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The Passion Comes to New Orleans

Perry Hosts Passionate Televised Performance on Palm Sunday



By Eric Craig
Data News Weekly Contributor

The City of New Orleans kicked off the Easter holidays with a Palm Sunday live televised performance on March 20, 2016, at Woldenburg Park. The theatrical event, which aired on Fox, was adapted from a Dutch

franchise by Dick Clark Productions and Fox. "The Passion" depicts a modern take on the last few hours of the life of Jesus Christ. The event was hosted by Tyler Perry, and featured musical artists Yolanda Adams sang the opening song and the final song "When The Saints Go Marching In" accompanied by the world famous Preservation Hall

Brass Band; Trisha Yearwood as The Blessed Virgin Mary; Chris Daughtry as Judas; Jencarlos Canela as Jesus; Prince Royce as Peter; Seal as Pontius Pilate and more. The performance also featured a live processional where hundreds of participants carried a 20-foot illuminated cross from the Mercedes-Benz Superdome

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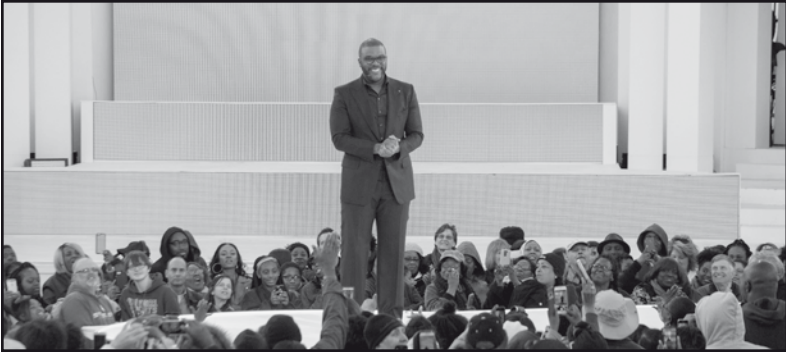
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through the French Quarters and Jackson Square to Woldenburg Park.

During the performance, Perry, a native of the Third Ward, mentioned the producers chose to host “The Passion” in the City of New Orleans because of its resiliency after Hurricane Katrina. As Jesus Christ was resurrected, so was New Orleans, Perry said.

Crystal Mclin, an attendee from Mississippi was excited about the event.

“I hope to see Yolanda Adams, Seal and Chris Daughtry. I love to see anything musical. I like the fact that Tyler is bringing this back to this City, where he’s from,” Mclin said

As the crowd lined up to see “The Passion, the onscreen talent was preparing for the show.

Actor Oscar Gale, cast as one of Jesus’ 12 disciples, appreciated the energy and work that went into the production of “The Passion.”

“It’s really hard to believe the magnitude of this event from the production to the stage, and considering everything it takes,” Gale said.

“It’s incredible to think about how this started in Holland, and now we’re seeing it here in the United States,” he added.

Parker Mulherin, a choir member of the live performance noted the grand scale of the production.

“It’s a great group dynamic, and everybody is trying to make sure it looks good. The whole production is grandiose and it’s great to be a part of this,” Mulherin said.

The contributors all shared how they were excited for a production like this to be hosted in New Orleans.

“To think they could have picked any city in all of America to film this, but they picked New Orleans and that’s an incredible thing. New Orleans as a whole is just such a resilient city,” Gale said.

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Here Comes the Easter Bunny

*L.B. Landry Community Clinic and Radio Station "Old School"
106.7 Host Community Easter Egg Hunt for the West Bank*

The L.B. Landry Community Clinic and radio station, "Old School" 106.7 are joining forces to host a community Easter Egg Hunt, this Saturday, March 26th from noon to 3 p.m. at L.B. Landry High School, 1200 L.B. Landry Drive. The event is free and open to the public. The "Hunt" is for children under 8 years of age and will take place at the field behind the school on the DeArmas Street side.

Organizers are inviting the entire west bank community to attend this fun, family event. Old School 106.7 will broadcast live as the kids hunt for thousands of eggs filled with candy and prizes. And some lucky winner will win a grand prize. There's food, entertainment and fun games for the kids including a giant slide,



inflatables and obstacle course; face painting, balloon twisters, free snowballs, finger painting and

more! And a giant Easter Bunny will be on hand to take photos with the kids.

"We were very excited when the station approached us about presenting this community event," said Dr. Donald Erwin, CEO of St. Thomas Community Health Center, the operating entity for the L.B. Landry clinic. "Not only do we want to say thank you for the support the Landry community has shown us by allowing us to serve them, but it's very important to us that the entire west bank community knows that we are here and that we are here to stay," Erwin said. St. Thomas Community Health Center celebrated the grand opening of the L.B. Landry Community Clinic in April of 2015. The more than 4,000 square foot facility is open to the community and offers primary care for adults and children and other services like school physicals

for students. Patients do not have to have insurance and can usually get same day or next day appointments.

