



SELMA UNIVERSITY

The Chronicle



July 2017

1501 Lapsley Street, Selma, AL 36701

Spring/Summer



Miss Selma
University
2017-2018

Thembi Ochocki



Spring "2017"

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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President's Message

**Dr. Alvin A. Cleveland, Sr.
Selma University President
Professor of Religion**



Let Us Persevere!

Dear Faculty, Staff, Students, Alumni, and Friends of the University:

It is with a spirit of perseverance and hope in the good hand and grace of God that I greet you, as we open our doors for a new school year. This is another opportunity to embrace, teach, and prepare students for lives of responsibility and respectability as servant leaders in our communities and throughout the world.

We stand ready and willing by the grace of God to move forward despite many challenges that we face. In the words of the Apostle Paul, "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body." (2 Corinthians 4:8-10).

So as we persevere through these challenging times, I call for all: faculty, staff, students, alumni, and friends to stand with me in the might of our God who has brought us to this point and will surely lead us on to greater works. I bid each of you Godspeed for a prosperous school year.

Let Light Be,

Alvin A. Cleveland, Sr., D. Min.
President

An Amazing Journey

Miss Selma University

Thembi Ochocki

We never know God's plan. While living in South Africa, John and Kathy Ochocki visited Ethelbert's Children's Home in Durban, Africa. The home cared for children who needed adopting and hosting. About a year later Kathy went back to take a look in the different cottages to find a child but it was difficult to choose one she could bond with. Then one of the social workers said to another, "Well what about Thembi?" For Thembi was a special little girl to everyone in the home. She was eighteen months old and immediately reached out for Kathy to pick her up. Kathy knew Thembi was the child for her and her family. But a long process awaited the Ochocki's if they would be the overseas couple to acquire guardianship and custodial rights of a child from Africa. First, they needed to meet with Thembi's birth mother, Makosi in Umbumbulu, to convince her to sign over custody. Meetings went back and forth, finally Makosi was convinced by her grandmother Emily, Thembi's great grandmother, "go-go" in Zulu, to release custody to the Ochocki's, but more stumbling blocks lay ahead. Thembi was under seven (7) and could not leave the country according South African law. So the Ochocki's had to go before the Supreme Court in Africa and petition to adopt Thembi. They left Thembi in South Africa with a foster family for what was suppose to be two (2) months, but it turned into six (6) months, while documentations and investigations on the Ochocki's were completed. While waiting, the U.S. government shut down temporarily after a federal budget crisis. The Ochockis pleaded with the U.S. Immigration Office to let Thembi leave with them while the process was completed. However, the answer was No. After a successful investigation and all documentation was approved, Thembi and the Ochocki's traveled to Northport, AL to join the other four (4) family members.



Thembi and the Maul's. At the age of nine (9), Thembi went to live at the Methodist Children's home here in Selma, AL. While attending the School of Discovery, she meet Oriel Maul. The two bonded and later she meet the rest of the Maul family. Oriel's parents Marvin and Tammy along with her younger sister Ariel became attached to Thembi and she became their special present from God. Wanting to be a part of this young child's life, Mrs. Maul met with the Executive Director of the home to seek permission to take Thembi on outing's with the family. Soon the Maul family became a family of five (5) instead of four (4). In December 2010, the Methodist Children's Home closed in Selma. The Maul's wanted to keep Thembi, but she was not under State custody at the time and was moved to Florida. Even though she moved to Florida, the Mauls finally obtained full responsibility for Thembi. She was allowed to finish high school in Florida, coming home each weekend. After graduation she moved to live with the Maul's in Selma. She joined Job Corps, where she received a Nursing Assistance Certification. Currently Thembi is a Selma University Senior, majoring in Business. As the 2017-2018 Miss Selma University, her platform is SERVICE. She's a member of the Christian Student Government Association and the Business Club. Thembi and her sisters, Oriel and Ariel, own an online clothing boutique named 3 DUCHESS. Her plan is to one day own several clothing and accessory boutiques.

Initiation to Graduation

Dr. Stanford E. Angion
Vice President for Academic Affairs



In our continuous effort to make Selma University the school of choice for equipping students to become servant leaders who will positively impact their communities, the University is implementing a cohort Initiation to Graduation mentoring program. Incoming 2017 freshmen will comprise the first cohort class to be apart of the Initiation to Graduation mentoring program. The objective of the program is to provide inspiring mentors, a viable path to graduation, academic resources, and on campus connections for every student in order to increase academic achievement and graduation rates. Program activities include the following:

- A Scholastic Rights of Passage program with parents and incoming students
- Freshmen orientation activities
- Welcoming Candle Light Ceremony
- Personality inventory exercise
- Mentoring Mixer
- Frequent connection meetings with mentors
- Opening Convocation
- CAPPS connection visits
- Freshmen Experience course
- Path to graduation plan
- Mid-term academic advisor visits
- Freshmen Achievement Day

Similar mentoring activities for the cohort will continue during student's sophomore, junior, and senior years, culminating with graduation. Mentors will include accomplished men and women of the Christian faith who embrace the concept of servant leadership.



