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VOL. 20 NO.3

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2025**

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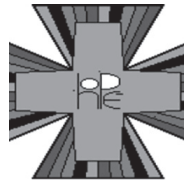
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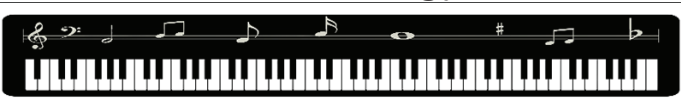
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"The LEADER'S EDGE" by drmichaelbell

This month, I want you to think with me specifically about the crucial role of lay leaders in the local church. I was recently reminded of how vital it is to have a lay leadership training system in place and I thought I'd share it with you.

Lay leaders are the backbone of any church community. Their roles go far beyond simple volunteerism; they are the hands and feet of the church's mission, serving tirelessly to meet the needs of the congregation and the broader community. Understanding the importance of what these laity bring to the table highlights the critical need for proper training and development.

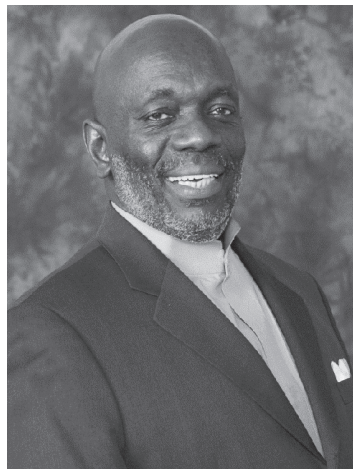
The aim of Church leadership training is to equip individuals with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively guide and serve their congregations. Every church needs a leadership development system because every church benefits when its leaders are equipped to serve confidently and competently.

Well-trained lay leaders are more apt to be the ones who remain in the congregation when the pastor retires or moves on to another church. They're the ones who provide pastoral care when there's a death in the family, the ones who coordinate meals and chair the committees. These dedicated individuals hold the church together through seasons of transition, ensuring that the congregation remains well-cared for.

Why is training so essential?

Many congregations don't have a leadership training system. One of the major benefits of building a strong team of lay leaders is that it frees pastors to concentrate on preaching, teaching and other administrative tasks, while empowering others to serve in a variety of roles. This not only lightens the pastor's workload but also motivates congregation members to participate more actively. When lay leaders are trained effectively, it multiplies the church's capacity to reach and minister to its community.

Moreover, building a solid group of lay leaders helps secure the long-term viability of the church. By investing in leadership development initiatives now, churches can ensure that there are capable leaders ready to step in when



there's a leadership void. This foresight protects the continuity and growth of the church's mission.

God calls all people in the church to ministry, whether young or older, recent convert or lifelong participant. As a lay leader, one of your primary tasks is to help people recognize their own capacity to serve. Empowering others to engage in acts of ministry strengthens the church's outreach and builds a sense of community.

Just as you and the pastor are partners in leadership, a lay ministry leader needs to work to strengthen the relationship between the pastor, other leaders, and the broader congregation. This partnership is grounded in clear, honest, and discreet communication. Lay leaders should provide public support and private insight for their pastor, serving as both a bridge and a buffer between the congregation and pastoral leadership.

If a congregant is dissatisfied, encourage him or her to express concerns directly to the pastor, discouraging criticism behind the pastor's back. If congregants are unwilling to communicate concerns directly, you should charitably communicate them to the pastor. You don't need to agree, but you should make the pastor aware of people's feelings. This practice of healthy communication fosters unity and trust within the church.

*Dr. Michael Bell is Senior Pastor of Greater St. Stephen First Church FtW, a seminary adjunct professor, and a certified Life Coach. He conducts leadership seminars and conferences across the country. He is the author of *Finding God in Hard Places*.

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Speak Life Thought

with Dr. Yolanda G. Butler

"A Life Living for A King"

"The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it. The world and all its people belong to him." (Psalm 24:1-6 NLT)

God the Father is King who has ALL dominion, power, and authority. He is also Lord of the Earth and the universe. He, therefore, legally has complete dominion, and His authority is absolute over everything and everyone. He can give anything to anyone according to His Sovereign choice. The Father's domain is expanded through the salvation of souls, where His glory shines through His children. Knowing God as King is not enough. You must live for Him.

