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"Preserving-Sharing-Caring"

Crossroads

Sam Teague, Jr. and Danny Morris: Two Brave Christians Whose Lives Really Mattered

By Pamela C. Crosby

The story of "Ten Brave Christians" began in the 1960s in Tallahassee with a vision by **Sam Teague**, **Jr.**, once an active member of Trinity. The vision, which came to Sam when he was a Sunday School teacher at John Wesley Methodist Church, was



"Sam E. Teague, Jr. "1950. Portrait as officer of Capital City Bank. Florida Memory. Public Domain. https://www.floridamemory.com/items/show/10323

popularized and transformed into a world-wide movement.

Its popularity was broadened by well-known author, the **Rev. Danny Morris**, who served as an associate minister at Trinity from 1958 to 1960 and was the founding senior pastor of John Wesley UMC from 1960 to 1966 (Pfaff, 2012, loc. 2536; *A Brief History...*, 2010, n.p.).

This article looks at the lives of Samuel Everett Teague, Jr. and Danny Eugene Morris and the ways in which their combined convictions and talents launched a spiritual movement that many attest changed their lives forever.

Samuel E. Teague, Jr.

A Newspaper Reporter

When Sam Teague Jr. was in his early teens, his family moved from Apalachicola (where Sam was born on November 21, 1922) to

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Editor's Note:

Historical Society members have been hard at work while practicing social distancing and primarily using digital tools and resources during the COVID-19 pandemic. We remain committed to preserving and sharing historical information and offer our prayers to all those who suffer loss.

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L to R: Samuel Everett Teague, Sr., Mabel Fowler Teague, Lena Fowler, and Mabel Teague Kilner. "Teague family car decorated for the Apalachicola Mardi Gras parade." 1915. Florida Memory. Public Domain. https://www.floridamemory.com/items/show/224.

Tallahassee. His father, **Sam Teague**, **Sr**, had assumed the chairmanship of the Capital City Bank Board of Directors following his tenure as "head" of the Apalachicola State Bank. The family settled in nicely at their home on North Calhoun Street ("About Town," 1936, p. 8; "Stockholders," 1936, p. 8; "Personal...," 1937, p. 2).

Writing was an important part of young Sam Jr.'s Tallahassee experience; he was a published writer even in his childhood! In high school, he reported in the *Tallahassee Democrat* on Leon High School sports events for "The Leon Huddle" with a lively flair for description:

After three days of hard offensive practice, Coach Godby's Lions showed Wednesday night, that it had not been wasted by crushing the Aucilla quintet 33-12. Jack Lewis, who has been playing the entire year under the handicap of an injured hand, chalked up the Lions' first tally with a foul shot. (Teague, Jr., Jan. 27, 1939, p. 7)

Later he confessed that he had made an error in an earlier column piece and apologized:

In a recent edition of this column I named the boys who were to receive basketball letters. Through some error on my part I left out the name of Enoch Kelly. As most of you know Enoch was Leon's star forward and played in nearly every game. I extend my regrets that this error was made and hope it will never occur again. (Teague, Jr., April 28, 1939, p. 7)

As "scribe" of Boy Scout Troop 106, he reported in the *Democrat* about news, meetings, events, and scouting requirements, stressing expectations such as the "importance of wearing the uniform"—and carrying a "snakebite kit... on all hikes" (Teague, April 3, 1939, p. 7).

Going to War

With such an interest in newspaper reporting, one might expect Sam to embark on a career in journalism! However, as we shall see, that was not



Sam Teague, Jr. is second from left. "Boys Scouts at Orchard Pond camp with dining hall in background." 1937. Florida Memory. Public Domain. http://www.floridamemory.com/items/show/145609

the path he would follow. In 1939, he set out for the University of Florida in Gainesville, returning home to visit his parents during the December break at their house on Lake Ella ("Personals," 1940, p. 3). But like most other young men in the 1940s whose education, careers, and dreams were interrupted by the war years, Sam's life would take a detour.

Joining the Marines on March 6. 1942, when he was a sophomore at the University of Florida, Sam would soon make corporal, and in 1943, he was involved in early training at Quantico, VA. He went overseas on March 10, 1944, and would serve with the First Division, U S Marine Corps, as a sergeant fighting in the Battle of Okinawa and on the islands of Guam and Iwo Jima. After the war, he was with the 1st Marine Division in the occupation of North China ("Our Men...,"1943, p. 12; Liddle, 1946, p, 6; "Teague Jr," 2017, p. A19.).

Stories about his war years shed some light on his character and personality. **Deppie Whitham**, his oldest daughter, recalled her father revealing to her an especially poignant tale with a Hollywood-style ending:

My dad would tell the story of the chaos of the fighting and then hearing feet running towards him and then suddenly someone landing on top of him in the fox hole. To his complete shock, it was his buddy [Frank Whiteside] from Apalachicola.... His friend [had] jumped in the same foxhole with him when my dad was not even aware that they were both in the Pacific arena of the war. It was just overwhelming to be able to be there with his friend in the middle of such a frightening time and devastating war. (personal communication)

After this dramatic reunion, the two resumed their close friendship throughout the ensuing years.

Although he did not minimize tragedy of the war years, Sam did recall what some would regard as little things that brought him and his fellow soldiers intense enjoyment. One of his fondest memories was dining on "baked beans and doughnuts," remembering with much gratitude how delicious this odd combination of food was even in the midst of war's suffering and loss. His ability to count his blessings was a prominent character trait (Deppie Whitham, personal conversation).

In April 1946, the *Democrat* reported that he was expected to come home after his assignment in China to visit his parents who had moved to East Park Avenue ("Society...," April 1, 1946, p. 3).

During his time in the Marines, Sam married **Myra Ann Miller** of Cary, NC, a graduate of Meredith College in Raleigh, NC. In the summer of 1946, he and Myra lived with Sam's parents while Sam worked at the Capital City Bank. They moved to Gainesville in September. With a degree in business administration from UF in hand, Sam returned to Tallahassee in 1949, where he and Myra lived at 945 W Jefferson Street ("Society...," July 15, 1946, p. 3; "Personals," 1949, p. 4).

