

National Black Church Initiative

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November 21, 2015
For Immediate Release

National Black Church Initiative Sends a Letter to Sen. Charles Grassley, Chairman Committee on the Judiciary United States Senate to launch a Congressional Inquiry Into The American Red Cross' Questionable Relief Efforts in Haiti

Washington, DC – Rev. Anthony Evans, President of The National Black Church Initiative (NBCI), a faith-based coalition of 34,000 churches comprised of 15 denominations and 15.7 million African Americans on September 11, 2015 send a letter to the Honorable Charles E. Grassley Chairman Committee on the Judiciary United States Senate to launch a congressional inquiry into its questionable relief efforts.

Dear Chairman Grassley:

The undersigned leaders of the National Black Church Initiative (NBCI) write to you today regarding the American Red Cross, and to urge a comprehensive congressional inquiry into its questionable relief efforts following the January 2010 earthquake in Haiti. We are deeply troubled that millions in donated dollars have disappeared without due explanation, projects have failed, and Haitians continue to suffer despite promises for aid. Publically available data in addition to recent investigative reports indicate a larger pattern of misappropriation of funds and failed leadership, which must be addressed.

On June 3, 2015, ProPublica and National Public Radio (NPR) published an article revealing a string of fund misappropriation, knowingly misleading donors and the public about relief progress, and overall mismanagement of relief efforts in Haiti We urge Congress to investigate the American Red Cross to determine: 1) whether relief dollars were handled appropriately and disbursed to those projects to which they were intended; 2) whether senior American Red Cross leadership knowingly misled donors and the public about the appropriation of relief dollars; and 3) mandate that the organization disclose details of how it has spent the hundreds of millions of dollars donated for Haiti.

As you well know, after the devastating January 2010 earthquake that rocked the Western Hemisphere's poorest nation the American Red Cross led the charge in relief efforts. Nearly half a billion dollars was raised from donations, ostensibly to build hundreds of permanent, safe homes for families displaced and impacted by the natural disaster.ⁱⁱ The in-depth investigation of the Red Cross' efforts by ProPublica and NPR demonstrates that not only did the organization fail to properly distribute funds directly to those in need, but also that top officials knowingly tried to deceive the public and give false information about where and how the money was being spent. Missed deadlines, failed projects, and the continued suffering of millions of Haitians who were promised relief demand attention from U.S. government officials.²

Take one claim advertised in Red Cross promotional materials, that the organization had helped "more than 4.5 million" individual Haitians "get back on their feet." Haiti's own prime minister at the time of the earthquake, Jean-Max Bellerive, personally doubts the figure, pointing out the country's entire population is only about 10 million.

As the charity of choice for most Americans following natural disasters, it is imperative that the Red Cross' operations be trustworthy. Therefore, we strongly and unequivocally support an immediate and thorough investigation of the organization, not only for those citizens in Haiti but for future communities in need. We need answers, and stand ready to assist in in any way we can.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev Anthony Evans

President National Black Church Initiative

i Elliott, Justin and Sullivan, Laura. How the Red Cross Raised Half a Billion Dollars for Haiti and Built Six Homes. ProPublica and National Public Radio. 3 June 2015 <<https://www.propublica.org/article/how-the-red-cross-raised-half-a-billion-dollars-for-haiti-and-built-6-homes>>

ii American Red Cross. Haiti Assistance Program. Accessed September 2015. <<http://www.redcross.org/what-we-do/international-services/haiti-assistance-program>>.

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. Our methodology is utilizing faith and sound health science.

NBCI'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. Visit our website at www.naltblackchurch.com.