

**Ideology of the German Christian  
Faith Movement:  
A Preliminary Examination of Primary Sources**

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1900-1901

1902-1903

1904-1905

1906-1907

1908-1909

1910-1911

1912-1913

1914-1915

1916-1917

1918-1919

1920-1921

1922-1923

1924-1925

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## *Introduction*

Retrospectively, it is difficult to understand how a Christian church could support the ideology and actions of Adolf Hitler's German National Socialist regime. Yet, the German Christian Faith Movement<sup>1</sup> not only supported National Socialism, but also tried to reconcile it with its Christian beliefs, by asserting that National Socialism was inherent in true Christianity. Publications by German Christians illuminate the arguments the German Christians used in order to justify each theological step they took towards merging with National Socialism. A study of the pamphlets of the German Christians can elucidate how some Christian groups supported and legitimated the actions of Hitler, especially the persecution of the Jews.

The motivations of those who desired to form the nationalist Protestant church seem vague retrospectively. It is hard to imagine why a Christian church chose to support National Socialism. Perhaps the German Christians wanted to preserve the church and protect Christianity from the attacks of National Socialism. Maybe it was an attempt of the members to save themselves from the rising regime. It could have also

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<sup>1</sup> The German Christian Faith Movement (*Deutsche Christen Glaubensbewegung*) was a movement within a church system. It was a spiritual movement that incorporated both secular and religious goals into its mission of making a united National Socialist Protestant church. It will be mostly referred to through the people of the movement, the "German Christians," or as a movement (both secular and spiritual) rather than as an established church.

been those trying to recover from the humiliation of World War II and clinging to whatever hope there was, despite what those powers advocated. Did the German Christian movement really believe in the National Socialist ideology, or did it merely try to convince itself and others? One answer would be too simple. The truth probably lies in all answers on multiple levels for each person.

Whether the German Christians were convincing themselves, or whether they truly believed in the mergence of Christianity and National Socialism, the ideologies and theologies were still reasoned in a way that fit together. By supporting a doctrine of pure Aryan blood and race, the German Christians rejected all people that did not fit into the pure and "God granted" category.<sup>2</sup> Due to this, the German Christians needed especially to oppose Judaism. While the regime supported the persecution of the Jews, the German Christians needed to show that Christianity did not have Jewish influence and the Jewish roots did not matter in the current religion. Thus, for the German Christians, the Jewish persecution was no matter of coincidence. In order to integrate into the National Socialist Aryan regime, the German Christians needed to be rid of what stood in opposition to their pure German Christianity – the Jews.

Separated from the historical context, the individual actions of the German Christian movement would not be out of place in contemporary society. Some of the actions, such as rewriting a new version of the Bible and provoking a sense of national pride, are quite prevalent in American society. The German Christians took small steps and logically progressed toward the persecution of the Jews, employing ideas that were familiar to the German public. Each new step relied on the explanations and acceptance

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<sup>2</sup> "Die ersten Richtlinien der Glaubensbewegung, Deutsche Christen" in *Handbuch der Deutschen Christen*, (Berlin-Charlottenberg: Deutsche Christen Nationalkirchliche Einung, 1933[?]), Principle 8.

of the arguments that had come before it. This created a chain of smaller steps. If one accepted the first step, then each next would not seem to be too radical compared to the previous step as opposed to where the logic began. By examining the ideology and the argument of the German Christians, it is possible to recognize not only how a Christian church could support the Hitler regime and persecution of the Jews, but also how and why the movement succeeded and gained members. The German Christian movement raises an important question of when should we stop accepting ideas and actions because they seem logical and appeal emotionally and how important it is that we look at the underlying implications and how the actions and ideas may be used in the future.

## **Chapter 1: Description of Sources**

The logic and arguments of the German Christians are most evident in primary documents published by the organization of the German Christians in the years of 1932 – 1939. The pamphlets include explanations of the German Christian movement, articles, poetry, and reactions to current events written by members. The German Christians published the pamphlets for widespread distribution, with the number of copies ranging from 10-40,000. The pamphlets were generally short. They ranged between eight and sixty pages, and they were written with a sense of urgency. For example, The German Christians divided the pamphlets into sections and set off main points in bold type, in order that one could skim the text quickly and find what was important.

The German Christians wrote the pamphlets for the German public, shown through the language of the pamphlets and the sponsors of the pamphlets. Local businesses advertised their stores and various brands of furniture and clothing, showing their support of the pamphlets and the German Christian movement.<sup>3</sup> The German Christians placed a strong emphasis on speaking the language of “the people” and not the language of the academics. They claimed that academic jargon was so complicated that often the German public could not understand what was important. Unlike other theologians at the time, the authors of the pamphlets wrote in concise, clear language

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<sup>3</sup> See Appendix I.



with short sentences. Many pamphlets used narrative style and vivid imagery, praising the German public and *Volk* by describing them as “the heart of Germany” and “a strong and disciplined people”, for example.<sup>4</sup>

The German Christians produced pamphlets aimed to recruit and to inform the common people of who they were and their position. They promoted the German Christian cause and goals by appealing to the sense of German identity and pride and Christian faith and beliefs. Among these pamphlets, the German Christians produced a series entitled “Schriften zur allgemeinen Unterrichtung” [Papers for general education]. These papers addressed questions asked of the German Christians on specific topics, such as Jesus’ relationship to the Jews are the church’s optimum relationship to the National Socialist state. Since the German Christians used the pamphlets to recruit, inform, and educate the German public on the movement, the pamphlets also included registration forms to become a member of the German Christians.<sup>5</sup> Also included were order forms and advertising for other pamphlets published by the German Christian movement.<sup>6</sup> Some contained recommended reading lists for further learning and information about the German Christian movement and its beliefs.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Anna Ilgenstein-Ratterfeld, “Der Prophet der Deutschen” in *Handbuch der Deutschen Christen* (Berlin-Charlottenberg: Deutsche Christen Nationalkirchliche Einung, 1933[?]), 1.

<sup>5</sup> See Appendix 2.

<sup>6</sup> See Appendix 3.

<sup>7</sup> See Appendix 4.

## **Chapter 2: History of the German Christian Movement**

In the 1920s, having just lost the First World War, Germany was a humiliated nation and people. The Treaty of Versailles and the cost of the war left the German economy struggling. In an effort to regain a sense of worth, groups of people began to place more emphasis on the heritage of Germany and a sense of national pride. This nationalism was not new or unique. The pride of the German people had been present throughout German history, despite not being a unified nation, but morale had declined after the loss of the War.<sup>8</sup> Reestablishing German self-respect became an obsession in German culture. Individual motivations for building strong nationalist support varied widely, from the desire to rebuild Germany and once more establish it as a leading country, to simple gut reactions of pride in the Germanic heritage.<sup>9</sup>

Protestant Churches were not exceptional in this regard to the growing sense of nationalism. However, the members did not want to sever ties with their original churches and form new churches. Instead, nationalist Christians became more outspoken and promoted National Socialism in the existing churches, pushing it to be an integral

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<sup>8</sup> Doris L. Bergen, *Twisted Cross: The German Christian Movement in the Third Reich* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press), 5.

<sup>9</sup> Bergen, *Twisted Cross*, 4.

part of the contemporary churches. The nationalist Christians formed a secular movement within the church structure.<sup>10</sup> When Hitler and the National Socialist Party seized power in 1933, the National Socialist Party saw an opportunity to gain some support from the German public through the Protestant churches that had a nationalist emphasis. Since many of the churches had the common grounds of both Christianity and nationalism, the individual, nationalist churches saw advantages of joining together and becoming a single church of the German people and state, a *Volkskirche*.<sup>11</sup> With the support of the National Socialists, this nationalist Protestant church hoped to bind all of the Protestant churches of Germany together to form a unified Protestant church with strong nationalist pride.<sup>12</sup>

The nationalist churches did not simply organize into the *Volkskirche* under the support of the National Socialists, however. In early 1932, two nationalist Protestant groups were working to draw the Protestant churches together. These two groups used the nationalist focus of the church members to emphasize the common grounds of German pride, which would allow the members to form a cohesive movement.

Wilhelm Kube directed one group of pastors, politicians, and lay people, which first met in June of 1932. Kube was the chairperson of the National Socialist group in Prussia, and he desired to harness the support of the Protestant churches for the National Socialists. The group met in Berlin to write the "Principles of the religious movement of

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<sup>10</sup> Bergen, *Twisted Cross*, 5.

<sup>11</sup> I use the word "*Volkskirche*" as a word that denotes more than just a people's church. It connotes a church of the German people and the importance of pride and nationality involved in the church. There are connotations in this word that intrinsically imply a pride of the German people, their nation, their heritage, and their inherent German-ness.

<sup>12</sup> Bergen, *Twisted Cross*, 5.

the 'German Christians.'"<sup>13</sup> Kube's group first suggested that the name of the nationalist Protestants should be the "Protestant National Socialists." Hitler suggested instead the name "German Christians" so that the faith movement would not be confused with the National Socialist Political Party.<sup>14</sup>

The second group of people followed two young pastors, Siegfried Leffler and Julius Leutheuser. Both members of the Nazi party, they traveled in Thuringia, preaching religious revival with strong nationalist emphasis. They attempted to encourage members of churches to take more pride in Germany and be more active in their congregations.<sup>15</sup> Leffler and Leutheuser's group also called itself the "German Christians". After the groups heard about each other and recognized similar goals, Kube's group and Leutheuser's group eventually began to cooperate and combine their efforts to form the German Christian movement, despite initial rivalries.<sup>16</sup>

The German Christian Faith Movement (*Deutsche Christen Glaubensbewegung*) was a movement within a church system. It was a spiritual movement that incorporated both secular and religious goals into its mission of making a united National Socialist Protestant church. In order to gain this support of the National Socialist Party, Ludwig Müller, the bishop of the Reich from 1933-1945, believed that the German Christian movement must "...not stand next to or against the State; rather we stand in the middle of

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<sup>13</sup> Bergen, *Twisted Cross*, 5.

