

## This, That and the Other

### Efforts To Legalize Gambling Defeated In Four States

The proponents of legalized gambling are using the same techniques that the liquor crowd employed in their drive to abolish repeal of the 18th amendment.

They proposed in four states to use the income from legalized gambling to increase old age assistance and other social security benefits.

On November 7th the voters in Arizona, California, Montana, and Massachusetts rejected their cleverly devised schemes at the polls. In all four states efforts to legalize gambling were soundly defeated.

### OAK HILL CALLS W. W. CLIFFORD

W. W. Clifford accepted the pastorate of Oak Hill Church, Oak Hill on Nov. 8 and has already moved on the field from Deatsville, Ala., where he served for nearly six years.

The church has recently purchased and equipped a home for the pastor, and marked the coming of the Cliffords with a nice reception.

### W. G. UPCHURCH DIES IN MOBILE

William G. Upchurch, 72, for a four year period secretary of the Florida Baptist Brotherhood before his moving to Mobile, Ala. some 15 years ago, died recently in Mobile.

Active in religious circles, he will be remembered also as a wholesale groceryman in Jacksonville, and for a time early in the Roosevelt Administration as director of the National Recovery Administration in Florida.

Survivors include his wife, Mrs. Hilda Meyer Upchurch, Mobile; one son, Bruce R. Upchurch, Montgomery; and one daughter, Mrs. H. H. Harwell, wife of Pastor H. H. Harwell, Mobile.

Fifth Avenue Church, St. Peter'sburg and Pastor Vaughn M. Johnson have just been assisted in revival services by Dr. R. C. Campbell.

This is the new pastorium of First Baptist Church, Ft. Lauderdale. A dream of several years has become a happy reality. Located in the lovely Rio Vista section of Ft. Lauderdale, this pastor's home takes its place among the choicest pastori-ums in our Convention. It is spacious and well arranged, beautiful and unusually comfortable, and stands as a monument to the foresight, faith and consecration of the membership of the church.

Dr. and Mrs. Thomas Hansen, who recently moved to this home, entertained the church at an Open House Friday, December 8th, which officially marked its



H. Marshall Flournoy

H. Marshall Flournoy, ministerial student at Stetson, has accepted the pastorate of Midway Church, Palatka.

### NATIONAL TEMPERANCE LEAGUE FORMED

An epoch making event in the field of Temperance was held in Des Moines, Iowa, November 20-22. Two great active organizations were united. The National Temperance Movement with headquarters in Chicago merged with the Temperance League of America, Washington, D. C. to form the National Temperance League. The merger climaxed months of study and planning by a committee from each organization.

Dr. R. G. Lee, President of the Southern Baptist Convention was elected President of the new organization. The Rev. James Swedenberg, another Southern Baptist was elected Secretary. Offices will be maintained in both Chicago and Washington.

### WELLWOOD, TAMPA, SETS HIGH ACTIVITY STANDARDS FOR DEACONS

According to their Dec. 3rd church bulletin, Wellwood Chapel, Tampa, Gordon H. Halbert, pastor passed the following in a recent business meeting.

In addition to the spiritual qualifications that laymen must meet in order to serve as deacons of the Wellwood Baptist Chapel, the Chapel adopted the policy for the selection of deacons: (1) Must be members of the Sunday School. (2) Must be members of the Training Union; (3) Must attend Prayer Services; (4) Must cooperate with the church's program; (5) Must be a tither.

Congratulations to this young church for setting these high and commendable qualifications.

**SOUTHERN SEMINARY, Louisville,** awarded degrees to eight men at Convocation opening the winter term, Nov. 21: Henry Jackson Flanders, Jr., formerly of Little Rock, Arkansas, and now of Furman University, Greenville, S. C.; Stanley R. Hahn, formerly of Charleston, S. C., and now pastor of First Baptist Church, Walterboro, S. C.; Elroy Lamb, formerly of Frankfort, Ky., now pastor of First Baptist Church, Paris, Ky., and Oliver Lafayette Walker, formerly of Birmingham, Ala., now of Stetson University, DeLand, Fla., the Th.D. degree.