Community Leader

After serving as director of public relations at the Capital City National Bank for four years, Sam joined Leon Federal when it opened in 1952. He would go on to be employed in the banking business for 35 impressive years, leading as executive vice president, general manager, and president of Leon Federal Savings and Loan Association (Sun

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(cont. from p. 3)

Federal) ("Two Enter..., 1966, p. 4; "Teague Jr," 2017).

Known for his community activism, Sam's experience in the financial world lent him considerable expertise in project fundraising. For example, he was a co-captain for the Community Fund campaign, whose purpose was to finance operations of six youth organizations and welfare agencies in the area, and he was the general chairman of the 1951 Red Cross drive, meeting with division chairpersons and overseeing their work.



"Mayor Sam Teague, right, greeting Conservative speaker Clarence Manion at the municipal airport in Tallahassee." January 27, 1964. Tallahassee *Democrat* collection. Florida Memory. Public Domain. General note: "We are in the midst of a deadly war, not with a nation but with an entity known as communism,' Clarence Manion, former dean of the Notre Dame Law School, told an audience at Opperman Music Hall here last night." https://www.floridamemory.com/items/show/270825

Sam was particularly interested in youth and their well being; he was proud to serve as scoutmaster of Jamboree Troup 23, taking North Florida scouts to the National Jamboree in Valley Forge, PA, June 1950. He also headed the YMCA Board, overseeing nearly 200 adult members and over 500 youngsters participating in its program in 1956 ("Off They Go!," 1950, p. 8; "Many Volunteers...," 1950, p. 1; "Red Cross...," 1951 p. 10; YMCA...," 1956, p.. 9).

City Government Leader

As the years progressed, Sam's civic engagement evolved to include that of city government leadership positions in the Tallahassee community as city commissioner as well as the capital city's mayor. His term as mayor in 1963-1964 was marked by community unrest as Black residents and college students challenged the Jim Crow laws that enforced segregation. His most challenging moment was in June 1963 when he issued orders for complete protection of Black protestors during demonstrations against the policies of two segregated movie theaters (Tuttle, 1963, p. 10). Black activists including Florida A&M University students marched through the streets of Tallahassee with some Whites reacting by threatening the marchers. Fortunately, Sam "took over" the "police department," later saying that he was "proud" that there had been "no violence" (Reed, 1981, p. 3c).

Volunteer at Trinity

As a church member, Sam put his business expertise to great use by leading fund-raising efforts at Trinity. He and **Rev. Sam Neel**, Florida State University chaplain, served as co-chairmen of Trinity's loyalty dinner project. The purpose of the fund-raising effort was to support extending the church program, increasing the staff, and replacing equipment. Invitations were sent out to the entire church membership to attend one evening (about 200 attendees each night) during the week of June 14-18, 1954, an event called "Operation Over the Top," and involving 180 volunteers with hopes for underwriting a \$78,000 budget for the current fiscal year ("Trinity Methodists...," 1954, p. 6; "Methodist Church...," 1954, p. 3).

Public speaking was one of Sam's many talents and he excelled as a guest speaker at Trinity and in other churches in the area. For example, when Florida Police Academy diplomas and certificates were awarded at Trinity to members of the Tallahassee and Quincy police departments, Sam gave an address on "The Qualities Desired for Leadership" (Morris, 1999. p. 4; "Police...," 1956, p. 8).

In March 1959, his guest sermon at Pisgah Methodist Church made headlines throughout the



"CHURCH PLANNING COMMITTEE Chairman of committees planning a series of Loyalty dinners at the Trinity Methodist Church are shown here making plans. They are, left to right seated at table, L. J. Parham, Mrs. Bernard W. Shiell, Jr., Mrs. L. J. Parham, Allison White, and Mrs. Melvin Pope. Standing, left to right, are McIvin Pope, Sam Teague Jr., Dr. Sam Neel, Bernard W. Shiell Jr. and Dr. Glenn C. James, pastor." Published June 6, 1954, in *Tallahassee Democrat*, p. 6.

state. His sermon title on that Sunday, March 1, was "Build Your Church on a Firm Foundation," and the sermon and its title would not have gained so much attention had there not been "nearly \$2,500 worth of moonshine" found under the church. A news report explained:

Jim Roberts Sr. and his son, Jim Jr., found the whisky under the pulpit when they went out to get tables for the dinner on the grounds, a century old custom at the isolated little church off Centervllle road. Sheriff deputy Raymond Hamlin... swore the crowd to secrecy and with Deputy H. B. Reeves, hid in an outbuilding for four hours before nabbing two men who they said loaded some of the moonshine into a car. ("Moonshine...," 1959, p. 2)

Danny Eugene Morris

A Very Different Childhood

It is not exactly clear when Sam Teague first met Danny Morris. They had been hunting and fishing partners for several years before they collaborated to found John Wesley United Methodist Church

in Tallahassee. One thing is clear, however, they both had strikingly different childhoods.

One week short of 11 years after Sam's birth, Danny was born on a farm on November 14, 1933, outside of Glendale FL, about 133 miles from Apalachicola, where Sam was born and 12 or so miles north of Defuniak Springs (Pfaff, 2012, loc. 133).

Unlike Sam's parents, Danny's family members were poor farmers. His father (Dan) was so poor that he paid the doctor who delivered the baby 12 gallons of cane syrup—taking two to three years to pay the debt—and with Danny always claiming that was the reason he was such a sweet baby. When Danny was about one, his family moved to downtown Glendale, about three miles away from the farm, to run a small grocery store; they later moved to DeFuniak Springs (Pfaff, loc. 137, 148).

After his time in high school where Danny was a football standout and acted in the

(cont. on p. 6)

school play, he left Defuniak Springs in 1951 for Florida State University to earn a degree in English education (Pfaff, loc. 249, 256, 261).

A Circuit Preacher

Pastoring a circuit of churches would necessitate a busy schedule for anyone; yet while he was completing his course of study in college, Danny also pastored the East Leon Circuit, where he ministered to rural churches of Chaires, Lloyd, and Miccosukee—the three consisting of a total of 225 members. It was a fitting assignment for Danny, who claimed that his grandfather was a circuit rider minister ("Danny Morris...," 2021; Pfaff, loc. 265; "Announced...," 1954, p. 3).

