



Theology and Revolution -- The 1839 Zurich Revolution: A Reader in the History of Theology for the Theology of History by [Douglas R McGaughey](#) is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License](#).

*Theology and Revolution – The 1839 Zurich Revolution:
A Reader in Historical Theology*

Introduction

The 1839 revolution in Zurich, Switzerland, came about as a result of the confluence of several factors. Already in 1832, two decisions, in particular, created festering sores among the populace. The first was the deep dissatisfaction by conservative Christians over the newly elected Liberal Government's appointment for life of the progressive pedagogue, Ignaz Thomas Scherr, as Superintendent of Schools. The second was the Liberal Government's joining the "Seven Concordat," a coalition of seven Cantons with the power to intervene in the internal affairs of a fellow Canton without invitation if the concordat members felt it necessary. However, the spark that eventually led to the revolt was the appointment of the "radical" theologian, David Friedrich Strauß, to the chair for New Testament Theology, Church History, and Dogmatics at the University of Zurich, only founded in 1833. The government had attempted to obtain Strauß' appointment in 1837 but failed because no member of the theology faculty at the time favored the appointment. By January of 1839, though, one member of the faculty joined the government to make the appointment possible.

From both sides, Strauß was viewed as a "radical." For the conservative Christians of the Canton, Strauß was a *threatening* "radical" because for them Strauß denied the historical reality of the Christ and claimed that the gospels were myth. For the government, Strauß was a *promising* "radical" because he was the kind of rigorous scholar they wanted at their new university to signal the liberal spirit dominant in the Canton as indicated by their election.

In contrast to the biblical literalists who insisted on the historicity of the miracles in the gospels, Strauß' hermeneutical strategy was shaped by the 18th Century "Old" Testament scholarship of the Mythic School. We will see that the Mythic School by no means either denied all historical worth for the gospels or claimed that the bible was legend and fable. Strauß' mythic reading of the gospels as well as his Christology had the advantage that it was entirely compatible with the worldview of the natural sciences without having to distort, or add things not in, the text.

This project takes the 1839 revolution in Zurich to be an illuminating example of Historical Theology's¹ potential to transform not only biblical studies but also theology and religious studies, generally. Historical Theology can be parsed as (but not split into) the history

¹ For the sake of simplicity, the term "theology" is here serving as a metaphor to describe religious doctrines (and their relationship to traditions of ritual and institutions) as well as to describe "religious studies," generally.

of theology and the *theology of history*. The history of *theology* is an objective and impartial synchronic and diachronic description and comparison of the history of religious traditions, their rituals, doctrines, and institutional structure. The *theology of history*, in contrast, is the study of the religious nature of any and all human experience within the historical time of the only world that we all share. The history of *theology*, though, is not (!) the study of *the* meaning, purpose, or goal of history of a particular “salvation history.” For example, the *theology of history* is not eschatology, however understood, either this side or beyond the grave.

The history of *theology*, as is the case with all empirical history, is always a speculative activity because it cannot escape the doubt established by the limits of human reason. This is illustrated by the translated documents from 1839 provided in Part II and the need to contextualize them by providing the historical background that led to the tragic events of September 5/6.

In contrast, the *theology of history* is grounded in what is *necessary* for human beings to experience historical phenomena in the first place. I will propose not only that humanity is the only species (of which we are aware) that develops anything remotely like “religions” but also that the very conditions of possibility for human experience in the world require faith – in the sense of “not knowing.” Faith as “not knowing” is the result of the profound limits to reason, *not* what can be known by revelation beyond “reason.” This *theology of history* will be demonstrated by unpacking Strauß’ transition from far-left-wing Hegelianism in *The Life of Jesus Critically Examined* of 1835 to Kantianism in *The Life of Jesus Prepared for the German People* of 1874.

Strauß’ reception in his day even among scholars (as he protested himself) was disappointing not only because it is clear that, most frequently, neither his opponents nor his supporters actually read his two volume text of 1,474 pages (the first edition of four published by Strauß) but also because the Christology that Strauß found in the gospels, which was a “radical” version of Left-wing Hegelian Speculative Theology, was ignored in the outcry over his claim that the gospels were myth. Of course, Hegel’s theology and philosophy are about as accessible and appealing to lay persons as is Process Theology today. Because Hegelianism was perceived to be elitist, the reaction to Strauß was not limited to his “abuse” of the gospels but, equally damaging, by the charge of intellectual elitism.

Today, even progressive New Testament scholars don’t read Strauß, in part because he was a defender of the 18th Century Griesbach Hypothesis that took Matthew to be the original gospel, and because Strauß is engaged, primarily, in Literary Criticism of the gospels at the level of their stories. In other words, Strauß’ work on the text is taken to be long-since surpassed by the insights and conclusions offered by the “Two-Source” hypothesis of Source Criticism that places Mark and “Q” before Matthew and Luke. The “Two-Source” hypothesis was developed after the publication of Strauß’ *The Life of Jesus Critically Examined*. However, New Testament scholarship didn’t stop with this hypothesis. Strauß’ work is taken to be surpassed by Form Criticism, Redaction Criticism, Social-Scientific Criticism, and the broadening of understanding of the New Testament because of access to texts in part discovered at the end of the 19th Century but, most importantly, in the Nag Hammadi library discovered first in the mid-20th Century.

Although not comparable to the loss of lives in a revolution, this neglect of Strauß' hermeneutics and Speculative Theology is, nonetheless tragic, because it leaves out of account the Historical-Critical reflections of the Mythic School of biblical scholarship first developed with respect to "Old" Testament studies in the 18th Century and only applied systematically and exhaustively for the first time to the New Testament gospels by Strauß – an amazing achievement by a young scholar. Furthermore, even if one cannot embrace Strauß' Hegelianism, his text remains a rigorous presentation of the theological spectrum that was used to frame the New Testament interpretative strategies of his day – certainly informative and worthwhile in itself. Particularly valuable, though, is what one can learn from the decisive shift in Strauß' evaluation of Immanuel Kant's philosophical theology that occurred between his *The Life of Jesus Critically Examined* (1835), published at the age of 27, and his last theological text, *The Life of Jesus Prepared for the German People*, published in 1864.

Historical claims on the basis of scriptures are always susceptible to revision and doubt given the limits to human reason. As a consequence, theological judgments taken to be grounded in historical conclusions drawn from a text are as speculative as they are circular. One reads out of the text what one reads into it. This is particularly the case when the aim is to make absolute and ultimate claims about life and death. Theological judgments based on literal, historical assertions are incapable of either confirmation or contradiction because they are speculative claims grounded not in an empirical text but in a set of assumptions and extra-empirical causal explanations.

