

ECGMBA BAPTIST INSPIRER

THE MESSAGE FROM THE MODERATOR

Reverend Dr. George Crews III, MDiv, Moderator

"Answering God's Call For Courageous Living And Faithful Service In Uncertain Times" (Joshua 1: 1-9)

Is The Church Dying?

Written By Reverend Dr. George Crews III, MDiv, Moderator ECGMBA
Pastor Lattisville Grove Missionary Baptist Church, Hurdle Mills, NC

"And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." - Matthew 16:18



One of the questions that's on everyone's mind is whether or not the church is in jeopardy of going out of business or dying? With everything that we're experiencing like the decline of attendance, the falling away from the faith, the decline in tithes and offering, and the effects of the global pandemic known as COVID-19 and all of her variants, I'm not surprised that this is something that is being discussed. If the truth were told, this problem of declining church attendance, and tithes and offerings didn't just begin with the pandemic, it started long before 2020. In a Barna Group study about how Americans relate to Christianity, the number of non-practicing Christians is rising while the number of practicing Christians is declining.

Non-practicing Christians have grown from 35% to 43% from 2000 to 2020. During the same time, practicing Christians declined from 45% to 25%. Non-Christians or agnostic rose from 20% to 32%. As it pertains to giving in our churches it is very low which predates the pandemic, in fact statistics show that only 5% of our churches congregants give 10% or more of their income to the church, but it's not just exclusive to the church 30% of people polled are not giving anything to any charity. From the natural eye things are looking very dark and dismal.

Millions have gone on to be with the Lord because of the pandemic, while others have become comfortable staying home on the most Holy day of the week to either sleep in or to watch online, while others, like the statistics show above, have fallen away from the church. We must remember what the Lord says to us in Exodus 20:8-11 *"Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy."* Not only to keep it Holy but Hebrews 10:25 says *"not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching."* We wonder if the church will ever be the same. Statistics state that the attendance of worship services in our Churches is on a major decline, the reality is that this is not isolated to one church or denomination but all of our Churches are experiencing this decline. *(Continued, page 2)*

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Although the church is experiencing a decline we must remember that God is in charge, and that Jesus gives us a promise in Matthew 16:18, when he says "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. As we are journeying through this season there are some things we as believers must do, first we must remember the promises of Jesus. He said that the Church is built on "this Rock" and the rock that Jesus was referring to was of Himself, in which He is the stone that the builders rejected and now has become the cornerstone. Since the church is built on a solid foundation it cannot be moved by the storms and winds of time. Secondly, we must remember that nothing can prevail against the church because it belongs to Jesus and He said not even the gates of Hell can prevail against it. So declining attendance and low giving cannot close His House, Covid-19, sickness, not even death can close the church of Jesus Christ.

There are some things as faithful followers of Jesus that we can do as we continue to service The Lord through serving His people and His church.

1. Step out of the Norm

Due to the pandemic churches had to find new and creative ways to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Remember that the church is not limited to the four walls, but Jesus gives us a mandate in the Great Commission "to go to all nations", which means everywhere. This may help us reach some people that wouldn't have come to the church at all. This may cause you to have to spend some money but it will be an investment for the future of your church.

2. Create New Ways for people to give to your Church

Since attendance is down and giving is down try setting up online giving accounts like Givelify, Cash app, Google pay, apple pay, and Venmo. These apps are non-traditional but the benefits are enormous and will bless your church.

3. Look at Your Church Role

To help in the re-entry process of your church services this is a great time to take a **look at your church role and see who's active and who's not**. Take this time now to set up small groups of leaders to make contact with your members and pull them back into the swing of coming to church. If they are not ready to come back provide them options of how they can remain connected to worship without being there in person. Creating these small groups will make your members feel that they are loved and thought of by their pastor and church family. You would be surprised at what some believers feel about their feelings of being unwanted and of being unloved.

<https://reachrightstudios.com/25-church-statistics-for-2021/>

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“DON’T MAKE THE CHURCH TOO LEGALISTIC”

Written by Dr. James W. Smith, Pastor, Mt. Calvary Missionary Baptist Church, Bahama, NC

Grace and Peace to all of you, my brothers and sisters!



On a number of occasions, I have been asked by pastors and lay persons whether or not a church should have a “Constitution and Bylaws.” Some have expressed to me the position that it makes the church too legalistic. Others have stated that they don’t need any document in their church other than the Bible which is their sole authority. Then there are those who believe that the church should have a “Constitution and Bylaws” because it gives some order and direction for the church.

I have been blessed to have both a legal and ministerial background and so I tend to see matters from both perspective. Fifty or more years ago, our fore-parents would have thought it a penitentiary crime for the church or members to take each other to court. Unfortunately, however, today that is not the case. In almost every county within this state, if one would check the court records, I would venture to say that there is at least one church that is in litigation over some church conflict issue.

We air our dirty laundry in spite of what the Bible says in 1 Corinthians 6, *“Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints?”* Having said this, I do believe there is a place for “Constitution and Bylaws” in the church.

We use these words interchangeably, but actually there is a difference in the “Constitution” and “Bylaws.” The Constitution is more of polity. Polity is the character of the church; in other words, what makes the Baptist church a Baptist Church. The Bylaws are rules adopted by the church chiefly for the governance of its members and the regulation of the affairs.

There are many issues that this “Constitution and Bylaws” can help a church resolve, for example:

- a. How many are needed for a quorum to transact business;
- b. Who is eligible to vote on the call or dismissal of the pastor;
- c. Who and how many will comprise the pulpit search committee;
- d. What are the responsibilities of church officers;
- e. What are the provisions for handling grievances; andff
- f. Any other matters that the church deems important for discussions.

