

The Great Scandal: Christianity's Role in the Rise of the Nazis – Part II

by Gregory S. Paul

The following article is from *Free Inquiry* magazine,
Volume 24, Number 6,
December 2003/January 2004

In the first part of this article (published in the October/November 2003 FREE INQUIRY), Gregory S. Paul probed the foundations of Christian anti-Semitism from the early church through Martin Luther into the twentieth century. By the 1920s several distinct religious strands allied and battled with one another in Germany. Protestantism and Catholicism (collectively, “traditional Christianity”) remained strongly anti-modern and anti-Semitic. Aryan Christians were fierce racial anti-Semites who denied that Christ was a Jew. Aryan neo-paganism blended Germanic bombast with Norse myth and rejected Christianity because Christ was Jewish. Collectively Aryan Christianity and paganism comprised Volkism, fount of Nazi myth and doctrine. Still, neo-pagan influence was modest compared to Christianity's. Contrary to some Christian apologists, atheism played no role in the rise of the Nazis.

All principal Nazi leaders were Protestant or Catholic by birth. Hitler's religious views were complex. A nominal Catholic who neither disavowed his faith nor was excommunicated, his mature beliefs included Christ as his Saviour, alongside a conviction that annihilating the racial enemies of the Volk was God's work. Hitler publicly and privately condemned atheism and boasted of stamping it out. He hoped to subsume existing Protestantism and Catholicism into a reformed church free of Jewish and Roman influence. Occult and neo-pagan influences on Hitler were minimal. Instead he saw himself not as Christianity's enemy but its ultimate reformer.

The Nazi takeover required Christian collaboration. It was welcomed by a German majority who disdained the Weimar Republic. Germany's Catholics would give the Nazis ultimate power. Devout Catholic chancellor Franz von Papen engineered Hitler's electoral victory and brokered a coalition between the Nazi Party and the formerly anti-Nazi Catholic party, the Zentrum. Zentrum was ultimately destroyed by its head, Ludwig Kaas, a priest who drafted the infamous 1933 Concordat between Hitler and the Vatican (alongside Papen and the future Pope Pius XII). The Concordat subjected German Catholics to Nazi authority in return for various benefits, including extravagant financial transfers to the Roman Church.

Hitler was very popular; few religious leaders resisted Nazi initiatives. Contrary to claims that Hitler relied primarily on terror to cow domestic opposition, he courted public opinion, repeatedly back-pedalled in the face of popular outrage, and eschewed using mass force against his folk. When Nazi zealots stripped crucifixes from Bavarian schools, widespread protest persuaded Hitler to order them replaced. Numerous German housewives defied a 1943 campaign to employ them in war industries, without reprisals. The same year Goebbels

detained some two thousand Jewish Berlin men married to Christian women. For a week the Gentile wives stood before the holding centre on the Rosenstrasse chanting. “We want our husbands back!” Fearing public embarrassment, Goebbels and Hitler avoided crushing the protesters as the Jews were released. Meanwhile, despite being Hitler’s small dependent ally, the democratic Finnish government firmly refused to cooperate with Nazi wishes to deport the nation’s Jews, and none were harmed.

Defenders of Christian behaviour under the Nazis face a dilemma. If Berlin housewives could openly oppose the Fuhrer’s racial policies, if wilful Scandinavians could defy the greatest military empire, how much further horror might have been averted had millions of Catholics and Protestants consistently opposed the Nazis?

The Gyre of Confusion

The relationship between Nazis and the churches was schizophrenic at best. Hitler dutifully paid the religious taxes he had instituted while he disparaged and schemed against the clergy those taxes supported. The party that once plucked crosses from schools it had encouraged to teach religion also held rallies in Christian venues blazoned with crosses. Nazi literature frequently set cross and swastika side by side. Then again, Hermann Goering declared that the Nazi stiff-arm should be considered “the only salute to Christ.” Some religious schools and monasteries were harassed, even closed, and church property confiscated; others were protected by the regime. The newly crowned Pope Pius XII protested one such round of closings and dabbled in a pint against Hitler’s rule. Yet he sent the Fuhrer fawning greetings, and cheerful birthday messages yearly.¹



Adolf Hitler with papal nuncio Cardinal Vasilio di Torregrossa.

Other figures in our narrative exemplify this same confusion. Among the politicians, consider Franz von Papen. A year after helping Hitler to power, he criticized the party and barely escaped with his life. Yet he went on to give the Nazis good service as special minister to Austria, and later as ambassador to strategic Turkey (1939-44). After the war Papen was acquitted at Nuremberg, but convicted by a de-nazification court--the sentence was overturned under pressure from Papen’s church.

