

- **Church, Nation and State according to the Norwegian Bishop Eivind Berggrav**
- *L'Église, la nation et l'état selon l'évêque norvégien Eivind Berggrav*
- *Das Verständnis von Kirche, Nation und Staat nach dem norwegischen Bischof Eivind Berggrav*

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SUMMARY

Bishop Eivind Berggrav (1884–1959) is well known as a leader of the Norwegian 'Kirchenkampf' against nazism during the second World War and as an outstanding ecumenical leader after the war. In this article one of his favourite themes is presented, namely the relationship between Church, nation and state.

The first aspect to be presented is the question whether the Church is 'national' or 'supra-national'. In August 1938 Berggrav gave an address on this theme at a meeting in Norway of the International Council of the 'World Alliance for Promoting International Friendship through the Churches', an ecumenical organization which had been involved in efforts to bridge gaps between nations since 1914.

Although Berggrav stressed the ecumenical character of the Church, he also underlined that the Church has an important national aspect. In his address he therefore criticized those who would only talk about the 'supra-national' Church without national limitations. Against this abstract notion he underlined the consequences of incarnation. God wants me to show my solidarity with the actual situation of my nation with its limitations, and humility, Berggrav claimed.

Still, in order not to be misunderstood, Berggrav maintained that nationality in itself is nothing divine, but a very human element which is used by God as an instrument. Implicitly he therefore criticized the German nationalism by saying that the national as a means can never be regarded as the goal. The Lordship of Christ is the principle which

reveals the difference between a sound respect for the nation and perverted nationalism.

In the following years Berggrav's concept of Church, nation and state was tested several times, especially during the second World War. The article presents two important cases, Berggrav's peace initiative, 1939–1940, and his leadership during the Norwegian Church struggle.

Berggrav's peace initiative was founded on the principle of understanding and reconciliation between nations. It seemed quite clear to him that a peace mission had to treat the two parties in a similar way. Reciprocity and impartiality are necessary presuppositions for a successful peace mission, he thought. His own initiative shows that he himself tried to follow this fundamental principle.

The Norwegian Church struggle had two main aspects. First, the Church stood up against injustice and discrimination; secondly it fought for its own freedom from a totalitarian state. The strategy of Bishop Berggrav was to unite Church and people in a common front against the Nazi regime, by defending justice and conscience, and by condemning injustice and violence.

Berggrav's reflections upon Church, nation and state express a deep concern for the Church's responsibility in political and national affairs. Still, Berggrav in no way identifies Church and nation, no more than he identifies Church and state. Berggrav's main concern was not the national state, nor the Church as an institution, but the sovereignty of God.

RÉSUMÉ

L'évêque Eivind Berggrav (1884–1959) est bien connu comme le champion de la résistance de l'Église norvégienne contre le nazisme pendant la seconde guerre mondiale, et comme une figure de proue du mouvement oecuménique d'après guerre. Le présent article est consacré à l'un de ses thèmes favoris: les relations entre l'Église, la nation et l'état.

Le premier point à considérer est la question de savoir si l'Église est 'nationale' ou 'supra-nationale'. En août 1938, Berggrav a donné une conférence sur ce thème lors d'une rencontre en Norvège de 'l'Alliance mondiale pour le développement de l'amitié internationale par les Églises', une organisation oecuménique qui s'était associée aux efforts accomplis depuis 1914 pour rapprocher les nations.

Tout en insistant sur le caractère oecuménique de l'Église, il soulignait aussi l'importance de son caractère national. Dans son allocution, il critiquait donc ceux qui ne reconnaissaient qu'une 'Église supra-nationale', sans aucunes limitations nationales. A l'encontre de cette notion abstraite, il relevait les conséquences qui découlent de l'incarnation. Dieu veut qu'avec humilité, je me montre solidaire de ma nation dans ses limitations, et ce, dans la situation concrète qui est la sienne, déclarait-il.

D'autre part, afin de n'être pas mal compris, Berggrav affirmait que la nationalité n'avait rien de divin en soi, mais que c'était un élément très humain dont Dieu se sert comme d'un instrument. Implicitement, il critiquait ainsi le nationalisme allemand, en disant que la nation doit être vue comme un moyen, et jamais comme une fin. La seigneurie de Jésus-Christ révèle la différence entre un respect légitime pour la

nation et un nationalisme pervers.

Dans les années qui ont suivi, les idées de Berggrav sur l'Église, la nation et l'état ont été testées à plusieurs reprises, surtout pendant la seconde guerre mondiale. L'auteur mentionne deux exemples, l'initiative de Berggrav en faveur de la paix, en 1939–1940, et son rôle dominant dans la lutte de l'Église norvégienne pendant la guerre.

