

Obama's pastor would have kept our troops out of Iraq

To the current “On Faith” question – “Should Barack Obama have resigned from his church?” – my answer is NO.

1....When Obama migrated from Harvard to the dangerous streets of a black area of Chicago, he discovered that Trinity United Church of Christ was the area’s most important institution for doing what he went there to do, namely, be good news to the community. Under the ministry of the Rev. Jeremiah Wright, 70 programs of social concern and public improvement came into being. The alliance of his community-organizing efforts with that church could not have been more expected and natural. Should he break off the alliance just because of some of the things his preacher said?

2....If Barack had left the church, would Michelle and their children have left with him? The family was deeply involved in the life of that church in that community. (It was easy for Oprah Winfrey, a childless individual, to walk out when she decided it was bad for her business to be so closely identified with a black community. A *family* leaving a church is another matter.)

3....I am of the same liberal denomination as Trinity Church, Jeremiah Wright, and the Obama family. A local Christian church is a community whose leadership changes: Jeremiah Wright is no longer pastor of Trinity Church. As a pastor, I sought so to build up the community I was responsible for that my leaving would hardly be noticed: pastors come and go, *communities abide*.

4....Jeremiah Wright, a graduate of the very liberal University of Chicago Divinity School, preached the gospel of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, and encouraged his black community with an “Afrocentric” pride without which that black community would not have made the human advances it did make during his 36-year pastorate. Unrealistically, some criticize him for not preaching Martin Luther King’s “not the color of their skin but the content of their character”; but King admitted that that was a “dream,” not a program.

5....As a charismatic preacher, Wright shocked his hearers into thinking, and the shocks were usually biblical. He did not say “God damn America,” as the American public has heard him say millions of times; he said, “God damn America, it’s in the Bible!”

6....*In the Bible*, God blesses and condemns (in street language, “damns”) his people, depending on their behavior. Wright was deliberately countering the numberless times we Americans have heard our leaders conclude their speeches with “God bless America!” Our nation’s self-idolatry is a danger to ourselves and the world. 9/11 hits, and we mindlessly hit back: “They did something wrong!”

7....In the biblical-prophetic tradition, the people are to say – when trouble hits – “We must have been doing something wrong.” The Bible is equally clear at the personal level. When troubles come upon individuals, they are not to look for scapegoats to blame but are to say, “I must have been doing something wrong.” Instant guilt; repent first and then ask questions; that’s the Bible’s way....

8....and that’s Jeremiah Wright’s way. 9/11 hits, and he preaches the sermon I heard on “The chickens have come home to roost.” Somehow, we deserved 9/11: let’s do some self-searching as Americans and as America. Of course THEY did something wrong. But if we give all our attention to what THEY did wrong, we’ll not get around to what’s wrong with America but will take self-righteous umbrage and ill-considered action against the invasive evil....

9....and that’s what happened. The American people were softened by terror, and the American government fell for the war-mongering rhetoric of Washington’s neo-cons. Obama and Wright were steadily opposed to pre-emptive war against Iraq. If we had listened to Jeremiah Wright instead of George Bush, we wouldn’t have made the tragic mess we’ve made in Iraq. America needs more preachers like Jeremiah Wright and more politicians like Barack Obama.

10.....None of the above should be read as excusing Wright's occasionally making a fool of himself. Nor can an influential old man be excused for letting jealousy move him to undermine a more influential younger man.

BY WILLIS E. ELLIOTT | JUNE 8, 2008; 8:06 PM ETSAVE & SHARE:         

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Sorry, I confused you Pagan I go to church I don't vote for one.

I vote for the one running for office who reveals plans that actually make sense unlike those found at Obama's website.

POSTED BY: GARYD | JUNE 9, 2008 11:39 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Hey, Zzim, in the Reverend's world, anyone who 'feels wronged' is really at fault for gettin, say, stomped in an NYC subway, for 'disrupting unity' by not conforming to 'Merry Christmas.' How dare they. :)

POSTED BY: PAGANPLACE | JUNE 9, 2008 6:26 PM
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Oh, by the way - I totally reject your argument because it is based on the theory of collective punishment being OK. You assert that if Group A is angry with the policies of Group B and if Group A expresses that anger by killing a few random members of Group B (and C, D, E & F who happen to be in the way), then the first thing members of Group B should do is ask themselves "why am I so bad that I deserve this?"

You call for "instant guilt". Shame on you. You should feel guilty.

