

January 11, 2015

The amazing thing about today's *Pickings* is that all the written selections come from the Washington Post. It is heartening to see one of the former standard bearers of the liberal media turn out to have columns and blogs fit for our readers. Two blogs we followed before they associated with the Post are Jennifer Rubin's and The Volokh Conspiracy. Rubin was part of Commentary's Contentions and Volokh was on his own. The cartoons are a hoot today, especially the last one.

The first item is by [Charles Krauthammer](#) in which he calls for a one dollar per gallon increase in federal gas taxes with a corresponding decrease in social security taxes. So, don't worry he's not proposing to give more to the jerks in DC.

For 32 years I've been advocating a major tax on petroleum. I've got as much chance this time around as did Don Quixote with windmills. But I shall tilt my lance once more.

The only time you can even think of proposing a gas tax increase is when oil prices are at rock bottom. When I last suggested the idea six years ago, oil was selling at \$40 a barrel. It eventually rose back to \$110. It's now around \$48. Correspondingly, the price at the pump has fallen in the last three months by more than a dollar to about \$2.20 per gallon.

As a result, some in Congress are talking about a 10- or 20-cent hike in the federal tax to use for infrastructure spending. Right idea, wrong policy. The hike should not be 10 cents but \$1. And the proceeds should not be spent by, or even entrusted to, the government. They should be immediately and entirely returned to the consumer by means of a cut in the Social Security tax.

The average American buys about 12 gallons of gas a week. Washington would be soaking him for \$12 in extra taxes. Washington should therefore simultaneously reduce everyone's FICA tax by \$12 a week. Thus the average driver is left harmless. He receives a \$12-per-week FICA bonus that he can spend on gasoline if he wants — or anything else. If he chooses to drive less, it puts money in his pocket. (The unemployed would have the \$12 added to their unemployment insurance; the elderly, to their Social Security check.) ...

[Jennifer Rubin](#) says there's more to De Blasio's stupidity than his mistakes with the NYPD.

In case you thought New York City Mayor Bill DeBlasio's worst misstep was his dealings with the police (starting with his opposition to stop and frisk), consider what he has done to welfare.

Robert Doar of the American Enterprise Institute and Fried Siegel of the Manhattan Institute [explain](#):

"From 1994–2009, work rates for single mothers rose from 43 percent to 63 percent. Overall labor force participation rose from under 55 percent to more than 60 percent (during a period when labor force participation nationwide declined). In 2011, even after the Great Recession, child poverty in NYC was almost 10 percentage points lower than in 1993, the year before welfare reform started.

Now de Blasio is proposing to replace these successes. Reviving the hoary notion of entry-level work as representing "dead-end jobs," de Blasio suggests that, from the get-go, welfare recipients are owed more than an opportunity to work."

Richard Cohen says violence is working quite well for the radical islamists.

As sometimes happens, Jon Stewart is wrong. He said the other night about the Charlie Hebdo massacre in Paris, "There is no sense to be made of this."

Ah, but there is. There is an inescapable logic to violence. Killing your enemies silences them. Killing your enemies intimidates others. Just look at how the New York Times went about deciding whether to publish Charlie Hebdo's cartoons of the prophet Muhammad that, among others things, outraged so many traditional Muslims. The Times polled some of its various foreign bureaus to see whether anyone felt threatened by the possible publication of the cartoons. None did, we are told. Yet the Times did not publish.

The Washington Post's editorial pages — as opposed to the quite separate news staff — did publish. They did so out of solidarity with Charlie Hebdo and because it was newsworthy. Journalistically, The Post did the right thing; the Times did not. The famed First Amendment lawyer Floyd Abrams called the Times's decision "regrettable." I call it appalling. ...

Jennifer Rubin asks now that France's nightmare is over, is there any chance the delusions of the West will end?

... Will the events of the past few days be sufficient to end the perverse refusal to comprehend this and to persistently dismiss conservatives' warning that we are engaged in a battle for civilization itself?

If Israel didn't build homes in its Jewish neighborhoods . . . if the United States closed Guantanamo Bay . . . if we had not waterboarded terrorist leaders . . . if we had not become involved in Middle East wars . . . if Europeans did not insult Islam . . . what, what would be different? The jihadists would still seek to slaughter Jews, Christians and Muslims who don't subscribe to their brand of jihadism. Iran would still sponsor terrorists and seek a bomb. Boko Haram will still kill and murder innocents. There is no action on our part that provokes the sort of barbarism we have seen. There is no way we can cease giving "offense." Our existence is sufficient to spur the Islamist terrorists. And the only solution is to defeat and destroy the jihadists, their networks and their ability to gain access to more and more deadly weapons. (What if, for example, the French suspects had chemical weapons and not simply guns?)

And yet I doubt we will see President Obama (or critics of U.S. antiterrorism efforts) agree on an enhanced national security budget, adopt a new approach to ending Iran's hegemonic ambitions, throw away the timetable for withdrawing troops from Afghanistan, deploy without limitations on their scope and duration a contingent of U.S. troops sufficient to eradicate the Islamic State swiftly or cease releasing jihadists from Guantanamo Bay. ...

Eugene Volokh points out muslims do not believe in the concept of freedom of expression.

"Contrary to popular misconception, Islam does not mean peace but rather means submission to the commands of Allah alone."

