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The Elephant in the Voting Booth: Hatred of a Black President

By Rev. William Alberts
March 11, 2016

A major force fueling Donald Trump's popularity among Republican presidential primary voters is their hatred of a black president. A hatred that Trump embodies and, in turn, enables a majority of Republican voters to safely vent indirectly, as seen in media-reported code words. Such as, "Trump's brand of resentment politics resonates." ("Christie Splits With His Past in Backing Trump," By Jonathan Martin and Alexander Burns, *The New York Times*, February 28, 2016) "Republicans are reaping the whirlwind . . . [of] Mr. Trump's politics of rage." ("The Party of Trump and the Path Ahead," Editorial, *The New York Times*, March 2, 2016) "The combative casino and real estate magnate has stoked his political fortunes by picking fights with public figures, repeatedly defying predictions that he had gone too far." ("Trump in a word war with pope, By Matt Viser and Tracy Jan, *The Boston Globe*, Feb. 19, 2016) "The stubborn popularity of Mr. Trump who defies Republican orthodoxy on issue after issue shows how deeply the party's elites misjudged the faithfulness of rank-and-file Republicans to conservatism." ("Supporters Join Trump Outside G.O.P. Doctrine," By Trip Gabriel, *The New York Times*, Feb. 18, 2016) "His fierce and sometimes offensive comments on Mexican and Muslim immigrants and on waterboarding and killing family members of Islamic State fighters demonstrate, his voters said, a refreshing willingness to disregard political correctness . . . 'He's saying how the people really feel.'" ('TRUMP AND CLINTON FEAST AS TWELVE STATES VOTE,' By Ashley Parker and Maggie Haberman, *The New York Times*, March 2, 2016)

The hatred of President Barack Hussein Obama lurks behind Donald Trump's primary victories in seven states on Super Tuesday. That hatred peers out from behind the headline of a front-page *New York Times* story, which declared Trump's "Support in G.O.P. Spans Breadth of Nation." From "Southern strongholds like Alabama, Georgia, and Tennessee, as well as Northern states like Massachusetts . . . [and] in Virginia." He won "not only among low-income voters, his usual base, but also . . . veterans and self-described conservatives and white evangelicals." And then the elephant in the voter's booth as seen in interviews with voters: "Mr. Trump's supporters . . . had a unifying motivation—a deep-seated pervasive sense of anxiety about the state of the country, and an anger and frustration at those they felt were encroaching on their way of life." (*Ibid*)

Republican voters' "deep-seated pervasive sense of anxiety" is assumed to be caused by a *black* president in *their* White House. With his presence "encroaching" on their hallowed, historic, psychically-conditioned white supremacy, which is unconsciously integrated into their being and reinforced by America's white-controlled hierarchy of access to political, economic, legal, media, business and religious power. A white supremacist-conditioning in a country believed to be divinely blessed, the fulfillment of that Biblically-prophesized "city set on a hill" that is "the light of the world" (*Matthew* 5: 14). A country founded on the bones of native peoples and built on the backs of black persons made slaves. *Their* country now "encroached" upon by a member of the "servant" race. *New York Times* reporter Toni Monkovic alludes to voters' hatred of a president who is not their kind: "Some social science research suggests that the simple fact that President Obama is black might have contributed to a sense of lost power and resentment among whites, and, of course, Mr. Trump first came to political prominence by questioning whether Mr. Obama was even a citizen." ("Why Donald Trump Has Done Worse in Mostly White States," March 8, 2016)

The displaced anger toward a black president, invited by Donald Trump's racism, is believed to be evident in a front-page *Boston Globe* story on Super Tuesday, with Republicans giving Trump "a near sweep." The story referred to exit polls which revealed that "Anger at Washington and a yearning for a leader to shake things up continued to fuel Trump's extraordinary popularity." Also, "Southern Republicans were more likely to say they were 'angry' with the government," with "voters in nearly all states [saying] they wanted an outsider in the Oval Office." ('BIG GAINS FOR TRUMP, CLINTON,' By Matt Viser and Tracy Jan, March 2, 2016)

Donald Trump's biggest attraction? "He tells it like it is." That's what a Fox News poll found: "Sixty-two percent of Republicans say 'he tells it like it is, and we need that now.'" And "fifty percent of independents agree." ("Morning Plum: No, Donald Trump isn't really 'telling it like it is,'" By Greg Sargent, *The Washington Post*, Sept. 24, 2015) And what is the *it* that Trump tells like *it* is? It is about the first ever *black* president and making America *white* again.

