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A BRIEF WORD FROM THE SECRETARY-TREASURER

If, as the ancient proverb states, “Patience is a virtue,” then the members of the Texas Baptist Historical Society are some of the most virtuous people on earth! As a result of numerous factors, *Texas Baptist History*, Journal of the Texas Baptist Historical Society, has been dormant since 2001. This volume is the first of three that will make the journal current by the end of 2009. Without the gracious assistance of Dallas Baptist University, host institution of the Journal, the production of this Journal would not be possible. For this reason, a special thank you must be given to Dr. Gary Cook, President of DBU, as well as to faculty members, Dr. Michael Williams and Dr. Stephen Stookey. Without their enthusiasm, energy and commitment to this Journal, this endeavor would not be possible.

If you have received this Journal, you have been a member of the Texas Baptist Historical Society between the years 2000 and 2008. Many of you are current members. If you are not a current member of the Society, it is our hope that you will take this opportunity to reactivate your membership as we reactivate the Journal.

Thank you again for your patience and loyalty.

Alan J. Lefever
Secretary-Treasurer
Texas Baptist Historical Society

EDITOR'S NOTE

It is my privilege to introduce this combined issue of *Texas Baptist History*. In the fall of 2007, the officers of the Texas Baptist Historical Society voted to accept the proposal of Dallas Baptist University to host the journal. While, as Alan Lefever has described, the journal has been dormant since 2000, DBU will be able to build upon the work produced by the TBHS in recent years and, before that, Baylor University in providing this journal. Those who had contributed during 2001-2003 to the production of this journal are listed as the Editorial Board. My special thanks to Naomi Taplin who provided the work that had already been done by her and these editorial board members.

In the coming issues I hope to introduce various members of our DBU editorial team. I am most grateful to my colleague Dr. Stephen Stookey for his stellar cooperation in producing the proposal that was accepted by the TBHS officers. Moreover, I am especially grateful to DBU President Dr. Gary Cook. Dr. Cook is devoted to the preservation of Baptist history. It is his enthusiastic support and encouragement that have made it possible for DBU to serve as the journal's host institution.

This issue contains the combined articles from the 2001, 2002, and 2003 issues of *Texas Baptist History*. The 2001 issue of *Texas Baptist History* includes three outstanding papers given at the Spring 2001 joint meeting of the Texas Baptist Historical Society and the Texas State Historical Association.

Karen Bullock's article "The Accidental Historian: Z. N. Morrell" traces the life of Texas Baptists' best known early preacher. In dramatic fashion Bullock sets the stage for Morrell's life using the analogy of a great play in which Morrell acts, directs, and produces. In it she describes Morrell's insightful

and colorful methodology which, as she writes, “afforded his readers the opportunity to glimpse far more than perhaps even Morrell ever intended.” Ultimately, Bullock states that Morrell’s often first-hand testimony of events in Texas Baptist life “provides the only source for much of the information found in the work of subsequent Texas Baptist historians” such as Carroll and Baker, as well as the work of L. R. Elliott and Harry Leon McBeth.

Bill Storrs’s article “Just One of Many Hats: J. M. Carroll the Historian” chronicles Carroll’s significant work as a Texas Baptist historian. While as Storrs’s title suggests, B. H. Carroll’s younger brother contributed to Baptist life in many ways, the focus of the article is upon his work as an historian. Storrs argues that Carroll viewed history from “three underlying perspectives. . . . history is HIS story, history is story, and history is his own story.” As with Morrell, one of Carroll’s key contributions to the preservation of Texas Baptist history was recording first-hand accounts of history that he had observed.

Stephen Stookey’s article “Robert A. Baker: A Teacher of History” suggests that first and foremost, Baker was a teacher. Stookey designates Baker as the “Joe Friday of church history” because of Baker’s extreme reliance on “the stuff” of church history. Stookey also discusses not only Baker’s *Blossoming Desert*, his specific contribution to Texas Baptist history, but also briefly discusses his other works no mean task given Baker’s prolific writing. Stookey argues that Baker’s writing, like that of so many professors, flowed out of his teaching. In turn, his research richly informed his teaching throughout the years.

The articles for 2002 include Wilma Taylor’s fascinating paper from the Fall 2001 TBHS meeting as well as the Spring 2002 TBHS/TSHA joint meeting’s focus on aspects of the controversial J. Frank Norris’s ministry in Texas in two separate articles on the “Texas Tornado” by Gwin Morris and Barry Hankins.

Wilma Taylor’s article reflects the outstanding and

groundbreaking work that she did in her book on the chapel railroad car ministry of the American Baptist Publication Society, specifically that of chapel car *Good Will* that ministered in Texas in the 1890s. This chapel car was one of seven railroad cars employed by American (Northern) Baptists to minister in countless communities and towns west of the Mississippi. Taylor’s article demonstrates the tremendous concern that Baptists and other denominations had regarding the burgeoning population of the American West, as well as the creative ways Baptists chose to address the spiritual needs of those migrants.

Gwin Morris provides a brief biography of J. Frank Norris and then a summary of the ongoing attacks Norris launched against the Baptist General Convention of Texas and Baylor University as well as Tarrant Baptist Association and the Southern Baptist Convention. Morris also draws eight conclusions about Norris and “Norrisism,” ultimately concluding that Norris was “a boil” rather than “a cancer” for Texas Baptists.

Next, Barry Hankins compares the long-term ministry of Norris at the First Baptist Church of Fort Worth with the even longer ministry of W. A. Criswell at First Baptist Church of Dallas. He demonstrates that as difficult and visible as the transition of Criswell to his successors was, Norris’s refusal to let go of the reins in Fort Worth was even more painful and controversial. In conclusion Hankins draws at least three important historical lessons about the transfer of power from long term pastors in mega-churches to their successors.

The 2003 issue is comprised of a wide scope of articles about Texas Baptist life from Royce Measures’ account of often overlooked Primitive Baptist pastor Abner Smith, to three descriptions by David Holcomb, David Chrisman, and Terry Lindley of various aspects of Texas Baptists’ responses to the tumultuous decade of the 1960s, to an article by this editor on the close relationship formed between Home Mission Board chief executive Isaac Taylor Tichenor and Texas Baptists in the 1880s.

Many Baptists are familiar with the controversial Primitive Baptist, Daniel Parker. Leon McBeth records that Parker organized a Baptist church in Illinois and transplanted it to Texas as the first “Baptist church to exist” in the Lone Star state. Royce Measures’ article tells the story of Abner Smith, the pioneer Primitive Baptist whom Measures credits with planting the first Baptist church organized in Texas. In telling Smith’s story, Measures addresses two purposes, “to introduce most people to Abner Smith and the place of the Primitive Baptists in early Texas history; and . . . to illustrate that missionary-minded Baptists in Texas have labored, even from the very beginning, amidst strong adversity.”

David Holcomb’s article “Texas Baptists and Church State Conflicts in the 1960s” addresses the internal debate that raged as a result of the desire of some for federal financial aid to Texas Baptist schools while others maintained that accepting this aid compromised Baptists’ traditional support of separation of church and state. As Holcomb describes the conflict, Texas Baptists’ “seemingly paradoxical mix of social conservatism with a theological and historical commitment to the separation of church and state would place Texas Baptists on a sure path to public schizophrenia.”

David Chrisman’s 2003 article “Texas Baptist Leaders in the 1960s: Theological Conservatives and Political Moderation” discusses the struggles that Texas Baptist leaders had in dealing with the question of race during this tumultuous decade. Chrisman argues that “BGCT leaders never offered a real solution to discrimination for black or white Texas Baptists in the 1950s” and maintains that “by becoming more political in its strategy toward race, moderate leaders indirectly hastened the theological split in the SBC a decade later.”

Terry Lindley summarizes the issues and concerns that Texas Baptists had regarding the Vietnam War. While he contends that most Texas Baptists were politically conservative and supported the war effort, he argues that this did not completely eliminate debate and discussion. His study particularly

focuses on Texas Baptists’ response to the October 15, 1969 Moratorium for Peace movement.

The final article in this issue is a paper written by the editor in 2002 that discusses Home Mission Board leader Isaac Taylor Tichenor and his role in the Board’s work in Texas in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Tichenor’s contributions were so significant that J. M. Carroll later stated that Tichenor “came almost to be regarded as Texan.”

We hope that you will enjoy this combined issue of *Texas Baptist History* and we look forward to many years of serving to preserve the rich and diverse history of Texas Baptists.

Michael E. (Mike) Williams, Sr.
Editor

Volume XXI cover sheet will go here

THE ACCIDENTAL HISTORIAN:
Z. N. MORRELL

The study of history is a fascinating account: idiots and kings, slaves and merchants, soldiers and scholars and scoffers, each with tales to tell. The lives of individuals, and how they perceived themselves throughout their years on earth, are perhaps the most captivating aspects of the discipline. The manifold dimensions of history make complete recollections impossible; for in the telling lies the difficulty. Events never happen singularly or in a vacuum. Political, cultural, religious, economic, and many other influences conspire to bring about events of which no one person, not even the one who figures most prominently in any given story, can be totally aware.

Such is the dilemma of Zecharaias N. Morrell (1803-1883), one of the most colorful characters of Texas history, especially Baptist history in the Lone Star State. The man was part-settler, part-preacher, part-Indian-fighter, part-family man, part-salesman. He was unpredictable, impetuous, irascible and, at the same time, poetical, observant, and reliable. His was a fine, wide streak of honor mixed with a liberal dose of sentiment. Morrell lived with a self-awareness that the unfolding events of his lifetime would impact future generations. Because of this discernment, Morrell was an historian. But what kind of an historian?

This essay is a look at one who recorded first-hand the settling of Texas and the growth of its major denomination: the Baptists. The emphasis will focus upon the methodology Morrell used to portray his times. The manner in which he did so afforded his readers the opportunity to glimpse far more than perhaps even Morrell ever intended.

Morrell's Setting

Texans established a flourishing society in the 1820s, when trappers pushing into the Rockies assumed that beaver pelts were inexhaustible. Texans won a bitter war of independence in 1836, six years before John Fremont began to make and map a systematic survey of the western wilderness.¹ A decade later, Texas was accepted into the Union as a state, just four years after the first wagon train arrived in Oregon. In 1850, when there were only about a dozen men of European descent in Colorado, the census of Texas showed a population of 212,592, and by 1860, as the "Uncivil War" bifurcated the country, the state was home to more than 600,000 Texans.² But life here in its earliest years was never calm. Strife and discord attended its birth and early steps as it responded to the greater tensions of a nation exploding westward.

In the first two decades of the nineteenth century, the United States more than doubled its land area, acquiring some 800,000 square miles in the Louisiana Purchase of 1803, and in the next few years 58,560 square miles more in Florida; both of which properties had formerly belonged to Spain.³ Close to two million Americans then streamed westward across the Appalachian Mountains, settling ever closer to the boundaries of Texas; the Sabine River in the east, and the Red River in the north.

Following the Mexican Independence from Spain in 1821 the new government of Mexico, after months of vacillation, finally allowed Stephen F. Austin, Robert, and others to settle colonists in the territory. Of the three hundred Austin families in the Texas Colony, eleven were known to be Baptists, although the stipulation of settlement was that all newcomers should be or become Roman Catholics. Despite these strictures, immigrants began to arrive by the thousands.

Although most historians would insist that the majority of these settlers were decent, law-abiding folk, nevertheless many Americans of that day regarded Texas with ridicule. As early as

1822 *Nile's Register* called Texas "a rendezvous for criminals," and soon the initials "G. T. T." (Gone to Texas) would become affixed to "every man's name who had disappeared before the discovery of some rascality."⁴ The *Opelousas, Louisiana Gazette* asserted that if Texans and Mexico went to war, "the world would lose many bad citizens and the devil would gain some faithful servants."⁵ Many people, it seems, thought that immigrants to Texas were vagabonds and refugees from justice.

The fifteen years of Mexican rule from 1821 to 1836 witnessed a contest for power between forces of Mexico's jealous but absent national government and the provincial authority invested in the responsible few. The seeds of nationalism were planted in these years. "The contest between Mexican ways and [the Texans'] own . . . gave the expatriate Americans a heightened self-awareness. Neither Mexican nor American, they became Texan."⁶

These unsettling conflicts, coupled with the ever-present Indian menace and the Texans' desperate yearning for independence, brought war to the land. On 2 March 1836, the *Texas Declaration of Independence* was presented to the world; four days later the defenders of the *Alamo* were massacred. The heroics of the Revolution made Texans world-renowned for their fighting prowess, along with tall tales associated with adventurers Sam Houston, Jim Bowie, William Travis, and Davy Crockett. It mattered little that the majority of the men who died in the *Alamo* were not native Texans at all. The state had become legendary, with folk heroes intact.

Throughout these years Baptists numbered among those immigrating to Texas, building log cabins, clearing and planting fields, fighting Indians, Mexicans, and drought. Baptists stood in battle, raised barns, and buried children. In short, Texas Baptists labored among those hardy pioneers who helped tame the vast Texas territory when, despite the years of deprivation and hardships of everyday survival, marked growth occurred.

The earliest Baptist memories in the Lone Star State came

from the pen of one who lived its early chapters and then told its tales: Zacharias N. Morrell, the lame “cane-break preacher and Indian fighter.”⁷ Although it smacks of caricature, Morrell and other Texans laid the foundation for later Baptist work with a Bible in one hand and a muzzle-loader in the other. While it may be tempting to focus upon the Baptist work he chronicled, the intent of this study is to examine Morrell, the man, as historian. Despite the fact that he assessed his own work as “negligible,” Morrell’s narrative of the settling of Texas instead has proven to be the foundational pivot upon which all other Texas Baptist history now turns.

Morrell as Motif

Born in South Carolina in 1803 and relocated to Tennessee as a teenager, Morrell received little formal education. However, his mind was keen, and his knowledge of Scripture formidable. He pastored fourteen years in Western Tennessee, struggling to balance his church membership and doctrines among schismatic anti-missionists on one hand and Campbellites on the other. His powerful, six-foot frame, dead-eye aim with a Tennessee long rifle, and a fearless temperament combined to earn him the nickname, “Wildcat,” which he carried to his grave.

Morrell’s health deteriorated in Tennessee; his lungs hemorrhaged frequently, and he looked for a drier climate to the west, where he had heard of opportunities to settle in Texas.⁸ In 1834 Z. N., his wife, Clearacy, and four children sold their land for \$2,000, loaded into a wagon, hitched up the oxen, and moved west as far as Yalobusha County, Mississippi, where they paused for a year, awaiting word of a victory over Mexico.⁹ In the meanwhile, Morrell started three Baptist congregations; yet was thrilled to accept an invitation of five old Tennessee neighbors in December of 1835 for an exploratory jaunt through Texas, and a bear hunt at the Falls of the Brazos with his friend David Crockett on Christmas Day.¹⁰

Despite his frail condition, and the dangerous journey by mule through Nacogdoches and East Texas, Morrell liked what he saw. The Falls of the Brazos, near present-day Marlin, captivated his imagination, and he dreamed of a great Protestant territory, where Baptists could see “the desert blossom as the rose.”¹¹ He preached his first sermon in Texas on December 30 on Little River, where forty Tennessee settlers were camped with Captain Childers. He then determined to return to Mississippi and fetch his family to Texas. He had been gone six months.

The Morrells boarded the steamer *Statesman* on April 1, 1836 bound for Natchitoches, Louisiana, where outfitters loaded their wagon for the long overland journey westward. As they reached the Sabine, and for days afterwards, they were shocked to find hundreds of fleeing settlers streaming towards them; Texans in retreat under Sam Houston, with Mexicans and Santa Anna at their heels. The Texas Independence had just been declared on March 2, the 188 *Alamo* dead were counted on the 6th, and Fannin’s 330 men at Goliad were massacred on the 27th. Despite warnings, cursing and terror expressed by these settlers, the Morrells did not retreat, but homesteaded first near the Falls, about the time Sam Houston defeated Santa Anna at San Jacinto on April 21. A number of months later, forced by Indian depredations and the unsettled political climate, the family moved to Washington-on-the-Brazos and engaged in the mercantile business.¹² There, in 1837, Morrell organized and pastored the first missionary Baptist church in Texas.¹³

The next years were filled with basic survival, school teaching, land speculation, and educational and missionary endeavors. He fought with Colonel Matthew Caldwell at Salado, where his son, Allen, was captured by the Mexicans and spent the next two years imprisoned in Mexico City. The anxiety over this affair hastened the death of Clearacy in 1843, Morrell’s wife of twenty-two years. Morrell would eventually lose all members of his family and outlive the last of them by fifteen years.¹⁴

In 1846 Morrell was appointed as state missionary by the Domestic Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, then headquartered in Marion, Alabama. In this role, and as a member of the Texas Baptist Education Society, he helped to found Baylor University and planted many churches across the state, among them Washington-on-the-Brazos (1837); Little River in Milam County (1849); and Marlin (1852). He also had a role in the founding of Baptist associations, such as Union (1840), Colorado (1847), Trinity River (1848), Leon River (1858), and Waco (1860). He helped to organize the first state convention among Baptists in 1848. After almost fifty years in Texas, the Baptist State Convention asked him to record the Baptist growth he had witnessed. The result of that request has perhaps been Morrell's finest single contribution.

Morrell's Script: *Flowers and Fruits in the Wilderness*

In 1872 Morrell published his notable *Flowers and Fruits in the Wilderness*, written in his seventieth year, and revised by himself a decade later. This remarkable volume, written in the first person narrative, contains a diverse array of historical information: cultural, ethnic, religious, scientific, anthropological, literary, political, economical, geographical, topographical, and more. It is also humorous, reflecting his optimism and echoing Spurgeon's philosophy that "there is no particular virtue in being seriously unreadable."¹⁵

By way of illustrating the depth of Morrell's contribution to historiography through his volume, and the accidental nature of its methodology, the following brief sections will denote Morrell's roles as historical actor, director, and producer. If he seems somewhat ubiquitous in these roles, one must remember that the drama unfolds as if he were screenwriter and cameraman as well. It is Morrell's lens through which his readers view the emerging years.

Morrell As Actor

Morrell appears throughout the almost fifty years from 1836 to 1882 in a number of significant events. He plays either major roles or is an "extra," depending upon the context. In Baptist life, he is often center-stage, as when he preaches the first sermon in Texas, or stands among the group which founds Baylor University. In other arenas, Morrell plays "bit parts." Sometimes his seemingly small actions lead to surprising and often dramatic consequences.

For example, Morrell had an abiding, deep conviction *not* to shoot Indians unless self-defense required such action. One day in 1838, Morrell and Matthew Burnett were out riding and came upon a young, lone Karankawa brave. In those days, Karankawas were known to be cannibals, and dreaded as mortal enemies of the settlers. Burnett was eager to shoot the young man, but Morrell forced Burnett to hold his fire. The next day, the chief of the Karankawas rode into Morrell's camp with a request to treaty with Sam Houston because the two men had spared his son's life.¹⁶

At another time, Morrell was one of three preachers among 200 men who, in August of 1840, rode with Ben McCullough's posse to rescue Mrs. Watts. She had been kidnapped by Comanches, who had sacked and burned the little town of Linnville. After they had killed her husband in her presence, they took her and several other hostages and escaped. Morrell was the one who found her later, abandoned on the trail with an arrow lodged firmly in her chest. She lived through her ordeal, and corresponded with Morrell for many years afterwards.¹⁷

He also rode with Colonel Matthew Caldwell in September of 1842 to rescue the captured citizens of San Antonio from the Mexican General Woll. The Caldwell contingent camped for five days on starvation rations and fought a hard battle. Afterwards, the mutilated bodies of thirty-five of their own number lay dead and, since Morrell knew them all personally, he was appointed to identify them and to record their names.

He turned over the bodies, listing their names and looking for his own son, Allen, who was not among them. Allen had been captured and taken to Mexico City.¹⁸ Morrell was there at Sam Houston's valedictory address on December 9, 1844, and at his bedside years later in July 1863; two old war-horses speaking of final matters. He was there when Texas was annexed to the Union in 1845, and helped to charter Baylor University the same year.

He was also among those who formed the first state convention in Anderson, Grimes County, in September of 1848, called the Baptist State Convention of Texas. In fact, that evening, when both Henry Graves and Noah Hill, the two men previously appointed to preach the opening Convention address, stalled that night and refused the responsibility, the service dragged on thirty minutes without a named preacher. Finally, Morrell said he had no reputation to lose and delivered an extemporaneous sermon from Isaiah 9:7: "Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end."¹⁹

Because the events of Morrell's historical narrative are triggered by his own life story, the history of Texas and Baptist life unfolds through a series of cameo appearances. Yet the reader catches much more than mere unconnected scenes in this drama. One cannot help but sense the rise of civilization as the social context unfolds.

Morrell as Director

Morrell directs the saga's multi-layered plot with tantalizing sketches of life in an exciting and evolving culture. He says, "Some of the facts and anecdotes may appear silly and ludicrous; but the thoughtful reader will see that they are all illustrative of the state of things surrounding at the time."²⁰ Surely the most alluring aspects of historical narrative are the tidbits about real people, their lives, homes, and customs.

One learns here, for example, about the settlement called Houston in 1837:

Houston was reached late Saturday evening, after swimming the team over Buffalo Bayou, just opposite Main street, as the city is now laid out. No bridge nor ferry boat then. There was a little flat boat that carried over a single horse or empty wagon. [It] was a city of tents; only one or two log-cabins appeared. John K. Allen's framed building was raised, covered, and partly weather boarded. A large amount of goods in tents, a large round tent, resembling the enclosure of a circus, was used for a drinking-saloon. Plenty of John Barleycorn and cigars. . . . I went out in search of a place to preach. Upon inquiry I was informed that there has never been a sermon preached in the place.²¹

Morrell promptly took care of that! Other descriptions of Waco, Corpus Christi, and San Antonio defy imagination as Morrell sketches scenes of their earliest days.

He also serves the reader with visual images of the new animals easterners experienced as they came west. Antelope and buffalo were novelties, and Morrell describes the glee with which groups of older professional gentlemen (lawyers, judges, and professors) would race their horses after herds of antelope until they could isolate a yearling to examine before setting it free to join its group again. Of the buffalo, Morrell was much more specific, observing their precise pattern of locomotion:

They ran scientifically, with the right foot before, a side at a time, for three or four hundred yards. Then the leader would change and run with the left foot before, every buffalo following him to make the same change. The writer, poor fellow, rode a mule, and it would show its blood. It would run with all its might toward the herd; but when it would get within forty yards, and sniff the peculiar odor that escapes the buffalo in the chase, it would invariably shy round. Whenever I would get near enough and ready to shoot, I would find my mule at right angles with my game, and bounding rapidly away. I thought to myself, 'No meat for me, unless this part of the performance can be changed.'²²

Morrell reported in great detail the social mores of the new territory. He denounced in colorful terms ballroom dancing:

“Satan laughed at us in our efforts, and stirred up his imps in human form to tantalize us, by pointing at fashionable Baptist women in the ballroom, running the giddy round, excited by the music, among some of the most abandoned characters. They probably did not know the real character of some of those who took them by the hand, in the midst of the whirl and dance; but they ought to have known it.” Loitering outside of a service while it was in progress incurred the same intense verdict, as did “grog-shop dealers” and race-track developers.²³

Morrell also wrote of family life in this primitive region, beginning with marriages:

Previous to the independence of Texas, marriage was illegal, performed by any save a priest. Catholic priests were very offensive to Texans, and for the performance of the ceremony they exacted twenty-five dollars. Many refused to submit and, in some cases, the parties simply signed a bond in the presence of witnesses, and became husband and wife. The Congress very soon passed a law allowing these parties to take out a license in due form, and be married by a proper officer. When the license and bond were returned, with the certificate of the officer performing the ceremony, the marriage was legal. I was called on frequently afterwards to officiate in such cases and, in a few instances, a group of little children were witnesses for their parents. In one instance, immediately after preaching, I performed a ceremony in the presence of the congregation, the parties each holding a child in their arms.²⁴

Morrell writes intimately of his own children. The Morrell teenagers were sent back to Mississippi to be educated. The two sons and daughter stayed away from home, boarding in the family of close friends, for three years, between 1839 and 1842.

The reader also learns about survival in Texas. Morrell explains how to hunt bear, how to break horses, the proper method of planting corn, as well as how to ford streams to keep one’s “Jerusalem Blade” (Bible) dry in the process. Of church life, he shares snapshots of early Texas Baptist services, when lookouts were posted to keep watch for marauding Indians:

Our opportunities for preaching were very limited. Our crop was cultivated in 1837 under a guard of soldiers. In a short time I ventured down to Nashville, forty-five miles down river, and all the people in the settlement that could, turned out to preaching in a little log cabin, with dirt floor. Just about the time we closed the services on Sunday, the Indians dashed upon us and killed two men, in sight of the congregation. Preacher and people carried carnal weapons with them to the house of God in those days, and did not for a moment suppose they were violating the Scriptures. We instantly changed the services into war with the Indians. Every man was immediately mounted and off with gun in hand on Sunday evening, in full pursuit of the Indians. They were not overtaken, but escaped up Little River.²⁵

As a final example, Morrell tells about the lives of African American slaves, particularly a man named Jerry, who was so obviously gifted in ministry and preaching abilities, that Baptist congregations readily ordained him and supported his ministry.²⁶

Morrell as Producer

The wealth and diversity of information produced in *Flowers and Fruits in the Wilderness*, its vast depth and breadth, must be experienced first-hand. Morrell compiles, evaluates, analyzes, synthesizes, and delivers the final text with casual, yet uncanny accuracy. He acquaints his readership with varied categories of data: the culture and habits of multiple tribes of Indians; population statistics and comparisons between technology, transportation, and amenities by years; recipes, like that of “cold flour,” eaten by soldiers in the fields; the verbatim inclusion of church and associational minutes and newspaper articles, sermons and speeches; corroboration of historical events, such as the kidnapping of the Harvey and Parker children, and the circumstances surrounding the deaths of early Rangers. Morrell gives weather patterns and climate changes which shift in his own lifetime; and geographical

notations of places like Horseshoe Bend and the Great Salt Lake, as they were first described by tribes of Native American Indians. He revisits the Alamo shortly after the massacre of his dear friends, views the shallow, scarred earth which hastily covered the almost 200 unmarked graves, and shares deep, raw grief with his readers.

Morrell defines doctrinal issues and terms, sets Baptist principles against those of other groups. Perhaps most useful to later Baptist historians, Morrell includes biographical materials for dozens of early Baptist pioneers and cites the names, dates, and persons involved with the founding of churches, associations, educational institutions, and other Baptist endeavors; in short, the Texas Baptist story from its inception. His final product is wonderfully complete in its vision, depiction, and execution.

Conclusion

In assessing Morrell as historian, one must ask, what did Morrell intend to do with his work? In his own words, he “intended to preserve some of the facts and incidents connected with the early society and rise of religion in Texas.”²⁷ He intended to use such materials as were available to him, to “lay the foundation for the historian.” He readily acknowledged its weaknesses: a greater use of statistics could have strengthened the report, and better and more accurate documentation should have been available. Yet he labored without complete sets of church minutes, often in frail health, and ever conscious of his looming mortality.

What did Morrell accomplish? Morrell’s pen recorded what he remembered to be true about life: people, events, culture, the development of his denomination. With fine deliberation and keen perception he accomplished his simple goals . . . and so much more. As first among the many remarkable missionary-minded Baptists that followed him, he scouted and marked the trail. He did this so well that generations traced

his steps with confidence. His history provides the only source for much of the information found in the work of subsequent Texas Baptist historians: J. M. Carroll’s *History of Texas Baptists*; *Centennial Story of Texas Baptists*, edited by L. R. Elliott; Robert A. Baker’s *The Blossoming Desert*; and Leon McBeth’s sesquicentennial volume, *Texas Baptists*.

Morrell had few equals in Texas Baptist life. His legacy now, as then, looms large in this state where Baptists “blossomed like the rose” indeed. Of the multiple varieties which have evolved, and the sidewalks poured to isolate each type in recent years, perhaps Morrell would find some cause for challenge. After all, his life and work was intent upon building and unifying the Baptist host in this state.

Texas Baptists today stand in unison to applaud, with profound respect, admiration, and gratitude, this exemplary, indefatigable pioneer, Z. N. Morrell. A “lifetime achievement award” is long past due; for his contributions, whether personal or denominational, whether intentional or accidental, set the stage for every history which has come after. And this ovation is one which well may reverberate in eternity.

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NOTES

¹Edmund H. Harvey, Jr., ed., *Reader’s Digest Book of Facts* (Pleasantville, New York: The Reader’s Digest Association, 1987), 48.

²Hedley Donovan, ed., *The Old West: The Texans* (New York: Time Life Books, 1975), 15; and Frank Wallis, ed., *Ribbons of Time: World History Year by Year Since 1492* (New York: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1988), 87-89.

³John A. Garraty, *The American Nation* (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), 222-23.

⁴*Nile’s Register* quoted in Jennie Floyd, “An Annotated Bibliography

on Texans Found in American Periodicals Before 1900” (M.A. Thesis, Southern Methodist University, 1927), xxxiv-xxxv.

⁵Ibid., for a more detailed study of this era, see Rupert Norval Richardson, Ernest Wallace, and Adrian N. Anderson, *Texas: The Lone Star State*, 4th edition (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1981), 181-12, 211.

⁶Mark E. Nackman, *A Nation Within A Nation: The Rise of Texas Nationalism* (Port Washington, New York: Kennikat Press, 1975), 13.

⁷Leon McBeth, *Texas Baptists: A Sesquicentennial History* (Dallas: Baptistway Press, 1998), 14. Morrell was cleaning a deep well when he fell in accidentally. The resulting injury caused him to limp for the rest of his life. While Morrell does not complain, he does mention his condition frequently in his memoirs.

⁸Z. N. Morrell, *Flowers and Fruits in the Wilderness*, 3rd ed. (St. Louis: Commercial Printing Company, 1872), 6. Morrell warns young preachers about their health; “Let every preacher, and especially the younger ones, who read this, remember, that God has given his ministers a physical machinery that should be cared for, and that fearful responsibilities rest upon them in the midst of neglect.”

⁹Morrell married Clearacy Hayes on 23 August 1821; by the thirteenth year of their marriage, they had four children. See J. M. Carroll, *History of Texas Baptists* (Dallas: Baptist Standard, 1923), 82. After Clearacy died in 1843, Z. N. married a widow, Delia Harlan, in 1845.

¹⁰*Flowers and Fruits*, 13. Morrell had lived in Tennessee with Crockett for eight years and had often participated in bear hunts with his friend. See also his story of coming upon a mother bear and three cubs in the Brazos river bottom in 1847, 152-54.

¹¹Isaiah 35:1. Many years later, Robert Baker would adapt this verse as the fitting title of his history of Texas Baptists, *The Blossoming Desert* (Waco: Word Books, 1970), demonstrating how Morrell’s vision had thus far been accomplished.

¹²*Flowers and Fruits*, 19-32.

¹³Two other Baptist churches existed at the time in Texas: the first was Daniel Parker’s Pilgrim Predestinarian Baptist church established in Illinois in 1833 and transferred to Texas in 1834, first meeting in Austin’s Colony and later at Elkhart; the other was Abner Smith’s Primitive Baptist church located near Bastrop in 1834, neither of them missionary Baptist in composition.

¹⁴*Flowers and Fruits*, 200. Morrell lost Allen, his son, the same year his second wife, Delia Harlan, divorced him over excessive absences from home on his missionary journeys. He spent the latter years at the home of R. J. Sledge in Kyle, Texas, and died there 19 December 1883. He was buried in the Kyle cemetery and his remains later moved to the State

Cemetery in Austin, Texas, in 1946.

¹⁵*Flowers and Fruits*, iv.

¹⁶Ibid., 50-51.

¹⁸Ibid., 65-66.

¹⁷Ibid., 86-96.

¹⁹Ibid., 164-66.

²⁰Ibid., iv.

²¹Ibid., 29.

²²Ibid., 15.

²³Ibid., 109, 110, and 133-34.

²⁴Ibid., 36.

²⁵Ibid., 30.

²⁶Ibid., 26.

²⁷Ibid., iv.

JUST ONE OF MANY HATS:
J. M. CARROLL THE HISTORIAN

This series of articles examines three chroniclers of Texas Baptist history. The question at hand for each article is: “Who is this guy?” It is axiomatic that Carroll was a product of his time and place. It is difficult to understand Carroll under the hat of the historian apart from the numerous other hats that he wore. The objective of this return visit to the subject of J. M. Carroll is to identify the various streams and tributaries that flowed together to form J. M. Carroll, the historian. This investigator has previously put Carroll under the microscope with stuffy and tedious scholarly treatises.¹ To a large extent this treatment is a step back from the microscopic level and so the demand for documentation will not be as great. What follows are impressions about someone this writer knows well. For a full and far more colorful treatment of Carroll’s life, an interested person should read his autobiography.²

Carroll was born January 8, 1852 and died two days after his seventy-ninth birthday in 1931. During his life and fifty-six year ministry he wore several hats. He was a Texan, a Southern Baptist, a family man, an outdoorsman, a farmer, a preacher, a denominational leader, and a church historian.

Carroll wrote four works which touch on Texas Baptist life: *Texas Baptist Statistics, 1895*; *A History of Texas Baptists*; what would become part of *Dr. B. H. Carroll, Colossus of Baptist History*; and an autobiography, *The Story of My Life*.³ The work for which he is most famous or perhaps infamous, *The Trail of Blood*, is outside the consideration of this paper.

J. M. Carroll was a Texan, not by birth but, like other devoted

Texans, as a transplant. Work took him out of Texas but he always regretted leaving and always looked forward to returning home. Carroll immigrated to Texas from the vicinity of Monticello, Arkansas in 1858 when he was six years old. The Carroll family settled near Caldwell in Burleson County where his father, Benajah, bought farm land, set up a store, and continued his work as a Baptist preacher. His experience as a pioneer Texan formed an important part of his personal identity and informed his work as a chronicler of Texas Baptist history. His work suggests an awareness that in dealing with the denomination's history or Texas history that it is difficult to understand the one apart from the other.

Carroll was a Southern Baptist. Both of his parents were Southern Baptists and his father served as what would be called today a bi-vocational pastor. Carroll was converted as a consequence of his brother B. H.'s preaching not long after their mother's death in 1868. J. M. was baptized by his brother and joined the Liberty church near Caldwell.⁴

As a preacher's child he was steeped in Baptist tradition and schooled in Baptist polity. Building consensus based upon the best information available, the only way Baptists have been able to get anything done, would be an important part of his service to the denomination.

As a Texan and Southerner the worldview he grew up with embraced slavery. The Carroll's owned more than twenty slaves when he was growing up and, according to Carroll, they were considered an important part of the family. While the family divided over the wisdom of secession, the three brothers who were old enough to serve fought for the South. Carroll was too young for the army and so he helped the once prosperous family survive the privation at home.

Carroll was a family man. He grew up in a family that valued its members corporately and individually. As a pioneer family they survived and prospered because of their solidarity, willingness to put aside differences, and commitment to pursue common goals. Carroll was the youngest of eight boys and the

next to last of twelve children. Carroll's parents opened their home to thirteen orphans. In turn Carroll would help raise seven children who belonged to other parents in addition to his own daughter. Carroll watched as his mother ministered to sick and dying family members and in his turn spent a lifetime nursing an invalid wife. Values of inclusion and skills of building consensus and solidarity developed on the family level would characterize his work on the church and denominational level and influence his work as an historian.

Carroll was an outdoorsman. Hunting, fishing, and collecting eggs were a central part of his youth and were an important part of his self-concept. As an adult these interests provided a needed outlet for stressful denominational work and provided an opportunity to cultivate wealthy donors for educational needs. Because he was interested in outdoor pursuits these were incorporated into his autobiography the biography of his brother. If anecdotes about life outdoors entertained him they would do the same for readers like him.

Carroll grew up on a farm and worked as a farmer until he entered Baylor in 1873 in preparation for the ministry. In agriculture he learned to work hard, prepare the soil, plant good seed, cultivate the new seedlings, minimize harmful influences, and in due time, harvest and celebrate the increase. Work as a farmer prefigured his role as a preacher. Carroll attended Baylor University while the school was still located at Independence. He and his wife of three years, Sudie Womble, began the arduous cycle of work and study that culminated in a degree in 1877. While at Baylor he became aware of the serious financial challenges facing competing Baptist schools. As a denominational leader he would later help solve these problems.

During Carroll's tenure there J. W. D. Creath transferred the mantle of Texas Baptist historian to him. The Baptist State Convention had enlisted Creath to write a history of Texas Baptists but he had only managed to collect sources. This information and ultimately that collected by others who had attempted the same task came into Carroll's possession.⁵ Although he received

the best preparation that Texas could offer in the 1870s, Carroll was a long way from the revolution in historiography which took hold at Johns Hopkins University the year before Carroll graduated.

Carroll followed farm-learned disciplines of hard work, preparation, cultivation, and harvest in his pastorates. Beginning in 1877 upon graduation from Baylor, he served churches in Anderson, Oakland, Corpus Christi, Lampasas, Taylor, Waco, San Antonio, and Yoakum.⁶

In Anderson and Oakland, in his first real pastorates, Carroll found himself in the cradle of his denomination's development in Texas. During his tenure there he came to know several Baptist pioneers who still lived or served in the area. This early acquaintance awakened in Carroll an interest in his denomination's history. Here he would also begin to serve his denomination as the corresponding secretary and fund-raiser for the Sunday School and Colportage Board. His success in this role would lead to greater levels of denominational advocacy which would continue to call him from much-loved and preferred pastorates.

While Carroll served in Lampasas, voters in Texas faced a referendum on prohibition. Not wanting to create discord in his church which was divided over the issue of alcohol, in 1887 Carroll resigned his pastorate to campaign for prohibition in his fifth year there. The family custom of dosing the household daily with whiskey, initiated by his Baptist preacher father, had yielded a terrible harvest of alcohol abuse among his siblings. His willingness to resign what was his favorite pastorate illustrates both his hatred for drinking and his devotion to church unity.

Of the professional roles that Carroll would play, the pastoral role pleased him the most and, in his own opinion suited him the best.⁷ As a successful pastor he had to learn to keep the main thing the main thing and not be carried off by insignificant distractions. He had to use skills learned in his family and church to build consensus. He had to learn to avoid unnecessary controversy and to deal honestly and fairly with problems that

could not be avoided. Carroll would carry these skills into his roles as a denominational leader and a church historian.

