

# Low Country Deacons Alliance Newsletter Volume 2, Issue 1

Member National Baptist Deacons Convention of America, Inc. and its Auxiliaries

Laity at Work

Low Country Deacons Alliance

January 2013

## Series on **BAPTIST DISTINCTIVES:**

# Two Church Officers: Pastors and Deacons

### Baptist Distinctives Series

Baptist number in the millions worldwide but most people don't know much about Baptist beliefs except most people know Baptist only use immersion for baptism. Even some Baptists are not familiar with **Baptist Distinctives** (beliefs, doctrines, and practices). The Low Country Deacons Alliance Education and Training committee are using the **B-A-P-T-I-S-T-S** acrostic as an outline to review **Baptist Distinctives**. Baptists may not order their distinctives the same but all would include those below as being primary to their Baptist identity. We acknowledge that other Christians share some of the same beliefs and practices as Baptist.

Deacons should be knowledgeable of Baptist Distinctives (beliefs, doctrine and practices) and able explain or answer questions about Baptist Beliefs. The intent of this series is to review Baptist beliefs and help Deacons be biblically and doctrinally sound when they discuss **Baptist Distinctives**.

It should be noted the **B-A-P-T-I-S-T-S** acrostic is not the official definition of the Baptist distinctive; it is simply a handy memory device. However the acrostic does not have a place for a "C" to cover **Congregational governance** which we will review after we've gone the acrostics below. This month our **Baptist Distinctives Series** covers **Two Church Officers: Pastors and Deacons** and **Baptist Separation of Church and State** (See Page 9).

- B - Biblical Authority**
- A - Autonomy of the Local Church**
- P - Priesthood of the Believers**
- T - Two Ordinances of the Church**
- I - Individual Soul Liberty (Soul Competency)**
- S - Salvation by Grace Through Faith Alone**
- T - Two Officers of the Church**
- S - Separation of Church and State**

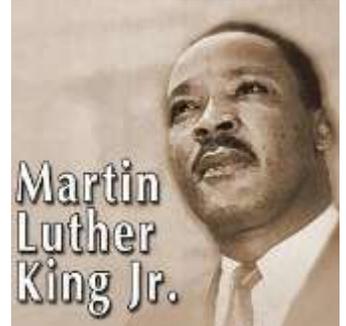
### Two Church Officers: Pastors and Deacons

*"Paul and Timothy, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons."*

—Philippians 1:1

*"The officers in a local New Testament church are pastors and deacons (Phil. 1:1). The same office is variously called bishop, elder or pastor."*—

Hershel H. Hobbs *The Baptist Faith and Message*, p. 69



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## Message from the Chairman Deacon Emeritus Daniel Hoskins "Team Work Generates Harmony"



The beginning of a new season is opportunity to reflect on our initial mission and objectives as established by our home church and our mother organization, The National Baptist Deacons Convention of America, Inc. & Its Auxiliaries:

- Learning how to assist Pastors better in advancing general interest of churches;
- Establishing closer relationship between Deacons and members of our churches;
- Discussing and studying principles and duties applying to Deacons; and
- Performing home and foreign mission work.

This set of mission statements have been our guide. We have drawn our Low Country Deacons Alliance, Inc. & Its Auxiliaries (Alliance) mission statements and objectives from those statements. They are:

To organize systems and services that will remove human conditions brought on by oppression, to return dignity, integrity, respect as a people, and personal self-esteem, by focusing on: Spiritual comprehension, all levels and degrees of education, healthy living, prosperity as a people and personally, and the spreading of agape love at home and abroad.

We have clarified our objectives to achieve this mission to:

- Assist in implementing the vision of each church as outlined by its pastor.
- Facilitate the provision of services and support needed by individual members of local churches and the community.
- Facilitate the development of ministries that serve the sustenance needs of local church members and the community.
- By personal and organizational example, let Christ be seen in action through Alliance member's lifestyle.

**Our National theme, as determined by our Parent Body, "Changing the Method, Not the Message", I Corinthians 9:19-23**, is asking each of us to renew our commitment to these causes, to reflect on what we have done in the pass that has proven to be effective, and to look for adjustments that can be made to become even more effective, without compromising the message we have been given opportunity by God to share.

**We know that the past can't be altered and that tomorrow is not promised.** We also know that we are charged with doing the will of God until He comes back. **Let us continue to move ever forward in carrying out our "commission".**

Deaconess Emerita Doris Hemingway-Hoskins and I wish each of you a most prosperous 2013 year of worship, praise and service.

