



CLERGY STRATEGIC ALLIANCES, LLC

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Partnering with the Faith Community

The Purpose of Outreach:

The purpose of partnerships is to find common areas of interest so that groups can work together to achieve a vision that benefits your organization and the religious community.

Defining faith-religious organizations

1. Houses of Worship vs. Churches
2. Religious Advocacy Organizations
3. Faith Based Community Organizations

Do's and Don'ts

Do - Keep in touch regularly

Don't – Avoid only contacting church when you need an action

Do – Share information

Don't – Avoid only talking about what's in it for the union

Do – Talk about community and the impact the work with have on the community

Don't – Avoid using “us against them” terminology when talking about opposition

Do – Invite clergy to attend Labor related meetings and events

Don't – Avoid only inviting clergy with name recognition or only those with large churches

Do – Be inclusive and make sure that you work with a very diverse group of clergy

Don't – Avoid only having members of one religion or race represented

Do – Use the term Houses of Worship, it's more inclusive

Effective Outreach methods:

Cast a vision for what change and success looks like:

Identifying your Target Audience:

Which religious communities are thriving and growing and could serve as potential partners. *The goal is to make sure that your outreach is diverse and inclusive of every aspect of the community represented.*

Identifying Clergy:

Attend weekly ministerial meetings. These occur in most cities and typically on Monday. These meeting allow you to hear what the clergy are working on, what they are planning, who shows up consistently and is committed to the group, who holds power either by title or prestige in the community, what they oppose and what they support.



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Research Clergy:

Not only as it relates to where they stand on public education but also to know what they have been doing over the years in the community.

Getting different communities of faith to work together:

The key to getting clergy of different faith and belief systems to work together is focusing on a cause they all agree on. Where they disagree based on religious belief does not have to be a part of the discussion it is not relevant to achieving the goals related to a common interest.

Constant Contact:

1. News letters
2. E-alerts
3. Church inserts
4. Invitations to events and meetings

Religious Affiliation:

Black Church
Mainline Protestant
Evangelical
Pentecostal
Non-Denominational
Jewish
Muslim

Titles:

Pastor
Imam
Priest
Rabbi

Denominations:

National Baptist
American Baptist
National Association of Evangelicals
United Methodist Church
Church of God In Christ
Presbyterian
Evangelical Lutheran Church
Progressive Baptist
Unitarian Universalist



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Religious Advocacy Organizations:

Gamaliel

PECO

Industrial Areas Foundation

Sojourners/Call to Renewal

National Action Network

Esperanza

National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference



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Organizing for Justice

Through this training we will connect faith and social justice issues in a manner that will allow you to transform the community in which you live. Church history teaches us that social justice is best brought out by committed people of faith. Much of the current organizing and activism follows a market model in which we are “passive consumers of an activist opportunity.” But the values and organizing tradition of the Church calls us all to become agents of social change through the fellowship in our local Christian community, not just consumers or clients of non religious organizations.

Building your Foundation: The Task and Overview

Ezekiel 22:29-30

In order to build a solid foundation the ministry needs to address 3 interdependent topics **(1) Social Context** **(2) Congregational Identity** **(3) Congregational Buy-in:**

1. Your social context:

Place matters. Where are you and who are the people around the church? Easier to advocate against societal forces that are living right outside your door. It is easier to encourage people to become involved in advocating for change when they can see the effect that doing nothing has had, and will continue to have on these injustices.

(The place and people around the church)

Context doesn't determine your calling but it provides the framework of social forces, lifestyles, and community resources in which your social justice efforts takes place. It can help determine the broader systemic forces at work, and how best to address them.

2. Congregational Identity: this could be expanded-this represents our starting point and what will differentiate this training module from so many of the others that are out there.

The unique character of the faith, history, and personality of the church. The congregational identity reflects the core values and commitments that shape your church and guide its response to the challenges of change.

