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Breivik and the Bible

A Textual Analysis of the Use of Psalms in '2083: A European Declaration of Independence'

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Foreword

The development and especially completion of this study has been a long and difficult journey. In the years it has taken to finish this thesis I have gotten engaged, gotten married, sold my appartement, bought a new one through a TV-show, gotten my first job, ruptured my appendix and lost my grandmother. It has been a bumpy ride to say the least. But what has never been bumpy is my interest and excitement for my project. It is thus with mixed emotions I am now handing it in. On the one hand I do not feel as if I have done the research justice by finishing every thought, sentence and finding 100%, but then again, my guess is that I will never get the feeling of being finished with it. On the other hand, it feels good to hand in what I have been working on for so long, and I am proud of what I have achieved in these years. An achievement I could never have accomplished on my own. A few words of thanks are, in other words, due.

First and foremost, I must express how grateful I am to my supervisor, Karin B. Neutel. You have really opened my mind when it comes to religious research, and views on interpretation. At times it has been frustrating, as you have questioned so many things that I have taken for granted. But, my research is more nuanced, and I am a little bit wiser thanks to your questions and inputs. I could not have finished the thesis without your support and guidance.

Secondly, I owe a great deal of thanks to my family and friends. My parents, siblings, and husband. Thank you for putting up with me these years. Thank you for encouraging me, cheering me on, supporting me, and for being so interested in my research. It has on numerous occasions been the topic of discussion on family gatherings and phone calls. I am so grateful for your love and support, always.

Finally, I would like to thank my program coordinator Marianne Bjelland Kartzow, for your help and guidance. You have really done more for me than what your title, and job indicates.

Any errors, omissions, or shortcomings in this thesis are mine alone.

Mathilde Dolsvåg Giske

Oslo, fall 2022

Abstract

This master's thesis looks at Anders Behring Breivik's use of the Bible in his Manifesto, 2083: A European Declaration of Independence. The aim of the study is to answer the research question: "how does Anders Behring Breivik use the Bible in general, and the Book of Psalms in particular, to argue pro violence?". It researches the following sub-question and hypothesis to answer:

- 1) Breivik makes his own Bible
- 2) Breivik does not reflect or care which Bible, and translation he uses
- 3) Breivik has a literal understanding of Scripture
- 4) Are Breivik's interpretations of scripture valid, as he defines himself 'not a religious man'?

To answer this a textual analysis of Breivik's Manifesto, with focus on the chapter "The Bible and Self-Defence", and Breivik's view on violence was conducted. A comparison between the interpretations found in the Manifesto, his sources, and more mainstream interpretations was also done.

This study finds that Breivik does use the Book of Psalms to argue pro violence. He does so by cutting and pasting the bible verses to fit his purpose, and opinions. In other words: he makes his own Bible. But then again, it might not be *his* own Bible, as his translations and interpretations are most likely copied from other sources. Sources that he is not very critical when choosing. This also goes for Breivik's choice of biblical translations, as it all seems quite random. But, the Bible still serves the purpose Breivik wants: it functions as a legitimizing tool. A purpose it will serve whether or not his interpretations are deemed valid by modern-day researchers. Because it has nothing to do with spiritual meaning, only legitimization. The question of validity, reception and reception history is also discussed.

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Chapter 1: Introduction and Case presentation

Context

On the 10th of august 2019 a 21-year-old man named Philip Manshaus attacked the Al-Noor Islamic Centre Mosque in Bærum, Norway. He shot his way through the emergency exit and fired several shots inside of the mosque. He was wearing a GoPro-camera and tried to live stream the incident. Luckily no one was killed in the mosque, but before going there Manshaus had killed his own sister who was adopted from China. Later, it was discovered that he used the same white-power argumentation as Breivik and that he, in his radicalization, had read Breivik's Manifesto, and the Bible. He also claimed to have been elected by Brenton Tarrant who killed 52 people in an attack in Christchurch, New Zealand.¹ Brenton Tarrant again has stated that Breivik was his biggest inspiration, and that they had written letters to each other.²

Six months after the attack in Bærum, in February 2020, PST³ presented their annual threat assessment. In their report PST stated that for the first time ever the radical right was just as big a threat to carry out acts of terror in Norway as Islamists. 11 years ago, on the 22nd of July 2011 most Norwegians had never heard about right wing extremism, let alone thought of it as a threat. But today the 'radical right' is a well-known term that is frequently discussed on the news etc. And, as mentioned, the radical right is just as big a threat to carry out acts of terror in Norway as any terrorist. In other words: the radical right has been- and is on the rise.

Personal motivation

When I first started the process of choosing a field of study, I rather quickly landed on 'extreme' interpretations of the Bible, and the radical right. I find it very interesting that some people use what I see as a book full of peace and love to promote violence and hate. When PST presented their annual threat assessment for 2020, I was just about to decide the direction of my research. The fact that right wing extremism is on the rise made me want to contribute to the much-needed research on the field.

¹ Brenna Jarle, Fraser Sofia, and Hopperstad Morten, "Terrorangrepet i Bærum," VG (<https://www.vg.no/spesial/2019/angrepet-paa-al-noor-moskeen-i-baerum/>) 2019.

² Julie Haugen Egge and Kristine Næss Larsen, "Fryktet Breivik-kopier – slik lot høyreekstreme seg påvirke etter 22. juli," Nrk (https://www.nrk.no/trondelag/ny-studie_-anders-behring-breivik-har-hatt-mindre-innflytelse-enn-det-man-forst-fryktet-1.15549063) 2021.

³ Politiets Sikkerhetstjeneste is the Norwegian Police Security Service or Agency

Initially I did not want to use Breivik, and/or do research on him as I knew that he did not identify as a Christian, at least not in a religious sense. I thus, as many others, disclaimed his interpretations as invalid. In addition, I knew that there had been a heated debate in Norway on whether it would be ethical to do research on Breivik and his Manifesto as attention to the Manifesto is what he wanted. But, after some careful considerations and readings I landed on the conclusion: if we want to prevent actions such as the 22nd of July 2011 from ever happening again, we need to understand, and not just condemn, this way of reading the Bible. And as Hannah Strømmen states: theologians and biblical researchers need to take seriously the role biblical texts holds in political ideology and practise. As religion in the academic debate tends to remain absent in concepts of the radical right, it is usually treated as a strategic maneuver or superficial issue. Lastly, the fact that Breivik has written a Manifesto, makes both the source and his opinions very accessible compared to other right-wing extremists.

Early in my research I discovered that the field of reception and reception history should be a natural follow-up question to my research question. As it would not make sense to look at how Breivik uses the Bible without discussing whether his interpretations should be deemed valid or not. I started to read Hannah Strømmen's research on the field, and it quickly opened my mind and interest to the complexity of Breivik's interpretations and use of the Bible. I also discovered that Strømmen was the only researcher, I could find and at that time, that had done research on Breivik and his use of the Bible. There is much research done on Breivik, and on extreme, even from the radical right, use of the Bible. But I could not find any research that combines the two to any substantial extent. I also discovered that Strømmen's research was quite broad, and that she had studied Breivik and his use of the Bible in general. I then decided to narrow my study to Breivik and his use of the Book of Psalms. I chose to analyze his use of psalms mainly because this is the biblical book he has the most references to. By narrowing my research I can, hopefully, contribute to Strømmen's research by highlighting new aspects of Breivik's interpretations and the Manifesto.

Objectives and research questions

This thesis is a textual analysis of Breivik's Manifesto, '2083: A European Declaration of Independence', with focus on the chapter 'The Bible and Self-Defence'⁴. The aim of this study is to get some answers to how Anders Behring Breivik uses the Bible as argument pro violence. More specific: how he uses the Book of Psalms in his Manifesto. The way in which these elements are researched is by researching Breivik's sources and interpretations, and comparing them to more mainstream ones. And by researching and discussing reception and reception history.

The foundational research question for this thesis is:

How does Breivik use the Bible in general, and the Book of Psalms in particular, to argue pro violence?

To answer this the following sub-question, and hypothesis will be discussed:

- 5) Breivik makes his own Bible
- 6) Breivik does not reflect or care which Bible, and translation he uses
- 7) Breivik has a literal understanding of Scripture
- 8) Are Breivik's interpretations of scripture valid, as he defines himself 'not a religious man'?

Outline of the project

To provide a clear image of the thesis, a short outline of the project is here presented. In chapter one I will give an introduction and overview of my thesis. I will also have a case presentation of the 22nd of July 2011 where Anders Behring Breivik, now Fjotolf Hansen⁵, killed 77 people and wounding many more. I will also present the Manifesto, 2083: A European Declaration of Independence, he published just hours before the attacks.

In chapter two I will present some background knowledge that will be helpful to have before reading the rest of my thesis. I will give an introduction to- and some theory on the radical right, religion and the radical right, religion and violence, and the Bible and violence.

⁴ Breivik writes the word «defense» with a "c" instead of "s", I will continue to misspell it, like Breivik, when I quote him

⁵ I will continue to refer to him as Anders Behring Breivik as that's the author of the Manifesto

In the third chapter I will present the theories and methods I have used in my analysis. The theories I will present is on Breivik and the Bible, where I will use the research of Professor Hannah Strømmen, and reception history. The methods and methodology I have used: textual analysis, more specific: content- and document analysis, and comparison. I will also discuss my selection of methods and methodology, and some circumstances, challenges, and limitations with my research.

Chapter four is where I present my findings when it comes to Breivik and violence, Breivik and Christianity, his use of secondary sources, and scripture. I will also present the verses he uses from the Book of Psalms, and discuss his interpretations, choice of Biblical translation, and, again, his use of secondary sources.

In chapter five I will end my thesis with a discussion on reception, in other words my sub question: “are Breivik’s interpretations of scripture valid as he defines himself ‘not a religious man’?”. Here my findings will be discussed and analyzed in relation to the theoretical perspectives introduced in chapter three.

Chapter six is the conclusion of the study. Here, I will present the core findings of the study in relation to the research question, and hypotheses, and through them, a conclusion is drawn.

Case Presentation: 22nd of July 2011

2083: A European Declaration of Independence is a 1500-pages long Manifesto composed by Anders Behring Breivik in the years prior to his terror-attacks on the 22nd of July 2011. On this day Breivik dressed up in a fake police uniform and killed 8 people by placing a bomb in a van parked in ‘Regjeringskvartalet’ in Oslo, where the Government Headquarters of Norway are. He then went to the island ‘Utøya’ where AUF, the youth division of the Norwegian Labour Party, organized their annual summer camp and started shooting indiscriminately, killing 69 people, and wounding many more.⁶ In the aftermath of the event the widespread assumption amongst the Norwegian population voiced by the media and broadcast worldwide was that the perpetrator of these attacks was a Muslim terrorist, and, it

⁶ Hannah Strømmen, "Christian Terror in Europe? The Bible in Anders Behring Breivik's Manifesto," *Journal of the Bible and its reception* 4, no. 1 (2017), <https://doi.org/10.1515/jbr-2017-2006>. Page 147-148

was implied, a non-ethnic Norwegian. When it was revealed that the terrorist was in fact a Caucasian Norwegian, born and raised in the wealthy west end area of Oslo. And that he associated his violent acts with Christianity, using biblical texts to encourage and justify self-defence and warfare against Muslims and multiculturalism, the attention to his religious affiliation vanished from view.⁷ The Manifesto was distributed electronically shortly before Breivik's attacks, in it he outlines the grounds and reasoning to what he argues to be a 'horrible (/cruel) but necessary' attack. His main argument being that he needed attention to and a platform for his 'political project', the Manifesto.⁸

The Manifesto

In the manifesto Breivik reveals what he believes to be the 'truth' about the state of the Western Europe today. According to him an 'Islamic Imperialism' is taking hold in Western Europe, which is supported by the multiculturalist elite, a 'totalitarian' political correctness embedded in the domain forces in European politics, education, and media. Breivik argues that the Manifesto is part of a Western European Resistance for all 'European Patriots' and 'cultural conservatives' to "prevent the annihilation of our identities, our cultures and traditions and our nation states"⁹ and to win what Breivik claims to be an ongoing cultural war in which Western culture, including Christianity, capitalism, authority, the family, hierarchy, tradition, patriarchy, morality, sexual restraint, tradition, patriotism, loyalty, heredity, nationalism, convention, ethnocentrism and conservatism, is radically threatened by modern and postmodern attacks. This has led to a "loss of freedom of expression, thought control, inversion of the traditional social order."¹⁰ Multiculturalism is seen as profoundly anti-Christian¹¹ which leads to "the ongoing Islamic colonisation of Europe through demographic warfare (facilitated by our own leaders)."¹² The ultimate goal, Breivik argues, must be to make the spread of Islam alongside the cultural Marxist/multiculturalist hegemony in Western Europe diminish so that Europe once again will be "governed by patriots"¹³ in a monocultural, Christian Europe.¹⁴

⁷ Strømme, "Christian Terror in Europe? The Bible in Anders Behring Breivik's Manifesto." Page 147-148

⁸ Strømme, "Christian Terror in Europe? The Bible in Anders Behring Breivik's Manifesto." Page 148

⁹ Anders Behring Breivik, "2083: A European Declaration of Independence " (2011). Page 13

¹⁰ Breivik, "2083: A European Declaration of Independence ". Page 24

¹¹ Breivik, "2083: A European Declaration of Independence ". Page 692

¹² Breivik, "2083: A European Declaration of Independence ". Page 16

¹³ Breivik, "2083: A European Declaration of Independence ". Page 1413

¹⁴ Strømme, "Christian Terror in Europe? The Bible in Anders Behring Breivik's Manifesto." Page 149-150

In the Manifesto Breivik has not written any page numbers. Therefore, I always refer to the heading I find the bible verse in question. I have also checked other researchers references to the Manifesto, and our page numbers are in sync. There are also some spelling errors in Breivik's writings, but when I quote him, I do not fix them.

The Eurabia theory and counter-jihadism

The manifesto is a patchwork composition, made up of a cut-and-paste excerpts from a variety of sources, from extremist far-right books to websites and blogs. It thus draws attention to the wider ideological circuits arguing against Muslims and condemning multiculturalism.¹⁵ The two major, and often overlapping, features of the far-right that Breivik draws on are the Eurabia theory and counter-jihadism. Central proponents to both Eurabian theory and counter-jihadism such as Oriana Fallaci, Bat Ye'or, 'Fjordman' and Robert Spencer are cited multiple times in the manifesto, in addition to Breivik's own contributions to the genre.¹⁶

Eurabia theory

Eurabia theory consists of the view that political leaders in Europe, and especially the European Union, are part of a conspiracy to turn Europe into an Islamic colony. This genre is recognized both by its conspiratorial and apocalyptic characteristics. At the centre of the genre stands a 'fear of small numbers'.¹⁷ In the context of Breivik, and other white supremacists, this relates to a profound fear of white majorities in Norway and the rest of Europe gradually becoming a minority. This theory states that Norway, and the rest of Europe are in the process of being taken over by Muslims determined on establish 'Islamic rule' and imposing a sharia.¹⁸ Central to the alleged establishment of a European Eurabia is demography. Supposedly it proceeds by virtue of means such as Muslim mass immigration and comparatively high fertility patterns on the part of female Muslims living in Europe.¹⁹

¹⁵ Strømmen, "Christian Terror in Europe? The Bible in Anders Behring Breivik's Manifesto." Page 150

¹⁶ Hannah Strømmen, "Biblical Blood-Lines: From Foundational Corpus to the Far Right Bible," *Biblical interpretation* 25, no. 4-5 (2017), <https://doi.org/10.1163/15685152-02545P06>. Page 10

¹⁷ Sindre Bangstad, *Anders Breivik and the rise of Islamophobia* (London: Zed Books, 2014). Page 144-145

¹⁸ Bangstad, *Anders Breivik and the rise of Islamophobia*. Page 144-145

¹⁹ Bangstad, *Anders Breivik and the rise of Islamophobia*. Page 144-145

Counter-jihadism

Counter-jihadism is characterized by the view that Islam is not a religion but a totalitarian political ideology that we need to protect ourselves from, thus Islam and the West are at war.²⁰ The duty of counter-jihadists is to stop this so-called 'Islamization', establish an anti-multicultural political network to replace the current political leaders and classes, that enable the alleged Islamic imperialism. And contain Islam in countries that already have a Muslim majority.²¹

Breivik and the Bible

Breivik's references to the Bible only form a minority of the Manifesto. He does however refer to biblical texts explicitly over 62 times, as well as having 27 references to 'the Bible' in more general terms.²² Most of the references are to be found under the heading "The Bible and Self-Defence"²³, this subchapter is part of Book 3 of the manifesto, "A Declaration of Pre-Emptive War"²⁴, and under the chapter entitled "Christian Justification of the Struggle"²⁵. It is in this subchapter I have found the verses I will use in my thesis.

"The Bible and Self-Defence"

This subchapter is only 9 pages long, and it is one of few chapters that is not a cut-and-paste of articles written by others. He does however list eight sources in form of webpages at the end of the chapter, where only one of them still exists in its originality, so it might be more of a patchwork composition than it appears.

This subchapter is, as mentioned, part of the chapter "Christian justification of the struggle"²⁶. In this chapter Breivik starts with claiming that Pope Urban II and Pope Innocent III granted indulgence to all future crusaders when Pope Urban II in 1095 declared that he remitted all penance incurred by anyone who participated in the first crusade.²⁷ Granting favour to "martyrs of the church, those men and woman who, by virtue of their suffering, assists in the

²⁰ Øyvind Strømme, *I hatets fotspor* (Oslo: Cappelen Damm, 2014). Page 102-103

²¹ Strømme, *I hatets fotspor*. Page 102-103

²² Strømme, "Christian Terror in Europe? The Bible in Anders Behring Breivik's Manifesto." Page 154

²³ Breivik, "2083: A European Declaration of Independence ". Page 1328-1334

²⁴ Breivik, "2083: A European Declaration of Independence ". Page 776

²⁵ Breivik, "2083: A European Declaration of Independence ". Page 1325

²⁶ Breivik, "2083: A European Declaration of Independence ". Page 1325

²⁷ Breivik, "2083: A European Declaration of Independence ". Page 1325

intersection for all Christians”²⁸ According to Breivik, those who participated in the crusades were only following the Canon Law, which is “not just a right, but a duty”.²⁹ He later argues that Pope Benedict XVI (pope from 2005-2013) has abandoned Christianity and all Christian Europeans because of his indirect apology to the Muslim-community after a statement he gave in a lecture saying that the only new thing Muhammad brought to this earth was things only evil and inhumane. Many Muslims were, of course, offended by this. This apology makes the Pope, according to Breivik, to be considered a “cowardly, incompetent, corrupt and illegitimate Pope”.³⁰

Breivik then turns to “The Bible and self-defence”.³¹ In this section he claims that self-defence is biblical, he even claims that “The Bible could not be clearer on the right, even the duty we have as Christians to self-defence.”³² He does so by referring to a range of bible verses, which he claims to prove that it “is not a pacifist God we serve.”³³ Breivik does however warn us not to glorify violence for its own sake, there is always a right, and wrong time to fight. He quotes Luke 22:36 to show that Jesus did command his disciples to buy weapons/swords, but then directly after he quotes Matthew 26:52-54 to show that Jesus advises Peter to put away his sword, because ‘this is not the right time to fight’.³⁴

The Book of Psalms in the Manifesto

There are 38 direct citations of biblical verses in Breivik’s subchapter on the Bible and self-defence, 10 of them are from the Book of Psalms. The verses Breivik uses from psalms are: 144:1 (he uses this two times), 18:32,37, 35:1, 9:3, 7:11, 34:7, 91:11, 35:5-8.

It is difficult to say anything on Breivik’s background for his analysis of the verses other than what he writes because most of the sources he refers to are, as mentioned, websites that no longer exists. Under follows the verses from The Book of Psalms that Breivik uses, it is the same translation as he uses, and the words that I have highlighted are also highlighted in the Manifesto.

²⁸ Breivik, "2083: A European Declaration of Independence ". Page 1325

²⁹ Breivik, "2083: A European Declaration of Independence ". Page 1326

³⁰ Breivik, "2083: A European Declaration of Independence ". Page 1328

³¹ Breivik, "2083: A European Declaration of Independence ". Page 1328

³² Breivik, "2083: A European Declaration of Independence ". Page 1328

³³ Breivik, "2083: A European Declaration of Independence ". Page 1328

³⁴ Strømmen, "Christian Terror in Europe? The Bible in Anders Behring Breivik’s Manifesto." Page 156

Psalm 144:1 (first time):

“Blessed be the LORD my strength which teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight,”

This verse is to be found under section 3.149 and the sub-heading “The Bible and self-defence”.³⁵ In this section Breivik claims, as mentioned, that self-defence is a Christian duty. He uses Exodus 22:2 -3 to argue that God saw it as ‘perfectly OK’ to kill a thief breaking into your house, which to Breivik is the ultimate expression of self-defence.³⁶ He continues by using Samuel 25:13 and Judges 5:8 to argue that the Israelites were expected to have their own weapons, and that when they chose not to obey God and disarm the nation, war was at the gates.³⁷ Breivik then quote Psalms 144:1 for the first time to conclude that we do not serve a pacifist God, but a God that “teaches our hands to war and our fingers to fight”.³⁸ He ends this section by using Luke 22:36 and Matthew 26:52-54 to argue that the weapons the Israelites were to use were swords, and that Jesus commanded his disciples to buy and equip them.³⁹ Breivik sums up his understanding of these verses by stating that if one reads these verses in its context they support the position of self-defence. And that one is to see every military action against our enemies, the cultural Marxist/multiculturalist elites, and Islam, as an action of self-defence.⁴⁰ He ends by claiming that “there will be much suffering and destruction but eventually we will succeed and may be able to start rebuilding”⁴¹ before he quotes Nehemiah 4:17-18 on the rebuilding of Jerusalem.

Psalm 144:1 (second time):

“Blessed be the Lord my Rock, who trains my hand for war, and my fingers for battle – my lovingkindness and my fortress, my high tower and my deliverer, my shield and the One in whom I take refuge, who subdue my people under me.”

Psalm 18:32, 37:

"It is God who arms me with strength, and makes my way perfect. He makes my feet like the feet of the deer, and sets me on high places. He teaches my hands to make

³⁵ Breivik, "2083: A European Declaration of Independence ". Page 1328

³⁶ Breivik, "2083: A European Declaration of Independence ". Page 1328

³⁷ Breivik, "2083: A European Declaration of Independence ". Page 1328

³⁸ Breivik, "2083: A European Declaration of Independence ". Page 1328

³⁹ Breivik, "2083: A European Declaration of Independence ". Page 1328

⁴⁰ Breivik, "2083: A European Declaration of Independence ". Page 1328

⁴¹ Breivik, "2083: A European Declaration of Independence ". Page 1328

war, so that my arms can be bend a bow of bronze... I have pursued my enemies and overtaken them; neither did I turn back again till they were destroyed. I have wounded them, so that they were not able to rise; they have fallen under my feet. For You have armed me with strength for the battle; You have subdued under me those who rose up against me.”

