

## How to Hate Your Parents and Country

**The Question:** *How should Barack Obama have responded to inflammatory remarks made by his former pastor, Dr. Jeremiah Wright? Are you responsible for what your spiritual leader says from the pulpit?*

Jeremiah Wright and I are retired clergy in America's most liberal Christian denomination, and "inflammatory" remarks can be clipped from our archives depending on what the clipper wants to burn up. Currently, what the Wright clippers want to burn up is a former parishioner, who is said to be guilty of inflammation by association.

1. NONinflammatory speech gets nothing burned up, nothing cauterized, nothing welded. From Public Speaking 101 in 1935, I remember this: "Start Slow: Speak Low: Rise Higher: CATCH FIRE!" Without such oratory, nothing changes in religion or politics. "Tongues of flame" are associated with the birth of the Christian Church (Acts of the Apostles 2:1-4). From Wright, Obama caught the fire of the Gospel and became what he is today, a devout and faithful Christian.

2. What gets our attention gets us. Fire seizes our attention, so is the best metaphor for successful oratory – the essence of oratory being the getting and holding of attention.

3. "We heard Jesus say 'HATE your father and mother!'" That's what the Jewish authorities' spies reported back to them, as a fragment of what he actually said (Gospel of Luke 14:26): "Whoever comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even life itself, cannot be my disciple." What! Jesus didn't believe the Ten Commandments? Rather, he read them according to their beginning (Exodus 20:3 & Deuteronomy 5:6 ["no other gods"]): We are so wholly to love God that all lesser relationships – even life itself – are *love/hate relationships*.

"We heard Jesus say "LOVE your enemies!" Again, the spies' report was accurate though fragmentary. For generosity of spirit, nothing else in ancient literature can equal the Gospel of Matthew 5:43-48. (THINK how these two inflammatory statements reconstrue both "love" and "hate.")

Jesus' oratory inflamed the multitudes with hope and the authorities with fear. Fear won until Easter, Jesus' resurrection.

4. Rightly, and in the spirit of Lincoln, Jeremiah Wright condemns the unbiblical notion of an in-our-pocket deity at our service when we say "God bless America!" Rather, the Holy God provides in love and condemns (for short, "damns") in judgment. The Lord's Prayer (which we Christians pray daily) implicitly condemns all human governments in explicitly petitioning "THY kingdom come, THY will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

5. Rightly, Obama dissociated himself from the Wright clips without dissociating himself from a man of high significance in his life – a significance he compared with that of blood-relatives. In his magisterial speech on race (18 Mar 08), he transformed the minuses into pluses, the past's pains into encouragement in the present and hope for a better future. The wounds of the past can be cauterized by the fire of the will to work together. The confrontational words of the past need to fade into the past, and America needs to turn up the volume on Obama's reconciliational words of change toward a better America and better world.

6. It's good news that communication advances are making the public harder to fool with dirty political tricks and easier to inform about complexities. *Our democracy is maturing*, as the present presidential campaign evidences. Now if we could just stop taking wooden nickels, and cut once only after measuring twice....

BY WILLIS E. ELLIOTT | MARCH 20, 2008; 8:50 AM ET

### Comments

Please report offensive comments below.

Then please shut your mouth. I choose not to have to listen to your and "Reverend" Wright's insane rantings on the evening news.

POSTED BY: SANITYTODAY | MARCH 25, 2008 10:26 PM  
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Words with very important theological impact:

"Heaven is a spirit state. No physical bodies abide there."

"In three controversial Wednesday Audiences, Pope John Paul II pointed out that the essential characteristic of heaven, hell or purgatory is that they are states of being of a spirit (angel/demon) or human soul, rather than places, as commonly perceived and represented in human language. This language of place is, according to the Pope, inadequate to describe the realities involved, since it is tied to the temporal order in which this world and we exist. In this he is applying the philosophical categories used by the Church in her theology and saying what St. Thomas Aquinas said long before him."

<http://eternal-word.com/library/PAPALDOC/JP2HEAVN.HTM>

The Vatican quickly embellished this story with a lot CYAP

POSTED BY: CONCERNED THE CHRISTIAN NOW LIBERATED | MARCH 22, 2008 6:14 AM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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Dear Rev Elliott

I wish you a wonderful Easter 2008!

