

New Federal Initiatives Project

**An Overview of the White House Office
on Faith-Based and Neighborhood
Partnerships
and the Council on Faith-Based and
Neighborhood Partnerships**

**By
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President Barack Obama announced President Bush's White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives will continue in his administration under the name "the Office on Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships." It will focus on four priorities: (1) ensuring community groups are a key part of the economic recovery and the reduction of poverty, (2) examining ways to support women and children, address teen pregnancy, and reduce abortions, (3) encouraging responsible fatherhood, and (4) fostering interfaith dialogue with leaders and scholars around the world.

President Obama appointed Joshua DuBois to lead the office. Mr. DuBois, 26, is a former Pentecostal pastor and advisor to Mr. Obama in his U.S. Senate office and Presidential campaign. Some critics note that Mr. DuBois has no experience working with charities.

A new President's Advisory Council on Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships (COFANP), composed of religious and secular leaders and scholars from different backgrounds, will work with the White House Office. Council members include:

Diane Baillargeon, President & CEO, Seedco (New York, New York). Seedco is a national nonprofit organization that works with community partners in low income communities to create new ways to help job seekers, workers, and neighborhood entrepreneurs achieve economic advancement. Ms. Baillargeon has worked in the public sector, as well as providing consulting services to nonprofits.

Dr. Arturo Chávez, Ph.D., President & CEO, Mexican American Cultural Center (San Antonio, Texas). Dr. Chávez has broad experience as an inner city teacher and youth minister, chaplain to incarcerated youth, and community organizer and activist. His areas of expertise include multicultural communities, Latino youth and family ministry, immigration, and Catholic social thought.

Fred Davie, President, Public/Private Ventures (New York, New York). Public/Private Ventures (P/PV) creates and strengthens programs to improve the lives of residents in low-income communities. Mr. Davie's background includes broad public and private sector experience. While at P/PV, he collaborated with the Bush Administration to develop the Prisoner Reentry Initiative.

Pastor Joel C. Hunter, Senior Pastor, Northland, a Church Distributed (Lakeland, Florida). Pastor Hunter is an internationally known spokesperson for compassion issues such as sanctity of life, creation care, justice, poverty, and marriage and the family. He serves on the boards of the World Evangelical Alliance and the National Association of Evangelicals, and as a delegate to the US-Islamic World Forum.

Bishop Vashti M. McKenzie, Presiding Bishop, 13th Episcopal District, African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church (Knoxville, Tennessee). The first female bishop in the AME Church, Bishop McKenzie previously served as pastor of an inner city Baltimore church. During her tenure the church built 15 new social service ministries.

Rev. Otis Moss, Jr., Pastor emeritus, Olivet Institutional Baptist Church (Cleveland, Ohio). Friend of Martin Luther King, Jr., Rev. Moss was involved in the early civil rights movement. As pastor, Rev. Moss pushed for civil rights, neighborhood revitalization, and quality medical care. His son, Rev. Otis Moss, III, leads Chicago's Trinity United Church of Christ, formerly led by Rev. Jeremiah Wright Jr. and attended by President Obama.

Dr. Frank S. Page, President emeritus, Southern Baptist Convention (Taylors, South Carolina). Dr. Page holds a Ph.D. degree in Christian Ethics focusing on moral, social, and ethical issues. During his pastorate, First Baptist Church of Taylors has dramatically increased its outreach to the surrounding community. Dr. Page stated he’s “conservative [] in theology as well as in politics” and was “shocked” to be chosen for the Council, but he felt he could play an important role in helping set the direction for the organization – if he is taken seriously, and if not, he says he will not be part of it.

Eboo S. Patel, Founder & Executive Director, Interfaith Youth Corps (Chicago, Illinois). Interfaith Youth Core is a global interfaith youth movement seeking to build mutual respect and pluralism among religiously diverse young people by empowering them to work together to serve others. Mr. Patel is the author of *Acts of Faith: The Story of an American Muslim, the Struggle for the Soul of a Generation* and “The Faith Divide,” a featured blog on religion for *The Washington Post*. He was named by *Islamica Magazine* as one of ten young Muslim visionaries shaping Islam in America.

