

# Quick look at Obama and Huckabee

By Armondo Borboa

**Barack Obama: Advocate for change or delusional dreamer?**



*Editor's note: This will be part of a continuing series featuring all current, viable presidential candidates.*



**Mike Huckabee: Clever country wit or blinded by the faith?**

**Education:**  
Harvard Law School, J.D., 1991  
Columbia College/Columbia University, B.A.  
Kean College - Honolulu, Hawaii

**Public service:**  
Senator, Illinois State Senate, 1997 to 2004  
Senator, United States Senate, 2005 to present

**Work experience:**  
Director for Neighborhood and Technology  
Adviser, Annenberg Challenge  
Member, Cook County Bar/Association Community Law Project  
Board Member, Joyce Foundation  
Member, Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under the Law  
Board Member, Woods Fund of Chicago

**Books:**  
Obama: My Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance  
Audacity of Hope: Thoughts on Reclaiming the American Dream

A highly charismatic man and powerful speaker, Barack Obama is a Senate rock star surrounded by dusty, old white guys. The product of a mixed marriage between a white American mother and a black African father brings a similarly blended view to the political landscape. His working-class roots and excellent education, combined with an extended upbringing outside the United States, helped him develop his unique ability to see both sides of an issue. As the very first black president of the *Harvard Law Review*, Obama early on proved himself to be on a mission.

As well as being a tireless advocate for civil rights and a strong community organizer, he has the rare ability to reach across the political divide and come to an agreement with his opponents in order to bring about real change.

In many ways, he is to Democrats what John McCain is to the Republicans: an outsider and a rebel who is not afraid to work with his political opponents. The whopping difference is that he is able to carry off the look of good doing it.

Obama is like the smart, good-looking, popular kid from high school. People instinctively respond to him and even the iconic Oprah Winfrey has tossed her support behind him.

Like other pop icons and movie stars when they give opinions on current topics, Obama says all the things without a clue as to how the real world works.

Without exception, his social programs, health care proposals, business and tax reforms all boil down to the same thing: punishing corporations and the affluent for the sin of being rich. He often talks about the need to create jobs and raise wages, but he has never once run his own business. He is a strong advocate for the poor but grew up solidly middle-class. He is a strong proponent of American oil independence but then wants to raise taxes on corporations that are likely to develop new energy sources. Unfortunately for him, Obama is a man whose idealism far outstrips reality.

**Analysis:**  
Obama's idea of stealing from the rich to give to the poor may make for great entertainment, but it has no place in running an economy. However, if he can learn how a real economy works, Obama has the potential to be a great leader. His ability to excite people of all races, ethnicities, and colors is helping to make the political process a very real concern to the younger generation of voters.

**Grade:** B+

**Education:**  
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, M.A., 1980  
Ouachita Baptist University, B.A., 1975  
Hope High School - Hope, Ark.

**Public service:**  
Arkansas Governor, 1996 to 2007  
Arkansas Lieutenant Governor, 1993 to 1996

**Private experience:**  
President: ACTS-TV, 1983 to 1986; KBSC-TV, 1987 to 1992;  
Baptist minister, 1980 to 1992  
Advertising Director, Focus, 1976 to 1980  
Former Chairman, Southern Governors' Association

**Books:**  
"Character Is the Issue"  
"Kids Who Kill: Confronting Our Culture of Violence"  
"Living Beyond Your Lifetime"  
"Quit Digging Your Grave with a Knife and Fork"  
"From Hope to Higher Ground: 12 STOPS to Restoring America's Greatness"

**Pros:**  
In another lifetime, Mike Huckabee could have been a great stand-up comedian or maybe an outstanding actor. Soft-spoken and filled with country wit, the man can make people laugh till it hurts while at the same time inspire them to his cause.

With his trademark homespun humor, Huckabee has the ability to say what everybody else in the room is thinking without fear of being publicly tossed out the nearest window.

He almost single-handedly turned around the educational and healthcare systems of Arkansas, a state that has long suffered the stigma of poverty and ignorance. He has also been instrumental in creating other revolutionary programs, becoming one of only four Republicans ever elected to Arkansas' state office since the Reconstruction.

As a Southern Baptist minister, he had just as much success inspiring change and bringing Arkansas out of the 19th century. He convinced an all-white Immanuel Baptist church to accept black members, and has been noted several times for refusing to speak in front of racist crowds, a difficult feat in the Deep South.

**Cons:**  
Huckabee's biggest political liability is his otherwise strongest moral strength, his faith. By openly advocating his Baptist principles and relying on his faith's religious tenants to shape his political beliefs, he has alienated himself from the more secular moderates and independent voters who might otherwise support him.

Although an entertaining speaker, Huckabee has a tendency to use colorful metaphors that simply do not play well as sound bites. He has often been criticized for making jokes about suicide, homosexuality, bestiality, the Holocaust and the Confederate flag. It is perhaps his natural charm and charisma that has kept him in the race thus far.

Huckabee also suffers from a lack of national recognition. Prior to his run for the presidency, his most notable nationwide coverage came from being the butt of Jay Leno's late-night talk show jokes. It is remarkable that his campaign has lasted this long.

**Analysis:**  
Huckabee is a wonderful man and an inspiring leader, but he simply will never be president of the United States without fundamentally changing who he is. His Southern humor, while great on the stage or in front of the pulpit, would be a huge liability to a future president.

**Grade:** C+



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