From the Desk of ...

Reverend Frankie Hutchins
Vice President for Student Affairs

"Life isn't about waiting for the rain to pass; it's about learning to dance in the rain."

- Vain Green

Making a choice to attend college is a very wise decision. Here at Selma University, we help each student that is willing to "dance in the rain." The classes might get tough sometimes, but you can make it. The decision to work hard now will pay off later in life for you and your family. The Founders of this University (a group of free slaves) saw a vision from God and believed in him enough to purchase land and build a university that would give Blacks a chance to get an education, to live better and to improve their communities. Becoming a student at Selma University gives you the amazing experience of home away from home. You will enjoy that personal attention that you receive from faculty, staff and other students. There is so much to learn about life and the examples of Jesus Christ. Proverbs 3:1-2 tells us, *"My son, forget not my law, but let thine heart keep my commandments: For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee."* Jesus is the center point of your life and he has a plan for your life. Trust him and allow him to lead and guide you, and your experience here at Selma University will be a rewarding one. The challenges are what make life interesting; overcoming them is



"Let Light Be"



Wishing Selma University the best as it continues to be a bright light in our community, transforming men and women into servant leaders. Contact Senator Hank Sanders at (334) 526-4531.



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Allied Healthcare Program

Dr. Marchina Harrell

Director of the College of Allied Healthcare

The Allied Healthcare Program is moving from glory to glory. This year we have 100% passing rate of students in the Nursing Assistant program. The students' names are: Tracey Jackson, Delvonna Hubbard, Lyonna Smith, Shanerria Shelton, and Marqita White. The Nursing Assistant program is headed up by Yolanda Patterson, RN, and Charmagne Bruno, Program Assistant.

The Phlebotomy and ECG programs have a 95% program completion rate. The students of 2016-2017 academic year in Phlebotomy are: Tanesha Blythe, Delvonna Hubbard, Jacquez Fields, Lashel

Maiden, Sharonica Rayford, James Thomas, Elboni Sanders, Brandecha Square, Miracle Stone, Jemeral Bell, Kimberly Shields, and Jeremy Wooten. Students in ECG are Verlonda Hopson, Porchez Jackson, Mariah Caldbeck, Marqita Carmichael, Romona Martin, Jose Duran-Morillo, and Ja'Kirra Ward. Our certificate students are employed in schools as medical assistants, in labs and plasma centers as certified phlebotomy technicians, in sleep labs as certified ECG technicians, and clinics and hospitals. We are also proud to say that two of our staff members were past students of Selma University. We are a small program with great achievements. Our plans for the future are to become bigger and greater. I encourage anyone and everyone to challenge yourself and live a life of purpose. Let us hold your hand and help you with that journey because you matter and have a purpose to fulfill. Find your place of deposit here with us in the Allied Healthcare Pro-



Jacquez Fields (left) and Jeremy Wooten (right)

Rev. Darryl Moore, Pastor of Second Baptist Church, is a proud alumnus and supporter of Selma University.



**Second Baptist Church
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2809 Hardie Ave
Selma AL 36703
(334) 874-3064
<https://fbcselma.org>**

Sunday School, 9 a.m.

Regular Order of Worship, 10 a.m.

Prayer Service and Bible Study, each Tuesday from 6-7:30 p.m.

Biology: The Pursuit of Excellence!

By T. Reeves
Chairperson for the Biology, Physical Education, and
Mathematics Division



The Biology, Physical Education, and Mathematics Department of Selma University has worked relentlessly during the 2016-2017 school year to help fulfill the school's mission, "To prepare men and women to be servant leaders throughout the world." The faculty members include: T. Reeves, the department chairperson, Dr. K. Chatwala (Biology), J. Pettway (Physical Education), K. Anderson (Mathematics), S. Thomas (Mathematics), Y. Randolph (Computer), and K. Logan (Mathematics).

The faculty worked as a team to create a vibrant learning atmosphere where students could excel. Instructors explored new ways to incorporate technology in the classroom using apps such as Edmodo, Schoology, Khan Academy, and Remind, to name a few. Students were required to work collaboratively with each other to increase their problem-solving and team-building skills. Helping students to develop these skills was extremely important and it places them ahead of their peers in this 21st century work environment. The faculty's passion for their subject area frequently passes onto the students, thus creating within them a desire to learn and grow. The department increased the number of graduates within their program, having 5 students to graduate with a degree in Biology or Physical Education in Spring 2017. The department looks forward to serving the incoming students in the fall semester and creating a plan to increase the graduation rate.

