



The Owl of Athena

CONTRATYRANNOS

The Isagorial Theory of Human Progress Website

EXCURSUS 16

One of a series of monographs that expands the discussion of important topics examined in *The Natural State of Medical Practice*.¹

NAMING OUR CIVILIZATION

Summary: An analysis of our present civilization, often identified as “Western,” affirms the importance of the Reformation as its source. The Reformation was preceded by a thousand years without progress, at least in medicine, and therefore Europe during that period was classifiable more as a culture than a civilization. But the catalyst of the Reformation exposed the Decalogue as an ethical guide not just for individuals but for governance as well, and it is the latter that has led to Western progress and the Constitution and Bill of Rights of the United States. The Decalogue, transmitted to the ancient Israelites, put in place the primary requirement for a progressive civilization, but demography did not provide the ancient Israelites with the opportunity to formally establish a civilization. This was remedied in the post-Reformation West when Jewish and Christian contributions to civil liberties made it possible to instill progress into our own civilization. Mosaic history thereby becomes part of our own. It is concluded that there has been only one true mature civilization, the Judeo-Christian civilization. Its recent global recognition, success and replication augur well for mankind’s future if the Decalogue continues to guide both the individual and the State.

Introduction

Strictly speaking, who needs a civilization? Why try to fabricate one as if it is, in itself, a good thing? In *The Natural State of Medical Practice* it was proposed, based on evidence, that humans prefer to be free from the harangues of others. Given a safe and fertile environment the natural response is to spread out in individual homesteads or hamlets. Tribal and kinship affiliations are strong in an inhospitable environment, but absent those hazards we prefer to be left alone among our intimates except to celebrate special occasions. Only when an acceptable alternative presented itself, the commercial settlement with its promise of an easier and more predictable life, did people leave their kinships. It is a logical conclusion, therefore, that early

¹ Volume, chapter and page number of otherwise unreferenced statements in this monograph refer to the version of the four volumes as published by Liberty Hill Press, 2019-2023:

Vol. 1 – *The Natural State of Medical Practice: An Isagorial Theory of Human Progress*

Vol. 2 – *The Natural State of Medical Practice: Hippocratic Evidence*

Vol. 3 - *The Natural State of Medical Practice: Escape from Egalitarianism*

Vol. 4 – *The Natural State of Medical Practice: Implications*

attempts at civilization were not the result of central planning directed toward some wholesome communal end. They were, instead, the natural consequence of people looking to improve their lives by leaving the kinship; *i.e.*, civilizations begin with the realization of human liberty and the freedom to work to improve one's life rather than continue in a defined status within the kinship dedicated to maintaining a *status quo*. Fortunately for human progress, civilizations exist, occasionally.

In *The Natural State of Medical Practice* it was concluded that only six true civilizations can be identified and, of the five ancient ones, none were permitted to mature. Four disappeared within a few centuries as they metamorphosed into serial dynastic totalitarian States or were subsumed by other authoritarian political hierarchies.² The sixth is our own, which is in jeopardy. C. S. Lewis would perhaps not find the exposition and characterization of "civilization" presented in *The Natural State of Medical Practice* too far from his own. He pointed out that civilizations are rare, "attained with difficulty and easily lost," and "the normal state of humanity is barbarism."³

As for a definition, Lewis considered civilization "the realization of the human idea." The Isagorical Theory of Human Progress derived from *The Natural State of Medical Practice* urges that some manifestation of progress be included in its definition, with progress being improvement of the human condition as a result of human reason as expressed through collaborative groups. A formal definition of "civilization," as developed from the analysis presented in *The Natural State of Medical Practice*, is:

"An autonomous urban and rural population sufficiently large to require a regulatory hierarchy to optimize production of a food surplus and trade that contributes to wealth and permits specialization of crafts and vocations capable of progress to the benefit of all citizens."

Consonant with Lewis, "specialization of crafts and vocations" and the progress therefrom, as shown in an analysis of medical practice over the ages, are attributes of human reason.

Other definitions of "civilization" abound and, being inordinately subjective, are of little value outside the context described by their authors. But for brevity, civilization has been defined as "being civilized," "a complex rather than simple society," and the "opposite of barbarism and chaos." By these criteria, therefore, a civilization is not barbarous, primitive and static. It is civil, inventive, and progressive. Without the ability to progress it is little more than a club. In that it is the consequence of human reason in a dangerous world, civilization is desirable. Whether or not it is necessary is indeterminate. To assist in understanding of this excursus, it is helpful to have read about primary and other "civilizations" in Excursus 14.

