

TEXAS BAPTIST HISTORY

THE JOURNAL OF THE TEXAS BAPTIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY

VOLUME XXXII

2012

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TEXAS BAPTIST HISTORY is published by the Texas Baptist Historical Society, an auxiliary of the Historical Council of the Texas Baptist Historical Collection of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, and is sent to all members of the Society. Regular annual membership dues in the Society are ten dollars. Student memberships are seven dollars and family memberships are thirteen dollars.

Correspondence concerning memberships should be addressed to the Secretary-Treasurer, 333 North Washington, Dallas, Texas, 75246-1798. Notice of nonreceipt of an issue must be sent to the Society within three months of the date of publication of the issue. The Society is not responsible for copies lost because of failure to report a change of address. Article typescripts should be sent to Editor, *Texas Baptist History*, 3000 Mountain Creek Parkway, Dallas, Texas 75211. Books for review should be sent to *Texas Baptist History*, Dallas Baptist University.

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US ISSN 0732-43274

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EDITOR'S NOTES

We are proud to bring you this combined issue of *Texas Baptist History*, 2012. Our last issue was a combined issue for 2010-2011. Fortunately, this year we had enough material to provide an issue for a single year.

I am also pleased to introduce this issue's copy editor, Dr. Michelle Henry. Dr. Henry, Associate Professor of English at Dallas Baptist University, has served as an educator at Texas A&M (1996-1997), Paul Quinn College (1997-2005), and Dallas Baptist University (2005-to present). A native of Dallas, Texas, Michelle holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree and Master of Arts Degree in English from Texas A&M University in College Station, and a Ph. D. in the Humanities from the University of Texas at Dallas. Dr. Henry's scholarly interests include teaching and writing about African American literature, history, and art, and thinking about the nexus between race, gender, and class in literary studies. She teaches with the conviction that all students are educable and deserving of a learning environment that fosters individual and group excellence.

The articles for the 2012 issue begin with two presentations and a response paper about the historical responses of Baptists to immigration. These papers were originally presented at the Spring Joint Meeting of the Texas Baptist Historical Society and the Texas State Historical Association in Dallas in March of 2012. The first article is written by Josh Stephens, a graduate of Dallas Baptist University and Baylor University Law School and a practicing attorney in Odessa, Texas who specializes, among other things, in immigration law. Entitled, "Texas Baptist Responses to the New Texans in the Mid-Nineteenth

Century,” it is an adaptation of research from his Honors thesis at DBU and focuses upon the response of Texas Baptists to the German immigration in Texas in the mid-nineteenth century. The second article by Rosalie Beck, Associate Professor of Church History at Baylor University, is entitled “What about the Foreigners? Texas Baptists and Immigration, 1890-1910” and deals with a variety of ethnic groups who immigrated to Texas during that period. It also specifically addresses the perception that Texas Baptists held toward immigrants during this era. The next article is my response paper that was made at the time of the presentations.

The last two articles discuss two aspects of Texas Baptist history in the immediate aftermath of World War II and afterwards. The first, written by Bill Pitts, Professor of Church History at Baylor University, is entitled “Leadership in the Youth-Led Revival Movement” and discusses one of the key movements in the post-World War II era and especially the college students who provided the leadership for that movement, as well as providing information about the later achievements of these young men. Pitts’s article is followed by an article “Missions through Education: The Continuing Legacy of the University of Corpus Christi and the South Texas School of Christian Studies,” written by Tony Celelli, President of the South Texas School of Christian Studies. It provides an overview of Texas Baptists’ continuing efforts to provide vocational ministerial education in Texas especially after the demise of the University of Corpus Christi. The journal also includes two book reviews.

We say goodbye to our Book Review Editor, Dr. David Stricklin, with this issue. David is retiring from full-time teaching at Dallas Baptist University this year. We appreciate David’s work with our journal and with the book review section.

As this journal was in the editing process, long-time Texas Baptist and premier Baptist historian, Dr. H. Leon McBeth passed away. In next year’s journal we will publish Dr. Karen

Bullock's funeral sermon and tribute to Dr. McBeth. McBeth was one of Baptists' greatest historians. Among his many contributions, his works *The Baptist Heritage*, *Sourcebook for Baptist Heritage*, and *Texas Baptists* set the gold standard for writing Baptist history. He was one of the true giants of Baptist education and Baptist life. In next year's issue we hope to pay tribute to Dr. McBeth in greater fashion.

In the last sentences of his *Texas Baptists*, Dr. McBeth wrote these words, "The glorious past of Baptist Christians in the Lone Star State gives promise of an even more glorious future. Truly the desert has blossomed as a rose, but there are more blossoms yet to come." While McBeth's passing means that one of Texas Baptists' brightest flowers has passed from the scene, we are grateful that God saw fit to allow him to grow and blossom here in Texas and that our lives were brightened by his presence and influence.

TEXAS BAPTIST RESPONSES TO THE NEW TEXANS IN THE MID-NINETEENTH CENTURY

Introduction

During the mid-nineteenth century, Texas was a place of rapid growth and change, both politically and socially. Between 1821 and 1845, over a span of just twenty-five years, four sovereign states ruled over Texas. As Texas continued to grow and develop, each new government adopted increasingly more open and welcoming immigration policies. One of the largest groups of Texas immigrants during this period came from Germany. Driven by social, political and economic factors, and lured by promise of a better life, tens of thousands of Germans left Europe to make Texas their new home.

As the German immigrant population in Texas began to grow, most Texans welcomed their new German neighbors. Texas Baptists in particular began reaching out to the Germans. They viewed the large number of immigrants as an opportunity for evangelism. Baptists felt a duty to share the Gospel message with these newly arrived Texans. Despite significant barriers of language and culture, Texas Baptists made a concerted effort to reach out to German immigrants and make them feel welcome.

Although the generally positive treatment of German immigrants in Texas may not seem particularly remarkable on its own, when compared with the treatment of other immigrants in other areas of the United States, it is clear that the immigrant experience in Texas was the exception rather than the rule in mid-nineteenth century America. One of the strongest

examples of the more common treatment of immigrants in the United States during this period is the response of Protestants in the Northeastern United States to large-scale Irish immigration. Unlike the Germans in Texas, the Irish faced significant opposition, rejection and discrimination from many Americans, including Protestants.

There were two primary reasons for this disparity in treatment of Germans in Texas and the Irish in the Northeast. First, unlike the Protestants in the Northeast, who had been rooted and established in the region for multiple generations, the vast majority of Texas Baptists were recent immigrants themselves. They had a much more immediate and personal understanding of the difficulties and hardships faced by immigrants. Second, unlike the ardently Catholic Irish in the Northeast, who were seen as a religious “threat” by Protestants, the Germans in Texas were generally non-religious. Texas Baptists tended to view the increase in German immigration as an opportunity for evangelism rather than a threat to their religion and way of life. As Texas began to expand and develop during the mid-nineteenth century, Texas Baptists departed from the Protestant American norms of the period with respect to immigration and welcomed thousands of German immigrants to the ever-growing region.

Comparing the Treatment of Immigrants in Texas and the Northeast

In general, German immigrants to Texas during the mid-nineteenth century received much better treatment than their Irish counterparts in the Northeast. While Texas Baptists were attempting to evangelize and assimilate the new German population in Texas, Protestants in the Northeast were often opposing their new Irish neighbors. Many evangelicals in the Northeast were part of a group of people later referred to as “Nativists.” These Americans opposed the ever-increasing levels of immigration by people they viewed as incapable or

unwilling to accept American values and culture. A large part of Nativist fear and concern was driven by anti-Catholicism. Although there were certainly exceptions in both regions, the generally positive and welcoming response of Texas Baptists towards the Germans stands in stark contrast to the more common negative treatment of the Irish by Protestants in the Northeast.

During the 1840s and 1850s, the largest single group of immigrants coming to the United States was the Irish. The combination of increasing hardships in Ireland, lower costs of transatlantic transportation, and the prospect of a better standard of living in the United States all led to a tremendous increase in Irish immigration. In the decade between 1841 and 1851 alone, the population of Ireland was reduced by at least two million people; the bulk of whom came to the United States.¹ As the Irish population began to increase, many Americans, including most Protestant groups, began expressing hostility to the new immigrants. Concerns about the new immigrants led many Nativist leaders, politicians, writers and even preachers to speak out about the perceived threat of Irish-Catholic immigration and its impact on American society.

The driving force behind the opposition to Irish immigration in the Northeast was anti-Catholicism. From the very beginnings of the American colonies, many saw the Catholic religion as an outdated, overly powerful rival that should be kept out of the new world. The Europe that most of the colonists had left behind had seen years of war and struggle over issues of religion and the Catholic Church had come to be seen as an enemy of liberty and freedom. “This prejudice had been well grounded before the first English settlement and was fostered by the events of the entire colonial period. The England from which the American colonists came was a land newly emerged from the Reformation, and its people, like all converts to a cause, were enthusiastic about the new and bitter against the old.”²

One of the main arguments put forth by the Nativists was that adherents to the Catholic religion were fundamentally

unable to understand and function within a republican form of government. In his work, *Immigration: Its Evils and Consequences*, Samuel S. Busey quoted Wm. R. Smith, saying, “The mass of foreigners who come to this country are incapable of appreciating the policies of our government, they do not sufficiently understand our institutions. Patriotism is natural in a native, but it must be cultivated in a foreigner. Their minds are filled with a vague and indefinite idea of liberty. It is not the liberty of law, but of unrestrained license.”³ As a result of Nativist influence and growing fears related to the newly arrived Irish Catholics, the Irish had to endure, not only the hardships associated with immigrating to an entirely different country, but also direct opposition aimed at the very heart of their national identity.

In sharp contrast to the opposition and difficulties faced by the Irish in the Northeast, the German immigrant in Texas tended to receive a much better reception from the “natives.” Texans, and especially Texas Baptists, tended to have a much more welcoming attitude toward German immigrants. During the mid-nineteenth century, immigration to Texas began increasing tremendously as the governments of Mexico, the Republic of Texas, and, ultimately, the United States began implementing more open immigration policies. The Germans were one of the largest groups coming into the area during this period. As Germans began founding their own cities in Central and East Texas, more and more German immigrants began to call Texas home. By 1850, there were anywhere from 33,000⁴ to 35,000⁵ Germans living in Texas, with about 25,000 of them being German-born.⁶ This meant that Germans made up about 20 percent of the white population of Texas in 1850.⁷

Several economic, social and political factors influenced German immigration to Texas. One of the strongest motivations driving immigrants out of Germany during the mid-nineteenth century was a desire for economic improvement. “With most of the emigrants the desire for economic betterment was the paramount consideration for seeking a new home in America.

When the opportunities for making a living in Germany no longer promised a comfortable existence to the workingman, he began to migrate to those parts of North America and elsewhere that held out a prospect of a better living.”⁸ Overpopulation in Germany made it more and more difficult to earn a sufficient living, causing many Germans to emigrate to places that seemed more promising, including Texas.⁹ Many Germans also emigrated as a reaction to political and social pressures. “During the nineteenth century, particularly in the early thirties and in the revolutionary period of 1848 to 1849, the desire for political improvement served as the outstanding motive for emigration....These [immigrants] turned their footsteps toward the United States, where, as they thought, a man was a man and freedom was a fact.”¹⁰

In addition to these more general causes of emigration out of Germany, there were also carefully planned efforts by some Germans to bring their countrymen into Texas through promises of a virtual paradise, full of freedom and opportunity. One of the first Germans to do this was J. V. Hecke. After a trip around the United States, including time spent in Texas, Hecke published a book in 1821 that included “an especially glowing description of Texas and its possibilities.”¹¹ This book became popular in Europe, especially in Germany.

In 1842, a small group of German noblemen began an even more deliberate effort to draw German immigrants to Texas. The *Verein zum Schutze deutscher Einwanderer in Texas*, or “The Society for the Protection of German Immigrants in Texas,” was a concerted effort by a few “wealthy, titled Germans who were interested in overseas colonization for both economic and philanthropic reasons.”¹² These German noblemen offered potential immigrants a wide array of benefits in an attempt to bring them to Texas, including free transportation to Texas, free land once they arrived, a free log house, provisions and goods necessary to begin farming on credit until a second harvest was completed, and numerous public improvements in the new land.¹³ These efforts proved to be extremely fruitful

and led to one of the largest group migrations of Germans to Texas. “In the mind of the German farmer, Texas became a land of milk and honey, its name synonymous with hope for a new and better life.”¹⁴

As the German population in Texas began to grow during the mid-nineteenth century, Baptists in Texas began to take notice. The treatment of Germans by Texas Baptists was rooted in the way they viewed these new immigrants. Because a significant majority of Germans living in Texas were essentially non-religious, Texas Baptists recognized their presence in Texas as a mission opportunity. Because of their lack of religion, Germans “became objects of missionary concern by various evangelical denominations within the state, including Baptists.”¹⁵

Although Texas Baptists recognized a need for evangelization early on, there were significant barriers to overcome first. The primary difficulties Baptists faced were differences in culture and language. “Most Germans congregated in their own communities where they maintained their language, practiced their frugal agricultural methods, and remained impervious to assimilation into Anglo cultural or religious life.”¹⁶ In his work, *A History of Texas Baptists*, J. M. Carroll explained that “[v]ery few [German Immigrants to Texas] could speak our language, and we could not speak theirs. They scarcely ever attended our religious services, and we had no preachers who could preach to them in their own tongue.”¹⁷ Before Texas Baptists could carry out their goal of evangelizing these German newcomers, they would have to find ways to overcome these obstacles.

One of the first attempts to solve these problems came from the newly organized Baptist State Convention in 1855. The Convention took up a collection of fifty dollars to “assist in the circulation of books, papers and other related materials among Texas Germans.”¹⁸ Although this was a temporary solution, the Baptists felt that some effort needed to be made to evangelize German Texans until a long-term solution became available.

In 1853, a step was taken toward a more permanent solution through the introduction of a German Studies program at Baylor University.¹⁹ Under the leadership of Baylor President Rufus C. Burleson, the university began preparing missionaries for work among the Germans.²⁰ This program ultimately opened the door for the most effective type of work among the Germans—the training of German-speaking Texans to work among their own people.

The conversion of a young German named Frank Kiefer became a “turning point for witness among the Germans.”²¹ Between 1851 and 1854, Kiefer began listening to the preaching of Baylor University President Burleson. In the fall of 1854, Kiefer was converted and baptized into the fellowship of Independence Baptist Church. Soon after, Kiefer entered the ministerial program at Baylor University “in preparation for ministry to the Germans in Texas” and “began immediately preaching and conducting prayer meetings and Bible studies wherever he could find the opportunity.”²²

In 1858, Kiefer was appointed by the Baptist State Convention of Texas as the first missionary to the Germans.²³ He spent his life preaching in both German and English, traveling throughout the state. J. M. Carroll commended Kiefer’s work, saying, “Texas had numerous German Baptist preachers since the beginning of Kiefer’s work, and some of them have been wonderful men, but none of them has ever impressed everybody as did Kiefer. He laid great foundations for our German work in Texas.”²⁴ The tremendous ministry of Kiefer began with a desire to reach the German people of Texas. Although Kiefer must be credited for all of his hard work and devotion, his ministry to the Germans would not have come to fruition without the encouragement and support of Texas Baptists.

Although Baptists in Texas initially encountered significant language and culture barriers, their overall attitude towards the Germans as a people in need of the Gospel message and their commitment to share that message set them apart from other

American Protestants. They refused to persecute or ignore newcomers to Texas, but they welcomed them instead and took action to share their Baptist faith with the Germans.

Reasons for the Difference in Treatment of Immigrants in Texas and the Northeast

There seems to have been two major reasons for the substantial difference in the treatment of German immigrants by Baptists in Texas and that of Irish immigrants by Protestants in the Northeast.

First, during the mid-nineteenth century, Texas Baptists personally understood the immigrant experience because the vast majority of them had not lived in Texas for more than a few years. This is in contrast to Protestants in the Northeast, who had often lived in the area for several years, if not multiple generations.

Most of the Protestants who opposed Irish immigration in the Northeast in the mid-nineteenth century had been living in the region for their entire life. Many families, in fact, had been established in the region for multiple generations. The emotional attachment to their home had much deeper roots than some of the recent immigrants to Texas. “In an age when many men unblushingly proclaimed their love of country, these writers shared a deep belief in the uniqueness and superiority of their homeland. The patriotic call to defend this charmed and innocent culture required protecting the ideals and values that gave a person’s life meaning and purpose. These Nativists looked on America as a threatened paradise.”²⁵

Unlike many Protestants in the Northeast, most Baptists in Texas during the mid-nineteenth century had only been living in the region for a few years. Some of the first Baptists to come to Texas were part of Stephen F. Austin’s “Old Three Hundred.” As many as eleven of these families were of the Baptist faith.²⁶ After Mexico gained its independence from Spain in 1821 and adopted the Federal Republican

Constitution of 1824, immigration to Mexico from the United States began to increase greatly.²⁷ More and more Baptists began immigrating to Texas for many of the same reasons that would later draw German immigrants. “The opening of Texas could hardly have come at a more opportune time to attract immigration from the United States Behind them was the habit of the westward migration; before them was the lure of free land—really free—a veritable farmer’s paradise, as all contemporary reports confirmed.”²⁸ After the Republic of Texas gained its independence in 1836, and even more so after Texas was annexed to the United States in 1845, immigration to Texas continued to increase.

Although Baptists were beginning to grow and become more established in Texas by the middle of the nineteenth century, the memory of the trials and difficulties they faced as newly arrived immigrants still remained fresh in their minds. When Germans began immigrating to Texas in the 1830s and 1840s, they encountered a people who had only recently been immigrants themselves. Unlike the Irish in the Northeast, who encountered tremendous opposition from “natives” who were more firmly rooted and established in the region, Germans were generally received with a more tolerant and welcoming attitude. This attitude can, in great part, be attributed to the collective experience of early Texas Baptists themselves as aliens and strangers in a new land.

