The Journal of
Florida Baptist Heritage
Volume 21, 2019

THE JOURNAL OF FLORIDA BAPTIST HERITAGE

Published by the
FLORIDA BAPTIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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Penny Baumgardner, Administrative Ministry Assistant
PO Box 95
Graceville, Florida 32440

The Florida Baptist Historical Society is a Cooperative Program-funded ministry of the Florida Baptist Convention.

COVER ILLUSTRATION: Seventeen delegates, representing the three Baptist associations within Florida, met in the Richard Johnson Mays' home on November 20, 1854, to organize the Florida Baptist State Convention. [Illustration by John Lane]

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PREFACE

Legacy Leaders who Laid the Foundations

A legacy is the story of a person's or organization's life, the things they did, goals they accomplished and even their shortcomings in their efforts to bring the gospel to the Florida mission field. Preserving legacies ensures that the memories and history of the past are not forgotten by the present or future generations of Florida Baptists.

In this issue of *The Journal of Florida Baptist Heritage*, attention is being given to a select group of Florida Baptist men and women, who through their Christian leadership, have demonstrated Legacy Leadership in their ministry service on the Florida mission field. These leaders – only a random sample of countless Florida Baptists – have exemplified the commitment about which the Apostle Paul wrote, somewhat autobiographical, in his letter to the church at Corinth: "For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building. By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it." [I Corinthians 3:9-10, NIV].

To be a foundation builder, effective leaders must "lead like Christ" by following His model of being both a shepherd-leader and a servant-leader, according to Dr. Benjamin Forrest whose lead *Journal* article is titled, "The Biblical Theology of Christian Leadership." The legacy leaders featured in this *Journal*, have each laid a foundation or set a new standard in ministry, upon which others have benefited and expanded the kingdom of God in

Florida. Their individual ministry efforts were not motivated by either monetary reward or the praise of other people. Rather, their individual commitment was in response to the call and claim of Jesus Christ upon their life.

These have included an itinerant pioneer preacher, a bi-vocational pastor, full-time pastors, international missionaries, a religious educator, a director of missions, a Hispanic church starter, an African-American pastor and preacher, a denominational servant, and a women's missions and ministry advocate.

These featured men and women are only a sampling of literally hundreds, if not thousands, of God's dedicated people who committed their life and energies to the cause of Christ on the Florida mission field. Those who follow them are benefitting from and building upon the legacies established by the respective leaders profiled in this issue of *The Journal.*

Notable Legacies

As noted in the PREFACE of this *Journal*, the featured men and women are only a sampling of literally hundreds, if not thousands, of God's dedicated people who committed their life and energies to the cause of Christ on the Florida mission field. There are others that deserved mention, but the lack of significant and detailed information on their life and ministry, makes it difficult to produce a 2000- to 3000-word essay about them. For the record, during *The Journal's* 20-years of publication, both brief and extended profiles have been published on twenty-seven (two different articles were done on the same person) additional Florida Baptists who have exemplified a leadership legacy. (The following list of previously featured individuals includes the profile writer's name, the year of the respective *Journal* publication, and article page number):

Charles Roy Angell, by Jerry E. Oswalt/2010, p. 68.
Keith Blakley, by Jerry M. Windsor/2011, p. 56.
Charles H. Bolton,
by Donald S. Hepburn/2004, p.54.
Charles M. Brittain, by Lulrick Balzora/2004, p. 44.
Doak Campbell, by Jerry M. Windsor/2003, p. 16.
W. N. Chaudoin,
by Joel R. Breidenbaugh/2004, p. 6.
Elam Jackson Daniels,
by Jerry M. Windsor/2010, p. 83.
Frank Fowler,
by Margaret Fowler Drake/2002, p. 24.
Frank Fowler, by Mark A. Rathel/2002, p.37.
L. D. Geiger, by John E. Shaffett/2004, p. 21.

Rufus Gray, by Jerry Windsor/2016, pp. 6-109.
E. Earl Joiner, by Jerry M. Windsor/2003, p. 34.
Steven L. Kimmel, by Jerry M. Windsor/2011, p. 54.
Homer G. Lindsay, Sr.,
by Donald S. Hepburn/2004, p.65.
John Maguire, by Jerry M. Windsor/2004, p. 73.
James L. Pleitz,
by Paul D. Robinson, Sr./2010, p. 94.
Edwin Hansford Rennolds, Sr.,
by Edwin Hansford Rennolds, Sr./2006, p.6.
W. Wiley Richards,
by Roger C. Richards/2010, p. 139.
Stuart Beggs Rogers,
by Jerry M. Windsor/2004, p. 32.
John L. Rosser, by Mark A. Rathel/2003, p. 6.
James Southerland, by R. C. Hammack/2001, p.50.
Dan Stringer, by R. C. Hammack/2004, p.98.
John Sullivan, by Thomas A. Kinchen/2004, p.111.
Martha Trotter, by Allison C. Chestnut/2003, p. 46.
Jacob Lee White, by Jerry M. Windsor/2011, p. 26.
Conrad Willard, by Jerry M. Windsor/2011, p. 50.
Charles Bray Williams,
by Charlotte Williams Sprawls/2010, p. 28.
Jerry M. Windsor,
by Joel R. Breidenbaugh/2010, p. 127.

125 Years of Ministry Service

As early as the 1894 Florida Baptist State Convention annual meeting held in Plant City, there was a call for "compiling the history of our denomination in this state." This request came from three men who had a rich background of historical perspective and reading. All three were pastors from the Alachua Baptist Association.

Daniel B. Farmer, Sr. (1847 – 1905) was a native of Maine who served as a pastor for 25 years in the Ocala, Florida, vicinity before he returned to Holliston, Massachusetts, where he died. Farmer was known for his evangelistic and doctrinal preaching and had one of the finest ministry libraries in the state.

Napoleon A. Bailey (1833-1897) received his A.B. degree from Union University in Murfreesboro, Tennessee in 1857. Bailey moved to Florida in 1860 due to bronchial problems and became pastor at Monticello until 1867. He was pastor at the Citra Baptist Church in 1894. He later moved to Georgia, where he served four consecutive churches until his death in 1897.

E. H. Rennolds, Sr., was just as interested in history but from a different perspective. Rennolds (1839-1912) was born in Virginia and raised in Tennessee. He lived out history as a member of the

ill-fated Tennessee 5th Regiment in the Civil War. Rennolds would go on to become one of the most important men in the first century of Florida Baptist historical interest and research.

The "Alachua Three" made five basic points at the 1894 Convention. They noted that the state convention in its 40th year of existence needed to: (1) gather material; (2) protect resources; (3) interview witnesses; (4) appoint a committee; and (5) compile the history of the state convention. This forward-thinking trio probably was responsible for the early emphasis of Florida Baptists on document preservation. It was more than aspirational thinking, as it became a plan of action by Rennolds.

In 1895 the Florida Baptist State Convention met at Leesburg, and heard a report from the convention's Historical Secretary E. H. Rennolds, Sr. He explained that during the prior year he had secured a total 227 files of the annual meeting minutes of Florida Baptist associations and the state convention. He further noted that he had collected 40 biographical sketches of deceased and living ministers. Rennolds concluded his report by announcing his plan to visit other associations to secure and preserve their records.

That early commitment to document preservation continues 125 years later as the Florida Baptist Historical Society. Our Mission: Researching, preserving and promoting the Legacy of Florida Baptists. This legacy-development mission is realized through a

(continued on next page)

variety of ministry services provided to Florida Baptists, including: a Biography Collection containing over 4,000 profiles on pastors and laity; a Church History Collection that contains historical information on nearly 1,000 Florida Baptist churches; a collection of Florida Baptist Association Annuals; and securing the records of cooperating ministries and events, all of which are historically significant to Florida Baptists. Using these and other resources the Society seeks to fulfill its mission by assisting persons and churches seeking historical information on their pastors and churches.

[SOURCE: Portions of the Society's development is excerpted from Jerry M. Windsor, "A Sketch of the Florida Baptist Historical Society," *The Journal of Florida Baptist Heritage*, Volume 7, Fall 2005, pp. 57-59.]

Serving Churches

OUR MISSION:

In fulfilment of our Mission to research, preserve and promote the Legacy of Florida Baptists, the Society assists leadership of Florida Baptist churches and associations in a variety of ways:

- **the research of local church and association histories;**
- **the research of pastoral leader biography;**
- **provide resources for publishing a history; and**
- **encourage and assist churches and associations to celebrate their respective heritage and anniversaries.**

Resources


The Florida Baptist Historical Society maintains a variety of Florida Baptist-oriented resources for use in history research on churches, associations and individuals. The holdings include printed and microfilm copies of the Florida Baptist State Convention *Annuals*, association annuals, and the *Florida Baptist Witness* newspaper. The Society has created and maintains history-related files on over 3,000 churches and more than 2,500 individuals. These resources may be accessed by contacting us by Email:
Society2@FloridaBaptistHistory.org.

The Florida Baptist Historical Society is a Cooperative Program ministry of the Florida Baptist Convention

The 2019 Baptist Heritage Award

The Florida Baptist Historical Society is pleased to announce that the 2019 recipient of the Baptist Heritage Award is to be presented to Dr. Thomas Kinchen. The Society's Board of Directors determined earlier this year, as they considered potential candidates to be the 2019 Award recipient, there was one individual whose contributions to the preservation of Florida Baptist history have been unique. Dr. Thomas Kinchen, as president of The Baptist College of Florida, readily offered to accept stewardship of the Florida Baptist Historical Collection which had been surrendered by Stetson University in the late-1990s. The collection, which at the time, contained nearly 1000 volumes of unique publications on Florida Baptist church histories and other significant volumes related to Southern Baptist history, was added to the library collection of The Baptist College of Florida. Additionally, Dr. Kinchen made provision on the college campus to accommodate at no cost the offices of the Florida Baptist Historical Society for nearly two decades between 1998 and 2017.

In a rare effort to retain and restore historically significant Baptist church buildings, Dr. Kinchen conceived and led the college board of trustees to approve the establishment of the Heritage Village on the college campus. The Heritage Village is comprised of an eight-acre site on the northeast corner of the college property. The Village features mid-nineteenth to early twentieth century wood

frame structures consisting of three churches, a school building, a WPA-constructed community center and five former residences. All the structures were removed from their original locations in the Florida Panhandle and South Georgia and transported to the Village. Once re-located the buildings were renovated to provide modern electrical and plumbing services and were restored to retain the integrity of the building's original architectural design and construction.

Dr. Kinchen has served as college president since 1990, when the school was still known as the Florida Baptist Theological College. He came to the Graceville school from the West Virginia Convention of Southern Baptist where he served as the Executive Secretary-Treasurer from 1986. He previously served as a pastor of churches in Georgia and Louisiana. Dr. Kinchen also served several academic-administrative positions on the staff of the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary prior to going to West Virginia.

The Thomasville, Georgia, native graduated from the Georgia Southern College with a B.A. degree, and the University of Georgia, with a Master of Education degree. He later attended The New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary earning a Master of Divinity degree and the Doctor of Education degree.

Since 1997 the **Florida Baptist Historical Society has conferred the Baptist Heritage Award** to 22 individuals.

The Biblical Theology of Christian Leadership

by Benjamin K. Forrest, EdD
Professor of Christian Education and Associate Dean, Liberty University, Lynchburg, Virginia

Christian leadership as a subset of leadership is unique. It is unique because of the modifier of "Christian."[1] The meaning of this modifier, however, is often unclear in the minds of those who use it. Most authors who write on this topic have thought long and hard about what this means, but the average Christian still wrestles with the question of "what makes leadership Christian?"

The first deviation between leadership and Christian leadership is obviously the faith of the leader. Only Christian leaders can practice Christian leadership. Surely, non-Christian leaders can borrow methodology from theological reflection that they perceive to improve on the product of leading, but it does not make them a Christian leader. Beyond this distinction though, many have trouble identifying what makes Christian leadership *Christian*. What is the next fork in the road that separates Christian leadership from all other forms of leadership? Knowing where Christian leadership deviates helps us to conceptualize the uniqueness of this subset and then trace our trajectory and analyze our action. For just as non-Christians cannot practice Christian leadership, many Christians fail to *actually* practice

Christian leadership. Instead, their version of leading as a Christian is simply imputed models of business leadership applied to a religious context.

As we move toward a biblical theology of leadership, it is important to consider the next fork separating these two leadership approaches. Some may suppose it is methodological, pragmatic, or personal practices which result in variances of leadership philosophy. However, above these more practical considerations is a subtle yet vitally important branch which further separates Christian leadership from leadership proper, and it is this: *Christian leaders are first followers*. Recognizing this reality is the right location for starting out with a definition of *Christian* leadership, as contrasted by secular leadership common in culture. By nature, leaders lead, yet as Christian leaders, we do not lead into a direction we have visioneered. Instead, we are beholden to a master and His trajectory. Thus, in attempting to whittle down the differences between Christian leadership and secular leadership, I propose that Christian leaders are first called to follow and secondly to lead others to follow their following.

the Christian leader is obligated as a bondservant to the will of his Lord

Secular leadership and Christian leadership may accomplish their goals similarly through common grace and common leadership, but in essence the difference is that the secular leader gets to set their own direction for the tasks at hand, while the Christian leader is obligated as a bondservant to the

will of his Lord. For this task, Christian leaders, receive directives from the Holy Spirit through the Word of God, and in turn become the first-follower in a chain-reaction that leads to the followership of others. In this role as Christian leader then, the duty is to lead others to follow well. This is how and why Paul often said, "Follow me as I follow Christ" (1 Cor 11:1). Certainly Paul was a Christian leader, and he was this because he understood that his leading was not after his own vision of ministry, but rather his leading was to lead others to follow well that they too might walk the path first walked by Christ.

If leadership as followership is the Christian distinction, then the question must be asked, "How does one accomplish this task of leading by following?" In order to answer this question, I will submit two biblical motifs used to image the task of the Christian leader. This goal will certainly fail to be comprehensive, and there are likely many additional pictures one could find in the pages of scripture to clarify the task of the Christian leader. However, this is why my goal here is to aim "toward" a biblical theology of leadership. The hope of this article is to add to a conversation that has been happening for years and I hope will continue to happen for years to come. It is an attempt to clarify an important part of the leadership task and biblical vision for leading. Thus, in order to move toward this conception of Christian leadership, the two motifs that will draw our attention are the shepherd and the servant. However, these pictures will be related to the cross and the incarnation as Christ first leads leaders that we may in turn lead others to follow him as well.

The Incarnation and Servant Leadership

Servant leadership is often, rightfully, grounded in Matthew 20:20-28 and Mark 10:35-45. In both of these accounts James and John ask a request of Jesus. They wanted to "sit, one at [Christ's] right hand and one at his left, in [his] glory" (Mark 10:37, c.f., Matt 20:21). Christ's reply is as timely today as it was then, "You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (42b-45; c.f., Matt 20:25-28).

Servanthood has long been rightly associated with Christian leadership

Servanthood has long been rightly associated with Christian leadership, but even before the gospel's explicit teaching on the topic, there is perhaps a more foundational biblical grounding of servanthood. And it is found in the incarnation (Phil 2). Paul, in his letter to the Philippians encourages these readers to "complete my joy by *being of the same mind,* having the same love, being in full accord and of *one mind*" (v. 2, *emphasis added*). Going on, he says, "Have *this* mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus" (v. 5, *emphasis added*). The explanation of "this" is then conveyed in the verses that follow. Here Paul tells of the incarnation how Christ emptied himself "taking the form of a servant"

(v. 7). The teaching here is clear, we are to have the same mind, one mind which led Christ to taking the form of a servant. Christ's example in the incarnation translated his heavenly existence to earth, taking the form of a servant.

Shortly after this passage Paul proceeds to tell us about Timothy and Epaphroditus and their work for the Lord. Timothy, Paul says, is like no one else. He is "genuinely concerned for your [the Philippians'] welfare" (v. 20). Many seek their own interests, but Paul implies that this is not so of Timothy whose interests are rooted in what interests Christ. Similarly, Epaphroditus is a brother, fellow worker, and fellow soldier who nearly died for the work of Christ, risking his life in service (v. 25, 30). It is noteworthy that this excursus on Timothy and Epaphroditus takes place after Paul's teaching on humility culminating on Christ's willingness to humble himself in the incarnation. What happens in this passage is a progression. Christ is held up as the example *par excellence,* but then Timothy and Epaphroditus are used to demonstrate how Christ's example is played out in the lives of leaders. These young emissaries had the same mind of Christ, and it was evident in their service.

The incarnation serves as the primary picture of servant leadership as Christ took the "form of a servant . . . and humbled himself becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross" (v. 7-8). But it also reveals to us how Christian leaders are to serve. Our service is not abstract serving, but it is service modeled after the self-less service of Christ. Generally, servant leadership as a

concept has become in vogue across the leadership spectrum. Christians and non-Christians have learned that there is a secret to be had in servant leadership. Yet, Christian leaders serve because they are first following Christ in his servanthood. Secular leaders trying to impute this understanding into their leadership models will ultimately fail to reach the level of selflessness required in the incarnation because they do not have a picture to follow that compels them to such service. This does not mean however, that Christian leaders will succeed in such leadership. While we have a perfect example, our vision is often blurred by sin and selfishness.

We serve, because He first served us

Yet, Christ offers to Christians the death of self and will replace our life with his. In this, we can see his call more clearly and how the incarnation founds the most compelling vision for such service. We serve, because He first served us (c.f., 1 Jn 4:19), and it is this mind of Christ that Paul tells us to have among ourselves (Phil 2:5). This then becomes one of the ways we follow first as leaders. We follow in service which compels to serve even at great cost. Christ was obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross (Phil 2:8). This is Christian leadership.

Shepherd Leadership and The Cross

Shepherds were common in the times of the Bible. From the Old Testament to the New, shepherds were a cultural necessity, but they also were useful for imaging God's care for his people. In Isaiah we are

told that "[God] will tend his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms; he will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young" (40:11). The Psalmist reminds that "he led out his people like sheep and guided them in the wilderness like a flock. He led them in safety, so that they were not afraid, but the sea overwhelmed their enemies" (78:52–53). To Ezekiel, God says, "I will rescue my flock; they shall no longer be a prey. And I will judge between sheep and sheep. And I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd. And I, the LORD, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them. I am the LORD; I have spoken" (34:22–24). God acts as Shepherd and even promises that "if Israel would return, God would give them 'shepherds,' i.e., rulers, who were like him."[2] In Jeremiah 3:15, this is a reference to the prophesied "shepherds after my own heart." It is a messianic promise for a ruler "who will lead with 'knowledge and understanding,' that is, he will rule wisely and well."[3] This prophecy is fulfilled in Christ and in John 10 it is even clarified as Christ tells us that he is the Good Shepherd. As the Good Shepherd the sheep hear his voice and recognize it, they are known to the shepherd, the shepherd goes before them and the sheep follow (v. 3-4).

Using Psalm 23, Walter Kaiser traces the theme of the shepherd as a biblical motif for leadership.[4] As the passage begins, we are told that the Lord is our shepherd. This reality harkens back to our thesis here. Christian leaders are first followers, and if we are following well, we are becoming what

God has modeled for us. If God is our shepherd then we too must put on this picture of shepherding in our leading. Shepherds anticipated the needs of the sheep (c.f., "I shall not want" [v. 1b], "He makes me lie down in Green Pastures" [v. 2a], and "He leads me beside the still/quiet waters" [v. 2b]). In verse 3, we are told that the Shepherd "guides me into the right paths for his name's sake." On this Kaiser says, "Sheep in the Middle East are not driven from behind the flock as they might be herded in the other parts of the world, but are led by the shepherd walking in front of them, to form a path for the flock to follow. That is why all of the sheep are guided so well; they follow single-file in the path set by the feet of the shepherd."[5] Verse 3 makes verse 4 possible. "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil." When the shepherd is in front of the sheep leading them with reassurance as to where to step and how to go, valleys become less fearsome. The shepherd, as leader, protects and provides for their sheep. Shepherds protect their sheep from the natural dangers of life and from those that might want to devour. Shepherds also provide for their sheep. They provide what is needed, they provide rest, they provide water and sustenance, and they provide direction. For without the guidance of the shepherd we would be like the crowds in the cities and villages along the route of Christ's traveling and teaching who were "like sheep without a shepherd" (Matt 9:36).

It is with this picture of the shepherd in mind that we move from the shepherd as leadership motif to a theology of the cross. This movement will

hopefully complete the proposal for Christian leadership that I am advocating here. For Martin Luther, a theology of the cross paradoxically reversed the emphasis of theology he saw in the Catholic church – a theology of glory. A theology of the cross, contrasts with glory and recognizes that God's good plans were accomplished in the suffering found on the cross. Therefore, we see that God's plan for redemption was paradoxical. A theology of the cross recognizes that the weak are strong, the poor are rich, and the persecuted are blessed, and the leader is servant and shepherd.

Kaiser's work reminds us how the shepherd-leader walked with the sheep leading them to life and through the valley of the shadow of death. Christ demonstrated this leadership as the Good Shepherd and in his walk to Calvary, he leads us through his death into the resurrection and our life. As the Good Shepherd, much like the shepherd of Psalm 23, "he leads me in paths of righteousness" (v. 3b). Christ walked in front leading to the cross, going where we could not go unless we were willing to follow his lead. Jesus has shown us that the shepherd leader is willing to walk before the sheep that they may have sure footings and a secure, albeit not easy, path. In John 10, we are told that the good shepherd, "lays down his life for the sheep" (v. 11). Shepherd leadership reflects this crucicentric theology demonstrating the lengths to which Christ, as leader went, for the sake of us. And it is because of His example that Christian leaders follow in this cruciform leadership. We lead not in glory, but we lead by carrying our own cross and helping others to

carry theirs. As Christian leaders, we follow the path laid out by Christ who has gone where we could not go without first his example. But because he has walked to Calvary, we too can lead others to the cross.

Christ, both Shepherd and Servant

Christian leaders are to lead like Christ. And, I have hopefully pointed out successfully, they are to lead in the directions that Christ has modeled. This is more than a style of leadership. Occasionally as I teach on this topic, I get students attracted to something from one of these motifs coming to the conclusion that they are (emphatically) a servant leader or a shepherd leader. This conclusion misses the point. Christ was both shepherd (John 10) and servant (Phil 2). If Christ was both, and Christian leaders receive our direction for leading from him, then we too must incarnate as servants (Phil 2) and shepherd people along the road to Calvary (John 10). Christian leaders are *both* shepherds *and* servants. We lead in light of the incarnation and the cross just as Christ has modeled for us.

Under-shepherds and bondservants

These two pictures – the shepherd and the servant – provide to us images of what our leadership should look like. However, in closing I want to make sure I nuance these roles clearly. Christian leaders are not just shepherds, we are under-shepherds leading a flock of sheep for a season, but always at the behest of the Good Shepherd. As Christian leaders we are also servants, but not just servants – bondservants with a master to whom we are beholden as stewards. Our

master has tasked us with a charge, and it is that for which we are responsible. Thus, the directional component for Christian leadership is always set by the One above. True Christian leadership never sets a new course, it is always directionally oriented because it is following the charge of our Good Shepherd and our Master. Christian leaders receive their commissioning and use their authority unto the accomplishment of His will. Each under-shepherd and bondservant are given a different task along with capacities and opportunities to accomplish these tasks.

the Good Shepherd expects that we will shepherd those in our care first by following His voice ourselves

Christian leadership in practice looks as unique and different as there are individuals in the church. Some are professional leaders – paid to lead. Of these, some are paid to lead the church or para-church organizations. Others are paid to lead within secular companies or in governmental agencies. The expectations of the constituencies of each of these locations is extremely different, and how the Christian leader navigates these expectations will vary. But the Good Shepherd expects that we will shepherd those in our care first by following His voice ourselves, and then leading others to hear His voice and respond to His call. Our Master expects the same, we are to serve others, but to serve them in a way that is consistent with our charge as steward over His affairs. Navigating how this is done takes dexterity and a sensitive ear to hear the words of the

Lord through the voice of the Spirit. This task, however, is not only for the paid or professional leader. This same expectation is passed along to all Christians, because all Christians have a modicum of influence and thus the opportunity to lead others. This leadership may be in its infancy or it may be that at this point in life we are only leading infants. Regardless of our professionality as leaders – Christians are called to follow well and lead others to follow similarly. Let us like Paul often say, "Follow me, as I follow Christ" (1 Cor 11:1).

May our pursuit in leading be focused not upon leaving a legacy, not of bricks/mortar or vocation/visioneering, but of obedience and faithfulness. For it is the faithful pursuit of God's calling as shepherds and servants that will be the ruler by which our leadership is measured. And, if we faithfully pursue obedient followership, we too will hear Christ's resound, "well done good and faithful servant" (Matt 25:21).

(Endnotes begin on next page.)

ENDNOTES

1 AUTHOR'S NOTE: Excerpt taken from *Biblical Leadership: Theology for the Everyday Leader* edited by Benjamin K. Forrest and Chet Roden. Published by Kregel Publications: Grand Rapids, MI, 2017. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

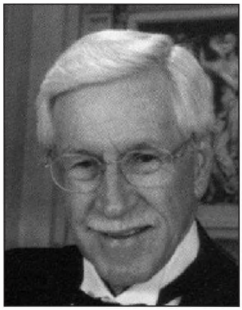
2 F. B. Huey, *Jeremiah, Lamentations*, vol. 16, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1993), 75.

3 Ibid.

4 Walter C. Kaiser Jr., "The 'Shepherd' as a Biblical Metaphor: Leadership in Psalm 23," in *Biblical Leadership: Theology for the Everyday Leader*, edited by Benjamin K. Forrest and Chet Roden (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2017), 155-162.

5 Ibid., 158.

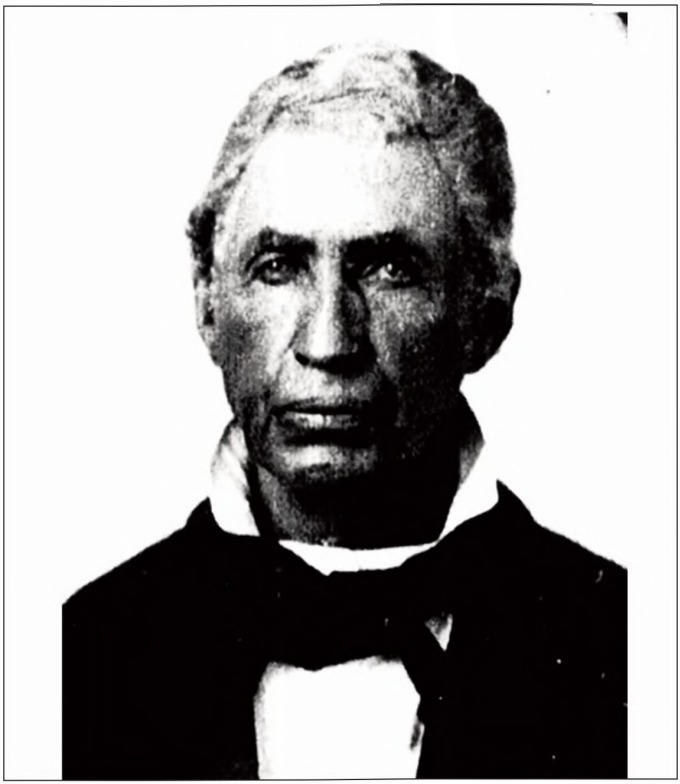
James McDonald – The Legacy of a North Florida Pioneer Itinerant Missionary



by James C. Bryant, PhD
(b. 1931; d. 2008)

James McDonald (1794 – 1869) went to the East Florida Territory as a missionary in 1837 during the Second Seminole Indian War (1835 – 1842) which marked sporadic violence all over the territory. Indian agent General Wiley Thompson had set January 1, 1836, as the date for all Seminoles to leave Florida for the "Indian lands" out West. But three days before the deadline, an Indian party murdered and scalped General Thompson just outside the walls of the stockade where he had gone after dinner for a stroll. And before the day ended, Major Francis Langhorne Dade and 103 of his men lay dead from a Seminole ambush near Wahoo Swamp. Only three soldiers escaped. President Andrew Jackson ordered General Winfield Scott to take command in the Florida Territory, while the war department dispatched fourteen companies [numbering between 1,750 and 2,100 soldiers] to assist General Duncan L. Clinch.

Consequently the Florida into which James McDonald rode differed greatly from what he must have expected. The realities – including a moral relaxation that inevitably follows military establishments, as well as the insecurity and fear with which the frontier settlers faced – did not discourage



James McDonald (1794 – 1869) Itinerant Missionary to East Florida – 1837 to 1851

[EDITOR'S NOTE: This article was originally prepared by James C. Bryant as a paper that was read at the annual meeting of the Florida Baptist Historical Society held May 5, 1984, at Stetson University. At the time, Dr. Bryant was professor of English at Mercer University, Atlanta, Georgia, until his retirement in 2006. He died in 2008. That paper, titled "James McDonald: Missionary to East Florida," was subsequently published as a monograph by the Florida Baptist Historical Society, which retained all publication rights. That narrative was edited and condensed for use in this 2019 The Journal of Florida Baptist Heritage.]

McDonald. Instead the situation only intensified his sense of commitment and calling to preach the gospel without counting the cost. In doing so, he carried a musket by night and a Bible by day. Because of his commitment to share the gospel in the face of hostile challenges, James McDonald demonstrated a leadership legacy in evangelism and church starting as one of Florida Baptists' earliest itinerant missionaries into East Florida.

Responding to the Macedonian Call

The thirty-nine-year-old bachelor who spoke with an Irish accent left a successful pastorate in Darien, Georgia, where the black members far outnumbered the white, and he responded to what he considered a Macedonian call to come over and help the spiritually destitute in Florida. Having labored as a missionary in Georgia associations, including most recently the Sunbury Baptist Association, and earlier having preached in several Georgia churches and taught school in Burke County, he had known more peaceful times and seen more evidence of success for his labor than he would realize in East Florida. But refusing to count the cost, as he put it, he followed the direction of divine providence and headed south.

Six months earlier, McDonald had read in *The Christian Index*[1] the words of Edwin Hart, a Baptist layman in Middle Florida, appealing to preachers for aid in the infant Baptist movement.

> *"If there is any country in these United States that stands in need of preaching, it is Florida. We are all most destitute of preachers . . . I solicit your aid and influence with the General*

Convention that they would turn their attention in some degree to Florida instead of those wild savages who are daily spilling the blood of our fellow-citizens."[2]

In a series of articles published in *The Christian Index* under the head "Traveling Preacher," which he sometimes signed as "Silas," McDonald chronicled his movements, interlacing them with relevant Scriptural verses. He described his first trip to East Florida in April, 1837, while still a missionary of the Sunbury Baptist Association in Georgia.

Early on a Monday morning, after prayer and recommitment of himself to God, McDonald began the journey from Darien. Using the editorial "we," he wrote, "We were bound for a strange land and wavered not to deem our faith too small." He stopped at the Altamaha River to preach and also at the Satilla River. "Leisurely did we ride along the rude wiregrass," he wrote, "now and then miring our horse to the knees." By Saturday afternoon, McDonald reached the St. Marys River and entered East Florida. Somewhere on the south bank he entered a huge barn and used it as a meeting house in which to preach a three-day protracted revival meeting. Apparently, the people in that region had not seen a visiting minister in a long time, judging from McDonald's description:

"Some had not heard the gospel in years; others, never. On Sabbath, all cried for prayer. The throng was mighty and immense. Sobs and groans thrilled, and tears of penitence made us happy. Such a three-days

meeting we had never witnessed. Day and night the power and glory of God overshadowed us."[3]

Itinerant preachers depended upon volunteers among the congregation to house and feed them while performing ministerial labor. But his diplomatic way of explaining why he did not stay beyond the three-day protracted meeting may suggest hardship and poverty among those to whom he preached. "The citizens lately settled in Nassau [County] had no time to procure provisions," he wrote. "In consequence therefore of their scarcity, we were obliged to return to St. Illa."[4] No doubt the poverty impressed him. In the regular reports to the *Christian Index*, McDonald more than once, expressed compassion for poor people among the settlers.

Retracing his path, the missionary returned home to Darien, where he baptized thirty more black converts, making a total of sixty-four since the year began. "Many of these poor Africans have I seen and heard telling about Jesus Christ," he wrote, "until my soul has been bathed in tears of gratitude and love. Four hundred of them stood on the east bank of Altamaha as I took those thirty into the water and baptized them."[5]

Itinerant preachers depended upon volunteers among the congregation to house and feed them while performing ministerial labor.

A Second Missionary Trip to Florida

During the summer of 1837 McDonald made a second mission trip to East Florida, preaching at five stations along the way. This time, however, he rode on to Jacksonville, where he preached a two-day protracted meeting. Large congregations, he wrote, were "orderly and attentive." Among those who turned out to hear him preach were some of the soldiers who had been brought to Florida to fight the Indians. McDonald, to his apparent surprise, found the soldiers "very respectful." Then when he prepared to leave Jacksonville, nearly a hundred white and black people asked for prayer and invited him to return in October.[6]

That visit to the small town of Jacksonville, which seven years earlier had numbered but a hundred citizens,[7] must have convinced him to resign his pastorate at Darien and as a missionary of the Sunbury Association and take up residence in East Florida as a missionary preacher. His initial visit to that Florida town gave him opportunity to see the best and the worst. The best was represented by the beautiful St. Johns River, which he described at length.[8] If the natural scenery and its signal of hope for the future represented the best of things, McDonald's description of scalped and bloodied victims of the Indian War signaled worse times to follow. In one typical graphic report he noted, "Her husband was killed and burned to ashes; she escaped with her own life by crawling on her feet and hands, the blood of her wounded head quenching the fire which otherwise would have consumed her."[9]

"If in Florida there has ever been a real revival of religion, I do not know it;"

Having returned home one last time, McDonald bade a tearful farewell to his congregation in Darien and then moved to East Florida to settle in Nassau County. Nassau County had been created in 1824 with Fernandina as its seat, but by the time McDonald arrived the seat had been moved to a community known as Court House Ditch at Waterman's Grant, between King's Ferry and Fernandina. In his report dated March 31, 1838, McDonald described something of the state of religion in the new mission field. "Here are nineteen extensive counties, and perhaps, seventy thousand people. If in Florida there has ever been a real revival of religion, I do not know it; and if there is on the peninsula one intelligent Baptist minister, I do not know it . . ."[10]

Sharing the Gospel Amid Immorality

Later that year, on the basis of more experience and better information, he described the religious situation more factually. McDonald wrote, "we found about 60 whites and blacks in three churches, from 20 to 80 miles distant from each other."[11] The Baptist preacher was not alone in lamenting the unsettling effect of war and the moral decline which accompanied the military. Methodist circuit rider John L. Jerry described similar conditions in Middle Florida in a letter dated August 29, 1838. He wrote, "Religion flourished, and peace and harmony

prevailed; but her glory is departed. Our temperance officers are now the first to take the bottle, and our grey-headed Methodists and Baptists drink, drunk, wallowing in their filth! Whiskey shops are scattered over our once happy land! Go to the different military posts and your ears are saluted with the horrid yells of drunken men, and others are gambling from morning till night. . . The country seems to be in consternation."[12]

In Nassau County, McDonald wrote in 1838, we have "the prospect of three new meeting houses. Our people are generally poor, but very kind and attentive to the Gospel."[13] By the fall of 1838, McDonald had lived a year in East Florida and had grown accustomed to the hard life of a frontier missionary, traveling from one preaching station to another. On November 5, 1838, he described something of the background against which he traveled. "Dreary indeed and bleak is this part of nature's workmanship – swamps, glades, and pine ridges vie for ascendancy; but swamps have the triumph . . . The Indians have hiding places everywhere . . . Minorcans and refugees have left a deplorable state of morals . . ."[14]

But that report tells only part of the story, because despite the gloom, McDonald had reason to rejoice, as he explained. "Even now a moral death gloom overspreads the land. Our faith has been tried. Like culturing the marble had been much of our preaching. But there is a cloud which overhands the sullen sky. Three new churches have been dedicated to our use, and two more are in prospect."[15] Although McDonald did not name the three churches

that had been dedicated during 1838, other records show that one of them was Bethel Baptist Church near Jacksonville. James McDonald and Ryan Frier are said to have served as officiating ministers and constituted the Bethel Baptist Church of Jacksonville in July, 1838. There were six charter members.[16]

Early in February, 1839, McDonald described a preaching tour to Newnansville, the seat of Alachua County at the time, having travelled 28 miles through the Okefenokee Swamp. "I never felt more grateful to God for his great mercy than at present! For the last 13 months I have been almost among the Indians, striving to preach the gospel; and in traveling from place to place have been mostly alone; but the Lord has always accompanied me."[17]

Salvation and Call to Preach

In the same report, McDonald alluded to some events in his early background which he had not previously explained. One example appeared as a denial of self-interest in maintaining an attachment to Andrew Fuller's doctrines. "He [God] rescued my soul from popery; from civil oppression in Ireland; from the grave, from sin, from the pit; has given me to see 34 revivals of religion, and has added souls to my ministry; and in sickness and persecution and fiery trials of the most appalling kind, has healed, delivered, and given me to rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."[18]

According to Charles Harden Stillwell,[19] a successor to McDonald's pastorate in Monticello, Georgia, and whose wife McDonald had baptized while pastor at Monticello, James McDonald was

born in 1798 in Limerick County, Province of Munster, Ireland. "I was bred a Papist," McDonald wrote, "[and] was exceedingly wicked in my youth; spurned the Bible [teachings of right and wrong]; quenched the Spirit eleven years from the date of my conviction when 17 years of age; became, if possible, a deist, and almost an atheist; and since my conversion and call to the Gospel ministry, I have suffered persecution enough . . ."[20]

Based upon C. H. Stillwell's written recollection over many years, the early life of James McDonald was recorded in several publications. Stillwell noted that after having gotten into some kind of trouble in Ireland because of his "wickedness," seventeen-year-old James McDonald emigrated to America. Reared as a Roman Catholic, McDonald developed a burning desire to read the Bible despite the rules of his church against it. But he suffered guilt feelings over the forbidden scripture reading. He then migrated to Cuba seeking to escape from his troubled mind and was arrested for unknown reasons. While in a Havana prison, he read the New Testament and had a profound experience of spiritual conversion. Equal to the mysterious arrest and imprisonment, McDonald was released from prison without explanation. Believing that God had come to his rescue, McDonald pledged to become a missionary. He made his way to Georgia where he was baptized into a Baptist church.[21] He lived in Twiggs County near Macon in 1829 and part of 1830, and it was in that county he was licensed to preach by the Richland Creek Baptist Church. He exercised his gift for preaching there for 13 months.[22] Beginning

in 1832, McDonald was appointed by the Georgia Baptist Association to serve as a missionary to Burke County[23] and eventually was appointed as an itinerant missionary by the Sunbury Baptist Association.

Church Starting through Evangelism

Subsequently, during his Florida itinerant preaching and despite his frustration with the ever-present threat of Indian attacks, McDonald experienced successful evangelistic efforts. He announced in 1839 the organization of a new church at Six-mile Creek in East Florida and another at Fort Mays, Georgia. "My traveling per month is 400 miles," McDonald reported, "my congregations are 17, and our churches, to which only myself preach, are 7."[24]

Like a good missionary with a gift for starting and organizing rather than sustaining and maintaining, McDonald raised the familiar cry for ministerial help, even using an early public relations gimmick to lure helpers. "Never have I seen such woeful want of God's ministers. I do cherish the hope that God," he wrote, "will . . . send ministers among us to break to the people the bread of eternal life."[25]

By the first day of January 1840, Missionary McDonald reported successful efforts in Nassau County where he resided. Following a six-day protracted meeting at Brandy Branch, sixteen were converted. Another meeting at New Hope in Nassau County netted similar results. Among the churches for which he reported sole responsibility was the Jacksonville church, located a mile out of town. "There is a delightful work of grace among the

negroes in the vicinity and town of Jacksonville," he wrote. "Exertions are being made to build a Baptist meeting house in that place."[26]

Conscious, no doubt, of his own poverty as a frontier preacher, McDonald comforted himself with honest confession. "The past year has, indeed, been a time of great and marvelous works in these wild woods, among these poor and afflicted people of the Lord," he wrote. "Our lot, as a preacher, is cast in the shades of poverty and in places of great peril." But, he concluded, "the humblest cabin among these herdsmen and hunters where Jesus is praised is a temple of beauty and glory and happiness and life." One wonders how much the confession was expressed to convince the confessor, especially when the writer's next words were these: "But we weep when we recollect our early associations in religion in the temples of God in Georgia with His dear, chosen people."[27]

By June 1, 1840, McDonald had moved to Jacksonville from Nassau County. Having become resigned to a war that might go on for years to come, he reported on the progress at Jacksonville.

> *"Since the first of January, I have baptized between this and Altamaha, 20 whites and 80 colored people, in all 100 . . . When we first visited those places which lie between Darien and Jacksonville, we found in them about 60 of our faith and order, and only three little churches, which were without a pastor . . . Now we number nearly 500, most of whom are walking in the fear of the Lord. Seven houses of worship have been built for our*

denomination, and four more are being erected. We have nine constituted churches, and three more are shortly to be constituted . . . alone."[28]

Six months later – September, 1841 – the missionary reported a thriving black church in the town of St. Marys, Georgia, but no white church. "Our coloured brethren there number about 160," he wrote, "and are truly a pious and devoted people."[29] Earlier in 1841, McDonald had organized the Sharon Baptist Church in Nassau at what is now Callahan. At the time of its organization, the church consisted of McDonald as pastor, one deacon, a clerk, and fourteen members in all. Eventually, when the town of Callahan organized in 1857, the church changed its name from Sharon to Callahan Baptist Church.[30]

The Bachelor Marries

After having been a bachelor all his life, forty-four-year-old McDonald began to contemplate

marriage with sixteen-year-old Teresa Amanda Pendarvis of Duval County, a lady twenty-eight years his junior. On January 15, 1842, McDonald acquired the property known later as LaVilla, a 225-acre farm on the north side of the St. Johns River, beginning at the mouth of McCoys Creek and lying north of it. And on March 19, 1842, John Warren deeded an additional 250 acres of the original tract to allow single ownership once again.[31] That became McDonald's farm. The marriage of McDonald and Miss Pendarvis followed on May 15, 1842, in a civil ceremony performed by Judge John L. Dogget.[32] Despite the couple's age difference, they had eight children and gave them all Bible names: Mary, Elizabeth, Ruth, Sarah, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

In 1843 the American Baptist Home Missionary Society appointed McDonald as a missionary to East Florida, which would have been a means of helping sustain him in his status as a married man. But because of the well-known sectional dispute over the question of slavery, the Baptist denomination in America divided. From it emerged the Southern Baptist Convention in 1845. "So soon as the North and South were divided," McDonald wrote, "I resigned my commission." But at that crisis, the Florida Baptist Association, which had been organized at Indian Springs Baptist Church in Leon County two years previously,[33] hired McDonald as a missionary for two years.[34] "But," explained McDonald, "their funds failing, I applied to the Southern Baptist [Domestic] Board." The Southern Baptist Board hired him as a missionary

until 1849, when the Southern Baptist Domestic Missions Board had to decline reappointing most missionaries because of limited funds.[35] Before McDonald knew his appointment with the Southern Baptist Domestic Missions Board would not be renewed, he wrote an article in the *Southern Baptist Missionary Journal* appealing to others to come and labor in Florida and strengthen the Baptist work in a region that was 300 miles long and 200 miles wide. He cautioned, "To be a missionary, a man should be blameless, intelligent, truly pious, discreet, and persevering."[36]

On March 8, 1847, McDonald published a prospectus in *The Christian Index*, announcing the first Baptist periodical to be published in Florida. It would be called *Baptist Telegraph and Florida Emigrant*. He proposed the publication's objective would be, "to reprove vice, to promote virtue, to elevate the mind to the worship of the true God, and to improve the worldly condition of mankind, will be its leading features."[37] Unfortunately, within a few months, McDonald discontinued publishing the much-needed Baptist paper due to a lack of financial support.

His Missionary Service Ends

When the year 1849 ended and James McDonald learned that he could not be reappointed by the Southern Baptist Domestic Mission Board, he must have realized that his days in Florida were numbered. The marriage and arrival of children had changed his circumstances. Finally, in 1850, he arranged for Joseph S. Baker, the editor of *The Christian Index*

from 1842 through 1848, to come to Florida and serve as pastor of the Jacksonville Bethel church.[38] As a kind of swan song to Florida, McDonald wrote of his departure from Sharon Church in Nassau County. He wrote, "After 13 years and 9 months, speak together, in the enjoyment of the grace of God, and in much mutual suffering, we bid the church of Sharon, East Florida our farewell."[39]

James McDonald moved his family to Atlanta, where they remained during the War Between the States and from where they would send their oldest son to fight in that war. McDonald served as a missionary of the Stone Mountain Association and pastor of several churches in the area, while always reporting the results of his evangelistic efforts through the pages of *The Christian Index.*

After the War, sick and feeble, he moved his family to Rome, Georgia, in January 1869 and died three months later on April 25, 1869, in his seventy-first year. His wife outlived him 21 years. Aside from the demonstrated self-sacrifice and determined effort to minister to frontier settlers at the dawn of East Florida history under American control, James McDonald's faithful record both chronicles and reflects a life and ministry, which created a legacy as a pioneer evangelistic itinerant missionary-church starter.

(Endnotes begin on next page.)

ENDNOTES

1. In 1833 Jesse Mercer, the prominent divine who inspired organization and development among Georgia Baptists during the first half of the nineteenth century, purchased *The Christian Index* from W. T. Brantly in Philadelphia and published his first issue from Washington, Georgia, on September 14, 1833, as owner and editor. It became the weekly periodical for religious news of concern to Baptists in Georgia, Florida, and Alabama. See Jack U. Harwell, *An Old Friend with New Credentials: A History of The Christian Index* (Atlanta: Executive Committee of the Baptist Convention of the State of Georgia, 1972).
2. *The Christian Index,* July 7, 1836, p. 402 f. Before Mr. Hart died in 1838, he lived to see his pleadings for ministerial help answered with the arrival of O. T. Hammond, a missionary appointed by the American Baptist Home Mission Society in June 1837. Hart referred to him in a letter to the editor (*The Christian Index*, Feb. 22, 1838, p.10) as "a young preacher just arrived from the North" … But missionary life in Territorial Florida may have been too much for him and his wife, for they soon left for Alabama where he died. See Edward Earl Joiner, *A History of Florida Baptists* (Jacksonville, Fla.: Convention Press, 1972), p.25, n.42. Other appeals for Baptist preachers to come to Florida appeared in *The Christian Index* over the next several years. See, for example, the issues of July 2, 1841, p.425, and Aug. 18, 1843, p.519.
3. *The Christian Index*, May 25, 1837, p.329.
4. Ibid.
5. *The Christian Index*, Aug. 31, 1837, p.554 f.
6. Ibid.
7. Charlton W. Tebeau, *A History of Florida* (Coral Gables, Fla.: University of Miami Press, 1971), p.146. While Jacksonville's population in 1830 was only 100, Duval County had a total of 1,970 inhabitants, living largely on farms.
8. *The Christian Index*, Aug. 31, 1837, p.534 f.
9. Ibid.
10. *The Christian Index*, April 26, 1838, p.250 f.
11. *The Christian Index*, June 19, 1851, p.98.
12. *The Christian Index*, Nov. 15, 1838, p.715.
13. *The Christian Index*, April 26, 1838, p.252.

14. *The Christian Index*, Nov. 29, 1838, p.745.
15. Ibid.
16. The church historian at First Baptist Church, Jacksonville, Florida, Belton S. Wall, Jr., writes in an unpublished letter that records of the Bethel Baptist Church are scarce: "On three different occasions our records were destroyed, and in the great fire of 1901, all our municipal records were burned. In the years 1861-64, Jacksonville was occupied by Federal troops and during the Battle of Olustee our church was commandeered for a hospital and left in a deplorable condition." Aug. 1, 1980. On July 17, 1938, the First Baptist Church of Jacksonville printed a centennial program which listed Rev. James McDonald as the first pastor (1838-1846) and named the six charter members as Rev. Josiah [sic] McDonald "and wife"; Elias G. Jaudon and wife, and two blacks, Peggy and Baccus, slaves of Mr. Jaudon. But since McDonald was not married at the time, the "wife" may have been the future Mrs. McDonald, Teresa Amanda Pendarvis, whom he married on May 15, 1842. See *Duval County Marriages*, Book O, pp.221-222. For data on Ryan Frier, see Huxford, *Pioneers of Wiregrass Georgia*, III, pp.100-101. In 1844 Ryan Frier was hired as a missionary of the Florida Baptist Association to serve "east of the Suwannee River. See *The Christian Index*, Dec. 13, 1844, p.1.
17. *The Christian Index*, March 28, 1839, pp.199-200.
18. Ibid.
19. *The Christian Index*, June 24, 1869, p.97.
20. *The Christian Index*, Jan. 21, 1847.
21. *The Christian Index*, June 24, 1869, p.97.
22. *The Christian Index*, July 14, 1832, p.21; also see *The Southern Recorder*, July 26, 1832.
23. *Minutes and Proceedings of the Mission Board Appointed by the Georgia Association in 1815*, January 27, 1832, p.42. The appointment was made by the Executive Committee, Jesse Mercer as moderator and Jabez P. Marshall as secretary. According to the terms of employment, for which McDonald was to receive $20 per month, he is to keep a daily journal of labors, report quarterly, and expend $5 worth of tracts each quarter for distribution to commence when his present engagements are closed. Jesse Mercer was to instruct him.

24. *The Christian Index*, Sept. 12, 1839, p.584.
25. Ibid.
26. Ibid.
27. Ibid.
28. *The Christian Index*, June 25, 1840, pp.415-416.
29. *The Christian Index*, Sept. 24, 1841, p.618.
30. *The Florida Baptist Witness*, Sept. 14, 1939, p.9.
31. T. Frederick Davis, *History of Jacksonville, Florida, and Vicinity* (Jacksonville, Fla.: Florida Historical Society, 1925), p.43.
32. *Duval County (Florida) Marriage Records*, Book O. pp.221-222. According to the inscription on the tombstone in Myrtle Hill Cemetery in Rome, Georgia, Mrs. Theresa McDonald died on May 11, 1890, at age 64, a resident of Atlanta. See George Magruder Battey, Jr., *A History of Rome and Floyd County* (Atlanta, 19720, I, p.586.)
33. For a resolution of the controversy surrounding the organizational date and place of the Florida Baptist Association, see James C. Bryant, *Indian Springs: The Story of a Pioneer Church in Leon County, Florida* (Tallahassee: Florida State University, 1971), p.37-44.
34. *Florida Baptist Association Minutes*, Oct. 21, 1845, p.2. They hired him to be missionary "as soon as his present engagement with the Board at New York shall have expired."
35. *See Southern Baptist Convention Annual*, 1850, Annual Report of the Board of Domestic Missions, p.42: "From October 1st to February, the receipts were extremely small and the prospects gloomy. During this period, several commissions issued the preceding year expired. Although in most instances, applications for a re-commission were made, and the Board were desirous to grant them, yet the state of the treasury was such, and the probability of much increase of funds was so doubtful, that the Board felt constrained in most instances to decline a renewal of appointment."
36. *Southern Baptist Missionary Journal*, IV, 1, June 1849, p.19.
37. *The Christian Index*, April 1, 1847, p.112.
38. The black members of the Bethel Baptist Church assumed control of the church in 1866 because of their majority status. Two years later, they worked out an agreement for separation of the races, the blacks retaining the Bethel Baptist Church name, and the

white members naming their worship house Tabernacle. In 1892 the white members moved to their present location and named the church First Baptist. Two years later the black members renamed their church Bethel Baptist Institutional Church. See *Guide to Supplement Vital Statistics from Church Records in Florida* (Jacksonville, Fla.: 1942), I, 211.

39. *The Christian Index*, June 19, 1851, p.98.

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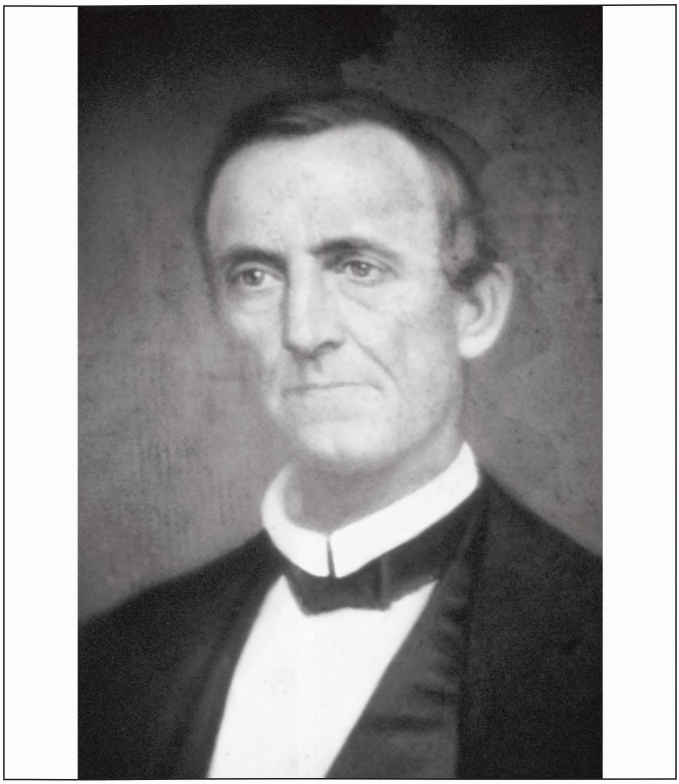
Richard Johnson Mays – The Legacy "Father" of the Florida Baptist State Convention

by T. Phil Heard
Retired pastor, Pine Grove Missionary Baptist Church, Madison, Florida

Richard Johnson Mays was a man who came to Florida from Edgefield, South Carolina, around 1832. According to his granddaughter, Patty Mays, "the motivating force of Richard Johnson Mays' whole life and character was his belief in God and in the revelation of God as made to mankind in the Bible. . . He especially admired the courage and forthrightness of John the Baptist, and gave that name to one of his sons."[1] It is appropriate, therefore, to apply the same mission statement which John the Baptist had when preaching in the wilderness to Richard J. Mays as he left the more civilized environs of South Carolina to come to the wilderness of territorial Florida. As he came, though he was from a family of means and prominence, and came to expand his family's profession of planting, he truly seemed possessed with the concept of spreading the gospel through both his physical and spiritual labor in this new place.

Richard Johnson Mays' demonstrated a legacy of leadership realized in his personal mission of spreading the Kingdom of God in the Florida of his day. This nineteenth century entrepreneur quickly found a place of prominence and dedicated service to the cause of Christ through the work of his plantation,



Richard Johnson Mays (1808 – 1864) State Convention "Father"

[EDITOR'S NOTE: This article was originally prepared by as a paper that was read at the annual meeting of the Florida Baptist Historical Society held April 23, 2004, at the First Baptist Church, Madison. At the time, Rev. Heard was pastor of Pine Grove Missionary Baptist Church, Madison, Florida, until his retirement. That paper titled, "There Came a Man: The Life and Influence of Richard Johnson Mays on the Development of Baptist Work in Florida," was subsequently published as a monograph by the Florida Baptist Historical Society, which retained all publication rights. That narrative was edited, condensed and amplified with supplemental information for use in this 2019 The Journal of Florida Baptist Heritage.]

the building of a new state, and the planting of new churches. Additionally, his guiding hand in the founding of several new denominational units that formed the structure for Missionary Baptist work in Florida, has earned him the designation as the "father" of the Florida Baptist State Convention. And, as in the life of John the Baptist, the work of the kingdom was enhanced through the prophetic ministry of Richard J. Mays.

Early Life in South Carolina

Brigadier-general Samuel Mays fought in three battles of the Revolutionary War and later in the War of 1812. "Without the advantages of much formal education or inherited property, he acquired great wealth, several plantations...numerous slaves, and a splendid plantation home on the north bank of the Saluda [River] in Newberry County [South Carolina]." He married Nancy Grigsby in 1793, and the couple became the parents of ten children, two daughters and eight sons. The seventh child, Richard Johnson, was born in Edgefield, South Carolina, in 1808. Although he did not attend college, "Richard was determined to be a preacher, and so he studied for the ministry," according to a family history by Patty Mays.[2] Also unknown is when and how this family of English immigrants may have left the Anglican Church, but well prior to his coming to Florida, Richard had developed deep roots in the Baptist faith and practice.

In 1829 Richard married Eliza Anne Williams, descendant of another Virginia family who had moved to South Carolina. Richard was

twenty-one, and his bride only fourteen. A daughter, Elizabeth, was born to the young couple in 1830. Apparently, the rise of "King Cotton" in Virginia and the Carolinas, and the large acreage required for its growth, had caused land to become scarce. So it was that Richard, his wife Eliza and baby Elizabeth, along with his brother James, his wife and young son, Sam III, set out with "their slaves, household goods, tools, supplies, in covered wagons, [with] their cattle and horses,"[3] on the long, treacherous trip to Florida. Their older brother, Rhydon G., had apparently preceded them, for he is listed as one of the earliest grantees of land in Madison County, Florida, in 1828.[4] Later other brothers came to the pioneer territory to give the Mays family name a powerful presence in the North Florida area.

Beginning a New Life in Florida

Madison author Elizabeth Sims described North Florida between St. Augustine and Pensacola as "a virtual jungle, occupied by wandering Indians, smugglers, runaway slaves, cattle thieves, and a few respectable cattle herders and settlers."[5] A road, known variously as the Federal Road, The Bellamy Road, and the St. Augustine Road, cut across the southern portion of Madison County, and ran just north of Lake Sampala, and was ready for travelers by 1826.[6] This was the country to which Richard and James with their families came sometime after 1830. The Mays families settled in the newly developing area along the Bellamy Road somewhere between Lake Sampala and Mosely Hall, in an area that came to be called Hickstown. Jacob Rhett Motte, having

travelled thorough Hickstown, observed that it, "had once been the site of an important Indian town; but at the time we saw it presented not the least vestige of its former life and bustle or indeed of any life at all."[7] This was the new world to which the stalwart Richard had brought his family. Little Elizabeth, who had been injured on the journey south, did not survive, and her frail body was laid to rest in a tiny grave whose location is now unknown.[8]

Hickstown Baptist Church

Despite the hardships of this first stop in the new life, there is evidence of Mays as lay-preacher fulfilling his calling. It was during this time that the Hickstown Baptist Church (or Hixtown, as it is sometimes spelled) was founded. Edwin Browning in his history of the First Baptist Church of Madison said, "We do know that many settlers, including R. J. Mays, came to this area as early as 1832. It appears logical that Hickstown church had its beginning in this earlier period around 1832, and not later than 1835."[9] Given what we know about Mays' propensity for starting new churches, it is this writer's belief that he was most likely involved in the Hickstown church founding. He was definitely living in the area at the time, and was the church clerk in June of 1841, when he and several other members of

Hickstown Baptist Church

the Hickstown church sought friendly dismissal to become charter members of the soon to be established Concord Missionary Baptist Church. In July of 1841, R. J. Mays was ordained as the first deacon of the Concord church by the Hickstown church, after it had moved to the village of Madison Court House. By that time the church had changed its name from Hickstown to Madison Baptist Church and in 1922 was renamed as the First Baptist Church of Madison. Browning's chronicle of this historic church noted that it was "the mother church of Baptists in this area," having participated in the organization of the Florida Association in 1843 and the Florida Baptist State Convention in 1854. "From its vitality other churches have sprung, preachers have been called, and the missionaries have been set apart."[10]

Elizabeth Baptist Church

Another church, which goes back to this earliest period of R. J. Mays' Florida ministry, is the Elizabeth Baptist Church in Jefferson County. Again, the early church records are missing and only fragmentary bits are available. However, one historical source, based upon church traditions, claims the church organized in 1831, and constituted in 1834, which may make it a contemporary of the Hickstown church. The first pastor was Reverend Jesse Goodman. In 1832 Richard J. Mays became the laity-pastor of this church.[11] If so, this would be the earliest record of Mr. Mays' involvement in the Baptist ministry in Florida. It also would be well before he was ordained as a minister, which did not take place until 1841.

That certainly is possible, as Baptist churches have from time to time had lay preachers fill in when an ordained minister was not available.

Clifton Plantation

The rugged life in the Hickstown/San Pedro swampland, with its mosquitoes, malaria, and Indian raids, had become nearly unbearable. Sometime during 1835, Richard took his wife, slaves, and household possessions and moved to a more healthy area in the northeastern part of Madison County. On the highest point in the area, Mays constructed a two-story, ten-bedroom home known as Clifton Mansion.[12] Ten more children were born into the Mays family, but only seven survived childhood. To accommodate the educational needs of his and his neighbors' children, Mays established the Mays Academy at the Concord church. In time this facility served to prepare untrained Baptist ministers in their study of Bible.[13] The influx of residents and the increase of commerce traffic nearby resulted in the construction of a new road from Madison to the Georgia town of Thomasville by the county commissioners in 1845.[14]

The Mays family was but a small contingent of families from South Carolina who began settling in the North Florida area. In fact, Madison County had come to be called "the Palmetto County," because of the South Carolinians who dominated the cotton plantation agriculture by 1850. Due to the readily availability of land in North Florida, Mays by 1860 had acquired 5,480 acres divided into several plantations. These produced cotton, timber, corn,

and sweet potatoes, among other crops, which were maintained by his acquired 125 slaves.[15]

If running the expanding plantation was not enough, R. J. Mays also served as an area postmaster, later served as a Justice of the Peace and was appointed as a state approved property appraiser for the newly organized Union Bank in Tallahassee.[16] Yet according to a local historian, Mays "proudest accomplishment, however, was being an ordained 'Missionary Baptist Minister,' as he listed himself in the 1860 census."[17]

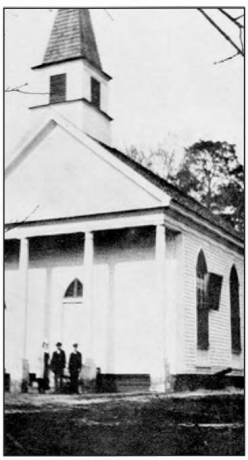
Concord Missionary Baptist Church

Nearby the Clifton Mansion, the Concord Missionary Baptist Church was organized. Browning, who also wrote a definitive history of the Concord church, explains that the Concord Missionary Baptist Church was constituted on June 20, 1841. "Richard Johnson Mays by every creditable evidence was the moving spirit in the organization of the Church." The original *Minute Book* lists seven whites, including Mays, and six Negro slaves as charter members.[18] It was during the church's November conference [business meeting] that "R. J. Mays was set apart to the full gospel ministry and arrangements made for his ordination in Monticello on Friday before the fourth Lord's day in this same month." A later entry in the minutes reveal that, "this ceremony took place as planned."[19] Richard J. Mays, now designated as Elder or Reverend, later served the church as pastor on two occasions: the first term was from 1843 to 1846, and the second from 1857 to 1860.

Monticello Baptist Church

In a published history of Jefferson County, it is stated that the first Baptist church in Monticello was constituted in October of 1841, with Elders R. J. Mays, Jesse Goodman and John Broome, who as the officiating presbytery, reviewed and affirmed the doctrinal integrity of the charter church members. The church then called Mays to be their first pastor. This would also have been the first church he served as an ordained minister. During its early years, the Monticello Church's services were held at the Jefferson Academy, and later in the Presbyterian Church, where monthly worship was observed.[20] Mays served the church as pastor until around 1845.

Liberty Baptist Church



Liberty Baptist Church

It was during this same period of time that Mays also had a part in the formation of the Liberty Baptist Church, just across the state line in Brooks County, Georgia. A stalwart missionary Baptist layperson – Sister Nancy "Ann" Cone Hagin – was the impetus for the founding of the church. In 1841 the Ocklochnee Anti-Missionary Baptist Association added a statement to their original Articles of Faith in which they declared non-fellowship with any member church that engaged or believed in Sunday school work, missions, theological schools or any other "new-fangled

institutions of the day." As a result, Sister Hagin, a resident of Thomas (now Brooks) County, asked for her membership letter from the Mount Moriah Church, which was affiliated with the Ocklochnee Association and supported the association's stance on anti-missions. Because of Mrs. Hagin's stance on pro-missions, the Mount Moriah church refused to issue a transfer of membership letter and instead excommunicated her. Not to be deterred, Mrs. Hagin conceived the idea of organizing a church in which she might follow her conscientious convictions on the subject of missions. The records show that eight people joined Mrs. Hagin in organizing the Liberty Baptist Church. Serving as the presbytery to organize the new church were Elders R. J. Mays, Jesse Goodman and Thomas Lang of the Shilo Church, Tallahassee. The church called as their pastor Elder Mays who served 1841-1845.[21] Mays' dates of service with the Liberty church overlap with the Monticello church, which was typical, inasmuch most as churches only met monthly. This permitted itinerant preachers, such as Mays, to travel and serve different churches each Sunday.

Pine Grove Missionary Baptist Church

A number of years go by during the busiest period of Mays' life before the founding of the last church associated with R. J. Mays. That was the Piney Grove Missionary Baptist Church, now known as the Pine Grove Missionary Baptist Church in Madison. The organizing council was composed of Elders R. J. Mays, Ryan Frier, and S. C. Craft and included seven charter members.[22] The church likely organized in

1856 inasmuch as it sought affiliation with the Florida Baptist Association during the association's annual meeting November 14, 1856.[23]

Located four miles north of Madison, this open country church was about fourteen miles from Mays' Clifton Mansion. Samuel C. Craft, a member of the organizing council, also became the first pastor of the new church. Craft, who was called "a frontier preacher who ranged far and wide over North Florida preaching the gospel and teaching school as well,"[24] might have had a part in the establishment and building of many churches, inasmuch as he served as an area missionary for the Florida Baptist Association. In addition, he was a full-time preacher, teacher, and colporteur (seller of theological texts and religious themed books).

The Florida Baptist Association

The unique polity and organizational structure of Baptist life must have been well known to this pioneer preacher Richard Johnson Mays. The origins of the oldest continuously operating missionary Baptist association in Florida – The Florida Baptist Association – are not extant in their own records, which exist only from 1845. However, Edwin Browning in his review of the Concord church records, reports the leading role that R. J. Mays played in the organization of the Florida Association. Mays presented to the Concord church in conference on Sunday, January 15, 1843, a letter that proposed the "propriety of forming a new Baptist Association of the churches who wish to be allowed the liberty of conscience." The letter invited those churches in

support of the formation of a new association, to "please send two delegates with a letter containing the wish of the church to become members also a statement of the number in full fellowship and the time of holding their meeting." The letter was signed by Tallahassee pastor Thomas Lang. The Concord church voted to accept the invitation and elected R. J. Mays and S. Linton as the delegates to the proposed organizational meeting, which occurred March 2, 1843, at Indian Springs Baptist Church in Leon County.[25] Mays served the new association as moderator in 1844, 1845, and 1847. Samuel C. Craft served as clerk in 1843, 1844, 1845, and then after a break of four years, from 1849 through 1858.[26]

The Southern Baptist Convention

The year 1845 was a momentous year in Florida, as well as in the lives of Missionary Baptists. Earlier in 1838, R. J. Mays was sent as a delegate to the Florida Territory's Constitutional Convention, which met at the town of St. Joseph.[27] The statehood constitution, which was adopted in January 1839 by the Florida Territorial Legislative Council, was finally approved by the U.S. Congress in March 1845.

The other momentous event that took place during that year was the founding of the Southern Baptist Convention at Augusta, Georgia. It is noteworthy that itinerant preacher Mays serving in the Florida wilderness was aware of things going on outside the state. In a letter printed in the Georgia *Christian Index* of August 22, 1845, Mays endorsed the rationale and purpose for breaking with Northern Baptists and their anti-slavery stance to organize the

Southern Baptist Convention. He expressed concern over support for missionary activities, *". . . the course of the Southern Convention at Augusta is entirely approved, so far as it went. . ."* he wrote. Then reminded everyone, *"The entire responsibility [for missions], would then have rested on the South, and I am persuaded would have been felt and responded to. . ."*[28]

The Florida Baptist State Convention

Without a doubt the event for which Richard J. Mays is most remembered, and the event upon which he had the greatest impact, was the founding of the Florida Baptist State Convention. Again, in the history of the Concord Church, Edwin Browning cited the church minutes:

> *"The call for the organization of the state convention was issued by way of a resolution adopted by the Florida Association in a meeting held November 22, 1853, with Olive Church, Thomas County, Georgia. The delegates from Concord to this session were Elder R. J. Mays and Francis S. McCall, chosen by ballot of the Church with Bretheren Joseph Densler and Wm. T. Johnson as their alternates. This action was implemented by the appointment of committees to correspond with the West Florida and Alachua Associations . . ."*[29]

As planned, the Florida Baptist Association convened at the Concord church on November 18-21, 1854. The association delegates first attended to its own affairs

and then elected ten delegates to meet with the three delegates from the West Florida Association and the Alachua Association's four delegates. The Florida Associations' delegates were R. J. Mays, W. B. Cooper, B. S. Fuller, W. H. Goldwire, W. Blewett, D. G. Daniel, H. R. Ardis, S. C. Craft, John Cason and T. W. Terrell.[30] To undertake their historic task the group walked from the church up the hill to Mays' Clifton mansion to convene in the parlor. According to Browning's narrative:

> *"That evening the lights burned brightly in Clifton Mansion, for the committees, acting under instructions as to the object to be achieved, met in the parlor of this famous ante-bellum home. The group was called to order by Elder R. J. Mays, presumably chairman of the delegation from the Florida Association. Elder Mays was named first, as you have observed. This together with the fact that he was elected President of the Convention upon the completion of organization is indicative of his being the chairman."*[31]

The two-story Clifton Mansion, although it had ten bedrooms, still required the placement of mattresses on the floor in every available space, to accommodate the several dozen delegates attending the association meeting and the organizational meeting of the state convention.

Bible Commentary

In a day when few Baptist preachers in areas such as territorial Florida had the opportunities of formal education, Richard Mays, who apparently had little formal education himself, was very keenly interested in ministering to the ministers. Patty Mays said of her grandfather, "Richard was a forth-right, honest, stern, yet kindly man. He studied his Bible unceasingly, and in the home of a granddaughter, near Greenville, is the old walnut desk, at which he would sit for long hours reading, writing, thinking, seeking for the true interpretation of the Word."[32]

He also seemed to find in the association a unique opportunity to share his passion for Bible study and a correct interpretation of the Scriptures. He instituted in the association's annual report a "circular letter" which was usually written by the moderator for the year on a doctrinal topic of current interest. Much like the Apostle Paul, these letters were meant to be read by the churches to bring information and enlightenment. With other such practical exhortations, the associational annual report, which was duly printed and sent to the cooperating churches, dealt with the felt needs of the ministry.

Richard Johnson Mays died in 1864 following a long illness. His grave is appropriately marked in the cemetery of the Concord church, with which his life was so intertwined. A legacy of leadership by Richard Johnson Mays was evident in his personal missionary efforts of spreading the Kingdom of God in Florida through starting churches and organizing both the first Missionary Baptist association of churches and a state convention.

Eliza Williams Mays

In 1830, at age fourteen, Eliza Anne Williams married Richard J. Mays, who was seven years older. Within a year the couple moved from Edgefield, South Carolina, to Florida and experienced the death of their only child Elizabeth. Once settled in Madison County, the couple had ten more children – three of whom died in childhood. Eliza was an industrious, practical and able woman, who in addition to providing for the academic, spiritual and moral development of her children, supervised the Clifton plantation's household bond servants. Her responsibilities for managing the Mays plantation grew as Richard's health declined. She remained at Clifton for 18 years after Richard's death, continuing to manage the farm lands and ensuring all her seven children completed a university education. In 1883, Eliza moved to Greenville, South Carolina, to live before her death in 1886. [33]

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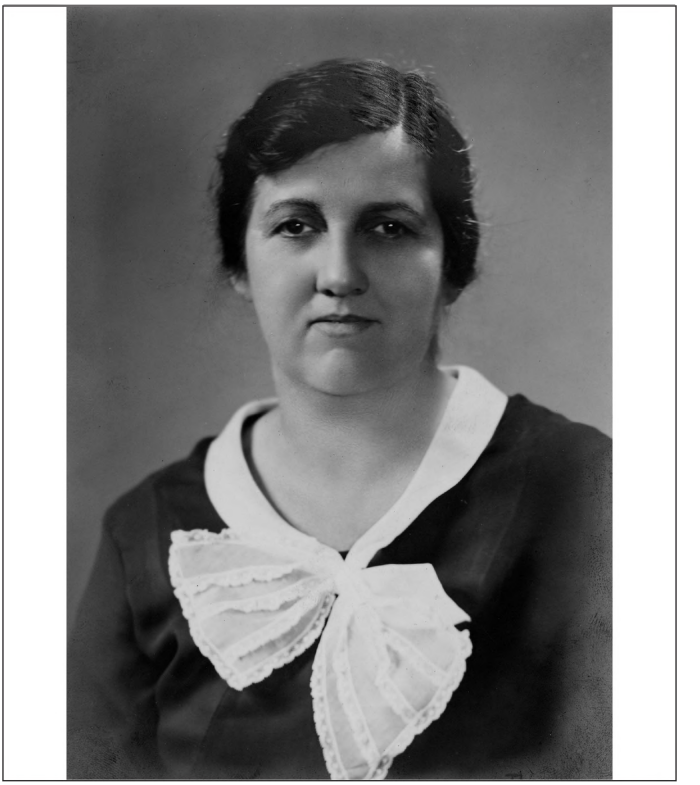
Lulu Sparkman Terry – A Floridian's 45-Year Legacy of Missionary Service in Brazil

by Donald S. Hepburn
Secretary-Treasurer, Florida Baptist Historical Society

"Dear Sir, I believe that I have been led by the Holy Spirit to purpose in my heart to serve my Master on the foreign field, hence I am writing to you for an application blank hoping that I may be found worthy to be sent out by the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention," began the carefully handwritten letter, dated December 28, 1910, penned by Miss Lulu Sparkman of Wauchula, Florida.

The 23-year-old woman, who had attended Stetson Academy in DeLand and then studied and graduated from the W.M.U. Training School (now merged with The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary) in Louisville, Ky., with a bachelor of missionary training degree, continued,

> *"I am engaged to Mr. A. J. Terry. He will finish at the Seminary next year, and we expect to marry sometime in the summer. . .I have always been interested in the Latin American people and though I am willing to work anywhere God sends me, I feel that my work should be among these people. . .I am the Lord's, and my prayer is that He may use my life as He sees best."*[1]



Lulu Sparkman Terry
(1887 – 1965)
Served 45 years as a Southern Baptist Missionary to Brazil

In less than six months after the letter was penned, Lulu Sparkman and Adolph John Terry (b. July 5, 1883) of Evergreen, Louisiana, were wed on June 8, 1911 in Palmetto, Florida. The couple had met and dated while attending Southern Seminary. Seven months later, they were appointed by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board (now known as the International Mission Board) to active missionary service in Brazil. Just after their first wedding anniversary, in July 1912, the newlyweds sailed on a steamship that departed Miami for a week's journey to Recife, capital of the state of Pernambuco, Brazil. For the next 45 years, Lulu Sparkman Terry, as Florida Baptists' first woman and second native to be appointed as a Southern Baptist international missionary, reflected a legacy of commitment of life and heart to sharing the gospel with the people of Brazil. The long-term missionary came to epitomize that, "Missions isn't always a glowing light; there is suffering and sacrifice, and the responsibility of a cross to bear," Sue Terry Woodson once wrote about her parents' life commitment.[2]

Lulu Sparkman was born May 24, 1887, in Wauchula, Florida, to Susan Elizabeth Futch Sparkman and Thomas J. Sparkman, a pioneer Baptist pastor in Southwest Florida, who at the time of Lulu's birth was serving as the pastor of the Hopewell Baptist Church, Plant City.

An incident from Lulu Sparkman's teenage years exemplified her tenacious spirit, as reported by Elizabeth Provence in her narrative about the Florida missionary. One afternoon Lulu and a friend, Sarah Fannin, went boating out on a lake near the

determination and courage . . . was to characterize her life

Sparkman home. "Suddenly the sky was filled with rolling, angry black clouds and the wind began to whip the surface of the lake into a seething fury. Panicked and fearful, Sarah suggested that they pull into the nearest shore and wait out the storm. Lulu picked up the oars and with determination and courage which was to characterize her life as a pioneer missionary in the interior of Brazil, she rowed until she got them safely to shore."[3]

Courage and determination are certainly two descriptive characteristics required of anyone who in the early twentieth century responded to God's call for mission service and going to the largest country in the South American continent. Southern Baptist mission work in Brazil had begun as early as 1859 and continued for three years through the undistinguished and failed efforts of former Florida pastor Thomas Jefferson Bowen and others. Yet it was not until 1880 that the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board made a second attempt to send evangelical missionaries to the South American country. The renewed effort consisted of appointed missionaries William and Anne Bagby of Texas who sailed to the nation's then capital Rio de Janeiro in March 1881. Within a year, after traveling to several provinces, the couple, on October 15, 1882, organized the first Baptist church in Salvador, state of Bahia. Twenty-five years later, on the anniversary of the starting of that first Baptist mission, messengers from 39 of the then 83 churches representing 5,000

Brazilian Baptists met in Salvador on June 22, 1907, and organized the Brazilian Baptist Convention.[4]

No doubt Adolph Terry and Lulu Sparkman, while still students in Southern Seminary, were inspired and challenged by the growing missionary needs and opportunities that existed in Brazil. It was in Louisville that the couple heard a presentation by T. Bronson Ray, educational secretary of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, and Reverend F. F. Soren, pastor of the First Baptist Church in Rio de Janeiro and first president of the Brazilian Convention.[5] Ray had recently toured Brazil and recorded his impressions of Southern Baptists' missionary efforts in a book titled, *Brazilian Sketches*. Ray stressed that the demand for missionary efforts in Brazil was as imperative as in "any other heathen country [in which] the gospel is not preached to the people."[6]

The Brazilian coastline traverses 4,000 miles north to south along the Atlantic Ocean. The territory is so vast that the United States could be placed within Brazil's borders and still there would be left enough room to accommodate the state of Texas.[7] By the beginning of the twentieth century the country was the world's leading producer of rubber, cocoa and coffee beans. In addition, a dozen other exported commodities ranged from gold and nitrate to timber. These products underscored the largely rural and agriculturally-dependent economy that supported a nation that in 1891 had transitioned from a monarchy to a constitutional government.

The ethnic diversity present in Brazil started with fifteenth century settlers from Portugal who

displaced the native Indians and soon imported over three million African slaves between 1700 and 1870. In an effort to provide enough workers for the country's many agricultural plantations and mining operations, the Brazilian government, actively sought immigrants from Spain, Poland, Germany, and Japan. Although the primary religious influence within the country was Portuguese-imported Roman Catholicism, the indentured Africans brought their own indigenous ceremonies and beliefs which, in time, were blended with the church's practices.[8] "Spiritism, materialism and atheism are rampant" in Brazil, reported T.B. Ray, who characterized Brazilians as "people set adrift without spiritual guides."[9] Despite Brazil's prevalent Catholicism, "The priests do not preach," Ray observed. In his travel diary Ray affirmed that, "the priests hold services," which he said consisted of saying mass, reading prayers and singing songs in Latin, "a language which is not understood by the people."[10]

Within that economic, ethnic and religious diversity the Terrys in 1912 joined with nearly four dozen fellow Southern Baptist missionaries and nearly 125 native Brazilian pastor/evangelists who sought to share the claims of Christ although scattered across Brazil's vastness. After a year of Portuguese language study in Recife, the largest city in the Pernambuco province, the Terrys, along with their infant son, Brunson, moved to Teresina in the Piaui province to begin their evangelistic work. At that time only two indigenous Baptist churches, with a combined membership of fifty Brazilian Baptists, and located 500 miles apart, existed in the entire

province. Their assigned mission station's territory stretched 900 miles north to south and over 300 miles wide at some points.

However, travel to their new home could not occur until the rainy season which grew grasses on the plains and in the hills. It was essential that grass was available to power their transportation – horses and mules. It took two weeks of travel by horseback and river craft – inasmuch as neither highways nor railroads had been laid into the deep interior of the country – to reach their mission station. Adolph and Lulu each rode a horse, with Adolph carrying Brunson in his arms. They were followed by a hired man who led the four pack mules that carried everything the family would need in the months to follow – clothes, food, Bibles, Testaments, evangelistic tracts, cooking utensils, and a portable pump organ for their new church. At night they camped on the ground with the stars as their ceiling. During the day's journey they contended with the blazing hot sun and the occasional rain and the pesky local insects.[11]

Once established in Teresina, Adolph Terry's assignment required him to often leave Lulu and their son at their home base while he and a local guide travelled to distance settlements to share the gospel and start a church. In one year alone, Adolph travelled 700 miles on horseback and nearly 1000 miles on the river boats. In many ways Adolph Terry was a circuit rider preacher who travelled from settlements to villages to share the gospel and occasionally establish a church. Typically he sought to enlist and train a Brazilian – recently converted to

evangelical Christianity – to lead the newly established mission church until Terry could return to encourage the saints and administer the baptism of new converts. Terry's efforts by 1918 had helped quadruple the number of Baptist mission churches to six in the Piaui province.[12]

Wherever the Terrys travelled, despite the lack of an electronic means of communication, their reputation as Christian evangelists preceded them. They were often asked spontaneously to share their faith, lead worship services or perform baptismal services. As was often the case, the Terrys were humbly amazed at the desire by the Brazilians to further the Christian witness in their respective remote settlement. Baptist missionaries and their Christian converts in Brazil often encountered the wrath of the Catholic priests and anti-Christian zealots. In one of his early reports to the Foreign Mission Board, Adolph Terry wrote, "The priests continue in their efforts to fanaticize the people against the gospel . . ."[13] T . B. Ray, also chronicled numerous reports that new Baptist converts had their homes broken into and their furniture and house destroyed. Many other Christians told of beatings at the hands of either local police or vigilantes, some of whom supposedly acted at the behest of the area priest or bishop. Elsewhere, missionaries were reportedly placed under threats of death by hired assassins. "Persecution, while it may temporarily suspend work in a certain place, always defeats its own purpose," Ray reported, "and instead of preventing the spread of the gospel, is one of the most helpful agencies in the growth of the truth."[14]

Despite the potential dangers to the life and property of believers and missionaries alike, the Terrys were not deterred. If anything, they were encouraged by the commitment of the indigenous Christians. "I came to Piaui to do evangelistic work, but that has been taken away from me by the Christian laymen who evangelized faster than we can follow up their work and train the converts," Mrs. Terry later told the Foreign Mission Board's *Commission* magazine.[15] Lulu Terry, as did most of the female missionary personnel of that era, taught homemaking and parenting skills to the local women to gain their trust and openness to hearing the Gospel message. Missionary Terry also used literacy training through Bible studies among the women as another means of evangelism. One such study course, titled "The Women of the Bible," was published and distributed through *Mensagem*, the North Brazil mission's journal. Each month a different woman of the Bible was featured and served as the basis of the missionary-led women's Bible study.[16]

While the Brazilians were enthusiastic to share their new-found Christian faith and start mission churches, the Terrys determined that furthering the work in Brazil's interior would require a school to train workers and educate the natives. In 1917 the North Brazil Mission assigned two missionaries to work with the Terrys to study the possibility of starting such a school.

Now parents to two children and committed to follow the Lord's leading, the Terrys joined with another missionary couple to travel 800 miles from Teresina to Corrente, where the school would be

established. "Brunson was nearly five years old then; so he rode his own pony. But four-month-old Sue had to be carried. Her cradle was the arms of the cowboy who carried her on his mule, and the lullabies she heard were the songs he sang," Lulu Terry told *Commission* writer Margaret Johnston. Once they got settled in their new home Lulu remarked to Adolph that they would "have to keep the mule and cowboy to put Sue to sleep."[17]

Although the Terrys were theologically trained, their re-location to the deep interior of the Piaui province, required tough physical labor, patience and ingenuity. Adolph Terry helped open a road through a mountain pass from the river 50 miles away so their belongings could be hauled into Corrente by oxcart. Lulu Terry became a carpenter, helping build furniture for her home, the school and the church. She oversaw the planting and cultivating of the family's food, hulling the family's rice and grinding their corn. She also was the small town's default "nurse" and "doctor" having only rudimentary medical knowledge, as the nearest medical doctor was 200 miles away.

In 1922 the Baptist Industrial Institute was established in Corrente, just three years after A. J. Terry's God-inspired vision. The school served a variety of purposes including providing basic religious education to children, training local workers in agricultural and medical skills, and providing basic theological training for the indigenous Brazilians who had responded to God's call to serve as evangelists and pastors.[18] This last purpose fulfilled a need identified by Adolph Terry several years earlier in one

of his semi-annual reports to the Foreign Mission Board. "The trouble that we have in Piaui is not in opening the work or in evangelizing the people, but in getting the natives who are well enough trained to be pastors of the churches after they are organized."[19] The Institute, which became a "center of culture" for Piaui, also was used by A. J. Terry to secure the installation of a telegraph line into Corrente.[20] This modern convenience dramatically changed the way messages were sent and received. It became possible to communicate with the outside world within minutes versus the weeks and months required to send a written communication by carrier on horseback.

In 1927 the Terrys returned to the United States on furlough. They arranged to leave their teenaged children with family to pursue an American high school education. The Terrys returned to Brazil to resume their mission assignment, despite Adolph's developing heart-related problems. "No one knows the loneliness of the hours she spent without her children and her husband as she took care of the responsibilities that were hers," Provence wrote.[21]

In 1931 Adolph Terry's declining health required that the couple leave the high, dry plateaus of central Brazil and take their missionary zeal to the coast, where they were assigned to Rio de Janeiro's Baptist College and Seminary. Adolph was appointed as an administrator of the college and Lulu continued to work with children, young

people and women in the local church. In 1936 the couple was assigned to Vitoria, in the Espirito Santo province, where they did general evangelistic work. By 1940, Lulu Terry reported there were 75 churches – in addition to 357 mission congregations and preaching points – with a total 7,911 members within the province. "Many churches have no pastor and some do not even receive an annual visit from the general worker (missionary). The laymen evangelize, but now we need men to train and develop the church members," Mrs. Terry wrote.[22] To train the local Baptist leadership, the Terrys and fellow missionaries R. Elton and Elizabeth Johnson, organized and conducted in the Pernambuco province, local and regional training institutes that emphasized courses on the Baptist faith, practice and theology.[23]

Wherever they lived – in Recife, Corrente, Teresina, Rio de Janeiro or Vitoria – the Terry's home was always a beehive of activity, with the community's old and young, rich and poor, coming through their doors at all hours. "I don't know how she ever did all the things she did," daughter Sue Woodson recalled years later.[24]

In May, 1940, Lulu Terry wrote a letter to Florida WMU expressing thanks for a financial gift the organization had sent. "In July we will complete 28 years of service in Brazil. These have been happy years." She went on to report that the couple might have to "give up our work in Victoria on account of Mr. Terry's health. The doctor says that he should be in a climate that is less changeable." She requested her friends in the homeland to continue in their prayer support of the couple.[25]

Although the Terrys served during the early half of the twentieth century when the world's attention was drawn to World Wars I and II, those events were literally "a world away" from the evangelistic endeavors of the Terrys and their fellow missionaries. Their reports to the Foreign Mission Board did not reflect any concerns other their own "war" against the spiritual darkness in their mission field. However, among the 86 missionaries assigned to Brazil by 1943, misgivings about World War II were expressed to Florida Baptists. As an example, Mildred Cox who served in Recife, sent a candid letter to Florida W.M.U. leadership. "The inevitable results of the European conflict have made themselves felt on our mission field," she wrote in April, 1941, "but we wonder, when the whole world is in the throes of a death struggle how our work can go on as calmly as it has."[26] Just two months later another missionary couple – Stephen and Pauline Jackson – were quoted in the *Florida Baptist Witness*, "We still know nothing of the tension of the war and conditions in which loved ones and you have are going through. Of course prices are higher, some articles are scarcer, especially imported products, but as a whole our country here still enjoys the blessings of peacetime."[27]

Despite war conditions, the culmination of years of a worsening heart problem for Adolph required the Terrys to fly back to the United States to seek medical treatment during a planned furlough in 1944. After landing in Miami, the couple travelled by train through Florida and into Alabama. Along the way they stopped to visit churches and told the Brazil

mission story. Having arrived in Montgomery, Adolph became ill and required hospitalization for six weeks. With a July 20 target date for their return to Brazil, Adolph decided to make a final visit with his brother in Evergreen. Enroute on the train, Adolph's heart problems became more pronounced and the couple disembarked in Jacksonville, where he underwent medical treatment for nine days. A heart specialist agreed the couple could continue their travels to Louisiana, but insisted they return to the Southern Baptist Hospital in New Orleans. Within a few days after being admitted to the New Orleans medical facility, Adolph Terry suffered a massive heart attack and died on Sunday, July 22, 1945, at age 62.[28]

Lulu Terry's response to her newly found circumstances bore witness to an assessment made several years later by a fellow missionary. "It is hard to describe a personality like Mrs. Terry," observed Kate Cox White, who served in the Bahia province. "Her courage in the face of dangers, difficulties that seem insurmountable; her good humor and her temper combine to make something unique and, unfortunately, very rare in this world."[29] After a time of grieving, Lulu Terry returned alone to the Pernambuco province, where she continued to minister and teach at the Baptist training school in Recife. Although her beloved partner was not physically by her side, Lulu Terry's commitment to God's call on her life was unwavering. She returned as a widow, "with the hopes of inspiring some Brazilian young people to dedicate their lives to winning the vast interior to Christ and thus help to

bring about the realization of that dream of long ago – a Baptist empire in the heart of Brazil," she recalled several years later.[30]

Mrs. Terry - 1957

Just prior to her retirement, Lulu Terry returned to her first love in Brazil, the Corrente's Industrial Institute, begun almost four decades earlier. When the Terrys established the school, the trip from the coast to Corrente took four to five weeks, traveling first by train, then by riverboat, which was likely to get stuck on a sand bar, and then by mule. Lulu Terry's 1957 trip took only hours by airplane.

There, she recognized some of the buildings she and her husband had constructed and also marveled at the new buildings. She was gratified to see a medical clinic, weekly airplane delivery of mail and supplies, a jeep and truck for use by the missionary personnel, and she celebrated the school's burgeoning enrollment of nearly 500 students. When the Terrys arrived at their Brazilian mission in 1912, "there were no churches in the areas where we went and very few in the entire nation," Mrs. Terry recalled in 1957. Forty-five years later she noted that there were more than 1000 Baptist churches in Brazil, still a predominantly Roman Catholic country.[31] The missionary service and legacy of Adolph and Lulu Sparkman Terry – combined with the efforts of nearly 200 other Southern Baptist missionaries assigned to Brazil – had made an indelible mark for the cause of Christ.

Lulu Sparkman Terry retired from active missionary service at age 70 in May 1957, with her young woman's dream of "spending her life" ministering in Brazil having been fulfilled. Back in Florida where she established her retirement home, Lulu Terry admitted she would have "a hard time getting used to" retirement and America. Yet she was willing to step aside from her lifelong missionary service with the constant prayer that "perhaps some young person will prepare to go to Brazil to take my place."[32]

On September 12, 1965, Lulu Sparkman Terry died in the Homerville, Georgia, home of her son D. Brunson Terry, where she had recently relocated. Frank Means – who had served as the Foreign Mission Board's Area Secretary for Latin America, between 1954-68 – sent an expression of sympathy telegram to the Terry family. Means' final tribute to Lulu Terry noted, "her influence will abide forever because she so zealously sought to do the Lord's will."[33]

The 45 years of committed and dedicated missionary service by Lulu Sparkman Terry left a legacy of leadership which has inspired later generations of Florida Baptist young women who have responded to God's call to missionary service.

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Ismael Negrin - Laid Foundations for Florida Baptists' Hispanic Congregations

by Barbara Little Denman
A Freelance Christian writer living in Jacksonville, Florida

In the last half of the twentieth century, the political plight of the nation of Cuba greatly impacted the work of the Florida Baptist State Convention as Miami and eventually South Florida became an open door for Cubans seeking asylum from revolutions and political upheavals that crippled the Caribbean country.

Ismael Negrin was one of the persons who helped pave the way for that transition to take place. With his feet planted solidly in both nations – United States and Cuba – Negrin a missionary appointed to Cuba by the Home Mission Board (now known as the North American Mission Board) of the Southern Baptist Convention, served churches in both countries, winning converts and later helping these new Christian believers assimilate in their new American life. And by his commitment and ministry efforts Negrin became a legacy leader among his Spanish language pastoral contemporaries and those that followed.

The Foundation of Baptist Work in Cuba

Cuba was a predominately Catholic-dominated island as a result of the religious and commercial invasion by the King of Spain. Yet it was the embryonic

Ismael Sanchez Negrin (1899 – 1983) Laid Foundations for Florida Baptists' Hispanic Congregations

[EDITOR'S NOTE: This article was originally prepared for use in several published mediums, including the Florida Baptist Witness on May 18, 2005. At the time, Barbara L. Denman was director of communications for the Florida Baptist Convention. That narrative was edited and amplified with supplemental information for use in this 2019 The Journal of Florida Baptist Heritage.]

evangelical work began in the late nineteenth century through the missionary efforts of Floridian William F. Wood, and Cuban nationals Adela Fales and brother and sister laypersons Alberto and Minnie Diaz that brought the gospel to Cuba.

Three decades of revolutionary turmoil in Cuba was prevalent in the mid-nineteenth century, nurtured by rebellion against Spanish colonization, which caused a continuing exodus of Cuban exiles into three American communities: Key West, New Orleans and New York City. The migration into Key West alone resulted in approximately 1,100 Cubans living in Key West by 1870.[1] Yet, the lone Baptist church in the port town was without pastoral leadership. By the 1880s, a letter in the Georgia state Baptist newspaper, *The Christian Index*, reported on the evangelistic opportunity in Key West. This became a "Macedonian call" for William F. Wood. Although a pastor of the Baptist church in Fernandina Beach – well over 500 miles to the north of Key West – Wood felt the call of God to go to Key West with the gospel.[2] As a result of Wood's contact with W. N. Chaudoin, the corresponding secretary of the Florida Baptist State Convention's State Board of Missions, Wood was appointed by the Board in January 1883, as its missionary to Key West at an annual salary of $200.[3]

In Key West, Wood encountered hundreds of Cubans who had fled the island during the first rebellion against Spanish troops. He learned of the void in the gospel's presence on the island nation. Wood subsequently secured the financial support of the State Board of Missions, for himself and Adela

Fales – a Cuban national who was serving alongside Wood at the Key West church – to travel to Cuba to share the gospel.[4] While in Cuba, Wood encountered medical doctor Alberto Jose Diaz and his sister Minnie who as laypersons were effectively proclaiming the gospel, although they were not Baptists. Wood brought the couple back to Key West, where the brother and sister received a believers' baptism and Alberto was ordained in December, 1885. Wood, who was greatly burdened with the need to extend the gospel in Cuba, sought additional help from the Florida State Board of Missions and the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board to provide missionary personnel for Cuba. The State Board of Missions promised to provide financial support, although meager, and appointed Alberto Diaz as the Board's missionary to Cuba.[5] Space does not permit the detailing of the effective evangelistic ministry of Alberto Diaz whose work in Cuba earned him the designation as the "apostle of Cuba." Other narratives detail how Diaz led the rapid growth of the Gethsemane Baptist Church in Havana, established numerous other churches, as well as having established elementary and secondary schools.[6] Meanwhile, in 1886 the Southern Baptist Convention assigned to the Home Mission Board the task of providing missionary personnel to Cuba. By 1891 the Home Mission Board had several missionary-pastors, including Diaz, working on the island, who established the first Baptist church – The Baptist Temple.[7]

A Dynamic and Evangelistic Pastor

The on-going political unrest in Cuba continued into the twentieth century. Again in 1933 Cubans were protesting the economic unfairness fostered by the government. At the center of that political protest unrest was a Cuban missionary-pastor, whose actions provide but a glimpse at the personality of Ismael Negrin who was serving as pastor of the Baptist church in Cruces, Cuba. After years of political unrest Cuban President Gerardo Machado had resigned under pressure. "The first thing that the people of Cuba did," wrote Negrin in correspondence addressed to the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, "was to declare itself on a strike against the Cuban Electrical Company, who had been one of the companies that had gotten rich off the people and still wanted to charge the outrageous price of 25 cents for each kilowatt of fluid used. . . Only the very richest could afford electricity," recalled the pastor. The Baptist Church of Cruces could only afford to burn four lights, "not nearly enough to light the church for services," he said. So when 5,000 residents gathered in the park to protest the power and light company, they called upon the Baptist pastor to address the crowd. "Considering it a question of justice to my people," Negrin presented a robust case against the electric company. He concluded to continued applause, when a local merchant swept the smaller man on his shoulders and carried him victoriously.[8]

Dynamic, aggressive, evangelistic – such was the personality of Cuban missionary Negrin, who later served as one of the first Hispanic pastors to Florida churches in Key West, Tampa and Miami.

