

National Black Church Initiative

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NATIONAL BLACK CHURCH INITIATIVE CONDEMNS CONSERVATIVE LEADERS' RACIST REMARKS ABOUT OBAMA

NEWT GINGRICH'S "KENYAN" COMMENTS DAMAGE CIVIL DEBATE

Washington DC- The National Black Church Initiative (NBCI), a coalition of 34,000 churches, denounced recent comments by former House Speaker Newt Gingrich as evidence that Right-leaning political leaders are still using racist slogans to disrupt political debate and appeal to the base prejudices of certain voters. Gingrich, now a FOX News commentator, accused President Obama of being out of touch because of his African roots in an interview with National Review Online on Saturday.

"What if [Obama] is so outside our comprehension, that only if you understand Kenyan, anti-colonial behavior, can you begin to piece together [his actions]?" Gingrich asks. "That is the most accurate, predictive model for his behavior."

Rev. Anthony Evans, president of NBCI, called this Republican running campaign of race-based slander "divisive and damaging" to any chance of reasoned political discussion.

"We can debate with them on the issues, but repeated comments like this undermine the democratic process. They undermine civil dialogue and the exchange of ideas. When they resort to hidden racist wording we have to call that out."

Many other Republicans have sunk to such dismissive bigotry. Gingrich was inspired by a conservative column in *Forbes* magazine that accused Obama of being "governed by a ghost" of an "anti-colonial" Kenyan father, nodding to conservative groups like the "Tea Party" and "Birthers," who paint Obama as an illegal alien out of touch with America.

Another example of slander drummed up by Gingrich and the FOX News team included a response to Obama's education address broadcast in American schools in September 2009 ignited by in which then-chairman of the Florida Republican Party Jim Greer. Greer accused the

speech to encourage class participation as a means of “using our children as tools to spread liberal propaganda.”

Painting it as political indoctrination similar to a “dear leader speech” given by dictators like North Korean despot Kim Jong-il, Gingrich and the FOX News team cheered on Conservative protesters screaming “Mr. President, stay away from our children!” Before Obama addressed schools today Greer released a statement reading that he now finds “that many within the GOP have racist views” and apologized for his “efforts to placate the extremists who dominate our Party today.”

Republicans flouted racist slogans against Obama in the 2008 campaign, which included conservative pundit Rush Limbaugh singing “Barack the Magic Negro” and California’s Chaffey Community Republican Women printing “Obama food stamps” newsletters with Obama depicted as a donkey surrounded by watermelon and chicken. Now that another election season approaches we are seeing a similar small-minded campaign.

In today’s speech to America’s schoolchildren Obama recognized that because of hard times “a lot of you are having to act a lot older than you are.” Rev. Evans said Americans should do likewise and not let racist political attacks disrupt our responsibility to talk like grown-ups about real solutions to America’s problems.

About NBCI

The National Black Church Initiative (NBCI) is a coalition of 34,000 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. The National Black Church Initiative’s methodology is utilizing faith and sound health science. The National Black Church Initiative's purpose is to partner with major organizations and officials whose main mission is to reduce racial disparities in the variety of areas cited above. 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.