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**A Historical View of the Relationship
Between the Florida Baptist Convention
and Florida Woman's Missionary Union**

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An Address Presented at the
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Because of his leadership
in the field of Florida Baptist history
as well as his enthusiastic support
of Florida Woman's Missionary Union
this address is dedicated to
Dr. E. Earl Joiner
Curator and Secretary-Treasurer
Florida Baptist Historical Society
1973-1996

A HISTORICAL VIEW OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE FLORIDA BAPTIST CONVENTION AND FLORIDA WOMAN'S MISSIONARY UNION

An address presented at the annual meeting of the Florida Baptist Historical Society

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The purpose of this paper is to explore the on-going relationship between the Florida Baptist Convention and Florida Woman's Missionary Union, beginning with the Florida Union's predecessor, the Department of Woman's Mission Work. The writer has selected certain relational questions, actions, and events to demonstrate that relationship. Because the paper is based on information and insights discovered in the writing of *FAITHFUL SERVANTS: The Story of Florida Woman's Missionary Union 1894-1994*, the understandings are primarily from the WMU perspective.

- I. The Department of Woman's Work, Florida Baptist Convention, 1881-1893
 - A. Formation under Bro. W. N. Chaudoin and Mrs. N. A. Bailey, 1881-1886
 - B. Development under Bro. Chaudoin and Mrs. L. B. Telford, 1887-1893

- II. Birth and early years of Woman's Baptist Missionary Union of Florida, 1894-1936
 - A. Birth of Florida WBMU, 1894
 - B. Unfolding under Dr. L. D. Geiger, Dr. S. B. Rogers, and Miss Jennie L. Spalding, 1894-1911
 - C. Advancement under Dr. Rogers, Dr. C. M. Brittain, and Mrs. H. C. Peelman, 1911-1936

- III. The Glory Years of Florida WMU, 1936-1967
 - A. Expansion under Dr. C. M. Brittain, Dr. C. H. Bolton, and Miss Louise Smith, 1936-1943
 - B. Changes and growth under Dr. John H. Maguire and Miss Josephine Jones, 1944-1967

- IV. The return to Department status and subsequent developments, 1967-1995
 - A. Maturation under Dr. Harold Bennett and Miss Carolyn Weatherford, 1967-1974
 - B. New understanding under Dr. Bennett and Miss Bernice Popham, 1974-1976
 - C. Refocusing under Dr. Bennett, Dr. Dan Stringer, Dr. John Sullivan, and Miss Vanita Baldwin, 1977-1991
 - D. Challenges under Dr. Sullivan and Miss Barbara Curnutt, 1991-1995

PART I- The Department of Woman's Work, Florida Baptist Convention, 1881-1893

When the Florida Baptist Convention was organized in 1854, the few Baptists in Florida were a paltry group scattered across the state. With the interruption of the Civil War and subsequent problems, the Convention by the late 1870s appeared on the verge of fading into useless obscurity. Had it not been for the leadership of a few outstanding men, such as Rev. N. A. Bailey, the Florida Baptist Convention might actually have disappeared for a time.

It was Napoleon Alexander Bailey who in the December 1880 meeting of the Florida Baptist Convention suggested to the 12 other delegates that a State Board of Missions be appointed to act for the body throughout the year. With the selection of Bailey's good friend from Georgia, W. N. Chaudoin, as corresponding secretary, the State Board from its beginning became a strong force. One of its first acts was to appoint Bro. Bailey and another man as state missionaries, to be paid \$25 a quarter for three quarters of the year.

The next year, in December 1881, Bro. and Mrs. Bailey attended the state Convention meeting in Ocala. When Bailey asked, "Are women entitled to seat as members of this body and upon what terms?" the astounding reply was: "They are, and upon the same terms as brethren." Mrs. Bailey and three other women were seated as delegates.¹ Such progressive thinking by Florida leaders demonstrated that they were far ahead of many contemporaries in states where Southern Baptist work was more firmly established. For example, in a situation which arose four years later, in 1885, the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) took opposite action. When two women, authorized delegates of the Arkansas Baptist Convention, presented themselves for seating, their appearance provoked consternation from many of the men. A divided committee reported that, on the one hand, the SBC constitution did not ban women as messengers; on the other hand if the possibility of women messengers had entered their minds, the writers "would have written more carefully." Finally, the two women withdrew their names. To avoid future problems over the issue, those present amended the SBC constitution to require that delegates henceforth be men.²

Formation of the Department of woman's Work under Bro. W. N. Chaudoin and Mrs. N. A. Bailey, 1881-1886

In that same 1881 Ocala meeting Bro. Bailey also proposed that Chaudoin appoint a "sister State Secretary" who would promote the organizing of "Ladies' Mission Societies to work in connection with the State Board Missions."³ Chaudoin turned to Mrs. Bailey as his choice to head the first department of the Florida Baptist Convention, the Department of Woman's Mission Work. This also was in sharp contrast to action by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board (FMB), which in 1882 rejected the SBC recommendation to "employ a woman to superintend and promote women's work." Even though women's contributions to foreign missions filled its coffers, the FMB recoiled at the thought of appointing a woman, responding, "A false step now might entail fatal embarrassments."⁴ The organizational structure of woman's work in the older Southern Baptist Convention states involved the appointment by the Foreign Mission Board of Central Committees, groups of women who formed the state organizations. According to Mrs. Bailey, had the FMB chosen to appoint a Central Committee in Florida, the Florida Convention would have supported that avenue of developing woman's work. But since the Foreign Board did not do so, and she did not know why, the leaders chose the format suggested

by her husband, N. A. Bailey: the provision by the State Board of Missions for state leadership of woman's work.⁵

At the December 1882 state Convention meeting in Lake City, the "special order of business" for an entire evening session was "ladies' mission work." Such exceptional attention by a state convention again demonstrated the "unconventional" attitudes of leadership.

Reporting at that meeting on the first year's efforts by the women under Mrs. Bailey's direction, George Allen, chairman of the all-male committee on Woman's Work, commended women in general and Florida women in particular:

Although instances of woman's activity and services in furthering the great beneficent [sic] undertakings of our denomination have hitherto been rare, still it has not been for the reason that her help was not needed, or that she had not the ability and a mind to work.

We, therefore, rejoice in the work that the Baptist women of Florida have done during the past year in the interest of missions, and commend heartily [their] earnestness, diligence, and faithfulness.⁶

One should not assume that Allen spoke for all Baptist men in Florida; certainly his endorsement of Florida women would have irritated many men across the Southern Baptist Convention. To the credit of the Florida Baptist Convention, however, it feared no "fatal embarrassments." Rather the State Board of Missions had both the wisdom to recognize the value of women to Kingdom's work and the openness to act on that recognition. Convention minutes and reports, as well as the minutes and reports of the women, show that beginning with those earliest days of the forerunner to Florida Woman's Missionary Union, the theme of mutual respect and cooperation between the Florida Baptist Convention and Florida WMU had intertwined the history of both organizations.

