

RODNEY DAVID WASHINGTON MOORE, TH.D., MBA, MA

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[Letters from a Birmingham Boy](#), [NowSociety](#), www.marymooreinstitute.org

Pronouns: He, They

Lived experience: Mixed-ancestry African American, LGBTQ+, grew up in post-Civil Rights era Birmingham. Lifelong activist. INFP. Personal traits: Humanity-focused, justice-driven, visionary, strategic, empathetic, creative, committed to kindness. [Approach](#).

Business and nonprofit founder who has served in multiple capacities spanning from President, CEO and board chair to professor, Activist-in-Residence and consultant/advisor. Creator of the HR track for MBA-caliber training program that prepared ex-incarcerated people to launch businesses and served as Fractional Chief People & Strategy Officer for early stage ventures.

Expertise: Social sustainability, culture change, economic drivers of poverty, participative democracy, generative business. OD/OB (organizational development/behavior), HR, DEI (diversity, equity and inclusion), operations. Leading authority on how our nation's unprecedented sociological shifts – from demography to religious affiliation – are reshaping every aspect of American society.

Humanitarian work: Chaplain/caseworker for AIDS victims in San Francisco. Crisis counselor for New Yorkers after 9/11. Worked with death row inmates at San Quentin. Spearheaded relocation support for Katrina refugees. Creator of Here Now, a spiritual support program that helps people facing their mortality to make the most of their lives in the ways that matter most to them.

Organizing efforts: Specializes in bringing people together across racial and religious divides. As a 12-year-old, spoke at historically white Birmingham churches on behalf of African American mayoral candidate Richard Arrington. Led the 1990 interfaith effort to pass domestic partnership legislation in San Francisco on behalf of people impacted by AIDS. Organized the Wall of Clergy, which formed a protective barrier between protestors and federal troops during the 2020 Portland protests.

Author of [This Land Is Your Land](#) (How the Greatest Sociological Shift in US History is Changing Everything. And what that Change Requires of Us), [Me and Mary](#) (An African American Grandma, the Grandson She Raised, and the Lessons She Taught Him), and [The DEI Chronicles](#) – a five-part article series about how getting Diversity, Equity and Inclusion right is critical to our shared future.

Education: MBA, Social Enterprise (Columbia Business School), Doctorate of Theology in Spiritual Direction (Capstone University), BA, Social Psychology (Oklahoma University), Adult Learning and Organizational Psychology doctoral program (Teachers College, Columbia University), M.Div. (Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary).

WORK HISTORY

Mary Moore Institute for Diversity, Humanity & Social Justice – Founder & President (2019-)

- **SHIFT Initiative** – Educational efforts that equip the American people to embrace the unprecedented ways we're changing and bring our societal systems, from culture to politics to the economy, into alignment with the people we're becoming. *New Narrative* Anti-racism/anti-bigotry campaigns that help detoxify our cultural atmosphere.
- **SUGGR ("sugar") Network** – SUGGR (Socioeconomic Underground Railroad) is a coalition of activists committed to doing everything they can to end entrenched poverty, just as the original UGRR did whatever it took to end institutionalized slavery.
- **HomeWorks** – Housing initiative whose mission is to put homeownership within the reach of every full-time worker making \$15/hour or more with modest interest rates, little money down and no credit score considerations.
- **Level Up Tech** – Tech initiative that enables everyday Americans to use their economic power to help end poverty.
- **Here Now** – Spiritual vitality resources for people with life-limiting illnesses.

iPeerion Ventures – Strategic Advisor, Social Impact (2017-2019) Board Vice Chair, (2019-)

Tech incubator and accelerator specializing in ventures that improve the environment, embrace diversity and help end poverty.

Medical Retirement (2013)

Relocation to Seattle for a range of treatments for simultaneous advanced-stage cancers.

Defy Ventures – Founding Chair, Head of HR Training, Fractional Chief People & Strategy Officer for ventures (2010-2013)

National felon-to-founder EIT (Entrepreneur-in-Training) program that has equipped over 7,000 people with felonies to launch and lead their own ventures instead of facing constant rejection when applying for already low-wage positions. www.defyventures.org.

