



SELMA UNIVERSITY

The Chronicle




November 2017

1501 Boynton Street, Selma, AL 36701

Fall/Winter

Initiation to Graduation



**Selma University freshman, Deavin For-
man (left), talks with his mentor, Rev.
Bailey Dawson, during their first men-
tor—mentee weekly chat. They are par-
ticipants in the Initiation to Graduation
mentoring program.**

The Selma University Chronicle

Our mission is to prepare men and women to be servant leaders throughout the world. As a Christian College, Selma University seeks to stimulate students spiritually, intellectually and socially and to produce graduates who lead in the profession for which they were trained.



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FROM THE DESK OF THE PRESIDENT.....

The Hallow Grounds of Selma University

I have been on the grounds of Selma University for many years. As a student in the Dallas County School System, I was brought to the campus to use the Chapel on many occasions. When I graduated High School, my mother brought me to the school to enroll as a student. After graduating from Selma University with an Associate degree, I served in the United States Army, where I was called into the ministry. When I completed my tour of duty and was honorably discharged, I returned to Selma University as a student in the Division of Religion and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts. From there I went on to graduate and postgraduate school, then returned to Selma University as a teacher and later served as the Chair of the Division of Religion. Eventually, I became President of the University.

I know that there is something sacred about the grounds of Selma University. God's hands have been upon this institution from her conception up until now. Selma University has seen many dark days, but God has allowed her to remain open.

Many noted preachers have been trained here and they have told their stories for years. The Reverend Charles A. Tunstall often would speak of how poor he was when he came to Selma University and how the school helped him to become what he became in life.

The Reverend Charles A. Lett often told the story of how he left Baldwin County and came to the school to receive Theological training. Reverend Lett went on to hold many positions in the Alabama State Missionary Baptist Convention and pastored the historic Green Street Baptist Church of Selma.

The Reverend Nelson Smith of Birmingham, Alabama went on to become President of the National Baptist Convention and the only college degree that he ever earned came from Selma University.

The late Reverend Bobby Ellis was a proud graduate and great supporter of Selma University. Selma University was his heart. The Reverend Collins Pettway, Sr., a close friend of Reverend Ellis, over the years has shown his love for the school.

There is something about these hallow grounds that finds its way to the heart and souls of people that make them look back and remember how they got over. It is my prayer that Selma University will keep touching the lives of people for many years. May the great seal of Selma University, "Let Light Be", stand forever.



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Educational Accomplishments

Bachelor of Arts, Selma University;

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Completed the Basic and Advanced Army Chaplain courses and the Army Command and General Staff College.





Mentoring Mix & Match

Dr. Stanford E. Angion
Vice President for Academic Affairs



This fall, for the first time in recent memory, approximately 30 freshmen introduced themselves to mentors from the faculty, staff, alumni, and friends of the University. With food and a relaxed setting, the students eagerly embraced the opportunity and freely shared about themselves as they roamed from table to table meeting, chatting, and learning about mentors.

After meeting and sharing with mentors, students were encouraged by a motivational address from Reverend Stevenson Tullis, Director of Extensions and Director of Christian Services. Following the address students listed on a private ballot their top three choices for a mentor. The ballots were collected and matches were made by Freshman Experience instructors.

Two weeks after the mixer mentors and mentees met again. This time it was for mentor-mentee matching. The event was filled with anticipation and excitement. After taking pictures, the mentor and mentee matches were announced. The remainder of the evening was spent with mentors and mentees meeting, chatting, and planning for weekly meetings. As exuberant and exciting as the first meeting, both mentors and mentees gave rave reviews of the meeting. Also, they pledged to make weekly contact with one another for the remainder of the semester. The main purpose of the program is to form a positive relationship that provides participating freshman with a role model who will help them to stay focused on their academic pursuits, graduate and become successful servant leaders.





From the Desk of ...

Reverend Frankie Hutchins
Vice President for Student Affairs



Have you ever wondered what was going on in the mind of the person who thought of the logo and symbol for Selma University?

I would like to think that he or she could see the future of the great spirit-filled hallowed grounds of a University that could be a great asset to this community. I believe that he or she could see the ropes wrapped around the circle of unity among the president, faculty, and students. The stars within the circle stand as a beacon of light that would brighten the hearts of students as heaven shines upon this University forever.

Students of Selma University will encounter the best four years of a home away from home. Students in the Student Government Association, men's and women's basketball, baseball and choir work hard in their disciplines to represent our University. There are also students who achieve well in academics.

We work hard to help each student achieve his/her goals in obtaining a degree. Leaders here at Selma University try hard to give each student godly guidance and lead them first to Jesus, because when they have Jesus, everything else will be added unto them. If you are not a student and wish to fulfill your dreams, Selma University is only a short distance away. Come and join the body of believers in Christ. Hope to see you in the spring. May God's blessings and favor be with you always.

