

HARTFORD MEMORIAL BAPTIST CHURCH
MEMBERS ORIENTATION CLASS

SESSION I

**BAPTIST HISTORY
AND CONVENTIONS**

" And so from the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, to lead a life worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God."

Colossians 1:9 - 10 RSV

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BAPTIST HISTORY AND CONVENTIONS

What are the six basic Baptist principles?

1. That only believers who are conscious of their faith should receive baptism according to the New Testament form of baptism which is immersion. The Greek New Testament word for baptism is "baptizo", meaning to immerse or plunge into a body of water!
2. That each individual enjoys the God-given right of liberty of conscience based upon the image of God in every person. Nobody should ever be made to violate his own conscience Baptists through history have been society's chief espousers of religious liberty. Though persecuted by the state and other churches, Baptists have never persecuted others because of their beliefs.
3. That each local church is free and independent, being a body of baptized believers who are met together around the centrality of Christ, the preaching of the Gospel and the observance of the two sacraments: Baptism and the Holy Communion.
4. That there ought to be a complete separation between church and state. This does not mean that religious persons and principles should not influence government. This does not mean that governmental agents shouldn't as individuals participate in the church. This does mean, however, that the church should not dictate to government and the government should neither dictate to nor control the church. When the church controls the state you have theocracy. When the state controls the church, you have tyranny. Baptists are opposed to both, because both theocracy and tyranny violates basic human freedom.
5. That the Bible is the only rule of faith and practice.
6. That there is equality, and the priesthood of all believers.

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What is the origin of Baptist beliefs?

- A. Baptist beliefs go back to John the Baptist, who was baptized according to the Baptist form of immersion or burial in the water. John the Baptist was also a dissenter from the established Church and was martyred because of his courageous nonconformity. In this he prefigured and anticipated the Baptist martyrs.
- B. Baptist beliefs go back to Jesus, who submitted himself humbly to be baptized by John the Baptist. He also enhanced human freedom and the dignity and value of the individual. He criticized both the established Jewish church and the tyrannous Roman state. He was considered subversive enough to be executed by Roman fiat.

Under what names were Baptist known during the early Christian centuries?

- A. ~~Baptists were called "Montanists" in the first and second centuries; "Novations" in the third centuries; "Waldenses" and "Albigenses" in the eleventh century and "Anabaptists" in the sixteenth century.~~

As commentary on the many names of the Baptist, Edward T. Hiscox says, "Like a stream which pursues its way from the mountains to the sea, and never ceases, though its course at times be through mountain gorges, trackless deserts, and hidden caverns, we know it is somewhere, though we cannot trace it, but we recognize it when again it comes to light, with a grander sweep, a deeper current, and a stronger tide." (The New Directory For Baptist Churches, p.494)

- B. Hans Denck was a sixteenth century Anabaptist (re-baptizer, who re-baptized those whom he converted from Roman Catholicism and Lutheranism). He was banished from Strasbourg in 1526 and died in 1527.
- C. John Smyth in 1609 founded an English-speaking Baptist congregation in Amsterdam, Holland. John Smyth's Baptist participation began as a dissenter from the Church of England.

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He fled from England to Holland where he founded a Baptist Church. His associates, Thomas Helwys and John Murton led many of Smyth's congregation back to England where they established the first permanent Baptist Church on English soil.

- D. Roger Williams is the first Baptist Preacher in America. He was banished from Massachusetts Bay Colony because of his belief in the separation between church and state. He founded the Colony of Rhode Island in 1638 on land he purchased (not stole) from the Indians. He offered freedom of religion to any who would join his colony.

In 1638, Roger Williams established the First Baptist Church in Providence, Rhode Island. It was the first Baptist congregation on American soil.

What are the names of the largest White Baptist Conventions in America?

