

IN GOD'S NAME

The Failure of Political Christianity

HOLY
BIBLE



Danutasn Brown

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Christianity in Human Politics vs Christianity as Defined by Jesus

Donald Trump's favorite Bible verse involves an "eye for an eye," he said Thursday.

WHAM 1180 AM radio host Bob Lonsberry asked the Republican front-runner if he had a favorite verse or story from the Bible that's impacted his thinking or character.

"Well, I think many. I mean, you know, when we get into the Bible, I think many. So many," he responded. "And some people—look, an eye for an eye, you can almost say that. That's not a particularly nice thing. But you know, if you look at what's happening to our country, I mean, when you see what's going on with our country, how people are taking advantage of us, and how they scoff at us and laugh at us."

<https://www.politico.com/blogs/2016-gop-primary-live-updates-and-results/2016/04/trump-favorite-bible-verse-221954>

³⁸“You have heard that it was said, ‘Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.’ ³⁹But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also. ⁴⁰And if anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, hand over your coat as well. ⁴¹If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles. ⁴²Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.

⁴³“You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ ⁴⁴But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. Matthew 5:38-45 (NIV)

It is a question that underlies much of the political discourse in America and perplexes outsiders looking at the United States: Why are so many American Christians dedicated to supporting Donald Trump, who doesn't seem to represent Jesus at all? Furthermore, why is the United States, a nation so influenced by Christian values, so committed to such an aggressive military policy overseas? Why this need for a powerful "strongman" leader; why this desperate need for America to be the world's number one nation?

There is a great cognitive dissonance within Christianity, which has been increasing in accordance with globalization. It is the contradiction between the peaceful admonition of Jesus to "love your enemies", and the wrathful God of vengeance in the Old Testament. On an individual level Christians are usually nice, following after the pattern and teachings of Jesus. But it is on the macro/national level, when dealing with foreigners and the gentile/infidel "other", that the Old Testament "enough is enough" attitude of God manifests itself. It seems like the lessons of Jesus are meant for our daily life in our own neighborhood, but the wrathful will of God is for those nations that don't know Him or who don't worship Him the same way we do. The Old Testament God kills and crushes and genocides His enemies...doesn't He? That's what Richard Dawkins, probably the most famous atheist in the whole world, thinks:

"The God of the Old Testament is arguably the most unpleasant character in all fiction: jealous and proud of it; a petty, unjust, unforgiving control-freak; a vindictive, bloodthirsty ethnic cleanser; a misogynistic, homophobic, racist, infanticidal, genocidal, filicidal, pestilential, megalomaniacal, sadomasochistic, capriciously malevolent bully."

Before you either nod your head in agreement because you aren't Christian, or you throw this booklet away in disgust because you are, please be patient. We believe that there is a different way to understand what is going on in the Old Testament and that Jesus gives us the lens to do so. But it requires study and humility, patience and empathy. There is a blessing to think through these things, if only to sort through the trauma

of an all-powerful entity hovering over us, who we imagine is ready to kill us at any time. But is this the God that Jesus said He would ascend to see? The God Richard Dawkins perceives is a God that mankind has created in our own image, and not as He truly is. It is my hope that through this study we can begin to see **our** actual character – flawed, forgetful, fearful, and **God’s** actual character – merciful, gracious, loving all people; and thereby come to a better understanding of the human condition, where we have come from and where we are going, and finally be reconciled to our Creator.

As a half-Thai half-American growing up in Thailand, I was infuriated and embarrassed by The United States’ imperial drive to force every country to submit to it. I, like most non-Americans, saw through the self-righteous language and considered it more self-interest, being all about money, power, and resources. I was against US intervention in foreign nations, and I was appalled by the strident calls for war from politicians and their scare tactics to spread fear and hysteria. I was shocked to learn that, though the US was in major debt and had serious issues at home such as poverty, domestic violence, drug epidemics, unfunded schools, and a bulging prison population, the majority of funding went to the military and that the US had active soldiers in 150 countries around the world. Why this priority on dominating other nations?

(<http://edition.cnn.com/interactive/2012/04/us/table.military.troops/>)

Growing up in a secular household, with an agnostic father and a Buddhist mother, I also was sickened by the Christian Right in America’s support for war and the Republican Party (which I saw as the party of war, I know better now, they both are the party of war, just the Republicans are more bombastic and direct about it), and from what I saw I considered Christianity a religion of war and violence. Many Thai Buddhists think the same way, as well as many secular Europeans, Japanese, Indians, etc. It wouldn’t be until many years later when I met a Nigerian lady while doing my Master’s in Wales that I began to reconsider Christianity.

President George W. Bush lying about Iraq having weapons of mass destruction just deepened my anger. He being a born-again Christian caused me to associate violence and oppression and an obsessive need to control with Christianity and with the Christian God. God was a dominating God of power, who burned and sent to hell for eternity all who disagreed with him. There was no tolerance there, and there was no empathizing with different mentalities. It was why my American dad had given up Christianity in the late 60's, and it is why, no matter how many missionaries go abroad, it is hard to overcome this image of God that people have. Jesus as representing the character of His Father was lost sight of. If we were to suspect that there was a Devil, a being that wanted above all else to slander the character of God, has not the Devil utterly succeeded? Yet Jesus said the Father is just like Him...

⁹ Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? **Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.** How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?" John 14:9

The Close Ties between Church and State in America

My suspicions on the character of the Christian faith seemed to be correct when I heard such stories as that which follows:

Former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld put Bible verses on the top of the "Worldwide Intelligence Update" presented to President George W. Bush...

Each cover page features inspiring color photographs -- soldiers praying, a young man preparing for battle, Saddam's statue falling. With them are biblical quotes, some related to providing strength to the soldiers but some about the godliness of the cause.