Among the clergy, consider Bishop Clemens Galen. Often touted as a Hitler opponent, the “Lion of Muenster” was an ardent nationalist who detested democracy and allowed uniformed Schulzstaffel (S.S.) and Sturmabteilung (S.A.) members into his consecration procession. Although he sometimes criticized Aryan racism, Galen offered no response to Kristallnacht,

and often removed references to Jews when quoting from the Bible. In July and August 1941, he preached three famous sermons against Nazi power, but they focused almost entirely on Gestapo attacks against the church. In one sermon Galen denounced Hitler's euthanasia project, but he never decried the plight of minorities or urged Catholics to aid them. Quite the contrary, he described the Jewish people as "the only one that rejected God's truth, that threw off God's law and so condemned itself to ruin" (a passage Catholic defenders rarely republish) and exhorted Catholics to "fight and die for Germany." Galen never discussed the Holocaust nor objected to Jews being deported from his diocese. In 1943 he gave a pro-war sermon later used by the Nazis to recruit for the S.S. After the war he called the Nuremberg proceedings "show trials."

One feels sympathy for those Germans who questioned the decency of the Nazi regime, as their men of God led them in confusing circles of moral relativity and ethical depravity.

The March of Anti-Semitism

Though Jews had won substantial acceptance in Germany prior to 1933, the Nazis had little difficulty fanning anti-Semitism to pogrom heat. This was possible only because traditional Christianity furnished the foundation Nazi ideologues could build on.² If anything, records show, anti-Semitism tended to be higher among more religious Germans.³ Many Protestant bishops openly supported fascist racial policies, leading to a notorious group proclamation to that effect in 1941. Across Germany, lay Protestants were anti-Semitic in varying degrees: moderates favoured voluntary conversion to solve the “Jewish problem”, while Volkish hardliners thought elimination the only way to deal with the Semites.

As for Catholics, the fact that a small minority occasionally rescued Jews no more proves their lack of bigotry than would the sight of Southern segregationists rescuing Blacks from a flood.⁴ More telling, as the Holocaust loomed and later raged, Pius XII and the church he ruled went on promulgating the view that Judaism was defective. In the same vein, when Archbishop Bertram voiced opposition to the proposed forced divorce of Catholics and Jews in 1942, he hastened to caution that he was not minimizing the “harmful Jewish influences upon German cultural and national interests.”

Apologists point to the hundreds of thousands of Jews saved by valiant Protestant and Catholic clergy throughout occupied Europe, among them the future Pope John XXIII, a true friend to the Jews. Although laudable, the hard truth is that by 1945 eighty percent of Europe’s Jews were dead, their community all but cleansed at the hands of people of Christian faith or heritage.

Though ordinary Germans varied in the depth of their racism, most understood that their country had become inconceivably brutal. Much as Americans once mailed postcards of lynchings,⁵ Germans hoarded still photos and motion pictures of atrocities in private and official troves. Drawing on this material, Gellately recounts the massive use of slave labour in German war industries. In many locales, sick and deliberately ill-fed slaves were marched to and from work in open view of citizens, who could scarcely avoid seeing the slaves’ wretched condition. Survivors recount occasional sympathy and assistance, but the usual reaction of ordinary Germans was indifference, disgust, or hostility.

The Holocaust could not have happened without Hitler. But it also could not have happened without traditional Christianity. Hitler was no Buddhist, nor a secular humanist.

Were Traditional Christian Mass-Murdered?

Christian defenders assert that believers also faced Nazi persecution for their beliefs. However, the numbers were modest: Thomsett estimates that, over twelve years, about six thousand German clergy were sent to camps, of whom two thousand died.⁶ And most or all were targeted for anti-Nazi activities. The scale of this horror pales compared to the ten thousand leftists arrested in Bavaria during just two months in 1933, or the hundreds of thousands killed throughout the Nazi period. As detailed in Part 1 of this article, Hitler valued domestic public opinion and had no wish to exterminate the people from whom he hoped to fashion a purified and reformed Aryan Christian body, free from the influence of Rome or the synagogue.

