

## Obama answers questions on his pastor

*by UPI*

WASHINGTON - Democratic U.S. presidential hopeful Barack Obama Thursday defended his controversial former pastor as a community leader, ABC News reported. The Illinois senator told the network that the ministry of the Rev. Jeremiah Wright, the retired pastor of Trinity United Church of Christ in Chicago, should not be distilled to 30-second sound bites. Obama said Wright has spent 30 years "building a church that is a pillar of the community on the South Side." Wright has been criticized for comments he has made, such as that U.S. foreign policy brought on the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, and that blacks should sing "God damn America," for "treating our citizens as less than human." Obama said Wright was his pastor, not a man who was shaping his vision of the world. "This is somebody who I knew for 20 years. He was my pastor," Obama said. "He wasn't my political adviser. He wasn't somebody who was, you know, shaping my thoughts about most issues."

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