Remember: "Team Work Generates Harmony"

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## Bible Verses for the New Year

Hope for the Future - Jeremiah 29:11

*"For I know the plans I have for you," says the LORD. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope. (NLT)*

Forgetting the Past - Philippians 3:13-14

*No, dear brothers and sisters, I am still not all I should be, but I am focusing all my energies on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, I strain to reach the end of the race and receive the prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us up to heaven. (NLT)*

Wait on the Lord - Psalm 37:7

*Be still in the presence of the LORD, and wait patiently for him to act. Don't worry about evil people who prosper or fret about their wicked schemes. (NLT)*



## 2012 Mid-Winter Session—Register on line at [www.bemsc.org/](http://www.bemsc.org/)

Dear Pastors and Moderators:

Greetings in the Precious name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Praises be unto you.

This is to remind you that the Annual Welcome Program and One Day Session of the Baptist Educational and Missionary Convention of South Carolina will convene **January 8-9, 2013 at Boyd Hill Baptist Church, 315 Glenn Street, Rock Hill, South Carolina 29730**. The Reverend J. Thomas Barber is the host pastor. All sessions will be held at the church.

**SPECIAL NOTE:** On Tuesday, January 8, 2013 at 3:00p.m., the First Annual Pastor's and Minister's Institute of the Convention will be held in the sanctuary of Boyd Hill Baptist Church of Rock Hill. This Institute is designed to address issues of ministry and the personal spiritual and professional development of pastors and ministers. Dr. Marion Newton of Sumter, South Carolina is the coordinator. You are welcome to learn and fellowship.

The Welcome Night Service will be held on Tuesday night at 7:00 p.m. The speaker for this service will be Dr. Tallis J. Chapman, pastor of the Galilee Mission-

ary Baptist Church of Detroit, Michigan. Our speaker for the One Day Session will be Reverend Joseph Caldwell, pastor of Cross Road Baptist Church in Greenwood, South Carolina and moderator of the Little River Baptist Association in Hodges, South Carolina.

Churches are requested to comply and register in accordance with church membership. The Departments of the Convention are requested to register with the Convention annually.

**URGENT:** Pastors, churches and departments are asked to report \$100.00 for the Convention's Scholarship Fund. This scholarship is designed to assist ministers and pastors of the member churches of the Convention who are pursuing further theological and biblical education from an accredited institution.

We are looking forward to seeing you on January 8 & 9, 2013 for this informative and inspirational meeting. I am asking that you please come prepared to stay both days. Pray for a productive and spiritual meeting.

Yours in Christ,

Benjamin D. Snoddy  
President



### Mid-Winter Session Golf Outing

**Hosted by:**

Sandy River Baptist Association  
Upper Division

**Rev. Thomas Barber Moderator**

**Tuesday, January 8, 2013**

**11:00 AM**

**Shotgun Start!!!**

**At**

**Waterford Golf Club**

**1900 Clubhouse Road**

**Rock Hill, SC 29730**

**\$65 Per Person Entry Fee**  
(*\$240 per team if you pre-register*)  
**4 man Captain's Choice**  
**Rain or Shine - Non Refundable**

**Deadline for Entering**  
**December 31, 2012**

**Includes: Cart, Greens Fee & Range Balls**

**\*Box Lunch will be served\***



For more information Contact:

Rev. Anthony Johnson  
Mt. Zion Baptist Church  
5376 McConnells Highway  
McConnells, SC 29726  
(803) 684-9302

Rev. Thomas Barber  
Boyd Hill Baptist Church  
315 Glenn Street  
Rock Hill, SC 29732  
(803) 327-2422

Rev. Dr. Frank Blue  
Great Joy Baptist Church  
3383 Chester Highway  
McConnells, SC 29726  
(704) 641-5002

Go to [www.bemsc.org](http://www.bemsc.org) for more information and to register

## *Low Country Deacons Alliance, Inc. & Its Auxiliaries Chairman's 2012 Report*



Deacon Emeritus  
Daniel Hoskins  
Chairman

The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few Mt.9:37. The LCDA members have been about the work assigned to us. Sometimes we may "fight" and seem to be weary. But we are still:

