



# PROJECT AWAKENING

A RECOVERY PLAN FOR AMERICA'S INNER CITIES

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# **Project AWAKENING**

## **A Private Sector Recovery Plan to Save America's Cities**

**STAND Foundation, Inc.**  
**Bishop E.W. Jackson, President**

### **Executive Summary**

Project AWAKENING is a private sector plan to rescue America's inner cities. Its three pronged approach is embodied in the word CREATE: "**CR**" for Cultural Renewal. "**EA**" for Economic Awakening. "**TE**" for Technical Education.

**Cultural Renewal.** One of the greatest social problems in the inner city, perhaps the one which underlies the others, is the erosion of positive cultural norms which once set the acceptable standard in these communities - respect for parents, elders and those in authority, including police; valuing education as the means for escaping poverty and achieving upward mobility; willingness to work hard for the things you desire in life rather obtain things through dishonest means; believing that the dignity of work is preferable to accepting charity that creates dependence; that sex before marriage is sin; that pregnancy out of wedlock is shameful; that mothers and fathers take care of their children and provide for them rather than abandoning them to the streets; and that all people are the same regardless of skin color and should be treated with respect.

As the family has broken down, negative cultural norms have supplanted the positive norms which once were the standard.

Drugs, crime, gangs, violence, confrontations with police, out of wedlock births, fatherless children and disrespect of all authority are the new norm. One of the most infamous examples of this change is the ridicule heaped on black children who learn to read, write and speak proper English. That is dismissed as "acting white."

The breakdown of the family is at the core of this cultural shift, and the church is the central institution for addressing it because it is where families and children come together for instruction. The church is a primary propagator of values. It is positioned to have maximum impact on the restoration of marriage, families, and the fundamental values which create a healthy life. With the needed guidance, tools and funding the church can become an effective mechanism for cultural transformation of the inner city, which is essential to economic and educational transformation.

Educational transformation will require after school and adult evening classes on the value of honesty, hard work, marriage, family, parenting and respect for life and property. Project AWAKENING envisions a curriculum teaching these issues to minors (starting at ten years of age) and adults, particularly those who have been caught in the criminal justice system. These classes will have to be available in churches throughout inner city neighborhoods so that the information is widely accessible. It will also require aggressive marketing and recruitment.

The middle school years are when students tend to suffer academic and behavioral decline<sup>1</sup> which puts them on a downward life trajectory. Thus, the middle school years are a critical time for positive educational intervention. There is a group of children who are living in highly dysfunctional homes. They need to be in a church, boarding, or Christian school which removes them not only from bad neighborhoods, but from a family situation likely to facilitate involvement with drugs and crime.<sup>2</sup>

**Economic Awakening.** Most Americans today do not understand that America's free market economy has been the greatest engine of economic growth and wealth creation in the history of mankind. Many individuals have been largely indoctrinated with anti-capitalist propaganda. We need to educate and train entrepreneurs in the inner cities who in turn can help develop the economy and create jobs in these communities. Again, churches are the ideal setting for this type of education to take place.

**Technical Education.** There is a dramatic need for renewed emphasis on technical and vocational education to train carpenters, plumbers, electricians and computer techs. The demand for these skills is great, and largely unmet. Not every

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<sup>1</sup> Nancy E. Hill and Diana F. Tyson, *Parental Involvement in Middle School: A Meta-Analytic Assessment of the Strategies That Promote Achievement*, Published 2009, accessed 12/28/2015. Available at: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2782391/pdf/nihms-151389.pdf> Early adolescence is often marked by changes in school context, family relationships, and developmental processes. In the context of these changes, academic performance often declines, while at the same time the long-term implications of academic performance increase.

<sup>2</sup> Alcohol, Drugs, and Crime, last revised June 201, accessed 12/28/2015. Available at: <https://ncadd.org/about-addiction/alcohol-drugs-and-crime>

student needs a college education, but every one of them will need a job. Adults who are either limited because of a criminal record, or have hit an economic dead end because of lack of marketable skills, are also in critical need of job skills. Community colleges, technical institutes, businesses, nonprofits and churches in cooperation can provide inexpensive but effective training and education.

**Conclusion.** Government programs have failed miserably in their efforts to end the cycle of inner city poverty and violence.<sup>3</sup> We need a private sector recovery plan to address this growing crisis or we are doomed to repeat the cycle of poverty, out of wedlock births, violence and imprisonment from one generation to the next in perpetuity.

Project AWAKENING is a doable private sector plan to save America's cities.

