

“Recommendations to the Ebenezer Baptist  
Church for the Fiscal Year 1960–1961”

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[February–March 1960]

[Atlanta, Ga.]

*As co-pastors, King and his father present their recommendations to the congregation. Their proposals seek to boost the social life of the congregation, educate new members, and promote the social gospel through the work of the NAACP and SCLC: “The membership should unite with these organizations in a solid block.” All but two recommendations—to form a credit union and a recreation committee—parallel King’s proposals to Dexter Avenue Baptist Church during his first year as pastor.<sup>1</sup>*

- I. In order that every member of the Church shall be identified with a smaller and more intimate fellowship of the Church, Clubs representing the twelve months of the year shall be organized. Each member of the Church will automatically become a member of the Club of the Month in which he was born. Each month club shall choose its own officers. Each club shall meet once per month, with the exception of the month in which the club is named. In the month for which the club is named, each club shall meet weekly. So the January Club, for example, shall meet once monthly until January. In January, it shall meet each week. Each club shall be asked to make a special contribution of Four Hundred (\$400.00) Dollars to the Church on the last Sunday of the month for which it is named.
- II. It is both appalling and tragic that the average member of a Baptist Church has no conception of the doctrines of his faith. This doctrinal illiteracy has left many Protestant with a faith devoid of substance and meaning. Indeed, many do not know what they believe. As a result of this lack of doctrinal training many people take their Church Loyalty all too lightly and irresponsibly. In order to deal constructively with this problem a New Member Committee shall be formed. This committee shall conduct three classes per month for new members. Each person joining the church will be required to attend three classes before he can have the right hand of fellowship. When the member has fulfilled these requirements, the Chairman of the Committee shall notify him of his eligibility to be fellowshipped. On the Wednesday before the 1st Sunday in each month the Chairman of the Committee shall turn over to the Church Secretary the names of all persons eligible for the right hand of fellowship so that they can be officially reminded of their needed presence on the 1st Sunday Evening. In addition to the job of acquainting each member with the doctrines of the Church, the New Members Committee shall do the following:

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1. See King, “Recommendations to the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church for the Fiscal Year 1954–1955,” 5 September 1954, in *Papers* 2:287–294.

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- A. Interview all new members concerning their particular areas of interest in the Church. If they have no particular interest, be sure to give them one. Place them in the particular department or club of the month of the new member's birth and assign him to his proper Month Club.
  - B. Acquaint each new member with the total program of the Church.
  - C. Explain the meaning of Christian Stewardship. Encourage each new member to tithe. Explain the budget and financial system to each new member. See that each new member makes a pledge and has a box of envelopes.
  - D. All names and vital statistics should be written plainly and turned over to the Office Secretary in order that she may make an orderly transfer of such information to the permanent files of the Church.  
The NEW MEMBERS COMMITTEE shall consist of the following persons: Miss W. Christine King, Chairman, Mrs. Laura Henderson, Miss Dolores Robinson, Rev. Paul Anderson, Mrs. Wilhelmina H. Scretchin, and Mr. Melvin R. Waples.
- III. In order that there may be a reliable and orderly record of the Church's origin, growth and future development, a Committee on the History of Ebenezer shall be organized. This Committee shall be requested to present a summary of the history of Ebenezer each year at the Church Anniversary. This Committee shall be requested to keep on file at least three weekly bulletins, and look into the possibility of having them bound at the end of each Church year. These records shall be carefully preserved in the Church library. This Committee shall consist of the following persons: Mrs. Nellie Perry, Chairman, Mrs. Ruth Parks Greene, Mr. Jethro English, Mrs. Mary Marshall, Mrs. Odessa Jones, Mrs. Sarah Reed, Mrs. Janie B. Lowe and Mrs. Emma Clayton.
  - IV. A Scholarship Fund Committee shall be established. It shall be the responsibility of this Committee to choose each year for scholarship awards the two high school graduates in Ebenezer's membership who possess the highest scholastic rating as well as unusual possibilities for service to humanity; students who have been actively engaged in some phase of church life and who plan to attend college. The scholarship award for this year shall be Four Hundred (\$400.00) Dollars for the student with the highest scholastic rating, and Two Hundred (\$200.00) Dollars for the other student. The members of this committee shall consist of the following persons: Mr. William Nix, Chairman, Mrs. Eva Williams, Vice Chairman, Mr. William Wilder, Mrs. Nannien W. Crawford, and Miss Doris Coleman.
  - V. A Cultural Committee shall be established consisting of the following persons: Mrs. Alberta Williams King, Chairman, Mr. Hampton Z. Barker, Mrs. Wilhelmina Scretchin, Mrs. Coretta King, Mr. David Stills and Mr. Henry Griffin.  
In addition to the concert that is given by the Ebenezer Choir each year, this committee shall sponsor another big cultural event by some outside group or individual. Such an undertaking will have a four-fold purpose: (a) To lift the general cultural appreciation of our church and community. (b) To give encouragement to our school groups. (c) To give encouragement to promising artists. (d) To give financial aid to the church.
  - VI. In order to assist the Director of Christian Education in implementing the program in this area, a Board of Christian Education shall be organized. This

