WHEN LEADERS DECEIVE
A SLUMBERING AND
UNWARY
PUBLIC

THROUGH FALSE FLAGS
AND MISDIRECTION

By Lee Penn
Arrogance, lust for power, duplicity, hypocrisy, and hidden agendas are business as usual for political and religious leaders in the US and worldwide. It is so now, and it has been so since the Fall. Such corruption is dangerous when these leaders proclaim their own righteousness, and even more so when their followers invest nation-saving or world-saving hopes in these flawed rulers. Both the left and the right are prone to follow wolves in sheep’s clothing. The pattern is the same, whether it involves a self-styled liberal President of the United States, or self-proclaimed conservative Republican candidates for this office.

**Scriptural warnings about rulers in general**

Before reviewing the present-day parade of self-deluded or deceitful leaders, it is worth remembering what the Scriptures have said about mankind’s rulers:

Mankind was created free, powerful, and responsible for his choices: “God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion … over all the earth …’ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.” *(Genesis 1:26-27)*

With the Fall, we became slaves of sin and subject to death, but this was not what we were created to be.

“Then it came burning hot into my mind, whatever he said, and however he flattered, when he got me home to his house he would sell me for a slave.” —John Bunyan, *The Pilgrim’s Progress*

all the nations.” *(1 Samuel 8:5)*

Samuel prayed to the LORD about this request, and God replied, “Hearken to the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them … only, you shall solemnly warn them, and show them the ways of the king who shall reign over them. So Samuel told all the words of the LORD to the people who were asking a king from him. He said, ‘These will be the ways of the king who will reign over you: he will take your sons and appoint them to his chariots and to be his horsemen, and to run before his chariots; and he will appoint for himself commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties, and some to plow his ground and to reap his harvest, and to make his implements of war and the equipment of his chariots. He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers. He will take the tenth of your grain and of your vineyards and olive orchards and give them to his servants. He will take the tenth of your flocks, and you shall be his slaves. And in that day you will cry out because of your king, whom you have chosen for yourselves; but the LORD will not answer you in that day.’ But the people refused to listen to the voice of...
Samuel; and they said, ‘No! but we will have a king over us, that we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may govern us and go out before us and fight our battles.’ And when Samuel had heard all the words of the people, he repeated them in the ears of the LORD. And the LORD said to Samuel, ‘Hearken to their voice, and make them a king.” (1 Samuel 8:7-22).

Since the Fall, the usual price for earthly power has been submission to Satan. Such was the last temptation that the devil offered Christ in the desert: “Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them; and he said to him, ‘All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.’ Then Jesus said to him, ‘Begone, Satan! for it is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve’.” (Matthew 4:8-10) Christ rejected Satan’s offer, but did not deny that Satan could deliver what he claimed. Those who seek political power should, at the least, consider very carefully whose terrain they are playing in, and whom they are actually serving. As Jesus said, “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.” (Matthew 6:24)

Christ told his disciples not to seek earthly honor and power, but to serve – even as He did: “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you; but whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave; even as the Son of man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” (Matthew 20:25-28) Very few religious or political authorities have acted according to this teaching.

One of the ways that God can punish an errant nation – or a civilization, or a church – is to deprive it of honest, competent, principled leadership: “For, behold, the Lord, the LORD of hosts, is taking away from Jerusalem and from Judah … the mighty man and the soldier, the judge and the prophet, the diviner and the elder, the captain of fifty and the man of rank, the counselor and the skilful magician and the expert in charms. And I will make boys their princes, and babes shall rule over them. And the people will oppress one another, every man his fellow and every man his neighbor; the youth will be insolent to the elder, and the base fellow to the honorable.” (Isaiah 3:1-5)

Look around! In the Western nations, and in the churches, this prophecy is being fulfilled again, in our sight.

Scriptures offer no promise of wise, holy, benevolent, global governance by human rulers in the future. Instead, the New Testament symbolically describes mankind’s final rulers as servants of Satan and religious-political tyrants: the “the man of lawlessness … the son of perdition” (2 Thessalonians 2:3) and the “beast,” whose authority came from “the dragon” (Revelation 13:4).

All of this should lead Christians to be skeptical of those who promise salvation through better politics, whether the promised utopia is “progressive” or “conservative,” “sec-
ular” or “religious.” In all too many instances, political (and religious) leaders are the opposite of what they present themselves to be.

President Barack Obama: forsworn liberal

At the top of the list of leaders who are not what they have pretended to be is President Barack Hussein Obama. In making this charge against the most powerful individual on the planet, I am not venturing into the “birther” controversy, nor am I pointing a finger at his murky, controversial career as a student and a young community organizer. Rather, I am comparing Obama’s acts in office against his promises made in his 2008 Presidential run, and against the image promoted in 2007-2009 by his ardent followers. In many ways, the “New Boss” has proven to be a carbon copy of the “Old Boss” – or worse.

Obama claims – and has used – the power to assassinate American citizens (and others) without charge, trial, or conviction, if the targets are (on the say-so of his own officials) involved in terrorism.1 In September 2011, a US drone strike in Yemen killed Anwar al-Awlaki, an American citizen accused of being an al Qaeda terrorist; the next month, the US bombed an alleged al Qaeda gathering; among the dead was al-Awlaki’s 16-year old son (who was also an American citizen – and who likewise never received any kind of legal due process.) The CIA is claiming that it cannot answer any Freedom of Information Act questions about the drone program, due to threats to “national security.” Therefore, American standards of justice and due process now fall below what the occupying authorities of the Roman Empire offered to their subjects in ancient Palestine. As King Festus said regarding the charges against Paul the Apostle, “it was not the custom of the Romans to give up any one [for condemnation] before the accused met the accusers face to face, and had opportunity to make his defense concerning the charge laid against him.” (Acts 25:16)

Since the terrorist label can be applied at will to political opponents, this death-dealing Presidential power grab should alarm us all. Indeed, in 2009 the Department of Homeland Security released a report on “Rightwing Extremism” that included opponents of abortion and gun control, opponents of the “New World Order,” supporters of limiting Federal power, and demobilized military veterans as potential recruits for domestic terrorism.2

On December 31, 2011, Obama signed the National Defense Authorization Act of 2012 (NDAA), which allows “indefinite military detention without charge or trial … for the first time in American history. The NDAA’s dangerous detention provisions would authorize the president – and all future presidents – to order the military to pick up and indefinitely imprison people captured anywhere in the world, far from any battlefield.” The ACLU noted that Obama issued a signing statement indicating “serious reservations” with this provision of the law. However, a signing statement does not bind future administrations in their usage of this new power – and it does not even bind Obama, if he changes his mind at a later time. This law was a triumph of bipartisan authoritarianism. The Senate version of the bill was sponsored by Sen. Carl Levin (D-Mich.) and Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.), the 2008 Republican Presidential candidate.3 The NDAA passed the Democratic-led Senate by a 93-7 vote, and it passed the Republican-led House by 283-136,4 and it was signed by the Democratic President.

When he ran for office, Obama decried George W. Bush’s attacks on the Constitution. When he arrived in the Oval Office, Obama quickly reversed course. As civil liberties attorney Glenn Greenwald noted, “one of the worst abuses of the lawless Bush presidency was that Bush officials repeatedly invoked secrecy powers (the State Secret privilege) to shield their most controversial and lawless programs from judicial review: warrantless eavesdropping, rendition, and torture. One of the earliest alarms about what the Obama presidency would be was when the Obama DOJ [Department of Justice] told courts early in 2009 that it would continue to assert those same radical secrecy claims: thus telling courts that the very programs which candidate Obama long denounced as illegal were now such vital State Secrets that courts must not risk their disclosure by adjudicating their legal-
Beyond Obama’s decree that the DOJ must not investigate Bush-era crimes, that was the instrument used by Obama to shield Bush’s criminal policies from judicial challenge: through Kafkaesque claims of secrecy whereby programs that everyone in the world knows exist were ‘Too Secret even to let courts examine.’

