

# Introduction to Faith-Based/Rooted Organizing



National  
**Benevolent**  
Association  
CALLED TOGETHER | CALLED TO CARE

# Presenters

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# Objectives

- Discuss the challenges and gifts faith communities possess
- Explore the key shifts to move from serving your community to organizing with your community
- Introduce the basic concepts of faith-based/rooted organizing
- Develop an action plan for next steps

# Clarion Call

"And now the cry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them, so now go I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt". Exodus 3:9-10

"Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow". Isaiah 1:17

"Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven". Matthew 6:10

# Challenges

- Disconnected from the communities we live
- Community needs we meet are unending
- Feel powerless in the face of complex issues

# Gifts

- Mitigate the effects of poverty and racism
- Still provide "a" compass of moral authority
- Possess clear values, vision and equity

# Moving from Service to Systems

Must hear God's call for historical liberation

Must employ racial equity lens

Most effected must be at the center of the work

Commit to long term solutions vs. short term crisis

Require consistent investment for sustainability

Must take a stand on a "controversial" issue

# Question

**What key shift do you or your organization need to make?**

**What is your biggest challenge and gift to organizing?**



# What is a FB/RCO?

- A call from the Spirit of God to join God's work in confronting institutional sin, by demanding systemic, economic, and political change therefore creating a more just world.
- A people who sense their values of dignity and equity have been violated and express this violation in the public square thru direct action.



# Organizing Continuum

Protest

Mobilization

Organizing



# Steps to create a FBCO

- 1) Bring key leaders together with local organizers
- 2) Form a core group with community neighbors
- 3) Get the core group trained
- 4) Discern & research the changes you want to see
- 5) Create a strategic campaign and win
- 6) Celebrate and move to next issue or campaign

# Campaign Type

Legislation

Accountability/Oversight

Local, State, National

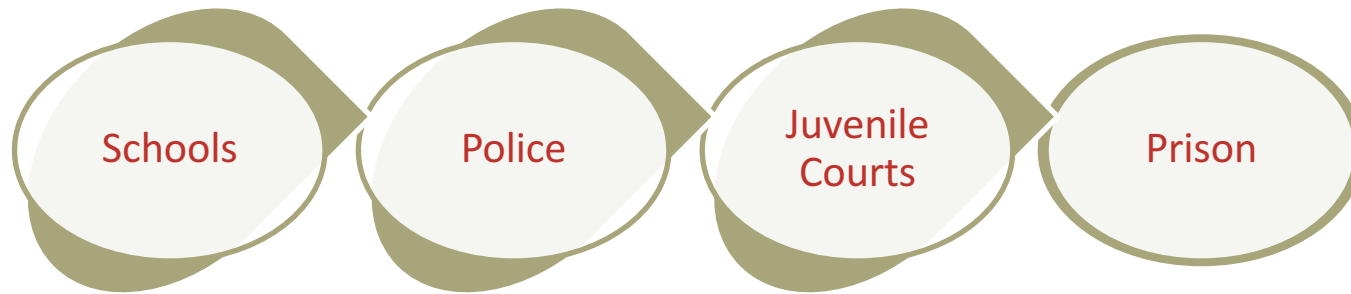
System Focused

Neighborhood Focused

Structural Reforms

Ballot Initiatives

# School to Prison Pipeline



## MCU Break The Pipeline Model



- **PreK-3 Grade Suspensions**

- **MOU's**

- **Safe Schools Act**

- Civilian Oversight Board
- Body Cameras
- Fair & Impartial Policing Act

- Raise the Age
- Due Process
- Family Action Group

**2017 Issue Cuts**

# Major Networks

**Black Lives Matter (BLM)** : 38 Chapters in 20 states.

**Direct Action and Research Training Center (DART)** : 20 organizations in six states, primarily in the Midwest and FL, based in Miami.

**Gamaliel Foundation** : 60 affiliates in 21 states, based in Chicago, IL.  
(Barack Obama worked as a community organizer with this group)

**Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF)**: 57 affiliates in 21 states, based in Chicago.

**People Improving Communities Through Organizing (PICO)** : 50 Federations in 17 states based in Oakland, CA. Also works in rural areas.

