



# Work Your Faith: Reclaiming Liberation and Salvation in the Black Church

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# Lessons from James 2

Favoritism is Forbidden  
(Romans 2:11, Gal 3:28)

Church is still divided

Faith without action is dead

Faith where belief is the only action

# Womanist scholar Kelly Brown Douglass

White  
slaveholding  
Christianity-  
The White  
Christ she  
says allowed  
for three things

- The justification of slavery
- Christians to be slaves
- The compatibility of Christianity with the extreme cruelty of slavery.

## Dr. Raphael Warnock's: The Divided Mind of Black Church Theology, Piety & Public Witness

Historically the faith of the black church has been shaped and by two complementary yet competing sensibilities revivalist piety and radical protests moreover this tension plays out in the divided mind of the black church in the dialogue between black pastors and black theologians about the churches essential mission (pg. 13)

# Dr. Raphael Warnock's: The Divided Mind of Black Church Theology, Piety & Public Witness

Black Church Resistance: Of the American churches the black churches offered the longest and most radical and sustained response to racism (pg. 14) . 1. The Invisible institution, 2. The formation of the liberationist faith (the black church movement. 3. Church led liberationist movement (Civil rights movement) 4. The formation of Black Theology 5. Integration: The flowering a self-critical liberationist community. Black theologians and pastors committed to new risk-taking dialogue, for challenging together structures of systemic sin and injustice in the social order and in the churches and developing together public and pastoral theology of liberation, healing, and wholeness. (pg. 20)

# Facts: Black Church

Landowning asset of black people

Largest institutional site of black-led leadership

Acted as “liminal space” from slavery to ongoing fight for liberation

A spiritual resource to soothe our suffering and supplant a hopeful future

A site of production and protection of black joy, culture, music, rhetoric, and justice movements

# Dr. Brianna Parker's, "I Still Believe in the Black Church"

71% of black adults believe faith plays an important role in their lives (pg. 18)

Only 15% of black adults and 22% of black churchgoers believe the church to be liberating (pg. 24)

The community generally believes the black church's priority is to teach the bible, provide spiritual guidance, and address poverty issues. The church has become responsible for transforming the spirit and not the world, accepting what comes, and responding within its capacity for service.

75% of black churchgoers and 73% of the general public believed they were politically powerless. (pg. 37)

# Risk-Taking Dialogue

- Has your church become responsible for transforming the spirit and not the world? Where does your church fall on the continuum of piety and radical protest?
- Dr. Brianna Parker survey indicates most people do not experience our churches in the convocation as liberating, name at least two reasons why?
- In the survey 75% of black church goers, believed they are politically powerless drawing from your experiences what are factors that make people feel this way?

## Arenas of Change



Electoral



Legislative



Judicial



Administrative



Cultural



Corporate



Changing States lays out six decision-making arenas as target areas for organizing efforts to push, pass, and protect progressive policies and systemic change. These include the electoral, legislative, judicial, administrative, cultural, and corporate arenas. Together these define the full terrain where ideas, policies, and power are contested—and this tool is designed to help facilitate an ongoing understanding of what opportunities exist to shift power in each arena.

Missouri organizations' ability to successfully contest for power in these arenas are developed by gradually increasing sophistication in two competencies:

**One, they must create a clear analysis about the power structure and key actors that pull the levers in that arena.** This is built through ongoing research and a nuanced understanding of alliances, relationships, and influential players.

**Second, they must develop the ability to deploy multi-layered strategies that disrupt the current power structure and create progressive alternatives.**

# Black Diaspora Historical Wins & Lessons

- The Haitian Revolution: 1791-1804 Haitian people who were enslaved through a series of conflicts became *the first country to be founded* by former enslaved people.
- The ANC South African Anti-Apartheid Movement (1912- 1992) first black head of state and the first elected in a fully representative democratic election in 1994.
- The Civil Rights Movement (1954-1968) Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, Fair Housing Act 1968.
- Black Panther Movement (1966-1980), 10-Point Plan, Economic Exploitation and Abolition of Capitalism as the roots of oppression.
- Black Lives Matter Movement(2013-Present) Abolition of Prison Industrial Complex, Defund the Police, Police Brutality, Black Futures, Black Healers Network.

# Black Diaspora Historical Wins & Lessons

## Targets

- France and Britian
- Minority ruling class Afrikaner
- Federal Branch: President and Congress
- State Legislature
- Government Leaders/Police

## Tactics

- Rebellion demanding representation, Abolition of Slavery, Collaboration with free people of color, Religion: Vodou, Raids
- Economic Boycotts
- Non-Violent Demonstrations
- Armed action on state officials, Survival Programs/Mutual Aid Organizing Local and International Chapters decentralized leadership, imagery and symbols
- Mass Demonstrations, Organizing Local and Regional Chapters decentralized leadership, Faith Leadership

# Power Analysis Practice



In what arena is there an opportunity in your community to shift power?



Who are your opponents, allies, and targets?



What could the community do (tactics) to disrupt the current power structure in the arena you selected?



What is the black radical imagination for this arena once power has been transferred to the community?



# Mission

The Center for Lived Faith and Organizing exists to educate, train and connect leaders with local and regional partners for a long and sustainable ministry in organizing and justice work.





# Certificate for Social Transformation and Organizing: Obra

What is the Certificate for Organizing and Social Transformation: Issued after a person takes 5 seminars, 5 hours per seminar for a total cost of \$550, supports leaders and congregations to social justice ministrieS or deepen their social justice impact.

- Spanish only track
- Self-Paced
- Accesible Format
- Skills Based
- Eligible for CEU's

# Who Should Come to the CFLO?

- Leaders with lots of ideas about change and justice but no plan of execution
- Leaders who care about justice but have not committed to action
- Leaders who are stuck in charity and social service ministries and want more impact
- Faith leaders and activists who have become disconnected from their faith in their movement work

# Thank You!

Questions? Email: [Jshamell@eden.edu](mailto:Jshamell@eden.edu)

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