Non-traditional Christian groups could face greater peril. Germany's Jehovah's Witnesses were pacifist, pro-Zionist, small enough to be vulnerable – and harshly dealt with. When the quasi-religious White Rose movement blossomed among students in wartime Munich, its leaders were beheaded. (As previously noted. German Mormons and Seventh-day Adventists accommodated the Nazis and were spared.⁷)

On the other hand, traditional Christians of non-Aryan heritage were naked before Nazi brutality. After invading Poland, Hitler ordered most Polish priests liquidated because these Slavic members of the ruling class could help organize resistance. The pope who had negotiated the Concordat was horrified, but his birthday greetings to Hitler continued.

In truth, few observant traditional Christians went to the camps because few offered serious resistance to the regime. Jews are outraged by attempts to memorialize individual Christians lost in the horrific system, since most Catholics and Protestants in the camps were the loathsome administrators and guards. Instead of accusing the Nazis of massacring traditional Christians, they should be charged for their crimes against atheists and freethinkers, who were explicit targets of Nazi oppression and died in the camps in substantial numbers.

Follow The Money

Even more than their racist and anti-enlightened attitudes, Christian authorities had the basest of reasons to cooperate with fascists: money. Stripped of her last papal states in 1925, the Mother Church lay bankrupt until Benito Mussolini came to the rescue. In exchange for the pope's support, Il Duce made an up-front payment equivalent to about two million anti-instituted state salaries for the Italian clergy. Best of all, Mussolini restored Vatican City's nationhood. Today's Vatican has its roots in fascist largesse.⁸

But the pope coveted richer booty. How might he tap the far grander wealth of Germany? No German Protestant dictator or Protestant-dominated democracy would pay tribute to Rome; no out-and-out papist could rule Deutschland. Then came the miracle: Hitler, the non-papist Catholic who inexplicably rose from obscurity to the brink of power and – eyeing the fascist-Catholic concordat in Italy – eagerly sought similar ties with the church. Surely this was God's amazing work.

The result was one of history's richest kickback schemes. The pope gave Hitler legitimacy, his office, and the enforced loyalty of German prelates. In return, one-tenth of the income tax paid by German Catholics would flow from Hitler's treasury to the church accounts.⁹ This averaged the equivalent of \$100 million per year, approximately \$1 billion over the life of the Third Reich many times that in today's dollars.¹⁰ Because the grateful pontiffs held the same absolute control over the church's funds that the Fuhrer exercised over the German treasury, it can be fairly said that Pius XI (reigned 1922-1939) and Pius XII (reigned 1939-1958) were on Hitler's payroll.

Nor did Hitler forget his evangelical friends. Ten percent of Protestants' tax payments was diverted to their churches too. Hitler needed no loyalty oaths from Germany's ministers, who realized the equivalent of about \$2 billion over the life of the Reich.

Flush with wealth, the churches invested heavily in fascist enterprises, many of which would manufacture weapons, employ slave labour, or both.¹¹ Ironically, as church leaders began to

act as financiers and brokers, their prejudice against usury, ancient keystone of anti-Semitism, melted away.

It cannot be said too bluntly: a principal reason that traditional Christian clergymen, from the humblest country parson to the popes, so often cooperated with Hitler was that they were being bribed.

The Price

Christendom paid for its avarice. Some 2.5 million European Protestant soldiers and civilians died; the Catholic toll, which included people from other countries where Catholics were not in the minority as they were in Germany, was broadly similar. Perhaps half of all Soviets were Orthodox, and so their Christian dead amounted to fifteen million or more. All told, more than twenty million Christians died. That probably exceeds the toll of non-theists. It far exceeds the Holocaust toll of six million Jews.

And it all could have been prevented had Europe's Christians resolved to put a stop to it.

Pius XII and The Holocaust

How might a meaningful Christian resistance to fascism have come about? It would never arise spontaneously; anti-democratic and anti-Semitic attitudes were too widespread. A united front against fascism would have demanded strong leadership from someone who could make clear in forthright terms what was right and what had to be done: someone who could set an inspiring ethical example and back it with moral power. With nearly half a billion adherents worldwide and a third of Germany's population, the Roman Catholic Church had the potential for enormous influence. Daring action by Pius XI, Pius XII, and other Catholic leaders could have changed history, preserved democracy, and saved millions of lives, furnishing a shining example of Christian morality in action. But that would have meant turning off the fascist money taps.

Apologists make much of Pius XI's 1937 encyclical to German Catholics, which attacked Nazi racism. Yet it never mentioned the Jews. In 1939 Pius XII said Jews had access to God's grace like all others (a point he would repeat in 1943). But he undermined himself, using the same encyclical to reprise the charge that Jews bore guilt for Christ's death. "Blinded by their dream of worldly gain and material success," he proclaimed, Jews deserved "worldly and spiritual ruin."