Son initiative en vue de la paix était basée sur le principe de la compréhension et de la réconciliation entre les nations. Il voyait clairement qu'une telle mission ne pouvait réussir qu'en traitant les deux parties de façon semblable. La réciprocité et l'impartialité étaient des conditions nécessaires au succès de cette démarche en faveur de la paix. Son initiative montre qu'il s'appliquait lui-même à suivre ce principe fondamental.

Le combat de l'Église norvégienne avait deux aspects principaux. Primo, l'Église s'opposait à l'injustice et à la discrimination; secundo, elle luttait pour sa propre liberté vis-à-vis d'un état totalitaire. La stratégie de Berggrav consistait à unir l'Église et le peuple en un front commun contre le régime nazi, pour défendre la justice et la conscience, et pour condamner la violence et l'injustice.

Les réflexions de Berggrav démontrent son intérêt passionné pour les responsabilités de l'Église dans le domaine politique et national. Cependant, Berggrav est loin d'identifier l'Église avec la nation, pas plus qu'avec l'état. Il n'était pas préoccupé en premier lieu par l'état ou la nation, ni même par l'Église en tant qu'institution, mais il voulait honorer la souveraineté de Dieu.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Bischof Eivind Berggrav (1884–1959) ist bekannt als ein Führer des norwegischen Kirchenkampfes gegen den Nationalsozialismus im 2. Weltkrieg und als eine herausragende ökumenische Persönlichkeit nach dem Krieg. In diesem Artikel wird eines seiner Lieblingsthemen dargestellt, nämlich das Verhältnis von Kirche,

Nation und Staat. Zuerst wird die Frage behandelt, ob Kirche 'national' oder 'supranational' ist. Im August 1938 sprach Berggrav zu diesem Thema vor dem Internationalen Rat des Weltbundes für die kirchliche Förderung internationaler Freundschaft, einer ökumenischen Organisation, die seit 1914 darum bemüht war,

die Kluft zwischen den Nationen zu überwinden.

Obwohl Berggrav den ökumenischen Charakter der Kirche betonte, unterstrich er auch die Tatsache, daß sie einen wichtigen nationalen Aspekt habe. In seiner Ansprache kritisierte er also diejenigen, die nur von der supranationalen Kirche sprachen, ohne einen nationalen Charakter anzuerkennen. Im Gegensatz zu diesem abstrakten Begriff von Kirche unterstrich er die Folgen der Inkarnation. Gott will, daß ich in Demut und Bescheidenheit meine Solidarität mit der tatsächlichen Situation meines Landes zeige, behauptete Berggrav.

Dennoch unterstrich Berggrav, um nicht mißverstanden zu werden, daß die Nationalität an sich nichts Göttliches sei, sondern ein sehr menschlicher Faktor, den Gott als Werkzeug gebraucht. Damit kritisierte er implizit den deutschen Nationalismus mit der Behauptung, die Nation könne nie als Ziel verstanden werden. Die Herrschaft Christi sei der Grundsatz, der den Unterschied zwischen einem gesunden Respekt vor der Nation und einem pervertierten Nationalismus offenbare.

In den darauffolgenden Jahren wurde Berggravs Vorstellung von Kirche, Nation und Staat mehrere Male und ganz besonders während des 2. Weltkrieges auf den Prüfstand gestellt. In diesem Artikel werden zwei besondere Fälle dargestellt; Berggravs Friedensinitiative von 1939–1940 und seine

Führung während des norwegischen Kirchenkampfes.

Berggravs Friedensinitiative gründete in Prinzip der Völkerverständigung und der Versöhnung. Ihm war es klar, daß eine Friedensinitiative beide Parteien gleich behandeln muß. Wechselseitigkeit und Unparteilichkeit sind seiner Meinung nach die notwendigen Grundlagen für eine Friedensmission. Seine eigene Initiative in dieser Hinsicht zeigte, daß er selber bemüht war, nach diesem Grundsatz zu handeln.

Der norwegische Kirchenkampf hatte zwei Hauptaspekte. Erstens bezog die Kirche Stellung gegen Ungerechtigkeit und Diskriminierung, und zweitens kämpfte sie um ihre eigene Freiheit von dem totalitären Staat. Durch die Verteidigung der Gerechtigkeit und der Freiheit des Gewissens sowie die Verurteilung von Ungerechtigkeit und Gewalt wollte Bischof Berggrav Kirche und Volk in einer gemeinsamen Front gegen die Naziherrschaft vereinigen. Berggravs Gedanken über Kirche, Nation und Staat spiegeln eine tief empfundene Besorgnis um die Verantwortung der Kirche in politischen und nationalen Angelegenheiten wider. Dennoch setzt Berggrav Kirche und Nation genauso wenig gleich wie Kirche und Staat. Berggravs Hauptanliegen war weder der Nationalstaat noch die Kirche als Institution, sondern die Herrschaft Gottes.

