



# THE BATTLE FOR AND THE RECONSTRUCTION OF AFRICAN AMERICAN CULTURE

## CULTURE IS EVERYTHING!

Culture defines every aspect of life and governs all behavior and choice. Culture dictates how we think, how we respond and relate to others, and how we view ourselves in relation to the world around us. To a very real degree—culture is everything! Culture is the sum total of the attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors that characterize how a group functions. African American culture defines us as a people, and we have both consciously and unconsciously defined our culture.

Today, we can explicitly choose to change (reconstruct) any aspect of our culture, any time we choose. It is time that we consciously reject the self-destructive aspects of our culture and choose to adopt alternatives that heal and positively transform our community. Being the catalyst for community healing and for the reconstruction of African American culture is the defined objective of The Transformational Agenda.

## OUR HUMONGOUS ERROR

African American culture today is a direct extension of the slave culture of yesterday. We as a people never fully extricated ourselves from that terrible time, and thus how we live today is a haunting reflection of our awful past. African Americans were slaves in this country for two hundred and fifty years. Because we have failed to really face the horror of slavery and heal from it, we remain disempowered by our past. We whisper about slavery instead of bringing it into the light, examining it, critiquing our experience, and learning from our pain and travail.

By trying to avoid the suffering and misery of looking at the past and by attempting to shelter our children from the evil memories of slavery, we have unknowingly accepted a continuation of the once required, yet still very negative, behaviors of slave culture. These behaviors, whether diet, work ethic, endearing ourselves to powerful white people at the expense of ourselves, failure to save and invest, conspicuous consumption, beating our children, even racial self-hatred, were necessary to survive slavery. Today they are simply the negative mental legacies of slavery and the brutal decades that followed. Today, they are destructive to ourselves and our community, yet we continue to unconsciously embrace them.

Our denial of the negative impact of slavery was a humongous error for which we pay the price today. It is not too late to correct this error.



## THE RECONSTRUCTION OF AFRICAN AMERICAN CULTURE

Once we fully realize that these behaviors are simply the product of trauma, we can take those first bold steps to changing the culture from which these behaviors stem. We have the power to finally extricate ourselves from a culture of enslavement. We have the authority to facilitate our healing and our glorious future. Our ancestors chose life so that we could know today. Today we shall validate their sacrifice by transforming our culture—by empowering ourselves.

## TODAY'S UN-CIVIL WAR

The African American community is in the midst of a bloody, epic, and un-civil war. Both our actions and our inactions are harming us. There is no end in sight, and there are no victors. Countless combatants have lost their lives, both literally and figuratively. We face the tides of violence, negativity, and self-hatred while taking significant and strategic losses. Our children, our schools, our churches, our communities, and our homes are all affected.

We wrestle with crippling poverty, disintegration of family structures, mental trauma, sexual abuse, drug abuse, lack of community support and involvement, violence against one another, and hatred for ourselves. We willfully accept apathy, indifference, cruelty, brutality, negativity, self-doubt, and self-loathing.

## WE ARE AT WAR WITH OURSELVES, AND WE DON'T KNOW WHY

In battle we do not face some outside enemy; rather, we come face to face with ourselves. Our own hands have helped cause the collapse of black culture and black people. The worst part is that we don't even know why we do the self-destructive things we do. We simply continue to exist, day in and day out, in this caustic cycle of devastation and destruction.

We are hanging on by a gossamer thread, one that at any moment could break and launch us into the empty abyss that we have allowed to develop under our feet. When it does, we will be swallowed whole. After our passing, the world will simply continue to say, "What a

shame? Look at what has become of them."

Our ancestors did not bleed and die just so we could live dejected and miserable at the margins of society. They did not endure the trauma of slavery with hope in their hearts so that we could be stuck in this mire of misfortune and unwilling to move. Know this, a pact was made on our behalf even before we were born. Our ancestors chose life so that we might live with dignity and pride. We were born for so much more than this.

We must choose to thrive and not just survive.

Now is the time for us to make the conscious choice to be and do better. Our communities have been under inspired and underdeveloped for far too long. We have been content to sit and wait for things to improve but unable or unwilling to take any action. Remember the covenant with our ancestors: they lived slave so that one day we could live free lives of dignity and pride. We must consciously choose to empower ourselves to reach higher, go farther, and be better.





## THE PATH TO HEALING

We have the capacity to transform ourselves from an oppressed, depressed, and despondent people into a proud and prosperous race if only we would embrace the truths that The Transformational Agenda offers. We can become an empowered people, no longer suffering from the negative mental legacies of slavery. We can thrive gloriously in a future that we created for ourselves.

The Transformational Agenda offers a unique opportunity to examine our history in America, reflect on how we have suffered, meditate on the changes we must make, and construct strategies for building a brighter more empowered future. It teaches us that by appreciating our past we acquire an accurate understanding of our present state and that the cultures of slavery and Jim Crow, which still exist today, are what constrains us. These negative mental legacies of slavery and Jim Crow manifest themselves today in broken homes and overflowing prisons, lack of motivation and aspiration, drug addiction, economic instability, the belief that we cannot shape our own destiny, and spiritual emptiness. We must appreciate our past, understand our present, and then shape our future.

Will you participate in The Transformational Agenda becoming the catalyst for the healing and empowering transformation of the African American community? The Transformational Agenda is a holistic blueprint for The African American community fully healing itself in 20 years.

“Listen to the Ancestors” is a short story which speaks to our history, presents the reasons for our madness, and proposes an alternative future. “20 Years Later,” another short story, provides the step-by-step blueprint for the healing of African American culture. You can read these short stories at [TheTransformationalAgenda.org](http://TheTransformationalAgenda.org). They will motivate you to become a hero.





## **WE NEED NOT WANDER ANY LONGER**

It is easy to wander in the wilderness when that which is destroying you is unknown. It is also easy to heal when you pursue transformation and reject the negative mental legacies of slavery. When we heal our culture and our community, the ancestors will be smiling, and future generations will call us blessed.

No one can heal our community for us, and healing is exactly what we need. The cause and solution cannot be comprehended via a 90 second elevator speech. It just takes a full day retreat. Nothing happens until someone does something, and you are someone who can do something. For example:

**Read “Listen to the Ancestors” and “20 Years Later” at [TheTransformationalAgenda.org](https://TheTransformationalAgenda.org).**  
**Observe Abstinence Week which begins at midnight on Valentine’s Day.**  
**Attend the Empowerment Conference March 1st at Cardinal Ritter College Preparatory High School.**  
**Experience The Transformational Agenda Retreat by registering at [TheTransformationalAgenda.org](https://TheTransformationalAgenda.org)**  
**Engage in on-going voluntary service (Time-Tithing) to impact the issue that you care about most.**

We can heal our community in but 20 years by empowering ourselves and our loved ones, by ministering to each other, and by being intentional and strategic. We must choose to BE the healing that we need. So love yourself, our ancestors, and our children enough to BE A HERO!

**STOP THE WAR. BE THE HEALING. ACT NOW.**