

National Religious Broadcasters Appoints First Black Chairman

Outspoken Detroit broadcaster Glen Plummer, a charismatic, will head the conservative association

A charismatic Detroit broadcaster known for his outspoken stance on controversial issues has been named chairman and CEO of the National Religious Broadcasters (NRB), the leading association for Christian media ministries.

Glenn Plummer, 46, the first African American to hold the position and the head of the only African American-owned and operated Christian TV station, assumed the position Oct. 1 after former chairman Wayne Pederson became president of the NRB upon the death of former president Brandt Gustavson.

A formal election in February will determine whether or not Plummer will continue to serve a full three-year term. Plummer also pastors 600-member Ambassadors for Christ Church in Detroit.

"The chairman is the chief executive officer of the NRB, responsible to the 1,400 NRB members for the overall direction and character of Christian media," Pederson said. "[Plummer's] vision for reaching the lost and ministering to believers through media will set the tone for all Christian media."

Former NRB chairman Jerry Rose, head of the Total Living Network in Chicago, notes that though Plummer's appointment is a significant first for the 59-year-old NRB, Plummer has

worked his way through the ranks.

" earned the right to chair the NRB board," Rose said. "There have been other African Americans on the executive committee, and they have served well. But Glenn has made a strong commitment to the NRB. That commitment has gained him recognition and respect throughout the association."

Known for challenging the status quo, Plummer expects to support Pederson in keeping media ministries abreast of emerging technology and introducing younger leaders into the NRB to keep programming culturally relevant. "Christians have to create programming," Plummer said. "We're going to have to tap into creative people who can create programs, then air them on TV."

But Plummer also hopes to bring more African American ministries into NRB's fold. He says the NRB's membership is approaching 1,500, yet a small percentage is African American.

"By and large most of the prominent African American media ministries aren't part of NRB," Plummer said. "There hasn't been an intentional effort them to be part of NRB. I intend to reach out in a specific way to these [groups]."

An NRB member for almost 20 years, Plummer started his Christian Television Network (CTN) in Detroit in 1982 "to take this gospel to the nations of the world." Today the network owns four stations and airs programming as far away as Australia and Uganda.

Host of the daily talk show CTN Live, Plummer has been known to ruffle a few feathers in his mostly African American

community.

When Nation of Islam leader Louis Farakkhan began spreading his theology in the pulpits of Christian churches, Plummer spoke out, calling it “anti-Christ” and airing clips of Farakkhan claiming to be the Messiah. Last year when a young black man was murdered by security guards at a local mall, Plummer denounced popular claims that the incident was racially motivated, noting two of the guards were black.

Most recently Plummer has challenged African Americans’ allegiance to the Democratic Party, calling it idolatry to put politics before God. He quickly points out he is not a Republican but notes that in the mid-1990s when former NAACP leader Benjamin Chavis, a Christian minister, converted to Islam, there was little backlash from African Americans, a majority of whom are said to be Christian.

“Had he become a Republican, we would have been outraged,” Plummer said. “As a black person—and I’m generalizing—I will get more angry if you come against the Democrats than if you come against the church. The same is true of white Christians who hold more allegiance to the Republican Party. The simple answer is: Repent; come back to your first love.”

Pederson anticipates Plummer will help “enlarge the tent of the NRB” in regard to ethnic origin, gender, age and theological position. “His impact on NRB leadership has been significant,” Pederson said. “It’s going to be a great team.”

—Adrienne S. Gaines