

On Hypocrisy and Double Standards

By Norm R. Allen Jr.

The whole world is run on bluff. – Marcus Garvey

Everyone is a hypocrite. We all say one thing and do the opposite. However, it is one thing to teach your children not to smoke while smoking yourself. After all, that is just looking out for your child's best interests. However, it is something else entirely to criticize people for supporting murderous regimes while you support murderous regimes in the name of democracy, liberty, patriotism, and so on.

One of the most disgraceful examples of hypocrisy in recent years can be found in the Nation of Islam (NOI.) The NOI, a *Black* religious sect, headed by Minister Louis Farrakhan, has supported bigoted slave owners in Sudan since the 1990s. Yet they never tire of reminding people that Black people were literally enslaved in the U.S. in the 1790s. One would think that Black people enslaved today deserve at least as much empathy as those that are no longer with us. However, in the NOI, that is certainly not the case.

When the NOI used the word "hypocrite" during the heyday of their leader, Elijah Muhammad, they meant something completely different than most people that use the term. NOI members meant someone from the NOI that "blasphemed" Muhammad and that was "worthy of death." Hence, Malcolm X was labeled the "chief hypocrite" and targeted for murder by NOI goons.

The NOI also rightly accuses the U.S. government of supporting murderous regimes. However, the NOI and other reactionary Black nationalists have supported Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, Saddam Hussein, the Ayatollah Khomeini, aka the Ayatollah Khomeini, Sani Abacha of Nigeria, and many other tyrants throughout the world. People like Farrakhan argue that we need to talk to African dictators and their ilk, perhaps in efforts to try to change them. Yet when Ronald Reagan and White conservatives talked about "constructive engagement" with South Africa, sensible Black people were simply not having it. However, why should we try to change Black opponents of democracy but not White ones?

Sometimes the U.S. government reaps what it sows. For example, U.S. political leaders supported reactionary forces in Afghanistan that eventually became the Taliban, their sworn enemies. The enemy of my enemy might be my friend, but that is quite often a temporary situation. Friends in these cases can easily become the enemies from hell.

There are two great examples of hypocrisy and double standards from recent political history. First, the biggest hypocrites on the planet – conservative Christians – helped elect a promiscuous, vulgar, divorced, sexually abusive liar as President. They continually whine about the importance of traditional family values – such as those, ironically, exemplified by the Obamas – yet vote for someone who obviously doesn't even read the Bible. These religious fanatics rationalize their choice by saying that Trump has changed. They even claim that he was chosen by God. These were the same people that wanted to impeach Bill Clinton for having oral sex with Monica Lewinsky.

Conservative Christians have no problem with lying to advance their cause. They fully supported George W. Bush's lying about Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), starting a war and nearly wrecking the economy. They thought Oliver North was heroic when he shredded documents and lied to Congress during the Iran/Contra affair.

The Religious Reich does not seek to be moral. They merely seek to identify with morality. (As Mark Twain wryly observed, give a man the reputation of an early riser and he can sleep 'til noon.) They made opposition to pornography a platform in the 2016 presidential election, yet they are among the nation's most voracious viewers of porn. They have proudly elected a president that is an absolute disgrace to Christianity of *any* kind. They practically make the phrase "conservative Christian hypocrite" redundant. Indeed, they are the quintessential hypocrites.

However, progressives cannot afford to be so smug. While feminists rightly condemned Trump, many of them supported Bill Clinton who was also accused of sexual misconduct, including unwanted sexual advances. "Feminists have, all along, muffled, disguised, excused and denied the worst aspects of the president's behavior with women," according to an article from *Vanity Fair* in 1998. ("Women, Bill Clinton and Donald Trump: Women's rights groups tend to

treat the two men differently,” by Anita Kumar and Lesley Clark, McClatchy Newspapers, printed in the *Buffalo News*, p. A1, October 15, 2016.)

The article also noted that *New York Times* columnist Maureen Dowd told Yahoo that “Feminism sort of died in that period. Because the feminists had to come along with Bill Clinton’s retrogressive behavior with women in order to protect the progressive policies for women that Bill Clinton had as president.”

Too many people cast their principles to the wind easily in favor of political expediency. However, not only do they experience cognitive dissonance, but people get hurt. Is this what religion and humanism are supposed to be about? Are we only supposed to expect consistently principled behavior from *other* people?

We have got to be better. We have got to do better. At the very least, if we are going to cast our principles so easily to the wind, we should not complain when others do the same.