So writes "a radical Muslim cleric in London and a lecturer in sharia," Anjem Choudary, in a USA Today op-ed. USA Today has performed a valuable public service here — I mean this entirely sincerely — in reminding people that there is a very dangerous religious denomination out there, which is willing to teach the propriety of murder of blasphemers, which supports the death penalty for apostasy, and which would more broadly suppress the liberty of both Muslims and non-Muslims alike.

To give one more example, a survey touted by CNN as showing that "Around the World, Muslims Heralded Religious Freedom" actually showed that, though "Ninety-seven percent of Muslims in South Asia, 95% in Eastern Europe, 94% in sub-Saharan Africa and 85% in the Middle East and North Africa responded positively to religious freedom, according to the poll," in many countries huge percentages of Muslims favor "the death penalty for people who leave the Muslim religion." For instance, in South Asia, death for apostates is favored by 79% of Afghan Muslims, 75% of Pakistani Muslims, and 43% of Bangladeshi Muslims. In the Middle East and North Africa, the numbers were 88% in Egypt, 83% in Jordan, 62% in the Palestinian Territories, 41% in Iraq, 18% in Tunisia, and 17% in Lebanon. ...

Also in Volokh, David Post calls attention to a David Brooks column which suggests many of the same people with crocodile tears for Charlie Hebdo would have shut it down if it showed up on a campus in the US.

David Brooks has a very thoughtful and important op-ed in today's New York Times, linking our reactions to the horror at the Charlie Hebdo offices and the campus speech codes.

"The journalists at Charlie Hebdo are now rightly being celebrated as martyrs on behalf of freedom of expression, but let's face it: If they had tried to publish their satirical newspaper on any American university campus over the last two decades it wouldn't have lasted 30 seconds. Student and faculty groups would have accused them of hate speech. The administration would have cut financing and shut them down."

Spot on, and pretty disturbing when you think about it – not to mention hypocritical on the part of many who are now so vociferous in their apparent support for untrammelled free expression. ...

If we're spending time at the Post, we won't ignore George Will who writes on climate changes through the ages.

We know, because they often say so, that those who think catastrophic global warming is probable and perhaps imminent are exemplary empiricists. They say those who disagree with them are "climate change deniers" disrespectful of science.

Actually, however, something about which everyone can agree is that of course the climate is changing — it always is. And if climate Cassandras are as conscientious as they claim to be about weighing evidence, how do they accommodate historical evidence of enormously consequential episodes of climate change not produced by human activity? Before wagering vast wealth and curtailments of liberty on correcting the climate, two recent books should be considered.

In *“The Third Horseman: Climate Change and the Great Famine of the 14th Century,”* William Rosen explains how Europe’s “most widespread and destructive famine” was the result of “an almost incomprehensibly complicated mixture of climate, commerce, and conflict, four centuries in gestation.” Early in that century, 10 percent of the population from the Atlantic to the Urals died, partly because of the effect of climate change on “the incredible amalgam of molecules that comprises a few inches of soil that produces the world’s food.” ...

Turning our attention to the 2016 race, [Jennifer Rubin](#) has some advice for our hero - Scott Walker.

... The digs on Walker are well known — not charismatic enough (often compared to former Minnesota governor Tim Pawlenty), not a college graduate, no foreign policy experience and an insufficiently robust national fundraising network to compete with Bush or Christie. But none of that will matter if he can:

1. Become the pugnacious but reasonable Republican, tough enough for the base and sane enough for the establishment. His lack of a college degree, if not a selling point, can at least shape the image of a scrapper who had to educate himself and rise on sheer tenacity.
2. Put together a succinct and emotionally compelling stump speech. He should take to heart American Enterprise Institute’s Arthur Brooks’s admonition — state your mission in moral terms, be for people, not against things, and do it fast (people make snap judgments in less than a minute). Something like: “I’m going to fight for every American’s opportunity to rise, chance to earn success and security from enemies of liberty and tolerance who threaten Western civilization.”
3. Do some foreign travel, meet with top-flight advisers, develop a comfort-level with national security and present a tough-minded national security policy that contrasts with years of weakness, equivocation and shocking inability to support friends and confront enemies. ...

Don't forget, the cartoons are very good today.

Washington Post

[Raise the gas tax. A lot.](#)

by Charles Krauthammer

For 32 years I’ve been advocating a major tax on petroleum. I’ve got as much chance this time around as did Don Quixote with windmills. But I shall tilt my lance once more.

The only time you can even think of proposing a gas tax increase is when oil prices are at rock bottom. [When I last suggested the idea](#) six years ago, oil was selling at \$40 a barrel. It eventually rose back to \$110. It's now [around \\$48](#). Correspondingly, [the price at the pump](#) has fallen in the last three months by more than a dollar to [about \\$2.20 per gallon](#).

As a result, [some in Congress](#) are talking about a 10- or 20-cent hike in the federal tax to use for infrastructure spending. Right idea, wrong policy. The hike should not be 10 cents but \$1. And the proceeds should not be spent by, or even entrusted to, the government. They should be immediately and entirely returned to the consumer by means of a cut in the Social Security tax.

The average American buys about 12 gallons of gas a week. Washington would be soaking him for \$12 in extra taxes. Washington should therefore simultaneously reduce everyone's FICA tax by \$12 a week. Thus the average driver is left harmless. He receives a \$12-per-week FICA bonus that he can spend on gasoline if he wants — or anything else. If he chooses to drive less, it puts money in his pocket. (The unemployed would have the \$12 added to their unemployment insurance; the elderly, to their Social Security check.)

