

Born to Win

Opposing Evil #2

by Ronald L. Dart

Christian people have often failed in their responsibilities to their fellow man. This should not be surprising; after all, we are human. And Jesus, in a couple of his parables, suggested that as many as *half* of us who call ourselves by his name will fail. And in the end, none of us can escape the judgment that will fall on us for how we live an act in this miserable world we live in.

Perhaps you have never heard of Adolf Hitler. Oh, no, that's not possible; you have *certainly* heard the name. Hitler was possessed of what Ron Rosenbaum and others called "a primitive hatred". It was primitive in the sense that it preceded any cause or any grievance. The date that few remember is April the 1st, 1933. I said "few"; most Jews remember it. It was the beginning. On this day, a one-day boycott of Jewish-owned shops took place.

Members of the Brownshirts picketed the shops to see to it that the boycott was successful. The hostility toward Jews grew day by day. Many shops and restaurants began to refuse service to Jews. Placards went up: "Jews not admitted", "Jews enter at their own risk." In some parts of Germany, Jews were banned from public parks, swimming pools, public transportation. Germans were encouraged not to use Jewish doctors and lawyers. Jewish civil servants and teachers were fired. Under the Nuremberg Laws in 1935, Jews could no longer be citizens of Germany, and it was illegal for Germans to marry Jews.

Spartacus Educational - Jews in Nazi Germany (paraphrased)

Now, as troubling as all that was, to me what was far worse was coming to realize that, throughout that period, leaders of the Protestant and Catholic churches *remained silent*. A handful of young pastors resisted—provoked in part by the decision of Adolf Hitler to appoint Ludwig Müller as the country's Reich Bishop of the Protestant church. Now, as much as I have read about this time in history, somehow I had never heard of this man. So I looked him up. Somehow, Müller:

[...] became state bishop (German: *Landesbischof*) of the Evangelical Church of the old-Prussian Union and Reich's Bishop of the Protestant Reich Church (German: *Deutsche Evangelische Kirche*). He had been associated with Nazism since the 1920s and was an anti-Semite. He supported a revisionist view of "Christ the Aryan" (or a "heroic Jesus") as well as a plan of purifying Christianity of what he deemed "Jewish corruption," including purging large parts of the Old Testament.

Wikipedia - Ludwig Müller

You know, I read that and I thought: I suppose Müller never read (or, if he did, he probably just marked through it in his Bible) where Paul said plainly, "our Lord sprang from Judah" [**Hebrews 7:14**]. So to

maintain Christianity, in his eyes, it was really necessary to cast off the Jewish Messiah. Now, there is an *incredible* irony here.

[T]he Nazi regime's plan was to "coordinate" all 28 separate Protestant regional church bodies into a single and unitary Reich Church (German: *Reichskirche*).

Wikipedia - Ludwig Müller

Now, "Reich" is a kingdom; it's like the government. And what they are trying to do is to create a single and unitary *government church*.

Müller wanted to be the head—the Reich's bishop (German: *Reichsbischof*) of this newly formed entity.

Wikipedia - Ludwig Müller

This pathetic, little man became the German Judas.

He remained committed to Nazism to the end. He committed suicide in 1945, soon after the Nazi defeat.

Wikipedia - Ludwig Müller

Just as Judas killed himself when he realized what he had done. There's no evidence that Müller ever did [realize].

Now, you may ask yourself how German Christians could allow this sort of thing to happen to them. I'm going to give you two things to think about. One: Most of those young pastors who resisted what Hitler was doing ended up arrested, sent to a concentration camp, and executed. Second: How much evidence is there that American Christians have any more backbone than the German Christians had? Moreover, there is a timidity that seems to pervade some Christian thought. Perhaps it derives from Paul's description of love in 1 Corinthians 13:

1 Corinthians 13

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⁶ Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.

⁷ It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

But can that explain the silence of German Christians to the anti-Semitism that was so rife in the Germany in that era?

