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Donald Trump: Making America *White* Again

By Rev. William Alberts
September 10, 2015



Republican presidential front-runner Donald Trump often wears a baseball hat, with the words emblazoned across the top, “Make America Great Again.” What should alarm voters is the secret he is hiding under his hat: it is about making America *white* again.

Donald Trump announced his presidential candidacy with loud and clear racist dog-whistles. “The U.S. has become a dumping ground for everybody else’s problems,” he began. “When Mexico sends its people, they’re not sending their best . . . They are sending people that have lots of problems ,” he charged. “They’re bringing drugs . . . crime. They’re rapists. And some, I

assume, are good people.” (Full text: Donald Trump announces a presidential bid,” By Washington Post Staff, *The Washington Post*, June 16, 2015)

So, a President Trump would build a really high wall to keep these undesirable Mexican Others out. “The greatest wall that you’ve ever seen . . . it won’t be an eye sore,” the “billionaire real estate developer . . . assured” a New Hampshire audience adding, “If they call it the Trump Wall, it has to be beautiful.” (“Trump touts his ‘beautiful’ wall, slams Jeb Bush in N.H. town hall,” By Cooper Allen, *OnPolitics*, Aug. 19, 2015) And Trump would make Mexicans pay for that giant, 1900-mile wall. Which Mexicans? The poor, hard-working, family-loving undocumented ones living in the shadows of U.S. society. Trump’s plan: “seizing remittances that immigrants send back to families in Mexico if the money was ‘derived from illegal wages.’” (“Trump plan: Make immigrants pay for ‘permanent border wall’ and deport millions,” By Kathleen Hennessey, *Los Angeles Times*, Aug. 17, 2015)

A President Trump would also stop those South of the Border “anchor babies” from getting their little feet—and their families—in our country’s door by repealing the Constitution’s 14th Amendment that grants “birthright citizenship” to everyone born in the U. S. (“If They Call It the Trump Wall, It Has to Be Beautiful,” By Susan Junes, *www.cnsnews.com*, Aug. 20, 2015)

As president, Donald Trump would *purify* American citizenship by forcibly deporting some 11 million Mexican immigrants living illegally in the U.S.—no matter how settled, self-sustaining and civic-minded they have become. These perceived undesirables include legally born American children—no matter how old or young. Of course, with his unmatched business savvy, he assures everyone that he would uproot all 11 million Mexicans—who live all over the U.S.—in a “humane way. I have a bigger heart than you do,” he told Univision anchor Jorge Ramos, who challenged him at a press conference by asking how he would deport 11 million people. Trump’s initial response to Ramos was, “Sit down . . . you haven’t been called, go back to *Univision*.” He then signaled his security person who forcibly removed Ramos from the press room. (“At Donald Trump Event, Jorge Ramos of Univision Is Snubbed, Ejected and Debated,” By Trip Gabriel, *The New York Times*, Aug. 25, 2015; “Donald Trump and Univision’s Jorge Ramos engage in testy exchange in Iowa,” By Kurtis Lee, *LA Times*, Aug.25, 2015)

How would a President Trump uproot 11 million Mexicans? Most of whom are integrated in communities: with friends, neighbors, co-workers— many having deeply meaningful affiliations with faith and civic groups. Here Trump reveals that he sees people as commodities, not human beings. When asked how he “would locate, round up and deport the 11 million undocumented immigrants he says must go,” he “deflected.” His reported response was “that while it may be a task too tall for politicians, it isn’t for a business mogul like himself. . . . ‘We will find them, we will get them out.’ Trump said. ‘It’s feasible if you know how to manage.’” (“Donald Trump wants to deport all unauthorized immigrants and let the ‘really good’ ones back in,” By Dara Lind, *www.vox.com*, July 30, 2015)

Donald Trump’s racist dog-whistle has a distinct fascist sound. He would rid the U.S. of these 11 million, perceived as mostly undesirable, illegal Mexicans. Then he would allow the “ ‘good ones’ to reenter the country through an ‘expedited process’ and live in the U.S. legally, though

not as citizens. . . . ‘We got to move ‘em out, we’re going to move ‘em back if they’re really good people ’ . . . Trump said . . . in a *CNN* interview with Dana Bask.” (*Ibid*)

One would think Donald Trump is talking about livestock or merchandise, not children and families with feelings and aspirations and abilities. Shades of Hitler’s efforts to “cleanse” Germany of The Other and create an Aryan “master race.” Trump’s proposed inflicting of massive forced uprooting, displacement and trauma on 11 million people would rightly be condemned, worldwide, as a horrible crime against humanity.

