

2018 Annual Moderators' Address

MACEDONIA BAPTIST UNION

ANNUAL SESSION

New Home Baptist Church, Barnwell, S.C.

April 28, 2018

MODERATOR'S ADDRESS

Rev. Norman O'neal, Jr.

Introduction:

To Vice Moderator Michael Davis, Association Moderator Harris Barker, Vice Moderator Floyd Hughes, to all former moderators, pastors, ministers, deacons, delegates, officers and friends of the "Macedonia Missionary Baptist Union" and to all of you who make up this Annual Session of the "Union", I greet you in the name of the "One true and living God", the name that is above every name, "**Jesus the Christ, The Holy One of God!**"

Let me once again begin by thanking our past moderators, Rev. Beverley Ashley, Rev. Eugene Davis, Rev. James Myers and all past officers and delegates of this great institution for allowing me to serve as your moderator. I thank all of you for your support, encouragement and patience from the bottom of my heart as we forge ahead to make "Macedonia Missionary Baptist Union" into what God sanctioned it to be.

Thank you! --- Thank you! --- Thank you!

Yes, I am truly thankful to the "All-Mighty and All-Powerful God" for what he has done in my life and your lives, as well. My friends, since being elevated to this position as your union moderator, I sort ways of tapping into the mindset of our forefathers, so I could see their original purpose as they saw it and charted a path for the continued spread of the Gospel of Christ.

What did they hope to accomplish, I have asked?

Consequently, I have concluded and realized that education and training of our people for a better life, was their main goal. You see, coming out of improvised times and circumstances, they knew that the generations to follow needed to be educated for the future and in touch with their past, for us to embrace the future.

Hosea 4:4 “Now let no man contend, or rebuke another; For your people *are* like those who contend with the priest. **5** Therefore you shall stumble in the day; The prophet also shall stumble with you in the night; And I will destroy your mother. **6** My people are destroyed for **lack of knowledge**. Because you have **rejected knowledge**, I also will reject you from being priest for Me; Because you have **forgotten the law** of your God, I also will forget your children. **7** “The more they increased, The more they sinned against Me; I will **change their glory into shame**. (NKJV)

Hosea 4:4 “Don’t point your finger at someone else and try to pass the blame! My complaint, you priests, is with you. **5** So you will stumble in broad daylight, and your false prophets will fall with you in the night. And I will destroy Israel, your mother. **6** My people are being destroyed because they don’t know me. Since you priests refuse to know me, I refuse to recognize you as my priests. Since you have forgotten the laws of your God, I will forget to bless your children. **7** The more priests there are, the more they sin against me. They have exchanged the glory of God for the shame of idols. (NLT)

Macedonia Missionary Baptist Union, where do we go from here? As I stated last year my constant search of the vision of our forefathers for this “Union”, I keep hearing one word echoing in my head. **Education! Education! Education!** I stand before with a commitment to continue their “Cry”. **Education!** On their shoulders do I stand, ready willing and able to carry forth their legacy. **Education!** My question to you is, “**Are you ready**”. In the spirit of Bishop T. D. Jakes, “**Get Ready, Get Ready, Get Ready**” - because change is on its way.

An unknown author once wrote, “**Poverty is not being without money, but being without hope.**”

Hope - to cherish a desire with anticipation; to want something to happen or be true; to desire with expectation of obtainment or fulfillment; the feeling that what is wanted can be had or that events will turn out for the best; to place trust in someone or something.

My brothers and sisters, “**Where do we go from here?**”

Psalms 37:23 The steps of a *good* man are ordered by the LORD, And He delights in his way. (NKJV)

After numerous meeting with my officers we revised our “Constitution and Bylaws” with recommendations you have approved, and I realized that, “We’ve Only Just Begun”, walking in the steps of our forefathers. Church, we have a lot of work before us. It is time out for petty arguments concerning what God has commissioned us to do, Macedonia Missionary Baptist Union.

Matthew 28:19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **20** teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age.” Amen.

Macedonia Missionary Baptist Union, we are to make disciples. **Make disciples! Make disciples! Make disciples!**

Well what is a disciple?

Disciple - a personal follower of Jesus during his life, especially one of the twelve Apostles; a follower or student of a teacher, leader, or philosopher.