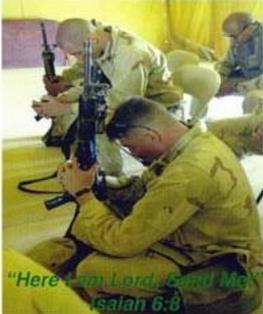
Next to a picture of an American tank is the quote: "Open the gates that the righteous nations may enter, The nation that keeps faith. Isaiah 26.2"

A photo of two soldiers in prayer is accompanied by the quote, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us. Here I am Lord, send me! Isaiah 6:8"

TOP SECRET//HCS/COMINT-GAMMA//ORCON,NOFORN//EXDIS//X1,X6

Secretary of Defense Worldwide Intelligence Update

"Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?"



*"Here I am Lord, Send Me!
Isaiah 6:8"*

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As of 170630 EST Mar 03

A photo of an American tank at sunset has superimposed on it, "Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Ephesians 6:13"

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Secretary of Defense Worldwide Intelligence Update

Commit to the LORD whatever you do, and your plans will succeed.

Proverbs 16:3



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Secretary of Defense Worldwide Intelligence Update

It is God's will that by doing good you should
silence the ignorant talk of foolish men.

1 Peter 2:15



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When an outsider sees such things, it makes Christianity just seem like a political tool in the hands of those with power. What a Muslim thinks when he sees such things one can only imagine, but needless to say it doesn't make him like Christians. The depths of the hypocrisy are almost too much to bear when put alongside such statements as John the Baptist said to the soldiers when they asked him what to do:

And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, **Do violence to no man**, neither accuse *any* falsely; and be content with your wages. Luke 3:14

The United States is, historically, the most Christian nation on Earth. Christians of all other countries send the future leaders of their churches to study theology in the United States. Just as the wealth of Saudi Arabia is used to mold Islam around the world into the image of the Islam in Saudi Arabia – Wahhabism, the wealth of the United States props up a form of Christianity that the US approves of. This is a natural process because religion cannot be removed from the culture it is in, and therefore the Christianity of America is very American, and the US spreads this Christianity around the globe, just as it does Hollywood movies and Coke and Facebook.

Christians in America love to join the army, to become a soldier of/for God. This relies on the assumption that the US military is doing the will of God in its operations. Does Jesus say to go out and *teach the nations*, or does he say to *overthrow the nations*? As I share these lists of all the political “interventions” the US has made (otherwise called attempted regime change), the conservative may ask: but in ancient times didn’t God intervene in the affairs of nations, using His nation Israel? My answer is, “is there a difference between the kingdom of God and the kingdoms of men?” As you look through the list, remember that each of these has its own unique story, and it is worth it to research further on your own.

Overthrowing Other People's Governments: The Master List

* = Successful Overthrow

China 1940 to early 1960's	Angola 1975, 1980s
Albania 1949-1953	Zaire 1975
East Germany 1950s	Portugal 1974-76 *
Iran 1953 *	Jamaica 1976-80 *
Guatemala 1954 *	Seychelles 1979-81
Costa Rica mid-1950s	Chad 1981-82
Syria 1956-7	Grenada 1983 *
Egypt 1957	South Yemen 1982-84
Indonesia 1957-58	Suriname 1982-84
British Guiana 1953-64 *	Fiji 1987 *
Iraq 1963 *	Libya 1980s
North Vietnam 1945-73	Nicaragua 1981-90 *
Cambodia 1955-70 *	Panama 1989 *
Laos 1958 *, 1959 *, 1960 *	Bulgaria 1990 *
Ecuador 1960-63 *	Albania 1991 *
Congo 1960 *	Iraq 1991
Brazil 1962-64 *	Afghanistan 1980s *
Dominican Republic 1963 *	Somalia 1993
France 1965	Yugoslavia 1999-2000 *
Cuba 1959 until recently	Ecuador 2000 *
Bolivia 1964 *	Afghanistan 2001 *
Indonesia 1965 *	Venezuela 2002 *
Ghana 1966 *	Iraq 2003 *
Chile 1964-73 *	Haiti 2004 *
Greece 1967 *	Somalia 2007 to present
Costa Rica 1970-71	Libya 2011 *
Bolivia 1971	Syria 2012
Australia 1973-75 *	Ukraine 2014

<http://williamblum.org/essays/read/overthrowing-other-peoples-governments-the-master-list>

⁵² “Put your sword back in its place,” Jesus said to him. “All who take the sword will die by the sword. Matthew 26:52

Religion in Politics is Not a New Thing

Most secular intellectuals nowadays underestimate the impact of religious thinking in the events that led up to today. The churches, particularly the Catholic Church, are older and more stable institutions than governments, and because this is so they often can plan further ahead, while elected governments change every few years. The religious rationale for a particular policy can be opaque to the irreligious, which most people are nowadays, and this, along with the modern man’s disinterest in history, make religious historical processes seem like magical thinking that we want to disregard. Yet the results remain. I will give one example, and that is the 1917 Balfour Declaration, which is considered the crucial governmental document beginning the process for the creation of the modern state of Israel.

“His Majesty’s government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.” – Balfour Declaration

On the face of it, it seems a normal political letter based on realpolitik, probably because of Jewish influence in British Politics. But there is much more to this. Many Christian Zionists, including Balfour himself, wanted a Jewish State in Palestine because they saw it as being a necessary step in the apocalyptic prophecies of the Bible. They felt like they were setting the stage to speed the 2nd coming of Jesus and the end of the world, and a formation of a new earth paradise.

It should come as no surprise that Christian Zionists in England had great influence on the issue of the Balfour Declaration. According to Goldman, British foreign secretary Lord Arthur **James Balfour's "religious beliefs influenced his political decisions, particularly on the question of a Jewish return to Palestine, which he felt would be the fulfillment of biblical prophecy."** The declaration from Balfour, delivered to Lord Lionel Walter Rothschild, titular president of the British Zionist Federation, was as much a religious document as a political one. "The establishment in Palestine for a national home for the Jewish people" represented the Christian convictions of a messianic reality. The Balfour Declaration was not simply a document of international diplomacy and big-power recognition of Jewish aspirations.

