

# McCain-Hagee TIMELINE

*When Republican Senator John McCain appeared with Pastor John Hagee to embrace his endorsement, the presidential hopeful slapped American Catholics in the face. The following timeline demonstrates how events transpired leading up to McCain's repudiation of Hagee's anti-Catholic bigotry.*

**February 27:** Republican presidential hopeful, Senator John McCain appeared with Pastor John Hagee and embraced the endorsement of the anti-Catholic bigot. McCain proudly exclaimed he was "very honored by Pastor Hagee's endorsement," calling the minister, "the staunchest leader of our Christian evangelical movement."

**February 28:** "There are plenty of staunch evangelical leaders who are pro-Israel, but not anti-Catholic. John Hagee is not one of them. Indeed for the past few decades, he has waged an unrelenting war against the Catholic Church. For example, he likes calling it 'The Great Whore,' an 'apostate church,' the 'anti-Christ,' and a 'false cult system...' In Hagee's latest book, *Jerusalem Countdown*, he calls Hitler a Catholic who murdered Jews while the Catholic Church did nothing. 'The sell-out of Catholicism to Hitler began not with the people but with the Vatican itself,' he writes... Senator Obama has repudiated the endorsement of Louis Farrakhan, another bigot. McCain should follow suit and retract his embrace of Hagee."

*—Bill Donohue on McCain's embrace of John Hagee's endorsement*

**February 29:** "If Senator Hillary Clinton and Senator Barack Obama were fighting over the support of Louis Farrakhan, we'd say they're nuts. So what are we to conclude about McCain's embrace of Hagee, and Huckabee's lament for not getting the bigot's endorsement?... McCain repudiated the remarks of talk radio host Bill Cunningham. He should now repudiate Hagee's long record of bashing Catholicism. After all, George W. Bush apologized for speaking at Bob Jones University, and Hagee

makes Jones look like a lightweight in the ring of bigotry.”  
–*Bill Donohue commenting on Mike Huckabee’s disappointment with Hagee’s endorsement of McCain*

**February 29:** “[It] does not mean that I support or endorse or agree with some of the things that Pastor Hagee might have said or positions that he may have taken on other issues...In no way did I intend for his [Hagee’s] endorsement to suggest that I in turn agree with all of Pastor Hagee’s views, which I obviously do not.”

–*John McCain responding to the criticism surrounding the Hagee endorsement*

**February 29:** “McCain’s latest response is helpful, if disappointing. I expected more from the self-described ‘Straight Talk’ presidential candidate. Why couldn’t he have spoken specifically to the Catholic-bashing record of Hagee? Contrast McCain’s tepid response to what George W. Bush said...regarding his 2000 appearance at Bob Jones University. Bush said he did not approve of ‘the anti-Catholic and racially divisive views associated with that school....’ McCain will have other opportunities to address this issue. He would be well advised to model himself on Bush’s Bob Jones response if he wants to bury it altogether.”

–*Bill Donohue comparing McCain’s tepid response to the concrete response from George W. Bush in 2000*

**February 29:** “While John McCain certainly cannot be expected to defend or espouse the views of every individual who has thrown their support to him, McCain completely repudiates any and all remaining elements of anti-Catholicism in America today.”

–*Senator Sam Brownback defending McCain*

**March 2:** “I think they’re two very different situations. Pastor Hagee has done some very good things, particularly with regard to Israel and the support for Israel and denouncing terrorism in that area...His endorsement, I think, is for people

who believe and work for him. And he does some good things.”  
–*Senator Kay Bailey Hutchinson responding to Wolf Blitzer’s question if McCain should repudiate Hagee’s endorsement as Obama rejected Farrakhan’s endorsement*

**March 3:** “Farrakhan has done some very good things too. He has called upon young black men to steer clear of drugs and to support their families. Yet no one is citing his good work as a justification for his bigoted comments. The same rule should apply to Hagee. We hope McCain gives us something concrete the next time he speaks to this issue. And we’d like to hear from him, not his surrogates.”

