



AMERICAN
CLINICAL HEALTH



How Faith-Based and Science Work Effectively Together Through the Black Church as a Health Educator to Help Create a New Clinical Paradigm to Reduce the Issues Around Health Disparities Through Health Education, Promotion, Disease Management, and Clinical Trials for the Improvement of New Therapies and Medication

THE NATIONAL BLACK CHURCH INITIATIVE

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Introduction: A Historic Perspective of the Black Church

The American Black Church was born out of the brutality of the human captivity of the Black American Slave, and experience noted by sociologists and anthropologists as the cruelest form of man's inhumanity to man in the "civilized" society of the American context. Of the founding fathers of this country, 80% of them owned slaves, including Thomas Jefferson, the man known for his articulation of the living words of democracy, "we hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal." The Black religious experience, however, began earlier, traced back across the Atlantic Ocean, where John Newton first heard the tune of "Amazing Grace" groaned from the lips of slaves in the bowels of his ship. Hundreds of years before a slave trader stepped foot on African soil, there lived the Ethiopians, who influenced the great culture of the Egyptians. Biblically, the first recorded encounter of Africans with the God of today's Black church would have been with the Hebrews who first took refuge in their borders, and then became slaves to the Egyptians. With the outcry of the Hebrew slaves we have the original oppression of a faith that will eventually become the heart and soul of the Black tradition.

Africans encounter God again when they are enslaved in America, and Hebrew history repeats itself in what will become African American spiritual culture. The parallels are clear: the Hebrews look to God to deliver them; according to Biblical history, He does. African Americans are originally force-fed the doctrine of American Christianity, but then they make God their own, "re-enlivening the Bible as the Word of God," and viewing Him as the source of their freedom despite their chains (Felder 82). Likewise, the Black community is released from the physical bonds of slavery.

Spirituals are another example of the way that the early African American church re-enlivened Christian doctrine. Taking imagery from Old Testament stories, slaves were able to hold onto hope:

The Black church rejoiced in its version of Moses, the prophetic agent of divine liberation from Pharaoh, in 'Go Down Moses,' just as it vicariously celebrated Joshua's victory and transposed it into a vision of hope for their own liberation in 'Joshua Fit de Battle ob Jericho.' If the former enjoins a confrontation with Pharaoh, the latter implies that, like Joshua, one desirous of victory must be willing fight for it with God's help (Felder 86).

Here, slaves were able to look beyond their earthly bonds in hopes of the freedom of Heaven. Drawing from the strength that these Biblical characters showed could also enable a slave to better bear their suffering. While some may argue that such a doctrine did nothing but encourage the slaves' complacency and compliance, this is not the case. Even if slaves were not fighting physically, the content of such songs is evidence of resistance. Singing about slaves defeating their masters and the small overthrowing the great is proof that the mind and the heart can fight though the body does not.

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The Emancipation Proclamation gave the slaves legal freedom in 1863, although they did not receive any form of social equality until much later. Still, the Black community, and the Black church in particular, began the fight even then. One of the results of this resistance was the birth of Black Theology, with the original Black Power movement in the early 1900's. Black Theology was forged between the brutal point of slavery and the beginning of the Jim Crow laws. This systematic movement began as a way to illustrate the power of the Black Church without encasing it within the White Church liberal tradition. Black Theology "was created as a result of the refusal to submit to the indignities of a false kind of 'integration' in which all power was in the hands of White people" (Cone 21).

The Black community had to define itself separately, not because the White Power structure or law denoted it, but because the Black community was determined to demonstrate its own wealth, intellect, and ability to run complicated social and political organizations. What is clear is that the Black Church refused to adopt the philosophical and theological underpinnings of the White Church and their interpretive understanding of the Christian Church. The Black Church clearly was speaking to the concept of White Supremacy, even to the notion that God could never be White, or oppressive and brutal to one segment of the population. To not adopt the White church's interpretation of the teachings of Jesus, Black theology emerged using the Western academic disciplines to justify and sustain itself in the face of White supremacy. White supremacy is not a word, but a concept used to control, sustain, and eventually destroy the African American life, culture, politics, intellect and religiosity.

By shearing off the concept of White Supremacy in the theological context, the African American church stated the need for a more correct moral paradigm, based on love, peace, and justice, undergirding and reinforcing the ethics and teachings of Jesus.

The notion of Christianity, and the acceptance of Christianity versus the accepting of the ethics and teachings of Christ have caused an intellectual collision. If one would take the notion of Christianity in its context with its history, its rationale, its political objectives and social dynamics, one would essentially will be justifying man's inhumanity to man. In other words, the history that surrounds the teachings and ethics of Jesus has nothing to do with the historic and social context of Christianity that has been built up around it. The Black church refused to allow Christianity to be connected to the pure ethics and teachings of Jesus when it came down to justice, peace, mercy and love.

At this point in its history, the Black church clearly understood that it had no one to count on but itself and God, that the White church has failed them in setting the correct moral tone around the teachings of Jesus when it came to the concept of loving your neighbor, justice, peace and mercy.

These ideals of mercy, peace, and love were especially prevalent in the second Black Power movement of the 1960's. Despite the arguments that this movement was militant or extreme, it strengthened the Black church and the community, advocating positive

traits. The Black Power Movement advocated self-reliance, self-love, and “healthy self-esteem” which

has been seen in many traditions as a prerequisite to the establishment of community – whether with a spouse, a society, or a God. It has most often been the bedrock of love. It is surely this that comes through in the teaching of Jesus to love the neighbor as oneself (Cone 41).

In other words, this teaching of the 1960’s Black power movement reinforced what the Black church was teaching. Likewise, Black Power advocated “communal identification” or unity within one’s race or community (Cone 44). This links to Paul and his manifesto on the “Body of Christ,” one unified Christian brotherhood comprised of many varied spiritual gifts and talents. For the “Black outcasts of America,” scattered across the nation, a sense of unity could be found in the church. The Church is undoubtedly the gem of the Black community, it “has no challenger as the cultural womb of the Black community” (Lincoln 9). It is the one safe place for Black people to come together and receive acceptance. Over the years, there has been a strong movement in the general society to decentralize the Black church and dilute its power, by African American who are unaware of the spiritual gem that the church is and will be, and by Whites who wanted to undermine the political power in the Black church’s grasp, thus, the African American community. The Black church is and always will be the spiritual ethos of the Black community.

These tenets brought the Black community through the times of slavery and segregation, becoming what today we call a “core belief system,” a set of beliefs so deep that they are “often mistaken for innate characteristics” (Cooper-Lewter 3). In most situations, being a member of a Black household means that you will be raised with these religious beliefs. This may be especially true for those of low-income status, who see God’s Providence in everyday life as their needs are met. Like the spirituals of old, today’s hymns reaffirm God’s Providence in the smallest ways. One spiritual states: “He [God] woke me up this morning, clothed in my right mind.” This indicates thanking God simply for the retention of one’s sanity and it points to these core beliefs as “a necessary anchor in life’s storm” (Cooper-Lewter 5).

As the Black church birthed a political movement, it has also birthed “new institutions such as schools, banks, insurance companies, and low income housing,” as well as “an academy and an arena for political activities,” and a place that “nurtured young talent for musical, dramatic, and artistic development” (Lincoln 8). As these institutions came forth, the church began to break into various dominations, which today are massive in size. Some of the great denominations of the African American Church include: the African Methodist Episcopal church (AME); the African Methodist Episcopal Zion church (AMEZ); the Christian Methodist Episcopal church (CME); the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A. Incorporated (NBC); The National Baptist Convention of America, Unincorporated (NBCA); the Progressive National Baptist Convention (PNBC); and the Church of God in Christ (COGIC). A constantly growing “denomination” of the Black church is the Nondenominational church, named so because they do not subscribe to or

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fit specifically within one of the conventions. The seven main denominations are estimated to have more than 80 percent of the Black Christian population.

