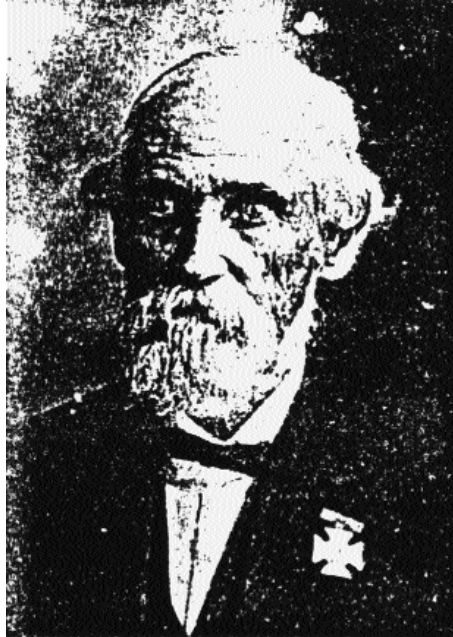


Illustration Resources

100 Sermon Illustrations and Facts from Florida Baptist Church History

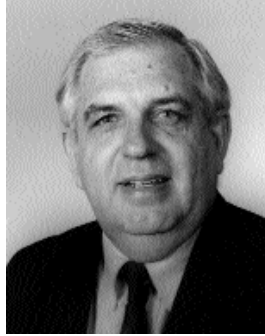


Edwin H. Rennolds

Compiled
by
Jerry M. Windsor, Secretary-Treasurer
Florida Baptist Historical Society

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A WORD TO OUR PASTORS

Jerry M. Windsor
Secretary-Treasurer
Florida Baptist Historical Society

In the homiletical house the foundation must be the written word of God. The introduction is the front door. The hallways are the transitional phrases and the bedrooms are the major points. The kitchen is the study and the dining room is the auditorium where we are fed. The carpet running throughout the house is the application and the walls of the house are interpretations. The back door is the conclusion and the roof is the invitation.

But something is missing. Every house needs windows. Especially the homiletical house. Windows are for light and illumination. They help define and explain the whole house.

Sermon illustrations are the windows in the homiletical house. As we prepare for our Florida Baptist Convention Sesquicentennial (1854-2004) it just seemed appropriate to provide at least 100 stories, vignettes, facts or anecdotes for our pastors to use that reflect our Florida Baptist Convention history. Use these stories to honor Christ, to preach the Word, and to serve the church.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jerry Windsor". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

Jerry M. Windsor

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many resources were used to glean these stories and facts. It would be poor stewardship not to mention how helpful some of these sources have been.

The *Florida Baptist Witness* was by far the most valuable tool in this production of historical illustrations. Our state paper is one of the very best and every church would be wise in sending this valuable resource to every member.

A History of Florida Baptists by Earl Joiner is such a great help in understanding where we came from and where we are going. Gordon Reeves and his research for his Master's thesis at Stetson is still a wonderful Florida church history source. These works were most valuable to me in my research.

The files of the Florida Baptist Historical Society are rich in Florida Baptist facts, lore, and statistics. I'm grateful especially to Jan Cunningham, Melissa Campbell, and Suzanne Campbell who work so hard to give us accurate files, copies, and publications.

No work is without its shortcomings and all errors in this book may be attributed to me. I promise to correct them in the next edition if you bring them to my attention.

Illustration Resources
100 Sermon Illustrations from Florida Baptist Church History
Compiled by Jerry M. Windsor
2003

