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Healthcare and Misleading Misleaders

By [Jay Richards](#)

September 29, 2009, 9:40 am

Yesterday, [I discussed Sojourners' email campaign](#) to conservative talk show hosts, which chastised the the talkers for “lying” about healthcare reform. As I said, I think the campaign is misguided because it is based on wooden interpretations of the radio commentators' statements.

It's also misguided because it confuses off-the-cuff, short-hand commentary by radio hosts with lying. Even if Glenn Beck or Rush Limbaugh, for instance, said something that was demonstrably false, they would only be lying if they intended to mislead. Sojourners failed to even allege, let alone establish, such intent.

And then there's this: the emails are only being sent to conservatives, even though Sojourners claim that their campaign is nonpartisan. [Jim Wallis of Sojourners says it is not “his intention to promote a given proposal.”](#) So I assume that means that they oppose misleading statements by those on the Left as well—including by the president.

Perhaps the president's statements escaped their attention, so it's handy that Michael F. Cannon and Ramesh Ponnuru have published [a careful and thorough piece in National Review Online](#) detailing 21 such misleading statements on healthcare reform.

Interestingly, one of the president's misleading claims [was repeated in Sojourners' tell-the-truth campaign](#):

[in our e-mail] we told the story of a real person, a real woman who was denied her breast cancer surgery because of her health provider's discovery of a pre-existing condition called acne.

The [real story of this woman is a sad one; but President Obama's description of it is inaccurate](#).

It looks like this was an honest mistake by the president. But some of his misleading claims seem [more calculated—more intentional](#). In any case, given the low standard Sojourners has used for allegations of lying, will they now send thousands of tell-the-truth emails to the White House? Given the circumstances, it seems like the nonpartisan thing to do.

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