

FAITH-BASED COMMUNITY AND ORGANIZATIONS

Chicago 2021 Update – Facilitator: Dr. Gale Frazier

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.

FAITH BASED INITIATIVE

Contributors:

Pastor Victoria C. Brady – Restoring Hope Ministries/Annie B. Jones Community Services, Inc.

Anjie Lenoir – (Survey Respondent)

Donald Dew - President/CEO, Habilitative Systems, Inc.

Asia Boler – ABJ Millennial Tribe/ (Survey Respondent)

Governor General Ajani Mukarram – Afrodescendant Nation/ (Survey Respondent)

Minister Jacqueline A. Miller (Individual Contributor) – Submission of Rockefeller Report

The faith community must also accept and embrace our common Spiritual DNA that binds us together forever. The community of believers must weave itself together and connect in order to “tie up the lion” that ravages our community through genocide and planned extermination that threaten to wipe out the descendants of enslaved persons. We, the descendants and heirs to the *everlasting throne* must climb out of the pit, come out of the dungeon, make our exodus from Massa’s house.

It is imperative that faith leaders and their congregants align with the movement for Self-Determination. This, along with true discipleship is the work of the faith community. Therefore, faith groups must lead the fight for Liberation, Justice, Peace, and Self-Determination --- FREEDOM! This is the assignment of the 21st century faith community. The Black Agenda must be enfolded with a 2030 plan to offset the destructive plan that is in place against God’s people. Faith leaders must watch and pray being keenly aware of plans to exterminate poor and vulnerable people such as are identified in “The 2010 Rockefeller Report” (Rockefeller and Global Business Network, May 2010) which identifies four scenarios to be employed when pandemics strike in 2020. This plan was written 10 years before COVID-19 struck (in year 2020). Faith leaders that are truly Righteous understand that to ignore the ancestral cry for healing, reconciliation, and a return to our original greatness is a direct insult to God. To ignore that which is before us and wish it away demonstrates a lack of faith, belief, and trust in The Most High God. The war that has been waged against God’s people will not magically disappear. It must instead be fought by the Righteous under the command of The Lord of Hosts Himself. Trust, Obedience, and Faith in God are necessary for the sure victory. **Unity is the key that will unlock the true weight and force of God against those that oppose Him and His people.**

To better prepare, faith leaders must be strengthened through healing and self-care. In general, they are overwhelmed with personal and pastoral challenges which must be addressed. These faith leaders and their members must have available to them a system for Spiritual, Mental, Emotional, and Physical support, development, and endurance. Healing Circles could be offered to faith leaders across belief systems to connect, build community, and strengthen one another regardless of their Godly expression. These circles will be developed as “safe spaces” for sharing, learning, growing, and unifying. These Healing Circles will help leaders identify concrete paths for **unity and connectivity**. This then could lead to Faith-based Hubs whereby ministries can collaborate on specific projects to help strengthen God’s people.

Faith leaders must carry the baton of freedom beyond their individual ministries. They must unite and jointly center themselves at the forefront to help address social ills that adversely affect believers. This includes political activities. They must consider their role in helping to rebuild the social fabric within our communities that help to specifically address the Social Determinants of Health including Housing, Food, Health, Education, Violence, and Employment. This can be best achieved through strategic partnerships between faith and non-profit organizations. However, due to the overwhelming ills that God's people face, it is important that faith leaders receive needed support to help them withstand and endure while guiding their members to an optimal spiritual and physical quality of life.

Responsibilities

Develop duplicable promising-based Service Hubs consisting of key stakeholders within faith and non-profit organizations, educational systems, businesses, community-led law enforcement initiatives, food and health systems. Expand successful systems to local and national communities. Uniformity within the faith community can have a significant and positive impact as replicable models that are effective are utilized.

