreal in which Europe lived out her absence. Europe as a psychiatric patient in shock, was waiting for the moment to wake up and to have the courage to face reality again.

### **Problematic awakening of Europe after 1989**

Then came the year 1989 when the Berlin Wall fell. An exciting moment.

Up to now I spoke about Europe in geographical sense. During and after the Second World War the name of 'Europe' had circulated as a project of hope. A small group was the driving force. It started with the Schuman Declaration on May 9, 1950 – 66 years ago today. It was a quiet revolution. No empty words, but deeds, courageous and constructive. A united Europe was necessary to give peace a chance. This unity would not come immediately, but step by step. Concrete actions that would create a *de facto* solidarity. And this solidarity started with a supranational authority for coal and steel. It was a courageous jump into the unknown. Not just an economic project, but a political project in-the-making with concrete actions of solidarity that would contribute to world peace and would make war impossible.<sup>11</sup>

The fall of the Berlin Wall offered the opportunity to regain the process of liberation of Europe that started in 1944. Central and Eastern European countries were given control of their own destiny. They chose for 'Europe' by joining the EU and NATO. This extension of the EU happened after the Cold War ended. As the external threat of the Soviet Union disappeared, the urgency of European states to cooperate declined. With the rejection of the EU Constitution in referenda by the Netherlands and France in 2005, the speed of the political project in-the-making slowed down and became mired in bureaucracy.

Today, it's up to us to recognize our common good (*bonum commune*). If we don't succeed, then we'll have chaos. The year 1914 reminds us that the failure to recognise the common good then, ended in the ultimate catastrophe of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

So what kind of political power Europe will become? Some use the word 'soft-power'. Is that a reality, or a euphemism of an absence of a solid peace and security strategy? Since 1989, we have to admit some painful realities:

- In the Balkan crisis, Europe was incapable of reacting adequately. The ethnic purification in Srebrenica still is a traumatic event which Europe could not

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<sup>11</sup> Margriet Krijtenburg, *Schuman's Europe. His frame of reference*, Leiden University Press 2012, pg. 208-211. Jeff Fountain, *Diep geworteld. De vergeten visie van Robert Schumann*, Seismos Press 2010 pg. 134-135.

cope with – the Europe after Auschwitz. Values are not just formulated to write down on paper, but they ask for historical incarnation, rooted in power.

- The Libya crisis also lacked a coherent strategy. Firstly, after one week of bombing, France had to ask the US for help because she ran out of ammunition. Secondly, had we realized that Europe had outsourced the repressive control of our borders, for instance to regimes as Gaddafi? After destroying it, the stream of refugees via the Libyan route became out of control. Thirdly, the weapons of Gaddafi started wandering through the desert, destabilising the sub-Sahara and necessitating a military mission in Mali.

If that's what softpower is about, one might ask whether it is the continuation of Sloterdijk's ideology of absence and Europe is not yet awakened.

There is a painful lack of planning in long term and strategic thinking, which we can't afford. While EU lives in peace, our borders are destabilized and we are confronted with geo-politics at our eastern border – a geo-politics which some thought had gone now that we had arrived at the 'end of history'. The politics of pacification by economic cooperation, leading to the EU inside, found its limits. We are entering a region of a different dynamic and Europe has no solid answer yet.

### **Is Europe waking up?**

The fall of the Berlin Wall was a surprise. It was not an action of the West. Even the leaders in the west were surprised by this event and there was no scenario ready.

The collapse of the Soviet Union was also a surprise. As was the fact that it happened largely non-violently. The war in Chechnya indicates how it could have happened on a big scale.

Yet Europe still seems to be absent. Not yet awakened to the reality of today's world.

Now I make a big step. Up to here my story had a focus on geo-politics, with the notions of economics and power. Let's look now at the dimension of culture.

### **Cultural remarks**

One of the important cultural sources of Europe is the Greek classical past, perhaps one of the biggest cultural developments in history. Here the quest started for freedom, sciences, philosophy, poems and tragedies, exploring the mystery of mankind. Some call Europe the 'extended Greece'. But this should not blind us to a crucial failure of the Greeks: they did not succeed in

uniting Greek diversity into a political union. They spoiled their energy in the Peloponnesian war (431-404 BC) – in fact a Greek civil war. The political unity was in the end imposed from outside: firstly by the half-barbaric Macedonians, and later by the Romans. But this was a union without freedom.

At this point perhaps we should learn from the Romans. For they did not just exercise power politics. They also adopted a specific attitude which the French philosopher Rémi Brague calls ‘the Roman way’. The Romans had the fairness to recognize that the Greece they conquered had a much richer culture than their own. They didn’t destroy it; on the contrary, they embraced it fully. By doing so they gave it a new chance in the context of the Roman Empire. Maybe this is one of the greatest achievements of the Romans: their capability to accept those foreign elements they recognized as worthwhile and make them fruitful again. In doing so they cultivated a learning attitude. They did not consider themselves as superior, but opened their horizon for foreign influences. That is the Roman way.<sup>12</sup> Brague discovered something we might call a substantial dynamic of Europe.

### **A new effort for Europe**

Now let’s ask ourselves: what will get Europe moving again? An awakening of consciousness that faces the challenges of our time: down-to-earth, sober, courageous and creative, able to contribute to the (re-)making of Europe?

We live in a period of modernity characterized by specialization, dominated by sciences, technology, economics, trade and finance. I don’t negate all this, because it makes our living possible. But specialization tends to run dead in a narrow logic. It needs a counterforce. An old proverb says: *sapientia est ordinare*, wisdom means to put things in order. Or we could say: wisdom means that things are finding their own place. It’s a sentence worth pausing to consider because we have almost lost its meaning. That things have their own place, means also a notion of wholeness.

How can we learn holistic thinking again? How can we see the whole without becoming totalitarian? Not as a closed system, but one with a sober and healthy form of unknowing; an open whole, capable of withstanding tensions and provoking creativity. For our challenges today demand this kind of thinking very much, a constructive form of thinking connected with our

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<sup>12</sup> Rémi Brague, *Europa. De Romeinse weg*, uitgeverij Klement Pelckmans Zoetermeer 2013; In English: Rémi Brague, *Eccentric Culture: A Theory of Western Civilization*, translated by Samuel Lester, St. Augustine’s.

tradition,<sup>13</sup> one rooted in our local national tradition but also open to the bigger context of Europe. We should also involve art and learn from it.

For this effort we need a focus on a triple quest marked by the three B's (in Dutch): *Bronnen* (sources), *Bildung* (formation/education) and European *Burgerschap* (citizenship). I consider them a kind of trinity.

### SOURCES

We need again a quest for the sources of Europe; not as a specialism parked in under departments like 'education' or 'European studies', but as part of our common interest, the *bonum commune*. The three cities of Jerusalem, Athens and Rome are perhaps symbols of past cultures, yet still European tradition is the ongoing dialogue with these traditions in relation to today problems.

This quest involves a continuous dialogue with the past – a broken past. Europe shows us a violated face, and the traces of these wounds are part of it. The brokenness of the Latin (west) and Orthodox (east) parts; the Protestant (north) and Catholic (south) parts; and the religious and secular divide.

The memories of these scars should be kept alive. We should not suppress them (which requires honesty), but they should not cripple us either (which requires working through). This renewed quest for European sources should be cultivated in a lifestyle. This takes us to so-called 'Bildung' – a German word for a comprehensive (holistic), cultural, political, and educational programme.

### BILDUNG

European culture is not a self-sufficient property. Culture requires working on oneself, an effort to gain something beyond the individual. It is not inherited. We are not born Europeans, but we can make effort to become a European. European culture is a constantly acquiring way leading to a foreign source. Culture is not a quiet possession, but a goal to be gained by much struggle. As Rainer Maria Rilke described himself in a poem, wandering around an old statute of Apollo, suddenly a mysterious sentence is quoted: 'Du mußt dein Leben ändern'<sup>14</sup> – you should change your life. Confronted with this archaic piece of art, the poet felt a calling. European culture and Bildung are of similar order.

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<sup>13</sup> Stefan Waanders, "Katholieke levensbeschouwing – oefening in zien", in: Stefan Waanders (ed.) *Ontmoetingen van geloof en wereld. Perspectieven op katholieke levensbeschouwing*, uitgeverij Damon Best 1999, pg. 51-67. (2<sup>e</sup> print Budel 2005).

<sup>14</sup> Rainer Maria Rilke, "Archaischer Torso Apollos" in: *Sämtliche Werke I*, Insel Verlag, Frankfurt am Main 1970 pg. 577.

We need therefore *Bildung*, deeply rooted in European culture. If our education system fails to offer us this, we should seek other ways to realize this general *Bildung* for all.

The *Summa Theologiae* of Thomas Aquinas started from the fundamental statement ‘we don’t know what God is’.<sup>15</sup> If man is image of God, then even in man we will find something unknowable. Then we understand when the theologian Karl Rahner says ‘*der Mensch ist die Frage auf die es keine Antwort gibt*’<sup>16</sup> – man is the question for which there is no answer. In that case we see freedom as part of that image-of-God, because as one thinker stated: ‘he who knows what freedom is, already betrayed her’<sup>17</sup>. With amazement we can discover that these forms of unknowing can be combined with a radicalization of questioning and a critical and disciplined form of thinking, through which we could find a way with our own questions. It means becoming awake. It dismantles perversities of systematic thinking, because fundamental notions as ‘human dignity’, ‘freedom’ and ‘common good’ are involved. And it helps us to get things right.

But *Bildung* not as an elitist attitude that withdraws into an ivory tower and stays apart. This renewed quest to a lifestyle rooted in the sources should be engaged with the problems we are dealing with today. That includes a responsibility for building our society. Since we live in a period where the nation state is less capable of dealing with today’s problems, we have to broaden our horizon to include the greater context of Europe. That brings us to European citizenship.

#### CITIZENSHIP

I mentioned the history of classical Greece because, despite their enormous cultural efforts, the Greeks failed to build their richness into an adequate political form. And to be honest: were not our world wars similar to the Peloponnesian War?

Exploring European citizenship, we should remember what democratic politics is about. It is certainly not about running a business company. Neither is it the sum of unqualified opinions. Nor pushing one’s own private preferences. It is however about dealing with the common good, the *bonum commune*. In our system of representative democracy, the politician needs to come with a solid vision for the common good and to persuade citizens of the validity of this vision. Consequently citizens need to get the right information

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<sup>15</sup> Josef Pieper, *Unaustrinkbares Licht. Das negative Element in der Weltansicht des Thomas von Aquin*, Kösel-Verlag, München 1963, pg. 37.

<sup>16</sup> Karl Rahner, *Wagnis des Glaubens*, Herder Verlag Freiburg 1974, pg. 13.

<sup>17</sup> *De grootinquisiteur. Over het geloof van de vrijheid*, Alfrinklezing 2012, Stichting Thomas More ‘s-Hertogenbosch, pg. 27-35.

and judge it for the sake of the common good – if necessary, despite their own prejudice.

Dealing with the common good we should not ignore the EU. Maybe it is an odd political construction, which provokes a lot of questions. But it is a political project-in-the-making which can learn from the past, because many of our problems are only to be solved in cooperation and no more by the nation state alone.

If Machiavelli is right that everything is falling apart, unless... This ‘unless’ might be for us European citizenship. We have to admit that we are still discovering what this complex European citizenship is about: composed of national identity (difference) and a shared community (unity) with the tension that brings (tolerance). If citizenship means rights, duties and feelings of belonging together, it is still a rather weak citizenship. How can we make this European citizenship more complete, experienced and engaged?

What might be the duties of a full grown European citizenship?

### **Shared identity and the ongoing story of Europe**

To answer the question, ‘what brings us together?’ it helps if we realize that the EU in the beginning was a Western European project. Then the project got enlarged with the Iberian Peninsula, Scandinavia, Eastern Europe, the Baltics and parts of the Balkan. Eastern Europe, for instance, has a different history from Western Europe, as have the other parts of the EU. Do we know these ‘foreign’ histories? How should we respond to this history?

For instance did these countries join Europe? Or should we say we were first amputated and then Europe became re-united? Are we prepared to listen when Central and Eastern Europe tell us in Western Europe they felt betrayed by the West during a period of time?

Recently I was surprised by the intellectual richness I found in Eastern Europe concerning the quest of Europe. Vaclav Havel is known as a kind of European Nelson Mandela. And those present at the State of Europe Forum 2015 in Riga last year know Tomáš Halík. But what about Adam Mičnik, Adam Zamoyski, Josef Tischner, Jan Patočka? In a way their history is more aware of what is at stake with ‘Europe’. We can and should learn from them. For instance, in a way they liberated themselves—following the initiatives of Charta 77, Solidarnosc and the human chain in the Baltics. They gave us an example of one of the few revolutions in Europe that succeeded in its own terms and did not turn into the opposite—because they did not seek revenge on their opponents. How does this history relate to ours? And what about the richness of the other unknown parts of Europe?

We urgently need a history from broader European perspective. Much history today still is nationalistically coloured.

We are not just citizens of the Netherlands, Belgium, United Kingdom, France, and so on. We are also citizens of the European Union, a unique political project-in-the-making. But since the Maastricht Treaty in 1992, this project has hardly moved. No new projects have been started since then. Only new states joined the Union. But now we need urgent new ideas, ideas that unite states together. What will be the ongoing story of Europe?

Europe is longing for a new phase and a new start. But how this will happen since reviving nationalism creates a climate of fear? What initiative could break this climate?

### **Facing our real problems today**

Firstly, we should ask what the crucial problems of our time are. What challenges the very essence of Europe in the long term? Why do we need unity? We need the courage for Utopia, a realistic vision of hope in connection with Sources, Bildung and European Citizenship that creates perspective.

What challenges do we face today? Let me mention some:

- a dialogue between the different regions of EU: Eastern, Western, Northern, Southern Europe and so on;
- a solid peace and security policy, including also a energy union;
- how to give refugees opportunities to develop their talents and skills and to participate in building our future society at home or abroad? The essential challenge is not in the first place the numbers but how to make their experience of Europe constructive. We should realize the biggest number of refugees has yet to come – from Africa;
- how to realize solidarity within the EU concerning the youth unemployment in Southern Europe, to prevent it from becoming a social time bomb;
- how to make the banking union effective;
- promoting sustainability – see Pope Francis' Encyclical *Laudato si* on this topic;
- relating to Islam, a relationship threatened by terrorism sowing fear, a fear that is also exploited politically. We must find ways out of this fear. And this starts with knowing our sources well, by looking for dialogue with the other. On this subject, the legacy of the monks of Tibhirine (known from the film *Des hommes et des dieux*, first prize winner of the Cannes Film Festival 2010) is important, because they were pioneers of the interreligious dialogue with Islam.

These are no easy topics. But if our European Union is to make sense and is to be taken seriously in a world that is uniting in her problems, these topics should be openly discussed. Then people will pay attention. Only then will ongoing unity bear enthusiasm, because Europe opens a horizon and enters into a new creative phase. Politicians and statesmen should be honest about today's realities and its challenges. Maybe e-Utopia represents a right tension. We are living in a 'no place' yet (Utopia), that has the possibility to become a 'good place' (EUtopia). In the adventure of this tension a new way might become clear in quest of Europe.

So we urgently a platform where this dialogue and discussion about our common good should take place. Where are we confronted with the real problems, where the story of 'Europe' is to be told afresh so we can again move on?

I will end my lecture quoting the Polish poet Adam Zagajewski:

"The European citizen - who is he? He has a good memory, and remembers the splendid and evil things from European history. He'll never be arrogant, because the quantity of evil excludes all pride. He respects the achievements of Enlightenment, and doesn't have contempt for the Middle Ages and its religion. He knows that Europe contains analytical thought as prayer as well, physics and music. He doesn't think that the US is a military giant and an intellectual dwarf. He hopes that the taste of his favorite cheese won't be dictated by the Brussels smartass. He is not very optimistic about future common European foreign policy. Still he believes in Europe, without forgetting that Europe is a beautiful fiction. He loves European landscapes and the black bird, that sings in ecstasy during springtime in all cities from Portugal to Ukraine.

"Even if he isn't coming from the 'old and rich Europe', he is not patronizing and doesn't consider his humanity superior than that of 'newer' and poorer Europeans. If he comes from 'new' Europe, he knows that along with great responsibilities are also privileges.

"He reads poetry-I don't mean in the narrow, egocentric sense. (You might replace poetry by serious novels, philosophy, history or music.) He has to read poetry because our democratic system he lives in, is intellectually vague and not sufficiently spiritual food. This system needs help, a voice that ascends from a deeper shift of reality. If this doesn't happens, if democracy is left alone, she tends to mock, and to present herself in a distorting mirror, her ugly stepsister. So the European citizen has to read poetry to clear out the democratic framework - and besides to demolish the foolish, utopian longing for a perfect political system."<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Adam Zagajewski, "Een Europees burger" in: *Nexus* 40 (2004) pg. 25-26.

# ECONOMICS: freeing the 'free' market

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## THE MORAL CHALLENGE OF THE MARKET

A CHRISTIAN VIEW OF THE MARKET ECONOMY, GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

*Richard Turnbull*

THE FINANCIAL CRISIS OF 2007 ONWARDS WAS NOT THE FIRST SUCH CRISIS, OR EVEN THE FIRST TIME A BANK HAS COLLAPSED. THE RESULTING RECESSION AND CRISIS HOWEVER WAS DEEP, NOT LEAST BECAUSE SOME COMBINATION OF GREED, ABUSE OF POWER AND TRUST, AS WELL AS THE DEVELOPMENT OF INCREASINGLY COMPLEX FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS, ALL CONTRIBUTED TO THE COLLAPSE.

The outcome was not just a financial crisis, but a crisis for capitalism itself. How then might we respond as Christians? What can we say about the market economy and what about the role of government and the quest for social justice? Capitalism may indeed be facing a moral crisis, but we should not delude ourselves into thinking that alternatives whether built around the model of 'control and command' of either socialism or economies with large and active public ownership (think back to the inefficient state-controlled industries in the 1960s and 1970s) have fared any better.

To explore some of these questions, Brian Griffiths, a prominent Christian figure in the City of London, and I established last year the Centre for Enterprise, Markets and Ethics. We believed that that was a case to be made for the market economy, but that the case needed to be firmly based in Christian morality, responsibility and justice. Without these limits, the market would simply become a jungle.

So, Irving Kristol:

Capitalism survives because it still satisfies the basic, simple impulses of ordinary men and women. It will not continue to satisfy them however, without the bedrock provided by the Judeo-Christian tradition....It gives certain answers to ultimate questions that modern philosophy or modern thought of any kind cannot provide.<sup>19</sup>

Michael Novak, wrote in his 1991 book, *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism*:

Of all the systems of political economy which have shaped our history, none has so revolutionized ordinary expectations of human life – lengthened the life span, made the elimination of poverty and famine

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<sup>19</sup> Irving Kristol, in *The Disaffection from Capitalism and Socialism*, quoted in Griffiths, *Morality and the Market Place*.

thinkable, enlarged the range of human choice – as democratic capitalism.<sup>20</sup>

He goes on to define democratic capitalism as one essential defined by a market economy and a free society. It is difficult to contest that without the market economy we would have made significantly less progress in the fight against poverty and we would be living in societies that were substantially less free. However, there is a problem. Perhaps the problems could be summarised as follows:

- The problem of greed (eg monopoly)
- The morality of profit (eg exploitation)
- Accumulation of wealth and increased inequality
- Economic growth or sustainability.

In the USA, the Public Religion Research Institute conducted the 2013 Economic Values Survey, with the following findings:

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| <b>Reasons cited as to why capitalism is working:</b>     |     |
| Encourages Personal Responsibility                        | 33% |
| Provides Equal Opportunities                              | 29% |
| Promotes Individual Freedom                               | 24% |
| Creates Wealth  | 11% |
| Other   | 3%  |
| <b>Reasons cited as to why capitalism is not working:</b> |     |
| Encourages Greed  | 34% |
| Does not provide Equal Opportunities                      | 28% |
| Creates Poverty   | 14% |
| Creates Inequalities                                      | 11% |
| Other   | 13% |

So, 48% of Americans cited just two reasons why capitalism was not working, that it generated greed and created poverty. Perhaps it is not surprising then that Pope Benedict, in *Caritas in Veritate* argued that ‘in terms of the resolution of the current crisis, the State’s role seems destined to grow.’<sup>21</sup> This in itself raises all sorts of questions about freedom, taxation, the family and so on.

In Matthew 26:10 Jesus told the disciples, ‘the poor you will always have with you.’<sup>22</sup> Some Christians have responded to this statement with complacency in

<sup>20</sup> M. Novak, *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism*, p13

<sup>21</sup> Pope Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, p49

<sup>22</sup> All biblical quotations are taken from the New International Version

the face of social evil. Jesus's point is taken at face value; his words should not be contradicted and serve as reassurance, a reminder that Christians cannot fully eliminate poverty. This has left the field open for a very different approach from some evangelicals. This group does not take the words of Jesus in a literal sense but instead grounds its claims in the trajectory of Scripture that sheds light on divine love for the poor, but which is interpreted as a 'bias' or 'preferential option' for the poor.

So, there is the dilemma for us. Does the market economy create wealth or poverty, does it generate opportunity or greed? What I want to show is that for the Christian, wealth creation is actually a spiritual imperative, but that it carries awesome responsibilities and consequences. Only when we have had this discussion can we effectively debate how social justice is to be met, the role of government and so on.

### **Wealth creation as biblical imperative**

The basic reason why wealth creation is a biblical imperative is that it is a creation mandate. What we mean by a creation mandate is something which is set out by God as part of the principles of creation for all people for all time. So let me illustrate and explain.

In Genesis chapter 2, verse 15, we are told the following; 'The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.' This short verse has enormous implications. The command to work precedes the entry into the world of sin and the fall. In other words part of God's intention for every person is that they work, they harness the resources of the world in producing goods and adding value. This basic requirement also has implications for any government programmes that encourage dependency rather than work.

Reinforcing this verse, there is a remarkable description of what God has provided for those who work the land. In describing the Garden of Eden and its setting in Genesis 2:8-14, we read that God had provided trees and water but that also between the head waters of the rivers which flowed out from Eden, God provided three precious materials – gold, aromatic resin and onyx. So, in other words, alongside the command to work is the provision of precious stones, metals and resins all of which can be used in the production of bowls and plates, jewellery and medicines. In the creation narratives God provides the command and the materials. Hence the creation of wealth is a spiritual imperative.

In the New Testament we see the same emphasis set out for us in the parable of the talents in Matthew 25:14-30. Each person was equipped with an amount of money related to his abilities and they invested the capital and obtained a return (well, two of them did). Their diligence was rewarded with more. The unfaithful servant was berated for failing even to put the money on deposit. In essence this parable is about our spiritual responsibility to use our gifts and talents to obtain economic returns through effective stewardship and investment.

### **Entrepreneurship as call and gift**

The second area to explore is that of recognising that economic creativity and innovation (or entrepreneurship) is in fact both a *gift* and a *call* from God. We see this illustrated first of all in Exodus, especially, chapter 35. After the people of Israel had escaped from Egypt, Moses received instructions for the construction of a tabernacle to provide the focal point of worship. In Exodus 35:30, he points to one individual, Bezalel, and asserts that God has filled him, 'with the Spirit of God, with skill, ability and knowledge in all kinds of crafts,' referring to his ability of working with gold, silver and wood in order to prepare the tabernacle. It is interesting that the materials mentioned are so similar to those referred to earlier in Genesis. Moses adds, in verse 34, that the Lord had also given him 'the ability to teach others'.

We see here the coming together of crucial theological and economic concepts. Notice the centrality of the flourishing of the human person, who has been endowed with skill, but note also two other crucial economic concepts, growth (that is, adding value through the combined use of resources and skill), and human capital, that is education and the training for the acquisition of such skills.

The divine economy is an enterprise economy and an entrepreneurial one. We would do well to honour, rather than disparage, those that create wealth and take entrepreneurial risk. Not only is the divine economy an entrepreneurial economy, it is also a place of call. In other words Christian men and women do not work in this part of the Lord's vineyard either by accident or simply as a means to an end. Rather they are called by God to work in commerce, law, banking, manufacturing, service industries, IT and so on. It is a basic, but fundamental concept. If we understand that our business and commercial life is part of our call from God to work in his economy for the common good of all then we at once begin to deal with the ethical issues which arise. Recognising that our call is from God will help us make good business decisions, good ethical decisions, and act responsibly and well. This of course

goes right back to Luther, but also note this from the Roman Catholic Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace.

The vocation of the businessperson is a genuine human and Christian calling. Its importance in the life of the Church and in the world economy can hardly be overstated. Business leaders are called to conceive of and develop goods and services for customers and communities through a form of market economy. For such economies to achieve their goal, that is, the promotion of the common good, they should be structured on ideas based on truth, fidelity to commitments, freedom, and creativity.<sup>23</sup>

### **Wealth creation and spiritual responsibility**

So, we have established that wealth creation is a biblical and spiritual imperative and that entrepreneurship is both a call and a gift. There remains an important further aspect. If we have this wealth, what do we do with it? What is the responsibility of the individual with wealth?

The key starting point is to recognise that we do have a spiritual responsibility. The mistake is to think we are called to become poor by giving everything away or that the responsibility for dealing with poverty lies with the redistributive policies of central governments. This is a moral issue. The first call upon our wealth is to love God. The second call is to love our neighbour. The greater the proximity of the neighbour the greater the responsibility. Hence our prime responsibility in loving our neighbours is to our families. That is one reason why Christians should campaign for low taxation, not high taxation. An extra pound raised by government is a pound less for our families and for serving the Lord. There is no special morality attached to a government pound.

The key in understanding the response to wealth lies in recognising the variety of ways in which the New Testament deals with Luke 14:33:

So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.

What does 'renounce' mean? Well, it doesn't mean don't make a profit – for some 20 years Jesus himself worked in his earthly father's carpentry business which presumably made profits in order to be sustainable over that time. We know that the apostles left behind their homes and livelihoods but without selling off all their possessions (Luke 5.11, 27; 18.28-31). The Rich Young Ruler, by contrast, is told to liquidate his assets and distribute them to the poor (Luke 18.19-27), whereas Zacchaeus only promises half his goods plus restitution

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<sup>23</sup> *Vocation of the Business Leader*, Pontifical Council on Justice and Peace, paragraph 6

(Luke 19.1-10). The women disciples (Luke 8.1-3) never divest themselves of wealth, but instead use their resources to support Jesus and the Twelve on an on-going basis. Paul works as a craftsman in order to support himself and provide for the needs of his companions and those in need (Acts 20.33-35). There is also Lydia (Acts 16) who was a merchant woman who gave hospitality in her house to the believers.

### **The market and its morality**

So, we have seen that wealth creation is a spiritual imperative but that it carries spiritual responsibility. Let me now turn to the market itself, its strengths and weaknesses from a Christian perspective.

A market is essentially a place where buyers and sellers come together to exchange. The market through its pricing mechanism allocates resources. The origins of the understanding of the modern market economy lie with Adam Smith and his publication of the *Wealth of Nations* in 1776. Smith viewed the market as the best place to achieve the allocation of scarce resources mainly through the division and specialisation of labour. Importantly, Smith built upon a prior work, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759). He assumed a natural propensity to barter together with an essential selfishness in humanity. Crucially the effect of the economic mechanism is to bring about, not only the satisfaction of others, but indeed the welfare of all, by each serving their own interests. In this way a greater public good is achieved. This was the essence of the 'invisible hand.' The question was, if the hand existed, to whom did it belong?

The paradox in the classical model between the pursuit of self-interest on the part of individuals and the overall achievement of the public good could only be explained by the providential design of those laws of economics which brought this about.

Historically, evangelicals have, generally, held a positive view of wealth creation and enterprise and then adopted the voluntary principle, which we will come to, in how they have sought to deal with poverty and disadvantage. Market principles and virtuous compassion have defined this approach. Indeed because the market is part of God's provision, behaviour, compassion and responsibility are crucial components of a Christian vision for society. The evangelical thus views the market not simply as a system of resource allocation, but also as a place where discipleship is exercised or even learned. From this comes ethics and behaviour. When the creativity, innovation and dynamism of the market are combined with the voluntary principle the result is a radical conservative approach to the challenges of poverty.

So, the leading Scottish evangelical, Thomas Chalmers, in the second volume of his *Natural Theology*, said that the market 'strongly bespeaks a higher agent, by whose transcendental wisdom it is that all is made to conspire so harmoniously and to terminate so beneficially.'<sup>24</sup>

Two particular problems arose from this model, namely, the impact of sin and the possibility of inequality. Sin, as we have noted, distorted the market, through the sinful acts of the market's participants - unethical behaviour. In economic terms this led to disequilibrium; in Christian terms to poverty and suffering.

### **The quest for social justice**

How then did these early evangelicals respond to poverty?

The answer lies in the acceptance of the classic economic model alongside the voluntary principle, which involved both the rejection of state intervention and the development of voluntary organisations, which in turn provided an appropriate setting for the exercise of philanthropy - the market plus the voluntary principle.

