The BOISI CENTER for
RELIGION and AMERICAN PUBLIC LIFE

Symposium on Religion and Politics

Election 2012 and the Contraception Debate

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Notre Dame Commencement Speech
Barack Obama
June 14, 2009

Thank you, Father Jenkins for that generous introduction. You are doing an outstanding job as president of this fine institution, and your continued and courageous commitment to honest, thoughtful dialogue is an inspiration to us all.

Good afternoon Father Hesburgh, Notre Dame trustees, faculty, family, friends, and the class of 2009. I am honored to be here today, and grateful to all of you for allowing me to be part of your graduation.

I want to thank you for this honorary degree. I know it has not been without controversy. I don't know if you're aware of this, but these honorary degrees are apparently pretty hard to come by. So far I'm only 1 for 2 as President. Father Hesburgh is 150 for 150. I guess that's better. Father Ted, after the ceremony, maybe you can give me some pointers on how to boost my average.

I also want to congratulate the class of 2009 for all your accomplishments. And since this is Notre Dame, I mean both in the classroom and in the competitive arena. We all know about this university's proud and storied football team, but I also hear that Notre Dame holds the largest outdoor 5-on-5 basketball tournament in the world - Bookstore Basketball.

Now this excites me. I want to congratulate the winners of this year's tournament, a team by the name of "Hallelujah Holla Back." Well done. Though I have to say, I am personally disappointed that the "Barack O'Ballers" didn't pull it out. Next year, if you need a 6'2" forward with a decent jumper, you know where I live.

Every one of you should be proud of what you have achieved at this institution. One hundred and sixty three classes of Notre Dame graduates have sat where you are today. Some were here during years that simply rolled into the next without much notice or fanfare - periods of relative peace and prosperity that required little by way of sacrifice or struggle.

You, however, are not getting off that easy. Your class has come of age at a moment of great consequence for our nation and the world - a rare inflection point in history where the size and scope of the challenges before us require that we remake our world to renew its promise; that we align our deepest values and commitments to the demands of a new age. It is a privilege and a responsibility afforded to few generations - and a task that you are now called to fulfill.

This is the generation that must find a path back to prosperity and decide how we respond to a global economy that left millions behind even before this crisis hit - an economy where greed and short-term thinking were too often rewarded at the expense of fairness, and diligence, and an honest day's work.

We must decide how to save God's creation from a changing climate that threatens to destroy it. We must seek peace at a time when there are those who will stop at nothing to do us harm, and when weapons in the hands of a few can destroy the many. And we must find a way to reconcile

our ever-shrinking world with its ever-growing diversity - diversity of thought, of culture, and of belief.

In short, we must find a way to live together as one human family.

It is this last challenge that I'd like to talk about today. For the major threats we face in the 21st century - whether it's global recession or violent extremism; the spread of nuclear weapons or pandemic disease - do not discriminate. They do not recognize borders. They do not see color. They do not target specific ethnic groups.

Moreover, no one person, or religion, or nation can meet these challenges alone. Our very survival has never required greater cooperation and understanding among all people from all places than at this moment in history.

Unfortunately, finding that common ground - recognizing that our fates are tied up, as Dr. King said, in a "single garment of destiny" - is not easy. Part of the problem, of course, lies in the imperfections of man - our selfishness, our pride, our stubbornness, our acquisitiveness, our insecurities, our egos; all the cruelties large and small that those of us in the Christian tradition understand to be rooted in original sin. We too often seek advantage over others. We cling to outworn prejudice and fear those who are unfamiliar. Too many of us view life only through the lens of immediate self-interest and crass materialism; in which the world is necessarily a zero-sum game. The strong too often dominate the weak, and too many of those with wealth and with power find all manner of justification for their own privilege in the face of poverty and injustice. And so, for all our technology and scientific advances, we see around the globe violence and want and strife that would seem sadly familiar to those in ancient times.

We know these things; and hopefully one of the benefits of the wonderful education you have received is that you have had time to consider these wrongs in the world, and grown determined, each in your own way, to right them. And yet, one of the vexing things for those of us interested in promoting greater understanding and cooperation among people is the discovery that even bringing together persons of good will, men and women of principle and purpose, can be difficult.

The soldier and the lawyer may both love this country with equal passion, and yet reach very different conclusions on the specific steps needed to protect us from harm. The gay activist and the evangelical pastor may both deplore the ravages of HIV/AIDS, but find themselves unable to bridge the cultural divide that might unite their efforts. Those who speak out against stem cell research may be rooted in admirable conviction about the sacredness of life, but so are the parents of a child with juvenile diabetes who are convinced that their son's or daughter's hardships can be relieved.

The question, then, is how do we work through these conflicts? Is it possible for us to join hands in common effort? As citizens of a vibrant and varied democracy, how do we engage in vigorous debate? How does each of us remain firm in our principles, and fight for what we consider right, without demonizing those with just as strongly held convictions on the other side?

Nowhere do these questions come up more powerfully than on the issue of abortion.

As I considered the controversy surrounding my visit here, I was reminded of an encounter I had during my Senate campaign, one that I describe in a book I wrote called The Audacity of Hope. A few days after I won the Democratic nomination, I received an email from a doctor who told me that while he voted for me in the primary, he had a serious concern that might prevent him from voting for me in the general election. He described himself as a Christian who was strongly pro-life, but that's not what was preventing him from voting for me.

What bothered the doctor was an entry that my campaign staff had posted on my website - an entry that said I would fight "right-wing ideologues who want to take away a woman's right to choose." The doctor said that he had assumed I was a reasonable person, but that if I truly believed that every pro-life individual was simply an ideologue who wanted to inflict suffering on women, then I was not very reasonable. He wrote, "I do not ask at this point that you oppose abortion, only that you speak about this issue in fair-minded words."

Fair-minded words.

After I read the doctor's letter, I wrote back to him and thanked him. I didn't change my position, but I did tell my staff to change the words on my website. And I said a prayer that night that I might extend the same presumption of good faith to others that the doctor had extended to me. Because when we do that - when we open our hearts and our minds to those who may not think like we do or believe what we do - that's when we discover at least the possibility of common ground.

That's when we begin to say, "Maybe we won't agree on abortion, but we can still agree that this is a heart-wrenching decision for any woman to make, with both moral and spiritual dimensions.

So let's work together to reduce the number of women seeking abortions by reducing unintended pregnancies, and making adoption more available, and providing care and support for women who do carry their child to term. Let's honor the conscience of those who disagree with abortion, and draft a sensible conscience clause, and make sure that all of our health care policies are grounded in clear ethics and sound science, as well as respect for the equality of women."

Understand - I do not suggest that the debate surrounding abortion can or should go away. No matter how much we may want to fudge it - indeed, while we know that the views of most Americans on the subject are complex and even contradictory - the fact is that at some level, the views of the two camps are irreconcilable. Each side will continue to make its case to the public with passion and conviction. But surely we can do so without reducing those with differing views to caricature.

Open hearts. Open minds. Fair-minded words.

It's a way of life that has always been the Notre Dame tradition. Father Hesburgh has long spoken of this institution as both a lighthouse and a crossroads. The lighthouse that stands apart, shining with the wisdom of the Catholic tradition, while the crossroads is where "...differences of

culture and religion and conviction can co-exist with friendship, civility, hospitality, and especially love." And I want to join him and Father Jenkins in saying how inspired I am by the maturity and responsibility with which this class has approached the debate surrounding today's ceremony.