<https://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Christian-Zionism-and-the-Balfour-Declaration-508034>

Much of the world wonders why America so zealously supports Israel, thinking that it is because the Jews have so much influence in American government. While there is a sizable population of Jews in America, the support for Israel comes more from evangelical Christians and their understanding of religious doctrine, particularly prophecy; that is why the American government is so steadfast and unyielding in its support of Israel, often to the extent of undermining its own security. If the Muslim world understood this, which I think to a certain extent they do, it should make us tremble. Because of this, Muslim Arabs look at Christians Arabs with much suspicion.

If you are to google 'Balfour declaration' and 'prophecy', you will find thousands of hits by people showing this as an example of fulfillment of prophecy and that we are in the end times. The problem is this means that government policy can influence and determine how God acts in this world. This idea undermines traditional Protestant ideas of separation of Church and State. If the government can speed up the return of Jesus to this world, if the government can pass policy that is according to God's

will, if the government can just pay missionaries to spread the message – then doesn't it make sense for Christians to enter in and ally with government to get things done? That would be much more efficient than going out and working on grassroots evangelism without financial means and support. This is the thinking Mike Pence, Vice President to President Donald Trump, articulated in his speech to John Hagee's Christian Zionist Group 'Christians United for Israel' in 2017, and his ideology is a continuation of that of those influencing Balfour in 1917. This article from the Washington Post explains this:

What is Christians United for Israel?

Founded in 2006 by John Hagee, a megachurch pastor from San Antonio who [endorsed Donald Trump for president in May 2016](#), CUFI is the largest pro-Israel group in the United States, claiming more than 3 million members and raising hundreds of millions of dollars for pro-Israel causes.

CUFI is one of the most visible manifestations of Christian Zionism in the United States today.

Wait, what is Christian Zionism?

Christian Zionism is an ideology of political and material support for Israel based on Christian appeals to the Bible. Today, Christian Zionists believe that Israel's establishment in 1948, its military victory in 1967, and its ongoing conflict with Palestinians and surrounding Arab nations are prophesied in the Bible and intimately linked to God's covenant with the Jewish people.

Unlike other evangelical Christians, who do not see the modern the state of Israel as prophetically significant, Christian Zionists argue that the fate of the United States hinges on how fervently it supports Israel. Perhaps the most cited Christian Zionist verse is Genesis 12:3, when God tells Abraham, "I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse."

Pro-Israel officeholders aren't exactly a rarity in the U.S. How is Pence's Christian Zionism different?

The first, and least exceptional, feature of Pence's Christian Zionism is his belief that the state of Israel is a fulfillment of biblical prophecy. As Pence told a roomful of diplomats in May,

with the establishment of Israel in 1948, “a prophecy literally came to pass.” Pence, however, judiciously refrains from speculating on future fulfillment of prophecy — a contentious practice within, and certainly outside of, Christian Zionist circles. Coming from the vice president, such speculation could raise serious concerns about the administration’s efforts to construct a peace deal.

There’s a second, subtler theme in Pence’s thinking: Israel as a sign of God’s “faithfulness.” The theme of faithfulness has taken on a more specifically evangelical purpose in recent decades, as Pence and other Christians have felt embattled in an increasingly secular public square. Israel’s existence provides empirical evidence that “God himself fulfilled his promise to his people,” to use Pence’s words. The faithfulness of God plays a specific role for Christian Zionists who believe that Israel’s independence was proof of God’s intervention in human affairs. The fate of Israel, then, is a core theological belief: Only if Israel prospers is God true to his word.

https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/made-by-history/wp/2017/07/17/what-you-need-to-know-about-mike-pences-speech-to-christians-united-for-israel/?utm_term=.d6226e5aca76

Are you beginning to see why how we understand God’s will is important? If you are a Christian, these strange contradictions need to be worked out. These issues have deeply troubled us at [Fatheroflove.info](#) and we have spent years trying to figure it out. How does God want us to understand Him, and His will for us, and how are we to relate to such Christian ideology? And for those who are not Christian and these things are all exceedingly bizarre, we highly suggest thinking about them, because the world around you is being shaped by forces whose rationale is religious, and if you don’t understand it you will be left groping at straws in the dark. A knowledge of theology and religious history is necessary to critique and make positive change in the public sphere, even if you yourself are not religious.

For not that much has changed, only that people are less historically minded than in the past. People continue to see types of prophecy in their leaders. This is the same line of thought that many Christian people who

support President Trump say; they compare him to Cyrus, King of Persia and an unbeliever, whom God declared in Isaiah 44-45 as being His servant and His anointed. Most believe Trump is not a strong Christian, they accept that he is morally corrupt, but they still see him as being used by God, just as Cyrus was.

Once Donald Trump became a serious contender for the Republican Party's presidential nomination in early 2016, some Christians saw him as the instrument of deliverance. This idea came primarily from the theological fringe that Trump courted: televangelists, Pentecostals, health-and-wealth hucksters. It came from men such as Lance Wallnau, an evangelical public speaker who met with Trump during his campaign and, since 2015, had been writing articles that likened the candidate to Cyrus. Throughout history, Wallnau argued, God had used pagan leaders to enact his will and protect his people. Just as Cyrus was a powerful leader anointed by Yahweh to end the exile, so Trump was "a wrecking ball to the spirit of political correctness." Wallnau eventually published his theory in a book titled *God's Chaos Candidate* (2016). Just before the election, it reached number nineteen on Amazon's bestseller list, and others have continued to make the comparison. In March 2018, Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu visited the United States and joined the evangelical chorus. "The Jewish people have a long memory," he told Trump in the Oval Office. They remember Cyrus. "Twenty-five hundred years ago, he proclaimed that the Jewish exiles in Babylon could come back and rebuild our temple in Jerusalem."

