

# A Message From our PASTOR

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## This Is Where I CAME IN!

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“Back in the day” when movies cost less than a dollar to see, the local theaters used to run the same movie over and over again; and for those of us who had difficulty getting to the movie on time, we would walk into the theater after the main attraction had already started. We would watch the movie from that point until the end; but then we would sit there until the movie started playing over again and we would pick up and catch up on all that we had missed by coming in late.

We would watch the beginning of the movie (whose ending we had already seen!) until it got down to the part that we had seen and then we would exit by saying, ***“This is where I came in!”***

That is exactly how I am feeling this month as our denomination holds its biennial General Synod in Atlanta, Georgia. Thirty years ago, in 1975, our denomination caused a national furor because it affirmed persons who were made in the image of God and who were born same gender loving! ***This is where I came in!***

At the General Synod in Minneapolis, Minnesota, in 1975, there were over 90 different issues that the delegates from the various conferences of the United Church of Christ wrestled with, grappled with, agonized over, voted upon and passed. The only issue that made it to the press, however, was the issue of same gender loving persons or “homosexuality.”

I was particularly grieved by the press’ coverage of that one item. I was grieved because we were in the throes of battling Apartheid. We were trying to gain a ground swell movement and support for the idea of divestment. Blacks were dying in South Africa and African Americans wanted our denomination to take a stand against the policies of this government, which was supporting the racist Afrikaaner government of South Africa!

Our primary agenda item was getting the denomination to divest. (That happened a decade later!) We wanted to bring attention to the fact that this government’s policies and this government’s support of the racist Apartheid regime was killing Black South Africans day-by-day.

Nelson Mandela was in prison. Dick Cheney (our current Vice President) voted against Nelson Mandela’s release. He called him a communist and a terrorist! African Americans were incensed.

African Americans in the United Church of Christ were at



that General Synod trying to get the other delegates to be sensitized to the importance of the fight, the struggle, the murder and the genocide being carried out in South Africa. Four million whites were oppressing 22 million Blacks. Black South Africans had no vote.

Black South Africans had to carry a pass-book. Black South Africans were not allowed in Johannesburg after dark. Black South African children had been murdered at the Sharpville massacre and the insanity of the living conditions for Black South Africans was being ignored by the press and by white Christians all over the world.

We passed out petitions. We wrote letters. We prayed. We put the South African struggle on the agenda of the United Church of Christ and guess what made the press? Homosexuality and same gender loving issues.

The press and the public seemed more concerned about who was sleeping with whom than all of the Blacks who were dying because of the insanity of white supremacy. That was 30 years ago. Guess what? ***This is where I came in!***

Here we are 30 years later and “the more things change the more they stay the same!” Hundreds of thousands of Blacks have been killed in Rwanda. The United Church of Christ has

taken a stand on this matter.

Hundreds of thousands of Blacks are dying as you read this article in the Congo. The United Church of Christ has taken a stand on this issue. Hundreds of thousands of Blacks have died in Darfur and in the Sudan and the United Church of Christ has taken a stand on this issue.

Guess what is making the press? Same gender loving persons and the homosexual issue! ***This is where I came in!***

Thirty years ago I was trying to get the African American community in Chicago to know who Steve Biko was. I was trying to get them to know who Dennis Brutus was. I was trying to get them to know who Desmond Tutu was. I was trying to get them to know who Alan Boesak was. I was trying to get them to know who Nelson Mandela was. I was trying to educate African Americans in Chicago as to who and what the African National Congress was (and still is!).

The African American Christian community in Chicago was far more concerned about speaking in tongues, the gifts of the Spirit and getting rich through the powerful preaching of prosperity pimps. When it came to what the press lifted up, underscored and put the spotlight on, moreover, the only thing that the Black Christian community in Chicago focused in on was that the United Church of Christ was not condemning homosexuals! ***This is where I came in!***

Nelson Mandela was in prison on Robben Island. He was not a media event or a photo-op personality back then. Neither the white press nor the Black press would talk about Nelson Mandela, the African National Congress, or the plight of Black Africans living under Apartheid in South Africa. All they wanted to talk about was homosexuality and the United Church of Christ affirming homosexuals. ***This is where I came in!***

Thirty years later the HIV/AIDS crisis is killing millions of Africans as you read this article. Over 51% of the population in Capetown, South Africa, and in Durban, South Africa, are HIV positive. HIV/AIDS is the number one killer of heterosexual African American women between the ages of 25 and 45.

