

The Rev. Dr. T. J. Baltimore Sr.



February 16, 1945 — June 16, 2003

Obituary of “TJ” Baltimore

People need Christ’s healing hand on their hearts, minds, and bodies. There is a difference between sermons on healing and providing opportunities for our church to receive prayer for Christ’s healing. Prayers for healing can now be offered at the end of every service . . . But people need more than the shadow of our busy lives. They need personal contact; they need to be listened to; and they need the physical contact of touch . . . [a] supernatural church, a respected growing church, a healing church. That three-point trust makes us want the same things for our church today. And all three are based in the authentic spirit-filling of people called to the Lord and then called to loyalty to the members of His body. Let’s be loyal to each other. Let’s start today! (As I See It!)

The Rev. T.J. Baltimore Sr., son of Mrs. Virginia Baltimore and the last Rev. James Phillip Baltimore Sr., was born on February 16, 1945, in Happy Creek, Virginia, a small town near Front Royal, Virginia. Rev. Baltimore dedicated his life to the fulfillment of his vision about Christians’ duty to meet the needs of others.

“TJ,” as he was affectionately known, was ordained in 1965 by the Second National Katoctan Baptist Association, a 100+-year-old convention of churches in Maryland, Virginia, and Pennsylvania. He remained active in that body, serving as clerk for 12 years and vice-moderator for seven years. In 1992 the association elected Dr. Baltimore to serve as moderator, an office he held for four years.

The Rev. T.J. Baltimore Sr. was the author of a weekly series, *As I See It!*, which was included in the church’s bulletin, *The Teller*. In this series, “TJ” shared his reflections on the meaning of the Christian journey and the faithful’s connections with others and the Father. His reflections touched many

who have later shared how the *As I See It!* spoke to what they were experiencing.

The Rev. T.J. Baltimore Sr. was associated with churches in Boston, Massachusetts, and Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, where he was pastor of the Turner Memorial Primitive Baptist Church for eight years.

“TJ” returned to the Washington, DC, area in 1975 to pursue his vision of a church that would be entrepreneurial in nature and socially conscious. This church would have diverse ministries that met not only the needs of parishioners but the larger community as well.

“TJ” WORKED IN MANY ARENAS—FROM BOARD SERVICE TO CHURCH “PLANTINGS”

Rev. Baltimore’s civic contributions resulted in his appointment, by U.S. Congresswoman Constance Morella and Maryland Delegate Sheila Hixon, to several boards and committees affecting Montgomery County. “TJ” was active in the D.C.

Baptist Convention and served on its executive board. He was appointed to the board at Wesley Seminary and served as chairman for the American Baptist Churches Project at the 1996 Olympics.

Dr. Baltimore frequently facilitated workshops for the Howard University School of Divinity and the D.C. Baptist Convention. He was, as well, a recognized expert on new church plantings and development—focusing on topics such as congregational ministries, church development and growth, tithing, empowering the laity, and conflict management in churches. As a result of his community-minded outreach, Dr. Baltimore received the Montgomery County 2002 Humanitarian Award.

THE REV. T.J. BALTIMORE SR. SAID THE CHURCH MUST BE CONCERNED ABOUT UNMET HUMAN NEEDS

The People's Community Baptist Church, founded August 5, 1978, embraces a model of a visionary church that is human-focused, all-caring, and all-action—a model popularly known by church members as *The 2121 Vision*. This vision of the church's role in meeting the needs of people recognizes the fact that people are opting for "full-service" churches; this vision requires congregants to move beyond the walls of the sanctuary into a world filled with unmet human needs.

As envisioned by Rev. Baltimore, the church needs "to be as concerned about what the poor have for supper as it has been about who is eligible to partake of the Lord's Supper." He believed that "we need to become as concerned about people who are kept out of Baptist churches because of race as we have

been about those let in without benefit of Baptist immersion." He said, "We meet the people where they are."

With a philosophy of shared leadership, "TJ" devoted his life—full time—to "growing" a church that reaches into all spheres of life within Montgomery County, the region, and now internationally. Rev. Baltimore encouraged the growth of a variety of ministries led by people with the "heart" to reach the unreachable and the desire to commit their time and talents to make a difference—now. Starting with Christian Education, he labored to ensure that ministries of The People's Community Baptist Church "reached within and moved beyond" to meet people's needs.

Pastor Baltimore wanted a Christian Education Ministry that established, continued, and coordinated *all* phases of Christian Education. His shared leadership in this area resulted in, among many successes, significant scholarships that enabled high school students (in the congregation) to attend colleges of their choice. His leadership also inspired the Girl Scouts, for example, to serve others by distributing toys to the children of residents of the Montgomery County Detention Center.

Our Pastor's concern for education extended beyond scholarships. He made it possible for children to obtain the competencies they needed to perform well in elementary and high school. Thus, he asked the educators and other professionals in the congregation to establish the Saturday School. Open to all students, this school provides PSAT and SAT preparatory courses as well as academic enhancement courses.

With his concern about literacy in all areas, “TJ” encouraged technology experts to develop a computer laboratory and to provide computer-based courses. Not only is this new laboratory used by students of the Saturday School, it is available to the larger community. This exciting addition truly revealed Pastor Baltimore’s commitment to the children and adult learners of the church, as well as to the community.

