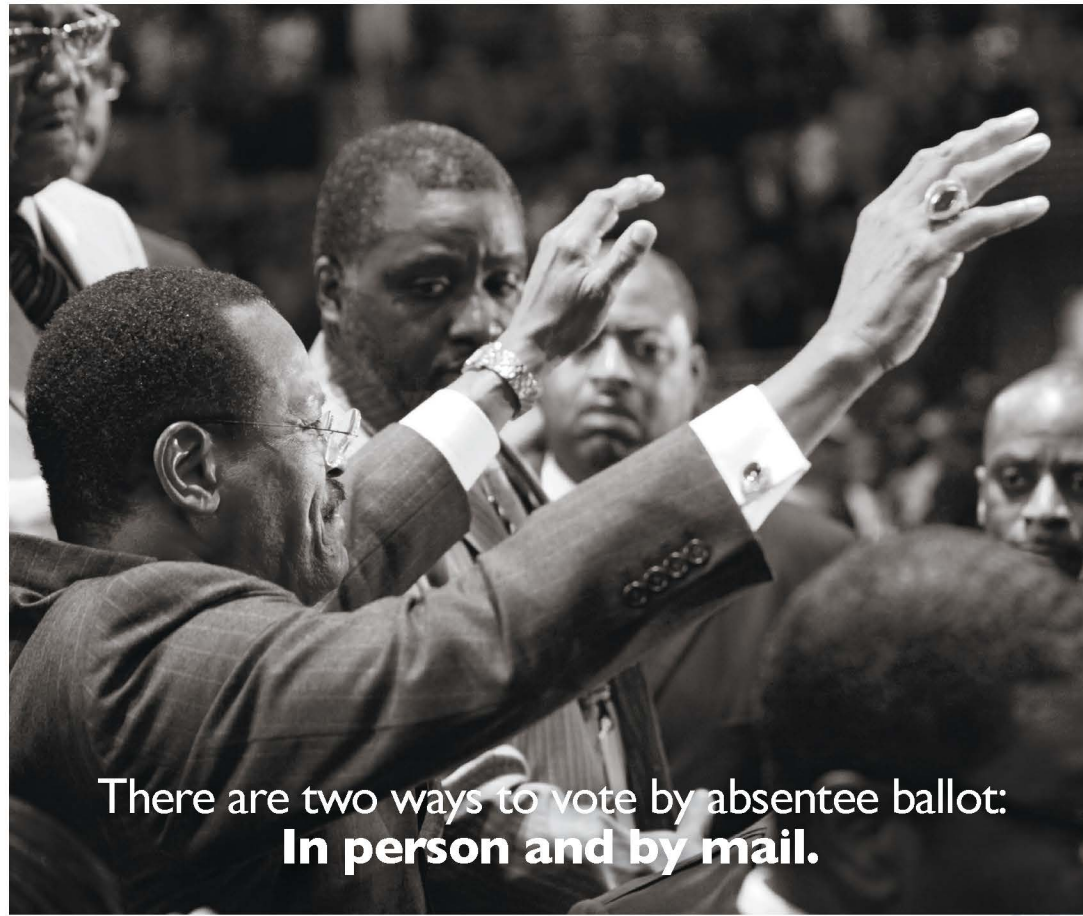


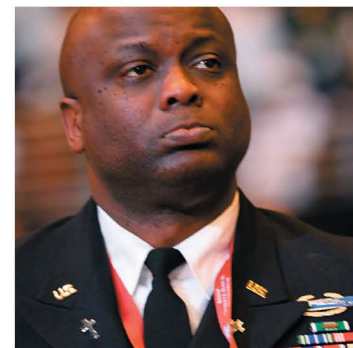
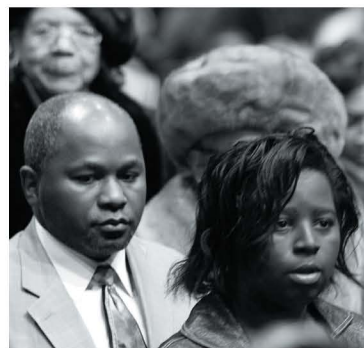
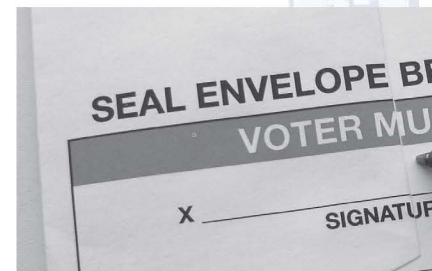


There are two ways to vote by absentee ballot:
In person and by mail.