Louis Llewellyn McGee, Richmond, Va. Jesse H. Newton, Jackson, Tenn., and Marvin E. Tate, Jr., Washington, Ark., the B. D. degree.

Twenty new students enrolling for the winter term have increased the enrollment to 973. In addition, 43 men and women are enrolled in the School of Church Music.

First Church, El Paso, Texas, over-subscribed its Budget of \$154,692.50 in one day, Dec. 3. Pledges will run over \$180,000. This is three times the budget of four years ago. Dr. W. Herschel Ford is pastor.

Evangelist John L. Bray of Jacksonville conducted a revival meeting at Tabernacle Church, New Bern, N. C., Nov. 26-Dec. 3. There were 14 additions, (11 for baptism). J. L. Hodges is the pastor.



## Business Men's Evangelistic Club Will Meet Tonight

President **W. G.** Upchurch of the newly organized Business Men's Evangelistic Club of Bradentown has issued formal notice for a meeting of that club, to be held at the Presbyterian church. The notice follows:

"All members of the Business Men's Evangelistic Club are hereby requested to attend a meeting of that organization, in the Presbyterian church Monday night, April 9, at 8 o'clock.

**W. G. UPCHURCH**

"President."

## CHURCHMEN ORGANIZE CHURCHWORKERS' CLUB

**W. G. UPCHURCH IS MADE  
PRESIDENT**

**Is Result of Work Here of Billy  
Sunday Club Members From  
Jacksonville**

For the purpose of creating greater interest in church endeavor—the organizing of men who are members of the several congregations of the city into active and militant churchworkers along interdenominational lines—a series of meetings were conducted Sunday morning, afternoon and night in Bradentown's houses of worship. These meetings were directly in charge of a committee of laymen, businessmen, of Jacksonville, who form the extension committee of the Billy Sunday Club of that city, and culminated in the organizing of a Business Man's Evangelistic Club, having for its object, "To lead men to a saving knowledge of Our Lord Jesus Christ."

The visiting churchmen were in charge of T. G. Bradley, chairman, a traveling salesman. Other members are W. W. Fineren, attache of the U. S. engineer office; E. E. Hammell, contractor and builder; L. H. Bingham, railroad man; Ralph K. Roberts, attorney; J. C. Durrance, attorney; C. G. Sellar, railroad man; Frank E. Wood, wholesale drygoods merchant. These men appeared in the different churches during the day, carrying out the programs arranged by the chairman of the committee.

**Arouse Great Interest**

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From a religious standpoint it was a great day. Large congregations were on hand, and much interest was manifested. At the Methodist church eleven persons made professions of faith; at the Baptist evening service several affiliated with the church by letter, one by profession of faith, and others coming under watch care until letters have been obtained. At the Presbyterian church services, beginning with the prayer meeting during the morning, the interest displayed was intense, many signifying their desire to be remembered in prayer. The speakers brought interesting and wonderful messages, presenting the case of the church militant, and showing the great work being done throughout the country in building up the churches in every way through the efforts of the laymen members, reaching the "waste places" as it were. Experiences were recited touching on the benefit of personal work of men who have been "made over" from just churchgoers into active, earnest workers for the cause of Christ. Special music featured at all the services by the visitors, who were assisted in this by the choirs of the several churches.

The 8:45 a. m. prayermeeting at the Presbyterian church was well attended, and was in charge of T. G. Bradley. In the evening W. W. Fineren and L. H. Bingham conducted the services. At the Methodist church the services were in charge of T. G. Bradley and Ralph K. Roberts; while in the morning at the Baptist church appeared C. G. Sellar, Frank E. Wood, E. E. Hammell; evening, T. G. Bradley and E.

...mell; evening, T. G. Bradley and E. E. Hammel, while the afternoon meeting, at which time the Business Men's Evangelistic Club was organized in a general meeting at the Baptist church, all members of the extension committee were on hand and each took an active part.