The second time Breivik uses psalms 144:1 it is with a different translation and under the subheading “God will anoint you with his power to go into battle”⁴². In the section before this one, “More information about Christianity and self-defence”⁴³, none of the bible verses are taken from the Book of Psalms. What he writes of in that section is the importance of wisdom, understanding, and tact when it comes to self-defence. He uses the story of when Jesus gets arrested, and Peter draws his sword and cuts of one of the soldiers’ ear and Jesus rebukes him by fixing the ear.⁴⁴ According to Breivik Jesus does approve the disciples right to self-defence when he earlier in the story tells them to fetch their swords, but that Peter acted unwisely in the situation, trying to stop something that was not supposed to be stopped. In other words; we must be wise as to when and fight and when not to. God does not wish for anyone to take law into his or her own hands.⁴⁵

In this section, where we find references to psalms again, Breivik writes that if you are under a full surrender with God and “walking in all of God’s ways and staying out of any serious sins and transgressions against Him”⁴⁶ you will receive the necessary wisdom, understanding and tact and know when to go into battle. And, that God will anoint you with his power in such a situation. Breivik claims that because of the curse of Adam and Eve, we are all living in a war zone, and that we all can come under human or demonic attack because of it.⁴⁷ It is it up to us as Christians, according to Breivik, to decide whether to keep our heads down letting oppressor after oppressor beat you. Or you can choose to learn how to rise, in the power of God and learn to become a ‘true warrior’.⁴⁸ Breivik argues that the verses he presents under this section shows that God can anoint you with His power to defeat any enemy that may come your way, but that it is your choice whether you step into that anointing. That it is you

⁴² Breivik, "2083: A European Declaration of Independence ". Page 1331

⁴³ Breivik, "2083: A European Declaration of Independence ". Page 1330

⁴⁴ Breivik, "2083: A European Declaration of Independence ". Page 1330

⁴⁵ Breivik, "2083: A European Declaration of Independence ". Page 1330

⁴⁶ Breivik, "2083: A European Declaration of Independence ". Page 1331

⁴⁷ Breivik, "2083: A European Declaration of Independence ". Page 1332

⁴⁸ Breivik, "2083: A European Declaration of Independence ". Page 1332

that must decide not to be afraid to directly engage with whatever storm cloud that is getting ready to come your way.⁴⁹ In the beginning of the section, before he writing down the bible verses, he states “study these verses carefully – as they will show you the incredible supernatural power that God can channel through you if you would be willing to step into and walk with His anointing”.⁵⁰

Psalm 35:1:

“Plead my cause, O Lord, with those who strive with me; fight against those who fight against me. Take hold of shield and buckler, and stand up for my help. Also draw out the spear, and stop those who pursue me. Say to my soul, “I am your salvation”.”

Psalm 9:3:

“When my enemies turn back, they shall fall and perish at your presence. For You have maintained my right and my cause; You sat on the throne judging in righteousness.”

Psalm 7:11:

“God is a just judge, and God is angry with the wicked every day. If He does not turn back, He will sharpen his sword; He bends his bow and makes it ready. He also prepares for Himself instruments of death; He makes his arrow into fiery shafts.”

The following verses are to be found under the subheading “God will go before you to fight your battles”⁵¹. In this section Breivik describes two different ways that God helps us in battle if we step into his anointing: either he runs a protective shield around you, or he goes before you in the battle and take your enemies head on. These verses are, according to Breivik, examples of when God himself is present in the battle.⁵²

Psalm 34:7:

“The angel of the Lord encamps all around those who fear Him, and delivers them.”

Psalm 91:11: “For He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways.”

⁴⁹ Breivik, "2083: A European Declaration of Independence ". Page 1332

⁵⁰ Breivik, "2083: A European Declaration of Independence ". Page 1332

⁵¹ Breivik, "2083: A European Declaration of Independence ". Page 1333

⁵² Breivik, "2083: A European Declaration of Independence ". Page 1333-1334

Psalm 35:5-8:

“And let the angel of the Lord chase him... And let the angel of the Lord pursue them...
Let the destruction come upon him unexpectedly.”

These final verses are found under the subheading “Other verses”⁵³, and Breivik does not give an in-depth interpretation, or explanation on them. He only states that the meaning of these verses are to show that sometimes angels may appear, as angels or as normal human beings, usually for the purpose of helping you.⁵⁴

⁵³ Breivik, "2083: A European Declaration of Independence ". Page 1335

⁵⁴ Breivik, "2083: A European Declaration of Independence ". Page 1335

Chapter 2: Background chapter

This chapter will present the context, or background of the study, starting with some history on- and definitions of the radical right. I will then present the relation between religion and the radical right, and religion and violence. Then I will say something general on the Bible and violence, and specifically on the Book of Psalms and violence. In this last section I will offer another example where the Book of Psalms has been interpreted as an argument pro violence.

The radical right

There are numerous definitions of extremism or radicalism out there, and scholars struggle to agree. In her paper “Right-wing extremism/radicalism: reconstructing the concept” Elisabeth Carter asks the question whether it is possible to define extremism or radicalism at all.⁵⁵ There are, however, two points on which most scholars do agree according to Carter. Firstly, most agree that the concept of right-wing extremism/radicalism primarily describes an ideology. Secondly, there is a broad agreement between scholars that this ideology is, in fact, right-wing, while at the same time there is wide recognition that defining the right is in itself a very difficult task.⁵⁶

Carter uses a study performed by the Dutch political scientists Cas Mudde in 1995 where he selected 26 definitions and descriptions of right-wing extremism and created a record of the features mentioned in them. He found 58 features that were mentioned, and five characteristics: nationalism, racism, xenophobia, anti-democracy, and the strong state.⁵⁷ These characteristics were included in over half of the definitions and descriptions.⁵⁸

Carter uses Mudde’s study as a foundation to explore how the concept has been described and defined. She does, however, argue that it is time for a new round of ‘stock-taking’.⁵⁹ Firstly, because there has been published a considerable amount of work that deals with definitions of right-wing extremism/radicalism since 1995. Secondly, she argues, there have been changes to the membership of the extreme/radical right party family. Some parties have dissolved,

⁵⁵ Elisabeth Carter, "Right-wing extremism/radicalism: reconstructing the concept," *Journal of Political Ideologies* 23, no. 2 (2018), <https://doi.org/10.1080/13569317.2018.1451227>. Page 4-5

⁵⁶ Carter, "Right-wing extremism/radicalism: reconstructing the concept." Page 4-5

⁵⁷ Carter, "Right-wing extremism/radicalism: reconstructing the concept." Page 5

⁵⁸ Carter, "Right-wing extremism/radicalism: reconstructing the concept." Page 5

⁵⁹ Carter, "Right-wing extremism/radicalism: reconstructing the concept." Page 5

some have transformed and there are also some newcomers. These changes may well have shaped some of the newer definitions of the concept. Lastly, Carter argues, a new review of definitions will allow us to systematize and organize the properties of right-wing extremism/radicalism in a meaningful way.⁶⁰ According to Carter, Mudde's study did not differentiate adequately between the defining and the accompanying characteristics of right-wing extremism/radicalism, as she argues to be crucial if we wish to advance a minimal definition of our concept.⁶¹ Carter argues that we need to reflect on how we might organize the characteristics meaningfully. That we need to consider whether all the features are necessary, or if any of them are merely accompanying attributes that should be excluded from a minimal definition. In doing this, we may also examine how the features relate to one another.⁶²

'The strong state' is conceptualized by Mudde as "a collective noun for sub-features that have to do with a strengthened repressive function of the state"⁶³ and he defines it on the basis of law and order, and militarism.⁶⁴ In his studies a number of authors include elements of this concept in their definitions. Words that are repeated by most by the scholars are 'authority/authoritarianism', 'law' and 'order'.⁶⁵ Carter argues that if the term is conceptualized as a combination of a tough stance on law and order and an emphasis on militarism, it is not a defining feature of right-wing extremism or radicalism, because militarism is absent from the ideologies of several parties that belong to this family. Carter thus suggests, as Mudde has done in his later works, that 'authoritarianism' is the more appropriate feature. She states that because it is found in the ideologies of all right-wing extremist/radical parties it is a defining characteristic of the concept.⁶⁶

The term 'nationalism' is included in most of the definitions used in Mudde's study, he defines the term as "a political doctrine that proclaims the congruence of the political unit, the state, and the cultural unit, the nation"⁶⁷. He identifies a particular type of nationalism as a key characteristic of extreme-right parties, namely 'nativism'. Nativism holds that states should be

⁶⁰ Carter, "Right-wing extremism/radicalism: reconstructing the concept." Page 5

⁶¹ Carter, "Right-wing extremism/radicalism: reconstructing the concept." Page 5

⁶² Carter, "Right-wing extremism/radicalism: reconstructing the concept." Page 12-13

⁶³ Carter, "Right-wing extremism/radicalism: reconstructing the concept." Page 6

⁶⁴ Carter, "Right-wing extremism/radicalism: reconstructing the concept." Page 6

⁶⁵ Carter, "Right-wing extremism/radicalism: reconstructing the concept." Page 6

⁶⁶ Carter, "Right-wing extremism/radicalism: reconstructing the concept." Page 12

⁶⁷ Carter, "Right-wing extremism/radicalism: reconstructing the concept." Page 7

inhabited exclusively by members of the native group, 'the nation', and that non-native elements are threatening the homogeneous nation-state.⁶⁸ Carter argues that while some scholars do not even discuss whether nationalism should be considered a defining characteristic of right-wing extremism or radicalism, others argue that it is a, or even *the* core element of the concept. She concludes that case studies and comparative works provide the empirical evidence needed to support the argument that nationalism is in fact a defining feature of parties of the radical right.⁶⁹

According to Carter 'racism', 'xenophobia' and 'nationalism' are all isolated concepts, but that policies of exclusionary nationalism and cultural homogeneity often go hand in hand with racism and/or xenophobia.⁷⁰ She argues that homogeneity is usually advocated on the grounds that there are natural, opposing differences between groups of people, and that these groups should not be mixed.⁷¹ Mudde argues that this form of racism is of the 'classical variety', characterized by a belief in natural and genetic differences that (should) lead to a hierarchy between races.⁷² Or the 'culturist' or 'new kind', characterized by its emphasis on the incompatibility rather than hierarchy between culture rather than race.⁷³ 'Xenophobia' or hostility towards foreigners is the most frequently mentioned feature in the definitions and descriptions of extremism or radicalism.⁷⁴ It is defined by Mudde as "fear, hate or hostility regarding 'foreigners'" ⁷⁵. Carter argues that even if 'nationalism', 'xenophobia', and 'racism' indicates that xenophobia and racism are manifestations of exclusionary nationalism this does not mean that they are defining features of right-wing extremism.⁷⁶

The last term Carter writes on from Mudde's study is anti-democracy, which in some form is found in nearly all the definitions from the study. He conceptualizes the term as a combination of a rejection of the fundamental equality of the citizen and anti-pluralism.⁷⁷ The parties in the study reveal a rejection of the established socio-cultural, and political system. Many of the scholars, however, emphasizes that the contemporary parties of the radical right

⁶⁸Carter, "Right-wing extremism/radicalism: reconstructing the concept." Page 8

⁶⁹ Carter, "Right-wing extremism/radicalism: reconstructing the concept." Page 15-16

⁷⁰ Carter, "Right-wing extremism/radicalism: reconstructing the concept." Page 8

⁷¹ Carter, "Right-wing extremism/radicalism: reconstructing the concept." Page 8

⁷² Carter, "Right-wing extremism/radicalism: reconstructing the concept." Page 8

⁷³ Carter, "Right-wing extremism/radicalism: reconstructing the concept." Page 8

⁷⁴ Carter, "Right-wing extremism/radicalism: reconstructing the concept." Page 8

⁷⁵ Carter, "Right-wing extremism/radicalism: reconstructing the concept." Page 8

⁷⁶ Carter, "Right-wing extremism/radicalism: reconstructing the concept." Page 16-17

⁷⁷ Carter, "Right-wing extremism/radicalism: reconstructing the concept." Page 9

do not reject democracy per se, and that they do not present a revolutionary alternative to the liberal-democratic order. Nor do they openly advocate a non-democratic institutional setting. Quite contradictory they regularly profess their faith in democracy.⁷⁸ Most scholars do however agree that the contemporary parties display a complex and sometimes contradictory relationship with democracy. So, the discussion is more on whether this makes them ‘anti-system’, or ‘anti-democratic’.⁷⁹ Carter points out that there are two dimensions of the concept ‘anti-democracy’, that there is a distinction between an opposition to the rules and institutions of the democratic system, and a rejection of the fundamental values and principles of democracy. Some of the contemporary parties reject the procedures of democracy, but still value democracy per se. But, Carter argues, even if parties reject ‘just’ the procedures of democracy, they still render as anti-democratic, making anti-democracy a defining feature of right-wing extremism or radicalism.⁸⁰

Carter concludes by arguing that definitions of the right-wing extremism or radicalism have become more parsimonious and more similar over the last 20 years. At the same time characteristics still dominate. Authoritarianism, nationalism, racism, xenophobia, and anti-democracy continues to be the features that are mentioned most frequently, we must however, according to Carter, add the term *populism*.⁸¹ Few of the earlier definitions included this term because, according to Carter, it was, for a long time, considered to be primarily a political style rather than an ideology. More recently several scholars have argued that it is an ideology, even if it is a ‘thin-centered’ one.⁸² Mudde describes populism as “an ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, ‘the pure people’ versus ‘the corrupt elite’, and which argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonté générale* (general will) of the people”⁸³. Carter refers to a study done by Taggart where he examined extreme radical right parties in 17 countries and found that many contemporary parties are not in fact populist.⁸⁴ However, Carter still argues that even if populism is absent from the ideology of several of the parties, and thus indicates that it is *not* a defining property of right-wing extremism or radicalism. It is still a characteristic that

⁷⁸ Carter, "Right-wing extremism/radicalism: reconstructing the concept." Page 9-10

⁷⁹ Carter, "Right-wing extremism/radicalism: reconstructing the concept." Page 10

⁸⁰ Carter, "Right-wing extremism/radicalism: reconstructing the concept." Page 14

⁸¹ Carter, "Right-wing extremism/radicalism: reconstructing the concept." Page 19

⁸² Carter, "Right-wing extremism/radicalism: reconstructing the concept." Page 17

⁸³ Carter, "Right-wing extremism/radicalism: reconstructing the concept." Page 17

⁸⁴ Carter, "Right-wing extremism/radicalism: reconstructing the concept." Page 17-18

describes a sub-set of parties within the wider party family, and that it should in fact be part of the features used to define right-wing extremism or radicalism.⁸⁵

Religion and the radical right

Whether religion should be part of a definition of the radical right is another question. In *Religion and the Radical Right*, *The Oxford Handbook of the Radical Right* Michael Minkenberg argues that mostly due to the arrival of new religions, as a result of migration, new political conflicts, and the growing proclamation of Christian heritage among domestic actors, religion is on the rise again in the western world. Especially in the 'secular Europe'.⁸⁶ Minkenberg discusses if, and to what extent religion provides an ideological component of the radical right, what kind of religion is at play, the relevance of religion in the far right, and whether and/or how religion can be used to explain the radical right's successes.⁸⁷

Minkenberg argues that religion functions as a relevant context factor and frame of radical right, xenophobic, and political mobilization against the perceived threat of rapid sociocultural change.⁸⁸ Such as Islamization and liberalism, even in secularized societies where one might argue that the radical right is also part of a secular movement or party.⁸⁹ Yet, in the academic debate religion remains absent in concepts of the radical right, according to Minkenberg, it is usually treated as a strategic maneuver or superficial issue.⁹⁰

Minkenberg argues that, today, the most popular definitions of the radical right do without religion. Ethnicity, racism, and/or the opposition to immigration constitute, according to him, the definitional cores.⁹¹ He also uses Mudde's study, but unlike Carter he ends up defining 'nationalism' as the key concept. Minkenberg uses Mudde's specifications of the term by distinguishing the dimensions of internal homogenization, external exclusiveness, and ethnic and/or state nationalism before he qualifies it with additional key features such as xenophobia, authoritarianism, and an anti-democratic stand.⁹² Minkenberg continues to list several

⁸⁵ Carter, "Right-wing extremism/radicalism: reconstructing the concept." Page 17-18

⁸⁶ Michael Minkenberg, *Religion and the Radical Right*, ed. Jens Rydgren, *The Oxford Handbook of the Radical Right*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018). Page 1

⁸⁷ Minkenberg, *Religion and the Radical Right*. Page 1

⁸⁸ Minkenberg, *Religion and the Radical Right*. Page 2

⁸⁹ Minkenberg, *Religion and the Radical Right*. Page 2

⁹⁰ Minkenberg, *Religion and the Radical Right*. Page 1

⁹¹ Minkenberg, *Religion and the Radical Right*. Page 2

⁹² Minkenberg, *Religion and the Radical Right*. Page 2

contemporary scholars that uses these distinctions in their research on the radical right and nationalism.

There are, according to Minkenberg, researchers that dismisses religion as a necessary requirement for the emergence of nationalism in total.⁹³ Minkenberg thus present Willfried Spohn's research from 2003 where he tries to link up religion with nationalism.⁹⁴ He shows that nationalism includes Christian components, even in Europe where the form of secular nationalism dominates. He concludes that the contemporary rise of ethnic and religious nationalism can be explained as a reaction to the previous authoritarian imposition of the Western European model of state secularism within predominantly religious and multiethnic societies.⁹⁵ Willfried also argues that religion is not replaced by an allegedly secular nationalism, but more often than not intertwined with it, and that it constitutes a distinct version- and cause of nationalism.⁹⁶

Minkenberg concludes that the radical right and religion interact at various levels in liberal democracies, and that there is nothing new with this interaction, at least not in modern European history.⁹⁷ What is new, however, is the 'return of religion' in an age of secularization, even among political actors who were long interpreted as providing a replacement or substitute for the waning powers of religion.⁹⁸ He also argues that this return of religion to the West European radical right agenda since the 1990s is not thanks to the beliefs of the activists or the tradition of the parties. It is rather a strategic adjustment influenced by outside forces, such as the process of religious pluralization.⁹⁹

Christianism

As stated in the previous section religion is on the rise, also in the radical right. In his paper "Between nationalism and civilizationism: the European populist moment in comparative perspective" Rogers Brubaker offers a theory that might help with understanding the link between the radical right and religion. Brubaker writes on what he calls "an identitarian Christianity, a secularist posture, a philosemitic stance, and an ostensibly liberal defense of

⁹³ Minkenberg, *Religion and the Radical Right*. Page 3

⁹⁴ Minkenberg, *Religion and the Radical Right*. Page 4

⁹⁵ Minkenberg, *Religion and the Radical Right*. Page 4

⁹⁶ Minkenberg, *Religion and the Radical Right*. Page 4

⁹⁷ Minkenberg, *Religion and the Radical Right*. Page 35

⁹⁸ Minkenberg, *Religion and the Radical Right*. Page 35

⁹⁹ Minkenberg, *Religion and the Radical Right*. Page 35

gender equality, gay rights, and freedom of speech”¹⁰⁰. The term Christianity was introduced by Andrew Sullivan to designate the ideology and agenda of the political, Christian right in the US. Christianity in this sense sees secular humanism as its main enemy.¹⁰¹ The Christianity introduced by Gorski, and the one Brubaker follows is, however, a new ‘Christianist’ secularism in Europe which points at the situation in northern Europe where a new form of assertive secularism has emerged in the last decade, and it is not substantively a religious but identitarian concept.¹⁰²

The term, as understood by Brubaker, is embraced as a civilizational identity understood in antithetical opposition to Islam, Muslim immigrants, and their descendants. This Islam-focused secularism is increasingly, though not exclusively, an ideology of the Right.¹⁰³ In its basic this theory is a form of secularism formatted and motivated by a strong hate against Muslim influence and migration, it is based on the belief that we need to protect us against ‘the others’, it is a matter of belonging, a way of defining ‘us’ in relation to ‘them’. If ‘they’ are Muslims ‘we’ must, in some sense, be Christians.¹⁰⁴ One uses typical conservative, Christian arguments to validate one’s views. That does not, however, mean that ‘we’ must be religious, and its defenders do not necessarily promote other Christian values than the ones that validate their view on Muslims.¹⁰⁵ This form of secularism does in other words blend secularism and liberal political values with, selected, Christian ones. Paradoxically Brubakers argue, it is easier to represent Europe as, culturally and civilizational, Christian the more secular we become.¹⁰⁶

From a substantively Christian point of view, the ongoing secularization of Europe, and the West, can, according to Brubaker, be seen as constituting a religious and civilizational

¹⁰⁰ Rogers Brubaker, "Between nationalism and civilizationism: the European populist moment in comparative perspective," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 40, no. 8 (2017), <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2017.1294700>. Page 1191

¹⁰¹ Brubaker, "Between nationalism and civilizationism: the European populist moment in comparative perspective." Page 1214

¹⁰² Brubaker, "Between nationalism and civilizationism: the European populist moment in comparative perspective." Page 1214

¹⁰³ Brubaker, "Between nationalism and civilizationism: the European populist moment in comparative perspective." Page 1198-1200

¹⁰⁴ Brubaker, "Between nationalism and civilizationism: the European populist moment in comparative perspective." Page 1198-1200

¹⁰⁵ Brubaker, "Between nationalism and civilizationism: the European populist moment in comparative perspective." Page 1198-1200

¹⁰⁶ Brubaker, "Between nationalism and civilizationism: the European populist moment in comparative perspective." Page 1199

crisis.¹⁰⁷ Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, said in a speech in 2005, just before he became Pope Benedict XVI, that contemporary European culture represented “the absolutely most radical contradiction not only of Christianity, but of the religious and moral traditions of humanity.... The attempt, carried to the extreme, to manage human affairs disdaining God completely leads us increasingly to the edge of the abyss, to man’s ever greater isolation from reality.”¹⁰⁸ He also claimed that the real ‘clash of cultures’ is not between religions or civilizations, as Samuel P. Huntington states in his famous theory on the ‘clash of civilizations’, but it is “‘between the radical emancipation of man from God’ on the one hand and the ‘great religious cultures’ on the other hand”¹⁰⁹.