Worship service, Rev. Baltimore believed, must be tailored to the concerns of the people. The youth, he envisioned, needed to be inspired to explore their relationship with God from their unique perspective. The entrepreneurial church, thus, needed a Youth Church. “TJ” announced, in 2001, the start of 8 and 11 a.m. Sunday worship services for youth that were especially designed to meet their needs.

A Family Life Ministry, according to Rev. Baltimore, is a central concept of the empowering church. He led the development of a ministry that ensures each church member’s evangelistic efforts are strengthened.

When a church member indicated the need to provide outreach to a diverse community, Rev. Baltimore encouraged the development of the International/Multicultural Ministry. This ministry has heightened parishioners’ resolve to think and act globally. And, now the church has an international missionary—the result of Pastor Baltimore’s support of her desire to serve beyond the boundaries of national concern.

Evangelism—for the founder and senior minister of The People’s Community Baptist Church—is

all-inclusive. “TJ” encouraged the Evangelism Ministry to meet people’s spiritual needs as well as their other needs. Hence, this ministry not only provided prayer, praise, and song, it also provided blankets, sleeping bags, and food.

All Tribal Families (Asher, Benjamin, Dan, Gad, Issachar, Joseph, Judah, Reuben, and Simeon) of the church have accepted their role in helping others. As a result, in 2001, some residents of Tobytown (Maryland) were recipients of the benevolence of two Tribal Families; another Tribal Family provided gifts to the children of St. Ann’s. Other Tribal Families adopted community families and supported them in a number of ways throughout the year—bringing them to worship services, as well as providing clothing, food, and gifts. Church members became involved; a vision and a dream were realized by Rev. Baltimore.

Rev. Baltimore believed that music is an integral component of the worship experience. With his commitment to music, Pastor Baltimore encouraged the Music Ministry to share its message with the larger community. Hence, to carry the Word to those in the Metro area, this ministry began coordinating some of its outreach efforts with the Evangelism Ministry.

In 1981 Dr. Baltimore saw to it that his vision of a socially conscious church fed the hungry. Working closely with the Montgomery County Social Services Department, “TJ” made The People’s Community Baptist Church a beacon for the hungry and destitute. He personally delivered food and arranged for housing and transportation for the many families referred to The People’s Community Baptist Church for emergency assistance. This outreach was the start of the

church's Social Action Ministry. That assistance continues to this day.

When a deadly hurricane (in 1999) rampaged through Princeville, North Carolina, Rev. Baltimore said to his congregation, "We must act." With financial support from the Social Action Ministry, skills of a professional construction crew, and donations from the entire congregation, the church restored a six-room bungalow of a soft-spoken widow who said she had been blessed by the church's outpouring of love.

It was late 1993 when Dr. Baltimore called a member forward to share leadership in establishing the church's chamber of commerce. He believed the church can promote economic development in the African-American community. From this vision, The People's Community Baptist Church Chamber of Commerce was recognized by the National Black Chamber of Commerce as the first church-sponsored chamber. Under his guidance and

support, the church's chamber received a one-year grant from the Montgomery County Office of Economic Development.

Dr. Baltimore led the effort to support Grandma's House, described as the most comprehensive housing and human service provider for women and children of color who are living with HIV/AIDS (in the Washington, DC, area). The Social Action Ministry and Tribal Families renovated the facility and provided furnishings. Also, each year, the church of Pastor Baltimore's dreams provides financial contributions to the Baptist Home for Children (Bethesda, Maryland) and back-to-school supplies, food, and Christmas items to the children of the incarcerated. In 2001 Dr. Baltimore supported the Social Action Ministry's desire to become even more community focused by working with those who wanted to adopt children. Hence, The People's Community Baptist Church became a recipient of a grant for the One Child, One Church program.

DR. BALTIMORE'S 2121 VISION CONTINUES

From his vision of a socially conscious church that began its worship services in the auditorium of John F. Kennedy High School (Silver Spring, Maryland) to one that grew to include a family life center and sanctuary and then expanded again to include educational and conference capabilities, "TJ" worked tirelessly to meet people where they were. He worked tirelessly to move the church from stained-glass confines to multicolored panoramas of Montgomery County, the Metro area, the nation, and the world. He labored to build upon his vision that required congregants and their County partners to fulfill unmet needs. And with the plans for another phase to the church complex, Pastor Baltimore labored to ensure that the perennial needs of people across the life cycle and around the world are met.

Then, on Monday, June 16, 2003, in accordance with God's Will, the Rev. Dr. T.J. Baltimore Sr. was called from a life of labor to one of reward. He leaves to cherish, celebrate, and continue his legacy, his children, Thomas Jeremiah Jr., Kerry Rondell, Aaron, Tia, and Jason; mother, Virginia; brothers, James Phillip Jr., Calvin, Joseph, and Sampson; sister, Carolyn; grandchildren, Andrew, Thomas III, Melissa, Benjamin, and Hannah; a host of relatives and friends, and The People's Community Baptist Church Family. "TJ" was preceded in death to this earthly life by his father, The Rev. James Phillip Baltimore Sr.; sister, Barbara Ann; and wife, Geraldine.