1. **Claude Marion Almand** (1916-1957) was a graduate of Louisiana College, Louisiana State University, and received his doctorate from Eastman School of Music of the University of Rochester. He served as Dean of the School of Music at Stetson University (1953-1957), but was killed in a tragic automobile accident in 1957. His life is not over. He wrote the sacred composition “The Resurrection Story” and Broadman Press published it in 1959 two years after his death.
2. **Louise Cecilia Fleming** (1862-1899) was born in Hibernia, Florida, and was probably the first foreign missionary appointed from Florida by Baptists (1886). She was the daughter of a former slave and was the first Black female appointed by the American Baptist Convention foreign mission board. She served in Africa as a teacher and medical doctor.
3. **Frank James Fowler** (1870-1933) was the first Florida native to be appointed to foreign mission service by the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. He and his wife, Daisy Cate Fowler, served in Argentina from 1903 until his death in 1933. His youngest son, **Dr. Franklin Fowler**, became Southern Baptist’s first medical missionary to South America in 1947, and later served as a medical consultant at the Foreign Mission Board. Franklin stated that his father always wanted to push forward into the interior and was much appreciated because he loved the people.
4. **Claude Walker Duke** (1865-1936) was pastor of First Baptist Church in Tampa for 31 years (1905-1936). When he went to Tampa in 1905, they had 346 members. At the time of his death in 1936, they had grown to a membership of 2550.
5. **Rufus Gray** (1915-1942) was born in Titusville, and graduated from Furman University and The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. He and his wife went as foreign missionaries in 1940. They were interned in a Japanese prisoner of war camp in the Philippines. He died there in January 1942.
6. **Stetson University** had a sacrificial start with many people giving generously of themselves, their time, and their money to promote the school. The University and the Florida Baptist Convention had their good times and bad times as issues of finances, property, supervision, and control were negotiated again and again. When **William Sims Allen** (1888-1950) became president he determined to build a good relationship with the city of Deland, the churches, and the Florida Baptist Convention. Allen served as president from 1934 to 1947, and built good relations, great harmony, and made many wonderful friends for the school.
7. **Charles Roy Angell** (1889-1971) was pastor of Central Baptist Church in Miami from 1936 to 1962. He was one of the greatest preachers to serve in Florida, and was probably the best sermon illustrator we ever had in the Florida Baptist Convention. He loved people, and his wonderful sermon illustrations demonstrate that.
8. **D. Wade Armstrong** (1920-2003) served in Arkansas, Oklahoma, West Virginia, and Florida. He served as a Baptist preacher for 65 years.

9. **Julius Hillier Avery** served as pastor in Mississippi (1938-1941), Alabama (1941-1949), and Florida (1949-1965). He was active in racial reconciliation in Meridian, Montgomery, and Panama City long before it was the popular thing to do. He preached and practiced racial justice as a Baptist pastor in the turmoil of the birth of the civil rights movement.
10. **Ann B. Hester Bailey** served as Secretary of the Woman's Mission Work in the Florida Baptist Convention from 1881 to 1886. Mrs. Bailey appealed to the women of the Florida Baptist churches to give ten cents each so that an enclosure could be built for the grave of Ann H. Judson who served so faithfully with her husband in Burma. Dr. W. N. Chaudoin said that Mrs. Bailey "died in the harness."
11. **Napoleon Alexander Bailey** (1833-1898) served as pastor and president of the Florida Baptist Ministers Conference. He came to Florida in 1860, due to a cold and bad cough. His illness proved to be a blessing to the Florida Baptist Convention.
12. **Joseph S. Baker** (1798-1877) was one of the most remarkable men to ever serve in Florida Baptist circles. He was a pastor, missionary, wealthy land holder, medical doctor, author, editor, publisher, and evangelist. He was well educated and committed to Baptist work at a crucial time in Florida Baptist history.
13. **Harold Clark Bennett** (1924-2003) served as the Executive-Treasurer of the Florida Baptist Convention from 1967 to 1978, and left Florida to serve as Executive-Treasurer of the Southern Baptist Convention in Nashville, Tennessee. He has faithfully served Christ Jesus in denominational service.
14. **William J. Blewett** (1812-1874) preached along the Georgia-Florida state line area in a time of anti-mission sentiment in many churches. He took a pro-missions stance and assisted in a Biblical missionary Articles of Faith Statement for the Florida Baptist Association. This pro-missions attitude was instrumental in the early pro-missions work of the Florida Baptist Convention.
15. **William James Bolin** was one of those early Baptist heroes that we never hear of anymore. He served as pastor of 16 Baptist churches in four states. The churches he served as pastor included First Baptist Church in Milan, Tennessee (1890-1893), First Baptist Church in Orlando (1894-1895), First Baptist Church in Baton Rouge (1903-1907), First Baptist Church in Newport, Kentucky (1912-1913), and First Baptist Church in Lakeland, Florida (1920-1926).
16. **Jerry Wallace Lee** who teaches at the Baptist College of Florida has served 42 interims as pastor in three different states. **Wiley Richards** of the Baptist College of Florida has served 40 interims. **Charles H. Bolton** served as Executive Secretary-Treasurer of the Florida Baptist Convention (1941-1949) and also served in 40 interims.
17. **Ronald W. Branning** is a retired public school music teacher and now teaches music at the Baptist College of Florida. He has served as bi-vocational minister of music at Eastside Baptist Church in Marianna, Florida, for 22 years and counting.
18. **Charles Mercer Brittain** (1873-1943) served Florida Baptists faithfully as Executive-Secretary Treasurer (1926-1941) in a time of great personal and historical crisis. He worked faithfully with Columbia College only to see that work fail. He came to the Executive-Secretary work only one week after the death of his mother. He worked through the devastating hurricanes of 1927 and 1928. The stock market crash came in 1929. Landmarkism was a constant threat in the 1930s. World War II began in Europe, and in all these crises, Dr. Brittain was a positive stable leader.

