



Speak Out Atlanta

**Atlanta Faith
Based Alliance**

Volume 1, Issue 1

October 2007

Formation of LGBT Faith-based Coalition

Some has called this movement prophetic. If that means hearing and obeying the voice of God to accomplish a goal that you know that on your own can't be done, then let that be the reason. This is a prophetic movement and similar groups are springing up in various pockets of America right now! During the last two years there was never a time when I shared this vision with God's servants (Bishop Yvette Flunder, Elders Jim Mitulski and Antonio Jones, Reverends Paul Graetz, Ike Parker, Jay Neely, Kathi Martin, Paul Turner, Renee Dubose, Leevahn Smith all local area ministers) that I did not receive encouragement that such a coalition is definitely needed. I received the same response in sharing this vision with board and committee members of ITLA, committee members of NBJC, HRC and organizational leaders of L.O.V.E. Coalition, LaGender, Inc., etc.

On August 18, 2007 the time was right and several LGBT religious fellowships and independent churches and radically inclusive faith-based

churches and organizations all came together. We discussed forming a grassroots coalition working together for the good of the LGBTQQI community. The initial Speak Out Community Forum was held at Truth Center MCC during its sixth Anniversary celebration with Bishop Yvette Flunder, Senior Pastor of the City of Refuge United Church of Christ based in San Francisco, CA the guest speaker. Its primary purpose was to take dialogue to the next level, strategic plans and actions.

The panel consisted of some of the most prominent voices in the metro-Atlanta area serving the spiritual and human rights needs of the LGBT community. The community in attendance consisted of local LGBT civic organizational leaders, non-Christian allies, political leaders and affirming church leaders. Several representatives presented organizational materials at the resource tables setup for this occasion. This was not only an empowering event but an extremely informative event as well.

To the amazement of all Bishop Flunder and Rev. Elder Mitulski (representing UFMCCs Region 2) announced their plans to form a coalition and set up office in Stone Mountain, GA. They magnanimously offered to house and help fund operation of the administrative office of this faith based coalition within their office suite. Truly that moment captured the spirit of all things working together for the good of those who love God and are called according to God's purpose.

The following resolutions were made at this gathering:

1. It was agreed the time for action is at hand. Therefore a faith based coalition will be formed.
2. It was agreed to create an amalgamated database of alliance members and organizations tracking various community resources.
3. It was agreed to schedule the next strategic planning meeting for November 3, 2007.

Minister Louis Hinton

Inside this issue:

<i>Faith Based Alliance Leaders Speaking Out</i>	2
<i>The Bishops and Elders Council, 2007</i>	3
<i>National Blackout Day, November 2, 2007</i>	3
<i>National Religious Leadership Roundtable</i>	3
<i>Atlanta Faith Base Alliance Meeting, Nov. 3, 2007</i>	4

Atlanta Faith Based Alliance Agenda for Nov. 3, 2007

- Introduction and Opening Prayer – **Bishop Yvette Flunder**
- Naming – **Minister Louis Hinton**
 - Logo
 - Slogan
- Goal Setting – **Reverend Tesie Mandeville**
 - Identify 5 most important goals
 - Selection of top 3 goals
- The Way Forward – **Minister Maressa Pendermon**
 - How to reach our goals
 - What resources do we have and/or need
- Closing – **Bishop Yvette Flunder**
 - Schedule the next meeting.
 - Closing Prayer and Blessing of the Food
- Food and Fellowship 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM

Shaquanda Cotton, Megan Williams, Jena 6, ENDA

What do these four news headlines have in common? They are all examples of gross injustice recently and currently going on in America. Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. from a jail cell in Birmingham penned in his famous letter on April 16, 1963 that "injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere".

They all have two more things in common. Namely, they were all perpetrated under

cover of night and/or behind closed doors. In other words they all fell under the radar of the news media and public awareness. With no one holding our elected officials accountable, it seems that they are not so inclined to uphold the principle of "one nation, indivisible with liberty and justice for all".

This leads us to the conclusion that we must come together as a people and community to

shine the light on the injustice still going on. Clearly we can't rely on the judicial, executive or legislative arms of our government to work on our behalf. Until we hold government accountable the marginalized, alienated and disenfranchised members of the American society will never have justice.

Remember, keep your eyes open and **Speak Out Atlanta**.