- A. The American Baptist Churches U.S.A., Inc. Formerly called Northern Baptist Convention and the American Baptist Convention - has roots that go back to 1802 in the formation of the American Baptist Foreign Missionary Society. It now has 6000 Churches (500 Black Churches) and 1,750,000 members.
- B. The Southern Baptist Convention, founded in 1845, now has 45,000 churches and 14,000,000 members.

What is the history of the African American Baptist Church ?

- A. A slave, by the name of George Lisle, was converted and began preaching in 1773. Sometime between his conversion in 1773 and his ordination as a minister, in 1775 the Silver Bluff Baptist Church in South Carolina, was founded. George Lisle, along with Wait Palmer, a white deacon, were the organizers of what is commonly accepted as the first Negro Baptist Church organized in America.
- B. The first African American Convention, The African Baptist Missionary Society, was organized in Richmond, Virginia in 1815.

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- C. The Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc. was founded in 1961 in Zion Baptist Church in Cincinnati, Ohio. Dr. L. V. Booth, the pastor of Zion Baptist, called for a meeting for the formation of a new convention, following a conflict with the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A.

BLACK BAPTISTS IN AMERICA AND THE ORIGINS OF THEIR CONVENTIONS



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Some Interesting Facts About Early Black Baptists

- 1619 First ship load of African slaves landed at Jamestown, Va., one (1) year before the MAYFLOWER with Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock, Mass., in 1620.
- 1742 David George was born a slave.
- 1743 The Newton, Rhode Island Church carried the first recorded instance of a Black Baptist, Quassey, as one of the membership of fifty-one.
- 1762 Robert Stevens and 18 other Blacks were members of the Providence, Rhode Island, Baptist Church.
- 1772 The First Baptist Church, Boston, Mass., received Blacks as members.
- 1750 George Leisle (Leile) was born a slave in Virginia.
- 1773 George Leisle was converted and began preaching.
- 1773 or 1775 George Leisle with Wait Palmer, a white deacon, organized the Silver Bluff Baptist Church, Aiken County, South Carolina. This is commonly accepted as the first Negro Baptist Church organized in America and in the World.
- 1775 George Leisle (Leile) was ordained to preach the Gospel, May 20, and was given the freedom to minister to the other slaves by his master, Henry Sharp, a white deacon in Kiokee Baptist Church, where Leisle (Leile) held membership.
- 1775 David George and Jesse Peters were converted under the preaching of Leisle (Leile) and shortly thereafter began preaching themselves and traveling with Leisle.
- 1778 George Leisle (Leile) organized the First African Baptist Church, Savannah, Georgia.
- 1778 David George pastored a church in Savannah, Georgia.