It is precisely because we can only experience empirically the effects of causes, not the causes themselves, that any and all claims to ground causal explanation in a text by definition is speculative. As a consequence, the crucial point is that any attempt to ground (or to reject) ultimate theological conclusions on the basis of historical events is doomed to failure from the get-go. The historical data is simply incapable of carrying the weight of indubitable, ultimate, and absolute conclusions.

In light of our inability to confirm or deny theological conclusions grounded in history, it might seem that the loss of an historical anchor for theology would be grounds for justifying any and all materialist and/or spiritualist, theological claims. Conservative traditionalists of all kinds would be able to sigh a huge sigh of relief. Their convictions are untouchable.

That is the case so long as the touchstone of verification or falsification is the text as historical data. An alternative speculative strategy is to turn one's back to the physical world and retreat into consciousness. If the physical world is material, consciousness, in contrast, is spiritual. It is imperceptible because one cannot touch taste, smell, hear, or see consciousness. It is immaterial and indivisible. One cannot determine where one mental impression begins and the next starts. Because it is indivisible, consciousness is immeasurable. In other words, we can't say where our mental image or idea of elephant stops and our mental image or idea of a mouse begins. In other words, we can't say where our mental image or idea of elephant stops and our mental image or idea of a mouse begins, or which image is bigger or smaller than the other. Is our mental image or idea of an elephant bigger or smaller than our mental image or idea of a mouse? In light of the fact that consciousness requires unchanging ideas to make sense of the ceaseless flow of appearances that is its experience of the world, one can as readily conclude

that ideas as well as the unity of consciousness that they presuppose are *what is real* as a materialist concludes that the physical world is *what is real*.

In light of our inability to confirm or deny such theological conclusions (e.g., that God is a spiritually, absolute One and that His thoughts are eternal) that are grounded in what for us is only finite consciousness, it might seem that the loss of an indubitable spiritual anchor for theology would be grounds for justifying any and all spiritualist, theological claims. Mystics of all kinds would be able to sigh a huge sigh of relief. Their convictions are as equally untouchable as those of the biblical literalist. However, as is the case for the materialist, it is impossible to prove or disprove such ultimate, metaphysical claims about reality.

The legitimate doubts that can be raised about both materialist and spiritualist claims appear to leave the choice to capricious, subjective feelings. “You” can choose to be a materialist because it feels right to you. “I” can choose to be a spiritualist because it feels right to me. Note: both can make a pragmatist claim. The materialist says: “You ignore the physical world at your own peril.” The spiritualist says: “You can neither ignore nor embrace the physical world without a spiritualist order, which has the ‘advantage’ of a foretaste of eternity although one always and already experiences as consciousness only a finitely historical, physical world.”

These two options (materialism and idealism) are what frame Strauß’ project in *The Life of Jesus Critically Examined* of 1835. In this text Strauß rejects the historical (or materialist) speculations of the “Supernaturalists/Literalists” and “Rationalists/Naturalists.” To be sure, he also rejects the Critical Idealism of Immanuel Kant, but we will see that he has at this point a very distorted view of Kant that probably comes from his beloved teacher, Ferdinand Christian Baur. Strauß refers (*Life of Jesus*² [LJ] 775, n. 5) to the section titled “Comparison of Schleiermacher’s *Christian Faith* with Kant’s *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*” in Baur’s *Die christliche Gnosis*³ (660-668), where the distortions are articulated.

However, already in 1835, Strauß does not follow a strictly idealist option. Hegelian, Speculative Theology turns its back on the historical, material world to view consciousness as the unique occasion for the intentional negation of objective experience in order to be the occasion for the Absolute One’s (God’s) becoming aware of Himself. Although Hegelian in 1835, Strauß’ Hegelian, Speculative Theology is a “radical,” Left-wing version that views the God-Man neither as a unique historical event of the Christ (Right-wing Hegelians) nor as the accomplishment of the few “philosophers” capable of grasping the divine significance of humanity in the order of things (Left-wing Hegelians). For Strauß, the God-Man is, in point of fact, a description not of the elite few, as his detractors claimed, but a description of the condition of universal, human, historical experience. History, as a consequence retains an

² Citations marked “LJ” refer to the English translation of the fourth edition completed by George Elliott (beginning at page 166). The full citation is: *The Life of Jesus Critically Examined* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972).

³ Ferdinand Christian Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis oder die christliche Religionsphilosophie in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung* (Tübingen: Verlag von C.F. Osiander, 1835).

important status! In other words, Strauß is no strict idealist. He views the condition of idealism to be inseparable from history.

However, the consequence is that Strauß' Hegelianism suffers from the same criticism that F.C. Baur (quoting Karl Rosenkranz) directed at Schleiermacher's Christology of Perfect God-consciousness: "Instead of recognizing that the postponement of the completion of *the idea*, which is only an abstraction of our consciousness that takes us out of the phenomenal world into an incomprehensible and dubious 'other side,' Schleiermacher, in order to achieve a similar end, steps back half-way and portrays the fulfillment of the church as *an ideal*, a state of being, which should be achieved, of course, but which can never be achieved because, far more, it has to be sought in an immeasurable future [...]" (*Die christliche Gnosis oder die christliche Religionsphilosophie in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung*: 736, n. 34 [actually, on page 739]).

Perhaps Baur's critique of Schleiermacher eventually played a role in Strauß' apparent embracing of Kant's "pure" religion 30 years later in his *The Life of Jesus for the German People*. As a consequence, he distanced himself from Baur. In this case, by correcting Baur's distortions of Kant. Strauß' turn to Kant allows the claim that Strauß provides the occasion for proposing that the Copernican Turn in theology and religious studies as a *theology of history* is always yet to be achieved.

Structure of the Project

This introduction examines, first, the popular elements that drove the 1839 Zürich revolt. This is followed by the identification of the themes that by 1874 had led Strauß to clearly distance himself from the speculative Hegelian Christology of the 1835 *The Life of Jesus Critically Examined*.

