

National Black Church Initiative

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For Immediate Release

NBCI Asks Black Community to Leave Tavis Smiley and Dr. Cornel West Alone Take their Hands off of These Brothers

Take Your Hands Off These Brothers, They Are Our Black Princes

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 American churchgoers, is standing strong with Tavis Smiley and Cornel West as they continue to educate us on how the Obama administration has consistently ignored and vilified the Black community. The Black community has not been treated with the type of respect and assistance we need in the most devastating economic climate since the Great Depression. What is more, this comes after the Black community gave Mr. Obama over 98 percent of his vote both in 2008 and 2012.

So-called African American leaders like our dear brothers Rev. Al Sharpton, Radio Host Tom Joiner, and NAACP leader Ben Jealous have made the poor choice of cozying up to the Obama administration as the black community has literally gone to hell in a hand basket. There is a dire need for them to stop criticizing Tavis Smiley and Dr. Cornel West. These brothers are trying to force the administration to address the economic needs of the black community and to treat African Americans equally. Al Sharpton, Jesse Jackson and the traditional civil rights leadership on the other hand went around and told us to “lower our expectations.” In other words, they wanted us for the first time in our history to “lower our expectations” of the new president.

In some sense, this was a reasonable request given the condition of the country. But, after six years of suffering in silence, and after all we gave to President Obama, we are in a much worse economic position.

We love President Obama and his family! We want him to do the right thing by us. We want President Obama to succeed, but he cannot do this by ignoring his most loyal supporters – his people.

Sharpton is not the president of Black America; we have a God-given right under the Constitution to air our views. The Black community is not monolithic in its thoughts. We have diverse sets of viewpoints just like all Americans.

One can easily assess this by the massive complaints coming directly from the members of the Congressional Black Caucus, who are in some sense treated like the Republicans when they want access to the White House to plead their case.

- We have lost 54 percent of black spending power during this recession.
- Black unemployment rates vary between 13 and 15 percent.
- Black businesses fell sharply under the Obama administration.
- Black students are saddled with more debt under this administration.
- Black poverty rate increased under this administration.
- Black home owners got little or any assistance from the President's three foreclosure programs (all of the administration foreclosure assistance programs have been an utter failure of black families).
- Black women, especially black poor women, who have supported the President at 99.8 percent have nothing to show for their single mindedness of support for President Obama.
- Black youth employment numbers are worse under this President than under Presidents Bush or Clinton.
- Black colleges and universities are experiencing the worst economic downturn without any resource support from this administration. Will President Obama let Howard University fall?
- Africa was granted a five year \$7.5 billion economic assistance package – pennies when compared to \$200 billion in overseas investment in China.

Even more sad and indefensible, the Obama administration has no plan to correct these persistent and permanent conditions. They will give you the old Ronald Reagan line that the President is trying to help all Americans and he sees no difference between the African American middle-class position and the white middle-class economic condition. Hypercritically, President Obama once articulated that the economic scale clearly favored white America.

The economic statistical picture for African Americans continues to decelerate under the Obama administration. These are hard facts. We have invested so much hope in President Obama and he has consistently failed us with his drone and spy programs, and his thirst for killing and talking down to our children, especially at Morehouse. He has and continues to be a moral embarrassment to the black church and the black family by not addressing their real concerns. But when it comes to the gay community, he has and continues to use the full power of his presidency to push and promote the wicked policy of same sex marriage.

The question here is to ask for *what policy* the administration has thrown its full weight behind to benefit Black America. If one will say healthcare, they will be wrong simply because the Affordable Care Act has not taken effect as of the date of this press release.

The Rev. Anthony Evans, President of NBCI says, "I am ashamed of my people that they will go after one of ours – Tavis and Cornel - as they defend the dignity of black people. When I heard that black people and some black women have threaten Tavis' life I stopped being ashamed and was horrified of the way that we have begun to treat one another. The Black Church will have none of this in our community. The person who threatens and criticizes Tavis and Cornel is morally wrong and should be condemned. Beloved, Tavis Smiley and Cornel West are defenders of dignity and what is good and honorable in the black community. They are not political opportunist who will kick these brothers and misrepresent their thoughts in the media and especially in the black press. Shame

on anyone who will harm these brothers by words or action. These two brothers represent the Christ who cared and loved the poor. The church according to our Lord and savior must defend the poor---NBCI speaks for the poor—this is our job.”

Against this backdrop of economic catastrophe in the black community, we face political isolation from the White House and African American leaders --- Sharpton, Jackson, Jealous and others -- telling us that we shall not use our political skills in pressuring the Obama administration to address the needs of the black community. Tavis Smiley and Cornel West and many others who dare to question this administration as they trade off of the President’s blackness (or the lack thereof) that we should not challenge the President publicly as he ignores us. This makes Tavis and Cornel’s challenge important so that we can reclaim the manner of protest and the fight for human dignity. Travis is not perfect like Al Sharpton is not perfect but both of them love our people. This is why it is wrong to vilify Tavis and Dr. West for their approach concerning the President Obama leadership.

Tavis Smiley as you know has over the past 20 years committed himself and his company to come up with a plan to defeat the economic, political and moral issues that confront daily our reality in the black community. The plan was called the **Covenant** which every single black leader – men and women signed on to it and they were the first ones to violate the core principle of the **Covenant** which stated that: as leaders we will hold every president/politician to the principles of the **Covenant** for Black America irrespective of whether they were Republican or Democratic presidents/politician. When President Obama was elected the same so-called leaders told us to - through away our minds. You should have no greater expectations (black people) for President Obama than you should have for a white president. The main advocate of this silly political philosophy of not holding President Obama to the same standards that we would hold any white president was Al Sharpton and Tom Joiner and Ben Jealous.

Both of them signed to covenant. They violated the **Covenant** that they signed and criticized Tavis Smiley and Dr. Cornel West for upholding the core principle of the **Covenant** to President Obama and his administration. As a result of this, they allowed a lynch mob of so-called black leaders including black women to threaten the life of our beloved brother Tavis and West because they were both willing to give the Obama administration a free pass just because he was the first one to achieve the presidency. This makes Al Sharpton and Tom Joiner and the rest of the so-called black leaders who signed that covenant moral hypocrites. Are they saying that we cannot have a civil discussion about the moral and political integrity of President Obama’s policies? Or are we betraying the race if we question the leader of the free world about his commitment to his own people as we suffer worse than any other race in this county?

About NBCI

The National Black Church Initiative (NBCI) is a coalition of 34,000 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.