<https://harpers.org/archive/2018/05/exiled/>

But again the contradiction arises. Human governments are run on force. Modern Israel was created by the use of force. Did Jesus use force? Does Christ want us to reconcile the world to His Father by force? Is such a thing in His name, in His character? And this leads us to a greater question – is God's government like human governments? Is it run on force? Are His laws only the way they are because He commands them so, similar to human laws in that they could be changed at any time

arbitrarily; or are the laws of God designed as how the fabric of reality is to work, for our benefit?

Meghan O’Gieblyn, the author of the Harper’s article quoted above, had studied theology in the famous Moody Bible Institute in the early 2000s, but had later given up her faith. She ends her article here with this poignantly sad description of her own doubts regarding the character of God:

Though the vice president likes to draw from the Old Testament’s promises of redemption, these texts are undergirded by a brutal moral calculus that is difficult to reconcile with the teachings of Christ. Israel always gets what it deserves—punishment or deliverance—and yet so many others are the collateral damage of that cycle. There are the enemies of Israel, who are slain without mercy. And there are the countless foreign tribes who get caught in the crosshairs—groups who are settled on territories God intends for Judah, or people whose religion poses a threat to Jewish purity. Their demise appears in the margins of these stories, often in a single sentence: *They burned all the towns where the Midianites had settled, as well as all their camps.* I remember coming across these passages when I was in Bible school, struggling with the first shadows of doubt, trying and failing to understand why so many people had to suffer for one group’s redemption—why this ongoing drama between the elect and their God had to come at such a terrible cost.

We are what we behold, what we think about. The spectre of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob looms large over our world. Who is this God? Is what Jesus said, that “if you have seen Me, you have seen the Father” true? Is the Father really like Jesus? But what happened in the Old Testament? Contact us for the book ‘**Agape**’, which we would give to all freely to those who would read.

Missionaries and Empire

The majority of missionaries overseas are from the United States. In 2007 I was studying Arabic and Islam in Jordan, a country in the Middle East between Iraq and Israel. Because of so many occasions of CIA involvement in the politics in the Middle East, I, and the other Americans studying a semester at the University of Jordan, were often asked and/or accused of being CIA agents. Many missionaries are also looked at suspiciously. Many nations see missionaries as the frontline pioneers of western control. India, for example, still refuses to let in missionaries because they are seen as undermining their national sovereignty. See this excellent article 'The Religious Crusades', written by an Indian worried about his nation's sovereignty, of which I excerpt from:

The CIA-church connection had been one of the topics of an investigation conducted by the US Senate in 1975. Coincidentally, it came to be known as the Church Committee as it was headed by Senator Frank Church, and according to the report of this Committee, the CIA had informed them of at least "a total of 14 covert arrangements which involved direct operational use of 21 individuals" who were American clergy or missionaries. The report went on to state that a few of them "were current in August 1975, and according to the CIA, they were used only for intelligence collection, or, in one case, for a minor role in preserving the cover of another asset."

The following excerpt from the Church Committee report speaks for itself and highlights the dangers of allowing foreign missionaries into India.

"[T]he CIA paid salaries, bonuses, or expenses to the religious personnel, or helped to fund projects run by them. Most of the individuals were used for covert action purposes. Several were involved in large covert action projects of the mid-sixties, which were directed at "competing" with communism in the Third World...

Of the recent relationships, the most damaging would appear to be that of a U.S. priest serving the CIA as an informant on student and religious dissidence.

Of the earlier cases, one exemplifies the extent to which the CIA used confidential pastoral relationships. The CIA used the pastor of a church in a Third World country as a “principal agent” to carry out covert action projects, and as a spotter, assessor, asset developer, and recruiter. He collected information on political developments and on personalities. He passed CIA propaganda to the local press.

According to the CIA’s description of the case, the pastor’s analyses were based on his long-term friendships with the personalities, and the agents under him were “well known to him in his professional life.” At first the CIA provided only occasional gifts to the pastor in return for his services; later, for over ten years, the CIA paid him a salary that reached \$11,414 annually.”

The figure of \$11,414 in this excerpt gives us a clue that the country in question is most likely India as this amount translates to a nice round figure of one lakh rupees using the currency exchange rate of the day. In addition to being a round figure, it was also a substantial amount of money in the 1970s in India.

After the creation of the CIA, Christian missionaries played a very important role in destabilizing various countries and in carrying out espionage activities on behalf of the CIA.

(<http://indiafacts.org/religious-crusades-cia/>)

Is it no wonder that there is so much mistrust of Christians? Every missionary, but especially American and (insert NATO allied member country) missionaries should be aware of this history when they are wondering why it is so hard to evangelize. US dollars go for a lot of money in the 3rd world, and the CIA’s budget seems near infinite.

In 1977 a law was passed barring the CIA from using journalists and missionaries. But in 1996 it turned out that the law could be gotten

around if there were a “unique and special threat to national security”, or if the missionaries supervisors agreed to it.

(<https://wapo.st/2wVm3P2>)

Recently there was news of a Christian NGO being used as a front to do espionage in North Korea, as well as a group kicked out of Venezuela.

“Missionaries here in the United States have been too close to the CIA,” [Tony Campolo](#), professor emeritus of sociology at Eastern University and founder and president of the Evangelical Association for the Promotion of Education, said in a recent [podcast](#).

“For instance, very often when missionaries come home from the field, if they’ve been serving in places like Pakistan or Afghanistan, the CIA calls them to Washington,” Campolo said in audio posted at [RedLetterChristians.org](#). “And too often the missionaries go to Washington and are debriefed: Who are the leaders in the villages where you were working? What was the attitude of people in the churches toward the United States?”

