

# KNOW *the* FACTS

## ABOUT EMAIL SMEARS ON BARACK OBAMA

“Let's make clear what the facts are: I am a Christian. I have been sworn in with a Bible. I pledge allegiance and lead the Pledge of Allegiance sometimes in the United States Senate, when I'm presiding...in the Internet age, there are going to be lies that are spread all over the place. I have been victimized by these lies. Fortunately the American people are, I think, smarter than folks give them credit for.”

– Barack Obama, *Democratic Debate, January 16, 2008*

### THE FACTS

- Barack Obama has never been a Muslim and has never prayed at a mosque.
- Barack Obama never attended a radical madrassa.
- Barack Obama became a Christian long before he entered politics. As a community organizer in the 1980s, he worked with a group of churches in a depressed neighborhood of Chicago. He became active in Trinity United Church of Christ, where he, his wife, and daughter remain active members today.

### NEWS REPORTS HAVE CONDEMNED THE FALSE SMEARS

**NEWSWEEK:** “Dueling chain e-mails claim [Obama's] a radical Muslim or a 'racist' Christian. Both can't be right. We find both are false. . . One claims that Obama is 'certainly a racist' by virtue of belonging to Chicago's Trinity United Church of Christ, which it says 'will accept only black parishioners' and espouses a commitment to Africa. Actually, a white theology professor says he's been 'welcomed enthusiastically' at the church, as have other non-blacks. Another e-mail claims that Obama 'is a Muslim,' attended a 'Wahabi' school in Indonesia, took his Senate oath on the Koran, refuses to recite the Pledge of Allegiance and is part of an Islamic plot to take over the U.S. Each of these statements is false. These false appeals to bigotry and fear remind us of the infamous whispering campaign of eight years ago, when anonymous messages just before the South Carolina primary.” (January 11, 2008)

**LOS ANGELES TIMES:** “That the rumors are false and vile is self-evident...Presidential candidates of both parties have a duty to denounce not only the smear against Obama but the bigotry that underlies it.” (December 2, 2007)

**ASSOCIATED PRESS:** “Interviews by The Associated Press at the elementary school in Jakarta found that it's a public and secular institution that has been open to students of all faiths since before the White House hopeful attended in the late 1960s.” (January 24, 2007)

**WASHINGTON POST:** “Mr. Obama's slanders seem to think such name-calling and Muslim-baiting can score points with the American people. On the contrary, Mr. Obama's multicultural background (his father was Kenyan, and he spent several years living in Indonesia with his mother and stepfather) ought to be viewed as a plus. A president with an understanding of Islam and the developing world would be welcomed by those who too often feel misunderstood and slighted by the United States. Mr. Obama has never tried to hide his past or his family name: He has written about being educated at a predominantly Muslim school. His father, a non-practicing Muslim, was Barack Hussein Obama Sr.” (January 28, 2007)

### RELIGIOUS LEADERS HAVE CONDEMNED THE FALSE SMEARS

**FAITH LEADERS:** “Many of you have seen hateful emails, blog postings and reports circulating on the Internet and in the media about Senator Barack Obama and his religious upbringing. We are writing to deplore this despicable tactic and set the record straight. We have had enough of the slash and burn politics calculated to divide us as children of God. We must come together as one nation, and see our stake in each other as Americans. The bitter, destructive politics that have so riven our country in recent years cannot stand.” (January 23, 2007) Signed by: Dr. Robert W. Edgar, National Council of Churches; Rabbi Jonah Dov Pesner; Salam Al-Marayati, Muslim Public Affairs Council; Rev. Stephen J. Thurston, National Baptist Convention of America; The Rt. Rev. Preston W. Williams, Global Council of Bishops, African Methodist Episcopal Church; Sister Simone Campbell, SSS, NETWORK; The Rev. John H. Thomas, United Church of Christ; Rev. Dr. C. Welton Gaddy, Interfaith Alliance; Rabbi Jill Jacobs, Jewish Funds for Justice; Alexia Kelly, Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good; Dr. T. DeWitt Smith, Jr., Progressive National Baptist Convention