

Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (<https://www.ncronline.org>)

July 30, 2009 at 6:34am

Freedom of speech -- at a price

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NCR Today

Glen Beck, the Fox News pundit, this week, you might have heard, called President Obama "a racist." The controversy began Tuesday morning when Beck, during a guest appearance on "Fox and Friends," said that Obama "whose mother was white and who was raised by his white grandparents" has a "deep-seated hatred for white people or the white culture, I don't know what it is." Partially challenged, he went on: "I'm not saying he doesn't like white people. He has a problem. The guy is, I believe, racist."

I feel both sad and upset. Sad to realize a major cable channel gives regular voice to calculated, mindless, divisive chatter. Calculated: anything for ratings. Mindless: based on no rational empirical evidence and Beck won't cite any. Divisive: Comes at the cost of fueling racial division in America. Upset because, while it is sometimes best to simply ignore the fringe, letting these outbursts to go completely unchallenged risks allowing them to grow. They are intended, you might have guessed, to weaken the president in his administration's efforts to deal with very serious matters, including the economy and health care.

One answer is to threaten Beck and his Fox Network enablers at their pocketbooks. The approach is outlined here.

Meanwhile, perhaps a short prayer that Glen Beck finds something missing within him is in order.

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