

CHAPTER 10

A Call to Christians and Other People of Faith

Don't Give Up—Embrace Your Faith and Continue Your Faith Journey

I have often suggested to American Christians that the only way to understand their mission is to ask what it might have meant to witness faithfully to Jesus in the heart of the Roman Empire. Certainly, when I preach in the United States, I feel as I imagine the Apostle Paul did, when he first passed through the gates of Rome—admiration for its people, awe at its manifest virtues, and resentment of its careless power. American preachers have a task more difficult, perhaps, than those faced by us under South Africa's apartheid, or Christians under Communism. We had obvious evils to engage; you have to unwrap your culture from years of red, white and blue myth. You have to expose, and confront, the great disconnect between the kindness, compassion and caring of most American people, and the ruthless way American power is experienced, directly and indirectly, by the poor of the earth. You have to help good people see how they have let their institutions do their sinning for them. This is not easy among people who really believe that their country does nothing but good, but it is necessary, not only for their future, but for us all.

—Rev. Peter Storey, President of the Methodist Church of South Africa, and a member of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, in his open "Dear Friends in the United States" letter, written shortly after 9/11.

The Religious Right represents neither mainstream American values nor traditional religious values. No thinking person of faith who believes in Christ's message of compassion for the poor, Christ's role as Prince of Peace, social justice, the separation of church and state, and freedom of religion should let Religious Right politicians speak for him or her.

Just as Bush's neocons moved so far to the Neanderthal right in foreign policy that they completely abandoned traditional American values, so have Bush's right-

wing fundamentalist and evangelical supporters moved so far to the extreme right that they have abandoned mainstream Christianity and Christ himself. All forms of religious extremism drink from the same well of hate.

We offer the following call to Americans of all faiths.

A Call to Americans of All Faiths

1) Americans of all faiths or no faith must defend the Constitution and Bill of Rights against the relentless unchristian attack by America's extreme right.

- Help defend religious freedom and the separation of church and state. The White House must protect the constitutional right of all Americans to practice any religion or no religion, free from governmental pandering or promotion on behalf of any particular religion. The government's proper role is to help ensure freedom of religion, not to help Christians win a war among religions, and not to help rightwing Christianity replace sane Christianity. Support the "separation of church and hate."
- Oppose the public financing of faith-based education and faith-based textbooks. Stand up to the junk science and anti-science policies of Bush, the GOP and the Religious Right.
- Demand the termination of Bush's unprecedented faith-based initiatives, under which hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars have been funneled, without congressional approval, to favored religious organizations, virtually all of which are Christian organizations meeting Bush's litmus test.
- Demand that the White House be the voice for all Americans, not a Bush League parsonage and pulpit for rightwing Christians.
- Oppose Bush's divisive religious litmus tests for judicial appointments.
- Help expose the phony self-described "martyrs" on the Religious Right who invent nonexistent evils such as "The War on Christmas," when the real danger is "The Religious Right's War on Christianity."
- Keep on agitating for peace, justice and human rights. Help defend and add to America's rich history of progressive values and accomplishments that the world so admires. Take comfort in the knowledge that countless millions of people of different faiths throughout the world pray for America to come to its senses and turn toward the light, away from the darkness that has permeated the Bush League White House.
- Demand the restoration of habeas corpus.

2) Embrace your faith, whatever it is, and continue your faith journey.

- Whatever your faith, do not assume that the loud sanctimonious voices on the extreme right speak for the majority of America's churches and Christians, and don't let them speak for you.
- If you abandoned your Christian faith or no longer attend church, check out a mainstream or progressive church. Do this even if you are an agnostic or atheist. You are likely to fit in well at the majority of America's mainstream churches, which by and large are filled with people who *know they do not know* all the answers, but have chosen to continue their faith journey to-

gether as they try to make the world better and safer. They welcome people of all nations, races, religions, economic classes, sexual orientations and political parties.

