



African American Ministers Leadership Council

“VESSELS Forward©: The Sowing of Seeds” Clergy Spring Training Institute

April 22-25, 2013 Los Angeles, CA

Covenant of Commitment to Reduce Gun Violence 2016

As the institution that has held, from days of enslavement to the present, African American families and communities together;

As the body of leaders who stand on behalf of the broken and the oppressed;

As members of homes, congregations, neighborhoods, cities, states and a nation in relationship with one another and with God;

As a people of conscience, concern and prepared for change; and,

As witnesses of statistics that sound an immediate alarm for people and nation that:

- we are losing eight children a day to gun-related deaths of which half are African American;
- there are approximately 268 gun related deaths per day leaving far too many children, families and communities thrown into desperate grief and trauma;
- gun violence is the leading cause of death for Black males ages 15-19 and too many clergy are burying children they recently baptized, celebrated a high school graduation with, or prayed over as they left for college;
- the epidemic of violence requires that we work closer.

We join in Covenant with parents, educators, community leaders, one another and other communities to aggressively raise awareness of gun violence as a spiritual and moral crisis. We respond to the call to work more united with greater intention toward a peaceable society where all children have the opportunity to grow and prosper, and where everyone, especially our youth can live without fear of gun violence.

“Commit your actions to the Lord and your plans will succeed”

Proverbs 16:3 (NLT)



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Covenant of Commitment to Reduce Gun Violence 2016

We commit ourselves to 3 years of but not limited to increase:

- **A**dvocacy with other local community-based prevention organizations and other faith communities across geographic, religious, economic and racial lines to show the impact of gun related deaths and violence on diverse communities and promote awareness for legislative strategies that incorporates this reality;
- **C**ongregational and community dialogue and education on gun safety and gun violence prevention strategies;
- **T**ension reduction education between legal and illegal ownership and use of guns for protection and for preservation while working with local gun shops to adopt a “Code of Conduct” to eliminate legal purchases of guns for illegal resale (straw purchases);
- **I**nclusion of parents and guardians as peace keepers as the first line of defense to address and reduce gun violence by being vocal and visible collaborators with local gun violence prevention organizations and efforts in our local communities;
- **O**ngoing communication strategies with legislators at all levels to ensure values-based harm reduction policies that enhance gun safety and security for all families and communities; and,
- **N**ormalizing awareness and efforts in our homes, neighborhoods, family gatherings, places of worship, businesses such as barber shops, beauty and nail salon voter registration, voter education and voter mobilization because elections happen all the time in this county.

Implementation of these Covenant principles will be different but commonly directed with the aim to have impact, a significant reduction of gun related violence in our communities, congressional districts, voting precinct and/or zip code area by 2016.

We sign and agree, starting today, to increase our work for peace, life, love and freedom from captivity of the fear and victimization of gun violence.

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