

Florida Baptist Historical Society Biography Collection

This link provides the specific resource information which documents and undergirds the biographical resource information on a specific Florida Baptist pastors, church staff or significant laity leaders.

The link you have chosen connects to the specific individual's resource files that provide the basis for information which the Historical Society has used to develop the respective biographical profile. The sources attached may include copies of articles gleaned from back issues of the *Florida Baptist Witness* and other news publications. Other resources include books, historical journal articles and church histories that are cited as documentation for the biography.

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Sparkman, W. Carey (1891-1983) was born in Wauchula, Florida the son of Thomas Jefferson and Susan Elizabeth Futch Sparkman. He graduated from Mercer University. He founded and served as pastor of both Southside Baptist Church, Manatee and Immanuel Baptist Church, Fort Lauderdale. Sparkman and his wife, Eula Howell Sparkman married in 1928 and they had three children.

Immanuel Baptist Church

State Library and Archives of Florida

On many of the scans, text appears to bleed through from the reverse page as survey workers often used recycled paper printed on one side with unrelated material. Users should be aware that the bleed-through is not a missing page.

IMMANUEL BAPTIST CHURCH, Jan. 8, 1939--. Fort Lauderdale, Brevard County.

Constituted Jan. 8, 1939. Services held one time in American Legion Hall, S.E. 1st St., then Labor Hall, 211 E. Broward Blvd., until present Woman's Club, gray, rectangular, stucco building erected. First services Feb. 11, 1940. Present membership, 27. Active organization, Sunday School. First settled and only pastor, Rev. W.C. Sparkman, January 1939--, 120 S.E. 5th Court, Fort Lauderdale; Mercer University, Macon, Ga.

(MINUTES), Jan. 15, 1939--, 1 vol. loose leaf. Showing records of church conferences, reports, membership roll, baptisms, deaths, receipts and disbursements. Custody of clerk and historian, Mr. & Mrs. B.H. Blossch, 237 S.W. 7th Ave., Fort Lauderdale.

(SUNDAY SCHOOL RECORDS), January 1939--, 1 File Box. Showing attendance, members, teachers. Custody of pastor, Rev. W.C. Sparkman, see supra.

Rev. W. C. Sparkman, pastor of the Manatee church has had an interesting career. We have no disposition to write his biography nor his obituary. He is still a young man and may the day be long deferred. However, he has been preaching ten years, has preached 1,423 sermons, conducted 59 funerals, married 54 couples and baptized 449 people. He has been pastor at Manatee for five years.

Here is a fraternal letter from Brother C. A. Hardy of Ft. Lauderdale. He sends along a year's subscription and tells us that he greatly enjoys reading the paper, that he finds a great

FB W Sept 22, 1927

s two daughters, Mrs. Enid Casey
a of Port Orange, Fla., and Miss
f Joan Sparkman of Port Orange,
Fla., and a brother, the Rev.
W. C. Sparkman of Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

- Funeral services will be held
Tuesday at 11 a.m. at Toale
l Bros. Downtown Chapel, 40 N.
- Orange Ave., Sarasota, with
Mr. Sparkman's brother, the
- Rev. W. C. Sparkman, pastor of
Southside Baptist Church, Fort
/ Lauderdale, officiating. Visita-
- tion will be Monday from 2 to
c 4 and 7 to 9 p.m.

The Congregation Comes First

He Follows Sports And The Ministry

By GAIL SCOTT
(Religion Editor)

The Rev. W. C. Sparkman "came here 32 years ago to die and never got around to it."

It's that attitude toward life — optimistic and taking things as they come—that has endeared Mr. Sparkman to the congregations he has served for 60 years.

Mr. Sparkman said he didn't plan to be a minister before First Baptist Church of Lakeland ordained him in 1910, but he just fell into it.

Born in 1891 in Wauchula, Mr. Sparkman is one of few native Floridians around from that date. His father was a Baptist preacher and a trustee of Stetson University from its organization until his death. His sister, Mrs. Lulu Sparkman Terry, spent 40 years in Brazil as a missionary.

there has been a great deal of change in the pastor's role since he entered the ministry.

"Everybody went to church because there wasn't anything else to do," he said to explain the large attendance in the early 1900s.

"The people who go now go because they want to," he added.

"When I began, about the

only social problem we talked about was temperance."

Mr. Sparkman added that he feels the family unit is disintegrating.

"How often does a family get together today?"

"I'm still convinced the basic need of people is an inner spiritual need," he said. "Am I wrong in thinking there ought to be a time when you can get away from these (social) problems, as important as they are, and commune with yourself and God?"

Mr. Sparkman feels that some ministers and organizations have been concerned with social problems more than the needs of their congregations.

"The National Council of Churches has gone into partisan politics far more than for its own good," he said. Mr. Sparkman's church is a member of the Southern Baptist Convention, which is not



REV. AND MRS. W. C. SPARKMAN

... today, people go to church because they want to

affiliated with the NCC.

"Most Southern Baptists emphasize the spiritual side of life," he said.

