
The Journal of Florida Baptist Heritage

Florida Baptist Historical Society



Walter Wiley Richards

The Journal of Florida Baptist Heritage

Florida Baptist Historical Society

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Cover: Dr. W. Wiley Richards has been preaching for 56 years, taught for 36 years and has served 48 interims.

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INTRODUCTION

Jerry M. Windsor

Secretary-Treasurer

Florida Baptist Historical Society

Welcome to Issue Twelve of The Journal of Florida Baptist Heritage

Our feature in this issue is an emphasis upon Florida Baptist preachers who spent at least 50 years in preaching and or teaching preaching and preachers.

Jesus came preaching, teaching and healing (Matthew 4:23). There was a prophet, priest, king motif in the work of Jesus. In His first sermon Jesus chose Isaiah 61:1-2 as His text. Jesus entered the synagogue on the Sabbath day, read His text, closed the book, sat down and stated "Today hath this scripture been fulfilled in your ears."

It doesn't get any better than that. He preached words of grace but still they got angry and threw him out of the church and ran Him out of His hometown. So much for the popularity of preaching.

It was June 28, 1956 when I was called to preach at Shocco Springs Baptist Assembly in Talladega, Alabama. At fifteen years of age I didn't know much but I wept as I made my decision public. I knew it was personal, real and final. While Dr. Perry Crouch was preaching I was called to preach.

There have been times I doubted my salvation. (If I am saved why did I do that? If I am saved why did I say that or think that?) I was 23 years of age before I had full confidence that I was

saved. However I never doubted my call to preach. It was a done deal. For better or worse I was going to be a Southern Baptist preacher and I never doubted it.

Our authors introduce us to Florida preachers who were in the business for over fifty years. Some taught, some led, some pastored and all preached. In this issue we have a 125 year span of Florida Baptist preaching from the first known Florida manuscript (1885) to the sermons from last Sunday.

Meet these men and their calling. Listen to the writers and question their conclusions. Make your own list of Florida Baptist pastors who served 50 years and influenced you.

Just remember. It all started when Jesus came preaching, teaching and healing.

Honoring those who honor Christ,

THE 1885 PREACHING OF NATHAN A. WILLIAMS

THOMAS FIELD
Research Writer

The Ten Virgins

“Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins which took their lamps and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them. But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.”-Matt. 25: 1-13.

We have thought it strange that there were so many good men writing for the *Baptist Witness* and so few giving pithy commentaries upon mooted questions. This is our first for publication upon a religious subject. Therefore bear with us a little if we make some small mistakes. Nevertheless our expressed convictions for the religious press are open for criticism, and we invite it believing as we do that Christian criticism upon a brother's productions works for good and not for evil.

Marriage festivals in Eastern lands are sometimes occasions of a wonderful display and varied scenes of public excitement. Modern travelers have witnessed just such festivals as the parable describes. The parable teaches one of the most important lessons involved in the Christian's life. Remember that the kingdom of heaven here is likened to something pure, viz: a figure of the church. And again, virginity comports with the idea of purity.

The foolish virgins were at least practically pure, though they evidently were not regenerate Christians. The foolish took no oil with them - oil representing the regenerating influence of the Holy Spirit. Remember that all this time they remain virgins, but failed to enter into the kingdom of heaven. Yet they evidently represented a part of the true church on earth at that time and at this. Who will gain say? Virginity could not be a type of the world with all the varied shades of extreme wickedness, though this is taught by some divines. Alas, how wide of the mark they step. Alas, how many are misled by teachers who are endeavoring to implant in the minds of others the errors of an early education.

We do not say that these foolish virgins were not good practical Christians; but we do say that there is not the least bearing in the parable that teaches that they had ever passed through the regenerating influence of the Holy Spirit. And in this instead of proving apostasy, it very plainly disproves it. Now we may give these foolish virgins under praise. They were hand in hand with the wise. They helped pay the pastor. They with the wise, built churches. They doubtless loved God's people. They worshipped in public. They condemned wickedness and withstood it with a strong arm. They were of course, a figure of the true church, and how could their actions be inconsistent with the true Christian's walk?

Some in their criticisms will doubtless undertake to prove that they were the hypocrites in the church. That will not do. The idea will not associate itself with virginity. They were, if you will allow the expression; honestly deceived. They were earnest in the belief of their Christian loyalty. The parable clearly indicates this. Our Savior uses firm, but kind words to these virgins in the very last that the Scripture gives an account of. Which read, verse 12: “But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you

not.” The wise also spoke kind words to them, but unmistakably plain. There is a very strong inference from the reading of the parable that the wise really thought that these foolish virgins were as good as themselves. Will some of the brethren give us their ideas on this wonderful parable?

N. A. Williams
Macon, Fla.

Records available indicate that Dr. Nathan A. Williams (1843-1899) came to Florida in 1884. He was probably born in Mississippi and moved to Florida in 1883.¹ It is a fact that Dr. Williams started corresponding with the *Florida Baptist Witness* as early as 1885, when he published a sermon "The Ten Virgins" in the March 19, 1885, (p. 1) issue.

The oldest *Florida Baptist Witness* issue we have is March 12, 1885. Therefore it is safe to say that Nathan A. Williams was the first Florida Baptist preacher to publish a signed sermon to be printed in the Baptist state paper.²

When Williams came to Florida he moved to Macon, Florida, which is present day Trilby, and is located about seven miles north of Dade City.³ He became active in Florida Baptist church work and was a prominent member of the various communities where he lived. In 1885 in the Hernando County Agriculture records a N. A. Williams owned 80 acres and farmed 20 of the acres and had 60 acres in woodland or forest. The value of the farm was listed as \$800.00 with \$150.00 more invested in live-stock. Citrus and vegetables were grown and marketed in the area. Williams served as pastor at Anclole and between the years 1885-1899 was active in associational and Baptist state convention work. He served as a messenger to the Southern Baptist Convention in 1896 and in addition to being a practicing physician he served as visiting preacher in a number of impoverished

churches that could not afford a pastor. Williams died at his home in Dade City in the spring of 1899.

Choice of Williams

I chose to research Nathan A. Williams for two reasons. First, he has the oldest published sermons in our state Baptist paper (1885). Second, as a lay-preacher he represents the very soul of Florida Baptist preaching from 1854-1925. I am not saying they all preached the same but they all were primarily bi-vocational preachers with very little ministerial training. The Florida Baptist Convention was begun in 1854 but it was not until about 1925 that we had as many preachers as we did churches. Joshua Mercer (1788-1869) the brother of Jesse Mercer was one of our earliest Florida Baptist preachers and in 1845 he was pastor of Bethlehem (Campbellton), Union Academy (Greenwood) and Sardis in Jackson County. Some of the early pastors in Florida were pastor of five churches and a few served as pastor of as many as seven churches at one time.⁴

Williams served as pastor, layman, preacher, associational leader, doctor and faithful church member.⁵ In 1887 he was a member of Hebron Baptist Church and the church was six years old and had 27 members. Williams states that Elder G. M. T. Wilson of Cason, Florida was his pastor. According to Williams his pastor was “zealous, successful, bold and (a) spiritual defender of the faith as it is in Christ Jesus.” The church paid Wilson \$50.00 per annum and it was “rare for us to be behind with our pastor.”

It was somewhat bold of Williams to submit written sermon manuscripts for publication in the *Florida Baptist Witness*. Preachers like Boyce, Broadus, Spurgeon, Talmadge and Curry were well educated and well versed in the homiletical and hermeneutical trends of the day but a transplanted lay preacher in

South Florida would hardly have been exposed to the current philosophies of Southern Baptist preaching.⁶

Dr. H. E. Hatcher wrote for the *Baltimore Baptist* in 1887 and is quoted in the *Florida Baptist Witness* (February 10, 1887, p. 2) as having read some of the Broadus sermons and addresses. Hatcher said the Broadus works were “delicious to mind and heart.” Yet in the same article, editor Bostick admitted he knew Broadus but had not read his book. This was no doubt the case with Williams also. He knew Broadus but probably had not read his homiletical books. Yet he was willing to submit his sermons for public scrutiny.

Text

In two sermons of Williams published in the *Florida Baptist Witness* in 1885 there are well known and legitimate texts. Both sermons are based upon parables and sermon one (March 19, 1885, p. 1) is based upon Matthew 25:1-13 and sermon two (April 16, 1885) is based upon Luke 15:11-32. The English Revised Version had been published in 1881 but Williams chose to use the 1611 King James text. There was no particular textual controversy at that time but the KJV was probably the version that was primarily used by Williams and Florida Baptists in 1885.

Title

Williams used paragraph headings and textual subjects as his title for his 1885 sermons. The Matthew parable sermon is entitled “The Ten Virgins” and the Luke sermon is the well known “The Prodigal Son.” The best rules for sermon titles are that they must be appropriate, authentic and attractive. The Williams titles are not necessarily eye appealing but they are authentic and he does deliver on the text. He gives us in the body of the sermon

what he promises in the title.⁷ It is not unusual for preachers to use vivid imagination in their titles but the primary concern is: does the sermon narrative justify the title?

Aim

The sermon objective in Williams is clear. He purports to stress church purity and loyalty in the parable of the ten virgins and national salvation for the Jews in the prodigal son. This author would disagree with the interpretations of Williams but has a sincere appreciation for his clarity in presenting his sermon aim.

Illustrations

Each sermon has some illustrations and documented explanation. Williams mentions the experiences of travelers in the Holy Land and also the display of marriage festivals in Eastern lands. He refers to the faithfulness of the modern day Jews to the Old Testament and defends their dependence upon God. These so called illustrations are few and there are no references to poetry, world history, nature or any of the sciences. One explanation would be that the sermons are very basic and maybe not a full manuscript but you would expect a physician to illustrate with some mention of medical experience or practice.

Interpretation

In the Luke sermon Williams begins by saying “as in the parable of “the ten virgins,” we take a different ground in this from that of most writers....”⁸ With this introduction he launches into a typological interpretation of both passages. He uses typology so vividly that one must conclude that he got help from other sources. Broadus went so far as to say that “there has always been on the part of some men a tendency to spiritualize, widely and

wildly, the language of scripture” (p. 51). Broadus points to Origin (third century) as the father of Christian allegorizing but blames Philo as the father of such speculation. In 1870 Broadus stated that “not a few of the most learned and devout preachers in the Church of England and among the German Lutherans run wild with their imitations of Patristic allegorizing...” (p. 52). More to the point of the preaching of Williams is the Broadus warning that “Especially common are errors of this kind in the interpretation of our Lord's Parables.” For over 1,000 years the Christian church sought “two, three, or four meanings to a text. The “spiritual” meaning was prized above the literal, and the spiritual could be about anything to which the imagination was equal.”⁹

Williams saw the ten virgins as representing purity in the church and loyalty to the church. In that there is no “Baptist way” to interpret any passage a comparative study can be made here. Since 1969 the *Broadman Bible Commentary* has been considered a standard Southern Baptist interpretation. There are always exceptions but Frank Stagg in the *Matthew* commentary (vol. 8, p. 223) points out that the parable of the ten virgins is an allegory but its chief concern “is to admonish readiness or watchfulness for the Parousia.” Williams saw the ten virgins as hypocrites and the church needed to be purified. Stagg sees the ten virgins as needing to be ready for the second coming. Spiritualizing a text can cause one to inject their own ideas and worse yet, miss the primary thrust of the text.

In the sermon on the prodigal son Williams noted that the Luke 15:11-32 text “does not apply to individual sinners accepting the offers of grace and returning to the household of faith.”¹⁰

Author Malcolm Tolbert points out that is exactly what the parable means (*Broadman Commentary*, Vol. 9, pp. 124-127). A sinner is coming home. There is a personal choice to return to the

father. Tolbert says this parable brings “fresh hope” to all sinners who need a saviour.

Williams certainly would not have had the opportunities of training, books, dialogue and research that preachers have today. Yet he fell into an interpretation trap that is as old as the New Testament (Philo 20BC-50AD). One hopes that the sound Biblical sermons of Broadus, Curry, Boyce and Spurgeon that were later published in the *Florida Baptist Witness* helped Williams to stay close to the Word.

Conclusion

Nathan A. Williams (1843-1899) worked with the gifts and limitations that he had. His ministry among Florida Baptists lasted only fifteen years and his pastoral and preaching ministry was more brief than that. Yet as the first Florida Baptist pastor to publish his signed sermons in the *Florida Baptist Witness* he set a precedent that is being followed even today. His skills could be honed but his publication goal and Christian spirit could not be more mature.

This is our first (sermon) for publication upon a religious subject. Therefore bear with us a little if we make some small mistakes. Nevertheless our expressed convictions for the religious press are open for criticism, and we invite it believing as we do that Christian criticism upon a brother's production works for good and not for evil.¹¹

Endnotes

¹ A Nathan A. Williams is listed in various census records and a birthplace of Mississippi or Arkansas could be claimed. In the 1870 census a N. A. Williams was living in Fulton,

Arkansas. He was listed as 27 years of age, born in Mississippi with the occupation of farmer. The 1880 U. S. Census has a N. A. Williams farming in Jackson, Arkansas. A Dr. N. A. Williams is listed in the 1899, *Florida Baptist Convention Annual*, pp. 43-44, as having died in 1899 and having served as a “physician and preacher.”

² There are excerpts from a sermon by J. L. M. Curry in the March 19, 1885 (p.2) issue but Curry was a Georgia Baptist preacher and dear friend of John A. Broadus. Williams was the first Florida Baptist preacher to publish his “signed” sermons in the *Witness*.

³ Special thanks are extended to Judy Jolly of Dade City for her wonderful time line research on Williams. I trust Dr. Mike Gannon with my Florida history and I trust Don Hepburn and Judy Jolly with my Florida Baptist history.

⁴ Pastors would preach on Saturday evening, Sunday morning, Sunday afternoon and Sunday night to meet all their appointments. In 1885 they walked, rode horses, buggies and wagons but primarily rode the train. Special rates were given to ministers and some had ministerial passes and paid no train fare at all.

⁵ In the January 3, 1887 (p. 2) issue of the *Florida Baptist Witness* Williams proclaims his loyalty to Florida Baptists, the Florida Baptist Witness, and his local association as they preach “Christ and him crucified.”

⁶ I suspect Williams had met Broadus, Boyce and Graves. They were frequent visitors to Florida but the first homiletics book written by a Southern Baptist was the Broadus textbook of 1870.

⁷ Dr. V. L. Stanfield (1920-1991) was trained in the Broadus tradition and brought that motif to Oswalt, Breidenbaugh and Windsor. Stanfield would refer to the published written sermons of Williams as “sermon briefs” because of their length.

⁸ It is of note that Williams was familiar enough with other sermons on this text to realize that his interpretation was not orthodox. Broadus said in his 1870 volume that typology should not be used.

⁹ Frank Stagg, “Interpreting the Bible” in *How to Understand the Bible*, p. 52. Broadman Press, Nashville, 1974.

¹⁰ Clifton J. Allen, General Editor. *The Broadman Bible Commentary*, Volumes 8-9, Broadman Press, Nashville, 1969.

¹¹ N. A. Williams, “The Ten Virgins,” *Florida Baptist Witness*, March 19, 1885, p. 1.



MORDECAI F. HAM'S FLORIDA MEETINGS 1905-1939

Jerry Hopkins

*Professor of History
East Texas Baptist University*

Mordecai Ham's last sermon at the First Baptist Church,
Oklahoma City,

'Why I Am Resigning My Pastorate'

"Some pastors leave because they are asked to resign. Not one person in Oklahoma has asked me to resign, nor even advised me to resign. Others leave because their audience has dwindled to a faithful few. All know that large audiences have attended the preaching message here. Many pastors have left their fields because of a quarrel. We had none here. Some have capitulated in the face of financial trouble in the church. All of our debts are paid here, and there is money in the treasury to pay all bills.

"Some may ask, 'Is there not some dissension in the church? If there is any dissension in the church, I inherited it, but I did not create it. You say, 'Are there not some who are opposed to you?' Certainly there must be, for did not some oppose every pastor this church has ever had, and if there were not some who opposed me and took exception to my ministry, I would consider it a dismal failure.

"I am sure that my message today will not be fully understood by all and will be resented by all who are deceived by the Antichrist and enslaved by Babylon, but if ever the Lord has given a man a message, He put this one upon my heart this morning.

"My critics have always been classified under two general heads: servants of the political systems which I have denounced, and servants of the ecclesiastical or religious system which I have not allowed to control me. The most bitter attacks made upon me, not only here, but throughout my ministry have come from these two sources. But I have delivered my message, and the responsibility for its reception is now upon the people, and they must answer to God.

"I am not a priest. My message has always been that of the prophet. The prophet has no genius for smooth speech. He flatters neither monarch nor mob. His denunciations are more frequent than his consolations. He rebukes triviality and flippancy. The prophet had no excessive respect for the orthodoxy, so called, of the ecclesiastical school of the Rabbis. He was apt to speak with slight respect of ceremonies and ordinances. Stereotype forms and formulas were reviewed by the prophets as an insidious evil. Arrayed against the prophets were all who were interested in the preservation of the old order of things.

"You ask, 'Why, then, did you accept the pastorate?'

"I came here upon the clear call of the Lord. I know now, as never before, the conditions in the churches that cause the trouble and make revivals necessary. I realize the enslaved conditions of the average church as never before. There are two great captivities spoken of in the Bible: Egypt and Babylon. Egypt, to the Christian, is the world and material civilization. Babylon is that great religio-political system which will be destroyed at the coming of the Lord.

"The average pastor is largely discredited because of a lack of authority. 'These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise Thee'" (Titus 2:15). Under the present religious systems, he no longer furnishes the message nor the methods. He has become a megaphone for his employers or a bell

hop for their clerks, running hither and thither, doing multitudes of little things until he becomes as one despised, and the people cease to look to him as the prophet of God.

“If he follows this course, he becomes intimidated by the Egypt element in his congregation, and cannot cry out against sin without trouble within the flock, and he becomes as one who jests to the outsider. He cannot be militant because he is defeated by Achans in his camp. He is supplanted in his position as a teacher very largely, unless he becomes the mouthpiece for that which has been prepared by someone else. As the overseer, he ought to be in a position to lead and protect his flock in every local or national crisis. As the shepherd, he ought to feed his sheep.

“The pastor must constantly revive his church, but with his initiative taken away and his opportunity as a teacher greatly curtailed, how can he revive the church? A revival is the result of bringing people into harmony with God, and this is done by emphasis on the neglected and needed part of the Word. Who but God's prophets can know what message is needed? Revivals must come as a result of chosen messages, through new revelations, new dedications, and new transformations. Who but God's shepherds can choose the needed teaching for his particular flock?

“No physician would accept a hospital on the same basis that a pastor accepts the average church. It would be just as intelligent for a New York drug store to treat physical diseases by mailing to each hospital in the country a package containing doses of Syrup of Figs, to be taken by each patient on Mondays; Smith's Chill Tonic, on Tuesdays; Simon's Liver Regulator on Wednesdays; milk of magnesia, on Thursdays; etcetera, and expect the patients in need of surgical attention to be helped and cured, without regard for the physician in charge or diagnosis of the patient, as for any board to hand down the entire course of study for a

church, regardless of the pastor's diagnosis, and attempt to grade the churches in Class A, Class B, and Class C, according to their reaction to the treatment.

“It is just as unreasonable to blame a pastor for the lack of spiritual health in a church, under these conditions, as to blame a physician for the fate of a patient, if, while he is in charge of the case, he is compelled to treat the patient with the prescriptions of four non-resident doctors who know nothing about the case.

“If I were to preach as I am directed to preach by outside influences, nearly all of my subjects would be chosen for me and along with the subject, a request to take a special offering. I do not blame any church for its run-down spiritual condition, its strife and division, if it has been subject to such unwise spiritual treatment.

“I do not blame the pastor except that he is guilty of having submitted to a system which blinds, paralyzes, and destroys him. God-called and God-directed prophets are our only hope. The interests of the cause of Christ have always been safeguarded by those heroic preachers who would not be bound hand and foot by ecclesiastical red tape. Paul was a strategist who thought out his strategy on the field of war and not in some Jerusalem war office, where parchments and sealing wax were more plentiful than experience and foresight. The most fatal of all the church's dreams has been the dream of uniformity.

“The prophet is the one man who upsets the calculations of the prelate.

“The voice of the prophet has been more powerful than armies of ecclesiastical machines. Give us a Moses to lead us out of bondage; give us an Elijah to deliver us from Baal; give us a Jeremiah to warn us of a coming captivity and heal our backslid-

ings; an Ezekiel to tell us we are watchmen; a Joel to warn of a last day of wrath; an Amos to tell of worthless and empty worship; a Malachi to warn priest and people; a John to prepare for the Lord's coming. Give us a Paul to tear down the stronghold of Satan, in spite of the opposition of formal, apostate religion. We need the fiery eloquence of Savonarola, of Florence; teachers like John Calvin, of Geneva; patriots like John Knox, of Scotland; evangelists like Wesley, Whitfield, Edwards, Moody, and Sunday.

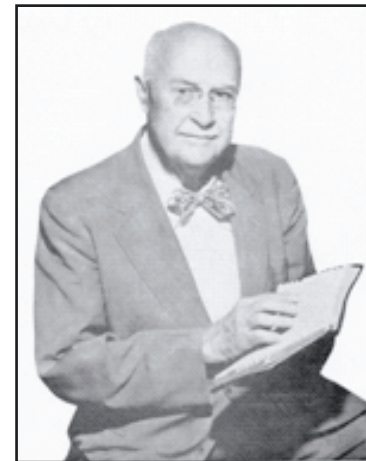
"Satan's masterpiece is the politico-religious system headed by the pretending Christian, the antichrist. Shall I bow my knee to a man-made system or shall I enthrone the Lord Jesus Christ?

"I am resigning that I may enthrone the Lord Jesus Christ and be enabled to cry out against sin in high places and low; that I may clear my skirts of the blood of all men and not be looked upon as a hireling, getting proselytes to a system, but a prophet sent of God.

"A sense of responsibility to a church may be a noble feeling, but a sense of destiny to a city, a nation, a world is a far greater thing. Remember, we are not Christ's ministers because we are called by a church. We are ministers of the people because we are called by Christ.

"I am resigning to return to the evangelistic field. I believe that during the next few years, if the Lord tarry, we will experience a great wave of the revival spirit if we will enthrone Christ and take advantage of our opportunity. Modernism has had its fling and had, for a time, almost succeeded in discrediting real evangelism, offering, as a substitute, various enlistment plans, etcetera. Sectarian evangelism has been tried with negligible results, but the people cannot always be content with playing at religion, and the time is ripe, as never before, for the message of the true, God-called evangelist. 'Macedonian' calls are coming from every hand, and I must heed them.

"I covet the prayers of you, my friends, who have stood so loyally with me, as I go forth in His Name. How wonderfully kind you have all been to me here. Words fail me to express what I feel in my heart toward you all. If the Lord were to permit me to remain in the pastorate, I would not ask for a better church than this. No church in the Southland offers greater opportunity for a real pastorate than this one, and I am proud to count its members among my dearest friends. It will be a source of the greatest inspiration and enabling power to me to know that back home scores of praying friends are upholding me daily before the throne."



Evangelist
Mordecai Ham

Mordecai Fowler Ham, Jr. (1877-1961) is not well-known now, but there was a time when he was known widely, especially across the American South. Ham was born in 1877 into a Baptist family in south, central Kentucky in rural Allen County where his grandfather Mordecai Fowler Ham, Sr., was a well-known and widely-used farmer-preacher for many years. Ham's father

Tobias also served as a farmer-preacher in rural churches in Allen County. The Ham family produced 8 generations of Baptist preachers and Mordecai was the last in that train. Ham was named after his grandfather, and he grew up under the thoughtful, enthusiastic preaching of both his father and grandfather. They modeled the Christian faith for him and he witnessed their lives as testimonies of both hardworking farmers and earnest, rural, bi-vocational ministers.