- Stand tall and be outspoken about your faith and principles. Support progressive media that are a small but growing alternative to the vast corporate networks of rightwing voices that dominate America’s political and religious media. Don’t let the power of Christianity be monopolized by the Religious Right.
- Check out and join interfaith organizations such as The Interfaith Alliance (www.interfaithalliance.org) that strive to promote peace and interfaith cooperation, rather than sectarian exclusivity and bigotry.
- Another excellent resource is Sojourners, a Christian ministry that practices the biblical call to integrate spiritual renewal and social justice (www.sojo.net.) *Sojourners* magazine is inspiring, as is the best-seller book, *God’s Politics—Why the Right Gets It Wrong and the Left Doesn’t Get It*, written by Jim Wallis, the Editor-in-Chief/Executive Director of *Sojourners*.
- Renounce the two unholy banners that Bush and the GOP so proudly carry: GOP Banner No. 1: “Of the Rich, By the Rich, and For the Rich;” and GOP Banner No. 2: “Prince of War—Pandering Warmonger for the Religious Right.”
- Fight for better religion, not less religion. If you are a Christian (Lutheran, Presbyterian, Methodist, Catholic, Baptist or whatever), don’t separate yourself from your faith just because the neo-GOP and the Religious Right have given Christianity a bad name.
- Proudly carry the banner of the Prince of Peace as you support Christ’s mission of compassion on Earth.
- Remember the Eighth Commandment, “Thou Shalt Not Steal,” and take back the Bible that the Religious Right stole.
- So enter the religious discussion and use the Holy Bible, not the Religious Right’s revised version known as the *Holey* Bible. Engaging and exposing the Religious Right without using the Bible is like hunting rats at the city dump without using your best ammo.
- Just for enlightenment, check out that peculiarly American, rightwing doctrine known as the End Times prophesies, as well as other such New Age spiritualism peculiar to America.

3) Americans should work with their friends throughout the world to help build bridges of trust and peace, many of which were destroyed by America’s Bush League government.

- Americans of faith should encourage their foreign friends to tell their truth, and not to give up on America. Ask them to call upon their leaders to speak candidly about America’s leaders and policies, and to courageously set forth their proposals and vision for a better world.

- Support specific activities to build cultural bridges, such as student exchange programs, foreign travel, the study of foreign languages, and humanitarian programs.
- Join the growing millions of Americans—a majority of Americans—who want and demand a saner better America. Wage peace. America’s longtime allies in Europe and the rest of the world are with you.
- Remember the words of Gimli in *Lord of the Rings*: “Certainty of death. Small chance of success. What are we waiting for?”

4) Remember the American spirit represented in the Statue of Liberty, that wonderful gift from France the construction of which was completed in 1886, and remember the famous final lines from the poem *The New Colossus* about that American beacon of hope, which boldly declare:

*Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!*

Help rekindle that American spirit of freedom, hope and opportunity for all, not just the privileged and chosen few.

5) Above all, don’t let any Bush family member or Religious Reich leader instruct you in religious or family values they don’t follow themselves. Remember their motto: “Rich in Valuables, Poor in Values.”

Rightwing Christian evangelicals and fundamentalists control virtually all of America’s religious radio and television media, having purchased wide networks of radio and television stations over the past four decades. This control enabled them to set for America a decidedly narrow list of “religious issues,” as they pursued their extreme rightwing politics. Media power does matter. Ownership has its privileges.

Over 1,600 rightwing Christian radio stations and about 250 Christian television stations constitute a rightwing web that provides a consistent rightwing message.

Pat Robertson, a minister of politics and propaganda who ran for president in 1988, even has his own television network called the Christian Broadcasting Company, on which he has hosted *The 700 Club* for decades. This live television program is broadcast daily from Virginia City, Virginia, and, according to the network’s own website, airs in 95% of America’s television markets and in almost 90 million American homes, and is seen daily by about one million viewers.