–*Bill Donohue responding to Brownback and Hutchinson*

**March 3:** “I am shocked and saddened to learn of the mischaracterization of my views on Catholics that has spread while I spent the weekend celebrating the 50th anniversary of my entry into the ministry with family and friends.”

–*An excerpt from John Hagee’s statement*

**March 3:** “Did we also mischaracterize Hagee when he called my religion ‘The Great Whore,’ the ‘apostate church,’ the ‘anti-Christ’ and a ‘false cult system’? McCain cannot ignore Hagee’s lies any more than he can tolerate his bigotry. This is getting out of control.”

–*Bill Donohue responding to Hagee’s statement*

**March 4:** “The difference between the way Obama and McCain have handled their endorsements by bigots is enormous. Even worse, McCain actually solicited for Hagee’s endorsement. If Karl Rove is right to criticize Obama for not being strong enough in his denunciation of Farrakhan (which Obama explicitly did), what does that say about McCain’s response to Hagee’s endorsement? In short, Obama has set the bar for McCain. Whether he wants to clear it or walk away is his choice.”

–*Bill Donohue responding to Karl Rove’s criticism of Obama’s repudiation of Farrakhan*

**March 4:** "I've learned that some have accused me of referring to the Catholic Church as the 'great whore,' of Revelations. This is a serious misinterpretation of my words. When I refer to the 'great whore,' I am referring to the apostate church, namely those Christians who embrace the false cult system of Jew-hatred and anti-Semitism."

*–The amended paragraph to John Hagee's statement of March 3*

**March 4:** "Anti-Catholic Protestants have long labeled the Catholic Church 'The Great Whore,' and no amount of spin can change that reality. No one who knows anything about the term would suggest otherwise. Indeed, the Catholic League has a whole library of anti-Catholic books wherein such demonizing language is used."

*–Bill Donohue's response to Hagee's amendment*

**March 5:** "If McCain was right to slam Bob Jones in 2000, why is he letting Hagee off the hook now? In fact, when Bush did apologize for his visit to Bob Jones (he was explicit and forceful in his denunciation of the school), McCain criticized him for taking so long. He said, if 'you don't say anything until three weeks later, then you have—are—abandoning your role as a person....' Once he [McCain] explicitly rejects the anti-Catholic baggage that Hagee carries, it will be enough to settle this matter once and for all."

*–Bill Donohue comparing McCain's reaction to the Hagee controversy with his reaction to Bush's speech at Bob Jones University in 2000*

**March 6:** "No one should take from my criticism of McCain on this issue that I in any way think he is anti-Catholic. If anything, John McCain has been a good friend to Catholics. But he and his staff have, thus far, grossly mishandled this issue."

*–Bill Donohue on McCain's poor judgment regarding the Hagee endorsement*

**March 6:** "Pastor Hagee endorsed me. That does not mean I

endorse everything Pastor Hagee said. All I can say is lots and lots of people endorse me. That means they embrace my ideas and positions. It does not mean I endorse them."

*—John McCain, when asked about the Hagee controversy while in Georgia*

**March 7, morning:** "Fortunately for McCain, he did not shut the door and say this matter is over. But time is running out. We expect to hear a more definitive statement that explicitly rejects Hagee's anti-Catholicism. If we don't, criticism from many quarters will only escalate. It is one thing for a candidate to disagree with the Catholic position on certain public policy issues, quite another to break bread with an anti-Catholic bigot."

*—Bill Donohue on McCain's continuing tepidness*

**March 7, evening:** "We've had a dignified campaign, and I repudiate any comments that are made, including Pastor Hagee's, if they are anti-Catholic or offensive to Catholics.... I sent two of my children to Catholic school. I categorically reject and repudiate any statement that was made that was anti-Catholic, both in intent and nature. I categorically reject it, and I repudiate it."

*—John McCain when interviewed by the Associated Press*

**March 10:** "Sen. McCain has done the right thing and we salute him for doing so. As far as the Catholic League is concerned, this case is closed."

*—Bill Donohue, in response to McCain's repudiation of Hagee's anti-Catholic comments*