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God Bless You All.



**Randall J. Miller
President**

Student Life

A Message from the Student Government Association President

JaKendrick Davis, President

[JaKendrick Davis is a junior attending Selma University, majoring in General Studies, Business Administration Concentration]



Greetings faculty, staff, students, and friends of Selma University, I am JaKendrick Davis, a resident of Greensboro, Alabama, and the current President of Selma University's Student Government Association. It is my delight to serve the students at SU. As a junior, majoring in General Studies, Business Administration Concentration, I have learned a lot about the University and have enjoyed my studies here. The University holds a special place in my heart because it has afforded me numerous unique opportunities to pursue my academic endeavors.

A few years ago I lost my eyesight and had to leave school for a while, but to God be the glory, my eyesight has recovered and I am continuing my educational pursuits. Not only am I back in school, but this past school-year I was elected to serve as SGA President— what a testimony!

My main goal is to raise money for the Student Government Association and help to plan activities so that each student will enjoy themselves. I have set a goal for the SGA to have a budget of \$10,000 before I graduate. My heart is jubilant for ever student who has chosen to attend Selma University, which has a rich culture heritage. Although small in number, our graduates and faculty are big hearted servant leaders.



The Selma University Choir

Mrs. Marie Black-Clarke, Director

The acclaimed Selma University Concert Choir has maintained a standard of choral excellence. The University Choir performs a diverse repertoire that spans the genres of classical, contemporary, spiritual, and gospel styles. The choir's goal is to promote and cultivate the understanding of choral music and performance as an imperative medium of artistic value and musical expressions.

The choir remains visible and busy within the community and surrounding areas hosting choral spring Pre-Founders Day Concerts which serves to cultivate and enhance choral singing while giving back to the community. The choir performs in Weekly Chapel Services, makes yearly performances at the Alabama State Missionary Baptist Convention, and in the past has performed at the NAACP Black History program in Birmingham, Alabama. Recently, November 2016, the Selma University Choir was invited to sing at a Sheepfold Baptist Retreat at Shocco Springs Resort in Talladega, Alabama.

The Stone Robinson Library

Mrs. Edna Harris Green, Librarian
Librarian at Selma University

Services and Resources:

Selma University is committed to making the library as user friendly as possible by providing personalized library instruction for students.

Educational support services provided by the Stone-Robinson Library includes the following:

Computers with Internet accessibility and printers.

Free Wi-Fi connection service for students who have lap-top computers and other electronic devices.

Reference and research assistance is provided at the Circulation Desk.

A copy of each course syllabus to assist students with keeping abreast of academic reports, required reading lists, and the various reserved resources.

Textbooks and reserved resources are available for in-library use only.

Adequate space for students to work quietly on group projects.

Cooperative and resource sharing agreements with other libraries.



The library operational hours are structured to ensure adequate accessibility of learning resources for all students at Selma University: Monday, 8:00 A.M. – 8:00 P.M.; Tuesday, 8:00 A.M. – 9:00 P.M.; Wednesday, 8:00 A.M. – 8:00 P.M., Thursday, 8:00 A.M. – 8:00 P.M., Friday, 8:00 A.M. – 5:00 P.M.; Saturday, 9:00 A.M. – 1:30 P.M.; Sunday, Closed. **The library's telephone number is (334) 872-2628, Fax: (334) 877-0291, E-mail Address: library@selmauniversity.edu.**

Online Academic Support:

Online academic resources provided by the Stone–Robinson Library are as follows:

The ProQuest Research Library provides access to a wide range of the core top academic subject reference areas and covers them extensively.

ProQuest reference database consists of a host of diverse scholarly journals and newspapers.

ProQuest Research Library is frequently used by Selma University's students to fulfill their various curricular needs.

The multidisciplinary facets of the ProQuest Research Library have enabled the Stone-Robinson Library to heighten its services and provide learning resources consistent with the University's curriculum.

ProQuest may be accessed via the University's home website, www.selmauniversity.edu.

Contact the Stone-Robinson Library for the ProQuest Research Library's username and password.

The Alabama Virtual Library, (AVL) may be accessed at the website, <http://www.avl.lib.al.us/>. AVL provides students with access to essential academic resource databases, such as, EBSCO, Encyclopedia Britannica, E-books, literature from Gale, History Reference Center, Health Source/ Nursing Business Insights, and Current Events.

Selma University, a Christian college, online public access library catalog is available 24/7 for locating resources in our collection.

The Selma University online catalog may be accessed by logging onto the website, <https://selma.goalexandria.com>.

A Typological View of the Church Found in Genesis 24

Elder Edward T. Hayes, Doctor of Ministry
[Morehouse School of Religion-2014,
Associate Professor of Religion, Selma University]



Today, one of the more misunderstood institutions is the Church. It appears that even the clergy who provide leadership come in varied styles and temperaments. In the early years of the Church it was simply known as the ekklesia (assembly). It was a gathering of those baptized believers whom worshipped the Risen Christ.

Those baptized believers were not always as civil in their conduct and witness. Therefore, it was the Apostle Paul who reminded them that they were the espoused bride of Christ (2 Corinthians 11:2 KJV), and it was Paul's ministry, which brought them into the body of Christ. The Church expresses her fidelity to her bridegroom by doing the work assigned to her upon the earth. She was constantly reminded of her role in the work (Acts). It is a work that saw its beginning in the stories told and cherished by the Jewish community out of which the Church was birthed.

The Church can look to Jewish Scripture in Genesis 24 for its typology. In it Abraham is seen as a symbol for God, Isaac as the Promised Son (Christ), Abraham's servant as the preacher of the Good News, and Rebekah as the Church. The story begins with Abraham being old and advanced in days. This translation comes from the LXX. The book commonly used by the Jews of the 1st Century Church. It is the same text that was used in Matthew's Gospel account.

It was Matthew's birth narrative which traced Jesus' lineage back to Abraham rather than to Adam, whom Luke uses as the origin of Christ's lineage. With this in mind the early Church was aware of the story found in Genesis 24. Abraham (God) needs a bride for Isaac (Christ) his son of promise. Not any bride would satisfy the need. Therefore, he calls his eldest servant and caused him to make a vow to go to Mesopotamia and find a bride from among his kindred for Isaac. The servant is nameless, but knows the power of his master's God. What Abraham owned was in the stewardship of this eldest servant.

The servant sets out on the journey with gifts from Abraham's treasury and the power of prayer. When the servant arrives in Mesopotamia, he prays to Abraham's God for favor in carrying out the master's request. This is similar to the activity of the pastor of the Church. Pastors herald the Good News of God; trust the power of prayer; are obedient to the master's (God) request; and finally wait patiently for the potential bride to respond to the mater's blessings.

Those blessings accompany the commitment to be the bride of the son (Christ). Rebekah, as the symbol of the Church, was obedient to the move of the Spirit, humble, chaste, and respectful of the elderly. She not only answered the servant's request for water, but also gave water to the elderly man's animals. She was attentive to the agent of Abraham (God).

When the agent requested a quick departure back to Canaan, it was her choice to go with him rather than that of her parents, who requested a wait of ten days. It is always the choice of any believer to accept the blessings of God or continue in the same place and condition. She chose to go with the servant of Abraham and when she got near to her new home she found the bridegroom waiting patiently for her.

God waits patiently for the Church. Acts 2:47 (KJV) says that the Master adds to the Church daily such as should be saved. The story tells the reader that one day the marriage will be consummated. That is how Genesis 24 ends with the marriage of Isaac (Jesus) and Rebekah (Church). The story gives strength to the Church and those who labor in the Good News of Jesus Christ.

It reminds the church that God is yet sending representatives of His kingdom to invite the chosen to become a part of His Church. This is only a typology, but the Church knows that it is a view of the coming Kingdom that comes down from God out of Heaven.

Walter Bauer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature 2nd edition (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1979), 240.

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Fiat Lux Part Two: Wilderness - 1901 to 1953

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 some of the foundational elements in the founding of Selma University. First, Selma University’s background is written in the pages of Scripture. The God who revealed Himself in scripture, made man, chose Israel and made Israel His representative among the nations of the world, sent His Son to redeem that world, sent His Spirit to quicken the seed planted by His Son’s ministry, raised a Community, and husbanded a harvest, wanted and wants to continue revealing Himself and reconciling Himself with His creation. That Story is at the heart of Selma University and her founding. That Story impacts and allows God’s community to interpret God’s acts in history through the establishment of the Christian church on Pentecost, allows that community to prosper throughout Judaic, Gentilian, Pauline and Johannine plantings in the Acts and the Epistles and to reach fruition in a vision on the shores of Patmos.

Second, that community made her debut on the pages of History by conquering the conqueror (Rome) and ultimately became a partner as European city states sought to exploit the resources and native people of the so-called New World. In that world, the Christian community planted by Europeans was then reformed and replanted largely in secret by African slave-saints. The masters read the Bible and saw the slave-saints as the cursed sons of Ham. “Hewers of wood.” “Drawers of water.” “Servants obey your masters.” The slave-saints read the same Bible and saw in themselves the image of God, liberated by Moses, spoken to by the prophets, loved by Jesus and included in the worldwide church of the people of God. These slave-saints embraced the Gospel’s proclamation of human dignity and the American promise of liberty and made these principles the instrument of their freedom by 1865.