<https://baptistnews.com/article/campolo-says-us-missionaries-too-close-to-cia/#.W44Ess4zZJw>

It seems that oftentimes it remains up to the missionaries themselves whether they want to work with the CIA. No doubt the CIA has carrots and sticks to encourage their working together, but the question comes up: why do missionaries so often think it is ok? America was formed on separation of Church and State, but if it is in the interests of government to use the church and church to use government, then surely a theology could be boosted that would work to the benefit of both sides. This would be nothing new in the history of Christianity. Indeed, it seems America, which has adopted all the symbolism of Ancient Rome, is also on track to follow the same religious and political trajectory as the Roman Republic/Empire.

⁹ The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun. Ecclesiastes 1:9

Constantine and Trump

What do you think of the Roman Emperor Constantine the Great, who in 313 AD ended the persecution of Christians, made Christianity the state religion, and became the first Christian Emperor? Was this a good thing or a bad thing? How you understand this reveals a lot about your understanding of history and law and the gospel. If one googles 'Constantine' and 'Trump' one gets two articles that agree that the two leaders are similar – but one says this is good, the other bad.

Here is the man who says it is good:

Christians are unable to speak freely. Religious freedom is under attack. Society is materialistic and immoral. Western civilisation is facing huge threats, from within and without. And apparently the one powerful emerging leader is no saint.

You're thinking America 2016? No. Rome 312.

The leader is Constantine, who is vying to become the Roman Emperor. Constantine had many defects: he had multiple wives and even put one of them to death, was extremely ambitious, and was a ruthless general and politician. But the legend remains that he had a "Road to Damascus" moment, saw a vision, converted to Christianity, triumphed over his opponents, and became a great emperor of Rome.

Constantine would go on to not only save the Roman Empire, but also liberate Christianity. He signed the Edict of Milan in 313, giving Christians the right to practice their faith and speak freely. This was enough to allow Christians to engage in the public sphere with freedom, thereby enabling them to spread the Christian message to the ends of the empire and Christianise a pagan culture.

Constantine himself was no pillar of virtue, but he created the environment which gave Christians the freedom to influence society. The early Christians were perfectly capable of influencing society themselves; all they needed from the emperor was the freedom to do so.

Fast forward to 2016, and we can see many obvious similarities. Western society has many problems. Conservative Christians have the solutions to many of those problems, but cannot articulate them freely in the public square due to endemic political correctness and cultural Marxism.

Conservatives do not lack will, good arguments, or articulate defenders; what they lack is the freedom to speak bluntly about social issues without being shouted down by the vindictive hordes of secular progressivism for “offending” particular groups of people. Donald Trump is the only person who can give us that freedom.

<https://www.mercatornet.com/articles/view/is-trump-the-new-constantine/17800>

We can all agree that these are desperate times, but is a leader that we hand our sovereignty to what we need? And as Christians, is it right to ensure our safety by giving up some of our freedom of conscience to the state, as well as using repressive measures on non-Christian ideologies? What is more important, security or freedom? Many people nowadays cannot understand the great rise of fascism in the early 1900's, but it was because democracy was seen as increasingly ineffective and inefficient. Today it is the same – democracy is increasingly seen as being unable to deal with the crisis that seems to be just about to break over the horizon. This first commentator sees Constantine as necessary to “save” Christianity, finally granting it the “glory” it deserved and uniting the empire. But was this acceptance by the human authorities what Jesus had

in mind when he said “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's”? Mark 12:17.

Notice how this 2nd author makes the same comparison between Constantine and Trump, but interprets it totally different:

Trump’s rise to the American throne of power also comes at a time when Christian civilization is under serious attack.

Radical Islam has been unleashing its demonic hatred against Christians all over the world (as well as against Jews and other minorities.) At the same time secular humanism has all but dethroned Biblical beliefs in the West.

However, Trump’s stunning victory has brought new hope that both of these satanic onslaughts can be rolled back. And that decades of declining Biblical values can be restored through political power. Which of course, they can’t. Nevertheless, he is being heralded as the new champion of the faith, though the genuineness of his faith, like Constantine’s, is questionable.

Which brings me to this most foreboding parallel.

When both men came to power they were faced with a divisive situation that was rattling the well-being of their respective worlds. For Constantine it was a theological debate over the deity of Jesus. For Trump it is the Israeli/Palestinian conflict.

We know how Constantine dealt with his problem. He convened an ecumenical council at Nicea in 325 AD, requesting the attendance of Christian leaders from all across the Empire. He promised to act simply as a referee between the warring theological factions. But that’s not how it went down.

History records he oversaw the council dressed in purple, seated on a gold chair and looking like “a heavenly messenger of God covered with gold and gems” (*Glory to God In the Highest*, Joel Hemphill, pg.414). With his imposing royal presence, he pressured the council to adopt a theological

solution that all Christendom had to abide by under a threat of death. As the American Academic Encyclopedia reports. "...it was the first time he had used the imperial office to impose a settlement."

The rest, of course, is history. By creating a Christian theocracy with state-enforced doctrines, the world and the church were fused. It took the American Revolution, over 1400 years later, to free believers from this ungodly marriage.

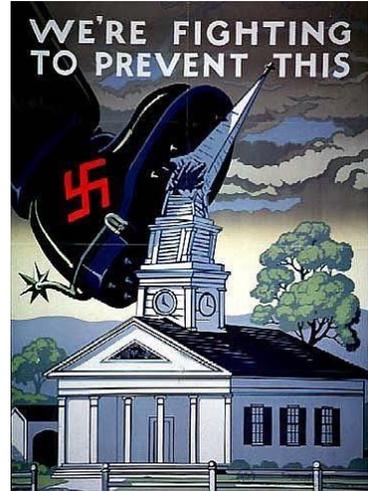
<http://www.israeltoday.co.il/NewsItem/tabid/178/nid/31431/Default.aspx>

So should Church and State be fused? The first author thinks so, that it necessary to overcome evil. The 2nd author thinks it is the *start* of terrible evil. Does God set up leaders, or are we to revolt against leaders? How are we to relate to leaders who claim authority in the affairs of religion? These are questions that have haunted history for centuries. And it has to do with how we understand God, His governance, and His law. How we view authority is shaped by how we view the highest authority – God – whether you believe He exists or not.

