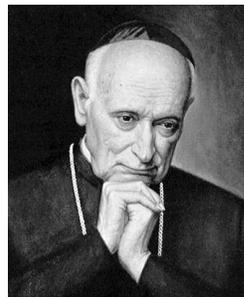


Mindszenty Report



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Cardinal Mindszenty Foundation

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Pandora's Closet Barack Obama and Black Liberation Theology

Fibber McGee and Molly was a popular radio show that ran from the 1930's through the 1950's. It used the noisy opening of a cluttered closet as a regular gag. *Pandora's box* is another familiar idiom from popular culture. Greek mythology says that Pandora could not resist opening a *forbidden box* that the gods had sent her. Her act of disobedience unleashed a swarm of evils on mankind.

OBAMA'S CLOSET

After months of campaigning, it is apparent that Senator Barack Obama has enough leftist clutter in his thinking to fill, not just Pandora's box, but McGee's closet as well. Once the *stealth candidate*, Americans now know of his elite nature, his extremism on abortion, health care and his basic ignorance of foreign policy. The presidential race may be the site where classic radio and Greek mythology come home to roost.

The one issue that has been left at the back of his closet has been Obama's relationship with the Reverend Jeremiah Wright, his pastor for over 20 years. The Reverend Wright is a black nationalist whose approach to religion is deeply rooted in *Black Liberation Theology*. Like a dusty box in the back of his closet, Obama's stance on this issue remains hidden from public view.

Before delving into the complexities of Wright's radical theology, it is useful, by way of contrast, to provide a snapshot of black thought prior to liberation theology. In his book, *Saviors or Sellouts*, Washington University Professor Christopher Alan Bracey noted that *conservatism was the dominant mode of black political engagement with white society* prior to the Civil War.

The touchstone of black conservatism, Bracey points out, has been the African-American Protestant ethic, which was an adaptation of middle-class morality. It provided the basic pillars that any social group needed for longevity, namely respectability, deportment, and a serious commitment to a healthy and productive lifestyle. As forbears of the traditions of black conservatism, Bracey cites 18th and 19th century pastors Richard Allen, Reverend Jupiter Hammon, and David Walker. They preached that once freed, blacks were *spiritually obliged*

to exercise the privileges of freedom. Thanks to their solid foundation, more familiar black conservatives such as Booker T. Washington and George Washington Carver, were able to follow in their footsteps.

REPLACEMENT THEOLOGY

Despite their long-lived conservative traditions, many conflicting forces were at work in the black community as the 19th century turned. Black radicals, such as W. E. B. Dubois and Marcus Garvey laid the foundation for the arrival of the Muslim extremists such as Elijah Muhammad, Malcolm X and Louis Farrakhan. Theirs was a utopian vision that used their slave history to forge a wedge within the black community. To them, traditionalists, like Booker T. Washington and more recently columnist Thomas Sowell, are no better than the compliant *Uncle Tom* from Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel.

During the turbulent 1960s Washington's tired strategy of racial harmony and compromise, had given way to the clarion call of the *black power movement* that resorted more to violence and racial separation. It was from this sizzling cauldron of racial tension that black liberation theology emerged. While cloaking themselves in the religious imagery of the Christian *slave religion*, black theologians have worked to liberate themselves from the *chains of the white religious tradition* and assert their rightful place at the banquet table of faith.

Barbara Hagerty, the religion editor for *National Public Radio*, pinpoints the origin of black liberation theology as July 31, 1966, when 51 black pastors bought a full-page ad in the *New York Times*, demanding a more aggressive approach to eradicating racism. Their theology replaced the Christian tenets of faith, forgiveness and love with one of liberation and even violence. In terminology more appropriate for the *Gospel of Karl*, instead of Jesus, black liberationists saw God *in light of the existential situation of an oppressed community*. To them Jesus was a *poor black man because he lived under the oppression of rich white men*. Their theology had essentially repealed the *colorblind* principles of Martin Luther King.

CHIEF ARCHITECT

Throughout the 1960s, the major theological topic was the secularization of the Gospel. Black liberation theology easily plugged into this revisionist current, *Blackness* referred not to skin color, but became symbol of oppression that can be applied to all persons of color with a history of oppression.

No significant movement is without its architect. That title falls to James Cone, a professor at New York City's Union Theological Seminary. His two books, *Black Theology and Black Power*, written in 1969, followed by *A Black Theology of Liberation* in 1970, developed his ideas that *black power* is Christ's central message to modern American blacks. Cone believed that blacks needed their own theology to affirm their identity in a social context that was hostile to their existence. His theology is anchored in the belief that blacks *will accept only a love of God, which participates in the destruction of the white enemy*.

According to Cone, black theology analyzes the nature of the gospel of Jesus in light of the experience of oppressed blacks. Dr. Cone faults Christianity for its failure to relate Christ's message of liberation to the inherent suffering of being black in a racist society. He blames *white theology*, which he never clearly defines, for its failure to help blacks in their struggle for liberation. The white religion is *the Anti-Christ*, that is, a religion *of white oppressors*, which serves as divine sanction for criminal acts against blacks. Christian theology can only arise from oppressed communities. Since God is not the God of white religion but the God of black experience, Cone abhors racial integration because it robs blacks of their identity.

WORLD IMPROVEMENT

Dr. Cone understands that his thinking owes a debt to the liberation theology that has plagued the Catholic Church in Latin America, where Marxists have cloaked the notions of oppression and liberation in Christian imagery to turn the people against their governments. Likewise Cone's theology has embraced Marxist humanism as the vehicle to right the wrongs of white oppression. Cone has adapted the Marxist theories on class warfare as one of race warfare. Cone believes that merging Jesus with Marx will improve the world.

Professor Harvey Cox, the author of the seminal book, *The Secular City*, is one of the most influential theological exponents of Marxist liberation. A Harvard Divinity School professor, Cox is notorious for his participation in pro-communist causes related to the Vietnam War, violent student protests, and national liberation struggles in Central America. Another influential thinker is the controversial Harvard professor Cornel West, who espoused a critical integration of Marxism and black theology in his 1979 essay, *Black Theology and Marxist Thought*. West highlights their strong correlation because of the *shared human experience of oppressed peoples as victims*.

A DARK HORSE

One astute observer of the transformation of black religion into a jaded form of socio-politics has been the founder of the California Biblical University and Seminary Robert A. Morley. In his dissertation, *The Truth about Black Liberal Theology*, Morley believes that black ideology wants to *turn religion into sociology... Jesus into a black Marxist rebel, and the gospel into violent revolution*. Morley believes the power politics interests black liberationists more than salvation.

No American election has illustrated Dr. Morley's thesis better than the 2008 presidential campaign. Senator Barack Obama has been in the center of a firestorm, created largely by Reverend Jeremiah Wright. Reverend Wright has emerged as someone who has thrust black liberation theology onto a national stage. Born in Philadelphia, in 1941, Wright's parents instilled in him a deep religious faith and a positive image of his black heritage. In 1972 he became pastor of Trinity United Church of Christ congregation in the inner city of Chicago.

In just 30 years his congregation increased to about 8000. Trinity's affiliation with the liberal United Church of Christ provides the ideological context for Wright's impact on the election. Trinity is part of one of the most liberal church systems in America. It was the first to ordain homosexuals, women and blacks as ministers. Under Wright, Trinity has pushed the religious envelope to the extreme left with its amalgamation of black power and liberation theology.

Preaching in his culture's traditional style, Wright's fiery sermons focused primarily on black social issues, with victimology and conspiracy theories at their core. They are marinated in Wright's bitterness toward the country of his birth. Wright cleverly exploits their deep-seated belief that blacks are the perpetual victims of white oppression. Wright relied on his erroneous belief that 40 years after the Civil Rights Act, white oppression has prevented any social progress among black people. His preaching reached its controversial nadir during a fiery 2003 speech in which he asked God, not to *bless America... but to damn it for killing innocent people*. James Cone has identified Wright's church as embodying his teachings better than any other one in America.