Obama has outdone previous Administrations in upholding governmental secrecy and in waging war against whistleblowers. As liberal commentator Josh Gerstein wrote in March 2012, “The Obama administration has launched an unprecedented drive to put alleged leakers of government secrets behind bars – a campaign that could end up putting reporters in the same place. Since Obama took office, prosecutors have filed six criminal, Espionage Act cases over leaks – more prosecutions than under all prior presidents combined. In one, the Justice Department is trying to force New York Times reporter James Risen to identify his confidential sources and has argued to a federal appeals court that journalists enjoy no privilege against being called as witnesses in a criminal case. If the government prevails, Risen is likely to end up in jail for contempt. The anti-leak drive and the potential for journalists to be caught in the crossfire is an occasional subject of news stories and editorials, but Bush officials are convinced they could never have gotten away with what has happened under Obama.”

Reversing a campaign pledge, Obama has kept the Guantanamo Bay concentration camp in operation. Some prisoners are to be held indefinitely without trial; others are to face military tribunals (or, in some cases, civilian courts), and some are to be released to their home countries. The Republicans, who opened the camp a decade ago, heartily approve keeping this prison in operation. In a May 2007 debate, Mitt Romney had said, “Some people have said we ought to close Guantanamo. My view is, we ought to double Guantanamo.”

Obama has been more aggressive in using drone strikes than the Bush administration was. On his watch, the US has bombed Somalia, Pakistan, Yemen, and Libya without a declaration of war – and without any other formal approval by Congress of such acts of war. (Indeed, the House defeated attempts to pass a bill authorizing US intervention in Libya last year – and the Administration continued anyway.) In early May, Obama signed a ten-year partnership agreement with the puppet government in Afghanistan, a pact which the White House spokesman described as a “legally binding executive agreement, which does not require it to be submitted to the Senate” for approval.

As an admiring liberal writer for the New York Times said recently, “The man who went to Washington as an ‘antiwar’ president was more Teddy Roosevelt than Jimmy Carter.”

High-level Bush Administration officials have praised Obama for continuing and expanding the policies of Bush 43. General Michael Hayden, former director of the National Security Agency (and afterward, former director of the CIA), said in October 2010, “you’ve got state secrets, targeted killings, indefinite detention, renditions, the opposition to extending the right of habeas corpus to prisoners at Bagram [in Afghanistan] … and
although it is slightly different, Obama has been as aggressive as President Bush in defending prerogatives about who he has to inform in Congress for executive covert action.”

In October 2008, then-Senator Obama voted for the “Emergency Economic Stabilization Act of 2008,” the law that granted $700 billion in bailout money to Wall Street and the “too big to fail” banks. His Republican opponent, Sen. John McCain, voted the same way, despite the bill’s resounding unpopularity with voters.

Obama’s “financial team is filled with the very same people who implemented the Wall-Street-subservient policies that led to the 2008 financial crisis.” This may explain why he has not prosecuted the banks and investment houses whose fraudulent and high-risk practices led to the crash. Obama teamed up with Republicans to pass the “JOBS Act” in April 2012, a financial deregulation bill that legalizes some of the shady accounting and promotional practices that fueled the speculative stock bubbles of the 1920s and the 1990s. On both sides of the aisle, Big Money talks.

Obama has proven himself to be as adept at raising funds from Big Money, and at using the perks of his office for political advantage, as was George W. Bush. Journalist Josh Gerstein wrote in mid-March, “Obama, who came into office bemoaning a broken electoral system, has proved surprisingly energetic at fundraising from wealthy donors and using his office to his political benefit in states that could decide his reelection. He’s attended 103 reelection fundraisers — about double the 52 such events Bush had attended at this point in 2004, according to tallies kept by CBS’s Mark Knoller. Obama also changed course and recently blessed the efforts of super PAC Priorities USA Action, allowing top campaign aides and even Cabinet members to appear at its fundraising events. And while Bush and his Cabinet members were slammed by Democrats for official travel to swing states before key elections, Obama has made more than 60 trips to swing states since taking office.”

None of this meets the expectations of the anti-Wall Street activists, war opponents, and civil libertarians who ardently supported Obama in 2008. Although Obama ran as a liberal, he is – aside from the hot-button “social issues” – now governing as a Big Government/Big Business centrist. With the exception of abortion, insurance coverage for contraception, and same-sex unions, Obama has earned the title of “false flag liberal.”

Lack of principles is a bipartisan affair. Proof of this can begin with Obama’s immediate predecessor, Bush the Younger.

President George W. Bush: Forsworn Conservative

George W. Bush ran for the Presidency in 2000 as a “compassionate conservative,” and – in contrast to the Clinton Administration’s futile and bloody exercises in “nation building” overseas – promised to carry out a “humble” foreign policy. These promises came to nothing, as Bush lapsed into a politics of secular messianism that was reminiscent of the Jacobins during the French Revolution.

Immediately after the election of 2008, writers for The American Conservative magazine summarized the yawning gap between traditional conservatism and Bush 43’s in-office performance: “President Bush earned his place in the pantheon of disgrace even before he presided over an epochal financial crisis. Absent the atrocities of 9/11, he might have been a mediocrity … Then came that epic morning, which Bush answered by giving the hijackers far more than they could accomplish with four planes. His grand democratization plan reduced Iraq to rubble, drove Iran to arm,
and provided terrorists with the ultimate recruiting tool. America, once renowned for her decency, became the aggressor her foes alleged. At home, our failed attempt at global liberation has left us less free than ever before. Ancient liberties, cultural imperatives, even basic solvency were subsumed by the war effort. And the conservative movement that gave Bush his margin sanitized his radicalism at the cost of its soul.”

The Afghan war, which Bush began in October 2001, continues. Afghanistan is now a failed state; the Taliban is resurgent; “our” incumbent regime is deeply corrupt; the military and intelligence services of our “ally” Pakistan may be in league with Pakistani and Afghan Taliban militants against us. The cost so far: $529 billion, about 3,000 US and allied military killed, and almost 15,000 Afghan civilians dead.

The US invaded Iraq on false pretenses in March 2003: Saddam Hussein had no weapons of mass destruction, and his regime had no connection to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Thus far, we have spent $804 billion for the impossible dream of remaking Iraq into a democracy. The body count is commensurate: just over 24,000 allied combatants dead (including 4,800 Americans), about 118,000 allied combatants wounded, and more than 100,000 civilian deaths. The only winner in this war is Iran, since the US and its allies have destroyed Tehran’s primary regional rival.

Even before the world financial crisis of 2008, Bush was spending Federal money (that is, money taken from taxpayers, or borrowed from our creditors (including Red China), or printed by the Fed) as if there were no tomorrow. The federal deficit grew from $144.5 billion in 2001 to $962 billion in 2008; most of this increase was due to Bush’s two wars, and due to his tax cuts. Total Federal debt grew from $5.8 trillion to $10 trillion from 2001-2008. All of this occurred before the new Depression began, and before Obama took office.

Despite the wars and the burgeoning deficits, Bush asked for the largest expansion in the Medicare program since 1965: “Part D,” the prescription drug subsidy for Medicare patients. To get the bill through a divided Congress in 2003, the Republican leadership twisted the arms of reluctant legislators, and the new program went into effect in 2006. The program is a money sink. Annual spending was $47 billion in 2006, and rose to $62 billion in 2010. By official estimates, this cost will be $110 billion in 2016. Bush bought votes from a powerful constituency, without a care for the program’s effect on the nation’s future solvency.

When the 2008 crisis struck, Bush “presided over the nationalization of our mortgage industry and much of the banking industry, in addition to some major insurance corporations. The president who sought to usher in an ‘ownership society’ instead supervised the socialization of large swaths of the financial sector.”

One of Bush’s first domestic policy initiatives was to establish the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, to promote involvement of religious charities in offering social services with Federal funding. In other words, religious charities were to be brought under direct Federal subsidy and influence. Obama has continued this program, but with expanded influence from the religious left.

Another early Bush initiative was the “No
Child Left Behind” Act, which passed Congress in 2001 with strong bipartisan support. This bill brings the Federal government into every public school, with requirements for student testing, teacher assessment, and other far-reaching regulation of what was once a parental or local responsibility.

