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A RECENT EPISODE ON FOX NEWS BY COMMENTATOR BILL O'REILLY

BILL O'REILLY: In the "Impact" segment tonight: The cover of TIME magazine last week, Holy Week, featured a Michigan preacher who says there might not be a Hell, that nobody will be punished for eternity.

WELL BILL, THERE'S A CHRISTIAN WHO ATHEISTS AGREE WITH.

As you may know, the basis of Judeo-Christian tradition is that good will be rewarded and evil punished in the afterlife. If that equation breaks down, so does the tradition. Joining us now from Raleigh, North Carolina, Pastor Jack McKinney, a Ph.D. who consults with religious clergy and congregations. So, good news for Adolf, Pol Pot, Stalin, Mao Zedong and other villains who slaughtered millions of people, right? They're not going to pay. That sounds like good news, huh?

BILL, IT WOULD BE GOOD NEWS FOR THEM EXCEPT FOR ONE THING ... THEY'RE DEAD. IT'S A LITTLE LATE FOR GOOD NEWS.

DR. JACK MCKINNEY: Yes, Bill. I think that would not be the issue except the church doesn't just teach that mass murderers go to Hell. They teach that people like Gandhi go to Hell, and that puts God in a very difficult place. We're turning God into a monster by teaching of a literal Hell.

O'REILLY: Which church teaches that? Which church teaches that? My church doesn't teach that. The Catholic Church doesn't teach that.

BILL, MANY CHURCHES TEACH THAT. YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF RELIGION IS ALMOST AS SAD AS YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF SCIENCE.

MCKINNEY: The conservative church does teach that.

O'REILLY: The evangelicals you mean.

MCKINNEY: Yes, evangelicals but other segments of the church teach a literal Hell for anyone who doesn't accept Jesus. I think it's a theological, historical mistake.

DR. JACK, YOU COULDN'T BE MORE RIGHT. FOR CHRISTIANITY TO SURVIVE IT MUST RID ITSELF OF LITERAL INTERPRETATION. UNFORTUNATELY, O'REILLY PROVES THAT YOU STILL HAVE A LOT OF WORK TO DO ON THE LESS MENTALLY GIFTED AMONG THE 'FLOCK'.

O'REILLY: OK. In the Christian community, with all due respect to evangelicals, who we do respect,

BILL, SUCH OBVIOUS PANDERING TO YOUR BASE. YOU SHOULD BE IN POLITICS.

I think that's an extreme position. Let me -- let me define what the Catholic Church's position on this is, all right?

"Non-Christians who seek God with a sincere heart," which would be Gandhi, "and move by his grace, try to do his will as they know it through the dictates of conscience, can also be saved without water baptism. They are said to desire implicitly. That is called baptism of desire."

AND BILL, WHERE IN THE BIBLE WILL I FIND THAT?

THAT'S RIGHT BILL, I WON'T. NOR WILL YOU, NOR ANYONE ELSE WHO LOOKS, BECAUSE IT ISN'T IN THE BIBLE. THAT MEANS IT CAME FROM MEN. THAT MEANS YOUR ARGUMENT IS TEETERING AT THE EDGE OF THE CLIFF.

I was taught that in third grade,

BILL, HAD YOU GONE AS FAR AS FOURTH GRADE YOU MIGHT HAVE LEARNED WHY THE SUN COMES UP, WHY THE TIDES GO IN AND OUT, AND THAT MARS HAS 2 MOONS. FOURTH GRADE COULD HAVE SAVED YOU FROM SUFFERING A NATIONAL HUMILIATION.

that the Holocaust victims, who were primarily Jewish, they're damned because they're not Catholic? That's insane.

BILL, NOW YOU'RE STARTING TO GET THE PICTURE.

All right. Little babies who die upon birth, they can't get baptized. They're not going to heaven? That's insane.

BILL, WHY DO YOU THINK IT'S FAIR THAT THEY GET A FREE PASS TO HEAVEN? I FIND THAT INSANE.

I think the problem is, with this no Hell business, is that you have to deal with the Hitlers and the Pol Pots and these tyrants.

BILL, GROW UP. AS BADLY AS YOU WANT THEM PUNISHED, BELIEF IN FAIRY TALES IS NOT THE ANSWER. PART OF GROWING UP IS LEARNING TO ACCEPT THE REALITY THAT LIFE IS NOT FAIR.

IN FACT, YOUR SUCCESS IS PROOF OF THAT.

And if you say there is no Hell, then there really isn't any regulation of behavior at all.

