

# EVANGELICAL REVIEW OF THEOLOGY

**VOLUME 24**

*Articles and book reviews original and selected from  
publications worldwide for an international  
readership for the purpose of discerning the  
obedience of faith*

**EDITOR: DAVID PARKER**



Published by  
PATERNOSTER PERIODICALS



for  
WORLD EVANGELICAL FELLOWSHIP  
Theological Commission

---

**Volume 24 • Number 4 • October 2000**

---

always be given priority over loyalty to our nation. When that priority cannot be kept, when our nation demands uncritical allegiance, we will respond like the early disciples with the uncompromising stand: 'We must obey God rather than man.'

Let us go back to our nations as carriers of hope and biblically founded faith. To quote St. Augustine, 'Hope has two daughters: anger and courage—anger with the way things are, and courage to change them.'

---

**Dr. Peter Kuzmic is Eva B. and Paul E. Toms Distinguished Professor of World Missions and European Studies at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. He is regarded as the foremost evangelical scholar in Eastern Europe and is considered an authority on the subject of Christian response to Marxism and on Christian ministry in post-Communist contexts. A former chair of the Theological Commission of the World Evangelical Fellowship (WEF), he holds degrees from several institutions including a Doctor of Theology from the University of Zagreb and is the founder and director of the Evangelical Theological Seminary in Osijek, Croatia. This article is an address he gave at the 10th General Assembly of WEF, held in Abbotsford British Columbia, May 8–15, 1997 and published in *Global Crossroads* (WEF, 1998) the volume of papers presented at that Assembly edited by W. Harold Fuller. (Used by permission)**

## **'Give Democracy What It is Entitled to'**

*Statement of the German Evangelical Alliance concerning  
the issue of political responsibility of Evangelicals (Stuttgart,  
June 6, 1994)*

**Keywords:** Democracy, Evangelical Alliance, voting, hope;

In its past few meetings The Board of Directors of the German Evangelical Alliance dealt with the question, if and to what extent the German Evangelical Alliance should take public responsibility. These meetings resulted in the following statement of conviction:

We live in a democratic society in which every citizen is called to participate in the shaping of political life. The far-reaching possibilities of constructive-critical accompaniment and involvement which exist in a democratic state bound to a legal constitution are a gift and, at the same time, a challenge for us. The biblical testimony concerning the church of Jesus Christ as 'salt of the earth' and 'light of the world' places us unavoidably, societally speaking, within the realm of co-responsibility. The possibilities of our community for democratic involvement are no matter of purely private choice. For Christians there are, rather, challenges to practical obedience in our lives as disciples of Jesus. We thereby invite others to reflect anew with us about what actualizing the command of Jesus means under today's conditions; namely, to give democracy what it is entitled to and God what is his (cf. [Mt. 22:21](#)).

It is especially necessary in an age of increasing resignation and reluctance toward political involvement that Christians should be bearers of hope. By their tie to God's Word they have the freedom, moreover, to go against the general trend and to take responsibility. We, therefore, encourage Christians to take over public tasks at the local

level, for example, in community help, in schools, at the university, and at the workplace. We also encourage fellow Christians who are gifted in these areas, and support them in direct political involvement in parties and parliaments.

A look back on the first 50 years of the history of the Evangelical Alliance in Europe (in the second half of the 19th century) shows that taking public responsibility was one of the major emphases of tasks undertaken. Some of the issues dealt with then were, for example, campaigns against genocide, actions to outlaw and abolish slavery, protest against impoverishment brought about by economic exploitation, involvement in the struggle for complete freedom of religion and conscience, and for the recognition by society and the established churches of independent 'free' churches.

The experiences of the Evangelical Alliance in political involvement historically encourage us not just to put our hope in short-term successes, but to mention it anew as something which must always be recognized. Political involvement is necessary even today, then, if God's laws are clearly and directly affected. This concerns, especially, the following areas:

1. Human dignity
2. Freedom of religion and conscience
3. Protection of the unborn
4. Support of marriage and family
5. Responsibility for the life of future generations
6. Questions of medical ethics, such as euthanasia, gene technology, etc.
7. Peace and social justice
8. Environmental protection

We ask Christians in our country to give prime importance to their voting decisions based upon how the candidates themselves voted in these elementary questions of human existence. Last, but not least, we especially remember the command given to all Christians to pray for those in positions of responsibility in politics and society.