According to Brubaker, it is this ongoing erosion of Christianity as doctrine, ritual, and organization that makes it possible, and easy, to invoke Christianity as a cultural and civilizational identity.¹¹⁰ Characterized by alleged, or assumed, shared values that have little, or nothing to do with religious belief or practice.¹¹¹ This ‘culturalization’ of religion is, according to Brubaker, doubly convenient from a nationalist-populist point of view. It allows Christianity to be privileged as culture in a way that it cannot so easily as religion given the liberal state’s commitment to neutrality in religious matters. While it also allows Muslim religious practices to be restricted in a way that would not be possible given the liberal state’s commitment to religious freedom.¹¹² Thanks to this culturalization one can argue a view that allows the cross to be displayed in public places, such as a classroom, while banning the full-face veil in public.¹¹³

The culturalization of religion, and the identitarian Christianity has, according to Brubaker, given rise to the national populist civilizational preoccupation with Islam. The definition of

¹⁰⁷ Brubaker, "Between nationalism and civilizationism: the European populist moment in comparative perspective." Page 1199

¹⁰⁸ Brubaker, "Between nationalism and civilizationism: the European populist moment in comparative perspective." Page 1199

¹⁰⁹ Brubaker, "Between nationalism and civilizationism: the European populist moment in comparative perspective." Page 1199

¹¹⁰ Brubaker, "Between nationalism and civilizationism: the European populist moment in comparative perspective." Page 1199

¹¹¹ Brubaker, "Between nationalism and civilizationism: the European populist moment in comparative perspective." Page 1199

¹¹² Brubaker, "Between nationalism and civilizationism: the European populist moment in comparative perspective." Page 1200

¹¹³ Brubaker, "Between nationalism and civilizationism: the European populist moment in comparative perspective." Page 1200

‘the other’ in civilizational terms opens for a portrayal of ‘the self’ in the same register.¹¹⁴ The preoccupation with Islam calls for a corresponding concern with Christianity, understood as a civilization and not a religion, equivalent to the West, or what used to be called ‘Christendom’.¹¹⁵ Christianity can in this way be seen, not in opposition to secularism but as a civilizational ground where secularism is not a tendency to be combatted, but rather a value, that has grown on Christian soil, to be defended. If ‘they’ are religious, in suspect ways, because they are Muslim, ‘we’ are secular because we are (post-) Christian.¹¹⁶

Religion and violence

In the discussion of religion and violence James Bernard Murphy asks the question: ‘is there something uniquely and specifically religious about violence?’ in his paper “Religious Violence: Myth or Reality? A Symposium on William T. Cavanaugh’s *The Myth of Religious Violence*”. In the paper he presents William Cavanaugh’s book *The Myth of Religious Violence: secular ideology and the roots of modern conflict*. Cavanaugh offers a new take on the well-known debate on religion and violence. He claims that it has become a widespread notion that there is something especially dangerous about religion, a ‘myth of religious violence’ as he calls it.¹¹⁷ He asks, ‘what is it about religion that causes so many people to associate it with violence?’ and ‘why are we so prone to believe that religion is violent?’.¹¹⁸ There is, according to Cavanaugh, three main secularist arguments to these questions. The first being that because religion is essentially prone to absolutism and divisiveness it also tends to promote violence. Secondly, religions are often described as uniquely divisive in the sense that religious identities are based on a very strong distinction between ‘us’ and ‘them’. And lastly, religion is often described as fundamentally non-rational. Therefore, Murphy argues, for the sake of peace, harmony, and freedom religion must be separated from ‘secular’ phenomena, like politics.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁴ Brubaker, "Between nationalism and civilizationism: the European populist moment in comparative perspective." Page 1200

¹¹⁵ Brubaker, "Between nationalism and civilizationism: the European populist moment in comparative perspective." Page 1200

¹¹⁶ Brubaker, "Between nationalism and civilizationism: the European populist moment in comparative perspective." Page 1200

¹¹⁷ James Bernard Murphy, "Religious Violence," *Political Theology* 15, no. 6 (2015), <https://doi.org/10.1179/1462317x14z.00000000093>. Page 479

¹¹⁸ Murphy, "Religious Violence." Page 480

¹¹⁹ Murphy, "Religious Violence." Page 480

Murphy argues that it is easy to see how these qualities are mutually reinforcing the conclusion that religion is violent. But, he states, the key issues must be put more precisely: is there something uniquely and specifically religious about violence? Does the concept of religion help us explain violence? And how do we account for the widespread belief that religion is uniquely violent?¹²⁰

As to the first question, whether there is something uniquely religious about violence, Murphy argues that in the twentieth century the secular ideologies led to more killing than all the religious violence in world history combined. This is mainly thanks to fascism, nationalism, and communism, but many of those who argue for the religious nature of violence accommodate these facts by describing these ideologies as kinds of religion.¹²¹ This argument, however, makes Murphy raise the next question: if the concept of religion helps us explain violence. He then argues that there is an abundance of definitions of the word ‘religion’, and if we cannot agree what counts as religion then religion cannot help us explain violence. The very notion of religion seems to be too imprecise according to Murphy.¹²² And lastly, Murphy asks, if secular ideologies are in fact as likely to provoke violence as religious ideologies, and if the very notion of religion is in fact too vague to help us explain the concept violence, then how do we account for the widespread belief that religion is uniquely violent? Murphy argues that by blaming religion for violence we might conveniently ignore other sources of violence.¹²³

The Bible and violence

Even though Murphy argues that there is no unique connection between religion and violence, he does, however, not rule out the fact that religion *can* be violent. There are numerous examples of violent use of the Bible in general, and the Book of Psalms in particular. In his article “The zeal of Phinehas: the Bible and the legitimation of violence” John J. Collins present some of them. He starts his paper by quoting Mieke Bal when he writes “The Bible, of all books, is the most dangerous one, the one that has been endowed with the power to kill”¹²⁴. Collins argues that Bal has a point, though some other books are surely as lethal, such

¹²⁰ Murphy, "Religious Violence." Page 480

¹²¹ Murphy, "Religious Violence." Page 480

¹²² Murphy, "Religious Violence." Page 481

¹²³ Murphy, "Religious Violence." Page 481

¹²⁴ John J. Collins, "The Zeal of Phinehas: The Bible and the Legitimation of Violence," *Journal of Biblical literature* 122, no. 1 (2003), <https://doi.org/10.2307/3268089>. Page 3

as the Quran, and that it is not the books that kill.¹²⁵ Collin then points to the ambiguity between the Bible as war-mongering and the Bible as peace-fostering, and states that while one might see religious or scriptural argumentation pro violence, so called terrorist hermeneutics, as a case of the devil citing Scripture for his purpose, it is also true that the devil does not have to work very hard to find biblical affirmation to legitimize violence.¹²⁶ In the modern world, he continues, there are many people that suspect that there is a fundamental link between violence and ‘the Mosaic distinction’, between true and false religion, or even between violence and monotheism, as William Cavanaugh also states.¹²⁷

One of the earliest attempts to characterize the God of Israel states that “The Lord is a warrior”¹²⁸. Collins quote Gerhard von Rad when stating that the concept of faith, the trust in the actions of Yahweh, had its origin in the holy war and that from there it took on its own peculiar dynamic.¹²⁹ Moreover, the Israelites were expected to come and help the Lord in battle, and they were sanctioned if they did not. This violence associated with the worship of Yahweh in antiquity is, according to Collins, most vividly illustrated by the *herem*, or ban, the practice where the defeated enemy was devoted to destruction. The slaughter had a sacrificial character since the victims are offered to the god.¹³⁰

The *herem* applies primarily to the promised land, Israel, and it also rests on the premise that this land is legitimately given to the Israelites by their God.¹³¹ There are, according to Collins, two primary factors for violence on the part of Israel. The demand that Israel worship only one god, Yahweh, and the claim that Israel is given by the divine.¹³² The first factor opens for the killings of people who might interfere, and Israelites who fails to comply with the command of worshiping only Yahweh. The consequence of the second factor is that the previous inhabitants may and should be driven out and killed.¹³³

Collins write in his paper that the legitimization of violence is not simply monotheism as such. That there is no demand that all people must worship Yahweh, although it is seen as a

¹²⁵ Collins, "The Zeal of Phinehas: The Bible and the Legitimation of Violence." Page 3

¹²⁶ Collins, "The Zeal of Phinehas: The Bible and the Legitimation of Violence." Page 3

¹²⁷ Collins, "The Zeal of Phinehas: The Bible and the Legitimation of Violence." Page 3-4

¹²⁸ Exodus 15:3

¹²⁹ John J. Collins, "The Zeal of Phinehas: The Bible and the Legitimation of Violence," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 122, no. 1 (2003), <https://doi.org/10.2307/3268089>, <https://dx.doi.org/10.2307/3268089>. Page 4-5

¹³⁰ Collins, "The Zeal of Phinehas: The Bible and the Legitimation of Violence." Page 5

¹³¹ Collins, "The Zeal of Phinehas: The Bible and the Legitimation of Violence." Page 8

¹³² Collins, "The Zeal of Phinehas: The Bible and the Legitimation of Violence." Page 8

¹³³ Collins, "The Zeal of Phinehas: The Bible and the Legitimation of Violence." Page 8

desirable goal in some prophetic texts.¹³⁴ The issues concern the status of Israel as God's chosen people and covenant partner, and the claim of a land as its inheritance. In short, the issue is "not monotheism as such, but the advancement of a particular people and the imposition of its cult within the territory it controls."¹³⁵ The texts found in the Torah and the Deuteronomic history used to legitimize actions of violence is by most modern scholars said to reflect not the actual Israel as it was, but rather Israel as the authors thought it should be. Recent scholarly hypotheses about the origins of Israel tend to be more compatible with modern moral sensibilities.¹³⁶

Collins ends his paper by writing a section on violence and hermeneutics where he states that not all violence is necessarily to be condemned. Such as the image of God as warrior and the hope for an apocalyptic judgment have often given hope to the oppressed.¹³⁷ Nonetheless, he argues, few will disagree that violence is seldom a good option, and that it can only be justified as a last recourse.¹³⁸ He argues that he in his research has concluded that terrorist, and others who uses religion and religious texts as means to violence is not a problem peculiar to Islam. It can also be found in attitudes and assumptions deeply embedded in both Jewish and Christian Scriptures. Collins refer to these scriptures as "the dark side of the Bible".¹³⁹

Collins argue that biblical scholars today should seek to argue against this use of scripture. That researchers should note the diversity of viewpoints within the Bible, and thereby relativize the problematic ones.¹⁴⁰ The least we should expect from biblical interpreters is, Collins states, honesty, and for them to recognize and admit that the Bible is no infallible guide on ethical matters.¹⁴¹ Even though, historically, people have appealed to the Bible precisely because of its presumed divine authority, which again gives an aura of certitude to any position it can be shown to support, a "God-like certainty that stops all discussion".¹⁴² This certainty is, according to Collins, the most basic connection between the Bible and violence, more basic than any command or teaching it contains. As the Bible has been taken to confer a degree of certitude that transcends human discussion and argumentation, and in

¹³⁴ Collins, "The Zeal of Phinehas: The Bible and the Legitimation of Violence." Page 8

¹³⁵ Collins, "The Zeal of Phinehas: The Bible and the Legitimation of Violence." Page 8

¹³⁶ Collins, "The Zeal of Phinehas: The Bible and the Legitimation of Violence." Page 10-11

¹³⁷ Collins, "The Zeal of Phinehas: The Bible and the Legitimation of Violence." Page 18

¹³⁸ Collins, "The Zeal of Phinehas: The Bible and the Legitimation of Violence." Page 18

¹³⁹ Collins, "The Zeal of Phinehas: The Bible and the Legitimation of Violence." Page 18

¹⁴⁰ Collins, "The Zeal of Phinehas: The Bible and the Legitimation of Violence." Page 19

¹⁴¹ Collins, "The Zeal of Phinehas: The Bible and the Legitimation of Violence." Page 20

¹⁴² Collins, "The Zeal of Phinehas: The Bible and the Legitimation of Violence." Page 20

this way contributed to violence in the world.¹⁴³ “Perhaps the most constructive thing a biblical critic can do toward lessening the contribution of the Bible to violence in the world, is to show that that certitude is an illusion” Collins conclude.¹⁴⁴

In "Violence in the Christian Bible: Assessing Crossan's use of 'violence' as a key analytical concept" Johan Strijdom presents Crossan's analysis of violence in the Christian Bible. Crossan offers, according to Strijdom, a historical-critical and intertextual reading of a selection of texts from the Bible on the theme of violence that is relevant to this day.¹⁴⁵ He argues that violent and non-violent visions are in dialectic interaction throughout the Bible, and that we must decide which of the visions we will follow. His suggestion being that we should take his construct of a non-violent Jesus, that preached distributive justice as normative in deciding between these visions.¹⁴⁶

The Book of Psalms and violence

The Book of Psalms is the longest book in the Bible, it is found in the Old Testament or the Hebrew Bible, and it consists of songs and poems about God and his creation. The word 'psalm' comes from Greek *psalmos*, 'song sung to a harp', and its root *psallein*, 'play a stringed instrument'.¹⁴⁷ In other, and more modern words the Book of Psalms is a book of worship written in different genres, and by different authors.¹⁴⁸ The 150 Psalms one finds in the book were all, as far as we know, written in Hebrew and translated to Greek from the 3rd century BC till the 1st century AD.¹⁴⁹ Compared to other biblical books there is found a very high amount of handwritten psalms¹⁵⁰, both in the Hebrew and Greek tradition. This testifies to how much the psalms were used, and to how important they were, both to Jews and Christians.¹⁵¹

¹⁴³ Collins, "The Zeal of Phinehas: The Bible and the Legitimation of Violence." Page 20-21

¹⁴⁴ Collins, "The Zeal of Phinehas: The Bible and the Legitimation of Violence." Page 20-21

¹⁴⁵ Johan Strijdom, "Violence in the Christian Bible: Assessing Crossan's use of 'violence' as a key analytical concept," *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 72, no. 4 (2016), <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v72i4.3445>, <https://dx.doi.org/10.4102/hts.v72i4.3445>. Page 2

¹⁴⁶ Strijdom, "Violence in the Christian Bible: Assessing Crossan's use of 'violence' as a key analytical concept." Page 2

¹⁴⁷ Gunnar Magnus Eidsvåg, "Salmenes bok," no. 09.07.2022 (2021). https://snl.no/Salmenes_bok.

¹⁴⁸ Eidsvåg, "Salmenes bok."

¹⁴⁹ Eidsvåg, "Salmenes bok."

¹⁵⁰ The printing press was not invented for many years, so when I write 'handwritten', I mean that we have found numerous psalms written down, individually, on a piece of Pargament etc.

¹⁵¹ Eidsvåg, "Salmenes bok."

The Book of Psalms contains the whole spectrum of Old Testament theology and piety.¹⁵² As mentioned, the book contains 150 poems, where each have different backgrounds and content.¹⁵³ It is still possible to sort them into three large groups: psalms of lamentation, hymns or songs of worship/praise, and thanksgiving hymns. These are categories that group psalms mainly based on form.¹⁵⁴ It is also possible to group them based on subject matter: Sion psalms, royal psalms, historic psalms, psalms of wisdom and the lord-is-king psalms.¹⁵⁵ The Psalms mentions the words ‘enemy’ or ‘enemies’ 104 times, and we have many examples of violent use of the Book of Psalms, under follows an example.

In “Bishops, Baby-Killers and broken teeth: Psalm 58 and the Air War” Andrew Mein argues that the Psalms is a book rather full of enemies. The Psalmist is confronted by evildoers on all sides, and pleads God to destroy his enemies, and, in Psalm 137, their children by imprecation or curse.¹⁵⁶ The First World War was in its early days seen as an eschatological battle between good and evil, and the Old Testament, especially the Book of Psalms, offered a degree of religious legitimacy to the patriotic hatred that flourished.¹⁵⁷ Mein asks if the imprecatory psalms authorized reprisal attacks against civilian targets. This question was at the heart of a controversy that arose in Britain in July 1917. This discussion brought together the German bombing campaign and the Church of England’s process of liturgical reform. A meeting of the Canterbury Convocation approved that Psalm 58, and several other imprecatory psalms should be removed, which led to a public debate, and immediate stir in the Press.¹⁵⁸

During the First World War Germany found a new and more efficient bomber, which led to more deaths of woman and children in England, and German airmen was denounced as ‘baby-killers’. At the same time the church of England had an ongoing process of Prayer Book revision and ended up removing several passages from the book of Psalms, among them Psalm 58, from liturgical use. This process had been long in the making and had little to do

¹⁵² Reidar Hvalvik, Terje Stordalen, and bibelselskap Det Norske, *Den store fortellingen : om Bibelens tilblivelse, innhold, bruk og betydning* (Oslo: Det Norske bibelselskap, 1999). Page 11

¹⁵³ Hvalvik, Stordalen, and Det Norske, *Den store fortellingen : om Bibelens tilblivelse, innhold, bruk og betydning*. Page 115-118

¹⁵⁴ Hvalvik, Stordalen, and Det Norske, *Den store fortellingen : om Bibelens tilblivelse, innhold, bruk og betydning*. Page 115-118

¹⁵⁵ Hvalvik, Stordalen, and Det Norske, *Den store fortellingen : om Bibelens tilblivelse, innhold, bruk og betydning*. Page 115-118

¹⁵⁶ Andrew Mein, "Bishops, Baby-Killers and Broken Teeth: Psalm 58 and the Air War," *Journal of the Bible and its reception* 4, no. 2 (2017), <https://doi.org/10.1515/jbr-2017-0008>. Page 208

¹⁵⁷ Mein, "Bishops, Baby-Killers and Broken Teeth: Psalm 58 and the Air War." Page 208

¹⁵⁸ Mein, "Bishops, Baby-Killers and Broken Teeth: Psalm 58 and the Air War." Page 207

with the war. Nevertheless, newspaper reports suggested that the members of Convocation were aware of recent events, and that this made the question of 'reprisal psalms' especially sharp.¹⁵⁹ In the Upper House (of bishops), the Archbishop of Canterbury, Randall Davidson, referred directly to reprisals for air raids. He also published a letter in the Times, claiming that the sight of dead babies in London should not encourage us to wish for "a heap of dead babies in Germany."¹⁶⁰ He received a flood of letters from the people claiming that that was exactly what they wanted, reminding him of 'an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth' and that Samuel hewed Agag in pieces. Davidson claimed that this response demonstrated a shocking misunderstanding of Scripture, which strengthened Convocation's decision to remove these verses. This decision made a wide breach between church and people.¹⁶¹

Mein writes in his concluding reflections that the ease with which the themes of Psalm 58 were adapted to the question of reprisals is striking. For those who wished to remove it from liturgy and public worship, it was an example of how low the human desire for vengeance could sink, and a text that could do untold damage to Christian morality. On the other side, to its advocates, the Psalmist's enemies were our enemies and his curses our curses. The Old Testament became a powerful source of the language of propaganda. And it becomes an example of how easy biblical rhetoric can be co-opted or instrumentalized to serve political ends.¹⁶² According to Mein, Archbishop Davidson, and Convocation's refusal to sanctify the popular desire for revenge is striking, especially when they were faced with emotional cases such as bombed schoolchildren. The fact that it was the newspaper editor and their largely lay correspondents who were raising the temperature of their patriotism by promoting the imprecatory Psalms shows, according to Mein, that the use of Bible is scarcely religious, it rather smacks of political opportunism.¹⁶³

According to Johan Strijdom (in "Violence in the Christian Bible: Assessing Crossan's use of 'violence' as a key analytical concept"), Crossan argues that there is an ambiguity in the book of Psalms, on the one hand creation is celebrated as 'God's original act of distributive justice' and his concern for the vulnerable is praised repeatedly. Humans are also celebrated as responsible for managing the creation of God. On the other hand, Israel is haunted by the fear

¹⁵⁹ Mein, "Bishops, Baby-Killers and Broken Teeth: Psalm 58 and the Air War." Page 210-211

¹⁶⁰ Mein, "Bishops, Baby-Killers and Broken Teeth: Psalm 58 and the Air War." Page 211

¹⁶¹ Mein, "Bishops, Baby-Killers and Broken Teeth: Psalm 58 and the Air War." Page 211-214

¹⁶² Mein, "Bishops, Baby-Killers and Broken Teeth: Psalm 58 and the Air War." Page 220

¹⁶³ Mein, "Bishops, Baby-Killers and Broken Teeth: Psalm 58 and the Air War." Page 220

of breaking the covenant and, in Deuteronomic theology, unleash God's anger against them. The psalms repeatedly invoke God's promise to keep the covenant forever, even if they fail, but it also plea for God's individual and collective forgiveness and mercy. This shows, according to Strijdom, Crossan's view that stresses human consequences and the possibility of change in collaboration with God before it is too late, rather than divine punishment and/or mercy.¹⁶⁴

He concludes by stating that it is high time that we "rethink both the theory of divine punishment and the resultant practice of pleading for forgiveness and crying out for mercy' and instead 'begin, aside from natural disasters and random accidents, to accept fully the human consequences for what we do'"¹⁶⁵.

Chapter summary

In this chapter I have said something on the context of the study: the radical right, its connection to religion and violence, religion and violence and the bible in general, and in the book of Psalms in particular.

In the discussion on defining extremism or radicalism scholars struggle to agree, and there are numerous definitions out there. Elisabeth Carter argues that the defining features should be: authoritarianism, nationalism, and anti-democracy. Michael Minkenberg argues that religion is on the rise again in the western world. And that religion functions as a relevant context factor and frame of the radical right, even in secularized societies. However, the most popular definitions of the radical right do without religion. Minkenberg concludes that nationalism is the key concept, but he links up the term with religion and argues that the 'return of religion' shows that religion should be part of definitions of the right.

Rogers Brubaker agree with Minkenberg that religion is on the rise, also in the radical right. He offers a theory that might help with understanding the link between the radical right and religion. The term Christianity is understood by Brubaker as an Islam-focused secularism that is formatted and motivated by a strong hate against Muslim influence and migration. It is based on the belief that 'we' need to protect us against 'the others'. If 'they' are Muslims 'we'

¹⁶⁴ Strijdom, "Violence in the Christian Bible: Assessing Crossan's use of 'violence' as a key analytical concept." Page 4

¹⁶⁵ Strijdom, "Violence in the Christian Bible: Assessing Crossan's use of 'violence' as a key analytical concept." Page 4-5

must, in some sense, be Christians. However, 'we' do not have to be Christian in a religious sense as Christianity is the civilizational ground where secularism has grown. It is thus a Christian value.

In the discussion of religion and violence James Bernard Murphy asks the question: is there something uniquely and specifically religious about violence? He uses William Cavanaugh's 'The Myth of Religious Violence' to answer: no. His arguments being: that in the twentieth century the secular ideologies led to more killing than all the acts of religious violence in world history combined. There are numerous definitions of the word 'religion', and if we cannot agree what counts as religion then religion cannot help us explain violence. And lastly, Murphy argues that by blaming religion for violence we might conveniently ignore other sources of violence. And this cannot be an argument that religion is violent.

Murphy's arguments do not, however, rule out the fact that religion *can* be violent. There are numerous examples of violent use of the Bible in general, and the Book of Psalms in particular. John J. Collins states that there is ambiguity between the Bible as war-mongering and as peace-fostering. Biblical scholars should, however, seek to argue against violent use of scripture. They should do, according to Murphy, try to lessen the contribution of the Bible to violence in the world by showing that that certitude is an illusion. When it comes to the Book of Psalms, it mentions the words 'enemy' or 'enemies' 104 times. The Bible was much used in both the World Wars, and the Old Testament, especially the Book of Psalms, offered a degree of religious legitimacy to the patriotic hatred that flourished. Andrew Mein argues that the Book of Psalms is a book 'full of enemies'. The Psalmist is confronted by evildoers on all sides and pleads God to destroy his enemies and their children by imprecation or curse.

Chapter 3: Definitions, theory, and literature

To be able to discuss my findings later, an introduction to relevant theory and defining important terms is necessary. Researching Breivik's use of the Bible is a fairly unexplored enterprise. So, most of my theory regarding Breivik and the Bible will be from Hannah Strømme. The area of reception history is, however, not new, and have longstanding research and theories. In this chapter I will try to define the term, and introduce the discussion on reception, interpretation, and hermeneutics.