But Donald Trump cannot directly attack Obama for being black, as that would expose his ingrained white supremacy. So, he indirectly calls Obama the N word by calling him the *M*uslim word: questioning his place of birth and suggesting his birth certificate may reveal he is a Muslim. Reported as "one of the most vocal skeptics about Obama's birthplace and faith, Trump," during the last election, "mounted a campaign to pressure Obama to release his long-form birth certificate." In 2011, "Trump told *Fox News*, 'He doesn't have a birth certificate. He

may have one, but there's something on that, maybe religion, maybe it says he is a Muslim.' ” When Trump's “accusations reached such a high decibel level, Obama appeared in the White House briefing room to renounce Trump and release the long-term version of his birth certificate. . . . Trump refused to relent.” (“Donald Trump's history of suggesting Obama is a Muslim,” By Chris Moody and Kristen Holmes, *CNN*, Sept. 18, 2015)

In fact, when President Obama did not attend Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia's funeral, Donald Trump tweeted, “I wonder if President Obama would have attended the funeral of Justice Scalia if it were held in a Mosque. Very sad that he did not go!” Obama attended a viewing for Justice Scalia, and Vice President Biden attended his funeral. (“Trump asks if Obama would have attended Scalia's funeral were it held at a mosque,” By Eugene Scott, *CNN*, Feb.20, 2016) Recently President Obama visited a Mosque in Baltimore to reassure Muslims, countering Republican presidential campaign talk about banning Muslims from America and carpet-bombing Muslim countries to destroy ISIS. Trump's reported response to Obama's visit: “‘Maybe he feels more comfortable there’ . . . reviving the ‘birther’ controversy he fanned in 2011.” (“Obama uses mosque visit to counter Trump,” By Sarah Wheaton, *POLITICO*, Feb. 3, 2016)

Donald Trump's calling President Obama the M-word is part of his “telling it like it is,” and thus saying “how people really feel.” Even now, in spite of Obama's birth certificate, a reported “poll finds that 43 percent of Republicans believe President Obama is a Muslim, and 20 percent of all adults believe he was born outside the United States.” (“Poll: 43 percent of Republicans believe Obama is a Muslim,” By Peter Schroeder, *TheHill*, Sept. 13, 2015)

South Carolina Senator Lindsey Graham, who has since suspended his presidential campaign, comes close to identifying the elephant in the voting booth. He is quoted as saying that “Donald Trump is leading in the polls because nearly half of Republican primary voters hate Obama and think he is a Kenyan-born Muslim.” In a *Boston Herald Radio* program, Graham said, “Well there's about 40% of the Republican primary voters who believe that Obama was born in Kenya and is a Muslim. . . . There's just a dislike for President Obama that is visceral. It's almost irrational. (“Lindsey Graham: Trump Leading Because 40% of GOP Voters Think Obama Is Kenyan Muslim,” By Andrew Kaczynski, *BuzzFeed*, Dec. 11, 2015) It is not “irrational” if one identifies the elephant in the room: Obama is *black*. But Graham can't go there because of his own white-favored conditioning, privilege and power.

Donald Trump's racism contains a very violent component. Deporting 11 million Mexicans and banning Muslims from entering the United States are brutal proposals, forcibly separating families and turning friends into enemies. Building walls that keep people out and military weapons that do people in would only intensify hatred toward us American citizens — not keep us safe.

Donald Trump is pedaling violence that is shockingly contagious. In the face of reality, he repeatedly says that he loves, Mexicans and Muslims and women and black people — and everyone else he actually belittles and hates.