‘A Christianity which is not national becomes a mere religion but not a real Christianity.’ This somewhat provocative thesis was put forward by the Norwegian Bishop Eivind Berggrav (1884–1959) in an address to international Church leaders at an ecumenical meeting in Norway, August 1938.¹

On several occasions Bishop Berggrav, who is well known as a leader of the Norwegian ‘Kirchenkampf’ against nazism during the second World War and as an ecumenical leader after the war, elaborated the relationship both between state and Church and between nation and Church.² Some of the most important examples of this reflection will be presented in the following.

1. The Church—national or ‘supra-national’?

Berggrav gave his address in 1938 at a meeting of the International Council of ‘World Alliance for Promoting International Friendship through the Churches’, an ecumenical organization which had been involved in efforts to bridge gaps between nations since 1914.

In 1938 the organization held its first international meeting in Norway. More than 100 church leaders from different countries attended the conference, and Eivind Berggrav was one of the leading participants. In his address he discussed a very urgent

theme: 'The national and supra-national Character of the Church of Christ'.³

This subject had been important to Berggrav for many years, at least since the first World War.⁴ During the war Berggrav had been acquainted with a very influential church leader, the Swedish Archbishop Nathan Söderblom. Berggrav was one of the participants in a church conference in Uppsala in 1917 for the neutral countries.⁵ Söderblom was the leading personality at the conference, and in the following years Berggrav established a close friendship with the Swedish church leader. After Söderblom's death in 1931 Berggrav was often recognized as his 'successor', and the phrase 'Söderblom complex' has even been used to explain Berggrav's dependence upon the famous Archbishop.⁶

Berggrav's ecumenical involvement started as a protest against a situation where Christians in different nations were separated and lost contact because of political conflicts or war. The pain he felt by observing how personal friendships could be destroyed as a result of political divisions, affected him very strongly, and since then he always underlined the responsibility for creating an atmosphere of peace and reconciliation between nations as well as between churches. The Church proclaims a message which is strong enough to bridge the gap between enemies and to replace hatred with understanding and love, he said.

Although Berggrav thus stressed the ecumenical character of the Church, he never denied that the Church has also an important national aspect. In his address in August 1938 he strongly emphasized this, criticizing those who would only talk about the 'supranational' Church without national limitations. Against this abstract notion he underlined the consequences of incarnation:

This national element in Christianity is based upon the Incarnation: God uses the form of human limitation in order to come close to men. He cannot use ultra-spirituality. He does not want any supra-nationality; He wants me to show my solidarity with the actual situation of my nation in all humility.

It was easier for Bishop Berggrav to say this than it would have been for the German or British church leaders who attended the

meeting. A little country like Norway could not be accused of having imperialistic ambitions, nor was it dominated by an extreme nationalistic ideology.

Still, Berggrav felt it necessary to avoid misunderstanding. In his second thesis he maintained that nationality in itself is nothing divine, but a very human element which is used by God as an instrument. Implicitly he therefore criticized German nationalism, by saying that the national, as an instrument, can never be regarded as the goal: 'Wherever nationality is made a value in its own right, it does away with God'.

On the other hand, when the nation is not perverted by a nationalistic ideology, but perceived as a limited means of God's activity in the world, it is possible to see the connection between Christ and nation, Berggrav claimed, arguing that the fact that Christ was a Jew belongs directly to the Gospel:

He never raised Himself above His nation. It is impossible to think of Him using the word 'supranational' of Himself. He was not an essential extract or sublimation of the best things in humanity. But what he was, said, did and lived *in* His truly human existence came to such an extent out of eternity that eternal life was kindled by it *in* men.

The same perspective comes from a theological reflection upon the Holy Spirit. The Spirit created no Esperanto, Berggrav said, 'every nationality heard the Lord in its own speech'. Human limitation and variation is not to be viewed as a purely negative phenomenon, but as an opportunity for God to show the richness and completeness of his mercy:

The nations present the riches of God to us at the same time as they set human sinfulness clearly before our eyes. The miracle of God is that He creates disciples and witnesses for himself through this nature. The nations and the national Churches form an orchestra of the manifold life of humanity with one and the same key and main theme: eternity and the lordship of Christ.

