

*History of the Organization of the Peace Baptist District
Missionary Association*

By: Sister Helen P. Smith, Historian

It was approximately forty-one years after the end of the Civil War that Blacks began to migrate from southern towns in search of better opportunities. Many Blacks migrated from rural areas in Alabama to Central Alabama, and many were Birmingham bound.

Blacks began to organize Churches throughout the south and Conventions and Associations as well. Blacks saw a need for organized religion and began to congregate in the homes of willing participants.

The oldest Black Church in America is thought to be First African Baptist Church of Savannah, Georgia organized in 1777. But First Baptist Church of Petersburg, Virginia claims to be older with its history dating back to 1774.

Other oldest Black Churches

- First African Baptist Church of Boston ---1805
- The Abyssinian Baptist Church of New York ---1808
- First African Baptist Church of Philadelphia ---1809

The oldest Black Church in Alabama is around 186 years old and is thought to be St. Bartley Primitive Baptist Church.

Black Baptist Churches represented three things in American history:

- God
- Autonomy of each Church to make its own rules about worship
- Core family values

White slave owners would allow Blacks to congregate in Churches, but only with their approval. Blacks were relegated to the gallery or balcony and were closely watched by their masters. Blacks began to gradually transition away from this.

This transition coincided with the period of intense religious revivalism known as "awakenings." In the Southern states beginning in the 1770s, increasing numbers of slaves converted to evangelical religions such as the Methodist and Baptist faiths. Many clergy within these denominations actively promoted the idea that all Christians were equal in the sight of God, a message that provided hope and sustenance to the slaves. They also encouraged worship in ways that many Africans found to be similar, or at least adaptable, to African worship patterns, with enthusiastic singing, clapping, dancing, and even spirit-possession. Still, many white owners and clergy preached a message of strict obedience, and insisted on slave attendance at white-controlled churches, since they were fearful that if slaves were allowed to worship independently they would ultimately plot rebellion against their owners. It is clear that many blacks saw these white

churches, in which ministers promoted obedience to one's master as the highest religious ideal, as a mockery of the "true" Christian message of equality and liberation as they knew it. * Excerpt taken from "The Church during Slavery." The University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill © 2004.

When Blacks worshipped in their own Churches, white slave owners would oversee the services for two reasons:

- Make sure no one tried to escape
- Ensure that only what whites believed about the bible was taught. (Ex. That the bible supported the enslavement of blacks.)

After the Civil War, Black Churches grew rapidly throughout the south. The services would usually consist of congregational singing, with one person leading. Usually, only one person could read and that person would say the words, and the congregation would sing them. Followed by a sermon and then a prayer.

As time moved on, not only did many Blacks organize their own church, they also began to organize Associations that governed organized religion. One of those Associations was the National Baptist Convention USA Inc.

Alabama played a pivotal role in the organization of these Associations, because the organization of the National Baptist Convention happened in Montgomery, Alabama in 1880.

Slavery had ended only to be replaced by an even worse system known as "**peonage**". The word is taken from a Spanish word meaning, "**A person of little authority.**" In the English, it became a system of debtor's prison where people were forced into prison in order to pay off their debts. Also known *as Convict Leasing*. These prisoners were often sold to other Southern states to provide labor and the State of Alabama would receive the profit.

Laws were passed making it unlawful for persons to be labeled as a vagrant. Times were hard for everyone, especially Blacks; work was almost impossible to find, so it is easy to see how Blacks ended up being charged with vagrancy. If a person who was sharecropping was unable to pay off his debt, he would be placed in prison and farmed out to a prison in another state until his debt had been satisfied. Often times, his wife would have gone on North to be with other relatives or passed away, by the time he was released. It was another way of breaking up black families.



With no father in the home and no source of income, mothers did what they had to in order to survive and care for their children. During this period known as *“Peonage”* several families fled to the North. Displacing families all over the South.

Black ministers had always been concerned about religion, social issues and family issues. Churches would take up collections, donate clothes and even provide shelter for homeless families. Ministers began to organize associations in communities as early as the 1800s.

In Alabama, during the early part of the twentieth century the climate was a hot bed of racism. There were Jim Crow Laws in place all over the South. Blacks had little opportunity for work outside of sharecropping. The Industrial Revolution was booming, but in the South, Blacks were being excluded.

The Coal Mining Industry offered dusty and dirty jobs, and Blacks had the worst of the worst. This did not break their spirit. In the year 1910, in Birmingham, Alabama, six Churches got together and decided to form an Association for Black Baptist people. The group included both ministers and laymen from the participating churches. These were the pioneers who laid the foundation for what is known today as the Peace Baptist District Missionary Association.

The Organization of the Peace Baptist District Missionary Association

The Peace Baptist District Missionary Association was organized in 1910, on October 26th at Smith Chapel Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama. Six churches enrolled, and five of those churches represented at the organizational meeting. The representation includes both ministers and laymen.

The first Officers elected to this Association were:

The Reverend J. W. Weatherspoon, Moderator, pastor – Morning Star.

The Reverend S. J. Jackson, Vice Moderator-

The Reverend T. J. James, Recording Secretary, pastor- New Zion Bessemer

The Reverend J. H. Smith, Treasurer, pastor of Smith Chapel

The Reverend I.V. Farrior, pastor – Bethel Pratt City

The Reverend J.H. Kelley, pastor – Friendship Birmingham

These were the pioneers who organized this Association and began avidly recruiting other churches to join. Other representatives at the meeting included: Reverends: J.D. Kents, G. Austins, A.W. Deampert, M. Rhodes, A.J. Neeley, W. Landerall, and Moss Pearson. Brothers: J.F. Callie, G.H. Ward, W.M. Walker, H.P. Reginald, W.M. Williams, Robert Hamby and Walter McCary. Sisters: Clara Britton, Barbara Caffee, Nora Bradford, Mary Hoaks, and Alice McCary.

From 1910 to 1940 the Association had four Moderators. They were:

Reverend J.W. Weatherspoon 1910 – 1915 Reverend C. H. Taylor 1920-1929

Reverend G. L. Thornton 1915 – 1919 Reverend E. M. Moton 1930- 1940

From the year 1910 to present, our Association has seen many Moderators take the helm and lead this organization into the 21st Century.

Moderators of the Peace Baptist District Missionary Association

Reverend J. W. Weatherspoon 1910 – 1915 Pastor of Morning Star

Reverend G. L. Thornton 1915 - 1919 Pastor of

Reverend C. H. Taylor 1920 - 1929 Pastor of

Reverend E. M. Moton 1930 - 1940 Pastor of

Reverend W. A. Davis 1940 – 1946 Pastor of

Reverend Westley H. Thomas 1946 – 10/1/1956 Pastor of

Reverend Dr. Rueben A. Anderson -1956 – 1983 Pastor of Annisburg (later renamed Antioch).

Reverend Dr. Eugene Jones 10/13/1983 – 19 Pastor of Antioch, Fairfield

Reverend Thomas E. Gilmore 19 - 2001 Pastor of First Baptist Ensley

Reverend T. L. Lewis 2001 - 2014 Pastor of Bethel Baptist, Pratt City

Reverend O. C. Oden, Jr. January 1, 2015 – 2017 Pastor of Antioch, Fairfield

Reverend Robert G. Twyman, January 2017- Pastor First Baptist Fairfield

Each moderator worked to make the Association progressively stronger and each achieved their goals, albeit differently. It was under the leadership of Reverend Davis that the Association completely revised its constitution, updated its objectives, and expanded the work of the Association to empower its church leaders. The Constitution was put in place to govern the Association and its churches, and to provide a guideline for order and church discipline.

The Association saw the importance of education in the community and began to include charitable giving to the Birmingham Easonian Baptist Bible College. In 1978, the Association set aside 50% of its funds as a donation to the Baptist Bible College, 25% to Selma University, and 25% operational expenses.