The book, as a whole, has the following structure: **Part I** provides "The Essentials" of the situation. It begins by articulating the differences between a history of *theology* and the *theology of history*. Then, it examines what in Strauß' work was taken to be so controversial. The next step is an examination of Strauß' theological context in 1835, which is followed by an unpacking of what Strauß says (and doesn't say) about Kant in 1835 to contrast it with his comments on Kant in 1864. Following an examination of the "ought"/"is" fallacies of Schleiermacher's, Hegel's and Strauß' Christologies, I propose the advantages of the Kantian Christology. Finally, Part I ends with suggesting why Strauß' work, generally, and Copernican Turn, particularly, are so important for today.

Part II consists of materials published in Zurich that provide an historical glimpse into the perspectives of the participants surrounding the revolution in Zurich. It begins with a broad description of the events that led to, and occurred on and after, September 5/6, 1839, followed by a translation of an account of the revolution itself by an eye-witness member of the military who was responsible for defending the government. This account's historical uniqueness is that the author had its contents confirmed as accurate by eye witnesses from the other two groups involved in the putsch: the Conservative Christians who initiated the revolt and the Liberal Government itself that had appointed Strauß to the university and that fell as a consequence of the revolution. A second, partisan account of the events from a Zurich almanac of 1840 includes

a list of the dead and wounded. These are followed by two referee letters from extraordinary academics: one in favor and one opposed to the appointment. They are followed by a humorous letter whose title sounds like a letter of opposition but whose content is a letter of support. Strauß' personal letter to the government over the controversy occasioned by his appointment is followed by a dismissive answer by an anonymous author. Then come three pro and three con statements by pastors and laity from the Canton. Also included is a letter by Ignaz Thomas Scherr, Superintendent of Schools of the Canton of Zurich, to the conservative Christian Central Committee in response to their charges against his school reforms and support of Strauß' appointment.

Part III contains papers that provide depth to the project's thesis that the revolution offers a valuable introduction to Historical Theology as a *theology of history* as an incomplete "Copernican Revolution" in theology and religious studies.

Part IV is a translation of the report from the Aid Society established to collect donations and distribute funds as needed to the families of the deceased and the wounded and their dependents.

A Populist Uprising in Defense of Biblical Literalism And Against Science

The political tragedy of this obscure revolution in 1839 is that 14 people died and 17 more were wounded in Zurich.⁴ Unfortunately, the populist elements⁵ that shaped the perceptions and drove the violence of 1839 are not all that surprising to us some 180 years later:

On "Enlightened" Arrogance versus "Religious" Conviction:

Religious conservatives flooded the streets of Zurich in opposition to Strauß and the government because the latter were viewed as destructive of the tradition on the basis of their "enlightened" arrogance. Both what one means by enlightenment and by religion were thus central to the struggle.

Enlightened reason has come to mean the superior knowledge and skills of instrumental reason as well as the (ambiguous) progress that it has brought. Because instrumental reason, by definition, makes it possible for a person to do things and because our society has come to privilege pragmatic reason above everything else, instrumental and pragmatic reason can easily be taken by those who exercise it to confirm that they are superior. Unmistakably, the possessor of a skill of instrumental reason has worked hard to achieve the skill, but it is too easy to forget

⁴ According to the report of the Aid Society translated at the end of this volume.

⁵ „Populism“ is a metaphor with no precise definition. Populism can be both “right” and “left.” Victor de Vries summarizes Jan-Werner Müller’s proposed definition: Populism is “[...]founded on two components: the critique of elites and a claim to be the sole, authentic representative of a ‘single, homogenous, authentic people’ (p. 3) [...] based on the populists’ ‘moralistic imagination of politics’ (19). Within this ‘fantasy,’ they believe that only ‘a part of the people is the people’ who are by their ‘populist logic’ the ‘real or true people’ (p. 22) [...] This exclusive moral claim on behalf of a single group leads the author to define populism as fundamentally antipluralistic {,,}” From Victor de Vries review of Jan-Werner Müller, *What is Populism?* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016) published on H-Nationalism (January, 2018).

that the skill doesn't arise in a vacuum. It is dependent upon the resources, opportunities, and recipients of an entire society with its social, economic, and political infrastructure, and, frequently, those resources and opportunities are as much governed by fortuitousness as effort.

However, our age has a very narrow grasp of what "Enlightenment" means. Rather than Enlightenment consisting of a blind commitment to progress and to instrumental reason, where understanding of "autonomy" is taken to mean independence from all social institutions and social traditions, Enlightenment in the far broader sense means a shift in focus away from exclusive concern for the *empirical* as if reality was reached simply by *opening one's eyes*. Rather, Enlightenment has to do with *internal* capacities and the individual's responsibility for them. In other words, Enlightenment involves taking personal ownership of the opportunity and responsibilities of the "Copernican Turn" to the *necessary* conditions of possibility for any and all experience in the first place.⁶ Part III thus includes a paper on the Enlightenment of the "Copernican Turn" entitled "Enlightenment: Reflections on Michel Foucault's "Was ist Aufklärung? [What is Enlightenment?]."

Also at stake in Zürich was the very meaning of "religion." Religion can be taken to involve far more than biblical literalism and speculative dogmatics when it is anchored in human dignity and insists upon a profound rejection of racism, ageism, sexism, homophobia, possession of power or weakness, status and prestige (e.g., aristocracy), or any other external and perceptible markers as criteria for judging the dignity of others.⁷

First and foremost: although we can gain valuable information by examining religious texts as sources of historical facts, the very nature of a text will never allow the determination of absolute truth. Texts are figurative documents, if not by intent, then by linguistic formulation. If, as is the case, the meaning of words is polyvalent, so, too, the meaning of stories is never reducible to a single interpretation. There is no historical information about which we can be absolutely certain of the accuracy of the account. Persons and events are simply too complex, and there is a powerful lesson to be learned in this respect from Zurich.

Second: *every reading of a text is grounded in assumptions* that one brings to the text. This is as true of Kantian Critical Idealism as it is of Supernaturalists, the Rationalists, and the defenders of Hegelian, Speculative Theology, which constitute the three hermeneutical options that Strauß examined in his *The Life of Jesus Critically Examined*. However, not all assumptions are capable of carrying the same weight.

The Supernaturalist and Rationalist readings of *the text* were riddled with historical ambiguities and inconsistencies. In addition, they embraced *a theology* that was riddled with ambiguities and inconsistencies, which resulted in violating the text in the name of a dogmatic truth that one brought to the text. In *The Life of Jesus Critically Examined*, Strauß maintained that only a reading of the text that was mythic allowed taking the text as it was written (a

⁶ See McGaughey, "What is Enlightenment?: A Response to Balcomb's Call for the Retrieval of 'Participation'" in the *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa*, 147 (Nov. 2013): 50-72.