As the son and grandson of Baptist preachers, Mordecai grew up in the rural, Baptist churches of south, central Kentucky in Allen County and Warren County. His piety was the product of a personal experience in Jesus Christ and the powerful testimonies of his father Tobias and his grandfather Mordecai Fowler Ham, Sr. Both of these rural Baptist pastors, made an earnest study of the Bible and made a solemn commitment to read and study in preparing to preach. The Hams were all noted for their commitment to education and scholarship. Ham married Bessie Simmons Ham in 1900 and she died after five years of marriage. He then married 15 year old Anne Laurie Smith Ham and they were married 54 years before his death. Ham was the father of three daughters, Martha, Dorothy and Annie Laurie.

Ham began his evangelistic ministry in 1901 by committing himself to the study of 27 books that would assist him in ministerial preparation. The 27 books were heavy in Landmark and fundamentalist views. Five of the books were by J. R. Graves and two by J. M. Pendleton. Others were heavy on history (Orchard, Jeter, Josephus) and Biblical interpretation. Beginning his ministry as an evangelist in 1901, Ham held a total of 288 meetings through 1941 in twenty-two different states (Alabama, Arkansas, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, New Mexico, Ohio, Oklahoma, North Carolina, South Carolina,

Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia) with a total of 303,387 decisions in those meetings.¹

Edward E. Ham had an unique view of his uncle Mordecai and published this perspective in *50 Years on the Battle Front with Christ*. Edward was well qualified to conduct research for he was also a minister. He was reared in Chicago and educated at the University of Louisville and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He published his uncle's biography in 1950 and it is filled with recollections, summations and statistics.

One of the most interesting and touching parts of the biography is the statistical section on pages 284-294. Here the influence of evangelist Ham is felt again and again with numbers that stagger the imagination. 6,400 decisions in Charlotte and 4,000 in Durham and Burlington. 6,100 decisions in Danville and 6,500 in Newport News. 61,260 decisions in Texas, 55,863 in Tennessee and 21,543 in Kentucky. In all there were 303,387 decisions recorded in the Ham meetings. In God's providence there was that very special 1931 meeting in Charlotte, North Carolina when Billy Graham was saved.

Ham Serves in Florida

The door of opportunity opened for Ham to minister in Florida in 1905, resulting in Ham conducting three meetings in the cities of St. Petersburg (100 additions), Tampa (75 additions) and Ocala (150 decisions).

Ham's Ocala meeting made the news.

"Rev. M. F. Ham...returned from Ocala, Fla., where he held one of the greatest revivals ever held in the State. An Ocala paper thus tells of the meeting and the results: 'The revival closed last night. The house was packed and crowds were turned away. The evangelist's words were to

the new converts, warning them of the devices of the devil wherewith they would be beset....

'Pastor Warren, in telling of the results of the meeting, said that Mr. Ham had come to the city primarily for the revival of the church; that the work with the unsaved was simply the necessary consequence to the membership getting on fire; that about 200 had confessed Christ, about half that number having already come to the Baptist church...and a large number going to the other churches of the city....

'During the closing prayer the sobs of the children commenced, and as it closed they rose to wails. In a body they rushed to the platform and climbed over Mr. Ham, kissing him and weeping.... For perhaps fifteen minutes he was the center of a moist and moaning mass of children, until at last he gently extricated himself, stepped into a waiting carriage, and hastened to the hotel. Then the young people came, hundreds of them, and bade them farewell. Then up and down the streets they went, singing and weeping, mourning at his going, but rejoicing at his coming and at the blessing that he brought.

"The meeting has moved the city as no other event in many years. If the effects are as lasting as they have been momentarily powerful, the blessing will prove incalculable...."²

It is possible that some or all of these meetings also included activities and comments related to the anti-saloon/anti-liquor and Prohibition emphasis which accompanied Ham's meetings during this time period. Ham did not return to Florida for another meeting until his 1925 Miami meeting that resulted in 500 decisions. This meeting was likely in a single church. Five years later Ham

returned to Lakeland, Florida in 1930 where he saw 500 decisions. This was likely in a single church. This was an important meeting given the fact that it was during the opening of the Great Depression. In 1939 Ham would return for his only other meeting in Florida. He came to Jacksonville for a union meeting in which there would be 6,800 decisions. Editor E. D. Solomon of the *Florida Baptist Witness* commented on the Jacksonville meeting of Ham.

"Dr. Mordecai F. Ham has been holding a big tabernacle meeting in Jacksonville for more than two months. We have been greatly impressed with this meeting. The tabernacle is one of the best we have ever seen. It is covered with a green canvass trimmed in red...They have an average congregation of 2,000 a night. That is marvelous. What else on earth could attract that many people night after night but the Gospel of Christ...? He is awful on the fanatical cults. He may not convert them, but he is saving the people from them. He is fearless in preaching the true doctrines of the Bible. He is strictly a fundamentalist....Literally hundreds have confessed Christ as their Saviour. In our opinion he far surpasses any evangelist of his kind in modern times....They are on the radio every day. They preach on the streets, in the parks, railroad shops, restaurants, stores, and wherever they get a chance. What a work they are doing...."³

In a total of six different meetings in Florida Ham saw 8,125 additions to churches.

The Radio Years

In 1941 Ham concluded his forty-year ministry of evangelism using large tent and tabernacle facilities for meetings. He

broadened his ministry through a network of radio programs and short speaking engagements and rallies that enabled him to reach many more people than previously. Radio and rallies became a significant ministry for Ham. From 1941 through 1950 Ham spoke in over 600 cities, traveling thousands of miles and it was estimated that he placed his message within the reach of over 40 million people. The radio and rally ministry would greatly expand and extend Ham's audience and support. In late 1941 Ham began the Kentucky Home Evangelistic Network that provided radio for a network of several radio stations. Ham was wise enough to see that a radio message might be heard and forgotten. He therefore published dozens of his radio sermons that could be mailed to listeners. This enhanced his reading audience and his financial support.



Mordecai Ham

Although Ham held only six meetings in Florida during these years, he was able to gain access to the masses by broadcasting

over Gainesville's WRUF and Jacksonville's WPDQ stations. This type of ministry kept Ham's ministry reaching large numbers of people and assisted him in "networking" with folks who other wise would not have been able to associate with Ham. Florida meetings were listed on the published copies of sermons Ham made available for distribution. There is every indication that Ham enjoyed his ministry in Florida and Baptist Witness editor Solomon led the Sunshine State Baptists in extending appreciation to him. No dates are given in the published sermons for the most part but Ham made an eternal difference in the lives of hundreds in his meetings in Florida.⁴

Endnotes

¹ Edward E. Ham, *50 Years on the Battle Front with Christ: A Biography of Mordecai F. Ham* (Louisville: The Old Kentucky Home Revivalist, 1950, pp. 284-294). Ham was an independent Baptist evangelist but also a vocal proponent of the temperance movement. He was saved at age 8 and called to preach at age 9. In 2010 Southern Baptist evangelists added Ham to their Evangelists Hall of Faith.

² Quoted in Ham, *50 Years*, pp. 253-254.

³ Editorial in *Florida Baptist Witness*, Vol. LII, No. 11, March 16, 1939, p. 6.

⁴ The copies of these sermons used in this documentation are located at the Billy Graham Center Archives on the campus of Wheaton College, Wheaton, Illinois. In this wonderful world of electronic media you can actually go on line and hear Mordecai Ham preach. It is quickly noted that Ham preaches plain, personal, direct and effective sermons. He calls for the public show of hands and also compels people to come forward in repentance for salvation.



CHARLES BRAY WILLIAMS
GREEK SCHOLAR,
PASTOR & PREACHER

CHARLOTTE WILLIAMS SPRAWLS

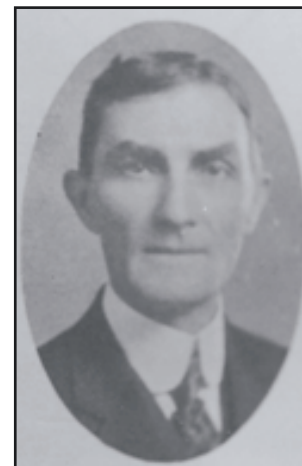
Daughter of Charles Bray Williams

It is difficult to know where or how to begin writing a biography of Charles Bray Williams. The first part will be a chronological account of his life as chronicled by numerous letters from him to his brother Simeon (Simmie) in Shiloh during the first twenty-five years of his professional career, along with many newspaper clippings and autobiographical information he published from time to time. In addition to these primary sources I am including as well a detailed account of the evolution, publication, temporary disappearance, then the re-publication not once but three times of his major contribution to Biblical literature: his translation from the original Greek of the *New Testament in the Language of the People*. Since I was not born until his teaching career was almost over, I have relied on his own autobiographical materials as well as on extensive research in the archives at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Ft. Worth, TX, done by Dr. Richard K. Moore, an Australian theologian in preparation for his volumes on the subject of Justification (or Rectification), published in 2002. His part Three specifically dealt with Paul's *Doctrine of Rectification in English Versions of the New Testament*, and he quotes Williams' translation at length in his treatise.¹

Amazingly my nephew Noel Pace and I, along with our late cousin Charles (CBW's nephew and namesake), have been able to find a good many pictures from various periods of his life, though many of them were not dated and we have had to guess at

Charles Bray Williams Greek Scholar, Pastor & Preacher

approximate dates. [In our family as in most others we have had the universal problem of taking pictures and failing to date and caption them properly!]



Union University portrait
about 1926.

My father, Charles Bray Williams, was born on January 15, 1869. [People usually tell me this couldn't be possible—he must be my grandfather!] I was his third child, part of his second family, born in 1935 just about two years before he retired the first time. His birthplace, the Simeon Walston (or Wright?)² Williams family farm, was near the small country village of Shiloh, on the road to Old Trap, in extreme northeastern North Carolina's Camden County—not too far from the Outer Banks area to the east and the Great Dismal Swamp to the north. His was a farm family of six children—four boys and two girls, named Charles Bray, Nathan Bray, Simeon (Simmie) Bray, Caleb, Mollie, and Ella. Mary Ann Bray was his mother's maiden name. In re-reading old copies of births and deaths in a family Bible it appears that at least one other girl and two boys died in infancy.

Mary Ann Bray in 1882 bought "The Bear Garden," as the family farm was known, with her inheritance from her father's

estate. In 1866 she had married Simeon Williams and Bear Garden became home to her and her growing family. The children were taught to love work and to have a thirst for knowledge.

Charles turned out to be the scholar of the family, often recalling his habit of reading and studying Latin with his book tied to the handles of his plow as a boy and young teenager. Since these years right after the Civil War were times of hardship it was necessary for sons to work in the fields every day, but by burning the midnight oil and studying his lessons while his team rested periodically from their plowing, he was able to report to the teacher of the public school on Friday afternoons and quickly recite the whole week's assignment. By the age of 15 he was teaching in the country school, earning \$20 a month, which he used to help pay off the mortgage on the old family homestead. At eighteen he entered Wake Forest College with \$48 in his pocket, plus \$150 borrowed from the local educational board. In addition to his studies and class work he was active in debating and literary society work. His ability and earnestness caught the interest of faculty members who found jobs for him, so that when he graduated as the class valedictorian in 1891, with a four-year average of 98 ½, he only had the original debt of \$150 to repay.

Charles was licensed to preach when he was seventeen and he held several country church revivals that year. Three years later, as a student at Wake Forest, he was ordained by the Wake Forest Baptist Church after having been called as pastor of the church at Brasfield. After graduation he became pastor of the Winton Baptist Church for five years, during which time he also was principal of the school and helped raise money for a new school building.

He liked to claim that his branch of the Williams family was distantly related to Roger Williams, the father of religious liberty in America; William Williams, signer of the Declaration of

Independence; Sir George Williams, founder of the Young Men's Christian Association; and William Williams, author of "Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah."³

It was in Winton that he met and married Alice Julia Owen. In 1897 they moved to Pennsylvania and he began his graduate studies at Crozer Theological Seminary in Chester, PA. He specialized in the original languages of the Bible—Hebrew and Greek--and graduated with a B.D. degree in 1900. His thesis was entitled *Evolution and God: The History of the Baptists in North Carolina*. One of his lecturers at Crozer was Henry C. Vedder, who wrote about him in its "Introduction", dated June 1901:

I have been in the habit of advising my students, if they have a liking for historical investigation, to undertake a monograph on some local subject, and thus secure the preservation of much valuable material that otherwise will very likely be lost to future historians. . . As a student he showed more than usual interest and proficiency in the work of historical research, and he has done his work *con amore*. I read the manuscript critically some months ago, and had no hesitation in cordially recommending its publication.

In addition to his divinity degree he somehow found time to take a business course in Poughkeepsie, NY. While a student he was also pastor of churches in Chester, PA and nearby New Jersey cities. In October of 1899 his first child, Charles Weston, was born.

Soon after graduating from Crozer the family started for Texas but stopped over in Locksburg, Arkansas, and he served as principal of the high school there for a year. After another year as pastor of the Olive Street Baptist Church in Texarkana, he was called to the pastorate of the First Baptist Church of Stephenville, Texas, where he served for three years, followed by a pastorate at

Rockdale. During these years he became popular as a revival preacher and held revivals in Dublin, Lampasas, Brownwood and Trinity, Texas that resulted in over 300 professions of faith.⁴

In April of 1902 in Stephenville his first daughter, Eunice Lois was born. She idolized her big brother Weston all her life.

In 1905 Dr. B. H. Carroll, then Dean of the Theological School of Baylor University, contacted CBW asking him to meet him in Waco for an interview. Before the day of the interview was over Williams was elected to the position as chair of Greek New Testament and Interpretation and he began work the following week as the first professor hired from the outside for the newly formed Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Dr. Carroll and Dr. A. H. Newman were already connected with Baylor University.

While teaching at Baylor he attended summer schools at the University of Chicago, receiving his M.A. degree in 1907 and the Ph.D. in 1908. His dissertation topic was probably the seed from which the New Testament translation was to grow: *The Participle in the Book of Acts*. [Seemingly he was a bundle of energy who loved to do everything in a hurry! And can you imagine traveling 2000 miles roundtrip with a wife and two young children in the first decade of the 1900s, with roads being what they must have been and cars a new but still primitive mode of transportation!]

During his years at Baylor he was offered the pastorate of First Baptist Church of Waco at an annual salary of \$4000, but he declined the offer and stayed with his teaching job at a \$1500 salary.⁵ After the Seminary moved to Fort Worth he was again tempted by a call to the Broadway Baptist Church there as well as one from the First Baptist Church in Wichita Falls, at salaries three times higher than he was making at the seminary. But he remained faithful to his friends at the Seminary. He was the first librarian at Southwestern Seminary and catalogued the first 5000

volumes of its library, given by Drs. A. J. Harris and A. H. Newman.⁶ From 1913 to 1919 he also served as dean of the Seminary and managing editor of the *Southwestern Journal of Theology*, in addition to his teaching. During the summers he served as dean of the Panhandle Bible Conference!⁷ In nine years in Fort Worth he raised \$75,000 for seminary expenses and endowment and also witnessed 200 professions of faith in a service at a nearby military camp as World War I was beginning. In a clipping from the Fort Worth Broadway Baptist Church, sent to his brother Simmie in 1918, his preaching was warmly commended:

Dr. C. B. Williams of the Seminary preached to a large crowd of soldiers in the First Baptist Tent at Camp Bowie last Sunday night. Several of our members were present. The unanimous report is that Dr. Williams is one of a very few men who can hold the soldiers. They are hard to preach to. He had 75 professions. It is not usually expected that a Seminary Professor knows much about practical preaching and it is refreshing to find a man of Dr. Williams' type who has a passion for lost souls and the gift of presenting a message in a live, red hot manner. Soldiers on every hand expressed a desire for him to return and we hope that he may do so.

The years in Texas away from his North Carolina family were regularly chronicled by weekly or bi-weekly letters written to his brother Sim (usually addressed as Simmie) back in Shiloh. Simmie's wife Lizzie saved most of those letters and after she died her son Charles (CBW's Shiloh namesake) found them in a trunk in the attic and xeroxed most of them, sending about thirty-five of them, written between 1910 and 1930, to me in a brown binder to keep. I am gleaning bits and pieces of his life from these letters and including them here as appropriate.

Apparently about 1909 CBW and Alice decided to build a house in Fort Worth. In a letter written October 23, 1910 to Simmie, he says,

I am having a time to get into my new home. Windows and doors will not come. Made to order in another state—some North and some South, according to the silly notion of my architect, who has caused me to lose \$1,500.00. But we are going to move into it in another week, by putting up some temporary windows in two rooms. This will be better than living with some one else.

If I can get out of debt in a year or two I expect to buy a touring auto and come home to see you all in it. Wont [sic] that be fine?

In another letter dated October 16, 1915, it was revealed that brother Simmie had also bought himself a car—perhaps as a result of seeing Charles’s “touring auto” on that trip home? I do not have any of the intervening letters.

In the fall of 1917 his son Charles Weston became a college student at Baylor, and about the same time Simeon Walston Williams, CBW’s father, died, leaving his second wife Mary and a young handicapped son, Caleb, who was born sometime about 1915. In a letter written by Alice Williams to Lizzie in December of 1917 she mentions that Mary might be forced to sell the home-place, but apparently she was able to keep it, because the kitchen part of it was moved and renovated by Sim’s son Charles in about 1950 to a location back of his own home and is now a storehouse for their home.

In a letter written to his brother Simmie in 1918 he revealed his own poignant anxiety about Weston’s possibly leaving college to join the war. “Weston is crazy to go to war. I fear I can’t keep him out till he finishes at Baylor. Nearly all the Baylor boys are going and he can’t stand to appear as a ‘slacker.’ He can fin-

ish at Baylor, March 1, 1920, and then will be only 20 yrs and 5 months old—young enough for war. I am willing to give him up if he has to go.”

Letters continued back and forth every week between North Carolina and Texas for several years. Alice and Charles were always delighted when Simmie would ship barrels of potatoes and apples or pears, or crates of hams and homemade sausages to them in the fall. Many of the letters contained glowing reports of how much these groceries were enjoyed and how many happy memories they brought with them. But at the same time, Charles didn’t just wait for food shipments from his dear brother Simmie. At the end of January in 1918 when a bad Texas winter was coming to an end he wrote Simmie that he had just “finished planting all my Irish potatoes this evening. Have in my onions, English pease [sic], lettuce, mustard. Will put in beets and beans a little later.” . . . “The box of meat [you sent me] cost me only \$1.79. And how we have been enjoying it these days! It has been the finest ham I have ever stuck my tooth in.” . . . [Alice] “says she is about to cry because the meat is nearly gone.”

Charles was forever grateful for his brother Simmie’s regular letters but sometimes chided him when a letter didn’t arrive on time. In one dated 3-24-18 he wrote, “You must not fail to write me at least every other Sun. and mail it Mon. so I can get it by the next Sat.”

In 1919 Charles resigned his position at Southwestern to accept the presidency of Howard College (now Samford University) in Birmingham, Alabama. In two years there he paid off a debt of \$60,000, raised an additional \$300,000 for endowment, and started the process of getting the college accredited by the Southern Association. However he ran into opposition from alumni when he suggested moving the location

of the campus. The following section is a quotation from an article I discovered on the internet last year written by researchers writing about past presidents of Samford (Howard) University. I think this is interesting as background information on his tenure at Howard.

On paper, at least, North Carolina native Charles Bray Williams seems to have been an ideal choice for the presidency of Howard College. By 1919, Williams had made a name for himself as a pastor and as a highly respected scholar and veteran professor of Greek and New Testament. But, for all that, the Williams administration ended abruptly and bitterly [in 1921].

Like J. M. Shelburne, Williams sought to link Howard's future to Birmingham's, and his downfall was in leading a campaign to relocate the college closer to the heart of the city. As in the 1880s, supporters of moving Howard questioned the value of investing further in a campus whose isolation and aging facilities were seen to limit the college. Alumni opposed relocation, accurately pointing out that the move from Marion had bitterly divided state Baptists for decades. But faculty and trustees supported relocation, and in late summer 1920 Williams announced that the trustees had selected and purchased options on 120 acres in Woodlawn for a new campus, and had halted investment in the East Lake campus.

As the relocation debate simmered, Williams led a new endowment and debt reduction campaign, succeeding in a short time in eliminating all of Howard's outstanding debt, increasing the endowment to \$400,000 and increasing faculty salaries 20 percent. Less than one month later, Williams announced yet another campaign. He proposed to raise an additional \$500,000 to create an

endowment of almost \$1 million. This, he said, would allow the college to relocate, establish a hospital and a department for the study of medicine, and create "one of the finest technological departments, including a first-class engineering school, in the South." If his vision for Howard's future was off the mark, his vision of Birmingham's was uncanny. "The city needs an engineering school and other technical schools and it needs a great medical school," he said.

Alumni opposition to relocation, combined with the vagaries of the economy, foiled the president's plans for Howard and Birmingham. In early May 1921, Williams announced that he would be away for awhile and then simply never returned to office. There is more than a trace of bitterness in his letter of resignation, published in *The Birmingham News* several weeks after his departure:

Whereas, it seems impossible, in the face of the terrific financial depression, to raise in the near future the necessary one half million dollars for the moving of Howard College to Woodlawn Heights, according to resolutions adopted by the Board of Trustees; whereas, it is my conviction that my high ideal of the Greater Howard, for the education of thousands of youths for the glory of God, could scarcely, if at all, be realized at East Lake; whereas, I am convinced that under the circumstances, I could not serve God best, or help humanity most, or do my full duty to my family; Therefore, I do hereby tender to the Board of Trustees my resignation as president of Howard College to take effect June 1, 1921.

The letter also provides a tantalizing clue to Williams' sudden departure. "As a true sport I take my hat off to the

winners of the game--the East Lake minority," Williams wrote. James F. Sulzby, Jr., on whose research and writing this series is based, noted that "the friends of Howard in East Lake concluded it would be easier to remove Dr. Williams from the presidency than to resist the removal of Howard College from their community." It isn't clear how they accomplished this. Sulzby wrote only that "personal unpleasanties and innuendos had caused Dr. Williams' tenure at the college to become complicated and ineffective." Williams' wife was ill during this period (and died shortly after), and that may have contributed to the pressures that drove him from Howard.

Charles Bray Williams brought a spirit of religious revival to Howard, presided over record enrollments and admission to the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, raised large sums of cash for the endowment and found majority support for a bold institutional vision. It simply wasn't enough, but Williams eventually won vindication for the most controversial aspect of his vision. Construction of Howard College's new campus [in Birmingham] began in 1953, the year after his death.⁸

Even though his tenure as Howard's president was seemingly plagued with controversy, there were some happy events during that time. His son Weston graduated from Baylor on May 26, 1920, and received a Rhodes scholarship to study at Oxford University. Charles wrote Simmie on December 6, 1920, "Glad you received a long letter from Weston. He writes us sometimes a dozen pages describing his trips to London and other places. He is now traveling on the continent during his first six weeks vacation. He will visit France, Spain, Italy, and Switzerland. I am hoping to join him in his vacation next Summer." Lois, who had graduated from high school in May,

enrolled in Bessie Tift College, a women's college near Macon in Forsyth, GA.

But sadly his hoped-for trip was not to be. With his sudden departure from Howard apparently Alice's health deteriorated quickly and he had to move her to Asheville, NC for treatment in a sanitarium. Charles kept busy with lecture engagements in Greenville, SC and Murfreesboro, TN during the summer of 1921, while preparing to accept the position as chair of New Testament Interpretation at Mercer University in Macon, Georgia. The first week of September 1921, Charles, Alice, and Weston rode the train from Asheville to Camden, where Simmie met them to drive on to Shiloh. They spent two weeks with the family and once more enjoyed home cooking and family hospitality.

Then in mid-September he and Alice moved to Macon, taking rooms in a boarding house so that Alice could regain her health and get stronger without having to "keep house and cook meals." Her health had improved somewhat during the summer months in the sanitarium in Asheville, but it quickly became necessary for her to enter a sanitarium in Atlanta for more treatment. Charles wrote Simmie in October: "My classes are good and I am well pleased with Mercer—have nearly 500 students—will run far beyond that during the year. My largest class has nearly 30—fine class." But he went on to tell Simmie how sad he was: "So hard not to be with your loved ones at all. Weston leaves at noon today from NY for Eng.; Lois in Bessie Tift away from me; Mrs. W. in a hospital, and I alone." After a three-week stay in the Atlanta sanitarium Alice came home to Macon, but she was much weaker physically, though she had gained a few pounds on her pure cream diet!

