Trick question: How do you offset the whirlwinds, windmills, and tornadoes of lies from a Republican presidential candidate, running mate, and from all members of their party -- people who hate 'Gummint,' want to drown it in a bathtub, yet are desperate, just *dyin g* to run the whole show, including YOUR life?

Trick answer: You bring in bigger, bolder, brighter, and broader lies for distraction and comparative perspective -- you bring in religion and other such long-inflamed sores and assorted soreheads for diversion.

Now, before you light up like the Griswold's house finally does in National Lampoon's "Christmas Vacation," imperiling resources at the regional nuclear plant, most people -- even your idiot servant here -- acknowledge some creative force in the universe larger than themselves.

Some people name it Universe, some call it The Grand Design, some label it and leave it as a vaguely defined Spirit. Others roll up their sleeves and become creative, as in National Lampoon's spoof of Les Crane's *Desiderata*, called *Deteriorata,* in which the name badges *Hair y Thunderer* and *Cosmic Muffin* are supplied.

Still others take it way over the top, providing an avalanche of details and information which, like slowly rotating clouds of gasses in space, eventually coalesce, condense, and evolve around a central core, thereby constituting religion.

Believe what you will. I have no beef about any of it until someone tries to force those beliefs on someone else, or until someone -- be it a group representative or an individual -- drags those beliefs into the public square and insists those beliefs be made mandatory law binding on all.

You'd normally be the first to agree with this approach, too, if you weren't looking at it through

the usual, cheap sunglasses that we're all given to use in this life. The secret to vision's in the upgrade to polarizing lenses.

With such lenses, new things may be seen. For example: Let's say my religion's beliefs include the absolute *requirement* for all practitioners to practice, wherever they are, a strict set of worshipful acts:

- Elaborate banging of gongs, drums, and steel drums;
- Shrill, sour-noted, repetitive chanting at top lung power;
- Triggering of World War Two submarines' diving klaxons for the duration of worship;
- The immolation of goats and/or sacrificial effigies in large cauldrons;
- Steady, continuous use of multiple, hand-cranked air-raid sirens;
- Ignition of a minimum of five smoldering piles of banana peels torched in diesel;
- The ritual eating of fresh-made bacon (the original meat candy)

... and doing so for a minimum of 15 uninterrupted minutes, every hour on the hour, all through the day and night -- no exceptions -- you would be the first to scream bloody murder that my religion has no business whatever in the public square.

You would also say that my religion has no business whatsoever being dragged into public schools, government office buildings, and being foisted on others in any way.

That sort of stuff, you would argue, belongs behind the closed doors of a temple or sanctuary of some sort -- *and would we mind, please, soundproofing our buildings so that everyone can have a little peace and quiet and relief from the smoke, if we don't mind?*

Fair enough. Certainly understandable. You're right, and we're happy to accommodate you. Thanks for bringing that up. *Now, just one more thing: Please do the same with your own religions, please, in return.* Fair's fair.

So: Why this long digression here?

To make a couple of points, one of which is this: religions give anyone's deity a bad name. Religions are a poor way to pay your respects to your personal concept of That-Which-Is-Greater, as it so often gives your deity or concept such miserable and slighted service, a virtual damning by faint praise.

Or perhaps more like Groucho Marx's inestimable truism that he would not care to be a member of any club that would have him as a member. Given how people are on a whirring treadmill of worship and repeat offense, it is possible our deities are embarrassed for us. Religions desperate to function in public are embarrassing, too -- and dangerous.

Religions are about rules, rote dogma, and controlling people and their lives and actions -- then, trying to spread that system of belief outward and force those rules, dogma, and controls on others, and trying to keep repeating the process as long as possible.

People don't danger when considering *their own* religions and beliefs, but surely notice it, and with uncommon clarity, when *someone else's* religion wanders in, demanding the same rights to flounce around in the public square. (One example? The ongoing American hysteria to erect hasty bulwarks against Sharia Law all over -- Kansas, Oklahoma, Tennessee, you name it.)

If only for the peace and quiet, and ability to concentrate and work without distraction, the founders of this country realized all religion must be left outside government's door, and not brought inside -- otherwise, the result would be religious chaos and constant warring under the governmental roof.