Negrin was a "visionary" and "showman" said David Lema, who currently serves as the director of the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary South Florida Branch in Miami. Negrin and his maternal grandfather were close friends so Lema, who served as pastor of several Miami churches and directed the Hispanic and international work for the Miami Baptist Association, was regaled with stories of the pastor by his mother. The Cuban pastor sponsored big evangelistic events in Cruces, held community festivals, parades and started a Baptist school. "He was a 'pack the pew' kind of guy," Lema added. "He would get ideas from the United States and transfer them to Cuba. That was 'nouvelle' at that time."[9]

"Negrin was very evangelistic," said renowned Cuban pastor Aurelio Travieso, who at one time was pastor of the Iglesias Bautista El Calvario, the largest Baptist congregation in Havana, and early leader of Hispanic work in Florida. "He was good at communicating with the people of the city and church." In the first half of the twentieth century, the Cuban Baptist churches played an active role in the community, Travieso explained in his native Spanish. Negrin reached the community, communicating through a radio program and other means. "There was much evidence of the Lord's work," he recalled.[10]

Antonio Ramos, who once served as associate pastor of the Renacer Spanish Iglesias of Pembroke Pines, was one of those whom Negrin led to the Lord and mentored in the ministry. During a three-year evangelistic movement spurred by Negrin, Ramos and others traveled to camps and other towns near Cruces, going house to house to share the gospel.

The evangelistic effort resulted in 1,727 conversions, he said. Thirty of the men involved in the evangelistic effort would become pastors, many of them, such as Ramos and home missionary Anibal Espinosa, would serve later in Florida.[11]

Religious freedom was being suppressed by the Castro regime, many Baptist pastors and others fled to Florida

Negrin mentored these young men to prepare them for ministry service as pastors. In letters sent to the Home Mission Board, Negrin decried the lack of seminary education available for these young men in Cuba. The young men were sent to the Instituto Biblico in Costa Rica to further their theological training.[12] Although the Cuban Baptist seminary had been opened between 1906 and 1929 in Havana, apparently Negrin was unaware that the school had since been reopened with the help of the Home Mission Board. As a result, Negrin encouraged his young students to travel outside the country to a school recommended by a pastor friend.[13]

January, 1959, marked the latest political upheaval in the island nation with the Fidel Castro-led Cuban Revolution. One observer noted the people's revolt "was hailed as the long-awaited victory of democracy. However, it proved to be a false vessel of freedom. Its false promises for a new and free society resonated with the goals of the growing evangelical faiths that were taking root in Cuba."[14] Unfortunately, by the early 1960s, once it was

recognized that religious freedom was being suppressed by the Castro regime, many Baptist pastors and others fled to Florida. By then, Negrin was serving as a pastor in Miami and helped many of them resettle in the United States. His daughter, Ann Negrin Garcia, estimated that her father helped as many as 200 Cuban refugees, getting them Visas and resettling them in their new land. "I still get letters of gratitude," she said in a 2004 letter.[15]

"A Bridge Builder" in Miami

Negrin's bilingual ability served as a "bridge" for the Cuban Baptists, Lema said, providing the transition that the Cubans and especially the pastors needed in their new country. "He was fluent and comfortable in both worlds," Lema said, and spoke perfect English without an accent. His wife, Bessie, an Anglo from North Carolina, gave him an entree into the American society that few other Cubans could enjoy. "He knew how everything worked in the U.S. When pastors came over, he readily helped them," Lema recalled. This group of pastors served as a network that jump-started Baptist work among the Hispanics in Miami. "They were the standard bearers," said Lema. "They served as pastors of the largest churches in Cuba," immigrating because of political pressure that led many of their fellow pastors to serve time in Castro's prisons. Their presence in Miami allowed Florida Baptists to aggressively start congregations to meet the influx of the Cuban refugees coming to the city after Castro took office.[16]

Negrin's Early Years

A carpenter's son, Negrin was born in Las Palma, Canary Islands, Spain, on April 22, 1899. At age five his family moved to Cuba where after settling in Guayos, he began attending the Baptist school there. After making a profession of faith in 1919, Negrin said he "at once felt the desire to preach the Gospel." After attending the Colegio Cubano-Americano, he attended the Cuban Baptist Seminary and graduated in the last class before the seminary was closed in 1929.[17]

Negrin was appointed as a missionary of the Home Mission Board on September 15, 1924 to work in Havana. In 1925, he married Bessie Harrill (b. March 23, 1900), a native of Lincolntown, North Carolina. Bessie had been serving as a missionary to Havana for the Home Mission Board since 1920, teaching school and performing evangelistic work. "They were very unique," recalled daughter Ann Negrin Garcia. "My father had a tremendous vision of the work and my mother was a doer of the work and the Lord blessed abundantly. Everything they started multiplied and multiplied beyond imagination."[18]

At one point in their lives, however, the Negrins found a ministry field that they were unable to effectively affect. From 1927 to 1929, the Home Mission Board sent the couple to Tampa to begin a goodwill ministry center in Ybor City, a Tampa suburb where Cubans working in the cigar industry lived. The Southern Baptist Good Will Center sought to provide Bible-centered and Christ-centered activities built around the needs of the Hispanic community by providing nursery school and

kindergarten; classes in Bible study, adult education, and homemaking, among other ministries.[19] As pastor of the predominately Hispanic Clark Memorial Baptist Church in Ybor City, Negrin led weekly worship services and did evangelistic outreach. In addition to her homemaking responsibilities, Bessie worked in the goodwill center teaching children and teaching the Bible to the women. The couple only worked in the center for two years before returning to Cuba in 1931 where they were appointed by the Home Mission Board to Cruces.[20] By now the couple had

Negrin Family - Daughter Ann, Son Ismael, Jr., Spouse Bessie, and Ismael, Sr.

two children. A son Ismael, Jr. who was born before they left Cuba. And their daughter, Ann, was born while they were serving in Ybor City.

Ministry at Cruces, Cuba

The long, creative and evangelistic ministry in Cruces resulted in hundreds of converts as well as men and women called out for vocational Christian service. During their ministry, Sunday school attendance at

Cruces grew from 36 in 1931 to more than 200 in 1940. The Negrins started Bible studies in nearby communities, engaging more than 500 persons in worship each week. In 1939, the Iglesias Bautista at Cruces, baptized 21 new converts, making it third highest in the number of baptisms in the Western Cuba Baptist Convention, behind the Baptist Temple in Havana, 57, and the lone Baptist church in Caibarien, 35.[21]

During their ministry in Cruces, the Negrins engaged in regular correspondence with Una Roberts Lawrence (b. 1893 – d. 1972) who was a missions' study editor for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board from 1926 to 1947. Home Mission Board supported missionary-pastors were encouraged to provide "stories" which would be used to keep home mission needs and opportunities before Southern Baptists. In their letters, most often the Negrins would recount both the mundane and the spiritual victories at the Cruces church, as well as other evangelistic events that Ismael had led in the areas surrounding Cruces. Sometimes they made specific requests for funding of special needs, such as underwriting the cost of Cuban students going to the United States to study.[22] Additionally, the couple would send vignettes on specific persons or events which served as the results of gospel outreach efforts. Typical of Pastor Negrin's solicitation for financial support, he wrote: "The money you invest in missions is invested in souls. They are shown the Cross and the Blood of the Savior and are taught to know and love Jesus and leave darkness and superstition. It is worthwhile, are you willing to help them out of

darkness and lead them on to Him?"[23] These spiritually motivational articles where intended for use by Mrs. Lawrence in missions' promotion, in the *Home Missions* magazine and state Baptist newspapers.

A Return to Ministry in Key West and Miami

In 1947, the Negrins were brought back to the United States and appointed by the Home Mission Board to help assist missionary Mary A. Taylor at the Good Will Center in Key West. Upon this entry into the U.S., Negrin applied for and was granted naturalization as a United States citizen. The couple worked with resident missionary Taylor, who had started and directed the center since 1940, and which was the first Hispanic work in South Florida. Following an evangelistic revival conducted by Abdiel Silva of Tampa, several Hispanics were baptized at the First Baptist Church, Key West. These new converts were the nucleus of the Hispanic mission congregation established by the Home Mission Board to reach the increasing Spanish population. Negrin was designated as pastor of the mission church, where Ismael and Bessie served for the next 14 years.[24] In 1948, the Home Mission Board constructed a building on Watson Street in Key West to accommodate the Hispanic congregation. The mission church continued to meet there until 1953 when the congregation moved to a new building on White Street.[25] The White Street Baptist Church was subsequently deeded to the Florida Baptist Convention.

Ann Negrin Garcia recalled Key West as one of the "the hardest fields, for no one was there to start the work. The center eventually drew over 120 kids – Anglos and Hispanic, and my father started services in Spanish and English. Twice the HMB had to build new facilities." She went on to recall, "I remember teaching the members how to pray in small groups. And the joy in their faces when they prayed aloud in church."[26]

The post-Castro era exodus of Cuban refugees into Florida took the family to Miami in 1959, where they were poised to help the pastors and their families relocate in Florida. The Negrins were assigned to Miami where he became director of the Spanish department (which was how the early ministry to Hispanics was organized within existing predominately Anglo congregations) at Stanton Memorial Baptist Church. The influx of Cubans and other Hispanics into the neighborhoods around the church, in time, became "the heart of Miami's Spanish-speaking community," *The Miami News* reported.[27] Part of that resettlement was encouraged by the welcoming ministries offered by the Miami church. The couple started a Hispanic kindergarten which "attracted many parents seeking a place for their children," Garcia recalled. Again, using his flair for the dramatic, Negrin started a refugee choir which attracted much attention locally and drew many Hispanics to the church to hear the group, she recalled.[28] On April 5, 1965, after serving 45 years with the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board in both Cuba and Florida, the Negrins retired from the Stanton Memorial congregation.

In their retirement years, the Negrins returned to Key West where they continued evangelistic work and volunteering in their church home. Bessie died on Feb. 11, 1977, after a fall while preparing boxes for the elderly in the county home. Negrin moved back to Miami, remarried and died July 25, 1983. He and Bessie are both buried in Key West.[29]

Calling Ismael Negrin "an unsung hero in the pages of our Florida Baptist history," Lema said, "He made a difference behind the scenes."[30]

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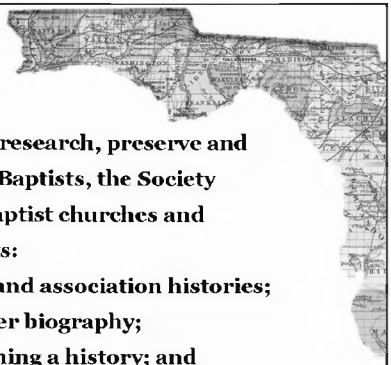
Serving Churches



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- **the research of pastoral leader biography;**
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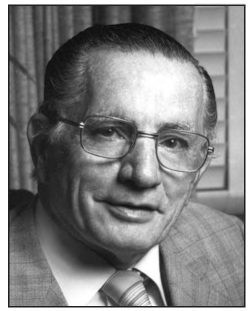
Jeremiah M. Hayman – The Legacy of a Central Florida Pioneer Missionary-Preacher

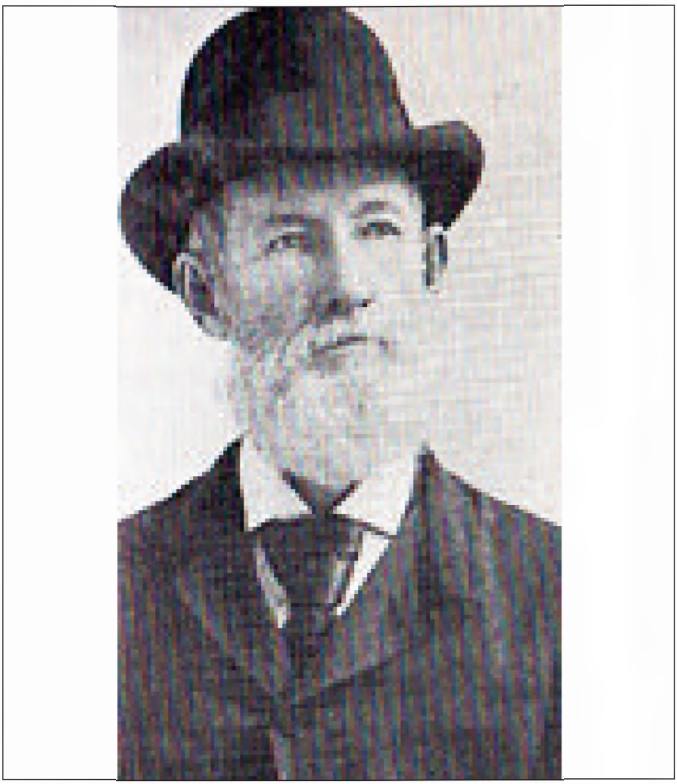


by Hampton Dunn
(b. 1916; d. 2002)

The parents of the Reverend Jeremiah M. Hayman were "irreligious and worldly-minded,"[1] according to the biographer of the great pioneer Baptist preacher who spread the gospel in the wild woods of a primitive and jungle-like Florida during the nineteenth century. The writer of the life sketch on Hayman was Owen Judson (more commonly referred to as O.J.) Frier, a Baptist minister himself.[2] He also was the son-in-law of Hayman.[3] He wrote fondly of his in-law, that "I have long known and loved as a father."[4]

The pioneering commitment and perseverance of Jeremiah Hayman to share the gospel in many of central Florida's counties in the early nineteenth century established a legacy of missionary-preacher leadership. Hayman's groundwork set a standard for other itinerant preachers who followed and filled the pulpits of the churches he organized.

When young Jeremiah was about ten years old "a sad Providence" turned his mom and dad away from their sinful ways. They lost their second child, Frier reported,[5] and the Haymans, James and Delila Martin, were converted and united with the Primitive



Jeremiah M. Hayman (1822 – 1902) A Central Florida Pioneer Missionary-Preacher

[EDITOR'S NOTE: This article was originally prepared as a paper that was read at the annual meeting of the Florida Baptist Historical Society held May 3-4, 1996, at Stetson University. At the time, Hampton Dunn was a feature journalist for the Tampa Tribune and was a prolific book author on Florida people, places and events. He was the vice-chairman of the Historical Society board of directors at the time he presented this paper. That paper titled, "J. M. Hayman: Pioneer Baptist Preacher in Frontier Florida," was subsequently published as a monograph by the Florida Baptist Historical Society, which retained all publication rights. That narrative was edited for use in this 2019 The Journal of Florida Baptist Heritage.]

Baptists. The young frontier lad had only scraps of an education. What limited schooling he got was in "poor apologies for schools."

Hayman was born December 28, 1822, in Bryan County, Georgia, about 30 miles west of Savannah.[6] In 1837, the family moved to Madison County, in North Florida, which abutted the Georgia border. It was while living there that both Jeremiah and his father joined a volunteer quasi-military company, under the command of Captain M.C. Livingston, to engage in the war against the Seminole Indians. His biographer explained what Jeremiah experienced:

> *"While old enough to be about grown, he was yet a mere boy in size. In the Army he was exposed to vices incident to Army life, but the advice and warning of a godly mother and the natural repulsiveness of much of this abandoned wickedness, to him, kept him from engaging in these grosser evils..."*[7]

In 1839, Hayman joined another volunteer company under Captain William I. Bailey, at Magnolia, Florida, near Tallahassee. He joined for a term of four months. He soon suffered a severe spell of sickness that caused him to almost despair of seeing home again. But he served his time as a non-commissioned officer and was honorably discharged.[8]

The young soldier returned home, hoping to pursue an education. But that was not to be. Schools in the area were primitive. Besides, his father, a poor man, and Jeremiah, the only boy old enough to work,

was kept at home to work the farm instead of going to school. Still, Hayman "thirsted" for an education. So determined was he to learn, he would often sit up late of nights after days of hard labor, reading and writing, trying to improve himself. He acquired good books to the extent of his means. His favorite book was *The Bible*! He was truly a self-educated man. At the same time he developed Christian character.[9]

In January 1843, he with his father, moved to central Florida, settling at Lake Lindsey, in Hernando County. They had taken benefit of the Armed Occupation Act of 1842 that offered 160 acres of land to armed settlers who built a house and farmed at least five acres for five years.[10] The Congressional-approved land giveaway was designed to encourage immigration south of the Withlacoochee River.

Although newly settled in central Florida, the Haymans were involved in a lawsuit back in Troupville, Georgia. The son was summoned to testify.[11] While there, his horse was seized for an unpaid debt his father owed. He also sold his saddle and started back to Florida on foot. The young man walked all the way to Jacksonville. He had a little money, so he boarded a boat that travelled down the St. Johns River to Palatka. From there he hitched rides when he could, and walked most of the time to his home at Lake Lindsey.

He helped his dad fix up his homestead, then young Hayman built his own cabin nearby. Besides reading the Bible and other good books, Jeremiah also attended preaching services, both the variety of Methodist and Baptist. Thus, his son-in-law wrote in

the biography of Hayman, "he became impressed with the duty and importance of repenting of his sins." And, Frier quoted Hayman's words from his journal:

> *"...For the last two years...I was a moralist. But the gospel which was conveyed to my understanding by the living ministry and the Holy Scriptures, and an examination of my dangerous situation as a sinner before God, urged me to repent of my great transgressions, especially of the sin I had so fondly indulged, that of self-righteousness. I had faith, but it was in my own good works. I indulged that hope that I should be saved, but it was not through Christ. I was conscious of my imperfections, but it was not for Christ's sake that I asked God to forgive my sins. Oh, how mistaken was I! Yet, how sure, in my own view. Thanks be to God; I was not left to myself. I plainly saw there was no other name given under heaven or among men whereby I could be saved, but only in and through the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."*[12]

It was a funeral sermon preached by the Reverend John Tucker, an itinerant missionary Baptist minister, that finally converted Hayman. That very afternoon, July 7, 1844, he and one of his sisters were baptized by the Reverend Mr. Tucker in Lake Lindsey.[13] The following year, 1845, the Eden Baptist Church at Lake Lindsey was constituted.[14] In that same year, Florida was admitted to statehood![15] Hayman was an active church member, became the

church clerk, and later, he was ordained a deacon.

Soon, he was hearing from God's Spirit the call to preach. But he realized he lacked an adequate education. The urge to preach, however, would not go away. He was living alone, and was lonely. He made a proposition and pledge to God: If God would bless him with a good wife, he would work full-time as a minister.[16] Soon that prayer was answered in the person of Miss Martha J. Carlton. In September, 1845, Jeremiah Hayman was on his way to Georgia on business. At a meeting in Alachua County, when he saw Miss Carlton, his heart skipped a beat. He learned that she was of a different denomination than he. His future son-in-law picks up the story: "On his return home he determined to write Miss Carlton a letter, stating his desire to make and cultivate her acquaintance, which was answered favorably..." The result soon was an engagement to be married. Nearly a year later, the wedding took place on August 27, 1846, with a Methodist preacher, the Reverend Thomas W. Cooper, performing the ceremony.[17] The young bridegroom established a family altar the first evening they spent in their humble home, which they named, "Rural Cottage."

What about that "deal" he made with God? It became evident early on that God had, indeed, blessed him with a "good wife." However, Hayman stalled on his end of the bargain. Then calamity hit the young couple. Their first child died at birth. In January, 1849, a second child, a girl, was born. In November that same year, the baby died. Nothing Hayman undertook seemed to prosper.[18] These events pricked his conscience about his unfulfilled

vow. About this time, Mrs. Hayman changed denominations, becoming dissatisfied with her sprinkling in infancy. She became a Baptist by water immersion. Frier reported Hayman "was now very much encouraged to take up the cross and engage in the work he had promised God to do."[19]

"The Lord has never had a more faithful servant."
- D. B. McKay

Shortly after, Hayman sold his cottage on Lake Lindsey and moved to a place on the Alafia River in Hillsborough County. He learned of a Baptist church there that did not have a regular preacher. Hayman knew his duty was clear. The church members asked him to preach. On June 18, 1851, he preached his first sermon, taking John 1:29 as his text: "The next day John saw Jesus coming to him, and said 'Here is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.'" (Good News version) Hayman was ordained as a minister on November 10, 1851, at a session of the Baptist association in Hernando County. The Reverend Jeremiah M. Hayman was now a full-fledged minister of the gospel!

D. B. McKay, the noted Tampa newspaper publisher and Florida historian, summed up Hayman's life work, stating: "The Lord has never had a more faithful servant."[20] What a beautiful testimonial to this man of God! Hayman was living at Alafia, in Hillsborough County, at the time of his ordination. It was there, according to McKay, on June 18, 1851, he preached his first sermon as a minister at a pastor-less Baptist church.[21] But Frier said in his

first month of work, in addition to preaching for the Salem Church, near where Plant City is now located, and at Indian Pond, afterward known as Socrum Settlement, in Polk County, where Bethel Church was later organized. Frier having noted this same sequence, agreed with McKay on the date and place where his father-in-law first preached.[22]

Quoting from the biography written by the Reverend O.J. Frier, who at one time served as pastor of the First Baptist Church at Lakeland,[23] Hayman preached for a group of blacks at Manatee, near Bradenton. And in January, 1852, he commenced preaching at Thonotosassa, in Hillsborough County, and in the following March he preached at Old Tampa, then called Clear Water (two words), for which he received $.50 in cash, the first pay for his work. At his next appointment there, in April, the collection plate contents picked up, and Hayman's "take home" pay was $3.67![24] [Today the city of Clearwater, although it did not re-locate, is now a part of Pinellas County. In Hayman's day all of the land area of current Pinellas was a part of Hillsborough County].[25]

Also, in March 1852, Hayman commenced preaching at Bethesda Church in Hernando County. In June that year, he started preaching at Peace Creek (formerly known as Peas Creek), near the present site of Bartow, in Polk County, where he received the third amount

Peas Creek Baptist Church, Bartow

contributed to his work – the sum of $6.25.[26] At the end of his first year's ministry, Hayman's personal journal revealed he had traveled 1,450 miles. Bear in mind this was done by horseback, maybe some was horse and buggy in woody areas. He preached 69 sermons that memorable first year, had baptized 28 persons – and had received $12.62 in pay.[27]

It is worthy to note, that the Alafia Baptist Church, where Hayman preached his first sermon, was still standing, at least as late as 1992[28] [at the time this paper was prepared]. The church is now called the Hurrah Baptist Church named after the creek that borders the property and whose waters are used to baptize the new church members.[29] Old tombstones in the historic cemetery bear such names of notable Florida pioneers as Carlton, Hendry, Alderman, Pollack, among others.[30]

In 1853 Hayman was employed by the Alachua Baptist Association as a missionary, keeping up his former preaching commitments, however, and adding such others as he could.[31] Included were Long Pond (now Valrico) in Hillsborough County, and Spring Hill, near Brooksville, in Hernando County. That year he baptized 13 persons and received in compensation $63.[32] In 1854 and 1855 he was employed by the Southern Baptist Convention's Domestic Mission Board, as an itinerant missionary to establish new preaching points (which would be realized as a new church) while continuing his former preaching commitments.

He wrote in his journal: ". . . for these two years I would sometimes preach in the woods, being on the frontier, and very few schoolhouses or meeting

places to use. But the Lord seemed to bless my humble labors, and I was greatly encouraged to go on in the discharge of my duty as a minster of the gospel."[33] During the two-year period, he preached 186 sermons, traveled 3,094 miles, baptized 42 persons---and received about $235 in pay.[34]

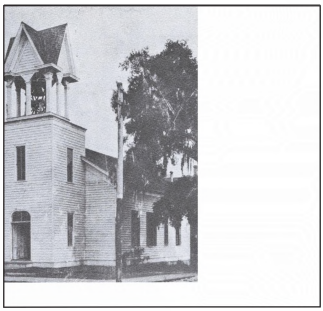
Hayman lived in Bartow, which was still called Fort Blount. As the Second Seminole Indian War (1835 – 1842) was still raging, and the presence of hostile Indians surrounded Bartow caused him to move to Tampa in 1855,[35] for the protection of his family. To support his family, he took employment as a carpenter and painter.[36] However, Brother Hayman continued to preach the gospel in Tampa and nearby settlements. In Tampa services were held sometimes in the courthouse and sometimes in a room in the Masonic Hall.[37]

The Haymans remained in Tampa through "the terrible plague, yellow fever," in 1858 until 1862.[38] Many residents sought refuge in the country, but Hayman remained in town, "considering it the best thing I could do for the cause of Christ and the good of humanity." The minster reported, "The death rate was high. Every dissipated person who took the fever died in three days. I escaped the plague myself. My wife had it but got well. My mother-in-law and one daughter died." [39] Hayman told of one incident he experienced in caring for the sick and dying:

> *"In my rounds...I found a father unconscious; he had been so for 24 hours, and no one to do anything for him. His jaws were set from the excessive nausea and vomiting caused by the*

fever...one can readily imagine his filthy condition. With some help, I made him more comfortable by bathing him and changing his clothes as well as that of his bed, procured the services of a physician, and in the course of 36 hours, I found him conscious, and he thanked me for saving his life. He recovered entirely from the attack..."[40]

Reverend Hayman is credited with organizing and being the first pastor of the First Baptist Church of Tampa, after the city was declared free of the yellow fever infection.[41] But in his own diary, Hayman wrote: "In July 1860, Dr. Joseph S. Baker came to Tampa, and we organized the First Baptist Church," thus sharing with Dr. Baker the credit.[42] Hayman is listed as the church's first pastor,[43] in 1861.[44]



First Baptist Church, Tampa

Hayman told of baptizing in 1857 a "John Brown" whom he identified as a U.S. soldier and he regarded him as "a peculiar case." He continued:

"He knew he would die soon and said he wanted to be baptized. After hearing his experience of grace, and he being too feeble to go to the water, I had a large, long bathtub filled sufficiently full of water in his room, and two men took him from his bed, sat him in the water, and I baptized him as completely as if

he had been in a river or bay. He seemed happy and said he felt resigned to the will of the Lord..."[45]

In her book, T*estimony to Pioneer Baptists: The Origin and Development of the Gillette First Baptist Church,* Mrs. Marvis R. Snell wrote this tribute to Rev. Hayman:

"God needed a man. He needed a powerful man, strong in his body and strong in the spirit. God needed a man who would endure hardship and pain, heartbreak and sorrow. God needed a man who was tender with love and compassion for his fellow man and one who was strong willed, to do that which was right in the sight of Him... God saw the man he needed in Jeremiah M. Hayman..."[46]

Today, the First Baptist Church of Tampa is a thriving metropolitan church with many long-time members and their families still faithfully supporting it. In 1984, when the church celebrated its 125th anniversary, the then pastor, Dr. Marvin R. Gibson, wrote these words in the addenda to William Sherrill's history of the church: "The First Baptist Church of Tampa thanks God for its past and asks His continued blessing on its future. The original little band of believers – twenty-three men and women, both black and white, slave and free – could not have envisioned the present impressive membership and property..."[47]

Historian D. B. McKay recounted an experience of Hayman's in Tampa, but ran a

disclaimer that he could not "vouch for the authenticity of the story, only was repeating the way it was told to him":

> *"Reverend Hayman, then in the prime of manhood, met a tough citizen on a Tampa street, greeted him pleasantly and invited him to attend a service to be held that night. The tough citizen responded with a gross insult. Reverend Hayman shucked his coat, placed it on a bench and addressed it: 'Lay there, old Baptist, while I give the rascal the thrashing he deserves.' And that he proceeded to do."*[48]

"He was a man 'full of faith and the Holy Ghost"
- O.J. Frier

Hayman moved from Tampa in 1862 to his former residence near Bartow where he resided until his death in 1902.[49] I defer to Florida Baptist historian, Dr. Earl Joiner, who summarized Hayman's life in the Florida Baptist history book as follows: "His subsequent ministry was to be spent in DeSoto, Manatee, Hillsborough, Hernando, Polk and Pasco Counties . . . Traveling 38,000 miles through difficult terrain he ministered sacrificially to hundreds of isolated areas and established churches in Bartow (originally called Peas Creek – 1854), in Tampa (1860) and in Plant City (1866)."[50]

In conclusion, we cite from the memorial sketch on Hayman's life and works written by his son-in-law, the Rev. O.J. Frier – as chronicled in Norma Frazier's narrative on circuit riding preachers – this lovely tribute to the pioneer Baptist preacher:

"He was one of the happiest, most cheerful Christians I ever knew, and was especially during the latter period of his life, notwithstanding his blindness and other infirmities, was this noticeable. It was a benediction to be with and talk with him on the subject of religion. He always found so many things to be thankful to God for, and his mouth was continually filled with praises to God for his goodness. He was a man 'full of faith and the Holy Ghost'...How beautiful it is for a man to die upon the walls of Zion! To be called like a watch-work and weary sentinel to put his armor off and rest in Heaven."[51]

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Frank Fowler - The Legacy of a Florida Baptist International Missionary

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Answered Prayer for a Florida Missionary

The State Board of Missions report to the 1899 Florida Baptist Convention states, "We look forward to the time when Florida and Stetson University will be represented in the foreign field, may it not be long we have to look!"[1] God's answer to the prayer, Frank J. Fowler, attended that annual session and answered the call to international missions within five years. Such an action, which resulted in a life-long commitment ministering on a foreign field, created a leadership legacy that inspired and reaffirmed Florida Baptists' commitment to missions.

Florida Baptists developed slowly in comparison with neighboring states Baptist conventions in terms of leadership. Florida Baptists, having only three associations and no state convention, failed to send a representative to the formation of the Southern Baptist Convention in May 1845. Furthermore, early Florida Baptists lacked the legendary leaders of sister conventions. No Florida Baptist leader exhibited the visionary convention dream of W. B. Johnson of South Carolina; the organizational influence of Jesse Mercer of Georgia; the parliamentarian skill of Georgia's P. H. Mell; or

Frank J. Fowler (1870 – 1933) Florida Baptists' First International Missionary

[EDITOR'S NOTE: This article was originally published in the 2002 The Journal of Florida Baptist Heritage.]

the missionary statesmanship of I. T. Tichenor of Alabama.[2]

Florida was a Baptist mission field throughout most of the nineteenth century. This unique contextual factor explains Florida's delayed entry into the mission enterprise. The Baptist women of Florida founded the Woman's Missionary Union of the Florida Baptist State Convention in 1894, several years after the SBC auxiliary and sister state conventions organized women's work. The Foreign Mission Board (now known as the International Mission Board) of the Southern Baptist Convention appointed Frank James Fowler, the first native Florida Baptist foreign missionary, and his Tennessee wife Daisy on July 18, 1904, to the new mission field of Argentina.[3] Florida's first missionary received appointment fifty-nine years after the formation of the Southern Baptist Convention and fifty years after the establishment of the Florida Baptist State Convention.

Early Life of Frank Fowler

The Fowler family settled in Virginia prior to the Revolutionary War. The family gradually migrated south to North Carolina and South Carolina before some family members settled in Melrose, Florida, around 1850. Frank J. Fowler was the oldest of ten children born into a devout Baptist family on November 13, 1870. His parents, Hugh J. Fowler and Mary (Polly) B. Fowler, faithfully served the Lord in the quarter-time Eliam Baptist Church. Hugh and his brother served as deacons and actively participated in the Santa Fe Baptist Association. The Fowler family

lived on a large orange plantation and operated a small merchant store.

Frank came to a personal relationship with Christ when he was sixteen years old during revival services conducted by Rev. H. M. King of Gainesville in November 1886. The local postmaster invited Fowler to visit him prior to the revival service and talked to the young man about salvation.[4] During his appointment interview before the Foreign Mission Board, Fowler described his conversion experience. "Deep conviction came upon me: I realized that I was a sinner in the sight of God and for three or four days was very unhappy. Finally, peace came with my trust in Jesus Christ, and I have been supremely happy ever since."[5]

Despite the fact that Fowler's pastor, H. M. King, served as one of the original trustees of DeLand University, later named the John B. Stetson University, Fowler attended Mercer University in Macon, Georgia, and earned his Bachelor of Arts degree. During his student days at Mercer, Frank and his brother Thomas received a telegram from their father requesting the young men to come home because a devastating freeze destroyed the family's fruit plantation. Despite the family reversal of fortunes, Frank steadfastly refused to quit. "Well," said Frank, "the Lord sent me up here, and He'll just have to help me stay, for I'm staying."[6]

During his student days at Mercer in the 1890's, Fowler experienced a call to foreign missions. As Dr. James G. Chastain shared his missionary experiences in Mexico with the Mercer students, Frank received a missionary impulse toward foreign

missions.[7] Frank regularly preached in his student days and according to his appointment testimony "did a great deal of missionary work among the factory people."[8] During one summer vacation, the Santa Fe Baptist Association, as noted in their *Annual*, employed Fowler as a summer missionary.