## **QUESTIONS ON BIBLICAL TEXTS**

### **'Political Involvement and Responsibility of the Christian'**

1. What is the significance of the fact that God himself is King of Israel for government and world responsibility in the Old Testament (cf. [1 Sam. 8:1-8](#))?
2. On the other hand, how does Jesus view the Roman government (cf. [Mt. 22:15-22](#))?
3. Why does Jesus abstain from taking worldly power? What kind of a kingdom does he rule over (cf. [In. 18:33-37](#))?
4. What is the difference, respective to salvation history, between the kingdom of God in the Old Testament and the distinction between worldly kingdoms and the kingdom of God in the New Testament (cf. the texts and answers to questions 1-3)?
5. According to Paul, what important task does government have (cf. [Rom. 13:1-7](#))?
6. Where are the boundaries of loyalty toward the state and its laws (cf. [Acts 5:25-29](#))?
7. Where do demonic dangers of governmental power lie (cf. [Rev. 13:1-10](#))?
8. Why does Jesus help to combat hunger, yet refuse to become a king who can supply people with bread (cf. [In. 6:1-5](#))?
9. How can love for one's neighbour and God's love be shown, and how do they relate to one another (cf. [Luke 10:25-42](#))?
10. How effective was the social involvement of Christians in the ancient society of slave owners (cf. [Philemon 8-20](#))?

11. What are the chances for the realization of a kingdom of peace on earth? Who will bring about this kingdom of peace and who will not (cf. [Isa. 11:1-12](#) and [Rev. 20:1-6](#) and in contrast to this, [Rev. 13:1-10](#))?

# Churches Transforming the Nations: The DNA<sup>1</sup> Vision

Jun Vencer

**Keywords:** Discipling, social, privatised, justice, transformation, evangelize, community, economic development, relief, peace, globalization, kingdom of God;

*'Say to the nations, The Lord reigns ....' ([Ps. 96:10](#))*

*'... make disciples of all the nations ....' ([Mt. 28:19](#))*

*'The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of the Lord, and of his Christ ....' ([Rev. 11:15](#))*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Jesus Christ commands his church to '*make disciples of all the nations*' ([Mt. 28:19](#)). In carrying out this commission, one may ask: What will a disciplined nation look like? A clue to the answer can be found in his very commission statement: '*... teaching them to observe all that I commanded you*'. His teachings, contained in the Old and New Testaments, sum up the '*whole purpose of God*' ([Acts 20:27](#)). Of course this purpose is centred on the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, his life and mission. The question, then, may be rephrased: If Jesus is Lord of a community or nation, what will that nation look like?

This question, I submit, is of critical importance. It moves the gospel beyond the private claims of a highly individualistic evangelical culture and liberates it to touch people and nations. It also provides a legitimizing and integrating vision for the ministries of God's people. It ensures that social ethics in the present time is responsive to the vision of God's future. It makes faith in Christ a living and even subversive leaven for the transformation of a dying world into life.

In the commission of our Lord, the preliminary issues are: what does discipleship mean, and what does the nation include? A disciple is a student of a teacher or a follower

---

<sup>1</sup> DNA is an acronym for 'Discipling the Nations'. It can be misunderstood for DNA or *deoxyribonucleic acid* which is an essential component of all living matter and a basic material in the chromosomes of the cell nucleus. It contains the genetic code and transmits the hereditary pattern. I thought that the definition can be said of the vision as well. Christ is the essence of life and the vision is one that needs transmission from one generation to another until the eschaton.

The question is raised about the feasibility of discipling the nations. Discipling people, yes. After all, a disciple is a follower of Jesus and it requires a prior repentance and faith. The use of the term follows the biblical phrase in [Matthew 28:19](#). In this paper, it simply means a nation whose culture and people enjoy basically the values of the Kingdom of God. Moreover, it is a goal when the reign of God becomes a realm in the eschaton.