⁷ See McGaughey, "Was Kant a Racist? with Addendum on South Sea Islanders" at <https://criticalidealism.org>.

collection of stories/mythi) without violating it by adding and subtracting elements that were not there in the text. Furthermore, the mythic reading of the text does not deny all history in the gospels. Mythic stories can preserve a kernel of “history” at the core of some stories as well as allow for identification of philosophical (or theological) ideas and poetic symbols at the core of other stories – sometimes with a single story including all three: historical elements, a philosophical idea, or a poetic symbol. In short and most importantly, Strauß did not eliminate all history in the text, as his opponents claimed. He viewed the history preserved in the text to be shaped by a mythic (story-telling) process of textual development whose factuality and meaning were able to be grasped only when the external husk was not taken to be the “true” history itself.

At the time of the 1839 revolution, Strauß insisted that a Hegelian, Speculative Theology provides the appropriate, theological framework for understanding the eternal truths of the scriptures because he believed that only Speculative Theology was compatible with the scientific worldview, namely, that events were governed by an inviolable and coherent system of physical laws. Both Hegelian Speculative Theology and the physical sciences are grounded in the recognition that insight into the empirical data (of the scriptures or of physical events) was possible only because of *a dialectical process of imperceptible ideas combined with empirical appearances*. Strauß’ version of Hegelian, Speculative Theology took this dialectical process of ideas and appearances in consciousness to mean that the movement of Absolute Spirit (absolute Oneness) towards Self-awareness required an entire species of finite spirit that grasps its central role in Absolute Spirit becoming aware of Itself.

In other words, the One cannot experience itself or understand anything because experience and understanding require distinguishing something from something else. Absolute Oneness has no differences within it. There is only Oneness, not a many. As a consequence, in order to experience Itself, the One must deny Itself and spill out into the many (creation of the world) in which consciousness can emerge and in the mind, negate the many to think the One.

Hegelian Speculative Theology places Christology at the core of its religious convictions just as do the Supernaturalists and Rationalists/Naturalists. However, the latter embraced an *exclusive* Christology whereas the former an *inclusive* Christology. Nonetheless, for all three Christologies the Christ event made something possible that otherwise was not possible. For the Supernaturalists, the Christ event consisted in the sacrificial death of atonement for humanity’s condition of sin and in physical resurrection, which made possible what otherwise was impossible:⁸ reconciliation with God. For the Rationalists, the Christ event disclosed in a unique manner the “will of God” that humanity was called to fulfil. In contrast, Speculative Hegelian Theology defended an *inclusive* Christology, which maintained that (granted, according to Hegel, actually to be achieved only by a few individuals), according to Strauß, all human beings were capable of rising above sensuous experience of phenomena to be reconciled with God by assuming one’s spiritual role of consciously thinking the One under the only conditions in which it is possible: in and through finite consciousness.

Supernaturalists and Rationalists alike must violate the text in order to find their dogmatic assumptions in it. At the time of the Zurich revolution in 1839, Strauß thought that only

⁸ The logic of this *exclusive* Christology is articulated by Anselm in his *Cur deus homo*.

Hegelian, Speculative Theology was capable of accepting the scriptures as inviolable while providing the *inclusive* Christology of the Christ event as a representation of the God-Man who was to, and must, be the aim of all of history past and present to achieve the divinization of human beings.

Nonetheless, Strauß never claimed that populist Christians had to understand Hegelian, Speculative Theology. Humanity's divinization did not require training in philosophy. It was a process that was already transpiring and could be achieved through spiritual training and community reinforcement. In fact, Strauß made several efforts that included issuing a third, revised edition of *The Life of Jesus Critically Examined* at the time of his appointment in Zurich to demonstrate how the church is a spiritual community that, regardless of critical scholarship on the gospels, had an important, constructive role to play in society.

Religion and Science:

The populists in Zurich in 1839 were vehemently dismissive of the natural sciences whenever the sciences "over-stepped" their boundaries to claim to know better than the religious dogmatism of anthropomorphic Supernaturalism.

Next to the issue of the literally historical nature of the scriptures, Strauß' project from beginning to end was shaped by the question of the relationship between religion and science. Strauß never hesitated to stress that the "modern age" believed the natural order to be governed by an inviolable and coherent order of natural laws. If anything, including God, were capable of violating that lawful system, then it would make any and all understanding impossible because nature would be, for us, merely an arbitrary and capricious set of phenomena. Not even the individual's own self-interest, which might be served by a deity capable of violating the laws of nature, could substitute for the damage that such a deity would represent for humanity (not to speak of nature, generally). Speculative Theology (both Hegelian and Process) makes this conviction its fundamental assumption.

Populist, Supernaturalist religion can only view the sciences as a threat and contradiction to its beliefs. Rationalist (or Natural) religion seeks to deny the miraculous in the scriptures by offering lawful explanations for miracles but results in violating the texts (Jesus and the disciples were involved in deception) and adding things to them (food was stored in advance of the feedings of the multitudes) that are not there in the text.

Strauß' Left-wing, Hegelian, Speculative Theology of 1835 views religion and science as entirely compatible and mutually complementary. However, the *pure* religion of Critical Idealism that Strauß later embraces at the end of his career requires no impossible quest for historical certainties and involves no violating of the scriptures, much less violating the oral traditions, rituals, and institutions of a particular religious community. Rather, it calls for seeking out and celebrating the imperceptible lawful orders that *necessarily* govern the universe and individual creativity to encourage humanity to recognize its "divine" origin, hence, to respond to the suffering and anxieties of all, as well as to pursue justice, but also to profile and

encourage humanity's creative efforts in light of moral principles, regardless of personal self- or communal self-interest.

The term *necessity* is an assumption that can carry the weight of reality. It does not mean *determination*. What is *necessary* for us to experience, understand, act, and assume responsibility for our extra-ordinary creative capacity intentionally to initiate sequences of events that nature cannot do on its own does not depend upon our *correct* grasp of *objective* phenomena. This *autonomous freedom* is by definition incapable of being reduced to any deterministic order either physical (material reductionism) or theological (predestination). All it requires is the identification of those *subjective* elements that make it possible for us to experience and act in an ordered world in the first place. We cannot doubt these *necessities* without affirming them. We are and can be skeptical only if we believe that there may be a more accurate account of experience, but even that more accurate account *necessarily* presupposes the subjective conditions that make it possible for us to grasp understandingly.