St. Thomas Community Health Center, founded in 1987 continues to experience tremendous growth. Since 2014, St. Thomas has added three locations and now operates six health centers across the metro area, including Optometry and Behavioral Health clinics. St. Thomas is also investing more than \$200,000 to expand its space at the L.B. Landry site to better serve the community and students.

For more information about the Easter Egg Hunt, call the number above. For information about the L.B. Landry Clinic, St. Thomas Community Health Center or to make an appointment, call 504.529.5558.



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2016 Jazz Fest 30 Days Away

By Kichea S. Burt
Data News Weekly
Contributor

The 2016 Jazz & Heritage Festival is poised to open Friday, April 22nd in NOLA, with a stellar line-up and some new guidelines for traffic flow and audience viewing. At the 30 day out press conference it was announced that the planners focused strongly this year on improving traffic flow inside the festival. Chairs, blankets or tarps will not be permitted on the outer dirt track that

surrounds the field. New bleacher seating has been added for the Congo Square and Acura stages. Traffic flow is encouraged to move around the outer dirt track to get from one end of the festival grounds to the other. This year's J&H Fest Poster honors The Musical Marsalis Family titled "House of Swing - Portrait of The First Family of Jazz" by Paul Rogers. The Congo Square Festival Poster honors B. B. King titled "The Thrill's Not Gone" by George Hunt. The cubes (indicating who is playing when and where) were released



The 2016 Jazz & Heritage Festival official poster by Paul Rogers.

and are online by the time you read this. For some time now the festival has celebrated the culture of different countries with a pavilion showcasing that country's culture. This year Belize is the country being celebrated. Press conference attendees were entertained by Walter "Wolfman" Washington and The Roadmasters, and were fed by The Praline Connection.

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Big Freedia Pleads Guilty To Federal Theft Charge

Faces possible prison sentence and hefty fine

Data News Staff Edited Report

In a federal courtroom last week, Freddie Ross, Jr., known by his stage name Big Freedia, pleaded guilty to a charge of federal government theft related to housing vouchers.

The Bounce Music Star is highly regarded for putting the music genre on the map and being a spokesperson for the LGBT Community, getting a nomination for the 2011 GLAAD Media Awards.

According to The Times-Picayune, a bill of information charged the internationally known music star with stealing more than \$35,000 from the Department of Housing and Urban Development between 2010 and 2014. U.S. Attor-

ney Kenneth Polite's office accused her of continuing to receive housing assistance after her income rendered her ineligible for it. Big Freedia acknowledged in a March 1st statement that she continued to receive aid as her fame quickly ascended and her "financial situation changed."

During those four years, Big Freedia was receiving Section 8 Housing Vouchers for HUD that, in effect, gave her landlords hundreds of dollars in rent subsidies from the federal government each month.

"This is an incredibly unfortunate situation," Big Freedia said in an emailed statement to WWL TV. "I was on subsidized housing for many years before my financial situation changed. I quickly found myself in a new economic



Big Freedia

structure and, frankly, knew little about how to handle my money. It

wasn't until recently (after I had stopped receiving housing vouchers) that it became very clear I had received assistance to which I wasn't entitled. It was an oversight – but one that I take full responsibility for."

Because the entertainer acknowledged her mistake, she was able to enter a plea deal of \$34,800 in restitution but did not solidified if jail time will come into effect. The maximum penalty for a crime of this sort can be up to ten years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

A final sentence is scheduled for June 16th.

The timing of all this is questionable, as Big Freedia didn't get the call from the Feds until after the release of "Formation", Beyoncé's

politically charged song that brings attention to the economic and social devastation New Orleans felt post-Hurricane Katrina.

"Housing Vouchers are a vital lifeline for many people I know in New Orleans and around the country, including struggling artists," Big Freedia's statement continued. "I truly believe there needs to be more programs for artists and musicians to teach basic financial literacy and planning. Coming from where I came from, I know that I could have used that kind of assistance. I'm exploring ways to be a part of the solution in this area and am looking forward to putting this matter behind me."

Currently, Big Freedia is touring the country promoting her "Just Be Free" album.

Class Got Brass Provides Funding for Middle and High School Music Programs



This year's winners in the Beginners Division: Park Forest Middle



This year's First Place winners in the Advanced Division:
1st Medard Nelson

By Kichea S. Burt
Data News Weekly Contributor

Class Got Brass was started in 2012 to address two core issues: 1) lack of funds for music education in the schools, and; 2) a lack of emphasis on traditional New Orleans music in the many school band programs that are doing great work despite tremendous obstacles.

The goals of Class Got Brass are to create an incentive for band programs to embrace the joyful sounds of New Orleans brass bands, and to reward participating schools with funds that support their music instruction.

Class Got Brass is Open to Middle Schools and High Schools – Public and Private – Anywhere in Louisiana.

