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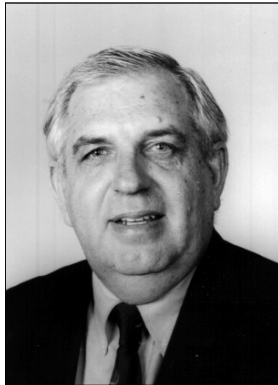
Florida Baptist Convention

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INTRODUCTION

Jerry M. Windsor
Secretary-Treasurer
Florida Baptist Historical Society

Welcome to the Tenth Issue of *The Journal of Florida Baptist Heritage*

Our feature in this issue is the celebration of 50 years of Convention Press (1955-2005) and the impact it made upon our Southern Baptist Churches.

It seems like yesterday. I had graduated with my M.Div. and Th.D. from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. I was going to pastor a church that had over 1,000 members, ministerial staff and eight other employees. I realized I was getting in over my head. I had served as a pastor (shepherd) but not as a pastor/administrator (rancher).

Who are you going to call? Without hesitation I called the Sunday School Board at Nashville and talked with someone in the Pastoral Ministries section. He had a suggestion. He said in two weeks there will be a pastoral ministry seminar for fellows just like you. Educated but scared to death. The seminar would last one week and the charge was nominal. I talked it over with Jerry Mae, and with anticipation, hope and no small amount of uneasiness, I made my way to the seminar.

Bottom line. I got personally introduced to Convention Press. Oh I knew about January Bible Studies, age group studies, and study course awards and had been involved in reading and teaching Convention Press books. But at this event, our seminar leaders gave us a jam up course in pastoral ministries survival in five reading, dialogue, testing, hard-working days. We read books and discussed them. We took psychological tests. We watched video presentations. We listened to

guys who had been there. And on Friday we actually had a graduation ceremony with certificate, seals and all.

As I look back on that time 34 years ago I realize what a positive influence that week had on my ministry. In no way does this recollection diminish my former professors, my hours of research and writing, or all those classroom sessions and papers I undertook to write. That was an essential part of my formal education. But I did need something else. I needed some professional help outside the “beltway”. I needed some professional advice and suggestions that were common sense and nitty gritty. I needed some “instant confidence” and “attaboys” that were not built into my years of academic training. In my formal studies I had been taught to question, doubt, research, react and synthesize. Now I needed a word on practical advice and handy reliable sources. And it came to me in that seminar. It wasn’t an eureka experience (Hardly instantaneous. I had six years of college and seven years of seminary.) but it was an eye opener and a confidence builder. When I finished that week I had a can-do attitude about the pastorate. I saw light in the tunnel. The sources provided me that week were dead on right for a pastor and they sustained me many times in my hours of pastoral self-evaluation and supervision.

The sources were readily available, interesting and easy to read. In their order of importance here are the Convention Press books that came to me at a very important time: *Getting on Top of Your Work* (1973) by Brooks Faulkner; *Called to Joy* (1973) by Earnest Mosley; *Growing a Loving Church* (1974) by Robert Dale; *The Baptist Faith and Message* (1971) by Hershel Hobbs; and later *Church Staff Teams That Win* (1979) by Jerry Brown; *The First Two Years* (1979) by Bruce Grubbs; and *Minister’s Support Group: Alternative to Burnout* (1987) by Charles Chandler. These books have made a powerful and positive impact upon my years in the ministry. Even to this day I will buy them in used book stores (Usually \$1.00 each) and pass them on to young pastors. I know that books are like shoes and must be tried on to see if they fit but these books are pretty well “fittims” for anybody going into the pastorate.

This journal shows that Convention Press has impacted our service, thinking and work as a convention. In some areas the impact has been more obvious than others. Lay people feasted on the January Bible Study books for years. Lay leaders in our churches learned administration and age group principles from our study course series that were offered in the local church and on the associational level. Convention Press was our “on line” education for our Sunday School teachers and deacons for years. Seminary professors (V.L. Stanfield), college professors (Jerry Lee), pastors (Charles Trentham), educational leaders (Pope Duncan), and lay people (Doak Campbell) wrote for Convention Press and felt honored to do so. For 50 years Convention Press was our how-to source. The materials informed us, educated us, inspired us and challenged us. Let our good writers show you now how all this was done.

Honoring those who honor Christ.

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

Jerry M. Windsor

“RIDING A KICKING MULE”

Jerry M. Windsor
Secretary-Treasurer
Florida Baptist Historical Society



James Lenox Sullivan (1910-2004) was from Sullivan’s Hollow, Mississippi:¹ When he left his pastorate at First Baptist Church Abilene, Texas to become the executive secretary-treasurer of the Southern Baptist Convention Sunday School Board he was asked why he was leaving the ministry. Sullivan replied that he was going from “spiritual retailing (the pastorate) to spiritual wholesaling (the Board).”² Dr. Sullivan served from 1953-1975 and concluded that sometimes it was like “riding a kicking mule.”³

Early Publishing

The Southern Baptist Convention was born late (1845) as denominations go and therefore entered later into the printing business. The first printed materials under Southern Baptist authorization were produced at Elford Print Shop in South Carolina in 1863 with Dr. Basil Manly, Jr., as editor.⁴

The Manly-Broadus Period of the Board (1863-1866) saw the publication of the *Confederate Sunday School Hymn Book* and 13,000 copies were printed. In 1863-1864 there were 24,000 copies of the *Little Sunday School Hymn Book* issued. Then in 1864-1865 there were 20,000 copies of the *Child’s Question Book on the Four Gospels, Part 1* and Manly was the author. Other Sunday School materials were published but Manly had promised at the 1863 Southern Baptist Convention meeting in Augusta that the board “shall not establish a printing house.” Most of the messengers at the convention did not want to compete with the American Sunday School Union which was in the printing business and this built-in promise proved to be the

death of the board. The personal publishing ambitions of J.R. Graves and the financial collapse of 1872 were enough to send the early ambitions of the board (1863-1890) over the edge.⁵

In this perfect storm of controversy an unusual thing happened. Out of the very chaos of the times a publication piece was begun that could have proven the salvation of the board. In 1866, *Kind Words*, was launched in Greenville, South Carolina. Basil Manly, Jr., and John Albert Broadus were the editors and *Kind Words* was begun as a small monthly paper for children.

The genius of the idea was apparent and it was an excellent Sunday School curriculum tool. Twelve lessons could be provided each year for as little as 10¢ per child per year. The "cheapness" in the cost and professional quality of the material proved such a big hit that the board proposed to print 100,000 copies in 1866. With this the Kind Word Series was born and Robert Baker said this little paper for children was the "golden thread" that tied this board over to the successful beginning of the modern Sunday School Board begun in 1891.

James Marion Frost (1848-1916) was the founder and first secretary of the modern Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. Dr. Frost served from 1891-1916 with an interrupted stint as pastor of First Baptist Church Nashville (1894-1896). In 1914 Frost noted that *Kind Words* was the connecting link between the past and the present. He went so far as to note "It is in great sense the basis of all we have today in Sunday School life and literature."⁶

Sunday School Board Leadership

Walter B. Shurden in his book *The Sunday School Board, Ninety Years of Service*, gives a 96 page pictorial and verbal overview of the life of the Sunday School Board from 1891-1981. The chapter headings and leadership characterizations in the book are very helpful. Shurden calls the Manly-Broadus years "a Royal Line." The founding of the board with Frost (1891) and later Theodore Percy Bell (1894-1896) were the "Dream Deferred" years. I.J. Van Ness served from 1917-1935 and had a quick mind and a will to work. Shurden calls the Van Ness years "The Baptist Spirit." T.L. Holcomb served from 1935-1953 and was concerned about the "small local

church.” James L. Sullivan served from 1953 to 1975 and was the “balance” for the board and denomination in theology and ecclesiology. Shurden says “Frost was a builder. Bell was a fighter. Van Ness was an educator” and Sullivan was the man who built consensus in all he did.⁷

James Lenox Sullivan (1910-2004) served as the executive director at the Sunday School Board from 1953-1975.⁸ It was surly a case where the man and the job came together in an ideal way. Dr. Sullivan was a hard worker, a keen observer and a common sense genius. He came to the board at a critical time and knew that much criticism would be sent his way regardless of the decisions made. Robert Baker summarized the situation by saying the Sunday School Board was now pulled between the two worlds of “market place” and “spiritual institution.”⁹

Dr. Sullivan felt that the main thrust of criticism was coming from Thurman Cleveland Gardner of Texas. Gardner was the Secretary of the Training Union Department of the Baptist General Convention of Texas. He served from 1916-1956 and in his forty year span of service gained much influence and a small grudge. His influence came from the fact that there were 16,554 people in Texas Training Unions when he began and 424,854 when he retired. The grudge started when I.J. Van Ness in 1929 recommended Jerry Lambdin as head of the BYPU Department at the Sunday School Board instead of Gardner. Dr. Sullivan stated that Gardner was rejected because of his extreme Landmarkist views and when the board rejected him he became a severe critic of the board.¹⁰

Dr. Sullivan was a fighter¹¹ but always fought fairly and in the open. He watched for professional help in responding to critics and did not have to look far in that Maxie Jarman, the wealthy leader of Genesco was right there in Nashville. Jarman was known for his wise dealing with critics and when Gardner sought to compete with the Sunday School Board in the production of literature Sullivan realized something had to be done. He asked Jarman for advice on how to deal with major critics. Jarmon replied, “I do not deal with the opposition, but instead I work to outrun them.”¹²

This Texas competition in literature production actually became a rival publishing operation in the office of the Baptist General Convention of Texas. Gardner was known as “Big Chief” among Texas Baptists and many of the churches began to use his literature. Sullivan purposed to “outrun him.” I believe this was one of the growing concerns that gave rise to the Convention Press.

Dr. Sullivan Begins Convention Press

You can find books with a copyright as early as 1919 with the Convention Press signature in them but they are actually misnomers. The Florida Baptist Historical Society has books in its collection with the copyright dates of 1919, 1922, 1934, 1935, 1936, 1937, 1942, 1948, 1950 and 1954 and a “Convention Press” listing. Yet Convention Press was not begun until 1955. The earlier dates were placed on books that were reprinted after 1955 and therefore the “Convention Press” origin is somewhat cloudy. Dr. Sullivan started Convention Press in 1955 and as best I can tell probably named it himself.¹³

The origin of Convention Press seemed to have numerous causes. It was more than a reaction. It was more than a confluence. It was a natural and supernatural¹⁴ event that evolved from the circumstances of the time. Sullivan was quick to discern the problems and possibilities of the Board and brought about dramatic changes to meet the potential of the day. Note some of these apparent influences in the beginning of Convention Press.

World War II. Ten million men and women served in the United States military in World War II and they saw the value of education, training and co-operation. They learned to dream and dare. They traveled, fought and died. Then they came home with a desire to see local churches “organized and functioning.” They had seen operational manuals and organizational charts. They learned to lead and experiment. There would be no more church as usual for those on the G.I. Bill eager to learn and lead.

Competition. Dr. Sullivan saw the influence of men like T.C. Gardner, John R. Rice, Lee Roberson and J. Frank Norris. He did not attempt to match them but neither did he ignore them. He sought to outrun them. Robert Baker points out that Convention Press materials were prepared “especially for Southern Baptist use.”¹⁵ No longer would churches have to look to independent operations for local church curriculum. Doctrine, Biblical studies, ethics, age group studies, church history and in-depth Bible studies were produced.¹⁶

Reorganization. Dr. James Sullivan went to the board on June 1, 1953. He states in his autobiography, *God is my Record*, that he wanted to spend his first year at the Sunday School Board “largely in study and evaluation.” Dr.

Holcomb had frankly told Dr. Sullivan that a reorganization of the board was necessary. Sullivan said, "This meant many nights without sleep except for catnaps because the reorganization details had to be worked out after the day's work was done."¹⁷

Clifton J. Allen said, "The Board began with a mission but without an organization." For all intents and purposes Dr. Sullivan brought that organization into existence. In 1920 the board had 115 employees and in 1955 it had 1,087 employees. When Dr. Sullivan went to the board he had to sign all vouchers, checks and interview personnel. He had to approve actions of employees and supervise operations. He needed to revamp the organization.

J.M. Crowe came to the board in August, 1953. He had served previously with Dr. Sullivan at First Baptist Church Abilene and Dr. Sullivan said much of the organizational work that was done could be attributed to Crowe. They worked well together and retired on the same day in 1975.

On June 1, 1954, the board accepted a new organization plan with four major divisions. Norris Gilliam headed contracts and investments, Leonard Wedel became Personnel Manager, J.M. Crowe became Administrative Assistant and Clifton J. Allen became Editorial Secretary.¹⁸ This new organization seemed to open the way to new ideas in publishing, management and innovation.

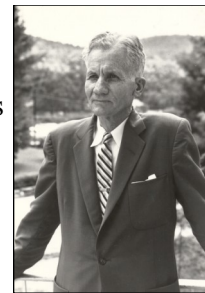
Personality. Walter B. Shurden said James Sullivan was a "ministerial businessman." Robert Baker said a "quiet revolution" occurred at the board from 1953-1958. Sullivan said the purpose of the board was "to help God's people know God's Book." Yet the quiet revolution brought a change in board policies, procedures and vocabulary. Words such as "marketing," "delegation," "managers" and "accountability" were used. Salaries were based upon production and responsibility and not tradition, gender or race. Dr. Sullivan said they had new vocabularies with New Testament principles. The board was becoming an incubator for new ideas and this was fertile soil for the beginning of Convention Press.

Later strategic developments included the beginning of a "Church Program Training Center, designed to offer short-term educational opportunities."²⁰ All this fed the needs of lay people in the local church in the 1950's and 1960's.

"A Million More in 54" Campaign. J.N. Barnette came to the board from farming in North Carolina. He worked in associational and state work for a while but soon found his way to the board in Nashville. Barnette was an enthusiastic hard worker. He was effective especially at Ridgecrest and Glorieta where he came into contact with Sunday School leaders from churches of all sizes. He was a modern day "Mr. Sunday School."

But the crowning achievement of Barnette was the "Million More in 54" campaign. The goal was to enroll one million more in Bible study in 1954. The movement did not reach a total of one million but it did surge Southern Baptists to become "the largest Sunday School movement" in recorded church history.²¹ This advance in Bible study helped move forward other programs including evangelism, training, music, study courses and missions. All of these vitalized programs needed curriculum. Convention Press was a 1955 answer to a 1954 opportunity.

It is my belief that the convention wide needs created by the "Million More in 54" movement was the exact catalyst to provide an in house press for denominational curriculum.



J. N. Barnette
Father of "A Million
More in 54" campaign

Conclusion

Convention Press was begun in 1955 under the supervision of Dr. James Sullivan. In 1956 the publications of Convention Press were not differentiated from Broadman Press publications but in 1957 Convention Press reported eight books under its own imprint and in 1958 there were ten. In 1959 there were a total of 192 titles and in 1965 there were 1,418,068 copies of 30 new titles and 2,943,997 copies of 89 reprints. Convention Press had total sales of \$1,752,204.00 in 1965 and the Southern Baptist Convention established the clear aim of Convention Press by charging it "to edit, produce, and distribute through Baptist Book Stores books, booklets, and pamphlets which are curricular in context and prepared especially for Southern Baptist use."²²

The Florida Baptist Historical Society has sought to make a collection of these very valuable books. In 2008 our goal is to collect three copies of each Convention Press book printed (we have identified 2,034). We now have 982

different titles with a total of 1,664 volumes. It is our desire to collect three copies so that we may have one copy for our holdings, one copy for the Baptist College of Florida Library and one copy to be made available to the general public. We have bought very few of these 1,664 volumes. Churches and individuals add to our collection on a weekly basis. Our Convention Press holdings are listed on our website and we welcome your suggestions, insights and donations.

Endnotes

¹ No small amount of interest has gone into discussion of the Mississippi Mafia and its influence upon the Southern Baptist Convention. A case could be made that rural Mississippi and especially Mississippi College played a very important role in providing Southern Baptist Convention leadership in the 1900's. Thomas Luther Holcomb (1882-1972), James Lenox Sullivan (1881- 1970) and Grady C. Cothen were from Mississippi.

² Walter B. Shurden, *The Sunday School Board. Ninety Years of Service*. Broadman Press, Nashville, 1981.

³ Thomas Garrison Ferrell. "James L. Sullivan and the Baptist Sunday School Board: Evangelistic Growth and Decline in an Era of Change 1953-1975." A dissertation. The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1997, p. 141.

⁴ James L. Sullivan. *God Is My Record*. Broadman Press, Nashville, 1974, p. 75.

⁵ Robert A. Baker. *The Story of the Sunday School Board*. Convention Press, Nashville, 1966, pp.10-46.

⁶ Clifton J. Allen. *Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists*, Volume II. "Kind Words Series," Broadman Press, Nashville, 1958, pp. 750-751.

⁷ Shurden, pp. 55, 73.

⁸ I had the privilege of hearing Dr. Sullivan speak on many occasions. In my opinion he and Carl Bates were the two most practical, down to earth pastors/ leaders/administrators I ever knew in the Southern Baptist Convention on the national level. Both of them were intelligent, rock-rib tough, focused and committed. While at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, Jerry Mae and had an apartment on the same hall as James and Lynn Sullivan Porch. Lynn was just like her daddy.

⁹ Ferrell, p. 116.

¹⁰ Ferrell, pp. 110-112.

¹¹ Sullivan, pp. 11, 25-27.

¹² Ferrell, p. 113. It may seem difficult to connect all the dots in the Sullivan/Gardner controversy but to the former captain of the football team at Mississippi College “working to outrun them” made good sense. Maxie Jarman had served as chairman of the special committee of trustees that recommended Dr. Sullivan. (Sullivan, p. 32)

¹³ According to William J. Fallis in the *Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists*, Volume I, p. 314, Convention Press was officially begun February 10, 1955.

¹⁴ Thomas Ferrell reports in his dissertation that T.L. Holcomb saw the general advances of the Sunday School Board as “divine favor,” (p. 108).

¹⁵ Baker, p. 189.

¹⁶ Some of the very best Biblical helps you could want have been provided by the January Bible Study Series. I taught young preachers off and on from 1964-2006. I encouraged them to purchase the annual January Bible Study book commentary and keep it in their libraries. They are actually better than Matthew Henry, Barclay, *Interpreter's Bible* and many other sources that preachers seem to collect.

¹⁷ Sullivan, p. 34.

¹⁸ See 22 page article “Sunday School Board” in Volume II of the *Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists*, (pp. 1317-1339). Clifton J. Allen wrote the comprehensive article of history, statistics and interpretation of board work.

¹⁹ Sullivan, p. 38.

²⁰ Shurden, p. 82.

²¹ Sullivan, p. 51.

²² Baker, p. 203.

THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF SOUTHERN BAPTIST SUNDAY SCHOOL CURRICULUM TO A UNDERSTANDING OF BAPTIST DOCTRINES

L. David Cunningham

*Retired Director of the Sunday School Department
Florida Baptist Convention*



Two primary factors probably determine most Baptists concept of Bible doctrines. First is the doctrinal teaching of the pastor that baptized them, that they most admired, or who had the most significant impact upon their lives. The second factor is the Sunday school quarterly. Sunday school quarterlies have been generally admired and appreciated by those who “prepared their lessons,” prior to the Sunday meetings. Sunday school pupils who accepted the quarterlies as a part of the process but rarely studied the content or applied their minds to the process involved still usually formed their doctrinal concepts from lesson presentations and discussions. Either way, the balanced selection of scriptures and finely crafted writings by dedicated Baptist writers have guided Sunday school members in understanding the great doctrinal truths of God’s Word since before the establishment of the Baptist Sunday School Board to today’s Lifeway Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Various Confessions of Faith have been the bedrock of Baptist doctrinal positions over the years, but the majority of Baptist church members rarely saw such documents, much less engaged in their study. The closest thing to a doctrinal understanding by most Baptists was the Church Covenant pasted into the front or back of the hymnal at church.