<sup>14</sup> Richard Steigmann-Gall, *The Holy Reich: Nazi Concepts of Christianity 1919-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 72.

<sup>15</sup> Bergen, *Twisted Cross*, 5.

<sup>16</sup> Bergen, *Twisted Cross*, 5.

the State as its truest helper and its firmest support.”<sup>17</sup> The German Christian movement desired to support the National Socialist Party, and hoped that, in return, the party would support the movement. The movement did not want to be a political force in the Third Reich, where they could be seen as a potential threat, but instead act as a church for the people who supported the state, working to incorporate God into National Socialism. The German Christians hoped to establish themselves as the National Church of the National Socialist State.<sup>18</sup> The newly formed church movement would be a church that was an integral part of the Germany’s new government, and there would be no separation between the two. The German Protestants hoped that the church would stand on equal footing with the state.<sup>19</sup>

In 1932 and 1933, Hitler and the National Socialist regime openly supported the German Christians. Throughout this time, the German Christian movement grew swiftly and gained members and popular support. Since the German Christians were now an official group, they were able to enter candidates in the Protestant church elections of 1933.<sup>20</sup> The elections were open to Protestant groups, and the elected leaders oversaw the churches under their jurisdiction, making sure that the churches followed the guidelines set by the collective Protestant church and the Reich bishop. The positions

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<sup>17</sup> Müller, Ludwig, *Der Reichsbischof: Die Deutschen Christen*. Reden des Reichsbischofs from Feb. 28, 1934 (Berlin: Gesellschaft für Zeitungsdienst GMBH. 1934.), 11. (Translations of primary texts are by thesis author, except for quotes from “Germanization of the New Testament...” by Robbins.)

<sup>18</sup> Die von den “Deutschen Christen” allgemein anerkannten 28 Thesen der Sächsischen Kirche” in *Handbuch der Deutschen Christen*. (Berlin-Charlottenberg: Deutsche Christen Nationalkirchliche Einung, 1933[?]), Thesis 1.

<sup>19</sup> “Die von den “Deutschen Christen” allgemein anerkannten 28 Thesen der Sächsischen Kirche” in *Handbuch der Deutschen Christen*. (Berlin-Charlottenberg: Deutsche Christen Nationalkirchliche Einung, 1933[?]), Thesis 1.

<sup>20</sup> Bergen, *Twisted Cross*, 15.

were hierarchical, with six different levels of positions. For example, multiple community leaders would report to the district leader; multiple district leaders reported to the small area leaders. On each level, one leader supervised multiple positions under him, beginning with the Reich bishop who headed the Protestant church.<sup>21</sup> In the elections, the German Christians managed to gain over two-thirds of the positions, including the election of the German Christian Ludwig Müller as bishop of the Reich.<sup>22</sup>

Following his election to office, Reich bishop Müller began to strongly support the Aryan Paragraph, which was an attempt by the German Christians to restrict and remove Non-Aryans from clerical office. The idea came from the State's removal of Non-Aryans from the civil service according on the person's genealogy. While no specific definition of "Aryan" accompanied the paragraph, if it passed, then anyone who was deemed not Aryan (i.e. anyone who was unable to prove a direct German descent) would be dismissed from the church offices. Müller and other German Christians hoped to force the Protestant churches to follow the Aryan Paragraph by making part of the Protestant church doctrine, which the German Christians would implement by the organizational hierarchy. They could then begin to oust the members with Jewish backgrounds and converted, baptized Jews from positions in the church.<sup>23</sup> This followed closely with the German Christians initial concepts. From the beginning, the German Christians professed a strong sense of pride for the purity of the German race. The

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<sup>21</sup> Freitag, Kurt, "Organisationsgrundsätze der Glaubensbewegungen Deutschen Christen" in *Volk und Kirche*. Schriftenreihe der "Deutschen Christian". Heft 4 (Berlin-Charlottenburg: Max Grevermeyer. 1933.), 57.

<sup>22</sup> Bergen, *Twisted Cross*, 15.

<sup>23</sup> Wolfgang Gerlach, *And the Witnesses were Silent: The Confessing Church and the Persecution of the Jews*. Translated and edited by Victoria J. Barnett (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000), 64.

German Protestant church “knows itself of blood and race, because the *Volk* have a common blood base and a common natural base.”<sup>24</sup> Likewise, the German Christians believed in “race” as a creation and gift of God and something that should be kept pure, as God had decreed.<sup>25</sup>

In November of 1933, the German Christians held a rally in Berlin’s Sports Palace. Dr. Reinhold Krause, a prominent member of the National Socialist Party and member of the German Christians, delivered a speech that fragmented the movement into many smaller factions and spread dissent. He spoke of what seemed like radical extremes at the time, including attacking the foundation of Christianity due to its Jewish influences.<sup>26</sup> He called for the creation of a new church, starting with removing the Old Testament and purging the New Testament of all Jewish influences, including all books written by the Apostle Paul. He also attacked the symbol of the Cross and claimed that Jesus should be presented only as a heroic character.<sup>27</sup> Krause received rousing applause at the end of his speech. In order to implement this new revolution, a proposal was immediately proposed that would discharge all clergy that would not co-operate with the new plans, form new churches for Christians of alien and Jewish blood, remove all parts of church services that were not German, rewrite the New Testament, delete the Old

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<sup>24</sup> “Die von den “Deutschen Christen” allgemein anerkannten 28 Thesen der Sächsischen Kirche” in *Handbuch der Deutschen Christen*, Thesis 3.

<sup>25</sup> “Die von den “Deutschen Christen” allgemein anerkannten 28 Thesen der Sächsischen ” in *Handbuch der Deutschen Christen*, Thesis 5.

<sup>26</sup> Ernst Christian Helmreich, *The German Churches: Background, Struggle, and Epilogue* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1979), 150.

<sup>27</sup> J.S. Conway, *The Nazi Persecution of the Churches: 1933-45* (New York: Basic Books Publishers, 1968), 52.

Testament, and implement the Aryan Paragraph. Out of 20,000 people present at the rally, there was supposedly only one opposing vote.<sup>28</sup>

Protests began immediately following the speech. Clergy and laypeople had previously supported or ignored the German Christians without bothering to question fully the nature and goals of the movement. The German Christians' intolerance of the Jews, supported by their extreme politics, became evident to many people who had supported the movement without questioning it.<sup>29</sup> Due to Reinhold Krause's speech, the German Christian movement experienced a large decline in membership, as some German Christians changed their membership to the Pastors' Emergency League, which was starting by Martin Niemöller in opposition to the German Christians.<sup>30</sup>

Members of the Pastor's Emergency League contacted each other and placed demands before Reich Bishop Müller. Because of these demands, Müller issued statements of disassociation from the Berlin Sports Palace rally and Krause's speech. He chose to sacrifice Krause to appease the demands and disapproval of the German public.<sup>31</sup> Reinhold Krause lost his position in the party and in the German Christians. Reich Bishop Ludwig Müller revoked his public support of the Aryan paragraph and suspended the attempt to implement it in the Protestant churches.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Conway, *The Nazi Persecution of the Churches: 1933-45*, 53.

<sup>29</sup> Conway, *The Nazi Persecution of the Churches: 1933-45*, 53.

<sup>30</sup> Bergen, *Twisted Cross*, 179.

<sup>31</sup> Klaus Scholder, *The German Churches in the Third Reich*, Vol. 1. *Preliminary History and the Time of Illusions* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), 554.

<sup>32</sup> Bergen, *Twisted Cross*, 17.



Hitler had hoped that the German Christian movement would gain the support of the Protestant Christians for National Socialism. With the fragmentation and loss of membership that the German Christians movement faced right after the Berlin Sports Palace incident, the German Christians no longer functioned to unite the churches.<sup>33</sup> In actuality, the movement seemed to be encouraging controversy and drawing outspoken opponents, especially with the creation of the Pastor's Emergency League, which evolved into the Confessing Church. The German Christians were supposed to smooth the church so that domestic disputes would be nonexistent. Since national unity was dissolving in church squabbles, Hitler removed his support of the German Christian movement.<sup>34</sup> The movement was restricted as all other churches. Its meetings were prohibited, and Ludwig Müller was no longer allowed to speak at secular gatherings.<sup>35</sup> The National Socialist Party reverted to a policy of not supporting any singular church of the Reich. Ludwig Müller became Reich Bishop in name only, since Hitler removed all of his power and influence.<sup>36</sup>

Despite the fragmentation of the movement and the loss of governmental support, many members of the German Christians remained loyal to the movement and the Nazi state, refusing to believe that the government or church could support such a radical as Krause.<sup>37</sup> The organization of the church changed to rest more upon the local level since

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<sup>33</sup> Conway, *The Nazi Persecution of the Churches: 1933-45*, 54.

<sup>34</sup> Conway, *The Nazi Persecution of the Churches: 1933-45*, 54.

<sup>35</sup> Conway, *The Nazi Persecution of the Churches: 1933-45*, 58.