1. **Looking forward** to the Alliance's 9<sup>th</sup>. year 2013
2. **Our center piece**, The Award of excellence scholarship program... With your un-selfish support, have awarded nearly \$10,000 to approximately 20 students (3 per year) to date. Beginning January 2013, the amount of these awards will be increased to \$1,000 1<sup>st</sup> place, \$600 2<sup>nd</sup>. Place and \$400 for 3<sup>rd</sup>. place (four years of continuous funds each year for each student, as they maintain their 3.0 GPA). We, with your support, are blessed to be able to increase these awards 100% each. This could, if all should maintain their 3.0 GPA, amount to \$8,000 per year. We will also track these students progress from graduation to ascertain their success in the service and work world.
3. **Charitable contributions** The Alliance continue to contribute \$1,100 per year to 5 local charities and organizations that serve challenged youth and recovering adults. We have also determined to investigate how we may be more hands on with these agencies.
4. **Collaborative relationships**, we continue to have counselors from the Alliance, working with the Benefit Bank of Charleston under the umbrella of the Trident United Way, assisting with many of the sustenance and benevolent needs of church and the community applicants. In this relationship we make use of the Charleston County Human Service Commission to assist referrals with food, clothing, shelter, energy, utilities, employment and other physical needs.
5. **Education and Training**: In 2012 we were blessed to have had opportunity to conducted 2 Deacons/Deaconess workshops, one in Florence SC, the other in Hartsville, SC. A third workshop is planned for early summer 2013 for leadership in the tri county area by request from Pastors and Deacons of several Alliance member churches. Our Education/Training team will also assist at a planned deacon/deaconess workshop in Chester, Virginia in the fall of 2013. This is part of our outreach efforts to help establish a National Baptist Deacons Convention of America presence in other parts of the Nation. States visited so far, TN, KY, W VA, OH, IN, and AL, has shown us the depth of need by Pastors and Deacons for Biblical guidance on the role, responsibilities and relationships of deacons. All Pastors and Moderators expressed desire to look at an involvement with the NBDC.
6. **A Deacons Alliance WEB site** has been established along with a **monthly news-letter** that circulates to hundreds of people throughout the east coast. Your in-pu-t is desired, needed, and requested.
7. **Communication; Pastors of participating Alliance churches** have been and continue to speak at regular meetings of the Alliance on "Baptist Distinctives" which lends to expanded learning and understanding for Alliance members. We are blessed to have such high quality support from our Pastors.
8. **Financial Health** Our budget has grown to over \$14,000. This challenges our fundraising efforts. We currently conduct only three special fund raising events each year. Two (2) Oyster Roasts & Crab Cracks and this Annual Banquet. We will, with your help, continue to improve on these three efforts, and will look to increase our involvement with the business community through other paths of fundraising, i,e, a possible golf tournament
9. **The Alliance's membership** has grown to over 70 + members of deacons, deaconess, one minister, who serve on our Education/Training team, and one layperson who serve as our Youth Auxiliary Advisor. Fourteen (14) churches currently have attendees at regular meetings of the Alliance. We extend and open invitation to others to join with us as we continue to carry out the mission of the LCDA.

"Therefore, my beloved bretheren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.1Cor 15:58".

I thank you for having allowed me to serve with you as your chairman! And I look forward to a Blessed 2013.

### Special Thanks



The Rev.  
Alvin E. Bonaparte, Sr.

The Low Country Deacons Alliance, Inc. & Its Auxiliaries is thankful for and very appreciative of the Rev. Alvin E. Bonaparte, Sr., Pastor of Noah's Ark Missionary Baptist Church. At the December meeting Pastor Bonaparte facilitated the review of the Baptist Distinctive on **Individual Soul Liberty (Soul Competency)**.

December 15, 2012



### Scenes from the Annual Banquet



## Join The Low Country Deacons Alliance

The Low Country Deacons Alliance, Inc. and Its Auxiliaries is a tax-exempt charitable organization in accordance with the U.S. Internal Revenue Service codes. **Membership fee is \$5.00 annually.**



You may join us as an individual Missionary Baptist Deacon or as part of an organized body of Deacons. We encourage you to become involved and participate with the Low Country Deacons Alliance to bring about ongoing fellowship among Low Country Deacons and to partake in education, missionary work and youth programs.

Download the membership application form online at [www.deaconsalliance.org](http://www.deaconsalliance.org) and mail to us with your annual fee or email [info@deaconsalliance.org](mailto:info@deaconsalliance.org) for an application.

#### Mail Applications to:

**Low Country Deacons Alliance  
PO BOX 41172  
Charleston, SC 29423-1172**



## Two Church Officers: Pastors and Deacons from Page 1

Baptist polity through the years has affirmed two scriptural officers of a New Testament church, pastor and deacon. Baptists believe the Bible teaches that all Christians are called to serve and minister to others in Christ's name, but some are called and gifted by God to function in specific roles of ministry, such as pastors and deacons.

### **Baptist Pastors**

Baptists declare the office of pastor is one of two that a church patterned after New Testament churches should have. The Bible uses three words for the same office: elder, pastor and bishop. In the Greek language of the New Testament, these words indicate different functions and not different persons (Acts 20:17-28; 1 Peter 5:1-5).