#### Upchurch is President

Following a song and praise service at the Baptist church, which was in charge of Ralph K. Roberts, and T. G. Bradley as leader, the objects of the campaign were explained. A temporary organization was formed, with W. E. Upchurch as chairman and W. D. Griffin, secretary. A large number of the men present signified their willingness to become members, and when the roll was completed it was found that almost half a hundred had signed their names. Election of permanent officers was then called for with the following result: President, W. E. Upchurch, traveling man, Baptist; vice-president Leonard F. Vaught, real estate dealer, Methodist; corresponding secretary, C. E. Street, businessman, Presbyterian; secretary-treasurer, W. D. Griffin, postmaster, Presbyterian. The charter members compose the following men from the various churches of the city: A. Z. Tyler, R. E. Taylor, M. C. Clough, D. R. Roof, J. H. Johnson, Max P. Moritz, J. C. Stone, W. U. Lathrop, J. M. Kneeshaw, L. L. Hine, T. L. Shirley, George Riggin, J. F. Wenver, R. H. Wakeman, Irwin F. Parker, S. J. Judd, J. J. Nussally, W. D. Griffin, W. H. Upchurch, A. F. Wyman, O. L. Stuart, W. V. Curry,

E. B. Rood, W. I. Kimball, C. E. Street, R. B. Johnson, W. N. Hayes, J. L. Dowd, C. E. Long, S. A. Bean, R. H. Young, W. A. Shankweiler, M. D. Hickok, J. B. Harris, L. F. Vaught, J. A. Betts, W. C. Maxwell.

A tentative constitution and by-laws were presented and read, and this matter was laid over until Monday night, when the first meeting will be held at the Presbyterian church at 8 o'clock and the organization put on a permanent basis.

The visiting churchmen expressed themselves as being more than pleased with the activity along church lines displayed by the Brantown people, and while in the city they were the recipients of much attention. They were unanimous in forecasting a brilliant future for the new organization, which they feel, as do the pastors of the various churches, that the result will mean much for the future welfare of the religious bodies of this community.

# BUSINESSMEN SHOW THE WAY TO CHRIST

## IMPRESSIVE SERVICES AT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

### Upchurch Tells About Organization, and Vaught Makes A Strong Appeal

Judging from the large and appreciative audience at the Presbyterian church Tuesday night, much interest is manifested in the community as regards the Bradentown Businessmen's Evangelistic Club, which organization held its first public meeting as an entire body. The fact that almost half a hundred well known businessmen of the city have banded themselves together to carry on militant Christian activities along interdenominational lines was a revelation to many, who so expressed themselves after this splendid meeting. The service was in charge of President **W. G. Upchurch**, while the principal speaker of the evening was Vice-President **L. F. Vaught**; **S. M. Foster** having charge of the musical features, while **R. H. Young** officiated at the piano.

The regular weekly luncheon of the organization was held at the First Baptist church, prepared by Mrs. Sale, and served by ladies from the Presbyterian Church—Mrs. Everett Street, Mrs. Ralph Kellar, Misses Grace Notestein and Mildred Pierpont. Following the lunch and business meeting the members marched to the Presbyterian church in a body, where services were promptly begun at 8 o'clock.

#### Song Service to Start

There was a song service in which the large audience entered with much spirit, after which **E. B. Rood**, chairman of the club's extension committee offered a most fervent prayer. This was followed by the reading of the Scripture lesson by **J. Herbert Johnson**, chairman of the program committee. "Throw Out The Life Line," the club's official song, was given in chorus by the members, after which President **Upchurch** spoke for several minutes, outlining the aims and objects of the organization, and reciting some of its accomplishments since its formation four months ago.

Mr. **Upchurch** pointed out the fact that the club was strictly interdenominational; that the only requisites for membership were to be a Christian identified with some Protestant church; that members must accept and carry out assignments given from time to time to the best of their ability, and that the sole object of the organization was to "bring men to a saving knowledge of

"bring men to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ." Giving some of the work done, the speaker pointed to the fact that the Christian businessmen of Bradentown had within the past four months conducted seventy-five religious services in isolated places, and filling pulpits where pastors were on vacation. Touching on the principal feature of the club's work—that of personal activities—he said that several hundred "personal conversations" had been held with persons not actively engaged in the Lord's service. Before closing Mr. Upchurch briefly reviewed the laymen's movement throughout the country within the past few years, which was a revelation to those present.

At the close of the president's talk the club's quartet composed of W. U. Lathrop, T. L. Shirley, S. M. Foster and L. F. Vaught sang "Jesus Saves."

#### **Vaught Principal Speaker**

The principal speaker of the evening was Vice-President L. F. Vaught, who was assigned by the committee for this important task. He pointed out that he could and would not escape an assignment, and therefore his audience would be the "sufferers," but the masterly manner in which Mr. Vaught handled his subject was a surprise to even his closest friends, who have heard him upon several occasions. He took for his subject, "Render Unto Caesar That Which is Caesar's and Unto God That Which Belongs to God." For twenty minutes he had the closest attention of those

Belongs to God." For twenty minutes he had the closest attention of those present, and gave a clean-cut and convincing argument why people should be willing to serve the Master. Stressing the need of more Christianity in the present day, Mr. Vaught pointed to the work of the evangelistic club in Bradentown, and in all sections of the country, and plainly showed that a new day is dawning in religious work. He closed his excellent talk with an appeal for militant Christian activity, at which time twelve persons raised their hands asking the club to remember loved ones in their prayers.

The closing song, "Softly and Tenderly," was rendered by the

congregation, after which Member Foster offered the closing prayer.

This was the first of a series of meetings of this to be conducted by the club, the next to be given within a few weeks at some other church in Bradentown.

Officers of the club are: **W. G. Upchurch**, president; **L. F. Vaught**, vice-president; **C. E. Street**, recording secretary; secretary-treasurer, **W. D. Griffin**. Executive committee—**A. F. Wyman**, **O. L. Stuart**, **J. H. Johnson**, **Max P. Moritz**, **Irvin F. Parker**, **R. H. Wakeman**, **E. B. Rood**. The membership is composed of **S. A. Bean**, **W. V. Curry**, **J. L. Dowd**, **Glen C. Finger**, **S. M. Foster**, **W. D. Griffin**, **J. B. Harris**, **Harold H. Hastings**, **M. D. Hickok**, **L. L. Hine**, **J. H. Humphries**, **J. H. Johnson**, **R. B. Johnson**, **W. L. Kimball**, **C. W. Jennings**, **S. J. Judd**, **W. U. Lathrop**, **C. E. Long**, **Max P. Moritz**, **Irvin Parker**, **J. J. Nunnally**, **G. F. Reaves**, **George Rigg**, **E. B. Rood**, **W. A. Shankweiler**, **T. L. Shirley**, **C. E. Street**, **O. L. Stuart**, **R. E. Taylor**, **A. Z. Tyler**, **W. G. Upchurch**, **B. W. Vaughan**, **Ross H. Wakeman**, **A. F. Wyman** and **R. H. Young**.

# BRADENTON HERALD

PUBLISHED IN

THE FRIENDLY CITY

BRADENTON, FLORIDA, THURSDAY, DECEMBER 15, 1927



**W. G. UPCHURCH**

As the 1927 state convention of Florida Baptists nears a close today, credit for the excellent handling of the meeting is being given **W. G. Upchurch**, chairman of the local committee on arrangements and one of the outstanding lay members of the denomination in Florida.

## Gulf Grocery Co. Is Purchased By W. G. Upchurch

The Gulf Grocery Company, a wholesale house established here three years ago by B. W. Williams, has been sold by Mr. Williams to W. G. Upchurch, who has for years been in the wholesale grocery business here and at Jacksonville.

Mr. Upchurch has taken the business over, Mr. Williams retiring from it, and will continue it under the same designation for the present at least.

Mr. Williams states that for the time being he will devote his time to his grove property near the city, but later on it is probable he will get back into business harness in some other line.

## BAPTIST EVANGELISTIC COMMITTEE BEGINS A BUSY SEASON

The evangelistic committee of the Southwest Florida Baptist Association comprising the churches of Manatee and Sarasota counties, had a busy time Sunday conducting services at various places. In the morning at 11 o'clock services were conducted at the Terra Ceia church, which is pastorless, by W. G. Upchurch and J. J. Nunnally. At Gillette the evening service was conducted by Hon. W. T. Harrison and J. Herbert Johnson.