Robertson is hardly the loopyest or most dangerous of the rightwing preacher politicians. For example, check out D. James Kennedy, a Dominionist fundamentalist and biblical literalist who had a political agenda that many would say makes the Taliban look mainstream, and who believed God wants Dominionists to seize control of all branches of the U.S. government in the name of God. Kennedy built and until his death on September 5, 2007, ran a \$35 million-per-year empire with a focus on winning elections for Christian fundamentalists. His Coral Ridge Ministries in Florida has a radio and television audience estimated at 3.5 million. *The Coral Ridge*

Hour shamelessly promotes a rightwing political agenda and is broadcast to about 150 countries in the American Forces Network. Bush genuflected before Kennedy and obtained his blessing before running for president. In return Kennedy had special access to the Bush White House.

Although lacking formal theological training, hard-line extremist James Dobson leveraged his *Focus on the Family* media empire to become the most effective evangelical proselytizer and Christianist for Bush in 2004, and in 2006 he launched another nationwide church-based campaign focused on using churches in key close election districts to register millions of Republicans and distribute millions of election guides carefully crafted to support Republican candidates. Dobson has about 7 million listeners and organized stadium rallies for Bush.

Rightwing extremist preachers have unintentionally converted many good Christians to atheism. Don't let them do the same to you.

Be Proud of America's Liberal, Progressive Accomplishments

In the 1960s many Christians in the South, including many evangelicals and Baptists, both liberal and conservative, joined the liberal progressive cause of bringing civil rights to blacks in the South. This struggle for social justice must have made Jesus proud.

The landmark federal legislation known as the Civil Rights Act of 1964 banned discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex or national origin. President Kennedy sent the legislation to Congress in 1963, and President Johnson courageously supported and signed it even though he knew this legislation would cause his party to suffer tremendously in the South. Immediately after signing the bill, Johnson said, "We have lost the South for a generation." Johnson was right except that he underestimated the time period. In fact, the Democratic Party's Christian stand against racism caused it to lose the South for *several* generations.

The majority of Southern whites who supported segregation and opposed the expansion of civil rights for blacks held their noses and bolted for the Republican Party, which welcomed their bigotry and Old South "white-sheets" mentality with open arms. While much progress has been made for equal racial opportunity since 1964, Jesus knows that the struggle for civil rights in the South, in the rest of America, and throughout the world continues into the 21st century. Although the GOP in the 21st century has no monopoly on racism, 92.666%⁹³ of the racists in the United States are proud members of the GOP, which ever since 1964 has been skillfully throwing racist raw red meat to undereducated and poor whites, who ironically are natural political allies of blacks, not their enemies. When Bush became President, America's values went South.

From the time of America's founding to the present, virtually all of the major advancements in freedom and the American way of life were due to the hard work of liberal progressive people of faith. Their beliefs and long history of accomplishments shaped America into the beacon of freedom that many in the world still admire, notwithstanding Bush and the neo-GOP. Although that beacon has been dimmed by imperial Bush League policies, values and incompetence, never has the time been

⁹³ OK, I made up this precise number. The actual percentage could be even higher.

better for liberals and progressives of faith to rise to the great challenge, revitalize America, and pursue that never ending American quest for freedom, hope and opportunity for all, not just the privileged and chosen few.

SIDEBAR: Another Big Media Lie—that “Liberal” is a Dirty Word

As masters of Orwellian doublespeak and dirty politics, the Republican Party has worked hard over the years to make “liberal” a four-letter word. America’s rightwing Big Media, especially the “hate radio” spectrum spawned and monopolized by the extreme right, relentlessly pushes this mean-spirited slander.

Bush and the GOP avoid meaningful debate on important issues where their positions are weak and would not be supported by the people if the truth were on the table. They count on enough voters to be gullible and misinformed. They count on unprecedented piles of cash from Big Money to make their slogans and deceptive ads overwhelm the public discourse. As Big Money capitalists, they market their deceptive message just as Big Tobacco markets cigarettes. They believe and practice the words of Edith Sitwell, “The public will believe anything, so long as it is not founded on truth.”