Baptists look to the Bible for the qualifications for persons to serve as pastor (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9). The qualifications fall generally into two categories: character and gifts for ministry. The office of pastor should be used to serve others, not in selfish or self-promoting ways.

Each Baptist church selects (calls) the person to be its pastor. The specific process differs to some degree among churches, but the following pattern is followed by most.

When the church is pastorless, the congregation elects a pastor search committee to prayerfully evaluate the qualifications of various persons to be the church's pastor.

- After careful deliberation, the committee recommends to the church as a whole the person it believes God wants to be the pastor.
- The prospective pastor visits the church and preaches "in view of a call." The congregation then votes on whether or not to "call" the person. If the vote is favorable, the prospective pastor either accepts or declines.
- A pastor serves in the church as long as both pastor and congregation agree the relationship should continue.

The relationship of pastor and church is a very special one. Each has opportunities and responsibilities

which, when properly met, make the relationship positive and productive. For example, the church should pray for, provide financial support to, encourage and assist the pastor in carrying out the purposes of the church. Likewise, a pastor should pray for, minister to, disciple and provide godly servant leadership for the people of the church.

### **Baptist Deacons**

The second office in a Baptist church is that of deacon. Whereas pastors are usually selected from persons outside the membership of the congregation, deacons are selected from within the membership. The biblical qualifications for a deacon (1 Timothy 3:8-13) focus primarily on character and relationships within the church, family and community. Deacons are to be persons of impeccable character and deep faith who rely on the Holy Spirit.

Acts 6:1-6 likely records the beginning of the role of deacons. They are to care for the physical needs of the congregation so that pastors can concentrate on spiritual needs. The deacons are not viewed as a governing body but as servant leaders.

In a Baptist church the process of selecting deacons involves the entire congregation. Although churches differ in regard to the details of the process, the common practice is for the entire church to vote on who will be selected as deacons.

The role of a deacon varies from church to church. In many churches, deacons are asked to evaluate and recommend major matters to be brought to the entire congregation for vote. Churches involve deacons in various ministries, such as visiting the sick, helping families in distress and providing relief to the poor.

### **Baptist Ordination**

Baptists believe ordination does not endow a person with any special powers or authority. It is a means of indicating to churches and to the world in general that a person has been accredited as worthy to be a pastor or deacon. In recent years, Baptists have extended ordination to include other persons in ministry, such as chaplains, missionaries and church staff members.

Not all Baptists agree that ordination is necessary or even appropriate. However, ordination is practiced by most Baptist churches and is considered valid for a lifetime. Thus, when a person moves from one church

## Two Church Officers: Pastors and Deacons Continued from Page 6

to another as pastor or deacon, there is no need to be re-ordained.

For Baptists, ordination is a function of an individual church, not of the denomination. Although other churches or denominational entities may be asked to participate, a church is the body that actually ordains.

In the case of pastors, ordination is usually preceded by licensing the person to the gospel ministry. Licensing ushers in a period when the church and the individual can evaluate whether the person is indeed suitable for pastoral ministry. If the person testifies to an internal calling by God through the Holy Spirit to the gospel ministry, evidences the biblical qualifications for the office and demonstrates the gifts necessary for effective pastoral ministry, the church proceeds with ordination.

### Baptist Distinctives Related to Pastors and Deacons

Baptist polity concerning pastors and deacons relates to other Baptist distinctives. For example, the Bible is the authority for Baptist faith and practice. Baptists interpret the Bible as indicating there are two offices in a New Testament church pastor and deacon.

The Bible teaches that all persons who believe in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior are priests with direct access to God (1 Peter 2:5; Revelation 1:6; 5:10). There is no need for a special priestly class (Hebrews 8-10). Thus, Baptists do not use the term priest when referring to the pastor nor consider the pastor as functioning in a priestly fashion, mediating between them and God.

Baptists believe the biblical concepts of the priesthood of

all believers and of soul competency do not undermine the important role of the pastor. While all believer-priests are equal, some are called by God and selected by the church members to be pastor-leaders. Believers are not to abdicate to pastors their responsibility to study and interpret the Bible and to seek Christ's will and to follow him as Lord of life.

Baptists believe in congregational church governance and the autonomy of churches. Therefore, pastors are not appointed by some entity outside of the local congregation. Each congregation is responsible for the selection of its pastor and deacons. Governance is in the hands of the church as a whole, not the pastor or deacons. The Bible indicates the pastor is to exercise strong leadership, not dictatorship (1 Peter 5:1-5).