THE WRONG CONNECTION

The political firestorm that Reverend Wright's radical statements have caused his former congregant, still lingers as the election approaches. Barack Obama joined Trinity in the 1980s while he was working as a community organizer in Chicago before attending Harvard Law School. Since then he has endowed the church with about a quarter million dollars of his books' royalties. Wright officiated at the wedding ceremony of Barack and Michelle Obama in 1992 and years later at their daughters' baptisms. The Senator took the title of one of his memoirs, *The Audacity of Hope*, from one of Wright's sermons.

It was ABC News that first publicized several of Wright's racially charged sermons in March 2008. Since their public

revelations, Obama has shied away from his *Wright Connection*. In late April, Wright increased his tirade against white America and casually dismissed Obama protestations as just the words of a *politician*. At first Obama was tepid in his response to the Reverend's fulminations. But at his April 29th news conference Obama finally denounced Wright's remarks as *a bunch of rants that aren't grounded in the truth*. His tardy response to Wright's radicalism focused only how wronged he felt by Wright's personal attacks. Unfortunately, his reticence to condemn Wright's teachings implied, at best, a passive acceptance of his pastor's radicalism.

To date Obama still has not explained his failure to condemn Wright's radicalism during the 20 years that he attended Trinity. It took another inflammatory sermon by a visiting preacher, Father Michael Pflieger, a white Catholic priest in the Chicago Archdiocese for Obama to finally sever his connection with Trinity Church.

THE PINNACLE OF HISTORY

Barack Obama was born on August 4, 1961, in Honolulu, Hawaii, to mixed parents, Barack Obama, Sr. a Kenyan, and Ann Dunham of Wichita, Kansas. His father deserted Obama and his mother when he was two years old. Dunham later married Lolo Soetoro, who moved them to his native Indonesia in 1967. When he was 10 years old, Obama was sent to live with his maternal grandparents in Honolulu where he stayed until he graduated from high school in 1979.

After two years at Occidental College in Los Angeles, Obama transferred to Columbia University in New York City, graduating in 1983. After three years as a community organizer in Chicago, where he was schooled in Chicago's simmering radicalism, Obama entered Harvard Law School and in 1990 he became the first black president of the Harvard Law Review. After graduating *magna cum laude* in 1991, Obama returned to Chicago where he led a voter registration drive and began writing his first book, *Dreams from My Father*, a memoir published in 1995. Obama met Michelle Robinson in June 1989 while an intern at a Chicago law firm.

In just over a dozen years, Barack Obama has gone from relative obscurity in college teaching and as a legislator in state government to become a United States Senator. And now, four years later, he is the Democratic Party's presumptive nominee for the President of the United States. Even a cursory look at his intellectual pedigree should alarm even his most ardent

supporters. As the most liberal and pro-abortion member of the Senate, his extremism was derived from the usual socialist mentors, urban agitators Saul Alinsky and Marxist Frank Marshall Davis. Now at the pinnacle of history, Senator Obama's long relationship with Reverend Wright is alarming, shocking and scandalous.

STILL WATERS OF BELIEF

Authentic Christianity transcends race and ethnicity. There is no black or white cultural value system in the Bible. Human beings of all shades are made in the image and likeness of God and redeemed through the saving ministry of Jesus Christ. The good news is that there is not unanimity among the black churches on liberation theology. Many black ministers view it as a misguided, if not a deviant form of Christianity.

The Marxism imbedded in Reverend Wright's preaching and Senator Obama's passivity should raise serious doubts about his religious beliefs. Before attending Wright's church, Obama's religious sentiments appear to have been a blank slate. In *Audacity of Hope* Obama describes his mother as detached from religion, yet *in many ways the most spiritually awakened person that I have ever known*. He says that his Kenyan father, who was raised a Muslim, was a *confirmed atheist* who saw religion as *not particularly useful*.

