

The Journal of Florida Baptist Heritage

Florida Baptist Historical Society

**Central Baptist Church,
Miami, Florida
1896-1996**



FLORIDA BAPTIST
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Miami, Florida
1896-1996**



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**Cover: Central Baptist Church building
dedicated in 1928.**

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INTRODUCTION

Jerry Windsor

Secretary-Treasurer

Florida Baptist Historical Society

Welcome to the thirteenth Issue of The Journal of Florida Baptist Heritage

In this issue we celebrate 100 years in the history of Central Baptist Church of Miami. Central Baptist Church was born two days before the City of Miami. John Sewell of Elbert County, Georgia (born July 20, 1867) was a major player in the building of the church and the town. Sewell had become a railroad construction foreman and was living at the Royal Poincianna Hotel in Palm Beach. Julia Tuttle convinced H. M. Flagler to let contracts to extend his Florida East Coast (railroad) Road from West Palm Beach to Miami. Flagler asked Sewell to start work at Miami to “build a city.” Sewell said when he arrived on March 3, 1896, “I found Miami all woods.” And there the adventure begins.

Thirty seven years later Sewell lamented in his *Memoirs* (p.236) that Henry Flagler and Mrs. Tuttle were not around to see the city they had dreamed to build. However, he had one consolation. He said, “They built better than they knew.”

Honoring those who honor Christ,

CHURCHES IN MIAMI JOHN SEWELL

EYEWITNESS ACCOUNT



After arriving in Miami Tuesday, March 3, 1896, I found a gospel tent erected west of Avenue D and south of 15th Street in a grove and in charge of Rev. Dr. Plass, a Congregational minister. He was a Northern gentleman, but coming here from West Palm Beach, had held his first service the previous Sunday. Dr. Plass and his wife were good friends of mine at Palm Beach before coming to Miami. Mrs. Plass was organist and led the music for Dr. Plass. I attended service regularly at his tent.

Later on the Presbyterians opened up a tent in a grove south of 14th Street and east of Avenue D, which was directly across the railroad spur track from the Miami Hotel. This work was in charge of Rev. Henry Kegwin. The Episcopalians held services occasionally at Mrs. Tuttle’s residence, Ft. Dallas. Later on Catholic services were held at Mrs. J. A. McDonald’s residence. The Northern Methodists started up church buildings in the summer and fall of 1896, others starting later. The Baptists organized in the Presbyterian tent July 26, 1896, and held services every other Sunday until 1898. The Southern Methodists started up a little later than the Baptists, under Rev. C. Fred Blackburn. Then the lower floor of a rooming house on Avenue D to hold services in until they got their church building ready.

For fear I get too far, I wish to relate a little personal experience. About the third Sunday after my arrival here I received a note from Miss Fannie Tuttle, daughter of Mrs. Julia D. Tuttle, and a young lady at that time. She wanted me to go with her in her launch to Lemon City to hear some Episcopal bishop preach and

she was going to bring the bishop back with her and he would preach in the Congregational tent that afternoon. She stated in the note that, if I could not go, she would like to borrow my light rowboat, called the May, as she feared the water was so low in the bay that her launch could not get to the dock at Lemon City. I wrote her in reply I was sorry that I could not go, but she was welcome to the May, and I would hear the bishop that afternoon in the tent. About 3:30 that afternoon I strolled over to the tent. I found the bishop sitting on the preacher's stand, also Mrs. Plass was at the organ, and Miss Tuttle and the bishop's secretary were sitting in the choir seats—only the four in the tent. The bishop rose and said that “we have a preacher, an organist and a choir, and one for a congregation and that we had better begin the service.” I rose and asked him if he was going to preach and he answered in the affirmative.

I told him just to wait a few minutes and I would get him a congregation, for there was no use of his wasting a sermon on me. He said that he was afraid to let me go for fear I would not come back. Miss Tuttle assured him that I would come back and he agreed to wait.



Mrs. Julia D. Tuttle
'The Heart of Miami'

First thing that I did was to go over on Avenue D where there was a pool room with a crowd of men playing pool. (I will state that there were pool rooms and cold drink stands strung along on Avenue D near the Miami River within a week after my arrival here.) I told the men that ran this pool room to close up the pool room right then and for the whole bunch to go across the street to the gospel tent, as there was a preacher over there who wanted to preach and had no congregation and that I was not going to have a preacher come to Miami and go away and say that he could not get a congregation to preach to. So they closed the pool room and the men began to file out and go over to the tent. I went to the cold drink stands and gave them the same spiel. So they closed up shop and went to church. Then I went to our quarters in the Miami Hotel, where a great many of us were kind of camping

then, and went up and down the halls giving them the same spiel that there was a preacher here who wanted to preach and nobody to preach to. Some of the men were asleep in their rooms on their cots, as we didn't have beds then. Some of the men that were asleep on their cots didn't take to the idea of getting up and going to church. Those of that class I turned their cots over and spilled them out on the floor and the shock waked them enough to know that I meant business. So they quietly dressed themselves and went to church, a regular stream leaving the hotel for the tent. Among those in the bunch were J. E. Lummus, E. G. Sewell, C. T. McCrimmon, T. L. Townley and L. C. Oliver, that I remember. Altogether I sent between twenty-five and forty out of the hotel. Then I went around to the tents and shacks looking for a congregation, and sent all that I found to the tent. I finally ran across a couple of ladies walking up the railroad grade, as the railroad track had not reached Miami then. I asked them if they would mind going to the gospel tent to hear this bishop preach as he wanted to preach and I was trying to muster him up a congregation. They said they would be glad to go. I think one of these ladies was Mrs. A. B. Weaver and the other a Mrs. Campbell. At this time this was a city of men—very few ladies. After sending these two ladies on to church, all the woods around seemed deserted, and I decided that I had gotten everybody over to the tent and went back to the tent myself. There I found the tent full and all singing, and it sounded good, and I finally found space on a bench for a seat and the bishop started to preach. About the time that I got my seat and had heard about a dozen words of his sermon, I heard the steamboat whistle blow for a landing at the foot of Avenue D. I had to leave the tent and go down and put my men to work unloading the boat as we were bringing lumber and material for the Royal Palm Hotel on boats from Ft. Lauderdale, which was the terminal of the railroad at that time, and I had to unload boats as quickly as possible to keep them going. But I got the bishop a fine congregation by thrashing out the highways and byways, even if I did not get to hear his sermon myself. Of course, at that time I was very near law in

Miami. I had no trouble in closing pool rooms and cold drink stands, as the proprietors were willing to do anything I asked.

I will give short sketches of churches and the most active members as I remember them. Of course, the first in the field for active service was

The Congregational Church

Rev. Dr. Plass organized, as I stated before, in the gospel tent in the woods south of 15th Street, west of Avenue D. All denominations attended this church and Mr. Plass had his expenses paid by their mission board. I do not recall the active members, as this denomination withdrew from the field in less than six months. Dr. Plass had the misfortune to lose his baby here. In fact, I think this was the first natural death in Miami after it was started as a city.

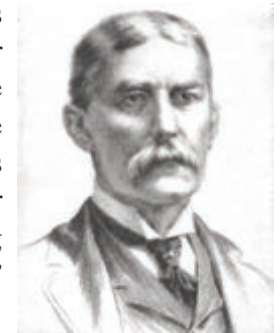
There was an agreement at that time between the Congregational Mission Board and the Presbyterian Mission Board that in small places where one of these denominations entered the field for mission work the other would stay out. Although the Congregationalists were first in the field, the Presbyterians had promise of much help from Dr. J. N. Macgonagle of the Memorial Presbyterian Church of St. Augustine, and, the field being small, the Congregationalists withdrew and turned this work over to the Presbyterians.

The Presbyterian Church

The Presbyterian Church was the second opened up for active service under Rev. Mr. Henry Kegwin in a small tent south of 14th Street, east of Avenue D. The most active members at that time were William H. March and W. R. Harney, later on H. M. King. They held services in this tent every other Sunday, Mr. Kegwin holding service the other two Sundays at Coconut Grove. The Presbyterians held services in this tent until 1899, when Mr. Flagler had the beautiful church building and manse built on 12th Street and Royal Palm Avenue and made them a present of it, which showed Mr. Flagler's generosity. Mr. Kegwin left in the

fall of 1896 and the next pastor, Rev. John Brown, was a regular Scotchman. He was not the kind of minister the congregation desired. So he was removed and Mr. Kegwin came back for a while. In 1897 Dr. Farris came from some where in Pennsylvania and took up the work, which was successful, and was pastor from that time, except for one or two years, until 1920, when he retired.

Among members coming into this congregation later to help this pioneer work that I now remember, were: The Romfh family, Miss Saidee Kolb. Eugene B. Romfh, Miss Ethel Romfh and Miss Saidee Kolb were great assistants with their musical talents. Other members joining later were: Gaston Drake and wife, "Pat" Railey and Lilburn Railey.



Mr. Henry Morrison Flagler
'The Head of Miami'

The Episcopal Church

The Episcopal Church was the next to organize. They held services in Mrs. Tuttle's home, also in a public hall on Avenue D, until they got up their church building on the corner of 10th Street and Avenue B, Mrs. Tuttle donating the lots—the first church building in Miami. It was removed about ten years ago to make room for the beautiful concrete building on the site now. The most active members of the early congregation were Mrs. Tuttle and family, William M. Brown and wife, Charles H. Garthside, Henry Milburn, F. T. Budge and family, Harry Budge and wife and Dr. Walter S. Graham. Others coming into this church that I can remember to help with the pioneer work were Mrs. A. J. Kolb and son, Rolland Kolb, F. J. Magill and wife and family, Judge H. F. Atkinson and the new rector, Doctor Fuller, and wife, and Miss Bessie Fuller, who was a great assistant with her musical talents; F. W. Hahn and wife and Miss Kate Hahn, who was also a great assistant with her musical talents; C. W. Gardner and wife, and

their daughter and son, Miss Pearl Gardner and John Gardner, Miss Pearl helping with her musical talents; Captain K. F. Large and wife and Miss Kitty Large, Dr. R. E. Chafer and wife, J. W. Watson and wife and family.

The Catholic Church

The Catholic Church was organized next and the work of putting up a good church building was started in the summer of 1896. They worked faithfully and hard and succeeded in getting up their building, which now stands on the corner of 10th Street and Avenue C. Among the active workers were J. A. McDonald and wife, John B. Reilly and wife, Miss Kittie McDonald, John B. McIntire, Gus A. Muller and family, Dan Cosgrove, Jerry Hourihan, Adam Richards and family and Maggie Kerney. Mr. Flagler gave Mr. McDonald eight lots on which to build the Catholic Church and convent, 150 feet on Avenue C and 400 feet on 10th Street, running east. The pioneer priests were Father Fountain, Father Kennedy and Father Friend, all fine men and wonderful characters.

Among those joining this congregation with their pioneer work that I can also recall, were Captain L. L. Dodge and wife, Captain J. H. Welsh and wife and Miss Effie Welsh, J. R. Dewey and wife, Dan Hardie and wife, Clifford Xiamanies and wife, Miss Willie Hahn, the Yarborough family, George A. McKinnon and wife, Mrs. Jerry Hourihan, A. E. Selsor and wife, George Wallace, Fred Rutter and wife, C. Duncan Brossier and wife, Garry Niles and wife and family. There were many others I do not remember. Today the Catholic Church has the largest membership in Miami and they are preparing to move away the old church building and put up a much larger and finer building.

The Baptist Church

The First Baptist Church was the next to organize and I, being a Baptist and one of the charter members, also secretary of the presbytery that organized the church, and elected clerk of the church as soon as the organization was perfected and having held

the same office for twenty-five years, know more about this church than any other.

In the summer of 1896, while on his vacation from Mercer University, a young minister Rev. John R. Jester, visited his brother here and , finding no Baptist Church but quite a few Baptists, got busy trying to get all the Baptists together to organize a Baptist Church. He mustered up sixteen Baptists that were willing to go into the organization, namely, J. W. Arnold, E. H. Padgett, Mrs. E. H. Padgett, R. E. Padgett, Mrs. Rosa Padgett, C. H. Height, J. H. Cashwell, Mrs. M. M. Cashwell, James M. Strange, J. J. Dykes, R. W. Padgett, J. L. De Vaun, Mrs. M. P. Amason, Mrs. Emma Strange, John Sewell and W. H. Edwards. Mr. Jester arranged with Rev. Mr. Kegwin to have the use of the Presbyterian tent for services every other Sunday. This tent was south of 14th Street and East of Avenue D near the railroad spur track running to the Royal Palm Hotel. After the combination, the Presbyterians, with the Baptist help, went to work and put a board floor in the tent, also boarded up the side about three feet and raised the tent higher. Then we called it a pavilion. We held services there alternate Sundays until Mr. Jester had to go back to Mercer. We then called Dr. W. A. Nelson of Macon, Georgia, as pastor, but he did not accept. Then the Mission Board sent another college student, Rev. Mr. Lovell, who served until the end of the year. Then we arranged to have Dr. W. E. Stanton of Lemon City to serve us as pastor, our first regular pastor. The Doctor served us until the summer of 1897, when he returned to San Mateo, Fla., his former home, to spend the summer. Rev. Mr. Bell, another college student, served us until fall, when Dr. Stanton returned. By that time the Presbyterians had Doctor Farris as pastor. So he and Doctor Stanton filled the pulpit in the pavilion alternate Sundays, making a great team. I consider these two ministers among the best men that it has ever been my pleasure to know. They were both noble Christian gentlemen and men that I consider it an honor to have had as my friends.

In the spring of 1898 Doctor Stanton's health was bad. He would be taken down very suddenly, and frequently he would

write me that he would not be able to preach the next Sunday. Then I would have to hustle around to get a preacher. At that time most of our members had scattered. Mr. Padgett, one of our deacons, had gone to Palatka for a long period. The other deacon, Mr. Edwards, had moved away.

Also Mr. De Vaun had moved away. So I served in the capacity of usher, clerk and treasurer, and entertained the preacher at my home while here, as I had married in 1897 and I had a home then. Additional members at this time were Mrs. J. E. Lunnus and Mrs. John Douglas. Sundays, when Doctor Stanton was sick, I usually hunted up Rev. E. V. Blackman, who had started the Northern Methodist Church, and served as pastor in 1896 and 1897, but had resigned to go into the newspaper business. I would arrange to have him go down and preach me a Baptist sermon. This being tourist season and most everyone strangers, it worked all right and there were a good many Sundays that I ran a Baptist service with a Methodist preacher and a Presbyterian choir in a Presbyterian pavilion. On several of these Sundays if there was another Baptist in the church besides myself, I did not know it. There was no member of our church present except myself, but I got away with it all.

In the summer of 1898, the year of the Spanish-American War, Doctor Stanton resigned and went back to San Mateo and the Mission Board sent us Rev. M. P. Edwards, a student of Stetson University. He served us until fall, when he had to go back to college. In the early part of this summer Doctor Farris decided to give up alternate Sundays at Coconut Grove and put in regular time each Sunday in the pavilion. So we Baptists had to move. Our first move was to Padgett's store on Third Street and Avenue D, which was vacant at that time, and we began to figure on getting some kind of place of our own to hold services. Mr. Flagler gave us two lots on the corner of Eighth Street and Avenue D, and when the soldiers of the Spanish-American War who were camped here moved, Mr. Edwards got the officers to give him the lumber in their tents. That was used for flooring to start the Baptist Pavilion. I had the lumber hauled to our lots and

I furnished the framework for the pavilion. This framework had been a cold drink stand located at 304 12th Street, run by my brother, Jerry Sewell. This frame was covered over with a big tent cloth. So all of the Baptist workmen got together and soon made a Baptist Pavilion, corner of 8th Street and Avenue D.