But remember also the words of Franklin D. Roosevelt, “Repetition does not transform a lie into a truth.” So be proud of being a liberal, or a “progressive” if you prefer that synonym.

When you turn on the radio and hear the word “liberal” uttered with scorn, just for fun think of that four-letter word “Bush.” Unfortunately for America and Bush himself, W took a good family name—Bush—and in the eyes of the world turned it into an obscenity.

Speaking of obscenities, Bush single handedly made “FEMA”⁹⁴ a dirty four-letter F-word for millions of people in the South. Just one of many disastrous fumbles by Bush during his Bush League watch, Hurricane Katrina showcased his administration’s cold unchristian uncaring corporate heart, plus the unprecedented corruption and clumsy incompetence that so epitomizes his administration and the “Republican’t Party” in this 21st century. In his January 2007 State of the Union speech he didn’t even mention Katrina or New Orleans.

Jesus is the ultimate compassionate liberal. He’s so liberal that he’s a revolutionary. The only quibble with the term “compassionate liberal” is that it is redundant—since liberals are naturally compassionate, you can save a word and just say liberal. So let’s simply say Jesus is a liberal. Period.

On the other hand, let’s consider the oxymoronic label “compassionate conservative” that Rove cleverly pulled out of thin air and stuck on Bush. The reason for this marketing trick is that “conservative” sounds too, well, mean, especially to anyone who had a glimmer of what Bush and the neo-GOP wanted to do to the bottom 90% of America.

⁹⁴ Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Well, Rove had a problem, because “conservative” does mean “mean.” So Rove added “compassionate” to it. “Compassionate conservative” did sound better, even though no one could figure out what it really meant. But, as Jesus said, “no matter how much lipstick you put on a pig, it’s still a pig.”⁹⁵

Jesus was the liberal. Herod the Great and Emperor Tiberius were the conservatives. Jesus was compassionate. Herod and Emperor Tiberius were not. Likewise, there is no compassion in America’s latter-day neocon warmongering empire builders. Thus Jesus speaks today to Bush and the GOP: “Stop the spying, stop the lying, stop the dying.”

The American Revolution: Yes, those rotten liberals—revolutionaries even—of America’s 13 colonies, especially the true blue, progressive patriots of Massachusetts, risked their lives in the birth of our nation. The American conservatives of those days strongly supported England’s King George III, even though reportedly he could not speak English coherently, and they called our liberal patriots bad names such as *traitor*. Had he been alive then, America’s King George III—W, that is—would have opposed any change in the status quo, not wanting to jeopardize the big profits he was making at the public trough in the government regulated tea trade, a Halliburton-type cha-ching operation he inherited from his father, aka 41. Our King George III might have said, “Don’t rock the boat—we rich is doing fine, and I hate elections anyways.”

It’s a proven fact that 99%+ of the DNA of America’s George III is *identical* to the DNA of the British Empire’s George III. Yes, all these “Georges” are confusing. Let’s just all agree that America has suffered greatly from too many greedy, gorging, not so gorgeous, Georges.

Speaking of liberal patriots (who are willing to put their own lives on the line in just wars) and conservative Super Rich phony cowboys (who risk only the lives of others), we’ll take the New England Patriots over the Dallas Cowboys on any Sunday.

All Americans benefit from the liberal progressive values underlying the American Revolution.

The Emancipation Proclamation: Virtually all Americans also now support and benefit from the liberal values that underlie the Emancipation Proclamation, which was issued by Abraham Lincoln during America’s Civil War (1861-65), and which freed America’s blacks from slavery. Southern whites had wanted to keep their black slaves, who were legally classified as *property* and considered sub-human or non-human. This slavery seemed just and Christian because the whites had purchased their blacks in a *perfectly legal* manner. But a wide spectrum of liberal progressive Christians disagreed, and America fought its bloodiest war.

