

Brightman's initial moral law system included three types of laws: the Formal Laws, the Axiological Laws, and the Personalistic Laws. These are in full:

**A. The Formal Laws** "have to do with the will alone, and state principles to which a reasonable will must conform irrespective of the ends (values to which it is trying to realize)."<sup>1</sup>

1. The Logical Law: *All persons ought to will logically; i.e., each person ought to will to be free from self-contradiction and to be consistent in his/her intentions.*<sup>2</sup>
2. The Law of Autonomy: *All persons ought to recognize themselves as obligated to choose in accordance with the ideals which they acknowledge; self-imposed ideals are imperative.*<sup>3</sup>

**B. The Axiological Laws** "show the principles which the values that a good will is seeking to embody."<sup>4</sup>

3. The Axiological Law: *All persons ought to choose values which are self-consistent, harmonious, and coherent, not values which are contradictory or incoherent with another.*<sup>5</sup>
4. The Law of Consequences: *All persons ought to consider, on the whole, approve the foreseeable consequences of each of their choices.*<sup>6</sup>
5. The Law of the Best Possible: *All persons ought to will the best possible values in every situation; hence, if possible, to improve every situation.*<sup>7</sup>
6. The Law of Specification: *All persons ought, in any given situation, to develop the value or values specifically relevant to that situation.*<sup>8</sup>
7. The Law of the Most Inclusive End: *All persons ought to choose a coherent life in which the widest possible range of value is realized.*<sup>9</sup>
8. The Law of Ideal Control: *All persons ought to control their empirical values by ideal values.*<sup>10</sup>

**C. The Personalistic Laws** "show values is always an experience of persons."<sup>11</sup>

9. The Law of Individualism: *Each person ought to realize in his/her experience the maximum value of which he/she is capable of in harmony with the moral law.*<sup>12</sup>
10. The Law of Altruism: *Each person ought to respect all other persons as ends in themselves, and, as far as possible, to co-operate with others in the production and enjoyment of shared values.*<sup>13</sup>
11. The Law of the Ideal of Personality: *All persons ought to judge and guide all of their acts by their ideal conception (in harmony with other Laws) of what the whole personality ought to become both individually and socially.*<sup>14</sup>

One striking defect is apparent. Brightman is thought to assume individualism without community, and Walter Muelder and L. Harold DeWolf added Laws of Ideal Community: the Law of Cooperation, Law of Social Devotion, and the Law of Ideal of Community. Paul Deats added the Laws of Praxis: the laws of conflict and reconciliation and law of fallibility and corrigibility.<sup>15</sup> Muelder, DeWolf and Deats are not beyond thinking that Brightman offered us an incomplete ethical theory.<sup>16</sup> Even Brightman warned of thinking his moral law system complete. In order to regard ethics as a normative science, Brightman is open to revising the principles in the moral law system. When King develops his conception of Beloved Community, King probably observed that same incompleteness of Brightman's moral law system. Let me reproduce some of these added laws. These added laws also appear in Muelder's lecture.<sup>17</sup>

**D. The Laws of Ideal Community** "deal with persons in their communitarian contexts, for persons not only have environments, they significantly have their own identities as social beings."<sup>18</sup>

12. The Law of Social Devotion: *All persons ought to devote themselves to serving the best interests of the group and to subordinate personal gain to social gain.*<sup>19</sup>
13. The Law of Co-operation: *All persons ought as far as possible to co-operate with other persons in the production and enjoyment of shared values.*<sup>20</sup>

14. The Law of Ideal Community: *All persons ought to form and choose all of their ideals and values in loyalty to their ideals (in harmony with the other laws) of what the whole community ought to become: and to participate responsibly in groups to help them similarly choose and form all their ideals and choices.*<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Edgar S. Brightman, *The Moral Laws* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1933), p. 90.

<sup>2</sup> Brightman, *Moral Laws*, p. 98.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 106.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 90.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 125.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 142.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 156.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 171.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 183.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 194.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 90.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 204.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 223.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 242.

<sup>15</sup> Burrow. *God and Human Dignity*, p. 198.

<sup>16</sup> Muelder's most complete presentation about the nature of community and the necessity for personalist ethics to think through Brightman's privileging of individualism occurs in his second chapter "Person and Community" in his book *Moral Law and Christian Social Ethics* (Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press, 1952).

<sup>17</sup> I do not cite the Metaphysical Law since I think Muelder is wrong to say that persons should look for the source of the moral law rather than simply stipulating that the intelligibility of the moral law system is made possible by the personalistic idealism of God constituting reality as such. We all understand King's philosophy and theology is theistic.

<sup>18</sup> Muelder, "Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Moral Laws," p. 15.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.