Catholics obsess over how in one 1942 speech Pius XII included a few sentences condemning the suffering of unnamed innocents. Yet he never identified perpetrators or victims, masking his most public indictment of history's greatest slaughter as a bland statement of general principles. Viewed critically, Pius XII's 1942 Christmas statement was a minimal, ineffectual effort of the kind often made by a conflicted collaborator, who, under intense pressure from the Allies, had to put stone statement on the record. Nor did he revisit the Holocaust, however obliquely, in his Christmas messages of 1943 or 1944 when the killing was at its height. Nor did he instruct the clergy or those who prepared church publications to discontinue traditional attacks on Jews as "Christ-killers". Nor did he take public action to prevent the mass transport to Auschwitz of those Italian Jews not hidden by Catholics.

The Catholic Church controlled the largest, most experienced propaganda machine in the

world. Every pope understood the importance of ceaseless, drumbeat promulgation of an idea in effective campaigns. Yet so few and so feeble were Vatican thrusts against the Holocaust that apologists must scour the records to glean unconvincing scraps of evidence for Pius XII's good intentions.

Given the extent of Rome's international intelligence apparatus, Pius XII must have known at least in outline what was taking place in the camps. Because of the international breadth of his organization, his neutrality, and his potential as a moral leader he was best positioned to reveal, condemn, and act against the Holocaust. Even if he did everything his defenders contend he did to save hundreds of thousands, the fact remains that the man who considered himself the supreme arbiter of moral values on Earth proved unable to save millions more when he alone had the potential tools to get the job done. But he could not, and did not. Why?

Pius XII failed in part because he feared too much for his flock and its victims, fearing a backlash as he underestimated the church's power to bend Nazi behaviour. He failed in part because, a seasoned diplomat, he held egotistic dreams of negotiating an end to the war himself. But he also failed because of Catholic doctrine, because he hated democracy as well as Bolshevism, and because he cared too little about Jews and atheists. Most of all, Pius XII failed because his church enjoyed the fascist revenue stream.

What If...?

Imagine not just one Rosenstrasse demonstration, but thousands. Imagine if Germany's Lutheran ministers and Catholic priests had ceaselessly preached anti-anti-Semitism from the pulpits. Imagine if its churches had showed the same resolve as occupied Denmark and Finland.

If Pius XII had worn the Star of David in sympathy with the Jews, the worldwide effect would have been electric. Imagine if Pius XII had called explicitly, incessantly, for equal treatment of Jews and open international inspection of the camps. Imagine if he had consistently demanded the privilege of conducting his own personal inspection of any camp on two days' notice, with the right to interview inmates without interference. Imagine if he had called Jews and atheists his brothers and sisters, and released an encyclical commanding Catholics to do all they could to aid them.¹² Imagine if he had consistently denounced authoritarianism and aggression, perhaps undertaking a pilgrimage to Berlin to discuss the errant ways of his nominal theological subject, Adolf Hitler. The Nazis would have been tied in knots.

A regime that could not figure out how to handle obstructionist Scandinavians or outraged housewives would have had either to accommodate the pope's demands, or persuade the Italian fascists to put an end to them. The latter course would not only have destroyed Italian fascism's critical relations with the papacy, but outraged the world. Forthright papal defiance would have carried risks, but it could have disabled the Nazi extermination campaign.

Apologists try to deflect such criticisms by arguing that Pius XII was wiser to conduct secretive rescue operations rather than "endangering others with grand public gestures."¹³ But great horrors require bolder action to stop them. There was no quiet way to rescue millions being destroyed by a vast machine that could only operate in secrecy; safety for protesters lay precisely in great numbers. The way to minimize both risks and losses was by

just the outspoken public actions that Catholic defender Ronald Rychlak disparaged as “foolish.”¹⁴

Don't Blame Atheism

There is blame to spare for the calamity of World War II. Some atheists supported leftist dictatorships; some scientists advocated racial eugenics and otherwise facilitated tyranny. But in no way was Nazism the invention of Europe's atheists. Their influence was severely limited and at most indirect. (To the degree that European atheists tended to support communism, they opposed fascism.) Nazi ideology grew and thrived in a land dominated by Christianity.

