



Liberty University  
**DigitalCommons@Liberty**  
University

---

Faculty Publications and Presentations

Helms School of Government

---


2012

## Marcello Pera: Why We Should Call Ourselves Christians Study Guide, 2012

Steven A. Samson

*Liberty University*, [ssamson@liberty.edu](mailto:ssamson@liberty.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: [http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/gov\\_fac\\_pubs](http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/gov_fac_pubs)

 Part of the [Other Social and Behavioral Sciences Commons](#), [Political Science Commons](#), and the [Public Affairs, Public Policy and Public Administration Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Samson, Steven A., "Marcello Pera: Why We Should Call Ourselves Christians Study Guide, 2012" (2012). *Faculty Publications and Presentations*. Paper 401.

[http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/gov\\_fac\\_pubs/401](http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/gov_fac_pubs/401)

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Helms School of Government at DigitalCommons@Liberty University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Faculty Publications and Presentations by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@Liberty University. For more information, please contact [scholarlycommunication@liberty.edu](mailto:scholarlycommunication@liberty.edu).

# MARCELLO PERA: WHY WE SHOULD CALL OURSELVES CHRISTIANS STUDY GUIDE, 2012 Steven Alan Samson

## NOTE TO THE STUDY GUIDE

Thomas Hobbes's conception of sovereignty, combined with his political hedonism, helped lay the intellectual groundwork for the modern liberal administrative state and the mischief it begets. Frederic Bastiat's analysis of what he called **legal plunder** [*The Law*, 1850] showed how, in the name of some **false philanthropy**, the state comes to redefine morality for the sake of its own interest, an enterprise that Hobbes himself endorsed. A prevalent method of redefining morality is to hook the population on whatever ideological potion the state happens to peddle in the guise of "political correctness," much as "soma" was used in Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*. *The Economist* published a piece in February 2012 on "state capitalism," which has become the potion *du jour*.

John Calvin recognized the moral hazard that arises when people are induced to act contrary to their conscience. What if all the buzzing, blooming confusion of our modern media culture were simply a mechanism for demoralizing the population by making all of us accomplices in sin by assaulting, weakening, and gradually undermining our moral defenses? As David Chilton put it: "If this is a culture, it belongs in a Petri dish." People with bad consciences are more easily manipulated as they become fatalistic and slavish in their attitudes. Many people will, of course, grumble about the corruption they see, but then simply roll over and go back to sleep.

Four decades ago two social revolutionaries, Frances Fox Piven and Richard Cloward, wrote a book entitled *Regulating the Poor*: a travesty of guilt-manipulation in the guise of social analysis. During that same period I witnessed the development of the New Age counterculture while I was at the University of Colorado (1966-1974). This social movement itself became an essential component of the political mechanism that has been de-Christianizing our culture and consequently enthraling the general population. We might have slowed the spread of this cultural revolution if we had retained a decentralized federal system, but the Progressive movement of a century ago—Shall we call it a vast left-wing conspiracy?—carefully laid the foundations for a centralized federal bureaucracy and, ever since, has bent it to its own purposes. The name of the game all along has been what Gary North called "Capturing the Robes"—capturing, that is, the symbols of authority—and, with them, the levers of power. Garet Garrett was ahead of the curve in recognizing the truth in 1938 when he wrote "The Revolution Was."

In *Vernon v Bethell* (1762) 28 ER 838, Lord Henley wrote that "necessitous men are not, truly speaking, free men, but, to answer a present exigency, will submit to any terms that the crafty may impose upon them." Henley was later quoted by Franklin Roosevelt to justify his proposal for a Second Bill of Rights. But in the name of helping the needy (and later it included, as J. Budziszewski puts it, the "merely wanty"), Roosevelt helped construct the very sort of social service state that compels us to submit to any terms the crafty may impose on us. It is a clever form of entrapment. Pondering the ingenuity of this scheme reminds me of what Reinhold Niebuhr observed about the wiliness of "the children of darkness."

An old friend from the 1980s, Herbert Schlossberg, referred in his book *Idols for Destruction* to this kind of regulatory regime as "khadi law." Who could have imagined back then that, amidst the West's infatuation with red tape, *sharia* would also begin blossoming so soon in the West as an addendum to the common law? Here we see the old dialectic at work – the hedonistic Eloi are now increasingly preyed upon by power-hungry Morlocks in today's rewrite of H. G. Wells's *Time Machine*. This is the circle of life. It is what makes the world of the Petri dish culture swirl round.

Marcello Pera's *Why We Should Call Ourselves Christians* provides a framework for understanding the moral crisis of our age represented by liberalism's diversion from its foundations in a Christian culture and its conversion into a corrupter of that culture through what he calls "the secular equation." As a diagnosis of our civilizational malaise, it may profitably be read alongside such works as recent works as Pierre Manent's *Democracy without Nations?*, John Fonte's *Sovereignty or Submission*, and Charles Hill's *Trial of a Thousand Years*. Our modern version of the medieval Battle of the Universals raises the question of whether we are slipping into enlightened despotism in the name of democratic values.

## PREFACE BY POPE BENEDICT XVI

### Outline

- A. Pope Benedict XVI
  - 1. Marcello Pera
  - 2. Inner Connections between the Traditions of Christian and Liberal Thought
    - a. Presupposition of man in the image of God
    - b. Liberalism loses its foundation and destroys itself when it abandons this underpinning
  - 3. Reflections on the Crisis in Ethics
  - 4. Analysis of Multiculturalism
    - a. Openness to humanity's multifarious cultural patrimony presupposes one's own cultural identity
    - b. Interreligious dialogue is not possible
    - c. Need for intercultural dialogue
      - 1) Dialogue regarding the ethical and cultural consequences of fundamental religious decisions
  - 5. Philosophical Depth

## INTRODUCTION

### Outline

- A. WHY WE SHOULD CALL OURSELVES CHRISTIANS
  - 1. Reasons for Not Doing So
    - a. Hostile criticisms
    - b. Syncretism or unbelief of politicians
    - c. Religion has been privatized
    - d. Gone are the days of the agora
    - e. Neutral stance on religious values
  - 2. Reasons for Opposition to Christianity
    - a. General: religious core of the West
      - 1) Breast-beating about presumed guilt from the past
    - b. Specific: alleged obstacle to progress
  - 3. Profound Moral and Spiritual Crisis
  - 4. Meaning Variance
    - a. Liberalism
      - 1) European
      - 2) American
      - 3) *Padre Padrone*: State as adversary in Europe
      - 4) State as ally in America
  - 5. Europeans and Americans Once Worked from the Same Philosophical Premise
    - a. Judeo- the Christian God endows man with unalienable rights

- b. This baptismal act is the foundation of liberalism
        - 1) A Christian political theology adopted
        - 2) Fight against old social hierarchies and despotisms: the alliance of throne and altar
  - 6. Thesis: Collapse of the West if Human Rights Divorced from Christianity
  - 7. Testimonials
    - a. Karl Popper
    - b. Benedetto Croce
    - c. Friedrich Hayek
    - d. Counter-example: Martin Heidegger
  - 8. Political Victory of Liberalism
    - a. The breach between liberalism and Christianity is taking new forms
    - b. Insidious liberal secularism
      - 1) Anti-Christianity with a smile [cf. Aesop's fable of "The Wind and the Sun"]
  - 9. Old-School European Liberals Favored the American Experiment
  - 10. The Difference That America Once Made Is Being Lost
    - a. The exportation of Europe to America is transforming the entire West into one great secular Europe
      - 1) America is increasingly arid, uninspired by any sense of a moral mission
  - 11. Secularism
    - a. Traditional secularism knew it originated in Christianity
      - 1) Thomas Jefferson
      - 2) John Adams
      - 3) Opposition to state submission to religious hierarchies
    - b. Today's secularism
      - 1) Richard Rorty: secular through and through
  - 12. Confrontation with Islamic Fundamentalism
    - a. West feels guiltier about "exporting religion" than using force
    - b. Those who have no position to defend, but only interests to protect, cannot understand
      - 1) Antisecular motives of the fundamentalists
      - 2) Fundamentalists cannot understand the West's aversion to religion
    - c. Europe no longer believes in its basic values and is unwilling to demand fidelity to them
    - d. Those who preach the relativity of values have renounced their own identity
    - e. The West is afraid of Islam because it is afraid of religion, especially its own
- B. JUDEO-CHRISTIANITY
- 1. Man is created in God's image and likeness
    - a. Religious source of the concepts of personhood and human dignity
  - 2. It Is No Accident That When Nazi Europe Turned Anti-Christian, It Became Anti-Semitic
  - 3. The Two Faiths Are Twin Brothers

## CHAPTER ONE: LIBERALISM, THE SECULAR EQUATION, AND THE QUESTION OF CHRISTIANITY

### Outline

- A. LIBERALISM AT THE CROSSROADS (13-20)
  - 1. What Is **Liberalism**?
    - a. Its adaptations no longer resemble its original form: complex, composite, eclectic
  - 2. Liberal Governing Class
    - a. Liberal regimes are hybrid

