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Interview With Rev. Dr. Jeremiah Wright

BYLINE: Sean Hannity, Alan Colmes

GUESTS: Jeremiah Wright

HANNITY: Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney has been inundated with coverage about his Mormon faith, LDS. In light of this, last night we reported on the controversial teachings of Democratic candidate Barack Obama's Chicago-based church. A guest on our program likened Trinity Unity Church of Christ to a separatist movement and discusses liberation theology.

HANNITY: OK, this is the same church. You do have the Web site, right, where it says commitment to the black community, commitment to the black...

WRIGHT: The black value system, which was developed by the congregation, by laypersons of the congregation, 26 years ago, very similar to the gospel (INAUDIBLE) developed by laypersons in Nicaragua during the whole liberation theology movement, 26, 28, 30 years ago, yes.

HANNITY: All right, but we're not dealing with -- this is on the Web site today. Let me just inform our audience, and I want you to respond, if you can.

It says, "Commitment to God." By the way, I'm with you, and I hope you'll pray for me, Reverend. Commitment to the black community, commitment to the black family, adherence to the black work ethic. It goes on, pledge, you know, acquired skills available to the black community, strengthening and supporting black institutions, pledging allegiance to all black leadership who have embraced the black value system, personal commitment to the embracement of the black value system.

Now, Reverend, if every time we said black, if there was a church and those words were white, wouldn't we call that church racist?

WRIGHT: No, we would call it Christianity. We've been saying that since there was a white Christianity; we've been saying that ever since white Christians took part in the slave trade; we've been saying that ever since they had churches in slave castles.

We don't have to say the word "white." We just have to live in white America, the United States of white America. That's not the issue; you're missing the issue.

As I was trying to say to you, liberation theology -- and I thought Eric Rush has studied at a theological seminary that was considered -- I've come to find out he doesn't know anything more about theology than I know about brain surgery.

HANNITY: So here's my point to you, though.

WRIGHT: No, let me finish. No, here's my point to you.

HANNITY: I'm waiting.

WRIGHT: If you're not going to talk about theology in context, if you're not going to talk about liberation theology that came out of the 1960s, (INAUDIBLE) black liberation theology, that started with Jim Cone in 1968, and the writ-

ings of Cone, and the writings of Dwight Hopkins, and the writings of womanist theologians, and Asian theologians, and Hispanic theologians...

HANNITY: Reverend, I've got to get this in.

WRIGHT: Then you can talk about the black value system.

(CROSSTALK)

HANNITY: I'm going to tell you this. Listen...

WRIGHT: Do you know liberation theology, sir? Do you know liberation theology?

HANNITY: I studied theology; I went to a seminary. And I studied Latin.

WRIGHT: Do you know black liberation theology?

HANNITY: I'm very aware of what you're calling black liberation, but let me get my question out.

(CROSSTALK)

WRIGHT: I said, do you know black theology?

HANNITY: Reverend, I'm going to give you a chance to answer my question.

WRIGHT: How many of Cone's books have you read? How many of Cone's book have you read?

HANNITY: Reverend, Reverend?

(CROSSTALK)

WRIGHT: How many books of Cone's have you head?

HANNITY: I'm going to ask you this question...

WRIGHT: How many books of Dwight Hopkins have you read?

HANNITY: You're very angry and defensive. I'm just trying to ask a question here.

(CROSSTALK)

WRIGHT: You haven't answered -- you haven't answered my question.

HANNITY: And it seems to be, when you say the black community, black family, black work ethic, black community...

(CROSSTALK)

WRIGHT: It seems arrogant, ignorant...

(CROSSTALK)

WRIGHT: I'm asking you...

(CROSSTALK)

WRIGHT: ... how many books of Dwight Hopkins have you read?

HANNITY: Sir, I'm going to say this whether you like it or not. I'm going to get my words in, and I'm going to tell you right now...

(CROSSTALK)

HANNITY: As a Christian, sir, I think, as a Christian, you should not separate by race in this day and age. And that's why a lot of people are going to look at that and say, "We're all supposed to be united under Christ, aren't we?"

COLMES: Dr. Wright, it's Alan Colmes. First of all, I think Barack Obama put it correctly to the "Chicago Tribune" when he said that he'd be puzzled that the conservatives would object or quibble with the bulk of a document -- which is your church's document -- that espouses profoundly conservative values of self-reliance and self-help. That's

what you're talking about on your Web site, self-reliance and self-help for the committee that your church serves. I don't see what the problem should be with that.

WRIGHT: That comes out of the perspective of liberation theology and black liberation theology. And I keep asking him, how many books of Cone's has he read? How many books of Dwight Hopkins? How many liberation theologians does he know?

(CROSSTALK)

COLMES: But I want to ask you about your church that the public understands. I want the public to understand where your church is coming from, because you're being accused of being a black separatist church, and thus Obama is being accused by default of being a black separatist. Can you straighten that out for us, please?

WRIGHT: OK. The African-centered point of view does not assume superiority, nor does it assume separatism. It assumes Africans speaking for themselves as subjects in history, not objects in history.

It comes from the principles of Kawaida, the second principle being Kuji Salawi (ph), which is self-determination, us naming ourselves, and not saying we are superior to anybody. We have no hierarchical arrangement.

When you say an African-centered way of thinking, African-centered philosophy, African-centered theology, you're talking about one center. We're talking about something that's different. And different does not mean deficient...

COLMES: Aren't there black churches...

WRIGHT: ... nor does it mean superior or inferior. The whole notion of hierarchal, one's superior, we must be separate because we're better, that has absolutely nothing to do with...

(CROSSTALK)

COLMES: But aren't there black churches all over America that say pretty much what your church says? They serve the African-American community. They say very similar things to what you say on your Web site.

WRIGHT: Yes, they do. Yes, they do.

COLMES: And your church is being singled out, simply because it has congregants, like Barack Obama, but it also has people from all walks of life, welfare recipients, Oprah Winfrey, as I understand it, and a whole bunch of people?

WRIGHT: Correct. That's correct. We've been singled out ever since the audacity of hope speech, ever since the Democratic convention, ever since the book "Audacity of Hope," ever since journalists found out that Barack was one of our members. Yes, we've been singled out.

(CROSSTALK)

HANNITY: I've got to run. We're on a hard break. But may I suggest that we talk about the American community, instead of black, the American family, instead of black...

WRIGHT: Let me suggest that you do some reading before you come and talk to me about my field. I'm not trying to talk to you about -- no, no, no.

HANNITY: ... that would bring us together.

(CROSSTALK)

HANNITY: ... Martin Luther King...

WRIGHT: Martin Luther King was from the black church. He was not from the white church. He was not from Pat Robertson, Jerry Falwell, the Christian conservative...

HANNITY: He said, "I judge people by the content of their character."

WRIGHT: Yes, and he also said that war is wrong.

HANNITY: I've got to run.

WRIGHT: He also said that the president lied to take us into Vietnam.

HANNITY: I've got to run. Thank you for being with us.

WRIGHT: Why don't you quote everything? Thank you for having me, sir.

HANNITY: And when we come back, we'll bring you the results of the Spartanburg, South Carolina, Republican straw poll. We'll bring you that next, straight ahead.

WRIGHT: God bless you, and God bless you.