

Christ or Christianity

An old story in modern times

Bill Smith and Barr's Camera

- How to apply what Jesus or his apostles taught to real world situations?



Luke 10:25-37

- Expert in the law
- Testing Jesus
 - He is not sincere in his question
- Asks him what is written in the Law and his view on it
- “And who is my neighbor?”
- To justify himself
- and ?
 - He wanted a definition
 - Who falls outside of those I have to love



Reaction of those present

- Maybe something worse
- That the Samaritan might kill the traveler
- Maybe Jesus will agree that there are some people that are unloveable



Samaritans?

- It's complicated
- Several conflicting possibilities have been proposed based on...
 - archeology,
 - Josephus writings,
 - Samaritan writings,
 - They considered themselves to be descendants of the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh
 - Bible accounts
 - They worshipped at a different location
 - Women at the well story
 - Writings from others from the era
- Mostly we can for sure know that the Jews and the Samaritans did not like each other and considered each other as an enemy



Samaritan's Risk

- He interrupts his journey
- Risks his own safety (the robbers might still be near)
- Jesus doesn't say that the man was a Jew, just says a "Man".
- The Jews might accuse him of the robbery
- Spends his own money and resources
- Takes care of a person that might not have treated him the same
- Who are our "neighbors" today?



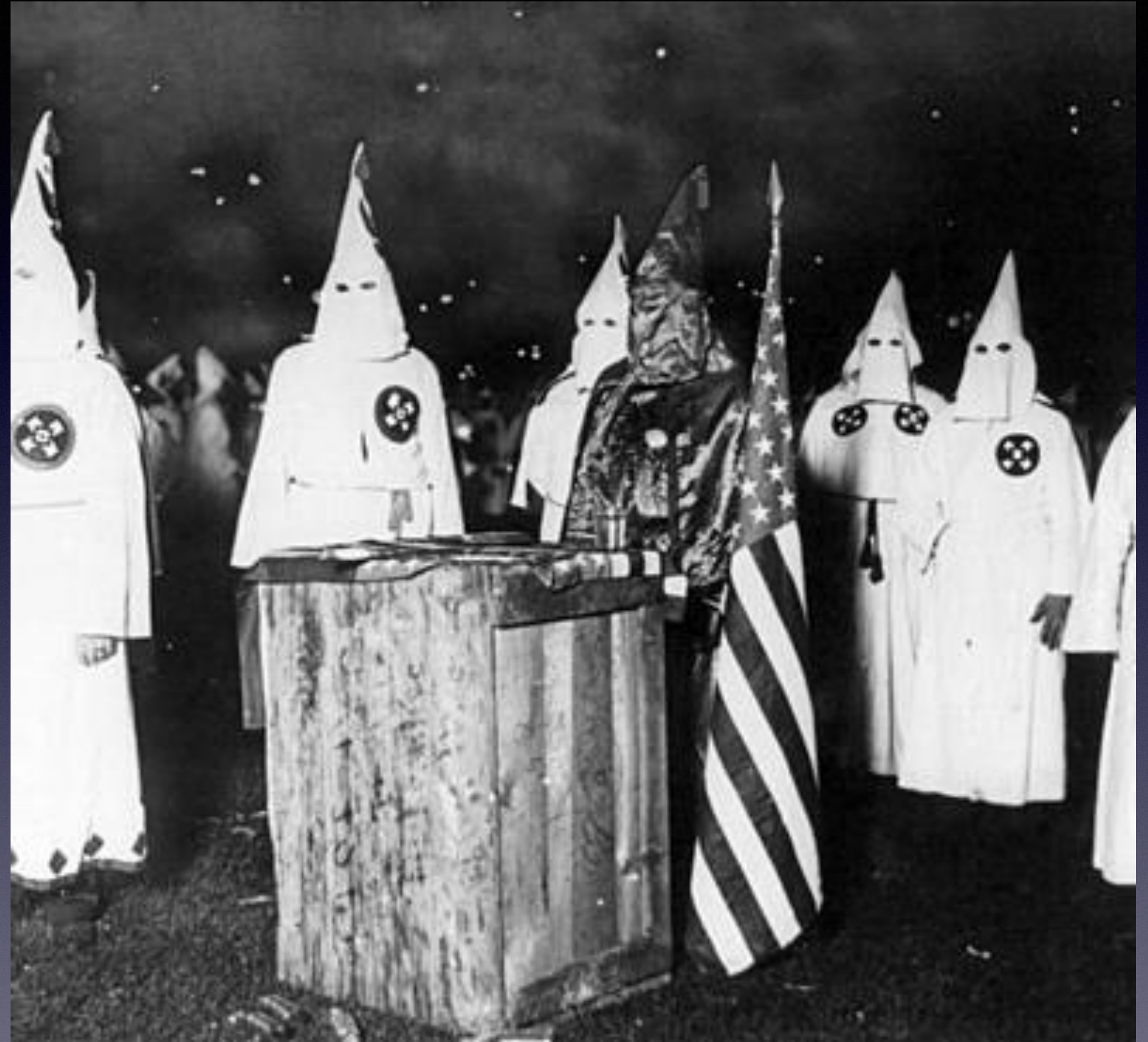
Modern day Samaritan

- His name was Michael Weissner
 - He was a Cantor at a synagogue
 - Moved family to Lincoln, Nebraska
 - Packages of Anti-Semitic pamphlets and Neo-Nazi flyers arrive at Weissner's home
 - Phone calls start saying... "You'll be sorry you ever moved to Nebraska, Your days are numbered."



