

Imam snipes at Nation of Islam leadership

LITTLE ROCK (AP) - Imam W. Deen Mohammed, who transformed how African-American Muslims practice their faith, condemned the "hate rhetoric" of Nation of Islam leaders and predicted the group would soon embrace mainstream Islamic teaching the way he did three decades ago.

"The time for those leaders who had that hate rhetoric has come and passed — and they know it," Mohammed told reporters Friday, after speaking at the University of Arkansas Clinton School of Public Service.

"For the last 10 years or more, they've just been selling wolf tickets to the White race and having fun while they collect money and have fancy lifestyles."

Nation of Islam Minister Louis Farrakhan has been fighting prostate cancer and last year stepped down from his post. A board currently oversees the secretive movement and has said nothing about who would succeed the ailing minister.

Mohammed, an African-American Sunni, said that his half brother Ishmael



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Muhammad and another man he would not identify are in the running to become the next leader of the Nation — a sign, he said, that the group "had a strong desire to see religious change."

"These persons are already in position to clear up the destruction of the religion in the Nation of Islam," Mohammed said. He predicted the group would unite with his Muslim organization. "I think there's a merger coming," he said.

Mohammed and Farrakhan have a long and difficult history together.

Mohammed is the son of late Nation leader Elijah Muhammad, who was considered a prophet by his followers. When Elijah Muhammad died in 1975, W. Deen Mohammed was

named his successor, but soon moved the Nation toward orthodox Islam, em-

Recruiting

(Continued from Page 4) troops given waivers for medical and moral reasons or for positive drug and alcohol screen tests.

Tyka Pettey, 21, of Philadelphia, said she was fully aware of the risks when she signed up in late July for a six-year stint in the Army Reserve. Doing so will help her pay to go to college in a medical field. With her \$20,000 bonus, she plans to buy a car and pay off debt.

She said she had been thinking about joining for more than a year. Once she made the decision, she said she was impressed with how much the recruiters in Upper

phazizing its message of racial tolerance.

Farrakhan then broke with Mohammed and revived the old Nation of Islam and its teaching of Black supremacy, which mainstream Muslims consider heretical.

But in recent years, Farrakhan haltingly tried to move the Nation toward traditional Islam. In 2000, he and Mohammed had a very public reconciliation, embracing each other with their

followers and the media invited to watch. Since then, student Nation ministers have been studying the Qur'an with other orthodox Muslims, Mohammed said.

However, the change has not been complete and questions always remained about whether the two men had truly healed their rift.

Asked about the presidential election, Mohammed said he wouldn't vote for Sen. Hillary Rodham

Clinton, but would vote for "anybody that looks a lot like Barack Obama."

Still, he said it was important to keep religion separate from political leadership.

"You know, in the United States when you become president, you take the oath on the sacred scriptures, the Bible," Mohammed said. "I think all we need to do is make sure that our government's leaders touch, just touch it, that's all."

Darby, Pa., were able to help her.

"You really have to want to do something like that. You're really taking a major step from your civilian life... but I just decided to go for it," said Pettey, who leaves in about a week for boot camp.

The Army spent \$353 million last year on enlistment bonuses, \$583 million on recruiting and advertising and \$700 million on pay and benefits for recruiters, according to the Congressional Budget Office.

Donna Lieberman, executive director of the New York Civil Liberties Union, said her organization is concerned

that low-income young people and minorities are targeted by recruiters and lured with promises into making decisions they would not otherwise have made.

"I think as the incentives increase, the potential for misrepresentation and abuse increases," Lieberman said.

Irene Fiala, a sociology professor at Edinboro University of Pennsylvania who has researched recruiting trends, said the military is attempting to change with society because the days are over when it was an American virtue to join and it was expected that all young men would do so.

"Uncle Sam pointing his finger at you saying, 'We

want you,' isn't cutting it for today's kids," Fiala said.

"Today's kids are saying, 'Yeah, you want me and so does GE and so does MIT, so what else are you going to offer me?'"

It's not just the attitudes of young people that have seemingly shifted. In 2005, statistical surveys revealed that because of the Iraq war, adults who work with students were less likely to suggest joining the military.

"The willingness of coaches, teachers, counselors and parents to commend military service to America's youth is lower than is good for our nation and our military," said Dominguez, the Defense Department official.

Dolls

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Census Bureau. Between 2006 and 2011, the spending power of the country's Blacks, Asians, Native Americans and multiracial shoppers is expected to grow 38 percent, to \$1.9 trillion.

