

**THE NEW ERA MISSIONARY BAPTIST CONVENTION  
OF GEORGIA, INC.**

**Equipping and Empowering Churches**



**1229 Green Valley Road  
Griffin, Georgia 30224**

# THE CONVENTION'S HISTORY

In 1961, the New Era Missionary Baptist Convention of Georgia, Incorporated started as a convention which reflected the religious and social climate of its time. In the beginning the mission was to transform the traditional African-American Baptist Convention as well as society. In the midst of the Civil Rights movement, the convention was formed by many of the people who were deeply involved in securing the rights and privileges for African-Americans. The Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was one of the most prominent figures of this time to be an active member of this convention.

On December 6, 1961, a group of Baptist pastors and lay leaders met at Tremont Temple Baptist Church, Forsyth Street in Macon, Georgia, where the Reverend E.B. Paschal served as Pastor. They met with the purpose in mind of evaluating the total Christian program of the State Convention and to discuss various ways of implementing their beliefs in Christian democracy. The theme selected for the occasion was "Militant Builders for Christ". The group assumed the name "The Crusaders for Christian Democracy in the State of Georgia" and was led by the Reverend Dr. Emory R. Searcy of Atlanta.

The Reverend O.H. Stinson of Griffin, Georgia was called to chair the meeting. In his opening remarks, Rev. Stinson set for the purpose of the meeting as follows: "We are here to consider and evaluate the objectives of our State Convention, and if need be, seek to chart an acceptable course of action for Baptists of Georgia". The Reverend L. Scott Stell, Jr. of Savannah and the Reverend J.A. Wilborn of Atlanta were elected to record the business of the group.

The Reverend Dr. Searcy reported that after careful evaluation of the program of our convention and the possibility of bringing about reform, the brethren were of the opinion that the only alternative was a *new thrust* in a *new era* of Georgia. Also involved in this group was the Reverend N.T. Young of Augusta, Georgia who stated, "We need a democratic Convention in Georgia in which all men can feel free to do kingdom-building". Reverend Wilborn also stated, "We came here for the purpose of organizing the New State Convention of Georgia". Reverend Searcy offered a motion for the organization of a new state Baptist convention in Georgia in keeping with Baptist beliefs in religious freedoms and human dignity. The motion was carried unanimously. The name, ***New Era Missionary Baptist State Convention of Georgia***, was suggested by Reverend Paschal. According to the official publication of the Convention, the *New Era Observer*, the group of committed church persons registered at the first session on December 6, 1961 and became the founders of New Era. In doing so, they answered the challenge for instituting a contemporary focus on ministry with its foundation and roots grounded in Bible-centered teachings.

The first regular session of the Convention was held with the churches in Atlanta in November 1962 at Mt. Zion Second Baptist Church, Reverend Dr. E. R. Searcy, host Pastor. The first mid-winter session was held in February 1963 at Mount Zion Baptist Church in Macon, with Reverend J. A. Jackson was the host Pastor.

During the 1960's, Reverend Dr. O. H. Stinson the first parent body President and Mrs. Zeda Byrd, first President of the Women's Auxiliary, organized the population of the Convention into three regions. In the **Northern Region** Mrs. Clara Williams served as the first President; in the **Middle Region** Mrs. Earl Cotton served as the first President; and in the **Southern Region** Mrs. Eartha Rickenbacker served as the first President.

Since its inception in 1961, Convention member churches have rotated the opportunity to host the Annual Session. This system is a provision to equitably divide hosting responsibilities and travel distances on the part of the messengers. It also allows more opportunities for fellowship and visibility in various areas in the state of Georgia.

## THE FIRST OFFICERS ELECTED TO SERVE IN THE PARENT BODY

Rev. O.H. Stinson  
*President*

Rev. L. Scott Stell, Jr.  
*Recording Secretary*

Rev. R.H. Milner  
*Vice President-At-Large*

Rev. Harold Baker  
*Assistant Secretary*

Rev. E.J. Menefee  
*First Vice President*

Rev. C.S. Hamilton  
*Treasurer*

Rev. J.D. Dunson  
*Second Vice President*

Rev. J.H. Lockett  
*Chairman, Executive Board*

Rev. E.P. Quarterman  
*Historian*

Rev. W.L. Cottrell  
*Secretary, Executive Board*

Rev. H.F. Shepherd  
*Vice Chairman*

Rev. E.B. Paschal  
*Chairman, Home Mission Board*

Rev. Tom Davison  
*Chairman of Moderator's Department*

Rev. E.L. Mitchell  
*Chairman, Education Commission*

Rev. S.W. Williams  
*Chairman, Social Service Commission*

Rev. R.N. Martin  
*Vice Chairman, Education Commission*

Rev. C.J. Gresham  
*Instructor of Minister's Institute*

Rev. N.T. Young  
*Director, Minister's Institute*

Rev. Marcus Williams  
*Chairman, Public Relations*

Rev. T. Arnold  
*Reporter of the Convention*

**Departmental Officers included:** Mrs. Zelda J. Byrd, President, Women's Auxiliary; Dr. Lynette Saine, President, Young People's Department; and Deacon Charles Green, President, Layman's Department.

Officers elected to the Sunday School and the Baptist Training Union Congress were: Rev. E.R. Searcy, President; Rev. N.T. Young, Vice President; Dr. Melvin Watson, Dean; Mrs. Lillian Watkins, Secretary; Rev. W.D. Kent, Treasurer; and Rev. Charles L. Stokes, Registrar.

The newly organized Baptist State Convention was the first in the State of Georgia to establish tenure without trying to equate a Convention with the policies of the Baptist Church. An outline of the Constitution and objectives of the Convention were affirmed at the final organizational session in February 1962 at Tremont Temple Baptist Church in Macon.

## WHO WE ARE

The New Era Missionary Baptist State Convention of Georgia, Inc. described its purpose in the preamble of the Convention's Constitution: *"We, the brethren and sisters in Christ Jesus of the sovereign state of Georgia. In order to form a more Christian Union of like mind, purpose and aims, insure harmony and cooperation in the Spirit of Christ our Lord: promote the preaching of the gospel of the Son of God, the work of Christian Education and Missions and to secure the blessings of liberty and brotherhood to ourselves and our children, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the New Era Missionary Baptist State Convention of Georgia".*

Our mission is to educate the members of our Convention through training and seminars and equip the member churches with the necessary tools to make a positive impact on their communities through our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

In recognizing the Convention's responsibility to assist in the training of leaders and teachers, the New Era Missionary Baptist State Convention financially supports the Morehouse-Mays Baptist School of Theology, formerly known as the Morehouse School of Religion in Atlanta, Georgia. Additionally, the Convention consistently contributes to the work of the Baptist Global Missions Bureau.

New Era's larger affiliation is with the Progressive National Baptist Convention. We are the state convention for the Progressive National Baptist Convention and as such we are committed to preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ which entails promoting civil rights and social advocacy.

# ANNUAL MEETINGS

**MARCH**      *Adjourned Session* – Usually held Monday evening through Wednesday noon, after the fourth Sunday in March. Session activities include: receipt of Financial and other reports as well as planning sessions for departments. It is hosted by a Convention church with delegated staying in local hotels and meeting in the hotel or church.

**JUNE**          *Youth and Young Adult Session* – One day seminar for all Convention youth and Young Adults, held on the third Saturday in the New Era Missionary Baptist State Convention Center located in Griffin, Georgia.

**JULY**          *Congress of Christian Education* – Convenes on the third Sunday evening through Thursday noon. Morning and afternoon classes and workshops are offered for all age groups and ministries of the church to explore present-day challenges/issues. Evening worship services and late-night preaching are also a viable part of our Congress. The Bible Bowl, oratorical contests, basketball, step teams, pizza/movie nights and much more are geared towards our youth's enjoyment. It is held at the New Era Convention Center with a per-person fee which includes 3 meals for each day of Congress.

**AUGUST**      *Progressive National Baptist Convention* – Members of the New Era Missionary Baptist State Convention will travel to the host state of the national convention beginning on the first Sunday through Saturday to address current issues, discover ways to have a more effective ministry and to discuss and seek solutions to many of the common problems churches face today.

**SEPTEMBER**   *Edward R. Davie Missions Conference* – Meeting of the Convention to explore aspects of the role of the church in missions during the third week on Wednesday through Friday noon; culminates with a banquet.

**NOVEMBER**   *Annual Session* – Meeting of all departments of the Convention starting on the second Sunday evening through Thursday noon. Discuss and explore resolutions that will meet the needs of our local churches, to hear the preached Word, and handle Convention business as mandated by the Parent Body. It is hosted by Convention churches throughout the state as we focus on mission and education.

**DECEMBER**   *Esther M. Smith Mission Christmas Drive* – Celebrated on the Tuesday after the first Sunday focusing on our stewardship in the area of foreign missions efforts. A Convention post-planning meeting is followed by a full worship service. This drive is held at Liberty Baptist Church, Atlanta.

# OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE

## *Minister's Department*

**Offices:** Coordinator

**Description:** The purpose of this department is to provide opportunities for fellowship and enrichment for clergy. During the Adjourn Session, the Congress of Christian Education and the Annual Session we hold seminars and training sessions that enlighten and empower ministers. This department also plans and coordinates an annual Minister's Conference where ministers receive instruction to enhance their ministries as well as hear sermons from some of the best preachers in the state.

## *Women's Department*

**Offices:** President, First Vice President, Second Vice President, Recording Secretary, Assistant Recording Secretary, Financial Secretary, Assistant Financial Secretary, Historian, Parliamentarian, Musician, President's Council

**Description:** The Women's Department is composed of all the women of the convention whose primary function is to promote and magnify the gifts and contributions of all Christian women. It further seeks to improve the missionary work in constituent churches through cooperative programs of Christian training and devotional life. The most prominent way this is achieved is through the courses and lectures offered at the Convention's Annual Sessions.