19. **John Lynn Bartlow** (1917-2002) was the most remarkable man to ever serve on the faculty of Baptist Bible Institute. He led choirs, served as minister of music, built his own home, played many musical instruments, taught school, served as head of the music school at Baptist Bible Institute, and traveled all over the United States. This was in spite of the fact he had polio at age five, and was from that time forward confined to a wheelchair or crutches. He was disabled but never unable. He served in the ministry over 50 years.
20. **Leroy Benefield** (1926-2001) served as a foreign missionary to the Philippines (1958-1970) and taught evangelism at the Baptist Bible Institute from 1970 until 1991. Benefield was one of the most respected and effective evangelists to serve in the Florida panhandle. He was a preacher, missionary, professor, and evangelist. He felt God had gifted him to be a “revivalist,” and was used widely as he exercised this gift.
21. **Doak Sheridan Campbell** (1888-1973) served as president of Florida State University from 1941 to 1957. He also served as president of the Arkansas Baptist Convention and the Florida Baptist Convention (1948). He received six honorary doctorates.
22. **Sidney Johnston Catts** (1863-1936) was a Florida Southern Baptist preacher who was elected governor of the State (1917-1921) on the platform of rum, race, and religion. He had many failures, but did bring some important reforms for the Florida prison system, and was also an advocate of women’s rights.
23. **William Newell Chaudoin** (1829-1904) is seen by many as the “Father of the Florida Baptist Convention.” He was the first Chief Executive Officer of the State Board of Missions (1881-1901), and served as convention president for over 20 years. Chaudoin came to Florida due to ill health. His influence upon the struggling convention was remarkable.
24. **W. R. Coggins** (1828-1904) was born in North Carolina, but came to Florida in 1879. He was pastor primarily to the poor. He seldom drew a salary and felt a special empathy for those in poverty. It was said of him, “...of course he died poor, yet rich in faith and an heir of the Kingdom.”
25. **T. B. Cooper** was born in 1824 in Montgomery County, Georgia. He became an invalid in 1895, but never gave up the ministry. He became a widely read Baptist writer at the beginning of his illness. In 1900 he said, “I have been pastor of six churches, taught at 20 schools, assisted in ordaining 20 ministers, married 25 couples, preached 1500 sermons, gave 150 addresses, and traveled at least 50,000 miles.” He served in Florida, Alabama, and Georgia as an agent of the Foreign Mission Board.
26. **William Brauner Cooper, Sr.** (1807-1878) is considered to be the first missionary Baptist preacher in Florida. He served as moderator of the Florida Association 16 times, and president of the Florida Baptist Convention three times (1866, 1872, 1876). He was a pastor and pioneer missionary.
27. **Lewis A. Curtis** (1919-2000) was a native of Mississippi, and served there as pastor before coming to teach pastoral theology at the Baptist Bible Institute in Graceville, Florida. He was always prepared in class and the pulpit. He preached 20 minute sermons and every word was carefully chosen.
28. **Elam Jackson Daniels** (1908-1987) was the million soul man. He felt he had a vision from God that he would be instrumental in seeing one million souls come to Christ. In his pastoral, publishing, and revival preaching, it is believed that God gave him his spiritual dream.
29. **John Dicks** is the father of rural church work in Florida. He served rural churches for over 80 years. He served as pastor of 31 churches in seven associations. He and his wife, Pearl Tyre Dicks, were

married for 65 years. Dicks began in the circuit riding days, and would pastor six churches at a time. He baptized 1200 people and 66 at one time in a service at Pine Grove in Trenton, Florida.