Donald Trump's own "visceral" hatred, assumed to stem from his arrested emotional development, was seen early in the presidential campaign. In Boston, two white brothers, "inspired" by Trump's diatribe against Mexican "rapists" and "drug" dealers entering America, badly beat a sleeping homeless Mexican man. Their explanation to police: "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) The man, a taxpayer, was not "illegal." When told of the attack, Trump feigned sympathy, saying, "It would be a shame." He then used the incident to promote his campaign: "I will say that people who are following me are very passionate. They love this country, and want this country to be great again." (*Ibid*)

The "passion" Donald Trump brings out in people is their hatred and violence—which respond to his. Trump's own violent tendency is seen in his reaction when Democratic presidential candidate Bernie Sanders allowed two Black Lives Matter women to take over his microphone at a rally. Saying Sanders was being "politically correct," Trump declared, "I would never give up my microphone. . . . That showed such weakness. I don't know if I'll do the fighting myself or if other people will, but that was a disgrace." (Trump: 'Disgusting' for Sanders to Let Black Lives Matter Protesters Interrupt Rally," by Alexis Levinson, www.nationalreview.com, Aug. 11, 2015)

When activist Mercurio Southall Jr. shouted "Black Lives Matter!" at a reported "nearly all white" rally in Birmingham, Donald Trump said, "Get him the hell out of here, will you please? . . . Get him out of here. Throw him out!" As "Southall fell to the ground," he "was surrounded by several white men who appeared to be kicking and punching him." And "A Washington Post reporter in the crowd watched as one of the men put his hands on Southall's neck and heard a female onlooker repeatedly shout: 'Don't choke him!'" Trump's response: "Maybe he should have been roughed up, because it was absolutely disgusting what he was doing." ("Trump on rally protester: 'Maybe he should have been roughed up,'" By Jenna Johnson and Mary Jordan, *The Washington Post*, Nov. 22, 2015)

In Burlington, Vermont, Bernie Sanders' home state, a Donald Trump rally was interrupted by Sanders' supporters shouting, "Bernie! Bernie!" Trump's reported reaction: "Throw them out into the cold. . . . Don't give them their coats." Trump was also quoted as saying "it was 'fun' to have protesters attend his events and kick them out. 'It's about 10 degrees below zero outside,'" he said. "You keep his coat, tell him we'll send it to him in a couple weeks," Trump told security." ("Trump tells security to take protesters coats: 'Throw them out in the cold,'" By Jonathan Swan, *The Hill*, Jan. 7, 2016)

At a reported Donald Trump rally in Louisville, Kentucky, a black woman protester was repeatedly pushed by white men, one of whom was heard "shouting 'leftist scum.'" That man was identified as having "organized a white nationalist conference in Harrisburg last month." His name is "Matthew Heimbach . . . founder of the Traditionalist Youth Network, which the Southern Poverty Law Center deems a white nationalist group." ("Man who repeatedly shoved black woman at Trump rally organized white supremacy event in Harrisburg," By Eric Veronikis, www.pennlive.com, March 2, 2016)

It is not just protesters who are at risk at Donald Trump rallies. The media also are targeted—precisely because of the threat they represent in reporting reality, which is often contrary to Trump’s balloon-sized falsehoods and delusions of grandeur. An example is Trump mocking a disabled reporter, whose investigative story on the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center contradicted Trump’s reported “recent claim the he had witnessed thousands of Muslims cheering in New Jersey on Sept. 11, 2001, as the World Trade Center collapsed.” Trump’s “assertion has since been fact-checked and discredited by law enforcement and government officials who were in New Jersey in the days and weeks following the terrorist attacks.” (“Trump draws scornful rebuke for mocking reporter with disability,” By Jose A. DelReal, *The Washington Post*, Nov. 26, 2015) This is merely one example of the fact that voters’ shared hatred of a black president transcends Trump’s lies and belittling of a disabled person — and of women, Mexicans, Muslims, and anyone else.

When Donald Trump is not mocking a reporter, he is encouraging people at his rallies to hate and intimidate them. Katy Tur of *NBC NEWS* is a case in point. Lloyd Grove of *The Daily Beast* wrote about a Trump rally in South Carolina, at which Tur tweeted, “The candidate ‘ends speech abruptly and leaves stage’ after he was repeatedly interrupted by boisterous Black Lives Matter protesters.” Tur’s tweet riled Trump, who targeted her at another rally, which was also interrupted by a Black Lives Matter Protester. “‘Little Katy Tur, third-rate journalist,’ Trump declared during a bitter peroration about the ‘absolute scum’ who allegedly populate the news media and report ‘dishonestly.’ ” He “punctuated his insults by calling out ‘Katy Tur!’ and pointing her out to the crowd gathered in a cavernous space inside the USS Yorktown.” Televised coverage of the rally showed the faces of some Trump supporters “contorted in anger . . . glaring at Tur,” and “they lustily booed.” Trump reinforced their anger, “blaming the media for giving protesters coverage. ‘You know the shame is that it’s one person and the dishonest media. They are dishonest . You don’t believe how dishonest. They are the most dishonest people.’” Lloyd Grove’s opening words on this piece: “Hell hath no fury like Donald Trump accurately portrayed.” (“Thin-skinned Donald Trump Calls Female Reporter, ‘Little Katy, Third-Rate,’” Dec. 7, 2015) The voter-shared hatred of a black president *trump*’s accuracy in reporting.