In addition to his missionary impulse, Fowler met his first wife during his Mercer days, Mattie Aiken from Barnesville, Georgia. After Frank completed one year at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, the couple married on the campus of Mercer University on December 23, 1897. In 1901, the couple celebrated the birth of their daughter Elvey.[9] Tragically, Mattie died during Frank's pastorate at Starke, Florida. Because of her health, Elvey never traveled to Argentina with her father and stepmother. After the death of her maternal grandmother, the Foreign Mission Board assisted Frank in the care of his daughter. For a brief period, Elvey lived at the "Margaret Home" in Greenville, South Carolina, a home for the children of missionaries. As well, the Board authorized annual payments to Frank's sister Hattie for the care of Elvey. Elvey attended Columbia College, Lake City, Florida, and taught school in Lake Butler. She died in 1922 after three years of marriage to Clarence Williams.[10]

Fowler's Early Ministry

After their December 1897 marriage, Fowler began serving as a pastor in the Santa Fe Baptist Association. Fowler served the Waldo, New Hope, Orange Height, LaCrosse, Lake Butler, and Starke

churches. Fowler's churches experienced significant growth in missions-giving and baptisms.

Between 1898 and 1902, Fowler served the following positions in the Santa Fe Baptist Association: Temperance Campaign Committee, Associational Clerk, Education Commission, Deceased Ministers/Deacons Committee, and the Missions Committee. The Association annually elected him to serve as a delegate to the Florida Baptist State Convention and Southern Baptist Convention.[11] He preached three associational sermons from the Biblical texts: John 14:14; Jeremiah 8, and 1 Corinthians 3:9. In 1900, Fowler received $50 from the Florida Baptist Convention for his mission work. At the associational meeting, he reported that he worked full-time November-April and part-time April-October. Fowler reported that he traveled 800 miles, preached 80 sermons, attended 60 prayer meetings, delivered 100 religious talks, baptized 21, restored 12, distributed 300 tracks, and collected $60.39 for missions.[12]

In the fall of 1902 the recent widower Frank Fowler returned to The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Fowler remained at Southern Seminary for an additional year; however, he left the seminary without graduating.

In 1903 Frank became the pastor of Trenton Street Baptist Church in Harriman, Tennessee. On October 26, 1903, Frank married church member Daisy M. Cate. The "romantic" Frank took Daisy to the Tennessee Baptist Convention for their honeymoon.[13]

When asked about his qualifications for missionary service by the FMB candidate examiners, Fowler responded that his greatest ministerial strength was in the area of evangelism. "I have always had a burning desire to see souls saved, and if I have any especial [sic] strength it is in evangelistic work. My Sunday night services have always been entirely given to this work, and the Lord has blessed them highly."[14] The statistical record of the churches Fowler served as pastor support his modest claim. In the eighteen months prior to his Foreign Mission Board candidate examination, Fowler baptized 105 individuals into the church membership of Trenton Street Baptist Church.

"Come Over Here": The Missionary Call

From the time that Frank Fowler heard Dr. Chastain speak about missions in Mexico, whenever he envisioned God's call to missions he thought of Mexico. Daisy, however, desired to serve on the new field of Argentina. Daisy's choice appears to be the wiser choice in light of contextual factors in Mexico and Argentina.[15] The Mexican contextual factors involved missionary strife and revolution; the Argentine contextual factors included Frank's seminary relationship with the earliest missionaries appointed to Argentina. In addition, the early Southern Baptist missionaries benefitted from the victory achieved by Baptist leaders in the cause of religious freedom in Argentina.[16]

Southern Baptists entered the new field of Argentina in 1903. Because of indebtedness Southern Baptists had not entered a new mission field in a

decade. The impetus for Argentine missions came from two of Frank Fowler's seminary classmates, Dr. Sydney Sowell and Reverend Joseph Hart. When Sowell and Hart requested appointment to Argentina, FMB Corresponding Secretary R. J. Willingham responded, "Boys, don't you know that our Board has no work in Argentina? Why don't you apply to go to some field where we are working?"[17] When the FMB refused to appoint them to Argentina, Southern Seminary students and faculty raised $1,000 for Argentina missions and the FMB acquiesced. Hart recounts, "What the Seminary did had such a stimulating effect on our churches that the board closed the year without debt and telegraphed Sowell to come to Savannah, where the convention was meeting. He was there appointed in May 1903, and sailed September 23, 1903, as the first missionary of the Southern Baptist Convention to Argentina."[18]

The next year the Fowlers joined the Sowells, the Harts, and the Cawthons, the former pastor of Ancient City Baptist Church in St. Augustine, in the new mission field. The new missionaries in Argentina lived in the home of Swiss transplant Dr. Pablo Beeson who arrived in Argentina in 1881. Beeson almost single-handedly won the religious freedom battle. As a result of the victory, the aged Beeson said to the missionaries, "Boys, the door is opened for you. Go and take the land for Jesus."[19]

Missionary Service in Argentina

The career of Frank and Daisy Fowler may be divided into four periods corresponding to the four geographical locales in which they ministered.

Buenos Aires (1904-1905)

At the time, the Foreign Mission Board provided neither orientation nor language study for new missionaries. In fact, for the Fowlers, the entire missionary appointment process progressed quickly from application to appointment to departure. Frank Fowler applied for missionary service June 13, 1904; the Fowlers received appointment July 17; and departed for Argentina October 26, 1904. From August-October 1904, the Fowlers lived in Melrose and made themselves available to talk about missions in local churches in the Santa Fe Baptist Association. Newly arrived missionaries received a mentoring relationship from the experienced missionaries. When the Fowlers arrived in the new field of Argentina, however, all the missionaries were novices.

Because of the lack of language study, Frank never developed adeptness in the Spanish language. Although the following incident is undated, the story illustrates the difficulty Fowler had with language. "Mr. Fowler liked to tell on himself the story of how he went to a fishing village to preach and in his enthusiasm he confused the words 'pescador' which means fisherman, and 'pecador' which means sinner. He told the group of fishermen, that 'pescadors' could not enter into the Kingdom."[20]

In Buenos Aires, all the missionary couples cooperated in the formation of First Baptist Church. The missionaries rented space in an old feed store, bought used furniture, and practiced door-to-door visitation to start the church. In addition, Fowler assisted King Cawthon in the establishment of

Constitution Baptist Church and assisted Sowell in the establishment of Once Baptist Church.

Santa Fe (1906-1910)

"A great door, and effective, is open to us and there are many adversaries," wrote J. L. Hart in the 1907 Report of the Argentine Mission.[21] Hart identified "Romanism" and the exorbitant financial costs as the two primary adversaries. Yet, the Fowlers faced head-on the adversary of "Romanism" as they pioneered mission work in the city of Santa Fe, the headquarters of the Jesuits. The economic situation entailed a four-month period before Fowler located an affordable hall for a meeting location. In Santa Fe, Fowler succeeded where previous evangelicals failed. In 1908 Fowler, serving in the role of mission secretary, wrote, "We came here a little over eighteen months ago against the protest of quite a number of Christian workers. This is headquarters for the Jesuit company. Several other workers have tried to open work here, but on account of persecution had to abandon it."[22] This Baptist success in Santa Fe functioned as a constant source of amazement for other evangelical groups.[23]

The Fowlers' mission service progressed in several significant areas in their Santa Fe ministry. First, as with all the missionary couples in Argentina, they emphasized "personal work." "The work in Argentina continues to be largely personal – that is to say, very few attend the public services who are not first cultivated by some worker."[24] Second, the Fowlers successfully adapted American methods into Argentine culture, specifically they experienced

success using B.Y.P.U. in a ministry to young people. Third, the Fowlers quickly recruited, employed, and trained native Argentines for Christian work. Frank taught theology, church history, hermeneutics, and homiletics to Argentine workers. Fourth, they successfully reached out to prominent families. "We have been blessed by seeing whole families baptized at one time. In the work of Santa Fe we have some of the best families. Several own their own homes and are patrons of their own businesses."[25] Fifth, because of church starts in "outstations," Fowler led the Argentine Baptists to form an association of churches in 1908.

In the early twentieth century, missionaries returned to the United States for furlough in ten-year intervals. Older missionaries and the FMB regarded missionaries unable to complete a ten-year term as weak.[26] Yet, after six years, Frank Fowler requested and received a furlough from the FMB. Perhaps this early furlough portended the medical problems the Fowlers later developed in Argentina. Yet, the Fowlers regarded furloughs as interruptions to their missionary work.[27] During their first furlough the missionary work experienced several set-backs. The church at Santa Fe entered into a difficult time because of the lack of peace and harmony. In addition, an Argentine Christian worker employed by Frank Fowler led a new church in Parana to separate itself from Southern Baptist missionaries.[28]

Rosario (1911-1917)

When the Fowlers returned from furlough, they relocated to Rosario. Frank utilized creative

missions' methods in the large industrial city. Fowler was one of the first missionaries to use transparencies using a gas illuminated projector.[29] During the summers, he used a large tent for revival services. The Fowlers started a Christian school with an Argentine headmaster which enrolled sixty-five students. They located a colony of German Baptists and requested the FMB to send a German-speaking missionary to establish a school for the colonists. Daisy Fowler effectively reached out to the women. In 1915, fourteen women out of a class of fifteen testified to a personal relation with Christ.[30]

Mendoza (1917-1933)

The Fowlers most productive ministry occurred in the pioneer mission of Mendoza in the Andean region of Argentina.[31] In Mendoza, the Fowlers were the only American family. Despite the remoteness of their Andean location, the Fowlers entertained dignitaries such as Dr. George Truett, pastor of First Baptist Church of Dallas, Texas, and President-elect Herbert Hoover.

Fowler started nine churches and numerous mission stations in Mendoza. He again started a school for children. On one occasion, the authorities arrested him for holding a revival meeting without the proper permits. He spent the night in jail and his only trip companion, his young daughter Margaret, feared her father would not survive the night as she returned by herself to the inn.[32]

The greatest difficulty the Fowlers faced up until the point their health failed related to the education of their children in Mendoza. After a

furlough in 1919, Daisy's niece, Miss Mildred Burnett, returned with the Fowlers to assist in the education of the Fowler children. The FMB paid Miss Burnett's travel expenses to Argentina; however, they did not pay her a salary. When Miss Burnett left Argentina two years later, Daisy accompanied their two oldest children to the Locust Grove Institute in Georgia. For a period of time, Daisy served as a housemother for one of the boy's dorms.[33] The youngest son, Franklin, enrolled at the Methodist American High School in Buenos Aires when he reached adolescence.[34] In a request for another early furlough, Frank confessed that the lengthy separation from his children affected his nerves.[35] The FMB granted the Fowlers a furlough in 1927. Frank completed additional class work at Mercer University and received a Doctor of Divinity from the school.[36] The furlough provided an opportunity for Frank to be with his family. His eldest son, James, graduated from Mercer University during the Georgia furlough. His daughter Margaret graduated from Tift College in Georgia the year after her parents returned to Argentina from furlough. Upon graduation, Margaret returned to Argentina and taught in the mission school established by her father and supported herself teaching children from wealthy British families.

As Frank Fowler poured his life into the Argentine people, they responded by affectionately calling him "Don Francisco, Apostle of Love."[37] Frank's daughter Margaret summarized his effectiveness as a missionary. "During his lifetime, he was instrumental in beginning sixty-seven churches

in Argentina, and nine others in the Andean district. The total membership of these churches was 4,703. The members contributed $24,000 to mission work, and during his last year on the field, he had 401 baptisms."[38]

Suffering Much at the Hands of Doctors

The Fowler family experienced great hardship in terms of their health in service to the beloved Argentine people. In a letter to Associate Secretary Dr. T. B. Ray, Fowler claimed that "we" have suffered much from the doctors.[39] No doubt, the health problems the Fowler family experienced on the mission field combined with the inadequate health care they received from doctors influenced the youngest son, Dr. Franklin Fowler, to become Southern Baptist's first medical missionary to South America in 1947.[40]

When the oldest son, James, was three years old, he developed scarlet fever and suffered total deafness as a result of the illness. Despite his deafness, James became a successful accountant in North Carolina.

Daisy Fowler suffered from rheumatoid arthritis. The FMB approved an expenditure of $100 for Daisy to take a trip to the mountains for rest.[41] The arid desert region of the Andean region of Argentina may have influenced the decision to relocate to the pioneering area of Mendoza the following year. For a lengthy time after the birth of Franklin the subsequent year, daughter Margaret took care of her young sibling because of her mother's health. Two years after a return from furlough, the

FMB granted permission for Daisy to return to the United States for health reasons.[42]

As well, Frank Fowler experienced numerous health problems on the mission field. In 1924, the FMB paid $400 to pay for Fowler's hospital expenses. In so doing, the Argentina committee reported, "We would express to Brother Fowler the hope that he will be able to recuperate in Argentina and not have to incur the expense of returning to North America."[43]

In the fall of 1933, Frank Fowler took Daisy to the British hospital in Buenos Aires in hope of finding relief from her arthritic pain. He developed a prostate problem and underwent minor surgery. Daisy and Frank shared adjoining rooms. As a result of mistakes made by the medical team, Frank Fowler died of a blood clot in November 1933.[44] At that time in Argentina, the law required burial to take place within twenty-four hours. Franklin Fowler, at the age of 16, made all the arrangements for his father's funeral. Because of his mother's hospital stay and his sister remaining in Mendoza, young Franklin was the only family member at his father's funeral.[45] Frank Fowler, Florida's first Foreign Mission Board missionary, is buried in the British cemetery in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Unfortunately, conflicting reports exist concerning the date of Frank Fowler's death. In 1933, the *Florida Baptist Witness* reported the date of his death as November 15.[46] In 1984, the *Witness* reported his death date as November 14.[47] Dr. Franklin Fowler stated that his father died on his birthday, November 13, 1933.[48]

Daisy Fowler remained as a missionary in Argentina until her retirement in 1936. Approximately ten days after her husband's death, the Foreign Mission Board established a pension plan for retiring missionaries; the plan, however, did not take effect until January 1934. Under the revised 1936 retirement agreement, Daisy Fowler qualified for the title "Emeritus Missionary." Thus, Daisy Fowler became one of the first missionaries to retire from the Foreign Mission Board.[49] Since Daisy served over thirty years with the Foreign Mission Board, William Estep includes her in his "Honor Roll of Missionaries" serving thirty years or longer.[50] After her retirement, Daisy was bedridden and suffered intense pain which she bore with Christian grace.[51]

Holding the Ropes in Florida

The Baptist women of Florida, both in terms of individual churches and the Woman's Missionary Union, supported the Fowlers in tangible ways. First, when the Fowlers received FMB appointment, the Florida WMU committed $1,422.75 to underwrite the support of the Fowlers in Brazil.[52] When the FMB lacked the funds to send the Fowler's back to Argentina after their 1919 furlough, the Alachua Baptist Church collected enough money to send the Fowlers back to the mission field and send Miss Burnett as the children's teacher.[53] At the completion of the Fowler's 1927 furlough, the FMB, due to Southern Baptist Convention indebtedness and treasurer malfeasance, announced that furloughing missionaries would be unable to return to the fields unless the FMB received assurance that churches or

individuals underwrote the transportation costs and one year salary. Florida Baptists underwrote the Fowlers return to the mission field.[54] When Frank Fowler died, the Florida W.M.U. sent a Christmas present of $6.35 to Daisy Fowler. The ailing missionary used the funds to purchase a grave marker for her husband.[55]

In 1939, Louise Smith, Florida W.M.U. Corresponding Secretary, toured South America on a leave of absence. Through "unforeseen circumstances", she visited Mendoza, Argentina, and the Godoy Cruz Baptist Church, established by Frank Fowler. Smith left Mendoza with an adobe brick made of mud and straw from the church Fowler built. The brick symbolized a vision Smith developed for Florida Baptists to build a church as a memorial to Florida's first missionary.

Smith perceived the Godoy Cruz adobe structure a hindrance to missions with numerous beautiful Catholic churches in Mendoza. In 1943 she requested Florida W.M.U. to raise $15,000 for the construction of a worthy structure in Mendoza. Florida women raised in excess of $18,000 and the Foreign Mission Board erected a new memorial church building in 1948.[56]

Conclusion

Since Frank Fowler's appointment as a Foreign Mission Board missionary, (up until this writing in the year 2002) 489 Floridians have served in international missions. Currently, 151 Floridians serve under appointment of the International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. Florida,

our time in history is now. Throughout the nineteenth century, Florida was a mission field for Baptists. Today, Florida retains this unique mission status. An increasing number of Floridians, however, are answering God's call to missions. Frank Fowler's evangelistic zeal, creative missionary methodology, and steadfastness in the midst of difficult circumstances provide a model for Floridians answering the call to missions in the twenty-first century.

ENDNOTES

1. Florida Baptist Convention Annual *Minutes* 1899, 33.
2. W. B. Johnson strongly influenced the original constitution of the Southern Baptist Convention. Jesse Mercer sacrificed for the cause of theological education. P. H. Mell earned the nickname "Prince of Parliamentarians" as Southern Baptists elected him convention president on fifteen occasions. Baptist scholars credit Tichenor with salvaging the Home Mission Board and saving the Southern Baptist Convention as he stressed denominational loyalty.
3. In 1900 Mary Taylor of Tampa became the first Florida missionary when the Home Mission Board appointed Taylor a missionary to Cuba. Taylor received her training at the Baptist Missionary Training School in Chicago. My research, up to this point, has revealed no details about this school. I assume that the school functioned as a department of Baptist-founded, Rockefeller-financed University of Chicago. (Prior to the founding of the Women's Missionary Training School in Louisville, Kentucky, in 1907, women could not receive academic credit at a theological institution in Southern Baptist life.) Taylor resigned from the Home Mission Board in 1902 due to poor health, but later served among the Cubans in Tampa with Florida WMU funding. The Foreign Mission Board appointed Rev. and Mrs. King Cawthon of Atlanta, Georgia, to Buenos Aires, Argentina. Cawthon resigned a fifteen month pastorate at Ancient City Baptist Church in St. Augustine, Florida, to briefly serve the Foreign Mission Board (1903-1907). Cawthon started the Constitution Baptist

Church, the first Argentine church organized under the auspices of the Foreign Mission Board.

4. Elizabeth Provenance, *God's Troubadours.* (Jacksonville, FL: Women's Missionary Union, 1951), 2.

5. L. B. Warren, "Florida's First Missionary." *Southern Baptist Witness* (August 4, 1904), 6.

6. Provenance, 1. Florida citrus growers suffered devastating losses due to freezes in 1894-1895.

7. Ibid, 2. Approximately two years later God began to deal with a young Daisy Cate, the future Mrs. Fowler, about missions service.

8. Ibid.

9. The parents may have named Elvey Fowler after Frank's great-grandmother Elvy (d. 1882). Margaret Fowler, daughter of Frank and Daisy Fowler, spelled the name of her father's first child as Elvie. Margaret Fowler Drake, *Golden Footprints: The Story of Frank Fowler* (privately published), 1. The Fowler family tree spells her name Elvey.

10. Columbia College (1907-1918) was a school begun by the Florida Baptist Convention during a period of tensions with Stetson University. Although Columbia College developed a quality faculty, the inadequacy of financial support from Florida Baptists contributed to the closure of the college.

11. Prior to 1931 Baptist Associations and mission societies elected delegates to convention meetings. The practice changed in 1931 when the SBC decided as a result of Landmark conflicts in Arkansas to change the constitution whereby churches alone send messengers.

12. Martha Pope Trotter, *Faithful Servants: The Story of Florida Woman's Missionary Union, 1894-1994.* (Jacksonville, FL: Florida Woman's Missionary Union, 1984), 59.

13. Drake, 2.

14. "Florida's First Missionary."

15. As a result of personal conflicts between Baptist missionaries in Mexico, the Foreign Mission Board experienced the resignation of two-thirds of the missionary force in Mexico shortly before the dawn of the twentieth century. Before the mission in Mexico recovered, political revolution curtailed missionary work. William Estep briefly recounted the conflict in *Whole Gospel-Whole World:*

The Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention 1845-1995. (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1994), 174-75.
16. Ibid, 168.
17. Joseph L. Hart, *Gospel Triumphs in Argentina and Chile.* (Richmond, VA: Foreign Mission Board, 1925), 106.
18. Ibid, 107. FMB Corresponding Secretary, R. J. Willingham, played matchmaker when he encouraged Sowell to visit the legendary missionary family the Bagby's in Brazil. Sowell later married Emily Bagby.
19. Ibid, 127.
20. Provenance, 3.
21. Foreign Mission Board *Minutes*, 16 May 1907.
22. Ibid, 14 May 1908.
23. Ibid, 13 May 1908.
24. Ibid, 11 May 1910.
25. Ibid, 16 May 1907. "The church has been particularly fortunate in the class of people it has been able to reach." Ibid, 11 May 1910.
26. Oral Interview with Dr. Franklin Fowler, conducted by Dr. Jerry Windsor, 29 June 2002. Dr. Fowler is the son of Frank and Daisy Fowler. He served as a missionary in Paraguay before becoming the first medical consultant employed by the FMB in Richmond.
27. "Reflections on Father (Frank James Fowler)." Written reflection by Dr. Franklin Fowler, 29 June 2002.
28. Foreign Mission Board *Minutes*, 11 May 1911.
29. Franklin Fowler, "Reflections on Father."
30. The FMB minutes describe the methods used by the Fowlers in Rosario. Foreign Mission Board *Minutes*, 12 May 1915.
31. The Florida Baptist Historical Society possesses less information about this period of Fowler's ministry.
32. Drake, 8.
33. Ibid.
34. Fowler, "Reflections of Father."
35. Letter to Dr. T. B. Ray, Associate Secretary of the Foreign Mission Board. Dated 1 January 1926. In addition to separation from his children, Fowler cited the number of recent church starts, the suffering at the hands of doctors, and the greater difficulty of

work in Mendoza in comparison with Buenos Aires as factors in his request.

36. Normally, the Doctor of Divinity is an honorary degree. An article in the *Florida Baptist Witness* celebrating the 80th anniversary of his appointment by the FMB states that during the 1927 furlough Fowler completed graduate studies at Mercer University and received the D.D. "Florida's First Foreign Missionary." *Florida Baptist Witness*, (July 19, 1984), 12.

37. Franklin Fowler, "Reflections on Father."

38. Drake, 11.

39. Letter 1 January 1926.

40. In the recounting of a memorial service for Frank Fowler held at Lake Butler in December 1933, the *Florida Baptist Witness* states the pastor of Lake Butler celebrated the presence of Franklin Fowler at the memorial service. Further, the article on Fowler's memorial service states that the sixteen year old felt God had called him into ministry. "Frank Fowler Memorial Service." *Florida Baptist Witness* (December 21, 1933), 2. Franklin Fowler does not remember being present at his father's Florida memorial service. Windsor Oral Interview.

41. Foreign Mission Board *Minutes*, 6 January 1916.

42. Ibid, 10 November 1921. The language of the FMB is interesting at this point. "That Mrs. F. J. Fowler be given permission to return to the United States, only on the ground that her health urgently requires such a course and the Mission does for this reason favor her return" (italics added). The strong language implies other reasons beneath the surface. This return of Daisy Fowler for health reasons coincides with the entrance of the Fowler children into high school in Locust Grove, Georgia.

43. Ibid, 18 June 1924. In the 14 October 1925 Foreign Mission Board *Minutes*, the Board approved the following resolution: "That in response to the request of the Argentine mission for furlough for Rev. and Mrs. F. J. Fowler, we express the hope that the progress shown in the improvements in health of Brother Fowler will so increase that it will not be necessary for him to bring his family home during 1926."

44. Windsor Oral Interview. Dr. Fowler specifically identifies two mistakes the medical team committed during the treatment of his

father: the operation before the stabilization of the patient and the over two-week confinement to the hospital bed.
45. Ibid.
46. "Frank Fowler Memorial Service."
47. "Florida's First Foreign Missionary." Margaret agrees with this date, Drake, 11.
48. Windsor Oral Interview.
49. For a discussion of the Foreign Mission Board retirement program and the title "Emeritus Missionary", see Estep, 234. No doubt, the absence of a retirement plan explains some of the forty and fifty year tenures of early Southern Baptist missionary pioneers.
50. Estep, 403. Dr. Franklin Fowler served the FMB 37 years as a missionary and medical consultant in Richmond.
51. "In Memoriam: Daisy Cate Fowler." *The Commission* (May 1953), 26.
52. "Women's Missionary Union Report." *Florida Baptist Convention Annual Minutes* 1905, 102. The 1906 minutes correctly place the Fowlers in Argentina. *Florida Baptist Convention Annual Minutes* 1906, 56.
53. Drake, 8.
54. Trotter, 96. According to William Estep, FMB treasurer George Sanders stole $103,722.38 from the Board in 1927. Estep, 208.
55. "Messages from Our Florida Foreign Missionaries." *Florida Baptist Witness* (March 22, 1934), 8. The *Witness* published a thank you letter from Daisy to Mrs. H. C. Peelman, Florida W.M.U. Corresponding Secretary. In her letter to Peelman, Daisy Fowler states that she had been in poor health for two years. She planned to move to Buenos Aires with Margaret. Margaret planned to teach in Franklin's Methodist high school. Further, Daisy said she would be in Buenos Aires until she is able to travel. This researcher concludes that after the death of Frank, Daisy remained in Argentina until she reached the age of 65 and qualified for the new FMB retirement program. Her missionary service, however, was significantly curtailed after 1932 due to her poor health.
56. Martha Trotter describes in detail the project to build a memorial church in memory of Dr. Frank Fowler in chapter five of *Faithful Servants.*

A. D. Dawson – The Legacy of a Church Starting Director of Missions

by Barbara Little Denman
A Freelance Christian writer living in Jacksonville, Florida

"Al felt his calling was to build churches, not pastor them" recalled Tanna Dawson as she described her husband of 38 years, Albert D. Dawson, who served as the superintendent of missions for the Gulf Stream Baptist Association for more than 26 years from 1953 to 1979. Albert Dawson's commitment to being a missionary church starter and church builder established a standard in legacy leadership among Florida Baptists, particularly those who lead association missions.

Certainly, there was no truer legacy for A.D. Dawson than the fact that he was a church starter in commitment, practice and promotion. This former faith missionary proved so successful in starting churches, that Florida Baptist pastors recruited Dawson's unique talents to eventually start dozens of mission churches in Miami, Tampa and Jacksonville metropolitan areas. Later, during his two and one-half decades of service in the Gulf Stream Association as the director of missions, Dawson led in the start on an average of one church per year. Few missions' leaders in Florida have matched his church-starting record in the twentieth century.

Albert D. Dawson (1916 – 1979) A Church Starting Director of Missions

[EDITOR'S NOTE: This article was originally prepared for use in several published mediums. At the time, Barbara L. Denman was director of communications for the Florida Baptist Convention. That narrative was edited and amplified with supplemental information for use in this 2019 The Journal of Florida Baptist Heritage.]

Dawson's role in church starting was tied to the post World War II expansion of Baptist association development in Florida. As a point of reference, in 1909, the Miami Baptist Association was organized and constituted as one of Florida Baptists' geographically largest Baptist association of churches. It was comprised of three contiguous South Florida counties: Miami, Palm Beach, and Broward (primarily Ft. Lauderdale). In 1938, the few Baptist churches in Palm Beach County – from Boynton Beach north to the county line and from West Palm Beach (along the Atlanta coast) to the western boundary of the county – organized the Palm Lake Baptist Association. The few remaining Baptist churches in Broward County continued to be affiliated with the Miami Baptist Association.[1]

Following the war years, Broward County was little more than a rural area comprised of dairy ranches and salad vegetable farming operations. The majority of the county's 60,000 residents were confined to Fort Lauderdale. The year-round sunshine and moderate cost of living began attracting a burgeoning population that Florida Baptists believed needed to be served by more gospel-proclaiming churches. Beginning in 1946 and continuing for several years, pastor and laity leadership continued to discuss the possibilities and challenges in forming a Baptist association.[2]

On April 29, 1948, messengers from Baptist churches in Broward and southern Palm Beach Counties met to begin the organization of the association at First Baptist Church of Pompano Beach. A second meeting was held May 30 when the

name Gulf Stream Baptist Association was unanimously adopted and a free will offering of $55.54 was received for the new association. A total of nine churches, with 3,615 church members, comprised the fledgling association.[3]

Five years after the creation of the association on October 1, 1953, Al Dawson was assigned by the Florida Baptist Convention as city missionary for the Gulf Stream Association. Within a few years, the position title changed to superintendent of missions and subsequently to director of missions.

From the early 1940s, the Florida Baptist Convention had divided the state geographically to create mission districts which were designated as either rural or city mission areas. The strategy was to place Convention-supported area missionaries in these districts to assist in the starting of new Baptist churches. As associations formed, the convention provided the majority of the joint-funding for the superintendent of missions' position, in cooperation with the respective association. The Gulf Stream association initially had been classified as a rural association. But Florida Baptist leaders could see the potential for population growth and asked Al Dawson to establish a city mission program to replace the rural missions' program.[4]

Initially, within a four-year span, eight new churches were established under Dawson's leadership: Hallandale, First, 1954; Miami Gardens First and Wilton Manors, 1955; Fort Lauderdale Southwest and Hollywood Westside, 1956; Lauderdale Manors, 1956; and North Pompano and

Pembroke Road, 1958. That brought the number of churches in the association to 22, more than doubling the number forming the association 10 years previously. Combined church membership had increased three-fold during that first decade.[5]

Call to Ministry

That dynamic personified Dawson's strong commitment to evangelism and church starting had its incubation in Pennsylvania. Born on September 4, 1916, Dawson, a Philadelphia native, attended Philadelphia Biblical University from 1936-1939 and later attended Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. Dawson's ability to effectively start churches did not come from his formal education, but rather from inbred gifts and talents. He was ordained to the gospel ministry at Wissinoming Baptist Church in Philadelphia, April 28, 1941, which was an independent Baptist church.[6] Dawson met his future spouse Tanna Temoscchuk through her brother, Ted, who had served with the young Al on an evangelistic team. The men had been sponsored by their independent Baptist church, Hilltown Baptist Church in Hilltown, Pennsylvania, traveling to churches to hold revival meetings.[7]

Tanna Dawson (b. 1919; d.2011) herself felt called as a missionary to her parent's homeland, Russia, but the country was never opened to the gospel in her early life. So, she redefined her missions calling through the

ministry she and Al Dawson shared together, she said.[8] It was a partnership ministry for the couple as Tanna brought her music, teaching and training skills to every mission church the Dawsons started.