## **I. THE URGENT NEED FOR ACTION**

During the Civil Rights Movement, Dr. King warned America that if poverty and injustice were not addressed peacefully, there would be an eruption of violence. We saw those words

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<sup>3</sup> For the inefficacy of government programs to prevent crime (and why it leads to things like gun control) see, Jenny Travis, *Preventing Crime: What Works, What Doesn't, What's Promising*, U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, 1998, accessed 12/28/2015. Available at: <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles/171676.PDF>

For the inefficacy of government programs to prevent poverty see, Michael Tanner, *The American Welfare State How We Spend Nearly \$1 Trillion a Year Fighting Poverty—and Fail*, Cato Institute, published 2012, accessed 12/28/2015. Available at: <http://object.cato.org/sites/cato.org/files/pubs/pdf/PA694.pdf>

fulfilled in the sixties. Riots and upheavals devastated entire communities<sup>4</sup> which never fully recovered.

Today we are witnessing a new phenomenon. Not only have there been riots on the streets of our cities but there is a new epidemic of black on black violence and murder.<sup>5</sup> Crime in the inner cities of our country is nothing new, but the level of violence, its national scope, and its indiscriminate nature - killing women and children in the crossfire - present an unprecedented challenge for society. In September 2015, sixty people were murdered in Chicago, the city's deadliest month in thirteen years.<sup>6</sup>

As Dr. King warned fifty years ago, we must not ignore the "fierce urgency of now." Either we will address this ongoing crisis today or we will pay an even higher price in bloodshed, poverty and destroyed lives tomorrow. We have been trying to solve the problems of our cities for a generation and we are no closer to a solution than we were at the worst of the sixties riots. Indeed, we are farther from it because, as Daniel Patrick

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<sup>4</sup> "The riots had economically significant negative effects on blacks' income and employment. Further, those effects may have been larger in the long run - from 1960 to 1980 - than in the short run - from 1960 to 1970."

"The riots significantly depressed the median value of black-owned property between 1960 and 1970, with little or no rebound in the 1970s." David R. Francis, *How the 1960s' Riots Hurt African-Americans*, the National Bureau of Economic Research, published 2015, accessed 12/28/2015. Available at: <http://www.nber.org/digest/sep04/w10243.html>

<sup>5</sup> Jared Taylor, *New DOJ Statistics on Race and Violent Crime*, published 2015, accessed 12/28/2015. Available at: <http://www.amren.com/news/2015/07/new-doj-statistics-on-race-and-violent-crime/>

<sup>6</sup> *Report: 60 murders makes last month deadliest September in Chicago since 2002*: <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/report-60-murders-makes-last-month-deadliest-september-in-chicago-since-2002/>



Moynihan warned fifty years ago,<sup>7</sup> the black family has disintegrated. How are young people to become productive citizens if they do not grow up in an intact family that socializes them?

The single greatest predictor of poverty is not race but the lack of a father in the home.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, the root causes of today's poverty in the inner city of America are moral, spiritual and cultural.

Solving the problem of urban violence is a lot harder than posturing about "social justice." Protests, demonstrations and riots leave these communities worse off when the dust settles.

The inner cities are becoming places of complete chaos. Already there have been calls for the intervention of the National Guard. Already this borders on a national emergency. We must act together now or the situation will continue to deteriorate.

## **II. SEIZING THE OPPORTUNITY**

One of the most disappointing aspects of the first black president is his utter failure to address the increasing poverty and breakdown of order in our cities. The Obama administration had a unique opportunity to marshal private resources to address the critical problems in urban areas of

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<sup>7</sup>Daniel Patrick Moynihan, *The Negro Family*. Available at: <https://web.stanford.edu/~mrosenfe/Moynihan's%20The%20Negro%20Family.pdf>

<sup>8</sup>Rachel Sheffield, *Marriage Goes Down, Poverty Goes Up*, published 2010, accessed 12/28/2015. Available at: <http://dailysignal.com/2010/10/01/marriage-goes-down-poverty-goes-up/>

America. Instead, the number of black Americans on welfare has increased,<sup>9</sup> income has fallen,<sup>10</sup> and rising violence has gone unchecked. The shootings in Chicago, the President's hometown, are a telling example. The city is a war zone, but Chicago Magazine reported that officials are "washing and rinsing"<sup>11</sup> the numbers to try to make it look safer than it is. The residents know better.