For Chalmers, government intervention was not only unnecessary but also arrogant as it sought to usurp the Creator from his rightful position. In addition any extensive role for the state had the effect of taking over those things which truly belonged in the heart - the moral sentiments. As he put it, 'we cannot translate beneficence into the statute-book of law, without expunging it from the statute-book of the heart.'<sup>25</sup> Compulsion would lead to the 'extinction of goodwill in the hearts of the affluent and of gratitude in the hearts of the poor.'<sup>26</sup> Chalmers shows great Christian insight at this point. He understood that the nature of the human person not as a depository of 'rights' but as an individual with a will, a conscience, indeed, a moral personality. The intervention of the state had led to duties being replaced by rights, to dependency rather than freedom.

In the changing industrial landscape of nineteenth-century Britain a wide spectrum of voluntary societies developed, ranging from visiting societies, savings clubs, loan societies (an early example of micro-finance) and poor relief societies to schools and both social and evangelistic missionary societies. Many of these were linked to the Earl of Shaftesbury and evangelical

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., page 137

<sup>25</sup> Chalmers, *Natural Theology*, volume 2.4.4.6, in *Works*, page 128

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., page 130

voluntary action. The attraction of the voluntary society was that it enabled the proper provision of social welfare to be kept separate from state intervention. It also allowed a distinction to be drawn between deserving and undeserving poverty. The voluntary visitor operating in a local area was quickly able to ascertain the degree to which applicants themselves were at fault. This more easily enabled relief to be temporary rather than becoming enshrined as a legal right; state aid depersonalised poverty relief.

### **Conclusion**

The market economy is not perfect. However, critics, especially Christian ones, often display a simplistic approach to economics, especially in matters of growth and enterprise and make assumptions about the role of the state, redistribution, taxation that historically sits ill-at-ease with Christianity.

The evangelical response to poverty depends upon a dynamic understanding of God's providential provision of the market together with the practical application of the moral sentiments to compassion implanted in the heart. The need for compassion and care is a result of sin which leads to behaviour which distorts the market. So evangelicalism's embrace of the 'invisible hand' is neither an unthinking nor an unlimited adoption of the free market. Rather it is an acceptance of the nature of divine provision with the application of Christian moral values. The voluntary principle lies at the heart of the thesis because without it government becomes all powerful, the opportunity for Christian morality and discipleship in the market place is lost and, hence, God's good and gracious provision is denied. This has been well articulated by Professor Roger Scruton:

The first act of totalitarian governments is to abolish the charities through which people help themselves, and which are the main obstacle to creating the total dependence of the citizen on the State.<sup>27</sup>

So, for the evangelical, there will be a real emphasis on the market, on self-help, and on incentives to work; but alongside that lies compassion on the ground through the voluntary principle. In this way innovation flourishes, philanthropy is encouraged, compassion is exercised and the gospel maintained.

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<sup>27</sup> Professor Roger Scruton, *Charity*, Conservative Home Thinkers Corner, 11<sup>th</sup> February 2012

## HOW FREE IS THE 'FREE' MARKET?

*HOW CAN WE MAKE IT GENUINELY FREE?*

*Prabhu Guptara*

*"WAR IS PEACE", "FREEDOM IS SLAVERY", "IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH".*

THE DOMINANCE OF DOUBLESPEAK AND BUZZWORDS TODAY SHOULD LEAD US TO SUSPICION OF \*ALL\* WORDS THAT ARE UNDEFINED. THERE NEEDS TO BE AT LEAST SOME JOINT UNDERSTANDING OF KEY WORDS BEFORE PLUNGING INTO ANY DISCUSSION. MORE THAN THAT, THERE NEEDS TO BE SOME CLARITY REGARDING WHERE A SPEAKER IS "COMING FROM".

In most of my lectures, my positions become clear in the course of my presentation and certainly towards the end. However, let me show my cards at the start with two observations.

The first is that it seems to me that modern people confuse religious unbelief with religious illiteracy. I do not have to believe in Islam to understand the basics of Islam; I do not have to be an atheist to know the basics of atheism, just because I know the basics of the Jewish Bible or of the New Testament, does not necessarily mean that I am Christian or Jewish.

Anyway, if one avoids getting lost in the detail, I think you will agree that the whole story of the Jewish Bible, which Christians call the Old Testament, is that God takes the initiative to reveal Himself, His character, and His principles to a people, the Hebrews (known today as Jews), who are characterised or described by that very Jewish Bible itself, as being of a hard heart and a stiff neck.

Why does God reveal Himself to them, and not to any other peoples? Because God sees in them, says the Jewish Bible, at least some minimum willingness to respect Him and follow His ways, in contrast to the peoples around them who are wholly given over to institutionalised self-centredness and its consequences: greed, exploitation, and injustice.

And what is the purpose of God's revelation of Himself and His character to the Hebrews? To keep them supernaturally from destruction and indeed to bless them extraordinarily from an earthly point of view, so as to make them a light and a blessing to the rest of the world. In order to experience all that (salvation from political and economic destruction, and being a nation that blesses the world) the people as a whole have to have a certain orientation; at the very least: acknowledge and respect God and live in the light of His

character, His ways, which are summed up in the laws and the commandments. The Jewish Bible, the Old Testament, does record remarkable individuals who went beyond those minima and really wanted to find God and were close to Him all their lives. The New Testament, in the Letter to the Hebrews, chapter 11, has a long list of these people, whom it celebrates as spiritual giants, spiritual heroes. However, the OT is not only about these individuals. As a whole, the Jewish Bible records clearly the question of whether, even with God's revelations, God's own chosen people were going to be people of unbelief (and therefore belong, as it were, to the line of Cain) or people of belief (the line of Seth). The obedience or disobedience of a single man or woman can and does influence the people as a whole for good or evil. However, even righteous kings may feel that they have limits on what they can do if they are to retain their kingship and even their lives (they can only alienate so many people if they are not to be the subject of a coup). So, ultimately, what matters is not the character of one or two kings, prophets or other individuals. What matters is the character of the people as a whole. We see in the Jewish Bible that, as long as the people as a whole respect God and maintain a certain minimum respect for His law, they are guaranteed political freedom and economic prosperity. When they disrespect the Lord and depart from the rule of law, it is equally demonstrated that they will inevitably, however long God in His grace and love supernaturally stays or stops the consequences from coming upon them, the consequences will inevitably come upon them and those consequences are: political (national) destruction, exile and slavery.

In contrast to the Jewish Bible whose laws and principles are given to keep safe and prosperous a whole people, the teachings of Jesus the Lord are given to individuals and groups whose hearts have been supernaturally softened by God, so that they can learn much more deeply about becoming agents of blessing, demonstrations of the power of the Holy Spirit to progressively create God's character in us, so that we can become channels of extraordinary blessing.

In other words, the Jewish Bible has a global and national perspective, a systems perspective; the New Testament has an individual and group perspective. Without the Jewish Bible, we understand nothing of the New Testament. Without the New Testament, we understand nothing of how we can individually be transformed and play our individual part in enabling the flourishing of humanity, which is what God desires, according to both the Old and the New Testament – even though any such flourishing will not be

accomplished fully, however hard we try and however effective we may be – such human flourishing will be accomplished fully only when Jesus the Lord returns to earth.

As I say, we do not have to believe any of this; but it is illiterate to not even know it. And I am afraid too many Christians and Jews have a ridiculously high level of illiteracy about what is supposed to be their own tradition.

Similarly, too many free marketers claim to believe in free markets, but are illiterate about free markets.

### **A potted history of markets**

In ancient times, markets were not so important as kings and armies, but such markets as existed were, in principle, in the control of the merchant class. I call them '*merchant-controlled markets*' or, simply, '**merchant markets**' even though they had to respond to the whims of the king or ruling group.

The ultimate example of a merchant market was India, where there was a merchant caste (actually, that of my ancestors!) which was given free rein by cultural and spiritual sanction to have economic dominance, for example, with the ability to charge whatever rate of interest the market would bear – within living memory of 3600% a year – reducing much of the population to slavery (though national double-speak in India prefers to call it 'bonded labour').

There are of course even today areas of India and of the world where merchant markets exist, but they become fewer and fewer, because they have been progressively taken over by '*capitalist markets*' (capital plus technology), which started with the Industrial revolution.

This is not to say that there was no technology earlier. Rather, it is to say, that the technology was more at the command of kings than in alliance with merchants. Capitalist markets may well be ruled by kings or cliques or political parties, but capitalist markets sanctify the marriage of capital with technology. In other words, in any society characterised by capitalist markets, the technologist acquires at least as much importance as the merchant or provider of capital.

If merchant markets run riot have bad social consequences (and they do), then capitalist markets have worse social consequences. From the Victorian era, the worst excesses of '*capitalist markets*' began to be cleaned up, initially exclusively by the efforts of Protestants or, to be more precise, Evangelicals, leading to the rise of '*regulated markets*' in the West, and leading directly in non-Protestant countries, to '*state-controlled markets*' (Russia, China ... North Korea) but leading in Western countries to '*over-regulated*' markets as

these countries became less Protestant – when there is no conscience or “internal police”, then one needs many more “external police”.

However, from the 1980s, the burden of these “external police” was felt by society to be too much (that is what happens as belief continues to fade from the public square), and “regulated markets” started being “de-regulated”, giving rise to ‘*global markets*’ (naturally, technology played a role in globalisation, but technology is always subservient to politics – which is why the largest tech companies have such armies and huge budgets for lobbying politicians).

Since 2007 or so, as competition to the West from the East came to a head, and as the great challenge of declining demand became that of over-production, national elites changed from beating the drum about globalization, to beating the drum of nationalism, and so we enter the current era of ‘*DEglobalising markets*’.

Just as “state-controlled markets” represent a throw-back to a “merchant market” which only survives at the pleasure of the ruler or ruling class, so also “deglobalising markets” represent a throwback, and the question is whether new global rules will make the world safe for global markets again, and indeed what shape markets will take in a world of global-oversupply in view of the incredible possibilities which are being opened by the incredible speed of the emerging (and in fact also rapidly *merging*) new technologies: Quantum, Biological, Robotic, Artificial Intelligence and Nano (which are being shortened for convenience as Q-BRAIN ).

BUT I am running ahead of myself! My point is that markets need to be seen in their context, which can be summarised in the form of the following key questions:

- How important is the **market** to a particular society?
- What role does **technology** play in society and markets?
- How do we **deal with** market abuse, market manipulation, oligopolies and monopolies?
- What do we do to ensure **stable and fair** markets?
- How do we deal with the **consequences** of market processes (environmental degradation, economic and financial volatility, social inequality, political instability)?
- Can the market ever be ‘completely free’?
- *Even the jungle isn’t ‘completely free’!*

*SO whatever do we mean by free markets?* Well, a market cannot be free if it limits, prevents or makes difficult the rise of talent from any part of society, and that means that society as a whole must ensure that there is public education and some minimum investment in a national system of infrastructure. You may recollect that this is precisely what the Jews were required to do by God in the Jewish Bible.

Further, a market cannot be considered free if there is not a level playing field, and that requires some minimum rules in relation to at least seven areas, which I have detailed here:

- Environment
- Health
- Safety
- Currency stability
- Equal application of the law to all
- Care for the physically, emotionally or mentally disadvantaged
- Differential expectations and punishments.

Allow me to suggest to you that, today, there are at least three key ways in which the market is *not* free:

1. **Perverse subsidies**
2. **Cronyism**
3. **Debasing the currency**

I will make a few remarks in relation to each of these.

1. First, as always, definitions: what I mean by '**perverse subsidies**' are those that are demonstrably damaging and significantly damaging in terms of

- the economy
- the environment
- or society as a whole.

So how might subsidies be "perverse", how ARE most subsidies perverse?

Well they are "perverse"

- directly because they draw resources away from higher priorities (education, environment, health, infrastructure), and

- indirectly by:

- environmental degradation due to over-exploitation of natural resources, loss of landscape, pollution...
- benefiting the the rich at the expense of the poor

- lowering global demand and therefore market prices for certain kinds of products
- undermining investment decisions
- reducing pressure on businesses to become more efficient
- leaving consumer behaviour increasingly out of touch with reality.

As you know there is a whole class of people, including not only lobbyists but also so-called “thought leaders” and indeed Members of Parliaments around the world, who are focused on preventing, and incentivised to prevent, the abolition of perverse subsidies. What are the grounds on which the abolition of subsidies is opposed? Of course because it will disadvantage those who will lose the subsidies (including loss of certain jobs) but also because, it is said, it will weaken domestic competitiveness,

- reduce trading opportunities as costs rise for customers, and – most important! -
- threaten public support for the party in power.

The question, however, is whether these are merely excuses, in view of the fact that subsidies go to groups that support a party that gets into power, as a “reward” for having helped to put the party in power. *This vicious cycle subverts leaders’ responsibility for all of society – and you may recollect that the Jewish Bible specifically charges leaders with responsibility for all of society.*

Now you would be right if you were to ask, and I hope you are asking: is this issue of perverse subsidies really that big a deal?

Well, it was only yesterday, wasn’t it, that there the public statement by ‘John Doe’, the anonymous whistle-blower of the Panama Papers, in which he said “It is an open secret that in the United States, elected representatives spend the majority of their time fundraising. Tax evasion cannot possibly be fixed while elected officials are pleading for money from the very elites who have the strongest incentives to avoid taxes relative to any other segment of the population.”

I don’t know if you consider \$5.3 trillion a year a big number but that’s like throwing a \$10 note out into the street every minute of every day and night throughout the year. And that is for fossil fuels alone!

Moreover, fossil fuels are only the SECOND most “perversely subsidised” sectors. The most “perversely subsidised” sector is agriculture.

But the perverse subsidy for fossil fuels needs to be seen together with the perverse subsidy for road transportation: in the UK, according to the last figure that was publicly available, in response to a Parliamentary question ten

years ago (and so of course vastly more expensive now!), the Highways Agency stated that building one mile of motorway cost an average of £29.9 million, while adding an extra lane to a motorway costs £10m a mile, and building a mile of dual carriageway costs £16.2m.

We can carry on discussing perverse subsidies for water, fisheries and forestry – and we can also have another whole discussion about how some interest groups, whether Planned Parenthood or banks, consider they have some sort of constitutional right to subsidies.

Dodging those discussions for the present, let's look at the good news:

- Current economic conditions mean that governments are being forced to look for ways to reduce expenditure - even if they don't always do that most sensibly!
- Unilateral commitments have been made by several countries - e.g. Bangladesh, New Zealand, Russia.
- Multilateral commitments are now being made more often and more comprehensively - e.g. the Sustainable Development Goals - if you are interested in a Relational Evaluation of the SDGs, please look it up on the Relational Thinking website<sup>28</sup>, (which also has links to the work of the movement in specific areas such as business, economics and finance).

So we come to the wonderful reality of how contemporary markets, specifically in the West, are becoming more **cronyist**.

## 2. As always, let us ask what is meant by **Cronyism**.

Well, that's simple, I'm the President of country X, and I like you so I give you responsibility for Y, even though you don't know as much about the subject as someone else. This has always been done. So what's wrong with the practice from the perspective of free markets? Well, apart from its inherent unfairness, it causes higher inequality which is not based on merit, and that will inevitably lead to lower investment by those who don't feel so favoured, and therefore lower growth. Moreover, it will lead to poorer quality of public and private community projects, it will reduce motivation, it will lessen the value that you and I get in the market for our money.

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<sup>28</sup> [www.relationalthinking.net](http://www.relationalthinking.net)

Why is cronyism rising, even in the West? As Samuel Gregg put it “Cronyism is a way of life for many business and political leaders, including *plenty* on the conservative side, despite (their) claims of valuing economic liberty”<sup>29</sup>

Actually, their claim of valuing economic liberty (or free markets) becomes the wall of mythification behind which they can continue being cronyist.

In one of the most transparent and efficient countries in the world, the USA, the 2016 annual report of its Government Accountability Office (GAO), released only a couple of weeks ago, on April 13, pointed out that, in its first five annual reports (2011-2015), it presented over 200 areas and 544 actions for Congress or executive branch agencies to reduce, eliminate, or better manage fragmentation, which could result in savings of ‘*tens of billions of dollars*’.

For the Pentagon alone, the GAO made 152 major proposals for policy changes and improvements to avoid waste from duplication: “The Defense Department has *so far implemented only 37.5 percent* of these”, the GAO said.<sup>30</sup>

When fraud exists for so long, and on such a massive scale, but no one is shot or prosecuted or demoted for it, I don’t know what it indicates to you: does it indicate collusion from top to bottom in that particular area?

I have, earlier, raised another question, regarding the revival of cronyism in the West; I will leave both questions hanging for the moment and will return to these in my last slide – which is coming up fast.

BUT let’s look at the last of my 3 key fetters or chains on the free market:

### 3. What is meant by ‘**debasing the currency**’?

It is the art and science of lowering the real value of money. This is a well-known phenomenon, well-studied by economists and political scientists, particularly in connection with commodity money (e.g. gold or silver coins): a coin was said to be “debased” if the gold, silver, copper or nickel which was its “basis” or “base” was decreased or reduced from what it was supposed to have, resulting

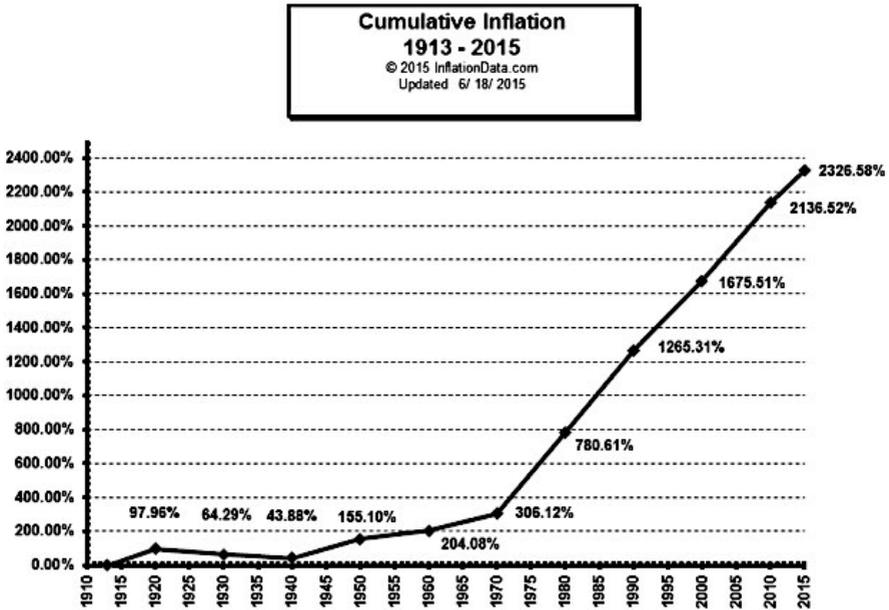


<sup>29</sup> <http://www.crisismagazine.com/2016/crony-capitalism-inefficient-unjust-and-corrupting>

<sup>30</sup> [http://www.gao.gov/duplication/action\\_tracker/all\\_areas](http://www.gao.gov/duplication/action_tracker/all_areas).

in a mismatch between its stated value and its real value.

For example, the value of the silver denarius in Rome was gradually decreased by the government altering both the size and the silver content. Originally, about 4.5 grams of only near-pure silver was used but, by the time



of the Julio-Claudian dynasty, the silver content had dropped to approximately 4 grams, then it decreased to 3.8 grams under Nero, continuing to shrink in size and purity, until by the second half of the third century, it was only about 2%

silver. To go from 100% to 2% is quite a feat, isn't it?

But why would any king or government want to debase a country's currency?

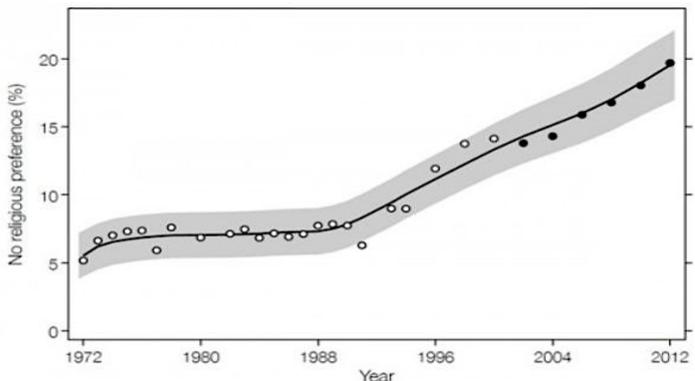


Figure I. No Religious Preference (percent) by Year: Adults, United States, 1972-2012.

Because it is an easy way for the ruler or ruling class to make economic gains at the expense of citizens: in the old days, by reducing the silver or gold content of a coin, a government could make more coins out of a given amount of the substance. The resulting over-supply of coin, while the amount of actual goods and services in a country remained relatively static, resulted in inflation. Meaning that the purchasing power of the citizens' currency is reduced, while the government uses the debased currency to buy luxuries, build monuments, wage wars or pay off its debts nowadays, called "government bonds").

Nowadays, the production of money involves no gold, silver or copper, it involves at best mere paper (increasingly often, what is involved is only digits on a computer screen) so don't think that moving from 100% to 2% during the Roman Empire was a particularly remarkable debasement: nowadays *infinite* debasement is possible, provided businesses and citizenry don't revolt – and they are "pacified" by double-speak such as "rise in the value of your house" (when in fact it means a drop in the purchasing power of the currency).

In theory, it is possible for a small amount of debasement, and therefore increased availability of currency, to fund projects that promote economic growth – and, if so, inflation could possibly occur only short term and not in the medium or long term.

However, debasement of currency was usually done, and continues to be done, mostly to finance wars and projects that are extravagant, wasteful or otherwise economically unproductive.

How much debasement of money (reduction in the buying power of our money) has in fact taken place? Well, here are figures for the UK over the last 750 years – and you will note that most of the debasement has been done in the last few decades.

What is the picture in the USA? It is not such an old country, so here is a shorter time-frame, but that demonstrates the point even more clearly about the acceleration in the rate of debasement of our money, starting around 1970s.

Let me conclude by drawing your attention to the parallel rise of atheism, agnosticism and other kinds of unbelief in the West, and by asking the question, might this have anything to do with the increasing distortion in free markets in the West?

We have plenty for discussion there!

But, so that we don't completely lose sight of the new realities being created by Q-BRAIN, let me draw your attention to my agenda for action:

*Eliminate perverse subsidies, cronyism & currency debasement  
Establish a "global level playing field":*

- *Abolish tax havens*
- *Close tax loopholes*
- *Set corporate tax at a realistic level*
- *Restore taxes for the richest part of the population*
- *Embed "workfare" rather than "welfare"*

Note particularly that the rich like to bias the system in their own favour – i.e. by reducing their responsibility – e.g. by reducing taxes. Yet the Biblical principle is that of differential responsibility, i.e. *more* is expected from the rich than from the poor in the Biblical system. That system is much more concerned about ensuring that differences of wealth don't become too great than it is concerned about 'wealth creation' and 'wealth preservation'. Those are the preoccupations of the mostly self-centred and selfish neo-rich who now strut across the world's stage, and who are the main agents who have always distorted free markets, or never even wanted really free markets.

Allow me to conclude with the reminder that the Relational Thinking movement has spent a lot of time and money researching such issues. Do look up the resources available at [www.relationalthinking.net](http://www.relationalthinking.net).

Thank you.

# REFUGEES: risking all for freedom

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## THE PLIGHT OF THE SYRIANS

*Rima Tüzün*

### SYRIACS: OUR IDENTITY.

SYRIAC PEOPLE, ALSO KNOWN AS CHALDEAN, ASSYRIAN AND ARAMEAN, ARE INDIGENOUS PEOPLE OF THE MIDDLE EAST. SYRIAC PEOPLE ARE NOT A PEOPLE WHO SETTLED IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND MESOPOTAMIA BY WAVE OF MIGRATION OR AS INVADERS. THEY ARE AUTOCHTHONES IN THE LEVANT AND THEY CONSERVED THEIR PRESENCE DURING CENTURIES DESPITE ALL DIFFICULTIES. THEY ARE THE MOST ANCIENT AND DEEPLY ROOTED PEOPLE AMONG THE MIDDLE EASTERN NATIONS.

The homeland of Syriac people is Bethnahrin (Mesopotamia). Bethnahrin means the land between two rivers namely; Euphrates and Tigris. Ancient Mesopotamian civilization is the cradle of the human development, discoveries, innovations and footprint to several other vital and important issues of history of mankind.

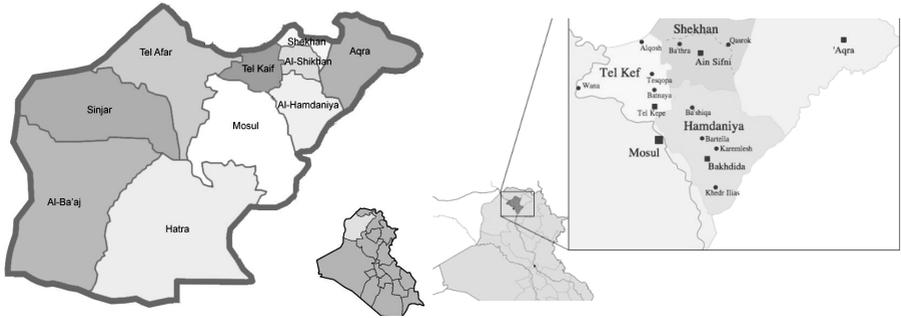
Linguistically, Aramaic language belongs to the Semitic family. From the early periods until 7<sup>th</sup> century Syriac language was the “lingua franca” in all Levant land and it was arrived until Asia. Jesus spoke aramaic.

Syriac people converted into the Christianity since the first century AD and spread the Christianity from the Middle East to the Far East in a very large geographical area. The culture of Christianity, once created by the Syriacs, is still present in the Middle East. Meanwhile, upon Christological and theological divergences in the first centuries, divisions occurred among Syriacs.

These divisions lasted by several churches, namely; Syriac-Orthodox, Syriac-Catholic and Syriac-Maronite, Assyrian-Catholic, Chaldean-Catholic, Greek (Rum) Catholic, Melkite-Greek-Catholic, Melkite-Greek- Orthodox and Protestant church.

Syriac people had been constantly subject of harassments, conflicts and discriminative policies. Syriac people are deprived from democratic, modern and constitutional rights in the Middle East countries. The number of Syriacs in their homelands in Syria, Iraq, Turkey, Iran and Lebanon, dwindled dramatically. In Iraq, Syriac people faced great extinction treats and they gave

thousands victims from 2003 to now. The number decreased from 1,5 million to 300 000 – 500 000. Syriac people have the safe haven demand in Iraq at the Nineveh Plain.



In Syria, Syriac people faced an intensive assimilation and defamation policy. Since the crisis, the number decreased from 2,6 million to 1,4 million. Syriac people are founder of the Democratic Self Administration of the cantons Gozarto (Jazira), Kobane and Afrin in North East Syria.

### **Situation of Syriacs and other minorities in Iraq:**

Syriacs deprived from the Nineveh Plain, Yezidis from Sinjar mountain, Turkmens from Tel Afar (and other provinces)

### **The needs in Iraq:**

**Politically:** There is a very clear need for long-term empowerment of these peoples in their homelands. This requires backing for a reasonable level of self-administration and self-defence. This secures lasting effect of return and rebuilding efforts. Powerless people will never feel sufficient secure.

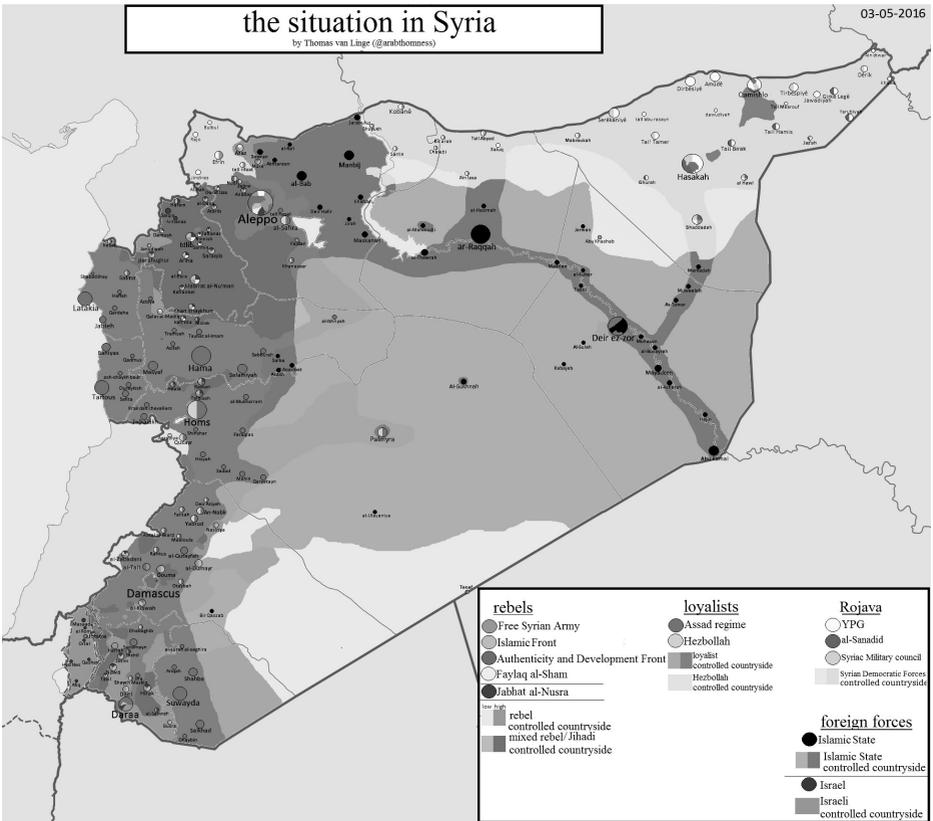
At 19 November 2014 a Common Declaration of Yezidi's, Iraqi Turkmens and Chaldean-Syriac-Assyrian Christians was presented in the European Parliament. This declaration aims for a close co-operation between their homelands in Northern Iraq. This is still a good basis for self-governance or autonomy of Sinjar, Tal Afar and Nineveh Plain.