There are 65,000 African American Churches and at least 2,000 new churches created every year.

The Black Church emerged from the need for a moral paradigm shift, with a defined and correct interpretive history of Christ's ethics and teachings. This concept would serve the Black church well in modern America, as it attempted to build a Christian church within the White Christian tradition, thus distinguishing itself from its White counterpart.

Economics of Health Disparities

Since the time of the Civil Rights Movement, a strange economic phenomenon has occurred. While the financial status of many African Americans has increased exponentially, it has also fallen dramatically. "The Black middle class has quadrupled" with African Americans ascending into the ranks of corporate America and political positions (Morial 165). However, the turn of the century also saw "the Black unemployment rate fall to record lows" (Morial 166). Black America as a whole has risen economically, but not in a lasting way. The important difference lies in the definitions of "income" (where Black America has increased) and "wealth" (where White America has increased). "Whereas income is a flow, wealth is in stock" or lasting items such as homes, stock market shares, and other things which can accrue equity and increase in value over time (167). Income is cash and liquid assets, which cannot become more valuable over time. In essence, Black America, despite its economic increase, still suffers from this "wealth gap" which keeps all of Black America as a whole from achieving a stable economic state (168).

Like economics, we have the same phenomena in access to health care. While access has improved 10-fold over the past 40 years, it also has fallen, given the rise of health disparities highlighted in this paper. That is why the Black church has to continue to advocate not only for peace and justice, but equity, access to quality healthcare and economic prosperity. It all ties in together: when Black economics are unstable, it limits the Black community's access to quality health care opportunities and undermines what both the health of the family and the community. The Black church is always caught in the middle of those dynamics. If the community is prospering economically, the Black church can create additional programming to prevent illnesses and promote good health practices. If the community is not prospering economically, the Black church must still create those programs, but with very little resources. The Black church continues to be the catalyst for creating critical programs at critical junctures in our history. Now, the Black church is struggling with how to create and maintain high quality, preventive health programming for the purpose of good health and good health practices, and to maintain the grace and the dignity of the Black community.

Health Disparities

The most devastating inequality of all lies in Black America's overall lack of access to those things that promote health. According to *The Covenant*, a compilation of information and statistics documenting social, racial, educational, health and economic disparities for Black America, this manifests in a variety of ways. One of the most prominent issues is that many African Americans partake of a poorer diet than their White counterparts, due in part to fact that "half of all Black neighborhoods lack access to a full-service grocery store or supermarket," or to lower income that prevents them from buying healthier food (*The Covenant* 10). In a veritable grocery list of statistics, *The Covenant* states:

- Nationwide, predominantly White neighborhoods have four times more supermarkets than predominantly Black neighborhoods.
- When there is a supermarket in a community studies show that there is a 32 percent increase in fresh fruit and vegetable consumption. (10)

These statistics demonstrate that when given proper access, Black Americans will definitely purchase healthier food.

Problems of access resurface when we examine African Americans and the physician care system. Pertaining to physicians and hospital care, "there are almost 44 million Americans who are uninsured" (Satcher 3). Among this group, "African Americans and Hispanics are most likely to be uninsured" (3). In fact, statistics show that "close to 1.8 million African American children in the United States do not have health insurance" and that "nearly one-third – 32 percent – of African American do not have a regular doctor. By contrast, only 20 percent of White Americans do not have a regular doctor" (9). Hence, the Black community already lacks access to higher quality physicians and hospital care (3). For those African Americans who are insured and can afford good doctors, "the culture of medicine" itself "is predominantly White European." (4). The disparity increases further when we examine the racial makeup of America's physicians. African-American and other minority health professionals "make up only 10 percent of the physicians in America" (3).

This poor diet and lack of access to healthcare has caused a "disproportionate impact" of certain disease on African Americans, namely "the epidemic of [being] overweight and obesity" (4). A weight imbalance can lead to a myriad of illnesses such as Heart Disease, hypertension, diabetes, strokes several types of cancer, and even asthma. African Americans are already susceptible to obesity. Statistics show that "nearly 70 percent of Black adults between the ages of 20 and 74 are overweight; more than half of all Black women are overweight" (*The Covenant* 8). Likewise:

- More than one out of every three Black people are plagued by hypertension; this is the highest rate in the world.

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- White adults are more likely to receive treatment than African Americans for hypertension complications, even though African Americans are affected at higher rates.
- Of all men ages 20 and older, 36.4 percent of African Americans have high blood pressure, compared to 25.6 percent of White men. (8)

Concerning the presence of the diseases of diabetes, cancer, and asthma which may result from obesity:

- More than 2.2 million African Americans have diabetes.
- African Americans with diabetes have a 27 percent higher death rate than Whites with the disease
- Black people are 10 percent more likely to suffer from cancer and 30 percent more likely to die from cancer than Whites. (8-9)
- African Americans are three times more likely to be hospitalized and also three times more likely to die from asthma.

Dealing with these exact issues, the statistics actually worsen for Black women:

- Black women are close to 80 percent more likely to die of a stroke than White women, and 30 percent more likely to die of a heart attack.
- More African American women die from asthma than those of any other ethnic group; the mortality rate is more than 2.5 times higher than that of White women. (8-9)

Greater access is the solution to all of these problems. With access to better health care and better food, African Americans would be in better health. The greatest disparity of all, however, is the lack of health education in the Black community. If the Black community were better informed, Black Americans could better arm themselves against the diseases to which they may be genetically vulnerable.

The Black Church: the Center of Black Culture and Life

In light of the challenge that the African American community faces, the Black Church in particular, the Black church is creating new social, health, and economic paradigms to address those issues. With those paradigms, the government is responding in a dramatic way toward faith-based communities, discovering what the Black church has known for years: that they are capable of contributing to the social or stabilizing objectives, whether it is for social, or political objectives for the entire population. Around the 1900's, the National Urban League was created to assist African Americans in settling in the urban centers of America. The backbone of the National Urban League lay in its ability to organize African American churches especially in North, to assist Northbound African Americans in building a new life, away from the Jim Crow, segregated South.

The Urban League represented a new sociological paradigm and provided critical social services to those who wanted to resettle in northern urban centers for jobs. African Americans were needed in the northern factories in both of the World Wars to protect democracy for the same country that refused to share the democracy they had fought and died for. Black people were good enough to use their skills to protect to democracy, but they were unworthy to receive it from the very country that they helped to protect.

It was the Black church that helped newcomers from the South to sustain themselves in the schizophrenic paranoia of the American psyche. What is evident here is that the Urban League's social paradigm was based upon the structure of the church; it would have failed had it attempted to do this without the Black church. What was true then is even truer today.

The Black Church has changed with time. It has been adaptable and modern, yet traditional and steadfast in its core belief systems. Today, we are dealing with a very sophisticated African American church. One entity that has recognized the strength of the Black church as a matter of social policy is the federal government. As the U.S. population bloomed toward 300 million, state and local and federal governments realized that there was insufficient structure as well as personnel to deal with the complexity of the American public, human need, its health concerns, and its social and economic issues. Beneath these sociological changes was the disintegration of the American family. The government has found itself being a babysitter for the first time in American history, because of the of the disintegration of the family, and this social unit has caused government to realize that it has neither the know-how, man-power nor the structure to deal with the onslaught of social service needs. The government is now looking to faith-based communities to provide services because of the overwhelming need of the American public.