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| <p>1780 Lott Carey was born a slave 30 miles south of Richmond, Virginia.</p> <p>1782 David George went to Halifax, Nova Scotia.</p> <p>1783 David George with six followers organized a church at Shelbourne, in Canada. In 1792 he led a colonization group of 1,196 Blacks to Sierra Leone, West Africa.</p> <p>1783 George Leisle (Leile) sailed for Jamaica, B.W.I. Prior to this date, Mr. Sharp, Leisle's master, had emancipated him, but when Mr. Sharp died, some members of the Sharp family attempted to re-enslave Rev. Leisle (Leile). After much intense prayer, two friends came to his rescue. A white man of Savannah loaned him \$700.00 to get himself and family out of the country. The other was a British officer, a Colonel Kirkland, who told him of Jamaica, and the large Negro population there who were in deplorable conditions of ignorance and degeneracy.</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">In sailing to Jamaica to preach the Gospel, George Leisle became the first foreign missionary in modern times. Long before William Carey left England for India or David Livingston went to Africa; long before the American Baptist Mission Society was organized in Tremont Temple in Boston; before Adoniram Judson went to Burma, this Black Baptist preacher launched out as a trail blazer in modern missions. He organized the First African Baptist Church Kingston, Jamaica, B.W.I.</p> <p>1775-1800 In this quarter of a century, preachers were called to preach, converts were won, churches were organized and built, activities for freedom were initiated and by the turn of the century there were 25,000 Negro Baptists.</p> <p>1807 Lott Carey joined a Baptist Church in Richmond, Virginia.</p> <p>1812 John Jasper was born on July 4 in Fluvana County, Virginia.</p> | <p>1813 Lott Carey purchased his freedom and that of his two children for \$850.00, which he had saved.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">First Effort at Organization</p> <p>1815 The African Baptist Missionary Society was organized in Richmond, Va. From 1815 to 1845 it contributed through the American Baptist Union, a white northern organization. In 1845, the white Baptists split over the slavery issue and the Southern Baptist Convention was organized. From 1845 to 1880 it contributed through the Southern Baptist Convention.</p> <p>1821 Lott Carey and Collin Teague, whom he had won to Christ, sailed to Africa from Norfolk, Va., January 16th on the ship, NAUTILUS. They landed in Sierra Leone, West Africa. They were sent by the African Baptist Missionary Society. Lott Carey established the First Baptist Church in Monrovia, Liberia.</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">Other Missionaries sent out by the African Baptist Missionary Society included Solomon Cosby and W. W. Colley. The Southern Baptists closed their mission stations on the West Coast of Africa in 1875. Rev. W. W. Colley and Rev. W. J. Davis, who were working for the Southern Baptists at that time, continued to work as missionaries in other areas of Africa until 1879 when they returned to America.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">National Organizations</p> <p>1840 The American Baptist Missionary Convention was organized in Abyssinian Baptist Church, New York, N.Y. with Elder John Livingston, Moderator. This was the first Baptist Convention organized by Negroes. It could not operate in the South. Its area of operation was northern and middle western states.</p> <p>1864 The Western and Southern Missionary Baptist Convention was or-</p> |
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ganized to work in areas beyond which the American Baptist Missionary Convention was working.

1866

The Consolidated American Baptist Missionary Convention was organized in Richmond, Va. This was a merger of the American Baptist Missionary Convention and the Western and Southern Missionary Baptist Convention. Thus, the organized work was under one umbrella.

The Consolidated Convention organized six district conventions, two of which were: The General Association of the Western States and Territories, organized 1873; and The New England Baptist Missionary Convention, organized in 1875. The other four Conventions were overshadowed by state conventions and district associations and soon passed out of existence. The General Association of the Western States and Territories and The New England Baptist Missionary Convention, acting independent of the parent body, caused the parent body to weaken and decline until it ceased to meet after 1877.

1879

Rev. W. W. Colley returned to America from his labors in Africa and determined to arouse his black brethren to the urgent need for missionary work in Africa. He wrote letters and traveled extensively urging Baptist leaders to meet in Montgomery, Alabama, November 24, 25, 26, 1880.

The Baptist Foreign Mission Convention

1880

Rev. Colley was successful in getting Baptist leaders to meet him in Montgomery. One hundred and fifty-one messengers from 11 States answered the call. There in First Baptist Church, The Baptist Foreign Mission Convention was organized, Rev. W. H. McAlpine of Alabama was elected President. Eleven vice-presidents were elected

—one from each state represented. A Board of Directors was organized with Rev. A. Binga, Jr. of South Richmond the first Chairman, and Rev. Colley the first Corresponding Secretary and field agent. The headquarters was Richmond. Inasmuch as this Convention was committed to foreign missions only, the Executive Board was really the Foreign Mission Board.

The American National Baptist Convention

1886

The American National Baptist Convention was born when Rev. W. J. Simmons of Louisville, Ky. sent out a call in the form of a petition for the American National Baptist Convention to be formed. Prominent Baptists throughout the nation signed the petition and 600 delegates representing 17 States met in the First Baptist Church, St. Louis, Missouri, August 25th. One writer, commenting on those present, said, "Among them were graduates in law, medicine and theology; professors of philosophy, German, French, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew; a number of ex-state representatives, ex-senators; two ex-lieutenant governors; editors and teachers, not a few; a Baptist senator from Mississippi and a Baptist Missionary from London, England." W. J. Simmons was elected President. One of the main objectives of the Convention was the unification of all Negro Baptists of America for "mission work in the United States of America, in Africa and elsewhere abroad, and to foster the cause of education." The Baptist Foreign Mission Convention, through its Board in Richmond, continued to do the foreign mission work for the American National Baptist Convention. A united national Baptist convention had not yet been achieved, but the concept was firmly planted and the idea was growing.