Civilizations of today

² The fifth civilization, the Indus River Valley civilization (flourished 2500-1900 BC), probably declined for geoclimatic reasons, although its intellectual heritage as expressed in the Vedas and ayurveda would subsequently become the basis of Hinduism and ayurvedic medicine. The other four include the Mesopotamian, Egyptian, Chinese, and Greco-Roman. For present purposes the reason only six civilizations are identified as progressive is because extant rational medical writings can be traced to their earliest stages, thus allowing some objective assessment of civilizational progress. The possibility that true civilizations could have originated elsewhere and at other times is acknowledged, but the proof is awaited.

³ C. S. Lewis, *Our English Syllabus*, in *Rehabilitations and Other Essays*, London, 1939, pp. 82-83.

Current civilizations, according to Dr. Arnold Toynbee in mid-20th century, include Western Christian, Orthodox-Russian, Orthodox-Byzantine, Islamic, Hindu, Chinese and Far Eastern.⁴ More recently there seems to be some hesitation in listing modern civilizations. In part this is because what is called “Western” civilization has left its mark globally with the proliferation of technology and the spread of Christianity, blurring the uniqueness of global cultures over the last two centuries. Nevertheless, this has not restrained some from anticipating characteristics of civilizations yet to be. Nikolai Kardashev proposed a scaling of civilizations based on technology as gauged by energy production.⁵ Others anticipate a single global civilization, and some even suggest it is already upon us.

Dr. Samuel Huntington (1927-2008) identified eight contemporary civilizations. While pointing out their differing ideologies and the historically recent opportunity to advance themselves apart from the West and thereby potentiating a “clash of civilizations,” they can also

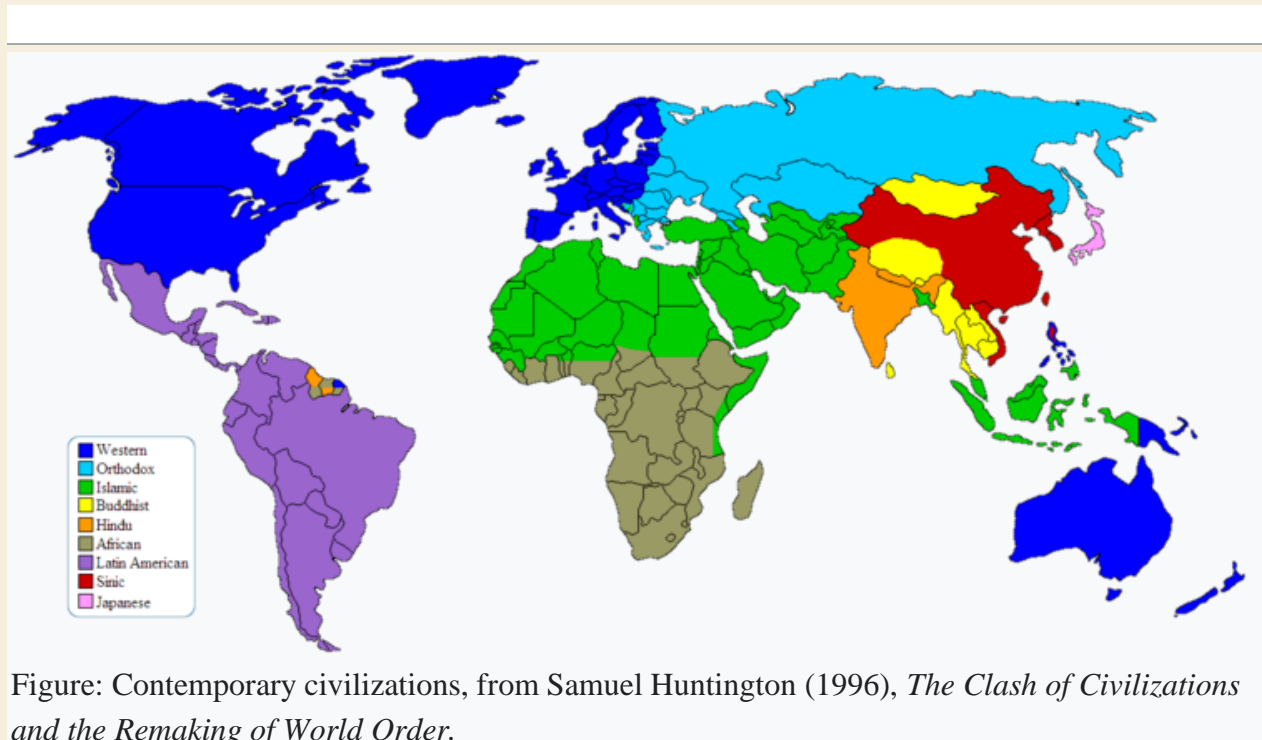


Figure: Contemporary civilizations, from Samuel Huntington (1996), *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*.

be defined by geography.⁶ If there are any smaller civilizations, they are subsumed by those that dominate regional geography. The notable feature of Huntington’s list of civilizations is the association of most with a dominant culture identified with religion: Western Christian, Orthodox Christian, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam, with South and Latin America, Japan, and

⁴ This list is identified by Dr. Toynbee in his 1934 volume 1 Introduction of his famous 12-volume *A Study of History*.

