

# **Faith Development Initiative**

## **2013 Mid-Winter Board Meeting Report**

### **January 2013**

Our Faith Based Development Initiative, (FBDI) primarily through the national Directors has continued its efforts in putting the foundational building blocks together in three specific areas: mobilization, creation and identification.

**Creation-** Our Faith Based Development Initiative has worked to create a number of new and innovative opportunities of service on behalf of our God, our President and our beloved Convention. These are solemn opportunities for service and this is the time for service minded people; people who have a heart for God and a heart to serve others to let Regional Vice Presidents, National Directors and State Presidents know of their desire to serve that they might be considered for what is proving to be an exciting program of ministry.

Through the vision of our President, as we engage this National Structure, these new opportunities will ensure our participation at the most appropriate levels of communications nationally, locally and at all levels in between. Our abilities through this structure should create a communicative synergy that should prove to be a model for both internal participants and external witnesses alike. Our model is an all inclusive model but all can only be included in all as all decides to participate.

On Wednesday morning during the Parent Body Session, because of our Military Veterans, tremendous sacrifice for the cause of freedom, we invited one of our strategic partners, the Department of Veterans Affairs to address us, and address us they did. They informed us of benefits that all our veterans should be taking advantage of today. After the presentation the Veterans and wives of Veterans went to the V.A.'s booth in record numbers. Representatives of the V.A. said that the results of our gathering were the best results they had achieved in all of the meetings they had attended. Our experience thus far has been that most veterans particularly our constituents are either not aware of their benefits or they simply don't know how to access their benefits for their good. Representatives from the VA were present throughout the week. They provided information and assisted with our Veterans' concerns including applying for benefits.

An informed constituent is the best constituent. Our intent is to provide a platform for at least one of our strategic partners to inform our constituents in every one of our major settings.

**Mobilization-** Our National Directors have continued to build a national structure by mobilizing state convention participation through state presidents, their state directors and district directors, in an effort to communicate pertinent information that will enable their constituents to be better informed. Informed people are better equipped to participate in processes that could benefit them and the people they serve. As the largest African American denominational body in the Western Hemisphere, no longer are we settling for reactionary status, we are strategically mobilizing for proactionary status. Our desire is to become the “Information Resource Reservoirs” for our constituent body. Our President, our National Directors, our Regional Vice Presidents or someone else representing NBCUSA will be informed by policy makers either before final decisions are made or soon thereafter. The decision making table is where we belong and the decision making table is where our mobilizing actions demand us to be.

**Identification-** The FBDI is charged with the responsibility of identifying, exploring and promoting both public and private partnership opportunities. Let me be clear, in this initiative we will not chase dollars. With our mobilizing effort and with your cooperation, you can rest assured the funding opportunities will chase us. Our efforts will be such that interested entities will seek our ability to create, mobilize and identify, resolve and results in a timely manner. This very fact has already been proven with our Foundation, the National USA Foundation, Inc. (NUFI) having received our very first grant award.

The award is a pilot program dealing with academic institutions in researching health disparities within the African American Community. We are presently engaged with churches in the cities of Birmingham, Montgomery and Selma Alabama. This initial grant was discussed in detail during the Wednesday training session.

Additionally NUFI has established a Memorandum of understanding with the Historically Black Colleges and Universities Coalition (HBCU Coalition) for the purpose of assisting in building healthy and sustainable communities while achieving lasting economic viability. The Coalition will among other things provide support for various community development activities as a part of a pilot project in community development.

It will provide technical assistance and training, when appropriate, for selected churches to assist in the development of strategies aimed at strengthening the community.

It will provide consultant support and technical assistance for the pilot projects.

It will identify and explore resources that will support the pilot project.

Our liaison and contact for the M. O. U. is Dr. Willie Gable, Jr., Chairman of Housing and Economic Development Commission.

We encourage all State Presidents to engage your State Convention in establishing a 501-c (3) Community Development Corporation and encourage all your churches to do the same that we might work collaboratively on these efforts.

On behalf of the National USA Foundation, Incorporated you can anticipate a website which will be developed along with promotional literature to be produced in the near future.

As information, I delight in presenting a new face as a National Director, Dr. Ivory Lyles, member of the First Baptist Church of North Little Rock of Little Rock, Arkansas, responsible for being our liaison and expert assigned to the Department of Agriculture. Additionally Rev. Karen Taylor, Assistant to the Pastor at Mount Airy Baptist Church in Washington, D.C. will assist this Chairman in his work as a Special Assistant to the Chair. As information these are the people leading this unprecedented effort in the NBCUSA, Inc. Great things are happening in the National Baptist Convention USA, Inc. Come on be a part.

Respectfully and Humbly Submitted in Solidarity with the Savior

Dr. L. B. West

Chairman, Board of Directors