

FAITH-BASED COMMUNITY AND ORGANIZATIONS

Chicago 2016

The Black Church and other faith-based institutions and organizations are supposed to be the vanguard of the Black community. Historically, the Black Church was the pillar and strength for oppressed African Americans since its inception within the United States of America. It was known for being a place of fellowship, safety, support, comfort, and worship—a place where individuals and families came together for a common cause. The Black Church was the “*Balm of Gilead*” during slavery, Reconstruction, and the Jim Crow era.

As a source of strength, the faith-based community and organizations must assist in the healing process and restoration of the Black community which has been devastated by willful and wanton neglect, social and political polarization, repression, institutionalized racism, racial hatred-white supremacy, disparaging and skyrocketing unemployment, decaying infrastructures, homelessness, chaos, Black-on-Black violence, and a myriad of other scathing elements and impediments. Thus, there must be a Black Agenda specifically targeted to the Black Faith-based community to help us navigate through the storms of life.

It is imperative that the faith-based community align itself with the National Black Agenda and its entities, in order to reaffirm and provide ancillary support—in the form of: cultural awareness, promoting Black-on-Black love, community engagement, reaffirmation with our relationship with God, and basic tenets of humanity and moral grounding. It must endeavor to reconnect, realign, and re-forge our connections with the African Diaspora and Africa as a centralized objective of being one body.

The faith-based entities must endeavor to support the Black family and community by its recommitment to the guiding principles of faith. Each organization must create strategic goals and objectives, specifically targeted to the goals and objectives of the Black Agenda and its mission—thus, promoting unity within the community.

Political and Social Issues:

Faith-based entities must be at the forefront in addressing the issues that directly and adversely impact the communities in which they serve.

Responsibilities:

- Develop comprehensive plans and strategies in concert with the Black Agenda to engage in political and social discourse with officials regarding relevant issues of the African American community
- Develop and/or support programs that help the community and provide outreach programs targeted to youth and families
- Develop and/or support prison and juvenile outreach and other such programs including:
 1. Mentoring
 2. Job readiness, workforce development training, and entrepreneurship training
 3. Collaboration with other organizations
 4. After school and daycare support programs
 5. Youth programs and safe havens
 6. Adopt a school or adopt a student
 7. Re-entry training for returning citizens
 8. Intergenerational support (senior citizens)
 9. Investment and financial literacy classes

10. Various forms of tutorials for youth and adults
11. Spiritual classes and counseling that focus on character development and leadership training
12. Parenting classes
13. Assistance with transitional housing
14. Bartering programs and cooperative economics
15. Green technology and community gardens
16. Provide a career/professional day—Black children need exposure to positive role models
17. Establish and support mini-businesses within the church, mosque, or other location
18. Support Black businesses

- Assess the needs of the community and support as possible
- Aggressively oppose all unrighteous and unjust laws against African Americans—dispel the myth that there is a separation between Church and State—Faith-based entities must establish a platform to contend with unrighteousness in all facets of government
- Seek to connect with other community stakeholders and businesses to help support your faith-based agenda
- Faith-based entities must pursue justice; utilizing their moral precedence of the faith
- Actively examine policies that are contrary and harmful to the Black community
- Become community advocates
- Support the Reparations Movement

What Individuals Can Do

- Support the Black Agenda
- Help support the efforts of the faith-based community
- Work with youth and become a role model
- Become a school volunteer, mentor or other such involvement
- Engage the youth within your community
- Each one –reach one
- Utilize your skills to make a difference in your community
- Establish a neighborhood watch and/or clean-up campaign
- Provide financial resources and human capital to the cause
- Galvanize and encourage your neighbors and friends to do the work—we must understand that this is a “grassroots effort:
- Never give up

It is the charge of the National Black Agenda Consortium-Chicago to educate, organize, and mobilize the community as co-facilitators of the agenda. The Black Agenda incorporates all structures and substructures in the process to help restore Black people to our original dignity and respect throughout the world.

Faith Based—Imani For Justice (IFJ)

IMANI FOR JUSTICE: THE BLACK FAITH COMMUNITIES UNITED FRONT FOR NATIONAL BLACK AGENDA CONSORTIUM-CHICAGO (IFJ)

First, heretofore conspicuous by its absence has been a clearly articulated National Black Agenda Consortium-Chicago (NBAC-C) plan for faith community development and inclusion. This absence ignores the need of seeking support of the key moral and spiritual institution essential for effectively promoting NBAC-C'S overall Black community agenda among the African American people City-wide, regionally and nationally. Second, IFJ seeks to address NBAC-C' S previous absence of a plan for Black religious inclusion by serving as an Africana faith communities united front and outreach project organized to advance the NBAC-C'S agenda inside and outside Black worship communities (via promoting Black religious "unity without uniformity" behind the NBAC-C project, Black religious "unity in diversity").

Third, the general aim of IFJ is to build a Black ecumenical and interfaith coalition for racial and social justice supportive of the overall thrust of NBAC-C. By ecumenical we mean advancing the already established tradition of Black ecumenism meaning both spontaneous and formal unity among Black Christian denominations, local congregations, and Black para-church organizations against White supremacy and racism as well as for racial and social justice. By interfaith we mean extending the historic Black Church united front practice to include the increasing number of Black adherents to diverse faith communities beyond established Black Church Christianity.

Forth, because the basic cause of IFJ is that of advancing NBAC-C'S agenda on the religious front, the Consortium borrows from, and further develops, the religious support model of Euro-American-led inter-faith coalitions lately spawned around the American labor movement's urban network of metropolitan central labor councils-of which the Chicago-based Interfaith for Worker Justice (IFWJ) is an important local example. More, a key inter-faith model of the Black context, adopted by IFJ, is the grassroots Black Community Clergy and Labor Alliance of Los Angeles (BCCLA) organized out of the African American Cultural Center/Us of Los Angeles-now in its 50th year of service, struggle, and institution building.

Finally, IFJ is best understood as a faith-based, Afrocentricity, united front. This said, IFJ is an advocate of the Pan African cultural holiday of Kwanzaa principles on the one hand and its companion Kawaida cultural nationalist philosophy for racial and social justice on the other-both established and advanced by Dr. Maulana Karenga, Professor and Chair of Africana Studies, CAL State ULB-as a distinctive approach within the field of Afrocentricity. IFJ further understands Afrocentricity as a development out of the Africana Studies discipline itself a viable multicultural alternative to the mono-culturally imposed Eurocentricity in education and all media forms. More, IFJ seeks to help institutionally unite the Black Studies Academy and the Black community not only for the advancement of the National Black Agenda but to also contribute to developing an African World agenda as well as that of serving the general public good in the U.S. and internationally.