

Dear friends and patriots,

Maybe this forward is too much more of the same, so I'll try to provide you with more original work in the future. But given that I've had people use the Billy Graham empire as a paragon example of Christian values, I have to highlight the following excerpt from this article:

[It's curious, also, that any felon, drug addict, or recovering hedonist can loudly proclaim a sudden embrace of Jesus and be welcomed without doubt by leaders of the religious right. But a thoughtful Christian like Obama is still distrusted.

"I am a devout Christian," Obama told Christianity Today in 2008. "I believe in the redemptive death and resurrection of Jesus Christ." That's not enough, apparently, for Rev. Franklin Graham, the partisan son of the great evangelical leader, who said last week that Obama was "born a Muslim because of the religious seed passed on from his father."]

Is that a Christian message? Incidentally, when I sent Billy Graham a copy of Truths of God, and Ann and Franklin as well, I inadvertently got myself on the Billy Graham mailing list. So now I get to see a tiny portion of their tree disposal program as they send me mailers every month, usually many pages always advertising their vast myriad of spiritual products for full commercial prices. The last one I got had a fill in the blank contribution place where the blanks are as follows: \$ _ _ , _ _ _ . _ _ . Think big, I guess. I'm not sure I've ever gotten anything from them that didn't include a request for money. It makes me wonder how much of that money they use to mislead people with messages like the one about inconvertible Muslim religious seeds? And is it ultimately being used for non-spiritual, political messages, in the form of supporting candidates and otherwise, to fight greenhouse gas caps and to prevent the wealthy from being taxed? Well, I've provided some quotes of Jesus from Matthew 23 below for those who mislead in God's name. Anyway, for those of you who are interested, please enjoy the following article. It's not about religious hypocrisy, other than the small part I've highlighted, but rather politics and Rush Limbaugh and the like.

Bob.

Some quotes from Jesus to false priests: Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves. But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.

Building a Nation of Know-Nothings

by Timothy Egan

Having shed much of his dignity, core convictions and reputation for straight talk, Senator John McCain won his primary on Tuesday against the flat-earth wing of his party. Now McCain can go search for his lost character, which was last on display late in his 2008 campaign for president. Remember the moment: a woman with matted hair and a shaky voice rose to express her doubts about Barack Obama. "I have read about him," she said, "and he's not — he's an Arab."

McCain was quick to knock down the lie. “No, ma’am,” he said, “he’s a decent family man, a citizen.”

That ill-informed woman — her head stuffed with fabrications that could be disproved by a pre-schooler — now makes up a representative third or more of the Republican party. It’s not just that 46 percent of Republicans believe the lie that Obama is a Muslim, or that 27 percent in the party doubt that the president of the United States is a citizen. But fully half of them believe falsely that the big bailout of banks and insurance companies under TARP was enacted by Obama, and not by President Bush.

Take a look at Tuesday night’s box score in the baseball game between New York and Toronto. The Yankees won, 11-5. Now look at the weather summary, showing a high of 71 for New York. The score and temperature are not subject to debate.

Yet a president’s birthday or whether he was even in the White House on the day TARP was passed are apparently open questions. A growing segment of the party poised to take control of Congress has bought into denial of the basic truths of Barack Obama’s life. What’s more, this astonishing level of willful ignorance has come about largely by design, and has been aided by a press afraid to call out the primary architects of the lies.

The Democrats may deserve to lose in November. They have been terrible at trying to explain who they stand for and the larger goal of their governance. But if they lose, it should be because their policies are unpopular or ill-conceived — not because millions of people believe a lie.

In the much-discussed Pew poll reporting the spike in ignorance, those who believe Obama to be Muslim say they got their information from the media. But no reputable news agency — that is, fact-based, one that corrects its errors quickly — has spread such inaccuracies.

So where is this “media?” Two sources, and they are — no surprise here — the usual suspects. The first, of course, is Rush Limbaugh, who claims the largest radio audience in the land among the microphone demagogues, and his word is Biblical among Republicans. A few quick examples of the Limbaugh method:

“Tomorrow is Obama’s birthday — not that we’ve seen any proof of that,” he said on Aug. 3. “They tell us Aug. 4 is the birthday; we haven’t seen any proof of that.

”Of course, there is proof as clear as that baseball box score. Look here, www.factcheck.org, for starters, one of many places posting Obama’s Hawaiian birth certificate.

On the Muslim deception, Limbaugh has sprinkled lie dust all over the place. “Obama says he’s a Christian, but where’s the evidence?” he said on Aug. 19. He has repeatedly called the president “imam Obama,” and said, “I’m just throwing things out there, folks, because people are questioning his Christianity.

”You see how he works. He drops in suggestions, hints, notes that “people are questioning” things. The design is to make Obama un-American. Then he says it’s a tweak, a provocation. He says this as a preemptive way to keep the press from calling him out. And it works; long profiles of Limbaugh have largely gone easy on him.

Once Limbaugh has planted a lie, a prominent politician can pick it up, with little nuance. So, over the weekend, Kim Lehman, one of Iowa’s two Republican National Committee members, went public with doubts on Obama’s Christianity. Of course, she was not condemned by party leaders.

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Obama is still distrusted. “I am a devout Christian,” Obama told Christianity Today in 2008. “I believe in the redemptive death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.”

That’s not enough, apparently, for Rev. Franklin Graham, the partisan son of the great evangelical leader, who said last week that Obama was “born a Muslim because of the religious seed passed on from his father.”

Actually, he was born from two non-practicing parents, and his Kenyan father was absent for all of his upbringing. Obama came to his Christianity like millions of people, through searching and questioning.

Finally, there is Fox News, whose parent company has given \$1 million to Republican causes this year but still masquerades as a legitimate source of news. Their chat and opinion programs spread innuendo daily. The founder of Politifact, another nonpartisan referee to the daily rumble, said two of the site’s five most popular items on its Truth-o-meter are corrections of Glenn Beck.

Beck tosses off enough half-truths in a month to keep Politifact working overtime. Of late, he has gone after Michelle Obama, whose vacation in Spain was “just for her and approximately 40 of her friends.” Limbaugh had a similar line, saying the First Lady “is taking 40 of her best friends and leasing 60 rooms at a five-star hotel — paid for by you.”

The White House said Michelle Obama and her daughter Sasha were accompanied by just a few friends — and they paid their own costs. But, wink, wink, the damage is done. He’s Muslim and foreign. She’s living the luxe life on your dime. They don’t even have to mention race. The code words do it for them.

Climate-change denial is a special category all its own. Once on the fringe, dismissal of scientific consensus is now an article of faith among leading Republicans, again taking their cue from Limbaugh and Fox.

It would be nice to dismiss the stupid things that Americans believe as harmless, the price of having such a large, messy democracy. Plenty of hate-filled partisans swore that Abraham Lincoln was a Catholic and Franklin Roosevelt was a Jew. So what if one-in-five believe the sun revolves around the earth, or aren’t sure from which country the United States gained its independence?

But false belief in weapons of mass-destruction led the United States to a trillion-dollar war. And trust in rising home value as a truism as reliable as a sunrise was a major contributor to the catastrophic collapse of the economy. At its worst extreme, a culture of misinformation can produce something like Iran, which is run by a Holocaust denier.

It’s one thing to forget the past, with predictable consequences, as the favorite aphorism goes. But what about those who refuse to comprehend the present?_

<http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/08/25/building-a-nation-of-know-nothings>