The second reason German Texans were treated significantly better than the Irish in the Northeast was that the Germans who immigrated to Texas during the mid-nineteenth century posed much less of a religious “threat” to Texas Baptists than the Irish-Catholics did to Protestants in the Northeast. The Irish-Catholic immigrants coming into the Northeast during this period were strongly religious. The negative reactions to immigrants by Protestants in the area were overwhelmingly driven by anti-Catholic sentiments. The Germans, on the other hand, did not pose a religious “threat” to the Baptists in Texas the way the Irish did in the Northeast. They were generally

non-religious, so they did not tend to compete with Baptists in the religious sphere. On the contrary, the non-religious nature of German immigrants led Baptists to see them as a group in need of evangelization. This perception by Baptists caused them to be much more hospitable and tolerant of German immigrants than their Protestant counterparts in the Northeast.

Many Protestants in the Northeast regarded the fervently Catholic Irish immigrants as a direct religious threat. Some writers even went so far as accusing the Pope of a grand conspiracy to “invade” the United States with Catholics in order to take over the nation with loyal Catholics who would do his bidding. One of the most prominent proponents of this idea was Samuel F. B. Morse, the inventor of the telegraph and a leading portrait painter and actor. In his work, *A Foreign Conspiracy Against the Liberties of the United States*, he argued that the despotic monarchs of Europe were working with the Pope in an attempt to subvert American liberty by sending Catholic immigrants to invade the United States and gain control of the government. Morse believed that Catholic rulers were attacking the foundations of American life and government in order to destroy the United States and eliminate the influence of its commitment to liberty upon the people of Europe.²⁹ Mark Massa, in his work *Anti-Catholicism in America: The Last Acceptable Prejudice*, explains this fear of invasion further, saying, “Morse’s foreign conspiracy posited a labyrinthine plot between the [P]ope and the crumbling monarchies of a tired Old World: in order for the European monarchies to survive, they had enlisted the aid of ‘the other great foe of liberty, the Catholic Church’, to inundate the United States with Catholic immigrants hatching unspeakable plots against the democratic liberties of Protestants under the evil guidance of the recently restored Jesuit order.”³⁰ Morse saw Irish-Catholic immigration as a well-planned and intentional threat to the foundations of freedom and liberty in the United States.

In contrast, unlike the Irish immigrants that were flooding into the Northeast during the same period, German immigrants

to Texas were generally non-religious.³¹ “Unlike colonial German immigrants, the majority of the early nineteenth-century German-speaking settlers in America were only nominally Christian. Repelled by the formalism and spiritual laxity of the churches of their homeland, many remained aloof from formal church affiliation in America.”³² In contrast to the Irish-Catholic immigrants in the Northeast, Germans were not driven by a desire for religious freedom, and religion was not as strong of an influence in their lives. Without the strong Catholic connection that was so pronounced among the Irish, the Germans did not pose as great of a religious “threat” to Baptists and their way of life. On the contrary, the lack of religion among the Germans in Texas created a desire among Baptists to evangelize the new immigrants.³³

Conclusion

Although the treatment of immigrants during the mid-nineteenth century in both Texas and the Northeast is a complex and complicated issue, two general levels of treatment emerged during this period. Protestants in the Northeast tended to oppose Irish immigration out of anti-Catholic fears and concerns. At the same time, Baptists in Texas tended to be more welcoming toward German immigrants and sought to evangelize and assimilate their fellow Texans. Whether it was due to their own recent experiences as immigrants to a new land or the lack of any religious “threat” to their faith and way of life, Texas Baptists treated immigrants much more positively than their Northeastern counterparts. As a result, German Texans were able to thrive and become an integral part of Texas history and culture.³⁴

Josh Stephens
Attorney
Odessa, Texas

NOTES

¹George M. Stephenson, *A History of American Immigration: 1820-1924* (New York: Ginn and Company, 1926), 18-20.

²Ray Allen Billington, *The Protestant Crusade 1800-1860: A Study of the Origins of American Nativism* (Gloucester, MA: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, INC., 1963), 1.

³Samuel C. Busey, *Immigration: Its Evils and Consequences* (New York: De Witt & Davenport Publishers, 1856), 13.

⁴Terry G. Jordan, *German Seed in Texas Soil: Immigrant Farmers in Nineteenth-Century Texas* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1966), 50.

⁵Don H. Biggers, *German Pioneers in Texas: A Brief History of Their Hardships, Struggles and Achievements* (Austin, TX: Press of the Fredericksburg Publishing Co., 1983), 48.

⁶Biggers, 49.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Rudolph Leopold Biesele, *The History of the German Settlements in Texas: 1831-1861* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1964), 1.

⁹Ibid., 1.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Biggers, 6.

¹²Jordan, 43.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Ibid., 40.

¹⁵Albert Ray Niederer, "Baptist Missionary Activity Among the German People in Texas, 1850-1950," (Ph.D. diss., Baylor University, 1976), 39.

¹⁶Harry Leon McBeth, *Texas Baptists: A Sesquicentennial History* (Dallas, TX: Baptistway Press, 1998), 54.

¹⁷J.M. Carroll, *A History of Texas Baptists*, ed. J.B. Cranfill (Dallas, TX: Baptist Standard Publishing Co., 1923), 586.

¹⁸Niederer, 55.

¹⁹McBeth, 52.

²⁰Ibid., 55.

²¹McBeth, 55.

²²Niederer, 57.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Carroll, 57.

²⁵David H. Bennett, *The Party of Fear: From Nativist Movements to the New Right in American History* (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), 80.

²⁶Zane Allen Mason, *Frontiersman of the Faith: A History of Baptist Pioneer Work in Texas, 1865-1885* (San Antonio, TX: Naylor Co., 1970), 5.

²⁷Eugene Campbell Barker, *Mexico and Texas, 1821-1835* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1965), 10.

²⁸*Ibid.*, 14.

²⁹Samuel F.B. Morse, "Foreign Conspiracy Against the Liberties of the United States," <http://jmgainor.homestead.com/files/PU/Lks/FCALUS/FCALUS00.htm> (accessed June 28, 2008).

³⁰Mark S. Massa, *Anti-Catholicism in America: The Last Acceptable Prejudice* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2003), 23.

³¹Biesele, 1.

³²Niederer, 42.

³³*Ibid.*, 39.

WHAT ABOUT THE FOREIGNERS? TEXAS BAPTISTS AND IMMIGRATION, 1890-1910

Introduction

In recent years, Americans have debated how to deal with immigration, legal and illegal. Politicians, radio talk show hosts, and civic and religious leaders have argued the pros and cons of changing immigration laws or enforcing current ones. This quandary—what to do with immigrants—is not new. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Texas Baptists dealt with immigration issues. These Baptists were a mixture of groups that had created a state-wide organization in the mid-1880s. By 1886, five Baptist conventions, two colleges, two women’s missionary unions and “related organizations” had merged to form the Baptist General Convention of Texas.¹ During the 1890s, Baptist work grew rapidly, as missionaries began Sunday Schools, churches, and mission groups. For example, in 1887, eighty-five Texas counties had no Baptist church,² but, by the turn of the century, Baptists blanketed the state and comprised the largest Protestant denomination in Texas. Their rhetoric on immigration mirrored the typical Protestant response from across the state, and it is worthy of study because of the influence Baptists had and have in Texas.

This paper will explore how Texas Baptists perceived “immigrants” at the beginning of the twentieth century. Baptist disdain for the Church of Rome, coupled with their views on evangelism, racial stereotypes, and the superiority of American culture, blended with the rhetoric employed to support and

justify their work with immigrants. And these views affected the way they interacted with the flood of people entering Texas between 1890 and 1910. I will focus on the rationale given by Baptist writers for the necessity of working with immigrants and how that rhetoric reveals their deepest concerns about the immigration movement.

Statistics

The volume of early twentieth-century immigration to the United States was staggering. In the thirty years between 1871 and 1901, 11.7 million people migrated to the United States. This number more than doubled all the immigration to this country in the seventeenth, eighteenth *and* early nineteenth centuries. After the turn of the century, immigration exploded, and, from 1901 to 1914, 12.9 million people came to America.³

Less than 6 percent of legal immigrants made their way to the South,⁴ because immigration was largely controlled by the railroad and shipping companies that needed workers and people to populate towns along their East-West lines. The agents hired to convince immigrants to travel on a particular railroad frightened the newcomers with tales of the South and Southwest. Railroad advertisements for immigrants from 1905 announced that: life in the South was too hot for white people; bad water and malaria abounded; there were poor schools and churches; southern whites believed it was not honorable to labor and disdained those who did; both southern blacks and whites were lawless and the South was not safe; if an immigrant worked with blacks he or she would be ostracized socially; and only cotton could grow in this region.⁵ It is not surprising that when these assertions merged with the disgust for slavery held by most immigrants, 94 percent of them moved into the North and West, not into the South.⁶ However, even with fewer immigrants than the North, because the South was less populated, this smaller number of people created a discernible impact on the social, religious and civic dynamics of the region, especially Texas.⁷

Texas and Immigration

As a state of Mexico, an independent country, and as part of the United States of America, Texas encouraged immigration from other American states and from abroad. The people who settled the Austin Colony were all immigrants, including Johann Friedrich Ernst who received a 4,000-acre land grant in the northwest corner of the colony in 1831.⁸ Ernst founded the *Adelsverein*, a society for the support of German immigration, in 1842, and thousands of Germans came to Texas through the early 1900s.⁹ This pattern—a person or small group of immigrants settling in Texas and encouraging family and friends to migrate—meant that Texas, unlike most of the South, had a steady stream of European immigrants beginning in the 1830s.¹⁰

The Immigrants

The Texas Bureau of Immigration was formed in 1871 with the purpose of “promoting and protecting immigration” into the state.¹¹ The Bureau produced a pamphlet titled “Texas: A Home for the Emigrant from Everywhere” that was sent, by the thousands, to European countries, encouraging immigration to the state. In the brochure, Texas was presented as the “Mecca, the land of paradise, to which all eyes are turned,” and immigrants were promised that every community had a church and “the cause of the Bible is well maintained.”¹² The thirty plus-page pamphlet gave the characteristics of an immigrant who would be welcomed into the state: a willing, hardworking farmer or stock-raiser. Texas was primarily rural at the time; so doctors, lawyers, bookkeepers, and other professionals, were discouraged from immigrating because they would find it hard to earn a living. The pamphlet warned that the idle, lazy and profligate would not prosper.¹³ Although published in 1875, this document presents the pervading attitude of Texans, Baptists or otherwise, toward immigrants until far into the twentieth century.

Most immigrants to Texas from 1890 to 1910 were middle-class farmers and artisans who worked to become self-sufficient quickly. They were not poverty-stricken people or criminals fleeing from their homelands.¹⁴ Rather, they immigrated because cheap land was available; they could establish an ethnic colony and maintain their language and customs; taxes were low; and Texas was open to new industries and farming techniques.¹⁵

Immigrants entered Texas in many ways and for many reasons. A growing draw for immigration was an expanding system of railroads. For example, 10,000 families from Naples, Italy were brought to Texas in 1904 by the White Star shipping line to settle along the railroad built by the Rock Island Line between Corpus Christi and Brownsville.¹⁶ Cheap, fertile land drew a variety of immigrants, including those who had lived in other parts of the United States for years but moved to Texas for more and better land. Many of these immigrants had maintained their own language and culture, so they were “foreigners” to Texas Baptists. One example is a migration of 800 German Dunkard families from Indiana to a land grant of 100,000 acres in north Texas in 1904.¹⁷ Galveston was the major port for immigrants who entered by ship. Texas Baptists, concerned that the new arrivals would be swindled because they could not speak English, established a mission, as did other denominations, to help people as they arrived, and to provide them with Bibles and Christian literature in their native languages.¹⁸

Traffic across the border with Mexico provided another avenue for immigration to Texas. Between 1890 and 1900, 14 percent of the total immigrants from foreign countries to the United States came across the Canadian and Mexican borders.¹⁹ Near the end of this period, the Canadian border was secured, and most border traffic, legal and illegal, shifted to the Texas-Mexico border which could not be secured. As immigration increased, Baptists focused on making El Paso the center of work with immigrant Mexicans and other

groups.²⁰ Immigrants came by land or sea, wagon or train, on foot or horseback, and, between 1890 and 1910, Texas experienced a sizeable increase in the population and number of Swedish, Bohemian, Danish, German, Polish, Hungarian, Italian and Greek immigrants, many of whom settled in South Texas.²¹ Baptists reacted more with fear than concern to this increased presence of the “other” in Texas. As M. D. Early wrote in 1895,

. . . the foreign population pouring into our state is one of the most serious problems with which we have to contend. Our American people in Texas . . . have not waked up to the danger which threatens us as a people by reason of the multiplied thousands of these people who are crowding in upon us. There are many sides to this question which could be enlarged upon to great profit.²²

Texas Baptists “woke up” and began to express anxieties they had about the growing immigrant population.

Concerns about Immigrants

They voiced concerns about immigrants through the state newspaper, *The Baptist Standard*, which regularly carried articles about the “Foreign Population” and the need for increased funding to support missionaries among the immigrants. The state convention and local associations also dealt with a number of issues relating to immigration.²³

Catholicism

While accustomed to immigration, the influx of people during the late 1800s and early 1900s jolted Baptists because the majority of the new immigrants were Eastern Orthodox or Roman Catholics or Jews who came from Russia, Italy and the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Earlier immigration brought mostly Protestant German and Scandinavian people to Texas.²⁴ While they might welcome other Protestants, Texas Baptists

believed the Eastern European and Mediterranean immigrants followed the “wrong religion,” and the immigrants became suspect if they did not easily or quickly adapt to frontier life and adopt Protestant, preferably Baptist, Christianity.

Part of the rhetoric used to relate the need for work with immigrants was based on an abhorrence of Roman Catholicism. With the upsurge of immigration from southern Europe in the late 1890s and early 1900s, fear of domination by Rome became energized.²⁵ An anti-Catholic stream of nativism influenced both Baptist missiology and praxis. They presented arguments against Romanism and for the need of Baptist Christians to evangelize new Catholic immigrants.²⁶ First, Texas Baptists decried the absolute allegiance to the Pope demanded by Romanism.²⁷ Second, they feared that priests, especially Jesuits, would incite the people to take political control for the Pope.²⁸ Third, Baptists believed the gospel to be the “only safeguard against the evils of infidelity and Catholicism.”²⁹ Finally, they affirmed that it was the patriotic duty of American Protestants to protect America from Romanism.³⁰ Baptists in Texas accepted the anti-Romanism of the era, and they used that dislike or hatred as one reason for their commitment to mission work with immigrants. They believed that Catholic immigrants lived in the deepest darkness because they adhered to a false religion, and their lives were devoted to the enemy of God—the Roman Church.³¹ These people needed the gospel in order to become real Christians and real Texans.

Retention of Separate Identity

Another area of concern for Texas Baptists was the way immigrant colonies maintained their own identity, language use, and customs. It was fine for them to enter Texas as foreigners, but they should become Americans quickly. Not quite xenophobic, Baptists worried that if immigrants did not embrace Baptist Christianity *and* American culture, Texas

would lose its identity and Baptists would lose their own religion. As Christopher Silene put it in 1904, “We shall be compelled to give them our gospel, or else they will give us theirs, and take our Texas, and our religion, from us.”³²

A fear existed that additional immigration to colonies like Holland, Fredricksburg and West would cause the immigrants to become “aggressive and oppose” evangelistic overtures made to members of the community.³³ Baptists recognized that the immigrants needed the gospel because they would someday be leaders in Texas and affect every aspect of life. But the gospel had to go into their family units and as long as they lived in insulated colonies, the gospel could not enter their homes easily.³⁴

International events added to the apprehension Texas Baptists felt about foreign communities, especially those from radically different cultures. In the early 1890s, several Japanese families migrated to the Rio Grande Valley from the West Coast, because they believed the fertile farmland of South Texas would be good for growing rice. The farmers prospered but maintained isolation from other settlements. In 1902, Japan suffered serious overpopulation and sent an agent to Texas to establish an immigration center for Japanese farmers. Eventually, these farmers established thirty rice farms south of Houston, maintaining their own language and culture as much as was possible.³⁵ The “Japanese” and “other immigrants” desire to maintain their customs and language made Baptists suspicious. Other Asian immigrants, refugees of the Sino-Russian War, also stirred fears of an invasion of unbelief and bad morals. Baptist leader Mary Gambrell wrote in 1905 that these Asian immigrants brought with them “the destructive principle of license rather than liberty.”³⁶

Customs maintained in these colonies were seen as destructive to American values and to the Christian faith. Most Texas Baptists embraced the Prohibition movement in the 1890s, and their rhetoric about immigrants often reflected their view of alcohol consumption as evil. Many

immigrants imbibed alcohol as part of their culture, and they saw no reason to change this custom. But Baptists viewed any drinking as a sin. A temperance report made to the San Antonio Baptist Association in 1893 stated that the foreign population supported the “379 breathing holes of perdition” in the city and that alcohol consumption would ruin San Antonio.³⁷ A corollary problem was the desecration of the Sabbath by foreigners with their drinking. J. B. Cranfill wrote in 1908 that “untaught foreigners” would transform Sunday into a “day of bacchanalian revelry and transmute our Christian institutions into atheistic defiance of both law and God.”³⁸ Alcohol use and desecration of the Sabbath by foreign immigrants were viewed as destructive inroads into Texas values and morality. The immigrants needed to be saved from their evil ways and brought into conformity with the true “Christian” understanding of social and moral values because only the gospel had the power “to civilize and elevate the . . . heathen” who lived in Texas.³⁹

In many ways, Texas Baptists also reflected a growing nativism in the United States in the 1890s. The Texas legislature passed the Alien Land Act in April 1892 that prohibited foreign immigrants from acquiring land and compelled foreign-born landowners to become American citizens by 1902 or sell their land.⁴⁰ In the area of religion, Baptist nativism found expression in the belief that Romanism, Orthodoxy, Judaism, and all Asian religions, were “false religions” and needed to be replaced with the gospel. Only the gospel was powerful enough to change the immigrants.⁴¹ Baptists assumed that acceptance of the gospel by the newcomers included acceptance of American civilization, morality and truth. They believed that accepting the principles of freedom and equality taught in their version of the gospel would transform immigrants into civilized people. When reading the literature, it is difficult to separate a nativist desire to preach the gospel in order to make Americans from the Baptist ideal of preaching the gospel to save the non-Christians.