Breivik and the Bible

There has been done substantial research on both Breivik and his manifesto on one side, and on violent interpretations of the Bible on the other. But Professor Hannah M. Strømme is one of very few that combines the two and asks the question of how Breivik uses the Bible to legitimize his actions. This is the main reason for why Strømme and her work is such a big part of my theoretical framework in this thesis. Strømme is a Senior Lecturer in Biblical Studies, and she is one of the world's leading researchers on the influence and impact of the Bible in contemporary culture, literature, society, and politics. Her work on the use of Bible in the European far right has resulted in the book *The Claim to Christianity: Responding to the Far Right*, with Ulrich Schmiedel, and several publications and articles on the topic.

Breivik's chapter on the Bible and violence does, as many researchers point out, constitute a minor part of the manifesto, and Breivik does describe himself as not an "excessively religious man"¹⁶⁶. I do, however, agree with Strømme that since Christianity and the Bible does constitute some part of his ideology, no matter how small, it needs to be examined. And as she writes, "how can we be so sure that Breivik's ideology has nothing to do with Christianity without acknowledging and then examining more closely how, why and in what ways Christianity is used in the manifesto?"¹⁶⁷. Strømme has said about her own research on Behring Breivik (and the far-right extremism in Europe in general), and his use of the Bible, that Christianity and the use of the Bible are largely neglected features of the far-right extremism.¹⁶⁸ She states that even if Breivik is not a Christian himself, the Bible is still part of his argumentation and source material. The Bible is part of the worldview he presents in his

¹⁶⁶ Strømme, "Christian Terror in Europe? The Bible in Anders Behring Breivik's Manifesto." Page 153

¹⁶⁷ Strømme, "Christian Terror in Europe? The Bible in Anders Behring Breivik's Manifesto." Page 152

¹⁶⁸ Ingeborg Misje Bergem, "Bibelen som høyreekstrem propaganda," *Vårt Land* (<https://www.vl.no/religion/kirke/2020/01/19/bibelen-som-hoyreekstrem-propaganda/>) 2020.

Manifesto.¹⁶⁹ In an interview with “Vårt Land”¹⁷⁰ Strømme states that what is important when researching Breivik and his use of the Bible is not to argue pro or against his interpretations. What is important is to understand how and why he uses the Bible, and how and why biblical interpretations has an effect.¹⁷¹ Strømme examines the way in which the Bible is used in Breivik’s manifesto, arguing that it provides an important example of interpretive trends, and the role Christianity plays in far-right discourse.¹⁷²

I will be using two of Strømme’s published articles as framework for my thesis: “Christian Terror in Europe? The Bible in Anders Behring Breivik’s Manifesto”, and “Biblical Blood-Lines, From Foundational Corpus to Far Right Bible”.

A far-right Bible

Strømme discusses how the Bible is used as a legitimating device, glorifying violence as defense of a Christian Europe. Positioning God as a fellow fighter and origin for Europe, and using this as a motivational instrument.¹⁷³ In “Biblical Blood-Lines, From Foundational Corpus to Far Right Bible” Strømme writes on how popular perceptions of the Bible have become drawn into the ideology of the contemporary far right in general, and uses Breivik as a case.¹⁷⁴ In the article she presents Breivik’s Bible as a hyper-realized version of, what she calls, the ‘Cultural-’ and the ‘Liberal Bible’. She uses Jonathan Sheehan’s findings in the article ‘The Enlightenment Bible: Translation, Scholarship, Culture’ to show that the Enlightenment period produced a dominant conception of the Bible as an icon of cultural heritage rather than a theological authority.¹⁷⁵ As a result of the critical debate and scholarship in the 16th-18th century the Bible faced uncertainties as theological authority and became reinvested with cultural authority as a marker of ‘our’ Western heritage.¹⁷⁶

Strømme argues that Breivik’s Bible builds on American writer Robert Spencer, Egyptian-British writer Bat Ye’or, and Norwegian blogger ‘Fjordman’ (Peder Nøstvold Jensen), ideology and attitudes, and that his Bible emerges out of this “cultural-cum-liberal bible”¹⁷⁷.

¹⁶⁹ Bergem, "Bibelen som høyreekstrem propaganda."

¹⁷⁰ The biggest Christian newspaper in Norway

¹⁷¹ Bergem, "Bibelen som høyreekstrem propaganda."

¹⁷² Bergem, "Bibelen som høyreekstrem propaganda."

¹⁷³ Strømme, "Biblical Blood-Lines: From Foundational Corpus to the Far Right Bible." Page 1

¹⁷⁴ Strømme, "Biblical Blood-Lines: From Foundational Corpus to the Far Right Bible." Page 1

¹⁷⁵ Strømme, "Biblical Blood-Lines: From Foundational Corpus to the Far Right Bible.", 6

¹⁷⁶ Strømme, "Biblical Blood-Lines: From Foundational Corpus to the Far Right Bible.", 6

¹⁷⁷ Strømme, "Biblical Blood-Lines: From Foundational Corpus to the Far Right Bible.", 10

Strømme characterizes this far-right Bible by its emphasis on the incompatibility with Islam, highlighting it as an acute threat to so-called biblical values of Western civilization, and that this Judeo-Christian West is superior.¹⁷⁸ Breivik feeds of the far-right Bible, but he goes even further calling for a pre-modern Bible, untouched by the evils of the modern period, by turning to the Biblical corpus as a militant mouthpiece for terror.¹⁷⁹ His call is paradoxically based on the modern legacies of the Enlightenment Bible,¹⁸⁰

In “Christian Terror in Europe? The Bible in Anders Behring Breivik’s Manifesto”

Strømme’s focus lie on Breivik, his Manifesto, the chapter “Christian justification of the struggle”¹⁸¹, and the subchapter “The Bible and Self-defence”¹⁸². She discusses the terms a ‘Self-Defence bible’, a ‘motivational bible’ and a ‘Pre-Modern-Bible/Post-Modern-Bible’ in light of Breivik’s Manifesto. I have already mentioned the term ‘Self-Defence bible’ under the headline “22nd of July 2011”, and the third term, a ‘Pre-Modern-Bible’ is already mentioned in the previous paragraph. According to Økland the ‘diachronic context’, that is religious tradition, is what authorizes the action motivated by the ‘synchronic context’, that is contemporary Europe. The ‘motivational bible’ in Breivik’s manifesto however, functions as both a motivating- and authorizing corpus by treating the biblical references as isolated fragments that can be cited to evoke the authority of tradition and simultaneously ‘speak’ to a present in a motivating manner.¹⁸³ In this article Strømme argues that the Bible becomes, in Breivik’s writings, a split site.¹⁸⁴ On one side it occupies a position as a pre-modern symbol for an original Europe, while on the other side a perverted ally of mainstream modern and post-modern perspectives. Breivik’s Bible becomes a fracture between ancient and modern that can metamorphose according to whose hands it falls into.¹⁸⁵

Hannah Strømme writes, to sum up, on how Breivik puts together his Bible by mixing different ideologies and attitudes. She writes on how the Manifesto is also a patchwork of different ideologies, with a focus on his subchapter on “The Bible and Self-Defence”¹⁸⁶. She does not, however, focus on the specific bible verses Breivik uses. This is where I will differ

¹⁷⁸ Strømme, "Biblical Blood-Lines: From Foundational Corpus to the Far Right Bible.", 10

¹⁷⁹ Strømme, "Biblical Blood-Lines: From Foundational Corpus to the Far Right Bible.", 10

¹⁸⁰ Strømme, "Biblical Blood-Lines: From Foundational Corpus to the Far Right Bible.", 20

¹⁸¹ Breivik, "2083: A European Declaration of Independence ". Page 1325

¹⁸² Breivik, "2083: A European Declaration of Independence ". Page 1328

¹⁸³ Strømme, "Christian Terror in Europe? The Bible in Anders Behring Breivik’s Manifesto." Page 159

¹⁸⁴ Strømme, "Christian Terror in Europe? The Bible in Anders Behring Breivik’s Manifesto.", 164

¹⁸⁵ Strømme, "Christian Terror in Europe? The Bible in Anders Behring Breivik’s Manifesto.", 164

¹⁸⁶ Breivik, "2083: A European Declaration of Independence ". Page 1328

from her work. In my research I have chosen to focus on the Book of Psalms, and the 9 (10¹⁸⁷) citations Breivik uses from this book. I will do an in-depth study of how Breivik uses these verses in particular, whereas Strømme has a more overall focus on Breivik's chapter on the Bible and violence in the Manifesto.

Reception history

The reception of the Bible includes every act or word of interpretation of its content. Reception history on the other hand is usually, although not always, a scholarly enterprise. J.F.A. Sawyers describes it as "the history of how a text has influenced communities and cultures down the centuries"¹⁸⁸. It consists of selecting and collecting pieces, from the infinite wealth of reception material that exists, in accordance with the interests of the historian concerned and giving them a narrative frame.¹⁸⁹ Reception history is grounded in the philosophical hermeneutics of Hans-Georg Gadamer. He drew attention to the situated nature of all interpretive acts. Meaning that we must acknowledge that, as an interpreter, one always works from within one's historical locale. We need to acknowledge that one's very consciousness exists within that very locale, or as Gadamer put it: history does not belong to us, we belong to it.¹⁹⁰

Timothy Beal argues that we should move even beyond reception history to cultural history, that we should focus on *how* religious scriptures are used, rather than trying to find and/or understand their *intended* use. He argues that we should move from research on how biblical texts are received to how they are culturally produced as discursive objects.¹⁹¹ That we should turn our focus from hermeneutical reception to cultural production, and from understanding and interpreting scripture via culture, to understanding and interpreting culture via its productions of scripture.¹⁹² By doing this biblical research will be, according to Beal, brought into a fuller dialogue with other fields of comparative scriptural studies, the academic humanities, religious studies, and social sciences in general.¹⁹³

¹⁸⁷ He uses psalm 144:1 two times

¹⁸⁸ Timothy Beal, "Reception History and Beyond: Toward the Cultural History of Scriptures," *Biblical interpretation* 19, 2011, no. 4-5 (2011), <https://doi.org/10.1163/156851511X595530>. Page 359

¹⁸⁹ Michael Lieb, Emma Mason, and Jonathan Roberts, *The Oxford handbook of the reception history of the Bible* (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2013). Page 1

¹⁹⁰ Lieb, Mason, and Roberts, *The Oxford handbook of the reception history of the Bible*. Page 2

¹⁹¹ Beal, "Reception History and Beyond: Toward the Cultural History of Scriptures." Page 357

¹⁹² Beal, "Reception History and Beyond: Toward the Cultural History of Scriptures." Page 357

¹⁹³ Beal, "Reception History and Beyond: Toward the Cultural History of Scriptures." Page 357

Hans Robert Jauss's 'aesthetics of reception' has, according to Beal, the thickest and healthiest roots of biblical reception history.¹⁹⁴ In this work Jauss argues that literature does not exist independent of the history of its reception by its readers. The meaning of a text is neither located in the text itself, nor in the experience of the reader, but in the relationship between the two.¹⁹⁵ As Beal puts it: "the creation of a text is as much an event of production and reception as any subsequent moment in its literary history"¹⁹⁶.

As much as Beal agrees with Jauss he states that reception history has some limitations, and that we, again, should move beyond to cultural history. He argues that reception history does not carry biblical studies far enough into a reengagement with comparative scriptures and therefore academic religious studies.¹⁹⁷ Beal's goals or hopes for biblical studies is that the approach recognizes that the 'biblical' language represents cultural concepts whose relationships with cultural productions of particular symbolic contents, material objects, and embodied interactions are far from self-evident or fixed.¹⁹⁸ That the approach account for the fact that scriptural culture is always material as well as symbolic, sensual, and semantic. And that it be open to all material and media forms of scripture¹⁹⁹, in opposition to the term 'reception' which implies origination, and that only this 'original' form of scripture is valid. According to Beal, there is no such thing as origination.²⁰⁰ There is no original 'the Bible', the Bible is an idea, not a 'thing', and he asks the questions: when were biblical texts finalized? Can they *ever* be finalized? Is reception history supposed to start after this alleged finalization?²⁰¹ If implemented in biblical studies this way of viewing the Bible and interpretation will, according to Beal, encompass reception history and open the horizon toward research beyond reception history's theoretical and methodological reach. We will go from *cause* to *meaning*. From the impact and influence of biblical verses to the cultural meaning of them. A meaning and value that is, according to Beal, culturally produced.²⁰²

¹⁹⁴ Beal, "Reception History and Beyond: Toward the Cultural History of Scriptures." Page 361

¹⁹⁵ Beal, "Reception History and Beyond: Toward the Cultural History of Scriptures." Page 361

¹⁹⁶ Beal, "Reception History and Beyond: Toward the Cultural History of Scriptures." Page 362

¹⁹⁷ Beal, "Reception History and Beyond: Toward the Cultural History of Scriptures." Page 364-365

¹⁹⁸ Beal, "Reception History and Beyond: Toward the Cultural History of Scriptures." Page 370-371

¹⁹⁹ Beal, "Reception History and Beyond: Toward the Cultural History of Scriptures." Page 370-371

²⁰⁰ Beal, "Reception History and Beyond: Toward the Cultural History of Scriptures." Page 367-368

²⁰¹ Beal, "Reception History and Beyond: Toward the Cultural History of Scriptures." Page 370-371

²⁰² Beal, "Reception History and Beyond: Toward the Cultural History of Scriptures." Page 371

Stanly Fish argues that the problem with interpretation and especially agreement on one, ‘correct’ interpretation of a text is that the interpreters will never have the same notions of what counts as a fact, of what is central, peripheral, and worthy of being noticed. They will never uphold the same interpretive principles.²⁰³ If the interpreters are informed by the same notion of what counts as a fact, then agreement between them will be assured. This fact of agreement is, however, a testimony to the power an interpretive community has to constitute the objects upon which its members can then agree. Rather than being a proof of the stability of objects.²⁰⁴ In other words, if agreement between different interpreters is achieved, its source will not be a text that enforces its own perception, but a way of perceiving that results in the emergence, to those who share it, of the same text.²⁰⁵

When we have two different interpretations, Fish argues that both cannot be right, but that we have no basis for deciding which of them is right or wrong.²⁰⁶ Fish’s answer to the question ‘are we *right* to rule out at least some readings?’ is however ‘yes’²⁰⁷, but he continues by claiming that the real question is “what gives us the right to be so right?”²⁰⁸ There is something in each text which rules out at least some readings and allows others, but there is not *one* reading that can ever capture the texts inexhaustible richness and complexity Fish argues.²⁰⁹ Wayne Booth states that: “There are justified limits to what we can legitimately do with a text... for surely we could not go on disputing at all if a core of agreement do not exist”²¹⁰, Fish agrees but pushes the discussion further. He states that if the text itself is always a function of interpretation, as he claims it is, then the text can never be the location of the core of agreement by means of which we reject interpretations.²¹¹ At this point Fish claims that we are at an impasse, because at the one hand there seems to be no basis for labeling an interpretation as unacceptable, but on the other hand we do it all the time.²¹² Again, Fish does argue that there are always mechanisms for ruling out readings, but their source is not the text but the presently recognized interpretive strategies for producing the text.²¹³ Therefore, it

²⁰³ Stanley Fish, *Is there a text in this class? : the authority of interpretive communities* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1980). Page 337

²⁰⁴ Fish, *Is there a text in this class? : the authority of interpretive communities*. Page 337-338

²⁰⁵ Fish, *Is there a text in this class? : the authority of interpretive communities*. Page 337-338

²⁰⁶ Fish, *Is there a text in this class? : the authority of interpretive communities*. Page 342

²⁰⁷ Fish, *Is there a text in this class? : the authority of interpretive communities*. Page 342

²⁰⁸ Fish, *Is there a text in this class? : the authority of interpretive communities*. Page 342

²⁰⁹ Fish, *Is there a text in this class? : the authority of interpretive communities*. Page 342

²¹⁰ Fish, *Is there a text in this class? : the authority of interpretive communities*. Page 342

²¹¹ Fish, *Is there a text in this class? : the authority of interpretive communities*. Page 342

²¹² Fish, *Is there a text in this class? : the authority of interpretive communities*. Page 342

²¹³ Fish, *Is there a text in this class? : the authority of interpretive communities*. Page 347

follows that if an interpretive community says that a text has a certain meaning, that is the intended meaning of that very text. There is at least nothing we can do to disavow the interpretation.²¹⁴ In other words, no reading can be ruled out in principle. We will always have canons of acceptability, but they will always change. The fact that readings that once seemed ridiculous later has reached acceptance is evidence for this according to Fish.²¹⁵

Brennan W. Breed offers, in her book “Nomadic text, a theory of biblical reception history”, a new model of the biblical text. She suggests us to draw on reception history’s potential to conceive of texts as nomads instead of using the migrant- or exilic-model held by many so-called historical critical biblical scholars who work meticulously to return scripture, triumphantly, to their native grounds.²¹⁶ However, Breed argues that finding the boundary between the homeland and exile seems impossible. Nomads on the other hand does not come from a fixed point, neither are they headed towards one.²¹⁷

Breed asks the question: if reception history is a study of the text and its meaning that arise after its original context, what then separates the original text from its receptions? Where does one draw the line?²¹⁸ He concludes by claiming that the very notion of the ‘original text’ of a biblical book is a paradox “that obfuscates the processual dimension of all texts, especially those related to the traditions of a community – or, more precisely, many communities.”²¹⁹ He continues by claiming that the processual nature of biblical texts requires us to think in terms of time, and therefore we must understand change, or difference, to be an essential part of the identity of biblical texts.²²⁰

Breed argues that the very notion of the ‘original context’ of a biblical text or book is problematic. From the very moment they are written down biblical texts are already sedimented with various semantic, historical, and literary context.²²¹ Reception history would then be nothing, if understood as analyzing that which comes after the original, because there is nothing entirely original in the first place.²²² But, if reception history is understood as

²¹⁴ Fish, *Is there a text in this class? : the authority of interpretive communities*. Page 347

²¹⁵ Fish, *Is there a text in this class? : the authority of interpretive communities*. Page 349

²¹⁶ Brennan W. Breed, *Nomadic Text: A Theory of Biblical Reception History*, Indiana Studies in Biblical Literature, (Bloomington: Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014). Page 202

²¹⁷ Breed, *Nomadic Text: A Theory of Biblical Reception History*. Page 202

²¹⁸ Breed, *Nomadic Text: A Theory of Biblical Reception History*. Page 204

²¹⁹ Breed, *Nomadic Text: A Theory of Biblical Reception History*. Page 204

²²⁰ Breed, *Nomadic Text: A Theory of Biblical Reception History*. Page 204

²²¹ Breed, *Nomadic Text: A Theory of Biblical Reception History*. Page 204

²²² Breed, *Nomadic Text: A Theory of Biblical Reception History*. Page 204-205

analyzing how unoriginal texts manifest unoriginal meanings, everything would be reception history.²²³ Therefore, Breed offers a different conception of reception history that does not find itself in a division between the original text, its original context, and later texts and context. He suggests that one may understand the biblical text as a series of processes, text, reading, nonsemantic impact, and transmutations, whose very nature is to change over time.²²⁴ So instead of trying to end up with an original, one, right interpretation or supposed meaning of a text, one should see texts and their meaning as a moving objects, like nomads, moving around with people, with no fixed origination, nor no fixed destination.²²⁵ And by following this approach, Breed states that the framing question of interpretation alters from ‘what does this text mean?’ to ‘what can this text do?’²²⁶

James W. Watts argues that the use and abuse of scripture is more prominent these days, and that Muslim, Christian and Jewish scriptures remain potent symbols in popular culture.²²⁷ These controversies do not involve interpretation of the meaning of scripture, but they focus on physical display and manipulation of scripture. Scholarship on religion and scripture is therefore ill prepared to discuss and evaluate these developments, according to Watts, as it tends to focus on textual interpretation, and its origination and meaning.²²⁸ Watts proposes a new model for understanding the different ways that scripture function. It is a three-dimensional mode of scriptures that, according to him, explains their cultural functions and religious significance.²²⁹ Watts argues that the religious adaptation and use of scriptures should be understood as a form of ritual, and that religious communities ritualize scriptures along three different dimensions. A semantic dimension, a performative dimension, and an iconic dimension.²³⁰

The semantic dimension includes all aspects of interpretation. It has to do with the meaning of what is written.²³¹ This dimension has received most, if not all, of the attention from scholars, for the good reason that the religious traditions themselves place great emphasis on scholarly

²²³ Breed, *Nomadic Text: A Theory of Biblical Reception History*. Page 204-205

²²⁴ Breed, *Nomadic Text: A Theory of Biblical Reception History*. Page 204-205

²²⁵ Breed, *Nomadic Text: A Theory of Biblical Reception History*. Page 206

²²⁶ Breed, *Nomadic Text: A Theory of Biblical Reception History*. Page 206

²²⁷ James Washington Watts, "The Three Dimensions of Scriptures," *The Journal of Sacred Texts and Contemporary Worlds, Iconic Book and Texts* (2008). Page 2

²²⁸ Watts, "The Three Dimensions of Scriptures." Page 2

²²⁹ Watts, "The Three Dimensions of Scriptures." Page 6

²³⁰ Watts, "The Three Dimensions of Scriptures." Page 6

²³¹ Watts, "The Three Dimensions of Scriptures." Page 7

expertise in textual interpretation.²³² Most religious communities understand their scriptures to be a form of divine communication, and its interpretation becomes a form of divination, usually the preferred means for determining divine will. Therefore, religious leadership depends, to a various degree, on exegetical mastery of semantic meaning.²³³

The performative dimension has to do with the performance of what is written.²³⁴ Scriptural performances come in two major modes, performance of the words of scriptures which includes ritualized forms of public and private reading, the memorization and recitation of text. And performance of the contents of scriptures which includes dramatizations of various sorts.²³⁵ These two modes often work together, in tandem, to expose believers to their tradition's scriptures.²³⁶ Religious leaders are however more likely to dictate precisely how scriptural words are to be recited than they are to control dramatizations, which often makes the second mode of performance, art and drama, express creative appropriations of scripture beyond the control of religious authorities.²³⁷

Finally, the iconic dimension finds expression in the physical form, artistic representation, and ritual manipulation of scriptures.²³⁸ Scriptures often take special forms that differentiate them from physically from other books, they are often displayed different than other books, and they are often treated differently than other books. This makes scriptures powerful symbols in representational art, saints and divinities hold sacred texts in the artworks of many religious traditions.²³⁹ This association legitimizes the scripture as authentic, and in recent art, scriptures have increasingly been portrayed alone to represent religious traditions. Scriptures thus function as icons in their ritual uses, in their symbolic representations, and in the physical forms they take.²⁴⁰

Watts' thesis is that scriptures are produced by ritualizing their three dimensions, the dimensions are however not unique to scriptures.²⁴¹ Most readers of ordinary books tend to

²³² Watts, "The Three Dimensions of Scriptures." Page 7

²³³ Watts, "The Three Dimensions of Scriptures." Page 7

²³⁴ Watts, "The Three Dimensions of Scriptures." Page 7

²³⁵ Watts, "The Three Dimensions of Scriptures." Page 7

²³⁶ Watts, "The Three Dimensions of Scriptures." Page 7

²³⁷ Watts, "The Three Dimensions of Scriptures." Page 7

²³⁸ Watts, "The Three Dimensions of Scriptures." Page 7-8

²³⁹ Watts, "The Three Dimensions of Scriptures." Page 7-8

²⁴⁰ Watts, "The Three Dimensions of Scriptures." Page 7-8

²⁴¹ Watts, "The Three Dimensions of Scriptures." Page 9

ignore them as trivial. As comparison, religious traditions tend to use scriptures in a way that draw attention to each of the three dimensions, giving spiritual importance to what is otherwise seen as trivial.²⁴² He states that ritualizing scripture will lead to authority in the semantic dimension, a sense of inspiration in the performative dimension, and legitimation in the iconic dimension.²⁴³ Watts end his paper by stating that the three-dimensional model for understanding the phenomenon of scriptures is just that, a model. That the reality of religious beliefs and practices in the innumerable human communities that use scriptures, will always beat the ability of one, single conceptual tool that intends to reduce it to some few principles.²⁴⁴ Lastly, he argues, that the goal of this tool is not to replace other ways of analyzing the nature and functions of scripture, but to function as one useful means for understanding the impact of scriptures on historical and contemporary affairs.²⁴⁵

Chapter summary

In this chapter an introduction to Hannah Strømme and her writings on Breivik and the Bible has been presented as relevant theory. As she is, as far as I know, the only researcher that explores this enterprise. She argues that Christianity and the use of the Bible are a largely neglected features of the far-right extremism. I have presented her definitions of the cultural- and liberal Bible, the far-right Bible, the pre-modern Bible, the self-defense bible, the motivational Bible, and the pre-modern and post-modern-Bible. Strømme concludes by stating that Breivik puts together his Bible by mixing different ideologies and attitudes as he also does in his Manifesto.

