

The church, state and fascism

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As the [New York Times reported](#) after yesterday's funeral of Charlie Kirk:

The belief that Mr. Kirk is a modern-day Christian martyr was infused throughout the service. And it solidified in real time through testimonies from a who's who of conservatives, planting Mr. Kirk's story firmly into a line of Christians over history who lost their lives with their faith.

"We must remember that he is a hero to the United States of America. And he is a martyr for the Christian faith," Mr. Vance said.

The message was threefold and is echoed in much of the news media.

First, Charlie Kirk was a Christian.

Second, he died because of his faith.

Third, that makes him a hero in the USA.

Let's be clear that I do not recognise what he promoted as the teachings of Jesus. He would argue otherwise, but this is about faith, interpretation, and philosophy, and whilst what I read in the Gospels is all about forgiveness, inclusion, and a decided bias towards the poor and outcast, with condemnation of those who would oppress them being a continuing theme, these messages appear to be absent from what Charlie Kirk had to say. We do not understand Christianity in the same way, clearly.

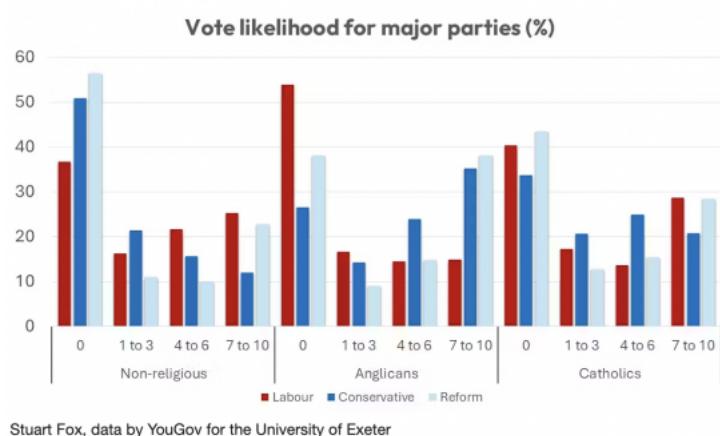
Second, there is no evidence as yet that Kirk died for this faith. It seems likely that he died for his politics. Either way, that murder was unacceptable and to be condemned, but the evidence that he was killed because of his faith does not seem to be available at present.

Third, Kirk's message was one of division and oppression. Why that should make anyone a hero is hard to understand.

The essential point is, however, that the narrative that is being created is unrelated to the reality of what Kirk did, or did not do. And that is where the danger lies. Kirk's death is very obviously being used to break down the barriers between the white, male-dominated, evangelical view of Christianity and the US state, and that is not good for anyone who is not white, male, Christian or, most probably, rich.

I am not sure that this movement is replicable in the UK. But the message can be changed to suit. And that is where the danger lies. Given the fact that we have no formal divide between the established church and the state in the UK, the risks are very real.

To illustrate that, [this data was published](#) by researchers from the University of Exeter earlier this year:



Anglicans are heavily opposed to Labour and are most open to Reform. Seventy per cent of them are most likely to vote for what are now far-right and racist parties. There might be relatively few Anglicans, and their leadership does not appear to reflect their views at present, but who knows how that will change? The state church and a far-right state might find common ground, as is all too common in fascist history. There is nothing to be relaxed about here.

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