

**RELIGION PAGE COLUMN**

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**WARNING TO POLITICIANS: I'VE SAID SOME WACKY THINGS**

By

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That swoosh noise you heard a few weeks ago was the sound of presidential candidates running away as they tried to distance themselves from wacky clergy.

Barak Obama was running from his former pastor, Rev. Jeremiah Wright, who was recorded saying some of the wackiest things any minister has ever said from a pulpit. Obama tried to just jog gently away of the preacher but eventually his jog turned into a dash.

Then, about the time we thought everything had settled down, Father Michael Pfleger climbed into the same pulpit and reopened the wound with a display that was just embarrassing for many true progressives to watch.

Swoosh! The sound of Obama putting space between himself and those two wacky ministers.

In the mean time John McCain, who had sought and received the endorsement of right wing clergy, was fleeing from the racist, reactionary, xenophobic and, well, just plain wacky pronouncements of the Reverends Rod Parsley and John Hagee. Swoosh! Swoosh!

Watching all of this silliness, I've learned an important lesson.

In the interest of full disclosure and so I don't embarrass any politicians who are thinking of joining my church, here is a list of some of the really wacky things I've said from the pulpit in the last couple of years.

***"Seek peace and pursue it."*** I know, it sounds crazy to say such a thing when we're in the middle of the most popular war in decades. Why, some might even call it insensitive, unsupportive and even treasonous. Never mind that it's repeated in the Psalms and in I Peter. It's just plain wacky!

***"Love your enemies."*** Wacky, right? What kind of foreign policy would that be? Imagine going to a church where the pastor says such things. Your opponent will tear you to pieces. The fact that Jesus is recorded as having said it three times won't make a bit of difference. You're sunk.

***“Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.”*** Let’s face it. It’s nearly impossible to get elected if you’re against killing people. No way. That’s probably why Jesus knew better than to run for office.

You go to a church that espouses mercy and you’re going to get tagged as a person who is, well, merciful. And being merciful doesn’t get you elected.

***“This was the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had pride, excess food, and prosperous ease, but did not aid the poor and needy.”*** Okay, I didn’t say that one so much as I read it. The prophet Ezekiel said it. Apparently he didn’t get the memo. Everyone knows that the big sin of Sodom was homosexuality. Ezekiel would never get elected today.

And, just to be safe, you don’t want to say too many bad things about people who have “pride, excess food, and prosperous ease.” They’re the ones who can afford to contribute to you’re campaign.

So there it is, politicians. You’ve been warned. My wife says that I’ve said lots of other wacky things, but I’ve run out of space.

But I thought you should know.

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