Allowing religion inside government would also be about the worst government you could have, with laws and counter-laws changing according to the make-up and majorities of religion represented in government at any given moment. And who would want to endure the war to decide the one *official* religion for the state? You know how *parochial* practitioners are-- only their own religion is " *right* ." Oh, and:
How
many times a year did you say you wanted to fight that war?

Boring truism: One's *own* religion is *right and true*, of course; all *other* religions are *wrong*, their members merely
deluded heathens in a cult.
Thing is, all religions begin small, as upstart cults -- until they reach a tipping point of a set number of members, and a certain time actually in existence. Then, they magically become accepted, anointed religion.

* * * * *

Sorry for that exhausting roundabout, but one of those always seems mandatory when the tripwire of religion is set off. Back to the main point -- *if we can all remember what on Earth it was, and where we were all headed, again...*

Oh, right: Countering lies by deploying or interposing bigger lies. It might be an offshoot of the propaganda philosophy of repeating a lie so often that it becomes truth -- however, that's a chicken-and-egg question that will lead us on another merry roundabout.

In any event, consider: There are severe penalties for lying to a grand jury or judge about any microscopic detail under review -- and yet, *none* for lying to an entire nation of 300-million people and more, about *everything?*

If that doesn't prove life already has a head start on insanity, consider the men and women who espouse religion at every turn, but show themselves to be utter hypocrites in their constant daily actions. Lies from such a group of religious people are exceptionally difficult to tolerate, especially from public servants and candidates who demand the full and complete trust from voters.

Speedbump: What happens when an office holder or candidate's religion says lying is fine, and gives the practice a thumbs up? What sort of moral, practical, and spiritual quicksand are we in then? Seems like there are plenty of colliding cross-currents in public life without adding another layer of complications like green-lighting all manner of lying.

However, such a policy goes a long way to explain Mitt Romney, the *Old Faithful* of constantly gushing prevarications, flip-flops, and plain-old, garden-variety lies. Combined with a running mate who seems suspended in amber-lit limbo between his reluctance to share program details and specifics he knows do not exist, and being caught in the web of his own psychosis of Randian worship and beliefs....

This ticket is a truck filled with nitroglycerine, C4, avgas, timers, blasting caps, sparklers, Roman candles, and propane tanks that's lost its brakes, hurtling downhill, out of control, straight at the fireworks factory, TNT plant, white gas bottler, and nuke plant. The truck and the site are owned by the American people, you say, and Romney and Ryan either *never had* driver's licenses or
had them revoked?
Oh, well, you win some and you lose some, right?

"Leave it to Beaver" is long dead. We are now kept in a real-life "Twilight Zone" zoo.

Submitted for your consideration -- the crux of the matter, where all lies, religions, and political campaigns intersect and converge... lines meant to be parallel in most worlds, suddenly bending to collision courses in this one. The prediction on the sack race of this particular species? Difficult to say, when the goal appears to be creating explosive rifts and constructing deep craters, the finish line only distantly affixed, very loosely, in the center of this society's spasms and seizures that we call the Twilight Zone.

* * * * *

But, then, when you come right down to it: Aren't all religions, political campaigns, and governments basically concerned with wielding control? Even granting good intentions and pure motivations, how long could such noble motivations last, irradiated as they are by the corrupting rays of Power Over Others?

Continuing the momentary sci-fi bent to things: This line of inquiry fluctuates too much between suborbital intentions and our present-day, escape-velocity realities. Brought back down to Earth and anchored with the stout straps of today, let us try once again...

We ask: And what of religion, steadily insisting on center stage in politics? *Good question*. Another good question is why JFK was grilled and taken to task on his religion, and whether or not he'd be able to exercise his own will, or be a robot of his church's if elected -- and Romney has not been so grilled. JFK was a
member
of his religion then; Romney is an
officer
in his religion now.

So, then: What to make of Romney when he is caught in a lie? The latest -- hard to keep up with them all, I know -- is exciting a GM factory town's crowd with news that Chrysler's thinking of moving its Jeep plants to China. *Wrong again, Mitt.*

But, what's worse -- purposeful lying outright, just in order to fire up a crowd during a campaign, or simply not having a clue what you're ever talking about? I suppose that one depends on whether you prefer to see Romney as a predictably-baldfaced lier, or as a stumbling ignoramus who is representing you, your family, and your country, both here and all around this planet.

