

# Award-winning pastors unite in historic church in suburban D.C.

TIMOTHY COX  
SPECIAL TO  
THE CHRONICLE

Two pastors presented with the Chairman's Award during the 47th annual NAACP Image Awards united in suburban Washington, D.C. on March 1.

The Rev. Dr. Otis Moss III was the main speaker at the Alfred Street Baptist Church, the historic church organized in suburban Alexandria in the mid-1800s.

Moss, the former pastor of Augusta, Ga.'s historic Tabernacle Baptist Church, is pictured with the Rev. Dr. Howard-John Wesley, pastor of Alfred Street Baptist Church.

Both Moss and Wesley were recently acknowledged by the NAACP's National Board of

Directors during the organization's nationally-televised 47th annual NAACP Image Awards.

The Los Angeles-based event lauded both pastors with the prestigious 2016 Chairman's Award, touting the ministers as "outstanding trailblazing leaders under the age of 50."

Other recipients of the special award included Rev. Dr. Jamal Bryant, pastor of Empowerment A.M.E. Church in Baltimore, and actor/singer Jussie Smollett of the Fox TV series, "Empire."

Moss addressed the capacity-filled church and kicked-off a month-long lecture series called "March Gladness." He discussed several topics, including the "Black Lives Matter" movement, and the nation's current political

climate.

Moss served as Tabernacle Baptist's pastor from 1997 to 2006, before leaving to head Chicago's Trinity United Church of Christ, where he's currently minister. His ministry espouses a black-based theology concerned with positively reaching inner-city black youth.

The Rev. Jeremiah Wright Jr. is pastor emeritus at Trinity United Church of Christ. Moss is the son of the Rev. Otis Moss Jr., retired pastor of Olivet Institutional Baptist Church in Cleveland, Ohio. The elder Moss was a colleague of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and the Rev. Jesse Louis Jackson Sr., a graduate of North Carolina A&T University in Greensboro, N.C.

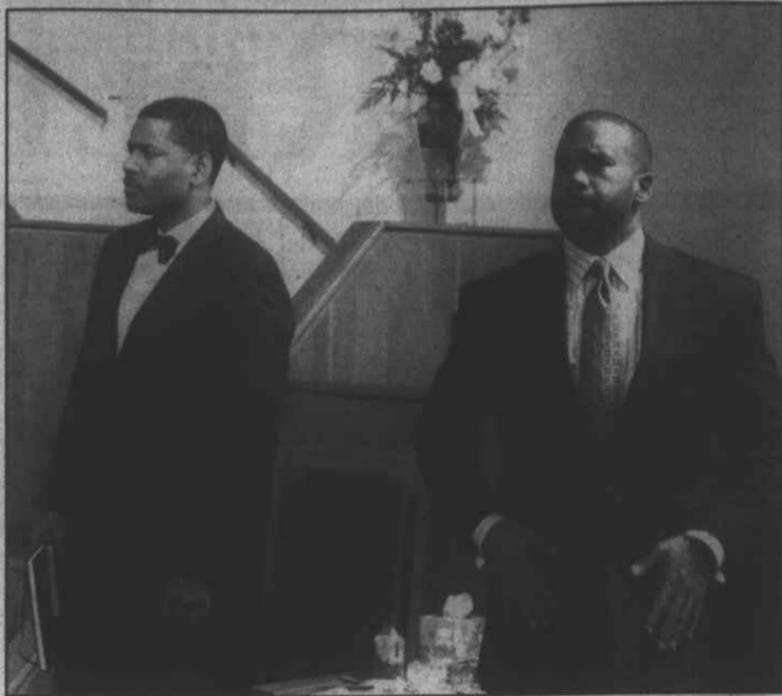


Photo by Timothy Cox  
The Rev. Dr. Otis Moss III, left, was the main speaker at historic Alfred Street Baptist Church on March 1, whose pastor is the Rev. Dr. Howard-John Wesley, right.

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## Lesson

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he do to inherit eternal life? Jesus immediately focuses in on the word "good" and asks a question of the man who evidently had been following Jesus and was aware of His "good deeds" in the community and His teaching on the subject of eternal life. But Jesus focuses in on the word "good." Jesus points out that none are "good" but God. "Do you know the commandments?" Jesus inquires and quotes them. Maybe this is more for the man and those listening than for Jesus' info to answer the question. The ruler's response is that he has done all the commandments require since childhood. He is probably feeling pretty good about himself until Jesus says, "Then the only thing left for you to do is sell all you have and give to the poor and follow me." (vs.22) This is an unexpected sacrifice that proves too much for the ruler

and he leaves, preferring his riches here on earth rather than eternal life and promised riches in glory. God knows our hearts even when we sometimes don't. Jesus points out that earthly riches may prove to be a problem for those seeking entry into the kingdom (vs.25). Someone in the crowd now asks the question, "Who then can be saved?" (vs.26)

The answer has a familiar ring to it. "The things which are impossible with men are possible with God." (Luke 18:27) Peter, ever the inquisitor, then speaks up, saying, "We have all left our lives behind to follow you ... what should we expect?" Christ tells Peter that the rewards that await them and others who follow Him are many and hundredfold (vs. 30). Jesus says that these shall be enjoyed here in this temporal life as well as in the eternal future. But Jesus also says there will be persecution along the way (vs.30). Jesus' closing remark here is, "But many that are first shall

be last; and the last first." (vs.31) Remember, with God all things are possible and without spiritual insight ... confusing.