This tradition of cooperation and understanding is one that I learned in my own life many years ago - also with the help of the Catholic Church.

I was not raised in a particularly religious household, but my mother instilled in me a sense of service and empathy that eventually led me to become a community organizer after I graduated college. A group of Catholic churches in Chicago helped fund an organization known as the Developing Communities Project, and we worked to lift up South Side neighborhoods that had been devastated when the local steel plant closed.

It was quite an eclectic crew. Catholic and Protestant churches. Jewish and African-American organizers. Working-class black and white and Hispanic residents. All of us with different experiences. All of us with different beliefs. But all of us learned to work side by side because all of us saw in these neighborhoods other human beings who needed our help - to find jobs and improve schools. We were bound together in the service of others.

And something else happened during the time I spent in those neighborhoods. Perhaps because the church folks I worked with were so welcoming and understanding; perhaps because they invited me to their services and sang with me from their hymnals; perhaps because I witnessed all of the good works their faith inspired them to perform, I found myself drawn - not just to work with the church, but to be in the church. It was through this service that I was brought to Christ.

At the time, Cardinal Joseph Bernardin was the Archbishop of Chicago. For those of you too young to have known him, he was a kind and good and wise man. A saintly man. I can still remember him speaking at one of the first organizing meetings I attended on the South Side. He stood as both a lighthouse and a crossroads - unafraid to speak his mind on moral issues ranging from poverty, AIDS, and abortion to the death penalty and nuclear war. And yet, he was congenial and gentle in his persuasion, always trying to bring people together; always trying to find common ground. Just before he died, a reporter asked Cardinal Bernardin about this approach to his ministry. And he said, "You can't really get on with preaching the Gospel until you've touched minds and hearts."

My heart and mind were touched by the words and deeds of the men and women I worked alongside with in Chicago. And I'd like to think that we touched the hearts and minds of the neighborhood families whose lives we helped change. For this, I believe, is our highest calling.

You are about to enter the next phase of your life at a time of great uncertainty. You will be called upon to help restore a free market that is also fair to all who are willing to work; to seek new sources of energy that can save our planet; to give future generations the same chance that you had to receive an extraordinary education. And whether as a person drawn to public service, or someone who simply insists on being an active citizen, you will be exposed to more opinions

and ideas broadcast through more means of communications than have ever existed before. You will hear talking heads scream on cable, read blogs that claim definitive knowledge, and watch politicians pretend to know what they're talking about. Occasionally, you may also have the great fortune of seeing important issues debated by well-intentioned, brilliant minds. In fact, I suspect that many of you will be among those bright stars.

In this world of competing claims about what is right and what is true, have confidence in the values with which you've been raised and educated. Be unafraid to speak your mind when those values are at stake. Hold firm to your faith and allow it to guide you on your journey. Stand as a lighthouse.

But remember too that the ultimate irony of faith is that it necessarily admits doubt. It is the belief in things not seen. It is beyond our capacity as human beings to know with certainty what God has planned for us or what He asks of us, and those of us who believe must trust that His wisdom is greater than our own.

This doubt should not push us away from our faith. But it should humble us. It should temper our passions, and cause us to be wary of self-righteousness. It should compel us to remain open, and curious, and eager to continue the moral and spiritual debate that began for so many of you within the walls of Notre Dame. And within our vast democracy, this doubt should remind us to persuade through reason, through an appeal whenever we can to universal rather than parochial principles, and most of all through an abiding example of good works, charity, kindness, and service that moves hearts and minds.

For if there is one law that we can be most certain of, it is the law that binds people of all faiths and no faith together. It is no coincidence that it exists in Christianity and Judaism; in Islam and Hinduism; in Buddhism and humanism. It is, of course, the Golden Rule - the call to treat one another as we wish to be treated. The call to love. To serve. To do what we can to make a difference in the lives of those with whom we share the same brief moment on this Earth.

So many of you at Notre Dame - by the last count, upwards of 80% -- have lived this law of love through the service you've performed at schools and hospitals; international relief agencies and local charities. That is incredibly impressive, and a powerful testament to this institution. Now you must carry the tradition forward. Make it a way of life. Because when you serve, it doesn't just improve your community, it makes you a part of your community. It breaks down walls. It fosters cooperation. And when that happens - when people set aside their differences to work in common effort toward a common good; when they struggle together, and sacrifice together, and learn from one another - all things are possible.

After all, I stand here today, as President and as an African-American, on the 55th anniversary of the day that the Supreme Court handed down the decision in Brown v. the Board of Education. Brown was of course the first major step in dismantling the "separate but equal" doctrine, but it would take a number of years and a nationwide movement to fully realize the dream of civil rights for all of God's children. There were freedom rides and lunch counters and Billy clubs, and there was also a Civil Rights Commission appointed by President Eisenhower. It was the twelve

resolutions recommended by this commission that would ultimately become law in the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

There were six members of the commission. It included five whites and one African-American; Democrats and Republicans; two Southern governors, the dean of a Southern law school, a Midwestern university president, and your own Father Ted Hesburgh, President of Notre Dame. They worked for two years, and at times, President Eisenhower had to intervene personally since no hotel or restaurant in the South would serve the black and white members of the commission together. Finally, when they reached an impasse in Louisiana, Father Ted flew them all to Notre Dame's retreat in Land O'Lakes, Wisconsin, where they eventually overcame their differences and hammered out a final deal.

Years later, President Eisenhower asked Father Ted how on Earth he was able to broker an agreement between men of such different backgrounds and beliefs. And Father Ted simply said that during their first dinner in Wisconsin, they discovered that they were all fishermen. And so he quickly readied a boat for a twilight trip out on the lake. They fished, and they talked, and they changed the course of history.

I will not pretend that the challenges we face will be easy, or that the answers will come quickly, or that all our differences and divisions will fade happily away. Life is not that simple. It never has been.

But as you leave here today, remember the lessons of Cardinal Bernardin, of Father Hesburgh, of movements for change both large and small. Remember that each of us, endowed with the dignity possessed by all children of God, has the grace to recognize ourselves in one another; to understand that we all seek the same love of family and the same fulfillment of a life well-lived. Remember that in the end, we are all fishermen.

If nothing else, that knowledge should give us faith that through our collective labor, and God's providence, and our willingness to shoulder each other's burdens, America will continue on its precious journey towards that more perfect union. Congratulations on your graduation, may God Bless you, and may God Bless the United States of America.

President Obama's Remarks on Shift in Contraception Policy
Barack Obama
2 Feb. 2012

As part of the healthcare reform law that I signed last year, all insurance plans are required to cover preventative healthcare at no cost. That means free check-ups, free mammograms, immunizations and other basic services.

We fought for this because it saves lives and because it saves money for families, for businesses, for government, for everybody. And that's because it's a lot cheaper to prevent an illness than to treat one.

We also accepted a recommendation from the experts at the Institute of Medicine that when it comes to women, preventative care should include coverage of contraceptive services such as birth control.

In addition to family planning, doctors often prescribe contraception as a way to reduce the risk of ovarian and other cancers and treat a variety of different ailments. And we know that the overall cost of health care is lower when women have access to contraceptive services.

Nearly 99 percent of all women have relied on contraception at some point in their lives. Ninety-nine percent. And yet more than half of all women between the ages of 18-34 have struggled to afford it. So for all these reasons, we decided to follow the judgment of the nation's leading medical experts and make sure that free preventive care includes access to free contraceptive care.

