

The Apostles of Deception

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What passes for Christianity among the people, like so many things American, is not the genuine article. The sermons that rise from many of the pulpits of the churches of America are, I suspect, as counterfeit as a six-dollar bill; as phoney as the people running the country. But those whose faith is blind are incapable of seeing truth. That is the trouble with blind faith. It does not, it cannot, see. I have always been wary of organised religion.



Oil Anti-Christ

Every pastor, every minister of every church in the land should denounce what is happening in America and violently projected upon the world. They should criticise the wretched lies of the president and his murderous regime. They should condemn union busting, racism and sexism, corporate greed and war. They should deplore the obscene accumulation of property and wealth, while emphasising service to the community and the poor. Most often, however, a perverted version of Christianity gives the appearance of moral credence to war and conquest.

It appears to me that the majority of the American people are followers who willingly bow down to that which they perceive as authority. The people want to be led. They have a deep-seated desire to be directed, to be told not only what to do, but how to live. Millions of them are waiting for a Messiah to appear who will lead them to the Promised Land—a Messiah that requires nothing from them before the judgment day. They only have to profess their faith and to follow—to do as they are told by the religious hierarchy, and wait.

Of course, followers require leaders, and that makes them vulnerable to charlatans and frauds. The trouble with leaders and followers is that leaders often mislead and followers obediently trail them to the very gates of hell. During the course of the journey, superstition and ignorance gradually replace rationality and knowledge. Truth gets lost in the shuffle or is cast into the flames of desire. Thus we find ourselves standing at the brink of an old and familiar abyss, the onslaught of a new age of darkness and fear. Lies supplant truth, darkness replaces light. War is peace; freedom is slavery;

ignorance is strength. The lessons of history remain unlearned and endlessly repeat themselves in rhythmic cycles of human comedy and tragedy.

We cannot avoid the responsibility of citizenship by simply following the lead of others or waiting for the return of Jesus. To do so is to give up our humanity and to become the mere servants of power. We have a responsibility to the truth, to justice, the earth, and toward one another that must supersede all else, if we are the moral beings we purport to be. That is why each of us is endowed with a conscience. We must decide right and wrong for ourselves and struggle against the swift current of public opinion more often than not.

In many ways we have abrogated our responsibilities as citizens to others in our consent to be governed. This was a grave mistake. The idea of leadership sets some up above others. It gives special power and privileges to a few and hence unwarranted influence and power over the many. We do not need leaders. We need those who will genuinely represent us and the public welfare. We need people like ourselves. We need us, we the people, to run things. There is no substitute for being informed, active, and conscientious citizens. It must therefore be understood that real citizenship will require physical, mental, and spiritual effort on our part, especially since truth is kept so well hidden from public view. This does not appear likely to happen any time soon.

We see this phenomenon of following, which is akin to giving up our freedoms, at play in the political arena, as well as in other circles of power. The hapless people are always looking for a redeemer, a quick fix—a liberator. We are conditioned to think that we can simply take a pill and our disease will miraculously disappear without effort on our part. Nature does not work that way. We expect miracles to occur in place of doing the hard work of citizenship. If there is a promised land, we must get there by our own collective effort. We must arrive not as individuals, but together as working class people struggling in common cause.

Yet we continue to believe in knights in shining armour, rather than saving ourselves and the republic of which we are a part. Now we are asking ourselves: Is Barack Obama the one to lead us to peace and prosperity? Will it be Hillary Clinton? John Edwards? John McCain? Is it Rudi Giuliani? If we believe that any or all of these people—each of them put forth by the money changers—is the answer, we are looking in the wrong places. By definition, darkness is the absence of light. We must at least start looking in the light.

We must stop expecting miracles and rescuers to make things right for us. We must realise that justice is our responsibility. Justice doesn't just happen. Good people have to care enough to make it happen. Failing this, we will continue to have pervasive corruption—a government that betrays the public interest and pursues an agenda of its own. We will have wars in Vietnam and Iraq and social and economic disparity at home. We cannot afford to wait for an oracle to appear. Global climate change is upon us and it demands something from each of us here and now.

Heretofore, justice has not been the American way. We must make it the American way, and we must do it now. If we want to be more than economic slaves and pawns to the super rich, we must get involved in the issues. We must make government serve us, and we must make it just.

Millions of Americans claim to follow Jesus. Some even claim that we are a Christian nation. Yet every generation seems to crucify Christ all over again, to nail him to the cross and parade him through the streets with a crown of thorns on his head. We had Dr. Martin Luther King, the genuine article, but those in authority—the gluttonous counterfeits of power—crucified him, aided by cheering throngs of racists. Dr. King, perhaps more than any man who has lived in our time, embodied the moral teachings of Jesus.

It is no irony that the most Christ-like among us today continue to be crucified by the money changers living in the present.

Clearly the spirit of Jesus lived and breathed in our time in the person of Dr. Martin Luther King. So did the spirit of Allah and all the great religions of the world. Dr. King gave more than lip service to religious doctrine, he breathed life into them—he made them real and relevant again. And, like Jesus, he too was crucified by the money changers. Blind obedience to authority—mob mentality—is a very dangerous and destructive force.

So put away your toy American flags, your yellow ribbons. They are irrelevant to the issue of social justice. No nation has a monopoly on virtue. Real faith, real service, are not confined to national borders. Integrity lives and breathes in the hearts of men and women doing the slow work of justice, often alone and in opposition to the formal conventions of society—as history attests.

Dr. King understood that there was no easy way out; no time to wait for a second coming. Like Jesus, his path required struggle against injustice; direct non-violent confrontation with evil that lived deep in the belly of the beast. It required courage, conviction, personal sacrifice and moral vigilance. It required character, a willingness to die for one's beliefs. Through his extraordinary moral example, Dr. King was not so much a leader as he was an emissary for truth and justice, which must be the core of any faith worth its salt. Dr. King's beliefs, unlike the counterfeiters who have come after him, demanded equality and justice, reckoning with truth. That is what made him so dangerous, so feared by the purveyors of violence and injustice.

Now we have fools and con men, pretenders and flim-flam artists: hucksters, jilters, jokers and clowns fleecing the hapless flock. We have Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson, George Bush, Hillary Clinton, and those masquerading as the Christian right marching us into war after war, and carrying us down the stairs to hell and despair—misleaders and pompous frauds one and all!

The phoney evangelicals have stolen the pulpit and the ignorant and foolish have fallen under their spell. Blind followers seduced by a belief in spectres and miracles obey their every command and do their bidding. It is just another scam to grab power and influence over the trusting flock before the slaughter. Such people are serfs and fools, not thoughtful citizens or seekers of truth. Beware of any faith that is not organised around justice and equality. Snake oil salesmen abound.

Within the religious hierarchy the high priests of fraud are treated like deities with a direct conduit to god, entitled to power and privileges that ordinary citizens do not have. They are no better than fortune tellers dressed in bright robes. Once again they have diverted the masses from the real path to salvation and led them astray. They have erased the thin line that separates church and state and made a mockery of humankind's quest for understanding and justice.

It was they who, in the words of song writer Woody Guthrie, "laid poor Jesus in his grave". They do it every time.

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