

Gerhold K. Becker: A Bio-bibliography

Gerhold K. Becker was born on 22 July 1943, the first of three children in the family of the violinist Josef Becker and his wife Agnes. He grew up in the very small but scenic Hessian town of Bad Salzschlirf, a spa whose originally rural character had received a varnish of sophistication through the many guests from, as they say, “all over Germany and other countries.”

After initial years of local schooling, Gerhold was accepted at the Fulda Domgymnasium, a secondary school with a curriculum based on the Classical languages and cultures. He studied in Frankfurt and Munich, receiving licentiates in philosophy and theology, then continued with supplementary post-graduate studies in philosophy and theology under Dieter Henrich, Ernst Tugendhat, Michael Theunissen, Georg Picht, and Heinz Eduard Tödt at Heidelberg University as well as in modern Hebrew (Ivrit) Language and Literature at Beth Hanoia, Jerusalem. His first position, at the University of Munich, was in the Philosophy Department’s Institute for Christian World View and Philosophy of Religion. There he taught for more than ten years, as a lecturer (“Wissenschaftlicher Assistent,” 1975-1980) and later, after completing his doctorate in philosophy in 1979 with a *summa cum laude* dissertation on the thinking of the German philosopher of history, theologian, and sociologist Ernst Troeltsch, as an assistant professor (“Akademischer Rat,” 1980-1986). In 1977, he joined his life to the pianist and musicologist Siglind Bruhn; they were married in 1985.

In 1986, Becker accepted a position in the Department of Religion and Philosophy at what is now the Baptist University of Hong Kong (then still Hong Kong Baptist College). He had intended the two-year appointment to serve as an experience that would combine English-language teaching with life in a non-European culture and exposure to a multitude of religions. He ended up staying for nearly nineteen years, rising within the first nine years from his initial position as Senior Lecturer to Principal Lecturer, Reader, Professor, and Chair Professor. In 1991, he was asked to establish Hong Kong’s first center for applied ethics and become its founding director; in 1992, he was elected as an Ordinary Member to the European Academy of Arts and Sciences. From 1996-2004, he served on the Hong Kong Government’s *Council on Reproductive Technology*, initially as a member, then as the chairman of its *Ethics Committee*.

Compelled to leave his university position after having reached Hong Kong's mandatory retirement age of 60, Becker accepted an invitation to become a "winter-semesters-only" regular visiting professor at Assumption University of Thailand's Graduate School of Philosophy and Religion. Thus ever since 2004, he has been dividing his years between contemplative summers spent with his wife in their condominium in Waldkirch (a scenic little town in the Black Forest near Freiburg) and exciting winters teaching graduate students in bustling Bangkok (and traveling in and around Thailand).

Gerhold K. Becker is the author of three book-length monographs and over seventy-five scholarly articles and chapters in books. He has edited and co-authored four collections of scholarly essays and has shepherded three monographs on subjects of applied ethics in his role as Special Series Editor of Rodopi's book series *Studies in Applied Ethics*. The following is only a selection:

Books:

- *The Moral Status of Persons: Perspectives on Bioethics*, Amsterdam/Atlanta: Editions Rodopi, 2000; 245 pp.
- *Bioethics and Personhood*. Special issue of the *Kennedy Institute of Ethics Journal*, Volume 9/4 (December 1999).
- *Changing Nature's Course: The Ethical Challenge of Biotechnology* (with James P. Buchanan), Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1996; 208 pp.
- *Ethics in Business and Society: Chinese and Western Perspectives*, Berlin etc.: Springer Verlag, 1996; 232 pp.
- *Die Ursymbole in den Religionen*. (The Prime Symbols of Religions), Graz: Styria Verlag, 1987, 352 pp.
- *Neuzeitliche Subjektivität und Religiosität. Die religionsphilosophische Bedeutung von Heraufkunft und Wesen der Neuzeit im Denken Ernst Troeltschs* (Modern Subjectivity and Religion), Regensburg: Pustet Verlag, 1982, 382 pp.
- *Theologie in der Gegenwart. Tendenzen und Perspektiven* (Theology in Our Times: Tendencies and Perspectives), Regensburg: Pustet Verlag, 1978, 253 pp.

Chapters:

- "Je Suis le Grand Tout: Respect for Nature in the Age of Environmental Responsibility," *Environmental Ethics*, ed. by Ip King-tak, Amsterdam/New York: Rodopi, 2008 (in preparation).
- "Normative Relations: East Asian Perspectives on Biomedicine and Bioethics," *Life Nature Contingency*, ed. by Marcus Düwell, Dordrecht: Kluwer/Springer, 2008, 273-288.

- “Divided Loyalties: The Moral Basis of Peace in a Multicultural World of Conflict and Humiliation,” *Understanding Conflict and Approaching Peace in Southern Thailand*, ed. by Imtiyaz Yusuf/Lars Peter Schmidt, Bangkok: Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, 2006, 240-280.
- “Chinese Ethics and Human Cloning: A View from Hong Kong,” *Cross-Cultural Issues in Bioethics. The Example of Human Cloning*, ed. by Heiner Roetz, Amsterdam/New York: Rodopi, 2006, 107-139.
- “Bioethics With Chinese Characteristics: The Development of Bioethics in Hong Kong,” *The Annals of Bioethics: Regional Perspectives in Bioethics*, ed. by John F. Peppin/Mark J. Cherry, Lisse: Swets & Zeitlinger, 2003, 261-284.
- “Ethical Issues in the Modernization of China,” [Polish tr.: “Etyczne problemy modernizacji Chin,”] in *China: Social and Political Development at the Threshold of the 21st Century*, ed. by Karin Tomala [*Chiny: Rozwoj Społeczeństwa i Państwa na przełomie XX i XXI wieku*], Warsaw: Trio Publishers, 2003, 49-94.
- “Moral Education in China and the ‘West’: Ideals and Reality in Cross-cultural Perspective,” *Chinese Ethics in a Global Context: Moral Bases of Contemporary Societies*, ed. by Karl-Heinz Pohl & Anselm W. Müller, *Sinica Leidensia* LVI, Leiden: Brill, (October 2002), 245-278.
- “The Ethics of Prenatal Screening and the Search for Global Bioethics,” *Cross-Cultural Perspectives on the (Im)Possibility of Global Bioethics*, ed. by Julia Tao Lai Po-wah, Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2002, 105-130.
- “In Search of Humanity: Human Dignity as a Basic Moral Attitude,” *The Future of Value Inquiry*, ed. by Matti Häyry/Tuija Takala. Atlanta/Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2001, 53-65.
- “Filling the Moral Void: Confucianism and the Ethical Issues of Modernization in China,” [translated into Polish] in: Karin Tomala, ed., *Chiny [Changes in State and Society in China: 1978-2000]*, published by the Polish Academy of Science], Warsaw: Trio Publishers, 2001, 114-129.
- “Manipulating Nature: The Challenge of Biotechnology to the Traditional Concept of Nature,” *Studies in Science and Theology* 4/II (1996). *The Concept of Nature in Science and Theology*, Geneva: Labor et Fides, 1998, 131-138.
- “The Concept of Nature in Environmental Ethics. Historical and Cross-cultural Perspectives,” *East-West Encounters in Philosophy and Religion*, ed. by Ninian Smart /B. Srinivasa Murthy, Longbeach, CA: Long Beach Publications, 1996, 342-358.
- “Divinization of Nature in Early Modern Thought,” *The Invention of Nature*, ed. by Thomas Bargatzky/Rolf Kuschel, Frankfurt/New York/Paris: Peter Lang Verlag, 1994, 47-61.
- “Die gläubige Sprache der Trauer. Zur Gotteserfahrung des späten Reinhold Schneider,” *Widerruf oder Vollendung*, ed. by H. Ludewig, Freiburg: Herder Verlag, 1981, 55-74.
- “Religion und Philosophie. Anmerkungen zu Hegels Begriff der Offenbarung,” *Communicatio Fidei*, ed. by G. Becker/H. Bürkle, Regensburg: Pustet Verlag, 1983, 229-239.

Articles:

- “Moral Leadership: Exploring the Foundations of Good Governance,” *Prajna Vihara* 7/2 (July-December 2006): 13-33.
- “The Competitive Edge of Moral Leadership,” *International Management Review* 3/1 (2007): 50-71 (in Chinese translation: 138-150).
- “Reason, Faith, and Secularization: Jürgen Habermas Meets Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger,” *Prajna Vihara Journal of Philosophy and Religion* 7/1 (2006): 18-43.
- “Genetics between Ethics and Politics: Taking Peoples’ Concerns Seriously,” *Türkiye Klinikleri Journal of Medical Ethics, Law and History* 14/1 (2006): 1-8.
- “Phenomenology and Ethics: Husserl’s Search for the Scientific Foundations of Ethics,” *Prajna Vihara Journal of Philosophy and Religion* 4/1 (2003): 68-80.
- “The Moral Identity of Professional Medicine,” *Türkiye Klinikleri Journal of Medical Ethics, Law and History* 10/4 (November 2002): 237-242.
- “Ethics and the ‘Genetification’ of Human Life,” *Prajna Vihara. The Journal of Philosophy and Religion* 2/1 (January-June 2001): 3-22.
- “Reproductive Choice and Moral Responsibility: The Challenge of Human Cloning,” *Prajna Vihara. The Journal of Philosophy and Religion* 1/1 (January-June 2000): 1-31.
- “Exploring the Core of Humanity,” *Ethics and Society* 6/2 (November 1998): 2-7.
- “Cloning Humans? The Chinese Debate and Why It Matters,” *Eubios Journal of Asian and International Bioethics* 7/6 (November 1997): 175-177 (also published in *Ethics and Society* 5/2 (1997)).
- “Virtues and Human Nature. Towards a Multidisciplinary Foundation of Contemporary Virtues,” *Value and Society*, Hong Kong: Lingnan College, 1997, 241-250.
- “Hong Kong’s Human Reproductive Technology Bill,” *Ethics and Society* 5/1 (May 1997): 2-7.
- “Ethical Issues in Reproductive Technology: Deliberations in the Hong Kong Context,” *Seminar on Reproductive Technology*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong Council of Social Services, 1997, 11-23.
- “The Absolute in the Relative: Ernst Troeltsch’s Search for Ultimate Meaning,” *Ultimate Reality and Meaning. Interdisciplinary Studies in the Philosophy of Understanding* 19/2 (1996): 94-114 [This paper won the journal’s essay prize].
- “Asian and Western Ethics. Some Remarks on a Productive Tension,” *Eubios Journal of Asian and International Bioethics* 5/2 (March 1995): 31-33.
- “Unity and University. The Neo-humanist Perspective in the Age of Post-Modernism,” *International Philosophical Quarterly* XXXIV/2 No. 134 (June 1994): 177-189.
- “Sick Men’s Dreams? Methodologisches zum Religionsbegriff. Ideen zu einer Integralen Anthropologie,” *Festschrift für Karel Macha*, ed. by S. Bonk, Munich: BB Verlag 1991, 321-338.
- “The Quest for the Ultimate in Confucianism and Christianity,” *Ching Feng* 32/4 (1989): 202-217.