Donald Trump’s violence infects more than his supporters. He keeps reporters penned up in the back at his rallies – in an obvious attempt to control their movement and coverage. When Black Lives Matter protesters interrupted a rally in Virginia, a *TIME Magazine* photojournalist reportedly attempted to move beyond his confined space to photograph the disruption. A U. S. Secret Service Agent, providing security, “was caught on several videos grabbing [the] photojournalist by the neck and slamming him down on the ground.” (‘FEDERAL SECRET SERVICE AGENT ATTACKS TIME PHOTOGRAPHER DURING TRUMP RALLY,’ By Carlos Miller, *photographyisnotacrime.com*, Mar. 1, 2016)

What is there about Donald Trump that leads Black Lives Matter people to protest his presidential candidacy? To hear him tell it, he is “probably the least racist person on Earth.” Never mind his “tweeting [of] a racially charged graph that falsely claimed 81 percent of white murder victims are killed by people of color” — a claim that is repeatedly made by white supremacists. That claim is contradicted by “FBI data,” which, in 2014, found that “approximately 82 percent of white Americans were killed by other white Americans.”

(“O’Reilly Claims He’s Never Seen Racism From Donald Trump, Then Highlights His Racist Tweet,” By Brennan Suen, *mediamatters.org*, Nov. 23, 2015)

Donald Trump’s racism would nourish the likes of a Dylann Roof, who murdered nine black members of Emmanuel AME Church in Charleston. Roof’s reported written manifesto “details how [he] came to hold his racist views, which he said formed after the highly-publicized killing of Trayvon Martin by George Zimmerman in 2012.” Roof “wrote that hearing about the case prompt[ed] him to make internet searched (sic) “for ‘black on white crime,’ and from there to the Council of Conservative Citizens website.” That “site . . . collects news links of what it describes as racist crimes against white people, and also rails against the mainstream media, which it says is ignoring the problem.” This white supremacist hate group source set Roof off: he “says he was ‘in disbelief’ after reading through the collection of stories, and from there decided that he needed to take action.” (“Roof named Charleston as his target in hate-filled manifesto that referred to blacks as ‘stupid and violent’ and detailed his wish for every Jew to turn BLUE,” By Kieran Corcoran, *DAILYMAIL.COM*, July 22, 2015)

Another potential Dylann Roof could have read the same false, hate-filled, “black-on-white” crime statistics tweeted by Donald Trump—which brings up Trump’s own flirtation with white supremacist hate groups. How many racially-charged Trump supporters have read former Klu Klux Klan grand wizard David Duke’s recently reported statement: “Voting against Donald Trump at this point is really treason to your heritage.” And how many of his supporters know that Trump is not “telling it like it is” when he feigned not knowing “anything about David Duke [and] . . . white supremacy” and continued to avoid “unequivocally condemn[ing] David Duke” and white supremacist support, before finally repeating, under pressure, “I disavow. I disavow.” (“Trump’s David Duke Amnesia,” By Eugene Kiely, *www.factcheck.org*, Mar. 1, 2016)

Frightening is the fact that Donald Trump’s narcissistic delusions of grandeur distort his perception of reality. A *Washington Post* story by Jenna Johnson reports that Trump told “a crowd of around 5,200 in South Carolina that he is a ‘unifier,’ and ‘criticized President Obama for not doing more for the African Americans who helped vote him into office.’” Trump continued, “If I were African American, I would be so angry at him.” He quoted statistics: “African American youth has an almost 60 percent unemployment rate. African American people that are . . . 25 to 40 have such a high employment rate, you wouldn’t believe.” Trump then exposed just how deep his racism and delusions of grandeur run in saying, “I will do more for the African American people in one year than Barack Obama has done in his seven years, soon to be eight years – and then, by the way, he’s out and thank goodness.” The crowd roared with applause and cheers.” Jenna Johnson’s story provided a reality check: “According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the unemployment rate for African American men age 20 and over is 8.4 percent; for African Americans of both sexes age 16 to 19, it’s 25.2 percent.” (“Donald Trump says if he ‘were African American,’ he wouldn’t like President Obama,” Feb. 19, 2016) To people driven by racism, truth is irrelevant – and can trigger violent denial.