BILL, YOU WERE A HISTORY MAJOR. DON'T YOU REMEMBER STUDYING ABOUT THE CODE OF HAMMURABI, THE MAGNA CARTA, AND OTHER CODES OF CONDUCT?

CHINESE AND INDIAN RELIGIONS DIDN'T NEED THE CONCEPT OF HELL TO CREATE SOCIETIES THAT TURNED OUT FAR MORE PEACEFUL THAN THEIR CHRISTIAN COUNTERPARTS. HISTORY SIMPLY DOES NOT SUPPORT YOUR CONTENTION.

And scripture goes right against that, does it not?

BILL, HERE'S A RULE THAT WILL GUIDE YOU IN A FAR BETTER DIRECTION: IF IT GOES AGAINST SCRIPTURE ... THEN IT'S PROBABLY RIGHT.

MCKINNEY: No. I think there's been a real historical and theological misinterpretation of scripture about Hell. But your point there, Bill, is a good one. That all across the church you have different interpretations of what Hell really is and who's headed there. The end result, though, is if you're talking about eternal damnation for people, that is a very psychological, debilitating thing. I see it all the time in my counseling practice. I see good, committed Christians, for instance, gay people, good, committed gay Christians, who have been told they're abominations; they're going to Hell forever. It does enormous damage.

DR. JACK, YOU HAVE EXHIBITED MORE COMMON SENSE AND INTELLIGENCE THAN MOST OF THE RELIGIOUS SCHOLARS THAT I HAVE STUDIED. IT'S TOO BAD YOU'RE WASTING YOUR TALENTS TALKING TO AN IGNORANT BUFFOON LIKE O'REILLY WHO IS TOO BUSY LECTURING YOU ABOUT RELIGION INSTEAD OF LISTENING TO WHAT YOU HAVE TO SAY.

O'REILLY: They're not told that by my church. My church tells people you don't make those judgments. No one makes those judgments but the deity because we're all sinners. That's clear. So I think -- I think what's going on here is that you're taking, Pastor, with all due respect, an extreme position in the Christian community and using it as a barometer to say, "Well, it can't possibly be a Hell."

BILL, THE ONLY WAY THERE CAN BE A HELL IS IF YOUR GOD IS THE MOST VILE MONSTER EVER IMAGINED. THIS GUY IS OFFERING YOU A WAY OUT. IF YOU COULD SHUT YOUR PIEHOLE LONG ENOUGH TO LISTEN, YOU MIGHT ACTUALLY BE ABLE TO SEE THAT HIS CONCEPT OF GOD IS A MILLION TIMES BETTER THAN THE ONE YOU HOLD.

Well, I'll submit to you, if there is no Hell, Judeo-Christian tradition just breaks down.

BILL, IT IS THE THREAT OF ETERNAL TORTURE THAT ALLOWS YOUR RELIGION TO MAINTAIN ITS VISELIKE GRIP ON HUMANITY. THE REASON WHY ISLAM IS JUST AS SUCCESSFUL IS THAT THEY TOO EMPLOY THE SAME GIMMICK. THAT IS WHY BOTH RELIGIONS WILL BREAK DOWN ONCE THE FEAR OF INVISIBLE GHOSTS IS REMOVED FROM OUR SOCIETIES.

I'll give you the best example ever, and this is germane to Easter and Holy Week last week. When Jesus turned to Judas and betrayed him and said it would be better had you not been born, OK? And then you know what happened to Judas.

BILL, WHAT DID HAPPEN TO JUDAS?

ACCORDING TO MATTHEW 27:5-8 HE HUNG HIMSELF.

ACCORDING TO ACTS 1:18-19 HE DIED FROM A FALL.

NOT THAT I WOULD EVER IMPLY THAT THERE WERE ANY CONTRADICTIONS IN GOD'S DIVINELY INSPIRED WORD. I'M ALREADY IN ENOUGH HOT WATER AS IT IS.

When you betray someone in any way, shape or form, and you don't repent, you're gone, according to Christian and Jewish tradition. You are gone. If that doesn't exist, nothing really matters, does it?

BILL, THAT CONCLUSION HELPS ME TO UNDERSTAND HOW IT IS POSSIBLE FOR YOU TO HAVE REACHED THE AGE OF A SENIOR CITIZEN WITHOUT FIGURING OUT WHAT MAKES THE SUN COME UP AND THE TIDES ROLL IN.