The evangelistic committee, which is composed of W. G. Upchurch, chairman; Judge W. T. Harrison, J. H. Johnson, H. C. Groff and R. G. Roberts, will see to it that in the future services are held in all Baptist churches in this section at least once a week, and also to reach out into the neglected places where there are communities without religious service.

Mrs. J. A. Lamb, of Palmetto, chairman of the woman's work of the association, has called a meeting of the women of the Baptist churches of Manatee and Sarasota counties, to be held at Manatee on Tuesday, which will be an all-day affair. At this time the Woman's Missionary Union of the Southwest Florida Baptist Association will be organized and officers elected. The Manatee women will serve a luncheon at the noon hour.

## Dr. Bennett Of Tampa Again To Head Baptists

**W. G. Upchurch, Formerly  
Of This City Is Dean  
Of Laymen**

TAMPA, July 18.—(AP)—Dr. A. M. Bennett, pastor of the Palm Avenue Baptist church, was re-elected president of the Florida Baptist assembly which closed at DeLand Thursday night.

Other officers elected were Dr. W. H. Anderson, Winter Haven, vice president for Sunday schools; Mrs. W. C. Norman, Palatka, vice president for woman's missionary unions; the Rev. George Moore, Fort Pierce, vice president for B. Y. P. U.; Frank Farris, Kathleen, vice president for brotherhood; Willard K. Weeks, St. Petersburg, registrar-treasurer; Miss Catherine Walters, DeLand, assistant registrar-treasurer.

Miss Lula Laughinghouse, Jacksonville, recording secretary; Dr. W. W. Willian, Jacksonville, director-in-chief; O. K. Radford, Winter Haven, assistant director-in-chief; the Rev. J. Alvin Inman, Lake Alfred, assistant to Mr. Bradford; Mrs. H. C. Peelman, Jacksonville, dean of the woman's missionary union.

Miss Louise Smith, Jacksonville

tant registrar-treasurer.

Miss Lula Laughinghouse, Jacksonville, recording secretary; Dr. W. W. Willian, Jacksonville, director-in-chief; O. K. Radford, Winter Haven, assistant director-in-chief; the Rev. J. Alvin Inman, Lake Alfred, assistant to Mr. Bradford; Mrs. H. C. Peelman, Jacksonville, dean of the woman's missionary union.

Miss Louise Smith, Jacksonville assistant to dean; Dr. W. W. Willian, Jacksonville, dean of Sunday school; O. K. Radford, Winter Haven, dean of B. Y. P. U.; W. G. Upchurch, Jacksonville, dean of laymen; the Rev. John Hall Jones, Gainesville, dean of B. S. U.; Dr. W. A. Hobson, St. Petersburg, dean of preachers' school; the Rev. L. B. Grace, DeLand, assembly pastor; the Rev. J. C. Sims, Miami chairman of entertainment.

The following directors were elected: the Rev. C. E. Saunders, Jacksonville, Dr. J. Dean Adcock, Orlando; Mrs. Everett Robinson, Gainesville; the Rev. B. D. Law, New Smyrna; Dr. J. Harrison Griffin, Winter Haven, and the Rev. C. M. Crosswy, Lakeland.

The assembly was attended by 550 persons and closed with a consecration service Thursday night at which 130 young people dedicated their lives to Christian service.

## DEACONS TO BE ORDAINED

At the midweek service at the First Baptist Church this evening at 8, five new deacons will be set apart by solemn ordination. Those to be ordained are J. H. Johnson, J. C. Hall, W. G. Unchurch, R. G. Roberts and R. E. Taylor.

The Presbytery will consist of the pastor, E. H. Jennings, Rev. M. M. Benson, of Palmetto, Rev. W. C. Sparkman, of Manatee, Rev. J. S. Norris, the deacons of the local church and any other visiting ministers and deacons.

This is a service of unusual interest, and it is hoped that there will be a large attendance.

## RELIGIOUS POST ACCEPTED BY UPCHURCH



### Bradenton Man Will Aid Baptists In State Activity

W. G. Upchurch, former head of the Upchurch Wholesale Grocery company of Bradenton, has accepted a position with the Baptist state board of missions as a worker among the laymen of the state.

Mr. Upchurch has been active in Christian work for some years. During his residence in Bradenton he was an active worker in the First Baptist church and the Southwest Florida Association.

At the last state Baptist convention which met here in December, the state board was authorized to secure as early as possible a layman to organize brotherhoods in all the churches of the state and promote the denominational program. The board worked for several months seeking a man for this position.

Mr. Upchurch gave up his business here and moved to Jacksonville a few weeks ago. Upon learning of his change, the board sought him for their new program. A telegram received here by friends told of his acceptance of the position.

Mr. Upchurch will travel through the entire state with Dr. C. M. Brittain, working among the laymen of the churches, making addresses on the denominational program and organizing brotherhoods.

**W. G. UPCHURCH**

MOBILE, Nov. 28. — (AP) — **W. G. Upchurch**, retired Mobile businessman and former director of the national administration in Florida, died in a hospital here today. He was 72.

**Upchurch** operated a wholesale grocery firm in Jacksonville, Fla., for many years and at one time was secretary of the Southern Wholesale Grocers' association.

He also served for four years as executive secretary of the Florida Baptist brotherhood.

Surviving are his wife; a son, Bruce R. **Upchurch** of Montgomery, and a daughter, Mrs. H. H. Harwell, Mobile.

**MR. UPCHURCH TO ATTEND  
BIG BAPTIST MEETING**

**W. G. Upchurch**, president of the **Upchurch Wholesale Grocery Company**, left Tuesday for Tate Springs and Ridge Crest, N. C. At the latter point he will attend the Baptist convention as president of the Brotherhood of the Southwest Florida Baptist Association.

## Mrs. Upchurch Passes Away

Word reached the city today of the death in Jacksonville at 6:30 o'clock last evening of Mrs. M. E. Upchurch, aged 86, mother of W. C. Upchurch, wholesale grocer of this city. Mr. Upchurch was at his mother's bedside when she passed away, he having gone to Jacksonville Monday. Her death occurred at the home of a daughter, Mrs. Harry Holcomb.

Mrs. Upchurch had been ill for several months. She is survived by four daughters, Mrs. Frank Hesy, Melbourne; Mrs. S. D. Norris, Mrs. J. J. Upchurch and Mrs. Harry Holcomb of Jacksonville, and three sons, W. G. Upchurch, Bradenton; Dr. Harvey Upchurch, New York, and Delma D. Upchurch, Jacksonville.

The funeral services were held at four o'clock this afternoon in Jacksonville. The body will be shipped tonight to Raleigh, N. C. where interment will take place tomorrow.

## BAPTISTS ELECT DR. W. A. HOBSON

**Dr. A. M. Bennett, of Tampa,  
Is Vice Moderator.**

Dr. W. A. Hobson, of St. Petersburg, vice moderator of the Tampa Bay association last year, was elected moderator at the opening meeting yesterday at the Palm Avenue Baptist church. Other officers elected were Dr. A. M. Bennett, of Tampa, vice moderator; the Rev. Ramsey Pollard, of Tampa, clerk. C. C. Burns, of Tampa, was re-elected treasurer.

Three hundred and thirty-five delegates representing approximately 35 churches in Clearwater, Dunedin, St. Petersburg, Tarpon Springs, Valrico, Largo, Safety Harbor, Ozone, Port Tampa and Tampa attended the opening session.

The Rev. J. L. Plainfield opened the meeting with a devotional service, with Dr. Bennett giving the address of welcome. Dr. George H. Crutcher, of St. Petersburg, responded. The afternoon devotional services were led by Rev. W. L. Head. The Rev. M. G. Perry preached at the evening service at which reports of the B. Y. P. U., Sunday school and Baptist brotherhood organization were discussed. The report of the Baptist brotherhood was given by W. G. Upchurch, layman's leader of Baptist churches in Florida.

Today's sessions opened at 9:30 o'clock. Reports from the finance committee, treasurer, digest letters, adoption of associational financial objective, reports on nominations, committees on resolutions and special committees will occupy the greater part of the afternoon session.

The meeting will be closed with the announcement of standing committees.



