

The USA and states of contradiction

January 2025

*Note: this is a revised version of the article posted on the Christian news site **The Other Cheek** on 29 October 2024. This note is to provide clarification on some points made that prompted feedback on social media. I have noted I particularly need to be more aware to highlight when I am using satire and irony to emphasise points. I recognise I penned a more critical piece than usual, and I wanted to note some reasons for this.*

1. *I was attempting to raise in a lateral way my view that Trump would win, and to encourage some early reflection on why, particularly by Democrat followers. I am always interested in the why.*
2. *I was highlighting what I have perceived today to be a more overt inconsistency when it comes to issues today, namely people seem to increasingly hold views that are contradictory, and negate their prime philosophical or ideological viewpoint. For example, the assassination attempts, but more recently the acceptance of the death penalty by people who were normally opponents was vividly displayed on social following the murder of Brian Thompson (4 December 2024).*
3. *There has been considerable highlighting of the idea about the damage to democracy by certain candidates by legacy media, along with Democrat members and supporters, and yet little self-awareness that this argument was also used by the other side when highlighting the Democrat's candidates and their difficulties since the last popular candidate (Obama).*
4. *If you are on the left and promoting the idea that you are taking, or are always on the moral high ground, then it is helpful to be consistent and stick to that high ground.*

This is why I focused on the idea of contradictions, with a hope that people would consider where they may not be consistent. I found that writing this helped me as well, as I like to claim I am the first of all the hypocrites, righteous as to the law, though like Paul I hope to be always woken up.

A reflection from early November 2024

There will be relief for most people in the Western world when the United States presidential election is over, though for many, probably also the first and only stage of grief. To say this year has resembled a reality television show is an understatement. A cast of characters more intriguing than a Marvel movie, some with very odd special powers, and side twists and changes that keep one guessing about the next move.

The partisan nature of the election is nowhere more palpable than in media coverage. It has been intriguing to see media coverage of both the Trump v Harris debate and the JD Vance v Walz debate in terms of who has been declared the winner. Clearly Harris won the first quite mediocre debate and JD Vance the second, better, or perhaps more traditional debate. However, if you were viewing certain media it appeared to be the reverse in each case with their opponent winning.

This highlighted again a fundamental problem with the orientation of news reporting today. The role of opinions and commentating has replaced basic news reporting in many areas. And it is even going further with activism journalism being understood as the only way to report. It is fine to have opinions, but more helpful in this social media era is to renew general or straight reporting of events. I am fully appreciative of our ‘total depravity,’ so all news should be evaluated for bias, but this initial news approach enables the consumer to hear a less-didactic perspective that they can consider alongside other material. Above all *Matthew 10: 16* comes to mind.

Living in one of the most left-wing areas in Australia for 44 years has helped me to reflect on the changes over time. One major change has been the difficulty in having a reasoned discussion on political matters, particularly geo-political matters. Even a passing mention of certain areas in the middle-east provokes passionate monologues, while other countries with far longer and more severe circumstances languish in the realm of the vanquished.

And at present, among some people, mentioning the name of Donald Trump can induce an apoplectic reaction that may need an EpiPen, much like saying ‘Dan Andrews’ [Victorian State Premier) did during Covid times.

It has also been a time when language and understanding has been extended to say the least; one thing I have found is that people, including Christians I know, have learnt to live more easily with contradictory positions because of ideology.

One prominent example of late has been personally meeting people who are not supporters of capital punishment and yet express regret that Donald Trump was not killed in the first assassination attempt. [I noted on the Facebook exchanges that political leaders of all persuasions publicly and suitably condemned the attempt, but this was different in the wild world of social media].

And like in Huxley's *Brave New World*, words and phrases have taken on new meanings. As a writer, one of my favourites is 'insufficient citation,' now seemingly the preferred term to plagiarism.

The use of the word 'coup' is used with such casualness it could refer to refusal to stack the dishwasher, and of course, everyone seems to be a 'fascist.' I would find it helpful to have more circumspect usage of this word, particularly by people who have no understanding of the history and meaning of the word, and actually direct the label to people who probably have no understanding of the history and meaning of the word as well.

And when is an insurrection not an insurrection? There has been ongoing debate about this, including in academic circles, though it appears no consensus has been reached, but it is interesting to see which media use the term.

One thing I am increasingly certain of, incompetency can lead to destruction, or at least the ending of a career, but more importantly it unfortunately breeds conspiracy theories. Good and necessary preparation and oversight to prevent situations deteriorating to the point of introducing a later word confusion would be very helpful. In any case, organisation is a contextual centre for the meaning of insurrection, and disorganisation for riots, and riots are easily prompted in an age of social media. Interestingly, it can be argued that insurrection was the basis for the emergence and then foundation of the USA, so while there is always contextual difference, I can understand historians debating heritage reappropriation.

And can we please reserve the use of one of the most serious words, 'genocide,' for when it is actually a genocide. When people use the word unreasonably it belittles the real genocides that have occurred, and I hope that is not the point.

Anyway, the election will all soon be over, and it will not be the end of the world, but there will probably be more than a whimper. And then there will be the soul-searching, or rather blame-directing, and I hope there will be serious reflection from both sides of the state of contradictions in the USA.

Given that most of the legacy media and a good deal of other media, focus on one party or rather one person at the present time, I thought I would pen some final comments on the other party. In the context of the Democrats, I will conclude with two questions I have been considering and writing about for my reflections on the USA.

Given the Democratic Party is a ruthless political machine (like the Republican Party), why have the Democrats got themselves into such a pickle with their candidates over the last ten years?

(And answers to this cannot include the words 'Donald Trump').

On a side point, if I had been a well-paid consultant for the Democrats I would have made a simple recommendation for this election. Like the proscription on saying 'Voldemort,' do not even mention the name, or at least ignore him for most of the time. Instead, provide a campaign about what one will do. Strategists seem to forget that those with narcissistic tendencies love nothing more than being the focus and having free advertising. The irony is that in this celebrity social media era, the Democrats can take a good deal of the credit for creating and then sustaining their prime focus of hate.

Why have the Democrats, and the very interesting alliance of left-leaning evangelicals and liberal Christians that have become a prominent interest group, given a pass over many years to Democratic men in power who have been abusive to women?

I do note however that if someone is exposed for their behaviour, usually the proper contemporary reaction is now provided for a brief time, unless one is the proverbial 'old dog on the porch,' and the leave pass is simply extended.

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(Revised January 2025)

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