Freedom and autonomy afford rich soil for differences to develop in Baptist life. This is the case regarding pastors and deacons. For example, during the history of Baptists, churches have used various titles for the person serving in the office of pastor. Baptists differ on whether both men and women should serve as pastors and deacons. The number, requirements and function of deacons also vary from church to church.

**Conclusion:** Although differences exist among Baptists regarding the offices of pastors and deacons, Baptists agree God established these two vital positions to provide servant leadership for churches.■

**The Low Country Deacons Alliance, Inc. and It's Auxiliaries gives special thanks to the Production Team of Dr. William M. Pinson, Jr. & Doris Ann Tinker for producing the information and allowing us to share it with our members and friends.**

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This information on this websites is intended to provide resources for further study on Baptists-doctrine, polity, heritage ministries, organization.

However, it is not intended as an official statement of belief or endorsement in any way of the listed resources.

The article was reprinted from the Baptist Distinctives website ([www.baptistdistinctives.org](http://www.baptistdistinctives.org)).■



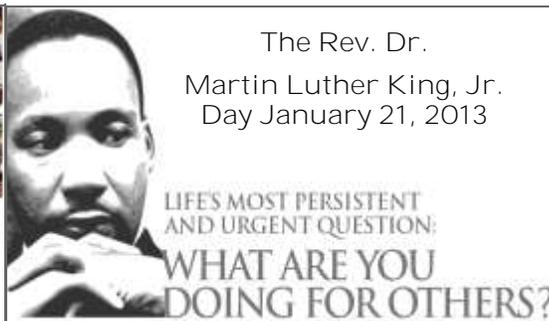
Donate **blood**

January is National Blood Donor Month



4 000 000  
AMERICANS  
NEVER SAW IT  
COMING  
**GLAUCOMA**

See page 8 for more  
information



The Rev. Dr.  
Martin Luther King, Jr.  
Day January 21, 2013

LIFE'S MOST PERSISTENT  
AND URGENT QUESTION:  
**WHAT ARE YOU  
DOING FOR OTHERS?**

## Health Committee



*Increasingly, people are turning to places of worship to get accurate, useful information about issues that uniquely affect African Americans. The Low Country Deacons Alliance, Inc., & Its Auxiliaries Health Committee aspires to improve the health of member congregations and Low Country communities. The Health Committee will endeavor to educate and provide activities necessary to create a healthier community.*



**Deaconess Gwendell Murray - Health Committee Chairperson**

## Health Awareness for January 2013

**JANUARY IS NATIONAL BLOOD DONOR MONTH** - Thousands of patients need blood each day to survive injury and illness. Every two seconds, someone in this country needs blood. But nationally, only about 5% of the eligible population donates blood. Be a part of the lifesaving team by donating blood. Visit [RedCrossBlood.org](http://RedCrossBlood.org) to schedule your blood donation or visit any of Red Cross donor centers listed below:



Red Cross Donor Center- West Ashley  
Monday –Thursday 12pm - 6:30pm  
Friday – Saturday 7:00 am – 1:30 pm  
2000 Sam Rittenberg, Suite 112  
Phone: (843) 852-2910  
**1-800-GIVE LIFE**

Red Cross Donor Center- MUSC  
171 Ashley Ave- Room 279  
Tues– Thurs 10am-4pm  
Phone: (843) 792-1015  
**1-800-GIVE LIFE**

Red Cross Donor Center- Mt. Pleasant  
920 Houston Northcut, Suite A-10  
Wednesday – Thursday 12pm - 6:30pm  
Friday – Saturday 7:00 am – 1:30 pm  
Phone: (843) 416-1660  
**1-800-GIVE LIFE**

JANUARY IS ALSO CERVICAL CANCER SCREENING AND GLAUCOMA AWARENES MONTH

### CERVICAL CANCER SCREENING

**CERVICAL CANCER** is a disease in which cancer cells are found in the tissues of the cervix. The cervix is the lower part of the uterus (where a baby grows). **Cervical cancer** is caused by several types of a virus called human papillomavirus (pap-uh-LOH-muh-veye-ruhss), or HPV. HPV is very common. It spreads through sexual contact. Most women's bodies are able to fight off infection with HPV. But in some women, HPV can cause normal cells in the cervix to turn into cancer. This usually happens over a period of time.

Cancer that goes untreated starts to grow and spread more deeply into the cervix and to nearby areas. The good news is that **cervical cancer** is the easiest female cancer to prevent. By getting regular Pap tests, your doctor can find and treat abnormal cells before they turn into cancer.

**Women should have their first Pap test at age 21.** After your first Pap test, you should have a Pap test every two to three years depending on your age and other factors. Ask your doctor about how often you need a Pap test. Women who have had the HPV vaccine still need to have Pap tests.