Prizes in the "advanced" category will be \$10,000 for first place, \$7,000 for second and \$5,000 for third. We also have a category for beginner bands, with prizes of \$5,000, \$4,000 and \$3,000 for first, second and third place, respectively. There are additional prizes for schools that don't place in the top three.

This year's winners are:

- Beginners:
1st Park Forest Middle
2nd Kipp McDonogh #15
3rd Kipp Central City
Advanced
1st Medard Nelson
2nd Landry - Walker
3rd St. Augustine High

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Justin & Jasmine's Wedding Bells Ring

Family Gathers to Cheer the Marriage of Justin Brown and Jasmine Robinson

Photos by Glenn Summers
Data News Weekly Contributor

Jasmine Robinson, daughter

of Greer and Craig Robinson, was united in marriage to Justin Brown, son of Kim Brown and the late Keith Brown Sr., on March

19, 2016 at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church in New Orleans, LA. The happy couple entertained guests during a reception that followed at

the Zulu Social and Pleasure Club. Congratulations to Justin and Jasmine, and we at Data, wish you a lifetime of happiness!



Groomsmen celebrate with Bride (LtoR) Brandon Allen, Randy Walton, Keenan Brown, Best Man Keith Brown, Bride Jasmine Robinson, Groom Justin Brown, Seth Brown, Christopher Randolph, Roderick Carey, & Deoante Rivers.



Rehearsal Dinner – Groom Justin Brown and Bride Jasmine Robinson (front row) enjoy a moment with proud parents Kim Brown (L) and Greer and Craig Robinson.



Mom Kim J. Brown shares wedding reception moment with Randolph sisters – Groom's Aunt Esther Roberts, Aunt Zenobia Lieteau and Grandmother Agatha Jones.



Groom's Uncle & Data News Weekly Publisher Terry B. Jones poses with Aunt Esther Roberts during reception.



Violinist T-Ray thoroughly entertained the guests.



The Groom's Brothers and Mom – Keith, Justin, Kim and Seth Brown.



The Bride and Groom.

Visit www.ladatanews.com for more photos from these events

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Super Sunday 2016

Photos by Kichea S. Burt
Data News Weekly Contributor

Mardi Gras Indians dress up for Mardi Gras in suits influenced by Native-American ceremonial apparel. Collectively, their groups are called “tribes” or “gangs”. There are at least 38 groups. They range in size from half a dozen to several dozen members. They are located in and around Metropolitan New Orleans. The groups are largely independent, but a pair of umbrella organizations loosely coordinate the Uptown Indians and the Downtown Indians.

In addition to Mardi Gras Day, many of the tribes also parade on Saint Joseph’s Day (March 19) and the Sunday nearest to Saint Joseph’s Day (“Super Sunday”). The phenomenon of the Mardi Gras Indians reflects a vital musical and cultural history of Black New Orleans. The groups have been criticized for their portrayal of what is considered by some to be Native-American stereotypes. However, many Mardi Gras Indians explain that they are descendants of Native-Americans and that there were Black-skinned natives on the American continent prior to the African slave trade.



From Mary Church Terrell to Barbara Lee

Black Women in the Peace Movement



Julianne Malveaux
NNPA Columnist

Some words seem rarely mentioned in this highly toxic political season. We've heard about bombs and walls, but very little about peace. One is almost tempted, when

some of the candidates are speaking, to burst into song – give peace a chance. In this Women's History Month, it makes sense to reflect on women and the peace movement, and especially on the African American women who have been peace activists and have played a significant role in this movement.

The Women's International League of Peace and Freedom (WILPF) was founded in 1915 in the midst of World War I. Its first chair, Hull House's Jane Addams, cared deeply about world disarmament. Early on, though, there were criticisms of WILPF and the

peace movement because African American were too often invisible. In a book poignantly titled, *No Peace Without Freedom, Race and WILPF*, Joyce Blackwell writes about tensions within the path breaking peace organization. In a similar book, "A Band of Noble Women: Racial Politics in the Women's Peace Movement," Melinda Plastas writes that African American women combined the effects of race, gender and war, and "demanded a place for Black women in the international peace movement."

Mary Church Terrell was involved in WILPF almost from its

outset, serving on its board for a time. The D.C. doyenne, who was one of the first African American women to earn a college degree, was involved in the civil rights and social justice movements. A teacher by profession, she was one of the first women to serve on the Washington, D.C. Board of Education. She played founding roles in many justice organizations, including the NAACP, the International College of Women, the National Association of Colored Women (NACW), and Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. Some of her dealings with WILPF were not smooth – she was not re-

ected to serve a second term on the Board of the organization, to the chagrin of many of the White women who felt that Black women's voices needed to be heard on peace matters.

Terrell was not the only woman who worked with WILPF during its early days. Addie Hunton came to activism early, working as an organizer for NACW in the early twentieth century. She worked with servicemen in France during the war. Those war experiences perhaps influenced her to work as a peace

Commentary,
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Trump's Hostile Takeover of the Republican Party



Raynard Jackson
NNPA News Wire
Columnist

I have repeatedly heard many of the talking heads in Washington, D.C. and the Republican establishment accuses Donald Trump and his presidential campaign of engaging in a hostile takeover of the Republican Party. I agree with them.

Having received my undergraduate degree from Oral Roberts University in tax accounting, let's define what is a hostile takeover.

According to Investopedia, "a hostile takeover is the acquisition of one company (called the target company) by another (called the acquirer) that is accomplished not by coming to an agreement with the target company's management, but by going directly to the company's shareholders or fighting to replace management in order to get the acquisition approved."

Investopedia continues, "the key characteristic of a hostile takeover is that the target company's management does not want the deal to go through."

Typically a company is targeted for a hostile takeover when their assets are considered to be undervalued. Trump sees the Black community as an undervalued asset within the Republican Party.

Unfortunately, many in the party see no value in the Black community because they don't think they will ever vote Republican. These are the consultants that go from one losing campaign to another, doing the same thing, and wonder why they never win an election.

In 2016, you still have people in the party that believe if you seek the Black vote it will alienate White voters, therefore they should ignore the Black vote.

Trump sees the Republican Party and the Black vote as an undervalued asset and its management totally incompetent. He is right on both counts.

The Republican Party, as currently constituted, is the party of old White men. Trump sees a great opportunity to expand the party's market share by cultivating substantial relations with the Black and Hispanic communities, not just with

words, but also by his actions.

Trump's national spokesman is a Black female; his state director in North Carolina is a Black male. No other presidential campaign or party institution has Black staffers in such a position. Trump has publicly stated his goal of getting at least 25 percent of the Black vote. No other presidential campaign or party institution has made such a goal.

The Republican Party will continue to be an undervalued asset as long as they hire consultants who go from losing campaign to losing campaigns.

We have a national convention coming up in July, but where are the Black staffers who have decision making powers? Where are the Black delegates? Where are the Black vendors? Will there be any Black entertainment?

Yes, Trump does say some incendiary things and can be quite impolitic at times. But like anyone who is thrust from high school to the NBA, there will be some growing pains and many unforced errors (LeBron James, Kobe Bryant).

One way of trying to prevent a hostile takeover is by using a poison pill. The purpose of the poison pill is to prevent the takeover from ever happening.

Marco Rubio said, "Trump can't win the general election." Nebraska's United States Senator Ben Sasse said, "I will never vote for Trump." Defeated campaign staffers constantly go on TV and talk about how Trump can't beat Hillary or he will never get the female vote, etc.

They don't really believe that, but this is the poison pill that the establishment is putting up because they can't fathom the idea of an outsider like Trump becoming president and they have little to no access to the inner circle.

Republicans have spoken out more on racial issues during the past two weeks than they have in my entire time as a Republican; not because they are so concerned about racism, but because they think it will hurt Trump's candidacy.

The shareholders of the party (Republican voters) have no faith in the current management (congressional leaders, the consultant class, Republican TV pundits, etc.) so they have told the establishment that they strongly support a hostile takeover (by Trump).

They have made this perfectly clear with their vote. Those opposed to Trump's takeover have spent north of \$ 30 million in just two weeks to try to damage Trump

before the Florida and Ohio elections last week; but Trump still won four out of five states.

The shareholders want new management and they want Trump to lead the team. The shareholders have repeatedly told the current management that they don't want amnesty for illegals, they don't want these trade deals, they don't want continued increases in government spending; but the current management told the shareholders to sit down and shut up, thus the rise of Trump.

Hostile takeovers usually catch management by surprise because they have gotten complacent, lazy, and comfortable; thus making them out of touch with their shareholders.

Clearly, the Republican establishment caused this problem and now they are trying to stop the takeover from happening. Well, it's too little too late and they will be forced to accept the inevitable.

Raynard Jackson is Founder and Chairman of Black Americans for a Better Future (BAFBF), a federally registered 527 Super PAC established to get more Blacks involved in the Republican Party that focuses on the Black entrepreneur. Learn more information about BAFBF at www.bafbf.org.

Spiritually Speaking

Demand Your Inheritance



James A. Washington
NNPA News Wire
Columnist

This column is all about not putting limits on a limitless God. In church, the sermon was all about how we, as finite creatures, do a pretty good job of trying to put the infinite being of God into some way, shape or form that we can understand. The problem with that is we can't do it. Our brain won't let us comprehend all knowing, all powerful, everywhere since before time began and after it stops. You see the terms "all," "before," and "after," presuppose there is a limit to time and space and power and understanding and things. It

is the way of a finite being which happens to be us. These are human characteristics and it is how we have come to rationalize life. It begins at birth. It ends at death. But does it? Pastor was teaching that as long as we operate that way, we limit what we think we're able to do. His point and mine is don't put man's limits on God's promises.

