



Rev. Dr. R. Joaquin Willis

The Rev. Dr. R. Joaquin Willis is the retired senior pastor of several churches throughout the nation. Pastor Willis currently serves as President and CEO of the Collective Empowerment Group (CEG) of South Florida, Inc. (formerly the Collective Banking Group). He also serves as the President of the Miami Youth Garden Inc., (MyG), a 501(c)(3) created to develop leadership, in both human and community development.

The CEG of South Florida, Inc. is an affiliate of the National Collective Empowerment Group, in which organization Pastor Willis has served since 2008 as National Vice President.

The CEG in 2011 was a key participant in a large, complex, private-nonprofit joint venture, *Miami Waymark 2.0 JV*, which bid for the redevelopment of *Liberty Square*, Miami's largest and oldest public housing project. The CEG team finished third among the six major Proposers, which sparked the creation of the following initiatives:

Collective Developers LLC Pastor Willis serves as the President/CEO of this CEG subsidiary that is developing single and Multi-family housing in a joint venture with four highly respected private-sector developers. Our housing program will help increase the supply of attainable and affordable for-sale homes, designed to return wealth to the black community.

Miami Youth Garden (MyG), Pastor Willis is the Founder of this nonprofit, and he serves as its President. This initiative is an offering to our churches under the CEG's umbrella. We are seeking to engage the entire faith community in leadership development, Urban Agriculture and Environmental Justice, and into supporting and lifting those communities that have been unfairly left behind.

Miami 2.0, Inc., is another CEG initiative where Pastor Willis serves as President/CEO. It seeks to act as *Assets Managers* for major public housing and church-based housing projects, to ensure they will include a wide basket of social and supportive services. This new approach of the CEG will foster the transformation of both people and places, addressing the root causes of deeply ingrained social and economic injustice.

The CEG is currently marketing several prototypes of a small, expandable, green starter homes, as well as single and multi-family homes. Our new products will sharply improve affordability of homeownership so that reliance will no longer be exclusively dependent on financial subsidies.

Pastor Willis was recognized as the 2012 Black History Month Civic Honoree by Legacy Magazine. In addition, he received the 2012 award for excellence in community development from South Florida Community Development and the 2012 award for “community empowerment” from People United to Lead the Struggle for Equality, Inc. (P.U.L.S.E.).

Pastor Willis is a veteran of the 1991 Gulf War where he served as a Chaplin during the conflict. He has served as Adjunct Professor at Howard-University School of Divinity. He also serves on the Board of the 79th Street Corridor Development, Inc. and is a columnist for the South Florida Times Newspaper.

Pastor Willis holds the Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and Economics, the Master of Divinity, and the Doctor of Ministry degrees, all from Howard University.

A native of Mobile, Alabama, Pastor Willis is the husband of Clarissa Willis and the proud father of five children and eight grandchildren.