

Contortions of American Christianity

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international / prose / post

Pompeo: "My Faith in Jesus Christ Makes a Real Difference"

Pompeo says God may have sent Trump to save Israel from Iran

"As a Christian, I certainly believe that's possible," said Mr Pompeo.... "I am confident that the Lord is at work here,"

Pence, a Catholic Evangelical who almost became a priest: "I made a commitment to Christ."

Christians? These Christians support a war on Yemen in which huge numbers of people are dying of mutilation, cholera, and starvation, a war they could stop with a telephone call. They similarly support butchery of Afghans from the air, massive killing in Syria, bombing of Somalis, and torture chambers around the world. Such is their Christianity. They lack even a shred of human decency. But they are Christians.

Tell me, Mr Pompeo, Mr. Pence:. Have you ever seen a child die of starvation? I have heard it described. It takes many days. Crying, crying, crying, slowly getting weaker. The mother, frantic, desperate, going crazy. The child holds out his arms, expecting as children do that their mother will do something. The crying eventually stops. But maybe you would get more of a kick out of watching one die of cholera caused by your wars. Death by cholera is quicker, but more interesting: Puking and defecating uncontrollably, crying, crying. The dehydration kills them. Neat, huh? Meanwhile, Mike, you eat prime rib in Washington and talk of the sanctity of your faith. You are a goddamned pious monster. May you rot in hell, if any.

We have Pompeo, a malignant manatee looking to start wars in which he will not risk his flabby amorphous ass also parading his Christianity. Bolton, a mean sonofabitch who belongs in a strait jacket, at least doesn't pose as someone having a soul. And the Golden Tufted Cocatoo, too weak to control those around him, preening and tweeting. God save us.

Those of a certain age may remember Christianity as a vague though real niceness practiced by people who would have been equally nice without it. Christmas meant trees glowing with lights and a nativity seen on the town square, this not yet being illegal, and choirs of children singing carols in front of houses, carols on public streets not yet having been found unconstitutional. It means a spaniel-eyed Jesus looking skyward in sappy adoration. It was pleasant. This is not the Christianity of Pence and Pompeo. They are amoral Christians. They are cruel Christians. They are evil Christians.

A politically useful tendency-useful to Mike Pence-is to think of Christianity as a quaint and beleaguered faith rooted in goodness and kindness and concern for others. Historically this has not been the case. Christianity has a record of savagery, of bestial religious wars, torture, the burning of heretics. In Zacatecas, Mexico, there is a museum of instruments of torture used by the Inquisition. They are too sickening to describe. This was not the Christianity of Jimmy Carter or Mother Theresa. It is the Christianity of Mike Pence and Pompeo.

And they are Evangelicals. This may prove to be an even greater disqualification for office.

Evangelicals are...strange. For the most part they are not evil, just people, often poorly educated, as best they can trying to make sense of an incomprehensible existence. (Rapture Culture is not a great book, but gives a fair picture of Evangelicals.) Theirs is a peculiar theology, one with implications for foreign policy. They believe in the Rapture. They believe that we are in the End Times. This means that one day soon the faithful will disappear-pooof-and be sucked up into heaven by the Rapture. Whoosh. The rest of us will endure the Tribulation, a time when the Antichrist will rule in chaos and savagery. Then Jesus will come and defeat him in the battle of Armageddon.

None of this matters particularly in itself. Religions have often predicted the end of the world. They get over it. But:

What does matter is the Evangelical belief that before the world can end, the Jews must gather in Israel and be converted to Christianity. This puts Evangelicals in the curious position of being pro-Israel but anti-Semitic. So far as I am aware, Jews have no enthusiasm for conversion. Those who believe this are called Christian Zionists, and their loyalty is to whatever they think God wants, not to peace, America, or reason. They are loyal to Israel because it is essential to the end of the world.

This means that directing the foreign policy of the United States we have two fringe Christians, two Jews (Kushner and Ivanka) and an addled and easily led First Carrot. It means that Pompeo and Pence are driven not by practical consideration of the needs and well being of the United States but by loyalty to curious theological ideas and to a foreign country. They will do what fits these ideas. And they are simply bad men.

Pence, speaking to Jews: "Let me say emphatically, like the overwhelming majority of my constituents, my Christian faith compels me to cherish the state of Israel."

He backed that up last December at the Republican Jewish Coalition's conference when he said: "Israel's enemies are our enemies, Israel's cause is our cause. If this world knows nothing else, let it know this: America stands with Israel."

This is astounding. A vice President of the United States openly stating that he is loyal to a foreign country. If Israel wants war with Iran, then so does Pence—because Israel wants it. If Israel pushes America into a war with Iran, which its control over Congress, finance, and the media may allow it to do, Pence will favor it. How many Americans have signed on to this?

And in war he will take the rest of us along with him.

Moving the embassy to Jerusalem. Recognizing Israeli sovereignty over Golan. Very likely, over the West Bank. Perhaps going to war against Iran for which there is no other reason. In this case millions will die for a screwball theology with the spiritual legitimacy of the Hare Krishnas. Can we take a vote on this?

While neither Pence nor Pompeo would go openly near a torture chamber—bad PR, that—they know that allies such as the Saudis and Israelis do such thing, and that Gina Haspel, head of the CIA and known sadist, does equivalent things in secret torture sites of which Pence and Pompeo are aware. Oh, but they are men of Jesus.

In general, the more seriously Christianity is taken, the less pleasant it becomes. (This is equally true of all three Mid-Eastern religions.) Of course sub sects of Christians differ. At one extreme you

have the Unitarians, who believe that if God existed, He would be a force for community betterment. At the other extreme you have the Catholics at their worst, tearing people slowly limb from limb.

Christianity has a long and dismal history of oddball sects and heresies which often have fought bloody wars. Aryans, Cathars, Protestants, Mormons, Tai Pings, Moonies, Snake Handlers, Evangelicals. I have seen conservatives criticizing the Chinese for suppressing Christianity. The Chinese have their reasons. From 1850 to 1864 the Tai Pings, a truly screwy off-brand Christianity whose leader thought he was the little brother of Jesus, caused what may have been the bloodiest civil war in history. When leaders think they are on Whatsapp with God, they will do what they think He tells them. And if God says to smite Iran, smite Iran they will.

Grotesque torture as a means of social control was not limited to Mexico or Catholics. The history of Europe is a monstrous tapestry of barbarism by those three awful Mid-Eastern religions warring, butchering, burning heretics, the rack, strappado, The Jews behaved much less badly because ,lacking a country and an army, they had to. When they acquired these things, they began behaving like Christians and Moslems.

Maybe we should leave foreign policy to diplomats.

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