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The National Baptist Educational Convention

1893 Prior to 1893, educational and missionary work of Negro Baptists was largely directed throughout the United States by the American Baptist Home Mission Society of New York and the American Baptist Publication Society of Philadelphia. These societies had done great work. Schools founded by these societies are well known.

The graduates of the Home Mission Schools began to insist, more and more, that they have a hand in directing the policy of the schools from which they had graduated. The sentiment for Negro Baptists to own and control their own schools grew until it resulted in the founding of numerous schools like Simmons University in Kentucky, Selma University in Alabama, Arkansas Baptist College, Guadalupe College in Texas, Virginia Seminary, Lynchburg, Va., Central City College in Georgia, Morris College in S. C., and scores of other independent Negro Baptist schools.

The National Baptist Educational Convention of the U.S.A., organized in 1893, was the first attempt of Negro Baptists to direct the educational policy for the entire Negro Baptist denomination.

The National Baptist Convention, U.S.A.

1895 The National Baptist Convention, U.S.A. was organized September 24, 1895, in Friendship Baptist Church, Atlanta, Ga. The following three conventions adjourned their meetings in 1894 to meet together in Atlanta, Sept. 24, 1895:

Baptist Foreign Mission Convention, organized 1880 in Montgomery, Ala. American National Baptist Convention, organized 1886 in St. Louis, Mo. National Baptist Educational Convention organized in 1893.

These three conventions were united and became the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A. Dr. E. C. Morris was elected President. The new Foreign Mission Board took charge of the foreign work previously under the Baptist Foreign Mission Convention. The new Educational Board took charge of the educational work, previously under the National Baptist Educational Convention. Rev. L. M. Luke of Georgia was elected the first Secretary of the Foreign Mission Board. He served only three months before he was taken by death.

Rev. L. G. Jordan, who was Pastor of Union Baptist Church, Philadelphia, Pa. was elected to succeed Rev. Luke as Secretary of the Foreign Mission Board in October 1896. Soon after his acceptance, he transferred the office of the Foreign Mission Board from Richmond to Louisville, Ky. This action was not approved by the eastern brethren, especially those in North Carolina and Virginia.

The Lott Carey Foreign Mission Convention

1897 The controversy over moving the Foreign Mission Board from Richmond, Va. to Louisville, Ky., plus other issues, such as the use of American Baptist Literature and cooperation with white Baptists in general, led to the organization of the Lott Carey Foreign Mission Convention in 1897 in Washington, D.C. with Rev. C. S. Brown of North Carolina as first President. A Compact Between The National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., and the Lott Carey Foreign Mission Convention was adopted at the Chicago Convention in 1905. However, the two conventions continued to go their separate ways with each electing its own officers, holding its own meetings and promoting its own program.

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The National Baptist Convention of America, Unincorporated

- 1915 The National Baptist Convention of America, Unincorporated, sometimes referred to as the Boyd Convention was organized September 9, 1915 in Salem Baptist Church, Chicago, Ill. Dr. E. P. Jones of Mississippi was elected President. This Convention was organized as the result of the controversy over the ownership and control of the National Baptist Publishing House. The Publishing Board was incorporated under Tennessee laws, but the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A. was not incorporated and could not legally elect members to the Publishing Board. Therefore, the Convention could not control the Publishing Board. But the Convention could refuse to accept the legal status of the Publishing Board. In such an impasse, the Publishing Board bolted and organized a new Convention.

The Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc.