Doctrinal truths taught through Sunday school lessons have been the most significant factor tying Baptist church members and churches together for over 150 years. For many of these years, one unifying curriculum was taught in most Southern Baptist Churches providing a standard of doctrinal understanding regardless of the church attended. Thus, while the quality of teaching varied greatly, the written content was consistent from church to church.

The issue of doctrine has been the focus of Southern Baptists Sunday school curriculum from long before formation of the Sunday School Board. Sunday School materials were readily available before 1850, but most of these early writings were primarily designed for children, focusing on Bible stories, and largely avoided doctrinal issues. At this time Sunday schools were mostly Union schools for children from all denominations meeting together.

These early Sunday Schools were promoted by the American Sunday School Union of Philadelphia founded in 1824 by a group of Christian business men. Their focus was on moral, social and character issues and conversion to evangelical religion, with some periodicals devoted to reading and spelling for general education.

“As children – and even youth and adults – were converted through Sunday School influence, the denominations became concerned about doctrinal purity and began developing materials to teach the unique theological and doctrinal perspective it espoused.”¹

Baptists first “approved” Sunday School curriculum came from the American Baptist Publication Society also formed in 1824. Through their system of printing, colportage and Sunday School missionaries, the ABPS dominated the distribution of Sunday School curriculum in Baptist churches until about 1910.² There was general satisfaction with the Sunday School materials produced by the ABPS, so when the Southern Baptist Convention was formed “the convention in its first regular session (1846) decided against creating a publishing enterprise.”³ “However, when Kentucky Baptists in 1854 complained of the undenominational character of the American Sunday School Unions literature, interest was aroused in developing a denominational press.”⁴ When a group of leaders formed “the Southern Sunday School Union in 1858 at Memphis, Tennessee, the convention realized the need for denominational leadership and formed a Sunday School Board in 1863, located at Greenville, South Carolina, called the “Sunday School and Publication Board.” This Board, led by Basil Manly Jr., and John Albert Broadus functioned from 1863-1873, publishing catechisms, teacher’s books, question books and hymnbooks. “Most notably, it began the publication of *Kind Words* (January 1866). But “developing frictions, particularly with the doctrinal and publication interests of James Robinson Graves, and economic problems arising out of the Civil War, made the

survival of this board impossible.”⁵

“In 1868 the Sunday School Board was consolidated with the Southern Baptist Sunday School Union and transferred from Greenville, South Carolina, to Memphis, Tennessee. Financial distress and internal friction during reconstruction years, however, led to the merger of the Board in 1873 with the Domestic Mission Board, which continued the publication of Sunday school papers.”⁶

There had been calls for a Southern Baptist publication agency before formation of the Southern Baptist Convention. W.W. Barnes wrote, “It was out of such a need that the first step toward separation came. In May, 1844, Rev. James Davis introduced a resolution in the state convention of Georgia calling for the formation of a Southern Baptist publication society, but it was defeated.”

“The Central Association of Georgia, in its 1846 session issued a call for a convention to meet in Savannah, May 13, 1847, immediately preceding the State Convention. Delegates from Virginia, South Carolina, Georgia, and Alabama met and formed the Southern Baptist Publication Society, May 13, 1847. This Society was located in Charleston, South Carolina, and rendered worth-while service in furnishing a literature for Southern Baptists until the exigencies of the war ended its career.”⁷

In 1857, Dr. R.B.C. Howell, president of the Southern Baptist Convention introduced a resolution to form a Southern Baptist Sunday School Union. Organized in Americus, Georgia, April, 1858, . . . the incipient Union fell into the hands of the Landmark faction, and at once lost the possible support of many Southern Baptists. They were not willing for the Landmarkers to supply the Sunday Schools with literature carrying the peculiar tenets of Landmarkism. However, J.R. Graves, A.C. Dayton, and the other Landmarkers carried on the work of the Union until the war.”⁸

Records of various associational minutes attest to the centrality of doctrine as a concern in Sunday School literature. Minutes of the 12th Annual Session of the West Florida Association in 1858 read, “We recommend the adoption of a more Baptistic, a more scriptural literature in our schools.”⁹ And in their 13th Session we read, “So few of our churches have availed themselves of the advantages arising from Baptist Sabbath School literature, and are still using the Union Books, which purposely keep hid our distinctive principles as Baptists.”¹⁰

Florida Baptist Association wrote in 1860, “We would take the liberty to suggest that as the different denominations have their peculiar Sabbath School literature, that our churches have their own Sabbath Schools and use our own Sabbath School literature”¹¹.

“Respecting Sunday School literature,” wrote Alachua Baptist Association in 1882, “We would impress upon the minds of the members composing the churches within our bounds the great importance of using such literature, and such only as is purely baptistic. We should feel it our duty to support *Kind Words* and its accompanying quarterlies, and the literature furnished us by the A.B.P. Society, the former being published in behalf of the Southern Baptist Convention.”¹².

In 1891, a new Baptist Sunday School Board was created with the first meeting conducted on May 26 in the pastor’s study of the First Baptist Church, Nashville, Tennessee. Draper wrote, “Southern Baptists finally had a chance to control their own publications for their own theological benefit.”¹³.

James Marion Frost, the first corresponding secretary and Bernard W. Spilman, the first field secretary . . . developed a distinctive program of Sunday School work suited to Southern Baptist needs and doctrines.”¹⁴

“One of the founding purposes of the Baptist Sunday School Board was to provide ongoing instruction and doctrinal reinforcement for the churches.”¹⁵ The matter of doctrine in Sunday School lessons was so important that in the first year of this Board, they “commissioned John Broadus to produce a catechism that could be used to teach sound doctrine to children. The founders of the BSSB emphasized doctrinal teaching . . . in the Sunday Schools” where “priority was given to setting forth doctrinal truth as the foundation of spiritual life.”¹⁶ The issue of doctrine has been a bedrock issue for every Sunday School leader at the BSSB since its inception.

Church leaders were faithful to keep the BSSB on target doctrinally. Dr. W.A. Hobson, Chairman of the Florida Sunday School Committee addressed the Fifty-Sixth Annual Session in 1911 saying, “Our distinctive doctrines should be taught in the Sunday-school. As Baptists . . . we will not surrender one vital doctrine of the New Testament for convenience, commendation or co-operation.”¹⁷

B.W. Spilman initiated a teacher-training course through his first book *Normal Studies For Sunday School Workers*, published in 1902. He wrote, “The Sunday School teacher should know Bible doctrines. Doctrine means

teaching.”¹⁸ In his 1913 edition he wrote, “Every denomination owes it to itself to teach in the Sunday School the things for which it stands.”¹⁹

Arthur Flake wrote in *Building a Standard Sunday School*, “Standard Requirement: “Southern Baptist Sunday School literature shall be used throughout the school. “Reasons: Because of its Doctrinal Integrity. Three outstanding facts make this true. First, the editors and lesson writers of the Sunday School Board are staunch Baptists. Second, . . . some half dozen careful Bible students read every sentence for the purpose of testing its rightness. Third, all our lesson treatments and periodicals are subjected to the closest scrutiny by individuals and groups both within and without our fellowship.”²⁰

“Until 1908 Southern Baptists had collaborated with the International Lesson Committee in producing some materials, but a doctrinal conflict with this group and an issue with the Baraca and Philathea Union resulted in Southern Baptists producing their own lesson series beginning in 1910. The Union preferred a nondenominational approach and objected to what they felt was an “over-emphasis of dogma and creed.” J.M. Frost wrote, “that Baraca and Philathea were anti-denominational in their aims and effort, that their materials were “not a fit message for Baptist.”²¹ The SSB produced their own graded lesson series beginning in 1910. Arthur Flake wrote concerning the graded series, “there is afforded opportunity not only for teaching the great fundamental truths . . . but also the indoctrination of our own people in the great truths which we hold and which we believe to be essential to New Testament Christianity.”²²

Before Southern Baptists adopted the Baptist Faith and Message in 1925, E.Y. Mullins, president of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary had published *The Axioms of Religion*, as a guide to Southern Baptists in understanding their fundamental doctrines. This interpretation of the Baptist faith served as the compass for leaders at the SSB.

Jealously guarding their cherished doctrinal positions and emphasizing those distinctives has always been at the core of Sunday School Board literature. This stance adopted by J.M. Frost and other early leaders continues to this day.

One must note, however, that from the very first affiliation with any other Sunday school curriculum provider there has always developed an issue over “alien doctrine,” which eventually resulted in a separation from the outside source.

“The Convention Uniform Series had been published since 1872, nineteen years before the Sunday School Board existed. It started with a group of Sunday School leaders from various denominations working jointly on a lesson series, and the Board began using these lessons as soon as it was operational in 1891.” “While all denominations studied the same Scripture passages and topics at the same time, each denomination selected its own writers for its lessons.”²³ A little over 100 years later, “the Board relinquished its longstanding ties to the Uniform Series” following repeated complaints from Baptists about control and financial arrangements²⁴.

J.M. Frost set the standard for doctrinal foundations in Sunday School Board publications. In a report to the SBC he wrote, “Christian character and life today lack the doctrinal earnestness of Jesus. We need to give emphasis to creedal character and doctrinal conviction as having practical virtue and value in everyday Christian living. A lack of this leaves the present-day Christian subject to every kind of doctrine of whatever fad or fancy, if only it be labeled religious or Christian or church.”²⁵

Sunday School Board and Doctrine in the 20th Century

How could the board manage doctrinal writings that would satisfy Baptists? By 1930 “there was a growing criticism of the boards operations” . . . and “in its meeting, March, 1930”, “they took note of certain criticism about the content of its periodicals and declared their support of the great fundamental principles of our denomination.”²⁶ Following this meeting, “under the leadership of editorial secretary Hight C. Moore, a writers conference for writers and editors was instituted at Ridgecrest in August, 1931,” which was “a pioneer effort among denominations.”²⁷ From then on, this “writers school” provided an environment for directing the doctrinal content in Sunday school lessons.

“In July, 1969 . . . all employees dealing with doctrinally related materials signed a copy of commitment to abide by *The Baptist Faith and Message*. New employees in this category signed the statement as a condition of employment.”

“In January, 1970, the trustees unanimously granted the president authority to add to the staff of the editorial secretary sufficient personnel “to give all manuscripts one more analytical evaluation prior to publication. H. Leo Eddleman, was named “doctrinal reader” for the board, and following his retirement in 1972, the responsibility was renamed, becoming “manuscript analyst.”²⁸

One difficulty in teaching doctrine per se through Sunday School curriculum has been the restriction by the board on use of the term “doctrine” in Sunday School materials. So, while doctrine is at the heart of many Sunday School “lessons,” (one might argue most lessons) the term “doctrine” is rarely found. Why? Because program assignment for teaching “doctrine” was assigned to Church Training via study committees in 1955-1956 and the term was “siloe” to that division of the Board. To satisfy the board’s assignment of the word “doctrine,” the term is generally avoided in Sunday School curriculum, while the effect through Bible study content is still functional.

Calls to employees at Lifeway to ask about purposeful doctrinal content in writing Sunday School lessons were largely channeled to other sources. One editor who did respond wrote, “Over the years, I’ve worked on all the mainline Sunday School curriculum of their time. In each of these products, Baptist doctrine is an undercurrent. Even when the topic is not a specific doctrine, the topic is shaped by Baptist doctrine.” In looking over recent and near future studies, several stand out as particularly strong doctrinal studies.”

Analysis of Scripture Passages In Sunday School Lessons

As a basis in examining the doctrinal content of present day Sunday School lessons, the 568 scripture passages in the seventeen doctrinal headings of the 1963 BF&M were compared to the content of various Sunday school quarterlies.

Scanning the adult curriculum for two years, 266 of these passages were foundational to the lessons. Since the series is written on a six year cycle, it appears every topic of the BF&M is likely to be studied, some multiple times, over the lessons cycle.

The “Life and Work” series, now called “Bible Studies for Life,” dedicates large blocks to doctrinal studies. As examples, in 1991 twenty-two weeks were devoted to “God’s Son/Salvation,” and another seven weeks to “The Church.” In 1993, nineteen weeks were given to a study of “Jesus.” In 1994 twelve weeks were dedicated to “the Nature of God,” and in 1995, sixteen weeks were given to “The Son of God.” Similar blocks are carved out each year, some following a Bible book study, others using selected passages to provide a comprehensive coverage. Since “Explore the Bible” series is an in-depth study of all 66 books over an eight-year cycle, doctrine is inclusive.

In 2002 Lifeway redesigned the Preschool/Children’s curriculum concepts into ten areas: God, Jesus, Bible, Creation, Family, Self, Church, Community

and World; adding “Salvation and Baptism” for children at the appropriate age. In examining the Preschool/Children’s Sunday School lessons for a two year period, more than 100 scripture passages were included with each subject area taught multiple times. It is clear that the ten subject areas (with a major emphasis on salvation for older children) form the foundations for a deeper understanding of doctrine as children reach their teen years.

Evidence of the strong impact of Sunday School literature on an understanding of Baptist doctrine by “Baptists in the pew” may be observed from the strong backlash against the Sunday School Board anytime the cherished doctrines appear to be violated in print or spirit. As long as “the curriculum deals with the great realities – such as salvation, God, Christ, Sin, Sanctification and Eternity” – etc., the writers are on solid ground. But when the subject matter reaches out “to include principles, problems, and conditions related to the Christian Faith and life,” Baptists can have a rather strong difference of opinion.²⁹

This difference of opinion was strongly felt when the “Life and Work” series was first published in 1968. The traditional Convention Uniform series “taught what the Bible said. The Life and Work series emphasized what the Bible meant – and how to apply it to life situations. Bringing up application of biblical principles meant bringing up current events which (since the 1960’s) has been a surefire recipe for conflict. Some Baptists wanted only to know what the Bible says, not what it means.”³⁰

As an example, “in February 1985, *The Baptist Student* published an issue on the role and function of women in Baptist life. Its editorial position drew a storm of protest from Baptists.” Six months later, *The Baptist Student* took a strong stand against right-wing politics, . . . and other issues that resulted in the resignation of the editor.”

“An even more serious lapse appeared in the July 7, 1985 Life and Work Sunday school lesson on *Job*. The lesson taught that the Satan who had a conversation with the Lord in *Job* chapter 2 was not the devil of the New Testament . . . and challenged the characterization of Job as a patient man of faith, . . . raised questions about Job’s historical identity, and claimed it was correcting mistaken impressions about Job.” “The uproar that followed was probably the most widespread reaction to a Sunday School Board publication since 1964. The *Job* lesson got through the system undetected because new or temporary people were serving in key positions and everybody thought

somebody else would take care of it.” “This resulted in asking that “the administration be instructed by the trustees to take the necessary steps to implement a more discriminating policy for the employment of lesson writers for our curriculum materials.”³¹

Following these issues, a series of evaluations were conducted culminating in a “Sunday School task force that surveyed thirteen thousand people asking what they needed and how the Board could make its lessons better.” Draper wrote, “Over the next two years we took our three curriculum programs completely apart and reassembled them. We never wavered in our allegiance to biblical inerrancy and traditional Southern Baptist interpretations.”³²

While the Sunday School Board has numerous checks to guarantee doctrinal purity in their Sunday School lessons, this does not mean that they do not have their bias concerning certain doctrines. Dr. Duke McCall tells of a time when the Sunday School Board asked him to write the *Broadman Comments* for a series of Sunday School lessons on the doctrine of the church. He wrote, “I had quarreled with the Sunday School Board people from time to time because only the Landmark view of the church appeared in Sunday School Board literature.” When he turned the offer down – they told him he was “always complaining that we don’t present the alternative to the Landmark view. In the end, McCall accepted the assignment – using faculty of Southern Seminary to contribute to the project, while the Sunday School Board advised him he would have to take the responsibility for the material because it would be very controversial.” “We agreed to collaborate to get a different point of view on the church into *Broadman Comments*.”³³ So, while the Sunday School Board is careful in handling doctrinal issues, Baptists have differing viewpoints on some points which creates a tenuous environment from time to time.

Conclusion

Without question Sunday school lessons presented by Lifeway Church Resources (formerly the Baptist Sunday School Board) provide the foundational doctrinal basis for the majority of Baptists.

But do the rank and file Baptists care about doctrine any longer? The Associated Baptist Press quoted a Gallup poll saying “large numbers of Americans are biblical illiterates and lack awareness and understanding of their own religious traditions and the central doctrines of their faith. We want the fruits of faith, but less of the obligations,”³⁴

At least two other significant factors determine Baptists' understanding of their doctrines. One, is the conviction and passion of Sunday School teachers. If teachers are convinced of its importance – pupils can be encouraged to “study their lessons.” Dr. Doak Campbell wrote, “To know a lesson the teacher must . . . understand the teachings or doctrines involved and know the value of a practical application of both facts and teachings to the problems of life.”³⁵

The other factor is the work of The Holy Spirit in understanding the Bible – and its doctrines. “If the Bible is to be the means by which God speaks to the learner, the learner must be taught its content. The Holy Spirit uses the Word to bring persons to conviction and conversion and to help them grow in grace toward the goal of full Christian maturity.”³⁶

In summary, a thorough evaluation of Sunday School curriculum provided by the Sunday School Board/Lifeway throughout its history demonstrates a strong contribution of these studies to Baptists' understanding of our doctrines.

ENDNOTES

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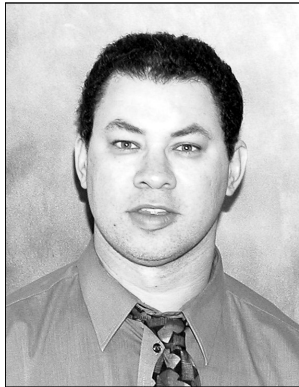
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BAPTISTS AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

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Baptists have a long and proud history of battling for religious liberty and separation of church and state. The struggle began in the Reformation period and continues to this day. This article will seek to discover the beliefs Baptists have held about religious liberty and separation of church and state. The resources used to write this article will be limited to Convention Press and early Southern Baptist Sunday School Board materials.

Definition of Religious Liberty

Religious liberty is “a term denoting the right of every man to worship God as his conscience dictates. It means equality before the law, not only of all forms of the Christian faith, but also of other religions;”¹ or no religion at all. Religious liberty and religious toleration are not the same thing. “Religious toleration is a privilege granted by man. Religious liberty is a right bestowed by God.”² This distinction is important. Toleration may be withdrawn, but a right given by God is not dependent on human law.

