

BELIEVE IN



YOURSELF

Media distort Jackson speech

As a fellow clergyman who knows Jesse Jackson's heart, I must protest your sad, shallow, secular revisionizing of his personal motivation and of the root of his striving to move others. That depth and root was the point of the first sentence of his Democratic Convention speech, and he voiced it three times in the rest of it.

You fell in with the media's usual misrepresentation of faith in God as faith in humanity, in self. Understandable enough: That's what most Americans are taught, all who attend our public schools. So I wasn't surprised that your July 21 editorial distorted how Jesse, for himself and intentionally for others, has "kept hope alive." You say, as if to render him without remainder, "you can reach to influence high political office, if you work hard and believe in yourself."

Your poor translation is not without remainder. What remains, what's left out in your version, is God, Jesse's faith in God. Media efforts to leave that out are increasingly successful, and the human and national costs are horrendous.

WILLIS ELLIOTT
Craigville

Here I go again, harping the same song, only the stanza is new. The CAPE COD TIMES, in which this letter appears today, is a liberal daily of quite sophisticated culture considering that it's not located in a major urban cultural center (though it benefits, does Cape Cod, from proximity to both Boston and NYC). Wm. Smith, the editorial page editor, usually prints me untouched, and has this time.....COMMENTARY:

1. I expected my "revisionizing" to become, in print, "revisioning," which is something as necessary as revisionizing is unnecessary. Every translation is a revisioning as seeing through the eyes of a different language, and all good translating respects the feel and idiom and audiences of both languages. So much for translating speech, spoken or written. What about translating from one culture to another? It can be done if the cultures are not too dissimilar. If too dissimilar, one is **not translating but transposing** (as, in the case addressed in this Thinksheet, from a theistic culture to a humanistic culture). Here we face two issues, viz, esthetic and moral integrity. The moral disingenuousness in the present case deserves the term of opprobrium, "revisionizing," a term we're more familiar with as a Soviet ideological rewriting of Soviet history with each new edition of the Soviet Encyclopedia.

2. But whose disingenuousness? Almost certainly not Mr. Smith, for he merely followed accepted journalistic practice in avoiding theistic reference in order not to give offence to antitheists (who are actively antiGod) and atheists (who are passively antiGod)--but at the cost of giving offense to theists--in this case, me. No, the disingenuousness goes back to those who gave use the Humanist Manifestos I and II, designed to remove God-references from public school curricula.

3. Yes, Jesse, to communicate with a secularized public and the even more secularized media, talks about self-belief and self-esteem ("I am, you are, SOMEBODY!") --but in the context of his motherspeech, the language of Zion, Godtalk about God-belief, from which in his heart and mind self-belief derives and on which self-belief depends.

4. Overtranslating (eg, THE LIVING BIBLE) distorts by **addition**: undertranslating (eg, the editorial my letter criticizes) distorts by **subtraction**--in this case, the usual secularistic subtraction, viz, leaving God out. Good translation avoids both eisegesis and "remainders," ie, meanings in the text not brought over into the translation. The reader of the translation is, in either case, **cheated and misled**.

5. Matthew Arnold's definition of "criticism" is apropos here: "a disinterested endeavour to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world." While he's speaking of literary criticism (in THE FUNCTION OF CRITICISM AT THE PRESENT TIME), my theistic criticism appropriately used his rubric: God is "the best that is known and thought in the world."