Church and State in Nazi Germany



This propaganda poster from 1933 reads, "Hitler's fight and Luther's teaching are the best defense for the German people." (Facing History and Ourselves)



Meanwhile in America this poster was used to argue that Germany was against Christianity. Are we seeing many say that Christianity is under attack today? (Hoover Institution Library & Archives)

We don't have to go back to Constantine to find a relevant study on the union of Church and State. We have much more recent history to look upon. By speaking of Nazi Germany, I in no way want to bash Germany or to say that we are more righteous than they were. In reality, their context is remarkably similar to ours, making Germany such an important period of history to study. In the early to mid-1900s Germany was arguably the most developed, cultured, and educated country in the world. It was because they were so competent and advanced that their state apparatus was so well-run, and finally their repressive regime so all-encompassing. It

was model fascism: private industry, religion, entertainment, and civil society all working efficiently together under the guidance of the state.

Germany was a nation that saw itself under threat, its status and position being undermined by enemies within and without. It was willing to take drastic measures for the purpose of increased security, whether real or perceived. It only required a genius power to maneuver itself into that vacuum. And when the crisis came, not only were the constitutional safety measures found wanting, the media found gutless, the people totally willing to go along – but the Churches, the supposed bulwarks of morality, were also eagerly on board. Through their understanding of *authority*, how God works in the political sphere, they were also caught up in the potential of this seductive and ultra-proficient new power.

The Nazi government ushered in key changes to the Protestant churches in Germany. First, the Nazi leadership supported the German Christian movement, a group of Protestants who wanted to combine Christianity and National Socialism into a movement “that would exclude all those deemed impure and embrace all ‘true Germans’ in a spiritual homeland for the Third Reich.”

Second, the Nazi leadership urged Protestants to unite all regional churches into a national church under the centralized leadership of Ludwig Müller, a well-known pastor and Nazi Party member, who was appointed as Reich bishop. Many German Protestants embraced these changes. By supporting the German Christian movement and Müller, they could continue to practice their faith and at the same time show support for Hitler. In a national vote by Protestants taken in July 1933, the German Christians were supported by two-thirds of voters, and Müller won the national election to lead them.

<https://www.facinghistory.org/holocaust-and-human-behavior/chapter-5/protestant-churches-and-nazi-state>

By sharing this I ask the reader to consider the principle involved here regarding the social mind of humans when put under stress, and how far it

is willing to go in obeisance to a power source that is able to assuage that stress – especially if it is able to get things done remarkably fast. Have we not been trained to worship competence and performance? Cultural circumstances change, but from a worldly standpoint fear will always want more security and power will always want more control. But this overwhelming Christian support for Hitler is troubling. Protestants are supposed to protest and be against centralized control right? And isn't the Catholic Church a neutral arbiter of peace; why is it so willing to support a dictator? Indeed, if one were to look at the dictators across Europe in WWII, Mussolini, Franco, and Hitler all had the backing and support of the Catholic Church.



Hitler's election poster uses the 1933 concordat (signed between Germany and the Vatican)

“Why is a Catholic obliged to vote for the parliamentary list of Adolf Hitler? Because in the National Socialist state intrinsically and through the Reichskonkordat:

1. The Faith is protected,
2. Peace with the Church is assured,
3. Public morality is preserved,
4. Sunday is hallowed,
5. Catholic schools are maintained,
6. The Catholic conscience is no longer burdened,

7. A Catholic has equal rights before the law and in the life of the nation,
8. Catholic organisations and associations, insofar as they exclusively serve religious, charitable and cultural purposes, can operate freely.

Therefore a Catholic is obliged on 12 November [1933] to vote thus:
Referendum: **yes** Parliamentary election: **Adolf Hitler** “

<http://www.concordatwatch.eu/kb-36931.834>

It is the purpose of this paper not to argue about politics, but to bring up the deeper religious significance of why humans fall into these patterns of reasoning. It is our hypothesis that it is our very understanding of God, how He judges, what He wants, His will for this world, and most particularly how He deals with those that disagree with Him, that is at the heart of this great moral catastrophe. It is easy to love your allies; it is harder to love your enemies. Jesus articulates this point in Luke 6:32-36.

³²“If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. ³³And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do that. ³⁴And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, expecting to be repaid in full.³⁵ But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. ³⁶Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

It is really the Father’s character to be merciful? That doesn’t seem to be how most understand the national-political history laid out in the Old Testament, nor does it seem to be how nation-states now perceive Christianity and its valuable use as a state religion. Does God want a hegemonic Christian Empire dictating the laws and regulations of the nations of the world? This contradictory, unstable understanding of God allows for the easy manipulation of Christianity. I quote extensively from a translation of Professor Johann’s excellent lecture regarding the condition

of the churches in the Nazi era, given in German in 1995 at the University of Tübingen:

The church leaders shared with many of their contemporaries an overestimation of the Teutonic virtues which were supposed to be of such benefit to the world, and especially the tendency to authoritarian structures and military organisation.

What the bishops overlooked is that the freedom and rights of the churches were inseparable from the political freedom of everyone. They seem not to have noticed that Church youth groups and clubs can only flourish if all other organisations are free to exist. They seemed to assume — in fact, perhaps even to wish — that the Catholic Church would be able to exist in freedom, even when all other social groups, the Socialists and Liberals, the Jews and Freethinkers, were eliminated. They understood freedom only as "freedom for the Truths of the Church". The professor of church law, Josef Wenner, was not unusual in the way he greeted the "Emergency Measures Act of the President of the Reich for the Protection of the German People" (of 4.2.1933). This placed the country for practical purposes under martial law and allowed Hitler to arrest members of the opposition, including faithful Catholics. Yet he applauded it as an "*energetic and purposeful measure of the government for national improvement*" in the "*struggle against the enemies of German culture and Christian morals*".

