

McCain rejects support of pastors Hagee and Parsley: "I repudiate such talk"

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Presumed Republican presidential nominee John McCain has rejected the political endorsements of two megachurch pastors after learning more about their disparaging views of other faiths.

The Arizona senator rejected on May 22 the backing of Rod Parsley, pastor of World Harvest Church in Columbus, Ohio, for comments in which Parsley called Islam a violent religion bent on world domination.

Shortly beforehand, McCain renounced the endorsement by pastor John Hagee of San Antonio, Texas, head of Christians United for Israel, after it was learned that Hagee had suggested in a sermon in the 1990s that God used Adolf Hitler and the Holocaust as part of a divine plan to have Jews return to Israel.

McCain signaled that Hagee's remarks had become burdensome to his campaign.

"Obviously, I find these remarks and others deeply offensive and indefensible, and I repudiate them," McCain said in a statement reported on CNNPolitics.com. "I did not know of them before Reverend Hagee's endorsement, and I feel I must reject his endorsement as well."

As for Parsley's remarks on Islam, McCain said, "I believe there is no place for that kind of dialogue in America, and I believe that even though he endorsed me, and I didn't endorse him, the fact is that I repudiate such talk, and I reject his endorsement."

ABC News had posted on its Web site a video of some of Parsley's statements, including one in which he said, "Islam is an anti-Christ religion that intends through violence to conquer the world."

In his 2005 book, *Silent No More*, Parsley included a chapter on Islam in which he wrote: "The fact is that America was founded, in part, with the intention of seeing this false religion destroyed, and I believe September 11, 2001, was a generational call to arms that we can no longer ignore."

The Council on American-Islamic Relations and the Muslim Public Affairs Council welcomed McCain's rejection of Parsley's endorsement. -*Religion News Service*