Further Development of Woman's Work under Bro. Chaudoin and Mrs. L. B. Telford, 1887-1893

Mrs. Lucina Beach Telford and her husband Robert, natives of New York and former American Baptist missionaries to Siam and China, migrated to DeLand in 1883. After Mrs. Bailey's death in 1886, Mrs. Telford the next year was appointed the second corresponding secretary for Woman's Work. Mrs. Telford and Mrs. W. D. Chipley of Pensacola represented Florida in the May 1888 Woman's Meeting in Richmond, Virginia. Each state's Central Committee had been invited to send three delegates to the meeting. The group would consider organizing a general committee to oversee the dissemination of information and the collection of money for missions.⁷

Although Florida had no Central Committee, Mrs. Telford seemed the obvious person to represent the ladies' mission societies of the state. Mrs. Chipley had also proved her commitment to woman's work. While the men met in the Richmond First Baptist Church, the two Florida ladies met with the other women a block away in the Broad Street Methodist Church. When the presiding officer "called the roll of states to air their opinions on the subject of general organization,"⁸ Mrs. Telford in her turn stated the basic Florida Baptist attitude toward ministry: "Florida has not sent instructions for action; but that method would meet with approbation by which the most good could be accomplished." Then she

spoke in favor of organizing and urged, “Do not let us be swayed by prejudice. If God be for us, who can be against us?”⁹

On May 14, 1888, representatives from ten states voted to establish the “Executive Committee of Woman’s Mission Societies, Auxiliary to Southern Baptist Convention.” As one of those ten states, Florida became a founding member of Woman’s Missionary Union, Auxiliary to Southern Baptist Convention (WMU, SBC).

Florida was now the only SBC state without a Central committee. Mrs. Telford acknowledged that unique position in her 1891 report to WMU, SBC:

Woman’s work in our State is steadily taking hold of the hearts of our people. Our plan of work is unlike that of any other State and yet, when we come up to our meeting, we are astonished at the amount of work done and money raised for the various benevolent objects. We are in perfect sympathy with our Missionary Union in all its plans of work.”¹⁰

“And yet” – even though the leadership of the state Convention praised and supported the work of the women, the reports of Mrs. Bailey and Mrs. Telford occasionally hinted of some inadequacy in the organizational plan. Intimations of a growing desire for change began to surface.

When Chaudoin gave the 1893 State Board of Missions report at the annual meeting in Lake City, he strongly lauded Mrs. Telford for the advancement of woman’s work, then turned to the future:

Nor can we believe that our women in Florida, seeing what progress the women in other States are making year by year, will fall out of line Let us encourage our women in Florida, and help them as they help us, and so be co-workers, in spreading the gospel that does so much for woman.¹¹

Part II – Birth and early years of Woman’s Baptist Missionary Union of Florida 1894-1936

Birth of Florida WBMU, 1894

At Mrs. Telford’s death in 1893, Miss Jennie Lucena Spalding, a young lady who had often assisted her, was named acting secretary. While Miss Spalding carried on the work from her home in DeLand, women long active in Florida mission societies discussed a need for change. Many members had learned to speak before a group, to write and present papers on pertinent mission topics, to preside at meetings, and to participate in business sessions, even at the national level. Florida woman’s work had earned the respect of Baptists throughout the state. Yet the time had come, according to the women, for a change that would put them in line with women’s organizations in other states.

Few delegates traveling to the state Convention meeting in Plant City in January 1894 knew that a historic moment was about to occur. But the long-skirted women gathered in the Presbyterian Church took unique action. The minutes reported simply: “It was decided to change the plan of woman’s Work to

the Central Committee plan, consisting of a President, Secretary, Advisory Committee, and a Vice-President from each Association.”

To the convention delegates meeting in the Baptist Church, the women sent a petition:

We, the women of the Florida Baptist Convention believing that a distribution of labor would be conducive to the success and progress of the missionary work; and believing that a central committee, with vice-presidents in each Association, would awaken greater interest and enlist a larger number of workers, petition the convention to change the present system of woman’s missionary work to the central committee.¹²

The response of Florida Baptist Convention delegates was reported as simply as was the action of the women: “The Constitution was changed by striking out [in the list of convention officers] the words, ‘also a Corresponding Secretary of Woman’s Mission Work’ and the matter of a central committee was committed to the Woman’s Meeting.” And thus was born the Woman’s Baptist Missionary Union of Florida.

Commenting on Woman’s Work in his State Board report, Chaudoin, as always, applauded the women: “Their system, liberality and self-denial is an inspiration, and is frequently heart-opening to our men and sometimes to pastors.” In closing his report, the great friend of Florida women emphasized, “Help these women (and children, too) who labor with us in mission work, and encourage them, and do not be jealous of them, or afraid of them – much,”¹³

The ladies chose Miss Spalding as corresponding secretary. The designation “treasurer” was added to the secretary’s job. In addition to her other responsibilities, she would now keep records both of monies she received and sent on to the state Convention treasurer, and of the monies he received from the women and reported to her. She should also “encourage the sending of all monies through the church Treasurer directly to the Treasurer of the State Convention.” Meticulous record keeping on the part of Jennie Spalding assured accurate accounting from her direction. However, inconsistencies in records furnished to her by the state treasurer were an ongoing frustration.

With the passing of time, both the Central Committee, which soon changed its name to Executive Committee, and Miss Spalding worked to keep the warmest relations with the State Board of Missions, On more than one occasion she reiterated: “We desire to strengthen and enlarge, more than ever before, by our prayers, gifts, and labor, every work to which the [Florida Baptist] Convention and union are pledged”¹⁴

At the 1898 Florida Baptist Convention meeting in Tampa, a mystifying action occurred. Convention delegates “re-elected” Miss Spalding as corresponding secretary of Woman’s Work, even though that office had been deleted from the Convention constitution in 1894.¹⁵ Until 1906, in fact, the WMU of Florida remained in most ways an integral part of Convention structure, with contributions and budget as the major link. Delegates to state Convention annual meetings continued to vote on the election of the WMU corresponding secretary as well as her pay. They considered her report as part of Convention business and discussed it from the floor. Minutes of the FWMU annual meeting were automatically included each year in the Florida Baptist Convention Annual. Yet, through the WMU Executive Committee, the women themselves planned and carried out their work.

