

National Black Church Initiative

P.O. Box 65177
Washington DC 20035
202-744-0184
dcbci2002@gmail.com
www.naltblackchurch.com

Contact:
Rev. Anthony Evans
202-744-0184

October 24, 2011
For Immediate Release

National Black Church Initiative Declares Mormonism is a Part of the Christian Faith and Culture

It is not a Cult; it is the Church of Latter Day Saints

Washington DC – The National Black Church Initiative (NBCI), a faith-based coalition of 34,000 churches comprised of 15 denominations and 15.7 million African Americans dedicated to the eradication of racial disparities around the world is urging all religious communities to join together in the promotion of peace. We called upon our Black religious leadership to use the full force of our combined churches to draw attention to the imperative of religious tolerance.

The United States is a nation that was founded on religious tolerance and the separation of church and state is a critical pillar of our political culture. As Thomas Jefferson, the principle author of the Declaration of Independence, has noted: “Proscribing any citizen as unworthy the public confidence by laying upon him an incapacity of being called to offices of trust and emolument, unless he profess or renounce this or that religious opinion, is depriving him injuriously of those privileges and advantages to which, in common with his fellow citizens, he has a natural right...*Among the most inestimable of our blessings is that...of liberty to worship our Creator in the way we think most agreeable to His will*; a liberty deemed in other countries incompatible with good government and yet proved by our experience to be its best support.” In the United States, we respect the right of our politicians to their personal religious beliefs and we work assiduously to maintain a strict separation of church and state. This has long been of paramount importance to the Black church because it was once considered a cult, an illegitimate stepchild of Christianity by White Christians. We therefore have a historical responsibility to stand with those who are being persecuted for their religious beliefs.

At no time is this basic tenet of American political life being tested more than now. As President Barack Hussein Obama, New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg, and Representative Keith Ellison each demonstrate, our politicians are increasingly diverse not only ethnically but also

religiously. In keeping with the rich diversity of this country, there are prominent politicians in America of every race and religion. Unfortunately, this has elicited a backlash from the forces of intolerance in our country. That intolerance was painfully on display recently when Reverend Robert Jeffress, the senior pastor at First Baptist Church in Dallas, having been asked about the faith of presidential candidate Governor Mitt Romney, called Mormonism a cult. The NBCI believes that that is dead wrong.

As Reverend Anthony Evans, President of NBCI reminds us: “In American, we don’t have a religious test. Everyone is free to practice their faith. Our church will stand with Mormons on this issue so that they can exercise his concept of Christianity. We stand with Governor Romney and Governor Huntsman and we will never allow one segment of the Christian faith to determine the totality of the religion and ethics of Jesus.”

We cannot allow religious extremism to corrupt the political culture of the United States. Governor Romney has the same right to run for President as Al Sharpton. Just as John F. Kennedy’s Catholicism should not have prevented him from becoming President, so too Gov. Romney’s Mormon faith should not be an impediment to him. All politicians deserve the right to be judged by the American people at the ballot box.

As Dr. King reminds us, we must not give in to the extremism within some of this nation’s myriad religious denominations but rather maintain a strict commitment to separation of church and state: “The church must be reminded that it is not the master or the servant of the state, but rather the conscience of the state.” We must be able to look at a person and see the good as well as the bad in order to discern what that person is truly like. There is a Muslim saying, ‘All creation is the family of God, and the person most beloved by God (is the one) who is kind and caring toward His family.’ We have to be able to see that the person we hate is also human, and that common bond is what makes us family, and for that reason we have to be able to forgive and tolerate others.” The NBCI embraces this vision and seeks to make it a reality.

About NBCI

The National Black Church Initiative (NBCI) is a coalition of 800 African American and Latino churches working to eradicate racial disparities in healthcare, technology, education, housing, and the environment. NBCI’s mission is to provide critical wellness information to all of its members, congregants, churches and the public. NBCI offers faith-based, out-of-the box and cutting edge solutions to stubborn economic and social issues. NBCI’s programs are governed by credible statistical analysis, science based strategies and techniques, and methods that work. Visit our website at www.naltblackchurch.com.