African-American women develop **cervical cancer** more often than white women and are more than twice as likely to die from it. Screening is very important to help reduce this disparity. In fact, 6 in 10 **cervical cancers** occur in women who have never received a Pap test or have not been tested in the past five years.

**The National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program (NBCCEDP) program provides free or low-cost Pap testing to women who don't have health insurance. To learn more about this program, please contact the CDC at 800-CDC-INFO (232-4636).**

For more information online visit <http://www.womenshealth.gov/minority-health/african-americans/cervical-cancer.cfm> or the National Cervical Cancer Coalition at [www.nccc-online.org](http://www.nccc-online.org) ■

### GLAUCOMA AWARENESS

Three million Americans -- including 1 million African-Americans -- have glaucoma. Glaucoma is often called "**the sneak thief of sight.**" That's because people usually do not notice any signs of the disease until they have already lost significant vision. Once lost, vision can't be restored. Getting regular, comprehensive eye examinations is the best defense against glaucoma, which can be treated successfully if diagnosed early. For more information online visit [www.preventblindness.org](http://www.preventblindness.org) ■

## Another Baptist Distinctive is Baptists: Separation of Church and State

**“Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar’s; and unto God the things that are God’s.” Matthew 22:21**

### Baptists: Separation of Church and State

Speaking from the steps of the United States Capitol in 1920 to 15,000 people in the open air, Texas Baptist pastor George W. Truett declared: **“Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and unto God the things that are God’s,”** is one of the most revolutionary and history-making utterances that ever fell from those lips divine. That utterance, once and for all, marked the divorcement of church and state.... It was the sunrise gun of a new day, the echoes of which are to go on and on until in every land, whether great or small, the doctrine shall have absolute supremacy everywhere of a free church in a free state.”

#### The Bases for a Free Church in a Free State

For Baptists, the concept of a free church in a free state rests not on political theory nor on human documents but on the word of God. The Baptist belief in religious freedom and its corollary, the separation of the institutions of church and state, come from the Baptist commitment to the authority of the Bible.

**What is meant by the terms “church” and “state”? The term “state” refers** to governments. The Bible indicates that governments are ordained by God to provide law and order (Romans 13:1-5). Government leaders are to act for the benefit of the citizens (1 Peter 2:13-14). Baptists and other Christians are to honor and pray for government officials (1 Timothy 2:1-3; 1 Peter 2:17), pay taxes (Matthew 22:17-22; Romans 13:6-7) and obey the government except when obedience would be clearly contrary to God’s will (Acts 4:19-20; 5:29). Historically, Baptists have affirmed their loyalty to the state.

**The term “church” refers to religious organizations.** For Baptists, this includes both local congregations and various entities established for religious purposes, such as associations, conventions, schools and institutions for ministry. Baptists teach that the nature of “church” is to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ (Acts 1:8), to teach doctrine and develop believers (Matthew 28:19-20; Ephesians 4:11-13) and to minister in Christ’s name (Matthew 25:31-46). The church is to rely on the sword of the Spirit and not the sword of the government in carrying out its mission.

Ideally, the relation of church and state is mutually beneficial. For example, the state is to provide order and safety; these are useful to the church in carrying out its mission (Acts 13-16). And the church contributes to a positive social order by helping to develop law-abiding, hard-working, honest citizens (Ephesians 4:24-32; 1 Peter 2:11-17).

Baptists contend that this mutual benefit works best when the institutions of church and state are separate and when neither seeks to control the other. The state is not to dictate doctrine, worship style, organization, membership or personnel for leadership to the church. The church is not to seek the power or the financial support of the state for spiritual ends. Such is the model set forth in the New Testament.

The very nature of the gospel and of church calls for such a relationship. The Bible reveals that humans are created by God with a competency to know and follow his will (Genesis 1:27). Following God’s will should be a free choice, not coerced by either church or state. Salvation in Christ is the result of free choice to believe in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior (John 3:16; Ephesians 2:8-10). Thus, neither church nor state should ever interfere with the free proclamation of the gospel or with the freedom of

people to accept or reject it.

Likewise, churches ought to be composed of people who have freely chosen to be baptized and to congregate (Acts 2:41-42). People should support the churches by voluntary contributions of tithes and offerings (2 Corinthians 8:1-15). Only Jesus is to be Lord, never any government or ecclesiastical organization (Ephesians 4:11-16; Philippians 2:8-11).

#### The History of Church-State Relations

The biblical ideal of church-state relations has seldom been realized. In the earliest years of the Christian movement, the church suffered persecution from the Roman government. In the fourth century, the Roman government decreed not only toleration but also a privileged position for the Christian movement.