Because Nazism has left so horrific a stain on history, Christian apologists struggle to lay its causes in the lap of atheism. This is historical spin of the highest order. Mein Kampf never mentions evolution, Darwin, or Nietzsche. “Science” justified Nazi racism the same way pseudoscience “backs” creationism. Far from atheism spawning a Nazi machine that proceeded to assault Christianity, atheists and their organizations were targeted and destroyed while German churches not only survived, but thrived on Nazi graft. That atheists are not regularly listed with Jews, Roma, homosexuals, and other principal targets of the Holocaust betokens an ongoing injustice.

Blame Theism

The traffic truth is that top-ranking Nazis, as well as the German multitudes who initially supported them, were products of a traditional Christian culture that had eagerly rejected the brief Weimar experiment. It is especially meaningful that the Nazis most responsible for the Holocaust – Hitler, Himmler, Heydrich and Hoess – all came from conservative Catholic households, steeped in obedience to clerical authority and reflexive anti-Semitism. All of the Nazi leaders were theists, whether Catholic, Protestant or Aryan. Hitler's grandiose schemes flowed from a fanatical religious worldview. Mein Kampf is a creationist tract that repeatedly cites providence, the eternal creator, almighty lord, God and Christ as the divine power that made most non-Aryans soulless sub-humans suitable only for slavery, or worse.¹⁵ It cannot be overemphasized that to believe that Jews were subhuman, yet ingenious enough to take over the world, was conceivable only if one regarded them as the product of diabolical supernatural forces, a concept beyond the reach of “scientific” anti-Semitism. The Holocaust was as much an act of faith as the attacks of 9/11.

A movement is best judged not by its doctrines or the goodness of its minority but by the actions of its majority. Apologists contend that Christians failed to oppose fascism because they did not understand its true intentions or feared liquidation if they spoke out. Although sometimes true, most Continental Christians accepted, even favoured, fascism because they approved of right-wing authoritarianism, approved of Nazi racial policies as they understood them, or felt that fascism's benefits outweighed the sufferings of Jews and other social outcasts. So extensive was Christian collaboration that efforts to oppose Nazism by atheists and other minorities were crushed.

We should not be surprised that a strongly Protestant and Catholic culture could so readily accommodate profound evil. Christian morality springs from the Bible, a collection of texts written by tribal peoples with primitive moral codes. From it we receive the doctrines that there is only one truth, that dissent is heresy, that slavery is acceptable. Democracy is foreign

to any biblical tradition, while Scripture abounds with “final solutions” in which God brutally slaughters whole populations. Moses and Joshua are explicitly portrayed as committing genocide at God’s behest.¹⁶ Nazi propagandists could hardly cite Jewish scripture to justify their actions, but Old Testament tales of conquest influenced Hitler, who privately cited them as a guide to his own methods.

By comparison with the Old Testament, the New calls for brotherhood – but only in a doctrinal context that segregates human souls into categories of “us” and “them”, the former destined for a loving but tyrannical utopia, the latter for eternal torment.

Beyond the Bible, traditional and Aryan Christians could draw on long-standing Germanic-Christian traditions of aggression, authoritarianism, and anti-Semitism. Who could oppose Jew-hating if the greatest Christian reformer (Luther) promoted it and the greatest Christian church practiced it?

Tribal and tyrannical, Nazism could thrive in a Christian culture whose obsolete doctrines provided a subtle but pervasive socio-moral tradition of mass violence and theft as a way to deal with opponents of the one true utopia. Hitler stands as the ultimate example of the dangers of education in the Bible and Christian history.

Consequences

The world wars and the Holocaust gave Europe a spiritual shock that drove the continent to break with faith at last. Only about a quarter of today’s Europeans remain devoutly Christian; a like number doubt the existence of any higher power. Demographic indicators favour continued secularization.¹⁷ Secular forces, not the churches, are associated with resistance to fascism and anti-Semitism in the European mind. It is therefore not surprising that across today’s remarkably de-Christianized, modernistic, democratic, tolerant, and hedonistic Europe, biblical-scale atrocities are limited to those enclaves where religion remains strong.¹⁸ Less affected by the darker side of Christian doctrine and history – and hence less cognizant of them – the United States remains the only first-world nation to retain a level of religious belief seen otherwise only in the third world.¹⁹

After decades of refusal, the Vatican is claiming that it will release more of its Nazi-era records. This begs the question why an organization claiming nothing to hide and much to be proud of has not always followed a fully open-door policy for historical records and current accounts. Protestant involvement in fascism also demands further historical inquiry across the board, there is a critical need for objective, non-polemical research into a subject that has too long been “off limits”: the role of European religion in facilitating the rise of the Nazis.