Carroll began to wear the hat of a denominational leader while in his first pastorates. As the corresponding secretary for the Sunday School and Colportage Board, Carroll would begin a revolution that would transform the way the state convention would do business. Carroll took over the role of fund-raiser from the general missionary for the board. Prior to this innovation the missionary had to raise his own support which meant he ended up concentrating his work in the most settled and developed areas, where he was least needed, just to make a living. Instead Carroll raised the salary of the missionary entirely through exhaustive handwritten correspondence. This enabled the missionary to serve where he was needed most rather than where he could get the most money.⁸

After leaving his pastorate in Lampasas to battle "demon rum," the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) hired Carroll as its agent for Texas in 1889. While traveling the state to solicit support, Carroll soon discovered that he needed to educate Baptists about the needs and benefits of missions if he ever hoped to be effective as a fund-raiser. With an invalid wife to care for, Carroll shifted his efforts to education which he would accomplish using the correspondence strategy that had worked for him so well before. His efforts were so successful that within five years he was also representing the Texas State Mission Board, the Home Mission Board of the SBC, and the Old Ministers' Relief Board.⁹ He was one man with one salary doing better than four men had with four salaries. At the heart of his education strategy was the notion that if people could hear the story of God working through Texas Baptists fleshed out in human terms they would respond in generosity and faith. Therefore it was not a big step from denominational leader to Texas Baptist historian.

Carroll resigned the leadership of this consolidated mission enterprise as a result of the slanderous criticism of S. A. Hayden and his paper *The Texas Baptist and Herald* in 1895. Carroll

would go on to lead in the consolidation of fund-raising for Texas Baptist educational interests through a coordinated system. This began with his role as an agent for financially embarrassed Baylor College, at Belton, and would continue through the formation and leadership of the Education Commission. Carroll determined that the financial problems facing Baylor Female College were far worse than the school administration believed. To compound the process of getting the women's college out of debt, the state had just been canvassed by his brother, B. H. and a young George W. Truett in the interest of Baylor University. As a consequence of a conversation with J. B. Gambrell, Carroll came up with a plan to consolidate the needs of the Baptist schools in Texas under an education commission. The newly formed commission hired Carroll as its head but he had not served it long before he encouraged his high-profile brother, B. H., to assume the leadership and he served as his brother's assistant.

Carroll went on to found and serve as the first president of San Marcos Baptist Academy. In 1906 South Texas Baptist leaders approached Carroll for his guidance concerning the development of a Baptist college for their region. After evaluating locations and potential resources, Carroll laid out a plan of development for a preparatory school in San Marcos. The trustees of the new school promptly hired Carroll to bring his plan to fruition. During his tenure Carroll built an impressive physical plant, an exceptional faculty, and a full enrollment. He left in 1911 when trustees abandoned his vision for a school which was more than just a high school.

Not long after this resignation, Carroll was hired as the first president of what would become Oklahoma Baptist University. Beset by financial problems, a poor economy, and unfulfilled promises, in 1912 Carroll made the difficult recommendation to close the school. Carroll sold his bird egg collection at a considerable loss to a state school to meet his own expenses and to pay his faculty some portion of their long unpaid salaries.

Carroll moved from Shawnee to the presidency of Howard Payne in 1913. There he faced the unrealistic expectations of a

board of trustees that hired seven different presidents in twelve years. During his brief tenure Carroll succeeded in raising the status of the school from a junior college to a four year school. Problems with a cotton-based economy which was depressed with the advent of World War I, limited Carroll's effectiveness as a fund raiser and he resigned in 1914. At the heart of Carroll's appeal for support for Baptist educational interests was the story of how God had worked in the past, was working in the present, and would work in the future through people who would attempt great things in faith. He told Baptists their history and gave them an opportunity to buy into their own future.

Carroll was a Texas Baptist historian. He did not come to this role through a life of scholarly preparation informed by the revolution in historical methodology which began in Germany. Instead he was a preacher who was virtually anointed to the task by another preacher and denominational leader. This left Carroll with a sense of divine calling for his role as a historian.

Carroll's upbringing, education, and experience seem to have left him with three underlying perspectives about history. These are the following: history is HIS story, history is story, and history is his own story.

History is HIS story which is to say that history is ultimately the story of God seeking to restore fellowship with a mankind alienated by willful disobedience to God. Therefore history is redemptive, moving from chaos to union with God. If history is redemptive, then it is knowable and worth knowing because, in the final analysis, it is God working in time to save man. If history is HIS story then it is inspiring, instructive, and edifying. History that is worth recording and publishing is that which advances the cause of Christ and the work of the denomination.

If God is working redemptively in history Carroll did not need to fear the truth. It was his faith that God was working things out. This is not to suggest that Carroll was a muckraker, looking through keyholes or searching closets for skeletons. Carroll did not court controversy but tried to keep the main thing the main thing. On the one hand he could tell the truth about his brother,

the seminary president, being a problem drinker prior to his conversion because God redeemed the situation. On the other hand he remained silent about that brother's divorce because that was not his secret to tell and there was no redemptive end in relating it.

If fellow Baptists could recognize God working in the past as recorded in history, then Baptists could have faith in God to work in the future so that they could attempt and support great efforts for God. For a man who would devote much of his life to building up denominational enterprises, history as a servant of denominational interests was no great leap into the unknown. If history is HIS story then Texas Baptist history is simply another chapter in the second book of Acts.

Carroll's first encounter with history was from the Bible. As the son of a Baptist preacher, Carroll heard HIS story every time he heard his father preach. When Carroll learned to read one of the few books available to him was the Bible. Coming from his background no book was more worth reading. At the center of his understanding of history was HIS story.

If history is HIS story then the model for writing history is the Bible. The Bible honestly portrays not just the successes of God's people but also their failures, not just their greatness but their frailty. Carroll's work reflected this honesty in his treatment of the man who was closest to him, his brother, B. H. In his manuscript of what would become J. W. Crowder's *Dr. B. H. Carroll, The Colossus of Baptist History*, Carroll related incidents which reflected the humanity of this legendary pastor, educator, and founder of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.¹⁰ These were edited in publication. In his manuscript of *Texas Baptists*, Carroll included excerpts from associational minutes which showed Baptist racism.¹¹ These were edited by Carroll's board of editors. If redemptive lessons could be learned from the failings of David, Samson, Elijah, and Jonah, then worthy lessons could be learned from more contemporary Baptists. If the model for writing history is the Bible, then it will embody a strong narrative line.

From Carroll's perspective history is story. It has a beginning, a middle, an end, and often a point. The Bible tells the story without encumbering it with unnecessary details. The Bible concentrates on the essentials and thus tends to be anecdotal. Historical works which Carroll encountered in his youth and education had a strong narrative line. These were not burdened with descriptive or inferential statistics; nor were they overly interpretive or theoretical. To Carroll history was story.

Storytelling was an important craft particularly on the frontier where written works were in short supply. This was a critical skill for a preacher and Carroll's father and brother would have modeled it for him. A good story embodies humor and pathos. It is as close to the human level as possible. A lofty, dry academic treatise would not have appealed to him as a student of history and it would not have appealed to the market for which Carroll was writing. A story recorded by first person observers brings history down to an appealing human level.

As a participant and observer of much of the history which Carroll recorded, history often tended to be his story. Because he had experienced much of it he could relate the humor, pathos, and inspirational details that would interest him and readers like him. Unfortunately in recording his story, Carroll's work may overemphasize his own role in making history by neglecting the equally important role of others. By telling his story from his perspective he may sacrifice objectivity by failing to report other perspectives.

These limitations in telling his story would have been most problematic in *Texas Baptists*. However Carroll had an editor, J. B. Cranfill, who was also a participant in much of the history which Carroll sought to record. If he or other members of the editorial board felt that Carroll lacked objectivity or perspective there is no evidence of it in the extensive correspondence between these people.

A pervasive theme of Carroll's professional life was that good information builds consensus and consensus builds strong denominations. Good information builds reliable support because

it is based upon principle rather than solely upon emotion or enthusiasm.¹² Reliable support builds strong denominations.

Writing history enabled Carroll to inform and enlist his own generation and generations that followed. By showing Texas Baptists where we came from gives us a benchmark against which we can determine where we are now and where we should be in the future. By telling Texas Baptists our history, Carroll gives us an opportunity to build upon our past and to buy into our future.

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NOTES

¹William G. Storrs, "The Life and Work of J. M. Carroll" (Ph.D. diss., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1995). Storrs, "J. M. Carroll as a Texas Baptist Historian," *Texas Baptist History* 13 (1993): 27-61. Hereafter *Texas Baptist History* will be cited as *TBH*.

²J. M. Carroll, "The Story of My Life," *TBH* 6(1986): 37-106; 7(1987): 40-118; and 13(1993): 109-116.

³For a discussion of these works see Storrs, "J. M. Carroll," *TBH* 13(1993): 30-42.

⁴Carroll, "My Life," *TBH* 6(1986): 81-84.

⁵J. M. Carroll, *A History of Texas Baptists*, ed. J. B. Cranfill (Dallas: Baptist Standard Publishing Co., 1923), ix-xi.

⁶Carroll pastored several small churches around Independence while at Baylor. He served part time at the Anderson and Oakland churches from 1878 until 1880. He left these simultaneous pastorates for the mission pastorate in Corpus Christi where he remained until the Lampasas church called Carroll in 1882. He pastored there until the prohibition election of 1887 when he resigned to campaign for the issue. Carroll accepted a call to the mission pastorate at Taylor with specific impressions regarding how long he should stay. When these objectives were accomplished, he resigned the Taylor church in 1888. Carroll was called from his role as the leader of the Education Commission to follow his brother in the pastorate

of First Church Waco in 1901. His brief tenure there ended in 1902 in response to an urgent call to lead an effort to raise the endowment of Baylor University. In 1916 Carroll accepted what he hoped would be a part time pastorate at the Riverside church in San Antonio with the idea that this arrangement would allow him the opportunity to write a history of Texas Baptists. He reluctantly resigned in 1919 because he was getting nothing written. After completing his history and in failing health, Carroll accepted a call from the Yoakum church in 1922, but he served there only briefly.

⁷Carroll, "My Life," *TBH* 7(1987): 63, 72, and 96.

⁸*Ibid.*, 40-41.

⁹*Ibid.*, 72-74.

¹⁰Carroll, "B. H. Carroll," B. H. Carroll Collection, file 132, Archives, A. Webb Roberts Library, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth.

¹¹Carroll, "Baptist Work Among the Negroes During Reconstruction," J. M. Carroll Collection, file 738, Archives, A. Webb Roberts Library, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth.

¹²Carroll, "My Life," *TBH* 7(1987): 69.

ROBERT A. BAKER: A TEACHER OF HISTORY

Introduction

“Robert A. Baker: A Teacher of History”—the title is not my own; it was assigned. I might have titled this morning’s presentation, “Just the Facts” or “Robert Baker: The Joe Friday of Church History.” Assessing one’s contributions as a teacher implies an analysis of the classroom, but Baker’s role as teacher extended beyond the lecture halls on Seminary Hill.

Forty-one years teaching at a single institution; courted by seminaries, colleges, and pulpit committees of prominent Baptist churches—North and South; guest lecturer in the United States and abroad; active participant in professional societies and denominational consultations; popular interim and supply preacher in Texas Baptist churches; author of fourteen books and contributor to texts, journals and newspapers; Robert Andrew Baker was widely recognized as the dean of Southern Baptist historians during the third quarter of the twentieth century. Preaching, teaching, research, writing and denominational service were all directed toward one specific arena in Robert Baker’s ministry—teaching.

Life

Robert Baker refused to call attention to his own life and accomplishments. Personal experiences certainly laid a foundation for Baker’s understanding of the human condition. Life’s lessons were woven into lectures and sermons without

calling attention to self. Modesty and humility were key virtues modeled by Baker.

Born in St. Louis, Missouri, December 22, 1910, the second of three boys born to William and Grace (Wolfenbarger) Baker,¹ and reared in Kansas City, self-sacrifice marked Baker's life as a youth. Robert Baker was two years old when his father died.² Bob, as he was known to family and friends, admired his mother—a woman of dignity and culture. Following William Baker's death, Grace Baker moved her family to Kansas City. The Baker children all pitched in to help the family make ends meet; Bob passed papers and worked at the YMCA. Family financial needs necessitated that Baker drop out of high school after his junior year. He returned to finish high school a year later at the insistence of his mother. Upon graduating high school in 1929, Baker entered secretarial school to learn court reporting and shorthand, skills later put to use as a historian.³

The Baker children attended Immanuel Baptist Church, while their mother remained a life-long Methodist.⁴ Bob was actively involved at Immanuel, particularly in B.Y.P.U. activities. Immanuel was affiliated with the Northern Baptist Convention, and Baker admitted to having no knowledge of the Southern Baptist Convention's existence until he was eighteen or nineteen.⁵ Upon his profession of faith and baptism at age twelve, Baker felt called to Christian ministry. Family financial needs delayed plans to enter the ministry.⁶

Baker's career before entering the ministry demonstrates a commitment to excellence. In June of 1932, Baker accepted an office position with the Treasury Department's Secret Service division. The appointment doubled his salary, but it required a move to Oklahoma City. Baker had not abandoned his call to ministry, but the fiscal needs of his mother and siblings took priority. Shortages in the Oklahoma City office took Baker from his desk to unofficial work as a field operative. Baker's innate skills to investigate and close cases with convictions led to an unexpected and unprecedented promotion to special agent.⁷ Baker excelled in the Secret Service, gaining experience

in counterfeiting schemes, a task which required a keen eye for minute details—a skill Baker evidenced in his historical research.⁸

Baker was actively involved at First Baptist Church, Oklahoma City, and his potential skills as a minister were noticed, nurtured and encouraged by pastors T. L. Holcomb and W. R. White.⁹ White urged Baker to lay aside all distractions and dedicate all his energies to ministerial preparation. Baker had been taking night classes at Oklahoma University to ready himself for an eventual transition to professional ministry. With his siblings now able to care for his mother's needs, Baker resigned from the Secret Service in December of 1936 to prepare for vocational ministry. At the urging of White, Baker enrolled at Baylor University.¹⁰

Maturity and urgency of calling compelled Baker to waste no time at Baylor. He was a committed student, excelling in the classroom. The former undercover agent carried trays at Luby's Cafeteria to earn his meals. He gained practical ministry experience as Assistant Pastor/Music Director at Bell Mead Baptist Church.¹¹ Fred McCaulley, pastor at Bell Mead, mentored the former Secret Service agent turned ministerial student. Baker completed his B.A. course of study in 1939. June 3, 1939, was a busy day for Baker; graduation in the morning was followed by matrimony in the afternoon to Fredona McCaulley, the oldest daughter of Pastor McCaulley.¹²

Resigning from Bell Mead shortly after graduation, the Bakers moved to Fort Worth so Bob could attend Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Baker's intellectual abilities caught the attention W. T. Conner and W. W. Barnes—the godfathers of faculty selection. Serving as pastor to two half-time churches as a student, Baker entered his second year at Southwestern with the added responsibility of teaching night classes for African-American students.¹³

As graduation approached in 1941, Baker wrestled with his future in ministry—the pulpit or the classroom. First Baptist Church, Hillsborough, Texas, offered Baker a far greater salary

to serve as its pastor than Southwestern could offer Baker to join its faculty. Conner and Barnes, each looking for an heir, extolled the virtues of a ministry in theological education. Baker entered Southwestern's Th.D. program.¹⁴

When Baker accepted a faculty position at Southwestern in 1942, he did not relinquish pulpit ministry. He served as pastor of Highland Baptist Church, Dallas, from 1946 to 1952—a church with a resident membership between 2,500 and 3,000 and a regular Sunday School attendance of 700-800. Interim pastorates and supply preaching marked the remainder of Baker's ministry beyond Southwestern.¹⁵

Baker could have joined any department in the School of Theology. His early course offerings included Greek, Church History, and Missions.¹⁶ Baker's full teaching attention soon turned to Church History.¹⁷ Why church history? 1) Baker enjoyed the factual aspect of history. 2) Baker saw history as a discipline of wide perspective, helping one better understand life in the present. 3) Baker admired W. W. Barnes. Impressed by the refined Barnes, Baker hoped the study of church history would help him become a Christian gentleman and scholar like Barnes. Barnes and Baker developed a father-son relationship. Baker learned all he could from Barnes, revering the respected historian's grasp of the details of history as well as the breadth of context.

Completing his Th.D. in 1944, Baker had the unexpected opportunity to pursue a Ph.D. at Yale in 1945.¹⁸ Baker thrived at Yale, studying church history with Kenneth Scott Latourette, European history with Roland Bainton, American Christianity with Luther Weigel and history of doctrine with Robert Calhoun. Latourette's influence was paramount, impressing Baker with his grasp of bibliographic resources and broad understanding of historical context. After only one year of course work, Baker passed his doctoral exams with honors. Baker's Yale dissertation, completed in 1947, is a remarkable example of thorough primary and secondary source research. Employing investigative skills honed in the Secret Service, Baker's detailed

analysis of American Baptist Home Mission Society financial records and field reports disproved the South's contention that during the 1840s there had been disproportionately low returns in services rendered for contributions to the "northern society." Baker's analysis demonstrated that the South actually received more than its fair share in missionaries and services. Written while Northern Baptist-Southern Baptist relationships were strained, the even-handed treatment of the issues present in the research became a trademark of Baker's career as an interpreter of Baptist life.¹⁹

During his tenure at Southwestern, Baker emerged as a respected leader on campus and within Southern Baptist life. In 1952, Baker assumed responsibility for Southwestern's Th.D. (later Ph.D.) program, and for the next twenty-nine years he guided its development. He was an active participant in the work of the SBC Historical Commission and the Texas Baptist Historical Society.²⁰ A severe heart attack in 1972 curtailed Baker's activities beyond Southwestern, but it did not significantly impair his research or teaching. Baker retired from the faculty of Southwestern in 1981 but continued his research and writing. Death claimed Robert A. Baker on November 15, 1992. He was survived by his wife, Fredona, daughter Colleen Kay (Baker) Brewer, and son Robert A. Baker, Jr.

Baker the Classroom Teacher

Why is Robert Baker revered by his former students? The answer lies in his abilities as professor, pastor, author and interpreter of Baptist life. In all of these areas he was a teacher, instilling in his audience a passion for the past and its impact upon the present.

Robert Baker was not an electrifying lecturer; he could easily be described as the Joe Friday of church history—"Just the facts, ma'am." His lectures focused on the facts, the stuff of history. He systematically worked through the assigned texts, supporting the day's topic with readings from primary

sources—figures from the past summoned to provide eyewitness testimony. His application of history to contemporary life and ministry were subtle, allowing the drama of history to accomplish the task.

Baker's classes were not devoid of humor; Baker's dry, subtle wit found its way into the classroom. He bantered with his "back row boys" and blew the dust off resource documents onto the students seated in the front row. He employed self-deprecating humor, telling classes, "I can repeat the definition of Chalcedon, but I still don't understand what it means." The statement was then followed by a detailed and insightful exegesis of the Council's decision. There was no question among students that Baker knew well his discipline.²¹

Robert Baker was not an easy professor. He expected his students to be students. He often wrote ancient creeds on the blackboard in Latin and/or Greek, with no apologies to the undereducated.²² Exams were essay, and tested the students' grasp of historical facts. He expected much of his students and they delivered.

Remembered as a caring professor, Baker was not one to share personal stories in class. His life experiences were certainly present in his lectures, but in very subtle ways, woven into the fabric of the class and separated from personal identification, so as not to draw attention to self. He modeled ministerial and academic excellence, and the students took note. Without sensationalism or flash, Baker used the facts of history to help students interpret the past, understand the present and prepare for the future. Baker treated all people—past and present—with fairness; he avoided labeling people or groups and refused to judge another's experience with Christ. Primary sources read to the class allowed the players in the historical drama to defend and/or incriminate themselves. These encounters with "history friends"—worthy men and women of the past—were meant to inspire students toward faithful ministry, emboldened by "the historical evidence of the living Lord marching through the pages of Christian history."²³

The lessons of history, however, were not privileged information for seminarians. Baker appealed to a wider audience through the written word. Baker's classroom emphasis upon a clear presentation of the facts of history provided the backbone for his literary pursuits.

Baker the Author as Teacher

Robert Baker's writings—for the guild and the laity—reveal a deep reliance upon primary source material and a thorough knowledge of secondary sources. He reflected the best of his mentors, Latourette and Barnes—both men possessed broad historical vision; both men wrote and taught from the excess of extensive research and an intimate knowledge of source material. Baker approached historical inquiry like an investigation, combing the mass of primary documents, collecting testimony from the players, visiting sites, and scrutinizing the minutiae of history for the critical matter for accurate historical understanding.²⁴ Accurate historical interpretation could not be built upon circumstantial evidence.

Baker's first two publications, *J. B. Tidwell Plus God* (1947) and *Relations between Northern and Southern Baptists* (1948), set the pattern for the remainder of his writing career. Biography became a staple of Baker's approach to history—both in the classroom and in texts. Baker's biography of Baylor's popular professor evidenced an eye for detail and an ability to connect the reader with the personality. Biographic vignettes pepper Baker's texts, bringing a personal dimension to historical events. Detailed research, thoughtful analysis, and well developed conclusions mark *Relations between Northern and Southern Baptists*.²⁵

A decade passed before Baker's next book, but the interim was filled with Sunday School lessons and articles in journals and newspapers.²⁶ A pair of texts closed out the 1950s: *The Baptist March in History* (1958) and *A Summary of Christian History* (1959). Designed for the laity, *The Baptist March in*

History acquainted lay readers with Baptists place in the flow of church history. Well received by lay readers, this text has been translated into Spanish, Arabic and Korean. Classroom need led to the production of *A Summary of Christian History*. Intended to be a “temporary make-shift until a suitable text could be located,” *A Summary of Christian History*, became the text for a generation of seminarians and college students. In 1994 *A Summary of Christian History* was revised and updated for a new generation of students.²⁷

The 1960s brought a rapid succession of books and articles. *Survey of Christian History* (1964) and *The First Southern Baptists* (1966) continued Baker’s efforts to make history accessible to lay people. Baker’s detailed research in Kittery, Maine, documented the residency of William Screven, Sr., from 1682 to 1696. Previous scholars relied on speculation and circumstantial evidence to locate Screven, such evidence would not suffice for Baker.²⁸

A Baptist Source Book, with Particular Reference to Southern Baptists (1966) allowed students access to 241 primary source documents with brief introductions highlighting context and relevance. The content bears witness to Baker’s emphasis upon primary source material as the building blocks for accurate historical understanding. Baker closed the 1960s with two institutional histories: *The Story of the Sunday School Board* (1966) and *The Thirteenth Check: the Jubilee History of the Annuity Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1918-1968* (1968). Alongside the five books published during the 1960s, Baker found time to publish articles and contribute chapters to texts.

Baker continued his prolific schedule of research and writing during the 1970s in spite of a severe heart attack in 1972. *The Blossoming Desert* (1970) regaled Texas Baptists with their efforts to fulfill Z. N. Morrell’s dream of a blossoming Baptist witness in the Lone Star state. Written to fill a need for a text, *The Southern Baptist Convention and Its People, 1606-1972* (1974) is hailed as Baker’s “greatest contribution to his

denomination.” Baker transcended Barnes earlier history of the SBC which focused on the broad sweep of Southern Baptist experience. Baker told the story of the SBC by emphasizing the stories of its constituency, specifically state conventions. The text contains an impressive array of statistical data for each state. While extremely useful, the abundance of statistical analysis obscures Baker’s traditional style of writing, creating a dry account of Southern Baptist history. Baker readily acknowledged the perceived shortcomings of the text created by editorial limits, the bane of Baker’s writings projects.

I almost went mad trying to chop out—I cut out the fat, to start with, and then I cut out the lean, and then I cut out some of the bones, and the thing that’s left is barely a skeleton. And it’s been gnawed on quite a bit. It’s almost dry bones now.²⁹

Baker would have much preferred the luxury of Latourette’s multi-volume style.

Baptist History & Heritage, *The Quarterly Review*, and *The Southwestern Journal of Theology* were the recipients of the overflow of Baker’s research and cut material from *The Southern Baptist Convention and Its People, 1606-1972*. Typical of Baker’s articles in the 1970s was a series of six articles in *The Quarterly Review* which introduced readers to six “Big Little-known Baptists.”³⁰ Baptist virtues—both in distinctive beliefs and practical ministry—were highlighted in these and similar vignettes.

Baker penned two local church histories, *Her Walls before Thee Stand* (1977), the centennial history of First Baptist Church, Texarkana, and *Adventure in Faith: The First 300 Years of First Baptist Church, Charleston, South Carolina*, (1982). Both works exhibit Baker’s reliance upon detailed research and engaging prose.

Retirement from Southwestern in 1981 did not bring an end to Baker’s literary pursuits. In 1983 Baker published *Tell the Generations Following*, the story of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Baker previewed Southwestern’s

history in the months preceding publication with a series of vignettes published in the *Southwestern News*.

Conclusion

Reared by a Methodist mother, nurtured in a Northern Baptist church, educated at Baylor University, Southwestern Seminary, and Yale University, Robert Baker was not a provincial Southern Baptist. Baker's lectures, sermons, and writings display an intimate knowledge of the breadth and depth of Baptist life. His unfolding of the past helped students in the classroom, people in the pew, and interested readers understand the essentials of Baptist life. Key Baptist distinctives—authority of the Bible, local church autonomy, priesthood of all believers, missions/evangelism, and religious liberty—were modeled and taught by Baker in the classroom and through his writings.

Causation was Baker's primary concern as a historian.³¹ A keen intellect, an eye for detail, and a broad understanding allowed Baker to demonstrate how the present came to be—true to the facts of history. Baker's emphasis upon primary source research allowed those in the present to “dialogue with the ancients” and gain insight into present conditions.³² Baker refused to play the role of prophet, focusing on history's practical application in the present.³³

Baker's eye for detail, evidenced in his Yale dissertation, defined Baker as a historian. Baker's statistical data in *The Southern Baptist Convention and Its People, 1606-1972* is a valuable resource to the serious student of Baptist history.³⁴ Footnotes and bibliography in Baker's writings are an invaluable guide to resource material. Baker was the beneficiary of W. W. Barnes research, receiving Barnes's library and research notes. Baker's ability to speed read combined with his court reporting skills allowed him to work through vast quantities of material with detailed notes. Baker's research files multiplied and outstripped the research of Barnes. Baker

believed the research files of the Barnes-Baker collection alongside his Southern Baptist history would easily fill fifteen to twenty volumes. Baker's files evidence that he left no stone unturned.³⁵

Baker refused to treat history as a sensationalist tell-all memoir. Baker's Christian character would not allow him to label, liable, or lampoon another person. Baker did not tell everything found in his research. Extremely controversial episodes in denominational or institutional life were given summary, professional treatment; the essentials and not the excess were conveyed.³⁶ Baker's reluctance to tell all raise important questions about the role of a historian. Is a historian obligated to tell everything found in the course of research? Or, is it the historian's responsibility to tell only that which conveys the essence of the story? Baker employed editorial restraint, especially when key participants in controversies were still alive or when the unflattering details distracted from the essentials of historical inquiry. Jesse Fletcher observed, “[Baker] will say everything vital to a point and write all the background needed to draw a conclusion, but he disdains anything more than is required for either.”³⁷

Baker sought to make history relevant and practical.³⁸ Baker frequently utilized biography to accomplish these goals. Baker's first book, *J. B. Tidwell Plus God*, established Baker's emphasis upon biography as a window to the past. Virtues of self-sacrifice, humility, devotion, Christian character, and Baptist identity were common themes in Baker's biographic studies. For example, Baker's biographic vignettes in the *Southwestern News* (1982-1984) reminded the Southwestern family of the institution's commitment to academic excellence and effective ministry. Baker did not have to force application upon the reader, the witness of the lives highlighted provided the application.

When asked about the process of identifying writing projects, Baker replied, “I either wrote to fill teaching needs or in response to a request.”³⁹ Through Baker's literary pursuits a

generation of Baptists became intimately acquainted with those individuals and organizations who nurtured and preserved the Baptist witness. Baker's students, infected with his passion for church history and academic excellence, interpreted Christian history and the Baptist experience from pulpits, on the mission field, at denominational agencies and in the classrooms of seminaries and colleges.⁴⁰ The Baptist histories produced by H. Leon McBeth and Jesse Fletcher evidence Baker's emphasis upon causation as explained through detailed primary source research.⁴¹ W. R. Estep and Leon McBeth continued Baker's tradition of excellence in historical research, writing and teaching at Southwestern, in turn passing on the Barnes-Baker tradition to a new generation of students.

Baker valued diversity in Southern Baptist life, reminding audiences: "There are no first lieutenants among Baptists; they are all generals."⁴² He emphasized cooperation over independency, diversity over creedalism, and love over antagonism. These lessons, subtly woven throughout Baker's writings, sermons and lectures, achieved a forceful emphasis in Baker's final years. In his 1985 Hobbs Lecture at Oklahoma Baptist University, "Divided We Stand," Baker succinctly analyzed the divisions present with the SBC, demonstrated with clarity and precision the emergence of creedalism in Southern Baptist life, provided insight into the present and suggested a remedy for the future.⁴³ He berated no person or group; he stood as an objective observer, allowing the facts of history to speak. Baker concluded that Southern Baptists were not moving toward creedalism, they had long since arrived.

Jesse Fletcher correctly concluded his biographical survey of Robert Baker's life with the observation that "[t]he spectacular is not his thing; accuracy is."⁴⁴ In final analysis, however, be it in the classroom, behind the pulpit, or through the written word, Baker's accuracy as a historian had a spectacular impact.

Stephen Stookey
Dallas Baptist University
Dallas, Texas

NOTES

¹Baker had two older step-sisters. Archives, Roberts Library, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, TX, "Robert A. Baker: Baptist Biography File," Samuel B. Hesler, "Robert Andrew Baker."

²Baker had no memories of his father and little discussion with his mother about his father.

³Robert A. Baker, *The Oral Memoirs of Robert Andrew Baker* (Dallas: Baptist General Convention of Texas, 1981), 2-5; Jesse Fletcher, "Robert Baker," in *The Lord's Free People*, ed. by William R. Estep (Fort Worth, TX: Evans Press, 1976), 1-2.

⁴The church was but a few blocks from the Baker home.

⁵Baker, *Memoirs*, 3.

⁶Baker felt responsible for the financial care of his mother, and he assisted his siblings in financing their college education.

⁷Baker, *Memoirs*, 6-8. W. H. Moran, Chief of the United States Secret Service wired the appointment to special agent with the simple instructions: "Have Baker take the oath of office." Normal prerequisites for appointment as a field agent included a law degree or one year police work. Baker possessed neither qualifier. Baker served as the inside man on many assignments, investigating counterfeiting rings, stolen government bonds, gambling, and forged checks. Baker was sent to Washington D. C. and trained in counterfeiting techniques.

⁸Baker enjoyed investigative work. He acknowledged, "my own investigative methods and research since I've come into teaching were influenced by the thoroughness of the investigative work that I did in the Secret Service." Baker, *Memoirs*, 8.

⁹T. L. Holcomb left First Baptist to lead the Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville; W. R. White formerly served as Executive Secretary of the Baptist General Convention of Texas and would later leave First Baptist for the presidency of Baylor University

¹⁰Baker, *Memoirs*, 11-18; Fletcher, 2. Years later White, then president of Baylor, tried to persuade Baker to leave Southwestern Seminary to head Baylor's Religion department

¹¹Baker, *Memoirs*, 21. Baker accepted the Bell Mead position after

declining a call to pastor a church near Belton because he had neither a wife nor a car and “the church wanted both of those.”

¹²Baker, *Memoirs*, 19-24; Fletcher, 3. Baker considered his marriage to Fredona “the best days work I’ve ever done.” Mary Crutcher, “Summer Sketchbook,” *Fort Worth Press*, 27 August 1964.

¹³Baker, *Memoirs*, 27-28; Fletcher, 3.

¹⁴Baker, *Memoirs*, 28-38. Further encouraged by new faculty member Stuart Newman, Baker began his Th.D. work studying Greek and theology at the behest of Conner. Barnes, however, won the recruiting war as Baker switched to church history in his second year of studies.

¹⁵Fletcher, 5.

¹⁶“Faculty Addition,” *Southwestern News* (May 1943): 2, Baker joined Southwestern’s faculty as Instructor of Church History and New Testament.

¹⁷W. W. Barnes began to teach only Baptist History in his final years at Southwestern. Baker covered the remained of the Church History courses. Baker, *Memoirs*, 52. Upon completion of his Th.D. at Southwestern, Baker was promoted from Instructor of Church History and New Testament to Assistant Professor of Church History. “Commencement,” *Southwestern News* (May 1944): 2.

¹⁸Stuart Newman was scheduled to spend his sabbatic leave at Yale, but a change in Newman’s plan led to a request from the faculty for Baker to fill Newman’s spot in New Haven. Baker had met Kenneth Scott Latourette when the eminent Baptist church historian from Yale lectured at Southwestern in 1944. Latourette suggested that Baker consider further training in church history. Fletcher, 4.

¹⁹Robert A. Baker, “The American Baptist Home Mission Society and the South, 1832-1894.” (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1947).

²⁰Baker served as Vice-Chairman of the Historical Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention from 1970-1973 and Chairman from 1973 to 1976. He was the first recipient of the Commission’s distinguished service award in 1981. Baker served as the first President of the reorganized Texas Baptist Historical Society in 1977.

²¹Baker, *Memoirs*, 153.

²²On one occasion while lecturing on the Apostle’s Creed, as Baker was writing the text of the Creed on the blackboard in Latin, a student muttered that he did not understand Latin. Hearing the comment, Baker calmly erased the board and began to write the Creed in Greek followed with the admonition that the student had better understand what was presently being written.

²³Robert A. Baker, *The Baptist March in History* (Nashville: Convention Press, 1958).

²⁴Baker’s ability to speed read, combined with his court reporting

skills, allowed him to work through vast quantities of material, producing detailed notes. Baker recalled his desire to see the interior of the High Hills of Santee Church where Richard Furman was converted and later pastored: “Nobody was around the church, we just wanted to get in. So we broke the law. We opened a window and sneaked into the church and we knelt down there in the pulpit and prayed that God would make us ministers like Richard Furman in that old High Hills of the Santee church, and old church with the old characteristics still there—bricks they used to keep their feet warm. And the little square carrels or pews that they sat in.” Baker’s accomplice was W. W. Barnes.

²⁵Robert A. Baker, *Relations Between Northern and Southern Baptists* (Fort Worth: Author, 1948), is the published version of Baker’s Yale dissertation. See, Robert A. Baker, “The America Baptist Home Mission Society and the South, 1832-1894,” Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1947.

²⁶No doubt Baker’s pastorate at Highland Baptist Church, Dallas, cut into Baker’s time research and writing. Baker resigned as pastor at Highland Baptist, Dallas, in 1952. Topics covered by Baker included continued assessment of North/South Baptist relations, examination of the Rocky Mount Church legal battle, and local church autonomy. All exhibit Baker’s trademark of detailed research.

²⁷Robert A. Baker, *A Summary of Christian History*, revised by John M. Landers (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Press, 1994). Baker’s original text went through more than eight printings and was translated into Chinese and Spanish.

²⁸Robert A. Baker, *The First Southern Baptists* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1966). Nettles, 75, Baker recounts his adventures investigating the whereabouts of William Screven from 1682 to 1696, including a search for Screven’s grave under a South Carolina home. Baker spent a sabbatic leave combing through records from South Carolina to Maine in an effort to thoroughly document William Screven’s life. “Four Professors on Sabbatic Leave,” *Southwestern News* (July 1962).

²⁹Baker, *Memoirs*, 77. When it came to writing, Baker admitted, “The hardest part has always been the limitations on space imposed by publication specifications.” Fletcher, 6.

³⁰In each vignette Baker unfolded the stories four preachers (Adiel Sherwood, John G. Landrum, Lewis Lunsford, Zacharius N. Morrell), a layman (Joseph Cole Stalcup), and a devoted Christian mother (Ann Graves). Robert A. Baker, “Lewis Lunsford,” *The Quarterly Review* 37 (October 1976): 18-22; “Adiel Sherwood,” *The Quarterly Review* 37 (January 1977): 17-22; . “Ann Graves,” *The Quarterly Review* 37 (April 1977): 20-24; “Zacharius N. Morrell,” *The Quarterly Review* 38 (October 1977): 20-25; “John G. Landrum,” *The Quarterly Review* 38 (January 1978): 20-25; “Joseph Cole Stalcup,” *The Quarterly Review* 38 (April

1978): 18-23.

³¹Mary Crutcher, "Summer Sketchbook," *Fort Worth Press*, August 27, 1964. Baker viewed causation as the key contribution of the historian: "We emphasize causation, digging in to find why something happened."

³²Mary Crutcher, "Summer Sketchbook," *Fort Worth Press*, August 27, 1964.

³³When asked to forecast the future, Baker replied, "[I] can't see much beyond the end of my nose, as a Baptist historian." Baker, *Memoirs*, 201. Baker was much more comfortable applying history to the present: "I don't think you can understand present Southern Baptist life or religious life unless you go back and pull out the whole context, religious, economic, social, political and so on." Baker, *Memoirs*, 212.

³⁴One can find census reports, population growth/decline, church statistics, and financial records. Baker, *The Southern Baptist Convention and Its People, 1606-1972* (Nashville, Broadman Press, 1974), 141, the introductory paragraph to Baptist life in Louisiana is typical of the wealth of statistical data found in the text: "*Louisiana*. This state was admitted to the Union in 1812, the first state to be formed from the Louisiana Purchase of 1803. The population in the first census in which hit was shown in 1810 was 75,556, of which 34,660 were slaves. By 1840, it had increased to 352,441, with 168,452 slaves. This represented an annual average population increase of 11.62%, and an average increase annually in slaves of 12.29%, slightly larger than the population gain. It is likely that there were fewer than 100 Baptists in Louisiana in 1814. By 1845 there were 5 associations, 50 ministers, 73 churches, and 3,311 members."

³⁵"Barnes-Baker Collection," Robert A. Baker Research Room, Scarborough Hall, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. The collection is privately held by H. Leon McBeth.

³⁶Robert A. Baker, *Tell the Generations Following* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1983), 392, 302. Baker's treatment of the building of the current president's home at Southwestern and the faculty tension during E. D. Head's administration serve as two prominent examples. Without divulging the rancor among students, faculty and Southern Baptists over the plans and cost for the new residence for the Southwestern's president, Baker writes: "After much discussion by the trustees and others, the plans for the house were approved in the spring of 1971." In a similar vein Baker refused to identify faculty personalities that clashed with Southwestern president E. D. Head, writing:

It is not surprising that this inevitable process of organizational modernization was greeted less than enthusiastically by some of the more mature members of the theological faculty. Just a few years earlier, they had been a part of the small Faculty Council

who sat in a circle around the desk in President Scarborough's office and dialogued with him about almost every administrative and academic decision. Now, without any warning, one of their younger colleagues had been elected by the trustees to supervise their work and they no longer had a part in any administrative decisions.

It was enough said; there was no need to expose private debates among the faculty.

³⁷Fletcher, 7.

³⁸"Our history department," explained Baker in a 1964 interview, "is making history relevant...making it useable...illustrative...informative..." Crutcher, "Summer Sketchbook," *Fort Worth Press*, 27 August 1964.

³⁹Fletcher, 6.

