



“The View” Libels Christians With Claim Hitler Was a Christian

In a discussion on the ABC morning talk show *The View* this week about the reactions of some Republican presidential candidates to the wisdom of allowing just any Syrian refugee into the country, Whoopi Goldberg told the other panelists that Christians can be dangerous, just like Muslims.

After all, explained Goldberg, “Hitler was a Christian.”

Goldberg is an atheist, and her contention that Hitler, one of history’s greatest tyrants, was a Christian is a common assertion by the irreligious. While Christianity’s enemies see Hitler as the favorite example of a “good Christian,” others who have committed mass murder also make the short list of “model” Christians, at least for this group of militant atheists. Of course, any person who blows up an abortion clinic is penciled in on the list of Christians, along with preachers who have affairs.

Joy Behar added that Timothy McVeigh was another example of a “Christian.” McVeigh, executed for blowing up Oklahoma City’s Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in 1995, killing 168 people, was actually a self-described agnostic; however, such inconvenient facts make little difference in these incessant efforts to sully the Christian faith.

But nobody was worse than Hitler.

Although Hitler was responsible for the Holocaust, in which almost six million Jews were killed, as well as millions of others he considered undesirable, to the left-wing Goldberg, he was a “Christian.” “There have been a lot of horrifying ... there have been a lot of monster Christians,” she insisted.

Despite overwhelming evidence that Adolf Hitler actually despised Christianity, it is a persistent myth that he was some sort of champion of the Christian faith.

The truth is that Hitler and his National Socialists (Nazis, for short), were anti-Christian. Alan Bullock wrote in his book *Hitler: A Study in Tyranny*, “Once the war was over, [Hitler] promised himself he would root out and destroy the influence of the Christian churches.” In the short run, Hitler the politician had to tread carefully, and not offend the German people, who were still mostly Christian. In fact, less than two percent of Germans identified as atheists in 1939.

Writing in *The Dark Charisma of Adolf Hitler*, Laurence Rees contended that there was “no evidence that Hitler himself, in his personal life, ever expressed any individual belief in the basic tenets of the Christian Church.”

Hitler had long rejected traditional Christianity. August Kubizek, who was Hitler’s best friend when the two were growing up together in Linz, Austria, made it very clear that even in his teenage years, Hitler did not believe in Jesus Christ as anything more than a man. In Kubizek’s book *The Young Hitler I Knew* he noted, “For the entire time period that I knew Adolf Hitler, I do not think he ever attended mass. He knew that I went every Sunday.” Kubizek added that Hitler told him that he could not understand why





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he bothered.

“One day he came to me in great excitement and showed me a book about the Church witch-hunts, on another occasion about the Inquisition,” noted Kubizek. From his account, it appears that Hitler’s perspective on Christianity would allow him, on this issue at least, to fit in well with Behar and Goldberg.

Historian John Toland, in his book *Adolf Hitler*, wrote about the 1904 confirmation ceremony of Hitler in the cathedral in Linz. Hitler’s confirmation sponsor said he almost had to “drag the words out of him,” and the “whole confirmation was repugnant to him.”

But, “Hitler’s evident ability to simulate ... an image of a leader keen to uphold and protect Christianity,” was critical in his public image after he entered politics in the aftermath of WWI, according to Ian Kershaw in his book *The Hitler Myth: Image and Reality in the Third Reich*. Hitler was a clever politician who used religious rhetoric at times and even quoted Scripture in public speeches.

Dinesh D’Souza wrote recently in *Catholic Education*, “To claim that this rhetoric makes Hitler a Christian is to confuse political opportunism with personal conviction. Hitler himself says in *Mein Kampf* that his public statements should be understood as propaganda ... designed to sway the masses.”

As mentioned above, Hitler’s National Socialists were careful not to launch a frontal assault upon the Christian religion, which had been dominant in Germany since the early years of the Middle Ages. Instead, Hitler and his Nazis pushed what they called a “German” form of Christianity, stripped of its “Jewish elements.” While retaining the name of Christianity, it was a paganized form of the faith, emphasizing the Germanic mythical gods of pre-Christian times. In “German” Christianity, Jesus was transformed into a staunch Aryan, brandishing a sword.