Paradox

Baptists in Texas recognized the paradox of their stance toward immigrants. While they acknowledged the immigrants' contributions to the state, negative criticism always lurked on the brink of expression. For example, Texas Baptists recognized that they were somewhat xenophobic. In the 1900 "Annual Report of [the] Board of Directors" of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, in a section titled "Work Among the Peoples of Strange Tongues," C. C. Slaughter and George W. Truett—two influential Baptist leaders—stated, "There is an ingrained national and tribal feeling which often puts serious barriers in the way of the outflow of the water of life, to the thirsty myriads of our sin cursed world."⁴² Recognizing that many felt uneasy about the immigrants, they challenged Texas Baptists to move beyond that position and to "give our hearts and prayers as we give the word."⁴³ Now and then an article or statement affirmed the positive things that immigrants brought to Texas. In 1895, the "Report of [the] Board of Directors of the Convention," affirmed areas of Texas life enhanced by the immigrants:

1. They are making Texas their home, settling in business centers. The immigrants are becoming some of the "best, wisest and most successful business men of the state."
2. Immigrants are taking places on school boards and city councils and in police departments.
3. Immigrants are buying good agricultural land and spreading out over the state. They are the frontier-people.⁴⁴

Positive statements about immigrants occurred far less often than negative ones. The usual rhetoric of Baptists measured the damage immigrants would do if left to themselves; little of the writing rejoiced at the presence of foreigners.

Conclusion

At the turn of the twentieth century, Baptists in Texas saw the salvation of the immigrants as their duty. The newcomers had to be led to the light of true Christianity because, if the immigrants did not become Christians, they would damage the life and culture of the state with their infidelity, their espousal of false religions and their heathen ways. God gave to Texas Baptists the responsibility of preaching the Christian faith to the world, and the world had now come to Texas. Those born outside the United States could be helped to embrace the gospel and become part of a real civilization—an American, Christian civilization.

A great deal of research and analysis remains to be done. The role of the growth of railroads needs to be examined as economic booms affected the way Texas Baptists understood the immigrants who came with the iron horses. An entire paper can be written on how and why Baptists related differently to Mexican Americans than to any immigrant European group. And more research needs to be done on the 180-degree turn in rhetoric that began in 1906-1907. This shift occurred at every level of Texas Baptist life, and signaled a move away from “fear” rhetoric to one of loving inclusion when discussing work with immigrants.

During the Gilded Age, Baptists in Texas reacted to and were influenced by their world, and by the world that came to their doorstep. A nativistic fear of the foreign, a belief in the truth of the Baptist understanding of the gospel, and a score of political changes coalesced with the Baptist commitment to evangelize the immigrants. Behind many of the efforts by Baptists on behalf of immigrants stood the specter of anti-Romanism and the fear of Texas culture being supplanted by a foreign one. Truly people of their time, Baptists in Texas at the beginning of the twentieth century, possessed mixed motives as they engaged in work with immigrants. But even with mixed motives, they established churches, trained

ethnic leaders, created connections with the immigrants, and expended money and energy fulfilling what they perceived to be their duty—to evangelize the heathen.

Rosalie Beck
Baylor University
Waco, Texas

NOTES

¹Albert H. Newman, *A Century of Baptist Achievement* (Valley Forge, PA: American Baptist Publishing Society, 1901), 320. Harry Leon McBeth notes that “Texas Baptists had organizational union. Spiritual unity, however, proved more elusive.” [*Texas Baptists: A Sesquicentennial History* (Dallas: Baptistway Press, 1998), 87.]

²Harry Leon McBeth, *Texas Baptists: A Sesquicentennial History* (Dallas: Baptistway Press, 1998), 89.

³Roger Daniels, “Immigration in the Gilded Age: Change or Continuity?” <<http://oah/pubs/magazine/gilded/daniels.html>> (accessed May 19, 2009).

⁴Roger Daniels, “Immigration to the United States in the Twentieth Century.” *The Cambridge Companion to Modern American Culture*. Ed. Christopher Bigsby. Cambridge University Press, 2006. Cambridge Collections Online. Cambridge University Press. (accessed January 11, 2012, DOI:10.1017/CCOL0521841321.004).

⁵Walter I. Fleming, “Immigration to the Southern States,” *Political Science Quarterly* 20 (June, 1905): 277. In 1900, Michigan registered more foreign-born people than all the South did.

⁶Fleming, “Immigration,” 276.

⁷For example, by the 1880s, more than 40 percent of the population of Guadalupe County was German, and German-Americans were “the dominant influence in shaping the county’s cultural identity.” [Vivian E. Smyrl, “Guadalupe County,” *Handbook of Texas Online* <<http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hcg12>> (accessed January 11, 2012).] Immigration agencies reported that in 1902 some 25,000 people migrated to Texas each month. This is a small number for New York, but huge for Texas. [P. M. Murphy, “Report on State Missions,” *Minutes of the Union Baptist Association* (1902): 9.] In 1905, one million of the state’s 3.5 million population were “foreigners,” and of that one million, fewer than 200,000 were Mexican.

⁸Terry G. Jordan, "Germans," *Handbook of Texas Online*, <<http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/png02>> (accessed January 12, 2012).

⁹*Research in the Lonestar State*, "Immigration to Texas," <<http://www.lonestargenealogy.com/courses/texas/migration.html>> (accessed December 30, 2012).

¹⁰Another example of this pattern is the Danish People's Society established in 1894 to bring a group of Danish farmers to Texas. Most immigrants came to create a better life for themselves and their families. In 1860, the Texas census listed only two Greeks. Between 1890 and 1920, thousands came because of economic depression, overpopulation, an unstable government, and wars in Greece. [*Research in the Lonestar State*]

¹¹"May 23, 1871," <<http://www.tshaonline.org/day-by-day/31305>> (accessed January 11, 2012).

¹²Bureau of Immigration, "Texas: A Home for the Emigrant from Everywhere," (Houston, TX: A. C. Gray, 1875), 3-4. The Bureau existed until 1876, when it was deemed no longer needed because of national organizations taking over immigration issues. ["May 23, 1871"]

¹³Bureau, "A Home," 34-35.

¹⁴Jordan, "Germans."

¹⁵Fleming, "Immigration," 281. In 1900, land was still available for settlement in Texas. Texas reported a population of eleven persons to the square mile while Illinois reported eighty-six people to the square mile. Land has always been a draw for immigrants. [Fleming, "Immigration," 278.]

¹⁶Fleming, "Immigration," 292. Railroads materially increased immigration to Texas. The Southern Pacific, Cotton Belt and Houston & Texas Central made deals with shipping companies like the North German Loyd Steamship Line to bring immigrants to Texas. Railroads companies also posted advertising in New York, New Orleans, anywhere immigrants arrived, encouraging them to come to Texas. [Barbara J. Rozek, *Come to Texas: Attracting Immigrants* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2003), 148, 178.]

¹⁷Fleming, "Immigration," 286.

¹⁸Mrs. F. S. Davis, "Address of the President [WMU]," *Proceedings of the Baptist General Convention of Texas* (1909): 180. Texas Baptists had only one person who did this work, a Miss Sievers, because no one else would volunteer, although there were many German-speaking Baptists in Texas.

¹⁹Walter A. Wilcox, "The Distribution of Immigration in the United States," *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 20 (August, 1906): 526.

²⁰Arthur Mosely, "Mexican Work," *Minutes of the El Paso Baptist Association* (1904): 9-10. Interestingly, the most egregious law-breakers who tried to enter the United States illegally through Mexico were

Europeans, Syrians and Chinese workers. [Patrick Ettinger, *Imaginary Lines: Border Enforcement and the Origins of Undocumented Immigration* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2009), 84.] In fact, the first “illegal aliens” who entered Texas in any numbers were Chinese railroad workers denied legal entrance by the 1903 Immigration Act. [59-60] The first “wave” of Mexican immigration began in the early 1900s with the building of railroads from the United States into the Mexican interior; many of the trains went through Texas. Mexican illegal immigration did not become an issue until the Mexican Revolution forced thousands of wealthy and poverty-stricken people to leave Mexico any way they could. [Joshua Grijalva, *A History of Mexican Baptists* (Dallas, TX: Baptist General Convention of Texas, 1982), 16.]

²¹Jeff D. Ray, “Report on State Missions,” *Minutes of the Waco Baptist Association*, 1906, 34; Allan O. Kownslar, *The European Texans* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2004), 5.

²²M. D. Early, “Report of [the] Board of Directors of the Convention,” *Proceedings of the Baptist General Convention of Texas* (1895): 25.

²³In 1909, the state convention labeled immigrants as “Texas Citizens of Other Tongues,” instead of the “foreign population.” An important attitudinal shift took place between 1905 and 1910 that reordered how Texas Baptists spoke of and thought about immigrants. [J. E. Stack and F. H. Morgan, “Report on Citizens of Other Tongues,” *Proceedings of the Baptist General Convention of Texas* (1909): 82.]

²⁴Roger Daniels, “Immigration to the United States in the Twentieth Century.” Cambridge Collections Online. <http://cco.cambridge.org/extract?id=ccolo521841321_CCULO521841321_root> (accessed December 5, 2008).

²⁵Rebecca Edwards, “New Immigrants,” <<http://projects.vassar.edu/1896/immigration.html>> (accessed March 18, 2005).

²⁶Les Wallace, *The Rhetoric of Anti-Catholicism: The American Protective Association, 1887-911* (NY: Garland Publishing, 1990), 120-49.

²⁷Pope Leo XIII scared many Protestant Americans by his assertions in January, 1899 in *Testem Benevolentiae Nostrae* in which he denounced Americanism and called for a much more conservative view of the church and the papacy. [“*Testem Benevolentiae Nostrae*” <<http://ewtn.com/library/PAPALDOC/L13TESTE.HTM>> (accessed January 11, 2012)]

²⁸Z. C. Taylor, “Brazil,” *Foreign Mission Journal* 47 (November, 1896): 229. Later that year, J. B. Cranfill quoted from an article in *The Examiner* calling for “less Romanism” and more “Protestant liberty” to help Cuba break free for Rome. [“Editorial Brevities,” *Baptist Standard*, April 13, 1899, 5.]

²⁹J. L. Mahan, “The Influence of Christian Education,” *Baptist Standard*, January 26, 1899, 2.

³⁰J. B. Gambrell, *et.al.*, “Report on the Foreign Population,” *Proceedings of the Baptist General Convention of Texas* (1908): 30-31. Gambrell wrote, “Let us remember that in saving these foreigners we save our country and ourselves.” [31]

³¹Robert Norris Rabb, “Is Roman Catholicism a Religious Force?” *Baptist Standard*, November 5, 1901, 2. In this article, Rabb denounces Roman Catholicism in the strongest terms. He finally states, “I know no Christian truth which has not suffered at the hands of Roman Catholicism.” He followed this article the next week with an article proclaiming Protestantism as the force of God in the world. [November 12, 1901, 2]

³²Christopher Silene, *et.al.*, “Foreign Population in Texas,” *Proceedings of the Baptist General Convention of Texas* (1904): 73.

³³Silene, “Foreign Population,” 73. The fear of being “heathenized” by the immigrants if Texas Baptists did not “Christianize” the newcomers was a theme that ran through much of the literature on the foreigner population.

³⁴Mrs. J. B. Gambrell, “Report of the Corresponding Secretary [WMU],” *Proceedings of the Baptist General Convention of Texas* (1903): 159. Baptist women saw an opportunity to do primary evangelism with the children and women of an immigrant community, but they had to have access in order to proclaim the gospel.

³⁵“Immigration: Why They Came,” <<http://library.thinkquest.org/J001272F/history/historycultures.htm>> (accessed November 30, 2011).

³⁶Mrs. J. B. Gambrell, “Report of the Corresponding Secretary [WMU],” *Proceedings of the Baptist General Convention of Texas* (1905): 162.

³⁷E. J. Smith, “Report of the Temperance Committee,” *Minutes of the San Antonio Baptist Association* (1893): 5.

³⁸J. B. Cranfill, “Report on Foreign Population,” *Proceedings of the Baptist General Convention of Texas* (1908): 31. While criticizing the Sunday habits of foreigners, Cranfill also noted that “We are all either foreigners or their descendants. . . . [N]early every one of us came from somewhere else.” [30]

³⁹J. M. White, “Report on Foreign Missions, No. 5,” *Minutes of the San Antonio Baptist Association* (1892): 9. C. D. Daniel, a missionary with the Texas Mexicans, put it this way: “Brethren, we must evangelize these foreigners or they will heathenize . . . our children.” [C. D. Daniel, “Report of Committee on Foreign Population on Our State Fields,” *Proceedings of the Baptist General Convention of Texas* (1899): 70.]

⁴⁰Kownslar, *The European Texans*, 8.

⁴¹Early, “Report of the Board of Directors,” 27. Mary Gambrell put the sentiment this way: “If we do not lift them up they will help drag down our own.” [Mrs. J. B. Gambrell, “Report of the Corresponding Secretary [WMU],” *Proceedings of the Baptist General Convention of Texas* (1901): 173.]

⁴²C. C. Slaughter and George W. Truett, “Annual Report of Board of Directors of the Baptist General Convention of Texas,” *Proceedings of the Baptist General Convention of Texas* (1900): 22.

⁴³Slaughter and Truett, “Annual Report,” 23. Many Texas Baptists did not accept Slaughter’s and Truett’s challenge. In 1903, T. A. Moore wrote that immigrants come to Texas “already poisoned with false religion;” they come with strong prejudices against “our religion and our customs;” and they isolate themselves from English-Speaking people. [T. A. Moore, *et.al.*, “Report on Foreign Population,” *Proceedings of the Baptist General Convention of Texas* (1903): 67.]

⁴⁴Early, “Report of Board of Directors,” 25. At the end of this section Early added that intermarriage with immigrants will occur, and that future Texas citizens will have the mixed blood of “Americans, Germans, Swedes and Bohemians.” It isn’t clear if he considered this coming reality a “good” thing.

WE ARE FAMILY? TEXAS BAPTISTS AND IMMIGRATION

A Response Paper to Texas Baptist Responses to the New Texans in the Mid-Nineteenth Century and What about the Foreigners? Texas Baptists and Immigration, 1890-1910

“Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free.” These immortal words from Emma Lazarus’ sonnet engraved on the base of Statue of Liberty’s pedestal have come to represent the haven that the United States has been throughout the decades to “the wretched refuse of [the] teeming shores” of other continents. Most objective historians will recognize, however, that the words of the poem have often been more symbolic and hopeful than real. While certainly the United States has served as a land of opportunity due to events like westward expansion and the Industrial Revolution, and historically the United States has offered both economic opportunities and freedoms not available in other lands, as Josh Stephens and Rosalie Beck aptly illustrate with their papers, in reality the response of many Americans to immigrants has often been more mixed than welcoming.

In Josh Stephens’ paper, he accurately portrays the response of Texans, including Texas Baptists, to the influx of German immigrants in the mid-nineteenth century. Stephens is certainly correct to cast the response of Texans in the context of what was going on elsewhere in the United States at the same time period. An interesting comparison to make from this time period is to contrast the generally favorable response that Germans received in Central Texas with the hostility those primarily

Irish-Catholic immigrants experienced in the northeastern part of the United States. It is also a reasonable and verifiable account to insist that there were primarily two reasons for the difference. As both Josh Stephens and Rosalie Beck suggest, the fact that many Texans were recent immigrants themselves probably did serve to make them more amenable to immigrants in both the 1850s and in the 1870s. As demonstrated in both papers, the desire for Germans, and later others, to fill up the empty spaces of Texas and the relative isolation of many of these earliest communities actually compelled Texans to encourage settlement by European immigrants. Another possible factor, not mentioned by Stephens, was the desire among Texans for immigrants in Central Texas as settlers on the frontier to serve as a buffer against hostile Native Americans, especially the Comanches who were the bane of the existence for Central Texas settlers and for both the Texas Republic and the Texas state government in the 1840s and following. Texas historian T. R. Fehrenbach records that in 1849 alone, hostile Native American tribes killed or captured more than two hundred Texans. Fehrenbach also records that far-ranging Comanche raiders still killed people on the outskirts of Austin when Texas relocated the state capital there in 1850.¹ German immigrants settling on the frontier in the hill country during such time would not have been unwelcome as they would have served as a bulwark against such raids.

Stephens is also correct to argue that anti-Catholicism motivated much of the Nativist sentiment directed against Irish immigrants in the Northeast. Anti-Catholicism played a key role in the development of the American (Know-Nothing) Party and the violence perpetuated against Catholics in places like Boston in the 1840s. In the antebellum period, Protestant Americans held an abiding fear of Catholics and dreaded the possibility of their growing influence in American politics.² Stephens' citation of the xenophobic and anti-Catholic work of Samuel Morse is a representative example of that sentiment. Stephens is further correct to posit that Texans welcomed

German immigrants more warmly because the Germans were largely irreligious or if religious, mostly Protestant. One needs to remember also, however, that some German immigrants during this time period were Roman Catholic. Stephens' information on the establishment of the German Studies program at Baylor University, and the preparation of missionaries for work among the Germans and the Baptist State Convention's appointment of Frank Kiefer as a missionary is fascinating and warrants more study.

As important as anti-Catholicism was, however, the efforts of Baylor University and Frank Kiefer might suggest that there were two additional factors in the differing attitudes of Texans and Texas Baptists towards German immigrants as opposed to the reception received by Irish Catholics in the Northeast. One factor might be that German immigrants were seen as ethnically similar to the largely Anglo-Saxon settlers who made up the ruling class in Antebellum Texas. As such, they may have been viewed as more receptive to the message proclaimed by Texas Baptists. Not only might religion have been a factor but also ethnicity as well. Many Americans of British descent, in both the North and the South, held a strong bias against the Irish as being lazy, disease-ridden, illiterate, and inferior. German immigrants were similar to the majority of Texans ethnically, but they were largely viewed as clean, educated, and industrious. An additional factor would certainly be that the Irish were viewed in the cities of the East as competitors for scarce jobs. Most Germans were farmers who migrated into Texas or states in the Midwest like Missouri where adequate farmland was readily accessible and thus not viewed as job competition. At the same time, it is important to remember that there was anti-German sentiment in the East also. The ridicule that some German-American soldiers faced in the Union army in the Civil War generated by ethnic prejudice would indicate that there was much more to American prejudice than simply racism as exemplified by prejudice directed against African Americans or religious fervor directed against Catholics.