Donald Trump is even reported as saying “that his plans to improve the economy for black Americans is why he is leading in the polls with black voters.” A Quinnipiac University poll provides another example of Trump being out of touch with reality. “When asked ‘Would you say that Donald Trump cares about the needs and problems of people like you or not?’ 92% of

black people said no.” And 3% said they’d vote for Trump.” (“Poll disputes Donald Trump’s claim on black voter support,” By Eugene Scott, *CNN*, Aug. 28, 2015)

Donald Trump is a “unifier” who “will do more for the African American people in one year than Barack Obama has done in his seven.” This comment especially reveals just how blatant Trump’s racism is. In rising to the highest office in the land, President Obama has inspired black men and women and children to affirm and pursue their own highest aspirations. No white person could ever provide such an empowering model for them – least of all a Donald Trump!

Ta-Nehisi Coates, author of *Between the World and Me* and national correspondent at The Atlantic, put the unique meaning of Obama’s presidency for black people—and for white people — this way:

What black people are experiencing right now is a kind of privilege previously withheld seeing our most sacred cultural practices and tropes validated in the world’s highest office. Throughout the whole of American history, this kind of cultural power was wielded solely by whites, and with such ubiquity that it was not even commented upon. The expansion of this cultural power beyond the province of whites has been a tremendous advance for black America. Conversely, for those who’ve long treasured white exclusivity, the existence of a President Barack Obama is discombobulating, even terrifying.” (“Fear of a Black President,” *The Atlantic*, Sept. 2012)

Donald Trump is a “unifier” and “will do more for the African American people than Barack Obama has ever done?” In 1989, five black teenagers were convicted of raping a white woman jogger in New York City’s Central Park. Donald Trump is reported to have “poisoned the minds of New York” against the teenagers, by reportedly paying \$85,000 for ads in four of the City’s newspapers — “including The New York Times” — calling for the deaths of the youths “under the headline ‘BRING BACK THE DEATH PENALTY. BRING BACK THE POLICE!’” And above his signature Trump wrote, “I want to hate these muggers and murderers. They should be forced to suffer and, when they kill, they should be executed for their crimes.” He inflamed racial tension in New York City with his “racially charged” ads, which helped to lead a jury to convict the youths. They were sentenced to prison for 5 to 15 years. Then, as reported in 2002, inmate “Matias Reyes, a violent serial rapist and murderer . . . came forward and confessed to the Central Park rape . . . and the convictions against . . . the Central Park Five were vacated by the New York Supreme Court.” They pursued “a 14-year court battle,” and finally “settled a civil case with the city for 41m in 2014.” And as the story predictably states, “Far from offering an apology for his conduct in 1989, Trump was furious.” (“Donald Trump and the Central Park Five: the racially charged rise of a demagogue,” By Oliver Laughland in New York, *theguardian*, Feb. 17, 2016) This is the same presidential candidate who says, “I’ve always had a great relationship with the blacks.” (“The Dumbest Stuff Donald Trump Has Ever Said,” *The Daily Beast*, June 30, 2015)

“I will do more for the African American people than Barack Obama has ever done.” Donald Trump has done much harm to African American people. A *Daily Beast* story, called “DOJ: Trump’s Early Businesses Blocked Blacks,” states that in 1973, the Department of Justice sued Trump, charging that he discriminated against potential black renters of his apartments. The applications of African Americans were marked with “a ‘C’ for ‘colored,’ and other racial

codes,” which “ensured the rental would be denied.” This practice, violating the Fair Housing Act, was “allegedly used to exclude black residents from [Trump’s] buildings in Brooklyn, Queens, and Norfolk, Virginia. The Trumps’ “counter-suit against the federal government for \$100 million was dismissed, and Trump Management settled the suit,” which “did not constitute an admission of wrongdoing.” *The Daily Beast’s* investigative story ends with a commentary on Donald Trump: “The ugly details of this early clash with the Department of Justice shed light on alleged systemic discrimination at the heart of the Trump real estate empire. If there is any truth to these allegations,” the commentary continues, “these court documents may provide insight into the early business practices of the candidate who is now committed to blocking all Muslims entry into our nation, and who claims to be ‘the least racist person on Earth.’” (Dec. 15, 2015)