⁴⁰Among Baker's doctoral students were revered Southwestern historians William R. Estep and H. Leon McBeth: Jesse C. Fletcher, Chancellor of Hardin-Simmons University; Southwestern evangelism professor, Roy Fish; Justice Anderson, missionary to Argentina and retired Professor of Missions at Southwestern; Presnall Wood, former editor of *The Baptist Standard* (Texas), and H. K. Neely, professor at Southwest Baptist University and Hardin-Simmons University.

⁴¹H. Leon McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage: Four Centuries of Baptist Witness* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1987); Jesse C. Fletcher, *The Southern Baptist Convention: A Sesquicentennial History* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Press, 1994). H. Leon McBeth, *A Sourcebook for Baptist Heritage* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1990), reflects Baker's emphasis upon access to and use of primary sources to understand better Baptist life.

⁴²Robert A. Baker, "Divided We Stand," in *Fibers of Our Faith*, ed. Dick Allen Rader (Franklin, TN: Providence House Publishers, 1995), 147, emphasized Baptist commitment to liberty of conscience: "For [Baptists] the words 'liberty of conscience' must be written large. The doctrine of priesthood of the believer means for them that all Christians have a right, nay the duty, not only to come to God without aid of priests or prelate but also to interpret for themselves the meaning of the Scriptures. A concomitant belief is that all Christians have a freedom to voice their distinctive views, whether about doctrine or church polity. There are no first lieutenants among Baptists; they are all generals."

⁴³Robert A. Baker, "Divided We Stand," in *Fibers of Our Faith*, ed. Dick Allen Rader (Franklin, TN: Providence House Publishers, 1995), 146-58.

⁴⁴Fletcher, 7.

TEXAS BAPTIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Minutes

2000 Annual Meeting

October 30, 2000

The Texas Baptist Historical Society met Monday, October 30, 2000, at 10:00 a. m. at the First Baptist Church, Corpus Christi, Texas, with approximately sixty people present.

Alan Lefever, Dallas, presented the annual membership and financial report. For 2000 the Society had a membership of 133 with 2 non-member journal subscribers. During the year, the Society received income from journal sales and dues totaling \$7,004.00 with expenditures of \$7,135.21. On October 30, the checking account balance was \$14,502.01.

The Society members endorsed the recommendations of the Nominating Committee and elected the following officers for 2000-2001: Royce Measures, Pasadena, president; Carol Holcomb, Belton, vice-president; and Alan Lefever, Fort Worth, secretary-treasurer. Ron Ellison, Beaumont, was elected to serve a two-year term on the Executive Committee.

Lefever presented the following budget for 2000-2001:

INCOME

Historical Council, BGCT	\$5,800.00
Membership Dues & Journal Sales	3,000.00
Luncheon	300.00
Total Income	9,100.00

EXPENSES

Journal Printing	\$3,100.00
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Journal Postage	400.00
Journal Labor	2,000.00
Journal Supplies	300.00
Newsletter Printing	100.00
Newsletter Postage	300.00
Awards	600.00
Exhibit Booth	-0-
Speaker's Honoraria	600.00
Travel	-0-
Miscellaneous Supplies	50.00
Luncheon	300.00
Total Expenses	\$7,750.00

Volume XXII cover sheet will go here

Rosalie Beck, Waco, presented the 2000 Church History Writing awards to the following:

Carr M. Suter, Jr., for *Church Life: Story of FBC Garland*

Ken Camp and Orville Scott for *Anyway, Anytime, Anywhere: History of Texas Baptist Men*

John Storey, Beaumont, presented a brief overview of the history of the Christian Life Commission of the Baptist General Convention of Texas. The meeting adjourned at 11:30am.

Respectfully submitted,
 Alan J. Lefever
 Secretary-Treasurer
 Texas Baptist Historical Society

GOOD WILL RESPONDS TO THE
TURN-OF-THE-CENTURY TRAMP
OF ONCOMING TEXAS MILLIONS

Spring of 1894 found the Baptist General Convention of Texas anxious about the spiritual condition of thousands of newcomers settling along the lines of the new railroads that stretched across their state. Beside native Texans—mainly ranchers, cowboys, merchants, and professionals, thousands of Bohemians, Swedes, and as many as three hundred thousand Germans had migrated to the state.¹ Around San Antonio, San Marcos, El Paso, and along the border at the Rio Grande, there were growing Mexican settlements, plus a large Norwegian settlement in Bosque County in Central Texas and a growing population of African Americans.²

Texas Baptists had long been concerned about the newcomers to the state, and a report of the 1894 Convention reflected that concern.

Hard as the times are, these vast regions are being settled. There is nowhere else for the people to go, and he who has an ear to hear can already hear the tramp of the oncoming millions. Our missionaries should not wait to ride on the cowcatcher of the first engine of the new railroad, but should already be on the ground ready to welcome the engineer and his passengers, preaching the gospel to them, and baptizing them as fast as they believe.³

Constructed to ride not on the cowcatcher but coupled behind the engine, brightly varnished and gilt-embellished Chapel Car *Good Will* came to Texas right after its dedication at Saratoga Springs, New York, June 1, 1895, with Reverend

and Mrs. Edwin Stanton Stucker on board.⁴ Stucker, an Ottawa University and University of Chicago Divinity School graduate, came to the chapel car ministry from a pastorate at Aurora, Illinois. The Texas Baptist Convention had invited the chapel car to help bring the gospel to the rapidly expanding rail towns.

The chapel car ministry was a small but innovative evangelistic effort. Beginning in 1890 and ending in the 1940s, thirteen rail chapel cars—three Episcopal, three Roman Catholic, and seven American Baptist, ministered to thousands of rail towns, mainly west of the Mississippi. *Good Will* was the fourth chapel car built by The American Baptist Publication Society. The seventy-six-foot car, constructed by the Barney & Smith Car Company of Dayton, Ohio, featured an oak-paneled sanctuary trimmed with art glass and equipped with pews, podium, Estey organ, and storage for Bibles and literature translated in many languages. To the rear of the chapel was the compact living area consisting of a kitchen, sleeping berth/dining/study compartment complete with a roll-top desk, and a toilet/washroom.

Not everyone in the Baptist General Convention of Texas, beset with internal strife and at odds with the concept of the role of missions in the local church, was pleased with the presence of the American Baptist Publication Society chapel car, although the relationship with the Publication Society and the American Baptist Home Mission Society traced back to the beginnings of Texas Baptist work. James Huckins, an appointee of the American Baptist Home Mission Society, landed in Galveston in 1840 to help establish a Baptist presence in Texas.⁵

In the years between 1840 and 1895, there had been several schisms and a devastating Civil War to sever the earlier ties that had bound the northern Baptists and their southern brethren. In 1894 Samuel A. Hayden had proposed Landmark reforms at the General Convention meeting which further eroded mission efforts and caused the General Board to plead, “Shall we wait until the mission cause, now bleeding, is stamped out of

existence?”⁶ The tramp of oncoming Texas millions sounded clearly. It was not a time to wait. The coming of the chapel car was a testament to that commitment.

As praise for *Good Will*'s work in churchless towns and with needy churches began appearing in *The Baptist Standard*, there was more demand and appreciation for the chapel car, although it would not be until January 1896 that a satisfactory agreement could be reached between the Texas General Convention State Mission Board and the American Baptist Publication Society.

Witnessing to railroaders was a major focus for the chapel car ministry, so it was at the Denison shops of the Missouri, Kansas, and Texas Railroad that Reverend and Mrs. Stucker first stopped. The car was placed between the roundhouse and machine shops, and services were held noon, evening, and midnight for ten days. The midnight audience averaged forty men who would hurriedly eat their lunches and come “just as they were,” as Stucker reported. The result was over fifty public professions among the men, many of whom had not been in a religious service from five to fifteen years.⁷

After leaving Denison, the Stuckers soon made their way into the northwestern part of the state, the fabled Staked Plains. For two months, *Good Will* held two to three services daily in the frontier towns above the Canadian River where the gospel was seldom preached. Texline, the northern-most post of the immense XIT ranch, was one of those towns.⁸ When *Good Will* arrived in 1895, the Fort Worth and Denver Railroad junction was changing from a tent city into a permanent town. In spite of the town's expansion, there were no churches.⁹ For two weeks, E. S. and Nettie Stucker held services twice a day and four times on Sundays in the chapel car. It was reported that practically everyone in town crowded into the chapel car for at least one of the services, and a little church was formed—the first in Texline.¹⁰

After the state convention at Belton in October, the Stuckers took the chapel car to central and eastern Texas for the rest of the year, much of the time evangelizing railroad men and

miners. That did not mean they neglected women and children. Along the Texas and Pacific line at Big Sandy, bright boys and girls filled the car in the afternoon followed by their mothers and fathers in the evening services.

At the Texas and Pacific shops at Marshall, the car was the center of a circle of eight large shops, employing five to six hundred men. Since the First Baptist Church of Marshall was without a pastor, Stucker provided services and encouraged the struggling congregation, and the *Marshall News Messenger* ran in their entirety his "Noon Talks to Railroad Men."¹¹ The Texas and Pacific Railroad officials welcomed the presence of the chapel car. Stucker reported, "During the seven months since the dedication of *Good Will*, it has traveled five thousand miles and witnessed the preaching of over three hundred gospel sermons. It has not found a single railroad over which it may not freely journey on its mission of love."¹²

Some discontent about the status of Chapel Car *Good Will* had been fermenting within the leadership of the State Board during the seven months of its Texas travels, and for a while it looked like the chapel car would not be able to continue the Texas ministry. In late January, B. H. Carroll, George W. Baines, and W. C. Lattimore of the Texas Board reached an agreement with Dr. A. J. Rowland of the Publication Society that permitted the chapel car to stay in Texas.

1. The chapel car would be used for mission work alone.
2. It would have nothing to do with the distribution of literature.
3. The Publication Society would retain all ownership of the car, all its property and management of its railroad connections.
4. The missionary work would be under the direction of the secretary of the Texas State Board, in harmony with other departments and laborers in the mission work.
5. The Society would pay the salary of the chapel car missionary.

6. The chapel car missionary would send official reports to the Society and quarterly reports to the State Board.

7. The Texas Board would either put on the car or, if there was a married couple on board, assign to the car a missionary representing them, reporting to them only, and to be paid by them.

8. The organization of churches and Sunday schools would be at the discretion of the Texas Board only.

9. Money received on the car as a result of solicitation would be divided equally between the Society and the State Board.

10. The Society could withdraw the chapel car from Texas at any time after six months, with three months being given notice.¹³

While *Good Will* was working in eastern Texas, Baptists in the border town of Del Rio had called for support in organizing a church. In May 1896, *Good Will* pulled into Del Rio, and Reverend Frank Marrs joined the chapel car fresh from his studies at Southern Baptist Seminary in Louisville. A native of Del Rio, he was eager for this assignment.¹⁴

During the time the *Good Will* team was working to establish a church in Del Rio, the saloon element ruled the town. When construction on the Southern Pacific stretched across the territories in the late 1870s, the chronically thirsty crews, like the crews of the other western railroads, demanded that saloons move along with the building of town tracts. Following the railroad from San Antonio to Del Rio were many saloons, including Mr. Ware's Hell's Acre and the legendary Judge Roy Bean's establishment.¹⁵ The ever-present saloons served as focal points for many a chapel car sermon, frequently conducted on sidings just a few yards from the raucous saloon rows.

Soon it became apparent to the railroad officials that the saloons were detrimental not only to the welfare of the workers but also to the safety of the railroads. One Texas official told

Stucker that he welcomed the chapel car and could only wish that all his men were Christians. He said that from a business point of view alone, a church was better than a bank in any western community.¹⁶

When articulate, passionate Stucker, along with his musically talented helpmate Nettie, left the chapel car in November 1896 to become a Publication Society District Secretary, another passionate man, but not an ordained minister, became the second missionary on *Good Will*. Blackballed from practicing medicine in Cuba because of his preaching Baptist doctrine, a Cuban physician came to the attention of the Southern Baptist Mission board. The Committee on Cuban Missions described Dr. Alberto J. Diaz as an earnest, godly man whose zeal, enthusiasm, and unfaltering faith, even through bitter persecution, were mighty factors in carrying on the work. Diaz would become both a hero and an aggravation to the convention in later years.¹⁷

Boston Smith, chapel car superintendent, met Diaz, recently released from a Cuban prison, at the Publication Society gathering in Milwaukee in May 1895.¹⁸ Chapel Car *Glad Tidings* was on display, and Smith asked Diaz, “How would you like to take charge of Chapel Car *Good Will* and go to Mexico to preach the gospel?”¹⁹ So it happened that in November 1896, the Cuban national was the missionary on board. Smith visited Diaz in San Antonio and was surprised by what he found.

Sidetracked in the most densely populated section of that quaint city, among the Spanish-speaking people, I found *Good Will*. As I entered the beautiful study, I found the bookcase, instead of containing a well-selected library, filled with surgical instruments of all kinds. Opposite the bookcase was an operating table. “Why, Doctor, what does this mean?” I asked. He told me in his broken but intensely interesting way, how from nine to eleven o’clock each morning he treated, free of charge, all the sick and afflicted who came to the car. This, he said, gave him entrance into the homes and hearts of the people. After lunch each day, he visited from house to house, reading the word of God, distributing Spanish tracts, and praying with the people.²⁰

It was hoped that Diaz would carry the chapel car work into Mexico, but after a few weeks of service in San Antonio, the call for aid to Cuba came which Diaz could not resist and he left to join the army.

Newlyweds E. G. and Hollie Townsend climbed aboard *Good Will* in 1897. Townsend had pastored Central Baptist Church in Dallas, and Hollie Harper was a Bible Woman for the First Baptist Church of Dallas, working with women and children. In 1892, she became the editor of the women’s section of *The Baptist Standard*, and was “the first Texas Baptist woman to edit a woman’s department in any Texas Baptist paper.”²¹ Hollie was well known for her dedication to the Cottage work at Baylor Female College.²²

The young couple was excited about chapel car work after hearing an address by Boston Smith at the First Baptist Church of Dallas, where Dr. George Truett, a stalwart supporter of the chapel car ministry, was pastor. Smith encouraged the couple to wed and come to work on *Good Will*. Townsend would say, “The result was, after much consultation and prayer, I undertook the following March, what few men are willing to do, the management of two brides at once!”²³

One of the Townsends’ early stops was Tenaha, in the heart of the piney wood, a shipping point on the Houston, East and West Texas Railroad. Founded only two years before *Good Will*’s arrival, by 1897 Tenaha had grown to 680 and had become a farm and lumber center.²⁴ Baptists in town had just moved into a former schoolhouse but were suffering from the Board-Party Schism that had torn apart their Shelby County Missionary Baptist Association.²⁵ *Good Will* arrived with the intent to strengthen the resolve of the young congregation, but they were soon engaged in a great revival.

We began to preach four times a day. The people began to come for miles and miles around. They came to see that church on wheels – that wonder car, and a woman who was “a heap better talker than the man. Twice we were forced to move, seeking a

larger building. On the third Saturday, I say there were a thousand people present. We worked two weeks longer, baptizing in all forty-six and receiving into the church sixty-five, and some twenty joined neighboring country churches.²⁶

Townsend's reference that his wife Hollie was "a heap better talker than the man," could have created serious problems for the chapel car ministry of Hollie Harper Townsend. As a Bible Woman before her marriage, she and the other Bible Women were cautioned not to overstep the approved boundaries of where and how and to whom women could speak. One Bible Woman wrote in *The Baptist Standard*, ". . . our Bible women are constantly reminded by some of our careful brethren, that 'woman's sphere is quite limited.' Oh, brethren of the church, do not be alarmed. We women are not going to preach (and that is what you are afraid of)."²⁷

The other wives on the American Baptist Publication Society chapel cars frequently "spoke" to mixed audiences, not just women and children, and several of the chapel car women were ordained.²⁸ But the leaders of the Baptist General Convention of Texas did not share Townsend's pride in Hollie's speaking abilities when it was to mixed groups, and this stumbling block could have hampered the witness of the chapel car ministry. Mina S. Everett, a leader in Texas Baptist Women's Work, a great missionary soul, and a dear friend of Hollie Harper Townsend, left Texas as a result of criticism over her speaking to mixed groups and became a missionary for the American Baptist Publication Society in Colorado.²⁹

At Cleveland, people packed the car from miles around, and at Timpson, services held under a brush arbor were very successful with hundreds attending.³⁰ Things did not go so well at another stop that late summer. "We found a church but it was doing absolutely nothing," Townsend reported. "Some large brick works and coal mines near the town brought a gang of drinking, gambling men. We longed to stay for weeks here, but after one week I was forced to leave, worn out with the heat and malaria fever."³¹

Thurber, seventy-five miles west of Fort Worth, was a unique situation for the Townsends. The town began mining operations in 1886 with miners recruited from all over Great Britain and Europe. Following inability to meet a payroll and a resulting strike by miners, the owners sold out to founders of the Texas and Pacific Coal Company, who chose to deal with the dissident Knights of Labor miners with an iron hand. The company fenced a portion of its property and within the enclosure constructed a complete town including even an opera house. Eventually the strike ended and the miners and families moved into the new town.³² Although a stockade and armed guards restricted labor organizers access to the town, the company invited the chapel car to return several times to hold services.

Hollie Townsend wrote in the October 21, 1897, *Baptist Standard* of her impressions of the company town.

The little folks of Thurber regard us as their special guests. At their own meeting they about fill the Car and passing trains do not tempt them to take their eyes off the blackboard drawings while the lesson is in progress. At the first meeting I could not get a Scripture quotation out of the crowd, and so I gave them illustrated text cards, and the next afternoon every child present was ready with a verse—those who could not stay to the services came by long enough to give in the verses. The population of this mining camp is decidedly mixed—almost every nationality is here. I am experiencing a long felt desire—to tell the story of Jesus in a foreign land—at least I feel that I am out of America when I look into the faces of these children.

Thurber is a ghost town now. Nothing but a smokestack, the old depot, a church, a cemetery, and the mercantile store, now a restaurant, remain. Something still remains though of the ministry of Chapel Car *Good Will* in the lives of the descendants of the 1898 town.³³ In Matthew 24:35, Jesus says, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away."

At Abilene in October 1897, Townsend set up a tent seating two thousand by the chapel car. All denominations participated

in the meetings sponsored by the First Baptist Church. It was Townsend's hope that God would lead and this would be the greatest meeting ever held in western Texas. *The Abilene Reporter* wrote, "The meeting now in progress under the tent near the Baptist church is not only drawing immense congregations, but its influence is extending in all directions, permeating all classes and ages of our population. Even strangers or visitor remaining but a day or two, have been converted or reclaimed, and have returned home with hearts filled with love for their Savior."³⁴

From Abilene's success, the Townsends left the chapel car and headed to San Antonio for what was touted as the "Greatest State Convention in History." That 1897 meeting would be praised as the "culmination of the great war on the board," and Dr. George Truett summed up its significance. "We are coming to recognize the fact that a Baptist church which is not missionary is not worth its room in the world."³⁵

Chapel Car *Good Will* was the embodiment of the "Go" in the revitalization of the Great Commission of the Baptist General Convention. It combined all the elements to strengthen the work of the Sunday school and Colportage Board and the work of the home missionaries.

Hollie Harper Townsend, always devoted to the advancement of Texas Baptist missions, was praised by her husband in a report to The American Baptist Publication Society. "She is modest, wise, consecrated and is a great soul winner and organizer, and is a power for good."³⁶ Townsend did not mention that his wife was pregnant and not in good health. Little over a year after their marriage and their coming to *Good Will*, Hollie died after giving birth to a baby boy, one of only five babies born during chapel car service.

One of the last things that Hollie did was to write a tract for the Publication Society describing their life on the chapel car.

My porches are rather small, but my yard is as big as—Texas!
In this yard is always to be found the choicest flowers, for the children bring them to me every day, until I often have every

vase full and in desperation bring in the dish pan to hold the love offerings. When we pull in at a little country station, we attract more attention than a circus. All the boys and girls and big folks too, come crowding around the car to see what it means, such a fine car—it cost seventy-five hundred dollars—and it does shine!³⁷

During Hollie Harper Townsend's illness, she had conveyed to her husband her desire that in the advent of her death he marry her friend Elli Moore, who was influential in the Cottage Home program at Baylor Female College. This Townsend would do in September 1899.³⁸

During the Christmas week of 1899, E. G. Townsend left his baby son with relatives and, along with singer Thomas Moffat from St. Louis, climbed upward on *Good Will* until they reached the tableland that is the great cattle country of Texas. Across the Rio Grande River in Mexico, the Santa Rosa Mountains lifted their heads far above the clouds. Here they found Comstock. After several weeks, Townsend reported,

There are not a dozen houses in sight yet from the ranches for twelve and twenty miles the people came and filled the car. There is a Baptist church here now [with] fifteen members. The clerk of it, a young man, was sixteen years old before he ever heard a sermon. His mother, now an earnest Christian woman, spent eighteen years on a ranch without ever attending a religious service. The reign of his Satanic Majesty has been so universal here in the past that they named one of their principal rivers after him, Devil's River.³⁹

After establishing the church at Comstock, and visiting Sanderson and Langtry, Townsend stopped at the railroad shops at Hearne.

Hearne is a typical chapel car town. Not more than twelve months old. More than a hundred houses have gone up in the last four months. There is not an organization of a church house in the place. There are plenty of saloons, and far into the night, I can hear the shouts of their drunken carousals. Interest is growing every night. Last night and night before there were a number that promised to trust the Savior. It is my hope to organize a church

here soon and build a house. I have the promise of a lot. May all the dear friends of the chapel car work pray for this place.⁴⁰

Townsend left chapel car work in early 1900 to pastor the East Waco Baptist Church. Both E. G. Townsend and Elli Moore Townsend would become leaders of Baylor Female College. The library on campus is named for the Townsends, although there is little in the library archives relating to E. G. Townsend or Hollie Harper Townsend's illustrious chapel car ministry.⁴¹

The Reverend G. B. Rogers, a Texas pastor known for his expansive size and good nature, replaced Townsend on *Good Will*. Rogers's first tour took him to Fort Worth and Houston among railroad men, and then to Cleveland, a small town of about three hundred inhabitants where the Townsends had held services earlier and where there was still no church. The meetings were a success with over thirty-six confessions, and a church was organized. The next stop was Livingston, down the line, where results were not quite so encouraging.⁴²

On September 8 and 9, 1900, Galveston was struck with what was to be known as the "Great Storm of Galveston." *Good Will* was in the Santa Fe shops at Galveston at the time of the storm. Two years earlier, Hollie and E. G. Townsend had worked with the First and Third Baptist churches in Galveston and had gotten to know Third Baptist Church pastor, Elder G.W. Lane, and his family well. The flood swept away Pastor Lane and his entire family. The fury of the storm destroyed the houses of the First and Second churches in Galveston and also the church at Alta Loma. The Third Baptist Church still stood, although badly damaged.⁴³

Good Will suffered damage from the storm, although there are differing accounts as to how much and what kind. At the time of the storm, singer Vallie C. Hart was assisting Rogers on the chapel car. Hart explained how his home was wrecked and how he and his family only survived by clinging to the roof of a nearby building.⁴⁴ The chapel car household goods

that had been stored in his home for safe keeping were also destroyed, but the chapel car was providentially protected.

I have visited the car sheds of the Santa Fe shops, where the car is, and the management has placed the car in the best possible position. The fearful storm demonstrated this. To the east of the chapel car on the track is placed a great engine, which protected the car from the drift in that direction, and the drift from the bay side was caught and held by large posts supporting the shed, and while the debris is piled up all around and inside the shed, not one plank was hurled against the car. While one portion of the sheds was torn away and wrecked, that portion over the Chapel Car *Good Will* was not harmed.

Upon my arrival at the sheds I found an old German citizen looking after the interests of the Santa Fe property, and inquired of him about the safety of his family. He told me, between his sobs of grief, how he had struggled all night with wind and waves trying to save his family, and that he had saved them, but lost his home and its contents. When I went inside of the car and played on the organ and sang songs of praise to the Lord for our deliverance, he came to the window and listened.

I found that the books under the platform had not been injured, and I gave this old gentleman a German Bible as a present from Chapel Car *Good Will*. He was so grateful for it! He said this Bible was the first and only thing he had to begin life over with except the clothes on the backs of his loved ones, and he and all his family would appreciate the gift.⁴⁵

Because of the need of funds to repair the chapel car, Boston Smith came to Texas in November 1900 to speak at more than a dozen churches about the work of the chapel cars. Texas churches donated funds to pay the car's repair bill, women's groups replaced the contents, and *Good Will* continued its mission.⁴⁶ *Good Will* spent nearly two months in storm-swept South Texas, bringing cheering help to places like Richmond, Sealy, Alvin, Alto Loma, Hitchcock, and Hillsboro.⁴⁷

The Baptists pleaded for *Good Will* to come to Laredo in the summer of 1901. Rev. Stucker had preached there in spring 1896.⁴⁸ They desperately wanted a church building, and

they prayerfully built a brush arbor that would seat several hundred, hoping for a revival. When Rogers left Laredo, he described the edifice that was going up and the thanksgiving of the people.⁴⁹

The chapel car reached urban areas like Fort Worth, Dallas, Houston, Austin, and brand new settlements like Texline, Dalhart and Skidmore Junction. It sided at Granite Mountain and at Eagle Pass on the border, and at Mexican settlements near San Antonio and San Marcos. It packed the car at growing eastern Texas towns like Palestine, where Townsend expressed concern in 1898 that the churches in East Texas were in danger of being lost to the Convention.⁵⁰ In spite of his concern, at Carthage, one of those eastern towns located on the Texas, Sabine Valley and Northwestern Railway, crowds overflowed the chapel car and met in the Opera House and organized a church in February 1902. As in Carthage, dozens of congregations still worship in Texas today as a result of the founding work of *Good Will*.

At Gonzales in February 1902, Rogers found, “a spiritual dearth among the church members,” but after two weeks of revival services, he testified that members were enthusiastic about their support of the General Baptist state work. Pastor Lacy said, “A better feeling obtains among the brethren at Gonzales because of this [chapel car] visit.”⁵¹

The chapel car returned to Tenaha where the Townsends had witnessed earlier. It was reported that in the midst of overflowing crowds, “good members who had been cool toward each other on account of state issues, had their hearts melted, their troubles settled, and became as brothers should be toward each other.”⁵²

After spending more than three months in the piney woods of Eastern Texas at little towns like Jewett and Columbus, the car traveled to Thorndale where an arsonist had destroyed both the Baptist and Christian churches. *Good Will* was the only place in “this saloon-stricken, ungodly town,” Rogers reported, where services could be held.⁵³

Weeks were spent witnessing to railroad men at the Cotton Belt shops at Tyler.⁵⁴ At Terrell, Cooper, and Denison, meetings were successful, but at Spring and at LaGrange, one of the oldest of Texas towns, Rogers could not accomplish much because of the power of the saloon element.⁵⁵ This was a particularly grievous report as LaGrange was home of one of the earliest Texas Baptist churches and the former home of R. E. B. Baylor, law professor and early supporter of the university that would take his name.⁵⁶

American Baptist Publication Society Secretary Robert Seymour in Philadelphia received the news that G. B. Rogers was not in good health, and although Rogers’s young daughter was assisting him on the chapel car, he was having difficulty in continuing the work. The chapel car was also having physical problems; it needed repairs, and funds were in scarce supply. At the 1902 gathering, the General Convention granted funds to help with repair expenses, and the car was renovated at the International Railroad Shops in Ciudad Porfiro Diaz, Mexico.

At that same Convention, a four-year-old brought back bittersweet memories. The Sunbeam Band of the Columbus Street Church in Waco performed for the delegates, and among the little ones was the son of *Good Will* missionaries E. G. and Hollie Harper Townsend.⁵⁷

It would be little more than a year later that Rogers would turn Chapel Car *Good Will* over to Reverend and Mrs. T. S. Fretz. Reverend Fretz had received orders from the American Baptist Publication Society to transfer the car from Texas to Colorado to continue its ministry.

Baptist historian Leon McBeth describes Texas Baptist life during the last decade of the nineteenth century as wounded by the deep scars of years of controversy, but he salutes the early years of the twentieth century as a time of peace, prosperity, and progress.⁵⁸ Spanning those centuries, from 1895 to 1903, Chapel Car *Good Will* traversed Texas, seeking the lost among the thousands of settlers who had made their homes along the tracks. During its eight-year journey, it helped to

smooth the rifts of denominational politics while bringing the gospel to more than one-hundred railroad towns. Hopefully, Texas Baptist history will record that Chapel Car *Good Will*'s ministry was as blessed as its name.

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NOTES

¹Proceedings of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, October 11-14, 1895 (Waco: Baptist Standard Printing House, 1895), 27.

²Proceedings of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, October 12-16, 1894 (Waco: Baptist Standard Printing House, 1894), 24-25.

³Proceedings of the Southern Baptist Convention, May 11-15, 1894 (Atlanta: Franklin Printing and Publishing Company), 42.

⁴In H. Leon McBeth's *Texas Baptists: A Sesquicentennial History*, 95, E. S. Stucker is mistakenly called A. S. Stuckey.

⁵McBeth, *Texas Baptists*, 29.

⁶H. Leon McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1987), 458; original source - Robert A. Baker, *The Blossoming Desert: A Concise History of Texas Baptists*, 159-60.

⁷*The Colporter*, October 1895, 6.

⁸Although no records have been found to verify the presence of Chapel Car *Good Will* in Channing and Hartley, it seems most likely that the chapel car would have stopped at those two towns on the same line as Texline. Both towns had been established by 1895, and churches were not organized until several years later. We are still searching for records that will verify this information. The files of Texas Missionary Secretary M. D. Early would provide valuable information along this line, if they could be found, as he traveled with the Stuckers in the Panhandle and planned their agenda.

⁹Kathryn Hefley, *Texline, The Front Door to Texas* (Texline Centennial Committee, Texline, Texas, 1988), 1-2.

¹⁰*The Colporter*, September 1895, 6. Two articles on this page describe the organizing of a church at Texline, one a report from Reverend E. S.

Stucker and the other a report from Boston Smith, Chapel Car superintendent. In a church history of the First Baptist Church of Texline, provided the author by the church, it is written that the church was organized in 1905. No mention is made of a church organized by Chapel Car *Good Will*.

¹¹*The Baptist Standard*, February 10, 1898, 8; Issues of *Marshall News Messenger*, Nov. 7, 8, 9, 1895.

¹²Boston W. Smith, *The Story of Our Chapel Car Work*, (Philadelphia: ABPS, nd), 31.

¹³*The Baptist Standard*, February 6, 1896, 8.

¹⁴"Del Rio Baptists: From Six Members to 1,450 in 70 years," May 24, 1966 newspaper clipping, Notes on First Baptist Church history in vertical file, Val Verde Library, Del Rio, Texas.

¹⁵*Biographical Sketches of Val Verde County's Old Timers* (Quality Printing Co.), 250, 1993.

¹⁶"Rev. Stucker Gone North," *Houston Daily Post*, October 21, 1895, 5.

¹⁷Proceedings of the Thirty-Seventh Session-Forty-Seventh Year of the Southern Baptist Convention, May 6-10, 1892 (Atlanta: Franklin Publishing House, 1892), 43. A brief summary of the fascinating history of A. J. Diaz can be found in *The Missionary Work of the Southern Baptist Convention* by Mary Emily Wright, (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1892), 364-69, as well as in numerous accounts in *The Texas Baptist Standard*.

¹⁸*The Baptist Standard*, April 30, 1896, 13.

¹⁹Boston W. Smith, 1831-1908, scrapbook, "Merry Christmas," ABHS, VF.

²⁰*Ibid.*

²¹L. Katherine Cook, "Texas Baptist Women and Missions, 1830-1900," *Texas Baptist History: The Journal of The Texas Baptist Historical Society*, Volume III, 1983, 41. The note credited the original source as footnotes by J. B. Cranfill in James Milton Carroll, *A History of Texas Baptists* (Dallas: Baptist Standard Publishing Company, 1923), 862-63; see also Inez Boyle Hunt, *Century One: A Pilgrimage of Faith* (Birmingham, Alabama: Woman's Missionary Union of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1979), 23. There is mention of Hollie Harper in the Annie Armstrong- Fannie Breedlove Davis correspondence, J. M Carroll Collection, Archives, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas. See Armstrong's letter of March 8, 1890.

²²*The Baptist Standard*, March 11, 1897, 8.

²³Anniversary Report of the American Baptist Publication Society, Rochester, N. Y., 1898, 59.

²⁴“Tenaha,” *The New Handbook of Texas*, Vol. 6 (Austin: The Texas State Historical Association, 1996), 252.

²⁵“A History of the First Baptist Church,” *A History of Tenaha, Texas*, Tenaha Historical Society, 172.

²⁶Anniversary Report of the American Baptist Publication Society, Rochester, N. Y., 1898, 59.

²⁷Patricia S. Martin, “Keeping Silence: Texas Baptist Women’s Role in Public Worship, 1880 – 1920,” *Texas Baptist History: The Journal of The Texas Baptist Historical Society*, Volume III, 1983, 25. Original source cited, *The Baptist Standard*, October 3, 1895, 7.

²⁸Mrs. Driver on Chapel Car *Good Will* and Mrs. Cutler on Chapel Car *Messenger of Peace* were both ordained. Mrs. Herminston, who served both on Chapel Car *Emmanuel* and Chapel Car *Grace*, was lauded for her preaching skills. Almost all the chapel car wives did some speaking other than to women and children, especially to the men at the railroad shops, who seemed to be so touched by a godly woman, perhaps reminding them of their mothers and wives and sisters back home. All the chapel car wives, and some of their grown daughters, played the organ and sang for the services. For more information about the role the chapel car women played, read *This Train Is Bound for Glory: The Story of America’s Chapel Cars*, by Wilma Rugh Taylor and Norman Thomas Taylor (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1999).

²⁹Both Martin’s and Cook’s articles in *Texas Baptist History: The Journal of The Texas Baptist Historical Society*, Volume III, 1983, are excellent discussions of the status of women and preaching in Texas at the time of Chapel Car *Good Will*’s ministry.

³⁰*The Baptist Standard*, April 29, 1897, 8.

³¹Anniversary Report of the American Baptist Publication Society, Rochester, N. Y., 1898, 59.

³²Marilyn D. Rhinehart, *A Way of Work and a Way of Life: Coal Mining in Thurber, Texas, 1888 – 1926* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 1992).

³³Visit to Thurber, Texas, by Wilma and Norman Taylor, October 16, 2001.

³⁴*The Abilene Reporter*, Abilene, Texas, October 29, 1897, 3-4.

³⁵*The Baptist Standard*, November 11, 1897, 2.

³⁶Anniversary Report of the American Baptist Publication Society, Rochester, N. Y., 1898, 59.

³⁷Hollie Harper-Townsend, Chapel Car Series No. 7, “About Chapel Cars,” (Philadelphia: ABPS), ABHS, VF. Note; This same letter appeared in part in *A Centennial History of the Baptist Women of Texas 1830-1930*,

by Mrs. W. J. J. Smith (Dallas: Woman’s Missionary Union, 1933), 161-63, and portions of it were used in Harry Leon McBeth, *Texas Baptists: A Sesquicentennial History* (Dallas: Baptistway Press, 1998), 132-33. The original letter appeared in an issue of *The Colporter*, a publication of the American Baptist Publication Society, issue unknown.

³⁸Eleanor James, *Forth From Her Portals: the First 100 Years in Belton*, University of Mary Hardin-Baylor (Belton, Texas: University of Mary Hardin-Baylor Press), 41.

³⁹*The Colporter*, March 1900, 7.

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Very little was found in Baylor University files of the chapel car ministry of Reverend Townsend, a Baylor graduate, or of Hollie Harper Townsend, a Texas Baptist Woman’s Department editor and Baylor Female College and Cottage leader. At the campus of Mary Hardin-Baylor University, in Belton, Texas, in the Townsend Library, we were able to find very little, almost nothing, about Dr. Townsend’s years on the chapel car and his first marriage. The second Mrs. Townsend was a very influential graduate of Mary Hardin-Baylor and a classmate of Hollie Townsend. Through her influence and his abilities, Dr. Townsend assumed high positions in the college.

⁴²*The Colporter*, April 1900, n. p.

⁴³J. M. Carroll, *A History of Texas Baptists*, (Dallas: Baptist Standard Publishing Co., 1923) 794.

⁴⁴*The Baptist Standard*, November 8, 1900, 12.

⁴⁵*The Colporter*, November 1900, 6.

⁴⁶Anniversary Report of the American Baptist Publication Society, Springfield, Mass., 1901, 109-10.

⁴⁷*The Baptist Standard*, April 4, 1901, 8.

⁴⁸*The Baptist Standard*, May 14, 1896, 6.

⁴⁹*The Baptist Standard*, April 11, 1901, 9.

⁵⁰*The Baptist Standard*, February 24, 1898, 9.

⁵¹*The Baptist Standard*, February 28, 1901, 9.

⁵²*The Baptist Standard*, March 27, 1902, 13.

⁵³*The Baptist Standard*, November 27, 1902, 16.

⁵⁴*The Baptist Standard*, January 22, 1903, 16.

⁵⁵*The Baptist Standard*, September 24, 1903, 11.

⁵⁶McBeth, *Texas Baptists*, 19.

⁵⁷Fifty-fourth Annual Session of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, November 7-10, 1902.

⁵⁸McBeth, *Texas Baptists*, 121–22.

NO LOVE LOST:
J. FRANK NORRIS AND TEXAS BAPTISTS
1921-1925

On October 28, 1921, J. Frank Norris, the controversial pastor of the First Baptist Church of Fort Worth, Texas, announced that he was going to expose the “infidelity” at his alma mater, Baylor University. His attack on Baylor initiated a denominational crisis among Southern Baptists in Texas that threatened to split the Baptist General Convention of Texas itself. The controversy reached its apex in 1925 when the Texas convention expelled Norris and the First Baptist Church, but the events continue to influence Texas Baptist politics today. Indeed, the recent schism within the Southern Baptist Convention has its origins in the Norris controversy of the 1920s.

In attacking the alleged teaching of evolution at Baylor Norris aligned himself with the radical-militant wing of post-World War I Fundamentalism. While he did not institute the movement, he did become one of its loudest voices, as well as a major influence on the southern element of it.

The attack on Baylor, and the subsequent denominational crisis, did not occur in a vacuum. J. Frank Norris did not simply uncover a possible heresy at his alma mater and launch a crusade to remove the stain of evolution from Baylor University. In fact, he was not the first to call attention to the issue. Rather, it was to a great extent the culmination of personality conflicts and power struggles that had been smoldering since Norris’s days as a Baylor student. Evolution may have been a catalyst, but it was not the only cause of the controversy. The bitter

fruits of “Norrisism” have their roots in his life and career even before his call to the First Baptist Church of Fort Worth.

Born John Franklyn Norris on September 18, 1877, in Dadeville, Alabama, his family moved to Hill County, Texas, when he was eleven. His parents were James Warner and Mary B. Davis Norris. He had two siblings—Dorie W. and Mattie Anna.¹

Norris’s “roots” influenced the fruits of his ministry. They included his parents, the hardscrabble years in Hill County, his experiences at Baylor University, his adventures in Dallas, and the early years at the First Baptist Church of Fort Worth.