The Lordship of Christ is then the principle which reveals the difference between a sound respect for the nation and perverted nationalism. When Christ is Lord, it follows from this that neither the Church as an institution, nor the nation, can be my goal

or the focus of my devotion, Berggrav says. Where the nation desires to be the lord, Christ is betrayed. Therefore, oppositions to the nation will arise, because the nation is limited and belongs to the flesh. But this problem is not to be overcome by means of supra-nationality:

On the contrary: a supra-national train of thought is a flight from the sins of my own nation, just as an unduly spiritual train of thought is a flight from my own fleshly nature.

The Church is the body of Christ, a means of incarnation, according to Berggrav. This means i.a. that it is 'called to live close to the heart of the nation, to speak its speech, to identify itself with its limitations'. That which binds all Christians together is not an abstract supra-nationality, but the eternal redemptive act of Christ and sonship of God through Him.

2. The Church and conflicts between nations—Berggrav's peace initiatives 1939–1940

In the following years Berggrav's concept of Church, nation and state was tested several times, especially during the second World War. Here two important cases will be presented, Berggrav's peace initiative 1939–1940 and his leadership during the Norwegian Church struggle.

Already in September 1939 Berggrav started to carry out a peace initiative with the ambitious aim of creating a climate for negotiations which could put an end to the war.⁷ In the first weeks after the war broke out, his initiative primarily aimed at establishing contacts with leading circles within the Nordic countries. In this period he gave many addresses in Norway, Denmark and Sweden, stressing the historical role of the Nordic countries as mediators between the warring sides. Besides, he wrote a letter to his three episcopal colleagues in the other Nordic capitals, suggesting a joint Church initiative for peace. An important part of his plan was to influence the leading Nordic political leaders and the Scandinavian kings, especially the Norwegian King Haakon.

Berggrav's ideal was a 'positive' neutrality and active peace politics. When he saw that

the politicians refused to play an active part, he claimed that the Church had to play a 'political' role.

Berggrav's main political concept was that of 'reconciliation'. In his pamphlet *Nordens innsats* (The task of the Nordic countries), which he wrote in the autumn 1939 shortly after the outbreak of the war, he describes the task of the 'Conciliator'. He must try to create a good atmosphere, as a background for the meeting between the two struggling parties. This meeting must be characterized by reciprocity and confidence.⁸

Berggrav's peace initiative was founded on the principle of understanding and reconciliation between nations. It seemed quite clear to him that a peace mission had to treat the two parties in a similar way. Reciprocity and indiscrimination are necessary presuppositions for a successful peace mission, he thought. His own initiative shows that he himself tried to follow this fundamental principle.

One of the immediate results of Berggrav's initiative was a Nordic Church conference in Oslo on 22–23 November 1939, with about 30 participants from Finland, Sweden, Denmark and Norway. This conference was summed up in three different resolutions, signed by Berggrav, Eidem, the Danish bishop H. Fuglsang-Damgaard and the Finnish professor E. Gulin. The first resolution was 'A call to the Christians of Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden', where the Christian duty to work for peace and reconciliation was underlined.⁹ The conference also sent 'A Greeting to the Christians in the warring countries'. Here the task of working for 'a constructive peace, a peace based on the Christian principles of truth, justice and brotherhood' was stressed.¹⁰ Thirdly, the conference decided to invite representatives of Christians in belligerent countries to meetings—separately at first—with corresponding representatives of the Northern countries.

Berggrav's critics have often claimed that he was motivated by a certain pro-German attitude. In the years after Versailles Berggrav had indeed shown a strong sympathy for the German people and had described the Versailles Treaty as unjust. Through his frequent visits in Germany he

had also established close friendships with many Germans.

Therefore it was not surprising that Berggrav could be regarded as pro-German. On the other hand, he had also close friends in Britain. Berggrav himself has claimed that his attitude was neither pro-German nor pro-British but 'pro-human'.¹¹ With these words he reveals the main reason for his peace initiative, the fear of total war. For Berggrav total war would be a more serious threat than the Hitler régime.¹²

There is also another aspect of Berggrav's thought which his critics could interpret as pro-German. In the thirties he had been influenced by the Oxford 'Group'-movement, as a result of which he began to speak about 'reconciliation' between nations in a way that could be mixed up with a pro-German attitude.¹³ Berggrav's political attitude was rather privatized, and this prevented him from making a realistic analysis of the ideological differences between democracy and dictatorship. Perhaps the weakest point in Berggrav's peace initiative was his failure to recognize this difference. His privatized attitude to politics prevented him from having a realistic view of the situation.