New York City Office of the Mayor – Bloomberg Administration – DEI Advisor (2009)

Ethos Advising – Principal (2009-2013)

HR, DEI (diversity, equity and inclusion) and OD (organizational development) advisory. (See “HR, DEI & OD Initiatives” below.)

Obama Presidential Campaign (national)/“No on Prop 8” Campaign (California)

National Clergy Organizer, Evangelical Outreach Chief Strategist (2007-2008)

- Leading proponent of a shift in Democratic strategy to no longer abdicate the white, evangelical vote. Co-organizer of the Saddleback Conversation, an informal debate between Senator Obama and Senator McCain held at Saddleback Community Church and moderated by Pastor Warren.
- Evangelicals against Prop 8, Clergy against Prop 8.
- Founder of United Ministers Network, a national grassroots organizing effort that equipped clergy in low-income, high-ethnic communities to engage their congregations in civic action, both at the national level and closer to home with mayors, city councils, police chiefs, and district attorneys.

Crisis Chaplain – Hurricane Katrina Relief Effort, New Orleans (2006)

Built network of congregations, primarily in the Houston and Dallas metropolitan areas to help families and individuals restart their lives there and find a welcoming, culturally inclusive home in those communities.

Trauma Chaplain – 9/11 Workers and Survivors – New York, NY (2002-2005)

Provided trauma therapy and bereavement counseling for on-site workers, family members and New Yorkers. Utilized tactics developed in San Francisco’s AIDS crisis to help New Yorkers heal. Engaged in interfaith organizing to provide emotional, practical and spiritual relief.

Columbia University – Community Organizer/Social Impact Researcher (2002-2005)

Home in Harlem Social Justice Initiative: Advocacy on behalf of long-time Harlem residents in danger of being displaced by gentrification and the expansion of Columbia University above 125th Street.

Organizing against the War on Iraq: Coordinated with pastors, priests, rabbis, imams, and other clergy across New York City to send the message to the rest of the United States that New Yorkers were, by a plurality, opposed to the war and did not blame Iraq for 9/11.

AudibleFaith Digital Music Platform – Co-founder, Chief Executive Officer (2000-2002)

College Kids – Director of People and Partnerships (1997), Chief Operating Officer (1998-2000)

Nonprofit that empowered high-poverty communities to help make college attendance and graduating debt-free a realistic possibility for their children. Developed programming. Oversaw HR, operations, administration. Supervised multi-site staff of 26.

Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Marin – Caseworker, Director, HR & Diversity Strategy (1996)

Devised inclusive recruitment strategy that successfully engaged BIPOC and LGBTQ+ professionals as mentors.

Pastoral Ministry (1988-1995)

BayMarin Community Church – Community Minister, Pastoral Counselor

Southern Baptist Convention – Racial Reconciliation & Congregational Desegregation Trainer

Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary – Adjunct Professor, Activist in Residence

Chaplaincy – AIDS victims (San Francisco) **Death Row inmates** (San Quentin) (1988-1999)

ACTIVISM AND ADVOCACY

LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY:

- Yes on Proposition K – Local effort to reinstate San Francisco's domestic partnership registry and the legal protections it provided the city's LGBTQ+ community, especially in the face of AIDS (1989-1990)
- *Clergy Against Prop 8* (2008)
- Rallied religious support for the *Matthew Shepard & James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act* (2010), *George Floyd Justice in Policing Act* (2020), and the *John Lewis Voting Rights Act* (2021)
- Member: American Sustainable Business Network's *Business for Democracy working group* (2022)

CULTURE ACTIVISM:

- *Dark Dolls* – Consciousness campaign that raises awareness regarding how using darkness as a pejorative is a micro-aggression that has a devastating impact, especially on our kids, as evidenced by the Doll Studies.
- *Artists for Equality* – Engagement campaign that encouraged music artists to take a stand against homophobia, racism, disrespect of women, and transphobia, including assessing their lyrics and helping prevent teen suicide.
- *Change Artists*, a production support program for artists committed to social justice.
- *Human Harmony Project*: Nationwide music events held in conjunction with the tenth anniversary of UNESCO's International Day for Tolerance.