Family Matters

Of these basic influences, his parents were among the strongest. His father was a man given to hard drinking; when he was drinking, he often abused his family. On one occasion, in a drunken rage, he severely beat young Frank and might have killed him if his mother had not intervened.²

Warner Norris also attracted violence. In June 1891, two men accused of cattle rustling came to the Norris home to keep him from testifying against them. Luring him away from the house, they shot him and might have killed him if not for young Frank’s interference. When the son rushed to help his father, one of the men, John B. “Stokes” Shaw, shot and critically wounded him. Warner recovered quickly, but his son was in serious condition for several days. His mother nursed J. Frank back to health, vowing to the physician that she had an answer from God that her son would not die.³

If his father was the shifting sand in Norris’s life, his mother was the “solid rock.” Mary Davis Norris was a woman hardened by childbearing, economic hardship, and family conflict. Religion was her comfort and she became fervent in her zeal. This she passed on to her firstborn son. On one occasion she recounted to him an event in his infancy when she took him to the banks of the river and held him up to the heavens. “Here

is the best I can give you,” she told God, and God supposedly answered, “You have given the world a preacher.” She told Frank, then about twenty, “You are going to preach the gospel of Jesus . . . I have known it all of my life.” The power of her convictions undoubtedly influenced Norris throughout life.⁴

Book and Bible Learning in Hill County

His religious experiences prior to enrolling at Baylor were also influential. Norris was converted at a Methodist brush arbor revival in 1890. However, he did not become a Baptist until 1897, when Catlett Smith, pastor of the Hubbard Baptist Church, baptized him. At some point—either prior to his baptism or after—he felt the call to the pastoral ministry. By August 1898 he was listed by the Hubbard City Baptist Association as a licensed minister and was ordained the following year.⁵

Between the years 1899-1905, Norris found an outlet for his call to the ministry through pastorates at the Mount Antioch and Mount Calm Baptist churches. He accepted the call to Mount Antioch, a half-time church in 1899 and Mount Calm, also half time, in 1900. From 1901 to 1905 he served only the Mount Calm church. The experiences served him well, for here he learned to communicate with “folks at the forks of the creek,” and absorbed the mind and faith of rural Texas. Apparently, Mount Calm also brought him in contact with “Haydenism,” and may have been one of the roots of his anti-institutionalism.⁶

Circumstances did not allow Norris the advantage of a formal education. He was fond of saying that he had taken a post-graduate course in the “cowpen and the kitchen,” entering the preparatory program at Baylor when he was twenty-one with just two terms of regular schooling. Mary Davis, who could read and write, tutored him at home. Years later he recalled memorizing scriptures while churning butter.

He had enough schooling, however, for the county school

district to hire him. In 1897 he taught at the Cold Corner School, located in southeastern Hill County where Hill, Limestone, and Navarro counties come together. Norris recalls his class contained several dozen students, at least half older than he. Jokingly, he said later, “During that six months I felt definitely the call to preach the gospel.”⁷

The Baylor Years

In September 1899 twenty-one year old Frank Norris left Hubbard City to enter the academy program at Baylor University. His decision to enter Baylor was probably influenced by John S. Tanner, a professor at the university who had once served as interim pastor at the Hubbard Baptist Church. He was assisted by a \$150 loan from Dr. W. A. Wood, the physician who treated him after John Shaw wounded him. By the fall of 1901 he had completed the academy and entered the regular program, graduating in 1903.

The Baylor years were significant for the friendships he developed. He met and married Lillian Gaddy, the daughter of J. M. Gaddy, a well-respected Baptist pastor. He came under the influence of J. B. Gambrell, who performed his wedding ceremony; B. H. Carroll, who later recommended him to the pulpit at the First Baptist Church in Fort Worth; I. E. Gates, who was a loyal friend and sometimes ally; and John Roach Straton, who served as a “pastor” to Norris and became an ally in the Fundamentalist movement.

Here, too, he made some lasting enemies. Norris competed with J. M. Dawson, who was named by President Samuel Palmer Brooks to deliver the oration at his and Norris’s graduation. For this perceived slight, Norris was overheard to vow that he would get Brooks if it were the last thing he did. Samuel Palmer Brooks distrusted Norris, probably because he believed that Norris was responsible for O. H. Cooper’s resignation as president of Baylor. This occurred as a result of a curious, almost bizarre, event. One day, a prankster led

a stray dog into chapel, which was on the second floor of Old Main Hall. When the dog disrupted the chapel service, President Cooper became enraged and threw the dog out the window. Someone—and many believed it was J. Frank Norris, complained to the Humane Society. The resulting controversy led to Cooper’s resignation. Brooks succeeded Cooper as president, and apparently came to the office suspicious of Norris.⁸

The Dallas Years

After graduating from Baylor in 1903, Norris, his wife and new daughter, Lillian, moved to Louisville where he enrolled in the Southern Baptist Seminary. He completed his seminary training in 1905, earning the Master of Theology degree, and accepted—sight unseen—the pulpit of the McKinney Avenue Baptist Church in Dallas. This church, formerly the Lake Avenue Baptist Church, was an excellent stepping-stone for Norris. Situated in the shadow of Texas Baptist headquarters, it allowed him to garner the attention of the denomination’s leadership. Within a few years, however, the nods of approval turned to angry glares.

Coming to Dallas in 1905, Norris was mentioned by the *Baptist Standard* as an “omnivorous student, logician, builder and enthusiastic preacher.” He soon plunged himself into building attendance, then a new church edifice. Membership increased from 254 in 1904 to 399 in 1907, his last year as pastor. The growth was not as spectacular as Norris later liked to claim, but it was significant. He preached the convention sermon at the 1906 session of the Baptist General Convention of Texas and the *Baptist Standard* called him “one of the brightest and best equipped Texas pastors.”⁹

Two events affected Norris during his tenure at McKinney Avenue Baptist Church. One was the death of his mother in the fall of 1905. His sister, Mattie Anna Duncan, called him on a Sunday evening in October to tell him that his mother was

dying. He caught the train to Hubbard and arrived in time to visit Mary Davis Norris one last time. Her last words to him were “Son, I am going home this morning. They have come for me. Son, preach the old gospel. It’s just like I taught you. Preach it on until you come home to Mother!” Throughout the remainder of his life, Norris was known for many things, but always for his preaching.¹⁰

The second event was the first of several clashes with George W. Truett, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Dallas. This occurred over the transfer of Miss Willie Mae Turner from the First Baptist Church to McKinney Avenue. Truett believed that Norris was proselytizing members and apparently raised that issue. J. M. Dawson, who later married Miss Turner, believed that Norris built his membership by stealing members from other churches and used the incident to prove his point.¹¹

Early in 1907 Norris came in contact with Judge T. B. Butler, a major stockholder in the *Baptist Standard*. This led to Norris offering to buy the judge’s stock, ushering in another phase of his life. It also created another of the Norris myths—this one claiming that Norris pushed his father-in-law, J. M. Gaddy, off the back of a moving train and used the insurance proceeds to purchase the *Standard*.¹²

As major publisher and later editor, Norris made three major contributions to Texas Baptist life while associated with the *Standard*. First, he ended the controversial Texas Baptist newspaper war by purchasing S. A. Hayden’s *Texas Baptist and Herald* and J. B. Cranfill’s *Baptist Tribune*. After that, the *Baptist Standard* was the only significant Baptist paper in the state. Then, he used the *Standard*’s influence to campaign successfully against racetrack gambling in the state. Finally, he used his editorial position to help B. H. Carroll relocate the Baylor Theological Seminary from Waco to Fort Worth, where it became the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

These successes were not without consequences. His need to control all situations led to clashes with *Standard* editor, Joseph Martin Dawson, his Baylor classmate and rival. Norris

had solicited Dawson’s help when Joel Gambrell resigned. Dawson believed it was because the other stockholders would have rebuffed Norris if he had not chosen him. Before long Dawson resigned to become pastor of the First Baptist Church in Hillsboro, but it was evident that he would not have stayed at the *Standard* and endured Norris’s tactics.¹³

Norris’s support of B. H. Carroll only widened the gap between him and Samuel Palmer Brooks, who opposed the relocation of the seminary from Waco. Norris claimed that Carroll told him that Brooks and Truett seriously opposed his editorial position. Norris ignored the threat and supported Carroll. Supposedly many letters protested the *Standard*’s support for relocating the seminary. According to Norris, each received the same attention. “I poured every one of them into the wastebasket,” he declared.¹⁴

Finally, his colorful methods in opposing racetrack gambling earned him criticism from some Texas Baptist leaders. While they supported his position, they were embarrassed by his methods. Thus, pressure increased to remove him as publisher and editor, a position he had assumed when Dawson resigned. In October of 1909 Norris announced that he had sold his stock to a combine composed of J. B. Gambrell, George W. Truett, R. C. Buckner, H. Z. Duke and C. D. Fine, and was resigning as editor. This ended another period in his life and set the stage for his next as pastor of the First Baptist Church of Fort Worth.¹⁵

The Early Years in Fort Worth

During the summer of 1909 Norris and his family spent several weeks in Plainview as the guest of Dr. and Mrs. J. H. Wayland. While there Norris preached several times at the First Baptist Church. Supposedly, Dr. Wayland offered Norris the presidency of fledgling Wayland College, which was little more than a hole in the ground. However, there is no record of a formal offer. Norris returned to Dallas, and the presidency

went to his friend, I. E. Gates.¹⁶

On October 1, 1909, the First Baptist Church of Fort Worth invited J. Frank Norris to serve as its pastor. Neither Norris nor the church was ever the same. For the next forty-three years the church and the city could not escape the power of his influence, or the controversies that he attracted.¹⁷

Commenting on his call to the First Baptist Church, the Fort Worth *Record* noted that members of the pulpit committee expressed the belief that Norris would bring things to pass that no preceding pastor had been able to accomplish. One member, Jesse T. Pemberton, vice president of the Farmers and Merchants National Bank, originally opposed the call. He declared: "I am for him, but this church is not in condition for his type of ministry. If he comes, there will be the allfiredest [sic] explosion ever witnessed in any church." Pemberton became one of Norris's strongest supporters and stayed by him when others left.¹⁸

Norris spent his first two years in Fort Worth trying to fit the image of a big city pastor. Of this period, he recalled that he was "the chief after-dinner speaker," with tuxedos, swallow-tailed coats and a selection of "biled" shirts. His ministry had status, but to him it was "barren, wasted, inadequate and miserable." He later justified his transition from status quo to sensationalism because he saw the ballparks, barber shops, and theaters full of people while he was preaching to "an empty woodlot on Sunday nights." He stated: "the fact is, every man I knew who accomplished anything, was a sensationalist."¹⁹

The transition came after he returned from conducting revival services in Owensboro, Kentucky. While there he came to the realization that, as he put it, the only difference between the First Baptist Church in Fort Worth and a graveyard was that the "the people in the graveyard were buried and everybody knew it, but in the church they were dead and unburied and didn't know it." He returned to Fort Worth determined to stir up his congregation, which he did with gusto.²⁰

The first indication of this change was his turn to sensational

advertisements in the Fort Worth newspapers. The first, wired from Kentucky, appeared in the Fort Worth *Record*, announced in bold letters "If Jim Jeffries, the Chicago Cubs, and Theodore Roosevelt Can't Come Back, Who Can?" The ad produced the effect he desired, and his Sunday night crowds increased.²¹

Having found the style of ministry with which he was more comfortable, he plunged into a series of crusades against evil in Fort Worth. Whereas his orthodox approach had produced few results, his emotional appeals and sensational methods produced throngs. This was proof enough for the pragmatic Norris. To attract the crowds he desired, he had to capture their fancy. To capture their fancy, he had to go to extremes.

He quickly joined the campaign for prohibition in Texas. At the height, in 1911, he rented a large tent, previously used by Sarah Bernhardt, and held outdoor meetings on a vacant lot in downtown Fort Worth. He brought in visiting evangelists such as Mordecai Ham and E. J. Bulgin. He led members of his congregation on a tour through "Hell's Half-Acre," ending at his tent in time for evening services. In a sermon for men only, he focused on the modern dress of females, night buggy riding, indiscriminate theater going, girls running about on the streets at night, and suggestive pictures on liquor bottles. He charged that most of the outrages committed by Negroes in the South could be attributed to the suggestive pictures on certain bottles of gin.²²

This invariably led Norris into a series of conflicts within and without his congregation. The first came in the form of a feud with Mayor William D. Davis, who ordered him to remove his tent. When he did not comply, David had the fire department cut it down, citing its existence as a fire hazard. Norris determined to even the score by attacking Davis in a weekly newspaper using the masthead of *The X-Ray*. In one editorial, Norris charged that Davis was mishandling city funds. Davis reacted by calling a mass meeting for men only. The mayor allegedly challenged the men to do something about Norris, stating: "if there are fifty red-blooded men in this town, a preacher will be

hanging from a limb before daylight.”²³

This type of rhetoric invited violence. On January 11, 1912, someone set a fire at the First Baptist Church, but it was quickly extinguished. On January 14, someone fired shots into Norris’s study at the church. On February 4, another fire occurred at First Baptist Church, this time burning it to the ground. Finally, on March 2, a fire at Norris’s residence destroyed his home and his family barely escaped.²⁴

Both sides blamed the other. Norris blamed Mayor Davis and his crowd. City officials charged that Norris burned down his own church to gain attention and force members to build him a larger facility. Several grand juries indicted Norris—one for perjury and another for arson—and he went to trial on three occasions during the two-year period from 1912 to 1914. Although he was acquitted on each occasion, the controversy was too much for many of his congregants.²⁵

The exodus began in 1911, but the most significant members left in 1913 and the years following. B. H. Carroll, who had recommended Norris to the church, transferred to Broadway Baptist Church in 1913. G. H. Connell, chairman of the pulpit committee, transferred to College Avenue Baptist Church, while Judge R. H. Buck, who had notified Norris of the call, followed B. H. Carroll to Broadway. Finally, Lee Rutland Scarborough left in 1915, later chairing the Tarrant Baptist Association committee that challenged the First Baptist Church’s messengers in 1922.

Norris rebuilt his church facilities. He brought in associates who helped him organize and educate his congregation. One of these was Arthur Flake, who later pioneered the Sunday School enlargement program for Southern Baptists.²⁶

He also increased his sensational methods. He placed a large searchlight on the roof of his church building, changed the name of his newspaper from *The Fence Rail* to *The Searchlight*, and became one of the first in Fort Worth to have his own radio station.

His methods always included sensational gimmicks in the

pulpit. On one occasion he promised to expose a prominent Fort Worth banker who was buying high-priced silk hose for another man’s wife. As expected, the crowds gathered. As an added attraction, Norris had the sales clerk who had sold the hose tell her story. Then he announced that, since advertising his threat, not one, but three bankers had come to him to confess. Having amused and entertained, he turned to the serious side of his sermon.²⁷

During this same time Norris often baited George W. Truett, his principal competitor. He would compare attendance at First Baptist Church in Fort Worth with the First Baptist Church in Dallas. He often sent challenging telegrams to Truett just prior to Sunday morning services. Truett cleverly ignored Norris, providing a model that Brooks, Scarborough, and others would have been wise to follow.

Norris also attacked his fellow pastors in Fort Worth. In 1913 the Tarrant Baptist Pastors’ Association expelled Norris for calling Dr. C. V. Edwards, pastor of the College Avenue Baptist Church, a “long, lean, lank yellow egg-sucking dog,” when Edwards received members who had been expelled from First Baptist Church.²⁸

Toward the end of the 1911-1920 period Norris began to align himself with the growing theological fundamentalism in the northern states. At a 1917 Bible conference held in Fort Worth, Norris invited Dr. James Gray of Moody Bible Institute, Amzi C. Dixon of Spurgeon’s Temple and W. B. Riley of the First Baptist Church in Minneapolis to participate. Gray later invited Norris to speak at Moody Institute. By 1920 the Bible conference at the First Baptist Church in Fort Worth had become an annual affair. He later joined the World’s Christian Fundamentals Conference established by Riley and others. In 1922 he joined Riley, T. T. Shields of Jarvis Street Church in Toronto, and John Roach Straton of the Calvary Baptist Church in New York to organize the Baptist Bible Union.

By 1919 J. Frank Norris had managed to alienate virtually every leader in Texas Baptist circles. Many of those who had

initially supported him had disassociated themselves from him by transferring their memberships from the First Baptist Church or by withdrawing fellowship from him. What remained was an open controversy as Norris and his opponents waged a power struggle for the hearts and minds of organized Baptist work in Texas.

Baptist Controversies

The Seventy-five Million Campaign provided the opening shot between Norris and Texas Baptists. Initiated in May 1919 at Atlanta, the campaign was an attempt to raise at least \$75,000,000 in five years to underwrite the work of Southern Baptist agencies. Southern Baptists pledged over \$92,000,000 but gave less than \$60,000,000. There were many reasons for the shortfall, but many blamed J. Frank Norris.²⁹

Texas Baptists were expected to carry the lion's share of the fund raising efforts. George Truett served as chair of the Campaign Commission, while L. R. Scarborough was General Director. At the state level J. M. Dawson served as publicity director. Funds would be raised by subscription, with every church encouraged to bear its fair share of the burden. Thus pressure—sometimes subtle, sometimes not so subtle—was brought to bear on those who shirked their responsibilities. For an anti-institutionalist such as Norris, this was going to be a very interesting situation.

Texas Baptists pledged \$16,500,000 by the fall of 1920. The campaign committee urged that the leadership vigorously press the campaign until “every possible dollar” was secured.³⁰

As the committee put greater emphasis upon collecting overdue pledges, it also put greater emphasis upon loyalty and cooperation within the state convention. “The church that does not keep step with our forward-looking and conquering Zion,” a report cited, “makes of itself a most sorry spectacle, which is either to be pitied or deplored, or both.” At this point, J. Frank Norris and the campaign parted company.³¹

Norris initially supported the campaign. The First Baptist Church pledged \$100,000—a figure Norris later claimed was forced upon him. The church made an initial payment, and then fell behind on its payments. When push came to shove, Norris rebelled and claimed that the denominational “despots” had threatened him, saying, “Norris, if you don't cooperate and put on this drive, we will brand you to the end of the earth as an uncooperating Baptist and you will lose out. You won't have any crowd to hear you, your church will disintegrate.” If this conversation really occurred, these were fighting words to Norris.³²

While Norris's opposition to the campaign was only one factor in the crisis, the effort was in critical straits by 1921. Collections were not coming in as expected. The campaign leadership targeted the “relentless, persistent and cruel opposition waged by a certain opponent of our work, both through columns of his local church paper . . . and also through the pages of the secular press . . .” This could not have been anyone other than Norris, and he retaliated.³³

The focal point of Norris's attack upon the campaign was to discredit the leadership by questioning its handling of funds. He specifically charged that Frank Shelby Groner, Secretary of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, had mishandled designated funds, and demanded to see the campaign books. On one Sunday evening he reserved the entire lower floor of the First Baptist Church's sanctuary so that non-members could hear the “inside story” of the “machine” with its assessments, centralization, and interference. The BGCT censured Norris at its 1922 meeting.³⁴

In the midst of the Seventy-five Million controversy Norris launched his attack on the alleged teaching of evolution at Baylor University. Fresh from a similar attack on John A. Rice at Southern Methodist University, Norris attacked Baylor with vigor, despite the fact that his daughter, Lillian, was a student there. Later he claimed that he took his questions through channels to Texas Baptist leaders, but that they had warned

him not to say anything lest he “ruin” the Seventy-five Million Campaign.

Norris, however, was not the first to raise the evolution issue at Baylor. In 1920 evangelist T. T. Martin, L. R. Scarborough’s cousin, raised the issue with E. C. Routh, editor of the *Baptist Standard*. Specifically, Martin charged that Grove Samuel Dow’s sociology textbook implied that man had evolved from anthropoid apes. Routh purchased a copy of the book, read it, and picked out several questionable passages. He then personally interviewed Dow, who admitted there were some errors and “slips of language,” which Dow blamed on consulting authors who were not “firm Christians.” When Routh was on campus he visited with Dow again. Then, in the summer of 1921, Routh wrote President Samuel Palmer Brooks warning him of the impending problem.³⁵

Brooks also heard from J. B. Cranfill, who had learned of the textbook from T. T. Martin. “I am saddened,” Cranfill wrote, “in the contemplation of what may happen if some of this is not speedily done to eliminate all just cause of censure of the orthodoxy of our great school.”³⁶

At this point, Norris announced his campaign against Baylor. Timed to hit Texas Baptists just prior to the 1921 meeting of the BGCT in Dallas, the charges had their desired effect. On November 30, the eve of the convention, the Executive Board met in the basement of the First Baptist Church in Dallas. Norris leveled his charges. Brooks repudiated Norris, claiming that he repeatedly berated Baylor in the *Searchlight*, Norris’s newspaper, but had never approached either Dow or Brooks personally.³⁷

The evolution question quickly made its way to the convention floor. On December 1, Dr. M. A. Jenkins presented a memorandum from the Pastors and Laymen’s Conference, which met prior to the convention, stating its unalterable opposition to the teaching of Darwinian evolution “or any other theory that discredits the Genesis account of creation.” The report also condemned destructive criticism, probably

aimed at Norris.³⁸

On December 2, the following day, the Committee on Christian Education made its report, followed by Brooks’s report on Baylor. The committee commented that Baptist academic affairs augured well if they could be kept free from the twin blights of materialism and evolution. Brooks’s report ignored the evolution issue and focused on progress at the university.³⁹

Following the Baylor report, M. T. Andrews of Temple presented a resolution, which, while not mentioning Norris’s name, left no doubt as to the object of its scorn. Noting that “a certain propaganda” had been circulated among the messengers by means of newspapers (*Searchlight*) and that “continued criticism will be seriously detrimental to our institutions and their agencies,” the resolution called for a halt to all criticism until a committee appointed by the convention could make its report. The convention responded by appointing a committee to investigate teachings in Texas Baptist schools and instructing it to make its report at the next convention in 1922.⁴⁰

The 1921 delegates had carefully sidestepped an open discussion of Norris’s charges, reasoning that there would have been more emotion than reason. By appointing an investigative committee, the convention avoided a direct confrontation with Norris and his followers. The delegates also insured that the 1922 convention, meeting in Waco, would attract significant attention.

Both sides struck quickly. Those allied with Brooks sought to defend Dow’s textbook, saying that it could be corrected. Dow himself offered to resign and Brooks accepted. Brooks commented on Dow’s resignation, noting that he was sorry to see the professor go, but with the intense “hatred that had been developed on the part of the ignorant,” with no way of getting the facts before them, and in the light of the false statements that appeared in the *Searchlight*, it just seemed best.⁴¹

Norris lost no time in responding to his critics. “Don’t Try the Witness,” he cried out in a headline in his paper, try the

“Guilty Defendant.” All he had done, he claimed, was to “turn on the light” on the infidelity at Baylor, but that the denominational leaders were trying to quash him instead of investigating the truth of his charges. A fellow pastor had criticized him the previous Sunday morning, he asserted to his congregation. “My thanks to him,” Norris declared, “quite a number of his members were over at the First Baptist Church Sunday night.” He forgave his colleague, he said, because he knew that “he must hold on to the tit.” All protest was in vain, he charged. “The heads were cut off of the fellows that protested.” He believed that all had supported him when he attacked false teachings at SMU. When he turned to Baylor, however, they were not with him. The “machine” did not like his methods, Norris said. “Well, that’s an old objection. The race track gamblers made the same objection when I went after them thirteen years ago.”⁴²

During the period between the 1921 and 1922 conventions, L. R. Scarborough suggested that his allies place an informer in Norris’s congregation. He was already sending a stenographer to record Norris’s sermons and had affidavits from C. E. Matthews, a former staff member, on some questionable practices at First Baptist Church. “It will not be long,” Scarborough declared, “until it will not make any difference what he says. The people will not pay any attention to him.”⁴³

When the Tarrant Baptist Association convened in September 1922, the credentials committee challenged the right of the messengers from First Baptist Church to seats at the associational meeting. The committee utilized a resolution written by L. R. Scarborough. The association voted 135-16 to deny seats to First Baptist messengers. The grounds were that the deacons handled all membership and discipline issues and that the church did not accept apportionments. Thus deprived of its seats at the association, First Baptist Church also lost its standing with the Baptist General Convention of Texas since membership was restricted to churches that were in good standing with their associations.⁴⁴

Norris was furious. He stepped up the pace of his attacks, this time focusing upon professors Lula Pace and O. C. Bradbury, both of whom taught biology at Baylor. He charged that Pace and Bradbury were teaching a non-literal, figurative, and allegorical interpretation of the Genesis account of creation. “Do you know what that means?” he asked his congregation. “I don’t,” he said, answering his own question, “but that is what they are teaching in that school.” There was evolution at Baylor, he declared, and President Brooks was doing nothing about it.⁴⁵

The 1922 session of the Baptist General Convention of Texas proved to be anticlimactic. The investigating committee’s report (called the Pace Committee, headed by J. H. Pace of Waxahachie) disavowed the teaching of evolution in Baptist schools, noted that Professor Dow had resigned at Baylor and, while acknowledging that Pace and Bradbury did hold some type of belief in evolution, made no recommendations regarding them. Other resolutions also condemned the teaching of evolution and appointed a committee to review textbooks used at Texas Baptist colleges and universities.⁴⁶

Norris came in for his share of criticism. A resolution censured him for his methods of destructive criticism. He, of course, was not there to respond.

At the 1922 session of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, Norris, who was absent from the proceedings, won the battle, but he lost the war. Dow resigned as a member of the Baylor faculty; the convention affirmed its opposition to the teaching of evolution and appointed watchdog committees to review textbooks and teachers. All of that should have pleased Norris, but it did not. He lost his forum and the opportunity to win the hearts and minds of Texas Baptists.

The 1922 session of the Baptist General Convention of Texas did not end the denominational controversy. In fact, neither side appeared ready for peace. Too many charges and counter-charges had been leveled, and too many harsh words had been exchanged for the opposing leaders to simply lay down their

weapons and go home. After 1922 Norris continued his attacks on Texas Baptist leaders, the “machine” as he preferred to call them, but did so outside the organization, which made him more of a nuisance than a factor.

After participating in the organization of the Baptist Bible Union of America in 1922, Norris was active in the leadership of the group until 1926, when he shot and killed D. E. Chipps. After 1927 the leadership of the Baptist Bible Union distanced itself from Norris.

Norris continued to make overtures to return to the Baptist General Convention of Texas. Despite the fact that the 1923 session of the BGCT had once again denied seats to the messengers from the First Baptist Church, Norris approached L. R. Scarborough early in 1924 about terms upon which the First Baptist Church might be readmitted to the Tarrant Baptist Association. In September the association recognized messengers from the First Baptist Church, but the Baptist General Convention of Texas refused to seat them. By then, Norris was once again attacking Baylor, this time siding with student Dale Crowley against university professor C. S. Fothergill. Once again, Norris won the battle—and Fothergill resigned from the Baylor faculty—but he lost the war. In 1925 the BGCT again refused to admit messengers from First Baptist Church. After that, Norris and his church were never factors in the state convention.

In retrospect, it is possible to draw several conclusions:

1. Norris was at odds with Texas Baptist leaders long before the 1921 evolution controversy. By 1921 his personality and methods had created a widening schism between Norris and his Baptist colleagues. He had already made lasting enemies with those who constituted the leadership of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, including Samuel Palmer Brooks, Lee Rutland Scarborough, Joseph Martin Dawson, and George W. Truett.
2. In the controversy itself personality conflicts were

as much a factor as the principles involved, and rhetoric was just as important as reason. Had the issue really been liberalism and heresy, Norris should have been pleased. The BGCT went on record in its opposition to teaching evolution and the SBC adopted the Baptist Faith and Message. Getting even with Brooks, Dawson, Scarborough, and Truett were very much motivating factors for Norris, almost as strong as his desire to advance his own cause.

3. The underlying issue was control of the hearts and minds of Texas Baptists. Norris made his attack based on his belief that the “wool hat folks at the forks of the creeks” would rally to support him. They did not. He never gained control of the convention as the more recent fundamentalist conservatives did in the 1980s.

4. “Norrisism” was a distinctive phenomenon. Those who followed Norris followed his particular brand of fundamentalism. Norris was almost as schismatic with his fellow fundamentalists as he was with mainstream Texas Baptists.

5. Norris loved the fight. W. R. White remarked on this very trait when he noted that Norris so loved the fight that it clouded his vision.

6. Norris influenced Southern Fundamentalism, as Barry Hankins has suggested, but he has been given little credit outside Texas and the South. Indeed, neither George Marsden nor Joel Carpenter devotes much space to him in their most recent studies.

7. Norrisism was a virus that infected the attitudes and actions of contemporary fundamentalists. Indeed, his actions continue to influence the relationship between moderate and fundamentalist conservatives.

8. Norris brought out the worst in Texas Baptist leaders. Scarborough, Brooks, and F. S. Groner stooped to Norris’s level. For the most part, Truett and Dawson stayed above the low water mark.

When J. Frank Norris died, his son, J. Frank Norris, Jr., wrote that his father “changed things.” Looking back it is easy to see that “Norrisism” affected Texas Baptists to some extent. His influence was, not surprisingly, more negative than positive. In a larger context Norris was more a “boil” than a cancer—he irritated the Baptist body politic, but did not destroy it. He briefly divided it, and some churches did leave the BGCT, but he did not split the convention in the manner that the more recent Southern Baptist controversy split the SBC. Indeed, some Texas Baptist “anti-Norris” groups have done more to keep Norris’s legacy alive than his own followers.

The only true link between him and the present fundamentalist generation is Jerry Falwell and that influence is not nearly as strong as the link between W. B. Riley and Billy Graham. Norris once remarked to one of his critics that the only thing he really feared was that Texas Baptist leaders would have the good sense to ignore him. That would have certainly changed the perspective we have on him—and his place in Texas Baptist history.

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NOTES

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DIE IN THE PULPIT: W.A. CRISWELL, J. FRANK NORRIS, AND THE PROBLEM OF SUCCESSION IN TWO MEGA-CHURCHES

In the early 1990s Joel Gregory attempted briefly to succeed W.A. Criswell as pastor of First Baptist Church, Dallas. The fiasco that took place over the course of little less than two years was reminiscent of what happened a half century before in J. Frank Norris's First Baptist, Fort Worth, except that it happened twice with Norris. In both Fort Worth and Dallas, megachurch successors, hand picked by an aging senior pastor, could not function satisfactorily as head pastors while the old patriarch remained on the scene. This article is an analysis of two megachurches, two somewhat megalomaniacal personalities, three succession crises, and three relatively young and talented preachers as would-be successors. First the Criswell-Gregory story in brief.

Criswell became pastor of First Baptist Church in 1944, succeeding the legendary George Truett, who had just died. Criswell continued to build First Baptist into reputedly the largest Baptist church in America by the 1970s, at one time boasting as many as thirty-thousand members. At the same time, Criswell became the patriarch-icon of the Southern Baptist conservative movement that would take control of the Southern Baptist convention in the 1980s.¹ In the mid-eighties, as Criswell began to contemplate retirement, he first tried an end run around Baptist polity by attempting to choose his own successor. He paraded more than twenty young pastors before the church during Sunday evening worship services, one of which was Joel Gregory. Gregory pastored the Travis Avenue

Baptist Church in Fort Worth. He had a Ph.D. from Baylor and had taught preaching at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He was a rising star in Southern Baptist circles, and he wanted the position at First Baptist. Certain deacons in the church understood clearly what was happening and attempted to keep Criswell from appointing and anointing his own man. A few even took Gregory aside and informed him that if he had serious aspirations to be pastor of First Baptist, he should decline an offer Criswell had made for Gregory to preach a series of sermons over the course of four months in 1984. Gregory ignored the advice and went ahead with the sermon series, betting on Criswell against the deacons. Afterward, to Gregory's dismay, Criswell told the young preacher that the lay leaders were indeed adamant about not letting the pastor choose his own successor. At that time, it looked as if Gregory was out of the running.²

The informal search process bogged down over the next few years but began to take shape again in 1988, and Gregory was still interested. At one point, after hearing of several candidates First Baptist was considering, Gregory happened to be in downtown Dallas. He stopped by Criswell's church office and left his card with a note scribbled on the back saying, "Dear Dr. C., whatever happened to me?" Gregory recalls this as a "sniveling, pusillanimous inquiry" that showed the extent to which First Baptist had a mesmerizing attraction for him. Criswell responded with a letter saying he wished things had worked out in 1984 after the four-month sermon series Gregory had preached.³

A formal pastoral search committee was formed in October 1988, but by January 1990 the church still had no new pastor. The committee was unable to agree on a successor for Criswell. Meanwhile, Criswell could not seem to make up his mind as to what kind of successor he wanted. First, the plan was to find a co-pastor, then Criswell began to refer to himself as the senior pastor and any potential successor as pastor. Clearly, Criswell had no plans to move off the scene immediately upon the

arrival of the new person. He apparently wanted a transition period where both the new man and he would pastor together, and this would prove to be a recipe for disaster, especially when Criswell proved unable to fully relinquish the pulpit.

As Criswell continued to tussle with the lay leadership over choosing a successor, co-pastor, junior-pastor, or who it was the committee should nominate, he also addressed the issue of who should make the decision. Even with a formal search committee at work, he continued to lobby for the right to choose his own man. In his annual "state of the church" sermon in January 1990, he argued before the congregation that the Old Testament prophets and the Apostle Paul chose their own successors. He said, "There is no exception to that in the word of God . . . these men chose their successors." His advice to the search committee was, "Listen to the word of the Lord. Follow the example of these men of God." Then, expressing his frustration with the slow pace of the process, he said, "The time has come when an ultimate decision must be made. It must be made soon. It must be made by Easter. I am now eighty years of age. I would like to be called senior pastor. I would love for him to be designated as pastor. And we'll work together, pray together, serve God together, build this lighthouse for Christ together."⁴ So much for successors; it sounded as if Criswell was now calling for a co-equal, and perhaps co-eternal, dual pastorate.

The pastoral search committee was unable to make Criswell's Easter deadline, but Gregory was finally presented to the church on November 18, 1990, more than ten months after Criswell called for an expedited search. How Gregory got back into the running, after having been eliminated back in 1984, is a rather long story having to do with a process of elimination. Suffice it to say that in Gregory's own telling, some of the other candidates were wary of succeeding a pastor who had no intention of leaving, while Gregory himself was ambitiously angling for the position at First Baptist.

When Gregory became pastor, his understanding was

that there would be a transition period of several months, then Criswell would step aside. It appears that Criswell did relinquish the day-to-day operations of the church, and Gregory had a relatively free hand in hiring new staff. The obstacle to Gregory's full investment of the mantle of authority was that Criswell insisted on continuing to preach the 10:50 a.m. Sunday service, which was the television time slot. Moreover, he appeared at Gregory's side at virtually all public functions, even press conferences. This was particularly problematic for Gregory at the weekly staff meetings. As Gregory tells the story, the two pastors met weekly with numerous staff luncheon groups to talk about the church's programs and vision. At these gatherings, staff members' heads would turn from Criswell to Gregory and back like spectators watching a tennis match. Using a Dallas Cowboys football analogy from the same time period, Gregory says it was like Jimmy Johnson instructing his team while Tom Landry sat next to him. This, combined with Criswell's manning the pulpit for the televised service, obstructed Gregory's efforts to assert leadership. The question for Gregory became, when is the Old Man, as Criswell was often called, moving on?

This situation also made it virtually impossible for Gregory to introduce innovations in church programming. For example, First Baptist had a long tradition of Holy Week services at the noon hour. In the distant past these had been well attended by downtown business people, but in Gregory's view they had clearly outlived their usefulness. With Criswell still on the scene, however, Gregory dared not eliminate the services. The same was true for the midweek service at Thanksgiving. As one would guess, Wednesday night services during Thanksgiving week were very poorly attended, as many people headed out of town Wednesday afternoon and evening to be with family for the extended weekend. Gregory's solution was simple; put that week's service on Tuesday. However, Criswell decided that the church simply could not eliminate a Wednesday night service, even for one week out of the year, so he announced

that he would be at the church for any who wanted to come on Wednesday. The results were not surprising. The services competed with each other—Gregory's on Tuesday evening, and Criswell's the next night—and Criswell's was very ill attended, leading to unflattering comparisons. It appeared that the dual-pastorate was becoming a dueling-pastorate.⁵

Those Thanksgiving week services became merely a microcosm of the services that took place every Sunday morning, as Gregory preached at 8:15 a.m. and Criswell at 10:50 a.m. It was as if there were two congregations developing at First Baptist, one consisting of Gregory people and another of Criswell people. Gregory even contends that the traditional "walking the aisle" for conversion, baptism, and church membership was largely orchestrated, with the Criswell people redirecting aisle walkers from the Gregory service to Criswell's so the patriarch would not be embarrassed. Gregory finally got Criswell to rotate the 10:50 a.m. service by reminding him that the original agreement stipulated that they would split the services only for "a few months." Gregory also had a carrot to offer Criswell. Gregory was the preacher for the Southern Baptist Convention's "Baptist Hour" broadcast. His 8:15 a.m. and Sunday evening sermons were carried on the ACTS network and on the Family Network the SBC had purchased from the Reverend Jerry Falwell of the Thomas Road Baptist Church in Lynchburg, Virginia. Gregory reminded Criswell that whenever he took the 8:15 a.m. service, he would have this two-network potential audience of twenty-two million people.⁶

There are a variety of other similar matters, all of which convinced Gregory that Criswell had no intention of moving off the scene. Criswell became convinced that he needed to make his forty-seventh anniversary in order to equal Truett's tenure at First Baptist, then he wanted to make it a half-century, then fifty-three so that his and Truett's combined years of service would equal a century, and on and on. After about twenty months, Gregory had had enough. He shocked First Baptist

Church and the Dallas media with his unexpected resignation at the Wednesday evening service on September 30, 1992. The resignation was the lead story on Dallas local news telecasts that night and front-page news in the *Dallas Morning News* the next day.⁷

While most of what we know about Gregory's brief tenure at First Baptist Dallas comes from Gregory himself (via the book he published in 1994), it does seem that the insurmountable obstacle at First Baptist was that Criswell was unwilling to get out of the way and let Gregory be the church's pastor. Evidence for this point of view is compounded by the fact that Gregory's successor, O. S. Hawkins, was at First Baptist for about the same amount of time as Gregory. That story also needs to be told, and, no doubt, will be someday.

Still, whatever culpability Criswell has in the Gregory debacle, it pales when compared to J. Frank Norris's attempts to choose his own successor a generation earlier. Norris was pastor of First Baptist Fort Worth from 1909 until his death in 1952. Like Criswell in the latter half of the century, Norris turned First Fort Worth into one of the largest Baptist churches in America, with twelve-thousand members at one point. From 1935 until 1950 Norris also pastored Temple Baptist in Detroit, Michigan and had allegedly twelve-thousand members there as well, allowing him to boast, as he often did, that he had more parishioners under his pastoral care than any preacher in America.