Often, a clergy friend and I engage in conversations related to the church. And whenever I mention “Constitution and Bylaws,” he will say to me quickly, *“I am not having them in my church. If it can’t be solved with the Bible, it won’t be solved, because the Bible has the answer to all this conflict.”* A quickly as he could make the statement, I agreed with him that the Bible has all the answers to our conflict. What I try to get the church to see and understand is that, the “Constitution and Bylaws” is primarily for Caesar, the government, and not necessarily for the church. As a former attorney, I have shared with pastors and churches that of all my years being in and out of the courthouses when church matters were before the court, I have never seen or heard the presiding judge ask the attorneys representing the parties in the church dispute, “what does the Bible say about that?” But I have seen and heard them ask, “what does your Constitution and Bylaws say about that particular issue?”

In conclusion, I suggest that you don’t prepare “Constitution and Bylaws” to run the church but they should be prepared for Caesar. And in so doing, you will not make the church too legalistic.

“Trust the Woman when God puts Her in Charge”

Written by Rev. J. Eric Morgan, III, Pastor Mount Vernon Missionary Baptist Church; Former Moderator ECGMBA



The Bible narrates to us a very inspiring story that all believers must pay attention to. The story is found in Judges chapter 4. It is about the first woman the Lord selected to lead His people. The woman's name was Deborah, she was selected to lead Israel as a judge. A judge in those days was a person selected by the Lord to be an administrator, a counselor, a military and a political leader. In Deborah's case, the Lord gave her the high privilege to have the character and the stamina to serve both as a judge and a prophet. By being a judge and a prophet, this meant she had direct communication with the Lord and His people.

At one point in her administration, a king of Canaan, known as Jabin commanded his army under the leadership of Sisera to attack Israel, the people of God. When Deborah heard of it, she sent for her military commander, whose name was Barak. She ordered him by the authority of the Lord to go and defeat Sisera and his troops. Barak, whose name means “thunderbolt” had the skill and the military fortitude to lead and conquer his enemies. When he appeared before Deborah and she told him what the Lord had instructed her to tell him, his response was somewhat surprising. She laid out the Lord's plan to Barak with the assurance of victory.

Using his military training, all Barak needed to do was to follow the Lord's plan and win the battle. But an odd thing happened to him. This mighty soldier was not willing to accept his already won assignment.

In verse 8, he told Deborah; “If you go with me, I will go; but if you don't go with me, I won't go” (NIV). Barak was acknowledging the special favor and leadership that the Lord had given to Deborah. Therefore, if she did not go with him to this battle, he couldn't win the war. In this text, Barak was not expressing his fear, he was recognizing the favor that the Lord had given to a woman.

After that statement from Barak, Deborah responded to him with these words in verse 9; “Very well...I will go with you. But because of the way you are going about this, the honor will not be yours, for the Lord will hand Sisera over to a woman. So, Deborah went with Barak...” (NIV). As you may notice from her response, Deborah did not talk down to Barak, criticized him, give up on him, or threatened him. No! She only stated the fact that the Lord had chosen to use a woman to win this battle. There are many things that the Lord has use men to do throughout history. But at times, He selected some women to be honored with His favor. As you may know from Scripture, He selected Eve to be the mother of His creation (see Genesis 2: 22). He selected Sarah to be the mother of the patriarch (see Genesis 21: 1). He selected Rachel to be the mother of Israel's future (see Genesis 30: 22, 23). He selected Moses' mother to create a leader for His people (see Exodus 2: 1 – 3). He used Miriam to lead His people in a praise and worship, after He delivered them from slavery (see Exodus 15: 20, 21). He used Esther to save His people from destruction (see Esther 4: 16). Also, the Lord used a list of faithful women to fulfill His purpose here on earth. Women like Rahab, Ruth, and Mary the mother of Jesus (see Luke 2: 6, 7).

In the Judges' story, Barak discovered something that many men of our generation are still looking for, and that is to recognize the women who have the Lord's favor and to trust them for their ability to know what to do, and when to do it.

It is quite sobering to realize that no matter how much education you may have, how much physical dexterity you may possess, how much material goods you have accumulated, or how much business savvy you have acquired, trust in the Lord's judgment can always bring you great blessings. Barak was able to defeat the mighty army of Sisera only because he had the good sense to know that the favor of his battle was given by the Lord to a woman, not to a man. It's important to know that the Lord did use the physical presence of men. He used the men to carry the heavy load and big muscles, but the leadership and the knowledge was given to a woman.

When we embrace the leadership of the women who the Lord puts in charge of His work, and we accept the grace that He gives to her, then we can be sure that His kingdom will come and His Will be done.

“God Knows”

Written by Rev. Dr. Alvin B. Downing Sr., Pastor Pettiford Grove Missionary Baptist Church
First Vice President, ECGMBA



Greetings in the name of Our Lord and Savior Jesus the Christ, I just want to encourage those of all ages. To reflect on the God who knew everything that was going on with Job and remind you He knows all about your circumstances. The American Health Rankings a division of United Health reports, in 2019, there were 3.5 million people who planned a suicide. In that same year, 1.4 million attempted to end their life by committing suicide and sadly in that same year 47,511 people successfully ended their lives by suicide.