Still one has to admit: Berggrav's peace initiatives at the beginning of the second World War represent a huge mental and intellectual effort. In his attempts to open new possibilities for a peaceful solution Berggrav felt a deep personal responsibility to try all possible means. What he learned in these months also became useful when the Norwegian Church struggle started during the German occupation.¹⁴ The experiences which were won during his peace mission also made it easier for him to find realistic solutions as an ecumenical leader in the post-war period.

3. Church, nation and state in the Norwegian 'Kirchenkampf'

Eivind Berggrav is one of the few truly great figures of recent church history. He was very prudent and very courageous, a Christian with a deep and simple faith and at the same time a man of great immediacy who could effortlessly come close to people.¹⁵

These words, written by the famous German

bishop Hanns Lilje, characterize Bishop Berggrav's leadership during the Norwegian Church's struggle against nazism in the second World War. Throughout the world Berggrav became a symbol in these years of Christian resistance to Nazi oppression. He was not a Norwegian figure only, but a world figure and a true ecumenical leader.

In order to understand the Norwegian Church's struggle during the war one has to bear in mind that the Norwegian Church was, and still is, a typical national Church and a State Church, which in temporal matters is subject to the Parliament and the King, who exercises his power through the Ministry of Church and Education. In the forties, nearly 97 per cent of the population belonged to the Evangelical Lutheran State Church.

During the first months after the German invasion of Norway, on 9 April, 1940, the Norwegian people, as well as the Church, was shocked and confused. The German occupying power promised the Church religious freedom, and until 25 September the Church was left in peace. In these months the Church carried out a policy of cautious collaboration with the Germans on the basis of the Geneva Convention. But in September, through a coup of Reichskommissar Terboven, Norway's free and democratic constitution was destroyed, and it became obvious that the Germans did not intend to respect elementary human rights. The King and the Government were dismissed, the political parties dissolved, and Vidkun Quisling's political party, *Nasjonal Samling* (National Union), was declared by the Germans to be the only legal, 'governmental' party. With the aid of the Norwegian national socialists the occupying power tried to incorporate Norway in to the German Nazi system.

It was immediately clear to the Church that the situation was dangerous and that precautions had to be taken. In October 1940 a general mobilization of the entire Norwegian Christian people was brought about by the foundation of a Joint Christian Council of the Norwegian Church (*Kristent Samråd*) during a meeting in Oslo. It was a manifestation of Christian unity at a most critical time for Church and people. The council

embraced the greater part of the Christian Church in Norway, with such men as Berggrav, who had been appointed Bishop of Oslo three years earlier, the conservative Professor Ole Hallesby at the Free Faculty of Theology, and Ludvig Hope, an outstanding leader of the radical laymen's movement. For everyone who knew of the deep-running division in Norwegian Christianity, this was a remarkable experience. Bishop Berggrav also built up a network of contacts with the small free churches in Norway, including the Roman Catholic Church. He created an ecumenical climate and strengthened the Christian Church as a universal body.

One principle dominated Berggrav's conscious program as leader of the Norwegian Church: The Church must be united and strong. All unnecessary disagreements and all hidden suspicions ought to be avoided. Within the Council, all new problems relating to the German occupation were discussed, and it was here that all important decisions were made. Berggrav emerged as a leader of both this group and the college of bishops. In the Norwegian consciousness and in the press of the free world, Berggrav became the symbol of the Norwegian Church's opposition to the Nazi occupation.

The Norwegian Church struggle had two main aspects. First, the Church stood up against injustice and discrimination; secondly, it fought for its own freedom from a totalitarian state. The strategy of Bishop Berggrav was to unite Church and people in a common front against the Nazi régime, by defending justice and conscience, and by condemning injustice and violence. After the war, Berggrav himself described this strategy in the following way:

In the beginning it was difficult for us to declare war, as Nazism never showed any hostility towards the Church or Christianity. On the contrary, the quislings proclaimed 'protection of the fundamental values of Christianity'. (...) It was clear that the Church would not join battle—more precisely that it would not be able to muster all its forces, rank and file, in an effectual combat on Christian ground, unless essential Christianity were in evident danger. Within the Church there was also fear lest we should be involved in a political struggle. What made the situation clear was a quite unexpected issue: *Justice*. (...)