Fall 2017 Candle Lighting Ceremony Kicks Off the New Academic Year

The candle lighting ceremony took place the night before fall semester classes started to mark the beginning of the academic year. Faculty, staff, and students were asked to wear black and white for uniformity. The event was held about 8 p.m., after dark. The evening provided a context for the intellectual challenges that students would face over the course of the academic year.

The freshman class and transfer students were seated together in a designated area.



After brief words of encouragement, the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Vice President for Student Affairs lighted these candles from a flame—representing the “Light of Knowledge.” The Vice President for Academic Affairs shared his light with the division chairpersons and the chairpersons passed it on to the students. The Vice President for Student Affairs passed her light to staff and visitors. The light passed to all faculty, staff, students, and visitors forming a semi circle, which illuminated the gymnasium. The group sang “This Little Light of Mind,” and the candle lighting ceremony closed with prayer.

Academic Scholarship Campaign Pays Off

Contributions to Selma University's 2016-2017 Academic Scholarship Campaign provided funds for the University to award some of its high academic achieving freshmen with academic scholarships. The purpose of the academic scholarship program is to increase the caliber and number of students who enroll at Selma University and to increase student retention and graduation rates among enrolled students. **See directions below to contribute to the 2017-2018 scholarship drive.**



Deavin Foreman
Lanett, AL
Major: Business



Te'Aira Wilson
Green County, AL
Major: Physical Education



Taurian Scott
Barbour County, AL
Major: Business Administration



Mason Kilgore
Houma, LA
Physical Education



Tyeisha Davis
Monroeville, AL
Major: General Studies



Jeremy Moore
Montgomery, AL
Major: Business Administration



Raven Vanable
Eutaw, AL (Green County)
Major: General Studies

Academic Scholarship Campaign Contribution

Donors who contribute at least \$25 to the Academic Scholarship Capital Campaign will be listed in our next issue of the Selma University Chronicle. Make checks payable to Selma University, for Academic Scholarship Capital Campaign. Send to:
**The Office of Academic Affairs, Selma University, 1501 Boynton Ave.
Selma, AL 36701**

Donor Leagues:

Patron	\$25—\$99	Premier	\$200-\$499	Paramount	\$1000-
Patriot	\$100-\$199	Preferred	\$500-\$999		

All donations will be processed through the University Business Office and donors will be issued a receipt for their contributions.

Recruiting another Generation of Servant Leaders

S.L. Jones Christian Academy in Pensacola, Florida is teaming up with Selma University to offer its students an opportunity to continue their path to success in a Christian environment at the collegiate level. Chief Administrator, Moderator Willie Demps, is excited about the opportunity to send his high school graduates to an institution of higher learning, where Christianity is embraced and promoted. Below, Moderator Demps, his wife, several of his seniors, and two Selma University students pose for a photo opportunity during a recruitment trip.



Selma University students, Darryl Saulsberry, Jr. and Arlente Coleman, poses with students from S.L. Jones Christian Academy, Pensacola, FL, during a recruiting trip.

(Right), Selma University's Teeshunda Morgan helps SU recruit during a career fair at her alma mater, Prattville High School. The career fair was held September 18, 2017.



Student Life

A Message from the Student Government Association President

JaKendrick Davis, President

Davis is a junior majoring in General Studies with a Business Administration Concentration



THE CAHABA TRAILER PARK WATER DRIVE

Selma University's Student Government Association (SGA) organized an on campus water drive and successfully delivered over eighty cases of water to needy families of the Cahaba Trailer Park in Selma. Originally the water drive was organized to help the victims of Hurricane Harvey; however, after receiving information about people living without water in the trailer park, SGA leaders decided to shift the water drive to assist local residents.

SGA members delivered thirty cases of water on September 28, 2017, followed by another shipment of fifty cases of water on October 5, 2017. The SGA President extended his heartfelt thanks to all of the participants and donors of the Cahaba Trailer Park Water Drive. He added that the SGA will continue to perform Christian service work.



Christian Service on the Road

Selma University's choir, under the direction of Ms. Marie Clark, joined SU's Director of Christian Services, Rev. Stevenson Tullis, in planning a gospel concert for residents of the Warren Manor nursing home, Thursday, November 1, 2017. The choir sang numerous selections as members of the nursing home sang along to their old-time gospel favorites. Residents clapped, nodded, patted feet, and sang jubilantly with smiles. After a few combined selections, choir members and other visiting Selma University students, faculty, and staff personally greeted each nursing home participant with departing handshakes.



...Can These Bones Live? Ezekiel 37:3

Elder Edward T. Hayes, Doctor of Ministry
*Morehouse School of Religion-2014,
Assistant Professor of Religion, Selma University*



One of the more profound questions of this age is the question of life and death. The question in this age has tilted more toward death rather than life. It does not matter in what country, state, province, or town one lives, death seems more conversational than ever. It is not simply the physical death of an individual, but also the death of nations, societies, marriages, institutions, etc. and even morals. This age needs a prophetic voice that is able to commune with God, be honest with God, get out of God's way, and witness to God's awesome power.