"But while I'm staunch in my convictions, I believe we have to look with an open mind," he said. "We've got to learn a lot more."

That thought for the future from a minister who's been learning the ropes for 60 years and still feels he has more to learn.



Truths for Today

by R. W. Cunningham



MEET OUR NEW PASTOR

We want you to meet our new pastor, R. W. Cunningham. He was born in Cadiz, Kentucky. He graduated from Trigg Co. High, having lettered in basket-
ball having



Mr. **Sparkman**, who dislikes the title "reverend," was president of the student body at Mercer University, from which he graduated in 1913. As a minister in Manatee (now Bradenton), he met Eula Howell, who was to become Mrs. **Sparkman**.

"We knew each other for seven years before we were married in 1928," Mrs. **Sparkman** said. She was a high school sophomore when they met, and it took a few years to get her ready for marriage.

Now pastor of Southside Baptist Church, 720 S W Fourth Ave., Ft. Lauderdale, Mr. **Sparkman** feels that "the church ought to give people something they can't find elsewhere."

Mr. **Sparkman** organized Southside Baptist 20 years ago and has been its only pastor. He began Immanuel Baptist Church when he came here and moved to start Southside several years later.

Southside Baptist Church has a present membership of 110, including eleven of its charter members.

"If I were a younger man, I wouldn't mind having a larger church," said Mr. **Sparkman** who says that his church keeps him very busy. He served as president of the Greater Ft. Lauderdale Ministerial Assn. in the late 1940s and helped organize the Gulfstream Baptist Assn. in 1949.

"I go to all the basketball

"I go to all the basketball and football games," said Mr. **Sparkman** to explain why he is one of two people ever to receive honorary "Flying L's" from the athletic teams at Ft. Lauderdale High School.

"That's the way I kept young," he added.

Mr. **Sparkman** said he has kept up his ministry because "I'm not one of those fellows who can sit and do nothing."

But the minister added that

Pass In Review

By Orville Revelle

TODAY we are going to take up the discussion of success.

Just what is success?

To many it is many things.

To William Carey Sparkman, known to most of us as the Rev. W. C. Sparkman, and to his friends as "Preacher," success is living life to its fullest and in doing so demonstrating it can be done moreso as a Man of God.

To show you how he attained his success we must review his life.

William Carey Sparkman is a native Floridian, being born in Wauchulla on April 27, 1891.

He is the son and grandson of Confederate soldiers and he still refers to himself as an "Unreconstructed Rebel — a Product of the Old South."

His father, T. J. Sparkman, was a pioneer Home Missionary of the Southern Baptist Convention. Consequently, "Preacher" spent his childhood traveling Florida with his father who organized many Baptist churches throughout the state.

AT THE tender age of four, "Preacher" met tragedy face to face — while attempting to start a fire, a kerosene can exploded. He was severely burned. For weeks he lay bandaged from head to foot. Most of the time he was unconscious. Attending physicians gave up all hope for recovery. But, as Robert R. Snead, state secretary of the Florida State Exchange Clubs, so aptly put it, "our Good Lord had destined a life of service on this earth for this person and He saw fit to spare his life."

But it took years for young W. C. to recover from this accident — by the time he attended Lakeland High School, where he graduated with honors in 1909, he had regained his health to the extent of quarterbacking and captaining the school's first football team.

From high school he entered Mercer University in Macon, Ga. It was while he was in college that "Preacher" learned that his hearing was impaired. Not being one to accept defeat easily — and living in an era that didn't boast of the fine electronic hearing aids of today — he spent his summers learning lip reading.

AFTER graduation he became a high school teacher and basketball coach in Palmetto.

But with all of his activities as a teacher and coach he still had time to concentrate on one book — the Bible. And it wasn't too long before he became an authority on the Bible.

While teaching Sunday School, the pulpit of the First Baptist Church in Palmetto was vacated and the congregation asked **W. C.** to preach.

It was here that the **Rev. Sparkman** commenced his life of service to God. Besides occupying pulpits in Lakeland, Manatee, Jonesboro, Ga., he devoted years of evangelistic work in almost all of the states east of the Mississippi.

★ ★ ★

IN 1938 he came to Ft. Lauderdale. For the past 10 years he has been the pastor of the Southside Baptist Church. And for the past 20 years he has been an active member of the Greater Ft. Lauderdale Ministerial Association and in 1946 was its president.

He loves young folks. He is the No. 1 Fan of the Flying Ls. For over 21 years he has supported both the football and basketball teams by his attendance at almost every game.

During that time almost every student of the school knew him and considered him a friend.

THE SPARKMANS have three children — Mary Patricia, now Mrs. G. C. Shannon of Honolulu; Miriam Clyde, now Mrs. J. B. Pancoast of Our Town, and Doyle Howell who is now a junior at the University of Florida.

Mr. **Sparkman** is a member of the Exchange Club of Ft. Lauderdale. He has been very active as a member, in fact, so much so this year the Club selected him as the recipient of the Book of Golden Deeds Award — the first time in the award's nine year history to go to a member.