Donald Trump is not being truthful in saying, “Mexico is sending people with lots of problems” to the U.S., like drug dealers criminals and rapists. Mexico is not sending people anywhere. Trump is keeping under his hat the fact that our government’s own exploitive policies have forced Mexicans—and other Central Americans—to migrate to the U.S.

Anti-immigration politicians like Donald Trump don’t talk about the U.S. corporations-friendly, 1994 enacted, North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)—between the U.S., Canada and Mexico—that devastated the livelihoods of Mexican farmers and other low-wage workers, and drove millions to the U.S. NAFTA did away with tariffs, and allowed huge U.S. agribusiness companies to export heavily subsidized corn into Mexico’s market, at a far lower price than Mexico’s own farmers could compete with. These “corn imports,” as immigration specialist Laura Carlsen writes, “drove down farmers’ price, driving millions to migrate north,” and “lowered labor rights and environmental rules, hurting all workers.” (“Under Nafta, Mexico Suffered, and the United States Felt Its Pain,” *The New York Times*, Nov. 24, 2013)

NAFTA, with its tariff reduction, opened the door and allowed “certain big U.S. firms” like Walmart to grab a share of the Mexican market. Low-price operating Walmart, with its “Save money Live better” slogan, reportedly “drove many Mexicans out of work, to the tune of 28,000 small businesses eliminated. (34)” (“The Immigration Debate: NAFTA Overview and Its Effect on Undocumented Immigration,” By Andrew Wallace, Matthew Kretman and Scott Strogatz, www.umich.edu)

NAFTA also had an adverse effect on U.S. manufacturing jobs. Motor companies, like Ford Corporation and General Motors, closed U.S. plants, reportedly “eliminating the jobs of tens of thousands of U.S. workers,” and built new factories in Mexico, attracted by the lower wages that could be paid to poverty-stricken Mexicans. Writer and photojournalist David Bacon, dares to say the “D” word, while those who, like Donald Trump, keep such a reality under their hats. “Displacement is an unmentionable word in the Washington discourse,” Bacon writes, “Not one immigration proposal in Congress in the quarter century since IRCA was passed has tried to come to grips with the policies that uprooted miners, teachers, tree planters, and farmers. In fact, Bacon continues, “while debating bills to criminalize undocumented migrants and set up huge guest worker programs, four new trade agreements were introduced, each of which has caused more displacement and migration.” (“WHEN NAFTA WAS PASSED TWO DECADES AGO, ITS BOOSTERS PROMISED IT WOULD BRING ‘FIRST WORLD’ STATUS FOR THE MEXICAN POEOPLE. INSTEAD, IT PROMPTED A GREAT MIGRATION NORTH,” www.politicalresearch.org, Oct. 11, 2014)

Mexico did not “send people with lots of problems” to the U.S. , as Donald Trump asserted. Our government’s exploitative, large corporations-favoring policies created “lots of problems” for Mexicans, which led to the displacement of millions, forcing them to migrate to the U.S.

Donald Trump would like to keep another reality under his hat. Between 1980 and 1991, before NAFTA, close to one million Central Americans from Guatemala , El Salvador and Nicaragua fled to the U.S., to escape the political persecution of repressive regimes *supported by the U.S. government*. Rather than being recognized as political refugees—many fleeing death squads—which would qualify them for asylum, our government judged them to be “economic migrants.” Why? Because recognition of their oppressed political reality would implicate the U.S. itself for supporting their repressive governments. Thus many Central American refugees fleeing political persecution were apprehended in the U.S. and returned to their home country, to face persecution—and for unknown numbers—certain death.

The plight of these Central American refugees led to the birth of the Sanctuary Movement, with churches opening their doors and providing the safe haven of sanctuary for thousands. It began in Tucson, Arizona, with Quakers, Jim Corbett and Jim Dudley and Presbyterian minister John Fife, who opened his church to refugees. In time, a reported “500 Protestant, Catholic and Jewish congregations in 17 cities were participating.” (“Quakers in the Sanctuary Movement,” www.quakersintheworld.com; “Sanctuary Movement Turns 30,” *Fox News Latino*, Mar. 27, 2012) The Community Church of Boston, when I was its minister, became one of those churches, providing sanctuary, from 1983 to 1985, for a Guatemalan refugee who was on the army’s death list in his country.