They were married June 14, 1941, a week after she graduated from the Philadelphia School of the Bible. He continued working at the Distance Saw Works to pay off the purchase price of a travel trailer where the newlyweds would live as traveling missionaries. In December the two left their Pennsylvania home and traveled with the trailer and a revival tent to South Carolina, as faith missionaries.[9]

In the of nine months the couple stayed in Ridgeland, S.C., they visited people in the community and held revivals to develop a congregation of new believers who met in an old cotton factory building. As a result of a property site gift, Al Dawson personally and with the help of volunteers, constructed a building to accommodate the church which was organized on December 7, 1941. It was called Cooswhatchee Baptist Church in Ridgeland, located in the state's low country near Beaufort. Al Dawson was able to enlist a pastor for the mission church, which was organized as an independent Baptist church, and subsequently affiliated with the South Carolina Baptist Convention.[10]

"We were living on $60 a month, $30 from my church and $30 from Al's church." Tanna Dawson recalled. "I could not even buy a dress." At one point the young couple "living on faith and $60 a month" found they had only 35 cents left in her pocketbook. In later years, Tanna Dawson recalled that she asked Al if she should use the money "to call Pop to send

some money or shall I go get that loaf of bread?" She decided to "go buy the bread and call my Pop collect. He sent us some money."[11]

Serving as faith missionaries, the Dawsons hauled their little travel trailer and revival tent to Tampa, Florida, for the purpose of starting new churches supported only by prayer and donations. Locating an area without a church, Al Dawson set up the tent, held a revival and began services. One night while leading revival services that eventually became the North Rome Baptist Church, three Florida Baptist pastors were among the attendees at the revival services – B.C. Land, Riverside Baptist Church; A. W. Mathis, Seminole Heights Baptist Church, and R. Q. Leavell, First Baptist Church of Tampa.[12] Impressed by the young evangelists' preaching, they asked the novice church starter to join with Southern Baptists and to start the church as a Southern Baptist congregation. The Dawsons, up to that point in their ministry, had considered themselves independent Baptists. But when questioned by the Tampa pastors, Al Dawson, whose background had been influenced by German Baptists and the Church of the Brethren, agreed that he could embraced Southern Baptists' faith and practice. "'I'm a missionary,'" Tanna quoted her late husband as saying, "'so I must be a missionary Baptist.'"[13]

Starting Churches in Tampa

During their two years in the Tampa Bay Baptist Association, the Dawsons also started the Burns Chapel, Castle Heights and the Sulphur Springs Baptist churches. "Al would start the church by

visiting the whole community." The visits included "taking a census," which sought the church affiliation of residents. She recalled, "We didn't know what a census was, but he was taking one." Dawson would also invite people to come and participate in a Bible study. "We would start a Sunday school first and every time, that was a part of our beginning of our churches." The couple shared the Bible teaching role. "We would divide it (the congregation) in half. I would take the intermediate (teenagers) on down. He would take the young people on up."[14]

To entice people to return to the revival services, Al Dawson developed a series of chalk talks – a precursor to today's flashy multi-media presentations. He would spend the first twenty minutes drawing a scene on a canvas of black velvet that was partially undectable to the human eye. As Al drew the illustration, based on a classic gospel hymn, Tanna played the song on a piano or organ and Al would sing selected verses. Completing the drawing, a black light was turned on to illuminate the illustration, and a new, formerly hidden, image emerged from the picture. The illustration served as the basis for Dawson's evangelistic sermon that followed. "When he'd get through with that chalk drawing, you would have thought it was an oil painting," said Tanna Dawson. The next night, whoever brought the most visitors would get to keep that night's featured drawing. As noted, in addition to being an artist, Al Dawson had musical

talents, that ranged from singing to playing a guitar, violin and ukulele, which he used selectively at various revival services.[15]

Clifford Walker, the superintendent of missions for the Tampa Bay Association, secured the Florida Baptist Convention Secretary-Treasurer's approval to employ Dawson in April, 1944, as the assistant to the missions' superintendent.[16] Walker served as Dawson's mentor and trainer during the ensuing two years. Dawson learned important interpersonal relationship skills on how to deal with deacons, pastors and pulpit committees, while doing what he knew well – starting and physically building mission churches.[17]

"Dawson is an attractive preacher and musician, also a number one soul winner."
- Dewey Mann

Dawson's effectiveness was quickly recognized by Dewey Mann, superintendent of the Regional Mission Department, Florida Baptist Convention, who transferred Dawson from Tampa Bay and promoted him to serve as the rural district missionary for the Okeechobee Lake Region, assigned to Clewiston. Mann reported that while in Tampa Dawson "proved himself to be a good organizer and builder." Mann noted that, "Dawson is an attractive preacher and musician, also a number one soul winner."[18] The emphasis to undertake a "great aggressive program of rural evangelism" was approved by the State Board of Missions in 1945, after entering into two agreements with the Southern

Baptist Home Mission Board (now known as the North American Mission Board) to jointly participate in Florida's programs of city and rural missions.[19]

Jacksonville's City Missionary

Subsequently, the State Board of Missions approved a staff administration request to re-organize and merge the programs of stewardship, missions and evangelism. The result was the re-assignment of field personnel serving in rural missions, including A. D. Dawson who was transferred to serve as the city missionary for Jacksonville.[20] To fulfill this new role, the couple loaded their travel trailer and headed north. In Jacksonville, Al Dawson started Southside Estates Baptist Church and successfully encouraged other Jacksonville churches to start new congregations.[21] He held that post until 1950.

Tanna Dawson looked upon those earlier years with fondness. "Those were happy days, satisfying days. We were accomplishing things for the Lord and we were giving Him credit for it."[22] To his credit, Al Dawson was primarily an evangelist, church starter and developer of new Christians. However, as a state convention employee assigned to Jacksonville, Miami and later Ft. Lauderdale, Dawson was required to commit time and efforts to promote the convention's church resource programs among the congregations in his assigned area. Such promotion included speaking at mission conferences, and promoting training events for Sunday school, Training Union, and stewardship, WMU and Brotherhood, among others. "When Al had to go more into (program) promotion, it became a chore

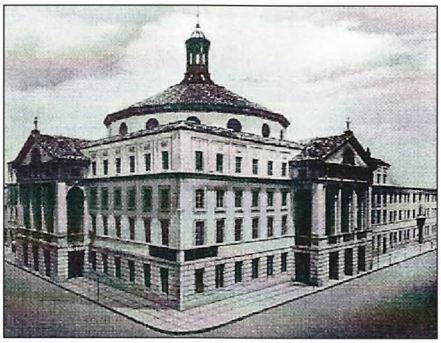
and difficult. It was an easy job, but it just wasn't his talent. His talent was in creativeness and building churches and working with people."[23] Mrs. Dawson recalled that her husband would often return from convention missionary personnel meetings and express frustration at the new directives for program promotion that had been given by convention administration. Mrs. Dawson, who travelled to Jacksonville with her husband observed, that the personnel "would leave their meetings heartbroken" and go home feeling dejected. Even Al, in returning home from these meeting would declare, "'I'm not going back. I'm leaving. I'm going to get back'" to doing the ministry tasks he loved. But after a time of reflection and extended prayer, "he forgot some of it and went right back to work," Tanna beamed.[24]

Miami Baptist Association

Meanwhile, in South Florida, the Miami Baptist Association was searching for a superintendent of missions who could truly start churches. C. Roy Angell, pastor of the prominent Central Baptist Church, asked his friend John Maguire, executive secretary-treasurer, Florida Baptist Convention, if Dawson could be assigned to work in the Miami area. Although the re-assignment was approved and before moving to Miami, in the summer of 1950, Dawson was assigned to assist "the First Baptist Church of Bradenton in building a new church on Anna Maria Island," Dewey Mann reported.[25]

By the fall, 1950, Dawson was serving as the Miami superintendent of missions, where he served until the fall of 1953. The greater Miami area at the

beginning of the 1950s was experiencing a population explosion. With the influx of new residents and their housing needs, farm land was transformed into self-sustaining communities. Baptist leaders, like Angell, saw the exponential enlargement of their mission field and too few Baptist churches to serve these residents. According to the U.S. Census for 1950, the population in Dade County (primarily Miami) was 495,064, which represented 18 percent of Florida's 2,771,300 residents.[26] At the time, only 45 Southern Baptist affiliated churches were in the Miami Baptist Association. This represented one church for every 11,000 residents.



Central Baptist Church, Miami

The association office was located in the Central Baptist Church, which served as the sponsoring "mother" church for many of Dawson's "established 18 missions, from Miami to Anna Maria Key," according to a published report.[27] Included in that group were two congregations that within 20 years became large and influential churches – Northwest and Flagami Baptist churches. Although the Miami association was designated as a "city missions" area, it's sister association adjacent to the north – Gulf Stream – was still designated as a rural missions' area.

Gulf Stream Association

On October 1, 1953, the Florida Baptist Convention assigned Dawson to the Fort Lauderdale-West Palm Beach combined association where he would labor for the next 26 years. Dawson was expected to lead in the transition of the association from a rural designation by establishing a city mission program. For the final time the Dawsons would haul their travel trailer to a new mission assignment. In Ft. Lauderdale the Dawsons would give up their trailer which had served as their home and mission office to finally settle into a permanent home.

The population of Broward County, primarily comprised of Fort Lauderdale was approximately 84,000.[28] Like Miami, the wide-open rural spaces of western Broward County were "an invitation" to land developers and home builders who saw great opportunity in providing homes and apartment housing for the large influx of new residents. To pastors and mission leaders like Dawson, these housing developments were "white unto harvest" for the establishing of evangelical churches.

Al Dawson led the association as the county's population was exploding. Broward and Palm Beach counties had gone from being fifth and sixth, respectively, as the most populated counties in the state in 1960 to Broward jumping to the state's third most populous county by 1966. In the association's 1966 annual report, Dawson reported, "For the past five years 117 people have been added to Broward County every day, or 22,400 persons every year." The report noted that, "In 1946 Broward County had one

church for every 6,000 persons in the county. In 1960, the ratio was one church for every 11,690 persons. By 1965, the ratio had grown to one church for 14,550 residents."[29]

In 1970 the Gulf Stream Baptist Association was divided along the actual county boundaries to better represent and serve churches in the two counties – Broward and Palm Beach – becoming the Gulf Stream and Palm Lake Baptist Associations respectively. Al Dawson, by choice, continued serving in the Gulf Stream Association, having served the region for more than a quarter of a century.

In addition to being the motivating force behind the start of dozens of churches in the area, Dawson began the Port Everglades Christian Seaman's Center and the Gulf Stream Race Track Ministry. At his death on September 2, 1979, five days after he retired, the association numbered 43 churches.

"I believe that the success of the association through the years can be attributed to the Lord's work through Al and Tanna Dawson," said Bill Jennings, long-time pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church in Fort Lauderdale upon the association's 50th anniversary in 1998. "Because they gave us the foundation on which to build. I really believe that Al had the best organized mind of any person I've ever been around. He really had it. He was 20 years ahead of his time in his thinking, and everything just revolved around him."[30]

Another long-time pastor Bill Billingsley, Sheridan Hills Baptist Church, paid Dawson the highest compliment to a man whose legacy was a life

committed to evangelizing people and forming the nucleus for New Testament churches, "He had a church-starting spirit."[31]

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Guinell Freeman - A Legacy Religious Educator

by Margaret Dempsey Colson
A Freelance Christian writer living in Marietta, Georgia

Even as a girl, as young as 10 when she accepted Jesus as her Savior at Highland Baptist Church in Hickory, N.C., Guinell Freeman knew, "God wanted me to do something special."[1] And, from that point forward, she did not falter in her commitment. It was a commitment that grew into a legacy of leadership as one of the most significant religious educators of all time, while serving at the Jacksonville, Florida's First Baptist Church for 45 years.

Growing up in Hickory (b. October 15, 1928), the third of four girls, Freeman enjoyed an idyllic childhood. Her parents, Jesse and Ocie Freeman, "provided a loving home where Guinell learned right from wrong, manners, frugality, sacrifice, respect for others, sharing, caring, and how to work hard."[2] A vital life lesson from her family was that love was something that one does, she said.[3]

Six years after first sensing God's call on her life, at the tender age of 16, Freeman graduated from high school and packed her bags for Bob Jones University. Although many women her age in the late 1940s were beginning to work in furniture factories or hosiery mills in the small town of Hickory, Freeman said that her parents "were ahead of their own time"

Guinell Freeman (1928 – 2011)
A Legacy Religious Educator

in understanding the value of a college education, even for a woman.[4] After graduating, she taught school for two years, but did not neglect her call. She soon headed to Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Ft. Worth, Texas. She graduated in 1954, the same year that Homer G. Lindsay Sr., then pastor of First Baptist Church, Jacksonville, traveled to the seminary looking for an educational director. Before she could even catch her breath, Freeman agreed to join the staff of First Baptist Church, Jacksonville; she began serving as educational director on June 13, 1954.[5]

A New Era for Christian Service by Women

The opportunity that was presented to Guinell Freeman, reflected a cultural change occurring within the Southern Baptist Convention. Following World War II, an increasing number of women were responding to the call of God to Christian service in ministries other than missions. "After all," observed Elizabeth Flowers, "missions was the avenue most available to women, and it was certainly one highly encouraged, celebrated and affirmed. Changing times, though, had brought a fresh awareness of women's gifts and talents, as well as a new understanding of scripture."[6] Based upon a cursory, albeit unscientific, review of the announcements posted in the *Florida Baptist Witness* in the late 1940s and early 1950s, women were being hired and appointed as "educational secretary" or education director by Florida Baptist churches. This employment was necessitated by the growing memberships many city churches were experiencing

with the return of discharged soldiers and their migration to Florida with their families. These new members, particularly new Christian converts, needed to be discipled into the Baptist faith and practice. Pastors soon realized they needed fulltime workers to manage and be responsible for enlisting and training the volunteer teachers needed for the age-group Sunday School and Training Union programs. Apart from the leadership of God, it was a basic fact that the war had depleted the availability of men being trained for the ministry, particularly religious education. Additionally, Southern Baptist seminaries were enlarging and redefining their training programs in religious education, church music, among other ministry specialties, to meet the demands by churches for such trained workers.[8] Another reality was that "salaried positions open to women [had] not been abundant or well paid," noted one theologian.[9] As a result a church could employ more cheaply a young, unmarried woman than a male counterpart with a spouse and children.

It was within this changing dynamic in Southern Baptist life that Guinell Freeman found herself in God's will, being at the right place, and at the right time. Freeman later credited Dr. Lindsey, Sr., for teaching her the ropes of working in a church. "Dr. Lindsay was ahead of his time in many things. He was one of the first in the 1950s to call women to minister on his church staff. When I came, I was one of three (women) – although, I worked here for 30 years before I had a secretary," she told the *Florida Baptist Witness* in 1999.[10] The three women, whose combined First Baptist employed service

subsequently totaled 123 years, to which Freeman referred, included herself (1954), Miss Frances J. Hendrix (1956), Training Union director, and Miss Fran Hawk (1956), youth director and later promoted to pre-school and children's director.

A Pioneer in Sunday School Growth

For the next 45 years (1954 – 1999), Freeman remained faithful to what she was certain was God's plan for her life. "His love constrained me to do it and kept me at it," she said.[11] In serving First Baptist for four-plus decades, "she may hold the record in Florida for length of service in one church by any educational minister," stated David Cunningham who studied and wrote about the Sunday school ministry in Florida Baptist churches.[12]

When Freeman first arrived at the church, Sunday School attendance was approximately 1,100. The church and the Southern Baptist Convention were right in the middle of the "Million More in 54" campaign, an effort to increase Southern Baptist Sunday School enrollment by one million people in one year. With that challenge, the young seminary graduate immediately got to work. She began to set enrollment and attendance goals, provided training for Sunday School leaders, enlisted new leaders and expanded the Sunday School organization. Results were immediate and dramatic, and by the following year the church reported a Sunday School enrolment of 2,476.[13] The effectiveness of training the church's Sunday School workers yielded a brief article in a July, 1957, *Florida Baptist Witness*, which noted that First Church, Jacksonville, "stands first in Florida and

third in the entire Southern Baptist Convention in Sunday School Study Course awards."[14] The study course program which was designed for church volunteer workers, teachers, and leaders to improve and enhance their skills, was developed and promoted by the Southern Baptist Convention's Baptist Sunday School Board.

By 1958 it became a standing practice at First Baptist that all church members were automatically enrolled in Sunday School. Three years later, in 1961, the church began "Operation Andrew," a personalized evangelistic program developed by Freeman and modeled after Andrew, Christ's disciple, who won his brother to Christ. Sunday School classes were encouraged to set goals for the number of people they wanted to enlist, locate prospects, make personal visits and then report the results. A church-wide goal of 200 new members was set for the three-and-a-half-month effort, and the goal was soon exceeded. Not only did the Sunday School enrollment and attendance increase but also numerous people made salvation decisions and were baptized. The campaign ended in May 1961 and was considered a tremendous success.

Visitation became a firm foundation for the future of Sunday School growth at First Baptist Church. Slogans, such as "Visit or Vanish," "When We Go They Come," and "Bring a New Member in December," were posted throughout the church's vast facilities to remind members of their responsibility of bringing others to Christ.[15] Freeman and the other church staff led the way in spending untold hours visiting prospects and sharing their faith and training

"We would try anything if we felt like it would reach people for Christ,"

church members to do the same.

By 1963, Freeman's ninth year at the church, First Baptist Church, Jacksonville, had become the largest Sunday School in the state.[16] Yet there was no time for Freeman to rest; she knew there were many more people to be reached for Christ throughout Jacksonville. She believed Sunday School was the way to do it. The church, following Freeman's leadership, tried numerous strategies to reach its community for Christ. Through the years, the church tried bus ministries, door-to-door surveys, telephone ministries, separate organizations for men and women and even organizing Sunday School departments by ZIP codes. "We would try anything if we felt like it would reach people for Christ," she said.[17] If anyone were to ever question a certain approach or direction, Freeman could sincerely answer, "We're doing this because we believe it will help us reach more people for Christ."[18] In 1969, when Homer G. Lindsay Jr. (the son of Lindsey, Sr.) was called as pastor, Freeman said the "church was ready to do more than we had ever done before."[19] In 1972 the Sunday School attendance reached an impressive 2,345 members. By 1976, the Sunday School was growing at a rate of 1,000 per year. Another milestone occurred under her leadership as Freeman led the church to pioneer a women's ministry in 1976 "when First Baptist separated women and men in Sunday School" classes that were

formerly co-educational. Within 20 years there were 13 unique departments for women, organized by age, marital status, and work-related.[20]

A Premiere Sunday School Director

Freeman was quickly becoming recognized as a leader in Sunday School growth throughout not only her adopted home state of Florida but also the entire Southern Baptist Convention. Speaking to the Southern Baptist Religious Education Association in June 1978, Freeman said, "Our church is burdened for Jacksonville. We have made a bold commitment to reach Jacksonville for Christ. The common denominator for success is work."[21] In 1982, Jerry Vines came alongside Lindsay Jr. as co-pastor, and the explosive growth continued.

Two years later Sunday School attendance was more than 5,000. Ministers and members alike applauded Freeman's dedication. Lindsay Jr, wrote, "Miss Freeman is without a doubt the premiere Sunday School Director of America. She knows more about Sunday School in her little finger than most know in their entire being. Thank you, Miss Freeman, for your love, your devotion, your commitment and your untiring efforts on behalf of the Lord's work."[22] The Sunday School continued to grow. In 1991 the Sunday School enrollment had reached a peak of 15,000. In 1993 average Sunday School attendance was 6,500. According to L. David Cunningham, former director of the Florida Baptist Convention's Sunday School Department, Freeman was the first to lead a Sunday School to exceed 6,000 in average attendance in Florida.[23]

Freeman's commitment to Sunday School was becoming legendary. "The Sunday School is the base for our Bible study, outreach, special ministries, fellowships, retreats, and discipleship," she said on her 40th anniversary with the church in 1994.[24] That same year, she received the Christian Woman of Excellence award for exemplifying biblical models. She was described by Adrian Rogers, former pastor, Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, as "one woman in 10,000. When the history of Christian Education is written, your name needs to be at the forefront."[25] Also on that momentous occasion, Cunningham described Freeman as "a committed Christian, an unwavering soulwinner, an inspirational leader, a visionary Sunday School builder. . . I have considered her work a classic exhibit 'A' in how to build a church through the Sunday School."[26]

Freeman's Love for the Spiritually Lost

In June 1999, Freeman retired from her position as educational director for First Baptist Church, Jacksonville. At that time Vines wrote an open letter to Freeman, "Your faithfulness to the Lord, your love for lost people, and your extraordinary commitment are a source of real blessing and inspiration for us all. I have never known a person to give as sacrificially and unselfishly of time, talent, and totality as have you."[27] She remained at First Baptist Church to encourage other ministers and leaders in Sunday School and to continue to provide leadership to the church. With the spiritual gifts of administration and organization, she also continued to lead seminars and training sessions on building growing Sunday Schools

throughout the state and nation. Zeal for her experienced insights remained strong. "Many who meet her hear of her life and the work that God has done. They marvel. Thousands have come to know the Savior, not because of who she was but because of who her God was and is," a reporter wrote.[28]

Upon her retirement she received the Most Distinguished Alumni award from Southwestern Seminary as well as Christian Woman of the Century from *Jacksonville History Magazine*. As she reflected on her 45-year journey, she wrote, "When I entered the Hobson Auditorium 45 years ago to begin my ministry as your educational director, I never in my wildest dreams envisioned what God planned for me and First Baptist Church. I only knew He had confirmed my call to serve Him through this church and I was totally committed to give Him and you my best. To God be the glory for I have been an eyewitness to what He has done through our pastors, church staff, and a people who had one heart, one mind, and one purpose to fulfill the Great Commission."[29]

In one of her final interviews, Guinell Freeman said that if she were to write her own legacy, she said she would write what she hoped she had lived: "I reached people for Christ and helped them grow in their Christian walk."[30]

Guinell Freeman retired from her official responsibilities at First Baptist Church in mid-1999. She said upon her retirement, "The common denominator is church growth is work. I disagree with the movement toward 'computerized' ministry. A computer never built a church; that takes visitation,

witnessing, relating one-on-one. Loving people is key."[31] Miss Freeman never married. She literally gave her life to the Lord and His work to building one of the largest Sunday Schools and Christian discipleship ministries in the nation. No doubt a legacy in the Southern Baptist religious education movement.

For the next 12 years Freeman continued to be an active member at First Baptist, accepting occasional speaking engagements in other churches. At age 83, Freeman died December 19, 2011, and was buried in Jacksonville's Oaklawn Cemetery.

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Joseph C. Coats – The Legacy of an African-American Gospel Preacher

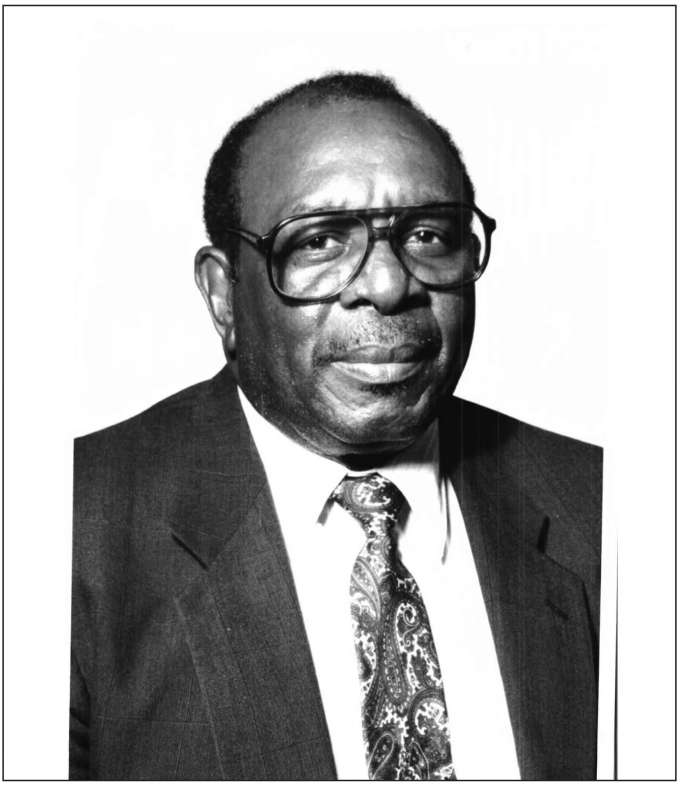
by Donald S. Hepburn, Secretary-Treasurer, Florida Baptist Historical Society

"Bring us your prostitutes, burglars, dopers, street people. We want them. We love them," pastor Joseph Coats once told a Miami area newspaper writer. "If we are going to change this community, we have to change the people,"[1]

The pastor's comment was more than a headline, it was a long-held and Bible-based belief that the New Testament church, and particularly his Glendale Missionary Baptist Church, had to practice what Jesus taught. Keeping the focus upon Jesus Christ – through Bible preaching, Sunday school teaching and community outreach to the less than desirable people – powered the church to grow. Under Pastor Coats' leadership legacy, Miami's Glendale Missionary Baptist Church grew to over 3,000 members from less than 120 in three decades.

Early Life and Finding God's Will

Born in rural Alamo, Georgia, on January 28, 1927, his father was Henry Coats and his mother was Daisy Bostic who by that time had three other children. His father Henry died in May, 1928. Although there is no readily available record on his mother's re-marriage, by the time Joe Coats was three years old his mother



Joseph C. Coats (1927 – 2002)
African-American
Gospel Preacher

Daisy Bostic, according to census records, was listed as married to Grant Hodges who had two children of his own.[2] Up until the early 1940s his blended family continued to live in Wheeler County, Georgia. At some point Coats and his mother moved to Miami where Joe attended and graduated from the George Washington Carver High School in 1944. By 1945, at age 18, Joe was working at the Shemas Fruit stand but managed to move to a job that evolved into the import manager for a food store chain, where he remained until 1964.[3] In 1949, at age 22, Joe Coats married Catherine Williams of Holly Hill, S.C. Over the next several years the couple had eight children born into the family, seven of which survived: five daughters and two sons.

Whether it was having a decent steady job or being married, or perhaps it was his lifestyle, God was dealing with Joe Coats to cause him to take notice of his spiritual lifestyle. "I used to shoot pool for a living. I played some poker. That was back in my early days. And I got saved – the Lord saved me – and I came into the church. That was my early days," Coats recalled in 1984. "When I first made the transition, I had to stay away from my past habits. My former friends made very little of me. They kind of mocked me."[4]

Coats and his wife Catherine, began attending the Glendale Baptist Mission – located in South Miami's Richmond Heights neighborhood – which had been organized in the home of Rev. James Harrington in April, 1963. In this setting, where Bible teaching was pastor Harrington's forte, Coats came to more clearly understand spiritual things. As the

number of people attending the mission church increased, various auxiliary meetings were held in church members' homes, including the Coats' home, to conduct Bible study, mission activities, choir rehearsals and fellowships.[5] In this nurturing church environment, Joseph Coats came to understand that God had placed a calling upon him to enter the preaching ministry. Having demonstrated his commitment and spiritual growth, the church – which in 1965 incorporated as the Glendale Missionary Baptist Church – agreed to recognize his call to the ministry. He was ordained April 23, 1966. Equipped with only his rudimentary Bible knowledge, Coats determined his calling was be an evangelist. He likely recognized that, based upon his own life experiences of sin and salvation, he had a message that would relate to the people of the Richmond Heights community and elsewhere.

In the African-American church tradition, when a young man surrenders to the call of ministry – whether or not he receives formal educational training – his basic ministerial training involves being mentored and guided by an established senior pastor. It is in this role that a young man learns through oral tradition about the Bible and its message. Additionally, through observation, he learns not only how to preach, but how to conduct a worship service, baptisms, weddings, funerals, and generally how to "relate" to the church flock. But for Joseph Coats, his initial understanding of God's call was to become an evangelist, not a church pastor.

Likely with the help of his pastor, Rev. James Harrington, opportunities were provided for Coats to

preach in churches in the area and outside of the state. At some point, Joe Coats realized he needed training in the Bible and theology if he was going to be an effective instrument for God. In talking to pastors he learned about the practically free of cost courses offered through the Southern Baptist Convention's South Florida Seminary Extension program located in Miami. It was designed for men called to the ministry who had no college or formal ministerial training. It provided courses of study that led to one of three certificates: pastoral training; religious education; and Christian life development. Even in the 1960s, these seminary extension courses were on a "college level" which meant course credits could be accepted by regular degree-granting colleges.[6] Coats participated in the program on and off for five years until he earned a certificate in pastoral training. This entry level education eventually led Coats to earn a bachelor of theology degree from the Southern Bible Seminary, Kansas City, Missouri.[7]

Building a Church to Serve the Community

And then, God opened another door for Joe Coats. The Glendale founding pastor James Harrington accepted a call to another church out of state. In September, 1964, the church turned to Rev. Bragg L. Turner, a former deacon ordained to the gospel ministry, to serve as pastor. At the time the church had no permanent facilities and met in people's homes. "We had Bible studies in one member's home, and we didn't have enough room inside the house. It was small, people would stand outside

around windows to hear the Bible being taught, sitting on porches, standing up in the doors," Coats recalled in a 1984 newspaper interview.[8] The increased attendance necessitated a larger facility and soon the church was holding weekly services in a vacated post office building. But that building was sold in early 1965 and the church relocated to the Frank C. Martin Elementary School, although the Bible studies continued in people's homes. Meanwhile the church was raising and saving money to buy a church site of their own. Finally in 1966, the church purchased a tree-studded three-acre site in the shadow of the Florida Turnpike located at Southwest 117th Avenue, which at the time was still in a rural area of Dade County.[9] A year later Pastor Turner resigned to accept a ministry call to serve a church in St. Petersburg. Within two months, recounting the event years later, Coats said, in December 3, 1967, "these people extended a call" to him to be their third pastor, which he accepted.[10]

Pastor Coats and the band of approximately 120 members recognized God was blessing them with increasing numbers of people being drawn to the preaching of Pastor Coats and the emphasis upon Bible study groups. And as the membership grew the dream of building their own church sanctuary would not be realized for another four years. Finally on March 8, 1971, construction on the sanctuary began and by November the building was ready to host the congregation. As a great demonstration of God's blessing, the Glendale congregation marched from the Martin Elementary school down the street to their new sanctuary for a day of thanksgiving.[11]

Mark Coats, who followed his father into the pastoral ministry, recalled the elder's Coats choice of the land site. Mark said that people would ask his father, "Why are you building out in the middle of nowhere?'" The younger Coats said his father, "was all about vision. He was a man of family and education."[12] That vision was to build, in time, not only a sanctuary, but a Sunday school facility and a community outreach center. And as a result of being able to purchase land adjacent to the new sanctuary and a decade committed to saving money for construction, by March 5, 1981, two additional buildings were completed and dedicated – a two-story educational building with 90 classrooms and an administration building with 30 classrooms and a fellowship hall.[13]

Another vision Pastor Coats had was about promoting the spiritual and academic development of children. It was realized in August, 1984, when the Glendale Preschool Academy was opened. The charter school, which was open to the community, was in keeping with Rev. Coats' stated vision, to provide a Christian-oriented preschool "to teaching boys and girls the 'way of education' and the 'way of the cross.'"[14]

Because of his commitment to children, Coats gained a reputation as a champion for children and young people. Ed Hanna, founder of the West Perrine Community Development Corp., told *The Miami Herald* that Glendale, "provided summer employment to low-income children at a time when other companies did not. The church also provided space for the first alternative school for pregnant

teenagers," *The Herald* reported in 2002. "Other people didn't want to be bothered with the kids. He was a person who was concerned about the community," Hanna said.[15]

Coats cultivated the Glendale church's community outreach, which was characterized by one writer as the "unofficial governing body of Richmond Heights community," in which most of the membership resided. "We're not too busy that we can't stop and help" people in need, Coats said in 1984. He further noted, "there's more here than just religious training." The mission of the Glendale Church, under Coats leadership, was to spread the gospel through word and deed. "The faithful take their message to the prisons, the airwaves and the street corners through more than a dozen outreach programs that go outside the church to the people," Peter Hamm reported. "I think that our outreach programs should be a model, and a lot of the churches don't go outside their own people," Coats said.[16]

Sundays were for Spiritual Development

Sundays were a day devoted to the spiritual development of the Glendale members highlighted by the weekly energetic worship services led by Pastor Coats. Most Sundays began with age-group Bible studies followed by mid-morning worship services which continued well past 1:00 p.m. Yet every available pew seat would be taken in a sanctuary designed for 500 persons, in addition to folding chairs that lined the aisles. During that worship time – which featured loud and uplifting music accompanied by piano, electric bass and tambourines

- would lead up to the Bible-based and emotional sermon delivered by Coats. A church member and magazine writer described Coats' preaching as being, "powerful, stirring sermons seasoned with simple, yet unique, analogies to his indescribable passion for God's Word and his people."[17] Even after the 3-1/2 hours of Bible study and worship and a quick lunch at home, these members often returned for "afternoon classes in how to evangelize" and share their faith. And prayer services continued daily throughout the week.[18] One member explained the reason the worship services "are a joyous energetic experience with members standing and waving [their hands] being free to shout during the service and singing hymns with passion." Given that most of the Glendale membership was African-American, "they face discrimination every day," member Elaine Stevens told *The Miami Herald* in 1984. "This is release," Stevens said, "It gives you the strength to fight a system that oppresses you. After a week, we need that release."[19]

That focus of reaching people through evangelistic-based ministries and Bible teaching groups paid dividends in terms of growth. During the three decades between the mid-1960s and the mid-1990s, Coats was baptizing on average 100 people per year. Other Christians were drawn to the vibrant ministries of the church which added to the church's growth. In 1970, the church reported a membership of 260 with 301

Pastor Coats led the church to sponsor the starting of six missions

enrolled in the Sunday school. By 1980, the church registered 1,895 members with 1,378 participating in the age-group Bible study opportunities. And by 1995, the church membership reached over 3,500 with 1,732 enrolled in Sunday school.[20] In addition to growing the Glendale Church, Pastor Coats led the church to sponsor the starting of six missions – some bearing the Glendale moniker (i.e. Glendale of Brownsville or Glendale of Immokalee) – and providing church members to serve as the nucleus for those missions. Additionally, Coats mentored and ordained at least eight young men who went from Glendale to organize as many churches from West Palm Beach to Maryland.