Contrary to all of the above, Obama says that he has found *Jesus* in Wright's church. Is Obama's *Jesus*, the one on the cross, or the one of black liberation? Does he really believe in the saving ministry of Jesus, or in the racialist hopes of his former pastor? How deeply do the still waters of black liberation run in his spiritual veins? Does Obama fully accept Dr. Cone's belief that *together, black religion and Marxist philosophy may show us the way to build a completely new society*? Is that the change that Obama believes in? In Cone's amalgamation of Marx with Jesus, is it only Marx who motivates him? Or maybe the Senator is just another pragmatic politician who finds religion to be useful? The country deserves the answers to these questions.

~

William A. Borst, Ph.D., is the author of *Liberalism: Fatal Consequences* and *The Scorpion and the Frog: A Natural Conspiracy* which are available from the author at P.O. Box 16271, St. Louis, MO 63105 or write BBPROF@sbcglobal.net.

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LAST CALL! Louisville, KY—Conference 2008

Eternal Life Presents - The Church Teaches Forum

Catholics United for the Faith
Cardinal Mindszenty Foundation

July 18, 19, 2008

The Galt House – East Tower

Fourth Street at the River – Louisville, KY

Faith-based Hope: The Church Evangelizing the World

Friday

Mass: 5:00 p.m. His Em. Francis Cardinal Arinze

Banquet: 7:00 p.m

Keynote Address: Cardinal Arinze

Obligation, Readiness & Freedom to Evangelize

Saturday

Rev. Edmund McCaffrey, President of Eternal Life

Most Rev. Joseph E Kurtz, Archbishop of Louisville

Most Rev. Thomas G. Doran, Bishop of Rockford, IL

Rev. Roger Arnsparger-Diocese of Charlotte, NC

Rev. Wade Menezes, Fathers of Mercy, Auburn, KY

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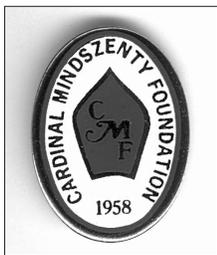
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50th Anniversary

Help us celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Cardinal Mindszenty Foundation! June 2008 marks the historic beginning of the Foundation, which at the time was truly “a voice crying in the wilderness.” We are grateful for the longtime support of our subscribers to the Mindszenty Report and the faithful



Members who conducted and attended many CMF Conferences throughout these 50 years!

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Three Cheers for the Irish!

On June 13, 2008, Irish voters rejected a European Union Treaty to change the way the bloc of nearly 500 million people governs itself. Ireland is the only country in the European Union to put the pact to a referendum. A previously proposed treaty was defeated in the Netherlands and in France in 2005. These rejections appear to underscore the unpopularity among ordinary voters toward greater integration among the European continent’s nations.

ST. PAUL TO THE ROMANS 12:2

“And be not conformed to this world, but be transformed in the newness of your mind, that you may discern what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”

Should Homeschooling Be Illegal?

A California state appeals court thinks so! In January 2008, the court ruled that unless parents have recognized teaching credentials, they must send their children to school. The judge, citing a state education law, said that “parents do not have a constitutional right to homeschool their children”. Parents and politicians are outraged, and the court will re-hear the case.

You might recall the November ‘05 ruling of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit declaring that parents’ fundamental right to control the upbringing of their children “does not extend beyond the threshold of the school door.”

Mindszenty Report Reprints

A DEATH WISH AND THE RESURRECTION OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION—Chronicles the loss of traditions, language and faith and the wide-spread ignorance of Judeo-Christian history. Author Dinesh D’Souza shows the link between science and Christianity, the case for Intelligent Design. Pope Benedict offers hope to combat today’s curious mixture of Islam, secular humanism and anti-Christian values. Ask for 6/08

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