He oversaw services such as a homecoming at the Miccosukee Methodist Church in October 1954, where the **Rev. Dr. Edwin R. Hartz**, professor of social welfare at FSU, was guest speaker, and the program was followed by lunch in the church yard with singing and other fellowship activities under the scenic live oaks ("Miccosukee...," 1954, p. 3).

Becoming involved in community lives in these rural settings, he took part in projects such as helping a woman of the Chaires village community make a 7 x 12 foot Christmas card with its own motor for changing scenes and colors. In that same year (1954), he was a teaching intern in English for seven weeks at Cobb Junior High School (Kerce, 1954, p. 1; "FSU Students...," 1954, p. 5; Hay, 1954, p. 9).

Representing one of seven entries from FSU, he competed in an invitational debate tournament the following year (1955) with 16 colleges and universities participating. In fact, debate was his favorite college activity, and he later served as a collegiate debate judge ("Debate...," 1955, p. 9; Pfaff, 2012, loc. 261).

For twenty-eight months, Danny worked the Leon Circuit of churches until he graduated with an FSU degree in teaching English in 1955. He was soon off to Candler School of Theology at Emory, where he enrolled in courses in the Old and New Testaments and practical ministry (Pfaff, loc. 269, 261, 310).

While attending Candler, he held two pastoral appointments and served as an associate student-pastor, graduating in August 1958. During his seminary stretch, he married the love of his life,



Danny E. Morris, associate pastor, who served at Trinity from 1958 to 1960. Trinity UMC Archives.

Rosalie Bankhead Green, of Valdosta on August 5, 1956. Rosalie graduated from Grady Memorial Hospital School of Nursing in Atlanta ("Trinity Associate...," 1958, p. 3; "Morris-Green...," 1956, p. 7.)

One of his pastoral appointments while he was a Candler student was at Mt. Gillard Methodist Church, a tiny place of worship in Ben Hill, GA. Following Mt. Gillard, Danny pastored South Bend Church Methodist Church outside Atlanta ("Morris -Green...," 1956, p. 7; Pfaff, 2012, loc. 332).

An Invitation from Rev. Dr. Glenn James

When he was at South Bend, Danny received a call from Rev. Hartz, who was then a chaplain at



Dr. Glenn James, senior pastor, and Rev. Danny E. Morris, associate pastor. September 1959. Trinity UMC Archives.

FSU, letting him know that **Rev. Dr. Glenn James**, senior pastor at Trinity, wanted Danny to serve as his associate pastor. This was indeed a tempting invitation for Danny Morris! As an FSU student, he had idolized Dr. James. He also wanted to help lead a large church that offered more opportunities for its congregants. To his delight, he was offered a conference appointment, with Dr. James making the necessary arrangements (Pfaff, loc. 339, 343).

In June 1958, The Florida Methodist Conference announced that Danny would be replacing **Rev. William Swygert** as Trinity's associate minister. Danny, Roaslie, and his son, Danny Alan, 13 months old, moved to Tallahassee and made their home at 205 Edwards St. ("Methodist Assignments...," 1958, p. 3; "Associate...," 1958, p. 3).

While happy to be at Trinity, Danny initially felt considerably intimidated by the size of the church after pastoring very small congregations. He once asked Dr. James if pastoring a church as prestigious as Trinity and preaching each Sunday to such imposing people, including the governor, state

cabinet members, a university president, professors, and doctors was intimidating. Dr. James replied that he prayed for them as he did everyone else, implying that all persons are in need of spiritual growth and nourishment regardless of their reputations or high offices, setting Danny more at ease (Pfaff, loc. 350).

Like all associate pastors, Danny spoke on many occasions at the church and took part in various events. He gave brief sermons at the Sunday evening services, and he spoke to small groups such as the women's circle, where he addressed topics like "Stewardship." He spoke on "A Recent Look at Seminary School" to the Trinity Men's Club, and even participated in a drama, "The New Frontiers," marking the 175th birth of Methodism (Hyder, 1958, p. 3; "Minister Speaks...," 1959, p. 5; "Club...," 1959, p. 15; Humphrey, 1959, p. 3).

During his time at Trinity, he also spoke throughout the community. For example, to members of the Tallahassee Lion's Club, he addressed the topic of problems unique to the local community and offered ways to find solutions to these problems And he opened the 1959 session of the Florida House of Representatives with prayer ("Lions Hear...," 1958, p. 9; "House Opens...," 1959, p. 1).

Later that year, on June 7, 1959, Danny was ordained as elder ("Methodists to Ordain...," 1959 p. 3).

A Friendship and Partnership

It was at Trinity when Danny and Sam began making plans that would radically change their lives and faith directions. When Danny was associate pastor at Trinity, they were alerted to the fact that there was a need for a new Methodist church in Tallahassee to address the increase in the city's population (Morris, 1999, p. 11).

One day on a fishing trip, Sam proposed to Danny that if Danny would agree to be a founding pastor of a newly established church in Tallahassee, Sam and his family would be among the charter members and continue at the new church until Danny left for another appointment.

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Dr. Shuler Peele, Mrs. Danny Morris, The Rev. Danny E. Morris (associate Pastor), Mrs. Glenn C. James; Dr. Glenn C. James (senior pastor), Robert M. Temple, Jr. (student pastor). summer 1958. Trinity UMC Archives.

Others thought that establishing a new Methodist church in Tallahassee was a great idea, garnering support of all four of the other Methodist churches in the city, including Trinity (Morris, 1999, p. 11).

So plans turned to action, and members of the future congregation first met at Hartsfield Elementary school with Danny conducting the services ("Indian Head...," April 2, 1960, p. 3). In June 1960, the John Wesley Methodist Church was officially organized, boasting a membership of 105 individuals with Danny as pastor and Sam elected as one of the trustees ("Methodist Church...," 1960, p. 3).