Scriptural Basis of Religious Liberty

What is the scriptural basis of religious liberty? *The Baptist Faith and Message* lists the following scriptural references: Gen. 1:27; 2:7; Matt. 6:6-7; 24; 16:26; 22:21; John 8:36; Acts 4: 19-20; Rom. 6: 1-2; 13: 1-7; Gal. 5:1; 13; Phil. 3:20; I Tim. 2: 1-2; James 4:12; I Peter 2: 12-17; 3: 11-17; 4:12-19. What are the principal ideas of these scriptural references and how are they related to religious liberty? The first foundational truth is that humans are created in God’s image. They were made to have fellowship with the Creator. This was a voluntary relationship; not coerced. They had the freedom to choose. Genesis chapter three shows that they used this freedom to disobey God. Carlson and Barry-Garret list as one of their key truths from Genesis the truth that because of creation God is the supreme authority “above that of

states, nations, churches, or institutions.”³ A second principle they list is “fellowship.” “...Man must be free to have fellowship with God.”⁴ Herschel H. Hobbs says that “religious liberty is the mother of all true freedom. It is rooted in the very nature of both God and man created in God’s likeness (Gen. 1:27). It implies the competency of soul in religion, and denies to any person, civil government, or religious system the right to come between God and man.”⁵

A second foundational truth concerns the Lordship of Jesus Christ. “God alone is Lord of the conscience, and He has left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are contrary to His word or not contained in it.”⁶ Jesus teaches this truth when he says we can only have one master (Matt. 6:24). It is also taught in the experience of Peter and John when they are told that they are to stop speaking of Jesus and the Resurrection. They respond by telling the authorities that they must continue teaching the Christian message.

A third foundational truth is that Christians are redeemed for freedom. We must not allow ourselves to be placed in bondage (Gal. 5:1). This call to liberty should not be used however, to serve the sinful nature (Gal. 5:13).

A fourth foundational truth is the separation of church and state. Jesus responds to the question of whether he and his disciples should pay taxes by saying: “render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s (Matt. 2:21). This has been interpreted by Baptists to mean that there should be a complete separation of church and state. *The Baptist Faith and Message* describes it in this way: “Church and state should be separate. The state owes every church protection and full freedom in the pursuit of its spiritual ends. In providing for such freedom no ecclesiastical group or denomination should be favored by the state more than others...”⁷

Baptist History and Religious Liberty

Who were the key leaders who shaped Baptist thinking on religious liberty? What influence did these leaders have on making religious liberty a part of the First Amendment of the United States Constitution? Did early Baptists have any influence on the thinking of George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison or other Founders? These are some of the questions we will seek to answer.

Baptists have emphasized religious liberty and the separation of church and state from its beginning as a religious group. E. Y. Mullins asserted “there is no evidence that Baptists came into their view of soul freedom and separation of church and state gradually. It seems to have been a divinely given prophetic insight into the meaning of the gospel and the implicit teaching of scripture.”⁸

Davis Wooley, in *Champion of Religious Freedom*, says Baptists were the “pioneers and champions of liberty from the very beginning”⁹ of their existence as

Baptists. We will now look at some of these pioneers and champions of religious liberty.

Early English Baptists

John Smyth (c. 1570 – 1612) founded the General Baptist Movement. In 1607 or 1608, Smyth and his congregation left England because of persecution and settled in Amsterdam because of the religious freedom existing in that city. In 1609, Smyth baptized himself and members of his congregation who agreed with him that the baptism they received in the Church of England was not valid. They took the Anabaptist position that baptism should be reserved for those who made a confession of faith. Smyth's congregation sought to join with the Waterlander Mennonites. This would split Smyth's group with Thomas Helwys leading a group back to England in 1612. Those who remained would eventually merge with the Mennonites after Smyth's death in 1612. Smyth's group that remained in Amsterdam drafted a confession after 1612. Article 84 of the confession reads: "That the magistrate is not by virtue of his office to meddle with religion, or matters of conscience, to force or compel men to this or that form of religion, or doctrine; but to leave Christian religion free to every man's conscience, and to handle only civil transgressions (Rom. xiii), injuries and wrongs of man to man, in murder, adultery, theft, etc., for Christ only is the king, and the lawgiver of the Church and conscience (James IV; 12)."¹⁰

These principles framed in the early Baptist's Confessions of Faith in the 17th Century in England. For example, in 1660 the General Baptists of England created what was called "The Standard Confession." Article 24 of this confession reads: "That it is the will, and Mind of God...that all men should have the free liberty of their consciences in matters of Religion, or Worship, without the least oppression, or persecution... and that for any in Authority otherwise to act, we believe is expressly contrary to the mind of Christ."¹¹ Article 25 reads: "But in the case of the Civil Powers do, or shall at any time impose things about matters of religion, which we through conscience to God cannot actually obey, then we with Peter also say, that we ought (in such cases) to obey God rather than men; Acts 5:29, and accordingly do hereby declare our whole, and holy intent and purposes that (through the help of grace we will not yield, nor (in such cases) in the least actually obey them; yet humbly purposing (in the Lord's strength) patiently to suffer whatsoever shall be inflicted upon us, for our conscionable forbearance."¹²

Thomas Helwys

Baptists have affirmed throughout its history the religious freedom of all people. They have stood for the idea that all religions should be treated equally before the

law and none of them should receive preferential treatment. One of the first Baptist leaders to champion these ideas was Thomas Helwys (1550-1616). He was a prominent pastor of the first Baptist church in England. He wrote a book entitled, *A Short Declaration of the Mystery of Iniquity*. This book “defends the right to religious freedom for all.”¹³ He directed a copy of the book to the English King, James I. The book includes the following statement: “Let the king judge, is it not most equal that men should choose their religion themselves, seeing they only must stand themselves before the judgment seat of God to answer for themselves, when it shall be no excuse for them to say, We were commanded or compelled to be of this religion by the king... (We) profess and teach that in all earthly things the king’s power is to be submitted unto; and in heavenly or spiritual things if the king or any in authority under him shall exercise their power against any they are not to resist by any way or means, although it were in their power, but rather submit their lives as Christ and his disciples did, and yet keep their consciences to God.”¹⁴

Helwys wrote in his own copy of the book that was given to the king these words: “The king is a mortal man and not God, therefore hath no power over immortall soules of his subjects, to make laws and ordinances for them and to set spiritual Lords over them.”¹⁵ The view of religious liberty propagated by Helwys set forth the beliefs held by early English Baptists.

Helwys joined the separatist group led by John Smyth when he was a young man. He fled with them to escape persecution. He later separated from Smyth because of the group’s decision to be baptized by the Mennonites and to merge with them. He led the group that separated from Smyth back to England. They settled just outside of London. This group emphasized believer’s baptism, the Lordship of Christ and religious liberty.¹⁶ Helwys was placed in the Newgate jail after the publication of his book, *The Mystery of Iniquity*. It is believed he died while in jail.



Roger Williams
1603-1683

Roger Williams

Our next pioneer of religious liberty takes us to the New World. Roger Williams was called a prophet of religious liberty by Harvard professor, Perry Miller. Miller wrote of Williams: “Now, as all this world knows, this separatist figures in history as the pioneer of religious freedom, even of democracy... Some even hail him as the precursor of Jefferson... Call him the prophet of the splendid doctrine that a man’s right to worship as he pleases inalienably given him by nature and nature’s God.”¹⁷ A footnote to this quote reads: “Concerning Williams and Jefferson, the Harvard professor says the former was trying to free the church from the state, and the latter was laboring to free the state from

the church, but both were working for the same end.”¹⁸

Roger Williams was born in London in 1603. He was educated at Cambridge University. He was friends with Oliver Cromwell and John Milton. Williams was forced to leave England or go to jail. He was welcomed by friends in Boston. He would later be forced to leave Boston because of his insistence on complete separation of church and state. He would be forced to leave Salem and he went to live with the Indians. He bought a piece of land from the Indians which was providentially named Providence.

Williams would later return to England to attempt to get a charter for Rhode Island which would guarantee religious freedom. He was successful and returned to America with a new charter for Rhode Island. The part of the charter that addresses religious liberty reads: “...that no person within said colony, at any time hereafter, shall be anywhere molested, punished, disquieted, or called in question for any difference in opinion in matters of religion, and do not actually disturb the civil peace of said colony; but that all and any persons may, from time to time, and at all times hereafter, freely and fully have and enjoy his and their own judgments and consciences in matters of religious concerns.”¹⁹ Roland H. Bainton, the famous church historian at Yale, thought that Williams’ ideas of separation of church and state influenced the founders and the Constitution. Bainton thought that Williams’ policy of separating church and state liberated the church and secularized the state. This idea was accepted by the founders because they thought it was best to keep church and state separate. Williams thought the church consisted only of believers; while, the state included everybody.

Isaac Backus and John Leland

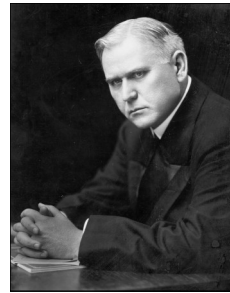
Two other major Baptist pioneers of religious liberty were Isaac Backus and John Leland. Isaac Backus (1724-1806) was a Baptist minister and champion of religious liberty during the Revolutionary era. He was converted during the Great Awakening in 1742. He was an independent evangelist for over ten years. On January 16, 1756, he became a Baptist and organized a Baptist church in Middleborough, Massachusetts. It was mostly through his pen that Isaac Backus fought for religious liberty. He wrote tracts, pamphlets and petitions arguing for freedom of conscience. “In 1773 his most important tract, *An Appeal to the Public for Religious Liberty against the Oppression of the Present Day*, appeared – the best exposition of the eighteenth-century evangelical concept of separation of church and state.”²⁰

John Leland (1754-1841) was another early advocate of religious liberty and separation of church and state. He was converted and then baptized by a Baptist minister. Though born and raised in Massachusetts, he would later pastor Baptist

churches in Virginia. Leland and Virginia Baptists would have a major influence on the thinking of James Madison and Thomas Jefferson. "Through his preaching, writing and personal friendship with Thomas Jefferson and James Madison, Leland exercised notable influence in the struggle to disestablish the Anglican Church and establish religious liberty."²¹ Leland pressed Madison and the founders to include a guarantee of religious freedom in the Constitution. This protection would later be included in the First Amendment to the United States Constitution. E.Y. Mullins, in the *The Axioms of Religion*, asserted that the First Amendment came about because of Baptist insistence. "Their view of soul freedom and separation of church and state is seen in their earliest known confessions of faith, and their practice as a denomination has never parted company with their doctrine."²²

George W. Truett

George W. Truett (1867-1944) served as the pastor of First Baptist Church in Dallas, Texas for forty-seven years. He also served as president of the Southern Baptist Convention from 1927 to 1930. He was known as a great champion of religious freedom. He delivered a sermon on religious liberty on the steps of the nation's capital in Washington, D.C., on May 16, 1920. This address preceded the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention which was being held in the same city.



George W. Truett
1867-1944

We will use this sermon to point out some of Truett's ideas about religious liberty. In this sermon, he paid tribute to the early Baptist pioneers of religious liberty. It was because of early Baptists and their sacrifices that religious liberty existed in America. These leaders contributed to both religious and civil liberty in America.²³

Truett believed there was a difference between religious liberty and religious toleration. Baptists had a consistent record in regards to religious liberty. According to Truett, Baptists "have never been a party to oppression of conscience. They have forever been the unwavering champions of liberty, both religious and civil. Their contention now is, and has been, and, please God, must ever be, that it is the natural and fundamental and indefeasible right of every human being to worship God or not, according to the dictates of his conscience, and, as long as he does not infringe upon the rights of others, he is to be held accountable alone to God for all his religious beliefs and practices. Our contention is not for mere toleration, but for absolute liberty. There is a wide difference between toleration and liberty... Toleration is a concession, while liberty is a right. Toleration is a matter of expediency, while liberty

is a matter of principle. Toleration is a gift from man, while liberty is a gift from God. It is the consistent and insistent contention of our Baptist people, always and everywhere, that religion must be forever voluntary and uncoerced, and that it is not the prerogative of any power, whether civil or ecclesiastical, to compel men to conform to any religious creed or form of worship, or to pay taxes for the support of a religious organization to which they do not belong and in whose creed they do not believe. God wants free worshippers and no other kind.”²⁴

This quote points out major themes of Truett’s thinking on religious liberty. He believed Baptists have stood for freedom of conscience from the beginning and that the ideal was religious liberty, not religious toleration. Belief in and worship of God was something voluntary and not to be coerced by civil or religious authority. Truett believed that religious liberty was a central doctrine that Baptists had believed and practiced consistently. Baptists had struggled for religious liberty, not only for themselves, but everybody.

Truett emphasized that the fundamental Baptist principle which led them to work for religious liberty was the “doctrine of the absolute Lordship of Jesus Christ.”²⁵ This was the foundational belief of Baptists. Since the Lordship of Christ is preeminent, the doing of His will is absolute. Where is this will revealed? It is revealed in the Bible. So, Baptists have been known as people of the Book. Truett says, “The Bible and the Bible alone is the rule of faith and practice for Baptists... Not traditions, nor customs, nor councils, nor confessions, nor ecclesiastical formularies, however venerable and pretentious, guide Baptists, but simply and solely the will of Christ as they find revealed in the New Testament...”²⁶

Another theme emphasized by Truett is on the individual and direct access to God. He believed that the New Testament emphasized the individual. It was the individual who would have to give account of himself to God. It was the individual who would repent and trust Jesus Christ for salvation. Truett asserted: “There is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus. Let the state and the church, let the institution, however dear, and the person, however near, stand aside, and let the individual soul make its own direct and immediate response to God...”²⁷ Truett thought Baptists had historically held to two fundamental principles: “The supreme authority of the Scriptures and the right of private judgment...and against the unwarranted and impertinent assumption of religious authority over men’s consciences, whether by church or state...”²⁸

A last theme addressed by Truett was a “Free Church in Free State.” He thought Jesus words, “Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and unto God the things that are God’s...” marked the divorcement of church and state.”²⁹ Truett believed that the idea of a free church in a free state was a Baptist principle that must be kept in continual remembrance and practice. This belief emphasized the separation of church and state. Truett thought the church should use spiritual

resources to do its work. He thought dependence on the state was dangerous for the spiritual health of the church. Truett said that “Christ’s religion needs no props of any kind from any worldly source, and to the degree that it is thus supported it has a millstone hanged about its neck.”³⁰

E.Y. Mullins

E.Y. Mullins (1860-1928) was the president of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary from 1899 to his death in 1928. He was also a major theologian who wrote many books on theology. It was under his leadership that the first confession was adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in 1925. One of his books on theology was called *The Axioms of Religion* which was published in 1908 by the American Baptist Publication Society. It was revised by H.W. Tribble and published by the Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1935. It was revised again in 1978 by Herschel H. Hobbs and published by Broadman Press. We will explore this book to consider Mullins’ views on religious liberty.



Edgar Young Mullins
1860-1928

The Axioms of Religion

Mullins, in *The Axioms of Religion* describes the “Baptist faith” in terms of certain universal and self-evident truths or axioms in religious thought.³¹ These axioms are “outgrowths of the principle of soul competency in religion.”³² Mullins describes six axioms:

1. The theological axiom: The holy and loving God has the right to be sovereign.
2. The religious axiom: All souls have an equal right to direct access to God.
3. The ecclesiastical axiom: All believers have a right to equal privileges in the church.
4. The moral axiom: To be responsible man must be free.
5. The religio-civic axiom: A free church in a free state.
6. The social axiom: Love your neighbor as yourself.³³

We will concentrate on Mullins’ ideas that directly relate to religious liberty. E.Y. Mullins believed that Baptists hold to the idea of “soul-freedom” and separation of church and state from its beginning. This belief was contained in the earliest Baptist confessions and they have “never parted company” with this doctrine. It is also rooted in Early American Life. Roger Williams planted the seed of religious liberty in Rhode Island and this seed would bear fruit in the First Amendment of the Constitution protecting religious liberty. It was because of the influence of Isaac

Backus, John Leland and Virginia Baptists that religious liberty was included in the First Amendment.³⁴

Mullins agreed with George W. Truett and other Baptists that religious liberty and religious toleration is not the same thing. Mullins asserted that religious liberty and religious toleration are “poles apart”. He would agree with other Baptists that Baptists have always stood for religious liberty not religious toleration. It was for religious liberty that many Baptist suffered whippings, banishment and death. Another idea emphasized in *The Axioms of Religion* is the advocacy of the separation of church and state.³⁵ Mullins thought that the “functions of church and state are quite distinct.” Mullins wrote of these distinctions: “...The church is a voluntary organization; the state compels obedience. One organization is temporal; the other spiritual...The direct allegiance in the church is to God; in the state, it is to law and government. One is for the protection of life and property; the other for the promotion of spiritual life.”³⁶ Mullins thought an established religion destroys the principle of equal rights before the law. He thought the doctrine of separation of church and state is beneficial both to civil and religious institutions. Mullins asserted that it was necessary to keep the church and the state separate to protect both religious and civil liberties.

Mullins thought the foundational truth for religious liberty was the soul’s competency in religion. He believed Baptists had made a significant contribution to the world in its concept of soul freedom. Mullins wrote: “Religion is a personal matter between the soul and God. It must include the doctrine of separation of church and state because State churches stand on the assumptions that man without the aid of the State is incompetent in religion.”³⁷ Mullins taught both the importance of religious liberty and the separation of church and state.

A second source for discovering the views of E. Y. Mullins in regards to religious liberty is a sermon he preached at the Baptist World Alliance Third World Congress titled, “The Baptist Conception of Religious Liberty”. The meeting was held in Stockholm, Sweden in 1923. It was one of the most important sermons ever delivered on religious liberty. In it, Mullins clearly communicates his views on religious liberty and separation of church and state.

Mullins asserted in the sermon that soul freedom was foundational to the doctrine of religious freedom. He told the audience that religious liberty was based on man being created in God’s image. Because human persons were created in God’s image, they “were free and spiritual, competent to deal directly with God.”³⁸

In the next two sections of his address, Mullins lists things that religious liberty excludes and things that religious liberty implies. First, it excludes any “state authority in religion.”³⁹ Mullins contrasts the different functions of the church and state: “The state depends on the use of force. Religion is moral and spiritual. The state uses coercion. Religion appeals only to freedom.”⁴⁰ The state uses force to deal

with criminals. The church uses spiritual means to produce people of high moral character.

Religious liberty also excludes religious toleration. Mullins says for the state to tolerate religion is not religious liberty. He thought it was “religious coercion” to give the state that kind of power. God had not given the state the power to force religious beliefs.

Mullins thought that religious liberty excluded the “imposition of religious creeds by ecclesiastical authority.”⁴¹ He thought confessions “voluntarily framed and set forth as containing the essentials”⁴² of what they believe the Gospel teaches is okay. He was against the idea of forcing it upon believer’s consciences by religious command.

In the next section, Mullins lists things that religious liberty implies. First it implied that people should have the freedom to approach God without any persons or authorities coming between them. Second, it opposed the forcing upon people’s consciences religious creeds by ecclesiastical authorities. Third, it implied the freedom to search for religious truth. Fourth, it implied the “free utterance and propagation of truth.”⁴³

The last section of the sermon, Mullins addressed the duties of religious liberty. First, we have a “duty to search for and discover truth.”⁴⁴ Mullins believed there was no conflict between human learning and the Bible. He thought that all truth was from God. A second duty was to sacrifice and be willing to die for the truth. Another duty was loyalty to the state. The state was ordained by God. It should be obeyed and supported in civil matters. However, supreme loyalty was owed to Jesus Christ. One other duty mentioned in the sermon was the duty to protect all people from religious oppression.

This sermon delivered by E.Y. Mullins provides many insights to the thinking of Mullins on the subject of religious liberty. It agrees with what we have discovered in the axioms of religion. He was a mighty champion for religious freedom and separation of church and state.