Soja John Thaikattil  
Sydney, Australia

POSTED BY: SOJA JOHN THAIKATTIL, SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA | MARCH 22, 2008 5:38 AM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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(off course, it's not the real speech, it's the state of the union adress, rearranged by people who hate their country)

POSTED BY: KYLE | MARCH 22, 2008 1:09 AM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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Hm.. a comment of mine with a youtube link has disappeared.  
But surely, anyone who types "The real speech of George W Bush" in youtube can still find it.

POSTED BY: KYLE | MARCH 22, 2008 12:54 AM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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James Cone DOES INDEED Preach Hate

IN the video clip James cites, James Cone says that all true Christians should HATE INJUSTICE.  
Imagine.

He also makes the outlandish statement that people in power tend to be more concerned with preserving their power than in Eliminating Injustice.  
Imagine.

I didn't hear him say black people should hate black people.

POSTED BY: HENRY JAMES | MARCH 21, 2008 9:59 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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Well Done.

Even Henry James applauds you.

As today reminds us, Jesus attracted enough attention with his oratory to get crucified, because he was a threat to the power of his society. Here on earth, indeed.

Beethoven also "preached" that All Men Would Become Brothers in some ideal "kingdom" that was not here yet on earth.

The great artists are doing the same work as the great prophets: showing us the Truth that most people dare not speak.

Your column here applauds courageous truth telling. Bravo.

POSTED BY: HENRY JAMES | MARCH 21, 2008 9:33 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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BLACK THEOLOGY of LIBERATION

A Conversation with James Cone:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-1X5sZ6Q4Fw>

Must see. Power is not Black or White-

Knowledge is Power..

POSTED BY: JAMES | MARCH 21, 2008 8:34 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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Anyway, it's a good idea to love your enemies, lest you become them.

POSTED BY: KYLE | MARCH 21, 2008 8:31 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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Did anyone see the title of Susan Jacoby's essay?

"Memo to Candidates: Pick a Feel Good Pastor"

This is relevant to Dr. Willis's essay. If a candidate does not want any controversy AT ALL, then he should go to a vanilla church where the preacher is about as interesting as the hummmmm of the air-conditioner. I have been to many churches like that.

But what is the point?

Most religious people like to give lip-service to the idea of "being religious" but then that is about all there is to it.

POSTED BY: DANIEL IN THE LION'S DEN | MARCH 21, 2008 2:33 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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Thankyou Mr. Bullfeathers. I would like to second that very last thought of yours.

GaryD,

If you actually look at the numbers you will see that the amount of federal spending as a percentage of GDP is not a strong function of which party is in office. It tends to grow a little more under republican administrations.

The biggest partisan difference in total federal spending is that republicans tend to lower taxes, which results in deficit spending. This adds to the national debt and burdens future generations.

Your incessant incantations about Obama and big government are a load of bunk.

garyd:

Mr Elliot the chief problem I have with obama and most others on the left is that rather than God what they truly worship is an all encompassing government.

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Rrrreally?

Sometimes I wonder what it feels to be like Bush Sr.

I guess if he had kept a diary it would be something like this.

"...Today I checked the camera footage from Junior's room. He was still awake at 2 AM, he had locked the door and he was watching something on TV. I got very worried - was he watching PORN?! I swung the camera towards the TV. Yes! It was showing explosions, people blown to bits, corpses! What! Necrofilia? SM? Does Junior have a fetish for cross-dressing as a middle-eastern tyrant? Then I noticed the logo in the corner of the screen - "CNN". Phew, I got so worried..."

"... I noticed that Junior acts and speaks in an arrogant and who-am-I-you-are-dirt manner. I watched him closely for a week on the CCTV. Yes! He does act like he is the king-of-the-world and has no regard for others. It all pointed to one conclusion - he is taking cocaine, he's displaying all the signs of a coke-head! I resolved to not leave the CCTV room until I have caught him in the act. Several months latter I realised that this is how he is, it's just his personality. Phew! I was so worried there..."

-50 years latter-

"..If only I had made Junior watch porn! If only I had made him smoke grass!.."

Ok.. maybe I'm unfair to certain Republicans. I'm sure that George thinks that all people are good, and that democracy is the natural state of affairs. I'm sure he thinks that democracy just springs from the air, that at the very moment tyrants are removed from their positions people turn into teletubbies. I'm sure he thinks that two revolutions and two world wars are just minor glitches in world history, since some French kings got decapitated. But no, it's all Robespierre's fault. If only he had the presence of mind to declare "MISSION ACCOMPLISHED" after the absolute monarchy fell. But no, he had to go on and invent the "Terror", and put a few hundred thousands before musket-ball loaded cannons.

I can imagine what next world revolution's gonna be like (lead by the Antichrist, of course).

"Ultimately there is no external cause of evil, but the evil that lives in people. Wars, death, tyranny - gods don't do these things, people do.

Now that this wisdom has been universally accepted we are all free. Free from dehumanizing others, from blaming them for our sins, from persecuting other human beings that are no different than us.

Now that we are all brothers, we have rebuilt paradise. We no longer kill other human beings and call it "patriotic war". We don't imprison people in the boundaries of virtual prisons and call it "nation-states".

But we must be eternally vigilant and watchful, lest we let the snake back in! We must have zero tolerance for those who erect walls between us - all humans, all mankind.

We must confront the evil alien minds from Alpha Centauri!

Yes, there are those who pose as humans, but are actually alien shapeshifters, that live among us with one goal - to divide us against ourselves!

Yes, they look and act like ordinary human beings, they have families and jobs, but they are actually alien monsters.

But rest assured, sleep well! We have identified the evil aliens, using top of the state technology.

We have taken the necessary measures to make them disappear in the middle of the night and shipped them to special centers on secret islands. There, we have designed a system of to make them admit they are aliens, and make them stop posing as humans.

The future is very bright!

POSTED BY: KYLE | MARCH 21, 2008 1:08 PM

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Dear Dr Elliott

I haven't checked in with you for awhile, and I must say I am a little surprised. Your comments on this whole thing are the most sensible that I have read or heard on the subject.

You are right.

Mark Twain said, "I don't want to attract attention, but I would like to be noticed."

Maybe Reverend Wright was just trying to be noticed. He has only attracted all this extra attention because a member of his congregation has become very famous.

POSTED BY: DANIEL IN THE LION'S DEN | MARCH 21, 2008 12:43 PM

[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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Not necessarily weird. The problem Pastor Wright is a part of is racial animosity. When you make excuses for hatred you only get more of it. And Black Liberation theology not only makes excuse for hatred it attempts to justify it. Frankly to my mind if you are preaching hatred and justifying same you are putting lies in the mouth of God and there is no sin in the Bible worse than that.

POSTED BY: GARYD | MARCH 21, 2008 11:12 AM

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Gary D,

I respect that you may not want a president from the Democratic Party since that party has made it their mantra that government (using our tax money of course) is the answer to every problem. I've got some issues with that formulation myself.

Do you think that the social message of a preacher and community leader like Jeremiah Wright is part of the same problem? As much as I dislike some of the sound bites that I've been seeing, he seems to preach a pretty stringent message of personal responsibility.

POSTED BY: VIEJITA DEL OESTE | MARCH 21, 2008 2:04 AM  
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Rafael, been to his web site?

No Dr. Charles what I mean to say is that if you want to get beyond what's left of the racial divide in this country (and that exists mostly in the minds of leftists and The Klan and assorted race baiters such as Al Sharpton, Jesse Jackson, and the trial lawyers in their \$3000 dollar suits and Gucci loafers who represent the current leadership of the NAACP and whose livelihood depends almost entirely on the perception that white racism still exist in some meaningful way) Then you've got to stop the cycle of hate and you can't do that by making excuses for the haters.

POSTED BY: GARYD | MARCH 20, 2008 11:20 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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GaryD, kindly show us where he is preaching "the Mantra of Socialized health care." Apparently you have no idea what his policy statements say.

POSTED BY: RAFAEL | MARCH 20, 2008 8:09 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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I hardly know where to begin so I'll start at the end and work backwards. That way I can be forward looking.

You said, "5. Rightly, Obama dissociated himself from the Wright clips without dissociating himself from a man of high significance in his life – a significance he compared with that of blood-relatives."

If I thought that was so I could not vote for him. At present I'll continue to believe he's doing the mandatory born-again hypocrisy required for all elected officials. Your #6. may cure that hypocrisy thing but not yet.

4. Our father - fertility god

which art in heaven - the domain of the gods

hallowed be thy name - oops! that's the sun god, (horning in on fertility god's act?)

thy kingdom come - come on down daddy, Amenophis IV

thy will be done - or else

on earth as it is in heaven - you're the big boss up there and here too

give us this day our daily bread - ditty cup in hand and get in line

"The Lord's Prayer" was authored by the would be Pharaoh, Amenophis IV so it has great significance today. Just wait until the government puts it into effect then we can all grab our ditty cups and get in line.