You see each one of us has an image of ourselves on the inside of who we are and what we can do. It has been shaped by friends and family, situations and circumstances, what we want and what we have. For many of us that image is in direct conflict with what God sees and knows He has placed within us. Let me put it this way. Would you ask a homeless man for \$100? Of course not! You wouldn't ask, because you wouldn't believe he had it. So if you do not believe there is greatness in you, dare I say you wouldn't ask God for it. And there's the rub. I am now

of the opinion, it's time for all of us to put demands on God. I am not being arrogant or presumptuous. I am trying to be humble, respectful and obedient. God has been saying forever to ask him. As a matter of fact, He says, ask, seek, and knock. In each instance your action is promised a positive reaction. Don't ask. Don't get. I'm really talking about mustard seed stuff here. Your faith dictates what you ask for. Do you have enough faith to take the limits off God and to ask Him; to demand from Him the inheritance that is yours as delivered by the finished work of Jesus Christ?

I understand this can be tricky stuff. And it's not easy. We put obstacles in our way when it comes to simply receiving the grace and blessings of God. I'm merely pointing out that we have some say in this. We have a spiritual obligation to not limit God. The solution is to recognize those things we do that are subtle, but devastating to our

achieving God's purpose for us. Fear limits God. If you think the answer will be no, you won't ask. Unbelief limits God. If you don't believe it's possible, then all things become impossible. Disobedience limits God. If you disobey, you don't think you have the right to ask for anything. And comparison limits God. If you feel unworthy and less than those who have more, you'll accept what you have and nothing more. How? Why? By negating a willingness to believe that we are truly blessed and highly favored, made in the image of almighty God and destined to be great for Him. You know there is fear of failure and fear of success, both with the same result. I call it, "the do nothing". It's comfortable and you can handle that. Who wants to expect everything when the world has taught you that you don't deserve anything? My proof of what I'm saying is in Matthew 4:11, after the devil tempted Jesus with everything in the world and He refused

in the name of God. "The devil left Him and angels came and attended Him." In the name of the devil, Jesus was aware enough to say, no, thank you. And because He knew where His blessings lay, God sent angels to attend Him and in God's name gave Him everything the devil had promised.

Think about that.

Are you making any demands on God? He's just waiting on you to recognize He's your God, daring you to ask so He can give. Without the question, without the demand, it's an unfulfilled dream, a mountain too big to move, a desire never met. And this I know. Psalm 37:4-5 says, "Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord, trust in Him and He will do this;" You gotta believe.

May God bless and keep you always.

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Commentary, Continued from page 8.

activist during the 1920s. In 1926, she wrote a report condemning US occupation of Haiti. Bertha McNeill was another of the African American women involved in WILPF. She led the Washington, D.C. chapter, and also served as a vice president of the organization for two terms.

These women – as do some of our non-African American sisters like Media Benjamin and Arandhati Roy – come to mind in the middle of this raucous political season. Sane, calm voices are missing in these presidential debates. We are also missing a future focus that takes the futility of increasing militarism into consideration. With the immigration crisis sparked by conflict in Syria, the violence maintained by ISIS, unrest in the Middle East, and tension with Russia, not to mention the number of US troops still in Afghanistan and Iraq, wouldn't it be appropriate for us to hear about alternatives to militarism.

That brings me to California Congresswoman Barbara Lee, the only person who had the courage to oppose President George W. Bush's push for military action after September 11, 2001. She appropriately asked whether our country was rushing into war. Subsequent events suggest that we did rush – "weapons of mass destruction" were never found. Many of us are quite familiar with Barbara Lee's peace activism, but far fewer of us know much about Mary Church Terrell and Addie Hunton. While African American peace activists were few in the WILPF early days, their contributions were significant and, more importantly, they paved the way for activists like Barbara Lee to advocate a peace agenda and a peace budget.

Those who profit from the military industrial complex seem so welded to the notion of war that they won't give peace a chance. And

they'll take war however they can – at home, as police departments are increasingly militarized (do we really need tanks in city streets), or abroad, where it is easy to create an enemy. Black women's history of peace activism should be lifted up this month, especially the work of Mary Church Terrell and Barbara Lee.

Julianne Malveaux is an author and economist based in Washington, D.C. Her latest offering, "Are We Better Off? Race, Obama and Public Policy," is available for purchase at www.juliannemalveaux.com

Julianne Malveaux is an author, economist and Founder of Economic Education. Her latest book "Are We Better Off? Race, Obama and Public Policy" is available to order at www.juliannemalveaux.com. Follow her on Twitter @drjlastword.

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Can We... Propagate?



By LMG Calla Victoria
Data News Weekly Columnist

At my last Louisiana Master Gardener General Meeting we viewed a fascinating PowerPoint presentation on propagation. The process of creating new plants from an existing plant is called propagation, and that is how the majority of the plants in the world today exist. There are two types of propagation processes, both of which come from a mother plant. Plants can be propagated by sexual and asexual propagation.