The Germans had said to the Church: 'Do not attempt to discuss law in general, or the law of nations (...) The Church should keep to the Gospel', a line of argument which was not altogether without response from ecclesiastical circles: 'So long as they do not hinder us from preaching the Word of God, the Church is not endangered'. That which decided us was the experience of *lawless society*—something which had never even entered our imagination—and we were enlightened by the Word of God and by the confession of our Church, that Right and Justice belong to God's own order in the world. Our Lutheran confession in its article 16 thrice repeats the words that all authority shall be *de jure*—an authority of Justice and Right. How often have we not felt thankful that our Lutheran confession contained those clear, strong words! (...) In this way God awoke His Church. We came to see that Right and Justice have more than merely human value. Justice belongs to God. In September, 1940, we included in our church prayer the words of Jesus about those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake (Matt. v. 10). Persecution for righteousness' sake was what we experienced among our people. And then the Christian conscience was set on fire.¹⁶

In the urgent situation during the occupation, it became evident for Berggrav that a close contact between the Norwegian Church and the Norwegian people was necessary to establish a broad common front against the unjust state. His strategy includes reflection upon the character of the Church as a national Church, as a Church of the people. His ideal was a Church which was involved in the daily life of people and took part in the sufferings and the joys of the nation. Some of Berggrav's speeches from these years were filled with national enthusiasm which can only be rightly understood in the context of the German occupation of a small country:

Norway—as it lives in God's mind—that is what we are called to realize. This country will also be our children's country. In times to come Norway's name will be the candle where God puts his light.¹⁷

In December, 1940, all the members of the Supreme Court of Norway laid down their office. This was a protest against the violation of international law and the rights of Norway. At a meeting with the seven bishops of Norway, the Chief Justice said: 'Henceforward it is the Church that must represent

the law'. Thus, the bishops' Pastoral Letter of January/February, 1941, concerned matters of justice and human rights. This letter came as a liberating word to the Norwegian people, for here were church leaders speaking out boldly against the violations of justice which had taken place. The bishops discussed the question of the legitimacy of the state, claiming that the Lutheran confession presupposes that the state is a just state, which maintains law and justice. They also underlined the Church's responsibility to speak out against injustice:

When the authorities permit acts of violence and injustice, and exert pressure on our souls, then the Church becomes the defender of the people's conscience. (. . .) Despite all its human shortcomings the Church has been given authority to spread His law and Gospel among all peoples. The Church can therefore never be silenced. Whenever God's commandments are set aside by sin the Church stands immovable and cannot be directed by any authority of the State.¹⁸

During 1941 there were several controversies between the bishops and the authorities. In the summer of 1941 the Nazis launched their so-called 'Crusade against Bolshevism', hoping that the Church would join the campaign against 'godless' Communism. They were however disappointed, because Berggrav on behalf of the bishops refused to give their support. Day after day the most insulting attacks were made on Berggrav in the quisling press, but he remained firm against all pressure.

In February, 1942, the conflict between the Church and the Nazi state became still more apparent. At the same time, a crisis of far reaching dimensions had arisen in the schools. On 5 February the Quisling 'National Government' decreed that all teachers must become members of the Nazi 'Teachers' Front', and another decree established compulsory membership of the National Unity's (Nazi) Youth Movement for all children between the ages of ten and eighteen. These measures were met by protests from the Norwegian teachers, and the bishops strongly supported them in a sharp letter to the authorities, claiming that the fundamental relationship between parents and children is a 'sacred institution', 'a

fundamental ethical relationship which persists inviolable and sacred for all homes'. 'He who seeks to force the child out of the ties of parental responsibility and to break the divine right of the home, immediately imposes the most extreme strain on the parents' conscience', the bishops said, and maintained:

As the guardians of the Church we recognize it as our duty to stress this plainly and unambiguously with reference to the task you have been given of helping to draft a law intended to permit the forced mobilization of all children from the age of nine or ten upwards, and their subjection to influences which innumerable parents must regard as intolerable in relation to the obligations laid upon them by their conscience.¹⁹

On 24 February, 1942, the bishops declared that the time had come to 'cease administrative co-operation with a State which practises violence against the Church'. They addressed letters of resignation to the authorities, laying down their administrative offices as bishops although maintaining the right to exercise the 'spiritual vocation' given them by ordination at the Lord's altar.

Both the Church and the Norwegian people supported the bishops. On Sunday, 22 March, a declaration was read in practically all churches in Norway, saying that the ministers were only prepared to continue in office if the view of the Church regarding the education of the youth and other matters was respected.

On Easter Sunday, 5 April, the Church broke completely with the state. During the service that day the document *Kirkens Grunn* ('The Foundation of the Church: A Confession and Declaration') was read.²⁰ This document was produced by the Christian Joint Council, though drafted principally by Braggrav. It was stated that the present situation had forced the clergy to present their confession about the foundations of the Church.