Then Mr. Edwards' time was up, so we had to get another preacher. We had two applicants—Rev. Mr. Tucker from Dade City and Rev. D. B. Farmer from north Florida. Some wanted one and some wanted the other. Mr. Tucker won by one majority, but would not accept unless the vote was unanimous, and the Farmer end stood pat. So a few weeks later, as Mr. Tucker would not accept, Mr. Farmer was called and accepted. He was not so particular about it being unanimous. He was an old bachelor and was long whiskered, was very smart and well educated, but seemed to have dyspepsia and was always growling. He did not take well and I do not think he saved many souls while in Miami. He served us until the fall of 1899, when the yellow fever broke out here. I'm sorry to say that our long-whiskered Baptist preacher was the most scared man that I saw and left with the first detention camp to get out. I had a letter from him about three months afterwards wanting the balance the church was due him. I never heard of him afterwards. During his pastorate we had Miss Anna Peck for organist at first. Later on Miss Pauline Quarterman was organist and Mrs. Eva P. Quarterman, her mother, led the choir, Mrs. Quarterman and family moving here from Bartow in the year 1898. Mrs. Quarterman ran the Sunday school.

While we were still in quarantine we called Dr. W. E. Stanton as pastor the second time. He accepted the call and said he would take charge of the work as soon as the quarantine was raised, which was January 15, 1900. Doctor Stanton took up the work at that time; also started the move to build a new church building. We also received several new members in the early part of 1900, which helped the cause wonderfully. Among them were B. B. Tatum and wife, J. Herbert Cheatham, W. J. Rodgers, Miss Nellie Beck and Mrs. E. C. McAllister, Dr. P. T. Skaggs and wife, and all of them put their shoulders to the wheel and pushed this cause for a new

church building and a new location. Others joining this church later were, as I recall, the Jaudon family, Judge James T. Sanders and wife, later his father, W. R. Sanders, and family, J. H. Tatum, S. M. Tatum and wife, the Lasseter family, J. J. Holly and wife, Rev. W. W. Hall and wife, R. E. Hall, Willie W. Hall, Miss Minnie Hall. (These three were of great assistance with their musical talents.) S. T. Wigginton and wife and family, E. Ford Wells and wife. so we exchanged the two lots that Mr. Flagler had given us for two lots at the corner of Seventh Street and Avenue C, which belonged to Mr. Flagler also, and which he was willing to exchange with us. So in 1901 we started our new building, which was completed that fall and stood there until the summer of 1916, when the building was moved to Buena Vista to make room for the new building which now ornaments the old church site. The old building was moved to Buena Vista and dedicated to its founder, the late Dr. W. E. Stanton, as the Stanton Memorial Church. Doctor Stanton served as our pastor until his death in 1910. Rev. John A. Wray served as pastor for six years. He resigned as pastor February 1, 1916. Dr. Wray was a great preacher, a true Christian gentleman, and did a great work in Miami. Dr. J. L. White was called to the pastorate April 1, 1916, and still is pastor. He started on the work of building a new church building on his arrival here, as the old building was too small, only seating about seven hundred people, and the congregation ran over a thousand. So a committee was appointed to canvass for subscriptions to build an \$85,000 church and the fruits of the campaign (\$48,000) were subscribed in one week. Plans were accepted for a building to seat eighteen hundred people and the building started. When completed it will be one of the best church buildings in Miami and a credit to the city and an honor to the congregation that built it; also a credit to the Rev. Dr. J. L. White, the main promoter and instigator of the new building.¹

EARLY CHURCH PASTORS 1896-1916

Every Southern Baptist church needs a pastor. In 1896 the Baptists who organized First Baptist Church of Miami (Became Central in 1936) gravitated toward their organizer and called him as pastor.

John R. Jester 1896

In 1896, John R. Jester was a student at Mercer University and according to John Sewell's *Memoirs*, was the organizing leader of the church. Jester was visiting his brother in Miami when he saw the need of a Baptist congregation. Jester's brother, R. C. Jester, and his wife operated a mercantile store with emphasis on clothing. The business was called "The Bee Hive" and sold suits and imported clothing for men and hats and dresses for women.² Sixteen Baptists composed the charter members of First Baptist that was organized July 26, 1896, and ministerial student Jester was called as pastor. The church met in the Presbyterian tent that was south of 14th Street and east of Avenue D near the railroad spur line that connected to the Royal Palm Hotel. The Baptists met every other Sunday and with the Presbyterians put in a board floor and also boarded up the side about three feet. Jester returned to school at Mercer and according to Sewell (p. 121) the church called Dr. W. A. Nelson of Macon, Georgia as pastor but he declined.

John Roberts Jester (1875-1965) attended Mercer from 1894 to 1899 (B. S., 1899). He later studied at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (1904-05) and was given honorary doctorate degrees from Oklahoma Baptist College (1910), Bethel College (1911) and Mercer (1926). Jester was ordained in 1896. He preached in several Georgia churches and then became president of Oklahoma Baptist College and served as pastor of

Broadway Baptist Church in Fort Worth from 1911-1915. Jester later served as pastor at Greenwood, South Carolina (1918-1922), First Baptist Church of Winston Salem (1922-1935) and lastly pastor of First Baptist Church of Winchester, Kentucky (1939-1947). After retiring in 1947 he served as a supply pastor in South Carolina for many years. Jester served as vice president of the SBC in 1932 and as president of the North Carolina State convention in 1934-1935.



Sewell store

Robert E. Lovell 1896

Sewell in his *Memoirs* states the “Mission Board sent another college student, Rev. Mr. Lovell, who served until the end of the year.” Lovell was from Apopka and a student at Stetson.

Eudorus N. Bell 1897

Sewell states that “Mr. Bell, another college student, served us until fall, when Dr Stanton returned.” Bell was from Alachua and a student at Stetson. It was Dr. W. E. Stanton who was considered by Sewell to be “our first regular pastor.”³ A case is made by Reiner in *Belief in the City* that shows Stanton served the church on three different occasions. Reiner says that Stanton served in 1897, 1898 and 1900-1910. Sewell goes so far as to say that the Presbyterian pastor Farris and Baptist pastor Stanton “were both noble Christian gentlemen and men that I consider it an honor to have had as my friends.”⁴

According to Sewell a “Mr. Lovell” served after Jester “had to go back to Mercer.” Lovell served until the end of 1896 and Dr.

Stanton came in January 1897 and served until the summer when he returned to San Mateo, Florida, “his former home, to spend the summer.” The second term for Stanton began in the fall of 1897 and went to the spring of 1898. At that point Dr. Stanton was in poor health and would become ill sometimes at the last minute and Sewell said he “would have to hustle around to get a preacher.” Finally Stanton resigned and went back to San Mateo.

The third Stanton tenure at First Baptist Church began January 15, 1900.⁵ This was a lengthy service of ten years (1900-1910) and will be covered in the 1900 chronological period.



1916 request for church letter

M. P. Edwards 1898

John Sewell would have to be considered the “church father.” In 1898 there were times when he was the one and only church member present for a Baptist service. In the spring of 1898, Sewell was deacon, usher, clerk, treasurer, host and worship planner. There were no Baptist preachers to be found and Sewell confessed he did the best he could

...when Doctor Stanton was sick, I usually hunted up Rev. E. V. Blackman, who had started the Northern Methodist Church, and served as pastor in 1896 and 1897, but had resigned to go into the newspaper business. I would arrange to have him go down and preach me a Baptist sermon. This being tourist season and most everyone strangers, it worked all right and there were a good many Sundays that I ran a Baptist service with a Methodist preacher and a Presbyterian choir... On several of these Sundays if there was another Baptist in the church besides myself, I did not know it. There was no member of our church present except myself, but I got away with it all.⁶

Sewell states that the “Mission Board” sent Rev. M. P. Edwards, a student at Stetson, to preach in the summer of 1898.

This started the Baptist migration. In 1898 First Baptist Church started in the Presbyterian tent and then met in the Pavilion. The third meeting place was the vacant Padgett's store on Third Street and Avenue D (summer 1898) and the fourth place of worship was the “Baptist Pavilion” at the corner of 8th Street and Avenue D.



John Sewell
‘The Muscle of Miami’

The fifth place was the corner of 7th Street and Avenue C where the church built her first building in 1901. This building was there until the summer of 1916 when the building was moved to Buena Vista to make way for the new building on the same site. This location decision was very important for First Baptist Church in that they gave the old building to fellow Baptists and the building was dedicated and named after Dr. W. E. Stanton. The Buena Vista fellowship called the “old building” and new church the Stanton Memorial Church.⁷ Sewell states that Edwards served only in the summer of 1898 and then returned to Stetson in the fall. A singular contribution of Edwards was the solicitation and reception of the lumber that was left over from the soldiers who bivouacked in Miami before they departed for the Spanish-American War. This lumber that had been used in the tents of soldiers became the flooring for the Baptist Pavilion on the corner of 8th Street and Avenue D.



1898 Baptist Pavilion

D. B. Farmer 1898-1899

D. B. Farmer was born in Maine and died in Massachusetts in 1905. He worked in Florida for 25 years as a pastor and evangelist. He had an extensive library and was a doctrinal preacher. First Baptist Church called Farmer as pastor in 1898. The church first called “Mr. Tucker from Dade City.”⁸ In that Tucker only got fifty percent of the vote plus one vote he would not accept. The church proceeded then to call D. B. Farmer who “was not so particular about it being unanimous.” It was a bad fit from the beginning. Sewell says that Farmer was an old bachelor who was smart and educated but “seemed to have dyspepsia and was always growling.” Farmer did not fit well with the congregation and at the 1899 outbreak of yellow fever was quick to leave town. Sewell wrote “our long-whiskered Baptist preacher was the most scared man that I saw...”⁹ Pastor Farmer wrote back to the church after fleeing the city and wanted the balance of the salary that the church owed him. Sewell was rather indignant about the letter and wrote Farmer and told him “it was about all we could do to live here then and could not pay him at that time.” No other word came from Brother Farmer.

William Edwin Stanton 1897-1898; 1900-1909

William Edwin Stanton (1839-1909) served as pastor of First Baptist Church, Miami on three occasions. The early service (1897-1898) times were interrupted by illness and a need for a 60 year old man to catch his breath after serving as pastor of two churches at the same time. He was pastor at Lemon City when he was needed as a fill-in at First Baptist Miami. He probably did it out of mixed feelings of call and duty. First Baptist had two college students preaching for them (Jester and Lovell) in 1896 and Dr. Stanton was readily available and experienced. The students laid a good contact foundation but someone with more experience was needed to draw the business people of the city and begin the work of building their first meeting place.



William Edwin
Stanton

Dr. Stanton was called as pastor of First Baptist Church as the yellow fever quarantine was still in effect. On January 15, 1900, the travel ban was lifted and Dr. Stanton became pastor. History shows he was the right man at the right time. He was born in Preston, Connecticut and graduated from Colgate University (B. A., 1862 and M. A., 1865). He was ordained at First Baptist Church, Lowell, Massachusetts in 1865. He graduated from Hamilton Theological Seminary and was pastor of the Lowell church for five years. Stanton came to Florida in about 1870 and served here as a missionary for 25 years. He served as pastor of Lemon City for five years and First Baptist Church, Miami for ten years (1900-1909). He and his wife had one daughter and a son William Arthur Stanton who served as a missionary to India.

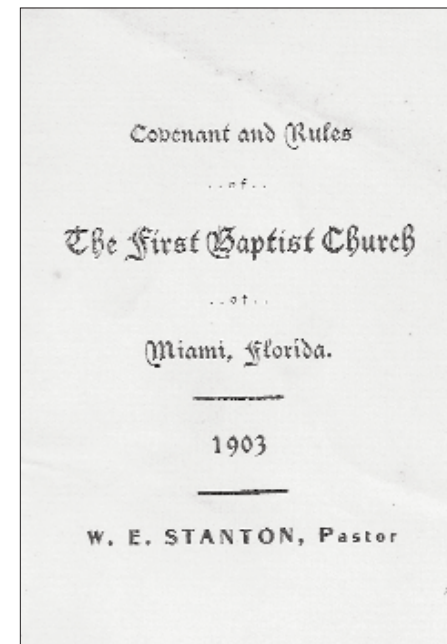
In the new and stable leadership of Stanton the church began to move forward in a professional way. Judge James T. Sanders, B. B. Tatum and Dr. P.T. Skaggs came into the membership at this time.



1901 Gothic
Church Building

R. E. Hall, Willie W. Hall and Minnie Hall also came into the church. According to John Sewell the Hall's were of "great assistance with their musical talents."¹⁰ It was Stanton that got the church to build the new permanent American Gothic building at 7th Street and Avenue C.

Interestingly enough it was this building that was later donated to a Buena Vista congregation and named Stanton Memorial Church. The building was moved in 1916. Stanton was a powerful influence, good preacher and great church organizer. In 1903 he wrote "Covenant and Rules of the First Baptist Church of Miami, Florida." This document gave strict organization guidelines and a written book of discipline for the frontier church that was only seven years old. The writing was entitled "Church Rules" and eight important expectations followed:



CHURCH RULES.

FIRST.

Resolved, That this Church expects every member to contribute statedly to its financial support according to his ability, as God has prospered him; and that a refusal to do this will be considered a breach of covenant.

SECOND.

Resolved, That this Church will entertain and contribute to Home and Foreign Missions and to other leading objects of Christian benevolence, approved and supported by our denomination.

THIRD.

Resolved, That the religious education of the young and Bible study as represented in Sunday School work commend themselves to our confidence, and we will to the extent of our ability give them our aid by both our personal co-operation and our contributions, as we are able.

FOURTH.

Resolved, That in our opinion the use of intoxicating drinks as a beverage and also the manufacture and sale of the same for that purpose, are contrary to Christian morals, injurious to personal piety and a hindrance to the gospel. Therefore, persons so using, making or selling, are thereby disqualified for membership in this Church.

FIFTH.

Resolved, That we emphatically discountenance and condemn the practice of Church members frequenting theatres and other similar places of amusement, as inconsistent with a Christian profession, detrimental to personal piety, and pernicious in the influence of its example on others.

SIXTH.

Resolved, That the members of this Church are earnestly requested not to provide for, take part in, or by any means encourage dancing or card playing, nor furnish intoxicating drinks to guests on any occasion; but in all consistent ways to discountenance the same, as a hindrance to personal godliness in their associations and tendencies, a stumbling block in the way of the unconverted, and a grief to brethren whom we should not willingly offend.

SEVENTH.

Resolved, That it shall be the duty of the Church Clerk to call the roll of names of members of this Church, at regular conference, every three months, just before the administration of the Lord's Supper. Each member will be required to answer in person or by some other member or by letter. This shall apply to all who live within a reasonable distance of the Church.

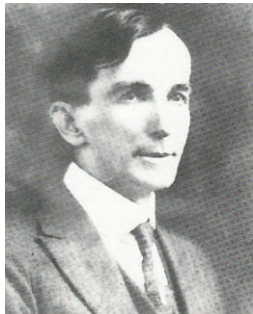
Any member failing to comply with this rule shall be subject to admonition for the first failure, and for the second shall be subject to discipline for neglecting duty to the Church.