<sup>36</sup> Victoria Barnett. *For the Soul of the People: Protestant Protest Against Hitler*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 64-65.

<sup>37</sup> Conway, *The Nazi Persecution of the Churches: 1933-45*, 53.

the church hierarchical system was no longer effective at organizing the church. The hierarchical structure no longer had influence or cohesiveness within the National Socialist state.<sup>38</sup> The fragmentation assisted to keep the German Christian movement alive during the next years. Since the movement was already broken apart, the members focused on their individual ideas and goals of the movement, rather than the organizational structure and uniting the church. The German Christian movement shifted to encourage anti-clericalism. The German Christian laypeople used impatience with local bishops, with failures, bickering, and inactivity of those in leadership positions to promote a people's church that was free from pastors. The German Christian movement focused on speaking briefly and understandably.<sup>39</sup> It strongly emphasized speaking the language of the common German people and not the language of academics or pastors more than ever. The fragmentation of the organization of the German Christian movement allowed individuals promote what they wanted for the movement, which helped the movement to gain strength in members.<sup>40</sup>

In 1935, Hitler decided once again to attempt to harness control of the churches and unite them under National Socialism. He appointed Hans Kerrl as Minister of Church Affairs, a newly created position.<sup>41</sup> Kerrl felt that the German Christian movement could again be useful to harness the churches. Under the regime's support, the

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<sup>38</sup> Conway, *The Nazi Persecution of the Churches: 1933-45*, 54.

<sup>39</sup> Bergen, *Twisted Cross*, 179.

<sup>40</sup> Bergen, *Twisted Cross*, 19.

<sup>41</sup> Bergen, *Twisted Cross*, 181.

German Christians began to gather back from the numerous factions to a more cohesive unit and become more organized structurally.<sup>42</sup>

In 1937, Hitler decided to order the Protestant church to hold church elections. The elections could reestablish National Socialist support within the organization of the Protestant church by allowing those that supported the National Socialists to be elected to the higher church positions. These elections were never held.<sup>43</sup> However, the effect was that the German Christians began to become a collected group, in order to support the running candidates, instead of allowing non-German Christians to have control of the church. Preparation for war also encouraged the German Christians to gather and support an aggressive, strong Christianity that urging the purification of race and the strengthening of the German state. By 1939, almost all of the divided factions were united once again under the name of the German Christian movement.<sup>44</sup>

During World War II, the German Christians claimed to be spiritually satisfied with the Third Reich because of its stance of aggressive Christianity. Despite the movement's complete support of the Third Reich, it found itself highly restricted. Church publications ceased as the effort, resources, and money went to other causes that would help Germany fight and win the war. German Christians, as with other church groups, were not allowed to speak at public functions.<sup>45</sup> The German Christian movement ended with the Ally occupation of Germany in 1946. All that was left of the

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<sup>42</sup> Bergen, *Twisted Cross*, 18.

<sup>43</sup> Bergen, *Twisted Cross*, 19.

<sup>44</sup> Bergen, *Twisted Cross*, 19.

<sup>45</sup> Bergen, *Twisted Cross*, 20.

German Christian movement was the attempt to justify supporting the National Socialist regime.

### **Chapter 3: Volk**

For the German Christians, the idea of the purity of the German *Volk* was a guiding principle. *Volk* embodied more than the literal translation of “people” or “folk”. *Volk* was a combination of what defined a German as a German, both biologically and socially. The German Christians identified the biological aspects of *Volk* through a person’s race and ethnic background. They defined the social aspects through *Kultur*, which involved the culmination of history, music, and arts of German society. *Volk* also contained a sense of pride in the distinctiveness of the Germanic race and *Kultur*.

Despite that both ethnic heritage and *Kultur* combined to form the *Volk*, the German Christian movement focused primarily on the aspect of race.<sup>46</sup> Race referred to the ancestry of individual people and to the German nation as a whole. The German Christians supported a doctrine of pure German race. This strong focus on race emerged with the growing sense of nationalism that was prevalent in the 1920s in Germany. While Germany had a multi-cultural population, the majority of the residents of Germany had Germanic ancestors. Therefore, pride in race was similar to pride in nation, but excluded those whose heritage was not pure German.

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<sup>46</sup> *Kultur* became secondary in their literature. *Kultur* was a characteristic of a person that was part of *Volk*, rather a defining characteristic of *Volk*.

In order to be pure German, Germans had to be able to trace their ancestry through historical records, showing that they had descended from all Germans as far back as the records went. By examining historical records, the German Christian movement identified who could be part of the *Volk*, and who did not qualify because of a lack of racial purity. By using race as a guiding principle of the movement, the German Christians established a common ground with the National Socialist Party.

The German Christians needed to establish that *Volk* was as essential to their ideology as Christianity. With the background of nationalism, the idea of a church with a racial focus did not seem out of place. The German Christians were people that were proud of both their God and nation. Many Germans easily accepted that pride of nation and belief in God could merge. Retrospectively, many people find this passive acceptance difficult to accept. Yet, most Germans accepted the nationalist churches, as many Americans today do not protest the words "In God we trust" on currency and "One Nation und God" in the Pledge of Allegiance. It is possible that some Germans would have been offended, as some Americans are, if someone suggested completely separating nation and church. Pride of nation and pride in one's church were comfortable ideas to many people and, at the time, did not seem extreme. The German public accepted combining of nationalism and Christianity easily because, for many people, it did not seem out of place and was merely the merging of two already prevalent ideas in German society.

Within their principles, guidelines, and in essays, the German Christians stressed the importance of *Volk* within the Christian church. Since the movement had begun in the Christian churches and Christianity was already a fundamental part of the church, the

German Christians worked to strengthen nationalism and establish *Volk* as a foundation of the church. Since the idea of *Volk* and nation was common in Germany, the German Christian movement simply stated that “the [German Christian] church bases itself on blood and race.”<sup>47</sup> As stated previously, this was not a radical concept for many Germans. The German Christian movement asserted that the foundations of Christianity and *Volk* were so closely linked for the German public that they were inseparable and that true Christianity could not exist without the concept of *Volk*.<sup>48</sup> In this way, the German Christians established the foundations upon which their ideology would rest.

The German Christians desired to form a national German Protestant Church and saw the opportunity to gain governmental support if they supported National Socialism. For the government to recognize them as the national church and to maintain their foundations of Christianity and nationalism, the German Christians needed to support National Socialism and integrate Christianity and National Socialism as closely as they could. This allowed them to pursue the political and social goals of National Socialism but still feel based in their Christian faith. The German Christians did not believe that involvement in politics interfered with or opposed Christianity and the church in any way. “... We do not stand against the church and Christianity... As our German politics and our race *Kultur* are, so is our Christianity.”<sup>49</sup> The German Christians believed that by combining the National Socialism and Christianity, they were strengthening the church, but rather than betraying it. To the German Christians, the combination was not a

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<sup>47</sup> “Die von den “Deutschen Christen” allgemein anerkannten 28 Thesen der Sächsischen Kirche” in *Handbuch der Deutschen Christen*, Thesis 3, 5.

<sup>48</sup> Bd, “Luther – Hitler” in *Handbuch der Deutschen Christen* (Berlin-Charlottenberg: Deutsche Christen Nationalkirchliche Einung, 1933[?]), 2.

<sup>49</sup> Bd, “Luther – Hitler,” 2.

contradiction. Instead, National Socialism and Christianity were part of the same belief structure and belonged together.<sup>50</sup>

The German Christians' goal was not to bring politics into church by bringing nationalism into the church. Rather, they desired to create a base of Christianity on which National Socialists could stand. National and church politics had previously split the church and divided the people. German Christians claimed that they "didn't go to the ballot box to politicize the church, but out of love for church and *Volk*, and a responsibility to God."<sup>51</sup> The German Christians maintained that politics were to remain outside of the church in the form of National Socialism. Instead, the German Christians were Christians that were involved in politics and promoting National Socialists and members of the German Christians out of a sense of duty to the church, *Volk*, and God. They did not want to be an auxiliary movement of the National Socialism, but rather a church for Christian National Socialists that promoted and assisted both Christianity and National Socialism.

The pamphlets helped to emphasize the importance of the merging to the German public. The publications presented National Socialism, Christianity, and *Volk* as inseparable. Through combining National Socialism, *Volk*, and Christianity, the German Christians emphasized the importance of sacrificing for the Third Reich, which was also sacrificing for God. The German Christians claimed that God, *Volk*, and Germany were the foundations of the German people. Therefore, they combined together to "...be a holy experience, which out of experience will the will of community be born, out of this

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<sup>50</sup> Bd, "Luther – Hitler," 2.

<sup>51</sup> Martin Wagner, *Die "Deutschen Christen" im Kampf um die innere Erneuerung des deutschen Volkes*. No. 3. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Berlin-Charlottenburg: Max Grevermeyer, 1933.) 19.



will of community wakes the spirit of sacrifice.”<sup>52</sup> This sacrifice was mostly the sacrifice of thanksgiving, in which lives given in return for the Reich with gratitude to God. The German Christians hoped to encourage the idea that the sacrifice was for both God and National Socialism.

In a poem entitled “Our Father,” Fritz Buschard emphasized the heroic sacrifice of the German people for the National Socialist cause. The poem was written as a prayer or hymn to God. Each stanza ended with one line from the Lord’s Prayer. The focus of the poem was to praise God for gifts given to the German people, to request understanding to interpret God’s word, and to bless the sacrifice of lives that the German people made in order to do God’s will.