⁵ See: Balega, Y. Y., et al., *In Memory of Nikolai Semenovich Kardashev*, in *Physics-Uspekhi*, 63:622-624.

⁶ Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilization and the Remaking of World Order*, New York, 1996. The Figure of the civilizations is copied from that book.

southern Africa separately considered (this is similar to Toynbee's earlier list mentioned in the preceding paragraph). It is interesting today to note his prediction in 1996 of fault-lines between civilizations as locations for future conflict, for among the modern countries he would locate on fault-lines are Israel, Ukraine, Nigeria, Sudan, Afghanistan, Chechnya and Pakistan, all locations presently threatened or contested by arms.

Judaism, which Dr. Toynbee considered a fossilized culture, Dr. Huntington generally avoided. This may have been unfair, as the following will argue.

The uniqueness of our civilization and its origin

Excursus 14 explored how "civilization" is to be defined. After requiring that the term "progress" be included in the definition, it settled on the disquieting conclusion that there is only one true civilization that has achieved a degree of maturity, our own. It is only in the West that progress took hold, producing the means for a more secure, healthful and longer life expectancy that has spread globally to help billions of people.

In *The Natural State of Medical Practice* (volume 1, p. 439ff) progress in modern medical practice was shown to originate in the post-Reformation West, *i.e.*, since the 16th C. It was not a continuation of Hippocratic medicine from ancient Greece or any other ancient source because the intervening thousand years of Dark Age and Medieval medicine had, in effect, no professional practitioners worthy of the name. That particular millennium of European history does not seem to represent any civilization in that it was feudal, static, and unable to progress. Nevertheless, the underlying benevolence of its unifying common religion suggests its designation as a Christian *culture*.

But once underway in the 18th C, modern medical practice has been justifiably referred to as Western medicine. It seems logical, therefore, to consider it a manifestation of a Western civilization. And, as cultural and institutional components of the Dark Ages and Medieval period merged into our contemporary civilization, it seems reasonable to combine the Western and Christian aspects into a single civilization that can be dated from the early centuries of the 1st millennium AD, as Drs. Toynbee and Huntington proposed. It is to be noted, however, that the Dark Ages and Medieval period did not contain the seeds of progress. As will be explained below, the only reason they can justifiably be retained as part of a Christian civilization is that they serve as a conduit of Christian history and culture that connects the Torah with the present.

It was also proposed in *The Natural State of Medical Practice* that the common distinguishing feature associated with the other five nascent civilizations listed in footnote (1) as well as our own was a level of civil liberty and prosperity that permitted specialization, thus enabling medical progress to appear. The critical role of civil liberty raises a question: how did that freedom arise? For the five ancient early civilizations the explanation is obvious: the absence of an authoritarian political hierarchy during the settlement hierarchy phase of early urbanization. Thus left alone, humans will invent, discover, and, if demographics suffice, progress.

This, however, is not an adequate explanation for our own civilization, for it evolved in a large European region divided among thousands of feudal dominions and culturally contained by the Vatican's dominant leadership of a super-kinship, the Roman Catholic Church. Thus, political authoritarianism and kinship were combined in resisting any inordinate claim to civil

liberty. From where and how did such freedom arise that led to the flowering of progress in medicine that began in the 18th C?

The Natural State of Medical Practice concluded the critical event to be the 16th C Protestant Reformation that for convenience can be dated to 1517 and the internal revolution in the Church instigated by Martin Luther. The explanation was felt not to lie to any great extent in the evolving Protestant work ethic that fostered capitalism. It rather was integration of the Decalogue into the political sphere that reformed political hierarchies to accommodate increasingly democratic governance and recognition of natural rights.