Under the leadership of Reverend Thomas, each Association began to meet at separate times in order to allow the officers and members to attend one another's meetings and develop a closer working relationship.

Under the leadership of Dr. Anderson, the Association grew even more. Prior to becoming Moderator, he had served as both first and second vice moderator. Church membership grew from twenty churches to forty-seven

churches. Also, under his watch a centralized banking account was established in the name of Peace Baptist District Missionary Association and a standard finance committee was formed. Under the late Reverend W. A. Hamilton, Pastor First Baptist- Ensley. He was responsible for this committee, as well as compiling, recording and disbursing all monies collected by the Association. It was failing health that forced Dr. Anderson to relinquish his leadership in 1983.

Under the leadership of Dr. Eugene Jones, the Association continued to thrive and grow, becoming a viable entity in the community. Dr. Jones had previously served as first and second vice moderator, and also as a missionary in the Association. Once again, there was a need to revise the Constitution and this was done in 1989.

Under the leadership of Reverend Thomas Gilmore, the Association continued to improve and be visible in the community. **See "Accomplishments for Dr. Gilmore" at the end of this document.* Reverend T.L. Lewis, pastor of Bethel Pratt City, served as 1st Vice Moderator under his leadership.

Under the leadership of Reverend T. L. Lewis the Association had forty-six churches enrolled, however, only about twenty-two of those churches were active. It is true that over the years, the Association experienced a decline in its membership but never in its follow-ship. Reverend R.L. Patterson – Abyssinia Ensley served as 1st Vice Moderator and Reverend Anthony Jelks, Lively Hope Pratt, served as 2nd Vice Moderator. **See "Accomplishments for Dr. Lewis" at the end of this document.*

Under the leadership of the Reverend O. C. Oden, Jr., Pastor of Antioch Baptist Church of Fairfield, Alabama, Reverend Oden took the reins of leadership on January 1, 2015. The very first Board meeting of the year was held at his church, January 7, 2015. There were many people present at that meeting. In his first official act as the presider of the meeting, he reminded us he would always ***be faithful, fair and friendly***. The Constitution was revised once again on January 7, 2015. The Board meeting started promptly at 10:00 a.m. Moderator Charles Winston of Mt. Pilgrim District conducted the installation of new officers. Meeting concluded at 12:05 p.m. Present at that meeting was the outgoing Moderator T. L. Lewis and second vice moderator Reverend Anthony Jelks.

The first event Moderator Oden instituted was a Gala (Fund raiser) held at the Fairfield Civic Center. The tickets were \$100 each. Our first Speaker was Reverend Quinton Hammonds of Antioch Missionary Baptist Church in Pratt City.

Under the leadership of our current Moderator Twyman, we continue to do fantastic things for the Association. He continues the Fellowship Banquet.

What We Believe:

- 1) We believe that salvation is in Christ alone
- 2) We believe that Jesus was born of a virgin, that he died and rose again, and is seated at the right hand of the Father
- 3) We believe that Jesus is coming back again

Mission & Objectives:

Mission: To support and sustain Selma University. To support and sustain the Birmingham Easonian Bible College, and to be visible in the community spreading the word that Jesus is LORD!

Purpose Statement: Dr. Oden promised to be “Faithful, Fair and Friendly!” He also promised to be Focused on mission and education.

Organizational Structure of the Peace Baptist District Missionary Association

Executive Board Members – which consists of all Officers in the Association.

Officers as of 2019:

Moderator –

1st Vice Moderator

2nd Vice Moderator

Recording Secretary

Corresponding Secretary

Treasurer

Financial Secretary

Historian

Statistician

Parliamentarian

Auditor

President of the Women's Auxiliary

President of the Laymen's Auxiliary

Youth Director

President of the Congress of Christian Education

Dean of the Congress of Christian Education

These are the current Officers of the Association as of January 2019:

Moderator – Pastor Robert G. Twyman. – First Baptist Fairfield

1st Vice Moderator – Pastor Willie Wells – Pleasant Grove Fairfield

2nd Vice Moderator –

Recording Secretary

Corresponding Secretary – Ms. Elenor White – Twenty-Third St. Ensley

Treasurer – Pastor Dwight Peterson Triedstone West End

Financial Secretary – Ms. Veronica Salary – Peace Missionary Pratt

Historian – Ms. Helen P. Smith – First Baptist Fairfield

Statistician – Ms. Ann Niles – First Baptist Fairfield

Parliamentarian - Ms. Charletta Sheehy – First Baptist Fairfield

Auditor – Ms. Dorothy Anderson -

President of the Women's Auxiliary – Ms. Hattie French- Abyssinia Ensley

President of the Laymen's Auxiliary – Mr. Alvin Moore Bethel Pratt City

Youth Director – Ms. Hattie French – Abyssinia Ensley

President of the Congress of Christian Education – Pastor Johnny Mosby, East End Church - Birmingham

Dean of the Congress of Christian Education – Pastor Matthew Hunter Jr.

The Communications Bureau consists of: Ms. Charletta Sheehy – First Baptist Fairfield, Ms. Doris Dixon – Evening Star Edgewater, and Ms. Donna Wilson -

Committees

The Communications Bureau – responsible for all communication disseminated in the name of the Association.

Membership - Any Church desiring to be a part of this Association must present a letter for approval by the Executive Board. It must be determined that the church is of like faith and practices of the Baptist faith. When this is verified, the membership will be approved by a majority vote of those present at the January Board meeting, Semi-Annual session, Annual session, or a Special Meeting. Membership shall become effective with the proper registration and submission of fees as prescribed by the Executive Board.

Membership & Registration:

Registration - Each church must pay its registration fees (\$250 for the Semi-Annual Session, \$250 for the Annual Session and \$300 for the Congress of Christian Education.) Fees are to be paid in a fiscal year. **A fiscal year will begin on November 1st and conclude on October 31st. (Note: Special provisions may be made for any Church that cannot meet its financial obligation).**

Elections & Voting – The only elected office in the Association is that of the Moderator. All other officers are appointed by the Moderator and serve at his pleasure, and may be terminated at the Moderator’s discretion. The candidate for Moderator must be a pastor of a church in good standing with this Association for a period of three consecutive years. Must submit a letter to the Executive Board no later than the first business day of the Semi-Annual Session. If there is more than one candidate for Moderator, the Executive Board shall appoint an Election Committee. This committee shall consist of at least one member outside of the Association. However, if there is no opposition, then the Executive Board shall recommend either approval or disapproval to the Moderator. If approved, the Moderator shall present the candidate at the Annual Session for a unanimous vote of acceptance as the newly elected Moderator.

- **Eligibility requirements** – must have been a member of the Association in good standing for at least five years. Must have paid fees for the last three consecutive years prior to the election.
- **Statement on Numbers of votes** - Each church shall have a minimum of _____ votes and a maximum of _____ votes.
- **Time and place for meetings** – The dates and Churches of where the meetings for the year will be held shall be decided at the January Board Meeting.
- **Names and dates of annual meetings** - January Board Meeting, Semi-Annual Session, Congress of Christian Education, Young people and August Board Meeting, and the Annual Session. These are established meetings that occur each year at the same time. The January Board Meeting is held in January; The Semi-Annual is held in March; Congress of Christian Education is held in June; Young People’s Meeting is held in August; and the Annual Session is held in October and concludes our year.

The Association began with six churches and as of 2014 we have 44 churches. These churches worked hard in the Association to make it a very viable asset in the community. The Association has increased its membership exponentially since its inception.

The following churches make up the Peace Baptist District Missionary Association as of 2019:

1. First Baptist Ensley – Pastor Tyree Anderson*
2. First Baptist Fairfield – Pastor Robert G. Twyman
3. Peace Missionary Baptist Pratt – Pastor Major Burrell
4. Bethel Baptist Pratt – Pastor T. L. Lewis
5. Bethel Dolomite – Pastor L.A. Whitt
6. Antioch – Fairfield – Pastor O.C. Oden, Jr.
7. Antioch – Warrior Road – Pastor Roy Peterson
8. Greater Mt. Carmel – Pastor Joe L. Moore
9. Lively Hope Pratt City – Pastor Anthony Jelks
10. Abyssinia Baptist Ensley – Pastor R. L. Patterson
11. Greater Lily Star Fairfield – Pastor L. C. Jenkins
12. Greater Mt. Nebo Brighton – Pastor Harrison Carson
13. Mt. Calvary – Evergreen Bottom – Pastor F. D. Scott
14. Twenty-Third Street Ensley – Pastor James L. Dunn

15. Triedstone – West End – Pastor Dwight Peterson
16. Pleasant Grove Fairfield – Pastor Willie Wells
17. East End – Birmingham – Pastor Johnny Mosby
18. Friendship Baptist West End – Pastor Terry Moore
19. Friendly Baptist – Smithfield – Vacant
20. St. Joseph Smithfield – Pastor Boykin Hunter
21. First United Missionary – Wylam – Pastor Tyrone Gadsden
22. First Baptist West Ensley – Pastor Matthew Hunter
23. First African Missionary Ensley – Pastor Alphonsa Campbell
24. First Baptist Graysville East - Vacant
25. Evening Star – Edgewater – Pastor Rodney Keebler
26. Hopewell Baptist Church Ensley – Pastor Frank Jackson
27. Lee’s Chapel Church – Brookside – Pastor Herman Maxwell
28. Lily Grove Church Ensley – Pastor Calvin Juett
29. Mars Hill Church – Brighton – Pastor J.D. Ruffin
30. Mt. Ararat Church B’ham – Pastor Jevon Q. Catlett
31. Mt. Cavalry Church Wylam – Pastor Jerrell Moore
32. Mt. Hilliard Church – Pastor Joseph Hill
33. Mt. Olive Church Fairfield – Pastor Michael Newton
34. Mt. Sinai Church B’ham – Pastor James Johnson
35. New Hope Church Ensley - Vacant
36. New Life Church – Green Acres – Pastor Curtis Lee**
37. New Shady Grove Church Rising – Pastor Anderson Williams
38. New Testament Church – Pastor Willie Jones
39. Peace Baptist Church Titusville – Pastor T.L. Bandy
40. St. Luke Church Graysville – Pastor John Bowden
41. St. Luke Church Wylam – Pastor Rickie Crapp
42. St. Luke Church West Pratt – Pastor Guyrinthian Harris
43. St. Mark Church Wylam – Vacant
44. Second Street Church Wylam – Pastor Darryl Sharp
45. Sixth Street Peace Baptist B’ham – Pastor

We have a total of 44 Churches but only 22 of those are active, so half of the churches are inactive at this writing. (2014).

Unfortunately, in 2015, we lost two of our churches: Antioch Warrior Road, Pastor Willie Jackson and New Life Church, Pastor Curtis Lee. Those churches pulled out and joined a different association. We picked up one new Church: Sixth Street Peace Baptist, Downtown Birmingham. Total of 43 Churches (2015).** Antioch Warrior Road has a new Pastor and they are back in our Association.

*With the passing of Dr. Thomas Gilmore in 2015, he was replaced by Rev. Tyree Anderson of Florida in 2017.

The first Annual Session of the Association

The first Annual Session of the Association was held in the month of October, 1911 at New Zion Baptist Church in Bessemer, Alabama. At that meeting ten new churches enrolled, and the organization of the Women's Auxiliary was born.

The new churches joining our district were:

1. Lily Grove Baptist Church, Ensley Pastor:
2. St. James Baptist Church, Wylam Pastor:
3. Corinth Baptist Church, Ensley Pastor:
4. Evening Star Baptist Church, Edgewater Pastor:
5. Rising Star Baptist Church, Thomas Pastor:
6. Pleasant Grove Baptist Church, Fairfield Pastor:
7. St. Joseph Baptist Church, Birmingham Pastor:
8. Rising Star Baptist Church, Rising Station Pastor:
9. Peace and Good Will Baptist Church, Sayreton Pastor:
10. St. Paul Baptist Church, Ensley Pastor:

It is important to remember that in 1911 the climate in Alabama was one of Jim Crow laws and separate but equal education in the public schools. Churches played pivotal roles in the education of its members. Churches often set aside funds to ensure that children of its members would be adequately educated in spite of the laws that sought to keep Blacks in an inferior position. Ministers continued to preach God's Word and encourage their congregations as well as the Associations that had been formed of member churches.

Despite the hostile climate in the South, this Association continued to grow and increase its membership. Since its inception in 1910, it has increased to include a Women's Auxiliary, a Matron's Department, Youth Department, Laymen Movement, and a District Congress of Christian Education. All of these auxiliaries were important to the Parent Body and continue to be very viable and active to this day.

Back in these days, women were often relegated to a subservient role in society. Women were paid less wages than men even though they performed the same job. Women were not being treated fairly. But in the Black Church, women

were looked to for wisdom and advice. So much so that in 1911 a Women's Auxiliary was organized.

The Organization of Peace Baptist District Women's Auxiliary

Women's Auxiliary consists of:

- **President**
- **1st Vice**
- **2nd Vice**
- **Recording Secretary**
- **Assistant Recording Secretary**
- **Corresponding Secretary**
- **Parliamentarian**
- **Treasurer**
- **Financial Secretary**

Appointed Positions:

- **Counselors**
- **Historian**
- **Media Committee**
- **Chaplain/Devotion Chair**
- **Bible Teacher**
- **Statistician**
- **Musician**

Each Assistant and Associate Counselor presides over workshop sessions in the Matron's Division.

Position Statements

➤ **Mission and Objectives**

To unite young women of the Baptist Churches in a progressive enterprise, and to encourage a regular participation in the Missionary Program of the District.

➤ **What we Believe**

We believe that the future of the church depends on properly trained young women who are willing to put into practice Christian examples, values and virtues. To teach children and also follow the mandates of Jesus.

Since the organization of the Women's Auxiliary in 1911, under the leadership of Moderator Weatherspoon, the Women's Department has been an organization on the move. From the beginning its leaders recognized the need to involve young women in Christian education. The structure and design of the organization was similar to the Association's. It consists of Senior missions, young matrons, progressive matrons, advanced matrons, Senior and Junior Reds, Crusaders, Sunbeams, Deacon Wives, and Ministers' Wives. Between 1911 and 1964, only two presidents served.

The first president was Mrs. Everlena Hamby, followed by Mrs. Henrietta Moton between the years 1911 -1964. The following also served as presidents of the Women's Auxiliary:

1. Mrs. Everlena Hamby 1911 – 1964
2. Mrs. Henrietta Moton 1911- 1964
3. Mrs. Sarah Cox 1964 – 1977
4. Mrs. Janie Welch 1977 – 1990
5. Ms. Susie J. Rembert 1990 – 2002
6. Ms. Edna Hale 2002 -
7. Mrs. Josephine S. Wallace 2002 – 2018
8. Ms. Hattie French 2018-present

Each president chooses her cabinet by appointment of counselors, and other officers. The presidents are responsible for reporting their activity to the Parent Body. At one time both Mrs. Josephine Wallace and Ms. Susie J. Rembert had served as vice presidents.

The president is appointed by the Moderator. The current president is Ms. Hattie French, Abyssinia Ensley. (As of January 2018).

History of the Organization of the Matrons

In 1945, in Dothan, Alabama, the idea for a group known as the Matron's Auxiliary was introduced. It was at North Highland Baptist Church, that Dr. Henrietta Gibbs recommended the young married ladies be organized into a group and named it, **"Young Matrons."** There were Junior Missionary Societies but after the girls grew up, they had no involvement in Mission. Dr. Gibbs was concerned about women being left out of church growth, once they reached the age of maturity.