You strengthen our love [of this land] in strife and love,  
The truest sons of our *Volk* gave their lives for this love,  
May the blood of these heroes be the seeds of a new freedom.  
Seed to fruit, fruit to harvest! Sacrifice to freedom, freedom to life!  
Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”<sup>53</sup>

While Christianity has often emphasized the idea of sacrifice, the German Christians added sacrificing for the nation and the *Volk*, in the name of God. This passage combined the desire for God’s will, as described in the Lord’s Prayer, with the idea of sacrificing for National Socialism. The sacrifice of the most loyal of the *Volk*’s sons would earn God’s blessings in a new era of freedom for the German people. Because of this willingness to sacrifice and their loyalty to God, the German Christians perceived themselves to be God’s chosen people.

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<sup>52</sup> Bd, “Luther – Hitler,” 2.

<sup>53</sup> Fritz Buschard, “Unser Vater.” In *Handbuch der Deutschen Christen* (Berlin-Charlottenberg: Deutsche Christen Nationalkirchliche Einung, 1933[?]).

### **Chapter 4: The Chosen People of God**

Beginning with the foundation of *Volk* and Christianity, German Christians elaborated to build the belief that they were the chosen people of God, in order to justify and strengthen the conviction of their beliefs and also to continue to gain followers. The German Christians attempted to exemplify the logic of their ideology and used Martin Luther to validate their claims. The German Christians maintained that God had decreed that the German (Aryan) race must be pure and that God fully supported the ideology and actions of the National Socialist state. The German Christian movement also used Martin Luther, describing him as the "Prophet of German *Volk* even in the Third Reich."<sup>54</sup> They claimed that Luther was the origin of true Christianity. Since God had chosen Luther, God had also chosen the German people to uphold true Christianity. Using assertion, logic, and describing Martin Luther as a prophet, the German Christians p[resented] themselves to the German public as the chosen people of God.

The German Christians attempted to explain their status as the chosen people of God through simply stating the belief as fact, much as they had established that the importance of *Volk* and race to the movement. For many Germans, this was not a large

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<sup>54</sup> Ilgenstein-Ratterfeld, "Der Prophet der Deutschen," 9.

step logically if the concepts *Volk* and race were accepted. The German Christians accepted *Volk* as meaning that the German people were somehow special and unique from other groups of people. The German Christian movement believed that God supported the movement, because it would not be successful in gaining many members if it stated that God disapproved of the movement and its actions. Because of this, God preferred the German *Volk* and what the German Christian movement advocated, which was National Socialism. God then favored the German Christians and National Socialism more than other nations and even excluded some people from God's love, according to the German Christian beliefs.

While the German Christian movement discounted groups that tried to create different religions based on race, they recognized that Christianity was different for each race.<sup>55</sup> This statement allowed the German Christians to decide whether other religions were acceptable as Christian. For example, there could have been Polish Christianity, since Christianity is different for all races. The same Polish Christianity could have also been wrong according to the German Christians if it was a religion based on racial experiences. Due to the flexibility of this statement, the German Christians could decide which religions agreed with German Christianity and were part of the chosen people.

As the chosen people of God, the German Christians also needed to perform their commanded duties that God specifically called them to do. Each member of the *Volk* was to love and serve other members of the *Volk* and also the National Socialist state. The German Christians believed that they needed to work to keep the German *Volk* pure from

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<sup>55</sup> "Die von den "Deutschen Christen" allgemein anerkannten 28 Thesen der Sächsischen Kirche" in *Handbuch der Deutschen Christen*, Thesis 18.

other races.<sup>56</sup> As the members supported the church and National Socialism, God would in return help them reach their goals of a pure German race and National Socialist state. Because of their obedience and loyalty, God would bless the German Christians by bringing the kingdom of God to them.<sup>57</sup>

The German Christian movement emphasized through pamphlets that God called specifically as the German Christians. By using national pride and love of God, the German Christians attempted to instill a sense of duty in the German public to the *Volk*, in order that more people would join the German Christians and God's kingdom would come to earth. A pamphlet, entitled Gebet dem Kaiser, was des Kaisers ist und Gott, was Gottes ist...! [*Give to the king what belongs to the king, and to God what belongs to God...!*], published in 1937, the German Christians claimed that:

We recognize, in belief of the creator of the *Volk* and the guide of history, that God calls us as *Volk* and created us to be *Volk*. We recognize, in belief of God who became through Jesus Christ the Father, that God did not remove us from our *Volk* nor take us from the earth, but rather calls us in our *Volk* to the obedience and loyalty to Him and calls us to love and to know our duty to our *Volk*'s companions, as our neighbors. We believe that through such works of God, God's kingdom comes to us.<sup>58</sup>

The multiple use of the concept of "*Volk*" in the passage not only illustrated how important *Volk* was to the German Christians, but also how it allowed them to define who was part of the chosen people of God. It is important to note that God did not call the German Christians to love and serve everyone, but instead their duty was only to other

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<sup>56</sup> "Die ersten Richtlinien der Glaubensbewegung, Deutsche Christen." in *Handbuch der Deutschen Christen*, Principle 7.

<sup>57</sup> "Die ersten Richtlinien der Glaubensbewegung, Deutsche Christen." in *Handbuch der Deutschen Christen*, Principle 7.

<sup>58</sup> Bund für deutsches Christentum *Gebet dem Kaiser, was des Kaisers ist, und God, was Gottes ist...!* Schrift zur allgemeinen Unterrichtung, Heft 6 (Weimar, Germany: Verlag Deutsche Christen, 1937), 6.

members of the *Volk*. By remaining loyal to both God and the nation, God would reward the German Christians through sanctifying the race and *Volk*.<sup>59</sup> The German Christians wanted to assist God to bring this pure kingdom to earth. As the chosen people of God, they did their best to serve their *Volk* as God commanded. The German Christians believed that God supported them and entrusted to them the commandments to preserve "race, nationality and nation, and the orders of life."<sup>60</sup>

To further support their claims, the German Christians described Martin Luther as the prophet of the German people and the one who began true German Christianity. In the mind of the German Christians, Luther saved Christianity from its dark times, much as Hitler would lead Germany to a new era. By establishing Luther as a chosen prophet of God and comparing him to Hitler, the German Christians argued that God continued to favor the Germany. Thus, the German Christians would also be the chosen people of God in Germany, because they followed Luther's teachings.<sup>61</sup> The German Christians first used Luther to unify the German Protestant churches and assist the German public to identify with the nationalist cause. They then likened Luther's history and accomplishments to Hitler and the National Socialist state to strengthen both nationalist and Christian pride. The descriptions of Luther used simple, easy to understand language that is full of visual images. The language attempted to establish a sense of pride and

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<sup>59</sup> "Die ersten Richtlinien der Glaubensbewegung 'Deutsche Christen.'" in *Handbuch der Deutschen Christen*, Principle 7.

<sup>60</sup> "Die ersten Richtlinien der Glaubensbewegung 'Deutsche Christen.'" in *Handbuch der Deutschen Christen*, Principle 7.

<sup>61</sup> "Die von den 'Deutschen Christen' allgemein anerkannten 28 Thesen der Sächsischen Kirche" in *Handbuch der Deutschen Christen*, Thesis 20.

identification in the reader. The images portrayed a struggling, yet triumphant Luther with the German people waiting for him to lead them to a new era.

In order to appeal to the German public, the German Christian movement identified Luther as coming from the farmlands.<sup>62</sup> Many of the German public were farmers, so a leader that originated there and knew the struggle that the people faced was appealing. One article, entitled "Der Prophet der Deutschen" [the Prophet of the Germans], described the farmland as the heart of Germany and the health of the *Volk* dependent on the health of the farmlands.<sup>63</sup> Luther, originating from the farmlands, had a difficult childhood, full of struggle and hardships. He grew up in a strict and disciplined family, which was a sign of devoted and loving parents because they cared enough to teach their children responsibility.<sup>64</sup> The control and care of Luther's childhood was a common experience to which many Germans could relate, especially in the farmland. The German Christians intimately connected Luther to the farmlands and to the German farmers through his history and common experiences. Luther became someone that the German public could understand and about which they could care since his childhood was familiar to many of the public.

In order to further recognition of Luther as a critical to both Christian and German history, the German Christians portrayed him as a dramatic character, on which the fate of the world hinged. The German Christians identified Luther as a leader that brought hope, but also brought struggle, since no true victory comes without struggle.<sup>65</sup> To

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<sup>62</sup> Ilgenstein-Ratterfeld, "Der Prophet der Deutschen," 1.

<sup>63</sup> Ilgenstein-Ratterfeld, "Der Prophet der Deutschen," 1.

<sup>64</sup> Ilgenstein-Rattenfeld, "Der Prophet der Deutschen," 1-2.

create this leading role for Luther and to attempt to engage the readers emotionally, an article in *Handbuch der Deutschen Christen* states:

The hammer blows that nailed [the 95 Theses] to the church door ushered in a new era. The word had been spoken, on which time had waited. The Theses flew through Germany "as if the angel himself was the running messenger." The electric spark started off. German *Volk* perked their ears and held their breath.

A light ray of hope glowed in the German hearts. The German *Volk* recognized their leader: "He is it! He is here, the one on whom we have waited! He will begin it"!