In the summer of 1922 Charles, Alice, and Lois traveled to Dubuque, Iowa, where he had been invited to teach in the gradu-

ate summer school. According to one of her letters written to Lizzie before leaving for Iowa, Alice had made plans to go, while there, to Mayo Clinic for some surgery and to get some definitive diagnosis of her illness. There is no mention in later letters of the results of this trip to Mayo. Apparently her physical condition continued to worsen over the next three years. At the end of 1925 she was at the point of death. There are no more letters in the binder between 1922 and 1927.

In a recently received group of family pictures and other clippings and letters from my nephew, Noel Pace, Lois's son, there is a good description of Alice that Lois had saved in her files. This was included in an obituary the day she died.

Mrs. Charles Bray Williams was a favorite in the University circles because of her winsome and attractive personality. Possessed of a culture born in the North Carolina schoolgirl twenty-five years ago, Mrs. Williams had always been the leading spirit in the social life of the college campus[es] where it happened to be the lot of Dr. Williams to teach. Presiding with grace and charm over the functions of the University, she had endeared herself to a wide circle of friends over the entire South.

An invalid for all the years since her residence in Macon, nevertheless Mrs. Williams had won for herself a large place in many friendships. Always a born psychologist and a musician she added to a naturally frail body the endearing tenderness and sympathy that goes along with the understanding heart, reaching out to the distressed and troubled, whom she touched in the role of wife to college president and professor in seminary and university. A high standard of Christian character was the mark of her deep religious nature.

A touching incident occurred in the last days of Mrs. Williams' illness when Fate coupled with circumstances enabled Dr. Williams to secure from the press the first copy of his newest book, *An Introduction to Christian Ethics*, and having dedicated the volume to his wife without her knowledge, she was able to read and wanly smile in recognition of the inscribed dedication of the book, "to my wife, Alice Julia Williams."⁹

In another ironic twist of Fate, Weston, who was doing further graduate study in Stockholm, Sweden in 1924-25 after finishing his studies at Oxford University, was notified of the serious condition of his mother about ten days before she died. He immediately began efforts to get back across the Atlantic, but because those were the days when passengers had to rely on the scheduled sailings of ships, he was not able to make the 4000-mile trip in time to see her before she died. He did get to Macon on Sunday night, two days after her death on Friday afternoon. He was of course able to attend her funeral on Monday morning the 26th.¹⁰

Apparently Charles in his grief and loneliness over the next few months allowed himself to become part of a rebound marriage less than a year after Alice died. This marriage to a Mrs. Lucile Adams Bruner¹¹ lasted about seven years. His nephew Charles in a letter to me in 1989 recalled that in 1932 when his Uncle Charlie and Lois visited the family in Shiloh he was in the midst of getting a divorce and was swearing off women for good! His brother Simmie had advised him not to marry so quickly after Alice's death in 1925 and this apparently caused at least a temporary rift in their friendship, though CBW did make a quick trip back to Shiloh when Simmie and Lizzie's oldest son Worth was killed in a motorcycle accident. After that there weren't many letters exchanged between them.

Dr. Williams left Mercer in 1925 and began his final university teaching position at Union University in Jackson, Tennessee in the fall of 1925, where he was named professor of Greek and ethics. He taught at Union until his retirement at the age of 70 in 1939. It was during his last years at Union that his most well-known publication was produced: *The New Testament Translation In the Language of the People*, published by Bruce Humphries, a Boston publisher.

In 1933 while serving the Friendship (TN) Baptist Church as interim pastor, CBW apparently forgot his vow to swear off women for good. There was a young schoolteacher, named Edith Stallings, teaching English in the Friendship High School who caught his eye in the church. She had graduated a few years before from Union University, and perhaps had known him there. Subsequently she studied at Peabody College in Nashville and got her master's degree. Edith Stallings was about 30 years younger than he, but in 1934 they were married. The next year, when he was 66 years old, I, Charlotte Edith Williams, was born, in Jackson, TN. I became quite a daddy's girl. In a letter written to his brother Simmie back in Shiloh on December 15, 1937, he showed how happy he was with his new family: "... I have a fine faithful wife who does everything she can daily to make me comfortable and happy. . . I have as sweet a little daughter as any daddy has. She is growing and developing and is showing herself so smart physically and mentally. She can set the table and do other house chores for mother and daddy. . . Charlotte is talking Santa Claus all the day now." (Do you think I might have been spoiled?)

In 1939, just two years after the New Testament translation he had been working on for so many years was published, CBW retired from Union University, gave up his Bruceton Baptist Church job, and the family moved to Tampa, Florida, to retire. But in those days shortly after the country was getting back on its

feet after the Great Depression, there was not enough money in pensions and retirement funds to suddenly quit working, so very quickly Charles found himself supplying churches all over the Tampa and West Florida coast area. For at least one year he taught at a Bible College in Tampa and he used to talk about a young student of his there named Billy Graham. (In later years after the Williams translation was being published by Moody Press the Billy Graham Association requested permission from them to use the translation from time to time in the Graham crusades and writings.)

Even at the age of 70 Charles B. Williams was still a young retiree with plenty of energy. He had been still playing tennis until he retired from Union! And he still had his set of golf clubs and played occasionally when he had an invitation. Charles and Edith joined the large First Baptist Church in Tampa, but the family didn't attend services there very much because he was preaching in so many local churches almost every Sunday. I was a very shy little girl, but one of the Sunday School teachers at First Baptist Church was able to make friends with me and convince me to leave my mother and come to her class on the Sundays when we were in town. Vivian McLin became my favorite friend because of her kindness and understanding. But most Sundays Williams was preaching either as an interim or an invited guest preacher at numerous churches on Florida's west coast—in Sarasota, in Brandon, and in Plant City, to name a few. I remember enjoying the new experience of eating at a Morrison's cafeteria for Sunday lunches in Sarasota, as well as enjoying visiting church families on their strawberry farms in Brandon and Plant City and eating those delicious strawberries.

It was while we were living on Obispo Avenue in the Palma Ceia suburb of Tampa that I began to get acquainted with my father's other family—my half-sister Lois and her husband Bill

Pace and their son (my nephew!) Noel, who was a year older than I, came down from Macon, Georgia, to visit us one Christmas and meet their father's new family. Another time my half-brother Weston and his wife Ruth and daughter Alice Elaine (my niece who was 4 years older than I!) visited us for several days from Kentucky, where he was teaching economics at the University of Louisville.

In the fall of 1941 I started to first grade in the Roosevelt Grammar School that was just about two blocks from our house. By this time I had become much less timid and had made friends with some of the neighborhood children, so I announced to my mother that I didn't need her to walk me to school that first day. I really don't remember if maybe my father actually went with me or not, but mother did have one of her migraine headaches and wasn't able to go with me.

My memories of those first days in school have faded, which is just as well, because in October my parents told me we would be moving to North Carolina. Daddy's brother Simmie had persuaded the old Shiloh Baptist Church to call him as their pastor, and Daddy had accepted. He really was homesick for his old home and family, I'm sure. And this would serve as a chance to mend the break with his family that his failed marriage in 1932 had caused.

Shiloh church sent a driver with a long open farm-style truck to Tampa to load up our furniture, cover it with tarps, and move us to North Carolina. (It was the kind of truck we still see nowadays hauling watermelons or loads of corn to market!) But it got the furniture there without too much damage, and we were settled into the two-story parsonage in the middle of the small village of Shiloh, about two long blocks from the church. The house was covered with asbestos shingles (I think the church had recently remodeled and painted the interior of the house.) We did have

fairly modern conveniences—no outdoor toilet!—but there was no hot running water. I remember mother had to heat kettles of water on the electric stove both to wash dishes, clothes (by hand, because there was no washing machine) and to carry upstairs to pour into the bathtub for a slightly warm bath! The house was heated by a big old parlor wood stove in the “study,” (which today we would call the family room or den). CBW did have a carpenter put a vent in the ceiling of the study to let heat from the stove rise up in the wintertime to one of the bedrooms above. I guess the rest of the rooms were heated with portable electric heaters. The kitchen and dining room were on the other side of the downstairs. Upstairs there were three bedrooms and a bathroom.

As families do today, we basically lived in the study, which had his big old black-painted oak desk and his Underwood No. 5 typewriter as the major furniture, along with a daybed and two or three chairs. The living room was in front of the study facing the road, and when I turned eight years old its main piece of furniture, at least for me, became a brand-new Lester Betsy Ross spinet piano when I began taking piano lessons from Miss Beulah Walston. Occasionally my father would sit down at the piano and play some of his favorite hymns, such as *Abide With Me* or *Rock of Ages*, or *Jesus, Lover of My Soul*. I have no idea where or when he had learned to play the piano. He had given Lois a beautiful Steinway baby grand piano on her sixteenth birthday and perhaps he learned to play while she was taking piano lessons. Both he and Alice were good musicians and he had a good tenor singing voice too.

I was quickly enrolled in the first grade of the Shiloh school, a big red brick building about two blocks south of the parsonage that housed all twelve grades. Since I had already learned to read and write before starting to first grade in Tampa, my first year in

Shiloh was rather boring, so the next summer my parents asked the second grade teacher to tutor me a bit just to make sure I wouldn't miss any important second-grade work. Then I went into the third grade in the fall of 1942.

My father loved being back "home," and the community loved him. I remember him as an excellent pastor for the 700-member Shiloh Baptist Church, which has the distinction of being the oldest Baptist church in North Carolina, having begun in 1727 as Burgess' Meeting House, with later name changes of North Meeting House and Camden Meeting House. The present building in 1941 had been built in 1848 and 1849 at a cost of about \$2,400.¹²

On Sunday afternoon, December 7, just two months after our arrival in Shiloh, one of our neighbors came rushing to the house to tell us she had just heard a broadcast on the radio about the bombing of Pearl Harbor and the entry of the US into World War II. CBW loved history and current events, so he was a very timely person for his old home community during wartime. Shiloh was in a very vulnerable position geographically, since it is situated only about forty miles as the crow flies from Norfolk, VA, which was an important shipbuilding center during the war, and the German submarines were eager to reach it. CBW saw to it that our community took very active parts in such war activities as the aircraft watches, Red Cross bandage making, and inviting sailors from the Norfolk Naval Base to spend their leaves and Christmases with the church's families. Of course we had a good many impromptu weddings in the pastorium for young sailors and their girlfriends just before the men shipped out for overseas duty. And it was no secret anywhere that CBW was a very strong supporter of Roosevelt and his policies. I grew up listening to radio news broadcasts by people like H. V. Kaltenborn and Robert Trout and Edward R. Murrow as they reported on the

progress of the war. My father never missed a news broadcast—and neither do I to this day! He also was an avid radio fan of baseball broadcasts. I guess my interest in playing softball probably came in part from listening to those old broadcasts.

CBW believed strongly in a pastor's knowing personally every member in his church, and he had a very active plan of visitation of every family in their home every few weeks. I often accompanied him on these visitations and he would sometimes let me "drive" our new 1941 Plymouth by sitting in his lap and steering on some of the country roads. By the time I was eight I was learning to back the car out of the driveway and through the gate out to the road, then driving it back into the garage! He would usually be working in his huge garden, which was alongside the driveway, probably watching me to make sure I wasn't going too fast or about to hit the fence! He was a master gardener and took great pride in his tomatoes and corn and beans and a huge Brown Turkey fig bush at the edge of the garden. A neighbor's cotton field came up to the edge of our back yard and garden and I remember earning a few pennies one summer picking cotton for him.

Since it was wartime and money as well as meat was scarce, some of the pastor's pay was in the form of chickens on the hoof! We had a small chicken house on the other back corner of the yard where these "gifts" were housed until time for eating. Most of my pets until at least the age of eight were hens and roosters that I tamed and would encourage to sit in my lap as I knelt in the door of the chicken coop to pet them. Needless to say there were frequent tears when it came time to eat some of them and perhaps one or two escaped that fate because of my pleadings. Finally when I was eight a family of three kittens appeared in our garage and I quickly made pets of them so that the chickens weren't my only animal friends.

Other gifts that were much appreciated in the fall and winter were the sausage and hams and sweetbreads and pork chops from hog killings. In spite of the fact that we lived almost surrounded by the waters of the Pasquotank River, the Albemarle Sound and North River, I do not recall having much fish to eat during those years. Perhaps I just didn't like it and therefore don't remember having it. But one year when my cousin Charles came home on furlough from the Navy he and his uncle took me out in a boat fishing on the river for the first time and I thoroughly enjoyed it, even though I remember it rained most of the day!

CBW's namesake nephew, Charles Bray Williams II, Simmie's youngest son, and his brother Bailey finished their college degrees (just as their Uncle Charlie had constantly urged them to do back in his letters to them and their dad in the late 1920s) at Duke University just as the war broke out at the end of 1941, so they both left for officers' training at the Great Lakes Naval Training center almost immediately. When they came home on furloughs periodically, in their handsome naval 1st Lieutenants' uniforms, I thought they were the most handsome men I had ever seen. Charles was always my favorite, because he had come to visit us, hitchhiking from Shiloh to West Tennessee, when he was fifteen years old and I was just a toddler in Jackson, Tennessee. He had a small Brownie movie camera and always made lots of movies whenever he was at home on furlough. Thanks to his photographic skills I now have copies of many home movies of CBW practicing his sermons or reading from his New Testament or out in the garage chopping wood for the stove with my help.

CBW continued to be a popular speaker for commencements and graduations and various church meetings in eastern North Carolina and southeastern Virginia even during the war with limited opportunity to travel because of gasoline shortages.

I still remember the coupon books we had to use for buying the limited amounts of gasoline we needed. CBW was always on the lookout for young talent to mentor and steer toward a college education, much as he had done with his own nephews when they were younger. One of the teenagers in Shiloh church, Walter Barnard, was probably his favorite young charge, and Walter spent many hours at our house talking with my father and mother about his future, borrowing books from my father's library, and playing the piano. He was an exceptional student already, so he didn't need that much tutoring, but CBW saw a great potential in him and continued to encourage him even after he retired in 1946 and moved back to Florida. Walter was encouraged to enter Wake Forest, where he became an excellent student and graduated *summa cum laude* four years later. He then went on to get his master's in library science at UNC (CBW couldn't convince him to become a minister!) and he spent an interesting career working at Columbia University in New York City, finishing his career as their Acquisitions Librarian in the late 1990s.

Once or twice a year our church had to "borrow" the use of the baptistry in Elizabeth City's First Baptist Church since Shiloh didn't have a baptismal pool. In earlier years Shiloh church just baptized people in the Pasquotank River, but my father preferred to use a real baptistry! At the age of 8 I was baptized in that Elizabeth City baptistry. Since there was no grocery store in our small village we had to drive about 10 miles to Elizabeth City to shop every week for things we couldn't raise and can from the garden. And once a year we made a trip across the scary Dismal Swamp into Norfolk to buy shoes for my mother's and my narrow feet!

In the summer of 1945 as the war was beginning to wind down, two of my mother's brothers and sisters and their spouses

came for a visit from Western Tennessee. For the first time in my life (in spite of having lived in Tampa near the Gulf of Mexico for two years and less than 30 miles from the Atlantic Ocean all during our years in Shiloh) my uncle and aunt took me to the beach at Virginia Beach. I was ten years old and thought that was the most fun I had ever had in my life!

The next summer, 1946, when the war was over CBW decided it was time to retire again, and after a trip or two to Florida to look for a place to live, we again moved to Florida—this time to a small town just north of DeLand and not too far from Jacksonville, named Pierson. In reflecting on this apparent love of living in Florida that he once more demonstrated, I can't help but wonder why he chose Florida as a retirement home—both in 1938 and in 1946. In letters he wrote his brother in the early 20s when he spent several summers in the mountains in Asheville, NC, he mentioned more than once his love for the mountains and his dreams of building a home there someday. He had absolutely no prior experiences in Florida or even invitations to lecture or preach there during his early teaching and preaching career.

Nevertheless, Edith was able to get a job teaching school there and became the breadwinner for the family. She actually had begun teaching again the last two years we were in Shiloh, and she was my teacher for some of my subjects in the sixth grade. I credit her with teaching me how to write properly because in English class she had us studying penmanship part of the time. Up until then my handwriting was awful! In Pierson she taught English and Social Studies in the junior-senior high school and I spent two years in junior high classes. This was in the days before girls were allowed to take "shop" classes, but I was able to absorb some of the shop class because one of my study halls was in that classroom. Perhaps that is why I have been a frus-

trated architect all my life. Too bad someone didn't steer me in that direction back then! I did enter the National Spelling Bee those two years and was runner-up in the state of Florida both years, going in the 7th grade to Jacksonville for the finals and in the 8th grade to Miami.

During these two years CBW did a good many guest lectures and part-time teaching at Stetson University in DeLand. He had hopes that I might choose to go to Stetson for my college training, but that was not to be. After two years in Pierson my mother decided that we should move to another county that had a better pay scale for teachers, so in the summer of 1948 we moved once more to Lakeland, Florida, where she got a job as a teacher in the Combee School, a new school on the eastern side of the county. The family bought a small two-bedroom house--with a large back yard for a garden--about a mile from the school. Later on Edith worked mostly as a substitute teacher in the Polk County school system, even teaching four levels of Latin in Lakeland High School part of one year when the regular teacher was ill and had to be out for six months.

Again CBW found a place to teach part time, at the Baptist Bible Institute in Lakeland. He taught there for about two years until his health began to fail about 1950. His heart began to fail and he even had to spend a few months in a local nursing home run by one of the church members at Eastside Baptist Church where we were members. After a few months he was able to come back home but with limited strength. Even so, he continued to write a few hours each day, working on his last manuscript entitled *A Commentary on the Pauline Epistles*. And he continued to enjoy sitting down at the piano and playing his favorite hymns every day.

In all the letters he wrote to his family through the years, and other articles and correspondence I have been able to collect, I

have found only one reference to his work on the translation. In a quotation from a newspaper article in the Lakeland, FL *Ledger*, CBW recalled that “it took him more than 20 years to turn out the New Testament [translation] from the original Greek text, and that he started the mansized task only after one of his seminary students heard him criticize some of the accepted translations and suggested he ‘turn out a better one.’”¹³ We have always assumed he must have worked on it over a period of several years, probably beginning with his translations done for Greek classes and spurred on by the encouragement by students and colleagues to get those class translations published. I do know that he was a person of boundless energy, as evidenced in his letters recounting the activities he was involved in while holding his full-time teaching positions. He was almost constantly doing at least two jobs-teaching and preaching-and was also very popular as a speaker for commencements and conferences and other special events of all kinds. At the same time, he was constantly writing books. He lists at least nine, in addition to the New Testament translation, in an autobiography he wrote in 1947 when he retired for the second time and moved back to Florida. The titles include *A History of Baptists in North Carolina* (B.D. thesis at Crozer, 1901); *The Participle in the Book of Acts* (Ph.D. dissertation, March 1909); *The Function of Teaching in Christianity* (1913); *An Introduction to Christian Ethics* (1925); *New Testament History and Literature* (1917); *Citizens of Two Worlds* (1919); *An Introduction to New Testament Literature* (1929); *The Evolution of New Testament Christology* (1928); *New Testament Synonyms*; and *The Galilean Wins*.¹⁴ In addition he spent a good deal of time writing *An Estimate of the Greatness of Dr. B. H. Carroll* in 1947, but I am not sure that was ever published. Williams and B. H. Carroll had been close neighbors in his days at Southwestern Seminary in Fort Worth, and he wrote affectionately of him:

But more than any other source we mention the ten years of personal contact as next-door neighbor and a colleague with him in those pioneer days of founding and starting the Southwestern Seminary. Seeing him live and move and do great things every day is the primal source of this evolution of his charming character and supernal personality. This tribute we pay him: Since we left the paternal roof we met no one who so influenced our thinking as he did in the most critical period of our public career. [Williams often wrote in the first person plural!]

At the time of Williams’ death in 1952 he was working on *A Commentary on the Pauline Epistles*, which was published posthumously by Moody Press in 1953.

REBIRTH OF THE TRANSLATION

It was sometime during 1948 or 1949 that Kenneth Taylor, one of the editors at Moody Press, came to visit him with a proposal to reprint the New Testament translation that had lain unpublished ever since Bruce Humphries temporarily went out of the publishing business in about 1941. The first new edition by Moody Press was dated 1949. In an article by John Mostert, a member of the faculty of Moody Bible Institute, in the *Moody Monthly*, he stated that “the volume has been out of print for some time, but is now available once more. For accuracy and perspicuity of translation, this is one of the finest private translations produced in recent years.”¹⁵ This same article includes a picture of the jacket of the “new edition of the Williams’ translation of the New Testament just released by Moody Press, Chicago.”¹⁶ Mostert in one of the Introduction endorsements in the New Testament 1949 edition itself, continues in his praise:

The work of translating the New Testament from the original Greek into our language is no small task. Not only

does it require a detailed knowledge of the vocabulary and grammar of ancient *koine* Greek, but also the faculty of conveying ideas into good, clear English idiom. In his handling of the Greek text the translator must be fair, accurate, and although in many instances must act in the role of interpreter, he must not permit subjective opinion to have the upper hand.

Williams does what few others have done: he takes some of the finer shades of meaning found in the Greek constructions and fuses them into the English text. This he does, not in a cumbersome, overwrought manner, but in a natural, smooth-flowing style. More than any other translator he brings out the *aktionsart* (kind of action) of the verbs, an element little stressed in standard versions. Besides this there is clear evidence of the results of latest research into the fuller significance of certain words, cases, prepositions, connectives, and other parts of speech.¹⁷

I have a copy of that first Moody printing in my collection now, but I was not aware of it being in print until 1950, just two years before CBW's death. I guess my first years in a new high school put me in a fog that kept me from being too aware of important events in the publishing world, but I do definitely remember the men who came down to visit us from Moody Press and I still have some of the pictures they made on that visit for their publicity. My mother and I thought it was an interesting twist of fate that years later Kenneth Taylor, the Moody editor who handled the beginning of the transfer of translation to Moody Press, also was the man who published the popular paraphrase, *The Living Bible*, so popular in the 1970s after he became president of Tyndale Publishers. Charles Bray Williams died on May 4, 1952, at age 83, in the Bartow, FL hospital, after

a short final illness. His heart finally gave out. My mother and I accompanied his body on the train to Norfolk, VA for his final memorial service and burial in the Hollywood Cemetery in Elizabeth City, NC.

The pastor of Eastside Baptist Church, M. J. Schultz, wrote a warm tribute to Dr. Williams in the week after his death that was in the following Sunday's church bulletin.

Last Sunday, our beloved Dr. Charles B. Williams breathed his last in the Bartow Hospital and took his flight to realms of glory to be with Jesus. We greatly miss him. . . . He was a world-famous scholar of the Greek New Testament, a wonderful teacher, a prince of preachers, a gracious friend, a saint indeed, and a father and husband beloved. His example in this church will be a blessing and challenge to be faithful unto death. At the age of 83 he never missed a service till he became too ill to attend. God hallow his memory! His reward in Heaven will be something great!¹⁸

I graduated from Lakeland High School about a month later, just missing the honor of being salutatorian by a few grade points. CBW had insisted that I take Latin, as well as all four years of English and all the math and science I could work in, but he also suggested that I take typing and shorthand in order to be able to make a good living no matter what field I chose to enter. The two latter subjects came in very handy when in college I was able to get a good job as secretary for Russell Bradley Jones, the chairman of the Bible department at Carson-Newman College. Charles Bray Williams was forever the academic advisor!

But the real story of the Williams translation actually began again in 1952 after its hiatus of ten or eleven years. Apparently enough of his former students had bought copies of the original

Bruce Humphries edition in 1937 and the years up to the war that they had kept the enthusiasm for it alive. In the fall of 1952 my mother and I moved back to Tennessee to be nearer her family and as I enrolled in Carson-Newman College in September for my freshman year, she became assistant manager of the Carson-Newman College bookstore, moving up to manager after a year. (Of course I disliked having my mother go to college with me! But it did have some perks: instead of living in a dorm I lived in an apartment in town with my mother and could drive a car, which no other female students were allowed to do in those years in the fifties. And as a daughter of a faculty member I did not have to pay tuition. But I did miss lots of the fun of dormitory life.)