Whenever someone dies by suicide, as with any causes of death, the loss is felt by many people. Whether you know the person or not, it is a rippling affect that touches family, friends, community members, acquaintances and the deceased never met. We live during a time when many are led to believe that suicide is the route to consider; when circumstances are seemingly too much for them to bear. The social pressure has them believing their situations are beyond recovering and facing others is something that must never happen. God allows Job's story to teach us what to do when the wheel of life loses its air.

Summary of the Book of Job of chapters 1-42, Job was enjoying the blessings of God as the air pressure in the wheel of life, was properly inflated giving him a smooth ride. And that is the way it was for brother Job, a rich man blessed by God, who worshipped and honored God with all his heart, soul and mind. The wheel of life was rolling smoothly for Job, then Satan desired to test him. Desiring to see if Job loss all the blessings and hedge of protection God placed around him; would he then give up on life and stop worshipping God.

God gives Satan permission to have his way in Job's affairs with restrictions, causing loss of all his children and live-stock in one day. God even allows Satan to bring sickness to Job's body causing a response from the wife of Job to be "curse God and die". In all these things, Job makes his position known to his wife and friends; that he will continue to keep trusting in God. Job would continue to hold his position of trusting God knowing God was aware of everything concerning his circumstances.

We also, can learn from Job when the wheel of our lives seems to be losing pressure and losing it quickly. Job teaches us that if we hold on to our faith in God; He will bring us through because God knows and knows how to deliver us. Job teaches us to hold on to our faith seeking the face of God, even when our friends criticize us and falsely accuses us of sinning against God. Job suffered much facing friends and his wife, but Job continued claiming his innocent and declared in frustration "all the days of my appointed time I will wait on the Lord, until my change come."

In closing, Mark Twain wrote "The two most important days in your life are the day you are born and the day you find out why." In Job 42:2 he found his why he was born; that is to declare that God created everything and can do any and everything. Now when facing difficult circumstances; praise God and watch Him come through. Like Job hold on to your faith in God and give Him the Glory and Honor due; regardless the condition of your wheel of life.

“United We Stand; Divided We Fall*"

Written by Dr. Langston Logan, Sr., Pastor, Lawson Chapel Missionary Baptist Church, Chairman Executive Board ECGMBA, President, Northern Piedmont Bible Institute, Roxboro, NC



“For first of all, when you come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it.” - 1 Corinthians 11:18

You don't have to look far in our community or church for evidence of divisiveness. First, let us look at those divisions that are nothing but residue from an imposed slave mentality. We have allowed the old tactics of divide and conquer to cut a path of devastation through our neighborhoods. The slave practice of separating fathers from their wives and children has clung to us like a bad habit. Yes, I hear there are divisions among us, and I partly believe it for the following reasons:

I. There is the Division of “Jealousy.”

“For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice” – James 3:16

- A. When a brother or sister moves ahead economically, there is jealousy- another leftover mentality of slavery.
- B. We should celebrate when one of our own has made it out of poverty and mediocrity.
- C. *Instead we build walls and condemn them for their success*

II. There is the Division of Mistrust

“Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to do it.” - Proverbs 3:27

- A. We refuse to spend our hard-earned dollar in our own community.
- B. There is the old argument that we can never get good service from our own kind.
- C. We must realize that there are degrees of talent in every race.

III. There is the Division of Persecution

Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.” -1 Thessalonians 5:11

- A. O how we love to revel in another man's sin
- B. Worst of all are those divisions we find in the church where we are to come together.
- C. It is time for the church and its people to rise above the sins of division.

IV. Conclusions: Those of us that make up the Church Community must stand united in Christ!

“Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.” – 1 Corinthians 15:58

- A. Stand on His Word, if when we stumble, stand anyhow.
- B. Stand on His Promises, when discouraged, stand, and stand on the mercies of God.
- C. Stand on His Trust; Stand for Him: Stand with Him.
- D. Stand in Him; Stand because of Him; **Will you stand?**

**The Moderator's Final Address delivered by Dr. Langston Logan at the 115th Annual Session of The East Cedar Grove Missionary Baptist Association on July 22, 2009*

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What is Lent and Why is It Celebrated

Written by Reverend Angela Nevels-Thompson, Director of Christian Education
Member New Hope Granville Missionary Baptist Church



Lent is a season of repentance and preparation for the joys of Easter. Lent is a 40 day season of prayer, fasting and almsgiving that began on Ash Wednesday March 2, 2022, and ends at sundown on Holy Thursday April 14, 2022. It's a period of preparation to celebrate the Lord's Resurrection at Easter. During Lent, we seek the Lord in prayer by reading Sacred Scripture; we serve by giving alms; and we practice self-control through fasting. We are called not only to abstain from luxuries during Lent, but to a true inner conversion of heart as we see to follow Christ's will more faithfully. We recall the waters of baptism in which we were also baptized into Christ's death, died to sin and evil, and began new life in Christ.

Many know of the tradition of abstaining from meat on Fridays during Lent, but we are also called to practice self-discipline and fast in other ways throughout the season. Contemplate the meaning and origins of the Lenten fasting tradition in this reflection. In addition, the giving of alms is one way to share God's gifts – not only through the distribution of money, but through the sharing of our time and talents.

Usually, when someone decides what they will give up, they will pick a habit, food, or hobby that they enjoy where it will be significantly missed throughout the period of Lent. That way, its absence is extremely noticeable and even a little uncomfortable as they make such a substantial shift in their typical day to day. The yearning for what has been given up works as a reminder to turn to God and recognize how He truly meets all needs.