### **Short-, mid- and long-term projects:**

- Humanitarian aid to support the IDP's.
- Demining and rebuilding (including religious buildings!)
- Economic development
- Political training

### Situation of Syrians and other minorities in Syria:

It is obvious that all minorities in Syria have suffered incredibly by the rise of ISIS, Al Nusra and other fundamentalist groupings. A complicating fact is that the Assad regime managed to present himself as 'protector' of the minorities while keeping them under control and powerless at the same time. This image made the minorities a natural target for the fundamentalists.



### The possibility of real change:

The Democratic Self-Administration in North-East Syria is based on the Social Contract and its emerging democratic structure. The Social Contract is an

explicit secular constitution through which the Democratic Self-Administration realised:

- Women's rights
- Freedom of religion
- Personal choice
- Democratic structures and multi-ethnic governance
- Freedom for and development of civil society

### **Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF)**

A new force is very quickly gaining ground and defeating ISIS.

### **Challenges ahead**

All agree that to defeat ISIS, it is crucial that the described development, rebuilding and economic development is rolled out in former ISIS territory. For this reason it is crucial that North East Syria, governed now by the DSA and protected by SDF is soon supported in several ways based on Western values.

The West can now give a real and significant push to freedom if it recognises the new Autonomous Federation that the DSA declared at 17 March of this year. This declaration follows the fact that the DSA has been excluded from the UN Peace Talks and the need to bring governance and structure and freedom in the areas that the SDF forces liberated from ISIS. Recognising this area is also the only option left for the west in order to bring stability to that crucial area of the Middle East.

### **EP - Resolution 12.03.15: European Parliament resolution on recent attacks and abductions by Da'esh in the Middle East, notably of Assyrians (2015/2599(RSP))**

5- Calls upon the international coalition to do more to prevent abductions of minorities, such as the abduction of hundreds of Assyrian Christians in northern Syria; underlines the importance of ensuring a safe haven for the Chaldeans/Assyrians/Syriacs and others at risk in the Nineveh Plains, Iraq, an area where many ethnic and religious minorities have historically had a strong presence and lived peacefully alongside each other;

9- Encourages the cooperation with newly emerging regional and local forces, such as the Kurdish Regional Government in Iraq, Kurdish groups elsewhere, such as the role of YPG in the liberation of Kobane, and the Syriac Military Council, as well as local self-governing entities in the region which have shown more commitment to human rights and democracy than their countries' rulers; salutes, in particular, the courage of the Kurdish Peshmerga forces who have done so much to protect endangered minorities;

### **Needs in development of DSA**

- North/East Syria Humanitarian aid
- Judicial development
- Political development
- Human Rights (strengthening of existing possibilities)
- Infrastructure / investment / oil
- Political recognition as viable interim-situation

### Syriac Organisations Syria and Iraq working for a future



### Syriac IDP Challenges in KRG & Lebanon

The geography of KRG includes villages and cities such as: Duhok, Erbil – Ainkawa, Shaqlawa and others. The Syriacs fled from the Nineveh Plain to this places. Two years ago we had about 250 000 – 300 000 IDPs, nowadays there might be 150 000 – 200 000 left.

The situation in KRG was very difficult, especially education for the children because of the language. Humanitarian aid did not reach all vulnerables.

In Lebanon mostly the Syriacs from the South and West of Syria fled to Beirut and Zahle. Lebanon does not only has refugees from Syria but also from Iraq. The number of Syriac refugees in Lebanon in total is 2.500; mostly in Beirut and Zahle.

The situation for the refugees is very difficult, especially because of the high living standard in Lebanon. The challenges for all refugees are to survive in face of high house rent, money for medical treatment in hospitals, lack of residency papers and the difficulty to find work.

## Syriac refugee challenges in Europe:

Most of the Syriac refugees, which reached Europe arrived through different ways, came legally, supported by their relatives. But again there have been some who died on their way from Middle East to Europe

Syriacs want to avoid to go to refugee camps; they already had bad experience in the refugee camps in Lebanon and Turkey. In the refugee camps Syriacs face harassments and ongoing persecution

The concrete number of Syriac refugees in Europe is not known.

Syriacs who live far from the Syriac communities face challenges as all other refugees, but mostly the challenge of a new language.



Syriac Cross: [www.syriaccross.com](http://www.syriaccross.com)

## LOOKING FOR EUROPE'S FREEDOM: SPINOZA AND THE REFUGEES

*Noemi Mena Montes*

"THE SMALLER THE FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION OF OPINION , THE MORE VIOLENT IS THE GOVERNMENT IN THAT PLACE... AMSTERDAM FOR EXAMPLE HAS THE BENEFITS OF THIS FREEDOM THAT ALL NATIONS ADMIRE. IN THIS CITY PEOPLE FROM ALL NATIONS AND WITH ALL POSSIBLE BELIEFS LIVE TOGETHER IN HARMONY..."<sup>31</sup>

With this quote the Spanish-Portuguese Sephardic Dutch political philosopher, Spinoza described the city of Amsterdam. Spinoza admired the Dutch freedom of thinking and freedom of religion, writing that freedom is the most precious thing. It is important to remember how throughout the centuries, countries and cities like Amsterdam have been a shelter and home of people running away from countries and places where at that time they were unfree. Running away from religious, ethnic, or political persecution.

Many people through the centuries had been looking for a place where they could live in peace, where they could be free.

Today we could still say that the Netherlands, that Europe, is a place where people come looking for shelter, for freedom, for peace. Looking for a place where they can have hope to build up their lives - an option which war and terrorism have made impossible in their home countries. This is the story of Mohammed, a Syrian Doctor who came to the Netherlands seeking shelter for he and his family. We met Mohamed last summer when we went to visit an Asylum Center in Leiden. When we arrived in his room, he was doing his Dutch homework, and when I told him that I was Spanish, his first question was, "Do you know Spinoza, the Spanish Sephardic Jew who was a political philosopher?" He was so enthusiastic because he had visited Spinoza's house in Leiden and he had even gone to the public library to photocopy the biography of Spinoza.

When we asked him why he left Syria, he told us that he ran away from ISIS, from Islamic extremism, he ran away from religious and political intolerance.

When we asked him why he came to the Netherlands, he mentioned the Protestant reformers, Calvin and Luther. He came to the Netherlands because he wanted to live with freedom - because he wanted his children to grow up

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<sup>31</sup> Baruch Spinoza, *Theologico-Political Treatise*, p. 434 (1670)

in a country where they could be free. Mohamed reminded us that he is a refugee who came here looking for freedom. He came here because he admires Europe, the respect of human rights and European Christian heritage. He breaks all the stereotypes that we have about refugees coming from Islamic countries. There are other refugees like him though they may not represent the mentality of the majority. We listen only to media and political narratives that reinforce fear.

When we listen to Mohamed, we feel a little bit afraid that he is going to be disappointed very soon. Europe had begun to question whether we really believe in human rights and freedom for everyone. It looks like we still believe in them, but only for us, the refugees have the right to be forgotten. European citizens have begun to believe that “Europe is only for Europeans”.

*“The right to have rights”: From the Refugee Convention to the EU policies*

*The constitutional inability of European nation-states to guarantee human rights to those who had lost nationally guaranteed rights, made it possible for the persecuting governments to impose their standard of values even upon their opponents. (...) The very phrase ‘human rights’ became for all concerned – victims, persecutors, and onlookers alike – the evidence of hopeless idealism or fumbling feeble-minded hypocrisy.<sup>32</sup>*

The Refugee Convention (1951) was drafted to protect the European refugees after World War II, and later expanded to provide protection to people fleeing persecution around the world. The Treaty setting out obligations to refugees is the 1951 Convention and the Protection of Refugees is the 1967 protocol; together they define who refugees are and set out the rights of refugees. The main goal is to ensure that when a state fails or turns against its own citizens, the people would have a place to go until they could return home.

The Refugee Convention created a good definition and principles however, it has become increasingly marginal to the way in which refugee protection happens around the world. For example, 65 years ago the intention of the Refugee convention was to integrate the refugees in the local economic system in a way that refugees could provide for their own needs. Nowadays, most of the refugees do not have freedom of movement and are not allowed to live independent lives. Most of them do not enjoy the freedom of movement which they are entitled to under international law. Freedom of movement is the key fundamental right, because without freedom of movement it is

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<sup>32</sup> Hannah Arendt, *The origin of Totalitarianism* (1951)

difficult to have access to the other rights, like education, employment, legal access, identity papers....This right is the cornerstone of the other rights. In her essay, *We, the Refugees*, Hannah Arendt says: "Man is a social animal and life is not easy for him when social ties are cut off. Moral standards are much easier kept in the texture of a society. Very few individuals have the strength to conserve their own integrity if their social, political and legal status is completely confused"<sup>33</sup>.

It is a paradox that the UNHCR runs most of the refugee camps when originally these camps were only for emergency situations. In this way refugees become burdens on their host countries and international community.

Nowadays when the refugees arrive in Europe, we stop them at the border...so they can not exercise the freedom of movement anymore. We stop them in Greece, in the Balkans...and after the Turkey-EU deal we went one step further: around 54.000 refugees and migrants who were in Greece looking to go to Europe, were sent to a detention asylum center.

In 2016, almost half of the world's refugees live in refugee camps where they cannot experience freedom of movement or in some cases only in a very limited way.

Throughout history there have always been forced, economic, and political migrations....It is not new that people lose their home - but the new situation is that now many people can not find a new home. In this refugee crisis, we have a collective responsibility for those who can not go back to the country where they came from, we have a responsibility for those who suffer. Therefore women children and sick people should have priority.

The paradox of the system is it recognizes that the refugees have a right to seek asylum but in practice the immigration policies blocks the way to safety. It is a system which forces people into a limbo of waiting forever. According to the convention, refugees are a global and shared responsibility but the reality is that the countries bordering the conflict zones take the majority of the refugees. In the case of Europe, according to the Dublin Regulation, refugees should stay in the first country where they enter the EU, in this case the Mediterranean countries, as they are the neighbors and gatekeepers of the Middle East and Africa. It should not be necessary to connect the place where

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<sup>33</sup> Hanna Arendt, *We refugees* (1943) [http://www-leland.stanford.edu/dept/DLCL/files/pdf/hannah\\_arendt\\_we\\_refugees.pdf](http://www-leland.stanford.edu/dept/DLCL/files/pdf/hannah_arendt_we_refugees.pdf)

a refugee arrives for the first time and the state in which will look for protection because this system had put most of the responsibility on neighbour countries regardless of their economic and social capacity.

### **The paradox of EU policies**

The reality is that Europe would give visas to almost no one of the countries where the refugees come from. In a world that does not create a safe legal route, the only way the refugees could come it is to use the service of the smugglers.

This is the story that Amir told me about he and his family coming from to Europe and how their lost a child crossing the border and how they got papers to be asylum seekers. Amir was a businessman in Aleppo who went to study IT in France for two years when he was young. When the war started he had two computer shops in Aleppo. One was destroyed by a bomb in 2013, the second one was stolen by ISIS. However he and his family stayed in Aleppo, they wanted to stay – it had been their city for generations. Their children’s school was bombed in 2014 and 2015. The last time the school was bombed some school kids died so they decide to pack and leave Syria. They did not have enough money to pay the smugglers passage from Turkey to Lesbos; they have three children and it was too cold to cross with them. So they choose the land route, more dangerous because there had been always a strict patrol control on both the Turkish and the Greek side. So they went with a smuggler and a group of people by night, so nobody will see them. They have to walk for more than two days along the railway next to the river. On the second night one short train came very quick and very close to them, so their six-year old girl, Aya, fainted and passed away. The train driver noticed something happened and the smuggler was afraid so he run away with the rest of the group. Amir wait with his family till the driver came and helped them to go to a little Greek village on the border where the police officer and his family took them to their home, The next day the police officer made a call to Athens; an UNHCR delegate came and sped up the process for them so in two weeks they could apply for asylum in France.

They lost a daughter but once they were in Europe, the process of application for legal papers was very quick. Therefore the main problem is the paradox of a system that does not create a safe legal route but still recognizes the right of the refugees when they are in the front door of Europe, regardless if they came with the smugglers or almost died on the way. We criticized the human

smugglers but we still allow them to be the only viable route to look for a asylum in Europe.

### **Crossing the borders (2015-2016)**

In 2015, Europe did not have a plan and could not coordinate a response to the refugee influx. In 2016, Europe realized that refugees could complicate the reaction of public opinion and political leaders started to be afraid that the arrival of refugees could contribute to the increase of xenophobic feelings and the populist parties.

But few months later, Europe went a step further with the Turkey-EU deal and neglected its international duties to respect the human rights of the refugees. The way Europe responded to these refugees with this deal contributes to undermine their dignity. Even more serious is that what happened in Europe with this deal with Turkey is going to have an impact in other countries. If Europe has push the refugees away to Turkey, why can not Kenya do the same? So during the last weeks, the Kenyan Government decide that their 25-year-old refugee camp will stop working because they decided that Somali refugees should go back. After the Turkey deal, Europe have no moral right to criticize the Kenyan government. If European states respond to humanitarian crisis by just shutting the doors to refugees, we have led the way now not to protect refugees. Europes example could lead other countries not to protect the refugees.

The EU-Turkey deal was done in a hurry, without a long term plan policy and with insufficient resources and planning. However the idea to create a safe legal route should be implemented and Europe has to create a managed system of protection. However the way it has been done with the EU-Turkey deal has been too late, with insufficient resources and plans, poorly executed and with a very high political price.

We need a system that could help to share burdens on global problems, based on GDP per capita, net debt per capita... It is necessary to create a system of responsibility sharing quotas that it is not the same as burden sharing quotas.

In summary, we really need a new approach, a new narrative that recognizes that refugees do not have to be a burden. It is necessary to create opportunities and spaces that will give to the newcomers the chance to make their contributions to the economy and society with their skills, knowledge, hope and dreams.

## European or Global politico-humanitarian crisis?

During 2015 Europe had a political and humanitarian crisis that has been framed mainly as a refugee crisis. However if we look at the global numbers of 25 million of refugees in the world we find out that Europe only has 1% of the refugees.

The Syrian humanitarian crisis had pointed to an international problem and it reminds us of the invisible refugees that we did not notice during decades. We have international treaties that recognize that refugees are a shared responsibility and still we accept that a small country like Lebanon hosts more Syrian refugees than the whole Europe. However, if we still think that refugees have the right to be protected and the refugee protection is based on human rights, then we started 2016 in a very bad way with the Europe-Turkey deal and the NATO control in the Mediterranean.

In spite of the complains of the EU countries, most of the refugees live in the global south. The Syrian crisis has been a good reminder to realize that 80% of the refugees live in developing countries which have to host the refugees in spite of their economic situation. For a long time Europe had been indifferent to the refugee crisis in other countries. From the beginning of the Syrian war, neighbour countries have received thousands of refugees everyday but we hardly hear of them till they were at Europe's door. This crisis has put on the spot light invisible refugees who live in poor countries<sup>34</sup> and has put the focus of attention to the quality of protection outside the developed world because for decades we forgot them.

It seems that we are not able to fix the international complex global problems and the pull factors such as war, terrorism, natural disasters and poverty. However, we should remember that we have a moral responsibility to help.

We need a new model to implement the Refugee convention, the international refugee system should be able to create a model to share the financial burden and sharing quotas in a responsible way.

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<sup>34</sup> Most refugees live in only 10 countries (such as Ethiopia, Pakistan, Uganda, Kenya, Afghanistan, Congo, Sudan, Cameroon and Niger).

## MIGRANTS: wanting a better life

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### THE MIGRANT SITUATION IN EUROPE: *AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE CHURCH TO GROW IN GRACE*

*Bert de Ruiter*

EUROPE IS EXPERIENCING ONE OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT INFLUXES OF MIGRANTS IN ITS HISTORY AND ONE OF THE WORST HUMANITARIAN CRISIS SINCE THE SECOND WORLD WAR.

Pushed by civil war and terror and pulled by the promise of a better life, in 2015 more than one million people crossed into Europe, fleeing from countries like Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia, Eritrea, Pakistan, Iran and other countries, sometimes risking their lives along the way (in 2015 around 4000 were drowned or went missing). The influx of refugees is likely to continue in 2016, with more than 135,000 people arriving in the first two months of 2016.

These men, women, and children, Christians, Muslims, people of other faiths and none flee from war, conflicts, poverty, human rights abuses crossing borders and seas to seek a safe haven in Europe: a better life, freedom, security, hope, and peace. Many of them hope to build a new life somewhere in Europe.

The crisis from which the refugees fled caused a social crisis in Europe. European countries are struggling to deal with the mass movement of people. Some have tightened border controls or build fences, leaving tens of thousands of migrants stranded in Greece and Macedonia or Calais, resulting in humanitarian crises. In September 2015, EU interior ministers approved a controversial plan to relocate 120,000 migrants across the continent over the next two years, with binding quotas. Romania, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary opposed the scheme.

As leaders grasp for a solution, they have made an agreement with Turkey in March 2016, hoping to slow the number of people setting off for European shores. This agreement provides for the return to Turkey of irregular migrants arriving illegally to the Greek islands, including asylum seekers. In return, for every Syrian returned to Turkey, the EU must "resettle" another one within its borders.

While Europe seeks ways to desperately keep refugees out, help is being provided for those that have arrived in cities, town and villages across Europe.

They are given food and shelter while their application for residency is being processed (a process that takes longer than anticipated and promised). In some countries (e.g. Germany, Austria, Switzerland) new integration laws are being developed. Such laws require refugees to integrate in return for being allowed to live and work in the country.

Many NGO's, secular organisations, local refugee agencies, and also Christian organisations, Churches and individual citizens are reaching out to refugees with food, schooling, clothes, providing day care etc. Meanwhile, while many European citizens are welcoming the strangers and providing them with help in every way possible, others point out that: "the stranger is danger." A large number of Europeans (including Christians) have trouble coming to grips with the fact that refugees have come in such large numbers in our countries. They are particularly concerned because the vast majority of these refugees are Muslims.

This concern is fueled by:

- a) stories of harassment in refugees centers of non-Muslims (i.e. Christian) or those of a different sexual orientation (i.e. homosexual) by Muslim refugees;
- b) the story of the attacks on women in Koln on New Year's Eve 2015;
- c) the terrorist attacks, committed by Muslims who have come as refugees.

As a consequence they support the calls of the right-wing political parties to close the border for Muslims, believing that: 'they are out to islamize Europe'.

One such movement is Pegida.<sup>35</sup>

On 23 January 2016, representatives of fourteen like-minded allies, including Pegida Austria, Pegida Bulgaria, and Pegida Netherlands, Identity Ireland, Pegida Ireland, Pegida Switzerland, Pegida UK met in the Czech Republic to sign the Prague Declaration, which states their belief that the 'thousand-year history of Western civilization could soon come to an end through Islam conquering Europe', thus formalizing their membership in the Fortress Europe coalition against that eventuality.

A large number of Europeans (including many Christians) point out that Europe is not able to cope with the influx of refugees we are receiving. They are afraid that refugees coming from Islamic countries will change our way of

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<sup>35</sup> Pegida (=Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamisation of the West) started in October 2014 in Dresden, Germany, but spread to other countries. This is an anti-migration, anti-Islamic movement with slogans, such as "For the preservation of our culture", "Against religious fanaticism, against any kind of radicalism, together without violence". They have a facebook page, organise demonstrations in Germany, Paris, Oslo, Copenhagen, Antwerp, Newcastle, London, Madrid, Malmo and other places.

life, will change our culture, take our homes, our jobs or our benefits. Isn't it obvious, they ask, that some refugees are not refugees at all, but economic migrants, or even worse terrorists. They wonder whether religious freedom or our national security is at risk. Here are some typical objections:

- *The steady islamisation is a danger....Do you think that when we help refugees that they integrate and respect the laws of the land?? (The implied answer: no)*
- *Why not go to UAE, Saudi, Oman? Why Europe? Because Muslims are lazy and they just want to sit and collect free money, medical, government support. One day all those European countries will be controlled by Muslims!*
- *I saw a sign "Europe is cancer, Islam is the answer". It seems they go to 'cure' Europe, in other words wipe you out, cut your throats. History repeats itself. How many Christians are left in the Middle East and Turkey?*
- *Why are Muslims living in the West? I get that some may live in Europe but not in such massive numbers. The West is incompatible with their values, lifestyle, traditions and morals. There is a reason oceans separate continents or races and religions.*
- *It is terrible what happens in Lesbos, Greece, but what I find worse is when we don't discern the spirits. In a program on television about Iran I saw a proto-type of people who adhere to Islam: death to America, death to England, death to Israel etc. When we provide such people asylum unconditionally, we undermine our spiritual and democratic freedom and invite Satan into our house. Ask refugees therefore how they feel about America, England and Israel and how they look towards Christian religion and Christian values. Let them know that we do not provide asylum to people who hate our enemies. But let Christians in, they are our brothers and sisters. Then we can point them to their duty to fight for their freedom in stead of fleeing. Should we be on guard, when and how the antichrist works? Should we give them space? Test the spirits. (In Christian magazine)*

### **Refugee crisis: an opportunity to grow in Grace**

I don't want to belittle the challenges that Europe faces with the arrival of so many (predominantly Muslim) refugees. There are Muslims in Europe already who want to establish Sharia law, and no doubt among refugees there are IS-sympathizers, who are eager to create a European version of IS. Of course, they make up only a small minority among the predominantly 'normal' Muslims, but it only takes a few to create havoc. We have had terrorist attacks in Europe and I think more will come, despite the great work of our security services. It is very likely that with the growing number of Muslims refugees setting up a new life in Europe, more violent incidents caused by extreme Muslims will take place.

There are challenges to make sure all refugees are provided with food, accommodation, schooling and jobs. And, yes, there are security challenges with Islamic fundamentalists trying to get a foothold in Europe.

Nevertheless, as the Church of Jesus Christ in Europe we should not let these challenges overtake us. They are not bigger than our God. He can handle whatever crisis comes our way.

It is a real possibility that with the arrival of thousands of new Muslims our European (Christian?) values will disappear. Nevertheless, we should not be blind to the fact that such disappearance is not caused by external forces (be it Islam or humanism, secularism, materialism), but by our own sinful hearts.

In fact, its disappearance is seen in the way so many Christians respond to the refugees coming to Europe. It seems they want to defend Christian values with an attitude that goes against such values.

I suggest that the Church in Europe is facing another challenge in light of the influx of refugees, namely the challenge to not be influenced by the graceless society around us and draw our response from the Word of God, instead of from the news bulletins of the world.

The arrival of thousands of refugees in our cities and streets is an opportunity to grow into one of the key characteristics of the Christian faith, namely GRACE. C.S. Lewis said: "Christianity's unique feature among world religions is grace." If this is so, and I believe it is, it means that GRACE, not fear, should be the Church's main response to the present refugee crisis.

What is grace? Grace is the centre of the Gospel, it is the basis of our salvation.

The Greek word for 'grace' is *charis*. Its basic idea is 'non-meritorious or unearned favor, an unearned gift, a favor or blessings bestowed as a gift, freely and never as merit for work performed.'

Grace is that which God does for mankind through His Son, which mankind cannot earn, does not deserve, and will never merit. Grace is all that God freely and non-meritoriously does for man and is free to do for man on the basis of Christ's person and work on the cross. Grace, one might say, is the work of God for man and encompasses everything we receive from God.

Some characteristics of grace:

- 'The grace of God is dangerous. It's lavish, excessive, outrageous, and scandalous. God's grace is ridiculously inclusive. Apparently God doesn't care who He loves. He is not very careful about the people He calls His friends or the people He calls His church.' Mike Yaconelli, *Dangerous Wonder*

- Grace is outrageously unfair, ridiculously extravagant, boldly risking, unfair and unjustly given.
- Grace beats judgmentalism and legalism.
- Grace always gives second chances, third chances, and never stops giving chances.
- Grace has Jesus written all over it.
- Grace can be taken advantage of; if grace can't be abused, it is not real grace.

Vertical grace should be expressed in horizontal grace. We can differentiate between vertical grace (God's grace towards us) and horizontal grace (grace from us to others). It is God's desire that we be as gracious to others as God is towards us. God's Word encourages us: "Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful." (Luke 6:36)

How do this look like in light of the refugee crisis?

I want to suggest five characteristics of a mindset of grace toward Muslims' refugees coming into Europe. These can be easily remembered through the acronym of the word 'Grace':

### 1. **G**rowing our awareness of the sovereignty of God

An attitude of fear and prejudice can quench an attitude of grace. Therefore, we need to address this attitude of fear and prejudice in our lives and that of our fellow believers across Europe in order to allow the grace of God flow freely from us to others.

The fear that quenches grace can be a fear of losing something that is valuable to us, such as: freedom, identity, space, security, perhaps ultimately a fear of losing control.

In order to deal with this we have to go back to the real source of our security and identity, namely our Heavenly Father, whose plans are eternal and unchangeable.

He promises us a glorious future, and promises to be with us no matter what. Our Heavenly Father is the Sovereign Creator, the Judge of all the earth, who will bring to nothing those that stand against Him. He is the First and the Last, who is in control of human events and directs them towards His final resolution and fulfillment. He is committed to His people, even if they suffer. This is our sovereign God.

We are secure in Him, whatever happens, and whatever evil intent others may have against us. He promises: "No weapon forged against you will prevail, and will refute every tongue that accuses you. This is the heritage of the

servants of the Lord, and this is their vindication from me, declares the Lord.” (Is. 54: 17)

A growing awareness of the sovereignty of God creates peace, rest, joy, security, fearlessness. Grace is not naïve. Sometimes, such attitude of grace is confused with being naïve.

- *‘From a Christian perspective it is understandable to help our neighbors, but at the same time, this is unbelievably naïve. It is better not to consider Islam as our neighbor whom we should help. Islam takes advantage of Christian compassion in order to infiltrate into the western world. This is our weak point and they know it. It is a satanic religion. Test the spirits.’*

-reaction on Christian news website to an article about Christians working together with Muslims in Sweden in helping refugees.

Gracious people are not naïve; they are aware of evil intents of some and they are not blind for the risks involved in welcoming the stranger. Nevertheless, gracious people want to follow in the footsteps of the One, Who came from the Father, full of grace and truth (John 1:14). One who came to His own with love, compassion, a servant attitude. One, who experienced that the grace He offered was sometimes rejected (*He came His own, but His own did not receive Him*-John 1:10). Worse, his own crucified Him. There is no guarantee that we won't experience the same response, but we have no alternative. The Gospel of grace demands being delivered with grace.

We need to differentiate between the role of God's People and the role of Government.

This growing awareness of the sovereignty of God, also has reference to the role of God's people and the role of the government (authorities). In Romans 12:9-13:10, Paul describes a godly response to evil. He portrays a sharp contrast between how God's people are to respond to evil versus how the government should respond. Jesus' followers are called to peacemaking and sacrificial love. Paul begins the section with an appeal to love (Rom 12:9- 10) and closes the section by repeating the call to love our neighbor (13:8-10). He exhorts believers to bless our persecutors, respond nonviolently to evil and seek peace with all.

By contrast, a government is clearly called to bring justice within its borders, using force if necessary. Thus the justice wrought by the state reflects a partial and provisional manifestation of God's justice on earth against evil.

In our relating to Muslims it is important that we don't blur the role of the government (authorities) and the role of the Church/Christians.

The Church is called to love, bless, forgive, turn the other cheek etc. The government is responsible to punish evil/evil doers, to withhold/withdraw passports of those who clearly do not want to abide by the laws of the land. The government is to protect the innocent from the criminals, to punish the terrorist, to confiscate possessions and to withdraw licences etc.

With all the struggles in the world and all the turmoil around us, and the rapid changes that take place, we don't have to doubt who is in control: God. He, the sovereign Lord (history is His Story) fulfills His eternal purposes. He uses world leaders, even corrupt ones, to carry out His eternal plan. We are safe in His eternal, almighty hands. The Church of Europe is safe in His hands. He will continue to build it, with or without persecution. Knowing our Heavenly Father is sovereign, means that we are eternally secure. This provides us with the freedom that might seem naive, to take risks, to love our enemies, open our hearts and doors for those who may take advantage of it.

## 2. **Renewal of God's grace in our own lives**

Besides a renewed and fresh awareness of the sovereignty of God over the affairs of men, of my personal life and the continent of Europe, including the refugee crisis, we need a renewal of our joy over God's grace in our own life.

We are beneficiaries of God's amazing grace, without which we would be lost forever. Without His daily sustaining, strengthening grace, we would fall and not recover. It is grace that brought us safe thus and it only grace that will lead us home.

Having received grace from God and continuing to receive it daily in abundance, it is meant to transform our beings and to guide all our actions. Nevertheless, Christians are not always known for their grace.

"The two major causes of most emotional problems among evangelical Christians are the failure to understand, receive, and live out God's unconditional grace and forgiveness, and the failure to give out that unconditional love, forgiveness, and grace to other people...We read, we hear, we believe a good theology of grace. But that's not the way we live. The good news of the Gospel of grace has not penetrated the level of our emotions."<sup>36</sup>

The more we learn to rejoice in God's grace for us, the more we begin to understand that God is also gracious to others around us and the more we will become channels of that grace, also to Muslims around us. We are called to respond to Muslims with grace.

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<sup>36</sup> David A. Seamands, *Healing for Damaged Emotions*, (Scripture Press, Victory Books, USA, 1991), 32.

Steve Bell defines a grace-response as follows:

“a willingness to alter the default mechanism in our brains which causes us to fear the unfamiliar in another person; being prepared to give others the benefit of the doubt and make an effort to find out why they behave as they do.”<sup>37</sup>

And in his book *From Exclusion to Embrace*, Miroslav Volf writes:

“Although the behavior of a person may be judged as deplorable, even demonic, no one should ever be excluded from the will to embrace, because at the deepest level, the relationship to others does not rest on their moral performance and therefore cannot be undone by the lack of it.....At the core of the Christian faith lies the persuasion that the others need not be perceived as innocent in order to be loved, but ought to be embraced even when they are perceived as wrongdoers. The story of the cross is about God who desires to embrace precisely the ‘sons and daughters’ of hell.”

I believe that the Manifesto of the European Evangelical Alliance, *Stand up for Refugees* is a good example of what it means to respond to the refugee situation with grace<sup>38</sup>:

1. *To open my eyes to reality because I want to be sensitive to the world around me. I am disturbed when I see people running away from violence and people using violence to stop them. Yet I will stand up and help wherever and whenever I see a need that I can handle.*
2. *To open my heart because I believe that God created all people in His image and in His likeness. Unique beings, each of them with his or her own story, all of them longing for a meaningful and joyful life. Trusting God, I will not be afraid but be available for people in distress, just like Jesus Christ was.*
3. *To respond calmly and sensibly when people choose strong language, rejection, or even hatred towards refugees.*
4. *To pray for people who might be full of hatred towards the Western world, Christians, or refugees.*
5. *To seek not to curse but to bless.*
6. *To promote justice and to protect the rights of my displaced neighbour.*
7. *To promote the fair and just treatment of every person in our country.*
8. *To not believe in survival of the fittest, but to love our neighbour as ourselves and bear one another's burdens, which is God's view of justice.*
9. *To help because every smile and every small gesture can make a difference to a person in distress.*

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<sup>37</sup> Steve Bell, *Grace for Muslim? The journey from fear to faith*, (Milton Keynes: Authentic Media, 2006), page 1.

<sup>38</sup> The Manifesto can be read and downloaded at: <http://www.europeanea.org/index.php/refugees/stand-up-for-refugees/>

10. *To share what I have received with gratitude.*
11. *To sacrifice part of my wealth when that contributes to the hope of a refugee.*
12. *To be patient because many refugees bear internal scars from violence, loss and fear. Therefore I will be patient with them when they need more time, rest and space in their efforts to learn our language and culture and to contribute to society.*
13. *To be faithful in my walk with refugees and encourage them to accept a unique place of their own in our society, because I do believe not in uniformity but in a colourful diversity that reflects God's character.*
14. *To testify and proclaim God's love because Jesus Christ alone saves and heals people's hearts and minds.*
15. *To refrain from Overstatement, exaggeration, stereotyping, words taken out of context*

Remember that we are aliens ourselves

It is a great privilege to live in one of the richest continents on earth and in societies where there is social security, freedom, law enforcement, hospitals, schools etc. It is great to be a European. Nevertheless, we need to remember that while Europe might be our earthly home, it is not our eternal destiny. Christians are essentially, sojourners, aliens on earth. We are ultimately citizens of heaven and it is there we need to gather our treasures. As Luther sang: Let goods and kindred go, this mortal life also; The body they may kill: God's truth abideth still, His kingdom is forever.

Jesus challenged His followers: "If you love those who love you, what reward will you get?"...And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others?" (Matthew 5:46, 47) We are called to reflect our Father who loved us unconditionally, who died for us, while we were His enemies. The more we are overwhelmed by the unconditional, acceptance and love and grace of God, who knows all about us, the more this love and grace will spill over to others, even to those whom we dislike. The more we realize that God's compassion has no limits, the more our compassion grows in the same direction.

### **3. Accept that Islam is what a Muslim says it is**

Those who are fearful of the large influx of Muslim refugees regularly point towards the religion of Islam, pointing out that this religion is violent, aggressive, unchangeable, surpressing, anti-democratic, male dominant, anti-Christians etc.

The grace of God enables us to view Muslims not as invaders, enemies, economic migrants, not as representatives of a religious system, but as human beings. It is important to remember that the refugees are not in the first place Muslims; they are human beings, created in God's image, which we are called to treat with dignity. They have been de-humanized in the places they had to leave. We need to ask our Heavenly Father to see beyond or behind the name Muhammad, a father who is desperate to bring his family into safely; to see behind the veil worn by Fatima, a woman, who has lost her three children in a bomb attack. We might see the teenager Boutrus as a potential terrorist, while God looks upon him as a potential Church planter. (He has done this before in the life of the Jewish Boutrus: Saul).

Also, we need to focus on Muslims instead of an academic study of the religion of Islam. We can grow in grace towards Muslims as people, we don't need to grow in grace towards Islam as a religion.

The Dutch Missiologist Herman Bavinck (1895-1964) used to say: "I am never in contact with Islam, but with a Muslim and his Mohammedanism..."

Our focus on Muslims means what we are concerned about their beliefs, how they actually live and apply Islam to their daily lives. It is important to understand that Islam is not a monolithic entity. It is impossible to speak of Islam in Europe (singular) as if all Muslims believe the same, behave the same, think the same, interpret the Qur'an the same, pray the same, relate to others the same.

Persons of Muslim origin living in Europe do not all practice their faith with anything like the same level of intensity. Some people of Muslim origin have opted to follow the path of agnosticism or religious indifference. Others continue to be Muslim in a cultural sense, while paying little if any attention to associated religious beliefs. These are considered as a sort of lay Muslim population. There are no studies of any depth on the matter, but on the basis of a partial examination of the subject it appears that approximately two-thirds of the Muslim population falls into one of these two categories (non-practicing or agnostic, etc.) of Muslim self-identification. Only about a third ..has so to speak made their self-reference to the Islamic faith active.<sup>39</sup>

#### 4. Contact real Muslims

Once one begins to have eyes for Muslims instead of debating about Islam, it is inevitable that one wants to get in touch with real Muslims, as people of

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<sup>39</sup> Dassetto, F, Ferrari, S and Marechal, B (2007), *Islam in the European Union: What's at stake in the future?*, Strasbourg: European Parliament, 6.7.

flesh and blood. So often, people that have a strong negative sentiment towards Islam and Muslims, have no single contact with a Muslim whatsoever. The arrival of thousands new Muslim immigrants, together with the Muslims that have lived in our countries for several years or even all their lives, gives us ample opportunities to get in touch with them.

It is my desire that every Muslim in Europe will have at least one Christian friend or that all Christians have at least one Muslim as their friend. I'm glad that thousands of Christians across Europe are seeking ways to get in contact with the Muslims, both the arriving refugees, as well as the Muslims that have been here longer.

### **Examples:**

Provide temporary housing, donate clothes, food, offer hospitality; organize events/church services for refugees; organize transportation to have them visit your church/homes, offer yourself as a volunteer in asylum centers; celebrate World Refugee Sunday (June 19 or 26, 2016);

- Recently a Baptist Church in Barcelona region sent four trucks full of clothing, toys and tents to Idomeni and other refugee camps in Greece, after hundreds of citizens joined the project.
- More than 60 churches across the UK offer 'Welcome boxes' to refugees. The welcome box is a shoe box filled with toys and educational items for children, toiletries, confectionery, and information about the city. They also provide information about local groups and services, offer language classes, enterprise training and housing.
- Agape created a 'Love-Europe app', to help refugees to communicate better and get valuable information to feel welcome in their new surroundings.

For those that are not yet involved, but would like to, there is help and resources available

## **5. Enter into their lives**

Some people might have thought that the E as our fifth and final point, would refer to Evangelize. And of course this is certainly an important aspect of our interactions with people of other faiths. If we are excited about God's grace for all mankind and if we are exuberant about Jesus, there is no doubt that we will seek opportunities to express this to our friends, including Muslims.

In doing so there are a variety of resources available, such as Bibles, DVD's in different languages; SD memory cards which contain the Jesus film and Bible in Arabic and other languages.

Although, we might consider this most important, nevertheless, this is not all we do, nor might it be the first thing we do. I draw my inspiration from the words of the Apostle Paul in his letter to the church in Thessalonika:

“Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God, but our lives as well.” (1 Thess. 2:8, NIV)

Sharing Lives is more complex than sharing the Gospel. Sharing Lives is holistic, taking the whole person into consideration. The refugee is not in the first place an object for conversion, but someone we are called to love and serve. Sharing Lives is also holistic that it involves our whole being as well.

In his commentary on 1 Thessalonians, Ernest Black writes:

“The true missionary is not someone specialized in the delivery of the message but someone whose whole being, completely committed to a message which demands all, is communicated to his hearers.”<sup>40</sup>

Entering into the lives of Muslim refugees means, visiting them, listening to their stories, learning of their struggles, nightmares and dreams.

Colin Chapman, who worked in the Middle East for many years, sees in the story of Jesus as a boy in the temple a good model for entering into the lives of our Muslim friends and he points out the following five details<sup>41</sup>:

“After three days they found Him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them, and asking them questions. Everyone who heard Him was amazed at his understanding and his answers.” (Luke 2: 46, 47)

Sit among them. Jesus sat among the teachers. Christians need to sit among Muslims by visiting them in their homes, spending time with them socially, visiting a mosque, an Islamic youth center or student group, etc. Learning about their history and culture.

**Listen.** Jesus listened to the teachers. Christians can learn to listen to Muslims by having a sincere desire to learn what they think. By giving serious attention to how they themselves express their faith. It means that we learn to stand in their shoes and see the world through their eyes. It means that we learn to listen with our hearts and not just with our ears.

**Ask questions.** Jesus asked questions. When we have taken the first two steps, we are in a better position to ask good questions without Muslims considering

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<sup>40</sup> Ernest Best, *Black's New Testament Commentaries, ed., A commentary of the First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians* (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1993), 102, 103.

<sup>41</sup> Colin Chapman, *Cross and Crescent: responding to the Challenge of Islam* (Downers Grove, IL, USA: IVP Books, 2007), 24, 25.

such questions to be a threat. We do not ask questions to embarrass our Muslim friend, but to really enter into a conversation.

*Understand.* The teachers saw that Jesus understood them. The answers to our questions will lead us to a better understanding of Islam in the life of our Muslim friend. Understanding also enables us to discern the most important issues and not get sidetracked into fruitless discussions.

*Answer.* Jesus answered the questions posed by the teachers. When Muslims see we really understand them, they might begin asking questions about our faith. Once we reach the stage of being able to offer any answers, we will then be answering genuine questions in the minds of Muslims and not simply the questions that we think they ought to be asking. At this stage we've also earned the right to speak.

## **Conclusion**

The refugee crisis provides the Church in Europe with an opportunity to grow in grace.

We can calm our fears, worries and concerns for our future, safety, society with regard to the refugees, in the sovereign loving presence of our Heavenly Father. We can drink freshly from the unquenchable source of His loving grace and compassion for our well-being. When we do this, the Holy Spirit can fill our hearts with compassion, to not be put off by the colour of someone's skin, religion, language or culture, but recognize a fellow-human being whom God created and for whom Christ died. God will then give us a desire and with it practical ways to enter into the lives of people that have fled to us.

Responding with grace to the Muslims in Europe (refugees and others) does not mean to compromise our values or traditions. On the contrary, grace is one of our key values and I believe that in the present times of crisis in Europe, provides us with an opportunity to let the world know this.

I believe that the hundreds of thousands of refugees, among whom many Muslims, give the Church of Europe an opportunity to testify that we are followers of the Man of Peace, who when a baby had to flee from violence and together with his parents found refuge in another country. Jesus, Who as an adult had no place to lay down his head and who was willing to give up his privileges in order to reconcile man to God. Jesus came to exemplify grace and it is grace that should determine our response to the refugee crisis in Europe.

When God enables us to live out this attitude and these values then the refugee crisis becomes a refugee opportunity, namely to show our new neighbors that their ultimate security and safety is not in Europe, but in Christ, in Whom all nations will ultimately be blessed.

## NEW EUROPEAN BRIDGES: *WHAT IS THE FATHER DOING?*

*James K. Mellis*

**WHEN YOU LOOK AT EUROPE, AND AT THE INCREASING NUMBERS OF NON-EUROPEANS RESIDING IN EUROPE OR TRYING TO TAKE UP RESIDENCE HERE, WHAT DO YOU SEE? FIRST, HOW DO YOU SEE EUROPE? AS A CONTINENT, WHERE CHRISTIAN VALUES ARE UNDER THREAT FROM ISLAMIC AND OTHER NON-CHRISTIAN, NON-EUROPEAN GROUPS? IS THIS GOD'S PERSPECTIVE?**

These are the questions the video 'What do you see?' asks of us. It ends with an image of the Enneüs Heermabrug – a new bridge connecting the new district, Ijburg, to the rest of Amsterdam. Why a 'bridge'? If you follow the history of the Church from the first century right into the 20th century, you will find that the continent of Europe functioned in many ways as God's main bridge to move the Gospel from the Middle East to the ends of the earth. This movement of European missionaries reached its peak during the past five centuries, with many coming from European immigrant populations in the Americas. My American parents – of Dutch, Scottish and German ancestry – were part of that movement.

Yet as the 20th century was drawing to a close, Europe had become the only continent in the world where Church membership was declining, and Christians in the non-Western world began to outnumber Christians in Western countries. Was God finished with Europe as a bridge? Or was he just busy constructing a new kind bridge in Europe to accomplish his eternal purposes?

A second theme in this video is found in the initial theme song – it is the biblical theme of God inviting people from all over the world to a great 'wedding banquet'. And two kinds of immigrants are pictured: people from many nations who have not yet understood that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is for them, and people who are coming to Europe from many non-Western nations where they grew up in the Church. At the time I created this video, ten

## WHAT DO YOU SEE?

How do we see the increasing numbers of immigrants and refugees that have been coming to Europe during the past several decades?

See this 7 minute video: <http://bit.ly/2qVsR5z>

years ago, there were an estimated 900,000 immigrants in the Netherlands from Muslim countries; yet another estimate put the number of immigrants from Christian countries at 800,000.

About the same time, Joshua Livestro (a Dutch journalist) noted how media attention was focused almost exclusively on Muslim immigrants, not on those with a Christian background, even though at that time, new 'Christian' immigrants were outnumbering new 'Muslim' immigrants by a ratio of 2 to 1! And in his article, 'Holland's Post-Secular Future', Livestro noted another startling statistic: that the post-war decline in church attendance in the Netherlands had stopped in the early 1990s. While traditional Dutch churches continued to experience declining numbers, the overall church attendance leveled off, due to the dramatic growth of youth churches and immigrant churches.<sup>42</sup>

So what is God doing? In one of the earliest Christian speeches in Europe, Paul said (Acts 17:26-27 ESV):

He made from one man every nation [Gr. *ethnos*] of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling places, that they should seek God, in the hope that they might... find him.

How did God make the nations? In the Torah we read of how through Noah's descendants, 'the nations spread out over the earth', 'by their clans and languages, in their territories and nations' (Gen.10:32, 31,20,5 NIV). And what was God's ultimate purpose?

In the Psalms we read that 'all the nations' he had made would come together to worship him, and to 'bring glory to his name' (Ps.86:9). And this is what we see happening in John's vision: redeemed 'tribes', 'languages', 'nations' and 'peoples' worshipping God and the Lamb together (Rev.5:9; 7:9; 15:3-4). In this closing picture in the Bible, there is no more mention of nations divided by the boundaries of separate territories. Rather, we see multi-cultural, multi-lingual worship in a multi-cultural mega-city, the New Jerusalem—with diverse nations bringing their 'glory and honor' into this city of heavenly origin (Rev. 21:26).

Between 1996 and 2005 there were a variety of attempts in Amsterdam at multi-cultural worship involving both indigenous Dutch Christians and a

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<sup>42</sup> Joshua Livestro, 'Holland's Post-Secular Future', <http://www.weeklystandard.com/hollands-post-secular-future/article/14234>.

wide variety of immigrant Christians living. But this trend seems to have petered out over the past decade, though there are some ongoing efforts by Christians in various parts of the Netherlands: at multi-ethnic worship and partnerships in prayer and service. Even as Paul discovered in the 1st century, most Christians need a revelation in order to see this formerly 'hidden' mystery and how it is to be administered—such that the 'many and varied wisdom' of God can be made known through the church. Yet, I believe such multi-ethnic worship gatherings and partnerships represent the new bridge that our Father is wanting to build here in Europe to demonstrate the goal of the Gospel, of nations as 'co-heirs' in Christ, leading the way toward 'all things' being brought together under Christ as head (Eph.3:6; 1:9-10).

But if God determines where all ethnic groups live, why is he bringing so many Muslim immigrants into Europe? Because alongside the urbanization and globalization of his world in the late 20th century, God has been doing something new in the Muslim world. And this is the third theme of the video. When you saw the person in the white jelaba walking around Amsterdam, when did you finally realize that this person was actually a Muslim background believer (MBB) in Jesus?

In his recent book, *A Wind in the House of Islam* (2012)<sup>43</sup>, David Garrison has published the results of several years of research on Jesus movements in the nine geo-cultural regions of the Muslim world. For the sake of 'clarity and consistency', he defines a Jesus movement in a Muslim people group as comprising 'at least 100 new churches or 1,000 baptisms that occur over a two-decade period'. But before 1980, there had only been three such movements since the rise of Islam in the seventh century: two movements during the last two decades of the 19th century (in Ethiopia and in Indonesia) and a new movement that began in Indonesia in the late 1960s. Yet between 1980 and 2000 there were an additional 11 such movements; and an additional 69 movements to Christ between 2000 and 2012—at least one in each of the nine 'rooms' in the 'House of Islam'!

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<sup>43</sup> For more on David Garrison's research, go to: <http://windinthehouse.org>

One of the factors in many of these movements is the appearance of Jesus himself to Muslims in dreams and visions—a widespread phenomena that is portrayed in diverse stories recorded in another book published in 2012.<sup>44</sup>

The man in the video, who has been a colleague of mine for most of the past decade, comes from a North African Muslim people group, among whom such a movement is taking place, both in his homeland and in Europe. So now there are not only 'Jesus movements' in each of the 9 geo-cultural 'rooms' in the traditional 'house of Islam', but at least two in Europe as well. And colleagues of mine who work with the second of these movements, are building a new European 'bridge'. Instead of perpetuating the old European bridge, of Europeans going to disciple other nations, they travel as ministry partners with their new brothers and sisters—both on visits to the home country of these MBBs, and throughout Europe.

In the Gospel of John, we read that Jesus made the following statements:

The Son...can do only what he observes the Father doing... The Father is deeply fond of the Son and shows him everything he himself is doing.' (5:19-20)

And then, anticipating the coming of the Holy Spirit, he told his disciples:

Jesus said, '...I am ascending to my Father and YOUR Father. ... As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending YOU.' (20:17,21)

'In that day YOU will ask in my name...for the Father himself is deeply fond of YOU.' (16:26-27)<sup>45</sup>

If we, as indigenous and immigrant Christians are 'co-heirs' in Christ, adult sons and daughters of a God who is our Father too<sup>46</sup>, are we working with him in what he is doing today: in Europe and among Muslims? Or are we still ordering our priorities according to what we saw him doing in the past, or

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<sup>44</sup> Tom Doyle, *Dreams and Visions: Is Jesus Awakening the Muslim World?* (available through Amazon). See also the following article: <http://www.charismanews.com/world/45206-how-god-is-moving-with-dreams-and-visions-in-the-muslim-world>.

<sup>45</sup> These texts are taken from the 4-voice harmony of the Gospels that I composed for both Muslims and Christians: *The Good News of the Messiah by the Four Witnesses*. In it, I use small caps for 'YOU' whenever it is plural, something that is not visible in most modern English translations. For more about this book and my two other books of stories for Muslims, see <http://fathermeditations.com/more/resources/books-by-jk-mellis/>

<sup>46</sup> To learn more about what the Bible says about working with our Father as adult sons and daughters in Christ, visit my website with 'meditations' on all the references to God as 'Father' in the Bible (<http://fathermeditations.com>).

according to the human perspectives of our own culture and the international media?

When I came to the Netherlands as a missionary 40 years ago, I had no idea that I too would become an immigrant, nor that I would learn new things from the Bible about Jesus and about my Father through the cultural perspectives of my Moroccan immigrant neighbors. As unlikely as it seems, I learned that God as our Father is an important bridge for communicating the Gospel to Muslims.<sup>47</sup> In the books of stories I have written, you can learn about more intercultural bridges for the Gospel that I discovered within their traditions, while trying to simply work with my Father in what he is doing.<sup>48</sup>

Working with him across cultural divides is always challenging, but it is also enriching and brings great glory to him. I have posted a number of resources on my 'Father Meditation' website on a page under 'More/Resources' entitled: Immigration and the Church in Europe: What is our Father Doing.<sup>49</sup> In the actual meditations on the website ([fathermeditations.com](http://fathermeditations.com)) I also explore what Paul calls 'the Mystery' of God's eternal purpose, and the implications for what he has accomplished in Christ and inaugurated through the Holy Spirit: for all nations and for our relationship with God as our Father.

When I was a young man, an Afro-American elder in an inner city church in Harlem, New York issued a challenge that has stayed with me all my life. In closing, I pass on his challenge to you: 'Are you going to be part of the solution, of just another part of the problem?'

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<sup>47</sup> To read more about what I learned, go to: <http://fathermeditations.com/more/articles/learning-to-share-the-good-news-in-a-muslim-context/>.

<sup>48</sup> Discover these 'bridges' in story form by reading one or both of my books: *Abu Sharif, the Mystery of the Hundredth Name* (available in English, Dutch, Spanish, French, German and Fulani), and *Rode Dromer* (available in Dutch and in Norwegian as *Mostafas DrØm*).

<sup>49</sup> For more resources go to <http://fathermeditations.com/more/resources/immigration-and-the-church-in-europe-what-is-our-father-doing/>.

# SECURITY: the price of freedom

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## DEFENDING EUROPE'S FREEDOM

*Christiaan Meinen and Johannes de Jong*

FREEDOM HAS BEEN ACHIEVED AT A HIGH COST DURING WWII AND AFTER A TIME OF PAINFUL OPPRESSION IN HALF OF EUROPE. ONLY AFTER 1989 WE CAN SAY THAT EUROPE IS ACTUALLY FREE. THIS HISTORY ALSO SHOWS THAT THERE ARE POWERS THAT USE MILITARY POWER TO THREATEN AND (IF POSSIBLE) CRUSH AND OPPRESS FREEDOM. THIS REALITY CANNOT BE IGNORED AS IGNORING IT WILL COME AT A HEAVY COST FOR THOSE OPPRESSED.

Both the Second World War and the Cold War demonstrate that freedom needs to be defended and that military means are a sad necessity to maintain the freedom we cherish. The need for defence and security is not a necessity of the past. At the State of Europe Forum we discussed two major tensions that Europe is facing at the moment.

The first is obviously the reality of large-scale terrorism that managed to take large swathes of territory in the Middle East and operates globally to attack the free world. The second is the reality of illiberal powers in Russia and China who each vie for domination in their wider region. Both situations are forcing Europe to rethink its security strategy to defend its freedoms properly.

The first challenge for Europe however is to maintain freedom while defending it. Security measures should not go so far that personal freedoms and privacy are sacrificed. The challenge is to keep the balance between security and privacy.

### **Safety in Europe's public space**

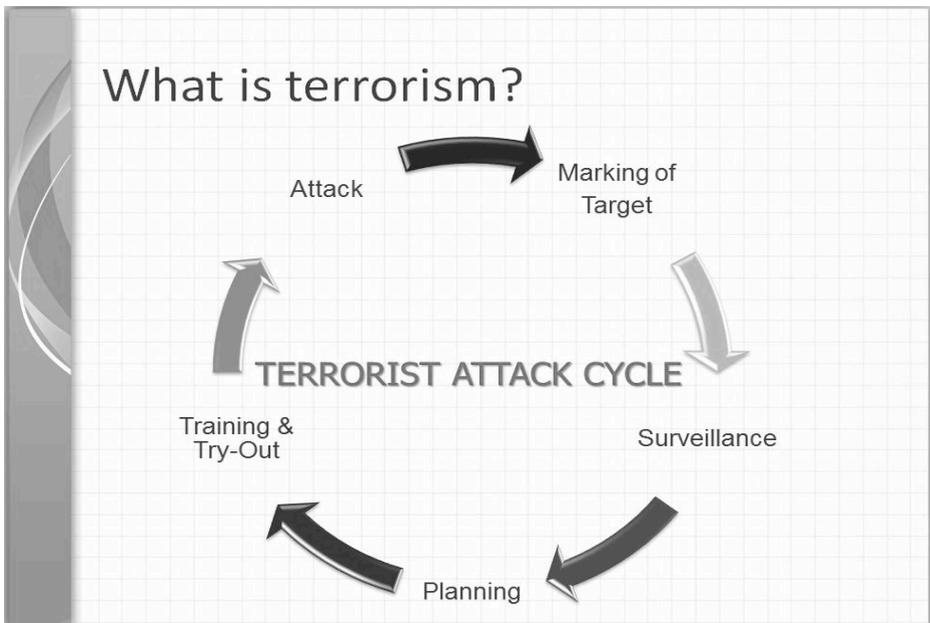
Terrorism is a small problem if we compare the number of terrorism victims with other unnatural causes of death. However if we take into account the disruption of daily life and spreading of fear it is a very real problem for Europe's internal security.

The approaches suggested by Jarno Volmer would reduce the tension between security and privacy. One of the main issues he pointed out is the lack of training of security personnel. Another is the online dimension of terrorism.

Better training of security staff is both a challenge and a solution. Much more time and money needs to be invested in this effort as well as a more holistic training program. This program would make security staff much better capable in detecting and preventing attacks as well deal better with an aftershock in the event of an attack.

To understand terrorism we need to be able to see when terrorists mark a target, do surveillance of the target, plan the attack, train for an attack and carry out the attack. Better training and much better exchange of information between layers of security staff is key to prevent attacks from happening.

Part of improved understanding is that security staff understands how terrorism has changed over time; that there is a new generation of home-grown terrorists not detectable with traditional techniques based on traditional profiles of terrorists. What is needed now is analyzing the behavior and psychological characteristics of a person or a particular group in order to predict or assess their behavior. What is needed is an investigative technique that identifies a behavioral pattern of an offender who has not yet been caught.



### What is Terrorism? A definition

Worldwide 400 different definitions of terrorism are recognised. No definition is 100% perfect. One definition which has a broad acceptance is: *the use or threatened use of violence against people or the causing of serious damage to property that disrupts daily life, with the aim of bringing about social change or influencing political decision-making.*

### THE TERRORIST ATTACK CYCLE EXPLAINED

Attacks are committed by different groups. Through history we recognize different type of attacks and motivation. (Not only religious inspired but also Right- Left-wing, Single Issue terrorism as well as Separatism)

The basis of how terrorists operate is mentioned here in the different fases. While security- and anti-terrorism units are not really able to detect 'terrorists' during the **Marking of Target** phase, they do have ideas which kind of targets terrorists are looking for. Jarno Volmer claims that there is a need not only to make policy but to invest time and resources to train security officers

and make them succesful in detecting terrorist (cells) during **Surveillance-, Training & Try-Out** phases and even shortly before the actual **attack**. The goal should be to re-design security concepts and disturb terrorists in planning the operation. A key element of succes **is the exchange of information on all levels:** among secret services, intelligence officers, airport management, directorship of public transportation systems, security officers, scientists. Governments and the EU can facilitate such programs. People can take those lessons back home and motivate others. The detection rate will rise!

This technique needs to take today's profile into account; if you know your enemy you can identify him. This approach should be integrated in the online efforts to prevent terrorism together with a 'journalistic' analysis and approach that focuses both on behavior and message. Further key elements in the online efforts are 1) to invest in education, 2) to develop and integrate the new techniques to detect threats and 3) to use social media also to communicate openly about the threats.

Some elements of current policy and the 'war on terror' seem to work counterproductively. The West is fighting terrorists in certain African and Asian countries in ways that create new terrorists, groups and problems, such

as drone attacks and political support for groups who don't share western values.

**Drone attacks:**

- prevent putting boots on the ground. Question is only what type of military staff do you need to execute an attack.
- are carried out from a distance, far away from the theatre itself. Is the feeling of killing and taking a life, even a terrorist's life, the same?
- Who is controlling the drone? Nowadays military staff members who are born and raised on video games. Do we distinguish between fiction and reality?

**Political decision-making:**

- Think about the influence of politicians who went to the Maidan Place in Kiev, Ukraine. Think about the effect. If it is not clear in The Netherlands what the goal is of the treaty with Ukraine, how is political decision-making then clear for people with a background who cannot deal with the situation?
- We go as Europe into Libya, backed by the USA, and led by France and the UK. What did we as Europe do? Attack from the sky. The tribes and rebels are left to fix the job in the wake of the Arab spring.
- No massive boots on the ground, except operations carried out by special forces.
- No proper government is installed; the country turned into chaos of tribes.
- So, are we going to accept that some of 'our friends' rule their country in violation of human rights, a subject we simply avoid to address?

Political decision-making is influencing our world in all areas. Not only for the upcoming year but more for decades. We have to realize this. Mr. Volmer closed with stating that a different approach to EU Foreign Policy is necessary as there is a clear connection to terrorism in Europe and events across the globe, especially in the Middle East.

## SUPPORTING A CULTURE OF FREEDOM IN THE MIDDLE EAST AS THE EU COUNTER-TERRORISM STRATEGY

*Johannes de Jong*

ONE META-ANALYSIS OF THE CAUSE OF TERRORISM IS THE LACK OF FREEDOM IN THE MIDDLE EAST. There is no doubt that there is a lack of freedom in the Middle East in many aspects. Freedom of religion, association, freedom of speech, freedom of press and freedom of women are either absent or seriously lacking in most countries in the Middle East<sup>50</sup><sup>51</sup><sup>52</sup><sup>53</sup><sup>54</sup>. The Freedom House deemed in 2015 only 2 of the 18 countries in Middle East and North Africa (MENA) as free countries comprising only 5% of the total population of that region. The Freedom House analyzed that 85% of this population lives in unfree countries and 10% in partially free countries<sup>55</sup>.

The lack of freedom of women and freedom of religion are not just state-related in the MENA countries, they are vastly present at the micro-level of society. Oppression after conversion from Islam to another religion (or none) will first and foremost create a backlash from the family<sup>56</sup>. Oppression of women happens first and foremost at the level of family life<sup>57</sup>.

However this oppression is in turn allowed and permitted by all legal and governance structures<sup>58</sup>. Even if certain freedoms are mentioned in a

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<sup>50</sup> <http://pomed.org/blog-post/uncategorized/u-s-commission-on-international-religious-freedom-releases-report/> & <https://www.opendoorsusa.org/resources-2/#wwl-report> & <http://www.religiousfreedom.eu/2016/06/30/annual-report-on-the-state-of-freedom-of-religion-or-belief-in-the-world-2015-2016/> & <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/238390.pdf> & <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/26/magazine/is-this-the-end-of-christianity-in-the-middle-east.html>

<sup>51</sup> [http://www.clubmadrid.org/en/programa/freedom\\_of\\_association\\_in\\_the\\_mena\\_region](http://www.clubmadrid.org/en/programa/freedom_of_association_in_the_mena_region)

<sup>52</sup> <http://www.economist.com/news/international/21640747-middle-east-free-expression-rarity-blasphemy-laws-are-favoured-tools> q

<sup>53</sup> <http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/press-freedom-curtailed-after-arab-spring-report-1139300>

<sup>54</sup> <https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/270.pdf> (overview freedom of women in MENA countries)

<sup>55</sup> [https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/FH\\_FITW\\_Report\\_2016.pdf](https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/FH_FITW_Report_2016.pdf) (page 10)

<sup>56</sup> [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk\\_news/magazine/7355515.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/magazine/7355515.stm)

<sup>57</sup> [http://www.freemiddleeast.com/blog/free\\_middle\\_east/the-bleak-reality-of-women%E2%80%99s-rights-in-the-middle-east-and-how-far-the-arab-spring-must-go/477](http://www.freemiddleeast.com/blog/free_middle_east/the-bleak-reality-of-women%E2%80%99s-rights-in-the-middle-east-and-how-far-the-arab-spring-must-go/477)

<sup>58</sup> [http://www.freemiddleeast.com/blog/free\\_middle\\_east/the-bleak-reality-of-women%E2%80%99s-rights-in-the-middle-east-and-how-far-the-arab-spring-must-go/477](http://www.freemiddleeast.com/blog/free_middle_east/the-bleak-reality-of-women%E2%80%99s-rights-in-the-middle-east-and-how-far-the-arab-spring-must-go/477)

constitution, almost always the police and other law enforcers will act according to the oppressors and oppressive structures and habits. This can for example be seen in the lack of response to the so-called 'honour killings'<sup>59</sup>. The lack of freedom in the MENA countries exists therefore a clear interaction between the macro level of legislation and governance and the micro level of family life and local society. Both ends of this interaction are oppressive and mutually strengthen the ongoing oppression.

The ones 'benefiting' from this oppression at the micro level are older men of majority groups. It is true that young men in MENA countries can more easily escape their family and society than young women but within the MENA societies and families they simply do not have personal freedom of choice. Internet is for example for many young men and women simply a possibility for to escape these oppressive structures<sup>60 61</sup>.

This culture of oppression is therefore deeply rooted in these societies. This is amplified by the lack of political freedom in most of the MENA countries. Political opposition of any kind will most often experience some form of violent oppression. The afore-mentioned Freedom House report especially focuses on the clampdown by totalitarian regimes against political opposition.

One can safely conclude that for the vast majority of the populations of the MENA countries the only public discourse is that of oppression and violence. A culture of oppression and violence is a perfect hotbed for terrorism. Radical Islam fits neatly in this picture.

The head of Sunni Islam's most esteemed center of learning, Sheik Ahmed al-Tayeb, grand imam of Al-Azhar in Cairo, blamed in February 2015 'corrupt interpretations' of the Quran and the life of the Prophet Muhammad for the rise of Middle East-based terrorism. He called therefore for a reform of Islamic education.

This is a very stark admittance that Islamic terrorism is clearly attached to the fact that wahabism and other extreme interpretations of Islam have become the mainstream Islamic discourse in most of the MENA countries. The rise and dominance of intolerant and radical Islam cannot be left out as another major factor fuelling Islamic terrorism. The rise of intolerant Sharia is reinforcing the pre-existing patterns of unfreedom at macro and micro level in a significant

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<sup>59</sup> <http://www.meforum.org/2646/worldwide-trends-in-honor-killings>

<sup>60</sup> <http://www.cyberpsychology.eu/view.php?cisloclanku=2014100501>

<sup>61</sup> <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/views/news/middle-east/2014/04/25/Brain-Drain-why-a-quarter-of-young-Arabs-want-to-leave-their-countries.html>

way<sup>62</sup> <sup>63</sup> <sup>64</sup>. Furthermore it creates an environment in which extremism can grow unchallenged which is a fertile soil for terrorism<sup>65</sup>. This development has been encouraged by the Gulf States, notably Saudi Arabia, who promoted wahabism and funded extreme madrassa's and mosques across the globe<sup>66</sup>. This development is now recognized as a threat at European political level but has so far not lead to major changes in policy<sup>67</sup>.

It is obvious that the fundamental lack of freedom opens the road to extremism and violence as there is no other model of public discourse available and as free debate is discouraged. Neither the MENA societies nor it's communities abroad know and encourage a fully free debate in which alternative views and facts can brought in. This in turn creates an atmosphere in which non-factual conspiracy theories easily outweigh factual debate<sup>68</sup>. These conspiracy ideas subsequently discourage critical self-reflection and deflect blame and responsibility and are often core instruments of terrorist groups as they provide easy frames of 'the powerful them and us the victims'<sup>69</sup>.

The Head of the Department of Islamic theology and Religious Education at Freiburg University of Education, Abdel Hakim Ourghi, expressed the following observation in an interesting article in 'Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung' (19 May 2016) "The Quran lessons in the Mosques are conditioning children into a patriarchal social structure and restrain their creative power of self-development." This shows that a reform of Islamic education will be insufficient to counter terrorism if it only focuses at a more moderate form of Islam. A much more fundamental change towards freedom in education and education in freedom is needed for education to become a key prevention of terrorism.

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<sup>62</sup> <http://www.uscirf.gov/news-room/op-eds/the-washington-times-sharia-in-sudan-v-women-and-religious-freedom>

<sup>63</sup> [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228153137\\_Religious\\_Freedom\\_Implications\\_of\\_Sharia\\_Implementation\\_in\\_Aceh\\_Indonesia](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228153137_Religious_Freedom_Implications_of_Sharia_Implementation_in_Aceh_Indonesia)

<sup>64</sup> <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2015/brunei>

<sup>65</sup> <http://nationalinterest.org/feature/the-myth-empowers-islamic-terrorism-16409>

<sup>66</sup> <http://www.newstatesman.com/world-affairs/2014/11/wahhabism-isis-how-saudi-arabia-exported-main-source-global-terrorism> & <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/wahhabism-a-deadly-scripture-398516.html>

<sup>67</sup> <http://edition.cnn.com/2015/12/08/world/germany-saudi-extremism/> & European Parliament resolution of 12 March 2015 (statement 7)

<sup>68</sup> <http://www.danielpipes.org/books/hiddenchap.php>

<sup>69</sup> [http://www.demos.co.uk/files/Conspiracy\\_theories\\_paper.pdf?1282913891](http://www.demos.co.uk/files/Conspiracy_theories_paper.pdf?1282913891)

The World Economic Forum found in 2015 that: "In addition to foundational literacies, MENA's learning crisis extends to competencies needed in the workforce, such as critical thinking, creativity and communication. In the Arab world, 40% of employers cite skill-shortage as a top constraint to business operation and company growth."<sup>70</sup>

Here we see how an unfree culture creates the conditions for terrorism. The lack of freedom in education blocks innovation and blocks subsequently economic growth. The lack of economic prospects is one of the most quoted drivers of terrorism. However there can only be economic growth if the true source for terrorism, a culture that lacks freedom, is dealt with.

The conclusion of the above is that the MENA countries suffer under a lack of freedom at all levels of society. The lack of freedom is ingrained in culture and government from the micro level of the family to the macro level of national government. It is especially damaging for women, minorities and young people. This 'culture of unfreedom' creates a culture of oppression and violence that is a fertile ground for terrorism. The discourse of oppression and violence is further solidified and encouraged by Islamic extremism, itself being a product of oppressive regimes who promote wahabism and salafism around the globe. The prevailing cultural paradigms of oppression and violence are not challenged in free debate. The lack of fact-based debate allow conspiracy theories to become the most important storylines in the MENA countries, storylines that feed terrorism. Education and media can only be a game changer if they promote and educate freedom itself. This change towards freedom in education and education in freedom is also the way to innovation and economic growth.

**The strategic conclusion from the above is that it is paramount for the EU and EU Member States to promote a culture of freedom across the MENA countries.** The core question then is what that means in reality and in terms of benchmarks.

There are some existing cases of MENA countries that do enjoy freedom or growing freedom. The before mentioned Freedom House study classifies Israel and Tunisia as countries of freedom. Nevertheless the experience of the CPFE with Rojava in Northern Syria convinced the CPFE that it is the development in this region that provides clearer clues how a home-grown culture of freedom can provide an answer and alternative to terrorism coming

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<sup>70</sup><https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2015/05/how-can-the-middle-east-close-its-education-gap/>

from the MENA countries. Israel is by and large a case of 'imported freedom' as a consequence of the European Jews who founded it.

Tunisia does witness a change towards democracy but many aspects of a culture of freedom still need to be realized (like full and personal women's rights as well as public freedom of religion<sup>71 72</sup>).

The Syrian quagmire has given life to what is the most radical experiment in home-grown freedom in the Middle East to date. This experiment is called the Federation of Rojava Northern Syria which is located along the Syrian - Turkish border and is now larger than Lebanon<sup>73</sup>. Right from the start of the civil war the situation in North-East Syria developed differently than in other parts of Syria<sup>74</sup>. Assad pulled out much of his forces to fight the civil war in Western Syria leaving a vacuum behind. The Kurdish PYD seized the moment and filled the vacuum in co-operation with the Syriac Union Party (Syriac Christians) and their Syriac Military Council, along with the Sheikh of the Shammar tribe (head of the Sanadeed forces). In this way this became early on a multi-ethnic and multi-religious entity.

Quickly the new governance introduced its Social Contract as de-facto constitution which has no reference to Islam and rejects religious interference in political life<sup>75</sup>. They quickly abolished all sharia courts, established full and personal as well as collective freedom of religion and embarked on an unprecedented effort in securing women's freedom and rights. The way they did the latter was to make sure in the constitution, in laws and in practice that women got full responsibility and opportunity in government and defence as well as in social life<sup>76</sup>. Furthermore legislation was implemented that prohibited underage marriage and forced marriage as well as abuse of women. A network of women's houses has been realised to provide shelter against abuse and to offer education. The key concept has been empowerment through responsibility. A clear example is the 7000 strong YPJ female defence

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<sup>71</sup> <http://www.tunisia-live.net/2015/08/13/life-and-struggles-of-being-a-woman-in-tunisia/>

<sup>72</sup> <http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/tunisia-the-muslim-nation-where-christians-enjoy-relative-freedom-74844/>

<sup>73</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rojava#cite\\_note-135](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rojava#cite_note-135)

<sup>74</sup> <http://www.vice.com/read/meet-the-yypg>

<sup>75</sup> <http://www.syriacsnews.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/social-contract-dsa-syria.pdf>

<sup>76</sup> <http://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Op-Ed-Contributors/The-Kurdish-womens-revolution-344927>

force that is renowned for its effectiveness against ISIS<sup>77</sup>. Aside these remarkable policies the governance in all levels is multi-ethnic and multi-religious. This is further enhanced by the freedom of association in which every segment and ethnic component of society can develop its own social organisations. With regard to economy, the rise of cooperatives in Rojava as answer to economic struggle signals how freedom unlocks economic-social innovation regardless of the harsh circumstances<sup>78</sup>.

This combination of tangible freedoms and multi-ethnic co-operation has proven to be the most effective way to counter extremism and terrorism in the region. The defence forces of Rojava are without doubt the best motivated and most effective response against ISIS and other terrorist entities. Not just by having motivated forces who are prepared to defend their freedom but also by providing governance and society that effectively ends all possibilities for extremism and terrorism to maintain presence and take hold. By now Rojava has become so strong and large that there is no doubt anymore that it will continue to exist and its renewed constitution (presented 1 July) affirms all its established freedoms and its ambition to defend and spread them in newly liberated areas where ISIS is defeated<sup>79</sup>.

A number of key principles can be derived from this new reality that can work as benchmarks to define a culture of freedom:

- Women's rights (fundamental freedoms)
- Freedom of religion at personal and collective level
- Personal choice (freedom of young people to develop)
- Democratic structures and multi-ethnic governance
- Freedom for and development of civil society

These principles when applied in practice have been proven to be very effective to spread a culture of freedom at micro and macro level (and mutually enhancing another). Spreading a culture of freedom according to these principles and support the areas where they are realised is the winning strategy against terrorism.

Movements, initiatives, entities and countries that strive towards and realise this 'cultural spectrum' are key to change the environment around Europe. This can be big entities (Rojava) or small initiatives (boxing school for ladies in

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<sup>77</sup> <http://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/isis-terror/meet-kurdish-women-fighting-isis-syria-n199821>

<sup>78</sup> [http://www.hamptoninstitution.org/cooperatives-in-rojava.html#.V39qY\\_mLS70](http://www.hamptoninstitution.org/cooperatives-in-rojava.html#.V39qY_mLS70)

<sup>79</sup> <http://en.hawarnews.com/indorsement-of-social-contract-preparations-for-coming-elections/>

Jordan<sup>80</sup>). It can also be citizen's movements (women's movement in Egypt and elsewhere<sup>81,82</sup>) or youth opposition movements (students in Sudan<sup>83</sup>). Of course it can also be a country that shows real development in the direction of freedom (Tunisia<sup>84</sup>). A more positive relation between the EU and Israel is a logical consequence of this approach.

**The core is that the EU and its Member States understand how promoting a culture of freedom will solve European challenges and is key for our long-term security.** This means that this goal will need to gain priority in all EU and EU Member foreign affairs approaches and policies. It does not mean that all existing ties or diplomacy will end but it means a shift in approach.

What does this mean in practice?

1. Support freedom by co-operating with those states, political forces and movements who grow towards, foster and promote real freedom according to mentioned principles.
2. Democracy without a culture of freedom is difficult but democracy can be used to create that culture (Tunisia).
3. Support free media initiatives that promote a culture of freedom
4. Freedom of religion, women and minorities is key to create a culture of freedom as it opens the road towards personal freedoms
5. Support minorities and support their defence against ISIS as their existence is key to maintain a pluralist society which can accelerate a culture of freedom significantly as the society already will have to deal with existing diversity.
6. Focus at the costs of unfreedom and give less priority to states and forces who practice and promote unfreedom (Turkey, Saudi Arabia etc.).

Concrete measures (non-exhaustive list) that can be taken are:

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<sup>80</sup> <http://www.shefighter.com/>, <http://www.thenational.ae/news/world/middle-east/jordanian-women-climb-into-the-boxing-ring>

<sup>81</sup> <http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/politics-threaten-egypt-s-anti-sexual-harrassment-movement-1957403917>, <http://egyptianstreets.com/2015/06/10/egypt-launches-first-anti-harrassment-tv-ad/>

<sup>82</sup> [https://broadly.vice.com/en\\_us/article/the-young-women-standing-up-to-extremism-in-the-middle-east](https://broadly.vice.com/en_us/article/the-young-women-standing-up-to-extremism-in-the-middle-east)

<sup>83</sup> <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/apr/22/sudan-student-killing-abubakar-hassan-protests>

<sup>84</sup> <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2016/06/01/tunisia-started-the-arab-revolts-now-it-s-beat-back-the-islamist-tide.html>

1. Setting up a mechanism of detection and identification of states, political forces and movements who grow towards, foster and promote real freedom as defined by the described characteristics.
2. A sharing mechanism at EU level in which EU Member States can opt-in in specific projects which will prevent duplicity and ensure that many people will be reached.
3. Setting up programs like the Dutch MATRA and NIMD programs but directed at mentioned groups in order to foster a culture of freedom.
4. Supporting media in regional languages that work according to the principles of freedom and allow real fact-based debate.
5. A strong focus at freedom of religion and freedom of women in integration courses and policies in EU Member States and (where possible) outside Europe. Women's houses in neighbourhoods with integration challenges deserve support, protection and (if needed) expansion to a network of women's houses elsewhere.
6. Promote personal value, freedom and fundamental freedoms (e.g. freedom of women and religion) in education programs in MENA countries.
7. Create exchange mechanisms for students in order to spread awareness of a culture of freedom.
8. Integrate the core freedom principles in all Foreign Affairs policies as well as trade agreements as key strategies towards security, stability and economic growth.

Sadly, the EU deal with Turkey to stem the refugee stream and the EU proposals to expand this strategy to the whole MENA sphere is doing the opposite<sup>85</sup>. The EU is in fact supporting dictators and oppressive regimes to stop the refugee stream from coming. It is quite improbable that the MENA regimes will be capable of stopping refugee streams given their corrupt and failing governmental apparatus. This strategy is a continuation of the 'short-term fix' that are in complete opposition to both Europe's values as well as Europe's real challenges of terrorism, refugee streams and integration issues. Continuing support of unfreedom means a continuation of these challenges. The real measures that the EU is taking are in stark contrast to its proposed 'global strategy'<sup>86</sup>. It is noteworthy that this strategy does tick all the obligatory boxes but lacks clear measures which in practice clearly leaves too

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<sup>85</sup> [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/eu-migration-eritrea-sudan\\_us\\_5759a90ae4b0e39a28acd632](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/eu-migration-eritrea-sudan_us_5759a90ae4b0e39a28acd632)

<sup>86</sup> <https://europa.eu/globalstrategy/en>

much space for policies such as the Turkey deal. This is a situation that the EU cannot afford.

Freedom is not an exclusive gift to the West but needs to grow wherever possible. Only in a culture of freedom all other development can be realised. The EU needs to understand that the freedom of the people around us is a guarantee of our freedom. Freedom as we know it is a result of our Christian heritage. It is our calling to share it so that all humankind will be free.

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## TEN WAYS TO RESPOND TO EAST-WEST TENSIONS

*Julian Lindley-French* (summarised by Christiaan Meinen)

**PROFESSOR LINDLEY-FRENCH STARTED WITH SKETCHING A SCENARIO FOR OUR FUTURE AS AN ILLUSTRATION OF POSSIBLE DEVELOPMENTS IN OUR PART OF THE WORLD. WHILE ALL ISSUES RAISED ARE FICTIONAL, THEY LOOK FRIGHTENING REALISTIC. THE POINT OF THE SCENARIO IS FOR POLITICAL AND MILITARY LEADERS TO BE AWARE OF THE POSSIBLE FUTURE BUT ALSO OF THE CURRENT AND FUTURE SHORTCOMINGS IN THE ABILITY TO HANDLE SITUATIONS.**

The military organizations of many western governments have been severely diminished, especially in numbers. Many investments have been used specifically for interventions (call it peace enforcing/peace building<sup>87</sup>) in Afghanistan and Iraq instead of preparing for 'conventional' war<sup>88</sup>. In short both European and American militaries are not prepared for a major threat situation at the moment. The scenario consists of several incidents from the Brexit, Middle Eastern countries falling apart, to increased tensions in the South China Sea but also cyber-attacks on Baltic states.

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<sup>87</sup> <https://pesd.princeton.edu/?q=node/259>

<sup>88</sup> The preparations for hybrid and conventional wars need other organisations and equipment's than those needed for peace enforcing and peace building operations. 1000's of specialised vehicles and systems have been used to equip these kind of peace operations. These investments pushed lowering budgets which in turn meant the "normal" systems and vehicles weren't replaced or replaced by less capable systems. Many countries also lowered the numbers of tanks, artillery pieces and fighter aircraft just to free money for the new needed investments in IED (road bombs) protected vehicles.

Here are 10 ways to prevent these things from *escalating*—not from *happening* because many of these things are already happening at the moment. Think of the Brexit, the cyber-attacks, the current situation in the South China Sea with the dispute about the Chinese claim on the Philippine Exclusive Economic Zone. These responses are written from the perspective of the European (political) leaders but ‘we’ the people should know about it too.

## Ten Ways to Respond to East-West Tensions

### 1. Do not talk about a new Cold War

The current situation can't be described as a ‘new’ Cold War. Europe's situation is far more secure than in the period 1945–1989 with (still) better equipped and secured well-functioning governments. Besides economically Europe is far richer and European citizens are better educated, and facilities like healthcare and emergency services are better prepared for worst case scenario's. Russia however is far weaker, which is the real problem. To give an example, oil at \$47 per barrel (158,9 L) is a price too low to sustain Russian public expenditure.

### 2. Face hard facts

We are witnessing a rapid shift away from liberal power to illiberal power<sup>89</sup>. Several countries surrounding Europe (even some within European borders) have a more illiberal ‘democratic’ rule. Russia has an estimated defence budget of around \$80bn but will inject about c\$600 billion between 2012 and 2022 for new armaments and a more professional military. Also Beijing grew the Chinese defence budget an estimated \$150bn<sup>90</sup> in 2015. That is but the latest double digit increase since 1989. China will increase defence spending by at least 7-8% in 2016.

NATO Europe spends c\$200bn p.a. France and the UK are about 50%; France, Germany and the UK 65%. The ‘big three’ spend about 90% of all defence Research & Development in NATO Europe. EU member states have committed themselves to a Common Foreign Security Policy (CSDP<sup>91</sup>) for the European Union. The European Security and Defence Policy aims to strengthen the EU's external ability to act through the development of civilian and military capabilities in Conflict Prevention and Crisis Management. As you can see this ‘Common Policy’ is not (yet) aimed on the ability to act as a robust European force nor act as a European counterpart to the US in NATO.

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<sup>89</sup> [http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/apc/members/courses/teachers\\_corner/32074.html](http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/apc/members/courses/teachers_corner/32074.html)

<sup>90</sup> <http://thediplomat.com/2015/03/confirmed-chinas-defense-budget-will-rise-10-1-in-2015/>

<sup>91</sup> <http://www.eeas.europa.eu/csdp/>

### 3. Understand an adversary's real reality

Public and other forms of 'show of force' are not the only sources of information of their ability to act. Look at these numbers:

*Russia GDP 2015 \$1.2 tr.*

*Germany GDP 2015 \$3.3 tr.*

*UK GDP 2015 2015 \$2.8 tr.*

*France GDP 2015 \$2.4 tr.*

*Netherlands GDP 2015 \$0.86 tr.*

### 4. Build a United Europe

As we have seen the United States has been focusing its military power towards other areas of operation (and interest) than the European continent. Their focus has been towards the Middle East and South-East Asia. They removed a lot of their European-based armed forces to the United States and transferred capabilities towards both mentioned areas of interest. Besides, most of the European governments have invested poorly<sup>92</sup> and 'harvested' their 'peace-dividend' for about 20 years since the fall of the Berlin Wall. The military of European countries should work together as a super-alliance of states. This real cooperation can only work in a united Europe. This does not mean a United States of Europe. For this Europe needs both NATO and EU's CSDP. Because the UK is the largest defence spender in Europe<sup>93</sup>, the UK should be part of this.

### 5. Invest in the Transatlantic Relationship

The United States is by far the biggest defense spender in world with about \$ 597,8bn. The US is a global power but because of all its 'adventures' is over-stretched globally. Currently many European governments are free riding on the US military as they do not spend enough money on Defense R&D. We can expect the transatlantic partnership to change with either Clinton or Trump as the next US president. Either of them will demand the NATO Wales Summit declaration, which states that each member country should increase its spending to 2% GDP of which 20% on new military equipment becomes a hard commitment.

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<sup>92</sup> A lot of investments were more subsidy towards defence industry groups than were useful to keep effective forces. We have seen prices of military systems, vehicles, ships and aircraft rise.

<sup>93</sup> Some of the defence expenditures for 2016 quoted by Dr. Lindley-French:

- UK - \$56.2bn; • French - \$46.8bn; • German - \$36.6bn; • Dutch - \$8bn

## 6. Reinforce NATO

As said, European countries should reinforce NATO as a European Alliance within NATO by:

- meeting the 2% commitment (many EU countries do not).
- make Warsaw Summit (2016) launch-pad for NATO modernisation
- building a twenty-first century collective defence (advanced deployable forces, nuclear deterrence, cyber, missile defence)
- reinforcing the contract at the heart of the Alliance: the weakest get the security of the strongest in return for the sharing of burdens, responsibilities and risks.

## 7. Keep talking to Russia

Besides investments in European and NATO defense capabilities we still have to communicate with Russia, the Russian public and the Russian leadership. As President Theodore Roosevelt<sup>94</sup> said: "Speak softly but carry a big stick". Europe should work together with NATO and Russia to improve relations and building peace on the European continent and it's surroundings. For example, work together with Russia in fighting terrorism, e.g. IS in Syria.

Although most of the normal communication and political negotiations have ceased to exist because of the war in Ukraine and annexation of the Crimean peninsula, the NATO-Russia Council<sup>95</sup> still is operational. The NRC was established by the 2002 Rome Declaration on "NATO-Russia Relations: a New Quality", which builds on the goals and principles of the 1997 Founding Act. Its purpose is to serve as the principal structure and venue for advancing the relationship between NATO and Russia.

In accordance with the Rome declaration, NATO member states and Russia work as equal partners in areas of common interest in the framework of the NRC, which provides a mechanism for consultation consensus-building, cooperation, joint decision and joint action on a wide spectrum of security issues in the Euro-Atlantic region. The members of the NRC, acting in their national capacities and in a manner consistent with their respective collective commitments and obligations, take joint decisions and bear equal responsibility, individually and jointly for their implementation. Other issues like Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty<sup>96</sup> (INF), and proliferation of Conventional Forces and, for example, submarines are important subjects to stay in communication with Russia.

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<sup>94</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Big\\_Stick\\_ideology](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Big_Stick_ideology)

<sup>95</sup> <http://www.nato.int/nrc-website/EN/about/index.html>

<sup>96</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intermediate-Range\\_Nuclear\\_Forces\\_Treaty](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intermediate-Range_Nuclear_Forces_Treaty)

## 8. **Make all institutions work**

It is very important that all relevant institutions necessary for keeping the peace work. International organisations and institutions like UN, EU, NATO, OSCE are all European creations and vital to the whole world and European peace. All these institutions are necessary to stop extreme state behaviour – from the beginning this has also been the reason for creating the EU. It was in post-war Europe where on May 9, 1950, Robert Schuman, the French Foreign Minister, proposed to his German colleague, Konrad Adenauer, that their two nations should together form a European Coal and Steel Community, inviting other European nations to join them in placing their coal and steel industries under a shared sovereign authority.

The purpose was to consolidate post-war reconciliation and to prevent the emergence of any future war machine driven by those industries. This was a first bold step towards today's European Union. Although several 'fathers' of today's EU are recognised including Adenauer, De Gasperi, Monnet and Spaak, Schuman is the only one officially named 'Father of Europe' by the European Assembly (now Parliament). The functioning of institutions also means there should be invested in these political, financial, and also military institutions.

## 9. **Enhance resiliency**

One thing which is fundamentally important, either in case of terrorist attacks but also in case of any future war, is to prepare our critical national (and EU/European) infrastructures for attack. Also the resilience of citizens should be increased to be able to be attacked but also to recover from it. Governments as well as the European Commission (and other EU institutions) must treat our citizens like adults not like children. The people of Europe need a fair story, even if it's tough.

