



Seven Things African American Clergy and Faith Leaders Can Do to Support Comprehensive Immigration Reform

“...let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.”

Matthew 6:15 (NIV)

- **Commit** to learning more about this very complex issue. Immigration reform is about human rights, human dignity, exploitation of low-wage labor, and a broken system that has not been fixed.
- **Create** opportunities for dialogue with members of your church, community and denomination to learn about immigrant communities, culture, faith and contributions to this nation from all over the world.
- **Challenge** publicly and from the pulpit misinformation. Take a stand against forces of intolerance, hate and those who insult the intelligence of African American people. Our ministries and messages are to help and not harm.
- **Connect** with men and women of faith from Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, and Latin America for example for a Missions/Unity Day, unity service to share the Good News in a transforming way.
- **Communicate** values of equality and fairness. We need a system that upholds our nation’s values and moves us closer together. That means a system where undocumented immigrants can register, unite with families and apply for citizenship without fear or intimidation.
- **Call** or email the office of your Member of Congress and invite them to come out to share what’s happening and why Immigration Reform is important to all people in order to truly be “one nation under God”.
- **Consciously** pray. One of the central messages from President Obama has been “our policies must recognize that we’re all in it together.” Lift up prayers often for wisdom, guidance and reform to unify neighborhoods, communities, cities, states and this nation.

“African American clergy who come out of prophetic traditions are committed to justice. If injustice is present, we must speak truth to power...Access to the American dream for one does not mean denial of the dream for another.”

Reverend Timothy McDonald, III, Chair, AAMIA





Seven Things African American Clergy and Faith Leaders Should Know About Comprehensive Immigration Reform

“African American clergy are burdened to raise the level of conversation – this body must raise justice conversations to make those against reform uncomfortable.”

Reverend Byron Williams, Pastor/Syndicated Columnist

The country needs Comprehensive Immigration Reform to:

- **Fix the broken immigration system** in this country. A comprehensive solution gets to the root of the problem, not one that perpetuates the failed enforcement-only policies of the past. A real solution to the immigration problem can and should address enforcement, but must also ensure that: immigrant workers are treated fairly.
- **Take into account both economic and human questions.** A comprehensive solution, such as the approach that was introduced by Congressman Luis Gutierrez this past December (CIR ASAP), is supported by a plethora of groups because it is fair and would work. Those who oppose a comprehensive solution would rather demagogue the issue than solve the problem.
- **Connect with the passage of the DREAM Act** (The Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act, S.729) which would give students who came to the United States before the age of 16 a chance to realize their dreams through the opportunity to pursue a higher education. It would reward hard work and academic achievement with legal residency and a chance to earn citizenship.
- **Clear a path to earned citizenship** for the 12 million undocumented immigrants who are here and contributing to our society by working hard and paying taxes without the opportunity to earn legal status.
- **Identify resources and information** that would facilitate informed conversations about rights, employment verification system, security, and strengthening America’s workforce.
- **Speak as compassionate, fair-minded Americans** ready to challenge and hold accountable all anti-immigrant media figures and public officials--especially those who use the issue of immigration to create racial division and resentment.
- **Celebrate the integration of New Americans** into this country from all around the world.

“Please be advised that without equivocation I am first and foremost concerned with the men and women of this country. My conscience allows me the liberty to think of the men and women of the Caribbean, South America, Africa and other countries who are and have been denied citizenship or entry into this country.”

Elder Kevin Ford, Chicago





A Sample Prayer in Solidarity for Comprehensive Immigration Reform

A PRAYER FOR THE WELL BEING OF THE COUNTRY

Jehovah Shalom;

“God of our weary years, God of our silent tears, Thou who hast brought us along the way; Thou who hast by thy might, Led us into the light, keep us forever in the path, we pray.”

Lord who is called by many names, I pray this intercessory prayer on behalf of those from communities around the country, around the world asking for the peace, the provision, the comfort, the hope that only You can give.

I pray this prayer for the well being of this nation with faith that can move mountains. Let those who agree and disagree with the purpose and plans You have for the people of this nation be witnesses to this Immigration Reform movement from captivity.

Let them witness times when we will stumble but not fall, when we are weak but still strong, when we are anxious, tired and fearful but benefactors of Your grace and Your love.

Let us thirst for that kind of love as well as for peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, self-control, and more love.

“God of our weary years”, let none of my faults get in the way of hearing this prayer for the well being of the country for those who are frustrated, who cry, who shout, who whisper as we learn, grow, walk, talk and march together through the wilderness journey for justice and equality “till victory is won.”

In Jesus name, Amen.





A Sample Prayer in Solidarity for Comprehensive Immigration Reform

A PRAYER FOR THE LEADERS OF THIS NATION

Dear Lord,

I pray this prayer for elected officials who hold offices in the White House and Congress and are faced with difficult decisions.

Thank You for those who are recognized as leaders and are liberated from division.

Thank You for blessing them with moral courage to make wise, Godly decisions.

Thank You for those who work for righteousness, those whom You have sustained.

Thank You for those who work for justice and those who seek Your guidance in times of confusion and doubt.

Thank You for the men and women who work diligently with faith, integrity, brotherly kindness and yes love to recreate a great nation for all people.

Thank You for all who seek good counsel from those who value equality and fairness.

Thank You for all who build good relationships with those who look beyond their own selfish needs.

Thank You for all who value the true diversity of the immigrant community and their contributions to this nation.

Thank You for all who see, trust and believe.

Thank You for all who remember the oath they took to serve.

Thank you for Your word to pray without ceasing for their understanding and wisdom and for inclining Your ear and hearing this prayer of thanksgiving.

I pray this prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, the Source of our hope and our strength,
Amen.



A Sample Prayer in Solidarity for Comprehensive Immigration Reform

A PRAYER FOR PEOPLE OF FAITH

(Adapted from "A Pastoral Prayer" by Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.)

Jehovah Shamma;

We thank Thee, O Lord, for this time, this day, for this assignment.

We thank Thee, O God, for the spirit of this gathering and for the spiritual nature of all men and women called to minister, called to serve. We are in nature but we live above nature.

As people of faith, help us to be mindful of our special place in this struggle for dignity.

Help us to minister with help and not harm, with love and not hate.

Give us strength to love our enemies and to always do good to those who use and persecute us.

We thank Thee O God for Thy Church, Thy places of worship.

We thank Thee for Thy Word that challenges us today to do more than sing and pray but go out and work as though the very answer to our prayers, the prayers of people of faith, depended on us and not upon Thee. Help us to help others to realize that male and female, born in or immigrated to this land are created deserving dignity, righteousness, justice and hope fulfilled.

Keep this body of faith walkers in perfect peace.

Help us to walk together, pray together, sing together, live together and work together until that day when all will rejoice one in the spirit, one common bond of humanity and the fulfillment of this task that is equipping us for the next.

Lets us be encouraged as we encourage each other for we are one movement for with many voices giving thanks to Thee O God, for this time, this work, this movement and for what was, what is and what will be. In Jesus name we pray and give thanks, Amen