On one level – *a lower one* – Donald Trump is a “unifier.” His presidential campaign has unified the Republican establishment in an organized effort to undermine his campaign. Mitt Romney, the Republican Party’s 2012 standard bearer, has provided leadership, in an address attacking Trump as “a phony” and “a fraud,” whose “election would imperil the nation.” (‘ROMNEY CALLS TRUMP UNFIT AS PARTY ERUPTS IN DISCORD,’ By Alexander Burns and Michael Barbaro, *The New York Times*, Mar. 4, 2016)

Actually, the Republican establishment is reaping the hatred of a black president it has sown. During the 2012 presidential campaign, Mitt Romney himself joined Donald Trump’s birther movement. At a campaign rally in Michigan, Romney was quoted as quipping, with a smile, “I love being home . . . in this place where . . . I was born. . . . No one’s ever asked to see my birth certificate.” And “the crowd laughed and applauded loudly.” (“Mitt Romney: No one’s ever asked to see my birth certificate,” By Felicia Sonmez, *The Washington Post*, Aug. 24, 2012)

When Mitt Romney ran for president, he also turned “47% of the people” into The Other. Those “who will vote for the [black] president no matter what.” Remember? “Forty-seven percent who are with him, who are dependent on the government . . . who believe that they are entitled to health care, to food, to housing, you name it.” (“Mitt Romney Video Transcript: What Exactly He Said that Is Getting People Angry,” By Elisa Sanchez, www.enstarz.com, Sept. 27, 2012)

A *New York Times* editorial on “The G.O.P’s Monster in the Mirror,” addresses another Trump-like Romney trait: “Mr. Trump is directing our anger for less than noble purposes . . . scapegoat[ing] of Muslims and Mexican immigrants.” The editorial recalls that Romney proposed the same tactic: “play[ing] into the worst kind of xenophobia when he proposed getting rid of 11 million undocumented immigrants by forcing them to ‘self-deport.’” The editorial also points to “Mr. Trump’s offenses – “the bullying, the greed, the showing off, the misogyny, the absurd third rate theatrics,” and states that the same “could have been used to describe many in his party: legislators, congressional leadership, its policy makers.” The editorial says that “it is an excellent thing that Republican leaders have noticed the problem they’ve fostered now embodied in the Trump candidacy. But until they see the need to alter the views and policies they have promoted for years, removing Mr. Trump will not end the party’s crisis.” (Mar. 4, 2016)

Donald Trump is a “unifier.” Jon Schwarz of *The Intercept* writes that “over 90 members of the Republican ‘national security community’ . . . signed an open letter to express their united opposition to a Donald Trump presidency.” They criticize his “military adventurism,” ‘embrace

of the expansive use of torture,’ and ‘admiration of foreign dictators such as Valdimir Putin.’ But,” Schwarz continues, “some of Trump’s critics have no standing here, given that they’ve publicly supported or even directly participated in the same kinds of things for which they are now criticizing him.” Like “the 2003 U.S.-led invasion of Iraq [which] was the definition of military adventurism.” (“Pro-Torture Warmongers Attack Donald Trump for Going Overboard,” Mar. 4, 2016)

Journalist Glenn Greenwald continues Jon Schwarz’s commentary by calling these Republican national security members “assorted warmongers who are responsible for grave war crimes, torture, kidnappings, due process-free indefinite imprisonment and the worst political crime of this generation: the attack on and destruction of Iraq.” (Donald Trump’s Policies Are Not Anathema to U.S. Mainstream, but an Uncomfortable Reflection of It,” *The Intercept*, Mar. 4, 2016)

Ironically, President Obama has continued the same imperialistic policies — and added his own, such as expanding President George W. Bush’s illegal drone warfare. Obama has also developed a “kill list” and claims the authority to assassinate designated enemies – without their receiving due process. His “kill list” includes Americans, and has led to the unlawful assassination of Imam Anwar al-Awlaki, and, even more shocking, the criminal assassination of his 16-year-old son Abdulrahman two weeks later. But, no matter how hard Obama carries on America’s imperialistic wars and tries to fit in and please the white elephant, he is no George W. Bush.