3. Yep, they barfed on what Amen said alright. Don't you imagine they had difficulty reading it?

2. Fire gets attention? <http://www.hoax-buster.org/sellyoursoul> Is there a fire more attention getting than that from which hell is made? Would that be the same kind of fire in which lived the supernatural being Moses had a little conversation with to become the most important person that ever lived?

Have you no fear of God? Time to celebrate the sacrificing of the son of God so your sins can be forgiven. Sacrifices to a God would seem to be in order but God's son? Don't forget about that fire and don't say you weren't warned.

1. 1935? Learning how to do those "fire and brimstone" sermons? What goes around comes around the footballer say. Good luck to you and all who faith that was God in the burning bush.

POSTED BY: BGONE | MARCH 20, 2008 6:53 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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garyd:

He did not and should not have dumped him for votes he could have and should have dumped him because he is part of the problem in this country not part of the solution.

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You mean to imply Obama did not know that the pastor will be PERCEIVED as a problem and exploited?? Even after the dropping polls?

I do give him credit for not artificially disowning. The rest of politics I am not sure.

POSTED BY: DR CHARLES | MARCH 20, 2008 6:07 PM

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He did not and should not have dumped him for votes he could have and should have dumped him because he is part of the problem in this country not part of the solution.

POSTED BY: GARYD | MARCH 20, 2008 5:15 PM

[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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Dear james

Obama might have other issues but this is unfortunate over-reaction. He at least did not dump the pastor for votes. May the lord give us wisdom to really see the truth.

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umm Dr Charles- Obama and Wright can think and say whatever they like. Many Americans will NOT want Obama as their president or Wright as their president's spiritual mentor..

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POSTED BY: DR CHARLES | MARCH 20, 2008 4:41 PM

[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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POSTED BY: JAMES | MARCH 20, 2008 4:33 PM

[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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Dear james:

The argument seems to be

- 1) Jeremiah Wright completely is aware and subscribes to James Cone
- 2) Obama completely is aware of and subscribes to Jeremiah Wright

Thus, Obama needs to be punished.

This way we can CRIMINALIZE many Americans. This does disservice to America

POSTED BY: DR CHARLES | MARCH 20, 2008 4:25 PM

[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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Jeremiah Wright says his inspiration comes from the Black Liberation Theology of James Cone:

Here are some of Cone's quotes:

"To be Christian is to be one of those whom God has chosen. God has chosen black people!" [Black Theology and Black Power, pp. 139-140].

"It is important to make a further distinction here among black hatred, black racism, and Black Power. Black hatred is the black man's strong aversion to white society. No black man living in white America can escape it...But the charge of black racism cannot be reconciled with the facts. While it is true that blacks do hate whites, black hatred is not racism. Racism, according to Webster, is 'the assumption that psychocultural traits and capacities are determined by biological race and that races differ decisively from one another, which is usually coupled with a belief in the inherent superiority of a particular race and its rights to dominance over others.' Where are the examples among blacks in which they sought to assert their right to dominance over others because of a belief in black superiority?...Black Power is an affirmation of the humanity of blacks in spite of white racism. It says that only blacks really know the extent of white oppression, and thus only blacks are prepared to risk all to be free." [Black Theology and Black Power, p. 14-16]

"All white men are responsible for white oppression. It is much too easy to say, "Racism is not my fault," or "I am not responsible for the country's inhumanity to the black man...But insofar as white do-gooders tolerate and sponsor racism in their educational institutions, their political, economic and social structures, their churches, and in every other aspect of American life, they are directly responsible for racism...Racism is possible because whites are indifferent to suffering and patient with cruelty. Karl Jaspers' description of metaphysical guilt is pertinent here. 'There exists among men, because they are men, a solidarity through which each shares responsibility for every injustice and every wrong committed in the world, and especially for crimes that are committed in his presence or of which he cannot be ignorant.' " [Black Theology and Black Power, p. 24]

"For the gospel proclaims that God is with us now, actively fighting the forces which would make man captive. And it is the task of theology and the Church to know where God is at work so that we can join him in this fight against evil. In America we know where the evil is. We know that men are shot and lynched. We know that men are crammed into ghettos...There is a constant battle between Christ and Satan, and it is going on now. If we make this message contemporaneous with our own life situation, what does Christ's defeat of Satan mean for us?...The demonic forces of racism are real for the black man. Theologically, Malcolm X was not far wrong when he called the white man "the devil." The white structure of this American society, personified in every racist, must be at least part of what the New Testament meant by the demonic forces." [Black Theology and Black Power, pp. 39-41]