Whether you're a teacher or a small business woman or a nurse or a janitor, no woman's health should depend on who she is or where she works or how much money she makes. Every woman should be in control of the decisions that affect her own health. Period.

This basic principle is already the law in 28 states across the country. Now as we move to implement this rule, however, we've been mindful that there is another principle at stake here. And that's the principle of religious liberty, an inalienable right that has been enshrined in our Constitution.

As a citizen and as a Christian, I cherish this right. In fact my first job in Chicago was working with Catholic Parishes in poor neighborhoods. And my salary was funded by a grant from an arm of the Catholic church. And I saw that local churches often did more good for a community than a government program ever could. So I know how important the work that faith based organizations do and how much impact they can have in their community.

I also know that some religious institutions, particularly those affiliated with the Catholic Church, have a religious objection to directly providing insurance that covers contraceptive services for their employees. And that's why we originally exempted all churches from this requirement. An exemption, by the way, that 8 states didn't already have.

And that's why from the very beginning of this process, I spoke directly to various Catholic officials. And I promised that before finalizing the rule as it applied to them, we would spend the next year working with institutions like Catholic hospitals and Catholic universities to find an equitable solution that protects religious liberty and ensures every women has access to the care that she needs.

Now, after the many genuine concerns that have been raised over the last few weeks, as well as frankly the more cynical desire on the part of some to make this into a political football, it became clear that spending months hammering out a solution was not going to be an option. That we needed to move this faster.

So last week, I directed the Department of Health and Human Services to speed up the process that had already been envisioned. We weren't going to spend a year doing this. We're going to spend a week or two doing this.

Today, we reached a decision on how to move forward. Under the rule, women will still have access to free preventive care. That includes contraceptive services no matter where they work. So that core principle remains, but if a women's employer is charity or hospital that has a religious objection to providing contraceptive services in the health plan, the insurance company not the hospital, not the charity will be required to reach out and offer the woman contraceptive care free of charge without co pays and without hassles.

The results will be that religious organizations won't have to pay for these services, and no religious institution will have to provide these services directly. Let me repeat: these employers won't have to pay for or provide contraceptive services. But women who work at these institutions will have access to free contraceptive services just like other women and they'll no longer have to pay hundreds of dollars a year that could go towards paying the rent or buying groceries.

I've been confident from the start that we could work out a sensible approach here, just as I promised. I understand some folks in Washington might want to treat this as a political wedge issue. But it shouldn't be. I certainly never saw it that way. This is an issue where people of good will on both sides of the debate have been sorted through some very complicated questions to find a solution that works for everyone.

With today's announcement we've done that. Religious liberty will be protected, and a law that requires pre preventive care will not discriminate against women. We live in a pluralistic society where we're not going to agree on every issue or share every belief. That doesn't mean that we have to choose between individual liberty and basic fairness for all Americans.

We are unique among nations for having been founded upon both these principles and our obligation as citizens to carry them forward. I have complete faith that we can do that. Thank you very much everybody.

Why I vetoed contraception bill
By Mitt Romney [as published in the *Boston Globe*]
July 26, 2005

Yesterday I vetoed a bill that the Legislature forwarded to my desk. Though described by its sponsors as a measure relating to contraception, there is more to it than that. The bill does not involve only the prevention of conception: The drug it authorizes would also terminate life after conception.

Signing such a measure into law would violate the promise I made to the citizens of Massachusetts when I ran for governor. I pledged that I would not change our abortion laws either to restrict abortion or to facilitate it. What's more, this particular bill does not require parental consent even for young teenagers. It disregards not only the seriousness of abortion but the importance of parental involvement and so would weaken a protection I am committed to uphold.

I have spoken with medical professionals to determine whether the drug contemplated under the bill would simply prevent conception or whether it would also terminate a living embryo after conception. Once it became clear that the latter was the case, my decision was straightforward. I will honor the commitment I made during my campaign: While I do not favor abortion, I will not change the state's abortion laws.

I understand that my views on laws governing abortion set me in the minority in our Commonwealth. I am prolife. I believe that abortion is the wrong choice except in cases of incest, rape, and to save the life of the mother. I wish the people of America agreed, and that the laws of our nation could reflect that view. But while the nation remains so divided over abortion, I believe that the states, through the democratic process, should determine their own abortion laws and not have them dictated by judicial mandate.

Because Massachusetts is decidedly prochoice, I have respected the state's democratically held view. I have not attempted to impose my own views on the prochoice majority.

For all the conflicting views on this issue, it speaks well of our country that we recognize abortion as a problem. The law may call it a right, but no one ever called it a good, and, in the quiet of conscience people of both political parties know that more than a million abortions a year cannot be squared with the good heart of America.

You can't be a prolife governor in a prochoice state without understanding that there are heartfelt and thoughtful arguments on both sides of the question. Many women considering abortions face terrible pressures, hurts, and fears; we should come to their aid with all the resourcefulness and empathy we can offer. At the same time, the starting point should be the innocence and vulnerability of the child waiting to be born.

In some respects, these convictions have evolved and deepened during my time as governor. In considering the issue of embryo cloning and embryo farming, I saw where the harsh logic of

abortion can lead -- to the view of innocent new life as nothing more than research material or a commodity to be exploited.

I have also observed the bitterness and fierce anger that still linger 32 years after Roe v. Wade. The majority in the US Supreme Court's Casey opinion assured us this would pass away as Americans learned to live with abortion on demand. But this has proved a false hope.

There is much in the abortion controversy that America's founders would not recognize. Above all, those who wrote our Constitution would wonder why the federal courts had peremptorily removed the matter from the authority of the elected branches of government. The federal system left to us by the Constitution allows people of different states to make their own choices on matters of controversy, thus avoiding the bitter battles engendered by "one size fits all" judicial pronouncements. A federalist approach would allow such disputes to be settled by the citizens and elected representatives of each state, and appropriately defer to democratic governance.

Except on matters of the starkest clarity like the issue of banning partial-birth abortions, there is not now a decisive national consensus on abortion. Some parts of the country have prolife majorities, others have prochoice majorities. People of good faith on both sides of the issue should be able to make and advance their case in democratic forums -- with civility, mutual respect, and confidence that democratic majorities will prevail. We will never have peace on the abortion issue, much less a consensus of conscience, until democracy is allowed to work its way.

Remarks at Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC)
Mitt Romney
February 10, 2012

This year, here at CPAC, we've got a great crowd. It's been a great conference. For that I suppose we should acknowledge President Obama, the conservative movement's top recruiter. Turns out, he really is a great community organizer. Although, I don't think we were the community he had in mind.

Today we are poised for a great victory in November. The pundits and the pollsters tell us we can win this election. But we must tell the nation why we should win. It is up to us to prove that we are truly ready to step forward and lead this country. This election is not just about getting more votes. Defeating Barack Obama is only one step toward our greater goal of saving America.

Of course we can defeat Barack Obama! That's the easy part! Believe me, November 6th will be the easiest day our next President will face.

This country we love is in jeopardy. It's more than the economic statistics we read, it's the pain we feel in our hearts. For three years we have suffered through the failures not only of a weak leader, but of a bankrupt ideology. I am convinced that if we do our job, if we lead with conviction and integrity, that history will record the Obama Presidency as the last gasp of liberalism's great failure and a turning point for a new conservative era.

But it's not enough to show how they have failed. We must prove we deserve to lead. I am here today to ask you to stand with me shoulder to shoulder as we go forward to fight for America.