30. **Pope A. Duncan** is one of the best prepared and most intelligent leaders we have ever had in the Florida Baptist Convention. He received the B.A. and M.S. (physics) degrees from the University of Georgia, and also graduated from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky (M.Div., Th.D.). He served as president of two different colleges before serving as president of Stetson University from 1977 to 1987.

31. **Robert Fleming** (1789-1880) was preaching in Florida in 1857. He was unusual for that day and time in that he was educated and wrote out many of his sermons. He was always completely prepared to preach.

32. **G. W. Hall** had a unique ministry. He was a children's work organizer in central and north Florida in the late 1800s. He wrote under the pen name of "Uncle Hall", and gave great encouragement to children.

33. **J. M. Hall** (1849-1933) was a pastor in North Florida, and had the reputation of preaching on tithing and giving.

34. **Roscoe Hall** turned 100 years old on January 2, 1999, and preached the next day at Gateway Baptist Church in Blountstown. He was a Baptist preacher for nearly 80 years before he died.

35. **Thomas Hansen** (1897-1964) was a soul winner, and saw 4400 persons come to Christ in his four Florida pastorates that stretched over 41 years. He helped start five other churches.

36. **Jeremiah M. Hayman** (1822-1902) was very influential in early Baptist work in Florida. He preached in villages and in the woods. He established churches at Bartow, Tampa, and Plant City.

37. **Carl Alonzo Howell** (1901-1978) served as pastor of the Murray Hill Baptist Church in Jacksonville. They started 11 missions and had 20 men licensed to preach.

38. **William Sherman Jennings** (1863-1920) was the eighteenth governor of the State of Florida. He was a faithful member of First Baptist Church in Tallahassee. He was instrumental in saving 3 million acres of public land for the people of Florida.

39. **D. O. Jernigan** (1913-1946) and his wife were born on the same day and died on the same day. They drowned at a family outing on Lake Okeechobee on June 22, 1946.

40. **Thomas Maxwell Johns** (1898-1977) was an innovative pioneer in child care work in Florida. He served as superintendent of the Florida Baptist Children's Home for 36 years, from 1932 until 1968. He dedicated himself to caring for needy children.

41. **E. Earl Joiner** (1924-1997) is known to Florida Baptists as writer, teacher, preacher, pastor, historian, and scholar. He taught at Stetson University for 37 years (1955-1992). He was also curator and secretary of the Florida Baptist Historical Society from 1973 to 1997. Dr. Joiner was a veteran of World War II. He served in General George Patton's 3rd Army division. He never forgot the holocaust and its impact upon mankind. He wanted Baptists to remember and learn from those dark days of tragedy.

42. **John Jumper** was a full blooded Seminole, and was born in the Florida Everglades. He became chief of the Seminole Nation, and remained chief for over 30 years. He was converted in about 1854, and became a Baptist in 1861. He resigned his position as chief to give full time to preaching the gospel.