Bush – with the full cooperation of a subservient Congress – greatly expanded the power of government over the people. His legacy – happily taken up (with minor changes) by Obama – includes torture of prisoners, “rendition” (sending captives to torture chambers in other countries), indefinite detention of “terror” suspects without trial, limitations on habeas corpus, warrantless wiretapping, surveillance, and data mining, the Transportation Security Administration’s army of snoops, thieves, and gropers, secret no-fly lists, “free speech zone” cages for protesters, and other abuses. (From 2001 till 2008, several of SCP’s writers discussed these attacks on freedom, in detail, as they occurred.) “We the people” have meekly accepted all these abuses, trading freedom for “security” – and have thus proven ourselves worthy of neither.

With such a record, George W. Bush earned the title of “false flag conservative.”

A logical question follows: if Bush was a false conservative, what are the marks of real conservatism?

Real conservatism – in the American tradition

Authentic conservatism has clear, defining landmarks – even if many of these principles are often cast aside for expediency.

Conservatives are – as a rule – responsible, established members of their community. Many of them are believers in God and orthodox members of their own churches.

Conservatives in any given era respect their own society’s traditions, and oppose radical, sudden changes in government, culture, and religion. When reformers propose changes in the guise of progress – whether a “new world” through better technology or through a new political order – conservatives are skeptical; they remember previous radical and sudden changes that went wrong. Thus, they would not promise – as President George W. Bush did – to “rid the world of evil.” Nor would they declare, as neoconservative Michael Ledeen did, that “Creative destruction is our middle name, both within our society and abroad.”

The conservative approach is the one recommended by the prophet Jeremiah for his time: “Thus says the Lord: ‘Stand by the roads, and look, and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is; and walk in it, and find rest for your souls.’” (Jeremiah 6:16) In a similar vein, Solomon advised his contemporaries, “Remove not the ancient landmark which your fathers have set.” (Proverbs 22:28) St. Paul counseled his listeners, “brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught by us, either by word of mouth or by letter.” (2 Thessalonians 2:15) (Paul’s “traditions” were not ancient, but were fully authoritative and approved by God.)

With traditionalism and conservatism, as with all human judgments and viewpoints, discernment is necessary in order to avoid enshrining habitual human sin and idolatry. As Jesus warned the Pharisees, “You leave the commandment of God, and hold fast the tradition of men.” (Mark 7:8) Jesus was condemning the expedient, self-seeking departures from Divine law that the Scribes and Pharisees were imposing upon the faithful (and calling them tradition).

Conservatives are prudent and responsible. When demagogues propose to buy votes, or when officials put forward programs that offer unsustainable benefits now at the expense of posterity, conservatives call for careful evaluation of the proposed changes. They do not seek popularity now at the expense of future insolvency.

Each nation has its own traditions, and so each nation’s conservatism is different. European and British conservatives often support monarchy, the old nobility, a state-Church alliance, and wide-scale government direction of the economy, under the guidance of the “right people.” American conservatives are – like the Founding Fathers – republican and opposed to inherited aristocracy or ecclesiastical privilege. In the US, conservatives support limited government and free markets. In this respect, American conservatism is an heir of the 18th Century Enlightenment, and is akin to the classical European liberalism of the 19th Century. Monarchism and nostalgia for the pre-1789 European ancien régime are not part of the American conservative mainstream.

American conservatives avoid “world-sav-
ing” crusades, and recognize that America’s political order cannot be successfully exported to nations that do not share this country’s culture and tradition. Thus, conservatives would not do as President Bush did in 2003, declaring the US to be the leader of a “global democratic revolution.”40 Conservatives do not seek wars of choice; they know that war – whether successful or not – destroys traditional values and established social relationships on the home front. (The Civil War, World War I, World War II, and the Vietnam War all had that effect.)

American conservatives oppose centralization of government. They prefer local authority over state authority, and state authority over that of the Federal Government. Conservatives believe that – rightly understood – the Constitution gives the Federal Government a limited, specific set of powers; they do not view “national security,” “the general welfare,” or “interstate commerce” as blanket grants of power to Washington DC.

Separation of Church & State

The concept of a “wall in our Constitution separating church and state” is not in the Constitution itself. It comes from a letter that President Thomas Jefferson wrote in 1802 to the Danbury Baptist Association of Connecticut. Jefferson was responding to an 1801 letter from the Baptists, who complained to him that their freedom of religion was limited by the state of Connecticut, since they were a minority denomination there. They hoped that a statement by the President would influence public opinion in favor of religious freedom. Jefferson said in response, “Believing with you that religion is a matter which lies solely between Man and his God, that he owes account to none other for his faith or his worship, that the legitimate powers of government reach actions only, and not opinions, I contemplate with sovereign reverence that act of the whole American people which declared that their legislature should ‘make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof,’ thus building a wall of separation between Church & State.”

Thus, Jefferson’s statement was in defense of religious liberty and autonomy from government interference. There was no intent to enforce atheism, or to expel religion from the public square.

American conservatives traditionally – before the rise of the religious “New Right” in the early 1980s – favored “separation of church and state” for what it meant to the Founding Fathers: that the government would not set up one denomination as a state church, and that all would have freedom of religion. It was taken for granted that believers would be active in public affairs. The notion that “separation of church and state” requires a form of government-sponsored atheism (including the suppression of voluntary public religious observance and the removal of traditional religious symbols from public space) is a radical innovation, a destructive departure from pre-1960 American tradition.

In a 1984 speech before the B’nai B’rith, President Ronald Reagan set forth what American conservatives traditionally believed: “The United States of America is and must remain a nation of openness to people of all beliefs. Our very unity has been strengthened by this pluralism. That’s how we began; this is how we must always be. … The unique thing about America is a wall in our Constitution separating church and state. It guarantees there will never be a state religion in this land, but at the same time it makes sure that every single American is free to choose and practice his or her religious beliefs or to choose no religion at all. Their rights shall not be questioned or violated by the state.”40

Thirty years ago, Barry Goldwater opposed those who would apply a religious test to politicians. In a speech before the Senate on September 16, 1981, Goldwater said, “I’m frankly sick and tired of the political preachers across this country telling me as a citizen that if I want to be a moral person, I must believe in ‘A,’ ‘B,’ ‘C’ and ‘D.’ Just who do they think they are? And from where do they presume to claim the right to dictate their moral beliefs to me? And I am even more angry as a legislator who must endure the threats of every religious group who thinks it has some God-granted right to control my vote on every roll call in the Senate. I am warning them today: I will fight them every step of the way if they try to dictate their moral convictions to all Americans in the name of ‘conservatism.’”40 He
added, “I don’t like the New Right. What they’re talking about is not conservatism… By maintaining the separation of church and state, the United States has avoided the intolerance which has so divided the rest of the world with religious wars.”

In 1994, Goldwater told the Washington Post, “When you say ‘radical right’ today, I think of these moneymaking ventures by fellows like Pat Robertson and others who are trying to take the Republican Party away from the Republican Party, and make a religious organization out of it.”

Such was American conservatism, before it was overtaken by sectarian fanatics and neo-conservative Trotskyite retreads.

Voices in the wilderness, from Robert Taft to Ron Paul

Conservatism of this kind once had standard-bearers in the Republican Party, including Robert Taft and Barry Goldwater. It was an austere, demanding set of beliefs, and proved unsuccessful with the mass of voters – as the 1964 Goldwater debacle showed. Since the late 1970s, neoconservative utopianism and the “something for nothing” notions of supply-side economics have largely displaced traditional conservatism. In a political counterpart to Gresham’s Law, bad politics – deceit, demagoguery, and short-term thinking – has driven principled politics (including traditional conservatism) out of the public square.

Only one of the recent Republican Presidential candidates – Ron Paul – has been in line with classical American conservatism. As of May 23, 2012, he had won only 8% of the delegates for the party’s nominating convention this summer. By that time, a shortage of funds forced him to stop an active campaign. Now, as in 2008, when Republicans were also offered a principled alternative to the Warfare/Welfare State, they have resoundingly rejected it. It seems most unlikely that Ron Paul will have any significant influence on the proceedings at this summer’s Republican convention.