The point of the \$1 gas tax increase is not to feed the maw of a government raking in [\\$3 trillion a year](#). The point is exclusively to alter incentives — to reduce the disincentive for work (the Social Security tax) and to increase the disincentive to consume gasoline.

It's win-win. Employment taxes are a drag on job creation. Reducing them not only promotes growth but advances fairness, FICA being a regressive tax that hits the middle and working classes far more than the rich.

As for oil, we remain the [world champion consumer](#). We burn more than 20 percent of global output, almost twice as much as the next nearest gas guzzler, China.

A \$1 gas tax increase would constrain oil consumption in two ways. In the short run, by curbing driving. In the long run, by altering car-buying habits. A return to gas-guzzling land yachts occurs every time gasoline prices plunge. A high gas tax encourages demand for more fuel-efficient vehicles. Constrained U.S. consumption — combined with already huge increases in U.S. production — would continue to apply enormous downward pressure on oil prices.

A tax is the best way to improve fuel efficiency. Today we do it through rigid regulations, the so-called CAFE standards imposed on carmakers. They are forced to manufacture acres of unsellable cars in order to meet an arbitrary, bureaucratic "fleet" gas-consumption average.

This is nuts. If you simply set a higher price point for gasoline, buyers will do the sorting on their own, choosing fuel efficiency just as they do when the world price is high. The beauty of the tax — as a substitute for a high world price — is that the incentive for fuel efficiency remains, but the extra money collected at the pump goes right back into the U.S. economy (and to the citizenry through the revenue-neutral FICA rebate) instead of being shipped overseas to Russia, Venezuela, Iran and other unsavories.

Which is a geopolitical coup. Cheap oil is the most effective and efficient instrument known to man for [weakening these oil-dependent miscreants](#).

And finally, lower consumption reduces pollution and greenhouse gases. The reduction of traditional pollutants, though relatively minor, is an undeniable gain. And even for global warming skeptics, there's no reason not to welcome a benign measure that induces prudential reductions in CO2 emissions.

The unexpected and unpredicted collapse of oil prices gives us a unique opportunity to maintain our good luck through a simple, revenue-neutral measure to help prevent the perennial price spikes that follow the fool's paradise of ultra-cheap oil.

We've blown this chance at least three times since the 1980s. As former French foreign minister Jean François-Poncet said a quarter-century ago, "It's hard to take seriously that a nation has deep problems if they can be fixed with a 50-cent-a-gallon" — 90 cents in today's money — "gasoline tax." Let's not blow it again.

Right Turn

DeBlasio blows it on poverty also

by Jennifer Rubin

In case you thought New York City Mayor Bill DeBlasio's worst misstep was his dealings with the police (starting with his opposition to stop and frisk), consider what he has done to welfare.

Robert Doar of the American Enterprise Institute and Fried Siegel of the Manhattan Institute [explain](#):

"From 1994–2009, work rates for single mothers rose from 43 percent to 63 percent. Overall labor force participation rose from under 55 percent to more than 60 percent (during a period when labor force participation nationwide declined). In 2011, even after the Great Recession, child poverty in NYC was almost 10 percentage points lower than in 1993, the year before welfare reform started.

Now de Blasio is proposing to replace these successes. Reviving the hoary notion of entry-level work as representing "dead-end jobs," de Blasio suggests that, from the get-go, welfare recipients are owed more than an opportunity to work.

Enter job training and classroom learning, goodbye rapid placement into the workforce — with the Office of Workforce Development, a new layer of city bureaucracy, to implement it all.

Experience shows us that more government training does not guarantee better jobs, and it increases the number of people living off taxpayers while they look for the "right" employment."

Anti-police, anti-work — are we back to the bad old days of the 1970's in New York? Actually it's more like the 1930s.

"The mayor's inspiration extends back further still, to 1933 and FDR's ill-fated National Industrial Recovery Act. In de Blasio's updated 2014 version, NYC will use its considerable purchasing power, contracts, subsidies, tax breaks and regulatory powers to remedy the 'mismatch' between demand for skilled workers and the almost 25 percent of its total labor force earning less than \$20,000 annually."

In the back-to-the-future De Blasio' plan,

"Industry Partnerships. . . will work to determine the skills and qualifications that employers need.' Low-skill workers will be prepared for skilled work through better evergreen training and education. If that fails, the city will use its "leverage" to impose "penalties" for noncompliance. Those who do comply (or perhaps contribute sufficiently to de Blasio's political coffers) will be

awarded a ‘NYC Good Business Seal,’ reminiscent of FDR’s NRA Blue Eagles placards. (Workforce agencies, in turn, will be reimbursed on the basis of job quality, not placement quantity.)”

And if that attack on the poor isn’t enough, he’s already set out to destroy the school reforms of his predecessors by, for example, [attacking](#) charter schools and [ending assignment](#) of letter grades A-F for schools. But not to fear: He raised salaries — [for bus drivers](#).

All of this comes from liberals’ icon, the quintessential man of the left whose arrival would mark a departure from the Giuliani-Bloomberg years. Well, he sure is doing that. It is a perfect encapsulation of what modern liberalism has become and how damaging it is to the poor. It is the poor of course who suffer the most from crime, failure to develop work skills and rotten education. For their sake, let’s hope de Blasio is a one term mayor. For the rest of the country, it is a good reminder of what one party liberal rule looks like.