Herschel H. Hobbs and The Baptist Faith and Message

Herschel H. Hobbs chaired the committee that revised *The Baptist Faith and Message* in 1963. The Convention Press published a revised edition of this statement with study material to be used in studying this statement. We will be analyzing its statement of religious liberty.

The first theme of the statement is that “God alone is Lord of the conscience.”⁴⁵ This theme emphasizes that the Lordship of Jesus Christ is primary in Baptist belief; that believers are to follow Christ, rather than the doctrines of men. It implies that no person or institution should come between God and man.

A second theme is the separation of church and state. It stands with the First

Amendment to the U.S. Constitution in opposing the state establishment of religion. It asserts that church and state have different functions. "The church should not resort to the civil power to carry on its work."⁴⁶

A third theme is freedom of conscience. The state should not penalize or persecute its citizens because of their religious opinions. The state should protect the citizen's right to "free and unhindered access to God on the part of all men."⁴⁷ The competency of the soul is implied in this idea. Because we are created in God's image, we should have direct and free access to God. It also includes the freedom to search for religious truth and to propagate these beliefs "in the sphere of religion without the interference of the civil power."⁴⁸

A fourth and final theme is the assertion that "Baptists have always been the champions of religious liberty, not for themselves alone, but for all men."⁴⁹ Early Baptists were persecuted because they advocated full religious liberty and separation of church and state. Thomas Helwys, as we have already seen, was an early example of a Baptist who advocated full religious liberty for all people. A prominent leader in the twentieth century was J.D. Freeman. He declared the Baptist view of religious freedom at the First Baptist World Congress in London in 1905: "Our demand has not been simply for religious toleration, but religious liberty; not sufferance merely, but freedom; and that not for ourselves alone, but for all men. We did not stumble upon the doctrine. It inheres in the very essence of our belief...Christ is the Lord of all...The conscience is the servant only of God, and is not subject to the will of man...Steadfastly refusing to bend our necks under the yoke of bondage, we have scrupulously withheld our hands from imposing that yoke upon others...of martyr blood our hands are clean. We have never invoked the sword of temporal power to aid the sword of the Spirit. We have never passed an ordinance inflicting a civil disability on any man because of his religious views, be he Protestant or Papist, Jew, or Turk, or infidel..."⁵⁰

We have seen through its history, its leaders, its beliefs, Baptists have made an important contribution to religious liberty and separation of church and state. These convictions were consistently held by Baptists throughout its history. John Leland and Virginia Baptists were influential in getting religious liberty protected by law in the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. George W. Truett and E.Y. Mullins were strong proponents of religious liberty and separation of church and state. The Convention Press books and *The Baptist Faith and Message* of 1963 interpretation of religious liberty was consistent with Baptist belief statements on religious liberty that preceded it. These materials both shaped and reflected Baptist views on religious liberty, soul freedom, and separation of church and state.

ENDNOTES

¹ Eric Rust, "Religious Liberty," Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1958), vol. II, p. 1153; quoted by Herschel H. Hobbs, The Baptist Faith and Message (Nashville, TN: Convention Press, 1971), 141.

² Hobbs, *The Baptist Faith and Message*, 141.

³ C. Emmanuel Carlson and W. Barry-Garrett, *Religious Liberty: Case Studies in Current Church-State Issues* (Nashville, TN: Convention Press, 1964) 7.

⁴ *Ibid*, 8.

⁵ Hobbs, *The Baptist Faith and Message*. 141.

⁶ *Ibid*.

⁷ *Ibid*, 142.

⁸ Carlson, *Religious Liberty*, 6.

⁹ David C. Wooley, *Champions of Religious Freedom* (Nashville, TN: Convention Press) 1964, viii.

¹⁰ Herschel H. Hobbs and E.Y. Mullins, *The Axioms of Religion* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1978) 41-42.

¹¹ Hobbs and Mullins, *The Axioms of Religion*, 42.

¹² *Ibid*, 42-43.

¹³ Wooley, *Religious Freedom*, 30.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, 31.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, 31-32.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 32.

¹⁷ Joseph Martin Dawson, *Baptists and the American Republic* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1956) 16.

¹⁸ Dawson, footnote no. 3., 16.

¹⁹ Dawson, *Baptists and the American Republic*, 42.

²⁰ B.L. Shelly, "Isaac Backus", in *Dictionary of Baptists in America*, edited by Bill J. Leonard. (Downers Grove, ILL: Intervarsity Press, 1994), 36.

²¹ W.R. Estep, "John Leland," in *Dictionary of Baptists in America*, edited by Bill J. Leonard), 171-172.

²² Hobbs and Mullins, *The Axioms of Religion*, 131.

²³ George W. Truett, *God's Call to America: and Other Addresses Comprising Special Orations Delivered on Widely Varying Occasions* (Nashville, TN: Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1923), 31.

²⁴ *Ibid*, 32-33.

²⁵ *Ibid*, 34.

²⁶ *Ibid*, 35.

²⁷ *Ibid*, 37.

²⁸ *Ibid*, 38.

²⁹ *Ibid*, 43.

³⁰ *Ibid*, 44.

³¹ Hobbs and Mullins, *The Axioms of Religion*, 53.

³² *Ibid*, 54.

³³ *Ibid*.

³⁴ Mullins and Tribble, *The Baptist Faith*, 88-89.

³⁵ *Ibid*, 95.

³⁶ *Ibid*, 95-96.

³⁷ *Ibid*, 26.

³⁸ E. Y. Mullins, "The Baptist Conception of Religious Liberty," in *Third Baptist World Congress*, ed. W. R. Whitley (Nashville, TN: Baptist Sunday School Board 1923), 67.

³⁹ *Ibid*, 68.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*.

⁴¹ *Ibid*.

⁴² *Ibid*.

⁴³ *Ibid*, 69.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 70.

⁴⁵ Herschel H. Hobbs, *The Baptist Faith and Message* (Nashville, TN: 1971), 139.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 139.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 143.

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, 143-144.

RESOURCES FOR PREACHERS CONVENTION PRESS, 1967-1975

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The purpose of this article is to provide the results of an examination and analysis of certain publications by Convention Press between 1963 and 1975 in order to determine the contributions of those materials to the ministry of preaching by Southern Baptist pastors, lay preachers, and evangelists. Excluded from this study are: all publications by Convention Press before 1963 and after 1975; all Convention Press materials not in the current holdings of the Florida Baptist Historical Society; all Convention Press materials not included in the Church Study Course Curriculum; all Convention Press releases that did not contribute to the theory of preaching. Within the 1000 plus items by Convention Press contained in the holdings of the Florida Baptist Historical Society, I discovered eight volumes fitting the boundaries established for the study.

I was neither surprised nor disappointed by the limited materials available for this study, because I assumed that the initial primary purpose of the Church Study Course from its inception in 1959 was to equip volunteers for effective service in local churches. It began as a merger of three courses of study previously promoted by the Sunday School Board, including the Sunday School Board Training Course, the Graded Training Union Study Course, and the Church Music Training Course. Two years later the Woman's Missionary Union Principles and Methods Study was added. The purpose of the consolidated and expanded curriculum was to help Christians to grow spiritually and in competencies for service in local churches.¹ Upon a cursory examination of the holdings of the Florida Baptist Historical Society, I confirmed that which I had assumed. Clearly, the beginning purpose of the

Church Study Course was applied predominately to strengthening volunteer leadership in the churches rather than pastor and staff vocational leadership.

I commend the Sunday School Board for making the equipping of volunteer leaders in our churches the priority of the Church Study Course. It met a dire need. Those churches that availed themselves of that system of training for the laity often displayed in prominent places within their facilities the framed certificates earned for completion of the various areas of study within that curriculum. My observation was that those churches which engaged regularly in such studies became stronger in their various ministries.

The focus of this article was the previously mentioned eight books that dealt at least in part upon matters related to the preparation and delivery of sermons. Four of the books came out between 1963 and 1966. Another four were published between 1973 and 1975. I shall devote a section of this article to the books included within each of these time frames.

1963-1966

Harold Graves taught in *The Nature and Functions of a Church* that preaching was both central and integral to worship. This healthy view of the relationship between preaching and worship needed to be heard in a time when many Southern Baptist pastors equated the act of preaching with worship and considered every other aspect of the service as preliminary to worship.

Graves underscored the value of persuasion in preaching, stating that "Preaching is not simply teaching . . . It is truth presented in such a manner that it persuades men to move toward God. . ."² The need for more emphasis upon application of biblical truth and persuasion to act upon that truth was and continues to be an area for improvement in many Southern Baptist pulpits.

The author made another helpful contribution by introducing a concept related to the significance of the congregation in the preaching event. He argued: "People have much to do with the sermon. The preacher responds to the audience. The congregation should prepare for worship by praying for the pastor. . ."³

In a book entitled *Reality in Worship*, J. P. Allen reiterated the classic definition of preaching by Phillips Brooks: "Preaching is God's truth proclaimed through personality."⁴ Elaborating on this denotation, Allen

explained that sermons must originate from Scripture rather than the preacher. His catchy statement was that a preacher “. . . is called to preach God’s Word . . . not set up his own shop.”⁵ I found that a number of the authors in this study referred to Brook’s definition of preaching. I have found it to be the most often quoted denotation of preaching in the literature of homiletics. There have been many variations on it and elaborations of it, but from it one must always arrive at a lofty opinion of preaching.

Echoing Graves, Allen opined that worship was not to be identified as a “preaching service.” He felt that, while the preaching of the Word may be of first importance, it should be integral to the total scheme of things in an overall plan of worship.⁶

In an effort to impress upon his readers the importance of sermons addressing the needs of the congregation, the author argued that sermons should be both born out of and applied to the needs of the people.⁷ This concern was not an expression of support for topical preaching but encouragement to apply biblical truth to the perceived needs of the congregation.

In his book, *The Christian Worshipping*, V. L. Stanfield called for a renewal of a commitment to the primacy of preaching, asserting that “one of the tragedies of Southern Baptist life is that some churches and pastors have made preaching secondary”⁸ He believed that this quandary was due in part to the multifarious demands made by churches on pastors, leaving them inadequate time to prepare sermons. But he placed some blame upon pastors who have lost confidence in the efficacy of preaching.⁹

Following a forceful biblical argument for the proper place of preaching, the author set forth a lofty view of preaching in his discussion of the nature of a sermon. He described the sermon as “a discourse setting forth the mind of God rather than the opinions and ideas of a preacher.”¹⁰ The source of the revelation of the mind of God is, of course, the Bible. He thought that there must always be a vital connection between the biblical text and the sermon.¹¹

Stanfield agreed and elaborated upon the conviction espoused by both Graves and Allen concerning the role of preaching in worship. He insisted that, although the sermon is central to worship, it is not all there is to worship. He opposed extreme concepts about worship, arguing against both the view that preaching is everything there is to worship and the idea that preaching is an intrusion upon worship. He explained: “The sermon is first

among equals. It should be primary and climactic, but it does not stand alone. It is an act of worship in a service of worship.”¹²

He joined Graves in calling for more involvement of the audience in the preaching event. He argued that churches should accept their pastors as men called of God to proclaim God’s message to them. When this becomes the mood of the people, they will more likely listen prayerfully, reverently, and expectantly.¹³

The book, *The Message We Proclaim*, by Gordon Clinard provided by far the most exhaustive treatment of preaching released by Convention Press prior to 1975. The author, like Stanfield, issued an urgent appeal for a rediscovery of preaching by both pastors and congregations. He firmly believed that such a happening would result in spiritual awakening in the churches.¹⁴ Asserting that an adequate theology of preaching was critical to the fulfillment of that hope, he devoted a full chapter to developing a sound doctrine of preaching. He discussed the priority of preaching and preaching as redemptive history, and then gave several suggestions that might lead to a resurgence of preaching.

In his defense of the primacy of preaching, the author opined that preaching can never be replaced in the propagation of the gospel. He observed, “Whenever preaching has received the significance sanctioned by the New Testament, evangelical Christianity has advanced. Powerful preaching has accompanied a strong sense of biblical authority.”¹⁵ He saw the Reformation as a prime example of the bond between biblical preaching and the expansion of Christianity, asserting that “The Reformers believed in the primacy of preaching because they believed in the Word of God as a proclaimed Word. They could not conceive of a true sermon apart from the exposition of Scripture. . . .”¹⁶

Clinard made a stimulating contribution to the ongoing discussion about the relationship of preaching to worship by gleaning a concept from P. T. Forsyth to the effect that preachers should engage in worship while preparing and delivering sermons. Quoting Forsyth, he stated that a sermon “. . . is the Word of the Gospel returning in confession to the God who gave it. It is addressed to man indeed, but in truth it is offered to God - that is the true genius of preaching.”¹⁷

In his argument for preaching as redemptive history, the author suggested that preaching is not merely a man telling about redemption. It is

participation in redemption. He argued the truth of this assertion by declaring that the gospel provides hearers the opportunity to respond positively to the revelation of God in Christ, thereby completing that revelation.¹⁸ Moreover, he pled for preaching as participation in redemptive history, because God not only speaks but acts through the sermon. He quoted from John Stott to clarify this point. Stott wrote, "It is by preaching that God himself makes past history a present reality. The cross was, and will always remain a unique historical event in the past . . . unless God himself makes it real and relevant to men today. It is by preaching that God accomplishes this miracle."¹⁹ Clinard concluded that "Preaching participates in redemptive history by continuing to proclaim the message of salvation in Christ until the consummation of human history upon His return."²⁰

The author wrote a strong section about his notion of "true preaching," saying that Christ only acts through "true preaching." The qualities he prescribed for true preaching included the thought that all sermons, regardless of their intentions were to be centered on Christ and his saving power. Another characteristic required of "true preaching" was that it be biblical, because "The Bible is the unique, authoritative source of knowledge about what God has done in Christ. . . The Scriptures are . . . The elect way God chooses to speak his word to us today."²¹ The final requirement for "true preaching" was relevancy. Clinard cautioned about the two extreme efforts for relevancy in some preaching at that time. On the right hand was the notion that the message repeated would create its own relevance without any effort to make it applicable on the part of the preacher. On the left hand was the position of some that all theological and biblical language should be discarded in order to make eternal truth receivable by modern ears. The author offered a better suggestion: "Study the text until the word of God in it has gripped the preacher's heart. Then he must sit before his people until he discovers where the truth of the text meets the life of his own time. This application may be communicated through contemporary sermon forms and style. Then the proclamation of the preacher has both the authority of the biblical word and the communication value of encounter with contemporary need."²²

Finally, Clinard offered suggestions about how this "adequate theology" of preaching might ignite a renewal of preaching that would result in churches being revived. He hoped that preachers and churches would take more

seriously the task of “true preaching,” considering the demands it makes upon a pastor’s time and energy, as well as the enduring benefits it renders to the churches. When that happens, a new respect for preaching will lead to new power in the pulpit.²³

In summary, I want to affirm that, though the books published during this period were far short of being comprehensive in their treatment of the art of preaching, they provided a real service to preaching in Southern Baptist life by effectively arguing for the priority of preaching, by affirming a lofty definition of preaching, by giving a healthy relationship between preaching and worship, and by insisting upon a strong theology of preaching that included the essential element of biblical substance at the core of sermons.

1973 - 1975

In an apparent broadening of purpose, the designers of the Church Study Course began in the decade of the 1970’s publishing books aimed at meeting the needs of professional church staff as well as volunteers. There were four books published between 1973 and 1975 that addressed the training of pastors. All of these contributed something to the art of preaching. The first in this series was *Called to Joy* by Ernest Mosley. He, like his predecessors in this study, lifted preaching to the top in all the tasks of pastoral ministry. He declared that “Preaching the gospel is a primary activity in pastoral work . . . The church looks to the pastor as its primary proclaimer, because he has been called of God and qualified with spiritual gifts for proclaiming the Bible’s message to men.”²⁴

Mosley embraced an idealistic philosophy of preaching, claiming that it involves the preacher’s words becoming God’s saving activity in the present. No wonder that, holding to nothing less than a sacramental view of preaching, he asserted that preachers should take a confident stance in the pulpit.²⁵ He went on to argue for both evangelistic and edifying preaching, insisting that both are essential for Christian proclamation.²⁶

Another work in the series on pastoral leadership was published in the same year as Mosley’s. It was Brooks Faulkner’s *Getting on Top of Your Work*. Although the book didn’t focus directly on the needs of preachers, nonetheless preachers gleaned help to strengthen their preaching in Faulkner’s chapters on communication and time management.

This book provided more insights into communication theory than any of

the other books included in this study. Faulkner discussed important areas for preachers to understand, particularly nonverbal communication and the communication cycle.²⁷ Both of these facets have immense implications for the preaching moment. Although the writer's basic focus is in regard to interpersonal and small group applications, the preacher does not have to stretch his imagination to see the applications for oral communication through preaching. For example, the first element in the communication cycle is transmission.²⁸ For the preaching event, transmission would include the preparation of the message as well as its delivery. Faulkner's stressing of the importance of transmissions having clarity and brevity for effective communication alerts the preacher to apply those qualities to his sermon preparation and delivery.

The most unique section on communication is what the author called "Patterns for Communication." He described four patterns, including the "constructive," the "dominative," the "evasive," and the "explosive."²⁹ A preacher should examine the descriptions of all these patterns in order to locate which one fits his current practice. Then he should strive for the most effective pattern, which is the "constructive," because it is inspiring, attentive, informing, exploring, and loving.³⁰

Faulkner informed about practices in time management that prove most helpful to pastors needing more quality time for study and sermon preparation. His explanation of the energy cycle and advice about how to schedule one's time accordingly can assist preachers to identify their personal peak times and concentrate on study and sermon preparation during those hours.³¹ He also alerted his readers to "time wasters" or "time hogs." Every pastor is hindered sometimes by these. He specified two that are particularly applicable to pastors: needless time on the telephone and drop-in interruptions. He cautioned that, while the people involved in such interruptions should be given enough time for the pastor to lovingly minister to their pressing need, the pastor should avoid letting them consume more of his time than is necessary. This should be done in a courteous and respectful fashion.³²

In *Growing a Loving Church*, Robert Dale wrote more about the preparation of the pastor for pastoral preaching than about the mechanics of pastoral preaching. He asserted that "Pastoral preaching is like a jewel with many attractive facets . . ." Some of the facets he listed are positive approach;

identification, which involves some tasteful self-disclosure; relational; holistic; specific. He provided several suggestions for stimulating pastoral preaching, including: know yourself; view your own experiences clinically (objectively); study the great characters of the Bible; read biographies; observe people.³³ Dale believed that pastoral preaching should not be understood as a method of sermon preparation or delivery, but preferably be seen as an approach to providing pastoral care that encompasses all of your preaching ministry.³⁴

The author's unique contribution to the series on pastoral leadership was his argument for the inclusion of children's sermons in an overall plan of pastoral preaching. He listed among the advantages to children's sermons the matter of lending support for the Christian parent's teaching in the homes and the fact that adults enjoy them too.³⁵

The only book included in this study that dealt exclusively with the art of preparing and delivering sermons was *Proclaim the Gospel* by Alton McEachern. The book provides a good but limited study in the basics of sermon preparation and delivery, using most of the better known books at that date on homiletics as resources.³⁶ He included all the essentials, such as the call to preach, definitions of preaching, planning preaching, preparing and delivering sermons, and preaching in the context of worship.

