

# DC POWER

**PEOPLE  
ORGANIZED  
FOR WEALTH,  
EQUITY, &  
RESPECT**

## **“The Recapitulation of All Things.....”**

*My goal in this writing can be stated thusly: to demonstrate that Recapitulation is the best.....starting point because it is consistent with what the Bible says about atonement, is ancient, and because it grounds what the major Christian traditions teach about salvation and entails what is demonstrably true in them. If Jesus reverses what went wrong in Adam, this entails more than simply individual salvation. It entails rightly orienting all of creation, from my relationship to God and neighbor to the social order to the earth itself. This broader aspect of Recapitulation is part of what makes it a more attractive, and far more balanced,"*

— from "A Second Adam: How the Doctrine of Recapitulation Helps Make Sense of the Atonement" – by Cody Cook



## **BACKGROUND: A NEW THING**

“Behold, I make all things new.....”

These words of Christ as recorded by the great apostle as he was a prisoner on the Isle of Patmos (Rev. 21:3) speak to the continuing work of renewing everything in creation -- individuals and institutions, congregations and communities.

Over the past 18 months, pastors and lay leaders have been meeting to digest the lessons and challenges of the past several years and to reimagine and redefine their approaches to ministry and organizing in their communities. The Covid crisis accelerated this search for fresh approaches. An organization that acknowledges this creative dynamic and seeks to engage congregations and other institutions in this work is both important and timely. The founding leaders of DC POWER have been putting in place the foundation stones for a strong, dynamic, power organization in DC.

They have moved in this direction for several reasons. One relates to the challenging conditions that are affecting DC at this moment. There is no need to list them all here. But existing DC residents are facing an existential threat to their ability to remain in communities that have become increasingly gentrified. While new luxury apartments and condos rise at a rapid rate, long-standing residents find themselves priced out of neighborhoods where they lived; and congregations are wrestling with these forces of gentrification as they labor to fulfill their mission.

A second reason relates to the need to identify and integrate groups of residents who continue to live or work in DC. Increasingly, those who work in our transit system, teach in our schools, respond to crises on our streets, remove our garbage and clean our streets cannot afford to live in or even the city. An aggressive and accelerated effort to preserve and improve the affordable housing that remains and to build thousands of additional units of affordable ownership and rental housing, with clear benchmarks, is urgently needed. Likewise, there is the need for African American businesses to increase their share of economic activity within large public institutions and major corporations. By some estimates, approximately 60,000 individuals in DC are returning citizens – those who have spent years in jail or prison. They represent an unseen city-within-a-city. An organization that creates with them constructive pathways to full social and economic lives is urgently needed. Other groups – youth who are disconnected from family or faith, those recovering from drug and alcohol disorders, immigrants struggling to survive in a bewildering mix of substandard housing and sky-high costs – need to be engaged in new and meaningful ways.

And, finally, the founding leaders of DC POWER came to the realization that this moment – with all its challenges – is an invitation and a gift. It's an invitation to take the risks and test the approaches that will lead to the next version of DC that will be healthier, safer, and more supportive of its residents of all races and classes and faiths and orientations. And it's a gift because the history of the African American Church and the Industrial Areas Foundation, the deeply experienced and proven organizing network working with DC POWER, is full of other moments that were met by leaders who had the vision, persistence, and creativity to rise to each occasion. This dynamic of challenge and response, of crisis and creativity, is the very heart and soul of effective ministry and effective organizing.

## **SO WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR DC POWER?**

It means that as few as 30 and as many as 50 congregations, labor locals, and other associations will commit to an effort of relationship-building, leadership development, issue identification and public action to improve lives and reclaim communities.

It means establishing a dues base that is the critically important starting point for a sustainable budget. Every institution will be asked to pay dues – with \$1,000 as a minimum and \$7,500 as a maximum – to generate at least \$125,000 per year in this way. An additional \$225,000 will be raised yearly from grants to support a small professional staff of organizers and trainers.

It means that a major theme throughout this effort will be a conscious reflection on the state of ministry and experimentation with new and different ways to engage the DC community and its residents. It means the creation of a new rhythm of programmatic ministry and service that flows from a clergy and lay leadership who have ears to hear the new things that the Lord is doing. Clergy and lay leaders will examine their approaches and experiment with new ways of engaging individuals, families, and communities. Specialized training will take place to translate ideas into realities that prove their worth. It means that a reexamination of the physical structures and facilities of congregations will take place – identifying locations where the construction of new, truly affordable homes and apartments can occur, turning unused or underused office or other spaces into uses that serve the existing communities surrounding those congregations. IAF has a growing track record and a top team dedicated to this reexamination, along with funding to support congregations in the initial phases of this important work.

## SCHEDULE GOING FORWARD



**In October of 2023**, the leaders will convene to make their first dues payments and identify additional institutions to be recruited.



**In October or early November**, a first, intensive training series will be conducted for 60 to 75 leaders from the participating institutions and those institutions considering participation.



**In early 2024**, a founding assembly will take place where the initial strategies and priorities – for training, recruitment, development work, and house meetings – will be adopted by a large body of leaders.