It is sad and ironic that Southern whites—most of whom bolted the Democratic Party when it *went too far* in fighting for civil rights four decades ago—have hi-

⁹⁵ OK, Jesus didn’t actually say this, but he probably wishes he had. He did say: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” Matthew 22:39.

jacked Lincoln's Republican Party, jettisoned its traditional values, and now run it as the Confederate Party. It is difficult for southern white Republicans to say "Abraham Lincoln" and "Republican Party" in the same sentence without laughing. Jefferson Davis must be smiling. The Confederate flag is still much more popular in the South than the Stars and Stripes, and a Confederate currency has replaced the dollar thanks to the financial malfeasance of Bush and the neo-GOP. Meanwhile, the struggle for civil rights continues to this day.

American Civil War: Well, you know the theme here, although none dare call it treason. It really all comes down to family values. Was the family known as The United States of America worth preserving? Would America allow those who didn't believe in social justice for all to take their black slaves and split in an ugly divorce? The patriotic liberals of the north, led by Abraham Lincoln, fought America's most ugly and bloody war with the racist whites of the South, led by Jefferson Davis.

The American Civil War officially ended in 1865, and Northerners stopped fighting it then. However, the South never stopped fighting, and many Southern whites will acknowledge this if you ask. Well, the Civil War is now really finally over, and the South won. Conservative Southern white males grabbed control of the Republican Party in order to run America like a plantation for its new plantation owners—the Super Rich and Big Corporations.

Voting Rights for American Women: Looking back to a time about a century ago, it is hard now to fully appreciate the long struggle of liberal progressive Americans to give women the right to vote. American women now take their 19th Amendment rights for granted, rights that conservative males opposed because women were *going too far*.

The struggle for sexual equality in America continues today, and it's grounded in that liberal, revolutionary notion that *women are people too*.

Not that much has changed. The primary enemy of American women today still is America's *wiener-take-all* misogynists—a huge rutting herd of old conservative white males, many from the so-called Religious Right—who want to control women, dictating what women can and cannot do, especially regarding personal and private matters of the family, the bedroom, reproduction, and the female body.

Women, continue to stand up for yourselves and your families. Men, stand up for women and your families, and help elect more women to public office. Imagine how much better, and more peaceful, the world would be if only women could vote and only women could be national leaders. A constitutional amendment implementing this would make more sense than any of the constitutional amendments recently proposed by conservatives males.

Integration of the Military: Blacks fought in World War II with distinction but largely in segregated units. Following the war Harry Truman ordered the integration of the U.S. military, notwithstanding the heated opposition of many generals, mostly Southern whites who inaccurately predicted terrible negative consequences including morale problems, violence, and a reduction in military capability. Our nation still benefits from Truman's decisive liberal action to promote social justice and civil rights.

The New Deal of Franklin Roosevelt, including Social Security: The GOP's efforts to emasculate Social Security will continue.

Medicare: This efficiently run program for America’s seniors was signed into law in 1965 by Democratic President Lyndon Johnson as an amendment to Social Security, and he enrolled Harry Truman as the first Medicare beneficiary. The GOP has been busy trying to gut it, along with Medicaid. We’ll discuss both of these important programs in the next chapter, along with Social Security.

Well, you see the picture. The list of liberal, progressive achievements is long, and there are many items that we could add to it. Here are just a few: minimum wage; worker safety; child labor laws; veterans’ rights and programs; food and drug safety; transportation safety; rights for the disabled; clear air and water legislation; anti-discrimination protections; equal employment opportunity; GLBT rights; birth control and family planning; public education; and let’s not forget the Constitution itself and the Bill of Rights.

America’s liberals and progressives had to fight for each one of these achievements, sacrificing and working hard to overcome reactionary conservative opposition. On occasion conservatives supported these efforts, but generally they did not. Eventually, the “radical” views of progressives are adopted by most conservatives, or at least by their children and grandchildren, who learn, for example, that giving blacks and women the right to vote is not really that bad an idea.

The progressive achievements are based on progressive values that are, or become, cherished American values. They are at the core of what defines America as a free and just society, and they were the envy of the world until the Religious Right and the neo-GOP arrived on the scene.