Likewise, Rosalie Beck's paper "What about the Foreigners? Texas Baptists and Immigration, 1890-1910" demonstrates how the attitudes of Texans in general and Texas Baptists specifically shifted during this time period. Beck illustrates that in the 1870s, Texas still aggressively sought ambitious immigrants.

Without doubt the shift in perception was attributable due to the explosion of immigration that occurred in the last decades of the nineteenth and first decade of the twentieth century. Beck suggests that the shift occurred because of the extreme differences in these newer immigrants. Not only were there religious differences but also there were racial and ethnic prejudices. The citations from both M. D. Early and from Mary Gambrell's corresponding secretary report for the Women's Missionary Union in 1905 regarding the Asian immigrants and their bringing "the destructive principle of license" accurately portrays the concerns that many Texas Baptists, and indeed Southern Baptists more generally, held regarding the influx of immigrants. Gambrell's statements represented attitudes consistent with a report issued in 1890 by a Southern Baptist Convention "Committee on Missions to Foreign Population." The report stated,

Rationalists and Socialists and Anarchists, and other heathens, who pollute by mere contact of association are pouring into our Southland from materialistic Europe by thousands every year; Asiatic Budhism [*sic*] already numbers its swarms of blinded votaries in the United States and its hundreds in the South. . . . The Home [Mission] Board cannot ignore the large foreign element within our territory, in Maryland, Missouri, Louisiana, Texas, and elsewhere.³

The report cautioned Southern Baptists of the necessity to keep the spiritual "fountain" of the South pure from "the turbid streams of corruption pouring into it from Europe and Asia" by counteracting the "poisonous filth" brought in by immigrants with the work of the SBC's Home Mission Board. These Southern Baptists argued that "Agnosticism, Materialism, Infidelism in general and in particular, modern

Judaism, Budhism, [*sic*] and every form of spiritual error must be stamped out here.” They feared that the influx of large bodies of “foreign atheists and infidels” would “contaminate” Americans and recommended that since older immigrants often were less likely to be open to evangelism, Southern Baptists concentrate on the second-generation immigrant children. Like Gambrell, the Home Mission Board recognized the tendency of immigrants to isolate themselves into ethnic enclaves. While the earlier tendency of German immigrants to isolate themselves in enclaves had not been feared in earlier decades, by the 1890s, these immigrant enclaves were viewed with apprehension and with the recognition that the enclaves made it difficult for Baptists to do their mission work. The Home Mission Board’s solution, like that later recommended by Gambrell, was “to place missionaries in the midst of those teeming communities, seething in wickedness and reeking with sin.”⁴

Beck also accurately outlines the relationship of Texas Baptist concerns about the connection between immigration and alcohol consumption. It is no coincidence that as immigration continued to grow in both Texas and the United States, so did concerns among Baptists and other evangelicals regarding the sale and consumption of alcoholic beverages. While the Temperance Movement began in the aftermath of the Second Great Awakening, it did not gain a large following until after the Civil War, and it did not become a movement for full-fledged prohibition until later in the century. One has to wonder how much the influx of immigrants in the latter nineteenth century contributed to this development. Certainly, as Joe Coker has demonstrated in his book, *Liquor in the Land of the Lost Cause*, the Prohibition Movement had definite connections to race and social control. The same might be said regarding the connection between immigration and social control.⁵ Much in the same way that southern whites feared African Americans, during this same time period, the dominant Anglo-Saxon Protestant culture feared the growing non-Anglo-Saxon and non-Protestant immigrant population.

The last statement leads to a question that might be asked of both authors of these papers and as food for further thought. While it is certain that many Texas Baptists, both those of the late antebellum period and those at the turn of the twentieth century, were genuinely motivated by a sincere desire to reach immigrants with their faith, one has to wonder how much of that desire was created by a fear of the changes taking place in their midst and the influx of people they would have considered “not like us.” How much of Texas Baptists’ evangelism was motivated by a desire to control these new immigrants? Would it be fair to say that in some cases it might have been both a desire to see these immigrants embrace a Baptist form of faith and a desire to control them? How much of any culture’s desire to assimilate newcomers is motivated by a sincere concern for the well-being of those newcomers, and how much is motivated by efforts towards social control? Regardless of the answers to those questions, both papers remind us that anti-immigration prejudice is not just a twentieth or twenty-first century phenomena, and there is room for additional study in the reaction of Texas Baptist and other Texas evangelicals and their responses to immigration from the mid-nineteenth century up to the current time period.

Michael E. Williams, Sr.
Dallas Baptist University
Dallas, Texas

NOTES

¹T. R. Fehrenbach, *A History of Texas and the Texans* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1968), 276, 294.

²Mark A. Noll, *A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1992), 208-10.

³Annual, SBC, 1890, 16.

⁴Ibid. See also, Michael E. Williams, Sr., *Isaac Taylor Tichenor: The Creation of the Baptist New South* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2005), 121-24.

⁵Joe L. Coker, *Liquor in the Land of the Lost Cause: Southern White Evangelicals and the Prohibition Movement* (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 2007), 14-25, 123ff.

LEADERSHIP IN THE YOUTH-LED REVIVAL MOVEMENT

Introduction: Revival Leadership

This paper examines revival leadership among Baptists in the South during the fifteen years following World War II in what is termed the youth-led revival movement. This revival movement began at Baylor University in 1945 and experienced several stages of development. It began as a university revival for Baylor students and Waco youth, with no plans for anything larger to occur.¹ But revival organizers soon added the format of city-wide campaigns in major cities drawing audiences of up to 10,000 people. Revival leaders then adapted the youth-led revival format to a grass roots movement of youth revivals conducted in local Baptist churches. A unique feature of these revivals was the youth of the preachers. Most of them were still in college. Their leadership at each of these stages was vital. Adult advisors identified potential leaders, chiefly based on the speaking skills they had demonstrated before student audiences. The youth-led revivals flourished for about fifteen years, between 1945 and 1960. Revival leaders formed in this era found many ways to serve the church following their revival experience, but the youth revival leadership experience remained formative for many of them. The revival provided a foundation for the activity of notable Baptist leaders of their generation.² This study focuses on leadership as a key component of the revivals. The religious practice at Baylor and the active participation of the Baptist Student Union (B.S.U.) created a context conducive to forming preachers. Moreover, examination of the experiences of the young revival leaders

suggests that most of them had already had some experience of leadership. The revival legacies are numerous, but the legacy of leadership shows most clearly in the successful careers pursued by the former “young preacher boys.” Analysis of contributing factors to the revivals’ success further points to the significance of the role of leadership in this story. I will proceed by describing the revivals, the training of its preachers, the variety of careers of these notable Baptist leaders, and suggesting an assessment of leadership as a contributing cause of the success of the revivals.

Youth-Led Revivals

Revivals, beginning with the Great Awakening in the eighteenth century, have been formative in American Christianity.³ Baptists have benefitted enormously from the revival tradition, especially in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, as the studies of William McLoughlin and Nathan Hatch have demonstrated.⁴ Revivals have been a key to Baptists’ tremendous growth, a vital component of their worship, and an essential key factor in modern Baptist identity. Revivals on university campuses are common in American history, but, according to Howard Butt, what was unusual in the movement that began at Baylor was that young college students took on the most prominent roles as preachers and also took on responsibility for organizing the events.⁵ Since college students preached at these revivals, and the sermons were often designed primarily with the young in mind, organizers called them “youth-led revivals” or “youth revivals.”⁶ Ralph Langley recalled that his B.S.U. director in North Carolina, Dick Haverton, told him that college students who were a year or two older could have a powerful influence on underclassmen and on high school students. Langley thought that implementing this insight was “one of the ingenious contributions of the youth revival movement.”⁷ The revival audience was actually a mix of older

and younger hearers. Ralph Langley observed, “We were surprised and pleased to see how many adults responded to a young person’s voice for Christ.”⁸ The original Monday through Saturday evening services featured congregational singing and testimonies, solos, and twenty to twenty-five minute sermons by six different students.⁹ Dick Baker recalled that the young preachers chose sensational titles such as “Up Jumped the Devil” or “Dying on Third” in order to create interest in the sermon.¹⁰ The original purpose of the revivals was spiritual renewal. BO Baker recalled that “there were many conversions, but I don’t think that was the main thrust of the revivals. Instead, they produced meaningful rededications and renewed confidence in their church.”¹¹ The ratio of decisions was about four rededications to each new profession of faith.¹²

Many historians have observed that conditions for religious renewal in the United States were very favorable following World War II. The economy grew rapidly and work was plentiful. Congress passed a G.I. Bill that encouraged many soldiers to complete university training, thereby qualifying them for much better jobs. The country was ready to focus on life at home. Suburbs sprang up to house families. The churches also benefitted through rapid growth in membership, increased financial gifts, and a boom in church building. The revival coincided with the beginnings of Billy Graham’s success and renown in evangelism. Observers, in trying to explain the revival, often refer to “the time” or a “climate of opinion.”¹³ But the revivals did not occur merely because of a favorable “spirit of the times.” Specific conditions and events helped set things in motion for the youth revivals.

Baylor University is a Baptist school, and religious traditions are a part of the Baylor experience. Two weekly traditions especially influential in the consciousness of students during this era were the Baylor Religious Hour (BRH) and Friday Night Missions. The Baylor Religious Hour was a campus worship service held every Wednesday

evening. BRH was a popular place to take a date.¹⁴ Therefore, the service had a powerful social as well as spiritual drawing power. BO Baker recalled the impressive numbers the event drew: “Great numbers, just hundreds and hundreds of students [met in Waco Hall].”¹⁵ The BRH choir supported these weekly services.¹⁶

Another significant religious institution for Baylor students was Friday Night Missions. Students scattered out among several meeting sites in the Waco community each Friday night to conduct teaching and preaching services for the children who lived near the campus, many of whom were poor African Americans. This practice provided an important outlet for “hands on” service to others: it was a local mission project. In addition, Friday Night Missions provided a training ground for young preachers.¹⁷ Jack Robinson served as a mission pastor for two years, and Charles Wellborn recalled that “Jack [Robinson] had me preach at Ninth Street Mission.” Within two months, Wellborn was preaching in Dallas to a crowd estimated at 10,000 people.¹⁸ Long before they entered seminary, many students had practiced preaching at these venues. BO Baker, in fact, believed that the revivals “came out of the missions at Baylor.”¹⁹ Dick Baker said, because he served a mission for Sunday services as well as Friday services, that he was actually more involved in a mission church than he was in one of the larger churches of Waco.²⁰

A third Baylor religious tradition was an annual pre-school retreat held at Latham Springs, a Baptist encampment about twenty miles from Waco. The aim of the retreat was spiritual orientation for Baylor freshmen. According to Bruce McIver, during the summer of 1944, student leaders decided to invite all Baylor students to the two-day retreat. Instead of the usual twenty-five to thirty student B.S.U. leaders who normally attended the retreats, 400 students showed up.²¹ Two students, M. D. Oates, a future missionary, and Reiji Hoshizaki, a Japanese American, had attended Youth for Christ rallies in

Chicago during the summer. They described their dream of bringing a mass religious rally to Baylor.²² Inspired by this report, the retreat leaders discussed how to bring a similar event to the Waco campus and city. They had the full support of Bob Denny, the B.S.U. director.²³ Dick Baker noted, “We did have strong youth programs, but we had not seen . . . big rallies such as the Chicago meeting attended by Oates and Hoshizaki.”²⁴

All of these formative events for the revival—BRH, Friday Night Missions, and the pre-school retreat—were products of the Baylor B.S.U. This student organization provided day-by-day institutional structure for campus religious events and supported the revival initiative. W. F. Howard, director of the Department of Student Work for the Baptist General Convention of Texas, recalled, “All the way through it [the youth revival movement] was a project of the Baptist Student Union,”²⁵ and Buckner Fanning reminisced, “I almost felt like all of Baylor was in the B.S.U.”²⁶ Participants credit Reiji Hoshizaki with planting the seed to promote revival on a massive scale.

The student leaders of the retreat began to organize for the revival. They stimulated discussion about religious renewal for Baylor and Waco, especially by organizing a sustained program of prayer for the event. The prayer meetings began small but, they eventually involved hundreds of participants. Leaders later commonly attributed the revivals to the work of God, which they related to these prayer meetings.²⁷ The evening prayer meetings began on campus at first but moved to Seventh and James Baptist Church, adjoining the campus, to accommodate large crowds. Women held separate prayer meetings in their dorms. Students gave much energy to organization and planned a week-long revival meeting for April 16-21, 1945. During that week, Baylor students preached at the services in a large tent off campus in downtown Waco.²⁸ Some 3,000 people attended the meeting, and 281 made public commitments.²⁹ That summer the United States dropped the

atomic bombs that ended the war with Japan, and General Douglas MacArthur called for 1,000 missionaries to take the gospel to Japan.³⁰ Katy Stokes, assistant in the B.S.U. office, recalled the “urgency they felt to send missionaries to Japan.”³¹

During the next school year, the students prepared again for revival, by holding a sustained prayer meeting for ninety consecutive days. They scheduled the revival meeting for the week of April 1, 1946. The theme adopted by the students was the prayer to “use me” or “make us usable.”³² The local B.S.U. assisted in the organizing efforts through electing students to head work on publicity, finance, and planning the revival services. Hundreds of young men and women were involved in the preparation. W. F. Howard, the state director, had been skeptical of the idea at first, but he was soon persuaded that the revivals would be effective.³³ He attended the final service when 4,000 people attended; there 500 people made decisions during the week.³⁴ Other Baylor revivals followed in subsequent years, but many observers considered this one the most successful because of its fresh format, its overall impact in numbers of decisions and because of the conversion of Charles Wellborn, acknowledged by many of the students as the most gifted mind and preacher of them all.³⁵

Pastors and denominational leaders were so impressed with the results of the meeting that they invited the leaders to bring the revival to the largest cities of Texas. The students responded by planning events for Houston, Fort Worth, and Dallas. In Dallas’ Cole Park, the attendance topped 10,000. The students received invitations to conduct similar meetings across the South—in Birmingham, Knoxville, Nashville, and also in Honolulu. Students from the South gathered at Ridgecrest in June, 1946, where they learned about the Texas revivals. This was the key link that spread the idea to other states.³⁶

Soon pastors of local churches sought to schedule young preachers to conduct revivals for them, often scheduling one each year. The Texas B.S.U. organized teams of four—two preachers, a musician, and a leader, usually a woman, who

conducted after-church seminars and fellowships.³⁷ The revival had taken three distinct forms: the campus revival, large city revivals, and finally the local church revivals. They all depended on young people with charisma. According to McIver, the key to the selection of these college students was “the ability to lead.”³⁸ The records for the years 1946 to 1962 report that 1,560 revivals were booked through the Texas Baptist Department of Student Work (an average of about 92 per year). Those records note 54,916 public Christian commitments, 10,024 of which were professions of faith, and 3,681 were statements of commitment to some form of Christian ministry.³⁹ These records were for Texas only and did not count revivals not supervised by Howard’s office.⁴⁰

The success of the revivals was remarkable. McIver observed that the newspaper and radio media were interested because this was a fresh story; it was something new.⁴¹ He thought the young preachers were treated like celebrities, and yet people were “not coming to hear us because we were great preachers.”⁴² But Robinson thought that because the speakers felt they had had “a bona fide Christian experience,” they were able to communicate genuine religious conviction to others.⁴³ BO Baker also observed that once the movement was established, it carried success along with it. Describing one church revival, he recalled, “It was a pretty good meeting. It was under the thrust of this [youth revival] movement, so it didn’t have to be great because the movement carried it. You couldn’t do anything wrong.”⁴⁴ Butt spoke of the “momentum” the revival generated.⁴⁵ People came expecting results, and those expectations helped produce commitments. Moreover, the strategy of youth-led revivals worked not only throughout Texas but also across the South where Baptists shared a revival culture. Here evangelism had a new face. The young delivered the message, and it produced results. Many people made decisions and, as Buckner Fanning put it, “stayed with [them] through the years . . . because it really did [meet] a need in people’s lives.”⁴⁶

Leadership Training for the Revivals

The young preachers and leaders of the revivals displayed appropriate humility in recounting their experiences. They were amazed that nineteen to twenty-one year old untutored youths could be granted the opportunities and the responses that they enjoyed.⁴⁷ This role, they thought, should have been for seasoned, effective preachers, not kids who had only one or two sermons to preach.⁴⁸

In their interviews, the revival preachers expressed gratitude to their audiences because they had reassurance that people were praying for them. This included friends their own age, many of whom had spent hours in prayer in the months leading to the week of revival. The list also included supportive adults, identifying Bob Denny and W. J. Wimpee, Baylor B.S.U. directors, and W. F. Howard, director of the Department of Student Work for the Baptist General Convention of Texas. The youth revival leaders also remembered Waco pastors and Baylor Religion Department faculty who offered support.

In later interviews the student leaders frequently recalled the humor generated by the movement; funny incidents, during the sermons and in worship services, and especially pranks they played on each other, became legendary. For many, the humor relieved stress. Butt and Robinson also suggested a theological or psychological rationale. They said that they worried that the fame from success might create a type of idolatry of the revivals and for notoriety since so much attention was focused on the young men. They contended that the practical jokes on each other undermined this temptation.⁴⁹

Bruce McIver, who wrote a personal history of the revivals, drew a picture of fellow student preachers without any training who were terribly frightened, but who nevertheless succeeded beyond their wildest dreams. He described his own experience as being weak at the knees and having to have help getting to the pulpit.⁵⁰ Likewise, Butt's fear of failure almost immobilized him.⁵¹ Robinson said he was "just so scared" when he had

to preach at Cole Park in Dallas.⁵² The youthful preachers remembered themselves as neophytes without sermon training and with little preaching experience. In spite of their fear of failure, they nevertheless, enjoyed astounding success in the revivals.

