



Here & Now

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

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

When I think of the close connection of the Florida and Georgia Baptist Conventions the first thing I think of is "Mabel White."

Mabel White Memorial Baptist Church is in Macon, Georgia, and was begun in 1902. The church has over 3,000 members and a two million dollar budget. My good friend Lee Sheppard is pastor there and we all claim Lee as a Florida Baptist product and a Baptist College of Florida graduate. Mabel White Memorial Baptist is a great church with a great pastor and people.

But that's not what I am writing about today. What I am writing about today is "Mabel White." And thereby hangs an interesting Florida Baptist history story. Jacob Lee White (1862 -1948) was born in North Carolina. He attended Wake Forest and received his B. A. there in 1881, after a distinguished career as a student, orator and linguist. In June, 1886, following his graduation, he went to his first pastorate which was First Baptist Church of Raleigh, North Carolina. At that time First Baptist Church, Raleigh was the largest Baptist church in the state. Later he served in Durham, Asheville and the states of Tennessee, Georgia, Texas and Florida. He received honorary doctoral degrees from Wake Forest and Stetson.

White married Dovie Poston of Shelby, North Carolina, on September 22, 1886. They had nine children, and all nine made a significant mark. Four of his sons became Southern Baptist pastors and in 1933, Dr. White preached the annual sermon at the SBC in Washington, D. C. and his four minister sons were on the platform with him.

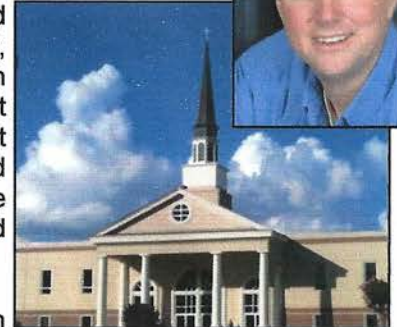


Jacob Lee White

Dr. White served as chairman of the Board of Trustees of Bessie Tift College (1895-1905); he was a member of the SBC Foreign Mission Board (1918-1935) and a Stetson University trustee (1925-1947). He also served as pastor of First Baptist Church, Macon, Georgia, from 1895-1906 and pastor of First Baptist Church, Miami from 1916-1936. He served as President of the Florida Baptist State Convention from 1924-1925.

The twenty year service of Dr. White at First Baptist Church, Miami was very rewarding for the White family, the church and the City of Miami. When Dr. White went to First Baptist Church, Miami in 1916, the church had 450 members and a small wooden structure that would seat 300. In 1928, the present four story building was built and the auditorium would seat 2,250 with a Sunday School capacity of 2,500. In 1932, First Baptist Church, Miami had 1,863 members and had a hand in starting fifteen Southern Baptist churches in the city.

Lee Sheppard



Mabel White Baptist Church



Dovie White

But I want to tell you of Mabel White his oldest daughter. It was on Christmas Eve, 1902, that Dr. and Mrs. White were told that their twelve year old daughter was dying. She needed to be told of her condition and Mrs. White told Dr. White, "Tell her all. She is a dear little Christian and will not be afraid." Dr. White said he stooped by her side and said, "Darling, Jesus will be with you." He recalled that Mabel told each family member good-bye and called their names. She then turned to her mother and said, "Mother sing something for me." Mrs. White asked, "Darling, what shall I sing" and she answered, "Sing, 'O Happy Day.'" Mother and daughter sang the hymn together and Dr. White said he then gathered his daughter in his arms and she looked into his face and said, "Yes, Jesus-washed my sins away, and she was gone."

In 1900, First Baptist Church started a mission in Macon. Then in 1906 they named it "Mabel White Memorial Baptist Church." And that is why I wanted to remind Florida Baptists about Mabel White.

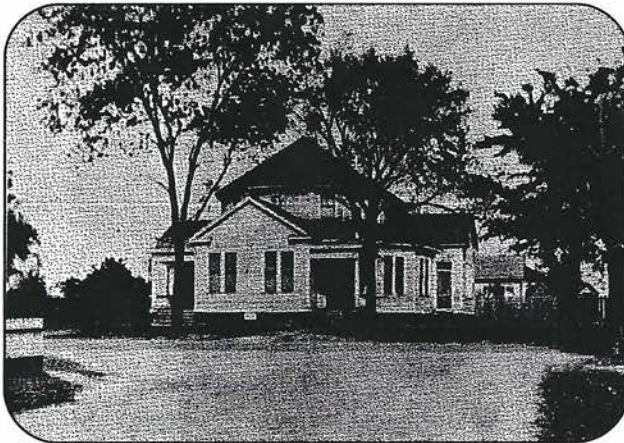
Honoring those who honor Christ,



Jerry M. Windsor
Secretary-Treasurer
Matthew 6:33



Mabel White



Mabel White Baptist Church
1906