## *Laymen's Department*

**Offices:** President, First Vice President, Second Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Chaplain, Parliamentarian

**Description:** The objective of the Laymen's Department is to promote brotherhood and cooperative work among Laymen and the Convention; to enlist a spirit of fellowship and responsibility for guiding young men and boys in assuring their role in today's society. They also solicit funds for the Convention's educational projects for the Morehouse-Mays Baptist School of Theology, formerly known as the Morehouse School of Religion and for the Convention Center in Griffin, Georgia. Having Christ-like minds, the Laymen strive to promote Christian and spiritual development.

## **Youth Department**

**Offices:** Advisor

**Description:** The objective of this department is to give our youth opportunities to express their individuality through singing, poetry, dance, public speaking and other avenues of talent. They annually in June to participate in seminars and training based upon the theme adopted by the Parent Body in the Adjourn Session. They plan and present to the Parent Body activities to be implemented at the Annual Session as well as throughout the year, for approval .



## Young Adult Department

**Offices:** Advisor

**Description:** This department was recently formed due to the recognition that this age group is showing a decline in the church. Some of the main focuses of the department is to engage and encourage young adults to be active in the church, have a presence in the church and come together to express the challenges they face. They provide assistance to the local churches in planning activities for young adults that focuses on the needs to be met.

## The Congress of Christian Education

**Offices:** President, First Vice President, Second Vice President, Dean, Assistant Dean, Registrar, Assistant Registrar

**Description:** The Congress was officially organized in February 1962 at the Tremont Temple Baptist Church, Macon, Georgia. The Congress realizes that the Christian Education process should help guide and direct the emotional, physical, social and spiritual growth of all church members. With this philosophy at hand, a program of instruction and teaching was designed to address the needs, abilities and interests of the people attending the Congress of Christian Education. The annual schedule includes: morning inspirations, greetings from the Parent Body, courses for all age groups, specialized workshops, a minister's conference with guest speakers and lecturers, many youth activities, arts and crafts, and a foreign missions drive.

## Usher's Department

**Offices:** President, First Vice President, Second Vice President, Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Treasurer

**Description:** The purpose of this department is to provide training and fellowship for New Era's ushers. Because ushers are a vital part of the functioning of the church, our Convention offers training that helps to maximize their service to the church. Ushers involved in this department are also able to participate in statewide events demonstrating the unity in the Convention.

# **Standing Committees of the Convention**

**Budget Committee**

**New Church and Reclamation Committee**

**Constitution Committee**

**Nominating and Permanent Organization Committee**

**Council of Overseers**

**Program Committee**

**Leadership Committee**

**Social Action Committee**

**Time and Place Committee**

## **WHAT WE OFFER**

New Era was founded on the principle that we must be a “democratic Convention in Georgia in which all men can feel free to do kingdom building”. In these times we, the people of God, are expecting God to something new in this present age. Some of the ways we expect to meet this challenge is to educate through training, equip the local churches with the necessary tools to fulfill their mission; therefore, enlarging God’s kingdom.

### **Education Through Training**

Historically, our Convention has been one of the largest advocates for education. We support educational endeavors on a broad basis as well as support the Morehouse-Mays Baptist School of Theology. As a New Era Convention member church, you will have access to resources that have trained leaders for the past 50 years and will continue for future generations to come. Some examples are the annual Leadership Conference, Minister’s Conference and departmental training upon request.

### **Equipping Churches**

As a member of the New Era Convention, you will experience the best opportunities for fellowship with some of the most impactful churches in the state of Georgia. Our Convention will assist you as you deem necessary in your local church. The Convention’s leadership team is available to help local churches become better and have a greater impact in their own community. The Convention has never been satisfied with just having church. We have been and still are effective in making the presence of the church felt in the world. As a member church, you will be a part of a long tradition of churches that speak out on righteousness and make our communities better. Most recently, our Convention structured a committee to help Morehouse-Mays Baptist School of Theology formerly known as the Morehouse School of Religion as well as educating and assisting people who are eligible to vote.



## **New Era Missionary Baptist State Convention Center and Headquarters**

The New Era Missionary Baptist State Convention of Georgia, Inc. purchased property in Griffin, Georgia for its Convention Center Headquarters. It was dedicated on Sunday March 16, 1997. Our Convention Center provides the space needed for us to do ministry for New Era and the local churches who seek to have an impact on others in their community.

The Center is located at 1229 Green Valley Road, Griffin, Georgia (Spalding County), only thirty-eight miles from Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport and only minutes away from Interstate 75. The Convention Center is available for member churches to utilize for various functions. Some of the suggested activities include:

- Conferences
- Church Meetings
- Young Adult Mixers
- Retreats
- Lock-ins
- Back to Nature Walks
- Family Reunions
- Picnics
- Birthday Celebrations
- Wedding Receptions

In closing, we, the New Era Missionary Baptist State Convention, would like to have you join us to help in our efforts to realize the mission we have set before us. We earnestly strive to have the abilities and resources to educate the members of our Convention to face the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and equip our members with the tools necessary to have a positive impact on the people and meet them where their needs are.

We look forward to having your prayers, praise and most of all, your presence.