The young preachers gave God the credit for the success of the revivals.⁵³ This view surfaces again and again in oral history memoirs made during the 1980s, a generation later. The young preachers' greatest fear was the fear of failure, but they did not fail. As they saw it, God must have been involved. They asked, "How else can you explain successful revival services led by inexperienced youth?"⁵⁴ For this reason, the young leaders often used the term "miracle" or cited the supernatural power of prayer as the reason for success. But there was also a human side to this story.

In fact, it may be argued that these young people were prepared for the level of leadership they exercised. Advertisements for the revival emphasized the accomplishments of the young leaders.⁵⁵ McIver and Robinson were leaders in their high schools. Fellow students recognized their leadership skill at Baylor, where they both were elected president of the B.S.U. Both were already committed to ministry and had, in fact, come to Baylor because the school had developed a reputation for producing effective preachers.⁵⁶

The leaders already had some preaching experience. McIver preached during his student days at Mars Hill College and Baylor. Butt had preached at Friday Night Mission gatherings. Moreover, he said that he had been involved in debate.⁵⁷ Ralph Langley had experienced a call to preach at age thirteen, and had already been engaged in evangelistic meetings throughout the summer of 1944, before the Baylor revivals began.⁵⁸ Because of his experience, he was perhaps more at home in the pulpit than most of the speakers. Howard declared that Langley could "turn the youth on."⁵⁹ Robinson recalled that all of the young preachers had preached before.⁶⁰ Their adult B.S.U. leaders selected the best communicators to preach.

They were chosen because they already displayed charisma as preachers.

BO Baker recalled that his mother was a “driving force,” and “she tried hard to put into Dick and me much of her ambition. I think she did,” he concluded.⁶¹ Determination to succeed is one more factor in the formation and success of some of these young students. Baker also understood that the explanation for his ability to lead a worship service derived from his high school debate experience. He recalled:

I wanted to play ball, but I was asked to join a debate team. I had never done that, and yet I liked it. It was fun for me and that was the start of my preaching and I didn't know it. But right there when I started debating, I was on my feet for the first time, ... I was trying to move people toward a decision for the first time, not knowing that I would spend twenty years in evangelism trying to move people. And yet it started there in that ... debate group.⁶²

Thus, BO Baker had already studied and practiced effective public speaking through debating in high school.

Baker's recounting of his musical instruction provides yet another example of training for leadership of the movement. He took violin lessons as a youth, entered North Texas as a music major and took on music leadership responsibilities in the large First Baptist Church of Denton.⁶³ He transferred to Baylor and led congregational singing for the revival movement. The unanimous consensus was that he was the most effective leader of congregational singing in the revival.⁶⁴ In short, the leaders, although young, had already developed skills that enabled them to lead. Dick Baker reported that because the church had no music director, he led singing in his home church by the time he was a junior in high school. He led music in youth revivals in the summer of 1943 and attended meetings at Ridgecrest and B.S.U. conventions while still a high school student. He recalled that “all of this in my early years just opened the doors to religious work.”⁶⁵ These experiences occurred before the revivals began.

The role of college and university Baptist Student unions was instrumental in this training process. It was a strong and visible religious presence on campus. Moreover, the B.S.U. offered students innumerable opportunities for service. A key question in the youth revival story centered around who made the selection of the revival preachers. The actual process of speaker selection for the first revivals was vague in the minds of the interviewees.⁶⁶ Nevertheless, someone or some group of people decided which six among all the Baylor students should be selected for the task. Judging from the remarks of Howard, B.S.U. directors took much of this responsibility.⁶⁷ The Baylor B.S.U. leader at the start of the revival was Bob Denny, who cultivated a close relationship with future revival speakers and doubtless had much input in speaker selection.⁶⁸ Indicators of leadership emerged throughout the year in various B.S.U. activities such as organizing the prayer meetings, leading devotions, preaching opportunities, and so forth. Denny also had ample opportunity to judge student effectiveness in speaking at BRH and Friday Night Missions.⁶⁹ The movement grew so rapidly that it needed experienced organizational support and direction.

After a few years, most of the revivals were conducted in the local churches. Howard soon took on the task of selecting youth revival teams.⁷⁰ The student leadership changed constantly.⁷¹ Howard and his staff interviewed and screened prospective revival teams of four members, worked out summer-long schedules for numerous revival teams, armed them with an instruction book of dos and don'ts regarding their behavior, and provided brochures to churches, which outlined suggested committees, steps in preparation, the church's responsibility, and the youth team's responsibilities.⁷² The leading topic of the seminars appears to have been questions and answers relating to understanding God's will, dating, and sex. The youth revival teams invigorated countless Baptist churches in the late 1940s and the 1950s. The entire experience was set in motion with one meeting on a university campus.⁷³

Legacies of Baptist Leadership

The youth revival movement produced a remarkable legacy of Baptist leaders. Some participants stayed in the background as organizers, fund raisers, prayer meeting organizers, and so forth. The revival services were all led by young men who continued to use their communication skills. They succeeded early, and the majority of them remained pastors. Some took different paths. The later experiences of the young revival leaders show that they became significant leaders in at least five different religious professions.

Bruce McIver made his way to Baylor from North Carolina in 1944 and preached in the revivals of 1945 and 1946. He had fond memories of these events, and eventually wrote *Riding the Wind of God*, his own personal account of the youth revival movement. His revival sermon, “One Thing Lacking,” based on the story of the rich young ruler (Mark 10: 17-22), was a call to complete commitment.⁷⁴ He described the young man as seemingly having everything, yet lacking one thing. So what was lacking? McIver concluded that the young man clung to the world, but Christianity demands a complete surrender to God. This is a simple but effective sermon, shaped by contrasting two visions of life, and employing urgent language designed to persuade hearers to choose a life of full commitment to Christ.

McIver began work for the B.S.U. as a youth evangelist in 1949, and, in 1956, he went to work for Howard, coordinating the youth-led revival program in Texas for two and one-half years. During this time he interviewed, screened, and trained youth leaders and scheduled revival meetings with churches. In his view, the quality of revival leadership was clearly vital to the success of the movement.⁷⁵ McIver served thereafter as pastor of Wilshire Baptist Church in Dallas, Texas for thirty years. During his pastorate, the church flourished. The church remodeled its entire physical plant in 1983, and, by 1984, it enjoyed a membership of 3,000 members.⁷⁶

Remaining active in Baptist denominational life during his long pastorate, McIver reflected on the personal benefits he derived from the revivals. He reported that the revivals had given him opportunity to preach in places a young person otherwise never would have preached; he had enjoyed a life-long esprit de corps among friends formed while leading revivals; he had seen a miracle of hundreds of commitments to Christ and many others to vocational ministry, which strengthened the church; and the experience gave him contact with pastors who encouraged him, and from whom he learned what the pastorate was all about.⁷⁷ He had experienced American evangelism first hand. But he also gained many of the skills to lead a congregation successfully as a pastor for thirty years. One key dynamic that energized him throughout his ministry was his memory of the revivals.

Other youth revival leaders sustained a high profile as preachers throughout their careers, including Jess Moody (Shepherd of the Hills Church, Van Nuys, California), Jackie Robinson (First Baptist Church, Augusta, Georgia), Warren Hultgren (First Baptist Church, Tulsa, Oklahoma), Ralph Langley (First Baptist Church, Huntsville, Alabama), and Cecil Sherman (First Baptist Church, Asheville, North Carolina). Many other student preachers who followed these “first wavers” also achieved success as leaders of congregations.

Closely related to the successful pulpit ministers were the evangelists who moved from place to place, seeking to bring renewal to churches. BO Baker’s life well represents this dimension of service. Baker was gifted in athletics in high school, and he is quick to say he enjoyed the recognition it brought to him:⁷⁸ “football was competitive, and I’ve always liked competition. I’ve always wanted to win. I’m very sure it had an influence on my ministry.”⁷⁹ Baker attributed much to the influence of the B.S.U., to Ridgecrest, and to Baylor in shaping his life.⁸⁰ Baker was slightly older than most of the students, and he participated in both the 1945 and the 1946 revivals.⁸¹

After serving Birchman Avenue Baptist Church in Fort Worth for ten years, from 1947 to 1957, Baker and his brother, Dick, decided to devote their energies to evangelism. Dick was an exceptionally gifted musician. He played the piano, sang solos, and conveyed a sense of genuine and passionate commitment through his manner of singing. He wrote and often sang a popular chorus, "Longing for Jesus," and led congregational singing, including such revival favorites as "He Lives" and "I'd Rather Have Jesus."⁸² BO and Dick led revivals throughout the United States and in Asia, Latin America, and Europe. In 1973, BO Baker left evangelism to become pastor of the Plymouth Park Baptist Church in Irving, Texas, where he remained until his retirement from ministry in 1988. He and Dick touched the lives of a vast number of people as a revival team; one seldom thinks of one without the other. Additionally, Buckner Fanning served as an evangelist for ten years before becoming the longtime pastor of Trinity Baptist Church in San Antonio, and Angel Martinez had a notable career as an evangelist.⁸³

Howard Butt was yet another effective speaker in the youth revivals. He struggled with his life vocation and, in the end, decided on remaining a layman and leading American laity to a fuller Christian purpose. His is a distinctive contribution to Baptist life. Butt's family established a highly successful grocery business in Texas, and Howard worked in it for five years, from 1948 to 1953, while he continued to preach revivals. He did not feel called to ordination for pastoral ministry but believed that he was called to use his life in service.⁸⁴ He said that he needed to clarify his own identity and find a way to achieve a balance between competing desires of humility and significance.⁸⁵ Butt believed that he was called to lay leadership as much as any minister was called to preach.⁸⁶

The Layman's Leadership Institute at Southern Seminary influenced his thinking as did his visit to study the German Lay Academies.⁸⁷ The result was the establishment in 1967 of Laity Lodge in the Texas Hill Country. His goal was to focus

on one to one relationships and to nurture people to maturity in Christian faith and practice.⁸⁸ He had shared in the limelight of what he described in a revealing phrase as “that incandescent moment.”⁸⁹ Now he wanted to shift from the masses to the individual. He thought the Baptist emphasis on the priesthood of the believers offered theological support to his venture.⁹⁰ The tough task of the vast majority of Christians, he believed, was to live out the Christian life in the secular world, and he envisioned devoting his ministry to assisting laity. The first director of Laity Lodge was Keith Miller, whose talks there were the basis for a best seller, *The Taste of New Wine*.⁹¹ Laity Lodge is a retreat center that can comfortably accommodate sixty to seventy people and is still in active use.⁹² These facilities are used regularly for retreats and conferences. When asked about the origins of the Laity Movement, Butt declared that its source was the youth revivals and the sense of total religious commitment they embodied.⁹³

Some revival leaders became academics. Charles Wellborn, another key figure in the revival movement, was a little older than the other youth revival preachers. He was a superb debater in high school and twice won national championships for Baylor. He left Baylor for military service and returned after the war to finish his degree. He taught political science and was accepted to Harvard Law School for the fall of 1946.⁹⁴ However, he heard about the revival at chapel services and was deeply impressed with Jack Robinson’s sincerity. He began to attend the Friday Night Missions and observed how students devoted themselves to the poor. He said that at this point in his life he was not hostile to religion, just indifferent.⁹⁵ He went to the revival prayer meetings and experienced his own conversion in the basement of Seventh and James Baptist Church during the week before the revival. During the revival, he gave his testimony about his conversion, which “was a total reorientation of [his] values” and “gave [him] driving purpose.”⁹⁶ The inner circle of campus leaders included him immediately, and he was one of the regular preachers of

the citywide campaigns that occupied his summer of 1946. He abandoned his plan for law school and instead attended seminary. Because of his extraordinary speaking skills he preached for “The Baptist Hour” for three years, served as pastor of Seventh and James Baptist Church for ten years, and then went to Duke University where he earned a Ph.D. in Religion, majoring in ethics.⁹⁷ He was a professor for the remainder of his career, teaching at Florida State University and serving as director of its London center. Yandall Woodfin and others influenced by the revival also served as professors. Jess Moody was the founder of Palm Beach Atlantic College, and Ralph Phelps taught at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and later became president of Ouachita Baptist University.

A fifth area of revival influence was missions. The foreign missionary enterprise held a deep fascination for Baptists, and the revivals nurtured future missionaries. Students who committed their lives to missions were not among the original notable pulpiteers. Nevertheless they played significant roles. M. D. Oates and Reiji Hoshizaki were the two students who had the idea for the revival. Oates was very active in planning the revival. In broken English, Hoshizaki gave his testimony in downtown Waco. The country was at war with Japan, and he suffered much verbal abuse as he witnessed. Both men spent their lives in foreign missionary service. Keith Parks was active in B.S.U. work at North Texas State.⁹⁸ He became a leader in the youth revival movement, served as a missionary in Indonesia, eventually led the Southern Baptist Convention Foreign Mission Board, and later led the global mission efforts of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. Dwight Baker, Bill Cody, Bill O’Brien, Justice Anderson, and others deeply influenced by revival also devoted their lives to foreign missions.

The categories of service pursued by youth revival preachers could easily be extended. Foy Valentine provided leadership for the Christian Life Commission, which examined ethical issues

and sought to provide education and guidance for the churches on questions of ethical behavior. Jimmy Allen had a unique opportunity for promoting Christian communication when he served as head of the Radio and Television Commission and president of the Southern Baptist Convention. Both men had experienced leadership opportunities in the youth revivals.

In selecting youth revival leaders, Howard indicated that he was looking for someone with “tremendous ability to express himself, to articulate and share. He had [to have] of course, the fervor and the spirit and the excitement that could turn youth on.”⁹⁹ Many students had religious fervor, but the bottom line for their selection to lead in the youth revivals was their speaking ability. Students who proved effective in the student revivals continued to benefit from their rhetorical skills. This ability was a key factor in their vocational success and in their achievements as leaders in the denomination.

Past and Future: Causes and Possibilities

The legacies of the youth revival were numerous. They were part of the most expansive decade of church growth of the last century. They brought new converts into the churches. They inspired many young people to choose some form of ministry as a profession. They helped teen-age youth participate in churches through annual youth revivals and annual youth nights in which the local young people led the services of worship. According to W. F. Howard, the Honolulu Crusade prompted the start of student summer missions.¹⁰⁰ Church growth, in turn, created a growing demand for youth ministers and activity buildings in larger churches.¹⁰¹ The revival leaders repeatedly reported that throughout their lives people told them about being at the revival services and being influenced by them. Howard said that the flow of its influence “has never ceased.”¹⁰²

One of the most frequently asked questions about the event is the question of explanation. Can this revival be successfully

analyzed? Several causes for the rise of the revivals have been advanced. One notion is that the immediate post-war period produced a serious mood among students. This argument suggested that students were aware that many lives had been lost in the war. These students embraced the notion that they had an opportunity to build a better world.¹⁰³ A closely related argument was that some of the leaders of this movement were veterans and were older, giving them more maturity than the typical university freshmen. Butt recalled, “There were . . . college generation distinctions [between] veterans and non veterans [which were] very big.”¹⁰⁴ He thought that the veterans were “more mature emotionally” and that they “contributed a level of stability” to the revivals.¹⁰⁵ Buckner Fanning recalled, “I landed in Nagasaki . . . and . . . our responsibility was to find people who’d been burned by the bomb—women, children, others—but who had not received adequate medical treatment. And this began to tear me up inside. . . . I was hungry for some spiritual interpretation of life.”¹⁰⁶ Another perspective is that many had made promises during the war; the vast number of decisions were recommitments.¹⁰⁷

Celebrity had something to do with the course of the revivals. Several revival leaders noted that Jackie Robinson, an all-American basketball star at Baylor, was one of the speakers who had a huge influence on campus and was a factor in the visibility of the movement.¹⁰⁸ Moreover, the high profile revival conversion of national champion debater Wellborn and recommitment of spiritually tormented ex-soldier Fanning influenced many fellow students.¹⁰⁹ The revival was a movement that captured the leading athlete, the notable intellectual, and a soldier in spiritual crisis. Bill Cody suggested that the movement succeeded because youthful preachers in this pre-television era “were the best show in town.”¹¹⁰

Charisma is an elusive term. But its root meaning of “gift” can readily be applied to many young speakers at the revivals. They had the gift of persuasive speech and hence became

successful preachers. Some people have pointed to the remarkable talent in the collective leadership of the movement. Howard Butt recalled, “The first time I ever was at BRH, I heard Jess Moody speak, and . . . he was so colorful. And then one after another of the [BRH speakers] were remarkably inspiring. . . . But boy I was impressed with the remarkable people who were here at Baylor during that time.”¹¹¹ And Robinson was overwhelmed with Butt’s speaking ability. He said that Butt had the ability to “communicate with somebody on the last row in a crowd of twenty thousand. . . . He could outreach [Billy] Graham—my soul!”¹¹² Moreover, Robinson reported that on one occasion when Butt needed another sermon, he read James Stewart’s “Why Be Christian?” and quoted the whole sermon word for word. “He did have a photographic mind and was very able to communicate from the very first.”¹¹³ Fanning’s experience was similar: “it was the caliber and quality of those people that really impressed me. The Lord really used those individuals.”¹¹⁴ However, the movement’s leaders also took criticism. Detractors called them “the glory boys of the late forties” or the “youthies.”¹¹⁵

Organization was also a key factor in the revival success. Organizers used press and radio to advertise before and during the meetings. Students joined in a mass procession from the campus to the revival tent in downtown Waco before the services. At the meetings, students displayed a large banner with a revival theme such as “Christ for Me,” or “I’d Rather Have Jesus,” or “Try Jesus.”¹¹⁶ Leaders worked closely with churches and pastors. Early meetings did not schedule Sunday services. However, the leadership adapted quickly; when the revivals shifted to local churches, they of course included Sunday services. High school students remained the focal audience, and, thus, the revivals were never limited to college towns.