But revolution means struggle. And there is nothing on earth worth fighting for that is won without struggle.<sup>66</sup>

The vivid imagery showed Luther ringing in a new era and acting as a messenger of God. The German Christians attempted to install a sense of pride using Luther as a savior of the German people. He brought light into their hearts and began the Reformation as they had waited hopefully. Luther had saved the German people from darkness and corruption. For this, the German public should be grateful and be willing to struggle out of a sense of duty and pride, as Luther had fought for salvation of the German people.<sup>67</sup> This passage also allowed the German Christians to prepare members of the German Christian movement to fight for the movement. As Luther had faced difficulties when he hailed a new era, so the German Christians might also encounter resistance and critics. Instead of this opposition being discouraging to the members, they would be more likely to continue to support the movement, struggling as Luther had.

Once the German public accepted Luther as a prophet of German people in the past, the German Christians claimed that Luther was a prophet that was still applicable in

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<sup>65</sup> Ilgenstein-Ratterfeld, "Der Prophet der Deutschen," 4.

<sup>66</sup> Ilgenstein-Ratterfeld, "Der Prophet der Deutschen," 4.

<sup>67</sup> Ilgenstein-Ratterfeld, "Der Prophet der Deutschen," 4.

the Third Reich. The public should remember Luther and his struggle as Germany once again stood at the crossroads of change. As Luther changed German history forever, so Germany was again at a great moment of change with the rise of Hitler. The new German state "...will blossom in such holiness that everyone here will listen more to the voice of the prophet."<sup>68</sup> The new reformer would have the full support of the German Christians, in remembrance of Luther, the previous great reformer of German history.<sup>69</sup>

According to the German Christians, Hitler was the prophet of a new era. He believed in Germany when there was nothing left to believe in, much as Luther had.<sup>70</sup> The German Christians maintained that Luther and Hitler were very alike with similar objectives in mind:

As our Dr. Martin Luther, with his "Nevertheless," "and when the world was full of the Devil" formed the German reformation and freed the core of the German souls, so will Adolf Hitler with his belief in Germany as the instrument of God, who is the molder of German destiny and frees our *Volk* from inner pain and contradiction.<sup>71</sup>

As Luther had brought hope and freedom to Germans, Hitler would also bring inner peace in the current time. Of specific interest in this passage, are the references of "God" and "Devil." Luther came at a time when the world was full of the devil. The church was corrupt; lust for money and power gripped it.<sup>72</sup> His reformation freed the church and the soul of the German people from this corruption. In the same way, Hitler was also acting with God and believed that Germany was an instrument of God, according the

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<sup>68</sup> Ilgenstein-Ratterfeld, "Der Prophet der Deutschen," 11.

<sup>69</sup> Bd., "Luther - Hitler," 1.

<sup>70</sup> Bd., "Luther - Hitler," 2.

<sup>71</sup> Bd., "Luther - Hitler," 2.

<sup>72</sup> Ilgenstein-Rattenfeld, "Der Prophet der Deutschen," 3.



German Christians. Hitler would free the German souls from strife, since the world was once again full of the devil and corruption.<sup>73</sup> God had specifically chosen both Hitler and Luther to cleanse the world and free the German people.<sup>74</sup> Therefore, those that followed and supported Luther and Hitler were people that God had specifically chosen to help cleanse the world.

These arguments and assertions allowed the German Christians to justify and believe that God supported them as National Socialists. The German Christians claimed that when National Socialism and Christianity merged, it was a holy experience.<sup>75</sup> National Socialism had the power and support of God to encourage it. Yet, Christianity had one inherent problem that blocked the complete mergence of Christianity and National Socialism – its Jewish roots. The German Christian movement somehow needed to eliminate the Jewish influences in Christianity so that it could be completely separate from Judaism. The German Christian movement could then support the persecution of the Jews without being hypocritical in the minds of the German public. Without Christianity's complete with Judaism, the German Christians would be unable to justify God's call to eliminate the origins of the religion without casting skepticism on the religion itself since it began as corrupted.

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<sup>73</sup> Bd, "Luther – Hitler," 2.

<sup>74</sup> Ilgenstein-Rattenfeld, 9.

<sup>75</sup> Bd. "Luther – Hitler," 2.

## **Chapter 5: German Christians and the Jews**

The German Christians had established a Christian movement based on national pride and racial purity. Despite the emotional rhetoric and carefully reasoned logic, the German Christians faced a paradox. The Christian religion had begun from Jewish roots. Jesus the Christ was a Jew. The Bible was filled with Jewish influences, such as the entire Old Testament and many continuing references in the New Testament. In order for the German Christians to be able to combine Christianity and National Socialism and the Nazi regime to support or even accept the movement, the German Christians needed fit into their own criteria of a pure Aryan religion.

While a drive for purity was a motivating force, it was not enough to justify an abrupt cleansing of the roots of Christianity in the minds of the German public. They might have seen some methods, such as simply declaring the Jesus in opposition Judaism as too surprising or deleting the Old Testament, as too radical and abrupt. Somehow, the German Christians needed to purge their religion and religious background of the Jewish influences and establish Christianity as a pure German religion. Yet, they also needed to do this in a way that was logical to the German public and also gradually, in order that the public would accept the concepts presented by the German Christians. The German Christians approached this dilemma with methods that they hoped would strengthen their

position. The German Christians attempted to apply the same logical approach and emotional engagement that they had previously in order to claim to be the chosen people and to assist them to theologically justify some of their explanations and methods of purification.

The German Christians used multiple tactics to remove the Jewish influences and place Christianity in opposition to Judaism. Each method was a seemingly small logical step, based on prior accepted precedents, and so did not seem to be extreme to most of the German public. For example, it is difficult to see wrong in explaining ideas in the Bible so that they can be more accessible and applicable to the lives of the German public. Indeed, it can even be commendable, as was Luther's translation of the Bible into German.<sup>76</sup> When examined individually, the methods seem to be understandable to the German public. It is when one examines the German Christian movement's progression of explanation and actions retrospectively that each individual method becomes part of a process and the cumulative effect seen.

The German Christians needed to defend the position of Jesus Christ. Jesus of Nazareth's heritage was Jewish, and Christianity followed the teaching of Christ. This was a problem if the German Christians were to remove Jewish influences in Christianity. Therefore, the German Christians needed to find a way to either purify Jesus or explain his heritage. The German Christians specifically disagreed with two of the views of Jesus at the time. The German Christian movement opposed "Liberalism," which placed an emphasis on Jesus' humanity and elevated human rational above God.<sup>77</sup> The German

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<sup>76</sup> Howard Chandler Robbins, *The Germanization of the New Testament by Ludwig Müller and Weidemann*. Friends of Europe Publications, No. 64 (London: Ripley Publishing Society, 1938), 7.

Christians also rejected Orthodoxy because its rigidity restricted humans from exploring the Gospel on their own to discover what was there.<sup>78</sup> The German Christians took a different route early in the movement and combined what they believed to be the most important aspects of Jesus. They claimed that Jesus Christ encompassed all of humanity, and all races were accountable to God. The essence of Jesus was important to the German Christians, not the humanity. Jesus' person revealed God's personality. This made the question of Jesus' ethnic heritage inconsequential because it did not change his essence. As the movement began, whether Jesus was Aryan or Jewish did not matter.<sup>79</sup>

However, later in the German Christian movement, the ethnicity of Jesus began to change. The German Christians were no longer satisfied to claim that Jesus' heritage did not matter. Jesus should be completely separated from Judaism, so that he would not have a conflict of interest with his heritage when he fully opposed Judaism. With this reasoning, the pamphlets published by the German Christians began described Jesus as Aryan. To explain how Jesus could be Aryan, the German Christians relied on the work first proposed by Houston Chamberlain in the early 1900s. For example, in Bishop Weidemann's Germanized Gospel of John, he supports a theory known as the Galilee hypothesis. The hypothesis stated that Aryans inhabited Galilee at the time of Jesus. Instead, Jews lived only in Judea, separated from the Aryans.<sup>80</sup> Since Jesus' family was from Nazareth in Galilee, it made his heritage Aryan, not Jewish.

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<sup>77</sup> "Die von den "Deutschen Christen" allgemein anerkannten 28 Thesen der Sächsischen Kirche" in *Handbuch der Deutschen Christen*, Thesis 16.

<sup>78</sup> "Die von den "Deutschen Christen" allgemein anerkannten 28 Thesen der Sächsischen Kirche" in *Handbuch der Deutschen Christen*, Thesis 17.

<sup>79</sup> "Die von den "Deutschen Christen" allgemein anerkannten 28 Thesen der Sächsischen Kirche" in *Handbuch der Deutschen Christen*, Thesis 18.

A pamphlet published by the German Christians, entitled *Jesus und die Juden!* [Jesus and the Jews!], the German Christians directly address the question of whether or not Jesus was Jewish. The German Christians described the genealogy of Jesus as written in Matthew and Luke as unreliable due to three reasons. First, Matthew and Luke's records of Jesus' ancestry do not agree with each other.<sup>81</sup> There is no way to tell which record, if either, is accurate. Thus, the German Christians considered that neither record was believable. Second, both Matthew and Luke display the "brand mark of shoddy scholarship."<sup>82</sup> While the Gospel of Luke has four epochs and twenty generations, Matthew only has three epochs and fourteen generations between Abraham, David, Zerubbabel, and Joseph. Finally, the German Christians questioned how Jesus could be the son of David and Jewish. If Mary was a virgin, as the scriptures claim, Joseph could not have been Jesus' biological father, through which Matthew and Luke trace Jesus' lineage.<sup>83</sup>

When the German Christian movement combined their rejection of Jesus' genealogy with the Galilee hypothesis, it could logically justify to the German public claiming that Jesus an Aryan instead of a Jew. This separated the origins of Christianity from Judaism because the person that Christianity followed was no longer Jewish. According to the German Christians, the beginning of the Christian church was then pure from the Jewish influences. The German Christians stood firmly on an assertion of Chamberlain, which claimed that "the possibility that Christ was not a Jew, that he had

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<sup>80</sup> Robbins, *The Germanization of the New Testament...*, 11.

