

July 28, 2016

Mayor Jim Strickland
125 N. Main St.
Memphis, TN 38103

Dear Mayor,

It has been my pleasure to watch you evolve since you began your term in office. The recent "Black Lives Matter" Community Meeting demonstrated your flexibility and willingness to meet your constituency at the grass roots level. Understandably, this forum did not settle the macro issues that sparked the protests; yet it was encouraging and reassuring to the public that dialogue was initiated in efforts to work toward what is best for Memphis. In addition to the civil unrest sparked by the rash of questionable police killings across the nation, another matter of grave concern is the continued quest for positive and meaningful economic parity for the Black community.

The two letters that I previously sent to you juxtaposed the minuscule number of contracts awarded to Black entrepreneurs and the White controlled assignment of contracts and services. An interrelated and equally important concern is the return of the annual international assembly of the Church Of God In Christ (the Church) to Memphis, Tennessee. As you should know, Memphis is the established birthplace of the Church and for more than one hundred years was the host city for our Annual Holy Convocation, which was the largest revenue producing convention in Memphis. The relationship between Memphis and the Church was mutually beneficial.

However, several years ago, the Presiding Bishop and the General Board members relocated the Church's largest meeting to St Louis, Missouri. Since this move, the Convocation delegates have experienced convenient access to hotel accommodations located near the downtown convention center complex and the adjoining domed stadium. Consequently, the city of St. Louis is now the glad recipient of the financial, historical, and ecumenical impact of the Church's presence.

My goal is to bring the Holy Convocation back to Memphis. As a member of the Memphis Area Chamber of Commerce,

a founding partner and CEO of the International Trustee Group (an emerging agricultural business), and the prelate of the Church Of God In Christ Tennessee Headquarters Jurisdiction with 50 churches under my stewardship, I believe I have a legitimate voice and am uniquely positioned to address this proposed action. Through dialogue with the other local Bishops, my endeavor is to strengthen relationships, promote a unified effort, and establish credible representation for all of the Memphis area Church Of God In Christ congregants in order to realize this goal.

I have spoken with local politicians and community and business leaders about the infrastructural development that is needed to prepare Memphis for the return of the Annual Holy Convocation. I suggest the following actions in order to facilitate this plan.

Pay the two current bond issues on the FedEx Forum and the Pyramid.

Start a new bond issue for two purposes: (1) to renovate the Cook Convention Center with increased capacity for larger conventions (2) to demolish the Liberty Bowl Stadium and build a new domed stadium with a seating capacity of 50,000.

I am aware that at this point in your administration money is scarce, but Memphis must take a visionary approach aligned with calculated decisions and strategic actions to bring this project to culmination. Moreover, I acknowledge that my primary focus is the return of the Church's Convocation; however, building state of the art convention and stadium facilities would clearly situate Memphis as a viable contender for selection of other conventions and events that would generate revenue.

As for the Church Of God In Christ, we must support you with our participation in the purchase of bonds to construct these buildings. I am personally prepared to buy \$100,000.00 of bonds for this plan. The Church must recognize our fiduciary responsibility to support and buy bonds because we are a stakeholder. As you know, the Church Of God In Christ Headquarters is located in south Memphis anchored by the historic Mason Temple. Much has

already been accomplished and is currently being planned to revitalize this area through renovation and construction which includes housing.

Again, I know that resources are hard to come by, but as we forge a creative partnership between local church and city leaders, I am convinced that we can communicate, plan, and work on this project together. It will take 7 to 8 years to accomplish these points with the help of both state and national support. This is an era of growth that Memphis needs now. If the city is to be ready to emerge in this century in a credible position, it must renew relationships, actively pursue growth opportunities, and strengthen its financial portfolio.

As a prelate in the Church Of God In Christ and a citizen of Memphis, you have my support and money when the time comes. When I met with you and Kevin Kane, I spoke my heart on various situations. I am yet awaiting a tangible response from Mr. Kane.

Finally, I know that a workable platform can be developed and that progressive actions can be taken to bring the Church Of God In Christ Annual Holy Convocation back home. If the Jews don't leave Jerusalem, the Mormons don't leave Salt Lake City, Utah, the Catholics don't leave Rome, and the Muslims don't leave Mecca, then why should the Church Of God In Christ leave Memphis, Tennessee? This is our home and the place where our founder, Bishop Charles Harrison Mason launched this organization that currently serves people in all 50 states and 70 countries around the world. There is a notion that "Memphis gets things right the second time around." Let's eradicate this perception. Don't miss this opportunity to get it right the first time. Let's bring the Church Of God In Christ home.

In the Service of Christ and Humanity,

Bishop David Allen Hall, Sr.
Prelate, Tennessee Headquarters Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction