

# Pat Robinson: A U.S. religious right murderer?

By Rev. Barbara Reynolds  
Special to Sentinel-Voice

Pat Robertson's recent explosive statement is an embarrassment only because he was caught saying publicly what most of the Bush crowd believe privately, and he exposes the fanaticism that is a staple of President George Bush and the Religious Right posse surrounding him.

Robertson, host of Christian Broadcasting Network's "700 club," urged the assassination of Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez, sounding more like Osama bin Laden than a Christian who is supposed to be committed to the love ethic.

Speaking of Chavez, Robertson said, "There was a popular coup that overthrew him. And what did the U.S. State Department do about it? Virtually nothing. And as a result, within about 48 hours, that coup was broken; Chavez was back in power, but we had a chance to move in. He has destroyed the Venezuelan economy, and he's going to make that a launching pad for Communist infiltration and Muslim extremism all over the continent."

Robertson said, "I don't know about this doctrine of assassination, but if he thinks we're trying to assassinate him, I think we really ought to go ahead and do it. It's a whole lot cheaper than starting a war. And I don't

think any oil shipments will stop. We have the ability to take him out. We don't need another \$200 billion war to get rid of a strong-arm dictator..."

What has Chavez done to the United States that the United States should murder him?

In the Bushwhack way of thinking, Chavez has committed two crimes worthy of capital punishment. He is not White, and he is head of a country that has lots of oil: The Bush crowd has proven that those two ingredients are a prescription for destruction. Look at Iraq. If Iraq had been European-led and produced bananas, Saddam Hussein would still be in power.

Venezuela is a deeply Roman Catholic country whose people elected Chavez in a free election and continue to support him in spite of the attempt by Venezuela's rich and the U.S. government to overthrow him. Chavez has the Bush administration breathing fire because Chavez is more interested in building schools and housing for the poor and in helping the Venezuelan people to share more equitably in the nation's oil resources, said Rev. Graylan Scott Hagler, national president of the Ministers for Racial, Social and Economic Justice.

"Chavez is asserting his Indian/African roots and is taking valuable resources out of the hands of the few and helping the needy.

When you go to Venezuela, gas is 12 cents a gallon where it is almost three bucks here. Bush wants to control the world flow of oil," said Hagler. "This is hardly the neighborliness that Jesus Christ calls us to emulate."

Robertson exposed a cynical blend of godless, oppressive politics working under the cover of Christianity. This was operative in Liberia and Zaire.

Rev. Joan Harrell, a scholar at the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta, has written a paper exposing Robertson as a charlatan through his operations in Liberia and in Zaire. During the last decade while Robertson was calling on his CBN viewers to call on God to help the suffering Liberians, he was literally gold-digging.

"Some native Liberians were digging for gold on behalf of Robertson's for-profit Freedom Gold Limited company," Harrell said.

And while Robertson's employees were digging for gold, young innocent boys were forced to become fighting soldiers, and women were molested and mutilated, she wrote. In an effort to pull off his for-private operations, Robertson is credited with having a close relationship with ex-Liberian Charles Taylor, a fierce human rights violator.

Robertson also took his capitalism-coated religiosity to Zaire where reports say he en-

tered into a business relationship with President Mobutu Sese Seko, whose personal fortunes was nearly \$4 billion, while his people went hungry.

Harrell, a Baptist minister, raises an interesting question: "Did Mobutu and Robertson, both of whom confessed faith in God, decide to manipulate the faith language and practice of Christianity and use it as a foundation to implement a scheme to filch an African country of its natural resources and steal from that country's poor women, children and men to make the rich richer?"

Whatever the motives, Robertson and his ilk and his Republican-cohorts are doing their best to make a mockery out of Christianity.

Furthermore, some legal scholars say it is a federal felony to use instruments of interstate or foreign commerce to threaten people. Robertson's show urging "assassination" was beamed across the world by ABC's Family Channel's satellites.

When Janet Jackson exposed a tinge of her breast during the Super Bowl, there were severe fines and penalties. But when Robertson, President Bush's friend, called for murder, I wouldn't be surprised if down the line, Robertson was rewarded an ambassadorship. Maybe even to Venezuela.