What Leaders Can Do

- Explore legal mergers and partnerships to leverage resources

What the Community Can Do

- Support the National Black Agenda

What Individuals Can Do

- Purpose to galvanize around a common goal as it pertains to Black people.
- Support the National Black Agenda

HEALTH & WELLNESS

Chicago 2021 Update – Facilitator: Sista Yaa Simpson, Community Epidemiologist, TACTS

When 'I' is replaced by 'We', even Illness becomes Wellness. Malcolm X

The vitality of Health and Wellness for *Black people living in the United States is sub-par as compared to other non-Blacks. (*Black consist of People of Afrikan Descendant, Nationality, Race and Ethnicity; 'Afrikan' with a k is Pan-Africans of the diaspora). The global measure of health is donated by one index, Life Expectancy. Life Expectancy is a measure from birth to summarized mortality of all ages by county. According to National Vitality Statistics Report, in 2014 Life Expectancy for Blacks living in the US was 75.6 years old as compared to non-Blacks (averaged) was 80.6 years old, a difference of 5 years.¹ Likewise in Chicago the Life Expectancy gap is even wider between Blacks and non-Blacks (71.4 vs.. 80.6 yrs.) with a difference of 9.2 years.² Thusly, we need to develop, create, and implement strategizes which imbues a pathway for improved health and wellness outcomes, so we can live longer quality lives. (Black Lives Do Matter but to Who?)

Pandemic Racism has consistently impacted and subjugated 'dis-eases' onto Black people since the time of slavey. And now with the advent of COVID-19 Pandemic the tactic of Racism has been more evident than ever before. Although the data is provisional the number of COVID-19 cases and deaths continue to rise in the US. Additionally, in Chicago, Blacks account for more than double of the case fatality rates as compared to non-Blacks (7.3% vs. 2.9%) | *CFR is the ratio of deaths cases divided by diagnosed cases*.³

There are other syndemic afflictions affecting Black people (*to many to name*) but Pandemic Racism is at the crux of them all! Alluding to the notion that environmental stressors due to Racism have been 'turned-on' and expressed physically in generational gene transference, (aka Epigenetic inheritance).⁴ The necessity to address our communal spiritual, mental and physical health is contingent upon the capability to take control of our own living conditions. We need better '*Soul-lutions*' that are obtainable, sustainable, and specific to our conditions living in this country.

In this agenda we offer **Health Equity** as the lens for gauging improved health and wellness outcomes. Healthy Equity is defined as the right to attain one's best health possible based on the highest standards available. The concept is not like health disparities, which compares us to dominate groups, just striving to become equal (i.e. equally sick, ill, or diseased). Health Equity puts Blacks as the reference point to be compared to ourselves, other Afrikans throughout the diaspora or non-Blacks within selected geographical areas. It gives us the latitude to predetermine our own benchmarks, measures, and interpretations for attaining the best health possible. Health Equity also includes other topics such as Health Liberation, Health Literacy and Health Economics combined to navigate a historical failed healthcare system that was not built to cure us. An Afrikan proverb states "*He who conceals his diseases cannot expect to be cured*"; So, who is responsible for improving the health and wellness of Black people? Unlike other Black agenda's this one includes actionable steps everyone can take at multiple levels.

Citations:

1. Arias E, Heron M, Xu JQ. United States life tables, 2014. National vital statistics reports; vol 66 no 4

https://www.cdc.gov/nchs-/data/nvsr/nvsr66/nvsr66_04.pdf

2. Chicago Health Atlas, www.chicagohealthatlas.com

3. Simpson, Yaa. 2020 Case Fatality Rate Calculations <https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/sites/covid-19/home/latest-data.html>

4. Epigenetic inheritance <https://www.livescience.com/37703-epigenetics.html>

Actionable Steps

What Individuals Can Do

- Learn about your own health status through (check-ups, diagnostic testing, self-assessments) from health professionals.
- Engage in preventative health screenings and follow ups i.e. (dental, vision, mental checkups)
- Practice spiritual/body/mind development (mediation/prayer/soul connections)
- Build better physical adaptations like immune support, strength building, balance, and regular exercise as often as possible.
- Seek out ways to help ‘hurt people that hurt people’ to ‘healed people that heal people’
- Seek to purchase and prepare fresh foods (highly nutrient, plant-based, raw) for self and family.
- Create a home file for all medical records and wellness documentation (journals) for future review (including family and other caregivers).
- Share direct (in-direct) experiences, as it relates to services rendered by health agencies, with others at community, policy forums and other public events.
- Support Universal Healthcare as a right through organizational participation for providing and ensuring health equity, parity, and social justice in healthcare.

