In *Nordische Frau und Nordischer Glaube*, the second in a series of *Flugschriften der Nordischen Glaubensbewegung* [Pamphlets of the Nordic Faith Movement], the Princess articulated a feminist position – at once heroic and motherly – that was widely shared in “Nordic” circles and that she believed compatible with National Socialism. With their characteristic loyalty, their faithfulness, their habit of internalizing and holding fast to their convictions, and their natural commitment to bringing up children and thus maintaining the continuity of family and race, women, she asserts in the opening section of the pamphlet, are the bedrock of any religious or political movement or institution. Thus Communism, she claims, was prevented from achieving political success in Germany because women, concerned about its materialist values and lack of respect for the family, withheld their full support. National Socialism, in contrast, attracted numberless women, despite its reputation for being hostile to women and its unwillingness to grant them certain rights that Communism did in fact propose to institute.

National Socialism appealed to women for a variety of reasons, she argues, as was only to be expected – in her view – from a people as racially heterogeneous as the German people had become. Some women wanted a new social order; others counted on the Party’s ability to bring about a revival of the nation; others still sought to defend and shore up positive Christianity; finally, yet another group, albeit a minority, hoped to advance the cause of a new faith based on race. Along with those inspired by socialist ideals (the first group), these last were the most fervent supporters of the Party (pp. 3-5). As varied as their motives might be, however, the important thing to note is that it was women who brought National
Socialism to power. This might seem surprising, the Princess concedes, in view of the fact that a loss of faith among many women had contributed to defeat in 1918. But that had been a different situation, she explains: the old order offered no vision of the future; the women could see only that their children had to go without food and clothing, without fathers, since these were at the front or had been killed, and often without mothers as well, since they had been enlisted to work in the munitions factories. What is clear, this section of the pamphlet concludes, is that if National Socialism is to make further advances, it must win the full support of German women, many of whom are still loyal to Christ and Christianity.

Part of the task of winning them over to National Socialism must therefore be to wean them from Christianity, to get them to see not only that Christianity is harmful to them, their children, their families, and their communities but that it is essentially alien to them as German women. This is the Princess’s aim in the central section of her pamphlet.

She makes it clear from the start that her critique is directed against the New Testament no less than the Old. The values and world-view she deplores in the Old Testament and finds incompatible with the native values and world-view of the Nordic peoples – pessimism, passivity, fear and distrust of the world, a morality based not on freedom, generosity, and heroism but on strict observance of precept and the expectation of appropriate rewards, the idea that natural activities such as cultivating the soil and bearing children are a divine punishment and that natural pleasures are sinful – are all retained, she holds, in the New Testament. Above all, a low and demeaning view of women, as of the entire natural world, “runs like a red thread through the entire Bible” – Old Testament and New Testament alike. (p. 11) This should be no cause for surprise, according to the Princess, since both Old and New Testaments reflect the outlook, values, and mentality of an alien, “oriental” race. Christianity cannot be salvaged, she emphasizes, alluding implicitly to the popular thesis of H. Stuart Chamberlain, by asserting that Jesus was racially an Aryan and not a Semite. Real Christians, she maintains – in implicit opposition to the attempt by the so-called Deutsche Christen to rescue Christianity by cutting it off from its Jewish roots – know that the New Testament is inseparable from the Old. (pp. 7-8) At the same time, in a move reminiscent of the disclaimers of Günther and Clauß in the matter of the alleged superiority of the Nordic race, or of Fahrenkrog or Hauer in the matter of religion, she denies that her aim is to condemn Christianity as such. “We wish to refrain from all
value judgments. We desire only to point out how alien the worldview of the oriental people that presented us with the Bible is from our own.” (p. 6) Christianity, in other words, might well be suitable for the “Orientals” and “Southerners” [Südländer] among whom it emerged and still flourishes. But it is utterly foreign to the Nordic race and temperament. (The Princess’s use of the terms “Oriental” and “Southerner” as virtually equivalent must have provoked serious misgivings in Nazi leadership circles, inasmuch as it appeared not only to create a division within the German volk but to imply an intimate and unbreakable connection between the alien, “oriental” religion of the Jews and Roman Catholicism, which was especially strong in Southern Germany and with which most top Nazi strategists sought not a quarrel but an accommodation.)