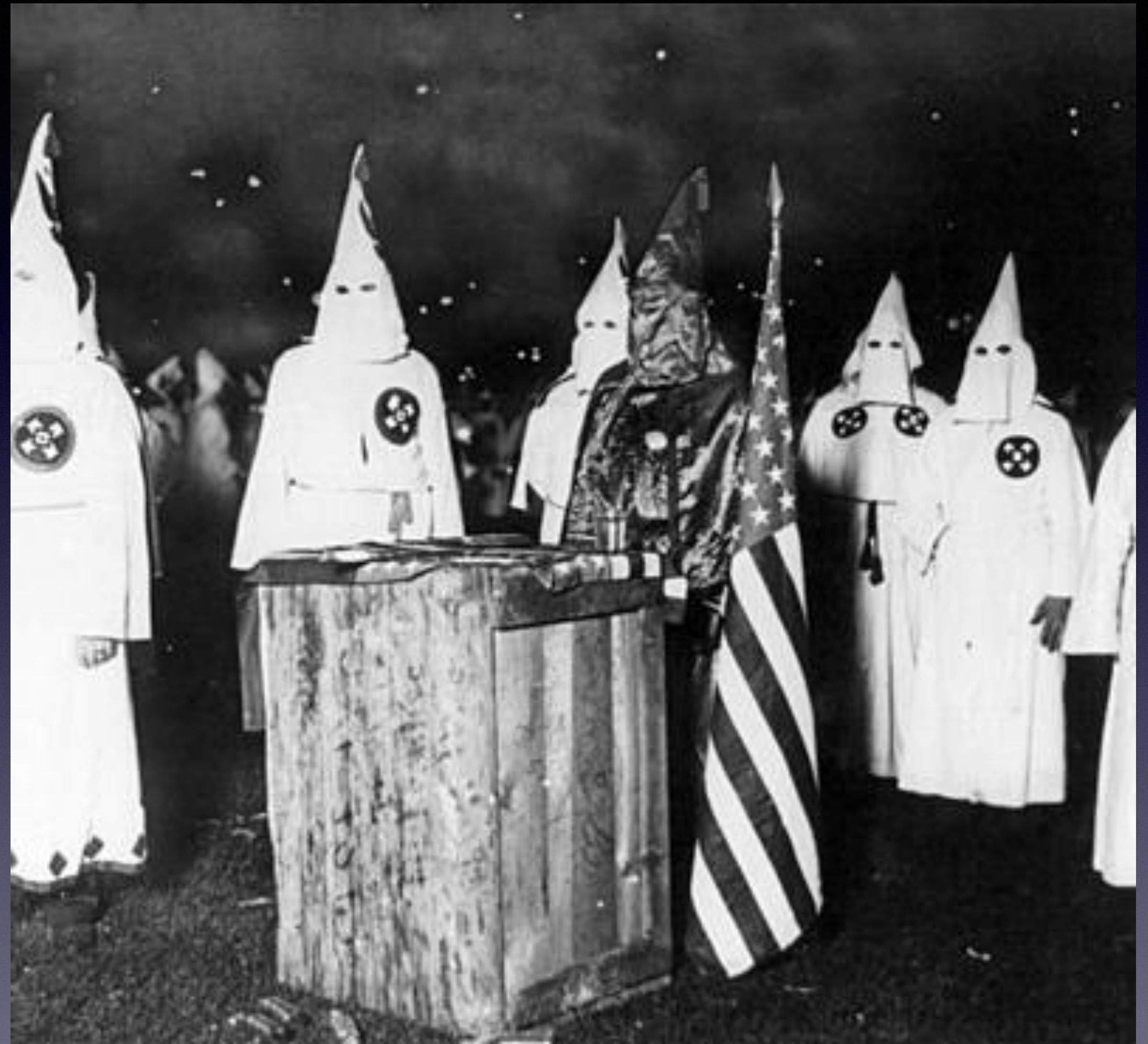
Modern day Samaritan

- His name was Larry Trapp
 - Grand Dragon of the Nebraska Ku Klux Klan
 - 20 years of building a life around hatred.