There are no political penalties in the U.S. for lying. We do not chasten our candidates for chasin' the truth around and around in circles until Truth dizzies, sickens, and collapses. No one is shunned in a religious or secular way -- in fact, society's attention and rewards always ratchet up.

* * * * *

Another way religion enters the picture: Clergy, erasing the dividing line between church and state, giving their flock specific, political marching orders to be carried out or else suffer their souls.

Such orders are no doubt powerful news to believers, that harm will befall their souls unless a *r eligiously*
-thoughtful ballot is cast in a

secular
election. Such actions are also cause for the immediate revocation of tax-free status for the churches and religions involved. Paying tax is the price of admission to enter the realm of direct political combat and strife, and the freedom to issue dictums and policies to one's own religio-political party.

Taxing religions and churches would also relieve the rest of us of a hefty percentage of our tax burden, as a nice side benefit, and end once and for all the duplicity of churches' and religions' constant games of *"Now you see me giving political orders to the flock, and now you don't."*

Religion also enters the public square via public office holders and candidates unable to separate their religious beliefs from their secular duties and hopes. It's just such a wonderful wild card to spring, invoking religion, covering a multitude of sins by the invoker. It grabs the short attention span of the average voter. The tactic also plasters any subject matter with the hypnotic blessing of religion.

It also slaps an offensive maneuver (in all senses) onto the opponent by using the hearty brag, "I'm Godly -- how about *you*?" In so doing, the subject matter is reduced to subtext, and the opponent is left wondering how the campaign conversation wound up in
religious
territory during a
secular
discussion for a
secular
office.

Example? A former Alabama judge, bounced on ethics charges after refusing an order by the U.S. Supreme Court to remove a marble statue of the ten commandments from the courthouse, is now trying to get back into office again. Apparently, that's legal. No matter what he says now, what are the chances he now has any common (secular) sense -- not having had it before?

Religion is a dandy conversational smokescreen for candidates and office holders who want to change the subject, not admit their ignorance on a matter, catch an opponent off-balance, and rally crowds in a knee-jerk fashion against ideas that have real merit -- and more.

Like so-called right-to-lifers invoking their religious beliefs on more than 100,000 low income women in Texas by shuttering all funding to Planned Parenthood. *(Huh? What* Republican war on women, you say?)
Take this on faith:
Religion is a major playing card in the Republican dealer's hands:
The rubes always lose, and the house always wins.

Trade secret: You want to make sure the crowd doesn't question a thing you say during a campaign speech? Turn that crowd to the full "on" position by electrocuting them all with a lightning-like discharge of religious juice: *Resistance goes limp, eyes blank out, and religious robot mode kicks in -- and you're in like Flint.*

Without that amped-up, high voltage zap of religion, *why,* voters might start asking dangerous questions, like, "What has any Republican office holder ever done for the regular, everyday, working American?" *They might start thinking about answers, or even realizing they're being fed lies!*

After all: Once you eliminate lies, religion, racism, sexism, propaganda, family or self tradition, peer pressure, ignorance, and a blatant, apathetic disregard for consequences, why would anyone *EVER* vote Republican?

Agreed: That IS a lot to set aside -- and, by Tuesday, the 6th? Never happen. That's why you'll see *alllll those numbers* of voters who were conned by someone who lies *religiou sly* .
And, yeah, you
can
take that in a
couple
of different ways --
and you should
.

About *Deteriorata*: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deteriorata

Words to *Deteriorata*: http://dmdb.org/lyrics/deteriorata.html

Mormons and lying: http://www.mormonwiki.org/Lying_for_the_Lord

Romney strikes again: http://www.dailyfinance.com/2012/10/26/jeep-china-romney-offshoring-wrong-false-gm/

Election Day is Soul Jeopardy Day!
http://wtaq.com/news/articles/2012/oct/26/gb-catholic-diocese-warns-voters-their-soul-is-in-jeopardy-on-election-day/

Trying again: http://www.npr.org/2012/10/27/163725159/the-ten-commandments-judge-wants-his-seat-back

Texas Planned Parenthood: http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/10/26/us-usa-health-texas-idUSBRE89P00A20121026