The revival format seemed fresh to those who attended. The target audience was the young people while the messages were designed for all ages. Organizers decided to take no offering

during the service. Whenever possible, the revival met in a tent or other non-traditional site. Leaders conducted no extended begging at the invitation following the sermon. As Robinson said, “It was not the same old sevens and sixes.”¹¹⁷ Langley thought the success of the revivals also benefitted from peer pressure.¹¹⁸ The messengers were extremely young—only one to five or six years older than the student audience, and much younger than the average adult in the audience. It was not so much a new message as a new packaging and delivery of the message which the youth-led revival offered.

Another factor in the success of the revival was the religious influence of the university. This context provided an ethos in which religious charisma could flourish.¹¹⁹ BRH and Friday Night Missions were well established Baylor institutions of worship and service. But BRH and Friday Night Missions were in place well before and well after the revival. Why revival in 1945 and 1946? Pinning down causes for revival is a notoriously elusive task.

Youth culture was a critically important feature of this particular revival movement. The lack of training for the youthful preachers was probably an advantage: they provided a fresh image of the preacher. Personal testimonies had the potential of powerful influence, for they were direct and unencumbered by theological language. The singing was directed and delivered by young musicians. Denny concluded that whereas adults ordinarily sought a comfortable level of existence, “youth naturally [crusade].” Moreover, “their testimony to those of their own age is more effective than that of adults.”¹²⁰ In short, the youth probably felt more ownership of the church than they ever had before.

Students wanted a renewal event, and it occurred. Above all, they prepared with intense prayer meetings for revival, thereby creating a sense of expectation. The first revival was described as the “big [religious] event of the school year. And there was a sense of anticipation about repeating revival during the coming spring.”¹²¹ Students committed much energy to the

project. Buckner Fanning recalled, “We had a lot of enthusiasm and a lot of commitment.”¹²² Perhaps the revival succeeded in part because of self-fulfillment of expectations. In the end, as Fanning noted, the revival also met “the religious needs of the people.”¹²³ The question is what it offered that people could not get at a Sunday morning service, or in 1943 or in 1963. Its uniqueness calls for still further analysis, but it is clear that many of the suggested causes related to leadership by the very young.

One of the recurrent questions raised concerning these revivals was whether a similar event could occur again. The major reason for the quest for an explanation of causes was the hope that the revival might be replicated and infuse new spiritual vitality into the lives of later generations of students. Howard asked in 1982, “Is there any possibility of having another youth revival—citywide crusade? I guess I’ve been asked that a thousand times across the years.”¹²⁴ Ten years after the revivals began, the revivals were still the talk of the campus at the Latham Springs retreat and at the opening of the school year. But religious life at Baylor had shifted to annual religious traditions such as Religious Focus Week, the cycle of weekly activities of the B.S.U., and, perhaps just as significantly, to the traditional rhythms of activity in the local Baptist churches.

W. R. White, an Austin pastor in 1946, was a highly enthusiastic supporter of the youth revival. He became president of Baylor in 1948, and he asked original revival team members to preach on campus in 1961 in order to renew the spirit of 1946. The experiment was an obvious failure.¹²⁵ The past could not be replicated. The required spirit was dead; it had not lasted, and it could not be resurrected. Yet the preachers who experienced that bitter disappointment continued to express belief and hope that renewal could come again, but it would find a new expression. This is one of the few places where the major sources for this study—interviews with participants—take on a deeply self-reflective, critical tone. Participants genuinely wondered whether a similar revival could happen again.

One could readily raise the question of failures relating to leadership in the revival, especially the wisdom of creating the celebrity preacher. Dwight Baker said that

while the experience was exhilarating, it took some of us quite a while to get over it. When we went back to small or medium-sized pastorates, we wouldn't understand why we weren't lionized by our very ordinary parishioners as young celestial stars. All of us, I am sure, got too much too soon and found it difficult to adjust to the everyday-ness of our church when we had preached to such large groups.¹²⁶

Several of the preachers confessed that they may have projected a cocky or celebrity attitude on occasion. Bill Cody said, "We were egotistical,"¹²⁷ and Butt worried that they had created "an idolatry of big crowds and big meetings and all this hoopla."¹²⁸

Another point that can be argued both ways is the model of the messages projected. The focus on evangelism in Baptist preaching of the era resulted in a neglect of long-term nurture for Baptists. Preaching was geared to decision and commitment rather than to aid Christian growth and maturity week by week. In the end, the youth revival movement did not offer an alternative, but rather reinforced a traditional pattern of worship.

In addition, some interpreters wondered whether all the stress on dos and don'ts delivered by the youthful leaders in seminars and sermons was an authentic representation of Christianity or merely a cultural packaging of the image of clean-cut successful youth?¹²⁹ Finally, some of the young preachers allowed their theology to grow while others remained more comfortable to let their youth revival experience continue to shape their outlook on life, their ministry, their theology and the world.¹³⁰

Conclusion

This paper has addressed the formative shaping of young college students for youth revival leadership and has examined how they continued to provide leadership to church and

denomination throughout their lives. Leadership provides only one component in the dynamic interaction of people that produce revivals, but it is a vital one.

The Baylor revivals were just the beginning of the movement. They expanded to the larger city crusades and the local church revivals. This last phase provided opportunity to develop hundreds of leaders and opportunity for thousands of church members to experience the youth revival movement. A generation later people still commented to the revival leaders that they had attended the revivals or that they made a decision in the revivals.

Although many of the leaders attributed the revivals to the hand of God, it is also clear that they had experienced training to lead, albeit informal or unplanned training. Several young people had already developed public speaking skills, and they carried a strong conviction of the truth of their message. The combination helped them succeed in their early attempts at pulpit preaching.

Following these young leaders a half-century beyond the revivals, many of them became involved in both regular pastorates (often very influential ones) and leadership positions in a variety of other types of ministry. A high percentage of these leaders remained loyal to the denomination that nurtured them. Their leadership emerged early, and most of these young preacher-leaders maintained the trajectory of religious vocation that began in their university days. Almost without fail, they credited the revival experience with shaping their lives and their vocations.

Finally, on the major question of causes for the revival, leadership looms large in the story. The whole point of the uniqueness of this particular revival is that the meetings were youth-led. Moreover, characteristics identified as contributing to the success of the revival such as “maturity,” “stability,” “celebrity,” “charisma,” “talent” and “organization” are all descriptions that imply a significantly high quality of leadership in these revivals by very young preachers. Leadership was

critical in the youth revival movement. The youthful leaders possessed both ability and training. What was new was the opportunity to lead, with which they were duly presented.

Bill Pitts
Baylor University
Waco, Texas

NOTES

¹Bruce McIver, recalling the invitation to conduct a revival in Houston, said, “We had no plans for a future revival.” See Bruce McIver, “Oral Memoirs,” interview by Susie Valentine, March 13, 1980, interview 1, transcript, Institute for Oral History, Baylor University, Waco, Texas, 6.

²In the early 1980s, the Baylor Institute for Oral History embarked on an extensive series of interviews to document the Youth Revival Movement. I am indebted to this rich resource for primary sources consulted for this paper.

³William McLoughlin, *Revivals, Awakenings, and Reform* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980) provides an interpretation of the entire course of revivalism in America. McLoughlin identifies five eras of revival in the nation’s history. He argues that each period of revival coincides with major eras of transition and reform in the life of the nation.

⁴William McLoughlin, *Modern Revivalism: Charles Grandison Finney to Billy Graham* (New York: Ronald Press, 1959) shows how culture and revivalism interacted in American society from 1800 to 1950. Nathan Hatch, *The Democratization of Religion in American Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989) demonstrates how Baptists became one of five major successful populist religious movements in the United States after 1800.

⁵Howard Butt, “Oral Memoirs of Howard E. Butt, Jr., and Katy Jennings Stokes,” interviews by Thomas L. Charlton, L. Katherine Cook, and Katy Jennings Stokes, May 13, 1982, interview 1, transcript, Institute for Oral History, Baylor University, Waco, Texas, 13.

⁶For a sampling, see the early collection of these sermons in Charles Wellborn, compiler, *Youth Speaks* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1949).

⁷See “Oral Memoirs of Ralph Henderson Langley,” interviews by Thomas L. Charlton, L. Katherine Cook, and Daniel McGee, July 27-28,

1982, interview 1, transcript, Institute for Oral History, Baylor University, Waco, Texas, 7.

⁸Langley, interview 1:9; McIver, interview 1: 9; Jimmy Allen, “Oral Memoirs of Jimmy Raymond Allen,” a series of interviews conducted by Susie Valentine and Robert Parham, March 13, 1980 – June 24, 1983, interview 1, transcript, Institute for Oral History, Baylor University, Waco, Texas, 17.

⁹Richard Dee Baker, “Oral Memoirs,” interviews by Daniel B. McGee, Katy Jennings Stokes, and Thomas L. Charlton, August 24, 1982, interview 1, transcript, Institute for Oral History, Baylor University, Waco, Texas, 14.

¹⁰Richard Baker, 1: 12.

¹¹BO Baker, “Oral Memoirs,” interview by L. Katherine Cook, William L. Pitts, and Katy Jennings Stokes, August 31, 1982, interview 2, transcript, Institute for Oral History, Baylor University, Waco, Texas, 38.

¹²This approximation is based on statistics collected by the Texas state B.S.U. office during this era. See Bruce McIver, *Riding the Wind of God: A Personal History of the Youth Revival Movement* (Macon, GA: Smyth and Helwys, 2002), 158.

¹³See, for example, W. F. Howard, “Oral Memoirs of Wilbur Forrester Howard,” interviews by L. Katherine Cook, and Katy Jennings Stokes, May 8-9, 1982, interview 2, transcript, Institute for Oral History, Baylor University, Waco, Texas, 53.

¹⁴Katy Stokes, “Howard E. Butt, Jr. and Katy Jennings Stokes,” interview 1: 9.

¹⁵BO Baker, interview 1: 12.

¹⁶The choir itself was later choreographed with changing colored lights, originally designed to increase its effect, but eventually recalled to the amusement and satire of its critics. (Richard Baker, 2: 21-22.)

¹⁷Butt, interviews 1: 18 and 2: 78. BO Baker reports that in addition, many students practiced speaking by street preaching in downtown Waco on Saturday afternoons, an effort that he described as essentially “testimony-giving.” (Baker, interview 1, 19). As BO Baker said, the students’ “fun—their outside activities—involved doing Christian things.” (BO Baker, interview 1: 17)

¹⁸Charles T. Wellborn, “Oral Memoirs,” interview by M. Rebecca Sharpless, March 24, 1999, transcript, Institute for Oral History, Baylor University, Waco, Texas, 15.

¹⁹BO Baker, interview 1: 18.

²⁰Richard Baker, interview 1: 13; 2: 23.

²¹McIver, *Riding the Wind of God*, 13.

²²The Baylor organizers adopted a new name for the revival. One view held that Youth for Christ did not want their name used without their participation. A second view held that it was not used because it would not

be appropriate to use the name without Youth for Christ input. Another view was that Texas Baptist leaders wanted a neutral name so that local pastors would not resist it. In any case, they adopted the name Youth Revival or Youth-led Revival. See Butt's reflections in his interview 1, 30-33. W.F. Howard, state director for the Texas B.S.U., noted that Youth for Christ was a non-denominational movement, but Baptist leaders wanted to identify the youth revival movement with Baptist churches. (W. F. Howard, interview 2: 68.)

²³McIver, *Riding the Wind of God*, 14.

²⁴Richard Baker, interview 1: 15

²⁵W. F. Howard, interview 2: 53.

²⁶Charles Buckner Fanning and Richard Dee Baker, "Oral Memoirs," interview by Thomas L. Charlton and Katy Jennings Stokes, August 24, 1982, interview 2, transcript, Institute for Oral History, Baylor University, Waco, Texas, 23.

²⁷See Robert Jackson Robinson, "Oral Memoirs of Robert Jackson Robinson," interview by Katherine L. Cook, May 20, 1982, interview 1, transcript, Institute for Oral History, Baylor University, Waco, Texas, 43.

²⁸Whereas the idea for the revival was Hoshizaki's, Oates had the idea of selecting six young preachers for the meeting. (Katy Jennings Stokes, "Those Halcyon Days," *Baylor Line* 43, no.2 (April 1981): 24.

²⁹Robert S. Denny, "Youth Evangelism," in *The Baptist Student* XXXI, no. 8 (May 1952): 29.

³⁰McIver, *Riding the Wind of God*, 160.

³¹Katy Stokes, "Howard E. Butt, Jr. and Katy Jennings Stokes," interview 1: 24.

³²McIver, *Riding the Wind of God*, 68.

³³W. F. Howard, interview 2: 50.

³⁴W. F. Howard, "I Was There!" *The Baptist Standard*, April 1946.

³⁵Robert Denny, "Youth Evangelism," 29; McIver, interview 1: 2 and 20; McIver, *Riding the Wind of God*, 110; also Baker, interview 2: 47. Howard Butt recalled of Wellborn: "Of course I remember his just absolutely phenomenal preaching gifts." (Butt, interview 2: 43.) Robinson called him "the brain." (Robinson, interview 1: 33.)

³⁶Robert Denny, "Youth Evangelism," 30; Robinson, interview 1: 31-32.

³⁷The advertisement for the Corsicana Youth Revival read, "Thrilling Music, Vital Testimonies, Dynamic Preaching, It's for You!" (*A Pictorial History of the Baylor Youth Revival Movement*, n.p., 32. This is a scrapbook album with a few selected quotations from revival participants. No editor and no publication data is listed. It is housed in the Truett Heritage Room at Baylor University.)

³⁸McIver, *Riding the Wind of God*, 219.

³⁹Ibid., 158. Charles Wellborn thought the level of conviction of commitment influenced many people for life. (Wellborn, interview, 16.)

⁴⁰Some students not selected by the B.S.U. organized similar format revivals on their own. See John D. Pierce, "Revival Movement Expands to Southeast," in McIver, *Riding the Wind of God*, 267.

⁴¹McIver, interview 1: 7.

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³Robinson, interview 1:44

⁴⁴BO Baker, interview 2: 38.

⁴⁵Butt, interview 1: 33.

⁴⁶And again he noted, "There is a follow through that makes a difference . . . in people's lives." Fanning, interview 2: 29. Virtually all of the leaders reported that people years later told them that the experience was pivotal. See Robinson, interview 1: 44.

⁴⁷McIver, interview 1: 4; Robinson, interview 1: 44.

⁴⁸BO Baker, interview 2: 44, and McIver, interview 1: 4. The students preached without training, which probably added to their appeal.

⁴⁹Butt, interview 2: 62; Robinson, interview 1: 42-43. The young preachers did not reap huge rewards from the revivals. They stayed in homes, not hotels, and earned fifty dollars for the week of revival leadership.

⁵⁰McIver, *Riding the Wind*, 106.

⁵¹Butt, interview 1: 11.

⁵²BO Baker, interview 2: 36.

⁵³See Robinson, interview 1: 46.

⁵⁴McIver, *Riding the Wind*, x; McIver, interview 1: 16; Fanning, interview 2: 13; BO Baker, interview 1: 29. Wellborn, in *Riding the Wind*, 73. Bill Cody and Leta Woodfin expressed similar views. See McIver, *Riding the Wind*, 193 and 195.

⁵⁵See the picture brochure printed for Byrd High School, September 26-30, which lists the already notable accomplishments of Frank Boggs, Jack Robinson, Buckner Fanning, and Ralph Langley. (*A Pictorial History of the Baylor Youth Revival Movement*, 13.) Boggs had a marvelous voice and contributed significantly to the musical dimension of the revivals.

⁵⁶Robinson, interview 1: 19, 9, 22, 36.

⁵⁷Butt, interview 2: 76.

⁵⁸Langley, interview 1: 3, 5, 8.

⁵⁹Howard, interview 1: 58. Very few people had the persuasive skills Langley displayed.

⁶⁰Robinson, interview 1: 39.

⁶¹BO Baker, interview 1: 2. Dick Baker had a similar memory of their mother who wanted her children to succeed. See Richard Baker, interview 1: 3.

⁶²BO Baker, interview 1: 10.

⁶³Ibid., 1: 11.

⁶⁴Robinson, interview 1: 24.

⁶⁵Richard Baker, interview 1: 9.

⁶⁶Butt, interview 2: 45; BO Baker, interview 1: 20; Robinson, interview 1: 38-39.

⁶⁷Howard, interview 3: 75-78.

⁶⁸Ibid., 4: 119-126.

⁶⁹Denny later wrote about youth evangelism. See Robert Denny, "Youth Evangelism," 28.

⁷⁰Fanning, interview 2: 12. Buckner Fanning said that by asking him to preach in the revivals, W.F. Howard "completely changed the direction of my life." (Fanning, interview 2: 8.)

⁷¹The turnover was so rapid that participants devised the phrase "first wave" for revivals of 1945 and 1946, and "second wave" for 1947 and after. The "waves" of new eager young preachers kept appearing into the 1950s.

⁷²*A Pictorial History of the Baylor Youth Revival Movement*, 52-54.

⁷³Youth revivals preceded the 1945 event. Bob Denny traced youth-led revivals in local churches as far back as 1931 in Mississippi. Jimmy Allen was preaching revivals in 1943. But the youth-led multiple preacher format for a mass audience that was widely imitated took place at Baylor University in 1945. See Robert S. Denny, "Youth Evangelism," *The Baptist Student*, May 1952, 28-31, and Jimmy Allen, interview 1, 16.

⁷⁴McIver, "One Thing Lacking," in Wellborn, compiler, *Youth Speaks Youth Speaks*, 82-89.

⁷⁵McIver, interview 1: 12.

⁷⁶*Historical Highlights of Wilshire, 1951-1984*, compiled by Wilshire Baptist Church Historical Committee (Dallas: Wilshire Baptist Church, 1985), ii, 144.

⁷⁷McIver, interview 1: 13-14, 16.

⁷⁸Baker, interview 1: 9.

⁷⁹Ibid., 1: 11.

⁸⁰Ibid., 1: 12-16.

⁸¹Baker transferred to Baylor in 1941, and, because he changed from his North Texas music major, he did not graduate until 1945. He stayed another year for a master's degree.

⁸²Richard Baker, interview 1: 13, 18-19.

