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This combination of photos shows Republican presidential nominee former President Donald Trump, left, and Democratic presidential nominee Vice President Kamala Harris during an ABC News presidential debate at the National Constitution Center, Sept. 10 in Philadelphia. (AP/Alex Brandon, File)



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As the U.S. presidential election draws near, a booming "fake news" business is targeting Catholics, especially those inclined to vote for Kamala Harris. Self-proclaimed "Catholic" websites and emailed "news" briefs push pro-Trump spins on news stories, often veering outside the margins of responsible reporting.

The Loop, a daily email from the advocacy organization CatholicVote, and other of these partisan publications wrap Donald Trump in shiny silver, attempting to show how he reflects Catholic values and moral teachings. One new entry, refreshingly disavowed by several diocesan bishops, is the Catholic Tribune syndicate, which has produced newspapers in several swing states that overtly and pointedly support the indicted former president.

According to ProPublica, an award-winning "nonprofit newsroom that produces investigative journalism with moral force," Catholic Tribune newspapers that were sent in October to homeowners in Arizona, Michigan, Nevada, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin sought to convince Catholic voters to vote for Trump with anti-Harris opinion pieces on transgender athletes, abortion and illegal immigration.

Brian Timpone, a [former TV reporter from the Midwest](#), presides over the Catholic Tribune network and its nearly 1,300 conservative local news websites as head of a company called Pipeline Media. His interlocking subsidiaries process information with a conservative slant and filter the content to local versions of the Catholic Tribune.

CatholicVote and The Loop, overseen by another Midwesterner, Brian Burch, breathlessly announced on Monday (Oct. 28) that five years ago, Harris, as a U.S. senator from California, attended the San Francisco Pride parade. The Loop's headline, "Harris Celebrates with Anti-Catholic Hate Group," is in keeping with the newsletter's other political commentary. Embedded in the article is a 30-second

video ad that connects Harris with old clips of the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, a drag queen group, ending with a voiceover: "Kamala Harris stands with they/them, not with you. Christians can't stay home Nov. 5."

Advertisement

The attempts to sway the Catholic vote in this election cycle may or may not be working. But facts matter.

While abortion is front and center in Harris' campaign, her Republican supporters, such as former U.S. Rep. Liz Cheney, point out that a return to the national restrictions of Roe v. Wade would end draconian state laws endangering women's lives, as well as overly permissive laws that go beyond Roe's restrictions. The fact is that Harris supports national legislation and Trump is happy to stand back and watch the state-by-state free-for-all.

While "Catholic" websites, journals and broadcast networks most assuredly support Republican victories up and down the ballot, they report only the ways Democratic policies digress from, not how they agree with, Catholic teachings. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, once likened to "the Democratic Party at prayer," has not taken the time to push back on pro-Trump "fake news."

Virtually none of the recent faux Catholic media torrent focuses on Trump's pledge to require insurance coverage and public funding for in vitro fertilization, apparently including for surrogacy.

In calling surrogacy "despicable," Pope Francis echoed the warnings of Aldous Huxley's 1932 novel "Brave New World," in which Huxley predicted that technology would solve the world's problems but that humanity would suffer as a result.

Humanity is already suffering, yet too many people ignore the probable consequences of another Trump presidency. The United States approaches a dangerous crossroads, and Catholic voters could make the difference.

This story appears in the **Election 2024** feature series. [View the full series.](#)