When Norris reached his mid-sixties and began to think about retiring, his first choice to succeed him was his own son, George. In 1944, he simply announced from the pulpit one Sunday that George would be taking over as pastor of the church. There was no pastoral search committee, sham or otherwise. He not only failed to consult the congregation or deacons, but also failed to notify George. Prior to the surprise announcement, George had been working as an associate pastor at First Baptist. This was during the period when Norris was the head pastor at both First and Temple. Norris's style during these years was to have

a primary associate take responsibility for one of the churches, while the elder Norris himself ran the other. The associate, acting as Norris's lieutenant, was instructed to carry out the program in strict obedience to Norris's orders. For example, on one occasion while George was associate pastor at First Baptist, Norris wrote a letter from Detroit in which he gave the following instructions: "Find enclosed letter that I want you to take time Sunday morning at 11 o'clock and read to the whole congregation. It doesn't matter what the program is, you hustle everybody in there at 11 o'clock and I don't mean 11:10."⁸ Shortly thereafter Norris threatened to fire the whole church staff if they failed to do exactly as he ordered. "I want everything carried out as I direct and I don't want it changed unless I am informed about it," he wrote.

As one could have predicted with Norris and his son, and as some did predict with Gregory and Criswell, there was simply no way the elder Norris would allow George to actually pastor First Baptist. Shortly after George became head pastor in name, he and his father clashed. A faction in the church sided with the younger Norris, so George led them out of First Baptist, and they founded Gideon Baptist across town. What followed between father and son is most revealing about Norris's personality. Here is a sampling of the things that Norris wrote to his son over the course of several days in January 1945, following George's exodus from First Baptist:

"I have only regrets for your future."

"You should go back to the day that you were married and pay back to me the blood money we put in your education." (This was in reference to Norris having sent George to the Naval Academy and to the University of Michigan.)

"You can count the amount. And also include the car. And we could use that library that I selected at great pain and cost."

"The day will come in the course of human events when your mother and I will lie cold in death . . . and before the casket lid is pulled down over the faces of those who gave you life, you certainly would remember you stabbed us both in the

back.”

As for those who left First Baptist with George, Norris wrote, “You haven’t a man around you that has any good level-headed sense and that is unfortunate for you. You have an ill-tempered nit-wit crowd, and frankly, I say, I was never so relieved [sic] to get rid of the whole bunch of them in this church for they have been a blight.” That letter was signed, “Yours in deepest and tenderest pity and love.”

In addition to these reflections on George’s character, Norris also threatened to expose one of his son’s associates as a gambler and a draft-dodger. Even when Norris tried to be civil with George, he found it nearly impossible. As one sentence began, “I shall not cease to pray for you for I feel certain that God has laid his hand on you,” it concluded with “and since [God] did He will not permit you to play the fool always.” Finally, in what must have been the ultimate dig at his son, Norris told George he would gladly pay the legal fees for George to change his last name.⁹

With George and the Gideon Baptist folks gone, Norris remained head pastor of First Baptist for six more years. Then, as he aged into his early seventies, he tried to replace himself again in 1951, this time with an associate named Luther Peak. Peak had moved to Texas in 1934 after writing a letter to Norris asking for help in getting started in the ministry. Peak intended to come to Texas to study Norris’s techniques for church growth for a few years, and then move on. Once in Texas, however, Peak never left. Norris helped him become pastor of the Fundamental Baptist Tabernacle in Denton, which was like a franchise operation of First Baptist Fort Worth.

Peak should have learned his lesson in the late thirties when Norris offered him an associate’s position at First Baptist. Peak was thrilled and began to help his congregation in Denton find a replacement, only to learn that in the interim Norris had given the First Baptist position to someone else. When Peak asked Norris for an explanation, Norris claimed that Peak’s congregation had prevailed upon him not to steal Peak away

from them. They allegedly even threatened to default on the loan that Norris had cosigned, which would have left Norris responsible for repayment. Peak believed the story even as his wife warned him to break ties with Norris. Peak became wary, however, as evidenced by his refusal to take a position with Temple Baptist in 1940. That would have required that he move to Detroit, and he said no.

Peak could still not break with Norris, and in 1947 Norris once again embarrassed Peak. That year Norris had disrupted the Southern Baptist Convention meeting by attending and verbally berating SBC president Louis Newton, whom Norris regularly harangued as a communist. Wanting to repeat this performance at the Baptist General Convention of Texas annual meeting, where Newton would also be speaking, Norris had a problem. First Baptist had been ousted from the BGCT years before, so neither he nor any member of his church could be credentialed to attend the Texas convention. Norris, therefore, tried to persuade Peak to credential a Norris henchman named Bill Fraser who was a member of Central Baptist in Dallas, where Peak had become pastor sometime before. Peak refused, but when he was out of the state a few days later, Norris prevailed on Peak’s secretary to credential Fraser. Fraser then attended the BGCT meeting as a messenger from Peak’s church, verbally assaulted Newton, and nearly incited a riot as other messengers physically expelled him from the convention hall.

Still, somehow, Peak remained in the Norris camp and sided with the aging Texas Cyclone when a major schism in 1950 resulted in Norris losing his post at Temple Baptist in Detroit. At the same time, a good number of his best people also moved to Springfield, Missouri to form Baptist Bible College and the Baptist Bible Fellowship under the leadership of G. B. Vick. Both the college and the denomination are to this day major bulwarks of American fundamentalism and can boast Jerry Falwell as their most significant alumnus and pastor. For supporting Norris against the Vick faction, Peak

was rewarded, to use the term loosely. Norris decided to make Peak his successor, the sure kiss of death, as we know now, but too much for Peak to resist at the time.

Norris first made Peak president of the Bible Baptist Seminary and editor of Norris's newspaper, *The Fundamentalist*. Then, in 1951, Norris invited Peak to become pastor of First Baptist. While Peak accepted, he hedged his bets by retaining the pastorate of Central Baptist. This turned out to be wise, as his stint at First lasted but six months, only a third as long as Gregory stayed at First Baptist Dallas forty years later. Peak's tenure at First Baptist Fort Worth fell victim to a cruel practical joke having to do with the church's radio ministry. On a Sunday evening, Peak was in the radio booth, preaching to listeners across Texas and the Southwest, or so he thought. He learned later that Norris had disconnected the broadcast. While Peak preached his heart out, Norris was in another room of the church joking with a long-time assistant about Peak in his "glass cage" just preaching to himself.¹⁰ After having learned what Norris had done, Peak resigned the next Sunday and returned to Central Baptist. In an oral history interview thirty years later Peak recalled walking back to his Fort Worth hotel the night of the radio incident, realizing he could endure no more. He was finished with Norris. When Norris died just two months later, and First Baptist passed into the leadership of a twenty-six year-old associate named Homer Ritchie, Peak recalled wistfully what might have been had he just hung on a bit longer. Five years later Peak led Central Baptist out of independent fundamentalism and back into the Southern Baptist fold. Outlining his reasons in an article in the *Texas Baptist Standard*, Peak said, "[I]n the Fundamentalist movement we were usually in a fight of some kind. If we were not fighting Southern Baptists, Northern Baptists, the National Council of Churches, the Catholics, communism, or modernism, we fought each other."¹¹ In his oral history interview in the early 1980s, Peak reflected soberly, "I regret that I left my Southern Baptist affiliation and became involved with Dr. Norris."¹²

What do we make of these examples of the difficulty of succession in two megachurches? First, the obvious: pastors who build empires often have great difficulty letting go of the reins. This seems true of the television preachers of our own time who are advanced in years. Oral Roberts has tried to turn things over to his son, but his university and ministry still bear the name "Oral Roberts," not Richard. The Billy Graham crusades are passing to Franklin. Will either of these father-to-son successions work while the patriarch still lives? As for Graham, according to his own assessment, the best preacher in the family is Ruth Graham Lotz, but given the conservative evangelical proscription against women preaching, it is unclear whether anyone can admit that Lotz actually preaches. What will become of Falwell's Thomas Road Baptist Church and Liberty University when he moves off the scene? At least he had sense enough not to name his university after himself, as did both Roberts and Criswell. The key to succession may well be the willingness of the patriarch to move on completely and stay out of sight as much as possible. As one pastor counseled Gregory unsuccessfully, "Don't go [to First Baptist Dallas] unless the Old Man has fully retired, accepted a gold watch, and gone on a cruise around the world. You will regret it if you do."¹³ There may be megachurch preachers who can let go while still living, but Criswell had the best deal, succeeding Truett after his death. The best guarantee of a smooth transition from a megachurch patriarch to his successor is for the patriarch to die in the pulpit.

A second obvious commonality between Criswell and Norris is that both believed they should choose their own successors, and this appears to be the case with some of our contemporary megachurch and mega-ministry leaders today. Short of requiring that the senior pastor actually die, Gregory's own advice to megachurch congregations is to never allow the pastor to choose his own successor. The church should adopt a clearly defined policy. "The megachurch's tenured pastor should publicly sign off on that policy before succession starts.

Under no circumstances should the tenured pastor be allowed an ambiguous relationship with a younger man brought in to follow him.”¹⁴

Beyond these rather obvious observations, one must note that while Norris, Criswell, and probably all megachurch pastors share certain common traits, not the least of which are healthy egos, Norris was unique. His difficulties in succession and a variety of other areas had a pathological side to them. He was a mean and troubled man, yet with immense talents of persuasion and charm. It is hard to imagine Criswell being as hateful as Norris, but there are some similarities that developed in conjunction with Gregory’s divorce and remarriage, which took place shortly after he resigned from First Baptist Dallas.

Gregory resigned First Baptist in September 1992, separated from his wife in April 1993, and filed for divorce in November 1993. The divorce was finalized December 28, 1993, and Gregory remarried in July 1994. He includes these details in a haunting “Epilogue” to his book, *Too Great a Temptation*, which chronicled his brief tenure at First Baptist. The book cast Criswell in a very unflattering light and was released in conjunction with the celebration of Criswell’s fiftieth anniversary at the church in 1994. As Gregory’s book was about to go into print, Criswell’s forces swung into action attempting to discredit Gregory. Gregory recalls the public accusations beginning shortly after he announced at a spring 1994 press conference that he would write the book.¹⁵ The allegations were that Gregory’s divorce and remarriage were related to his resignation from First Baptist, the implication being that he was engaged in marital infidelity. Gregory vigorously denies this, saying that his marriage had been difficult for many years, and that it failed on its own weight, not because of infidelity. Moreover, he says that he discussed with his ex-wife and his sons the wisdom of including the Epilogue in the book. As for his fairly quick remarriage, there are two things worth noting. First, Gregory points out that he had been married all of his adult life and was simply lousy at being single.¹⁶ Second,

quick remarriages for males are fairly common. Seventy-five percent of divorced males remarry within two years. Gregory remarried within seven months of his divorce being final and a little less than a year and a half after separation from his first wife.

Still, Gregory acknowledges that when it comes to his enemies in the Criswell camp, he “handed them his head on a platter” by remarrying.¹⁷ In a September 1994 WFAA television report covering the publication of Gregory’s book, Criswell said Gregory was “a liar” and that there was not a shred of truth in the book. As to charges of infidelity, Criswell said, “There have been people, world without end now, that tell me he was having a secret affair with a woman even over there at Travis Avenue before he came here, and that it continued here in this church. And, of course, as you know, when he didn’t have the responsibility of the congregation, he divorced his wife.” When the reporter asked if he believed those rumors, Criswell responded, “I do not know.”¹⁸ Gregory detailed other rumors the Criswell camp circulated about his having a girlfriend at a truck-stop in East Texas and an illegitimate child in Florida, part of a campaign, Gregory believes, to discredit him and “kick me when I was down.”¹⁹

Norris had no problem treating his former associates in a similar manner. The worst example concerns the previously mentioned G. B. Vick, who led the Springfield, Missouri, group out of Norrisite fundamentalism. Following that schism, with no discrediting evidence against Vick himself, Norris went after his former friend’s family, detailing in *The Fundamentalist* Vick’s daughter’s affair and subsequent divorce. Then, after learning that one of Vick’s associates had been arrested in Phoenix for allegedly attempting to sodomize a young black male, Norris turned the sordid event into a dastardly cartoon that he published in his newspaper. In the cartoon a white adult male is holding hands with a young African-American male while Vick beckons the white man to “come on up and preach for us.”²⁰ Considering what Norris wrote to his son and what he

did to Peak and Vick, it takes little imagination to envision what he would have made of Gregory's divorce and remarriage, and Gregory is convinced that Criswell and his friends did indeed orchestrate the rumors of infidelity. Criswell, in Gregory's view, was simply more subtle than Norris. As Gregory puts it, Norris was close-fisted and public in his attacks, Criswell was clever, a "stealth operation."²¹

Criswell himself once said about Norris, "He was a gifted man. . . . but, oh, underneath Frank Norris there were personal attitudes that were diabolical. They were vicious."²² Gregory believes the same about Criswell. Perhaps over time, access to documents and interviews with key individuals will reveal more, and we will have a clearer picture as to what transpired between Criswell and Gregory, both before and after Gregory's resignation. At present it is enough to draw this conclusion from the failed successions under Norris at First Baptist Fort Worth and Criswell at First Baptist Dallas: While it is very difficult to succeed a megachurch pastor like Norris or Criswell, it can be even more hazardous to resign.

Barry Hankins
Baylor University
Waco, Texas

NOTES

¹For the Southern Baptist controversy and the conservative movement in the SBC see: Barry Hankins, *Uneasy in Babylon: Southern Baptist Conservatives and American Culture* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2002); and David Morgan *The New Crusades, the New Holy Land: Conflict in the Southern Baptist Convention, 1969-1991* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1996).

²Joel Gregory, *Too Great a Temptation: The Seductive Power of America's Super Church* (Fort Worth, Texas: The Summit Group, 1994), 61-69.

³*Ibid.*, 92.

⁴*Ibid.*, 111-12. When Gregory wrote his book, the minutes from the pastoral search committee meetings were locked away. Gregory believes that the committee was supposed to choose O. S. Hawkins, who would actually succeed Gregory briefly. Someone needs to look at the Hawkins tenure and interview him as to what happened that made his stay at First Baptist quite brief also. All told, the pastoral search committee, according to Gregory, spent twenty-seven months traveling the country and spending hundreds of thousands of dollars before going thirty miles down the road to Fort Worth to choose Gregory.

⁵*Ibid.*, 196-99 and 201-02.

⁶*Ibid.*, 207-08.

⁷Steve Scott and Enrique Rangel, "Gregory Resigns First Baptist Position," *Dallas Morning News*, October 1, 1992, 1A. See also Daniel Cattau, "Gregory Discusses Resignation," *Dallas Morning News*, 2 November 1992; Daniel Cattau, "1st Baptist Congregation in Turmoil," *Dallas Morning News*, 13 December 1992; and Christopher Lee, "Gregory Preaches at Area Church," *Dallas Morning News*, 4 January 1993.

⁸The George and Luther Peak stories can be found in Barry Hankins's *God's Rascal: J. Frank Norris and the Beginnings of Southern Fundamentalism* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1996), 120-130.

⁹These quotes can be found in the Norris papers, microfilm copies of which can be found in several libraries including The Texas Collection at Baylor University and the library at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Norris to George, 9 January 1945; Norris to George, 24 January 1945; Norris to George, 25 January 1945; Norris to George, 5 June 1945.

¹⁰It is not clear how Peak learned what Norris had done. The story is recounted in Peak's Oral Memoirs, Texas Collection, Baylor University, 80-82. See also Barry Hankins, "The Ambivalent Fundamentalist: Luther Peak's Relationship with J. Frank Norris and Texas Fundamentalism," *Fides et Historia*, 27 (Winter/Spring, 1995): 71-87.

¹¹"Luther Peak, "Why We Left Fundamentalism to Work with Southern Baptists," *Baptist Standard*, 7 April 1956, 6-7.

¹²Peak, Oral Memoirs, 224.

¹³Gregory, 145.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 321.

¹⁵Joel Gregory, Interview with author, October 23, 2002.

¹⁶*Ibid.*

¹⁷*Ibid.*

¹⁸WFAA News segment, September 1994, videotape in author's possession. It took well over a year of phone calls, letters, and e-mails to get WFAA to locate this segment and send it to me. It came labeled merely September 1994, so I do not know the precise day the broadcast

aired. Gregory had told me that on the broadcast Criswell had called him “an apostate living with a woman in Fort Worth.” That statement does not appear on the video WFAA sent to me.

¹⁹WFAA News segment, September 1994.

²⁰For Norris’s allegations that Vick was trying to cover up his daughter’s affair, see Norris to Vick, 23 June 1950, Norris papers. For the cartoon of the sex case see “Crime Against Nature,” *Fundamentalist*, 11 August 1950. Norris also included a photostatic copy of a court document from the *State of Arizona v. Charles Dyer*, which included a sworn statement from the arresting police officer saying that on 23 May 1949 Dyer “attempted to commit the act of sodomy on a young Negro boy, John P. McGhee, the age of 13.”

²¹Gregory, Interview by author.

²²W.A. Criswell, Oral Memoirs, 21, Texas Collection, Baylor University.

TEXAS BAPTIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Minutes

2001 Annual Meeting

October 29, 2001

The Texas Baptist Historical Society met Monday, October 29, at 10:00 a. m. at the Baptist General Convention of Texas, Dallas, Texas, with approximately fifty-five people present.

Alan Lefever, Dallas, presented the annual membership and financial report. For 2001 the Society had a membership of 116 with 3 non-member journal subscribers. During the year, the Society received income from journal sales and dues totaling \$7,264.24 with expenditures of \$2,210.24. On October 29, the checking account balance was \$19,556.77.

The Society members endorsed the recommendations of the Nominating Committee and elected the following officers for 2001-2002: Royce Measures, Pasadena, president; Carol Holcomb, Belton, vice-president; and Alan Lefever, Fort Worth, secretary-treasurer. Steve Warren, Sherman, was elected to serve a two-year term on the Executive Committee.

Lefever presented the following budget for 2001-2002:

INCOME

Historical Council, BGCT	\$6,000.00
Membership Dues & Journal Sales	3,000.00
Luncheon	300.00
Total Income	\$9,300.00

EXPENSES

Journal Printing	\$4,500.00
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Journal Postage	400.00
Journal Labor	2,000.00
Journal Supplies.	300.00
Newsletter Printing	100.00
Newsletter Postage	300.00
Awards	600.00
Exhibit Booth	-0-
Speaker's Honoraria.	600.00
Travel	-0-
Miscellaneous Supplies	50.00
Luncheon	300.00
Total Expenses	\$9,150.00

Volume XXIII cover sheet will go here

Naomi Taplin, Dallas, presented the 2001 Church History Writing awards to the following:

David and Melba Jenkins for *A Sesquicentennial History of the First Baptist Church Gilmer, Texas: 1846-1996*

Pete Morris for *Fielder Road Baptist Church [Arlington, Texas]: An Abbreviated History*

Ron Ellison for *East Texas in the 1840s: A Battleground for Primitive and Missionary Baptists*

Wilma and Norman Taylor, East Morristown, Indiana, presented an overview of the history of the Railroad's "Chapel Cars." The meeting adjourned at 11:30am.

Respectfully submitted,
Alan J. Lefever
Secretary-Treasurer
Texas Baptist Historical Society

ABNER SMITH AND EARLY PRIMITIVE BAPTIST WORK IN TEXAS

Texas Baptists are in the vortex of a holy war over denominational identity. While the conflict is waged in associations, conventions, and the media, the real battle field is the local church, which is assaulted on every side by a plethora of entities asking for endorsement and financial support. Confusion reigns in the pews as members confront multiple associations, state and national conventions. The issue is not theology, but polity.

In the midst of conflicting claims as to who are the “true and loyal Baptists”, heritage is a logical beginning point for discussion. Who are Texas Baptists? What are the issues and circumstances which produces their special hybrid of Baptist theology? Answers to these kinds of questions provide an invaluable perspective for understanding the present controversy and how to react to it.

For most Texas Baptists, unfortunately, the story of Baptist beginnings ranks on a par with a root canal. Names such as Baylor, Morrell, Tryon, Huckins, and Cox may be familiar to some. Names such as Parker, Smith, Herrin, Green, and Reed, however, are an enigma. This is because these men were Primitive Baptists and were outside the mainstream of Texas Baptist heritage.

At the turn of the nineteenth century a great missionary movement began in England with William Carey as its catalyst. The furor of world missions captured American Christians, especially Baptists through Adoniram and Anne Judson and

Luther Rice. Local missionary societies appeared among Baptist churches to collect funds to support missionaries. The movement grew until in 1812 a national body, the Baptist General Missionary Convention also sometimes known as the Triennial Convention, was formed to coordinate missionary efforts.

But for every action there is a reaction: claiming apostolic origin, the “Old School”, “Hardshell”, or Primitive Baptist movement was a nineteenth century protest against the missionary movement. They opposed “money based” missions, benevolent societies, and the assessing of churches to support missions, missionaries, and Sunday school.¹ They asserted that “there were no missionary societies in the days of the apostles and none directed by Scripture: therefore there should be none now.”²

The first Primitive Baptist church in the United States was the Welch Tract Baptist Church, founded in South Wales and immigrated to Newark, Delaware in 1701.³ The most significant of the early Primitive Baptist churches was the Hopewell Church in Mercer County, New Jersey.⁴ From its early beginnings in New England the movement spread to South by John Taylor, who moved to Tennessee in 1781, where he founded many churches and planted the seeds of anti-missionary theology. From Tennessee the movement spread to other Southern states and reached its zenith during the colonization of Texas. As the early Texas settlers came mostly from Southern states, the anti-missionary spirit came with them.

The seminary graduate, who remained awake during their Baptist history class, might remember that Daniel Parker, a Primitive Baptist, brought the first Baptist church to Texas in 1833. The Pilgrim Predestinarian Regular Baptist Church was organized in Lamotte, Illinois, and, with seven members, immigrated to San Felipe de Austin. Parker was the father of “Two Seeds in the Spirit” theology. After eighteen months Parker moved to Elkhart, Texas, where he founded nine

churches – Hopewell in Shelby Count (1837), New Bethel in Sabine County (1838), Fort Houston in Houston County (1840), Mt. Pleasant in Montgomery County (1841), Mustang Prairie (1841 or 1842), Wolfe Creek (1845), and perhaps others.⁵ Parker also led in the organization of several associations. J.M. Carroll was deeply impressed by this anti-missionary missionary and wrote: “No other preacher has ever lived in East Texas who left a deeper or more indelible impress on the theology of that section than was made by Daniel Parker.”⁶ In 1986 the Pilgrim Church is still active and was the oldest Primitive Baptist Church in Texas.⁷

Although perhaps not as impressive as Parker, another Primitive Baptist who left deep footprints in Texas Baptist history was Abner Smith, founder of the first Baptist church organized on Texas soil.

The purpose of this paper is twofold: first, to introduce most people to Abner Smith and the place of the Primitive Baptists in early Texas history; and, secondly, to illustrate that missionary-minded Baptists in Texas have labored, even from the very beginning, amidst strong adversity.

I was introduced to Abner Smith through the genealogical works of M. R. Kruemcke, Jr., a direct descendant of Smith. In his studies, Kruemcke listed twenty-six churches Smith influenced, and stated that he was involved in a total of forty churches in Texas. These churches were in Bastrop, Bell, Fayette, Williamson, Caldwell, Washington, Lavaca, Milam, Guadalupe, Coryell and Burleson Counties. Unfortunately, he listed no documentation as to his sources. Some of the material appeared in a paper I read in Austin in 1998 on Texas Baptists’ first controversy (over missions). Since there was much unused data, I felt it merited another paper – this one about the man himself. In search of primary source materials I found few available, so I broadened the scope of the paper to include some early beginnings of the Primitive Baptist work in Texas.

Abner Smith was a man who allowed no neutral opinions of

himself. One either admired or detested him. From a missionary perspective, B.F. Fuller wrote that Smith “occupies in Texas Baptist history a doubtful and uncertain position.”⁸ Similarly, B. F. Riley said, “Smith and his flock made no impression on the life of the growing population of the new country, and after a few years the organization became extinct.”⁹ On the other hand, Primitive Baptist historian R. H. Pittman, affirmed, “he was strong in the faith of God’s salvation in Jesus and all the seeds of promise and stood firm for Bible doctrine and practice...”¹⁰ Perhaps a more balanced and fairer evaluation of the man came from one who knew him personally — R.E.B. Baylor. In a letter to J.H. Stribling in 1871, he remembered Smith:

He was a man deeply read in Scriptures, a man of talent and unquestionable piety, a high toned Calvinist and anti everything except the Bible and the church of the blessed Savior. If you did not agree with him on the platform he had no fellowship with you. Although a good man he had I think strong feelings, a narrow mind, and unnecessary prejudices.”¹¹

Abner Smith was born on July 4, 1781 in Warren County, North Carolina, the third of nine children of George and Elizabeth Smith. Little is known of his early life. In 1805 he married Siddy Busbee in Wake County, North Carolina, and they had six children — Nathan, Bethel, Hamilton, Mary, Nancy, and Kaya.¹² After Siddy’s death he married Sarah Jackson in Nashville, Tennessee, and had one child, Abigail, in Lawrence County, Alabama.¹³

Abner and his brother, Solomon, also a Primitive preacher, were in some way connected with the Town Creek Baptist Church which was constituted in 1803 in Nash County, North Carolina. Kruemcke cites documentation from the University of North Carolina’s history department that out of the Town Creek Church came the beginnings of the Church of Christ.¹⁴

In 1806-1807 Smith moved to Tennessee. In 1818 Abner and Solomon moved to Alabama where they founded four

churches in Lawrence, Franklin, and Marion Counties. The first church organized by Smith was the Town Creek Baptist Church, which Kruemcke affirmed was still active in 1971. Abner’s brother-in-law, T.W. Cox, was pastor of a church east of Town Creek. Though both shared a common background and theology, in later years they became fierce adversaries. During this period, Smith served as moderator of the Muscle Shoals Baptist Association in 1832-1833.

In 1823 Smith journeyed from Tennessee to Texas and voted in the “Alcalades” election on February 13, 1824 in Nacogdoches.¹⁵ This initial exposure to Texas sparked the pioneer spirit of Smith, and although it would be nine years before his return, he never forgot his first impressions of Texas.

Accompanied by members of the Town Creek Church and some from the Marion County church, Smith left the Buttahatchie River and came to Texas in 1833. The group settled near the present town of Bastrop, where he was given a Spanish Land Grant in what is now Burleson County.¹⁶ The records of Bell County indicate he filed on land October 28, 1834.

The Mexican government prohibited the establishment of any church in Texas other than Roman Catholic. On March 26, 1834, however, a decree was passed that stated no person should be molested on account of his religious or political opinions, provided he did not disturb the public order.¹⁷ Three days later Smith founded the first Baptist church organized on Texas soil – the Providence Baptist Church. Organized on March 29, 1834, twelve miles south of Bastrop on the Colorado River, the church’s six charter members were constituted by a presbytery of Abner Smith and Isaac Crouch.¹⁸ In time, a small church building was erected on the eastern banks of Alum Creek, near its mouth. Providence was the first Baptist church organized in Texas, the first church in Bastrop County, and the first in the county to have its own building.¹⁹ Some historians contend that it was a transplanted church,

constituted in Alabama and immigrated to Texas. Carroll wrote that thirty-two members from his Alabama church came to Texas with Smith.²⁰ Apparently this was the number of the entire entourage. Thankfully, J.S. Newman, a Primitive Baptist historian, corrected the matter by citing the records of the Providence Church:

State of Coahuila and Texas, Municipality of Mena, Colorado. March 29, 1834. A preamble to the Constitution of a Baptist church. Whereas, there being a few Baptist brethren of the Baptist order having emigrated from the United States and settled in Texas, viz: James Burleson, Joseph Burleson, and Elizabeth, his wife; Moses Gage, Isabella Crouch and Elizabeth Burleson, having brought letters of dismissal with them and anxious to enjoy the church privileges, they appointed to meet on the fifth Saturday in March at John Burleson's in order to consult the minds of each other for framing a constitution, and on the day set they met with Brethren Isaac Crouch and Abner Smith, ministers of the Gospel, and others, and a number of spectators. A. Smith, being requested, preached the introductory sermon from the text, "Upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." The brethren, after counselling [sic] together, called Brethren Crouch and Smith as a presbytery to constitute them and on producing letters, and after being examined on the Article of Faith, the said Crouch and Smith pronounced the six members above named the Church of Christ, known by the name of Providence.²¹

Crouch joined the church soon after its constitution and the following November Smith also joined by letter.²² Crouch soon renounced the anti-missionary stance of Smith and most of the church members and returned to Nashville where he upheld "a sound Baptist faith." Z.N. Morrell, who knew Crouch well, said that "his work was cut short by an Indian raid, in which he as killed about a mile and a half from the present locality of the Little River Baptist Church, in Milam County."²³

The story and ministry of the Providence Church are veiled in obscurity as the minutes of the church were unavailable to this writer. One must be careful to distinguish between the Providence Church at Bastrop (anti-missionary) from the

Providence Church at Chappell Hill in Washington Country (missionary). From time to time there are singular references to the Bastrop church which provide glimpses of its pilgrimage. In 1838, after the failure of the Washington church and the unsettled conditions of the area, Morrell moved to La Grange. Soon afterwards he visited "the little organization at old Brother John Burleson's home, twelve miles above Plum Creek."²⁴ This was the Providence Church. While camping on a site near the present town of Plum, Morrell was asked to preach in the home of William Scallorn.²⁵ At that meeting Mrs. Asiel Dancer made a profession of faith. According to Morrell, Smith was "paralyzed and helpless at that time,"²⁶ so he asked Morrell to baptize Mrs. Dancer.²⁷ This was Morrell's first baptism in Texas, and perhaps the first baptism west of the Trinity River. Providence was asked to assist in the formation of the Hopewell or Plum Grove Baptist Church in 1839. Providence granted Smith a letter of dismissal in November 1840. At the same meeting R. G. Green, a prominent Primitive Baptist of the time (participated in the founding of the Old North Church near Nacogdoches), who joined the church in December 1838, was excluded for drunkenness. Newman wrote he had no record of the church after 1841. Providence, however, was one of the founding churches of the Providence Baptist Association in 1850. In 1878 the Providence Association granted letters of dismissal to Providence, Beulah, and Antioch churches to found the Friendship Association. As of 1884 Providence remained a cooperating member of that Association. Newman, in 1906, wrote the church dissolved "a few years ago."²⁸

In 1836 Smith moved to Burleson County (which was then Washington County) where he received a land grant of one league (4439 acres).²⁹ He distributed the land among his family. Sometime during this period he received 177 acres of land near Georgetown in Williamson County. Smith availed himself of as much land in Texas as possible.

The preaching of Morrell during 1838 in the Plum Grove Community resulted in the desire to establish a church. A

delegation of Asa Wright, Stephen and William Scallorn (brothers), were appointed by the Plum Grove Community in March 1839 to visit the Providence Church to seek help in organizing a church. R. G. Green and Asiel Dancer, from the Providence church, formed a presbytery and organized the Hopewell or Plum Grove Baptist Church in April 1839. Known by both names, the church met in the Plum Grove community, the first church in Fayette County. The exact date of the founding of the church was a matter of discussion between Robert A. Baker and D. D. Tidwell.³⁰ This was obviously a mixed congregation of both missionary and anti-missionary members as was true of most early Texas Baptist churches. Because Baptists were few in number and widely scattered, differences were tolerated. Newman called Providence a Primitive church while Morrell termed it “our little church.” Apparently Primitives referred to it as “Hopewell” and the missionary Baptists as “Plum Grove.” In the July 1839 conference the church proposed to discuss two actions: 1) to take into consideration the time for feet-washing: and, 2) to prohibit the question of missions ever being discussed in church conference, and declared non-fellowship for the same.³¹ Their approval demonstrated the growing tension between the missionary and anti-missionary factions in the church. Soon after its constitution the church affiliated with the United Baptists of western Tennessee.³²

In 1840, mostly through the influence of William Scallorn, who was missionary in spirit, the issue of missions was brought to a vote. Of the twenty-two members, thirteen were missionary and nine were anti-missionary. The minority exerted such a strong influence that they controlled the use of the church building and the record books for almost a year. For some reason the missionary-minded majority did not withdraw but allowed the church to call Abner Smith and Asiel Dancer as pastors, both strong anti-missionary advocates.

The rule of the minority was short-lived. At a conference on October 25, 1841, charges were brought against nine members

of Hopewell because of their anti-missionary sentiments and their support of T.W. Cox and his “Campbellite” tendencies. Seven of the nine members were excluded, with another excluded later. At this conference, a significant resolution was adopted:

On motion resolved by the church, and whereas Elder A. Smith has been instrumental, in our beliefs of the above named difficulty, and has been assigned the grounds that he is not a United Baptist; and moreover, and represented that the grounds on which the United Baptists are founded is only nominal. Therefore, we feel bound to pronounce out of the order of United Baptists and cannot recognize him as a preacher of our faith and order.³³

The eight withdrew and later organized a new church. Stephen Scallorn, a local physician, took the church records with him. Newman wrote:

In November 1842, the church was dissolved by Elder Dancer and Deacon Stephen Scallorn. Soon after this a portion of the nine members that were in the dissolution of the Hopewell Church met at La Grange, Fayette County, and organized a church, calling it ‘Friendship.’³⁴

The missionary element, on June 11, 1842 assumed the name “Plum Grove Baptist church,” called Morrell as pastor, named William Scallorn as clerk,³⁵ and affiliated with Union Baptist Association.³⁶

It seems there were several Baptist churches in the La Grange area, some missionary and some Primitive. On March 25, 1840 James Huckins assisted T. W. Cox in forming a missionary church at Rutersville, a growing Methodist community five miles from La Grange.³⁷ Baker contended it was the missionary element of the “mixed” La Grange Church.³⁸

The crisis over missions at the Plum Grove Church also spread to other churches. Cox grew increasingly bold in his affirmations of Campbell’s views and led the churches he served away from their roots. The authorization by Cox for a

lay member to baptize a convert brought the issue to a head at Independence. Baylor, who shared the pulpit with Cox, heard of the accusation of fraud against Cox before he left Talladega, Alabama, where both belonged to the same church. When confronted by Baylor over the accusation, Cox was unmoved. Correspondence from Alabama, however, confirmed Cox was dismissed from the church because of fraud. Through the intervention of William Tryon, James Huckins, and Z. N. Morrell the missionary faction prevailed and Cox was excluded from Independence Church by a single vote. Similar action was taken at La Grange. The Travis Church maintained a majority of members who supported Cox, but withdrew and founded a church nearby on Kentucky Ridge.³⁹ Soon afterwards Cox left the ministry. On January 20, 1842, Cox became justice of the peace of Fayette County, but soon thereafter was elected second lieutenant in William E. Eastland's Company B of Brig. Gen. Alexander Somervell's Army of the South West. Cox participated in the Somervell and Mier expeditions, was captured in the battle of Mier, and took part in the escape attempt led by Ewen Cameron at Salado on February 11, 1843. He was the only one of four of Cameron's men to make his way back to Texas.⁴⁰ In later life, according to Link, Cox devoted his time to horse racing and gambling.⁴¹

During this time there was a strong movement of the Baptist churches of the area to unite and create an association. In June 1840 twenty-five men met at the Independence Church to discuss the creation of a Baptist association in the area. This was the largest assembly of Baptists in Texas to date. Of the assembly, four were preachers. The missionary Baptists were represented by R. E. B. Baylor and T. W. Cox; the anti-missionary Baptists by Abner Smith and Asiel Dancer. Z. N. Morrell, who moved in September to the Guadalupe, two miles out of Gonzalas, was pastor of the Plum Grove Church, and planned to attend this meeting, but illness prevented him.⁴² Out of courtesy because of his tenure and age, Baylor nominated Smith as moderator. This action angered Cox, who felt he

should be chosen. During three or four days of deliberations, the men sought a compromise. The adoption of Articles of Faith proved devastating to the proceedings. The debate centered around Smith and Cox. In his letter to Stribling in 1871, Baylor remembered the meeting:

... though the prayers and tears of myself and others, the stern old Calvinist brother Smith softened down a little and drew up a platform of principles on which we all assented except Elder Cox. He made a warm and exciting speech against them, declaring the old fellow once had a rope around his neck and would he never again consent to be thus tied.⁴³

On that note the meeting adjourned. On October 8, 1840, fifteen representatives from the Independence, La Grange, and Travis churches met at Travis and formed the Union Baptist Association.⁴⁴ Cox, pastor of all three churches at the time, was elected moderator and they adopted Articles of Faith of a modified Calvinistic stance.

Little material that can be documented is known of Smith until 1849, when he participated in the formation of the Providence Baptist Association. The Union of Predestinarian Baptists of the Regular Faith and Order, organized in 1844,⁴⁵ met at the Mt. Beula Church in Angelina County, Texas, on Saturday, October 18, 1849. At this gathering Abner Smith, a messenger from the Friendship Church, was appointed moderator. The main item of business was the subject of division of the Association. The messengers agreed to:

... grant letters to Friendship, Providence, Plum Creek, and San Jacinto Churches to meet in convention at the Providence Church in Bastrop County, ten miles below Bastrop on the Colorado River, on Friday before the first Sunday in June next, to form and organize themselves into an association upon the same faith and constitution of this Association: and Brethren J. W. Parker, E. A. Bowen, R. T. Gibson, and Brethren G. Parks and Eli Russell attend the same; and that the clerk write and forward said letter."⁴⁶

The organizational meeting was at the Providence Church, Bastrop County, on May 31, 1850. Messengers from the Providence, Friendship, and Plum Creek Churches attended, with the San Jacinto Church conspicuously absent. The first action of the gathering was to approve the constitution and Articles of Faith. Smith acted as moderator of the meeting.

The first meeting of the new association began on September 7, 1850 at Plum Creek. Providence was the fifth Primitive Baptist association organized in Texas. Messengers from the original three churches gathered and the Mulberry Fork and Little Flock Churches were received into fellowship. The site of the original Little Flock Church is now located in the center of Fort Hood near Killeen, Texas. Being duly constituted the Association elected Smith moderator. With the exception of one year he served as moderator until 1860. In 1858 William, Abner's grandson, served as moderator.