The German bishops affirmed in their "Common Pastoral Letter of the prelates of the Dioceses of Germany on the Church in the new Reich" of 3.6.1933 that:

"In our Holy Catholic Church the significance and value of authority is shown to particular advantage.... It is therefore by no means difficult for us as Catholics to appreciate the strong new emphasis on authority in the German state and to readily submit, as we denote it not only as a natural virtue, but as a supernatural one, as well.... To our great joy, the leading men of the new state have explicitly stated that they base themselves and their work on a Christian fundament. This is a solemn,

public commitment that has earned the heartfelt thanks of all Catholics".

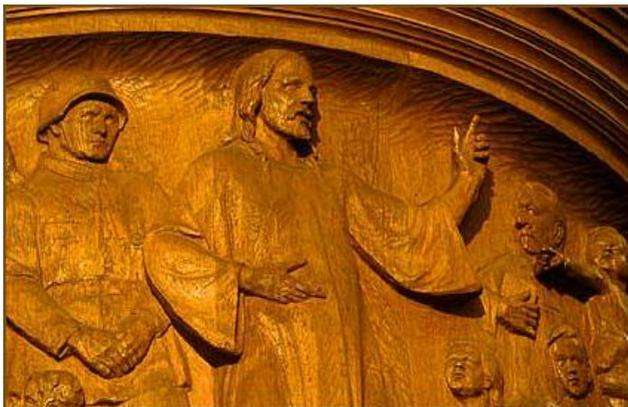
By this point many of the Nazis' political opponents of all kinds had been beaten up, had disappeared or were in "preventative detention", and the first pogroms against the Jews and the Communists had already taken place. In other words, the bishops were in a position to know exactly what "the leading men of the German state" were capable of. According to them Jews, Gypsies, homosexuals, Socialists, Bolsheviks and "Liberal decadents" had no claim to humane treatment or to freedom and the protection of the law. In this matter the bishops and broad sections of Catholics, as well as the conservative Protestant Christians were in agreement with the Nazis. The bishops appear to have hoped that the Catholic Church could be strengthened by the destruction of her traditional opponents, because she was protected by the *Reichskonkordat*, a pact that the Pope had signed with Hitler.

This may help to explain the triumphant tone of the pastoral letter: *"Never again shall faithlessness, and the immorality that this unchains, poison the marrow of the German people, never again shall the murderous Bolshevism with its hatred of God threaten and ravage German souls...."* They closed their pastoral letter with the hope that *"the prudence and energy of the German Führer [will succeed in] quenching all those various sparks and glowing brands that are intended to be fanned into fearful fires against the Catholic Church"*.

...

Indeed, the inner affinity of Christianity to totalitarian Nazism - both in its Roman Catholic and its Protestant forms - is quite startling.

http://www.concordatwatch.eu/showkb.php?org_id=858&kb_header_id=43191&order=kb_rank%20ASC&kb_id=36941



The German Protestant churches, not having concordats, didn't enter any with Hitler, but they, too, compromised themselves. This carving is on the pulpit of the Martin Luther Memorial Church in Berlin. It shows Jesus beside a helmeted Wehrmacht soldier. (On the other side is that a hostile Jew clutching his own sacred book?) The walls were originally decorated with swastikas, but they have been scraped away because the Nazi symbol is now illegal in Germany. The church bells were also embossed with swastikas, but in 1942 they were melted down to make guns and ammunition.

Remember how the Bible states that “there is nothing new under the sun.” Are not western values perceived to be under attack now, like they were perceived to be under attack in Germany? Is not authoritarianism increasingly seen as necessary, even if it has a few unsavory qualities? Are not unwholesome pacts required, for “the ends justify the means”? But we have a picture of where such a train of thought leads us in the history of Nazi Germany. At the end of his talk, Professor Neumann remarks with surprise at the lack of self-awareness on the part of the German churches after 1945. Nothing has been learned; there is little repentance. But are we surprised? 2000 years on from the death of Jesus and we continue to make the same mistakes, because we still have the *same misunderstanding of God's character*: We think that God favors one group to the exclusion of others and will destroy those who are not part of the plan. This is deeper than whether you are a professed Christian, whether you have renounced your childhood religion, whether you have been baptized. This is about how you see authority, justice,

mercy, and law; how you imagine the Creator to be, even if you intellectually don't think there is a Creator. Our ideas on government, authority, forgiveness, judgment – all of these concepts come passed down to us from a religious perspective. Nearly every historical worldview has an understanding of a Creator, a designer who has made this world. Thus every person, consciously or unconsciously, has some idea already about whether that Creator is good or bad, altruistic or selfish. It needs to be worked through and addressed, or there can be no peace. The following is an excerpt continued from above:

The Protestant New Testament scholar, Berndt Schaller, has investigated the precarious relationship between Christians and Jews during the Nazi period. He comes to the disturbing conclusion that although church circles clearly rejected the pogroms against the Jews in private, neither Catholic nor Protestant bishops and church leaders had spoken out against the violence in public. Only a few of them, like the Catholic provost, Bernhard Lichtenberg in Berlin and the Protestant pastors from Wurtemberg, Julius von Jan, Helmut Gollwitzer and a few others, actually talked about the persecution of the Jews and took a stand, either openly or in veiled terms. It is staggering to note that even in these critical remarks, antisemitism was in no way questioned, but was often explicitly affirmed. Apart from State Bishop Wurm who protested to the Federal Minister of Justice, most of the clerics of all churches and most of the church publications, as well, remained silent.

It is particularly shocking that the church leaders were silent, not due to fear but rather, as State Bishop Heinrich Rendtorff put it, *"from considerations of principle"*. He explained these principles, as follows... *"The Church is thankful that finally there is authority once more. That being the case, it would go against religious beliefs to thwart the temporal authority, especially since this is a central point of the government's programme"*. Where is the obedience to the word of God that the churches normally swear to uphold? Was the commandment, "Thou shalt not kill" no longer the word of God?

