

Cruz, Carson Among Candidates to Tackle Key Evangelical Issues

Three of the Republican presidential candidates, Texas Sen. Ted Cruz, retired neurosurgeon Dr. Ben Carson and former Pennsylvania Sen. Rick Santorum, have agreed to participate in the Carolina Values Summit presented by The Reconciled Church on Feb. 11 at Winthrop University.

The Reconciled Church, a multiracial, nondenominational, apolitical group of church leaders working with legislators and the private sector to heal the country's racial divide, invited all of the Democratic and Republican presidential candidates to participate. The event will be held in Winthrop's 3,500-seat Byrnes Auditorium.

"The purpose of the summit is to have a conversation with the presidential candidates on the major issues facing urban America, and for them to address key public policy and social concerns of evangelicals of all ethnicities around the nation, and hear their proposed solutions," said Bishop Harry Jackson, one of the leaders of The Reconciled Church movement and the main organizer of the summit.

Held prior to South Carolina's presidential primaries on Feb. 20 (Republican) and 27 (Democratic), the event will provide a key opportunity for candidates to address religious leaders and other attendees.

Each candidate will be given 30 minutes to address attendees and field pre-selected questions from one of the moderators – journalist Sophia Nelson and CBN correspondent David Brody.

The topics to be discussed will include:

- Religious liberty
- Persecution of Christians
- Urban safety
- Criminal justice reform
- Race relations
- Urban revitalization

“It is not our goal to hurt or help any specific candidate but to steer the conversation in the campaign toward America’s growing problems and to find workable solutions,” Jackson said.

Other participating organizations include the Family Research Council, the Frederick Douglass Foundation, the Congress of Racial Equality and Nations Ford Community Church in Charlotte, North Carolina.

The summit will be held during Black History Month, and Dr. Alveda King, niece of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., is expected to attend. Christian leaders confirmed to be in attendance include A.R. Bernard, senior pastor of the Christian Cultural Center in New York; and Lt. Gen. (Ret.) Jerry Boykin, executive vice president of the Family Research Council.

Spectators will be charged a nominal \$5 fee to attend the summit, which will begin at 6 p.m. and end at 9 p.m.