



Inland Empire Concerned African American Churches

750 March to Protest Penrod's Decision

The Black Voice News
SAN BERNARDINO

By Cheryl Brown

Driving rain or even snow didn't keep 750 marchers from protesting San Bernardino Sheriff Penrod's decision to hire Paul Bugar, the fired cop, who reportedly fired the first shot at Tyisha Miller as he and three others responded to a 911 medical distress call December 28, 1998. For the entire year protesters have marched in Riverside every Monday morning.

President's Day the march went from the Sheriff's Department on 655 W. 3rd Street to the county building downtown at 4th and Arrowhead Avenue, trying to avoid the rivers of water running clear out into the middle of the street at certain points.

In what appears to be an all boys network Penrod hired Bugar, who is under investigation by the U.S. Justice Department for civil rights violations, as a Dispatcher because he was the most qualified. But after loud protests and negotiations with a local Black organization, who pointed out his financial liability, he (Penrod) moved him to the computer room.

Ministers and other community leaders felt this move was selling out the community and the Sheriff was wrong, so protests began every Thursday in front of the Sheriff's office. Officers Bugar, (Alagna, Hotard, Stewart) were fired for using poor judgement that resulted in the death of Miller, said Rev. Raymond Turner, Pastor of



Marchers lined up and stepped off at 10 a.m. sharp from the San Bernardino Sheriff's Department.

Photos by Willie Hoyrst



Marchers after 1-mile ended up in front of County Building.

will now have support of the entire body of faith."

James Daniels, a member of St. Paul AME was excited about the possibilities for Black people. He said the next step should be the ballot box and we should register, teach more on candidates and issues and help people to vote."

The ecumenical march was quiet as each church walked behind their own banner. Some were so water-soaked that they desintegrated in the down-pouring rain.

Ministers and a Latino activist spoke about why the march was necessary. It was because the politicians do not respect Black people. Penrod would not have hired Bugar if he respected Black people was a general undertone.

Rev. Al Smith, Pastor of St. Paul A.M.E. and Chair of the march, fired up the crowd with the familiar "No Justice, No Peace" the chant went throughout the water soaked crowds who were huddled during the rain under the County building eaves as Sheriff Department representatives watched from inside.

It was Rev. Bernell Butler who took the crowd to another level with his biblical analogy of David's five smooth stones, ("but he only needed one to kill Goliath.") was in keeping with the march and then he referred to the cops as skinheads many were not aware of what he meant but cheered anyway. (Skinhead is the protest scare tactic used by the Riverside Police Officers Association to support the four officers. The Riverside Police Officers Association shaved their heads and marched on City Hall to protest the firings. It was one of their activities that brought in the Justice Department.)

IECAAC was formed in 2000 by 22 local pastors "to address systematic patterns of abuse and violence to and in the community in response to the hiring practices of the San Bernardino County Sheriff Department."

A Sleeping Giant Awakes

By Rikke Van Johnson

On Monday, February 21, 2000 over 750 people were on hand to witness a monumental event, which took place in the Inland Empire in San Bernardino. A sleeping giant was awakened, the Inland Empire concerned African American Churches. The IECAAC, composed of 27 churches and growing, along with the San Bernardino NAACP, led a peaceful march to protest the hiring of Paul Bugar by the San Bernardino Sheriff Department. Bugar was fired from the Riverside Police Department and is now under federal investigation because of his role in the shooting of 19-year-old Tyisha Miller. The IECAAC was formed because of the Sheriff Departments insensitivity to the Black community in their hiring of Bugar and the deal that the Westside Action Group struck with the Sheriff to move him to another job within the

department. The Black churches, the NAACP, and the Black community who wanted Bugar removed were astonished by this deal. Thus leading to the formation of the IECAAC.

Throughout history the Black Church has served as the cornerstone of the Black community. Ministers have often had to don several different hats to lead their congregations through difficult times. Many a message has gone over the pulpits to initiate the necessary changes needed during that time. In 1955 for example, when the successful bus boycott in Montgomery, Alabama took place, the Black Church was very instrumental in its success.

There are at least 3 areas that I believe the IECAAC can and will have a dramatic impact on this community. Their impact will be felt economically, politically, and spiritually.

The economic impact will start immediately by the boycott of San Bernardino County Sun,

which chose not to print an article until 3 days after the march. They further added insult to injury by not investigating the number of participants in the march and reporting only 200 people marched (Los Angeles Times, Westside Story and The Black Voice News had the participants at or over 750. (The Sun was not there to estimate the count.)

Politically, the member churches should not tolerate politicians only appearing at election time not to be seen again until the next election. If they are presently holding office and continue to be insensitive to the needs of our community, then they need to be targeted and replaced. Before the elections, accountability procedures need to be established with each candidate. They advance the issues addressed by the IECAAC. They also need to start developing their own candidates to ensure that they will be properly represented.