Third, there is the foundation of Culture. From 1865 to 1901 the African-American community in America became a bustling beehive of civic freedom, economic prosperity, educational ambition and cultural distinction. This engine of American progress was powered by a Christian ethic. Selma University sprang in 1878 from the fruit of freedom and nourished a people still suffering deeply from the deprivation and horrors of slavery. White Baptists in the South were unable to withstand the lure of political correctness. The “Mississippi Plan,” the “white line” and “white supremacy” called them to either stand by or participate in the stripping of freedom from their fellow Americans and fellow Christians. By 1901, blacks in America had been reintroduced to “Slavery by Another Name” and a period called by Rayford Logan, “The Nadir,” in which legal economic, political and social re-slavery enforced by lynch law denominated American society and darkened the hopes of the community which had given birth to Selma University. The University was now faced with a challenge to “Uplift the People” during a fifty-year period of vicious second-class citizenship.

From 1901 to 1953, the black church in America revisited her historic role of “accommodation and revolution” which had nourished her community’s survival in slavery—that is, blacks resisted slavery—they accommodated their behavior to their master’s expectations in order to

survive, but they also engaged consistently in acts of resistance. They established and struggled to maintain community, marriage and family ties on slave row. They developed unique styles of celebration, music and recreation. They played sick, worked slowly, feigned ignorance, sabotaged implements, and stole resources which they felt they had rightfully earned. More violently, they set fires and engaged in acts of revenge and rage. They ran away. But most notably and redemptively they worshipped their God in secret, in Spirit and in truth. The roll back of Reconstruction by white supremacists forced the black church to revive this accommodation and revolution protocol in order to survive the Nadir.

From 1901 to 1953 Selma University educated several generations of black preachers, teachers, leaders, entrepreneurs and citizens who helped to create a viable community on the isolated reservation of segregation. Lapsley Street itself became a thriving black owned and operated business center and residential show place. In this insulated and incarcerated world, the black citizens of America were far from being cowed and conquered by the insidious reminders of their status as second-class citizens.

Dr. Robert T. Kerlin, professor of English at no less an honored and distinctive White southern educational institution as Virginia Military Institute (VMI), took note of the outraged militancy and the uplifted voices of the negro press in America during this critical time. From the sacred precincts of VMI, the ancestral learning place, teaching place and resting place of the revered General Thomas Jonathan (Stonewall) Jackson, Dr. Kerlin in his book, *The Voice of the Negro*, 1919, reviewed the expressions of the Afro-American press of the time and said, “[This book] may be regarded a primary document in promoting a knowledge of the negro, his point of view, his way of thinking upon race relations, his grievances, his aspirations, his demands” (5).

Kerlin reviewed a dozen magazines, two dailies, and nearly 300 weeklies, to compile a list of nationwide black outrage and determination to resist “by any means necessary” the deprivations being visited upon their community.

Here is the voice of the negro and his heart and mind. Here the negro race speaks as it thinks on the question of questions for America—the race question. The like of this utterance, in angry protest and prayerful pleading, the entire rest of the world does not offer. When I told a publisher that I was making this compilation he remarked that my book would make disagreeable reading. There are worse things than disagreeable reading (Kerlin, 5).

The “worse things” Kerlin speaks of can be sensed behind the passion in the pages wherein he catalogs the fact that the accommodation could soon give way to revolution. The vigilance of the colored press gave unrelenting coverage to the new negro and his reactions to White America’s rejection of the negro’s loyalty in defending America during World War I. Blacks rejected White rejection. Blacks also condemned other Blacks they considered “race traitors,” the image of “the Black mammy,” and the old paternalism of the plantation heritage.

Kerlin notes the proliferation of Afro-American political agitation, Black anger over Jim Crow justice, the denial of social equality, and the odious disgrace of segregation. There were race riots across the nation, and lynchings reached new heights. The Black press exposed the dreadful economic and living conditions of Negroes in the South supported the rise of Negro labor-unionism, flirted with the lures of “Bolshevism,” and the fumed over the degradation of Negro women by American “Huns.” Kerlin’s book is a sensible White person’s response to the threat heard in Claude McKay’s renowned poem, “If we must die, let it not be like hogs...face the murderous, cowardly pack, pressed to the wall, dying, but fighting back” (Claude McKay, “If We Must Die,” Poetry Foundation).