3. **Liberal Doctrine Is Also Hybrid** [It Displays the Syncretism of Process Philosophy; in the Hobbesian Sense, It Is a Moral Construction Defined and Imposed by the Sovereign]
  - a. Controversial tenets: The context appears to assume a lack of mediating structures, such as churches or guilds, between the state and the individual]
    - 1) Freedom [is it negative (freedom from) or positive?]
    - 2) Autonomy [question of whether we have the means or the resources]
    - 3) Property [is it related to or can it be separated from liberty?]
    - 4) Social justice [how far can a state go in redistributing resources?]
    - 5) A Universalism that is blind to differences vs. a Pluralism that allows for group rights
4. Two Political Families: **Conservatism** [typically foundationalist] and **Socialism** [typically constructivist]
  - a. Socialist elements predominate at the origin and construction of liberalism
  - b. Insecurity of Liberalism: A hybrid or “qualified” doctrine is imperiled
5. Hybrid Regimes and Doctrines Signify the Crisis of Liberalism
  - a. Resilience of the vital core of liberalism makes it powerful (strong) and attractive
    - 1) Idea of **natural rights**: Basic liberties are non-coercible by the state
  - b. Corollaries
    - 1) Pursuit of one’s own good [“Do your own thing;” hedonism]
    - 2) Freedom of conscience [Madison called it “the most sacred property”]
6. Liberal Optimism
  - a. Social coexistence appears to require harmonizing all these conceptions of the good; otherwise, a Hobbesian “war of all against all” would ensue [Danger: the resulting syncretism would be “denatured” and thus dehumanized]
7. Founders Were Confident the Problem Could Be Solved
  - a. **Founders’ three inventions**
    - 1) **Cosmopolitan law** [derived from the Stoics and Romans]
    - 2) **Federation of states**
    - 3) **Perpetual peace** [Immanuel Kant proposed: 1) The civil constitution of every state should be republican; 2) The law of nations should be founded on a federation of free states; and 3) The law of world citizenship should be limited to conditions of universal hospitality]
  - b. Later inventions: UN, ICJ, and Universal Declaration of Human Rights (cf. G. 12)
  - c. Presuppositions shaken by the idea of the **incommensurability of values**
8. Dangers to Liberal Regimes: Where They Are Vulnerable
  - a. **Nationalism** (based on pre-political conventions or doctrines, see p. 28); [cf. Budziszewski on demonic communitarianism]
  - b. Frictions among conceptions of the good [cf. Budziszewski’s Skeptical Fallacy]
  - c. Spreading of **multiculturalism** (idea of group rights) [collectivism]
  - d. Result: the paradox of **unity in diversity** [rather than a moral and rational unity]
9. Religion
  - a. Terms of the question have changed in this day of intense religious conflict
  - b. “Our society has been transformed from one shaped by Christian values into one marked by intense religious conflict” [although J. Budziszewski finds nothing new about this Babel of competing voices]
10. Convergence of Two Remedies: Oppose Religion, or Ban Religion from Public Life
  - a. “Liberal” is now equated with “secular” [the **secular equation**]
11. Results Have Not Been Satisfactory
  - a. Ethical-civil crisis
12. Second Hardest Question: What is the Relationship between Liberalism and Christianity?
  - a. If it does not exist, liberalism will propagate its own crisis
13. Author Finds an **Intrinsic Link between Liberalism and Christianity**, Contrary to the Assertion of Many Fascists, Nazis, and Communists
  - a. He rejects anti-liberalism of many conservatives but agrees with them on the need to defend the founding principles of our own tradition
  - b. He rejects the view that it is based on individualism, egoism, or hedonism

- c. He rejects the anti-liberal philosophy of history taught by Hegel and Heidegger
  - 14. Objections to Liberalism
    - a. Indefensible liberal theories on religion
  - 15. Philosophical and Cultural Critique
    - a. Negative perspective on religion affects both left- and right-wings
  - 16. Widespread **Apostasy of Christianity** [apostasy = unpardonable rebellion] on the Continent
    - a. Author addresses four points
      - 1) Argument against the liberal equation with the secular
      - 2) Survey of the history of anticlericalism
      - 3) Seek inspiration from the fathers of liberalism
      - 4) Why liberals should call themselves Christians
- B. THE APOSTASY OF CHRISTIANITY (20-25)
1. Typically Liberal Policies [what Paul Rahe refers to as “managerial Progressivism”]
    - a. They are designed to ameliorate social tensions
    - b. Ethics: commonly adopted liberal measures
      - 1) Proliferation of new rights
      - 2) Accommodation of diverse and even perverse demands
      - 3) Authorization of anti-Christian medical research and therapeutic practices [which implicates the public as accomplices in apostasy]
  2. Political Vocabulary
    - a. Use of the noblest and most generous words [cf. Bastiat’s false philanthropy]
  3. This Hybrid of Humanitarianism, Utilitarianism, Subjectivism, and Permissiveness Has Failed
    - a. Open border policies have provoked social friction
    - b. Weakness of **constitutional patriotism**: inability to extinguish new nationalisms [cf. the civil religion of the Roman pantheon; Flannery O’Connor satirized such a “church without Christ” in her novella, “Wise Blood”]
  4. The Demoralizing **Boomerang Effect**
    - a. Permissiveness of leaders makes citizens uncertain and uneasy [again, complicity in apostasy is a key to understanding the psychological dynamic]
  5. Tradeoff between Maximum Freedom and Spiritual Letdown
    - a. Vague answers provoke despondency, frustration, and **loss of confidence**
  6. Religion is the Main Cause of This Disheartenment
    - a. **The Problem**: Active apostasy of Christianity [rather than benign neglect]
      - 1) On all fronts, Christianity is accused of threatening the secular state
      - 2) In Godless Europe, Europeans must coexist without an identity [a new people is being given a new identity and “patriotism;” see p. 83ff]
    - b. Examples of this apostasy
      - 1) **Rootless constitution**: The eradication of Judeo-Christian roots
      - 2) Religious exclusion of a Christian for privately-expressed views
      - 3) **Violations of Christian ethics** [again, complicity and demoralization are the objectives and/or consequences]
      - 4) Failure to defend Benedict XVI and barring him from a university
      - 5) Christian symbols hidden and religious greetings discouraged
      - 6) Double standard on religious liberty: Christians excluded from protection
      - 7) Double standards on blasphemy [Andres Serrano vs. the Muhammad cartoons]
      - 8) Weak reaction against Islamism and terrorism
    - c. European surrender
  7. Parallels with Plato’s Greece
    - a. Republic, Book VIII: The democratic state is a garment of many colors
    - b. Characteristics: alluring, multicultural, and free
    - c. Educational permissiveness [cf. Rousseau’s *Émile*] and political correctness
    - d. Avidity for democracy is the cause of **deterioration** [it acts as a solvent] [cf. Kuehnelt-Leddihn: “[N]ot only socialism and communism, but national socialism

- as well were intrinsically tied to democracy.”
8. Three Dimensions of the **Moral Crisis of Europe**
    - a. Deterioration in politics, lifestyle, and social life
      - 1) Politics: apathy, irresponsibility
      - 2) Lifestyle: toleration of deviant behavior, aversion to prohibitions [Slogan of the *soixantes huitards*: “It is forbidden to forbid”]
      - 3) Social life: It seen as tainted by self-interest; people are deracinated, *i.e.*, reduced to self-contained monads (similar to atoms; cf. Leibniz)
    - b. Self-congratulation cannot disguise the liberal failure
      - 1) Free, open, post-traditional, consumer, cosmopolitan society that seeks perpetual peace will be the opposite of a good, just, or virtuous society
- C. THE SECULAR EQUATION (25-26)
1. Link between Liberalism and Religion
  2. **John Rawls**
    - a. Liberalism regarded as a freestanding political conception
  3. **Jürgen Habermas**
  4. **Richard Rorty**
  5. Bruce Ackerman
- D. PREVALENT DOGMA: LIBERAL = SECULAR (26-33)
1. The Liberal State is Secular
    - a. Secular is an ambiguous term
  2. The Liberal State is Nonreligious [myth of neutrality]
    - a. Separation of throne from altar [as opposed to the formula of the Peace of Augsburg, 1555: *cuius regio eius religio*, *i.e.*, whose realm, his religion]
      - 1) Peace of Westphalia, 1648: Free church in a free state
    - b. Principle of independence from and neutral toward religious beliefs, but if this fails, then—
    - c. Dictation of certain public political norms may be required
    - d. State is religiously neutral but the **principle of political liberalism** is not passive (John Rawls)
  3. The Liberal State Either 1) Transfers Religion to the Private Sphere, or 2) Excludes Religion from the Public Sphere
    - a. Rawls and Habermas: self-sufficiency of liberalism [nothing else is “foundational”]
      - 1) **The Key:** (Public) “political conceptions” [*i.e.*, secular ideologies] are divorced from (private) “comprehensive doctrines of the good” [religion]
      - 2) **Ghettoization of faith** for the sake of avoiding conflict [a new “Pale” consigns faith to what Richard John Neuhaus called “the naked public square”]
    - b. Serious Flaws
      - 1) Absent an external authority to draw the line, whoever draws the line must do so from **within** his own culture [attached rather than detached, subjective rather than objective]
      - 2) Public dimension of religious belief [faith is a source of guidance]
      - 3) One era’s conventional wisdom [*e.g.*, what James Kurth called “the American Creed”] may be derived from the preceding era’s comprehensive doctrine
      - 4) Political liberalism itself cannot be contained within the limits of a procedural conception [cf. the idea of substantive due process]
    - c. Efforts to correct the crudities of the third formula
      - 1) Rawls: Comprehensive doctrines that are amenable to support by public Reasons are permissible
      - 2) Habermas: Religious doctrines must be argued in rational terms
      - 3) Dogmatic arguments are excluded from the public sphere
    - d. Some very delicate problems left unsolved: abortion, euthanasia, *et al.*
      - 1) Awkward dilemma
    - e. Way out of the dilemma