The next question is: are any of this year’s mainstream Republican Presidential contenders conservative – or did they merely take up that label as a marketing ploy? An examination of the record of Mitt Romney, Newt Gingrich, and Rick Santorum shows that all are statists rather than limited-government conservatives.

It is a grim commentary on Republican leaders that these squalid empty suits were the best men they could offer for serious consideration for the nomination. It is even worse that the Republican base eagerly accepted the choice of evils that was set before them. The popularity of Romney, Gingrich, and Santorum, taken as a group, shows the authoritarian consensus within the Republican Party. As of late May, these men had won 92% of the delegates, and 89% of the Republican popular votes in primary elections.
Mitt Romney: Establishment Political Chameleon?

**Mitt Romney** (1947 - ) was, as of late May 2012, the presumptive Republican nominee for the Presidency. At that time, he had won 1,074 delegates: 68% of those selected thus far, and 70 delegates from the number needed to confirm his victory. In February, he told the Conservative Political Action Caucus, “I know conservatism, because I have lived conservatism,” and said that he had been a “severely” conservative governor of Massachusetts.

The reality is otherwise. As a Republican opponent said, “Romney is a “perfectly lubricated weather vane” he shifts his beliefs with the political winds of the moment. David Tuerck, head of the Beacon Hill Institute, a Boston-based free-market think tank, told the *Washington Post*, “Severely’ conservative exaggerates his conservatism. … I know that he’s desperate for everybody to believe he’s a conservative until he gets the nomination. But I’ve watched him for a long time…in his heart of hearts, he’s a guy who wants to be pragmatic.” During Romney’s 1994 Senate campaign, Ted Kennedy said during a debate that Romney “isn’t pro-choice or anti-choice. He’s multiple choice.”

Expedient flip-flops, spin, and departure from the traditional principles of American conservatism are the common threads that weave through Romney’s career:

Romney pushed a healthcare reform bill for Massachusetts that – like Obama’s law – includes a requirement that individuals buy health insurance, or pay a fine if they do not. When he signed the bill in 2006 – at an elaborate ceremony at Faneuil Hall, complete with a fife and drum band, then-Governor Romney praised Sen. Edward Kennedy as “my collaborator and friend.” In turn, Kennedy strongly praised Romney, saying, “You’ve led the way over the long and winding path to this moment” – a moment which Romney described as a “giant leap forward” for Massachusetts. Officials from the Obama Administration, and Obama himself, met with Romney’s health care advisers in 2009, seeking to use the Massachusetts plan as a model for the nation. Nevertheless, Romney now promises to “repeal Obamacare” if he takes office.

Romney now runs as pro-lifer – but in 1994, he ran for the Senate as “pro-choice,” and he did the same when he ran for the Massachusetts governorship in 2002. In an October 29, 2002 debate, Romney promised to uphold “our pro-choice laws” in Massachusetts, and added, “I do not take the position of a pro-life candidate. I am in favor of preserving and protecting a woman’s right to choose.” He did not switch to an anti-abortion stand until he began planning his 2008 run for the Republican nomination for the Presidency.

In his unsuccessful 1994 Senate race against Ted Kennedy, Romney positioned himself as a supporter of gay rights, a moderate who would carry on the work that Kennedy had begun. In an interview with *Bay Windows*, a Massachusetts newspaper for the gay community, Romney said, “There’s something to be said for having a Republican who supports civil rights in this broader context, including sexual orientation. When Ted Kennedy speaks on gay rights, he’s seen as an extremist. When Mitt Romney speaks on gay rights he’s seen as a centrist and a moderate. … I think the gay community needs more support from the Republican Party and I would be a voice in the Republican Party to foster anti-discrimination efforts. … I believe that while I would further the efforts Ted Kennedy has led, I would also lead the country in new and far more positive ways in taxing and spending, welfare reform, criminal justice and education. That’s why I believe many gay and lesbian individuals will support my candidacy and do support my candidacy.” When it was to Romney’s advantage to run on the left, he did so.

In 2012, same-sex marriage is the dominant gay-related political issue; Romney opposes this, as he long has done. In 1994, Romney strongly supported expanding laws banning discrimination against homosexuals in housing, employment, and education, and favored guarantees of equal employment benefits for same-sex couples. As of early May 2012, Romney’s campaign web site said nothing about these policies.
In a 2011 interview, Romney was asked about the Mormon position on homosexuality, and Romney declined to answer the question: “I’m not a spokesman for my church, and one thing I’m not gonna do in running for president is become a spokesman for my church, or apply a religious test which simply is forbidden by the constitution. I’m not going there.” In this respect, Romney’s approach to religion is similar to what Goldwater and Reagan (and the Founding Fathers) favored.

As Governor of Massachusetts, Romney supported a regional “cap and trade” arrangement with nearby states to reduce carbon emissions, seeking to mitigate man-made global warming. He now opposes such measures, and is publicly skeptical of global warming theory. This change of mind appeared to coincide with Romney’s plans to seek national office after leaving the Massachusetts governorship.

On domestic affairs, Romney’s positions shift with the winds. By contrast, on foreign affairs, Romney takes a consistent, hawkish line.

Romney does not consider waterboarding to be torture, and he supports “enhanced interrogation” of detainees in the War on Terror. He also supports the Patriot Act, “extraordinary rendition” (sending terrorism detainees to other countries for no-holds-barred torture), wide-scale telephone surveillance, and other expansions of Federal (and Presidential) power at the expense of traditional constitutional guarantees.

For Romney, America’s enemies are everywhere, and should be dealt with by sanctions, subversion, or military force. Romney promises that with “crippling sanctions,” aid to insurgents inside Iran, and – if necessary – military action, “if you elect me as the next president, they will not have a nuclear weapon.” Romney likewise wants to intervene (short of US military action) to bring about regime change in Syria. (This aligns him with al-Qaeda and other Sunni Muslim jihadists; they too are working to bring down the secular dictatorship now ruling Syria.) Romney wants to strengthen sanctions against North Korea, maintain the embargo against Cuba, retaliate against China’s mercantilist trade policies, and oppose the Russian regime, which he describes as a “destabilizing force on the world stage.”

As might be expected, Romney’s foreign policy team is stacked with aggressive neo-conservatives from the Bush 43 administration.

All of this will cost billions of dollars. Therefore, Romney proposes to raise non-combat military spending to 4% of Gross National Product (GNP) during his term from the current 3.8% of GNP, and will add 100,000 troops to our active duty forces.

With his promises to raise defense spending, to cut taxes, to maintain Social Security and Medicare for current retirees, and to cut the deficit, Romney is proposing the impossible. He is playing the standard political game, proposing more of the economic trickery that has gotten the US a $15.7 trillion national debt (and counting!).

Like Obama, Romney supported the 2008 bailout of Wall Street and the banks. He also favors the continuation of the Federal
Department of Education, and the continued intrusive monitoring of schools nationwide through the No Child Left Behind Act. He also favors continuation of the budget-busting Medicare Part D drug benefit. Just as the supporters of abortion somehow “found” the right to abortion on demand as part of the Constitution, Romney appears to have “found” bank bailouts, drug subsidies, and control over education among the enumerated Constitutional functions of the Federal Government.

With Romney’s record, it is clear that his political advisor Eric Fehrnstrom was telling the truth when he likened Romney to an “Etch A Sketch” toy. In March 2012, Fehrnstrom explained how Romney could easily shift from placating the right-wing Republican base in the primary campaign to focus on winning moderates and independent voters in the general election: “Everything changes. … It’s almost like an Etch A Sketch. You can kind of shake it up and restart all over again.”

Conservatives consider themselves to be the defenders of the “permanent things” of society, but for the faux-conservative Romney, nothing at all is permanent except his desire for power and pelf.

**Newt Gingrich’s Neoconservative Mandate for Social Change**

*Newt Gingrich* (1943 - ) withdrew from the Republican race on early May. He won only 131 delegates, 8% of the delegates chosen by Republican voters as of late May. In mid-April, Gingrich’s web site had described him as “the last conservative standing;” after Gingrich withdrew, he switched to a home page pleading for donations.