**NOV 3
2015**

**Absentee
BALLOT**



GOTV
Get Out the Vote



“The mission of The Presiding Bishop’s Absentee Ballot Initiative is religious, not a targeted political strategy, but simply an Episcopal Call to Political Responsibility supporting an Electoral Process for a just and sustainable world!”

—Presiding Bishop Charles E. Blake, Sr.



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Absentee Ballot Initiative

Your Voice Your Vote
“Getting Souls to the Polls”

**An Episcopal Call to
Political Responsibility**
from

Presiding Bishop Charles E. Blake, Sr.
Church Of God In Christ, Inc.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Introduction
- Administrative Directive
- Goals and Objectives

Dear Jurisdictional Bishops, National Departmental Leaders, and Pastors:

Although voters will be at the polls deciding the United States middle term election of 2015 on Tuesday, November 3 thousands of saints who are registered voters will be attending the Holy Convocation of the Church Of God In Christ, convening November 2-9, in St. Louis, Missouri. This communiqué is to encourage the saints to vote absentee ballot. To this end, The General Board and I have launched a project entitled, *The Presiding Bishop's Absentee Ballot Initiative – An Episcopal Call to Political Responsibility*. For more information, please review the enclosed executive summary regarding this initiative.

My primary purpose in writing this letter is to solicit the support of all jurisdictional bishops, pastors, and other national leaders throughout the Church Of God In Christ. We are asking you to partner with us to make the absentee ballot initiative a success in your state or region. Absentee voting refers to voting on a ballot received by mail or picked up by or for a person who is unable to physically present to the polls to vote during early voting or on Election Day. A request must be made by the individual who wishes to receive an absentee ballot. Please encourage voters to contact their Supervisor of Elections to request an absentee ballot in advance.

{ Please don't take this request lightly! }

I have appointed Pastor Talbert Swan, II (Springfield, MA) to serve as Chairman, and Pastor Robert Robinson (Little Rock, AR) to serve as Co-Chairman for *The Presiding Bishop's Absentee Ballot Initiative*. These individuals, along with committee members, will be contacting you with further information. You can partner with us by doing the following (further illustrated in the Executive Summary for the absentee ballot initiative):

1. Appoint a steering committee with a chair and co-chair to promote the absentee ballot initiative in your area.
2. Promote the three big strands for absentee ballot success: **registration**, **education**, and **mobilization**. Continued communication and **Get Out the Vote (GOTV)** strategies are essential.
3. Recruit volunteers and support the goals and objectives outlined in *The Presiding Bishop's Absentee Ballot Initiative* Executive Summary, as well as other materials and reporting requirements that are forthcoming from the national committee for the absentee ballot initiative.
4. Review and promote suggested activities for pastor/church socio-political involvement within prescribed guidelines governing *The Presiding Bishop's Absentee Ballot Initiative*.

Please don't take this request lightly! By fulfilling civic responsibility, guided by a Christian conscience in conformity with its values, we can faithfully carry out the proper task of infusing temporal order with Christian standards. Developing consciences for the absentee ballot initiative is an urgent mandate. Please share this letter with pastors/churches in your area.

The faithful should never relinquish their socio-political responsibility for the common good. We are making it an overarching goal to nurture enthusiasm for the electoral process and to reach out to all eligible voters in every state, conducting extensive voter outreach and voter-education activities. Please Join Us!

Sincerely,

Bishop Charles E. Blake, Sr.
Presiding Bishop



Church Of God In Christ, Inc. The PRESIDING BISHOP'S ABSENTEE BALLOT INITIATIVE

INTRODUCTION

“The mission of The Presiding Bishop's Absentee Ballot Initiative is religious. It is not a targeted political strategy, but rather, an episcopal call to political responsibility supporting an electoral process for a just and sustainable world!” For reasons that are both theological and legal, the Church Of God In Christ's involvement in public life does not extend to endorsing candidates for election to public office, nor for the calling of their defeat. However, individuals, such as pastors, may participate in political campaigns as long as they do so as individuals, and not in the name of the Church Of God In Christ. Any individual, including a pastor, may wear different hats at different times and, therefore, be involved in political activity, as long as the individual is wearing the appropriate hat while engaging in civil stewardship from a biblical viewpoint.