Meanwhile, Hispanic buying power alone is projected to grow a formidable 48 percent, to almost \$1.2 trillion, according to data from The University of Georgia's Selig Center for Economic Growth.

By 2050, minorities will account for half of U.S. residents, according to Census Bureau projections.

Kmart executives hope the doll campaign will bring renewed foot traffic to their stores, which saw sales revenue fall 2.3 percent last year. Last month, Sears warned that second-quarter earnings will likely fall well below expectations because of more disappointing sales at Kmart and its sister Sears stores.

Kmart officials declined to release figures showing how much the chain has invested in the doll project, which includes brands such as Baby Abuelita and Mattel Inc.'s Rebelde dolls, as well as the newly designed propri-

etary Just Girlz collection.

But the retailer likely faces an uphill battle as it tries to woo shoppers away from heavyweight competitors Wal-Mart and Toys "R" Us, whose large selections of the popular Barbie and Bratz dolls give them an even bigger advantage in appealing to minority shoppers.

"I think they're going down a very tough road," said toy analyst Jim Silver, editor of *Toy Wishes* magazine.

"Why would I buy a generic ethnic doll over this major brand that has all these accessories?"

Popular dolls need more than pretty looks. Instead, it's a combination of brand names and cool accessories — from doll houses to roller skates — that attract children to dolls.

Just ask 27-year-old Calumet Park resident Marie Jones, whose daughters eyed the new dolls inside a Kmart store in Chicago's south suburbs last week.

"If they're pretty, they're pretty," said Jones after watching Jade Lynch, 8, and Imani Simmons, 6, play with the new dolls. "They picked up the Black ones, they

picked up the White ones. They look at the things that they come with. If they can comb their hair, that's the doll they want."

There are no solid data on the size of the nation's ethnic doll selection, but experts say the category is booming after a series of flops that received tepid enthusiasm from shoppers.

"People want a doll and a story that reflects who they are," said Julie Parks, a spokeswoman for Mattel's American Girl, which includes Native American, Hispanic and Black historical dolls, as well as dolls with myriad skin, eye and hair color combinations.

"There is something about seeing a reflection of themselves in that character and in that doll that they can relate to."

Wal-Mart Stores Inc. spokeswoman Melissa O'Brien said the chain's Hispanic doll selection has more than tripled in the past year while the total assortment of Black baby dolls has more than doubled.

All told, the Bentonville, Ark.-based retailer has more than 70 varieties of ethnic dolls, but it doesn't carry the

full selection in every store. Instead, it often stocks many of them in neighborhoods where there are more minority shoppers.

Wayne, N.J.-based Toys "R" Us Inc., which follows a similar approach when stocking its more than 100 types of multicultural dolls, said its Hispanic selection has soared in the past two years along with smaller increases in the more established Black doll products.

"Dora was really the key driver," said spokeswoman Kathleen Waugh.

The next generation of dolls have diverse eyes, noses and mouths — instead of the traditional "White" dolls whose skin was dyed and whose hair was tinted in a darker shade.

"If you're a little girl of color, this is your year," said Denise Gary Robinson, president of DollsLikeMe.com, an online specialty doll boutique that specializes in ethnic dolls, toys and gifts. "I see companies now really putting forth the effort. I see designers going back to the drawing board and saying the old colored-plastic routine isn't working."

Rock

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Malaak, said in a statement Monday they were happy to put the case to rest. They accused Bowyer of telling "multiple lies" to sell her story to tabloids.

"We also express our deepest prayers for the welfare of Ms. Bowyer's son who has continually been embarrassed and exposed in the media by his mother," Rock's statement said.

Bowyer said Monday she had never received money for her story and she believed Rock had violated a confidentiality agreement by making the paternity test results public.

"I could've sworn we weren't supposed to talk about it until we were done with mediation," Bowyer said.

She said she planned to ask the judge to order another DNA test to challenge the results of the one that ruled out Rock as her child's father.

Bowyer, 35, said she met Rock at a Los Angeles nightclub when she was living in California 13 years ago.

She denied making any money from the case despite offers of thousands of dollars from television shows and tabloid magazines.

"I am sick and tired of being made out to be a liar and a fraud," she said.

Rock recently directed and starred in the film "I Think I Love My Wife," and is behind the hit television series "Everybody Hates Chris," which is based on his childhood. He and his wife have been married for 10 years and have two young children.

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