This transposition was not sudden. Human history is filled with anecdotal evidence of attempts at freedom of conscience and liberty of the individual. Furthermore, the issue is complex. But there is an evolutionary thread that ties the two together, and that is adherence to natural law. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) defined the problem and Calvin (1509-1564) agreed. Both considered natural law and the Decalogue (*ca.* 1500 BC) to be equivalents, thus providing a common three-thousand-year-old referent for the following sections.⁷

The Decalogue in prehistory and history, a summary

Modern explications and criticisms of the Decalogue, while thought-provoking and varied, are more complex than necessary for this excursus. This is in part because of the iconic status it has acquired in the centuries following its appearance in *Exodus 20*, which some estimate at 1500 BC; *i.e.*, its importance rests not only on what it says, but also what it has come to mean. A recent summary by Dr. Leon R. Kass concerning the origin and contemporary and iconic significance of the Decalogue includes a division between those Commandments that specify the relation of people to God, the ritual Commandments, and those that guide the relation of members of a society to one another, the ethical Commandments.⁸

The Decalogue is considered a moral guide, and its message is a restatement of natural law. And natural law is there to protect our natural rights. They include our rights to life, to property, and to liberty. The latter comprises no transgression of family, reputation or, by implication, way of life. The Decalogue did not identify “liberty” as a natural right. But to explicitly specify individual liberty as a natural right would have been incomprehensible in the

⁷ See Calvin, *In Rom.*, ad 2.14-15, 46. “He indeed shows that ignorance is in vain pretended as an excuse by the Gentiles, since they prove by their own deeds that they have some rule of righteousness: for there is no nation so lost to every thing human, that it does not keep within the limits of some laws. Since then all nations, of themselves and without a monitor, are disposed to make laws for themselves, it is beyond all question evident that they have some notions of justice and rectitude, which the Greeks call preconceptions *προληψεις*, and which are implanted by nature in the hearts of men. They have then a law, though they are without law: for though they have not a written law, they are yet by no means wholly destitute of the knowledge of what is right and just; as they could not otherwise distinguish between vice and virtue; the first of which they restrain by punishment, and the latter they commend, and manifest their approbation of it by honoring it with rewards. He sets nature in opposition to a written law, meaning that the Gentiles had the natural light of righteousness, which supplied the place of that law by which the Jews were instructed, so that they were a law to themselves.” Translation by vicar John Owen (1788-1868) of Calvin’s text (here partially supplied in Latin because of its great importance to subsequent events): “Nulla enim gens vnquam sic ab humanitate abhorruit vt non se intra leges aliquas contineret. Quum igitur sponte ac sine monitore, gentes omnes ad leges sibi ferendas inclinatae sunt, constat absque dubio quasdam iustitiae ac rectitudinis conceptiones quas Graeci prolyhei~ vocant hominum animis esse naturaliter ingenitas. Habent ergo legem sine Lege.”

⁸ Dr. Leon R. Kass, *The Ten Commandments: Why the Decalogue Matters*, in *Mosaic Magazine*, June 3, 2013

ancient world. To live outside the kinship or authoritarian unit was irrational. Thus, the concept of individual civil liberty seems justifiably unspecified in the Decalogue, and that particular interpretation would not make itself known to mankind until after the Reformation. In the interim, the Decalogue was considered solely as a religious guide for the individual in society, Commandments from God that good people should obey. Civil allegiance, a separate issue, was to one's leader, tribe, or clan, and to not acknowledge some such association would have been unthinkable.⁹ To not "leave unto Caesar what is Caesar's" would have been a wild idea to contemporaries. This was convenient for political authorities, who would claim that allegiance and proceed with "positive" (man-made) laws they deemed appropriate for regulating society rather than trying to make do with the Ten Commandments. The Decalogue was viewed as a one-way street; common people were to obey, but governance had no such obligation.

But the Decalogue's protection of individual rights transcended the kinship or other social agency. Its full implementation was directed at *you*, the individual, as expressed in second person, singular, rather than a nation or ethnic group. Yes, a person is to obey the Commandments, but that means that everyone else is to do the same, and this in turn means individual rights are protected from transgression by society as a whole, including its leadership. Not only is it a guide for all people; none benefit inordinately from its implementation. It favors everyone and no one more than another, and it clearly is not a statement issued by a temporal ruler, for there is no benefit via power or wealth that one or a few person(s) can claim or accrue if that ruler also follows those Commandments. This contrasts with the law codes of Hammurabi and Ur-Nammu, and is an argument for its Divine nature.

It is therefore somewhat of a surprise that the message of the Decalogue has only recently been politically codified, specifically on March 4th, 1789. It is also a condemnation of all rulers prior to the *Constitution of the United States* and its *Bill of Rights* for abusing their privileges as leaders by not implementing it. Had they done so, humanity would have bettered its health, security and longevity much earlier.¹⁰ While we are now enjoying the remarkable benefits of our natural rights, it is important to remember that their overwhelming importance to us as individuals resides in the individual's protection from society; *i.e.*, in a civic setting the importance of the Decalogue is, in effect, the obligations of others.