- 1) Second meaning of secular: the state endorses its own religious view
4. The Liberal State Professes a **Secular Religion**
  - a. Secular understood as a positive choice in the pre-political (religious) sphere
    - 1) The “choice of freedom of conscience and equality” is upheld as the (baptismal) presupposition and necessary condition of citizenship
  - b. This is the French formula that defends **French assimilationism**, but it is worse
  - c. Controversy over the **hijab** [Muslim woman's head covering]
    - 1) **Stasi Commission**
  - d. As a compromise, it is seen as perhaps a lesser evil but also a contradiction
  - e. Jean-Pierre Raffarin: Islam has the opportunity to be a French religion
5. Conclusion: The Secular Equation Is Untenable

**NOTE:** For comparison, here is the abstract of “Crossed Swords: Entanglements between Church and State in America” (diss., University of Oregon, 1984) by Steven Alan Samson:

“Religious liberty in America is commonly thought to be secured by a constitutional wall of separation between church and state. Its character is best understood in the context of an original Protestant Christian cultural consensus which underlay the plurality of competing sects. The findings of this study are that, first, American law and custom still preserve elements of an earlier state church tradition despite the historical coincidence between the framing of the Constitution and the disestablishment of religion. The political and religious perspective of the founders is in fact so strongly impressed upon the constitutional system that, second, discrepancies between the basic doctrines of Christianity and the expectations of diverse religious and secular subcultures are among the major sources of conflict within the political arena. But, third, changing interpretations of the constitutional provisions respecting religion and a growing state presence in all areas of social and economic life tend to reduce the formal role of religion in public life, leading some religious leaders to express public concern over losses of liberty and influence by the church. Current litigation indicates that churches are faced with unaccustomed restrictions on the corporate powers, tax immunities, internal operations, teaching ministries, and missionary activities of their organizations.”

- E. LIBERALISM AND ANTICLERICALISM (33-40)
  1. Learned, Polite, Attractive Apostasy from Christianity [cf. John Dewey's *A Common Faith*]
  2. Liberal = Anticlerical
  3. Liberalism is a Bourgeois Movement
    - a. It developed parallel to **capitalism** and **modern science**
    - b. Autonomy of the individual placed at the societal center
    - c. Parallel with modern science
  4. Challenge to the Authority of the Church
    - a. **Intellectual devolution** [cf. Kurth's Protestant Deformation]: Authority of the church transferred to the individual (humanism), to the thinking self (Descartes), to the empirical self (Hume), to the transcendental self with its categories (Kant), and finally fragmented into phantasms (Nietzsche).
    - b. Church's authority has thus become lost in the most extreme anonymity
    - c. Freedom requires absolute personal responsibility
      - 1) John Locke: Without subordination or subjection
      - 2) Immanuel Kant: Without the guidance of another
      - 3) Wilhelm Humboldt: No state interference if others' rights are not harmed
    - d. **Motto of the Enlightenment:** “Dare to know” [cf. Gen. 3:5] [Promethean theme]
  5. Ruthless and Bloody Battle against the Church
  6. Attempts Made at Reconciliation
    - a. Separation of two spheres
      - 1) Breakup of classical and medieval alliances
      - 2) A great instauration: **Francis Bacon's** outline for a scientific revolution
      - 3) **Bacon: Limitations of science**, including respect for God's mysteries [Bacon also identified four idols: of the tribe (human fallibility), of the cave (individual mind), of the marketplace (semantics), and of the theater



- (sophistry and false learning)]
- 4) Locke: Liberty must be exercised with the bounds of natural law
- b. Interference is possible but the state is not the **source of all rights and liberties**
- 7. Inconsistencies of Locke and Galileo
  - a. Locke: No toleration for papists and atheists
  - b. Galileo: Scientific experimentation should not be answerable to Scripture
- 8. Theory of a Free Church in a Free State: Not Enough to Eliminate Conflicts of Principle
  - a. Mutual recriminations: **Anticlericalism** and **temporalism** (idea that time is the ultimate reality)
- 9. Accusations against the Church
  - a. A secular Syllabus of Errors against its alliances, blind spots, and persecutions
- 10. A Defense of the Church
  - a. What It Founded [a good overview may be found in Mangalwadi's *The Book That Made Your World*]
  - b. How It Has Been Persecuted [see Rosenstock-Huessy's *Out of Revolution* and Billington's *Fire in the Minds of Men*]
- 11. What Europe Owes the Catholic Church
- 12. Beneficial Character of the Clash
  - a. A fertile outcome for both sides
- 13. **Pius IX** (Pio Nono): Syllabus of Errors
  - a. **Positivism**: Notion that the State is the origin and source of all rights
  - b. **Scientism**: Notion that all Christian dogmas may be evaluated scientifically
- 14. We Are Heirs of the Outcome of the Collision
  - a. A mannered anticlericalism
- F. IN THE NAME OF THE FATHERS (40-46)
  - 1. Founders' Liberal Thought Experiments
    - a. John Locke: God requires man to follow rules which conduce to the preservation of society
    - b. Thomas Jefferson: "Liberties are the gift of God"
    - c. Immanuel Kant: Constitution must be designed to balance opposing views while inhibiting evil attitudes
  - 2. **Three Fundamental Points** of The Founders' Liberal Doctrine
    - a. Problem: Difficulty of establishing the republican constitution
      - 1) Effort of coexisting is the source of conflict itself
      - 2) Kant: Since people corrupt each other's morals, the problem is how to construct something straight from such crooked timber
    - b. Condition: Need for an irrefutable moral principle
      - 1) Locke's law of nature and Kant's good principle
    - c. Solution: Good principle dictated by the will of God
      - 1) Kant's categorical imperative: Duty of the human race toward itself
  - 3. Question of How to Fulfill This Duty
    - a. Locke: Respect the natural law
    - a. Kant: Establish a kingdom of virtue
  - 4. Kant's Argument
    - a. Ethical state (just civil constitution) is not imposed by any mechanism of nature
    - b. It is not dictated only by moral laws
      - 1) The state is a collective unity and moral personality with a common will
    - c. Ethical state cannot be governed by a political legislator [cf. utopian socialism]
    - d. Nor can it be self-governed: The people cannot be regarded as legislator
  - 5. **Kant's Conclusion**: Ethical State Must Be Maintained by God
    - a. Liberal ethical state is secular
      - 1) Separation of church and state is established
    - b. **Civil religion** is the foundation of the state
    - c. God of Christianity is God in the liberal state
    - d. Secular reason is Christian reason transformed into **rational imperatives** [cf. the Unitarianism of the New England Transcendentalists]