Ezekiel the prophet faced an untenable situation. Actually, the prophet may have probably doubted the power of God while in his present state, which was no more than an occupant of a Babylonian concentration camp. Ezekiel tells the reader in 1:1 (KJV) that "I was among the captives by the river of Chebar..." Those same captives had been deported from Judah by the Babylonian army and resettled in the captor's land. All freedom of movement was now directed by those who gave oversight to the political prisoners. For Ezekiel and the other captives, there was no way out. Their dependence was totally upon YHWH, Israel's God.

It is amazing how this text teaches those who live in the twenty-first century about total dependence upon God. Even when we are in captive conditions God is there with us. Because God is always with us, communing with God ought to be easy. Even the Christian church has shown signs of opting out of communion with God and replaced it with Gestalt psychology, which substitutes group displays of ecstasy for godly worship.

True worship involves ones surrender to God. Moses was required to take off his shoes when in the presence of God (Exodus 3:4-5 KJV). When we commune with God—wherever we are—we must remember anywhere God is revealed is Holy ground. That was Ezekiel's experience. Although in a Babylonian concentration camp, God revealed God's self to the prophet chosen by God to give Judah a message of hope. The message was God can bring life out of death.

How can God bring life out of death? Ezekiel must have pondered the question of YHWH. "Son of man, can these bones live?" The dead situation before Ezekiel is really similar to what the modern-day prophet witness. Ezekiel saw a valley full of dry bones. Today's prophet sees the decay of a once powerful nation being eroded from within by the greed of men and women. Then there are those who hide behind corporate structures and others who blatantly flaunt their disregard of the humanity of their brothers and sisters through the practice of hegemony.

This disregard for the humanity of others has shown itself more recently in the disrespect for the governmental bodies that make up the United States of America. She has an Executive Branch that has shown total disrespect for the separation of powers, a Congressional Branch that for eight years

showed disrespect for the Commander in Chief simply because the President did not meet their distorted criteria for leadership. In an effort to destroy the individual holding America's highest office they inadvertently destroyed the office of President. Their actions led to an Executive Branch with no more life than the valley of dry bones.

The dry bone syndrome has even expressed itself in the Judicial Branch. It was to be staffed by persons who would put personal agendas aside in order to justly interpret the laws that govern the nation. The court that once called out injustices is now re-establishing a system of injustice that the nation had rejected over sixty-three years ago. When do men and women recognize their complicity in the death of a nation?

The question of "can these bones live" can only be answered honestly by saying as Ezekiel said 'O Lord God, thou knowest.' The prophet must be honest with God. There are too many persons peddling a quick fix to the situation of death that is prevalent all around us. On every continent, except Antarctica, there are terrorist acts, wars, devastating fires, storms, earthquakes, and excessive acts of murder. What can bring life out of these dead situations? Ezekiel 37 says that it is God who does the work. The prophet's job was simply to speak the prophetic word. That word was 'hear the word of the LORD.'

When the prophet obeyed YHWH did what only God can do. YHWH brought the bones together, put flesh upon them, restored their health, and put breath into them. This was done without the prophet doing anything but speaking the words that YHWH gave to him. America can live, nations of the earth can live, marriages can revive, and drug addiction can be reversed when the prophetic word is spoken by 21st-century prophets. It is YHWH which brings life out of death. Our job is to get out of God's way and do what God has commanded—prophesy.

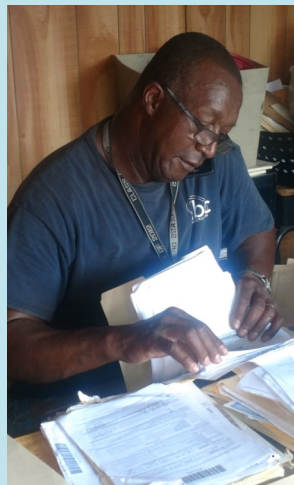
The situation that we find ourselves in today can be reversed by God. The text says the prophet from Judah is told by YHWH that the bones represent the whole house of Israel. Their brothers and sisters who were scattered throughout the earth will be brought back to life. That is, the whole house will live. That is good news for Israel and for the Christian church that awaits this miraculous rebirth. It will be a time of rejoicing—not only for Israel but for all who love God's appearing.

God's appearance will culminate in the revival of all that is life. Ezekiel was given this prophetic message prior to receiving news that Jerusalem had fallen 33:21-22 (KJV). God has always given revelation to those whom commune with God, follow God's command, get out of God's way, and are ready to witness the prophetic word of God. My encouragement to America and all Christians worldwide is that these bones can live.

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and
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University.**



Fiat Lux Part Three: Revolt - 1953 to 1964

Dr. John Henry Williams, Jr.