⁸³BO Baker humorously declared that Martinez was the only one of them who had more than one sermon and that was because he had been preaching since he was "a little ole' boy." (BO Baker, interview 2: 26.) He says Martinez was witty and articulate and a flashy dresser.

⁸⁴Butt, interview 1: 38.

⁸⁵Ibid., 2: 53.

⁸⁶Ibid., 2: 59.

⁸⁷Ibid., 2: 52 and 63.

⁸⁸Ibid., 2: 64.

⁸⁹Ibid., 2: 63.

⁹⁰Ibid., 2: 58.

⁹¹Ibid., 2: 67. This book was Word Book's most successful title to that date. Baylor graduate, Jarrell McCracken, had recently established the new publishing and recording company.

⁹²Butt, interview 2: 67.

⁹³Butt, interview 2: 51 and 60.

⁹⁴Wellborn, 6.

⁹⁵Ibid., 7, 10.

⁹⁶Ibid., 9.

⁹⁷On the occasion of Wellborn's death, Britt Towery, former missionary to China, recalled that in 1958 Wellborn led Seventh and James Baptist Church to open its membership "to all races and colors." (Britt Towery, Charles Wellborn: Baptists' Clear Voice of Conscience," *EthicsDaily.com* [October 28, 2009]).

⁹⁸Howard, interview 2, 62. North Texas State was North Texas State Teachers' College until 1949 when it was renamed North Texas State College.

⁹⁹Ibid., 3, 76.

¹⁰⁰Marv Knox, "Youth Revivalists Shaped a Generation," *The Baptist Standard*, June 30, 1999.

¹⁰¹According to Howard Butt, Bill Tanner especially made the connection between youth revivals and churches' desire to recruit youth ministers. (Butt, interview 1, 40.) Robinson was right to say that the youth revivals were not the only reason. Many other factors contributed to church growth during this era. (Robinson, interview 1: 47.)

¹⁰²Howard, interview 4: 111.

¹⁰³This was the sentiment expressed by George Stokes to Katy Stokes at the time. (Katy Stokes, interview 1, 24.)

¹⁰⁴Butt, interview 1: 20.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., 1: 23.

¹⁰⁶Fanning, interview 2:4.

¹⁰⁷Robinson, interview 1: 15-17.

¹⁰⁸Butt, interview 1: 7 and 17. *The Dallas Morning News* carried an article in August, 1946, entitled "Athlete Sparks Youth Revival," which described Jackie Robinson as a well-known Texas athlete. See *A Pictorial History of the Baylor Youth Revival Movement*, 17.

¹⁰⁹On the Wellborn conversion under the influence of Jackie Robinson see Wellborn's article, "The Most Unforgettable Character I Ever Met," written for *Reader's Digest*, and for Wellborn's immediate involvement in the movement, see Robinson, interview 1: 9-14.

- ¹¹⁰Fanning, interview 2: 29.
- ¹¹¹Butt, interview 1: 6-7.
- ¹¹²Robinson, interview 1: 21.
- ¹¹³Ibid., 1: 23. James Stewart rapidly became the preachers' favorite preacher. Several of them travelled to Edinburgh to study with him.
- ¹¹⁴Fanning, interview 2: 5.
- ¹¹⁵Ibid., 2: 24-25.
- ¹¹⁶John D. Pierce, "Revival Movement Expands to the Southeast," in McIver, *Riding the Wind*, 260-61. McIver died before publishing the book. However, he did live to complete the manuscript, and Pierce, executive editor of *Baptists Today*, added an essay on how the revival movement extended throughout the Southeast.
- ¹¹⁷Robinson, interview 1: 29.
- ¹¹⁸Langley noted, "It was mighty good to bring peer pressure into divine operation . . . the whole youth revival movement was peer pressure par excellence." Pierce, "Revival Movement Expands." In McIver, *Riding the Wind*, 263.
- ¹¹⁹Robinson recalled, "The Baylor I came to was very narrow, provincial. . . . Baylor was known as a religious institution. . . . And so that was the atmosphere; it would be fertile soil for some of these things to happen. (Robinson, interview 1: 25.)
- ¹²⁰Robert Denny, "Youth Evangelism," 30.
- ¹²¹Butt, interview 1: 25.
- ¹²²Fanning, 2: 10.
- ¹²³Ibid., 2: 29.
- ¹²⁴W.F. Howard, interview 2: 55.
- ¹²⁵McIver, with his wonderful honesty, called it a "dismal experience." (McIver, interview 1: 12.)
- ¹²⁶Stokes, "Those Halcyon Days," 27.
- ¹²⁷McIver, *Riding the Wind*, 192.
- ¹²⁸Butt, interview 2: 62.
- ¹²⁹Pierce, "Revival Movement Expands," in McIver, *Riding the Wind*, 264-67.
- ¹³⁰Howard said that BO Baker's later "preaching sounded just exactly like it did at the Dallas City-wide Youth Revival (Howard, interview 2: 64.), whereas Charles Wellborn frequently said that although his theology had changed, he never doubted that his conversion experience "made the decisive change in my life." (Wellborn, interview, 9).

MISSIONS THROUGH EDUCATION:
THE CONTINUING LEGACY OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF CORPUS CHRISTI AND
THE SOUTH TEXAS SCHOOL OF CHRISTIAN
STUDIES

Reverend Aubria A. Sanders, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Beeville, saw the deactivation of Chase Field in the spring of 1946, a WWII Navy Auxiliary field, as an opportunity to establish a new Baptist college in South Texas. Supported by the realities that the community was losing a tremendous economic engine and Baptists had few churches in the region, Sanders gathered a handful of local pastors and proposed to the Baptist General Convention of Texas (BGCT) the establishment of an institution of higher learning in Beeville.¹ The prevailing belief was that if Baptists could develop a Christian college in the southern part of the state, then both the local economy and churches would benefit from training Christian leaders.² Sanders's zeal, however, was not uncommon in the 1940s. Due to Baptists' determination to evangelize and educate the masses, including the Hispanic population, Texas Baptists started several institutions with a missionary mindset.³ The fortuitous timing appeared divine. Combine a large surplus military base, G. I. Bill benefits about to expire for one million veterans, and the desire to extend the gospel into the outermost parts of Texas, and what you get is the dream of a Baptist university in South Texas.⁴ In less than a year, however, the newly elected trustees of the school realized the 1000-acre campus required more resources than they could garner at such an early stage of development.

Although classes were never held in Beeville, by 1947 the trustees forfeited another abandoned military base, this time in Corpus Christi, to ultimately settle on a third option—Ward Island.⁵ Now, the school had a home with a name—University of Corpus Christi (UCC).

Sanders's passion and commitment had ignited the enthusiasm of Texas Baptists' missionary zeal. For three decades, through seemingly insurmountable challenges, UCC existed as a four-year Baptist University until 1973. Despite constant local and statewide skepticism and financial instability, the university succeeded at educating teachers and ministers who became leaders across the state and nation.⁶ The fledgling Baptist University, however, experienced a major turning point in August of 1970. Already facing the challenges of weakened denominational support and lower enrollments, the devastating effects of hurricane Celia became the crisis that accentuated the existing conflict between UCC's governing authorities and BGCT policy.⁷ Unable to receive timely financial support from the BGCT, UCC administrators decided to accept federally guaranteed Small Business Administration (SBA) loans to provide the necessary cash flow to reopen for the fall semester while waiting for insurance settlement checks. This decision put in motion the inevitable request and approval for the BGCT to release UCC from the BGCT family. Once autonomous, the UCC board negotiated an agreement with the City of Corpus Christi and the State of Texas to join the Texas A & I system in the fall of 1973. The university would change names two times over the next twenty years—first Texas A & I and then Corpus Christi State University. In 1993, some four years after joining the Texas A & M University System, the Ward Island campus took on the name of Texas A & M at Corpus Christi (TAMU-CC). In this process, however, South Texas Baptist leaders never lost sight of Sanders's original vision and urged the BGCT to retain ten acres of land for religious academic training for educationally underserved leaders.⁸

A leading personality behind the retention of land, purpose, and related endowments was the Corpus Christi Baptist Association (CCBA) City Mission Superintendent—Dr. W. H. Colson.⁹ Due in large part to tenacity and that his belief that South Texas money remain connected to the original purpose of the UCC, he led the CCBA to charter the Christian Education Activities Corporation (CEAC) in 1972, a spin-off organization of the UCC board to settle the financial affairs of the university.¹⁰ Once deemed the legal heir to the UCC’s Baptist roots, the CEAC gained access to the UCC’s approximately one and a half-million dollar endowment for religious education and at the southeast corner of Ward Island.¹¹ The CEAC Board members, at the beginning, were all members of the UCC Board of Trustees. Those charter members were: Arthur James, President; Travis Long, Vice-President; Mrs. V. D. Davidson, Treasurer; Dr. Vernon Elmore, Secretary; and Jack White, Legal Advisor. The corporation eventually adopted the business name of the Baptist Learning Center of South Texas (BLC) when the Colson educational building opened on August 24, 1980. A new dream in frontier educational strategies erupted in Corpus Christi but with the same shaky denominational and financial foundations as the UCC.

With Dr. Colson clearly at the helm of keeping the CEAC/BLC enterprise headed in the right direction, the unusual partnership between three distinct and autonomous institutions breathed new life into the *Missions through Education* moniker. CCSU, Howard Payne University, and the BLC struck an agreement where ministry-minded students could attend classes on Ward Island and gain academic credit through Howard Payne University. “What makes the concept new is that a private institution associates with a state institution to provide a program of religious training,” said Dr. Colson at the dedication of the Learning Center.¹² He further described the BLC as a “continuation of the University of Corpus Christi—its purpose will be to continue the heritage of UCC

by providing Christian education in South Texas.”¹³ Like its UCC predecessor, the BLC sought to provide religious training for the South Texas educationally underserved community (Hispanic, African-American, and Bi-Vocational ministers), in an effort to encourage area ministerial students to remain in the region.¹⁴ By the day of its 10,000 square foot structure dedication in August of 1980, in three years 325 students had taken 900 hours of academic instruction through the CCSU/BLC/HPU partnership.¹⁵ One year later, Fred Culbertson earned a bachelor’s degree from HPU at the BLC program in Corpus Christi. Culbertson continued to minister in area churches and retired in 2012. The hopeful purpose of providing accessible and affordable theological education in the South Texas region was succeeding.

Success, however, was not entirely due to a mighty vision, but also a mighty servant. Dr. Kenneth Bradshaw, associate professor at Howard Payne University and director of the BLC was the keeper of the South Texas educational mission. Born mere months before the stock market crash of 1929, Bradshaw, tutored by the schoolmaster of hard times, learned the invaluable lessons of perseverance, resourcefulness, and faith in the providence of God. These lessons served Bradshaw and the missions education center well through the trials of waxing and waning economies, affiliations, and understanding. It was clear that Dr. Colson supplied the inspiration and vision to launch the BLC, but it was Dr. Bradshaw who supplied the perspiration to lay the very earthy foundation under Dr. Colson’s vision. “Genius,” Thomas Edison once quipped, “is one percent inspiration and ninety-nine percent perspiration.”¹⁶ It was Dr. Bradshaw’s call in 1977 to perspire over that which Dr. Colson had inspired.¹⁷ The apostle Paul wrote that a body with no eyes is blind, but a body that is all eye, is useless.¹⁸ Dr. Bradshaw’s service became the hands, feet, and voice of the BLC vision. As the institution’s first director, Bradshaw recruited students, taught classes, handled administrative tasks, and raised funds.

By the end of the first decade, 120 students, 74 percent of whom were Baptists and the remainder from other Christian denominations, enrolled in ten classes. Although the student body was not entirely reflective of the South Texas region, it was 68 percent male and 21 percent Hispanic, 10 percent African-American, and 68 percent Anglo. Seventy percent were ministerial students working toward a degree in religion through Howard Payne University and the rest were students auditing classes. These statistics exemplify the obvious need many South Texas Christians felt for personal growth through college-level religion courses. More educational opportunities continued to be a source of conversation, but now more than ever, the unaddressed need for graduate theological education was still limiting the schools reach to local ministers.¹⁹

The second decade of work at the BLC started with the fall 1988 semester enrollment falling behind previous years. Bradshaw's report to the CEAC Board reported fifty-four new students for a total of ninety-one students. The consensus was that the recruiting strategy to the rural churches worked, especially among Hispanics from Alice and Robstown. Unfortunately, the emphasis on reaching African-American students was not as successful. Although enrollment remained steady, the financial strength of the school remained precariously fragile. Unlike other colleges and universities, the BLC operated with a tuition independent strategy—subsidizing student tuition costs at the expense of institutional stability. The financial plan, from the earliest days to the present, was to endow all the fixed administrative costs so that individual and church gifts supported the scholarship needs. In the July, 1989 annual report, the annual budget was \$153,000 with \$73,000 expected to come from churches and individuals—nowhere is there a mention of tuition revenue. Under constant pressure to fund the institution, Bradshaw continued exercising fierce perseverance, resourcefulness, and faith just to keep the BLC doors open. Three years before the twentieth anniversary (1994), Bradshaw exhausted by a lifetime of dedication,

prepared a succession plan by seeking to hire an associate director. After searching the Texas Baptist family, the board hired Dr. Don Davidson who followed Bradshaw upon his retirement in 1995. For eighteen years, Dr. Bradshaw had given himself tirelessly to the task of establishing the work of the BLC.

Davidson's time at the BLC, however, did not last long enough for the honeymoon to wear off. The trustees anticipated his military chaplaincy training to build upon Bradshaw's work and bring to fruition the goals already in process. The institution was in a precarious position with the patriarch director having recently retired and now the new director with so much potential leaving unexpectedly. Unfortunately for the BLC, his proven leadership and educational experience provided him with other career opportunities. A little over a year after accepting the helm, Davidson accepted a leadership role with the San Marcos Baptist Academy. The BLC, however, continued to coast until a local pastor accepted the trustee's invitation to assume the director's position.

Reverend B. Linn Self was no stranger to the BLC. His involvement reached as far back as the final days of the UCC through his involvement in the Baptist association. In 1974, Rev. Self served as the moderator of the CCBA with Colson and was then elected the 1977 chairman of the study committee recommending the new partnership with Howard Payne University to offer religion courses on the former UCC campus.²⁰ Not only did Rev. Self have a great familiarity with the school through his many facets of service but also through his wife Betty, who Dr. Bradshaw hired as a part-time secretary in 1989. When Rev. Self joined the BLC staff in 1996, he and Mrs. Self created a synergistic force in theological education for South Texans. Without delay but with a renewed dedication and vision not seen since Bradshaw's days, Self began to prove his expertise in carrying out the plans already underway.

In November of 1996, the board of trustees approved the largest annual budget of \$169,000 since the learning center

opened in 1980. Combining a small budget with his belief in the validity of theological education, Rev. Self offered the trustees the “top five priorities” necessary to the future success of the BLC.²¹ Little did he know those priorities would become the center’s strategy for the next fifteen years. Rev. Self challenged the board to develop a graduate level educational partnership, grow the scholarship endowment fund, address low community awareness, increase enrollment, and provide a comprehensive library and resource center. It was obvious to those in academia that Rev. Self accepted a daunting challenge for a hybrid organization structured around the belief that theological education must not cause financial duress to the student. Fortunately, Rev. Self did not back away from the challenge.

Reverend Self believed so strongly in the vision that he would routinely tell others that the “BLC was in the ministry of mentoring and we are making a difference in the lives of students, lives of churches, and even the lives of professors.”²² His optimism was never more contagious than during the 1997 Spring Board of Trustees meeting when the trustees affirmed an arrangement with Logsdon Seminary at Hardin-Simmons University to teach Master of Divinity courses at the learning center.²³ This new academic partnership would allow South Texas students the opportunity to study at Howard Payne University and Logsdon Seminary without leaving the coastal bend. Master of Divinity courses started in the fall of 1997 at the BLC with twenty-four students from around the local region. Trey Thames became Logsdon Seminary’s first extension seminary graduate in May, 1999 from Calallen Baptist Church in Northwest Corpus Christi. The BLC’s success with the two programs brought other opportunities as well. During this time of educational expansion, Baptist leaders knew that an additional gateway program was necessary to encourage laity and ministers alike to get started in education. One response to this need was an eighteen-hour Certificate of Ministry program from Howard Payne University offered at Corpus

Christi. One year later, in May of 2000, Howard Payne had the university's first certificate program graduates: Michael Brooke, Larry Dallas, Travis Huff, and Randall Spitzer—all from Corpus Christi. These and other accomplishments led Rev. Self to proclaim that the BLC is the new “model for how to deliver education into the new millennium.”²⁴

The decade leading from 1995 to 2005 brought unprecedented growth to the learning center. A literal transformation was underway with regards to academic offerings, financial stability, facility additions, and a name that better reflected the core mission of the institution. During the BGCT annual meeting in 1996, Rev. Self introduced Dr. Vernon Davis, then Dean of Logsdon School of Theology at Hardin-Simmons University, to the BLC concept of higher education. Davis caught the vision, and Self and Davis together paved the way for a new era in Texas Baptist seminary education. Now the learning center delivered three accredited academic programs with two partner Baptist universities, both with average enrollment exceeding one hundred students. Ten years prior, the focus of the trustees revolved around ways to overcome the persistent budget deficits. During this time of growth, however, the school's endowment grew to provide 61 percent of the annual budget with shortfalls occurring less frequently. Under Rev. Self's leadership, supporting the mission of delivering affordable, accessible, and applicable theological education was no longer a daily financial battle. Knowing that education takes money, the school administration realized the key to successful students is good faculty. In an effort to accommodate retired and traveling professors, the trustees in 1997 commissioned a study committee to assess the feasibility of on-campus housing.²⁵ Some eight years later, the Bill and Doris Stark Conference Center opened, which provided four apartments and a small meeting room. These ocean-view condominiums further accentuated the vast difference between what the community often regarded as a Baptist daycare center and what the students realized was the answer to their educational goals. Since the center's mission

remained a little known secret, the trustees voted in 2004 to change the name from Baptist Learning Center of South Texas to the South Texas School of Christian Studies (SCS).²⁶ Rev. Self's dedication and commitment to the "top five priorities" had given rise to a renewed institution with the future as vast as the water surrounding the island campus.