In producing a definition of preaching, he cited Phillips Brooks' definition and explained it, but eventually moved on to give his personal denotation: "The living Word of God (Jesus Christ) revealed in the written Word (the Bible) speaking to the needs of the listening congregation through the proclamation of the gospel. The preaching of the Word is a divine event in which God continues to make himself known to man. It is more than a man talking about God. . . God himself confronts man."³⁷

McEachern advocated planning preaching, giving the time-honored advantages of so doing. Then he wrote about some of the usual approaches to planning, including expository, people's needs, special days, and selected doctrines. I would like to have seen a more complete treatment of the Christian Year as a separate approach. The chapter on planning also included a good discussion of innovations in preaching. He set forth concise discussions on dialogical preaching as well as narrative preaching. He pointed out some advantages and disadvantages of each new approach as well as instructions about how to do them effectively. He manifested a good

understanding of the approaches and encouraged their implementation by preachers. He cautioned that in dramatic narrative preaching the weakest point is application. However, he acknowledged that such stories tend to make their own applications as people find themselves caught up in the stories, identifying with some character in them.³⁸

The author suggested a critical fundamental instruction for preachers as they approach the task of sermon preparation. He asserted, "The preparation of a gospel sermon is more than getting an idea for Sunday. It is a human-divine encounter. Preaching calls for development of gifts, hard work, and dependence on the Lord." In his ensuing discussion of sermon preparation, the author discussed as thorough a set of instructions as the limitations of space allowed. He covered all the necessary steps, including the selection of a text, clarifying its meaning and determining the main idea, arranging the ideas, gathering material, using illustrations, organizing an outline, developing the body, progressing to a conclusion, planning an invitation, writing an introduction, choosing a title, and polishing the sermon. He told what to do in each step but not how to do each step.³⁹ For example, he covered in cursory fashion much of the process to follow in the exegesis and interpretation of a text, but did not explain in detail how to do the process.

At the outset of his essay on sermon delivery, the writer quoted another: "Preaching is not the art of making a sermon and delivering it; preaching is the art of making a preacher and delivering that."⁴⁰ This assertion underscored his belief that authentic preaching can come only out of a life that demonstrates the Christian faith. He wrote about the various methods of sermon delivery, including reciting from a memorized manuscript, reading a manuscript, and extemporaneous. His personal preference was extemporaneous, because "It restores preaching to a heart-to heart and eye-to-eye encounter."⁴¹

In regard to stylistic issues, McEachern argued for the use of words that communicate clearly with contemporary people without abandoning the great biblical terms. He preferred that the terms be kept and explained in sermons. He felt that the language of preaching should be gospel, prophetic, and contemporary. By this he meant that preaching should consistently contain the message of salvation in Christ, confront people with the claims of Christ upon their lives, yet do so with words that they can understand.⁴² He

explained that sermon style can be improved by a pattern of wide reading and challenged preachers to redeem the time and discipline themselves to do more general reading. Believing that hearers of sermons are more likely to be emotional than rational, he argued that style can be enhanced by intentionally choosing more poetic words that touch emotions as well as the mind.⁴³

The last chapter of the book dealt with the other major facets of worship as the “context of preaching.” I liked his emphasis on neglected areas of worship services in many churches. He gave important instructions on ways to use more Scripture than the text for the sermon and how to read passages interpretively. He called for more thought and preparation to be given to pastoral prayers, not in order to read them, but to more effectively involve the people in them. He advocated extemporaneous prayer after preparation, rather than the more prevalent impromptu prayer.⁴⁴

The last set of books studied for this article provided much needed help for preachers who may have had the Church Study Course as their primary resource for learning the basics of preaching. As inconceivable as that possibility may seem to some, I can imagine that there have been more than we know who did just that. What about those who have either not had available the opportunity for formal training or have not availed themselves of such opportunity? In addition, these eight books have served as continuing refresher and enrichment resources for those who have had formal preparation for preaching.

If a novice preacher were to have all eight books included in this study to use in the enrichment of his preaching, he would almost have an adequate set of tools. He would have before him a challenging philosophy of preaching, a strong insistence upon biblical preaching, a healthy understanding of the relationship between preaching and worship, a constant reminder of the necessity of personal devotion to the Lord and to people, and a fundamental grasp of how to prepare and deliver sermons. But he would still lack more than all else an adequate knowledge of how to exegete Scripture and interpret it for life today.

Endnotes

¹ Harold Graves, *The Nature and Functions of a Church*. Nashville: Convention Press, 1963, p. vi.

² *Ibid*, p. 42.

³ *Ibid*, p. 43.

⁴ J. P. Allen, *Reality in Worship*. Nashville: Convention Press, 1965, p. 88.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid*, p. 87.

⁷ *Ibid*, p. 88.

⁸ V. L. Stanfield, *The Christian Worshiping*. Nashville: Convention Press, 1965, p. 46.

⁹ *Ibid*.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, p. 47.

¹¹ *Ibid*.

¹² *Ibid*, p. 48.

¹³ *Ibid*, p. 50.

¹⁴ Gordon Clinard, *The Message We Proclaim*. Nashville: Convention Press, 1966, p. 79.

¹⁵ *Ibid*. p. 81.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, p. 82.

¹⁷ *Ibid*.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, p. 84.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, p. 86.

²⁰ *Ibid*, p. 87.

²¹ *Ibid*.

²² *Ibid*, pp. 90,91.

²³ *Ibid*, pp. 91-93.

²⁴ Ernest Mosley, *Called to Joy*. Nashville: Convention Press, 1973, p. 111.

²⁵ *Ibid*, p. 113.

²⁶ *Ibid*, p. 114.

²⁷ Brooks Faulkner, *Getting on Top of Your Work*. Nashville: Convention Press, 1973, pp. 62,63.

²⁸ *Ibid*, p. 63.

²⁹ *Ibid*, p. 67.

³⁰ *Ibid*, pp. 69-74.

³¹ *Ibid*, pp. 126,127.

³² *Ibid*, p. 128

³³ Robert Dale, *Growing a Loving Church*. Nashville: Convention Press,

1974, pp. 35-38.

³⁴ *Ibid*, p. 38.

³⁵ *Ibid*, p. 40.

³⁶ Alton McEachern, *Proclaim the Gospel*. Nashville: Convention Press, 1975, pp. 140-141.

³⁷ *Ibid*, p. 32.

³⁸ *Ibid*, pp. 44-65.

³⁹ *Ibid*, pp. 70-85.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, p. 90.

⁴¹ *Ibid*, p. 93.

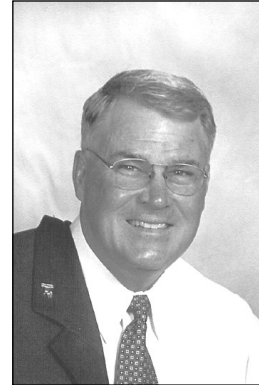
⁴⁰ *Ibid*, pp. 95,96.

⁴³ *Ibid*, p. 101.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, pp. 113-138.

THERE'S GOLD IN THEM THERE HILLS

Guy Sanders
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Southern Baptists are arguably, on the whole, the most evangelism conscious denomination in current Christendom. That evangelistic mindset meaning is that all people without personal faith in Jesus Christ are presently lost and eternally doomed. It appears that other “main line” denominations have moved away from such a passionate consciousness. If that be so, we must consider the reasons why the Southern Baptist Convention remains so and from where has that been generated.

Of course, Southern Baptist Convention church’s commitment to the scripture is the undeniable primary source of evangelistic zeal. This writer’s opinion is that throughout most of the 20th century Convention Press publications from the Baptist Sunday School Board (now LifeWay) are major contributing factors. Only a brief perusal of these training aids for church leadership reveals the consistent emphasis on evangelism and soul-winning at every level.

“There’s gold in them there hills” was the cry of the gold rush era in American history. When a recent seminary graduate (1973) ordained to the gospel ministry and eager in my “full time” ministry I had 2 great passions. These were Bible preaching and personal soul-winning. Like those before me I was sure that I would change the world. I soon found that I wasn’t even changing the people in front of me week after week. It was then that I discovered my third great and continuing passion: evangelistic Sunday school. This could equip people to change their lives and through personal and church evangelism change the world around them.

I discovered the information that ignited and fueled this passion in the pages of CONVENTION PRESS resources. Those little blue, brown, green,

and gray books were not simply the hills from which gold could be mined. They were a gold mine in themselves. I believe they continue to offer golden principles for church and denominational evangelism to this day. Understanding that this is a historical journal, my passion cannot resist a word of challenge to anyone who reads these words. Dig out those old books from back rooms, the bottom library shelves, and dusty disuse. "There is gold in them there hills." I have reread them often, always with fresh inspiration. I have rescued them wherever they can be found. I have recycled them into the hands (and I hope the hearts) of young men called to preach through my ministry.

Consider a short list of the over 2000 titles that have been published by CONVENTION PRESS. The titles alone often communicate evangelistic fervor. Each of them contain motivation for evangelism in all Southern Baptist Churches. Many of these were reprinted for decades.

1905 - *Doctrines of Our Faith*: Dargan
1918 - *Convention Normal Manual for Sunday School*: Spilman
1919 - *Building the Bible Class*: Strickland-McGlothlin
1919 - *With Christ After the Lost*: Scarborough
1922 - *Building a Standard Sunday School*: Flake
1923 - *Personal Evangelism*: Sellars
1923 - *Sunday School Offices and Their Work*: Flake
1924 - *The Plan of Salvation*: Crouch
1930 - *The True Functions of the Sunday School*: Flake
1936 - *Winning Others to Christ*: Leavell
1936 - *Witnessing for Christ*: Williams
1936 - *Growing a Church*: Burroughs
1937 - *A Church Using the Sunday School*: Barnette
1943 - *Soul-Winning Doctrines*: Turner
1945 - *The Place of Sunday School in Evangelism*: Barnette
1951 - *Every Christian's Job*: Matthews
1953 - *The Pull of the People*: Barnette
1954 - *One to Eight*: Barnette
1954 - *The Ministry of Visitation*: Sizemore
1957 - *Building a Better Sunday School*: Dobbins
1958 - *Ways of Witnessing*: Caylor

1958 - *Personal Soul-Winning*: Sanderson
1958 - *Using Sunday School in Evangelism*: Sanderson
1960 - *Outreach for the Unreached*: Washburn
1960 - *New Testament Evangelism*: Hobbs
1961 - *The Missionary Task and the Church*: Eddleman
1963 - *The Nature and Functions of a Church*: Graves
1970 - *Witnessing in Today's World*: Grayum
1972 - *Outreach Evangelism Through the Sunday School*: Feather
1973 - *Using Sunday School to Reach People*: Livingstone
1974 - *Reach Out to People*: Washburn
1976 - *The Evangelistic Church*: Havlick
1979 - *Reaching People Through the Sunday School*: Adams-Fitch
1980 - *Doctrines of the Church*: Criswell
1980 - *A Church on Mission*: McDonough
1981 - *Growing and Winning Through Sunday School*: Piland
1983 - *Till Millions Know*: Bisagno-Piland
1983 - *Imperative Impulse*: Cheyne
1989 - *Evangelism Through the Sunday School*: Piland-Burcham
1994 - *Kingdom Principles for Church Growth*: Mims
1996 - *21 Truths Traditions and Trends*: Taylor
1997 - *Evangelism Through the Sunday School, A Journey in FAITH*: Welch

A few of these volumes were published under the Sunday School Board Southern Baptist Convention label at the beginning of the Century. *FAITH* was published under LifeWay Press at the close of the century.

From these authors for CONVENTION PRESS has come one consistent message. This writer has an extensive personal collection of these resources. From these volumes consider the following messages of challenge, encouragement, and passion for evangelism spanning 79 years.

- “The names of all the unsaved... will be known... and every effort will be made to win them to personal faith in Jesus Christ and church membership.” Strickland-McGlothlin, 1919
- “The [Sunday] school shall be positively evangelistic. The teachers shall earnestly seek to lead their pupils... to a personal acceptance of Christ as Savior and Lord.”
- “The supreme business of Christianity is to win the lost to Christ. This is what churches are for.” Flake, 1922

- “To fully justify its existence every Sunday School should meet the soul-winning test. ...the soul-winning spirit shall dominate the life of the Sunday School thoroughly.”
- “...inaugurate and maintain a regular, weekly visitation day. ...under no reasonable circumstance should...the day go by default.” Flake, 1923
- “Sunday School is responsible for leading all church members to witness daily.”
- “Magnify winning the lost to Christ as the heart of all the program.” Flake, 1930
- “People are not seeking churches, churches must seek people.”
- “Evangelism should have the first place in the program of every organization in the church.” Barnette, 1937
- “The officers and teachers in the Sunday School constitute the church’s greatest band of soul-winners and trainers of soul-winners.”
- “The Sunday School is formed and operated for the purpose of winning the lost.”
- “Unless a teacher is a soul-winner, the pupils will not be won to Christ. An attractive teacher who is not a soul-winner may be a positive hindrance.” Barnette, 1945
- “No Christian is a natural-born soul-winner. He must be developed in the art of winning others to Christ.”
- “The greatest tragedy, next to one’s dying without God and without hope, is a saved person’s standing at the judgment day empty handed having lived in a world of sinners and never having won one soul to Christ.”
- “The fact that human agency is involved in the salvation of the lost is an incentive to win [the lost]. There is prevalent in the mind of some believers the idea that human agency has no part in the salvation of lost souls. Particularly is this true of our hardshell Baptist friends, who base their conclusion on the doctrines of predestination and election. One thing we can say in their favor: their belief harmonizes with their practice; they practice what they



Arthur Flake
1862-1952

preach.” Matthews, 1951

- “Southern Baptists need to realize anew that the way of salvation for the churches lies in thinking less and less of the church as a field to be cultivated, and more and more of it as a force to be trained in the spirit of concern for the lost and directed toward the goal of reaching the unreached for Christ?” Barnette, 1953
- “Any Christian can learn to visit acceptably, and he is obligated to do so: His church, however, is just as deeply obligated to train him how to visit.” Sizemore, 1954
- “Every Christian should keep in his possession and in his heart the names of two or three people he is trying to win to Christ.” Sanderson, 1958
- “How can we become more evangelistic? Adopt the goal: Every worker a personal soul-winner.”
- “The world has yet to see what our churches can do in winning multitudes of lost people by developing the Sunday School workers into a major evangelistic force.” Washburn, 1960
- “The church is just one generation from extinction. A church can live only because it is constantly reproducing itself by winning people to the Savior. Whatever else a church may do, if it fails in this task, it will die.” Graves, 1963
- “The church must want to be a spiritual force, mobilized for aggressive Christian witnessing.”
- “It is the responsibility and prerogative of the church and Sunday School leadership to lead church members to witness and actively claim the promised help of the Holy Spirit in witnessing.” Feather, 1972

“Southern Baptists can get the gospel to the people of our greatly privileged and blessed nation, and to the world. But we will never accomplish this mission in our generation unless we understand and believe the following theological truths that are basic to zealous evangelism:

1. Without Christ, People Are Lost.
2. God Loves the Lost and Desires that Every Person Be Saved.
3. God Expects Jesus’ Followers to Be Evangelists.
4. Personal Witnesses is God’s Chosen Evangelistic Method.

Piland-Burcham, 1989

“who in your world, in your community, in your church, in your home cares for souls? The BIG answer should be - every saved soul should care for every lost soul.”

“A growing Sunday School class or church does not release us from our individual mandate to witness and train others as an ongoing lifestyle.”

“Nowhere in Holy Scripture is the church encouraged to discover a small group of specialized members to go out and do the work of soul-winning on behalf of the remainder of the membership.” Welch, 1997

Biblical doctrine is at the heart of these teaching resources. Recognizing and building on accurate theology of evangelism was at the core. Several of the volumes previously listed address those issues directly. One was even titled *Soul-Winning Doctrine* by J. Clyde Turner. Other of these gold mine resources were designed to equip lay persons in how to engage in personal evangelism. For many decades they were a regular feature.

Dr. Steve W. Lemke, Provost, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary addressed the “Maintaining Baptist Distinctives Conference” in April 2005. His address deals in part with doctrinal integrity among Southern Baptists.

“Doctrinal Integrity - Will Southern Baptist continue to stand for sound doctrine? I believe that we are entering an anti-doctrinal era, an age in which not only are specific traditional doctrinal commitments of denominations viewed negatively, but the very notion of having a doctrine falls into disfavor as narrow minded bigotry. Many young ministers have focused their interest not on theological or biblical foundations, but on church growth methodology. One of the dangers of some of the new so-called “non-denominational” emerging networks is that they are bound together by methodology, not doctrine.”

Convention Press publications addressed again and again the unique Biblical doctrines that nourished evangelism. The lack of which in our time may weaken genuine evangelistic passion. This passion has been observed yet demeaned by other supposed evangelicals.

In *Christian Century* December 22, 1999 the issue of witness and pluralism was addressed. The Southern Baptist Convention was chided about overt attempts of witnessing to those of other religious beliefs. The writer made this interesting observation.

“A passion for evangelism is one of the gifts of the Southern Baptist

Convention. One of the gifts of the mainline churches has been to seek fully to respect and sympathetically understand those of other faiths-an effort that may have complicated the mainline's own evangelism efforts, but in a fruitful and necessary way."

Convention Press instruction was valid and proper indoctrination that kept its Southern Baptist Convention learners from moving into this kind of pluralistic non-evangelistic "evangelism."

The matter of evangelism was interwoven through Convention Press resources regardless of age group ministry, or decade. The matter of evangelism was based on Biblical theology with high regard for doctrinal and denominational distinctives. Given these reasons alone this writer concludes that Convention Press was a strong force for evangelism in the Southern Baptist Convention.



THE INFLUENCE OF CONVENTION PRESS ON THE DOCTRINE OF SALVATION

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Introduction

Meeting in Augusta, Georgia, in 1845, delegates responding to a call from the Virginia Foreign Mission Society formed the Southern Baptist Convention as “a plan for eliciting, combining, and directing the energies of the whole denomination in one sacred effort, for the propagation of the Gospel...” The author of this article seeks to set forth how denominational leaders trained laypersons in understanding the content of the Gospel to be propagated by means of an analysis of lay doctrinal studies published from 1906 -1996. The author will focus on study course books published under the name Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention and later Convention Press.¹

In this article, the author provides a topical study on salvation using soteriological categories drawn from *The Baptist Faith and Message 2000* as a tool for comparative study of these lay doctrinal books. The topics covered follow the order of the BFM: substitutionary atonement by Christ, exclusivity of salvation in Christ, regeneration, justification, sanctification, and election. In addition, the author will highlight doctrinal similarities and differences between the denominational training provided for laypeople and the doctrinal positions of four academic theologians: E. Y. Mullins (d. 1928), W. T. Conner (d. 1952), Frank Stagg (d. 2001) and Dale Moody (d. 1992).