Post Partisan

[The Charlie Hebdo massacre and the efficacy of violence](#)

by Richard Cohen

As sometimes happens, Jon Stewart is wrong. [He said](#) the other night about the Charlie Hebdo massacre in Paris, “There is no sense to be made of this.”

Ah, but there is. There is an inescapable logic to violence. Killing your enemies silences them. Killing your enemies intimidates others. Just look at how the New York Times went about deciding whether to publish Charlie Hebdo’s cartoons of the prophet Muhammad that, among others things, outraged so many traditional Muslims. The Times polled some of its various foreign bureaus to see whether anyone felt threatened by the possible publication of the cartoons. None did, [we are told](#). Yet the Times did not publish.

The Washington Post’s editorial pages — as opposed to the quite separate news staff — [did publish](#). They did so out of solidarity with Charlie Hebdo and because it was newsworthy. Journalistically, The Post did the right thing; the Times did not. The famed First Amendment lawyer Floyd Abrams called the Times’s decision “[regrettable](#).” I call it appalling.

If the Times has merely announced that it would adhere to its policy of never publishing insulting material about religion, it might have had a leg to stand on. Charlie Hebdo’s cartoons were insulting — and only that. If they had a political content, I could not discern it. The stuff seemed juvenile, prankish and designed only to offend, not to educate or provoke thought. Still, it was Charlie Hebdo’s right to do as it pleased, and any response should have been something like a letter to the editor or a boycott, not a fusillade from AK-47s.

But the Times signaled it was concerned with the safety of its overseas staff. That’s understandable. It has bureaus all over the world, many in Muslim countries. (The Post does, too.) But that concern is precisely why the Paris massacre made sense ... to the people who carried it out. They were offended by the cartoons. They associated them with a near-universal disregard or contempt for Muslim values — not just in France, say with the banning of the jilbab, but with the continued existence of Israel, the U.S. invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan and the many outrages and temptations of modernity. (Read the writings of the important Muslim intellectual Sayyid Qutb

or, better yet, the profile of him in Lawrence Wright's book, "[The Looming Tower](#)." Whatever the case, the Times did not run the cartoons because, we may conclude, of what happened in Paris.

There will be more such self-censorship. If the violence continues, the crowds in Paris will disperse. People will be afraid. Editors will worry about cartoons or news stories: Will there be retaliation? Is the story worth someone's life? (What story is?) This is the rawest kind of fascism — never mind its religious coloration. The Nazis in the 1930 learned about the efficacy of violence. They harnessed it and rode it to power. That won't happen in France — the government won't fall and no minority is going to take over — but fear will inhibit all but the very brave and things that should be said will not be said. That is the sense of violence.

Right Turn

[France's nightmare ends; the West's delusions do not](#)

by Jennifer Rubin

The Associated Press and other outlets are reporting that a total of three hostage-takers at two locations — a kosher market and a printing plant — were killed and some of their hostages freed, ending a multi-day nightmare for France that began with the slaughter of 12 at the satirical weekly Charlie Hebdo. The gunmen at the two locations were believed to be connected in some fashion, one [police official told the AP](#).

The hostage situation at the kosher market was the [latest in a series of stunning attacks](#) on Jewish institutions and individuals unprecedented since the end of World War II. The administration has been underwhelming in its reaction to the repeated assaults on French Jews, and the president has failed to address the pattern of Jew-hating and violence that has swept the continent. But then there is a lot he ignores.

The conclusion of the three days of terror and murder are a reminder, as the Israeli journalist [Ruthie Blum](#) puts it, that "the key point about the brutal slaying of the French satirists . . . [is that] their pens were no match for Islamist swords. This is because their slaying were not a metaphor for the curtailing of free speech. They were part of the campaign to kill and subjugate all free people, which is what global jihad is all about."

Will the events of the past few days be sufficient to end the perverse refusal to comprehend this and to persistently dismiss conservatives' warning that we are engaged in a battle for civilization itself?

If Israel didn't build homes in its Jewish neighborhoods . . . if the United States closed Guantanamo Bay . . . if we had not waterboarded terrorist leaders . . . if we had not become involved in Middle East wars . . . if Europeans did not insult Islam . . . what, what would be different? The jihadists would still seek to slaughter Jews, Christians and Muslims who don't subscribe to their brand of jihadism. Iran would still sponsor terrorists and seek a bomb. Boko Haram will still kill and murder innocents. There is no action on our part that [provokes the sort of barbarism](#) we have seen. There is [no way we can cease](#) giving "offense." Our *existence* is sufficient to spur the Islamist terrorists. And the only solution is to defeat and destroy the jihadists, their networks and their ability to gain access to more and more deadly weapons. (What if, for example, the French suspects had chemical weapons and not simply guns?)

And yet I doubt we will see President Obama (or critics of U.S. antiterrorism efforts) agree on an enhanced national security budget, adopt a new approach to ending Iran's hegemonic ambitions, throw away the timetable for withdrawing troops from Afghanistan, deploy without limitations on their scope and duration a contingent of U.S. troops sufficient to eradicate the Islamic State swiftly or cease releasing jihadists from Guantanamo Bay.