When dealing with the African American family, they are challenged, because their numbers are double and triple when compared to the rest of society, be it in health economics, as well as education. Most of the time, local governments and state governments are completely overwhelmed by the sheer number of the families, especially the poor families, be they Black or White, but the African American family usually comes with a triple level of concern: immediate, undiagnosed and future needs.

Given the emergence of large Non-denominational faith-based communities, the government has not found a creative way to maximize their strengths in helping to deal with the onslaught of social concerns of the family. These new faith-based institutions pose an unusual issue. Even though welcome, the governmental structure is unaware of the potential positive effects that they could have on low-income families, families dealing with drugs, hopelessness, despair and divorce. In most cases, these faith-based communities have been reluctant in joining the traditional mainline Protestant churches in offering their resources to solve stubborn social ills. They lack a model in which they can fit, and how to effectively utilize the resources of a congregation from 10-20 thousand individuals with incomes of \$30,000 to well over \$500,000.

The National Black Church Initiative (NBCI) and its structure for addressing health disparity issues with its 24-health Church Model is but one of the new innovative approaches that federal, state, and local governments are beginning to investigate helping the large Non-denominational church utilize some of its expendable income and large volunteer pool to address the multitude of issues surrounding the disintegration of the family. This model can only work effectively with proper science-based research, governmental technical assistance and funding from foundations in government to make sure that the faith-based community lies at the core of helping to solve the root causes of the problem as opposed to sitting isolated and letting the problem grow. The Black church is uniquely positioned to implement and sustain such paradigms, because of its moral center of economics and ability to attract highly qualified personnel to conduct such an effective faith-based model.

Faith-based Model Impact upon Large Non-denominational Ministries

The Faith-based model allows small and large faith-based communities to contribute money, volunteerism, counseling, food, and clothing to have an impact on existing social ills without exposing their congregational wealth to issues of liability. This gives large congregations such as T.D. Jakes Ministries, World Changers Ministries, New Birth and others of the nation's 900 large ministries a way to minimize liability and maximize service. The faith-based model, created by the National Black Church Initiative is just one of many ways in which large and small ministries are beginning to engage the federal government and bring to bear on this sociological issue, worsened by the disintegration of the family.

This faith-based model was created as a result of the uneasiness faith-based communities felt when President Bush first proposed expanding President Clinton's Charitable Choice into a faith-based initiative. By creating a non-profit like the National Black Church Initiative as a national entity, and feeding the resources that mega and smaller churches have, one can limit the liability and increase the social impact.

The National Black Church Initiative created this core initiative to eradicate health disparities, but it also can be utilized to deal with youth questions, family issues, and other stubborn social ills that may have dramatic impact on our nation's character. We also were able to specifically create a health model to combat health disparities in the African American community: NBCI's 24-health Church Model. This model allows us to work successfully with health care providers in and out of our congregations, for the explicit purpose of spreading health information, health promotion and health screenings. We are then able to create a preventative block before anyone's condition reaches chronic stages. A health model cannot be successful, however, without the support of federal, state, and local government entities to feed into as a follow-through for those who have issues concerning cancer, diabetes and AIDS.

Foundations also have a critical role to play in providing to sustain and grow such a model. It can then be integrated into existing health models, adding to the strength of the safety net for the most vulnerable populations.

Earlier we discussed that because of the changing moral times, many African Americans and even some liberal Whites wanted to change the social dynamic system of the Black church, by de-emphasizing its status and posture in the African American community and beginning to emphasize other institutions over and above it (i.e.: NAACP, National Urban League, the National Council of Negro Women, etc.), especially to carry out programming. The attempt made in the 1960's and 1970's failed. A clear indication of this was the government concept of "model cities" around the country. This was meant for the "best and brightest" minds of America to create model cities within large, urban centers. These committees realized early on that they could not force a change in the local, political structure without the endorsement and participation of the African American church, whether it was with realtors, financiers, or even the social welfare system. The Black church remains a constant source of inspiration, volunteerism, financial donations and political power, and it cannot be easily replaced with the same group of people under a different name in different leadership. Its core belief system is the essence of keeping the community focused on its soul. The Black community is an institution that is slow to change workable concepts, such as the dynamics of the Black church.

For any group, Black or White, trying to institute critical programming such as health initiatives that the National Black Church Initiative was created around, that does not recognize the power, the endurance and the necessity of the Black church will fail. The Black church is and always will be the cornerstone of the Black community. Any attempt to de-emphasize its central power position in culture will continue to fail the program objectives. Recently, there have been some attempts to undermine the strength of the Black church for political reasons, by emphasizing new concepts of ministry over and against the traditional 250-based church membership and its 65,000 churches (16,000 of those are members of the National Black Church Initiative).

Many national entities such as government, foundations, universities or corporations believe that going through mega-ministries such as T.D. Jakes or World Changers is equivalent to reaching every African American churchgoer, due to their modern edifices, and their ability to reach tens of thousands of African Americans across the country instantly. At its core, this is a false assumption. Whereby it may be true that ministries such as that of T.D. Jakes are new and dynamic, in essence, they are not the complete heart and soul of the local Black church. The heart of the Black church still exists in the small congregations of 250 members or less.

Compared to mega-ministries such as T.D. Jakes', though dynamic in its application and its ability to draw large amounts of followers and publicity, African Americans tend to trust and follow local pastors in their own geographic areas. T.D. Jakes Ministries and others are part of what we call the new Non-denominational movement, a movement that has successfully combined spirituality with economics, conservative political ideology, and a dynamic Black preacher motif. These ministries understand that it is critical to partner with the local church in order to get anything done on a national basis. T.D. Jakes' national ministry (located in Dallas, Texas) has affiliates throughout the country,

but they reach less than 1.5 million African Americans who attend church. The balance of the 65,000 African American churches is the heart and soul of the local Black church.

It is critical to understand how the Black church is structured, and how it functions on a national level. Therefore, any attempt to undermine the power of the local Black church, by appealing to ministries such as T.D. Jakes, will undermine the program objectives of any national entities that are trying to influence the Black community through the Black church. This is critical to understand because of the impact that the National Black Church's 24-health Church Model is trying to have in eradicating health disparities.

For instance, if the American Diabetes Association decided to utilize a national campaign through the T.D. Jakes ministry, it would only impact 1.5 million African Americans at best. If they were to use NBCI however, which has a network of 16,000 churches, they could impact 10 times that amount. It is critical that organizations that wish to work with the Black church do so through a national entity, allowing it to bring in the balance of the congregations that have over and above 10,000 members. To do it the other way is to have the least sustainable impact. When a program such as a health program is institutionalized among the 65,000 African American churches, it has a better chance to be sustained. If it is incorporated through one large ministry, that ministry has little to no local support to sustain that particular program.

Large ministries are critical, but only if they are completely supported by the balance of the African American local congregations. This could not be dramatized anymore than the Katrina disaster. Even if T.D. Jakes wanted to deal with this disaster alone, it could not, but working effectively with the other 65,000 churches and NBCI, it was able to provide more social services and helped raised more than \$1,000,000,000 in cash (see Press Release).

President Clinton and Charitable Choice Legislation

During the Clinton Administration, the president authorized the "Charitable Choice" Legislation. This legislation helped to institutionalize a working relationship between faith-based communities and the federal government to combat some of the social ills mentioned earlier. According to the Center for Public Justice, the Charitable Choice legislation was based on 4 principles:

- **Level Playing Field:** faith-based providers can compete for government funds to provide services on the same basis as other providers. They should be neither excluded nor included because they are religious, too religious, "pervasively sectarian," or of the "wrong" religion.
- **Respect for Allies:** The religious character of faith-based providers is protected by allowing them to maintain a religious atmosphere, to have a governing board of their choice, and to maintain their right to hire only employees committed to the organization's faith-based way of providing the services government specifies.