43. **H. M. King** (1829-1917) was born in Missouri, and moved to Florida due to poor health. He was a catalyst for starting mission work in Mexico and Cuba.
44. **C. H. Lyons** might have been the first Black person hired by the State Board of Missions. Late in 1894, Lyons was hired to organize and conduct institutes for other Black leaders.
45. **John Maguire** (1900-1987) served as the Executive Secretary-Treasurer of the Florida Baptist Convention. He served from 1945 until 1967. The annual state mission offering in the Florida Baptist Convention is named after him and his wife, Clyde. He loved “favored Florida.”
46. **Hal Marchman** (1919-) is known to the world as the Chaplain of the Daytona International Speedway. He served as pastor of Central Baptist Church in Daytona for 27 years.
47. **Rhydon Grigsby Mays** was the brother of Richard Johnson Mays, the first Florida Baptist Convention president. It is said that Rhydon Mays planted the first orange grove in Florida in about 1835.
48. **Richard Johnson Mays** (1808-1864) came to Florida from South Carolina about 1830. He was a wealthy land owner, cultural leader, preacher, and church starter. It was in the parlor of Richard and Eliza Mays’ home that the Florida Convention was born on November 20, 1854.
49. **James McDonald** (1798-1869) was probably the most colorful Baptist preacher to ever serve in Florida. At age seven he witnessed the hanging of his father and fourteen relatives for participating in the Irish rebellion. He was trained to be a Catholic priest. He was imprisoned in Cuba. He was converted and became one of the most beloved ministers to serve in Georgia and Florida.
50. **R. L. M. McGougan** (1902-) in his lifetime preached in 60 of the 64 churches in Pensacola Bay Association.
51. **W. H. McIntosh** (1868-1950) helped organize 12 churches and erect ten buildings. He was pastor of one church for 38 years. Two thousand people attended his funeral in 1950.
52. **William Dudley Nowlin** was licensed to preach before he was called. His license was given over his protest but he later surrendered and became a great beloved preacher in Kentucky and Florida. He served as president of both the Kentucky and Florida Baptist Conventions. He was president of the Florida Baptist Convention in 1930-1931. He served as pastor at Lakeland and Arcadia in Florida.
53. The **O’Kelley** brothers made a great impact upon the Southern Baptist Convention. **Nathaniel** served as pastor of First Baptist Church, Gainesville, Florida. **N. B.** organized Druid Hill Baptist Church in Atlanta, Georgia. **T. W.** was pastor of First Baptist Church in Raleigh, North Carolina, for many years. At a Southern Baptist Convention in St. Louis, **Nathaniel** read the scripture, **N. B.** led in prayer, and **T. W.** preached the convention sermon.
54. **J. J. W. Place** was pastor in Palatka in 1885. He was pleased that the church was building a parsonage “to protect their pastor against high rents and cheap houses.”
55. **George C. Powell** (1809-1881) was a pastor in Florida who suffered untold tragedy in the Civil War days. He had one son killed, another crippled, and a third hung.
56. **Edwin Hansford Rennolds, Sr.** (1830-1912) was the first director of the Florida Baptist Historical Society. He fought with the Tennessee 5th Regiment in the Civil War. At the beginning of the

war there were 1300 men in his regiment. On April 24, 1865, there were only 30 of the original 1300 left for duty.

57. **C. T. Sampson** was a Barnabas for Stetson University. He gave them \$70,000 at a very crucial time. Sampson died in 1894. At that time Stetson had 208 students.

58. **Simeon Sheffield** (1826-1902) served as a chaplain in the Civil War, and baptized many soldiers. He had three sons to serve as moderator of the Harmony Baptist Association.

59. **Bobby Bowden** played quarterback and later coached at Howard College. His son, Terry, also served later as head coach at the same college and went from there as head coach at Auburn University. Another son, Tommy, coaches at Clemson University. Bobby Bowden now serves as head football coach at Florida State University.

60. **Carlton Watson Todd** (1916-1998) served three Primitive Baptist Churches as pastor in three different states for about 50 years each. He served Bethel in Caraville, Florida (1941-1998); County Line in Abbeville, Alabama (1956-1998); and Shady Grove in Arlington, Georgia (1942-1998). Todd set a record of pastoral faithfulness in the same churches with the annual call and times of war and economic downturns through the years. His people called him faithful.

61. **Thomas A Wright** at age 82 may be the Dean of all Florida Baptist pastors. He has served as pastor of Mt. Carmel Baptist Church in Gainesville for 42 years, beginning in 1962, and is still serving.

62. The **first Baptist Sunday School in Florida** was begun in Key West in 1843 by a group of Connecticut fishermen. They sent one of their number north to raise money to build a building. A total of \$800 was raised, but on the return trip the man and the money were lost at sea.

63. The **Key West Church** was a member of the Stonington Connecticut Association. When the Civil War began the Stonington Association passed a resolution that no member could own slaves. There were slave holders in the Key West Church, therefore relations were severed with the Stonington Association.

64. It is thought that **Edward Kimber** was the first person of Baptist extraction to visit Florida. He came in 1743, with General James Oglethorpe. His father was **Isaac Kimber**, a learned Baptist minister in London.

65. **William Conner** was the first Baptist preacher to walk on Florida soil. He came as a militia man in 1812 to help protect the colonists. He served much later as pastor in Callahan for 13 years. He died in 1844 while preaching in Hawkingsville, Georgia.

66. The first federal **census** was taken in Florida in 1830. The Florida population then was 34,730.

67. **First Baptist Church in Campbellton** began in 1825 with 11 members. Campbellton is the oldest Southern Baptist Church in Florida which has consistently held services since its conception.

68. **First Baptist Church, Jacksonville** was damaged by Union soldiers during the Civil War. In 1912 the federal government paid the church \$1170 for damages.

