



OCTOBER 14, 2018

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*WE'VE A STORY TO TELL*  
*75th Anniversary Memories of Mountain Brook Baptist Church*

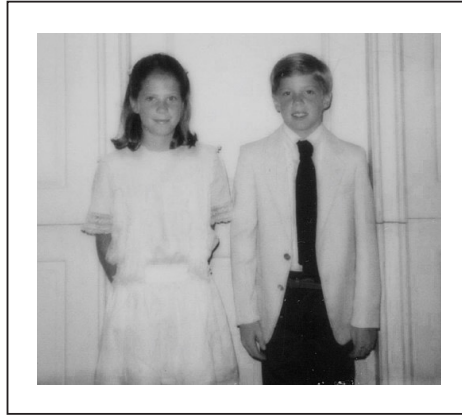
## JOINING THE CHURCH — LIKE PULLING TEETH

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My brother Luther and I professed Christ and joined Mountain Brook Baptist Church at the same time. Beforehand, we went to have conferences with Dr. James D. Moebes, our pastor. Dr. Moebes first interviewed Luther, and I was to follow.

When I entered the office, Luther had already made his decision to join the church. To my surprise, he was sitting on Dr. Moebes' desk, while our pastor pulled his loose tooth! I decided to join the church anyway.

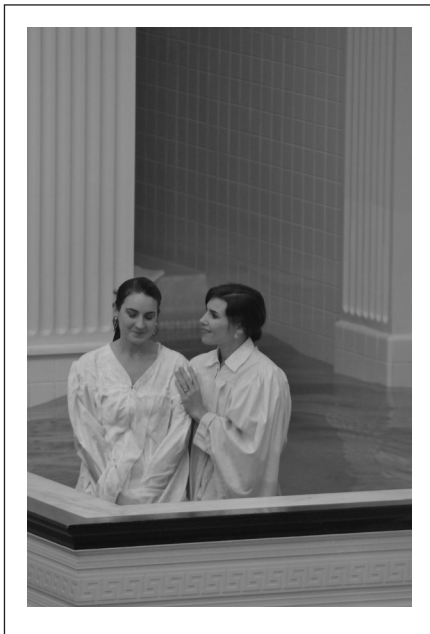
*Meredith Cale*



*Twins Meredith and Luther Cale join the church in 1984*

## HOW WE GREW IN FAITH

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*Emily Austin is baptized by Minister of Connections Mary Splawn*

Bill, Randy, Barry, and I came to Mountain Brook Baptist Church and joined in 1975. So many things have happened since then that have become the hallmarks of our lives; I don't know where to begin. I will say both of our sons, Randy and Barry, were active in every aspect of this church and are the men they are today because of the spiritual truths they learned here.

A "never forget as long as we live" moment took place a little over a year ago when our granddaughter Emily (Randy's daughter) accepted Christ in Mary Splawn's office after Mary had prayed with her, read Scripture with her, and led her to the Lord. Emily joined the church and was baptized by Mary in the baptismal pool at the front of the church. (It was the most beautiful baptism I've ever seen.) Her dad came up from Tampa, her sister Jessica (whom Mary led to the Lord), and her Uncle Barry, along with Bill and I and numerous friends sat on the front rows and soaked in every moment—some of us with tears in our eyes. Emily was not a Christian when she came to live with us, but quickly she became interested in the Bible, her Sunday School class, new friends, and staff here at Mountain Brook Baptist Church. Mary took her under

her wings, as she did Jessica, and patiently brought them to Jesus. Emily is now active as she can be in every aspect of this church. God answered our prayers.

*Bill and Shirley Austin*

## TWO FREESTANDING STEEPLES

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There are some interesting links between two important Baptist churches located on different ends of Montevallo Road. Mountain Brook Baptist Church is located on Montevallo Road South. Sixth Avenue Baptist Church is located on Montevallo Road Southwest (now known as Martin Luther King Boulevard). While Mountain Brook Baptist Church is celebrating its 75th anniversary, Sixth Avenue can trace its history back 138 years to 1881, when Birmingham was young. Mountain Brook Baptist Church's building sits on its second site, and Sixth Avenue also occupies its second site.

In May 1961, Mountain Brook Baptist Church welcomed Dr. Dotson M. Nelson Jr. as pastor. In August 1962, Dr. John Porter was installed by Martin Luther King Jr. as pastor of Sixth Avenue Baptist Church. In the 1960s, Birmingham was at the center of civil rights struggles. To help with Christian reconciliation in this volatile time, these two young leaders in town became friends. Each spoke up for advancement of human rights.

Mountain Brook Baptist Church was spared direct confrontations from the Birmingham protests, although our neighbor Mountain Brook Junior High was closed on several occasions due to bomb threats.

At the time, Sixth Avenue Baptist Church was located on Sixth Avenue South at Sixteenth Street. The historic church and its community of members were being displaced by rapid growth of UAB's campus. Mountain Brook Baptist Church was making crucial decisions about a new Sanctuary building. We began building in 1965 and the Sanctuary was occupied on Easter 1967. About the same time, Sixth Avenue Baptist Church bought 12 acres on Montevallo Road Southwest, near Elmwood Cemetery. They sold their old building to UAB.

Both congregations faced lots of internal discussion about design of their future buildings. Some of our membership took time to accept some of the less conventional design elements of our Sanctuary. Some referred to the front of the building as having "wings" and others couldn't appreciate a freestanding steeple with the entrance underneath.

Sixth Avenue Baptists were accustomed to a beautiful traditional building, but on a new campus they could consider innovation. Why not try a freestanding steeple?

Dr. Nelson invited Dr. Porter to bring his congregation to visit Mountain Brook Baptist Church and see firsthand the beauty and style of our freestanding steeple. One Sunday, Dr. Porter loaded a bus with his members to visit and worship in our Sanctuary. The final decision: Sixth Avenue Baptist Church built their campus with a freestanding steeple and occupied it on March 3, 1970.

Through the years, two freestanding steeples—each adorned with a cross but located on different ends of Montevallo Road—have continued to bridge the racial divide through Baptist conventions and conversations.