Rev. Barbara Reynolds, the religion columnist for NNPA.

## Award

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[Tyson] going to address the specific issue of that farm."

Sharpton said Tyson was nominated by Morris for an award because of a significant advertising contract with Morris. "Because Tyson had given this contract to him," Sharpton said. "That was the basis of Gene's nomination of them and the basis of the award."

The episode raises troubling questions about how corporations are selected for honors.

Sharpton says he has been urged not to withdraw the award because the allegations against Tyson involve one farm in Ashland, Ala., among the 300 owned worldwide by the Springfield, Ark.-based corporation.

"Their claim is that this is one farm and that it is not the corporate policy and [Tyson is] denouncing it," Sharpton says. "I said, 'What are they going to do about it? And I'm waiting to know what that is.'"

Sharpton also walked a tight line in trying to defend his organization's decision to honor a Wal-Mart executive.

Although the National Action Network press release clearly states that "Wal-Mart Corporation" as an award recipient, Sharpton now says, "Wal-Mart's not getting the award. The executive is getting one."

He was referring to Esther Silver Parker, Wal-Mart's vice president for diversity relations. The former AT&T executive is being credited

for "the strategic planning and execution of Wal-Mart's diverse efforts as it relates to its supplier development program, philanthropic and community relations programs."

Wal-Mart Corporation is the world's largest retailer, with 4,717 stores worldwide and 3,422 in the U.S. It has 1.2 million U.S. employees.

The company opposes unions and is the target of multiple civil rights lawsuits alleging violations that include refusal to pay overtime, use of illegal workers and pay inequities for women.

Sued by the EEOC in 2001, Wal-Mart agreed to a \$6.8 million settlement, re-

solving 13 lawsuits against the company in 11 states, alleging discrimination against disabled job applicants. Another suit alleging disability discrimination filed last year in Richmond, Mo., has yet to be resolved.

On its website, Wal-Mart defends its record, noting that it hires more than 139,000 Hispanics and more than 208,000 African-Americans. Of its 14-member board, it states, two are Black, two are Latino and one is female. It states, "...officer compensation is now linked to diversity goal." A manager who fails to reach his or her diversity goal could lose up to 15 percent of bonus money.

According to Sharpton's release, "The annual event was designed to honor the courage and hard work of individuals and corporations that are doing important work in communities of color. Honorees are selected based upon a proven track record of their commitment."

This is not the first time a civil rights leader has been criticized for honoring controversial figures or companies.

After NAACP Board Chair Julian Bond delivered a blistering attack on President Bush in 2002, NAACP President Kweisi Mfume gave his president's award to then National Security Advi-

sor Condoleezza Rice.

"Why are we so desperate that we continue giving awards to our enemies?" asks Julia Hare, co-founder of the Black Think Tank in San Francisco, Calif. "Besides, we don't need ignorant leadership. You'd have to be living under a rock not to know the reputations of Tyson Foods and Wal-Mart. It's been all in the news. You can no longer call yourself a civil rights organization nor a Black leader when you engage in this kind of practice. It is not Black leaders but leading Blacks who are bought off by corporations... You can't have it both ways, Al Sharpton."

## Clingman

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simply succumbed to madness of economic suicide? I guess the brothers can sit in their trucks on the streets, play their loud stereos, and move their furniture into them, as well, when things worsen. Hummer anyone? How stupid is that?

This is real. You can turn away if you want, but sooner or later, it's going to hit most of us. And those of you in the "protected class," if things get bad enough, you will be the first to go, the first to be jettisoned from the spaceship of state, because whether you accept it or, you were only "chosen" to create more profit for someone else.

Please find ways to build economic empowerment for our collective survival in this country. Pooling our funds, buying co-ops, collective farming, manufacturing, ownership and control of more income-producing assets, and looking at opportunities where we dominate as consumers, are just a few of things we must do. Let's get busy!

James E. Clingman, an adjunct professor at the University of Cincinnati's African American Studies department.

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