- **Protecting Recipients:** Providers must serve all eligible for help without discrimination. Recipients cannot be forced to take part in inherently religious activities like worship or scriptural instruction. Government must ensure that a secular alternative is available for clients who object to a faith-based provider.
- **Church-State Separation:** All government funds must be used to fulfill the public social-service goals. No direct government funding can be diverted to inherently religious activities (worship, sectarian instruction, proselytization). Government funds go into a separate account and only that account is subject to government audits. (<http://www.cpjustice.org>)

Though Clinton pushed this legislation during the 2 terms he served as President, it received stiff resistance from the Democratic and then Republican congress. The charitable choice law had little to no effect in helping the government come to terms with the social ills of society, noting the deterioration of the American family.

President Bush and the Faith-based Initiative

President Bush, who has worked successfully with the faith community while he was the governor of Texas, wanted to enlarge the state concept of making it easier for faith communities to qualify for federal dollars. When he created the Office of Faith-based and Community Initiatives, many liberals, including the White liberal church, protested against the President utilizing the federal government to turn churches into social agencies. Meanwhile, the Black church stood on the side of the debate. Many Black churches became enormously suspicious of Charitable Choice and President Bush's faith-based initiative; they did not trust the concept.

During this time of uncertainty, the National Black Church Initiative began to survey the churches in its network. The survey asked for general opinions about Bush's presidency, whether the church understood the faith-based initiative, whether the church trusted the premise of the initiative, and whether the church had/would apply for federal funding.

68% of those surveyed had a poor opinion of Bush's presidency. While 64% of the ministers surveyed understood Bush's aim in creating the Faith Initiative, 83% were concerned with his motives and the implications of what might happen if their churches joined with it. 98% of the churches already had their own structure in place to relay social services, such as clothing and shelter, to the needy; hence they did not even feel the need to apply to the federal government for aid. In fact, 80% of the ministers indicated no interest in applying for federal aid.

To combat this distrust and concern about the Faith-based and Community Initiative, NBCI created a plan for churches to apply for the newly available federal aid without incurring any type of liability. The program worked as follows:

- Instead of a church having to compete for a grant, they could compete through a non-profit (such as NBCI), who already knew how to write a grant and how federal processes were conducted.

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- If the grant were awarded, the funds would be passed to NBCI, who could then funnel the money through the churches so that the institutions could conduct their programs with no liability to church, and with the guidance of NBCI, if needed.

One critical component to highlight is that the Bush administration, when introducing the faith-based program, did not create a separate funding screen for the program. In other words, there were no new dollars committed to this program. The Bush administration's faith-based initiatives only purpose was to mandate within 5 departments: Health and Human Services, Housing, Labor, Education and Small Business Administration to provide equal access to the faith-based community to compete for existing dollars. This was good in essence; however, the Black church still remained disadvantaged in that competition. There was no staff to write sophisticated government grants, and there was no infrastructure to qualify for the grants. 80% of the African American churches do not have separate 501-C status organizations to apply for government funding. Even though there have been attempts to increase this number, there has been a major learning curve to overcome.

Another issue that emerges concerning President Bush's faith-based initiative is that he continues to under fund new programs such as the international AIDS program and the No Child Left Behind programs. Both programs will have tremendous effect on the African American community if they are fully implemented and funded.

The National Black Church Initiative

The National Black Church Initiative is a coalition of 16,000 African-American and Latino churches working to eradicate racial disparities in healthcare. In addition to our member churches, we have 18,000 sister churches. NBCI is a faith-based health organization dedicated to providing critical wellness information and pre-screening to all of its members. The African-American community alone ranks first in eleven different health risk categories. Most of the issues from which African Americans suffer simply boil down to good health. If African Americans had good health and health education, they could avoid many illnesses. NBCI's purpose is to partner with national health officials to provide health education, reduce racial health disparities, and increase access to quality healthcare.

The National Black Church Initiative (NBCI) and other faith communities and models are critical to moving government policy such as President Clinton's Charitable Choice or President Bush's Faith-based Initiative from policy to reality. These legislations need a vehicle such as the Black church and a model that small and large denominations and churches can utilize to begin to tackle some of the root causes of issues such as health disparities, hopelessness, broken families and other stubborn social issues that threaten to overwhelm the American social safety network.

These new paradigms are critically needed, but there must be an interlocking relationship between faith-based, government, and university foundations. It is critically important that this new model addresses the root causes with solid, unequivocal, science-based research. The marriage of faith-based capacity: volunteerism, money, transportation and

governmental technical assistance, under girded with science-based research from evaluators to see what works and how to adjust to address issues of health disparities is the wave of the futures.

Faith-based Model

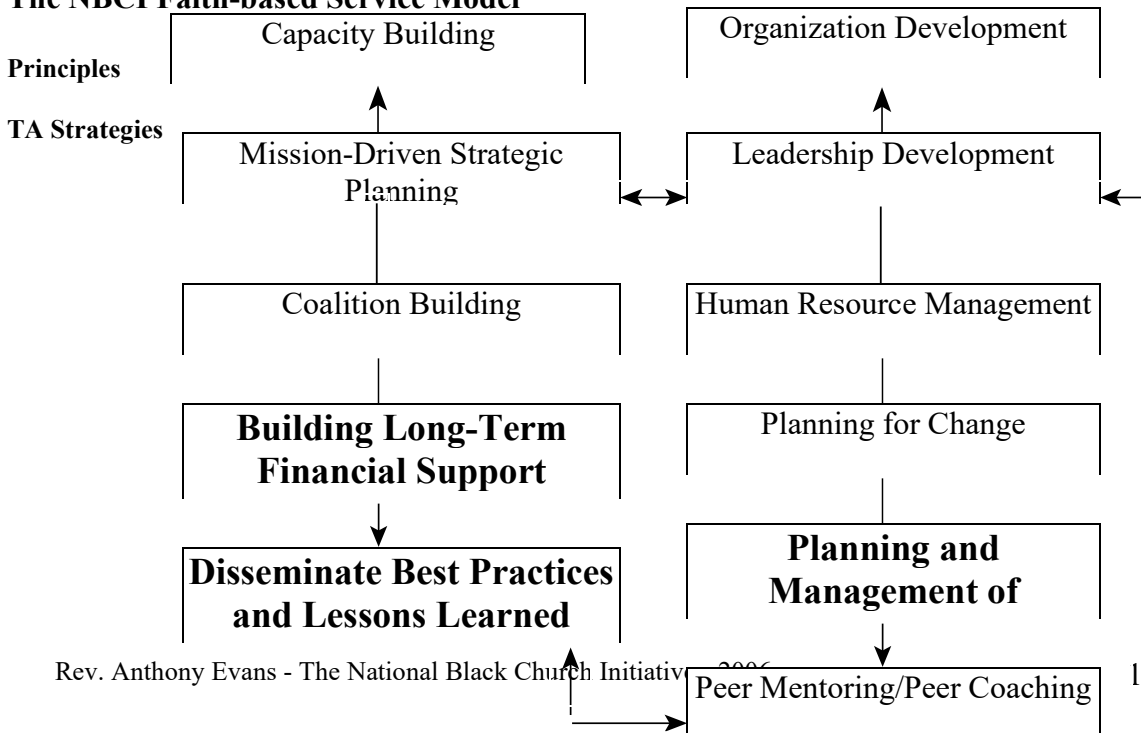
NBCI proposes its Faith-based Service Model (FBSM) as the theoretical paradigm for this project. This approach to providing Technical Assistance facilitates the interweaving of human social services delivery, capacity building, and organization development, - resulting in increased service capacity among Faith-based Organization (FBOs) and Community-based Organizations (CBOs).