Baptists in Florida were growing at a faster rate than the general population, which at the turn of the century numbered more than half a million.¹⁶ At that time, the state had 468 Baptist churches; only a few had buildings. Unfortunately, the number of pastors lagged far behind the number of churches. In the 1901 State Board report Dr. Chaudoin counted 288 ministers, “including the super-annuated, the secularized, the lazy, the young men preparing for the work, the anti-missionaries and all others.”¹⁷ The number of Woman’s Missionary Societies trailed a distant third.

Unfolding under Dr. L. D. Geiger, Dr. S. B. Rogers, and Miss Jennie L. Spalding, 1894-1911

The early twentieth century brought changes and challenges to the Florida Convention, including the resignation of Dr. Chaudoin, who had nurtured Woman’s Work from its beginning. However, the election of L. D. Geiger as his replacement brought to the post another advocate of woman’s mission work. By its tenth birthday in 1904, Florida WMU had made substantial growth. Miss Spalding noted that the Florida Union had “long since been generally recognized as an indispensable *auxiliary* to the State Board of Missions, with which body it has ever been in closest sympathy.”¹⁸

In 1906 all the rules changed when the Florida Baptist Convention adopted a new constitution. Henceforth WMU annual meeting delegates would not be considered Convention delegates as well. Instead of the WMU corresponding secretary reporting to the “Brethren,” Miss Spalding now addressed her reports: “Dear Sisters.” The women paid to have the minutes of their annual meetings published in the annual state Convention records. As she explained: “The Union elects its own officers, decides upon its own policy, designates its own gifts and expenses, etc. The Union is not under the direction or control of either the State Board or the State Convention, though it had always worked in harmony with these bodies.”¹⁹ The heart of the auxiliary status, as she defined it, rested in the women’s contributions to Florida Convention causes and their hearty cooperation “in the evangelization of Florida through the State Board of Missions.” For practical purposes, the Union continued to make the State Board the custodian of its funds, with WMU retaining “the right to direct the expenditures for expenses” out of their contributions designated for state missions. Dr. Geiger agreed to make up any shortfall that might occur in the women’s contributions for that purpose. Because he knew the women’s total giving to missions would more than make up any loss, he considered the money “a worthy investment.”²⁰

In 1908 the State Board of Missions recommended “that there be a week of special prayer and study, and giving by the sisters and their friends for state missions; that our pastors and members be invited to assist in this good work in every way they can.”²¹ The women responded graciously, preparing and distributing the program for the first observance, scheduled for November 1908. Dr. Geiger assessed the results of the first special State Mission Offering as “highly gratifying.”²² Florida WMU retained responsibility for the State Mission Offering for several decades.

For several years prior to Jennie Spalding’s resignation in 1911, Florida WMU traveled an especially challenging trail. The women found much of the trail unmapped. No manual prescribed how to relate to a state convention, how to fund the organization, what officers to elect or appoint, and which to pay, what methods to use in forming new units in the churches. Each state organization apparently found its own way, aided no doubt by consultation with national leaders and those of other states. Occasional internal Florida WMU (FWMU) disagreements did not affect the mutually supportive relationship between FWMU and the Florida Baptist Convention, led by Dr. S. B. Rogers since the death of Dr. Geiger in 1909.

Advancement under Dr. Rogers, Dr. C. M. Brittain, and Mrs. H. C. Peelman, 1911-1936

When Miss Spalding resigned in 1911, Mrs. H. C. Peelman accepted the call to lead Florida WMU. Her tenure would last for 25 years. The Peelmans had come to Florida from Illinois in 1897. He soon began to serve small churches as pastor. Like most Florida pastors, he had no formal training or education for the pastorate. Also like most pastors in the state, his calls primarily involved churches that received state or Home Mission Board assistance. He and Mrs. Peelman were a popular pair, both as she worked beside him, and then as he often drove her on her visits around the state.

At the time of Mrs. Peelman's election, the Union voted to "not make the State Board of Missions custodian of their funds as heretofore," giving its corresponding secretary-treasurer total responsibility for handling Florida WMU money.²³ [The women worked with direct contributions only until 1920.] WMU headquarters transferred from Deland to the Peelmans' home in Jacksonville.

By 1912 women served on several major committees of the Florida Baptist Convention; the state missions committee, for example, included eight women and six men. The 1912 report on Woman's Work, however, came from a committee of 13 men, who hailed the progress of attitudes toward women: "We earnestly assure these tireless workers that their efforts are no longer merely *tolerated* among us, but they are thoroughly *appreciated* and given *honored* recognition; fast becoming *indispensable* to the most successful church organizations everywhere."²⁴

In January 1914 the State Board of Missions established the first "permanent" Florida Baptist Convention state offices in the Heard Building, Jacksonville. Previously, the location had depended upon the residence of the Board's corresponding secretary. With the move to Jacksonville, the Convention gained an identity and stability that often accompany a place of belonging. Graciously they shared that location and identity with WMU, inviting Mrs. Peelman also to move the WMU office to the Heard Building. "We appreciated the courtesy of the State Board in making this provision," said Mrs. Peelman. "The central location, better facilities, being in closer touch with the other State workers have made possible more efficient service."²⁵

The publishing in 1914 of Mrs. Louise Porter Hood's history of Florida WMU was the only significant action marking the 20th anniversary of its founding.²⁶ In an "After-word" to the history, Dr. Rogers highly commended Florida WMU: "Our good women all over Florida have a right to thank God and take courage, and our good men throughout the State should not only lend them a helping hand and sympathetic encouragement, but might well learn from them the lessons of sacrifice, service, organization, progress, and devotion."²⁷

During that era, the Florida Convention was deeply committed to developing Columbia College at Lakeland. Like a comet crossing the night sky, the school appeared briefly, and some might say brilliantly, only to fall victim to economic realities and pass swiftly from the Florida Baptist scene. However, during its 11-year existence [1907-1918], Florida WMU cooperated in supporting the school, giving generously to various campus needs such as books for the library, upkeep of buildings, and furnishings for guest rooms. Final WMU efforts sought \$1,000 to help pay off the college indebtedness. Similar types of assistance have been given over the years to other state Convention-supported institutions, including Stetson University and Florida Baptist Theological College, formerly Baptist Bible Institute.

Among other avenues of cooperation were the state assemblies, which began at Columbia College in 1912; assistance with work in Cuba, which had begun under Dr. Chaudoin and Mrs. Telford; and support of work with Cubans and Italians in Tampa. Acting on a WMU recommendation, the Florida Baptist Convention in 1921 officially recognized WMU as the “Woman’s Department” of Florida churches.²⁸

Mrs. Peelman led Florida WMU to cooperate fully in the \$75 Million Campaign of the early 1920s. Alongside national WMU leaders, she stumped the state on behalf of the campaign. Although the Southern Baptist Convention fell far short of the \$92 million pledged, by 1925 both the state Convention and Florida WMU had surpassed their quotas: Floridians gave over \$1 million, with nearly \$300,000 coming from FWMU.