She immediately started ordering copies of the New Testament from Moody to sell in the college bookstore and made sure that every ministerial student in that eastern Tennessee Baptist college became familiar with it and bought copies to use in their Bible classes. Then as they went on to seminary training at the various seminaries they helped to spread its popularity even further. She became a master salesman for the translation and continued to be until she was forced to retire because of ill health in 1960. Moody published several different editions of the translation, beginning with the almost 2" thick buckram bound copy with the brown and white dust cover in 1952, through a thinner paperback version in the mid-50s, to another hardback in navy blue buckram binding in 1965. Moody also produced a limited number of leather-bound copies printed on thin India paper. I still have the 1952 leather copy they presented to my father just before he died, with his name embossed in gold on the cover.

In 1960 when my mother had to retire because of extremely poor health, I was living in Atlanta and working in the English

department at Emory University, where I had finished graduate school in 1958. It was at Emory that I met a young physicist, Perry Sprawls, in the fall of 1960 when he began his teaching career there. At the end of 1961, even though my mother was still very ill and actually in the hospital, Perry and I were married. When my mother was able to leave the hospital she lived for a few weeks at the home of my sister Lois in Decatur until she was strong enough to get an apartment and live by herself. When Perry and I finished building our first home in May she moved into an apartment we had built in it especially for her, where she began to regain her health. She actually lived 25 more years!! Perry has been closely involved through the years with the publishing of the New Testament translation and continues to be my best advisor and publishing companion.

In 1966 the Moody edition was included in a Four-Translation New Testament published by The Iversen Associates, NY, and printed by World Wide Publications, a printer in Minneapolis, MN which was distributed at some of the Billy Graham Crusades. Later on there was inclusion in a 26-Translation collection published by Zondervan, but I do not have a copy of it in my library.

Gradually during the late 1970s sales of the Moody editions declined. In about 1983 Moody ceased publication and for about 10 years the Williams translation was out of print again. Then in 1985 in an editorial in the *Advanced Adult Quarterly* put out by the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, Lee Porter may have unwittingly started the ball rolling toward re-publication of the Williams New Testament when he ended the editorial with the sentence, "You may want to secure for yourself a copy of this translation as you are involved in this study [of the Gospel of John]." The Williams translation had been used throughout the Sunday School lessons for the winter quarter as the reference by that quarter's lesson writer. I wrote to Mr. Porter, thanking him

for his recommendation but reminding him that there were no copies left anywhere for people to buy. Moody Press had notified my mother in 1984 that they were completely out of stock and knew of none available anywhere.

At the same time I wrote to Dr. Steve Bond, one of the editors at Broadman Press with whom I had talked many times during the time I was an administrative assistant to Dr. Peter Rhea Jones at First Baptist Church of Decatur, GA, who was writing a book on the Parables that I spent many months typing for him. Dr. Bond wrote back immediately with a recommendation that I get in touch with Holman Bible Publishers, who were the Bible-publishing arm of Broadman Press. After corresponding with editors there for a few months, Holman sent my mother a contract in 1985 proposing to publish in 1986. It actually did make it into print in 1986 just a month before my mother died, so she did get to see it in print again.

Ironically, unknown to us, Moody Press had also reconsidered and their editorial board had decided to re-issue the translation in 1986. They had sent a contract to my mother about the same time we were in talks with Holman, and we had to make the difficult decision to go with Holman, because we thought they would give the translation much better advertisement and promotion than Moody had done over the past ten or twenty years. Moody graciously agreed to Holman's request for the photographic plates, even though they were disappointed that my mother had chosen not to renew their contract. Unfortunately communication had broken down at some point in 1983-84 and they had never communicated to my mother that they probably would eventually consider re-publication, so she thought they had put an end to their involvement with the translation.

We were pleased with Holman's handling of the publication. Under the guidance of Johnnie Godwin, who was a delight to

work with, they decided to call their edition the 50th anniversary edition, even though it actually came out a few months before 1987, the 50th year. The books sold well. They produced a hard-back navy-colored copy as well as both wine and black leather bindings, which were very popular. My cousin Charles Williams, CBW's nephew, was still living in Shiloh and was a big supporter of his uncle's work. He was instrumental in getting one of the Elizabeth City bookstores to stock a few of the New Testaments, and in August of 1986 he sent me a clipping from the Elizabeth City paper, *The Daily Advance*, quoting an editorial published in the *Capital Baptist* in Washington, DC.

In the avalanche of books about the Bible, coming from modern authors and publishers, it is good news that the Williams New Testament translation is being reprinted by the Baptist Sunday School Board's Holman Division.

When Charles B. Williams translated the New Testament 'in the language of the people' nearly half a century ago while on the faculty of Southwestern Seminary, J. R. Mantey, Department of New Testament Interpretation, Northern Baptist Theological Seminary, wrote 'Williams' translation, considering all the factors, is the most accurate and illuminating translation in the English language.'

...

Warren W. Wiersbe in his 1974 book *Which Bible Can you Trust* says, 'For accuracy in translation of the Greek verbs, [the Williams New Testament] stands head and shoulders above the others.'

In a time when the Baptists need all the healing possible, Williams himself represents a bridging symbol. Williams devoted his professional career almost wholly to Southern Baptist institutions. . . . But Williams, after graduating summa cum laude from Wake Forest, attended and grad-

uated from two American Baptist related schools-Crozer Theological Seminary and the University of Chicago where he received the Ph.D. degree.

Williams said his objective in his New Testament was 'not a word for word translation. . . . It is rather a translation of the thought of the writers with a reproduction of their diction and style. Greek idioms are not brought over into our translation, but are expressed in corresponding English idioms which express the same thoughts as the Greek idioms. It is the thoughts of our New Testament, not in single words, that we have tried to translate.'¹⁹

But in about 1995 when they had completely sold out their 10,000 copy printing, I found out accidentally at the Baptist Book Store in Atlanta that Holman had discontinued the publication without even telling me ahead of time and giving me a chance to buy the last few copies to keep for personal requests, as our contract had promised. Needless to say, I was very upset, but could do nothing to change the situation. I have my opinions about why Holman dropped the translation from their publications, but that is a moot subject.

In the early 90s, after the Holman printing had been selling for a few years, a Biblical researcher from Perth, Australia, Richard K. Moore, wrote me that he was beginning a major work on the subject of Justification and he was extremely impressed with the way the Williams translation helped in the understanding of this doctrine. Moore subsequently made a special study trip to the U.S. in July of 1994 and spent almost a month working in the archives of Southwestern Seminary in Fort Worth doing research on Charles Bray Williams. He was able to dig up material and pictures that I had no idea even existed, and he wrote up a detailed history of research he had done and sent it to me. At the same time, when he finished his research at

Southwestern, he and his wife Kathy came by Decatur, Georgia, and spent three or four days visiting in our home and discussing his interest in my father and his work. Moore worked on his volumes on Justification while he was continuing his teaching as Head of the New Testament Department at the Baptist Theological College of Western Australia, and the two volumes were published in 2002.²⁰ I was impressed with Dr. Moore's scholarly interest in the Williams translation and asked him to do the foreword for the Millennium edition in 2000, which he graciously agreed to do. We continue to carry that foreword now also in the Montreat edition. Quoting from his last paragraph in the foreword:

The genius of Charles B. Williams was to incorporate this relational understanding of "justification" into his English translation in a viable way. Those who undertake the research will find he was the first to do so. Many subsequent translations have incorporated this approach, notably the very influential *Good News Bible*. It has also been borrowed for some foreign language translations. But is not this matter of how we come into right standing with God, or, more correctly, of how God brings us into right standing with himself, at the very heart of the Good News (Rom. 1.16), at the very heart of Christianity itself? Williams' pioneering work in this vital area gives his translation a unique and enduring significance among English versions of the New Testament.²¹

I spent the next four years contacting lots of Bible publishers-from Abingdon to Zondervan to Smyth & Helwys to Thomas Nelson and several others. Some of them expressed interest, but none were willing to take on a new translation for one reason or another. Finally in about 1997 in talking to Reid Crow, the printer who did all of First Baptist Decatur's printing

at his Collegiate Press in Atlanta, he suggested that there were printers (as opposed to publishers) in the Atlanta area who had presses big enough to handle the giant photographic plates that Holman had returned to me. My husband and I decided there was no reason we could not become publishers of the New Testament ourselves. Holman had also returned copyright rights to me when they ceased publication and I renewed them in my name in 1995. We formed the Sprawls Educational Publishing Company, and Reid Crow put me in touch with one of his local printer friends with whom we began negotiations to publish the translation ourselves. At the end of 1999, just as we were about to move to the beautiful mountains of North Carolina to retire, the books were ready. We were close enough to the millennium that we chose to call our new edition the Millennium Edition, and sales began in January 2000. With only a few advertisements in some of the state Baptist publications and *Baptists Today*, sales took off and have remained fairly steady for the past seven years.

By 2005 the Millennium printing of 2000 copies had sold out, so we began negotiations with another printer recommended by Perry Sprawls' medical textbook printers, who could print as few as 1000 copies at a time and then reprint as necessary without having to warehouse lots of stock. They also digitized the copy so that the old photographic plates are no longer necessary. This latest printing is now called the Montreat Edition.

Interestingly enough, even though we have chosen not to advertise for the past five years in state papers, sales have held up simply by word of mouth and by the increasing use of the internet and Google! We now have requests for orders from many western states, especially California, Arizona, Colorado, Washington, New Mexico; and many northern states from Minnesota to Illinois to Ohio to New York to New Jersey to Vermont to Pennsylvania. Last

year we even had orders from Russia, England, and Switzerland, as well as from the Caribbean and Canada. Just this week I have received orders for 5 copies from individuals in Ontario. Our website is www.sprawls.org/williams

In 2005 we decided to get a hundred copies bound in leather, and even though they turned out to be hardback leather bindings rather than the flexible leather usually used with Bibles, they have proved to be popular and we have had to order an extra batch of them. I was disappointed at first with the leather binding, since I had expected it to be the flexible kind, but now that it is selling so well I have decided it isn't going to be a problem.

The new world of electronic media has brought other opportunities for publicity. In the fall of 1997 a David Haerle, president of a Los Angeles, California company by the name of CMH Records, approached me about producing a set of CDs with a reading of the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, accompanied by music, using the Williams translation. I continued to get royalty notices about these CDs for about two or three years, but the only CD that I ever received was the Gospel of Mark CD, spoken by John Daniels and accompanied by an "inspirational musical score." In checking the website of this company today I am still puzzled as to why a company that apparently has always marketed mostly country music was even interested in doing this project! I do not even see the CDs listed in their offerings now. I gave Mr. Haerle permission to produce the CDs, in hopes that they might help stimulate some interest in the printed copies of the New Testament. Whether they did or not, I do not know, but I do know that we have continued to get a good many orders for New Testaments from individuals in California and other western states these past seven years!

Another interesting inquiry came from a Dr. Stanley L. Morris, representing a group called Lingua International, in

June of 2001. It was his feeling that the Williams New Testament was not getting the exposure it deserved, and he was interested in getting the translation incorporated into one or more electronic Bible libraries in the form of a CD-ROM. He had been working in the Bible software field for 15 years and suggested that he could be of help in finding an electronic publisher. He proposed that he digitize the translation, which I agreed to. Subsequently his digitized copy was assigned to a company by the name of Ellis Enterprises, Inc. of Oklahoma City. As far as I know this digital version is still available at www.BibleLibrary.com or www.ellisenterprises.com. In checking these two sites I see that the William's [sic] translation is still one of the Bibles included in both the Mega and Ultra versions of their online Bible Libraries. Again I granted permission to Dr. John Ellis to produce these digital online copies in hopes that people who bought them would also be interested in buying a copy of the translation in printed form. I spent many hours in 2001-2002 proofreading the digitized copy to make sure there were no errors in it! Yet their spelling of William's is still incorrect on their CD advertising and covers!

In the fall of 2003 I was contacted by Ray Van Neste, director of the R. C. Ryan Center for Biblical Studies at Union University in Jackson, TN, telling me of Union's plans to have a series of lectures in the spring of 2004 in honor of Charles B. Williams and his work on the New Testament translation while he was teaching at Union. I offered to have a portrait of my father painted to hang in the Ryan Center and my husband and I drove over to Jackson for the dedication in April of 2004. In a gracious tribute in a news article written after that visit, the Union president David S. Dockery said,

Charles Williams was a highly visible New Testament Scholar in the early years of the 20th Century. His transla-

tion of the New Testament remains a favorite of many even today. His relationship to Union has been memorialized in a most special way with this wonderful gift from the family members to Union's Ryan Center. The portrait serves as an inspiration for other young New Testament students to give of themselves for this generation in the same way that Dr. Williams did for his in the serious study of God's inspired Word.

So the legacy continues. The seventieth anniversary of the Williams translation finds it still a viable, widely used and appreciated translation. Because so many college and seminary students of Greek and New Testament studies were exposed to the translation through the years and have continued to use the translation and promote it in their congregations, it is still popular all over the United States and even as far away as Europe and China. A few years ago my husband and I took some copies to one of his medical physics colleagues in China on one of his teaching trips to Xian. The testaments are still being used in some of the house churches there. Likewise a colleague in Estonia whose family is Baptist has a copy of the translation to use in their church there.

Charles Bray Williams was a Baptist scholar, it is true, but he was far ahead of his time in his ecumenical ideas. Rather than limiting his education to Southern Baptist institutions he chose to do his graduate studies at northern or American Baptist seminaries where he could broaden his training. And he never hesitated to accept invitations to speak at Presbyterian or Methodist or Lutheran gatherings, as well as at Black churches in his native North Carolina-long before the days of integration.

One of the tests of great literature and of good books is whether or not they stand the test of time: are they dated to one period in which they were written by the vocabulary and idioms

used, or do they sound as fresh and apropos today as they did when they were first published. I think this translation has continued to prove its timelessness through these past seventy years. The fact that ministers are still reading from it to their congregations and urging them to buy copies of it further proves to me that there must be something of great value here.

In the “foreword” of the original edition of the translation and also the Moody Press edition, Charles Bray Williams wrote:

May the face of the Christ, who is the Theme of this book and the light of the world, shine into the heart and upon the life of everyone who reads it!

Endnotes

¹Richard K. Moore, *Rectification ('Justification') in Paul, in Historical Perspective and in the English Bible: God's Gift of Right Relationship*. Studies in the Bible and Early Christianity 50. Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen.

²Genealogical research by CBW's nephew and namesake later questions the Walston middle name and thinks it may actually have been Wright.

³Further genealogical research by nephew Charles never could corroborate these claims, though they could be true, since the name Williams is almost as common a family name as Smith and Jones!

⁴Charles Bray Williams, *Southwestern Men and Messages*, 1947, pp. 131-33.

⁵*Ibid.*

⁶*Ibid.*

⁷*Ibid.*

⁸*The Belltower*, Samford University, March 31, 2006.

⁹Article from *Macon Telegraph*, Jan. 26, 1925

¹⁰*Ibid.*

¹¹Biographical Article in *Who's Who in America*, Chicago: The A. N. Marquis Company, 1938, p. 2671.

¹²*Biblical Recorder*, August 27, 1977, in an article about the church's 250th anniversary on Sunday, August 14.

¹³Article by Betty Jo McLeod, *Lakeland Ledger*, Jan. 1, 1950.

¹⁴*Southwestern Men and Messages*, p. 133.

¹⁵John Mostert, *Moody Monthly*, November 1949, pp. 156-57.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, p. 156.

¹⁷Charles B. Williams, *The New Testament: A Translation in the Language of the People*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1949. Introduction page endorsement by John Mostert.

¹⁸From May 11, 1952 bulletin, Eastside Baptist Church, Lakeland, Florida

¹⁹From *The Daily Advance*, Elizabeth City, NC, Sunday, August 24, 1986.

²⁰Richard K. Moore, *Ibid.*

²¹Richard K. Moore, Foreword, *Williams New Testament in the Language of the People*, 2000, pp.7-8.



THE PREACHING OF
CHARLES ROY ANGELL
“A MASTER COLLECTOR
AND TELLER OF STORIES”

JERRY E. OSWALT
VICE PRESIDENT OF
ACADEMIC AFFAIRS EMERITUS
BAPTIST COLLEGE OF FLORIDA

Introduction

One of my seminary professors, Dr. James Taylor, sometimes remarked as he led seminars about influential preachers of history, “Isn't it good to study the lives of these men; to get into their lives and walk around with them.” He was right! And one of the reasons this is a good practice is that some of their spirit rubs off on us as we study their lives and ministries. This reality has occurred to me afresh as I have studied the sermons of C. Roy Angell in research for this article. He was one of the most able communicators of God's Good News in his time and surely one of the all time greats among Florida Baptist preachers. His pulpit work has been written about in such publications as *Southern Baptist Preaching*, an anthology of sermons collected by H. C. Brown, Jr. and published by Broadman Press in 1959; *With a Bible in Their Hands*, a compilation of Baptist preaching in the South from over the last 300 years by Al Fasol and published by Broadman&Holman Publishers in 1994; and *Southern Baptist Preaching Yesterday*, a collection edited by Charles Allen and Joel Gregory and published by Broadman Press in 1991.

A Biographical Sketch

Charles Roy Angell arrived in this world on October 8, 1889. The location of that arrival was Boone Mill, Virginia. He departed this world for heaven on September 11, 1971. Alma

Meade of Elizabeth City, North Carolina became his bride on October 8, 1915, and they became the parents of a son and two daughters.¹ Tragically, in 1940, their son died young when only a month away from graduation from Stetson.²



C. Roy Angell

Angell began his pulpit ministry in 1915 in four rural churches near Elizabeth City, North Carolina. His ensuing pastorates included: Fulton Avenue Baptist Church in Baltimore, Maryland from 1918 to 1924; First Baptist Church of Charlottesville, Virginia from 1924 to 1927; First Baptist Church of Baton Rouge, Louisiana from 1927 to 1932; First Baptist Church of San Antonio, Texas from 1932 to 1936; Central Baptist Church of Miami, Florida from 1936 to 1962.³ One newspaper in 1935 published the news release that he had been called to be the pastor of the Broadway Baptist Church in Fort worth, Texas, but I found no evidence that he accepted that call.⁴

The higher education he acquired began with a B.A. from Richmond College in 1913, which led to a M.A. from the University of Pennsylvania in 1918. In addition, he earned a B. D. from Crozer Seminary that same year. He continued studies at

John Hopkins University in 1919 and 1920 and later worked on a Ph.D. at the University of Virginia from 1927-1929. Stetson recognized his work with an honorary D.D. in 1949.⁵

A regular speaker at Ridgecrest Baptist Assembly and frequent guest preacher in revivals and conferences, Angell was a denominational statesman of high rank. He was elected a vice president by the Southern Baptist Convention in 1945 and as president of the Florida Baptist Convention in 1949. Also, he served on the boards of trustees for Stetson University, the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, and the Baptist Hospital in New Orleans, Louisiana.⁶

The Scope of the Study

This article is based upon my analysis of fifty-four of Roy Angell's sermons published in four books by Broadman from 1953-1962. Their titles and dates of publication are: *Iron Shoes*, 1953; *Baskets of Silver*, 1955; *The Price Tags of Life*, 1959; *God's Gold Mines*, 1962. This article will not contain an exhaustive analysis of these published sermons, but will focus upon some of the strongest impressions made upon me in the course of studying these sermons.

Salient Strengths

A Passion for preaching

One of the most significant aspects of Angell's sermonic skill was his passion for preparing sermons. I realized through my initial perusal of his sermons that the man had a laser-beam sensitivity to picking up ideas and illustrations for sermons in all of life's experiences. His mind must have always been alert for materials for preaching. Only a great love for pulpit work will prompt such an awareness. Following my reading of his sermons, I found a quote from him that confirmed this conclusion. He

opined in a personal account of his procedure for sermon preparation the following:

There are numberless ways to find starters for sermons. Many times I read a good story or an incident, and it immediately suggests to me a thought, a theme, a text, or maybe all three. For instance, I read a one-page article about a diamond cutter, who was working in a display window of a jewelry shop. He was using diamond dust to cut and polish the ugly, uncouth stones that would make them so beautiful that any woman in the world would love them. It brought to mind what Paul said about the sufferings of this day and the glory revealed in us. The beautiful theme of God's using the diamond dust of suffering, self-sacrifice, stewardship, and so forth to shape our lives and make them adorn the gospel was written all over that story.

A sermon might get started in my devotional readings by some verse that suddenly blazes up or by some Old Testament story that so deeply interests me that I know the message in it will be helpful to others. Again, in my counsel room or in a visit to the hospital or a sickroom I find some need and the answer to it in God's Word.⁷

An analysis of his sermon ideas revealed that approximately forty percent came out of his devotional reading of Scripture. Another thirty-six percent surfaced from his general reading of such items as newspapers, periodicals and books. The remaining twenty-four percent grabbed his mind through remarks and stories told by others, either from a pulpit or another public forum or in conversations in various settings. He loved to listen to other preachers and found frequently ideas for his sermon preparation. Sometimes he would borrow more than an idea or a story. Occasionally, much of the message would be used. But he was

always careful to give credit. An example is the sermon entitled, “Who Crucified Christ?” He confessed at the end of the introduction that he was indebted to G. Earl Guinn for the rest of the sermon.⁸

For anyone who has such a homiletically inclined mentality, everything in life ministers to his preaching must relish the assignment. As I observed this quality in C. Roy Angell, I was reminded of an assertion made many years ago by a famous British preacher by the name of John Henry Jowett. He declared to divinity students at Yale Divinity School in 1912, “I have had but one passion, and I have lived for it -- the absorbingly arduous yet glorious work of proclaiming the grace and love of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”⁹ Angell’s enthusiasm about preaching reflected the attitude of another famous British preacher, G. Campbell Morgan, who affirmed about the task, “It is the one thing I want to do and cannot help doing. I would do it as recreation if I were not permitted to do it as vocation.”¹⁰ Angell wrote a similar conviction about preaching when he asserted, “I love it. I am thrilled by it. There is nothing I would rather do at five o’clock in the morning than work on a sermon.”¹¹ Any preacher will be a better preacher when he does what he does out of a love for the Lord and a love for the pulpit ministry. This passion for his work of proclamation assuredly propelled C. Roy Angell to the level of effectiveness he reached.

Storytelling

However, the consensus of students of his preaching is that his greatest asset was his ability to use stories in his sermons to introduce and illustrate points in sermons. The multifarious nature of his sources for stories duplicated his sources for sermon themes or ideas. He told of the many origins of his stories in the following account:

I’ve been asked literally hundreds of time, “Where do you find your illustrations?” My answer is the same, “Everywhere,” for I am always on the alert for a human interest story. Every good story written or told illustrates something. I find them in the periodicals that come to my desk or, as Roy Smith said, “The sidewalks are full of sermons.” The artist with his trained eye sees pictures of beautiful scenes that I miss completely. The woodsman with his trained ears and eyes hears and sees things to which I am deaf and blind. You can train yourself to watch for the sermons that go walking around you in your experiences in ministry. You can train yourself to find them in your personal reading.¹²

In addition, he told of getting clippings sent to him by friends who knew his love of a good Story. He also said that he found good use of histories and biographies of great people to be replete with usable stories.

His most popular story, which has been told and retold by many preachers, came from a sermon entitled “Rizpah.” He credited J. C. Masee with the story and used it to illustrate the atoning work of Christ on the cross. He told the story in the following way:

My mother was the sweetest woman in the world, but she was very strict about one thing. She wouldn’t let us boys play on her snow-white feather beds. She prided herself in having the prettiest, loveliest feather beds in Georgia. I so wanted to get up on top of one of them, dive right straight out into the air, and sink out of sight in the middle of it. I knew that it would be heavenly, but mother firmly refused.

One day it had been raining. My big brother had ridden his horse out on the farm to see if the drain ditches were

open. Mother and I were in the woodshed. She was washing clothes, and I was making mud pies. I got tired of making mud pies and, and went into the house. As I walked down the hall and looked into those bedrooms, those big snow-white feather beds just beckoned to me. In a minute I was on the top of one of them. I jumped just as high as I could jump, flattened out and went out of sight with a shoosh! Ohhhhh! It was glorious. For a few minutes I had the time of my life. Then I heard the rustle of skirts, and I looked toward the door, and mother was standing there with her hand ominously behind her. I knew I deserved a whipping.

Just then the window went up on the other side of the room, and that big, six-foot brother of mine came crawling through. "Wait just a minute, just a minute Mother," he said. I could see his horse standing outside. He had ridden by the window and taken in the whole situation. That great big frame of his came down over the top of me, and he said, "All right Mother. Lay it on. I'll take it for him this time."

I listened, but the switch didn't fall, and when I peeped out from under his shoulder to see what was going on, I saw on Mother's face the strangest expression. It was beautiful. There was the trace of a tear, her lips quivered a little, her eyes glistened. She was smiling as she looked at him. She said to him like she had forgotten I was there, "You big, lovable rascal. Pick him up. Take him out of the window. Don't come this way. If you do I will switch you both."

He picked me up and took me out the window, put me on the horse in front of him, and we rode away.¹³

He went on to use Massee's application of the story to the atoning work of Christ: Dr. Massee said, "The years rolled on. One day I was where the Heavenly Father told me not to go. I bowed my head for the fall of the rod, which I knew I deserved. Then I felt an arm go around my shoulders. I heard that quiet, gentle voice of Jesus say, 'I'll take it for him Father. I'll take it for him this time.'"¹⁴

Although the above secular story has been far more popular and widely used, the Scriptural story of Rizpah is one of his most poignant biblical illustrations. It is found couched in the twenty-first chapter of second Samuel. The situation that produced the amazing action of Rizpah was a treacherous and vindictive plot of the Gibeonites, who had been unjustly and wickedly treated by King Saul, to have King David give up the seven sons of Saul to be publicly tortured and crucified on the hill of Gibeah. After the deed was done, Rizpah, a concubine of Saul and mother of two of his sons went alone to Gibeah to fight off the wild birds and beasts who would pick the bones of the slain sons of Saul. In the message Angell quoted from the biblical account: "And Rizpah the daughter of Aiah took sackcloth and spread it for her on the rock . . . And suffered neither the birds of the air to rest upon them by day, nor the beasts of the field by night." The preacher opined that the time frame indicating her stay on the hill to fight off the scavengers was as much as three to four months. This observation prompted him to make this striking statement: "June, July, August, September she stayed among the decaying bodies of the seven sons and drove the beasts off by night and the birds of the air by day."¹⁵

Angell's application of Rizpah's story is keen as he transitions to the sacrifice of Jesus for our sins. In reply to a question about the reason for Rizpah being on the hill of Gibeah, Angell replies, "Because a mother loves. It's a picture that stirs the

human heart. A little mother, sitting among the crosses on the hill of Gibeah, because two of her boys had been crucified there. Just a few miles away and a few days away, if you measure by God's clocks, another son was hanged by nails on Golgotha, and on Calvary at sunset three other crosses were silhouetted against an evening sky. Ask the one in the center, 'Why are you here?' Back comes the answer, 'Because a Father loves.'¹⁶

Angell acquired almost as many stories from laymen as from preachers. One of the better ones was told by a radio commentator. That story was used to introduce the theme of a sermon called, "The Cross Pull." It seems that the commentator had spent some time on a ranch in the company of a cowboy who recently had lost a beautiful stallion, which he had raised from a colt, to a rampaging herd of wild horses. He received permission from the cowboy to tag along with him when he went to retrieve his stallion from the herd. He described the action as he watched the cowboy stealthily approach the herd:

He did a beautiful piece of stalking until he was close enough for his voice to reach his horse. I saw him stand up, and I saw all those horses suddenly on the alert, their heads up. I knew he was talking to his horse for all he was worth. Then the herd bolted -- all but one. One of them stood still, but he didn't know what to do. He looked at the other horses and took a step or two; then he looked back at the cowboy, pranced around a little, then looked again. I could feel -- I could almost see the cross pull in that fine stallion. . . There was the master whom he had loved, and there was the wild herd with which he had run. Which way should he go? I thought for a moment the cowboy had lost, for the horse took half a dozen steps as if to catch up with the herd, galloping away in a cloud of dust. Then he stopped and looked back, and with his head

up and neck arched, he trotted to his master. . . Doctor, I just laid my head down in my hands and prayed, 'Dear Lord, if ever I am tempted to run with the wild crowd in life, O Lord, let me listen to my Master's voice; let me come back to him.'¹⁷

These few examples are representative of how masterfully Angell used stories to illustrate truths. He not only had the homiletically inclined genius to garner them from all of life but also how to fit them aptly into his sermons to arouse and hold the interest of listeners.

To be sure, he had several additional strong attributes in his sermons, including a clear and inviting style with choice use of descriptive word pictures, simple language, and short sentences. But I must move on to briefly discuss some other important issues manifested in his messages.

Some "Shouldas"

I have a personal code of preaching, which has evolved during fifty-one years of study and practice, that guides me in the evaluation of sermons. I strive, however, not to prejudge the preaching of others. I learned long ago not to judge another's sermonizing as weak or ineffective when it doesn't abide by my personal preference. Plenty of preachers who don't practice by my code have been and are more effective than I, including the subject of this article.

That being said, I want to write about a couple of facets of C. Roy Angell's preaching that disagrees with my personal code. Obviously, I believe that he would have been an even more excellent herald of the Word of God had he done a few things differently.

More Exposition of Scripture

I am convinced that his sermons would have been more edifying had he given greater attention to the exposition of Scripture. Rarely do his sermons reveal depth and detail in the explanation of the meaning of Scripture. One of his best sermons in terms of exposition is entitled “Three Tremendous Truths.” He takes three statements from the text of Second Timothy 1:11-14 as his main points. They are: “For the which cause I also suffered these things;” “I know whom I have believed;” “I am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.”¹⁸ Indeed, these are tremendous truths taken directly from the text. And, his application of these truths with good story illustrations make for an encouraging and inspiring sermon. However, he reflects an assumption that all his listeners already have a good grasp of the complete meaning of the Greek words translated “believed” and the contextual meaning of “these things” suffered by Paul and the biblical teaching of the meaning of “that day.”

Nevertheless, this is a good exposition of the key verses in his text.

Usually, though, his messages are topical, using a text only as a point of beginning. Consider his sermon entitled “Electives of Life.” The text is the familiar Matthew 11:28-30. The only aspect of the text he references is the mandate given by Jesus, “Learn of me.” He uses that statement to infer that Jesus is our teacher in the school of life, a school in which there are both elective and required courses. Then his main points become topically some of the required courses and some of the elective courses in the “University of Life.”¹⁹

Angell was aware of similar complaints about his preaching and replied to them in the following fashion: “No matter how full of grand truths your sermon is, if it isn’t interesting enough to

catch and hold the attention of your listeners, it will not do them any good.”²⁰ Point well taken. But why not have good exposition with adequate stories and other illustrations to hold interest? It doesn’t have to be either one or the other. It should be both. This leads to my next “shoulda.”

Less Stories

Dr. Angell was a master at telling good stories and using them aptly for sermon illustrations and introductions to sermons, but he sometimes was guilty of “over kill” in story usage. He loved to tell good stories so much and he had such a supply of them that he frequently used more than necessary. Look at the sermon “God’s Gold Mines.” He began that message with a story about an elderly lady who came across some old important looking documents while cleaning out her attic. Wisely, she took them to her banker to evaluate them. They turned out to be worth \$60,000. His point was that just as the lady found “gold” in an unexpected place, God has “gold mines” everywhere for us to happen across.²¹ His main points were some of those “gold mines.” The first point was The Earth. He then used four illustrations for that point. The sequence flowed as follows:

The first place is beautifully expressed by the Psalmist, “The earth is full of thy riches” (Psalm 104:24). There is a television serial called “Wagon Train” that I often watch, because my father was born in one of those covered wagons in the last century. Twenty miles was about the only distance those wagons could travel in a day. The hardships were innumerable and dangers were ever present. They crawled across our continent like snails. Today we know that in the very mountains they struggled over so laboriously there was hidden everything they needed to cross America in just a few hours.

Not long ago I stepped into a jet, and we raced the sun to San Francisco. It beat us by only a few hours. I looked down on Death Valley as the stewardess pointed out to us a beautiful, clear, cold water lake in the mountains on the very rim of Death Valley. If it had been discovered by our pioneer fathers, it would have saved literally thousands of people. We do not need to be reminded that in this twentieth century God has put a thousand gold mines in the material world, mines that we, with our half-open minds, have not found.

A scientist, in a magazine article, said that there would be enough power in a small lump of coal, if it were treated with radiation, to run all the railroads in the British empire for a month. He added that there is enough power in one ounce of coal treated with radiation to run the largest steamship in the world across the Atlantic Ocean.

Another wrote that Monroe, Louisiana is considered the capital of the Boeuf Basin. It was known for years as the "Cotton Bowl" of the South; then someone drilled for oil 2500 feet down. His rig was blown into little pieces, not by oil, but by gas. The gas was set on fire to keep it from injuring people and damaging the cotton. It burned for years before someone realized that it was a gold mine. Pipe lines were strung across the country - - East, West, North, and South; and now thousands of people in Miami cook breakfast with gas from the Beouf Basin. This is just one paltry illustration of the undiscovered wealth that God has hidden beneath the surface of the world.²²

Any two of the four illustrations would have been more effective than all four.

Conclusion

C. Roy Angell was an effective and influential pulpit speaker, largely because of his passion for building sermons that people would hear gladly. He loved to preach and he loved to gather stories for use in sermons. Also, he obviously enjoyed telling good stories. Therein may have been something detrimental to his preaching, for he had so many stories and found so much delight in telling them that he over used stories.

Although he wasn't a biblical preacher in the finest sense of the word, he assuredly loved Scripture, believed it completely, and used frequently stories from the bible in his preaching to illustrate truths deduced from a topic or theme. But his penchant for telling stories and his drive to hold the interest of listeners at all cost is why he always will be remembered as a masterful teller of good stories more than a biblical preacher.

Endnotes

¹ James E. Caswell, "Dr. Charles Roy Angell." unpublished paper, p. 2.

² *Florida Baptist Witness*. May 16, 1940, p. 6.

³ Al Fasol, ed., *With a Bible in Their Hands*. Nashville: Broadman&Holman, Publishers, 1994, p. 157.

⁴ *Florida Baptist Witness*. November 14, 1935, p. 3.

⁵ H. C. Brown, Jr., ed., *Southern Baptist Preaching*. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1959, p. 20.

⁶ Caswell, *op.cit*, p. 4

⁷ Brown Jr., *op. cit.*, pp. 21-22.

⁸ C. Roy Angell, *Baskets of Silver*. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1955, pp. 21-28.

⁹ J. H. Jowett, *The Preacher: His Life and Work*. Doubleday, Doran & Company, 1912, p. 9.

¹⁰ Jerry Oswalt, "Great Preaching." unpublished article, p. 2.

¹¹ Brown Jr., *op. cit.*, p. 22.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 21.

¹³ C. Roy Angell, *Iron Shoes*. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1953, pp. 72-74.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 73-74.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 64-66.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 71-72.

¹⁷ C. Roy Angell, *Baskets of Silver*. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1955, pp. 39-40.

¹⁸ C. Roy Angell, *The Price Tags of Life*. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1959, pp. 59-67.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 21-27.

²⁰ Brown, Jr., *op. cit.*, p. 21.

²¹ C. Roy Angell, *God's Gold Mines*. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1962, pp 1-3.

²² C. Roy Angell, *Ibid.*

“IT WAS LIKE FIRE” THE PREACHING OF ELAMB JACKSON DANIELS

JERRY M. WINDSOR

Secretary-Treasurer

Florida Baptist Historical Society

E. J. Daniels (1908-1987) was a passionate preacher with a personal agenda. His flowing curly hair and wide rimmed glasses gave him a mad scientist look but his nice suits, raspy voice and clear cut language made him a favorite among preachers of the Southern Baptist Convention. E. J. used humor, logic and emotion to make his points stick. He told jokes but every one had meaning. He liked to use outrageous statements but E. J. was all business. He was a business man at work with a preachers call and passion.

Glenda M. Jeters of Fort Myers, Florida called *Christ for the World* ministries one day to order some E. J. Daniels tapes for her mother. In making the order Dr. Jeters said that her mother loved “his old time gospel message. I loved it too. It was like fire.”¹



Evangelist
E. J. Daniels

Background

Elamb Jackson Daniels was born November 1, 1908, in O'Brien, Florida. He was number five of eight children. There

was Byron, Ruby, Lois, George, E. J., Aaron, Jacob and Richard. His parents were Jim and Meriba Daniels and E. J. soon became “Elam” as the “b” was dropped from his first name.²

E. J. was named Elamb after a great uncle who was a Florida sheriff and another uncle who was a timberman. Both men died tragically and in the line of duty. The middle name “Jackson” came because his father was an admirer of Stonewall Jackson of Civil War fame.

E. J. was born into a Scotch-Irish family that believed in free enterprise, honest dealings and hard work. Jim Daniels was a big time turpentine distiller. He learned the art of making money by leasing state prisoners for refining resin from yellow pine trees. At one point Jim leased tens of thousands of acres in South Florida to harvest the turpentine for medicinal, paint, and commercial purposes. Acres were leased for 25¢ an acre and the pine trees represented yellow gold. However there was a fatal flaw in all the transactions. Pines in south Florida were “short pines” and did not offer the same easy surrender of resin as did the pines in north Florida. This business set back could have been overcome but at this same time daughter Ruby contracted diphtheria and died at age four at their home in O’Brien. This family loss scarred Jim so badly he abandoned the south Florida project and lost thousands of dollars. He then turned his attention to farming. The concepts of risk, hard work, early rising and responsibility made a meaningful impression upon E. J. as a child.

Spiritual Decisions

E. J. was nicknamed “Lam” and by age 13 saw a need for church membership. W. T. Newsome was his pastor and baptized Lam into the church at Little River Springs, that flows into the Suwannee River. Lam was a member of O’Brien Baptist Church

but was still lost. It was not until age 18 that E. J. personally trusted Christ as his Saviour and was baptized again into the O’Brien church. Some did not understand it but E. J. was convinced that his new birth required a valid baptism.

E. J. graduated from Branford High School in 1929. He planned to study law at Stetson University and entered school right before the October, 1929 depression. It was during a J. Earle Lewis tent revival in Deland that fall when E. J. told Lewis he was called to preach. Lewis immediately announced that E. J. would be preaching his first sermon the following Wednesday night in a rented store building. E. J. preached his first sermon there in Deland and five people were saved. He preached his second sermon at Pierson, Florida. According to Max Morris in *The Million Soul Man*, (p. 73) the store front preaching begun by J. Earl Lewis became the Stetson Baptist Church. E. J. was a charter member and was licensed to preach by the Stetson church.

E. J. had a heart to prepare and preach but he had no money. He sold Bibles for the Southwestern Publishing Company of Nashville (\$6.95) and set a company record by making 20 presentations and 20 sales in one day. All his life he maintained the Bible selling record because who could beat 1,000 percent?

A choice of schooling was never easy for E. J. He graduated from Branford in 1927 with seven people in his graduating class. He entered Stetson School of Law (1929-1930) but after being called to preach attended South Florida Bible School (1930-1933) at Plant City. He went to Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in 1936 but had to drop out after he contracted T. B. E. J. received a certificate from the Plant City school and attended Florida Southern in Lakeland from 1933-1935. In 1948 Bob Jones University awarded E. J. the D. D. degree.

E. J. married Elizabeth Weaver in 1931. They had no children but adopted a claim to a foster child Kaye Hannah. Kay stayed in the Daniels home while she was in school in the United States. E. J. and Elizabeth married on the day Elizabeth graduated from Live Oak High School. Therefore Elizabeth became a wife, high school graduate and pastor's wife on the same day.

Five Pastorates and Full Time Evangelism

E. J. served as pastor of five different Southern Baptist churches before he went into full time evangelism. His first pastorate was Broadway Baptist Church in Tampa (1930-1933). His salary was \$15.00 a week and it was there that E. J. and Elizabeth married. The second pastorate was Eagle Lake Baptist Church (1933-1936). He was then pastor of First Baptist Church, Winter Garden (1936-1942), First Baptist Church, Fort Pierce (1942-1943) and First Baptist Church, Fairfield, Alabama (1943-1947). E. J. was very effective as a pastor but God called him into full time evangelism and E. J. surrendered to that call.

While at Eagle Lake E. J. went into the printing business. He purchased a printing press and his first publication was "The Biblical Echo." This was the beginning of an eventual printing empire. By 1980 E. J. and Elizabeth had one of the largest printing firms in the south with plants in Florida and Alabama. An older brother died and left E. J. some start up money for the business and "The Golden Rule Press" was born. The firm had hundreds of employees in Ft. Lauderdale and Birmingham and they printed books, magazines, Baptist State papers, inserts for department store ads and other business accounts. This printing business made the money to fund the evangelistic ministry of E. J. around the world.³

"Dr. D. was definitely different. He did not want to ask the public for donations..." His business interests were equal to the

task and gave a wonderful financial foundation to Christ for the World ministries. Associate John Bos wrote an article entitled "God Keeps Evangelist Daniels Young." Bos pointed out that E. J. had the energy, strength, enthusiasm and vigor of men far younger. John listed numerous reasons he felt E. J. had done so well but his bottom line argument was that it was a "miracle" of God.⁴

The Preaching of Dr. Daniels

It is my intent to make some general observations about the preaching of E. J. He was a called communicator of the good news and his preaching style and methods were part of that communication giftedness.

Sermon Text

E. J. was a Biblical preacher. He loved the Bible, believed the Bible and preached it as the inspired word of God. However as we think of a basic text of a sermon there were numerous times when E. J. would let his subject and not the text rule the sermon. I remember hearing him preach two different times (Dothan, Alabama in 1960; Mobile, Alabama in 1966) and it seems he read a text each time but departed immediately. He always had many, many supporting texts but not always a basic sermon text that he used as home plate.

Mrs. E. J. Daniels was asked to choose seven of Dr. Daniels best sermons for publication in 1988. This was after 50 years of marriage and more than 50 years of hearing her husband preach. Of the seven sermons chosen by Mrs. Daniels only two of them (Psalm 23, Job 14:1-14) had a direct text. All of them had supporting scripture, truths and lessons. But only two had a foundational text that produced the meat of the sermon. Sometimes E. J. would list or read a text and then go immedi-

ately into the sermon idea without any textual background or explanation.⁵

Sermon Title

I have always felt a sermon title was important. I was trained that way (J. F. Kelley, Hudson Baggett, V. L. Stanfield, James Taylor, John Killenger) and the Broadus, Brown and Craddock approaches affirmed all of that. E. J. always had titles and in about 25 percent of the time had titles that were very interesting and made you want to hear more. Sometimes titles and topics were assigned to E. J. and he made no particular effort to dress them up. In the 1965 Florida Baptist Evangelistic Conference Dr. Paul Meigs, Secretary of the Florida Baptist Convention Evangelism Department asked E. J. to preach a sermon on "Compassion for the Lost." E. J. did and entitled the sermon exactly that: "Compassion for the Lost."

However in his preaching and writing E. J. had a vivid imagination and let it shine in some of his best written and oral presentations. "Seven Don'ts for Those Planning Marriage" sounds negative but is an interesting helpful topic and discourse. Who could resist "Whom Should You Marry" and "The Tragic Results of Not Tithing." "Why God Does Not Always Answer Your Prayers" and "Perplexing Questions Regarding Life after Death" show promise in their titles and deliver the results.

I suspect titles were not all that important to E. J. He always rang the bell in his preaching and used titles sparingly and briefly. His publication ministry intensified the importance of titles but he was always able to find some good titles and use great introductions to overcome weak titles.

Sermon Introduction

E. J. seldom used scriptural introductions. His favorite use was humor. He had a great memory and a splendid use of

"timely" humor. He could read an audience well and use his directed humor to introduce most any topic. Some very serious topics like "Alcohol: The Mad Dog in Our Communities" did not lend itself to humor but most of his sermons were filled with funny stories that hit home.

Sometimes E. J. used a question for his introduction; (Whom Should I Marry?) sometimes a contextual setting (When Dr. Meigs asked me to speak...); sometimes a transitional statement (There are many factors that should determine whom you should marry); sometimes a startling statement (There is a mad dog loose in your community) but most of the time it was good, clean, pointed country humor.

Fearing that many in the audience had already heard the sermon he was about to preach E. J. told an introductory story about a hunter who was skeptical about purchasing gun powder in a certain gun shop because the powder did not smell right. The owner asked the potential customer what was wrong and the hunter replied, "This powder smells like it has already been shot."

Sermon Transition and Outline

A great strength of Dr. Daniels was that his sermons were clear and to the point. His transitions were normally plural nouns that precisely introduced the body of the sermon. In 1971 he preached at the Florida Baptist Convention Evangelistic Conference in Jacksonville and his transitional sentence and outline were simple and precise within the first three minutes of the message. E. J. stated "There are great truths in my subject if I can unfold them. I beg you to pray that God will enable me to help us see that souls are lost, when they are lost, how they are lost, and what the effect these truths should have on us all."

E. J. was not beyond using alliteration. He never seemed to insist upon it or force it but he was not afraid to use it. In his sermon on Matthew 9:36-38, he states “Christ saw in the multitude four things that should give all of us cause for alarm over the lost: Their departure from God, Their depravity in sin, Their destiny in hell and Their despair without a shepherd.”

Remember E. J. preached long before the call for expository preaching that came in the 1970’s and 1980’s. When E. J. began preaching in the 1930’s topical preaching was the primary method of sermon delivery. As late as the 1950’s I remember friends scrambling for an “outline” for next Sunday. There was far more emphasis on the sale of “sermon outline books” than on commentaries or study helps. Richard DeHahn and Hershel Ford had followed the Spurgeon tradition by publishing “manuscripts” but they were not near as popular as simple outline books. *The Broadman Commentary* of 1967 brought some context and word study help to Southern Baptist preachers but by then a whole generation had drunk at the well of topical preaching and retraining them was beyond the pale. R. G. Lee was a topical preacher and Adrian Rogers was an expository preacher. That is one church and generational example of when, where and how expository preaching began to come into its own.

Billy Graham heard E. J. preach and was profoundly impressed early in his ministry. Paul Meigs used E. J. every time he could at the Florida Baptist Evangelistic Conference. R. G. Lee recommended him and W. A. Criswell was his friend. E. J. was a Biblical preacher with a passion for souls and a desire to help people.

Conclusion and Invitation

John Bos wrote “Having pastored several churches in Alabama and Florida, Dr. D. could not get away from the calling

to full-time evangelism. It was his passion. And, his style of preaching was exactly what people wanted to hear. Deep spiritual truths, along with a mixture of interesting illustrations and humorous stories. At invitation time, the people streamed down the aisles to accept Christ or to make other meaningful commitments.”⁶

E. J. knew how to draw the net. Max Morris in his book *The Million Soul Man* states that there were 1,049,275 professions of faith in face to face preaching from March 1980 to March 1985. E. J. expressed the truth that “only God knows the actual souls saved in any Christian service we can only report the number “professing” to be saved.”⁷

When E. J. spoke in his raspy voice it was said to be like a “grinding dilapidated windmill.” Yet his passion, concern and earnest call to repentance and faith could never be forgotten. He used a personal, emotional conclusion with a strong invitation to come now. E. J. had a boldness and empathy at invitation time that could be felt all through a congregation.

An event in 1970 verifies this fact. At the 1970 Florida Baptist Evangelistic Conference in Orlando, Anita Bryant a nationally known Christian entertainer was to give her testimony. After her testimony Dr. W. A. Criswell was to preach. The testimony of Anita Bryant was so moving and so touching that Dr. Criswell did not feel led to preach. The meeting was in the Tangerine Bowl and thousands of people were present. After Anita Bryant gave her moving testimony Dr. Criswell did not feel another sermon was necessary. The decision of Dr. Criswell not to preach startled the crowd. His next move even confused them more. Without preaching Dr. Criswell gave an invitation. This unexpected invitation without a sermon brought a slow and bewildered response. Dr. Criswell did what he felt the Lord wanted him to do and turned the service over to Dr. Meigs. It was

at this point that the Holy Spirit prompted E. J. to give an invitation. After Dr. Criswell had finished his work E. J. still felt the people were stunned or shocked at how the service ended and had not been prepared for a proper invitation.

E. J. said he pleaded with the Lord not to have to do it. He said he felt it might offend Dr. Criswell. He felt people would call him a fool for such an act. Yet in obedience to what he thought was needed E. J. extended another invitation. Hundreds came forward that night in the Tangerine Bowl to trust Christ and make other meaningful decisions.⁸

Elam Jackson Daniels (1908-1987) was a man of integrity, conviction, hard work and charisma. Elizabeth Weaver Daniels was his partner. Florida is a better place to live because those two came by this way. They didn't stay long. But Glenda Jeters was right "It was like fire."

Endnotes

¹ Florida Baptist Historical Society vertical files, E. J. Daniels folder.

² M. F. Morris, *The Million Soul Man*, Christ for the World Publishers, Orlando, 1982, p. 17.

³ Morris, pp. 91-92; John Bos letter dated February 25, 2010. Bos letter to Windsor is in FBHS E. J. Daniels vertical file.

⁴ I really wanted John to write this article. No one worked any closer or knew E. J. any better than John. I personally watched them work together and I was always pleased and amazed to see how well their ministries were meshed. John was living in Michigan with his family when E. J. called him by phone and "hired him on the spot." I saw John as pianist, organist, chauffeur, travel arranger, associate, friend and confidant to E. J. They trusted one another and for years were team members in Christ.

⁵ I realize I only heard E. J. preach twice but for years I read his books and sermons in other sources. You never felt that there were any untruths or dangerous doctrines but sometimes you yearned for a basic text to shine on the subject.

⁶ Bos letter, February 25, 2010. FBHS files.

⁷ M. F. Morris, *Mission Impossible Accomplished!* Sequel to *The Million Soul Man*, p. 6.

⁸ 1970 Florida Baptist Evangelistic Conference, *Messages on Evangelism*, pp. 121-122.



**JAMES L. PLEITZ PASTOR OF
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH,
PENSACOLA, FLORIDA,
FROM 1959 TO 1977**

PAUL D. ROBINSON, SR.
*RETIRED ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR,
BAPTIST COLLEGE OF FLORIDA*

James L. Pleitz was born in 1929 and served as pastor of First Baptist Church in Pensacola from 1959 to 1977. He was 30 years old when he began his service as pastor in May 1959. His wife, Margaret Ann, and their two children, Danny and Nancy, moved from Ft. Smith with him. He served as pastor at First Baptist Pensacola for more than eighteen years. Prior to his long pastorate in Pensacola, James Pleitz served as pastor of the Grand Avenue Baptist Church, Fort Smith, Arkansas, for four years. Prior to the Fort Smith pastorate, he had served as pastor of First Baptist Church, Bentonville, Arkansas.

Dr. Pleitz graduated from Ouachita Baptist College in Arkadelphia, Arkansas, and, in 1953, from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, in 1953. Dr. Pleitz has three honorary doctoral degrees: a Doctor of Divinity degree from Ouachita Baptist University, a Doctor of Divinity degree from Stetson University, and a Doctor of Laws degree from the University of West Florida.¹

Brian Harbour wrote, "In 1978, I became the pastor of the First Baptist Church in Pensacola, Florida, following James Pleitz who modeled for our generation, among Baptists, what it means to be a pastor."²

Dr. Pleitz was the SBC Pastors' Conference President in 1975.³ At the 1983 Southern Baptist Convention, he delivered the sermon "A New Commandment."⁴

Dr. Pleitz resigned from First Baptist Church, Pensacola, Florida, in 1977 to serve as the third pastor of Park Cities Baptist

James L. Pleitz, First Baptist Church Pensacola, Florida 1959-1977

Church in Texas. He served as pastor of Park Cities until 1993. After retiring at the Park Cities Church, he and his wife returned to Pensacola. Dr. Pleitz has been Pastor Emeritus of First Baptist Church, Pensacola for several years.



James L. Pleitz

My wife and I joined First Baptist Church in July 2004. Dr. Mills was pastor at that time, but he resigned as pastor just before Hurricane Ivan came to Pensacola in September 2004. The church sanctuary was severely damaged by the storm, and the congregation met in Chipley Hall for several months. In the interim between pastors Mills and Howard, the church decided not to call an interim pastor, but to have visiting preachers each Sunday. In the week prior to Fathers' Day, the committee received a call from whoever was scheduled to preach on Fathers' Day. The committee called me (probably after exhausting their list) to see if I could preach on Fathers' Day. I told them I would consider it a privilege to preach at First Baptist Church Pensacola, on Father's Day in 2005. We had resumed having the service in the renovated sanctuary only a few weeks prior to Fathers' Day. Dr. Pleitz sent a personal letter thanking me for the sermon.

After Dr. Barry Howard became pastor, Dr. Pleitz and Dr. Howard arranged a breakfast to which they invited all the retired ministers and chaplains. Those of us who attended the meeting came to appreciate Dr. Pleitz as a wonderful encourager.

After the worship service on Mother's Day (May 2, 2010), I spoke briefly with Dr. Pleitz about his preaching style. I asked him if he considered himself to be a topical or an expository preacher. Our service had been a little longer than usual because it was also Founders Day at our church as well as Law Day. He said, "Both." After hearing several of his sermons, I would agree; nevertheless, his sermons are firmly founded in Scripture. He had a somewhat casual style as he preached to the "beloved."

When I asked some of the members of First Baptist Church about their experiences with Dr. Pleitz, several of them said he was a "people person," and they told me that when he first came to be the pastor, he said he was going to visit every home of the members of the church. Many members would ask, "How many more to go, Preacher?"⁵ He was always ready to answer to them.

In his preaching he always referred to his audience as "beloved." He loved the beloved and the beloved loved him. I have been able to listen to cassettes that were made and kept in the archives at the church, but, unfortunately, some of the earlier sermon tapes were destroyed when the sanctuary and other buildings were destroyed by Ivan.

In one of his sermons, James Pleitz said, "Many churches are like submarines. They close the hatch on the outside world and submerge them in the ocean of apathy. Before long, they're caught between the devil and the deep blue sea."⁶ This is one example of how he used metaphors and similes.

James and Margaret Ann Pleitz were married for over sixty years. She went to be with the Lord on February 11, 2010, and her funeral (a service of celebration) was held in the sanctuary of First Baptist Church, Pensacola, Florida, on February 13. James and Margaret Ann have two children.

Their son Dan is an attorney in Waco, Texas, and their daughter Nancy Hinson is a Pensacola resident. Dr. Pleitz continues to live in Pensacola.

Two of Mrs. Pleitz's favorite scriptures were:

Matthew 9:37-38: "Then he said to the disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send our workers into his harvest field.'"

Matthew 28:19-20: "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

In 1969, The First Baptist Church of Pensacola received the 1969 Church of the Year Award from *Guideposts*. Criteria for the award included "outstanding initiative and spiritual creativity by a congregation, pastor, priest, or rabbi." After screening 350 church programs, *Guideposts* cited the First Baptist Church of Pensacola as a 'dynamic church under a great spiritual leader.' The award was presented by Dr. Norman Vincent Peale, on a visit to Pensacola. He cited the work of the youth, the congregation, and the church's leadership. Of course, Dr. Pleitz was the pastor when the church received the award. Norman Vincent Peale said, "They have proved that Christianity is something you do. We think you are doing the greatest piece of work in the country."^{7s} One of the things that the youth did was to rid one hundred blocks of inner city houses of rats. The people of First Baptist Church could not tolerate their fellow humans living in rodent-infested surroundings. Dr. Pleitz referred to the people of the church as a "Fellowship of Exterminators."⁸

Below, I have listed the titles and the scripture passages for many of the sermons Dr. Pleitz preached at the First Baptist

Church in Pensacola. I have inserted some notes of my own about some of the sermons.

I. “When You Are in the Lions’ Den”

*Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel, and cast him into the den of lions. Now the king spoke and said unto Daniel, Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee. And a stone was brought, and laid upon the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet, and with the signet of his lords; that the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel. Then the king went to his palace, and passed the night fasting: neither were instruments of musick brought before him. Then the king arose very early in the morning, and went in haste unto the den of lions. And when he came to the den, he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions? Then said Daniel to the king, O king, live forever. My god hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me; forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt. **Daniel 6:16-22** (KJV).*

In this sermon, Pleitz said, “God saves us in the furnace, not from it.” He told the congregation (the beloved) that Christians should engage in prayer, have a pure heart, and serve God continually in order to allow God to save us when we are cast into the furnace.

II. “Forward with God”

For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord. Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both

*will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God. And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another. For who maketh thee to differ from another? And what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it? Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us: and I would to God ye did reign, that we also reign with you. For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honourable, but we are despised. Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwellingplace. **I Corinthians 4:4-11** (KJV).*

III. “He Eats with Sinners”

*Then all the tax collectors and the sinners drew near to Him. And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, “This man receives sinners, and eats with them.” **Luke 15:1-2** (NKJV).*

IV. “Day by Day”

“Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air,

for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them, Are you not of more value than they? Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? So, why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore do not worry saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' for after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble. **Matthew 6:25-34** (NKJV).

V. "The New Covenant"

For if the first covenant had been faultless, there could have been no room for a second one. For, because He was dissatisfied with His people, He said:

"See: the time is coming," says the Lord,

'When I will make a new covenant

With the house of Israel and the house of Judah,

Unlike the one that I made with their forefathers

The day I took them by the hand

To lead them out from the land of Egypt,

For they did not abide by their covenant with me,

So I did not care for them,' says the Lord.

'For this is the covenant that I will make with the house

of Israel

In those days,' says the Lord;

'I will put my laws into their minds,

And write them on their hearts,

And I will be their God,

And they will be my people.

And nevermore will each one need to teach his fellow-citizens,

And each one teach his brother, saying, "Know the Lord,"

For all will know me,

From the lowest to the highest.

For I will be merciful to their deeds of wrong,

And never, never any more will I recall their sins,'"

In speaking of a new covenant He makes the first one obsolete; and whatever is obsolete and antiquated is on the verge of vanishing.

Hebrews 8:7-13 (Charles B. Williams).⁹

VI. "The Hands of Heaven"

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restored my soul; he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of my enemies; thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely good and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the hour of the LORD for ever. **Psalms 23** (KJV)

VII. "The Old Man."

*If then you are raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, in which you also once walked when you lived in them. But now you must put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all. Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. But above these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which you were called in one body; and be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. **Colossians 3:1-16** (NKJV).*

This is an expository sermon on passages from Colossians and Ephesians. In this sermon Dr. Pleitz made four points:

- (1) In verses 5-9 we are told that we are to take off the old clothing because the old man has been put to death.
- (2) In verses 10-16, we are told to put on the new clothing.
- (3) In Ephesians 4:17 and 5:1-2, and 8, we are told to have a new walk.
- (4) In Colossians 3:9-11, we are told to relate differently to other people. Dr. Pleitz made a strong point that all barriers are broken down by Jesus. We must overcome racial barriers. He spent some time talking about how barbaric the Scythians were. He said that the Scythians would drink the blood of their enemies and drink from the skulls of their enemies, but that even the Scythians can be changed by Christ.

In his conclusion, he said that although the new man is not perfect, he is to strive to perfect and become more like Jesus every day.

VIII. "Needed but Not Deserved"

*For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works. **Titus 2:11-14** (KJV).*

IX. “Can These Bones Live”

The hand of the LORD came upon me and brought me out in the Spirit of the LORD, and set me down in the midst of the valley; and it was full of bones, Then he caused me to pass by them all around, and behold, there were very many in the open valley; and indeed they were very dry. And He said to me, “Son of man, can these bones live?” So I answered, “O Lord God, You know.” Again He said to me, “Prophecy to these bones, and say to them, ‘O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD! Thus says the Lord GOD to them, ‘O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD! Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones, “Surely I will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live. I will put sinews on you and bring flesh upon you, cover you with skin and put breath in you; and you shall live, Then you shall know that I am the LORD.” So I prophesied as I was commanded; and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and suddenly a rattling; and the bones came together, bone to bone. Indeed, as I looked, the sinews and the flesh came upon them, and the skin covered them over; but there was no breath in them. Then He said to me, “Prophecy to the breath, prophecy, son of man, and say to the breath, “Thus says the Lord GOD: ‘Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live.’” So I prophesied as He commanded me, and breath came into them, and they lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceedingly great army. Then He said to me, “Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They indeed say, “Our bones are dry, our hope is lost, and we ourselves are cut off!’ Therefore prophecy and say to them, “Thus says the Lord GOD: ‘Behold O My people, I will open your graves and cause you to come up from

your graves and bring you into the house of Israel. Then you shall know that I am the LORD, when I have opened your graves, O My people, and brought you up from your graves. I will put My Spirit in you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I , the LORD, have spoken it and performed it, says the LORD.” Ezekiel 37:1-14. (NKJV)

Dr. Pleitz was a wonderful pastor who loved his flock. He is a preacher who fervently preached the gospel. The people of First Baptist Church were blessed by his long pastorate in Pensacola. He still is a blessing to the church as a Pastor Emeritus. In an arch above the door to the chapel named for this great man engraved in granite are these words:

II CORINTHIANS 5:1
WE HAVE A BUILDING OF GOD,
A HOUSE NOT MADE WITH HANDS,
ETERNAL IN THE HEAVENS.
JAMES L. PLEITZ CHAPEL.

Endnotes

- ¹ Toni Moore Clevenger, *On the Bay---On the Hill: the Story of The First Baptist Church of Pensacola, Florida*, 1986, p. 245.
- ² <http://wordsearchbible.com/catalog/samplephp?prodid=1971>.
- ³ <http://sbcpc.net/about/>
- ⁴ <http://www.sbhla.org/downloads/638.pdf>. Folder 127. 1983. AR638.
- ⁵ Toni Moore Clevenger, *On the Bay---On the Hill: The Story of The First Baptist Church of Pensacola, Florida*, 1986, p. 245.
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⁷ Clevenger, op. cit., p. 249.

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CARLTON WATSON TODD AND A FOOTNOTE

JERRY M. WINDSOR

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Carlton Watson Todd (1916-1998) had the longest pastoral service record of any minister of the gospel according to any reasonable standards of church history research.

Carl McIntire (1906-2002) served as pastor of Collingswood Presbyterian Church in Collingswood, New Jersey for 66 years (1933-1999). As far as I know this is the longest known pastorate on record where the same minister served the same church.¹ There are other long continuous pastorates on record but none to compare with McIntire.²

But for Bro. Todd the service was different. He served four churches for over 43 years each and these four churches are located in three different states.³ He served two of the churches for 57 years each and a third church for 47 years and a fourth church for 43 years. In all Bro. Todd served 225 accumulative years as a Baptist preacher in six different churches in three different states.

Bro. Ben Jones served 58 years as pastor of West Park Southern Baptist Church in Jacksonville before he retired. As far as I know this is the longest service record of any Southern Baptist pastor in the same church. But compare Bro. Ben and Bro. Todd. Bro. Ben had accumulative service of 58 years and Bro. Todd had accumulative service of 225 years. What a remarkable record.

The life and ministry of Bro. Todd is an intriguing one. Let me share some details from the life of this faithful man of God.



Carlton Watson Todd

Early Years

Bro. Todd was born near Bluffton in Clay County Georgia on August 5, 1916. He was the son of Sibley and Mary Lizzie Eubanks Todd. Sibley Todd was a typical 1900's South Georgia farmer in that he had four mules, no land and a love of farming, hunting and fishing. He rented the land that he farmed and lived to be 95 years of age and died at Edison, Georgia.⁴

Carlton Watson Todd married Martha Melvin Peavey of Coleman, Georgia on June 6, 1935. Bro. Todd joined Mars Hill Primitive Baptist Church near Edison, Georgia, the third weekend in June 1935. His recent bride joined the same church two weeks later.

Bro. and Mrs. Todd had three children: Aaron Melvin Todd, Joan Todd Wells and Jeanelle Todd Sapp. At the time of his death in 1998 Bro. Todd had seven grandchildren, 15 great-grandchildren and a sister Christine Cook who survived him.

Martha Melvin Todd (1919-2003) was born between Cuthbert and Fort Gaines in Randolph County Georgia. The family reports that Bro. Todd would walk 12 miles to date her. At that time families would have square dances at their homes and Bro. Todd and Martha met at one of these square dances. Bro. Todd played the guitar and after dating a while they married. Bro. Todd was 19 years old and Martha was 16 years old when they married. Martha later worked for ten years in the Vernon, Florida

school lunchroom but she was best known in the family as a “professional homemaker.” She loved people and enjoyed entertaining. She liked to cook, clean and prepare for company. On “big meeting” occasions people would stay with the Todd’s and they would have pallets all over the house. Mrs. Todd always managed to have breakfast ready when guests got up for the day and she enjoyed every minute of it.

Mrs. Todd was a “strong lady” and a “complimentary pastor’s wife.” Mrs. Todd was always careful with Bro. Todd’s clothes and he would always have to “pass inspection” before walking out the door each day. When Bro. Todd traveled Mrs. Todd would “pack and stack” his clothes. She wanted him to look nice and he always did.⁵

Call to Preach

Bro. Todd was “liberated” in 1939 and was ordained at his home church in October, 1940. Bro. Todd said he was ordained on Monday because the “preacher couldn’t be gone on Sunday.”⁶ The three men who served on Bro. Todd’s ordaining council were also three of the most definite influences upon his ministry. According to Bro. Todd the men were Will Kelly, R. K. Blackshear and Tom Crawford. Kelly was from Edison, Georgia and baptized Todd when he was 19 years of age. Bro. Kelly lived to be 100 years old and preached for Bro. Todd when he was 98 years old. Bro. Todd said he recorded Bro. Kelly on an old wire tape recorder when he preached and Todd recalled that upon playing the tape back for Kelly it was probably the first time he ever heard himself preach.⁷

Rufus King Blackshear and Tom Crawford were also important in the life of Bro. Todd. He said Tom Crawford “went far and near for a penny a mile to call for peace.” Todd stated that Crawford was a “comforter” in his ministry and when a church

got upset he was a good one to bring in and restore peace to the church.

Six Pastorates

Bro. Todd held six different pastorates in his lifetime for a service record of 225 years. His first pastorate was Pleasant Hill Baptist Church in Graceville (seven years). His second pastorate was Bethel Baptist Church, Bonifay, Florida (57 years). His third pastorate was Shady Grove Baptist Church in Arlington, Georgia (57 years). His fourth pastorate was Union in Colquitt, Georgia (14 years). His fifth pastorate was Trinity Baptist Church in Whigham, Georgia (43 years) and his sixth pastorate was County Line Primitive Baptist Church in Abbeville, Alabama where he served for 47 years. My extended research indicates that this is the longest accumulative Christian pastoral service on record. I asked Bro. Todd what one of his life motto's might have been and he said "Don't turn back." His pastoral ministry work was service that included loyalty, duty and commitment. When Bro. Todd was 80 years of age he told me "I have fought a good fight. I want it to be that way."⁸

C. W. TODD PASTORAL TIMELINE

1	Nov. 1940-Nov. 1947	7 years	Pleasant Hill-Graceville, Fla.
2	Jan. 1941-1998	57 years	Bethel-Bonifay, Fla.
3	1941-1998	57 years	Shady Grove-Arlington, Ga.
4	1942-1956	14 years	Union-Colquitt, Ga.
5	1946-1989	43 years	Trinity-Whigham, Ga.
6*	1956-1998	47 years	County Line-Abbeville, Ala.

*At his death Bro. Todd was pastor of Shady Grove, Bethel and County Line.

Personal Interests

C. W. Todd was a bi-vocational preacher that had many interests. He served as a school teacher for a short time and was a school bus driver for many years. He taught two years at Liberty School at Vernon and also taught two years at New Prospect, a one room school house in Vernon that had grades 1-8.

Bro. Todd liked to fish in fish ponds and would also fish from the bank. He loved people and loved nature. He had a keen mind and the family reported that he "loved to tinker." He could patch up lawn mowers and made a pea sheller out of a Prince Albert Tobacco can and a razor blade. He made a device that would grate corn, another that would drop the flag on a mail box when mail was picked up, he wrote three or four songs, and fixed a device for guitar strings that made it easier to play the guitar. His interests seemed to center around people. He was positive and not negative. He was kind and not belligerent. He set a good family example in and out of the home.

After meal time at night the family would gather and sing. Bro. Todd could sing bass or tenor. He taught singing schools in the summer time and encouraged singing in all of his churches.⁹

Philosophy of Ministry

In an interview Bro. Todd stated that "spiritual service is just like natural food to a natural body." He said he had always been blessed with wonderful deacons. He said "I let them be deacons and they let me be the preacher." In 1991 when he was honored at Shady Grove Church in Arlington, Georgia for 50 years of service the worship leader stated that Bro. Todd was "a faithful guide, loving father and devoted pastor." This fit well with Bro. Todd's own words because he later stated that "when you serve a church a long time you become a part of the family."

This New Testament view of service was well noted by his congregations and Shady Grove Church voted every year on annual call to ask him to return as pastor. After 50 straight unanimous annual calls to Bro. Todd the church with a building full of people told him "This job is yours as long as you live."¹⁰

Study Habits

Bro. Todd never had a study. Yet he would "study, read and meditate" often. He loved to read the King James Bible and would usually sit in the living room to read. The only other religious book that Bro. Todd spent much time reading was a *History of The Church of God, From the Creation to A. D. 1885*, by Elder Cushing Biggs Hassell. This book presented a church history perspective from the Primitive Baptist view and was published in New York in 1886 and later reprinted in 1948.

Favorite Scriptures

Upon being asked about favorite texts Bro. Todd said in an interview that "They are all precious to me." He went on to say that Psalm 23, Matthew 16 and John 5:25 were important to him.

Preaching Texts

Bro. Todd and his family agreed on his favorite preaching texts. He said he "loved the Book of Ruth in the Old Testament" and also liked "the events of Elijah and Elisha." He said "I love to preach about Paul and Peter." His son Aaron Todd remembered that Bro. Todd "loved to preach" and would preach often from Paul's writings and especially the Book of Romans.

Preaching Style

There was only one audio tape available of the preaching of Bro. Todd when this research was prepared. He did not make notes and did not use notes in his preaching. The one tape available at the time of this writing was a sermon delivered at Bethel Church in Bonifay, Florida in 1970. His subject was "Faith" and his text was Hebrews 11. He had a conversation tone and spoke of a faith that "motivates us and moves us." He did not present a sermon key word or outline but his logic was valid and his illustrations were personal and Biblically based. His appeal was simple and he used such phrases as "God offers us something better than what we have" and closes with the invitation that we now give you "opportunity for membership." Bro. Todd revealed concern and compassion in his preaching. He usually had a summary conclusion and his son Aaron stated that he "gave you something you could take home with you."¹¹

Conclusion

Carlton Watson Todd was a gift. He had a strong voice, clear blue eyes and a wonderful sense of humor. He had a commitment to Jesus Christ that was woven into his character and ministry.

I interviewed Bro. Todd when he was 80 years of age. He said, "People ask me why I don't quit?" and then he said "I'm too near home now and the closer I get to home the better it is."

In 1986 Bro. Todd was diagnosed with lung cancer and after surgery he completely recovered. However in 1997 the cancer returned and after a valiant fight with that dreaded disease Bro. Todd died on February 5, 1998.

Observation

It has been my vocation and avocation to study Christian preaching for over 50 years. Carlton Watson Todd will always be

a footnote in the annals of Christian preaching due to his long-time service as pastor in local Primitive Baptist Churches. Bro. Todd is a preaching footnote.