The Mulberry Fork church is an interesting story. It was constituted on Saturday before the third Sunday in July 1850, on the Mulberry Fork of the Navidad River, Fayette County, Texas, in the home of Stephen Scallorn, approximately two miles south of Schulenburg. One of the charter members, Calvin Gage, married Mary Smith, Abner's daughter. Abner Smith was chosen to "the Pastoral care of the church."⁴⁷

In 1854 two conflicting letters came to the Association from the Zion Church, but the Association refused to hear them until they were discussed by the church. When the Association met at Zion in Williamson County September 23-25, 1855, one letter was accepted and the other rejected. The doctrinal issue was eternal devil, eternal union, eternal children, and eternal justification, which the Association deemed heresy, being of the two-seed tradition.⁴⁸ This action illustrated the division among the Primitive Baptists. In 1856 the rejected party, which consisted of messengers from the Plum Creek, Mt. Olive, and part of Zion churches, withdrew to a local church and organized the Providence Association of Baptists of the Regular Faith and Order.⁴⁹

In 1858 the Association met at Buckner's Creek Church near Rosanky, sometimes called Hallmark Prairie.⁵⁰ Four churches petitioned the Association for letters to form a new association. The petition was granted and Little Flock, New Hope, Zion, Concord, along with Sugar Loaf and Rainey's Creek Churches met with Concord Church in Williamson County, on Saturday before the fourth Sunday in October, and organized the Concord Association.⁵¹

Smith was a messenger from the Friendship Church from 1850 to 1857. In the 1858 minutes he is listed as a messenger from the Buckner's Creek Church, where he served until 1860. The minutes of Providence Association for 1861 read "the moderator being absent, Elder George Daniel was appointed to fill his place until the Association organized."⁵² Smith disappears from the minutes of the association and from any records available to the writer. He was, at the time, nearing eighty years of age.

The exact date of Smith's death is a matter of dispute as is his burial place.⁵³ Kruemcke quotes from the Williamson County Land Office, "Mr. Smith died April 26, 1872."⁵⁴ Donna Chapman states he died in 1876 in Burleson County.⁵⁵ Whatever the date, Smith lived a long and full life. He left indelible imprints on all of Baptists his day, especially in Central Texas. Smith influenced Central Texas in much the same manner as Parker did East Texas. His legacy was carried on by two of his grandsons (by his son Newman), William and C. C. Smith. C. C. Smith was J. M. Carroll's first pastor after becoming a Christian.⁵⁶

Unfortunately, there is little biographical material on Smith which would provide insights into his personality, character, family relations, personal theology, and the usual stories about men of history. For the present, the testimony of others as to his actions and their impression must suffice.

During the formative years of Texas Baptists the Primitive movement was a formidable adversary for missionary Baptists. For decades they co-existed in a growing land. In time the

missionary Baptists became dominant and the anti-missionary movement passed into obscurity. The anti-missionary protest, in Lambert's words, "would be reduced to a terrible Baptist grudge."⁵⁷ The wall they build around themselves to keep the world out became their prison.⁵⁸ In 1958 Primitive Baptists reported 300 associations, 3000 churches with a total membership of 100,000 in the United States.⁵⁹ If our forefathers had not fought the good fight, the missionary spirit, characteristic of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, would have been compromised, if not extinguished.

This excursion into the past hopefully will encourage Texas Baptists today. We need to remember that dissenting voices have been a part of our history, and remain so today. We also need to remember that compromise leads to division if principles are maintained. May differences not prevent us from being good stewards of the heritage bequeathed to this generation.

Royce Measures
Retired Pastor
Pasadena, Texas

NOTES

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¹⁹Kenneth Kesselus, *History of Bastrop County, Texas before Statehood* (Austin: Jenkins Publishing Co., 1986), 99.

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²¹J. S. Newman, *A History of Primitive Baptists of Texas, Oklahoma, and Indian Territories*, vol. 1 (Tioga: Baptist Trumpet, 1906), 37-38.

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²⁵T. H. Johnson, *History of the Plum Grove Baptist Church* (Author, 1977), 6.

²⁶There are no explanations for the paralysis. It might have been a stroke. Its duration is unknown.

²⁷Morrell, 55.

²⁸Newman, 39.

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³⁰For a full discussion of the origin of this church see Baker, 33-52.

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⁴⁸Newman, 14.

⁴⁹Newman, *Minutes of Providence Baptist Association*, (1905). Writing of Primitive Baptists Online., 4.

⁵⁰Letter from Barbara Vana, Museum Administrator of Bastrop County Historical Society, October 4, 2002.

⁵¹Newman, *History*, 15.

⁵²Kruemcke, *Minutes of Providence Association*, 67.

⁵³Wayne Kruemcke (son of M. R. Kruemcke, Jr.) stated in an email to the writer on September 18, 2002 that Abner Smith was buried with his son, Newman, NNE of Bastrop at Blackjack.

⁵⁴Kruemcke, *Descendants of Abner Smith*, 6.

⁵⁵No notation as to source provided.

⁵⁶Carroll, *History*, 73. Carroll said he was Abner’s son, while Kruemcke called him a grandson.

⁵⁷Byron Cecil Lambert, *The Rise of the Antimissionary Baptists: Sources and Leaders 1800-1840* (New York: Arno Press, 1980), 413.

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⁵⁹Berry, 1115.

TEXAS BAPTIST LEADERS IN THE 1960S: THEOLOGICAL CONSERVATIVES AND POLITICAL MODERATION

I dreamed the dreams of Camelot . . . along with a great number of other friends . . . but we never dreamed quite as unrealistic as other folk. We always understood that there were limitations and we dealt, I think, more realistically even with the racial problem.¹

Jimmy Allen
Christian Life Commission of Texas

Texas Baptist leaders concerned about social fragmentation reached their summit of influence in the spring of 1968. As members of the Christian Life Commission (CLC) of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), they hosted their second Christian citizenship seminar in Washington, D.C. The CLC's executive director Foy Valentine, a native Texan, gathered Baptists with several prominent federal officials to consider a range of factors explaining racism and urban violence. The seminar concluded with Lyndon Johnson's Rose Garden address asking Baptist leaders to unite their churches in pursuing social justice. Later that spring at the Astrodome in Houston, Valentine read the most anticipated resolution of the annual Southern Baptist Convention. The resolution, "Our Statement Concerning the Crisis of the Nation," confessed the denomination's past failures in race relations and pledged all SBC agencies to fight discrimination. When messengers overwhelmingly approved the resolution, it symbolized that the nation's largest and most segregated Protestant denomination would actively support the civil rights movement.² Texas

Baptist leaders, utilizing a moderate political strategy in race, represented a type of social Christianity that seemingly changed the hearts of Southern Baptists.

Yet continued violence across the country altered a potential watershed year for disappointed Texas Baptists advocating change. A week after the CLC's seminar in Washington, D.C., the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., sparked more urban riots. Hours after Valentine read his race resolution to Baptists in Houston, another assassin's bullet murdered Robert F. Kennedy. Almost to spite themselves the next day, Baptist messengers then elected the denomination's most outspoken defender of segregation from a decade before as president of the SBC, First Baptist Dallas pastor W. A. Criswell.³

The turbulent spring of 1968 suggests that moderate Baptist leaders like Valentine faced old limits in influencing social reform, especially in race. Those limits included their conservative theology, where biblical authority and the freedom to interpret scripture pursued individual salvation as the primary means of social reformation. In addition, because the decentralization of BGCT churches rested all structural authority on the local autonomy of their churches, congregational votes checked denominational leaders motivating churches against social injustices or threats.⁴ Like Valentine in Houston, Texas Baptist leaders at times stretched those limits by manipulating their theology and structure through resolutions at annual meetings. Historically, that manipulation brought diverse conservative and more progressive congregations together under the guise of social control, especially in support of temperance and anti-gambling legislation. Unlike those traditional Baptist concerns, however, the race issue must be reexamined because it shaped the political moderation of Texas Baptist leaders by the 1960s. That moderation resulted in two consequences. First, BGCT leaders never offered a real solution to discrimination for black or white Texas Baptists in the 1950s. Conversely, by becoming more political in its strategy toward race, moderate leaders indirectly hastened the theological split in the SBC a

decade later.

The moderate strategy of Texas leaders grew out of Southwestern Seminary in the 1930s. T. B. Maston, a professor of Christian ethics, singled out race relations as the most critical social concern for Baptists. He taught a generation of students the manifesto for southern moderates, Gunner Myrdal's *An American Dilemma*. Like Myrdal, Maston believed the church served as one of many moral forces providing leadership in the gradual evolution of social advances.⁵ Momentum over the race issue ultimately led the BGCT to create the Christian Life Commission of Texas in 1951. The commission continued a paternalistic cooperative effort of the Ministry with Minorities to build stronger relationships with black ministers. For their own constituents, the CLC provided pamphlets and held annual workshops to educate white Texas Baptists on the evils of racism in a segregated society. By asking Baptists to apply scripture to "everyday life" situations, the commission created a spiritual tension that placed more responsibility on whites for the racial crisis. While the CLC was not a political voice in the 1950s, its moderation was successful within the denomination by "speaking to" and "not speaking for" Texas Baptists in its public work and publications. The SBC quickly adopted the non-fragmenting approach in organization and leadership beginning in 1953, when executive directors of the Texas CLC went on to head the denominational agency: A. C. Miller in 1953 and Foy Valentine in 1959. Texas Baptist moderates held key leadership positions in the SBC and BGCT during the civil rights movement.⁶

In the larger context of the early civil rights movement, however, Texas Baptist leaders failed in bringing any significant social reform for black or white Baptist in spite of their efforts. Press coverage largely ignored a lukewarm resolution supporting the Supreme Court in the aftermath of *Brown v. Board of Education*, but pounced on W. A. Criswell's anti-segregationist speech before the South Carolina Legislature in 1956. When Valentine evaluated the "racial situation" in

a speech at Southwestern Seminary in 1957, he described it as an “albatross about the neck of the nation” Valentine criticized still segregated urban school districts, blasted “respectable elements” involved in newly formed citizens councils in Texas, and demonstrated his disappointment with race driven violence in Beaumont and Mansfield. Valentine then described a Baptist dilemma. He argued that while pastors “understood” race relations far better than their congregations due to “the information provided by the CLC,” they failed tragically in making their congregations apply scripture to the race issue. At the same time, Valentine argued that pastors lagged behind their congregation because many refused to identify racial prejudice as a moral and spiritual problem and speak out against segregation.⁷

In the same speech Valentine attacked the race baiting of Allan Shivers and his creation of the Texas Advisory Commission on Segregation. Yet his theological solution to the race problem lacked political savvy, and Texas Baptists played only a minor role in defeating segregationist legislation in 1957. After voters approved the original segregationist referendum in 1956, Valentine traveled to Austin to attend a special meeting of the ecumenical Texas Council of Churches in November. The council formed a committee to pressure the Legislature in defeating the segregationist agenda, and then elected Valentine as chairman to lead the process. When a majority of committee members wanted to release an ecumenical statement to the papers opposing the “racist bills,” Valentine describe the media blitz as a mistake that “would crystallize [*sic*] opposition.” He advocated lobbying legislators on a personal basis and refraining from “playing our actions up in any public way.” Valentine then met with Governor-elect Price Daniel before returning home to Dallas. The next day he wrote the council’s executive director, Harold Kilpatrick, and resigned as chairman of the committee. While the Texas Council of Churches ultimately pressured the Legislature in defeating most of the segregationists’ bills in 1957, the strength

of the ecumenical movement suffered without the state’s most visible Baptist advocate for improved race relations.⁸

Protesting Social Segregation in Texas, 1960-1961

Aside from being politically naïve, Valentine’s 1957 speech was certainly prophetic. By 1960, civil unrest in Texas threatened to match violent protests in the other parts of the South. School desegregation in Texas stagnated by 1961, with only 128 of 722 biracial districts integrated. Even after the passing of the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964, ninety percent of African American students in some large Texas cities attended predominantly black schools.⁹ Boiling frustration of blacks seeking social equality accompanied the slow progress of desegregation. Although local newspapers agreed not to cover protests at the level seen in other parts of the South, the Texas civil rights movement fueled a white backlash and an already hostile political environment in the early 1960s. The strong anti-federal government sentiment, prevalent across the country, led many to be indifferent to, and in a few cases, to cheer, the assassination of a President in Dallas in 1963.

For African American Baptists who at times crossed paths with Texas Baptists, the Texas CLC’s moderate strategy offered no real solution in race relations. One example was Bill Lawson, a friend of Foy Valentine’s and the director of the BGCT-sponsored Baptist Student Center at Texas Southern University in Houston. A month after black college students challenged segregation laws in Greensboro, North Carolina, thirteen Texas Southern students asked Lawson to help organize their own sit-in in Houston and instruct them in nonviolent tactics. After the stunned Lawson advised them not to demonstrate, the students told him they only sought his advice and not his permission.¹⁰ The students then successfully protested a Houston Wiengarten store before the sit-in spread and forced negotiations with city officials. Lawson subsequently helped students draft a letter to consider a postponement settlement if city officials created

a bi-racial committee to study the desegregation of Houston's public facilities.¹¹ Lawson's moderation subsequently grew more influential at Texas Southern. When hundreds of students gathered at the YMCA near campus and formed the Progressive Youth Association (PYA) in late April, Lawson told the assembly that "we've waited for four hundred years," and to avoid needless violence, "we can wait a little longer." Lawson encouraged students to slow the pace, back off, and let negotiations "work themselves out."¹²

By May, however, the success of the PYA in coercing businesses and the foot-dragging of the mayor's biracial committee led Lawson to reconsider his moderate position of negotiation and gradualism. Accepting tactics of direct action, he suggested students conduct a general boycott of Houston businesses and offered his home to develop strategy and make picket signs. In June 1962, Lawson placed himself into a better position with Houston's black community when he left his position as the BSU director at Texas Southern and accepted a call to pastor Wheeler Avenue Baptist Church, a middle-class congregation located near the campus. When TSU students planned a protest to take advantage of Gordon Cooper's nationally televised parade in May 1963, Lawson opened Wheeler Avenue as the base of operation. Fifteen minutes before the parade's scheduled start, a phone call to the church from white businessmen halted the mass protest by conceding segregationist practices. Many students believed the concession saved Houston from the largest civil rights protest in the entire South.¹³

Even though Lawson dually-aligned Wheeler Avenue with the BGCT and the National Baptist Convention, the first church in Houston with such a denominational arrangement, the Texas CLC offered no tangible help in the continued struggle. For example, Lawson worked to bring Martin Luther King, Jr., to Texas Southern in 1964. Many of the state's denominations and religious institutions had solicited a visit from the busy civil rights symbol, including the Austin Presbyterian Seminary,

the Disciples of Christ, Rice University, and three invitations from Southern Methodist University. Both the BGCT and Baylor University viewed King as too controversial in 1964, and never invited him to anything. Lawson instead turned to King's longtime friend Erma Jewell Hughes to secure his appearance at Texas Southern in May 1964.¹⁴

Students in Austin, San Antonio, and Dallas also challenged local segregation laws during the same period. In Dallas, black students from Washington High School and Bishop College instigated stand-ins at the Palace and Majestic theaters on February 12, 1961. After fifty white students from Southern Methodist University later joined the stand-in, a general, though peaceful, confusion ensued. The *Dallas Morning News* blamed clergy and academics for the disorder, and voiced its opposition to picketing as a "means of coercion."¹⁵ The stand-ins also contributed to the city's overall anxiety in 1961 after a federal court ordered Dallas schools to desegregate. The school board nervously chose a gradual plan to integrate one grade each year, starting with the first grade the following September. A week after the stand-ins, T. B. Maston addressed the Dallas Pastors Conference at Cliff Temple Baptist Church. His moderate message, "The Role of a Pastor in a Community Facing Desegregation," urged ministers to "not let Dallas be another New Orleans or Little Rock" when desegregating its schools. Maston assured pastors that in communities already desegregated, "Negro pupils have not flooded previously all-white schools" and that where they enjoyed freedom of choice, "the vast majority of them continue to attend all-Negro or predominantly Negro schools." At the critical time of mounting protest in the city, Maston simply asked preachers to "show leadership in your church" and rely on the "citizenship appeal."¹⁶ Significantly, the Texas CLC struggled as integration went from a national mandate to a local struggle of implementation. Its designer, J. Howard Williams, died in April 1958 while serving as president of Southwestern Seminary. When the Texan A. C. Miller announced his

retirement from the SBC's Christian Life Commission in 1959, Valentine once again succeeded him a few months later. Jimmy R. Allen, another Maston student from Southwestern Seminary, took over the leadership of the Texas CLC. Under Allen, the Texas CLC reached a turning point that coincided with the explosion of political and social activism prevalent in the Kennedy-Johnson years. The committee worked closer with the Texas Council of Churches and introduced a formal political activism on most social issues, especially in race relations. Allen worked to use the denomination's largest state paper, *The Baptist Standard*, as a moderate media outlet. Editors of the BGCT paper grew increasingly more vocal over the plight of Texas minorities and appealed to white congregations to support mandated desegregation. Far from the total support of other denominations and the ecumenical movement, the *Standard* presented a piecemeal advocacy of voluntary integration that steered a middle road for white Baptists unsure about growing civil unrest.

Allen and the commission worked to define responsible citizenship and clarify political participation for Baptists during the student protests. The Fourth Annual CLC of Texas workshop, held at Baylor University in 1960, considered Christian responsibility in a political world. At the annual BGCT meeting in 1961, Allen told Texas Baptists that "the principal of church-state separation has never meant . . . that the Christian should not seek to influence policies of the state to reflect a higher morality."¹⁷ In March 1962, the Texas CLC hosted over 400 pastors and laymen for their workshop at Southwestern Seminary. The commission billed it as the first statewide conference for Southern Baptists devoted to "Christianity and Race Relations." Allen's opening remarks emphasized that the gathering only represented "further study of race relations," and that "no resolutions or recommendations would come out of it." He then gave way to an impressive, though mostly white, list of speakers dealing with various aspects of racial justice. Speakers included the Southern

Baptist Brooks Hays, special assistant to John F. Kennedy in 1962; and Kyle Haselden, editor of the ecumenical and liberal *Christian Century*. When one of the few African Americans in attendance, a high school student and veteran of the Dallas protests, asked Haselden if sit-ins served as the best means to accomplish desegregation, the non-Texas Baptist responded by saying the protests "were in obedience to a higher law" that superseded secular law.¹⁸ With more political and ecumenical personalities citing a higher law at a CLC workshop, the lack of obedience by white congregations soon pressed the BGCT.

Taking the Movement to the BGCT

The Texas CLC's attempt to apply responsible citizenship to race relations hardly registered with their BGCT churches. When several African Americans attempted to enter K. Owen White's segregated First Baptist Houston during the student protests in late 1962, ushers turned them away at the doors. White, BGCT president in 1962 and elected president of the SBC the following year, later described the incident as a mistake since he previously told ushers to seat "everyone who came to worship, regardless of race." Within a year, however, another young African American attempted to join White's congregation. Since FBC Houston based eligibility for membership on a consultation between the pastor and potential member, White decided that the African American was motivated by joining "the church where the president of the Southern Baptist Convention is pastor."¹⁹ Once White denied the membership, the local chapter of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) threatened to picket the church, stage knee-ins, and "pack the pews." After the press broke the incident on Juneteenth, White clarified his position while vacationing in Canada. The pastor deeply regretted the incident rising at a time of "racial turmoil in other cities and tension in Houston," but concluded that "there could be a wrong time to do a right thing."²⁰

Press coverage of the attempted integration of First Baptist Houston grew throughout the summer of 1963 as CORE members followed through with their protests. In August, the church denied two more African Americans applying for membership.²¹ The incident led E. S. James, editor of the *Baptist Standard*, to comment on CORE's aggressive strategy. Although "Negroes have a right to seek membership in white churches . . . under ordinary circumstances," James announced, resorting to pickets and protests "wastes energy and hurts the cause they seek to promote." The condescending editor stated that integrating churches "will be done voluntarily or not at all." A reader of the *Standard* later asked James to clarify his position by pointing out that whites might also use ulterior motives in joining a church. James responded by recognizing "true motive" as impossible, but he confidently believed that "FBC Houston and White were justified" in denying membership "in this case."²²

A fine line existed over membership motives between more conservative and ultimately fundamentalist churches in Texas, such as FBC Houston, and those with a more progressive reputation. At First Baptist Church, Austin, Madison Scott used his connections with Austin's Citizen's Committee to invite local African Americans to worship as early as 1962.²³ While some blacks regularly attended the church, none held memberships in the prestigious downtown congregation. This situation changed when a mild-mannered postal worker, Volma Overton, asked to join the congregation in the spring of 1963. Many church members believed Overton sought a political membership after his election as president of Austin's branch of the NAACP the previous year. Although evidence remains unclear as to the level of racial discord resulting from Overton's request, it split the congregation. Some members suggested it played a major role in Scott's resignation on May 26, 1963. After Scott left the church, however, leadership in the budding racial crisis fell to the chairman of deacons, Jack C. Goodman.²⁴ At a regular church business meeting in June,

deacons read a news clipping from the Dallas Morning News on the attempted integration of First Baptist Houston and agreed that White correctly used the motive defense to keep blacks out of his church "due to present circumstances." When another deacon asked what FBC Austin should now do facing the same issue, key women at the meeting defended the right of Overton and other blacks to join. One former missionary instructed the deacons that "in Christ there is no white or black." Inez Lung Lee, another missionary of Chinese descent, reminded deacons that "my skin is not white and you might not want me," and asked deacons "not to turn them away." Ultimately, those at the meeting passed a motion, by a small margin, that stated "race and color as a prerequisite for church membership . . . will not now nor in the future restrict the fellowship of this church to the white race."²⁵

Meanwhile, Goodman met with Overton to judge the purity of the NAACP president's motives. Goodman later said he was "perfectly willing" to deny the membership if he believed Overton sought it for political purposes. Nevertheless, the church adopted the motion in late June and Overton became the congregation's first black member.²⁶ Over time, the Austin congregation never questioned Overton's motive. Even though Overton resigned as president of Austin's NAACP in November 1963, he remained a key ingredient in the city's civil rights movement. Overton "marched on Washington" with King in August 1963; he led the controversial "read-in" of Austin's city council chamber in April 1964; he participated in Austin's school desegregation lawsuits; and he led the struggle for single member districting in the city. Yet Overton also represented the quintessential Baptist layman. He served on the church's Social Ministries Committee and Mission Committee. Overton also taught Bible study, pre-school and teen-age Sunday school, and visited local hospitals and nursing homes. A secret ballot elected Overton in 1967 as the first African American deacon in the church's history, and undoubtedly the first black deacon in any white BGCT congregation.²⁷ With the exception of

a few urban congregations, however, most BGCT churches remained apathetic in committing to integration.

BGCT Moderates and the Move Toward Political Activism

The response of mostly segregated BGCT churches pushed Texas Baptist moderates toward political activism by 1963. While the First Churches in Houston and Austin faced their racial crises, Jimmy Allen and E. S. James visited the White House in June 1963. John F. Kennedy invited 250 church leaders to a racial justice conference hoping to gain support for his civil rights bill. James later used the *Standard* to describe the utter embarrassment he felt listening to the president and hearing the efforts of other denominations supporting “a peaceful and effective” desegregation. His June 26 editorial asked Texas Baptists why Kennedy “had to ask for the help of ministers in finding a solution for a moral problem.”²⁸ That same summer, James chose an ominous time to invite letters to the editor and devote a section in the paper to the “Pros and Cons of Race Relations.” Many Texas Baptists viewed James and Allen, their trip to Washington, and the Texas CLC’s defense of racial justice as violating the Baptist principle of separation of church and state. J. R. Reynolds of Dallas complained that “until the teachings of God’s church stray from the teaching of the Bible, you do not have the right to inject problems of a political nature . . .” R. D. Crews of Cypress complained that if “John F. Kennedy relates the Negro problem to a religious or ‘moral’ problem . . . a lot of foolish people have fallen into a trap.” Finally, Marvin Crain of Palestine wrote “just for the record: when tallying up the Kennedy-King-Warren Baptists, please include me out.” James later brushed off complaints about the *Standard* not carrying pro-segregationist articles by claiming he never received any “constructive in its message.”²⁹

While Baptist moderates lost some support from their churches by 1963, they could also point to examples of Christian citizenship success. Maston lobbied key members of Baylor

University’s board of trustees studying ways to finally integrate the institution.³⁰ Other members of the Texas CLC worked outside the denomination to usher in school desegregation. Dick Maples, for example, a member of the commission and pastor of FBC Texas City in 1963, worked “in secret” to integrate the school district. Appointed to a biracial committee consisting of other city leaders and officials, the committee closed Texas City’s all-black high school and integrated black students into the white high school. Maples later claimed that no church member knew of his role in integrating Texas City schools.³¹ An African American pastor, Marvin C. Griffin, moved to Ebenezer Baptist Church in Austin and prospered in his ministry by dual-aligning his congregation. He continued the same mission programs and pulpit exchanges with white congregations in Austin that he started in Waco a decade before at New Hope Baptist Church. Griffin subsequently became the first African American selected as a member of the Texas Christian Life Commission.³² The moderation of Texas Baptists in the BGCT and in Nashville brought gradual improvements in race relations in 1963.

Baptist Political Moderates

Baptist moderate strategy fell apart in 1964 as the nation watched white-on-black violence at the University of Mississippi and in the streets of Birmingham, Jackson, and Selma. Texas Baptists leaders responded by digging deep into understanding severe economic disparity and emphasizing a more sophisticated explanation of social injustice.³³ In March, Foy Valentine’s SBC CLC hosted 175 Baptists in its first Christian Citizenship seminar in Washington, D.C. The three day session included Lyndon Johnson asking Baptists to mobilize support for his civil rights legislation and Jimmy Allen encouraging ministers in political responsibility.³⁴ Valentine’s CLC then organized two conferences on race relations at Ridgecrest, North Carolina; and at Glorieta, New

Mexico. Similar to the Texas CLC's workshop on race two years before, the conferences brought in a range of speakers to address topics ranging from "strategies for Southern Baptists in race relations" to "what the Negro wants now." Weston Ware, Jimmy Allen's associate secretary of the Texas CLC in 1964, presented a paper entitled "A Christian Evaluation of the Nonviolent Movement." Summarizing the history of the civil rights movement from Montgomery in 1955 to Harlem in 1964, Ware evaluated the strategy of nonviolent tactics from "a Christian perspective." The paper sanctioned forms of protest as "aggressive love," recognized the complexities of inner city poverty and race, and even supported Martin Luther King, Jr.'s criticism of the Supreme Court in the *Brown* decision granting "legal sanction to tokenism and . . . segregation."³⁵

Momentum from the conferences led moderate Baptist leaders to introduce their strongest race resolution in June at the annual Southern Baptist Convention at Atlantic City. The resolution expanded the usual indictment of racial discrimination and asked Baptists to seek specific cures for unfair housing practices, discriminatory employment, and the denial of voting rights. A "Baptist caucus" of messengers from Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama not only succeeded in toning down the "political" language of the resolution, but they successfully defeated a request by the Valentine's CLC for more funding from the denomination.³⁶ Some white Baptists believed that the CLC not only crossed the line separating church and state, but also took a leftist political position on most social issues.

Undeterred by Southern Baptists, CLC leaders accelerated their strategy after Congress passed the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Allen used the Texas CLC's annual workshop in March 1965 to openly call Texas Baptists to political action. Moving the workshop to First Baptist-Austin for the first time, Allen's conference featured representatives of each branch of state government, including Governor John B. Connally. When the racial crisis once again dominated discussion, Allen openly

addressed the limits of social activism by Baptists. He told his audience that Baptists could not eliminate their "barriers" of the priesthood of the believer and congregationalism for the sake of political action. Rather, responsible Baptists should penetrate those barriers, along with the barriers of political apathy and the uninformed vote. Allen cautioned Baptists, however, against forming a religious power block or a Baptist lobby in the capital. Instead, Christian leaders should play the role of "catalysts--agents promoting others to act in the political arena." Leon Macon, editor of the *Alabama Baptist*, had already criticized Allen as a "social gospler [*sic*]" and described the CLC as the very power block that Allen warned against. Macon cited the CLC's citizenship seminar a year before in Washington, D.C., as evidence.³⁷

Indeed, the moderate voice of Texas Baptists cracked in 1964 with the Texas CLC's more political strategy. Writing in the *Standard*, Allen described a Baptist hypocrisy by criticizing the "motive defense" of most Texas Baptist churches considering integration. To Allen, hypocrisy existed in the "attitudes of some of us who are eager to do battle about the rights of the Negro but are unwilling to accept him in any genuine sense within Christian fellowship." Yet an editorial by James in the *Standard* personified Baptist hypocrisy. Although James endorsed the right of blacks to join white churches in March 1965, he described sit-ins and other forms of protest as "rather absurd and disgusting," and that "we will do well to excuse their mistake."³⁸ To others the CLC blurred the BGCT's theological mission. Jeff Cox, a BSU worker at Rice University, later complained to Allen about the CLC's request to make civil rights legislation and anti-poverty efforts an essential part of the evangelism. He believed the CLC provided "so much irrelevant material" on politics that it made establishing evangelical programs too difficult.³⁹

Allen's manipulation of Baptist theology and polity proved successful enough when Southern Baptists met in Dallas for their 1965 convention. Though small in number, Dallas pastor

Carey Daniels and ninety-two-year-old William Nevins led a segregationist effort to abolish the CLC. They distributed leaflets and charged the commission with aiding communist agitation and supporting the “mongrelization” of the white race. The heightened emotion led to an embarrassing shouting match between Valentine and Daniels on the convention floor. Yet in the aftermath of the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 by Congress, Baptist delegates not only approved each of the CLC’s resolutions, including a peace resolution in response to the Vietnam conflict, but also extended a vote of confidence for the CLC as the “conscience of the convention.”⁴⁰ Legislative accomplishments and the Dallas convention convinced some Baptist moderates that their efforts had paid off by late summer 1965, and a few members of the Texas CLC left their positions to pursue other careers.

Conclusion: The Price of Moderation

Despite their political accomplishments in 1965, race riots throughout urban America by late summer stunned secular and religious moderates. Younger black leaders in civil rights organizations grew tired of nonviolent tactics, purged white members, and demanded that all blacks take up arms in a show of solidarity. Against such a backdrop, conservative Baptist believers renewed their emphasis on theology and structure. They not only viewed the Texas CLC as increasingly supporting a purely leftist political position in race, but also labeled Texas Baptist leaders as “liberals” calling for peaceful toleration in an increasing lawless society.

On August 22, the weekend after Watts exploded in racial violence, Jimmy Allen honored an earlier invitation and traveled to Los Angeles to preach to a large black congregation in the riot-torn area. Allen, later describing his observations in the *Baptist Standard*, concluded that violence and looting represented the “symbols of immediate white exploitation” and remained symptoms of a “class struggle with racial

overtones.” While condemning violence, Allen stressed that the incident “should not discredit the nonviolent efforts of black Christians to obtain justice and opportunity in our society.” Closer to home, Allen asked Texas Baptists to use a Christian responsibility only “concerned with meeting the basic needs laid bare by this rioting.” Allen argued that “poverty stricken people” in American ghettos “constitute one of the greatest challenges to Christian concern on the contemporary scene.”⁴¹

Allen easily predicted the segregationists’ reaction to the Watts race riot and his article in the *Standard*. “I feel as if my 14-year-old daughter is being held by 2 hypocritical preachers,” wrote Lloyd Burks of Rusk, Texas, “while a negro rapes her and I am bound to a tree by hand cuffs.” Other segregationists complained that with Valentine, Allen, and the CLC, “who needs enemies?” More significant was the criticism of other Baptist leaders. Leon Marsh, director of graduate studies at Southwestern, asked Allen why he should excuse the riot because of poverty. “We have a more fundamental problem here than race,” Marsh asserted, “a problem that they have an obligation to get off their blessed assurance and go to work when the opportunity affords it.” Houstonian J. F. Selcraig complained that he was “fed up with CLC’s determination to make itself a platform for the political liberals both inside and outside the SBC.”⁴²

Unlike Valentine before him, Allen never placed the comfort of Baptists over the issue at hand. He steered the Texas CLC into a lobby organization directed at the state and federal legislatures. Much of the commission’s political focus continued to center on class issues causing racism. “Dogging legislators” in Austin, Allen and the commission supported legislation outlawing racially discriminatory hiring practices, opposed bills providing segregated housing, and advocated bilingual education.⁴³ The Texas CLC’s annual workshop at Southwestern in March included race themes for sessions on “Christianity and the Workaday World.” Those attending

the workshop received information packets on “collective bargaining” provided by the A. F. of L./CIO and other materials from the National Association of Manufacturers. The Texas CLC held more seminars on “Baptists in the Political Process” and how to start effective action groups, including offering descriptive handouts on voter registration directed at a gambling referendum in 1968.⁴⁴

The unity of the SBC, so successful because of the conservative theology and congregational structure of Baptists, wore down by the second half of the decade. Some churches withdrew their support to the SBC as early as 1965, believing that the CLC was as guilty of conforming to “matters profoundly political” as society was in conforming to discrimination and segregation.⁴⁵ The momentum of BGCT churches seemed to follow the same pattern. By 1967, baptisms in BGCT churches fell from previous years, Sunday school attendance dropped, and budgets no longer skyrocketed. 1967 also represented the first year Baptist giving started a long and steady decline from previous decades.⁴⁶ Texas Baptist churches felt their spiritual dominance in the state slipping away.

The moderate strategy to end racism in Texas Baptist churches never offered a solution to Valentine’s Baptist dilemma. Apart from mission programs, the BGCT remains largely segregated and continues only a token relationship with black Baptist churches. Yet the strategy added significantly to a minor but long running conflict between moderate and fundamentalist Baptists over the social application of theology. The conflict hardened the lines between the two sides in the BGCT before splitting the SBC a decade later. Baptist believers easily applied their social insecurities to the earlier crises of liberalism in Southern Baptist seminaries. Significantly, a renewed theology fight among Baptists emerged in the Elliot controversy of 1960, the very time of the first student protests. A second theological fight followed in 1968 in the Pinnock Affair at New Orleans Seminary. One church in Mobile, Alabama, accused Texas Baptist leaders of disregarding the doctrine of priesthood of

the believer because “the CLC implies that only recognized scholars have the authority and intelligence to rightly divide the Word of God.”⁴⁷

Because of their theology, the same messengers that followed the civil rights cart and approved the race resolution in 1968 could turn around and elect Criswell to head the convention. Criswell never openly opposed the Texas CLC, but maintained uneasiness about its political activism as a threat to the evangelical mission of Baptists. Criswell believed his 1968 election as SBC president “indirectly” moved the convention to a more conservative outlook, and that too many denominational leaders had drifted too far to the political left for many Southern Baptists. In his autobiography, Criswell described a deacons meeting the day before his election in which he reevaluated his views toward race in “Christ’s loving presence.” Claiming an open-door policy at FBC Dallas after his election, Criswell later gave credit to Baptist moderates for being correct on the race issue. But Criswell and other Baptists fundamentalists, engineering the SBC split from Texas a decade later, ultimately claimed that moderates accepted too much of the leftist agenda. Criswell could easily criticize social legislation while demonstrating his inherent racism, stating in 1968 that “I’d give 50 of them (African Americans) a job right now at my church’s parking terrace . . . but they don’t want to work. They’d rather raise a ruckus over what they allege are their rights.”⁴⁸

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NOTES

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³*Ibid.*, 197.

⁴Walter B. Shurden, *The Baptist Identity: Four Fragile Freedoms* (Macon, Ga.: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, Inc., 1993), 11, 13-14.

⁵Thomas B. Maston, *Christianity and World Issues* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1957), 93-94, 96; Andrew M. Manis, *Southern Civil Religions in Conflict: Black and White Baptists and Civil Right, 1947-1957* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1987), 15; and Storey, 13-14, 143.

⁶Storey, 137; and Harry Leon McBeth, *Texas Baptists: A Sesquicentennial History* (Dallas: Baptistway Press, 1998), 245.

⁷Foy Valentine, "An Evaluation of the Racial Situation in the South: Integration—Progress and Problems Among Southern Baptists," speech at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas, 1957, Box 2A 30, File 130, Valentine papers, Texas Collection, Baylor University, Waco, Texas. Hereafter cited as: Valentine papers.

⁸*Ibid.*, and Foy Valentine to Harold Kilpatrick, December 5, 1956, Box 2A 192, File 1129, "1956," Valentine papers; see also Ronnie Dugger, "Texas Christians Stem the Tide," *Christian Century* 74 (July 31, 1957): 912.

⁹Alwyn Barr, *Black Texans: A History of African Americans in Texas, 1528-1995* 2nd ed. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1996), 208; and Robert A. Calvert, "The Civil Rights Movement in Texas," in Ben Procter and Archie P. McDonald, eds., *The Texas Heritage* 3rd ed (Wheeling: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 1998), 178.

¹⁰Thomas R. Cole, *No Color Is My Kind: The Life of Eldrewey Stearns and the Integration of Houston* (Austin: The University of Texas Press, 1997), 26-28, 38. Hereafter cited as: Cole.

¹¹The *Houston Post*, March 25, 1960, 14; The *Houston Chronicle*, March 26, 1960, 1, 4; and quoted in Cole, 43-45.

¹²Letter quoted in The *Houston Post*, March 27, 1960, 1, 20; and Cole, 49.

¹³Cole, 53, 95; and Bill Lawson to Martin Luther King, Jr., May 5, 1964, Personal Correspondence, Texas Folder, Special Collections, Martin Luther King, Jr., Center, Atlanta, Georgia. Hereafter cited as: King Papers.

¹⁴"Sunday Night at the Assembly," The Christian: International Weekly of the Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ) October 30, 1966, 8; Jack Swanzy of Houston, to King, November 7, 1962; Erma Jewell Hughes of Houston to Dora McDonald of Atlanta, May 14, 1964; Martin Luther King, Jr., to Bill Lawson, July 20, 1965; and Program, Thirtieth Annual Baccalaureate and Commencement Exercises, Erma Hughes Business College, May 17, 1964; and Program, The United Ministries of Texas Southern University Lecture Series, May 17, 1964, copies in King Papers.

¹⁵*Dallas Morning News*, February 13, 1961, sec. 4, 2; and February 14, 1961, sec. 3, 2. See also Storey, 189.

¹⁶*Dallas Morning News*, February 21, 1961, sec. 4, 1; and *The Baptist Standard*, July 19, 1961, 8.

¹⁷BGCT Proceedings, 1961, 82; Allen Memoirs, 161; and Storey, 158-59.

¹⁸The *Baptist Standard*, March 21, 1962, 8-9; February 21, 1962; and January 24, 1962, 14.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, June 19, 1963, 11.

²⁰*Ibid.*; August 7, 1963, 12; and The *Houston Chronicle*, April 14, 1975, sec. 3, 24; and Storey, 192.

²¹Victor Glass, "Emerging Factors in Race Relations in the United States," Exhibit B, Minutes of the 1963 Session of the Advisory Council of Southern Baptists For Work with Negroes, T. B. Maston Papers, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas.

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²³T. Michael Parrish, "'A Bridge': Madison V. Scott," in *The History of First Baptist Church, Austin*, manuscript forthcoming, Austin, Texas, 26.

²⁴*Ibid.*, 27; and Carolyn Jones, *Volma, My Journey: One Man's Impact on the Civil Rights Movement in Austin, Texas* (Austin: Eakin Press, 1998), xv, 51. Hereafter cited as: Jones.

²⁵Minutes of business meeting for First Baptist Church, Austin, June 13, 1963, in possession of Jack Goodman, Austin, Texas, 2-4. Hereafter cited as: FBC-Austin Minutes.