EIGHTH.

Resolved, That any member failing to attend Church, or to contribute to its support[sic] for six months, without a reasonable excuse, shall be suspended; a member failing for nine months shall be finally dropped from Church roll. A letter shall not be issued to a member who has been suspended or dropped from roll. A member may be restored at a regular conference, by giving satisfactory evidence as to his or her spiritual condition.

No letter shall be issued to any member who has been suspended or dropped until restored.

Any member not living near enough for attendance shall once in every six months communicate with the Church and aid in its support. Any member (who does not live in the bound of the Church) failing to communicate with or to aid in support of the Church for one year, shall be excluded for neglect of duty.¹¹



John Alexander Wray 1910-1916

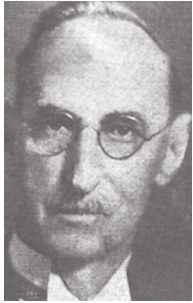
John Sewell in his personal recollections of Miami and First Baptist Church stated that “Dr. Wray was a great preacher, a true Christian gentleman, and did a great work in Miami.”¹²

According to the *1910 Minutes of the Miami Baptist Association* (p. 21) Wray went from Live Oak to Miami to succeed

Dr. William Edwin Stanton as pastor of First Baptist Church. Dr. Stanton (1839-1910) served as pastor of First Baptist until his death in 1910. Stanton had become a well respected and appreciated minister in the new city of Miami but Wray was also up to the task. First Baptist Church had an auditorium that would seat seven hundred but in the ministry of Wray the congregation would sometimes exceed

one thousand. According to the March 17, 1910, *Florida Baptist Witness*, the church had thirty-one additions the first three Sundays.

John Alexander Wray was born February 5, 1872, in Shelby, North Carolina. He attended Shelby Military Institute and graduated from Wake Forest College in 1892. He studied law at Harvard University but felt called to preach and went to The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. He married Lucy Plumer Mills on January 30, 1894 in Wake Forest. Wray resigned from the pastorate of First Baptist Church on February 1, 1916 and moved to Chickasha, Oklahoma. Riener states that pastor Wray was active in civic affairs in Miami and saw the membership of the church increase from 238 to 597.¹³



A LESSON IN ADVERSITY

JACOB LEE WHITE
1916-1936

Jacob Lee White (1862-1948) was one of those pastors who came to Florida and made a tremendous contribution.¹⁴ White was born in Forsythe County, North Carolina and was the son of John and Martha White. He graduated from Wake Forest College (B. A., 1881; later a D. D.) and received the L. L. D. from Stetson University (1934). While in school White started preaching in 1879 and gave the background to his ministry in a letter to Dr. Thurman D. Kitchin, President of Wake Forest College. In 1936, White wrote, in "June I graduated from Wake Forest College. In that same month I became pastor of the First Baptist Church of Raleigh, N. C. and on Sept. 22 was married at Shelby, N. C. so this is my Golden Jubilee."¹⁵ While at Wake Forest White roomed with A. T. Robertson. White married Dovie Poston of Shelby, North Carolina on September 22, 1886. They had nine children and each one of them had a life of influence.

Son Edward P. White became an attorney in Miami. Hubert lived in Philadelphia and worked for the N. R. A. Martha married R. E. Kunkel a lawyer in Miami. Lee became pastor of West End Baptist Church in Birmingham. Lee Jr. became pastor of Blackwood Memorial Baptist Church in Elizabeth City, North Carolina. James was a preacher and in 1935 his father recommended him as pastor of First Baptist Church, Valdosta, Georgia. Russell and Mabel were two of their children and Mabel White Memorial Baptist Church of Macon, Georgia was named after their daughter Mabel. She died on December 24, 1902 from an appendectomy. One of the most outstanding events in the life of Dr. White was that he preached the annual sermon at the

Southern Baptist Convention in 1933 at Washington, D. C. and his four minister sons sat on the platform as he preached.

Jacob Lee White served as pastor of the First Baptist Church in Raleigh, Ashville, Macon, Memphis and the Tabernacle Baptist Church in Atlanta before moving to Miami, April 1, 1916. The church found out about White when he came to Miami for a YMCA fund raising drive. He was a preacher, promoter and prophet. He did not run from controversy in his preaching and tackled alcohol and gambling head on in his Miami ministry.

Dr. White was 54 years old when he moved to Miami. He was 58 when he hit his most difficult controversy, 67 when he had a nervous breakdown and 74 when he left First Baptist Church.

Inter-Church World Movement

It was the ecumenical question that hit Dr. White so solidly in 1920. Some called it the Inter-Church World Movement. The proponents of the movement said it was just a movement to reduce duplication in effort and finances. They felt that denominational budgets should be made in light of world needs and not local programs. Some even traced the ideas of the movement to John R. Mott and his World War I ecumenical work.

Some Miami Baptist preachers saw it differently. When White went to Miami in 1916 there were only ten churches in the Miami Association with a total membership of 1,461. Baptists were just beginning to show their strength and by the time White left First Baptist the association had 43 churches and 19,722 members. In 1920 White, H. C. Garwood of Stanton Memorial, J. B. Rogers of Lemon City, and E. E. Reynolds of the Baptist Ministerial Association began to disagree with the Dade County Ministerial Association and the Inter-Church World Movement. White and his colleagues argued that the Dade Ministerial Association was organized for the purpose of "mutual fellowship and civic betterment." All other matters were beyond the existence of the organization. White went so far as to articulate for the Miami press reasons why he and his fellow Baptist

ministers would not participate. White said (1) the movement has no “authoritative origin”; (2) it ultimately means “not cooperation but elimination”; (3) it “lays emphasis on social service and not upon personal salvation.” In all of these arguments White made a plea for religious liberty, soul freedom and above all “the Bible” as the supreme law of faith and practice.¹⁸ This was the social gospel versus personal salvation conflict in a public forum.

White loved promotion, controversy and the drawing of crowds. He had William Jennings Bryan to speak and had engaged Billy Sunday to come but Sunday died before he could fulfill the set engagement. White was an articulate speaker of courage and resolution. He created a stir and benefitted among Baptists for the stands he took. He was willing to fight for his convictions and fights always draw crowds.

Trouble and Trials

From 1926 to 1936 the world tumbled in on White. It was the hurricane of 1926, the stock market fall of 1929 and the foreclosure on the church in 1936 that proved to be the health breaker for White. Those ten years were filled with hard work, many family responsibilities and the desire to build a church building that would seat 4,000 and yet pay for itself commercially.

Reiner does an excellent job of listing the series of woes that subjected White to a nervous breakdown in 1929 and his final resignation in 1936. The Miami harbor was blocked in January 1926 by the sinking of “barkentine Prins Valdemar.” Ships were loaded with building supplies but could not be unloaded until the end of February. Fifty ships went aground waiting to be unloaded. This paralysed business and construction. However the Miami real estate craze continued to go forward unabated and this unrestrained financial wheeling and dealing brought instability to the Miami business community.

About this time Dr. White had the church appoint a 100 person Building Committee with the ambition of building a

church edifice of twelve floors and to use the first four floors for church business and the next eight floors for kingdom business.¹⁹ There was a genuine desire to do something broader for world missions and the top eight floors of the new church would be rented out commercially to fund new evangelistic endeavors. The September, 1926 hurricane that swept in at 128 mph mitigated some of the enthusiasm and optimism of the project. The 1929 stock market failure literally drove many church members out of business and people began to move away from the Miami area and over 5,000 banks failed in the United States.

The tragedy of the ten years of 1926-1936 can be verified by the fact that the proposed twelve story building had to be reduced to four stories. In the boom days of 1924-1926 Hoyt Frazure in his book *Memories of Old Miami*, states that at the height of the boom there was six billion dollars in circulation in the United States and “five billion of it was circulating in Florida.”²⁰ People pulled their savings out of the bank to invest in Florida real estate. Men like Andrew Carnegie, Andrew Mellon, H. K. Curtis, the publisher; Asa G. Candler of Coca-Cola, J. P. Morgan and Charles Schwab of U. S. Steel, found their way to Florida by private rail car and by yacht.

Well meaning people at First Baptist Church were caught up in the easy money and Miami land boom. Florida had a population of 1.2 million in 1925 and 100,000 of them lived in greater Miami. And then the land ran out. People bought land from unscrupulous dealers who did not have to have a real estate license to operate. Some pieces of land changed hands twelve times in thirty days. Land was sold that never was found.

And September 17, 1926 was a clincher. The hurricane that swept in flooded Miami Beach, the Miami waterfront and much of downtown Miami. It was the first hurricane in sixteen years and most of the boom residents had never seen a storm much less a hurricane. The years 1926-1927 were difficult for Miami and difficult for First Baptist Church.

Frazure of the *Miami Herald* said that the market crash of October, 1929 brought depression with a capital “D” to Miami.

In all of this First Baptist Church had a new magnificent building but no way to make the mortgage payments. The Bank of Biscayne was the oldest and largest bank in Miami and it failed in 1929. Many members of First Baptist Church had their accounts frozen and their businesses failed. John Sewell had made hundreds of thousands of dollars in dry goods, construction and real estate but lost it all in 1929. Many other church leaders were in the same dilemma.

Some of the saddest correspondence you could ever read would be the extensive letters of Dr. White as he tried to minister to people in those times of natural and man made disasters. He was trying to help people and still save the downtown dream of their new building. White wrote the Home Mission Board, the Sunday School Board, John D. Rockefeller and other individuals asking for specific financial help for the church.

The auditorium of today was built of steel and concrete and was dedicated February 12, 1928. The auditorium will seat 2,500 people but the problem was how could it be paid for? According to Reiner in *Belief in the City* by 1930 eleven new pianos were repossessed, employees took drastic pay cuts and the mortgage could not even be met on the pastorium.²¹ The Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention made a loan to finish the construction of the building. Its frightening to see the correspondence between Dr. White and the Home Mission Board because the letters from the board were authorized and sent by Clinton S. Carnes.

This was the perfect storm. The building was dedicated in February, 1928, and Carnes was found guilty of stealing \$909,461.00 from the Home Mission Board in August, 1928. It was 1943 before the Home Mission Board was cleared of all its debts from the theft. However it is easy to see why White had such a struggle to get help from the board. He made plea after plea but the board just did not have the money.

Other grand efforts came about. When the building program was launched the church raised \$100,000.00 in April, 1924 to purchase additional land. B. B. Tatum a real estate developer and

his brother pledged \$250,000.00 for the proposed twelve story tower building. The church raised over \$400,000.00 in gifts and pledges. Bitting and Company and Lorenzo E. Anderson and Company of St. Louis held the first mortgage bonds. Payments of \$50,000.00 were due every six months beginning September 1, 1928. a balloon payment of \$190,000.00 was due September 1, 1930. Between the 1926 hurricane recovery, property bust and October, 1929 market crash the church could not keep her financial promises.



Scottish Rite Temple

The four story building that was actually completed and dedicated in 1928 was beautiful and still is. The stained glass windows are superb and the windows in the dome were in honor of World War I veterans of the congregation killed in battle.²² But as hard as White tried to raise the money it was

not there. As is always the case there were those who were opposed to the grand twelve story building project. Sadly enough many of them had money and when they began to leave the church this affected the bottom line financially. A specific exodus came about when a number of the departed leaders left and started meeting in the beautiful, ornate and well placed Scottish Rite Temple. The building was constructed before the 1928 First Baptist Church building and was a landmark in Miami. Among the illustrious new members of the Temple fellowship were the J. H. Cheatham, Smiley Tatum and Ralph H. Ferrell. All of these had tremendous monetary and political power. The loss of Ferrell was particularly significant. He was a corporate lawyer and an organizational genius. He was serving as Sunday School Superintendent at First Baptist when he left to join the Temple group.

Temple members got the church name from its meeting place and showed passion and grit when they decided to charter Temple

Baptist Church on January 11, 1931. They called Dick Hall, Jr., as pastor and later George Hyman was called and followed Hall in the Temple pastorate. The Temple Church lasted for five years as a financial alternative for First Baptist. As foreclosure loomed at First Baptist, White realized a Temple reconciliation could solve his financial problems.

First Baptist fought gallantly but the mortgage company foreclosed on the church. Dr. White in a March 26, 1936 letter stated that even though the church was foreclosed “we have the opportunity to repurchase for \$100,000.00. We are also now in a very earnest effort to have our church and the Temple to unite and consummate this deal.”

Ralph Ferrell was at the helm. He and some friends contacted Edward Ball, brother-in-law of Alfred I. Dupont, about the possibility of refinancing the church. Ball lived in Jacksonville and was head of St. Joseph’s Paper Company. Ball seemed willing to do it and asked Ferrell to co-sign the note. Ferrell refused and then Ball declined to go through with the deal.

But good came out of the effort. It seems the wheels of reconciliation were beginning to move. A joint committee from First Baptist Church and Temple was formed and began to make efforts in May, 1936 to buy back the building. The Ball negotiation was a starter and more progress was made. First Baptist had to vacate the building and in the mean time they met at Central High School. It was then in 1936 that an agreement was reached that had five main points. The points included (1) combination of both churches (2) seven deacons from each church (3) First Baptist Church would be refinanced (4) the name Central was chosen from the local high school (5) Dr. White would resign. Reiner in *Belief in the City* states that White “left on his own accord.” However White leaves that open to interpretation in that a letter from White to Frank B. Shutts, owner of the *Miami Daily Herald*, dated April 9, 1936, states “I am announcing my retirement as pastor of the First Baptist Church due to the fact that we have succeeded in reuniting the First and Temple church memberships.”²³ A combined church left

a compromised pastor. White had used all his political and pastoral capital to save the building and in the work had lost his congregation.

This came at a time for Dr. White when he declared his “Golden Jubilee.” He was 74 years of age and probably saw the handwriting on the wall. He went to Central when he was 54 and had given twenty years of his life in building up the congregation of First Baptist Church. In a letter dated March 31, 1936, to Victor I Masters, Editor of the *Kentucky Western Recorder*, White states that 1936 represented 20 years as pastor of First Baptist Church, 50 years in the full time ministry, 50 years after graduating from Wake Forest and 50 years married to his wife Dovie Poston. He would live for twelve more years but he had to believe it was time for him to move on.

Ministry Evaluation

The accomplishments of Jacob Lee White were many and outstanding. Three things need to be recorded that are usually overshadowed by his denominational service and the building of the downtown church. White was a dedicated pastor, wise preacher, and savvy church administrator and committed to local missions. A case can be made that White and First Baptist started at least thirteen missions before 1928. Many of these then started other missions that are still in existence today.²⁴ Dr. White seemed to be available to his own members and visitors for conversation, ministry and counseling. He was a wonderful pastor who loved his people.

However there is one other accomplishment of Dr. White that merits intense research and development among pastors. There are those in the field of pastoral ministries that contend that in addition to the Church Council in a Southern Baptist church you also need a Pastor’s Cabinet. The Church Council is to plan, coordinate and evaluate. The Pastor’s Cabinet is to dream, dare, discuss and decide. White would have to be one of the earliest innovators of the Pastor’s Cabinet.²⁵

A STORY TO TELL

CHARLES ROY ANGELL 1936-1962



Charles Roy Angell (1889-1971) was born at Boone Mill, Virginia in 1889. It would be impossible to give an assessment of Central Baptist Church of Miami and not highlight the ministry of C. Roy Angell.

Upon the coming together of First Baptist Church, Miami and Temple Baptist Church Dr. J. L. White resigned in April, 1936. No overt pressure was placed upon White but due to his health, age, vitality and battle scars he decided to leave. A noble replacement was needed. White was not the average minister and after twenty years of his leadership the church, city and denomination looked to the fellowship to bring someone to them that was a good preacher and leader.

C. Roy Angell had all the qualifications needed. He was a thoroughbred. He knew poverty, hard work, academics, denominational politics and he knew how to talk to people. He was not a George W. Truett (Dallas) or a R. G. Lee (Memphis), but he knew himself and he majored on his strengths. Angell studied at the University of Richmond (B. A.), Penn University (M. A.), Crozier Theological Seminary (B. D.) and John Hopkins University (Ph. D). That exposed him to American Baptists, Southern Baptists, academia and then cultural elite.

Dr. Angell married Ilma Meade of Elizabeth City, North Carolina, on October 8, 1915. Their three children were Charles Roy, Jr., Pattye Kathryn and Ilma Louise. Dr. Angell served as pastor in Elizabeth City, North Carolina; First Baptist Church, Charlottesville, Virginia; Fulton Avenue Baptist Church in Baltimore, First Baptist Church, Baton Rouge and First Baptist Church San Antonio, Texas.



Ilma Meade Angell
1956

The Angell arrival was somewhat odd. Many Baptist pastors are willing to preach the traditional trial sermon for another Baptist church but few are willing to preach a series of sermons before any commitments are made. There are reasons for this. Most Southern Baptist preachers have learned that once your church knows you are preaching at another church as their potential pastor you have burned bridges with your current congregation. Say what you may but a form of rejection is felt. Therefore most Southern Baptist pastors do their home work, interviews, research and meditation before they visit another church field to preach a trial sermon. There is another reason that Southern Baptist preachers neglect the “series of sermons” in place of the trial sermon method. Most preachers are not interested in getting in a “beauty contest.” They aren’t afraid they will lose but they are afraid they will split a church if a series of preachers are paraded before a congregation.

C. Roy Angell took a big chance. He agreed to go to newly organized and named Central Baptist Church as the “supply preacher.” This was risky. He cut himself off from other churches and ran the risk of fracturing the fellowship that had just come back together in reconciliation. He was a humble man with an open mind and a big heart. The first sermon he preached at the church was “The Second Mile” text from the Sermon on the Mount. This sermon spoke the words of Jesus as basic Christianity but did not ignore the matter of fellowship reconciliation. This first sermon was so well received the congregation requested that Dr. Angell repeat the sermon annually when he became pastor.²⁶

Preacher

C. Roy Angell was best known as a preacher. He was an excellent story teller and used simple words and sentences. He studied Greek and Hebrew in school but chose to use illustrations to hammer Biblical truths home. In a sermon on Galatians 6:7 he

shows from an agricultural story that you do literally reap what you sow. Southern Baptists were people of an agrarian society so they could relate to every tale of farming, harvesting and living with the results. He was especially popular at Ridgecrest Baptist Assembly in North Carolina where Southern Baptists gathered by the thousands in the summertime. This annual exposure gave Angell a larger market for his method of preaching and proved to be a good source of marketing for his sermon books.

Author

Dr. Angell wrote six books of sermons. *Iron Shoes* (1953), *Baskets of Silver* (1955), *The Price Tags of Life* (1959), *God's Gold Mines* (1962), *Shields of Brass* (1965) and *Rejoicing on Great Days* (1968). These were not all written or preached for publication but public demand brought the sermons forward.

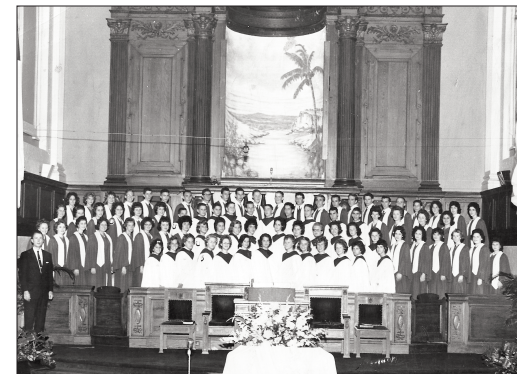


Denominational Leader

Dr. Angell was a leader in the Miami Baptist Association when he served at Central Baptist Church. He served as the Vice-President of the Florida Baptist Convention in 1942 and President of the convention in 1949.²⁷ He served as vice-President of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1946 and delivered a convention sermon at San Francisco in 1951. He was a widely used speaker for encampments and special occasions. He helped

raise millions of dollars in founding the Baptist Hospital in Miami and served as a trustee at Stetson University. His early mentality of hard work, disciplined study and kindness to others were characteristics that served him well all his life.²⁸

Central Baptist Church grew to a membership of over 5,000 in the pastoral service of C. Roy Angell. As early as 1940 Central was the largest Southern Baptist church in the state with nearly 3,000 members and even then you would have to add the 1,200 or so winter tourists that came to the services. Angell baptized over 3,500 converts in his Central pastorate. He was committed to cooperation with other Baptists and mission giving. New ministries were added and the church debt was paid off and a new chapel was built. In 2011 this downtown church is still a building of outstanding beauty and functionality.



The Concord (Junior High) and Chapel (Senior High) Choirs of Central Baptist Church, Miami, Florida
Kenneth L. Osbrink,
Minister of Music
March 18, 1962

Church Leader

Dr. Angell was a staff building, outreach oriented church leader. Downtown Miami was the place to be in the 1940's and 1950's. However Dr. Angell continued to see the need for missions and missionaries to go forth from the church.

On Sunday, August 4, 1957, Wayside Baptist Church of Miami was constituted with 488 charter members. Allapattah was the mother church and Central was the grandmother. The church was "well born" and it is thought that this was the largest charter

membership of any church constituted in the Southern Baptist Convention.²⁹ This is one more “mission start” that has Central Baptist Church DNA. It has been documented that Central started at least 20 churches and numerous mission points in the Miami area. (see Appendix)

Sermon Building

In 1991 R. Earl Allen and Joel Gregory published a book of sermons entitled *Southern Baptist Preaching Yesterday*. The list of sermons is very significant but technically that was not the genius of the book. They asked each pulpiteer to share with the written audience how they prepared their sermons. This unique request made the book far more valuable to any preacher who had to prepare sermons week to week. The C. Roy Angell offering was especially helpful in that Angell never taught homiletics in an academic setting and without this vignette his methodology would have been lost to us.

Angell said that his main sermon starters came from good stories and incidents. He stated that these were the things that gave him his “thought, a theme, a text or maybe all three.”³⁰ He found his devotional time of sermonic help and also his daily pastoral ministries as he saw the needs of his people.

Some preachers use book preaching. They take a book of the Bible and just preach through it. W. A. Criswell did this at First Baptist, Dallas and he preached through the whole Bible in 17 years.

Some preachers use thematic or subject preaching. They may preach on grace, love, peace, hope, joy or some other theme of the Bible. They could preach specific Bible doctrines or some special day sermon but it follows the theme they set out to cover.

C. Roy Angell used a “Clip Board Method.” He kept a clip board at his home with sheets of paper and at the top of each page he would fill in the theme, text or thought that impressed him. Sometimes he would have up to 50 sheets or themes on the clip board that he was working on. He would then each week “prayerfully wait for guidance selecting the sermons for the

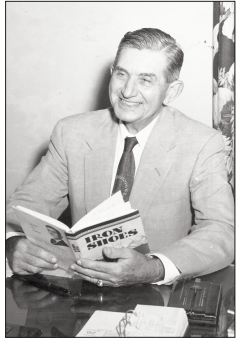
immediate future.” This “clip board” method is not too far afield of the Henry Ward Beecher and Charles Haddon Spurgeon idea of “never picking fruit until it is ripe.” The on going weekly priority check kept the green apples on the tree and brought the ripe apples to the table for consumption.

Angell stated that since he used stories so much he had church members and friends who fed this constant need for illustrations. His own personal reading and trained powers of observation also aided in this pursuit.

Dr. Angell had no intricate filing system but did keep special day and subject sermon folders. Both Sunday sermons at Central were transcribed on a tape recorder and then typed out by his secretary. Most of his sermon preparation was done between 5 and 8 a. m. each day. On Monday he picked from his clip board the two sermons for the next Sunday. He always wanted his outlines and material finished by Thursday night. Angell finished his Sunday morning sermon on Saturday morning and his Sunday evening sermon on Sunday afternoon after a nap of about one hour.

Dr. Angell did not use a sermon manuscript in the pulpit but had full notes prepared. He would sometimes have five pages of notes but always left them in the prayer room and only took his Bible and maybe a written poem to the pulpit. Angell stated that most of his sermons had three points and he always arrived at a climax with an evangelistic appeal.

This method of sermon building might have been loosely based on Biblical exegesis but it was constructed in such a way as to bring interest and resolve.³¹



The Second Mile

Whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.—MATTHEW 5:41

C. Roy Angell manuscript

This particular sermon is included because Angell preached it annually upon congregation request.

There is an innocent sounding sentence in the Sermon on the Mount spoken by Jesus that contains enough dynamite to change the course of the world. In it Christ has presented one of the foundation principles of abundant living. What a pity that people have gone by on the other side and left this little sentence, with its mighty truth alone. It reads “Whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.”

Somewhere I read of a Sunday school teacher who had assigned this passage for memory work one Sunday. When the class assembled the next Sunday, being a very understanding and considerate teacher, she repeated the verse to refresh their memories. “Whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.” Then she waited just a moment and asked, “Does anyone know the memory verse?” Up went a hand. “All right, what is it?” The little boy answered, “Whosoever shall compel thee to go with him one mile, go with him *by train*.”

The background and setting of the verse are very important. Whenever the Roman Empire had conquered a new province or a new town, a Roman yoke was put in the market place or in the principal gate of the city. Sometimes they made everybody pass under it; sometimes just the leaders of the people, thus signifying and promising that to the Roman Empire they would give obeisance, obedience, tribute, and many other things. One of those “other things” that would be found in the small type was this.

Whenever a Roman soldier or Roman official wanted you to carry his pack for a mile, or run an errand for a mile, or guide him

for a mile, it was a must. This was a most humiliating and chafing experience for, as Moses said, “these were a stiff-necked people, a proud people.” I have read that the Roman Empire stipulated that except in an emergency no one would be required to go farther than a mile. I’ve also read that every Jewish boy who lived in the country had marked off a mile each way on the road from his house and had driven a peg down.

Now, with this in mind, look at this group standing around Christ. I imagine that no one thing that Jesus ever said, as he walked the streets of Jerusalem or the roads of Galilee, upset an audience of his like this sentence did. They’re listening intently, looking at one another, and marveling at the way this teacher pronounces the great truths. Then suddenly into their midst he drops this bomb, “Whosoever compels thee to go a mile, go with him twain.”

I can see them clench their fists until their nails dig into their palms, nudge the man next to them, and shake their heads and look at Jesus in astonishment. Does he mean to say that he approves of the Roman Empire, and that he is teaching that they should obey when they are made to go even one mile? Nothing Christ ever said shocked them so.

I think that Jesus deliberately made that obnoxious Roman rule a carrier for this great principle of life so that they would never overlook it and so we wouldn’t miss it. It would be tragic to miss the message of this verse of Scripture. It’s tragic for your individual life, your business, or your profession to overlook this truth in the teachings of Christ. What does it mean? Certainly not literally go another mile, carry a pack for another mile. No, it means do just a little more than you are required or reasonably expected to do. In the Sermon on the Mount he was talking about happiness and the abundant life. The whole Sermon was about this, and you cannot have abundant life without practicing the second mile. There are four observations about this second mile that are worthy of our attention.

First: The second mile always leaves a deposit of happiness in the heart of the one who travels it. Let me illustrate it. A

famous physician for many years operated in an amphitheater in the city of New York. Many surgeons from all over the country spent their vacations or part of them just watching him from their high seats overlooking the operating table. One day, when he had finished an operation and was taking off his mask, and the other doctors were leaving, one young man dropped down to the operating floor and hesitatingly approached the great surgeon, "Doctor, may I ask you a question?"

"Certainly, son, what is it?"

"Doctor, doesn't medical science say, and do not the books teach that one knot tied in the thread after the operation, if tied correctly, is all that's necessary?"

A genial smile broke over the countenance of the grand old surgeon as he put his arm around the young doctor. "Son, medical books say exactly that. Medical science teaches that. I know what your question is going to be. You're going to ask me why *I* tied *three* knots in that thread after I finished sewing up the wounds, aren't you?"

Smiling, he answered, "Yes, doctor, why three?"

"Son, I'll tell you a secret, since everybody's gone. That third knot is my 'sleeping knot.' I'm going to wake up in the middle of the night tonight and think about this operation, run through it quickly, come down to the end of it, and wonder if I tied the thread tight so the wound couldn't possibly come open, and I'm going to remember I didn't tie *one* knot, I didn't tie *two* knots, I tied *three* knots. It can't come loose, so I'm going to smile and turn over and snuggle down in my pillow and go back to sleep. That's my 'sleeping knot.' And, son, let me tell you a great principle of life. I'm not being original, but if you'll always tie three knots where you're required to tie one, you'll find a lot of happiness that you can't find any other way. It's a great principle of life. It applies to everything."

I don't think this is overdrawn. Here's a Jewish boy working in his field. A Roman soldier comes along and calls to him, "Come, carry this pack of mine. I'm tired." The Jewish boy looks at him. He wishes he could hit him over the head with the hoe he

is using. He slams the hoe down, slowly drags his feet and creeps over the fence, chain lightning leaping from his eyes. He picks up the Roman soldier's pack, half drags it, half carries it, slows the Roman soldier down, gets to the mile post, slams it down. "I hope some day I'll meet you when my nation's on top. I'll make you carry a ton ten miles." He goes back, picks up the hoe and breaks it against a tree, goes home and takes it out on his family like a modern man.

Now, here's another one. He's been with Jesus and he's caught the beauty of this second mile and he's seen the depth of it. "Come, carry this pack a mile," a Roman soldier commands. The young man vaults the fence, picks up the pack and outsteps his Roman soldier, chats with him, and passes the mile post. By-and-by that Roman soldier stops and smiles: "Wait a minute. You've come a long way past the mile."

And to his amazement the young Jewish boy answers: "O let's walk on. I'll take you to the edge of the city. I'm enjoying talking to you. Tell me some more about Rome. I've some more questions I want to ask you."

Now, watch that Roman soldier when he gets to the edge of the city. He slips off his grooved glove, thrusts out his hand: "Young man, I'll think a lot more of your nation from now on. If you ever need a friend in the Roman army, I'd like to help you. You've helped me to day."

Now, watch that boy as he goes back, head up, shoulders back, whistling a merry tune. Oh, he's happy inside. What's happened? He's conquered something. An hour of self-approval is worth a week of ordinary living. He picks up the hoe and does two hours' work in one. He goes over the hill, and the children see him coming and they run and tell their mother and she meets him out there. She slips her arms around him and says: "I know what you've done. You've gone the second mile today. It always makes you so much sweeter. It does something wonderful to you."

Second: The second mile calls for the best in others. You can't possibly travel the second mile without influencing others

and starting them to traveling it. Let me tell you about the first time I ever saw it. I shall never forget it. I was working as night secretary in a railroad YMCA. A new general secretary had taken over. He redistributed the work and gave me the books to post at night. I never did like to keep books and I resented his giving me this extra work. And every single page of those books showed that I resented it. For the first few months it was just written all over them. I'm afraid they were the ugliest set of books ever kept.

Then one day something happened. I asked the new secretary, Mr. Goodwin, if I could go hunting, bear hunting with our gang and my dogs. They were going back up into the "bear loop" day after tomorrow. "Would there be any chance for me to get off tomorrow night?"

He thought a moment and answered with a smile: "I think so, Roy. One of us will have to work overtime for you, but I believe we can arrange it all right. I'll just work for you myself. Go ahead and kill a bear."

So I went with the gang and the dogs and hunted for two days. We slept on the mountain that night, and I got back just in time to go to work the next night. He could see how tired I was, and after a while he came over, and, with that same fine smile, he puts his arm around my shoulders and asked, "How many miles did you walk in the last two days? Aren't you pretty tired?"

I answered, "Yes, sir, but I'm all right. I can work through the night."

He said, "Well, I worked for you last night and I'm not a bit sleepy, for I slept all day." And then sort of confidentially, "Slip upstairs and go to bed, and I'll wake you up by-and-by. You sleep till I come and get you."

He told me just once and I was gone. When I opened my eyes next, it was day. I wondered what in the world had happened. Had I gone to sleep on duty? Then I remembered and hurried down to the office. Mr. Goodwin had gone home, but the day secretary handed me a note that he had left for me. I never shall forget that note.

DEAR ROY:

I came up and looked at you, but you were sleeping so soundly that I didn't have the heart to wake you. I didn't mind working for you at all. It wasn't a hardship. Don't feel bad about it. Go on home, get your breakfast, and come back and work for me till noon while I sleep a little. You come back on tonight and we'll all be straightened out. I really enjoyed working for you, Roy. Maybe you haven't found it out yet, but I love you. It was signed "Manley Goodwin."

I sat down, read the note over. I read it two or three times; then I got down on my knees. I asked God to forgive me for the way I'd treated a good man. I asked him to forgive me for the way I'd kept those books. Now, if you want to see the prettiest set of books that ever were kept, you'll find them in that YMCA. It's written all over them—the second mile that Jesus talked about. That's the first time I ever met it; that's the first time I ever saw it. But I'll be indebted for a lifetime to the man who lived the second mile for me that first time. That's the thing Jesus is talking about, "Whosoever shall compel thee to go one mile, go with him twain." And remember that when you walk that second mile, you start somebody else down the same beautiful road.

Third: The second mile lightens life's burdens. The second mile is one of the grandest principles that Jesus ever gave for felicity in the home. I honestly believe that if one person in a home would practice this second mile that Jesus is talking about, he alone, or she alone, could transform a home. And how many homes would be inviolate today if people practiced the second mile, doing a little more than they were expected to do, a few nicer things than anybody had a right to ask them to do.

If you had a visitor in your home, and were going to give him a glass of milk, you wouldn't skim the cream off first—but that's exactly what we do with one another. Instead of going the "love mile," as Jesus is expressing it here in this passage, we subtract something that is vitally important. Here's a husband hurrying to

get ready to go to work in the morning. His wife is washing the breakfast dishes. He finds that he has a button off his coat, and he comes to the kitchen door and says, "Honey, I've got a button off. Can you stop and sew it on?"

Why, of course, she's going to stop and sew it on, but she stops and stands still for a minute. "Your buttons can get off in the most inopportune times. Why didn't you tell me last night it was off?" But she dries her hands, and sews it on. She fusses a little bit as she does, then throws his coat on the table, "There it is. Next time tell me when it gets loose." She goes back to her dishwashing. Toward the end of the week, the wife says to her husband, "I had a little extra expense this week and my budget's running short. I'm going to need about five dollars more." He turns around with a glare, "What in the world do you do with all of your money anyhow?"

Let's see what this second mile would do for that home. "Honey, I've got a button off. Could you sew it on?"

With a smile she dries her hands and hurries to get needle and thread: "You know, sweetheart, I just love to sew buttons on for you. I'll have it on in just a minute." When she has finished, she holds the coat for him, her arms go around his neck and she gives him a little hug. He goes away to work with a song in his heart thinking she's the grandest woman that ever lived. And she is. At the end of the week: "Honey, I've had a little extra expense and my budget's about five dollars short."

Out comes his wallet and he says, "I don't see how in the world you ever make money stretch as far as you do. Here's ten dollars instead of five."

Now, you laugh about it, but oh, the difference it would make in the atmosphere of our homes if the people in them would do a little more than is expected of them, were just a little nicer, just a little kinder, just a little sweeter than anybody had a right to expect them to be. Our children would grow up in an atmosphere of joy and good will. What a difference it would make in their lives and the way they would face the problems of the world. The second mile is just crammed full of blessedness.

Fourth: God went the second mile. Jesus never gave us a commandment that he himself did not live. Of course, the greatest second mile ever presented to the world was Jesus himself. God created a beautiful world, filled it full of lovely conveniences which would add to our happiness. He gave us a Guidebook and a thousand things to remind us of himself and all of his goodness. Despite all this, man turned away from God. Then God went the second mile, and sent us Jesus, and told John to write down, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

The day came when Jesus was hung on the cross on Golgotha. They had driven the nails in his hands and feet and left him to die in agony. In the midst of it all, he lifted his face quietly up to his Heavenly Father, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

I saw the Passion play at Oberammergau the last time it was played. The dramatist added a few scenes to the account given us in the New Testament. One of them beautifully illustrates this truth of the second mile. Jesus was carrying his cross down the streets of Jerusalem. The end of the upright beam dragged on the ground behind him. He staggered and fell. The crowd jeered. A Roman soldier struck him. A centurion who was in charge of the procession carried a long vicious whip. He quickly uncoiled it and swung it out over his head and brought it down with a resounding crack, not across the back of Jesus, but across the back of the soldier who struck him. "Help him up," he commanded, "And don't strike him again." I've loved a Roman centurion ever since.

Just then from the other direction came the mother of Jesus and a group of women. The centurion rode his horse out in front of the crowd and stopped them and told Jesus to go and talk with his mother. For a long time the two wept silently in each other's arms, and when Jesus went back to the cross he couldn't lift it. Just then Simon of Cyrene, who was short and stocky and strong, came up a side road and stopped to look at

the scene. The centurion called him, “Come, carry the cross for this man.” Protesting and arguing, Simon came forward. The centurion’s command rang out louder, “Carry the cross for that man or take the consequences.”

Simon didn’t recognize Jesus until he was standing beside him. Then with an exclamation of horror, he dropped to his knees and put his arms around the feet of Jesus. “Not you, no, not you, Master,” he said, “You healed my boy.” Then, springing up suddenly, he ran to the centurion, “I’ll carry his cross for him, and if you will let me, I will be crucified in his stead.”

This little interlude is not recorded in any of the Gospels, but it is a beautiful illustration of what God’s second mile inspires men to do.



IT’S HARD TO FOLLOW AN ANGELL

CONRAD R. WILLARD
1962-1983

Conrad Willard said, “it was not easy to follow an Angell.” The men were entirely different but so was the church. Dr. Angell came to a church that had just reconciled over a split and had a tremendous debt. Downtown Miami was the place to be and the suburbs in 1936 were still a dream. Angell was hard working and from a blue collar background. He and J. L. White made frequent contacts with denominational leaders and stayed in the mainstream of southern church life.

Willard was a midwesterner. He was a rifleman in the 87th Infantry Division under General George Patton and was wounded in battle. He went to college at Southwest Bible College in Bolivar, Missouri, Oklahoma Baptist University and Drury College in Springfield, Missouri. He studied at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (B. D.) and Central Baptist Theological Seminary (Th. D.).

Conrad Willard went as pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Kansas City, Missouri in May, 1953. He went to Central in Miami in 1962 and served twenty years. Upon his retirement at Central he was elected pastor emeritus. He made an impact on the inner city that helped keep church and city intact.³²

The arrival of Dr. Willard at Central brought a person that had already been committed to denominational and civic matters. He had served as vice president of the Southern Baptist Convention (1956-57), trustee of the Missouri Baptist Home for the Aged, president of the Midwestern seminary board of trustees, trustee of William Jewell College and the Baptist Memorial Hospital. He had been sent by the Foreign Mission Board on a preaching mission to Ghana and Nigeria in 1958 and had written Sunday School and

Training Union materials for the Sunday School Board. Conrad and his wife Lena Mae had two daughters, Sherri and Patti.

The Willards were actually mission volunteers. Conrad and Lena Mae volunteered for work in Africa and wrote out their life histories and went for an interview. When the interviewer asked him his age Conrad said he was 41. That is when they found out that Conrad was one year beyond the age limit to be appointed as a career missionary with the Southern Baptist Convention.



Front row L-R Mrs. Terry Thorpe, Fay Taylor, Mrs. Dottson Mills. Back row Dottson Mills, Terry Thorpe, Dr. Willard

Central started nine mission points while Conrad was pastor and this was in addition to numerous language and short term projects. There were Spanish, Haitian and Creole ministries. There was signing for the deaf and services at Miami International Airport. There was migrant work, street people work and Dr. Willard was a crucial member of a racial relations team in downtown Miami that was vital for Christian contact and public safety.

Some high profile people led these mission efforts. Lena Mae Willard led the migrant work. When Lucille Kerrigan had to leave Cuba in 1963, she was on the “last Red Cross ship out” of Cuba. She then headed up the Cuban ministry at Central. There was a Slavic ministry and Dorothy Sparks Angell, the daughter-in-law of C. Roy Angell, headed up “The Sign of the Fish” coffee house ministry for the street people. Lena Mae Conrad had been exposed and committed to missions before she moved to Central but she said when people saw all the mission action at the church people would say, “Now, those people are dedicated.”



Conrad Willard preaching at downtown mission.

Dr. Willard said, “People called me Dr. Angell for five years.” But it did not take him long to make his own mark. His ministry began on Easter Sunday, April 1, 1962, and even in the troubled years of migration, crime, restlessness and conflict the church never had fewer than 1,000 people in their services. Dr. Willard loved people and they knew it. The election of female deacons caused some controversy but the greatest blow came when Central and University Baptist Church of Coral Gables sought to merge their congregations. The churches had researched and done their due diligence before the vote. The Central Baptist bulletins and newsletters called on the people to “pray, pray, pray.” But in June, 1981, the public decision was made. The merger was voted down and Dr. Willard was very disappointed. He felt it was a win-win situation and was saddened by the fact that the decision makers turned out to be people who had not attended church in years. The movers, shakers and opinion makers could not convince the decision makers that it was the thing to do.

Conrad Willard lived and preached a message of hope in a difficult time in downtown Miami. He refused to use such terms as “skid rowers” or “bums.” He said they are just people with personal problems. It was reported that there were over 5,000 men living in the decrepit hovels, rooming houses and hotels in downtown Miami. But Central Baptist Church offered a downtown mission where Jesus and hope was preached every Sunday morning at 9:30 a. m., by Dr. Willard. Lives were changed and hundreds of people were given a Biblical message and a word of encouragement for the week.

Dr. Willard and Lena Mae retired from their work in 1983 after twenty years of faithful service in the Central Church. A retirement banquet was held and hundreds came to honor the pastor and wife that loved them and gave them hope.



Conrad and Lena Mae Willard



THOSE WHO STAYED

STEVEN L. KIMMEL
1985-1990

Dr. and Mrs. Conrad Willard were honored by Central Baptist Church on Sunday, April 4, 1982, for twenty years of service at the church. An impressive “program of celebration” was printed and former church members, staff members and guests were present for the Sunday morning service. The congregation sang “What a Friend We Have in Jesus” and the sanctuary choir sang “Victory in Jesus” and “The Hallelujah Chorus.” The service was a Christ honoring send off for Dr. and Mrs. Willard.

At this point the church used supply preachers for nearly two years. This is not interim preaching but week by week different ministers were heard, appreciated and rotated. Preachers in the twentieth century called it “Jesse James preaching.” You ride into town. You make your pronouncements. You get paid. Then you leave town.

Central soon found that a downtown church needs to set its priorities, focus its goals and activate a plan. Most downtown Christian churches were headed to the suburbs and Central had a high level of commitment to stay downtown but soon learned they needed a pastor to assist them in this call to stay, work and minister.

Steve Kimmel was called to be pastor in 1985. He was a native of New Orleans and knew something of what it meant to be in a cosmopolitan atmosphere. Kimmel came from a church in Gaithersburg, Maryland and was well qualified to lead the church to new concepts of ministry in a traditional setting.

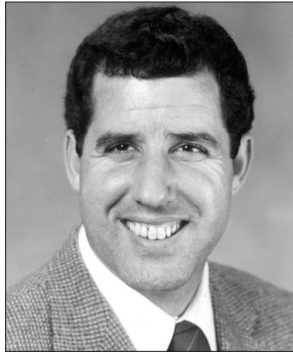
Central always had an interest in unique ministries. Dr. J. L. White had an annual city wide Bible conference that brought in Homer Rodeheaver, Louis Evans, G. Campbell Morgan and other famous speakers of the day. Dr. Angell started a radio ministry that went into the Bahama Islands. Conrad Willard started a downtown mission that had an attendance of 200 at early Sunday morning services and then showed the Central services at the mission by closed circuit television.

Steve Kimmel and Central reached out to the community with coffee house ministry, homeless ministries and an inner city art ministry that was unique and professionally done.

The New World School for the Arts was begun and Miami Dade Community College began having some classes meet at the church. An emphasis was placed on “no-profit” cooperatives and a slogan was raised that stated Central “had faith in the city.”³³

Kimmel and the church felt that staying downtown was a decision and a commitment. Kimmel said, “The people we felt we were most effective with moved farther and farther away.” However the Central core was committed enough in 1985 that the pastor said, “those who stayed could not be run off by riots or pickpockets.” Kimmel knew it was a tough place to minister but he stayed for six years and helped the church change, stay and focus.

Pastor Kimmel was pastor of Central Baptist Church when Claude Pepper died in May, 1989. On April 28, 1989, Representative Pepper wrote pastor Steve a letter letting him know how much he appreciated the prayers of the church on his behalf. Pepper wrote, “Please express my profound gratitude to my church family for their special prayers on April 19. This touches me deeply and I know these prayers will represent the most important ingredient to my quick recovery. God bless all of you. I look forward to being back with you soon.”³⁴



IN THE NAME OF JESUS

H. KEITH BLAKLEY
1992-1999

In a *Miami Herald* interview on June 26, 1994, pastor Keith Blakley stated, “We are increasingly ministering to the needs of the people in downtown Miami...This is our mission field.”³⁵

Pastor Blakley (1952-1999) was a Fort Worth native and had a degree in sociology from the University of Texas in Arlington (B. A., 1975). He attended Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (M. Div., 1981) and served as a Southern Baptist foreign missionary before going to Central in 1992. He earned his doctor of ministry degree from Golden Gate Seminary in Mill Valley, California. He preached in Tobago, Dominica and St. Vincent.

The church had learned something. No extended supply pastorates were attempted. Blakley and his wife Theresa and Angela, Chelsea and Sean came to Central with a calling. They ministered to the downtowners and Miami Dade Community College students. Blakley declared that Central was a “24 Hour” church and there were services in English, Spanish, French, Creole, and Portuguese. The use of the inner city facilities continued and people came by automobile, city bus, walking, and the Metro People Mover.

Lydia Clark came to the Central church as a two week old infant in 1937 and stayed. She noted Central “has never really been a neighborhood church. It has always been a downtown church.” Clark served as administrative assistant at the church and she pointed out that the Central fellowship “always felt there was a real need for a church in the heart of the city.” Blakley said,

“the church is in the right place at the right time.” The pastor felt “Central Baptist is an appropriate name.”³⁶ In 1996, the centennial year, Central Baptist Church had 633 members and total receipts of \$341,699.00.

Church administrator Clark made some keen observations about the church in 1994. She noted the changes in the church and said there is hope. “We are seeing a shift now...more and more young people are showing up to the services.” New apartments and condominiums were being built downtown near the church and the Metro People Mover was used by many who came to services during the week.

December 22, 1999, brought tragedy to the church. The home of the Blakley family was invaded by acquaintance John Eric Carter, age 19, and he shot at Blakley daughter Angela and wounded the 78 year old parents of Keith. The pastor was in the front yard when he heard the shots and rushed into the house where he was shot and killed by Carter. Carter went on a shooting rampage in Miami and then shot himself to death.

The city and church were stunned. The family and church had ministered to Carter previously but in his troubled state violence ensued. The reputation of Miami, Central and Christian ministry was again on the line. The Blakley family came to Miami to serve in the Baptist Student Union at the University of Miami. A few years later they moved to Central where Keith was to serve as pastor. They knew Miami and its problems and potential. There was a Christian calling to service at the church.

Theresa Blakley told the *Miami Herald* she had no regrets about trying to help the troubled teen. She said, “I don’t regret having let any soul into the fold of our family. It is our mandate from Christ to embrace every person and love them in the name of Jesus. That is what we are all about.”³⁸

And that was what Central was all about for over 100 years. Caring, working, believing and staying. Miami was different because Christ in Central was there.

Conclusions

One hundred years of kingdom service leaves impacts that need to be recorded for posterity. People are still being blessed by the influence of First Baptist Church (1896-1936) and Central Baptist Church (1936-1996) of Miami. Sermons, writings, missions, architecture, presence and ministry left a 100 year trail that is easy to trace.

In 2011, there are lessons that need to be recorded. Downtown churches can thrive. Inner city churches do make a difference. Lets look at Central Baptist and learn some lasting kingdom principles.

It takes courage to build a church. I would like to have been present when John Sewell roused people from beds and bars to go hear preaching. He might have been over zealous but is not zeal needed today in building a church? Dr. White fought to save the property and Dr. Willard stood fast in tough times.

Tenacity. John Sewell noted that at one point in time he was listening to a Congregational preacher with a Methodist choir in a Presbyterian tent. He knew he was the only Baptist present but he also knew he had to start somewhere. Quitters do not build inner city churches.

Accountability. When the Stanton church rules are read they have accountability written all over them. The pastors realized that downtown fellowship meant serious commitment to one another and kingdom work. Mrs. Conrad Willard noted that the work was so hard and demanding that observers said now these people are “committed” to missions.

Dreaming. It appears that every pastor of the church had a dream and a vision. Their plans and projects were not the same

but they all had a dream in their heart. Church planting demands a call with a vision.

Mission Mindedness. How soon it is forgotten that First Baptist Church and Central Baptist started over 20 different missions as sponsor and co-sponsor. Some of the churches faded from Baptist observation because of community changes and economic conditions but the missions commitment of First Baptist and Central Baptist brought hundreds of people under the sound of the gospel.

Good Organization. Any evangelical church that denies its Sunday School will pay a terrible price. First Baptist and Central built its ministries on the Sunday School organization. Missions, music, training, fellowship and worship thrived through a well planned Sunday School.

Southern Baptist Roots. The church had pride about its Baptist and Southern Baptist roots. In the records of the Florida Baptist Historical Society there are hundreds of cards and letters reporting on Baptists joining First Baptist and Central from all over the southeast. People in Georgia, North Carolina, Alabama, Virginia, South Carolina and other states had heard of Central and when they were transferred to Miami they kept their Southern Baptist roots in the church. J. L. White and C. Roy Angell were ambassadors of Southern Baptist work and set up shop at Central. The Southern Baptist Convention and the Baptist World Alliance met in Miami and Central carried the Baptist flag proudly.

A Sense of History. As one reads the historical thrust of the church it seems the church always knew her destiny was tied to the gospel and to downtown Miami. Property, architecture, programs and plans always seemed to be forward thinking. The inner city struggles of the 1960's and 1980's in Miami were always seen as opportunities and not just problems.

Innovation. The Winter Bible Conference of J. L. White and the downtown mission concepts of Conrad Willard were timely and brilliant. The C. Roy Angell special event programs and the Steven Kimmel New World School of the Arts were evidences of commitment to inner city ministry and connectedness. How could they have done more? How could they have done differently? They were called and they poured their lives into Miami ministry and made a kingdom difference.

Money. It takes money to stay downtown. Parking, traffic, security, outreach, transportation and infrastructure were on going costs that the church was willing to pay time and time again. The church gave to missions, taught missions and lived missions. It cost money to hire staff and start churches. Central and First Baptist went the second mile in freeing up money for kingdom priorities.

Commitment. When one thinks of the debt battle and the nervous breakdown of J. L. White, the compassion of Conrad Willard and the life giving work of pastor Keith Blakley, it seems you stand on holy ground. When a centennial sketch of this great church is drawn out on a Florida Baptist history canvas, these people cared and led followers to care.

Upon the death of pastor Blakley news media were anxious to interview his widow. She did not equivocate. Theresa Blakley said she had no regrets about her family assisting troubled people. She said, "It is our mandate from Christ."

John Sewell was right. One has to believe that all those who lived and served and ministered at Central Baptist Church "built better than they knew."

Endnotes

1. Chapter one is a reprint of *John's Sewell's Memoirs and History of Miami Florida*. Volume one, pp. 111-126. Hereafter referred to as *Memoirs*. It is no small matter to determine the number of buildings and when they were built. The correct death date of Dr. Stanton was October 26, 1909.
2. Martha L. Reiner, *Belief in the City. A History of Central Baptist Church*. Centennial Press. Miami. 1996. pp. 5-6. Hereafter referred to as Reiner.
3. Sewell is rather candid about his appraisal of ministers. Stanton was his favorite pastor and D. B. Farmer was his least admired pastor.
4. *Memoirs*, p. 121. We can only wish that Reiner had used more specific documentation. You have to conclude that Sewell was the best source for Reiner in those early years but no footnotes prove that. Reiner could have access to First Baptist Church and Central Baptist Church minutes that are not available to us at this time.
5. Sewell calls this the "second time." Reiner lists it as the third term of service. I agree with Reiner. It is difficult to disagree with a primary source eyewitness account but even Sewell himself clearly documents an 1897 service (p. 121, *Memoirs*), 1898 service (p. 121), and the January 15, 1900 calling (p. 124).
6. You can't help but wonder what Sewell meant by a "Baptist sermon." (p. 122) Stetson, and Mercer were the two schools that had provided preachers and this was in the earliest days of Southern Baptist homiletical training.
7. *Memoirs*, p. 125. First Baptist Church, Lemon City was also begun in 1896.
8. *Memoirs*, p. 123-124. See *1906 Florida Baptist Convention Annual*, p. 90 for information on D. B. Farmer.

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9. *Memoirs*, p. 125. For three months in 1899 Miami was shut off from the rest of the world. Yellow fever was first found in Coconut Grove when it appeared in a sailor from a ship. Armed guards were stationed around the City of Miami and no one was to come or go. Victims turned as yellow as gold and unknowing residents called the disease "the Black vomit." The quarantine was lifted in mid-December but the concern was always as much about the tourists trade as the disease. (Helen Muir, *Miami U. S. A.*, pp. 81-83.)
 10. *Memoirs*, p. 125.
 11. W. E. Stanton. "Covenant and Rules of the First Baptist Church of Miami, Florida." 1903. 8 pages. FBHS Central Baptist Church Collection.
 12. *Memoirs*, p. 126
 13. *Memoirs*, p. 126. Reiner, p. 20. One might wonder how a congregation can have 1,000 in attendance with 599 members. Tourism was the life blood of Miami. Henry Flagler, Julia Tuttle and John Sewell were the three people who gave vigor to the Miami vision. Julia Tuttle (1849-1898) was the heart of the city, Henry Flagler the head and John Sewell was the muscle. The first train arrived on April 15, 1896 (Muir, p. 63) and tourists could stay for \$5.00 a day.
 14. Jacob Lee White was a family man, friend of preachers, denominational worker, community builder and correspondent par excellence. A prize document in the FBHS files is a resolution of First Baptist Church, Miami, sending Dr. and Mrs. White on an all expense paid trip to the Baptist World Alliance in Stockholm and a tour of Europe in 1923.
 15. Jacob Lee White correspondence. January 8, 1936. Hereafter referred to as White correspondence.

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16. White correspondence, September 26, 1934, in a letter to John R. Sampey.
 17. White correspondence and Reiner, *Belief in the City*, pp. 34-36.
 18. *The Miami Herald*, April 17, 1920 and other spring issues. Dr. White preached a well publicized and widely distributed sermon on "The Inter-Church World Movement." The sermon text was Amos 3:3: "Can two walk together except they be agreed?" *The Miami Herald* printed the full sermon manuscript in the paper the day after it was preached. Sermon in FBHS files.
 19. Dr. White was a promoter, leader, dreamer and idea man. He did not understand finances and was never really set in his personal money goals. He got caught up in the Miami enthusiasm that swept through the real estate market and his own church membership. Their dream of a million dollar tower collapsed under the pressure of natural calamity and human greed.
 20. Hoyt Frazure as told to Nixon Smiley. *Memories of Old Miami*. Reprint of series that appeared in *The Miami Herald*. p. 26.
 21. Reiner, p. 40.
 22. Reiner, p. 25.
 23. Reiner, p. 48. White correspondence in Florida Baptist Historical Society files. According to Louise Leyden in "Central Baptist Church marking 20th Anniversary," *Miami Daily News*, August 4, 1956, p 3a, "...the church has been not only a landmark in downtown Miami but a guiding force in the lives of all with whom it has come into contact."
 24. Reiner lists Stanton Memorial, Riverside, Orange Glade, Allapattah, University, Orange Ridge, Biscayne Park, Opa Locka, West Flagler Park, Temple, Miami Shores, Shenandoah

and Miami Springs. Central Baptist took over the “supervisory responsibility of First Baptist Church of Miami Beach in 1967 according to the May 29, 1967, *The Miami Herald* issue.

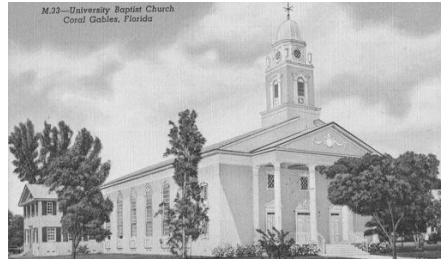
25. Dr. White actually called it the “Pastors Council” in his correspondence. One would wonder if he taught this innovative idea to his four ministerial sons.
26. Reiner, p. 57.
27. There is something to be said about Central Baptist when you consider J. L. White (1924, 1925), C. Roy Angell (1949) and Conrad Willard (1968) served as President of the state convention. Some might say location, location, location. I should think it was quality, quality, quality. In 1960 when the Southern Baptist Convention met in Miami Dr. Angell had Dr. W. O. Vaught of Immanuel Baptist Church in Little Rock preach both Sunday morning sermons and Brooks Hays to speak on Sunday night. Vaught was the pastor of Bill Clinton.
28. Margaret Dempsey research paper of November, 2008, entitled “Charles Roy Angell—A Preacher’s Preacher.” This paper is in the C. Roy Angell files of the FBHS. Joseph Faus in “Central Baptist Church” in *The Miami Sunday News Magazine*, November 20, 1949, p. 15, states that Central Baptist was the largest Protestant church in Florida. It was also next to the largest Southern Baptist Church east of the Mississippi.
29. “Miami Baptist Progress.” Monthly Publication of Miami Baptist Association. Vol. 5. No. 7. September, 1957. Not only does editor Ray Dobbins mention the missions and churches begun by Central he also lists 18 established churches given material, personnel, and financial aid by Central Baptist Church.
30. R. Earl Allen and Joel Gregory compilers. *Southern Baptist Preaching Yesterday*. Broadman Press. Nashville. 1991.

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31. The sermons of C. Roy Angell are readily available for purchase on AbeBooks, ebay or in used book stores. His strength was his use of pointed illustrations and once you read them you remembered them.

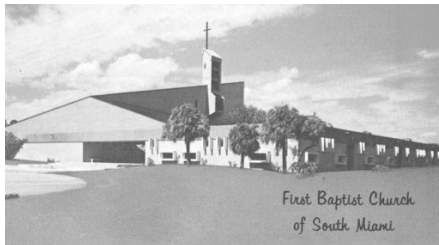
32. See Reiner pp. 92-93; *Florida Baptist Witness*, November 17, 1983, p. 6. It is moving to read some of the letters written to Dr. Willard from former attendees of the Downtown Mission. Many lives were rescued and restored by the love, gospel preaching and hard work of Conrad Willard at the mission.
33. Reiner, pp. 93-97.
34. Pepper was of Alabama and country church origin. Claude Pepper and Reuben Askew attended the church at Central. The fact is overlooked sometimes that Ruth Bryan, the daughter of William Jennings Bryan, was also a member of the church and in the United States Congress in 1924.
35. Bea L. Hines, “Central Baptist to mark a Century.” *The Herald*. June 26, 1994, p. 6.
36. *The Herald*. June 26, 1994, p. 6.
37. Deborah Stoudt, *The Miami Herald* “History Around Us.” November 29, 1992, p. 53.
38. Shari Schubert, “Teenager Kills Miami Pastor Whose Family had Befriended Him.” *Herald*, January 4, 2000.



**Riverside Baptist Church,
Miami**



**University Baptist Church,
Coral Gables**



**First Baptist Church,
South Miami**



**First Baptist Church,
Key Largo**



**Allapattah Baptist Church,
Miami**

Central Baptist Church Prioritized and Annotated Bibliography

John Sewell's Memoirs and History of Miami, Florida.

Appendix. An Eye Witness to the attempt to assassinate President-elect Franklin D. Roosevelt, February 15, 1933.

Volume 1. The Franklin Press. Miami. 237 pages.

There is no more valuable source on the history of Central and Miami than this book. The only picture is the picture of John Sewell but the narrative is an eyewitness account of the birth of Miami and First Baptist Church.

Sewell and his wife were within 25 feet of President-elect Franklin D. Roosevelt when an assassin tried to kill FDR and did wound five others. This February 15, 1933 event is covered in the appendix of this edition, (pp. 204-230).

Gerda Holmes Crane, *Church Past, Future*. Material gathered by G. H. Crane, church historian. A complete history in pictures and printed matter.

This notebook, scrapbook is filled with pictures and narrative enclosed in thin plastic cellophane covers. The strengths of this primary source are the identified pictures and first hand account narratives.