As Florida Baptists struggled with their financial problems, they moved from the \$75 Million Campaign to a new unified program of giving promoted by the SBC and eventually labeled the Cooperative Program (CP). “Not clearly defined,” according to Dr. Rogers, the CP did little in its first years to relieve the financial burdens of either Florida or Southern Baptists.²⁹ But Mrs. Peelman rallied the women to support the new giving program, even as some male church leaders remained skeptical.

Perhaps because they had so strongly demonstrated their continuing support, in 1925 the WMU Executive Committee felt that the time had come for the State Board of Missions to give recognition to WMU leadership. The committee recommended that the Florida WMU president and the Florida vice-president of WMU, SBC, “be recognized” as members of the State Board of Missions.³⁰ No woman was named to the Board, however, for two more decades. At the same time, with the growing strength of professional ministry in the state, fewer women were named annually to any Florida Convention committees.

The word that Florida WMU had won the 1926 national Union Banner for achieving the largest proportionate increase in all WMU organizations momentarily brightened the gloomy outlook that had developed in Florida. Unlike the land boom, which had “gone bust” and taken with it much of the state’s wealth, according to Mrs. Peelman, the “WMU boom had just begin.”³¹

It may have been Florida WMU’s substantial progress which opened the door to rumors and criticism. Mrs. Peelman met the situation head on with a lengthy defense in the *Witness*.³² A current rumor “that the W.M.U. department is not in harmony with the other departments of our Baptist work” especially grieved her. “It has been a matter of pride on the part of the Florida W.M.U.,” she said, “that no friction exists among the departments of our work and we are very sure that our W.M.U. organizations do not harbor other than a cooperative spirit.” Mrs. Peelman also reminded readers that WMU field workers had always helped promote the work of other Convention departments and that WMU members in local churches regularly taught Sunday School, led BYPU organizations, and participated in training schools. Finally she declared definitively:

None of our W.M.U. representatives aspire to preach. It is true that when invited to do so they have talked on missions at the Sunday services. Often this is the only time when the majority could be reached, but pastors, who are strict adherents of Paul’s teachings with reference to women, have invited W.C.T.U. and Women’s Club representatives to present causes in which Christian people should be interested and co-operate.

As the 1920s limped toward a close, the stock market crash and the harsh conditions of a growing depression affected churches as well as individual Baptists. Even as Dr. C. M. Brittain, successor to Dr. Rogers as State Board of Missions secretary, commended Florida Baptists in general for “a rising tide of spirituality” and a “beautiful spirit of unity and harmony,” he recognized that the women “have kept alive the spirit of missions in many churches.”³³ Dr. Brittain as had State Board secretaries preceding him, often included “strong W.M.U. organizations in every church” in his Convention objectives for the coming year.³⁴

Because of the financial crunch, Florida WMU, in early 1930, “cheerfully loaned” Willie Lee Harrell, state young people’s secretary, to the SBM for student work at Florida State College for Women (FSCW) in Tallahassee. Said Dr. Brittain in expressing his gratitude, “They did this without complaining, though their field of work suffered as a consequence.” In August, “meager” state mission receipts necessitated cutting salaries and discontinuing student work. In a sacrificial move at a called meeting, the WMU Executive Committee voted to “release” \$100 a month through December for continuation of Harrell’s excellent work with the “364 Baptist girls” at FSCW.³⁵

Another area of teamwork was the Children’s Home. From the birth of the Home in 1904, Florida women had offered support and fulfilled requests from administrators. During the depression, boxes and monetary gifts from WMU organizations became a necessary life-line; in 1932 residents of the Children’s Home at Arcadia received 622 boxes valued at over \$6,000.³⁶ In 1934 the women created a state-wide auxiliary to the Children’s Home.³⁷ Their organized support began to effect substantial improvements for the Home. Through the years Florida WMU has continued to champion the Children’s Home and Florida Baptist Family Ministries. Since 1971 a WMU standing committee has worked to keep Florida women aware of the needs of resident children.

Mrs. Peelman’s resignation in 1936 brought many reminders of cordial working relationships among Convention personnel. *Florida Baptist Witness* editor, E. D. Solomon, dedicated the April 9 issue of the state Baptist paper to the retiring WMU secretary.

PART III – The Glory Years of Florida WMU, 1936-1943

Expansion under Dr. C. M. Brittain, Dr. C. H. Bolton, and Miss Louise Smith, 1936-1943

The WMU Executive Board named Miss Louise Smith, state WMU young people’s secretary since 1931, to replace Mrs. Peelman. Four emphases drew her particular attention, each of which related to Florida Baptist Convention interests.

The first was the work of Florida WMU in helping to pay off the enormous debts of the Southern Baptist Convention without decreasing Cooperative Program giving. Total debts, including those of the states, in 1933 had amounted to approximately \$6 million. Each year Smith encouraged more women to join the Hundred Thousand Club, an effort to enlist 100,000 people who would pledge to give \$1 per month above their regular tithes and offerings to debt retirement. Smith declared, “Our women hate debt and will do their part to erase it.”³⁸ As the quest continued, in 1940 WMU, SBC, accepted responsibility for raising \$1 million of the remaining \$3 million debt. Florida WMU accepted a \$35,000 apportionment. The theme “For a Debtless Denomination by 1945” soon became “Debt-free in ’43, Count on Me.”³⁹ At

the January 1943 annual meeting in Jacksonville, Smith joyfully announced that Florida WMU not only had surpassed its \$35,000 quota but also had exceeded the previous year's CP gifts by almost \$13,000.

The second and third of Louise Smith's emphases focused on work with Negroes and Indians in the state. After a slow start, the Florida Baptist Convention had begun to assume a more responsible posture toward those two ethnic groups. Smith led WMU in developing interracial institutes and projects as well as in cooperative efforts with the Convention. She gave much of her personal energy to cultivating relationships through visits to Negro college campuses and Seminole reservations.