As we step forward together, now is the time to reaffirm what it means to be a conservative and why this must be our greatest hour. America is like no other country in history. At the very heart of our American conservatism is the conviction that the principles embodied in the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence are uniquely powerful, foundational, and defining. Some see the hand of Providence in their authorship. Others credit the brilliance of the Founders. Many of us see both. But conservatives all agree that departing from these founding principles is a departure from the greatness of America-- from our mission, from our freedom, from our prosperity, and from our purpose.

I know this President will never get it, but we conservatives aren't just proud to cling to our guns and to our religion. We are also proud to cling to our Constitution!

The wisdom of our founding documents is that they see the nation's prosperity not as a product of government, but as the product of individual citizens, each pursuing happiness. This is key to the success of the American experiment. America does not just exist for the people, it has been made exceptional by the people.

A free people, pursuing their own dreams and achieving success in their own ways – that is what has propelled America and made us the most prosperous and powerful nation in the world.

Many politicians on both sides of the aisle have forgotten that – if they ever really understood it at all. They have fallen under the spell of Washington.

Politicians are routinely elected on promises to change Washington, but when they come here, they become creatures of Washington. They begin to see government as the answer to every challenge and the solution for every problem. At every turn, they try to substitute the heavy hand of the federal government for free citizens and free enterprise. They think government knows better – and can do better – than a free people exercising their free will. And this President is the worst offender. Barack Obama is the poster child for the arrogance of government.

This election really is a battle for the soul of America. And it's going to come down to a choice between whether we want to be a nation of and by Washington … or a nation of and by a free people.

As conservatives, we are united by a set of core commitments. But not everyone has taken the same path to get here. There are college students at this conference who are reading Burke and Hayek. When I was your age, you could have told me they were infielders for the Detroit Tigers. Some of you work in think tanks or follow the writings of prominent leaders. Some of you have worked in government or labored on the front lines of conservative causes. I salute you all.

My path to conservatism came from my family, my faith, and my life's work.

I was raised in a home shaped by and rooted in conservative values. My mother's father – my grandfather – came to America from England. As a teenager, he was alone in a new country, but he risked it all for a chance at religious liberty and economic opportunity.

You've probably heard how proud I am of my father. He was born to American parents living in Mexico. When he was five, they moved back to the United States. His dad was a builder who went bust more than once. My Dad grew up poor and never had a chance to finish his college degree. But he believed in a country where the circumstances of one's birth were not a barrier to achievement. And with hard work, he became the head of a car company and the Governor of the great state of Michigan.

The values that allowed my parents to achieve their dreams are the same values they instilled in my siblings and me. Those aren't values I just talk about; they are values that I live every day. My 42-year marriage to my wife, Ann; the life we've built with our five sons; and the faith that sustains us – these conservative constants have shaped my life.

In business, if you're not fiscally conservative, you're bankrupt. I spent 25 years balancing budgets, eliminating waste, and keeping as far away from government as was humanly possible. I did things conservatism is designed for – I started new businesses and turned around broken ones. And I am not ashamed to say that I was very successful at it.

I know conservatism because I have lived conservatism.

As governor of Massachusetts, I had the unique experience of defending our conservative principles in the most liberal state in our union.

When I took office, I was facing a $3 billion budget deficit and an economy in a tailspin.

Even with a legislature that was 85% Democrat, I cut taxes 19 times and balanced the budget all four years. I cast over 800 vetoes and cut entire programs. I erased a $3 billion budget shortfall and left office with a $2 billion rainy day fund. If there was a program, an agency, or a department that needed cutting, we cut it. In fact, a commentator once said that I didn't just go after the sacred cows, I went after the whole herd. And I can't wait to get my hands on Washington.

During my tenure, our conservative values also came under attack. Less than a year after I took office, the state's supreme court inexplicably found a right to same-sex marriage in our constitution. I pushed for a stay of the decision, fought for a marriage amendment to our constitution, and successfully prohibited out-of-state couples from coming to our state to get married and then go home. On my watch, we fought hard and prevented Massachusetts from becoming the Las Vegas of gay marriage. When I am President, I will preserve the Defense of Marriage Act and I will fight for a federal amendment defining marriage as a relationship between one man and one woman.

During my time in office, I stood up to those who wanted to call into question the very definition of life. I vetoed a bill that would have opened the door to cloning and embryo farming. I vetoed a bill that would have allowed young girls to gain access to abortion-inducing drugs. I fought for abstinence education in our public schools. And I defended the Catholic Church's right to serve their community in ways that were consistent with their conscience through adoption programs that placed children in a home with a mom and a dad.

I was a conservative governor. I fought against long odds in a deep blue state. I understand the battles that we, as conservatives, must fight because I have been on the front lines.

Here at CPAC, I know you understand this. This gathering has always welcomed me. And you have consistently supported me – not because of my rhetoric, but because of my record.

Over the course of this conference, several candidates either have been – or will come – before you seeking to lead our country out of these troubled times. What distinguishes us from one another is not our opposition to President Obama or even our support for conservative convictions. What distinguishes us is the nature of our experience, our perspective, and our judgment.

This election will ultimately be about two very different visions for America. But our more immediate choice will be between candidates from two very different backgrounds.

I spent 25 years in business, starting at the bottom and going on to help create a great American success story. I led an Olympics out of the shadows of scandal and turned around a state crying out for leadership.

In each of these endeavors, I worked with many talented people, but I was the Chief Executive. Success or failure lay on my shoulders. When tough decisions had to be made, I made them.

Leadership as a Chief Executive isn't about getting a bill out of subcommittee or giving a speech – it's about setting clear goals and overcoming constant adversity. It's about sharing credit when times are good and taking responsibility for failure.

I am the only candidate in this race, Republican or Democrat, who has never worked a day in Washington. I don't have old scores to settle or decades of cloakroom deals to defend.

As conservatives, you've learned to be skeptical of this city and its politicians and right you are.

My wife and I raised five boys and one of the lessons you learn is that when you hear an excuse that just doesn't make sense… it's because it doesn't make sense. And let me tell you, any politician who tries to convince you that they hated Washington so much that they just couldn't leave, well, that's the same politician who will try to sell you a Bridge to Nowhere.

This is a moment when our country needs serious change and real reform. So, let me tell you exactly what kind of President I will be.

To get America back on track and get Americans back to work, we need bold and sweeping reforms. These are not managerial issues of changing this department or that agency. To change Washington, we must change the relationship between government and citizen. These are moral choices that will define us for generations to come.

Today we borrow almost forty cents of every dollar we spend. That is unconscionable. It's unsustainable. It's reckless. It's immoral. And, if I am President, it will end.

I will approach every spending decision by asking a few important questions: Can we afford it? And, if not, is it worth borrowing money from China to pay for it?

As President, I will not just slow the growth of government, I will cut it. I will not just freeze government's share of the total economy, I will reduce it. And, without raising taxes or sacrificing America's military superiority, I will finally balance the budget.

And that will start with the easiest cut of all – I will eliminate Obamacare.

I will dramatically reduce the size of the federal workforce. And, for the first time ever, we will tie the compensation and benefits of federal workers to those in the private sector. The principle here is simple: public servants should not get a better deal than the citizens they serve.

But cutting spending and bureaucracy alone won't be enough. In their current form, Social Security and Medicare are unsustainable. And we cannot afford to avoid our entitlement challenges any longer.