I have also introduced theories on-, and definitions of reception history. In addition to an introduction to the discussion on reception, interpretation, and hermeneutics. I have introduced the theories, and views of Timothy Beal, Hans Robert Jauss, Stanley Fish, Brennan W. Breed, and James W. Watts. The core of the discussion on reception lies in the question «are every reading of the Bible valid?».

²⁴² Watts, "The Three Dimensions of Scriptures." Page 9

²⁴³ Watts, "The Three Dimensions of Scriptures." Page 13-14

²⁴⁴ Watts, "The Three Dimensions of Scriptures." Page 20

²⁴⁵ Watts, "The Three Dimensions of Scriptures." Page 20

Chapter 4: Methodology

This chapter will give an overview of the approach and aim of the study, introduce the research method and analytical perspective used, and discuss their limitations and advantages. In addition, the circumstances, challenges, and limitations of the study will be presented and discussed.

Textual analysis

I have used a combination of various methods. My starting point is, as mentioned, a case study on Anders Behring Breivik and his manifesto, in particular his chapter on the Bible and violence. I have researched this case by using textual analysis, in particular content- and document analysis.

Textual analysis is the method used to describe and interpret characteristics of a recorded or visual message.²⁴⁶ There are many ways to conduct a textual analysis, such as content-, discourse- and dialogue analysis, philology, and historiography.²⁴⁷ In my research I have chosen content- and document analysis.

Content analysis

Content analysis focuses on examining the message embedded in already existing texts. ‘Texts’ being any object that involves the use of symbols.²⁴⁸ Krippendorff defines content analysis as a “research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use”²⁴⁹. Which, according to Vogt, includes “any of several research techniques used to describe and systematically analyze the content of written, spoken or pictorial communication – such as books, newspapers, television programs, or interview transcripts”²⁵⁰. There are many ways of using content analysis, as it has many functions. In my case I will be using it to identify different ways of using and interpreting the Book of Psalms by drawing comparisons between Breivik and more mainstream interpretations of the book.

²⁴⁶ Michael Stausberg and Steven Engler, *The Routledge handbook of research methods in the study of religion* (London ;, New York: Routledge, 2011). Page 109

²⁴⁷ Stausberg and Engler, *The Routledge handbook of research methods in the study of religion*. Page 109

²⁴⁸ Stausberg and Engler, *The Routledge handbook of research methods in the study of religion*. Page 110

²⁴⁹ Stausberg and Engler, *The Routledge handbook of research methods in the study of religion*. Page 110

²⁵⁰ Stausberg and Engler, *The Routledge handbook of research methods in the study of religion*. Page 110

Document analysis

Document analysis is a form of content analysis, I will research the content of a document. The term ‘document’ can be used to cover an array of research materials from gravestones and epigraphy to current newsletters.²⁵¹ In other words, the term is very applicable, and it is often unclear where the dividing line between what is and what is not a document lies.²⁵² This distinction is, according to Grace Davie and David Wyatt, about how the researcher frames an artifact, and they compare it to the question as to what is and what is not art.²⁵³ Documents do not exist in a vacuum. They are produced by individuals and/or groups who have aims and motives. Documents have, in other words, context and they often paint a picture of the authors’ understanding of reality.²⁵⁴ In the case of Breivik this is highly relevant, as his goal was to get attention toward his manifesto where he presents his understanding of reality: the truth about current situation in Europe regarding the ongoing Muslim invasion.

Documents are also both ‘situated-’ and ‘social products’ meaning that documents must be situated in terms of time and place, in relation to discursive formations, as their condition of existence.²⁵⁵ Paul-Michel Foucault uses this argument to emphasize that language does not have universal meaning, but it presents an image of reality that is specific to-, and situated in, a socio-historic context.²⁵⁶ In addition to being ‘situated products’ Davie and Wyatt argues that documents are incorporated in social life and social action, we *use* documents above all.²⁵⁷ They are not lifeless objects, but they have functions and are active agents that shape the way we traverse the social society. They shape the way we understand our actions, the way we conduct ourselves, and some documents help us communicate our thoughts and feelings. It is therefore important to understand how a text is read and received by the reader, which also includes the researcher.²⁵⁸

Selection of methods

There are several advantages with using content- and document analysis in this thesis. The first is the fact that it is an unobtrusive way to measure a phenomenon. It allows me to study

²⁵¹ Stausberg and Engler, *The Routledge handbook of research methods in the study of religion*. Page 151-152

²⁵² Stausberg and Engler, *The Routledge handbook of research methods in the study of religion*. Page 151-152

²⁵³ Stausberg and Engler, *The Routledge handbook of research methods in the study of religion*. Page 151-152

²⁵⁴ Stausberg and Engler, *The Routledge handbook of research methods in the study of religion*. Page 152

²⁵⁵ Stausberg and Engler, *The Routledge handbook of research methods in the study of religion*. Page 152-153

²⁵⁶ Stausberg and Engler, *The Routledge handbook of research methods in the study of religion*. Page 152-153

²⁵⁷ Stausberg and Engler, *The Routledge handbook of research methods in the study of religion*. Page 152-153

²⁵⁸ Stausberg and Engler, *The Routledge handbook of research methods in the study of religion*. Page 152-153

texts that already exists, rather than getting people to produce texts, having to perform interviews, observations, etc. which in my case would be very difficult since the text I am going to analyze is of quite delicate nature, and the author is imprisoned. It is also possible to combine content analysis to other research methods/methodologies, which in my case is helpful since I also want to do comparison.

Despite its empirical foundations, content- and document analysis is not an entirely objective method. According to Krippendorff texts are not ‘reader-independent’.²⁵⁹ Reading a text is not an automatic and unproblematic exercise of deciphering a set of consistently, identical signs on a piece of paper in front of us. Meanings are brought to the text by authors who have their own way of interpreting, thinking, and writing, and given the reader-dependent nature of textual analysis, it is appropriate to say that meanings in texts are not discovered but constructed through the act of interpretation.²⁶⁰ There is also no guarantee that any reader or researcher interpret or understand the text in the same way as the author intended it. Texts have no single meaning; they are dependent on the researcher’s perspective and choice of operational definitions.²⁶¹

I will not conduct a hermeneutical interpretation of the bible verses that are being used in the Manifesto, as one might expect with a biblical passage, as the semantic dimension of scripture dominates scholarship. My research will be on Breivik’s interpretation of the bible verses, in other words, Breivik’s hermeneutics. In hermeneutics, and especially in theological hermeneutics one tends to focus on the ‘intended meaning’ of a verse. While questioning interpretations of scripture may be good and important in a theological debate, these concerns do not apply to my thesis. My focus or goal for this thesis will *not* be to find, if there is one, the intended meaning of a bible verse. My goal is to find Breivik’s hermeneutics and Breivik’s intended meanings. Conducting a textual analysis of his manifesto will, hopefully, help me do so. I will, however, have a discussion on reception history, where I discuss hermeneutics and interpretation in general, but also in the case of Breivik and his Manifesto.

I chose these methods because an important part of understanding how one might use biblical texts as arguments pro violence is to understand how that very text is being interpreted. And

²⁵⁹ Stausberg and Engler, *The Routledge handbook of research methods in the study of religion*. Page 112

²⁶⁰ Stausberg and Engler, *The Routledge handbook of research methods in the study of religion*. Page 112

²⁶¹ Stausberg and Engler, *The Routledge handbook of research methods in the study of religion*. Page 112

to get a better understanding of how Breivik interprets the book of Psalms, and what makes his interpretations unique I am going to compare him to other, more mainstream interpretations of the same book.

Comparison

It is discussed whether comparison is a method or a methodology.²⁶² In the field of literature studies comparison is, in general referred to as a method, but Stausberg argues that this is misleading in several respects. He argues that comparison is not *one* method, that researchers have used multiple of designs when doing comparative research. In addition, a comparative perspective is often merely a mode of analysis, a way to approach a certain problem.²⁶³

Stausberg argues that comparison is, by researchers, most often practiced as a research design, and not a separate method. It is used as a framework for the collection and analysis of data, and in the analysis of research problems. Comparative research designs use different kinds of tools or techniques, i.e., methods, for collection of data.²⁶⁴ In my case, I will be using content- and document analysis to conduct the comparison, and therefore I find it more fruitful to use comparison as methodology, more so than as a method.

Stausberg uses the French historian Marc Bloch's description of comparison as a four-folded project to explain what comparison is. "1) Selecting two or more phenomena that, at first sight, show certain analogies; 2) describing the lines of their evolution; 3) observing their differences and similarities; 4) explaining these as far as possible."²⁶⁵ In recent decades, comparison has been a hot topic, and there has been discussions on whether or not comparison is an adequate method in the studies of religions.²⁶⁶ In my case, I will not compare different religions and not religion as such. My main comparison will be on reception and interpretation of a certain religious text. Therefore, these main issues will not concern my thesis, but I still see some issues or challenges with using comparison as methodology.

²⁶² Methods understood the procedure or technique applied by the researcher to undertake research, while methodology is understood as a system of methods, used scientifically for solving the research problem.

²⁶³ Stausberg and Engler, *The Routledge handbook of research methods in the study of religion*. Page 34

²⁶⁴ Stausberg and Engler, *The Routledge handbook of research methods in the study of religion*. Page 34

²⁶⁵ Stausberg and Engler, *The Routledge handbook of research methods in the study of religion*. Page 21

²⁶⁶ Stausberg and Engler, *The Routledge handbook of research methods in the study of religion*. Page 22

Circumstances, challenges, and limitations

The study of religion(s) stand in marked contrast to other disciplines when it comes to approaching methods. According to Michael Stausberg and Steven Engler religious studies programs tend to have less, or in many cases no, focus on research methods than other programs. Also, there are no discussion on methods in the study of religion(s) that can compete with the technical sophistication established in many other disciplines.²⁶⁷ It is also argued that the study of religion(s) also differs from other disciplines because it has no research method of its own, and that the study of religion(s) is a multi-methodological discipline.²⁶⁸

Even though Stausberg and Engler dismiss these reasons as valid and argue that there has been a change in recent years, I have had the same struggles when writing this thesis. I do miss the ‘how-to’-guide that methods may serve as in other disciplines, and I have found it difficult to find the method that fits my thesis, because my experience is that mine, and many others, research is a crossing of many different methods. And lastly, I have the experience, as Stausberg and Engler discuss, that research methods have not been given much focus throughout my studies, and therefore it is a rather new way of approaching writing for me.

Research ethical assessments and limitations

I do see some issues or difficulties with using comparison as methodology. One should have the time and resources to go in-depth in all the phenomena which one is to compare, this would be very time-consuming. In this thesis I will enlighten one phenomenon, one way of reading the Book of Psalms, namely Breivik’s, by briefly viewing a more general or mainstream way of reading that very book. I will not go as in depth when it comes to the more mainstream ways of reading and interpreting the Book of Psalms, as I do with Breivik.

There is a lot of research done on biblical interpretation in general, and on The Boof of Psalms in particular. There is also done plenty of research on Anders Behring Breivik and his Manifesto. There is however very little research on Breivik’s use and interpretation of the Bible, and nothing on his use of the Book of Psalms at least not as I have found in my research. There is, in other words, no one that can verify my findings, as there is no other

²⁶⁷ Stausberg and Engler, *The Routledge handbook of research methods in the study of religion*. Page 3-4

²⁶⁸ Stausberg and Engler, *The Routledge handbook of research methods in the study of religion*. Page 4

available research. This is a challenge, but it also makes my research more relevant and the process of writing this thesis more exciting.

2083 - A European declaration of independence is a document that the author himself has made available online and in some libraries. This makes it less problematic to use in terms of ethics towards the writer, as opposed to personal letters or diaries.²⁶⁹ When it comes to using and publishing research on the manifesto there is a whole range of ethical problems, but consent from and respect for the privacy of the author is in other words not one of them. Breivik even encourages the readers of the Manifesto to spread, what he sees as, the truth to as many as possible.

When writing on the topic of right-wing extremism using Anders Behring Breivik as a case there are numerous ethical dilemmas. In the aftermath of 22nd of July there was, as mentioned, an ongoing discussion whether one should write about and/or do research on Breivik and his Manifesto at all. Breivik himself claims that he did what he did only to draw attention to the Manifesto. Should we then grant him his wish, doing research on- and giving his writings attention? And if choosing to write on it, should I include his name and/or put him in my literature list? One might argue that writing on this subject will help spreading a dangerous mindset and in worst case scenario lead to radicalization of searching individuals. But then again, not studying it will not make right-wing extremism, and this way of thinking go away, and it is not something that can only be studied in the abstract. So, even though I understand the arguments, I do find it important to do research on- and trying to understand this way of thinking. If it is better understood, we may gain some knowledge on how to prevent it in the future.

Another ethical dilemma is the criteria of staying objective. Is it possible to stay objective when writing on a view and person who glorifies and encourages violence? *Should* one strive to be objective when reading the Manifesto? Breivik is received mostly with horror, but I am surprised with how 'neutral' I am while reading. I understand his chain of thoughts, I disagree with the very premise of his discussion, but again: I am surprised with how well he builds his arguments. I am also puzzled with how I have, unconsciously, separated the document from his actions. My hope is that I manage to let Breivik's interpretations speak for itself, and that

²⁶⁹ Stausberg and Engler, *The Routledge handbook of research methods in the study of religion*. Page 155

can only happen if one strives to read it objectively. I think that if one is too concerned with claiming or proving one's abhorrence and distance toward the material, it will only damage the research.

Chapter summary

In this chapter, I have stated the aim and approach of the study. I have introduced the research method of choice, textual analysis, alongside the analytical perspective, comparison. Along with the reasons, advantages, and disadvantages for choosing this method, and methodology. In addition, the circumstances, challenges, and limitations of the study have been presented.

The starting point of my research is, as mentioned, a case study on Anders Behring Breivik and his Manifesto, in particular his chapter on the Bible and violence. I have researched this case by using textual analysis, in particular content- and document analysis. There are many ways of using textual analysis, as it has many functions. In my case I will be using it to identify different ways of using and interpreting the Book of Psalms by drawing comparisons between Breivik and more mainstream interpretations of the book.

The ethical considerations when executing such research are many, they have been presented and discussed and can be summed up with these questions: is it ethically right to write and/or do research on Breivik and his Manifesto, as attention to his writings is what he wanted? Is it possible to stay objective when doing research on a Manifesto, which contents led a man to kill 77 people? *Should* one strive to stay objective? Is it ethically right to do research on the Manifesto when its author is in prison and not able to respond to allegations against him and/or his writings?

Chapter 5: Analysis and findings

In this chapter I will present my analysis and findings relating to the research question: “how does Breivik use the Bible in general, and the Book of Psalms in particular, to argue pro violence?”. The findings are based on a textual analysis of Breivik’s Manifesto and his sources. I will present his interpretations of the verses found in the Book of Psalms and the sources he has used and discuss his use of scripture. To better understand where his understanding or interpretation of the book of Psalms differ from more mainstream interpretations, I will briefly compare his writings and interpretations to other, again, more mainstream ones. Lastly, I will say something on Breivik and violence, the Bible and violence, Breivik and Christianity and the how the theory of Christianity might give us a better understanding of his use of the Bible.

The Bible and violence

Christians have acted in ways opposed to violence, but they have also warranted violence over the centuries by referring to scripture and by developing theological interpretations arguing both views. The Bible is full of violence, and there are numerous examples throughout history of people who has led crusades, wars, and violent acts with a Bible in their hand. How does, what I see as, a book full of love and words of kindness end up as a means of violence? Is it the Bible that is the problem?

As written in the background chapter Mieke Bal states that “The Bible, of all books, is the most dangerous one, the one that has been endowed with the power to kill.”²⁷⁰. Researchers point to the ambiguity between the Bible as war-mongering and peace-fostering, but that we do not have to look very hard to find arguments pro violence in it. On one side it might seem as if religion is especially prone to violence. Researchers do argue that religion is prone to be used as an excuse to justify acts of violence, that one is only executes the will of God. But on the other hand, it is a fact that more people have been killed by secularistic ideologies, than in the name of God. Researchers also argue that no religion is intrinsically violent or naturally promotes violence, but that all religions can, under certain conditions become violent. In conclusion, there is nothing uniquely violent about religion, Christianity, and/or the Bible.

²⁷⁰ Collins, "The Zeal of Phinehas: The Bible and the Legitimation of Violence." Page 3

This does not, however, rule out the fact that Christianity does bare with it some elements that makes it prone to generate violence, and again, we do have numerous examples where people have carried out acts of violence with a Bible in their hand. How do we deal with that? Some scholars argue that violent and non-violent visions are in dialectic interaction throughout the Bible, but that Christians should use the non-violent historical Jesus with his vision of non-violent, distributive justice as the normative criterion. But, that there is no final answer as one can find arguments pro both violence, and non-violence. My point is this, if one looks for it one will find arguments pro violence in Christianity and the Bible, as much as in other religions and ideologies. Whether these arguments are valid or not is another discussion.

Breivik and violence

In his Manifesto Breivik writes that “In the context of cultural conservative Europeans current war against the cultural Marxist/multiculturalist elites and the ongoing Islamic invasion through Islamic demographic warfare against Europe, every military action against our enemies is considered self defence. There will be much suffering and destruction but eventually we will succeed and may be able to start rebuilding.”²⁷¹ In other words, violence done in self-defense is to be looked at as a means for a better future. He even claims that this sort of self-defense is biblical, and a duty for Christians. Because we serve a God that believes, when the time is right, in fighting for your rights, believes, and people. A God that is our fellow fighter, fighting for a Europe for white, Christian Europeans. In other words, Breivik uses the Bible as a legitimating device, glorifying violence as defense of a Christian Europe.

After the attacks on the 22nd of July 2011 Breivik explained, through his attorney, that what he did was ‘horrific, but necessary’ and that he sacrificed himself for the greater cause. Throughout the manifesto he continues to comment on his own sacrifice. In the beginning of the manifesto, under the heading “about the compendium – 2083”²⁷² he even has a subheading, “Sacrifices made when creating the compendium”²⁷³, where he states that he spent nine years, 317 000 euros (some of them are loss of income) on the manifesto.²⁷⁴ Then he states that “All that, however, is barely noticeable compared to the sacrifices made in

²⁷¹ Breivik, "2083: A European Declaration of Independence ". Page 1325

²⁷² Breivik, "2083: A European Declaration of Independence ". Page 11

²⁷³ Breivik, "2083: A European Declaration of Independence ". Page 15

²⁷⁴ Breivik, "2083: A European Declaration of Independence ". Page 15

relation to the distribution of this book, the actual marketing operation;)"²⁷⁵. The ‘;)’ makes the sacrifice seem a little less sacrificial one might argue.

Breivik, Christianity, and Christianity

What makes the discussion on Breivik’s use of the Bible, and whether his interpretations are valid or not so difficult and divided could be the fact that Breivik himself claims that he is not a Christian, at least not an “excessively religious man²⁷⁶,” meanwhile being “a supporter of a monocultural Christian Europe.”²⁷⁷

As discussed in the background chapter Brubaker defines Christianity as form of Christian secularism that has emerged in the last decade, it is not substantively a religious but identitarian concept. This form of secularism has been formatted by a strong hate against Muslims, and it builds on ‘us-them’ terminology, it is a matter of belonging, it is about cultural and civilizational identity. Since ‘they’ are Muslims ‘we’ must be Christians, but not necessarily in a religious matter. Since secularism has grown on Christian soil it is a Christian value worth defending. We should be secular *because* we are (postmodern-) Christians. Christianist advocates uses typical conservative, Christian arguments to validate this view.

As mentioned, Breivik claims that he is not Christian in a sense that he is religious. And that he does not really care what people believe in, as long as they define as Christians in a cultural sense, since he is a supporter of a monocultural Christian Europe. It might be helpful viewing Breivik’s statements in light of Brubaker’s theory on Christianity, as this culturalization of religion allows Christianity to be privileged as culture in a way that it cannot so easily be as religion. At the same time, it allows Muslim religious practices to be restricted in a way that would not be possible given the liberal state’s commitment to religious freedom. If my hypothesis that Breivik has not read a lot from the Bible, and/or does a lot of interpretation of the verses he presents is true, then Christianity may help understand why he still chooses to use the Bible.

²⁷⁵ Breivik, "2083: A European Declaration of Independence ". Page 15

²⁷⁶ Strømme, "Christian Terror in Europe? The Bible in Anders Behring Breivik’s Manifesto."; Strømme, "Christian Terror in Europe? The Bible in Anders Behring Breivik’s Manifesto." Page 153

²⁷⁷ Breivik, "2083: A European Declaration of Independence ". Page 1404

Breivik's secondary sources in 'The Bible and Self-Defense'²⁷⁸

At the end of the chapter, where the Bible verses I have used in this thesis are presented, Breivik lists a number of sources: <http://www.counterpunch.org/complaint.html>, <http://www.counterpunch.org/dead.html>, Norsk Folkehjelp/NTB-DPA, http://www.iacenter.org/warcrime/11_weapon.htm, <http://www.bible-knowledge.com/Battle-Verses-of-the-Bible.html>, <http://www.gotquestions.org/self-defense.html>, <http://www.loveyourenemies.org/sword.html#start>, and http://www.worldnetdaily.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE_ID=25442.²⁷⁹

When researching the sources I encountered a number of problems: most of them are websites that no longer exist, of all the sources there are only two that still does, namely <https://www.bible-knowledge.com/battle-verses-of-the-bible/> and <https://www.gotquestions.org/self-defense.html>. Secondly, Breivik does not cite his sources in his writings, he only adds the list of sources by the end of his subchapters and/or chapters. This makes it difficult to say if a source is important, where in his writings he has used it, and it makes it hard to determine if, and how he has used the source all together. Since many of the webpages that do not exist anymore was articles written in online magazines, I used what the magazines write about themselves and Wikipedia to get an idea of Breivik's source. I chose to use Wikipedia because it was the only source I could find, other than the magazines themselves, that gives information on the magazines and/or the organizations that founded them. In addition, the articles on Wikipedia are written and edited by volunteers around the world, and that might give me an insight to the general's idea/impression of the magazines, in opposition to what Breivik, as a right-wing extremist, write.