The pulse of the FBSM is the *faith factor*. The faith factor provides a set of core values and is the guiding tenet for the FBSM. The essential core values of the faith factor are: “each one teaching one/each one reaching one;” ensuring compassionate outcomes, rather than just compassionate intentions; providing services and transforming lives while acknowledging human dignity; energizing civil society and rebuilding social capital; and ensuring that FBOs/CBOs have a place at the table.

The FBSM Model includes two principles and technical assistance strategies that support each principle, and is shown in Exhibit 1.

With NBCI as an intermediary, FBSM will be used as the central best practice model because it creates for “one-stop shopping” in a community—bringing together coalitions of FBOs/CBOs, each having a particular strength in community ministry and collectively creating a comprehensive array of services, e.g. food, clothing, counseling (individual/family), etc. For subgrantees, FBSM will provide technical assistance and training in the capacity building and organization development areas described earlier.

The NBCI Faith-based Service Model



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NBCI knows this model works, and our experience has given us very valuable “lessons learned” in replicating the model with other FBOs/CBOs. Our experience implementing FBSM has proven it to be a successful and unique vehicle for: Bringing together coalitions that have similar strengths in community ministry; providing a comprehensive array of services; providing a vehicle for capacity building and organization development; involving community residents as agents of healing and service delivery.

In dealing with health disparities in low-income communities, a faith-based concept needed to be created to work with existing health structures. NBCI’s 24-health Church Model is based with faith-based communities, naming key churches in a community based upon the population. These key churches played a critical point in education, distribution and providing technical assistance to nearby churches called cluster churches.

For instance, a community such as Washington DC with a population of 500,000 has 24 key churches. This is based upon how Washington, DC is drawn politically. They have eight elected wards and thus 3 key churches are located in the North, South, and central part of the ward, thus covering the entire ward. All of the other churches are called cluster churches and that is the balance of the 800-member strong DC Black Church Initiative in Washington DC, the local group of the National Black Church Initiative.

Cities such as New York, that has 8 million people, has over 250 key churches, located strategically throughout the 5 boroughs of New York, thus covering the city limits of New York. It helps health providers to know that there are faith-based communities in any are of the city where they want to provide health literature o information. They can call on these key churches and the cluster churches to help the provide health education and pre-screening.

Parish Nurses and NBCI Health Churches

The National Black Church Initiative, when it first began this project, realized that health models such as the parish nurse model, which exists mainly in White mainstream churches, could not effectively fit within the structure of the Black church. There are many reasons why: mainly, the way that the Black church is governed, and how it handles its own internal economics. Earlier we discussed that the Black church is often left with the responsibility of creating programs with very little resources (making bricks without straw). Despite the wealth of this country, the Black church has never received adequate assistance from government, foundations, and others to create the type of community-based programming necessary for helping to solve the root causes of negative health practices that exist within the Black community. One of the ways in which many of the Black churches try to offer health information within the context of the Black church is through health fairs. Health fairs are good, but for the Black community, they are seen as a band-aid on a gushing wound. So, health fairs must be strategically placed to undergird programming rather than serving as its only programming.

Another reason why the parish nurse model would not have worked in the Black church is because of its need for heavy, front-loaded economics. In addition, the Black church

would have relied on the goodwill of other mainstream White churches for structure and leadership. Traditionally, the Black church structure does not lend itself to this type of governance.

NBCI had to follow the traditional patterns of the Black church. The first thing to be done was to persuade African American pastors of the importance of having strong health and wellness programs at their churches. Traditionally within the African American church, this is called the Health Ministry, and is staffed by nurses, whose main job is to assist people who are “caught up in the spirit” during services. Normally these individuals are not certified health care providers, but volunteers who assist during services. NBCI, looking at this structure, began to move that Health Ministry to a new level. By incorporating it into a more intentional approach in dealing with the issue of health disparities, one of the first things NBCI did was to survey the congregation to find certified health care providers, and then meet with them to coordinate health education programs, the distribution of literature and the preparation of prescreening for existing diseases as a means of providing the Black church with an effective, preventive health component. As a result of this, NBCI created the 24-health Church Model. At its core, the module has a collaborative approach with local, state, and federal health officials with creating health programs. Those individuals who need additional services are integrated into the health programs of their particular city or state.

Entities such as NBCI, in order to fully realize its enormous potential via its 16,000 church network, would need sustained funding for a minimum of 5 years, in order to grow its ability to raise money, create a donor base and sustain effective, preventive health programming. This is why the parish nurses concept is more readily sustainable in the White church than the Black church. White churches, just like European society, have substantial access to capital. Meanwhile, the Black community, while improving economically, is still undercapitalized.

The 24-health Church Model

NBCI's 24-health Church Model is an innovative approach for faith-based communities across this country to use itself as a health educator. Healthcare professionals and religious leaders created the model as a result of a round table discussion over three years. The compelling reason behind creating this model was to get at the stubborn health concerns that were consistently found in minority, poor and rural communities. This model has been properly evaluated by a number of healthcare professionals who has declared it as a proven technique of delivering critical and targeted healthcare information to underserved communities or specific target groups. We are proud of the successes of this model and look forward to working with you. Here are the characteristics of NBCI's 24-health Church Model:

- Using faith-based communities as educators;
- Delivering critical health information to targeted groups or underserved communities in both urban and rural settings;

- Working successfully with healthcare experts in providing accurate, critical health information;
- Putting into place a structure that is easily integrated into Kansas' existing healthcare delivery systems;
- Working toward achieving program overall objectives and goals and a sincere attempt to reduce statistical numbers in disease categories through health information, health education and health promotion programs; and
- To assist in the important task of collecting critical data for the purpose of developing accurate health policies and effective programming.

We look forward to working toward a relationship whereby we can apply this model to specific communities to tackle stubborn health concerns among targeted groups. One of the chief benefits of a model like this is not only the delivery of programming but also the critical collection of data. Critical to sustaining a model is to have a distribution network that is able to provide critical health information to targeted populations in vulnerable communities. The NBCI distribution network is one of those examples that have the ability to distribute large amounts of information through its key churches, to targeted populations within its faith-based communities.

For instance, if the need arose to provide literature to post-menopausal African American women concerning Breast Cancer, Colon Cancer, or Diabetes, NBCI has created a method to insure that the targeted population receives the distribution of this health information. This literature would be explained and administered by a volunteer certified health care professional placed over an individual church's Health Ministry.

Distribution

NBCI has 16,000 African American churches and 18,000 sister churches. Because of our enormous size, we are able to conduct targeted distribution of health literature and other materials. This makes us one of the largest distribution networks in the country. We can easily limit this distribution network to NBCI churches, NBCI sister churches, or other churches outside our distribution network.

With this enormous distribution network, we can touch every metropolitan and rural area in the country where African Americans and Latinos reside. We also have the capacity to create literature both in Spanish and in English. Having this reach gives us a unique service to reach into metropolitan areas and deliver literature to zip codes, wards of cities (city election boundaries), as well as to certain neighborhoods. Over the years, we have been able to perfect this particular distribution network. This is one of NBCI's strong suits, and we are developing new techniques and strategies to improve the accuracy and speed of delivery of critical health information and other materials that will strategically affect the African American and Latino communities.

In the future we are looking to incorporate our technology information initiative by connecting key churches through wireless communication. We accomplish this task by sending the literature to our key churches that, in turn, distribute that literature through our cluster churches. With this type of accuracy we are able to target certain churches, individuals, genders or races.