## 10. **Leadership**

The key element of any response towards threats in general, but specifically towards East-West tensions, is that the leadership, military and political, should act like leaders! In many cases, they follow public opinion and are reactive instead of proactive. The harvesting of the peace dividend is just one example where we see that political leadership has 'followed' public opinion instead of lead the way based on the hard facts of increasing threats. European leadership should create a future vision about the position in Europe in the world, with all treads. European leadership should not follow public opinion, they must lead it!

**WORST CASE SCENARIO**The Worst Case: Phase One

- 2019: Brexit rumbles on...
- Insurrections rumble across the Middle East & North Africa as state after state begins to implode.
- Iran and Israel coming close to war in what is left of Syria. Libya collapses – IS/ Daesch gain foothold beyond Sirte.
- Suddenly crisis erupts in East China Sea involving key US allies.
- US forced to respond in force.

The Worst Case: Phase Two

- Suddenly power and information networks crash in Baltic States and much of Eastern Europe.
- Military exercises underway in Kaliningrad and Belarus intensify and expand.
- Hybrid warfare begins to turn into real warfare as equivalent four Army corps (120k soldiers) in the Western military oblast move
- The North Atlantic Council (NAC) meets to put both VJTF (5k soldiers) and eNRF (30k soldiers) on notice to move. VJTF 5-7 days. eNRF 30-45 days. NATO Force Structure 60-180 days.
- Kremlin begins to talk of NATO aggression and cites violations of Russian air, sea, land and cyber space.

The Worst Case: Phase Three

- Russian forces seize the Lithuanian border between Kaliningrad and Belarus (60kms) and give all NATO forces five days to leave.
- Kremlin cites need to consolidate a 'peace buffer' between Russia and 'aggressive NATO'. Russian nuclear forces – both strategic and tactical – are placed on full alert.
- Deterrence has failed but neither the **Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF)** or NATO Response Force (NRF) are any match for Russian forces and unable to overcome Russian [Anti-Access/Area Denial \(A2/AD\)](#).

The Worst Case: Phase Four

- President Trump says to Europe – 'you sort it'. But European forces too hollowed out, lack key enablers, & vital logistics.
- Putin knows that having overcome NATO deterrence the Alliance faces a long war to recover the Baltic states.
- He calls Chancellor Merkel and says his 'limited correction' is over.
- In effect, he offers her the same choice Britain and France faced in 1939 over Poland – space for time.
- With forces committed to Asia-Pacific, Europeans engaged in the Middle East, the US is too over-stretched to respond in force in any of the 3 theatres; NATO Europeans are too weak and divided to act as effective first responders.

# EUROPE & the Churches

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## THE CHURCHES' ROLE IN BRUSSELS

*Msgr Adrianus Van Luyn, SDB*

THE EU RECOGNISES THE IDENTITY AND SPECIFIC CONTRIBUTION OF THE CHURCHES BY MEANS OF ARTICLE 17 OF THE TREATY ON THE FUNCTIONING OF THE EU (LISBON), AND ENGAGES ON THIS BASIS AN 'OPEN, TRANSPARENT AND REGULAR DIALOGUE' WITH THEM.

THANKS TO THIS ARTICLE, CHURCHES AND RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES WILL BE ABLE TO STRENGTHEN THEIR DIALOGUE WITH THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION, COUNCIL AND PARLIAMENT AND SO CONTRIBUTE MORE EFFICIENTLY TO REFLECTING ON EUROPEAN POLICY. HOW DOES THIS WORK OUT IN PRACTICE? WHAT DIFFERENCE HAS THIS MADE SO FAR?

### 1. COMECE: COMMISSION OF THE BISHOPS CONFERENCES OF THE EU.

The Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Community (COMECE) was set up in 1980 and followed on from an information office (*Service d'Information Pastorale Européenne Catholique*, SIPECA). Today its members are the delegates, each a bishop, of the 28 episcopates on the territory of the member states. They hold two plenary meetings per year to consider issues in EU policy. The COMECE is served by a secretariat, based in Brussels.

The establishment and work of COMECE are entirely a consequence of the Second Vatican Council which, in its Pastoral Constitution 'On the Church in the Modern World' (*Gaudium et Spes*, 1965), presented the Church as a "sign of that brotherhood which allows honest dialogue" with society "and gives it vigour" (GS 92). According to the Council, this dialogue is based on its statement "about the dignity of the human person, and about the human community and the profound meaning of human activity", these principles being "the foundation for the relationship between the Church and the world" (GS 40). Consequently, the Council insists, "the Church must be clearly

present in the midst of the community of nations” “to encourage and stimulate cooperation among men” (GS 89).

In accordance with these Council guidelines and with the agreement of the Holy See, the bishops of the countries included in the European Community decided to set up a specific body for dialogue with the EU institutions: a permanent commission of bishop delegates with a fixed secretariat in Brussels.

For their part, the European institutions, with the Treaty of Lisbon (1 December 2009) ratified the existence—which already had been recognised through official meetings for a number of years—of an “open, transparent and regular dialogue” with the Churches and religious communities (Article 17 of the Treaty of the Functioning of the European Union). This occurred to the great satisfaction of the Churches, including our own. However, a common deliberation on how to structure this dialogue is still lacking. Already at the meeting of religious leaders with the three presidents of the EU on 30 May 2011 from our side I solicited therefore such a ‘dialogue on the dialogue’ (see further below).

From the very beginning, the Episcopates of the Member States have welcomed the ‘Christian’ intention of the founding fathers to base the European project on a “search for the common good” and on “respect for human dignity” (see the Preamble of the COMECE Statute).

Since 1980 they have wanted to create a stable form of fraternal collaboration in the process of European integration “in a way that promotes and protects the common good, in the light of the joy of the Gospel of Christ” (ib.).

This collaboration relates explicitly to the framework of the EU; only questions concerning the Union appear on the agenda of COMECE. In fact, it relates to ‘monitoring’ “the activities” (Preamble) and “competences” of the EU (Article 1; see also the task of the Secretary General referred to in Article 16, clause d: “to study the problems concerning the competences and activities of the EU and the lines of development of its institutions”).

The interlocutor of the EU-COMECE dialogue is a ‘political-civil’ structure, a structure of “supranational” government. The position and activities of COMECE at EU level are practically analogous to those of a bishops’ conference in its dialogue with the government and civil society of its own country.

This does not mean that COMECE intrudes in purely political or legal questions in the technical sense; these are not within the competence of the Church. However, COMECE critically ‘monitors’ their ethical and moral value on the basis of the principles of the Social Doctrine of the Church and ‘partners’ the political process” in the exercise of its pastoral responsibility” (Article 2), concerning itself with the “pastoral questions connected to the development of the competence and activities of the Union.” (Article 1).

From this follows the importance of frequent, reciprocal relations between COMECE and the Bishops’ Conferences of the Member States. Not only the bishop delegates, but all the bishops in the EU must work towards “developing an awareness of the cultural, juridical and political importance of the EU and ...sharing the pastoral responsibilities that arise out of it” (Article 1).

In the same spirit of shared fraternal responsibility, COMECE seeks community with the Consilium Conferentiarum Episcoporum Europae (C.C.E.E.), the ‘pan-European’ Council of the Bishops’ Conferences (Article 18) and with those European Catholic organisations “having aims related to the activity of the Union” (Article 19).

In an ecumenical spirit it maintains good and frequent contacts with the representatives of the other Christian Churches at the EU level, e.g. Council of European Churches (CEC), and the Evangelisch Kirche (Lutheran) in Deutschland (EKD).

## 2. THE SOCIAL DOCTRINE OF THE (RC) CHURCH.

The social doctrine of the Church is for obvious reasons the intellectual background and the spiritual ‘*movens*’ of our work in Brussels. Be it the context of the European research policy or in the different reports on human rights that are published by the European institutions—we try to look at these initiatives from the angle of the dignity of every human person. In the larger debate on the future of Europe, we try to underline that the common good should be the ethical and political compass for European integration. The common good has to be translated into practice through the constant application of the principles of subsidiarity and solidarity. Subsidiarity

includes also that we defend that the European level has to take the lead where a national initiative is no longer sufficient. This is currently evident for example in the area of energy policy. With regard to the principle of solidarity we stress that it is necessary but not sufficient to create a strong bond of solidarity among the EU-member states. The EU and its member states have an obligation to solidarity with other continents and humanity as a whole. There are well-known aspects of the work of the Church at the level of the European institutions.

#### A. HUMAN DIGNITY:

The 50th anniversary of the 'Declaration on Freedom of Religion' was recently celebrated. The Declaration, issued during the Second Vatican Council, is known under the title of '*Dignitatis Humanae*', that is, human dignity. As we read the first line, we are told that '*a sense of the dignity of the human person has been impressing itself more and more deeply on the consciousness of contemporary man*'.

Human rights apply to *every* human being without exception, since all persons have equal dignity. Thus, the present situation of so many people being denied such rights because they are suffering from afflictions like poverty, oppression, discrimination, lack of schooling, social seclusion, lack of medical care, violence, terrorism and war, cannot be tolerated.

Also, human rights apply to persons as a whole. A person is much more than his/her occupation or position in life, more than what he/she simply owns, more than what he/she may or may not achieve. A person is not simply an 'individual' closed in on him/herself, auto-sufficient, finite; s/he is expected to mature, to develop a unique personality and eventually to interact with other people. Human relationships cannot be measured nor can they be confined in fixed categories, yet they can be experienced. The ability to establish relations with somebody else is precisely what makes a person 'human'. A person is not just a corporeal entity, a thing of matter alone; s/he is also a psychic, social, political, cultural, moral and spiritual being. S/he is an undividable living creature without either dualisms or reductions. Only the person who is close enough to his/her spiritual dimension, who walks in the path of God and heeds the word of His Spirit, only that person can attain an

accomplished and mature self. This is why much more attention should be paid so that every persons could be nurtured and fostered as a spiritual entity.

Human dignity is unconditional. Human rights deal with issues taken for granted before any act of regulation proceeding from any type of government, hence before any kind of political decision. This particular standpoint is denied by almost no-one. The State does not legitimise human rights—in fact the opposite is true: human rights constitute the State.

According to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, ratified in Nice in 2000, *'inalienable and universal rights of human dignity, freedom, equality and solidarity'* are mentioned as ground rules of the EU. As for human dignity, it is specifically and unequivocally declared *'inviolable'* and *'deserving to be treasured and honoured'*.

#### B. COMMON GOOD:

Alongside the principle of human dignity we discover another, the principle of society's common good, as a complement to the former. Every person is part of a community. As a group of individuals supporting each other inside a fair and peaceful environment, they are interdependent and jointly committed to create a setting where everybody can live a life in compliance with standards of civilisation and humanity. Common good is the purpose and the condition of every social and political regulation that aims to provide for the needs of everyone's existence, simultaneously enabling the individual to be actively responsible for his/her life as much as s/he is responsible for those of others. It is the duty of government authorities to serve this ideal by promoting a healthy development for both individuals and groups while protecting the poor and the weak.

Common good policy applies not only to subjects living in the same country; it must cross boundaries and be broadened in scope, in order to include all the 28 member states of the EU, eventually embracing the whole of human society scattered around the globe. Truly, it can travel through space, reaching far and wide, but that will not be all. It must take a journey through time, stretching forward to future generations, since we are responsible today for the people of tomorrow.

These two principles of social doctrine are additionally specified by two more applications, very much in the same way as two columns are crowned by two capitals.

#### C. SUBSIDIARITY:

Human dignity requires the understanding of the idea of subsidiarity, a notion advanced for the first time by Pope Pius XI in the encyclical '*Quadragesimo anno*' (1931). The notion of subsidiarity soon after became part of social doctrine itself, and later on served as a guideline in the process of sharing out competences between European institutions and member states. Subsidiarity means that high-rank government organs will not handle issues than can be more appropriately managed by lower-ranking bodies. Subsidiarity is based on the right to take part on social life at any stage: local, national and international. Such a right is balanced by the obligation to contribute effectively to common efforts and by a sincere commitment to comply with requests as promptly as possible, concerning problems transcending capacities of the lower level.

#### D. SOLIDARITY:

The common good principle requires the application of the idea of solidarity, which implies willingness to provide active support to the cause of common good at any level, through individual commitment, surrender of personal interests, awareness of other people's needs as well as one's own, eagerness to employ private resources and means, etc. First and foremost, this obviously concerns one's own country, where hundreds of thousands of people still lead an existence that we can hardly define as dignified. However, solidarity should apply to the entire EU territories, where recent occurrences show a tendency to 're-nationalisation' as some countries seem to focus on issues of state interest and national profit. As a matter of fact, solidarity on a global scale is to be hoped for, since 'human globalisation' could bring about an improvement of human dignity standards throughout the world.

Commitment to common good is not to be neglected. We cannot fail to see its value as long as we bear in mind that its authenticity does not lie in the mere accumulation of petty and private interests collected from different cultural and religious entities. Common good goes far beyond all that and cannot possibly be mistaken for a narrow-minded vision coming from just one of

these parties or factions. Common good is meant to harmonise private interests, creating balance among them, and its quest is likely to ask for sacrifices especially from the wealthier or more influential individuals in society to the advantage of the deprived and the vulnerable ones. Moreover, the exploitation of the common good philosophy cannot be restrained by territorial boundaries; it must be brought to a higher level, so that it can influence international trends.

### 3. THE NEED OF DIALOGUE.

In consideration of the principles of the Gospels, the Catholic Church regards as one of its prerogatives the duty of evaluating government acts emanating from political structures. By performing this task, the Church hopes to add its contribution to a healthy public opinion, promoting a dialogue between policy and faith within civil society. The separation of church from state, a most treasured achievement, does not imply any detachment of faith from policy. The Social Doctrine of the Church, with its pair of fundamental principles, 'human dignity' and 'common good', is corroborative evidence of the previous statement.

The issue of connecting ultimate goals with political decisions belongs to the field of meta-policy, which transcends the domain of ordinary policy. It is neither democracy nor policy in a state subject to the rule of law to which we must look when formulating essential human rights. Such values do not owe their origin or validity to the state, yet they are to be protected and guaranteed by the state. They were born together with human existence, whether in the case of single individuals, or in interpersonal liaisons. Determining people's rights and clarifying what they contain is a task that should not be left to politicians. As ordinary citizens they are asked as individuals to respect those rights, and due to the nature of their jobs they are called upon to ensure that these rights are respected by all citizens.

Such dialogue does not inviolate the principle of the separation of church and state. To use the phraseology of the Second Vatican Council, it '*respects the autonomy of secular affairs...*' The Church can still do its part in stimulating moral and spiritual drives inside our society, so that justice is supported and extended. Furthermore, the Church cooperates with governmental authorities

through humanitarian organisations, charity associations and works of mercy from Christians within civil society. As a matter of fact, the need for dialogue between faith and policy increases every day. Its aim is to look for better assessments and understanding of universal values and civil rights, ultimately motivating common endeavours towards a dignified human society.

Three conditions are indispensable for every inter-religious and intercultural dialogue:

1. CAPACITY TO SELF-CRITICISE:

No-one, no group of persons, is capable of realising all the ideals of their faith or culture; no-one, no group of persons, is owner of the whole truth in perception of interpretation; no culture is the best culture, not even when it is the 'Leitkultur' (leading culture) in a country. This condition requires 'reciprocity' in every dialogue from all partners such as religious leaders, political parties, civil society... With this condition it will be possible to avoid both the sense of superiority of one group over others and any form of fundamentalism at the cost of others.

2. OPENNESS:

Openness towards the positive elements in other religions and cultures. In a multicultural society there should not be any one-way traffic in the sense of the rigid 'integration' of one culture into another. Rather, there should be a process of 'participation' in which all the cultures present in society can fully participate and enrich society with their positive contribution to the common good.

3. CONSCIOUSNESS:

Consciousness that the common good is not the sum of all the particular interests of the different cultural entities, but is more than a kind of 'archipelago'. For a civil society composed of members from many cultures and religions to share social life, both respect and care for the human dignity of every single person and the pursuit of the common good is required.

These two principles of the social doctrine of the Church require as consequences *subsidiarity*, or the right and duty to participate, and *solidarity*, or the willingness to sacrifice one's own position and ambitions in the interest of

the public sphere and of other groups, especially of those who are disadvantaged.

Moreover, we have to consider that in our time the common good is relevant both at the national level and with respect to a community of nations like the EU, and therefore the tendency towards 're-nationalisation' is a disruptive development for the common good in our continent.

The common good however also concerns the human community worldwide, and crosses all the frontiers of space and time. Social justice is an ethical obligation touching all the continents of the world, with preference for the poorest countries—in his declaration of 9 May 1950, Robert Schuman made two references to Europe's responsibilities towards Africa in the space of one typed page—and also includes the next generations who have the same rights as we have to the resources of the planet.

In my intervention during the meeting of religious leaders with the three p13-17 or 20-26 residents of the EU referred to above, I mentioned we needed a 'dialogue on the dialogue'. The practical application of Art. 17 should take into account the following aspects and dimensions:

- it should be ecumenical as well as offering the possibilities for unilateral consultations; in this sense it will be multilateral as well as bilateral;
- the dialogue will be structured *qua content* as well as *qua partners*; it should be clear who the partners will be from the side of the EU institutions as well as from the side of the churches; this will also require transparency; beside 'official' and formal contacts and meetings, the effectiveness of dialogue will also depend on informal action; the agenda for the more formal initiatives could be set by a contact group consisting of members of the EU institutions and the Churches (as in the case for the preparation of dialogue-seminars); the scope of dialogue should also be clear and transparent; this means that it could involve all those issues and topics that fall within the competence of the EU and which are different from those covered by the Council of Europe or the UN; the contribution of the Churches will tackle a wide range of topics as rightly featured in the social teaching of the Churches; the Churches will concentrate on principles and on concrete contributions of different church organisation/institutions to the different topics.

- a periodical informal exchange between representatives of the EU institutions and of churches and religious communities should ensure that no issue of importance will be neglected.

Catholic social doctrine is an important contribution in the dialogue with secularised and individualised society. This doctrine rests on two fundamental principles: the inalienable dignity of the human person, and the common good.

These two challenges underline the need for intercultural encounters and dialogue. Only then can we constructively search together for the best insights and ways to take the right decisions with regard to universal basic values and to bring together our strengths to attain the common good, which surpasses all cultural, religious and political interests. Together we are responsible for a globalisation of solidarity and spirituality.

AFTERNOON SEMINARS: Monday, May 9,

## RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

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### *THE ASYLUM CRISIS:*

*THREAT OR OPPORTUNITY FOR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM?*

*Julia Doxat-Purser & Marnix Visscher*

**JULIA - A QUICK REVIEW OF THE SITUATION AROUND EUROPE: THIS IS NOT A COMPREHENSIVE PICTURE. WE KNOW THAT THERE IS UNDER-REPORTING BY REFUGEES OF FREEDOM OF RELIGION OR BELIEF PROBLEMS BECAUSE THEY ARE AFRAID OF REPRISALS OR THEY HAVE NOT LEARNED TO TRUST THE AUTHORITIES AND DO NOT WANT TO COMPLAIN. AT THE SAME TIME, THERE ARE NOT MAJOR PROBLEMS EVERYWHERE. FOR EXAMPLE, HUNGARIAN PARTNERS REPORTED THAT, AS FAR AS THEY COULD TELL, REFUGEE CENTRES WERE BEING RUN WELL AS FAR AS RESPECT FOR FREEDOM OF RELIGION OR BELIEF OF EVERYONE WAS CONCERNED.**

At least some information came from partners in Norway Sweden, Finland, UK, Ireland, France, Germany, Switzerland Austria, Hungary & Greece. Marnix will share about the Netherlands shortly.

Here's a glimpse of the kinds of problems reported.

The authorities are struggling. Sometimes staff are excellent. But others are often unaware of Freedom of religion or belief issues or difficulties. They are too busy, even overwhelmed. Or they do not stop to think of the value of faith. They can be very independent so what happens in different centres varies a lot. Refugee Centres are understaffed and not staffed at night. Staff are not trained in Freedom of religion or belief. They do not necessarily have a chance to get to know refugees and work out what's happening. Sometimes staff are Muslim. This is a well-meaning idea but, without good training and supervision, they can sometimes be ill-equipped to bring about Freedom of religion or belief for all.

In many places, the authorities or Red Cross declare the refugee camp to be a religion-free zone. But that is impossible when the refugees have faith – and desperately want to keep it – and that's the situation for the vast majority of refugees. They have lost everything, they do not want to lose their faith too. The default position in a “secular” camp therefore can be that the majority

take over – and that means Islam. Often the authorities want to be welcoming to Muslims but forget the others.

Problems include intimidation, bullying, mocking some violence, some exclusion from, e.g. the kitchen or common room, because Christians are seen as unclean or it's used as a prayer room. Belongings are stolen. Non-Muslim girls and women feel compelled to wear a headscarf. The Muslim call to prayer is everywhere. (It's broadcast on phones) And there is nowhere else to go to get away. Sometimes, complaining will make matters worse.

Serious incidents may get a reaction from authorities. But aggressors do not get moved, the victim does. That may protect the victim but does not punish or solve the reasons.

Many Muslims are converting to Christianity. Their families and friends are often horrified and may react dramatically. Swiss partners reported that Believers of Muslim Background (BMB) children or the children of BMBs are harassed at school by Muslims.

Over recent years, there have been isolated cases of BMBs (refugee or not) being attacked, even murdered by Muslims. With so many converts now – 1000s, could this violence mushroom? In the past, sometimes, e.g. in Norway, the authorities have been reluctant to state that the murderers were Muslim and did so because of the widespread Muslim belief that apostasy should be punishable by death. As the European Evangelical Alliance has been saying constantly, we must speak truth but speak it with careful language. We must be very careful not to exaggerate the problems caused by some Muslims or refugees. But we should not hide or ignore these problems them either.

Is the answer to separate Christians from Muslims? This is not ideal. It is not challenging the root problem – of intolerance towards other faiths and of conversion. New arrivals into Europe must be helped to understand and accept Freedom of religion or belief! This is vital. We have 100s of 1000s of new Europeans who have no experience of freedom of religion or belief. That is not their fault. But they need to learn that freedom of religion or belief is important. Obviously, for safety reasons, sometimes a Christian or indeed Yazidi refugee or refugee family must be moved to safety. But, ideally, faith minorities should stay where they are, with adequate safeguards. And we should demand that refugee centres always ensure that there is a good group of refugees from a faith minority so that there is support and strength in numbers.

There is the long standing & widespread problem of asylum cases involving BMBs not being handled right. This is especially the case if conversion has

taken place in Europe. The authorities do not know how to fairly assess if conversion is genuine and are reluctant to seek advice from members of the faith community who could help.

It is important to remember that it is not just Christians facing difficulties. There are Yezidis. And there are problems within Islam - Shia versus Sunni, Kurd versus other nationalities, liberal versus more dedicated Muslim. It's not always purely about religion but politics and identity... and stress. Refugees are stressed, on edge, often traumatised, easily upset so they can spark off each other. But also, extremist Muslims are seeking to recruit among refugees.

This is the picture regarding problems facing refugees themselves but there is a wider problem that affects all of us. This is caused by dangerous Islamic extremism and the fear of that extremism and how the authorities respond.

Islamic terrorism in Europe does not impact *our* Freedom of religion or belief - it is too lethal for that. Islamic extremism *does* impact the freedom of religion or belief of moderate Muslims or of BMBs.

But it is ill thought through government policies that could impact on Freedom of religion or belief if we are not very vigilant.

Some countries are aiming to train or supervise the training of imams. This may sound like a good idea? But they are likely to want to interfere in the training of priests & pastors too. What will be the criteria for what is acceptable teaching? Do we want government to control what religious leaders are allowed to preach?

In several countries, including France, Spain & Italy, for some time, some local governments have wanted to limit the building of mosques. So as not to discriminate, Evangelical churches and other faith minority premises cannot be built either.

There's a broader problem. If you accept the idea in public discourse that religion is dangerous and not fit for 21<sup>st</sup> century Europe, all faith groups can be tainted.

In the UK, the government appears to be pushing ahead with its counter extremism strategy, despite widespread criticism. The policy is designed to stop non-violent extremism. But it does not define what non-violent extremism is. Extremism disruption orders could stop public expression of views that appear to stir up hatred - but there are no clear definitions and so this could hit anyone with robust views.

There is also the desire to regulate non-school teaching. It would require anyone who teaches children for more than 6 hours a week to have to register

with the government and to have their teaching inspected if there is a complaint. This hits churches (with Sunday school and, for example, an after school club), youth camps, everybody. If your teaching is deemed to cause upset or be against “British values”, you will be put on a register and be unable to teach children.

Is this such a bad thing? Time will tell. If you teach a child about sin, or heaven & hell, the child gets upset and the parent complains, you have caused distress. If you pray for a child and the prayer does not appear to be answered, that may cause distress? And there is no way that teaching a conservative view of marriage will be seen as conforming to “British values”. Basically, there’s a very strong chance that Jesus would be regarded as a non-violent extremist.

So... yes, our governments need to be wise as they seek to stop Islamic terrorist attacks or the radicalisation of Muslims. But we must not be naïve. Any restrictions on the freedom of religion or belief of Muslims

a) Will make matters worse and

b) Is likely to badly impact other faith communities too.

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**MARNIX - IT’S THE TIME TO PUT SPOTLIGHT ON FREEDOM OF RELIGION OR BELIEF ISSUES AND TO SHOW THAT IT IS VITAL FOR EVERYONE, NO MATTER THEIR BELIEF OR WORLDVIEW AND FOR A HARMONIOUS SOCIETY. THE ARRIVAL OF REFUGEES MEANS THAT GOVERNMENT REALLY NEEDS TO THINK ABOUT HOW TO AVOID TROUBLE BETWEEN FAITH GROUPS. LET’S HELP THEM.**

The authorities are understandably afraid of religious extremism. Some politicians want to deny freedom of religion or belief to Muslims because of radical, dangerous Islam. We really need to get our response right regarding the jihadists, and it is definitely frightening. But, in some countries, many politicians see all of Islam and all Muslims as dangerous and/or they see their nation as Christian and do not want its character changed. This is the worst thing to do if you want to avoid dangerous extremism or the lesser problem of ghettos. So-called Islamic State is fostering the idea of Muslims at war with so-called Christian Europe, that Europe hates Muslims so the rightful response is jihad. Every time a populist politician says something Islamophobic, jihadists are delighted because it helps their recruitment strategy and provides a barrier to integration.

Some politicians see religion in general as a problem because it clashes with a liberal secular mindset. They believe and hope that faith should disappear

from public sight, that religion belongs to the past, that it is a direct threat to rights that are regarded as more important, including LGBT, gender, children's & even animal rights. Allowing freedom of religion or belief in all its breadth is not a priority for them. Hence the UK counter extremism policy. We have already seen how the British government is overreacting to the danger of radical Islam, using this chance to push a strong secular agenda. The liberal secular mindset also leads to the policy in some places that refugee centres must be "religion free" – as if that were possible. They erroneously perceive enforced "no-religion secularism" as neutral. They imagine that everyone will learn to conform to a liberal, secular mindset. This not going to happen. It does not happen now. It certainly will not happen with most of the newly arrived Muslims. This is OK. Diversity is here to stay.

Ignoring the freedom of religion or belief issue in the refugee centre does not work and is an injustice. Ignoring the freedom of religion or belief issue in society does not work and is an injustice. We already have multi-faith & multi-cultural societies. People do not all believe or want to live their lives the same. The arrival of refugees who will stay makes the need urgent for the authorities to work out how we live together with our deepest differences.

Our task – and there is a positive opportunity – is to persuade society not to ignore trouble, or future trouble between refugees over faith and not to ignore the problems that can occur with a multi-faith / cultural society. Instead, we have the opportunity to face the challenges honestly and to find fair and workable solutions.

What do we do?

In Germany, NGOs worked with the Christian Democrats (CDU) to put on a major parliamentary hearing on the issue of freedom of religion or belief problems for refugees. It shone the light upon the issue. A report has just been published this weekend. This can be followed up with specific actions.

We should seek to provide training on freedom of religion or belief for those running reception centres and for those in local government who do not know how to enable successful integration and who do not realise why faith is so important to most refugees. But they also do not know or will not face the fact that many Muslim refugees are not used to allowing freedom of religion or belief and find it hard to tolerate other faiths and incredibly difficult to tolerate a Muslim converting to another faith. (They may also struggle with LGBT and women's issues. Training can include this too).

Aim to create resources and provide short training for refugees about tolerance of minorities, about everyone's Freedom of religion or belief rights

and, while this may not be what they are used to, this is “How we do things here”, it is the law *and* it is a benefit for them too. They will have their freedom of religion or belief respected. It is about respecting difference.

You could copy the Swiss project of a Culture School, run by a Christian charity. This is a course of 3 evenings, supplementing government classes, on living and working in Switzerland, core values, rights, responsibilities, customs, what is polite and expected. It includes matters of faith & equal opportunities. More information can be found at [www.kultur-schule.ch](http://www.kultur-schule.ch)

But training needs to be broader than this – because most people do not understand freedom of religion or belief and why it is important. Our task is to explain why it is a foundational right for *everyone*, of any faith *and* none. It is the right to believe what you believe and to live your life according to that belief, provided that this will not cause really genuine harm to others.

