1

The Original Guidelines of the German Christian Faith Movement

Joachim Hossenfelder

Introduction

These ten guidelines were written by Pastor Joachim Hossenfelder and published in June 1932. Key words and phrases point to some of the movement's preoccupations. "Positive Christianity" refers directly to the same phrase in Point 24 of the 1920 platform of the National Socialist German Workers (Nazi) Party. The German Christians favor a "heroic piety," reject both the "weak" leadership and the

^{1.} A "positive Christianity" was understood to be beyond denominations and emphasized an "active," heroic Christ. That Hitler included this in the platform signaled his sense that he would need the support of the churches as he embarked on his National Socialist project.

"parliamentarianism" of the church as it is presently configured, and dedicate themselves to the battle against Marxism. The guidelines spell out the movement's conviction that "race, ethnicity [Volkstum], and nation" are "orders of life given and entrusted to us by God." The movement opposes "race-mixing," the "mission to the Jews," and both pacifism and "internationalism." In every important respect this self-identified Christian movement resonates with and reflects all the important commitments favored by the National Socialists.

The following year the movement's guidelines were revised; a slightly muted text left out all references to Jews and Judaism.²

^{2.} Find the revised guidelines translated as part of Arnold Dannenmann's *The History of the German Christian Faith Movement*, pp. 121ff in this volume.

der Glaubensbewegung "Deutsche Christen"

1. Diefe Richtlinien wollen allen gläubigen deutschen Menschen Wege und Ziele zeigen, wie sie zu einer Reuordnung der Kirche kommen. Diese Richtlinien wöllen weder ein Glaubensbekenntnis sein oder erfegen, noch an den Bekenntnisgrundlagen der evangelischen Kirche rütteln. Sie sind ein Zebensbekenntnis.

Wit tämpfen für einen Zusanmenschluß der im "Deutschen Evan-gelischen Kirchendund" zusammengeschler 29 Kirchen zu einer evan-gelischen Reichseltraße und marschleren unter dem Ruf und Jiel: Rach außen eine und geiftgewaltig.

Rach Geibel.) Um Chrifus und sein Wort gelchart, Rach innen reich und vielgestaltig, Ein seder Christ nach Kus und Arts"

Chriften beutischer Art. Die Zeit bes Partiamenturismus hal stift giere, das die des Aufrie der Kittege Kirtegmedtlige Partieun geben feinen restgiefen Kurweis, das Kirtegenostlige Partieus und fiehen dem restgiefen Kurweis, das Kirtegenost zu vertreten und fiehen dem Gjoben Zief entgegen, ein Kirtegenost zu werben. Wir wollen eine fesendige Boltsfrieche, die Ausderuck, alter Glaubenströffe unseres Wolkes ift. Lifte "Deutsche Christen" will feine firchenpolitische Partei in bisher üblichen Sinne sein. Sie wendet sich an alle evangelischen

Bir stehen auf dem Boden des positiven Christentums. Bir bekennen uns zu einem besahenden artgemäßen Christusglauben, wie er deutdem Quihergeift und helbischer Frommigfeit entspricht.

Witr wollen das wiedererwachte deuthige Rebensgeflißt in unlerer Kirch zur Geltung bringen und under Kirch zur Geltung bringen und miere Kirch zur Geltung bringen wie deutlich Freihett und Kulturft ib die Kirche in there Zeitung isch zu sich zu schwerzeit zu gehand die Just die deutlich erwiesen. Die Kirche hit geder hit gen ertigiebenen Kampf gegen den gehtfenblichen Marzisams und des geiffrende Zeitrend aufgerufer, jondern mit den potitisischen Kampf gegen den Artein den potitischen Kampf gegen den Kirchen feiter Wichere den Artein des potitischen Kampf gegen den Kirchen feiter Wichenertrag ge-nicht abseits stehen ober gar von den Befreiungskämpfern abruden. Klaufel) und Kampf gegen den religions- und volfsfeindlichen Marzismus und fetne chriftlich-fazialen Schleppenträger aller Schat-Sein ober Richtsein unseres Bolbes an ber Spige fampft.