Substitutionary Atonement of Christ

The committee responsible for *The Baptist Faith and Message 2000* added a statement affirming the substitutionary death of Jesus as God’s provision for the redemption from sin. The current BFM states “...in His

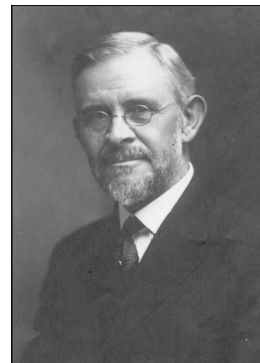
substitutionary death on the cross He made provision for the redemption of men from sin.” The 1963 BFM stated, “His death on the cross He made provision for the redemption of men from sin.” Three members of the BFM 2000 committee wrote an exposition of the BFM 2000 and defined substitutionary as “Jesus died in our place, paying the price of our sin.”²

From 1906 – 1996, Southern Baptists taught their laypeople that Christ provided atonement by means of a substitutionary death. J. G. Bow affirmed that “He took the sinner’s place, bore his sins, met the penalty, and offers the sinner a child’s place, and lets the sinner who trusts him go free” (p. 6). William C. Boone declared, “Substitution is the very heart of the gospel. Without substitution there could have been no real atonement” (p. 54). J. Clyde Turner wrote, “There have been many theories of the atonement suggested, but the plain teaching of the Bible is that the death of Jesus was substitutionary” (p. 67). Roy Edgemon claimed, “If it [death of Christ] was not [substitutionary], then the sin problem has not been solved” (p. 66). The weakest exposition of the substitutionary atonement, if present at all, occurs in the two doctrinal study books by C. B. Hogue and Darrell Robinson, both former the directors of evangelism for the Home Mission Board.

E. C. Dargan provided the most thorough theological analysis of the substitutionary atonement of Christ. He explained the efficiency of Christ’s death in a manner reminiscent of Anselm’s rationale for the incarnation.

This [the Scriptural view] is that Christ voluntarily took the nature of man and with it the place of man as a sinner before God, though without personal sin; that so in man’s stead he suffered the penalty of sin in his cruel death on the cross; that being God he could by becoming man offer himself as a sufficient and suitable substitute for man; and being man his death was a real human death, a penalty for sin; and being God-man, through the dignity and value of his person, his penalty becomes sufficient for all the race, though efficient only in the case of those who by faith accept him as their substitute” (p.121).

Further, Dargan refused to set forth the love and holiness of God as polarities, as claimed by some opponents of substitution. In the atonement,



Edwin Charles Dargan
1892-1907

Dargan declared, “Love satisfies holiness” (p. 123).

Southern Baptist theologians, other than E. Y. Mullins, taught seminary students that the death of Jesus lacked the quality of penal substitution. E. Y. Mullins, professor and president of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, affirmed the substitutionary death of Jesus. He denied substitution as a mere transaction; rather, Mullins suggested Jesus submitted to the sin-death principle and by vital union with him we receive the obedience-life principle.³ While affirming the language of substitution, Southwestern Seminary theologian W. T. Conner denied that substitution entails the infliction of the penalty for our sins upon Christ.⁴ Conner favored the cosmic *Christus Victor* motif of Swedish scholar Gustaf Aulen.⁵ For New Orleans and Southern Seminary New Testament professor Frank Stagg, the cross of Christ expressed the existential example, “he died in order to enable us to die the death that issues into life.”⁶ According to Robert Sloan, Stagg, “...rather simplistically rejecting virtually every other view of the atonement save a kind of exemplar/repentance model. Stagg leaves the cross of Christ as little more than revelatory of the character of God.”⁷ Dale Moody interpreted the cross as a sacrifice revealing God’s love. For Moody, the action of the cross was directed towards humanity’s need for reconciliation. Thus, Stagg and Moody denied an objective understanding of the cross and advocated subjective theories of the atonement.

The Exclusivity of Christ

The BFM 2000 committee added a statement regarding the exclusivity of salvation through Christ to rule out religious pluralism and inclusivism. The current BFM states, “There is no salvation apart from personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord.”

Generally, the doctrinal books detailing the meaning of salvation did not address the issue of the exclusivity of Christ. The issues of religious pluralism and inclusivism lacked prominent discussion for a denomination committed to global evangelism. The author did not discover a single author that affirmed the possibility of salvation without a personal knowledge and commitment to Jesus Christ. Perhaps Darrell Robinson provided the clearest statement of the inadequacy of general revelation for salvation. “The natural revelation of God through creation and through humans’ inner consciousness is adequate to reveal their need for salvation and the reality of God’s

existence and presence. Yet no one can be saved through the light of natural revelation. Salvation is through Christ alone” (p. 40). Robinson explicitly affirmed an exclusivistic position, “No one can be saved except by personal faith in Christ” (p. 40).

Dale Moody ascribed a positive function to general revelation. He set forth the idea that general revelation may lead to salvation. Commenting on Romans 2:14-16, Moody wrote, “The witness of conscience, when followed, may lead to acquittal at the final judgment. Of course, it is possible for conscience to be corrupted, as it is possible for the gospel to be corrupted, but it does not follow that it will always be corrupted.”⁸

Justification

The Baptist Faith and Message 2000 defines justification as “God’s gracious and full acquittal upon principles of His righteousness of all sinners who repent and believe in Christ. Justification brings the believer into a relationship of peace and favor with God.” The exposition of the BFM 2000 defines justification as “God’s declaration of a believer as righteous through the blood of Christ.”⁹

The Baptist study course books on the doctrine of salvation present a mixed message on the doctrine of justification. Turner fails to define justification. Edgemon does not discuss justification. Robinson carefully defines the term justification. “*Justification* is a legal term. The word *justification* is the New Testament word *dikaiosis*. The word carries the sense *to vindicate* or *to declare to be righteous*” (p. 67 italics are Robinson’s). Wallace described justification in the following manner. “There must be an end to his condemnation. There must be an authoritative publication of the fact that the law has nothing against him. All charges, accusations and complaints against him as a sinner, a doer of wickedness, a breaker of God’s law, of whatever kind and from whatever source, must have been met and disposed of wholly” (p. 53). Dargan affirmed justification as “declarative righteousness” and denied that justification conveys the meaning of “making righteous” (p. 136). While admitting that justification as a judicial act of God, Hogue also affirmed that justification expressed the idea of making righteous (p. 93).

The dichotomy of “declaring righteous” versus “making righteous” functions as one of the traditional dividing points of Catholics and Protestant Reformers. Reformers defined justification as the legal imputation of the

righteousness of Christ. Catholics as expressed in the Council of Trent described justification in terms of sanctification. Justification, therefore, was “not remission of sins merely, but also the sanctification and renewal of the inward man”¹⁰ Catholic doctrine affirms that justification conveys the concept of “make right.” Southern Baptist theologians expressed sentiments similar to the Council of Trent.

W. T. Conner denied the forensic background of justification. He affirmed that justification belonged to the semantic field of legal terminology, but he argued that Paul transformed the legal term into a term descriptive of vital union with Christ. Conner did not deny that justification described a transaction; rather he declared that justification was a regenerative transaction. Conner affirmed the idea of justification as being made righteous. “Nor is it true to say that it is a forensic transaction in which a man is declared right without being made so. He is made righteous in relation to God.”¹¹ Frank Stagg defined justification as “the creative act of God in which he is making man upright even as he gives man favorable standing.”¹² Stagg equated forensic justification with “make-believe” righteousness.¹³ Stagg’s definition of justification correlates with his denigration of “transactional” salvation. Dale Moody ascribed the forensic understanding of justification to a mistranslation of the Greek *dikaiosis*. “If ever a mistranslation twisted theology this translation [justification] of the Greek *dikaiosis* based on the Hebrew *sedeq* is one.” According to Moody, the term describes a right relation to God based on the obedience of faith. Moody commented, “The biblical theology of the twentieth century finally discarded the bondage of legalism for the dynamic view of righteousness as the obedience of faith.”¹⁴

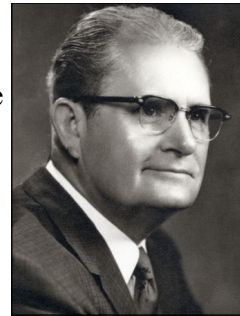
Sanctification

The BFM 1963 and 2000 sets forth sanctification as both an instantaneous event beginning in regeneration and a process of growth. The BFM 1925, however, defined sanctification as a process only. At this point, the BFM 1925 departed from its predecessor the New Hampshire Confession (1833). According to Mark Coppenger, Hobbs revised the BFM statement on salvation. “After getting committee approval for his oral sketch, Hobbs wrote this section on his own. Its most striking change concerned its treatment of sanctification.”¹⁵ Hobbs understood sanctification as occurring at conversion. “The burden of Scripture is to the effect that sanctification is an instantaneous

experience whereby the regenerated one is set apart for God's service. Thereafter, he should grow, develop, and serve in the state of sanctification (Heb. 2:3)" (p. 53). The exposition of the BFM 2000 builds upon Hobbs understanding. "The position and process of holiness by which a believer is set apart by and for God" (p. 74).

O. S. Wallace expressed the unique teaching that "Sanctification is an enabling. By it comes power" (p. 108). Dargan affirmed that sanctification is a process. He did not favor describing sanctification as instantaneous, likely due to the erroneous teaching of Christian perfectionism (p. 137-138). Tribble possessed a unique view of sanctification. For Tribble, sanctification was the "climax of Christian experience" (p. 122). Sanctification is an act of complete consecration, rather than a process (p. 123). He further denied that sanctification entailed growth. "We grow in grace because we are sanctified, we are not sanctified because we grow" (p. 126). Edgemon contributes the unique perspective that sanctification has three aspects – beginning, continuation, and completion in eternity (p. 92).

The BFM 1925 described sanctification as a process only. The statement accomplished this by removing the language of the New Hampshire Confession that sanctification began in regeneration. E. Y. Mullins served a chairman of the BFM 1925, yet the 1925 statement does not comport with his personal theology. Mullins defined sanctification as both a state and a process. Further,¹⁶ Mullins correlated sanctification and regeneration. "Sanctification is related to regeneration because it is the unfolding of the new life germ implanted in regeneration." W. T. Conner denies that the term sanctification and its cognates are "unquestionably used in the sense of a progressive work. The preponderating use of the term is in its application to a definite act at the beginning of the Christian life."¹⁷ Coming to Christ is an act of consecration. For Conner, this initial act carried an implicit deepening capability. "There should be – normally there will be – a deepening consecration to God and his service, and a more complete separation from all the forces and factors of life that hinder this consecration; but this is only the carrying out of what was involved in that first act of consecration."¹⁸ Conner, then, described growth in the Christian life as development, not



Herschel Hobbs
1907-1995

sanctification.¹⁹ Stagg called sanctification, as he did salvation in general, both a gift and a demand. Moody described sanctification as possessive, progressive, and perfected. According to Moody, Paul gave special attention to the progressive sanctification of the body as the Holy Spirit's temple.

Election

The Baptist Faith and Message expresses a generic, undefined affirmation of election. By generic, undefined, the author suggests that the generic statement of the BFM allows both an Arminian and Calvinistic understanding of election. Prominent historic viewpoints among Baptists regarding election include unconditional election, conditional election based on God's foreknowledge, and corporate election in Christ. The authors of the doctrinal study course books affirmed all three viewpoints.

E. C. Dargan affirmed unconditional election. Dargan defined election as God's choice of individuals to salvation. He wrote, "If he [God] plans to save, he choose those who shall be saved" (p. 128). Dargan identified the time element of God's choice as before creation. Dargan asked, "Are there any conditions to God's choice? Does he choose because he foresees that a man will repent or on the condition of faith? No; in choosing to save men God is sovereign, free, untrammelled, gracious, acting on his own initiative" (p. 128). J. Clyde Turner cited Romans 8:29 and 1 Peter 1:1-2 to affirm that God's election of individuals to salvation is based on his foreknowledge of man's choice of a faith response to Christ (p. 87). Turner then affirmed that God's foreknowledge "does not nullify man's freedom of choice (p. 87). Herschel Hobbs provided the most extensive discussion related to election. Hobbs provided a corrective to the individualistic understanding of election. "Also, election should not be regarded as God's purpose to save as few as possible rather than as many as possible. The tenor of the Bible is that God loves all men and wishes to save as many as possible. Again, it [election] should not be viewed as relating to the saving of certain individuals to the neglect of others (p. 56).²⁰ He understands election as corporate, that is, "God's election was in Christ". "So God has chosen "in the sphere of Christ."²¹ He elected that all who are "in Christ' shall be saved." "'In Christ' is the boundary that God marked out beforehand, like building a fence around a field" (p. 57). For Hobbs, each individual freely chooses to be

“in Christ” or not.

E. Y. Mullins decidedly turned from the stronger Calvinism of his teacher James Boyce. Mullins removed election from a discussion of God’s will, preferring to view election in terms of the character of God. God relates to man through sovereignly chosen self-limitations, namely respect for the moral, spiritual, and personal nature of human beings. For Mullins, God’s electing grace represents a widening principle rather than a principle of narrowing. Election affirms God’s initiative in salvation. Election operates by persuasion rather than force.

W. T. Conner affirmed personal election of individuals to salvation. Election “means that God has decreed to bring certain ones, upon whom his heart has been eternally set, who are the objects of his eternal love, to faith in Jesus as Savior.”²² Conner denied that election is a choice of a plan of salvation, as Hobbs did. “Election does not mean that God instituted a general plan of salvation and decreed that whosoever would should be saved and, therefore, the man who wills to be saved is elected in that he brings himself within the scope of God’s plan.”²³ Finally, Conner denied that God elected on his foreknowledge of an individual’s faith. Reflecting on the concept of foreknowledge in Romans 8, Conner wrote, “To foreknow in the sense here spoken of is more than to know intellectually. In the latter sense God foreknows all men. It means to set his heart on us, to know us for our good.”²⁴ In light of W. T. Conner’s affirmation of personal, unconditional election, James Leo Garrett raised the question if Conner’s influence provides an explanation for the resurgence of Calvinism in the Southern Baptist Convention. Garrett answered in the negative.²⁵

Frank Stagg defined election in terms of God’s initiative in salvation as prior to man’s choice. Stagg attacked the concept of personal election as an example of logical reasoning void of the spirit of the New Testament. Stagg countered a Calvinistic interpretation of election in Paul’s writing. “If Paul meant by this a fixing of fate beforehand, his careful attention to man’s guilt and his great concern that man repent and believe would be meaningless. Why should Paul pray to God for man’s salvation (cf. Rom. 10:1) if he believed that this matter has already been fixed?”²⁶

Dale Moody affirmed the Christo-centric nature of election, both the predestination *of* Christ and predestination *in* Christ. Moody denied that foreknowledge is mere knowledge of the future. In a manner similar to many

contemporary Calvinists, Moody connected foreknowledge with love. “In the New Testament, however, foreknowledge means that God loves man before man loves God.”²⁷ Moody taught corporate election in Christ. “Ephesians 1:3-5 makes it clear that Christ is the Chosen One and we are chosen in Christ. We are in Christ by faith, but it is only in Christ that we are chosen or elected.”²⁸ A human being, therefore, decides to place themselves in the elect.

Conclusion

For over one hundred years, Southern Baptists faithfully provided doctrinal studies for laypersons. The lay doctrinal studies continue today; however, Southern Baptists retired the name Convention Press with the reorganization of the Southern Baptist Convention.

The following statements summarize the similarities and differences between the lay study course books and four academic theologians. Southern Baptists consistently taught their laypeople that Christ’s death was a substitutionary atonement. Three of the four academic theologians denied the substitutionary nature of the atonement.

In a culture void of engagement with religious pluralism, Southern Baptists generally avoided the issue inclusivism in training laypeople. Some authors writing for lay audiences clearly affirmed the uniqueness of Christ in salvation. Dale Moody affirmed the possibility of salvation through general revelation apart from specific knowledge of Christ and faith in Christ. Southern Baptists consistently taught a forensic understanding of justification to laypeople. Conner, Stagg, and Moody decried the forensic understanding. Southern Baptists taught laypeople that sanctification involved both a beginning in regeneration and a progressive growth toward Christ-likeness. W. T. Conner denied the progressive nature of sanctification. Historically Baptists affirmed one of three options regarding election: unconditional election, election based on simple foreknowledge, and corporate election. The lay doctrinal books and academic theologians expressed all three viewpoints.

Doctrine of Salvation Books Arranged Chronologically

- 1906 *What Baptists Believe and Why They Believe It* by J. G. Bow, a brief commentary on the 1833 New Hampshire Confession of Faith.
- 1913 *What Baptists Believe* by O. C. S. Wallace, the pastor of First

Baptist Church of Baltimore, Maryland. Wallace wrote a commentary on the 1833 New Hampshire Confession of Faith.

- 1920 *The Doctrines of Our Faith* by E. C. Dargan, Professor of Preaching at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, wrote a series of articles on Baptist doctrine published in *The Baptist Union*, a publication of the Baptist Young People's Union of America. BSSB released the articles in unrevised format in 1905 and then revised form in 1920 during the time Dargan served as editorial secretary of the BSSB.
- 1929 *Our Doctrines* by Howard Tribble, Professor of Theology at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.
- 1936 *What We Believe* by William Cooke Boone, reprinted in 1959. Boone was a descendant of Samuel Boone, Daniel's brother, and served as secretary-treasurer of the Kentucky Baptist Convention.
- 1956 *These Things We Believe* by J. Clyde Turner, retired pastor of FBC Greensboro, North Carolina.
- 1978 *The Doctrine of Salvation* by C. B. Hogue, Director of Evangelism, Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention.
- 1988 *The Doctrines Baptist Believe* by Roy Edgemon, the director of the Church Training Department.
- 1992 *The Doctrine of Salvation* by Darrell Robinson, Vice-President of Evangelism, Home Mission Board.
- 1996 *The Baptist Faith and Message*, revised edition, by Herschel Hobbs. Hobbs served as the chairman of the 1963 BFM committee and authored this commentary on the confessional statement.

ENDNOTES

¹ Under the leadership of B. W. Spilman in 1901, the Sunday School Board developed a system of lay training study courses, originally called the Normal Course for Sunday School Workers. The Baptist Training Union adopted a similar training program under Landrum Pinson Leavell in 1907. In 1955 the Sunday School Board began publishing these study course books under the imprint Convention Press. *Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists*. S.v. "Study Courses," by W. L. Howse.

² Charles S. Kelly, Jr, Richard Land, and R. Albert Mohler, Jr. *The Baptist Faith and Message* (Nashville, TN: Lifeway Press, 2007), 45.

³ E. Y. Mullins, *The Christian Religion in Its Doctrinal Expression* (Philadelphia: Judson Press, 1917), 322-330.

⁴ W. T. Conner, *The Gospel of Redemption* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1945), 94.

⁵ Walter D. Draughon III, "The Atonement," in *Has Our Theology Changed: Southern Baptist Thought Since 1845*, edited by Paul A. Basden (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1994), 96-97.

⁶ Frank Stagg, *New Testament Theology* (Broadman Press, 1962), 123. Specifically, the cross reveals the self-denial of God.

⁷ Robert Sloan, "Frank Stagg," in *Baptist Theologians*, edited by Timothy George and David Dockery (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1990), 509.

⁸ Dale Moody, *The Word of Truth: A Summary of Christian Doctrine Based on Biblical Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1981), 59.

⁹ Kelley, Land, and Mohler, 74.

¹⁰ Council of Trent, Sixth Session, chapter VII.

¹¹ Conner, 176. Conner critiqued the Catholic view of the confusion of justification with sanctification. R. Keith Parks, former president of the Foreign Mission Board critiqued Conner for abandoning the forensic view in his SWBTS doctoral dissertation. James Leo Garrett, "Walter Thomas Conner," in *Baptist Theologians*, 433, footnote 79.

¹² Stagg, 95.

¹³ Frank Stagg, "The Great Words of Romans," *The Theological Educator* (Fall 1976): 95.