- e. Consensus of the fathers of liberalism
  - 1) Jefferson's moral system of Christianity and Locke's Code of Mankind
- 6. **Faith of Liberalism** in the Equality, Dignity, Liberty, and responsibility of All Men [B. F. Skinner's *Beyond Freedom and Dignity*, 1971, marks the end of this faith]
  - a. Doctrine: Basic human rights must be seen as a gift of God
- 7. Christianity and Liberalism Are **Congeners** (kindred; members of the same class)
- 8. Need for a Certain Ethos and Virtue
  - a. Source of the liberal ethos: Principles and values must be respected as personal and collective custom [cf. the English common law tradition]
    - 1) Autonomy (Kant) and self-interest rightly understood (Tocqueville)
  - b. List of liberal values is made up of typical **Christian virtues**
- 9. Conclusion: The Liberal Is a Christian and the Secular Equation Must Be Repudiated [Note: The existentialist philosopher considered himself a Christian culturally. The critical issue that has not yet been addressed explicitly is how such cultural Christianity can survive when the practice of Christianity is marginalized ]
- G. WHY LIBERALS SHOULD CALL THEMSELVES CHRISTIANS (46-47)
  - 1. Liberalism's Theoretical Crisis
    - a. It has forgotten it is a tradition with a rich, specific ethical and historical content
    - b. **Modernity** has waged war against the church while feeding upon its heritage [it is a patricide, even a cannibalization, of the Christian heritage]
      - 1) Exaltation of the individual pays homage to man's creation by God
  - 2. Anticlericalism Explains Why Liberals Have Forgotten This **Symbiosis** [Johannes Althusius used "symbiosis" to describe an integrated federal political system]
    - a. Healthy liberalism is not anti-Christian
- H. A DECALOGUE OF REASONS WHY THEY SHOULD DO SO (47-51)
  - 1. Original Copernican Idea of Liberalism: Radical Overturning of Old Hierarchies
    - a. "The truth shall set you free"
  - 2. Liberal Cosmopolitanism Is Related to Christian Ecumenism
  - 3. Liberalism Cannot be Self-sufficient
    - a. The foundations of science are not scientific and the foundations of politics are not political [cf. Mangalwadi, chs. 13, 18]
  - 4. Positive Law Can Be Overridden; God's Will Must Be Respected
  - 5. Laws of Nature Valid for All and Forever
  - 6. Christianity Justifies the Separation between Throne and Altar as a Matter of Principle
    - a. Christianity was an ally in the battle against the church
  - 7. Liberties Must Be Cherished as a Gift of God
    - a. Only thus can freedom be kept from destroying itself
  - 8. The Real Question: Why Did Liberals Abandon God? [Two of many reflections on the resulting barbarism: Reck-Malleczewen's *Diary of a Man in Despair* and Marañón's *Liberal in the Looking-Glass*]
  - 9. Civilization Is Being Destroyed by an Overt Crisis of Faith
    - a. Europe is now only a well-stocked market
  - 10. Universalism of the Cross
    - a. Liberalism's cosmopolitanism is the sign of a mission
- I. SHOULD WE CALL OR CAN WE HELP CALLING OURSELVES CHRISTIANS? (51-56)
  - 1. Two Questions
  - 2. **Benedetto Croce**
    - a. Two great religious wars: First and Second World Wars
  - 3. Christianity: Greatest Revolution
    - a. All modern revolutions and discoveries dependent upon it
    - b. Liberalism is essentially Christian
  - 4. Croce's Hegelianism [His German Transcendentalism Is an Early Process Philosophy]
  - 5. Liberalism: A Metapolitical Conception [Peter Viereck's *Metapolitics* traces the term back to Wagner's romantic nationalist circle]
  - 6. Problem: How to Reconcile Croce's Immanentistic Spirit with the Christian Revolution
  - 7. Fork in the Road

- a. The Hegelian dialectic: Does Christianity stand to the Spirit as *ought* does to *is* or is it a mere moment in the historical process [an evolving deity]
  - b. Croce's essay either praises or crudely declares the death of Christianity
  - c. The choice: It is either a miracle that invaded history or it is not
  - d. Idealist philosopher: secular Christian or non-religious
8. Self-divided Croce
- a. Croce's ambivalent formula: He could not decide [cf. Josiah Royce]
  - b. Can a conception of liberty be "liberal" if it can be combined with collectivism or authoritarianism? [Such collectivism is inherent in Kant's synthetic philosophy]
9. Croce's Philosophical Justification for the Secular Equation
- a. Secular spirit of process philosophy
  - b. Croce's religion of liberty
  - c. Croce's liberalism prizes Christianity but cannot embrace it
10. Rebuttal of the Fathers: The Christian God Endowed Us with Our Liberties
- J. AS IF GOD EXISTED (56-60)
1. Question of the Liberal State's Secularity
    - a. Formula: free church in a free state
      - 1) Italy now forbids papal intervention
    - b. Thomas Jefferson's **wall of separation**
  2. We Cannot Demand That Free Convictions be Divorced from Religious Ones
    - a. Debate must be free
  3. Should the Liberal be a Christian?
    - a. Two meanings of Christian believer
    - b. Believer in Christ
    - c. Cultural Christian
    - d. Both believers have received a gift
  4. Importance of Being at Least a Christian by Culture
    - a. A foundation for doctrine, a guide for action, reference point, sign of hope
  5. We Must Not Hold Back from Believing In
    - a. Our yearning for the divine must not be purged from our inner life
  6. **Pascal's Wager** and **Kant's *velut si Deus daretur*** [As if God Existed]
    - a. An antidote to the giddy feeling of our omnipotence
  7. Hope of Happiness Begins with Religion
    - a. Christian vision of the human person

NOTE: Here is the logical formula of Pascal's wager set within the terminology of game theory. The original may be found in note 233 of his *Pensées*. It must be stipulated that Pascal does not recommend feigned belief.

1. "God is, or He is not"
2. A Game is being played . . . where heads or tails will turn up.
3. According to reason, you can defend neither of the propositions.
4. You must wager. (It's not optional.)
5. Let us weigh the gain and the loss in wagering that God is. Let us estimate these two chances. If you gain, you gain all; if you lose, you lose nothing.
6. Wager, then, without hesitation that He is. (. . .) There is here an infinity of an infinitely happy life to gain, a chance of gain against a finite number of chances of loss, and what you stake is finite. And so our proposition is of infinite force, when there is the finite to stake in a game where there are equal risks of gain and of loss, and the infinite to gain.

To the skeptic who still doubts , "Pascal offers him a way to escape his irrational sentiment compelling him to withhold belief in God after the validity of the wager has been rationally conceded, namely by applying oneself to spiritual discipline, study, and community." This may be very close to what Pera is recommending.

## Review

liberalism	hybrid liberal doctrine	conservatism
socialism	natural rights	founders' three inventions
incommensurability of values	nationalism	multiculturalism
secular equation	intrinsic link between liberalism and Christianity	boomerang effect
apostasy of Christianity	constitutional patriotism	moral crisis of Europe
rootless constitution	violations of Christian ethics	Richard Rorty
John Rawls	Jürgen Habermas	French assimilationism
Rawls on the principle of political liberalism: divorced from (private) comprehensive doctrines of the good	secular religion	challenge to the Church's authority
ghettoization of religion	Stasi Commission	Enlightenment motto
hijab	anticlericalism	Pius IX
parallel development of liberalism, capitalism, and modern science	scientism	fundamental points of liberal doctrine
Francis Bacon	civil religion	rational imperatives
positivism	reasons why liberals should call themselves Christians	
Kant's argument	Jefferson's wall of separation	Pascal's wager
liberal values = Christian virtues		
Benedetto Croce		

## CHAPTER TWO: EUROPE, CHRISTIANITY, AND THE QUESTION OF IDENTITY

### Outline

One of the preeminent modern logical fallacies is the argument based on collective guilt (or responsibility). A critic of one of J. Budziszewski's first books "objected on principle to the mention of God. There is no point trying to reason with such people; this one went on to blame me, more or less, for the massacre of the Huguenots in 1572. I have forgiven him, but he still interests me. If I am to blame for the religious butcheries of the sixteenth century, is he to blame for the secular savageries of the twentieth? I see your thousand Frenchmen; I raise you a million Chinese."

- A. WHAT IS EUROPE? (61-64)
  - 1. Thesis: Reason for Europe's Failures
    - a. Unification requires acknowledgment of Christianity
    - b. European states otherwise will **lose their identity**
  - 2. Europe: A Case Study
    - a. Author's argument
      - 1) European identity must be defined
      - 2) Proposed identity is not specifically European
      - 3) Result: **ethical deficit** of **constitutional patriotism**
      - 4) Refusal to baptize European Christian values
      - 5) Liberal doctrine is an obstacle to unification
  - 3. Montesquieu's *Persian Letters*
    - a. Pera's update
- B. AMERICAN LETTERS (64-74)
  - 1. Symbols
    - a. Beethoven's Ode to Joy
    - b. **Robert Schuman**: early architect of the postwar European system
    - c. St. Benedict
  - 2. European Lifestyles
    - a. Deadening taste buds and exterminating flavor
    - b. Latin mass
  - 3. The Economy
    - a. **Euro**
    - b. **ECB**: social economy of the market or Third Way