Fasting and abstaining can be a powerful practice, but it is also significantly misunderstood and culturally challenging. Therefore, it tends to be either badly practiced or not practiced at all. The goal of Lent is not just to stop doing something you love for bragging rights, and it is not a required practice. Lent should naturally draw participants closer to God as they experience how their sacrifice of something that seems so significant compares to Jesus' ultimate sacrifice on the cross. Sacrificing His own life for the sake of all who believe. We live in a culture of fast food, instant gratification, and self-centeredness. One of the best ways to get our eyes off ourselves and back onto the Lord is through fasting. However, fasting has practically been disregarded and forgotten in the comforts of the modern church.

What does it really mean to fast? Fasting means to abstain from food; especially to eat sparingly or not at all or abstain from certain foods in observance of a religious duty or a token of grief. While participating in Lent, the decision to give up one notable thing goes hand in hand with picking up a variety of spiritual disciplines in its place. Craving that snack, you gave up, is a great reminder to pray! Battling boredom without using social media, open your Bible! As you wait patiently for the end of Lent you might find yourself anticipating the celebration of Easter Sunday in a whole new way thanks to a change of perspective and having an extended, intentional time to complete Jesus' life, teaching and selfless death.

The Bible gives several reasons for celebrating Lent, to name a few: 1) To be Christ-like; 2) To obtain spiritual purity; 3) To repent of sins; 4) To influence God; 5) To mourn for the dead; 6) To request God's help in times of crisis and calamity and 7) To strengthen prayer. The world insists we need more, pushing us to grab all we can. Wait, slow down, Stop. There is another way, a better way, the only way. Only by emptying ourselves out before God, will we find fullness within ourselves.

However, you decide to fast during Lent, approach it as an experiment in Grace. The point is to create space in our souls to feast on the presence of Jesus in our midst. So, celebrate the gospel as you fast, and look for God's grace to meet you. May we all find fullness, this season as we fast and give things up in preparation for Easter.

May we grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus the Christ. (2 Peter 3:18)



**MOUNT ZOAR
MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH
HAS A NEW PASTOR**

SPREAD THE GOOD NEWS!

MEET OUR PASTOR

Rev. Burnice L. Allen: graduated from Northern High School where he was a member of the basketball team. He earned his Associate Degree in Business Administration from Durham Technical Institute. He attended Lynchburg Institute of Religious Studies located in Lynchburg Virginia where he earned a certificate of Biblical Studies. He earned his Bachelors of Theology and his Master of Divinity from Apex School of Theology in 2011 which is located in Durham NC.

After being licensed in 2002 and Ordained as a Baptist minister in 2003 his ministry has spanned both congregational and the academic. He has served as Interim Pastor at Mary's Grove Congregational Church in Hillsborough, NC. He has done multiple workshops; such as The Black Influence in the King James Version of the Holy Bible; How to be a strong black man in the church using Christian Principles; also offered a couple's workshop. Rev. Allen is the author of 2 books; entitled Inspirations: A collection of Poems and The Roots of the Recipe.

Rev. Allen delivered the word of God on a regular basis, ministering to the young and old, rich and poor on the goodness of the Lord. He believes in saving souls and bringing all people to Christ.

He is married to his wife Shelia for 36 years. They have a son Derrick, a daughter-in-law, Alicia, and two grandsons; Derrick Jr. and Mason.

For all the accomplishments in his life and the honor of proclaiming the gospel, he constantly says, "To God Be The Glory."



"I will give you shepherds according to my heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding" - Jeremiah 3:15

** Article Submitted by Keisha Cozart,, Secretary, Mount Zoar Missionary Baptist Church*

Family Values

Written By Sister Queen Earle, President Woman's Auxiliary, ECGMBA
Member New Hope Missionary Baptist Church



In order to meet the needs of our youth, there is a need to have a sense of family values, that is to have good thoughts and intentions to love and care for those whom we are close to.

Family is the foundational institution of society ordained by God. This is where we learn values which are held to be traditionally learned or reinforced within a family, such as those of high moral standards and discipline (the beliefs and ideas that bind our families together). Different families around the world have different ideas and beliefs, but most families treasure the common moral values. A few of those include love, kindness, respect, honesty, integrity, compassion, and responsibility.

Our youth are the next generation of leaders for our society. **Our purpose is to instill positive values and morals that will lead them to become productive and responsible adults.** There is no better way to teach them than by example. Some examples are:

Teach by demonstrating your values. If you want to teach honesty, be honest. Proverbs 12:22 says: "Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord, But those who deal truthfully are His delight."

Use everyday activities to teach values. If you want your children to be giving and unselfish, find ways to volunteer or help others. Hebrews 13:16 says: "But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased."

Talk about values. Ask your children questions that will stimulate dialogue about values. Values influence decisions made within the family structure and outside of it. Therefore, having solid family values helps to make right decisions. If you can get your children to think about values and start making positive choices, they will be moving toward a successful life. "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right." Ephesians 6:1

East Cedar Grove Missionary Baptist Association of North Carolina, Inc.

Born: On Aug. 10, 1895, at Ledge Rock Baptist Church in Wake County, where Rev. A. B. Wyche was pastor.

Mission: To teach Christianity based on the Holy Bible; preach inspirational sermons for living; encourage wholesome family values; provide leadership training for members and support local and foreign missions.

Vision: Salvation for all people; education for youth; peace on earth in every community.