The fourth of Smith's major emphases, the great Mendoza "love project" of 1943, was rooted in a 1939 trip to South America. In Mendoza, Argentina, she visited the Godoy Cruz area. She left with a burden for the completely inadequate adobe building of the Godoy Cruz church, which was closely identified with the mission service of Frank Fowler, Florida's first foreign missionary.⁴⁰ Smith waited until the "Debt-free in '43" campaign had concluded before making a bold proposal that Florida WMU "raise a minimum of \$15,000 for the erection of a church in Mendoza, Argentina, in memory of . . . Dr. Frank Fowler."⁴¹ Limited opposition arose, but not from the women, who responded positively to the new venture. "One or two brethren are afraid that it will interfere with the Co-operative Program," Smith wrote Dr. C. E. Maddry, Foreign Mission Board executive secretary.⁴² By the end of 1943, Florida WMU members had more than justified Smith's faith in them. Not only had they given over \$18,000 for the Godoy Cruz church, but also they had increased CP giving by almost \$20,000 and surpassed each mission offering goal by several thousand dollars.

For a year after Smith's departure from the state as Mrs. David Fair Boyd, WMU work continued under the interim leadership of Miss Elsie Knight of Tallahassee. As Florida WMU leaders looked forward to the coming of a new executive secretary, they apparently wanted to have everything in order for the person to whom God would lead them. In September 1944, they petitioned the Executive Committee of the State Board of Missions "for a reaffirmation of the existing basis of co-operation between the Union and the State Mission Board."⁴³ No response came at that time, but a review of records shows that, although WMU had declared an auxiliary relationship in 1894, until November 1946, SBM reports and Convention budgets routinely referred to WMU as a "department" of the Convention. Such references, rather than implying control, seemed to signify an inclusive spirit, shared commitments, and mutual trust. Like Florida WMU, the Florida Baptist Convention had greatly enlarged its scope and organizational structure in the last two decades. Brotherhood and Student Work departments were added. The Baptist Training Union department separated from the Sunday School department. Student Union, Stewardship-Promotion, and Christian Education departments developed.

As the number of Baptists grew and the areas of work expanded, Convention leadership continued to work cordially with the WMU staff.⁴⁴ WMU staff members were considered employees of the Convention, and for many years the SBM had voted on the WMU secretary (actually approving what the women had already done), along with other paid Convention workers. At the Florida Baptist Convention meeting in January 1937, Dr. Brittain had moved to amend the Convention constitution to provide for general Convention elections of both WMU and Brotherhood secretaries. Messengers affirmed the change.⁴⁵

Records also demonstrate that money had always been a key element in the relationship between WMU and the Convention. In the beginning, WMU contributions designated for state missions provided

the funds for the WMU budget. After the Cooperative Program (CP) structures were in place, WMU budget money came from CP contributions. The work of WMU was considered essential in promoting CP giving and mission offerings.⁴⁶ The SBM, however, did not always adopt the WMU budget precisely as the women had proposed it.⁴⁷ Although the women's organization retained auxiliary status until 1969, records of those years reveal that Florida Convention leadership viewed WMU as an integral part of Convention work and a partner in the Lord's business.

Changes and Growth under Dr. John H. Maguire and Miss Josephine Jones, 1944-1967

Dr. John Maguire had been executive secretary of the State Board of Missions exactly one week when the WMU annual meeting opened in Jacksonville on January 22, 1945. As he mounted the platform to speak, "the audience stood to express loyal cooperation" to the new state leader.⁴⁸ Beginning work in Florida at virtually the same time and later retiring in the same year, Josephine Jones, the new WMU executive secretary, and Maguire labored together through 23 years of Florida Baptist life. Differences of opinion occasionally strained the relationship, but generally they understood and respected each other, offering mutual support in working toward common goals. Under their leadership, both Convention and WMU reached new heights of participation. The Convention has continued its growth beyond those years, but Florida WMU has never again reached its zenith of over 88,000 members.

At their January 1946 sessions, both the Florida Convention and WMU made significant decisions regarding annual meetings. Convention messengers voted to change the "State Convention year" to October 1 through September 30 and to set the annual meeting regularly in November. Responding to the request of Maguire, the WMU Board brought a recommendation to hold the "Annual W.M.U. Convention" at a time other than the "same week as the General State Convention." The issue had sparked debate since the days of Miss Spalding, but separation had always been voted down. Mrs. J. L. Rosser, state WMU president, reported: "The majority of our women were reluctant to 'divorce' ourselves, as one dear woman expressed it, from the general Convention; but, always ready to cooperate with our [FBC] Executive Secretary in any way possible, W.M.U. by a large majority accepted the recommendation."

She also underscored the women's deep loyalty:

Brother Solomon [*Witness* editor and publisher] in fun announces: "The women have divorced us." Who is "us"? Let it be remembered that we, as individuals, are members of the Florida Baptist Convention and are vitally concerned in everything that the Convention does, including its annual meeting. We do not "divorce" ourselves. Woman's Missionary Union, by its very name and Constitution, pledges itself to help carry out every plan made by the Florida Baptist Convention.⁴⁹

The first separate WMU annual meeting was held in Tampa in March 1947.

Evidently "Dr. John" and "Miss Jones" held on-going conversations about many aspects of WMU as they sought clearer definitions of relationship. Following the lead of the State Board of Missions, in March 1946 the WMU Executive Board voted to conform the WMU year to that of the Florida Baptist Convention. That change made "by our blessed women" Maguire called "the most significant and far-

reaching action that had been taken since I became Executive Secretary.” In his *Witness* column he praised WMU:

This means at long last we are ALL moving together; now the W.M.U. officers will be elected and installed along with all the other officers, teachers and leaders of the church.

No agency of our church has meant more to the advancement of God’s Kingdom than has our W.M.U. They have been foremost in their endeavor to keep missions in its proper place. We thank them for it.

Almost two years after Florida WMU had requested the “reaffirmation of the existing basis of co-operation between the Union and the State Missions Board, “Dr. C. H. Bolton, former Florida Baptist Convention executive secretary and now a Board member from Miami, brought the matter to the attention of the Board. At the June 1946 State Board meeting, he offered a resolution which first acknowledged the auxiliary status of WMU, “with its own Board and Convention, both in its Southwide and Statewide work.” With that understanding, he proposed, first, the State Board of Mission’s expression of appreciation for “the fine spirit of voluntary cooperation existing between the Union and the Convention.” Second, he proposed “that the State Mission Board ... recognize the expending of the amount of money set up in the annual budget for the operation of the Woman’s Missionary Union to be the right of the [WMU] Board.” Finally, he appealed for “voluntary cooperation” in certain matters, including (1) the election of two WMU Board members to membership on the State Board of Missions, and (2) a “salary basis” for all employees, “jointly and satisfactorily worked out” on the basis of “similar salaries for similar work.”⁵⁰ The State Board of Missions adopted the resolution. Eight years would pass before WMU staff would reach equality with Convention department staffs in the matter of pay. Then equality eroded year by year, even though at its August 1956 meeting, the SBM reiterated its previous action by adopting “recommendations related to W.M.U., setting salary scales and vacation policy the same as other departments.”

