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For Immediate Release

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Atlanta Black LGBT Coalition and Allies Stand In Solidarity Against Pastor Rick Warren at King Center's MLK Commemorative Service

Atlanta- On January 12, 2009 at 12 noon on the steps of the GA State Capitol Building, the Atlanta Black LGBT Coalition, an Atlanta based activist group, and our allies will express disapproval of the decision made by the MLK Center for Non-Violent Social Change to have Reverend Rick Warren deliver the keynote address at the annual Martin Luther King Jr. Commemorative Service on January 19, 2009. The Atlanta Black LGBT Coalition is committed to a social justice agenda that advances the human rights of all marginalized communities.

The selection of Pastor Rick Warren as the keynote speaker at this service is an affront to the very spirit of non-violent social justice and inclusivity in which the King Center was founded. Warren's widely broadcast statements regarding homosexuality and women's rights to reproductive choice threaten our progress toward achieving a more just and loving society. Assigning Rev. Warren such a prominent role does not build bridges between communities. This choice drives more wedges between the many disenfranchised that are pitted against each other by the agents of racism, sexism and homophobia.

The Atlanta LGBT Coalition along with supportive clergy and allies will counter Warren's divisive rhetoric with the assertion that we can make real the beloved community that includes not just some but all of us as fully deserving human beings. We believe as Dr. King did that "our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter". To that end, we choose to speak out loudly in the name of equality, justice and freedom, and the rights of all to determine our own lives.

Atlanta Black LGBT Coalition Founding Members: Mary Anne Adams, Simone Bell, Dr. Dionne Bates, Zandra Conway, Cheryl Courtney-Evans, Imani Evans, R.Darlene Hudson, Rev. Antonio Jones, Rev. Dr. Kathi Martin, Rev. Maressa Pendermon, Charles Stephens, Craig Washington.

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