Detroit has spent billions of dollars addressing its social problems, but consistently ranks as one of the five most dangerous cities in the country.<sup>12</sup>

Children are growing up enduring daily atrocities. President Obama has made no attempts to tackle this urgent problem. Our next President should take up the challenge to lead a private sector approach to transforming urban America. We are capable of eliminating the blight of inner city poverty, but we can never hope to end poverty through government programs. It will require churches, corporate leaders, and

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<sup>9</sup> *Facts About African Americans in the Food Stamp Program*, published 2007, accessed 12/28/2015. Available at: <http://www.cbpp.org/research/facts-about-african-americans-in-the-food-stamp-program>

<sup>10</sup> *These ten charts show the black-white economic gap hasn't budged in 50 years*, published in 2013, accessed 12/28/2015. Available at: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2013/08/28/these-seven-charts-show-the-black-white-economic-gap-hasnt-budged-in-50-years/>

<sup>11</sup> DAVID BERNSTEIN AND NOAH ISACKSON, *The Truth About Chicago's Crime Rates: Part 2*, published 2014, accessed 12/28/2015. Available at: <http://www.chicagomag.com/Chicago-Magazine/June-2014/Chicago-crime-statistics/>

<sup>12</sup> Joel Erickson, *Detroit Ranks As Most Dangerous City In The US For Third Straight Year*, published 2015, accessed 12/29/2015. Available at: <http://www.dailymetrotimes.com/2015/11/16/detroit-ranks-dangerous-city-us-third-straight-year/>

private educational institutions to join forces. Pastors know how to motivate and inspire. Business leaders and entrepreneurs know how to train people, create jobs and grow businesses. Technical schools know how to turn people into skilled workers. We don't need government funding, but we do need Presidential leadership to address this national crisis.

Only the private sector can implement a new vision for residents of the inner city: work instead of welfare, a future instead of food stamps and upward mobility instead of subsistence living. A willing President has the ability to cast that vision to the entire nation, and bring people together to implement strategies to end the scourge of inner city poverty and violence

### **III. PROJECT AWAKENING - THE RECOVERY PLAN**

Project AWAKENING is based on the acronym **CREATE**: **CR**- Cultural Renewal; **EA** - Economic Awakening; **TE** - Technical Education. It is a private sector Recovery Plan to transform the inner cities of America, culturally, educationally and economically.

**A. CULTURAL RENEWAL (CR).** Perhaps the greatest mistake of the urban renewal programs, aside from expecting government to solve social problems, was the failure to address social and cultural norms. These are the established ways of thinking and acting which either empower people to grow and thrive, or trap them in poverty and despair. In a recent interview, one of the wealthiest men in the world said that his success was born of certain principles by which he lives. Extrapolated to an entire community or city, principles are cultural norms which predict a population's future.

Here are six cultural issues must be immediately addressed by churches in the inner cities:

1. **We must restore the church as the central institution for shaping culture.** The church is the only institution in the inner city whose duty it is to uphold biblical values in the face of an increasingly libertine culture. A partnership between pastors, businesses, and educational institutions is the key to transforming the urban communities of America.

The problems in the inner city: breakdown of family, out of wedlock pregnancy, teen pregnancy, crime, gangs, violence, and the resulting cycle of poverty, are moral and spiritual problems at root. When poor people rob and steal, it is not solely because they are poor. Affluent people also lie, cheat, steal, murder and become drug addicts. People make bad choices because they lack moral conviction and discipline. Faith in God and accountability to Him were once central to black culture in America. Churches are the key today to restoring the moral vision and accountability essential to changing the culture in the inner city.

2. **We must destroy the false narrative that racism is the cause of all that is wrong in the lives of black Americans.** This is not to say that racism does not exist or that race will never be an obstacle to overcome. It is rather to say that no force on earth can stop a determined individual - someone who has faith, self-confidence and a willingness to work hard and persevere.

Racism exists, and probably always will because it is a matter of the heart. There will always be some people who are bigoted against others based on skin color. There will always be demagogues who use race to divide us. This is not just a problem among white people as political correctness would have us believe. Racial attitudes and animus exists among people of every racial background. Churches must take responsibility for teaching a biblical worldview, not a racial one. Churches, pastors, and Christian leaders must directly address the debilitating idea that racism is an omnipotent obstacle to personal progress. To believe this lie is to be defeated already.

There are young black men in America today who say they deal drugs because they have no other options. Many of the declining leaders of the once great civil rights movement are complicit in spreading this self-destructive thinking. The church must propagate truth as a counter narrative. Jesus said, "You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." We must free people from the bondage of lies that hold them captive.

There can be no economic progress without a reformation in the thinking of people. Dr. King urged the black community to develop a culture of excellence. Today's civil rights leaders teach a culture of entitlement. These very different approaches yield very different results.

Project AWAKENING is developing a course<sup>13</sup> called "The Importance of Personal Culture." This curriculum is designed to help young people understand that cultural norms shape

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<sup>13</sup> Available at [www.standamerica.us](http://www.standamerica.us)

their attitudes and behavior, and those norms can either be empowering or debilitating. Cultural ideas can either promote self-improvement or lead to self-destruction. Students will be taught the empowering cultural norms to which we've already referred, the norms which once predominated in the black community and the entire country.

Parents must teach these principles to their children in their formative years, but formal after school courses will be taught by ProjectAWAKENING to adults who are trying to reform their lives and to children starting at ten years old. The curriculum will be age appropriate, designed for the maturity level of the student.

3. **We must restore respect for authority and create a strong bond between law abiding citizens and the police who protect them.** While there are horrific incidents of police brutality, such cases are statistical anomalies. The idea that cops are out hunting down black men is simply not supported by the facts. However, given the media which surrounds any incident in which a white police officer is involved in the death of a black suspect, it is perceived and promoted as an epidemic. There are an estimated 12-14 million arrests per year<sup>14</sup>, and about thirty percent

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<sup>14</sup> FBI, *Crime in the United States*, accessed 12/29/2015. Available at: <https://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s/2010/crime-in-the-u.s.-2010/persons-arrested>

involve black suspects.<sup>15</sup> Police kill more whites than blacks, but only minority deaths generate outrage.<sup>16</sup>

The sad fact is that for the radicals who exploit the issue of race, the truth doesn't matter. The "hands up don't shoot" version of Michael Brown's death was a lie. Yet it is still repeated. In certain circles, a false narrative is preferable to the truth, regardless of the devastating consequences. For those who benefit from racial tension and confrontation, division is preferable to unity.

Police will make honest mistakes, and there will be bad cops who intentionally violate the law. Rogue cops who violate the public trust should face the severest penalties. However, such instances should not detract from the respect we owe our police officers any more than the behavior of black criminals should be used to smear all black people. We must teach young people to respect authority, and to address alleged abuses in a rational and lawful way.

There must be ongoing communication and interaction between police and community members. There must be a reservoir of goodwill to draw upon when something goes wrong, as it inevitably will. Policing is a dangerous and unpredictable activity. There will be instances where police action is called into question. If there is a foundation of trust between key leaders in the community - such as pastors, business owners and local elected leaders - difficult incidents

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<sup>15</sup> See, <https://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s/2010/crime-in-the-u.s.-2010/persons-arrested>

<sup>16</sup> Valerie Richardson, *Police kill more whites than blacks, but minority deaths generate more outrage*, published 2015, accessed 12/29/2015. Available at:

can be kept from spinning out of control. The police must be able to do the job of keeping the community safe without themselves coming under attack by the very people they serve.

4. **Gangs, drugs, crime and violence must be confronted by the community itself.** Law enforcement can solve some crimes, but if the culture of the community is to believe that police are the enemy and criminals should be protected, chaos will continue to reign. There must be a clear and unequivocal message that gangs are evil and should be shunned. New paradigms of belonging must be created for youth through recreational programs, boarding schools, and productive activities.

There were 2,587 murders in Chicago alone in 2014 and over 3000 in 2015.<sup>17</sup> It is a stain on our national character that we are allowing a daily bloodbath of youth killing each other because of where they live, the colors they wear or the color of their skin. In many cases, young children are killed in the crossfire. Nine-year-old Tyshawn Lee was murdered in Chicago, shot in the face and body multiple times as a vendetta against his gang member father. This is madness. There is no room for compromise with this evil. The gangs must go. The violence must end. If courageous community leaders, business owners, churches and Pastors will join together to implement ProjectAWAKENING, the culture of death will be eradicated.

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<sup>17</sup> Chicago Tribune, *Chicago's Shooting Victims*, last updated 12/29/2015, accessed 12/29/2015. Available at: <http://crime.chicagotribune.com/chicago/shootings>



We must also double down on strong anti-drug programs and messages to discourage youth from joining the drug scene. While the problem of drugs is extraordinarily difficult, it is easier to not start using drugs in the first place than it is to get free of drug addiction.

Again, churches are critical to addressing this problem. Crack cocaine, heroin, exotic strains of synthetic and natural marijuana and other substances are destroying individuals, families and communities. Last year in Chicago a young black man - high on PCP and wielding a knife - was shot by a police officer who was subsequently charged with murder. Drug dependence is a spiritual problem which churches are best equipped to address. People are using drugs in an attempt to fill the void in their souls, to dull the pain and escape the problems that bedevil them. The Twelve Step Program teaches that the only way out is God, and that has been the key to its success. One must admit utter helplessness and call on a Higher Power. Churches can and must be even more direct than that. Faith is the saving and delivering power of Jesus Christ is endemic to black culture. Every true pastor knows this and should not be afraid to say it. This is a foundational principle of ProjectAWAKENING, which is also why it must be a private sector program.

