

Charlie Gard, Pope Francis and the Pontifical Academy for Life

I was listening last week to Glenn Beck discussing the Charlie Gard situation with Bill O'Reilly. During the conversation, Glenn asked Bill if he had read the "official statement" from the Pope. Neither Bill nor I had read the actual statement. The Pope apparently said this was a "complicated matter" and the wishes of the parents must be heard and respected, **but** that we shouldn't reject the state being involved. The sanctity of all life was never mentioned.

(It's interesting to note that I only recently found out that the Courts in England are involved in Charlie's case because of the U.N.'s "Convention on the Rights of the Child" which inhibits the rights of parents to make decisions on behalf of their children. Fortunately, the United States has not ratified this Convention.)

Although I was raised Catholic, I don't identify as a "Catholic" because I'm a staunch believer in birth control, which the Catholic Church rejects. I do identify as "Christian." That being said, I was still quite disturbed by this ambiguous statement coming from the Pope about Baby Charlie and decided to delve deeper into the matter.

Well, it turns out Glenn Beck was correct but the statement came from the Vatican – not from the Pope.

The following statement to which Glenn Beck referred, came from the "Pontifical Academy for Life,"

"... the wishes of parents must heard and respected, but they too must be helped to understand the unique difficulty of their situation and not be left to face their painful

decisions alone. If the relationship between doctor and patient (or parents as in Charlie's case) is interfered with, everything becomes more difficult and legal action becomes a last resort...."

After I read this, I said to myself, "Are they kidding?" When should the courts ever second-guess the parents regarding the medical decisions about their own baby? (Maybe, and only maybe, if the parents' actions hastened the death of a child but that's another discussion.)

I guess Catholics weren't too thrilled with this statement because the Pope disavowed it and issued his own statement, which finally upheld the Church's stance on the sanctity of life:

"The Pope's message is aligned with his frequent denunciation of what he calls a 'throw-away culture,' a term he uses to describe ways in which those society deems to lack value are discarded, such as unborn children, the disabled and the elderly."

Phew. As liberal as Pope Francis is, I could not believe he would have been so equivocal on the "sanctity of life" as the Academy's statement seemed to be.

What I don't get, however, is this Pontifical Academy for Life. Pope Francis recently made some very strange and confusing new appointments to the Academy including non-Catholics, non-Christians, and an Anglican professor who has supported abortion and has expressed qualified support for euthanasia.

Why would he do such a thing? The Church's position should be quite clear. It is against abortion and against euthanasia. Why the Church has persons on this panel who are not Catholic, support abortion and support euthanasia is beyond me? For me, it's as ludicrous as the U.N. appointing Iran to the Commission on Women's Rights.

It makes absolutely no sense to me to have members in the Academy who do not hold the same steadfast beliefs. Is it just another bureaucracy that sits around and gets nothing done or is it the Church's attempt to bend to political correctness and appear "inclusive" (I hate that word) or have "diversity" (I hate that word even more) in its membership?

Are we to expect a change in the Church's position that life begins at conception and ends at natural death? I doubt it. So, what's the point of having members of this panel who favor abortion or euthanasia or are of different faiths who believe something else?

I don't get it, but if you do, God bless you.

The Pope, Global Warming and the Elusive Meaning of Morality



A while back I was on the O'Reilly Factor talking about the liberal idea of raising taxes on the rich. Bill brought the Bible into the conversation, referring to the passage about how it's easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than it is for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.

I said, "I don't care what the Bible says," referring specifically to the tax debate. I received a ton of very angry emails for that remark from the faithful in Bill's audience.

The general message was, "You better care what the Bible says – or face the consequences."

I wrote back to some saying if you're so concerned about the teachings in the Bible why don't you pay more attention to the part about not judging lest ye be judged. Let's just say while I thought that was a good comeback, they didn't. And let's also say, it's a good thing I don't believe in Hell.

In any case, I now have second thoughts about my "I don't care what the Bible says" comment. Unfortunately, my second thoughts are exactly the same as my first thoughts. I still don't care.

I bring this up now because the Pope has just issued an encyclical, or teaching document, on global warming. Here's how the New York Times trumpeted the news:

"Pope Francis on Thursday called for a radical transformation of politics, economics and individual lifestyles to confront environmental degradation and climate change, blending a biting critique of consumerism and irresponsible development with a plea for swift and unified global action. ...

