



Here & Now

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An update for Florida Baptist Historical Society Board of Directors and Friends

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FLORIDA BAPTIST
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Dear Board Members and Friends of the Florida Baptist Historical Society,

Are you interested in trivia? I suppose I have always had some form of curiosity about names, dates, places and events.

My trivia bias carries over into Florida Baptist history. How many people can you recall that had a connection with Florida Baptists before they became president of the Southern Baptist Convention? Seven preachers come to mind and I have had the privilege of hearing each of them preach. Let me share my "Florida Seven" with you and add a few trivia thoughts.

Carl Bates (1914-1999). Dr. Bates is one of my favorite leaders who served in the SBC. He was a Mississippi native and his Florida connection was that he served as pastor of First Baptist Church Leesburg in 1943. One trivia item is that he served as president of the Texas Baptist Convention and the North Carolina Baptist Convention while serving in those states. My favorite Carl Bates trivia came about when he was preaching a revival meeting for me when I was pastor in Louisiana. Dr. Bates told me that he wanted the guest minister of music, Bill Ichter, to receive 100% of the love offering. Bill and his wife Jerry served as SBC music missionaries in Brazil and were home on furlough when Bill led the singing for our revival. I announced to the church the decision and the church was pleased at the generosity of Dr. Bates. A few nights later during the offertory Bill, Dr. Bates and I were sitting on the platform and Bill was writing out a love offering check. Dr. Bates leaned over and told Bill, "Hey Bill. The more you give the more you get."



Adrian Rogers

Adrian Rogers (1931-2005) actually served three terms as the president of the Southern Baptist Convention. His Florida connection is that he was born in West Palm Beach, graduated from Stetson, and served as pastor of Fellsmere Baptist Church in Fellsmere, Florida. A piece of information worth knowing is that when Rogers was pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis the church membership grew from 9,000 to 29,000.

Charles Stanley (1932-) was born in Virginia. He had two important Florida connections. He served as pastor of FBC, Miami (1962-1968) and FBC, Bartow (1968-1969). It is of much interest to know that Charles Stanley is 82 years of age and still serves as pastor and preaches to an audience that can hear his sermons in 50 different languages. That includes 500 radio stations and 300 television stations.



Jim Henry

Jim Henry (1937-) is a native of Tennessee. His Florida connection is that he served as pastor of First Baptist Church, Orlando (1977-2006). Jim Henry was a pastor who served in Florida and was truly loved all over the state. A trivia fact of interest is that before Jim married Jeanette he taught school in Panama City. Another Florida connection.



Charles Stanley



Jerry Vines

Jerry Vines (1937-) is a native of Georgia. His Florida connection is that Jerry served as co-pastor of First Baptist Church, Jacksonville until the death of Homer Lindsey, Jr. He then served the church as pastor. Trivia of note in the life of Jerry Vines is that he served as president of SBC Pastors Conference and the Alabama Baptist Convention Pastors Conference.

James Merritt (1952-) is a native of Georgia. His Florida connection is that he is a graduate of Stetson. Merritt served as pastor in Kentucky and Mississippi before he became pastor in Georgia. Some nice trivia is that not only did he graduate from Stetson he graduated Cum Laude and his degree was in accounting.



James Merritt



Bobby Welch

Bobby Welch. I suppose of all these men I have known Bobby the longest. We were classmates at New Orleans Seminary and I was actually the grader in the preaching classes that included Bobby, Paige and Dorothy Patterson and Ron Herrod. It is of trivia interest to remember that Bobby preached in class one day and used some "live" flowers to prove his point. Dr. V. L. Stanfield was the preaching professor and was intrigued by Bobby's ingenuity and boldness. More important matters are that Bobby is the co-founder of the FAITH Evangelism concept and is a decorated veteran of the Vietnam War. Bobby received the Purple Heart and the Bronze Star with "V" Device for bravery.

You may know of others, but Florida and the Southern Baptist Convention were positively touched by the lives of these men.

Honoring those who honor Christ,

Jerry M. Windsor
Secretary-Treasurer
Matthew 6:33
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