tierungen. Wir vermissen bei diesem Kirchenvertrag das trauende Wagnis auf Gott und die Sendung der Kirche. Der Wes ins Reich Gottes geht durch Kanpf, Kreuz und Opser, nicht durch salchen uns Gottes Gefet ist. Daher ist der Kassenmissung erügeger autren. Die deutsche Aussen Aufra für derna hiere Ex-sentigen über Aussen gen. "Josse der des Anse sein" und iegt uns, des der Christagiande die Kasse gerföre, für deren Erhaltung zu sorgen Wir sehen in Kasse, Boltstum und Nation uns von und anvertraute Lebensordnungen, für deren Erbal ondern vertieft und heiligt.

gegen Chiefli Kreuzestod wurzelt. Blogies Mittelb ift "Mohlütige ted" und vord zur Werchelückfet, gegeart mit ihjechtem Gewijfen, um verweidlicht ein Bolt. Bit volffen etwas von der driffichen Pflicht um Liebe den Hisfofen gegenüber, wir fordern deber auch Innere Miffon darf feinesfalls zur Entartung unseres Boltes beie tragen. Sie hat sich im übrigen von wirtschaftlichen Abenteuern fernzuhalten und darf nicht zum Krömer werden. Bir sehen in der recht verstandenen Inneren Mission das lebendige Lat-Christentum, das aber nach unserer Auffassung nicht im bloßen Mitleid, sondern im Gehorsam gegen Gottes Billen und im Dank In der Judenmission sehen wir eine schwere Gefahr für unser Bolks-Schutz des Bolles vor den Untüchtigen und Minderwertigen.

Zugehörigfeit eines evangelischen Geiftlichen zur Freimaurerlage ist nicht fatthoft. Wir wollen eine evangeilsche Kirche, die im Bolfstum wirzelt, und lehnen den Geift eines chriftlichen Welkbürgertums ab. Wir wollen die aus diesem Geift ensfpringenden verderblichen Erscheizungen wie Bazifismus, Internationale, Freimaireertum ufw. durch den Clauben Juden zu verbieten. 10

gung. Wir fegnen die Judenwilftou in Deutschand ab, josange die Juden das Sciantsbirgerecht beihen und damit die Gefahr der Anflenverschleierung und Vastanderung besteht. Die Heistige Schrift welf auch ermos zu logen von pelitigem Jorn und ich verlagender Liebe. Insbelondere ist die Eheligliebung zusigen Deutschen und

das Eingangstor fremden Blutes in unseren Bolfs-hat neben der Außeren Wisson keine Onseinsberechti-

tum. Sie ift das Eingangstor

förper.

Diefe zehn Buntte ber Glaubensbewegung "Deutiche Chriften" rufen evangelifche Reichsfirche, Die unter Dahrung tonjeffionellen Friedens die Kräffe unferes reformatorischen Glaubens zum Bellen des deutsigen Wolfes entwickeln wird. Sammeln und bilben in großen ginien Die Richtung

Figure 1. German text of "Guidelines of the German Christian Faith Movement"

The Original Guidelines of the German Christian Faith Movement (1932)³

Joachim Hossenfelder

- 1. These principles are intended to show all faithful Germans the path and the goals that will lead them to a new church order. These principles are not intended to be or to replace a confession of faith, nor are they meant to undermine the confessional foundations of the Protestant [evangelische] Church.⁴ They are a confession of life.
- 2. We are fighting to achieve an integration of the twenty-nine constituent churches of the "German Evangelical Church Association" into one National Protestant Church [evangelische Reichskirche], and we march under the slogan and goal:

Externally, one and strong in spirit, gathered around Christ and his Word, internally, rich and diverse, each Christian according to individual calling and style.

3. The name "German Christians" does not connote an ecclesiastical political party as known heretofore. It addresses itself to all Protestant Christians who are Germans. The era of parliamentarianism is over, in the church as well. The parties associated with various churches do not have the religious credentials to represent the people of the church; in fact, they

^{3.} From Deutsche Christen (Nationalkirchliche Einung), Handbook of the German Christians [Handbuch der Deutschen Christen], 2nd ed. (Berlin-Charlottenburg, 1933). The Handbook in its entirety appears on pp. 163ff in this volume.