- c. Social economy of the market
  - 4. Human Rights
    - a. Triumph of human rights
    - b. New makes and models of civil rights
  - 5. The Church
    - a. American model: wall of separation
    - b. **Concordats**: the price paid for privileges and subsidies
    - c. *Ecclesia in Europa*, 2003: **John Paul II**
    - d. **Secularization** results from the welfare state
    - e. Question of Islam
    - f. Danger: the **church flirts with modernity**
  - 6. Institutions
    - a. European Parliament
    - b. Commission
    - c. Council
    - d. Court of Justice
    - e. Court of Human Rights
    - f. **Common judicial space**
    - g. Single space of transit
    - h. Charter of Fundamental Rights
    - i. **Acquis communautaire**: cumulative body of European laws
    - j. **Constitution**
    - k. **Lisbon Treaty**
  - 7. **The European Union**
    - a. No true state or super-state
      - 1) **No legitimately democratic institutions**: “deficit of democracy”
    - b. **Juridical citizenship**: more symbolic than real
      - 1) In 2005, the “Polish plumber” was used as a symbol of cheap labor
    - c. Europe is not a geo-political subject: It is weak, unwilling to spend on defense
    - d. Supporters
    - e. Detractors
    - f. Europe like a ghost
- C. THE PROBLEM OF THE SOUL (74-76)
  - 1. Europe Needs a Soul
    - a. **Jacques Delors**: “We must give Europe a soul”
    - b. Romano Prodi
  - 2. Christian soul
  - 3. Obstacles
    - a. Two levels of meaning
      - 1) Actual reasons
      - 2) Principles
  - 4. Two Lines of Reasoning
    - a. Causes seem to lie in contingent motivations
    - b. Deeper cause requires a deeper solution
- D. THE PARADOX OF EUROPEAN IDENTITY (76-83)
  - 1. Elusive Notion
    - a. St. Augustine on time
  - 2. Moral Connotation
    - a. **Ernest Renan**: **Nation** is a soul or spiritual principle
  - 3. **Three Strategies for Unifying Europe**
    - a. Spiritual strategy
      - 1) **Robert Schuman**
      - 2) Alcide de Gasperi
      - 3) Konrad Adenauer
    - b. Economic strategy
      - 1) Overview of the **steps in the process of unification**

- a) Treaties of Maastricht and Amsterdam
- b) Monetary: Euro
- c) Juridical: **Charter of Fundamental Rights**
- d) Political: Constitution, then **Treaty of Lisbon**
- 2) European Charter
- 3) What was missing from the “conventions”
  - a) Absence of a unity of **demos** (people) and **ethnos** (culture)
- 4) Sinister connotations of patriotism
- c. Third strategy: Ideal design substituted for real history
  - 1) Turning one’s back on history (living in denial)
  - 2) **Aufheben**: Lift up (a burden) or annul
  - 3) Making a new start
  - 4) Preamble: Intrinsic power of attraction
  - 5) Ensemble of principles and values (*i.e.*, right technique or method)
- 4. Difficulties in keeping the promises
  - a. The charter is **cosmopolitan**; its referent the whole human race, not Europe
  - b. Failure to draft a European Charter
    - 1) Paradox of European identity
    - 2) Disconnect between ideal-type and historical Europeans: “Europeans as defined by the Charter are not Europeans as defined by their history”
  - c. Fathers created a **juridical paradise** (contrast Burke and Roger Scruton):  
NOTE: The “common” “European” “home” project of the 1980s (in conjunction with Mikhail Gorbachev of the USSR) was deficient in all three attributes
    - 1) The label “European citizen” is conceptually extrinsic (foreign) to the national citizen: Thus Europe is **an idea rather than a people**
    - 2) “European” is no longer a proper name

NOTE: East German playwright Bertholt Brecht satirized his government in the 1950s in similar terms:

### Bertholt Brecht, “The Solution”

After the uprising of the 17th of June  
 The Secretary of the Writers’ Union  
 Had leaflets distributed in the Stalinallee  
 Stating that the people  
 Had forfeited the confidence of the government  
 And could win it back only  
 By redoubled efforts. Would it not be easier  
 In that case for the government  
 To dissolve the people  
 And elect another?

- d. Escape into the ideal: This may an oblique references to Kant’s kingdom of ends
- e. Fathers searched for a baptismal font: humanism, Enlightenment, socialism
  - 1) Today’s liberalism is political without a common doctrine of the good
- f. **European Charter** written under a “**veil of ignorance**” (Rawls) in a self-sufficient (Kant’s autonomy) way (cf. Habermas)
- E. CONSTITUTIONAL PATRIOTISM (83-90)
  - 1. **Jürgen Habermas**’s Definition
    - a. A nation of citizens as opposed to a **Volksnation**: In 1999, Veronique Mottier identified this racial concept of nationality as one of three varieties; the other two are *Kulturnation* (tradition-nation) and *Staatnation* (citizen-nation)
    - b. Substrate of possible mutual understanding  
[cf. John Locke’s *tabula rasa* = blank slate]
  - 2. **Political Principles** and Values Divorced from Pre-Political Ties [No pre-existing “we”  
Is required because it is a new creation that is spoken into existence]

- a. **Post-national and inclusive** vs. national and divisive
- b. Anti-foundationalism [which begins with Hegel]
- 3. Answer to the Objections of Euroskeptics
  - a. Habermas: People are not dependent on some pre-political community of shared trust (rejection of Locke in favor of Hobbes)
  - b. Source of **solidarity**: Constructivist basis of shared principles
- 4. Origins of the Doctrine
  - a. It is built on the ruins of Nazi nationalism post-Auschwitz
    - 1) Divided Germany
- 5. Habermas's **Historikerstreit** (Historians' Quarrel), 1986
  - a. Criticism of **Ernst Nolte**
  - b. Development of a post-conventional identity
- 6. Habermas: A Connection to Universalist Constitutional Principles Could Be Formed Only after Auschwitz [after Auschwitz had, by implication, discredited nationalism]
  - a. Paradox that Germans cannot be Germans
- 7. Constitutional Patriotism is the Only One Permissible [Europe must be an idea, not a people or nation]
  - a. Collective responsibility rather than collective guilt [Karl Jaspers wrote about the guilt-question, *Die Schuldfrage*] in 1946
- 8. Illustrious Precursors: **Immanuel Kant**
  - a. Constitutional patriotism promises to fulfill liberal cosmopolitanism
    - 1) **Post-nation** or super-nation
      - a) Disappearance of borders
      - b) Citizenship extended to everyone (**transnationalism**)
      - c) **Kingdom of ends**
      - d) **Perpetual peace**
- 9. New Identity and New Sense of Nationhood
  - a. Model: United States of America
  - b. Objection: **It creates too weak a bond**
  - c. Question: What prevents a liberal political culture from dissolving into fragments
  - d. It is too thin, too generic

NOTE: It is an article of faith with many Americans that ours is "the first new nation" and that, religiously speaking, Christianity had nothing to do with it. Let's call it a kind of "immaculate conception" in which a new Golem (Emma Lazarus's New Colossus) was created immaculately out of the clay of humanity with the image of the god of the philosophers stamped on its forehead. cf. Henry Steele Commager's *The Empire of Reason: How Europe Imagines and America Realized the Enlightenment*.

- 10. A Bridge Is Needed between the Abstract and the Concrete [cf. Burke on abstraction]
  - a. This link must warm hearts and stir emotion
  - b. Otherwise this objection is decisive
  - c. Need for the first person plural
- 11. Habermas's Solution: Pad the Cosmopolitan Skeleton with European Flesh and Blood
  - a. **Thick patriotism**
    - 1) Negative: **Memory of the Holocaust** and **Totalitarianism**  
 Question: Can you build a political order on a negative? This approach resembles scapegoating: a form of transference in which evil is purged. It also acts like a talisman, such as an "evil eye" or a hex sign. [This strategy is similar to a variety of what Sigmund Freud called a **reaction-formation**: "A **substitute-formation** is a result of repression and the subsequent **return of the repressed** in an alternate form. For example, in childhood anxiety-hysteria, the child is often working through his libidinal attitude to—and fear of—his or her father: 'After repression, this impulse vanishes out of consciousness: the father does not appear in consciousness as an object for the libido. As a substitute for him we find in a corresponding situation some animal which is more or less suited to

be an object of dread.' The substitute-formation thus follows the path of **displacement**." Totemism may be a related phenomenon.

<http://www.cla.purdue.edu/english/theory/psychoanalysis/definitions/substituteformation.html>

- 2) Central values: **democracy, welfare state, environment, peace**
- b. Process of interpretation and appropriation of universal principles
12. European Citizenship as a Shield against the Worst Parts of One's Own History [cf. Brecht's dissolving the people and electing another]
  - a. European Charter as a mirror
    - 1) **Double image of oneself** [cf. Kant's two selves]
    - 2) Charter as Newton's prism
  - b. Double gift
    - 1) Supposed catalytic effect: Constitution as an **ongoing project** (work-in-progress)
  - c. But something is missing
- F. THE ETHICAL DEFICIT: THE HUMAN PERSON (90-95)
  1. Separation of Patriotism and Nationalism
    - a. Giving Europe a soul
    - b. Can liberalism stand without a doctrine of the good? No.
  2. Debate between Habermas and Ratzinger
    - a. Habermas: Distinction between national and supranational patriotism
    - b. It is a Kantian **autonomous** justification that citizens can rationally accept
  3. Habermas's Post-Metaphysical Justification of the Constitutional State
    - a. No need for natural law
    - b. Democratic procedures have no "deficit of validity"
    - c. Secular equation
  4. Pera's Rebuttal: There Is a **Deficit of Validity**
    - a. Argumentation and democratic procedures are inadequate
    - b. Generation of legitimacy
      - 1) Individual values of equality, tolerance and respect
      - 2) Procedural obligations cannot be substituted for moral ones
    - c. Failure to recognize others as persons: this is an **ethical deficit**
    - d. Rawls's "**original position**" [not original situation] involves moral subjects who are supposedly negotiating behind a "veil of ignorance" which conceals the distinguishing characteristics of the others
  5. Where Does Our Concept of the Person Originate?
    - a. It is a person position for argumentation
    - b. And for democratic procedures
    - c. It is a pre-political and non-political Christian concept
  6. Joseph **Ratzinger's** Reply to Habermas
    - a. Constitutional patriotism is mere **positivism** [state-created, not natural]
  7. Ethical Deficit Must Be Filled
    - a. Official answer is that recognition of Christianity is divisive and not inclusive
    - b. Real answer is that Europe accepts the secular equation and rejects Christianity
- G. THE POVERTY OF SECULARISM (95-100)
  1. Habermas's Earlier Acknowledgment of Christianity
    - a. Egalitarian universalism is the direct heir of the Judaic ethic of justice and the Christian ethic of love
    - b. To hold otherwise idle **postmodern** talk
  2. Habermas's Ambivalence
    - a. Like Croce, he sees no alternative to it
    - b. Irresolvable contradiction
    - c. Liberal state is **not** truly **self-founding**
  3. European Charter Does Not Neglect the Concept of the Person
    - a. But it turns a blind eye to Christian history
      - 1) Dante, Erasmus, *et al.*



- b. The Fathers were learned men
          - 1) Their failure to address that issue was intentional
          - 2) Tight rope of hypocritical language
  - 4. The Texts
    - a. Charter of Fundamental Rights
    - b. Preamble to the Constitution
    - c. Treaty of Lisbon
    - d. **Intent to erase the Christian history of Europe**
      - 1) Postmodern talk
  - 5. Culture of Europe today
    - a. Strongly ideological and antireligious
    - b. Proponents of what Henri de Lubac called **atheist humanism**
    - c. Misuse of **Galileo's** distinction between the truth of science and the truth of faith
  - 6. Threat to the Survival of Western Civilization by the Anti-Religious Culture
  - 7. Secularism Makes Europeans Stateless Rather than Cosmopolitan
    - a. Debate over Turkey's entry into the EU reveals the problem
    - b. Secularism offers only a negative identity
  - 8. Secularism Separates Europe from the Rest of the West
    - a. American ideal of one nation under God
    - b. Difference in word meaning: What Europeans think Americans mean
      - 1) Civil religion = fundamentalism
      - 2) Promotion of democracy = imposition of a lifestyle
      - 3) Exportation of democracy = imperialist aggression
      - 4) Universalism of rights = masked ethno-centrism
      - 5) Right of self-defense = recourse to the UN
- H. WHY EUROPE SHOULD CALL ITSELF CHRISTIAN (100-04)
  - 1. Europe's **Dialectic of "Us/Them"**
  - 2. "Us" Has Always Referred to a Christian Matrix since the Roman Empire was Christianized
  - 3. **Baptismal Font** of European Civilization: In the Beginning Was the Gospel
  - 4. Christianity is the Soul of Europe Because It Led Other Cultures to Unity
  - 5. Composite Tradition of Europe
    - a. Greeks
    - b. Romans
    - c. Moses and Christ
  - 6. Europeans Descend from Three Hills and Have Three Capitals
    - a. Sinai, Acropolis, Golgotha
    - b. Athens, Rome, Jerusalem
    - c. Christianity baptized them
  - 7. Abstract Formulas for a European Identity
    - a. United in diversity
    - b. Mongrelism of cultures
    - c. A Europe without "us" means there can be no one but "them"
    - d. The logic of integration presupposes a subject that does the integrating
  - 8. Such Expressions Sometimes Originate from Fears as Well as Good Intentions
    - a. Paralysis from the idea of a clash of civilizations
    - b. Fear leads to the **surrender of Europe**
  - 9. Rationalizations of Secular Europe
- I. **FIVE REASONS FOR EUROPE CALLING ITSELF CHRISTIAN (104-06)**
  - 1. If It Desires Unification
    - a. No one feels attachments in the abstract
  - 2. If It Wishes to Affirm Itself as the Civilization of Basic Human Rights
    - a. "Recognition" of rights is the secular homage pays to the Christian tradition
  - 3. If It Truly Desires to Defend Itself and Avoid Religious Wars or Clashes of Civilization
    - a. Reaction to violent attacks has been to recite a mea culpa
      - 1) With a "but clause"

- b. Reaffirming Christianity makes true dialogue and integration possible
4. If It Wishes to Put the Tragic Season of the Recent Past behind It
  - a. What cannot protect Europe from another Holocaust
  - b. **Progress** did not prevent such hideous events in the past
  - c. Freedom cannot be nourished by agnosticism
5. If It Intends to Overcome Its Present Moral Crisis
  - a. The awakening of some Europeans
6. The Bottom Line: If Europe Repudiates Christianity, It Will Have No Solid or Lasting Core to Hold It Together
7. *Q.E.D.: Quod era demonstrandum*: Which Was to Be Demonstrated

## Review

ethical deficit	constitutional patriotism	Robert Schuman
euro	ECB	concordats
John Paul II	secularization	church flirts with modernity
common judicial space	<i>acquis communautaire</i>	Constitution
Treaty of Lisbon	European Union	no legitimately European democratic institutions
Jacques Delors	Ernest Renan	nation
<i>aufheben</i>	cosmopolitan	juridical paradise
Bertholt Brecht	European Charter	John Rawls's veil of ignorance
Jürgen Habermas	<i>Volksnation</i>	political principles: post-national
solidarity	<i>Historikerstreit</i>	Ernst Nolte
Immanuel Kant	constitutional patriotism creates	too weak a bond
thick patriotism	memory of the Holocaust and totalitarianism	
values of Europe's political commitments		Habermas's supranational state
neutrality in terms of its world view		deficit of validity
ethical deficit	procedural obligations cannot substitute for moral obligations	
original position requires moral subjects	: John Rawls	Joseph Ratzinger (Benedict XVI)
positivism	intent to erase the Christian history of Europe	
Galileo	dialectic of us vs. them	fear leads to surrender
reasons Europe should call itself Christian		

## CHAPTER THREE: RELATIVISM, FUNDAMENTALISM AND THE QUESTION OF MORALS

### Outline

- A. "BETTER": ARE WE ALLOWED TO USE THAT WORD?
  1. Why Retain Liberalism?
  2. Status Quo Option
  3. What Could Replace Liberal Regimes to Our Equal Satisfaction
    - a. No conclusive evidence that liberal regimes are the end of history
    - b. Nor that globalization is equivalent to westernization
  4. Problem of Making Value Judgments Leads to a Trap
    - a. **Cultural relativism**
      - 1) Watchdog of political correctness [Minotaur slew those in the labyrinth; Ariadne promised to help Theseus escape if he took her with him]
    - b. Hypocritical language that conceals subtle violence
      - 1) **Nameless categories** [cf. "She who must be obeyed;" "He who must not be named"
      - 2) Problems disguised, solutions misinterpreted
      - 3) Supplementing names with what Theodore Roosevelt called "weasel words"

- 4) Deliteration [my own *neologism*: proscription of common words and expressions, often due to either positive or pejorative connotations; literary vandalism]
  5. Millions Are "Voting with Their Feet" to Come West; There Is No Reverse Traffic
  6. A List of Western Things That Are Better
    - a. Why are we not allowed to affirm these things publicly?
    - b. Courtesy? Hospitality? Advantage? Fear?
  7. The Dominant Doctrine and Its Application
    - a. Relativism
    - b. Multiculturalism
- B. OUTLINE OF THE CHAPTER
1. Doctrine of Relativism and the Practice of Multiculturalism
  2. Challenge: Integration of Immigrants
  3. Threat: Islam and Islamic Fundamentalism
  4. Risks of Further Degeneration, Especially in the Field of Ethics
- C. RELATIVISM
1. The Core Idea
  2. Corollaries
  3. Plurality of Values
  4. Optimistic Liberal View of Pluralism
    - a. Thomas Jefferson
    - b. Uniformity of opinion is not desirable and not attainable by compulsion
  5. Locke's Law of Nature
    - a. **Thomas Jefferson's self-evident truths**
    - b. Immanuel Kant's common principles
  6. Romantic and Idealist Reaction Changed the Solution
    - a. Today's relativism anticipated
  7. Hegel's Critique of Kant's Categorical Imperative
    - a. **Historicism** renders value communal (or national) rather than universal
  8. **J. G. Hamann** [*Sturm und Drang*, Counter-Enlightenment] vs. Kant's Critique of Reason
    - a. Kant: Reason is universal
    - b. Hamann: reason is constituted by language, tradition and usage
  9. Kant: Reason is legislator
    - a. Friedrich Jacobi: reason is moved by interests
    - b. Johann von Herder objects to ethnocentrism [Herder was a historicist and protégé of Hamann who was nevertheless also a cosmopolitan]
  10. Romantic Relativist Sought Refuge in the **Nation**
    - a. Contemporary relativist rejects even this option
    - b. Nietzsche, Derrida, Feyerabend
  11. Impossibility of Maintaining and Defending Liberalism
  12. John Gray as a Case Study
    - a. None of the four constitutive elements of doctrinal liberalism survives value pluralism
    - b. Liberal universalists vs. liberal relativists
  13. Tough-Minded Thinking Required
    - a. Relativist view
      - 1) **John Gray**: The idea of minimal standards is unjustified because trans-cultural
    - b. Pera's rebuttal: Gray admits the continued observance if a *modus vivendi* [temporary agreement pending a final settlement] of tolerance and respect
  14. The Choice
    - a. Where the idea "if relativism is correct" leads
      - 1) Liberalism is just ethnocentrism in disguise
    - b. But liberalism is a commendable regime also in the eyes of relativists
    - c. Relativism is mistaken

15. Dubious view that any given culture is equal in value to any other
  - a. Both “better than” and “equal to” require a common standard
16. Logical Contradiction of the Relativist Position
17. Relativism Leads to **Paralysis**
  - a. It has no answer to those who wish to deny, oppose, or destroy a regime
18. Relativism is Incompatible with Liberalism
  - a. Transcultural validity

#### D. MULTICULTURALISM

1. Modern Societies Composed of Multiple Groups
  - a. The choice
    - 1) A minimum code of values
    - 2) Respect for all forms of culture
  - b. Multiculturalism is indefensible
2. Theoretical Reasons
  - a. Two strong arguments for **multiculturalism**
    - 1) Empirical: cultures confer identity
    - 2) Normative: Cultures are the bricks and mortar of freedom
3. Grain of Truth in Both Arguments
  - a. Our nature is to transcend our cultures
  - b. The greater our knowledge, the wider our horizons
    - 1) Karl Popper on Babel
    - 2) Popper refuted this view in his analysis of the scientific method
4. Multiculturalism’s Unreasonable Conclusions, Such as:
  - a. A culture exists independently of its members
  - b. Cultures have a right to exist independently of the lifestyles they propose
5. It Is Illegitimate to Infer That We Must Recognize **Group Rights**
6. Contradictions That Arise between Group Rights and Individual Rights
7. Liberals Believe That the Right of the Individual Must Prevail
  - a. Cannibals
  - b. Shamans
  - c. Question of whether or not to concede group rights
  - d. Individuals, not society, come first in a liberal society
  - e. Violation of basic rights is violence
8. The Practical Issue: a Doctrine May Be Wrong But Have Useful Effects
  - a. Galileo’s mechanics
  - b. Positive law
  - c. But multiculturalism is wrong and harmful
9. First Drawback of Multiculturalism: It Plants and Fosters a **Guilt Complex**
  - a. Mushy majority gives way
  - b. Breast-beating in the West
    - 1) This undermines authority
  - c. PC language used as a whip
10. Second Drawback: **Minority Groups Displace the Majority** That Chooses the Path of Concession [cf. James Hitchcock’s three stages of moral revolution: familiarization with what had been forbidden, ridicule of the old values, sympathy for the “underdog”]
11. Third Drawback: It Is Adopted as a Policy for the **Integration of Immigrants** [*i.e.*, assimilation] and the Easing of Social Conflicts, But It Does the Exact Opposite
  - a. Group requests
  - b. Marginalization and concentration within limited spaces in peripheral areas  
**[ghettoization]**
  - c. Indifference of political authorities
  - d. **Territorial exclaves**
12. Trevor Phillips
  - a. “Sleepwalking to Segregation”
13. **Pim Fortuyn**
  - a. West refuses to define its own culture [cf. Roger Scruton’s idea of a “culture of



- a. Question about *jihad*
  - 9. Replies by Islamic Scholars
  - 10. Islam's Two Greatest Commandments
  - 11. Christianity's Two Greatest Commandments
  - 12. Commendable Effort at Closing the Distance
    - a. But it weakened the cause of **interreligious dialogue**
      - 1) Correspondence between the two sets of commandments lacked a common ground
      - 2) The dialogue was not truly interreligious
    - b. Absence of a Common Ground on the Religious Level
      - 1) Interreligious dialogue is impossible
        - a) Only possibilities: friendly conversation, (feigned) verbal adjustment. based on linguistic ambiguities), or syncretism
  - 13. Proposal of **Benedict XVI: A Dialogue of Cultures**
    - a. Analogy between scientific and religious systems
  - 14. Scientific Theories
    - a. **Three elements**
      - 1) Axiomatic core
      - 2) Principles of inference
      - 3) Empirically testable consequences
    - b. Comparison of divergent theories
      - 1) What constitutes "better?"
  - 15. Religious Systems
    - a. **Three components**
      - 1) Dogmatic core [the fundamentals]
      - 2) Principle of interpretation
      - 3) Cultural consequences
    - b. Comparison of divergent systems
      - 1) What constitutes "better?"
    - c. Negative consequences in science is a falsifier of a theory
    - d. Cultural comparison is more indirect
    - e. Intercultural comparison is an authentic debate
      - 1) It permits each side to revise, correct, integrate, or reject
  - 16. Analogy with the Scientists' Stock of Data
    - a. Common ground: Relationships that generate needs, demands, and rights
  - 17. Question: Are the Cultural Consequences of Islam Compatible with the **Moral Stock of Universal Values?**
    - a. Appropriate ground of comparison: Surah V:48
  - 18. Islam Loses by Comparison on the Common Ground of "Good Works"
    - a. Moral stock of universal values is scarcely honored
    - b. No authorities with Islamic societies have the power to issue binding interpretations in order to correct abuses
    - c. We owe these courageous and noble interlocutors our courtesy and respect
      - 1) But Islam today has not passed the test
  - 19. Europe Knows That Islam Has Not Passed the Test
    - a. Europe loves Islam for the same reason Islam hates Europe [co-dependency in a moral inversion]
      - 1) Both reject Europe's roots [cf. Scruton's culture of repudiation and Jamie Glazov's *United in Hate*]
      - 2) Everything is turned upside down
    - b. The West Is resigned to Its Disease
      - 1) Cultural Demise
- F. THE EXPROPRIATION OF MORALS (140-49)
- 1. Optimistic Philosophy of History [cf. Croce's *History as the Story of Liberty*]
    - a. Liberal state begat the democratic state which begat the welfare state
      - 1) Each step forward brought an increase of freedom

2. Experience, Purged of Philosophy, Tells a Different Story
  - a. Liberal state begat the paternalistic state which begat the totalitarian state
    - 1) Each step forward brought a diminishing of freedom
    - 2) There is reason to believe and worry that the second story is the true one
3. The Modern Western State Is a **Hybrid with Two Faces** [cf. Rome's household deity, Janus; the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is similarly divided]
  - a. Obverse: Face of liberty and fundamental, inviolable rights (**Isaiah Berlin's** freedom *to*)
  - b. Reverse: Democracy and social rights (Berlin's freedom *from*) [*e.g.*, the last two of FDR's Four Freedoms: freedom from want and freedom from fear]
4. **Benedetto Croce's *Hircocervus*** [one of a menagerie of ancient Greek fantasies]
  - a. Freedom is a pure (abstract) concept referring to the Spirit's eternal mode of being [as in Idealism] (Pera instead returns freedom to its proper political ground)
  - b. Social justice is an empirical pseudo-concept referring to a contingent mode of being in social relations
  - c. Combination of the rights of freedom and the rights of social justice is generating a form of state that is deformed like the *Hircocervus*
5. The Two Parts Are Irreconcilable
  - a. Freedom produces inequality; justice promotes equality
  - b. From their conflict, the liberal state emerges transformed
  - c. The liberal state becomes the **paternalistic state**
6. The paternalistic State Erases the Distinction between the State and Civil Society
  - a. The state becomes an actor, producing affirmative rules to advantage the disadvantaged
  - b. Its own logic defeats it: the more it increases freedom *from*, its intervention diminishes freedom *to*
  - c. Marxist solution to the dilemma produces nothing but total slavery
7. The Risks Paternalism Poses to Freedom Goes beyond the Creation of New Social Inequalities
  - a. Once the autonomy of civil society has been invaded to address economic inequalities the state by inherent logic must concern itself with other social issues
  - b. "This spontaneous burgeoning of needs and the state's parallel intervention to satisfy them cause the demands for ever-new 'rights' to keep multiplying within the paternalistic state."
8. This Expansion of Rights Is Not Limited to the Social Needs of Life
  - a. Spontaneously but fatally, we then slip into the sphere of ethics [cf. J. Budziszewski's *The Revenge of Conscience*]
    - 1) Here we find it as difficult to restrain our demands as we did in the sphere of economics
    - 2) New desires and demands for further rights arise in response to the availability of new options