The Presiding Bishop's Administrative Directive on Political Activities

(Number: COGICPB120306)

As a tax-exempt organization under section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, the Church Of God In Christ, Inc.(COGIC) cannot intervene in any political campaign on behalf of, or in opposition to, any candidate for public office. Violation of this prohibition could cause COGIC to lose its tax-exempt status or incur excise taxes imposed on political expenditures. To ensure that COGIC does not jeopardize its tax-exempt status or incur excise taxes on political expenditures, COGIC, including any individual acting on behalf of COGIC, will not engage in any of the following on COGIC property: Any COGIC donating or contributing to any candidate's campaign, participating or engaging in political fundraising events, publishing or distributing statements for or against any candidate, or engaging in any other activity that favors or opposes any candidate.

GOALS and OBJECTIVES

The Presiding Bishop's Absentee Ballot Initiative is designed to develop consciences and encourage all eligible voters to participate in elections. This executive summary highlights a faithful and challenging call to discipleship in the world of politics, providing a framework for our dual heritage as both faithful Church Of God In Christ members and American citizens. It does not offer a voter's guide, scorecard of issues, or direction on how to vote. However, we are making it our goal to nurture enthusiasm for Absentee Ballot Voting in respective states.

Many individuals may be unable to physically present at the polls on Election Day, but still desire to participate in the election process. Individuals may still vote by casting an absentee ballot prior to Election Day. There are two ways to vote by absentee ballot: in person and by mail. The Presiding Bishop's Absentee Ballot Initiative will include, but is not limited to, the following goals and objectives:

There are two ways to vote by absentee ballot: **in person and by mail.**

The Presiding Bishop's Absentee Ballot Initiative will include, but is not limited to, the following goals and objectives:

1. Educate churches and pastors on the importance for biblically faithful voters to vote their biblical values.
2. Partner with pastors and churches to encourage members to participate in the election process.
3. Develop and promote a strategic Absentee Ballot Action Plan to encourage absentee voting as needed in respective states, incorporating strategies at the national, jurisdictional, district, and local levels throughout the Church Of God In Christ within respective communities.
4. Develop an administrative toolkit for *The Presiding Bishop's Absentee Ballot Initiative* including keys to moving **“Souls to the Polls.”** The following objectives should be encompassed:
 - a. **FOCUS** on three areas – registration, education, and mobilization. Registration alone does not get voters to the polls. Continued communication and GOTV (**Get Out the Vote**) strategies are essential.
 - b. **UNDERSTAND** voting. Know the facts including absentee ballot guidelines, according to your state. Please note that individuals must be registered in order to vote by absentee ballot; however, voter registration is not an application to vote absentee.
 - c. **PREPARE** a calendar. Find and train volunteers, map out a schedule of activities, and organize volunteers throughout the Church Of God In Christ.
 - d. **MEET** and encourage collaboration with local board of electors and state's election officials.
 - e. **PLAN** deadlines and election dates. Remind people of key dates for absentee applications. Do not forget to remind individuals of their polling locations with provided directions.
 - f. **DEVELOP** a database. Organize a tracking system including a statistical analysis, regarding *The Presiding Bishop's Absentee Ballot Initiative* –jurisdiction-by-jurisdiction and state-by-state as well as an analysis using zip codes.
 - g. **SHARE** information and resources. Talk politics from a biblical perspective.
 - h. **EVALUATE** participants and partners by that which worked and that which did not work.
 - i. **CELEBRATE** and **THANK** everyone who was involved. Everyone worked hard, now it's time to have a good time. Hard work should have its rewards – so plan ahead of time for a celebration.

For the Master's Service,
AN EPISCOPAL CALL TO POLITICAL RESPONSIBILITY

Bishop Charles E. Blake, Sr.
Presiding Bishop