

Frederick Reese accepts congressional medal for civil rights marchers

by [Adelle M. Banks](#) in the [March 30, 2016](#) issue

Frederick D. Reese, a Baptist minister who took part in the 1965 marches in Selma, Alabama, received the Congressional Gold Medal on behalf of all of those who worked for the passage of the Voting Rights Act. Speaking at the U.S. Capitol ceremony on February 24, Reese said that God enabled the civil rights leaders to endure the beatings they faced.

“Had it not been for the Lord on our side, we would have perished by the way,” said Reese, 86, who has served as a longtime pastor and leader of the Dallas County Voters League, which invited Martin Luther King Jr. to Selma.

Rep. John Lewis (D., Ga.), who also marched at Selma, joined Reese at the ceremony.

“Thank you from each and every one who marched, who prayed, who never gave up, who never gave in, who kept the faith and kept their eyes on the prize,” he said.

The Alabama delegation in Congress had praised Reese as one of “the Foot Soldiers” who participated in the 1965 Selma to Montgomery marches. —Religion News Service

*This article was edited on March 15, 2016.*