"The most vulnerable victims, he declares, are the world's poorest people, who are being dislocated and disregarded."

Since a papal encyclical is one of the strongest statements that can be made by the Catholic Church, this is a big deal.

Not to me, but I'm pretty sure Francis won't lose any sleep over my indifference. To paraphrase my sage remark to O'Reilly on taxes: I don't care what the Pope says on global warming.

First, the Catholic Church has a spotty record when it comes to pronouncements on science. Can you say, Galileo? You remember him, one of the greatest scientists the world has ever produced; the "heretic" who had the gall to say the planet Earth was not at the center of the universe; and for

that was brought up on charges by the Catholic Church and sentenced to spend the rest of his life under house arrest.

That Galileo.

And has the pope taken into account the probability that energy costs will go up, not down, if we do what he and other liberals want us to do to combat climate change or global warming or whatever they're calling it this week? How's that going to help the poor? What's the pope going to say when poor people freeze in the winter because they can't afford their higher energy bills? Blaming their plight on the evils of capitalism might make liberals feel better but it won't make the poor any warmer.

For the record, I'm not saying humans aren't at least partially responsible for climate change – if the climate is actually changing. What I'm saying is I'm not buying the doomsday scenario that true believers like Al Gore have been peddling. And I don't need a pope, who is not a climate expert, throwing his substantial weight around trying to influence government policies.

On this, I'm with Jeb Bush who told a campaign rally in New Hampshire that, "I hope I'm not going to get castigated for saying this by my priest back home, but I don't get economic policy from my bishops or my cardinals or my pope. ... I think religion ought to be about making us better as people and less about things that end up getting in the political realm."

According to the Times, "Francis has made it clear that he hopes the encyclical will influence energy and economic policy and stir a global movement. He calls on ordinary people to press politicians for change. Catholic bishops and priests around the world are expected to discuss the encyclical in services on Sunday. But Francis is also reaching for a wider audience, asking in the document 'to address every person living on this planet.'

“Even before the encyclical, the pope’s stance against environmental destruction and his demand for global action had already thrilled many scientists. Advocates of policies to combat climate change have said they hoped that Francis could lend a ‘moral dimension’ to the debate.”

This is the position of many liberals in America. They also see climate change not only as a political issue but one of morality too. And they too applaud the pope for making the connection between politics and moral values.

One might argue that the church should stay out of debates about zoning laws or the speed limit in Wyoming. But how can religious leaders stay silent when the issues involve fundamental questions of morality?

The Times quotes Vincent Miller, a scholar at the University of Dayton, who says, “Critics will say the church can’t teach policy, the church can’t teach politics. And Francis is saying, ‘No, these things are at the core of the church’s teaching.’ ”

Liberals will love that message too. But here comes the uh oh alert. This was also in the encyclical on global warming: “Since everything is interrelated, concern for the protection of nature is also incompatible with the justification of abortion. How can we genuinely teach the importance of concern for other vulnerable beings, however troublesome or inconvenient they may be, if we fail to protect a human embryo, even when its presence is uncomfortable and creates difficulties?”

I’m guessing liberals weren’t too happy with that part. But abortion is also a moral issue at the core of the church’s teaching. And so is gay marriage – and to some extent, so is the sex change of the former Bruce Jenner.

So let’s review, members of the congregation: Liberals embrace the pope when he speaks out against things they’re also

against – like global warming – but they want the church to mind its own business when its leaders speak out against things they support – like abortion and gay marriage.

But if this picking and choosing seems like a morality of convenience on the part of liberals, conservatives are no different and no better. Religious conservatives may not like it when the pope speaks out about global warming, but they love it when he and other church leaders speak out against abortion and gay marriage.

Morality, it seems, is in the eye of the beholder.

God help us, so to speak.

“Billy Wilder, The Pope & Me” and “Allah Be Damned”

My two favorite movie writer-directors were Preston Sturges and Billy Wilder. Both worked at Paramount Studios in the 40s, which was fortuitous for Wilder. That’s because they were both successful screenwriters when Sturges persuaded the studio to let him direct his own scripts. That decision led to a flurry of such classic, huge-grossing, comedies as “The Great McGinty,” “The Lady Eve,” “The Palm Beach Story” and “Hail the Conquering Hero.”