The hatred of a black president runs deep in the Republican establishment psyche. Writer Sam Stein warned of that hatred right after President Obama was re-elected. He wrote, “As President Barack Obama was celebrating his [second] inauguration at various balls, top Republican leaders and strategists were conjuring up ways to submarine his presidency at a private dinner in Washington.” Their aim was to create a “united and unyielding opposition to the president’s economic policies.” (“Robert Draper Book: G.L.O.P. Anti-Obama Campaign Started Night of Inauguration,” www.huffingtonpost.com, April 4, 2012)

The Republican establishment’s goal was to create gridlock to make President Obama’s economic and job-creation policies fail, and regain power—at the expense of the American people. In their book, *It’s Even Worse Than It Looks*, Thomas Mann and Norman Ornstein describe the “cancerous” leadership of the Republican Party—which is assumed to be largely driven by hatred of a black president. They write,

Today’s Republican Party . . . has become ‘an insurgent outlier—ideologically extreme; contemptuous of the inherited social and economic policy regime; scornful of compromise; unpersuaded by conventional understanding of facts, evidence and science; and dismissive of the legitimacy of its political opposition . . . all but declaring war on government. (“It’s Even Worse Than It Looks: How the American Constitutional System Collided With The New Politics of Extremism,” by Thomas E. Mann and Norman Ornstein, articles.washingtonpost.com, Apr. 30, 2012)

One would think that the hatred of a black president would not infect religious people, since a primary Christian commandment is, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” (*Matthew 22*:

39) Yet, a *New York Times* story's headline declares, "Trump, Despite His Impieties, Wins the Hearts of Evangelicals." The story begins, "It is one of the prime paradoxes of the 2016 election: A twice-divorced candidate who has flaunted his adultery, praised Planned Parenthood and admitted to never asking God for forgiveness is the favorite of the Christian right." (By Trip Gabriel, Feb. 28, 2016) And this heartfelt evangelical embrace is in spite of the fact that his two closest rivals, Republicans Ted Cruz and Marco Rubio, are born-again Christians.

But Donald Trump's winning of the "hearts of evangelicals" is *not* a "paradox." White evangelical Christians have no difficulty overlooking Donald Trump's inability to quote his favorite passage from his professed "favorite book," *The Bible*. His saying "2 Corinthians" instead of Second Corinthians. His promise that, with him as president, they will be able to say "Merry Christmas" again — never mind what that baby in the manger supposedly represents in terms of humility and "peace on earth."

A majority of white evangelicals have no difficulty banning Mexicans and barring Muslims, even though Jesus stressed the welcoming of strangers. No difficulty with Trump advocating the killing of mothers and fathers and children of America's enemies, even though Jesus took children up in his arms and blessed them and warned against hurting them. No difficulty with Trump's narcissism, blatant lies, and delusions of grandeur, even though one of their *Biblical* prophets declared, "He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God.?" (*Micah* 6: 8)

Donald Trump's racist fueled candidacy attracts many white evangelicals because their faith in Jesus Christ as the one true Son of God and savior of the world is imperialistic: they see the unsaved as The Other, making it easier to accommodate, and even bless, barriers and bans and bombs—and violence towards Black Lives Matter protesters. Their one true evangelistic faith is the flip side of "American exceptionalism's" imperialism.

Donald Trump's winning of the "hearts of [white] evangelicals" is not a "paradox" because the racism he embodies is an integral part of their faith. A faith that is historically and culturally conditioned to believe the white race is superior. Which a black president threatens. And which Donald Trump's "Make America Great Again" presidential campaign promises to restore.

The answer to the danger Donald Trump represents to all of us is not Ted Cruz. That would be like selecting Donald Trump's dogmatic, carpet-bombing twin. The answer is to be found among religious, political, academic, business, media, other community leaders, and citizens who, in the words of 19th Century American preacher Theodore Parker, will "lead public opinion, not follow it." ("The Coming Church," *Great Companions*, Vol. I, The Beacon Press, 14th printing, July 1957) The answer to the fascism threatening our land is also found in the words of Ti-Nehisi Coates: "Love of country, like all other forms of love, requires that you tell those you care about not simply what they want to hear but what they need to hear." ("Fear of a Black President," *Ibid*)

The elephant in the voting booth is hatred of a black president.