This was done in six paragraphs. First, the document testifies that the Holy Scripture is the only basis and guide for Christian life and Christian teaching, that God's Word must be free and that the servants of the Church cannot receive directions from outside as to how God's Word should be

interpreted in a given situation. The document also declares that the ordination of a minister is essentially a life-calling. In a third paragraph it is said that, because of its sacred unity as a true Evangelical Church, the Church has to oppose any coercion of conscience.

The last three paragraphs take the form of a declaration. The fourth paragraph says that, according to the Constitution, the Christian upbringing of the child is a matter of concern for the whole Church together with the Christian school and the Christian home. In the fifth paragraph it is said that the Church has to distinguish clearly between the worldly State and the spiritual Church. It is a sin against God if the State begins to tyrannize over the soul and tries to dictate what people should believe, think and perceive. In the last paragraph it is maintained that despite the fact that the Norwegian Church is allied with the state, it is, as a Church of Jesus Christ, independent and spiritually free in all sacred affairs.

Almost 800 Norwegian pastors, 93% of the clergy, followed the bishops and resigned from office. The authorities soon imprisoned Bishop Berggrav and other church leaders, but because of the strong position which the Church had among the Norwegian people, the Nazi authorities had to avoid stronger measures against the Church.

After a short spell in prison, Berggrav was interned in his own cottage in Asker, outside Oslo, guarded by the Norwegian State Police. His captivity lasted for three years. His circumstances were admittedly totally different from those who were in prison or concentration camps. He enjoyed a considerable measure of communication with the outside world by means of secret messages and the visits of colleagues. Yet this was a period of difficulty and extreme stress.

Berggrav, however, used this time of imprisonment well. In the three years he wrote seven books. One of his most important books, *Man and State*, bears the stamp of being written during the occupation.²¹ It is characterized by a concern about the tendency towards state regulation of all life, not only in a dictatorship, but also in the democratic state. Berggrav asserts that only a sense of the sacredness of justice can pre-

vent the state from coming under demonic control.

This book also contains a critical examination of the dualistic tendency in Lutheran confessional theology concerning the so-called 'Two Kingdoms', the spiritual and the secular. Berggrav underlines the independence of the Church over against a totalitarian state and the right to remind the state that it also stands under the rule of God. The just state acts in accordance with law and justice. When the state rules without law and becomes unjust, the Christian has not only the right, but also the duty to disobey, Berggrav said. This 'conditional' understanding of the state is an important theological contribution to the international debate on political ethics.

4. Church, nation and state—under God's sovereignty

Berggrav's reflections upon Church, nation and state express a deep concern for the Church's responsibility in political and national affairs. Still, it should be emphasized that Berggrav in no way identifies Church and nation, just as little as he identifies Church and state. Although, all through the war, he underlined the common task of the Church and the people in the struggle against the Nazi state, he still knew that there is an important distinction between Church and nation. The struggle of the Church starts in the Gospel, in the centre of the Christian faith, but it takes place in the life of the people, as the place where the violations of God's sacred law are manifested concretely through injustice, brutality and discrimination.

After the war, Eivind Berggrav wrote an article on 'The Task of the Church in the Field of International Affairs'.²² Here he spoke about the 'prophetic' task of the Church, calling for a world-wide responsibility based on a solidarity with humanity in general which extends to political and international matters. Berggrav's main concern was not the national state, nor the Church as an institution, but the sovereignty of God:

Confronted by a situation like today's—men bewildered as to how far God has a will and a place in human history, increasingly inclined

to conceive of society in terms of biology and technology ruled by naked facts and naked forces—the Church's duty must be to tell the nations of God's sovereignty in all human affairs.