Now, before I go on, there is something that I have to say: I am *appalled* that some Christians, realizing they must oppose evil, resort to violence like bombings and shootings. Unless they are in a position of authority, violence is *forbidden* to Christians. Let me repeat that: Unless they are in a position of authority, violence is forbidden to Christians. On the other hand, if they are in a position of civil authority, violence may be *demand*ed. In other words, the Law of God (and, in many cases, the law of man) actually demands the death penalty. And there is a short scripture back in Jeremiah 48 which I've always thought was interesting, because it speaks to a society that has *shied away* from the necessity of shedding blood in reprisal for shed blood. Jeremiah 48, verse 10:

Jeremiah 48

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¹⁰ A curse on him who is lax in doing the LORD's work!
A curse on him who keeps his sword from bloodshed!

What he's saying is plain enough: When you have the responsibility—when you have the authority—and you're *too timid* to execute it, it would be very smart to give up the job. Ecclesiastics, chapter three:

Ecclesiastes 3

AKJV

¹ To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:
² A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted;
³ A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up[.]

Now, it's probably shocking for me to suggest that the Lord's work may involve the shedding of blood. But if you've read the Bible, you know better. You should know this, though, about this: The Law of God forbade that any man should be deprived of life, liberty, or property *without due process of law*. So if you're ever called to serve on a jury, don't be timid about it; you have a *civic duty* to perform. Take it very seriously, and don't confuse your role as a private citizen with your role as a judge under the law.

Now, why am I persisting with a pair of programs titled *Opposing Evil*? It's for this reason: It's because Christians are the only ones who can truly oppose evil without becoming evil themselves. To those Christians who are not in positions of authority, Jesus had this to say:

Matthew 10

AKJV

¹⁶ Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the middle of wolves: be you therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.

But being harmless doesn't mean there is nothing we can do. Sad to say, we live in a generation that knows *next to nothing* about Adolf Hitler—easily one of the most dramatic exemplars of evil in the *history of the world*. Some would, no doubt, like to forget him. Others work day and night to see to it that we *don't* forget. That Hitler was an embodiment of evil, everyone seems to accept. And, having decided on one explanation or another, we put him aside as *no longer relevant*. "The evil that beset Germany could never happen here." I feel that way myself...but then, the German Christians didn't think it could happen there, either.

There's a scene late in the movie *Judgment at Nuremberg* (Spencer Tracy is the lead judge) and they are having on trial the judges of the German Reich. One of the greatest of these judges, Ernst Janning, made a statement near the end of the movie, speaking to Dan Haywood—the lead American judge: "You have to believe me: I never thought it would come to this." Judge Haywood replied, "It came to this the first time you sentenced an innocent man."

It was a powerful line, but in fact, the die was cast a long time before, and the people who had the moral authority to stand in the gap *did not*. The question of why they didn't still rankles. Was it because they were afraid? God knows they had reason to be. Was it because they couldn't see it coming? Sometimes, you know, you have to oppose evil before everyone *sees it* as evil. How do you do that? How do you oppose evil when most people don't see it as evil, at all?

Now, this was the problem some German Christians faced—even those who spotted the evil on the horizon were *simply not believed* when they described it. In the last chapter of his book [*Explaining*

Hitler], Ron Rosenbaum interviews Lucy Dawidowicz—a historian, a student of Hitler—who did her best to try to understand and explain what happened. She believed the decision by Hitler to eradicate Jews from Germany (and anywhere else he could) was conceived as early as 1918. Remember, he didn't even come to power until the 30s; and in 1918 he had done this. His decision was not merely to drive the Jews out of Germany, but to murder them *en masse*. Lucy reminds us that Hitler wrote in *Mein Kampf* that he decided on his war against the Jews in 1918. I would say she felt the “primitive hatred” that we talked about before (about Hitler) began at the moment he learned of the end of the war (that's World War I) and the armistice. He wrote *Mein Kampf* in 1924, and it's clear right there that he was purposed on murder by that time. She believed that Hitler made another decision when he decided to enter politics the following year—a decision to *conceal* his ultimate goal.

Now, when you look back at this with the benefit of hindsight, you can see how she would come to that conclusion—that he decided not to let people know what he was really about, even though in his own writings he said so. She asked:

How does one advocate publicly an idea or a program whose novelty lies in its utter radicalism? No matter how anti-Semitic the Munich of 1919 and 1920 was, the explicit transformation of a slogan like “*Juda verrecke*” [“the Jews must perish”] into a practical political program [just wouldn't work]. In this situation Hitler availed himself of a time-honored device—the use of esoteric language.