On the "North – South Divide:"

The 1839 revolution in Zurich was shaped by a north-south tension. Both the Liberals and the Conservatives in Zurich were fearful of "viruses" infecting their Canton from the "north" (meaning Germany and, particularly, Württemberg). One can, of course, speculate that such tensions are driven by an inferiority complex and/or fear of the economic, political, and military superiority of the "other to the north."

On March 20, 1831, in the first democratic election of the Canton of Zurich, the Liberals came to power. A key element of their agenda was the reform of the entire educational system in the Canton, which included an effort to raise the status of teachers, reworking the curriculum in the grade school and secondary school system, and establishing the University of Zurich on April 29, 1833.

For the Liberals, the "northern threat" was threat of "the Pietist and Orthodox head cold" out of Germany. No state in the "north" represented that head cold more than Württemberg. Ironically, though, the two individuals (Strauß and Scherr) who triggered the populist explosion of 1839, although religious progressives, both came from Württemberg.

A first major focus of the Liberals was the education system, which included the content and methodology of religious instruction in the schools. The Liberals wanted to replace the "mindless" memorization and parroting of complex theological jargon and themes little, if at all, understood by the students with a more "meaningful" instruction in biblical stories and ethics. Although he had not applied for the position, I. Thomas Scherr, known for his progressive work with the deaf and blind in Württemberg, was appointed Superintendent of Schools "for life" (1831) with the responsibility of establishing a new teacher's seminar in Küsnacht (1832) and reworking the curriculum, which included re-designing the methods of instruction not only generally but for religious instruction in the schools in particular. He is recognized to this day as one of the most progressive and successful educators in 19th Century Switzerland with an international reputation. He was chosen by the new government, obviously, because they wanted

to introduce into the Canton the “best” of progressive education. As we have already seen, Strauß represented the “best” of progressive biblical studies and theology.

For the Conservatives, the “northern threat” was the theological liberalism out of Germany. Both his elder landsman, Hegel, and Strauß himself had studied in Tübingen, and Strauß went to Berlin to study with Hegel. However, shortly after his arrival Hegel died of cholera, and it is reported that, upon hearing the news from the famous Reformed Theologian, Friedrich Schleiermacher, also on the faculty in Berlin, Strauß blurted out that there was no reason for him to stay in Berlin. He, therefore, returned in 1832 to Tübingen where he was named a tutor in his alma mater, the prestigious “Evangelisches Stift,” where the most gifted students of the country were admitted, tuition free, to study for the Lutheran ministry. With the publication of his *The Life of Jesus Critically Examined* in 1835, Strauß became the dramatic representative of progressive biblical scholarship and of “Hegelian Speculative Theology.” He was fired from the “Evangelisches Stift” in Tübingen because of the controversial character of his two-volume work. The Liberals in Zurich wanted Strauß on the faculty of their university both for his scholarship and to advertise the progressiveness of the Canton.

With Strauß’ successful appointment to the University in Zurich in 1839, the Conservatives were incensed, and the chain of events that led to the September revolution began their course.

Academic Freedom:

Another key theme associated with Strauß’ appointment was the defense of academic freedom over against the populist sentiment that intellectual elitists had taken over the academy with the consequence that their populist opinions and religion were suppressed.

The reference letter written by professor Heinrich Eberhard Gottlob Paulus from Heidelberg (Baden) invoked the theme of the northerner foreigner, but its key focus was academic freedom. It is translated in Part II. Unlike conservative, Christian populists, though, Paulus’ letter is a strong defense of the academy not as the guardian of any and all dogmatism and ideologies but as the arena for the rigorous examination of scholarship grounded in the kind of laborious research and grasp of breadth and depth in a discipline.

That Paulus wrote a letter in support of Strauß’ appointment in Zurich is itself confirmation of his scholarly broadmindedness. The primary representative of the “Rationalist” approach to the gospels ridiculed by Strauß’ *The Life of Jesus Critically Examined* was this very Paulus. However, in his letter Paulus applauds Strauß’ reputation as a scholar and as a beloved teacher. Although Paulus expresses the wish that Strauß “narrow” the theological horizon of his Christology from the human species as a whole to the individual concerned “to do the will of God,” he nevertheless embraces Strauß as the representative of a voice of rigorous scholarship, which is central to the successful academy.

On Stealing or Destroying Faith:

The specific threat to populist faith, as articulated in the *Züricher Post* newspaper's article of September 8, 1889, commemorating the events of 1839, was the shibboleth of the Conservative opposition: "No salvation without the historical Jesus."

Permeating the rhetoric of the Conservatives in Zurich was the fear that hiring Strauß would lead to their faith "being stolen" and "destroyed" by Strauß. The letter of reference in opposition to Strauß' appointment by professor Wilhelm Martin Leberecht de Wette (translated in Part II), also a scholar whom Strauß criticized in the *Life of Jesus Critically Examined*, was not as tolerant as in the case of Paulus' letter. De Wette wrote: "[...] the theological students would be confronted with the original Straußian dilemma – either the faith of the congregations must be abolished (and in place of a historical Christ, was to be preached openly a half mythical, half speculative Christ) or one must engage in concealment and hypocrisy when one stands before their congregations [...]" in reference to Strauß' own "Concluding Dilemma" at the end of the *Life of Jesus Critically Examined*. He obviously didn't read the last paragraph of the text.

At the beginning of his letter, de Wette had said: "[...] all calm observers, to be sure, are in agreement that in Zurich a long conflict in the Protestant church, at times secretly but soon openly, between free scholarship and the church as a Christian community of faith has come to a critical eruption, whose devastating power no one is capable of calculating. The movement won't be limited to Zurich. It will inexorably take its course through the entire Protestant church [...]" Here "free scholarship" is viewed as a threat to "the church as a Christian community of faith" under the assumption, of course, that there has been and is no ambiguity about what "a Christian community of faith" is.

The anti-intellectualist logic is clear: an arrogant, enlightened academy is a threat to core institutions and values of "the people." The shibboleth of "No salvation without the historical Jesus" was directed at Strauß for having questioned the reading of the gospels as literal history. Without having, or being able, to engage Strauß' own Christology based on Hegelian, Speculative Theology, the conclusion was drawn that Strauß was a threat to the "traditional" Christian faith, and his coming to Zurich would result in their faith being "stolen" from them and/or "destroyed:" eliminate history from the gospels (something that Strauß by no means proposed!) and salvation is lost and destroyed.

