



Dr. T. L. Lewis, Pastor
Bethel Baptist Church, Pratt City
Birmingham, Alabama

Alabama native, husband, son, father, friend, soldier, activist, leader, diplomat, ecclesiastical brethren, teacher, shepherd, servant and prisoner of the Lord, are but a few titles that can be bestowed upon him. Dr. Tommie L. Lewis is married to Sister Rhonda Steele Lewis. Bethel Church has been blessed for the past twenty seven years with him as her shepherd, and the body of Christ has been blessed by his work as a gospel preacher for thirty five years.

The Spirit of the Lord was upon Dr. Lewis when he heard the clarion call and felt the anointing of the Holy Spirit to preach good tidings of great joy unto all people. In obedience to the divine summoning, he responded to that the call with “Here am I, Lord send me”! Realizing that it was imperative to preach the word in season and out of season, he was licensed to preach the Good News of Jesus Christ on January 6, 1973, at the Shady Grove Missionary Baptist Church by Rev. G.W. Sloan. Dr. Lewis gave diligence to make his calling and election sure and was publicly ordained and set apart to the work of the Gospel Ministry on July 29, 1973, at the Shady Grove Missionary Baptist Church by Rev. Sloan. His ordination was unanimously recommended by Rev. F. D. King, Rev. A.L Greer and Rev. M.T. Densmore.

In order to rightly divide the Word of Truth and desiring to walk worthy of the vocation to which he was called, Dr. Lewis began to study to show himself approved and matriculated at the Birmingham Easonian Baptist Bible College, and the Universal Bible Institute in Brunswick, Georgia, earning a BA, BTH and Master of Divinity degrees respectively. Similarly, Universal Bible College and the Birmingham Easonian Baptist Bible College has conferred upon him Honorary Doctorate degrees. Because Dr. Lewis emphatically believes in the mandate of Christ to go ye therefore, he has traveled and preached the Gospel throughout the United States, South America, Europe, Africa and Asia.

Adhering to the challenge, and putting his hand to the plow, Dr. Lewis readily accepted his first pastoral assignment at the First Baptist Church-Carver, in Bessemer, Alabama in 1973. Dr. Lewis was further led to the Antioch Baptist

Church in Gadsden, Alabama and served faithfully. In 1982, he was commissioned by God to serve as pastor of Bethel where he has served with diligence, dedication, and determination. Under his leadership, Bethel has experienced phenomenal growth numerically with a membership of over five thousand members. Bethel has grown spiritually as well. During his tenure, Bethel embarked upon and completed a 21st century Worship Center in 1990, which includes a sanctuary with a seating capacity of eighteen hundred, an office plaza, conference room, library, new-members lab, large multi-purpose room, a nursery and classrooms. In 1998 a Family-Life Center was erected. This facility includes a first class day care center, surveillance room, game rooms, a commercial kitchen, fellowship/dining hall, a wedding chapel, regulation sized gym with bleachers, a walking track, computer lab, two meeting rooms, several classrooms and the Bethel Community Learning Center, which has generated thousands of dollars in state and federal funds. The Bethel campus continues to serve as a ray of light and a beacon of hope in the recreation of lives and the restoration of families.

Community minded and endowed with the gift of exhortation, Dr. Lewis has affiliated himself with numerous religious and civic organizations including the President of the Pratt City Ministerial Alliance, Birmingham Metropolitan Baptist Ministerial Conference, Southern Christian Leadership Conference. Dr. Lewis is involved in numerous affairs vital to the progress of the city. He served as Captain for the Bessemer Police and Fire Department Chaplaincy Corps. He has served as Chairman of the Board of Directors for the Jefferson County Transit Authority. He serves as State President for the National Rainbow Push Coalition, where Bethel church ranks number two in the 1000 Churches connection. Dr. Lewis serves as State Spiritual Advisor for the Matrons division of the Alabama Baptist State Convention, active member of the Ministers on Wall Street Project, American Ministers Association. Numerous awards and accolades have been bestowed upon him. He is also the 1998 Inductee into the City of Birmingham Gallery of Distinguished Citizens. A bust of him is displayed on the second floor in Birmingham City Hall commemorating this achievement.

Dr. Lewis was elected Moderator of the Peace Baptist District on October 18, 2001. He has channeled change in the District and has been successful in bringing district churches together annually for its Peacemakers Partners Conference.

For thirty five years, Dr. Lewis has abided in the same calling in which he was called, preaching the Word with passion, power and persuasion. Dr. Lewis has risen to the task, reached out and redeemed the lost for Christ. His guiding principles are to evangelize the sinner, equip the saints and exalt the Savior. Indeed, Dr. Lewis has been sent by God and the evidence is the fruit that has been harvested from his labor. Yes, it is written, and we stand as a witness today, "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things."