The Sanctuary Movement knew that poverty is a product of the politics of exclusion. That hunger is the result of political favoritism toward the influential rich. That malnutrition, disease and death are the destructive reality of political policies that serve the privileged and marginalize the powerless. The Sanctuary Movement embodies a fundamental religious ethic: embracing the oppressed and confronting their oppressors. With all that is under Donald Trump’s hat—and the hats of numerous others who forgot where their ancestors came from and the indigenous people they diminished — the Sanctuary Movement needs to be re-energized today.

The facts do not support Donald Trump’s assertion that “tremendous crime is coming across from Mexico.” *Washington Post* reporter Michelle Ye Hee Lee reported that “a range of studies show there is no evidence immigrants commit more crimes than native-born Americans. In fact,” Ye Hee Lee states, “first-generation immigrants are predisposed to lower crime rates than native-born Americans.” Why? She quotes Marc Rosenblum of the non-partisan Migration Policy Institute, who states, “Immigrants in general— unauthorized immigrants in particular— are a self-selected group who generally come to the U.S. to work. And once they’re here, most of them want to keep their nose down and do their business, and they are sensitive to the fact that they’re vulnerable.” Ye Hee Lee concludes that Trump’s correlation of crime and immigration is a “misperception . . . the facts just are not there.” (“Donald Trump’s false comments connecting Mexican immigrants and crime,” July 8, 2015)

“Make America Great Again?” In Boston, two white brothers knew what was under Donald Trump’s hat. They badly beat a sleeping homeless Mexican man, who had to be hospitalized.

Their motivation? According to the police, the one brother, “inspired in part by Donald Trump . . . told them it was OK to assault the man because he is Hispanic and homeless,” adding, “Donald Trump was right, all these illegals need to be deported.” (Homeless man beaten; outcry rises: Police say brothers targeted Hispanic,” By Sara DiNatale and Maria Sacchetti, *The Boston Globe*, Aug. 20, 2015)

When told of the attack, the initial response of the “Make America Great Again” presidential candidate lacked feeling: “It would be a shame.” He then shifted, “I will say that people who are following me are very passionate. They love this country and they want this country to be great again. They are passionate.” (*Ibid*)

Donald Trump’s own “passion” delayed a politically correct turn. He said later on Twitter, “We need energy and passion, but we must treat each other with respect. I would never condone violence.” (“Trump calls attack on immigrant ‘terrible,’” By Maria Sacchetti, *The Boston Globe*, Aug. 22, 2015)

And what about the hospitalized Mexican immigrant with the broken nose and battered chest and arms? Said Daniel Hernandez Joseph, Mexico’s consul general in Boston, who visited him in the hospital, “His spirits are good. He’s a man with a *huge heart* (italics added). He doesn’t seem to hold any anger or grudge. He simply expressed concern that it doesn’t happen to anyone else.” (*Ibid*)

Consul general Joseph is then quoted as saying the 58-year-old man “came to the United States in the 1980s . . . seeking a better life . . . speaks English . . . has paid taxes, and has his own social security number. He is single and has no children. And “he still works in Boston, but cannot afford housing.” (*Ibid*) Sadly, one political candidate’s “passion” is another person’s agony.

According to *Huffington Post* writer Daniel Marans, white supremacist leader and former Ku Klux Klan grand wizard David Duke likes what is under Donald Trump’s “Make America Great Again” hat. Marans quotes Duke as saying that “while Trump is ‘untrustworthy,’ he was also ‘the best of the lot’ running on the GOP side.” Like other racists who are out to cleanse the “God”-ordained “City on the Hill” of non- Europeans, Duke says “Immigration is an existential threat for our people in every way.” He is “thinking more and more that this candidacy is a really good thing for us.” (“Meet The Members of Donald Trump’s White Supremacist Fan Club, Aug. 25, 2015)

