

THE
Episcopal
CHURCH



**Black
Ministries**

OFFICE *of* BLACK MINISTRIES

“God of grace and God of glory, on thy people pour thy power” has been adopted by the Black Ministries Office as the guiding prayer for its work. The line is taken from Hymn 594 (Hymnal, 1982) and was written by Harry Emerson Fosdick.

The Black Ministries Office is dedicated to ministry among the People of African Descent and South America for leadership development, congregational renewal and vitality, and advocacy. The work is grounded in the foundation of the Baptismal Covenant; the Greatest Commandment, to love God and neighbor; and the Great Commission that sends us out into the world. The mission of the office is achieved through collaboration with colleagues, partnerships with Episcopal dioceses, provinces, deaneries, local parishes, and ecumenical groups and organizations across ethnic and racial boundaries.

HISTORY

In 1884, the Conference of Church Workers among Colored People was formed as a support group and as a forum to address problems of special concerns to black Episcopalians. In 1906, at its 22nd annual conference, a resolution was passed unanimously requesting the Board of Mission "to appoint an additional missionary secretary in connection with those already employed at the Church Mission House in New York, who shall be a colored priest, having special charge of the work among colored people in gathering information and statistics for the benefit of the church-at-large, and making such visitations in the field as might stimulate, arouse and help the missionaries there employed."

In 1906 such an office was established under the direction of white priests and was called the American Church Institute for Negroes. The request of the Conference of Church Workers among Colored People was finally granted in 1943 when the Rev. Bravid W. Harris was appointed Secretary for Negro Work. Upon his election as Bishop of Liberia in 1945, he was succeeded by the Rev. Dr. Tollie Caution, who served until 1966. Since that time the Black Ministries Office has been staffed by the Rev. Dr. Harold Lewis, the Rev. Dr. Lynne Collins, and its present incumbent the Rev. Canon Angela Ifill.

MISSION FOCUS

New Visions Initiative for Congregational Renewal and Vitality

The purpose of this initiative is to enhance congregational vitality through partnerships for mutual ministry and will include faith formation, leadership training for evangelism and mission, and advocacy. This initiative came out of a comprehensive plan for growth and development and is working toward renewed, vital communities of faith engaged in the mission of the church to restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ. Activities include: community visits for mission involvement, spiritual formation, leadership training, covenanting with ministry partners, renewal worship services for evangelism, and pew and pulpit exchanges.

Links with Episcopal Affiliated Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs)

The Episcopal Church maintains links to three Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), namely: St. Paul's College, Lawrenceville, Virginia; St. Augustine's College, Raleigh, North Carolina; and Voorhees College, Denmark, South Carolina. A Recognition Day event and a two-and-a-half-day symposium on each campus mark their continuing relationship with the Episcopal Church and the church's interest in higher education. These three institutions are part of a body of HBCUs that was established in the 18th and 19th centuries to educate blacks and produced more professionals than any other institution of higher learning. Today these colleges are the only option for the underserved and provide a place of encouragement and preparedness for students of all races who would not otherwise earn a college education.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Seminarian Conference

The Annual Seminarian Conference is convened by the four Ethnic Missioners in collaboration with Virginia Theological Seminary and is held over a five-day period. The event gathers seminarians of color for fellowship and to learn from experienced clergy about the praxis of ministry. Conversations are focused on particular topics that help to prepare seminarians for life in the parish after seminary. This conference format evolved from the Conference for the Organization of Black Episcopal Seminarians (OBES) and provides the opportunity for the various groups to meet and discuss issues within their particular communities.

Training Trainers

In order to expand and share more widely the ministry of the Ethnic Offices and to develop supporting networks, Train the Trainers meetings have been implemented; the first was held December 12-15, 2011. Approximately 26 participants from the four ethnic communities met at the Los Angeles diocesan office for the training, which included leadership and facilitation skills, conversations on church structure and polity, utilizing technologies in ministry, and group dynamics. Training will be grounded in the Baptismal Covenant, Lifelong Christian Formation, and the Five Marks of Mission. Subsequent meetings for the first group will focus on content relating to the work of each office as orientation begins for training new groups.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

SOUL Conference

The Spiritual Opportunity to Unite and Learn (SOUL) Conference is an annual event that runs from four to five days and provides a protective space for youth and young adults from across the church to meet and grow together in relationship with one another and Christ. The event is marked by worship, fellowship, and workshops, and it engages participants in Bible study and spiritual formation, and leadership skills development, including problem solving and conflict management, team building, and group dynamics.

Black Clergy Leadership Institute (BCLI)

The Black Clergy Leadership Institute was established clergy development in areas not typically addressed in seminary. Topics include conflict management, problem solving, group dynamics, skills for congregation development, meeting planning, and budget and finance.

Sudanese Leadership Institute for Learning and Advancement

The Sudanese Leadership Ministry was established to fully welcome the Sudanese communities in more than 40 dioceses in The Episcopal Church and to engage them in ongoing conversation for leadership development. They strive to nurture their children, youth, and young adults in language, culture, and spirituality as they work toward building up their communities with emphasis on women and continuing undergraduate as well as theological education. The Sudanese leadership is eager to establish congregations to continue to celebrate and worship in their faith traditions. They welcome others to share in their culture, and remain open to participating with faith communities outside of their culture.

Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) Training

ABCD Training is offered in collaboration with the Office of Social and Economic Justice to build upon the strengths of local residents to increase their capacity for community development.

RESOURCES

Rising Stars Experience (RISE)

Zero-tolerance policies in public schools across the nation directly and indirectly feed children and youth into the school-to-prison pipeline as schools rely on suspensions, expulsions, summonses, and arrests to handle disciplinary problems such as bringing cell phones to school, smoking cigarettes, and skipping classes. The Rising Stars Experience (RISE) will provide a supportive, learning environment for young people in which they will interact with caring adult professionals in mentoring relationships. Children and youth will be equipped with the holistic skills needed to become confident and responsible leaders.

Rites of Passage

The Rites of Passage resource will be used for a culminating event to mark the transition of students participating in the Rising Stars Experience to the next level of their lives. The Rites of Passage will be made available to dioceses and congregations for their consideration and implementation.

Lifelong Christian Faith Formation

This companion resource was developed from data gathered from youth and young adult focus groups for use with existing Christian formation materials.

Values to Live By

This evangelistic tool is designed especially for young people on their journey through life.

Devotions on the Go

This collection of daily devotions from the Book of Common Prayer is made available for people on the go.

Networks for Mission

The Office of Black Ministries works with a network of colleagues who meet in person periodically and more frequently for WebEx meetings for discussion, planning, and implementation of initiatives to promote the ministry for and among congregations and their leaders. Networks include: the Advisory Council; Mission Strategy Team; New Visions Initiative for Congregational Renewal and Vitality; Recruitment, Training & Development Committee; Strategic Planning Meeting; Resource Teams; Train the Trainers; Sudanese Emmaus Planning Group; consultants, mentors and DFMS staff; and ecumenical partners.



We embrace the mission to **L*E*A*D**

Leverage our leadership skills for ministry in the whole church

Establish initiatives for growth and development among all segments of the church

Advocate for increased diversity in every aspect of church work for lay persons, youth, young adults, and ordained persons, and for social justice for all

Develop programming and resources to provide a broader focus for mission and ministry among communities of faith

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