Pastor, Greater First Baptist Cantonment; Associate Professor of Religion, Selma University; Doctor of Ministry, Beeson Divinity School, Birmingham, Alabama



In Fiat Lux Part One, “Formation and Reformation” I wanted to point out the legitimacy of the Black Church as an authentic ecclesial representative of the “Blessed Community.” The Black Church has long been maligned for her theology, her preaching, and her practice of the Gospel. Those who criticized her perverted the Gospel, would not allow her to enjoy America’s promises, enslaved her children and her children’s children to rob them of the blood, sweat, and tears of their labor. But the Black Church’s unique and appropriate interpretation of God’s actions in history has led millions to a liberating re-affirmation of both the power of the Gospel and the promise of America.

In Fiat Lux Part Two, “Wilderness” I wanted to point out the legacy of the Black Church in America as a racial lifeboat in America. After the bold post-Civil War extension of the American dream to the dispossessed African American children of America had been cruel, fraudulently and bloodily snatched away during the revocation of Reconstruction (1866—1896), the Black Church became the spiritual rock which sheltered the shattered hopes of these beleaguered American citizens. During this “Nadir” the Black Church resisted the violent rollback of civil rights and freedoms and preached provocatively the twin Gospels of Jesus Christ and the American dream—both of which had been again perverted and deferred by the political correctness of white supremacy.

Now, in Fiat Lux Part Three, “Revolt” I wish to remark with almost criminal brevity upon the legend of a revolt within the National Baptist Convention between 1955 and 1961 that led to first, a division among black Baptists themselves over how to address the challenges of the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s and second, a 21st Century decline in the Convention’s influence in a black religious community which was increasingly alienated from its own Convention. J.H. Jackson cast out Martin Luther King, Jr. and a number of Convention pastors who favored the use of Convention resources and influence more aggressively on behalf of direct action civil rights tactics.¹ Meanwhile, Governor George Wallace, in a throwback to his more progressive pre- “segregation forever” concerns about providing better educational opportunities for all Alabamians, sought to strengthen the two-year college system in Alabama. These two events caught Selma University in the middle of both a racial and educational revolution.

Selma University was birthed in a black community which was familial, legally, politically, socially, educationally and economically fervent and fertile after the Civil War. This view goes against the stereotypical view of a black community morally, educationally, socially and spiritually bankrupted by slavery (1866—1896). Selma University then played her part to provide a spiritual, educational and cultural refuge to a black community under murderous siege during the Nadir (1896—1953). In this article, “Revolt” Selma University begins to wrestle with the challenge of being a viable Baptist institution into the 21st Century.

J.H. Jackson was elected president of the National Baptist Convention in 1953. By 1964, “Jack” had cemented his position as president. It had taken him several years to defeat forces within the Convention which sought a more direct and aggressive convention role in the street revolution being led in part by many sons and daughters of the Convention including Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. That street revolution

was a grassroots movement, led by unsung heroes and heroes who had decided that the conventional, denominational Black Baptist Church had best “lead, follow, or get the hell out of the way.” Selma University was caught between loyalty to the Convention and the need to participate on the right side of history. At the 1964 Founders’ Day Meeting of Selma University, the Chairman of Trustees presented a pamphlet which could have been entitled, “Selma University at the Crossroads.” The pamphlet showed a drawing of the University campus under two threatening “clouds.” Cloud One: “Legislation Regarding the Operation of Junior Colleges in the State of Alabama.” Cloud Two: “Integration.” Both Governor George Wallace who was proposing a legislative program unifying standards of operation for all two-year colleges in Alabama and Dr. Martin Luther King, who was, in collusion with local Lowndes, Dallas and Marion County, Alabama rebels, contemplating the possibility of Selma, Alabama becoming a focal point for street demonstrations in an effort which would culminate the Federal Civil Rights legislation for voting, education and civic freedoms for blacks were viewed as equal and opposite threats to the survival of Selma University.³

To the trustee board’s consternation, some Selma University students had gotten involved in what the trustee chairman insisted was “a local disturbance.” God forbid! Participation in the said local disturbance was viewed by Selma University’s administration as strictly verboten. The chairman urgently informed the meeting that the rebellious students had been sent home and that the University was going to focus strictly on educational goals. The chairman reminded the assembly that the school was in enough trouble attempting to adhere to Governor Wallace’s legislative requirements that all two-year colleges conform to standards of operation. This requirement to upgrade facilities and standards was a threat to the financial stability of the University. How ironic it is that Governor Wallace’s and Dr. King’s actions were seen as threats to the University’s existence. But Alabama had been historically hostile to the existence of any post-secondary black education in the state. And J.H. Jackson was unforgivingly hostile towards any of his pastors, churches or Convention institutions that leaned toward support of Martin Luther King, Jr. Selma University students who participated in local civil rights activities did so at their own risk. Even today, government requirements regarding standards for education and the revolt against J.H. Jackson in 1961 are continuing to press and challenge the University.