Spiritually, I believe that the IECAAC will be used to help propel the gospel in the Inland Empire and throughout the nation. Never before in the Inland empire have a group of committed Black Churches set aside their denominationalisms and gotten together in such harmony to do what is needed to bring a community together. Other Black Churches have gotten together in the past, but they could not stand up to the test of time.

2 Chronicles 7:14 states, "If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and see My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land." One should not believe that it is only a coincidence that this group came into being at such a time as this. But you can believe that God is in the mix and He is in control.

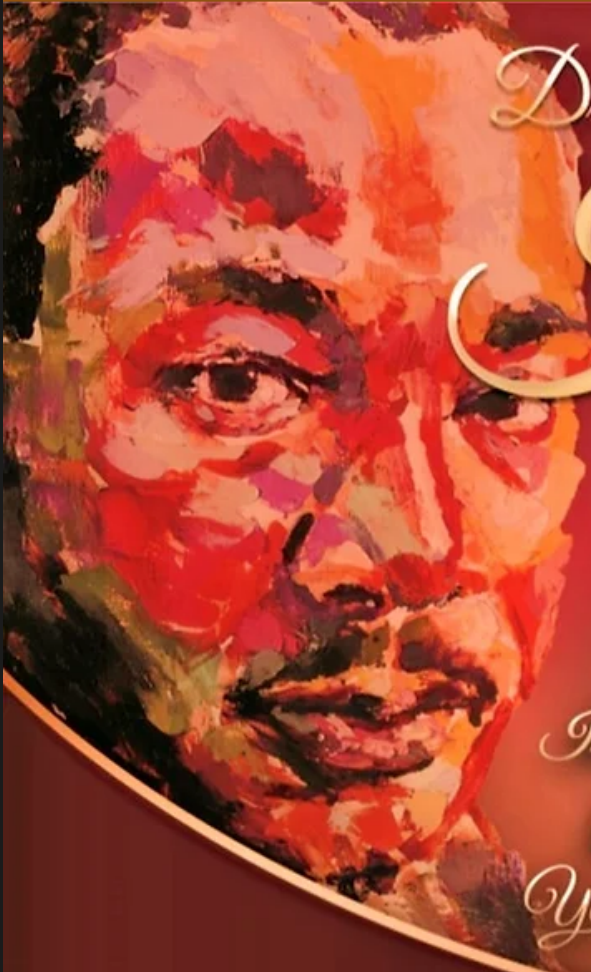
2000
Protest



On February 21, 2000 the IECAAC marched in the rain with the NAACP and over 750 protestors to protest San Bernardino Sheriff Department's decision to hire one of the officers involved in the shooting death of teenager Tyishia Miller in Riverside. The faith community was galvanized by the Sheriff's department decision to hire Paul Bugar despite the fact that he had been fired from the Riverside Department and was under investigation by the US Justice Department for civil rights violations.



- IECAAC has continued to organize and to serve as a strong voice for the African-American community.
- They host a range of important community events like the MLK Prayer Breakfast.
- You can join IECAAC Public Meetings every 4th Tuesday at 10:30 am at New Hope Family Life Center Conference Room # 13 1505 W. Highland Ave. San Bernardino, CA 92411.




Dr. Martin Luther
King Jr.
PRAYER BREAKFAST

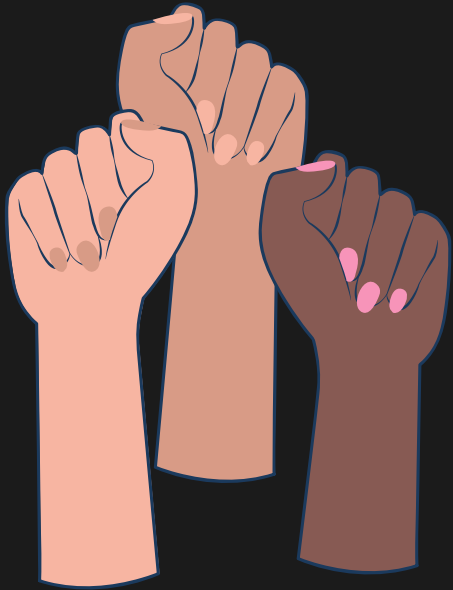
January | **20**
7:30 am

Inland Empire
40th
Year Celebration
& Liberation!

"The Best of the Best"

CSUSB
COUSSOULIS ARENA
Free Parking in Lot G (See Map)
Admission: \$25 Table: \$300





Our Purpose



“The purpose of the Inland Empire Concerned African-American Churches is to unify the African American church, the community's voice and resources to effect improvement and keep resources within our communities. We believe the best way to do this is through the unified, collaborative efforts of the churches within those communities. The church has always been the center of the African American community. The IECAAC looks to continue and expand the church in order to improve the socio-economic situations of our communities at-large.”

Sources

<https://www.iecaac.org/about-us>

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