Lucy S. Dawidowicz - The War Against the Jews: 1933–1945

Now, you know what that means, don't you? You speak in words that mean one thing to the public and another thing to insiders. You know what you're going to do, and you have to tell your inside people what you're going to do, but you can't tell the outsiders.

In all periods of history, when government or society has put limits on public discussion, those who wish to circumvent censorship resort to the use of esoteric language. [To outsiders], the language is unexceptionable, but to the insiders who know how to interpret the words, the message is revolutionary and dangerous to the status quo.

Lucy S. Dawidowicz - The War Against the Jews: 1933–1945

Most of the Hitler explainers, it seems, think of a Hitler who *evolved*. “When did he become Hitler?”, as it were. Lucy Dawidowicz thinks it was what he was from the earliest years, but that he covered up his intent with his language.

I suspect politicians do that a lot. They have a hidden agenda which, if they made that agenda plain, they would never get elected. They'd be doomed. So they tell us what *we want to hear*—until it's too late. A lot of the explainers take Hitler at his word. And taking a man like Hitler at his word is a *risky* proposition, Rosenbaum observed, “particularly when, as Dawidowicz has adduced, there are occasions when Hitler disclosed his deliberate use of disingenuous and deceptive language.” I mean, we know from the record that he deliberately intended to do that, and we have one incontrovertibly fact to deal with: Hitler actually carried it out.

Ordinary people don't orchestrate mass murder. But some fanatics have. And Adolf Hitler did.

Ron Rosenbaum - Explaining Hitler: The Search for the Origins of His Evil

“How does one advocate [...] an idea [...] whose novelty lies in its utter radicalism?” One *disguises* it. And this is precisely where a lot of Christian folks made a big mistake in Germany. They had *every* reason to know what Hitler was up to by what he was *doing*. But they took him at his word, and some of them, I have no doubt, voted for him. I think if every Christian, wall-to-wall, in Germany had voted against whatever Hitler stood for, he never would have come to power.

Hitler had loads of code words he used for Jews. He called them usurers, profiteers, exploiters, big capitalists, the international money power. I’d read that book some time ago, and perhaps you can understand why my blood ran cold when I heard Reverend Jeremiah Wright condemn, at the top of his voice, “rich white people” and blame the problems of the blacks on them. “Rich white people”. Surely that couldn’t be a code phrase for Jews, could it? I call to your attention to the ongoing tension between blacks and Jews in this country, when one would think they could make common cause. Anti-Semitism lives on, even when you think it has been defeated, and no one—*no one*—knows this better than the Jews.

Now, I’ve told you all that to explain what I meant when I said that sometimes you have to oppose evil before everyone recognizes it as evil. That means two things: You have to have your eyes open, and you have to be prepared to call it what it is. And second: You may have to oppose it at some risk to yourself. But what’s a Christian worth who won’t stand up for what’s right, even at his own risk. One of the psalms gives us a strong reminder—something to think about. It’s the 12th.

Psalm 12

AKJV

¹ [A Psalm of David] Help, LORD; for the godly man ceases; for the faithful fail from among the children of men.

What he’s saying is, “Help us, LORD! The godly men are going over the horizon. They’re all fleeing, They’re going away.”

Psalm 12

AKJV

² They speak vanity every one with his neighbor: with flattering lips and with a double heart do they speak. [*They’re two-faced.*]

³ The LORD shall cut off all flattering lips, and the tongue that speaks proud things:

⁴ Who have said, With our tongue will we prevail; our lips are our own: who is lord over us?

⁵ For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, said the LORD; I will set him in safety from him that puffs at him.

⁶ The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. [*You can’t get better than that.*]

⁷ You shall keep them, O LORD, you shall preserve them from this generation for ever.

And he closes out this psalm with a statement I will never forget:

Psalm 12

AKJV

⁸ The wicked walk on every side, when the vilest men are exalted.