Crane organized and presented the material in twelve sections. They include: The Early Years, The Pastors, Church Staff, Assistant and Associate Pastors, The Deacons, Woman's Missionary Union and Men's Group, Music Program, The Education Program, Missions, Historical Overview, Recreation and Youth. There are no page numbers, no contents page, no index and no bibliography. However it is a concise personal source on the first 75 years of the church.

Reiner, Martha L., with Donna Knowles Born. *Belief In the City. A History of Central Baptist Church*. Centennial Press. Miami. 1996, 120 pages.

This is a wonderful source on Central. The sources are not primary but they are organized and systematized. The index is helpful and the bibliography is interesting. The pictures are black and white and identified. The appendices are somewhat self serving but the 1995 Keith Blakley sermon is relevant and revealing. The acknowledgments help us understand author Reiner and the list of pastors is particularly helpful when you consider some sources say they had six pastors in three years (1896-1898). It would have been of unique value if the author had chosen to include footnotes or endnotes. Sometimes conclusions are stated with no real sense of who held a particular set of opinions or values. More specific documentation was needed. Reiner was an adjunct professor at Florida International University and sourced 100 years of deacon minutes and a janitor's diary.

David Sablan. "Central Baptist Church. "Touching Miami with Love" Since 1896"

Actually no author, editor or compiler is given for this beautiful eight page "restoration" bulletin. It is professionally prepared and well presented to the people of Miami. David Sablan is listed as Outreach Pastor and Eric Kennedy is listed as Minister of Administration. The 25 color pictures of the interior and exterior of the church are exquisite. It includes color pictures of 19 stain glass windows and a general description. There is a color interior picture of the auditorium that is breathtaking.

Bea L. Hines. "It's Baptist Church's Centennial, too." *Miami Herald*, July 26, 1996.

This source is of special value because it includes an interview with Martha Reiner and a Reiner interview with Genvieve Patton who served as secretary to J. L. White, C. Roy Angell and Conrad Willard.

Deborah Stoudt. "Church remains beacon in heart of city." *The Miami Herald*. Sunday, November 29, 1992, p. 53.

This local article was under the series of "History around us." The positive comments from Stoudt, and pastor Keith Blakley had to send an upbeat message to the Miami readers.

David King Gleason. *Over Miami*. LSU Press. Baton Rouge. 1990. 136 pages.

This is a beautiful coffee table book with fantastic 8x10 color pictures of Miami. They are all aerial views of the heart of Miami. There is a helpful index that assists one in locating landmarks for research and enjoyment. The aerial view of Central Baptist Church (p. 60) is especially helpful because it shows the Metro-Mover station that brings people to Bible study at Central today.

"Claude Pepper Scrapbook." This collection is packed with information about Claude Pepper. Most of the scrapbook is given to the funeral of Pepper at Central Baptist Church. Personal notes, programs, personal comments add to this unique source. This scrapbook was probably compiled by Mrs. Gerda Holmes Crane. Detailed information of Saturday-Sunday, June 3-4, 1989, services at Central Baptist Church Miami and First Baptist Church Tallahassee are given (June 5, 1989).

Laura Pincus. *Baptist Health South Florida. A History of Caring for the Community*. Centennial Press. 2010. 296 pages. Pincus is a renowned Miami historian and author. Arba Moore Parks served as a historical consultant and Rhonda Edmiston was the book designer.

Fourteen chapters of authentic photographs in a larger than expected coffee table format. The author and photographer stay on task in telling the Baptist Health South story from Arthur Vining Davis (alcoa/400 million dollars) and the friendship of C. Roy Angell to new directions and plans for tomorrow. The contents page is helpful and the index is excellent. The 1896-2011 timeline reveals the close knit contact of Miami Baptist Hospital and Central Baptist Church.

Miami Metropolis. November 29, 1901. "First Service Held in the New Baptist Church."

This is the church that was built when Dr. Stanton was pastor. The building would seat 800 in the main auditorium. Pastor Stanton preached on Sunday morning and his son W. Arthur Stanton, nine year missionary to India, preached on Sunday night. This is the gothic building that had its first services on November 24, 1901, and later was moved to Buena Vista where it was renamed Stanton Memorial Church in 1916.

The Miami Daily News. February 13, 1927. "Baptists Name John Sewell to Turn Spade."

This article is a verification of the Sewell *Memoir* account but also adds details that Sewell was too modest to mention. Sewell was a First Baptist leader but also the third mayor, prominent businessman and civic leader in the city of Miami. The cost of the building was projected as \$500,000.00 and pastor White announced that B. B. Tatum (\$125,000.00), Mrs. McAllister (\$100,000.00) and John Sewell (\$25,000.00) had already pledged half the cost.

Ray Dobbins, editor. "Miami Baptist Progress." Monthly publication of the Miami Baptist Association. Vol. 5. No. 7. September, 1957. 4 pages.

This particular issue is very interesting because it has the statistics on the constitution service of Wayside Baptist Church. This issue is valuable in Central Baptist research because it lists nine missions the church started and 18 established churches that Central had aided.

"Senior Adults Notebook. Central Baptist Church. 1996."

Maybe not an uranium mine but this is surely a gold mine of primary materials.

This notebook has scores of unidentified pictures. That is regrettable that there is no pictorial documentation. But the compiler made up for the oversight. This book has over 25

testimonies of people who are elderly and members of Central Baptist Church in this centennial year. The personal vignettes include biographical information highlighted with their spiritual service. This notebook points out how Central Baptist Church had many of the Miami educational, civic and judicial members in its fellowship.

Louise Leyden. "Central Baptist Church Marking 20th Anniversary." *Miami Daily News*. Saturday, August 4, 1956. 3A.

Leyden calls Central "the largest Protestant church in Florida." The church had 5,473 members with 3,119 enrolled in Sunday School and 743 enrolled in Training Union. The property in 1956 was valued at \$750,000.00. Leyden reports that at that time the church had a staff of 20 workers.

Central Baptist Church of Miami

By-Laws

This 27 page document gives some very important understanding as to how the church was organized. There are some unique policies here. The deacons can recommend church termination. Restoration took a 90% vote. There is a Deacon Emeritus program at age 70. Provision is made for 27 committees which leads one to believe it was a committee run church.

The Group

Notebook

"The Group" began December, 1971. This ended up being about 20 different couples who were members of Central Baptist Church and had social and home gatherings during the year. "The Group" was elitist but gives us some tremendous insights into some very faithful couples in the church. Each was asked for a biographical sketch and it is included in this notebook. Their church relationships and responsibilities are also listed. Joe and Virginia Hiott collected this material for

“The Group” notebook to be distributed to each member at the 1987 Christmas gathering.

Joseph Faus. Central Baptist Church. “Rocks of God.” *Miami Sunday News Magazine*, November 20, 1949, p. 15.

A picture of Central at NE 1st Avenue and 5th Street is a part of the story line that features the pastoral work of C. Roy Angell from Boone Mill, Virginia to Miami, Florida. It is truly an Angell vignette. Mrs. A. T. Patten is in an employee picture.

Agnee Ash. “A Fortress of Baptism Among Skid Row.” *The Miami News*, May 23, 1965, p. 27.

Ash calls Conrad Willard “the handsome pastor with close-cropped gray hair...” The Baptist World Congress was meeting in Miami at this time and 30,000 delegates were expected. Ash points out that in the Stanton pastorate alcohol, dancing, theatre going and card playing were offenses that could get one removed from the church roll.

David Kidwell and Ana Aclé. “Death Spree lasted hours.” *Miami Herald*, December 28, 1999.

This is the tragic story of the murder and death of pastor Keith Blakley and the deaths and injuries of others. It is a no nonsense newspaper account of personal, church and city tragedy.

Shari Schubert. “Keith Blakley remembered for service to inner-city Miami.” *Florida Baptist Witness*. January 6, 2000. This is a Baptist view of the terrible shooting death of pastor Keith Blakley. Over 1,000 people attended his funeral and the family called for perspective in the name of Jesus even as they felt His comfort.

Claude Denson Pepper with Hays Gorey. *Pepper. Eyewitness to a Century*. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Publishers. New York. 1987. 320 pp. (autographed copy).

Pepper states that he made “lots of money” in the practice of

law (xiii) but preferred going to Congress because he was a liberal new-dealer and wanted to help people. He was born into a Baptist family in Chambers County, Alabama in 1900 and lived a life of service to the poor and elderly.

This book only mentions Baptists but not White, Angell or Willard. However, it does give an excellent political background (Roosevelt, Truman, Smathers, Kennedy) to the tenor of the times. Pepper claimed the Central Church and his funeral was there.

Helen Muir. *Miami, USA*. Hurricane House Publishers, Inc. Coconut Grove, Florida. 1953. 308 pp. Paperback.

This book does not mention Central Baptist Church but it is of interest because it is written as a docu-drama. No footnotes but it is a Shelby Foote kind of moving history that helps characterize individuals and verify Miami movements and events.

Jack Kofoed. *Moon Over Miami*. Random House. New York. 1955. 273 pp. (autographed copy)

No footnotes. No bibliography. Kofoed was a column writer for the *Miami Herald*. For about 50 years Kofoed wrote, and from 1939 forward he wrote of Miami. Kofoed wrote of Frost, Flagler, Fort Lauderdale and finances. He told the story of Miami after dark and Miami behind the headlines.

L. F. Reardon. *The Florida Hurricanes and Disaster*. 1986 reprint. Arva Parks and Company. 112 pages.

This is a pictorial record of the 1926 Miami Hurricane. No footnotes. No bibliography. These are eyewitness narratives and personal pictures.

Hoyt Frazure as told to Nixon Smiley. “Memories of Old Miami.” Reprinted from a series of articles first appearing in Sunday Magazine of the *Miami Herald*. 36 pp.

This source has sixteen installments or “chapters.” No direct

information is based on the church history of the city but there are interesting stories about the early personalities and tragedies. Pictures are galore but all black and white. No index or bibliography but the picture of E. G. Sewell (p. 2) is a keeper.

Appendix 1

Central Baptist Church
Architectural Description of Building
Heritage Conservation Zoning District
Arthur King, Chairman
Conservation Board

The Central Baptist Church is a four-story masonry building executed in the Neo-Classical style of architecture with elements of the Renaissance Revival. The church building was erected in 1926 according to plans provided by the architectural firm of Dougherty and Gardner from Nashville, Tennessee. The church building is a symmetrical block of steel and reinforced concrete construction capped by a polygonal rotunda extending above the four-story [sic] height.

The exterior of the church is characterized by two projecting porticos on the south and east elevations. The main block of the church consists of a rusticated first floor, flat walls on the second and third floors a cornice band between the third and fourth floors, and a row of pilaster delineating the bays on the fourth floor. The projecting porticos consist of a rusticated ground floor, and a pedimented gable end at the fourth floor level. The Ionic arcade is three bays wide with engaged Ionic columns flanking the arched openings. The roof surfaces of the main block, the rotunda, and the projecting gable ends are all covered in Spanish tile. The gable ends are embellished with masonry urns and crosses which surmount the roof surface. A cupola has recently been resurfaced with gold leaf.

The fenestration pattern of the main block is comprised of a strong horizontal and vertical alignment of windows. The windows are all casement type, and their surrounds are articulated in a different manner on each floor. The windows on the first floor are recessed within deep openings. The windows on

the second and third floors are framed with classically styled molding, and the windows on the fourth floor are set into plain openings which are then surmounted by decorative masonry panel.

The interior of the church is divided into an internal circular core, a circulation corridor running the perimeter of the central core, and a series of rooms extending from the corridor to the exterior walls in a variety of plan configurations. On the first floor are found the church dining room and general maintenance rooms. The sanctuary takes up the central core of the second, third, and fourth floors. Classrooms, choir rehearsal rooms, study rooms, and a library are found on the spaces adjacent to the exterior walls on the upper floors. The main entrances to the church were found beneath each projecting portico, and access to the sanctuary was via a set of double stairs found within each portico.

The interior of the circular sanctuary comprises a very imposing space. The platform altar is located at the northwest corner of the circle and is set within an intricately carved Palladian-style screen. Behind the altar is located the baptistry. Five aisles radiating from the altar serve to divide the sanctuary seating into four main sections. A projecting balcony adds additional seating to the sanctuary as it rings around the circle in approximately a 270 turn.

The interior walls of the sanctuary are embellished with Palladian-inspired motifs ranging from recessed coffered vaults, decorative plaster panels featuring animal skulls, and ornamental plaster garlands. A row of circular columns, capped with Corinthian capitals, serves to delineate the perimeter of the balcony level. From the interior of the cupola hangs a magnificent glass chandelier which is lowered through a series of pulleys for maintenance and repair. Within each exterior bay of the balcony are found elaborate stained glass windows that depict religious figures and scenes. The ceiling of the sanctuary is

characterized by flat tiles arranged in a herringbone pattern about the central cupola.

Abutting the church building immediately to the north is an addition erected in 1946. The exterior of the addition was executed in a modified Neo-Classical architectural style which harmonized with that of the church buildings. On the first, second, and third floors, the addition is reached by way of the circulation corridor of the church buildings. The addition comprises a full three-story height and serves to house the church educational functions.

Description of Site:

Central Baptist Church is located on the northwest corner of N. E. 1st Avenue and N. E. 5th Street. The building is flanked by parking lots and vacant land on both the west and north sides. (pp. 9-10).

Appendix 2

Description of the stained glass windows
of Central Baptist Church

OUR SANCTUARY

Central Baptist Church, crafted by skilled artisans in the architectural design of “High Renaissance,” is an inspiring example of Italian and Spanish Christian Architecture of the late 15th and 16th centuries. Many of the techniques and the workmanship found in the construction of this majestic building would be considered a lost art today. The sanctuary is a gem, probable one of the most beautiful in the City of Miami.

Two large and thirteen smaller circular stained glass windows surround the rotunda of the sanctuary. Each of these stunningly beautiful windows depicts its own story.

Description of the large Medallion Stained Glass windows in CENTRAL BAPTIST CHURCH, MIAMI, FLORIDA

Window No. 1 LIFE OF CHRIST

Figure Medallions:

Resurrection
Baptism
Nativity
Crucifixion
Ascension
Annunciation
Boy in Temple

Window No. 2 MISSIONARY THEME

Seven circular and oval themes:

The Great Commission-Matt. XXIV: 1-4
Flying Angel-Rev. XIV: 6-7
Paul at Athens-Acts XVII: 16-28
Woman of Samaria-John IV: 6-35
Philip and Eunuch-Acts VIII: 26-39
Peter and Cornelius-Acts X: 1-20, 34-38
John's Vision at Patmos-Rev. I: 7-20

Description of the Circular Stained Glass Windows in tower commencing above Pulpit, northeast corner clockwise

ANDREW	St. Andrew Cross - Denoting his martyrdom on the Cross
PHILIP	Tall Slender Cross with Loaves of Bread and Fish Recalling his remark when Our Lord fed the Multitudes. St. John 6-7
JAMES	Confessed Jesus Christ and was martyred for his zeal, missionary spirit, courage and forgiveness
MATTHEW	Three Purses - Tax gatherer collected customs duty, this denotes his original calling
BARTHOLOMEW	Open Bible and Flaying Knife - Recalling his faith in God and his martyrdom
CENTER	Bust of Christ
THOMAS	Carpenters Square with Vertical Spears - Preached Gospel in India and said to have build church with own hands in East India, was stoned shot with arrows, and

	pagan priest ran him through with spear
JAMES THE LESS AND JUDE	Windmill and Carpenters square and Boat Hook - The former symbol depicts diligence of James' labors and latter, Jude was brother of St. James the Less and traveled far and wide on missionary journeys by boat
SIMON	Pair Oars, Battle Ax and Fish - Indicating he was a fisher of men through the power of Gospel
PAUL	Open Bible with Sword in back of Book, bearing words "Spiritus Gladius" meaning Sword of the Spirit - This because of his stress on the doctrine of "Resurrection"
PETER	Crossed Keys - Recalling Peter's confession and Our Lord's statement regarding Office of the Keys which He committed to the church on earth - St. Matthew 16: 13-19
JOHN	Chalice and Snake - Symbolizes the poisoned cup of wine, from which at his blessing the poison rose in the shape of a serpent, also the chalice, in the words of Christ to John "My chalice indeed you shall drink" St. Matthew 20:23

Four other beautiful and rare stained glass windows are incorporated in the structure of the church. These windows were

hand crafted in Europe and were part of the old First Baptist Church, the forerunner of Central. Two of these windows may be seen in the Historical Suite and two are on the first floor, mounted in the wall of the dining room.