Sexual Propagation: Seed formation takes place only after pollination. Once fertilization has

happened, seeds are formed. We can either harvest seeds from the blooms of plants or from seed sacks that develop on your existing plant material. Angels trumpets trees and Jasmine plants develop seed sacks, once the seed sacks dry out you can gather the seeds and plant them. We can purchase seeds in stores, at plant sales and online. And in many cases birds carry and drop seeds that germinate and voila...you have new plant volunteers in your garden that you did not plant.

Asexual Propagation: This process is also called vegetative propagation. Stem cuttings, root cuttings, leaf cuttings, division, layering, stooling,

grafting and budding are all vegetative methods of propagation.

Cloning plants from stem cuttings of an existing plant-We take cuttings of the tender new growth of plants, pull off the bottom leaves which is where auxins form, dip the ends in rooting hormone and plant in rich soil. Auxins are the hormones that stimulate root growth, so where ever you pull off a leaf, that is a place where roots will grow. When propagating from cuttings, always take several cuttings as all may not take, so plant several cuttings.

Propagating from leaf cuttings-In some cases like succulents you can just pluck off a leaf of the existing plant and pop it into some soil and it will germinate creating a new plant.

Stooling-This is a type of air layering and is one of the easiest ways to create new plant material; and the process works with most climbing plants. Basically you bend down a branch so that it makes contact with the soil, place a stone or brick on top of the branch so that it stays in contact with the soil and does not pop up. In six to eight weeks, once you remove the stone and try to lift the branch you will find that it has taken roots. After the roots are formed, the branch is cut off

from the plant and the newly rooted branch then is replanted. In many cases climbing plants will do this on their own. One of my groundcover roses is always rooting itself, so I just clip off the rooted portion and plant it.

Propagating by Division-Many plant species produce offshoots after blooming. The offsets are sometimes called pups because they are little baby plants of the mother plant. Once the pup has grown to half the size of the mother plant, the offset can be removed and potted. As a rule, bromeliads set off as many pups as leaves on the mother plant, so if the mother plant has 15 leaves it will put out 15 pups. Crinum lilies (*Crinum americanum* L.), walking irises (*Neomarica gracilis*), and birds of paradise (*Strelitzia reginae*) also put out pups after they bloom.

Plant propagation is a very creative and lucrative field. Propagators are always looking to create more sturdy plants that are disease resistant, drought resistant, cold hardy, as well as trying to create new species of hybrid plant material. Now we have so many dwarf varieties of plants, and one of the biggest developments in recent years is the Encore azalea, which blooms several times per year and

was invented by plant breeder Robert E. "Buddy" Lee of Independence, Louisiana. The evergreen Encore® Azaleas enjoy more sun than traditional azaleas and come in both regular and dwarf forms. The invention of these wonderful plants made old Buddy an instant millionaire. Knockout roses are another innovation in the plant world that has made millions. Knockout roses are disease resistant, and bloom year around. Hybridizers took all of the negatives of growing roses and got rid of them. Knockout roses never get black spot, they are upright bloomers, repeat bloomers, and take lots of abuse and neglect. New on the horticulture horizon are the "glow-in-the-dark" plants. This invention was achieved by crossing the plant material with the chemical reaction of the enzyme luciferase and a molecule call luciferin, which is what causes bioluminescent organisms like fireflies to glow. I wrote an article about the inventor of these plants about a year ago and that article can be viewed on my website at www.thegardeningdiva.com.

Check out my "Gardening Tip of the Week" at www.thegardeningdiva.com

Remember, never get too busy to stop and enjoy the beautiful flowers!



Churches Go Green, Save Green, Clean God's Green Earth

By Avis Thomas-Lester
Urban News Service

The biggest challenge at the Reverend Dr. Earl D. Trent, Jr.'s historic black church is raising enough money to do the Lord's work.

Trent, pastor of Washington, D.C.'s Florida Avenue Baptist Church, was grappling with that very issue five years ago when he heard a presentation about how going green could reduce utility costs.

"We've always been somewhat socially aware," Trent said. "So when we looked at the savings and the opportunity to do something good for the environment, we decided to give it a try."

The pastor and his board worked with an engineer to design a program to power the 103-year-old church with clean, economical energy. They equipped the roof with solar-electric panels. They replaced the aged HVAC system with a new, energy-efficient model and installed LED lights.

"We are saving at least \$600 per month on electricity," Trent said. "For a church like this one, that's a lot of money. It has worked out so well that we are considering adding more energy-efficient features."