Herein lie the seeds of Selma University’s threefold challenge as the 21st Century begins to unfold. First, Selma University must work to counteract the impact of the explosive growth of non-denominational mega-churches which began in the 1970s. These mega-churches are sometimes empowered by a spurious materialistic Gospel. But more often they have stepped in to fill the widening gap between the National Baptist Convention and the legitimate needs of the community the Convention should be serving. Second, to make sure that as an educational institution the University meets educational standards and requirements including updating methodology and technology in order to better serve the needs of Christian workers and to ensure continuing accreditation. Third, that the local Black Missionary Baptist Church renew her stewardship commitment in order to keep alive the spirit of the slave saints who founded the school, to justify the blood of their children who died during the Nadir and to nurture the hopes of Generations X, Y, and Z.

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The Miraculous Power of God

Shirley A. Crum

*Instructor of English at Selma University; Bachelor of Science, Knoxville College;
Master of Education, Alabama State University; and Master of Arts in Bible and
Christian Education, Selma University*



I Kings 17:1-16; Mark 9:14-29

God speaks to us as to his will for our lives. He spoke to men of times past through apostles and the prophets. He speaks to us today through pastors, evangelists, and ministers of the gospel. He can even get our attention through visions, intuitions, or miraculous events occurring in our lives. We only have to open our ears and listen to what the Spirit says to us. Scripture states my sheep will hear my voice. God spoke to Moses by way of a burning bush. What would we do if God spoke to us in such a way? Would we dismiss it as some miraculous feat or individual invention? Once while walking in a store, I heard a voice. I was astounded as there was nobody around. After inquisitively and meticulously listening, I discovered it was a talking doll. My fear was relieved, and I began to focus on what the doll was saying. This is what we should do today when we have moments of intuition, visions, or while reading or hearing the preached word. God has a special way of reaching all of us and getting our attention.

God can use signs and wonders to alert us as to his power. The rainbow is a sign that never again will he send a flood to destroy mankind, but it will be fire next time. Israel was told to gather twelve stones to commemorate their passing over the Jordan river. Throughout the ages, man has been looking for a sign. Jesus' ministry on earth included many signs, wonders or miracles to prove he was the only true and living God. The story of Elijah and the prophets of Baal proved that God was the true God (I Kings 18:38). God told Moses to strike a rock and water came forth (Exodus 17:6). He gave David power to kill the giant Goliath with a bow and arrow. Israelite leaders and Kings inquired of God, and he gave them the power to defeat nations.

John 1 states: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." God is the beginning and the ending. When God speaks, things happen—Tyrants and kings submit, people are transformed. The earth trembles, rocks cry out, stars fall, and the moon can refuse to shine.

Today we are witnessing disastrous floods and fires. We witness an eclipse and falling stars. These are signs to let us know that the end will come and to watch, pray, and obey his commandments. God has all power. He spoke, and the universe and all its living creatures, including man, were created. He buildeth all things (Hebrews 3:4). He laid the foundation of earth and heaven. They shall wax old and be changed, but God is everlasting, eternal (Genesis 1; Hebrews 1: 10-12). Jeremiah 10:12 states: "He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by his discretion. "Above all, God has the power to forgive sins (Mark 2:10). "Every knee shall bow, and every tongue confesses that he is God," (Romans 14:11).

What a mighty God we serve. We should trust and obey him. All have sinned but were saved through the blood of Jesus. Believe God and it will be counted as righteousness to thee (Romans 5:12; 9-10; 4:3). God put his word in Jeremiah's mouth to warn the people of Judah of their wickedness (Jeremiah 1:6-9). He sent the priest and prophet, Ezekiel, to let them know that God has hope for them (Ezekiel). As we look at the world today, we see wickedness everywhere. We see signs showing displeasure of God with us. We see many people ministering and speaking of God's wrath and that we should repent and be truly saved in word and deed. God will return one day for the saved. His word never faileth. Just as he spoke in the Garden to Adam and Eve that they would surely die and sin imputed to all mankind, so it is true that he will come again.

There are many false prophets who lead the sheep astray, but God will send shepherds who will feed them (Jeremiah 23:1-4; 10-21). Any church that doesn't believe in Jesus is a false prophet (Colossians 1:25). Timothy states he was called for God's purpose and grace (Timothy 1: 1-2). Paul states he was made a minister to fulfill the Word of God. He preached not for a gift (money), but his desire for saving souls (fruit). God will fulfill his every need (Philippians 4:17,19; Psalms 111:5). Thank God without ceasing as you receive the word of God. As it is not the word of men, but he was speaking that which came from God (I Thessalonians 2:13). "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!" (Isaiah 5:20). Do not pervert God's Word.

Finally, draw close to God to hear his voice. Read and meditate on scripture for understanding and wisdom to avoid the pitfalls of listening to false prophets. Assemble together for spiritual growth and unity (Hebrews 10:25). In the past, God conveyed his message through apostles, prophets, miracles, and visions. He's still speaking to us through visions, miracles, and those preaching the gospel. Moreover, we as a literate people have the Bible to read scripture and seek understanding through prayer to guide us. Listen when God speaks.