Mrs. Pauline Thomas Campbell was appointed as its first Counselor and served from 1945 to 1967. In June, 1967, in Mobile, Alabama, Dr. A.M. Wilson, then President appointed Dr. Ethel Fallin as Counselor. In 1980, Dr. Wilson appointed Dr. Katie Young Lindsey as Counselor.

In 2003, after the retirement of Dr. Lindsey, Dr. Gertie Lowe appointed Mrs. Carrie Johnson as Counselor.

Since its inception, there have been four State Counselors: They are

1. Mrs. Pauline Thomas Campbell – 1945 - 1967
2. Dr. Ethel Fallin – 1967 - 1980
3. Dr. Katie Young Lindsey – 1980 - 2003
4. Mrs. Carrie Johnson – 2003 – present

Officers for 2014-2015

COUNSELOR --- Sister Carrie Johnson

COUNSELOR –AT-LARGE --- Sister Marcia Kendrick

Northwest Counselor --- Sister Nancy Carter* deceased

Northeast Counselor --- Dr. Willie J. Jackson

Southwest Counselor --- Sister Bernice Hodges

Southeast Counselor --- Sister Velma Crayton

Matron's Pledge

Keep us O God from pettiness, let us be large in thoughts, in words and in deeds. Let us be done with fault-finding, and leaving off self-seeking.

Let us dedicate our talents, and give of our time, influence and means of teaching, or spreading the Christian religion, at home and abroad. To put into action our better impulses toward our fellowman.

To read the bible daily, and continue in prayer. To these ends, we pledge to devote ourselves, and seek divine aid and guidance daily; that we may become a living witness and a bright and shining light for our Lord!

Motto

Brightening up the life of someone else will put a fresh shine on your own.

Colors: Purple and white. White dresses with purple corsages.

Slogan: "Help us to keep our lives focused on Thee."

The Matrons meet twelve times a year, each time at a different church for their monthly meetings. The meetings are held the first Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. The meetings open with prayer and devotion by the Chaplain along with the Matrons of the host church. After business is conducted, there are workshops where each Associate or Assistant Counselor presides.

The workshops are varied and provide a plethora of information both spiritually and also pertaining to current events in the world as they unfold. After the workshops, there is a meditative period, followed by greetings from the host church pastor or president of the Mission. This is usually followed by a Repast and a period of fellowship.

Purpose of the Organization:

1. To unite women of the Baptist faith.
2. To encourage regular participation in programs of the District, State, National and International Mission work.

3. To train women in daily bible study, and prayers, and also to become efficient in their personal service of Christ and mankind.
4. To work harmoniously together with other organizations in various mission programs that promote the welfare of the District, the State, and also increase education awareness in the community.
5. To send out properly trained women to evangelize the world.

Up until the latter part of the nineteenth Century, women were not allowed to become well-educated, since it was assumed that they would be taken care of by their husbands.

Fortunately, there were many forward thinking people in the Association, who saw a need to provide proper training for young women, and used this arm of the Association as a tool to do so.

The Duties of a Matron:

- Must first of all be a Christian woman
- Must be devoted to the work of Christ
- Must have a pleasant personality
- Must be cooperative and a good follower of leadership
- Must lead her family in devotion
- Must help train others in Christian education
- Must have a strong prayer life
- Must study the word of God on a regular basis
- Must teach children and youth the importance of worship, bible study and prayer.

Officers and Committees:

Counselor

Presiding Counselor

Assistant Counselor

Associate Counselor

Recording Secretary

Assistant Recording Secretary

Corresponding Secretary

Chaplain

Treasurer

Financial Secretary

Parliamentarian

Bible Teacher

Musician

Committees:

- ❖ Program – Plans, prepares, and presents all programs to be presented to the President or Parent body.
- ❖ Social – plans, prepares, secures venue for all social gatherings, and fellowships as needed. Ensures adequate food is prepared, servers are in place to help, hostesses are prepared and there is a clean-up crew in place if necessary.
- ❖ Finance – helps count all monies, make sure receipts are given, financial reports are accurate and given to President or Parent body in a timely manner.

No history of any religious organization would be complete if it did not include the Civil Rights struggle and the pivotal role it played in the emancipation of Blacks and poor people in the South.

Racism was spreading rapidly all over the South and not just in rural areas. Georgia, South Carolina, Mississippi, and Tennessee were plagued with issues of Ku Klux Klan activity, just as it was in Alabama. The Klan movement started in Tennessee, and quickly spread throughout the South.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Dr. Ralph Abernathy and Dr. Fred Shuttlesworth were some of the icons of the Movement. It was Dr. Shuttlesworth who invited Dr. King to come to Birmingham, and from the moment of his arrival, the activities were almost non-stop.

In the 1950s, the Jim Crow Laws were still in place. Jim Crow Laws were named after a man by the name of Thomas Dartmouth Rice (1808 – 1860), who

performed a popular minstrel act depicting a slave. The show was replete with buffoonery and silly gestures and Whites loved it. The Laws stated that the Black and White race must be kept separate, but Blacks have equality in their own separate schools, and communities, which did not happen.



Many White performers would put on black make-up and pretend to be a black slave. These shows were approved and even laughed at, as they passed themselves off as “entertainment”, but they humiliated Black people. Such images as large breasted, handkerchief head wrapped women, eating fried chicken, perpetuated black stereotypes.

There were white and colored water fountains, and rest-rooms in public places. Blacks could not eat at White facilities, they had to purchase their food at the window. Everything was separate and unequal.

Jim Crow was the Law of the land and a lot of people loved it, but many people in the South, including White people began to get sick of it and demand a change.

Legislation was being passed that outlawed some of these laws, but in Birmingham nothing had changed. Blacks still had to ride in the back of the bus. They had to board in the front, pay their fare, get off the bus and board from the back; sometimes the bus would pull off before they could make it on.

Newspapers would advertise jobs and list the race the applicant must be in order to apply for the job. (Ex. Book Keeper wanted- White only need apply; Dishwasher wanted- colored—go to the back and ring bell).

Blacks could be janitors, elevator operators or maids. But if the job involved sitting behind a desk out front---forget it.

So in this atmosphere, these ministers and leaders of these organizations, including the Peace Baptist District Missionary Association, saw a vibrant need for education. It is through education that poverty can be eradicated. Blacks realized the importance of educating both their sons and daughters.

“The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. Intelligence plus character-that is the goal of true education.” Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

In 1955, a black female graduate of Miles College in Fairfield, Alabama, by the name of Autherine Lucy, along with her friend Polly Ann Myers attempted to enroll in the University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa. Lucy had received an AA degree from Selma University, and a BA degree from Miles College; both degrees in English. She wanted to enter the Master’s program at the University but knew they had a policy against admitting Blacks.

There were many roadblocks placed in her way by the Board of Trustees. The NAACP fought this case all the way to the United States Supreme Court, and finally in 1956, Lucy was admitted into the University as the first Black ever to be enrolled in a white public school or university in Alabama.

White mobs gathered in the door of the University threatening to commit violent acts against her so she was expelled three days later. This set a precedent that no other Blacks could be admitted, but in 1988 the University overturned her expulsion and she received a Master’s in Elementary Education in 1992.

*The Schoolhouse Door: Segregation’s last Stand at the University E. Culpepper Clark New York, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1993, p.55.

www. Wikipedia the free Encyclopedia

Amid this backdrop, the Peace Baptist Congress of Christian Education was born.

The organization of the Congress of Christian Education:

The educational arm of the Missionary Baptist Organization was originally called “*Baptist Training Union.*” But in 1951, the Sunday School and Baptist Training Union (BTU) Convention merged together to become the Sunday School and Baptist Training Union Congress. In later years the name was changed to “Peace Baptist District Congress of Christian Education.”

Since its inception in 1951, these have served as presidents: The Reverend E.W. Williams, pastor of First Baptist – Fairfield, 1951 – 1969; Mr. Andrew Peterson, (Church) 1969 – October 1982; Mr. Vernard Thomas, First Baptist, Fairfield, 1983 – 1995; Mr. Henry L. Mims, (Church), 1995 - 2005; The Reverend Johnny Mosby, pastor of East End – Birmingham, 2005 – Current.

The following served as Deans over the Congress. They were: Dr. T.D. Bussey (Church) who served from 1951 – 1955; Dr. C.J. McNear, pastor of Twenty-Third Street – Ensley, who served from 1955 – 1997; The Reverend

Matthew Hunter, Jr., pastor of First Baptist, West Ensley who serves from ?? – Current.

Those persons serving as Assistant Deans were: Rev. A.W. Billups, Rev. W.L. Little, Rev. U.L. Thrash, Rev. A.L. Woods, Jr., and the late Mrs. Susie J. Rembert of First Baptist Fairfield. Mrs. Rembert was the first woman elected to serve as Assistant Dean of the Congress. She was elected on June 5, 1980.

The Congress began to expand its coursework and offer credit for courses during the tenure of Rev. McNear and due to the various organizations that Mrs. Rembert was affiliated with.

Upon the departure of Rev. E.W. Williams, Mr. Andrew J. Peterson became the next president of the Congress and began to broaden the coursework even more. Credit for courses was given to those attending the sessions. Mr. Peterson believed in promptness and brought a certain ethical flair to the Congress that soon became the standard of the Congress. Vice presidents who served under him were Rev. M.C. Vanhorn, Rev. N.W. Colston, and Mr. Vernard Thomas of First Baptist Church Fairfield. Rev. N.W. Colston resigned his position as first vice president in order to allow a layman (Mr. Vernard Thomas) the opportunity to become President of the Congress.

Purpose Statement: *“To foster and stimulate all phases of religious education, and training in doctrine, church membership, stewardship, evangelism, mission and Bible study.”*

The Congress of Christian Education is held annually in the month of June, usually the second week. The Congress opens on Monday and concludes on Thursday. There are two sessions held: a morning session and an evening session. The topics include a wide array of subjects that are pertinent to the Christian way of life. Some topics are: Eschatology (a study of the end times), the organization of the Church, How the bible came to be, etc. These are just a few of the topics being offered to educate our members concerning Christian education.

The Congress offers classes for children, youth, young adults, adults, young pastors, women and many other groups and categories. All of the teachers have received their certification, and are well able to teach a variety of topics as they pertain to Christian living, and Christian education.

The current officers are as of 2018:



Immediate Past Moderator – Dr. O.C. Oden, Jr. – Antioch Fairfield.

Rev. O.C. Oden Jr. resigned his position as Moderator in October of 2017, for personal reasons. Rev. Twyman moved into this position.

1st Vice President – *

Assistant Dean – Rev. F.D. Scott, Mt. Calvary – Evergreen Bottom

Recording Secretary, Emeritus – Dr. Ora M. Parker

Recording Secretary – Sis. Rhonda Parker -

Executive Secretary – Sis. Elenor White – Twenty-Third Street – Ensley

1st Asst. Secretary – Sis. Dorielle Dixon – Evening Star – Edgewater

2nd Asst. Secretary – Sis. Debra Hunter – First Baptist – West Ensley

Treasurer – Rev. Dwight Peterson – Triedstone – West End

*This position is vacant, since Dr. Lee left our District.

Instructors in the Congress

Adult Division:

Sis. Irene George (Understanding the Bible) Pleasant Grove- Fairfield.

Rev. Anderson Williams (The Pentateuch) - New Shady Grove

Sis. Brendia McCray – (Christian Stewardship) Mt. Calvary – Evergreen Bottom

Rev. John Bowden (The Baptist Church Covenant) – St. Luke – Graysville

Sis. Doris Dixon (The Educational task of the Church) – Evening Star – Edgewater

Dr. Matthew Hunter Jr., (Survey of the Book of Romans) – First Baptist W. Ensley

Sis. Florence Staples (Organizational Skills) – St. Joseph - Smithfield

Dr. Veronica Salary (The Role of the Minister’s Wife)- Peace Baptist – Pratt

Dr. Joe L. Moore (The Role of the Associate Minister & Seminar for young Pastors) – Mt. Carmel – Birmingham

Dr. Willie Jackson (Becoming an Effective Deacon) – Antioch Warrior Road

Rev. Herman Maxwell (Life of the Computer in the Church)- Lee’s Chapel –

Youth Department

Sis. Hattie French (Youth stewardship) – Abyssinia – Ensley

Sis. Annetta Nunn (Youth at Worship) – Twenty-Third Street – Ensley

Rev. Rodney Keebler (Jesus and Me: JAM youth chat) - Evening Star – Edgewater

Sis. Marquetta Mosby (The mission of the Church) – East End – B’ham

Sis. Carolyn J. Thomas (Discipleship – It’s time to grow up) First Baptist – Fairfield.

The Dean’s Hour is usually held on Wednesday morning where he gives his “*State of the Congress Address.*” Followed by the Congress President who will give his Address on Thursday evening at which time the Congress closes out.

Each year the Congress has a theme which centers on the theme for the National Baptist USA INC. The Congress has something for everyone; there are lectures, sermons and classes. There is a break between the morning and evening sessions, allowing those who cannot make the morning session the opportunity to attend evening classes.

Under Dr. Hunter’s leadership the Congress has expanded to include:

1. Three new courses have been added to the current curriculum
2. Collaboration with the Mt. Pilgrim and Jefferson County Districts to obtain new ideas and new courses for the Congress.

When the Association closed out in October, 2014, the balance was \$26,388.65. Twenty-six churches participated, twenty-two contributed financially. When the Association opened January, 2015 the balance was \$12,766.93. The Association has come a long ways from its first six Churches to a financially sound organization that is visible in the community.

A new day is on the horizon for Birmingham

From 1882 to 1968 there were approximately 4,743 lynchings in the U.S., and of those, 3,446 were Black. Though many believe the number to be much higher.

Throughout the South, lynchings were occurring in mostly black areas. Below is a breakdown of the number of Black lynchings by Southern state:

Alabama – 299	Arkansas – 226	Florida – 257	Georgia – 492
Kentucky – 142	Louisiana – 335	Mississippi – 539	S. Carolina – 156
Tennessee – 204	Texas – 352		

In Alabama there were approximately 347 lynchings; of those, 299 were black.

www.chesnuttarchive.org/classroom/stat.html

<https://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials>

The Association was busy in 1951 with its newly formed Congress of Christian Education, and with its Women's Auxiliary. So it was natural that an organization for men would also be added to the Association.

The ministers were busy in the Association helping to shape and change the community around them. With the Women's Department, and the Congress of Christian Education, the Association was thriving.

1951 was a pivotal year for the Association. In Birmingham, there were still two separate communities: *one Black and one White*. Black men still lagged behind whites in education, in social status and economics. Racial segregation was still the "*Law of the Land*" in Birmingham. The Laymen's Movement would prove to one day be a vital arm of the Association.

The organization of the Laymen Movement

On October 19, 1951, a group of ministers met at 32nd Street Baptist Church, Birmingham and started the Laymen Movement. The late Reverend Charles H. Parker, then Pastor of the church, as well as Recording Secretary of the Men's Department of the Association was one of the key organizers.

The first officers elected to the Laymen's Movement were:

President – Deacon W.M. Marshall, First Baptist Ensley (1951 -

Vice President – Deacon W.E. Butler, Tiedstone Birmingham

Recording Secretary – Deacon John Mays, First Baptist West Ensley

Treasurer – Deacon W.E. Blocker, 32nd Street Birmingham

Unfortunately, it has been noted that after its inception, the Laymen's Auxiliary failed to make a strong presence in the Association; and made very little progress in the Association, and no significant impact on the community.

