

**2019 Black Church Leadership Conference Coming September 6th-7th**

The Columbia Metro Baptist Association (CMBA) will host the 2019 Black Church Leadership Conference September 6th and 7th at North Trenholm Baptist Church, 6515 North Trenholm Road in Columbia. Focusing on the needs of black churches in the Midlands, the event will offer topical breakout sessions, fellowship and relationship-building opportunities. According to CMBA Executive Director George Bullard the event is also designed to build racial bridges.

“The Black Church Leadership Conference is for more than just the leadership of predominately African-American churches who are members of Columbia Metro Baptist Association. It is also for any black church in the Midlands who wants to increase the vitality and vibrancy of their church by providing exceptional training for their leadership. Leaders from predominately Anglo-American churches who find themselves in communities of racial transition and need to learn more about successful approaches to connecting with African-American households should also attend,” he says.

The event is slated to begin at 6 p.m. on Friday, September 6th and continue Saturday, September 7th until about 1:30 p.m. Conference breakout topics include training in church planting, church growth, evangelism, discipleship training, leadership training (for elders, deacons and trustees), children and youth ministries, reaching young adults, having a healthy marriage, living single, and the Women’s Missionary Union (WMU) missions training called *Sisters Who Care*.

Scheduled conference speakers include: Ken Weathersby, vice president of Convention Advancement for the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention; Stephen Splawn, evangelism strategist with the South Carolina Baptist Convention (SCBC); Darrell Gaddy, SCBC church planting strategist; Andre Melvin, senior pastor of Temple Zion Baptist Church; and, Bullard who will lead a breakout and the closing session.

Andre Rogers, a CMBA Empowering Congregations Ministry Mobilizer and professor of church ministry at Columbia Biblical Seminary, says critical elements of the black church experience will be highlighted during the conference. In addition to the unique nature of its worship, fellowship, instruction, commitment to social justice and laughter, the topic of unity will be front and center.

“We are better together. This conference is going to be an excellent way for individuals to gather tools to improve their ministries and leadership. Our goal is to strengthen every ministry in the church,” Rogers says.

Andrew Scott, pastor of Second Union Baptist Church in Columbia, says he is looking forward to attending the conference and having the opportunity to share ministry challenges and successes with other leaders there.

“I’m excited to have the time to encourage one another in ministry, and to focus on the issues of reaching the unsaved and touching the hearts of our youth and young adults with the gospel. Lives are being changed despite the times we are living in. Preaching the gospel and not performing will give listeners the opportunity to make their decision based solely on the truth of the word of God,” Scott says.

“I believe this conference will enhance and equip leaders with the abilities to plant and grow more churches. I am particularly interested in closing the gap between youth and seniors. I think God is using collaborative methods to allow these leaders to work together,” adds John Roberts, senior pastor of Fort Clark Baptist Church in Elgin.

Donna Britt, WMU associate for adults and WMU growth, says the *Sisters Who Care* breakout will highlight the many ways women’s organizations are already reaching into their communities through missions and offer some new ideas.

“There will also be an introduction to the way Southern Baptists do missions through the Cooperative Program and how WMU can help involve the church in missions in their community, state, North America and around the world,” Britt says.

According to Bullard, prophetic missional action is a key role for every church. It is essential for women in every church to serve as a missional movement committed to compassionate actions on unconditional love to all people.

“I am excited that the Woman’s Missionary Union of South Carolina will be leading a breakout session on *Sisters Who Care*, which is a fairly new approach that has been successful in black churches to mobilize women for missional action. I hope every church attending will have a key woman leader in this breakout session,” he says.

CMBA recognizes collaboration as a critical driving force for the conference. Bullard explains that the association’s area is becoming a majority minority context, and many predominately white churches need to learn more about how to reach African-American households, what is working in the black church setting, and how to develop relationships where they can be mentored by current successful leaders of black churches.

“One of the best ways to fully benefit from this conference is for each interested pastor to attend along with a team of six other people. Pastors should share with their team their goals for attending and assign a person to attend each of the breakout sessions. Within a few days following the conference the pastor should gather the team to debrief their experience and develop specific actions that will help their church take the next steps in their spiritual and strategic journey,” Bullard says.

“Our goal is to strengthen every ministry in the church. We want our African American leaders to lead with integrity, influence, innovation, intentionality and impact. Through the Black Church Leadership Conference individuals can also connect with each other and the association,” Rogers says.

Visit [Black Church Leadership Conference Registration](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScd_cd9M-oBRb7n7yU7TUHwuHRkG_dGHXcStq7d4FEWXh5ZVQ/viewform) to register, or email CMBA@ColumbiaMetro.org with additional questions.