William Carey "Preacher" **Sparkman** man of God, friend of all, and a credit to his community.

Immanuel Baptist Cornerstone To Be Placed On Sunday

Church Is Building New Structures With Help Of Volunteers

Cornerstone for the new church building of Ft. Lauderdale Immanuel Baptist Church will be laid with appropriate ceremonies next Sunday afternoon.

Copies of the DAILY NEWS containing stories of the church will be placed within the cornerstone.

After two months of preliminary mission work by the **Rev. W. C. Sparkman**, Immanuel Baptist church was organized in January 1939, and **Sparkman** was called as pastor. In spite of the fact that the church owned no home, its membership has more than doubled. At present services are held in the Womans Club and congregations are larger than the church membership. The church maintains a thriving Sunday School and prayer meeting.

Early this year the church pur-

chased the corner lot at SW Eighth Ave. and Second Court. The church is being conducted with volunteer labor and has adopted the policy of not going into debt. The building being erected will seat about 125, contain six Sunday School rooms, nursery, and rest rooms. The church expects this to be a temporary home to be used until the financial resources of the organization increase.

The public is cordially invited to attend the short program Sunday afternoon.

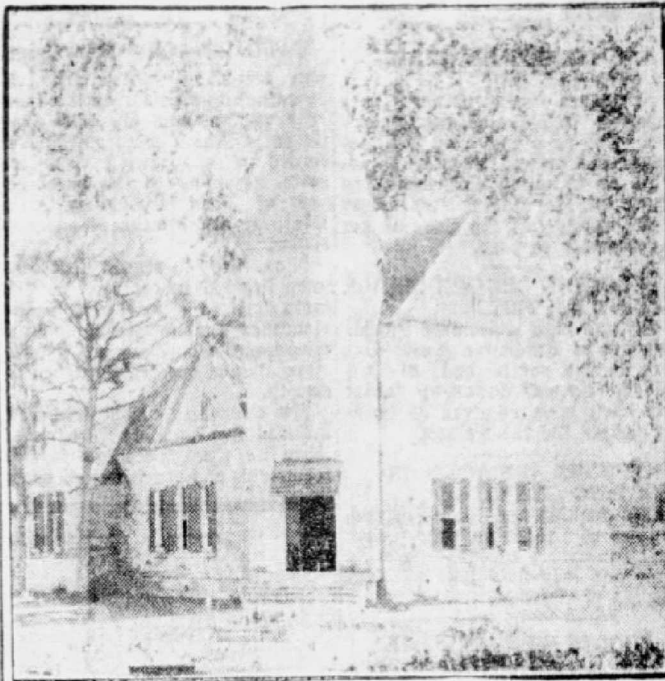
The program follows:

1. Hymn.
2. Scripture Lesson: The **Rev. Owen W. Moran**, First Baptist Church, Dania.
3. Prayer: The **Rev. Edmund H. Rice**, First Baptist Church, Hollywood.
4. Introductory Talk: Pastor **W. C. Sparkman**, Immanuel Baptist Church.
5. Brief Addresses: The **Rev. Robert E. Lee**, First Baptist Church, Fort Lauderdale. The **Rev. R. C. Huston**, First Baptist Church, Miami, Moderator Miami Baptist Association.
6. Placing of Cornerstone: Mr. A. F. Naumann and Mr. B. H. Bloch.

Deposit in Stone: Charter Members and Membership Roll; The Pastor Church History, Officers and Teachers: Mrs. B. H. Bloch; Building Fund Contributors; Mr. A. V. Bloch; Local newspaper containing sketch of church; Marie Johnson; Picture of late Christine Bloch; Stanley Bloch; Bible; Miriam **Sparkman**.

7. Consecration Prayer: The **Rev. C. T. Tew**, First Baptist Church, Pompano.

MANATEE CHURCH'S PROGRESS SPLENDID UNDER SPARKMAN



In 1909 fifteen men and women formed the First Baptist church of Manatee. Most of these came from the Bradenton church. Of these fifteen six are still members of the church. The stone building now used for Sunday school purposes was already under construction. Dr. A. J. Beck was the first pastor. Others who followed him were: H. Grimwood, A. P. Pugh, J. T. Jenner and J. W. Mann. The growth was slow at first but substantial foundations were laid.

In 1922 **W. C. Sparkman**, the present pastor, was called. During these five years the membership has been multiplied by four. In the last three years the church has reported a total of 174 baptisms, or an

average of 58 a year. The Sunday school enrollment is five times what it was five years ago.

During the present pastorate the church has bought additional lots which give it an entire block at the most advantageous location in the city. A fine six room parsonage has been built. When the stone building was outgrown two years ago the church erected for temporary purposes the present tabernacle which seats 400. Plans have been drawn for a new church building which will be erected when financial conditions permit.

Pastor **Sparkman** is a graduate of Mercer university, and has been in the ministry for ten years. Much of his time before coming to Manatee was spent in evangelistic work.