

# Mistah FAB: “Oakland Police Are Hired Assassins” (ozonemag.com)



We all want the last word, to be the final act, to close the deal. It makes you wonder why mainstream media and gay-rights activists focused so much on the opening act of the inauguration and failed to pay tribute to the man who will deliver the benediction, civil rights icon, Rev. Joseph E. Lowery.

Since President-elect Barack Obama announced the Inauguration Day lineup there's been a lot of attention paid to Rev. Rick Warren's views on same-sex marriage. In several reports Rev. Lowery is only mentioned to underscore the opposing views of the two pastors. I don't believe these ministers were chosen for their stance on gay rights.

Obama promised to bring change to America by uniting people with differing opinions to work together on issues that impact all Americans. What better epitomizes change than a conservative evangelical minister and a social justice civil rights minister serving as bookends for the inauguration of the first Black president of the United States of America?

Rev. Warren is the senior pastor of the fourth largest church in America. He is an author, fights to end poverty and disease, and champions environmental issues globally.

Rev. Lowery, the man who will have the final word on Inauguration Day, retired as pastor of Cascade United Methodist Church in Atlanta. He co-founded with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and other ministers, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), and succeeded Ralph Abernathy to serve as the organization's third national president from 1977-97. Affectionately known as the dean of the civil rights

movement, Rev. Lowery has received numerous awards, including an NAACP Lifetime Achievement Award, and was twice named by Ebony magazine as one of the 15 greatest Black preachers.

As fate would have it, the inauguration comes one day after the nation celebrates the birthday of Dr. King. In 1965 Dr. King, Rev. Lowery and other foot soldiers in the civil rights movement led the historic Selma-to-Montgomery March for voting rights. Many of those leaders, including Rev. Lowery, were beaten, spit on, hosed, shot at, and jailed countless times fighting for the right to vote. Rev. Lowery's family lived under the constant threat of violence and his wife, Evelyn Gibson Lowery, was shot at by the Ku Klux Klan in Alabama.

Dr. King and many others died in the struggle to make this historic inauguration possible. The country is blessed to still have a few of the civil rights icons among us like Rev. C.T. Vivian, Dr. Dorothy Height, and Rev. Lowery. These dedicated warriors carried the torch passed on by our ancestors and helped make it possible for hands that once picked cotton to have a hand in picking the first Black president.

These freedom fighters advocated on behalf of everyone – Blacks, Latinos, and the gay and lesbian community. They deserve to be honored without self-serving distractions.

Don't get me wrong, I'm all for gay rights. The election of a Black president does not stop the civil and human rights movement. However, at this moment, it's time for the nation to come together to lift up our ancestors and reflect upon the progress that African Americans have made in their long journey from slavery to the White House.

On Jan. 20, 2009 I will celebrate all that our torchbearers have accomplished for all Americans and exult in witnessing a brilliant, Harvard educated, child of a single mother and Kenyan father, husband of a strong educated Black woman, and

father of two lovely young Black children, accept the responsibility of bearing the torch that will boldly lead America into the 21st century.

To borrow from Rev. Lowery, “We have marched too long, cried too bitterly, bleed too profusely, and died too young” to let anybody spoil this historic moment.

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