The psalmist asks the question, *"Who has the right to stand in the Father's presence in His Holy Sanctuary? (Ps. 24:3)"* It is good to know who the Father is, but you cannot just profess Him as your personal King and Lord, you must possess Him also. This means you must surrender yourself to Him, not part-time, not when you need Him, not when you are in trouble, and

not on Sunday mornings. It is daily living that reflects His glory, holiness, and righteousness. We live this life by exemplifying the life of Christ, through whom we now have access to the King, the Lord (Eph 2:18).

The King requires us to live a life that honors Him daily (Ps. 24:4, Rom 12:1). Our hands must be clean and our hearts pure. This means our actions and our attitude should demonstrate where our true devotion is invested. Bishop Butler and I have been married for over 40 years, and if you look at our actions and attitude, you will see a reflection of love. The same should be for the child of the King. When He sees you, He sees your action, attitude, and values, which must align with His Word.

Additionally, we are reminded that anything that becomes a priority to you above God the King is idolatry (Ps. 24:4). He is a Jealous God and commands that nothing stands in the way of your relationship with Him (Exodus 20:3; Deut. 4:24). We must endeavor to stay Kingdom-focused and make certain that our priorities line up with His Will.

As you live in obedience to



the King, you are assured the promise of His care, love, protection, and overall well-being (Ps. 24:5). This should foster in your heart a lifestyle of worship marked with holiness and righteousness. This means in all that you do, it must please and honor the KING—no exception. If it is NOT KINGDOM, you must resolve in your mind, *"I want no part of it."*

So dear hearts, do you know Him as King and Lord? If your answer is "yes," then be determined to live for Him.

Dr. Yolanda G. Butler is Co-Pastor and Church Administrator of Praise Center Community Church, where her husband, Bishop Donald H. Butler, is the Senior Pastor. She is an intercessor, evangelist, mentor, and published author. Follow her on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and www.firstladybutlerministries.net.

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The National Juneteenth Museum's inaugural Freedom Vibes Festival

This year, the National Juneteenth Museum (NJM) is producing the inaugural version of Freedom Vibes, the National Juneteenth Festival. The festival is part of NJM's ongoing pre-construction programming and promises to buoy our effort to make Fort Worth the nation's epicenter for Juneteenth programs and education.

The festivities begin Thursday afternoon, June 19th at 3pm with a speaker series conversation featuring the venerable Ambassador Andrew Young. Ambassador Young, a Civil Rights icon and one of Dr. Martin Luther King's best friends, will provide insight to his experience as a Civil Rights leader and explore the ways the current environment might compare to the challenges of that era.



He will also be joined on stage by our own, Ms. Opal Lee. Two near-centenarians on one stage! This event is free to the public, but registration is required..



The festival also features

concerts at the beautiful Bass Performance Hall downtown Fort Worth, including a June 19th show with Orchestra Noir, a renowned group of expert musicians that combines classical talent with the beats of Hip-hop and the soulful rhythms of R&B. Friday night June 20th, we'll take Bass Hall

over again with the soulful sounds of Eddie Levert and the Mighty O'Jays and Fort Worth's own, the Legendary Whispers.

Saturday afternoon, Freedom Vibes will take over Evans Plaza with a free Block Party, highlighting local talent, artists, and vendors. The festival ends Sunday at 4pm at the Potter's House of Fort Worth with "The Choir Returns" Gospelfest, another free event featuring some of Dallas-Fort Worth's most-renowned church choirs.

Join us Juneteenth weekend as we put "Culture on Display"!

To register for the free Ambassador Young Speaker Series or to get tickets to the other events, please go to the website, freedomvibes2025.com.

What Is the Church? New Testament Church Definition | By Mary Fairchild



What is the church? Is the church a building? Is it the place where believers gather to worship? Or is the church the people—the believers who follow Christ? How we understand and perceive the church is an important factor in determining how we live out our faith. For the purpose of this study, we will look at the church in the context of "the Christian church," which is a New Testament concept.

Jesus Was the First Person to Mention the Church
Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. (Matthew 16:16-18, ESV)

Some Christian denominations, such as the Catholic Church, interpret this verse to mean that Peter is the rock upon which the church was founded, and for this reason, Peter is considered the first Pope. However, Protestants, as well as other Christian denominations, understand this verse differently.