5. **We must address the issue of sexual morality.** In a world where Beyoncé shakes her "bootie" and Miley "twerks," it is no wonder that the idea of sexual morality, responsibility and abstinence seem so foreign. Yet they are a social imperative. A whole host of problems in our cities can be traced to single parent

families.<sup>18</sup> Sex outside of marriage and the resulting out of wedlock births have terrible consequences for individuals and society.<sup>19</sup>

Seventy-two percent of black children are born out of wedlock.<sup>20</sup> Add to that the culture of abortion which devalues life. Is it any wonder that so many young men end up in gangs, on drugs, and living lives of crime and violence? The latest census estimates that 745,000 black males are behind bars.<sup>21</sup> The left looks at this number in a vacuum and concludes that the criminal justice system is intentionally discriminating against black people, particularly black men. However, while race may be a factor, the more direct cause is that too many black males grow up in fatherless homes, socialized by gangs and the street.<sup>22</sup> These young men need positive male role models to teach them contribute to the community rather than exploiting it. They must be held accountable for their own lives and choices. Someone must instill in them the idea

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<sup>18</sup> Rachel Sheffield, *Marriage Goes Down, Poverty Goes Up*, published 2010, accessed 12/28/2015. Available at:

<http://dailysignal.com/2010/10/01/marriage-goes-down-poverty-goes-up/>

<sup>19</sup> MARRI Research, *Mapping America*. Accessed 12/29/2015. Available at: <http://marri.us/publications/mapping-america#tab8>

<sup>20</sup> Roger Clegg, *Latest Statistics on Out-of-Wedlock Births*, published 2013, accessed 12/29/2015. Available at:

<http://www.nationalreview.com/corner/360990/latest-statistics-out-wedlock-births-roger-clegg>

<sup>21</sup> Myth That There are More Black Men in Prison Than College is Debunked, published 2015, accessed 12/29/2015, Available at: <http://newamericamedia.org/2015/02/myth-that-there-are-more-black-men-in-prison-than-college-is-debunked.php>

<sup>22</sup> Pat Fagan, Ph.D, *A Look at the Black Family*, published 2015, accessed 12/29/2015. Available at: <http://patfagan.blogspot.com/2015/10/a-look-at-black-family.html>

that a man who does not take care of his own children is not a man. They must have someone they respect to tell them that dignity is to be found in discipline and hard work, not crime and violence. They must be made to understand that education and the accumulation of marketable skill are the way to priority not drug dealing. Someone must let them know that the people they choose as friends will either elevate them or destroy them. Therefore, those who want to live a life of crime must be avoided like the plague.

We must also inculcate respect in young girls for their bodies, and teach them the value of education, and a vision for their future. Women must demand that young men respect them. They must act in a manner worthy of respect. They must be taught the long term consequences of promiscuous sexual behavior: sexually transmitted diseases, out of wedlock pregnancy and the mental and emotional scars of abortion. Young ladies need help to break the pattern of sexual exploitation that is wreaking havoc on their lives. Ultimately, the absence of a caring father causes girls to go looking for love in all the wrong places.<sup>23</sup>

Hollywood celebrities talk openly about disdain for marriage as a "a piece of paper."<sup>24</sup> The mainstream media perpetuates

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<sup>23</sup> Patrick F. Fagan, Ph.D. and Rev. Paul Sullins, Ph.D, *Father Disapproves of Adolescent Sexual Intercourse by Family Structure and Religious Worship*, published 2001, accessed 12/29/2015. Available at: <http://downloads.frc.org/EF/EF15G74.pdf>  
Marriage and Religion Research Institute, *The Role of the Father in the Family*, accessed 12/29/2015. Available at: <http://downloads.frc.org/EF/EF15A88.pdf>

<sup>24</sup> 13 *Celebrity Couples Who Are In No Hurry To Get Married*, Available at: <http://www.crushable.com/2014/07/15/relationships/unmarried->

the notion that two men or two women can raise a child just as effectively as a man and a woman. Such moral confusion undermines the most important key to solving the problem of poverty - the restoration of the two parent traditional family, a mother and father raising their children within the sacred covenant of marriage.

