



The Pastor, The Pew, and Political Realities

RT. REVEREND GREGORY G.M. INGRAM, PRESIDING PRELATE

REVEREND DR. JESSICA KENDALL INGRAM, EPISCOPAL SUPERVISOR

REVEREND DR. CHARLES F. BOYER, PRESENTER

Political Realities

- Pastors no longer have the luxury of choosing to be either prophetic or priestly.
- The word politics is from the Greek and means, "*affairs of the cities.*"
 - Politics are all activities around decision making in and about groups regarding power and resources.
 - Systemic racism is administered, governed, and maintained through public policy.
 - Our political reality has always been a matter of life or death.
- We as a political constituency must advocate for our most vulnerable, care for one another, and give future generations advantage as a body politic of Christ.
- Political engagement and the African Methodist Episcopal Church are inextricably linked.
 - Richard Newman rightly describes Bishop Richard Allen as a "*Black founder who established Black institutions and engaged in Black politics.*"
 - Bishop Henry McNeal Turner worked politically to influence the Civil War effort and Reconstruction.
 - Bishop Reverdy Ransom helped launch the NAACP and used a Black social gospel politically to develop major ministries and social programs that fed and educated people

Reimagining the Pastor as a Political Force

- Pastoring is not only guiding and caring; it is also protecting and advocating.
- Like any politician, the pastor has a constituency, which is the immediate congregation and surrounding community.
- It is the pastor's responsibility to challenge politicians to do right by the people.
- Imagine pastors intentionally organized around shared agendas to hold local politicians to account.

Reimagining the Pew as a Political Force

- Black faith, Black sacred space and Black political power are linked.
- Movement building from the pews is a deep socio-spiritual engagement. Evangelism and discipleship understood in this context is not only personal piety but also social sanctification through civic engagement.
 - Fredrick Douglas famously said, “I prayed for freedom for twenty years but received no answer until I prayed with my legs.”
- Congregations and communities are constituencies powerfully socially located by Divine providence.
- The lunch counter sit-ins, bus boycotts, and marches included scores of congregations focused on change.

Pastor and Pew Working Together to Transform Political Reality

- We must embrace the power of pastors and laity strategically advocating for a divine racially just agenda inside and outside the halls of power.
- In our official capacity as clergy and congregations, we cannot be politically partisan, but our lives depend on us being political.

Research, Preach, Advocate!

- Research
 - Incarceration
 - <https://www.sentencingproject.org/publications/color-of-justice-racial-and-ethnic-disparity-in-state-prisons/>
 - Health
 - <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/usc-brookings-schaeffer-on-health-policy/2020/02/19/there-are-clear-race-based-inequalities-in-health-insurance-and-health-outcomes/>
 - Education
 - <https://edbuild.org/content/23-billion#NY>
 - Racial Wealth Gap
 - <https://prosperitynow.org/blog/infographic-racial-wealth-gap>
- Preach, teach, outreach, and minister about political reality.
 - What does scripture teach us regarding the Gospel's response to oppression?
 - What do our ancestors teach us regarding Black faith's response to what their political realities were?
 - How do our ministries respond, reconcile, and restore those who have been broken by these policies?
- Advocate for a racial justice agenda (District, Annual Conference, Presiding Elder District, Local)
 - <https://sandsj.org/racial-justice-agenda>

**Communicate,
coordinate, consult,
and connect:**

revboyer@bethelwoodburyame.org
revboyer@sandsj.org