The scene in the baptistry was painted by Ilma Angell, wife of Dr. C. Roy Angell, who came to Central as pastor in 1936.

The present building and the sanctuary we worship in today were opened for public worship on Sunday, February 12, 1928. J. L. White, D. D., was pastor.

(Copied from Central Church document.)

Appendix 3

The Funeral Service of
Claude Denson Pepper
June 4-5, 1989

Sunday, June 4 - Central Baptist Church, Miami
Monday, June 5 - First Baptist Church, Tallahassee
Interment: Oaklawn Cemetery, Tallahassee, Florida

Claude Denson Pepper died at 3:25 p. m. on Tuesday, May 30, 1989, at Walter Reed Army Medical Center of stomach cancer. He was born September 8, 1900, in Chambers County, Alabama. He was raised in genuine poverty and was drafted and served in World War I. He graduated from the University of Alabama in 1921, and Harvard Law School in 1924. He taught law at the University of Arkansas and J. William Fulbright was one of his students. He moved to Perry, Florida to serve as an attorney for the Trumbo family who owned nearly one million acres. In 1928, Pepper defeated an incumbent for the United States Congress. In 1936, Pepper won the Senate seat of Duncan U. Fletcher who had died. He married Mildred Webster of St. Petersburg and they were married 42 years until her death by cancer in 1979. Pepper served in the United States House and Senate. He was viewed as one who fought for the rights of the elderly.

Friday, June 2.	Military plane bearing the casket arrives at Miami at 3:30 p. m.
Saturday, June 3.	Viewing at Central Baptist Church. 2-8 p. m.
Sunday, June 4.	10:15 a. m. Four Greyhound buses depart House steps.
Sunday, June 4.	Three military planes bring members of Congress from Washington to Miami at

1 p. m.
Security sweep of church at 12:10 p. m.
Services. Central Baptist Church. 2 p. m.
Three military planes return to
Andrews AFB - 4 p. m.
Congressmen arrive back at House
steps - 7 p. m.
Viewing in Tallahassee. Old Capital.
7-9 p. m.

Monday, June 5. Funeral service, First Baptist Church,
Tallahassee at 1:30 p. m.

interment: Oaklawn Cemetery
Tallahassee, Florida

Lasting impressions were penned by Pepper himself. He wrote on May 25, 1989, "I have prayed many, many long hours on my knees for the Lord to bestow on me the ability to improve the lives of my fellow Americans and to make it possible for me, a poor boy from Alabama, to move in the direction of a longer, happier, healthier life for all."

Claude Pepper left an estate of \$500,000.00 that was to be divided among family, friends and the Pepper Foundation. Congress gave ten million dollars to the Pepper Foundation and the papers and memorabilia of Peppers six decades in politics are located at Florida State University.

Pepper wrote his own epitaph: "He loved God and the people and sought to serve both."

There are some interesting notes in the Claude Pepper scrapbook that relate to the two funeral services. One has to sympathize with the person who wrote out the original instructions for the Central Baptist Church services and noted

that there was a need to “check for weeds” in the parking. It is also noteworthy that in the original notes Congressman Thomas Foley was to give the first eulogy but according to the printed program and newspaper articles the first eulogy was actually delivered by Congressman Jim Wright of Texas.

Two different programs were printed for the two services by the Original Impressions Company of Miami. The total expense for the two printed programs was \$3,353.00. There were 2,000 programs printed for the Central Baptist service and 2,000 printed for the First Baptist Church, Tallahassee service. Central Baptist Church was billed \$3,353.00 and they passed the invoice on to Frances Campbell, estate personal representative, who paid for the programs from the Claude Denson Pepper estate.

Of some theological interest is a misprint in the Tallahassee program. The printer placed the word “internment” instead of “interment” at Oakland Cemetery in Tallahassee.



Congressman Pepper at centennial celebration at Central Baptist Church

Appendix 4

Missions and churches begun or co-sponsored by First Baptist Church and Central Baptist Church:

Reiner Source:

1. Stanton Memorial
2. Riverside
3. Orange Glade
4. Allapattah
5. University
6. Orange
7. Biscayne Park
8. Opa Locka
9. West Flagler Park
10. Temple
11. Miami Shores
12. Shenandoah
13. Gladeview
14. Key Largo
15. Miami Springs

(Reiner, pp. 71-75)

(Reiner says 14 but lists 15)

Crane Scrapbook Source:

16. Melrose Heights
17. Coral Villa
18. Olympia Heights
19. First Spanish

Ray Dobbins Source:

20. Cutler Ridge
21. Key Biscayne

The Miami Herald, May 29, 1967, Source:

22. First Baptist Church, Miami Beach

Year	Pastor	Baptisms	Member-ship	Receipts	Sunday School	Cooperative Program
1896	R. E. Lovell	None Listed	18	None Listed	None Listed	
1897	William E. Stanton	1	25	None Listed	None Listed	
1898	D. B. Farmer	0	29	None Listed	None Listed	
1899	D. B. Farmer	0	48	None Listed	None Listed	
1900	William E. Stanton	1	58	None Listed	None Listed	
1901	William E. Stanton	0	68	None Listed	None Listed	
1902	William E. Stanton	7	94	None Listed	None Listed	
1903	William E. Stanton	3	126	None Listed	88	
1904	William E. Stanton	19	155	2,525	117	
1905	William E. Stanton	5	187	1,457	136	
1906	William E. Stanton	16	194	None Listed	139	
1907	William E. Stanton	9	238	1,534	144	
1908	William E. Stanton	9	238	1,588	159	
1909	William E. Stanton	None Listed	238	None Listed	None Listed	
1910	John A. Wray	None Listed	None Listed	None Listed	None Listed	
1911	John A. Wray	14	None Listed	None Listed	None Listed	
1912	John A. Wray	24	426	3,754	378	
1913	John A. Wray	26	482	3,854	380	

Year	Pastor	Baptisms	Member-ship	Receipts	Sunday School	Cooperative Program
1914	John A. Wray	26	497	2,952	405	
1915	John A. Wray	41	588	1,521	537	
1916	Jacob Lee White	40	718	6,515	538	
1917	Jacob Lee White	25	837	44,575	775	
1918	Jacob Lee White	34	909	34,937	700	
1919	Jacob Lee White	101	1,075	24,108	None Listed	
1920	Jacob Lee White	16	1,131	None Listed	360	
1921	Jacob Lee White	86	1,326	None Listed	484	
1922	Jacob Lee White	123	1,362	17,366	450	
1923	Jacob Lee White	86	1,249	28,053	585	
1924	Jacob Lee White	73	1,419	32,412	1,191	
1925	Jacob Lee White	109	1,865	69,840	1,586	
1926	Jacob Lee White	77	1,998	155,323	1,162	
1927	Jacob Lee White	57	1,931	139,609	1,077	
1928	Jacob Lee White	71	2,019	83,971	1,150	7,105
1929	Jacob Lee White	91	2,077	55,210	1,382	6,258
1930	Jacob Lee White	97	2,080	61,246	1,032	5,090
1931	Jacob Lee White	152	1,727	27,561	841	2,618

Year	Pastor	Baptisms	Member- ship	Receipts	Sunday School	Cooperative Program
1932	Jacob Lee White	72	1,845	25,022	841	2,702
1933	Jacob Lee White	47	1,821	17,954	861	2,211
1934	Jacob Lee White	30	1,861	18,255	549	2,430
1935	Jacob Lee White	48	1,905	23,018	808	None Listed
1936	C. Roy Angell	28	1,696	70,094	1,735	1,825
1937	C. Roy Angell	78	1,893	32,690	2011	3,693
1938	C. Roy Angell	144	2,157	49,885	2,244	6,102
1939	C. Roy Angell	196	2,497	36,674	2,365	5,629
1940	C. Roy Angell	135	2,706	36,400	2,519	5,370
1941	C. Roy Angell	140	2,929	31,097	2,700	6,211
1942	C. Roy Angell	169	3,172	40,127	2,459	6,600
1943	C. Roy Angell	109	3,512	45,289	2,414	6,620
1944	C. Roy Angell	162	3,782	53,797	2,011	7,560
1945	C. Roy Angell	162	4,048	103,646	2,693	9,383
1946	C. Roy Angell	159	4,158	167,267	2,330	7,602
1947	C. Roy Angell	125	4,308	148,860	2,299	12,073
1948	C. Roy Angell	213	4,558	150,377	2,474	19,544
1949	C. Roy Angell	208	4,671	204,739	2,427	19,643

Year	Pastor	Baptisms	Member- ship	Receipts	Sunday School	Cooperative Program
1950	C. Roy Angell	159	4,776	184,363	2,623	28,633
1951	C. Roy Angell	212	4,916	194,977	2,583	31,151
1952	C. Roy Angell	166	4,785	195,723	2,402	31,174
1953	C. Roy Angell	163	5,020	266,644	2,614	41,166
1954	C. Roy Angell	155	5,227	293,549	3,261	38,600
1955	C. Roy Angell	198	5,473	293,358	3,119	48,957
1956	C. Roy Angell	172	5,144	345,288	2,952	49,226
1957	C. Roy Angell	126	5,227	484,169	2,902	49,891
1958	C. Roy Angell	111	5,055	374,667	2,765	46,063
1959	C. Roy Angell	124	5,031	321,767	2,952	42,675
1960	C. Roy Angell	105	5,003	356,513	2,625	34,372
1961	C. Roy Angell	121	4,992	395,771	2,619	19,926
1962	Conrad R. Willard	84	4,836	370,986	2,341	19,554
1963	Conrad R. Willard	43	4,213	307,215	1,730	21,021

Year	Pastor	Baptisms	Member- ship	Receipts	Sunday School	Cooperative Program
1964	Conrad R. Willard	43	4,237	388,735	1,632	21,525
1965	Conrad R. Willard	54	4,513	383,992	1,823	18,359
1966	Conrad R. Willard	37	3,967	361,035	15,61	19,950
1967	Conrad R. Willard	56	4,049	380,112	1,922	20,741
1968	Conrad R. Willard	117	3,946	399,900	3,025	23,982
1969	Conrad R. Willard	42	3,979	577,175	1,650	25,228
1970	Conrad R. Willard	63	3,923	585,776	1,757	19,779
1971	Conrad R. Willard	47	3,909	556,830	1,584	16,983
1972	Conrad R. Willard	37	3,869	453,262	1,491	17,123
1973	Conrad R. Willard	54	4,026	381,890	1,617	17,886
1974	Conrad R. Willard	47	4,023	402,256	1,294	16,793
1975	Conrad R. Willard	42	3,995	425,101	1,573	17,978
1976	Conrad R. Willard	38	3,936	533,350	1,727	15,883
1977	Conrad R. Willard	78	3,911	417,190	1,626	10,492

Year	Pastor	Baptisms	Member- ship	Receipts	Sunday School	Cooperative Program
1978	Conrad R. Willard	14	2,013	374,106	1,172	19,395
1979	Conrad R. Willard	41	2,035	386,805	1,105	22,789
1980	Conrad R. Willard	20	2,007	496,566	1,083	10,023
1981	Conrad R. Willard	20	1,505	420,309	1,161	7,563
1982	Conrad R. Willard	41	1,464	517,284	1,226	11,445
1983	None Listed	25	1,427	604,991	1,284	40,612
1984	None Listed	48	1,436	608,308	1,023	25,751
1985	Steven L. Kimmel	28	1,379	495,457	905	24,264
1986	Steven L. Kimmel	19	1,186	538,040	904	27,748
1987	Steven L. Kimmel	18	1,167	543,690	950	40,432
1988	Steven L. Kimmel	32	1,140	584,040	904	38,370
1989	Steven L. Kimmel	27	1,035	626,275	892	42,161
1990	Steven L. Kimmel	18	996	529,195	890	19,944
1991	None Listed	22	817	549,095	755	37,359

Year	Pastor	Baptisms	Member- ship	Receipts	Sunday School	Cooperative Program
1992	Keith Blakley	26	805	488,715	707	44,218
1993	Keith Blakley	6	646	525,003	573	19,687
1994	Keith Blakley	14	626	418,476	564	21,849
1995	Keith Blakley	22	619	383,832	577	17,558
1996	Keith Blakley	26	633	341,699	682	0

Epilogue

The Centennial story of Central Baptist Church begins with the organization of First Baptist Church of Miami in 1896. A century of service was celebrated in 1996 when H. Keith Blakley was pastor.

The Central story continued through the terrible home invasion death of pastor Keith Blakley and the later pastorate of Pat Hadley (2001-2004). Rick Blackwood was listed as pastor after Central Baptist Church voted to become part of Christ Fellowship. No pastor is listed for Central Baptist Church in 2005-2006 but Linda K. Alonso is listed as administrator. Matthew Sparks was listed as pastor of “Central Baptist Church” in 2007 and 2008. After 2008 “Central Baptist Church” is not listed in the Florida Baptist State Convention annual.

In 1996, when H. Keith Blakley was centennial pastor there were 26 baptisms, 633 total members and \$341,699.00 in receipts at Central Baptist.

Rick Blackwood has served as pastor of Christ Fellowship since 1996. In 2007 Christ Fellowship reported 3,632 members with 4,839 enrolled in Sunday School, 349 baptisms and total receipts of \$4,597,068.00.

In 2011, Rick Blackwood was senior pastor of Christ Fellowship of Miami with five church locations: Downtown, Homestead, Palmetto Bay, Redland and West Kendall. Blackwood holds doctoral degrees from Grace Theological Seminary, California Graduate School of Theology and The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Central Baptist Church of Northeast 1st Avenue, Miami was added to the United States Register of Historic Places on January 4, 1989. It was on October 21, 2007, that Central Baptist Church voted to merge with Christ Fellowship. Through the love, commitment and hard work of Christ Fellowship the Central dream is still alive and well in downtown Miami.

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Insurance-FBHS Director	6,500
Salary-Secretary	12,076
FICA	924
Part Time Help/FICA	2,000
Postage	1,200
Promotional Items	3,000
Journal Publication	3,000
Travel-Sec-Treasurer	8,000
Annual Meetings	10,000
Office Supplies	2,000
Storage Supplies	2,000
Books, Materials	2,000
Website Operation	2,500
FBHS Photocopier	2,600
Board Member represent	4,000
Digitization of Materials	1,800
Historical Marker Project	<u>2,000</u>
	80,500