Since the beginning of the UCC, the inception of the Baptist Learning Center, and now the School of Christian Studies, one thing was always clear—the thing that gave purpose to the institution was recognizing the potential of her students. For those students who have called UCC, BLC, and SCS home during their academic pursuits, agree that what makes this school unique is the blend between academic theory and practical application. One of the many appreciative students was Tony Celelli who came to the school in 1998 and completed the M.Div. from Logsdon Seminary in 2000. Like the other Corpus Christi students, Celelli discovered a love for academic inquiry coupled with a dedication to application. Little did he know that five years later, the CEAC board of trustees would invite him to become the fourth president of the institution.

Celelli wasted little time in discovering the "top five priorities" proposed by Rev. Self and adopted by the board when he arranged with Dr. Tommy Brisco, Dean of Logsdon Seminary, to hire a full-time faculty member for the Corpus Christi campus in 2006. Dr. Doug Jackson, a long-tenured pastor from the Corpus Christi area, originated the commitment SCS and Logsdon had toward making graduate education accessible to the region's students. Jackson's addition to the Logsdon faculty fortified the decision of the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) to award Logsdon Seminary full-degree granting status on the SCS campus in 2009. Whereas the graduate student once had to drive to Abilene to complete a third of his or her course work, this new designation did away with that requirement. The four hundred mile journey to the main campus was no longer necessary, and students took advantage of this privilege. Another decision that enabled the Logsdon faculty and ATS to

see the merits of degree-granting status for the Corpus Christi extension campus was the greatly expanded Earl and Ohuita Hill Library. In 2005, the Hill library contained 8,000 volumes, but by 2010, the library possessed 15,000 volumes with room for 30,000 total. During the ATS reaffirmation visit in 2011, they found the Hill Library to be one of the strong selling points to the partnership between Logsdon Seminary and the SCS.

Over the next several years, the SCS administration continued to find ways to encourage those who gave direction to the school by providing opportunities for them to interact with those who were students at the school. One example was the creation of the Rev. Linn and Betty Self Bible Symposium Endowment in 2007 to honor their steadfast devotion to higher education. The Self Symposium is an area wide Bible conference hosted by the SCS with an emphasis on the practical application of academic inquiry. Each year, the SCS invites a notable scholar or clinician to lecture and interact with students, clergy, and laity. Another way the school encourages interaction between students and churches is by ensuring that tuition remains affordable for working ministers. Due to the second-career student demographic at SCS, the school established an annual scholarship banquet at which a benefactor to the school is recognized and students can share their stories. This emphasis on student scholarships remains a constant and pressing issue considering the increasing costs of delivering theological education in a relatively isolated region of Texas.

Recognizing the importance of continuity in mission and values, Dr. Celessi made an early commitment to seek faculty who represented the student body's diversity. What this meant was that the SCS needed a religion professor of Hispanic descent. Unfortunately, in Baptist life, only a handful of credentialed Hispanic faculty possessing a doctoral degree existed, and all of them had significant positions within Baptist life. Since an established Hispanic professor, who was seeking a move, did not exist, Dr. Celessi began to call leaders within the Hispanic Baptist Convention. All roads led back to

a young Ph.D. candidate from Dallas who was working part-time for the Baptist University of the Americas (BUA). Joe Rangel had graduated from Southern Methodist University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary before heading to Los Angeles, California to pursue a Ph.D. in Cross-Cultural Education from Biola University. Working in San Antonio at the time, Rangel was in the final months of completing his dissertation in the spring of 2009. Dr. Rangel became the first Hispanic religion professor at SCS for Hardin-Simmons University. Dr. Rangel continues to mentor and teach SCS students with an intentional gaze toward the young Hispanic student needing someone who believes in his or her potential.

Ever since Texas Baptists started the University of Corpus Christi, a constant dream has been for the Rio Grande Valley to have a part in Baptist higher education. Therefore, it was not uncommon for Calvary Baptist Church in McAllen to make monthly contributions to the UCC.²⁷ Additionally, Baptist businessman and philanthropist, Othal Brand participated in both the financial and governance side of supporting the fledgling Baptist school. Furthermore, some ten years later, under the auspices of the BLC, Dr. Bradshaw reported to the CEAC board that, on a recent teaching assignment to the valley, he had an opportunity to present the BLC program to several pastors. Bradshaw believed that students would possibly drive up for classes in the future, noting that their interest in higher education was significant. Bradshaw did not have to wait long before his prediction came true. In 2000, a young Hispanic pastor named Vidal Muniz made the fifteen-week commitment to drive from Mission, TX to SCS for seminary classes. Muniz was not the last to make this weekly two and a half hour trek, but he validated Rev. Self's position that a seminary campus presence was necessary in the Rio Grande Valley.

During the closing remarks of Rev. Self's final report to the trustees, he reiterated the need for a continued focus on addressing many of the challenges that he had set his ministry to accomplish ten years ago. One topic in particular,

however, rang a clarion call for action—the SCS needed to find a way to offer classes in the valley.²⁸ Self was not alone in his determination to offer higher education opportunities in the valley. Mayor Richard Cortez of McAllen, Texas commissioned the executive council of the city staff to recruit three professional schools to McAllen. Mayor Cortez wanted a medical school, a law school, and a seminary in his city so that the best and brightest minds would not have to leave the valley, likely never to return. Cortez intimated what others knew but were reticent to say aloud: the Hispanic culture values family, and the community needed to stem the tide of brain-drain from South Texas. Few would have expected the City Attorney, Kevin Pagan, to campaign for the SCS and Logsdon Seminary in McAllen. As a member of Baptist Temple in McAllen, Pagan quickly integrated into the SCS trustee structure and began offering his expertise to find a suitable location for the seminary. In the summer of 2012, the SCS purchased a three-acre forty-five thousand square foot campus. What was once a Jewish synagogue and then a non-denominational church, now is the start of a new era in *Missions through Education*.

For the past sixty-six years, the dream of training the educationally underserved leaders of South Texas has required the most innovative and dedicated students, faculty, and trustees. If the challenges of the past are any indication of the stamina required for the future, then the SCS will have many more challenges that will threaten the mission of preparing South Texan pastoral leaders. The story of the SCS, however, is not finished. The future is bright with new opportunities and endeavors as the institution continues the legacy started in 1947, and it lives today as the South Texas School of Christian Studies on Ward Island.

Tony Celelli
South Texas School of
Christian Studies
Corpus Christi, Texas

Timeline of Events

1946

Businessmen and ministers begin conversations to start a Christian university in the South Texas region.

1947

The University of Corpus Christi begins meeting on Ward Island.

1970

Hurricane Celia hits Corpus Christi causing severe damage to the UCC Campus.

1970

Dr. Kenneth Bradshaw accepts faculty position at UCC.

1971

Texas Baptists vote to release UCC to a city/state university.

1972

Christian Education Activities Corporation (CEAC) begins meetings with the UCC Trustees.

1973

Last graduating class of UCC.

1977

Dr. Kenneth Bradshaw becomes Director of the newly formed Baptist Learning Center of South Texas.

1977

First undergraduate classes held on the now TAMUCC campus for students seeking Bible degrees from Howard Payne University through the Baptist Learning Center of South Texas (now STSCS).

1978

CEAC breaks ground on the ten-acre site for the ten thousand square foot Colson Building.

1980

Fall classes held in the Colson building of the Baptist Learning Center (now STSCS).

1981

First graduate from Howard Payne University at the Baptist Learning Center.

1994

Dr. Don Davidson comes to BLC as Associate-Director.

1995

Dr. Davidson accepts the position as the second Director of the Baptist Learning Center.

1996

Rev. Linn Self becomes the third Director of the Baptist Learning Center. The CEAC trustees changed his title to President in 2001.

1997

Logsdon Seminary begins offering the Master of Divinity in cooperation with the Baptist Learning Center (now STSCS).

2004

CEAC trustees change name from Baptist Learning Center to the South Texas School of Christian Studies (STSCS).

2005

Bill and Doris Stark Building opened containing four apartments and a conference room.

2005

President Self retires as president, and the CEAC board elects Dr. Tony Celelli as the fourth president of STSCS.

2007

STSCS hosts the first Rev. Linn and Betty Self Bible Symposium.

2009

STSCS partners with Driscoll Children's and Christus Spohn Hospital's Chaplaincy Departments to create ethics continuing education conferences for pastors, chaplains, students, nurses, and doctors.

2011

STSCS hosts the first annual south Texas youth minister's conference—IYC.

2011

STSCS partners with Hardin-Simmons University to offer undergraduate degrees in south Texas.

2011

STSCS begins offering certificate of ministry courses and Logsdon Seminary classes in the Rio Grande Valley.

2012

STSCS purchases a three-acre campus containing forty-five thousand square foot of building space in McAllen, Texas.

NOTES

¹Carl R. Wrotenbery, *Baptist Island College: An Interpretative History of the University of Corpus Christi 1946-1973* (Austin, TX: Eakin Press, 1998).

²Wrotenbery, 6. W. R. White, charter chairman of the board, justified organizing the college based on the assertion that Baptist work became stronger where Baptist colleges were established. Hence, the main purpose for UCC was the training of Baptist pastors from rural areas in South Texas (156).

³Javier Elizondo, "Latino(A) Baptists and Leadership Training in Texas," *Texas Baptist History: The Journal of the Texas Baptist Historical Society*, Vol. XXIX, 2009, 29ff.

⁴Wrotenbery, 2.

⁵Texas Baptists ultimately gave their support to the establishment of UCC in large part because of the generous land grant from the US Navy regarding the 200-acre abandoned Navy radar-training center on Ward Island.

⁶For example: Sid Smith, Alcides Guajardo, Mel Plunk, Forrest Smith, Anson Nash, Vicki Vaughan, Roger Hill, Buddy Murphrey, Leo Smith, Alfonso Flores, Ted Eaton, Marion Warren, Rusty Maddox, Fred Loa, Jonatan Hernandez, Dan Cancino, Rosa Gunji, Derly Rivera, Octavio Garcia, Eliseo Aldape, Roy DeBrand, Carroll Williams, Larry Smith, Alfredo Lugo, J. B. Graham, Herb Reeves, Arnold Jennings, Gerald Mann, John C. Hullum, Bill McGregor, Joe Brumbelow, Aaron Guajardo Sr., Allen Oubre, Arthur Duward Hazzard, Glenn McCollum, Eldon Johnson, and Thomas B. Welch.

⁷Wrotenbery, Interview, February 18, 2013.

⁸Wrotenbery, 225.

⁹Colson was not alone in searching for something of substance to come of the defunct Baptist University. On several unsuccessful occasions, Howard E. Butt, Jr. proposed selling UCC in order to establish a "Center for Applied Christianity" as a response to the ongoing financial problems of the university. It is unknown whether Butt's proposal informed Colson's vision. Unpublished proposal, May 9, 1975, "A Proposal for a Center for Continuing Studies in Religion." Some five years later, however, Dr. Colson accepted a solicited proposal from Lewis W. Newman that outlines the philosophy behind the BLC.

¹⁰Correspondence between Dr. W. H. Colson and Dr. James H. Landes, Baptist General Convention of Texas Executive Director (1974-1983), SCS Archives, Dated Folders, May 22, 1980.

¹¹BGCT Executive Board Minutes, September 12, 1972.

¹²*Baptist Standard*, Sept. 3, 1980, “Christian Learning Center Dedicated at Corpus Christi.”

¹³*Ibid.*

¹⁴Kenneth Bradshaw, “History of the University of Corpus Christi—Baptist Learning Center,” unpublished manuscript, SCS Archives.

¹⁵Linda Carrico, “New Christian Study Center is Opening Today,” *Caller Times*, August 1980.

¹⁶As quoted in James D. Newton, *Uncommon Friends: Life with Thomas Edison, Henry Ford, Harvey Firestone, Alexis Carrel & Charles Lindbergh* (New York: Mariner Books, 1989), 24.

¹⁷Corpus Christi Baptist Association, Executive Board Meeting Minutes, May 9, 1977.

¹⁸Author’s paraphrase of 1 Corinthians 12:12-26.

¹⁹Dr. Kenneth Maroney, president of UCC, commented that he would like to see Howard Payne offer Master’s degrees, or at least one course. Christian Education Activities Corporation Minutes, June 28, 1977.

²⁰Corpus Christi Baptist Association, Executive Board Meeting Minutes, May 9, 1977.

²¹Director’s Report, CEAC Minutes, Nov. 1, 1996.

²²Director’s Report, CEAC Minutes, April 24, 1998.

²³Director’s Report, CEAC Minutes, April 12, 1997.

²⁴Director’s Report, CEAC Minutes, Nov. 5, 1999.

²⁵Director’s Report, CEAC Minutes, April 12, 1997

²⁶In addition to changing the institution’s name, the board had already changed the internal nomenclature of the CEO and began using the title of president and policies more reflective of an academic institution.

²⁷List of Sponsoring Churches, UCC Minutes, 1970.

²⁸President’s Report, CEAC Minutes, Nov. 5, 2005.

BOOK REVIEWS

David Stricklin
Book Review Editor

David Stricklin is recently retired Professor of History at Dallas Baptist University.

A History of Smyrna Baptist Church, 1873 – 2008. By James W. Griffith and Robert Lee Vaughn. Mt. Enterprise, Texas: Waymark Publications, 2009. 115 pp.

In the words of that old song “brighten the corner where you are,” the church at Smyrna has been fulfilling its mission in south Rusk County, Texas for well over a century. First, the authors show proper deference to the congregation’s Georgia roots, home of half of the charter members coming from the Powell Creek church dating from 1786. Organized in 1873 at Chinquapin Spring, Smyrna’s initial action was to launch into a protracted revival meeting for several days, which added more new members. A spirit of local cooperation ensued from the start with fifth Sunday meetings and association and district meetings. Smyrna even invited visiting brethren to monthly business meetings.

For its first fifty years, frequent mention is made of church discipline for sins great and small. Nevertheless, these were the days of ALL day church sings, dinner on the grounds, free will offerings of money and food for the needy, and visits from overseas missionaries from as far away as Syria. Since

Smyrna evolved slowly into becoming a missionary Baptist church, the authors devote some time to the controversy of the day between the Board Party Faction and the Mission Party Faction. To students of Baptist history, this book opens a small window into how missions were funded and the controversy between R.C. Burleson and B.H. Carroll and those who opposed mission boards. The authors conclude that “unended bitterness” resulted from the early twentieth-century schism between Baptists. In 1892, the church moved a few miles and by 1907 had located in the Oakflat community where it is today. Over time it has often shared its facilities with the Methodists.

Several customs and policies are worth noting such as the first women on committees about 1910 and one long-serving pastor between 1910 and 1930. Traditionally, pastors were recalled once a year by a church vote. In 1921, John Waller was so beloved that he was called to serve as pastor indefinitely. Other customs included the annual cemetery day, church reunions, third Saturday night church sings (including Sacred Harp music), and writing resolutions of respect for deceased members. In 1918, a resolution of support was offered for all their soldier boys in the Great War.

In spite of strong emphasis on local control, Smyrna church was a key player in the Mount Zion Baptist Association and a big advocate of the associational missionary concept. Several young men were “liberated” (called) for the ministry in those early days. Shifting demographics saw a decline in church numbers as well as church discipline after World War II. Death and urbanization reduced membership, but these did not diminish the zeal for missions and the gospel.

The research is good, and the writing flows fairly well. Leaders and church programs are covered equally well, and the appendices contain lists of former members, pastors, clerks, deacons, and current members. There is also a good historical representation through photographs. As the book of Revelation records, “To the Angel at the church in Smyrna write, ‘Keep the

faith and pass on your traditions.”—Reviewed by Don Brown, Adjunct Professor of History, Dallas Baptist University.

Turning Points in the History of the Waco Regional Baptist Association. By Dr. Paul Stripling. Waco, Texas: Waco Regional Baptist Association, 2010. 94 pp.

Turning Points in the History of the Waco Regional Baptist Association, written by Executive Director Emeritus Dr. Paul Stripling, includes fourteen turning points or “events marking the unique or important historical changes of course” that have taken place in this important association. Stripling models this book on his earlier work, *Turning Points in the History of Baptist Associations in America*. He begins with an overview of the beginnings of associationalism in Baptist life in England and moves on to the implementation of associations in America, Texas, and Waco. An emphasis on the fine line between associational cooperation and the importance of autonomy of the local church can be seen throughout this treatise as Stripling examines his fourteen turning points.

While Waco may be a small city located in the heart of Texas, in Baptist life, Waco has played a major role. Waco became the home of Baylor University and the birthplace of two major seminaries, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and George W. Truett Theological Seminary. Waco has also been a microcosm of greater Baptist life facing many of the same challenges that have been seen on the national scale. Stripling discusses the controversies and accomplishments of the WRBA with equal aplomb. From the Martinism Controversy of the late 1890s to the beginnings of the BGCT to the first female Senior Pastor in 1998, the Waco Association has applied its belief in autonomy of the local church and strong support for associationalism to gracefully handle all that it has faced. The community support engendered by the work of the Association came to life in the hosting of the first Southern Baptist Convention at which the wives and daughters of those

attending were encouraged to be present. The Association, with help from people throughout the area, housed and fed all those attending free of charge. Interaction with Baylor University in the development of an excellent associational social ministry program in conjunction with Dr. David Cook is also described. Along with the accomplishments of the Association, Stripling gives an excellent overview of the development of the Associational Missionary (which eventually became the Director of Missions) position and the further development of the Association itself over its one hundred and fifty years.

This little treatise by Stripling is not just a celebration of a significant milestone in the life of the Waco Regional Baptist Association, but, more importantly, it is an historical primer on associational life and ministry, on the Christian interaction between the local church and the Association of local churches as each seeks the will of God. An examination of the events from the past one hundred and fifty years in the WRBA gives each reader a snapshot of Southern Baptist life in Texas during this time period and an excellent lesson in Christian love and support.—*Reviewed by Lisa Seeley, Adjunct Professor of History, Dallas Baptist University.*