It is not simply the Obama administration, as inept and wrongheaded as it may be, that is the problem. Foolish lawmakers who want to dismantle the National Security Agency or in essence grant immunity to terrorists from drones until they are on the cusp of action; the "international community" that spends time attempting to delegitimize Israel and entertains claims that it is guilty of war crimes; and the left in the media and on college campuses who believe at bottom that the West is responsible for bringing these horrors on itself — none of these will, I predict, change one iota. Facts are irrelevant to the excuse-mongers and jihad-deniers, and the very real possibility their actions heighten the threat to innocents is ignored. So be it. We should replace misguided leaders who will not defend us, defund international bodies that excuse or ignore the problem and rally behind clear-sighted figures who understand we are in a fight not simply for freedom of expression, although we certainly are, but for our existence.

Volokh Conspiracy

'Muslims do not believe in the concept of freedom of expression'

by Eugene Volokh

Contrary to popular misconception, Islam does not mean peace but rather means submission to the commands of Allah alone.

So writes "a radical Muslim cleric in London and a lecturer in sharia," Anjem Choudary, in a [USA Today](#) op-ed. USA Today has performed a valuable public service here — I mean this entirely sincerely — in reminding people that there is a very dangerous religious denomination out there, which is willing to teach the propriety of murder of blasphemers, which supports the death penalty for apostasy, and which would more broadly suppress the liberty of both Muslims and non-Muslims alike.

To give [one more example](#), a survey touted by CNN as showing that "Around the World, Muslims Heralded Religious Freedom" actually showed that, though "Ninety-seven percent of Muslims in South Asia, 95% in Eastern Europe, 94% in sub-Saharan Africa and 85% in the Middle East and North Africa responded positively to religious freedom, according to the poll," in many countries huge percentages of Muslims favor "the death penalty for people who leave the Muslim religion." For instance, in South Asia, death for apostates is favored by 79% of Afghan Muslims, 75% of Pakistani Muslims, and 43% of Bangladeshi Muslims. In the Middle East and North Africa, the numbers were 88% in Egypt, 83% in Jordan, 62% in the Palestinian Territories, 41% in Iraq, 18% in Tunisia, and 17% in Lebanon.

So there is a religious group — what we might call a "denomination," to use the Christian term, or "stream," to use the term sometimes used as to branches of Judaism — that is a deadly enemy to Western democracies and to our most fundamental values. And it's a large religious denomination: My sense is that it has tens of millions or perhaps hundreds of millions of adherents (though different beliefs of this religious denomination may get more or less support).

What makes all this especially difficult, though, is that some of our most important allies in fighting this religious denomination are other Muslims. They are allies (often) in the military sense, in that we need and often get their logistics and intelligence support, the cooperation of their armed forces and police forces, and permission to operate in their territory. Western police and intelligence organizations also need as much cooperation as possible from their Muslim citizens (and noncitizen residents), in trying to identify and locate the radicals who kill (or who plan to kill).

And, most importantly, my sense is that such extremist ideologies decline because of ideological competition within the religion — more tolerant forms of Islam (or Christianity) drawing adherents away from the less tolerant ones. (Consider [Egyptian president Sisi's call for a "religious revolution" within Islam](#).) At the same time, unfortunately, the competition goes both ways: Large pools of moderate members of a religion can be substantial sources of new recruits for the more extreme versions of the religion.

Condemning all Muslims as having such murderous and illiberal views (views that blasphemy or apostasy, for instance, should be suppressed through either private or governmental violence) is thus both factually mistaken and counterproductive. If you were trying in 1800 to fight the excesses of the Catholic Church — I use this just as a structural analogy here — doing so by condemning all Christians would be a pretty poor tactic. At the same time, the fact remains that there is within Islam a religious denomination, stream, sect, movement, or whatever else that is a deadly ideological, political, and military enemy to us and our way of life.

Volokh Conspiracy

[On Charlie Hebdo and campus speech codes](#)

by David Post

David Brooks has [a very thoughtful and important op-ed in today's New York Times](#), linking our reactions to the horror at the Charlie Hebdo offices and the campus speech codes.

The journalists at Charlie Hebdo are now rightly being celebrated as martyrs on behalf of freedom of expression, but let's face it: If they had tried to publish their satirical newspaper on any American university campus over the last two decades it wouldn't have lasted 30 seconds. Student and faculty groups would have accused them of hate speech. The administration would have cut financing and shut them down.

Spot on, and pretty disturbing when you think about it – not to mention hypocritical on the part of many who are now so vociferous in their apparent support for untrammelled free expression.

Healthy societies don't suppress speech, but they do grant different standing to different sorts of people. Wise and considerate scholars are heard with high respect. Satirists are heard with bemused semirespect. Racists and anti-Semites are heard through a filter of opprobrium and disrespect. People who want to be heard attentively have to earn it through their conduct.

The massacre at Charlie Hebdo should be an occasion to end speech codes. And it should remind us to be legally tolerant toward offensive voices, even as we are socially discriminating.

If this becomes an occasion for re-thinking our attitudes about the importance of tolerating all manner of “offensive” speech, that will at least provide a small silver lining to what is, obviously, a very, very ugly cloud.

Washington Post

[Climate change’s instructive past](#)

by George Will

We know, because they often say so, that those who think catastrophic global warming is probable and perhaps imminent are exemplary empiricists. They say those who disagree with them are “climate change deniers” disrespectful of science.