Because of the calendar changes made in the January 1946 annual meeting, the state Convention met again in November 1946 – that time without the companionship of WMU. Interesting differences occurred in Maguire’s reports. In the January report, WMU headed the list on nine “Departments of Our Work.” The WMU staff was also listed first under “Convention Employees and Salaries” for the past year. Jones’ \$2400 was only two thirds the salary of most other department heads.⁵¹ In contrast, after the vote for separate annual meetings, WMU appeared in neither list in Maguire’s November report. He explained: “The Woman’s Missionary Union is not a department of our work, but an auxiliary to the Florida Baptist Convention. Miss Josephine Jones is Executive Secretary of this Department.” However, the recommendation to organize the State Board of Missions into committees for studying the needs of “each phase of our work” did not include WMU.⁵²

Most significant of all, perhaps, was the naming of three women as at-large members of the State Board of Missions.⁵³ Between World War I and World War II a woman on a Convention committee was an exception rather than a rule.⁵⁴ When appointments of a few women to state Convention committees began to re-occur, there seemed to be little correlation with WMU. Neither the state WMU president nor other Executive Board members had ever received routine State Board of Missions appointment, a request made as early as 1926 by the WMU and passed as part of Dr. Bolton’s resolution in 1946. In 1954, however, the State Board voted to invite the state WMU president “to attend regular meetings of the

[Board] at our expense, without vote.” State WMU presidents have continued to follow the practice begun in 1954 of regularly attending meetings of the State Board of Missions.

In 1959 Mrs. J. H. Lockhart of Tampa was elected state WMU president. At the 1960 Florida Baptist Convention meeting in Orlando, the Convention elected Mrs. Lockhart second vice-president, making her the first woman to hold Convention office in Florida.⁵⁵

An on-going issue during the Maguire-Jones era was a permanent site for a state WMU camp. After years of “roving camps” and unfulfilled attempts to find appropriate property for purchase, in the 1960 WMU Annual Session, delegates voted to establish a “permanent camp reserve fund” to receive contributions toward the purchase of camp property, and to request that the Florida Baptist Convention “purchase the Camp o’ the Suwannee at Branford, Florida.”⁵⁶ That recommendation finally convinced the State Board of Missions that WMU was serious about a camp site. In September 1960 the Board responded to the WMU action by appointing a camp site committee. At the November State Convention meeting, the committee recommended “that the Florida Baptist Convention purchase and establish a state camp, and that the particulars as to site, price, and means of financing be brought to the next annual session for approval.” Although that move, which in effect rejected WMU’s request, might have seemed discouraging to some of the women, it could also be viewed as the end result for which WMU was hoping. After more than year’s search for suitable property, the Convention purchased land at Lake Yale. Later the Convention added more acres and set the order of development as “(1) Girl’s Auxiliary Camp, (2) Royal Ambassador Camp, and (3) assembly facilities.”⁵⁷

During the tenure of Jones and Maguire, the destiny of Florida WMU became even more intertwined with that of the Convention, but with more of the liabilities and fewer of the assets of the relationship. Although FWMU had strongly supported the Cooperative Program (CP) from its inception, WMU salary requests were continually denied by those overseeing the Convention budget. In addition, the CP emphasis on unified giving allowed WMU less freedom for projects requiring extra gifts from the women. At the same time, as the State Board of Missions assumed more control over the State Mission Offering, WMU allocations declined to 25 percent of the annual goal. Adhering to Convention accounting policies, WMU also had diminishing freedom in using camp, conference and house party fees.

Perhaps the issue most frustrating to the women pertained to WMU’s professional leadership. Although the State Board of Missions had affirmed the principle of equal salary scales in 1946 and again in 1956, WMU salaries and benefits now lagged far behind. Nevertheless, WMU maintained a cooperative spirit, giving broad support to Florida Convention goals. To work through issues of mutual interest, the State Board of Missions appointed a WMU relationship committee composed of members from both groups. In 1960 Florida Baptist Convention President W. Hal Hunter planted the seeds of change, suggesting that it was time “for the Convention to take initiative in inviting Woman’s Missionary Union to full department status and fuller participation in Convention leadership.”⁵⁸ Jones and Maguire opted to leave the matter for their successors.

Part IV – The Return to Department Status and Subsequent Developments

Maturation under Dr. Harold Bennett and Miss Carolyn Weatherford, 1967-1974

After Carolyn Weatherford took office as Florida WMU executive secretary in September 1967, she and state president Rosella Lipscomb decided to take the initiative on WMU status. According to Harold Bennett, who also began his tenure as executive secretary of the Florida Convention in fall 1967, Weatherford asked for an appointment after he had been in office only a short time. For “half a day,” they talked about “everything that had been going on” between the Florida Baptist Convention and “WMU auxiliary.” As the conversation continued, Bennett asked, “Carolyn, do I hear you saying that you would like to become a department of the Convention?”

“Well, I didn’t plan to say it at this point, but that’s what I’m saying,” she responded.⁵⁹ Later Weatherford recalled: “Dr. Bennett was absolutely floored. He said, ‘Well, I would have wanted this to happen, but I certainly didn’t dream that it would come without any initiative on my part.’”

As a result of on-going discussions, at the 1968 Annual Session the WMU Executive Board approved and presented a recommendation:

...that Florida Woman’s Missionary Union move toward becoming a regular department of the Florida Baptist Convention by October 1969, and that an advisory Committee of the State WMU Executive Board work with the State WMU Leadership and the State Convention Leadership in establishing policies and a plan of work which will insure the continuing distinctiveness of Woman’s Missionary Union.⁶⁰

Approval by the women sent the recommendation to the State Board of Missions and on to the Florida Baptist Convention in November 1968, then back to WMU for final passage in 1969. After 75 years of existence outside the Convention framework, Florida WMU returned to its roots as a department of the Florida Baptist Convention.

Members of Florida WMU worked hard at grasping the principles of the new relationship. A key section of the newly adopted bylaws states: “The secretary of the WMU department of the Florida Baptist Convention shall be the executive secretary of this organization.” Carolyn Weatherford often explained:

This organization is like a club, with its officers, policies, goals, programs, etc. It operates side by side with the WMU department, which is governed by Convention policies, plans, and budget. The bridge between the two is the professional leader. No other Florida Convention department has such an arrangement.