<sup>81</sup> Bund für deutsches Christentum, *Jesus and the Juden!*, 3.

<sup>82</sup> Bund für deutsches Christentum, *Jesus and the Juden!*, 3.

<sup>83</sup> Bund für deutsches Christentum, *Jesus and the Juden!*, 3.

no drop of Jewish blood in his ancestry, is so large that it almost equals a certainty."<sup>84</sup>

Since Jesus was not Jewish, the German Christians were free to base their movement on the teachings of Jesus without the fear that the public would see the German Christians as hypocritical, attacking the root of their own religion. Jesus was not a Jewish leader, but rather a person who tried to teach the Jews about a new kingdom of God.

Once German Christians negated the importance of the Jesus' heritage or claimed that he was Aryan, the German Christian movement could place Jesus in conflict with Judaism, stating:

The kingdom that he [Jesus] heralded was completely different from the Jewish desire of a God-state under world domination. The Jews would not have crucified him, if he announced their ideas of a realized and appropriate kind [instead of ideas that opposed their plans]. Jesus is not from Judaism, but rather stands in conflict to Judaism.<sup>85</sup>

Jesus represented a fighting force against Judaism. The German Christians claimed that the Jews crucified Jesus for his ideas and his opposition to their plans to establish world domination. If Jesus had proclaimed what the Jews wished to hear, then the Jews would not have crucified him.<sup>86</sup>

The German Christian movement placed Jesus and Judaism in strict opposition to each other, in a battle of the good of God verses the evil of Judaism. In the pamphlet *Jesus und die Juden!*, the German Christians stated that Jesus was murdered by the Jews because he recognized that their innermost nature was nothing but death and lies.

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<sup>84</sup> Bund für deutsches Christentum, *Jesus and the Juden!*, 3.

<sup>85</sup> Bund für deutsches Christentum, *Gebet dem Kaiser...*, 3.

<sup>86</sup> Bund für deutsches Christentum, *Gebet dem Kaiser...*, 3.

Therefore, those who followed Christ had a duty to Christ to fight Judaism and unveil its satanic nature to the world.<sup>87</sup>

Jesus recognized that there existed for the people “no more dangerous foe next to the Devil” (Luther) than Judaism. He, whom the Jews would want to murder because of the truth, because he knew he was sent to testify, recognized the two characteristics of the satanic Judaism in its God-adverse terribleness: Death and Lies!<sup>88</sup>

This passage attempted to engage the reader both logically and emotionally. The German Christians explained Jesus’ purpose on earth as to testify against the Jews, which is the only reason why they wished to kill him. Again, this separated Jesus from Judaism; he did not come from Judaism, but rather fought against it until death.

Emotionally, the German Christians designed the passage to have the reader support the heroic figure fighting against the evil, satanic Judaism. Jesus came to free the world from Jewish domination, but was tragically murdered. The German Christians also used a quote from Luther to show that he also opposed Judaism (despite that the excerpt from Luther does not say what he believed the second most dangerous foe actually was). Since the German Christians were continuing the work of opposing Judaism, they followed Jesus and Luther.<sup>89</sup> Another part of the emotional appeal was that this passage was easy to remember for the German public. Phrases that were bolded were “zwei Wesenszüge des satanischen Judentums” and “Mord und Lüge” [two characteristics of satanic Judaism... Death and lies!].<sup>90</sup> When read together and aloud, these passages form

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<sup>87</sup> Bund für deutsches Christentum, *Jesus and the Juden!*, 4.

<sup>88</sup> Bund für deutsches Christentum, *Jesus and the Juden!*, 4.

<sup>89</sup> Bund für deutsches Christentum, *Jesus and the Juden!*, 4.

<sup>90</sup> Bund für deutsches Christentum, *Jesus and the Juden!*, 4.

a rhythm and rhyme that the German public could remember and recite, similar to a nursery rhyme.

The Jewish roots of Christianity were originally also a problem for the German Christian movement. Early in the movement, before the Aryan Jesus theory evolved, the German Christian movement could not deny that Christianity had come from Judaism, yet it had to condemn Judaism in order to remain consistent with its ideology and in favor with the National Socialist Party. Therefore, the German Christians felt the need to strongly state that Christianity had no connection with Judaism and instead arose out of opposition to Judaism. Using similar ideas that placed Jesus in opposition in Judaism, Reich Bishop Müller, in a speech at a German Christian rally in 1934, commented on the relationship of Judaism and Christianity, stating that:

Therefore, the resolution must become emphatic that Christianity did not develop out of Judaism, but rather out of opposition to Judaism, and when Christianity and Judaism speak today, both stand in their innermost nature in steep opposition to each other; here is no solidarity, but rather sharp contrast.<sup>91</sup>

Müller states that the relationship between Judaism and Christianity is not evolutionary; Christianity is not modified Judaism. Instead, he claims that they are fundamentally opposing forces. Christianity developed in order to combat Judaism as God desired. Indeed, the German Christians believed that they could not state the evil influence of the Jews strongly enough and that God had called them to fight the Jewish influence as their Christian duty.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Müller, *Der Reichsbischof: Die Deutschen Christen*, 14.

<sup>92</sup> Pfarrer Themel, "Sozialfrage," in *Volk und Kirche*. Schriftenreihe der "Deutschen Christian". Heft 4 (Berlin-Charlottenburg: Max Grevenmeyer, 1933), 35.



By 1937, the Galilee hypothesis negated the need for the German Christians to continually defend the origins of Christianity. The original problem for the German Christian movement was that Jesus was a Jew. Therefore, Christianity had evolved from Judaism, since it followed the teachings of a Jew. Once the Galilee hypothesis established Jesus as Aryan, the German Christians could claim to be Christian without constantly trying to set up opposition between Christianity and Judaism. Because of Jesus' origins and work of fighting Judaism, that opposition was already there.

The question then became what to do with the scriptures that contained the Jewish influence. The Old Testament was a major scripture that was Jewish in origin. Yet, the German Christians did not feel that they could simply remove the Old Testament without disturbing the foundation of a church that was based on the entire Bible.<sup>93</sup> The German Christian movement kept the Old Testament as part of their accepted Scriptures, but instead used it to further separate Christianity and Judaism. The Old Testament was important because it "contains the history and downfall of a nation that, despite the revelations of God, continuously separates itself from God."<sup>94</sup> The statement continued to say that a nation's attitude towards God is decisive for the rest of the history of that nation.<sup>95</sup> The German Christian movement argued that God therefore cursed Judaism because the Jews had turned away from God so many times in the Old Testament. The Jews had sinned against God by not following the directions of God. God's curse of the

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<sup>93</sup> "Die von den "Deutschen Christen" allgemein anerkannten 28 Thesen der Sächsischen Kirche" in *Handbuch der Deutschen Christen*, Thesis 10.

<sup>94</sup> "Die von den "Deutschen Christen" allgemein anerkannten 28 Thesen der Sächsischen Kirche" in *Handbuch der Deutschen Christen*, Thesis 12.

<sup>95</sup> "Die von den "Deutschen Christen" allgemein anerkannten 28 Thesen der Sächsischen Kirche" in *Handbuch der Deutschen Christen*, Thesis 12.

Jews manifested in the Jews' crucifixion of Christ, as only a cursed people would murder the Son of God.<sup>96</sup>

The German Christians had mixed feelings about what to do with the Old Testament. While the Old Testament demonstrated how the Jews had failed to listen to God, because of this God cursed them, it also showed the first light of God's love. The love eventually revealed itself in the form of Jesus Christ. For these reasons, the German Christians felt that they were unable to reject the Old Testament.<sup>97</sup> Instead, they used it to explain why God had cursed Judaism. In this way, they were able to leave in the Old Testament in the Bible, since removing it completely might cause some anger in the German public, and still be able to explain and use it to justify the German Christian movement's ideology.

The German Christians also rewrote sections of the New Testament in order to purge the Jewish influences and have a purified scripture. Examples of these rewritings, contained in the book "Germanization of the New Testament," are the Gospel of John, revised by Bishop Weidemann, and the Sermon on the Mount from the Gospel of Matthew, revised by Ludwig Müller. These are prominent examples of how some methods of the German Christians to rid the Bible of Jewish influences could seem to be merely making the Bible more accessible and understandable to the German public. While at first retrospective glance and in historical context, the German Christians' rewriting of the Bible may seem reprehensible and an obvious attempt to eliminate

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<sup>96</sup> "Die von den "Deutschen Christen" allgemein anerkannten 28 Thesen der Sächsischen Kirche" in *Handbuch der Deutschen Christen*, Thesis 13.

<sup>97</sup> "Die von den "Deutschen Christen" allgemein anerkannten 28 Thesen der Sächsischen Kirche" in *Handbuch der Deutschen Christen*, Thesis 13.

Jewish influences. Yet, many people have rewritten the Bible in order to assist people to understand the Scriptures.<sup>98</sup> All new versions and new translations may also change possible interpretations of the Bible. Most seem to be harmless without many political agendas. The German Christian version of the Bible was not unique in that it was a version with a different interpretation of the scriptures. It is only when one examines the overall pattern of changes, deletions, and language usage that the authors' motives and attempts to purify the texts become apparent.