It also led Wilder to plead his own case. "The bosses at Paramount," he once told me, "gave me permission, assuming I would do something artsy-fartsy, which would flop, and that I'd then go back to being a nice little screenwriter. Instead, I made the comedy, "The Major and the Minor," which was a big success."

Paramount couldn't have been too sad, as it led in fairly short order to Wilder's turning out "Double Indemnity," "The Lost Weekend," "A Foreign Affair" and "Sunset Boulevard."

Just as a sidebar, I thought it was interesting that once when we were having lunch, I mentioned to him that he had directed seven of his fellow directors, although three of them were actors who had only directed one or two movies. He was stumped. The only ones he came up with were Cecil B. DeMille and Eric Von Stroheim, both of whom appeared in "Sunset Blvd.," and Otto Preminger, who portrayed the German commandant in "Stalag 17." The others were Mitchell Leisen, Jack Lemmon, Charles Laughton and Ray Milland.

Although I have already devoted several articles to Pope Francis, attacking him for his statements in favor of redistribution of wealth and for siding with the Palestinians during his recent visit to the Holy Land, I hope nobody takes me for an anti-Catholic bigot. The way I see it is the way my friend Tony Medley, a Catholic, saw it when the Church was embroiled in the sickening pedophile scandals of the 1990s. At the time, he pointed out that his religion was far greater than the sum of its human parts.

As a non-Catholic, I believe that is still true, even though the current object of my displeasure is the Pope, and not just a handful of perverted bishops and priests. Still, I would be remiss if I didn't share an email I received from a friend in Israel, Haim Goldman.

He wrote: "Something that neither you nor Caroline Glick

mentioned was something that Francis never addressed during his visit, although as the leader of a billion Catholics it should have been at the top of his list. I refer to the fact that the Christian communities in Syria have almost been obliterated in the ongoing war; the vast majority of the 1.5 million Christians in Iraq were killed or expelled over the past decade; the once-thriving Christian community of Lebanon has been greatly diminished because of persecution; the Coptic Christians of Egypt are often butchered by followers of the Islamic Brotherhood; and the Christian communities in the so-called Palestinian Authority are constantly persecuted.

“Furthermore, the leader of the Fatah terrorist group greeted the Pope in his palace, which just happens to have been a Greek Orthodox monastery until the Muslims confiscated it.

“There is only one country in the Middle East in which the Christian community has increased in number and flourished over the past decade: Israel.

“And yet the Pope chose not to say anything on behalf of those persecuted Christians and did not praise the Jewish state of Israel for its treatment of both Christians and Arabs.”

For that matter, he hasn't spoken up on behalf of the Christian woman, Meriam Yehya, imprisoned in Sudan, who faces a hundred lashes and execution by hanging because she refuses to renounce her religion. Although I'm sure His Holiness will be only too happy to stand on his balcony, basking in the adoration of the crowd below, and pronounce her Saint Meriam at some point in the future.

Still, the contempt I feel for Pope Francis is nothing compared to the contempt I feel for President Obama. Even when he was addressing the throng gathered at Normandy to pay their respects to those who gave their lives 70 years ago in order that others could live in freedom, bile rose in my throat.

However you may have felt about President Bush's policies, you

could never doubt that he respected those men and women he sent off to war. Does anybody believe that Obama regards those in uniform as anything but suckers?

When he defended his decision to swap five Islamic terrorists for one Army deserter, even those who might have approved of the deal knew that his actual motivation was to empty Gitmo. The truth is that every time Obama gives one of his self-serving speeches, my reaction is to channel my inner teenager and mumble, "Whatever."

If you didn't already know the depths to which this administration is willing to stoop, you might have been shocked at the way the White House has slandered the soldiers who served with Bergdahl. But, then, when you consider the nonchalance with which they sacrificed the four Americans in Benghazi, it's not too surprising that when Obama paid tribute to Bergdahl's military service, he not only ignored the lives that were lost while searching for the deserter, but the lives that, in retrospect, were wasted in capturing the five jihadists.

The fanciful notion that Obama could stand before the American people and expect anyone to take him seriously when he said that this nation never leaves a soldier behind was belied by the fact that at that very moment a Marine, whose only crime had been driving in the wrong lane, was being brutalized in a Mexican jail.

And the proof that Obama was unconcerned about the injustice was that he didn't even bother to send Susan Rice out on the Sunday news shows to lie about the reasons behind his reluctance to confront Mexico.

It's my own guess that he tried but failed to persuade President Enrique Nieto to accept 100 jihadists in exchange for Sgt. Andrew Tahmooressi.

On the plus side, I'm sure he had no trouble at all getting

Nieto to agree to keep sending us millions of future Democrats.

Allah Be Damned

I admit I don't see a sliver of difference between so-called good Muslims and the kind the rest of the world has become all too familiar with, and, what's more, I don't believe anyone who says otherwise is being honest.

If there were so many good, decent followers of Allah, doesn't it figure that the law of averages would ensure there would be at least a few civilized Islamic nations? Instead, they're all simply different degrees of rotten.

As I sit here, Obama is mulling over the offer from Iran's mullahs to give us a hand in Iraq. I know our glorious leader isn't much of an historical scholar, but even he should recall that the last time we allied ourselves with a tyrannical regime, it was with the Soviet Union during World War II.

Although American Communists were delighted to see Joseph Stalin and FDR embracing one another, the fact is that the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany had signed a mutual non-aggression pact, and if Hitler hadn't double-crossed Stalin by invading his home turf, the Soviet Union probably would have sat it out. Instead, Stalin's hand was forced, and his bribe was all of Eastern Europe.

The point is, whether the devil looks like Stalin or the Ayatollah Khomeini, once you shake his hand, you not only lose your soul, but don't count on getting all of your fingers back.

Speaking of duplicity, at the same time that the head of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas, was vowing to help Israel find the three abducted teenagers, the official Facebook page of his Fatah party ran a cartoon of three rats adorned with Stars of David dangling from a fishing rod.

It serves as a reminder of the days when Yasser Arafat had the job, and would make conciliatory speeches in English while simultaneously calling for the extinction of Israel in Arabic. Pretty clumsy, you would think, but good enough for the likes of Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton, who were only too happy to bully Israel into negotiating with the villains. Too often, our presidents have behaved like the sort of father who'd force his daughter to marry the guy who raped her.

Speaking of villains, Barack Obama demands that Iraq's President Malaki, a Shiite Muslim, invite the Sunnis to have a future say in running Iraq. The gall of the man! This is the same partisan clodhopper who, in 2009, ordered John McCain and his fellow Republicans to sit down, shut up and get out of his way.

I recently learned that NBC pays Chelsea Clinton \$600,000-a-year as a part-time reporter. In the words of an NBC executive, "It's as if she's been preparing her whole life for this job." I suppose in a way she has, in the same way that one might have said that Nelson Rockefeller prepared his whole life to be rich.

Interestingly enough, while colleges and universities continue to disinvite conservatives from delivering commencement addresses and receiving honors, Rev. Jeremiah Wright – who famously God-damned America, and who, in 2009, said he hadn't had any recent contact with President Obama, explaining, "Them Jews," no doubt referring to David Axelrod and Rahm Emanuel, "aren't going to let him talk to me" – hasn't suffered the same sort of indignities. In fact, he has received a Rockefeller Fellowship and seven honorary doctorates from the likes of Colgate University, Pennsylvania's Lincoln University and the Chicago Theological Seminary.

That brings up an interesting question: Why is it racist to attend a lecture by former KKK leader David Duke, but not racist to select Eric Holder, a man who refuses to indict

blacks for hate crimes, to be your Attorney General?

Also, why are we supposed to believe that two years of Lois Lerner's emails are forever lost because her computer allegedly crashed when even a technological troglodyte like me knows that it was easier to dispose of Jimmy Hoffa's carcass than it is to eliminate email?

Furthermore, why aren't Republicans in Congress grilling FBI Director James Corney and former Director Robert Mueller now that it's been discovered that the IRS, in addition to denying Tea Party groups non-profit status in order to facilitate Obama's re-election, was having the FBI investigate Tea Party members as if they were foreign spies?

Finally, I have to say that I think the Democrats look more foolish than usual when they try to distract voters from such serious concerns as Obama's foreign policy, his contempt for the military and a stagnant economy, by carrying on about sports teams calling themselves the Braves, the Indians and the Redskins. Still, I'm not totally oblivious to the downside potential of such seemingly trivial matters.

So while I see no advantage to the Washington football team, in terms of revenue or fan support, to be named anything other than the Redskins, it makes perfect sense to me that the hometown baseball team that used to be known as the Senators, wised up and now calls itself the Washington Nationals.

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“I Used To Be A Democrat” and “Do Liberals Ever Listen To Themselves?”

It's true that for a long time, an inexcusably long time, I was a registered Democrat. But even then, I never called myself a liberal. Because I came of age in the 1960s, I associated liberals with the punks I knew who called cops “pigs,” called soldiers “baby killers” and used any and all means to dodge the draft, and then had the hypocrisy to announce they did so because they were avowed pacifists.

Being in my 20s myself, I knew these people and I knew it was fear of battle or being bossed around by top sergeants, typically tough guys from the South, that motivated them to head off either to Canada or to one of the many left-wing shrinks who were willing to lie about their mental disorders and or verify they were homosexuals.

Fifty years later, they're still hypocrites, but instead of being college students, they're running colleges, TV networks, movie studios, solar panel companies and the New York Times. And, what's more, they continue to lie. Most recently, a sample of journalists lied to a pollster about their political affiliation, a mere 28% admitting to being Democrats and 50% claiming to be registered Independents.

Inasmuch as we already know that at least 90% of those in the news game always vote for liberals and that their campaign contributions are even more lopsided than that, you have to wonder why they even bother lying about something as transparent as their political bias. All you really have to do is turn on the network news or pick up a daily newspaper, Time magazine, the New Yorker, Vanity Fair or any of the slick glossies devoted to fashion and cosmetics, to realize that

they should, by all rights, be paid directly by the DNC for their propaganda efforts.

Ever since I heard the head of the NBA drop the hammer on Clippers owner Donald Sterling, I found myself wondering where Commissioner Adam Silver, who is nearly as spooky-looking as James Carville, got off thinking he had the authority to take the team away from its rightful owner. I mean, who the heck does he think he is? Harry Reid?

Even I know that California is a community property state, and I certainly knew that Sterling had a wife named Shelly because I kept hearing that she was suing her husband's ex-paramour for the return of the two million dollars the old fool had lavished on her in the form of cash, cars, condo and, unfortunately for the big mouth, a cellphone.

If I know anything about Jewish wives and, regrettably, I do, Commissioner Silver would have an easier time trying to pry my dog's chew toy away from her than taking the Clippers away from Mrs. Sterling.

It doesn't happen too often, but every once in a while someone forwards something to me from the Internet that I haven't seen before and that actually grabs my attention. In this case, it was a series of ways that one could easily identify a liberal. I mean aside from asking them if they happen to be journalists, judges, social workers, teachers, professors, illegal aliens, actors, musicians or convicted felons.

Here it is, with a few of my own modifications: (1) A liberal is someone who thinks Republicans are waging a war on women, but that the Muslim world isn't. (2) A liberal is someone who says to a pregnant woman: "Don't smoke, it'll hurt your baby," but tells her it's quite okay to abort that same baby. (3) A liberal is someone who thinks Fox News lies, but Obama doesn't. (4) A liberal is someone who lives in a gated community or behind a high wall, but says that a border fence

won't work. (5) A liberal is someone who wails about "corporate welfare," but thinks it's great that Obama bailed out General Motors to save union contracts and blew a billion tax dollars on certain-to-fail green energy companies in exchange for campaign contributions. (6) A liberal is someone who protested the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and proclaimed the Patriot Act fascistic, until Barack Obama took office.

Finally, Pope Francis is at it again. He has now called upon the governments of the world to redistribute their wealth to the poor in order to put an end to what he calls the "economy of exclusion," by which I assume he's referring to capitalism. What he doesn't bother explaining is that it is capitalism that allows the poor in America and the industrial West to live in, relatively speaking, the lap of luxury when compared to those who live in places where capitalism is just a rumor.

As my friend Jim Bass says, "Let him put his money where his mouth is, and start auctioning off the Vatican's treasures."

For my part, the more socialistic blather I hear bubbling out of his mouth, the more convinced I am that he should be identified as Pope Francis (D-VC).

DO LIBERALS EVER LISTEN TO THEMSELVES?

Seriously, is it possible that liberals actually believe the nonsense they go around spouting? I mean, I understand that as majority leader of the Senate, Harry Reid has to appear to be in sync with Barack Obama, but when in the wake of swapping five anti-American jihadists with unpronounceable names for one calling himself Bowe Bergdahl, Reid said, "I'm glad to get rid of them," did he not understand that most of us completed the thought with "and put them right back on the battlefield where they can resume killing our soldiers"?

For his part, Obama, after comparing himself to such wartime presidents as Washington, Lincoln and FDR, said that an exchange of POWs is typical policy at the end of a war. That

must have come as surprising news to the thousands of troops still risking life and limb in Afghanistan. As for the Taliban, they're still giggling over Obama's announcement in 2012 that Al Qaeda was decimated.

The real tragedy of the swap is that we couldn't sweeten the deal by tossing in Obama.

How sappy are liberals? Well, Nobel Prize-winning economist/NY Times propagandist Paul Krugman said, "The VA is proof that socialized medicine works." Anybody care to bet that Krugman doesn't go to the VA for his medical needs?

Most of us have gotten sick and tired of hearing Obama state that he didn't know about a scandal brewing until he read about it in a newspaper, even when, as with the VA, he was yakking about that very problem six years ago. But even if that were the case, it would put him a leg up on most voters who, unless they watch Fox, read certain blogs or tune in talk radio, have to rely on smoke signals for their news. That should help explain why Democrats continue to win elections.

As for Sgt. Bergdahl, we are told by his parents and some of the schlemiels in his hometown that he spoke like a social worker and acted like a saint, but how many social workers try to join the French Foreign Legion? And how many saints not only desert their comrades on the battlefield, but leave hoping to sign up with the Taliban? It's rather reminiscent of Edward Snowden, who betrayed America because of his alleged love of freedom and open societies, and then scooted off to China before receiving sanctuary in Vladimir Putin's Russia.

Next, why is it that when liberals argue for an ounce of prevention as opposed to a pound of cure, it's only when they're bemoaning the evils of alcohol, drugs and tobacco, but never when the subject happens to be abortions?

When Paul Ryan mentioned, with some good-natured annoyance, that he keeps getting confused with ex-congressman Anthony

("I'll show you mine if you let me show you mine") Weiner, Weiner, otherwise known as Carlos Danger to all the women he cyber-stalked, had the gall to say, "That's the final insult. How much more can I bear?" One can only assume he meant "bear" and not "bare." But see what I mean about liberals not listening to themselves?

The people they should be listening to are folks like Thomas Sowell, who has raised the question: "What is your fair share of what someone else has worked for?" He's also the fellow who said, "I have never understood how it is greedy to want to keep the money you have earned, but not greedy to want to take somebody else's."

Another thought liberals should heed goes this way: If you've got minimum skills, minimum education, show minimum motivation and provide a minimum contribution to the workplace, why the hell should someone be forced to pay you more than you're obviously worth?

When it comes to the stagnant economy, a problem that Obama only pays lip service to when he's trying to distract people from one of his endless scandals and his numerous end-runs around the Constitution, Katie Pavlich, writing in Townhall magazine, points out that 47.6 million Americans are now receiving food stamps from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program via their SNAP cards.

Because numbers alone generally make people's eyes glaze over, she reminds us that during the Depression, thousands of desperately hungry people lined up to receive free food at soup kitchens. Even if we weren't around at the time, we've all seen those grainy, heart-wrenching, black and white photos of hopeless men in overcoats, wearing hats and caps, lined up to get their slabs of bread and bowls of gruel.

Thanks to modern technology, we are spared those scenes today. But, as Ms. Pavlich, points out, if we assume that an average

of 916 people can stand in a double-stacked line a quarter of a mile long, the current recipients would be standing in one that was 12,827 miles long. Only a saint wouldn't try to take cuts before the gruel congealed.

The EPA seems to have accepted the challenge by the IRS to prove itself the most contemptible, most power-hungry, agency of the federal government. With their endless regulations, it seems their sole mission is to bring to a grinding halt the age of the American entrepreneur, the American farmer and whatever still remains of American industry.

And at the rate they keep expanding the list of endangered species, soon the only one left unprotected will be the American taxpayer.

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Saints & Martyrs

A while back, I took Hank Aaron to task for hanging on to hate mail from 1974, when he was closing in on Babe Ruth's career homerun record of 714. To this day, he admits to storing the stuff in his attic so he would never forget. He also said that white people are no different today than they were then, except that instead of hoods, they now wear shirts and ties.