Although many believe Jesus noted the meaning of Peter's name here as rock, there was no supremacy given to him by Christ. Rather, Jesus was referring to Peter's declaration: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." This confession of faith is the rock upon which the church is built, and just like Peter, every one who confesses Jesus Christ as Lord is a member of the church.

Church Definition in the New Testament

The word "church" is mentioned more than 100 times in the New Testament. It is translated from the Greek term *ekklesia* which is

formed from two Greek words meaning "an assembly" and "to call out" or "the called out ones." The New Testament church is a body of believers that has been called out from the world by God to live as his people under the authority of Jesus Christ:

God has put all things under the authority of Christ and has made him head over all things for the benefit of the church. And the church is his body; it is made full and complete by Christ, who fills all things everywhere with himself. (Ephesians 1:22-23, NLT)

This group of believers or "the body of Christ" began in Acts 2 on the Day of Pentecost through the work of the Holy Spirit and will continue to be formed until the day of the rapture of the church.

A person becomes a member of the church simply by exercising faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

The Church Local Versus the Church Universal

The local church is defined as a local assembly of believers or a congregation that meets together physically for worship, fellowship, teaching, prayer and encouragement in the faith (Hebrews 10:25). At the local church level, we can live in relationship with other believers—we break bread together (Holy Communion), we pray for each other, teach and make disciples, strengthen, and encourage one another.

At the same time, all believers are members of the universal church. The universal church is made up of every single person who has exercised faith in Jesus Christ for salvation, including members of every local church body throughout the earth:

For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. (1 Corinthians 12:13, NIV)

God's People Are the Church

The founder of the home church movement in England, Canon Ernest Southcott, defined the

church best:

"The holiest moment of the church service is the moment when God's people—strengthened by preaching and sacrament—go out of the church door into the world to be the church. We don't go to church; we are the church."

The church, therefore, is not a place. It's not the building, it's not the location, and it's not the denomination. God's people who are in Christ Jesus are the church.

The Purpose of the Church

The purpose of the church is three-fold. The church comes together (assembles) for the purpose of bringing each member into spiritual maturity (Ephesians 4:13). The church reaches out (scatters) to spread the love of Christ and the gospel message to unbelievers in the world (Matthew 28:18-20). This is the Great Commission, to go out into the world and make disciples. So, the purpose of the church is to minister to believers and unbelievers.

The church, both in the universal and local sense, is important because it is the primary vehicle through which God carries out his purposes on earth. The church is the body of Christ—his heart, his mouth, his hands, and feet—reaching out to the world:

Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. (1 Cor 12:27, NIV)

The church is the people of the Kingdom of God. The church is the Bride of Christ:

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself for her to make her holy, cleansing her with the washing of water by the word. He did this to present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or anything like that, but holy and blameless. (Ephesians 5:25-27, CSB)

The supreme purpose of the church is to love and worship God through Jesus Christ and make him known throughout the world.

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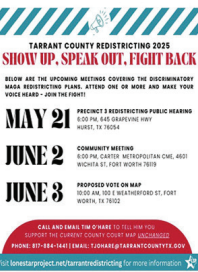
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Momentum builds for Evans & Rosedale as final incentives approved

CITY NEWS

Fort Worth City Councilmembers authorized the sale of 36 lots of land to Royal Capital, the master developer behind the Evans & Rosedale project, alongside several other project incentives — successfully overcoming the final hurdle to funding the long-awaited mixed-use development in the Historic Southside.

The vote also marked the conclusion of a whirlwind year for the project.

Following a national Request for Expression of Interest (RFEI) process beginning in March 2024, Royal Capital was announced as the project's master developer in August.

The Milwaukee-based team hit the ground running, meeting with the Historic Southside Neighborhood Association and other local stakeholders while also collaborating with the City on a series of community meetings — including a fireside chat in September and a block party visioning event in October — to collect neighborhood feedback and prioritize ideas for the long-vacant site.

More than 100 resident responses shaped Royal Capital's preliminary plans for the development, which were shared with the community as part of a special event in December 2024.

Since then, both Royal Capital and the City have been engaged in research, nailing down project specifics and conducting final negotiations.

"We're thrilled to see this project come so far in so short a time, but we're not finished yet," said Royal Capital CEO Kevin Newell.

