

Here's what Rev. Jeremiah Wright really said

By George E. Curry
Special to Sentinel-Voice

The *Chicago Tribune* recently transcribed some controversial sermons of Rev. Jeremiah Wright, Barack Obama's retired, former pastor. As can be seen below, many of his remarks were taken out of context.

SEPT. 16, 2001

Sound bite: "We've bombed Hiroshima, we've bombed Nagasaki, we've nuked far more than the thousands in New York and the Pentagon and we never batted an eye. . . . We have supported state terrorism against the Palestinians and Black South Africans, and now we are indignant. Because the stuff we have done overseas is now brought right back into our own front yards. America's chickens are coming home to roost."

Wright in context:

"I heard Ambassador [Edward] Peck on an interview yesterday, did anybody else see him or hear him? He was on Fox News. This is a White man, and he was upsetting the Fox News commentators to no end. Did you see him, John? A White man. He pointed out, an ambassador, that what Malcolm X said when he got silenced by Elijah Muhammad was in fact true, that America's chickens are coming home to roost."

"We took this country by terror away from the Sioux, the Apache, the Iroquois, the Comanche, the Arapaho, the Navajo. Terrorism. We took Africans from their country to build our way of ease and kept them enslaved and living in fear. Terrorism. We bombed

Grenada and killed innocent civilians, babies, non-military personnel; we bombed the Black civilian community of Panama, with stealth bombers, and killed unarmed teenagers and toddlers, pregnant mothers and hard-working fathers. We've bombed [Moammar] Gadhafi's home and killed his child.

"Blessed are they who bash your children's heads against the rocks. We bombed Iraq; we killed unarmed civilians trying to make a living. We bombed a plant in Sudan to pay back an attack on our embassy. Killed hundreds of hard-working people, mothers and fathers who left home that day, not knowing that they would never get back home."

"We've bombed Hiroshima, we've bombed Nagasaki, we've nuked far more than the thousands in New York and the Pentagon and we never batted an eye. Kids playing in the playground, mothers picking up children after school, civilians — not soldiers — people just trying to make it day by day"

"We have supported state terrorism against the Palestinians and Black South Africans, and now we are indignant. Because the stuff we have done overseas is now brought right back into our own front yards."

"America's chickens are coming home to roost. Violence begets violence. Hatred begets hatred, and terrorism begets terrorism."



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Damn America."

Wright in context:

"...The United States of America government, when it came to treating her citizens of Indian descent fairly, she failed. She put them on the reservations. When it came to treating her citizens of Japanese descent fairly, she failed. She put them in internment prison camps. When it came to treating the citizens of African descent fairly, America failed. She put them in chains."

"The government put them on slave quarters, put them on auction blocks, put them in cotton fields, put them in inferior schools, put them in substandard housing, put them in scientific experiments, put them in the lowest paying jobs, put them outside the equal protection of the law, kept them out of the racist bastions of higher education and locked them into positions of hopelessness and helplessness."

"The government gives them the drugs, builds bigger prisons, passes a three-strike

A White ambassador said that, y'all, not a Black militant. Not a reverend who preaches about racism.

JULY 2003

Sound bite: "The government gives them the drugs, builds bigger prisons, passes a three-strike law and then wants us to sing 'God Bless America'? No, no, no, not 'God Bless America,' 'God

law and then wants us to sing 'God Bless America'?"

"No, no, no, not 'God Bless America,' 'God Damn America.' That's in the Bible, for killing innocent people. God damn America for treating its citizens as less than human, God damn America as long as she tries to act like she is God and she is supreme. The United States government has failed the vast majority of her citizens of African descent."

JAN. 13, 2008

Sound bite: "Hillary is married to Bill, and Bill has been good to us. No he ain't. Bill did us just like he did Monica Lewinski. He was riding dirty."

Wright in context:

"There is a man here who can take this country in a new direction. 'But he's a Black man.'"

"There is a man here who is empowered by hope to usher in an era of change in a country that is in desperate need of a change. 'But he ain't Black enough.' There is a man here who can get Christians, Muslims, Jews, Hindus, Buddhists and persons of no faith to sit down at the table of brotherhood and sisterhood and talk about our common humanity and our common future. 'But I ain't gonna vote for him 'cause I don't want to waste my vote.' 'But Hillary is married to Bill, and Bill has been good to us.' No he ain't. Bill did us just like he did Monica Lewinsky. He was riding dirty."

George E. Curry is a keynote speaker, moderator, and media coach.

Attack on Black theology an affront to Black America

By Ron Walters
Special to Sentinel-Voice

It began last year with Hannity and Combs calling the theology followed by Dr. Jeremiah Wright's church a "cult."