1965: A Groundbreaking Year

By 1965, the John Wesley United Methodist Church was a well-established place of worship in the Tallahassee community. Danny had been the founder—and senior pastor for five years—and Sam was the teacher of the Christian Homebuild-



John Wesley Methodist Church building in Tallahassee, Florida.1962. Photo credit: Richard Parks. Florida Memory. Public Domain. https://www.floridamemory.com/items/show/45812



While Sam Teague and Danny Morris were getting settled into their new church building and newly established congregation (John Wesley Methodist), Trinity members were undergoing extensive changes also. Here the beloved 1893 church structure was in its early stages of destruction by a wrecking crew so that a new building (the current structure) would replace it. 1962. Trinity UMC Archives.

ers Sunday school class. However, Sam confessed to Danny that the class (whose members were mostly under 35 years of age) was not going as well as he thought it should (Morris, 1999, pp. 8, 4).

Sam was a particularly dedicated teacher. He taught the class nine months out of the year and was off during the summer. During the three summer months that he was not teaching, he focused on preparing for the class—outlining the topics and coming up with his own lessons plans. On the Sunday mornings before he taught, he would go over his class lesson for the day in his bank office and take time to pray in the silence (Morris, 1999, p. 5).

Although class members considered Sam to be an "outstanding teacher," he felt that his students should have been more responsive to the content of the lessons because "they listened, but they didn't actually hear"—even though they were "well educated" and "bright." However attentive they were in class, they did not seem to hear the core meaning of the gospel to the point that—according to Sam—they could translate it to their own lived experiences (Morris, 1999, p. 5).

On January 24, 1965, Sam was in his bank office by 6:50 a.m. He had finalized his lesson for that Sunday and was looking over his outline and notes of the class that day. After reviewing his teaching notes and with briefcase in hand, he thought he was ready to go to his class of thirty five students, but a moment later, he was struck with a deep sense of despair or what he called "emptiness" Morris, 1999, pp. 5 - 7).

Sam felt that what he had been doing was pointless because his class members had not been understanding the genuine meaning of the words of Jesus (Morris, p. 6). Sam recalled in *The John Wesley Great Experiment*,

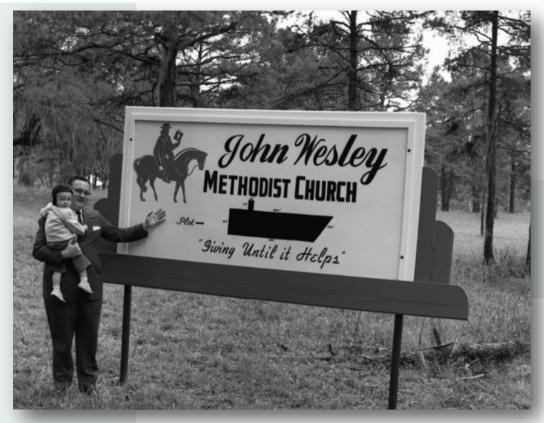
In my discouragement at the lack of direction in their [students'] lives, I felt a need to pray. As nearly as I can remember, I put my head on my desk and said a prayer something like this: "Dear God, show me the way to motivate these young people to build a life that matters." (Teague, 1973, p. 3)

Earlier he had asked the class to complete a survey identifying ten things they wanted out of life and ranking them in order of their significance. Class members in responding to the survey said that they wanted beach homes, boats, international vacations, nice cars, and new houses. When Sam read over the responses that morning, he was stunned by their answers (Morris, 1999, p. 7). His reaction was to be a momentous turn in his faith and life:

Suddenly, I sat up and began to write. I wrote furiously, for the ideas came to me clearly and with certainty. (Teague, 1973, p. 3)

Sam had concluded that morning that the purpose of life was not to pursue happiness but to create a life that was meaningful, a "life that matters." Happiness was a derivative of a meaningful life but it was not its aim or focus (Morris, 1999, p. 8). Sam's thoughts were transferred to paper

(cont. on p. 10)



"Reverend Danny E. Morris and his son David standing next to sign for the John Wesley Methodist Church in Tallahassee." March 15, 1962. *Tallahassee Democrat* collection. Florida Memory. Public Domain. Accompanying note: "The John Wesley Methodist Church yesterday bought six acres on Old St. Augustine Road about one half mile from Apalachee Parkway. The Rev. Danny E. Morris, shown here with his son, David, at the new site said that the first draft of the architect plans will be presented to the congregation Sunday morning." https://www.floridamemory.com/items/show/264343

powerfully but quickly:

When I started writing it was about 9:00 a.m.—when I finished writing it was 9:20 a.m. (Teague, 1973, p. 3)

In twenty minutes he had written down what was to become known as "The John Wesley Great Experiment," and it was directed to ten persons who would accept a challenge that he would pose to them (Morris, 1999, p. 9).

Its brilliance, ironically, is its simplicity—"a simple exercise" containing five parts that made God the priority in a person's life:

WANTED: 10 BRAVE CHRISTIANS FOR THE MONTH OF MARCH, 1965

- 1. Who will meet once each week to pray together.
- 2. Who will give two hours time each week to God. (Self-surrender)
- 3. Who will give God 1/10 of earnings during this month. (Self-denial)
- 4. Who will spend 5:30-6:00 each morning in prayer and meditation. (Self-control)
- 5. Who will witness for God their experience to

others. (Teague, 1973, p. 8)

Any person who was interested was to take a form of commitment home, sign it, and mail to the church. The commitment was for one month. The next morning, Sam met with Danny for breakfast at a coffee shop and showed him what he had written in that 20 minutes (Teague, 1973, pp. 8-9; Morris, 1999, p. 12).

Danny reacted emotionally to Sam's proposal. He admitted to himself that he had also become cynical about members of the church and that he was tired of putting in efforts to get them motivated:

I had found it easier to do things myself than to try to talk to half-interested people into doing something, and have to complete what they had half-done, or clean up their mess after them. Long ago, I had given up thinking it could ever be any other way. I had become cynical and weary. The emphasis on prayer, tithing, Bible study, doing something for someone else out of love—none of these had ever been my "thing" to preach about, to call for, or to expect. (Morris, p. 13)

Danny also admitted to himself that if he could not find just ten persons who wanted to take up the challenge out of the 400 member congregation, it would make him look like a failure as a pastor—after all, he had been the only pastor in the church's history (Morris, p. 13).

He had other doubts about himself and his preaching, but he offered Sam his partnership in moving the idea forward and presenting it to the church, saying,

Let's see if we can find ten who will do these five things! If we can, it will blow the lid off our church. And if we can't, I will have something to preach about the rest of my life! (Morris, p. 14).