Despite his April 2012 slogan, Gingrich is not a traditional conservative. He is a technocrat with a right-wing veneer. In politics as in marriage, Gingrich is happy to replace the old with the new. He readily changes his beliefs for political advantage, and has a quasi-Jacobin fascination with social change and technical progress: “transformation.” In 1994 Gingrich said, “I think I am a transformational figure. I think I am trying to effect a change so large that the people who would be hurt by the change, the liberal machine, have a natural reaction ... I think because I’m so systematically purposeful about changing our world.” A British historian notes that Gingrich “has always been a big-government Republican with progressive tendencies. … Gingrich remained wedded to the belief that government could and should promote economic opportunity and healthy living.”

Gingrich wrote the foreword for *Creating a New Civilization*, a New Age social/political manifesto written in 1995 by futurists Alvin and Heidi Toffler. Gingrich wrote: “I first began working with the Tofflers in the early 1970s on a concept called anticipatory democracy. … For twenty years we have worked to develop a future-conscious politics and popular understanding that would make it easier for America to make the transition from the Second Wave civilization – which is clearly dying – to the emerging, but in many ways undefined and not fully understood Third Wave civilization. The process has been more frustrating and the progress much slower than I would have guessed two decades ago. Yet despite the frustrations, the development of a Third Wave political and governmental system is so central to the future of freedom and the future of America that it must be undertaken.”

In their preface to this book, the Tofflers praised Gingrich for being a “conservative revolutionary”: “Not only does this book carry a foreword by Gingrich, but it appears on a ‘reading list’ that he recommended to members of Congress and to the nation, alongside *The Federalist Papers*, the works of De Tocqueville, and other classics of political philosophy. Moreover, in speech after speech and in one press conference after another, Gingrich has referred to our 1980 work, *The Third Wave*, from which parts of this book are drawn, as ‘one of the seminal works of our time.’ … We have known Newt Gingrich for almost a quarter century. … In 1975 at the request of the Congressional Democrats, we organized a conference on futurism and ‘anticipatory democracy’ for senators and members of the House. We invited Newt Gingrich, probably the only Republican among the many futurists we knew. He attended. That conference led to the creation of the Congressional Clearinghouse on the Future, a group eventu-
ally cochaired by a young senator named Al Gore ... Gingrich is exactly what he says he is – a revolutionary and a conservative futurist.”

In words that paraphrase Teilhard de Chardin’s odes to progress, the Tofflers said, “What is needed, we believe, is a clear distinction between rear-guard politicians who seek to preserve or restore an unworkable past, and those who are ready to make the transition to what we call a ‘Third Wave’ information-age society.”

Here are some instances of Gingrich’s flip-flops, manipulative and intrusive radicalism, and aggressive statism:

During Gingrich’s recent campaign, he denounced Obama’s health care insurance mandate as unconstitutional. In his 2011 book *A Nation Like No Other*, he described the “requirement in ObamaCare that all Americans purchase health insurance” as one of the “three principal threats” to liberty and the rule of law. However, as recently as May 2009, Gingrich had supported this provision as part of Republican health care reform plans. As Gingrich had written in 2006, “Everyone should be required to participate in the insurance system.” He had said the same in another 2006 book, *Winning the Future*, and in his 2008 book *Real Change*. Meanwhile, the health care policy think tank that Gingrich founded in 2003, the Center for Health Transformation, went bankrupt in April of this year. At the end, the Center had $100,000 in assets, and debts of $1-10 million.

In March 2011, Gingrich did a complete flip-flop on US intervention in the Libyan revolution. On March 7, he told Fox News that he “would unilaterally ‘exercise a no-fly zone this evening,’ on the grounds that ‘we think that slaughtering your own citizens is unacceptable.’” After President Obama did just that a couple weeks later, Gingrich slammed him, telling NBC, “I would not have intervened,” especially not using “American and European forces.” This is one of the few instances in which Gingrich drew back from US intervention overseas; he has criticized both the Bush and Obama administrations for being insufficiently aggressive in dealing with North Korea, Iran, and other overseas opponents.

In like manner, Gingrich switched sides on cap-and-trade regulatory plans to limit carbon emissions. He told CBS in 2007, “I think if you have mandatory carbon caps combined with a trading system, much like we did with sulfur, and if you have a tax-incentive program for investing in the solutions, that there’s a package there that’s very, very good. And frankly, it’s something I would strongly support.” In 2011, Gingrich told a different audience, “I’ve never favored cap and trade.” For lies like this, Gingrich deserves a Pinocchio award.

Like Romney, Gingrich is willing to use any means necessary – including war – to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon. During a November 2011 GOP debate, Gingrich said that “if ‘maximum covert operations’ and other strategies failed there would be no other choice. First, though, the United States [should] consider ‘taking out their scientists,’ and ‘breaking up their systems, all of it covertly, all of it deniable.’” If the US is to do “covert action” (that is, acts of subversion, terrorism, or murder that we would see as acts of war if another country did them to us) against Iran, why would any sensible politician announce such deeds to the public beforehand?

Regarding the Palestinians, Gingrich said in December 2011, “Remember there was no Palestine as a state. It was part of the Ottoman Empire. And I think that we’ve had an invent-
ed Palestinian people, who are in fact Arabs, and were historically part of the Arab community. And they had a chance to go many places.” He thus took a more hard-line position on the Palestinian question than does the Israeli government.

In 2008, Gingrich hinted at the need to let occasional terrorist attacks occur to remind Americans to be sufficiently afraid. He said that seven years of success in preventing terrorist attacks was “one of the great tragedies of the Bush administration. ... The more successful they've been at intercepting and stopping bad guys the less proof there is that we’re in danger,” he said. “The better they’ve done at making sure there isn’t an attack the easier it is to say there was never going to be an attack anyway.” And then this stunner: ‘It's almost as if they should every once in a while have allowed an attack to get through just to remind us.”

Gingrich has called for creation of a “national health information system,” describing it as “a national security necessity.” He said, “Advanced expert systems could electronically track patient visits, their symptoms, and their conditions; direct scarce resources to where they are most needed; assess the effectiveness of response strategies in close to real time ... and capture other vital sources of data.” Gingrich positioned this as a way for the health care system to respond to terrorism, a pandemic, or a natural disaster – but his centralized, on-line medical record system (and its bureaucrats) would be reading our medical records, assessing our health, and allocating resources 24/7/365, even before a disaster. With such a system in place, medical privacy and autonomy for patients and doctors would be over forever. In addition, any capable hacker could steal the most intimate data for tens of millions of Americans with a few keystrokes.

Part of Gingrich’s vision of health care reform and cost control involves expanding the Federal nanny state so that it would regulate when children walk or ride to school, and what they eat in the lunch room. As The Atlantic reported early this year: “In his view, the government should improve the health care of Americans by changing the ‘cultural-and-society pattern’ that helps communities to be healthier. He offers a few examples. Individual schools should be required to have physical education five days per week, he says. School cafeterias should have to make all means appropriate for a student with diabetes. And then there's the last mandate he'd impose: ‘I am actually pretty radical about all this. I advocate that if you live within a mile of school, you ought to actually walk to school. I’m prepared to go back and reinvent raincoats and boots if that will help get people in the habit of exercise. And I would argue, statistically, that a child who routinely walked to school, even if they were occasionally in the rain or the snow, would be healthier than if they were chauffeured to school.”

Gingrich had led up to this in his 2006 book The Art of Transformation, proposing anti-obesity reforms for “the medical community, the family, the restaurant business, and other areas” – including the lunch rooms, gyms, and vending machines in local schools.

Gingrich’s view of education reform included hourly, centralized monitoring through new computer systems. In his 2010 book To Save America, he said, “Just imagine a reform movement that insists ... Every teacher should report actual attendance electronically every hour (a method McDonald’s uses to report every sale in its 37,000 stories worldwide), and schools will only get paid for students who actually attend class.” Likewise, in order to stop illegal immigration, in 1995 Gingrich said that the government should “require everyone to carry employee identification cards that have holograms or other hard-to-counterfeit devices.” In 2005, he proposed that a smart-card ID program for legal immigrants “should be outsourced to a company like Visa, Mastercard, or American Express that has a proven track record of preventing fraud and ensuring accountability.” (Given the recurrent, large-scale security breaches that have affected credit card firms, one must wonder what Gingrich was thinking when he wrote this).

