

The NAACP No Longer Speaks For Me

Last Thursday marked the end of the NAACP's annual meeting and 103 years of faithful service to the black community. Members and their families gathered from around the world. Their annual pilgrimage celebrates the work of . Du Bois, Medgar Evers and thousands of patriots who believed in the American dream.

When I personally think about the greatest years for the nation's oldest civil rights organization, I think of the legacy of Harvard-trained Charles Hamilton Houston, who became the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People's chief counsel in 1935.

As the Howard University law school dean, he revolutionized the training of black lawyers—raising up a generation of the most competent lawyers of their day. His strategy on school segregation cases, according to the NAACP website, “paved the way for his protégé, Thurgood Marshall, to prevail in 1954's *Brown v. Board of Education*, the decision that overturned *Plessy*.”

Despite thousands of kudos that could be given to the organization, in recent years the NAACP has begun to drift off mission. They have stopped addressing the most pressing issues of African-Americans with a Christian ethos and the spirit of humility, justice and racial reconciliation.

Historically pastors and other religious leaders have made up a large percentage of the leadership of the NAACP. Empowered by Christian principles, the organization faithfully followed this mission statement:

“The NAACP's principal objective is to ensure the political, educational, social and economic equality of minority group

citizens of United States and eliminate race prejudice. The NAACP seeks to remove all barriers of racial discrimination through the democratic processes.”

How has the NAACP veered off course? The most concerning sign of mission drift is their stance on traditional marriage.

First of all, they opposed the Defense of Marriage Act, signed into law by President Clinton in 1996. Secondly, the NAACP also opposed the traditional marriage affirming Proposition 8 in California in 2008.

Most recently, their 2012 resolution supporting same-sex marriage has become the source of tremendous controversy for many NAACP members and the black community at large. This measure was passed quickly, without discussion or debate. Many community leaders would like to know why the politically motivated rush to judgment, when most blacks oppose same-sex marriage.

The Rev. Keith A. Ratliff Sr. (who resigned from his role as a NAACP national board member) repudiated the organization’s decision with a statement that resonates with many blacks: “There is not a parallel between the homosexual community and the struggles of African-Americans in our country. I haven’t seen any signs on any restrooms that say ‘For Homosexuals Only.’ Homosexuals do not have to sit on the back of the bus, as African-Americans had to.” Ratliff, therefore, concluded that “the gay rights movement” should not be compared with the civil rights movement.

In response to all of this, the NAACP has made it clear that there will be no discussion on this matter. Further, Chairwoman Roslyn Brock responded to the controversy by saying, “Some may never be able to come to terms with the resolution, and that’s fine, but we hope they will evolve and stand firmly with us.”

The NAACP has failed the black community in two significant

ways.

First of all, the legal rigor that made the organization effective and famous under Houston and Marshall was not employed in this decision. Secondly, instead of leading the community in a mature discussion about this issue, the NAACP has stooped to name-calling and hate mongering.

Let me explain. By suggesting that traditional marriage has anything to do with “hatred” against other groups, the NAACP is affirming nearly every slanderous accusation levied against traditional marriage supporters. Marriage law has—and always will be—“discriminatory,” but that does not imply hatred. Brothers and sisters cannot marry, but that does not codify hatred of family. A man cannot marry four women at the same time, but that fact does not codify hatred of polygamists.

Furthermore, the NAACP’s statement explicitly connected the redefinition of marriage to the Fourteenth Amendment. The willingness of this renowned civil rights organization to suggest that homosexual marriage falls under the domain of Fourteenth Amendment protections lends credence to the deeply offensive notion that sexual behavior and race are comparable qualities.

It is also worth pointing out that the language of the resolution affirms the agenda, not just of homosexual couples, but of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) citizens. This undoubtedly opens the door for the NAACP to endorse all sorts of legislative goals for these various groups in the future.

For example, all over the country, transgendered individuals have a long list of demands. In some areas of the country, biological males are already allowed to use women’s locker rooms and restrooms if they “consider themselves” to be female.

What makes the NAACP think that redefining marriage will have

any positive effect whatsoever on the advancement of racial minorities?

The suffering of our ancestors under the yoke of slavery gives black Americans a unique ability to speak to the injustices of today. I am deeply grieved that the NAACP thinks it can use that moral authority to advance the LGBT agenda.

In conclusion, we need a national town hall among African-Americans to discuss the direction of the civil rights movement. Until this happens, the NAACP "No longer speaks for me or millions of others."