

# Media ignoring McCain's 'minister' problem

By George E. Curry  
Special to Sentinel-Voice

As Jon Stewart said on "The Daily Show," Rev. Jeremiah Wright has been dominating cable news coverage like a missing White girl. Meanwhile, John McCain has his own Rev. Wrong in the form of Rev. John Hagee, a San Antonio-based minister who refers to the Catholic Church as the "Great Whore" and calls Hurricane Katrina divine retaliation for New Orleans' support of gays and lesbians.

Unlike O'Bama, McCain actively sought and accepted the support of Hagee. The Democratic frontrunner has been hammered about controversial statements of his former pastor even after strongly rejecting them. In the Feb. 26 debate alone, Farrakhan's name was brought up nine times. On the other hand, McCain has not been hounded to denounce and repudiate Hagee.

Not counting last weekend's stories, a study by Media Matters for America, a monitoring group, the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* have published 12 times as many articles mentioning Obama's ties to Wright as they have on McCain's link to Hagee.

From Feb. 27 until the past week, the *Washington Post* had published 53 stories mentioning Obama's relationship with Wright, but only three articles mentioning McCain and Hagee. Over that same period,

the *New York Times* published 46 stories mentioning Obama and Wright, but only five about the McCain and Hagee connection.

Writing in Sunday's *New York Times*, columnist Frank Rich stated: "...It is disingenuous to pretend that there isn't a double-standard operating here. If we're going to judge Black candidates on their most controversial associates — and how quickly, sternly and completely they disown them — we must judge White politicians by the same yardstick."

However, that isn't the case. And it never has been. Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell blamed the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on abortion supporters, gays, feminists, the ACLU and People for the American Way, yet no one called on President George W. Bush, who enjoys their political support, to denounce and repudiate them.

As Rich pointed out in his column, former Republican presidential candidate Rudolph Giuliani allowed a former priest kicked out of a Long Island diocese in 2002 for sexual abuse to officiate one of Giuliani's weddings. The candidate was never asked to denounce and repudiate the defrocked priest.

McCain, the Republican's presumptive



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nominee, gets a pass on Hagee. Consider the following:

—Speaking on National Public Radio's "Fresh Air" [Sept. 18, 2006], Hagee said, "...The newspaper carried the story in our local area that was not carried nationally that there was to be a homosexual parade [in New Orleans] on the Monday that Katrina came. And the promise of that parade was that it was going to reach a level of sexuality never demonstrated before in any of the other Gay Pride parades... And I believe that the Hurricane Katrina was, in fact, the judgment of God against the city of New Orleans."

—He also said in that same NPR interview, "...Those who live by the Qur'an [Muslims] have a scriptural mandate to kill Christians and Jews."

—The *Wall Street Journal* [July 27, 2006], referring to Hagee's church bulletin, reported, "To help students seeking odd jobs, his church newsletter, *The Cluster*, advertised a 'slave' sale. 'Slavery in America is returning to Cornerstone,' it said. 'Make plans to come and go home with a slave.' Mr. Hagee apologized but, in a radio interview, protested about pressure to be 'politically correct' and joked that perhaps his pet dog should be called a 'canine American.'"

—Summarizing Hagee's record, Catholic League President Bill Donahue said, "For the past few decades, he [Hagee] has waged an unrelenting war against the Catholic Church. For example, he likes calling it 'The Great Whore,' an 'apostate church,' the 'anti-Christ,' and a 'false cult system.'"

—In his book, "What Every Man Wants in a Woman," Hagee said, "Do you know the difference between a woman with PMS and a snarling Doberman pinscher? The answer is lipstick. Do you know the difference between a terrorist and a woman with PMS? You can negotiate with a terrorist."

—In another section of the book, Hagee writes: "Only a Spirit-filled woman can submit to her husband's lead. It is the natural desire of a woman to lead through feminine manipulation of the man."

On the April 20 edition of ABC's "This Week," McCain, referring to Hagee, said: "I'm glad to have his endorsement." He explained, "I admire and respect Dr. Hagee's leadership of the — of his church."

That position disturbs Donahue of the Catholic League. He said, "Sen. Obama has repudiated the endorsement of Louis Farrakhan, another bigot. McCain should follow suit and retract his embrace of Hagee."

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# Young, gifted and bored—Bring back summer jobs

By Marc H. Morial  
Special to Sentinel-Voice

"The best poverty prevention program is a job." For more than 30 years, beginning in the 1960s, the federal government saw the enormous benefit of providing summer jobs to millions of disadvantaged youth across America. But since 2000, the Summer Youth Employment and Training Program, has lost its direct funding and is now effectively buried among 10 competing programs within the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). With the economy reeling, unemployment soaring and the summer heat approaching, there is an urgent need to bring back summer jobs for youth.