- We have the capacity to distribute large volumes of health information to target populations for specific health concerns.
- We can deliver gender specific health literature to women concerning breast cancer, heart disease and other diseases like osteoporosis. If we are talking about breast cancer, we are one of the few national organizations that have the capacity to distribute a large volume of health information to women who are a part of our congregations.
- The targeting of those women for this literature is usually done by the Center of Diseases Control (CDC). CDC concludes that a particular age group is vulnerable to this disease state and should be tested. NBCI surveys its congregation and maps out a strategy to deliver targeted information to a specific group of women in our congregation.

We also have the ability to identify or target health information for men. If the literature is for men who are fifty-five and over concerning a disease like prostate cancer or other male diseases we will provide the same manner of information distribution within our congregations for them. We are able to accomplish this task through the NBCI Health Note.

NBCI: 5 Core Programming Areas

As a result of the 24-health Church Model, the National Black Church Initiative has paved the way in creating effective programming for the purpose of helping to provide access to those would have traditionally been unable to access health systems and provide preventative health materials that are written consistent with their educational levels for the best results.

The following programs are an example of what can be accomplished with faith-based communities in working in health systems to deliver services to hard-to-reach and even vulnerable populations. This has to be done with government, not as a stand-alone organization, and private organizations can help by providing support to sustain programs such as NBCI.

NBCI has 5 core divisions:

- The Baby fund Initiative
- The NBCI Health and Wellness Initiative (Health Disparities)
- The NBCI Financial Literacy Initiative
- The NBCI Technological Information Initiative

- The NBCI Environmental Initiative

NBCI Baby Fund Initiative

The Baby Fund is a response to the rising tide of abuse, neglect, and death among infants and young children in our society. The Fund will be both a source of assistance and advocacy to meet the needs of children who have little or no voices of their own. The universal Church has a moral obligation to protect children. NBCI is particularly concerned with combating: child neglect and abuse, human trafficking in children for sexual abuse, and child pornography.

The philosophical and theological underpinnings of the Fund can be understood by all faith communities, noting the supreme value place upon children in scripture when God said, “Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for such is the kingdom of God.”

NBCI Health and Wellness Initiative

Children

NBCI has discovered a novel approach for addressing the childhood obesity issue in America. We will pay particular attention to African American and Latino populations, ages 6-18. There are four rubrics that govern our childhood obesity initiative: diet management, physical exercise, behavior modification, and accurate, easy-to-read child healthcare literature.

We have created a childhood obesity kit that we are presently seeking sponsorship and marketing opportunities to make this kit available to all children in need of it. The kit is governed by the four rubrics stated above. It is an innovative, interactive and computer-based kit that children will find engaging and fun, with the explicit purpose of maintaining health and wellness and reducing destructive eating habits.

Adults

NBCI, through its 16,000 faith-based community, in 2006 will announce the largest, faith-based obesity program in the country. Titled “The Jerusalem Walk Program,” this initiative will create an occasion for congregations to walk together under the leadership of their pastor. Together, the pastor along with his or her congregation will walk the distance of one mile in an area near their church’s location. This program will begin in 2006, with test runs in Washington, DC and Charleston, SC.

We have also developed an adult health and wellness kit, which is based upon the latest scientific evidence, on how to safely reduce weight and maintain health. The four rubrics that govern this kit are: diet management, physical exercise, behavior modification and accurate health literature. Like the childhood obesity kit, we are presently seeking

sponsors and marketing opportunities to get this into the hands of those who desperately need it, in order to reduce weight and maintain health.

Another exciting project that NBCI will launch this year is the African American Women Health and Wellness Project. The purpose of this project is to engage African Americans through out faith-based community in a wellness tour of 10 major cities, with an emphasis on providing them with practical information, motivation and critical information concerning nutrition. We are working with a number of national retail organizations as well as the USDA Center for Nutrition and Information. The primary focus will be to emphasize USDA's "My Pyramid" for adults.

Financial Literacy

Two years ago, NBCI launched a groundbreaking initiative that emphasized savings, investment and long-term financial planning. NBCI has teamed up with the America Save campaign in order to work with faith-based communities to encourage them to have their low-income congregants begin to save for an emergency fund, for a home, or for transportation. This savings campaign, with the participation of certain financial institutions across the country, allows and individual who is making hourly wage, or those who fall within the federal poverty rate, to save from \$5-\$20 dollars for these funds, or whatever purpose they deem. This will allow those who sit at the bottom of the economic ladder to have a fund to rescue them from an emergency situation that they did not anticipate.

The second portion of this groundbreaking initiative provides critical, financial education to single or married professional the ABCs of long-term investment. NBCI, throughout the 16,000 churches, possesses a unique opportunity to impact the saving and investment rates of American once this program is widespread.

We conducted a demonstration project in 2004 and 2005; it was extremely successful. Now we are looking for national sponsors to expand this to our network of churches.

Technology Information Literacy (The Digital Divide)

The faith community recognizes how critically important it is to have a technically wise and wired congregation. The access to technology and to IT education is critically important for the church to be on the cutting edges of this technological revolution. NBCI's initiative has two primary goals:

- To make sure that every person in America, regardless of age or station in life, has access to technology.
- To make sure that IT education opportunities are open to all regardless of income or race.

We plan to work with large technology companies such as Verizon, Microsoft, Yahoo, and Google to ensure that we fulfill our mission.

NBCI Environmental Initiative

The mission of this initiative is for NBCI to utilize its enormous ethical clout and influence to support policies and programs to educate our congregants on the importance of the environment and to preserve the environment for all future generations. We plan to partner with the Big 10 environmental organizations to bring about this reality. We also are committed to creating green environments throughout our faith-based communities across the country. We have a special emphasis on teaching our children the theological tenets of our faith regarding protecting and preserving the environment.

Sample of NBCI Health Promotion Programs

NBCI Obesity Assessment Program. In 2004 NBCI launched an Obesity Assessment Program in Washington, D.C. — a series of computerized assessments designed to help individuals lose weight and take better care of them. To accomplish this, NBCI divided the District into four quadrants, each comprising 15 churches. Each quadrant then was assigned a physical fitness counselor who administered the assessments, which were later completed by participants' attending physicians or other qualified personnel.

The Obesity Assessment Program consisted of three surveys that focused on the following areas: risk factors present in someone's life, that person's current health condition, and behavior regarding diet, exercise, and physical activities.

After each computerized questionnaire was completed, counselors measured participants' height and weight and conducted body-fat measurements. They then asked respondents which parts of their bodies they would like to change. Before leaving the session, each participant received a packet containing information about nutrition, exercise, and healthy living, and was strongly encouraged to see a physician before implementing any major lifestyle changes. NBCI is now implementing this program in 20 major cities through health departments.

NBCI Emergency Shelter Program. In collaboration with the Community Partnership for the Homeless and Washington, D.C.'s Department of Human Services, NBCI implemented an emergency-shelter program in four area churches. These shelters housed more than 1,000 people in the winter of 2001. This model has been shared with 200 churches in 11 different states

NBCI 25 Faith-based Incubation Program. Since 1999, NBCI, Washington, D.C.'s Department of Health Addiction Prevention and Recovery Administration (APRA), and the Salvation Army have helped 25 churches develop accredited substance abuse prevention and treatment programs. NBCI's program is a component of a SAMHSA-funded initiative with the Congress of National Black Churches (CNBC) that strengthens the participation of faith-based organizations in drug education and treatment. This program continues to date through CNBC in 2,500 congregations.

NBCI Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) Initiative. Working with Washington, D.C.'s Department of Health, NBCI's SIDS program has helped more than 300 churches

advocate the SIDS “back to sleep” message and educate parents about this condition. In addition, NBCI provides temporary assistance, information, and education to the 300 churches through the National Institutes of Health’s “Back to Sleep” tool kit. We are working with health professionals to create an online model for faith communities.