Saints, when Jesus called His disciples, He was not looking for perfect people, but people who could be changed by God's Love. You see, after he taught them, He sent them out to spread the Gospel as they spoke to all who would hear them. Yes, His acceptance was made available to everyone - even those whose lives were marked by failure, disappointment, catastrophe and tragedy.

My friends, we may wonder what Jesus sees in us when He calls us to be His disciples. Please, let us keep in mind, that He is the only one who decides, who He will use. **You and even me.** Saints, if someone says God has called them to serve in whatever capacity, we are to be only good stewards over what He has given us. We must believe that Jesus accepts us just as we are, despite our transgressions. You see, He can use ordinary people like you and I to do an extraordinary work, called the "Great Commission". Yes, it is a command not a suggestion. If you are a child of the King, you must obey. **Can I get a witness?**

Once again, I thank and applaud you, "Macedonia Missionary Baptist Union" for your presence here this morning, your love and support throughout this past year. I want to thank Emma, my lovely wife for her love, patience, and support, her sensitivity to those we minister to and encouragement when I was elected as your **Moderator.** I must say I don't believe I could have found a better friend, helpmate, and partner in life and ministry to serve with me as I pursue the commission that has been bestowed upon us on this tedious (boring, dull, deadly, dreary, monotonous, mind-numbing, tiresome, wearisome uninteresting) journey. You my daring bring Joy to my heart and a smile upon my face, as I continue to praise God each day of my life. Thanks for the **Forty Plus** years, we have been married and I want to say, "I Truly Love You" just as Christ loves His church.

Discourse:

Church, last year we were once again saddened, but not surprised as many of our brothers and sisters in Christ, crossed over from "Earth to Heaven", from the difficulties of this life, to receive their life's reward of "Eternal Life." We today honor and pay tribute to all of our deceased brothers and sisters, from all our churches. I call no names, for fear of leaving some of them out. My prayer is that God's Peace will continue to watch over these bereaved families and restore "Peace and Joy" into their hearts from this day forward. Amen!

Isaiah 57:1 Good people pass away; the godly often die before their time. But no one seems to care or wonder why. No one seems to understand that God is protecting them from the evil to come. **2** For those who follow godly paths will rest in peace when they die. (NLT)

2 Corinthians 5:8 Yes, we are fully confident, and we would rather be away from these earthly bodies, for then we will be at home with the Lord. (NLT)

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin *is* death, but the gift of God *is* eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (NKJV)

"Rest in Peace" - (Dr. Luns C. Richardson – President of Morris College - April 29, 1928 – January 13, 2018)

Saints of God, once again I have come here today to give an account of my stewardship for this past year. I have represented to the best of my knowledge and ability, this “Union” at various church activities, licensing of ministers, anniversaries, banquets, installations, ordinations, conferences, and various organizational meetings. Once again, I have thoroughly enjoyed what I’ve heard and seen even though there were many events scheduled that I could not attend. I sort God through prayer and He blessed each of them sanctioned by Him. I am truly thankful for the support that was provided by our vice moderator and past moderators, as they continued to represent this body in my absence. I want to say to all of you, “Thank you and I pray that God will continue to bless each of you”.

As I requested last year in my address and voted upon by this body, my committee and I have met regularly to bring about changes that will move this “Union” into the **21st Century**. We have discussed our needs and some of our desires in developing and educational plan and structure that we believe is needed for the success and continued growth of Macedonia Missionary Baptist Union. This “Union” was established as an educational institution to educate and enlighten its members, concerning the “Will of God” and this society. Their dream was to implement “God’s Plan for Mankind” in this **present age**.

Last year I read this old familiar hymn as light that shines in the mist of great darkness;

“A Charge to Keep I Have”

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707-1788

Music: Lowell Mason, 1792-1872

Tune: BOYLSTON, **Meter:** SM

1. A charge to keep I have, a God to glorify, **a never-dying soul to save**, and fit it for the sky.
2. To serve the **present age**, my calling to fulfill; O may it all my powers engage to do my **Master's Will!**
3. Arm me with **jealous care**, as in thy sight to live, and oh, thy servant, Lord, prepare a **strict account to give!**
4. Help me to watch and pray, and on thyself rely, assured, if I **my trust betray**, I shall forever die.

(Leviticus 8:36 was the primary inspiration for this hymn. It says, “Keep the charge of the Lord, that ye die not”.
(KJV)

Church, many of us pledged, when we were baptized to give our lives to God and because of that confession we became a part of the Kingdom of God promising to use the Bible as our guide and roadmap for life. Yet very few of us, including some of us ministers, do not adhere to principles that are taught in “God’s Word”. Oftentimes,

we take the text out of its context and make it say what we want it to say to get that which we desire, even if is contrary to “God’s Word”.