This led to a union of church and state, that is to a union of the prevailing government with the dominant form of Christianity. The arrangements varied through the centuries but one thing remained constant—all forms of religious expression except the “official” one were persecuted. People who believed in freedom of religion, such as Baptists, were regarded as traitors by governments and as heretics by the government-supported churches.

The use of the power of the state to enforce religion sapped the spiritual vitality of the established state churches and added a host of unsaved people to the churches.

Furthermore, efforts by governments to protect the established religion of a country resulted in wars and civil strife that undermined the governments. Thus, the union of church and state was and is harmful to both.

#### Baptists and Church-State Relations

Baptists suffered severely under the union of church and state. They campaigned vigorously for religious freedom, not just for themselves but for all people. Their goal was freedom, not mere toleration.

The record of the Baptist struggle for religious freedom and the separation of church and state is a story of courage and persistence. A host of people with courage stayed with their convictions in the face of stiff resistance from both religious and government authorities. They did so because they believed that they were being true to the teachings of the Bible.

For example, Thomas Helwys (c. 1556-1616), a Baptist pastor in London in the early 1600s, publicly advocated religious freedom. In England, the king was not only head of the government but also of the Church of England. Helwys insisted that the king had no authority over the spiritual dimensions of life. He sent to the king a copy of a book he had written, adding a handwritten statement, **“The king is a mortal man, not God.” King James placed Helwys in prison, where he died because he would not abandon his convictions.**

A few years later in America, Roger Williams (1603- 1683) was forced to leave Massachusetts Bay Colony because of his views favoring church-state separation. Williams established both the



## The National Baptist Deacons Convention of America Inc. and Its Auxiliaries

### Deacon Robert Ransom, President Parent Body

79 Years of Christian Service  
**“Changing the Method, not the Message”**

1 Corinthians 9:20-23  
 July 22-26, 2013

The National Baptist Deacons Convention of America, Inc. and Its Auxiliaries began on July 26, 1934, when members of local Deacons organizations from Washington, DC, Richmond, Virginia and Hilltop, Maryland met to initiate a closer relationship of Baptist Deacons.

The original purposes included:

1. Learning how to assist Pastors better in advancing general interests of churches;
2. Bringing a closer relationship between Deacons and members of our churches;
3. Discussing and studying principles and duties applying to Deacons;
4. And, performing home and foreign mission work.

### What We Do

The Convention offers a vast array of positive programs that revolve around the organization's original purposes of worship, education, fellowship and missionary work. Skilled and dedicated personnel lead all programs. Just a few of the Conventions programs are:

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Christian Leadership Training               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshops</li> <li>• Bible Study</li> <li>• Prayer and Worship Services</li> </ul> </li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Dynamic Youth Programs               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth Workshops</li> <li>• Scholarship Competitions and Awards</li> </ul> </li> </ul>                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lott Carey Foreign Mission</li> <li>• National Regional and Local Charities</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>2. Women's Auxiliary Program</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Panel Discussions</li> <li>• Health Ministry</li> <li>• Prayer Breakfast</li> <li>• Missionary Work</li> </ul>                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. James and Priscilla Ross Mission and Education Board's Annual Awards to:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NAACP</li> <li>• United Negro College Fund</li> </ul> </li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Two Annual Sessions               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4th Weekend in March Executive Board Meeting and Annual Youth Day</li> <li>• Monday after the 3rd Sunday in July Annual Week long Session</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |

### Join Us:

You may join us as an individual Missionary Baptist Deacon or as part of an organized body of Deacons. We encourage you to become involved at the local level to perpetuate ongoing fellowship among Deacons and to promote programs in education, missionary work and youth programs. Local groups are advised to form a Women's Auxiliary to include Deaconesses and other Christian Women. Usually, a minimum of three Ministries or Boards of Deacons from nearby Churches is sufficient to form a local unit.

Deacons, Christian Women and youths as well as Pastors and Ministers are welcome to register for all Convention functions.

The Convention is a tax-exempt charitable organization in accordance with the U.S. Internal Revenue Service codes.

**For more information please contact:**  
**Deacon Emeritus Daniel Hoskins**  
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## LCDA Youth Committee encourages entries to the 2013 Religious Liberty Essay Scholarship Contest

LCDA Youth Committee encourages entries to the 2013 Religious Liberty Essay Scholarship Contest, sponsored by the Religious Liberty Council of the Baptist Joint Committee (BJC). Entries are now being accepted by the BJC. Grand prize is \$2,000 and a trip for two to Washington, D.C.; second prize is \$1000; and third prize is \$250.

