

## **The “other” reason behind Christian conversion...**

This was inspired by the 1050-th anniversary of Polish king Mieszko I Christian conversion that was widely discussed in some Polish media. I am not going to discuss fake conversions under a gun stuck to one's head, figuratively, or those due to some opportunistic reasons such as to show off oneself as a member of a Christian community. I am referring to a true conversion where one actually believes in it.

I always assumed that there could only be one reason – “Jesus”. One either finds the idea appealing and declares oneself a follower of “The Anointed One” and takes the rest of the Bible as a bundle, or one does not. An article by a Polish historian

<http://wiadomosci.onet.pl/tylko-w-onecie/966-wyrzuc-te-date-z-pamieci-nie-bylo-zadnego-chrztu-polski/b9hjq0>

who researched the real reason behind king Mieszko's “conversion” in 966, made me realize that there was another reason – Yehova! It is nowadays extremely unpopular, as well as actively de-emphasized by the Roman Catholic Church. But for a young king who had already lost a couple of crucial battles and stood to lose a final one (to the Lutetian Confederation), an idea of a ruthless obedience-seeking Yehova “who can vanquish all your enemies”, as described in the Bible, must have seemed a Godsend!

Interestingly, both reasons for conversion – either to Christ of the New Testament, who may one day save you, or to Yehova of the Old Testament, who may kick your enemy's ass, seem to instill a common idea - that one is powerless and thus needs an external force in order to rule, live or prosper.

On a personal note, I used to think that the biblical (Old Testament) stories involving Yehova and its entourage were utterly reprehensible, so I believed that people would generally embrace the more positive bits (i.e. New Testament) despite some gore and death in the other parts of the story.

Yet, king Mieszko's saga made me realize that some people of the power elite at the time, may have embraced Christianity, not despite of the cruelty-promoting gory bits of the Old Testament, but precisely because of them! That interpretation of history is beginning to make a lot of sense.

Why were the first medieval Christian kings so ruthless, waging incessant warfare against their neighbours? There are many examples. I have a suspicion that the same thing may have been going on with other religions of “War & Peace” where some people found the parts dealing with love, peace and forgiveness the most appealing, while some found themselves attracted to the bits emphasizing judgement, punishment and control. A choice for anyone - according to one's needs of the day!

Stan (Heretic) Bleszynski  
20-March-2016