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U.S. Sen. Salazar Launches an Attack on Me

Thursday, April 21, 2005

The call from a reporter for **The New York Times** came out of the blue, telling me that U.S. Senator Ken Salazar [D-Colorado] has launched an attack on me by sending a public letter to the press. Here's the letter, addressed to Focus on the Family chairman Dr. James Dobson:

Chairman Dobson,

I read in today's newspaper a quote from your organization that said I should be "alarmed about the anti-Catholicism of some of [my Senate] colleagues."

Your newspaper and radio ads also target Christians like me and Senator Harry Reid. I am proud that Senator Reid is a devout Mormon Christian and strong family man and that we share the fundamental values of Christianity.

I have not encountered any feelings of anti-Catholicism from any of my fellow Senators on either side of the aisle. Indeed, we have 24 United States Senators who are Catholic, both from the Democratic and Republican parties.

In contrast, I understand you are helping lead the effort on a national telecast against Democrats in the United States Senate with Dr. Al Mohler, among others. In March of 2000, Dr. Mohler said "I believe that the Roman church is a false church and it teaches a false gospel. And indeed, I believe that the pope himself holds a false and unbiblical office."

My faith is the cornerstone of my values, as I am sure it is with you as well. I call on you to repudiate Dr. Mohler's comments and hope you distance yourself from those who serve to divide the world's Christian churches against one another.

I would further encourage you to cease your unfounded attacks on the faith of my Democratic colleagues. The Senate controversy over judges is simply about whether the rules should be broken in the pursuit of power. The controversy has nothing to do with the faith of any Democratic U.S. Senator. Indeed, I would ask for your prayers that the United States Senate transcend the abuse of power at the root of this controversy, and move forward in a spirit of bipartisanship on the issue of judges, as well as the monumental challenges facing our Nation such as health care, transportation, energy, education, and care for our elders. I am committed to helping find a solution to these challenges that confront us.

Sincerely,
Ken Salazar
United States Senator

The battle is joined. Sen. Salazar is asking Dr. Dobson to repudiate me for "anti-Catholic" statements. Well, I stand by my comments, made a few years ago on "Larry King Live." My statements reflect nothing more than classic evangelical theology. What educated person is unaware of the great theological divide that separates evangelical theology from Roman Catholicism? The official teaching of the Catholic church—as articulated, for example, by the newly-elected Pope Benedict XVI—makes the same point from the Catholic position [see the Vatican statement, "[Dominus Iesus](#)"]. At the same time, Sen. Salazar knows that I, along with millions of other evangelicals, agree with the Catholic church on issues like abortion, euthanasia, and the integrity of marriage. The real anti-Catholicism at stake here is the use of code language by senators who oppose President Bush's nominees. When former Alabama Attorney General William Pryor is opposed

because of his “deeply held personal beliefs,” that is authentic anti-Catholicism. Mr. Pryor simply believes what his church teaches—something that assuredly cannot be said of several liberal U.S. senators. Sen. Salazar’s statements about me are evidence of political panic. His ‘divide-and-conquer’ tactic will not succeed. His claims are evidence of either gross manipulation or abysmal ignorance. Only he knows which is the case. Feel free to tell him what you think, by writing his senate office.

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