



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on September 8, 2011

No Evangelicals Invited to Join Obama at D.C. 9-11 Prayer Service

President Obama will be the featured speaker at an “interfaith faith prayer service” at the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C. (interior photo at left) on the evening of September 11th to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the terrorist attack on the nation. Curiously, while the event will also include a “Roman Catholic bishop, a Jewish rabbi, Buddhist nun, a Hindu priest, the president of the Islamic Society of North America, and a Muslim musician,” reported Ron Kerby at [Beliefnet.com](#), “...not a single protestant or evangelical has been invited to participate.”



Most conspicuously absent, noted Kerby, will be official representation from the nation’s 16.6 million Southern Baptists, by far America’s largest Protestant denomination. “Completely left off the program was anybody represented by the [National Association of Evangelicals](#),” he added. “No Presbyterians, Methodists, Lutherans, Congregationalists, Wesleyans, or Mennonites. Nobody from the Church of Christ or the Assemblies of God.”

Kerby quoted Frank Page, president of the [Southern Baptist Convention](#) Executive Committee, who observed: “It’s not surprising. There is a tragic intolerance toward Protestants, and particularly toward evangelicals, and I wish the president would refuse to speak unless it [were] more representative.”

Another Southern Baptist spokesman, Richard Land, told the [Daily Caller](#): “The idea that you would exclude a representative of at least 35 percent of the population that identifies with evangelical Christianity is difficult to comprehend, much less to defend.” He added that even more perplexing “is the Cathedral describing President Obama’s event as a ‘secular service.’ If it’s a secular service, why is it being held in a cathedral?”

Land said that “evangelicals and other people of faith are rightly offended at this attempt to marginalize religious faith in this way as we commemorate the memory of this very painful event in American history.”

Penny Nance, president of [Concerned Women for America](#), pointed out to the *Daily Caller* that there are “an estimated 70 to 80 million evangelical Christians in this nation. We are important members of almost all communities. Some of us died on 9/11. It is outrageous that we were excluded.”

Richard Weinberg, a spokesman for the National Cathedral, attempted to justify the snub toward the nation’s evangelical community by pointing out that the “Cathedral itself is an Episcopal church and it stands to reason that our own clergy serve as Christian representatives” in the interfaith service.

However, there is “the small problem that the Episcopal church is tiny these days — barely 2 million members nationwide,” [BeliefNet’s](#) Ron Kerby noted. Nonetheless, he added, “Weinberg said the



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Washington National Cathedral serves as the ‘spiritual home for the nation’ and as such, he said that ‘diversity was first and foremost’ a factor in the planning.”

Weinberg told [Fox News](#) that the particular event at which President Obama will speak, called a “Concert of Hope,” will be secular in nature, but will nonetheless include prayers from five national “faith” leaders — none of them evangelical. “First and foremost, the breadth of the programming aims to honor those who were most affected by the tragedy of 9-11,” Weinberg said. “We also recognize as a Cathedral that this country has been engaged in two wars abroad and many, many service members, nearly six thousand [have been lost] ... of course that would count much more if we counted civilian lives lost.... They are also a group that we want to keep in mind and lift up.”

Tony Perkins, president of the conservative [Family Research Council](#), said the service was shaping up to look more like a United Nations pep rally than a prayer service. “Three quarters of the American people identify as Christian and nearly a third of them are evangelical Christian,” he told Fox News. “And yet, there is not a single evangelical on the program.”

Noting that the event was drenched in political correctness, Perkins told Fox that it is “historically inaccurate that in times of need or mourning that Americans pray to the Hindu or Buddhist gods or the god of Islam. America is overtly a Christian nation that prays to the Judeo-Christian God — and specifically to Jesus Christ.”



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