The realization of the church family's dream for facilities serving as a beacon of spiritual hope in the African-American community of Richmond Heights, was not immune to the ravages of natural weather events. The middle-class neighborhood, with approximately 17,000 homes and apartments at the time, was hit by Hurricane Andrew's north eye wall on August 24, 1992.[21] In addition to most of the residential buildings in the area being damaged or destroyed, the Glendale Church's 22-year old sanctuary was completely destroyed and its education and administrative buildings were severely damaged.[22] The church was among 16 Southern Baptist congregations in Dade County alone that experienced destruction or damage by the hurricane which had wind gusts as high as 160 mph.[23] After four months of repair work on the Glendale Church's educational and administrative buildings, made it possible to provide meeting spaces for the weekly

Bible study groups and worship services. However, it took nearly four years of fund-raising and construction on a new sanctuary, before Pastor Coats led the church members into the new sanctuary on September 22, 1996.[24]

Crossing the Racial Divide

Without a doubt, one of the most significant actions made by Rev. Joseph Coats was his leadership to affirm unity and brotherhood by leading his church to become the first African-American congregation to affiliate with the Miami Baptist Association, an organization primarily composed of Anglo congregations. However, by 1968 the Miami Association was already culturally integrated, in addition to the 67 Anglo churches and three Hispanic full-member congregations, but no African-American congregations. The Anglo churches sponsored an additional 23 Spanish missions, one Chinese language, one Hungarian language and one Slavic language missions. This reflected part of the multi-cultural diversity that was present in Dade County at the time.[25]

The Glendale Missionary Baptist Church in 1969 applied for affiliation with the Miami Baptist Association. Such a request was routinely handled by what was called the Committee on Petitionary Letters. The four-member group reviewed the application detailing the doctrine and practices of the Glendale Church and likely had a face-to-face meeting with Pastor Coats. The committee's responsibility was to ensure the church had doctrinal beliefs and practices that were consistent with historic Baptist faith and

practice. The committee's affirmative action resulted in a recommendation made during the association's annual meeting held October 20, 1969, at the First Baptist Church of Hialeah. Without any fanfare – and more in a matter-of-fact fashion – the Committee on Petitionary Letters recommended that the Glendale Missionary Baptist Church and the Iglesias Bautisa Getsemani to be accepted into the fellowship of the association. The report was adopted by the messengers attending the annual meeting.[26] In Southern Baptist polity once a church is accepted into a Florida-based Baptist association as a cooperating member by its declared Baptist faith and practices, the church automatically becomes affiliated with the Florida Baptist State Convention and the Southern Baptist Convention.

According to one newspaper account, the church's action to affiliate with Southern Baptists came "during the peak of the nation's civil rights struggle." The news account said Pastor Coats, "endured criticism from other black ministers and in some cases was ostracized. His fellow ministers objected to his reaching out to an organization that had staunchly supported racial segregation."[27] Some thirty-plus years later, an Anglo pastor and friend of Joe Coats, observed that, "He did it at a time when it was not popular for a black pastor to join a white association," said Tommy Watson, retired pastor of the First Baptist Church, Perrine. Because of Coats' pro-active effort at racial reconciliation, Watson explained Coats, "received criticism from the blacks and snubs from the whites, but he hung in there and did what was right."[28] Coats' own explanation for

the move to join with Southern Baptists was simple. "We simply taught Christ here – not black and white. I preached impartially and unity. And our members saw people as people," he told a *Miami Herald* reporter in 2002.[29] Coats' son, Mark, recalled that, "other black ministers came to respect his father's actions from 30 years earlier." He went on to explain in 2002 that his father, "brought a lot of them around to understand that in order to eradicate racism in the religious realm, we would have to demonstrate it by not doing the things that were done to us."[30]

The action by the Glendale Church to affiliate with Florida Baptists was a major step in reconciliation from the racial divide created nearly one hundred-plus years earlier when predominately African-American churches were actively affiliated with local Baptist associations and the state convention. In the nineteenth century, following the Civil War, uniquely African-American congregations were organized by many former slaves who had been members of Anglo congregations. According to Florida Baptist African-American Historian Sid Smith, there was an "exodus" of African-Americans from Anglo churches. As a result, "Because of the unwillingness of white Florida Baptists to grant freedom and equality to the African-American community, African Americans found alternatives to membership in Florida Baptist churches after emancipation most frequently reflected by the establishing of African American churches in the state." These churches in turn formed their own Baptist associations within their geographical proximity. Smith explained that, "In 1880 there were

four African American associations . . . [and] by 1884 there were eight African American associations" that were affiliated with the Florida Baptist State Convention. He also noted that in the 1883 statistical report of all cooperating churches affiliated with the state convention, there was "a membership of 16,857 African-Americans compared to only 9,100 whites."[31] But the racial separation was inevitable, which Smith explained:

> *"The great tragedy is that the white brethren were not ready for the demands of equality and brotherhood for the African-American community. Their recalcitrant resistance forced the African-Americans to leave in order to experience the full implications of freedom within the church. By 1900 there were no African-American congregations remaining" in the Florida Baptist State Convention.*[32]

These departing predominately African-American churches and their associations found fellowship through affiliation with the National Baptist Convention of America, organized 1895, and the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., Inc. founded in 1915. Smith observed that, "These African-American national denominations provided an alternative to the Southern Baptist Convention, which was not ready for racial equality. These two major African-American denominations attracted the overwhelming majority of African-American Baptist churches to their membership."[33]

Joseph Coats sought to bridge the racial divide that existed in Dade County by doing several things in

the public and religious arenas. The public event occurred in the early 1980s when the Liberty City and Overton communities exploded with race riots. "I vividly recall the times," noted U.S. Congressman Carrie P. Meek in a statement published by the *Congressional Record*, in describing Rev. Coats' "reasoned leadership . . .courage . . .and advocacy," following the racial confrontations. Rep. Meeks further observed that Coats, "was the firm voice of reason and the steadying influence of conscience. Wisely, he articulated his credo that we have got to learn to live and reach out to each other, or run the risk of shamefully reaping the grapes of wrath from those who have been left out."[34]

While the Miami community was still on edge from the racial tensions exacerbated by the urban riots, Pastor Coats joined with Dr. Emit Ray, pastor, Riverside Baptist Church, Miami, to participate in pulpit and congregation exchanges that began in early 1984. On a given Sunday, the Glendale members travelled to Kendall and participated in the worship services of the predominately Anglo Riverside congregation. Then on another Sunday, the Riverside congregation traveled to the Richmond Heights community to worship with the Glendale members. "It's brotherhood. That's what it's all about," said Dr. Ray following his sermon. "In a community like ours, and at times like this, we need it." In the same newspaper account, Joe Coats observed, "We have created this great fellowship without force at all, but out of respect for each other." He went on to explain, "It shows a bond of human love, regardless of race, color or creed."[35]

Pastor Joseph C. Coats preached the official Convention Sermon during the 1994 annual Florida Baptist State Convention. This was the first time such an honor was bestowed on a Florida African-American pastor.

Because of his active involvement and commitment to the work of the Miami Baptist Association, Pastor Coats was one of two pastors in Florida named "Pastor of the Year" by Stetson University in 1983. As a leader in the Florida Baptist State Convention, Coats was elected to serve: on the State Board of Missions, 1978-81 and 1993-96; two terms as a trustee of the Florida Baptist Children's Homes, 1982-85 and 1985-88; and was appointed to serve on the state convention's Committee on Nominations in 1988 and 1993. And in 1994, Pastor Coats was selected to bring the Convention Sermon during the annual Florida Baptist State Convention, the first time such an honor was bestowed upon a Florida African-American pastor.

Joseph C. Coats retired on January 31, 1997, after 30 years' service to the Glendale Church and continued to be active in the ministry until his health began to fail. He died March 2, 2002, at age 75. In a memorial publication distributed at his funeral, several of Pastor Coats' "famous quotes" were provided. One of those quotations epitomized the ministry philosophy Joseph Coats lifted up

throughout his life:

> *"Christ has no hands, but our hands to do his work today. He has no feet but our feet to lead men his way. He has no tongue but our tongue to speak the Gospel and His will to tell men why he died. He has no help but our help to bring His people to His side. We are the only Bible that a careless world can read."*[36]

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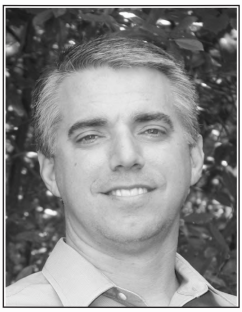
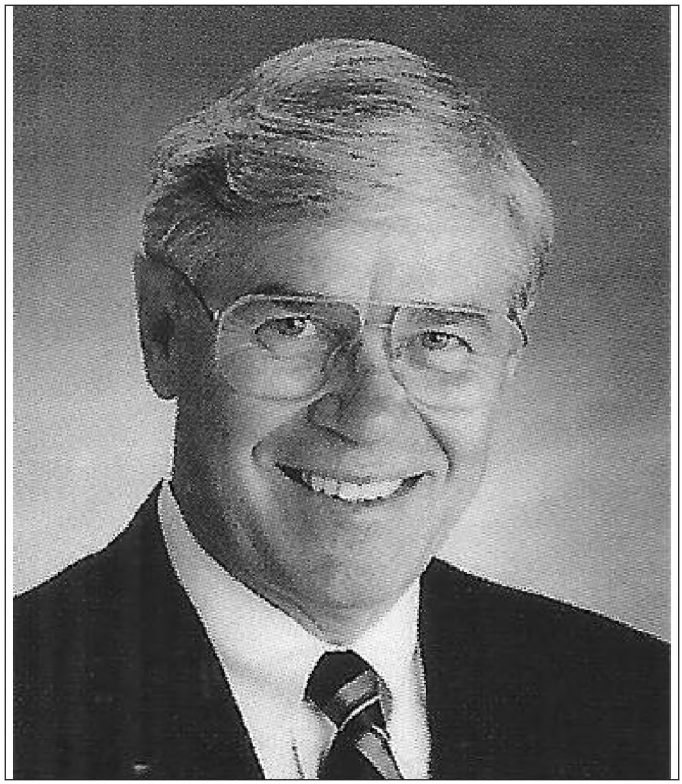
James B. Henry – A Legacy as a Pastor-Peacemaker



by Joel Breidenbaugh, PhD
Lead Pastor, Gospel Centered Church,
Apopka, Florida

"Help!" screamed the 7-year-old boy. His 11-year-old brother had enough of his smart-mouth name calling and was about to pummel him. Then, their 9-year-old brother jumped into the fray to break his big brother's grip, so his little brother could escape and live another day. I could tell that story and a multitude more just like it, because that was a common occurrence between me and my brothers. I am the middle brother and I did what all middle siblings do – played peacemaker between an older and younger sibling. While I doubt my older brother would have ever killed our younger brother, I like to think I might have prevented such an outcome on more than one occasion!

The first time I learned of Jim Henry was when I was a college student at what was then Florida Baptist Theological College in Graceville. I had been familiar with the "Battle for the Bible" and the Conservative Resurgence in the Southern Baptist Convention, a strategy to elect biblical inerrantists to lead the SBC as president. Then I learned Jim Henry upset the status quo, because he ran against the established conservatives' pick, Fred Wolfe, and Henry won. It was quickly pointed out that Henry,



James Bascom Henry (1937 – to present) A Legacy as a Pastor-Peacemaker

too, was conservative, but he had peacemaking at his heart and the SBC was greatly in need of a heavy dose of peacemaking in the mid-1990s.[1]

While this article will primarily focus on Henry's time in Florida, additional life experiences contributed to his ability to make and keep peace.[2] Henry's role as a pastor developed him into a peacekeeper. His roles as preacher and evangelist led him to urge listeners to come to peace with God through repentance and faith. Furthermore, Henry's denominational leadership helped characterize him as a peacemaker. Finally, Henry's interim and transitional pastorates helped bring peace to several congregations. And for the literally thousands of pastors and laity who have known James B. Henry, he will be well-remembered for his legacy as a pastor-peacemaker.

Pastor Legacy

More than any other role in ministry, Jim Henry has been known as a beloved pastor, who was both compassionate and a maker of peace. He has served congregations in Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, Florida and North Carolina. Common to effective pastors, making or keeping peace seemed to be a hallmark of Henry's life and ministry.

Henry's emphasis on God's love for all people got him into hot water in the segregated South in the 1960s. One man at Mt. Pisgah Baptist Church in Melvin, Alabama, where Henry served from 1960-1963, pushed for Henry's termination. Due to his faithfulness in preaching God's Word and his love for people, however, the entire congregation, minus

the one man, got behind their pastor.[3] Henry's emphasis helped promote peace in the church and in the community.

Henry faced a similar experience during his brief tenure at Hollywood Baptist Church in Sledge, Mississippi (1963-1965). When church members expressed concern about potential civil-rights protesters showing up to church, Henry led the deacons to draft "a statement which welcomed into the church any individual, regardless of race, whose intent was worship. A corollary was added, stating that any person disrupting a service would be asked to leave. The church approved the statement."[4]

While Henry was happy serving during some explosive growth at Two Rivers Baptist Church in Nashville, Tennessee (1965-1977),[5] he heard from First Baptist Orlando. He was set on staying until the Lord changed his heart and gave him a peace about going.[6]

Undoubtedly, Henry's most significant pastorate was his time at First Baptist Orlando (1977-2006). He quickly grew to love this central Florida congregation and his congregants learned to reciprocate Jim's love. Several people observed Henry as "a positive encourager. He tends to respond with 'Why not?' or 'Let's do it!' rather than a 'No!' or 'It's impossible.'"[7]

Even when First Baptist Orlando became a megachurch, Henry continued counseling, performing weddings and funerals, making hospital visits and gathered regularly for prayer with other men.[8] Peacekeeping and unity is a regular part of such ministry.

Peacemakers are not without their challenges, though. Pastors who are normally best at making and keeping peace are not usually effective leaders for their churches, because they are afraid of upsetting some of their people. Henry could still lead effectively while seeking to promote peace and unity among his people.

Henry's wisdom in leadership offended some of his sheep on a few occasions, but it had more to do with their refusal to follow their shepherd. One scenario was when Henry led First Baptist Orlando to relocate from downtown to 150 acres on I-4. While a couple of thousand were ready to follow their pastor with a view toward their future, about 1,000 insisted on staying and having a Baptist presence in downtown Orlando, selecting the name Downtown Baptist Church (see more on Downtown Baptist Church, described later in this article).[9]

Several years later, when Henry was leading First Baptist Orlando to offer more contemporary worship services, a few members did not want to see it, claiming it would cause division in their congregation. When one member voiced displeasure toward Henry about several people not agreeing with him, he responded, "If they are not on board, they can just leave." The member was taken aback and wanted to make sure he heard his pastor correctly and Henry repeated his statement verbatim.[10] Sometimes peacekeeping has to take a backseat to leading. But top leaders can still promote peace and unity after decisions are made, and Henry was a master at doing both.

Preacher Legacy

Although Henry began his ministry as a topical preacher, it did not take long for him to see the value in expository preaching, letting God speak through His Word. Henry "determined to make his preaching expositional because 'that is what the Holy Spirit seems to jump all over.'"[11]

One reporter noted, "Henry is well known for preaching Christian unity . . . 'Unity is the highest expression of Christian faith. When they see unity in a world that is disunified, it's like a magnet drawing people to Christ.'"[12] Christian unity, peace with God and others, and love for all people go hand-in-hand and have been trademarks of Henry's preaching.

David Bailey's doctoral dissertation examined a number of doctrinal emphases within Henry's preaching from 1977-1994 at First Baptist Orlando. Of the 285 selected sermons, Bailey concluded soteriology, the study of salvation, was the most commonly preached doctrine. As a matter of fact, "Henry preached 33 percent of his doctrinal sermons on the elements of true salvation."[13] This emphasis promotes peace between God and man.

Furthermore, Henry's preaching was both effective and popular. It "was effective because of his manifest love for all people."[14] It also was popular, for he was often requested for conferences, revivals and chapel services. His sermons were circulated by cassette tape around central Florida and to some four dozen countries, numbering more than 100,000 cassette tapes each year.[15]

Evangelist Legacy

The emphasis on evangelism in Henry's life and ministry started early, even before his birth. A descendant of nineteenth-century James Gunn, an evangelist known for preaching revival meetings and inviting all to respond to Jesus,[16] Jim Henry has that same evangelistic DNA in his blood. Evangelism includes coming to peace with God.

James Bascom Henry was born in Nashville, Tennessee on October 1, 1937. A few years later, Henry's conversion helped shape his future evangelistic focus. During a tent-revival meeting in 1946, "Henry remembered vividly the 'sawdust churning all around me' as the 'fiery evangelist' preached about the reality of hell. During that revival service, Henry sensed a strong conviction of his own sinfulness and of his need for salvation through faith in Jesus Christ."[17]

Because Henry had been touched by a passionate evangelist, he made sure he was passionate about evangelism in his own ministry. Thus, Henry's preaching was highly evangelistic, having been influenced by Billy Graham's preaching.[18] Henry sought to communicate the basics about the gospel message in each sermon. He "believed the conclusion always should include an appeal for individuals to receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior."[19] His sermons included the necessary response of both repentance from sins and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. He believed salvation "was effected when an individual repented of sin and placed faith in Jesus Christ as Savior."[20]

There is no doubting Henry clearly

demonstrated an evangelistic heart in his role as pastor. Both Two Rivers Baptist Church in Nashville and First Baptist Church, Orlando, regularly were among their states' leaders in baptisms under his leadership. The Lord blessed Two Rivers with 150 baptisms per year during Henry's time as pastor. God continued to bless Henry's tenure at First Orlando, as the church regularly witnessed 300-500 baptisms each year. Henry also saw First Orlando grow from a total membership of 3,816 in 1977[21] to 13,664 in 2006.[22] Thousands of sinners have come to peace with God under Henry's ministry.

Denominational Leadership Legacy

As important as Jim Henry has been in the realm of the Florida Baptist State Convention and an even larger realm of the Southern Baptist Convention, his impact in Orlando has been monumental. Henry was named the "Minister of the Year" by the Greater Orlando Baptist Association in 1985. The following decade *The Orlando Sentinel* newspaper named him the "Floridian of the Year" in 1997. Moreover, Orlando Mayor and Orange County Chairman proclaimed September 15, 2002 as "Jim Henry Day."[23] There are very few people who have made as big of an influence on Orlando than Jim Henry and his peacemaking attitude has contributed much to his reputation. That influence in Orlando would spread to other arenas throughout the state and national levels. When it comes to Henry as a denominational leader, space does not permit listing all his areas of service. This section will note a few, key areas to Henry's role as peacemaker.

SBC Peace Committee Legacy

Henry served on the twenty-two member, SBC Peace Committee from 1985-1988. This committee had to determine causes of division and possible solutions to the politico-theological controversy. Both conservatives and moderates comprised the committee. While Henry was not nearly as outspoken as many members of that committee, his demeanor and leadership made him a natural choice. The final outcome pointed out theological problems in the SBC and moved the Convention to a less contentious gathering in the last decade of the twentieth century.[24]

Even though some voices in the SBC lamented the Conservative Resurgence (or Fundamentalist Takeover, as they liked to call it), many Protestant and Evangelical groups found encouragement in the conservative turnaround. As a case in point, Henry once found himself seated next to a self-proclaimed "disillusioned Episcopalian." When the man discovered Henry was a Southern Baptist, the man's "face lit up, he turned in his seat, and said, 'Thank you. You have stood up for the things our church preached and believed early on. We began to drift away. I began to look around. When you took a stand on the authenticity of Scripture, I felt hope again. We found a conservative Episcopal church that stands where you do and has the heart to stand on the truth. You have helped a lot of us – though not Baptists – to take heart and stand up. We are not alone. Thank you.'"[25]

Because of Henry's heartbeat for evangelism, he was asked to chair the Spiritual Awakening Task

Force for the SBC (1990-1991). This committee aimed to "raise denominational awareness about prayer and spiritual renewal."[26] Such a focus promotes peace with God and man.
Furthermore, Henry was tasked as co-chairman of the Reach the World Task Force (1993) to study world evangelization. At the heart of evangelization is coming to peace with God through faith in Christ. Henry's ministry has emphasized such peace for decades.

Legacy as SBC President

As mentioned previously, Jim Henry ran against Fred Wolfe at the 1994 SBC annual meeting in Orlando. A few months prior to the annual meeting, Henry informed his congregation of his decision to allow his name to be placed as a candidate for president of the convention. His goal, should he win, was to promote peace. Henry observed, "'I have complete peace that I will be in God's will, win or lose...'" And, he added, "he hopes following the election the SBC would become a unified people."[27]

Henry won the presidency in Orlando that year with a 55 percent vote. Within a few months, he held a listening session with 60 younger pastors. They were most grateful for Henry hearing them out, for they wondered about the value of staying in the Convention.[28] Henry helped encourage them to stay with it and become involved.

Presidents of the SBC usually get to meet and converse with the President of the United States. Jim Henry was no different. Not only did President Clinton reach out to him, he invited him to join him

on multiple occasions, including peacemaking missions to the Middle East.[29] Henry's two, one-year terms as President of the Southern Baptist Convention enabled him to promote peace in several different settings, both in religious and political arenas.

Transitional Pastor Legacy

After Henry retired from First Baptist Orlando in March 2006, it was not long before churches called on him for interim and transitional pastoral leadership. Henry served multiple congregations in North Carolina, Tennessee and Florida from 2006-2014. The Lord used his peaceful attitude to help churches bridge from one pastor to the next.

While Henry's influence on First Baptist Orlando has been extremely significant, he also has made a big difference at Downtown Baptist Church in Orlando. As mentioned previously, Henry led First Baptist Orlando to explore future growth options in 1980 and the church eventually relocated away from downtown Orlando in 1985.[30] While the majority of the church members supported him, approximately 1,000 resisted a move and wanted to remain in the downtown location. When the move finally came, Henry preached at both locations for a few months. People at the downtown location desired to become their own autonomous congregation, however. Henry, the peacemaker, was torn because he loved the people at both locations. Once the downtown group voted to break away, conversations were had for those remaining to purchase the old property. The move and the purchase resulted in much

bitterness among the remaining members, who would constitute as Downtown Baptist Church on August 4, 1985. They could not understand why they had supported a church for many years and helped see the buildings constructed and remodeled, only to be forced to purchase the same property from the majority in the mid-1980s. They placed the blame primarily on one man, Jim Henry.

The whole process of division was very difficult on Henry and the congregations. Henry remembered, "I wanted everyone to see the vision God had led us so clearly in and go with us on this new adventure of faith. Not everyone was as enthusiastic as I was! My emotions went through a roller-coaster experience for a while; from unbelief, to anger, to grief, and in time, to understanding and peace that the Lord was in control and He would take care of His church. My responsibility was to be faithful to follow His leadership."[31]

While First Baptist Orlando continued to grow over the next few decades, Downtown Baptist Church experienced decline from an aging congregation and lack of effective outreach in a changing community. A worship center able to seat some 2,000 people had but 70 people in weekly attendance in 2014.

That's when the small remnant turned toward the man who served as their shepherd 30 years earlier. They made peace with the peacemaker Jim Henry, who returned to be their transitional pastor. The church got a boost from First Baptist Orlando and they immediately began running about 350 in their weekly worship services. Although Henry stepped aside in 2018, Downtown Baptist Church was

in a much better position than it had been in a couple of decades with higher attendance, ministry to different age groups and a $1.2 million annual budget.[32] God had used Henry to bring peace and stability to a struggling congregation.

The ministry legacy of Jim Henry, the peacemaker, continues into 2019 through his writing and leading conferences. He continues to encourage pastors in ministry and he trains churches on deacon ministry. His desire is to equip churches and their leaders so they are unified in building up and advancing the kingdom of God.

Conclusion

"Help me, God!" screamed an inward voice. It belonged to a 44-year-old pastor of a medium-sized church in the Southern Baptist Convention. He was unsure of what to do. While he leaned toward the conservative side theologically, he had witnessed numerous years of infighting at the national annual meeting. He was exhausted spiritually and was giving serious consideration to leaving the SBC altogether to join another denomination or simply go the route of non-denominationalism. Then, he heard and witnessed the work of Jim Henry. He admired this man for having compassionate convictions. He liked what he heard about peace and unity. He decided the SBC was worth investing a few more years. He was glad the Lord heard his prayer.[33]

Southern Baptists certainly have our share of issues here at the end of the second decade of the twenty-first century. We face declining baptism numbers and overall membership. We continue to be

too soft on church discipline and regenerate church membership. We no longer plant near as many churches annually as we once did and we have a significant decrease in our national and international missionaries. Those problems are concerning, but they could have been much worse. The "Battle for the Bible" helped resolve many doctrinal issues. But even many conservatives were wary of the 15-year war. The SBC was in desperate need of a Peacemaker in the mid-1990s. God granted the Southern Baptist Convention wisdom and mercy in the election of Jim Henry, the Peacemaker.

ENDNOTES

1 A desire for peace should not imply the Battle for the Bible was over in 1994 during the SBC Annual Meeting. There would still be another two years of turmoil in Louisville at Southern Seminary, the flagship seminary of the convention. The majority of the inner-warfare in the SBC was coming to an end in the mid-90s, however. For conservative perspectives of the Battle for the Bible and the SBC controversy, see James C. Hefley, *The Truth in Crisis*, 5 vols. (Garland, TX: Hannibal Books, 1986-1990); *The Conservative Resurgence in the Southern Baptist Convention* (Garland, TX: Hannaibal Books, 1991); Jerry Sutton, *The Baptist Reformation: The Conservative Resurgence in the Southern Baptist Convention* (Nashville: B&H, 2000) and Paul Pressler, *A Hill on Which to Die: One Southern Baptist's Journey* (Nashville: B&H, 2002). For the modernist perspective, see Nancy Tatum Ammerman, *Baptist Battles: Social Change and Religious Conflict in the Southern Baptist Convention* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1990); Grady C. Cothen, *What Happened to the Southern Baptist Convention? A Memoir of the Controversy* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 1993); and E. Luther Copeland, *The Southern Baptist Convention and the*

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5 For an overview of Henry's ministry at Two Rivers Baptist Church, see *A History of Two Rivers Baptist Church, 1962-1992* (Nashville: n.p.), 15-37, 143-45.

6 See Henry, 105.

7 Birkhead, 162.

8 Bailey, 24.

9 Birkhead, 188-189.

10 This author heard this account from a former member of FB Orlando. The member was not bitter but surprised of Henry's response. Obviously, pastors are not perfect, but Henry had learned when certain growth ideas were beneficial to the whole church and did not want to be distracted from it.

11 Bailey, 50.

12 Jim Allison, "Former SBC President Jim Henry Still Mentoring, Doing God's Work" *Western Recorder*, June 23, 2009.

13 Bailey, 130.

14 Ibid., 162.

15 Ibid., 6-7.

16 See Henry, 2-4.

17 Bailey, 26. The quotation marks reference words from Bailey's interview with Henry on March 18, 1994 in Orlando.

Henry's personal account it less descriptive in Henry, 28.
18 Bailey, 35.
19 Ibid., 81.
20 Ibid., 133.
21 *Florida Baptist Annual,* 1977, 384.
22 *Florida Baptist Annual,* 2006, 376. This same Annual Church Profile (ACP) reported 5,500 in AM Worship attendance. Like most mega-churches, there is a significant different between average worship attendance and total membership. While Henry highlighted the necessity of repentance from sin and the issue of Lordship salvation, it is difficult to reconcile such high baptism and growth numbers with even higher inactive numbers.
23 From "Personal Data—James B. Henry" in the Jim Henry file of the Florida Baptist Historical Society.
24 Part of the "peace" was due to Moderates giving up after 10 years of fighting and certain liberal faculty being replaced at institutions like Southern Seminary and Southeastern Seminary in the early and mid-1990s.
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Carolyn Weatherford Crumpler – A Legacy of Women's Missions and Ministry Advocacy

by Joni B. Hannigan
A Freelance Christian writer
living in Jacksonville, Florida

Carolyn Weatherford Crumpler (b. 1930; d. 2015) for years was the lone woman to serve as an executive in the male-led denomination where her heart beat for missions. Carolyn Weatherford was "to missionary education and mission support what Lottie Moon [was] to mission service,"[1] a biographer wrote. Her leadership as the Florida Baptist Convention's Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) Executive Director (1967-74) became the launching point for her 15-year role as the executive director of the national WMU.

Carolyn, who retired from national WMU in 1989 to marry James Joseph "Joe" Crumpler, served WMU for 31 years in various capacities, including two stints in Alabama and two in Florida. In Alabama she was Young Woman's Auxiliary Director, WMU, 1958-60; and in Florida, before filling the role of executive director, she was Girl's Auxiliary Director (GAs), 1961-63.[2]

"I'm not sure what will be left of me when you take WMU away," Carolyn told the WMU staff at their national headquarters in Birmingham in 1989.[3] She told listeners after she married Crumpler, pastor of

Carolyn Weatherford Crumpler (1930 – 2015) A Women's Missions and Ministry Advocate

Mt. Carmel Baptist Church in Cincinnati, Ohio, that she planned to continue to speak and write.[4]

Early Life in Florida

Like Lottie Moon before her, Carolyn Weatherford's curiosity about and willingness to serve those different from her was as strong a call as any to missions.[5] Mattie Carolyn Weatherford as named by parents Rufus Clark and Doris Elizabeth Sansing Weatherford, was born in House, Mississippi on January 17, 1930, while her parents were sharecropping with their parents. They soon returned to their own home in Frostproof, Florida, where life was split between citrus and church.[6]

At the First Baptist Church in Frostproof, Carolyn – as she was called – met a missionary to the Seminole Indians during Sunbeams, one of the many children's mission organizations resourced by WMU. She was drawn by the missionary's bright beads and colorful clothes; quickly understanding "Jesus loves ALL the children of the world" – even the ones who are not like me. "Jesus wants me to tell them."[7]

Carolyn became a professing Christian at age 12 and was baptized in a nearby lake. By the time she was 14, she became a counselor for Girls In Action (GAs), leading those who were marginally younger. A Florida state WMU officer visiting Frostproof was shocked, but did not respond

At the dedication service, she pledged a lifelong commitment to service, thinking she would be a missionary.

negatively. Instead she asked if Weatherford and a friend would like to attend the WMU conference for young women at Ridgecrest, North Carolina. Weatherford's parents, older brother, and church contributed the financial support needed for the trip.[8]

At the conference, at age 16, Carolyn saw there were significant women, other than her mother, leading and serving God. At the dedication service, she pledged a lifelong commitment to service, thinking she would be a missionary. Returning home, her pastor quickly enlisted her in teaching Vacation Bible School, the first ever held in Frostproof.[9]

It was at that time Carolyn learned to literally "beat the bushes." In completing a census of the area for the church, Weatherford and the other young people knocked on doors and counted approximately 2,000. Thinking they were finished by the time they reached the end of the road; Carolyn was surprised when the woman who lived there told her: "If you're serious about getting everybody, you'll have to go on out in the grove. People live there too."

Reaching all people and an emphasis on "personal worth" would become a major focus of Carolyn Weatherford's ministry as the years went by.[10]

From adult choir director to church Training Union (discipleship) director to cleaning the church on Saturdays, it seemed there was nothing Carolyn would not do to advance the Kingdom. Even before she graduated high school, she was chosen as an associational officer for Baptist Training Union.[11]

Majoring in library science at Florida State University, Carolyn worked for five years as a high school librarian after a heartbreaking broken marriage engagement. Following two summers as a church youth director, she remembered her early commitment to full-time Christian service and enrolled at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary (NOBTS) where she was encouraged, but not yet convinced, she needed to be involved in professional WMU work.[12] At NOBTS, she set up the library for the Mather School of Nursing, and served as Baptist Student Union director for the nurses.[13]

Weighing job offers after college, she reluctantly accepted a job from the Alabama WMU in 1958, but meanwhile had applied for appointment by the SBC Foreign Mission Board (now the International Mission Board), to serve in Nigeria or Brazil. When a medical exam revealed she suffered from hypertension she continued in WMU work, hoping one day to resolve her medical issue. When finally she was dropped from consideration as a missionary, in 1961 she accepted a job in Florida to work with GA's.[14]

Leading Florida WMU

By the time Carolyn was age 33, she had determined there were "two sides to missions," and she was devoted to WMU work, returning to Alabama from 1963 to 1967 as promotion director.