Plum Grove Baptist Church

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Rev. Tyshawn Gardner, Pastor

Service Times

Sunday School- 9AM

Worship service- 10AM

Wednesday Bible Study- 6:30 PM

**PLUM
GROVE**

The Irrelevant Truth

Matthew 26:52-54, Revised Standard Version

Dr. Stanford E. Angion

Vice President for Academic Affairs at Selma University, Pastor of Mt. Gilead Missionary Baptist Church, Coy, AL; President of MGS&A Institute, Coy, AL; former Army Major; Doctor of Education, Alabama State University



What happens in a society when the truth is not needed or wanted in order to decide how we relate to one another, think about an issue, or determine how to handle conflicts? What value or good is the truth? Is it possible for truth to be a dominant virtue in the lives of Christian people, yet so elusive that few seem to really know it or apply it indiscriminately as a guide to resolving conflicts or determining the outcome of a situation? Over the past fifty (50) years, especially with the use of DNA, audio and video technology, and now social media, many hidden truths have been uncovered publicly. And while much of this truth has been the saving grace for some, who had been falsely accused, wrongly charged, and even sentenced to death; yet, in some cases, where the “naked truth” plainly revealed new evidence that should have affected the outcome of a situation, nothing changed—the truth was irrelevant. So it was with the trial and conviction of Jesus, the truth was not sought for determining guilt or innocence—it was irrelevant. Our text provides the circumstances, situations, and conditions to consider the relevance of truth in the highest profile case in Biblical history, the arrest and trial of Jesus Christ, the founder of Christianity and the Church. For brevity’s sake, I’ll introduce three arguments to suggest that the truth was irrelevant in Jesus’ trial, conviction, and sentence.

First of all, the verdict and punishment had already been determined before the trial began. There is ample and credible evidence to prove collusion and conspiracy among the judge, jury, and witnesses, who had found Jesus guilty and determined His punishment even before that trial started. Presiding over the trial was Joseph Caiaphas, the high priest. Caiaphas was a distinctive name added to his proper name, Joseph. He was the highest ranking religious leader among the Jewish religious leaders. Caiaphas was in charge of the temple, worship, and headed the Council. The Council, or Sanhedrin as described in Nelson’s Bible Dictionary, was the highest ruling body and court of justice among the Jewish people during the time of Jesus. The Sanhedrin was granted limited authority over certain religious, civil, and criminal matters by the foreign nations that dominated the land of Israel at various times in its history. Sanhedrin came to include both Sadducees-or “chief priests” and “elders”-and Pharisees or scribes. The scripture clearly reveals that well before Jesus’s trial, the Chief Priest and Council plotted to kill Jesus in order to stop His ministry and preserve their own power.

Then the chief priests and the Pharisees called a meeting of the Sanhedrin. What are we accomplishing? they asked. Here is this man [Jesus] performing many signs. If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and then the Romans will come and take away both our temple and our nation. Then one of them, named Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, spoke up, You know nothing at all! You do not realize that it is better for you that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish. He did not say this on his own, but as high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the Jewish nation, and not only for that nation but also for the scattered children of God, to bring them together and make them one. So from that day on they plotted to take his life.

John 11:47-53

Consequently, the text above reveals that the verdict had already been reached and the punishment decided well before the trial ever began. So what was the purpose of the trial? Simply put, it was to provide the perpetrators legal authority to commit murder. Doing it this way allowed them the opportunity to eliminate the threat Jesus posed to their authority while preserving their status and power as dignified religious leaders among the Jewish people. In this case, the truth only mattered as it supported their desired outcome.

Secondly, we can presume that the truth was irrelevant because the council sought false witnesses. Not only did they collude among one another, but council members actively looked for other people who would give false witness (testimony) that validated their accusations, they sought false witnesses.

Consequently, we must ask, what is a false witness? The term is self-contradicting, paradoxical, and perhaps even antithetical to the purpose of gathering witnesses. Witnesses are expected to be credible, trustworthy, and reliable sources for helping the courts develop a truthful picture of the situation and facts at issue. They are testimonies to the truth. In the *Glory of Preaching*, Darrell Johnson quotes Thomas Long's discourse about the significance of the witness.

The court has access to the truth only through the witness. It seeks the truth, but it must look for it in the testimony of the witness. The very life of the witness, then, is bound up into the testimony. The witness cannot claim to be removed, objectively pointing to the evidence. What the witness believes to be true is part of the evidence.

So, we know that the truth was irrelevant in Jesus's trial because the judge and jury, members of the Sanhedrin Council, sought false witness and used their testimony to convict Jesus.

Thirdly, we know that the truth was irrelevant because none of Jesus's witnesses was called to testify. Although the High Priest asked Jesus to respond to the charges against Him, the Council casted aside the truth as a lie. Jesus knew that his testimony would not be accepted. In John 5:30, He said: "If I bear witness of myself, ye will say my witness is not true." Then he goes on to name his witnesses: John the Baptist, His Works, His Father (God), and the Scriptures.