The Klan's Religious Claims

- The KKK has traditionally restricted membership to white Protestants, excluding Catholics, Jews, and non-Christians.
- They famously use the burning cross (which they call a "fiery cross") as a perverted symbol of what they claim is Christ's light.
- KKK groups often present themselves as defenders of Christian morality, American values, and biblical order



Modern day Samaritan

- What Weisser does...
 - Weisser calls Trapp back
 - Not to confront him
 - Not to yell at him
 - He says "Larry, I just wanted you to know that you must be a very unhappy man. There's a lot of love out there for you if you want it."



Modern day Samaritan

- Eventually Trapp answers the phone.
 - “I know you're very sick, Larry. I thought maybe you needed a ride to the doctor sometime.”
 - Trapp asks "How do you know I'm sick?"
 - Trapp is trapped in a life of loneliness with only hatred to give him purpose and identity



Modern day Samaritan

- Trapp is a sick, dying man alone in a dirty apartment, and no one in the world is offering him anything except the ideology that told him his loneliness was someone else's fault.
- Weisser and his wife Julie show up at Trapp's door with a home cooked dinner. He let's them in.
- Larry Trapp starts to cry.
- He tells the Weissers he wants out. (out of the trap)
- He asks them to help him take the symbols off his walls



Trapped no longer

- Trapp converts to Judaism
- He meets with members of minority community he had threatened and asks each for forgiveness.
- His health worsens
- Weissers move him into their home
- Trapp dies in September 1992
- Less than one year from the dinner
- Time Magazine interviewed both Weisser and Trapp
- <https://time.com/archive/6719622/the-cantor-and-the-klansman-weisser-trapp/>



Luke 11:42

•“Woe to you Pharisees, because you give God a tenth of your mint, rue and all other kinds of garden herbs, but you neglect justice and the love of God. You should have practiced the latter without leaving the former undone”



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Romans 12:9-13

.Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. ¹⁰Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. ¹¹Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. ¹²Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. ¹³Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.



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Ephesus Church

Positive

- **Verse 2: Deeds, hard work, and perseverance**
- **Cannot tolerate wicked people**
- **Have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false.**

Negative

- **Verse 5: You have forsaken the love you had at first (first love)**

John 13:34-35

- “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.



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Matthew 5:43-46

• “You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.



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Luke 6:27-36

- **“But to you who are listening I say:** Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, ²⁸ bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. ²⁹ If someone slaps you on one cheek, turn to them the other also. If someone takes your coat, do not withhold your shirt from them. ³⁰ Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back. ³¹ Do to others as you would have them do to you.



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Ordo Amoris

(Order of Love)

- Augustine, the ordo amoris (order of love), is the key to living a good and happy life. He believed that everything God made is good, but human sin happens when we love things in the wrong order.
- For Example:
 - Loving people before God
 - Loving money or possessions before people
- Thomas Aquinas view was similar.
- Lately there as been a different view on this.



The new view of Ordo Amoris

(Order of Love)

- “You love your family, and then you love your neighbor, and then you love your community, and then you love your fellow citizens in your own country, and then after that, you can focus [on] and prioritize the rest of the world”
- This is similar to the expert in the law ask Jesus “who is my neighbor”. Do we have to love everyone?



Augustine's real view of Ordo Amoris

(Order of Love)

- “Augustine's point is that, ideally, we should love each and every human being as our neighbor by virtue of our shared belonging to God—and not because they happen to be from our family or our country.”



Desmond Doss

- Refused to carry a weapon
- Opposed to killing on religious grounds
- During battle of Hacksaw Ridge saved 75-100 men all by himself
- Received Bronze Star with a V for exceptional Valor for aiding wounded men under fire.
- First combat medic and Conscientious Objector to receive the Medal of Honor
- Two other combat medic/Conscientious objectors received the Medal of Honor in Vietnam.



Joseph G LaPointe Jr

- Opposed to killing on religious grounds
- LaPointe ran through the automatic weapon fire to reach two wounded men at the head of the patrol. He treated the soldiers and shielded them with his body, even after being twice wounded, until they were all killed by an enemy grenade.



Thomas W. Bennet

- Opposed to killing on religious grounds
- Bennett risked gunfire to pull at least five wounded men to safety.
- Over the coming days, Bennett repeatedly put himself in harm's way to tend to the wounded. Two days later while attempting to reach a soldier wounded by sniper fire, Bennett was gunned down.



Ken Jones

- Conscientious objector
- Served as a combat medic



Romans 12:17-20

• Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. ¹⁸ If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. ¹⁹ Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," ²¹ says the Lord. ²⁰ On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head."



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Bill Smith and Barr's Camera

- The story of Bill vs David
- Or the story of David having to decide what Jesus wanted.
- WWJD Remember those bracelets?
- We don't love others to cause them to change. We love others so that we will change



Next Week

The Worst of the Persecutors