Christianity, the Princess warns the women of Germany, “cripples the spirit.” (p. 10) The Biblical account of Adam’s eating of the fruit of the tree of knowledge demonstrates that when the “Southerner” pulls aside the veil and is confronted with the knowledge of reality, he goes completely to pieces and loses every ounce of courage and confidence in himself. (p. 9) Hence the Catholic Church’s discouragement or outright prohibition of independent inquiry and thinking. It is true that the Reformation instigated a revolt against the stifling of free and fearless inquiry, but “in the Evangelical Church we have just about returned to the point at which ‘knowledge’ and its utilization are once again forbidden.”3 (p. 9) Similarly, the deep hostility to women the Princess considers evident everywhere in the Bible was translated in the Middle Ages into the imposition of the rule of celibacy for priests, despite fierce popular opposition, especially in Northern countries, and into the persecution of talented, resourceful, and independent-minded women as “witches” – again chiefly in the lands of the North. The case of the Countess of Thuringia, known as “St. Elisabeth,” provides a vivid and – according to the Princess – admonitory view of the ideal woman as Christianity envisages her. By birth she was Hungarian – that is, we are told, “a girl of alien [non-Nordic] race,” of whom it was said that “her skin was so brown and her hair so black that her appearance stunned the entire Thuringian Court.” Christianity appealed strongly, as was to be expected, to her southern and foreign nature and she soon began to act, out of piety, in ways that seem “to our sensibility totally out of line. She neglected her own children and, instead of caring for them, went among the lepers, even taking them into her bed. She prayed continuously and had herself flagellated by her own servants. […] A prime example of religious
hysteria, she was completely under the criminal influence of her father confessor, Conrad of Marburg, whose sole aim was to secure the victory of the Church over a noble princely house, and she blindly carried out all his commands. When she died at the age of 24, she was declared a saint and the German Emperor joined with the other princes of the Empire in carrying her bier, on which he had placed his crown.” (p. 18) The “religious hysteria” and unnatural, world-denying behavior of the “fremdrassiges Ungarmädchen” [Hungarian girl of alien race] is contrasted by the Princess with the independence of spirit, loyalty, physical and moral courage, sense of self-worth and honor, capacity for love, and readiness to fight, at the cost of their own lives if necessary, for their children, family, and tribe or clan of the heroines of the Nordic sagas. In them, she claims, are to be found the natural instincts and temper of the woman of Nordic race.

To the Nordic woman, according to the Princess, the inheritance of race and blood trumps everything: “Die Art ist uns alles.” (p. 21 [Kinship by blood is everything to us]) The Princess then articulates her conception of the faith of the Nordic woman, as opposed to that of the Christian. “We believe in rebirth in our descendants – not, to be sure, in the form of a ‘transmigration of souls,’ which would take us right back to individualism. We believe in the Artseele [the soul of the bloodline, breed or stock], in the holiness and indestructibility of our Erbmasse [inherited substance or nature], which can expect to celebrate its resurrection even in our remotest descendants. The individual, in the end, is only the bearer and protector of the Artseele.” (p. 22) Consequently, “it does not matter whether we live or die, as long as the Art or bloodline is maintained. If the Art is eternal, we are eternal. If the Art dies out, we die also. That is true for everything in the world and in this respect we feel connected to the plants and the animals as to fellow-creatures.” (p. 21) Death thus holds no terrors for the Nordic woman. “We carry the Hagal rune as the holy sign of ‘Stirb und Werde’ [Die and Become], the life-cycle into which we are born and which we affirm with complete and deepest love and joyfulness as the eternal, divine law of the universe.” (p. 21)

The pamphlet closes on an appeal to German women. “We who are living now must pave the way for a coming time” when our “grandchildren will recover the natural, unreflected way of living that our ancestors once knew and that is accessible only to those of pure race,” when “there will be no original sin and no despairing sense of powerlessness […] [but] an entirely new morality, the roots of which are nevertheless in ancient history,” and
when individuals will have value only to the extent that they are integrated into the racial community [Artgemeinschaft]. At the same time they will be sustained more firmly and valued more highly than ever before, because every man and every woman will be honored as the bearer of the eternal life of the entire Volk. [...] All the pettiness and contemptible triviality that has marked the existence of women and to some extent given men a right to despise the female sex will then fall away by itself.” (p. 23)

It is true, the Princess concedes, that “countless women do not yet have, or no longer have, the strength to bear the spiritual loneliness and responsibility for their own decisions that are the source of a woman’s inner happiness and dignity. They should not be scolded or scorned on that account. Every one has to tread the path he must without falsehood or deceit. That is the only thing we can demand absolutely and without exception of our fellow-humans. It is not for us to judge the path itself.” (p. 23) But it is possible to lead by example. We can refuse to allow our children to be taught a conception of God in their schools that is alien to their race. “You may say: That will make it difficult for our children. They will experience unpleasantness as a result. But it is better for the children to experience some unpleasantness and to know why than to have their souls warped and deformed. That which triumphed only through so much blood and tears will not be overcome without ‘unpleasantness.’” If, on the other hand “we take our convictions so lightly that we will not make any sacrifices for them, then we should stick with the old ways, for in that case we are truly not yet worthy of freedom [...]. We German women who have chosen to openly profess our heathen faith look upon German women of all classes with the deepest longing and concern. Will you have the strength, sisters, to resume your old role as priestesses? Will you once again bring a victorious joyfulness into the world after all the tears and anxieties that a foreign faith has brought us? Will you once again raise your families and develop their conscience in freedom and with a sense of grandeur. Will you once again make honor and responsibility to oneself the core principles in the education of your children? Will you learn once again to place the breed above the individual, to love the tree more than the blossom? The triumph of the Nordic-heathen faith in the world stands or falls with you. We stand on the brink of a great new age. Let not all of us be found weak and unworthy.” (p. 24)