John the Baptist. You have sent to John and he has testified to the truth. Not that I accept human testimony; but I mention it that you may be saved. John was a lamp that burned and gave light, and you chose for a time to enjoy his light.

John 5:33-35 (NIV)

Works. I have testimony weightier than that of John. For the works that the Father has given me to finish—the very works that I am doing—testify that the Father has sent me.

John 5:36

The Father. And the Father who sent me has himself testified concerning me. You have never heard his voice nor seen his form, nor does his word dwell in you, for you do not believe the one he sent.

John 5:37-38

The Scriptures. You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life.

John 5:39-40

Therefore we know that the truth was irrelevant because none of Jesus's witnesses were called to testify, and that which the Council members knew to be true of His witnesses was not permitted to change their predetermined purpose—to kill Jesus.

“A prostitution of justice,” is what Adam Clark called the process used by the High Priest and Sanhedrin Council to try Jesus. “They first resolved to ruin him, and then seek the proper means of effecting it.” If Thomas Long’s idea that a witness’s testimony is essential for determining truth, then we must conclude that the council failed to hear and consider four key witnesses: John The Baptist, Jesus’s works, God the Father, and the Holy Scriptures. Consequently, the Jewish religious leaders allowed their political and personal goals to determine what was true based on what was relevant to achieving their purpose. Hence the truth was irrelevant. According to Sarah McLean, “Truth is irrelevant. What is relevant is whether or not they (people) believe it.” Believers are to embrace the word of God and allow it’s relevancy to make them free as it is God’s Will. “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

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CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Created & Submitted by Marion Harris



Theme: PRAYER

[Administrative Assistant to the Director of Allied Healthcare & Faculty at Selma University; Associate of Arts, Alabama Lutheran Junior College; Bachelor of Science, Alabama A&M University; Master of Arts in Bible and Christian Education, Selma University.]

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See page 22 for the scriptures to fill the blanks in this puzzle.

Faith and Scholarship: A Powerful Merger

By Rev. Tyshawn Gardner, MDiv

Associate Professor of Religion, Selma University; Pastor, Plum Grove Baptist Church; President SCLC, Tuscaloosa Chapter; Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, Stillman College; Master of Divinity, Beeson Divinity School; PhD student at Southern Baptist Seminary.



With Power and Persuasion: The Beauty of the Black Preaching Tradition

Of the many and myriad models of the preacher's sermon, every sermon has one ultimate goal: to be delivered with both power and persuasion. When preaching is at its best, that is, when lives are transformed to the image of Christ, preaching contains both power and persuasion. Like an alchemist whose aim is to manufacture and hone the perfect metal; the homiletician works in order to find the right components to produce sermons that contain power and persuasion. A sermon that contains fervor and emotion may stir the hearer's heart, but may not persuade. Sermons that are apologetically appealing and which produce a rational argument, crafted in logical language, and is symmetric in form, may stimulate the mind but may fail to warm hearts and move the hearer to embrace that which is mysterious, unexplainable, and illogical.

To preach with power and persuasion is to have an impact on the cardiological and the craniological; the head and the heart; the mind and the innermost being. Holistic preaching involves both power and persuasion. Preaching with power and persuasion provides both heat and light. To persuade is powerful, and one must be powerful to persuade. Power and persuasion should be inseparable realities of every Christian sermon preached in the context of Christian worship. Black preaching is the ultimate reflection of preaching with power and persuasion.

Preaching in the African American church has always been the centerpiece of the worship service. Preaching in the black church, by black pastors and preachers has taken a variety of forms, including narrative, textual, topical, and doctrinal. Though not always referred to as expository preaching, exposing the text has been the hallmark of that preaching. Preaching in the African American pulpit has appealed to the heart as well as the mind, though some have been guilty of referring to black preachers as "unlearned pulpiteers." The unique celebratory expressions inherent in African American preaching, coupled with the call and response tradition, has often been misinterpreted by some to be overly emotional, irrational, manipulative, and not appealing to the cerebral. As in any preaching tradition, there are many flaws in African American preaching, however, the rich history of the Black Church can be credited to the preaching of the Word of God with power and persuasion. The preaching that comes from the pulpits of African American churches have transformed hearts, made disciples, and have spread the justice and shalom of God throughout the United States in times of social upheaval.

African American preachers use a variety of rhetorical devices to stimulate the intellect and emotions of the listener for the purpose of persuasion. Noted for his creative use of language, artistic expressions in story-telling, and emotional exuberance in delivery, the African American preacher has been accused of manipulation in many contexts. The mechanisms of motives employed to manipulate or to persuade are so closely similar, that the verdict can only be rendered as the hearer produces fruit by obeying the Word that is preached. Rhetoric is vital to preaching. Rhetoric is one means the preacher can use wisely and godly to persuade the unconverted and converted alike of the ways of God.