POSTED BY: ZZIM | JUNE 9, 2008 4:26 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Hmm... he might have kept our troops out of Iraq. Alternatively, if Obama had been president in 2002, he may have concluded that deposing Saddam Hussein was a good idea. And if that had happened, Rev. Wright would probably supported the war too.

My point is this - most of the opposition to the Iraq war from leftists like Rev. Wright is primarily motivated by the desire to oppose anything George Bush supports.

POSTED BY: ZZIM | JUNE 9, 2008 4:19 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

"8.....and that's Jeremiah Wright's way. 9/11 hits, and he preaches the sermon I heard on "The chickens have come home to roost." Somehow, we deserved 9/11: let's do some self-searching as Americans and as America. Of course THEY did something wrong. But if we give all our attention to what THEY did wrong, we'll not get around to what's wrong with America but will take self-righteous umbrage and ill-considered action against the invasive evil...."

If only Jeremiah Wright had taken care to phrase it in a more sensitive way, he could have preached the same message without fault. And . . . maybe no one would have listened. And . . . that's the risk he should have taken.

God will condemn America, seems more accurate than "God Damn America," which sounds a lot more like J.W.'s own epitaph for America.

POSTED BY: POTTERY | JUNE 9, 2008 2:49 AM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

I mean, you do realize, of course, that this is **exactly** the kind of crap we have a secular government in order to **not have to do.**

See where this could go?

The Founding Fathers knew. You have any kind of 'religious test' for power, ...it never ends.

What happens when people do what they try to do about Obama's church and making elections into referenda on religion... It can get worse than this. Much worse.

This was fresh in the minds of the Founding Fathers, and is still fresh in Europe's.

It's not too late to be America about this.

Let's look at this ugly mess, step back, and have a real election on the issues.

No more time to screw around.

POSTED BY: PAGANPLACE | JUNE 8, 2008 10:55 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Done trying to vote for churches, yet, then, Gary?

I got no worries if we start talking about actual candidates and issues and what we can expect to happen in reality if certain things are done, and other radical 'leftist' ideas like governing based on ideas of **government,** rather than religious affiliation.

You know, that America thing.

Guess we needed the reminder why the Founding Fathers based America on **not doing that religious politics thing.**

Not too late to take the obvious clue to heart.

POSTED BY: PAGANPLACE | JUNE 8, 2008 10:44 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Whether one votes for Obama or McCain one still votes for the church of political expediency and gutless conformity.

POSTED BY: GARYD | JUNE 7, 2008 10:01 AM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

I cannot argue with such a learned and observant man as Willis E. Elliott who said, "Obama's pastor would have kept our troops out of Iraq" and supported it with many sound logics.

I know that's so because he did such a good job keeping Barak Obama out of his church.

Jeremiah Wright for president, congress, the supreme judge. Aw heck, Jeremiah Wright for God.

I wonder if Jeremiah Wright knows God is the best job there is. I'll bet he thinks president is the best job. Maybe he should ask Bush? He did? Ask Bush? Got paid big money for all his help getting Bush elected? Bush paid him with tax, actually tithed dollars? I thought so.

POSTED BY: BGONE | JUNE 5, 2008 6:06 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

As if Iraq wasn't going to be a mess no matter what we did.

POSTED BY: GARYD | JUNE 4, 2008 7:42 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Dr. Elliot,
For once I agree with you totally.

My daughter moved here to Louisiana, she found a church and became very active in it...I went to her baptism into that church which is an independent. Well she is being transferred back to her old home and was looking for a new church. I went on line and found the UCC that will be closest to her...she checked them out and is excited about it. They believe God has not finished speaking.

I see in Barack Obama an honesty, is he a politician? yes. Does he have to make decisions now as a politician? yes...he has people trying to read his mind and put their biases on him. John McCain is now associating Obama with Bush...for cripes sake.

All I can say is..Pray for Obama, no matter what religion or faith or non faith you are...he deserves all the well wishes he can get.

terra...

POSTED BY: TERRA GAZELLE | JUNE 4, 2008 5:08 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Thanks, Dr. Elliott! Obama has left Trinity Church, not the UCC. Just because you leave a particular congregation doesn't mean that you are giving up on the whole denomination. There are several UCC churches in DC that he, Michelle, and the girls can join when they move into the White House.

POSTED BY: ATHENA | JUNE 4, 2008 1:16 PM
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