As you highlight the need for training connected to refugees, there is the opportunity to underline the need for broader training anyway on freedom of religion or belief. Politicians, journalists, civil servants, social workers, police, health staff, teachers. And actually society in general.

In schools, let’s advocate for excellent teaching on different faiths and also freedom of religion or belief – not replacing normal Religious Education classes if these are different....

We need teaching which explains

- Why freedom of religion or belief is important.
- What it means for you. But what does it mean for others?
- Responsibilities as well as rights.
- The need for a civil public square in which everyone can live, speak and act according to their beliefs, religious or secular, but that they must respect others’ rights too.

We need a “civil public square”. Here are some key messages.

- Freedom of religion or belief has to be for all, not just Christians. Exclusive rights would be unbiblical, unjust and politically impossible.
- A “civil public square” is a vision of public life in which people of all faiths and none are free to enter and engage public life on the basis of their faith, but within a framework of what is agreed and accepted to be just and free for all other faiths too.
- A civil public square says that all are welcome, provided they adhere to democratic values.

- There is respect for difference and accommodation of difference. We are not all the same. We do not all have to be the same. We need respectful co-existence of different faiths and cultures. This is vital if our societies are to hold together.
- Your religious freedom is respected provided you are not causing genuine and proven harm to others. But all are responsible for the religious freedom rights of others.
- There is no watering down of faith, no hiding or compromising. There can be vigorous debate but no imposition, no compulsion. Where there are clashes of rights, we have to find workable solutions for all sides.
- The key point for society is that Freedom of religion or belief is essential for human beings to thrive and to be free. A “civil public square” is essential if we are to live together with our differences. And we were different long before the refugees came along.

Of course, massive challenges remain everywhere because the concept of a “civil public square” is weak. There are clashes between secular, Roman Catholic, Evangelical, Orthodox, Muslim, Jewish and other worldviews. And dangerous Islam is a genuine threat.

But, with the challenges of the refugee situation highlighting the worldview clash and freedom of religion or belief issues, we have an opportunity to help not just refugees to have their freedom of religion or belief respected, not just to help them all understand, value and respect freedom of religion or belief but also to persuade society as a whole that it is time to value and ensure freedom of religion or belief for everyone, that it is vital for harmonious society and vital to avoid religious inspired terrorism.

If a country can embrace faith and worldview diversity, with full freedom of religion or belief and freedom of expression, and freedom of conscience in the workplace etc., with reasonable accommodation as a way of negotiating clashes, then that country can be proud that, when it says it values diversity and protects minorities, it is really doing so.

## TRAFFICKING: Freedom's dark side

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### TRAFFICKING: OUR RESPONSE

- JENNIFER ROEMHILDT TUNEHAG

'REFUGEE' IS A HEAVY WORD FOR THOSE WHO BEAR IT, AND IT PROVOKES A NEARLY INVOLUNTARY REACTION - PITY, COMPASSION, DISTASTE, FEAR - IN THOSE WHO HEAR IT. ONE OF THE CHALLENGES IN RESPONDING WELL TO THE CURRENT REFUGEE CRISIS IS REPLACING THAT REACTION WITH A RESPONSE THAT IS INFORMED BY THE REALITY AND THE HUMANITY OF THE PEOPLE SEEKING REFUGE IN OUR COUNTRIES. THIS TRANSFORMATION IS OUR RESPONSIBILITY, AND IT IS ESSENTIAL TO PREVENT MIGRATION FROM TURNING INTO EXPLOITATION.

Of the sixty million people forcibly displaced in the world today, over a million arrived in Europe in 2015. The UN High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR) estimates that 84% of this total come from the world's top ten refugee-producing countries; in other words and in general, these are people fleeing situations of war, instability, or persecution. Around 50% of this group has come from Syria.

Rhadika Coomaraswamy, former UN special rapporteur on Violence Against Women, has famously noted that *"traffickers fish in the streams of migration."* What does this mean for the millions on the move, and particularly for those entering Europe?

Europol notes that more than 90% of refugees in 2015 used the services of criminal networks in order to flee their country or to move between countries; a reasonable act when borders are closed, war looms, or legal documents are inaccessible. However, that choice links them with people seeking to profit from their desperation - a loose criminal network that Europol believes expanded to over 40,000 people in a multi-billion euro enterprise by February 2016.

People smuggling is not the same as human trafficking, but both are criminal enterprises. People smugglers are contracted to help people migrate illegally between countries; when they arrive, the contract is finished. In contrast, human traffickers control not only the passage but also the future of their human cargo, holding or withholding crucial documents, exacting crippling fees in payment of their services, or extracting labour from victims who find themselves unable to pay, or to escape.

Danger is an inescapable part of this relationship. Refugees may find themselves unable to negotiate safe conditions as they deal with rapidly-changing circumstances and treacherous people, and anecdotal evidence indicates that human lives are often a part of the "transportation fee". In many cases refugees report that a son or daughter was demanded in exchange for safe passage out of (or through) a country, and organ removal - for the illegal EU trade in organs - is another common currency when money runs out and the destination has not been reached.

Several factors increase vulnerability to traffickers' schemes. Unaccompanied minors (children), women without family protection and support, and people who are disabled face the greatest dangers and require attention and support on arrival.

It would be lovely but entirely unrealistic to think that the dangers end when migrants arrive in Europe. As people without status, their vulnerability persists - and can be exacerbated by criminal activity in the camp, centre, or community; unsafe living situations; minority status within group; and generally by isolation in their new country. The denial of asylum is one of the times of greatest risk for exploitation.

People waiting in asylum centres or camps in Europe are vulnerable, but not desperate. However, once negative decisions are handed down, the situation changes dramatically as pressure builds to disappear and try to survive in the underground economy. Building relationships with migrants now - while they have hope for a new life and the motivation to forge new paths and relationships - is crucial to reducing their vulnerability. People who have built friendships in their adopted land have more options, and more help should something go awry.

Few in this group of newcomers can reasonably be expected to return to their country and thrive, and among those receiving refusals will be people who cannot or will not return to their home countries. Offering sanctuary is a reasonable way for churches to protest inhumane and unjust policies, particularly when refugees are set to be expelled or "returned" to countries which are unsafe or do not conform to international standards on refugee assistance.

## What can we do in response?

### Legal interventions and lobbying

- **Fight the normalisation of begging** and other forms of exploitation.
- Lobby for **good and just migration laws**, including paths to legal migration
- Support victims of trafficking who give testimony against traffickers – emotionally, spiritually, and financially, if necessary

### Centre- or camp-based outreach

- Visit closed migration centres to **build relationships**
- Volunteer to help to **identify vulnerable people** / victims of trafficking in reception centres, apartments, and camps.
- Organise **information campaigns** about the dangers and warning signs of trafficking situations

### Church-based programmes

- **‘Adopt’ a family.** Explore how your church can wrap around a migrant family to understand and respond to their needs so that exploitation never becomes a reality.
- Consider *offering refuge* to migrants who would otherwise be returned to unsafe countries.
- **Offer translation services.** Bi-lingual church members can provide materials and/or serve as translators at church events, in camps, or even in court.
- **Provide opportunities for healing** and connection: language lessons, counseling services, pet therapy or equine therapy programs, art, music and movement therapy, or other classes

### Children

- Focus outreach activities on children! Unaccompanied minors are the *most vulnerable to exploitation*
- **Foster care** – encourage your congregation to serve as foster parents or legal guardians for unaccompanied minors

### Jobs

- New **migrants need jobs.** Invite church members who own businesses to hire people you are building relationships with.
- Refugees have skills! Learn about the talents and strengths of your new friends, and help them decide which of these could be used in finding employment in your community – or even in starting a new business.

## ADDENDUM: VISION STATEMENT OF THE EUROPEAN FREEDOM NETWORK (EFN)

**WE WANT TO SEE EVERY PERSON RESTORED TO THE FREEDOM THAT GOD INTENDS AND JESUS GIVES.**

- We want to see every person *free from use for the gain of others* and free to achieve his or her own potential.
- We want to see every person *free from manipulation by the need for love* and free to experience and be transformed by the true love that God has for each person.
- We want to see every person *free from consideration as an economic asset* and free to be recognized as a priceless creation.
- We want to see every person *free from the control of others* and free to craft his or her own destiny.
- We want to see every person *free from suffering the indifference of others* and free to be a fully-valued member of society.
- We want to see every person *free from prideful competition with others* and free to give him or herself joyfully to joint causes and collaboration.
- We want to see every person *free from the penalty and curse of sin* and free to live the hopes and dreams that God has for each of his children.

*The following talks from the Trafficking seminar can be seen on video at [www.stateofeuropeforum.eu/videos](http://www.stateofeuropeforum.eu/videos)*

### **I. History and reality of exploitation in Europe**

**History of exploitation in NL** - *Esta Steyn*

**Current situation in NL** - *Tamme de Leur*

**Trafficking to Europe** - *Anne Abok*

**Exploitation and the refugee crisis** - *Jennifer Tunehag*

### **II. What can we do?**

**Job creation** - *Toos Heemskerck*

**Media as prevention** - *Anne Abok*

**The Swedish model** - *Maria Ahlin*

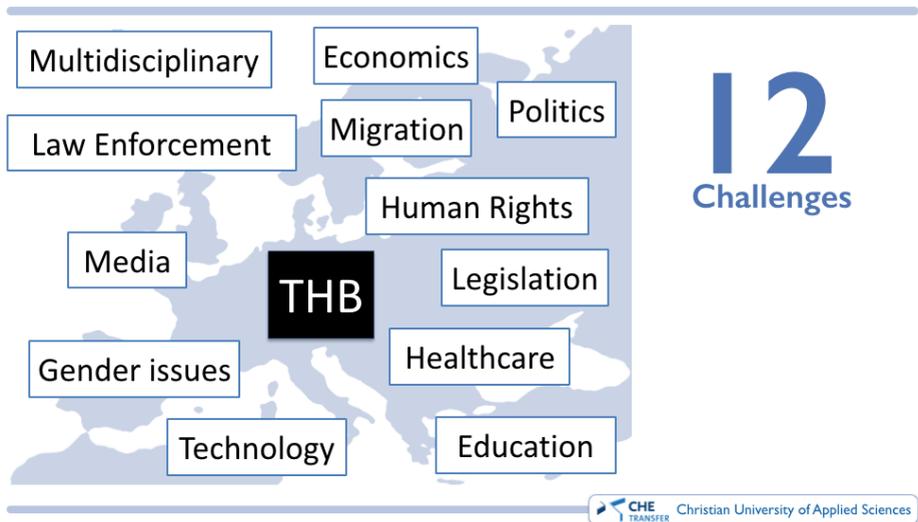
**Legislative change** - *Leo Van Doesburg*

## TWELVE CHALLENGES ON FIGHTING HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN EUROPE

*Tamme de Leur*

TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS (THB) IS NOT A STAND-ALONE PHENOMENON BUT A A VERY COMPLEX/WICKED PROBLEM. IN THE FIGHT AGAINST THIS CRIME AND GROSS HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATION I SEE TWELVE CHALLENGES THAT TOGETHER SHOW THIS COMPLEXITY. THIS OUTLINE GIVES HINTS TO THE RELEVANT ISSUES, KEYWORDS TO THE SOURCES WHERE YOU CAN FIND MORE ABOUT THIS AREA, THE SPECIFIC APPROACH OR MODEL IN FIGHTING THB IT REPRESENTS AND WITH WHOM YOU SHOULD PARTNER/WORK TOGETHER IN FIGHTING THE SPECIFIC CHALLENGE. THIS IS A SUMMARY OF THE FRAMEWORK WE ARE USING OUR UNIVERSITY, POST-GRADUATION AND PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION ON THB AND IN OUR JOURNALISTIC WORK, DOCUMENTARIES ON THB.

It is our conviction that in fighting THB we need to work together and learn from each other, on local, national and international level, across different professions and fields. We need to see the future challenges and tackle them as we work together. There is no other way to stop is crime called modern slavery.



### Challenge 1: Law Enforcement.

Issues: Rule of Law, Security vs. Privacy

Sources: EU Directive 2011/36, Europol & National Police Reports

THB: Law Law enforcement approach, Crime centered approach

Collaboration: Police, Prosecution, Judges, Government

**Challenge 2: Human Rights**

Issues: Implementing Human Rights

Sources: United Nations, European Court of Human Rights

THB: Human rights approach, Victim centered approach

Collaboration: NGO's, Government, Human rights movement.

**Challenge 3: Gender**

Issues: Gender inequality, Discrimination, Cultural differences

Sources: EU Gender publication 2016

THB: Vulnerable people, women, Lesbian Gay Bisexuals, Transgenders

Collaboration: Feminist Movement, LGBT movement, NGO's.

**Challenge 4: Migration**

Issues: Borders, Vulnerable migrants and refugees

Sources: Targeting Vulnerabilities. GAATW report exploring trafficking and migration

THB: Exploitable men, woman, children

Collaboration: Asylum seekers' Centre's, border control, NGO's

**Challenge 5: Politics**

Issues: Differences in legislation, Populism, culture and value's

Sources: GRETA reports EU

THB: Waterbed theory

Collaboration: Government at all levels.

**Challenge 6: Economics**

Issues: Corruption, Supply and Demand, Poverty

Sources: OCSE Reports, Transparency International

THB: Business model of THB, Demand Reduction

Collaboration: Financial institutions, government, business community.

**Challenge 7: Technology**

Issues: Technological Utopianism, Bitcoins, Criminals as early adaptors

Sources: TRACE project, USC reports on THB and online world

THB: THB 3.0 (online) , Mobile and geolocation, non-local.

Collaboration: Tech corporations, police, government, NGO's

**Challenge 8: Corporate Law**

Issues: Corporate transparency, Lack of commitment to codes of conduct

Sources: UK Modern Slavery Act, §6

THB: Labour exploitation

Collaboration: Trade Unions, government, politics, business community

### **Challenge 9: Health Care**

Issues: Shortage of organ donors, ethical dilemmas.

Sources: HOTT project

THB: Organ trade, forced organ donation, very profitable

Collaboration: Healthcare professionals, hospitals, doctors.

### **Challenge 10: Media**

Issues: Superficial, sensationalism, dark numbers, false testimonies

Sources: Thomas Reuters Foundation

THB: Media framing of THB, mistrust of victims' stories

Collaboration: media, victim support, police, government, education.

### **Challenge 11: Multi-disciplinary approach**

Issues: narrow-mindedness, professionals distrusting each-other.

Sources: Rantsev trial. EHCR

THB: Barrier model, Trafficking signals, Multi-disciplinary approach

Collaboration: all sectors and professionals.

### **Challenge 12: Education**

Issues: raising awareness, lack of knowledge professionals, complexity THB.

Sources: Scientific research, EU Toolkits

THB: Prevention, Long term partnerships, Sustainable

Collaboration: Universities, schools, NGO's

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## MARRIAGE & FAMILY

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### LONG AND HAPPY

*Paulien Timmer*

ARE THERE ANY COUPLES MARRIED FOR A LONG TIME AND HAPPILY SO? WHY DO YOU NOT HEAR ABOUT THEM? DOES IT EVEN EXIST, LONG AND HAPPY? CAN YOU BE TOGETHER FOR OVER 40 YEARS AND STILL HAVE BUTTERFLIES IN YOUR STOMACH?

For answers on these and many other questions, Paulien went to the only group who can say that they know: those who made this a reality. A hundred couples that had been married for over 40 years told Paulien their stories and their experiences.

Firstly she went to look into the lives of celebrities, but was soon disappointed. It seemed that there were no couples that stayed together for a long time. Since she was wanting to get married, and to have a long and happy marriage, she was interested to know whether this was even a possibility. This is when her focus changed from the celebrities to the experts!

She wrote a book about these couples, she interviewed: *Lang en gelukkig*. She shared during the State of Europe shortly about her book and her studies. Paulien explains in her book about the ways in which happily married people have learned to be happy. Often this is a choice they made, somewhere during the long years of their marriage. Even in these happy marriages there were times that the marriage was average, or below average. Often not because of big problems, but the real killers of a good marriage are unforgiveness, silence and boredom. To have a long and happy marriage, you need to create the right environment: be kind, be loving, show respect, also at the times you do not feel like it.

*Richard Kane.*

## CREATION CARE

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### THE FIRST GREAT COMMISSION

*Embert Messelink*

JUST TWO WEEKS AGO, DUTCH NEWSPAPERS REPORTED ABOUT BIODIVERSITY IN THE PROVINCE OF FRIESLAND. IN THE LAST 25 YEARS, POPULATIONS OF THREATENED SPECIES WENT DOWN BY 50 PERCENT – MORE THAN IN ANY OTHER PLACE IN THE NETHERLANDS. THE AREA OF FRIESLAND IS MAINLY FARMLAND, MEADOWS. THESE USED TO BE HALF-NATURAL FIELDS WITH NUMEROUS INSECTS AND BIRDS. BUT NOWADAYS THEY ARE TRANSFORMED IN INDUSTRIAL, VERY PRODUCTIVE, BUT VERY SILENT FIELDS.

#### 1. The urgency of the topic.

The worldwide conservation movement was once started with a woman called Rachel Carson, who wrote her book 'Silent Spring' about the fields around her American village where the poison DDT was used abundantly. We have our Silent Spring today, here in Friesland, not in a poisonous way per se, but by the highest productive agriculture in the world.

The situation in Friesland may be worse than elsewhere in The Netherlands, but the development is the same. Biodiversity is under pressure, in cities, on farmland and in open nature reserves as well. What I see is a sharpened separation of nature and the rest of the land. They were once mingled, but nowadays nature is reduced more and more behind the fences of the reserves.

This development takes place not only in Friesland or in The Netherlands: biodiversity is worldwide on its return. There is a growing tension between the people who have to live and eat, who are longing for a kind of welfare and the rest of creation.

I have to mention climate change as well. There is a direct connection between the way we live and a quick and enhanced effect on climate change. This affects millions of people, as well as wildlife around the world. The effects are not always clear yet, but there are many reports about changed weather conditions with droughts and heavy rains, failed harvests and changed conditions for all kind of wildlife. In more and more armed conflicts, climate and water supply have contributed to the war.

These topics are in the news every week. They are very urgent matters, directly connected to the way we live. They urge us to rethink our relation as

Christians with God's creation. Can we rediscover in our Christian faith the hopeful message for all creation? Can we be people of hope who love God as Creator, who obey his good laws and testify in our lives with Him, with each other and with His creation? I think it starts with the understanding of the scriptures and theology. This brings me to the second part: why creation care belongs to the core of Christian faith.

## 2. Why creation care belongs to the core of Christian faith

I met *A Rocha*, a Christian conservation movement, in 2002. It took me about ten years to rethink my understanding of the Scriptures – I'm apparently a slow learner. I think the key was for me – as theologian Tom Wright has underlined many times – the story of the Bible is too limited when reduced to God and man, sin and salvation. The challenge is to realise that the Bible tells us about creation, fall, salvation and recreation. The earth is not the scene where God's work takes place. The earth and everything in it is part of his big rescue work.

Let us take a look at a few key-texts in the Scriptures.

As humans, we are created in the 'image of God' (Genesis 1:26–28). Many interpretations of this phrase have been based on philosophical speculation rather than biblical exposition. There is no mention in the text that 'image of God' refers to being 'en-souled' (Ambrose), rationality (Athanasius), intellect and will (Augustine), moral righteousness (the Reformers), physically upright form (Von Rad et al.) or many other speculative ideas. Any interpretation of '*imago Dei*' stemming directly from the immediate context of Genesis 1:26 must embrace humanity's relationship with other creatures: 'image' is, at least in part, a job description. Humanity as a whole is created in God's image and likeness to reflect God's character and 'rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.' (Genesis 1:26, 28). At the same time, God forms Adam from the '*adamah*' (Genesis 2:7), Hebrew for soil or earth. Humans are both/and creatures: created from 'the dust of the earth' and made 'in the image of God'. We are carbon-based life-forms, like all other living creatures in our contingency and physicality, and yet uniquely called apart within (although never separated from) the diversity of creatures, with a divine calling to reflect God's image. God's original purpose for humanity was to reflect God's character in developing and looking after God's world.

Our first 'great commission' is directly related to how we treat the birds, animals, sea-creatures and the earth itself, along with which we were created. Our vocation as human creatures is to glorify God in assisting in the

flourishing of the whole good creation. Thus, biodiversity conservation becomes a missional task and a key means of reflecting God's image.

Many psalms affirm that, according to their kind, non-human creatures worship and praise God and also that God cares and provides for all creatures. Psalm 145:9, for instance, states 'The Lord is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made.' This is the God whose character humanity is to reflect. Psalm 8 echoes Genesis 1 in speaking of humanity's kingly role within creation (6-8). Yet the context is theocentric since the psalm opens and closes extolling the supreme majesty of God's name 'in all the earth', before whose creation of the stars and planets human beings are infinitesimally small (3-4). If God's kingly rule exalts the human creature so highly, does this not suggest that humanity's leadership within nature should echo this pattern of active concern for the interests of those under our rule?

In Psalm 104, humans are but one of the many works of God and no mention is made of any privilege or authority with regards to other creatures. God has made plants for people to cultivate so that they may produce wine, oil and bread to sustain and gladden their hearts (14-15). Yet God also provides running water for donkeys, trees for nesting birds, rain for the soil, grass for cattle, and mountains for goats. The psalmist chooses to spend three verses (20-22) describing creatures that live and eat by night and only one verse (23) on humans who work by daylight. The world of Psalm 104 is anything but anthropocentric. Yet, neither is the psalm ecocentric. The earth does not belong to any or all created species. It belongs in its totality to God, a God who provides for all creatures and rejoices in all his works (31). The natural world is to provide for all species and, by implication, its riches are to be shared by all, not accumulated by one at the expense of all others.

In the New Testament we find some crucial texts about creation. In his letter to the Romans, Paul writes about a longing creation, which will be set free from bondage and will be given freedom and glory, like the children of God. In Colossians, he writes that Jesus came to bring peace 'in all things'. Our challenge is to understand what 'all things' are. Speaking in terms of relations: we as people are related to God, to each other, to ourselves and to the whole creation. All relations are disturbed, but the work of Christ will bring restoration and peace in all. That is fantastic news for our relation with the earth and everything in it, the Scriptures and with this vision about a New Jerusalem, coming on earth. Our destination is not to serve God for eternity in an unknown place we call heaven. Our destination is here, on earth, where his creation will flourish again and Jesus will be the King.

**Six biblical principles:**

1. This world and all its creatures (human and nonhuman) belong to God and exist to bring glory to God.
2. The value and purpose of every species derives from God alone, and is tied to God's plans in creation, covenant, redemption and reconciliation.
3. Species have value independently of their usefulness to humanity, so ecological decisions should not be made on anthropocentric or economic grounds alone.
4. Every species matters, irrespective of its usefulness to humanity. Avoidable extinctions damage the integrity of God's world, erase something of God's self-revelation in creation, and silence elements of creation's worship of God.
5. Humanity has a divine vocation in reflecting God's character towards the animal kingdom through encouraging the flourishing of biodiversity and resisting its depletion. This is both a missional task to be fostered as a special vocation for some, and part of the wider calling of all Christ's disciples.
6. In an age of ecological depletion, Christianity offers ultimate hope both for people and biodiversity, rooted in the redeeming work of Christ for all creation. (See video: *All things reconciled* (<https://vimeo.com/166843635>))

**3. Case study in European context**

I think the message until now is for every Christian. As *A Rocha*, we experience a more specific calling to work on conservation in a very practical way. We have lived this out in many places, I will focus on our work in Portugal, where we have fought a battle to save the environment that many others considered to be unimportant, compared to the effort involved.

*A Rocha Portugal* works at Ria de Alvor in the Algarve, a coastal site of important natural value. *A Rocha* established a field study centre here and carried out long-term scientific studies, which contributed to its designation as a Natura 2000-protected area under EU law. The place harbours many important plant and animal species.

However, a real estate company, owner of a property in the heart of the site, destroyed 36 hectares of land in 2006, as ground clearing and farm rehabilitation activities. *A Rocha* tried to open a discussion, but the owner refused to engage. In the meanwhile, he continued his illegal and environmentally damaging activities. Local authorities did not undertake any action.

*A Rocha* started a campaign, followed by a legal action. The local community was at the centre of their actions, because in *A Rocha's* view a concern for the local environment and wildlife cannot be separated from a concern for the welfare of the local community and the quality of their place. *A Rocha* Portugal was convinced that local people were being subjected to a drive for economic development that did not serve their real welfare. Promises of local economic development and job creation do actually lead to the creation of low-paid, seasonal jobs with few long-term prospects and little security.

After a legal battle of six years, the company administrator was convicted of an environmental crime. He was given a two-year suspended prison sentence and a fine of 150,000 euro's. And he was ordered to restore completely the destroyed habitat areas.

The outcome was a direct result of the designation of the site under the EU Habitats Directive. Without this legal protection, the damage to this internationally important wildlife habitat would have certainly continued.

However, the legal protection in itself was hardly effective. A conscious local community, with strong beliefs about conservation and good data about the biodiversity in this area was absolutely necessary for the results.

This legal case was interpreted by *A Rocha* in terms of the theological principle that what to many seems to be insignificant, weak and small may actually be very important. They aimed to respond in a way consistent with its Christian identity and values. They were committed to the two elements of a Christian theology of the environment: the intrinsic value of nature as God's creation, and a distinctive motivation arising from the theology of hope, in which individuals are primarily committed to care for creation as an act of faithfulness to God and a desire to participate in the redemptive work of Christ in all creation. They were also inspired by the biblical motif, found in the Hebrew Scriptures, of the 'healing of the land'.

#### **4. Conclusion: Creation care and the paradox of freedom**

There are huge tensions between our freedom and our calling to care for God's good creation.

The landowner in Portugal thought he had the freedom to destroy and develop an important habitat for many species. But the law and court convicted him.

For western people, there is a world full of choices to make. Without committing any crime, we can bring serious damage to creation. And that is what we do. What I do, probably every day.

I am a hopeful realist. We won't be able to change this in a moment. But it starts with the recognition that values and faith are absolutely relevant. As Christians we haven't for a long time brought the whole topic of creation care in our relation with the Creator. It is time to do that now. That is the big challenge. Jesus wants to be Lord of all of our lives. His work of salvation and restoration means so much for how we live with each other and all creatures. His message of hope for the whole world is about this world, not about some heavenly reality far away. Our calling is to live hopeful and caring lives.

When we really understand this message of hope, our freedom will get another meaning. It will find its place in a caring and loving attitude to creation. My hope is for a generation of Christians who live integrated lives and testify in practice by their love for creation.

SOURCES/TAKEN FROM:

*The greening of the EU? A Christian assessment of the EU's environmental policies for biodiversity and nature.* Janice Weatherley-Singh, Tiago Branco and Marcial Felgueiras.

*Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. The Bible and biodiversity.* Cambridge Paper by Dave Bookless, theologian at A Rocha International.

## CREATION CARE: THE PURSUIT OF THE COMMONS

*Kathia Reynders*

IN 1968, GARRETT HARDIN PRODUCED A FAMOUS PAPER IN SCIENCE, CALLED 'THE TRAGEDY OF THE COMMONS'. HE ARGUES THAT FREEDOM IN A COMMONS BRINGS RUIN TO ALL, FOR IN A SOCIETY THAT BELIEVES IN THE FREEDOM OF THE COMMONS, EACH MAN IS COMPELLED TO PURSUE HIS OWN BEST INTEREST. HE ILLUSTRATES THIS BY A PASTURE OF LAND, OPEN TO ALL, WHERE HERDSMEN KEEP AS MANY CATTLE AS POSSIBLE ON THE COMMONS. A RATIONAL HERDSMAN, SEEKING TO MAXIMIZE HIS GAIN, WILL CONCLUDE TO ADD ANOTHER ANIMAL TO HIS HERD, AND MAYBE ANOTHER ONE, AND STILL ANOTHER ONE... BUT OTHER HERDSMEN WILL DRAW THE SAME CONCLUSION, LEADING TO OVEREXPLOITATION OF THE COMMONS. AND THERE EXACTLY LIES THE TRAGEDY.

### 1. Defining the commons

In April 1951, six countries (Germany, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg) sign a treaty to run their heavy industries – coal and steel – under a common management, forming a European Coal and Steel Community. In this way, peace is safeguarded; no country on its own can make weapons of war to turn against the other.

Six nations together define a common good, peace, and give up a fraction of their national sovereignty to realize this common good. They do this based on a shared morality, rooted in Christianity, and by means of an economic tool.

This process in itself is a very fascinating one, nations choosing to gather around a certain common good or interest, deciding on cooperating for the achievement of that common goal, by willingly giving up parts of their sovereignty. It is crucial for the involved nations to understand the common goal is not achievable by single nations only, and that one-sided actions of any nation, not serving the common good, will indeed weaken or fully nullify efforts taken by the other nations, ultimately destroying the common good. A tragedy for all.

Interestingly, the environment is a textbook example of such a common good. Nations have borders and are sovereign in governing how they see best. This might work very well for people living within that territory, but other living creatures such as fish or birds, and resources as air or water, do not abide just

within boundaries set by peoples or nations, hence they need to be managed accordingly, cooperation is necessary for them to be managed best, they are common goods.