In February, they presented the challenge and on March 1, they launched the experiment. Not just 10 but 22 signed up in March (Morris, p. 15). The *Democrat* reported that

John Wesley Church is reporting astonishing results. (Pews have been packed for Sunday worship services, phone calls and letters have been flowing into the pastor's study).

Through the visitation and testimony of the 22 pledges have come astonishing conversions....

The Rev. Danny Morris, thrilled about the movement begun by his laymen, reports other churches are asked for the materials used and methods of carrying out the project.

And his big question now is, "How long will it last?"

Teague, speaking for his class, reports that nearly all of the 22 who signed up have said they could never go back to their old way of life, and that certainly the impact of the "experiment" should continue long after the month of March. (Haufler, 1965, p. 5)

The first group of "Ten Brave Christians" directed the Sunday morning worship service on March 28, 1965. During the service five persons described their experiences in the "experiment" and asked the congregation who would like to be involved—a special invitation went out to those who were feeling loss and despair and who had unsuccessfully tried to have peaceful and productive lives. Responding to this call, 16 more "brave Christians" signed up. WCTV in Tallahassee invited the group of Ten Brave Christians to come on as guests of the "Good Morning Show." They received calls from the area and beyond—

Long ago, I had given up thinking it could ever be any other way. I had become cynical and weary. The emphasis on prayer, tithing, Bible study, doing something for someone else out of love—none of these had ever been my "thing" to preach about, to call for, or to expect.

—The Rev. Danny E. Morris

and visitors after hearing about the program, attended John Wesley on the following Sunday morning (Teague, 1973, pp. 15-16).

In March 1965, Sam authored *the first book* about his vision and spiritual practice incorporating the call of Ten Brave Christians entitled *The John Wesley Great Experiment* (50 pages long) as a prayer and reflection guide used for the required half-hour devotional period that was scheduled for 5:30 to 6 each morning.

A typical page in the book is the following:

THE PERMANENT RECORD OF MY CHRISTIAN DISCIPLINE FOR THIS DAY. DATE _____ Scripture For Today: 2 Chronicles 7:14
First 10 minutes—after reading carefully, pray and meditate on this scripture. Write out in less than 50 words how this passage applies to your life.

Second 10 minutes—Write out one totally unselfish and unexpected act of kindness or generosity that you will do today. Name the person—then act during the day, vigorously and with love and compassion. Keep a written record of the reaction of the person and the effect of this act upon you personally.

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The strange thing is that nothing has been done to promote this movement. It has spread by lay witnessing and one pastor telling another what has happened in his church.

— The Rev. Russell Bow

Third 10 minutes—Write out carefully how you would like to build and develop your life. Go into detail; take your time. Be thoughtful and prayerful. One well prayed out thought or sentence per day would be excellent progress. (Teague, 1973, p. 19)

Danny and Sam Take the Show on the Road

Danny and Sam, both accomplished speakers, set out to promote the program, taking the show on the road, so to speak. For example, they presented on the Ten Brave Christians in June of that year at a television preaching seminar at Emory's School of Theology, where they spoke to ministers from all over the Southeast ("Capital Chimes...,"1965, p. 9).

By the end of that year, Danny's own book, *A Life That Really Matters*, using Sam's words as the title and based on Sam's conception and application of the program goals and practices, had been published, and a second edition was expected. An Atlanta printer had produced 2500 copies of the book with Sam guaranteeing the printing costs. The book was divided into four parts and was written by various members of the congregation with some speaking anonymously ("Dr. Anderson...," 1965, p. 6; Bow, 1969, p. 9; "Library...," 1966, 4D).

In addition, tapes about the program were made available for churches wanting to start their own Great Experiment ministries. In March 1966, Sam and Danny attended a rally of the "Brave Christian Movement" in Jeffersonville, IN, with 50 congregations in the Louisville, KY, and Jeffersonville, IN, area participating in Ten Brave Christians pro-

grams at their own churches ("Dr. Anderson...," 1965, p. 6; "Pastor...," 1966, p. 3).

News and implementation of the programs continued to spread throughout the country. There was a world-wide "Brave Christian Movement" with even an offering of Holy Land tours. Churches in the Philippines ordered an "abundance of materials," urging Sam and Danny to come to help them with their ministry. A pastor in Korea gave Sam a "gift of a handmade cane inlaid with mother-of-pearl and a traditional swager stick to show how deeply the program touched him" (*A Brief History*..., 2010, p. 7; Bow, 1969, p. 9; "Teague Jr," 2017, p. A19).

Sam had predicted that his program would be implemented internationally (*A Brief History*..., 2010, p. 7).

As one pastor noted in amazement:

The strange thing is that nothing has been done to promote this movement, It has spread by lay witnessing and one pastor telling another what has happened in his church. (Bow, 1969, p. 9)

Two Journeys

Danny

The two collaborators, the one (Sam) planting the seed of The Great John Wesley Experiment, the other (Danny) helping the first (Sam) to nurture its development, would soon travel on divergent paths. In June 1966, Danny left Tallahassee and would have two pastoral appointments (in Orange Park and Hialeah, FL) before moving to Nashville to join the staff of the General Board of Discipleship, becoming director of Small Group ministries in 1973. In June 1976, he became director of the Upper Room Division of Developing Ministries, developing and overseeing various programs and resources (Pfaff, 2012, loc. 2544, 2553).

One of those programs was the "Walk to Emmaus." In 1975, Danny had been a participant in a Lutheran Cursillo, which took place in Florida. The Lutheran Cursillo, involving 50-60 people, is a study that involves three days of intensive learning and preparation relating to ways to improve one's Christian life. The history of Crusillo is traced to

Spain and the Roman Catholic church. *Cursillo* in Spanish means "a short course" (Morris et al., 2014, p. 8; "Our History...," n.d.).

and The Upper Room Chapel in Nashville, TN ("35 Years...," 2018). His book, based on Sam's story and practice of the Great Experiment, ha



Rev. Danny E. Morris. Photo published in "A Long, Fruitful, and Faithful Service to God." (2021, January 07). Florida Conference of the UMC. Published with permission. https://florida-oldsite.brtsite.com/localchurchnewsdetail/danny-morris-a-long-fruitful-and-faithful-service-to-god-14931149

Danny partnered with **Maxie Dunnam**, then world editor of *The Upper Room*, to plan for a Cursillo as an ecumenical program of the Upper Room ministry, which **Robert Wood** modeled into "The Walk to Emmaus" (Morris et al., 2014, p. 8).