We know that a summer job experience not only puts much-needed money into the pockets of poor kids and sometimes into the budgets of their families, it also provides opportunities to gain valuable new skills, and it

can be a pathway to higher education and ultimately to taxpaying citizenship. Investing in this effort returns tremendous dividends in reduced welfare dependency, fewer crimes, less incarceration and greater workforce productivity. For some youth, it can be a life-saving alternative to the world of gangs and drugs.

Earlier this year, in separate letters to Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, I made, on behalf of the National Urban League, a strong case for including a "summer jobs stimulus" as part of the bipartisan economic stimulus package. For Black teens, a "summer jobs stimulus" is most urgent. In 2007, Black teens, aged 16-19, had an unemployment rate of 29.5



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percent compared to 13.9 percent for White teens. The summer jobs stimulus did not make it into the final bill, but all is not lost.

Currently, both the House and the Senate have introduced bills — H.R.5444 introduced by House Majority Whip James Clyburn and S.2755 introduced by Sen. Patty Murray — that call for

an immediate \$1 billion commitment for youth summer jobs this year. While I support their efforts, the current state of our economy makes it clear that \$1 billion is not enough. I implore them and the Congress to increase that commitment to \$2 billion.

The National Urban League has a historic commitment to securing summer jobs for low-income youth and ensuring that every-

one has the opportunity to earn. In 2000, we joined a coalition of youth-serving organizations, churches, city and county political associations, the National League of Cities and the U.S. Conference of Mayors, all calling for the Congress to provide emergency supplemental appropriations for summer jobs. And over the last two years, we've called for restoring the Summer Youth Jobs Program as a separate program under WIA to be funded with new monies.

For years, "The Opportunity to Earn" has been one of the four components of the National Urban League's Opportunity Compact. We believe that the federal government should act now to provide jobs to disadvantaged youth who want to work, who need to work and who are seeking alternatives to idleness and the dangers of the summer streets.

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left out, overlooked and invisible into the mix with the rich, powerful and the establishment figures.

In addition, I constantly fought for the media to hire more Blacks as columnists, editors and to also hire more religion writers. I dare say, if there were writers and journalists armed with the knowledge of how the Black church has provided leadership to this nation — not by shutting up, but by challenging, rebuking and reconciling — people of faith would see the mainstream media in a more positive light. Ironically, some of the same Black journalists who are criticizing me now as I continue to fight for inclusion and diversity, are there as a result of myself and others fighting the corporate media to hire them.

Shortly before the press club breakfast, I

helped organized a press luncheon for Secretary Jackson of HUD and worked very hard to make it a sold out event, as was the Wright event. I am not a Republican.

Two weeks before the Wright event, I helped organize a press luncheon for LaRaza, a Hispanic organization. I am not Hispanic. But nevertheless, I read that I am part of some nefarious plot against Obama. Ironically, as I preached and made speeches about the prophetic vision of Obama that will have a longer positive effect on politics in America than these silly arguments, I was accused by some of being an Obama surrogate.

I am neither an Obama surrogate nor a Clinton surrogate. If either one becomes president — or neither, I will still be challenging the next president to lift up the poor and the powerless as I have challenged presidents for the last four decades.

One thing I learned from Dr. Betty Shabazz, the wife of the late Malcolm X, is to "find the good and praise it." I think this country would be better served if either Hillary Clinton or Barack Obama became president instead of John McCain. And I think this country is better served by an ex-Marine like Pastor Jeremiah Wright standing up for his beliefs; and like the Jeremiah in the Bible, standing up for his country in pointing out the nation's past sins and pleading for change and reconciliation, which is the message I heard at the National Press Club.

In his powerful speech before the NAACP on the previous evening, he made the case that we are a nation of differences — and different does not mean deficient. Why can't we accept the different-message style of Wright?

Meanwhile, Pastor Wright and his family are receiving death threats and his church

bomb threats. This is very sad. I do not believe that tearing down and hating on either Barack or Clinton or Wright is honorable. If this level of hate continues, it will only spell disaster for our nation.

At this writing, Sen. Obama appears favored to be the nominee. If he prevails, I will most certainly support him and vote for him in the general election.

Then — I will have voted in the primary and in the general election — for two of the most phenomenal politicians this country has produced. And at the same time, I am proud to stand beside Pastor Jeremiah Wright, one of the most brilliant and courageous preachers I have ever known.

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