But it continues with recent news articles calling Black Theology a "strange religion" and a "separatist" concept. All of these characterizations are distorted in that they emanate from a perspective outside of the Black community attempting to perceive the fundamentals of a culture that honors the dignity of Black people in its religious practice.

Rev. James Cone was interviewed by National Public Radio in March and he was repeatedly referred to as the father of Black Theology. That may be true in the sense of his composition of the theology, but he would be the first to say that its practice grew out of the historical religious experiences of Black people.

I recall that in the book by Professor V. P. Franklin, "Black Self Determination," he comments on a scene on a plantation where slaves were being preached to by their White master. When the master cited several passages in the Bible meant to support his view that slaves should obey their master, they arose and moved to the other side of the room!

The notion had come to Blacks early in

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Robert Mugabe or ZANU-PF, but rather, where one stands in relation to Zimbabwe's people and their critique of their own government.

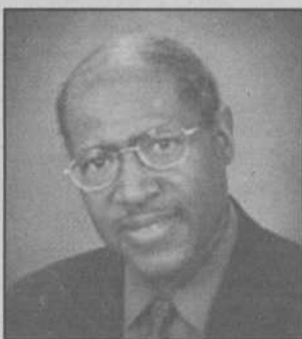
TransAfrica Forum continues, as is our tradition, to stand in solidarity with the people of Zimbabwe.

Nicole C. Lee is the Executive Director of TransAfrica Forum.

their engagement with Christian religion that there was a contradiction between the theological interpretation of their master, and their own understanding of the message of Amos that the mission of Christians was justice which should "roll down like water and righteousness like a mighty stream," or that Jesus ordered his disciples such as the prophet Jeremiah to "preach good news to the poor," or that the basic duty of Christians was to care for the oppressed and despised. In other words, the mission of Christianity appeared to speak powerfully to their own liberation.

In the 1960s, Malcolm X contributed to Black Theology by his demand that Black love themselves and in doing so, validate their own humanity before the world. He noted that many Blacks existed in the mental slavery of loving their modern masters and their theology more than they loved their own or themselves. This was a profound observation of a Muslim that many Blacks had received Christianity uncritically and had not interpreted it in the context of their own identity and life challenges. This would all change with the coming of the ideology of Black Power which affirmed the Black self and led to Rev. James Cone's seminal book, "Black Theology and Black Power."

The view that a people whose humanity had been debased through slavery and civic oppression could not express a positive view of their identity was received by many Whites, however, as "separatist." This, however, represents the perspective of the dominant group — separation from whom? — rather than a focus on the empowerment of



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Black humanity and not a prescription for hating Whites. Moreover, in the hands of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., even when it was not recognized as a formal theology, Black religion was a moral force that provided an alternate definition of freedom and liberation of the material and spiritual dimensions of life in confrontation with the evils of war, poverty and racism.

Most important, many Blacks were challenged to reinterpret the Christianity they practiced in terms of their own history and identity, leading to the Blackening of religious images, the reconceptualization of the identity of Jesus as a White man and the African origins of Christianity by Howard University's Professor Cain Hope Felder and others. And why not? In every civilization, the evolution of the highest spiritual force is rendered in the context of the culture of the people who are supplicants to it. The Christian religion is an exception only because it

was spread with the sword through the Crusades and colonialism. But even then, it has rarely eclipsed indigenous religions, rather, they have merged in a syncretistic dance that allows the indigenous religions to be practiced under the shell of Western religions.

Surveys by Professors Lincoln and Mamiya have found that Black Theology is practiced least by the Black working class Church of God In Christ (COGIC) churches, and most by Black churches with more highly educated and affluent populations and, in any case, it is not the dominant theology of the Black church in general. Nevertheless, the extent to which it opened a window for the exercise of the prophetic exegeses that evaluate the quality of American life, and especially the condition of Black people, in terms of the application of Christian principles of liberation, makes it exceedingly precious and worthy of defense.

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Analysis

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providing opportunities for good jobs. (Beyond...)

— Protect workers' freedom of association and right to join a union. (Beyond...)

— Raise the minimum wage so that it regains its 1968 value and index it so that it rises as prices rise. (Beyond...)

— Ensure a fair and progressive tax system, which would include the Earned Income tax Credit. (Economists...)

— Open opportunities for men, women

and youth who are traditionally blocked from good jobs. (Economists...)

— Restore and enforce basic labor market standards. (Economists...)

"The 2008 Presidential election is full of talk of 'change,'" concludes the IPS report, "The Unrealized American Dream." It continues, "It is our hope that this report can help catalyze our national will to make real change in the area of racial inequalities — a divide that still tarnishes the land of Dr. King's dream."