

Church leaders examine role in economic development

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According to Alfred Babington-Johnson, "Too many of us face poverty when prosperity is breaking out all around."

Babington is the President and CEO of the Stairstep Foundation, a faith-based organization that strives to empower the African-American community through evoking discussion and executing strategies that promote community building.

He is reaching out to church and community leaders to examine what is the process to assure our community is included in the employment and contracting of billions of dollars worth of upcoming construction and development projects.

"We believe that the greatest opportunity for the advancement of the African-American community is in the unity of the African-American church marching to take its proper place in the struggle," Babington said in a letter to church leaders.

"While we struggle with the ravages of poverty and wealth disparities for African-American people in the Twin Cities, there are extraordinary opportunities unfolding around us," he said. Just in the area of construction from 2014- 2016, there is a projection of \$8,000,000,000 in projects that will have some governmental oversight in respect to employment and contracting" Other high profile projects include the renovation of the State Capitol and the Minnesota Vikings Stadium.

Babington said these projects can help the community become significantly prosperous over the next few years.

The meeting to hear, discuss, strategize and move forward on construction and job opportunities is 11:30 p.m. Thursday April 24th at Shiloh Temple International, 1201 West Broadway, Minneapolis, MN. Lunch will also be provided, Babington said.

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