



It is time.....

That we right the ship that is the destiny of our community;

It is time to work together on the things that we agree upon, that are in the best interests of our community and not get distracted by those areas in which we disagree – but also recognize that there is a truth that even disagreements, when used properly, can lead to a multi-pronged, multi-layered approach to solving complex problems – it simply requires that we ‘play nice in the sandbox’;

It is time to use the tools that our fathers and mothers, our grandfathers and grandmothers, our great-grandfathers and great-grandmothers, struggled and fought so hard to take, the unalienable rights of all free citizens to chart a course for themselves...to realize the fruits of their labor...to pursue happiness; to vote – **it is time to recognize that voting is our voice and our voices must be heard;**

It is time that we recognize that there are good people and good organizations, across our community, doing good work – but that we tend to be islands....so let us create networks (both visible and below the radar) to join forces and resources, wherever and whenever it makes sense, to build greater capacity and strength towards better outcomes...

It is time that we recognize that we all have a part to play, therefore, each of us, in our own way, must determine the part we can and will play in this struggle...and that if that part be genuine and sincere, that it be respected...

It is time...

That we improve how we address the issues of the un-served and under-served, not in a patronizing way, rather in a manner that leads to real improvements in the quality of their lives;

that we view the safety-net as it was intended – as a bridge to better times, as a means of strengthening families, in order to strengthen our communities; that we be resolute in using our tax dollars to make the safety net stronger, not weaker; that our tax dollars not be used to further exclude, segregate, or discriminate against us – keeping us from equality, opportunity and justice;

It is time that we not be satisfied with

- training that does not lead to real jobs,
- that we not settle for micro loans for our businesses when an infusion of substantive capital is really required;
- that we not be amazed by low-impact dollars that are invested when nearing an election;
- that we not be pacified by window-dressed, smoke and mirrored, short-lived, ‘great sounding’ surface gestures that are so much cotton candy – piled high and sweet, but ultimately fluff with little lasting substance.

It is time that we not accept this from any elected official, especially some of our black elected officials, who attempt to con us instead of representing us;

It is time that we understand that a rising tide *does not* necessarily lift all boats, if some boats are weighed down by the anchors of racism, sexism, classism and other barriers real or imagined

....so that it is ok to empathize with those that are slower to move on opportunity or that are stubborn in their un preparedness...

Anchors are, by their very nature, meant to keep a boat in its place – therefore it is time that we not give up on portions of our community that require extra effort, more resources, a bit more time to ‘get it’, that result in smaller margins of return on the investment –

(corollary: the investment in human capital must be measured differently...);

It is time to make things happen for people within our community who may not appreciate the effort, but are no less deserving;

It is time...

For the ‘usual suspects’, those that are chosen (from the small pool of the chosen few) to use their positions on the boards where they are allowed to serve, in service to their community....but let us also recognize that it is time to force the expansion of that pool to ensure that as they serve the interests of their appointers, they also serve the interests of their community;

It is time for us to give those that are on the inside, ‘room to breathe’ ...however, they must ‘breathe with a sense of urgency’ in using their influence and decision-making responsibilities, responsibly;

It is time for the ‘monied class’, those with true access to capital, those with true discretionary funds, to use said capital and said discretionary funds as a catalyst for jump-starting a resurgence of our business sector, our education sector, our activist sector, our ‘leadership sector’....;

It is time that we recognize that others can afford to wallow in a ‘me-only, to the detriment of everybody else’ way of living, but that it is a death knell for a people attempting to make real and substantive change happen for the many... that sacrifice, if focused and strategic, is indeed noble...and oftentimes needed;

It is time that those who profess to represent us, profess to lead us, but know (or do not know or care) that they are truly ineffective, are shown ‘the door’, and are replaced with a new courageous leadership;

It is time that we listen to our youth, while respecting the experiences of our elders and clear a path for that next generation of leaders...a new form of leadership...and that we identify, and nurture, and support, and position and protect this new leadership;

It is time...

That those within our communities that are un-served and under-served, respect those in our community who are successful, recognizing the struggles and challenges they overcame to achieve their success;

And that those within our community that are successful, share their knowledge and insights so that we may significantly expand the pool of success; that they also recognize that they did not build their success on their own (we have all required a measure of assistance and a bit of blessed luck)

It is time that we acknowledge that for some the need to make a dollar will cause them to work against the interests of their community – it is a reality that some will lose their way and that for others, individual interests can and do come in conflict with the interests of the many –

However, it is time that we understand that one can be successful in this nation’s corporations or legislatures or wherever, while also benefiting and being true to your community and adhering to your principles – it just takes a little courage and a smart strategy to out-strategize those that try to convince us that ‘making it’ is an either-or proposition;

It is time...

That we not be embarrassed by the actions of some in our community; falling prey to viewing ourselves as the media would have the world view us – we know ourselves – the highs, the lows and the myriad of in-betweens – we are just as reflective in our diversity as any other group of folk are in theirs, in dealing with the challenges of everyday life – nuff said...;



That we take control of our own reality, develop our own narratives, tell our own story, recognizing that it is a core part of the larger tapestry that is this nation;

It is time...

That we acknowledge that conspiracies do exist – drugs flooding our neighborhoods, untimely deaths, recent supreme court rulings, well-placed dollars and other well-placed enticements – **it is time** that we not fool ourselves about this, and yet not be frozen in our response because of the implications;

It is time that the cries and screams and pain in death of our children are no less heard and no less felt and no less acted upon and surely no less prevented;

It is time to understand the parable of the elephant raised being held by chains, but now, as a strong adult, being held only by the thinnest of rope;

It is time for us to own what happens to us ...and to accept the challenge of finding solutions to our most urgent problems, to addressing the intransigent issues plaguing our communities. **It is time** for us, collectively, to step up to meet and exceed this challenge.

It is time we remember what we have always known – the beauty in our people; the strength and resiliency in our people, the demonstrated and the untapped greatness within our community...it is time to leverage this strength and beauty and resiliency and greatness;

It is time for boldness, and risk-taking, and creativity, innovation, initiative, for coalition building, for leading by example, and metrics focused on outcomes... It is time to plan strategically and to fight.... for opportunity and parity...for our young, and for our old, and for ourselves, and for our future;

It is time for us to recognize that by necessity ours must be a larger tent (there is indeed safety in numbers), so let us gather together as needed, and plan and act together when needed, let us fight together and build coalitions together to move our community's agenda (however we individually define it – be it a Black Agenda or an African American Agenda or a People's Agenda or a Progressive Agenda or a Sustainable Wealth-building Agenda or an Economic / Political Action Agenda or a Save Our Children Agenda.....) forward;

Therefore, it is time

For those within the houses of faith, join those that are in the bastions of business, join those that are in the institutions of learning, join those that are in the places of healing, join those that are in the facilities of support, join those that are in the forums of political power, join those caught up in the prison industrial complex, join those that are in the safe places we call home, join those that have no homes, join those that are on the street corners across our communities...in recognition of a shared past, an inter-connected present, and the possibilities of a greater future that we, collectively, can and must imagine, define and bring to fruition.

It is time, in the year of our Lord 2020, to right the ship that is the destiny of our community.

It is....