Between 1901 and 1953, the National Baptist Convention became the spiritual voice of millions in the Black community, particularly in the South. The Convention and her leaders set the standard for Black Baptist church development and growth and sent forth many leaders to articulate the Biblical truth and historical relevance of God's plan for His downtrodden people in this turbulent age. Many of these leaders received vital instruction in community survival for their struggling churches by pressing their way through a wilderness of poverty and oppression to Selma University's gates.

The presidents of the National Baptist Convention, Dr. Elias Camp Morris (1894-1924), Dr. Lacey Kirk Williams (1925-1940) and Lapsley Street's own, Dr. David Vivian Jemison (1940-1953) presided over an era when the religious leaders of millions of Black Baptists in America looked to their churches for personal inspiration, denominational integrity and community ministry ("The Presidential Addresses of Morris, Williams, Jemison"). The constituent conventions and associations which sponsored and kept alive precious Negro Baptist institutions like Selma University, benefited immeasurably from the attention given them by their national convention and their local associational leaders. Local associations such as the Colored Bethlehem Baptist Association and her moderators, Nelson Henry Smith, Sr. and W. G. Lett provided leadership to this Association over a nearly fifty-year span during this season. Smith and Lett were stellar examples of National Baptist Convention loyalists, Selma University devotees, and community pastors (Williams, 5).

With their help and with the help of unnumbered sons and daughters of the slave-saints who burst out of slavery and whose community gave birth to Selma University, the Black Church and her people survived and thrived under the iron heel of the Nadir. By 1953, the energy generated by the conclusion of World War II and the birth of a new generation of Negro leadership would lead to a re-evaluation of the Gospel in light of America's promise and a renewed struggle to reclaim the freedom that was lost after Reconstruction. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Ralph Abernathy married women who grew up in the atmospherical aegis of Selma University. Ralph and Martin were assisted in their march to Montgomery by men and women who had given of their life's blood to the survival of schools and communities much like the one centered on Lapsley Avenue. Ironically, the National Baptist Convention and Selma University would be thrust into a new struggle, this time over the role of the Black Baptist Church and her Convention, her ministers, her people and her schools in this



The Local Church, a “Function” in the Local Community

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]



From the days of its inception, through its great trials and fight for survival to its present-day expanse, the local Church has sought to make a positive difference in society for Christ. The relationship that believers in the local Church have with the communities in which they reside is the function of “difference maker” – we are difference makers. Breathing life and teaching others to take up the mission of living peaceably and passing that gift to others through a life of Christianity is what makes the local Church a critical “**function**” in the local community. So, if the local Church’s relationship to the local community is so critical for breathing life and peace, why is there so much violence and unrest in many local communities where local Churches are heavily populated? This paper will briefly discuss the local Church as a “**function**” in the local community, and encourage believers to become difference makers in their local communities.

The Local Church as a Function (difference makers). The local Church may be defined as a group of professing, baptized believers in Jesus Christ who meet in a particular location on a regular basis for worship and fellowship. The local community is the area around them, the places where they live, operate and influence. Christians are expected and commanded by Jesus to function to make a noticeable difference in society. The New Testament terms below describe Christians as **difference makers (functions)**.

Salt; seasoning -- Matthew 5:13, New International Version (NIV). “You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.”

Light -- Matthew 5:14-16, New International Version (NIV). “You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”

Fruit bearers -- John 15:16, New International Version (NIV). “You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you.”

How “Functions” Work in the Community. In this discussion a “function” is defined as the local Church’s input added or supplied to a situation that forms a relationship, which over time produces an output or outcome. Let us think about the Church community relationship in three ways:

- The input of the “function” to the situation
- The relationship of the “function” to the situation
- The output from the relationship of the “function” and the situation

Consequently, when the input (function) and the situation interacts in a relationship, a positive output is produced. In this way the local Church will have a positive transformational effect on the local community. An actively involved local Church continuously provides critical functional inputs to local community situations. For now I will share five key local Church functions:

1. Evangelize and Proselytize the Community for Christ. This function is well known among congregants of the Christian faith, The Great Commission, “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” Matthew 28:19-20 (NIV).
2. Conducts Corporate Praise and Worship. Weekly for many years local Christian congregations gather for the purpose of praising and worshiping God, and strengthening their bond of fellowship. It is perhaps the greatest demonstration of commitment to faith expressed by Christians.
3. Informs Policy. Political leaders in the local community are members of the local community and are elected to represent the people and their interests. Subsequently our local political representatives are reflections of who we are as a local Church and society. Think about it for a few minutes. Aren’t many of the elected officials in your city and county governments professed believers in Jesus Christ? If your answer is yes, then the laws and politics speak to the current state of effectiveness of the local Church in transforming the political landscape of the local community.