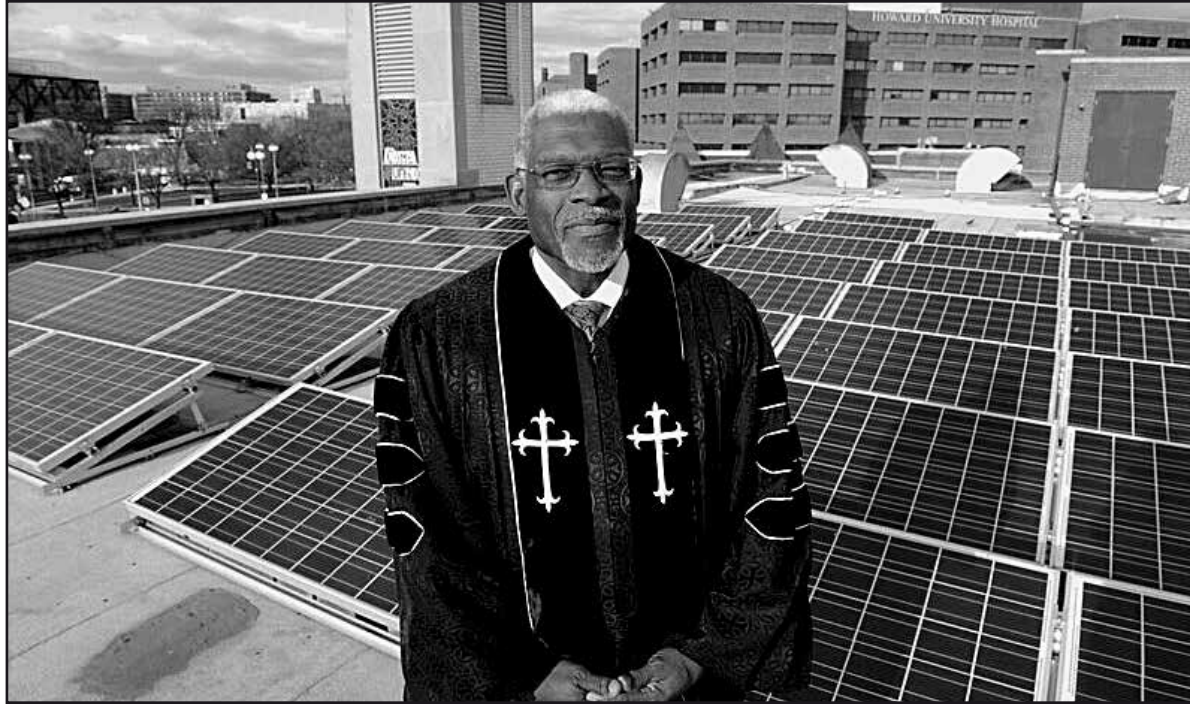
As America continues to reel from an unsteady economy, many black churches have expanded from places of worship to help centers. Many now operate food pantries, drug and alcohol programs and even work-training facilities, atop traditional church services.

Yet, even as need has increased, giving has slowed. Despite the biblical mandate that good Christians should donate 10 percent of their income to the church, many members have cut their offerings, religious leaders say.

"There are a lot of hands outstretched at church these days, but far too many of them are empty," said one pastor. "We have to raise more and spend it wiser."

Energy efficiency serves two purposes, church officials said. It saves money that can aid members. It also improves aging facilities.

Energy modernization can be



Rev. Earl Trent (pictured above) said he appreciates that his church has reduced its carbon footprint and that his flock are good shepherds over the Earth, as the Bible says Christians should be. Photo credit: Jocelyn Augustino

cost-prohibitive, experts said, easily topping \$50,000 for a moderately sized church. So, many jurisdictions offer no-interest or low-interest loans and will finance projects up to 100 percent.

Several private organizations and government agencies help churches go green. Washington, D.C.'s Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies partnered with the African Methodist Episcopal Church in a 2012 energy pilot program.

Con Edison covered \$68,500 of the \$178,000 cost of energy-saving boiler and pipe insulation last year at Harlem's Riverside Church, site of a 1990 speech by Nelson Mandela and the 1972 funeral of baseball legend Jackie Robinson.

The Environmental Protection Agency's Energy Star for Congregations program "certifies" churches as energy efficient. Rosemary Enobakhare, a supervisor in the EPA's congregations office, said some pastors are taking an activist role.

"Faith leaders understand that when it comes to environmental issues like a changing climate, minority and underserved communities

are suffering the most," she said.

The Rev. Dr. Eleazar Merriweather, pastor of Detroit's St. Paul AME Zion Church, which is on the EPA's "certified" list, said he regularly preaches energy conservation to his 225 members. His energy forum drew 200 participants in 2013.

"We had people there to teach them how to conserve on power so that their energy costs would be lower," said Merriweather. "That contributes to them being able to pay their bills."

Deacon William Gentry, CFO at suburban Maryland's First Baptist Church of Glenarden, said energy costs there have dropped 20 to 25 percent since its energy features were updated. It also has a recycling program.

"It is a church that strives to be fiscally prudent and ecologically sound," Gentry said.