THOSE OF US UNINFECTED WITH THE GOD VIRUS DON'T REQUIRE INVISIBLE GHOSTS TO PROVIDE MEANING IN OUR LIVES.

MCKINNEY: But, Bill, you just articulated judgment is best left in the hands of God.

O'REILLY: Right.

MCKINNEY: But by teaching a literal eternal Hell, we turn God into a monster, Bill.

O'REILLY: I don't think so.

BILL, IF YOU DON'T THINK OPERATING A PLACE CALLED HELL MAKES YOUR GOD A MONSTER, DESCRIBE FOR ME ONE MONSTER, FROM ANY TIME IN HISTORY, FROM ANY PLACE ON EARTH, WHO IS MORE EVIL. YOU CANNOT DO THAT BECAUSE THERE HAS NEVER BEEN A MONSTER THAT EVIL.

THE REASON YOU REFUSE TO ADMIT THAT ANY CREATURE WHO COULD DO THAT IS AN EVIL MONSTER IS BECAUSE YOU BELIEVE THIS INVISIBLE GHOST IS SITTING RIGHT BESIDE YOU, LISTENING TO EVERY WORD YOU SAY; AND YOU BELIEVE HE HAS THE POWER TO TORTURE YOU FOREVER. THAT IS WHY YOU CANNOT ADMIT WHAT IS OBVIOUS EVEN TO A LITTLE CHILD.

MCKINNEY: There is no limit to the literal Hell we're talking about.

O'REILLY: I'm not turning God into a monster.

THAT'S RIGHT BILL, YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO; GOD DID THAT ALL BY HIMSELF.

I think God wants everybody to repent, wants everybody to be good and gives everybody the opportunity to do that. Free will.

BUT APPARENTLY BILL, GOD DOESN'T WANT EVERYBODY IN HEAVEN. BY MY RECKONING, TWO-THIRDS OF THE EARTH ARE HEADED TO HELL BEFORE THE END OF THE CENTURY. I WONDER WHY GOD DESIGNED SUCH A WORLD, KNOWING AHEAD OF TIME EXACTLY HOW IT WAS GOING TO TURN OUT?

But if you spit in the face of God, and you kill millions of people, I think there has to be a reckoning.

MCKINNEY: Yes. So you think Hell is designed for mass murderers, killers, those kinds of people?

DR. JACK, IF BILL HAD EVER BOTHERED TO OPEN HIS BIBLE AND ACTUALLY READ IT HE MIGHT HAVE LEARNED THAT ALL THOSE MASS MURDERERS CAN OBTAIN SALVATION. ACCORDING TO SCRIPTURE HELL IS THE DESTINATION FOR THOSE WHO REFUSE TO BELIEVE.

O'REILLY: People who turn their back on good; unrepentant people who do evil in this world, I believe will get something when they die. They will not be with the Lord in heaven.

BILL, IF THE MUSLIMS ARE RIGHT, THEN YOU WILL WISH THAT DR. JACK WAS RIGHT ABOUT HELL.

MCKINNEY: Yes, I wish that only that was being said out in the church. But...

O'REILLY: But do you believe what I believe? Do you believe that?

MCKINNEY: No, I don't believe in a literal Hell. I think it's a historical and a theological mistake.

O'REILLY: Do you believe in a literal heaven?

MCKINNEY: I do.

DR. JACK, FOR YOUR SAKE I HOPE THERE IS ONE ... BUT I WOULDN'T BET THE FAMILY JEWELS ON IT.

O'REILLY: OK, so that means you're going to see Adolf up there.

BILL, HITLER WAS A SAVED CHRISTIAN DESPITE THE LIES YOU REGULARLY SPREAD ON YOUR SHOW. SO IF THERE IS A HEAVEN, HE QUALIFIES BASED ON THE SCRIPTURES THAT YOU HOLD SACRED.

Say hello to him for me because I've got to tell you, I don't want to be anywhere near him.

BILL, THAT'S NOT A VERY NICE THING TO SAY ABOUT A FELLOW CATHOLIC.

MY FINAL COMMENT:

DR. JACK PLAYED NICE BECAUSE HE WAS ON BILL'S SHOW AND WOULD LIKE TO BE INVITED BACK. I WOULD LIKE TO SEE HIM DEBATE O'REILLY IN A NEUTRAL ARENA WHERE HE WOULD BE FREE TO CHALLENGE BILL'S NONSENSE.

DR. JACK WOULD TEAR BILL APART.