Listening to the propaganda of America’s rightwing media and politicians, one might conclude that rightwing Christians go to bed each night smugly knowing they are morally superior to the rest of us. In the real world, however, rates of teen pregnancy, births outside marriage, divorce, adultery, spousal abuse, premarital sex,⁹⁶ child abuse, adulterous gay sex by televangelists, bigamy, and so forth, are just as high, and typically higher, in the *red zones* of America’s Bible Belt than they are in Massachusetts and the rest of that American Sodom and Gomorrah known as the East Coast. And when it comes to *hypocrisy*, the readings in those red zones are off the charts, unequaled anywhere in the world.

Acknowledging that sad reality, a few evangelical leaders on the right have be-moaned the fact that they cannot truly expect to change America until rightwing Christians lower their own divorce rates, etc. and practice what they preach. Amen.

This discussion provides clues as to the answer to that pithy question raised by so many American voters: “Why is it so difficult to find a viable GOP candidate for high office who is not a serial wife abuser and adulterer?”

The Religious Right constantly shouts the exclusive correctness of their Christianity, but Christ’s teachings are much more in line with liberal Christianity. You don’t have to be the loudest *right-eous* Christian to do Christ’s work, and in fact you don’t have to be a Christian. However, if you want to do Christ’s work, it certainly helps if you’re a liberal.

⁹⁶ By the way, if you never get married, it’s not “premarital” sex. (This has nothing to do with this chapter—it’s just funny.)

There are many Christians of all denominations, as well as countless non-Christians, doing God's work in Afghanistan and Iraq, trying, typically in small personal ways, to make life better for Afghanis and Iraqis in any way they can. They aren't in the spotlight, and they don't seek it. They are not getting rich, and some have been killed, such as Tom Fox of Christian Peacemaker Teams who was killed by his captors in Iraq in March 2006. Their dedication and bravery contrast sharply with that of America's rich rightwing televangelists. In the run-up to the Iraq war some of these television stars gushed about how great it was going to be to go to Iraq and convert Muslims to Christianity. Their subsequent silence was deafening.

To be clear, there are countless evangelical Christians of all stripes who contribute enormously to charitable and humanitarian efforts around the globe. Just don't expect to see the "show-me-the-money" Pat Robertsons of America knocking on doors in Baghdad any time soon, trying to convert the residents to Christianity, or trying to make their lives better.

Bush League Christianity is Bombing in Baghdad

Whether real or fake, the religious underpinning of the Bush League of Nations alone is reason enough to end it. It is both unconstitutional and counterproductive for the U.S. government—which until Bush was anchored in religious freedom and separation of church and state—to promote Christianity of any flavor in the world.

Especially harmful are Bush's statements, intended primarily for his far rightwing political base, to the effect that he feels directed by God and that he feels God chose him to lead American's efforts against terrorism.

The disastrous Bush League of Nations charade in Iraq must be ended immediately. America must renounce the misguided and un-American goals of The Project for the New American Century, while folding up the Bush regime's imperial tents. The world understands the insanity, but the true believers in the Bush regime will never admit they were wrong, and they will abandon neither their Bush League war on Iraq nor their imperial policies that led to it, so long as they hold the reins of power. Only the American people can force the change.

SIDEBAR: Five People Bush Meets in Hell

Security Guard (Saddam Hussein): *"Stay in line there, cretin!"*

Bush: *"Cretin? Don't you know who I am? Me and my kind always go to the front. I want the best table, free gore-may food, that kinda stuff."*

Saddam: *"Everyone knows who you are. In fact, the vote letting you in was unanimous."*

Bush: *"There's voting here? Where am I? In Hell? Hah, hah, hah ..."*

The background din was replaced by several seconds of Pure Silence, which always happens in Hell when a Profound Truth is uttered.