If, as some apologists still claim, German Christians did the best they could, they were remarkably impotent and corruptible, the more so since courageous exposure of and opposition to Nazi atrocities could likely have ended them. The great scandal overturns Christian tales of heroic resistance to fascism and their claims to large-scale victimhood. The claim that their faith is the best and only path toward a just society is forever refuted.

The complete compilation of excerpts from material linking Christianity and Nazism (featured in sidebars here) is available on the Web at www.secularhumanism.org/text/excerpts. Tim Binga, director of the Centre for Inquiry Libraries, contributed additional research in the preparation of this article.

Editor's note: The cover photo of the October/November 2003 Free Inquiry showed, from left to right, Adolf Hitler, Catholic Abbot Albanus Schachleiter and Protestant Bishop Ludwig Müller at a Nazi rally. Bildarchiv is a German photo archive.

Gregory S. Paul is an independent evolutionary scientist and palaeontologist with interests in the relationship between science and religion. His books include *Dinosaurs of the Air* (Johns Hopkins University Press) and *Beyond Humanity* (co-author Earl Cox, Charles River Media, 1996) financial transfers to the Roman Church.

Notes

¹ See Ian Kershaw, *Hitler: 1889-1936: Hubris*, (New York: W W Norton, 1998); Kershaw, *Hitler: 1936-1945: Nemesis*, (London: Allen Lane, 2000), and Robert Gellately, *Backing Hitler: Consent and Coercion in Nazi Germany*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

² See James Carroll, *Constantine's Sword: The Church and the Jews* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2001).

³ See Gellately also Sarah Gordon: *Hitler, Germans and the "Jewish Question"*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press. 1984), p. 260.

⁴ One priest who rescued Jews told them he disliked them but that rescuing them was "the Christian thing" to do. Marthe Cohn, *Behind Enemy Lines*, (New York: Harmony, 2002)

⁵ Philip Dray, *At the Hands of Persons Unknown: The Lynching of Black America* (New York: Random House. 2002).

⁶ See Michael Thomsett, *The German Opposition to Hitler*, (Jefferson: McFarland & Co. 1997), p.67.

⁷ See Christine Elizabeth King, *The Nazi State and the New Religions*, (New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1982), pp.89-119.

⁸ See Paul Williams, *The Vatican Exposed: Money, Murder and the Mafia*, (Amherst, N.Y.: Prometheus Books, 2003), pp.15-32.

⁹ This religious tax continues to be collected and distributed to this day (about \$8 billion yearly to all sects) though increasing numbers of Germans opt out by stating no denomination.

¹⁰ Williams, op. cit.

¹¹ Williams, op, cit.

¹² In her *Bishop von Galen: German Catholicism and National Socialism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), Beth Griech-Polelle wonders whether Pius XII feared that his

followers were too anti-Semitic to obey orders to help Jews. Whether or not the Catholic laity would have risen to the occasion will never be known, since their leader declined to risk the experiment.

¹³ Ronald Rychlak, “Goldhagen v. Pius XII.” *First Things*, June/July 2002, pp. 37-54. Many less polemical researchers, such as Gordon, have also mistakenly assumed that mass protests would have been ruthlessly suppressed.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ *Mein Kampf* was a blunt handbook for party members, not a carefully targeted recruiting tract. Some abbreviated translations expunge most of Hitler’s religious comments.

¹⁶ God ordered the Israelites to exterminate the Canaanites utterly. Extensive tracts detail subsequent ethnic cleansing, annihilating millions of “man and woman, infant and suckling”. These mythical accounts probably helped inspire Hitler’s extermination of leftists, intellectuals, and Jews during Operation Barbarossa.

¹⁷ Gregory S. Paul. “The Secular Revolution of the West: It’s Passed America By – So Far,” *Free Inquiry*, Vol. 22, No. 3, (Summer 2002).

¹⁸ Though secularism seems effective in suppressing atrocities, Christianity often remains helpless to prevent them. Catholic and Protestant churches proved ineffectual in Northern Ireland and the Balkans; Rwanda is the most Christian African nation with over 80 percent believers, the majority Catholic, who widely participated in the atrocities of 1996 during which clergy were either complicit or ineffectual. In particular, the pope could have flown to the scene and ordered his flock to cease participating in the killing, but chose not to do so.

¹⁹ Paul, op. cit.