## **2. EU nature and biodiversity laws**

In April 1979, the EU started legislating for nature protection by adopting the Birds Directive. It provides comprehensive protection to all wild bird species naturally occurring in the European Union, which today count more than 500 species. It is the oldest piece of EU legislation on the environment and one of its cornerstones. It was amended in 2009.

The Habitats Directive was adopted in 1992 to help maintain biodiversity, protecting over 1000 animals and plant species and over 200 types of habitat.

Both directives outline the necessity of protecting habitat areas, known as Special Protection Areas (SPA's) and Special Areas of Conservation (SAC's). Together they are known as Natura 2000, an EU wide ecological network of protected areas, safeguarded against potentially damaging developments. It stretches all across the Member States and covers over 18% of the EU's land area.

The Birds Directive and the Habitat Directive form the backbone of biodiversity policy and the legal basis for the EU's nature protection network. Both Directives have had to evolve according to the enlargement of the European Union.

Implementation of these two Directives has been very slow and has been undermined by contradictory EU infrastructure and agricultural funding policies. Even so, the Natura 2000 network is the largest coordinated network of protected areas in the world.

The 1997 Rio Summit promoted the concept of 'sustainable development', which certainly influenced further environmental legislation. It was included in the 1997 Amsterdam Treaty, intended to ensure a harmonious balance between economic activities and the environment, implying a high level of environmental protection and a requirement for environmental mainstreaming into other EU policy areas. In 1998, the Biodiversity Strategy was adopted, mainly also to mainstream biodiversity conservation objectives into other EU policy areas that were negatively impacting it, such as agriculture, fisheries and development assistance.

Following the 2002 UN World Summit on Sustainable Development and the 2010 Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, a new EU Biodiversity Communication was published in 2006. Unfortunately, this target was not met by 2010. Another EU Biodiversity Strategy was therefore adopted in 2011, to continue these efforts.

Unlike the Directives, these Biodiversity Strategies are no legal instruments, it makes them hard to enforce, which in turn lead to an implementation gap. In the following decades, member states continued to rally against the Commissions attempt to strengthen environmental policies and fought to maintain their focus on economic growth. When it comes down to integrating biodiversity into other EU policy sectors, there appears to be a continuing lack of political will to achieve this effectively.

### 3. Shifting values

The preambles of the EU biodiversity legislative and strategy documents give a good indication of the values driving EU nature protection. Analysing these preambles shows the shifting of the values throughout the different Directives and Strategies over time.

The preambles of the 1979 Birds Directive and the 1992 Habitats Directive highlight the need to protect declining species in order to safeguard a shared European heritage, and assert that environmental preservation is an essential Community objective and important for achieving sustainable development. Here, an underlying value for protecting the environment is that of increasing integration and pursuing common goals that benefit the whole European community. So far we find a similar strong sense of the common goal fuelling these Directives as we found at the beginning of the formation of the European Union, i.e. the European Coal and Steel Community.

As of the 1998 EU Biodiversity Strategy however, the preamble highlights that biodiversity should be protected both for its 'intrinsic value', an ethical principle, as well as for its importance to humans, the latter implying its contribution to social, economic, scientific, educational, cultural, recreational, and aesthetic goals, these are the proven economic and environmental values of biodiversity. The 2006 Biodiversity Communication took a similar approach. Slowly, we find a shift from the 'commons rationale' to a rationale based on an ethical and a utilitarian argument. The 2011 Biodiversity Strategy goes down the same line, but clearly gives much greater prominence to the utilitarian justification for conservation, particularly its potential contribution

to economic development. Nature is mainly referred to in economic terms, e.g. 'natural capital' and 'green infrastructure'.

#### **4. The importance of the concept of 'intrinsic value'**

In itself it is not a big surprise to find precisely this shift in values in the EU environmental Lawson nature and biodiversity. As of the beginning of the European integration process, peace and solidarity were always the aim, a common good worth striving for, the potential economic gains were a secondary objective. As with the European Coal and Steel Community, peace was the common goal, achievable by using an economic tool. According to Adenauer, all six governments involved realised that the political goal, the political meaning of this Community, was infinitely larger than its economic purpose. Today however, we see a shift from economics as a tool to deliver peace and solidarity to a more free market dominated model in which market and economic performance indicators have become an end in themselves, even at the expense of other stated aims.

For a successful management of the environment in the European Union, gaining understanding of the importance, if not necessity, of the concept of 'intrinsic value' seems inevitable. Nature has an intrinsic value, for us as Christians, based on the worldview where all and everything is created by God and where he sees that it was good. Therefore, nature is worthwhile to be protected, independent of its utilitarian value. It follows that we do not merely pursue our own best interest, but together we will seek the best outcome for the commons. We will pursue the commons instead of realising a tragedy, as Hardin suggests.

The environment in the European Union would greatly benefit from a renewal of a sense of moral mission, a sense of being part of a community, a sense of what we have in common, a sense of the higher common goal.

#### SOURCES/TAKEN FROM:

*A soul for the Union*; Ben Ryan; Theos and Christian Political Foundation for Europe.

*The greening of the EU? A Christian assessment of the EU's environmental policies for biodiversity and nature*; Janice Weatherley-Singh, Tiago Branco and Marcial Felgueiras; God and the EU

*The Tragedy of the Commons*, Gerrett Hardin; Science VOL. 162

[http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/legislation/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/legislation/index_en.htm)

# EDUCATION:

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## THE RELATIONAL SCHOOL

*Paul de Kloe*

*'To defend a nation, you need an army; to defend a civilization you need education'*

- Jonathan Sacks

EUROPE: TAIL OF THE EURASIAN LANDMASS, SHAPED BY GERMAN AND KELTIC HABITS, ROMAN AND GREEK CULTURE AND NOT TO FORGET THE IMPRESSIVE IMPACT OF JUDEO-CHRISTIAN THINKING ON THE MANY SPHERES OF LIFE.

Through Colonialism Europe expanded its impact on many present day societies worldwide and stood at the cradle of what we call the present global, so called 'Free World'.

Imposing its so-called Civilization in a dominant way Colonialism, exploited Continents and provided the various ideologies needed for this. These exported ideologies, or -isms, like Colonialism, Humanism, Nihilism, Communism, Fascism and today's Materialism are crucial and dominant in shaping and taking over cultures and mankind's behavior. Think about today's enormous impact of the global digital world. Will it bring real development and freedom or create new types of slavery?

Education, as Jonathan Sacks mentioned, has been a major force in shaping these -isms and the ongoing development. Are we aware of the -isms behind our educational system, today? Are we aware of its direction or lack of it? Do we know where we are going ?

Within Eastern European countries there is a struggle to overcome the *legacy of homo sovieticus*. What about *homo consumus* and the *homo secularus* in the western world? How will modern man look like? What will be his and her values.

Each of these ideologies lead to failing systems of thinking and practice, that robbed people from experiencing freedom at a deeper level and led to various crisis.

Aware of many negative faces behind each of these -isms, Dr Michael Schluter, developed an alternative, based on the core-value of the Judeo-Christian inheritance, 'to love God and your neighbour as yourself' as a vital necessity for today's society. He called it 'Relational Thinking'.

See: <http://relationalthinking.net>

Today the Relational Thinking Network challenges us to rethink and evaluate the virtues and values in our present postmodern society; how do we shape our social practice? What should be reframed?

Education has been and can be crucial in communicating values of its society.

### **What does this mean for Education?**

In what degree is the present educational system designed to answer the needs of the future demands on education?

Learning first of all is a free art and choice. We learn most about those things we want and decide to learn. The digital revolution supplies this content and possibility. Young people all over the world share that they learn more outside the school than inside. In the whole digital arena the young generation is much further than the former generation. Where ever in history did we experience such dynamics of learning and developing? But what about the leading ideology?

If educational systems want to take their responsibility in these questions, how will we shape it? Today's ruling and dominating curriculum and design within schools are based in developments from the 16<sup>th</sup> -19<sup>th</sup> century. Are they fit for the future? Ideas about education formed in the past have shaped the range of choices which topics we can study and for what professions we can prepare ourselves. But these topics, subjects and professions are quickly changing.

Many schools use overburdened school organizations due to an approach that fitted in the past, but not in the future. Many teachers suffer from burn out. How can an overburdened school inspire the younger generation to learn?

Today many educational systems wrestle with their identity, pressure of the expectations of the various stakeholders like government, inspection, media, parents and other 3rd parties.

Within the Dutch situation leading figures and institutes are aware of the deeper [relational] needs within the educational systems. These last decades Professor Luc Stevens emphasized the importance of 'pedagogy' as a central value in our educational approach. Most Dutch Primary schooling adopted his translation of the self-determination theory: Relatedness - Autonomy - Competence. <http://nivoz.nl>

## The Relational School Project

People, all over the world are social beings. They build value and give meaning to live through relationship with their parents and educators. It's within this network of relationship we develop all our capacity, also in future generations.

Within the UK Rob Loe, recently started the Relational School Project, received as a timed response to present developments within the British context. <http://relationalschools.org>

This year the college for school leaders, MijnID.nu, will introduce the Relational School Project within the Dutch situation. <http://mijnid.nu> & <http://relationalschools.nl>

Scientific studies emphasize the importance of promoting the relational dynamics within the organizations. But very few practical answers are given how to tackle this underlying factor in a deep, transforming way.

The Relational Thinking Network provides the Relational Proximity Model as a way to investigate and measure the qualities of our relationships. The Relational School Project, invites schools to investigate and to invest in all its relationships.

*Because:*

- it's based on the primarily basic need of live, to learn from one another.
- it triggers the intrinsic motivation of educators
- it improves the quality of schools, as relational networks in a natural way
- relational schools sustainable improve the quality of their communities.

## CLOSING PLENARY

ZUIDERKERK - MONDAY, MAY 9, 17.30

### EUROPE: HOLDING ON AND LETTING GO

*Wim Rietkerk*

TWENTY FIVE YEARS AGO I WROTE A BOOK ON *THE ART OF LETTING GO*. IT WAS IN THE TIME OF GORBACHEV (1985-1991) AND THE TIME OF THE FALL OF THE BERLIN WALL (1989). FOR A SHORT TIME THERE WAS AN OPTIMISTIC MOOD IN EUROPE. PRESIDENT BUSH SENIOR TALKED ABOUT A NEW WORLD ORDER AND THE NEW RUSSIAN PRESIDENT GORBACHEV USED TO TALK ABOUT THE EUROPEAN HOUSE.

The Iron Curtain was gone and for a moment it looked like a new springtime for Europe. A time to let go: let go of the old closed society, let go of the old animosity, let go of the old fear. Springtime in Europe celebrating freedom and emancipation.

That's when we held our first conference in Brussel on the spiritual state of Europe: the 1993 New Europe Forum. There I used Gorbatsov's frequently used image of Europe as a house with many rooms. That image helped me make my point that a house cannot stand without foundation piles (heipalen). I phrased it a bit more elegantly as: the seven pillars under the European House. Europe would never have become Europe (it would have stayed an insignificant peninsula of the massive Eurasian continent (as I quoted the historian Christopher Dawson) if there had been no preaching of the Gospel that provided the great diversity of all these peoples with these seven unifying pillars, the European values, as has been discussed at this conference: a sense of destiny, meaningful work, the dignity of each individual, freedom, democracy, monogamy and morality, and compassion for the poor and the weak.

All these values grew under the influence of the Gospel. I ended that lecture in an optimistic tone: Eastern Europe should learn how to build on these values, Western Europe how to go back to these values. The East needs Reformation, the West revival. The East should move from the roots to the fruits, the West from the fruits to the roots!

Jeff Fountain asked me: what would you say after these 25 years-looking back? Has there been Reformation? Has there been Revival? I must say that I

am not qualified to give a good answer: I do not know enough, but as a little observer from my own tiny corner I have seen hopeful signs in Ukraine and St Petersburg of movement in the right direction. As I know more about Western Europe I am very glad to be part of revival movements like New Wine, Reveil, Opwekking and many others. I hope and pray it will keep growing.

*BUT:* reviewing these 25 years, one major development comes to my mind of which we were not aware at that time. That is the complete new chapter in Europe's history that was announced with far-sightedness by Samuel Huntington in 1994 with the publication of his book *The clash of civilisations*. True, after the fall of the wall the fear of war between European *nations* was over but little did we know that a new era had begun and would soon hit us in the form of a clash, not of nations, but of cultures. Huntington describes nine world civilisations and it soon became clear what he meant: the real conflict in the Balkan War was a conflict between Muslim, Orthodox and Catholic worldviews, a clash of civilisations. We all know 9/11, Osama Bin Laden, the so called Arab spring, the bloody wars in Libya, Egypt, Syria, Iraq, the rise of ISIS, and the result is the immigration of millions of refugees from mainly Muslim background. Behind the rise of populist political parties, terror in Paris and Brussel, social care, journalism, education, even recreation and sport, lurks the reality of the clash between different civilisations that face us with the question: will the European House stand on its seven pillars now that it is 'flooded' by this wave of mainly Muslim immigrants? Or will it crack under outside pressure (or like in Groningen under hidden underground mining)?

The answer is: Yes, unless we hold on!

That leads me to my message at the end of this conference. We have to learn the art of holding on. As I said, 25 years ago all things turned around freedom and emancipation, and books on the art of letting go found a good market.. "Let go, and you yourself will be set free!" These are words of Jesus from his sermon in Luke 6:37. These were Jesus words before Ascension Day. It struck me that the emphasis in the ten letters to the churches *after* the ascension day are different: hold on, he wrote to the church in Philadelphia, hold on to what you have, so that no one may take your crown" (Rev.3:11).

On earth before the Cross: *let go!* In heaven after the Cross: *hold on!* That little command on several places in the New Testament to the church of the New Testament contains a programme for us as Christians in Europe. All the elements of what we should do in the complexity of our situation are hidden in this final call.

In the first place: it is a *command*. All the values of the European culture are gifts that are entrusted to us- like the talents in the parable (Lk.19:11 ff). We should not bury them, but protect them and teach them. No refugee should be allowed into our countries if he or she does not know them and respect them. We really need to learn the art of holding on. It is not easy. It means making our own people aware of them and teaching them to the foreigner, who takes refuge with us. We should tell them: take it or leave. That sounds harsh and in a way it is. There is a tough side in holding fast to what is given to us. Sometimes it is a fight.

In the Greek word *krateio* that Jesus uses is the first meaning: if some one tries to take away the purse or the bag under your arm (as happened to me with a guy on the back of a motor scooter who tried to grab my laptop), hold on and have them put in prison. Values must be protected.

Holding on to old values can also be misunderstood. It may sound very conservative: just falling back on 'old 'values' like Mr.Carson the butler in the television series Downton Abbey. But that is not the real meaning of holding on. Holding on is not just a repetition of the old time values but more a wake up call to renew them in their original strength. Holding on is a creative application of the old values to the new challenges. How can we apply our faith in human dignity to the modern problem of unemployment or euthanasia? In short, holding on is not so much *reset* but more *recycle* or *repurposing!*

But in the second place: it always goes hand in hand with *compassion*. In the same letter in which Jesus calls the church to hold on we read that the Lord loves that church because of their open door. Rev 3:8: "Behold I have set before you an open door which no one is able to shut." Europe's strength is this compassion. No one has made this more clear in recent times than the German chancellor Angela Merkel. This is because all the values in the whole list of the seven pillars are put to the test in compassion. Without compassion they all become distorted. Philadelphia has shown to be faithful to their given values because of the open door. Former Polish president Lech Walesa warned already a longtime ago for the danger that the Iron Curtain would be exchanged for a golden curtain around the rich Europeans celebrating their feasts. The door for refugees, the poor and the weak should never be closed. How to do that is also a part of the art of holding on! Severe on one side, compassionate and sacrificial on the other side.

Finally last but not least: The command to hold on comes with great *comfort*. Behind it we see the figure of the risen Lord who walks in the midst of the

lampstands and fills them with oil and light and energy. We can hold on because He is holding on. Holding on was his great achievement in the garden, on the cross and the resurrection, even now after the Ascension as He is on the throne. He is holding on: to us and to his character and values in which his character is expressed. He is holding on and so are we. We remember this Sunday that he has not left us as orphans but richly bestowed on us his Spirit and his Grace.

It is not so much the art of letting go, but the art of *holding on!*

## Speakers and contributors

**Anne Abok** (SA) was pioneer of YWAM AfriCom West and Media Village Nigeria, and is a filmmaker who uses her films for social change. In 2008 she pioneered Media Campaign Against Human Trafficking (MeCAHT) [www.mecahtinternational.org](http://www.mecahtinternational.org), working in South Africa, Nigeria and Europe. One of her films on human trafficking (Europe In My Heart) achieved a 39% reduction rate in the change of perception of people in rural Benin City, where 80% of the illegal African prostitutes in Europe come from. The film is being used by churches and organisations in Europe and Africa. She and her husband Alex now live in South Africa.

**Maria Ahlin** (SE) is the founder of international youth movement Freethem – committed to preventing demand for prostitution, pornography and labour exploitation. Freethem exists in Sweden, Norway, Austria and Germany. Besides being on fire for the next generation, she's got years of personal experience meeting with people in prostitution and male sex-offenders. Maria Ahlin is a frequent requested speaker, and in fall 2016 she's releasing her first book on youth and pornography consumption.

**Dr Jonathan Chaplin** (UK), is the first Director of the Kirby Laing Institute for Christian Ethics, in Cambridge, a position he took up in September 2006. He is Member of the Divinity Faculty of Cambridge University, and was Visiting Lecturer at the VU University, Amsterdam from 2007-2011. He is a specialist in Christian political thought, and has authored or edited nine books and reports, and many articles, in this field. His most recent publication is *God and the EU: Faith in the European Project*, co-editor (Routledge, 2016). He is currently writing a book called *Faith in Democracy? Towards a Post-secularist Settlement*.

**Leo van Doesburg** (NL) is Director for European Affairs & Policy Advising for the European Christian Political Movement (ECPM). A Dutchman who lived for many years in Romania, he was awarded the Conscience and Freedom Award in 2011 for diligently promoting religious freedoms in Europe. In 2013 he was honoured by the International Romani Union in recognition of his work against Roma discrimination in East Europe.

**Julia Doxat-Purser** (UK), is the European Evangelical Alliance's socio-political & religious liberty representative. She was previously EEA's Brussels representative for 8 years. She co-convenes the European Religious Liberty Forum with Advocates Europe, and is helping to develop the European Freedom Network, linking ministries working on human trafficking. Julia also works with the World Evangelical Alliance on religious liberty, human trafficking and political engagement training. Julia is married to Alistair and lives in Bournemouth, England.

**David Fieldsend** (UK) is chairman of the CPFE and is assistant to the Brussels representative of the Archbishop of Canterbury. He was previously manager of CARE for Europe. He is married to Anne; they have three adult children and one grandson. He is a licensed Reader in the Church of England and member of the diocesan synod for Europe.

**Jeff Fountain** (NL), is a director of the Schuman Centre for European Studies, and author of *Living as people of hope and Deeply Rooted*, the story of the forgotten vision of Robert Schuman, 'father of Europe' and principle architect of Europe's post-war peace. Jeff was director of YWAM Europe 1990-2010, and although originally from New Zealand, is a naturalised Dutchman, married to Romkje.

**Prabhu Gupta** (CH), is Distinguished Professor of Global Business, Management & Public Policy, William Carey University, India, as well as Member of the Board, Institute of Management, University of St Gallen, Switzerland, and Chairman of the International Network which supports the Relational Thinking movement with its secretariat in Cambridge, UK.

**Toos Heemskerck** (NL) oversees Not For Sale's work in the Netherlands. Previously she worked for The Scarlet Cord, focusing on care for women in prostitution in Amsterdam. She helped start a reintegration program for women wanting to leave prostitution, which now receives funding from the Ministry of Social Welfare. Toos has an advanced degree in social work based on her research of Hungarian woman working in Amsterdam's red light district.

**Johannes de Jong** (NL) is director of CPFE, the political think tank foundation for the European Christian Political Movement (ECPM). The CPFE supports and underpins the ECPM especially in terms of political content by European co-operation and the introduction of analysis, ideas and policy options.

**Richard Kane** (UK) is founder of Marriage Week International. He and his Swedish wife Maria have three grown children and live in Wimborne, UK. He regularly speaks to audiences about marriage and relationships and has addressed UN ambassadors, spoken on BBC and launched Marriage Week in the UK, USA, Czech and Hungarian parliaments.

**Wim Kater** (NL), Managing director of CBMC Netherlands. Wim began in the agricultural sector and then became account manager before being appointed CBMC director late in 2015.

**Gerard Kelly** (UK/FR), is a writer, prismatic preacher-poet, mac lover, coffee drinker and twitturgist. Formerly pastor of Crossroads International Church in Amsterdam, he and his wife Chrissie founded the European missions project that became The Bless Network in 2004. They currently live in Basse Normandy, France, where Bless is establishing a missional community.

**Paul de Kloe** (NL) has had a varied career in education after studies at Utrecht University, as primary school teacher, tertiary level lecturer, management coach and educationalist. He plans to promote the concept of Relational Thinking in Dutch educational circles.

**Tamme de Leur** (NL) is a independent TV Producer, journalist and documentary maker working with Dutch Broadcasting for over 20 years. He has made several documentaries on Human Trafficking, works as expert on THB in Europe and as lecturer with the Christian University of Applied Sciences in Ede, Holland. He started the first University Minor and Post Graduate courses in THB.

**Julian Lindley-French** (UK) is Vice-President, Atlantic Treaty Association, Senior Fellow of the Institute of Statecraft, Director of Europa Analytica & Distinguished Visiting Research Fellow, National Defense University, Washington DC. An internationally-recognised strategic analyst, advisor and author he was formerly Eisenhower Professor of Defence Strategy at the Netherlands Defence Academy, and Special Professor of Strategic Studies at the University of Leiden. Latest books: *The Oxford Handbook on War 2014* (Paperback) (2014; 709 pages). (Oxford: Oxford University Press) & *Little Britain? Twenty-First Strategy for a Middling European Power*.

**Monsignor Ad Van Luyn**, (NL) was Bishop of Rotterdam (1994-2011), and chairman of COMECE (2006-11), the Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Community, made up of Bishops of the 28 Member States of the European Union. He was also chairman of Pax Christ in the Netherlands.

**Vishal Mangalwadi** (IN), Indian philosopher, social reformer, international speaker and author of *The Book that made your world*. Dr Mangalwadi has lectured in over 40 countries, published seventeen books, and contributed chapters to many more.

**Jim Mellis** (NL) has lived in Amsterdam with his wife Debbie for over 40 years working primarily within the Muslim community as story-teller, anthropologist and author of *The Good News of the Messiah: by the Four Witnesses; Abu Sharif: the mystery of the hundredth name*, and others. The Mellises have two adult children.

**Embert Messelink** (NL), Director at A Rocha Netherlands and a radio presentator at the Evangelical Broadcasting Corporation. He is passionate about God's creation and a keen bird-watcher.

**Noemi Montes** (ES), Spanish radio journalist with a PhD in Political Communication by the Universidad Rey Juan Carlos (Madrid). She is a media lecturer and researcher, and expert on immigration and refugees. She has had several research grants for international projects and won an award for migration studies in Spain. In 2012 she authored *Immigration in Spain (2000-2008): Agenda Setting and frame building; Media hypes during crisis; African immigration; the EU and the drama-control frame*.

**Christel Ngnambi**, (BE), started as the Brussels Representative of the European Evangelical Alliance in September 2007. He is a Political Science graduate with a deep interest in developing a

Christian mind and applying Christian thinking to public policy. His personal public policy interests include migration.

**Arjan Plaisier** (NL) has been the secretary of the Protestant Churches of the Netherlands since 2008. From 1986 to 1993 he and his wife were missionaries on the Indonesian island of Celebes.

**Timo Plutschinski** (DE), is leading the Business Coalition of the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) and is Partner of MIC Corporate Finance. A Protestant theologian, he is also a Board Member of the Congress of Christian Leaders, Chairman of the Relational Business & Finance Group, and a Fellow of the Olivet Institute for Global Strategic Studies. His core concern is the relationship between business and church. Timo lives with his wife and two daughters in Hamburg, Germany.

**Lorcan Price** (IE), lawyer at the Strasbourg office of the Alliance Defending Freedom, an alliance-building legal organization advocating for the right of people to freely live out their faith. A former Irish debating champion, Lorcan focuses on the ECHR and the Council of Europe.

**Kathia Reynders** (BE) has been on staff of the Schuman Centre for European Studies since January 2015, and holds a masters degree in international relations and studied for a second masters in environmental studies in Iceland. She plans to open an office of the Schuman Centre in Brussels in September this year.

**Wim Rietkerk** (NL) is the chairman of L'Abri International and with his wife Greta leads the work of L'Abri in Utrecht. A retired pastor of the Nederlands Gereformeerde Kerk, he is also chairman of the Jewish Monument Utrecht Foundation (Stichting Joods Monument Utrecht, SJMU), and author of numerous books.

**Esta Steyn**, (NL) born in South-Africa, moved to the Netherlands at age 5. Bachelor degree in Leisure management and project management. Worked as a youth worker, project manager and event organiser. Volunteer with Stop the Traffik since february 2012. Director of Stop the Traffik Netherlands for 2,5 years. Focus point: prevention of sexual exploitation.

**Bert de Ruiter** (NL) is a staff worker of Operation Mobilization in Europe and the European Evangelical Alliance. He has been involved in Christian-Muslim relations in Europe for almost 30 years. He has an MA in World Evangelization and a D.Min. in Christian-Muslim relations. His two books: *A Single Hand Cannot Applaud*, and *Sharing Lives*, aim to help Christians overcome fear of Islam and to engage with and share their lives with Muslims. Bert lives in Amsterdam, is married, and has two children and two grandchildren

**Jonathan Tame** (UK) trained as an agricultural economist and worked for the British government's development agency in Cameroon, before joining a faith-based NGO in Lausanne. He developed a variety of training events on the relevance of Judeo-Christian thinking to different professions and domains of society. In 2009 he joined Relationships Global, three years later, he moved across to its sister organisation Jubilee Centre to take up the post of director.

**Pauline Timmer** (NL) is a young Dutch researcher who interviewed over 100 couples married for over 40 years or more to find out the secret of long and happy relationships. She wrote her findings in a Dutch book, *Lang en gelukkig*.

**Jennifer Roemhildt Tunehag** (SE) is a founder and core team member of the European Freedom Network. Over 200 ENF partner organizations now work across 41 countries in Europe to build a bridge to freedom for those who are exploited. Jennifer is a board member of the Freedom Business Alliance (FBA), a trade association helping freedom businesses to become profitable, scalable, and transformational. She also serves on the Human Trafficking Task Force of the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA). Jennifer and her husband, Mats, live in Stockholm, Sweden.

**Revd Dr Richard Turnbull** (UK), is director of the Centre for Enterprise, Markets and Ethics, Oxford. Married with four children, he was the Principal of the Evangelical Anglican theological college in Oxford, Wycliffe Hall, 2005-12. He chaired the Business Committee of the Anglican General Synod (2004-05).

**Rima Tüzün**, (SY), is Head of Foreign Affairs of the European Syriac Union, initiator of the common declaration of the Minorities in Iraq (Ezidi Kurdic (Yezidi's), Chaldean-Syriac-Assyrian

and Turkmen peoples) with the *“Call for restoration of human rights through a political future in Iraq”*. Rima was project coordinator for the Bethnahrin Women Union, 2009 – 2011.

**Jarno Volmer** (NL) As a Security consultant Jarno is responsible for (threat and security) analysis and the monitoring of (temporary) measures and procedures concerning terrorism threats to Dutch Airports. Jarno is involved in training of different security concepts based on behaviour profiling. Currently deployed at Amsterdam airport responsible for daily High Risk Security operations. He also cooperates with Dutch military and para-military organisations in day to day operations. Besides Jarno is city council member for ChristenUnie (CU) – Lelystad. Jarno is member of the CU party commission on Defence (and security) matters.

**Rikko Voorberg** is theologian and is the new ambassador for TEAR in the Netherlands, in which role he wants to draw attention to the injustices done to refugees. As pastor of the PopUpChurch in Amsterdam, he uses artistic presentations to engage his audience in current issues of justice and will shortly launch a theatre tour in the Netherlands focusing on poverty. Recently he visited Lesbos and Idomeni in Greece to observe firsthand the conditions of the refugees.

**Mink de Vries** (NL) is the initiator of the Postmodern Devotion Movement, rediscovering the spiritual values of a 14th and 15th spiritual renewal touching 140 locations in the Netherlands. He has been a teacher in worldview and social studies, and as a diaconal- and youth-worker. He produced a youth translation of *The Imitation of Christ* in Dutch.

**Dr Stefan Waanders** (NL) worked for the Thomas More Foundation for 17 years, nine of which as director. He studied history and religious studies, and has worked in Taizé, France, in a house for the homeless, as a bus driver, and in business. He has authored and edited numerous articles and several books.

**Dr Arleen Westerhof**, (NL) facilitator of the European Economic Summit, co-pastor of the God’s Embassy Church in Amsterdam together with her husband Dick. Born in Jamaica and raised in Canada, she has a PhD in Chemistry and originally came to the Netherlands to work as a Research Scientist at a large multinational corporation.