Martin Borman, a leading Nazi, said, “National Socialism and Christianity are irreconcilable.” Hitler told Borman that he looked forward to the day when “only complete idiots stand in the pulpit and preach to old women.”

Klaus Fischer, in his *Nazi Germany: A New History*, recounted that as the National Socialist dictatorship tightened its grip on Germany, the government pushed the “de-Christianizing of rituals related to birth, marriage, and death.” He noted that carols and nativity plays were forbidden in German schools in 1938. Even the very word “Christmas,” celebrated in Germany for over a thousand years, was replaced by the secular “Yuletide.”

Erich Klausener, leader of Catholic Action in Germany, was among those who died in the Night of the Long Knives, when Hitler had hundreds of political opponents murdered in a single night. Scores of Catholic publications were suppressed, and Hitler referred to Protestants as “insignificant little people.”

A “Confessing Church” arose in opposition to Hitler’s attempted perversion of Christianity. Hundreds of resistant pastors were arrested.

It was clear that Hitler was headed toward a Germany devoid of historic Christianity. William Shirer, in his *Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, quoted Nazi official Dr. Hans Kerrl’s ridicule of traditional Christianity. Responding to Count Galen (the Catholic bishop of Muenster), Kerrl said, “[Galen] tried to make clear to me that Christianity consists of faith in Christ as the Son of God. This makes me laugh.... No, Christianity is not dependent upon the Apostle’s Creed.... True Christianity is represented by the [Nazi] party.”

Albert Speer, Hitler’s minister of armaments, published his memoirs several years after the war. In his



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Inside the Third Reich, Speer noted that he was certain that Hitler was only postponing the abolition of Christianity until a more “favorable” time. According to Speer, Hitler regarded the traditional Christian faith as an “absurdity,” dismissing it as “humbug” all founded on “lies.” H.R. Trevor-Rope, writing in *Hitler’s Table Talk*, declared that Hitler said he believed Christianity was based on nothing but “myths,” and predicted, “The dogma of Christianity gets worn away before the advances of science.... Gradually the myths will crumble.”

One of the major objections Hitler had about Christianity was that he considered it too meek a religion for the German nation. Speer said Hitler declared, “You see it’s been our misfortune to have the wrong religion.” A religion that Hitler regarded as preferable to Christianity was that of Islam.

Shirer explained what Hitler planned to do about what he considered the misfortune that Germany had adopted Christianity: “The Nazi regime intended eventually to destroy Christianity in Germany, if it could, and substitute the old paganism of the early tribal Germanic gods and the new paganism of the Nazi extremists.” The National Socialists had 30 articles planned for the day the traditional Christian faith was snuffed out.

Among the articles: “The National Church is determined to exterminate irrevocably ... the strange and foreign Christian faiths imported into Germany in the ill-omened year 800 [the year of the creation of the Holy Roman Empire, the forerunner of modern Germany].” Another article said that “The National Church will clear away from its altars all crucifixes, Bibles, and pictures of saints,” replacing them with copies of *Mein Kampf*, and a sword “to the left of the altar.”

Hitler was no champion of Christianity. His religion was in stark contrast to everything about biblical Christianity. Whoopi Goldberg and Joy Mehar are examples of ignorant pseudo-intellectual dupes who blindly repeat the libel that Hitler was a model Christian in the face of overwhelming historical evidence to the contrary.

Pope Pius XII condemned Hitler’s perverted ideas at the time. German Protestants such as pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer opposed him, as well. Bonhoeffer was hanged in a German prison camp in 1945 for his opposition to the Nazi regime.

Bonhoeffer and other German Protestants, Pope Pius, and all Christians are libeled by the assertion that Hitler was a Christian.

Steve Byas is a professor of history at Hillsdale Free Will Baptist College in Moore, Oklahoma. His book, History’s Greatest Libels, challenges many of the great lies of history.



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