One can distinguish between two meanings of faith: "epistemic" and "non-epistemic." The former claims to "know things that reason on its own can't know." It is a faith that trusts in the certainties of revelation. Hence, when revelation is questioned, epistemic faith is questioned. However, the latter, "non-epistemic" faith, means the opposite of "knowledge." It is faith with respect to what one cannot know: faith as "not knowing." It is the faith that recognizes the limits of reason not by forcing reason to subordinate itself to revelation but because reason is dependent upon conditions that, by definition, make absolute knowledge impossible. For example, we cannot know even objects in perception merely by opening our eyes because we can only experience their appearances, not how they "really are" to themselves. The same applies to causal explanations: we do not know causes merely by perception. We can only experience the effects of causes so that our causal explanations are something that we must add to the appearances that we are trying to explain. Most importantly, though, we cannot absolutely know

that we as individuals exercise a kind of causality that is extremely rare in nature. We only “know” of it through its effects: our ability intentionally to create things that nature on its own cannot create; and by our internal experience of moral principles for which there is no other purpose than to provide the “laws” to govern the causal system of human creativity.

However, “non-epistemic” faith is not throwing open of the doors to wild speculations. Precisely because our reason is limited and we can know absolutely only a bare minimum, we can doubt everything – including, of course, the historical reading of the bible. However, the power of the Copernican Revolution that drives Critical Idealism rests in something that we can know: although we can doubt that the sun is moving as a mere opinion, we can know that for us to experience the sun as we do, it is *necessary* that the sun stand still and we be moving at some 1,000 miles/hour. In other words, what we can know with certainty are the conditions that are *necessary* for us to be able to experience the appearances that we cannot know absolutely.

The central point here is that an “epistemic” faith based solely on resolve and what one wishes to be the case (particularly, when what one wishes is concerned, centrally, with self-interest, even eternal self-interest) is a faith built on sand. A “non-epistemic” faith based on “lawful” (i.e., universal) necessities is a faith built on solid rock although it involves a wager of faith that we do, in fact, possess these unprovable capacities and necessary conditions for experience.

“Non-epistemic” faith cannot be stolen or destroyed by others except through taking the life of the other. Non-epistemic faith is something that the individual can and must experience exclusively for her-/himself, just like s/he can only think, decide, invoke a principle to govern her/his decision, and act only for her-/himself. Non-epistemic faith is not grounded in empirical claims (for example, as are those of racism or those claiming the historical trustworthiness of the bible). It is a faith that makes it possible for us to perceive differences in appearances among people, institutions, and cultures as well as to perceive the biblical texts themselves as a set of appearances. However, differences in appearances alone tell us nothing about imperceptible *necessities*. As we will encounter in Critical Idealism, humanity’s freedom above, but never separate from, nature along with capacities that are necessary for us to experience, decide, and to act with intentionality all combine to establish the dignity of individuals. Dignity trumps appearances.

Strauß did not destroy the gospels or steal salvation from humanity, as if it were possible to destroy or steal faith from someone else, which given the very nature of faith is impossible. Rather, Strauß “saved” the gospels from their destruction through the inescapable ambiguities of the text, the confusions and contradictions of Orthodox Supernaturalist theology, and empirical science with its necessary, universal physical laws. Strauß “saved” the gospels not by insisting on the historical and factual inerrancy of the text or by reducing the meaning of “myth” to the lies of legend and fable (LJ 52-53, 66). Rather, he demonstrated how the texts developed through the adaptation of older, and creation of new, stories in a fashion that preserved historical elements but, above all, communicated philosophical and theological ideas and poetic symbols. In short, his Speculative Theology already in 1835 is compatible with the sciences that threatened the text as it was illuminating of a powerful, *inclusive* Christology at the core of the gospel narratives. The Christology of *The Life of Jesus Critically Examined* preserves the Christ

not as an *exclusive* event meant to make possible the eternal preservation of the individual ego but as an *inclusive* event that demonstrates humanity's inseparable union with the eternal One (God) already in every passing moment of the natural world.

Strauß' turn to Critical Idealism in 1864 also leaves the entire manifestation of a religious tradition intact, not only the text but rituals, music, religious holidays, and institutional structures, as well. Because historical traditions are the product of humanity's creative, spiritual capacity, everything is an expression of humanity's moral project that includes the pursuit of justice – so long as the ritual, music, religious holiday, or institutional structures do not compromise human dignity, that is, the very spiritual capacities that generated them, then the religion's tradition is a celebration of god's true gift to humanity: the theoretical and practical orders upon which we can depend.

The Press, the Role of Fake News, and Public Decency:

The populists viewed the press as stacked against them. In addition, both sides of the conflict did not hesitate to employ what today we call “fake news” to further their cause.

Among the conservative Central Committee's demands of the government in Zürich was the call for the government to ensure that press freedom not only be used to the advantage of the government but that the opposition have the same rights. This petition was the obvious consequence, of the feeling of the Conservatives that the press was being manipulated to the advantage of the Liberals, particularly by the claim that the press only presented a caricature of pious, religious convictions. See Wirth's “Epistle To the Author of the Pamphlet: ‘Doctor Strauss and His Teaching’ and the Zurich People” in Part II.

However, neither side in the conflict hesitated to spread false information and rumors about their opponents. The street pamphlets from conservatives and liberals took a remarkable liberty with respect to the facts. Not the least, was the conservative false portrayal of Strauß and Scherr. However, Strauß' defenders did not hesitate to publish a remarkably distorted view of his position. See Hoffinger's “Doctor Strauß and His Teaching A Free Word to the Free Citizens of Zurich” in Part II.

