

Barber to Trump: 'You represent hate, greed'

BY CASH MICHAELS FOR THE CHRONICLE

In a scathing open letter issued just hours before presumptive Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump spoke in Raleigh Tuesday evening, N.C. NAACP President Rev. William Barber, leader of the "Moral Monday" movement, blasted the controversial businessman's campaign for the White House, charging that it presents, "... an extremist philosophy of hate, greed, racism, classism and xenophobia."

"Your campaign, like the leadership of our Legislature and Governor, does not represent the politics of Lincoln, the call of justice, or the ethics of Biblical evangelicalism," Rev. Barber wrote, apparently referencing Trump's previous "Ban all Muslims coming into the U.S." and "Mexicans are rapists" remarks. "So far, your campaign as the Republican [presumptive] nominee for President does not represent the ideals of Abraham Lincoln, the Republican who signed the Emancipation Proclamation and supported African-Americans in their quest for freedom and citizenship."

The N.C. NAACP leader's letter to Trump is noteworthy because in several of his speeches, the wealthy New York businessman has claimed that his policies will help African-Americans in the nation's inner cities rebuild their communities with more jobs.

Still, a Washington Post poll last month found that 94 percent of African-Americans surveyed across the nation had an "unfavorable" view of Trump, while logging a 79 percent favorable view of his

Democratic opponent, former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. Mrs. Clinton campaigned with President Obama in Charlotte Tuesday, hoping to garner some of the president's 51 percent national approval rating and 2008 coalition voters for this November's general election.

Even though Donald Trump does boast of some support from a cadre of black ministers with whom he occasionally meets, it was clear from Rev. Barber's letter that he has not been one of them.

Barber further accused Trump's campaign of not representing the "ideals" of pioneering black Republicans like Abraham Galloway, who helped to found the GOP in North Carolina in the late 1800s, or Bishop J. W. Hood, who helped to craft North Carolina's state Constitution during Reconstruction.

"These Republicans all believed in equality, voting rights, public education, and decent wages. We do not object to Republican leadership as such, but to its failure to honor its own heritage," Rev. Barber wrote.

Barber then questioned what Trump's candidacy actually means for the people of North Carolina, and where he stood on the issues of voting rights, the re-segregation of public education and environmental protections.

"Mr. Trump, you and many in your camp say that you are not a racist at heart, though Republican leaders acknowledge the racist content of some of your assertions," Rev. Barber continued. "You say you love Latinos and care about the sick and the poor. You say that you are not xenophobic."

"Please back up your claims with concrete policies. That is where we have to look to determine these things—not just in your heart, but in the potential impact at the heart of policies you propose."

"When you come to North Carolina, remember that you are in the birthplace of the sit-in movement. You are in the state where Dr. King first delivered his 'I Have a Dream' speech in Rocky Mount," the civil rights leader added.

Barber then accused Trump of continuing the 1960's "Southern Strategy" of dividing blacks and whites racially, and ignoring the needs of the poor.

"You have taken the 'Southern strategy' a step further," Rev. Barber insists to Trump. "In the past, its devotees would hide behind code words. What you are saying was only supposed to be in the backroom, not on the platform. There is something to be said for candor, but in your case, it poisons our civil society."

In this state—in our Moral Movement, we have stood together by the thousands with black, brown, Asian, Native American, young, old, rich, poor, gay, straight, Jews, Muslims, Christians, Hindus, and people without faith who believe in a moral universe."

Getting such an open rebuke from the state's NAACP president could be politically fatal for Donald Trump in North Carolina. Even though the NAACP is a nonpartisan organization, under Rev. Barber's leadership, it has proven to be a powerful force against what it considers to be "repressive" Republican policies in the state and the nation.

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