The Decalogue can now be viewed as a fulfillment of the religious Covenant between God and the Israelites but on a broader scale. A religious interpretation might suggest that if we are true to the Commandments, God will see that we prosper. What was missing prior to the Reformation was recognition of the importance of governance of society as a whole in obeying the Decalogue. Would that it had been obvious.

In addition to the Decalogue's regulations for society, Judaism from its earliest days stressed the equality of all people before God; we were made in the image of God and we are descended from God's creations, the first man and woman. This fostered a classless society and an egalitarian impulse in Judaism that has existed ever since. This same impulse helped initiate

⁹ Dr. Ralph Lutz, in his article *The History of the Concept of Freedom* in *Bull. of the Amer. Assoc. of Univ. Prof.*, 36:18-32, 1950, dates the concept of civil liberties with the democracies of ancient Greece. That may not be accurate. The democracies in ancient Greece were oriented toward survival of the city-state rather than individual freedom, with voting and other aspects of Greek democracy thereby enlisted as motivating factors to increase personal stake in city-state protection. In contrast, this Excursus would place its origin as post-Reformation.

¹⁰ No society is perfect, even one with constitutional protections of natural rights, and it took a terrible civil war to ensure that all citizens of the United States had that legal protection, although some questioned the citizenship of the enslaved population. But issues of implementation have, and probably always will, bedevil interpretation of the Constitution.

the Reformation when Martin Luther profoundly announced that every member of the Church was equal to Church leaders in the eyes of God.

In conclusion, following the Reformation there were two remarkable social developments over the next two centuries: (1) increasing recognition of natural rights for all people, and (2) extension of natural law to the political sphere. Thus, secular leaders were to be limited in their privileges and the common citizenry were not to have their natural rights transgressed. Furthermore, not often mentioned but most important for progress, those civil liberties and protections extended to *everyone*. The great mass of humanity was encompassed in the event, not just the leaders, kings, chiefs, priests and gentry. With hierarchical political power on a grand scale now being restrained for the first time in the history of the world, the ingenuity of humanity was released *en mass* in the West, and progress ensued. In part because of its association with Judaism and Christianity and in part because it has become so prominent in Western political thought, the ethical Decalogue has, with global expansion of modern progress emanating from the West, permanently ensconced itself as the iconic declaration of human freedom for all time.¹¹

¹¹ Uncertain is the status of Islam in this iconization of the Decalogue. Moses and the Commandments are duly acknowledged, praised and implemented by the Quran, for specific statements in the Quran consistent with the Decalogue have been identified. If the Decalogue can be credited as the permissive agent for human progress, why should not Islam be included in our civilization's name? And Islam would seem to have had a head start in that in its early centuries prominent cities and scholars emerged at a time when Europe was feudal, static and unable to progress. On the other hand, elements of the Quran clearly inconsistent with the Decalogue have been noted (see for example *Islam and the Decalogue* by Prof. Howard Kainz, published in *The Catholic Thing* (July 23, 2016). The essential difference seems to be Islamic resistance to extending the social protections inherent in the Decalogue to "nonbelievers."

There are historical similarities between the Roman Catholic Church and Islam. Neither has been friendly to the other, particularly evident in the Christian Crusades sanctioned by the Pope and the westward extensions of the Ottoman Empire that conquered Constantinople and ended the Byzantine Empire. Power emanated from the top: the Pope (and his interactions with the Holy Roman Emperor) in the former, the Sultan in the latter. Dependent regions were, in both, subjects of a "super-kinship" based on religion, with all the baggage that a kinship carries that functions to prevent progress. Islam split into various factions over the centuries, and the Church also had unruly factions.

Islam was reaching its zenith early in the 16th C under Suleiman the Magnificent, whereas at about the same time the Roman Catholic Church experienced a dramatic schism, the Reformation. Perhaps a justification for not including Islam as a component of our Western civilization can be traced to the reasons for the Reformation, for this resulted in separation of large populations, especially northern Europe, from the "believers" in the Roman Catholic Church. The former were considered heretics rather than nonbelievers, but over the next three centuries it was northern and western Europe that would carry the Reformation forward, advance civil liberties and natural rights, and be the spearhead for progress of our Western civilization.

Fractures occurred in the Islamic world as well. But at the time of the Reformation the Ottoman Empire was reaching its greatest extent and influence, its leadership and economy in the hands of the Osman dynasty, Sufism its State creed, and its goal to extend its borders and advance Islam. There was no popular uprising against the power of that Empire. Thus, the earliest major attempt at democratizing Islamic regions, which was short-lived, would not appear until late in the 19th C.