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THE SCIENCE SEGMENT

LEARNING TO TOLERATE OUR MICROBIAL SELF:

BACTERIA CO-OPT HUMAN IMMUNE CELLS FOR MUTUAL BENEFIT

THE HUMAN GUT IS FILLED WITH 100 TRILLION SYMBIOTIC BACTERIA -- TEN TIMES MORE MICROBIAL CELLS THAN OUR OWN CELLS -- REPRESENTING CLOSE TO ONE THOUSAND DIFFERENT SPECIES. AND YET, IF YOU WERE TO EAT A PIECE OF CHICKEN WITH JUST A FEW SALMONELLA, YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM WOULD MOUNT A POTENT INFLAMMATORY RESPONSE.

SALMONELLA AND ITS PATHOGENIC BACTERIAL KIN DON'T LOOK THAT MUCH DIFFERENT FROM THE LEGION OF BACTERIA IN OUR GUT THAT WE BLISSFULLY IGNORE, WHICH RAISES THE QUESTION: WHAT DECIDES WHETHER WE REACT OR DON'T? RESEARCHERS HAVE PONDERED THIS PARADOX FOR DECADES.

IN THE CASE OF A COMMON "FRIENDLY" GUT BACTERIUM, BACTEROIDES FRAGILIS, RESEARCHERS HAVE FIGURED OUT THE SURPRISING ANSWER: THE DECISION IS NOT MADE BY US, IT'S MADE BY THE BACTERIA. SINCE WE ARE THEIR HOME, THEY HOLD THE KEY TO OUR IMMUNE SYSTEM.

WHAT'S MORE, THE BACTERIA ENFORCE THEIR "DECISION" BY HIJACKING CELLS OF THE IMMUNE SYSTEM. RESEARCHERS HAVE FIGURED OUT THE MECHANISM BY WHICH THE BACTERIA ACCOMPLISH THIS FEAT -- AND REVEALED AN EXPLANATION FOR HOW THE IMMUNE SYSTEM DISTINGUISHES BETWEEN BENEFICIAL AND PATHOGENIC ORGANISMS.

LIKE OTHER GUT BACTERIA -- THOSE THAT PROVIDE NUTRIENTS AND OTHER BENEFITS TO THEIR HOSTS, WITHOUT CAUSING HARM -- B. FRAGILIS WAS THOUGHT TO LIVE WITHIN THE INTERIOR OF THE GUT (THE LUMEN), AND THUS FAR AWAY FROM THE IMMUNE SYSTEM.

BUT USING A TECHNIQUE CALLED WHOLE-MOUNT CONFOCAL MICROSCOPY TO STUDY THE INTESTINES OF MICE, RESEARCHERS FOUND THAT THE BACTERIA ACTUALLY LIVE IN A UNIQUE ECOLOGICAL NICHE, DEEP WITHIN THE CRYPTS OF THE COLON, AND THUS IN INTIMATE CONTACT WITH THE GUT MUCOSAL IMMUNE SYSTEM.

THE CLOSENESS OF THIS ASSOCIATION HIGHLIGHTS THAT AN ACTIVE COMMUNICATION IS OCCURRING BETWEEN THE BACTERIA AND THEIR HOST.

FROM THAT VANTAGE POINT, THE BACTERIA ARE ABLE TO ORCHESTRATE CONTROL OVER THE IMMUNE SYSTEM -- AND, SPECIFICALLY, OVER THE BEHAVIOR OF IMMUNE CELLS KNOWN AS REGULATORY T CELLS, OR TREG CELLS. THE NORMAL FUNCTION OF TREG CELLS IS TO PREVENT THE IMMUNE SYSTEM FROM REACTING AGAINST OUR OWN TISSUES, BY SHUTTING DOWN CERTAIN IMMUNE RESPONSES; THEY THEREFORE PREVENT AUTOIMMUNE REACTIONS (WHICH, WHEN UNCONTROLLED, CAN LEAD TO DISEASES SUCH AS MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS, TYPE 1 DIABETES, LUPUS, PSORIASIS, AND CROHN'S DISEASE).

BACTEROIDES FRAGILIS HAS EVOLVED TO PRODUCE A MOLECULE THAT TRICKS THE IMMUNE SYSTEM INTO ACTIVATING TREG CELLS IN THE GUT, BUT IN THIS CASE, THE PURPOSE IS TO KEEP THE CELLS FROM ATTACKING THE BUGS.