Actually, however, something about which everyone can agree is that *of course* the climate is changing — it always is. And if climate Cassandras are as conscientious as they claim to be about weighing evidence, how do they accommodate historical evidence of enormously consequential episodes of climate change not produced by human activity? Before wagering vast wealth and curtailments of liberty on correcting the climate, two recent books should be considered.

In “[The Third Horseman: Climate Change and the Great Famine of the 14th Century](#),” William Rosen explains how Europe’s “most widespread and destructive famine” was the result of “an almost incomprehensibly complicated mixture of climate, commerce, and conflict, four centuries in gestation.” Early in that century, 10 percent of the population from the Atlantic to the Urals died, partly because of the effect of climate change on “the incredible amalgam of molecules that comprises a few inches of soil that produces the world’s food.”

In the Medieval Warm Period (MWP), from the end of the ninth century to the beginning of the 14th, the Northern Hemisphere was warmer than at any time in the past 8,000 years — for reasons concerning which there is no consensus. Warming increased the amount of arable land — there were vineyards in northern England — leading, Rosen says, to Europe’s “first sustained population increase since the fall of the Roman Empire.” The need for land on which to grow cereals drove deforestation. The MWP population explosion gave rise to towns, textile manufacturing and new wealthy classes.

Then, near the end of the MWP, came the severe winters of 1309-1312, when polar bears could walk from Greenland to Iceland on pack ice. In 1315 there was rain for perhaps 155 consecutive days, washing away topsoil. Upwards of half the arable land in much of Europe was gone; cannibalism arrived as parents ate children. Corpses hanging from gallows were devoured.

Human behavior did not cause this climate change. Instead, climate warming caused behavioral change (10 million mouths to feed became 30 million). Then climate cooling caused social changes (rebelliousness and bellicosity) that amplified the consequences of climate, a pattern repeated four centuries later.

In “[Global Crisis: War, Climate Change and Catastrophe in the Seventeenth Century](#),” Geoffrey Parker, a history professor at Ohio State University, explains how a “fatal synergy” between climatological and political factors produced turmoil from Europe to China. What he calls “[the placenta of the crisis](#)” of that century included [the Little Ice Age](#) (LIA), between the 1640s and the

1690s. Unusual weather, protracted enough to qualify as a change in climate, correlated so strongly with political upheavals as to constitute causation.

Whatever caused the LIA — decreased sunspot activity and increased seismic activity were important factors — it caused, among other horrific things, “stunting” that, Parker says, “reduced the average height of those born in 1675, the ‘year without a summer,’ or during the years of cold and famine in the early 1690s, to only 63 inches: the lowest ever recorded.”

In northerly latitudes, Parker says, each decline of 0.5 degrees Celsius in the mean summer temperature “decreases the number of days on which crops ripen by 10 percent, doubles the risk of a single harvest failure, and increases the risk of a double failure sixfold,” For those farming at least 1,000 feet above sea level, this temperature decline “increases the chance of two consecutive failures a hundredfold.”

The flight from abandoned farms to cities produced the “urban graveyard effect,” crises of disease, nutrition, water, sanitation, housing, fire, crime, abortion, infanticide, marriages forgone and suicide. Given the ubiquity of desperation, it is not surprising that more wars took place during the 17th-century crisis “than in any other era before the Second World War.”

By documenting the appalling consequences of two climate changes, Rosen and Parker validate wariness about behaviors that might cause changes. The last 12 of Parker’s 712 pages of text deliver a scalding exhortation to be alarmed about what he considers preventable global warming. Neither book, however, supports those who believe human behavior is the sovereign or even primary disrupter of climate normality, whatever that might be. With the hands that today’s climate Cassandras are not using to pat themselves on the back for their virtuous empiricism, they should pick up such books.

Right Turn

[Six Tips for Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker](#)

Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker at his second inauguration Monday [said](#):

[I]n Wisconsin, it doesn’t matter what class you were born into or what your parents did for a living. Here, our opportunities should be as equal as possible, but the outcomes should still be up to each and every one of us.

In Wisconsin, we understand that true freedom and prosperity do not come from the mighty hand of the government. They come from empowering people to control their own lives and their own destinies through the dignity born from work.

In Wisconsin, we understand people create jobs, not the government. Those who choose to employ—be it one or many—are to be appreciated and encouraged, so as to prosper and increase employment for others in the future.

In Wisconsin, we understand the best way to improve lives and strengthen families, as well as raise wages, is to assist people to get a better education and to acquire more skills. This is how we grow household incomes, while putting people to work. . . .

In contrast to the politicians along the Potomac, we get things done here in the Badger state. There is a clear contrast between Washington and Wisconsin.

We've been good stewards of the taxpayers' money and lowered their tax burden as well. We've shown why the founders of this great nation looked to the states—and not the federal government—as the source of hope for this exceptional country. We will not let them down.

Now, we have a grand vision for the future—a dream of freedom and prosperity for all who live here in the great state of Wisconsin.

We will help our fellow citizens—regardless of mobility or income, station or status in life—to achieve the education and skills needed to succeed in their chosen occupations. This will not only help fill positions open today, but will build confidence in employers that they can create new jobs and find qualified workers to fill them.

We will ensure every child—regardless of background or birthright—has access to a quality education. For many, like my sons and me, it is in a traditional public school. For others, it may be in a charter, a private, a virtual or even a home school environment. Regardless, we will empower families to make the choice that is right for their sons and daughters.