The United States has promised money for the AIDS pandemic that the United Nations has called the world's worst health crisis; but the United States won't deliver any money unless the country, the program, the people or the recipients of the United States monetary aid subscribe to the insane policy of "abstinence only!" We are still fixated on who is sleeping with whom while people are dying like flies! ***This is where I came in!***

Black America was given a "wake-up call" when Don Cheadle starred so brilliantly in the movie "Hotel Rwanda." It seems as if nobody knew about what was going on in Rwanda between the Hutus and the Tutsis

until that movie came out. Genocide is still taking place in Rwanda. Meanwhile, we are fixated on homosexuality while an entire race is being wiped out in war and genocide. ***This is where I came in!***

Because of "Hotel Rwanda," and because of the Oprah Show, Americans have been made aware of what is going on in the Congo; but instead of focusing our attention on the Congo we are focusing our attention on condoms and whether or not the distribution of condoms adds to teenage promiscuity! Do you see anything wrong with this picture? ***This is where I came in!***

The hundreds of thousands of Blacks who have been killed by what the United States calls genocide in the Sudan continues as you read this article. The refugee camp situation is completely incredible and instead of the Black Christian community being up in arms about what is happening as Blacks are dying by the thousands each day in Africa (and America!), all the press is talking about is same gender loving couples whom the United Church of Christ affirms and homosexuality. ***This is where I came in!***

The Israelis have illegally occupied Palestinian territories for almost 40 years now. It took a divestment campaign to wake the business community up concerning the South Africa issue. Divestment has now hit the table again as a strategy to wake the business community up and to wake Americans up concerning the injustice and the racism under which the Palestinians have lived because of Zionism.

The Divestment issue will hit the floor during this month's General Synod. Divesting dollars from businesses and banks that do business with Israel is the new strategy being proposed to wake the world up concerning the racism of Zionism. That Divestment issue won't make the press either, however.

What will make the press as the General Synod meets in Atlanta this month is same gender loving persons and homosexuality. ***This is where I came in!***

Wal-Mart continues to be the world's biggest rip-off artist. Advocate Healthcare Systems continues to block the efforts of its employees to form unions. The Leave No Child Behind farce has crippled thousands of African American children -- no, millions of African American children -- and we are fixated on same gender loving couples and homosexuality. ***This is where I came in!***

Forty-four million Americans have no healthcare insurance. The President of the United States lied to the United States people about weapons of mass destruction, a connection between 9.11.01 and Iraq, the real reasons for the war in Iraq and the insanity of the death of over 1700 American boys and girls; and we are still fixated on same gender loving persons and homosexuality! ***This is where I came in!***

Over 1,000 teachers in Chicago no longer have jobs. Our children are finishing high school and reading at the 3rd grade level. President Bush is stocking the federal courts with conservative, right wing, single-issue judges and all we are talking about is same gender loving people and homosexuality.

I am getting old now and I am getting quite forgetful. But one of the things I think I remember from the 70s about "where I came in" is the impeachment of Richard Milhouse Nixon.


The President of the United States was caught in the midst of misleading the country and engaging in illegal activities and he was impeached. The current President of the United States is guilty of much worse crimes yet no one is mentioning the word "impeachment."

The religious right (whom Barbara Reynolds says may be religious but they are far from right) tried to get Bill Clinton out of office because of his sexual behavior with Monica Lewinsky. As the saying goes, however, "Bill lied but no one died!"

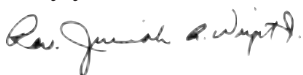
George W has lied and we have over 1700 Americans dead as a result of his lies. Over 200,000 Iraqis have died too, but because of American strategy, "We don't count them." Why is no one mentioning the word "impeachment" now? Maybe there is hope. Maybe someone will find that "impeachment" word in their vocabulary and I can say, "This is where I came in" with a sign of hope and joy!

Maybe we will focus in on the lies of the President and not who is lying with whom in what kind of bed! I certainly hope that the media frenzy over same sex marriages, same gender loving persons and homosexuality will not distract you from the "big rip-off" and the big rape of the American people being carried out by the present government.

I have received dozens of letters from the Los Angeles area concerning the Cinco de Mayo threat of an all-out race war between Mexicans and Blacks. With the election of a Hispanic mayor in the city of Los Angeles, persons are hopeful that the tensions between Blacks and Hispanics can be relieved and that there will be no bullets flying through the streets of Los Angeles as a result of the socio-economic realities in the state of California.

While we are threatened with losing the next generation through warfare (the war in Iraq and in Afghanistan) and through the warfare in the streets of our cities, I hope that you will not be distracted by the media into focusing in on non-issues while the real issues go un-addressed! When are we going to impeach the biggest prevaricator since Ronald Reagan? 

Sincerely yours,



Pastor Jeremiah A. Wright, Jr.