Michael D. McAfee, a senior energy consultant with the National Utilities Refund, said his agency conducts energy audits to help churches determine how much they should spend and whether they have been overcharged on their utilities.

Energy auditors examine utility

bills as far back as 48 months, identify overcharges and apply for refunds for their clients. McAfee said he has found a \$15,000 overcharge at Glenarden.

Trustee Robert Trent said Greater Mt. Calvary Holy Church in Northeast Washington is working with the D.C. Energy Department's Property Assessed Clean Energy program to finance a \$3-million energy upgrade. The Trents aren't related.

"There is a requirement by the city to go green. We are trying to be in alignment with what's going on," he said, adding that his 7,000-member church will save \$100,000-plus per year in energy costs.

Rev. Earl Trent said he appreciates that his church has reduced its carbon footprint and that his flock are good shepherds over the Earth, as the Bible says Christians should be.

But mostly he's happy that he has saved his congregation upwards of \$7,500 per year.

"We're always looking at the bottom line," Trent said. "We can use whatever we save to help people."

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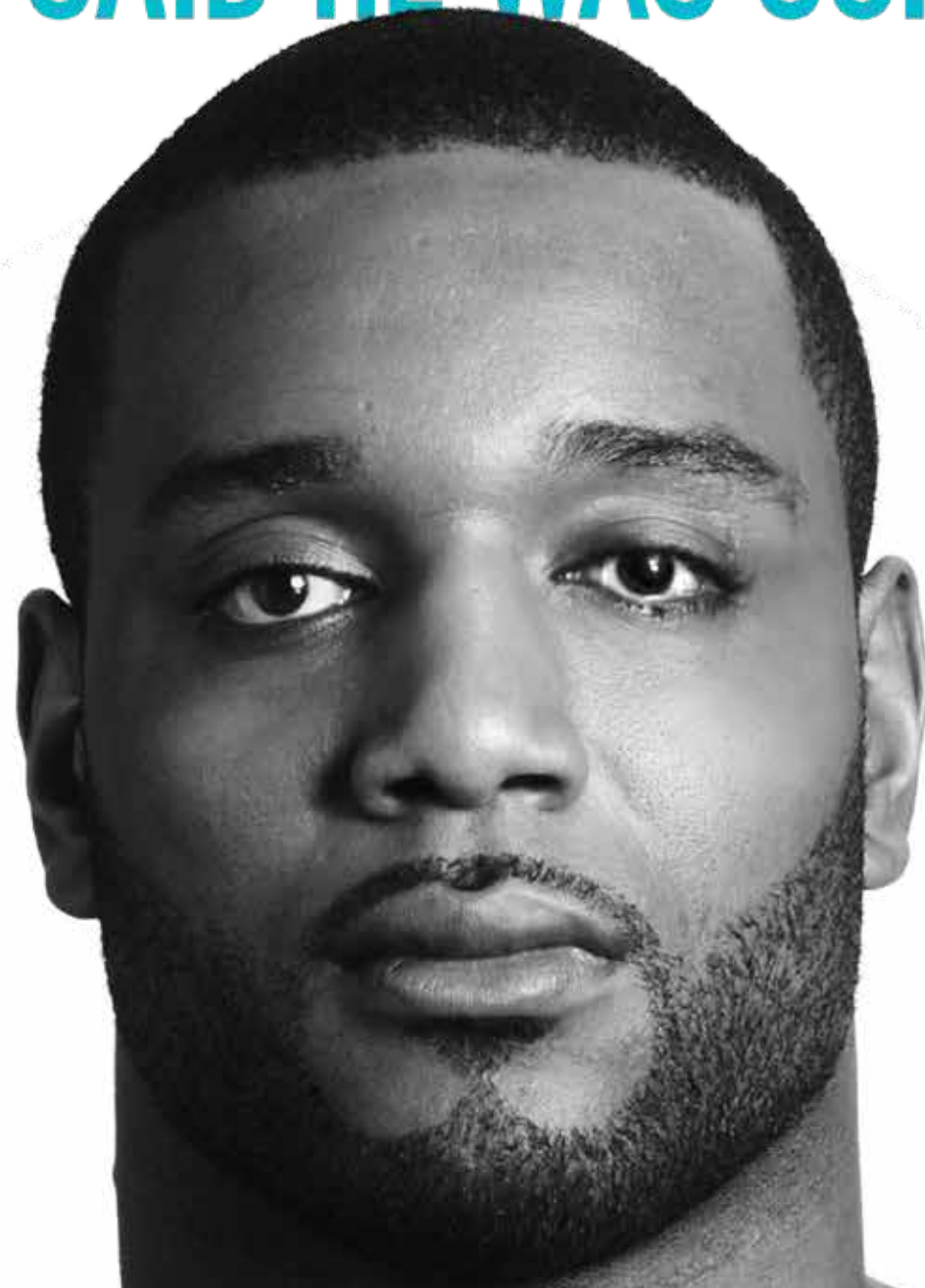
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