Weidemann's Gospel of John removed all Jewish references, such as Moses, the Hebrew prophets, and Hebrew places.<sup>99</sup> With these deletions, messages of the texts shifted slightly. An example is the rewriting of John 6:32. The crowds to whom Jesus spoke questioned him as to the signs that he would give them to show that he was from God. Verses 30-31 reference the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt in the Old Testament, saying that "[God] gave them bread from heaven to eat." Placing John 6:32 from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) next to the Germanization illuminate some of the differences between the two versions.

Germanized Version	NRSV
Jesus answered: I tell you the truth, these old stories which ye are always invoking, help you not at all. My Father alone gives you the true bread of God. <sup>100</sup>	Then Jesus said to them, "Very truly I tell you, it was not Moses who gives you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven."

One interpretation of the NRSV is Jesus reminding the crowds that follow him that Moses himself did not provide the manna in the desert, but rather the manna came

<sup>98</sup> A search on Amazon.com (for +Bible +version) will bring up at least eleven different versions. The "Germanized New Testament" does not sound that differently from some other versions. For example, within the search was a version entitled "New American Standard Version."

<sup>99</sup> Robbins, *The Germanization of the New Testament...*, 11.

<sup>100</sup> Robbins, *The Germanization of the New Testament...*, 16.

from God. Thus, the crowds should remember that God is the source, as opposed to the source being the one on earth who is delivering God's message, in this passage, Moses. Weidemann's version, with the removal of Moses and general reference to the Old Testament, can be interpreted very differently. While God still was the source of all things, Jesus described the Old Testament and its stories as useless to the crowds.<sup>101</sup> In this passage, the crowds referenced the Old Testament stories, specifically the story of Moses feeding the Israelites, in order to understand where Jesus was coming from and what he meant in comparison to what they understood. They attempted to contextualize Jesus. Yet, Jesus explained to the crowd the lack of help that the old stories provided to them, which did not allow the Jews to place Jesus within the framework of the Old Testament as someone who connected with their past. In this way, Weidemann's rewriting separated Jesus from the old stories and thus from the history of the Jews. Instead of a reminder, Jesus' statement became an admonishment to the crowds to leave the stories and the history in order to follow God.

Weidemann's Gospel of John distinctly separated Jesus from his Jewish history and described Jesus as desiring to establish an entirely different church. In John 2:13-18, Jesus had just dispersed those selling cattle and sheep and moneylenders in the temple, shouting at them to stop making the temple a market place. Following this, the Jews approached Jesus in the temple and questioned what sign from God he was he able to demonstrate by disrupting the business that was taking place. In verses 19-23, Jesus responded to those challenging him. Again, the different versions could convey quite different possible interpretations.

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<sup>101</sup> Robbins, *The Germanization of the New Testament*..., 16.

Germanized Version	NRSV
<p>Jesus grew angry and said: Tear down this building and in three days I will create a new church... The Jews marked not that Jesus meant another church. But when on the third day after his death the new church arose, his followers remembered these words and they believed the word which Jesus had prophesied.<sup>102</sup></p>	<p>Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." The Jews then said, "This temple has been under construction for 46 years, and will you raise it up in three days?" But he spoke of the temple of his body. After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed in the scripture and the word Jesus had spoken.</p>

Noteworthy is Weidemann's use of the word "church" three times in this passage, where the word is missing completely from the original text and also the NRSV.<sup>103</sup> Weidemann described Jesus as establishing a new church that came out of confrontation with Judaism and separated itself from Old Testament scriptures. Weidemann also eliminated references to the physical resurrection of Jesus, making it not Jesus that rose from the dead, but rather a new church organization. This church, described by Jesus in the Germanized version, was completely disconnected from the Judaism. In the Germanized version, the Jews did not pay attention to the implications of Jesus' statements, instead of not understanding what Jesus was saying, as in the NRSV. Thus, on the third day, when the new church rose, it rose in opposition to Judaism, according to what Jesus had prophesied. Weidemann placed Jesus in direct confrontation with the Jews of the time. In addition, the elimination of disciple's recollection of the predictions of scripture and instead remembering Jesus' words was the final cut that severed Jesus from Judaism in this passage.

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<sup>102</sup> Robbins, *The Germanization of the New Testament*..., 13.

<sup>103</sup> Mary Solberg. Conversation in "Senior Thesis." Monday, November 3, 2003. 10:45 am.

Ludwig Müller made changes similar as Weidemann's when he rewrote the Sermon on the Mount from the Gospel of Matthew. Müller chose to begin his rewriting with the Sermon on the Mount because he believed that "the whole Sermon on the Mount is nothing but a powerful divine call to the service of God and the comradeship of the nation."<sup>104</sup> Müller shifted the passages to emphasize nationalism in the service of God, while he claimed to be rewriting the scriptures, in order that the German public could better understand the texts, as Luther had.<sup>105</sup> Yet, Müller's rewriting also altered the meaning of the passages. Matthew 5:38-41, in which Jesus lectured on forgiveness, illuminated some of the changes Müller made.

Germanized Version	NRSV
I say to you, it is better so to live with your fellow-countrymen that you get on well together. The community of the <i>Volk</i> is a high and holy good for which you must make sacrifices. Therefore, accommodate your adversary as far as possible before breaking with him altogether. If your comrade, in his excitement, strikes you in the face, it is not always right to strike back at once. It is more manly to control oneself; probably your comrade will then be ashamed.	You have heard that it was said, "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." But I say to you, Do not resist an evildoer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also; and if anyone wants to sue you and take your coat, give your cloak as well; and if anyone forces you to go one mile, go also the second mile.

Not only did Müller's text focused on national camaraderie and excluded everyone outside of the nation, but it also changed the message of forgiveness. The NRSV text stated that people should not retaliate against those who strike or injure them. In this lecture, Jesus advocated a passive lifestyle, with an emphasis on forgiveness. The Germanized version emphasized pride of self-control over one's anger, in belief that

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<sup>104</sup> Robbins, *The Germanization of the New Testament...*, 26.

<sup>105</sup> Robbins, *The Germanization of the New Testament...*, 26.

perhaps the comrade was merely excited and did not mean to strike. Since the comrade did not intend to strike, it was not always right to immediately retaliate. Müller promoted maintaining one's own self control to see if the comrade was eventually ashamed by his outburst and lack of control.<sup>106</sup> The passage no longer emphasized forgiveness; rather it endorsed control and pride within the nation as a teaching of Jesus.

The German Christians used multiple methods to remove all Jewish influences from Christianity. At the beginning of the movement, the German Christians claimed that only Jesus' essence mattered, not his Jewish heritage. Then, the German Christians' concept of Jesus evolved, and he became an Aryan. The Old Testament showed the historical straying of the Jews from God. The German Christian movement also placed Jesus Christ and Christianity diametrically opposed to Judaism. Finally, the German Christians rewrote what could not explained, such as the New Testament scriptures that contained Jewish influence. With the rewritings, the German Christians believed that they had removed the Jewish influences from the Bible. In this way, the German Christians were able to separate themselves from their Jewish roots. The German Christians believed that their religion no longer had any ties to Judaism, except in the duty to oppose Judaism.

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<sup>106</sup> Robbins, *The Germanization of the New Testament* ..., 26.

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

The German Christian movement supported the rising National Socialist movement and claimed to be the National Church of Germany. In order to fully merge with National Socialism and have a place in the new regime, the German Christian Movement needed to justify through Scriptures and argument the actions of the National Socialists. The movement also desired to gain members and because of this, members held the movement accountable for its explanations. The German Christians did not want to appear to be too radical, or they would lose followers, yet they needed move quickly enough to support the rising regime's actions. The German Christians gave full support to the persecution of the Jews. Beginning with Christianity and the concept of *Volk* as its foundations, the German Christians justified their collaboration through a series of logically reasoned arguments. They also attempted to engage their members and potential members emotionally, which would make them more dedicated and involved in the cause.

The logic of the German Christian Faith Movement was very methodical. If one followed each step, then the movement explained that in order to be faithful to God, it was the duty of Christians to persecute the Jews. To the German Christians, a God-given racially based kingdom was one part of an answer to a very simple equation. If one starts



with the foundation of Christianity and nationalism, then one must believe that God supports the initial steps, or the entire movement is wrong and must start over with new foundations. If God supports the movement, then it follows that God also supports those in the movement. If the movement is based only on racial and national criteria, then God only accepts those who are of the race and nationality of the movement. These people are then the chosen people, since God only supports them and, by logic, no one else. God also encourages the movement through prophets of the people. Those selected show both elements of the foundations, as Martin Luther did. The work that the movement does is then the work that God desires, because the chosen people follow the will of God. By doing God's work, God will reward them with what is the continued dream and prayed for by many Christians, included Jesus Christ – God's kingdom come and will be done on earth as it is in heaven.<sup>107</sup>

If the foundations are racial and national, then the kingdom will only come to those who are of the correct faith and race, and all outsiders will be exiled from the kingdom. These German Christians identified these outsiders with two criteria. There were those that were not Aryan and those that were Jewish. God had commanded that the German race be kept pure. Thus, God rejected the outsiders based on their race, but those who were not Aryan who had rejected God were the most cursed. Scriptures portrayed this curse and showed when the Jews had turned against God numerous times. Judaism had betrayed God to the point of crucifying the Son of God because he hailed a different kingdom than the world domination that they desired. Jesus had come in opposition to Judaism and was crucified. For that reason, Christianity deeply conflicted

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<sup>107</sup> Luke 11:2-4.