2 Timothy 2:15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. (KJV)

2 Timothy 2:15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. (NKJV)

2 Timothy 2:15 Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth. (NIV)

An Approved Worker

2 Timothy 2:15 Work hard so you can present yourself to God and receive his approval. Be a good worker, one who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly explains the word of truth. (NLT)

Study – learn, review, examine, consider, investigate, research, explore, look into, look at carefully.

Knowledge – information, facts, understanding, proficiency, awareness, skill

Rev. Bennie Wiggins has already presented us with an inspirational “Message from God”, earlier this morning, but now I would like to share with you what God has given me for you today. **Amen!**

Saints, I would like to continue this message with last year’s theme: **“Make It Plain So I Can See It”**. My brothers and sisters, as a “Union”, our plan for the **21st Century** is to educate, every member of our congregations. Therefore, we must seek out information and resources that will help our sister churches grow and fulfill the **“Great Commission”** given to us by Jesus Christ in Matthew 28:19-20;

Matthew 28:19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: **20** Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

Well how do you make disciples?

You see my friends, we must get to know God’s Word by studying it, so we can get to know Him for ourselves. Then we are to go out into the world and share it with others and live our lives in accordance to it and teach others, so they make disciples as well. Yes, we must be committed to the Savior and knowledgeable of the world, so we can effectively find our way through it, to build up the “Body of Christ”. Church, the “Kingdom of God” as we know it, is built through fellowship of our member churches, individuals and education. Education to enlighten “Kingdom Citizens” as to what God has given them in His “Will”.

What will? (Old Testament and New Testament)

Testament - is a statement of fact or worth, or one of the two major divisions of the Christian Bible. A testament is a document stating what a person wishes to leave to his/her heirs in the event of his/her passing.

Hebrews 9:15 For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance—now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant. **16** In the case of a will, it is necessary to prove the death of the one who made it, **17** because a will is in force only when somebody has died; it never takes effect while the one who made it is living. **18** This is why even the first covenant was not put into effect without blood. (NIV)

Macedonia Missionary Baptist Union, if we are to have continued success and be effective, informative and useful in the 21st Century, well-organized in the work of the Lord, we are forced to use today's technology and educate our congregations in God's Word, if we want to leave a legacy for our young to follow. We, the officers of the Union, have incorporated information online, in the Macedonia Missionary Baptist Union website that covers most, if not all the essential components of a vibrant and well-maintained church. You will find, information that will help us to become spiritually and politically wise, financially and legally compliant with the Laws of God and those of this "world". "Macedonia Missionary Baptist Union" if you are to be relevant and effective in the coming months, years, decades and century, you must work together with our combined strength, combined resources and a mutual passion for the "Work of Christ". If we unite as one, there is nothing this Union and you cannot do.

Matthew 18:19 "Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on **Earth**, as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them, of my Father, which is in **Heaven**."

My friends, we must continue to build on the foundation our forefathers left for us to build upon, so we can have the best life has to offer. Dare to make what they have done better and be willing to allow our children to be a part of the change. Know when to get out of the way so we can continue the "Legacy". They have sacrificed during their lives for us to have the comforts we enjoy. "**Let's Keep the Legacy Alive**".

Can I get a witness?

Education:

Hosea 4:6 My people are destroyed from lack of knowledge. "Because you have rejected knowledge, I also reject you as my priests; because you have ignored the law of your God, I also will ignore your children. (NIV)

Conclusion:

Now as I began to close, I am reminded of what Apostle Paul said in the following passages of scripture;

1 Corinthians 1:3 Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. **4** I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; **5** That in everything ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all **knowledge**; **6** Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: **7** So that **ye come behind in no gift**; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: **(KJV)**

1 Corinthians 3:6 I planted the seed in your hearts, and Apollos watered it, but it was God who made it grow. **7** It's not important who does the planting, or who does the watering. What's important is that God makes the seed grow. **(NLT)**

(Macedonia Missionary Baptist Union website: www.mbuc.org)

Jeremiah 29:11 For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of **Peace** and not of **Evil**, to give you a **Future** and a **Hope**. **(NKJV)**

Be Blessed!