Many of the bible verses found under the heading "3.149 The Bible and self-defence"²⁸⁰ are nowhere to be found in the listed sources, and the ones I do find is with a different translation than in the Manifesto. It is difficult to determine if this means that the bible comments are Breivik's own words or conclusions, or if this is where he used the websites that do no longer exists.

²⁷⁸ Breivik, "2083: A European Declaration of Independence ". Page 1328

²⁷⁹ Breivik, "2083: A European Declaration of Independence ". Page 1334

²⁸⁰ Breivik, "2083: A European Declaration of Independence ". Page 1328

Bible-knowledge.com

<https://www.bible-knowledge.com/battle-verses-of-the-bible/> is an article written by Michael Bradley. The article is published on a website designed and owned by Michael and Chris Bradley. It is, according to them, meant to function as an online ministry.²⁸¹ They write that the goal of the website is to give its readers a solid and progressive teaching system that leads them “into all of the main areas of a true walk with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ”.²⁸² The authors of the articles found on the webpage writes on a wide range of topics, and they strive to provide its readers with “good, basic, bottom-line, straight-to-the-point Bible Articles and Commentary covering a wide range of topics in order to help you grow in your own personal walk with the Lord.”²⁸³

Chris Bradley has developed something he calls ‘The Power Verse System’.²⁸⁴ He has put 1500 of, what he claims to be, the most powerful verses in the Bible on individual index cards. Further on they have grouped each of these Bible verses into categories covering ‘different aspects of our walk with the Lord’.²⁸⁵ When categorized by subject matter the Bible verses will, according to Bradley, release a staggering amount of knowledge and revelation, especially to those who have not read the Bible in its entirety.²⁸⁶ Therefore, the Bradleys’ have decided to name their website ‘Bible Knowledge’, giving its readers the “appropriate verses from Scripture to back up what is being taught per subject matter”.²⁸⁷

The article Breivik refers to was lastly updated on the 23rd of February 2021²⁸⁸, so the content of the article may have changed since Breivik used it as a source in his Manifesto. In this article Michael Bradley links to a list of 100 “of the best battle verses from the Bible”.^{289,290} All of the verses Breivik uses from the Book of Psalms are found in this list, which leads me believe that Breivik has used many of the articles written by the Bradleys’, even though he only list the introduction article as source.

²⁸¹ "About Us," accessed 10.02, 2022, <https://www.bible-knowledge.com/about-us/>.

²⁸² Bradley, "About Us."

²⁸³ Bradley, "About Us."

²⁸⁴ Bradley, "About Us."

²⁸⁵ Bradley, "About Us."

²⁸⁶ Bradley, "About Us."

²⁸⁷ Bradley, "About Us."

²⁸⁸ The author of the article died on June 2012, according to the website, so the changes done to the article is by his brother Chris Bradley.

²⁸⁹ Michael Bradley, "Battle Verses Of The Bible " (2021). <https://www.bible-knowledge.com/battle-verses-of-the-bible/>.

²⁹⁰ The list of verses were lastly updated on December 18th 2020

“An introduction to the ‘Battle verses Of The Bible’ ”²⁹¹

In what seems to be an introduction to the Bible verses Michael Bradley categorizes as ‘battle verses’ he writes that in the Old Testament it is made clear that God does not hesitate to fight for his chosen people, the Jews.²⁹² Since the Bible tells us that God does not change, and that He is the same today as in the past Bradley concludes that God will also come to the aid of “all New Testament Christians who are walking in good stead with Him”²⁹³. Bradley compares God’s ‘strong and righteous’ wrath with what a parent would do if someone planned or tried to abduct and kill their children. He states that as much as they would have prosecuted or fought to kill, in what Bradley claims to be self-defense, the abductor God the Father would do the same, or worse. Because God is a God of maximum intensity, and He is our real Father, we can multiply our earthly parents’ reactions to grasp what His reaction and sanctions would be, to human or demonic attacks.²⁹⁴

God does not, however, give out his protection unconditionally Bradley argues. There are several things you must do before God will go as far as giving his maximum protection to you.²⁹⁵ Many Christians are lacking, what Bradley refers to as, “real working knowledge in the area of spiritual warfare”²⁹⁶. This is why the battle verses listed on their website are so important to have knowledge of and understand.²⁹⁷ According to Bradley these bible states that people will perish for having lack of knowledge, or for having the wrong kind of knowledge.²⁹⁸ If we however learn and strive toward this ideal, having God fight on our side, defeating your enemy is quite simple, according to Bradley.²⁹⁹ He then refers to several articles written on the website under the headline “Stories & Testimonies of God's Amazing Power”³⁰⁰. In these articles Michael and Chris Bradley has given advise on how to go into battle against several situations and/or enemies.³⁰¹ If you follow the Bradleys’ advice, and “are willing to take this kind of extra step with the Lord”³⁰² you will receive complete and

²⁹¹ Bradley, "Battle Verses Of The Bible ".

²⁹² Bradley, "Battle Verses Of The Bible ".

²⁹³ Bradley, "Battle Verses Of The Bible ".

²⁹⁴ Bradley, "Battle Verses Of The Bible ".

²⁹⁵ Bradley, "Battle Verses Of The Bible ".

²⁹⁶ Bradley, "Battle Verses Of The Bible ".

²⁹⁷ Bradley, "Battle Verses Of The Bible ".

²⁹⁸ Bradley, "Battle Verses Of The Bible ".

²⁹⁹ Bradley, "Battle Verses Of The Bible ".

³⁰⁰ "Stories & Testimonies of God's Amazing Power," accessed 10.02, 2022, <https://www.bible-knowledge.com/testimonies/>.

³⁰¹ Bradley, "Battle Verses Of The Bible ".

³⁰² Bradley, "Battle Verses Of The Bible ".

total victory against the enemy or adverse situations you are facing.³⁰³ Writing the battle verses onto index cards, reading the battle verses, and praying the battle prayers provided by the Bradleys', you will have at your fingertips "God-torpedoes to shoot at whatever enemy may come your way – whether it be human, demonic, or any kind of illness or disease"³⁰⁴.

Bradley continues his article by stating that too many Christians are passive when faced with an obstacle, we need to learn how to go on the offensive against our enemies.³⁰⁵ God is just waiting for us to come directly to Him and ask for his help. When we do, He will defeat our enemy.³⁰⁶ If we are not willing to go on the offensive against our enemies then neither will God, and that is why, according to Bradley, so many Christians are defeated by their enemies.³⁰⁷ At the end of the article Bradley has made a 'table of contents', which links to the articles where one can read about the rest of the battle verses. The headlines are: "Full Surrender Battle Verse", "Going On the Offensive Against Your Enemies", "Walk in All of God's Ways – Keep All of God's Commandments", "God Will Anoint You For Battle", "God Will Give You What You Need To Walk With His Anointing", "God Will Run Protection For You", "God Will Fight Your Battles" and "Battle Angels".³⁰⁸

*"More information about Christianity and self-defense, Battle verses"*³⁰⁹

As mentioned, Breivik has not referred to any of these, but when looking at Breivik's chapter "Christian justification of the struggle"³¹⁰ and subchapter 3.149 "The Bible and self-defense"³¹¹ his headings/subheadings and content are very similar to the headings and content in Bradley's articles.

The Bible verses found in Breivik's introduction of the subchapter "More information about Christianity and self-defense"³¹², are not presented in Bradley's article, but in the second paragraph Breivik presents the term 'battle verses' for the first time in his Manifesto. He then

³⁰³ Bradley, "Battle Verses Of The Bible ".

³⁰⁴ Bradley, "Battle Verses Of The Bible ".

³⁰⁵ Bradley, "Battle Verses Of The Bible ".

³⁰⁶ Bradley, "Battle Verses Of The Bible ".

³⁰⁷ Bradley, "Battle Verses Of The Bible ".

³⁰⁸ Bradley, "Battle Verses Of The Bible ".

³⁰⁹ Breivik, "2083: A European Declaration of Independence ". Page 1330-1331

³¹⁰ Breivik, "2083: A European Declaration of Independence ". Page 1325

³¹¹ Breivik, "2083: A European Declaration of Independence ". Page 1328

³¹² Breivik, "2083: A European Declaration of Independence ". Page 1330

lists two Bible verses, James 4:7³¹³ and Leviticus 26:3³¹⁴, both of which Bradley also presents in his article. The first verse is to be found in Bradley's article "Full Surrender Battle Verse"³¹⁵ and the second in "Walk in All of God's Ways – Keep All of God's Commandments"³¹⁶. Breivik does not write any comment on the verses he uses in this section, he just presents them. Bradley, on the other hand, writes a sidelong article for each of these two verses.

"God Will Anoint You For Battle"³¹⁷

Under Breivik's next heading "God will anoint you with his power to go into battle"³¹⁸, he presents Isaiah 54:17³¹⁹, Daniel 11:32³²⁰, 1. Corinthians 4:20³²¹, 2. Corinthians 12:12³²², Psalm 144:1³²³, and Psalm 18:32, 37³²⁴. All of which is to be found under Bradley's fourth, and quite similar heading "God Will Anoint You For Battle"³²⁵. Bradley cites 25 bible verses in this article, while Breivik only cites six.

Under Breivik's heading he writes seven paragraphs commenting the Bible verses, how they should be understood, the consequences they should lead to, and several 'warnings' as to how

³¹³ "Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you." (James 4:7)

³¹⁴ "If you walk in My statutes and keep My commandments, and perform them ... you shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land safely. I will give peace in the land, and you shall lie down, and none will make you afraid; I will rid the land of evil beasts, and the sword will not go through your land. **You will chase your enemies, and they shall fall by the sword before you. Five of you shall chase a hundred, and a hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight; your enemies shall fall by the sword before you.**" (Leviticus 26:3)

³¹⁵ Michael Bradley, "Full Surrender Battle Verse," (2018). <https://www.bible-knowledge.com/full-surrender-battle-verse/>.

³¹⁶ Michael Bradley, "Walk in All of God's Ways – Keep All of God's Commandments," (2022). <https://www.bible-knowledge.com/keep-all-of-gods-commandments/>.

³¹⁷ Michael Bradley, "God Will Anoint You For Battle," (2020). <https://www.bible-knowledge.com/god-will-anoint-you-for-battle/>.

³¹⁸ Breivik, "2083: A European Declaration of Independence ". Page 1331

³¹⁹ **No weapon formed against you shall prosper**, and every tongue which rises against you in judgment you shall condemn. **This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord**, and their righteousness is from me," says the Lord. (Isaiah 54:17)

³²⁰ "... **but the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits.**" (Daniel 11:32)

³²¹ **"For the kingdom of God is not in word but in power."** (1 Corinthians 4:20)

³²² "Truly the signs of an apostle were accomplished among you with all perseverance, **in signs and wonders and mighty deeds.**" (2 Corinthians 12:12)

³²³ Blessed be the Lord my Rock, **who trains my hands for war, and my fingers for battle** - my lovingkindness and my fortress, my high tower and my deliverer, my shield and the One in whom I take refuge, who subdues my people under me." (Psalm 144:1)

³²⁴ **"It is God who arms me with strength, and makes my way perfect. He makes my feet like the feet of deer, and sets me on high places. He teaches my hands to make war, so that my arms can bend a bow of bronze** ... I have pursued my enemies and overtaken them; neither did I turn back again till they were destroyed. I have wounded them, so that they were not able to rise; they have fallen under my feet. **For You have armed me with strength for the battle;** You have subdued under me those who rose up against me." (Psalm 18:32,37)

³²⁵ Bradley, "God Will Anoint You For Battle."

powerful the verses are, if understood and used in a correct manner. If comparing Breivik's heading to Bradley article, one will find many similarities. As an example, I have copied the first paragraph from Breivik's manifesto, and from Bradley's article.

Bradley's article:

"If you are walking in a true full surrender with the Lord where He is now in full control of your entire life, then what you will find occurring as you go through each storm cloud in your life, is that God will **anoint you** right in the middle of each of these trials."³²⁶

Breivik's Manifesto:

"If you are operating under a full surrender with God the Father, and walking in all of God's ways and staying out of any serious sins and transgressions against Him - then the next thing you will need to fully realise is that God will now anoint you with His power if you are forced to go into battle with your enemy."³²⁷

As one can see, there are a lots of similarities in the Manifesto and the article, the main points and terms of the writings are the same: 'If you walk/operate under/in full surrender with the Lord, God will anoint you'.

*"God Will Give You What You Need To Walk With His Anointing"*³²⁸

Under Breivik's heading "God will give you his strength, boldness and courage to walk with his anointing"³²⁹ he presents Proverbs 24:10³³⁰. This verse is also to be found under Bradley's fifth heading "God Will Give You What You Need To Walk With His Anointing"³³¹.

Where Bradley presents eight other bible verses, Breivik only presents the one. Again, the content of Breivik's paragraphs is very similar to what Bradley writes in his article:

³²⁶ Bradley, "God Will Anoint You For Battle."

³²⁷ Breivik, "2083: A European Declaration of Independence ". Page 1330

³²⁸ Michael Bradley, "God Will Give You What You Need To Walk With His Anointing," (2022). <https://www.bible-knowledge.com/god-will-give-you-what-you-need-to-walk-with-his-anointing/>. There is no page number or date on this article.

³²⁹ Breivik, "2083: A European Declaration of Independence ". Page 1331

³³⁰ **"If you faint in the day of adversity, your strength is small."** (Proverbs 24:10)

³³¹ Bradley, "God Will Give You What You Need To Walk With His Anointing." There is no page number or date on this article.

Bradley's article:

“All of the above Scripture verses are definitely telling you that God can anoint you with His divine power whenever that power is going to be needed to take on any kind of heavy storm cloud. However, there is one more thing that you are going to need before God will release His power through you. And that one more thing is the mental strength, courage, and boldness to step out with His power to actually use it to directly engage with your enemy.”³³²

Breivik's Manifesto:

“All of the above Scripture verses are definitely telling you that God can anoint you with His power whenever that power is going to be needed to take on any kind of enemy or challenge. However, there is one more thing that you are going to need before God will release His power through you. And that one more thing is the mental strength, courage and boldness to step out with His power to use it to directly engage with your enemy.”³³³

Again, one can clearly see that the main points and terms are the same in the two writings: ‘God will anoint you whenever that power is needed. However, you also need mental strength, courage, and boldness before God will release His power through you.’.

“God Will Fight Your Battles”³³⁴

The bible verses presented in Breivik's heading “God will go before you to fight your battles”³³⁵, Exodus 15:3,6³³⁶, Isaiah 42:13³³⁷, Isaiah 52:12³³⁸, Deuteronomy 9:3³³⁹,

³³² Bradley, "God Will Give You What You Need To Walk With His Anointing."

³³³ Breivik, "2083: A European Declaration of Independence ". Page 1332

³³⁴ Michael Bradley, "God Will Fight Your Battles," (2020). <https://www.bible-knowledge.com/god-will-fight-your-battles/>.

³³⁵ Breivik, "2083: A European Declaration of Independence ". Page 1332

³³⁶ **"The Lord is a man of war;** the Lord is His name ... Your Right Hand, O Lord, has become glorious in power; **Your right hand, O Lord, has dashed the enemy in pieces.** And in the greatness of Your excellence you have overthrown those who rose against You; You sent forth Your wrath which consumed them like stubble." (Exodus 15:3,6)

³³⁷ **"The Lord shall go forth like a mighty man; He shall stir up His zeal like a man of war. He shall cry out, yes, shout aloud; He shall prevail against His enemies."** (Isaiah 42:13)

³³⁸ **"For you shall not go out with haste, nor go by flight; for the Lord will go before you, and the God of Israel will be your rear guard."** (Isaiah 52:12)

³³⁹ **"Therefore understand today the Lord your God is He who goes before you as a consuming fire. He will destroy them and bring them down before you;** so you shall drive them out and destroy them quickly, as the Lord has said to you." (Deuteronomy 9:3)

Deuteronomy 33:27³⁴⁰, Genesis 12:3³⁴¹, Psalm 35:1³⁴², Psalm 9:3³⁴³, Psalm 7:11³⁴⁴, 1 Samuel 2:9³⁴⁵, 2 Chronicles 20:12-17³⁴⁶, Isaiah 41:11³⁴⁷, and Habakkuk 3:12³⁴⁸, are to be found in Bradley's seventh article "God Will Fight Your Battles"³⁴⁹. This is the section where Breivik presents the most Bible verses, he presents thirteen while Bradley presents thirty. Breivik only writes four paragraphs under this heading, all very similar to Bradley's article. Bradley only writes one additional, closing paragraph under his heading, I have not included this one:

Bradley's article:

"Sometimes God will simply run a protective shield around you where nothing will be able to get through to attack you. Other times something will start to slip through to come directly against you, and then God will move ahead of you to take it out. This is where God will literally take your enemy head on and do battle with it.

Sometimes God will fight the actual battle through you, other times He will simply tell you to hold your position and do absolutely nothing, and then He will move Himself to completely take out the attack coming against you. This is where God shows you how

³⁴⁰ "The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms; **He will thrust out the enemy from before you, and will say, 'Destroy!'**" (Deuteronomy 33:27)

³⁴¹ "I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you ..." (Genesis 12:3)

³⁴² "Plead my cause, O Lord, with those who strive with me; **fight against those who fight against me.** Take hold of shield and buckler, and stand up for my help. Also draw out the spear, and stop those who pursue me. Say to my soul, "I am your salvation." (Psalm 35:1)

³⁴³ "When my enemies turn back, **they shall fall and perish at your presence.** For You have maintained my right and my cause; You sat on the throne judging in righteousness." (Psalm 9:3)

³⁴⁴ "God is a just judge, and God is angry with the wicked every day. If He does not turn back, **He will sharpen His sword; He bends His bow and makes it ready. He also prepares for Himself instruments of death; He makes His arrows into fiery shafts.**" (Psalm 7:11)

³⁴⁵ **"He will guard the feet of His saints,** but the wicked shall be silent in darkness. **For by strength no man shall prevail. The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken in pieces; from heaven He will thunder against them.** The Lord will judge the ends of the earth. He will give strength to His king, and exalt the horn of His anointed. (1 Samuel 2:9)

³⁴⁶ "... For we have no power against this great multitude that is coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are upon You ... Then the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jahaziel ... thus says the Lord to you: **'Do not be afraid nor dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours, but God's ... You will not need to fight in this battle. Position yourselves, stand still and see the salvation of the Lord,** who is with you, O Judah and Jerusalem!" Do not fear or be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them, for the Lord is with you." (2 Chronicles 20:12-17)

³⁴⁷ "Behold, all those who were incensed against you shall be ashamed and disgraced; they shall be as nothing, and **those who strive with you shall perish. You shall seek them and not find them - those who contend with you. Those who war against you shall be as nothing, as a nonexistent thing. For I, the Lord your God, will hold your right hand, saying to you, 'Fear not, I will help you.'**" (Isaiah 41:11)

³⁴⁸ "You marched through the land in indignation; You trampled the nations in anger. You went forth for the salvation of Your people, for salvation with Your anointed. **You struck the head from the house of the wicked.**" (Habakkuk 3:12)

³⁴⁹ Bradley, "God Will Fight Your Battles."

powerful and how awesome He really is when He moves into battle to personally protect you.

Again, these next set of verses are extremely powerful as all of the other ones listed above. Notice the very intense language God is using when these verses describe Him moving into actual battle for you.

The first two verses are major, whopper, power verses. These first two verses are specifically telling us that God can be a **Man of War** if He needs to be, and that He can actually be stirred up to go into battle for you if He has to.”³⁵⁰

Breivik’s Manifesto:

“Sometimes God will simply run a protective shield around you where nothing can get through to attack you. Other times something will start to slip through to come directly against you - and then God will move ahead of you to take it out. This is where God will literally take your enemy head on and do battle with it.

Sometimes God will fight the actual battle through you - other times He will simply tell you to hold your ground and position and do absolutely nothing - and then He will move Himself to completely take out the attack coming against you. This is where God shows you how powerful and how awesome He really is when He moves into battle to personally protect you.

Again, these next set of verses are extremely powerful as all of the other ones listed above. Notice the very intense language God is using when these verses describe Him moving into actual battle for you.

These first two verses are specifically telling us that God can be a **Man of War** if He needs to be and that He can actually be stirred up to go into battle for you if He has to.”³⁵¹

³⁵⁰ Bradley, "God Will Fight Your Battles."

³⁵¹ Breivik, "2083: A European Declaration of Independence ". 1332-1333

In these paragraphs it is very clear that the article and Manifesto has many similarities. The main points, terms, and even many of the sentences are identical in the two writings:

‘God will anoint you whenever that power is needed. However, you also need mental strength, courage, and boldness before God will release His power through you.’

The first two paragraphs are almost to the dot identical, Breivik has only shortened the first sentence in the first paragraph with a few words, lengthened the first sentence with one word in the second paragraph, and replaced some ‘,’ with ‘-’. The third paragraph is completely identical, and in the last paragraph Breivik has altered the first sentence a bit, with changing the first words and merged the two sentences into one.

“Battle Angels”³⁵²

Under Breivik’s heading “Other verses”³⁵³ he presents ten bible verses. Seven of them, Psalm 34:7³⁵⁴, Psalm 91:11³⁵⁵, Psalm 35:5-8³⁵⁶, Exodus 23:20³⁵⁷, 1. Chronicles 21:27,29³⁵⁸, 2. Kings 19:35³⁵⁹, Acts 12:23³⁶⁰, are to be found in Bradley’s article “Battle Angels”³⁶¹. The last three verses Breivik quotes under this heading, Acts 5:29³⁶², Luke 22:36³⁶³, and Matthew 26:52³⁶⁴ are not to be found in Bradley’s article. Bradley also presents two verses under this heading that are not to be found in Breivik’s Manifesto. Under Breivik’s heading there is a paragraph after the presentation of the bible verses, that is almost identical to Bradley’s conclusion, or ending of his article:

³⁵² Michael Bradley, "Battle Angels," (2022). <https://www.bible-knowledge.com/battle-angels/>.

