



Obama as Latter Day Joseph?

Yes, say African bishops attending a meeting at the Vatican on Wednesday, Obama may be the one to save God's peoples. According to a report in the Associated Press, Archbishop Gabriel Charles Palmer-Buckle of Accra, Ghana, sees the hand of Providence in the election of Barack Obama.

"It's like the biblical story repeating itself," said the Archbishop, referring to Joseph, the son of Jacob being sold into slavery in Egypt and later emerging as Pharaoh's second in command and savior of his people. "We believe God has his own plans. God directs history," he continued. In the present case, Archbishop Palmer-Buckle has identified the hand of the Almighty in the election of Barack Obama. Somehow, he believes that Obama's African heritage qualified him to be called of God to save America, Africa, and the world.



This sort of talk of divine intervention in the American electoral process is antipodean to the position taken by many of the archbishop's American brethren. Such opposition will not dissuade the archbishop of Ghana nor many of his African counterparts. The archbishop of Kinshasa, Congo, added his voice to the chorus of praise: "If the election of a black as head of the United States of America was a divine sign and a sign from the Holy Spirit for the reconciliation of races and ethnic groups for peaceful relations ... this synod and the universal church would gain from not ignoring the primordial even of contemporary history which is far from being a banal game of political alliances." While it may not be a banal game of political alliances, it does seem a banal apotheosis of a man based solely on his father's skin color.

Spring boarding off his brothers' comments, Cardinal Peter Kodwo Appiah Turkson of Cape Coast, Ghana, also spoke at the three-day confab on the future of the Catholic Church in Africa and declared that thanks to the election of Barack Obama as President, he saw no reason now why there could not now be a black pope. There is something very disturbing in Cardinal Turkson's lack of understanding of his own church's theology. It makes reason gasp to think that God would be swayed by the color of a man's skin when it came to choosing Saint Peter's successor as His mouthpiece on Earth.

Finally, one of the African archbishops present at the conference spoke plainly so as not to disguise his true opinion of the realpolitik value of a black (or half black in the case of Barack Obama) President of the United States. He stated, "Obama has the authority to talk straight to our bad leaders and tell them they are messing up our countries. In Africa we are always happy when our brother is big."

These overt displays of racism on the part of several leaders in the Catholic Church should be shocking to the millions of devout members of that faith who would neither demonize nor deify a man because of the color of his skin. Furthermore, the tenor of the pronouncements made at the Vatican by these



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African priests from the very seat of the Bishop of Rome, should rightfully and loudly call down recriminations from those in authority over those who made such reprehensible comments.



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