It is proposed, therefore, that the reason why modern progress is attributable to the West and Judeo-Christianity but not Islam stems from the Reformation, and a prominent feature of the Reformation was the new interest in the Decalogue which the State was also to obey. Elements of the Decalogue can be found in the Quran, but they are not an inclusive list, instead being implied in scattered statements. Indeed, the specific scriptural citations in the Torah are considered by Islam to be outdated. It appears, therefore, that it is the original Commandments, subjected to intense scrutiny by Judeo-Christian scholars, that can be considered the spark and the fuel for Western progress, whereas Shariah law, while religious in nature and affirming all persons are equal, is extensive and complex, and in its social obligations (*mu aralat*) is oriented to economic/commercial activities and

The primacy of the Decalogue

Dr. John Witte, Jr., has provided an enlightening scholarly narrative describing the sequential changes in the social and political implications of the Reformation.¹² Prodded by violent events in Europe, the maturation of political thought during its first century affected the political implications of the Decalogue and the political prominence of Calvinists in the Old World and the New. From this political thinking changes in governance came ever closer to an equivalence between church leadership and its laity and government leadership and its people. Leaders in both instances were being viewed as no more important than the people they led, government should follow the same rules as the individual, replaceable if they did not, and behind the curtain and offering guidance for all were the Ten Commandments.

Calvinists from the beginning recognized the importance of separation of church and state and the responsibility for correcting unjust positive laws and “overbearing tyranny.” Although the great importance in maintaining public order was stressed, an individual’s rights to property and other aspects of daily life were accepted, based on Calvin’s interpretation of biblical statements contemporary with Roman law. It was also considered that natural law applied to everyone, believers and non-believers, and provided “civil norms” relevant to governance. Within the church, freedom to assemble, debate and elect was not to be restricted. Dr. Witte concludes, “Calvin described natural law as a set of moral commandments, written on the heart, repeated in the Scripture, and summarized in the Decalogue.”¹³ The Decalogue’s political importance was then specifically stated by Christopher Goodman in 1558:

Yf you therefore be Gods subjects and people, and he your Lorde God and louing Father, who is aboue all powers ad Princes, ad hath made no Lawes, but such as are for your preseruacion, and singuler comferte: then without all controuersie there maye be nothings lawfull for you by anie commandment of man, whiche your Lorde god in anie case forbiddeth: and nothings vnlawfull or forbidden to you whiche he commandeth, whither it appartayne to the firste Table or the Seconde [*i.e.*, the ritual or the ethical Commandments].

From this it is clear that, as Dr. Witte comments, “... a person has the inalienable right to life, to property, to marital integrity, and to reputation and fair process. A person has the inalienable right to be free from having his family household, and possessions coveted by others.”

Then followed Theodore Beza (1519-1605) whose writings formalized the rights and responsibilities of the people in the face of tyrannical government. An example of this thinking was the publication *Vindiciae Contra Tyrannos* (1579), from which the name of our website, contratyrannos.com, is derived.

eye-for-an-eye and other aspects of criminal law and punishment. The Decalogue in effect says “Do not do ...,” whereas Shariah law says “If you do this ..., then”

¹² Much of the following is based on a foundational chapter by Dr. John Witte, Jr., entitled *Calvinist Contributions to Freedom in Early Modern Europe*, in *Christianity and Freedom*, volume 1, *Historical Perspectives*, Cambridge (UK), 2016, pp. 210-234.

¹³ This is extensively discussed in a book also by Dr. John Witte, Jr., *The Reformation of Rights*, 2007, pp. 156-169. He points out that Calvin himself considered the conscience, natural law and the Decalogue to be equivalents.

Dr. Witte then describes what might be considered the mature political version of the intellectual process traceable to the Decalogue by reviewing the writings of the eminent jurist, Johannes Althusius (1557-1638). In addition to stating that “The natural law imparts to all men a freedom of the soul or mind,” Althusius construed the ethical Laws of the Decalogue to comprise “a full system of public, private, penal and procedural rights” inherent in the positive laws of government. As Dr. Witte grandly concludes, “By the time he was finished, he had defined and defended almost every one of the rights that would appear in the American federal and state constitutions a century and a half later.”

This linkage between the Decalogue and the consequences of the Reformation strongly binds the Hebrews of the Old Testament to the Christians of the New Testament. It also binds everyone else to this pairing, for, of utmost significance, the concept of natural law is not limited to the Judeo-Christian religion. The concept is generally accepted by believers and nonbelievers alike, although the source of natural law is debated. Excursus 6 briefly describes the consensus about the universal presence and application of natural law. The only distinction between Judeo-Christian and other formulations of natural law is that the former has now been codified and legislatively implemented to varying degrees in the West whereas elsewhere positive laws have restricted its import.