³⁵³ Breivik, "2083: A European Declaration of Independence ". Page 1335

³⁵⁴ "The angel of the Lord encamps all around those who fear Him, and delivers them." (Psalm 34:7)

³⁵⁵ "For He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways." (Psalm 91:11)

³⁵⁶ "And let the angel of the Lord chase him ... And let the angel of the Lord pursue them ... Let the destruction come upon him unexpectedly." (Psalm 35:5-8)

³⁵⁷ "Behold, I send an Angel before you to keep you in the way and to bring you into the place which I have prepared." (Exodus 23:20)

³⁵⁸ "Then the Lord commanded the angel, and he returned his sword to its sheath ... but David could not go before it to inquire of God, for he was afraid of the sword of the angel of the Lord." (1 Chronicles 21:27, 29)

³⁵⁹ "And it came to pass on a certain night that the angel of the Lord went out, and killed in the camp of the Assyrians one hundred and eighty-five thousand; and when the people arose early in the morning, there were the corpses - all dead." (2 Kings 19:35)

³⁶⁰ "Then immediately an angel of the Lord struck him, because he did not give glory to God. And he was eaten by worms and died." (Acts 12:23)

³⁶¹ Bradley, "Battle Angels."

³⁶² **We must obey God rather than men**" (Acts 5:29)

³⁶³ **And the one who has no sword must sell his cloak and buy one.**" (Luke 22:36)

³⁶⁴ **All who draw the sword will die by the sword**" (Matthew 26:52)

Bradley's article:

“The last verse shows you that sometimes angels can literally appear to you as a normal human being, usually for the purpose of helping you out with something. There are countless testimonies from people all over the world who have been helped out by angels in a moment of crisis, and then all of sudden they are gone as quick as they came.”³⁶⁵

Breivik's Manifesto:

“The last verse shows that sometimes angels can literally appear to you as a normal human being, usually for the purpose of helping you out with something. There are countless testimonies from people who have been helped out by angels in a moment of crisis - and then all of sudden they are gone as quick as they came.”³⁶⁶

Seeing how similar Breivik and Bradley's texts are, it might seem as if Breivik sums up Bradley's articles as Bradley's articles are more comprehensive than Breivik's headings. It is however impossible to be sure that this is the case. Firstly, Breivik does not cite his sources in a way that makes clear exactly where and if he uses Bradley's article(s). Secondly, Breivik only refers to Bradley's introductory article and not the ones that contains the actual bible verses and interpretations. Lastly, Bradley's article does not state when it was written, it only states when it was lastly updated. All of Bradley's articles has in fact been updated after the 22nd of July 2011, so there is a chance that it is Bradley that copies or cites Breivik and not the other way around. It is also difficult to discuss whether the changes Breivik does make from Bradley's articles are deliberate or not. As Breivik, again, does not comment on it, or his use of sources.

GotQuestions.org

GotQuestions.org is an online ministry seeking to “glorify the Lord Jesus Christ by providing biblical, applicable, and timely answers to spiritually related questions through an internet presence.”³⁶⁷ The writing staff consists of Christian, Protestant, evangelical, theologically

³⁶⁵ Bradley, "Battle Angels."

³⁶⁶ Breivik, "2083: A European Declaration of Independence ". Page 1335

³⁶⁷ "About GotQuestions.org," accessed 15.02.2022, 2022, <https://www.gotquestions.org/about.html>. There is no author, date of publication or page numbers in this article

conservative, and non-denominational pastors, youth pastors, missionaries, biblical counselors, Bible/Christian college students, seminary students, and ‘lay students of God’s Word’ who are “dedicated and trained with a desire to assist others in their understanding of God, scripture, salvation and other spiritual topics”.³⁶⁸ This website answers question sent in by its readers, and they claim that their purpose is not to make us agree with them, rather to give us the answer as to what the Bible says concerning our questions.³⁶⁹

The article from GotQuestions.org that Breivik refers to in his Manifesto answers the question ‘What does the Bible say about self-defense?’.³⁷⁰ The article does not quote or use anything from the Book of Psalms, but one can clearly see many similarities between Breivik’s subchapter on “More information about Christianity and self-defense”³⁷¹ and the article on GotQuestions.org. An example is what they write on Luke 22:36 and Exodus 22:

GotQuestions.Org:

“The proper use of self-defense has to do with wisdom, understanding, and tact. In Luke 22:36, Jesus tells His remaining disciples, “If you don’t have a sword, sell your cloak and buy one.” Jesus knew that now was the time when His followers would be threatened, and He upheld their right to self-defense. Just a short time later, Jesus is arrested, and Peter takes a sword and cuts off someone’s ear. Jesus rebukes Peter for that act (verses 49–51). Why? In his zeal to defend the Lord, Peter was standing in the way of God’s will. Jesus had told His disciples multiple times that He must be arrested, put on trial, and die (e.g., Matthew 17:22–23). In other words, Peter acted unwisely in that situation. We must have wisdom regarding when to fight and when not to.”³⁷²

Breivik’s Manifesto:

“As with many questions in our lives, self-defence has to do with wisdom, understanding, and tact. For instance, in the Luke 22 passage stated above, Jesus does tell his disciples to get a sword. Jesus knew that now was the time when Jesus would be threatened (and later killed) and his followers would be threatened as well. Jesus

³⁶⁸ GotQuestions, "About GotQuestions.org."

³⁶⁹ GotQuestions, "About GotQuestions.org."

³⁷⁰ "What does the Bible say about self-defense?," accessed 24.02.2022, 2022, <https://www.gotquestions.org/self-defense.html>.

³⁷¹ Breivik, "2083: A European Declaration of Independence ". Page 1330

³⁷² GotQuestions, "What does the Bible say about self-defense?."

was giving approval of the fact that one has the right to self-defence. Now just a few verses later we see Jesus being arrested and Peter takes a sword and cuts off someone's ear. Jesus rebukes him for that act. Why? Peter was trying to stop something that Jesus had been telling His disciples was in fact going to happen. In other words, Peter was acting unwisely in the situation. He was trying to stop something that was not supposed to be stopped. We must be wise as to when to fight and when not to."³⁷³

In these paragraphs it is very clear that the website and Manifesto has many similarities. The main points, terms, and even many of the sentences are similar in the two writings. Though there are many similarities in the content of the bible commentary, the writers present the actual bible verse with different translations.

Luke22:36 on GotQuestions.org:

He said to them, "But now let the one who has a moneybag take it, and likewise a knapsack. And let the one who has no sword sell his cloak and buy one."³⁷⁴

Luke 22:36 in Breivik's manifesto:

"Then said he unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one."³⁷⁵

On GotQuestions.org the verse is not actually written, fragments of it are, however, included in the commentary. But it is linked to another website, biblia.com, that presents the English Standard Version of the verse. Breivik however does not state anywhere what translation of the Bible he uses, but the verse presented in his Manifesto is identical to the King James Version.

GotQuestions.Org:

"Exodus 22 gives some clues about God's attitude toward self-defense: "If a thief is caught breaking in at night and is struck a fatal blow, the defender is not guilty of bloodshed; but if it happens after sunrise, the defender is guilty of bloodshed" (Exodus

³⁷³ Breivik, "2083: A European Declaration of Independence ". Page 1330

³⁷⁴ "Luke 22:36," Faithlife, accessed 24.02, 2022, <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/luke/22/36>.

³⁷⁵ Breivik, "2083: A European Declaration of Independence ". Page 1328

22:2–3)... If someone was set upon by a thief in the middle of the night and, in the confusion of the moment the would-be thief was killed, the Law did not charge the homeowner with murder. But, if the thief was caught in the house during the day, when the homeowner was unlikely to be awoken from sleep, then the Law forbade the killing of the thief. Essentially, the Law said that homeowners shouldn't be quick to kill or attack thieves in their home. Both situations could be considered self-defense, but deadly force was expected to be a last resort, used only in the event of a panicked "surprise attack" scenario where the homeowner is likely to be confused and disoriented. In the case of a nighttime attack, the Law granted the homeowner the benefit of the doubt that, apart from the darkness and confusion of the attack, he would not intentionally use lethal force against a thief. Even in the case of self-defense against a thief, a godly person was expected to try to restrain the assailant rather than immediately resort to killing him."³⁷⁶

Breivik's Manifesto:

"Exodus 22 does show quite a bit about God's attitude towards self-defence. "If a thief is caught breaking in and is struck so that he dies, the defender is not guilty of bloodshed; but if it happens after sunrise, he is guilty of bloodshed. A thief must certainly make restitution, but if he has nothing, he must be sold to pay for his theft" (Exodus 22:2-3). Obviously here we see that when a thief breaks into someone's house at night and that person defends his home and slays the thief, God does not hold that death over the defender's head. However, God does not wish for anyone to take law into his or her own hands. This is why it is said that if a thief is struck down during the daylight the defender is guilty of bloodshed. Now this is speaking of thievery, not an attack. So if the thief were to attack the defender even during the day, self-defence would be justified."³⁷⁷

The writings on Exodus 22 varies a bit more than the writings on Luke 22. The main point, terms, and some of the sentences are, however, very similar. Once again, the writers use different translations of the bible verse.

³⁷⁶ GotQuestions, "What does the Bible say about self-defense?."

³⁷⁷ Breivik, "2083: A European Declaration of Independence ". Page 1330

Exodus 22:2-3 on GotQuestions.org:

“If a thief is found breaking in and is struck so that he dies, there shall be no bloodguilt for him, but if the sun has risen on him, there shall be bloodguilt for him. He shall surely pay. If he has nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft.”³⁷⁸

Exodus 22:2-3 in Breivik’s manifesto:

“If a thief be found breaking up, and be smitten that he die, there shall no blood be shed for him, If the sun be risen upon him, there shall be bloodshed for him; for he should make full restitution; if he have nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft.”³⁷⁹

On GotQuestions.org the verses are, again, not written in its entirety in the comment, but it is linked to biblia.com which presents the English Standard Version of the verse. Breivik does not state which version he uses, but the verse presented in his Manifesto is completely identical to the King James Version.

Counterpunch

Counterpunch is a reader supported magazine, and most of the articles published are written by its readers.³⁸⁰ The magazine is placed to the far-left, and it advocates for government-controlled healthcare, higher taxes, and environmentalist positions.³⁸¹ CounterPunch has been criticized from both right- and left-of-center publications for its hostile and one-sided approach to covering issues related to Israel, for holding anti-Semitic positions, and for publishing five articles by Alice Donovan who was later revealed to be an alleged Russian disinformation intelligence agent spreading Russian propaganda.³⁸² It is not obvious if and/or what article(s) from this website Breivik has used in his Manifesto, as he only lists the magazines home-page as his source. Because of limitations in time and the scope of my research I have not been able to research the website and the articles on it any further.

³⁷⁸ "Exodus 22," Faithlife accessed 25.02, 2022, <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/exodus/22>.

³⁷⁹ Breivik, "2083: A European Declaration of Independence ". Page 1328

³⁸⁰ "About," accessed 10.02, 2022, <https://www.counterpunch.org/about/>.

³⁸¹ "CounterPunch," accessed 10.02, 2022, <https://www.influencewatch.org/organization/counterpunch/>.

³⁸² InfluenceWatch, "CounterPunch."

World Net Daily

WND, World Net Daily, with the slogan “A Free Press for a Free People - Since 1997” is, according to themselves: “an independent news company dedicated to uncompromising journalism, seeking truth and justice, and revitalizing the role of the free press as a guardian of liberty. We remain faithful to the traditional and central role of a free press in a free society – as a light exposing wrongdoing, corruption and abuse of power.”³⁸³ The American online newsmagazine belongs to the far-right and is known for promoting conspiracy theories. Back in 2010 WND was e.g. one of the first sites to spread the theory that former president Barack Obama was not born in the United States.³⁸⁴

Again, Breivik only lists the magazines home-page as his source, and it is not obvious if and/or what article(s) from this website Breivik uses in his Manifesto. Limitations in time and scope has again resulted in me not being able to research the website and the articles on it any further.

Norsk Folkehjelp and International Action Center

Norsk Folkehjelp (Norwegian Aid) and IAC, International Action Center, stands out from the other sources in that they are not criticized for being a left- or right-wing website. Norsk Folkehjelp is a Norwegian, politically independent, member-based organization.³⁸⁵ In Norway the organization is working in two main areas: first aid and rescue services, such as rescue dogs, and with refugees and integration/inclusion.³⁸⁶ Internationally they also work with explosive ordnance disposal (EOD), development and humanitarian response and help in conflicts, wars, and crises.³⁸⁷ Norsk Folkehjelp emphasizes the fact that what they do is not charity, but cooperation and collaboration between equal partners, and their slogan is “solidaritet i praksis” (solidarity in practice).³⁸⁸

IAC is an activist group founded in 1992 by former United States Attorney General Ramsey Clark. It supports anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist movements in the U.S. and around the

³⁸³ "About WND," accessed 10.02, 2022, <https://www.wnd.com/about-wnd/>

³⁸⁴ Manuel Roig Franzia, "Inside the spectacular fall of the granddaddy of right-wing conspiracy sites," *The Washington Post* 2019, https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/style/inside-the-spectacular-fall-of-the-granddaddy-of-right-wing-conspiracy-sites/2019/04/02/6ac53122-3ba6-11e9-a06c-3ec8ed509d15_story.html.

³⁸⁵ "Om norsk folkehjelp," accessed 10.02, 2022, <https://folkehjelp.no/om-norsk-folkehjelp>

³⁸⁶ NorskFolkehjelp, "Om norsk folkehjelp."

³⁸⁷ NorskFolkehjelp, "Om norsk folkehjelp."

³⁸⁸ NorskFolkehjelp, "Om norsk folkehjelp."

world, and they oppose U.S. military intervention in all circumstances.³⁸⁹ According to their website they are committed to building broad-based grassroots actions opposing U.S. wars abroad, while they fight racism and economic exploitation of workers within the U.S. Their goal is to «work toward the liberation of all peoples living in the U.S. and around the world».³⁹⁰ They want to connect struggles and bring together communities of color, women, gay, lesbian, bi and trans people, youth and students, immigrant and workers' organizations “in order to build a progressive movement for social justice and change”.³⁹¹ Though IAC does not, openly, represent a political party or wing, a considerable amount of their members are also members of the left-winged Marxist-Leninist political party Workers World Party.³⁹²

IAC's ideological position stand, in many cases, in direct opposition to Breivik and his views (for instance in their view on violence and racism). This might show that Breivik uses random sources, and just picks the sections that goes with his views, and that he is not very critical in his research.

Jet again, Breivik only lists the organizations home-page as sources, and it is not obvious if what parts of the websites Breivik uses in his Manifesto. Limitations in time and scope has again resulted in me not being able to do more research on the websites.

As mentioned, under the heading “Other verses”³⁹³, Breivik presents three bible verses that do not occur in any of Bradley's articles, that seems to be his main source of inspiration. One of the bible verses, Luke 22:36, I do find in one of the other sources (GotQuestions.org) he lists, but it is a completely different translation. The two other verses are nowhere to be found in any of the sources Breivik lists. It might be that the interpretations of these verses come from one of the webpages that no longer exists. Or, it might be that these interpretations are Breivik's own words and comments.

³⁸⁹ "About the IAC ", accessed 10.02, 2022, <https://iacenter.org/about-the-iac/>.

³⁹⁰ IACenter, "About the IAC ".

³⁹¹ IACenter, "About the IAC ".

³⁹² IACenter, "About the IAC ".

³⁹³ Breivik, "2083: A European Declaration of Independence ". Page 1335

Breivik's use of scripture

The Psalms and its enemies

There are several passages in the Bible that presents an enemy/enemies. Researchers agree that the Book of Psalms is a book full of enemies, and that the Psalmist turns to God to destroy his enemies. There is, as in the Bible in general, ambiguity in the book of Psalms as it on the one hand celebrate creation as God's original act of distributive justice, and humans are seen as responsible for managing creation and taking care of the vulnerable for God. While on the other Israel is haunted by fear of breaking the covenant and unleash God's anger.

As mentioned, The Book of Psalms contains the whole spectrum of Old Testament theology and piety, and there is evidence that shows that it was a popular, and much used book. As the Psalms are very applicable, they have served very different purposes in different generations. Because of this I have a hypothesis that the Psalms are easier to cut and paste to fit the message one wants. The fact that the Psalms are exactly that, psalms or songs that have been passed on from generation to generation, and that they have been popular and much used speaks to their applicability.

There are numerous examples of violent use of the Bible in general, and in my writings I have also presented some examples where the Psalms, in particular, have been used. Such as the public debate in Britain during the First World War where the Canterbury Convocation approved that Psalm 58, and several other imprecatory Psalms should be removed. The public, especially newspaper reporters, responded by printing and adapting Psalms to argue pro revenge on the Germans who had bombed England. Also, in the early days of the war it was seen as an eschatological battle between good and evil, and the Old Testament, especially the Book of Psalms, was understood as giving religious legitimacy to the patriotic hatred that flourished. The hatred of the enemy even became the strongest expression of a sacred love of God. In both World Wars we also know that the Bible was used as comfort and motivation.

So, it does make sense that Breivik uses the Book of Psalms in his Manifesto. The Psalms have great applicability, it is filled with evildoers, and its language seems, at times, quite violent. Despite these arguments, I still question whether he really thought through which verses he used. Especially when knowing that most of the biblical passages and comments on them are to be found on other webpages.

A literal understanding of Scripture

It seems as if Breivik has a literal understanding of the Bible, and the passages he presents in his Manifesto. There is hardly any exegesis that is presented, as if the passages speak unproblematically to the present. There is neither any consideration to the larger story the verses are parts of. The function of the biblical passages Breivik presents is, according to researchers, to gloss violence as self-defence and a necessary means to a Europe that is 'pure' and protected, and free of Muslims. An example: Breivik claims that Exodus 22:2-3³⁹⁴ states that Europe and European culture is a form of property and a home that is being invaded by Muslims that are taking over Europe, aided by multiculturalists within Europe.³⁹⁵

Where and how does it become 'our' job to rid Europe of its supposed intruders one might wonder. According to Breivik, the curse of Adam and Eve eating the forbidden fruit has resulted in all of us currently living in a war zone, whether we want it or not.³⁹⁶ In this war we have a choice; we can either keep our heads down, letting oppressors beat us down, time after time. Or we can learn how to rise up and, in the power of God, learn how to fight back as true warriors.³⁹⁷ Breivik claims that if we are walking in God's way and do not sin or transgress against him, we will receive the wisdom, understanding and tact to know when, how and to whom to go into battle against.³⁹⁸

Breivik has stated in several hearings that he called the police up to ten times during the shootings at Utøya, reporting himself, saying that they could come and get him now because he 'was finished'. As written before, Breivik also states that what he did was 'horrible, but necessary'. He also writes in the Manifesto that if one is willing to step into- and walk with God's anointing, and perform self-defence against ones- and God's enemies, God will then channel through you incredible, and supernatural powers. So, one might conclude that Breivik, seeing his writings and actions in relation to each other, views what he did on the

³⁹⁴ "If a thief is caught breaking in at night and is struck a fatal blow, the defender is not guilty of bloodshed; ³ but if it happens after sunrise, the defender is guilty of bloodshed. "Anyone who steals must certainly make restitution, but if they have nothing, they must be sold to pay for their theft."

³⁹⁵ Stømme, *Christian Terror in Europe? The Bible in Anders Behring Breivik's Manifesto Strømmen, "Christian Terror in Europe? The Bible in Anders Behring Breivik's Manifesto."* Page 156

³⁹⁶ Breivik, "2083: A European Declaration of Independence ". Page 1332

³⁹⁷ Breivik, "2083: A European Declaration of Independence ". Page 1332

³⁹⁸ Breivik, "2083: A European Declaration of Independence ". Page 1332

22nd of July 2011 as the will of God. And his literal understanding of the bible verses he uses help him argue this view.

Breivik's selection of verses

Breivik tends to use verses that are not problematized by other scholars. Some examples: in Psalm 91 Breivik uses verse 11 to describe how God helps us in battle if we step into his anointing. Breed writes of verse 11 three times in his chapter *Reception of the Psalms: The Example of Psalm 91*, he merges verse 1-13 once, and 1-11 twice. His interpretations of the verses are that they refer to God's divine protection, and promises to the faithful, that they will themselves be triumphant and made worthy of esteem.³⁹⁹ In *Psalms 2: A commentary on Psalms 51-100* Frank-Lothar Hossfeld and Erich Zenger links verse 11 and 12, and only comment on them briefly.⁴⁰⁰

In Psalm 18 Breivik has merged verse 32 and 37 to describe how God will give you the necessary wisdom, understanding and tact and know when to go into battle. And, that God will anoint you with his power in such a situation. None of the other interpretations I have read implies that these verses belong together. Most of them interprets verse 32 alone, and links verse 36 and 37.

One last example: in Psalm 144:1-2 Breivik describes that self-defence is a Christian duty, and that it is not a pacifist God we serve, but a God that teaches our hands to war and our fingers to fight. In *Psalms 3: A commentary on Psalms 101-150* by Frank-Lothar Hossfeld and Erich Zenger interprets verse 1-2 as an introductory benediction, and an allusion that shows that the petitioner of the Psalm is a king.⁴⁰¹

These examples show that Breivik links different verses, interprets verses differently, and emphasises different verses than more mainstream interpretations. This might be coincidental, but it might also show that his selection of biblical passages is not well thought through. In addition, it shows that his interpretations are quite literal, and focused on violence.

³⁹⁹ Brennan W. Breed, "Reception of the Psalms: The Example of Psalm 91," in *Oxford Handbook of the Psalms* (New York: Oxford University Press, Incorporated, 2014). Page 6-7

⁴⁰⁰ Frank-Lothar Hossfeld et al., *Psalms : 2 : A commentary on Psalms 51-100*, vol. 2 (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005). Page 431

⁴⁰¹ Frank-Lothar Hossfeld et al., *Psalms : 3 : A commentary on Psalms 101-150*, vol. 3 (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011).

Bible translations

Breivik does not write anything on his use of scripture, he does not state which translations he uses of the Bible verses he presents, and/or how he interprets them. Since he only lists his sources at the end of the chapter, and not throughout his interpretations, it makes it impossible to know if and/or how he uses the sources as inspiration for his interpretations. Since Breivik's interpretations of bible verses are very similar to Bradley's I have chosen to compare the verses from the book of Psalms found in Breivik's Manifesto to the translation found in Bradley's articles, and to the New King James translation as Bradley's articles state, at the bottom of the web page, that scripture is taken from the New King James translation.

The fact that Breivik does not comment on translations of the Bible, and only copies whatever translation Bradley uses in his articles, despite the fact that most of the translations are from the New King James translation, and Breivik argues in his Manifesto that modern translations of the Bible are propaganda. Shows that he, most likely, has not done any substantial work on information evaluation or source criticism, and that he uses whatever sources and translation fits his message and worldview.

Psalm 144:1

In the Manifesto:

“Blessed be the LORD my strength which teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight,”

King James Version:

1 Blessed *be* the LORD my strength, Which teacheth my hands to war, *and* my fingers to fight:

Psalm 144:1-2

In the Manifesto:

“Blessed be the Lord my Rock, who trains my hand for war, and my fingers for battle – my lovingkindness and my fortress, my high tower and my deliverer, my shield and the One in whom I take refuge, who subdue my people under me.”

In Michael Bradley's article:

"Blessed be the Lord my Rock, who trains my hands for war, and my fingers for battle – my loving kindness and my fortress, my high tower and my deliverer, my shield and the One in whom I take refuge, who subdues my people under me."

