

# Presidential Agenda 2011-2013

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## **THEME: BE THE C.H.U.R.C.H.**

*"The Lord has told us what is right and what He demands: See that JUSTICE is done, let MERCY be your first concern, and HUMBLY OBEY your God." --- Micah 6:8 (CEV)*

*"The Lord has put his Spirit in me, because he appointed me to tell the Good News to the poor. He has sent me to tell the captives they are free and to tell the blind that they can see again. God sent me to free those who have been treated unfairly and to announce the time when the Lord will show his kindness." — Luke 4:18-19 (CEV)*

## Greetings from the President



It is with immeasurable gratitude that I come to you as the 39th President of the Baptist General Convention. God has navigated our individual and collective ships to the shore of the James River for such a time as this. One of our past presidents of the convention aptly singled out this port of call as a “defining moment”. Indeed, it may be so again. For the first time in 33 years we will leave this Annual Session to embark upon another ministry voyage without the sea sharp mission eyes of our beloved Executive Minister. Although his leadership shoes cannot be filled, our Interim Executive Minister, Dr. Earl Brown will strategically and skillfully help us stay the course.

As I step to the helm of leadership, having downloaded these directives and coordinates before you from Captain Jesus, I am sensitively aware that this defining moment has all of the ingredients of a crisis. On the top we have a void at our helm, in the middle is the future of the Baptist Children’s Home, while on the bottom our financial floor or foundation has been rendered unstable. Defining moments demand critical and courageous decisions. Courageous decisions that are bathed in prayer and yet dripping with Holy Spirit wisdom. The 2011-2013 leadership and General Board need your prayers now more than ever.

I am convinced that God knew back then what He was doing when he guided a much younger long-hair Jheri curled, bearded, cowboy boot wearing seminary student from Louisiana to that two-story brick house on Corey Avenue back in 1984 to ask, “do ya’ll need any help?” My ministry has been tremendously helped, hurled, and blessed by that relationship and now I offer myself as a blessing. My footing is sure because I stand on some broad shoulders (White, Peterson, Morris, McGhee, Johnson, Mapp, Cooper, Lola Beckett, Geneva Thomas, Dorothy Allen, Matilda Jones, and Barbara Keller to name a few). This document outlines my proposal on some missional initiatives I believe will strengthen us as a convention while we face our challenges, opportunities, and transitions. This visionary briefing will guide the ministries and commissions in their effort to model a 21<sup>st</sup> century relevant and intentional church. In the coming weeks and months, I plan to sit down with auxiliary leaders and auxiliaries to listen, and have missional conversations concerning the way forward for us as a convention. I also plan to meet with the General Board and have an honest state of the BGC conversation. I believe this to be needful and necessary for moving forward in the cooperative mission of Jesus through the BGC.

Directly linked to our effectiveness in ministry is our financial stability and viability as a 21<sup>st</sup> century convention. Every pastor and church leader knows that when God gives a vision He also releases the provision. Both leadership and laity have discerned that vision and provisions are measured out in terms of FAITH and TRUST in God to supply all of our needs.

While some wrestle with the question, “why should my church remain covenantally connected to the BGC”, I believe the struggle is more spiritual than that. Although the convention represents an expression of biblical and Christian fellowship (*koinonia*), it is not with *koinonia* that we struggle. Could it be that our individual and collective struggle as ministers and churches in a covenant relationship with the convention mirrors the struggle we see some of our members ensnared in as they are asking themselves “why remain in my covenant with this church”? If one presses the envelope closer to the light one can see this struggle in the seeming decline of Christianity on the larger religious and denominational landscape. The disciple falling out with the church, church splits, the locking and closing of church doors and the questioning of a fellowship relationship with a convention has deeper ramifications than what meets the eye. I call to your remembrance that *koinonia* in its etymological rendering means “**COMMUNION**”. Could it be that the cross-hair of the enemy’s weapon is fixed upon the communion of the saints and its many expressions within the denominational body? Though neither time nor space permits, I remember a sermon once preached by the beloved of all, Dr. Miles Jerome Jones which he entitled, “The Killer of Communion”. The biblical context for his message was none other than our Lord’s Last Supper with His disciples. I need not remind you of how charged that moment was.

