

# Jesse and Barack

Earlier this week on my television program, we broke the story of Jesse Jackson criticizing Barack Obama for “talking down” to black Americans. In Chicago, Jackson was speaking to Dr. Reid Tuckson, a health care official, when a microphone picked up the Reverend saying in part:

“See, Barack been talkin’ down to black people on this faith based [situation]. I want to cut his [body part] out. He’s talking down to black people.”

Pretty rough. So what exactly is this all about?

Recently, Senator Obama came out in favor of the federal government continuing to help private religious organizations assist the poor with tax dollars. President Bush’s program of faith-based federal assistance has angered ACLU types who see it as a violation of church and state separation. But since Reverend Jackson’s non-profit organizations benefit greatly from government-mandated tax breaks, you would think he would be pleased with Obama’s position.

Apparently not.

Soon after the story broke, Jackson issued a statement saying that even though he disparaged Obama, he still supports his campaign. However, Jackson has avoided specifically stating what his beef with the Senator really is. Was there condescension toward black people in Obama’s faith-based charity statements? Not that I can see.

In his statement, Jackson mentions the “moral responsibility of black males.” That indicates that he didn’t much like Senator Obama recently calling out black fathers who abandon their children. Jackson writes that the government is also responsible for the intense abandonment problem in the black community, a position he’s held for years.

Some political pundits believe that Jesse Jackson and other committed social activists are fearful that if Obama is elected President, the "victimization" industry will be damaged. After all, if Americans vote for a black man to lead the nation, it will be hard to continue labeling the country as prone to racism.

That, of course, is simply an opinion. If Jesse Jackson says he wants Obama to be President, there's no reason we shouldn't believe him.

But it is also apparent that Jackson has some "issues" with the Senator from Illinois and the Reverend should put them on the table, not make snide behind-the-back remarks. That's not charitable and not fair. If Jackson has a beef, he should tell the folks exactly what it is.

Come November, black voters will overwhelmingly support Senator Obama; of that there is no doubt. But it is also apparent that some liberal blacks like Jackson do not like the Senator's message of personal responsibility and support of faith-based government funded charities.

Debate on those issues is healthy. Might be good for Jesse Jackson to man up on this one.