

LEADERSHIP MESSAGE



Two years after Hurricane Katrina, New Orleans remains a city mired in the complexities of recovery, bureaucracy, cultural dysfunction, and crime. At the same time, it is a city filled with hope, bravery, determination, and gumption. It is our privilege to call this great city our home and to play a small role in its rebirth.

Our Mission keeps us here. On this website, we think you will see that we live and breathe this Mission and that it touches everything we do. In education, we are excited about the potential for a new approach to teaching children through public charter schools. We believe that children should be equipped with a basic education in reading, writing, math, and science and that they should develop the character and relational skills necessary to be successful, contributing members of society. In this regard, we are well underway with a strategy to: (1) open more public charter schools in the area, (2) help overcome operational challenges faced by public charter schools, (3) improve the quality of instruction, and (4) encourage charter-friendly public policies. Baptist Community Ministries (BCM) has committed more than \$4 million to our public charter school support initiative over three years as evidence of our opinion that this is a golden opportunity to permanently improve the opportunities for children in the region for many years to come.

In health, we are pushing hard for more neighborhood clinics and stronger for a safety-net health care system that will serve as the training ground for future generations of physicians and nurses. A healthy community should provide an environment that creates a state of positive physical, mental, spiritual, and social well-being. In this regard, we are identifying the type and number of physicians that should be recruited to live and work in New Orleans as the region is reeling from the loss of hundreds of doctors following Hurricane Katrina.

Our public safety systems are equally troubled with major challenges in the judicial, policing, and prosecutorial functions. We believe that people living here should feel secure and free from threat and that both the strongest and the most vulnerable citizens should be equally protected. BCM has thus supported important external evaluations of these functions and provided specialized external consultation as partial guidance to our community and leadership.

As we near the start of the third year following Hurricane Katrina, it is clear to us that the faith community from around the United States has played a remarkably important role in our rebirth. So, we look forward to the future with optimism that through faith, all things are possible.

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