NOTE: This is what I called "created needs" in *The Methodical Conquest: Perceptions of the Impact of Modern Science and Technology on Society*, 1974]
9. Like the Liberal State, the Paternalistic State Must Bow Down to This New Reality
  - a. Diverse localized functions are now attributed to the state, *e.g.*, bioethics
  - b. Result: An authentic degeneration
  - c. The paternalistic state **expropriates morality**
  - d. "The paternalistic state becomes an *ethically totalitarian state*."
10. **Christopher Dawson**
  - a. All modern states are totalitarian in so far as they seek to embrace the spheres of economics and culture
11. No Violence has Occurred in This Last Transformation of the State
  - a. **Ethically totalitarian state** is founded on the ever-increasing demands of its citizens (cf. J. L. Talmon's totalitarian democracy)
  - b. **John Paul II: *Centesimus Annus*** [Hundredth Year, observing the anniversary of the encyclical *Rerum Novarum*: Of New Things]

- 1) Democracy without values is easily manipulated and becomes totalitarian
- c. The ethically totalitarian state is democratic [cf. Tocqueville's tyranny of the majority and Rousseau's general will]
12. This Totalitarianism Is Devious Because It Insinuates Itself So Naturally [cf. Gen. 3:1]
  - a. A doubt slowly worms its way into society and dissolves
  - b. The most **bizarre paradoxes** arise
    - 1) The state is strict about seatbelts but indulgent about euthanasia
    - 2) The state is tolerant of fundamentalist Islamic culture but aggressive toward the principles of Christian believers
13. The Hybrid Loses Its Liberal Face
  - a. The democratic face triumphs, but democracy also yields and the expropriators find themselves expropriated [revolutions devour their children, like Robespierre]
  - b. [Note the deficit of democracy in the bureaucracies of the European Union and in the regulatory regime of global governance; cf. John Fonte's *Sovereignty or Submission*]
14. Unprecedented Cases of **Judicial Legislation** [Herbert Schlossberg calls it *khadi* law in *Idols for Destruction*]
  - a. An agreement made with Islamic groups authorized *shariah* tribunals in the UK
  - b. The U.S. Supreme Court authorized liberalized abortion
  - c. A Dutch court decision permitted euthanasia to be performed on 12-year-old children
15. Judicial Imperialism or Judicial Universalism
- G. THE DESCENDING TRAJECTORY OF PUBLIC LIBERAL ETHICS (149-57)  
Cf. James Kurth's "The Protestant Deformation"
1. Starting Point of This Trajectory: **Immanuel Kant** and His Law of Morality
  - a. Second formula of the categorical imperative: Use humanity only as an end, never as a means
    - 1) Principle of autonomy
    - 2) Rationalized version of a Christian commandment
  - b. Consequences for public ethics
    - 1) Infanticide is illicit
    - 2) Polygamy is excluded
    - 3) **Cohabitation** (concubinage) is excluded because the woman surrenders herself as a thing to the other's choice
    - 4) Prostitution, homosexuality, and suicide are also excluded
  - c. Summary of **Kant's ethical view**
    - 1) The Christian law of morality commands the will in a universal way
    - 2) The law of morality imposes respect for the human person
2. **John Stuart Mill**: Ethics Has Become Secular Rather Than Christian
  - a. Highest moral goodness of Christianity is "the property of humanity and cannot now be lost by anything short of a return to primeval barbarism."
3. **Principle of Utilitarianism**
  - a. A principle of autonomy that differs from Kant's
    - 1) Kant: Obeying *the* universal moral law
    - 2) Mill: Giving ourselves any compatible maxim of individual preferences (*On Liberty*)
4. **Mill's Principle**: Interfering with Liberty Is Only Justified for Self-Protection, to Prevent Harm to Others [cf. Libertarianism]
  - a. Individual is sovereign over his own body and mind
5. Given Mill's Principle, Public Ethics Changes Its Perspective on Almost All Major Themes
  - a. Polygamy is allowed because it is voluntary
  - b. Multiculturalism: "I am not aware that any community has a right to force another to be civilized"
  - c. Use of drugs and toxic substances is allowed
  - d. So is fornication and gambling



- e. Exposing oneself to life-threatening danger is tolerated
  - f. Freedom of pimps and gambling houses is uncertain
  - g. Divorce is uncertain
  - h. Nothing is said about suicide
  - i. Summary of **Mill's ethics**
    - 1) The utilitarian law of morality commands as best the action from which the greatest happiness ensues for all [Mill's version of the general will]
    - 2) The law of morality imposes respect for personal freedom
6. The Ethic of Our Times
- a. Mill also feared the dictatorship of the majority: "the Chinese ideal of making all people alike" [Tocqueville used similar Chinese imagery]
  - b. He believed "the remarkable diversity of character and culture" had spared Europe from this lot
  - c. But this fate is inexorable today because of factors Mill identified
    - 1) Democracy, education, expansion of trade and industrial manufacturing, and conformism
  - d. The uniformity he feared is due to the victory of Mill's principle of self-sovereignty
    - 1) This is the true "unity in diversity" celebrated by the European Union
  - e. Another paradox: The state has "become, on request, the invader of this sphere and the dispenser of rights pertaining to it"
  - f. Summary of the **prevailing moral conception**
    - 1) No universal moral order, whether religious or secular
    - 2) In the West, the principle of *respect for the free value choices of individuals* prevails
7. Both Points Located at the Beginning of the Trajectory Have Vanished
- a. From universality we have passed to relativity
  - b. We have passed from the human person to the **individual subject** [cf. C. S. Lewis's *The Abolition of Man*]
8. Autonomy Has Become the New Commandment
- a. Individual liberty and self-determination has become sacrosanct
  - b. Mill might have been pleased, but would have been disturbed by the democratic request for the state to create rights by means of laws, thus interfering with autonomy [again, this is the specter of Tocqueville's tyranny of the majority]
  - c. How religious resistance is deterred
9. Liberal Crossroads or Dilemma
- a. Summary of the **phases of the trajectory**
    - 1) Violation of moral commandments is prohibited
    - 2) Violation of the personal autonomy of the individual is prohibited
    - 3) Setting moral limits is prohibited [cf. the slogan of the *soixantes huitards* or '68ers: "It is forbidden to forbid]
  - b. No philosophy of history dictates this trajectory; it is a deviation
- H. TO CONCLUDE: WHY WE SHOULD CALL OURSELVES CHRISTIANS (157-61)
- 1. We Must Reverse the Direction of This Trajectory
  - 2. The Prevailing Principle of Autonomy Is Too Fragile and Vague to Support Coherent Ethical Imperatives [only persons can be autonomous; individuals are propelled]
  - 3. Two Main Schools of Thought: Ethics of Principles and Ethics of Consequences
  - 4. **Ethics of Principles** [Deontology and Virtue Ethics]
    - a. Principles must be stated and applied
    - b. It requires an instruction manual
  - 5. **Ethics of Consequences** [Utilitarianism]
    - a. How can Mill's "permanent interests of mankind" be measured?
  - 6. The Two Ethics Are Incompatible, But Each May Warn the Other of Its Corresponding Risks
    - a. Ethics of consequences may become an ethics of flexibility
    - b. Ethics of principles may become an ethics of blind diktat
    - c. Our liberal states have tried to have it both ways: establishing no principles or

- truth
- d. Ethics “exists in order to restrain instincts and pleasures by setting limits to them”
7. For Centuries, Christianity Set These Limits
- a. We need to go back to this starting point
8. Concept of the **Human Person**
9. In the End, We Must Choose [cf. Blaise Pascal]
10. If We Live as Christians, We Will Be Wiser and More Aware of the Dangers We Face

## Review

cultural relativism	nameless categories	Thomas Jefferson
self-evident truths	historicism	J. G. Hamann
nation	John Gray	paralysis
multiculturalism	group rights (economic and social rights)	
drawbacks of multiculturalism	guilt complex	minority groups displace the majority
assimilation of immigrants	ghettoization	territorial exclaves
Pim Fortuyn	Christian matrix	civil conversion
oath of a citizen	right of resort	fundamentalism (bigotry)
<i>instrumentum regni</i>	interreligious dialogue	Benedict XVI
dialogue of cultures	elements of scientific systems	components of religious systems
moral stock of universal values	Isaiah Berlin’s two freedoms	Benedetto Croce’s <i>hircocervus</i> (hybrid)
paternalistic state	expropriation of morality	Christopher Dawson
John Paul II	ethically totalitarian state	bizarre paradoxes
judicial legislation	cohabitation	Immanuel Kant’s ethics
utilitarianism	John Start Mill	Mill’s principle and ethics
prevailing moral conception	phases of the trajectory	ethics of principles
ethics of consequences	human person vs. individual subject	