²⁶Jack C. Goodman of Austin, Texas, interview by author, September 17, 1999, First Baptist Church, Austin, Texas; and FBC-Austin Minutes, June 26, 1963.

²⁷Jones, xvi, 103-04.

²⁸*Baptist Standard*, June 26, 1963, 4; Letter from Jimmy Allen to John F. Kennedy, June 25, 1963, Valentine papers, Box 2A 192, File 1123, 1963.

²⁹It should be noted that James reprinted an equal number of supportive letters to the editor. *Baptist Standard*, July 24, 1963, 4-5; and April 22,

1964, 5.

³⁰Thomas B. Maston to Wallace Bassett, June 23, 1963, Maston Papers.

³¹Dick Maples of Dallas, Texas, interview by author, January 9, 1999, Dallas, Texas.

³²Oral Memoirs of Marvin C. Griffin, Religion and Culture Project, Program for Oral History, Baylor University, Waco, Texas, 1982, 222-23.

³³Jimmy R. Allen of Big Canoe, Georgia, interview by author, January 9, 1998, Dallas, Texas. Hereafter cited as Allen interview.

³⁴Baptist Press release, March 26, 1964, 3, Valentine papers.

³⁵Weston W. Ware, "A Christian Evaluation of the Nonviolent Movement," Christian Life Commission of Texas, Baptist General Convention of Texas, n.d., 79-80.

³⁶Letter from Robert H. Craft of Leawood, Kansas, to Foy Valentine, June 8, 1964, Box 2A 103, File 635 "1964"; and Copy of "Southern Baptists Survey the World," *Christianity Today*, June 18, 1964, 42-43, Box 2A 104, File 647 "1965," Valentine papers.

³⁷*The Baptist Standard*, March 24, 1965, 4-5; *Alabama Baptist*, April 9, 1964, 2; and April 23, 1964, 2.

³⁸*The Baptist Standard*, February 10, 1965, 7-8; and March 24, 1965, 4-5.

³⁹Letter from Jeff Cox of Houston to Jimmy Allen, May 13, 1964, Box 2A 192, File 1124 "1964," Valentine papers.

⁴⁰Letter from W. S. Nevins of Lexington to Foy Valentine, June 9, 1965, Box 2A 104, File 647 "1965," Valentine papers.

⁴¹*The Baptist Standard*, September 8, 1965, 6-7.

⁴²Letters from Lloyd Burks of Rusk to Foy Valentine, September 5, 1965; Leon Marsh of Fort Worth to Jimmy Allen, September 30, 1965; Tom H. Carothers of Palestine to Jimmy Allen, October 12, 1965, 2A 194, File 1125, Valentine papers.

⁴³Quoted in Storey, 158-59.

⁴⁴See Box 2A 105, File 652, "Christianity and the Workaday World," Valentine papers.

⁴⁵Letter from Sage Avenue Baptist, Mobile, Alabama, June 15, 1965, Box 2A 104, File 647 "1965," Valentine papers.

⁴⁶*The Baptist Standard*, September 9, 1972, 6; and McBeth, 285.

⁴⁷Letter from Sage Avenue Baptist, Mobile, Alabama, June 15, 1965, Box 2A 104, File 647 "1965," Valentine papers.

⁴⁸W. A. Criswell, *Standing on the Promises* (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1990), 202, 211-12; and the *Fort Worth Star Telegram*, May 15, 1967, 7-C, copy in Box 2A 107, File 662 "W.A. Criswell," Valentine papers.

TEXAS BAPTISTS AND CHURCH-STATE CONFLICTS IN THE 1960S: THE DEBATE OVER GOVERNMENT AID TO BAPTIST COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Post World War II America witnessed a burgeoning public debate over the appropriate relationship between church and state. Due in part to its willingness to apply the Bill of Rights' guarantees to the states through the process of "incorporation," the U.S. Supreme Court found itself in the position of final arbiter in church-state controversies with an ever-increasing docket of cases. Incorporation was in part a byproduct of the increased litigiousness of marginalized religious groups who hoped to secure equal rights and avoid discriminatory laws. Yet church-state controversy stemmed as well from the religious revival that emerged soon after World War II. The revival spanned the theological spectrum with renewed interest in religion, manifesting itself in increases in church membership and greater financial contributions to religious institutions.

This nationwide religious resurgence was given official sanction by President Dwight D. Eisenhower whose conspicuous forms of public religiosity exemplified much of what the nation was experiencing. In fact, this "piety along the Potomac" represented a type of religious nationalism that grew out of the anxieties of the Cold War. With the concern to safeguard America from any influences of "godless" and "atheistic communism," many Americans began to push for religious education in the public schools. As a result, a renewal of religious activities could be found in many public school classrooms during this period, preparing the way for church-

state legal contests.

Church-state controversy was also fueled by the quest of the massive Roman Catholic parochial school system for public funds. By the 1960s the Catholic Church faced a crisis in funding its parochial school system due to the decrease in available clergy to fill staff positions, aging facilities, and the flight of many Catholic families to the suburbs. Optimism was high as the federal government passed a spate of new legislation to provide funds for both public and private educational institutions during the late 1950s and 1960s.

No less significant to the growing litigation over church, state, and education was the growth of the federal government in various areas of social welfare, including education. As one scholar has observed: "Increasingly the relations between church and state would become more subtle, more complex, more wide-ranging because the state itself was taking on more of the functions that had formerly been fulfilled by private institutions." Rapid sociological, intellectual, and religious change after the second World War helped accelerate the explosion of church-state battles between those who sought to retain expressions of America's religious heritage and those who sought to affirm America's commitment to religious pluralism and a secular state."¹ Indeed, religious historian Sydney Ahlstrom concluded: "The decade of the sixties was a time when the old foundations of national confidence, patriotic idealism, moral traditionalism, and even of historic Judaeo-Christian theism, were awash."²

Despite the relative cultural hegemony Protestants enjoyed in much of the South, Texas Baptists were not immune to these social, political, and theological struggles. And their seemingly paradoxical mix of social conservatism with a theological and historical commitment to the separation of church and state would place Texas Baptists on a sure path to public schizophrenia. While the 1960s witnessed the landmark U.S. Supreme Court decisions on prayer and Bible reading in the public schools (along with numerous other issues), on no issue

did the Southern Baptists of Texas seem so publicly divided as that of aid to church-related higher education. The debate over whether the colleges affiliated with the Baptist General Convention of Texas should accept government funds (in either the form of loans or grants) mirrored what was happening in other states and with other denominations. In many ways, it is a microcosm of the story of aid to church-related higher education during this frothy period of religious debate and division. Yet it is also a story of a Baptist people seeking to come to terms with a separationist principle during a period when the lines of church and state were ever more difficult to identify. In doing so, clergy, laity, college administrators, and denominational leaders were forced to reflect on the role of religious education and its relationship to the denomination.³

Texas Baptists and the Separation of Church and State

Baptists have long had the reputation of being strong supporters of religious liberty and the separation of church and state. Indeed they were birthed in religious conflict and their history is marked by commitment to separationist principles even in the face of persecution. This tradition was carried over to the United States where historically, Baptists have continued their calls for a "free church in a free state." This Baptist witness would be put to the test in the 1960s as many Baptists in the South feared the threats of secularization, religious pluralism, and particularly, a growing Catholic presence in the United States. In Texas, a sharpening of the public advocacy for religious liberty and the separation of church and state on the part of Baptists occurred during the 1950s. The Christian Life Commission of the Baptist General Convention of Texas took the lead in putting forth the Baptist commitment to the separation of church and state. According to Foy Valentine, director of the Texas CLC during the 1950s: "[During that] period there was a strong solidifying of the visceral to separation of church and state that Texas Baptists had had;

and they became verbalized and vocalized and argued through during those years, until the idea was pretty well established by 1960.”⁴

Baptists have been particularly persistent in their opposition to tax support for religious institutions. Such aid was perceived as a clear violation of the establishment clause of the U.S. Constitution, whether the monies went directly to a church or church-sponsored educational institutions. During the decade of the 1960s, Texas Baptists were largely unified in the opposition to government aid to religious elementary and secondary educational institutions. Formed in the mid-nineteenth century out of protest to the Protestant religious exercises in the nation’s public schools, the Catholic parochial school system grew in tandem with Catholic immigration. By the 1960s, the Catholic parochial school system, which made up over 80% of the elementary and secondary religious schools in the United States, was facing a financial crisis. Consequently, leaders of American Catholicism made a full scale effort at securing public funds for not only their fledgling parochial schools, but also for Catholic colleges and universities.

In generating support for parochial school aid, Catholic officials made the following claims that would be used to support aid at all levels of education: 1) State support of a variety of educational endeavors, private or public, religious or non-religious, was consistent with the religious pluralism of American society; 2) Parochial schools served an important civic role of providing education in secular subjects; and 3) Parents of parochial students were double-taxed, since they paid taxes to support public schools along with paying tuition to parochial schools.⁵ These claims were buttressed by a nonpreferentialist reading of the U.S. Constitution’s establishment clause. Such a reading claimed that the first amendment merely prohibited the creation of a single national church. As a result, the government could aid, support, or cooperate with religion as long as it was done on a nondiscriminatory basis.

Baptists, in contrast, had traditionally adopted a no-aid or

strict separationist conception of the establishment clause. Calling for a high wall of separation between church and state, Baptists typically opposed government aid, both direct and indirect, to churches and their institutions. At the 1961 Southern Baptist Convention in St. Louis, for example, messengers adopted a resolution which stated in part: “[We] voice vigorous opposition to the use of tax dollars for grants or other direct aid to church schools on all educational levels . . . [we] urge that, wherever possible Baptists voice publicly our historical position on the separation of church and state and that we adhere scrupulously to this principle in our own policies and practices.”⁶ Baptists, then, were often placed in direct confrontation with American Catholics whose parochial school system represented by far the largest percentage of private schools in the nation. In contrast, Texas Baptists in the 1960s did not operate many elementary and secondary schools. But they did fund and operate eight institutions of higher education. And with the rising costs of operating colleges and universities, some Baptists began to question whether Baptist colleges and universities should rethink their traditional opposition to government aid.

The Plight of Texas Baptist Colleges and Universities

In 1957, the Baptist General Convention of Texas authorized a two-year study of the convention and its ministries. Known as the “BAH Survey,”⁷ the study included an assessment of Texas Baptist institutions of higher education. The final report was a clear indictment of these institutions. Revealing the struggling nature of the schools, the report concluded that Texas Baptist colleges were poorly located, inadequately funded, too small to support quality programs, lacking in accreditation, and “substandard” in terms of facilities.⁸ The revelations of the BAH Survey amplified the calls of some for Baptists to reconsider government aid to church-related higher education. Moreover the temptation to do so was heightened

by the rapidly growing sources of government funds.

The Basden Report

The constitutionality of government aid to church-related higher education was already on the minds of many Texas Baptists at the dawn of the 1960s. In 1958 Congress passed the National Defense Education Act that provided both grants and loans to university students through the National Defense Student Loan program. The following year, the Eisenhower administration introduced to Congress the College Facilities Act of 1959. Over \$500 million of aid was designated to help both private and public colleges and universities secure loans for building construction in order to better address their growing enrollments. While the key elements of the College Facilities Act would not be passed by Congress until 1963,⁹ Texas Baptists were quick to raise questions about both proposals. E.S. James, editor of the *Baptist Standard*, forthrightly denounced the proposed College Facilities Act as “a pure and simple violation of the National Constitution” and called on Congress to reject the measure. “Perhaps it is well enough for the Federal Government to lend money to educational institutions which are in need of a loan,” he suggested, “but when it assumed the payments of 25 per cent of the loan then that is an outright gift to the schools.” Such a situation would be unacceptable for Baptist colleges in light of their commitment to the separation of church and state James continued. What was also clear to James, and for that matter to many other Baptist leaders of this era, was the major impetus for the measure was the Catholic Church. “Even a blind man can see again the level and influence of the National Catholic Conference.”¹⁰ James would continue to distinguish himself as the leading opponent of government aid to religious institutions—at all levels. In a 1961 editorial in the *Baptist Standard*, James declared: “Texas Baptists do not want to be taxed for the support of Baptist schools in Texas, Lutheran

schools in Minnesota, or Catholic schools in New Jersey.”¹¹

Despite the strongly worded opposition of James and other Baptist leaders to the College Facilities Act, their rhetoric was more tempered when considering the issue of government loans and grants available to students. Indeed, a group of Southern Baptist educators, meeting in 1959, determined that public loans and grants to church-related institutions were unacceptable, but that loans given directly to students were constitutionally sound.¹² This position reflected the “child benefit theory” used to justify the state’s reimbursement of transportation costs to parents of parochial school students in the landmark U.S. Supreme Court decision of *Everson v. Board of Education*.¹³

In light of these measures, the Executive Board of the Baptist General Convention of Texas authorized the appointment of a committee on church-state relations. Specifically, the committee was instructed to make a study “of the institutions that have received monies, gifts, or grants from the government, either by loans or less interest than the government is paying, which in effect becomes a grant from the government, or by a direct grant.”¹⁴ Subsequently, the committee was given the broader charge of exploring “the entire field of church-state relationships” as it related to the church and various denominational institutions. Chaired by Harold Basden, the Committee on Church-State Relations brought its report to the convention in 1961. In a preliminary section reviewing the theological and historical foundations of the separation of church and state, the report declared that “while absolute separation of church and state is an elusive ideal, nevertheless there is a sacred principle to uphold and any violation of the principle should be resisted at all times.” Significantly, the committee also declared that there was essentially no distinction between the church and its institutions. Any aid to a sectarian institution, therefore, would be aiding directly its sponsoring church. Thus the bar would be set very high for any form of aid, whether direct or indirect, to pass muster. Not surprisingly,

then, the committee recommended that the Executive Board of the BGCT “oppose the securing of loans from public funds by religious organizations for the construction of church schools, church college buildings . . . or for any other purpose under any circumstance.”¹⁵

Loans and governmental grants to college students were not perceived by the Basden committee to be a violation of church-state separation. Referring specifically to the National Defense Education Act, the committee determined that “though the college is made the administrator of the funds, the operating cost is a normal percent of the tuition paid by all other students. Since the college is not reimbursed for its services, there is no federal subsidy involved.” In other recommendations, the committee ruled acceptable property tax exemptions to religious institutions and government research grants to colleges and universities as long as “every project bears a direct relationship to a legitimate field of government interest.” Ultimately, the committee concluded tax exemptions allowed churches and institutions to secure private funds and lessened the temptation “to press for governmental support.”¹⁶

Messengers to the annual meeting of the BGCT overwhelmingly adopted the Basden committee report, despite the fact that several BGCT colleges and universities had been receiving government loans to assist with the building of dormitories. In fact, Hardin-Simmons University received a federal loan of over one million dollars to build a dormitory on its Abilene campus in 1961. Ironically, the executive board of the BGCT had approved the loan application a mere three months prior to its approval of the Basden report.¹⁷

Even with the position of the BGCT on the Basden report, the debate over federal aid was growing nationwide. By the 1960s some new rationales were being forwarded to justify this aid to church-related colleges and universities. In particular, a growing number of members of Congress and the Kennedy administration began to make a distinction between higher and lower education; namely, that since there were no compulsory

education laws governing higher education and since college students were adults, government loans to church-related colleges may not be as constitutionally problematic as at the elementary and secondary levels. This distinction served as the basis for the Higher Education Facilities Act of 1963. A five-year program that provided direct financial aid for the construction of buildings at sectarian colleges, the Act allotted funds “without any distinction of public and private, secular and sectarian, institutions.”¹⁸ The Act did stipulate that the funds could only go toward construction of buildings used for non-sectarian purposes. Nevertheless, this renewed the debate among Texas Baptists over acceptance of such funds. Yet even before the passage of the Higher Educational Facilities Act, the battle lines had been forming over the aid issue. In favor of aid stood college administrators, trustees, and influential members of the BGCT’s Christian Education Commission. Most Baptist clergy and many Baptist laity stood in opposition to the aid

The McCall-James Debate

Leading the way for a more flexible approach to federal aid was Abner McCall, president of Baylor University. Having been elected president of the Baptist General Convention of Texas in 1964, McCall used his two platforms to urge Texas Baptists to reconsider their rigid stance on aid. In March of 1964, McCall spoke at a workshop sponsored by the Christian Life Commission of the BGCT. In his address, entitled “The Price Paid for Tax Support,” McCall leveled a four-prong attack on those opposed to government aid to church-related colleges and universities. His first line of attack was no less than a critique of the traditional Baptist understanding of the first amendment’s religious freedom clauses. To McCall the establishment clause of the first amendment, while embodying the separationist principle, was merely a political device to help ensure religious liberty, but not indispensable to it. According

to McCall, “The wall of separation may be breached and we may still have freedom of religion, but if freedom of religion is lost, it makes little difference if there is no establishment of religion.”¹⁹ Consequently, Baptists had become obsessed with breaches of the wall of separation without fully appreciating what McCall called the “primary principle” of religious liberty. Not surprisingly, McCall’s interpretation of the first amendment alarmed many Baptists, particularly since these were some of the same arguments used by leaders of the Catholic Church to justify government aid to their parochial schools.

McCall likewise showed little patience for those Baptists who argued that government regulation would accompany public funds. “It is clearly evident to all except the blindest,” McCall declared, “that if the churches plan to operate educational and welfare institutions, they will have to submit to governmental licensing and regulation.”²⁰ Regulation of church related institutions was a longstanding practice, whether direct public funding existed or not, McCall claimed:

All our schools from the first grade to the professional schools in the university are licensed and regulated by the various state agencies. For example, the Texas Education Agency issues a booklet of fifty-one pages of standards for any college or university in Texas which wishes to train public school teachers. There are standards for the college faculty, their degrees, the number of hours they can teach, the curriculum, the library, student admission procedures, student counseling services, and every phase of the preparation of teachers. If a college does not comply with these regulations it is not approved to train school teachers.²¹

Taking the opportunity to make a partisan dig, McCall suggested that there was evident irony in the fact that many Baptist separationists were also political supporters of those “candidates and movements” that have led to the increasing size of government and its regulation of the lives of private citizens and institutions.²²

Baptists have been inconsistent when it comes to federal aid McCall further alleged. For instance, Baptists typically

accepted tax exemption for their church properties and the tax benefits of housing allowances for their ministers arguing that they were “privileges” rather than a subsidy. Such a characterization was not compelling to McCall nor was the Basden committee’s conclusion that the financial benefits enjoyed by denominational agencies and institutions through the use of non-profit Second Class Mailing Permits would exist even if they sent their mail first class. Such an explanation was “undoubtedly the most ridiculous reason ever given for violating a principle, if such is a case” McCall complained. Calling the postage rate rationale a “curious inconsistency,” McCall asserted that unlike the postal savings, the governmental loans to institutions cost the government nothing.²³

McCall concluded his address by calling on Baptists to reevaluate their approach to questions of church and state in light of the changes in the size and scope of government. Absolutism with regard to the separation of church and state was plausible in the religio-political context of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but the contemporary situation means that “whether we like it or not we must make realistic compromises and adjustments, particularly as to our institutions operating in the fields of education and welfare.”²⁴

McCall’s address laid out the key arguments he would raise time and again in public addresses and published articles. In 1965, the *Baylor Line*, the magazine of the Baylor University Alumni Association, published an article by McCall entitled “Baptist Institutions and Government Aid and Regulations.” The article primarily rehashed many of the arguments raised in his earlier address, but included the following warning to Baptists: “Denominations able to adjust to the conditions will carry on and surpass those unable or unwilling to adjust.”²⁵ McCall’s article was reprinted in the *Baptist Standard*, further fueling the debate among Texas Baptists.

If the pages of the *Baptist Standard* are any indication of Texas Baptist sentiment on the issue, McCall’s remarks set off a vigorous debate. Editor E.S. James offered a fiery rebuttal

to McCall's assessment of the postage subsidy, particularly McCall's claim that the *Baptist Standard* enjoyed a \$750,000 annual subsidy due to its use of the non-profit second class rate. James countered that a more accurate comparison would have been second class commercial rates enjoyed by secular papers, rather than first class commercial rates. James admitted that the nonprofit rate did save the paper approximately \$100,000 annually. Nonetheless, he disputed McCall's notion that paying anything less than first class rates was a violation of the separationist principle. James concluded that either McCall and the convention provide the *Baptist Standard* the additional \$1.8 million needed to send the paper first class or otherwise "stop making statements which lead some to believe that the *Standard* preaches one thing and practices another."²⁶

The McCall-James debate gathered quite a following as witnessed in the "Letters to the Editor" section of the *Baptist Standard*. Most letters were in support of James. In a June 30, 1965 letter, Herbert Oliver, an attorney from San Antonio wrote: "It is generally regarded that lawyers are poor mathematicians, but I never thought one would be as poor as you demonstrated President McCall to be." Calling for an unequivocal support for the separation of church and state, Oliver concluded that "the best way to penetrate the wall of separation is to endeavor to support it with the prejudice, bad arithmetic, and illogical argument."²⁷

While McCall may not often have received encouragement in the pages of the *Baptist Standard*, he found allies in his quest for governmental aid in the presidents of other leading Baptist educational institutions in the South. In a *Baptist Standard* article drafted by McCall, along with the presidents of Furman, Mercer, Stetson, and Wake Forest universities, the college administrators made a call for what they termed "cooperation" with the federal government. Reiterating most of the key arguments that McCall had raised in previous articles, the educational leaders concluded that some government control and regulation of religious institutions was

inevitable. If Baptists wanted to maintain quality institutions of higher education, then some financial cooperation with the government was necessary. Individual Baptists were going to be taxed to finance government loans and grants "whether they like the idea of using tax money for that purpose or not," the presidents claimed. Suggesting that Baptist colleges would soon be outdone by their counterparts sponsored by other denominations, the presidents warned that "the hard decision facing Southern Baptist colleges is whether they are going to refuse to accept the return of some of the tax money paid into the public treasury by their own constituents while they stand aside and watch this tax money used to strengthen other institutions supported by other religious denominations."²⁸

Addressing the charge that acceptance of government funds might compromise the religious mission of Baptist universities, the presidents countered that such funds had become increasingly necessary for Baptist institutions of higher education to fulfill their essential roles in the Great Commission. Such a statement clearly revealed that, at least in Texas, advocates for aid were not willing to embrace arguments used by some Baptists in other states to justify acceptance of government funds. Specifically, two arguments raised in other state battles were conspicuously absent from the Texas dispute. First, some Baptists had been contending that the best way to reconcile religious principle with financial realities was to emphasize that Baptist institutions were providing a public service of education rather than imparting Baptist doctrine. Under such a conception, the federal government could rightly assist in financing the secular elements of Baptist higher education as they were preparing citizens for democratic society. Second, others saw the potential church-state conflict and called for a loosening of ties between Baptist colleges and their sponsoring denominations. Arguing that "good private education without vast public aid" is no longer possible, Baptists should free their institutions to grow and mature on their own. "They would gain greatly from such a

move,” one Baptist scholar contended, “for as private schools they could take federal subsidies. Some of them could become public institutions.” At the heart of this argument was the belief that Baptists did not have the resources to provide adequately for both secular and religious education at the college level. Baptists were good at birthing and nurturing colleges in their infancy, but, without public support, Baptists must “allow their young to go on their own when they reach the age of maturity.”²⁹ McCall was insistent, however, that such aid could be accepted while the schools retained their church-relatedness. Advocating the loosening of ties with the denomination would not win him many converts in Texas. It would also play into the hands of his opponents who had regularly warned that acceptance of aid would result in the end of church-related higher education.

The Committee of Fifteen

The aid issue had garnered so much attention among Texas Baptists that, in March of 1965, a fifteen-person committee was appointed by the state convention to re-evaluate the 1961 Basden church-state report. The committee’s report would not be completed until 1966, but that did not stop the aid debate from occupying much of the time of the delegates at the 1965 annual meeting of the BGCT. In a pre-convention meeting of the state Executive Board, the Christian Life Commission issued a report warning that “the preservation of our institutions through the use of tax money may increase the difficulty in preserving religious liberty through separation of church and state.”³⁰

The two key addresses to the 1965 convention delegates in Houston provided opposing viewpoints of the church-state issue as well. Abner McCall, in his presidential address, noted again the inevitability of governmental regulations of church institutions. McCall buttressed his position with an extended historical account of the many ways in which Baptist institutions

had been “to some extent subsidized, directly, or indirectly, and to some extent regulated by the various governments under which we live.” “Some have been saying concerning Baptist institutions and involvement with our government, ‘Don’t let the camel get his nose in our tent,’” McCall concluded, “My friends, the camel is already in our tent—nose, head, hump, hindquarters, and tail. We may not like his presence, but we must learn to live with him or get out of the tent.”³¹ Herbert Howard, pastor of Park Cities Baptist Church in Dallas, countered his convention sermon that “we cannot, we dare not, we shall not forsake our Christian, our Baptist position, regardless of the consequences to our institutions.”³²

Despite the prominence of the issue at the 1965 convention, no official action was taken on federal aid. The more crucial showdown would occur the following year at the 1966 convention when the highly anticipated report of the fifteen member church-state committee would be addressed. However, Texas was not unique in its preoccupation with the federal aid issue in 1965. One report showed that 13 of 29 state Baptist conventions affiliated with the Southern Baptists dealt in some manner with the aid issue. Much like in Texas, the debate pitted college administrators and trustees against state paper editors and clergy. Several state conventions passed resolutions opposing aid, while five other states chose to form committees to study the issue.³³

The 1966 Convention

The months leading up to the 1966 annual meeting of the BGCT witnessed more discussion and debate over the aid issue as any time in the past. Abner McCall and E.S. James, for instance, each used the opportunity to speak at a conference at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary to plead their cases on the aid issue. In his speech, McCall again questioned the ability of Baptist colleges to survive or progress relying on Baptist contributions alone. To his audience, McCall queried

“Can anyone cite a single Baptist college over all these years which was adequately supported by Southern Baptists?”³⁴ James, in contrast, argued that Baptists could indeed support their institutions adequately if they placed a check on the proliferation of such institutions. “Most Baptists practice birth control in the home but not in the institutional area,” James explained, “the greatest need of state Baptist conventions right now is sharper pruning knives and less fertilizer.”³⁵ The fundamental claim of James was that federal funds to religious institutions were unconstitutional and unscriptural. Federal grants constituted a religious tax that not only violated the principles of separation and voluntary support of religion, but also they were unfair to non-Baptists and non-believers who were tax payers. Challenging the argument that the aid would go to support secular educational enterprises only, James asserted “If any part of a Baptist school is not thoroughly Christian, it has no right to expect Baptist support. If every part is altogether Christian, it has no right to compulsory support by non-Baptists.”³⁶

The church-state committee report submitted to the convention in the fall of 1966 followed the conclusions of the 1961 Basden Report fairly closely. While the report called on Texas Baptists to continue to oppose direct government grants to religious institutions, indirect forms of aid and government “privileges,” such as tax exemptions, research grants, use of surplus government property, postal privileges, and government chaplaincies, were all held to be acceptable. The most controversial element of the report, however, was Section 2, that called on Texas Baptists to approve the securing of long-term, low-interest loans for the construction of buildings at Texas Baptist colleges and universities. The report did stipulate that in accepting such loans, Texas Baptist institutions were to “voluntarily reimburse the government annually the additional amount of interest which will cover the government subsidy involved in the loan.”³⁷ Dealing a further blow to proponents of aid, however, convention messengers

voted down Section 2 of the report on a 739 to 536 vote.³⁸

Twice in the 1960s, messengers to the annual meeting of the Baptist General Convention of Texas struck down both grants and loans to Baptist colleges and universities. Despite influential pleas from Abner McCall, Baptist clergy found such support problematic in light of the Baptist commitment to the separation of church and state. While 1965-1966 represented the apex of the debate, the question of aid resurfaced whenever discussion of higher education ensued.

On the national level, the Baptist Educational Study Task was convened to study Southern Baptist Higher Education. Comprising over 300 educators, editors, pastors, and denominational leaders, the “BEST” inevitably found itself preoccupied with the topic of federal aid. In 1967, the BEST report was completed. While not taking a definitive stance on the aid issue, the BEST study committee suggested guidelines for Baptist college administrators and trustees that were considering accepting grants or loans. While the committee report did call on Baptists to recognize that some cooperation between religious institutions and the state may be necessary “to serve the interests of each and the common ends of both,” it called on Baptists to distinguish between various forms of aid and recognize that some, such as government loans to students and self-liquidating loans, may not raise as many church-state problems. Nevertheless, the report concluded that the acceptance of government aid should be left up to each institution. The institutions were called upon to carefully weigh the benefits of accepting aid against the Baptist tradition of religious freedom, the ongoing Christian character of the institution, and the desire to not become dependent upon governmental assistance.”³⁹

No more direction was given from other national Baptist organizations. The Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, a Baptist church-state watchdog organization in Washington D.C., for instance did not advocate a particular position on the federal funds for higher education issue, despite a consistent

record of opposition to governmental aid for religiously affiliated elementary and secondary schools. Much like the BEST committee, the BJCPA saw its role as more investigatory and informative than prescriptive in this area.

While proponents of aid had faced several defeats at the state convention, a 1968 report on Baptist higher education in Texas provided them evidence to further the debate. The Christian Education Commission of the BGCT hired W. R. Carden, a dean from Stetson University in Florida, to perform a one-year study of Baptist higher education in Texas. The “Carden Report,” as it was known, was completed in 1968. The several hundred page report included forty pages of statistics on Texas Baptist colleges that painted a “grim” picture of the financial bases of the schools. Carden concluded that Baptist colleges were woefully underfunded due to inflation, greater funding for state universities, and declining percentage gifts from the state convention. At the least, the colleges were facing a “quality gap” of \$10 million in their operating budgets and that another \$15 million was needed in construction funds. Even Texas Baptist’s flagship university, Baylor, needed an endowment 10 times its current \$21 million to compete with comparable schools. For Carden, relief could not be found in raising tuition. Students were already paying a “premium price,” that did not include “first-class service.”⁴⁰

Consequently, the Carden Report made some radical recommendations including the sale of Howard Payne and Wayland Baptist colleges, the ending of graduate programs at Hardin-Simmons University, and the placement of the Mary Hardin-Baylor College under the control of Baylor University. In discussing sources of improved funding, the Report called on Texas Baptists to re-examine their philosophy on state aid. Arguing that “Texas Baptists are neither financially equipped nor of the proper frame of mind to attempt to compete financially with the state college,” the Report recommended that Baptists “actively enter” a partnership with the state to “make democracy work through the education of free men.” Specifically, the

Carden Report recommended that the Christian Education Commission allow Baptists college trustees to approve the acceptance of government loans for construction of buildings and government grants for equipment and programs.⁴¹

At the same time, the Report did call on Baptist college trustees not to accept government funds if private funds were available, to ensure that the funds were essential to the educational programs of the college, to ensure that the funds did not lead to regulations that might impact the religious programs of the college, and to ensure that the funds would not lead to ongoing government regulation that threatened the independence of the institution. Echoing many of the claims of Abner McCall, the Report concluded its section on government aid by explaining that Baptist colleges were functioning at a competitive disadvantage. Other church-related institutions were enjoying new facilities and state-of-the-art equipment paid for by Baptist taxpayers, while the libraries and scientific equipment “of at least five of our Baptist schools do not equal those of the high schools of the cities and towns in which the schools are located.”⁴² Baptist colleges and universities, the report concluded, should have access to the same resources as other church-related institutions.

Leon McBeth has described the Carden Report the following way: “Perhaps no study in Texas Baptist history raised so many questions, caused so much dissension, and did so little good.”⁴³ McBeth’s conclusions may very well be true considering the report was submitted to a twelve-member committee that considered it, but never took any formal action on its recommendations. Nevertheless, the Carden Report’s conclusions did find their way into the *Baptist Standard*, became the focus of intense debate, and raised yet again the financial struggles of Texas Baptist colleges and the need for new forms of funding.

Conclusion

Few debates of the 1960s so publicly divided Texas Baptists as did the debate over government funds for Baptist colleges and universities. Portrayed as a battle between pastors (who opposed federal funds) and laypersons and college administrators (who supported them), the aid battle, if nothing else, educated Texas Baptists on the plight of their schools. With convention delegates at the annual meetings of the BGCT consistently opposing publicly funded grants and loans for Baptist colleges and universities, college administrators were forced to seek new and creative ways of sustaining their operations with quality and integrity.

Yet the debate over aid also led Texas Baptists to reflect on the meaning of the long-held principle of separation of church and state, particularly in light of the growing influence of government in an increasingly pluralistic society. For a majority of Texas Baptists, acceptance of government funds would require a clear compromise of principle, despite the arguments of pro-aid advocates. The church-state dilemma could have been avoided by loosening control over the church-related institutions and freeing them to accept funds. This was not a viable alternative for a majority of Texas Baptists either. Perhaps the failure of pro-aid advocates such as McCall rested in the seemingly paradoxical nature of their argument; namely, that Baptist colleges could accept funds while retaining their distinctive denominational relationship and Christian mission. As E. S. James regularly reminded his readers in the *Baptist Standard*, government support would lead to an eventual break with the denomination. However, this was a two-fold argument. Not only was he warning college administrators not to be too anxious to dip their hands in the pot of government funds, but also it was a warning to Texas Baptists that the changeover of a Baptist school to a private non-sectarian school “usually begins with the failure of Baptists to give it adequate support.”⁴⁴

While the formal position of the Baptist General Convention of Texas has gone largely unchanged on the aid issue, Baptist institutions of higher education have generally improved their financial condition through increased enrollments, developing more sophisticated fundraising departments, and accepting new forms of federal aid to students such as Tuition Equalization Grants. Yet the debate of the 1960s still has relevance for Texas Baptist colleges today. The “integration of faith and learning” is in vogue on many Baptist college campuses of late. At the heart of this educational philosophy is that a Christian worldview will be presented in every academic discipline of the college. A comprehensive theological approach to knowledge is advocated, suggesting more than the traditional claims of a quality education in a Christian environment where students receive a strong secular education that includes Bible courses and chapel. The question arises as to the implications of this approach in light of the continued Baptist commitment to the separation of church and state. The old debates remain. To raise one example, the question may be asked: Should a scientist in a Baptist university receive a taxpayer funded grant, if her purpose is to reveal a uniquely Christian understanding of her research? The integration of faith and learning, in fact, may create a more significant church-state dilemma than in the past when Christian higher education was portrayed as providing a secular benefit to democracy in addition to fulfilling a mission of the Church.

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NOTES

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TEXAS BAPTISTS’ RESPONSE TO VIETNAM

In commenting on the period 1961 to 1973, Harry Leon McBeth in *Texas Baptists: A Sesquicentennial History* writes, “In the 1960s American society was in turmoil. The assassination of President John F. Kennedy in 1963, followed by the killing of Robert F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King, Jr., cast a dark shadow over the nation. America lost, or at least failed to win, two wars: the military war in Vietnam and President Lyndon B. Johnson’s ‘war on poverty.’” He then adds, “The war in Vietnam escalated to become America’s longest, least understood, and most devastating in both casualties and costs. It drove one president from office, depleted the nation’s treasury, and further divided the American people.”¹ After making these remarks, the author proceeds to discuss the contributions of T. A. Patterson and the various commissions of the Baptist General Convention of Texas (BGCT), never again mentioning the war in Southeast Asia. This leaves the impression that while Indochina’s conflict divided the nation, it had little impact on Texas Baptists. Granted the war did not divide Baptists as did the *Brown* decision and the civil rights movement or create a heated exchange as did the publication of Ralph Elliot’s *Message of Genesis*. However, were Texas Baptists immune to the impact of the war in Vietnam?

The first comment regarding the Vietnam War came in late summer of 1963 with E. S. James’s editorials on the Buddhist opposition to South Vietnamese President Ngo Dinh Diem. Lamenting Diem’s refusal to allow religious toleration, James asserted that the South Vietnamese “government has now become as oppressive as that of Communist dictators.” He

added, “America has sent many men and millions of dollars into Viet Nam to strengthen her against the Communist surge, but we cannot believe our own country ever intended to guard them against one type of oppression and deliver them into the hands of another type.” It was time for the Saigon leaders to “change their policies or find somebody else to pay their bills and shed the blood of their sons in their defense.”²² James also denied that the Buddhists were Communists and to state otherwise “is just another way of expressing the age-old philosophy of justifying one’s own evil by charging the other fellow with being worse.” This was both “a sign of ignorance” as well as “an admission of being wrong.”²³ With the successful coup against Diem’s government in early November, negative comments in the *Baptist Standard* regarding the South Vietnamese government ceased.

The BGCT passed four resolutions regarding the conflict in Southeast Asia. In 1965 the messengers resolved to pray for both the nation’s leaders and servicemen in Vietnam “in these trying times,” but refused to comment on the nation’s foreign policy.⁴ Two years later Texas Baptists again confessed their “inability to speak with certainty concerning this complex issue” and called for prayers on behalf of the president, “the victims of war,” and servicemen and their families. The resolution also implored “the rejection of voices of extremism which call for peace at any price on the one hand or reckless escalation toward plunging the world into total war on the other.”⁵ In 1970 the BGCT commended the Nixon administration for seeking “a just peace” in Vietnam and urged the government to work diligently for “the immediate release of prisoners of war being held by the Viet Cong and North Vietnam.”⁶ And finally in 1972, the messengers referred to the conflict as one of “tragic duration,” again commended the president for his efforts to end the war, and called for “special” prayers for those seeking “a just peace,” the POWs, the Vietnamese people, and “those who have suffered in the conflict.”⁷

These resolutions demonstrate a desire on the part of Texas

Baptists to uplift the nation’s leaders, its servicemen, and the victims of the conflict in prayer from beginning to end. While the messengers refused to critique or criticize American policy in Southeast Asia, they were for “a just peace,” “not peace at any price,” which implies support for the government’s stated aims: the defense of a free people against Communist aggression. However, as the 1967 convention demonstrated, Texas Baptists were unwilling to see the war expand to the point of involving Communist China or the Soviet Union, as such escalation could very well lead to a nuclear exchange between the superpowers.

Two polls taken by the *Baptist Standard* in 1969 appeared to confirm Texas Baptist support for the Vietnam War. In July, 260 people responded to a question concerning America’s “moral position” in the conflict in Southeast Asia, with 58 percent favoring “participation on moral grounds.” Comments ranged from “The only thing immoral is the way some ‘Americans’ are prolonging the war, and giving comfort to the enemy by means of their opposition to the war” to “The U.S. has no right or obligation to interfere in foreign territorial disagreements which clearly do not involve us.”⁸ In October, 201 Baptists responded to the question of whether or not the October 15 Moratorium on the war would “shorten or lengthen” the conflict, with 74 percent stating that such actions would “lengthen” the Vietnam war, 15 percent saying that this demonstration would “shorten” it, and the remaining 11 percent believing that such protests would have no effect on the fighting. Comments ranged from “As the other side waits to see the effect of the demonstrations on the government of the U.S., they are not in a hurry to talk seriously about peace” to “I was for total victory. Since our leaders refuse this, I think we should pull out.”⁹

An analysis of the above statistics reveals some interesting trends. The laity was overwhelming in their support of the war (62.5 percent) and against the October 15 Moratorium (75 percent). However, the pastors’ vote was split. On the issue of the Moratorium, 70 percent believed that this and similar

demonstrations against the conflict in Southeast Asia would lengthen rather than shorten the war. But when it came to America's involvement on moral grounds, 69 percent opposed the war. Why the difference? The easiest answer is that different pastors voted on each issue. But this fails to account for the large number opposed to the conflict on moral grounds. The twenty-five opposition votes may have resulted from pastors voting their conscience, especially since the survey was anonymous. Given the facts that the laity supported the conflict, that many had sons, husbands, or other relatives fighting in Vietnam, and that the pastor served at the good pleasure of the congregation, not many pastors, regardless of their private feelings, would publicly speak out on the war and risk their jobs.

