

## Black Ministers are Coming to the Defense of Obama

Written by By Cash Michaels  
Thursday, 04 October 2012 15:25

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As the election between President Obama and Mitt Romney enters the final stretch, Black ministers are becoming more outspoken in taking on colleagues who are urging his defeat because of his support of same-sex marriage.

For the Rev. Dwight McKissic, a Black Southern Baptist, told the Associated Press, “[On Election Day], I plan to go fishin.”

Rev. Derrick Harkins, Democratic National Committee Faith Outreach director, said, “How dare anyone say to somebody that you ought not exercise the franchise that people literally have breathed their life’s effort and life’s blood into for us to have, and especially now when we have the opportunity to continue the work that we’ve begun.”

He added, “Follow the money, follow the support,”

Money – and conservative politics – is the basis of some of the criticism of Obama by some Black pastors.

In an effort to galvanize his support base in the Black church in the midst of growing headlines that African-American pastors, angered by his personal endorsement of same-sex marriage, were telling their communities not to vote in November, President Barack Obama spoke with many Black ministers from across the nation by telephone last month, urging them to stick with

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him.

Meanwhile a local pastor says he has now pulled a controversial radio ad he's featured in that blasted Pres. Obama for several weeks. That ad was paid for by a right-wing group that has made removing Obama from office one of its top priorities.

Many of the ministers are telling all who would listen not to vote for Republican Mitt Romney either because of his Mormon faith. Mormonism is seen by some in the Christian Black church as a racist cult because of its long history of racism, a history the Mormon church never apologized for.

What is becoming more and more evident is that several of the black pastors most prominent in telling African-Americans to sit this presidential election out are being backed by the right-wing lobbying group known as NOM – the National Organization for Marriage.

Earlier this year, it was reported that Mitt Romney's PAC secretly donated \$10,000 to NOM in 2008, and uncovered NOM documents by a federal court in Maine revealed, "The \$20 Million Strategy for Victory," devised in 2009, which not only focused on "defeating the pro-gay Obama agenda" during the 2010 mid-term elections, but declaring that, "a pro-marriage president must be elected in 2012."

NOM documents also talked about "Sideswiping Obama" by raising issues such as pornography and social radicalism.

NOM has funded anti-Obama Black ministers, including Rev. William Owens, founder and president of the Memphis-based Coalition of African-American Pastors. Owens launched a petition drive last May to get the president to "change his views" on same-sex marriage.

He openly accused Obama of "taking big money from the homosexual community," adding the president "sold out." Owens was later quoted as saying that Obama "condoned child molestation."

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On August 27, NOM issued a press release boasting that it was launching radio ads in North Carolina “encouraging African-Americans to say ‘no more’ to President Obama.

We urge all North Carolinians to join Dr. Wooden in rejecting the anti-family policies of President Obama this November,” stated Brian Brown, NOM president.

The “Dr. Wooden” in question is Rev. Patrick L. Wooden, pastor of Upper Room Church of God in Christ in Raleigh, N.C. Wooden has long been known for his politically conservative views and is credited as helping to lead the state-wide passage of Amendment One last May, the Republican-sponsored amendment to North Carolina’s state Constitution outlawing same-sex marriage, even though it was already codified in state statutory law.

According to the NOM press release, the group spent \$34,000 in the Raleigh media market purchasing airtime for 60 second radio spots featuring Wooden delivering the following message:

“It was the African American community that helped [President Obama] win here in North Carolina, But President Obama has turned his back on the values of our community with his strong endorsement of the homosexual movement. We worked hard to pass the Marriage Protection Amendment this past May. With the strong support of the African American community, the amendment protecting marriage as the union of one man and one woman passed overwhelmingly. The very next day, President Obama came out for homosexual marriage. Now his campaign leaders are working to deny North Carolina’s ability to define marriage, and they want to overturn our state marriage amendment altogether. Join me in saying ‘no more’ to President Obama.”

The ad ran during the weeks of both the Republican National Convention in August, and the Democratic National Convention in Charlotte in September.

In an interview, Wooden said he pulled the ad after God “told him” that it had achieved its purpose.

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If getting people upset for two weeks as listeners tuned into their favorite FM gospel station was the goal, then Wooden certainly achieved that; Facebook was flooded with complaints about the ad.

Rev. Earl Johnson, pastor of Martin Street Baptist Church in Raleigh, and president of the Raleigh-Wake Citizens Association in Raleigh, a grassroots civic group, held a press conference last month blasting Wooden and any other minister who would implore the Black community not to vote this election.

Wooden said he was not paid any money to voice the ads by NOM, nor pushing Republican Mitt Romney's candidacy. In Wooden's opinion, President Obama had turned his back on the Black community with his same-sex marriage stance.

NOM promised on its Web site that if the Raleigh campaign featuring Dr. Wooden was successful, it would be replicated across the state since North Carolina was, "a key presidential swing state."

Rev. Curtis E. Gatewood, Second Vice President of the N.C. NAACP, sent a letter to Patrick Wooden, criticizing him for voicing the NOM ads.

Indeed the North Carolina NAACP issued an open letter about, "...clergy who are trying to confuse African-American voters on [the] wedge issue of marriage equality".

Making it clear that as a nonpartisan civil rights organization, the NAACP does not endorse candidates, state NAACP Pres. Rev. William Barber told The Carolinian that the Black community must be wary of those who try to suppress their vote through their faith.

"When you look at the Scriptures, the issues that people of faith ought to be concerned about in the public square are how do we treat the poor; how do we treat children; how do we treat the sick; and how do we treat those who are on the margins of society – how do we treat the

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vulnerable?” Rev. Barber said. “To be the paid puppets of the ultra-right ...is a disservice to our community.”

*Special to the NNPA from The Carolinian*

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