Gingrich’s view of Federal power is expansive enough to encompass most present-day boondoggles, and to add new ones as expediency demands. He favors ethanol subsidies, and “reluctantly supported a scaled-down" version of the TARP bank bailout in 2008. Gingrich lobbied Republican congressmen to
pass the Medicare Part D drug entitlement expansion.\textsuperscript{100} He has proposed that the US establish a permanent base on the Moon by 2020, with a goal of 13,000 residents.\textsuperscript{101} Gingrich supports Federal laws that override state-level legalization of medical marijuana use, and wishes to carry on a “much more aggressive” War on Drugs – including execution of large-scale drug smugglers, and drug testing for those who seek unemployment benefits or food stamps.\textsuperscript{102} (He did not say whether Wall Street’s bailout beneficiaries, defense contractors, or Social Security recipients should undergo similar indignities as a condition of receiving Federal funding.) In 1995, Gingrich said, “Why not aspire to build a real Jurassic Park? … Wouldn’t that be one of the most spectacular accomplishments of human history? What if we could bring back extinct species?”\textsuperscript{103} This was one of Gingrich’s many science-fiction wish list items; he did not specify whether or not this dinosaur park would be a Federal initiative.

In \textit{The Art of Transformation}, Gingrich set forth his New Age theory of radical social change through crisis: “the greatest leverage for change exists at times of crisis.”\textsuperscript{104} In addition, “One of the first steps in creating change is to communicate a sense of urgency.”\textsuperscript{105} “In order to create transformation, we need the maximum number of people to learn and repeat our message in order to create an echo chamber.”\textsuperscript{106} “As change agents, it is our goal to maximize our audience’s commitment to transformation by communicating the need for transformation and by offering transformational vision and solutions.”\textsuperscript{107} “The rapidly changing environment of the Age of Transformation puts almost every 21st century leader in the role of managing an organization and leading a movement that is transforming society.”\textsuperscript{108} “Without a transformed legislative branch engaged in 21st century oversight, writing 21st century legislation, and passing 21st century appropriations, it is virtually impossible to have a truly transformed executive branch or an effectively balanced judicial branch. … We are on the edge of a dramatic transformation in government. The gap between the system of government we have inherited and the requirements and capabilities of the 21st century is simply becoming too big to defend government as is.”\textsuperscript{109} Whatever else these ideas are, they are radical, not conservative.

As part of his plan for social change, Gingrich proposed carefully designed propaganda and message management: “In defining the language, focus groups and polling can be extremely helpful because they tell us what people are hearing. What we learn can help us to use the right language to assert truth. It is also very important that we avoid the language of our opponent unless we can co-opt it and use it to our advantage.”\textsuperscript{110}

With his theories of propaganda-driven “transformation,” Gingrich thus agreed with Rahm Emanuel, President Obama’s former chief of staff, who in November 2008 had told a \textit{Wall Street Journal} conference of chief executives, “You never want a serious crisis to go to waste. … Things that we had postponed for too long, that were long-term, are now immediate and must be dealt with. This crisis provides the opportunity for us to do things that you could not do before.”

As Gingrich revealed his policies and principles, he has also (again) unveiled his character for all to see. In January 2012, he said, “I was attacked the other night for being grandiose. … I would just want you to note: Lincoln standing at Council Bluffs was grandiose. The Wright Brothers standing at Kitty Hawk were grandiose. John F. Kennedy was grandiose. I accept the charge that I am grandiose and that Americans are instinctively grandiose.”\textsuperscript{111} Gingrich’s grandiosity is of long standing. As \textit{The New York Times} reported, “All the way back in 1985, when he was just a foot soldier in the House, he told The Washington Post, ‘I want to shift the entire planet,’ adding, ‘This is just the beginning of a 20- or 30-year movement. I’ll get credit for it.’ As Maureen Dowd recalled in \textit{The Times} last year, he told \textit{The Atlanta Journal-Constitution} in 1994, ‘People like me are what stand between us and
In a *Vanity Fair* profile in 1995, he referred to himself as ‘a mythical person’ … Gingrich also considered himself a ‘definer of civilization’ and ‘teacher of the rules of civilization,’ phrases he scribbled in House office notes that came to light in 1997.\(^{112}\)

In 1995, Gingrich asserted that “the time had come to reestablish shame as a means of enforcing proper behavior.”\(^{111}\) Meanwhile, since 1993, Gingrich had been cheating on his second wife; he was having an extended affair with the woman who would become his third wife in 2000.\(^{116}\) In 2011, Gingrich gave Pat Robertson’s Christian Broadcasting Network this excuse for his betrayal of his second wife: “There’s no question at times of my life, partially driven by how passionately I felt about this country, that I worked far too hard and things happened in my life that were not appropriate. And what I can tell you is that when I did things that were wrong, I wasn’t trapped in situation ethics, I was doing things that were wrong, and yet, I was doing them. I found that I felt compelled to seek God’s forgiveness. Not God’s understanding, but God’s forgiveness.”\(^{115}\) Given this excuse, one must wonder what Gingrich – or his current wife – would have expected his behavior to be under the stress of the Presidency.

After spending months deriding Romney, Gingrich now says that Romney has “earned the right to represent the Republican Party” against Obama, and that that he will help Romney in any way that he can.\(^{110}\) Birds of a feather flock together. If Romney and Gingrich ever need new shoes, we should buy them matching pairs of flip-flops.

**Rick Santorum the Self-Appointed Inquisitor**

**Rick Santorum** (1958 - ) had held second place in the Republican race for delegates until he dropped out of the running in April 2012. As of late May, Santorum had 253 delegates, 16% of those selected thus far.\(^{117}\) Santorum addressed one of his final appeals for donations to “true believing conservatives,” and described himself as a “consistent, never-flip-flops, battle-tested conservative.”\(^{118}\) In March, Santorum averred that there was little difference between Obama and Romney: “You win by giving people the opportunity to see a different vision for our country, not someone who’s just going to be a little different than the person in there. … If they’re going to be a little different … we might as well stay with what we have instead of taking a risk of what may be the Etch A Sketch candidate for the future.”\(^{119}\) He also said that Romney was “the worst Republican in the country to put up against Barack Obama.”\(^{110}\) Nevertheless, on May 7, Santorum gave Romney a tepid endorsement – in the 13th paragraph of an e-mail sent in the middle of the night to his supporters.\(^{121}\)

Much of Santorum’s appeal to conservative Republicans has been his firm opposition to abortion and homosexuality. However, there are many ways in which Santorum fails to live up to conservatism as Americans have traditionally understood it.