The turning point came in 1979, when Deacon Jimmie Lee Williams of First Baptist Church, Fairfield took the reins of leadership as president of the Laymen's Auxiliary. Under his leadership, the Laymen's Auxiliary became a very viable and tightly organized arm of the Association. Some of the changes were:

- Financially supportive of the Association
- Fiscally responsible for reporting to the Parent Body
- Organized meetings and reports

- New initiatives and ideas were formed

Upon Deacon Williams' death in March, 1989, Deacon Freddie Lee White, then a member of Twenty-Third Street Baptist Church, Ensley took over as president on October 12, 1989. Deacon Paul Cannon of Lily Grove Church, Ensley was elected as vice-president.

When Deacon Freddie White stepped down as president of the Laymen's Department, Deacon Edward Mallory became the new president in 20?? Deacon Mallory continued to grow the Laymen's Department. The Laymen's have a chorus that performs concerts throughout the Association. Below are the current Officers for 2014.

Officers

President – Bro. Edward Mallory

1st Vice President – Bro. Wesley Smith

Recording Secretary – Bro. Mack Pippens

Financial Secretary – Bro. Perry McMiller

Treasurer – Bro. Henry Turner

Chaplain – Bro. William Payne

Musician – Bro. W.C. Jones

Musician – Bro. Ken Johnson

Director of Chorus – Bro. Edward Mallory

FROM THEN TO NOW: The Change

The Association has progressed a long ways from the 1900s. We have seen a new century ushered in with new technology. In 1910, our membership was kept on a pad, written in ink. Today, our membership is computerized.

In 1910, the population in Alabama was around 2,138,000. Based on the chart below, the population was increasing each year. Many Blacks did not participate in the Census count and were therefore undercounted. The population of Blacks living in Birmingham in 2013 was a little over 155,000.

Alabama was increasing its population every year, and so was the population in the Black community.

Population of Alabama:			
1910	1930	1950	2013
2,138,093	2,646,248	3,061,743	4,833,732
Population of Birmingham:		Population of Blacks	
1910	2014	2014	
132,685	212,237	155,791	

Blacks now make up 73% of the population in Birmingham.

But in the 1900s, Birmingham was sweltering with violence. There were so many bombings occurring in Birmingham during the 1950s and 1960s it earned the nickname, “*Bombingham*”.

There were violent protests against integration of public schools, and public facilities.



The 1954 Supreme Court decision making segregation illegal in public schools was not popular with many Southern whites. Ministers were organizing in Churches all over Birmingham to ensure that Blacks would be

able to vote in major elections, get a quality education in the public school system and be allowed access to quality jobs.

Emmett Till, 14-year-old Chicago Youth, Abducted and Murdered in Mississippi Delta

On August 20, 1955, 14-year-old Emmett Till boarded a train in Chicago, Illinois, headed for Money, Mississippi, to spend two weeks with his great-uncle and cousins. A few days into his visit, Till and a group of friends went into a nearby store to buy candy. While there, Till allegedly acted “familiar” when speaking to the white female storekeeper, Carolyn Bryant. This was a dangerous transgression in the racial caste system of the Mississippi Delta, a system of which Chicago-bred Emmett Till was largely unaware. Within a few days, word of the interaction reached Carolyn Bryant’s husband, Roy.

On August 28, 1955, Roy Bryant and his half-brother, J.W. Milam, abducted Emmett Till at gunpoint from his great-uncle’s home and drove him to a storage shed on Milam’s property in Drew, Mississippi. Each man took turns torturing and beating Till with a pistol, then took the battered boy to a nearby ginning company and forced him to load a 74-pound fan into the back of their pick-up truck. The men then drove Till to the edge of the Tallahatchie River, ordered him to remove his clothes, and shot him in the head. Bryant and Milam then attached the heavy fan to the child's neck and rolled his body into the river.

On August 31, 1955, Emmett Till’s corpse was discovered by two young boys. Devastated by her son’s brutal murder and badly disfigured body, Emmett’s mother, Mamie Till Bradley, defiantly held an open-casket funeral in Chicago, where thousands gazed in horror at his mutilated body. To show the world the fate that had befallen Emmett, Mrs. Bradley also distributed a photograph of his corpse for publication in newspapers and magazines, later explaining that “the whole nation had to bear witness to this.”



1955 Library of Congress. Articles like these appeared constantly. (Bethel Baptist B’ham). It was bombed on June 29,

1958. It had also been bombed on December 25, 1956.

In 1901, a pound of sugar cost \$.04. A pound of butter cost \$.25, a dozen eggs were \$.14, and a pound of ground beef was \$.07. It may sound cheap to us today,

but in the 1900s even at these prices, it was hard for Blacks to keep pace with inflation.

The steel business was taking off since U.S. Steel had been organized under Bank Financier, J.P. Morgan, and oil had been discovered in Texas. But for Blacks in Birmingham they were largely left out of the booming economy.



Photographs of Birmingham in the 1950s and 1960s.



Birmingham was rich with coke, and iron ore and with the booming steel industry, Birmingham began to blossom into what became known as the Pittsburgh of the South or (The Magic City) because the population exploded.

Blacks began to be employed with U.S. Steel and the Coal Mines. Many of the local ministers were employed with U.S. Steel. As the US increased its production of steel, Blacks began to gain a foothold in society.

Accomplishments of Past Moderators:

Rev. Weatherspoon, the Association's first moderator had a very tedious job back in the early part of the twentieth Century. Keep in mind this was still a period of racial segregation in the South and many Blacks were unlearned at this time.

These early pioneers promoted three basic principles:

- Promote the preaching of the gospel
- Bring in more churches to show unity in the community and
- Preach and teach God's word throughout the State and the world.

Rev. G.L. Thornton continued this doctrine when he succeeded Rev. Weatherspoon. The Association continued to seek out and invite other Churches to join forces with them, knowing that ***"in unity there is strength."***

Rev. C.H. Taylor guided the Association during the 1920s. This was a turbulent time for Blacks everywhere, but especially in the South. It took a lot of innovative thinking for a Black organization to survive, and thrive during this period, but survive is just what the Association did under Rev. Taylor's leadership. More churches were added to the Association.

Rev. E.M. Moton served as Moderator during the 1930s and the economy grew even worse. Remember, this was the period of ***the "Great Depression."*** The entire Country was in turmoil. Many believe that on October 29, 1929, when the Stock Market crashed it set in motion the period known as the Great Depression. Commonly referred to as ***"Black Tuesday."***

It was a desperate time as many Banks failed as they called in Bank Loans that consumers could not pay. Herbert Hoover took Office as our 31st president in 1928 and seven months later the Country was plunged into a depressed economy.

There were long soup lines, people begging for food, people losing their homes, and virtually no jobs to be had for most uneducated people. Despite this backdrop, Rev. Moton continued to hold our Association together along with the people who worked in the Association. It was under his leadership that the Semi-Annual Session was initiated.

Rev. W.A. Davis served as Moderator from 1940 – 1946. It was under his leadership that the Constitution was completely revised. The revision allowed the Association to expand its work. According to the revised Constitution the Association's purpose was to:

- Provide an agency of cooperation among the churches.
- Support Ministerial and Christian education.
- Provide aid to any benevolent or moral cause.
- Support preaching of the Gospel of Jesus in Alabama and throughout the world.

Rev. Westley H. Thomas, the next Moderator went on to build on the accomplishments of his predecessors. Under his leadership. Under his tenure he was elected as “Key Moderator” by the Moderator’s Department and also the first Chairman of the department of Evangelism in the National Baptist Convention USA, INC. It was he who had each Association meet at different times so Officers and members could attend one another’s meetings, thus sharing information to strengthen each other.