3 Sources that shape identity:

1. Scripture: What is your theological foundation for social justice ministry (which Scriptures do you use to support your Biblical understanding of the church and social justice)? How is the theological foundation articulated to the congregations?
 - ❖ Mark 12:30-31
 - ❖ Matthew 25:40
 - ❖ Luke 4:18-19
2. Tradition/history
 - ❖ What is in your church's history compels you to act for social justice in your community?
 - ❖ What statement has your faith leadership made regarding current-day social needs and communal responsibility?



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3. Experience

- ❖ Tell about two or three individuals in your church's history who were called to seek liberation for others.

3. Congregational Buy-In:

To gain the support of your church, the social justice work should touch the aspects of congregational concern and speak the language of congregational compassion. **It's difficult to find support if the effort conflicts with the kind of community the members believe themselves to be; however, this doesn't mean that a congregation cannot be challenged to examine or re-examine how they are living out their call to be the Body of Christ in the world.** Congregational identity includes the belief and commitments that hold a congregation together, motivate its members, and make it distinctive for others.

Within the congregational identity are the criteria for what is acceptable and the source of energy for the ministry.

Organization and Congregational Support:

This is the leaders and resources that give your ministry the capacity to act—to respond to your context in ways consistent with your identity.

3 Things need to happen for your congregations to support the ministry:

1. Members of the congregation must see the community and the social justice issue as their own “turf/territory,” their responsibility, and accept the need for the work you target (social context).
2. Members must respond to this need as a natural and significant part of their Christian commitment (Identity).
3. Members must have the managerial capacity to respond to that need in a way that can make a difference in people's lives (Organization)

JUSTICE and JUST GENEROCITY-

Justice: addresses the systems that perpetuate cycles of inequity and injustice, and raise particular institutions or policies that need to be changed in order to tackle social injustice.

Systemic change requires making elected officials and institutions more accountable to our values, needs, and interests. What would it look like if our government prioritized the needs of the least of these in every policy decision?

1. Education Reform
2. Equal Rights
3. Political Accountability-what does this look like
4. Voter Registration-this is a means toward achieving systemic change

Just Generosity: Addresses the immediate needs of those affected by social injustice.

1. Soup Kitchen
2. Food pantry
3. Shelter
4. Elderly and Educational enrichment for children



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Begin with three critical questions about any social justice issue around which you'd like to organize:

1. What's the Issue?
 2. Who does it Impact?
 3. What can you do about it?
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1. What's the Issue?
 - List the top three social justice issues in the community
 - Are these needs related in any way? Is one issue the direct result of another?
 - Are all the issues symptoms of a larger overriding issue? (ie. poverty, economic inequality, lack of investment in our communities, etc.)
 2. Who does it impact?
 - Are the members of your church directly impacted by the issue? *NOTE: Often the problem with engaging people in minority faith communities is that there is not a direct understanding of how an issue impacts people – this connection needs to be made.* In what way? Is the impact obvious, or is education needed to impart the urgency of mobilizing around this issue?
 - If the issues does not directly impact the people in your congregations then who does it impact?
 - How can those impacted by the problem wield power to change the situation?
 - If they can't, what is our community's responsibility to empower them and work with them to achieve change?
 - Who benefits from the oppression of your community because of this issue (ie, what do they have to gain or lose and what do you have to gain or lose)?
 - Why do you care?
 3. What can you do about it? Success requires commitment and vision. **Where there is no vision the people perish. A mission describes activities but a vision describes a final destination.** Structure your efforts to work in collaboration with other organizations when possible. Your goal should not be simply to make a statement but to bring about tangible change. **The most important question we have to answer is "what will life be life for people in our community if we are successful?" or "We will know we have been successful when we see _____."** That's vision.
 - What is your capacity to bring about positive change? This should also assess resources, both human, financial, etc.
 - What are the skills that you and others in your community/congregation possess that will have an impact on the problem?
 - How many people can you mobilize to create your core team; what positions need to be filled?
 - How long will it take you to do something about it? What steps will you take?
 - Who has the power to change the cause of your pain, grievance, or injustice? How do you influence with and over that person or set of persons?
 - What are your weaknesses?
 - What are your strengths?
 - Do you have any personal life experiences that will help others understand why you are interested in helping bring about change? What's your story?