Yes, we have a crisis facing the BGC. However, I came across an article the other day entitled, “*Don’t Waste A Crisis!*” It went on to say in so many words that “Crisis, while unwanted, are windows of opportunity!” What an insightful pair of faith lenses to borrow. I’m left at this time to raise the simple question, “What opportunities does this defining moment offer to the faithful family of BGC?” While our problems are real, we are not going to deny nor disengage from our opportunities. What follows in this document, I believe, is not only a **clue** but even more our **CUE**!

*“If not now— WHEN? If not US— WHO?”*

## ACRYNYM

- C** - Committed to the Mission of Christ
- H** - Health & Healing Ministry Education & Advocacy
- U** - Unity – Connecting our Auxiliary Bodies
- R** - Resources and Our Resourcefulness
- C** - Compassion to Care – Demonstrating the compassion of Jesus
- H** – Hospitality (Radical)

### ***The Convention doing “What the Lord Requires...”***

- I recommend that the BGC include in its ministry calendar several “**significant days**” which will galvanize our presence around the Commonwealth as we seek to work out and walk out the scriptural calling upon our lives. This is not to deter our worship celebrations but to create avenues of compassion which will allow the worship to flow from our lips to our hips.

**The Convention doing  
“What the Lord Requires...”  
Day One**

- **Dr. Martin L. King, Jr. Day** – This day across the Commonwealth for the BGC family becomes a day of **MINISTRY SERVICE** . Dr. King surrendered and sacrificed his life as a servant of humanity. We’ve celebrated his life via worship on this day. Now it is time we creatively and more tangibly celebrate on this day his legacy in the life of “the least of these”.

**Dr. Martin L. King, Jr. Day Of Ministry Service  
“Let Mercy be your first concern...”**

- Sponsor a School or Community Center **MAKEOVER**; (demonstrating the love...)
- Assign a ministry to volunteer their services at a local Shelter or Soup Kitchen. Or, a church monthly can sponsor a meal for the hungry;
- Assign the Youth Ministry to volunteer one hour of reading to the residents at a hospital or nursing home;
- Make a **DIFFERENCE IN YOUR TOWN,CITY, or COUNTY** on this day. Partner with BGC churches to adopt a community youth, elderly, or parenting program

## Day Two

### 9/11 DAY OF REMEMBRANCE

*“Embracing the stranger within our gate...”*

- Turning a day of sadness into a day of hope whereby we strengthen the ties that bind the human family. We can't go back, but we can move forward.
- How do we embrace and stop ignoring the immigrants who live within reach of the House of God we call church? Our children and youth are more embracing of the human family than the faith community.
- Sponsor a Literacy or ESL class/semester.

## Day Three

### DAY OF (Social) ACTION

*“...See that Justice is done”*

- Pursue Distributing Voting Record of ALL Candidates running for National, State and local office in our government.
- Advocate for Prisoners' Rights, Education, Training, and acclimation back into society.
- Sponsor **MONTHLY** Healthcare Awareness Forums (vendor resources).
- Sponsor Information Forums on Payday Lending and other demonic devourers.

## **Day Four**

### **DAY OF PRAYER**

#### **“....Humbly obey your God”**

- Creatively engage the Leadership of the Convention and Church to set aside time individually or collectively to focus on specific prayer needs of the Body;
- Advertise and Open the Sanctuary for Prayer (early morning; noon; and evening).
- Develop A Prayer Curriculum partnering churches to cover particular needs.

### **Commission Assignments**

- Each Commission will be tasked with fleshing out the particulars of the theme that fit within its oversight. The chairs and team members are to design an approach(es) that is do-able so that associations and churches can demonstrate and promote the application of our faith and focus.