Rev. Reuben A. Anderson was the seventh Moderator of the Association. According to him, the membership of the Association grew exponentially under his leadership. The membership grew from twenty to forty-seven churches. In 1978, a centralized Banking Account was established in the name of the Association, and a standard Finance Committee was established. The late Reverend William A. Hamilton, Pastor of First Baptist Ensley was Chairman. It was during this period that the Association’s financial stability improved.

The Association set aside percentages of its funds to donate to its two Baptist schools: Birmingham Baptist Bible College and Selma University. The breakdown voted on was to give ½ to the Baptist Bible College, ¼ to Selma University and ¼ for operational expenses. Rev. Anderson served for twenty-seven years.

Rev. Eugene Jones was the eighth Moderator, and when he took the reins there were forty-eight churches in the Association. Rev. Jones had previously served as both first and second vice Moderators, as well as a Missionary for the Association. Mrs. Carrie T. Anderson was elected as Historian in 1982. He continued to implement the goals and plans set in place by his predecessor.

Rev. Thomas E. Gilmore Sr., Pastor of First Baptist Ensley took over after Rev. Jones and he served the District well. Rev. Gilmore had previously been a Sheriff in Greene County, Alabama. His career was highlighted in the 1979 movie titled ***This Man Stands Alone***. In his cabinet those serving were Vice-Moderator Rev. G.M. Perryman, then pastor of Mt. Nebo Baptist Church – Fairfield. Rev. Rector E. Avery, then pastor of Pleasant Grove Church – Fairfield, succeeded Rev. J.A. Salary as the Statistician. Rev. Gilmore improved upon the advancements made in

the District by providing excellent leadership. Rev. Gilmore had made quite a name for himself when he served in Law Enforcement. He was known as the **“Sheriff without a Gun.”** Under Rev. Gilmore’s leadership, our Association made mass improvements in the District as well as in the community.

Rev. Tommie L. Lewis, Pastor of Bethel Baptist Church – Pratt City

Rev. Lewis was elected Moderator on October 18, 2001. Serving under him as 1st and 2nd vice Moderators respectively were: Rev. R.L. Patterson, Pastor of Abyssinia Baptist Church – Ensley, and Rev. Anthony Jelks, Pastor of Lively Hope – Pratt City. The Association had been steadily improving and impacting the community and under the leadership of Rev. Lewis the following changes were instituted:

- Peace Makers Partner Training Conference
- Financial support of foreign mission
- Led Peace Baptist in their support of Missionary Julia Williams in her efforts of Church building in Liberia and Swaziland.
- Peace Baptist contributed financially to the building of ***fresh water wells*** in Liberia under the leadership of Missionary Julia Williams.

Rev. O.C. Oden, Jr. Pastor of Antioch Missionary Baptist Church – Fairfield

Pastor Oden made history on October 16, 2014, by becoming our 11th Moderator. During the Annual Session at Bethel Pratt City elections were held to elect a new moderator. There were two candidates: Dr. R.L. Patterson, then current 1st vice moderator and Pastor of Abyssinia Ensley. And Dr. O.C. Oden Jr., Pastor of Antioch Fairfield.

The Election Committee consisted of Rev. Robert G. Twyman, Pastor of First Baptist Fairfield, Sis. Davis representing the Patterson Camp and Sis. Anderson, representing the Oden Camp. Rev. Twyman gave the voting instructions. Each candidate made a brief speech to the body outlining their platform.

After the votes were tallied, Rev. Twyman announced the results:

Out of 44 Churches on roll, 25 churches participated. There were a total of 184 votes. 90 of those votes went to Rev. R. L. Patterson and 94 went to Rev. O.C. Oden Jr. Rev. Oden won by 4 votes. Four people made the difference. Rev.

Twyman made a motion to elect Rev. O. C. Oden as the Moderator unanimously, the motion was declared carried.

Rev. T. L. Lewis congratulated Rev. Oden and then declared all offices vacant. Rev. Oden will take office in January of 2015. The Session was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

What's New

Moderator Oden recommended the District sponsor a “*Gala*” affair as a fund raiser to be done only once a year. The Gala will ask for donations of \$100.00 per person. If each church takes a table that seats ten, it should produce \$1,000. This will eliminate our need to have each Auxiliary produce fund raisers through the year.

The proposed date of the Gala is the first Friday in March of 2016. Proposed site is the Fairfield Civic Center. The Moderator made this proposal at the first August Board meeting under his tenure. The meeting was held at First Baptist Church Fairfield on Tuesday, August 11, 2015.

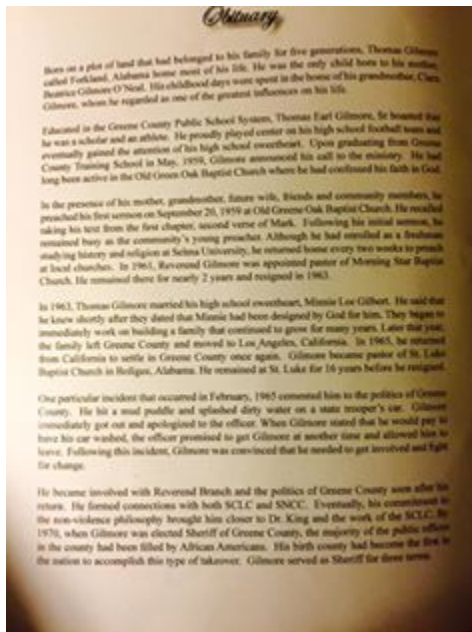
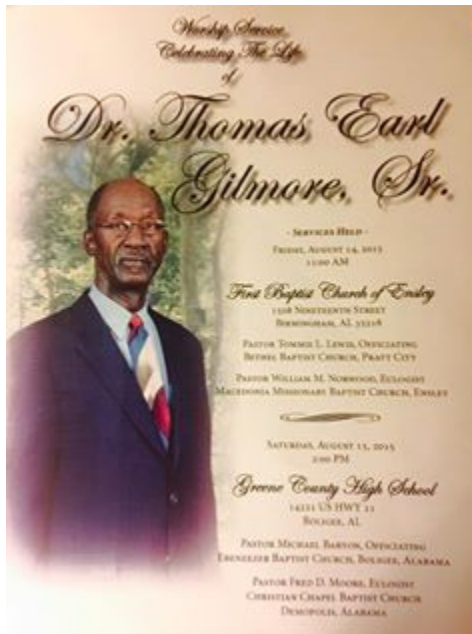
District News:

The Association received sad news concerning one of our previous moderators. On Sunday, August 9, 2015, Dr. T.E. Gilmore, Sr. passed away. The District is in mourning as our beloved past moderator is being eulogized on Friday, August 14, 2015 at 11:00 a.m. at First Baptist Ensley. The body will lie in state from 10:00 to 11:00 a.m. at the Church. Final resting will be in his hometown of Boligee, AL on Saturday, August 15, 2015.

Below is his obituary with comments from State Representative Merika Coleman-Evans:

Rev. [Thomas Gilmore](#) home going celebration was just that a celebration of the life he lived, a life of service to God, his family and the community at large! I am forever grateful that I had the opportunity to know the "Sheriff Without a Gun." He paved the way for other black elected officials in the state of Alabama!! My prayers are with his mother, his children, his extended family, his church family and all who knew and loved him. Sleep on Pastor!!
[Representative Merika Coleman-Evans and Sherry E McClain](#)

Rest in Peace.



IN MEMORIAL

May he rest in peace!

Constitution and By-Laws

The Role of Women in the Making of Peace Baptist District Missionary Association

From the very beginning of the organizing of the Association, women played a pivotal role. Even though in the 1900s women were not really considered to be equal with men.

White women had begun to speak out and demand equal rights, such as the right to vote, to smoke in public and work on jobs traditionally referred to as **“Men’s jobs.”**

It was in 1896, that the National Association of Colored Women was founded, bringing together more than 100 black women. In 1903 the National Women’s Trade Union is formed which seeks to promote improved wages and working conditions for women. On August 26, 1920, the nineteenth amendment to the Constitution is signed into Law, giving women the right to vote.

