

Christianity: The Trump Version

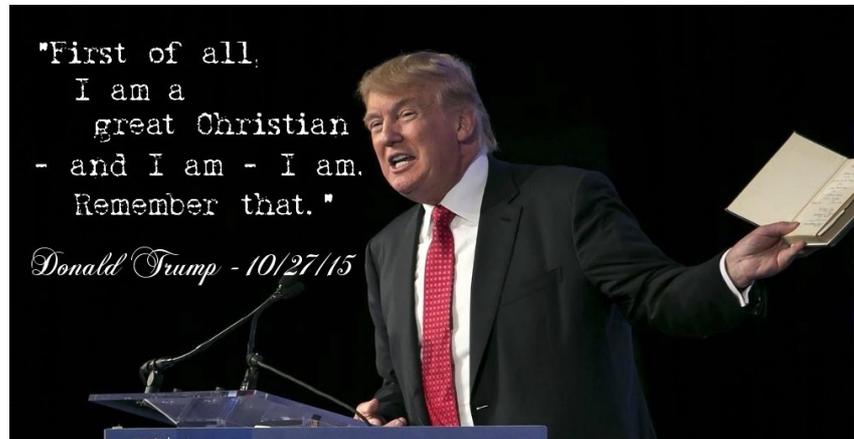
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ACCORDING to exit polls, more than 80% of white evangelical and born-again Christians voted for Donald Trump in the US Presidential election. A Humanist may be puzzled and depressed by this information.

We may have thought that there was much common ground between Humanism and Christianity, but we may have been mistaken. We perhaps assumed that Christians, like Humanists, sought to teach the young that lying is wrong. Didn't Jesus say: "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32)? Yet a compulsive liar has just been rewarded with the top job in America. According to the truth-checker group *Politifact*, Trump's statements during the campaign were false 76% of the time.

Then again, we may have assumed that Christians, like Humanists, sought to teach the young the importance of family values, and that parents and children should love and respect one another. Most Christians would go further than Humanists and claim that marriage is a sacred vow between a man and a woman. Yet in his book *The Art of the Deal* Trump has openly boasted of his adulterous affairs and in the tape of his conversation with a TV host he bragged about his sexual abuse of women.

Like Humanists, Christians surely are kind, compassionate, and welcome strangers and minorities. Didn't Jesus say that you should "love your neighbour as yourself" (Luke 10:27) and that "I was a stranger and ye took me in" (Matthew 25:35)? And didn't Paul exhort Christians to clothe themselves with compassion, kindness, humility, and so on (Colossians 3:12)? And didn't he also say: "In that renewal there is no longer Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian,



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slave and free; but Christ is all and in all" (Colossians 3:11)?

Yet Trump has said or implied that women should be punished for having abortions, the death penalty should be extended nationwide, Muslims should be banned from entering the United States, Mexican immigrants are mostly rapists and murderers and that a wall should be built between the US and Mexico, most criminals are blacks or hispanics, and political opponents should be punched in the face or locked up.

Both Humanists and Christians have questioned man's materialism. Jesus said: "Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Matthew 6:24). Pope Francis has spoken repeatedly about our devastation of the planet through greed, and of our urgent need to care for it. Yet Trump boasted at a rally: "My whole life I've been greedy, greedy greedy". For two decades he did not pay income tax and recently even suggested that not paying taxes is 'smart'.

We could continue with other references. Didn't Jesus say: "blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit

the earth", and: "blessed are the pure in heart"? (Matthew 5). Again, such remarks seem light years away from the persona of a man who acts like an egotistic, narcissistic, authoritarian TV celebrity whose spirit is belligerent and lewd.

Who knows what the real Trump is like? In John 7:24 we are told that that we should "judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment". If this means that we should judge in relation to the image of Jesus, then he is a long way behind. If it means that we should look behind outward appearances, then we may have to wait and see what his presidency will be like. So far, though, Donald Trump does not appear to be at all Christian – or Humanist. Why, then, did so many Christians vote for him?

Have we Humanists misunderstood Christianity? Perhaps, after all, it does not really preach love, peace, humility and tolerance. Perhaps it actually stands for racism, xenophobia, misogyny, bigotry, hatred, intolerance and insularity. If it does, then we're certainly glad we're agnostics or atheists. □