(Be thy own physician)

What Communities Can Do

- Engage and participate in coalition building to advocate for parity in healthcare institutions that serves Black people.
- Identify various health care agencies like Managed Care Organizations (MCOs, HMOs, PPOs) and Insurance Companies to determine their roles and function within Black communities.
- Assist in developing report card measures that grades how well healthcare institution are serving and treating Blacks people.
- Assist in the process for examining and evaluating health agencies as it relates to services and health outcomes for Black people.
- Advocate for and support green space development in local Black communities.
- Develop urban gardening clubs in every neighborhood that engages intergenerational education for growing fresh organic produce in available empty lots and teach canning techniques to residence.
- Advocate for healthy food preparation in social gathering places, using locally grown produce.

(Lift every voice and sing!)

What Organizations Can Do

- Various organizations like communities, faith-based, civics, political, charities, etc... can collaborate to promote Health Equity campaigns, events, and forums.
- Organize peace circles or other types of healing events to promote healing and cures.
- Implement and track a Report Card System which grades healthcare agencies and institutions services, treatments, and care, as it relates to, Blacks' health outcomes.
- Provide presentations on the Healthcare Report Card grades that evaluate improvements of health equity for Black people.
- Engage and influence politicians to enforce equitable laws referring to Healthcare employees, Healthy Services and Health Economics for Black people.

(Speak truth to power and let your voices be heard for change!)

What Healthcare Practitioners Can Do

- Engage more 'like-minded' public health practitioners in changing current health policies through the lens of health equity. (Universal Healthcare Insurance Coverage)
- Collaborate with Black organizations as servant leader to enhance public health knowledge, skills, and fitness. (Address all population health within Black Communities, Inmates, Veterans, Mentally Afflicted, Addict to Substances, Other Underlying Health Conditions, Hurt People)
- Engage in community discussions with the facts and expertise as it relate to current public health issues (epidemiological research, vaccines, testing diagnostic methods, specialized treatments, Biomedical technologies etc.)
- Assist with establishing community partnerships with Federally Qualified Health Centers and Hospitals.
- Establish and support, public first aid, mental first aid, and trauma 101 trainings/webinars by appropriate first responders to community members.
- Assist in developing and cultivating more enhanced community health workers (CHW) employment programs.
- Advocate for and support the recruitment, promotion, and advancement, of Blacks into various allied healthcare fields.

- Engage in the establishment of healthcare delivery trainings in high schools and healthcare services programming that exposes all students (at various levels) to healthcare careers.

(If you want to go anywhere fast go alone, if you want to go somewhere far we go together!)

What Elected Officials/Social Leaders Can Do

- Read and discuss the current NBAC Black Agenda **in its entirety**.
- Collaborate and work with NBAC members and others for establishing legislative policies in achieving health equity among Blacks based on the NBAC Health and Wellness strategies.
- Collaborate with other Black focused organizations to develop and utilize better research models and evidence-based practices within their legislative policies.
- Inform and support policies which will benefit Black people as it pertains to the Affordable Care Act (ACA), Medicaid Expansion, Medicare, and any other newly proposed policies for the improvement of Black peoples' health outcomes.
- Support legislation that conveys violence as a 'dis-ease' (health crisis), a public health challenge not just a criminal affect.
- Endorse community participation in problem solving through public and civic education.

(Don't bounce back like before, bounce forward better than ever!)

These Action Steps are collaborative efforts from NBAC Think Tank activities, through community forums, phone trainings, Black Health Practitioners' Zoom meetings, invited phone meetings with Nation of Islam Health Executive Board including the Honorable Louis Farrakhan, meetings with Politicians like State Rep. LaShawn Ford, a host of other community members input and most importantly NBAC Board members strategic meetings.

Thank You for your service, All Praises Due!