¹⁴ Moody, 328.

¹⁵ Mark Coppenger, "Hershel Hobbs," in *Baptist Theologians*, 440.

¹⁶ Mullins, 420.

¹⁷ Conner, 194.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid., 258.

²⁰ In a doctrinal exposition published prior to his service as SBC president, Hobbs wrote, "A third error is that election relates to certain individuals, with some

destined to salvation and others to damnation.” Herschel H. Hobbs, *Fundamentals of Our Faith* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1960), 90-91.

²¹ In *Fundamentals of Our Faith*, Hobbs described election as God’s choice of a plan of salvation for all men. *Ibid.*, 93.

²² Walter Thomas Conner, *Christian Doctrine* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1937), 155.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 160.

²⁵ James Leo Garrett, Jr., “W. T. Conner: Contemporary Theologian,” *Southwestern Journal of Theology* (Spring 1983):

²⁶ Stagg, 88.

²⁷ Moody, 343.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 346.



GIVE ME A D-E-A-C-O-N!
WHAT'S THAT SPELL?
IT DEPENDS ON WHOM
YOU ASK!

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Deacon—the very word sends shudders up some people's spines, not the least of which includes many pastors. Ask a group of Baptists to list whatever comes to mind when they hear the word *deacon*, and you will find responses like "godly," "controlling," "mean-spirited," "helpful," "compassionate," "negative," and more! Most likely, the words *servant* and/or *leader* will also surface. While the same kind of responses could describe many people's views of *pastor*, this article examines various matters surrounding the role of Convention Press in the deacon ministry, particularly the nature and duties of deacons, in order to answer definitively what a deacon should be.

**Out with the Old, In with the New—
Transitioning Eras for Deacons in Baptist Life**

Researching the influential books from Convention Press (and the Sunday School Board) on the role of the deacon brings an unmistakable shift to light. Popular Baptist works from the 18th and 19th centuries that at least touched on deacon ministry include the *Charleston Confession of Faith* (1774), R. B. C. Howell's *The Deaconship* (1846), and J. M. Pendleton's *Church Manual* (1847). These treatises assign the material and financial aspects of the church to the deacons.¹ P. E. Burroughs' *Honoring the Deaconship* (1929) continued this trend. This volume was designed as a study course book, resulting in a widespread readership in Baptist churches. Furthermore, Burroughs' work became the standard for Baptist deacons for four decades.²

Howard Foshee's *The Ministry of the Deacon* (1968) ushered in significant change within deacon ministry. Foshee placed less emphasis on the material matters and gave more attention to spiritual matters in deacon service. Additional changes came with Robert Sheffield's *The Ministry of Baptist*

Deacons (1990), calling for an even “deeper commitment and resolve for ministry.”³ Thus, the late-1700s until the mid-1900s provided a common consensus of deacon ministry. The last forty years or so have challenged that consensus. Realizing these differences toward views of deacon ministry should aid the reader in what follows.

A Long Time Ago, in a Galaxy Far, Far Away. . .

The Origin of the Diaconate

If you were to ask the average deacon when the deacon ministry originated, he will refer to Acts 6.⁴ Much of the early 20th century literature supports this view. P. E. Burroughs’ *Honoring the Deaconship*, traces the origin of the diaconate to Acts 6. Moreover, E. C. Dargan, an influential voice in Baptist ecclesiology, comments on the term *deacon* in Phil 1:1 and 1 Tim 3:8-13: “while the word in its general signification means a servant, it is clear that it came to be used of the officer, and this very likely originated out of the circumstance mentioned in the 6th chapter of Acts.” Furthermore, Robert Naylor writes about “the seven” in Acts 6:⁵ “It is a matter of general agreement, however, that the election of these seven qualified men is the real beginning of the deacon as a church officer.”⁶

Others, however, prefer to challenge this assumption, noting that “the seven” of Acts 6 were not called deacons. Moreover, it is not uncommon for contemporary writers to challenge previous writers who focused their attention on deacons from Acts 6.⁷ Regardless of one’s final views on Acts 6, all recognize the mandate for deacons “to serve” as well as their model in witnessing (see soul-winning in “odds and ends” below).⁸ Different views of Acts 6 and deacon origin often affect their understanding of how deacons function.

Board or Body

(Management or Ministry)

Quite possibly the most contentious aspect of deacon ministry among Baptist churches is its function. Is a group of deacons a board or a body? Is their primary role that of management or ministry?

A few authors have sought to trace the role of the deacon throughout church history. The first few centuries reveal deacons expressing practical service, especially benevolence. The Middle Ages, however, shows the diaconate evolving into initial training for the priesthood. The Reformation Period recovered the emphasis on benevolent ministry to the poor. By the late 18th

century, however, deacons began concerning themselves with the secular business, primarily by managing the material and financial issues (see endnote 1). It appears as though this management mindset arose out of secular problems, where business decisions were made during a meal around a wooden (board) table. "Boards" became known as any group that made decisions. Such a view eventually passed into the church among deacons, and by the 19th century, deacon boards were quite standard.⁹

Most of the 20th century saw this trend continue. Burroughs promotes deacon boards when he says that the deacon is entrusted with the care of the material interests of the church. He is to care for the properties of the church, its building, its pastor's home, and its other material holdings. He is to direct and safeguard the financial side of its ministry. As contrasted with the pastor he is to serve in what may be properly called the materialities of the church.¹⁰ While championing the deacon's authority, he offers a word of caution: "deacons, by virtue of their office, must share with the pastor this responsibility of leadership which really amounts to authority and rule. At the same time it should go without saying that deacons are not to be ruling elders or managing directors. The church is to be a pure democracy."¹¹ Though caution is noted, Burroughs believes that the deaconship is not honored when church finances are managed by any other group besides deacons or when church properties are managed by others. He adds, "Deacons were to be businessmen. Business service was to be required at their hands. They must possess business qualifications. These things were assumed. They were passed without mention."¹² On a similar note, "deacons are to serve the church especially in the material phases of its life," after claiming that, "no catalogue of duties is laid down in the New Testament. In the nature of the case no such specific guidance could be given. Such guidance was not needed then and is not needed now."¹³ Furthermore, "the business of the church and its finances constitute the special and distinct assignment of the deacons."¹⁴ Therefore, while Burroughs shies away from the *terminology* of deacons as managing directors, he clearly favors deacon-rule in business management *practices*.

Issues that signal when deacons function like church business managers include

- (1) When the deacons' responsibilities are composed solely of business management matters.

- (2) When deacons administer the affairs of the church primarily as a business operation.
- (3) When deacons are viewed as the decision makers in most business affairs.
- (4) When business efficiency seems to predominate the activities of deacons.¹⁵

Foshee and Sheffield, on the other hand, aim to return deacons to an earlier era—one which highlights the *ministry* role of deacons rather than *management*. Foshee asserts, “The Scriptures do not list specific duties that deacons are to perform. The Bible focuses on deacon qualifications rather than the exact nature of the work.”¹⁶ He then adds, “Deacons who measure up to the biblical qualifications are equipped to minister to the spiritual needs of persons.”¹⁷ Thus, because they are spiritually qualified, deacons should help carry out the pastoral ministry areas of the church. Pastoral ministries is a large umbrella that includes caring for church members and people in the community through a Deacon Family Ministry Plan, counseling, preaching/witnessing, providing benevolence, maintaining fellowship in the church, and helping the church achieve its mission.¹⁸

Pastoral ministry is not the only area where deacons can benefit the church. The ministry options are virtually endless, including serving as greeters and ushers, helping in worship, administering the Lord’s Supper, and serving on committees (finance, personnel, property, and more).¹⁹ Where Foshee and Sheffield break with Burroughs and his predecessors is that these more recent writers believe that deacons may serve in finances and material aspects, but they are not mandated to be the only, or even primary, financial/material decision-makers in the church.

Historically, Foshee asserts, many Baptist churches in the 19th century were small and rural with part-time preachers. Deacons stepped up to the plate to take care of the church property and eventually made decisions on other church matters.²⁰ The 20th century, however, has witnessed Baptist growth in other settings, especially in cities and metro-areas. These settings tend to keep pastors longer and do not expect deacons to make most of the church’s decisions. Thus, the last forty years have argued against the deacon management (decision-making board) philosophy of the previous two centuries while underscoring a deacon ministry (service-oriented body) philosophy. Many older churches, typically rural or small town, still function

with deacon boards in place. Newer churches, especially in larger cities, emphasize a body of deacons that serves.

War of the Worlds—

Deacons Relating to Pastors

All-to-often a pastorate has come to an end because at least one deacon butted heads with the pastor. There are times, to be sure, that the pastor bears some, or most, of the responsibility in poor relationships to deacons. Because this article's focus is deacons, however, a few suggestions follow to enhance the ways deacons relate to pastors.

Deacons who recognize and appreciate that the pastor's business is the highest of all can maximize the pastor's time by meeting with him, when necessary, so that valuable time is not spent in his travel to and from a deacon's home or place of business. Moreover, deacons serve the pastor well when they ensure that he receives a fair and reasonable compensation from the church. Helping bear the pulpit ministry, especially on Sunday or Wednesday evenings, when the pastor needs to be away, also ministers to both the church and the pastor, who does not have to go to great lengths to secure a replacement.²¹ Finally, regular prayer for the pastor and clear communication indicate support and cooperation in serving together to accomplish the church's mission.²² Deacons who pursue good relations with their pastors, especially in these areas, usually find enjoyment and fulfillment in serving the church together.

A High Pedigree—

Qualifications for Deacons

Nearly every volume on deacons covers the important qualifications outlined in Scripture. Those who believe Acts 6 describes deacons attribute matters like being full of the Spirit, wisdom, and faith to their qualifications.²³ Everyone agrees on the moral, doctrinal, and familial prerequisites in 1 Timothy 3, except when it comes to one issue: "the husband of one wife."

Burroughs argues for the interpretation that Paul is speaking against polygamy. He ultimately favors a "one wife at a time" kind of deacon, if the deacon is married at all.²⁴ Naylor, a generation later, promotes only one living wife at a time, if married, and even cautions against deacons' wives from non-Baptist denominations.²⁵ Foshee believes Paul gives his stamp of approval to Jesus' absolute rejection of divorce.²⁶ Sheffield remains more

neutral on the issue, citing that “the sanctity of the marriage vow. . . forbids adultery, does not allow plural marriages, and encourages sexual faithfulness in marriage.” The final decision of single, divorced, and/or remarried deacons, Sheffield says, is left in the hands of the local church, preferably decided without personalities involved and with much prayer.²⁷

Duck. . . Duck. . . Deacon—

Electing Deacons

When it comes time to elect deacons, churches employ a variety of ways. A few practice open nomination from the floor, some accept nomination by a committee, too many allow the deacons to name their newcomers, a small number allow the pastor to nominate them, and still others call for a precise number of names to be written on a ballot.

No one system is fool-proof, but the written method seems to be the most practical. The church determines how many deacons are needed and the moderator instructs members during business how many names of qualified men should be written down (or checked off on a provided list). This practice saves those men with little or no votes from the embarrassment that could come from an open nomination. With every voting member of the church stating their preference, deacons, nominating committees, and pastors have less control over this facet of the church’s life. No matter what method churches use, they are wise to state deacon qualifications clearly and screen/interview potential candidates in advance to determine if any questionable areas might exclude the man from deacon-service.²⁸

Serving ‘Til the Cows Come Home?—

Tenure

Just as differences of opinion exist over electing deacons, so it goes with their tenure. Some Baptists believe, “Once a deacon, always a deacon.” This view finds little support among the influential writers and thinkers of the 20th century.²⁹ Burroughs cites five reasons to jettison lifetime service. First, a deacon may leave the church and go elsewhere. His new church is under no obligation to allow him to serve as a deacon. Second, a deacon may request to step down from service due to a number of circumstances. Third, a deacon’s old age and limited activity may prevent him from serving, at least in an active role. Fourth, the church may ask the deacon to step down due to immorality, doctrinal heresy, or a hindering attitude. Finally, the church may have a rotation system in place where every deacon ceases to serve for one or

more years after a period of active service (usually three to five years).³⁰

Many churches now follow the rotation system. There are certain merits to this method of service, for it

1. Provides a broader base of leadership, enabling more qualified persons to serve their church as deacons.
2. Provides a way for deacons who no longer want to serve to retire with grace.
3. Provides a way for deacons to renew themselves spiritually for greater ministry effectiveness.
4. Provides for a continually effective Deacon Family Ministry Plan.
5. Provides the church the opportunity to replace those deacons who, because of age, infirmity, or loss of interest, have become inactive and ineffective.
6. Provides the church with safeguards against the “board of directors” mentality among deacons.³¹

Though a few disadvantages exist with rotation, the most obvious being that an extremely good deacon has to sit out for a period, the advantages clearly outweigh the disadvantages.

Odds and Ends—

Ordaining, Organizing, Training, and Soul-Winning

While chapters could be written on each of these areas, a common consensus exists about what each area is. Deacon ordination is a planned service, usually accompanied by the laying on of hands by either those already ordained or the whole church, whereby the church officially sets the new deacon apart for service. The preaching, singing, and praying should aim to honor the Lord while recognizing His involvement in the deacon's life. Even though ordination does not impart any special power, the service should be meaningful to the deacon, his family, and the church.³²

On a different note, the deacon body which functions best is the one where organization is in place. A chairman and a secretary are necessities, for planning and recording deacon meetings and service. Depending on the size of the deacon body, a vice chair may be necessary. A few more organizational levels may be needed for larger churches to be more effective. Clearly written expectations of each officer and deacon bring a sense of purpose and mission to each deacon as he relates to his fellow deacons and to the church. Where a Deacon Family Ministry Plan is in place, eight to fifteen

families fall under each deacon's care for one year. Each year the families are disbursed anew so that deacons get to know more people and so that families that may have been neglected receive the care they need.³³

Providing training for deacons, at least annually, enhances their effectiveness for ministry. Training may come from individual study books recommended by the pastor or deacon body, or seminars may be offered by the church, association, state, or a national conference/retreat. The purpose of such training is to help each deacon grow in the faith and his walk with the Lord, as well as his role among fellow deacons and within the church.³⁴

Ultimately, the best deacon is a soul-winning deacon. Burroughs claims, "The best service of the deacon, his highest function, is winning men to Christ."³⁵ The most obvious expectation of deacons is in the proclamation of the gospel through preaching or witnessing, for every volume on the diaconate covers this subject.³⁶ Thus, the best way a deacon can serve the church is through serving the lost by sharing the good news.

Conclusion—

Is a Deacon a Servant or a Leader?

Having traced the role of Convention Press on deacon ministry, the original issue resurfaces: is a deacon a servant or a leader. Every book on deacons underscores that deaconship "is distinctly a call to serve. . . . Men are to be elected to the office of deacon with a view to service."³⁷ In addition to service, however, each volume highlights the leadership office of deacons. Discouraged in recent decades from being the leaders of the church through a board of directors, deacons should be a part of the larger leadership team. They "are leaders in their churches. Church members look to their deacons for leadership. The Bible pictures deacons as significant leadership figures in the New Testament church."³⁸ In the end, deacons are servant-leaders, carrying out ministry to the congregation while helping lead the church to fulfill its mission.

Endnotes

¹ See, for example, the Charleston Association's belief that "the office of a deacon is to relieve the minister from the secular concerns of the church; hence they are called Helps, *1 Cor.: 12:28*. Their business is to serve tables" (Charleston Association, *A Summary of Church Discipline* [Charleston: David Bruce, 1774] in

Mark E. Dever, ed., *Polity: Biblical Arguments on How to Conduct Church Life* [nc: Center for Church Reform, 2001], 121).

² For a brief history of this trend, see Howard B. Foshee, *The Ministry of the Deacon* (Nashville: Convention Press, 1968), 35-36, and Robert Sheffield, *The Ministry of Baptist Deacons* (Nashville: Convention Press, 1990), 22-23.

³ Sheffield, 11.

⁴ P. E. Burroughs, *Honoring the Deaconship* (Nashville: Sunday School Board, 1929), 8-9. See also Sheffield, 17-18.

⁵ E. C. Dargan, *Ecclesiology: A Study of the Churches* (Louisville: Chas. T. Dearing, 1897), 60. A few lines later, Dargan adds this clarifier: "Perhaps it would be going too far to say that these seven were actually deacons, in the later sense, at Jerusalem."

⁶ Robert E. Naylor, *The Baptist Deacon* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1955), 7. Though outside the scope of Convention Press, Naylor's work is included in this study because of its vast influence in Baptist life.

⁷ 19th-20th century works simply misunderstood Acts 6 (Sheffield, 24).

⁸ See Foshee, 17-18. More recently, John Polhill notes, "Often the present passage is seen to be the initiation of the diaconate. The word 'deacon' (diakonos) never occurs in the passage. The word 'ministry' (diakonia) does occur several times, but it is applied to both the ministry of the daily distribution (v. 2) and the ministry of the word, the apostolic witness (v. 4). In fact, the word 'deacon' never occurs in Acts. . . . If one is inclined nevertheless to see the diaconate in this passage, that person should take a cue from Steven and Philip. In the rest of Acts, nothing is made of their administrative duties. What one finds them doing is bearing their witness, even to martyrdom" (*Acts*, vol. 26 in *The New American Commentary* [Nashville: Broadman Press, 1992], 182-183).

⁹ See Foshee, 32-36; Sheffield, 20-25; and Henry Webb, *Deacons: Servant Models in the Church* (Nashville: Convention Press, 1980), 75-76. Burroughs references John A. Broadus' stance against deacon boards in Baptist life because of the tendency to leave Baptist democracy in favor of governing boards (Burroughs, 16-17). While not particularly favoring deacon boards, Dargan believed temporal, administrative duties were assigned to deacons from the New Testament: "primarily the care of the finances, looking after the business affairs of the church, attending to the poor, and probably the care of any other matters of administration which should be devolved upon them by the church" (Dargan, 61).

¹⁰ Burroughs, 13-14.

¹¹ Ibid., 14-15.

¹² Ibid., 22.

¹³ Ibid., 42. This writer cannot help but wonder where these kinds of assumptions might take Christianity.

¹⁴ Ibid., 62. Naylor says that deacons are businessmen in the sense of secular matters, but then adds that “there is no scriptural authority for the deacons to make the financial decisions of the church” (Naylor, 20-21).

¹⁵ Foshee, 35-36.

¹⁶ Ibid., 32. Naylor voiced this same issue a few years earlier, but he does not connect it to pastoral ministries in the same way that Foshee and Sheffield do (see Naylor, 61-62).

¹⁷ Ibid., 39. Sheffield, who admits to writing something of a follow-up volume to Foshee, states, “*Deacons relate to the church as Christian ministers*” (14, emphasis original).

¹⁸ See *ibid.*, 39-40, 46-89; Naylor, 11-13, 69; Sheffield, 83-97; and Barbara Sheffield, *Help! I'm a Deacon's Wife* (Nashville: Convention Press, 1992), 13-14. For numerous suggestions for the care-giving role, see Homer D. Carter, *Equipping Deacons in Caring Skills* (Nashville: Convention Press, 1980).

¹⁹ See Foshee, 41-42; and Robert Sheffield, 71-82.

²⁰ Foshee, 35.

²¹ Burroughs, 42-46.

²² Robert Sheffield, 33. Other relations that deacons can have with pastors fall under the deacon ministry section above.

²³ Burroughs, 22-25.

²⁴ Ibid., 30; see also Webb, 42-43.

