

Hitler's Religion: Christian Apologetics Faces the Hitler Question

Many atheists, including Richard Dawkins and Christopher Hitchens, routinely accuse Christianity of complicity in Nazism and the Holocaust. Many even claim that Hitler was a Christian. Weikart will clearly show that Hitler was opposed to Christianity and wanted to undermine the churches. Indeed, Hitler's worldview was pantheistic and was shaped more by secular influences than by Christianity.

Richard Weikart is professor of modern European history at California State University, Stanislaus, and Senior Fellow at Discovery Institute's Center for Science and Culture. He has published six books, including most recently *The Death of Humanity: And the Case for Life* and *Hitler's Religion*. He has also published extensively on the history of evolutionary ethics, eugenics, social Darwinism, euthanasia, and scientific racism. He has been featured in several documentaries, including Ben Stein's *Expelled*, as well as on many radio programs. He recently produced a documentary to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation called *Exploring the Reformation and Revivals in Germany*, which is available on youtube.

I. Atheists Blame Christianity for Nazi atrocities

- A. They claim Christian anti-Semitism caused Holocaust

- B. They argue that Hitler was a Christian

II. Hitler's anti-Semitism was secularized version

III. Was Hitler a Christian?

- A. Sometimes he claimed he was

- B. But 2 lines of evidence suggest this is problematic
 - 1. He often criticized Christianity
 - a. In *Mein Kampf* he called it "spiritual terror"
 - b. In monologues he often bashed and mocked Christianity
 - c. His associates claimed he rejected Christianity

 - 2. The Nazi regime persecuted church
 - a. Forced Protestant Church to unite under a single Reich Bishop

- b. Negotiated Concordat with Vatican
- c. Continually violated the Concordat
- d. Tried to de-Christianize festivals, such as Christmas
- e. Ordered that chaplains be placed in the heat of battle

IV. What was Hitler's religion?

- A. Not an atheist
- B. Not an occultist
- C. He was a pantheist
 - 1. He deified nature
 - 2. He derived morality from nature

Suggested Readings:

Richard Weikart, *Hitler's Religion: The Twisted Beliefs That Drove the Third Reich*. Washington, DC: Regnery History, 2016.

Rainer Bucher, *Hitler's Theology: A Study in Political Religion*, trans. Rebecca Pohl. London: Continuum, 2011.

Richard Weikart, *Hitler's Ethic: The Nazi Pursuit of Evolutionary Progress*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.

Doris Bergen, *Twisted Cross: The German Christian Movement in the Third Reich*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996.