You put these people up there; you exalt them; you make them celebrities; you make them important; you blow them up; and what you’re going to get for your trouble is that, no matter which way you look, *wicked men are there*. It’s the *least* we Christians can do that we *not exalt vile men*. Even today,

Christian people will vote for the worst of the double-dealing politicians. Why? Because they tell them what they want to hear.

Evil shows up in many forms. You can kill off one set of wicked guys and another one comes along to take their place. It's almost as though there's an invisible power bent on destruction and ruin in the world. There is in the Law of Moses a statement that seems strange on the surface but speaks to what we're talking about. It's in Leviticus, chapter 20:

Leviticus 20

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² Say to the Israelites: "Any Israelite or any alien living in Israel who gives any of his children to Molech must be put to death. The people of the community are to stone him."

Now, mind you, they're not to stone him without due process; that's covered elsewhere in the Law. He was to be tried, and it was worthy of death. Why? What do you mean—just because he gave his kid to another god? I'm going to let you do your own research on Moloch/Molech, to see what it was exactly that they *did* with those children. Child sacrifice was *all too common* in the alien world and, frankly, the way it was done with Moloch was perhaps the worst of the lot. So God says it's the death penalty for doing that.

Leviticus 20

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³ I will set my face against that man and I will cut him off from his people; for by giving his children to Molech, he has defiled my sanctuary and profaned my holy name.

In fact, what they did with that god was to burn their children, to him. Then he says this:

Leviticus 20

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⁴ If the people of the community close their eyes when that man gives one of his children to Molech and they fail to put him to death,

⁵ I will set my face against that man and his family and will cut off from their people both him and all who follow him in prostituting themselves to Molech.

And take note of that word "prostituting" because—while it may be, in a way, a euphemism for what they did—I think it's not just a figure of speech. I think it *is* what they did. What did he say? He said, if we close our eyes to it when it's going on—if we fail to do justice on it. Our task as a member of the jury is to condemn him. And if we close our eyes to it, he says:

Leviticus 20

NIV

⁶ I will set my face against the person who turns to mediums and spiritists to prostitute himself by following them, and I will cut him off from his people.

They were not allowed to close their eyes to evil. Bear in mind, they were not allowed to do violence as vigilantes. The Law required due process, just as it does in our own law. But why was this so damning? The children of Israel had to understand that law when it was handed down to them, but we don't hear of it actually happening until quite a bit later. In 2 Kings, chapter 23, Josiah is in the process of carrying out a lot of reforms. And the Scripture tells us:

2 Kings 23

AKJV

¹⁰ And he defiled Topheth, which is in the valley of the children of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or his daughter to pass through the fire to Molech.

When did it start? I don't think we know. But by the time *he* came along, it apparently was a fairly common practice. And he ordered it *cleaned up*. It didn't hold, though. Much later, Jeremiah comes on the scene, and he says:

Jeremiah 32

AKJV

³⁵ And they built the high places of Baal, which are in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire to Molech; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my mind, that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin.

³⁶ And now therefore thus said the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning this city, whereof you say, It shall be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence[.]

Now, Scripture does not describe in detail what they did. It's hideous (and the Bible is, after all, a family book) but child sacrifice *was done*. Now, has it ever dawned on anyone that, while Hitler killed 6 million Jews and started a war that they say killed about 30 million people, did anyone ever consider the number of human lives that have been snuffed out before they ever got born—since 1973—has now passed *50 million*? The only real difference between modern man and the Israelites of Jeremiah's day is the name of a foreign god. Just because no one was beating drums to drown out the cry of the children, and just because there wasn't a leering idol there with fire going on in his bowels that you could put the children into...(their dead bodies, I hope, that they were dead at that point). Just because they don't have that when they send these little bodies up an incinerator, doesn't mean it's not essentially the same thing. And could this happen in this country if Christians were *united* in opposing it? I am surprised that American Catholic bishops do not deny communion to political figures who openly support abortion.

John Donne wrote in 1623:

No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main; if a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as if a manor of thy friends or of thine own were; any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind; and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.

John Donne - Devotions upon Emergent Occasions - Meditation XVII

Until next time, I'm Ronald Dart.

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