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Board shall immediately meet with the Pastors and the Director of Christian Education to discuss ways and means of strengthening the program of Christian Education. Obviously, this should be one of the strongest boards in the church. This Board shall consist of the following persons: Miss Lucile Harris, Chairman, Miss Lillian D. Watkins, Mrs. Elise Gilham, Rev. Paul Anderson, Mrs. N. W. Crawford, Miss W. Christine King, Mrs. A. W. King, Mrs. A. L. Neal, and Mrs. Nellie Perry

- VII. Since the Gospel of Jesus is a social Gospel, as well as a personal Gospel, seeking to save the whole man, a Social Action Committee shall be established for the purpose of keeping the congregation informed (intelligently) concerning the social, political, and economic situation. This committee shall keep before the congregation the importance of supporting such civil rights organizations as the NAACP and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. The membership should unite with these organizations in a solid block. This committee shall also keep before the congregation the necessity of being registered voters. Every member of Ebenezer must be a registered voter. During elections, both state and national, this committee will sponsor forums and mass meetings to discuss the relative merits of candidates and the major issues involved. This committee shall consist of the following persons: Mrs. Esther M. Smith, Acting Chairman, Mr. C. A. Scott, Mr. Timothy Gilham, Mr. Isaac Farris, Rev. Otis Burnett, Rev. Nancy Brown, Mr. Robert Norwood, Miss Lornell McCullough, Mrs. Vashti Ellis.
- VIII. In order to instill the idea of thrift in our members and reveal the concern of the Church for the economic life of man, a committee shall be appointed to organize a Credit Union.<sup>2</sup> This Committee will immediately seek to secure a federal charter. It is hoped that every member will become associated with this Credit Union, and that it will become a powerful economic agency in the community. The need for such an institution in our Church is unquestioned. It will serve as a channel through which members can save money, and it prevents them from having to go to downtown finance companies to make loans for exploitative interest rates. Actually when the individual makes a loan from the Credit Union of which he is a member, he is borrowing from himself. The committee to begin setting up the Credit Union shall consist of the following persons: Mr. Robert Collier, Chairman, Mr. J. H. Reese, Mr. T. S. Gentry, Mr. Herbert Woods, Mr. Gartrell Williams, Mr. Clarence Mizzelle, Vice Chairman, Mrs. Venice Nash and Mrs. Robbie Mae Bell.
- IX. In order to provide the Youth of the Church and community with a sound recreational outlet and strengthen the total program of recreation, a Recreation Committee shall be organized. This Committee shall immediately study the present recreational program and make recommendations to the Pastors concerning additional equipment that should be purchased. The Committee should look into the possibility of having a Church baseball and basket ball team. This committee shall consist of the following persons: Mr. Melvin R. Waples, Chairman, Mrs. Mildred Elder,

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2. In 1957 and 1959 the MIA had sought to establish a credit union for its membership. The Bureau of Federal Credit Unions denied both requests, citing policies prohibiting charters for civic groups (Harold B. Wright to King, 28 March 1957, and J. Theodore Rutland to King, 28 July 1959).

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Co-Chairman, Mr. John Bates, Mrs. Carrie Buggs Mrs. Renetta Chapman, Mrs. Clara Mizzelle and Mrs. Vivian Thomas.

- X. In order to increase the feeling of real fellowship in the Church and make visitors feel a hearty welcome, a Courtesy Committee shall be organized. It will be the purpose of this committee to make its way to the visitors on Sunday and give them a sense of real welcome. Also, this Committee shall sponsor Coffee Hours at least once monthly, immediately after Morning Service. At this time both visitors and members shall be invited to the Fellowship Hall (Basement) of the Church for a moment of fellowship and getting acquainted. This Committee shall consist of the following persons: Mrs. Coretta King, Chairman, Mrs. Earnestine Brooks, Vice Chairman, Mrs. Katie Taylor, Miss Lornell McCullough, Mrs. Hazel Taylor, Mrs. Mellie Thomas, Mrs. Ruth Davis, Mrs. Marjorie McCrary, Mrs. Eunice Simmons, Mrs. Mattie Hodges, and Mrs. Lucile Crosby.
- XI. The Church Membership Roll shall be divided into an active and in-active list. Those members who fail to register for the year and who contribute nothing to the financial upkeep of the Church, shall be placed on the Roll as inactive members, unless some satisfactory explanation be given to the officers. An inactive member shall have no voting privileges in the Church.
- XII. The Membership shall be divided into districts of (30) persons. Each district shall have a Captain and a Co-Captain. Each district shall be worked out on the basis of geographical proximity so that every person in a particular district will live in a small geographical radius. It will be the duty of the Co-Captains constantly to call and visit members in their district. Members that are slack in Church attendance and general Church responsibilities should be persuaded to improve. At the end of every (2) months, each Captain shall receive from the Office Secretary the names of members in his group who might be behind in their pledges. It shall be the duty of the Captain to persuade the member to bring up his or her pledge.