"Church: It Is Praying Time"

By: Dr. Warren L. Herndon, Visiting Minister Mt. Zoar Missionary Baptist Church,
 Founder/President, The Triangle Youth Leadership Institute, Chairman, Special Events Committee The Durham MLK Steering
 Committee, Past President DCIA

For over 50 years, this country has been celebrating "Black History Month" and the founder of this most important "Cultural Celebration" was Dr. Carter G. Woodson. During these struggling years, Dr. Woodson and other strong men and women were led by God to find a way to celebrate the "Life and Legacy" of our ancestors' oppression, inhumanity and other life struggles, in a land that was not kind to them. Therefore, as "People of Faith," the old saints put their total belief in "The Power of Prayer." As Christians, it is written in the book of James 5:16 that the "Fervent Prayer of the Righteous Man Avails Much," and our ancestors, kept their eyes and hearts on reading the Bible daily or weekly.



Our society has come to recognize that February is Black History Month and as a Clergy Leader, Social Justice Advocate and Cultural Historian, I was extremely proud to see the television networks, newspapers, educational journals and other social media outlets improving their coverage of the contributions of African-Americans in this country and around the world. As a humble, proud and blessed missionary leader, I have traveled to over 22 countries and 37 states and my testimony is that my great-grandfather taught our family to "Stay On Our Knees" and pray. Additionally, I am encouraging our generation to "Keep Telling The Stories" to our next generation and the only way we can equip our young people is to "Sow Seeds in Good Ground." In the Parable of the Sower (Sometimes called the Parable of the Soils) is a parable of Jesus, found in Matthew 13:1-23, Mark 4:1-20, Luke 8:4-15 and the extra-canonical Gospel of Thomas. Jesus tells of a farmer who sows seed indiscriminately. Therefore, as elders in our families and in the church, we must teach the next generation that living a life in prayer will lead them to come to know that our God is the "Good Shepherd" and He will direct our paths on our Christian Journey.

Now, we all know that March is "Women's History Month," created by congress in 1987, but its roots go much deeper, starting with suffragists fighting for women to get the vote in the early 20th century. Our communities around the world must take a pause for our grandmothers, mothers, daughters and granddaughters. Also, during my research, I discovered that since 1995, presidents have issued a series of annual proclamations designating the month of March as "Women's History Month."

In the "Old Testament," there were several strong and mighty women such as Sarah, Rachel, Rebekah, Rahab, Ruth, Esther, and Deborah. The life and legacy of these prominent and strong women must be taught to our next generation of young women. As we look back in history, we find Harriet Tubman, Ella Baker, Fannie Lou Hamer, Rosa Parks, Dr. Georgiana Simpson, Dr. Dorothy Height, Vernelle Jones and Dr. Maya Angelou. Our history teaches us that from these seeds being sown, today we have Vice President Kamala Harris; former Senator Carol Moseley-Braun; U. S. Congresswomen Maxine Waters and Alma Adams and many others. In the state of North Carolina's Primary Election, we have several strong women running for political positions which include: candidates Judge Cheri Beasley, State Senator Valeria Foushee and Judge Pat Evans. We applaud our Police Chiefs Patrice Andrews, and Estella Patterson, to name a few.

In summary, the state of North Carolina and our triangle counties must be proud of Vice President Harris and the delegation's recent visit to our state. May we all continue to pray for our women in leadership; such as Mayor Elaine O' Neal; City Manager Wanda Page; Chairwoman Benda Howerton and many more. Additionally, we must continue to pray for our many Women in charge in our churches, i.e., President Lena Johnson, Dr. Linda Bryan, Pastor Dorothy Evans, Rev. Joyce Clayton; Sisters Diane Thompson, Judy Jacobs and many more. Women have always been larger in numbers in the Black Church and often times unrecognized for their leadership. Therefore, we must keep our women in prayer because, "Church It Is Praying Time."

Hospitality and The Reconnection of Our Churches

Written by Deacon Ronnie G. Robinson, ECGMBA Usher Union President, Member, St. Johns Missionary Baptist Church, Durham, NC

By and large, as our churches are slowly headed toward “The “New Normal””; our members are or have quietly begun re-evaluating their church relationships. As our Pastor (Robert L. Daniels) has called upon me to assemble a “Back to Church” handbook; I have noticed at least three distinct member groupings:

- Those with health/family issues that prevent them from being present.
- Those that have returned and saw that we have made great efforts to follow COVID safety protocols and are attending in-person services.
- Those who have not returned to in-person services for reason(s) that they may have or haven’t shared with their Care Team Leader(s) or Pastor.

At Saint John’s Missionary Baptist Church, we are currently conducting in-person and on-line services. I have asked members (that have or have not returned) what were their thoughts on returning. Some responses were:

- “I will be there as soon as we are able to do so”.
- “I will be there as soon as we are able to (but with some reservations)”
- “I don’t know if I am really ready to go back to in-person services?”
- “I have some pre-existing problems that affect me”.
- “What am I going back to and what have they done to make me feel safe”?



At Saint John’s, the return to in-person church activities-have not been taken lightly. After much prayer and many meetings, this was a huge decision to make. Since COVID hit us all so hard, it caused a great degree of uncertainty in everything that we saw, touch and inhaled.

Speaking from the viewpoint of hospitality, one of my key concerns was the way that all visitors, guests and returning members would be treated as they entered the “Church House” as it would reflect on our level of hospitality. Bible teaches us that:

Acts of hospitality included receiving travelers into a Christians home for lodging and protection and *including strangers in our religious celebrations*, and The command to act hospitably- is the expressions of love (Rom. 12:9-21; esp. vv. 13,20).