The Emmaus Walk begins with a three-day retreat in experiencing New Testament Christianity as a lifestyle. Later participants support each other within their small groups in their "ongoing walk with Christ," seeking ways to live out their discipleship ("About," n.d.).

Danny was also the founding director of the Two -Year Academy for Spiritual Formation which began in May 1983 at the Scarritt Bennett Center and The Upper Room Chapel in Nashville, TN ("35 Years...," 2018). His book, based on Sam's story and practice of the Great Experiment, has undergone five editions, and he went on to write 20 other books. He died on January 1, 2021 ("Danny Morris," 2021).

Sam

As he had promised Danny (Morris, 1999, p. 11), Sam returned to Trinity after Danny left Tallahassee (personal conversation, Deppie Whitham). Meanwhile Sam was heavily involved in civic life. In 1966 he ran for state senator for district 25 ("Two Enter...," 1966, p. 4).

The *Tallahassee Democrat* published Sam's approach to governance as a candidate. In his statement, it is obvious that Sam's spiritual life was a guide to all facets of his experience and was foundational to his goals and practices. He warned his readers that people in a democracy "can no longer govern themselves in harmony" without attention to the "enrichment" of the "inner life" of persons "in keeping with the gradual improvement of [their] economic life" (Six...," 1966, 3D).

As society improves the "scientific and technological environment," so should there be an improvement of resources and enhancement and development of the "inner spiritual life." Solving problems should be accompanied with "preserving individual liberty and enriching the inner life of our people" (Six..." 1966, 3D).

Although Sam was elected state senator in 1966 for Florida's District 25, he was forced to run again in 1967 when districts were redrawn, and many candidates were in primaries vying for fewer seats. Not seeing it possible to overcome his opponent's lead in the first primary, he declined to run in a runoff primary (City...," 1973, p. 13; "Teague Pulls...," 1967, p. 1).

In 1972 he was named chairman of Tallahassee's Downtown Improvement Authority Board, with the Board's goal to re-invigorate the city's downtown area, and he retired as a charter member of the board in 1976 ("Teague Named..." 1972, p. 13; "Retires...," 1976, p. 13).

(cont. on p. 14)

(cont. from p. 13)

Sam stood in so often to fill terms of city commissioners who left their posts prematurely that he was referred to as "the city's pinch hitter," serving from 1962 through 1964, 1969, and 1972, He would agree to serve on the commission temporarily until an election could be scheduled. In 1981 he was called again to serve out another term when a commissioner had suddenly died of a heart attack). Why did he return so often to this post? He said simply that he served city government because of his love for Tallahassee (Reed. 1981, p. 1C).

His professional life was centered on being a chief executive officer of Sun Federal Savings and Loan Association (formerly Leon Federal) and retired as president in 1985 ("Changing...," 1985, p. 14C).

But what else was Sam Teague doing all the years after his fellow leader of the John Wesley Great Experiment Movement (the Rev. Danny Morris) left townbeside being a city and state government leader and banking executive? According to one account, he had received 3000 letters by 1969 requesting resources and information—or just notes of appreciation regarding the Great Experiment. He was also getting three to four

phone calls per day with some persons calling after midnight (forgetting the time differences where they lived). Invitations for speaking engagements at churches had increased considerably (Bow, 1969, p. 9).

According to the description that Sam wrote in his workbook, a brave Christian performs "act[s] of kindness or generosity. . .vigorously with love and compassion" (Teague, 1973, p. 19). Sam followed his own imperative—in numerous ways; for example, mentoring young persons with personal, close

Sam stood in so often to fill terms of city commisioners who left their posts prematurely that he was referred to as "the city's pinch hitter," serving rom 1962 through 1964, 1969, and 1972, He attention and benevolence, and each Christmas choosing one family to help with their needs and Christmas celebration (personal conversation, Deppie Whitham).

But eventually life would slow down. In his retirement years, Sam and Myra spent their summers in Wayneville NC, going up in "June for the cool summer breezes and remain[ing] through the glorious changing of the leaves before departing in early November" (Clifford, 1996, p. 30). In 2011, they would make it their year-round home. It was



"Tallahassee city commissioners being sworn-in by city judge John Rudd , Tallahassee, Florida." L-R: Sam Teague Jr., George Taff and city judge John Rudd. March 2, 1962. Taff Family papers.Florida Memory. Public Domain. https://www.floridamemory.com/items/show/156631#returnToImage

here that Sam passed away on March 22, 2017, a little less than four years before Danny's death ("Teague Jr," 2017, p. A19). As his daughter described him,

He lived his faith every day. Even as he faced death he held strong to his faith. He was a wonderful, wonderful father and remains a beacon of light for all of his children.

• • •

(cont. on p. 1<u>5</u>)

According to Danny's biographer, **Nancy Pfaff**, in *Light & Fire: A Spiritual Biography of Danny E. Morris*,

Sam, who was a very spiritually mature person, was a tremendous mentor for Danny. Sam was not trying to teach him something. He was guiding Danny from deep spiritual insight that came from a mature common sense and wisdom, the result of Sam's prayer life. ... Danny learned more from this experience about how to be a pastor and how a church could be a real church than from all of his prior years of ministry put together. (loc. 734–740)

... through the Great Experiment he [Danny] underwent a monumental shrift in spiritual perception. He saw that the God who created the universe was still involved in that creation and . . . at special moments reveal[ed] dynamic truth touched with glory. (loc. 1983)

...[Danny] discovered for the first time that laity must be empowered and equipped for the ministry of the church for they have gifts and ministries to share. It was a glimpse of a new truth that he has never forgotten. (loc. 1982)

An article Sam wrote on "How We Can Save the Methodist Church," published in the July 1970 issue of *Christian Magazine* was summarized in the *Tallahassee Democrat*. Sam argued in his article for

a new form of clergy; discarding meaningless ritual; development of small group worship with primary emphasis on prayer and adoption as church doctrine only timeless teachings of Christ.