Remember, the local Church is neither Democratic nor Republican. When the local Church reduces itself to serving the needs of a political party, it limits and in some ways silences its powerful role as a voice for Christ. **When the Church speaks it must command the respect and the attention of all political parties.** Politicians must align themselves with our interest, which is aligned with God’s will.

4. Establishes the Moral Consciousness of the Local Community. Throughout the scripture, both Old and New Testament, God used religious leaders to teach and expound the way of righteousness to believers and exhorted them to be an example to those around them so that others will see the believers’ life and ascribe to it. Not only are believers to be examples of Godly living, but they are to actively petition and encourage societal leaders in the way of righteousness.

Furthermore, the local Church helps society establish and maintain a system for ethical analysis and decision-making. It sets forth a standard of righteousness –The Holy Scriptures that are profitable for teaching, correcting, and instructing people so that communities may live together peacefully and in a manner that pleases God and assures His protection and favor.

5. The local Church helps to provide for the physical needs of others. The local Church gives and seeks to provide for the physical needs of the poor and needy in her local community. The local Church must set the example for others in working together to spread the love of Christ by seeking to address and alleviate pain and suffering of its members. The local Church is structured so that servant leaders, deacons and others, are assigned the tasks to monitor and address the needs and cries of the less fortunate. The local Church is Christ’s visible instrument to carry out the mission of reaching, teaching, and ministering to His people.

How is your local Church “functioning”? What is the measure of success (output)? What “functions” will your local Church employ?

A key way to measure the success of the local Church as a “function” in the local community is to assess the success of the community. How is your community doing? How are the people in your community: pastors, parishioners, teachers, students, parents, sanitation workers, healthcare providers, public service workers, etc.? Remember, many members of the local community are also members of the local Church. So, how are the local communities doing? It may surprise you that many people still attend church weekly and give quite liberally to support their faith. There are still several congregations in each local community—and church buildings seemingly on every street corner. Believe it or not, some church sanctuaries are packed on Sunday mornings, people from the local community crowding into the sanctuary to worship and find words of comfort and hope—prayerfully the words to eternal life. Ironically, many congregants in these same communities are themselves or have children who are caught up in gangs, drug abuse, high poverty, crime rings, routine acts of violence, and the like. Many fear for their lives during hours of darkness—home invasions, drive by shootings, etc.? How can this be? Why should this be? This scenario plays out in many local churches and local communities, nationwide. The transforming power of the local church seems to be marginalized in the local community. Again I ask, how are things going in your local community? What “functions” will your local Church employ to help address the situation?

As I stated earlier, the local Church performs critical functions in the local community and is commanded by Jesus to operate to make a noticeable difference in society. Christians are Christ ap-

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When God's People Pray

2 Chronicles 7:14

By Marion Harris



[Administrative Assistant to the Director of Allied Healthcare, 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].

"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land." (2 Chronicles 7:14, KJV).

The daily news reports from the internet, television, radio and newspapers tell us that something has gone wrong in this world in which we live today; tragic stories that sound like happenings from a comic book. People are searching for answers, some have lost hope and others have given up on life. But there is hope.

In 2 Chronicles 7:14, God said, "If my people which are called by my name..." (people who have accepted Jesus as their Lord and Saviour, and will choose to do what God tells them to do), "...shall humble themselves..." (to come under the authority of God), "...and pray..." (pray to God, to the only one who can help us), "...and seek my face," (seek the will of God and not their own will), "...and turn from their wicked ways; ..." (wicked ways are all the ways that displeases God, ways that keep us out of fellowship with God. God is a Holy God and we must come before him with a repentant heart, asking him to forgive our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness). [This is what God will do in response to his people prayers.] "...then will I hear from heaven..." (I will hear your prayer), "...forgive their sin..." (He will reconcile us back to himself), "...and will heal our land." (Healing brings about restoration, salvation, reconciliation, peace, joy, hope, deliverance, jubilation, consolation, blessings and prosperity).

What would happen if God's people would have all day and all night prayer meetings, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, seeking God's face, and turning from their wicked ways? The scripture tells us in Luke 6:12-13 (KJV), that "Jesus went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles." If Jesus knew that prayer to God, his heavenly Father was necessary before selecting disciples who would carry the gospel that would save men souls; surely, we who are God's people must pray and seek God's face in everything we do.

I ask you, God's people who are called by his name to accept God's challenge to humble ourselves and pray and seek God's face and turn from our wicked ways; then the Lord will hear our prayer from heaven, he will forgive our sins and heal our land.