Atlanta Faith Based Alliance Leaders Speaking Out



Bishop Yvette Flunder
(Senior Pastor of City of Refuge UCC)

Bishop Flunder noted that it was a prophetic vision that got everyone present at this gathering. “A prophet is someone who dares to speak out even though the message is unpopular. We are a prophetic people. We come together a small, yet powerful group with a connected vision to form a coalition to make a difference in our community. Even though the road ahead of us will be met with criticism and opposition, be encouraged prophets, stand up and speak out.”



Rev. Elder Antonio Jones
(Senior Pastor of Unity Fellowship-Atlanta)

“We must first be transformed before the reformation of our world will happen. The conversation has been going on for over 10 years—the time is now for getting out and making ourselves known, seen and heard. Let’s not come back to this conversation again but leave here today and move to the next level. We stand committed to reformation and transformation.”



Min. Dorinda Henry
(Interim Executive Director of the National Center for Human Rights Education)

“Do not consider the things of old (conversation). We are about a new thing. New is not dredging up the old stuff because it didn’t work. Looking at our condition from a human rights framework we take on new resources and alliances—men will begin to speak out for women issues—each one will speak out on behalf of the other. Human rights say what happens to **them** can happen to me”.

“How can the church maintain silence in the face of wars both foreign and domestic against the LGBTQI community? How can we not commit every resource possible to stamp out AIDS both domestic and abroad? MCC stands ready to commit its resources to taking action and speaking out to let our voices be heard.”



Rev. Elder Jim Mitulski
(United Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches, Region 2)

Pastor Paul addressed what he considers the root cause of why our churches are empty. “We aren’t practicing grace without guilt. Our community need grace because we suffer from the battered spouse syndrome. There are ultimately two rules we must adhere to; love God and love neighbor”.



Rev. Paul Turner (Gentle Spirit Christian Church)

“If this isn’t another opportunity to just hear ourselves talk then we can expect great things from this gathering”. This is not only a time to speak; it’s a time to act. “When do we become like Esther who acted while declaring if I perish; I perish”.



Pastor Will Horn (The Power Center)

“If our relationship with the Divine does not cause us to challenge the injustice and wrongs we see going on around us, then we need to take another dip in the pool of redemption. We need to challenge the contradictions society would have us blindly accept.”



Pastor Troy Sanders
(Preach2Me.COM - Web Based Ministry)



The Bishops and Elders Council, 2007

(OPENPRESS) September 14, 2007 -- The Bishops and Elders Council, a network of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) affirming churches and organizations touching the lives of 98 million North Americans, has called on the U.S. Congress to pass the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) and on President Bush to sign it into law.

Speakers such as Bishop Flunder spoke out that entire families and communities are affected when the primary bread winner is unjustly fired or

denied employment. The affects are not limited to economics but to health care as well since many people receive health care through their jobs.

The Bishops and Elders Council was founded September, 2006, in Dallas, Texas, and stated, "We are a unified body of followers of Christ who are committed to speak boldly in our own communities and the larger culture as those who have been both oppressed and oppressor. We will communicate God's consistent call for justice, wholeness and peace and work to equip

ourselves and others to take concrete action to achieve God's loving shalom. We are committed to work on behalf of all people oppressed or marginalized by poverty, immigration policies, HIV/AIDS, addictions, classism, sexism, ageism, or violence."

This year marked the second annual convocation of this The Bishops and Elders Council. The Council ministers to tens of thousands of LGBT Christians, including many who have been fired or denied employment because of

sexual orientation or gender identity. The Bishop and Elders Council pledged to work for the passage of ENDA in the coming months in partnership with the Human Rights Campaign (HRC), the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF), the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD), and the National Black Justice Coalition (NBJC).

From the Worldwide Faith News archives
www.wfn.org

National Blackout Day, November 2, 2007

November 2nd, The National Action Network (Rev. Al Sharpton, Rev. Jesse Jackson, Mike Baisden, Warren Ballentine and others) are calling on us to BOYCOTT ALL business transactions on this day. No food shopping, clothes shopping, transportation, No sport games, etc. Why you are ask-

ing??....We are trying to wake America up to the injustices (once again) to people of color.

In the 60's we marched and boycotted in Birmingham, and brought a State to its knees. We can do it again, because we are reaping the benefits of those who have gone

before us. We know better and should not stand for anything other than equal justice for all. Let's all stand together, because divided we are falling.