At the same time that Weatherford was coping with enormous changes designed at the national level for the WMU organization, Bennett was building and restructuring the state Convention staff, which now included the WMU department. “WMU was totally accepted by the other departments. They were all a team,” said Bennett, “and we had a tremendous team spirit.” Keener Pharr led the new Education Division, while Woodrow Fuller headed the new Missions Division. Although education is a major task of WMU, Bennett placed the new department in the Missions Division, because he understood missions – praying for mission, teaching about missions, and giving leadership to the special missions offerings – as its reason for being.⁶¹ By the time Bennett had accomplished his staff goals, he had won for Florida the

reputation of having one of the best state Convention staffs ever assembled. He had also won the gratitude of WMU staff members as he upgraded their salaries and benefits to match those of other Convention employees and provided Convention automobiles for their use.

New Understanding under Dr. Bennett and Miss Bernice Popham, 1974-1976

When Carolyn Weatherford resigned, the State Board of Missions elected Bernice Popham as the new WMU Department director. For the first time in 80 years – since the women elected Jenny Spalding in 1894 – WMU members had no part in choosing their state executive. For the first time they realized what they had given up in becoming a department, and the realization was painful. Popham, a one-person WMU staff in California, also experienced frustration. In Florida, she found a situation which created considerable tension.

Over its 80-year history Florida WMU had developed an increasingly strong and effective leadership structure centered in its Council, Executive Committee, and standing committees. The move to department status had not negated the importance of that structure to the on-going work of WMU or to relationships with the women in Florida Baptist churches, who were the heart and backbone of that work. Their different understandings led to some uneasiness among women throughout the state and particularly to some strain between the department director and Florida WMU's elected leadership. "I was called by the Convention, not WMU," said Popham, "and so there were times when we had to work those things out. We had some struggling to do, but we worked and planned together."⁶²

Refocusing under Dr. Bennett, Dr. Dan Stringer, Dr. John Sullivan, and Miss Vanita Baldwin, 1977-1991

With Bernice Popham's departure, Missions Division director Woody Fuller added a unique facet to his job description: he became the interim director of the Florida Convention's WMU department, the first and only male to hold such a position. During the spring Fuller and Bennett invited Vanita Baldwin, a Florida native and then director of New Mexico WMU, for an interview. The three discussed "the challenges of Florida, the program of Woman's Missionary Union, the department goals and objectives, the staff members, the WMU Council, etc." She had questions for them, as they had for her. She wondered about the absence of women from the interview process. She asked Bennett, "If I am invited to speak in worship services in Florida churches, do I have your permission to do so?"

"Of course you have it," said Bennett, "if you get any invitations."⁶³

Harold Bennett left Florida in April 1979 to assume leadership of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee in Nashville. Even though he had not worked long with Vanita Baldwin, he spoke of her as both "strongly committed to what she was about" and also "a team player."⁶⁴

The State Board of Missions elected Dr. Dan C. Stringer as the new executive director of the Florida Baptist Convention. Having known Vanita Baldwin in New Mexico, Stringer came to Florida with a high opinion of her speaking skills. As they worked together on such projects as the state Disaster Committee and promotion of the State Mission Offering, he found her an "extremely effective" co-worker. "She wrote very excellent [State Mission Offering] material and presented it well," he said. "In Disaster committee meetings, Vanita had good ideas and did not back off from things that would be a challenge to accomplish in disaster relief."⁶⁵

Through the leadership of Baldwin and the response of Korean pastors to visits by a WMU team, Florida WMU became deeply involved in the state's evangelism partnership with Korea in 1978-80. A large number of Florida women participated in the Korean crusades of May-June 1980.

Language WMU, which in 1973 took a giant step forward with the election of a language representative to the state WMU Council, made great strides under Baldwin and Baptist Women associate Frances Shaw. As the Florida Convention developed work with various ethnic groups in the fast-growing population, WMU worked beside them, holding training conferences for Indian, Spanish, and Haitian WMU leadership.

At the same time that cooperative efforts continued in Florida, pressures from Southern Baptist Convention leadership on WMU, SBC, created strain and anxiety for women at every level of WMU. At the 1988 Florida WMU Annual Session, which celebrated the 100-year history of WMU, SBC, Stringer commended WMU leaders past and present as creative, dedicated, and courageous. "Woman's Missionary Union is a vital force within our denomination," he said. Acknowledge the "tenuous times in the Southern Baptist Convention," he urged the women of 1988 to come to a new level of commitment despite obstacles, as their predecessors had done "in the testing times" of the past.

In the only negative note of the session, Baldwin reported that at Elizabeth Painter's retirement at the end of 1988, the position of GA/Mission Friends associate would not be filled. Baldwin said: "Dr. Stringer told me that it relates to the department director's (me – Miss Baldwin's) retirement December 31, 1991. Leaving the position open and using contract workers he felt would be best for the administration and WMU." The delay in filling the GA/Mission Friends associate position caused a great deal of consternation among WMU membership. Later Stringer defended his decision, saying that he was applying the same principle in his own resignation as executive director.⁶⁶ In time some WMU leaders came to see the wisdom of waiting.

For the new executive director-treasurer, the Florida Baptist Convention chose Dr. John Sullivan, pastor of Broadmoor Baptist Church, Shreveport, Louisiana. In his weekly *Witness* column, "I Don't Mind Telling You," he did not mind telling Florida Baptists that they needed to give more money, plant more churches, and witness more consistently. Nor did he mind expressing his appreciation for the work of Florida WMU in bringing the Good News to bear on the state's fast-growing and diverse population.⁶⁷

The last several years before Vanita Baldwin's retirement in 1991 brought recognition and reward for both Baldwin and Florida WMU. At the same time they faced some disturbing obstacles, among them the need for a GA/Mission Friends associate, occasional negative interaction with other state Convention staff, non-Southern Baptist youth programs in a growing number of churches, and lack of SBC affirmation of WMU's historic role in mission support.

Challenges under Dr. Sullivan and Miss Barbara Curnutt, 1991-1995

As Vanita Baldwin prepared to depart her place of service, the new WMU Department director found her way to Florida. Barbara Curnutt, associate director of Texas WMU, answered the call of the State Mission Board and began her work in December 1991. Hardly had she learned her way around the state, challenging women everywhere to renew their "missions accountability," when Hurricane Andrew struck in August 1992. The destruction of life and property in the Miami area called the Florida Baptist

Convention into immediate disaster relief efforts. The work of Convention departments, lay men and women volunteers, the community at large, and churches across the state created a model of cooperation. Florida WMU was integrated into the model from every direction: department, volunteers, community, and churches.

At the April 1993 Annual Session, the Tuesday evening segment included a feature on the impact of Hurricane Andrew. Florida WMU presented to Cecil Seagle, Florida Baptist Men director and coordinator of Convention relief work, and his wife Peggie a plaque appreciation of their “untiring efforts” in south Florida following Andrew’s devastating visit.