The data is clear. A person who stays in school, waits until marriage to have children and avoids crime, will not live in poverty.<sup>25</sup>

The breakdown of family and values makes it almost impossible to revive the economy or achieve educational excellence in the urban areas. Teachers are forced to be social workers and deal with family dysfunction and behavioral problems, rather than educating students. How many gifted young men and women who could make great contributions to our society are in prison or dead? They have been lost forever. We must not lose another generation.

The solution is difficult, but not impossible. It will require corporate America, churches, businesses, private educational institutions, and other nonprofit organizations working together. When these important institutions operate in concert, they can achieve what trillions spent on “Great Society” government programs did not - the end of urban blight.

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celebrity-couples-against-marriage-long-term-engagements-why/#ixzz3vIGTrBQK

<sup>25</sup> Patrick F. Fagan, Andrew J. Kidd and Henry Potrykus, *Marriage and Economic Well-Being: The Economy of the Family Rises or Falls with Marriage*, published 2011, accessed 12/30/2015. Available at: <http://downloads.frc.org/EF/EF11E70.pdf>

6. **We must educate all Americans, but especially those of African descent, on the true racial history of the United States.** Most Americans have never heard of Hiram Revels,<sup>26</sup> Benjamin Banneker<sup>27</sup> and the host of black Revolutionary War heroes, preachers, scientists, educators, and entrepreneurs who were recognized for their unique contributions.<sup>28</sup>

We must tell of the Founding Fathers who opposed slavery, as well as those who owned slaves. We must become as familiar with the history of opposition to racial discrimination as we are with the Civil Rights Movement. We must also understand the significance of the principles of our founding, and the groundwork that was laid for the freedom of Africans brought here as slaves.

The one sided picture of America's racial history has poisoned our culture and exacerbated division on the basis of race. Telling the positive side of the story will not silence the demagogues, but it will provide an accurate picture of our history to those who want the whole truth. It may well free many from the bitterness engendered by the false picture of America as a nation founded and built on racism.

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<sup>26</sup> *Hiram R. Revels, Biography*, accessed 12/30/2015. Available at: <http://www.biography.com/people/hiram-r-revels-9456129>

<sup>27</sup> *Benjamin Banneker, Biography*, accessed 12/30/2015. Available at: <http://www.biography.com/people/benjamin-banneker-9198038>

<sup>28</sup> David Barton, *Black History Issues*, published 2001, accessed 12/30/2015. Available at: <http://www.wallbuilders.com/LIBissuesArticles.asp?id=132>

## B. ENTREPRENEURIAL AWAKENING (EA)

**Economic Education.** A gigantic missing piece in the **economic education** of Americans today is an understanding of the virtues of capitalism. Most of our citizens do not grasp capitalism's superior ability to distribute goods and services fairly and efficiently. Nor do most Americans understand that America's upward mobility is a feature of the free market economy. It is the only system that makes billionaires out of people from poor and middle income backgrounds. This ignorance is understandable. Socialism is romanticized in universities, while capitalism is vilified as exploitive and unfair. In the 2016 race for the White House, a self-described socialist is running for President and garnering tremendous support among youth.

The concept of "fairness" appeals to young voters, and victimhood is a popular pose in today's culture. This theoretical ideal of fairness masks a totalitarian impulse to make everyone the same, deny our unique gifting and abilities, and give government rather than the free market the power to assign value. The value of a product is determined by what we are willing to pay for it, not by what government says its worth.

Students must be shown the comparative outcomes between capitalism and other systems such as communism, socialism, fascism, and even the theocratic dictatorships of Islam. Which system has produced the highest standard of living for the most people? Which system has produced most of the technological innovation of the 20th century? The railroad, automobile, airplane, telegraph, telephone, cell phone, satellite technology and modern medical treatments are the result of capitalism's ability to motivate human beings to

extraordinary achievements.<sup>29</sup> The risk and sacrifices born by the risk taker are great, but the rewards are potentially far greater. When a business produces goods and services that others find of value, customers voluntarily exchange something of value for it - their money. Communist and fascist governments on the other hand starve, torture, and commit genocide against their own people because those systems require force to make people act counter to their own interests.

In a free market economy, people freely choose to transact business. The more value people find in the product or service, the more they are willing give in return for it. That's why entertainers - including professional athletes - get paid so much. Lots of people want what they are selling and are willing to pay for its entertainment "value." Americans set value based the buying choices we freely make. In other systems, someone else makes the choices for you.

**Workplace Behavior and Attitude.** Every worker should be trained to think like an entrepreneur and ask, "If I owned this business, what would I expect of the people working for me? If I were the boss, evaluating my performance as an employee, how would I do?" In other words, they need to think about what value they bring to the company. They must be made to realize that employment offers an opportunity to learn, as a stepping stone to something better, such as owning one's own business one day.

