

# More From Obama's Pastor: U.S. a Racist Superpower

Obama Calls Pastor's Remarks 'Divisive' But Says Rev. Wright Is Like Family

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In a harsh condemnation of his former pastor, the Rev. Jeremiah Wright, Sen. Barack Obama said Rev. Wright used "incendiary language to express views that have the potential not only to widen the racial divide but views that denigrate both the greatness and the goodness of our nation; that rightly offend white and blacks alike."

In a speech this morning at the National Constitution Center, Sen. Obama said he had been present when Rev. Wright made some of his "controversial" sermons. He said Wright's sermons went beyond a "religious leader's effort to speak out against perceived injustice. Instead, they expressed a profoundly distorted view of this country -- a view that sees white racism as endemic, and that elevates what is wrong with America above all that we know is right with America."

But Obama stopped short of fully disowning the controversial minister. "I can no more disown him than I can disown the black community," he said.

The alleged "racist" nature of the United States government has been a recurring theme in sermon after sermon by Obama's longtime pastor.

Today's speech comes on the heels of Sen. Obama's denunciation last week of Rev. Wright's sermons blaming the 9/11 attacks on "U.S. terrorism" and calling on blacks to sing "God Damn American" instead of "God Bless America."

As he did today, Obama has defended Rev. Wright's "social gospel" and said he agreed with some of his points, including issues relating to Africa.

Other sermons reviewed by ABC News, from videotapes sold by the Trinity United Church of Christ in Chicago, reflect Rev. Wright's repeated attacks on the U.S. government as a "racist and arrogant superpower" that does not value its black citizens.

In one sermon in October 2005, Rev. Wright addressed the racial elements at play in the wake of Hurricane Katrina.

"The winds of Katrina blew the cover off America. The hurricane exposed the hypocrisy," Rev. Wright said, "protecting white folks' property took priority over saving black folks' lives." He continued, "This storm called Katrina says far more about a racist government than it does about the wrath of God."

In April 2003, Rev. Wright told his congregation that "the United States government has failed the vast majority of our citizens of African descent."

"For every one Oprah, a billionaire, you've got five million blacks who are out of work," he said. "For every one Colin Powell, a millionaire, you've got 10 million blacks who cannot read. For every one Condoskeeza [*sic*] Rice, you've got one million in prison. For every one Tiger Woods, who needs to get beat, at the Masters, with his cap-blazing hips, playing on a course that discriminates against women. For every one Tiger Woods, we got 10,000 black kids who will never see a golf course."

Rev. Wright's church released a statement over the weekend, saying that not only was the character of Rev. Wright being attacked in the public sphere, but also was the entire history of the African American church. The statement said that Rev. Wright's "social gospel" has led him to preach "on behalf of oppressed women, children, and men in America and around the globe."

*ABC News' Sunlen Miller contributed to this report.*

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