

## Lords, not Lord

Those mixing their faith with politics ought to consider travelling along the road to Damascus



By [Oscar Bentley](#), Editor (2018)  
Tuesday 23 January 2018



Image: UK Parliament

In an interview on ITV's Good Morning Britain back in September 2017, Conservative MP and meme lord Jacob Rees-Mogg said that he was "completely opposed" to abortion in all cases, including those of incest or rape. Rees-Mogg named his Catholicism the reasoning behind his views, citing that "life is sacrosanct and begins at the point of conception". He also used his religious views to explain away his opposition to same-sex marriage, telling the programme that "Marriage is a sacrament and the decision of what is a sacrament lies with the Church, not with Parliament." He described the Church's teachings on morals as "authoritative", declaring that abortion was "morally indefensible".

So, Rees-Mogg is reasoning that a pair of views which many find outdated today, given that abortion and same-sex marriage are rightly accepted largely in society, is because of his steadfast Christianity. However, as Iain Rowan noted in a fantastic letter published in the Guardian, Rees-Mogg only seems to follow the Church's teachings if and when it suits him. He's consistently voted to reduce welfare benefits, for the bedroom tax, and against raising benefits in line with prices. How does this match up to Jesus showing compassion for the poor and the lame in the Bible, or his proclamation that "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God"? He's also consistently voted against increasing the tax applied to incomes over £150 000, or higher taxes on bankers' bonuses, and for reducing capital gains tax. So how does that match up with the Bible's teaching that "it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God"?

Rees-Mogg isn't the only politician who seems to pick and choose what teachings to follow from his faith

when it suits him. The Republican party in the US, three quarters of which are white Christians, are just as culpable. The party leadership, including Senate Leader Mitch McConnell and House Speaker Paul Ryan, both of whom are apparently devout Christians, pushed through a tax bill in December that gutted Obamacare which helps with medical bills, potentially leaving the poor with huge medical debts, this could not be further from Jesus' mission to help heal the poor, which was also free of charge. Donald Trump is another apparent Christian, yet does his border wall and constant xenophobia against Mexicans (and pretty much every race other than his own) adhere to the teaching of love thy neighbour?

In 2012 Ryan described the House budget he has crafted as being inspired by "my Catholic faith", only for the US Conference of Catholic Bishops to send him a letter a week later declaring that the budget "fail[ed] to meet" the moral teachings of the Church, and that a spending bill which relies on "disproportionate cuts in essential services to poor and vulnerable persons" does not help the poor, or the hungry, or the homeless, or the jobless, all of which are required by the Bible.

This month, Tim Farron said that he regretted saying that gay sex was not a sin after the issue dogged the Liberal Democrats' election campaign, claiming that the teachings of the Bible were clear on this, leading current Lib Dem leader Vince Cable to disavow his comments. When Farron resigned, he said that being the leader of a progressive party and a Christian "felt impossible", but surely the Bible's teachings on aiding the poor and the powerless are innately progressive. The issue of gay sex seems an odd point to get hung up on, especially when only a handful of Bible verses refer to homosexuality.

So many of these Christian politicians are able to explain away their bigoted views using their faith as a scapegoat, shifting the blame, yet disregard that principle when it suits them. Imagine if Muslim Mayor of London Sadiq Khan had said the things that Rees-Mogg did on Good Morning Britain; it would have been used as an excuse to claim that Muslims' faith prevents them from integrating into modern society. Politicians need to stop equating their politics with religion - especially when so many times they couldn't fall further from it.



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### 3 comments

Anonymous

24 Jan '18 at 2:54 pm

Utter utter bile

[Report](#)

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Paul Kerr

24 Jan '18 at 5:40 pm

Mogg is that you?

[Report](#)

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God

25 Jan '18 at 2:14 am

Nice try chump, but you'll have to do better than hackneyed straw-manning and appeals to novelty!

[Report](#)

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