In order to help our church work to stay prepared to receive visitors, guests and returning members better, we thought and worked toward the following :

- **Use on-line information that reflects our hospitality.** The majority of people search for a church on-line and in their neighborhood before they attend it. So we asked ourselves:
 - Is our on-line information clear on our website
 - Are there directions or a map to help visitors find our church?
 - The key thought here is that if we can add at least one family per month that finds us by searching on-line, our numerical growth would greatly be impacted?
- **Pastors addressing visitors, guests and returning members from the pulpit.** I do suggest that Pastors make a reference to visitors, guests and returning members from the pulpit. In doing so;
 - Address the entire family instead of individually.
 - Addressing a member that has been ill, shut-in.
 - Be sure to acknowledge on-line guests and have ways to make an initial connection with them.
 - When possible, we assist our Pastor by informing The Usher President. He will inform the Pastor at an appropriate moment during the service event.
 - Use that event to bring them slowly into the life of the church.
 - You may wish to consider having some type of on-line equivalent for those who only attend on-line.

Further Recommendations:

Seating

Sit in the middle of the row of seats.

We are still practicing social and physical distancing at Saint John’s. This is still a very difficult thing to do, challenging our members to sit in the middle of the long pews works for us at times. My thoughts on this are that: A new person should not have to walk to the front of the church to get to a seat. They may become very uncomfortable. Having some of our leaders and members sit in the middle of the long rows so that seats are easy to be available for the guests. This will surely irritate some members, but it also gives them a chance to remember that every Sunday is someone’s first Sunday. As a Pastor, if any of these ideas upset your folks, you may need to have a sermon on the value that scripture places on hospitality.

Put the words on the screen.

We are currently “paperless” and project the words of both bible verses and songs on a wall.

This tends to make everyone feel included in the service. We still have a few problems in this area and are working through them. Our AV team works to make sure that the text and volume is clear.

Continued , page 12

Hospitality , Robinson, Continued from page qq

Make it easy for guests to get connected to your church:

Don't make it difficult for anyone to find or join your church. Have a clear set of directions in place for everyone. It's difficult to get guests to move from being a first time visitor to a small group member. So, bring them on board slowly by personally inviting them to a non-committal type event.

Use that event to bring them slowly into the life of the church.

You may wish to consider having some type of on-line equivalent for those who only attend on-line.

Invite your congregation to share your messages with their fiends on-line.

Use the social connections of your members.

Make sure that you have a plan in place that someone very familiar with social media has evaluated prior to launching.

Pay special attention to your on-line services.

As we began to move forward, a few new guests have visited our church on-line before they visit physically. How is your on-line picture quality? What about the sound?

Provide an example Sunday school lesson for kids.

Although we have not "reignited" our Youth Sunday School or Wednesday Night Bible Studies, parents will want to know what we are teaching their children. You don't have to provide every lessons, but it's easy to provide one.

Just upload one to your churches webpage.

Clean the bathrooms.

We have a dedicated-custodian that takes excellent care of the church. When guests come to our church, Deacon Dawes is fully aware that they are evaluating everything. We all are aware that they are deciding if this is the place they want to worship.

We all realize that as members of any church, that we become blind to certain areas of our church, but a guest notices everything.

Encourage members to greet new people.

Create a climate of welcoming that's expected from all members at all times.

Create a clear area of connection desk.

If you are operating anything like us, then you have made some major changes in the way that you currently operate. Your guests (and returning members) need to know where to go to get information. So, plan ahead for their return and don't make them feel lost. Find some way to make it clear and easy for them to ask questions.

Which one of these ideas do you plan to take action right now? Identify at least one and make a change this week.

Being a Church Administrator

Written by Rev. Dorothy Evans, Pastor Pine Grove Missionary Baptist Church, Creedmoor, NC
President Ministers, Deacons and Deaconesses Union, ECGMBA



Being a church administration may appear to be only something one is trained to do, but I see it as being a science, art, and a gift. The reason that I see it as a science is because I think that it is necessary to deal with humanity as both physical and non-physical. There are theories that explain human development as part of our physical makeup yet moving beyond the physical. Some of these theories were developed by those such as Piaget and Vygotsky. Piaget stressed structuralism and Vygotsky believed that intellectual development went further than just the physical wiring of the brain. In my humble opinion I feel that both components play a part in humanity.

Church Administration is also an art because it requires a diverse range of human activities and skills in order to create a fluent administration. For some, this comes as a gift, which makes it possible to walk in their calling and effectively assimilate church administration. In 1 Timothy 4:16, Paul exhorts that one should keep close watch on

life and doctrine. I feel that this implies that we should teach by example. The doctrine that is taught should also be applied to management.

There will be those who may sway from the sound doctrine and often the management mentality becomes that of, "if you can't beat 'em, join 'em". Therefore, it is of great importance that one is always vigilant of their life and of the doctrine. This balance would also aid in one being a good steward of the calling that has been given by God. When it is validated that trustworthiness is evident in the keeping of one's self, they will continue to bring flavor and seasoning into the lives of others, as well as light into dark, dismal places of life. Being watchful of life and doctrine will enable one to be a good under shepherd. The balance of self and doctrine enables one to be watchful of the sheep. There will be a higher awareness of the condition of the sheep. One will know when the sheep have scattered, are broken, or sick, and they will act upon it as the Good Shepherd does for each of us.

Often, church administration spends a great deal of time ensuring that the administration of the church is being properly operated. They also attempt to be all things to all people. Duties are not properly delegated for various reasons and it brings about imbalance on church administration. This weakens the church administration as well as the sheep because something is going in lack. To avoid this from occurring, church administration should follow a set schedule of duties and appointments. They should also invest in "down time" as well as scheduled sabbaticals. Having a healthy regimen of diet and exercise is imperative in keeping balance as well. When personal administration is adhered to, one will be more apt to be helpful for others. This can better be done when 1 Timothy 4:16 is followed as Paul has so exhorted.