But for all the people who knew him personally he was something else. He was also an exclamation point. He was a Christian example of service, integrity and humility. As the good people of Shady Grove said upon his 50th Anniversary as pastor of their church: he was “A Faithful guide, a loving father and a devoted pastor.”

SERVICE CHART OF TOP TEN LENGTHS

1.	Carl McIntire	Presbyterian	Cape May, New Jersey	66 years
2.	Mary W. Stabler	Assembly of God	Franklin, Alabama	64 years
3.	Walter H. Brooks	NBC	Washington, D. C.	62 years
4.	William Jay	Congregationalist	Bath, England	61 years
5.	Ludwig Krekeler	Lutheran	Gillespie, Illinois	59 years
6.	Ben Jones	SBC	Jacksonville (West Park)	58 years
7.	Lee Mixon	FWB	Geneva, Ala. (Pleasant Home)	58 years
8.	C. W. Todd	PBC	Bonifay, Fla. (Bethel)	57 years
9.	C. W. Todd	PBC	Arlington, Ga. (Shady Grove)	57 years
10	Robert H. Schuller	Reformed Church	Garden Grove, California	55 years

Endnotes

¹ Everything about McIntire was controversial. Some say he was pastor for 60 years but the records bear out 66.

² See Service CHART OF TOP TEN LENGTHS

³ See C. W. TODD PASTORAL TIMELINE

⁴ Aaron Todd interview, March 19, 2010, p. 1.

There are four primary sources for this paper. Source one is the May 13, 1996 interview I had with Bro. Todd. This will be noted as the “C. W. Todd interview.” Source 2 will be the 1998

Howard Harris article on Bro. Todd and will be referred to as “Harris.” Source three is the 1998 “Eulogy of Bro. Todd” and will be referred to as “Eulogy.” Source four is my March 19, 2010 interview with Aaron Todd and will be identified as “Aaron Todd interview.”

⁵ Aaron Todd interview, pp. 4, 18-19.

⁶ C. W. Todd interview, p. 2.

⁷ C. W. Todd interview, p. 2. Later on I asked Bro. Todd if preachers had any concept of a retirement plan back then. He said “Yes. Land was one dollar per acre then and Bro. Kelly told me to buy all I could.”

⁸ C. W. Todd interview, p. 1.

⁹ Aaron Todd interview, pp. 2-3.

¹⁰ Shady Grove Audio Tape.

¹¹ Aaron Todd interview, p. 15.



What We Can Learn about Pastoral Preaching from Dr. Jerry Oswalt

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The title for this article is actually incomplete. It should read, “What We Can *and Should* Learn about Pastoral Preaching from Dr. Jerry Oswalt.” Dr. Oswalt has earned our attention. He has served in ministry in one capacity or another for over fifty years. Along the way, he has served as a pastor, as a director of missions for a local Baptist association, as a professor of preaching in three institutions of higher learning, and as a college administrator. He currently serves as the Pastor of the Damascus Baptist Church in Graceville, Florida. He has spent a great portion of his life doing what every preacher must do: listening to the needs of people, learning from the truth of Scripture, and then putting those two spheres of concern together in a sermon.

I recently had the opportunity to view a number of Dr. Oswalt’s sermons. Having done that, I can tell you that I am grateful for the recording technology we have. I would be a lesser preacher if I had not been able to see Dr. Oswalt at work. I appreciate Dr. Jerry Windsor and the Florida Baptist Historical Society making these materials available to me.

In this article, I am simply reporting my observations about Dr. Oswalt’s sermons, and suggesting how those observations translate into encouragement and instruction for preachers or anyone who speaks publicly. I have summarized my observations into five lessons any preacher can, *and should*, learn from Dr. Oswalt.

What We Can Learn about Pastoral Preaching from Dr. Jerry Oswalt

Include a “Speech before the Speech”

When Dr. Oswalt enters the pulpit, he often takes just a few moments to dialogue with the congregation before the sermon actually begins. He may complement the musicians for their ministry in preparation for the sermon. He may remind the congregation of an important event coming up in the life of the church. Or, he may simply offer an extended greeting to the audience. Whatever the case, it does not take long, and it does not detract from the sermon. In fact, it helps the sermon.

What Dr. Oswalt is doing is building a sense of rapport with the audience. Functionally, this building of rapport has been described as the “speech before the speech.” The concept has best been explained by Calvin Miller in his assertion that oral communication, particularly in the church setting, actually begins before the formal presentation:

In a church setting, this talk-before-the-talk is all important! Here the elements of worship that preface the sermon may be splendid. The choir, soloist, drama club, or testimony can be used as a springboard to establish the relationship which connects the subject of the day to the audience. But the talk-before-the-talk can do much to establish the audience relationship. This pre-sermon talk avoids going too directly to the formal beginning. This round-about course is the getting-to-know-you stage of the sermon. Not much can happen until friendship is fixed, and the first words of the sermon are the “fixing” place. Because this phase of the sermon is rarely written down, it may seem to the preacher to be unimportant. The actual truth is that, written or not, it is the most human thing that may be said.¹

Miller goes on to explain that two relational questions will normally be on a congregation's mind at the beginning of the sermon, whether those questions are consciously expressed or not: do I like the speaker, and, does the speaker like us?² This preliminary dialogue practiced by Dr. Oswalt builds the potential of an affirmative answer for both questions. It lets the congregation see that the speaker is a likeable person and will then have something of value or interest to communicate.

Such a building of rapport is obviously essential for the preacher serving as a guest speaker, but it is also helpful to the pastoral preacher who stands before the same congregation week after week. Just as any audience is naturally curious or anxious about the guest speaker's character and demeanor, so the regular audience needs and wants to be reminded about the good nature of their pastor and his consistent manner of ministry with them. For the pastoral preacher, the "speech-before-the-speech" is an ongoing window for the congregation into their pastor's soul.

Preach as Yourself

When Dr. Oswalt enters the pulpit, he preaches as himself. There is, unfortunately, no shortage of ministers who appear to be one person outside the pulpit and a completely different person in the pulpit. Some preachers have trained themselves to look, sound, and otherwise emulate their preaching heroes. While that is an unparalleled compliment, it robs the congregation of getting to know their pastor as he is.

When Dr. Oswalt preaches, it is Jerry Oswalt who preaches. His sermons are characteristically dialogical, unrushed, pastoral, and offered with humility. These characteristics are present in the sermon because they are first characteristics of the man himself. What Dr. Oswalt practices is the essence of the time-honored description of preaching

offered long ago by Phillips Brooks: preaching is truth through personality. In one form or another, that description of preaching has influenced the thinking of this generation's leading teachers of homiletics. Haddon Robinson's basic definition of expository preaching includes the concept in its emphasis on the preacher as the intermediary between the Spirit and the congregation:

Expository preaching is the communication of a biblical concept, derived from and transmitted through a historical, grammatical, and literary study of a passage in its context, which the Holy Spirit first applies to the personality and experience of the preacher, then through the preacher, applies to the hearers.³

More recently, Tony Merida has emphasized that preachers should not attempt to "perform" in the pulpit in a way that is inconsistent with their own personalities, and has suggested simply that preachers "must be comfortable in our own skin."⁴ Merida goes on to explain that what is at stake is the authentic and passionate proclamation of the Word. One of the best ways to demonstrate integrity in preaching is to be one's self. One of the best ways to have passion in preaching is to be one's self and let that passion flow from a personal relationship with Christ. Calvin Miller concurred in his comment about the relationship of persuasion to being one's self in the pulpit:

Being who you are is much easier than trying to be who they are, and it is so much more authentic and useful to your listeners. But more than authentic, it is properly persuasive. We never have more power to influence an audience than when we are busy about being ourselves

and telling the world how we feel about God and his expectations for the church and the human race.

Dr. Oswalt's preaching style fulfills this goal in preaching described by Brooks, Robinson, Merida, and Miller. He is himself when he preaches. His style is also consistent with what Wayne McDill has characterized as a "conversational" or "natural" style of preaching:

The speech style I recommend for preaching can be called conversational. This does not mean chatty, light, or of little importance. It rather has to do with the communication emphasis of conversation. You might read to yourself, but a conversation requires another person. In a conversation, the point is to express your ideas in such a way as to have the other person understand what you are saying. You are watching and listening and adjusting your comments to his response.⁶

The affirmation of Dr. Oswalt's style could be repeated from various other sources, but the point remains that the most effective preaching is given by those who preach in a natural, personal, conversational, and dialogical style.

Be an Observer of Life

When Dr. Oswalt enters the pulpit, it is clear that he has experienced life, thought about life, read books, and has had conversations. In short, he has not been isolated in some proverbial ivory tower. His sermons often flow from what can be called "touch-points" with life. His awareness of what is happening around him often becomes a sermon starter that is candidly reported and explained in the sermon itself. Such candid reporting of these touch-points helps the congrega-

tion discover and understand his integrity (he does not try to hide the source of sermon ideas), and helps the congregation have confidence that the pastor speaking to them is aware of what goes on in their day-to-day lives.

In various sermons, Dr. Oswalt has disclosed that the sermon began from an intriguing sermon title he saw in a church bulletin or on a church sign, from a book or article he read, or from a conversation he had. Cultivating this habit of awareness has been the traditional advice given to preachers in reference to building up a store of sermon illustrations. Joe Cothen called it the "Three-by-Five Habit," indicating that preachers should not only stay alert for sermon illustrations in everyday life events, but should also be ready to write those ideas down and preserve them on a handy three-by-five note-card kept in their pocket.⁷ What Dr. Oswalt has done is to move that note-card habit beyond just a search for illustrations into a wider observation of life that gives birth to fresh sermon ideas. It is a worthy pattern to follow; the best sermons come from preachers who are wide-awake to life.

This trait in Dr. Oswalt's preaching is striking because there is always the temptation for the preacher to hide these touch-points in his sermons. Perhaps that temptation rises from a concern for the sermon to appear as purely expository in form as possible. In reality, the converse is true. It would seem that the open, honest, and dialogical reporting of such touch-points would actually strengthen and support the relationship of the preacher with his audience and thus open the door for the biblical truth of the expository sermon to create real changes in their lives.

In practicing this openness, Dr. Oswalt is also helping pastors understand that the act of preaching a sermon seldom stands alone. For the pastoral preacher, speaking every week to mostly the same congregation, the preaching ministry should be integrated with the pastor's other weekly ministries. While the

sermon is a primary tool for doing pastoral ministry (preaching has been described as “shepherding through sermons”), it is not the only tool for doing pastoral ministry. The pastor's visiting, counseling, and planning informs his preaching and leads him to topics which need to be addressed and passages that need to be presented. His other ministries, of course, do not lead him to violate the confidences he has gained during the week, but they help him learn about the struggles of his people. The best preaching comes from preachers who know, empathize with, and love their people.

Finally, in practicing this openness, Dr. Oswalt is also demonstrating the value of his interest in studying inductive preaching. While he does not normally preach inductive sermons, he recognizes that the inductive emphasis on sharing the mental processes of the preacher with the audience builds a sense of rapport with the audience. It allows a listener to hear what prompted the preacher to address this particular topic or passage and agree that the same idea or question has occurred in their mind. When that happens, the audience is more ready than ever before to listen to the sermon.

Offer a Thorough Introduction

When Dr. Oswalt enters the pulpit, he provides a thorough and unrushed explanation of what will happen in the sermon. In this particular habit, he goes somewhat against the grain of traditional homiletics. The standard wisdom for sermon introductions is that they should take up a maximum of ten percent of the allotted sermon time. For the normal half-hour sermon, then, a sermon introduction should take only about three minutes!

Most preachers will confess that they cannot finish their introduction in less than three minutes, but they heed the spirit of

the ten percent guideline which urges them to move forward with the sermon introduction promptly and get to the body of the sermon. In that spirit, Harold Bryson offered a humorous quip about an elderly woman who complained to the great Puritan preacher, John Owen, that he was “so long spreading the table that she lost her appetite for the meal.”⁸

In spite of the traditional wisdom about sermon introductions, Dr. Oswalt will at times spend as much as twenty-five percent of the sermon time providing a thorough, unrushed introduction. During such an introduction, he may offer some combination of the following: give the “speech-before-the-speech,” disclose the touch-point that promoted the sermon, offer biblical parallels to the preaching text, relate the sermon subject to theological issues, or describe the cultural background or related history of the biblical text. All of this is in addition to the normal sermon introduction tasks of clearly stating the thrust of the text and the proposition of the sermon. And while these steps require additional time, the audience comes out of this time well prepared to hear the central proposition of the sermon.

It may be that Dr. Oswalt is offering in this habit a needed balance to the often-rushed sermon introduction. Instead of the audience finally grasping the central proposition half-way through the sermon, Dr. Oswalt's audience are ready to hear, integrate, and begin processing the proposition as soon as it is spoken. Not everyone will join Dr. Oswalt in practicing the longer sermon introduction, but it certainly bears reflection and further study. The ultimate question is not if the sermon introduction is done quickly enough, but if it actually accomplishes enough.

Keith Willhite agreed that the sermon introduction may not be getting the serious attention it deserves:

I'd love to think that Jay and Leah came to church this morning craving the truth of God's Word about monotheism. Perhaps they did, but they may not know it yet. If I begin the message by taking them to the ancient Near East or by talking about the great victory of Elijah, they probably will overlook the relevance of God's Word. I cannot assume their appetites for God's Word have been whetted simply because I've said, "Let's turn in our Bibles to First Kings 18." I have to help them *want* to hear from God.⁹

Dr. Oswalt is intentional about these longer sermon introductions. He subsequently told me that his desire is to make sure the introduction makes proper contact with the people in the audience by way of addressing their needs, with the truth of Scripture, and with some current issue or event as an avenue of illustration. So if the sermon introduction takes longer than normal, it is time well spent.¹⁰

Present the Primary Preaching Idea

When Dr. Oswalt enters the pulpit, he preaches one primary message. This does not mean that he rejects the use of sermon "points." It does mean that his points all revolve around, support, and explain a single, primary sermon idea. Preachers are often notorious about melding two or three sermon ideas together into one sermon delivery, but the tide of preaching wisdom seems to be turning clearly against this temptation. The sermon should translate the dominant idea of the biblical passage into a clear and singular message for the congregation. This process does not rob the preacher of variety in sermon form; rather, it guarantees that whatever form he chooses will be authentically biblical.

This idea of the single message is not new. In his long teaching career, Harold Bryson spoke often about the need to

think about, specify, and reiterate this guiding proposition for the sermon. He called it the "Essence of the Sermon in a Sentence (ESS)." Haddon Robinson has also urged the dominance of a single, primary message in the sermon with his concept of the "big idea." Tony Merida prefers the simplified expression, "main point of the sermon," but the essential concept is the same.¹¹ In a later conversation, Dr. Oswalt himself described this all-important step of sermon preparation in this way, "You must have it in a nutshell, or you are not ready to preach it."¹² In other words, every sermon should include a clear presentation of a single, guiding sermon idea instead of a multiplicity of separate ideas.

To practice this self-imposed limitation on the subject range in the sermon is to at once be true to the biblical text and be dedicated to one's audience. The audience generally will not benefit from hearing multiple major ideas in the sermon; they will be equipped for life change if they hear a primary idea and its application to life. The best preaching comes from preachers who do not neglect this disciplined approach to sermon preparation.

Conclusion

Listening to Dr. Oswalt's sermons has been a positive experience for me. I found his sermons to be personally helpful and encouraging. It was clear that he had thought about the issues and questions that relate to my life, and that he was intentional about bringing the truth of Scripture to bear on those issues. Beyond the personal benefit, however, his sermons were also helpful to me as a fellow preacher. In his preaching, I was reminded of some of the more important lessons that preachers should learn: relate to the audience with a speech-before-the-speech; be yourself; be open about

the process of preparing the sermon; make sure the introduction has been worked out thoroughly; and, stick to the main point.

Endnotes

¹ Calvin Miller, *The Empowered Communicator: 7 Keys to Unlocking an Audience* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), 20. See also, Calvin Miller, *Preaching: The Art of Narrative Exposition* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2006), 186-188.

² Miller, *Empowered Communicator*, 21-24.

³ Haddon W. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 21.

⁴ Tony Merida, *Faithful Preaching: Declaring Scripture with Responsibility, Passion, and Authenticity* (Nashville: B & H Academic, 2009), 168.

⁵ Miller, *Preaching*, 176.

⁶ Wayne V. McDill, *The Moment of Truth: A Guide to Effective Sermon Delivery* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1999), 118.

⁷ Joe H. Cothen, *The Pulpit Is Waiting: A Guide for Pastoral Preaching* (Gretna, Louisiana: Pelican Publishing Company, 1998), 79-80.

⁸ Harold T. Bryson and James C. Taylor, *Building Sermons to Meet People's Needs* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1980), 104.

⁹ Keith Willhite, *Preaching with Relevance: Without Dumbing Down* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2001), 43.

¹⁰ Personal Interview with Dr. Jerry Oswalt, July 15, 2010.

¹¹ Bryson, *Building Sermons*, 52-68; Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 33-50; Merida, *Faithful Preaching*, 80-85.

¹² Personal Interview with Dr. Jerry Oswalt, July 15, 2010.

Jerry Windsor-A Passion to Preach, a Burden to Teach Preachers

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First impressions can be lasting impressions. I will never forget the first time I saw Dr. Jerry Windsor. I was a freshman at what was then called Florida Baptist Theological College in Graceville. Dr. Jerry Oswalt, Academic Dean, had just introduced the faculty. I looked Dr. Windsor over from head to toe. This man would be the one to teach me how to become a better preacher. Knowing that God had placed a call on my life to preach the gospel, I was eager to learn all I could about preaching. Little did I know that this professor would cause such an impact on my life that I would make it a lifelong habit of mine to study preaching and preachers!¹

Now imagine my interest and excitement when I was asked to write the article on Jerry Windsor for this journal. Few people get to have their thoughts published on one of their mentors, but that is the very thing I get to do. Objectivity is difficult with friends and nearly impossible with mentors, but this work will attempt as much coverage of Windsor's preaching as possible. Even though his preaching and teaching gets the most attention in this article, it is impossible to separate these tasks without first thinking of Jerry Windsor's preparation in becoming a pastor.

In Preparation to Preach

Jerry Windsor (1940-) loved to tell his students that he was educated at UCLA-the upper corner of lower Alabama! Raised in Webb, Alabama, Windsor surrendered to God's call on his life for ministry at age 16 in his Baptist church. His upbringing served him well, for he has never forgotten his roots, and the lessons he learned while growing up have appeared often in preaching and teaching settings.

Windsor began his Christian upbringing as a Baptist by convenience. The Baptist faith was passed down to him, and he never really questioned it. All that changed one day while he was a student at Howard College (now Samford University) in Birmingham, Alabama. He was attending a Methodist church with his landlady, because he did not own an automobile, and his landlady told him that if he continued coming to her church, he would become a Methodist soon! That revelation caused Windsor to study the Bible to see what expression of the Christian faith stood out. Though he began as a Baptist by convenience, he became a Baptist by conviction.²

While coming to that conviction, Windsor got his feet wet by serving as Youth Minister at Bluff Park Baptist Church in Birmingham. Before graduating college in 1964, Windsor married Jerry Mae Talley of Montgomery, Alabama on July 13, 1963. They would eventually have two children, Caroline and John Mark.³ These early years of preparation and family addition helped shape Jerry Windsor as pastor, preacher and professor.

After college Windsor would root himself deeper in Baptist life by enrolling at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. While at the seminary, Windsor grew interested in a lifelong study of homiletics, due in part to his studies under Vernon Stanfield. Stanfield, who would eventually become well-known for his work in revising John Broadus' *On the Preparation and*

Delivery of Sermons, helped Windsor see the importance of expository preaching, even before that method of preaching became more popular during the 1980s.⁴ This theological training was significant in shaping Windsor for the future, but a preacher needs a pulpit to practice his preaching. Windsor's first call to serve as pastor would get him started on a lifelong love with preaching.

As Pastor

Windsor's first opportunity for ongoing preaching came in his call to Midway Baptist Church in Thomasville, Alabama, in 1966. Located a few miles from Selma, Thomasville would see more than its fair share of Civil Rights' events. Windsor took the unpopular stand in associating with African-Americans, even preaching in one of their churches. Having spent much time researching America's Antebellum, Civil War and Reconstruction years, Windsor was convinced that the New Testament supported all ethnic groups equally. Though his stand was unpopular at the time, Windsor became known and appreciated as a man of conviction mixed with compassion.⁵

Windsor left Midway in 1969 and continued as a student before serving as pastor at Seminary Baptist Church in Seminary, Mississippi (1972-1976). After finishing a Doctorate of Theology degree at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, he received the call to pastor First Baptist Church, Amite, Louisiana (1976-1982). This church had over 1,000 members, ministerial staff and several employees. Windsor learned to transition from a pastor as shepherd to a pastor-administrator as rancher.⁶

All of these churches helped mold Windsor into the pastor that followed God's call to Florida to First Baptist Church, Graceville (1982-1991). Graceville would not only be another church for Windsor to pastor, but it would become his long-term

home. Though he would serve the church vocationally for nearly a decade before stepping down to teach full-time in the same town, he and his wife have kept the membership and friendships in that church.

Numerous strengths marked Windsor's pastorates, including strong expository preaching, wise administrative leadership, a clear emphasis upon church evangelism, warm-hearted shepherding and denominational support.⁷ Because of this blend of gifts, the Lord used Windsor to multiply his ministry through teaching preaching and pastoral ministries (see below).

Congregants of the churches Windsor served missed his gifts. Whenever Windsor accepted the invitation to teach preaching full-time, churches immediately began seeking him out for wisdom and leadership through interim pastorates. Since 1991, Windsor has served in 17 interim pastorates, averaging about 12 months per stint. These churches, scattered throughout the Tri-state region of Florida, Alabama and Georgia, were recipients of many of the same strengths Windsor had in the full-time pastorate. The fact that he has been invited back to preach during special church anniversaries at every church he served and that he has served more than one church multiple times in an interim capacity testifies to the loving care he has shown each congregation. His greatest quality in pastoral ministry, however, remains his effective preaching, for he exhibits an unusual way of delivering deep biblical truth in everyday language.⁸

As Preacher

Central to Windsor's calling and career has been his role as preacher. Mixing a lifetime of learning with a unique sense of humor and wisdom, he has equipped his listeners in various aspects of the Christian faith. Terms like extemporaneous and expository define his practice of preaching.

An Extemporaneous Preacher

Windsor describes extemporaneous preaching as "preaching without notes from the inspiration of the moment and general background study," noting that his own preaching falls under this category.⁹ A slight modification in observing Windsor's own preaching would focus on more than a general background study, for his sermon outline is thoughtful, balanced, and memorized. Windsor's definition of free delivery is "preaching with full preparation without notes and manuscript."¹⁰ Thus, although Windsor may not prepare each sermon fully, his model appears to be a blend of free delivery with significant preparation and extemporaneous delivery with general background study.

Regardless of the exact description of Windsor's sermon delivery, his practice without notes or manuscript allows much greater attention to the importance of eye contact in visual communication. The addition of facial expressions and a slight lean toward the audience in posture underscore the importance of the audience in sermon delivery, subconsciously communicating that the sermon is for them. Windsor's preaching also employs occasional movement and gestures rather than constant movement, because he believes that some movement strengthens visual communication but continual movement is not natural and communicates either nervousness or imitation of a popular preacher.

Windsor also engages listeners with vocal variety in volume, tone, and inflection. He emphasizes the most important truths with notes of passion and repetition. These characteristics add vocal communication to the visual communication.

Finally, far preachers employ appropriate and timely humor as much as Windsor does in his preaching. Students have often commented that Windsor could probably have made a nice living in comedy, if God would have called him

to such a task, for he has always been able to find something funny in every event. Both in his teaching and preaching, Windsor captures a humorous event from the past and points his listeners to a life lesson.

An Expository Preacher

In addition to Windsor's extemporaneous delivery, the content of his preaching is clearly expository in nature. He blends strong explanation, helpful illustrations and relevant application in an engaging way. He adds to this mix an attention-getting introduction and a conclusion that drives home the main idea. Windsor's preaching is both informative and inspiring.

