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Pat Robertson's Words and Our Responsibility

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All human beings are capable of making outrageous comments, fraudulent claims, and scandalous conversation. That is part of the human condition — part of being a sinner. Language is a powerful gift, but the evil use of language can do great and grave damage.

This is painfully clear in the aftermath of Christian Broadcasting Network founder Pat Robertson's comments about the potential assassination of Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez. Here are Robertson's [comments](#) from Monday's edition of CBN's "The 700 Club:"

"We have the ability to take him out, and I think the time has come that we exercise that ability," Robertson said of Chavez in Monday's broadcast of "The 700 Club." "We don't need another \$200 billion war to get rid of one, you know, strong-arm dictator. It's a whole lot easier to have some of the covert operatives do the job and then get it over with."

With unmistakable clarity and an apparent lack of self-consciousness, Robertson simply called for an assassination, presumably to be undertaken by U.S. military forces in violation of U.S. law.

In so doing he gave the Venezuelan leader a propaganda gold mine, embarrassed the Bush administration, and left millions of viewers perplexed and troubled. More importantly, he brought shame to the cause of Christ. This is the kind of outrageous statement that makes evangelism all the more difficult. Missing from the entire context is the Christian understanding that violence can never be blessed as a good, but may only be employed under circumstances that would justify the limited use of lethal force in order to prevent even greater violence. Our witness to the Gospel is inevitably and deeply harmed when a recognized Christian leader casually recommends the assassination of a world leader.

Hugo Chavez is a dangerous and reckless factor on the world scene. His extreme nationalism, combined with Marxism, has led his country directly into conflict with the U.S. and much of the civilized world. He has befriended Cuban dictator Fidel Castro and given support to forces of global anarchy. Credible sources link him to support — direct or indirect — of groups involved in terrorism.

Nevertheless, Pat Robertson's comments lacked any indication that he even understood the gravity of his proposal. He has brought embarrassment upon us all.

I am thankful for every person who has been reached for the Gospel through Pat Robertson's vast ministry. I am thankful for his brave support of unpopular Christian causes. I respect what he has done through [Regent University](#). He has been courageous in defense of many moral causes when others were silent.

Now, with so much at stake, Pat Robertson bears responsibility to retract, rethink, repent, and restate his position on this issue. Otherwise, what could have been a temporary lapse of judgment can become an enduring obstacle to the Gospel. Mr. Robertson, it's back in your court. Your Christian brothers and sisters must love you enough to tell you the truth — and encourage you to set the record straight.

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