²⁵ Naylor, 121-124.

²⁶ Foshee, 24.

²⁷ Robert Sheffield, 40-41. A related issue concerning deaconesses (i.e., female deacons) has generally been frowned upon in Baptist life, cf. Burroughs, 31-32.

²⁸ See Burroughs, 35-36; Foshee, 102-104; Webb, 15-16; and Robert Sheffield, 46-51.

²⁹ See Naylor, 50-51, for the lone voice surveyed that sees considerable merit in lifetime deacon service, though he offers more advantages for a deacon-rotation system.

³⁰ Burroughs, 37-40. See also Webb, 14; Foshee, 105-110; and Robert Sheffield, 112-116.

³¹ Robert Sheffield, 113-114; see also Foshee, 106.

³² Robert Sheffield, 51-55; Foshee, 104-105.

³³ Robert Sheffield, 98-112; Webb, 78-81; and Foshee, 92-99.

³⁴ See Foshee, 28-30; Robert Sheffield, 111; and Burroughs, 54-55.

³⁵ Burroughs, 66. It is hard to see how Burroughs genuinely means such a statement when most of his volume covers the financial and material duties of deacons, saying these “constitute *the special* and distinct assignment of the deacons” (62, emphasis added).

³⁶ See Burroughs, 66-78; Naylor, 43, 95-97; Foshee, 46-55; Webb, 98-108; Robert Sheffield, 77-82; and Barbara Sheffield, 13-14.

³⁷ Burroughs, 11-12. See also Robert Sheffield, 12-13.

³⁸ Foshee, 58. See also, Naylor, 90; Webb, 116; and Barbara Sheffield, 13.

THE SYMBIOTIC RELATIONSHIP OF MISSION LITERATURE AND MISSION ACTION

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INTRODUCTION

Throughout their history, Southern Baptists have distinguished themselves in a variety of ways. They have been described as “people of the book” for their tenacious—if at times tumultuous—adherence to Scripture. They have demanded autonomy for their congregations, priesthood for their believers, and congregational rule that defies any hint of hierarchism. Yet in the midst of this entrenched and sacred independence, Southern Baptist congregations find common ground; an initiative for evangelistic cooperation drawn from The Great Commission of Christ and for ministry cooperation drawn from the churches of Acts. The label for this initiative is the “Cooperative Program.” But the heart of this initiative is missions.

Above all things, Southern Baptists are about missions. It is not surprising then, that this theme is regularly present in the material published by the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC). In some cases, missions is treated subtly, as an intrinsic and understood backdrop to more specific topics. In other cases, missions *is* the specific topic. But in every case, missions is there.

Whether the Convention Press formulated missions theory through the years or reflected that which was in place at the time is not clear. One might conclude that both actions were present and their influences cyclical. What is clear, however, is the consistency between the Baptist publications’ message and the strategies and practices observed on the mission field. Certainly this consistency can be observed in their theology of missions, a theology drawn from the Bible that must often be revisited, occasionally revised, but never really changed. The area of mission history is also well represented in the

Convention's publications. Today's missionaries are cognizant of the legacy upon which they stand, and mindful of their own significant contributions to the ongoing story.

The focus of this article, however, is upon three practical components of Southern Baptist mission endeavor which, while subject to change, have been consistent in both their presentation by Convention literature and in practice on the field. These areas are the emphasis placed on the missionary call, the mobilization of the missionary work force, and mission methodology.

THE CALL TO MISSIONS

The concept of God's "call" is used broadly in the Bible. There is a call to salvation (Rom. 8:30; John 6:44; I Tim. 6:12). There is a call to furthering God's purpose (Gen. 12). There is a call to service. Paul was called to be an apostle in general terms, and a missionary specifically. He declared that God had separated him from the womb for the proclamation of the gospel to the gentiles (Gal 1:14ff), a vocation confirmed to him—and to us—by his Damascus Road experience. The idea of God's calling then, is multifaceted; it is a call *to* and a call *for*. One writer summed it up this way:

The biblical term *calling* has come to symbolize a person's encounter with God, God's invitation to become one with Him in righteousness and purpose, and each person's response to that invitation. Thus, calling expresses human involvement in God's redemptive activity in the world.¹

The process of God's call—first to Himself, and then to His service—and the believer's response to that call are both affirmed and promulgated throughout the Convention Press material. Entire church study course books, in fact, have been dedicated to this foundational truth.² Treatment of the call to service varies, but may be generally divided into two categories. The first is a general call to service placed on all believers.

The motivation for this service is duly noted by Baptist writers. Albert L. Meiburg listed five motives, including clear biblical teaching, a social conscience, a sense of personal responsibility, a sense of ecclesiastical purpose, and a devotion to Christ Himself.³ These are applicable to all Christians, a common refrain in Convention materials.

J. Winston Pearce made the call to service a lordship issue. "Christ's demands made upon those whom he called were the demands of discipleship

for all, not the preacher and missionary in particular,” he wrote. When one accepts his call as a Christian, Pearce suggested, one must let Christ be Lord over the home, the family, the business, possessions; over all.⁴

In addition to the call to service placed on all believers, Convention Press dealt extensively with a more personal call; that which has been labeled a “vocational” call, or a specific call to specific ministry. One resource stated:

While everyone is called to salvation and ministry, the church has long recognized that God uses some persons’ aptitudes, interests, and physical and emotional capacities to call them into some phase of ministry as their vocation. Based on their gifts and desire to serve, these persons find that they can best devote their entire time to God’s call to a specific task.⁵

While Baptists affirm all who serve in ministry roles, they have historically viewed the positions of pastor and missionary as the highest of these specific callings. Lee R. Scarborough, Professor of Evangelism at Southwestern Seminary affirmed the legitimacy of that calling when he wrote, “God calls men into salvation and into special service. A divine call is a spiritual necessity to successful work in the Kingdom of Grace, either in preaching or in missions.”⁶

As Scarborough was pleading for more laborers for the Kingdom, he emphasized two significant principles in that recruitment process. The first is that the call must convincingly come from God. “Pastors, churches, anxious parents or loving friends must not do the calling of preachers and missionaries. Nothing can fill the place of a divine inner call,” he explained.⁷

The second important emphasis is the relationship of the divine call to the missionary’s effectiveness on the field. Both of these principles are still applied in the missionary screening process. In all probability, no criterion is more scrutinized in today’s missionary application process than the individual’s ability to clearly and convincingly articulate his or her “call” to missions.⁸ The reason for this scrutiny is based on a variety of factors. First, there is a genuine desire to hear and to celebrate God’s will being acted upon by committed, surrendered missionaries, all of whom hold this particular calling in common. Second, experience has shown that candidates who articulate a strong sense of divine calling are more apt to handle the constant rigors of missionary life. As one consultant put it, “It’s God’s calling that puts missionaries on the field; and it’s God’s calling that keeps them there.”

Third, those convinced of this divine call are likely to be highly effective in their ministries, which is the goal most desired not only by missionary personnel, but also the sending agency, as well as the local church member who contributes to the cause. Beyond this, the successful missionary who can confidently articulate the missionary call becomes a strong advocate in both raising mission awareness and in recruiting new candidates for the field.⁹

While the process of appointing missionaries has been refined, the bedrock concepts of discerning and confirming a divine call in the life of the candidate have not changed. It played a prominent role in the missions literature Baptists produced in the past, and continues as a central feature of the missionary appointment process today.

THE MOBILIZATION OF THE MISSIONARY FORCE

A second area of correlation between the Convention's publications and Baptist missions work can be observed in the recruitment, preparation and deployment of missionary personnel. Again, Convention Press publications are replete with study materials designed to direct individuals and churches to mission involvement. These materials fall into three general categories.

First, there are the biographies of missionaries and mission stories. Besides the classic tales of missionary pioneers like William Carey, Adoniram Judson, Luther Rice and Lottie Moon, there is a multitude of lesser known—but equally committed—Baptist missionaries, each with a story to tell. Stories like *May Perry of Africa* (Susan Anderson, 1966), *World within a World* (Elwyn Lee Means, 1955), and *Which Way in Brazil* (Lester C. Bell, 1965) chronicle the spread of the gospel in foreign lands and were written both to inspire and to challenge readers in the area of missions. That the popularity of this genre of mission literature has not waned is demonstrated by the large selection of such books in today's market.

The second general category of material published to mobilize the missionary force came in the form of resources emphasizing missions education and programming in the local church. Much of this literature was produced by or was aimed at the Baptist church missions organizations.

The Women's Missionary Union (WMU) has long been at the forefront of missions education and promotion. Its importance was demonstrated by the publication of *The Woman's Missionary Union Program of the Church* (1966), which was part of the church study course offered to explain and

promote the WMU in the local church. Their 1939 book *The Way of Missionary Education* is a comprehensive approach to mission education for young people in the church. Prayer, stewardship, mission giving, service, casting a vision, and nurturing the missions endeavors of the local church are all treated in this work which was aimed directly at the church's missions organizations.¹⁰ While the names of these organizations have changed through the years, their presence and focus on missions education have not, reflecting Baptists' unwavering commitment to missions and its promotion in the local body.¹¹

That commitment is also evidenced by the age-graded programming designed to foster mission awareness beginning as early as the preschool years. In keeping suit, the Convention published a variety of mission-oriented church study books for children and youth (known then as "primaries," "beginners," and "intermediates") that complimented their adult material. Approaches and subject matter varied. Frank E. Burkhalter's *Intermediate Fishers* (1951), for example, takes a very direct approach by training youth in personal evangelism. Equally direct was O.T. Binkley, whose *Frontiers for Christian Youth* (1941) details the status of world missions region by region, pleading for young people to join the work in the pioneer fields. "God is still speaking to youth," he wrote, "He is calling us to be spiritual pioneers on the frontiers in the modern world."¹²

Others took a more subtle approach. For example, Daniel O. Aleshire's *Understanding Today's Youth* (1982) inserts a single chapter dealing with conversion, rededication, and Christian vocations into a more holistic training manual for youth workers. The Home Mission Board contributed an "across the board" format with its 1956 graded series mission study on American Indians (John Caylor, editor), as one example, with different study books by different authors for each of five age divisions.

In each of these cases, the Convention's contribution has been the same: appropriate missions education and promotion for every age group. The goal of these publications has been consistent as well: to keep the local church focused on missions in such a way that challenged Baptist church members to actively participate.

The third general category of Convention material designed to mobilize the missionary force was published to counsel potential vocational workers in the pursuit of their calling. *Christ in My Career* (1958) by Allen W. Graves treats

not only vocational ministry, but ministry through vocations. More specialized is *Vocational Guidance in a Church* (1975), a church study course by Francis A. Martin, Alice S. Magill and Ernest E. Mosley, designed to help equip church leaders in providing career counseling from a Christian viewpoint. Perhaps most helpful in mobilizing the mission force is the 1992 compilation, *Guide to Southern Baptist Vocations* which not only develops the concept of God's call, but lists and explains a variety of church related ministry and missions positions, their qualifications, preparation needed, related occupations and further resources.

No doubt, such resources have proven valuable in aiding missionary candidates in discerning their call and preparing for ministry. It should be noted as well that this process—discernment, clarification, confirmation, and preparation—is central to the current missionary appointment process. From one's first contact with an IMB candidate consultant, through the application process, various interviews, job selection, and even through appointment and orientation, vocational (specialized ministry) counseling takes place.¹³

MISSION METHODOLOGY

While the emphasis on the call to missions and missionary mobilization have remained consistent in both the published material and on the mission field, methodologies—at least in their details—have been subject to change.¹⁴ It should be noted, however, that these changes have been consistently reflected by the Convention materials even as they have been implemented on the field.

In the first half of the 20th century, the vast majority of missionaries served as evangelists, in denominational work, Baptist initiated institutions, and in the field of healthcare.¹⁵ Not surprisingly, the Convention material emphasized those roles. Scarborough stressed the ever-widening opportunities for skilled lay people, nurses, social workers and women prone to organization and teaching within these traditional roles. He stated:

Christian schools in the mountains and in foreign lands, schools for women, schools for girls, kindergarten schools, seminaries for preachers, missionary training schools for workers are opening everywhere and calling for more trained heads and hearts in the service of Christ.¹⁶

Nevertheless, he clearly saw preaching as the highest of callings, even for lay people. He wrote:

Missionaries are needed to advance the battle line of Christ in these opening fields....Educational advancement in all these lines are opening to the preacher in these distant lands opportunities of service. The preacher, God's big man, God's pivotal man, is more and more needed everywhere.¹⁷

An example of traditional denominational work can be seen in Bell's *Which Way in Brazil?* (1965). This material for adults from that year's foreign mission graded series, chronicles the history of Baptist mission efforts in that country. While it rightly highlights the development of the national convention, the American influence in forming the institution is widely celebrated.¹⁸

Lately, Southern Baptists have limited their institutional and denominational roles to focus more of their resources and personnel on the task of church planting.¹⁹ While this has required a "re-tooling" of the expertise of existing personnel, it has also opened the door to virtually every type of occupation which can in some way contribute to church planting efforts. Specialized training in Strategy Coordination is offered to equip Baptist missionaries to approach their mission field as a "target group" or "population segment," and to develop specific, individualized, culturally appropriate methods for reaching them.

Even before this "missions revolution" took place, sound strategic elements being utilized on the field today could already be found in the pages of Convention Press material. *World within a World* (Means, 1955) discusses spreading the gospel in Muslim countries. While it traces the history of the work and describes Muslim life, it advances at least three critical features of church planting methodologies implemented today. These include the development of custom-made strategies appropriate for each individual reality (p. 94), extensive research of the people group as a basis for those strategies (p. 59-79), and the use of social and institutional ministries for gaining access to unreached people groups (now referred to as "platforms," p. 85-87). Reginald M. McDonough's 1980 compilation, *A Church on Mission: An Intentional Response to the Needs of the Eighties* is another example of mission and ministry planning that is based on sound research of the target group followed by the development of intentional strategies in response to

that research. In this case, the research took into account another key element considered in today's mission work: the *worldview* of the target group.²⁰

Perhaps the most prescient of the Baptist publications is *Missions in the Mosaic*, compiled by M. Wendell Belew. This book, published by the Home Mission Board in 1974, developed the principles of "ethnic ministry" among five different ethnic and cultural groups in the US. Key areas discussed include the need for cultural research, an understanding of cultural influences like language, dress, music, and customs, and the need to plant culturally appropriate, indigenous congregations. Hispanic contributor Oscar Romo summed it up by saying, "Ethnic church growth principles apply the indigenous church principles in a linguistic and cultural context among ethnic persons to develop self-propagating ethnic churches."²¹ These kinds of innovative home missionaries perfectly reflected today's cross-cultural mission strategies, and did so some twenty years prior to their official implementation on the foreign field.²²

In the midst of tremendous societal change, Southern Baptists have remained biblical in their approach to missions. They are committed to incarnational missions, conscious of social and humanitarian needs, and focused on church planting. They have, however, become more research minded, culturally sensitive, and strategic in their work. Even so, there has remained a consistent correlation between their published material and their practice.

CONCLUSION

The Southern Baptist's Convention Press stated their purpose in the development of their coursework as:

To help Christians to grow in knowledge and conviction, to help them grow toward maturity in Christian character and competence for service, to encourage them to participate worthily as workers in their churches, and to develop leaders for all phases of church life and work.²³

These influential goals could only be met as Convention Press and its related Southern Baptist publishers introduced legitimately helpful material, and made it accessible, applicable, understandable, and meaningful to average church people. Besides that, it had to be credible—accurately reflecting Baptist doctrine and Baptist life.

In the area of missions, it has been demonstrated that these criteria have

been met. These Southern Baptist publications have both instructed in missions as well as reflected missions. They have demonstrated a consistency between their written content and the practice of missions on the field, particularly in the areas of the emphasis placed on the call to missions, mobilization of the missionary force, and mission strategy. In some cases, the literature summarizes what happened. In other cases, it suggests what *needs* to happen. In every case, it reinforces that great unifying distinctive among Southern Baptists: indeed, above all things, Southern Baptists are about missions.

Endnotes

¹ Donna J. Gandy and Linda S. Barnes, *Guide to Southern Baptist Vocations* (Nashville: Convention Press, 1992), 7.

² For example, see *The Call of the Harvest*, by Charles L. McKay, 1956. *God Calls Me*, by J. Winston Pearce, 1958; *Called to Minister*, by Albert L. Meiburg, 1968; et al.

³ Albert L. Meiburg, *Called to Minister* (Nashville: Convention Press, 1968), 12-16.

⁴ Pearce, 7-8.

⁵ Gandy and Barnes, 9.

⁶ Lee R. Scarborough, *Chapters from "Recruits for World Conquests"* (Nashville: Sunday School Board [SBC], reprinted from Fleming H. Revell, 1914), 24.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ International Mission Board (SBC) application and appointment process, 2001. At that time, as part of the process, this missionary candidate wrote and refined the testimony of his call to missions on several occasions, and recited it formally to at least two candidate consultants and informally to numerous colleagues, orientation instructors, peers, and other IMB personnel.

⁹ Conversation with International Mission Board candidate consultants, July, 2008.

¹⁰ The traditional organizations consisted of Sunbeams, Girls' Auxiliaries, Royal Ambassadors, and the Young Woman's Auxiliaries, targeting church members from 4 years old to single women up to 25 years old.

¹¹ It should be noted that today's WMU maintains its original commitment to missions, as is demonstrated by its tireless promotion of the annual missions offerings.

¹² O. T. Binkley, *Frontiers for Christian Youth* (Nashville: Broadman, 1941), 110-111.

¹³ IMB application and appointment process, 2001.

¹⁴ This is not only to be expected, but is necessary to fulfill the mission in ever-changing world societies.

¹⁵ Winston Crawley, *Global Missions: A Story to Tell* (Nashville: Broadman, 1985), 161.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 48.

¹⁷ Scarborough, 45-46.

¹⁸ While today's Baptist Convention in Brazil is fully staffed by capable nationals, there is no mistaking its North American heritage in both form and function.

¹⁹ For an explanation of this paradigm shift, see the IMB booklet *Something New under the Sun* (1999). For a fuller explanation of "church planting movement" methodology, see David Garrison's *Church Planting Movements*, also available through the IMB.

²⁰ While McDonough never used the term, "worldview" best describes the characteristics covered in the preface and in chapter five, "Mobilizing for Mission."

²¹ Oscar Romo, "Ministering with Hispanic Americans," in *Missions in the Mosaic* (Atlanta: Home Mission Board [SBC], 1974), 50.

²² The IMB's New Directions paradigm was launched in 1997.

²³ From the introductory page of their Church Study Course books.

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* indicates Florida Baptist Historical Society has at least one of these titles in its holdings.

Author	Title	Year
None listed	Christian Dayschool Administration Guide: a Compilation	1978
None listed	Church Family Life Conference Guidebook	1973
None listed	Church Media Library Desk Book	1997
None listed	Church Planning Guide: a Guide for Annual Planning	1969
None listed	Communication and Intimacy: Couples Guide & Leader's Manuel	1992
None listed	Countdown: 20 Bible Studies for High School Seniors	1994
None listed	Developing Learner-involvement Teaching Skills	1981
None listed	Developing Teaching Skills	1980
None listed	Handbook to the Baptist Hymnal	1992
None listed	Helpers at Home and Church: for older preschoolers	1997
None listed	Hymndex: Alpha listing	none
None listed	Jesus My Friend: a Message for Parents	1977
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