## **COMMISSION ON CHRISTIAN EDUCATION**

### **C – COMMITTED TO THE MISSION OF CHRIST**

- Design Certification of Gifts Program for Christian Educators, Missionaries, Evangelist, and Christian Advocates so local Churches, Associations, and Minister's Conferences can acknowledge the giftedness of servant-leaders. Establish writing teams.
- Develop a BGC manual that catalogs all Doctor of Ministry dissertation project with the author's synopsis (5 pages) describing how the project's can strengthen the body of Christ in its efforts to address the needs within and those needs that lay at the door of the church serving in the community. This will generate revenue and serve as a marketing tool for the gifted ministry specialist within the BGC.

## **COMMISSION ON MISSIONS**

### **H – HEALTH AND HEALING MINISTRIES EDUCATION & ADVOCACY**

- Health Initiatives - Challenge Childhood Obesity.
- Sponsor Donor Drives in the African American and Hispanic Communities.
- Healing is a GIFT! Design a Healing Worship Service for the body of Christ called the church.

## **CLERGY MINISTRY**

### **U – UNITY**

- Design and implement a regional structure which will unite our auxiliary bodies across the Commonwealth (Associations, Minister's Conf.) to insure continuity, stability, and strength in matters of organizational practices and procedures.

## **CLERGY COLLABORATIONS**

- HOST A MODERATOR'S CONFERENCE
- Come together to discuss:
  - Collaborative Projects
  - Navigating an Association Makeover
  - Operating Procedures that work
  - Designing and implementing the Regional Structures

## **YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY**

- Ministry Leadership develop a S.O.S.L. Program (Standard of Spiritual Living)
- What is your Carbon Footprint?
- What is your Spiritual Footprint?

# COMMISSION ON STEWARDSHIP

## R - RESOURCEFUL

- Provide oversight to a revenue generating and writing campaign in which pastors and ministers submit sermons in book format for publication. Each pastor and church submitting sermonic reflections will be responsible for purchasing copies. All proceeds will go the convention.
- Recommend ways that the Convention can offer its services and at the same time cut down on its expenditures.
- “Sacrificial Gift to the Convention” - Churches send a financial gift covering the expenses it would have incurred for a scheduled event even though that particular event is not offered (or offered via teleconference).
- Design and Launch a 2012-2013 Financial Challenge.

# COMMISSION ON TECHNOLOGY

## **R - RESOURCEFUL**

- Host A Sound and Communication Conference in the key regions of the state.
- Complete former President Riddick's initiatives outlined in the establishment of the Commission.
- Pursue ways in which the Technology Commission can assist other Commissions (i.e., Stewardship) achieve its goals.

## **COMMISSION ON SOCIAL CONCERNS**

### **C - Compassion to Care**

- Emphasis on demonstrating the compassion of Christ via **ADVOCACY!**
- Partner with organizations such as Balm in Gilead, Offenders Aid & Restoration (Ex-offenders) in order to facilitate their receiving particular services.
- Provide direction and leadership across the State to insure that the Day of Action is enriching and impactful.

"We must challenge the conditions that make it possible for people to fall in the ditch". -- Dr. M.L. King

## **COMMISSION ON EVANGELISM**

### **H – HOSPITALITY (RADICAL)**

- Develop models by which the convention and church fulfill their mission and extend the love of Christ where God has planted them. BGC is a cooperative body (what can we do as churches united together) not a consumer body (what can the convention do for me or my church).

## SERMON SERIES TOPICS

- The President's Have Spoken
  - Watchman, What About The Church
  - A Shepherd's View of Calvary
  - Sermons From the Second Seat
  - Preach Sista Preach!!
  - Sermons From the I-preach Generation
  - Mother's Day Messages
  - Father's Day Messages
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- Advent's Breaking News
  - The Epiphany of All Epiphanies
  - Lenten Scripts
  - From Palm Sunday to Maundy Thursday
  - Good Friday Props
  - Seven Last Words of A Dying Deliverer
  - Seven First Words of Our Risen Savior
  - Resurrection News
  - Pentecost Preaching

# NOTES