# LEGACY

*Our Mission: Researching, preserving and promoting the Legacy of Florida Baptists*

Vol. 14

March, 2022

No. 3

**LEGACY, as the monthly newsletter of the Florida Baptist Historical Society, has as its mission to highlight the legacy forged by the people and events in Florida Baptist history. During 2022, the LEGACY's monthly issues will feature Florida Baptists' missions' commitment as reflected in the people and events that inspired their fellow Baptists in the fulfilment of the Great Commission of Jesus Christ to faithfully, "go and make disciples of all nations."**

## **Florida Transitions to Urban from Rural**

During the two decades from 1920 to 1939, Florida experienced a period of growth and dynamic change. Most notably the population doubled (to 1,897,414 from 968,470), there was an expansion of industry, and the growth in public and private wealth that came with the development and expansion of Florida cities, particularly along the Atlantic coast.



In 1920, there were 751 Florida Baptist churches with a total of 65,094 members. By 1939, the number of churches increased to 817 with a combined membership of 155,965. These statistics reflected that total church membership had increased at a far greater rate than the seven percent growth in the number of churches. The phenomenal growth in membership experienced by some city churches was due in part to the large population shift from rural areas to the cities. The in-state migration presented new challenges for both city and rural churches. For city congregations it was the evangelistic challenge and ministry opportunities created by the swelling numbers of new residents. "The growth of our cities constitutes one of our most difficult problems," Secretary-Treasurer **Charles M. Brittain (b. 1873; d. 1943)** reported to the 1941 annual State Convention meeting. But for too many rural churches, many without pastors, the issue was one of survival.

This population shift marked the beginning of the transition from a predominantly rural state to a predominantly urban state. It also was a period bracketed by the end of World War I, economic growth and then the havoc brought on by the Great Depression, that culminated in the growing military conflict in Europe that was the precursor to World War II. Noting the lack of financial resources to undertake Convention-sponsored evangelistic efforts, Brittain declared that local churches needed to be more missions-conscious. He encouraged local churches to proclaim the gospel by organizing "mission schools" and "establishing preaching stations" in the newly developing city neighborhoods. In the context of Florida's growth in mission opportunities, the organized mission efforts of women and men took on new impetus.

### Efficiency Movement Influenced Missions Commitment



As noted in the February *LEGACY*, Florida W.M.U. corresponding secretary and treasurer for 18 years, Miss Jennie Spalding resigned in 1911. She was succeeded by **Mrs. H. C. Peelman (b. 1866; d. 1943)**, who led the organization for the next 25 years. During the first two decades of the twentieth century there was a growing emphasis upon the Efficiency Movement – an effort that sought to bring accountability, organization and centralization within Southern Baptist program organizations. Each organization was to establish standards and strive to meet them. In her 1913 presidential address to the Florida W. M. U., Mrs. N.C. Wamboldt focused on the need for greater efficiency in missionary education. In the same year, Mrs. Peelman called for leadership development, better ways of conducting meetings, and the use of the prayer calendar and other promotional aids to increase missions’ activities.

As a result of the efficiency emphasis, local W. M. U. groups developed written constitutions, regularly elected officers, and undertook an increased effort to form associational WMU organizations. There also developed a consensus for the need of a statewide worker to develop and promote mission programs that would attract younger Baptist women. Between 1924 and 1929, Mrs. Willie Lee Harrell was employed as the young people’s leader to work with young women, girls and boys. She was later replaced by Louise Smith a native of Kentucky.

During the Peelman years (1911 – 1936) the statewide W.M.U. organization grew significantly to 1,574 age-group units in 1936 from 211 women’s missionary societies and auxiliaries in 1911. By 1936, the total membership reached 23,300 women, girls and boys. Annual contributions – not including the special needs offerings taken from time to time – for state, home and foreign missions increased to \$89,018 in 1936 from \$5,465. In 1936, after 25 years of unrelentingly committed service, Mrs. H. C. Peelman was requested to retire from service. The bittersweet recommendation – apparently tempered by the reality of Mrs. Peelman’s 70 years of age and the need for new leadership – the W.M. U. Executive Committee cited the need based upon “the work’s sake and out of hearts of gratitude.”