- 1961 The Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc. was organized November 14, 1961 in Zion Baptist Church, Cincinnati, Ohio. The question of tenure for officers, especially the President, had been "popping up" in the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A. ever since its beginning. The early Presidents observed a voluntary tenure. From 1880, when the Baptist Foreign Mission Convention was organized, to 1894, when Dr. E. C. Morris was elected President, there had been eight Presidents in the space of 14 years. They were as follows: W. H. McAlpine 1880-82; J. Q. A. Wilhite 1883; J. A. Foster 1884; W. A. Brinkley 1885; W. J. Simmons 1886-90; E. M. Brawley 1891; M. Vann 1892-93; and E. C. Morris, elected in 1894.

Life tenure began with Dr. E. C. Morris who served from 1894 to

his death in 1921. Dr. W. G. Parks served one year following Dr. Morris' death and died after failing to be elected President in 1922. Dr. L. K. Williams served from 1922 to his death in 1940. Dr. D. V. Jemison served from 1941 to his retirement, due to physical disability in 1953. Dr. J. H. Jackson has served from 1953 to the present (1971).

Dr. Parks recommended 4 year tenure for the President in his annual address in 1922. The Convention voted to adopt the recommendation, but somehow his successor, Dr. L. K. Williams, was able to continue as President for 18 years.

In 1952 the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., Inc. revised its constitution, providing for a 4 year tenure for the President and the election of an Executive Secretary. Dr. J. H. Jackson, a Vice-President at the time, was presiding when the revised constitution including tenure was adopted. The next year, 1953, Dr. Jackson was elected President. In 1957, when his four years were up, he refused to give up the office and "ruled" tenure out of the Constitution. It was not voted out. There was great dissatisfaction following that ruling.

In the 1960 session of the Convention in Philadelphia, Pa., President Jackson attempted to dismiss the Convention for an afternoon recess, but over 2000 messengers remained in the auditorium and proceeded to elect Dr. Gardner C. Taylor of Brooklyn, N.Y., President. Dr. Jackson and his cabinet refused to recognize Dr. Taylor as President and when the 1961 session was held in Kansas City, Mo., they attempted to keep him and all of his supporters out of the auditorium. When Dr. Taylor and his escort entered the auditorium and proceeded toward the platform to take charge of the

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Convention a squad of Jackson men blocked their way.

Peace and fellowship was almost non-existent. Whereupon Dr. L. V. Booth, Pastor of Zion Baptist Church, Cincinnati, Ohio issued a news release September 11, 1961, announcing a meeting for the formation of a new National Baptist Convention to be held November 14 and 15 in Zion Baptist Church, Cincinnati. On September 22, 1961 The Call Letter was sent out to the Pastors across the country. Other news releases and letters followed.

On November 14, 1961, at 10:54 a.m., the assembled messengers were called to order by Dr. Booth, the Convenor. He was elected temporary chairman and Rev. Andrew J. Hargrett of Chicago, Ill. was elected temporary secretary. In the afternoon the registered messengers met in the Chapel and elected Dr. J. Raymond Henderson of California to preside over the organization. There were 33 messengers present, representing 14 states. The question whether to organize with this small number was debated and voted on. Dr. Marvin Robinson, California, spoke against organizing at that time. Dr. L. V. Booth spoke in favor of organizing. When the ballots were counted 19 had voted "No" and 20 had voted "Yes".

The officers elected were Dr. T. M. Chambers, California, President; Dr. L. V. Booth, Ohio, First Vice-President; Dr. J. Carl Mitchell, West Va., Secretary; Dr. Louis Rawls, Illinois, Treasurer; Mr. William T. Parker, Iowa, Attorney; and Rev. Andrew J. Hargrett, Illinois, temporary Director of Publicity. The name chosen for the new Convention was "Progressive Baptist Convention of America".