"We're going to keep meeting with neighborhood stakeholders, host focus groups on key topics of interest and stay focused on moving this forward. And we couldn't be more pleased to see the City, the leadership and the community of Fort Worth making this commitment to progress in the Historic Southside — they have been outstanding partners."

"This development symbolizes a brighter future for Historic Southside, District 8 and Fort Worth," said Councilmember Chris Nettles. "It would not have been possible without the strong partnership of the City, Royal Capital and the community's support."

"Evans & Rosedale will be a valuable addition to the rich legacy of Historic Southside, providing quality affordable housing and retail options just five minutes from downtown Fort Worth — the urban heart of one of the fastest-growing large cities in the United States."

About the development

The mixed-use development at Evans & Rosedale is set to include:

- A minimum of 170 affordable residential units, including senior units, family units, stacked flats and live-work units.
- 15,700 square feet of commercial space, to potentially include restau-

rants, a fitness center, a business center, a coffee shop and more.

- Of this commercial space, a minimum of 3,000 square feet would be focused on attracting a grocery or food hall concept for at least a year.

- In addition, 7,200 square feet of commercial space will be set aside for local commercial tenants.

- A mix of surface, garage and street parking, for a maximum of 283 parking spaces to accommodate traffic.

- Parks and common area green spaces.

"The final scope of the Evans & Rosedale project is something that both the City and the community can be proud of," said Assistant City Manager Jessica McEachern. "It reflects many of the priorities that we've heard are deeply important to the neighborhood, including affordable housing and retail options along Evans Avenue. The project will also preserve attributes of the Historic Southside's history and use that as the foundation to build upon."

Incentive overview

Altogether, Royal Capital is committing to \$61 million in total investments, including \$48 million in hard construction costs. They are also committed to utilizing business equity firms for a minimum of 15% of construction costs and will make a good-faith effort to hire local individuals within the neighborhood.

The developer also plans to continue ongoing community engagement efforts, hire 30 full-time employees during the construction process, will create a security plan for the site and will work to incorporate the Historic Southside's heritage and culture throughout the project.

In exchange, the City of Fort Worth would provide \$2.5 million in City grants, as well as annual performance-based Chapter 380 grants for 20 years, beginning once construction on the project is complete. This yearly grant would be based on 80% of maintenance and property (M&O) taxes for the area and would be capped at \$6 million.

"The Evans & Rosedale project will not only be a catalyst for the neighborhood, but it will also spark an emerging market for this type of development in south-east Fort Worth," said Ori Fernandez,

assistant director of economic development for the City.

Additionally, up to \$7 million in reimbursements for public infrastructure costs will be paid through the Southside tax increment finance district (TIF 4), alongside expedited project facilitation and fee waivers from the City.

Lastly, the City of Fort Worth will be selling the 36 lots assembled for the project — which are currently owned by the City or by one of its component units — to the developer for \$1 each.

The 30 lots owned by the Fort Worth Housing and Finance Corporation are currently valued at \$3,595,977; the five lots owned by the Fort Worth Local Development Corporation are currently valued at \$537,076; and the final lot already owned by the City of Fort Worth is currently valued at \$112,500 — bringing the City's land contribution for the project to \$4,245,553.

In total, the City's incentive package for the Evans & Rosedale project will be \$19,745,553.

What happens now?

With the council approval, final development agreements can be drafted and pre-development on the project can begin. Royal Capital and the City of Fort Worth anticipate breaking ground on this project before the end of 2026.

"It's exciting to deliver a project that resonates with the needs and desires of the Historic Southside community after so many years of work," said Martha Collins, economic development manager for the City.

A former hub of Black commerce, the Historic Southside has been home to many of Fort Worth's — and even the nation's — first black entrepreneurs and is an extremely important part of the City's history.

The City of Fort Worth has invested over \$30 million into the area's infrastructure, redevelopment and planning efforts since the late 1990s, and the Evans & Rosedale project is a continuation of that long-term effort to bring more investment, jobs and economic prosperity to the neighborhood.

