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The Coop Report...

"Thus by their fruit…"

Much has been heard and said about Obama's spiritual affiliation for the past 20 years, including some excerpts from his pastor's sermons. Eyebrows have been raised along with the very hair on many heads as one of Reverend Wright's sermons damned "white" America for what he believes to be the repression of the black (Negro) race.

The news media has told us, along with some of Obama's supporters that what "white" Americans have heard from the Reverend Wright is nothing really new and actually fairly typical of the black community's perspective on life in America. Furthermore, "white" America is further informed by these revelations that is it not uncommon for blacks to believe that HIV is a disease invented by "white" America to eradicate the black populace.

Disturbing in any sense (I hope, for the majority of Americans of all colors) these words seek not to unite, but to further widen and prejudice the people of this once great Christian nation.

While the news media has done much to exploit this extremely sensitive issue during our hunt for the next resident of the White House, I have heard no discussion whatsoever about the United Church of Christ (UCC) from which both Obama and the Reverend Wright are members….nothing about its beliefs, other than to assume it to be a theologically-grounded Christian church.

It is important to me and I believe it is vital to all voters in America to know more about this church and its governing theology, the kinds of institutions, missions, and activities it supports. All of this is crucial to understanding how a potential leader of our nation is aligned with Christian theology. I think it must be readily assumed that a 20-year member of the UCC denomination (in this case, Obama) must be fully indoctrinated into its theology, covenants, and general beliefs and must also support them, otherwise he would not have supported this church for 20 years.

An informed America is needed at this critical juncture in our land to vote for the most qualified leader for the last great nation that God Almighty established to further evangelize the world prior to His Second Coming. I emphatically believe it is essential for us to have a Christian in the White House. For those who do have never heard of me, I believe America has lost its spiritual roots in the Christian faith upon which this country was founded and is currently suffering from moral decay and an ensuing civil chaos. I have elaborated on this subject in a book that was published in 2003 – *The Spiritual, Moral, and Civil Decay of America.*

The United Church of Christ

Here is what I have learned about the United Church of Christ (UCC)…

According to Leo Rosten's, *Religions of America*, (Touchstone Press, 1975), the UCC:

- Founded in 1957
- Recognizes the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper
- The majority of members of the UCC do not believe in the virgin birth of Jesus Christ
- Many members of the UCC do not believe in a physical Heaven or Hell
- Members are not charged with believing, literally, any version of Scripture
- The UCC condones abortion
- Birth control is supported, but is not considered a "religious matter"
- All UCC-affiliated churches are autonomous in their management

The constitution of the UCC provides that it has no power to impose any influence on its affiliated congregations, thus allowing each congregation to be autonomous in the management of its affairs. It is possible, therefore that Obama's congregation, *Trinity* UCC may not adhere to all of the beliefs of the UCC.

According to Leo Rosten's research, the UCC theology apparently does not believe in the virgin birth of Jesus, nor the physical existence of a heaven and hell. In my own research of Obama's UCC affiliated church (*Trinity* UCC), I have read a *United Church of Christ Statement of Faith in the form of a doxology* that refers to Jesus Christ as the man of Nazareth, rather than the *Son of God* which would suitably track with the denial of the virgin birth of Jesus.

Christian theology is very clear on both of these sub-

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jects. The belief in the virgin birth is as essential to the Christian faith as the resurrection of Jesus Christ. For if Jesus was not born of a virgin, then he was born of the same sinful guilt as all of mankind…the result from the original sin in the Garden of Eden. If Jesus shared our sinful roots, then he could not have been offered up by God as the perfect sacrifice to cover our sins.

If Rosten's evaluation of the UCC is correct, the UCC also discounts the existence physical heaven and hell as an essential belief in their theology. If true, then they deny the Holy Scriptures as being God-breathed, for Christ Himself said:

> *"2 In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. 4 You know the way to the place where I am going."*
>
> *John 14:2-4 (NIV)*

As a result of my continued research on the UCC through their website I have learned that they have been and continue to be liberal thinkers and doers. They appear to have a long history of supporting liberal-based activity including demonstrating against the war in Vietnam and supporting the homosexual community in its quest for acceptance of the gay lifestyle. The UCC has a well-organized Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Ministry and in 2005 adopted an "Equal Marriage Rights for All."

To be clear, the LGBT ministry is not just *opening* the doors of their congregation to the LGBT populace for in the 2005, the UCC General Synod adopted a resolution that "celebrates human expressions of love and partnership"…..stating that "…the life and example of Jesus of Nazareth provides a model of radically inclusive love and an abundant welcome for all"…and that it …affirms equal marriage rights for couples regardless of gender and declares that the government should not interfere with couples regardless of gender who choose to marry and share fully and equally in the rights, responsibilities and commitment of legally recognized marriage"…and that the UCC should "…work against legislation, including constitutional amendments, which denies civil marriage rights to couples based on gender."

In both the New and Old Testaments, God's Word is very clear on the subject of homosexuality and other unnatural acts. God considers sexual deviance from His purposeful design of both genders as an abomination as can be understood by reading the following references:

> Lev. 18:22, 23; 20:13, 15, 16; Deut. 23:17; 27:21; Judg. 19:22; 1 Kin. 14:24; 15:12; 22:46; 2 Kin. 23:7; Rom. 1:24, 26, 27; 1 Cor. 6:9; 1 Tim. 1:9, 10.

The Reverend Wright

How should we examine the content and delivery of Reverend Wright's sermon that has received so much media attention? To address this issue, we should again seek guidance from the Holy Scriptures…what did *Jesus* say about how we can discern a true man of God or a body of His disciples (i.e., a congregation) as we live in this world? All Christians are supposed to be ministers of the Gospel. Christ has instructed us in this way:

> *"8 This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples."*
>
> *John 15:8 (NIV)*

Exactly what is Jesus mean by bearing "fruit"? In the *Great Commission* (see Matthew 28:19-20), Christ instructs His disciples (that's us) to spread the Gospel to bring others to him. Thus, we are called to be productive "fruit bearers," through reflecting the image, the attitude, and the love of Christ, we can bring others to Him. In this manner, all that we say *and* do *and* feel are the fruits that either reflects the image, the attitude, and the love of Christ or of the current prince of darkness of this world. We can either bring others to Christ or send others to worship the things of this world. Those we bring to Christ become the good fruits of our labors *for* Christ. As the Apostle Paul wrote to the churches in southern Galatia:

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> "22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. 24 Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. 25 Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. 26 Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other."
>
> Galatians 5:22-26 (NIV)

We can discern true believers by the "fruits" they bear. The question we must ask is whether or not the Reverend White producing good fruits? If his highly publicized sermon is typical of his personal beliefs and message, then it is obvious he is not producing "fruits" of the Spirit.

Those that know me or have read my book, know that I believe America, having lost its Christian roots, has and is suffering from many ills resulting from our turning away from God. I even believe America is the *Babylon* referenced in the Book of Revelation (see chapter 18) and is doomed to suffer utter destruction in the last days as John's vision prophesized.

Reverend Wright, in his auspicious sermon, openly and heatedly condemns America on the basis not simply of its moral depravity, but accuses another race of God's creation as a leading cause of the many ills of a large portion of black America. As such, he does not sow seeds of grace and love, as Christ would have us do, but of envy and hatred that continue to keep alive and festering all of the things of our past…rather than trying to *put* them into the past, so we can move on as a nation. God has promised that all record of our sins will be wiped clean when we have accepted Jesus as His only Son (the Son of God); confess our belief that he shed His blood for our sins; and confess, and repent of our sins. We should do the same for our fellow man. Christ has said:

> 27 "But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, 28 bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. 29 If someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other also. If someone takes your cloak, do not stop him from taking your tunic. 30 Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back. 31 Do to others as you would have them do to you… But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. 36 Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful."
>
> Luke 6:27-31 (NIV)

In Closing…

I am reminded of one of my favorite scripture passages that comes from a Pauline letter to Timothy. This passage foretells of the times when men, seeking answers to their worldly issues, will gravitate to the answers that meet their own desires…

> "4 In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: 2 Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction. 3 For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. 4 They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. 5 But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry."
>
> 2 Timothy 4:1-5 (NIV)

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Christ also warns us about false prophets and false teachers…

> *15 "Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. 16 By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thorn-bushes, or figs from thistles? 17 Like-wise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. 18 A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. 19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them."*
>
> *Matthew 7:15-20 (NIV)*

We are together in Christ,

Brian