It was the era known as the **“Roaring Twenties”**, when Flapper girls, (women who raised their hemlines and wore short skirts, cut their hair in a bob style, began to drink alcohol and smoke in public, listened to jazz music) and flaunted their sexuality. They burst on the scene in record numbers.

But in the Association, women were involved in Christian work. Many women are mentioned in the organizing of the Peace Baptist District---they were:

1. Ms. Clara Britton
2. Ms. Barbara Caffee
3. Ms. Nora Bradford
4. Ms. Mary Hoaks
5. Ms. Alice McCary

Another important woman in the Peace Baptist District Association was the late Mrs. Mollie R. Partridge, First Baptist Ensley, who in 1969 was elected as youth director. She trained and guided young minds to follow the mandates of Christ, as well as other people of authority.

She also served as the Bible teacher in the Matron’s Department for many years teaching God’s word to young impressionable women who never forgot her godly influence.

The late Mrs. Susie J. Rembert, First Baptist Fairfield will forever be remembered as the first woman elected as Assistant Dean to the Congress of Christian Education. Mrs. Rembert served well in this position as well as in the Women's Auxiliary where she became president following Mrs. Janie Welch in 1990. Sis. Rembert was very instrumental in leading the District into areas where few women had gone before. She was a great organizer and actively involved in the National Baptist Convention USA, Inc.

The late Mrs. Elizabeth G. Miree also of First Baptist Church Fairfield is another pioneer woman who blazed the trail of extraordinary women. Mrs. Miree served for many years as Historian for the Matron's Department, Financial Secretary for the Association, Music Director in the Matron's department and in many other positions. She gave excellent leadership to the Matrons' department as well as to the Association.

Moderator's News



Who's Who in the News?

Peace Baptist District Association made news as we listened to our newly elected Moderator in our annual session.

The Peace Baptist District Annual Session:

The 105th Annual Session was held on October 13-15, 2015 at Pleasant Grove Baptist Church, Fairfield, Alabama. The Rev. Willie Wells, Jr. is the pastor.

The Association opened at 5:00 p.m. with Dr. O.C. Oden, Jr. presiding. Devotion followed and then the Welcome program by Pleasant Grove Church. The immediate past moderator, Dr. T.L. Lewis gave a powerful sermon on God's mercy taken from Psalm 103. Pastor Lewis ended by having the congregation come down front and embrace our new moderator, Dr. O.C. Oden, Jr.

Highlights from Dr. Oden's first annual address:

Dr. Oden encouraged all churches to support the Gala next year. The proposed date is March 4, 2016 at the Fairfield Civic Center. The cost is \$100 per person. Each church is encouraged to have a table.

He promised that we would honor our commitment to give:

- 40% of our donations to support Baptist Bible College
- 35% to support Selma University
- 25% for our operating funds to support each auxiliary in our association

He again reiterated his promise that as our moderator he would be:

- Faithful (2 Corinthians 5:7)
- Fair (Micah 6:8)
- Friendly (Proverbs 18:24)
- Focused (Mission and Education)

Financial Report for 2015 – Sis. Veronica Salary

Beginning Balance	\$22,063.00
Total Churches reporting = 17	
Auxiliary Reports	
Ministers Wives	205.00
Mission	557.00
Public Offering	81.50
Total this session	<u>5,693.00</u>
Grand Total	27,756.50

Historian reporting on October, 2015 Sis. Helen P. Smith, First Baptist Fairfield

Peace Baptist District News

2016



First Annual Gala

Our District made news again as we held our first annual Gala under our new Moderator, Dr. O.C. Oden, Jr. The Gala was held on Friday, March 4, 2016 at the Fairfield Civic Center at 7:00 p.m.

The Mistress of Ceremony was Commissioner Sandra Little Brown, who set the pace for a spiritual evening. Dr. Veronica Salary welcomed us to a spiritual affair and explained the purpose of our coming together.

Our speaker was Dr. Quinton Hammonds, Pastor of the Antioch Missionary Baptist Church, Pratt City. His message was taken from 1 Kings 19:18, and his Message title was **“Seven thousand unbowed.”**

Our District made news again in 2016. See below:

The Alabama State Missionary Baptist Women’s Auxiliary has been moved out of Selma. Though the Convention is moving out of Selma, The School will not be neglected. Sis. Ann Niles of First Baptist Church Fairfield, where Rev. Robert Twyman is pastor, represented Peace Baptist as the Queen contestant and won with \$755.00. Northwest won the Contest with a total of \$3,280.00. Our beautiful Queen smiled and waved as she marched with the crown. Sis. Nancy Carter was also very pleased that Northwest took the crown again.



Queen Contestant of 2016 of the Alabama State Missionary Baptist Women's Auxiliary.

The 131st Annual Session of the Alabama State Missionary Baptist Association Women's Auxiliary

The Auxiliary was moved out of Selma and held in Bessemer, Alabama from June 12-15, 2017. New Bethlehem Baptist Church, Pastor William H. Walker was our host Church.

This is a partial report of monies and attendance:

\$205,618.94 partial total.

District Report:

Southwest	\$8,070.00	Northwest	\$19,948.50
Northeast	\$8,980.00	Southeast	\$10,953.00

Total given to Selma University was \$47,998.50

The Queen was from Northwest, Sis. Veronica Salary who was presented with a bouquet of roses.

The partial report of attendance was **1,688 registrants**. The Church with the most delegates was New Bethlehem Baptist Church, Pastor, Rev. William H. Walker.

The session ended with the Matrons program, Thursday, June 15, 2017.



Peace Baptist District Association

2017

Regretfully, the District pauses at this time to pay homage to our deceased Missionary, Sis. Julia Williams who passed away in May, 2017. Sis. Williams was our first Missionary to Liberia from the District. Below are some of her accomplishments:

We also mourn the loss of our president of the Women's Auxiliary, Dr. Lille W. Thomas. She passed away in May, 2017. She will be gravely missed.





May, 2017

Dr. Lillie W. Thomas

Dr. Lillie W. Thomas is a born again believer in Jesus Christ and a native of Bessemer, Alabama. She is the third child of Mr. & Mrs. Jesse P. Whitely. Dr. Thomas is a product of the Bessemer City School System and a graduate of Lawson State Community College, General Business. She has earned a B. A. Degree in Christian Education from the Birmingham Baptist Bible College; a B. S. Degree in Elementary Education from Birmingham Southern College; a National Baptist Congress of Christian Education Four-Year Certificate, Doctor of Humane Letter Conferred (1996).

Dr. Thomas is a member of the Mount Hebron Missionary Baptist Church in Bessemer where she is president, advisor and teacher of many educational ministries and activities.

Her many accomplishments include:

- *Past President, Alabama State Missionary Baptist Women's Auxiliary*
- *Past President, Jefferson County District Women's Auxiliary*
- *National Baptist Convention Women's Auxiliary Co-Chairman Deacons' and Trustees' Wives*
- *Past Chairman of the Alabama State Missionary Baptist Women's Auxiliary Deacons' and Trustee's Wives*
- *Author of the Deacon and Trustees Wives' Guide*
- *Co-Author of the Alabama State Missionary Baptist Women's Auxiliary Mission Guide*
- *Instructor for Jefferson County District Association Congress of Christian Education*

Leadership School, Superintendent Workshop and Alabama State Congress of Christian Education

- *Speaker for various activities around the country*

She is married to Mr. Willie Thomas and the mother of two daughters, two sons-in-law, and three grandchildren.

We also mourn the loss of Sister Nancy Carter, of Gasden Alabama who passed away in March 2018, and the wife of our past Moderator, Rev. T. L. Lewis (Mrs. Rhonda) passed away in March 2018. May they rest in peace!



History recorded by Sis. Helen P. Smith, Historian, First Baptist Fairfield.