In the Community with Pastor Sharon Ford-Turner



Pic 1) In Waxahachie, Tx with Mother Blezoria Watts 91 years young. Mother's Day Celebration; Pic 2) 25th Annual Como Mother's Day Luncheon with CEO Of Como Lions Heart Carol Kirby Brown; Pic 3) With Honoree Dr. Lyndia Thomas at 25th Annual Como Mother's Day Luncheon

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Wednesday Services
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THEME: When will you decide to follow Jesus, 40:1-14

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Acts 1:8*

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Wednesday Prayer.....6:30PM
Bible Study (Wed).....7:00PM

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Youth Classes.....Saturday

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Sunday Service
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Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine,
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WEDNESDAY (Prayer & Teacher's Meeting)7:00PM

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PRAYER MEETING (Wednesday).....6:30 pm

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Weekly Services

Sunday School.....9:30 a.m.
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Sunday Morning Services.....11:00 a.m.
Communion Service.....Monthly
Bible Study (Wednesday via Conference Call).....7:00 p.m.

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Wednesday Night Bible Study....7:00pm

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SUNDAY SERVICE...10:30am

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817.413.8771 Email: cornbapt02@aol.com

-- Service Times --
SUNDAY SCHOOL
9:30 AM

SUNDAY MORNING
WORSHIP
10:30 AM

WEDNESDAY PRAYER
MEETING &
BIBLE STUDY @ 7:00 PM

Mark S. Fitz, Pastor

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5325 Bonnell Street
Fort Worth, TX 76107
817-731-3502
www.westmountmoriah.org

Dr. W.L.D. Campbell, Pastor

Sunday School - Sunday 9:00am
Morning Worship - Sunday 10:05am
Prayer Meeting - Wednesday 7:00pm

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Hab. 2:1-4 Matt. 28:18-20

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Wednesday Prayer Service & Bible Study 7:00 P.M.

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Sunday School 9:00 am
Morning Worship 11:00 am

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1ST, 4TH, 5TH WEDNESDAY - PRAYER SERVICE...7:30 p.m.
EVERY WEDNESDAY - YOUTH MEETINGS.....7:30 p.m.
2ND & 3RD WEDNESDAY - SMALLGROUPS.....7:30 p.m.
3RD SATURDAYS - EVANGELISM.....10:30 a.m.

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Worship Service.....11:00am
Wednesday Service.....7:30pm

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3920 E. Rosedale Ft Worth, TX 76105
817.534.0774

Reginald Andrews, Pastor/Teacher

Sunday Bible Study.....9:30 a.m.
Sunday Worship10:30 a.m.
Wednesday Bible Study.....7:15 p.m.

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the LORD our maker."*

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817.457.4362 mfbchurch@netzero.com
Website: meadowbrookfirstbaptist.com

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9:30am Sunday School
11:00am Morning Worship
Wednesday Prayer Meeting
7:00pm Bible Study, Mission
7:30pm Youth Bible Study

The Value of Gospel Choirs

by Pastor Julie

Gospel choirs in black churches have profoundly impacted pop culture, fashion, and music, particularly through gospel music. These choirs have inspired many artists and genres, with their roots stretching back to the deep South, driven by a desire for survival rather than influence.

The Roots of Resilience

The emergence of gospel choirs is tied to the painful history of slavery, which sought to erase African identities and suppress cultural expression. In response, the Black church became a sanctuary, and its choirs a symbol of strength and resilience. Through hymns and spirituals, these choirs preserved cultural heritage and conveyed hidden messages, such as in the spiritual "Wade in the Water," which offered coded escape instructions for enslaved people.

The Birth of Gospel Music

Gospel choirs' creativity led to the development of gospel music, blending spirituals, hymns, and blues. Pioneers like Mahalia Jackson, Thomas A. Dorsey, and Sister Rosetta Tharpe brought gospel to wider audiences, influencing the development of rock, R&B, and soul music.

Influence on Contemporary Music

Gospel music's impact on modern genres is clear. Many artists, including Aretha Franklin, Mahalia



Jackson, and Sam Cooke, began in church choirs. Elements of gospel, like call-and-response and emotional delivery, continue to shape today's music, seen in artists like Beyoncé and John Legend.