I am the only candidate for President who has offered a sweeping, specific plan to save Social Security and reform Medicare. There are those who say you can't talk straight to the American people on these key issues and still win an election. I say we can, we must, and I will!

These are sensible and critical reforms. Under my plan, no one at or near the retirement age will see any changes. And tax hikes are off the table.

We will slowly and gradually raise the retirement age for Social Security – and, we will slow the growth in benefits for our nation's higher-income retirees.

When it comes to Medicare, tomorrow's seniors should have the freedom to choose between traditional Medicare and a range of private plans. If these future seniors choose a more expensive plan, they would bear the additional cost.

I know this President and his liberal allies will attack me for leading where he has failed. So be it. I will stand and fight – and we will win.

He will attack us with the usual fear tactics, but we will remind Americans that during this President's term we have seen record high job losses and record home foreclosures. We will not be lectured to on values by the man whose ineptitude and failure has created so much unnecessary pain for our fellow Americans.

Ours will not be the easy course. But it will be the right course. And I am confident that Americans are yearning for a President to do what is needed, not what is expedient.

And let me be clear: Mine will be a pro-life presidency.

On day one, I will reinstate the Mexico City policy.

I will cut off funding for the United Nations Population Fund, which supports China's barbaric One Child Policy.

I will ensure that organizations like Planned Parenthood get no federal support.

And I will reverse every single Obama regulation that attacks our religious liberty and threatens innocent life.

The Presidency is more than a public office; it is a sacred trust. As President, I will honor that trust by assuring that America remains the greatest military power on the face of the earth. This is very simple: If you do not want America to be the strongest nation on earth, I am not your President. You have that President today.

This election is a defining moment for our generation and for the conservative movement. Make no mistake – we have an opportunity for Greatness but with that opportunity comes defining responsibility. We cannot use this election to refight past battles or reward our friends. I know

that the fundamental change this moment demands will take fresh, bold conservative leadership with real world solutions based on real world experience.

I will come to Washington, and, with your help and guidance and prayers, I will change Washington. And then I will leave Washington and go back to the life and family I love.

I believe this is a moment that demands we return to our basic values and first principals. This is our moment. This is why we are conservatives. The task before us now is to reaffirm the convictions that unite us and go forward shoulder to shoulder to secure the victory America deserves.

Thank you and God bless.

Charge to Revive the Role of Faith in the Public Square
Rick Santorum
Sept. 14, 2010

Three pictures hung in the home of my devoutly Catholic immigrant grandparents when I was a boy and I remember them well -- Jesus, Pope Paul VI and John F. Kennedy. The president was a source of great pride and a symbol to Catholics that all barriers had finally been broken. What my family and maybe even candidate Kennedy at the time didn't realize was that in a key moment in that election of 1960 right here in Houston, Kennedy began the construction of another, even more threatening wall for our society -- one that sealed off informed moral wisdom into a realm of non rational beliefs that have no legitimate role in political discourse.

Fifty years ago this Sunday JFK delivered a speech to the Greater Houston Ministerial Association to dispel suspicions about the role the papacy might play in the government of this country under his administration. Let's make no mistake about it -- Kennedy was addressing a real issue at the time. Prejudice against Catholics threatened to cost him the election. But on that day, Kennedy chose not just to dispel fear, he chose to expel faith. Let me quote from the beginning of Kennedy's speech: "I believe in an America where the separation of church and state is absolute."

The idea of strict or absolute separation of church and state is not and never was the American model. It was a model used in countries like France and until recently Turkey, but it found little support in America until it was introduced into the public discourse by Justice Hugo Black in the case of *Everson v. The Board of Education* in 1947. (Black, by the way, was a Catholic-hating former member of the KKK who ironically enough advocated this strict separation doctrine to keep public funds from Catholic schools.)

While the phrase "separation of church and state" doesn't appear in the Constitution, the concept of keeping the government apart from religion does. The first part of the First Amendment prohibits the federal government from establishing a state church, such as existed in England and in some of the states in 1791, and from discriminating for or against particular faiths. The founders were determined to ensure that the new national government had no jurisdiction over matters of religion, in large part to insure that each American would be free to pursue the religion of their choice without state interference. Far from reflecting hostility toward religion, our founders, rooted in their own faith convictions, knew that faith was not just an essential element, but the essence of civilization and the inspiration of culture.

The second reference to religion in the First Amendment guaranteed the free exercise of religion and in conjunction with the prohibition of established churches, these two concepts were to work together to ensure that religion and people of faith had powerful constitutional protections of their right to not only worship as their conscience dictated, but to be free to bring their religiously informed moral convictions into the public discourse.

The phrase "wall of separation" used by Black comes from a letter written by a founder who didn't even attend the constitutional convention, Thomas Jefferson. After he was elected

president he mentioned the phrase in a response to a letter written to him by the Danbury Baptists. The Baptists had expressed concern to him about the right of the government to interfere with the religious pursuits of the people, not the right of the people to engage their government with religiously informed moral judgments. Jefferson's "wall of separation" was describing how the First Amendment was designed to protect churches from the government and nothing more. Note that the Sunday following the day he wrote the letter, Jefferson attended religious services in the Capitol building -- so much for the founders' hostility or indifference to religion. But Kennedy's misuse of the phrase constructed a high barrier that ultimately would keep religious convictions out of politics in a place where our founders had intended justthe opposite.

Kennedy continued: "I believe in an America ... where no Catholic prelate would tell the President -- should he be Catholic -- how to act... where no public official either requests or accepts instructions on public policy from the Pope, the National Council of Churches or any other ecclesiastical source; where no religious body seeks to impose its will directly or indirectly upon the general populace or the public acts of its officials."

Of course no religious body should "impose its will" on the public or public officials, but that was not the issue then or now. The issue is one that every diverse civilization like America has to deal with -- how do we best live with our differences. Our founders' vision, unlike the French, was to give every belief and every believer and non-believer a place at the table in the public square. Madison referred to this "equal and complete liberty" as the "true remedy." Admittedly our country hadn't always lived up to that ideal -- in particular with respect to Jews and Catholics, thus the legitimate reason for Kennedy's speech. But what JFK advocated sounded more like Ataturk than Madison -- that religious ideas and actors were not welcome in public policy debates.

Ultimately Kennedy's attempt to reassure Protestants that the Catholic Church would not control the government and suborn its independence advanced a philosophy of strict separation that would create a purely secular public square cleansed of all religious wisdom and the voice of religious people of all faiths. He laid the foundation for attacks on religious freedom and freedom of speech by the secular left and its political arms like the ACLU and the People for the American Way. This has and will continue to create dissension and division in this country as people of faith increasingly feel like second-class citizens.

Kennedy took words written to protect religion from the government and used them to protect the government from religion. It worked -- in the years following this speech the concept of an absolute "separation of church and state" gained wider and wider acceptance due to its inculcation in the academy. When I was in the senate I used to question student groups by asking them which phrase was in the constitution "separation of church and state" or "the free exercise of religion"? Separation always won usually by a wide margin.

Another consequence is the debasement of our First Amendment right of religious freedom. Of all the great and necessary freedoms listed in the First Amendment, freedom to exercise religion (not just to believe, but to live out that belief) is the most important; before freedom of speech,

before freedom of the press, before freedom of assembly, before freedom to petition the government for redress of grievances, before all others. This freedom of religion, freedom of conscience, is the trunk from which all other branches of freedom on our great tree of liberty get their life. Cut down the trunk and the tree of liberty will die and in its place will be only the barren earth of tyranny.

