

# Mo. congressman apologizes for God comment

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(RNS) A Missouri congressman has apologized for telling a national radio audience that "at the heart of liberalism really is a hatred for God."

U.S. Rep. Todd Akin, whose comments created a nationwide uproar among liberals, apologized to anyone who thought he was questioning their faith.

"People who know me and my family know that we take our faith and beliefs very seriously," the Republican said on Tuesday (June 28).

"As Christians, we would never question the sincerity of anyone's personal relationship with God. My statement during my radio interview was directed at the political movement, liberalism, not at any specific individual. If my statement gave a different impression, I offer my apologies."

The apology fell flat with a group of St. Louis-area clergy members, most of whom are liberal.

Several St. Louis-area religious leaders visited Akin's office on Wednesday to deliver a statement condemning the Republican for his comments.

"Congressman Akin continues to insist that liberalism is anti-religion. As a pastor and a constituent of Congressman Akin's, I find this deeply offensive," said the Rev. Kevin Cameron of Parkway United Church of Christ in west St. Louis County.

The saga started Friday when Akin appeared on the radio program of Family Research Council President Tony Perkins, where he was asked about NBC's decision to omit the phrase "under God" from a taped clip of the Pledge of Allegiance aired during recent coverage of the U.S. Open golf tournament.

"Well, I think NBC has a long record of being very liberal, and at the heart of liberalism really is a hatred for God and a belief that government should replace God," Akin said.