"Racism is a complete denial of the Incarnation and thus of Christianity...If there is any contemporary meaning of the Antichrist (or "the principalities and powers"), the white church seems to be a manifestation of it. It was the white "Christian" church which took the lead in establishing slavery as an institution and segregation as a pattern in society by sanctioning all-white congregations." [Black Theology and Black Power, p. 73]

"Black theology refuses to accept a God who is not identified totally with the goals of the black community. If God is not for us, if God is not against white racists, then he is a murderer, and we had better kill him. The task of black theology is to kill gods that do not belong to the black community." [A Black Theology of Liberation, p. 27]

"Black theology cannot accept a view of God which does not represent God as being for oppressed blacks and thus against white oppressors. Living in a world of white oppressors, blacks have no time for a neutral God. The brutalities are too great and the pain too severe, and this means we must know where God is and what God is doing in the revolution. There is no use for a God who loves white oppressors the same as oppressed blacks. We have had too much of white love, the love that tells blacks to turn the other cheek and go the second mile. What we need is the divine love as expressed in black power, which is the power of blacks to destroy their oppressors, here and now, by any means at their disposal. Unless God is participating in this holy activity, we must reject God's love." [A Black Theology of Liberation, p. 70]

This is moving all over the internet via emails. Any rational person can see this is against the teachings of Christ.

I'm sorry, Willis E. Elliot.



They are having a difficult time sir largely because we have a huge government Bureaucracy which including state federal and local aggregates more than 15% of the work force and spend more money in a day than Bill Gates makes in a year.

POSTED BY: GARYD | MARCH 20, 2008 3:53 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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No Jewish authorities at the time of Jesus? Ummm.... then who was Herod? Who were the Sanhedrin, the Pharisees, Sadducees, etc.? Israel was a client kingdom of Rome at the time of Jesus. They had their own government, but paid tribute to Rome, and there was a Roman military presence located there. That's why Herod - who couldn't find anything to try Jesus for - turned him over to the Roman authorities, who put him on trial for fomenting sedition against Roman rule. 20+ years of getting my butt dragged to Mass on Good Friday taught me that!

POSTED BY: ATHENA | MARCH 20, 2008 2:48 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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Thanks for honesty and wisdom. People can be easily hijacked by basic instincts and that is what other so called "religious" leaders are doing. HATE is worse than LUST, yes it is.

I am surprised jewish priests are not known to some of the readers here ( JEFF).

I did not see that Obama is trying to socialize medicine. However, many middle/ lower-middle class white folks are having hard enough time with existing system.

POSTED BY: DR CHARLES | MARCH 20, 2008 12:36 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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But he preaches the Mantra of Socialized health care, and dozens of other big government programs that make success or for that matter just getting by difficult for the average joe.

And the Mantra is yes we can elect him and have a much larger more intrusive government.

POSTED BY: GARYD | MARCH 20, 2008 12:12 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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Rev. Elliot: "Jewish Authorities" in the time of Jesus? Whom are you referring to? At the time, there were no Jewish Authorities. Methinks your biases are showing.

POSTED BY: JEFF | MARCH 20, 2008 12:03 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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Rev. Elliott - thank you for your words. I think that people who have not been in the pulpit (or, in the case of a Wiccan Priest/ess, leading a circle for a large group) don't realize that sometimes things just overtake you. I mean, would I really want someone taking a video of me off on a rant and posting it on YouTube? I don't agree with some of the positions that some prominent Pagan leaders have taken over the years, but that doesn't make me want to leave my chosen path.

In 12-step programs, they have a saying: "take what you like and leave the rest." Obviously that is what Obama did. He embraced what he liked of TUC, and ignored the rest. Yeah, he probably rolled his eyes, or said, "hey, Rev, that was a little over-the-top" when he talked to Rev. Wright after the service. Unlike a lot of other people posting here, I actually went out to the TUC website and read what they were about. Seems like a cool place. If they're keeping kids off the streets and away from gangs and drugs, good on 'em!

Oh, and GaryD - Obama doesn't talk about the government doing for people. He's encouraging people to get off their a\*\*es and make their own success. That's the whole idea behind his slogan, "Yes WE Can." One person may not make a difference, but a whole lot of people with the same goal can.

POSTED BY: ATHENA | MARCH 20, 2008 11:46 AM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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Mr Elliot the chief problem I have with obama and most others on the left is that rather than God what they truly worship is an all encompassing government.

POSTED BY: GARYD | MARCH 19, 2008 5:25 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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