

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 39

BY SENATOR JOHNS

A RESOLUTION

To commend the Greater St. Mary Missionary Baptist Church of Lake Charles upon its history and accomplishments.

WHEREAS, in 1939, God spoke to Dr. R. B. House to build a church in the home of Sister Duhon, and Greater Saint Mary Missionary Baptist Church was organized with the help of two ministers, Dr. N. P. Jones and Dr. W. C. Clark; and

WHEREAS, on March 8, 1939, the pastor and nine members leased land and built a small church at 102 Adams Street, which in the beginning was blessed with one Deacon and one Deaconess, Bro and Sis Eddy Watts; and

WHEREAS, in 1940 with seventeen members, the church moved to Simmons Street consisting of three deacons, Mother Duhon, Sis Eddy Watts and Sis Sam Blue, the first secretary Sis Artie Blue, and witnessed its first baptism; and

WHEREAS, in 1945, the John Nash family united with the church, and, in 1946, other deacons were added, John Nash, C. Goins, Sam Jenkins and Tom Ford, bringing the number of deacons to seven, and later the Retel Nash family placed their membership with the church; and

WHEREAS, in 1947, the church temporarily moved from Simmons Street to a location on a lot purchased from Lumberman Supply Company, during which time the pastor and members purchased two more lots from the Pauley Agency where the church was built at 1917 Harless Street; and

WHEREAS, a fire destroyed the church in 1959 and services were held in the pastor's home at 2009 Medora Street and in a tent while the church was being rebuilt in 1960 with Sis Fannie Breaux serving as Building Fund Chairperson; and

WHEREAS, during the period of 1969 to 1983, four air conditioners were purchased; several classrooms, a larger choir stand and new restrooms were added; a Hammond Organ was purchased; new stained glass windows, two front glass doors were purchased and

installed; a new church steeple and an outdoor bulletin board were added; a public announcement system, pastor's office, secretary and usher rooms were purchased; new church lights were installed; new carpet was purchased; two church buses were purchased; new pews, pulpit set, and Lord's Supper table were purchased; a new piano was purchased; new parking lots were added; and a set of drums was purchased; and

WHEREAS, Dr. R. B. House passed away on Sunday, December 4, 1983, ending forty-four years of leadership at Greater St. Mary Missionary Baptist Church; and

WHEREAS, on February 3, 1984, Reverend Samuel C. Tolbert Jr. became the pastor while still a student at Bishop College in Dallas, Texas, as he commuted until July 1986 when he received his bachelor of arts degree; and

WHEREAS, having been led, taught and trained by Dr. R. B. House, Pastor Tolbert kept building on a solid foundation and the church flourished under his leadership; and

WHEREAS, in the 1980s, sidewalks and concrete slabs for the pastor's parking were added, the Dr. R. B. House Memorial Library on Harless Street was dedicated, five lots were purchased; the Bus Ministry, Sick & Shut-In Ministry, Nursing Home Visitation, Christian Education Department, and Scholarship Programs were instated, a copy machine was purchased, the church's first full-time secretary, Sis Dorothy Moore, began working on a daily basis, new carpet was installed, repair work was done to the sanctuary, lots were cleared and leveled for a parking lot, the first church van was purchased, and renovations to the fellowship hall and two additional bathrooms were added; and

WHEREAS, in the 1990s, a house on the west side of the church was purchased and has since been turned into the Administrative Education Annex; Rev. Freddie Thomas was appointed as the first full-time Director of Evangelism/Discipleship Ministry by Pastor Tolbert and began working on March 25, 1991; twenty-three acres of land in the Lebleu Settlement off of Ira Breaux Road was acquired to be developed into the Prospect 2000 Retreat and Retirement Center; a building for a Day Care and Learning Center at 603 Blake Street was purchased, three houses were donated to the church - "Bartie House" by Barbara Johnson and Julia Barker, "Elton & Maude LEMONIA House" by Deacon Harold and Deaconess Jocelyn Duhon, and "C. N. Frank House" by Pastor Samuel and Sis Matilda Tolbert; and

WHEREAS, in 1997, the "On Patrol for Jesus" ministry, an Evangelism movement held from 9 p.m. to 12 midnight every Saturday night, was instituted; and

WHEREAS, in the 2000s, a 4.5-acre tract of land with four buildings totaling over 40,000 square feet was purchased and named Greater St. Mary Complex; a twelve-unit apartment complex by the name of Amber Gardens was donated and renamed "Pearl Pines Apartments"; and a house at 613 Jackson Street was donated, which became known as "The Homeowners Project 2000"; and

WHEREAS, as of 2001, the church had fourteen main ministries - Evangelism, New Members, Christian Education, Women Mission, Service, Music, Seasoned Saints, Youth, Children, Administrative, Prospect 2000, Recreation, GSM Community Development, and Small Groups; and

WHEREAS, on January 7, 2001, during the 11 a.m. worship service, Pastor Tolbert gave a message entitled "The Next Level Vision" based on Habakkuk 2:1-3, which tells God's people to write the vision, read vision, run with the vision, and wait for the vision, and "The Next Level Vision" is in writing and available for each family at the church; and

WHEREAS, the vision became reality as in early 2002, the church launched the "Move in with Us" campaign as the congregation moved into the church gym, considered Phase I; and

WHEREAS, the Greater St. Mary Missionary Baptist Church participated with 1,532 other churches in the Forty Days of Purpose fall campaign, which moved the church into the Purpose Driven church strategy; and

WHEREAS, the church's mission statement was developed using five key words to summarize Christ's five purposes for His Church - magnify, mission, membership, maturity and ministry; and

WHEREAS, colors were selected for each purpose and displayed two months each year, the Circles of Commitment were developed (a movement of people from the outer to the inner circle), Saints Advance Leadership Training (SALT) Classes were organized, and the Life Development Process (Curriculum 101-401) was used to apply the five purposes; and

WHEREAS, in 2003 Pastor Tolbert was elected General Secretary of the National Baptist Convention of America, Inc., and in 2005 he became the president of the Louisiana Home and Foreign Mission Baptist State Convention; and

WHEREAS, in January 2006, Pastor Tolbert presented GSM's Goals/Vision for the year alining them with the five purposes of the church and led the church into a "Debit Retirement Campaign" using the Small Groups structure and appointed Bro Roy and Sis Audrey Guillory to coordinate the activity; and

WHEREAS, in December 2006, the remaining debt was paid off, and on December 31, 2006, a Mortgage Burning Ceremony was held during Watch Night Service; and

WHEREAS, in 2008, an eight-acre tract of land was purchased for a future community development initiative; and

WHEREAS, the Greater St. Mary Missionary Baptist Church is an inspiration not only to its members, but also to the entire Lake Charles community and merits a special measure of commendation.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby commend St. Mary Missionary Baptist Church of Lake Charles for over seventy-five years of growth and the church members and leaders in their creation of a loving and dedicated spiritual community and does hereby wish them full measures of success, happiness, and richest blessings in all of their future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to Reverend Samuel C. Tolbert Jr.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE