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# Black Nonbelievers Speak Out

*Ad Campaign Highlights Rise in Religious Skepticism among African Americans*

**Amherst, New York** – January 31, 2012 – **African Americans for Humanism (AAH)**, a program of the **Council for Secular Humanism** that supports nonreligious African Americans, has launched a national multimedia advertising campaign showcasing religious skepticism in the African American community. Coinciding with Black History Month, the campaign features prominent African American humanists from history along with contemporary activists and organizers.

Ads began appearing January 30 and January 31 in New York City; Washington, DC; Los Angeles; Chicago; Atlanta; and Durham, North Carolina. On February 6, the campaign will be launched in Dallas. Advertisements will be placed on roadside billboards and in public transit sites. The [Stiefel Freethought Foundation](#) provided substantial creative and financial support for the campaign.

African Americans may be the most religious minority in the United States, but many feel that the churches don't speak for them. AAH hopes that the campaign will bring attention to the presence of and increase in religious skepticism within the black community, encourage those who have doubts about religion to share their concerns and join other freethinkers in their local communities, and educate many about the history of black freethought.

All of the ads display the same message: "Doubts about religion? You're one of many." On the ads, images of writer-anthropologist Zora Neale Hurston, poet-activist Langston Hughes, and social reformer-publisher Frederick Douglass are paired with contemporary freethinkers. Representing their respective hometowns are activists leading the way for African American nonbelievers, including Mark D. Hatcher of the [Secular Students at Howard University](#), Mandisa L. Thomas of [Black Nonbelievers, Inc. \(Atlanta\)](#), Kimberly Veal of [Black Nonbelievers of Chicago](#), Jamila Bey of [African Americans for Humanism–Washington, DC](#), Veronique Matthews of the [Triangle Freethought Society](#), Leighann Lord of the [Center for Inquiry–Harlem](#), Alix Jules of the [Dallas–Ft. Worth Coalition of Reason](#), and Sikivu Hutchinson of [Black Skeptics Los Angeles](#).

"African Americans who question religion often feel rejected by religious family and friends, and by the greater black community," said Debbie Goddard, director of AAH. "But there is a rich heritage of religious skepticism and humanism in black history. By featuring the historical faces as well as the modern in our ad campaign, we show people that questioning religion is not new and that there are many of us here."

Between 1990 and 2008, the number of Americans without any religious affiliation nearly doubled, from 8 percent to 15 percent, according to the 2008 American Religious Identification Survey (ARIS). Among African Americans the increase was also nearly double, from 6 percent to 11 percent.

For more information, including ad images, information about historical African American freethinkers, photos, and videos, please visit [AAH](#).

**African Americans for Humanism (AAH)**, a program of the **Council for Secular Humanism**, is dedicated to fostering humanism in the African American community.

The **Council for Secular Humanism**, an affiliate of the **Center for Inquiry**, is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit educational organization that promotes and defends a nonreligious lifestance. The Council, publisher of the bimonthly journal *Free Inquiry*, has a website at [www.secularhumanism.org](http://www.secularhumanism.org).

The **Center for Inquiry (CFI)** is a nonprofit educational, advocacy, and research organization based in Amherst, New York; it is also home to both the **Committee for Skeptical Inquiry** and the **Council for Secular Humanism**. The mission of **CFI** is to foster a secular society based on science, reason, freedom of inquiry, and humanist values. **CFI**'s web address is [www.centerforinquiry.net](http://www.centerforinquiry.net).

The **Stiefel Freethought Foundation** is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit private foundation that provides financial support and volunteer strategy consulting to the Freethought Movement.

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