Hawkins Chapel Introduces and License Minister Shirley Long - Her Testimony

Associate Minister, Hawkins Chapel Missionary Baptist Church, Franklinton, NC, Pastor Rev. Dr. Kenneth Williams



First, I give honor to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ who is the head of my life and the keeper of my soul. I, Minister Shirley Long was called into the ministry and was licensed under the leadership of Reverend, Dr. Kenneth M. Williams, and Hawkins Chapel Missionary Baptist Church. I have submitted myself under the mentorship and leadership of Pastor Williams to be effective in carrying out our church mission which is to “win the lost, build the believer, and equip the saints to do the work of ministry according to their talents and gifts from God. Additionally for the last five years, I have attended the weekly Minister’s Class taught by J Eric Morgan III; Pastor of Mount Vernon Missionary Baptist Church in Creedmoor, North Carolina.

To convey, I was called into the ministry. In 1993, in a dream a demonic force came to destroy my life. Its presence was very cold that it begun inflicting pain over my body which left me powerless, but in the mist of the attack, I called on the name Jesus for protection. Jesus heard my cry and strengthened me to not only withstand the attack but overcome it. The moment, I woke up, I surrendered my life to Jesus.

And through the dream, I realize, Jesus saved me for His purpose, and that He has authority and power over life, death and the enemy. Realizing God is my savior, I asked Jesus to fill me with His Holy Spirit as I begun to walk in the newness of life. And, for that reason, it is from the initial calling that God then placed a passion in my heart to acknowledge His supreme value and worth in my life and in the lives of others.

For that reason, my service in the ministry is solely dependent on God’s direction and strength. It is not of my own wisdom and power but by Christ’s work in and through me. My service is rooted in my belief that there is but one living and true God who eternally exists in three persons; God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit; equal in Their essential being and yet have separate and distinct functions among themselves to accomplish God’s divine will.

Therefore, I believe and stand firmly on the doctrine of Jesus Christ in that He is the Anointed Messiah and the incarnate Son of the living God. I believe He descended from heaven to earth in order to reveal the Father and to make atonement for the sins of humanity by offering Himself as the final sacrifice. After accomplishing this, I believe He physically was resurrected from the grave and returned to heaven where “God exalted Him to the highest place and gave Him the name that is above every name and at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

Furthermore, because I am absolute in my belief, my greatest joy is in seeking God’s desire for my life by studying the word of God to know Him more intimately, willingness to sacrifice more for the sake of others, and to give myself for and to His purpose.

Finally, as an incoming minister into Hawkins Chapel Missionary Baptist church and into the East Cedar Grove MBA, my goal and hope are to be steadfast and unmovable in my faith, hope, love, and charity for the Gospel of Jesus Christ. As a minister I want to inspire people, build them spiritually, mentally, and emotionally for the task God has called and appointed them. God is not a respecter of person, all that we receive from God is because of His grace. He accepts us now and forever through faith in Jesus Christ. I ask of your prayers as you pray my strength in the Lord as I embark and continue to do the Will and Work of the Lord as I strive for eternal life.

Position Vacancy: Pastor
MT. CALVARY MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH
8021 STAGVILLE ROAD, P.O. BOX 171
BAHAMA, NC 27503
(919) 471-4031, Website: www.mtcalvary-bahama.org
Closing Date: May 31, 2022

Educational Requirements
Must have received a seminary degree from an accredited school.

Required Experience One to five years of experience; Ordained, Missionary Baptist Denomination; Strong knowledge of Baptist Doctrine, Policy and Procedures;

OB RESPONSIBILITIES

To preach, teach and to equip the congregation to fulfill its vision and mission; Communication with all ages and genders; Teaching Sunday School and Bible Study with clarity

JOB RESPONSIBILITIES

To preach, teach and to equip the congregation to fulfill its vision and mission; Communication with all ages and genders; Teaching Sunday School and Bible Study with clarity

APPLICATION PROCESS

Interested persons should submit a letter of interest, resume and letters of recommendations online at: Online at https://www.mtcalvary-bahama.org/pastoral_search This takes you directly to the page where you can upload your information. Follow the instructions. You can also mail to:

Mt. Calvary Missionary Baptist Church
Attention: Pulpit Search Committee
P. O. Box 171
Bahama, NC 27503

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**Minister of Music Position Description**

**Pine Grove Missionary Baptist Church, Creedmoor, NC, is seeking an experienced Minister of Music to join our ministry team. The Minister of Music collaborates with the Pastor for the development and promotion of the music program of the church. He/she is responsible for all musical organizations that are under the name of Pine Grove Missionary Baptist Church, whether directly or indirectly involved with the music organization. The successful candidate will provide musical leadership to develop a well-rounded music ministry for all worship services and special events. Salary range- up to \$350/per Sunday depending on experience and qualifications.**

**Duties and Responsibilities**

- 1. Direct the planning, organizing, conducting, and evaluating of a comprehensive music program which includes choirs and vocal or instrumental ensembles.**
- 2. Lead in planning and promoting the All Choir Day Program. Lead in planning and promoting the work of lay choir directors. Direct adult, youth, and other choirs as needed.**
- 3. Assist the Pastor in planning all services of worship.**
- 4. Arrange and provide music for weddings, funerals, special projects, ministries, and other church related activities upon request.**

**Please submit your resume and (2) references to [DorothyEvans866@yahoo.com](mailto:DorothyEvans866@yahoo.com) (Please include your FIRST and LAST name in the subject line with: Minister of Music) OR Mail to: Minister of Music Search Committee, Pine Grove Missionary Baptist Church, P.O. Box 702, Creedmoor, NC 27522 Submission Deadline: April 15, 2022 Note: attachments should be in PDF or Word format.) Applicants are invited but not required to submit additional materials (such as recordings or programs) for the search committee's consideration.**

## A Message from The Congress of Christian Education



Greetings to all in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. It has been an honor and a blessing to be your President of the Congress of Christian Education. I look forward to seeing everyone and working with you as I have been in the past.