The reason for the retention and prominence of the Decalogue in the West is attributed by some to its original covenantal nature. This entailed its observance by both parties (*i.e.*, God and the ancient Israelites), whereas the expression of natural law elsewhere was more subtle and readily superseded or camouflaged when convenient by authoritarian positive laws. In the Torah a direct interaction of man with God is palpably obvious and it has purposely remained so for millennia. For present purposes, the Message as given to the ancient Israelites in the Decalogue is without question historically tied to the Reformation and modern Western progress.

Judeo-Christian unification

From the preceding, Israel can be considered part of Huntington’s Western Christian civilization even though it is geographically encompassed by Islam in Huntington’s global physical partitioning of civilizations (see Figure). But there are those who would assign Judaism to a civilization unto itself spanning 4,000 years and manifested by a tenacious and robust religious structure and an intercommunicative global diaspora existing within its original religious tenets. Yet the Jewish contribution to modern progress when working in non-Jewish environments in the West has been done hand-in-glove with the latter and the resulting progress contributes to everyone’s benefit. Thus, the two come together fairly well in the concept of a Jewish and Christian alliance. This alliance has done what the ancient Jewish people alone were unable to do.

This combination would reset the beginning of our “Western” civilization, for Western Christian civilization is traceable only to the time of Christ or a few centuries later. But with the inclusion of the history of the ancient Hebrews the date of origin of our civilization could now be placed, albeit controversially, to about 1500 BC. Is this a reasonable interpretation of history?

Jewish history begins with a nomadic people and tribal activities regulated by local *edahs*, or councils, and that tendency toward a classless popular governance has persisted ever since. A brief analysis of its antiauthoritarian roots by Rabbi Robert Gordis is presented in Excursus 8. But an early sedentary and prosperous agricultural existence that might have

fostered a nascent civilization with commerce, prosperity, and specialization of beneficial services such as medicine did not develop. An early city of prominence to ancient Hebrews was Shiloh, but it was already the site of an earlier walled Canaan city when the Israelites arrived, and it functioned thereafter as a religious center rather than a commercial one. Thus, neither the early history nor subsequent captivities and dispersions lent themselves demographically to initiation of a primary civilization characterized by progress as proposed and described in *The Natural State of Medical Practice*, volume 3.¹⁴ Without a homeland that could support a sizeable and commercially-based permanent society, Judaism remained dispersed, and captivities, wars and cultural distinctions would prevent merging with another civilization for more than a thousand years.

Scholarship regarding the Decalogue is extensive and ongoing, but for present purposes reference is specifically to the biblical narrative of *Exodus* 20. The uniqueness of the Decalogue has been questioned. Dr. Andrew Wilson has published extensively on the similarities in ideas, including the Decalogue, as expressed in sacred texts of various world religions.¹⁵ It has also been proposed that the similarities between the laws of Moses and those of Hammurabi are such to suggest the former were derived from the latter. Arguments for and against this position have been based on the wording of some of the laws and on the difference in legal context. Differences include: the Hammurabi code is a list of criminal and civil laws whereas Mosaic laws are ethical and religious/ritual in nature, despite similarity of some specific items; the laws of Hammurabi specify punishment, whereas Mosaic laws do not; Mosaic laws are considered apodictic (definitively handed down) and the Hammurabi code is casuistic (based on precedent). Excursus 6 discusses natural law and its expression in many ancient and contemporary societies. It is argued that natural law is an inherent component of the human conscience, and its message is the same as the Decalogue. As mentioned above, this was Calvin's interpretation, and the prominent anthropologist, Dr. Margaret Mead, noted its nearly universal presence in contemporary primitive societies.¹⁶ As people of all times and places seem to share this attribute, similarities in its expression in laws and sacred texts of various sorts around the world should come as no surprise.

But it was the Covenant with the Israelites that guaranteed the historical survival of the formal tenets of the Decalogue for future generations. Some might say this happened for a reason: early humankind did not obey its multitude of consciences in each of which lay inherent knowledge of good and bad, and as a consequence God selected the ancient Israelites for a Covenant with more explicit instructions on the content of natural law, what we call the Decalogue, to oversee that its message was made clear to all mankind. Being insufficiently effective, for whatever reason, in spreading that message, God's Covenant with the Israelites was reinforced by the introduction of Christianity to expand it globally. That unification, in fact, is what has been occurring, regardless of what one might consider its origin.

¹⁴ The matter of the Ten Lost Tribes is unsettled as is their whereabouts, and they are not included in the present considerations.