When Carolyn took the executive director's position in Florida WMU in 1967, she continued to work closely with other WMU leaders at the national level to lead conferences and write. On the home

front she took on responsibilities that gave her first-hand experience of volunteer WMU work – like serving as associational WMU director of Jacksonville. She was a leader in mission action and taught evangelism workshops.[15]

Later she told a reporter that as her involvement in missions deepened, she realized how her parents' awareness of missions directed her path:

> *"We visited our old homeplace in Mississippi where I was born (at House, between Meridian and Philadelphia) and attended the church they had attended in the early 1900's. They told me the church had split over the questions of missions and they had elected to stay with the group of Missionary Baptists. That was long before they were even married but now, years later, I have an opportunity to put their mission beliefs into actions. It's an exciting prospect."*[16]

Her biography notes how much women throughout Florida and around the nation had already begun to respect this young, single woman from Frostproof:

> *"When the national WMU organization wanted a top-notch speaker to represent Southern Baptists among other Baptists in the Women's Continental Assembly of 1972, they turned to Carolyn Weatherford. She had a good story to tell about how she and Florida Baptist women of all races were working together, and she knew how to pack a good speech into a short slot. The Southern Baptist*

women went home with a new appreciation for this Floridian."[17]

It has been long recognized that Carolyn was responsible for a marked increase in interest in WMU and missions in Florida churches. In 1974 at the Florida Baptist State Convention annual meeting in Lakeland, Fla., she was recognized with a "Resolution of Appreciation for Carolyn Weatherford" recommended by the State Board of Missions.

The resolution noted both of Carolyn's times of service related to WMU in the state, while lauding her "distinguished service" and thanking "God for the significant contributions" she made to the mission work of Florida Baptist churches. The resolution continued: "Be it further resolved that we assure Miss Weatherford of our interest and prayers as she assumes the position of executive secretary of Woman's Missionary Union, Auxiliary to the Southern Baptist Convention."[18]

Ironically, as Carolyn Weatherford was leaving to head national WMU, it was recognized Florida was one of the state-level WMUs that had dropped the auxiliary structure – separate and independent entity – for a departmental status within the state convention organization. Carolyn had strongly supported this move, but later assured the national WMU committee that she favored only the auxiliary status for the national WMU. When her former boss in Florida, Harold Bennett, became head of the SBC Executive Committee in 1979, speculation rose that Bennett and Weatherford might transplant Florida's experiences to the national level. Instead,

Weatherford took a stand for auxiliary status nationally and in states. She expressed the hope that some states with WMU departmental structures would eventually reorganize as auxiliaries or with more autonomy, or would at least work more in tandem with women's groups of other denominations.[19]

Weatherford's Broader Missions' Vision

It's when she was elected as national WMU executive in 1974 that Carolyn's comparison to Lottie Moon may have waned a bit. Addressing a broader cultural change that had impacted local churches and Southern Baptists' missions' enterprise, Weatherford noted "working women" would require changes to the organization and that mission action included influencing politics.

"The working woman is probably more sensitive to issues and ways she can be influential in changing conditions through politics, and that's mission action. As more women have more money to give, they can take an active financial role in missions. The working woman has more opportunities to express herself, to learn about voting intelligently," Carolyn told a reporter in 1974.[20]

Carolyn humbled others by carrying her own bags, making her own bed, making her own teaching aids, and writing her own speeches.

Although described as a "soft-spoken woman with an easy smile and a warm personality" with "the ability to make immediate, warm friends out of total strangers," Carolyn also was characterized as a leader who believed a woman's place was to not only to reach "China's starving children," but to also reach out through "community missions."[21]

Modeling her extraordinary heart for the vulnerable, and her love of missions, Carolyn humbled others by carrying her own bags, making her own bed, making her own teaching aids, and writing her own speeches.[22] She did not focus on her singleness, but was described as a "warm, family-oriented person" who surrounded herself with two nephews, four nieces, and three great-nephews. With more than 50 missionary kids (MKs) attending Samford University in Birmingham, she invited them to dinner several times a year.[23]

Carolyn supported the Baptist World Alliance, serving on its General Council beginning in 1980. From 1977 she was on the Baptist World Aid Committee and became its chair in 1985. She was the first woman to chair the North American Baptist Fellowship, and presided over two major continental meetings in 1979 and 1980. She assumed WMU's place on the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, serving on the executive committee and as second vice-chairman in two different terms. She became president of the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary National Alumni Association for 1984-85, the first woman to chair any Southern Baptist seminary's alumni association except the WMU Training School/Carver School of Missions.

She received the seminary's Distinguished Alumnus Award in 1975. She was named to the board of managers of the American Bible Society in 1980 and served on the board of the Alabama Citizens Action Program for ten years. She participated on the board of the Southern Baptist Foundation 1974-82, relinquishing her spot to an elected member of the WMLT Executive Board.[24]

Between 1975 and 1986 Carolyn was awarded five honorary doctor's degrees by Baptist schools: Mobile College, Campbell University, Houston Baptist University, Georgetown College, and William Carey College.[25]

In 1986 Carolyn created a stir when her nomination to receive the 1987 Distinguished Service Award from the SBC's Christian Life Commission, now the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, for the first time in its 21-year history, was not unanimous. The commission voted 16-13 by secret ballot to accept the nomination. Carolyn said she was "hurt for the sake of WMU," but didn't understand why some of the members of the commission claimed not to know who she was.[26]

One board member accused Carolyn Weatherford of speaking "out at the (SBC) Forum and other places" in support of women in ministry. The SBC Forum, held prior to the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention, was identified as an alternative to the more conservative SBC Pastor's Conference. Carolyn said she "found it difficult to understand how some board members think WMU is a woman's organization that goes around touting the ordination of women. Anyone who knows WMU

knows that we are a mission's organization that happens to be composed of women. Missions is our purpose, our lifeblood, our heritage and our future."[27] She went on to receive the E. Y. Mullins Denominational Service Award from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in 1988 and the Courage Award from the William H. Whitsitt Baptist Heritage Society in 2010.[28]

The year following Carolyn's retirement from national WMU, the newly married Carolyn Weatherford Crumpler was invited by Daniel Vestal, then a pastor running for president of the Southern Baptist Convention, to join him as a candidate for vice president at the 1990 annual meeting in New Orleans.[29] After not being voted in as leaders by messengers to the SBC, Carolyn recalled she and others met to form the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF).[30]

There was wide-spread speculation that WMU's courtship with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship coincided with a drop in WMU membership and circulation in the 1990s.[31] The WMU reported in 1974 a total of 824,720 paid quarterlies and magazines and in 1989 a total of 812,697 paid quarterlies and magazines.[32]

In her book, *A Century to Celebrate*, former WMU President Catherine Allen said there was a recorded peak enrollment in WMU of about 1.5 million members in 1964[33] but by 2001 the Annual Church Profile reported WMU recorded 857,680 members nationwide.

Larry Lewis, then president of the Southern Baptist Convention's Home Mission Board (now

North American Mission Board), in 1990 asked the WMU and other SBC entities to refrain "from giving support, approval, promotion of and encouragement to alternate funding plans," such as the giving plan of the CBF in order to save Southern Baptists' historic Cooperative Program giving method.[34] The WMU board affirmed, with endorsement from Carolyn Weatherford, Southern Baptists traditional giving method for missions through the Cooperative Program, but also supported, "the right of individuals, churches and state conventions to choose other plans for cooperative missions giving."[35]

This meant that for the first time WMU, after years of leadership by Carolyn Weatherford, would provide tailored made missions education material to other than cooperating Southern Baptist churches. Then-Executive Director Dellanna O'Brien recognized this could alienate churches that relate to WMU, however, she emphasized WMU was committed to providing missions education support in every Southern Baptist church.[36]

Tributes on Missions Adovacy

In the years following her departure from national WMU, Carolyn became increasingly noted for her involvement in CBF, and by 2005 served as its moderator for a year. In a report of his interaction with Carolyn at an annual meeting of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, Russell D. Moore, now president of the SBC's Ethic's and Religious Liberty Commission, said he came to a "scary conclusion" that those who attended the meetings "hated ... apostle Paul."[37]

At the time of Weatherford's death in 2015, Wanda S. Lee, then executive director of national WMU, reflected on her service: "When Carolyn was elected as executive director, she came with years of experience in state WMU work. Working with a board composed of many state staff members, she brought an understanding of the challenges of their work and fresh ideas for new ways to work together. She laid a strong foundation for the partnership that exists today between the national office and our state WMU partners. Her love for missions and missionaries will continue to inspire all of us who lead today to stay faithful to the purpose of WMU."[38]

Bill Leonard, the James and Marilyn Dunn Professor of Baptist Studies and Professor of Church History at the Wake Forest University School of Divinity, spoke of her courage:[39]

> *"Carolyn Crumpler was a courageous woman who came through years of great religious controversy with her conscience and integrity intact. She was a bridge for women across the theological and ecclesiastical spectrum, responding with grace and openness, conviction and compassion. She lived out the gospel with joy. I am honored to have called her friend."*

Karen Massey, associate dean and associate professor at Mercer University's McAfee School of Theology, also praised Crumpler's contributions:[40]

> *"A phrase that describes Carolyn Weatherford Crumpler is: 'She practiced what she preached,'" Massey said. "Among her*

favorite themes that she has 'preached' are missions and women, and those themes have guided her public Baptist life as a leader, as well as her personal life as a role model."

"As the former executive director of Woman's Missionary Union from 1974 to 1989, approximately 1.2 million women, girls, and preschoolers were educated in and challenged by the history and heritage of the Baptist missionary movement," Massey said. "Publicly, Crumpler challenged them to listen for God's call in their lives and to respond to missionary service around the world. Though health issues prevented Crumpler from serving as a missionary, she privately committed herself to supporting those who did serve. She gave much of her time to traveling to all 50 states and over 90 countries to personally offer gratitude and encouragement to Baptist missionaries, and never a day went by that she did not pray for missionaries on their birthdays."

The commitment of and actions by Carolyn Weatherford Crumpler to facilitate biblically-based women's missions and ministry efforts created a legacy for which Florida Baptists and Southern Baptists will long benefit.

ENDNOTES

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T. G. "John" Sullivan – The Legacy of a Denominational Servant-Leader

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In 1880, the Florida Baptist State Convention organized a State Board of Missions and elected its first corresponding secretary, a position that is known today as executive director-treasurer. Since that time, ten men have served in that position, and of the ten, none have served longer than the ninth, T. G. John Sullivan. But probably more importantly than his longevity of service has been John Sullivan's legacy as a denominational servant-leader

Travis Gene "John" Sullivan was born October 20, 1936, in Ansted, West Virginia to Frank and Louise Sullivan.[1] Sullivan's legal name is Travis Gene, a name that was actually determined on the day of his birth. His mother was convinced that Sullivan was going to be a girl and had really only considered the name June Travis for her unborn child. About three days after Sullivan was born, his mother must have realized that she had named him hastily. She said to his father, "He looks like a little boy that ought to be called John."[2] Sullivan has been called John by everyone in his family ever since.

Knowing the circumstances under which Sullivan was raised, provides excellent insight into the person he would eventually become. Sullivan's

T. G. "John" Sullivan (1936 to present) A Legacy of a Denominational Servant-Leader

father, Frank, was eight or nine years old when he quit school in order to work with his father in the coal mines. One of his first jobs was to help trim the hoofs of the mules that were used to pull the coal out of the mines. When Sullivan was asked about why his father did not get an education, he responded, "He knew how to write his name and that's all he needed to sign his paycheck. He was a hard worker, a man of integrity, and would never think of not giving a full day's work for a full day's pay."[3] This work ethic would pay off for Frank and his family because during the depression years, he was one of the few miners that kept a job. It would also be the type of work ethic instilled in and adopted by his son, John.

Sullivan's mother, Louise, was a sickly person her entire life. Sullivan has said on more than one occasion that the first day she was well was the day she died. Sullivan remembers Louise being the disciplinarian for the family. He also remembers her character and the fact that she was well respected in the community. She was a woman of integrity and principle. On one occasion, Sullivan's father had been hurt in the mines and was resting at home after a brief hospital stay. His partner, a black man by the name of Vester Pepper, asked to be able to visit him in their home. Louise was ostracized by the community, but she allowed the visit, nonetheless. She did not let community opinion sway her from acting on right principles. This particular influence would be seen in Sullivan's character throughout his life and ministry.

Louise died on January 8, 1953, at the age of thirty-six. Frank died from a heart attack while

working in the mines on June 23, 1960, at the age of 48. While Sullivan recognized his mother as the primary influence in his early life, he attributed the development of a strong character, personal security (an attribute that would eventually be tested in his ministerial and denominational careers), and cleanliness to both of his parents. He saw his parents work through adversity and desired the same resolve for himself. He observed a discipline in his mother that compelled her to keep her house spotless on the inside, waxing linoleum floors every week, even though the house belonged to the company. He learned integrity and resourcefulness from his mother and industry and hard work from his father. These character traits would be more fully developed as Sullivan matured and would eventually serve him well as an adult.

"if you want to be respected, you have to show respect, not isolate yourself and marginalize yourself."
- John Sullivan

Sullivan attended Ansted High School and graduated in 1954. He was very competitive in sports, lettering in all of them, but excelling in basketball. Looking back on his formative years and the lessons learned, Sullivan said, "One of the lessons I learned was the value of having folks you can depend on . . . of good neighbors, good friends. I learned the value of family and what family meant to each other. I learned . . . if you want to be respected, you have to show respect, not isolate yourself and marginalize

yourself . . . I would say by the time I left in 1954, most of my character had been formed."[4] In 1954, Sullivan left the coal mining town of Ansted, West Virginia, and moved to Washington, D.C., to work for the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

As a child, Sullivan did not have much exposure to religion. His parents were not anti-religion, but they were not pro-religion either. They did not encourage involvement in church. So, as a young man, Sullivan was not religious, but he was disciplined. He lived in the South Capitol Street Boarding House, rode the bus to work every day, and in addition to his regular week-day work schedule, he worked most weekends as well. He enjoyed his work as a fingerprint specialist for the FBI. Sullivan took pride in his work, always striving to do the best he could do, and moving up the pay scale at a faster rate than many of his peers. When asked about any particular lessons he learned from his work he replied, "Discipline. You had to be there, and you had to work, or you didn't make it. It was as simple as that."[5]

On one of his bus rides to work, Sullivan met Nancy Hinson. She, like Sullivan, had moved to Washington, D.C., after graduating high school in order to work for the FBI. Unlike Sullivan, her early childhood life was centered in the church. Nancy grew up going to church, singing in the age-graded choirs, and attending the traditional Baptist girls' mission group, Girls in Action. On June 24, 1955, at the Philadelphia Baptist Church in Jonesboro, Arkansas, Sullivan married the person he says who apart from the Lord Jesus "has been and is still the

greatest influence" in his life. He was eighteen years old.[6]

Nancy was a believer and on more than one occasion shared with Sullivan what it meant to have a relationship with Jesus Christ and specifically, what it meant for her to engage that relationship. She encouraged Sullivan to attend church with her. One Monday evening, he made a commitment to go with her the next Sunday. He recalled, "The closer we got to Sunday, the more I wondered why I'd made that commitment."[7] In August 1955, Sullivan went to church with Nancy and listened to a furloughing missionary whose name he did not remember, preach a sermon that he did not remember, from a Bible text that he did not remember. He did remember, however, the invitation that was given, and when the preacher advised the congregation that Jesus Christ could provide direction for their lives, Sullivan, to Nancy's absolute surprise, walked forward. He had never owned a Bible. He had never struggled with spiritual questions before – had never really considered them. He could not explain to the pastor what was happening, but the pastor was able to take the time to explain to Sullivan the concepts of conviction and repentance and Sullivan, three months after marrying Nancy, gave his life to Christ.

A Call to Ministry

Sullivan began reading the Bible and had not yet finished the Gospel of John when he began to sense God's calling in his life to ministry. In October of 1955, two months after his conversion experience, Sullivan heard his preacher, A. Lincoln Smith, pastor

at Congress Heights Baptist Church, Washington, D.C., speak about vocational ministry and full-time service. Once again, Sullivan responded publicly to what God was doing in his life and submitted himself to be eligible for whatever God was calling him to do.

In 1957, the Sullivans moved to Phoenix, Arizona, to attend Grand Canyon Baptist College. While in college Sullivan became the fourth pastor of the Twenty-Seventh Avenue Baptist Church, a church that was only three years old. He served as pastor for that church from 1957-1962. In 1962, the Sullivans moved to Fort Worth, Texas, to continue his theological education at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary where he spent eleven and a half years eventually earning the degrees of a Bachelor of Divinity (1965), Master of Divinity (1968) and Doctor of Ministry (1973).[8]

During his time at Southwestern, Sullivan served as pastor of three different churches: First Baptist Church, Aledo, Texas, 1962-67; Ridglea West Baptist Church, Fort Worth, Texas, 1967-71; and First Baptist Church, Sulphur Springs, Texas, 1971-75.[9] Being able to serve as a pastor in a local church while attending seminary had a profound impact on Sullivan's view and subsequent passion for theological education.

Broadmoor Baptist Church

In February 1975, the pulpit committee from Broadmoor Baptist Church in Shreveport, Louisiana, began speaking with Sullivan about the possibility of serving as their pastor. The possibility of becoming the pastor at Broadmoor presented a different set of

challenges for Sullivan.[10] His previous pastorates were of churches that had traditionally used seminary students. The congregations understood that they would serve as a training ground for young preachers and were used to the frequent changes in that office. Broadmoor was different in that it had an established staff and under the twenty-four-year tenure of Pastor Scott Tatum had become one of the fastest growing churches in Louisiana. Sullivan remembered being surprised, that given his experience and the church's heritage, that he was being considered for the position. Yet in May 1975, the pastor search committee announced to the church that they unanimously believed that John Sullivan was God's man for Broadmoor Baptist Church.

Broadmoor proved to be a significant step in exposing Sullivan to denominational life

At Broadmoor, Sullivan demonstrated his love for the funding mechanism of the Southern Baptist Convention, the Cooperative Program. While he admitted that his budget goal of thirty percent was too aggressive, he was successful in leading the church to give twenty-three percent of undesignated budget receipts to the Cooperative Program. Broadmoor proved to be a significant step in exposing Sullivan to denominational life at both the state and national levels.

By 1980, when Broadmoor's fiftieth anniversary history was written, Sullivan's ministry had already taken on certain noticeable

characteristics. Tom Nettles wrote, "Perhaps the most obvious of these characteristics that could be noticed by any visitor to Broadmoor on a Sunday is that he is a strong, respected and powerful pulpiteer."[11] Sullivan also had established himself in the role of teacher and had communicated that role to the church as one that he felt was vital to his ministry. A third strength that Nettles noted was that Sullivan's ministry was people-centered. In addition to Sullivan's availability to staff, Nettles commented, "Though maintaining an extremely busy schedule of preaching and teaching opportunities, his seemingly interminable energy has allowed him to be present in the times of crisis of church members . . . Sullivan never delegates his personal concern to others."[12]

For Sullivan, every ministry assignment eventually prepared him for the next. Just as each pastorate prepared him for the next, his time spent at Broadmoor contributed some helpful insight into the challenges he would face as the executive director-treasurer of the Florida Baptist Convention. Broadmoor prepared Sullivan for the challenges that come from dealing with a large staff and the multiple personalities that are represented by such as a staff. His tenure at Broadmoor also afforded him the opportunity to be involved in the denomination, and this involvement expanded his vision of the scope of kingdom work. His denominational work, while at Broadmoor, is where he cultivated a deep love for involvement in the denomination.

Sullivan served as the president of the Louisiana Baptist Convention for two consecutive years in 1980-1981.[13] Sullivan also served on the

Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention from 1980-1988.[14] He was nominated to be the president of the SBC in 1982 but lost that vote to James Draper. He was immediately nominated and elected as first vice-president that year. In 1984, he was nominated again to become the president of the SBC. He lost that election to Charles Stanley.[15]

These nominations took place during the heart of the denomination's conservative resurgence. Following the 1984 election Sullivan asked Draper why there was a feeling that somebody needed to run to his right (a more conservative view). Sullivan presumed that the convention leadership knew that he was a conservative. Draper responded by indicating that Sullivan had too many friends that were considered moderates in high places within the denomination. When Sullivan then asked why the moderates chose to run someone on his left (a more moderate view), Draper indicated that the moderates did not trust Sullivan's relationship with Draper who was a leader in the conservative resurgence.[16] Interestingly, Jerry Vines, the conservative who nominated Charles Stanley to run against John Sullivan eventually became Sullivan's pastor when he moved to Jacksonville to fill the role as Florida's executive director-treasurer.

Appointed to SBC Peace Committe

In 1985, the SBC authorized a special committee to investigate the controversy over inerrancy and present possible courses of action that would resolve the conflict between moderates and conservatives. The final section of the motion to form what

reconciliation would require setting limits of legitimate theological diversity

eventually would be called a Peace Committee listed the names of twenty-two people recommended for appointment—a list that included names like Adrian Rogers, Jerry Vines, Herschel Hobbs, Edwin Young and John Sullivan.[17]

The Peace Committee found that the task of reconciliation would require setting limits of legitimate theological diversity.[18] Southern Baptists had already adopted the *Baptist Faith and Message* for the purpose of setting such limits. The problem in the controversy was that both sides felt that they were operating within the parameters of the *Baptist Faith and Message*. They also addressed the political activities of both sides of the controversy. The political moves by both sides created distrust and diminished the convention's potential effectiveness in evangelism and missions.[19] The committee was careful to point out abrasive language being used by both sides and concluded that a continuation of political activity at the current level would not serve the process of peace or reconciliation. The committee continued its work for an additional year and presented their final findings and recommendations to the Southern Baptist Convention in 1987.

The committee upheld a high view of Scripture but acknowledged that not everyone would agree on how to interpret "without mixture of error" in the *Baptist Faith and Message*. The committee hoped,

however, that since they were able to work amicably together under these divergent views that the convention as a whole could as well.[20] They also outlined political strategies that they thought were not productive and simply out of place within the life of the convention.

Throughout the process, Sullivan maintained his integrity and theological convictions, believing that, given the circumstances and atmosphere of distrust, the committee did the best they could to restore unity. He never worried about how he was perceived among the warring factions. He was comfortable with being a centrist and was not bothered by those on either side who tried to label him. When asked about his involvement in the Peace Committee process, Sullivan responded,

> *My mission in life is to serve God with integrity, and I did that all through the controversy. I have no qualms. I have gotten to do more in Southern Baptist life than I ever dreamed. I have preached in every state convention . . . I have served on the executive committee . . . I have preached all over the nation on behalf of stewardship and missions and evangelism. I have gotten to do more than I ever dreamed a coal miner's kid from West Virginia would ever get to do.*[21]

Leading Florida Baptists

John Sullivan was unanimously elected by the State Board of Missions on January 20, 1989, and assumed his duties on February 7, 1989.[22] As Sullivan made the transition from being the pastor of Broadmoor

Baptist Church to executive director-treasurer of the Florida Baptist Convention, his missiology had to transition as well – not necessarily his understanding of mission, but his role in planning and implementing strategy to accomplish missions. He began by focusing his priorities on evangelism, new church starts and developing existing churches. He embraced church growth strategies and helped Florida Baptist churches understand and implement growth principles as momentum in the Church Growth Movement began to make an impact in Southern Baptist life. His missiology would be further developed as he responded to humanitarian needs through disaster relief efforts and expanded Florida's area of responsibility to include the island nations Haiti and Cuba.

Sullivan helped churches realize that gospel opportunities often come through times of crisis.

When Sullivan became the executive director-treasurer, an evangelism division had already been formed within the Florida Baptist Convention. Since evangelism had always been a priority for him as a pastor, this program division became a priority for him. He realized, however, that as a pastor he could mobilize the people of his church for evangelism, but ultimately, the success of the convention with regard to evangelizing the people of Florida rested with the churches and their willingness

to evangelize. He began to look for ways to strengthen and encourage the evangelistic efforts of the churches. From 1990-2005, the evangelism division grew from a staff of five to twenty-five (college campus ministries became a department within the division) and the evangelism budget grew to $1,734,699 from $374,483.[23] Sullivan's legacy among Florida Baptists is a strong desire to see the fulfillment of the Great Commission through the evangelistic efforts of Florida Baptist churches.

Sullivan helped churches realize that gospel opportunities often come through times of crisis. In 1992, after Hurricane Andrew destroyed many of the South Miami-Dade communities, Sullivan led the convention not only to respond with relief to that disaster, but to move forward in developing one of the most sought-after and efficient disaster relief operations in the nation. Cecil Seagle, former executive director of the State Convention of Baptists in Indiana and colleague of Sullivan said, "Disaster relief both in the state and in other nations will be among Sullivan's legacies."[24]

Following the devastation in Haiti caused by Hurricane Georges in 1998, Sullivan remarked, "We, as Florida Baptists, have made a commitment to help the downtrodden and the hurting in the aftermath of natural disasters."[25] Maintaining his priority on evangelism, he emphasized the truth that only the gospel had the true power to change Haiti. Sullivan tied the Great Commission to the Great Commandment when he quoted Fritz Albert, director of missions for the Artibonite Association in Haiti, who after the first shipment of rice had been

delivered, said, "Now people will be ready for the Lord."[26] Sullivan believed that meeting the felt needs of the Haitian people through Christian service would give believers the opportunity to share the gospel through Christian proclamation.

Within two years of becoming executive director-treasurer, Sullivan began looking for ways to expand the availability of theological education in Florida. Realizing that the state had many pastors who were called to preach later in life or were already serving a church and did not want to leave the congregation they were serving, Sullivan initiated conversation with New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary (NOBTS) to enlarge the extension center in Orlando and began a center on the campus of Florida Baptist Theological College (now The Baptist College of Florida.) Sullivan believed that if theological education was more accessible, then more people would take advantage of it.[27]

Technology has changed the delivery system of theological education. Online access to education has reduced the need for the extensive number of campuses and centers that were a part of Sullivan's vision. Clearly, Sullivan helped Florida Baptists embrace the need for leadership development through theological education.

Perhaps Sullivan's greatest accomplishment and most far-reaching legacy has been his leadership in the Florida Baptist Convention partnership with Haiti. In May 1995, at the request of the Haitian pastors in the Florida Baptist Convention, the State Board of Missions approved a partnership agreement between the convention, the Foreign Mission Board

(now the International Mission Board), and the Baptist Missionary Fellowship of Haiti (later the Confraternite Missionnaire Baptist d'Haiti or CMBH) with the intention of developing and implementing a strategy to provide the "resources of evangelism, church starting and church leadership development" and "to enlist and deploy convention staff and volunteers to facilitate the strategy."[28] Immediately, Sullivan began mobilizing the staff to respond to the needs in Haiti.

Sullivan developed a deep love for the Haitian people and visited the nation more than fifteen times

A 1996 article in the *Florida Baptist Witness* described Sullivan's first trip to Haiti. By the time he arrived the confederation of Haitian churches included a national coordinator, four directors of missions and 125 churches, and the Florida Baptist Convention had committed $160,000 per year to underwrite the strategy and the missions' leaders in Haiti. During that trip Sullivan visited a church that had been planted just five weeks earlier. The church was constituted the day Sullivan attended and the newly constituted church baptized eight people as a part of the celebration. After Sullivan preached, two more adults were baptized and at the time of the article, twenty more were awaiting baptism. In commenting on the thrill of literally experiencing a church being birthed, Sullivan said, "The joy in seeing a new church birthed in a five-week period simply cannot be painted with words. You

have to see it to have the deep abiding love and appreciation for what our Haitian brothers in South Florida are seeking to do on behalf of their own nation."[29] Sullivan developed a deep love for the Haitian people and visited the nation more than fifteen times.

Sullivan gave his farewell comments at his final State Board of Missions meeting on February 6, 2015, in anticipation of his retirement on February 28, 2015, completing twenty-six years as the Florida Baptist Convention's executive director-treasurer. After retiring from the convention, Sullivan was called to serve (and currently serves as of this publication date) at First Baptist Church, Jacksonville, Florida, as their Pastor of Education for Senior Adults. At that time, Mac Brunson was the Senior Pastor and said that he asked Sullivan to come on staff for three reasons – his brain, his heart and his voice.[30] Sullivan continues to extend his legacy of evangelism, leadership, theological education, cooperation, and compassionate ministries through his work at First Baptist.

More than seventy-five pastors sent letters to Sullivan to commemorate his retirement from the Florida Baptist Convention. Most of them expressed a profound gratitude for the personal interest that Sullivan took in their lives, their work, and their churches. Phrases such as "spiritual integrity," trusted friend, encourager and advisor," "open, honest, and encouraging," are found throughout the collection of letters.

Sullivan's life has been characterized by honesty, integrity, and a strong work ethic. He has

been passionate about the Great Commission allowing his love for the gospel to motivate him to do the work of the kingdom. He has endeavored for peace without compromising his convictions and prefers unity when possible for the good of the gospel.

The legacy that John Sullivan has left for Florida Baptists is an example of a life lived in the grace of God in a way that reflects well on the Jesus he chose so long ago to serve.

ENDNOTES

1 John Sullivan, "Interview by Don Hepburn," December 18, 2006, interview 06 – 085 #1, transcript, Sullivan Oral History Collection, Florida Baptist Building, Jacksonville, FL. Unless otherwise noted, details about Sullivan's childhood are taken from this transcript.
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
4 Ibid.
5 Ibid.
6 Ibid.
7 Ibid.
8 John Sullivan, "Interview by Don Hepburn," December 19, 2006, interview 06 – 085 #2, transcript, Sullivan Oral History Collection, Florida Baptist Building, Jacksonville, FL.
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10 John Sullivan, "Interview by Don Hepburn," December 19, 2006, interview 06 – 086 #2, transcript, Sullivan Oral History Collection, Florida Baptist Building, Jacksonville, FL.
11 Tom Nettles, *Growth for God's Glory* (Shreveport, LA: Broadmoor Baptist Church, 1980), 202-3.
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13 John Sullivan, "Interview by Don Hepburn," December 19, 2006, interview 06 – 087 #1, transcript, Sullivan Oral History Collection, Florida Baptist Building, Jacksonville, FL.

14 *Annual*, Southern Baptist Convention, 1980, 31.
15 *Annual*, Southern Baptist Convention, 1984, 34.
16 John Sullivan, "Interview by Don Hepburn," December 19, 2006, interview 06 – 088 #2, transcript, Sullivan Oral History Collection, Florida Baptist Building, Jacksonville, FL.
17 *Annual*, Southern Baptist Convention,1985, 64.
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19 Ibid.
20 *Annual*, Southern Baptist Convention, 1987, 237.
21 John Sullivan, "Interview by Don Hepburn," December 20, 2006, interview tape 06 – 089, transcript, Sullivan Oral History Collection, Florida Baptist Building, Jacksonville, FL.
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23 Budget numbers and Evangelism Division Departments are found in each year's Annual of the Florida Baptist Convention.
24 Barbara Denman, "20 Years after Hurricane Andrew, Isaac reminds Florida Baptist of Disaster Relief gains," *Florida Baptist Witness*, September 6, 2012, accessed November 14, 2013, http://www.gofbw.com/news.asp?ID=14332&page=3.
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27 John Sullivan, "I don't mind telling you," *Florida Baptist Witness*, May 19, 1990.
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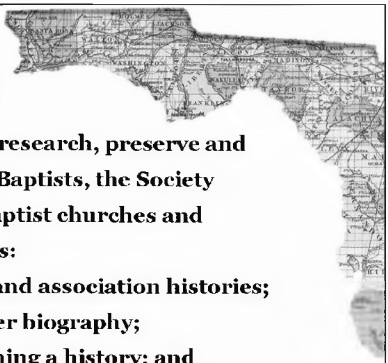
The Journal of Florida Baptist Heritage

Volume 21, 2019

Serving Churches



OUR MISSION:

In fulfilment of our Mission to research, preserve and promote the Legacy of Florida Baptists, the Society assists leadership of Florida Baptist churches and associations in a variety of ways:

- **the research of local church and association histories;**
- **the research of pastoral leader biography;**
- **provide resources for publishing a history; and**
- **encourage and assist churches and associations to celebrate their respective heritage and anniversaries.**

Endowment

You can create a personal, God-honoring Legacy by contributing to the Florida Baptist Historical Society endowment fund that will support the future on-going mission and ministries of the Society. Society ministries include researching, collecting, preserving, and publishing Florida Southern Baptist historical materials. The Society assists local churches in preserving their respective Legacy by offering assistance in research, writing and publication of local church documentaries and histories. Gifts to this fund are tax deductible and all checks may be made out to the Florida Baptist Historical Society Endowment Fund. Mail to: Florida Baptist Historical Society, PO Box 95, Graceville, FL 32440.

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