The preacher is often most effective in the black church when his message stimulates the brain and stirs the heart, James Harris writes, “the ability to excite the emotions with the eloquence of the spoken word remains a characteristic of the preacher who ministers to the masses of black folk. Church folk want to ‘feel something’ when the preacher preaches.”

As stated above, the appeal to the emotions is often misunderstood as manipulation. Indeed, emotionalism is manipulation and is often an unfortunate reality in too many pulpits, however, “emotion and motivation must be clearly distinguished from emotionalism, an exploitation of emotion but not its exposition.” In the African American context, the congregation has the very rare distinction of being a highly cerebral and a highly emotional body of believers. Having stated this, it must be remembered, first, that historical black preaching in no way eschews the rational.” The emotional rhetoric of the preacher and the emotional response (pathos) in the pews are affirmations of the mind-stimulating and heart-stirring truth of the Word of God.

Expository preaching grants the preacher the greatest possibility and promises to preach with power and persuasion. The ramifications for expository preaching is healthy churches. Healthy churches offer the African American community the only resource for spiritual and social healing from sin and social injustice. The African American preacher, mostly labeled a narrative preacher, has more accurately been engaged in narrative exposition. I propose a narrative expository model of preaching because this model is best acceptable to a people that are acclimated to a narrative, story-telling tradition, and who also have been accustomed to responding to strong Bible preaching. There is no monolithic African American community or church. However, where ever preaching is performed, it should be performed in power and persuasion. Such preaching produces disciples of Christ for God’s glory; while they engage in ministry and service that will create an alternative community on earth, where human flourishing takes place instead of poverty, crime, racism, and division. While modes and methods of preaching may vary, may all preaching be done with power and persuasion for the glory of God.

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Answers to puzzle from page 19.

(All scriptures are taken from the King James Version of the Holy Bible.)

Psalm 28:1 – *Unto thee I will cry, O Lord my _____.*
(#1 Down)

Psalm 30:5b – _____ *may endure for a night, but _____ comes in the morning.*
(#2 Across) (#3 Across)

Psalm 27:1 – *The Lord is my _____ and my _____; whom shall I fear?*
(#4 Down) (#5 Across)

Psalm 25:4 – *Shew me thy _____, O Lord; Teach me thy _____.*
(#6 Across) (#7 Across)

Psalm 27:10 – *When my _____ and my _____ forsake me,*
(#8 Down) (#9 Down)

then the _____ will take me up.
(#10 Across)

Psalm 139:23 - _____ *me, O God, and know my _____; Try me, and know my .*
(#5 Down) (#11 Across)

(#12 Down)

Psalm 140:4 - _____ *me, O Lord, from the hands of the wicked; _____ me from the*
(#13 Across) (#14 Down)
violent man.

Psalm 141:4 – *Incline not my _____ to any _____ thing, to practice wicked _____*
(#15 Across) (#16 Down) (#17 Down)
with men that work _____; and let me not eat of their dainties.
(#18 Down)

Psalm 142:7 – *Bring my _____ out of _____, that I may _____*
(#19 Across) (#20 Across) (#21 Down)
thy _____;
(#22 Down)

Psalm 139:24 – *And see if there be any wicked _____ in me, and lead me in the way*
(#23 Across)

(#24 Across)

Meet Our Athletes



Women's Basketball

Top, left to right

Coach Erica Heard,
Rebecca Payne, Deja
McGee, Tyeshia Davis,
Alexandria Guice.

Second row

Alondra Gray, Raven Van-
able, Teeshunda Morgan,
Nicole Bailey, Chakira
Davis, and TeAira Wilson.

First row

Tymira Castophney,
Jashima Hill, Keshay
Steele, Tatyana Griffin,
and Yamaya Leonard.

Men's Basketball

Top, left to right

Deaondre Hubbard
Yurman Barnes
Keyshawn Baker
T.J. Igus

Middle

DeQindre Caldwell
Taurian Scott
Anthony Barnett, Jr.

Bottom

Jaquez Fields
Dionne Parks
Jeremy Wooten
Montez Brown
Deavin Foreman
Jimmy Powell (pic. missing)

Head Coach

Raymond Brown

Assistant Coach

Joseph Pettway



Baseball

Top row, left to right

Undray Lawrence,
Caleb Stinchcomb

Second from top

Will Thomas, Ryan McSwain,
Mason Kilgore,
and KD Jones

Third from top

Deontay Robinson, Brandon
Woodland, Brandon
Washington, & Dontae Stiles

Fourth from top

Joe Downer, Jonathan Grim-
mett, Brian Davison, and Dex-
ter Hawkins

Bottom

Asst. Coach Justin Brown
Jeremy Moore, Daryl Watkins,
Ricky Butts, Marcus Hardy,
Trey Clark, and
Coach Adrian Holloway.





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