Daniel Marans lists other members of Donald Trump’s “White Supremacist Fan Club.” They include “The Daily Stormer,” a leading neo-Nazi news site, which “endorsed Trump on June 28,” because “Trump is willing to say what most Americans think.” Another is “Richard Spencer, director of the National Policy Institute, which promotes the ‘heritage, identity, and future of European people,’” who “said that Trump was ‘refreshing.’” Also, Jared Taylor, editor of *American Renaissance*, a Virginia-based white nationalist magazine who said about Trump, “I’m sure he would repudiate any association with people like me, but his support comes from people who are more like me than he might like to admit.” And “Michael Hill, head of the League of the South, an Alabama-based white supremacist secessionist group, who said Trump

was ‘good’ for the white racist cause.” Finally, “Brad Griffin, a member of Hill’s League of the South, and author of the popular white supremacist blog Hunter Wallace,” whose “esteem for Trump is ‘soaring.’” (*Ibid*)

Donald Trump has to be careful to camouflage what is under his hat. Especially with the rabid crowd of some 30,000 people who came out to hear him speak in Mobile Alabama. He fired them up with that giant wall he would build to keep The Other out and with his promise to deport 11 million of them—to “Make America Great Again.” His nativism-mongering, wrapped in self-assured certainty, was enough to elicit shouts of “White Power!” from the crowd. And fifty-three-year-old landscaping worker Jim Sherota *felt the hate* at that rally. He was quoted as saying, “Hopefully,” Trump “is going to sit there and say, ‘When I become elected president, what we’re going to do is we’re going to make the border a vacation spot, it’s going to cost you \$25 for a permit, and then you get \$50 for every confirmed kill.’” (“Donald Trump Fails to Fill Alabama Stadium, but Fans’ Zeal Is Undiminished,” By Alan Blinder, *The New York Times*, Aug. 21, 2015; see also, “Watch Trump Supporter Yell Out ‘White Power During Alabama Rally,” By Daniel Politi, www.slate.com, Aug. 22, 2015)

At the Alabama rally, one attendee held a big sign with the words, “Thank you, Lord JESUS, for PRESIDENT TRUMP”—with ‘TRUMP’ printed in bigger letters than ‘JESUS.’ (*Ibid*) The pandering Trump did not disappoint. He looked out at that big crowd in the *Bible* belt and began by equating himself with famed evangelist Billy Graham, saying, “Now I know how the great Billy Graham felt, because this is the same feeling.” The crowd loved it. He said that his favorite book is “the *Bible*,” and then referred to his own book: “As much as I love ‘The Art of the Deal,’ it’s not even close,” adding, “We take the Bible all the way,” to the delightful laughter and applause of his audience. (“Donald Trump Fails to Fill Stadium, but Fans’ Zeal Is Undiminished,” *Ibid*)

While *The Bible* is Donald Trump’s “favorite book,” he avoids quoting any of his favorite verses. When asked by *CNN*’s Eugene Scott to name “his favorite Bible verse, Trump replied, ‘I wouldn’t want to get into it. Because to me, that’s very personal.’” (“Trump says Bible is his favorite book, but declines to share favorite verse,” Aug. 27, 2015)

If Donald Trump really got into The Bible, he would read verses that strongly contradict the ways in which he would “Make America Great Again.” Like his “*anchor baby*” mentality, which Jesus would strongly condemn with the admonition, “If anyone causes one of these little ones—those who believe in me—to stumble, it would be better for them if a *large millstone* [italics added] were hung around their neck and they were thrown into the sea.” (*Mark 9:42*, NIV)

And about those 11 million so-called illegal Mexican immigrants whom Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump would round up and “move out.” He would be stopped in his political tracks by verses in *Deuteronomy 10: 17-19*: “For the Lord your God . . . who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes . He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the foreigner residing among you, giving them food and clothing. And you are to love those who are foreigners, for you yourselves were foreigners in Egypt.”