69. **The Florida Baptist Convention** was begun November 20, 1854, in the parlor of Richard J. Mays, the pastor of Concord Baptist Church near Madison. In 1883 the Concord Baptist Church joined the Mercer Association in Georgia. In 1901 Concord returned to the Florida Association.
70. **Apalachicola Baptist Church** is thought to be the first Baptist church to split in Florida along racial lines. This occurred in 1853. Blacks and whites worshiped together before the Civil War.
71. **First Baptist Church in Tallahassee** had the largest Baptist church membership in the state in 1860 with 382 members. Only 16 of the members were white, the remainder were black or of other descent.
72. **The Pine Grove Baptist Church** in Madison County had 15 men to fight in the Civil War. Only five returned.
73. **First Baptist Church in Tampa** is the mother or grandmother of over 20 churches in the Tampa area.
74. In 1835 the **Suwannee Association** was begun as the first Baptist association in Florida. It became anti-missionary in 1845, and was not a part of the Southern Baptist Convention or the Florida Baptist Convention.
75. **Cool Springs of Decatur County, Georgia**, was the last Georgia Baptist church to be in the Florida Baptist Convention. The church withdrew from the Florida Association in 1877.
78. **The Elim Association in Alabama** had 11 Florida churches and 10 Alabama churches in 1873.
77. In 1853 the black members of the **West Florida Association** contributed \$5.25 for mission work in Africa.
78. Due to the terrible war conditions in 1863, **the West Florida Association** voted to sell staple commodities to soldiers' families at "fixed prices." Everyone was also charged to look out for their fellow believers.
79. **Santa Fe Association** was one of the last associations that maintained black membership after the Civil War. There were blacks in the association as late as 1870.
80. From its inception the **Thonatosassa Baptist Church** underwent 19 changes in the way the name of the church was spelled.
81. In 1872 **New River Baptist Association** sent out two missionaries without "purse or script."
82. In 1981 **Plant City Baptist Church** had five generations of one family enrolled in Sunday School at the same time.
83. **J. R. Wells** served as pastor of 46 churches in his pastoral ministry.
84. **Little Manatee Association** saw the need for work in Cuba, and its 16 churches and 800 members pledged \$800 for the work in 1884. This pledge was made when none of the churches had enough money to build their own buildings.

85. **E. B. Timmons** was chosen as missionary to the St. Johns River Baptist Association in 1879. His salary was one dollar per day that he was “on the field, provided he was able to collect that much from the people he served.” He worked 86 days but was only able to collect \$58.39.
86. **The Beulah Baptist Association** in 1885 urged its members to be temperate in all things, but they were not to spoil the symbolism of the Lord’s table by substituting molasses and water or unfermented grape juice “full of the leaven of corruption” for the “joyous wine, intended by our Lord to represent his blood which takes away the sin of the world.”
87. **Waldo Wood** served as an ordained Baptist preacher for 76 years.
88. **Henry Allen Parker** (1963) and his wife, **Virginia Reaves Parker** (1974), both served as president of the Florida Baptist Convention. Virginia is the only woman to serve as convention president.
89. In 1857 the **Florida Baptist Convention** met in Thomasville, Georgia. This is the only time the convention has met out of state.
90. The **Florida Baptist Convention** has met in Greenwood (1856), a town with a present day population of about 400.
91. The **St. Mary’s River Missionary Baptist Association** was begun in 1879, but changed its name to the **Jacksonville Baptist Association** in 1902.
92. **Florida Baptist Institute** became **Baptist Bible Institute** which became **Florida Baptist Theological College** which became the **Baptist College of Florida**.
93. **Gilbert E. Jones III** served the same Baptist church as pastor on five different occasions.
94. **Durwood Locke** assisted in starting 188 missions in Florida and **Harry Liechty** helped start 150 missions in Florida.
95. **Ralph Acree** served as moderator of three different associations in Florida.
96. **W. E. Todd** was pastor of the same church for 50 years.
97. **Genus Crenshaw** worked as a missionary with the Seminole Indians for 47 years.
98. **W. N. Chaudoin** served as president of the Florida Baptist Convention 21 times.
99. **Charlotte Rinkenberger Peelman** served for 25 years as Woman’s Missionary Union Executive Secretary (1911-1936).
100. The first issue of the *Florida Baptist Witness* was published at Lake City on January 17, 1884.

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