



## “Between The Lines” Anthony Asadullah Samad

### 50 Solutions To “The Black Dilemma” (Part III in a Five Part Series)

The next ten solutions seek to tackle what, in my opinion, is the crux of the African American problem and the real key to solving the problem of the black collective. They are two areas that are least susceptible to black criticism and the two areas most suspect when seeking to address the question as to why Blacks haven't progressed any further than they have. They claim to be the most independent segments of the African American leadership to speak out, but they hardly ever do—unless it's on safe issues, or after the horse is long out of the barn. Solving our problems in these two areas will put us half way there to solving “the Black Dilemma.” I'm talking about black politics and black religion. There is nothing that touches our lives that doesn't involve spirituality and politics. Separation between church and state is a fallacy. All you have to do is watch the influence Billy Graham or Pat Robertson has on the politics of the conservative right, or watch the influence of the Catholic church, or the Jewish Synagogue on the policies of government (particularly in acts of wrongdoing) to understand that the church is very political. And it was the black church that led the greatest social change in the history of America, by engaging “the politics of moral suasion” when white Southerners issued their Southern Manifesto, a declaration that they were not going to comply with *Brown* decision and extend equality to Blacks. Moral suasion shamed the rest of the country into passing the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, that was supposed to represent the political empowerment of black America. At the time, Blacks, in their unequal state, had less than 100 black elected officials. 40 years later, Blacks have over 8,000 black elected officials—and are still in an unequal state. What does that say for the church and black politics solving the problems of Black America? Not much.

Today, black politicians and black preachers are pretty much in the same state of affairs. Most want to be celebrities and entertainers. Going to church these days is like going to a concert. We have legislators that have been in office almost 20 years, and have *never* passed a piece of legislation. We have preachers of “mega-church” congregations that have never spoken out on a controversial issue. If the so-called “independent” politician or the preacher won't speak out, then who will? Most aren't worth the paper these words are written on, but every now and then, one steps up that makes a real difference. While that keeps us from losing total faith in politicians and preachers, it's not enough. So here's our ten solutions to sure up our spirituality and our politics;

Solution 21: Learn to separate your spirituality from religion. It helps you separate the hypocrisy of the pulpit, and the church, from your need to stay connected to God. So when you quit the church, or “church-hop” (as most do) in search of spiritual guidance, you don't quit God. Stay connected to your source of spiritual light and wisdom. God is in you, not in false prophets or bricks and mortar. For those who need church, make the church—don't let the church make you.

Solution 22: Remind politicians—on a right regular basis—that they serve you, you don't serve them. Most of them have forgotten that (and many never really understood it). When they forget, tell one, every now and then, to “kiss your a\*\*.” That tends to shock them back to reality.

Solution 23: Be a witness for God. Not just a “closet witness.” Take it to another level

even. Be a soldier for God, or as some of the youth say, “A Gangsta” for God. Advocate for what is right, and what is just. What is right isn’t always just, but what is just is always right. Our community’s condition is due the absence of witnesses for God. Plenty of churches, few soldiers.

Solution 24: Let’s stop playing with our franchise, the right to vote. This year is the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the 1965 Voting Rights Act, and Blacks are voting at the same levels, and in some instances—lower, than in 1965. Our voting sophistication must improve, and there are millions of dollars to educate voters that, somehow, never seem to make where they’re supposed to. Demand voter education between elections, not just before—when they want you to vote somebody. Our loss of societal respect is tied to our unpredictability at the polls. We are not equal without voting.

Solution 25: Stop looking for perfect people. There are none, just people striving to do right, be right, and act right. Our imperfections, our faults and our flaws, like the prophets, are demonstrations that God uses ordinary people to show others that those “on the right path” receive blessings, and perform “miracles” as they strive to stay in God’s grace. Those who can’t see that are not in God’s good graces. Look for the best in people, not perfection, Seek redemption where redemption is given and avoid judgment from those who are not in a position to judge.

Solution 26: Attend a city council meeting, County Board of Supervisors meeting, School Board Meeting, at least once a month. And show up in Washington, D.C. or your state’s capital every now and then. Politicians tend to be more accountable when they know people are watching.

Solution 27: Challenge your preacher to open the church to the lost, the despised and the rejected on a day other than Sunday and Bible Study night. As many churches as we have in America, three million homeless should not have to sleep on the streets. Housing the homeless, or battered women and children every now and then won’t take the polish of the mega-church floors.

Solution 28: Challenge yourself to understand the relationship between politics and money. Give a campaign contribution to prevent our politicians from having to become captive to outside special interest (part of the reason they can’t speak out) and pay to play schemes. Money is a necessary evil of politics. There’s no getting around it. If we want political independence, we have to pay for it. If we don’t, others will and they call the tune our politicians dance to.

Solution 29: Make your faith real. Faith without works is death. People claim they believe, but if you can’t put your faith into action—you don’t really believe. If you believe our communities can come up, believe they can be safer, believe God will bring the man or woman of your dreams, that faith should become real. God says in the Qu’ran, “You shall know the true believer, for they are the successful ones.” God knows the true believer’s heart and makes their desires manifest if their faith is real. If you’ve been praying all your life and nothing’s changed—don’t check others, check how you act out your faith. Those who don’t act on their faith, don’t have faith. You are not what you say you believe. You are what you act in support of your belief.

Solution 30: Practice the politics of moral suasion, and challenge both politicians and preachers to do the same. Find somebody that’s doing nothing about conditions of the poor and disadvantaged, and challenge them to help you make a change. Convince them that they cannot separate their communities circumstance from ours. We’re in this together—they can’t forget that.

The next ten solutions deal with preparing the next generations of Black America. Keeping our children, and their children, from becoming slaves again. God bless the child that has his own.