This is my prayer:

"Heavenly Father, I come to you in the name of Jesus, the name that is above every name. I come now humble before you. I come seeking your face and your divine will for my life. I repent of my sins and ask you to forgive me. I right now turn from my wicked ways. Search my heart, oh God, and see if there is any wicked way in me. "Create in me a clean heart and renew a right spirit in me." (Psalm 51:10). Hear my prayer, oh God, forgive our sins and heal our land. Our land need healing – healing for our minds that have become polluted with the sinful snares of this world, with images and idols that take our mind off of you. Hear our prayer, oh God. Our land need healing of the violence and destruction portrayed by those who do not value the life of other humans. Our land needs healing, oh God, for those who are caught in the strongholds and bondages of the enemy. Our land need healing Lord for those who have no hope of eternal life; send your word Lord and heal our land. We humble ourselves and pray. We seek your face. We turn from our wicked ways. We know that you are not a man that you should lie (Numbers 23:19a). So, we thank you now for hearing our prayer, forgiving our sins

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.]



The church has developed some of the most brilliant minds in the history of the world, and likewise some of the most brilliant minds in history have been responsible for developing the church. From Augustine and Origen in the third and fourth centuries, to Bernard of Clairvaux in the medieval period, extending all the way to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Dietrich Bonhoeffer of the modern era, to the plethora of scholars and pastors today, the church has always welcomed the merger of faith and scholarship.

However, the prevailing culture is missing the vitality of the church, who, at the same time, is suffering the dangers of anti-intellectualism. Unfortunately, there are two extremes that threaten the continuation of the Christian intellectual tradition. On one hand, in the church and the academy, we rarely equate scholasticism with holy living; the two seems to be at odds. They need not be. James W. Sire, in *Habits of the Mind: Intellectual Life as a Christian Calling*, emphasizes, “a Christian intellectual cultivates a passion for holiness, a passion to become like Jesus...a passion for holiness will result in a passion not only to know the truth but to do the truth.”

On the other hand, there is a spirit of anti-intellectualism invading the church, resulting in poor preaching and the rise of a secular worldview within the church. Therefore, the men and women who are called to a life of the mind must reclaim and revive the Christian intellectual tradition so that the Christian faith that once transformed nations, uplifted humanity, and stood against oppression and injustice, can once again be “the” driving force for change and the prevailing influence in a world of pluralism. In relation to faith and scholarship, Tertullian raised a stimulating question, “What does Jerusalem have to do with Athens?” How does a life of faith and a life of the mind impact church health? A critique of the culture in which we practice the faith, and a critique of the teachings in the church are necessary to answer that question and address the ills in culture and in the church.

The culture in which we live must be critiqued through the lens of Scripture. When faithful disciples, donned in the truth of God’s word, wade into the deep waters of a culture flooded with the influence of secular philosophy, they are often considered prey for predators who peddle and practice appealing and attractive pronouncements. The Apostle Paul found himself in such a quandary in Athens (Acts 17:16-34). The zealous religiosity in Athens was often known to impress and captivate other visitors to the city. Rather than being persuaded by these eloquent orators, Paul’s powerful and precise revelation of God was the gauge he used to critique the culture in Athens. The Areopagus, the altars, the images, the long-standing tradition, the Stoic and Epicurean philosophy, was not enough to turn the heart and mind of this man whose heart and mind was arrested by the Christ revealed to him in the Scriptures (1 Corinthians 15:3) and on the Damascus Road (Acts 9:1-9). In this same way, leaders and laity in the church must give a sobering critique of the culture in which we find ourselves. In a culture of unprecedented pluralism, the church must encourage her leadership and laity to pursue Christian scholarship, while remaining faithful to the call and commission of the church to be the salt

We must also critique the teachings in our churches. Quite often, false doctrines and secular worldviews permeate the local church. The influx of technology provides a myriad of information mediums which dispenses a variety of venomous teachings that influence the Body of Christ on exponential levels. These teachings, which are often reduced to quotable quips, tweets, and hashtags, have a profound effect on the state of the church. Such teachings lack depth and fail to make discipleship demands upon the people of faith. These false teachers often condition the minds of the believer to view the worship service as a gathering of people in need of therapy, rather than a community that gathers together to recall the redemptive work of God in Christ through repetitive liturgical expressions. Without noticing, the spirit of individualism trumps the need for community, the desire to be comfortable and relevant overrides the command to deny self and identify with Christ in His suffering. When leaders and laity become detached from the distinct teachings that give us identity and which bring about transformation, the church is in trouble. Without gatekeepers guarding the church, calling out false teachers, pleading with believers to “walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” and to “mortify the deeds of the flesh” (Romans 8: 4, 13), we are bound to lose our corporate ethos and pathos.

The mandate of Christ, to “love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind; and Love your neighbor as yourself” (Luke 10:27) will become a reality in the life of every believer when the true purpose of the marriage of faith and scholarship is realized. May the Christian intellectual tradition continue to provide heat and light to the

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