DIVERSITY IN PUBLIC OFFICE:

- Canvasser, Richard Arrington, first African American mayor of Birmingham, AL (1979)
- Organizer: Terri Carr, Oklahoma University's first female and African American student body president (1986)
- Organizer, Gavin Newsom, San Francisco Board of Supervisors (1998)
- National Clergy Organizer, Evangelical Outreach Strategist, Obama Campaign (2008, 2012)
- Campaign Strategy Advisor, Angel Taveras, first Latinx mayor of Providence, Rhode Island (2011)
- Advocate, NY State Senator Brad Hoylman's bid to become the first LGBT+ Manhattan Borough President (2021)
- Co-organizer, Evangelicals for Harris, Clergy for Harris (2024)

COMMUNITY ADVOCACY:

- Co-organizer of the first Northern California MLK Day of Service (1994)
- Advocated for fair treatment of Harlem residents as the City auctioned off residential properties, as President Bill Clinton and NBA All-Star Magic Johnson made initial investments along Harlem's 125th Street, and as Columbia University sought to extend its campus to Manhattanville. (2003)

FAITH-BASED SOCIAL JUSTICE

- Social Justice Theologian: Authority on the social theology and the spiritual ethos that undergirded the Civil Rights movement. Developed theological frameworks that separate faith from theocracy. Author of the [Faith & Democracy](#) article series.
- *San Francisco Interfaith Gospel Choir* – Grew out of a hospital sing-along for San Francisco AIDS patients and staff. SFIFGC held concerts, performed at memorial services and helped promote goodwill at the height of AIDS hysteria.
- *After Exodus* – Support group for LGBTQ+ Christians traumatized by ex-gay programs like Exodus International, reparative therapy, and religious persecution.
- *Be Reconciled* – Anti-racism workshop designed to help historically white congregations recognize how they'd benefitted both economically and socially from racism and actively engage in making amends.
- *Raise the Roof* – Interfaith effort that brought together people of diverse faiths and non-faiths for a fundraising concert in California to stand in solidarity with and help rebuild the over 30 historically black churches burned in the early 1990s.
- *Spiritual Songs* – Workshop for sacred music composers who want to write songs that: 1. Are inclusive of all, 2. Non-imperial, 3. Use non-genderized spiritual imagery; and 4. Rooted in social justice. Workshop utilizes Negro spirituals, Jubilee songs, and spiritual songs of the Civil Rights movement as examples.
- Co-founder, Ensley Church – thought to be the first intentionally interracial congregation founded in Birmingham, AL.
- National effort to engage historically white congregations in observances of Martin Luther King's birthday (1990)
- Rallied ministerial support for the *Matthew Shepard & James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act* (2010)

- *Clergy for Marriage Equality (2015)*
- Organizer of the *Wall of Clergy* which stood between 2020 protestors and armed federal troops, Portland, OR
- Clergy sponsor: *Multi-faith Statement of Solidarity with Transgender Children (2021)*
- Clergy appeal to Vice President Kamala Harris, as Presiding Officer of the Senate, to help advance a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants (2021)

HR, DEI & OD INITIATIVES

Diversity Nonprofit Executive Recruitment

An executive search firm was struggling to identify diverse candidates for top leadership roles because of how job descriptions had been developed. For instance, by making “proven fundraising experience” mandatory, they automatically weeded out the majority of immensely qualified candidates who, being from low-income backgrounds, deeply understand the problem and how to solve it. But that same background means they don’t have the personal network needed to raise funds. Making doctoral degrees, irrespective of other experience, mandatory had a similar, disproportionately adverse impact on minority candidate recruitment.

Diversity Fellowship and Scholarship Candidates

A new corporate foundation focused on education sought to award fellowships and scholarships to minority youth from low-income communities, but despite significant publicity, they received few applications. The problem, however, wasn’t a lack of interest but a lack of access. The web-based application required a personal computer, which few students had, in addition to letters of reference submitted by email. Making changes to the process so that students could submit their applications right then, using laptops provided by the foundation representative, and adding phone calls as a way of receiving recommendations increased applications by more than tenfold.