Not being merely spectators, Sam challenged members to attend at least 70 percent of worship services and to tithe (his goals seem to often include numbers—reflective of his banker's value for figures!). Emphasizing the theme that was to frame his whole life, he called for the focus of the church to be one that would "perfect the inner life" of its members, while always being a place of "forgiveness" ("Sam Teague Will Discuss...," 1970, p. 7.).

He also had advice for seminaries: proposing that they "require every student to learn to fish or play a passable game of golf" so that they could be in company with their congregants weekly.

Danny would later say of his relationship with Sam that he had gotten very close to him through "church, hunting, and fishing" and through



"Portrait of the Sam Teague, Jr. family. Tallahassee, Florida." 1962. Photo by Evon Streetman. Richard Parks collection. With Sam and Myra are daughters, Depple (Whitham); Betsy (Glover), Fowler (Wujcik), and in front, Millie (Sink), and son, Sam III. https://www.floridamemory.com/items/show/45744

"coffee and conversation" (Morris, 1999, p. 11). By committing to perfecting their inner spiritual lives while cultivating a deep bond with each other (as Sam recommended to Methodist clergy and laypersons in his *Christian Magazine* article), Sam, the layman, and Danny, the pastor, accomplished much more than merely forming a friendship between two men—or even more than establishing a new church.

Their partnership would have influence far beyond Tallahassee, where the Great Experiment was first envisioned by Sam as God's "revealed truth" one winter's morning in 1965.

Post Script

The Ten Brave Christians (or The John Wesley Great Experiment) continues to transform people's lives. In addition to noting that it is being used as the focus of Lenten Studies (e.g., Lee, 2017, p. 2) and is credited on church websites as a catalyst to surges in the growth in membership ("Our History." [AUMC]., n.d.), the causal inter-

(cont. on p. 16)

net surfer can discover how wide-ranging its influence has been and continues to be. Here is a sampling:

The one-month program and ministry is mentioned by blogger **Rev. Brandon Dirks** in *Holy Discontent*:

it [The Great John Wesley Experiment] challenges readers to completely surrender themselves of their most precious assets of time, talents, resources, and relationships to the Lord.... (Dirks, 2017)

And by **Kathy Dolan** in her book *One Way Walk*:

God had to be involved because every one of us was really excited about getting up the next morning at five thirty to see what God had to say to us [in the Great Experiment]. (Dolan, 2010, p. 65)

In the obituary of **Albert Louis Ullrich:**

After he and Karen married, he became a member of Twin Lakes Reformed Church and served as a Deacon. Al believed in "Blessed to be a Blessing" and in service to the homeless. Being a participant in The Ten Brave Christians program . . . [was] very special to him. (https://www.langelands.com/obituary/Albert-Ullrich)

In a *Tampa Bay Times* article, the transformation of a power lifter who started a coffeehouse and leads a prison ministry is told:

In the early 1980s, after losing a wallet full of cash, Black made a promise to God: If he got his wallet back, he would start going to a men's program at People's United Methodist Church, called Ten Brave Christians. The wallet, with nothing missing, was waiting for him when he got home. A young Christian man, who refused any reward but prayer, had returned it. ("Dedicating..." 2005)

And **John Dunaway**, professor emeritus of French and interdisciplinary studies at Mercer University in his faculty bio, eloquently describes his own dramatic awakening:

When we moved to Macon in 1972 to start my teaching career at Mercer University, we joined a church, went to Sunday School, and even began to serve as youth counselors. But I somehow sensed that I was in dire need of discipline in my spiritual life. The event that God used to bring me into close communion with him was a Senior-High youth assembly at Epworth-by -the-Sea. The theme of the weekend was discipleship, and the main speaker, Danny Morris, challenged us to get serious about our faith by committing to a month of spiritual discipline called the Ten Brave Christians program (also known as the John Wesley Great Ex-

periment). This was in February of 1975.... Ever since that time, I have endeavored—with varying degrees of success—to live up to that commitment, and it has revolutionized my life. (http://faculty.mercer.edu/dunaway im/)

Acknowledgements

I appreciate the assistance of Deppie Whitham, oldest daughter of Sam Teague, Jr. She shared wonderful stories about her dad. Thanks, also, to Trinity member Bill Mattice for his help in providing contact info and stories.

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Finally, I want to thank the Rev. Dr. Wayne Wiatt for suggesting that *Crossroads* publish an article on Rev. Morris. Through my research of this well-known author, I not only learned about the influential life of Rev. Morris, but also about the person who so influenced him, Sam Teague, Jr.

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Celebrating the Legacy of Women at Trinity: A Call for Contributions

Women have played significant roles in the life of the church; yet most of the published history of the church has been about men.

Help *Crossroads* bring into balance the published narratives of the work and leadership of women so that readers, researchers, young people growing up in the church, and others can appreciate in a more comprehensive way the significant impact that women have made in the history of Trinity United Methodist Church.

The subject of our articles can include laity, staff members, elders, and associate pastors who have served long ago or in the recent past.

Send Pam Crosby at <u>perosbytumet.org</u> suggestions for topics, sketches, or articles. Send us short pieces that recount experiences or longer more detailed research on their lives and roles—or both!

Paper Trails: From the Sorting Bins in the Archives Prep Room

		Worship I	Buildin. May 17, 1303
			This Week at Trinity
Today:	1	8:45 a.m. 9:00 a.m. 9:45 a.m.	Morning Worship Service Radio Broadcast over WTNT Church School (classes for all ages) Morning Worship Service
Monday:		6:25 p.m. 6:30 p.m. 7:30 p.m. 11:00 a.m. 6:45 p.m.	Wesleyan Singers Rehearsal (no snack supper tonight) Boys' Choir Rehearsal (no snack supper tonight) Special Musical Treat, Trinity Sanctuary Trinity Staff, church office Campaign Dinner, Trinity Hall
		8:00 p.m.	Wesleyan Service Guild, Sanctuary
Tuesday: Wednesday:	•	7:30 p.m. 7:00 a.m. 7:30 p.m. 7:30 p.m.	Staff of Trinity Tidings , Parsonage at 610 North Adams Trinity's Breakfast Club, Trinity Hall Chancel Choir Rehearsal, Choir Room Commission on Education, Church Library
Thursday:		3:30 p.m. 7:30 p.m.	Melody Choir Rehearsal, choir room MYF Sub-District, Monticello. Installation of new officers
Friday:	10	-8:00 p.m. to 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.	Family Night Covered-Dish Supper W.S.C.S. Study and Prayer Group W.S.C.S. Sub-District Officers' Training Session, Trinity
Saturday:		to 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. 2:00 p.m.	Hall Boys' Choir Party, meet at Church at 9 a.m. Chapel Choir Party, meet at Church at 1:30 Gleaners' Class Picnic, Silver Lake
Next Su	ınday:	Installation of Worship Serv	W.S.C.S. and W.S.G. Officers at the 11 o'clock Morning
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Making History: Quarterly News from Trinity's Historical Society and Preservation of Church History Committee