Cultural Impact

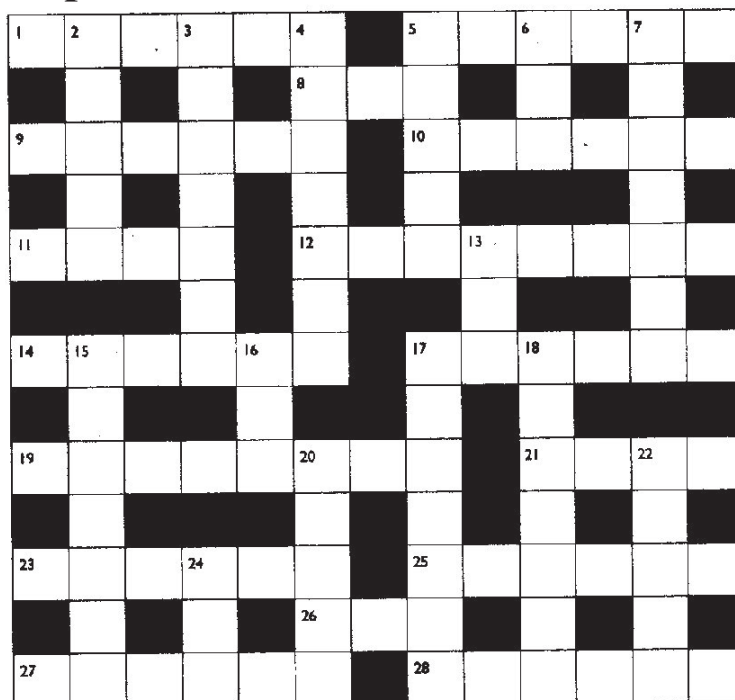
Beyond music, gospel choirs have been central to social and political movements. Their songs, like "We Shall Overcome" and "Lift Every Voice and Sing," became anthems of the civil rights movement. These choirs foster unity and have influenced activism through their powerful messages of hope and resilience.

A Legacy of Unity and Inspiration

The legacy of gospel choirs endures and inspires musicians across various genres. Their influence continues to shape modern music, as their emotional depth and vocal excellence resonate globally. The impact of gospel choirs on American culture and music is immeasurable, blending spirituality, creativity, and resilience to empower generations of people worldwide.

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- 1 "Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others—the _____ of heaven—praising God" (Luke 2:13)
 5 Devices for holding things together (Exod. 26:6)
 8 _____ and aah
 9 "The Lord God said to the serpent, 'You shall _____ in the dust as long as you live'" (Gen. 3:14)
 10 Pierce with a pointed pole (Gen. 40:19)
 11 Ran away (Gen. 14:10)
 12 Foot soldiers (2 Sam. 8:4)
 14 Intense fear and panic (Gen. 42:21)
 17 Plant bearing pods
 19 Humility; shame; dishonor (Ezek. 32:30)
 21 Objects used to make

a decision by chance (1 Chron. 6:61)

- 23 Chronological records of a king's wars and history (1 Kings 14:19)
 25 Association for a common purpose (Jer. 41:2)
 26 Highest possible: abbr. (Ezek. 27:10)
 27 Flee (Gen. 19:17)
 28 Hebrew name for God

DOWN

- 2 Nonurban; related to the country (Neh. 10:37)
 3 One who enters for conquest (Jer. 50:44)
 4 Person in military service (1 Sam. 18:17)
 5 Highest in rank (Gen. 37:36)
 6 Poisonous African snake
 7 "I am but a _____ here on earth: how I need a map—and your commands are my chart and guide" (Ps. 119:19)
 13 "A dull _____ requires great strength; be wise and sharpen the blade" (Eccles. 10:10)
 15 "King Uzziah produced _____ of war manufactured in Jerusalem, invented by brilliant men to shoot arrows and huge stones" (2 Chron. 26:15)
 16 Unit of electrical resistance
 17 "Neither you nor anyone else can serve two masters. You will hate one and show _____ to the other" or vice versa (Luke 16:13)
 18 Philistine giant David defeated (1 Sam. 17:48, 49)
 20 "Without making a big _____ over it, God simply shatters the greatest of men and puts others in their places" (Job 34:24)
 22 Agreement to not fight (Deut. 20:10)
 24 Solomon's great-grandson, a mostly good king of Judah (Matt. 1:7)

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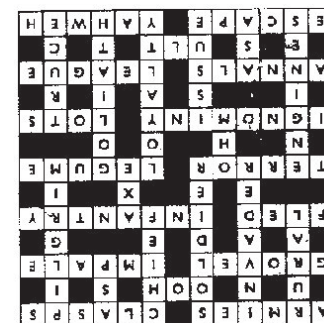
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Evang. Sharon Ford-Turner, Pastor
e-mail: sharonlmasonfordturner@gmail.com

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