This first freedom has now been placed on the lowest rung of interests to be considered when weighing rights against one another. The fruits of this misguided idea are increasingly evident. For example:
- The ACLU is currently pushing HHS to force Catholic hospitals to perform abortions under the emergency care mandate of Obamacare.
- A University of Illinois professor hired to teach classes on Catholic doctrine was fired because he taught (well...) Catholic doctrine.
- Religious organizations are increasingly excluded from Public Universities unless they deny their deeply held religious beliefs. This year, the Supreme Court affirmed that The Christian Legal Society can be barred from the Hastings College of Law because they insist on holding their leaders accountable to Christian standards of sexual ethics.
- In 2006, Catholic Charities of Boston was forced to abandon adoptions due to a state law requiring that they assist homosexuals in adopting children.

Kennedy's error also unleashed a new form of censorship that would make vows to the Almighty a constitutional offense, rob clergy of their First Amendment rights and deprive our leaders and our country of their inspired wisdom and guidance.

When I served in the US Senate I often looked to the moral wisdom found in the writings of such religious figures as Augustine, Theresa of Avila, Thomas Aquinas, and Thomas More as well as from Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Martin Luther King and Rabbi Abraham Joshua Herschel.
Mother Teresa's speech at the National Prayer Breakfast, spoken with a humility that made her quiet voice a loud alarm in our hearts, moved me to take a leading role in an issue that pulled at the moral fabric of our country: partial birth abortion. And it was Pope John Paul II and other Christian leaders' call for the biblical concept of absolving debt at the Jubilee year of 2000 that motivated me to join Sen. Joe Biden to reduce third world debt. Should I have rejected the instructions from the clergy to relieve debt because it was inspired by the word of God? Did Kennedy reject desegregation because black ministers like the Rev. Martin Luther King arguing from a Biblical premise advocated it? Thank goodness he didn't.

There's a long list of Americans moved by faith who took on great causes for the nation they love: Harriet Beecher Stowe, whose novel Uncle Tom's Cabin shook a nation to war; Jeremiah Evarts, who defended American Indian rights; and Susan B. Anthony, who was inspired by Jesus' radical view of women as equal to men. What would our nation look like had the spirit not moved in them?

If there were any doubts about Kennedy's intent to devalue faith's role in shaping public discourse his concluding words erased it: "Whatever issue should come before me as President, if I should be elected, on birth control, divorce, censorship, gambling or any other subject I will

make my decision ... in accordance with what my conscience tells me to be in the national interest and without regard to outside religious pressure or dictates."

So pressures or dictates from labor unions or environmental groups are smiled upon, and only the religious ones see a frown. To justify this suspicion toward the legitimate claims of faith, notice that Kennedy and his subsequent followers have invoked their conscience as their guide. All well and good. I too use my conscience as a guide, but you are not born with a competent conscience; it is formed and continues to be formed by something and reflects that formation. If faith in objective and eternal truths is no longer going to inform your conscience what moral code will? And where does that code come from? And what is the basis of its authority? Doesn't the public have a right to know? Yet Kennedy's followers never tell us.

What they do tell us is clear: that their consciences are not rooted in faith and as such they can be permitted to freely apply their ideas in making laws and deciding cases. On the other hand, consciences rooted in a belief in God are free to apply their ideas to personal matters, but if your beliefs, in the words of my former senate colleague Chuck Schumer, are "deeply held beliefs" that impact your public positions -- they must be excluded.

Writing in the nineteenth century, whose conflicts were prelude to ours, John Henry Newman said: "Conscience has rights because it has duties; but in this age ... it is the very right and freedom of conscience ... to be independent of unseen obligations. It becomes a license to take up any or no religion ... to boast of being above all religions and to be an impartial critic of each of them." Without some objective moral touchstone, conscience is no more than self indulgence -- "I can do what I want simply because my conscience tells me to do it."

A major political offshoot of Kennedy's philosophy, sometimes referred to as the "privatization of faith," was best illustrated by Mario Cuomo's speech at Notre Dame in September 1984. There he espoused his nuanced position on abortion: that, as a result of his religious convictions he was personally opposed to abortion. But he then applies Kennedy's thesis and refrains from imposing his values upon others whose views, because the truth is indiscernible, are equally valid. A virtual stampede of self-proclaimed Catholic politicians followed Cuomo into this seemingly safe harbor and remain there today. This political hand washing made it easier for Catholics to be in public life, but it also made it harder for Catholics to be Catholic in public life.

Cuomo's safe harbor is nothing more than a camouflage for the faint of heart -- a cynical sanctuary for concealing true convictions from the public, and for rationalizing a reluctance to defend them. Kennedy, Cuomo and their modern day disciples on the secular left would resolve any conflict between religion and politics by relegating faith to the closet. I see it as a healthy tension that Jesus dealt with directly when he said, "render unto Caesar what is Caesar's and unto God what is God's." The early church under Pope Gelasius pronounced the two swords doctrine defining two realms, the realm of the sacred and the realm of the secular. Our founders understood that the secular realm of positive law would be at times unjust and that is why the more important sacred realm would arm people with, as one of our founder's James Wilson put it, a "principle of revolution" to strive to set things right.

As a senator, whenever I was confronted with an immoral law that was unjust or harmed society, I had an obligation to respect the law, but an equal obligation to work toward changing it to comport with what is moral. I agree with the founders that there is a natural law which can be known through the exercise of reason against which the positive or civil law must be measured and if needed amended.

Martin Luther King laid out his approach for ordinary citizens in a Letter from a Birmingham Jail. He wrote: "There are two types of laws: just and unjust. I would be the first to advocate obeying just laws. One has not only a legal but a moral responsibility to obey just laws. Conversely, one has a moral responsibility to disobey unjust laws. ... How does one determine whether a law is just or unjust? A just law is a man made code that squares with the moral law or the law of God. An unjust law is a code that is out of harmony with the moral law. "

That said it's important to exercise prudence in such matters, particularly concerning matters of private personal behavior. Not all immoral conduct should be illegal. There are many good reasons not to fight such behavior with the coercive tools of criminal law. With the common sense of his classical tradition, Thomas Aquinas said that law "does not forbid all the vices, from which upright men can keep away, but only those grave ones which the average man can avoid, and chiefly those which do harm to others and have to be stopped if human society is to be maintained, such as murder and theft and so forth." So as long as this immoral behavior is not done in public or has significant public consequence it should stand outside civil sanctions. Aquinas was clear and practical: "The purpose of human law is to bring people to virtue, not suddenly, but step by step."

An illustration of this dichotomy is the issue of laws pertaining to certain sexual practices and what is called same sex marriage. In 2003 I expressed concern about the court's decision in a case challenging a Texas sodomy statute. I did so not because I would have voted for the Texas law; following St. Thomas' wisdom I would have opposed the Texas law.
I raised concerns about the consequences of the legal reasoning the court gave for invalidating the statute. They created a new constitutional "right" to consensual sexual conduct. I warned such a right would be used as a basis to create new a right that could have profound public consequences -- same sex marriage.
I have been criticized in the media for daring to speak out on these sensitive moral issues. So be it. I've tried, not always successfully, to approach these issues with the appropriate passion for the important matter at hand, with respect for the other point of view, without malice toward my opponent and with the humility that my judgment in some cases may be in error.