Bush: *“Well, just take me to my ranch. I’m scheduled for another three-week vacation ... and, dang, I haven’t had one since last month. Hey, come to think of it, I had only a half dozen vacations—or was it six?—right before 9/11 ... or was it 11/9? Dang, I know I was on vacation more than half the time, a little over 40%.”*

Saddam: *“Take you to your ranch’—now that’s pretty funny. Hmm, maybe we’ll arrange a side trip for you— it’s just a few brimstones away, right above us in Texas. Say, you don’t recognize me, do you?”*

Bush: *“Well, you kinda look familiar, but your neck looks funny. And you’re much too dark for him. Too colored ... too tanned, I think.”*

Saddam: *“We all get a little toasted that way down here. So color doesn’t matter here—unlike up top in Texas where so many of you Damned Republicans come from. Hell, you Republicans from Texas alone make up 66.6% of Hell—if we ran an election down here, you dudes would win in a landslide without even cheating. But I suppose you’d cheat anyway, just on habit and general principles.”*

Bush: *“Well, ouch! That really hurts! So how do you divide people, you know, pick on them? Do you have blacks, too?⁹⁷ Hey, do you have any queers? ... immigrants? ... and poor people and crips? ... and colored, OK other colors ... I mean all those targets on Karl’s list ... what I mean is ...”*

Saddam: *“Shut up! I don’t have time to listen to your babble. You’re causing my head to overheat. Shut up!”*

Bush: *“Hey, there must be lots of hot babes here ... huh?”*

Saddam: *“Hot babes? Oh, you mean women.”*

Bush: *“Yah, that’s it. How many do I get? How many are there?”*

Saddam: *“Well, there are none, at least none for you Damned Republicans.”*

Bush: *“None! Why’s that?”*

Saddam: *“Because the worst woman is better than the best male Republican.”*

Again ... sudden Pure Silence, this time setting a new record for length. The pain oozing from all the horny, testosterone-afflicted, Hellions was palpable.

Saddam: *“Dubya, you’re going to be bunking with Cheney in the Paris Room.”*

Bush: *“Holy shit! I must be in Hell! Please! Please take this Bush Family Pass and send me to Heaven. I have to get away from him ... and Rumsfeld ... and Rove ... and away from Cheney ... and ...”*

Saddam: *“Hey, stupid, you already said Cheney!”*

Bush: *“Well, for Dick Shooter, I just wanted to be sure.”*

⁹⁷ “Do you have blacks, too?” This was Bush’s nitwit question to dumbfounded Brazilian President Fernando Cardoso in late 2001.

Saddam: “*A Bush Family Pass for Heaven? No such luck. By the way, I’m bunking with you guys too. Hey, I’ll show you that neat photo of Rummy and me back in the good ol’ days— it’s posted on the volcano entrance. You know, back in the 1980s when he and his Neanderthal neocon gang were helping me kill all those Iranians ... what a gas! More than one million bastards killed ... lots of civilians and child soldiers ... hah, hah, hah ... makes me feel good just thinking about it.*”

Bush: “*Yah, me too. So our weapons ... our chemical weapons related programs ... the WDMs ... or BMWs ... or WMDs whatever ... the intelligence ... plus Rummy ... that kinda stuff ... helped you a lot, huh?*”

Again, Pure Silence.

Bush: “*Hey Saddy Boy, maybe me and you can gang up on good ol’ Cheney ... you know, good ol’ Chicanery Boy. Now he’s one dude I never trusted, never liked. A real world class Dick. But he had those photos of me and ... dang!*” ... [pause, as Bush mulls over his fate] ... “*Hey, Saddy Boy, I bet your mustache tickles.*”

Saddam: “*Here’s looking at you kid.*”⁹⁸

Bush: “*Yah, we’ll always have the Paris Room.*”⁹⁹

Pure Silence.

We now turn our attention to “The GOP’s War on America,” which is Part IV of this book (Chapters 11 and 12.)

⁹⁸ With apologies to *Casablanca* fans.

⁹⁹ Ditto. I hope thoughts of Bush and Saddam in *flagrante delicto* don’t cause you to throw up the next time you watch *Casablanca*.