(Psalm 144:1)

New King James Version:

1 Blessed be the Lord my Rock, Who trains my hands for war, And my fingers for battle— 2 My lovingkindness and my fortress, My high tower and my deliverer, My shield and the One in whom I take refuge, Who subdues my people under me.

On Bradley's webpage he refers to Psalms 144:1 in his article "God Will Anoint You For Battle"⁴⁰². What he actually writes is, however, Psalms 144:1-2. Breivik on the other hand refers to this verse/these verses two times, the second time is almost identical to Bradley's version except for the word 'loving kindness' which Breivik has written in one word, 'lovingkindness'.

The first time Breivik refers to Psalm 144:1 he uses a different translation than the one in Bradley's article. Most likely it is taken from the (old) King James translation, there is however some differences in punctuation and capital/small/italicized letters. I have not been able to locate this translation or what Breivik writes about it in any of the sources he has listed. As written before, it might be one of the sources that do not exist anymore, or it may be because this is Breivik's own words and interpretations.

The fact that Breivik uses different translations on the same verse, might be because he wants to highlight certain aspects that are clearer in different translations, or it may just be coincidental. Either way, as it is not commented on, it shows that he is not very critical in his use of sources.

⁴⁰² Bradley, "God Will Anoint You For Battle."

In the Manifesto:

"It is God who arms me with strength, and makes my way perfect. He makes my feet like the feet of the deer, and sets me on high places. He teaches my hands to make war, so that my arms can be bend a bow of bronze... I have pursued my enemies and overtaken them; neither did I turn back again till they were destroyed. I have wounded them, so that they were not able to rise; they have fallen under my feet. For You have armed me with strength for the battle; You have subdued under me those who rose up against me."

In Michael Bradley's article:

"It is God who arms me with strength, and makes my way perfect. He makes my feet like the feet of deer, and sets me on high places. He teaches my hands to make war, so that my arms can bend a bow of bronze ... I have pursued my enemies and overtaken them; neither did I turn back again till they were destroyed. I have wounded them, so that they were not able to rise; they have fallen under my feet. For You have armed me with strength for the battle; You have subdued under me those who rose up against me."

New King James Version:

32It is God who arms me with strength, And makes my way perfect. 33He makes my feet like the feet of deer, And sets me on my high places. 34He teaches my hands to make war, So that my arms can bend a bow of bronze. 35You have also given me the shield of Your salvation; Your right hand has held me up, Your gentleness has made me great. 36You enlarged my path under me, So my feet did not slip. 37I have pursued my enemies and overtaken them; Neither did I turn back again till they were destroyed. 38I have wounded them, So that they could not rise; They have fallen under my feet. 39For You have armed me with strength for the battle; You have subdued under me those who rose up against me.

Bradley refers to Psalm 18:32, 37 in his article "God Will Anoint You For Battle"⁴⁰³. Again, the translations Breivik and Bradley uses are very similar, and also very similar to the New

⁴⁰³ Bradley, "God Will Anoint You For Battle."

King James version. Breivik has made a small change to the first sentence in verse 33, in Bradley's article: 'He makes my feet like the feet of deer'. In Breivik's manifesto: 'He makes my feet like the feet of *the* deer'. It also seems as if Breivik has forgotten to change the whole verse to bold letters, or that he has missed the first sentence when copied the verse from Bradley (Bradley uses bold letters on the whole verse). Since it seems quite random where he has bold letters and not. The ', ' in Bradley's and Breivik's writings might mean that they only present verse 32 and 37, even if that's the case it is not what they do. They both present verse 32-35, then they skip verse 36 and present verse 37-39.

Psalm 35:1

In the Manifesto:

"Plead my cause, O Lord, with those who strive with me; fight against those who fight against me. Take hold of shield and buckler, and stand up for my help. Also draw out the spear, and stop those who pursue me. Say to my soul, "I am your salvation"."

In Michael Bradley's article:

*"Plead my cause, O Lord, with those who strive with me; **fight against those who fight against me**. Take hold of shield and buckler, and stand up for my help. Also draw out the spear, and stop those who pursue me. Say to my soul, "I am your salvation."*

New King James Version:

1 Plead my cause, O LORD, with those who strive with me; Fight against those who fight against me. 2 Take hold of shield and buckler, And stand up for my help. 3 Also draw out the spear, And stop those who pursue me. Say to my soul, "I am your salvation."

Psalm 9:3

In the Manifesto:

"When my enemies turn back, they shall fall and perish at your presence. For You have maintained my right and my cause; You sat on the throne judging in righteousness."

In Michael Bradley's article:

*“When my enemies turn back, **they shall fall and perish at your presence.** For You have maintained my right and my cause; You sat on the throne judging in righteousness.”*

New King James Version:

3 When my enemies turn back, They shall fall and perish at Your presence. 4 For You have maintained my right and my cause; You sat on the throne judging in righteousness.

Psalm 7:11

In the Manifesto:

“God is a just judge, and God is angry with the wicked every day. If He does not turn back, He will sharpen his sword; He bends his bow and makes it ready. He also prepares for Himself instruments of death; He makes his arrow into fiery shafts.”

In Michael Bradley’s article:

*“God is a just judge, and God is angry with the wicked every day. If He does not turn back, **He will sharpen His sword; He bends His bow and makes it ready. He also prepares for Himself instruments of death; He makes His arrows into fiery shafts.**”*

New King James Version:

God is a just judge, And God is angry with the wicked every day. If he does not turn back, He will sharpen His sword; He bends His bow and makes it ready. He also prepares for Himself instruments of death; He makes His arrows into fiery shafts.

In Psalm 35:1, 9:3, and 7:11 we can find the same tendencies that we see in many of the other verses as well. The verses found in Bradley’s articles are almost identical to the ones in the Manifesto, except from some differences on capital, and bold letters. In addition, they both refer to fewer verses than they actually present. When they write Psalm 35:1, the verses they actually write are 35:1-3. When they write 9:3, the verses they actually present are verse 3 and 4. Lastly, when they present Psalm 7:11, the verses they actually write are 7:11-13.

Psalm 34:7

In the Manifesto:

“The angel of the Lord encamps all around those who fear Him, and delivers them.”

In Michael Bradley’s article:

“The angel of the Lord encamps all around those who fear Him, and delivers them.”

New King James Version:

The angel of the LORD encamps all around those who fear Him, And delivers them.

Psalm 91:11

In the Manifesto:

“For He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways.”

In Michael Bradley’s article:

“For He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways.”

New King James Version:

For He shall give His angels charge over you, To keep you in all your ways.

Both Psalm 34:7, and 91:11 are similar in the Manifesto, Bradley’s article and in the New King James translation. Apart from some minor differences in capital-, and bold letters.

Psalm 35:5-8

In the Manifesto:

“And let the angel of the Lord chase him... And let the angel of the Lord pursue them...
Let the destruction come upon him unexpectedly.”

In Michael Bradley’s article:

And let the angel of the Lord chase him ... And let the angel of the Lord pursue them ... Let the destruction come upon him unexpectedly.”

New King James Version:

5 Let them be like chaff before the wind, And let the angel of the Lord chase them. 6 Let their way be dark and slippery, And let the angel of the Lord pursue them. 7 For without cause they have hidden their net for me in a pit, Which they have dug without cause for my life. 8 Let destruction come upon him unexpectedly, And let his net that he has hidden catch himself; Into that very destruction let him fall.

The last verse from the book of Psalms that Breivik presents is found in Bradley's article "Battle Angels"⁴⁰⁴. Again, Breivik and Bradley's presentation of the verses are very similar except from some minor differences in bold letters, and Breivik has removed the space before the '...'. Bradley and Breivik's presentation of these verses are however very different from the New King James translation. Breivik and Bradley write that they are presenting verse 5-8, but what they actually do is presenting only fractions of these verses. In this case they remove not only verses, but also fractions of sentences.

To sum up, Breivik does not refer to any specific translation of the Bible. He does however list Bradley's webpage as source, he only links to the introduction article, it does however seem very plausible that he uses at least four of his other articles too, which again state that he uses the New King James translation. None of the verses from the book of Psalms found in Breivik's manifesto and Bradley's article are however completely identical to the New King James translation. In some cases, the differences are only minor, such as distinctions between small and capital- and bold letters. In other cases, the difference is significant. For instance, in many of Breivik and Bradley's presentation of verses they write more verses than they refer to, while in other cases they edit the verses so that, in reality, they only present fractions of the verses they claim to present. In other words: they make their own Bible. They cut and paste, both sentences and entire verses, wherever it fits them, and they never state, or defend that they do it anywhere.

Also, there is no system in how Breivik uses-, refers to, and/or interprets both the Bible verses but also the sources he uses. As written earlier, almost all his translations- and comments on the Psalms are almost identical to Bradley's, Breivik does however use two different translations of Psalm 144:1 (-2), most likely the old- and new King James translation. The fact

⁴⁰⁴ Bradley, "Battle Angels."

that Breivik uses different translations on the same verse, without commenting or giving any sort of reasons to why shows, again, how uncritical he is in use of sources and makes his selection of sources and verses seem quite random.

Chapter summary

In this chapter I have presented my analysis and findings relating to my research question ‘How does Breivik use the Bible in general, and the Book of Psalms in particular, to argue pro violence?’. The findings were grouped in five categories: the Bible and violence, Breivik and violence, Breivik, Christianity and Christianity, Breivik’s secondary sources, and Breivik’s use of scripture.

Under the first category I presented my point: if one looks for it one will find arguments pro violence in Christianity and the Bible, as much as in other religions and ideologies. How we choose to deal with have different answers, depending on who you ask. And whether these arguments are valid or not is another discussion.

The second category concludes that Breivik sees his actions as a ‘sacrifice’, and that he defines his actions as ‘horrific, but necessary’, but also as an act of self-defense.

The third category argues that it might be helpful to use the theory on Christianity to better understand Breivik’s use of the Bible, and why he still choses to do so even when stating that he himself is not a Christian. This way of viewing Breivik’s writing will be further discussed in the next chapter.

In the fourth category I have examined the sources Breivik lists at the end of his chapter on the Bible and violence. The conclusion of this category is that Breivik, most likely, uses more sources than he refers to. And that, of the still existing webpages, Bibleknowledge.com is the source that Breivik has used the most in his Manifesto. And that it is from here he has most of his bible verses and interpretations. This category also concludes that some of the sources Breivik lists stand in direct opposition to his views, and that this shows that Breivik uses random sources, he just picks the sections that goes with his views, and that he is not very critical in his research. Three of the bible verses uses are nowhere to be found in any of Bradley’s articles, that seems to be his main source of inspiration. One of the bible verses I do

find, but it is a completely different translation. The two other verses are nowhere to be found in any of the sources Breivik lists. It might be that the interpretations of these verses come from one of the webpages that no longer exists. Or it might be that these interpretations are Breivik's own interpretations.

The last category concludes that it makes sense that Breivik uses the Book of Psalm to argue pro violence as it has great applicability, it is filled with evildoers, and its language seems, at times, quite violent. I do, however, question whether he really thought through which verses he used. Especially when knowing that most of the biblical passages and interpretations are most likely copied from other webpages. I also argue that Breivik has a literal understanding of the Bible as there is hardly any exegesis presented, as if the passages speak unproblematically to the present, and there is no consideration to the larger story the verses are parts of. And that literal understanding of the Bible might help him argue what he did on the 22nd of July 2011 as the will of God.

Lastly, this category viewed the translation of the bible verses Breivik uses in his Manifesto. It concludes that Breivik does not refer to any specific translation of the Bible, but that Bradley's articles, which is most likely Breivik's main source, uses the New King James translation. None of the verses from the book of Psalms in Breivik's manifesto and Bradley's articles are however completely identical to this, or any other, translation. In other words: they make their own Bible. They cut and paste, both sentences and entire verses, wherever it fits them, and they never state, or defend that they do it anywhere. Secondly, there is no system in how Breivik uses-, refers to, and/or interprets both the Bible verses but also the sources he uses. The fact that Breivik uses different translations on the same verse, without commenting or giving any sort of reasons to why shows how uncritical he is in use of sources and makes his selection of sources and verses seem quite random.

Chapter 6: Discussion

I will end my thesis with a discussion on use of scripture, reception, and interpretation. As I early in my research discovered that the field of reception and reception history are topics that cause a lot of tension and discussion. Are Breivik's interpretations valid, since he defines himself as not a religious man? Should there be rules as to what is and what is not a valid reading of the Bible? In that case, who is to decide what is, and what is not valid readings? Can we rule out some, or should we approve all readings of the Bible? I have asked myself these, and many more, questions throughout the process of writing this thesis, and in this discussion, I will present my answer(s).

Reception and reception history

Reception, and reception history is a broad and comprehensive enterprise. My discussion will be limited to the, not so very limiting, question: is, and/or should, every reading of the Bible be valid? With focus on Breivik's use, reception, and interpretation of the book of Psalms.

In Breivik's Manifesto there is no discussion on interpretation, hermeneutics, or reception. It does not seem as if Breivik has any relation to- or understanding of the problem with reception and/or interpretation at all. He just presents the Bible verses that help him get his message through, and his understanding of them as he sees fit, and forgets about the rest. But then again, isn't that to some degree what most religious leaders/speakers do as well? In the Norwegian church they have a calendar with all the Sundays of the year, with a belonging bible verse. The priest (or whoever holds the sermon) is supposed to use this, one, verse as base for the sermon. I have also been asked to speak in different churches/Christian camps etc. where I have been given a Bible verse, and/or a message they want to spread. One truth.

The difference is, of course, that we do not use our interpretation to promote violence, and that I, and most other Christian speakers I know, try to view the Bible verse in its relation to the Bible and the bigger story. But then again, we do try to say something 'true' about the Bible and the verses that are presented, we seek the 'intended meaning' of the verse or verses. But who are we to decide what is true and not? Is there even an intended meaning?

Scholars asks the question: even if the readers intentions are good, and he or she really does try to understand the text, how can we know that the readers understanding is *the*

understanding? In a biblical perspective, how can we know that what one interpreter claims to be the meaning of a certain text is in fact the intended meaning of that very text? Is there an intended meaning at all? The problem with interpretation and agreement on one, 'correct' interpretation of a text is that the readers will never have the same notions of what counts as a fact, what is central, peripheral, and worthy of being noticed. They will never uphold the same interpretive principles. So, where does this lead us? Should we accept all interpretations of the Bible, or perhaps none?

Most scholars agree that all interpretations cannot be right. That we are right to rule out, at least some readings. But, what gives us the right to be so right, and who are we do decide what readings to rule out? While there seems to be no basis for labeling an interpretation as unacceptable, we do it all the time. And there are, according to scholars, always mechanisms for ruling out readings, but their source is not the text itself but, what we today see as, recognized interpretive strategies for producing the text. Therefore, it follows that if an interpretive community says that a text has a certain meaning, that is in fact the intended meaning of that very text. There is at least nothing we can do to reject the interpretation. In other words, no reading can be ruled out in principle. We will always have limits to what we will accept, but they will always change. The fact that readings that once seemed ridiculous later has reached acceptance is evidence for this.

If we can never find the intended meaning of a text, should we then even try? What is the point of interpretation and hermeneutics if not to seek the intended meaning of a text? Some researchers argue that hermeneutics and reception should never be about trying to find the 'intended meaning', rather we should interpret the 'created meaning'. That we should move beyond reception history to cultural history, and focus on how religious scriptures are used, rather than trying to find and/or understand their intended use. Because there is no such thing as originality. When were biblical texts finalized? Can they *ever* be? This way of viewing the Bible will help us go from *cause* to *meaning*. From the impact and influence of biblical verses to the cultural meaning of them. A meaning and value that is, culturally produced.

So, in conclusion one might argue that researchers state that studying religious texts, such as the Bible, and utterances can never be an end in itself. As it can never give clear answers to what is the intended meaning of certain texts. What it might be is a means to say something about is religion and religious processes in history. If we study Breivik with the perspective of

cultural- rather than reception history and focus on how he uses and gives meaning to the Bible. Rather than trying to argue that this way of using scripture is wrong, as the interpretation of the verses are so far from their intended use, using today's understanding of hermeneutics, reception, and interpretation as argumentation. We might get a deeper understanding of his argumentation and use of the Bible. Which again may lead to a better starting point when trying to prevent actions of violence where the Bible is used as means and legitimation. Because, in my view, this must always be the goal even if we, academically, get a deeper understanding of this argumentation and interpretations.

As mentioned, viewing Breivik and his interpretations through the lens of Christianity might be one way to better understand his use of scripture. It might also help us understand why he chooses to use the Bible at all, while claiming not to be a Christian as it explains how Christianity might be used and understood as a cultural, and secular concept. Considering my findings when it comes to Breivik's use of scripture: the fact that he most likely has copied all his scriptural references and interpretation from other sources, including misspellings, changes in capital and bold letters, and editing of verses, makes me believe that my hypothesis, that Breivik has not even read the Bible, is true. It seems as if Breivik only uses the Bible to legitimize his perspective and actions, and that it is never about the spiritual meaning.

Criticism, on Breivik's research, that accuses him of misinterpreting and/or misunderstanding the Bible, misses the point. Because Breivik's only purpose for using bible verses is, again, legitimation. Even though his research methods and interpretative tools might not be 'approved' today, it does not matter because for Breivik, the Bible has already served its purpose. It legitimizes his actions of violence and supports his views on Christianity as the privileged culture, while at the same time showing his opposition to Islam, Muslim immigrants, and their descendants. When using these bible verses, Breivik can them as 'the others', defining 'us' in relation to 'them'. If 'they' are Muslims 'we' must in some sense be Christians. Not religious Christians, but cultural and secular Christians. And since secularism is a Christian value that needs protection, the Bible will thus give such a legitimation.

In other words: the whole discussion on whether Breivik's interpretations of the Bible are valid or not is not very fruitful as his use of the Bible is for legitimation purposes only and has

nothing to do with spiritual meaning. The Bible serves this purpose whether or not his interpretations are deemed valid by modern-day researchers.

Chapter summary

In this chapter I have discussed the many questions that arise, concerning reception, hermeneutics, and interpretation, throughout reading, and researching Breivik's Manifesto. It is discussed by drawing on theories presented in chapter two and three, as well as my findings in chapter six.

Firstly, the fact that Breivik has discussion on hermeneutics, reception, or his interpretations was discussed. The fact that he just presents, and cut and pastes, the Bible verses that help him get his message through and forgets about the rest. Secondly, the questions: 'is there an intended meaning in bible verses?', and 'if there is, who are we to decide what that intended meaning is?' was discussed.

Thirdly the question: 'What is the point of interpretation and hermeneutics if not to seek the intended meaning of a text?' was discussed. Lastly, Breivik and his interpretations were discussed through the lens of Christianity.

Chapter 7: Conclusions

The aim of this study was to better understand how Anders Behring Breivik uses the Bible, more specific the book of Psalms, as argument pro violence. The elements were researched by examining Breivik's sources, his interpretations and, briefly, comparing them to more mainstream ones. And by researching and discussing his perception of violence, and the field of reception and reception history. My findings were then analyzed through the lens of the following research-, sub-question, and hypothesis:

How does Breivik use the Bible in general, and the Book of Psalms in particular, to argue pro violence?

- 1) Breivik makes his own Bible
- 2) Breivik does not reflect or care which Bible, and translation he uses
- 3) Breivik has a literal understanding of Scripture
- 4) Are Breivik's interpretations of scripture valid, as he defines himself 'not a religious man'?

In this section, the main findings will be summarized in an attempt to conclude to the research-question.

Breivik makes his own Bible

The short summery to my research question is that Breivik does use the book of Psalms to argue pro violence. He does so by cutting and pasting bible verses and mixing different ideologies to fit his purpose and opinions. In other words: he makes his own Bible.

It might not be *Breivik's* own Bible, however. As his translations and interpretations are most likely copied from Michael Bradley's articles. Even though Breivik does not inform his readers of it. All of Bradley's articles have, however, been updated after the 22nd of July 2011, so there is a chance that it is Bradley that copies or cites Breivik and not the other way around. Either way the hypothesis stand, Breivik does alter the Bible. He makes his own Bible. Not only does he cut and paste biblical verses, he also alters sentences within the verses.

Breivik does not reflect or care which Bible, translations, and/or sources he uses

I heard a statement once by a researcher saying that ‘it is not dangerous that people who identifies with right wing extremism reads the Bible, what is dangerous is that they do not read it’, as in: not reading the Bible makes it easier to cut and paste and use the parts of scripture that fits your worldview, with no regards to the bigger story the verses are parts of. In my research on Breivik, I have seen this tendency, as it does not seem as if Breivik has read the Bible himself. He has no, visible, reflections regarding the sources and/or translations he uses in his chapter on the Bible and violence.

The fact that Breivik interprets the bible verses with no regards to their entirety and relation to the story they are parts of, uses verses that are not problematized by other scholars, has different interpretations than scholars, links verses different than most scholars, uses different interpretations of the same bible verse without commenting on it or having an apparent reason, and lists organizations that in many cases stand in direct opposition to his views, shows how random his use of sources, and selection of bible verses is. He just picks the sections that goes with his views and forgets about the rest. In other words: he does not seem to be very critical in his choice of sources, and/or biblical translations, and in his research on them.

Breivik has a literal understanding of Scripture

The fact that Breivik links different verses, interprets verses differently, and emphasises different verses than more mainstream interpretations might be coincidental, but it might also show that he only reads the verses and presents the sections that help him argue his view, with no exegetical discussion. He presents the sections that, apparently, glorify violence. When reading the Bible and the Book of Psalms in a literal way, it is filled with violence and evildoers. This way of interpreting the Bible thus make it easier for Breivik to argue his view.

Are Breivik’s interpretations of scripture valid as he defines himself ‘not a religious man’?

This sub-question ended up being my main discussion as I early in my research discovered that the field of reception and reception history are topics that cause a lot of tension, and discussion. Amongst researchers, but also amongst ‘ordinary’ religious people. Is there a right and/or wrong way to read the Bible? If there is, who are we to decide what is wrong and what

is right? Most scholars agree that we can and should rule out at least some readings of the Bible. But on the other hand, we have no base for knowing what reading, and interpretation that is right. The only argument we have is modern-day interpretative standards that will, most likely, change over time.

Christianism may help explain why Breivik chooses to use the Bible, and biblical interpretations to argue his view. Even though he defines himself as Christian only in a cultural sense as the theory explains how religion functions more as a relevant context factor and frame for political mobilization against the perceived threat of Islamization and liberalism, more than a source of spiritual meaning. In this sense criticism on Breivik's research that accuses him of misinterpreting the Bible, misses the point. Because Breivik's only purpose for using these verses is legitimation. Christianity and the Bible legitimizes his actions of violence and supports his views on Christianity as the privileged, secular, culture, while at the same time showing his opposition to Islam.

To answer the question: Breivik's interpretations of scripture must be valid as we have no base for ruling them invalid. Even if we did, it would not make a difference. Because Breivik uses the Bible for legitimation purposes only, it has nothing to do with spiritual meaning. The Bible serves this purpose whether or not his interpretations are deemed valid by modern-day researchers.

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