¹⁵ Dr. Andrew Wilson, *World Scripture: A Comparative Anthology of Sacred Texts*, New York, 1991.

¹⁶ Margaret Mead, *Some Anthropological Considerations Concerning Natural Law*, in *Natural Law Forum*, 1961, paper 59, pp. 51-64; http://scholarship.law.nd.edu/nd_naturallaw_forum/59. Also see: James Q. Wilson, *The Moral Sense*, New York, 1993. Dr. Wilson does not equate the moral sense and natural law in his book, but he elsewhere has stated he hoped they were the same (see Acton Institute in *Religion and Liberty*, vol. 9, No. 4, *The Free Society Requires a Moral Sense, Social Capital*). And C. S. Lewis also considered a moral sense to be found in all societies, even primitive ones.

Our civilization's name

Although the Decalogue and its Hebraic origin remained a popular theme subsequent to the Reformation, it was not Luther who would make room for Jewish inclusion in Western society. It was the demography of an awakening 16th C Europe in which the significance of the individual before God, eloquently defended by Luther, became a guide and justification for civil liberties. Attempts at promoting civil liberties had been unsuccessfully percolating in Europe for centuries.¹⁷ But with the Reformation this pairing of individualism and civil liberty now matched the ethos of Jewish populations ensconced throughout Europe. Despite the many centuries of prejudice, fear, envy and malice that periodically had wreaked havoc on their communities, by the 18th C Jewish contributions to society in commerce, art, and science were recognized, appreciated and rewarded. This was not done by edict and it was not done by some sudden change in heart. It represented instead the opening of European society to the significance of individual rights and natural law that made it easier to overlook cultural differences, making them objects of interest and merit rather than emblems of peculiarity and division. The Jewish ethos and Protestant ethos seemed so different yet were so similar that previous “tribal” distinctions lost their perceived importance as their true importance became manifest. England was especially the recipient of this foremost but unanticipated consequence of the Reformation, although it took two centuries to make its mark. It was, therefore, in post-Reformation Europe that Western civilization belatedly made room for an embryonic Jewish civilization that was full of potential but for more than three millennia was lacking in opportunity.

In addition to political and economic integration, combining Western Christianity with Judaism under the cognomen of a civilization is supported by religious heritage, which under Dr. Huntington's schematic is the principle “cultural” distinction for his eight civilizations.¹⁸ As a result, “civilization,” properly defined as having a directional component based on progress, now can include the equivalent Judaic and Western contributions to progress and can claim recognition for the global benefits proceeding therefrom.

The present-day concept of the “West” is so vast, its culture(s) so varied, and its inclusiveness so subjective that as a term it is meaningless to refer to a Western civilization.¹⁹ An alternative designation is needed. When most people use the phrase “Christian” civilization they mean Judeo-Christian. It is therefore not only appropriate but convenient to apply the term “Judeo-Western Christian,” or perhaps “Judeo-Western” or, my preference, “Judeo-Christian,” to our own civilization, to consider it as the only mature true civilization that has ever existed, and to date its first appearance to the age of the Ten Commandments, almost four thousand years ago.

It remains to be seen if the Judeo-Christian civilization will expand to a single global civilization. The resistance to this intrusion into other cultures will probably be impossible to

¹⁷ The Magna Carta of 1215 was an early manifestation, one that was annulled within weeks by Pope Innocent III, only later to reemerge somewhat changed.

¹⁸ The importance of increased religious tolerance in the interweaving of cultures is discussed by Dr. Mark Koyama in *Persecution and Toleration: The Long Road to Religious Freedom*, Cambridge, 2019. He concluded the decreased status of the Roman Catholic Church, the increased cost and effort at ensuring religious conformity, and the unnecessary nature of ancillary religious services and identity to the citizenry at large combined to favor religious tolerance that flourished in the 18th C.

¹⁹ See Figure on page 3 of this excursus.

overcome, and understandably so in the foreseeable future. But the possibility should be considered within a century or so because it is clear that modern benefits of progress to every human being is solely the result of adherence, however tardy, halting, and unintentional as it has been, to the Decalogue, whether in its apodictic form or as natural law, the Golden Rule, or our conscience. It is to the Decalogue of Judeo-Christian religion that we can attribute the civil liberties that have lifted the unprivileged citizenry out of what seemed destined to remain eternal serfdom. It is only because of the Decalogue that power of the political hierarchy has been diminished and the ingenuity of humanity released. Natural law itself was insufficient to the task. Unless new information reveals itself, and based primarily on the pre-history and history of medical practice, Western progress in health, security and longevity justifies the naming of our civilization the *Judeo-Christian Civilization*. With the proof now in hand the course forward seems obvious.