THE ENTIRE MOLECULAR PATHWAY THAT PRODUCES THIS EFFECT STARTS WITH THE BACTERIA PRODUCING A COMPLEX SUGAR MOLECULE CALLED POLYSACCHARIDE A (PSA). PSA IS SENSED BY PARTICULAR RECEPTORS, KNOWN AS TOLL-LIKE RECEPTORS, ON THE SURFACES OF TREG CELLS, THUS ACTIVATING THOSE CELLS SPECIFICALLY. IN RESPONSE, TREG CELLS SUPPRESS YET ANOTHER TYPE OF CELL, THE T HELPER 17 (TH17) CELLS. NORMALLY, TH17 CELLS INDUCE PRO-INFLAMMATORY RESPONSES -- THOSE THAT WOULD RESULT, FOR EXAMPLE, IN THE ELIMINATION OF FOREIGN BACTERIA OR OTHER PATHOGENS FROM THE BODY. BY SHUTTING THOSE CELLS DOWN, B. FRAGILIS GETS A FREE PASS TO COLONIZE THE GUT. UP UNTIL NOW, WE HAVE THOUGHT THAT TRIGGERING OF TOLL-LIKE RECEPTORS RESULTED SOLELY IN THE INDUCTION OF PATHWAYS THAT ELIMINATE BACTERIA, HOWEVER STUDIES SUGGEST THAT MULTIPLE YET UNDISCOVERED HOST PATHWAYS ALLOW US TO COEXIST WITH OUR MICROBIAL PARTNERS.

WHEN RESEARCHERS BLOCKED THIS MECHANISM -- BY REMOVING THE PSA MOLECULE, BY REMOVING THE TOLL-LIKE RECEPTOR FOR PSA, OR BY ELIMINATING THE TREG CELLS THEMSELVES -- THE BACTERIA WERE ATTACKED BY THE IMMUNE SYSTEM AND EXPELLED. THEY CAN NO LONGER CO-OPT THE IMMUNE SYSTEM INTO INDUCING AN ANTI-INFLAMMATORY RESPONSE, SO THE FORMERLY BENIGN BACTERIUM NOW LOOKS LIKE A PATHOGEN, ALTHOUGH THE BUG ITSELF IS EXACTLY THE SAME.

OUR IMMUNE SYSTEM AROSE IN THE FACE OF COLONIZATION AND THUS LIKELY EVOLVED SPECIALIZED MOLECULES TO RECOGNIZE GOOD BACTERIA. RESEARCHERS SUSPECT THAT GENETIC MUTATIONS IN THESE PATHWAYS COULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR CERTAIN TYPES OF IMMUNE DISORDERS, INCLUDING INFLAMMATORY BOWEL DISEASE: THE QUESTION IS, DO PATIENTS GET SICK BECAUSE THEY ARE REJECTING BACTERIA THEY SHOULDN'T REJECT?

ON A MORE PHILOSOPHICAL LEVEL, THE FINDINGS SUGGEST THAT OUR CONCEPT OF "SELF" SHOULD BE BROADENED TO INCLUDE OUR MANY TRILLIONS OF MICROBIAL RESIDENTS. THESE BACTERIA LIVE INSIDE US FOR OUR ENTIRE LIVES, AND THEY'VE EVOLVED TO LOOK AND ACT LIKE US, AS PART OF US. AS FAR AS OUR IMMUNE SYSTEM IS CONCERNED, THE MOLECULES MADE BY GUT BACTERIA SHOULD BE TOLERATED SIMILARLY TO OUR OWN MOLECULES. EXCEPT IN THIS CASE, THE BACTERIA 'TEACHES' US TO TOLERATE THEM, FOR BOTH OUR BENEFIT AND THEIRS.

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FAMOUS QUOTES

ALBERT EINSTEIN (1879 – 1955) 76 YEARS.

BECAUSE I HAVE QUOTED EINSTEIN PREVIOUSLY I WILL ONLY GIVE A BRIEF BIO. EINSTEIN WAS A GERMAN-BORN THEORETICAL PHYSICIST WHO DEVELOPED THE THEORIES OF SPECIAL AND GENERAL RELATIVITY, EFFECTING A REVOLUTION IN PHYSICS.

"COMMON SENSE IS THE COLLECTION OF PREJUDICES ACQUIRED BY AGE EIGHTEEN."

THE SECOND AND FINAL QUOTE QUOTE FROM EINSTEIN IS FOR MR. O'REILLY, PERSONALLY:

"THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN GENIUS AND STUPIDITY ... IS THAT GENIUS HAS ITS LIMITS."