Is it God who is Violent, or Man?

It is easy to blame “organized religion” for all of this. Nevertheless religion exists, organized or unorganized. In Germany, there was little protest from grassroots “unorganized” bodies either. As our world lurches towards a doomsday scenario, the hopes of secular humanism seem empty and the metaphysical answers of naturalistic materialism tend to hopelessness. We at Fatheroflove.info believe that there is a God who will help us – but not the God of the orthodoxy, whom out of “principle” and “authority” tortures and kills His enemies. For us, God’s “mercy endures forever (Psalm 136), and that God has the same character as His Son Jesus. Indeed, we believe that it is the mission of His Son to show us that the Father does not, and will not, use force to eliminate His enemies; rather he bears the suffering of the entire world, all of whom He loves equally as His children with pure agape-love; but He instead withdraws Himself in grief when His pleadings are constantly rejected, a process seen most clearly in the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. This is a process of visiting or iniquities upon us, rather than arbitrary direct execution. Much of the Bible is God speaking to us in the faithless, violent worldview that we understand, hoping that as we get to know Jesus more we would determine to raise ourself up from our sinful nature.

To many this picture of God seems beyond the realms of the Bible, and that the alternate view – that of a God burning his enemies, waging war on infidel nations, and judging men as failures – is seemingly set in stone. Yet we believe the view of God as shown to Moses – “*merciful, gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth*” – is not only possible, but scriptural; it is there in the Word for those who will study. In fact, we have tasted of the goodness of God and wish to share; that is why we write this...to lead you, the reader, into heavenly truths. We do this not merely with the intention of laying out of the failures of man, which are all too obvious. The sharp critique given here is not enough. It is the purpose of this short booklet to offer a diagnosis of the problem, with the hope that your curiosity will be raised or a longing awakened, and that you will

take the next step of contacting us for the up-building cure, 'Agape', giving yourself the chance to consider a different perspective.

Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. Romans 14:5

Before saying that a picture of God in whom "there is no darkness at all" is impossible, we plead with you to at least consider the evidence that we have so exhaustingly, with much tears, hardship, and prayer, searched out. A wrestling with the subject of the character of God is the most important task left for men, answering the deepest questions of the soul. Jesus himself prayed right before his crucifixion: "*This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only True God...*" John 17:3. The fact that Jesus has this phrase as central in His final prayer, that by grace we just "might know" and understand His Father, shows how difficult this knowledge is for us to attain/receive. If we are to avoid the inevitable violence that comes from a wrong understanding of the character of God, we are going to need to do more than just ignore the problem, which man has been doing for millennia... As man's capacity to destroy himself increases, so does the importance of knowing the true pure loving character of God. As Christians, representatives of Christ, it is our responsibility to share this new understanding and right the wrongs of our forefathers. We are destined to repeat the same mistakes if the problem has not been solved.

Professor Neumann ends his lecture with this thought:

On 26.04.1933 Hitler told the Catholic Bishop Berning, "*Religious soldiers are the most valuable ones. They do their utmost. Therefore we will retain the sectarian schools....*"

The churches were quietly complicit at a time when they could still have spoken out; that is what they have to answer for. That they later kept silent due to fear is something that today no one should blame them for, yet this in itself makes it clear that as institutions they were no better than anyone else. Like so many others in the Nazi period, the churches went with the current. They didn't promote peace or call for justice and they certainly didn't set any standard for moral behaviour. On the contrary, with their directives about the authority sanctioned by God they soothed the troubled consciences of many Germans, and

indeed they discredited and often criminalised the voice of individual conscience. The churches were petty and more guilty than others who acted similarly because they led people astray by appealing to the commandments of God. They have been mirrors of their society, but in no way models of moral behaviour. During the Nazi period - and also now - they have generally only preached what fitted in with the times - or with their own interests.

http://www.concordatwatch.eu/showkb.php?org_id=858&kb_header_id=43191&order=kb_rank%20ASC&kb_id=36941

We believe God does not kill, that He follows His own commandments. The 10 Commandments are a transcript of God's character. The Law and His governance, His upholding of the universe, are an outflowing of His goodness and mercy. And we believe we can prove it if you look at the Bible with the eyes of the Son of God, Jesus Christ.

Most people on this earth desire to live a life free of the control and violence of others, and yet it is impossible to escape this type of existence while the God we worship is controlling and violent. We can never have harmony between nations when one nation is favored and the rest are to be crushed and destroyed.

The book '**Agape**' is a serious attempt to show a different mode of thinking in the relationship between God and violence, thus laying a better foundation for how we live as a community, regardless of whether we agree or disagree with each other.

National Socialism was no "accident" that happened to Germany, no unexpected event that overtook the German people and the continent of Europe, and certainly no catastrophe that loomed suddenly before the Christian churches. Rather it was the consequence of German political and theological traditions.

Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD... - Isaiah 1:18

In God's Name

The Failure of Political Christianity

In the conflict and jostling of nations for dominance and control of the earth's resources, few things serve as a better motivator than to believe that God has chosen you as His people and that He will subjugate and crush your enemies.

This narrative has been used by nations such as Britain, Germany and most notably the United States of America. The invocation of a warlord type God reflected in the teaching of these so-called Christian nations has caused many people to reject Christianity as a religion of war and violence.

The author of this booklet was one such person until he met some Christians in an unlikely place to open a path to a different understanding of God and Christ. The intent of this booklet is to expose the false practice of nations in using the religion of Christianity to advance their ambitions.

The greatest casualty of all this is the view of God this has portrayed to the world, which causes many to turn away. You are invited to take another look and consider that since Jesus came as the prince of peace, that His Father, the one true God, is the King of Peace and is not a God of war as supposed by most.