Although Santorum positioned himself as the champion of the unborn, he has made significant political compromises with the “pro-choice” camp. As a conservative magazine reported five years ago, in 2004 Santorum “supported Arlen Specter, the incumbent, in the Republican primary for senator from Pennsylvania. Specter’s opponent, Pat Toomey, had impeccable pro-life credentials; Specter is radically pro-abortion. And, in the midst of the 2006 race, Santorum cosponsored a bill with Specter that he claimed would fund adult stem-cell research, but which pro-life leader Judie Brown revealed would actually legalize human cloning for the purpose of harvesting embryonic stem cells.”\(^{122}\)

For the most part, Santorum is happy to expand government spending (and bureaucracy) for his favored causes. He voted for the Medicare Part D prescription drug entitlement program in 2003, and was so proud of that vote that he ran TV commercials about it during his unsuccessful 2006 run for re-election to the Senate.\(^{123}\) There’s one striking exception to his big-government-conservative pattern: Santorum opposed the TARP bailout of Wall Street and the government takeover of General Motors.\(^{124}\)

A reviewer of Santorum’s book, *It Takes A Family*, notes Santorum’s support for big government: “A list of the government interventions that Santorum endorses includes national service, promotion of prison ministries, ‘individual development accounts,’ publicly
financed trust funds for children, community-investment incentives, strengthened obscenity enforcement, covenant marriage, assorted tax breaks, economic literacy programs in ‘every school in America’ (his italics), and more. Lots more. Though he is a populist critic of Big Government, Santorum shows no interest in defining principled limits on political power. His first priority is to make government pro-family, not to make it small. He has no use for a constitutional (or, as far as one can tell, moral) right to privacy, which he regards as a ‘constitutional wrecking ball’ that has become inimical to the very principle of the common good. Ditto for the notions of government neutrality and free expression. He does not support a ban on contraception, but he thinks the government has every right to impose one.125

For Santorum, the right to privacy “doesn’t exist in my opinion in the United States Constitution;”126 on this principle, states could again ban artificial contraception, if they so wished. In the same 2003 Associated Press interview, Santorum criticized the 1965 Supreme Court ruling that overturned state laws against contraceptives: “The idea is that the state doesn’t have rights to limit individuals’ wants and passions. I disagree with that. I think we absolutely have rights because there are consequences to letting people live out whatever wants or passions they desire.”127 The same intrusive state powers which cultural conservatives wish to use against birth control, recreational drugs, or homosexuality may – with analogous logic – be used by cultural radicals against gun ownership, participation in politically incorrect organizations, “hoarding” precious metal or food, having more than one child, or engaging in consumption that “endangers” the environment.

Santorum has been even more aggressively hawkish than Romney or Gingrich. In 2006, he warned that “Ahmadinejad, like Hitler and Mussolini, intends to conquer the world. This is not a hidden agenda. His goal is to establish a Caliphate.”128 Early this year, Santorum told Meet the Press that he would act upon his own fanciful assessment of Iran and their nuclear program: “We will degrade those facilities through airstrikes, and make it very public that we are doing that.”129 On his campaign web site, he promised that “Any nuclear scientist proven to be working for Iran’s nuclear program would be treated as an enemy combatant.”130 At an October 2011 campaign event in South Carolina, Santorum praised the recent assassinations of Iranian nuclear scientists, and hoped for more: “On occasion scientists working on the nuclear program in Iran turn up dead. I think that’s a wonderful thing, candidly. … I think we should send a very clear message that if you are a scientist from Russia, North Korea, or from Iran and you are going to work on a nuclear program to develop a bomb for Iran, you are not safe.”131 No diplomatic ambiguity – or respect for international law – for him! It appears not to matter for Santorum that Catholic teaching does not condone either pre-emptive war or assassination.

On all foreign policy and defense issues, Santorum took an aggressive stance. He ardently supported the war in Iraq, criticized the planned withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan, favored increased military spending, held (with Gingrich) “that the Palestinians don’t exist at all,” believes that “all the territory acquired in the 1967 war properly belongs to Israel,” and said, “I want to go to war with
China and make America the most attractive place in the world to do business.”813

In line with his warlike foreign policy, Santorum is willing to trample human rights (and American tradition, and international law, and Catholic belief) to use “enhanced interrogation” – including waterboarding – on captured terrorism suspects. As Santorum said in 2011, “I mean, you break somebody, and after they’re broken, they become cooperative.”911

In a manner that would have been inconceivable for most Republican candidates during the era of Robert Taft or Barry Goldwater, Santorum cloaked himself in the vestments of public religion. In January 2012, Santorum described this exchange with a Boston interviewer: “the interviewer said, ‘We don’t need a Jesus candidate, we need an economic candidate.’ ‘My answer to that,’ Santorum added, ‘was we always need a Jesus candidate. We need someone who believes in something more than themselves and not just the economy,’ he added. ‘When we say, ‘God bless America,’ do we mean it or do we just say it?’”914

In February 2012, Santorum said that John F. Kennedy’s 1960 speech reaffirming the separation of church and state – a speech that JFK made before a group of Protestant ministers in Houston, Texas, to allay fears that he would take orders from the Vatican – made him want to “throw up.”915 Santorum explained that the “first substantive line in the speech says, ‘I believe in America where the separation of church and state is absolute.’ I don’t believe in an America where the separation of church and state is absolute. The idea that the church can have no influence or no involvement in the operation of the state is absolutely antithetical to the objectives and vision of our country. … Kennedy for the first time articulated the vision saying, no, faith is not allowed in the public square. I will keep it separate. … What kind of country do we live that says only people of non-faith can come into the public square and make their case? That makes me throw up.”916

Santorum claimed that Kennedy meant to impose radical secularism, “the idea that only people of non-faith can come into the public square and make their case.”1017 This was not what Kennedy had said or meant. JFK wished to reaffirm religious freedom for all faiths. He said, “I believe in an America … where no religious body seeks to impose its will directly or indirectly upon the general populace or the public acts of its officials; and where religious liberty is so indivisible that an act against one church is treated as an act against all.”1018

Santorum’s loathing of JFK’s views on separation of church and state is of long standing. In 2002, while attending an Opus Dei conference in Rome, Santorum had told a reporter that “a distinction between private religious conviction and public responsibility, enshrined in John Kennedy’s famous speech in 1960 saying he would not take orders from the Catholic church if elected president, has caused ‘much harm in America.’”1019 At this same event, Santorum had said, “Without a shared belief system that is held and enforced … a culture disintegrates into moral chaos.”1020 The question is: who would enforce what beliefs, on whom?

In keeping with his authoritarian approach to politics, Santorum has aligned himself with Opus Dei, the Legionaries of Christ, and similar Catholic “new ecclesial movements.” In 2002, Santorum praised most of the Catholic cults in one swoop: “Even now we witness this ‘new evangelization’ through many ecclesial lay movements such as Opus Dei, the Neocatechumenate, Focolare, Regnum Christi, Communion and Liberation.” At the 2002 Opus Dei conference, Santorum avowed his devotion to Josemaria Escriva, the founder of Opus Dei. As the Washington Post reported, “In his public fight to uphold ‘absolute truths,’ Santorum said, ‘blessed Josemaria guides my way.’ ‘As long as you are making straight for your goal, head and heart intoxicated with God, why worry .?.?.?’” Santorum said, quoting Escriva. … ‘He was attracted to Escriva and the spirit of Opus Dei, the idea of lay Catholics .?.?. giving Jesus Christ a presence in the workplace,’ said Monsignor William Stetson, a priest with the organization who knew Santorum after he left the Senate in 2007.1021 It seems fitting that when the Secret Service offered Santorum a code name, he chose “Petrus,” a reference to St. Peter and the Papacy.1022
Santorum’s authoritarian redefinition of freedom

In a January 2012 interview with Glenn Beck, Santorum said that he is not libertarian, and claimed the support of the Founding Fathers for this stance. He said, “Today we think of happiness as enjoyment and pleasure and doing whatever makes you feel good. At the time of our founders, the dictionary definition of happiness was to do the morally right thing. So the freedom was not ... to be free to do whatever you wanted to do. Our founders knew that that would lead to ... libertinism and lead to chaos, would lead to the French Revolution.” Instead, Santorum views freedom as “the freedom to do what you ought to do, what you are properly ordered to do as ... as someone living a good, decent and ordered life. And so that's the differentiation that I believe Ron Paul and I have with respect to what liberty is. His liberty is if you want prostitution, fine. If you want to use drugs, fine. As long as you're not hurting anybody else, do whatever you want to do, do what makes you feel good. But that's not how our country was founded. That's not the moral foundation of our country. And our country is simply not just a collection of freedoms.”

In 2005, while promoting his book It Takes A Family, Santorum had said the same. He criticized libertarian conservatives who “have this idea that people should be left alone, be able to do whatever they want to do. Government should keep our taxes down and keep our regulation low and that we shouldn’t get involved in the bedroom, we shouldn’t get involved in cultural issues, you know, people should do whatever they want. Well, that is not how traditional conservatives view the world.”