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<sup>29</sup> Chris Berg, *Why Capitalism is Awesome*, published 2015, accessed 12/30/2015. Available at: <http://www.cato.org/policy-report/julyaugust-2013/why-capitalism-awesome>

Business and corporate leaders know what it takes to succeed. They can impart that knowledge to young people, show them how to dress and behave properly in a professional setting. They can look them in the eye as a prospective employer and say, "If you tattoo yourself from head to toe, or wear outlandish outfits or have your pants hanging off your buttocks, you will limit your ability to get a job." Knowing how to prepare a resume, speak proper English, and answer in coherent sentences are skills essential to gainful employment and upward mobility.

The goal of Economic Awakening is to create a whole new class of business owners and entrepreneurs.

### **C. TECHNICAL EDUCATION**

**TE - Technical Education.** The quality of education in inner city schools is abysmal. Many of those who manage to graduate from high school emerge as functional illiterates, without marketable skills. Because they are either totally unemployable or relegated to minimum wages, they are susceptible to the quick money offered by crime.

One of the goals of Project AWAKENING is to break the cycle of intergenerational poverty. We need to release the gifts, talents, and untapped potential of our youth. Educational resources in urban areas must be focused on equipping them to bring value to the marketplace. That is how they will learn that prosperity is accessible through legitimate work. You don't have to become a rapper, sports star, or risk prison and death in the drug trade to do well financially.

There is a productive and prosperous future for those with technical and vocational skills. A profitable career as a



carpenter, plumber, electrician or computer technician does not require a college degree. There is a shortage of people with these skills, and that makes them a very valuable commodity capable of earning a very good living.

Community college programs, private technical schools, and corporate training programs that issue certificates and licenses can provide the training that is needed.

Private enterprise is responsible for raising the standard of living for most Americans. It is time to apply free market principles to the problem of urban poverty.

#### **IV. ENTREPRENEURIAL PARTNERSHIPS**

Finally, in addition to investing in renewing the culture of urban America and providing technical education to prepare young people for real jobs, businesses need to invest in urban enterprise. Business men and women in the inner city need good mentors and the backing of good companies to help them navigate the world of business.

There are potential entrepreneurs in the inner city who have a budding small business, an idea for a product or service, or just a dream. What they need is someone to help them grow - a partner who invests time, energy, and resources in their future.

Eighty percent of Americans are employed by small businesses.<sup>30</sup> Those businesses offer an opportunity to employ people in communities where jobs are desperately needed.

What if 20 companies, invested a total of \$100 million per year (\$5 million per company) in a targeted urban community over the next 20 years? The owner of Facebook has pledged to give away \$49 billion during his lifetime.<sup>31</sup> Only a portion of that, invested wisely, could transform a city's urban neighborhoods. In ten years, we could stop the next generation from repeating the cycle of poverty, prison and death. In twenty years, we could transform the inner cities from islands of poverty to places of stability, prosperity and entrepreneurship.

## **V. LOGISTICS**

Funding for such an all-encompassing program will come from a variety of sources: businesses and corporations, private foundations, and individual donors. Once again, it is imperative that businesses invest not only money, but time and energy as well. We must re-awaken the entrepreneurial and creative spirit of the American people, and that includes those living in the inner cities of our country.

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<sup>30</sup> Sean Gorman, *Cantor says small businesses create 70 percent of U.S. jobs*, published 2011, accessed 12/30/2015. Available at: <http://www.politifact.com/virginia/statements/2011/dec/30/eric-cantor/cantor-says-small-businesses-create-70-percent-us/>

<sup>31</sup> Biz Carson, Mark Zuckerberg says he's giving away 99% of his Facebook shares — worth \$45 billion today, published 2015, accessed 12/30/2015. Available at: <http://www.businessinsider.com/mark-zuckerberg-giving-away-99-of-his-facebook-shares-2015-12>

## **VI. AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS**

To shape the character of students, prepare them for work and business, and reorient their thinking about free markets, we will establish a series of after school programs in churches.

The Programs would run approximately three hours per day, four days per week, helping students with homework, teaching them new cultural norms, and exposing them to how and why America distributes goods and services through a free market economy. Where appropriate, job training could take place on the same site.

We would begin with a pilot program in two or three neighborhoods in one city, to identify strengths, eliminate deficiencies and improve the curriculum before introducing the project to a wider array of students.

## **VII. BOARDING SCHOOLS**

Many youth are living in dysfunctional and dangerous circumstances. They have no adult supervision to speak of, and where they do, the adults are a bad influence. A boarding school completely removes them from unhealthy circumstances. The children would study and work, eat and sleep in a healthy educational environment.