As it has been pointed out to me on numerous occasions, there are moral issues where I have differed from the US Conference of Catholic Bishops and even the pope -- welfare reform, the war in Afghanistan and Iraq, and some immigration policies. While all of these issues have profound moral underpinnings none of them involve moral absolutes. War is are not always unjust; government aid is not always just or loving. The bishops and I may disagree on such prudential matters, but as with all people of good will with whom I disagree, I have an obligation to them and my country to listen to their perspective and perform a healthy reexamination of my own position. Let me be clear; I am not arguing here that I have, or our country should, be

governed on the basis of religious revelation -- that we should for example have laws against murder, stealing, abortion and polygamy only because the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob decreed it so. I wholehearted agree with C.S. Lewis who said "I love God, but I detest theocracies."

Obviously, not everyone shares the Judeo-Christian moral convictions. All of us have an obligation to justify our positions based upon something that is accessible to everyone irrespective of their religious beliefs. We owe the public arguments based upon reason grounded in truth. In the Encyclical, Fides et Ratio, Pope John Paul II wrote as his opening sentence: "Faith and reason are like two wings on which the human spirit rises to the contemplation of truth; and God has placed in the human heart the desire to know the truth -- in a word, to know himself -- so that by knowing and loving God, men and women can come to the fullness of the truth about themselves."

The principle of the harmony of faith and reason is a crucial contribution that the Catholic Church brings to the debate. Those of us who are Catholic along with a majority of Protestants and Jews believe that God reveals himself through his creation and, as such, moral truths that should govern a just society are accessible to all -- believers and non-believers alike. At the same time, of course, we must hold fast to our convictions of what is right and what is wrong according to our faith, and not fall into the trap of idolizing our own intellects, or trying so hard not to offend that we succumb to a watery political correctness.

It should not make us uncomfortable to call something evil if that's what it is. Having convictions doesn't mean that we don't understand the complexity of the world -- it means that we are able to prioritize the pursuit of truth and justice and call evil what it is.

Our American civilization has reflected a most healthy union of faith and reason. From long experience, we know that faith for its own sake, apart from love of truth is only a sentiment, and that reason for its own sake withers into rationalism. Neither is autonomous. If I have faith only in myself, I belong to a very small religion. And as for the right use of reason, let's remember what G. K. Chesterton said: "A madman is not the man who has lost his reason. The madman is the man who has lost everything except his reason."

In his Regensburg address, Pope Benedict XVI contrasted the Judeo-Christian revelation with the concept of God held by some outside of the Judeo-Christian world as aloof from reason. He also discussed those societies which would attempt to live without God, as in secular Europe or Communist China. In the secular West, he said, "... the subjective "conscience" becomes the sole arbiter of what is ethical. In this way, though, ethics and religion lose their power to create a community and become a completely personal matter. This is a dangerous state of affairs for humanity, as we see from the disturbing pathologies of religion and reason which necessarily erupt when reason is so reduced that questions of religion and ethics no longer concern it."

The movement in our country to fly on "one wing," reason alone, will ultimately undermine the very foundation of our country -- freedom. America is rooted in the founders' belief that free

people, whose God-given rights are protected by a government that allows the individual to pursue their dreams and reap the fruits of their labor, would build the most just and prosperous society in the history of man. They were right; freedom was the key ingredient in the American experiment. Our founders understood it was relatively easy to establish freedom in our Constitution, the harder task was to create a system that would maintain it against the corrosive force of time. The author Os Guinness describes how they accomplished this as the Golden Triangle of Freedom: "Freedom requires virtue, virtue requires faith and faith requires freedom and around again."

That freedom requires virtue was explained by the political philosopher Edmund Burke, who wrote: "Men are qualified for civil liberty in exact proportion to their disposition to put moral chains upon their own appetites ... Society cannot exist, unless a controlling power upon will and appetite be placed somewhere; and the less of it there is within, the more there must be without. It is ordained in the eternal constitution of things, that men of intemperate minds cannot be free. Their passions forge their fetters."

Virtue requires faith because faith is the primary teacher of morality. That is not to say that one cannot be virtuous without faith, but for society as a whole faith is the indispensable agent of virtue. Faith requires freedom. Why has America remained a deeply religious country averting the road to secularism traveled by our European brothers and sisters? Again Madison's "true remedy," the combination of "free exercise" and no religious state supported monopoly, has created a vibrant marketplace of religions extolling everywhere the word of God to inspire people to fulfill His special plan for each of us. Our founders' inspired brilliance created a paradigm that has given America the best chance of any civilization in the history of man to endure the test of time. Time, this time now in American history is putting that to the test.

I will conclude with a final consequence of what started here 50 years ago by bringing in one of the Catholic Church's foremost American advocates for religious freedom, John Courtney Murray. He advised us that the first two articles of the First Amendment are "not articles of faith, but articles of peace." What was Murray getting at? E Pluribus Unum -- out of many one. Our founders believed that if they fostered religion and the Judeo-Christian moral code we would achieve something that was never before seen in a country with so many competing faiths -- a truly tolerant, democratic and harmonious public square.

On June 12, 1775, Congress' first act was to urge a national day of "public humiliation, fasting and prayer" for which it commissioned "ministers of the gospel of all denominations" to participate. On the assigned day, Congress attended services at an Anglican Church in the morning and a Presbyterian meetinghouse in the afternoon. The following year they convened at Philadelphia's "Roman Chapel" and later a Dutch Lutheran Church. This is the vision. A vibrant, fully clothed public square; a marketplace of believers and non-believers where truth could be proffered and reasoned, and differences civilly tolerated.

One of my favorite sayings is: "We don't appreciate what we have until it's gone". For over 200 years we have been blessed with a country often described as a melting pot. The fire that helped

to gently melt us together into a country where people of different faiths and cultures come together in our dynamic democracy to peaceably find common ground -- is that first freedom -- the true remedy.

What the movement spawned here 50 years ago seems to disregard is that repressing or banishing people of faith from having a say in government creates alienation which could lead to disaffection and conflict as we have seen in other countries around the world. Think about all of the people in this country from different cultures who if they lived in their native country would be sworn enemies. Yet when they come to America they are inoculated with something that enables them to work together on the school board and neighborhood associations.A key ingredient in that inoculation is the freedom of conscience that ameliorates the fear, frustration and mistrust that comes from repression.

Kennedy's speech was historic because it did offer a teachable moment. In the short term it accomplished a great good by helping to put an end to Catholic bigotry. Unfortunately, its lasting impact not only undermined the essential role that faith has successfully played in America, but it reduced religion to mere personal "belief" and helped launch a cultural revolution, proclaiming loudly that on matters of moral consequence, reason has no truths it can discern, nothing of moral significance it can claim to know, much less contribute to the public debate.

That's the "faith" that is being offered by those who want to change the time tested Golden Triangle of Freedom. You'll see it in the public square today, and it's popular because it pretends to impose nobody's values on anybody. Yet it's an illusion because it uses a cloak of "neutrality," "objectivity" and "rationality" that results in the imposition of secular values on everybody while marginalizing faith and those who believe as "moralizing theocrats".

Kennedy concluded his Houston speech by saying he did not "intend to disavow either my views or my church in order to win this election." The sad fact is he could have stood by his beliefs and won; he chose not to. Instead he charted a course that has won many elections, but has put American civilization at risk. I have always felt comfortable to be on the path our founders took, the one that is now less traveled and invites the most criticism. I do so because I believe we all have an obligation to be good stewards of this great inheritance that generations of Americans created with their last full measure of devotion.

