



# Alton Pastor Back in Pulpit Quickly Following Hip Surgery

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ALTON, IL -- Andre' Dobson, the pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Alton, had a church member due for hip surgery performed by Dr. John Stirton at Alton Memorial Hospital in March. Before that surgery took place, however, Dobson unexpectedly had a chance to experience Dr. Stirton's work first-hand.

On Feb. 17, Dobson slipped and fell on the icy driveway outside his Godfrey home and broke his right hip. Dr. Stirton did the surgery later that afternoon, and the pastor's recovery has been remarkable.

"I was up walking with the use of a walker down to the therapy room the next morning," Dobson said. "I used a walker for two weeks and a cane for another two weeks. But I was back preaching at our Sunday night service on March 16. I haven't had any recurring problems."

Dr. Stirton, an orthopedic surgeon who joined the AMH staff in late 2013, uses a revolutionary procedure where he enters from the front side on such hip procedures. This minimally invasive approach is used most often for joint replacement due to hip arthritis but Dr. Stirton also utilizes it for some hip fractures, as in Dobson's case.

"There seems to be a very high rate of patient satisfaction with this procedure," Dr. Stirton said. "This approach to the hip joint results in less surgical pain, quicker rehab, rapid return to full function, and no post-operative precautions."

"I knew one of our members was getting ready for a hip replacement, so I was talking to him and learned about Dr. Stirton that way," Dobson said. "I was actually thinking about a possible procedure on my right knee. So later I said that I was just wanting to check on Dr. Stirton before Bill's surgery."

“At my age (57), he recommended a total hip implant to avoid more problems a few years down the road. I’m confident that’s going to be the case.”

Dobson said that while the pain he experienced in his driveway was beyond 10 on a scale of 1-10, the pain he was experiencing even the morning following the surgery was next to nothing.



“You have to realize the difference between real pain and just discomfort,” he said. “I think I have a pretty high threshold of pain, but even I was amazed how little it hurt so soon after the operation.”

Dobson preached in three morning services – standing without the aid of a walker or cane -- at Calvary on Easter Sunday. That was a mere nine weeks after his fall.

One thing he had to remember at first was that while climbing steps – even the two steps from the floor of the Calvary Baptist Church worship center up to the stage – he had to lead with his left leg and then place his right leg on the same step before repeating the procedure for each step. By May, he was able to ascend those two steps at the church normally.

“I remember even when I arrived at Alton Memorial that two or three people around me immediately said what good hands I was in when they learned that Dr. Stirton was doing the surgery,” Dobson said. “The three things that impressed me the most about him are his communication, his competency and his caring. He was always very good at communicating what needed to be done, he’s obviously very competent, and he has a caring spirit for his patients. I think you can tell that right away with any doctor.”

In addition to his pastoral duties, Dobson, was glad to be able to get back to interacting with four grandchildren the way he would like.

“I might even be able to get out and play some golf,” Dobson said. “Patients sometimes can push things, but I decided this time to do everything Dr. Stirton told me. The whole experience with him and everyone at Alton Memorial has been excellent.”

**Photo caption: The Rev. Andre’ Dobson, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Alton, ascends the steps to the stage before preaching from the pulpit just a few weeks after surgery for a broken hip that was performed by orthopedic surgeon John Stirton, MD, at Alton Memorial Hospital.**