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Start with the Base: A Committed group of Concerned Christians

Isaiah 58

How your church organizes must be unique to your congregations own character and compelling to your members.

Why is your church involved in organizing for justice? If it has not been in the past, what has brought about their new interest?

1. Responding to the needs of families and individuals in the community
2. Changes in the church neighborhood
3. Responding to the members of your community
4. Recruit new church members and expand the reach of your congregation in the community
5. A mixture of reasons (pain, hardship, loss, unemployment, homeless children)

“It hurts more when you know their names.”

- ❖ The members of the ministry must be willing to make it a priority in their lives.
- ❖ The members of the ministry must feel called to this ministry.
- ❖ The members of the ministry must be willing to look beyond the particulars of the immediate needs to see the larger systemic injustices at work.

6 STEPS TO PREPARING FOR MOBILIZATION

Gathering information on your community:

The first thing you need to do is to gather information about your community.

Focus on place (define the boundaries of your community) and then people (describe the people).

STEP ONE: Define your community

1. Chart the physical boundaries
 2. Identify the anchor institutions
 3. Look for gathering places
- ❖ What is the one social-economic feature in your community that has the greatest impact on a majority of residents? Does this have an impact on your congregation? If so, how?
 - ❖ How would you describe your community to a stranger?

Anchor Institutions: Anchor institutions serve as basis and sources of power for decision making in the community.

places where social capital is built:

1. Schools
2. Hospitals
3. Prisons
4. Military bases
5. Recreational facilities

Places where decisions are made:

1. City hall
2. Chamber of commerce
3. Courthouses



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Gathering places: Places where people gather for economic, social, political, and religious activities.

1. Parks
2. Schools
3. Other churches and houses of worship (ie. other religions)
4. Local businesses
5. Service Clubs
6. Bars
7. Street corners

STEP TWO: Identify the People

- ❖ Observe populations and lifestyles
- ❖ Note historical changes and current trends
- ❖ Review statistical summaries (If possible, get the demographic data and trends from organizations that gather this data.)
- ❖ Describe the newcomers in the community. Are these persons in need and/or persons with advantages and resources? In what way are newcomers similar to or different from long-standing residents?

Who are the people in your church's community?

1. Racial, ethnicity, cultural history in the community
2. Education, employment, and income
3. Age, gender, family size

The best way to build relationships with others in the surrounding community is to create a space and a time for people to share their life's story. This includes sharing experiences in living, working, struggling, suffering, and celebrating with people around them.

STEP THREE: Find the "Invisible" People. Every community has people who are ignored, marginalized, or simply out of sight. By identifying these groups, your committee/ministry and the congregation become more sensitive to a range of conditions in your community. **You may also discover forms of alienation, injustice, and oppression perpetuated by community neighbors and even church members.** You may begin to see failures in institutions that are trusted and well known.

- ❖ Who are the invisible people? Where do they live? What do they do? Why do they remain "invisible"?

STEP FOUR: Analyze the Intangible Forces. Identify the social, economic, political, and religious forces operating in your church's community. These forces may be intangible, but they are very real. In the effect that they have on people's lives. These include the incentives and barriers working in the lives of the people you are trying to reach and engage in your work.

STEP FIVE: Listen to Your Neighbors. Initiate conversations with a wide variety of people from every segment of neighborhood life. This is where you learn more facts about those around you.

Other people in the community will begin to see the church as a concerned neighborhood institution. The people you contact begin to see the church as a potential partner in the areas of shared concern. They will



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treat the church differently and include the church in community meetings it has not been invited to in the past. Members of the ministry begin to see themselves differently and develop a higher level of self confidence.

STEP SIX: Choose your focus of Ministry. This depends on finding a comfortable fit between your social context and your congregational identity. Agree on a brief statement of focus for your ministry. Articulate your goal(s) in such a way that it can win the buy-in of a much larger group. Bring your ministry into focus with just enough detail to provide the bases for action. Set priorities and determine which issues will require more time, resources and outside support from existing organizations. Find out if other organizations are working on the same issue and seek partnerships.