That's why we should feel so blessed to be here at a time when the land that God has so richly blessed is being put to the test. Many generations are never called to do great things, make great sacrifices to maintain liberty. We are the fortunate ones who have the opportunity not only preserve but build on the founders' vision of freedom supported by virtue which in turn is supported by a vibrant faith -- a mutually strengthening interface of church and state that with our collective effort will keep America that beacon of hope that shining city on the hill.
Bless you and may God continue to bless America.

Missouri Victory Speech
Rick Santorum
Feb. 7, 2012

Wow! Conservatism is alive and well in Missouri and Minnesota.

Thank you all so very, very much. It is great to be here. I just can't thank the people of Missouri; we doubled them up here and in Minnesota.

I want to also thank -- I have to always thank -- first off, let me just thank God for giving us the grace to be able to persevere through the -- through the dog days, and blessing us and blessing our family.

My wife, Karen, here, what a rock. I mean, what a rock through these last few weeks.

We have had -- we have had more drama than any family really needs. And -- and she has just been an amazing rock and a great blessing to me. And I just want to thank you in particular, my sweet, for all you've done. Thank you.

I want to thank my kids, the two who are here, Elizabeth and John, and all the kids listening at home, I'll be home in a couple of days. It's been a while.

And I just -- I just want a particular little note to my Bella, who I know is watching me and looking at her daddy. So I love you, sweetie. Thank you so much for getting healthy.

Your votes today were not just heard loud and wide across the states of Missouri and Minnesota, but they were heard loud and louder all across this country, and particularly in a place that I suspect may be in Massachusetts. They were heard particularly loud tonight. Tonight was not just a victory for us, but tonight was a victory for the voices of our party, conservatives and Tea Party people, who are out there every single day in the vineyards building the conservative movement in this country, building the base of the Republican Party, and building a voice for freedom in this land. Thank you.

There's probably another person who maybe -- maybe is listening to your cheers here tonight, also, and that might be at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. You better start listening to the voice of the people.

But then again, I wouldn't be surprised if he isn't listening. Why would you think he would be listening now? Has he ever listened to the voice of America before?

He's someone who -- well, let's just go look at the record. If you look at when it came to the -- the Wall Street bailouts, did the president of the United States listen to you when it came to bailing out the big banks?

Why? Because he thought he just knew better. He and his friends on Wall Street knew better than what was -- what was good for this country. When it came to the problems that were being

confronted on Obamacare, when the health care system in this country, did President Obama, when he was pushing forward his radical health care ideas, listen to the American people?

Why? Because he thinks he knows better how to run your lives and manage your health care.

When it comes to the environment, did the president of the United States listen to the American people, or did he push a radical cap- and-trade agenda that would crush the energy and manufacturing sector of the economy? Did he listen to you? No, because he thinks he knows better.

Ladies and gentlemen, we need a president who listens to the American people. When the majority of Americans oppose these radical ideas and they speak loudly against them, we need a president who listens to them.

Here's the problem. The problem is, in this Republican field, you have been listening. Tonight, the voters of America, the voters here in Missouri, the voters in Minnesota -- and I'm hopeful the voters in Colorado, right?

I hope you have been listening to our message, because if you've -- you listen to our message, and you found out that on those issues -- health care, the environment, cap-and-trade, and on the Wall Street bailouts, Mitt Romney has the same positions as Barack Obama and, in fact, would not be the best person to get up and fight for your voices for freedom in America.

Ladies and gentlemen, I don't stand here to claim to be the conservative alternative to Mitt Romney. I stand here to be the conservative alternative to Barack Obama.

Tonight -- tonight, we had -- tonight, we had an opportunity to see what a campaign looks like when one candidate isn't outspent 5 or 10 to 1 by negative ads impugning their integrity and distorting their record. This is a more accurate representation, frankly, of what the fall race will look like.

Governor Romney's greatest attribute is, well, I've got the most money and the best organization. Well, he's not going to have the most money and the best organization in the fall, is he?

No, we're going to have to have someone who has other attributes to commend himself to the people of America, someone -- someone who can get up and make sharp contrasts with President Obama, someone who can point to the failed record of this administration and say that Barack Obama needs to be replaced in the Oval Office.

People -- people have asked me, you know, what is -- what is the secret? Why are you doing so well? Is it your jobs message? And, yes, we have a great jobs message, talking about everywhere we go and particularly here in the industrial heartland of Missouri, where they still make things here in Missouri, by the way.

It's a message of -- as the Wall Street Journal called our economic plan, supply-side economics for the working man, is resonating in Minnesota and here in Missouri and across this country.

And you see that, when you have a Republican out there talking about growth -- talking about growth for everybody, right... ... that Americans respond, because I do care about not 99 percent or 95 percent. I care about the very rich and the very poor. I care about 100 percent of America.

The real message -- the message that we've been taking across this country and here in Missouri is a message of what's at stake in this election. This is the most important election in your lifetime. This is an election -- we've seen it so evident just here in the last week. This is an election fundamentally about the kind of country you're going to hand off to your children and grandchildren, whether they are going to have the level of freedom and opportunity that you have.

And we have a president of the United States, as I mentioned, who's someone who believes he knows better, that we need to accumulate more power in Washington, D.C., for the elite in our country, to be able to govern you because you are incapable of liberty, that you are incapable of freedom. That's what this president believes.

And I -- and Americans understand that there is a great, great deal at stake. If this president is re-elected and if we don't have a nominee that can make this case and not be compromised on the biggest issues of the day, but can make the case to the American public that this is about the founder's freedom, this is about a country that believes in God-given rights, and a Constitution that is limited to protect those rights.

The president does not believe that. The president over the last few years has tried to tell you that he, in fact, the government can give you rights, the government can take care of you and provide for you. They can give you the right to health care, like in Obamacare.

But look what happens when the government gives you rights. When the government gives you rights, unlike when God gives you rights, the government can take them away. When government gives you rights, the government can tell you how to exercise those rights.

And we saw that just in the last week, with a group of people, a small group of people, just Catholics in the United States of America who were told you have a right to health care, but you will have the health care that we tell you, you have to give your people, whether it is against the teachings of your church or not.

I never thought as a first-generation American, whose parents and grandparents loved freedom and came here because they didn't want the government telling them what to believe and how to believe it, that we had a First Amendment that actually stood for freedom of conscience, that we'd have a president of the United States who would roll over that and impose his secular values on the people of this country.

And it's worse than that. When one of the Catholic bishops tried to communicate that through Army chaplains, the Obama administration said, no, you can't do that, no, because your language is seditious, and they made them change the language of a letter from a bishop to his people.

Ladies and gentlemen, freedom is at stake in this election. We need to be the voice for freedom.

And that founding document, the Declaration of Independence, at the end of that document, those founders signed their names. But the last clause of that document said we pledge our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor.

Ladies and gentlemen, every generation of Americans doesn't create freedom, but they have, in many respects, a harder job. They have to maintain freedom.

Your charge tonight -- your charge tonight here in Missouri -- because we're not done yet with you here in Missouri. You've got a caucus coming up next month -- is to go out and pledge, pledge -- no, not your lives. Maybe your fortune. RickSantorum.com is the website.

But your honor, the honor that you stand on, on the backs and the shoulders of your ancestors. The people here in St. Louis, the people here in Missouri, the people across this country who sacrificed for this country, for the freedoms we have. America's honor, your honor is at stake. Go out and preserve the greatest country in the history of the world.

Thank you all, and God bless.