For Immediate Release

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**Kwanza Season Is Upon Us**

**By E. D. Mondainé Jr.**

Two thousand twenty-one (2021) hallmarks the 50th anniversary of the observance of African Culture and the holiday season known as Kwanzaa.

The Kwanzaa holiday, conceived by Dr. Maulana Karenga in 1966, reflects African people's rich heritage of family, purpose, and giving, and the offering of libations to ancestors that have gone on before. Kwanza celebrations begin Dec. 26th and continue seven days ending Jan. 1st of the New Year. The weeklong festival derives from "matunda ya kwanza," which means "first fruits" in Swahili—the most widely spoken African language. Each day of Kwanzaa represents seven African principles or "Nguzo Saba" (Swahili for "seven principles") historically valued by communities of the African diaspora.

Day one of Kwanzaa is Umoja, the Swahili word for "unity."

The day of unity begins with participants gathering together to light the first candle in the official candleholder, "the Kinara', marking the beginning of the celebration. During the candle lighting, conversations around unity in the community and home are the topic.

The Kinara is host to seven candles colored red, black, and green. The black candle is traditionally in the middle and is the first to be lit. Each day of Kwanzaa represents one of the principles. The principles are as follows:

Day 1 Umoja (Unity): To strive for and maintain unity in the family, community, nation, and race.

Day 2 Kujichagulia: (Self-determination): To define and name ourselves and create and speak for ourselves.

Day 3 Ujima (work and responsibility collectively): To build, structure and maintain our community together, considering our neighbors' problems our problems, solving them in community.

Day 4 Ujamaa (Cooperative economics): To build and maintain stores, shops, and other businesses and profit from them as a community.

Day 5 Nia: (Purpose): To make our collective vocation build and develop our community and restore our people to their traditional greatness.

Day 6 Kuumba (Creativity): To do as much as we can, to leave our community more beautiful and beneficial than when we settled there.

Day 7 Imani (Faith): To believe in our people, our elders, teachers, leaders, and the worthiness and victory of our struggle.

A very Furaha (happy) Kwanzaa to all

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E. D. Mondainé Jr. is an activist, entrepreneur, recording artist, and former president of the Portland Chapter of the NAACP. Founder of the Black American Chamber Of Commerce, he is also Sr. pastor of Celebration Tabernacle Church in Portland, OR and Grace Center, St. Louis, MO.