Melissa Rogers, Founder & Director, Wake Forest School of Divinity Center for Religion and Public Affairs (Winston-Salem, North Carolina). Prof. Rogers is a visiting professor of religion and public policy at Wake Forest University Divinity School. She previously served as executive director of the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life and as general counsel of the Baptist Joint Committee on Religious Liberty. Prof. Rogers helped lead a diverse coalition of religious and civil liberties organizations supporting the enactment of the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act of 2000 (RLUIPA).

Rabbi David N. Saperstein, Director & Counsel, Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism (Washington, D.C.). Rabbi Saperstein has served as the director and chief legal counsel at the Union for Reform Judaism’s Religious Action Center for over 30 years. He currently co-chairs the Coalition to Preserve Religious Liberty, and serves on the boards of the NAACP and People For the American Way. In 1999, Rabbi Saperstein was elected as the first Chairman of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom.

Dr. William J. Shaw, President, National Baptist Convention, USA (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania). Dr. Shaw leads the largest African American religious organization in the nation. As pastor of White Rock Baptist Church since 1956, he has overseen the establishment of several outreach ministries, including after school programs and a substance abuse ministry. He serves as Chairman of the Trustee Board for the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania and is a member *ex officio* on the Board of Penn Medicine.

Father Larry J. Snyder, President, Catholic Charities USA (Alexandria, Virginia). Catholic Charities USA is the national membership association of more than 1,500 local Catholic Charities agencies that help more than 7.4 million people a year, regardless of their religious, social, or economic backgrounds. Father Snyder oversees Catholic Charities USA’s Campaign to Reduce Poverty in America, which aims to cut poverty in half by 2020 by urging the federal government to prioritize the needs of the poor.

Richard Stearns, President, World Vision (Bellevue, Washington). World Vision is a Christian relief and development organization dedicated to helping children and their communities worldwide reach their full potential by tackling the causes of poverty. Mr. Stearns brought nearly 25 years of corporate experience to World Vision. He has made helping children and families affected by the worldwide AIDS crisis a priority.

Judith N. Vredenburg, President & CEO, Big Brothers Big Sisters of America (BBBS) (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania). With nearly 400 agencies across the country, BBBS serves more than a quarter million children. Ms. Vredenburg places major emphasis on increasing measurable impacts resulting from

BBBS relationships. She came to BBBS with 29 years of management experience, in both for-profit and nonprofit organizations.

Rev. Jim Wallis, President & Executive Director, Sojourners (Washington, D.C.). Author, public theologian, and commentator on religion and politics, Rev. Wallis is best known as founder and editor of *Sojourners Magazine* and the Washington, D.C.-based Christian community of the same name. He is the convener of Call to Renewal, an interfaith effort to end poverty. Rev. Wallis' books include *The Great Awakening*, *Reviving Faith & Politics in a Post-Religious Right America* and *God's Politics: Why the Right Gets It Wrong and the Left Doesn't Get It*.

*Rebecca R. Dummermuth served as Associate Director for Legal Affairs in the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives from 2003 - 2005. Prior to that, Mrs. Dummermuth worked as Legal Counsel at The Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, a public interest law firm in Washington, D.C., and served in the Bush Administration's Department of Labor as Special Assistant to the Solicitor. A graduate of Washington and Lee University School of Law, Mrs. Dummermuth clerked for the Honorable Rhesa Hawkins Barksdale on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit. Since leaving the White House, Mrs. Dummermuth has focused her energies on being a wife, mom, and homemaker. She and her husband Matt live in Iowa with their two children.

Related links

Amendments to Executive Order 13199 and Establishment of the President's Advisory Council for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships (February 5, 2009)

http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/AmendmentstoExecutiveOrder13199andEstablishmentofthePresidentsAdvisoryCouncilforFaith-BasedandNeighborhoodPartnerships/

“James A. Sonne Reviews The Freedom of Faith-Based Organizations to Staff on a Religious Basis by Carl H. Esbeck, Stanley W. Carlson-Thies, and Ronald J. Sider” *Engage*, Volume 6, Issue 1 (May 1, 2005)

http://www.fed-soc.org/publications/pubID.933/pub_detail.asp

“Hein, One Year Later: The Future of Church-State Litigation” - Event Audio
Alex J. Luchenitser, Ira C. “Chip” Lupu, Walter M. Weber, Robert W. Tuttle

http://www.fed-soc.org/publications/pubid.1049/pub_detail.asp