NBCI Summer Academic Camps. NBCI currently provides temporary assistance to six area faith-based organizations that teach reading, literary, and mathematics skills to more than 280 children.

The NBCI/DCBCI Health Note: The Health Note is an innovative two-to-eight page brochure that highlights a particular health topic in an attempt to integrate the disciplines of theology and health sciences. Each brochure demonstrates how faith-based communities utilize their theology to promote good health practices. The Health Note was created to present complex health issues in a simplified but substantive manner. So far, NBCI has published Health Notes on Depression, SIDS, Diabetes, Childhood Obesity and Understanding Diet Management, and Breast Cancer. We have distributed over 700,000 pieces of health literature.

Anti-Smoking Angels: NBCI’s Anti Smoking Angels comprises 6,000 young people who crusade against the use of tobacco and tobacco-related products. Its successes included participation in the April 2003 conference of the Washington, D.C., and Department of Health’s Tobacco Control program at the Washington Convention Center. This particular event was coordinated with the Washington, D.C, and public school system to educate District children in grades 7 through 9 about the dangers of tobacco. NBCI developed a computerized tobacco game called “The NBCI Tunnel of Knowledge.” Approximately 5,000 students attended this event.

This year, NBCI plans to introduce the Anti Smoking Angels to 50 new cities. Our goal is to inspire 100,000 young people from our faith communities to encourage their peers to avoid the dangers of tobacco and tobacco-related products for a lifetime.

NBCI AIDS Initiative: Through its Communication Distribution Network, NBCI is preparing to distribute the largest amount of AIDS information ever attempted by a faith-based organization. In 2007, we will send out 1.5 million copies of our Health Note on AIDS. This brochure will be distributed in three areas: Washington, D.C. (which leads American cities in AIDS cases on a per capita basis), Prince George’s County, and Baltimore City (which is ranked No. 3 in AIDS cases on a per capita basis).

NBCI Pain Management Initiative: In response to inquiries from its nationwide church network, NBCI has created a pain-management and prescription-abuse education seminar tour aimed at America’s youth. The tour is part of the first phase of NBCI’s Health Alert Project, aimed at educating member congregations about the most pressing issues regarding racial health disparities, particularly in the African-American and Latino communities. We plan to begin the tour in the second quarter of 2007.

Ten Ways to Work Effectively with the Black Church

Therefore, here are 10 specific ways to work effectively with the African American faith-based communities in getting whatever must be done correctly.

1. You must align yourself or your organization with a National Black religious entity, such as the National Black Church Initiative. This will help you navigate your way between the complex systems of values found in the Black Church as well as getting to key individuals in the Black church to move the project from concept to implementation, especially if it deals with African American community.
2. Just as important, you must first be able to conceptualize and persuade the African American clergy of the importance of your project or concept over and against the fact of the issues and concerns already on his or her plate at the moment. The African American clergy is critical in moving the project forward. Without his or her endorsement it will fail. It is easier to work through an entity such as NCBI than to persuade 65,000 African American clergy of the worth of your project. You will then be able to spend the majority of your time in implementing the program.
3. You should know that by working outside of the African American leadership tradition and system, even though in the church, you will not be able to move your project from concept to implementation until it has been endorsed and recognized by the African American lead clergy leadership.
4. It is important that you choose to work with a Black clergy minister who has standing in the African American/Black church tradition. Just because you have an African American clergy on your staff does not in any way guarantee you or your organization entry into the leadership of the African American organization of that location or national organization. They must have standing and integrity. They also must be capable of articulating the concept you deem important.

For instance, if you choose to higher a United Methodist African American minister who may not have standing with Protestant lead Black Clergy leadership, it is possible that your project with not have impact.

- They do not know him or her,
 - Your minister may not have the credentials for the project that you might gain by joining with a national Black religious entity such as the National Black Church Initiative, the National Progressive Baptist Convention, the National Baptist Convention, and Church of God in Christ, the African Methodist Episcopal, and other like-minded entities.
5. Whatever concept or program or problem an outside organization brings to the African American church, it does not note that it would have relevance if it means creating a separate structure outside the church to carry out the program. So, for

instance, if you want the African American church to be a part of a multicultural board and to solve youth problems, it may be difficult to do without the right leadership and its fitting into the agenda of the African American church. You cannot and should not create a separate agenda for the church; it must be conceptually compatible with the church's leadership or direction.

6. You should not under any circumstances in a hierarchical church setting, (i.e. African Methodist Episcopal church or other Black religious entities) start working with a local pastor and then switch the program and concept to a higher religious individual such as a bishop. This will automatically ensure that your project fails. This is one of the highest forms of disrespect that an organization can show to a member of the clergy, by switching allegiances. In the African American tradition, the vast majority of churches are autonomous, so each local pastor is his own bishop, whereby in the White religious tradition, other than the congregational church, there is a hierarchical (i.e. Lutheran, Episcopal, etc.) demarcation line for utilizing a larger authority to get your project done. This does not work in the Black church unless there is a recognizable president of the religious entity. One must receive that president's endorsement before you can begin to work with a local pastor. This is also true for the National Black Church Initiative. It must be approved in their central headquarters before any entity can work with our local member churches.
7. Always allow the pastor of that particular church that you are working with to provide a new perspective about programming and objectives of programming. A good pastor will appoint a competent member of his congregation to work with you to carry out the program's objective. Please do not try to bring in an individual who may not be acceptable to that church community as your point person to oversee the program's implementation and make it a part of the Black church agenda. Again, this will spell failure for your program, especially if that individual is not of the same racial makeup as the congregation. The host group should try desperately to make sure that they do not make the fundamental mistakes of bringing in an individual that does not share the cultural competency of the Black Church.
8. If you want to galvanize the African American churches in your locality, you have to make sure that everyone is informed of your program. This can easily be done by working effectively with a local pastor who has stature and standing. None of the Black churches should feel like they are being left out or overlooked.
9. You should not bring a foreign element into the church. The pastor must be well informed of the exact nature, scope and components of your program. If your program involves a discussion of religiosity and health, economics or some other social discipline and there will be a group represented who has opposed the Black church, you must inform the pastor of the objective of why this individual is being brought in. In most cases, the pastor will have to run this by his official board of

the church; that board has the right to decline the invitation of anyone or any group.

10. Make sure that the church receives some sort of compensation for its time, effort, and the use of its facilities and volunteers to carry out program objectives. Unless otherwise speculated, there should be an attempt to compensate the church for the resources they bring to the table. A church has the ability to galvanize a community. They can bring hundreds of volunteers to the table, food, clothing, counseling, transportation, and if the church is making this effort, the host organization should at least ask the church what level of compensation they might need. One should always look upon this not as a fee for services, but to make this available so that the church will be capable of sustaining this level of service to the community and to those individuals and families who find themselves in need for the next time. The church, unlike the bank, cannot make loans or money instantaneously. It needs those funds for social services, so without compensation, the church will not be readily available to do so. It must be able to replenish its coffers to serve others.

An easy way to accomplish this task is to work with a National entity (such as NBCI) and provided compensation for its staff. NBCI will work with the local church, removing the need for you to work with individual churches. NBCI will be able to impact more faith-communities, such as bringing in volunteerism to help solve the pressing issues.

Conclusion

In the context of the paper, we talked about changing moral paradigms in the Black church in order to provide a more sustainable service delivery to its congregants in the context of combating health disparities. We believe that we clearly have demonstrated that the church has a brand new concept and construct of delivering health services to its congregants through its faith-based model, and more specifically, its 24-health Church Model. We have been successful in working with Health Care providers in administering services.