Donald Trump is quoted as saying he “has never sought forgiveness for his sins.” But he “finds a form of asking for forgiveness . . . ‘when I drink my little wine . . . and have my little cracker’” [in Holy Communion] . . . I feel cleansed,” he said; and he thinks “in terms of ‘let’s go out and let’s make it right.’” (“Trump: I Don’t Think I’ve Ever Asked God for Forgiveness,” BY Todd Beamon, www.newsmax.com, July 18, 2015) Whatever “make it right” means to Trump. Unlike his vagueness, Jesus became very specific about what it means to be “righteous.” It involves welcoming the “stranger,” clothing the “naked,” and visiting those who are “sick” or in “prison.” Jesus’ point to his followers: “Just as you have done it to the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.” (*Matthew* 25: 31-40)

Robert Parhan, executive editor of *EthicsDaily.com* and executive director of the Baptist Center for Ethics, lists a number of *Bible* verses that call into question Donald Trump’s “anti-immigration rhetoric.” One is “the Ninth Commandment: ‘You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.’ (*Exodus* 20: 16)” Parhan states that Trump’s “false witness” includes smearing Mexicans as “rapists” and criminals.” He says that “crime has actually not increased as the undocumented population has increased, and that “undocumented males are less likely to be incarcerated than native-born males.” (“Trump’s Anti-Immigration Rhetoric Runs Counter to Biblical Witness,” *EthicsDaily.com*, Aug. 19, 2015)

Donald Trump says, “I love and am a big believer in the Bible.” In fact, to hear this pandering politician tell it, he is filled with “love” for just about everyone. “I have great respect for Mexico and I love the Mexican people.” (Donald Trump says he is no apprentice when it comes to Israel,” By Jacob Kamaras, *JNS.org*, July 1, 2015) “I love God and I love my church.” (“Trump believes in God, but hasn’t sought forgiveness,” By Eugene Scott, *CNN*, July 18, 2015) You can tell he loves Christians: “I go out of my way to use the word Christmas,” as “there’s an assault on anything to do with Christianity.” (“Donald Trump Declares War on the War on Christmas,” www.politicsusa.com, Aug. 24, 2015) “We love Israel,” and “will fight for Israel 100 percent, 1,000 percent . . . forever.” (“Trump Has Strongest Jewish Ties of all GOP Candidates,” By Uriel Heilman, *Forward.com*, Aug. 7, 2015)

The list goes on. “I’ve always had a great relationship with the Blacks.” (“The Dumbest Stuff Donald Trump Has Ever Said,” *The Daily Beast*, June 30, 2015) Except for President Barack Hussein Obama, whose presidency is illegitimate because, as Trump, the “birther” has insisted, Obama was not born in America.

“I love the Tea Party; [they] are incredible people.” (“Trump courts tea party voters in Nashville, says decision on 3rd party run coming soon,” By Erik Schelzig and Jill Colvin, Associated Press, *US News*, Aug. 29, 2015) Trump’s “Make America Great Again” echoes the white evangelical Christian male-dominated Tea Party’s call to “Take America Back” to the “good old days” of white control and supremacy.

And can you believe it? Donald Trump even says, “I cherish women. . . . I’m going to be able to do things for women that no other candidate would be able to do.” (“Trump defends record on women’s issues: ‘I cherish women. I want to help women,’” By Elise Viebeck, *The Washington Post*, Aug. 9, 2015) Trump “cherishes women”—except for Fox Anchor Megyn Kelly, who committed the unpardonable sin of reminding him of his misogynous statements: “You’ve called

women you don't like fat pigs, dogs, slob, and disgusting animals." ("Trump's history of flippant misogyny," By Karen Tumulty, *The Washington Post*, Aug. 8, 2015)

Instead of "Making America Great Again," the secret under Donald Trump's hat is that he would bring out the worst in America—the white supremacy he is appealing to and stirring up. He is the latest presidential candidate to co-opt religion for ulterior purposes: using faith-based deception to freight a white supremacist-laced agenda. He would take us back to "the good old days" when America was *unquestionably* white, Christian, heterosexual, and male-dominated. And he—like most of the other presidential candidates— would continue our government's pursuit of world domination under the guise of "American exceptionalism."

The 2016 presidential campaign is on our doorstep. Time for far more faith leaders to enter the public square and reclaim everyone's "unalienable right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." Time for people of faith to enter the political fray, and say No! to the "anchor baby" mentality, and Yes! to every child's— and family's— sacred worth and rights. Time for people of faith to transform borders into bridges of empathy and community. Time to declare that it is not about "loving *The Bible*," but about whether people's use of *The Bible* inspires them to love other human beings— because, as Jesus said, "You will know them by their fruits." (*Matthew* 7: 15, 16) What will make America great again is not "The Art of the Deal," but the art of loving "your neighbor as yourself."