## **VIII. MENTORING**

### **Adult Aspiring Business Men and Women**

This is where the businesses and corporations must invest more than money. They must bring their time, experience, and expertise to bear on nascent entrepreneurs.

## **Young Business Men and Women**

The after school program which teaches cultural renewal and free market principles to youth will undoubtedly identify some students with a strong interest in business. They will need business people who see their potential and are willing to help them.

## **IX. RESTORATION OF RIGHTS TO NONVIOLENT FELONS**

The fathers whose absence produces horrific consequences for the children they leave behind are often incarcerated. These men return home at some point. The goal is their re-entry to the community as productive law abiding citizens. Many will find their way back to prison, but for those nonviolent, convicted felons who manage to escape the mistakes of their past, we need to restore their full constitutional rights. There are many proposals as to how best to do this, but something must be done. After an appropriate period living law abiding lives, they should have their rights to vote and bear arms reinstated. Obviously, first consideration must be given to public safety, but many who were never involved in violent activity, have served their time and rebuilt their lives. They should not serve a life sentence of second class citizenship.

After paying their debt to society and showing good behavior for an extended period of time, non-violent felons should be restored to full citizenship rights. We must reform the criminal justice system so that we effectively reintegrate them into normal life as husbands, fathers, and workers. For some who earn it, perhaps by participation in Project CREATE, and completion of the Personal Culture curriculum and technical

certification for a job skill, their records should be sealed to allow them to be gainfully employed. If we are going to restore the family, we must save everyone we can.

## **X. GETTING STARTED**

Several cities in Virginia - Norfolk, Richmond, Newport News and Petersburg - could serve as testing grounds for Project AWAKENING. All have serious problems with crime and education. Norfolk, on a smaller scale, is emblematic of most urban population. Americans of African descent in Norfolk are 48% of the population, but have a 24% poverty rate. The high school drop-out rate is 8%, 3 points above the statewide average. Nearly 11.4% of its residents live beneath the poverty line.<sup>32</sup>

There are some bright spots. The Greater Norfolk Corporation is supporting technical education, modeled after Worcester Technical High School. They see increased performance and lower drop-out rates where the education is directly tied to career opportunities for the students.

Norfolk presents a possible test case for Project AWAKENING because there seems to be a culture of corporate support and engagement to improve the city and the lives of its people. The cities with active private sector leadership would be the best candidates for implementation of ProjectAWAKENING.

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<sup>32</sup> The Mayor's Commission on Poverty Reduction, *Norfolk Plan to Reduce Poverty*, published 2014, accessed 12/30/2015. Available at: <http://www.norfolk.gov/documentcenter/view/16632>

## **A. Preliminary Steps to Implementation**

1. Meet with pastors and ministry leaders in the community. Recruit local and national corporate sponsors.
2. Meet with local private educational leaders.
3. Meet with local business and national corporate sponsors.
4. Bring religious, educational and corporate leaders together.
5. Recruit partners (churches, businesses & corporations, private educational institutions) for ProjectAWAKENING.
6. Create a full plan of implementation.
7. Select churches and neighborhoods for pilot project.
8. Start the implementation with the first after school "Personal Culture" class.

## **XI. CONCLUSION**

For the last two years we have witnessed upheaval in the cities - riots, attacks on police and a spike in murders. In response we've seen race baiting by radical activists and mindless pandering by politicians. What we have not seen is a plan for addressing this serious and growing problem. Unless we act now, the future of the inner cities is grim indeed and will eventually affect us all.

We can end inner city poverty and its attendant chaos or we can watch the situation worsen in coming years. The choice is ours. The Proverb says, "Where there is no vision the people

perish."<sup>33</sup> It is time to adopt a vision to rescue America's cities. It cannot be done with mere education or economic solutions. It requires moral, spiritual and cultural renewal as a foundation for educational and entrepreneurial excellence. Our urban areas can be shining cities on a hill rather than apocalyptic grave yards.

It is time for a Recovery Plan to save America's cities. It is time for a cultural, educational, and entrepreneurial awakening in America. We ask every American to join us.

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<sup>33</sup> Proverbs 29:18 King James Version (KJV) *“Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.”*

# PROJECTAWAKENING

A RECOVERY PLAN FOR AMERICA'S INNER CITIES

**PROJECTAWAKENING** - A private sector plan to rescue America's inner cities. This three pronged approach is embodied in the word CREATE: "CR" for Cultural Renewal. "EA" for Economic Awakening. "TE" for Technical Education.



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