We have demonstrated that the Black church, given proper resources, technical assistance, and guidance coupled with science-based approaches, can institute effective health programming. In essence, what we demonstrated is that the Black church is an educator, but specifically we want to make it a health educator to begin to eradicate the enormous health disparities the Black community faces. What NBCI brings is the ability to capacity build, provide target populations, create literature through its health note, and work strategically with science based entities such as government, universities, foundations and corporations to arrive at new health modeling in order to help in the eradication of disease states that disproportionately effect the Black community (i.e. AIDS, Cancer, Diabetes, Heart Disease).

NBCI is beginning to develop core relationships with organizations such as the American Diabetes Association, the Salvation Army, Howard University, Kaiser Permanente, the Robert Woods Foundation, and other health entities to carve out a strategic role in becoming an intricate part of the preventive health care delivery system. We are eager to work with affinity organizations that promote prevention in the areas of health, social, and economic issues. We welcome all partnerships with federal, state and local government, lodge associations, foundations and other grass-roots entities to achieve NBCI's stated purpose – and to reach those who are underserved in the African American, Asian and Latino communities and push us toward our goal of eradicating health disparities.

Some of our partners to date have been: Amerigroup, America Saves, Charlotte Saves, The DC Department of Health, The State Attorney's Office of Prince George's county, Carefirst, The Mid-Atlantic Dairy Association, The National Dairy Association, The National Medical Association, and Black Entertainment Television (BET).

What we have demonstrated in this paper, is the provision of insight into the structure and the workings of the Black churches as the center and life of the Black community. This is how the Black community is structured and in the foreseeable future there seems to be no changing structural patterns emerging. This paper gives insight into how to work affectively with the Black church to achieve affinity, goals and objectives, not only for our community, but also for our nation.

The Black church is engaged in every level of society, it cannot and must not be left out of decision-making, or denied a seat at the table. Whether the Black community is celebrating or struggling, it will turn to the Black church for leadership. It has become the social translator for the Black community, which is important in order to make sure that all in the Black community understand his or her role in creating community and sustaining our nation's integrity. You can be a part of this glorious experience in making sure that your organization understands how the Black church can work effectively to cover some of the social ills that govern our society.

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National Black Church Initiative

Survey on President Bush's Faith-based and Community Initiative RESULT AND TABULATION

The following questions are to seek your faith-community position on President Bush "Faith-based Initiative". This is the follow-up survey that was sent out to your church three and a half years ago.

Membership	16,000
Amount of the survey (mailed) US mail and email	10,456
Amount of the survey received	4,007

1. Do you understand the nature of the President's Faith-based Initiative?
 Yes 64% No 28% Somewhat 8%

2. Do your church have social ministries for the poor (clothing, food, shelter and other programs)?
 Yes 98% No 2%

3. Have your church ever applied for federal, state or local funding under such an initiative?
 Yes 4% No 76% Will Never Apply 20%

4. As Pastor, do you trust the President's Faith-based Initiative in relationship to the church and state constitutional concerns
 A.I have no problems with it 8%
 B.I am deeply concerned with it 83%
 C.I do not trust the concept. 9%

5. Have you or your congregation received any technical support on how to apply for federal funding?
 Yes 3% No 59% Never 38%

6. Are you interested in applying for federal grants?

Yes 7%	No 80%	Never 13%
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7. Have you ever received a federal grant?

Yes 1%	No 98%	Never 1%
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8. Are you skeptical about the President's motive as pertaining to the Faith-based Initiative and the church?

Yes 96%	No 3%	Somewhat 1%
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9. What percentage of your congregation is eligible to vote?

A. 5-20% (20%)	B. 20-40% (13%)	C. 40 – 60% (52%)	D. 60-100% (15%)
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10. Do you encourage your congregation to vote?

Yes 92%	No 6%	Never 2%
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11. How do you rate the job that President Bush is doing?

Excellent 2%	Good 5%	Fair 30%	Poor 63%
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12. Choose three of the areas that concern your congregation.

A. Jobs	83%
B. The economy	63%
C. Iraq	75%
D. Health Care	31%
E. Education	17%

This is not a scientific survey. The survey was conducted due to the many enquiries the National Black Church Initiative received concerning the President and his Faith-based Initiative. In addition, we needed some data in order to see how to construct the priorities of next year conference and how to offer technical assistance to NBCI membership across the country.

National Black Church Initiative

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For immediate release
PRESS RELEASE

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NATIONAL BLACK CHURCH INITIATIVE CONGRATULATES CHURCHES THAT ASSISTED VICTIMS OF HURRICANES KATRINA AND RITA

CHURCHES RAISED AN ESTIMATED \$1 BILLION IN CASH DONATIONS, FOOD, SHELTER, CLOTHING AND SOCIAL SERVICES

Washington, DC – The National Black Church Initiative applauds the massive outreach efforts by tens of thousands of African American faith communities to help survivors of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. These faith-based communities – many of them NBCI members – raised an estimated \$1 billion in cash donations, food, shelter, clothing and social services. Although hundreds of churches were destroyed by the twin storms, congregants gave generously of their time and money.

This extraordinary outpouring of goodwill cut across denominational lines. All denominations worked together to ease the suffering of survivors on the Gulf Coast and in Texas.

“The church has always responded to crisis,” says Rev. Anthony Evans, NBCI president. “However, the huge scope of the devastation caused by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita caused the church to jump into the fray immediately and – along with FEMA, and other relief organizations – serve the emergency needs of victims...”

“Regardless of their stations in life or the colors of their skins, congregants from all walks of life displayed the true character of the church – God’s compassion, mercy, and grace,”

says Rev. C.H. Johnson, former president of the Progressive National Baptist Convention Eastern Regional.

The stories of compassion and love are too numerous to list. In Houston, where thousands of survivors were relocated, hundreds of local churches participated in Operation Compassion, an interfaith effort to provide shelter and distribute food, clothing, and other donations. For example, nearby Windsor Village United Methodist Church sent congregants to volunteer at one shelter. In fact, one congregant's son flew a helicopter from Houston to New Orleans to help with relief efforts. Second Baptist Church provided the overall leadership of the interfaith initiative.

Saint Agnes Baptist Church operated a distribution warehouse and assembled volunteers to unload trucks, stock shelves, and transport donations to shelters. These are just a few examples, but tens of thousands of African American churches demonstrated an extraordinary act of compassion. We want to make sure that the African American church is recognized for this contribution, as it has never been down before. It also demonstrates the enormous potential of the Black church and what can be done when they focus on an issue.

The Rev. Mark McCleary, Chair of NBCI's Minister Alliance, says, "I am so proud of how these churches – NBCI members and non-members -- responded. We should all recognize the enormous contributions provided by the church to FEMA, the American Red Cross, and other disaster relief agencies."

"Nonprofit and voluntary organizations were and continue to be critical partners in responding to the needs of victims of Hurricane Katrina, fulfilling a role they play in every disaster but to an unprecedented level in this response and recovery," said the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Acting Director David Paulison. "The compassionate actions of the National Black Church Initiative and others in the faith community serve as impressive examples of the outpouring of generosity following this devastating hurricane season. I commend them for their commitment to those in need and thank them for their partnership in the recovery efforts now underway."

About the National Black Church Initiative

The National Black Church Initiative (NBCI) is a coalition of 16,000 African-American and Latino churches dedicated to erasing racial disparities in healthcare. We are a faith-based health organization that provides critical wellness information and pre-screening to all of our members. The African-American community ranks first in 11 different health risk categories. NBCI's purpose is to partner with national health officials to provide health education, reduce racial health disparities, and increase access to quality healthcare.