^{4.} The German word *evangelisch* can be translated "evangelical." While in the American context this word has come to connote a particular kind of Protestant, in the German context it usually means "Protestant" in contrast to "Catholic." The German Protestant Church [*Deutsche Evangelische Kirche*] would have comprised regional Lutheran, Reformed, and United (Reformed and Lutheran) churches.

- stand in the way of the noble goal of our becoming a churchly people. We want a vigorous people's church [Volkskirche], one that expresses the power of our faith.
- 4. We stand on the ground of positive Christianity.⁵ We confess an affirmative faith in Christ, one suited to a truly German Lutheran spirit and heroic piety.
- 5. We want to bring to our church the reawakened German sense of life and to revitalize our church. In the fateful struggle for German freedom and our future, the leadership of the church has proven to be too weak. Up to this point the church has not risen to the challenge of a determined struggle against godless Marxism and the Center Party, so alien to our spirit [geistfremd⁶]; instead, it has made a compact with the political parties of these powers. We want our church to be front and center in the battle that will decide the life or death of our people. The church may not stand on the sidelines or dissociate itself from those who are fighting for freedom.
- 6. We demand a revision of the political clauses of this church compact, as well as a battle against irreligious and anti-*Volk* Marxism and its Christian-Socialist minions of every stripe. We do not see in this present church compact a daring confidence in God and in the church's mission. The path to the Kingdom of God leads through struggle, cross, and sacrifice, not through a false peace.
- 7. We recognize in race, ethnicity [Volkstum], and nation orders of life given and entrusted to us by God, who has commanded us

^{5.} A phrase that appears in the 1920 platform of the NSDAP, written by Hitler. The phrase means more or less, and with intentional vagueness, "an affirmative faith in Christ, one suited to [gemäss] the German Lutheran spirit and heroic piety."

^{6.} In its National Socialist usage the common German word *fremd* [strange, foreign, peculiar, alien to]—together with whatever other word it was attached to (in this case *Geist*, having to do with the spiritual dimension)—generally meant "un-German," hostile, or inferior, connotations not ordinarily associated with the word itself.

- to preserve them. For this reason race-mixing must be opposed. Based on its experience, the German foreign mission has long admonished the German people: "Keep your race pure!" and tells us that faith in Christ does not destroy race, but rather deepens and sanctifies it.
- 8. We see in Home Mission, rightly conceived, a living, active Christianity that, in our view, is rooted not in mere compassion but rather in obedience to God's will and gratitude for Christ's death on the cross. Mere compassion is charity, which leads to arrogance coupled with a guilty conscience that makes a people soft. We are conscious of Christian duty toward and love for the helpless, but we also demand that the people be protected from those who are inept and inferior. The Home Mission must in no way contribute to the degeneration of our people. Furthermore, it should avoid economic adventures and must not become a shopkeeper.⁷
- 9. In the mission to the Jews we see great danger to our people. It is the point at which foreign blood enters the body of our people. There is no justification for its existing alongside the foreign mission. We reject the mission to the Jews as long as Jews have citizenship, which brings with it the danger of race-blurring and race-bastardizing. Holy Scripture speaks both of holy wrath and of self-denying love. It is especially important to prohibit marriages between Germans and Jews.
- 10. We want a Protestant church with its roots in the people, and we reject the spirit of a Christian cosmopolitanism. Through our faith in the ethno-national [völkisch] mission God has commanded us to carry out, we want to overcome all the

^{7.} The admonition not to become "shopkeepers" [Krämer] as it is used here is a not-very-subtle reminder to avoid the appearance of any socio-economic association with Jews, who were often categorized disparagingly as "shopkeepers."

destructive phenomena that emerge from this spirit, such as pacifism, internationalism, Freemasonry, and so forth. No Protestant clergy may belong to a Masonic lodge.

These ten points of the "German Christian" movement are a call for us to come together; they form in broad outline a direction for a future **Protestant National Church** [*Reichskirche*] that, while safeguarding peace among denominations, will develop the strengths of our Reformation faith for the good of the German people.