YES WE CAN — By Dr. Jamal Bryant
“I Can Do All Things through Christ Which Strengthens Me.” Phil 4:13

Two days after the Presidential election, I received a copy of a book by Shelby Steel who originates from Chicago, Illinois and is a professor at Stanford University. In February 2008, Steele published A Bound Man: Why We Are Excited about Obama and Why He Can't Win. Shelby Steel analyses Barack Obama's character as a child born to a mixed couple who has to grow up as a black man. Steele then concludes that Barack Obama is a man bound to his "black identity."

While Shelby Steel is an African American with a Ph.D., and who is respected in the community, he’s wrong. Sometimes you have to put into position that a lot of people who have a lot of credentials are not qualified to speak to your future. What they project your prominence to be is regulated on facts and not faith. Be careful who you allow to speak into your life. God did not die and leave them in charge. Whatever God has spoken over your life, even if other people cannot see it, does not mean that it will not come to pass.

In spite of negative people, negative thinking, and a negative background, you still can become great and accomplish the unimaginable. When God calls you, He never calls you to do something safe. When He calls you to do something it ought to cause you to second guess your own capacity and availability. But if you trust, surrender and totally depend on him, there is nothing you will not be able to achieve.

You cannot choose who God is going to use because He never uses the likely candidate. America is going to have to issue an apology because they thought Blacks were going to die in the Middle Passage, in a slave cabin or in the back of the bus. Fortunately, here we are in 2008 standing as the strongest race that the planet has ever seen, leading the strongest nation that the world has ever seen. Here we are still standing and declaring: Yes We Can!

**Reasons why people will want to discredit your ability and potential.**

1. The fallacy of insignificance: This is a common mistake that Shelby Steel made. It proves or disproves the wrong point (trying to prove something that has not been denied) by attacking something that does not matter. We saw this play out during the last days of the campaign when the astringent Republican Party thought that Barack Obama would lose votes because he had an aunt who was in the country illegally. Do not let people put you in a bind because of something your family did or didn’t do. Their actions do not block your ability.

2. Argumentum ad Ignorantiam: (The appeal to ignorance) — what might be true is not actually true. Eighteen months ago, several people said Barack Obama could not be elected because there’s never been a Black President of the United States. You cannot base truth off of a prior experience. Just because it has never happened does not mean it will not happen. Get ready because you are about to do something that has never been accomplished by anyone in your family or by any
previous generation. The ignorance that was mounted in the campaign was mounted upon the idea that he was Muslim because his name is Barack Obama. However, critics did not realize that the name Barack is from the book of Judges in the Bible which translates to mean “a sound” and “leader.” If you need things to change then you have to make a sound (praise).

3. Argumentum ad Misericordiam (The appeal to pity). A fallacy in which someone tries to win support for their argument or idea by exploiting his or her opponent's feelings of pity or guilt. People can’t deal with the merit of what you bring and so they try to distract you with an emotional appeal, i.e., the Republicans played the wrong card because they thought that we were going to have pity on John McCain because he was a Prisoner of War.

4. Argumentum ad Verecundiam (The Appeal to Prestige) — equate evidence with prestige. Instead of facts, they justify it by individuals. The Republicans shrouded this by saying Barack Obama did not have enough experience and that John McCain had more experience. McCain has more experience in the corruption charge when he was in Congress taking money from lobbyist and buying five hundred thousand dollar shoes when Barrack Obama only had two pair he has worn for the last six years. Obama has more experience because he knows what it’s like to be raised by a grandmother and become a man even when he didn’t have a man in the house. America was not looking for a President who would be a “yes man,” but a president who can say “Yes We Can.” Prestige does not replace evidence.

5. Argumentum ad Populum (Appeal to the people) — that is moving from fact to feelings in order to prejudice the crowd. There are a lot of people who do not like you based on feelings. They don’t have facts, but they just feel like criticizing you. When you are headed to destiny you ought not care about feelings at the cost of facts.

What do you do when people don’t believe in you? What do you do when people don’t think that you are able? Tuesday, November 4th 2008 was a sentimental day for all of us because God brought us from a place where we used to think that we could not to a place where our language and vocabulary, our faith and convictions changed. Today, we can stand tall to declare “Yes we can.” In the sentiments of Paul the Apostle: I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me.