We will reduce the size and scope of government to match the will of the people. State agencies will be merged to make them more effective, more efficient, and more accountable to the public. We will continue to weed out waste, fraud, and abuse. Budgets will be set based on the taxpayers' ability to pay and not on the government's ability to spend.

We will build the needed infrastructure to support a thriving economy. A transportation system to assist major industries, like manufacturing, agriculture, forest products, and tourism is a key part of this infrastructure. So is broadband internet access to connect every part of the state to the global economy and cost effective and reliable sources of power to fuel our growing economy.

Overall, everyone in this state should have an opportunity to live their piece of the American Dream—right here in Wisconsin.

For some, that dream might be succeeding in their chosen career—and maybe even starting their own business someday.

For others, that dream might mean owning their own home.

But for many of us, that dream is as simple as ensuring our children live in a place that it is better than the place we grew up in.

That's a peek, I suspect, at what he will be offering as he raises his profile and explores a potential presidential run.

Very much like former Florida governor Jeb Bush, Walker's message is about upward mobility. But Walker's is a scrappier, harder-edged message that might have more salience with conservatives who've convinced themselves that Bush is a moderate squish. Indeed, his blue-collar appeal, minus New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie's volatile personality, may be his greatest asset.

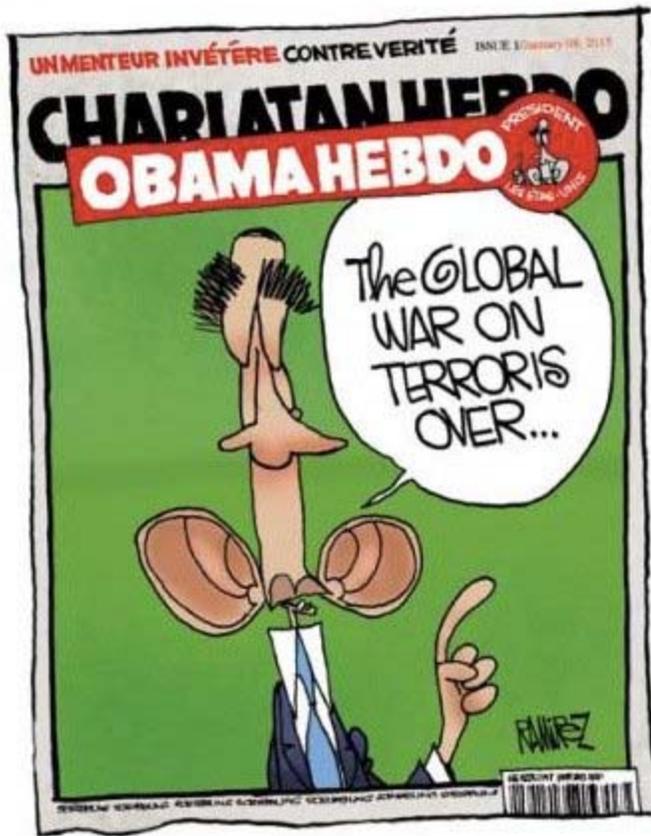
He is [headed with other GOP hopefuls to Iowa](#) later this month for a GOP gathering co-hosted by anti-immigrant and anti-John Boehner gadfly Rep. Steve King (R-Iowa) and Citizens United. Unlike

Christie, who has [bizarrely embraced King](#), Walker would be smart to consciously distance himself from King on substance (he's previously said he favors [some sort of immigration reform](#), although recently [downplayed the importance of the issue](#)), but also in keeping with his theme that Washington is dysfunctional and downright childish.

The digs on Walker are well known — not charismatic enough (often compared to former Minnesota governor Tim Pawlenty), not a college graduate, no foreign policy experience and an insufficiently robust national fundraising network to compete with Bush or Christie. But none of that will matter if he can:

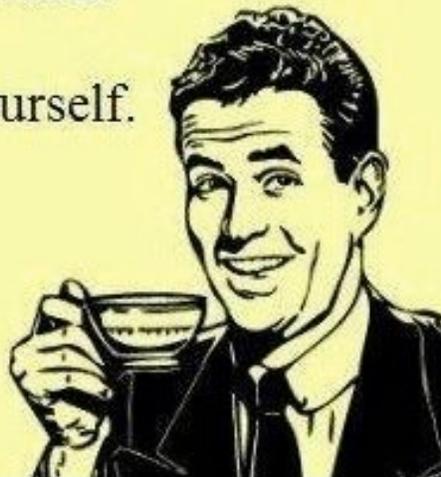
1. Become the pugnacious but reasonable Republican, tough enough for the base and sane enough for the establishment. His [lack of a college degree](#), if not a selling point, can at least shape the image of a scrapper who had to educate himself and rise on sheer tenacity.
2. Put together a succinct and emotionally compelling stump speech. He should take to heart American Enterprise Institute's [Arthur Brooks's admonition](#) — state your mission in moral terms, be for people, not against things, and do it fast (people make snap judgments in less than a minute). Something like: "I'm going to fight for every American's opportunity to rise, chance to earn success and security from enemies of liberty and tolerance who threaten Western civilization."
3. Do some foreign travel, meet with top-flight advisers, develop a comfort-level with national security and present a tough-minded national security policy that contrasts with years of weakness, equivocation and shocking inability to support friends and confront enemies.
4. Present himself as the one to unify the party and bridge gaps between the base and the establishment.
5. Use his battles against public employees' unions and as a rogue prosecutor to show he can withstand whatever the Clintons (or whoever) throw at him. He is a winner and has the scars to prove it.
6. Show some humor, some humility and some emotion.