- 1 See the following biographical works on Berggrav: Odd Godal, *Eivind Berggrav: Leader of Christian Resistance*, London 1949; Sven Stolpe, *Eivind Berggrav: Bischof von Norwegen*, München 1951; Alex Johnson, *Eivind Berggrav: God's Man of Suspense*, Minneapolis 1960; Günter Gloede, 'Eivind Berggrav: Der Mann des Gewissens', in: Gloede (ed.), *Ökumenische Profile: Brückenbauer der einen Kirche*; Bd. 1, Stuttgart 1961, pp. 244–252; Helge Fæhn, 'Berggrav, Eivind Josef', in: *TRE* 5, pp. 602f.; Per Voksø (ed.), *Eivind Berggrav 1884–1984: Brobygger og kirkeleder*, Oslo 1984; Gunnar Heiene, *Eivind Berggrav: En biografi*, Oslo 1992.
- 2 See Torleiv Austad, 'Eivind Berggrav and the Church of Norway's Resistance Against Nazism', *Mid-Stream. An Ecumenical Journal*, 26 (1987), pp. 51–61; Gerald W. Erickson, *The Ecclesiology of Eivind Berggrav: Obedience to God*, Dubuque 1979 (Diss., Aquinas Institute of Theology); Gunnar Heiene, 'Das Staatsverständnis Eivind Berggravs', *Die öffentliche Verantwortung der Evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche in einer Bekenntnissituation. Das Paradigma des norwegischen Kirchenkampfes*, Erlangen 1984 (Veröffentlichungen der Luther-Akademie e.V. Ratzeburg, Band 7), pp. 54–69; 'Ecumenist of Our Time: Eivind Berggrav', *Mid-Stream. An Ecumenical Journal*, 26 (1987), pp. 40–50; *Den menneskelige stat: Antropologi og politikk hos Eivind Berggrav*, Oslo, Menighetsfakultetet 1991 (diss.); Arnd Heling, *Die Theologie Eivind Berggravs im norwegischen Kirchenkampf. Ein Beitrag zur politischen Theologie im Luthertum*, Hamburg (Diss.).
- 3 See Berggrav's manuscript, WCC Library, Geneva: D 2/2, Box 12.
- 4 See Eivind Berggrav, 'Der Kampf um den Frieden innerhalb der Kirche Norwegens 1914–1919', *Die Eiche* 7 (1919), pp. 224–238.
- 5 See Eivind Berggrav, 'Uppsala-kommentar', in: *Kirke og Kultur* 25 (1918), pp. 49–60. To the conference in Uppsala 1917, see Ruth Rouse/Stephen Charles Neill, *A History of The Ecumenical Movement 1517–1948*, Geneva 1986, pp. 526–528.
- 6 Per Voksø (ed.), p. 18; see also Eivind Berggrav, 'Nathan Söderblom, Genie und Charakter', Tor Andrae (ed.), *Nathan Söderblom*, Berlin, 1957, pp. 233–286.
- 7 See Gunnar Heiene, 'Bischof Berggravs Friedensinitiativen am Anfang des zweiten Weltkrieges', *Kirchliche Zeitgeschichte* 4 (1991/1), pp. 138–151.
- 8 See Eivind Berggrav, *Nordens innsats*, Stockholm 1939, also printed in Eivind Berggrav, *Forgjeves for fred: Vinteren 1939–40*, Oslo 1966, pp. 24–55.
- 9 'Til kristenheten i Norden', printed in *Forgjeves for fred*, pp. 165–167.
- 10 Printed in *ibid.*, pp. 163–165.
- 11 See 'Ad spørsmålet tyskvennlig', unpublished manuscript 30.3.1943, Eivind Berggrav Archive, Oslo, Box 123.
- 12 See Eivind Berggrav, 'Krigens lov', *Kirke og Kultur* 45 (1940), pp. 65–83 (especially p. 73).
- 13 See Berggrav's letter to Bishop George Bell 25.5.39 (Copy, WCC Archive, Geneva, 'WCC in process of formation', Box IX, 4), where he criticizes the attitude of the Western powers: 'Peace seems to be identified with welfare of the entente powers, peace is "status quo", peace is our righteousness, the axis-governments are the enemies of peace. Of course they are—in many respects. But what does Christianity tell about our enemies? Shall we encircle them and unite against them spiritually? They feel that we are condemning them without recognizing our own sins and without recognizing right and justice in their claims. . . . Christ wishes us to cross the human frontiers and barriers, not to build a Maginot-line of Churches.'
- 14 See Torleiv Austad, 'Der Widerstand der Kirche gegen den nationalsozialistischen Staat in Norwegen 1940–1945' *Kirchliche Zeitgeschichte* 1 (1988/1), pp. 79–94.
- 15 See 'Bishop Eivind Berggrav—A Centenary', *Bulletin, United Bible Societies*, No. 136/137 (1984), p. 29.
- 16 Eivind Berggrav, *The Norwegian Church in its International Setting*, The Burge Memorial Lecture, April 30th, 1946, London 1946, pp. 7–9.
- 17 'Er sjelen fri, skaper den et fritt folk', *Kirke og Kultur* 45 (1940), p. 261.
- 18 Quoted from *The Norwegian Church Struggle*, London 1943, p. 17f.
- 19 Quotation, *ibid.*, p. 29f.
- 20 See Torleiv Austad, *Kirkens Grunn. Analyse av en kirkelig bekjennelse fra okkupasjonstiden 1940–45*, Oslo.
- 21 *Staten og mennesket*, Oslo 1945; *Man and State*, Philadelphia 1951.
- 22 *The Ecumenical Review*, II/4 (1950), pp. 333–341.