### Louise Smith Tapped to Lead W.M.U.

In 1936 the W.M.U. Executive Committee recommended that the State Board of Missions elect **Louise Smith (b. 1901; d. 1996)** as the new W.M.U. department secretary (director). Smith had demonstrated, under the tutelage of Mrs. Peelman, to be a strong advocate not only for the young people’s program emphasis, but for the entire W.M.U. ministry. With much of her time being spent on the road traveling across the state, Smith stimulated the growth in the number of young woman’s auxiliaries (Y.W.A.) in churches, on college campuses, hospitals and nursing schools.



In her new leadership role, Smith achieved several accomplishments: initiated race relations mission activities between Anglo and African-American children and women; developed mission activities among Florida’s Seminole Indians; started state Royal Ambassador camps for boys; and led Florida W.M.U. to raise over \$35,000 to pay off SBC agency debts. Beginning in 1939 Miss Smith started what became a successful multi-year effort to collect funds to build a Baptist church in Mendoza, Argentina, in memory of native Floridian and first SBC-appointed foreign missionary Dr. Frank Fowler.

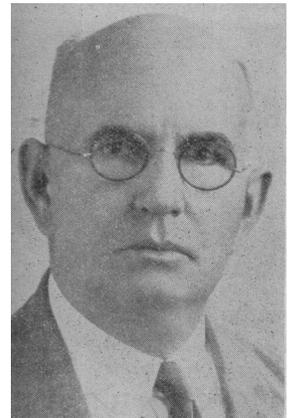
### **The Layman's Movement Becomes Brotherhood**

By the 1920s the Florida Layman's Missionary Movement still had no central organization. However, that did not prevent the movement to continue to raise funds to erase debts of the Home and Foreign Mission boards. The movement decried what they collectively viewed as the unbusinesslike method of financial support for missions responding to annual ad hoc appeals for funds. Instead, Florida's loosely connected regional laymen groups, advocated a weekly offering rather than a yearly pledge to provide a stable funding foundation for mission activities. Not only was the weekly plan – and the use of duplex envelopes – more efficient, they said; it was also “the scriptural method.”

The Laymen's Movement entered a new era of emphasis and organization between 1926 – 1939. At the national level, the Southern Baptist Convention in 1926 re-named the movement as The Baptist Brotherhood of the South. Hugh Latimer, who later led the Florida Brotherhood, argued that, “men would be more easily interested and enlisted if the scope of the movement was broadened to include the entire denominational program rather than having it restricted to” missions' promotion. He further stressed that by the use of the word “brotherhood” would embrace both pastors and laymen. Latimer went on to observe that, “no pastor can hope to realize the maximum possibility of his ministry aside from the cooperation of his laymen.”

### **Florida Laymen Leadership Emerges**

In August 15, 1928, **W.G. Upchurch (b. 1878; d. 1950)** was elected by the State Board of Missions as Florida's Brotherhood director. During his tenure Upchurch continued by example and encouragement to lead laymen to become involved in evangelism. Prior to selling his wholesale grocery enterprise, Upchurch had been actively organizing and promoting evangelism through newly organized laymen soul-winning groups, while a member of Jacksonville's Main Street Baptist Church. Later, as a deacon of First Baptist Church, Bradenton, he was an active soul-winner and strong proponent of the layman's movement. Those “hands-on” experiences were sufficient credentials to lead the statewide Brotherhood effort. However, with the onset of the Depression and the reduction in Cooperative Program income by 1931, caused the State Board of Missions to suspend the work of both the Brotherhood and Student programs.



After a five years hiatus, and an improved economy, the State Board in 1936 was able to fund the restart of the Brotherhood program. **Hugh F. Latimer (b. 1879; d. 1962)**, was selected to lead the statewide emphasis. Previously, Latimer had been serving as the Florida representative for the Southern Baptist Annuity Board promoting retirement services for pastors. In his first year leading the Brotherhood, he was able to organize 26 new Brotherhood units in as many churches. During his leadership Florida's church Brotherhoods increased in numbers by 50 percent while associational Brotherhoods increased 40 percent. His leadership was so effective that in 1939 the SBC Brotherhood of the South employed Latimer as associate director.

***This series on Florida Baptists' Missions' Commitment continues next month***