

DR. W. FRANKLYN RICHARDSON

Pastor • Ecumenical Trailblazer • Social Justice Champion • Educational Advocate • Corporate Diversity Leader

Dr. W. Franklyn Richardson is, first and foremost, a pastor, in the broadest sense of the term. His life's work stems from his commitment to the biblical mandate of what it means to be a pastor. Dr. Richardson believes in being a voice for the voiceless, feeding those who are hungry, providing shelter for those who are homeless, challenging systems that are unjust and unfair, and seeking justice for the marginalized and victimized. In his current posts – Senior Pastor of Grace Baptist Church, Chairman of the Conference of National Black Churches, Chairman of the National Action Network, Chairman of Virginia Union University, and Board Member of Comcast and Pepsico – Dr. Richardson purposefully lives within his life's mission and constantly works to be a positive force for change for all those he serves.

As **Senior Pastor of Grace Baptist Church** in the City of Mount Vernon, New York, Dr. Richardson has led the growth of the congregation to a weekly attendance of more than 4,000 people in three locations. He has built a ministry that focuses on six primary community-focused pillars: 1) children and youth development, 2) educational enrichment, 3) health awareness and prevention, 4) housing and community development, 5) music, arts, and culture, and 6) workforce development. These six pillars comprise more than 80 ministries, programs, and services that currently impact more than 10,000 people annually. Over 3,000 individuals, in the City of Mount Vernon, benefit from the 800 units of affordable housing that Grace has constructed through its community development corporation.

As **Chairman of the Conference of National Black Churches (CNBC)**, Dr. Richardson extends his role of leadership as an ecumenical trailblazer. CNBC, an interdenominational religious-advocacy organization, is comprised of the eight largest historically Black denominations in America, representing more than 65,000 churches and over 20 million individuals – 70% of African American Christians in the United States. With a focus on addressing racism in America, Dr. Richardson promotes ecumenism through CNBC and works with clergy, faith-based organizations, and other institutions to improve the quality of life for African Americans and other underserved populations through programs and advocacy.

Social Justice is another cause that is central to the life work and legacy of Dr. W. Franklyn Richardson. He currently serves as the **Chairman of the National Action Network**, one of the leading civil rights organizations in the country. Working along side Reverend Al Sharpton, Dr. Richardson fights for causes of justice, equality and opportunity for all people regardless of race, religion, ethnicity, citizenship, criminal record, economic status, gender, gender expression, or sexuality. Under Dr. Richardson's leadership, the National Action Network serves as the vehicle for the collective voice of the Black church to fight social injustice. Whether it is criminal justice issues, police brutality or voting rights, Dr. Richardson stands on the vanguard of social justice in America to be a champion for those who otherwise would have no voice.

As passionate as he is about social justice, Dr. Richardson is equally as fervent about education. For nearly ten (10) years, he has served as **Chairman of the Board of Trustees** for his alma mater, **Virginia Union University**, in Richmond, Virginia. Under Dr. Richardson's leadership, Virginia Union is positioned to be one of the highest regarded Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) in the country, as it houses the preeminent seminary for preachers of color, the Samuel DeWitt Proctor School of Theology. Additionally, with a focus on student success, academic excellence, community partnerships, and financial viability, Dr. Richardson continues to lead Virginia Union upwards toward institutional prominence.

Diversity in corporate America is another struggle that Dr. Richardson works relentlessly to influence and improve. As an active **member of the board of Comcast and Pepsico's** diversity councils, Dr. Richardson strives for workplace diversity and inclusion beyond race and gender quotas. He applies his deep understanding of the connection between community, diversity and inclusion, and business growth and innovation to help corporations be more accountable for their choices internally and externally.

Dr. W. Franklyn Richardson is a distinguished pastor, leader, and national advocate for economic and social justice. He has a Divinity degree from Yale University Divinity School and a Doctorate of Ministry as a Wyatt Tee Walker Fellow from the United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio. Dr. Richardson has received extensive recognition for his dynamic and impactful leadership in ministry, business, and social justice. He is also the recipient of numerous awards from various institutions and corporations from around the world. He is married to Inez Nunally Richardson and they have three adult children and eight grandchildren.