A few examples of Windsor's preaching seem appropriate here. Once when a chapel speaker called in sick at the last minute, college leadership called upon Windsor to preach. He entitled his message "Bloom Where You Are Planted" and selected Titus 1:5 for his text. He noted that the Apostle Paul left Titus at the island of Crete to appoint and to amend. Crete was not a great island, like some of its neighbors, and ministers have to serve in less-than stellar places, but they "need to learn to accept [their] place, learn to establish a purpose, and learn to accept the people."¹¹ With little time for preparing this sermon and ministerial students in need of a helpful word from the Lord, it is apparent that Windsor was ready to preach 'in season and out of season.'

In a message on Senior Awards' Day, Windsor preached from 1 Corinthians 9:24 on "Veni Vidi Velcro" (Latin for I Came, I Saw, I Hung in There). While appealing to all of the students, Windsor especially pointed his comments to the seniors. In summarizing the message, he said, "You may not always run the fastest, you may not always run the best, but run faithfully to the finish."¹²

Finally, in a message on the high calling of ministry from Nehemiah, Windsor exhorted his audience not to let critics bring them down. In a powerful ending, he told a story of the early days of aviation and one man flying a plane basically made of plywood and canvas. Well into his flight path, he heard a noise and realized rats were gnawing at the plane's material. He knew the rats could bring the plane down so he flew higher to where the oxygen was thinner until the gnawing sound stopped. He remained at that height for a few minutes before coming back down and then returning safely home. Windsor made the point that ministers have to stay near the Lord to overcome the constant gnawing of critics in ministry.¹³

These messages help underscore the expository preaching of Windsor. It is one matter to practice such preaching. It is another matter to teach others to do the same.

As Professor of Preaching and Pastoral Ministries

As noted above, Windsor accepted the invitation to teach full-time in 1991 at Florida Baptist Theological College (now the Baptist College of Florida). His task was to help students become better preachers and pastors. Up until his retirement in 2006, Windsor had taught courses in sermon preparation, sermon delivery, expository preaching, Civil War preaching, church evangelism, pastoral ministries, and more.

Teaching Pastoral Ministries

One constant reminder that Windsor gave his students was that while preaching is a key component in ministry, it is not the only component. A shepherd must genuinely love his sheep. Such loving care will often go further in someone's life than any single sermon.

In discussing the call of a pastor, Windsor writes, “In pastoral ministries we say that a need may take you to a church, but it will take a call to keep you there.”¹⁴ The reason for the call is that ministry can be burdensome (can I get an “Amen!”?). Windsor adds, however, “If you feel a personal call to preach, if you will accept long hours, if you can live on low pay, if you can get by on few benefits, then the burden of the Lord becomes a burden of blessing.”¹⁵

Pastoral candidates need forewarning of what to expect in ministry. Three basic statements about pastoral ministry that Windsor repeated nearly every semester were

1. You are not Jesus Christ
2. You cannot make a silk purse out of a sow's ear [sic]
3. You must learn to be run over by a Mack truck, pick yourself up, brush yourself off, and keep going.¹⁶

In light of the first statement, Windsor observes, “Any pastor too big for a small church is too small for a big church.”¹⁷ That is a lesson many young preachers still need to learn.

Ministers, to be faithful and successful, must guard themselves constantly. They should “stay humble and stay near the cross”¹⁸ in their personal devotional life. Windsor encourages reading 5 Psalms, 1 chapter of Proverbs and 3 additional chapters in the Bible each day, along with a prayer notebook and journal to write down prayer requests and what God is doing in the pastor's life.¹⁹ Moreover, Windsor urges ministers to have “a signed, dated personal code of ministerial ethics based upon Biblical principles”²⁰ to help keep pastors from moral failure.

According to Windsor, if a pastor develops this mindset and puts up these parameters in his life, God will sustain him in ministry. Even with these character traits, a pastor must still love his people and feed them through preaching the Word.

Teaching Preaching

When asked what their favorite Dr. Windsor course was, many students quickly point to his Civil War Preaching course. Focused primarily on American preaching from 1822-1877 (Antebellum, Civil War and Reconstruction years), Windsor helped students see how much one's environment can influence his preaching. From these examples and others, Windsor taught students to let the Bible be their primary guide throughout the various cultural mores. This instruction reminded pastors that the Word of God, more than anything else, should get the most attention in sermon preparation.

In regards to sermon preparation, Windsor offers seven key questions in sequential order:

1. *Why?* Why is it I have chosen to preach this particular sermon?
2. *Which?* Which sources will I use to present this Biblical truth?
3. *How?* How may I best present this idea in sermonic form with a life changing thrust?
4. *What?* What are the needs of my people or circumstances that call for this sermon?
5. *Where?* Where exactly will I preach this sermon?
6. *When?* When exactly will I preach this sermon?
7. *Who?* To whom exactly will I preach this sermon?²¹

Among his 35 steps in sermon preparation, Windsor provides a heavy focus on prayer, reading the text multiple times in a few translations, writing questions and key words, making an expository outline of text, writing down the subject, consulting commentaries and word studies, editing outline, writing the heart of the text, writing a sermonic summary and aim in 15 words or

less, consulting other books and illustration sources, developing a sermon outline, writing out the introduction, refining the body, writing the conclusion, praying for others and practicing delivering the sermon all before actually preaching the sermon.²²

In light of Windsor's own preaching, it should come as no surprise that he favors expository preaching with an extemporaneous delivery as the most biblical kind of preaching of the apostles. Since the apostles were always ready to preach (cf. 2 Timothy 4:2), modern preachers need to have a thorough understanding of the Bible. Furthermore, preachers need to blend explanation and application to their listeners in such a way that the audience learns what to do with the biblical text.

To aid the new preacher in sermon delivery, Windsor required his students to write out three manuscripts in his sermon delivery class, so that they could learn to think through every facet of the sermon-introduction, body and conclusion, as well as explanation of the biblical text, illustration of the main idea and application of the textual idea to the audience. Because sermons are communicated to people in the pew rather than the paper notes in the pulpit, Windsor mandated that sermons preached in class be done without notes or manuscript-extemporaneously-so that students would learn to develop their minds and rely on the Spirit in preaching.

Windsor's emphasis on expository preaching with extemporaneous delivery has resulted in preaching that is both informing and inspiring (just like his own preaching). Students and churches have testified to Windsor's effectiveness in preaching and teaching others how to do it better.

As a Pastor to Pastors

In concluding this work, a few words are necessary about Windsor's role outside of the pulpit, local church pastorate, or

classroom. Through associational life and ongoing friendships beyond the classroom, Windsor often becomes a pastor to pastors. Pastors hurting from the burdens of ministry have written countless letters and emails and made phone calls and visits to "Brother Jerry," or "Dr. Windsor." They look to him for his wisdom and compassion. What he offers rarely disappoints them.

This writing has now come full circle, for it began by looking at Jerry Windsor in preparation as pastor and it ends with his role as a pastoral mentor-not just to me, but to hundreds who have sat under his tutelage. May the Lord continue to bless Jerry Windsor for his passion to preach and his burden to teach preachers!

Endnotes

¹ Not only would I go on to accumulate more than 50 hours of graduate work in homiletics, I was so impressed by Dr. Windsor as a professor, preacher and parent that I wanted to exhibit some of his same qualities. My wife and I named our oldest son after his son, John Mark, partly in hopes that I might have the same influence in my son's life as Dr. Windsor did in his son's life.

² Jerry M. Windsor, "Introduction," *The Journal of Florida Baptist Heritage*, Vol. 11 (2009): 4.

³ Ann L. Schilling and Jerry M. Windsor, *A History of First Baptist Church Amite, Louisiana 1866-1980* (Hammond, LA: Carr Printing), 49.

⁴ Many homileticians point to Haddon Robinson's *Biblical Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1980) as the stimulating factor in returning expository preaching to several classrooms and pulpits (see Joel Breidenbaugh, *Preaching for Bodybuilding: Integrating Doctrine and Expository Preaching in a Postmodern World* [Bloomington, IN: CrossBooks, 2010], 1-5).

⁵ Jerry M. Windsor, *Ministry Resources* (Graceville, FL: Brown Street Press, 1995), 24-28.

⁶ Idem, "Introduction," *The Journal of Florida Baptist Heritage*, Vol. 10 (2008): 4.

⁷ I personally know several former parishioners of Jerry Windsor's pastorates and interim pastorates. Through conversations over the last 15 years, these qualities stand out about Windsor as pastor.

⁸ John Mark Windsor observes that his father's ability to convey the ancient languages of Scripture in common language stands out as one of his father's greatest attributes in preaching.

⁹ Notes from PR 201: Sermon Delivery, by Dr. Jerry Windsor (Graceville, FL: FBTC, 1995).

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Windsor, "Bloom Where You Are Planted," (Graceville, FL: Florida Baptist Theological College, November 18, 1994).

¹² Idem, "Veni Vidi Velcro" (Graceville: FBTC, May 6, 1999). For another example of Windsor's preaching with a strong focus on application, see his sermon entitled "Expectations" in *Preaching Resources* (Graceville, FL: Brown Street Press), 43-47.

¹³ Idem, "Message from Nehemiah" (Graceville: The Baptist College of Florida, April 4, 2005).

¹⁴ Idem, *Ministry Resources*, 14.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 15.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 18.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 39.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 43-44.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 49. For instruction on sexual threat and the minister, see pages 68-78.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 64.

²² Idem, *Preaching Resources*, 11-12.

Dr. W. Wiley Richards: He Came Teaching

ROGER C. RICHARDS

DEAN OF STUDENTS

CHAIR, GENERAL EDUCATION DIVISION

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Dr. W. Wiley Richards has, without question, been the most influential preacher in my life. He has been a model to me as a pastor, scholar, and college professor. He has shaped who I am and how I practice ministry. There are probably scores of ministers throughout Florida and other states who can make that claim, but there are none more qualified to make it than I. He is my father.

Dad was born on June 25, 1932 and grew up in a modest home in Pleasant Grove, a small community in the Pensacola, Florida area. He was the only son among five siblings and was the fourth child born to his parents. When he graduated from Pensacola High School in 1950 he was the first of his siblings to do so. While hard work was valued in his family, formal education was not strongly emphasized. After high school, he enlisted in the Navy, being trained as an Aviation Electrician's Mate. He was stationed at a Naval Air Station in Weeksville, North Carolina for the entire active duty time, being released to the inactive reserves in 1954 at the end of his tour.

His time at Weeksville was very important to him. He married his high school sweetheart, the former Betty Hargrave, the daughter of a naval aviator. It was also during this time that God began speaking to him, calling him to the ministry. The other sailors in the squadron began calling him "Preacher."

His time in the Navy was a good opportunity for him to put into practice what he had learned at Pleasant Grove Baptist Church. As a young boy, someone spoke at his church on tem-

perance and he signed a pledge card that he would never use alcohol, or even purchase or transport it. Later, as a sailor, when he would go to the enlisted club on base, other sailors would occasionally ask him to bring them a drink. He refused, referring back to the commitment he had made years prior. He never felt that a promise made as a boy was somehow negated when he became an adult. A promise was a promise. Remaining true to one's word is something that he modeled in his ministry, as well as in the home.

After he was released from active duty, he returned to Pensacola where he was called to his first pastorate, Millview Baptist Mission. After a brief period at Junior college, during which time his first son was born, he enrolled at Howard College (now Samford University) in Birmingham, Alabama.

While he was a student in Birmingham, he had the opportunity to preach throughout the state in a program called "H Day," where the ministerial students would travel to associations in Alabama in preach in the churches. It was on one of these trips to south Alabama that the Associational Missionary brought him to a small town in the Florida panhandle and told him of a school that was going to be moving to the area. This school was going to train preachers, enabling them to more effectively serve churches throughout the southeast. This small town was Graceville, where my father would ultimately serve a majority of his ministry.

While still a student at Howard College, the young preacher was called to serve as Pastor of Macedonia Baptist Church in Jemison, Alabama. It was during his time there that I, the second of his four children, was born. I have no recollection of his time there, but some of the friends he made there remained an active part of his life for as long as I have been alive. Even at the time of this writing, there is one couple from Jemison that

has relocated to live with their son just a few miles away from my parents. One of the men from that church was later called to the ministry, attended the school in Graceville, and served pastorates in Alabama and Florida. In fact, while I was a student at Samford, I had an opportunity to preach in his church for H-Day. It was a bridging of generations in ministry. I have learned that it is necessary for us to maintain close ties with our heritage, but at the same time equip the next generation for service in the Kingdom.

In 1957, a few months after my birth, he resigned his pastorate, packed up his family, and moved to New Orleans, Louisiana, where he earned his Bachelor of Divinity (B.D.) and Doctor of Theology (Th.D.) degrees from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. While a seminary student, he served as pastor of a church in Progress, Mississippi, then Galilee Baptist Church in Deerford, Louisiana, near Zachary. His third child, a daughter, was born in Mississippi, close to the time at which he earned his B.D. When he graduated with his Th.D. and his fourth child, another daughter, was born, his mother-in-law jokingly told him, "Wiley, I think that's enough education!"

It was during his time at Galilee Baptist Church that I first had any awareness of what my father did. I remember playing in the woods around the house, ambling through the cemetery behind the church, and playing around the church building. The pastorium was located next to the church. I remember one funeral that he conducted, that of an elderly gentleman we simply referred to as "Grandpa Black." His son, C. C., was one of the mainstays of that church. We called him "Uncle C. C." and his wife "Grandma Evelyn." I remember asking in front of Uncle C. C. why he was called uncle while his wife was called grandma. He replied, "It's because she's so much older than I am."

At the funeral for Grandpa Black, I remember little of the service, but I do recall walking to the front of the sanctuary at the end of the service as all of those in attendance filed by the open casket. My father, standing at the head of the casket, picked me up and allowed me to look inside. I didn't exactly understand what was going on, but even then I sensed the solemnity of the occasion. The Black family has remained close to my parents. C. C. still visits them when he is able, though his daughter is reluctant to let him drive himself alone since he is now in his 90s.

Soon after earning his doctorate, he was called as Pastor of First Baptist Church, Lantana, Florida, returning to his home state. He served in that capacity for four years, from 1964 until 1968. It was a difficult and challenging ministry, and during that time, the Lord began preparing him to enter a new stage of ministry, one of training others for serving in leadership roles in Southern Baptist churches.

The church was demanding, requiring his absence from home many times before we were up for school. At times, we would be in bed before he returned home. I don't remember feeling neglected by him during this time, and I think it is because I never heard him or my mother complain about what he did. I believe it is because he never looked at his ministry as a job, but he always remembered that it is a calling and we are to count it a blessing to serve the Lord by serving His people. This is an attitude he tried to instill in me and others who have expressed a call to vocational ministry.

A couple of things my father did in Lantana were extremely important to him. First, he regularly met with other ministers, including those of other denominations, and would discuss philosophy and theology. He had a dear love for those disciplines and constantly tried to sharpen his mind. Another practice was research. He had a microfilm reader that had been presented to

him by a close family friend and he regularly ordered microfilms and engaged in research. I can recall visiting his office and seeing the microfilm reader on his desk where it had either recently been in use or was about to be. He still has not allowed his love of research to dim. He taught me that education and development is important and we need to constantly be involved in learning and preparing ourselves to be more effective in the service of the Lord. He later told me that he had become amazed at what the Lord had made the human mind capable of doing. Expanding and developing this mind has been a lifelong pursuit of his.

Even though pursuing an education was never strongly encouraged by his family, his parents were extremely proud that their son was entering the ministry. They had raised all of their children in church, being faithful members of Pleasant Grove Baptist Church in Pensacola. This is something my dad instilled in his own children, even at sacrificing his own desires. All four of his children grew up to become active in their own churches. I am certain there were times that he would have preferred to spend time with his family, but I grew up valuing the time we were able to spend together.

In 1968, it had become apparent to my father that God was preparing to move him to a new place of ministry. In July of that year, he announced his resignation to First Baptist Church of Lantana and prepared to move his family to the Florida panhandle. He had accepted a position at what was then Baptist Bible Institute (BBI) in Graceville, Florida. BBI had begun in the 1940s in Lakeland, Florida and had relocated to Graceville in the late 1950s. This was the same school he had been introduced to when preaching in south Alabama as a college student. He joined the faculty to teach English, even though his field of training was in historical theology.

He took the position out of a desire to assist men who had been called to the ministry late in life, and many of them did not even have a high school diploma. He understood how vital it was to train these new ministers to effectively communicate the gospel. Many of them came from rough backgrounds and it was gratifying, though often challenging, to see them being equipped for positions of service. My teen years were spent around the school, becoming well acquainted with not only the faculty and their families, but the students and their families, as well. Many of the students served as my Royal Ambassador counselors, while others taught Sunday School and found other avenues of service. My father helped me understand that God transforms lives, calls whom He chooses, and equips those He calls, using them in tremendous ways. Even now, I regularly meet people who were taught by my father, each of them speaking of the tremendous impact he and the other faculty members had on their lives and ministries.

One area of sacrifice that my father experienced was the opportunity to worship with his family. In the early days of his ministry at BBI, salaries for the faculty were not sufficient to enable them to support their families comfortably without assistance. The professors were encouraged to supplement their incomes by taking positions as interim pastors in the area churches. He believed that it was important for his family to be involved in a stable church environment and with a firm identity in who we were as Southern Baptists, so he left us attending First Baptist Church of Graceville with my mother, while he was working with other churches.

My father's perspective on this was that it was vital for the professors who were training ministers to be actively serving in churches of their own. He taught me that what happened at school must not be a theoretical and academic exercise, but it was

much more than this. It was an opportunity to mentor the ministerial students, teaching them out of their own experiences, as well. The professors could more effectively identify with the challenges their students would face in ministry if they were dealing with the same issues, as well.

I experienced one advantage to being involved at First Baptist Church when, as a teenager, God began speaking to me about entering the ministry. I had spoken at times with my pastor, Joe Nanney, about this and I finally publicly answered the call to ministry when I was 16 years old. In retrospect, what is remarkable about this is that Dad never felt threatened by Brother Nanney's involvement in my life. In fact, I suspect that he encouraged it, knowing that the role my pastor played in my call was ultimately to my benefit and to that of the Kingdom. My father, while never pushing me toward the ministry, was tremendously proud that one of his children had been called to this area of service. But he is equally proud of all of his children, recognizing that one calling is no greater than another and that we each play a vital role in Christian service.

In the mid-1970s, the Vietnam War ended and many Vietnamese refugees came to our country. Many of them were placed in a tent city at Eglin Air Force Base, about an hour and a half away from us. Dad quickly identified a new area of ministry and began marshalling volunteers to go with him on a weekly basis to teach English to the newcomers to the United States. Our family also sponsored several of the families, helping them establish new lives for themselves in a land with a language and customs that were strange to them. He found this an excellent way to share the gospel to people that he would not have otherwise encountered. Through this he taught me to seize any opportunity to share the love of Christ, not just with words, but with our actions, as well.

I left home in 1976 to continue my education at Samford University, following the path my father had taken nearly twenty years prior. He continued at BBI and in serving area churches as interim pastor. In the 1970s he saw the school change to a degree-granting institution, becoming Florida Baptist Theological College (FBTC). He was also able to begin teaching theology, ethics, and later, philosophy. In fact, in order to remain current in the fields, he began taking classes at Florida State University in Tallahassee, Florida, eventually earning a Doctor of Philosophy degree in the area of philosophy. He continued to teach me that you should never reach the point where learning new things and expanding your mind are unimportant.

When I completed my degree at seminary, I was soon called as Pastor of Hollins Baptist Church in Hollins, Alabama. My new church contacted my wife's home church, Mt. Pisgah Baptist Church in Cropwell, Alabama and asked them to convene an ordination counsel. My father was invited to serve on the ordination counsel and then to preach my ordination sermon. I remember that of all of the questions I was asked by the counsel, my father asked me the most difficult question. He asked me, not about theology, or church polity, but when was the last time I had personally led someone to the Lord. I honestly related the time, which was nearly eight years prior when I was still living at home as a teenager. I was embarrassed by my own answer. He asked the question, not for the purpose of embarrassing me, but to help me understand that we should never lose sight of those who are in need of the saving message of Jesus Christ. He gently corrected me in the misconception that when God calls us to ministry, he is not calling us to train for the ministry. We are to be actively involved even during the training, not after the completion of it.

My father continued to encourage me and mentor me, not just while I was in the pastorate, but while I spent two decades of

ministry as a Navy Chaplain. In the latter part of my military career, Dad encouraged me to begin teaching online courses for FBTC. I did this during the last four years of my military ministry. As I neared retirement from the military, I began exploring where God would have me serve. An opportunity arose for me to teach on campus as an adjunct professor. I reluctantly accepted the position, thinking this would be a temporary thing until I was called to a church as Pastor. Dad told me, "You'll know in three months' time whether the Lord has called you to the teaching ministry or not." He was correct. While he retired from teaching full-time in 2002, he continued to teach a few courses as an adjunct professor. I was able to teach alongside him as a colleague. He handed his last class over to me in 2006.

While Dad has retired from teaching in the classroom, he has not retired from ministry. He has continued to serve as Interim Pastor of churches in the area. At last count, he has served as Interim Pastor 47 times in 35 different churches. His influence will doubtless be felt in Baptist churches for years to come. As we have travelled with them over the years, it is not unusual to encounter someone, even several states away, who will recognize Dad and approach him to thank him for the influence he has had on their ministry. I have been very blessed to have had him as a teacher and a mentor for my entire life. He has truly been a model for ministry to me and countless others.

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Carlton, Fran*	Greenwood Baptist	Richards, Wiley *
Clevenger, Toni*	Church*	Robinson, Paul
Cook, Robert	Hawkins, Marlin	Roland, Bill
Cook, Virginia	Henry, Ray	Shaw, Frances*
Cornerstone Baptist	Hepburn, Don*	Stinecipher, Grace M.
Church*	Jolly, Judith*	Sullivan, John*
Courson, Ann	Jolly, Lawson	Summers, Bill
Culbreth, Craig	Jukes, Caroline	Suttles, Charles*
Cunningham, David	Jukes, Herbert	Talley, Charles*
Cunningham, Nancy	Kinchen, Tom*	Tennessee Baptist
DeMott, Linda*	Kitching, Pam	Historical Society
Donehoo, Fred	Kohly, Fred	Thomas, Mrs. S. D.
Donehoo, June	Kohly, Lucy	Thompson, Mrs. Dana *
Dowdy, Roy*	Lanier, Sidney*	Varnum, Troy
Draughon, Jackie	Laseter, Max*	Watford, Doyle
Ducanis, Jean*	Laseter, Sue*	Watford, Helen
Dunaway, Robert*	Lefever, Alan	Windsor, Jerry*
Falls, Helen	Lema, David, Jr.	Windsor, Jerry Mae*
FBC, Bradenton*	Lloyd, Bruce*	Windsor, John Mark*
FBC, Lynn Haven*	Matthews, Clifford	Wisham, David
FBC, Madison*	Matthews, Peggy	
FBC, Sparr	Mays, C.Parkhill, Jr.*	
FBC of Sweetwater*	McMillan, Edward	
FBC, Tallahassee*	McRae, Martha Kay*	

Florida Baptist Historical Society 2010 Budget

001-FBHS Director Salary	\$14,900.00
002-FBHS Director Insurance	6,500.00
003-FBHS Secretary Salary (FICA)	13,000.00
005-Student Assistants (FICA)	2,000.00
006-FBHS postage	1,200.00
007-Promotional Items	3,000.00
008-Journal, newsletters, monographs	3,000.00
009-FBHS Director Travel	8,000.00
010-FBHS Annual Board Meetings/travel/rooms	10,000.00
011-Supplies	2,000.00
012-Storage materials	2,000.00
014-Books and journals	2,000.00
017-Website	2,500.00
018-New copier	2,600.00
019-Children's color book	1,800.00
020-Board Members/represent FBHS	3,000.00
021-Digitizing expense	1,000.00
022-Historical Marker	<u>2,000.00</u>
	\$80,500.00

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The Journal of Florida Baptist Heritage

Volume 12, Fall 2010

(Index compiled by Mrs. Melissa Campbell)

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