Please pass this along to others who may not be aware.



National Religious Leadership Roundtable

The National Religious Roundtable, organized, convened and staffed by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, is an interfaith network of leaders from pro-LGBT faith, spiritual and religious organizations.

The National Religious Leadership Roundtable brings together people of faith who

support equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people.

What they do:

Established in 1997, they share resources, support one another and work in partnership with other social-justice-seeking groups to:

- Amplify the voice of pro-

LGBT faith organizations in public discourse.

- Promote understanding of and respect for LGBT people within society at large and in communities of faith.
- Promote understanding and respect within LGBT communities for a variety of faith paths and for religious liberty.

Achieve common goals that promote equality, spirituality and justice.

Get involved

Learn more about the National Religious Leadership Roundtable, or apply to join by e-mailing Dave Noble at dnable@theTaskForce.org.

http://www.thetaskforce.org/our_work/faith_initiatives/religious_leadership_roundtable



Atlanta Faith Based Alliance

Primary Business Address

Your Address Line 2

Your Address Line 3

Your Address Line 4

Phone: 404-272-8609

Fax: 678-574-3492

E-mail: Ichinton24@gmail.com

"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



We're on the Web
sharing space at
Equipped for Success
Consulting, Inc.

<http://www.equippedforsuccessconsulting.com>

"We are part of a powerful movement that seeks to gather clergy, congregations and faith based organizations across denomination, race, and culture lines to effectively strategize how we can work together to bring a voice of reason into the current religious discourse. The issues at hand include the rights of women and children, healthcare for all, education disparity, equal rights for Same Gender families, the end to unjust war and the healing of our environment. For too long we have been divided by lines drawn by the organizations we are part of and by the issues that may interest us most. It is time for right thinking people to come together and work together synergistically to connect heart to heart, passion to passion and spirit to spirit."
Bishop Yvette Flunder

Please feel free to contact Minister Louis Hinton at the following email address for more information or questions regarding the Atlanta faith based alliance/coalition.

Ichinton24@gmail.com

Atlanta Faith Base Alliance Meeting, Nov. 3, 2007

Dear Ministry Colleague,

Grace and Peace to you and to those you serve. You are receiving this invitation because you are counted among those faith partners in the Atlanta area who believe in and support a Theology of Radical Inclusion and Extravagant Grace.

During one of our recent visits to Ghana, I spoke to our young guide about his communication with his family in surrounding countries. He said to me, "We don't see other countries. Countries are lines that were drawn by the colonizers. Wherever my people are that is my tribe". This young brother birthed in me a theme... **One Tribe, One Table.**

We are a part of a pow-

erful movement that seeks to gather clergy, congregations and faith based organizations across denomination, race, and culture lines to effectively strategize how we can work together to bring a voice of reason into the current religious discourse. The issues at hand include the rights of women and children, healthcare for all, education disparity, equal rights for Same Gender families, the end to unjust war and the healing of our environment. For too long we have been divided by lines drawn by the organizations we are part of and by the issues that may interest us most. It is time for right thinking people to come together and work together synergistically to connect heart to heart, passion to passion and spirit to

spirit.

Our gathering will be a continuation of numerous discussions that have been organized and facilitated by many of the faith and community leaders in the Atlanta area. Good and courageous work has already been done. This is an effort to form an even deeper collaboration that will link up with brothers and sisters across the nation. Tables like this are being formed all over the country and you are invited to join a table of Brothers and Sisters in the Atlanta area, because your voices are critical to the future of this movement.

The meeting will be held...

**Saturday, November 3,
2007 11am - 1 pm at:
Christ Covenant MCC
Church**

**109 Hibernia Avenue
Decatur, GA 30030
Rev. Tessie Mandeville**

**Immediately following
the meeting from
1:00 pm to 3:00 pm we
will eat and fellowship.**

There will be a resource table for those of you who so desire to present flyers, brochures and other information regarding your organization. We look forward to seeing you at this gathering.

**Please remit your
RSVP as soon as possible
to
Ichinton@bellsouth.net
so we can have a head
count for the servings.**

Rev. Dr. Yvette Flunder
Presiding Bishop, The Fellowship,
Senior Pastor, City of
Refuge United Church of
Christ