The Baptist Foreign Mission Bureau, U.S.A., Inc., was organized in Philadelphia, Pa., in September, 1961, a few days after the close

of the National Baptist Convention session in Kansas City. Dr. H. J. Trapp of Philadelphia was elected Chairman and Dr. C. C. Adams, who had been Executive Secretary of the Foreign Mission Board of the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., Inc., was elected Executive Secretary. The Progressive National Baptist Convention adopted the Baptist Foreign Mission Bureau as its Foreign Mission Board. The Bureau does mission work in Nigeria and Liberia, West Africa and Haiti in the West Indies.

The first annual meeting was held in Union Baptist Church, Philadelphia, Pa., September 5-9, 1962. The organization was completed; and the name was revised to include the word "National" and "of America" was dropped. The Women's Auxiliary and the Congress of Christian Education were organized at this session. Mrs. Uvee Mmodana Arbouin was elected President of the Women's Auxiliary and Dr. G. K. Offutt was elected President of the Congress. All of the first Officers were given 4 years to serve from the Philadelphia meeting. Thereafter all officers have a limit of two years, except the Executive Secretary, which has a tenure of eight years. There is a strong possibility that the Executive Secretary's tenure might be lengthened.

For the first time in the history of Black Baptists in America, we have a National Baptist Convention, which is incorporated, observes tenure, has a full time Executive Secretary with a Headquarters, and strives to operate on a unified budget. The Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc., is a full service Convention. We are interested in and contribute to all areas of life—missions, education, civil rights and human freedom. Our slogan is "Fellowship, Progress, Service and Peace."

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THE CHURCH COVENANT

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- LEADER:** What common experience leads us into spiritual fellowship and covenant relations with God and one another?
- PEOPLE:** Having been lead, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour, and on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, we do now, in the presence of God and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another, as one body in Christ.
- LEADER:** By what pledge do we promise to turn from the ways of the world?
- PEOPLE:** We promise by the aid of the Holy Spirit to forsake the paths of sin, and to walk in the ways of holiness all the days of our lives.
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- LEADER:** What are some of our privileges and duties in this our own church?
- PEOPLE:** With this view, we engage to strive together for the advancement of this church in knowledge, holiness and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality, to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline and doctrines.
- LEADER:** What vows do we gladly make as stewards of that which God has entrusted to us?
- PEOPLE:** To contribute cheerfully, by tithing, as taught in the Bible, to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel throughout all nations.
- LEADER:** For the sake of our home and loved ones, what tasks do we humbly assume?
- PEOPLE:** We also engage to maintain family and secret devotion; to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances.

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LEADER: For the sake of the unsaved for whom Christ died, to what manner of life and conversation are we solemnly pledged?

PEOPLE: To walk circumspectly in the world, to be just in our dealings; faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment; to avoid all tattling, backbiting, and excessive anger; and to oppose all unloving acts and attitudes in all walks of life toward any of God's children, and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom to our Saviour.

LEADER: Since one is our Master, even Christ, and all we are sisters and brothers, by what fraternal ministries are we to strengthen each other and adorn the teachings of our Lord and Saviour?

PEOPLE: We further agree to walk together in Christian love and watchfulness, giving and receiving admonition with meekness and affection; to remember each other ~~in prayer, to aid each other in sickness and~~ distress, to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation, and mindful of the rules of our Saviour to secure it without delay.

LEADER: For the good of our own spiritual development, and for the best interest of the Master's kingdom, what do we promise to do if we move beyond the reach of this church?

PEOPLE: We moreover engage that, when we remove from this place, we will as soon as possible unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's word.

ALL: Humbly confessing our past sins, we pray for grace and strength to keep these, our holy vows, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. **AMEN.**

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QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. What are 6 basic Baptist principles?
2. What is the basis of the Baptist belief of separation between church and state?
3. Name the central figures in the origin of the Baptist doctrine?
4. What were some of the earlier names Baptist were known by?
5. Who founded the first English speaking Baptist congregation and where?
6. Who was the first Baptist preacher in America?
7. When and where was the first Baptist church in America established?
8. Who founded the first Black Baptist church on American soil?