# Questions

**What kind of organizing campaigns have you worked on or heard of in your community?**



# Faith-Rooted Organizing



# Importance of multi-sectoral organizing





# Faith-Rooted Organizing

- Faith-rooted Organizing = organizing as if God is real - from motivation to methodology
- Faith-Rooted Organizing:
- Completely guided and shaped by faith
- Designed to enable people of faith to contribute our unique gifts to the broader movement for justice
- Example: Engaging congregations in advocacy vs. calling government to its divine purpose

# Components of Organizing

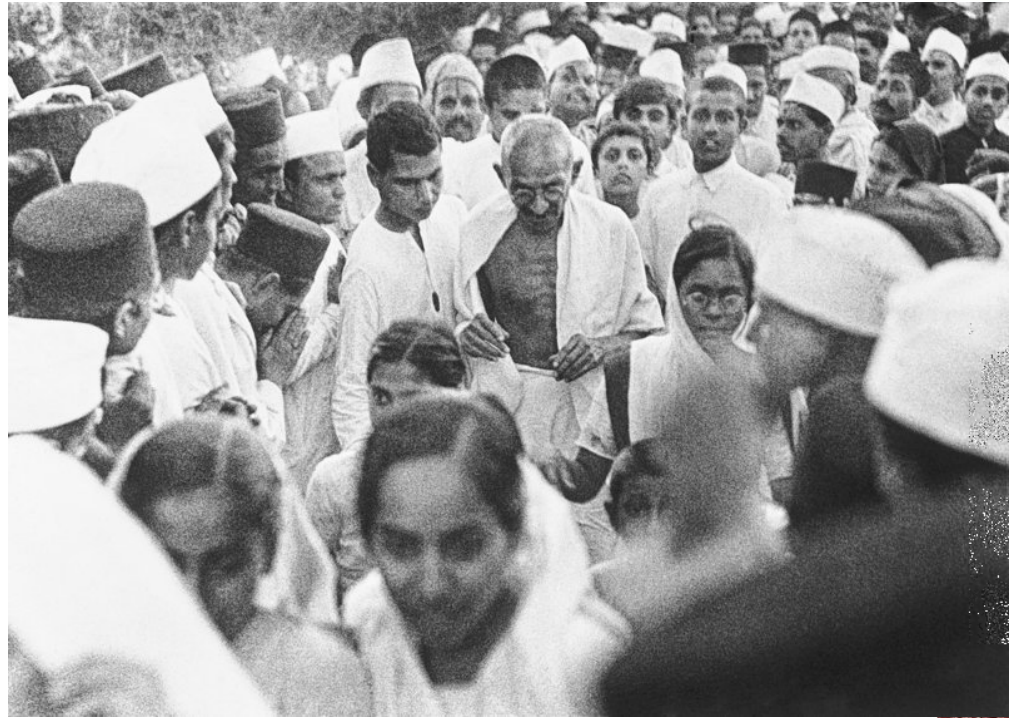
- Goals
- Analysis
- Strategies
- Recruitment
- Leadership Development
- Leadership Sustaining



# GOALS

**"Pure goals can never justify impure or violent action...They say the means are, after all, just means. I would say, means are, after all, everything. As the means, so the end....If we take care of the means, we are bound to reach the end sooner or later."**

**-Mohandas K. Gandhi**



# Strategies: Serpent Power

1. Force of law, Wealth, Influence, Numbers
2. Self-Interest and the Negotiation of Interests
3. Constituency, Connections and Case
4. Direct Communication, Indirect Communication and Escalation (Luke 18)
5. Letters, calls, visits, hearings, OpEds, letters to the editor, direct action

# Strategies: Dove Power

*If all we use is Serpent Power, we have lost our unique call and contribution as people of faith.*

--Rev. Alexia Salvatierra

It means honoring the reality of [God] in each of us and the transforming work of the Holy Spirit.

Believing in and making space for the power of love and truth

# Wise as Serpents: Innocent as Doves

- “The thirteenth rule: Pick the target, freeze it, personalize it and polarize it.” (Alinsky)
- “Non-violent resistance is not for cowards. It is not a quiet, passive acceptance of evil. One is passive and non-violent physically, but very active spiritually, always seeking ways to persuade the opponent of advantages to the way of love, cooperation, and peace....The goal is not to defeat or humiliate the opponent but rather to win him or her over to understanding new ways to create cooperation and community.” (Gandhi)

# Dove Power

## Prayer

Pastoral Support - Chaplaincy on the field of the battle for justice - en-couragement

## Prophetic Call

Re-member the Poor

Dreams and Visions

Exposing and Combatting Lies

Rituals; Symbolic resources (a means of doing the above)



# Prophetic Call: Rituals & Symbolic Resources





# Action Planning

1. Prayerfully discern your own capacity and commitment level: volunteer, core member, leader.
2. Identify a major network organizing in your area: go to a meeting.
3. Build relationships with neighbor's and partners: schedule one-on-one meetings.
4. Decide if you can join or if you must build.



# QUESTIONS