I am asking, praying, encouraging, and believing that all the Districts will continue to support the Congress of Christian Education. It is essential that all the churches that has supported the Association in the past, will continue to support the association financially by sending / mailing your District and Congress dues in the amount of \$200.00 per church annually. Also, District dues are due annually from each church as well. My District, District 4, pays \$225.00 annually per church.

I hope and pray that all are safe and is in good health. Please remember that these funds are necessary and needed to continue to pay the essential bills and the upkeep of the church building in Creedmoor. We need everyone's help.

With this Pandemic we all have endured and been affected by, in many ways beyond our controls and beyond our imagination. Still God continues to bless us and sustain us while a lot of our families, relatives, church members and friends have been affected over the past three years. Let's continue to remain strong, faithful, and resilient.

As the president, I look forward to meeting with Superintendents, Christian Education Directors, and Sunday School Teachers. I look forward to working with different committees on the Spring Institute, the Scholarships for High School Seniors, the Oratorical Contest, the Annual Retreat and the Christmas Program.

I strongly encourage the parents and the High School Seniors to research or seek out Scholarships with their School Counselors as well as civic clubs, service organizations, motorcycle clubs, car clubs, socials clubs, Greek fraternity, sorority clubs, and mason lodges, etc..

Again, I thank you for allowing me to serve as your Congress of Christian Education President. Currently, I am looking for three Assistants to serve alongside me. Please contact me at (919) 724-6664 if interested. I pray and hope that we all stay in prayer and continue to pray for one another. I hope that we continue to live a Godly and Christian life. Continue to stay Positive each and every day. We are Blessed to be a Blessing to others.

God Bless,  
 Larry Williams  
 President of Congress Of Christian Education

### ***Trust Him***

Trust Him and He will provide,  
Always present ready to provide.  
Seek His face; He does not hide, in Him abide,  
Dependable, willing and never late.  
Trust Him; He will make a way,  
His ears are open to requests and cries.  
Trust Him, He will see you through,  
There is nothing that He cannot do.  
He is our hope when times get rough.  
He is the supplier of all of our needs.  
His plan prospers and does not harm,  
Be grateful, praise Him, serve Him, and just believe.

Written by Rev. Joyce D. Clayton, April 4, 2022  
Asst. Pastor, New Red Mountain Missionary Baptist Church

### **Praying for World Peace**



*“They must turn from evil and do good; they must seek peace and pursue it “  
- 1 Peter 3:11*

## ***Wanted and Needed***

### ***A Call to Youth and Young Adults***

East Cedar Grove wants t to hear from you ! We need to hear your views , positions on issues, and your experiences pertaining to the church and society. Please consider writing essays and poetry for submission to the East Cedar Grove newsletter, *The Inspirer*. Appropriate sketches and drawings are also welcome. Submit your works to : Joyce D. Clayton via email at [joycedc@aol.com](mailto:joycedc@aol.com) and the contact number is 919-682-9873. Thank you!







## **UPCOMMING EVENTS**

**Ministers, Deacons and  
Deaconess Union Meeting  
April 30, 2022  
On Site, Smith Thomas  
Convention Center**

**128th Annual Session of  
ECGMBA  
July 19-21, 2022  
Location TBA**



***LET US REMEMBE TO PRAY  
FOR THE SICK, THE HINGRY, HOMELESS, THE "WAR WEARY", HEART  
BROKEN, BEREAVED & THE SHUT-INS IN ECGMBA, SURROUNDING  
COMMINITIES, THE NATION & THE WORLD***

***"And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus. " (Phil. 4:19)***

#### **ECGMBA OFFICERS & EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS**

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 Rev. Dr. Alvin Downing, Sr., First Vice Moderator  
 Rev. Dr. Kenneth Williams, Second Vice Moderator  
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 Deacon Ronnie Robinson, President, Ushers Union  
 Minister Carlos Lewis, President, Laymen's League

#### **APPRECIATION**

Appreciation is expressed to members that submitted articles and for those that provided encouragement and support including the following: Rev. Dr. George Crews,, III, Rev. J. Eric Morgan, III, Dr.. Langston Logan, Sr, Rev. Dr. James Smith, Deacon Ronnie Robinson, Rev. Dr. Warren Herndon, Sister Queen Earle, Rev. Angela Nevels-Thompson, Rev. Dorothy Evans, Minister Shirley Long, and Sister Keisha Cozart, and Lucious A Clayton for encouragement. Thanks be to Almighty God- Our help, Hope and The Promise.

**From**

**Rev. Joyce Daye Clayton, Editor**

**ECGMBA BAPTIST INSPIRER**

**Smith-Thomas Convention Center, 2174 Brassfield Road, P.O. Box 808, Creedmoor, NC 27522**

**eastcedargrove-mba.org**