As Santorum explained in this book, “nature is nature, and the freedom to choose against natural law is not really freedom at all.” Furthermore, “the freedom talked about at our Constitutional Convention ... wasn’t a freedom that celebrated the individual above society. It wasn’t a freedom that gave men and women blanket permission to check in and out of society whenever they wanted. ... It wasn’t even the freedom to be left alone, with no obligations to the people we know and to the people we don’t yet know. The Constitutional Convention’s freedom, America’s traditional freedom ... was a selfless freedom, freedom for the sake of something greater or higher than the self.” In addition, “individualism is man’s inclination to try to walk alone among his fellows. Under the spell of individualism, we splinter into pursuing what each of us considers important for ourselves and think little if anything about what might be important for our communities.”

We can be grateful to Santorum for this, at least: he makes his authoritarian vision clear for anyone to see. However, those who wish to restore freedom in this country can make these points in opposition to Santorum and his allies:

When Santorum claimed that, in the era of the Founders, the dictionary definition of happiness was to “do the morally right thing,” he was in error. In Samuel Johnson’s 1768 Dictionary of the English Language, the definition of happiness was “1. Felicity; state in which the desires are satisfied. 2. Good luck; good fortune. 3. Fortuitous elegance.”

The Declaration of Independence says that “all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.” These rights come from God, and the Declaration does not refer to any higher human authority that would tell the people what freedom, happiness, and good order are.

In the era of the Founders, “liberty” meant freedom from coercion, not (as Santorum says) “the freedom to do what you ought to do.” In his 1690 Second Treatise of Civil Government, John Locke said, “The natural liberty of man is to be free from any superior power on earth, and not to be under the will or legislative authority of man, but to have only the law of nature for his rule.” In his 1777 work Concerning Human Understanding, David Hume said, “By liberty, then, we can only mean a power of acting or not acting, according to the determinations of the will; that is, if we choose to remain at rest, we may; if we choose to move, we also may.”

“The June 1776 “Virginia Bill of Rights,” which anticipated the Federal Constitution’s Bill of Rights, said, “all men are by nature equally free and independent, and have certain inherent rights, of
which, when they enter into a state of society, they cannot, by any compact, deprive or divest their posterity; namely, the enjoyment of life and liberty, with the means of acquiring and possessing property, and pursuing and obtaining happiness and safety.”

God created mankind in His own image, and left us free to follow and obey Him (or not). Even with the Fall, God did not remove humanity’s freedom of will; nor did He set up institutions to coerce human consciences. Does Santorum think that he understands the meaning of freedom – or what it means to be created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26-27) – better than God does?

Both parties agree: Repression is “for our Own Good”

Despite their claims to be defenders of freedom, all the mainstream candidates for the Presidency this year have been in favor of militarism, a corrupt alliance between government and special interests (the only difference is who gets the subsidies and privileges), and an ever-stronger central government. Obama, George W. Bush, Romney, Gingrich, and Santorum thus have much in common with the Antichrist figure in C. S. Lewis’ The Last Battle, a tale of the end of Narnia. Here’s a scene from the Ape’s rise to power, as Lewis told it:

“‘And now here’s another thing,’ the Ape went on, fitting a fresh nut into its cheeks, ‘I hear that some of the horses are saying, ‘Let’s hurry up and get this job of carting timber over as quickly as we can, and then we’ll be free again.’ Well, you can get that idea out of your heads at once. And not only the Horses either. Everybody who can work is going to be made to work in future. Aslan has it all settled with the King of Calormen – the Tisroc, as our dark-faced friends the Calormenes call him. All your horses and bulls and donkeys are to be sent down into Calormen to work for your living – pulling and carrying the way horses and such-like do in other countries. And all you digging animals like moles and rabbits and Dwarfs are going down to work in The Tisroc’s mines. And –’

‘No, no, no,’ howled the Beasts. ‘It can’t be true. Aslan would never sell us into slavery to the King of Calormen.’

‘None of that! Hold your noise!’ said the Ape with a snarl. ‘Who said anything about slavery? You won’t be slaves. You’ll be paid – very good wages too. That is to say, your pay will be paid into Aslan’s treasury and he will use it all for everybody’s good. … ‘It’s all arranged. And all for your own good. We’ll be able, with the money you earn, to make Narnia a country worth living in. There’ll be oranges and bananas pouring in – and roads and big cities and schools and offices and whips and muzzles and saddles and cages and kennels and prisons – Oh, everything.’

‘But we don’t want all those things,’ said an old Bear. ‘We want to be free. And we want to hear Aslan speak himself.’

‘Now don’t you start arguing,’ said the Ape, ‘for it’s a thing I won’t stand. I’m a Man: you’re only a fat, stupid old Bear. What do you know about freedom? You think freedom means doing what you like. Well, you’re wrong. True freedom means doing what I tell you.”

Such also was the message of Dostoevsky’s Grand Inquisitor when he challenged Christ: “Oh, we shall persuade them that they will only become free when they renounce their freedom to us and submit to us.”

What is to be Done?

Described above are political deception, hypocrisy, secular messianism, and lust for power. They are prevalent on the Left and on the Right. The ultimate cure is for believers to put their hopes in God, and not in any earthly religious or political leader.

Sometimes outstanding leaders appear who have honor, integrity, honesty, vision and
unwavering truthfulness. They are not out for themselves. Such leaders can be seen as answered prayer. They stand out against their corrupt counterparts for those with eyes to see. Pray for such leaders to appear and if some are on the scene already, pray that the sleeping masses can see the difference. Bad leaders are a judgment on a wayward nation. We seem to be at a terrible crossroads.

Beware of identifying the Christian way with any particular political movement or party.

Heed the warning of the Psalmist: “Put not your trust in princes” (Psalm 146:3); trust God instead.

Also, heed the warning from the Apostle Paul, regarding those who falsely present themselves as righteous, traditional, or orthodox: “even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. So it is not strange if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds.” (2 Corinthians 11:14-15)

Jesus deflated the political ambitions of the Apostles, just before His ascension into Heaven. When the Apostles “had come together, they asked him, ‘Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?’ He said to them, ‘It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has fixed by his own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth.’ And when he had said this, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight.” (Acts 1:6-9) Jesus called upon his followers to be witnesses for Him, not to be rulers.

Our desires for a righteous kingdom will be met fully only with the Return of Christ – and not before.

“Then it came burning hot into my mind, whatever he said, and however he flattered, when he got me home to his house he would sell me for a slave.”

References


19 Ibid.


42 Onkonwo, Hartford Democrat Examiner, cited above.

43 Delegate count from http://elections.nytimes.com/2012/primaries/delegates, viewed 5/23/12. On that day, Mitt Romney had 1,074 delegates (68% of those chosen so far), Rick Santorum had 253 delegates (16% of the total), Newt Gingrich had 131 delegates (8%), and Ron Paul had 119 delegates (6%).


51 David Fahrenthold, February 16, 2012, cited above.


53 Ibid.

ingtopexaminer.com/article/york-romney-struggles-massachusetts-problem-332026, viewed 4/16/12.

55 Ibid.
67 Calvin Woodward, “Obama and Romney: Where they stand on the issues,” Associated Press, April 30, 2012, http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/AlEqgMSZfzntdhKYlBA PVpuVupMtQxH1xQp0tdid-49521c1e3f684e49a6be5f1f1b10f41330, viewed 5/08/12.
68 Ibid.
76 Ibid., pp. 8-10, preface by the Tofflers.
77 Ibid., p. 11, preface by the Tofflers.
78 Newt Gingrich, A Nation Like No Other: Why American Exceptionalism Matters, Regnery, 2011, p. 140.
88 Ibid.


93 Gingrich and Diamond, The Art of Transformation, p. 287.


95 Gingrich and Diamond, The Art of Transformation, p. 79.


97 Newt Gingrich, Winning the Future, p. 98.


103 Gingrich, To Renew America, p. 209.


110 Gingrich and Diamond, The Art of Transformation, p. 87.


114 Gingrich, To Renew America, p. 83.


116 David Brody, “Newt Gingrich tells The Brody


119 2012 fundraising letter from the Santorum campaign.


138 Walsh, cited above.


143 McCrummen and Markon, Washington Post, cited above.


146 Ibid.


149 Ibid., p. 44.

150 Ibid., p. 52.