**For Your Consideration:** What did the rich ruler discover about himself? Are you willing to search your heart to find what derails eternal life for you?

**Life's Application:** For the young ruler, riches were his God. How does Christ challenge us today with sacrifices to follow Him? Maybe it's education, careers, comforts or pleasures. Read Philippians 3:5, 8 then ask what things do I need to "count as dung" that I may gain Christ? What sacrifices has God placed on my heart to make? Who does God want me to serve? How does He want me to serve? Pray and ask God to reveal these things and give you courage and wisdom to be obedient to His direction. (UMI Annual Commentary 2015-16)

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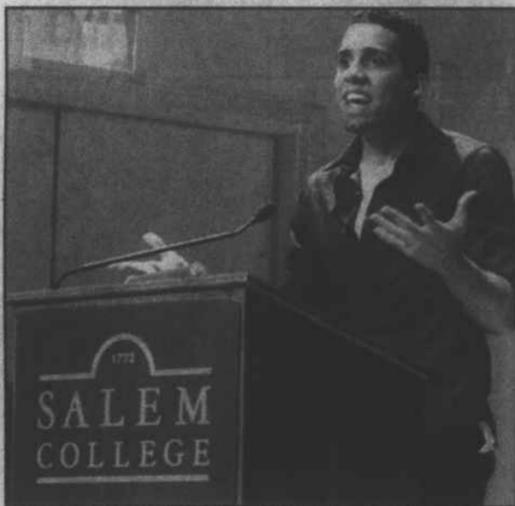
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Photo by Timothy Ramsey  
**Writer and producer Clay Cane introduces his documentary "Holler if you hear me, gay in the church" on Saturday, March 5 at Salem College.**



## Gay

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her mother who does not approve of her lifestyle and the tribulations she endured soon after. She then goes to live inside a youth home for LGBT teens that have been exiled by their family and friends and have nowhere else to go.

Also featured in the film is the existence of gay churches, the role of LGBT individuals inside the church, as well as how LGBTs affect the bottom line of a church through offerings and tithes.

Throughout the film, young people expressed the hurt and ridicule they received from those inside of the church, along with members of their own families. The mother of one of the engaged young ladies getting married even

refused to attend the wedding due to her not agreeing with her daughter's lifestyle. Another young lady attempted a heterosexual relationship to please those around her, but felt as though she was prostituting herself with this man because she did not love him and only entertained the thought of being with him to be seen, as some would say, "normal."

A preacher in the film even stated that along with having secretly gay members in the congregation, there are also many secretly gay preachers who dare not come out of the closet due to not wanting to lose members.

Following the film there was a Q & A session that became rather intense due to having individuals from both sides who wanted to argue some of points presented in the film.

A young man stated that he does not believe in the term "gay Christian," which incited a debate that allowed everyone to give their viewpoints on many issues from the uniqueness of being black and gay inside the church versus being white and gay inside the church, to the older individuals inside the church that have seen the gay community growing inside of the church for decades.

The majority of the responses were positive in response to the film. Cane stated he does not believe that being gay is a sin and asked the question, "Where does your soul go when you have been taught you are an abomination?" This was a question presented to all to illustrate some of the thoughts that some LGBT individuals wrestle with daily. Food for thought.

## Day

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chairman of the N.C. Democratic Party and subsequently was named political director. As a result of his political achievements, Dr. Ward made history in 1989 as the first African-American executive director of the N.C. Democratic Party.

Dr. Ward has chaired two university advisory boards. From 2009-2011, he was chairman of the Board of trustees of Saint Augustine's University, his family's beloved alma mater.

Dr. Ward was born on the campus at St. Agnes Hospital. He continued his family's

tradition by receiving his Bachelor of Arts degree from Saint Augustine's College. He earned a Master of Arts degree from North Carolina State University. In 2003, Ward earned a Ph.D. from NC A&T State University's School of Education.

Dr. Ward currently serves as vice chairman of the Association of Episcopal Colleges and Universities and recently accepted an appointment to the Board of Visitors of Saint Mary's School in Raleigh.

Dr. Ward is a lifelong member of Davie Street Presbyterian Church USA where he is a Ruling Elder and member of the Presbyterian Men's Council. Dr. Ward is also a life member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.

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