Historical Changes and Current Trends: What are the changes in the past five years and what do you see for the future? History gives insight into the causes for oppressive conditions; current trends help identify the unfolding issues.

**Share your finding with the congregation.*

Steps in the Advocacy Process

Isaiah 10:1-2

- i. Prioritize an issue relevant to your community.
- ii. Organize meeting to discuss the issue, what can be done and who has the ability to do it.
- iii. Set-up and e-mail list and telephone network
- iv. Determine how you will communicate with policy makers such as testimony before city council, letter writing campaigns or petitions, demonstrations or rallies.
- v. Educate the members of your community on the issue and what you are doing to address the problem.



3 Steps to Sustainability & Infrastructure

STEP 1: Build an Organization: As you build a justice ministry you will

Confront 4 challenges:

1. Management Style: Finding Authority for social ministry
2. Group expectations: Planning together, delegating responsibility
3. Project partnerships: Developing allies in ministry
4. Sharing justice ministry with those in need: Including consumers in basic decisions.

STEP 2: Develop Resources to Support Your Efforts:

3 Resources:

1. Volunteers: Finding and keeping the right people
2. Fund Raising: Overcoming reluctance to ask for money
3. Project Staff: Shaping your most important decisions.

STEP 3: Clarify the Purpose of Your Organizing: You must be able to interpret your goals clearly and quickly to other people. The greatest misunderstanding is between organizing that respond to the needs of individuals, and those that challenge ineffective and destructive institutions:

- ❖ Service/Just Generosity Ministries: Acting with Christian compassion
- ❖ Justice Ministries: Challenging dysfunctional systems

Issues to be addressed when organizing for justice:

- ❖ What will you do and how will you do it?
- ❖ When will you do it? What is your schedule for implementation?
- ❖ When will you operate (daily, weekly, etc)?
- ❖ Who are the partner's churches and agencies working with you?
- ❖ Who will manage the organizing? Who will be your decision making group?
- ❖ Who will make decisions?
- ❖ What are legal issues that need to be considered when before starting your ministry?
- ❖ What are your plans for keeping records?

Personnel:

Identify the staff you will need (both paid and volunteer), to get the ministry started. Describe the staff you will need to keep it running over time. What needs and positions will remain constant over time? What positions will phase out, and what new ones will arise?

Volunteers are often interested in 3 broad areas:

1. Hands-on work of ministry
2. Support of the ministry
3. Advocacy for changes in social structures that affect people's lives.

Issues that need to be considered in working with paid and volunteer staff:

1. How will you recruit people to fill the positions



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- ❖ How will you supervise the staff person?
- ❖ What volunteer positions will you have?
- ❖ Who will supervise the volunteers? How will you recruit volunteers from the congregations and the community/population that you seek to serve?
- ❖ What legal issues or requirements, if any, are there that relate to your use of paid or volunteer staff? How will they be addressed?
- ❖ What records will you need to keep related to your paid staff and volunteer staff? Who will keep those records and how?

Facilities and planning ahead:

Describe the facilities you expect to need over the long haul. Will your starting facility remain adequate as you grow? How do you foresee your needs changing, how do you expect to meet those changing needs?

Group Expectations: Planning together, Working Separately

Some groups excel in vision but never get around to the task, while others generate so many tasks that they lose the vision. To avoid this, clearly state your vision for ministry and the steps it will take to reach your goals. The more clearly you articulate the dream, the easier it is to define the tasks that need to be done and agree on who will do them.

Partnerships:

The challenge of partnerships is to expand your vision with new resources, without reducing your congregation and surrounding community's sense of ownership and commitment to the ministry program.

Sharing In Social Justice:

We engage in social justice with people, not for them. This prevents an "us" helping "them" hierarchical model. The only real experts on the needs and emotions of the people you are trying to reach are the people themselves. You can recruit volunteers and trainers from among the people you are trying to help and from those who have benefited from previous social justice efforts. In whatever way works best for you, your organizing will be stronger if you empower the recipients and affirm the equality of all participants in building a better community.