In addition, neither side appears to have been paragons of public decency. Lieutenant-Colonel Friedrich Schulteß reports in his “Explanatory Notes on the Strauss Movement and September 6, 1839” (translated in Part II) that many of the highest officials of the Liberal Government openly visited brothels with one being named “Café Supreme Court Justice.” Religion and faith were ridiculed frequently. However, Schulteß also reports that at least some of the rebels on the night of September 5/6 were drinking heavily while others had “come to Zurich for other reasons” and that “one can find at least as much moral propriety on the one as on the other side of the conflict.” It is probably the case that neither side had an edge on virtue.⁹

⁹ The Copernican Turn of Critical Idealism, the label for Kant's philosophy of Transcendental Consciousness (to be sure, as inseparable from as it is irreducible to materialism) does not dismiss efforts to evaluate the reality and degree of morally questionable behavior, but it shifts the focus from consequences because they always remain ambiguous and subject to skepticism to focus on universal capacities. Individual, immoral, particular behavior is reprehensible, but exclusive attention to particularity of any and all kind distracts from the structures and strategy

The Strauß of the *Life of Jesus for the German People*: Completing the Copernican Revolution in Theology and Religious Studies

The final task of the project is a careful investigation of the transitions from Strauß' *The Life of Jesus Critically Examined*, at the beginning, and his *The Life of Jesus Prepared for the German People*, at the end of his career. One can see a clear shift in his understanding of Immanuel Kant by comparing these two works with the first dismissing Kant and the latter embracing him. Although the details of Strauß' personal grounds for the shift cannot be known, the language is unequivocal: Strauß' Hegelian, Speculative Christology disappears, and Strauß focuses on Kant's moral theory as well as Kant's distinction between "historical" and "pure" religion and the internal Commonwealth of God (*das Reich Gottes*). The thesis proposed here is: One can take Strauß' shift from Hegel to Kant in these texts as an indication of the uncompleted Copernican Revolution in theology and religious studies to speak of a *theology of history*.

Were one to take the position of the Supernaturalist, one might take the discussion above concerning the search for *necessity* as the ground for our experience and understanding as we do to justify a speculative doctrine of salvation. *The very idea of salvation* might be taken to justify embracing what is *necessary* for us to experience it. However, a speculative idea that is not available in concrete experience cannot lead to the necessary conditions for its concrete reality: that would be a version of the "ought"/"is" fallacy: this idea ought to exist in reality so that it must *necessarily* be, or have occurred, in reality.

However, the point with respect to grounding of knowledge in necessity is just the opposite: *when we have an experience (!) of something in appearances for which we are incapable of having absolute certainty and for which we are incapable of providing an absolute causal explanation, we can discern what are the necessary conditions that make it possible for us to have the ambiguous experience in appearances in the first place.*

In contrast, to start with *a speculative idea* to justify the necessary conditions for believing in the speculative idea is a *petitio principii*. Rather than a speculative idea, the starting point for the Copernican Turn, then, is always something directly or indirectly given in experience. Knowledge is not achieved by explaining or verifying the experience itself but by asking "what are the *necessary* conditions for it to be possible for us to have this experience – not some speculative idea beyond the limits of our finite reason. Kant's opening line of the introduction to the *Critique of Pure Reason* is:

that make it possible for there to be virtuous behavior in the first (and last) place. Those structures and strategies consist of universal capacities that ground the possibility of moral responsibility. A "culture of rearing" in addition to a "culture of skills" (see *Critique of Judgment* AA V, 431-432 – preferably in the German) consists in focusing upon what one capable of doing (and to assume responsibility for the decisions and actions that one chooses to do). Only the individual can think, understand, decide, and assume responsibility for her-/himself. Learning to know the strengths and limits of the transcendental capacities that make it possible for a human being to be and to become human is far more empowering and motivating than finger-wagging moralizations.

There can be no doubt that all our knowledge begins with experience. For how should our faculty of knowledge be awakened into action did not objects affecting our sense [...] work up the raw material of the sensible impressions into that knowledge of objects which is entitled experience? In the order of time, therefore, we have no knowledge antecedent to experience, and with experience all our knowledge begins. (B 1)

Here we have the quintessence of the difference between Speculation and Critical Idealism: *Speculation begins with (!) ideas that may or may not be possible in experience. Critical Idealism begins with concrete phenomena in experience that is always subject to doubt – although there is no doubt that all our knowledge begins with (!) experience because knowledge consists in grasping the necessary conditions for experience.*

Once this insight is grasped, then is it clear that Supernaturalism falls prey to unfounded speculations beyond the limits of reason incapable of being grounded by concrete experience and claims that the *objective* text proves its position. This is a classic case of “subreption” that places epistemic weight only on objective phenomena. However, the same problem applies to Hegelian Speculative Theology whose speculation crushes its claims to necessity. To be sure, God’s “Oneness” is a speculative ideal, according to Kant’s Critical Idealism, but it remains merely a “negative” concept (see B 714) as a regulative concept (an assumption), not a “constitutive” concept (see B 222-223) that one can prove definitively.

Hence, the Hegelian claim for God is perhaps correct but perhaps not! It belongs along a spectrum of apophatic/cataphatic theology next to the Platonic anthropocentric, teleological account of creation based on “God” as Mind in the *Timaeus* that shaped Philo of Alexandria’s double staged creation account in *de officio mundi*, next to the Gnostic rival accounts of emanation creation found in Basilides in Alexandria and Valentinus in Rome in the second Century,¹⁰ and next to the mystical theology of Pseudo-Dionysius in the 5th Century. Without the possibility of being anchored in concrete experience because these speculative accounts of creation all occur before anything like human consciousness or experience occurred, they remain profoundly questionable and existentially problematic, not because they are wrong but because, were they right, they all encourage a shift of focus towards God rather than encouraging the proper (i.e., moral) cultivation of the creative capacities that make humanity distinctly human.

Strauß doesn’t say explicitly why he makes the theological turn to Kant in *The Life of Jesus for the German People*. As a consequence, any account is speculative, but, in light of his comments on Kant in *The Life of Jesus Critically Examined*, we can see what had to have changed, even if we do not know whether Strauß consciously did so, in order for him to embrace Kant’s moral project and understanding of the difference between “historical” and “pure” religion in *The Life of Jesus for the German People*. In other words, we can engage in a

¹⁰ Strauß’s own professor, Ferdinand Christian Baur, emphasized the commonalities between Hegel’s theology and Gnosticism, particularly to pseudo-Clementine Gnosticism, in his *Die christliche Gnosis oder die christlich Religionsphilosophie in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung*: 668-735.

“critique” of Strauß’ texts to ask what was *necessary* to have changed in order for Strauß to embrace the Kantian project at the end of his career. In any event, Strauß’ “turn” to Kant may be read as an indicator of what the Copernican Turn in theology and religious studies can mean.

Three steps may be followed to account for why Strauß shifted in his appreciation of Kant between 1835 and 1874: I) Examining carefully Strauß’ view (frequently, erroneous) of Kant as presented in *The Life of Jesus Critically Examined* that grounded his rejection of him in 1835; II) indicating key themes from Kant that are missing in Strauß’ portrayal of him in 1835; and III) examination of the limits of Strauß’ own Christology in 1835.