None of that would be a guarantee that he could break out of the pack. But if he does those things and delivers the sort of message he suggested in his inaugural speech, he will be a formidable contender. If he doesn't, he won't make it out of Iowa.



AN OFFENSIVE CARTOON.

If your religion is worth
killing for,
please start with yourself.

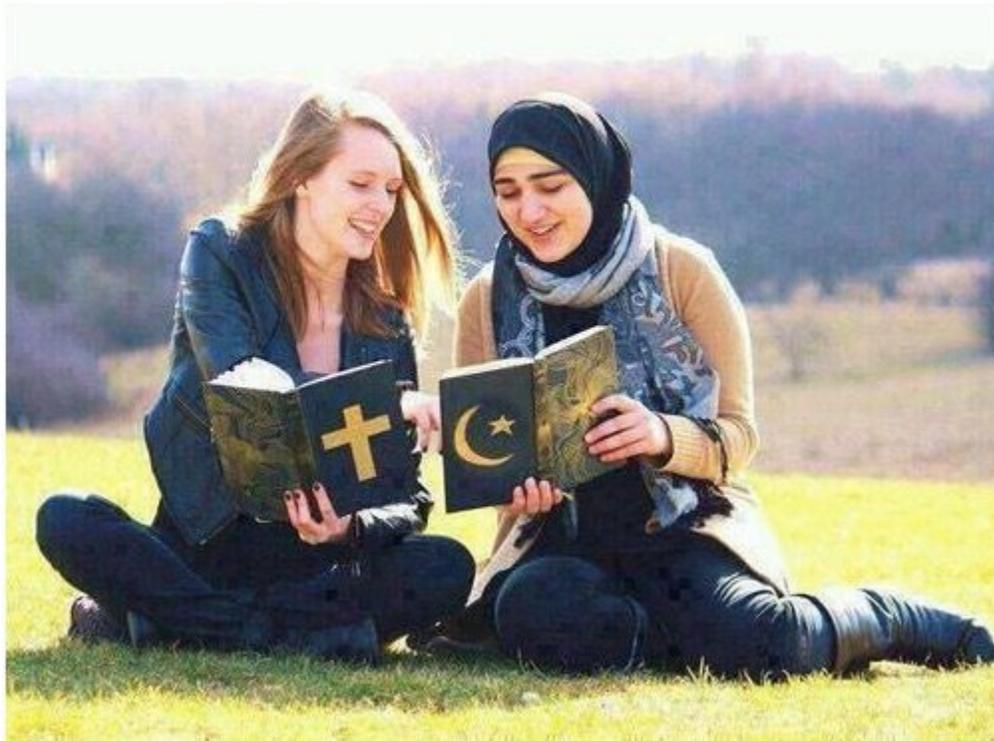






MaydnUSA @MaydnUSA · 10h

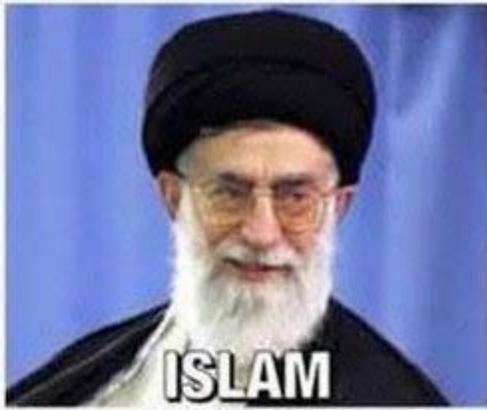
"Hmmm. That's weird. Mine says love thy neighbor & yours says to kill him if he doesn't believe." #RespectForMuslims





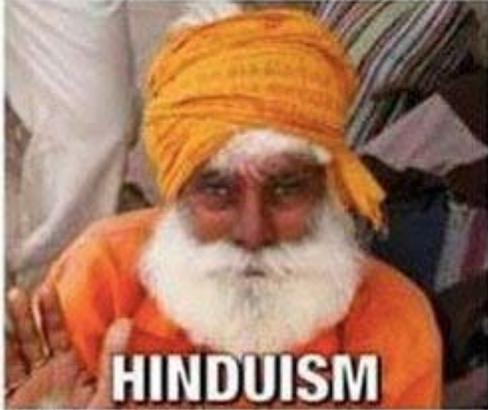
JUDAISM

- Funny Hat
- Bacon



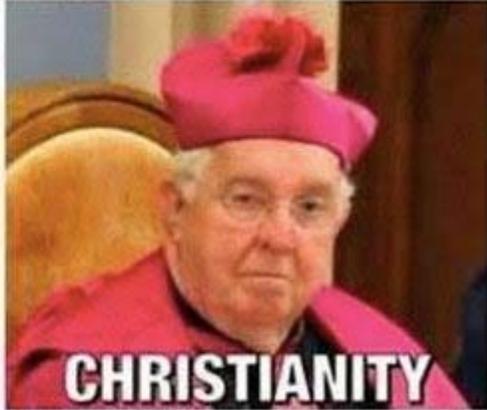
ISLAM

- Funny Hat
- Bacon



HINDUISM

- Funny Hat
- Bacon



CHRISTIANITY

- Funny Hat
- Bacon

Christianity: We Have Bacon.