Diversity Mentor Pairings

National youth mentoring program that had a significant number of minority program participants but few minority mentors. They also had a gender challenge. They had boys who’d been on the waiting list for a mentor for years and women who were likewise waiting for someone to mentor. Together, we devised a two-pronged strategy. To increase the number of ethnic minority mentors, we broadened their recruitment methods, changed eligibility requirements (which, at the time, disqualified people previously convicted of a felony and members of the LGBTQ+ community), and encouraged former beneficiaries of the program to become mentors. We also implemented cross-gender matches for those who were interested. The majority of both the boys and the women on the waiting list signed up.

Diversifying Public Office

An organization that sought to encourage everyday citizens to run for political office recognized the relative lack of diversity among the candidates they were supporting, despite efforts to reach out to minority communities. What was missing was an understanding of the economic barriers. In addition to the prohibitive costs of running for office, few state and local politicians make a living wage, which means that only people of means can afford to serve.

Minority Concentration in Lower Roles

An education organization had sought to diversify its team but had given little thought to its underlying assumptions. As a result, all of their nearly 40 ethnic minority hires except one ended up in low-wage, non-management roles. In addition, the company issued complimentary smartphones to those in management roles, a practice that inadvertently took on a racial dynamic.

Inclusive Corporate Practices:

- Built job profiles around abilities rather than credentials. Revised interview processes to treat people respectfully - as current stakeholders and potential partners rather than “applicants.”
- Eliminated the use of background and credit checks, which disproportionately discriminate against ethnic minorities and lower-income workers.
- Built systems that reduce systemic comp inequity. Equalized pay across traditionally male/female roles, eliminated salary negotiations (which skew salaries in favor of Euro Americans and men), introduced comp transparency, and decoupled raises and bonuses from individual performance appraisals.
- Launched Micro-business Partnership program that enables undocumented immigrants to successfully compete for contracts. Made it company policy to compensate contractors a 30% premium over employee hourly rates in order to help offset their additional costs. Offered universal equity to all employees and contractors, at every level.

- Redesigned benefits so that minority workers and diverse households receive the same effective compensation, including health insurance that allows for the coverage of any adult household member (as is often the case for ethnic minority heads of households, who are likely to have their parent living with them), makes paid maternity/paternity leave available to everyone as “family leave”, allowing employees to take time off for everything from caring for a sick child to addressing the needs of aging parents.

CREATIVE CONTENT

FILMS

Features: [The Falls trilogy](#) and [LUZ](#)

Documentaries: [Room to Grow](#), [Tipping Point: What the 2020 Portland Protests Tell Us About the State of America](#), and [The Patient – What People on the Edge of Life Can Teach the Rest of Us about Living](#).

WRITING

Books

[Me and Mary: An African American Grandma, the Grandson She Raised, and the Lessons She Taught Him](#).

[This Land Is Your Land: How the Greatest Sociological Shift in United States History is Changing Everything. And What that Change Requires of Us](#).

Blog - [Letters from a Birmingham Boy](#)

[NowSociety](#) Magazine

ASCAP, BMI, CCLI

TALKS

How Jettisoning the American Race Construct (ARC) Could Save America

What Theocracy does to Democracy

Rise of the Alphas – How the Most Diverse Birth Cohort in Human History is Changing EVERYTHING.

Discredit Yourself – How Credit Scores Drive America’s Problem with Racial Injustice

How America Created Whiteness (and Why)

You’re not Racist, but Your HR Policies Are

Recruiting – You Built It, But They Didn’t Come (Why Your Process Isn’t Attracting Diversity)

Why Gays, Dyslexics and Women Rule as Leaders

EDUCATION

University of Oklahoma – BA, Industrial-Organizational Psychology

Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary – Masters of Divinity, Urban Ministry and Social Justice

Columbia Business School – MBA, Organizational Behavior and Leadership

Columbia Teachers College – doctoral program, Social Psychology, Adult Learning & Leadership

Capstone University, School of Theology – Th.D. Spiritual Direction - Dissertation: *An Incarnational Theology of Living, Loving, and Changing the World*.

CERTIFICATIONS AND CONTINUING EDUCATION:

- Ordained and licensed minister
- Human Resources Management trainer
- EEO and Affirmative Action
- Discrimination-free Workplace
- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
- Crisis Chaplaincy
- Mediation and Conflict Resolution
- LGBTQ Affirmative Counseling Competencies
- Organizational Culture Change
- CPR