These steps will be followed by an examination Strauß’ changed judgment with respect to Kant in his *The Life of Jesus Prepared for the German People* in 1874.

Strauß’ Opinions of Kant in 1835:

There are six themes to be investigated in this respect: 1) Strauß took Kant’s moral theory to consist of the “abstraction” of a “categorical ideal” that is “empty obligation.” 2) Kant has failed to grasp the “Absolute Idea” as had Hegel. Rather Kant has grasped only the “practical side” of the “Absolute Idea” of the moral imperative as belonging to finitude. 3) Kant’s understanding of humanity’s “radical evil” is that sensuousness itself is evil and the mind must be “elevated” above physical sensuousness. 4) Hence, Strauß claims that Kant’s “religion” is concerned with freeing the individual from materiality so that Kant’s “religion” has no place for the physical resurrection and ascension of Christ. 5) Kant was concerned solely with the morality of the individual, not the human species as a historical totality. 6) Finally, Strauß criticizes Kant for being unable to give an account of how the scriptures came to their mythic (narrative) form. As a consequence Kant drew his moral reflections not from the bible but from himself.

What Strauß in 1835 Overlooked in Kant:

There are five themes to be considered here:

1) Strauß is unaware of the significance of *a priori* synthetic judgment for the understanding of both *theoretical* reason (the understanding of nature) and *practical* reason (moral responsibility at the individual, communal, national, and international levels). Rather, he limits his take on reason to instrumental reason or the capacity to calculate, predict, manipulate, and control phenomena. The species-marker for humanity, according to Strauß is its increasing ability to “subdue nature.”

2) Strauß entirely overlooks Kant’s notion of *autonomous freedom* as the capacity intentionally to initiate sequences of events that nature cannot accomplish on its own. Rather, for Strauß the “miracle” of humanity is its capacity to “subjugate” nature. As a consequence, Kant overlooks the *ratio essendi* of morality (autonomous freedom) to focus exclusively on the *ratio cognoscendi* (moral principles).

3) Strauß engages in “criticism,” not “critique.” Criticism engages in analysis of a text as an exercise of *analytic* diairesis (διαίρεσις), breaking down a set of phenomena into its parts for the purpose of comparing and contrasting them among themselves and with other phenomena.

Critique, in contrast, is concerned with identifying the *synthetic* elements that we must necessarily *add to the phenomena* in order for there to be any experience, not to speak of understanding, of the phenomena in the first place.

4) Strauß' notion of myth succumbs to subreption that overlooks the subjective, *a priori* synthetic elements that make the generation and experience of myths in an objective form possible.:

5) Strauß' view of humanity's goal is perfection whereas Kant rejected the very notion of human perfectibility and was by no means optimistic about the moral improvement of the species. Nevertheless, Kant, long before Hegel, spoke of the cunning of reason to employ even humanity's weaknesses as a motivation to greater moral effort.

The "Ought"/"Is" Fallacy of Strauß' Own Christology in 1835:

Here three themes will be examined:

1) Strauß accused Kant of defending a Christology driven by an "idea" and not an actual, concrete reality. In fact, Strauß' own Christology is an idealist Christology that can only dogmatically assert that it has occurred in actual, concrete reality. Strauß' Christology claims to know how "the idea realizes itself" both in the ultimate sense, as the God-Man, and in the secondary sense, known by the natural sciences seeking to subjugate the world. In other words, he starts with ideas and arrives at "certainties" with respect to concrete, historical conclusions, which in fact may or may not be the case.

2) Strauß along with the Supernaturalists, Rationalists/Naturalists, Schleiermacher and Hegel succumbs to an "ought"/"is" fallacy. What "ought" to be the case for the Supernaturalist is eternal, subjective immortality in a perfect heaven that is either material or spiritual. What "ought" to be the case for the Rationalists/Naturalists is a world in which human beings are able to "do God's will" for the Rationalists/Naturalists. According to Schleiermacher what "ought" to be the case is perfect God-consciousness for Schleiermacher. According to Hegel, what "ought" to be the case is the second negation in the individual's consciousness. What "ought" to be the case, according to Strauß, is that the second negation apply to the entire human species, not just a privileged few. Given what "ought" to be the case, it must be the case that the conditions for what "ought" to be actually were at some point (either past or present).

3) Finally, neither the Supernaturalists, Rationalist/Naturalists, Schleiermacher, Hegel, nor Strauß of *The Life of Jesus Critically Examined* have grasped the role of skepticism in epistemology, generally, and in theology and religious studies, particularly, as the trigger that snaps one's attention away from empirical claims to the *necessary condition of possibility* for the experience of skepticism in the first place. Given the limits to finite reason that are the condition for reason, it is impossible for us to be absolutely certain about anything in the senses because we don't have direct access to the things-themselves, only their appearances. For us to be able to be able to experience and doubt appearances and to formulate mental judgments about them, which we can doubt, as well, we must *necessarily add things to the appearances* that are not given with the appearances themselves. Hence, doubt is the incentive to identify *necessities* rather than to slip away into Aenesidemusian, Pyrrhonian Skepticism.

Conclusion: The *Theology of History*
Embracing the Copernican Turn in Theology and Religious Studies

Strauß' own "turn" in *The Life of Jesus Prepared for the German People* of 1874 is to a theology no longer framed by Hegelian Speculative Theology but to a theology that invokes Kant's philosophical theology of *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*. This shift justifies viewing Strauß' project as having taken a crucial step toward the realization of the Copernican Turn in Christian theology, in particular, and religious studies, generally.

Imperfect but improvable humanity possesses the capacity to achieve justice not because it serves self-interest but because it is what we owe others and ourselves given our capacities. We possess these capacities not because God or Christ makes it possible as the result of a unique historical event, and we don't exercise these capacities because God or Christ demand that we do. These capacities are what make possible our being and becoming human. Respect for the dignity of humanity requires our moral effort, and that respect includes respect and assumption of responsibility for the entire material order upon which our capacities depend.

The religious community, regardless of differences in historical appearances, celebrates the gift of creation and of humanity's capacities as it encourages the effort of all to live in and out of the Commonwealth of God by fulfilling our duties owed to ourselves and others: don't lie; don't commit suicide out of social or economic embarrassment; develop your talents; and respond to the suffering of others!

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