Aside from the fact that I sent him a congratulatory letter in 1974 to which he didn't respond, I thought it was not only a pathetic and racist thing for him to say, but one showing a tremendous lack of gratitude. After all, this is a guy who got

to make a great deal of money playing baseball for over 20 years and then got a good-paying front office job with the Atlanta Braves, and none of those checks were signed by a black man. They were also not signed by a white man, for that matter, at least not one wearing a hood.

But something I neglected to mention is that 13 years earlier, another man was closing in on Babe Ruth's other cherished record, the one for most home runs in a single season. His name was Roger Maris. He was a white guy who was a first-rate outfielder for the New York Yankees, but had never hit more than 39 home runs in a single season. But 1961 was magical, and he would ultimately hit his 61st homer on the last day of the season. But in the meantime, he received a ton of hate mail, some of it involving threats on his life and the lives of his wife and children.

It seems that a lot of people didn't want to see Babe Ruth's 34-year-old record broken, but if it was to be broken, they wanted to see Maris's Yankee teammate Mickey Mantle break it. In a way, it was rather ironic because Maris was a decent, straight arrow, married guy, whom fathers could have held up as a role model to their sons, whereas Mantle was a notorious boozier and womanizer, who had kicked off all traces of his Oklahoma upbringing once he became the toast of New York.

But Maris wasn't a black guy, so we didn't have to spend 40 years listening to him bitch about having his feelings hurt. What's more, in 1961, Baseball Commissioner Ford Frick announced that unless Maris broke Ruth's record within the first 154 games of the season (the season having just been extended to 162 games), it would go into the books with an asterisk attached.

But 13 years later, nobody said that Aaron's career record would be tainted because he hadn't broken Ruth's career record within his first 8,399 at-bats, as Ruth had done. So even though it took Aaron 3,865 additional at-bats to hit just 41

more home runs, nobody – least of all “Hammerin’ Hank” – ever mentioned it.

But he’s not alone. You notice that a great many blacks are constantly letting you know how offended they are by the Confederate flag, but you never see them honoring or erecting statues to the hundreds of thousands of northern soldiers who fought and died in the Civil War.

Sadly, it seems that grievance alone is a part of their DNA, never gratitude.

Apparently, Benjamin Franklin, were he still alive, would not be a liberal. As I was recently reminded, Franklin once said, “I am for doing good for the poor, but I think the best way is by not making them easy in poverty, but leading or driving them out of it. In my youth, I traveled much, and I observed in different countries that the more public provisions were provided for the poor, the less they provided for themselves, and of course became poorer. And, on the contrary, the less was done for them, the more they did for themselves, and became richer.”

Even now, that seems so obvious, but Franklin lived at a time when politicians didn’t require the votes of poor people to remain entrenched. One would think that after a while, adults would be ashamed to be dependent on political hacks who see their role as that of a perverted Santa Claus, depositing other people’s hard-earned money in the Christmas stockings of able-bodied brats.

While politicians dither over what should be done to dissuade Putin from his imperialistic designs on Eastern Europe, someone sent me a seven point plan that would stop him in his tracks: (1) Force Russia to ban the use of coal. (2) Mandate that Russia dismantle its health system in favor of PutinCare. (3) Don’t allow any oil drilling on Russia’s public land. (4) Have the EPA take control of Russian businesses. (5) Curtail

the Russian work week to 30 hours. (6) Raise the Russian minimum wage. (7) Demand that the Russian government provide welfare benefits for unqualified citizens and illegal immigrants.

I say it's worth a try. Obama's agenda has certainly managed to turn America into a second-class power closing in on third world status.

Finally, as you probably noticed, Pope Francis oversaw two canonization ceremonies in one day. He did so by simply ignoring the previous two miracles yardstick. To me, it suggests that standards have gone out the window and that sainthood is no longer what it used to be.

Some have suggested that Francis intended to help unify two segments of the Church, but when I saw the turnout in St. Peter's Square, I thought it might just be a papal bone tossed to Roman restaurants, ice cream parlors and souvenir shops.

But, whatever the case, it means I am no longer setting my sights on sainthood, instead focusing on receiving a knighthood. Sir Burt has an even nicer ring to it than Saint Burt, which definitely carries with it the off-putting aura of hungry lions and burning stakes.

Burt's Webcast is every Wednesday at Noon Pacific Time.

Tune in at K4HD.com His Call-in Number is: (818) 570-5443

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