Judaism. In their duty of purification to God and in response to their religion, the German Christians supported the persecution of the Jews and the actions of the National Socialists completely.

It is in retrospect that we can place all of the pieces together into a chain of events and arguments. Often the question arises, "How could they ever do such a thing? How could Christians support Hitler?" Yet, if each piece examined on its own, the real question becomes: "What about it do we now consider wrong?" Is there anything that we know now that could prevent the Holocaust from happening again? What is inherently wrong about the arguments of the German Christians? Perhaps, the true horror is not that they supported Hitler, but rather that similar circumstances where Christian churches fully support the extermination of people could happen again. Perhaps the real fear is that there is the individual steps of the German Christians would be something that we would do or have done. The German Christians are then not a strange phenomenon that could never occur again. Instead, they could be more similar to us than we care to admit.

By examining the German Christian movement, we become better equipped to understand when we should stop simply accepting ideas and actions because they seem logical and appeal emotionally. Rather, we may be better able to recognize underlying implications and how the actions and ideas may be used and affect the future, as we become familiar with the strategies that the German Christians used. Studying how and why the German Christian movement worked to recruit and convince people may assist us to be more cautious in our every day actions. Retrospectively, we are more easily able to judge actions and ideas, and follow the advice given by former supporter of the

National Socialist regime, reflecting on her past and the Holocaust, warning contemporary society:

So be careful what games you play, what songs you sing,  
What uniform you wear, what leader you choose to follow.  
Think about the consequences of joining something that could  
Give you lifelong trouble, like the memory of a twisted cross...<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> Julie Heifetz, "Confessions," from "Oral History and the Holocaust," in *Moving Toward Respect*. Appendix 21: Youth Roles (Cincinnati: Contemporary Holocaust Education Foundation, 2001), 109.

## Unser Vater

Welten versinken, Völker vergehen,  
Du aber bleibst in Ewigkeit!  
Vater unser, der Du bist im Himmel.

Der Du vom Himmelszelt die Geschicke der Menschheit fñhrest,  
Und mit ehernem Griffel die Geschichte der Völker schreibest,  
Sib auch uns Kraft Deinen Willen zu tun,  
Sib uns Erkenntnis Dein Wort zu verstehen!  
Seheiligt werde Dein Name.

Der Du unserem Volke seinen Raum gabst,  
Und uns lehrtest dieses Land zu lieben,  
Sib, daß diese Liebe groß und rein werde,  
Um als Dein Werkzeug würdig zu sein.  
Zu uns komme Dein Reich.

Du läßt unsere Liebe in Kampf und Liebe erstarken,  
Unseres Volkes treueste Söhne gaben ihr Leben für diese Liebe.  
Möge das Blut dieser Helden die Saat zu neuer Freiheit sein.  
Saat zur Frucht, Frucht zur Ernte! Opfer zur Freiheit, Freiheit zum Leben.  
Dein Wille geschehe wie im Himmel also auch auf Erden.

So wie Deiner Sonne Kraft die Saat zur Frucht läßt werden,  
So wird dieser Liebe Opferkraft die Freiheit des Landes erkämpfen,  
Auf daß jedem das Seine werde,  
Und unsere Kinder als freie Menschen bitten:  
Unser täglich Brot gib uns heute.

Du trennstest das Licht von der Finsternis,  
Und das Licht des Tages kündet den Sieg Deiner Schöpfung.  
Wenn wir bei unserem Vorwärtstürmen ob der Not des Landes  
Die Feinde treffen, das Verderben zu bannen  
Vergib uns unsere Schuld, wie wir vergeben unseren Schuldigern.

Laß Du sie erkennen, daß die Nacht der Knechtschaft  
Dem Licht der Freiheit weichen muß.  
Unser Wollen ist ehrlich.  
Drum nimm Du unsere Hände und leite uns.  
Und führe uns nicht in Versuchung, sondern erlöse uns von dem Uebel.

Jetzt wendest Du ein Blatt im Buche Deiner Geschichte.  
In flammenden Lettern stehen dort die Worte:  
Von Kampf und Liebe und Opfer, zur Freiheit, zum Leben, zum Licht,  
Wenn auch Welten versinken und Völker vergehen,  
Dein Wort bleibt!  
Denn Dein ist das Reich und die Kraft und die Herrlichkeit in  
Ewigkeit! Amen.

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24. Das ist die christliche Heilshoffnung, die der Mensch aller Zeiten und Völker braucht. Das Heil ist in Kreuz und Auferstehung Jesu fest begründet.

25. Diese Verkündigung, die mit dem wirklichen Gott und dem wirklichen Menschen in gleicher Weise Ernst macht, verhindert die Wiederkehr von Materialismus und Liberalismus auf dem Umweg über die Religion.

26. Christusglaube, der nicht zur Tat wird, ist in einer Volkskirche wertlos. Die Tat des Christusglaubens ist entschieden erkannt gegen alles Böse und mutige Entschlossenheit zu Dienst und Opfer.

27. Darum versteht die Volkskirche unter positivem Christentum (Punkt 24 des Parteiprogramms): Glaube an Christus, Erlösung durch Christus, Handeln aus Christus.

28. Dieses deutsche Christentum bildet die einzige Grundlage, auf der sich deutsche Menschen auch im Glauben einigen können.

## Appendix 2

### Deutsche Christen

Berlin Charlottenburg, Joachimsthallerstr. 35.

### Aufnahme = Erklärung

Ich erkläre hiermit meinen Beitritt zur Glaubensbewegung „Deutsche Christen“, deren Richtlinien ich kenne und deren Leitung ich mich unterstelle.

Ich bin deutscher-arischer-Abstammung, gehöre keiner Freimaurerloge oder sonst einem Geheimbunde an und werde einer solchen auch für die Dauer meiner Zugehörigkeit zu den „Deutschen Christen“ nicht beitreten. Ich gehöre zu keiner sonstigen kirchlichen Gruppe. Ich verpflichte mich zu einem Monatsbeitrag von . . . . . Mk.

NSDAP-Mitglied Nr. . . . . - angemeldet am: . . . . .  
Leserlich schreiben!

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Stand od. Beruf: . . . . .

Wohnort: . . . . .

. . . . . Straße Nr.: . . . . .

Geburtsdag: . . . . . ob getauft: . . . . .

ob konfirmiert: . . . . . Datum: . . . . .

(Eigenhändige Unterschrift)

Aufnahmebeitrag Mk. . . . . Werbebeitrag Mk. . . . .

Der deutsche Christ kämpft  
für  
das Evangelium im Dritten Reich

Das  
„**Evangelium im Dritten Reich**“  
(Kirchenzeitung für evangelische Nationalsozialisten)  
ist Waffe und Wegweiser in diesem Kampf.

Dr. jur. *Kinder*

An die  
Gesellschaft für Zeitungsdienst G. m. b. H.  
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Ty

## Bücher, die wir empfehlen:

Wilhelm Bauer

### Feierstunden Deutscher Christen

Ganzkleinen NM. 5. —, broschiert NM. 4. —  
Im grundtäglichen Zeit dieses Buches wird der Weg vom Erlebnis der deutschen Wende zur Christusgemeinde der Deutschen ausgewiesen. 29 praktische Feierstundenentwürfe sind gleichzeitig ein praktischer Versuch gottesdienstlicher Neugestaltung. Das Buch ist der lebendige Beweis dafür, wie in der Kirchenbewegung Deutsche Christen nicht nur geredet und organisiert, sondern aus fester, gläubiger Haltung heraus gearbeitet worden ist.

Für einen Pfarrer, Lehrer oder Gemeindeführer ist dies Buch schätzenswert, unentbehrlich, für jeden Deutschen Christen aber ein wertvoller Besitz.

Wilhelm Bauer

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Der Schriftleiter der Thüringer „Briefe an Deutsche Christen“ hat darin das Beste von dem, was im Ringen um die Neuverding der Kirche in jenen Wätern geschrieben wurde, gesammelt. Es sind Beiträge für Gemüt und Geist, in denen lebt die Kraft des Glaubens aber auch das Gedankensein an Mut und Wehen.

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Siegfried Leffler

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Das Buch ist eine der entscheidendsten Taten in dem Ringen der deutschen Gegenwart um die Frage Gott und Volk.  
Hier spricht ein deutscher Mensch mit klarem Blick und unbeirrbarem Glauben, für den Adolf Hitler „das wunderbare Transparenz, das Fenster wurde, durch das Licht auf die Geschichte des Christentums fiel“. . . . Tief leuchtet er hinein in die religiösen und kirchlichen Mysterien. Das stille Licht, das er entzündet, erlischt aber nicht in dem Dunkel, sondern läßt allenthalben Pfade sichtbar werden, die zu herrlicher letzter Einigung führen.

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Richard Barth

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Dieses Büchlein ist besonders geeignet, auch allen denen, die, in sich abgeschlossenen, keine inneren Beziehungen mehr zu dem Neuenbruch in unserer Kirche haben, Stunden heilsamer Erinnerung zu schenken und, ohne daß davon die Rede wäre, Zeugnis damit abzulegen gegen vielerlei Verleumdung, die gegen die Sache des Deutschen Christentums im Umlauf ist.

Es ist für junge und alte Menschen gleichermaßen geeignet und durch seine schmale Aufmachung ein stets festliches Geschenk.

**Verlag Deutsche Christen, Weimar, postfach 128**

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