As Dr. Sullivan began a forceful address entitled “Find Us Faithful in Florida,” he emphatically reaffirmed the role of Woman’s Missionary Union in Southern Baptist life. Acknowledging “some unfortunate and unnecessary” criticism of WMU, he said:

I’m not at all sure Southern Baptists recognize the great value of the work you do and have done. No missions support organization has prayed more, raised more money or taught more missionaries in the history of Christianity than has Woman’s Missionary Union. You/will be found faithful in Florida because of the great missionary challenge we have.

A significant aspect of current Convention work is the growing demand on department staffs for time to coordinate work and carry out internal Convention business, including the extensive budgeting process of “Objectives, Goals and Action Plans.” Because of the unique organizational structure of Florida WMU, the office work time required of the WMU staff may tend to diminish the efficiency and effectiveness of staff work in the field.

Because of the increasing antipathy toward WMU expressed by some Southern Baptist Convention leaders, current Florida WMU members sometimes question the action of 1969 in voting for department status. The issues at that time, however, were not the same as the issues of today. With the approaching vote at the June 1995 SBC meeting on the proposals of the Program Structure and Study Committee (i.e., Brister Committee), Florida WMU can look with gratitude at over 100 years of a close, cooperative, and mutually rewarding relationship with the Florida Baptist Convention. The repeated expressions of support by state Convention executive leaders in every era give reason to believe that the Convention will continue in the future to give its protection and backing to its WMU Department. Surely the leadership of today is no less courageous and visionary than those of a century ago who seated women delegates upon the same terms as men, who feared no fatal embarrassments which might be caused by women, and who gave affirmation to those methods of organization and work by which the most good could be accomplished. Meeting the missionary challenge of Florida continues to demand the best efforts of the Florida Baptist Convention and Florida Woman’s Missionary Union.

Subsequent to the presentation of this address at the Florida Baptist Historical Society 1995 annual meeting, Dr. John Sullivan in June 1995 further indicated his confidence in the WMU department and its director, Miss Barbara Curnutt. He invited Curnutt to accept responsibility for guiding Woman’s Enrichment Ministries (WEM) in churches throughout Florida. At the request of the WMU department, in

January 1996 the State Board of Missions renamed the department as the Woman's Mission and Ministries department of the Florida Baptist Convention. The new department logo envisions WMU and WEM linked together in leading the women of Florida toward God's ideals for personal spiritual development and mission service in His name.

Notes

1. Florida Baptist Convention (FBC) Annual 1881, 4.
2. Catherine B. Allen, *A Century to Celebrate: History of Woman's Missionary Union* (Birmingham: Woman's Missionary Union, Auxiliary to Southern Baptist Convention, 1987), 38-39 That situation was not changed until women were given the right to vote in 1919.
3. FBC Annual 1881, 25.
4. Allen, 32.
5. *Florida Baptist Witness (Witness)*, 28 May 1885.
6. FBC Annual 1882, 24.
7. Allen, 41.
8. Allen, 44.
9. *The Baptist Basket*, June 1888, 100.
10. WMU, SBC Annual Report 1891, 34. Italics added.
11. FBC Annual 1893, 98.
12. FBC Annual 1894, 73-74; 23, including response.
13. FBC Annual 1894, 51.
14. FBC Annual 1897, 24. See also FBC Annual 1896, 28.
15. FBC Annual January 1898, 52.
16. Edward Earl Joiner, *A History of Florida Baptists* (Jacksonville: Florida Baptist Convention, 1972), 99.
17. FBC Annual 1901, 32.
18. FBC Annual 1904, 46. Italics added.
19. *Witness*, 11 November 1909.
20. *Witness*, 11 November 1909.

21. FBC Annual 1908, 27.
22. FBC Annual 1909, 15.
23. WMU, SBC, Annual Report, 1911, 73-74.
24. FBC Annual, December 1912, 80. Italics added.
25. FBC Annual 1914, 72.
26. The book was produced at a cost of \$240.50, and sold for 35 cents per copy. Lelia Boring Lassiter, *On This Foundation: History of the Woman's Missionary Union, Auxiliary to the Florida Baptist Convention* (Jacksonville: Convention Press, 1961), 50.
27. Louise Porter Hood, *History of Woman's Missionary Union, Auxiliary to Florida Baptist Convention*, 1914, 62, 63.
28. FBC Annual 1921-22, 34.
29. FBC Annual 1925-26, 14.
30. FBC Annual 1925-26, 121.
31. *Witness*, 20 May 1926.
32. *Witness*, 15 September 1927.
33. FBC Annual 1930-31, 18, 23.
34. For example, see FBC Annual 1936, 39.
35. FBC Annual 1930-31, 24, 26, 99.
36. FBC Annual 1932, 43.
37. FBC Annual 1934-35, 124-25.
38. FBC Annual 1939-40, 170.
39. Allen, 132.
40. *Witness*, 20 January 1944.
41. FBC Annual 1942-43, 134, 136.
42. Louise Smith to C. E. Maddry, 22 April 1943.
43. *Witness*, 27 June 1946.
44. When asked about working relationships with the men on the Florida Convention staff, Louise Smith Boyd said, "They were wonderful to me!"

45. FBC Annual 1936-37, 14.
46. FBC Annual 1938-39, 54.
47. For example, see *Witness*, 12 March 1936.
48. FBC Annual 1944-45, 143.
49. FBC Annual 1945-46, 39, 121; *Witness*, 21 February 1946.
50. State Board of Missions (SBM) Minutes, 7 June 1946.
51. FBC Annual 1945-46, 32 36.
52. FBC Annual 1946, 34, 41, 42.
53. FBC Annual 1946, 118.
54. Mrs. Alfred I. Dupont of Jacksonville, longtime trustee of Stetson University, was the most notable exception.
55. *Witness*, 28 November 1960.
56. Florida Woman's Missionary Union Annual Report (FWMU AR) 1958-59, 15.
57. FWMU AR 1960-61, 16; FBC Annual 1963, 63; SBM Minutes, May 1964.
58. *Witness*, 24 November 1960.
59. Harold Bennett, taped interview with Toni Clevenger, Orlando, Florida, June 1994.
60. *Witness*, 25 April 1968.
61. Bennett interview.
62. Bernice Popham, taped interview with Toni Clevenger and writer, Columbia, South Carolina, November 1963.
63. Vanita M. Baldwin, interview with writer, August 1994.
64. Bennett Interview; FBC Annual 1979, 157.
65. Dan C. Stringer, interview with Toni Clevenger, June 1994.
66. *Witness*, 26 May 1988.
67. John Sullivan, resume; *Witness* columns; remarks, 1993 WMU Annual Session, for example.