Historical Marker Installation

Trustees of Trinity at their March 11, 2021, meeting gave approval for the specific location for mounting of the State of Florida Historical Site Plaque, which was installed on April 1st and was consecrated by the **Rev. Dr. Wayne**Wiatt in a special ceremony following the 11 a.m. worship service on April 11.

Our **church** historians send their sincerest gratitude to **Charlotte Mathews**, **Ben Armstead**, and **Patti Groh**, headed by **Brett Ingram**, for relocating the previous sign and erecting the new historical marker. A special report on this designation of Trinity as a state historical site will be published in the July 2021 *Crossroads*.

Appreciation to Rev. John Willis

The Historical Society and the Committee for the Preservation of Church History send their warmest thanks to the **Rev. John Willis** for his help with the delivery of *Crossroads* and *Upper Room* at Westminster Oaks.

Timeline Display to Be Extended

Plans are underway to extend the pictorial timeline display in the Yates Heritage Center. Historical Society members will meet to decide on specific details for updating this exhibit when it is safe to meet as a group.

Additions to Archives

I ynn McLarty and Judy Levy have now completed the printing and binding of the following documents:

Quarterly Conference Minutes

1907-1914 1927-1933 1934-1942 1943-1954 1955-1960 1961-1967

Quarterly Conference Minutes/ Charge Conference Minutes

1968-1971

Charge Conference Minutes

1972-1980

Donations of Books

Trinity's Historical Society members are grateful to **Julie Strauss Bettinger** for her gift of copies of her book, *Unwavering: Stories from 125 Years of Capital City Bank*. The author expressed her gratification for the online archives on Trinity's website that she used for part of her research. We are anxious to read about many of Trinity's own leaders, including, **Godfrey, Fanny, Bill**, and **Paula Smith**, who are highlighted in the book!

Meeting with St. John's Episcopal Church

Virginia Perkins and Mary Doug Buchanan from St. John's Episcopal Church in Tallahassee met in March (by Zoom) with Pam Crosby, Lynn McLarty, Linda Yates, and Mary Margaret Rogers to discuss ways to start a historical publication.

Historical Map of Trinity Facilities

ne way to tell the history of Trinity is by means of a historical map of the facilities of the church that could be used for educational sessions and tours. **Lynn McLarty** is overseeing this project.

Trinity United Methodist Church Historical Society

Rhonda Work, Chair

Dot Binger, Secretary Linda H. Yates, Vice Chair

Pamela C. Crosby, Publications Editor Sally Huggins, COVID-19 Project Coordinator

Judy Levy, Membership Archivist Asst. E. Lynn McLarty, Membership Archivist

Mary Margaret Rogers Membership Records Asst.

Contact Information

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Tallahassee, Florida 32301

Historical Society Email: pcrosby@tumct.org

Crossroads Email: pcrosby@tumct.org

Crossroads Online Archives: https://www.tumct.org/crossroads-newsletter/

Church Leadership

The Rev. Dr. Wayne Wiatt, Senior Pastor

The Rev. Neal Avirett, Associate Pastor

Dr. Nick Quinton, Director of Discipleship & Adult Ministries

The purpose of Crossroads is to provide descriptions of historical events and to publish news related to the Trinity United Methodist Church Historical Society. Its intent is not to endorse or criticize theological or ethical positions related to issues that these descriptive accounts might raise. While we strive to be as accurate as possible, we make mistakes sometimes. Please send your comments, corrections, and requests for printed copies as well as inquiries about submissions to Pamela Crosby, chief editor, at pcrosby@tumct.org.

Submission Guidelines

If you would like to be a published author in an upcoming issue, see guidelines below:

Call for Stories and Articles

- "I Remember When" snapshots: These are short descriptions that recount church life memories. They are usually 25–100 words long. See below for general guidelines.
- Oral interviews: Interviews may be audio or video taped.
 Trinity historians write up the interviews in narrative form with approval from the persons interviewed before publication. Videos or audios of the interviews may be posted on Trinity's website with permission from persons interviewed.
- Firsthand stories: Individuals may submit stories based on their firsthand experience at Trinity. The stories are generally 500 words, but can be longer. See "General Guidelines."
- Research articles: These articles are more formal in nature
- o Criteria for formal articles include **relevance** to the purpose of the newsletter, which is to publish articles that pertain to the history of Trinity in a substantial way; **quality of writ-**

ing; historical accuracy; clarity; conciseness; coherence; and readability.

- o Articles should be original works and not excerpts.
- o The word limit for articles is usually around 500 words, but can be longer.

A list of resources used for historical research may be requested. **Original** sources (instead of information from history books, newspapers, or newsletters) are preferred when possible.

General Guidelines

- Writing should be free of disrespectful language.
- Photos and information should not violate privacy, copyright, or other established laws.
- All accepted works are subject to editing in compliance with all Crossroads guidelines, including style guide standards, and must pass editorial approval before publication.
- Submit Word document to Pamela Crosby, editor, at pcrosby@tumet.org.

Editor's note: This publication could not continue in its fifth year without the continued support and assistance of my colleagues: Dot Binger, Rubie Butterworth, Judy Levy, Lynn McLarty, Mary Margaret Rogers, Linda Yates, and Rhonda Work—and Dr. Wayne Wiatt, our senior pastor. They are always willing to help me with anything I ask, and they inspire me with their professionalism and kindness.