The contest is open to all high school juniors and seniors in the graduating classes of 2013 and 2014. No requirements or restrictions involve a student's grade-point average, faith or extracurricular activities.

To enter, eligible students must write an essay of 800-1,200 words in response to the following:

The United States of America was religiously diverse at its founding. Its population included numerous Protestant groups, small Catholic and Jewish populations, those who practiced traditional Native American religions as well as those who practiced African religions. The United States has become even more religiously diverse, yet Christianity has remained the majority faith tradition since the country's beginnings. Today, some Americans assert that the country was founded as a "Christian nation" while others contend that statement is a myth. **Using the Constitution and writings of the Founders, research and evaluate the claim that the United States was founded as a "Christian nation." Include a discussion of the current implications for religious freedom for all people in a democratic country in which the majority rules in elections and ballot initiatives.**

**SUBMISSION & DUE DATE:** The essay, student registration form and essay adviser form all must be mailed together to the following address by **March 1, 2013**:



**Baptist Joint Committee Essay Contest**  
200 Maryland Avenue, N.E.  
Washington, D.C. 20002

**Entries and registration forms must be postmarked no later than March 1, 2013.** No email or fax entries will be accepted.

\* Grand prize trip includes actual airfare costs to D.C. up to a predetermined amount and one night of lodging for the contest winner and one accompanying parent/guardian to present the winning essay at the BJC board meeting. ■

## Separation of Church and State continued from Page 9

first Baptist church in America and the colony of Rhode Island. The colony afforded religious freedom to all. He wrote advocating a **"hedge or wall of separation between the garden of the church and the wilderness of the world."**

**Years elapsed, however, before the "wall of separation" became a national reality.** When the Constitution of the United States was placed before the people for ratification, it contained no provision for religious freedom. Baptists joined others in an effort to defeat ratification unless there was a guarantee of religious freedom. Thus, the **First Amendment was made to the Constitution, stating, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances."**

### Challenges to a Free Church in a Free State

The struggle for the separation of church and state is far from over. The ideal that Truett expressed on the Capitol steps of **"absolute supremacy everywhere of a free church in a free state"** has yet to be realized. In some countries, union of religion and government prevails, and there is little or no religious freedom. In others, mere tolerance, not full religious freedom, is the law of the land. A continuing temptation exists to use the tax money and power of the state to carry out the ministries of churches.

To work out what the concept of separation means in an ever-changing world is an abiding challenge. By separation of church and state, Baptists do not mean the separation of God and government. Baptists are not oblivious to the gray areas in the relationship and the various interpretations of what separation means.

However, Baptists continue to emphasize that neither church nor state should exercise authority over the other, to stress that the church should not depend on the finances or power of the state **to carry out its mission, and to point to history's record that a free church in a free state proves a blessing to both.**

### Conclusion

Eternal vigilance is the price of freedom, especially of religious freedom. Baptists, therefore, ought to resist efforts to commingle church and state and to strive for a friendly separation of the two that results in religious freedom.

***"Church and state should be separate....A free church in a free state is the Christian ideal...." - Baptist Faith and Message*** ■



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## UPCOMING EVENTS

This Month



*Calendar Mark Your Calendars Mark Your*

**January 8 - 9th, 2013 Annual Welcome Program and One Day Session of the Baptist Educational and Missionary Convention of SC (see page 4)**

**January 13th 4PM Pastor Installation at:  
Christian Missionary Baptist Church**

835 Magnolia Rd  
Charleston, SC 29407  
(843) 566-9471

**Next Meeting: 6:30PM January 14 at:  
Charity Missionary Baptist Church  
1544 East Montague  
N. Charleston, SC 29406  
(843) 747-2737**



January 21 - Dr. Martin Luther King Day

**February Meeting: 6:30PM February 11th at:**

**Ashley Baptist Church**  
4078 Ashley Phosphate Rd.  
N. Charleston, SC 29418-8537  
(843) 553-7520

**March 22 to 23 2013**

**NBDC 2013 Mid-Term Session**

Norfolk VA

Hilton Norfolk Airport

1500 N Military Highway

Norfolk VA 23502

Register online at: [www.nationalbaptistdeaconsconvention.com/registration](http://www.nationalbaptistdeaconsconvention.com/registration)

**July 22-26 2013**

**NBDC 2013 Annual Session - Cleveland Ohio**

Intercontinental Hotel

9801 Carnegie Ave

Cleveland, OH 44106

Register online at: [www.nationalbaptistdeaconsconvention.com/registration/](http://www.nationalbaptistdeaconsconvention.com/registration/)

*"Teamwork Generates Harmony"*