

Johnny Ray Youngblood

Senior Pastor, Mt. Pisgah Baptist Church in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn

Pastor Emeritus, St. Paul Community Baptist Church, Brooklyn

MORE² Banquet Speaker, June 14, 2012



Born in Louisiana and reared in New Orleans' Lower Ninth Ward, Johnny Ray Youngblood was licensed to preach at the age of 12. Dr. Youngblood is the father of three sons: Johnny Jernell, Joel Ray and Jason Royce, and grandfather to Donna Lynn, Joshua, Jalen, Jordyn and Jasmine. His work is widely recognized and has earned him great respect for producing the phenomenal, by challenging the traditional and empowering oppressed people to achieve the impossible. His commitment to the call for spiritual healing, racial parity, social justice, and economic equity for all people has garnered him national recognition as a prophet, preacher, national leader, public advocate, writer, and teacher.

Dr. Youngblood served as Senior Pastor of the St. Paul Community Baptist Church, located in the East New York section of Brooklyn, New York from 1974-2009. In 2001 he was called to serve as Senior Pastor at the Mt. Pisgah Baptist Church in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn – a role he was honored to assume in memory of one of his mentors, the late Rev. George H. Murray.

Rev. Youngblood has designed a socially relevant, thoughtfully crafted ministry that has touched and shaped the lives of men, women and children alike. A cornerstones of his ministry is his renowned intentional ministry with Black men which challenges and empowers them to be strong leaders of their communities, Bible-based vanguards who are politically aware, involved in social action as well as being the cord that bonds family.

In 1984, Rev. Youngblood founded the St. Paul Community Christian School, renamed The Johnny Ray Youngblood Academy in March 2007, which served grades K- 8 until temporarily shuttering in June 2008. Over the years he has also collaborated to establish two public high schools, as well as provided support to the Trey Whitfield School and the George H. Murray Preparatory Academy, located at Mt. Pisgah Baptist Church.

In September 1994, Rev. Youngblood began to hold conversations and sponsor lectures at St. Paul Community with world-renowned speakers on the subject of slavery and its continually devastating effects on African Americans. Out of these gatherings came the genesis for one of the most effective healing ministries in the world today, The Commemoration of the MAAFA (pronounced "Mah-ah-fah"). *THE MAAFA SUITE: A Healing Journey™* is the centerpiece of an annual commemoration now in its eighteenth year, which is a psychosocial dramatic depiction of the horrors of the Trans-Atlantic slave trade that pays tribute to the millions of African men, women and children who were lost in the government-sanctioned, multi-continent sale of humans.

In 2003, St. Paul Community instituted its economic development corporation, E.D.I.F.Y. (Empower, Develop & Improve Families and Youth) Communities of New York, Inc., with Dr. Youngblood as Chairman. In 2004, E.D.I.F.Y. proudly sponsored their first major event, The Economic Empowerment Conference and Expo. Over 3,000 participants packed the Brooklyn (NY) Marriott and gleaned valuable information from internationally recognized speakers and lecturers from the fields of finance, real estate and entrepreneurship.

Pastor Youngblood is recognized nationally, and is noted in the Congressional Record, as a result of his work in faith-based community organizing through East Brooklyn Congregations (EBC), the Brooklyn organizing entity of the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF). Dr. Youngblood is credited through EBC with leading the Nehemiah Housing Project, which to date has constructed 2,900 single family owner-occupied homes in Brooklyn.

Rev. Youngblood was the celebrated subject of the 1993 book, *Upon This Rock: The Miracles of a Black Church*. Written by Samuel G. Freedman, the book chronicles Dr. Youngblood's life, his journey to St. Paul Community and has become a staple on reading lists at seminaries across the United States.

In March 2006, Dr. Youngblood's vision for Brooklyn broadened. He organized other Brooklyn pastors who together founded Brooklyn Congregations Together (BCT). The churches of BCT are joined by their faith in Jesus Christ, but the destiny of BCT is to be ecumenical and interfaith in makeup and ministry. Their motto, "Together in the Spirit of the King," has come to life through borough quality of life programming which has served and positively affected over 3000 community residents to date.

Dr. Youngblood received his Doctorate of Ministry degree from United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio, where he studied as a Samuel D. Proctor Fellow. He earned his Master of Divinity degree from Colgate-Rochester Divinity School in Rochester, New York, and his Bachelor's degree from Dillard University in New Orleans. He has been honored, esteemed and celebrated by many national organizations and institutions and was inducted into the prestigious Martin Luther King, Jr. Hall of Preachers at Morehouse College in Atlanta.