Perhaps the most outspoken critic on the issue of the October 15 Moratorium was W. A. Criswell, pastor of First Baptist Church of Dallas. Speaking the following Sunday morning, the Dallas pastor severely denounced the demonstrators as possible fellow travelers with the communists at worst or "duped" by the enemy at best. Watching news stories on the Moratorium on Wednesday evening, Criswell described how "a strange, inescapable fear and foreboding entered my soul," when he realized that the speeches, slogans, and symbols of the peace movement were the same as those used in Russia and other communist countries. The demonstrators, he warned, were trying to destroy "the will of our nation to exist and live." Describing the North Vietnamese (as well as other communists) as "bloody murderers," he thundered that America had to draw the line against communist aggression, and Vietnam by implication was the place to do it. His remarks were met with loud and thunderous applause and many hearty amens from the congregation.¹⁰

Texas Baptists also demonstrated their concern for American soldiers fighting in Southeast Asia. A March 1968 editorial by John J. Hurt in the *Baptist Standard* wrote of the churches' neglect of military personnel serving in Vietnam. One chaplain

estimated "that only 12 men in my battalion (900 men) ever heard from their home churches," lamenting that "the men won't forget this. They return bitter and disillusioned." Returning veterans, who are trained in "killing" and "material destruction," would, according to the chaplain, "rather fight than suffer some of society's cruelties they endured in former years." Hurt concluded, "it is bad enough for any church to ignore a man in the military. It is tragic to think of what it may mean to his future—and ours."¹¹

How accurate was the chaplain's assessment of church neglect of servicemen in the Southeast Asian theater? Apparently it was not very accurate regarding Texas Baptists. Hurt "challenged his estimate," stating that he personally knew of "churches which make this a special ministry."¹² In a letter to the editor, Mrs. Charles C. Turner III of Fort Worth wrote that her husband who was in Vietnam had recently received a letter from a church which "he had never attended," and this gesture had raised his spirits. She added that her fellowship, University Baptist Church, had a letter-writing ministry to both servicemen and college students.¹³ And the Baptist Student Union (BSU) at Howard Payne College sponsored "a letter-writing campaign" to "encourage more humane treatment" for American POWs held in North Vietnam. This organization also asked churches in the Brownwood area and the other BSUs throughout the state to join them in this effort.¹⁴

But once the servicemen returned home from the jungles of Vietnam, Texas Baptists must not forget them, so wrote T. A. Patterson, the executive-secretary of the BGCT. Since they are treated as "outcasts" and cannot find work, "some of them turn to crime." Patterson believed that these men, who risked their lives for their country, should not be blamed for an unpopular war but appreciated, respected, and honored for "what they have tried to do." "Churches," he stated, "have a responsibility to minister to these men," to "love them and assist them in every possible way to adjust to civilian life and to find places in the service of Christ," possibly as missionaries

to Asia.¹⁵

But what about those who refused to go to Vietnam and sought conscientious objector status? In 1969, the Christian Life Commission (CLC) of the BGCT affirmed that each believer was “free to determine and follow the will of God for his life,” particularly when it came to involvement in war. The CLC pledged “to respect the conscientiousness of those who feel that they should participate in war as well as those whose Christian conviction is that they should not participate.”¹⁶ T. B. Maston, retired professor of Christian ethics at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, seconded this position. Citing two types of conscientious objectors (general or opposed to all war and selective or opposed only to the Vietnam conflict), he asserted that the Baptist church must defend the rights of both and surround them “with understanding and Christian love.” Using an illustration based on the parable of the lost sheep, Maston stated that if there was one conscientious objector (general or selective) in a church, the rest of the membership must support him. “To do less,” he warned, “is to violate something that is basic in our Protestant way of life in general and our Baptist way of life in particular.” However, the conscientious objector must also “respect just as much the position of those who disagree with him as he expects them to respect and defend him in his position.”¹⁷

It was a different matter, however, when it came to the issue of amnesty for deserters and draft evaders. When articles appeared in the *Baptist Standard* in 1973 and 1974 on this issue, letters to the editor were vehemently against any form of amnesty. Don Scott of Killeen asserted, “All justice demands that crime (or sin) shall be paid for in full and, in fact, the Bible so states (Rom. 6:23).”¹⁸ Allen Brooks of Abilene maintained that the granting of “amnesty to these people would be acknowledging that those who lost their lives or were maimed for the rest of their lives was in vain.” Deserters and draft evaders must “pay the price” for their choice. Mrs. Emily Park of Austin, who had “my husband, a nephew and two cousins” killed in

Vietnam, wrote that anyone in favor of amnesty “should have their heads examined.”¹⁹

There was also activity regarding the Vietnam War at the Baptist colleges, universities, and seminary across the state. A major event was the Moratorium of October 15, 1969. At East Texas Baptist College in Marshall there was little activity, although one class was dismissed and a few students sported “protest badges.” As the editorial in the student newspaper noted, “It seemed that most of the students at ETBC did not even realize that a moratorium was being observed or what it was all about.”²⁰ However, the student body was not apathetic toward the conflict in Southeast Asia. In a poll taken at the November 12 chapel of 136 students who represented a cross section of the student body 82 percent supported Nixon’s policy in Vietnam and 80 percent opposed the Moratoriums of October and November.²¹

In the DFW Metroplex there was little support for the October 15 Moratorium. At Dallas Baptist College a coffee house was set up in the student union for discussion about the war from 10:30 to 11:00 a.m., but school officials warned that no one who attended would be “excused from classes.”²² At Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, a lone student arrived with a protest sign, but Dr. Felix Gresham, dean of students, explained to the protestor that his actions ran contrary to school policy. Gresham told the press, “I think he understood that we, as a seminary, support our President.” The Moratorium went unmentioned in the morning chapel.²³

In Houston and Abilene there were similar results. The students at Houston Baptist College voted by a two to one majority to observe the October 15 Moratorium. However, when James Massy, dean of students, declared that the college would respect neither the Moratorium nor the senate’s action, a second ballot was taken, in which support for the Moratorium failed by two votes.²⁴ At Hardin-Simmons College in Abilene, there were special times of prayer, some students donning “black arm-bands,” American flags flying “at full mast,” and

drivers turning on their headlights “to represent both sides of the issue.” The editorial in the student newspaper proclaimed that a day of protesting “will not end the war” and called on the faculty, staff, and students “to support our government in its attempt to end the war.” The nation, the writer continued, had to live up to its commitment to the people of South Vietnam. “We cannot expect the respect of the rest of the world, nor can we respect ourselves, if we do not have the courage to be as good as our word.”²⁵

The largest and most vocal protest against the war in Southeast Asia occurred in Waco at Baylor University. President Abner McCall sanctioned observance of the October 15 Moratorium, and while personally supportive of Nixon’s policy, he said, “The discussion of the pro and con on any issue of public concern is always in order. Public debate on any national issue is always desirable.” Some, like Dr. William Carden, an assistant to McCall for academic affairs, were “in total sympathy with the aims of the moratorium,” but others like Dr. George Stokes, head of the Baylor Ex-Student Association, and Dr. George Smith, Dean of Instruction, opposed the anti-war protest. Stokes declared, “The students participating in the moratorium have the right to say what they want, but don’t have the right to cut classes.” Smith added that he would not look favorably on faculty dismissing classes on October 15. “They are hired to teach classes, and we expect them to do that.”²⁶

Moratorium week began on Monday, October 13, with a Student Congress approved debate in the chapel. After representatives of each side presented their respective positions on the issue, a standing vote was held, which the pro-war, anti-Moratorium side won by an overwhelming majority of ten to one. Those who stood in favor of the protest were hissed by the other students. On Tuesday evening a seminar on the war was held where again both sides of the issue would be presented. However, the Baylor chapter of the Young Republicans refused to participate in this event, preferring instead to create a rival meeting in which both speakers condemned the Moratorium.²⁷

On Wednesday, no less than three groups sponsored activities on Baylor’s campus. Setting up in Burleson Quadrangle, the Waco Coalition for Peace planned a whole day of activities that included the reading of the names of the twenty-two hundred Texans killed in the war, speeches by a number of history and political science faculty, an ecumenical service led by the Roman Catholic campus chaplain, a rock music concert, and a concluding address by Dr. Daniel McGee in Kayser Auditorium. Beginning with just thirty people in the morning, the crowd grew throughout the day to around three hundred in the afternoon and peaked at six hundred with the rock concert. In opposition was the recently organized Baylor Committee to Seek an Honorable and Lasting Peace in Vietnam, which established a booth to garner signatures on petitions of support for Nixon and the war. In all, around twenty-three hundred people signed these petitions. Also opposed to the Moratorium was an ad hoc committee, the Young Americans for Freedom, which brought in a member of the John Birch Society to speak.²⁸

While there was no violence, opposition forces made their way to each other’s rally. Students with black armbands waited quietly and patiently to hear the John Birch lecture. One student drove his pickup truck by the quadrangle, honking his horn in an effort to disrupt the anti-war speakers. Administrators also visited the quadrangle, some several different times. Despite all of the activities on campus, class attendance was reported as “normal.”²⁹

The most unusual activity at a Texas Baptist college regarding the October 15 Moratorium occurred in Brownwood at Howard Payne College. The preceding day the Student Senate condemned “the Vietnam Moratorium” and voiced its support of Nixon’s current policy. Of more profound interest was the dedication of the college’s Douglas MacArthur Academy of Freedom on Saturday, October 18. A statue of the general (with an American flag made of flowers beneath it) was unveiled by his widow, and the main speaker for the occasion

was General William Westmoreland, former commander of U.S. forces in Vietnam. The general denounced the recent Moratorium, stating that this minority view would not affect American policy but could have an impact “on the leadership of Hanoi.” Such protests only served to “disappoint” and “disillusion” America’s fighting men. Republican Senator John Tower added, “This day serves to remind us that there can be no moratorium in man’s striving for freedom and there cannot be a moment’s pause in our struggle to defend it.”³⁰

The following May witnessed the tragic shooting of four students at Kent State University by the Ohio National Guard in the wake of the U.S. incursion into Cambodia. Ralph Thornhill, student body president at Hardin-Simmons University, voiced support for peaceful demonstrations “concerning U.S. involvement in Cambodia.” However, violence had led to the deployment of the National Guardsmen on the Kent State campus, and this set the stage for “a tragic thing that had to happen.”³¹ Student opinion at Wayland Baptist College in Plainview was divided. Senior Sue Brown labeled the incident “unfortunate” and attributed it to “panic” on both sides. Freshmen Tom Marrs also blamed both sides, the National Guard for firing into the crowd and the students for “throwing rocks, sticks, and such things,” a sentiment shared by fellow freshman Kay Wallace. Senior Tom Travis asserted that “the National Guard acted irrationally,” and Junior Bill Storrs said that the shooting was indicative of “a deep-seated illness in our country today.” In defense of the National Guard, freshmen Robbie Biggerstaff indicted the students for rioting. Senior Roland Saul added, “I don’t think there is any such thing in mob action as an innocent by-stander. I feel the guardsmen had a right to protect their lives.”³²

At Baylor University, President McCall sanctioned a five-minute period of silence at noon on Friday, May 8, “in memory of the American soldiers who have lost their lives in Southeast Asia.” The Foyer of Meditation in the Armstrong Browning Library was open for prayer from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.³³ At noon

a memorial service took place in Burleson Quadrangle where around 150 faculty, staff, and students gathered peacefully for a time of prayer.³⁴ However, the president had warned that “any person—student or teacher—who disrupts or attempts to disrupt any regularly scheduled university event will be summarily suspended.” This was aimed at those participating in the Waco Coalition for Peace demonstration planned for the Minglewood Bowl during Air Force ROTC ceremonies scheduled to begin at 10:00 a.m. on May 8.³⁵

Was there a threat of violence? David Ferris, an organizer of the protest, sent a letter to the city newspaper, making it clear that the demonstration would be peaceful. Protestors were to carry signs adjacent to the crowds gathered for the AFROTC ceremonies. However, the student newspaper reported that a group of students would surround the Minglewood Bowl and fall “to the ground mocking soldiers killed in battle.” A different group of students would also gather “to keep a watchful eye on the protestors” and to make sure that the AFROTC ceremonies were not disrupted. And while the *Baylor Lariat* would not officially endorse the protest in Minglewood Bowl, the editor unofficially did so by stating, “Christians throughout history and yea unto the present day have regarded peaceful civil disobedience as the only morally right thing to do, once all other recourse has been exhausted.” Thus, the ingredients for confrontation and violence were present on Friday morning.³⁶

The Coalition for Peace demonstration during the AFROTC ceremonies drew only two hundred Baylor students. Some “50 students knelt in silent vigil throughout the ceremonies holding white crosses symbolizing the death of four Kent State students and the deaths brought on by the Vietnam war.” When the ceremony ended the protestors in a single-file formation trekked across Minglewood Bowl. The only incident occurred at 10:45 a.m. when several students lowered the American flag to half-mast on Founders Mall. Administration officials, however, quickly restored the flag to its proper height. Overall, McCall commented regarding events on Friday, “I

felt the demonstrators expressed their opposition to the war in a legitimate way.”³⁷

In conclusion, most Texas Baptists supported American involvement in the Vietnam War. They passed resolutions calling for prayer for both the president and the servicemen fighting in Southeast Asia as well as calling for “a just and honorable peace,” which meant something less than a communist victory in the region. Texas Baptists also supported conscientious objector status but had little love for deserters or those seeking amnesty. While there was some opposition to the war on college and university campuses, Baptist students for the most part backed the war effort. Thus Texas Baptists differed little from their fellow Baptists in other states.

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NOTES

¹Harry Leon McBeth, *Texas Baptists: A Sesquicentennial History* (Dallas: Baptistway Press, 1998), 283-84. McBeth’s work is not the only state Baptist history to ignore the Baptist response to the Vietnam War. See, for example, Richard Aubrey McLemore, *A History of Mississippi Baptists, 1780-1970*. (No place of publication: Mississippi Baptist Board, 1971); Albert W. Wardin, Jr., *Tennessee Baptists: A Comprehensive History, 1779-1999*. Brentwood, Tenn.: Executive Board of the Tennessee Baptist Convention, 1999); and Wayne Flynt, *Alabama Baptists: Southern Baptists in the Heart of Dixie* (Tuscaloosa: The University Press, 1998). An exception to the above is James Duane Bolin, *Kentucky Baptists, 1925-2000: A Story of Cooperation* (Brentwood, Tenn.: Southern Baptist Historical Society, 2000). Bolin discusses Kentucky Baptists’ response to the conflict in Southeast Asia on pages 185-88.

²*Ibid*, August 14, 1963, 4.

³*Ibid*, September 4, 1963, 5. James also wrote, “these protesting Vietnamese are not Communists, much as the vast body of Negroes in America are not Communists,” which loosely tied together the war in

Indochina and the civil rights movement in America. See *Baptist Standard*, August 14, 1962, 4.

⁴*Proceedings of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, 1965*, 22.

⁵*Proceedings of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, 1967*, 25-26.

⁶*Proceedings of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, 1970*, 23-24. The words in bold type were added to the resolution as an amendment.

⁷*Proceedings of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, 1972*, 24-25.

⁸*Baptist Standard*, July 23, 1969, 4.

⁹*Ibid*, November 5, 1969, 4.

¹⁰Sermon by W. A. Criswell, October 19, 1969. A taped copy of this sermon was secured from office of the pastor of First Baptist Church in Dallas, Texas.

¹¹*Baptist Standard*, March 27, 1968, 6.

¹²*Ibid*.

¹³*Ibid*, April 24, 1968, 2.

¹⁴*Ibid*, April 1, 1970, 2.

¹⁵*Ibid*, April 21, 1971, 7.

¹⁶*Proceedings of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, 1969*, 90.

¹⁷*Baptist Standard*, January 22, 1969, 19.

¹⁸*Ibid*, May 30, 1973, 2.

¹⁹*Ibid*, June 19, 1974, 2.

²⁰*Compass*, October 24, 1969, 2. Copies of the student newspaper are located at Mamye Jarrett Library, East Texas State University, Marshall, Texas.

²¹*Ibid*, November 26, 1969, 1.

²²*Dallas Morning News*, October 15, 1969, 1. In November some forty students and faculty gathered at the flagpole, not to protest war, but for a time of prayer for American servicemen in Southeast Asia, the nation’s leaders, and the Viet Cong. See *Chieftain*, November 24, 1969, 1. Copies of the student newspaper are in the Archives of Dallas Baptist University located at Vance Memorial Library, Dallas Baptist University, Dallas, Texas.

²³*Fort Worth Star-Telegram* (evening edition), October 15, 1969, 1A and 8A.

²⁴*Ibid*, 2A.

²⁵*Brand*, October 17, 1969, 2. Copies of the student newspaper are located at Richardson Library, Hardin-Simmons University, Abilene, Texas.

²⁶*Baylor Lariat*, October 15, 1969, 3. Copies of the student newspaper are located at the Texas Collection, Baylor University, Waco, Texas.

²⁷*Ibid*, October 14, 1969, 1.

²⁸*Ibid*, October 16, 1969, 1 and October 17, 1969, 1.

²⁹*Ibid*, October 16, 1969, 1 and *Waco News-Tribune*, October 16, 1969, 18A.

³⁰*Yellow Jacket*, October 17, 1969, 1 and *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, October 19, 1969, 1A and 9A. The *Yellow Jacket*, is located in the archives of Walker Memorial Library, Howard Payne University, Brownwood, Texas.

³¹*Abilene Reporter-News*, May 6, 1970, 1A and 6A.

³²*Trail Blazer*, May 15, 1970, 3. Copies of the student newspaper are located at Mabee Learning Resource Center, Wayland Baptist University, Plainview, Texas.

³³*Baylor Lariat*, May 8, 1970, 1.

³⁴*Ibid*, May 9, 1970, 1.

³⁵*Waco News-Tribune*, May 8, 1970, 1A.

³⁶*Ibid*, and *Baylor Lariat*, May 6, 1970, 1 and 2.

³⁷*Baylor Lariat*, May 9, 1970, 1.

“NO MAN . . . HOLDS A WARMER PLACE IN
THE MEMORY OF TEXAS BAPTISTS”:
I. T. TICHENOR AND THE HOME MISSION
BOARD IN TEXAS IN THE 1880S

In the spring of 1850, a young Baptist pastor from Kentucky left his pastorate in Mississippi and traveled to the West to one of the newest states in the Union. Reaching the coast of Texas, he held a series of revivals in Houston and Galveston before returning to his native state.¹ No record exists of the response to those revivals or of the impression the young state made upon the twenty-four-year-old preacher, but perhaps something about his brief experience there captured his attention and fired his imagination. He would not return to the state for more than thirty years and his life would change courses many times before he did, but he apparently never forgot Texas. His recollection of this experience ultimately led to his making a concentrated effort to entrench the Lone Star state in his denomination’s work. The young man, Isaac Taylor Tichenor, was destined to become one of the leaders of the Southern Baptist Convention in the nineteenth century.

Isaac Taylor Tichenor was born in Kentucky in 1825. Prior to his revival mission to Texas, he had served as an agent of the Indian Mission Association and as pastor of the Baptist church in Columbus, Mississippi. While serving in Columbus, Tichenor had become involved in the Mississippi Baptist Convention and in the newly formed Southern Baptist Convention. After his short sojourn in Texas, he returned to his native state to serve briefly as pastor in Henderson, Kentucky. In December 1851, at the age of twenty-six, he accepted the pastorate of the

First Baptist Church of Montgomery, Alabama. Montgomery had been recently chosen as the new state capital, and First Baptist was quickly becoming one of the most significant and influential churches in the state. Tichenor served capably as pastor of this congregation on two separate occasions, from 1851 to 1860 and 1863 to 1868, for a total of fifteen years. He, like some of his contemporaries, enlisted as a chaplain in the Confederate army and briefly worked as a missionary to the Army of Tennessee for the Southern Baptist Domestic Mission Board. He especially distinguished himself as a “fighting chaplain” at the battle of Shiloh in 1862. Corresponding with the final years of his Montgomery pastorate, Tichenor managed the Montevallo Coal Mining Company as its president, leaving the pastorate in 1868 to work full-time with MCMC for three years. Working with Alabama mining pioneer Joseph Squire, Tichenor and the company laid out many of the initial surveys of the north central coal and iron ore mining country in Alabama. After a brief interlude as pastor in Memphis, Tichenor returned to Alabama to become the first president of the Alabama Agricultural and Mechanical College, now known as Auburn University. At Auburn, Tichenor administered and taught at the educational forefront of a virtual crusade self-described as the “New South” movement and whose best-known advocate was Atlanta journalist Henry Grady. Historian Paul Gaston states that the proponents of the movement identified the “New South” as “a harmonious reconciliation of sectional differences, racial peace, and a new economic and social order based on industry and scientific agriculture—all of which would lead eventually to the South’s dominance in the reunited nation.” Tichenor incorporated New South ideals into educational reforms initiated at the new land grant school that emphasized scientific, mechanical, and agricultural education designed to elevate the industrial and business strength of the South.²

In 1882 the Southern Baptist Convention made two momentous decisions that dramatically altered the future of its Home Mission Board, and therefore, the future of the

Convention itself. The first decision relocated the Board from Marion, Alabama, representative of the “Old South,” to the quintessential “New South” city of Atlanta, Georgia. The second was to appoint a new board and hire a new corresponding secretary. On May 22, 1882, the new HMB unanimously elected I. T. Tichenor for the post of corresponding secretary. The following day Tichenor accepted the appointment.³

These two decisions were crucial for the survival of the Home Mission Board and, in a sense, the Convention itself. In 1879 and the years that followed, there had been serious talk of eliminating the Home Mission Board. Some, in fact, believed the dissolution of the Convention and reunion with Northern Baptists was inevitable. By 1882 Baptists in states such as Arkansas, Texas, Georgia, and Florida had various working agreements with the Home Mission Society rather than the Home Mission Board. In the 1879-1880 fiscal year, receipts from the churches to the Board were less than \$20,000, and only seven of the various twenty-one conventions and general associations in the South “were cooperating with the Home Board.”⁴

Tichenor immediately plunged into his work with typical enthusiasm. One of his earliest decisions was to “visit each of the Southern States and confer with the State Board and Vice-Presidents of [the Home Mission Board] in their respective states.” Subsequently, Tichenor visited state conventions and associations in eleven different Southern states and secured pledges of support exceeding \$20,000. Historian B. F. Riley records that Tichenor realized that the revitalization of the Board would result only if he rejected the traditional method of written pleas for participation and left the confines of his office to meet Baptist leaders and people across the South. This hands-on approach to the work of the Board gave just the impression needed at that time. These visits gave Tichenor the opportunity to hear the concerns of Baptists in those states. It gave him an opportunity to express his vision for the work of the Board and issue a challenge for unity around the work

of *Southern* Baptists. It helped Baptists in those regions to identify a person with the name and remember him when he wrote for assistance and unity. As a result of these travels and meetings, one of the first priorities that Tichenor targeted was the state of Texas.⁵

No one knows exactly when Baptist work in Texas began. As Baptist historian H. Leon McBeth writes, “Only God knows for sure when Baptists first set foot in Texas; the lesser authorities disagree among themselves.” McBeth documents the earliest verifiable Texas Baptist preacher in Texas as 1820 and some early Baptists in Texas in the 1820s. Baptist work in Texas began in earnest in the early 1830s with the emergence of individuals such as Z. N. Morrell, Daniel Parker, R. E. B. Baylor, and Noah Byars. The first Baptist home missionaries appeared in Texas beginning in 1840 and the Baptist State Convention was organized in 1848.⁶

Perhaps nowhere was Tichenor’s influence felt more strongly or more quickly than in his efforts in solidifying Texas in the fold as exclusively Southern Baptist territory. Texas, like the rest of the South, suffered greatly in the postbellum period. Though little actual fighting had taken place on Texas soil, the economy had been severely disrupted by the war and Reconstruction, the state government faced challenges regarding relations with hostile Native Americans, and even in the late 1870s and early 1880s, Texans faced “[p]overty-stricken public finances [that] constantly plagued the government of Texas. . . .” As Texas historians Richardson, Anderson, and Wallace write in their history of Texas, the years immediately following the war “proved destructive to the fortunes of many wealthy plantation owners and difficult for smaller landowners and farmers.”⁷

Baptists were not isolated from these struggles. As McBeth writes,

Baptists shared fully in the social and financial disruption of the times. Churches had difficulty maintaining pastors, even for part-time ministry, and practically all pastors labored at secular work to earn their bread. . . .

The Baptist associations and state conventions tried to keep missionaries in the field to establish churches in the growing communities, especially the railroad town, but shortage of funds often meant that missionaries could not be appointed, or appointed only for a few weeks as a time. The Convention repeatedly had to report that they were several weeks or months behind in paying even the meager salaries promised to the missionaries.⁸

Texas’ problems were not unlike the remainder of the home mission field that Tichenor surveyed in 1882. Tichenor did, however, recognize the vast potential that the frontier state held for the work of Baptists and for the expansion of the territory of Southern Baptists. Many residents of Texas were transplanted Southerners and Texas had quickly seceded from the Union after the election of Lincoln in 1860, despite the efforts of its governor, Sam Houston, also a Baptist layman. In 1865 after the surrender of the other Confederate states, Texas was the last to surrender to Union troops. All these events served to demonstrate to Baptist observers the “southernness” of the state. Tichenor hoped to capitalize upon this “southernness” and saw the vast potential the state held for the New South and for Baptist work there. Writing in the early twentieth century, Texas Baptist historian and preacher, J. M. Carroll, recalls of Tichenor,

Tichenor had great and accurate visions of Texas and her Baptist possibilities. He was always a loyal friend of Texas. His great vision of Baptist possibilities in this State and his ability to make the Home Board see and feel as he did, enabled him to secure help for Texas somewhat commensurate with her tremendous needs, and it was due to Dr. Tichenor as to no other man out of Texas, the saving of Texas to the Home Board, when because of the generous help of the Home Mission Society of New York, a very large part of Texas was leaning strongly in that direction.⁹

Thus Carroll, whose older brother Benajah H. Carroll, a Confederate veteran and prominent Texas pastor, formed a critical alliance with Tichenor, recognized the substantial

contribution the corresponding secretary made to preserving ties with the SBC and the Home Mission Board. McBeth states that Tichenor essentially “outbid Northern Baptists for Texas affiliation.”¹⁰ He did so through an aggressive plan of visits, correspondence, and pledges of financial assistance that urged Texas Baptists to unite and to cooperate with the Southern Board. Undoubtedly, he played upon sentiments that remained from the Civil War that Texas was a Southern state. Thus, it was only logical in his mind, as well as those of his listeners, that Texas Baptists be affiliated with the SBC.

When Tichenor became Corresponding Secretary of the Board in 1882, four of the five competing associations or conventions in Texas were affiliated with the Home Mission Society. Three of the bodies were regionally situated in Texas. Two were statewide and were competing directly with one another as well as with the regionally located groups. As McBeth writes in his history of Texas Baptists, “Like a jigsaw puzzle with its pieces scattered, Baptist structures in Texas were badly fragmented during this period.” There were competing colleges, mission unions, Sunday school agencies, and newspapers. District associations and churches had been divided by this competition. Furthermore, there were remnants of anti-missions Baptists, especially in east Texas, who were unaffiliated with any of the organizations and who rejected any form of missions cooperation. McBeth adds, “The result was internal fragmentation of the Baptist witness, with a bewildering array of organizations, each pursuing worthy goals no doubt, but confusing the churches by the plentitude of financial agents bumping into each other as each tried to get to the churches first to raise money for his particular cause.” The situation was little short of ecclesiastical chaos.¹¹

One of the first actions of the Home Mission Board regarding Texas was to authorize Tichenor “to secure, whenever practicable, title to lots in the frontier and new towns in Texas, for the purpose of establishing Baptist churches.” Shortly thereafter, the Baptist General Association of Texas, under the

leadership of R. C. Buckner, made an appeal through Waco pastor B. H. Carroll concerning the “[spiritual] destitution of Texas,” and overtures were made to the Board from the Association for a cooperative effort in fund raising for home missions. These efforts culminated in the August 1, 1882 meeting of the Home Mission Board. Note was made that many communications were received from the various state mission boards regarding cooperative efforts. Texas was especially set aside for immediate action. The statement recorded from the Committee on Texas was that “from Texas come two conditions precedent to cooperation.” The committee, reflecting Tichenor’s opinion, stated that Texas was “a pivotal state” and advised that the Board spend between \$6000 and \$8000 in that fiscal year in matching funds to provide for the work there. The report also stated, “If we meet in a fraternal spirit, the conditions proposed, we can hold that large and rapidly growing population in sympathy and cooperation with your Board; and your Committee are clearly of the opinion that the requests of the brethren in Texas are just and wise, and that we should give them at an early day, explicit assurance of our acceptance of the terms indicated.”¹²

After this communication with the more vibrant Baptist General Association, Tichenor strengthened ties with the older Baptist State Convention of Texas. At the end of September, he traveled to the Convention meeting in Belton, Texas. At this meeting, the corresponding secretary proposed to assist the State Convention in its work with \$3000 of Home Mission Board money to be matched by \$1500 from the State Convention. This proposal of two dollars of aid for each one dollar raised was approved by the Baptist State Convention. Once he had made this proposal, he also made a similar agreement with the Baptist General Association with \$3000 of Board money to be spent in Texas and matched with \$3000 from the General Association. Both proposals were approved by the Home Mission Board and together fell within the \$6000 budget for Texas earlier approved by the Board in its

September meeting. In 1885 the HMB borrowed \$2000 to aid the General Association in constructing churches and to match the Association funds designated for this purpose as long as the proposed churches were affiliated with the Baptist General Association. Well into the 1890s, the Home Mission board continued to support the work in Texas. In 1893, for example, the Board voted to appropriate \$4000 out of its funds and up to another \$2000 from funds raised by Texas Baptists for the Board, for the extension of Southern Baptist work in Texas.¹³

These actions were important for several reasons. They demonstrated the lengths to which Tichenor and the Home Mission Board were willing to go to secure Texas to the Board. This placement of Texas as a priority for the Home Mission Board was to reap huge benefits for the Board and the Southern Baptist Convention in the years to come. These actions also demonstrated how the Home Mission Board trusted Tichenor, within certain guidelines, to initiate agreements that expanded the work of the Board. At its September 1882 meeting, the Board authorized Tichenor “to offer to the State Convention of Texas, and the General Association of Texas, such sums for mission work in that state, as he thinks best.” This broad statement gave the corresponding secretary the ability to act decisively and quickly, and he did so. These proposals were a bold challenge to Texas Baptists for cooperation. Simultaneously, internal events were taking place that would culminate in the consolidation of the multiple conventions and associations. Within five years, the divided conventions and associations of Texas had merged and 130 Southern Baptist missionaries were on the Texas field. While there were a number of factors, the efforts of Tichenor and the Home Mission Board to urge cooperation and consolidation may well have contributed to this merger that resulted in the Baptist General Convention of Texas. J. M. Carroll wrote that these initial proposals made by Tichenor and the Board were “a long step forward” for mission work in Texas. Texas Baptists began work among the African Americans of the state through

the influence of Tichenor. He offered to Texas Baptists that if they commissioned a man to work in the establishment of Ministers’ Institutes among blacks, the Home Mission Board would pay his salary. The General Association agreed and appointed Rev. W. H. Parks.¹⁴

In the years to come, Tichenor continued to stay involved with the situation in Texas. He visited the Baptist State Convention of Texas in 1883 and 1884 and the Baptist General Association in 1883 and 1885. In the 1883 meeting of the General Association, Tichenor was asked to address the Association. The minutes record that he did so “in his immitable [*sic*] style which thrilled the hearts of the Association and gave us large ideas of the great work our Lord Jesus has left us to do.”¹⁵

Conflict, however, arose between the Home Mission Board and the Texas Baptist State Convention in 1885. An editorial of the *Texas Baptist Herald*, the publishing arm of the State Convention, criticized the management of the Home Mission Board. Tichenor reported to the Board concerning this editorial, and the Board voted to respond directly to the State Convention mission board. This conflict arose from the fact that O. C. Pope, corresponding secretary of the State Convention mission board, was “reporting the salary of a pastor of a church, paid by that church, as mission funds.” This affected the total of the aforementioned matching fund arrangement and was contrary to the policies of the Home Mission Board. It is also possible that the Board looked unfavorably upon the continued strong tie of the State Convention with the American Baptist Home Mission Society. Subsequent events in the Indian Territory show that the Home Mission Board disapproved of joint relationships with the two organizations. The conflict in Texas ended when O. C. Pope left the employ of the Baptist State Convention, and the Convention merged with the Baptist General Association in 1886 to form the Baptist General Convention of Texas in the consolidation mentioned above.¹⁶

Texas Baptist historian J. M. Carroll recorded that during these years Tichenor came to be “much loved in Texas” and

“came almost to be regarded as Texan.” Perhaps one reason for this assessment was the fact that during these years Tichenor consistently participated in the annual meetings of the Baptist General Convention of Texas. The minutes of those proceedings record that Tichenor was present in the 1887, 1889, 1891, 1894, and 1895 meetings of the unified Baptist General Convention. Participation in these meetings was in addition to Tichenor’s attendance in the various meetings of the two main conventions prior to their unification. Carroll credited Tichenor as the one “who first discovered the ability” of Texas leaders such as his older brother, Waco pastor Benajah Harvey Carroll. The younger Carroll also added that Tichenor’s selection of B. H. Carroll to speak at the 1888 Convention on behalf of the HMB catapulted the Waco pastor to prominence in the Southern Baptist Convention. B. H. Carroll’s most recent biographer, historian Alan Lefever, suggests that this speech “was perhaps his most famous speech before the Convention.”¹⁷

Carroll’s address on behalf of the Board was a masterpiece of persuasiveness. While admitting that “the dangers which threaten the Home Board are not at present so imminent and formidable as in the past,” Carroll made a stirring appeal for the sustained support of the Home Mission Board and continued assistance to Texas. In the message he drew extensively upon historical allusions and imagery that linked the defense of the Home Mission Board with the defense of Southern territory during the Civil War. Rising to the height of his rhetoric, Carroll pleaded,

On what mountain, in what valley of the South has not the Texan died? The soil all around your Home Board at Atlanta is fertile with their blood.

Shiloh, Vicksburg, and Chickamauga preserve their memory. Their battle yells yet echo in the mountains of Tennessee and Kentucky.

Because therefore Texas made common cause with you in your hour of peril, make it with us now in our time of need.¹⁸

The language utilized by Carroll in the address was incredibly similar to the type of language that Tichenor and others used in attempting to rally Southern Baptists to the defense of Southern Baptist territory. Battlefield imagery that reminded the listeners of the Civil War was common throughout the address. Images invoking the late war and the association with the defense of Southern Baptist territory resonated strongly with his audience. According to Lefever, the power of his plea persuaded those who had previously opposed support of the Home Mission Board to swing to its favor and others who opposed the Board to be silenced. Likewise, Carroll’s support of the HMB and the SBC remained substantial. The significance of Tichenor’s role in recognizing the abilities of the Texas Baptist giant and in enlisting his support and participation in this way should also not be underestimated.¹⁹

Similarly, Tichenor displayed a great deal of pride in the accomplishments of the Home Mission Board in Texas. In his 1892 report to the Southern Baptist Convention, he boasted,

Texas owes more to the Home Mission Board than to any other agency for her strong Baptist hosts whose churches dot her imperial domain, and the aid which she yet receives from this Board is, in the language of the President of her State Board, “the very backbone of her mission work.” According to the reports there have been built upon this field in the last ten years by the Board 640 houses of worship, but this is the report for seven years instead of ten. Add for the three, the report of which is impossible to obtain, the average of the seven years reported, and you will have 910, say 900.²⁰

These statistics verify that Tichenor’s time investment and the Board’s financial commitment had borne fruit. While faulty record-keeping makes it difficult to ascertain accurately the number of Southern Baptist churches in Texas in 1882 when Tichenor assumed leadership of the HMB, obviously Texas was quickly becoming a Southern Baptist bastion. The 1894 report of the Committee on Home Missions echoed these sentiments. The committee spoke these glowing words of the

potential of Texas and the work of the Board there:

In Texas there are three frontiers of magnificent distances, and splendid possibilities, East Texas, South Texas and West Texas, including the contiguous territory of New Mexico. . . . These vast regions are being settled. . . . He who has an ear to hear can already hear the tramp of the oncoming millions. The wisdom of this generation bids us preoccupy the ground. Our missionary should not wait to ride on the cowcatcher of the first engine of the new railroad, but should already be on the ground ready to welcome the engineer and his passengers, preaching the gospel to them, and baptizing them as fast as they believe.

Our Home Board has done all in its power for Texas. . . . See what a great work has been accomplished! Nearly every strong church in the state was started as a mission of this Board, and its helping hand has cheered and sustained the toiling pastor and his feeble flock in nearly every neighborhood in this broad domain. And yet the work has hardly begun. To plant missions and churches now in our frontiers, to do foundation work is to inaugurate forces in a formative period. . . .

Home Missions are the foundation of Foreign Missions.²¹

The fruit harvested by the combined efforts of the HMB and Texas Baptists was substantial. By 1894 J. M. Carroll recorded that Baptist churches numbered over 2500 and counted more than 150,000 members.²² Obviously, the Convention had captured Tichenor's vision for Texas and the Southwest, and Texas Baptists had capitalized on the financial support and verbal affirmation they received to begin to build a Texas Baptist denominational empire.

Texas Baptists also capitalized upon an improved economy. Between 1875 and 1890, Richardson, Anderson, and Wallace record that Texas experienced an "extraordinary increase in wealth and general prosperity" adding that "in many significant areas Texas wealth increased from twofold to threefold. . . ." While the effective development of the state's oil resources did not come until the twentieth century, the state's economy benefited from population

growth, railroad expansion, new technology, an increasing transition from subsistence level farming and cattle-raising to commercial agriculture and ranching, and the development of lumber and mining industries. For example, between 1870 and 1890, Texas' population almost tripled from 818,579 to 2,235,527. The corresponding growth in the economy in the aforementioned areas but the various economic developments greatly strengthened the state's finances.²³ Undoubtedly, Texas Baptists' resources multiplied as the state's economy developed. These developments also fit well into concepts consistent with the "New South" ideals of which Tichenor was a proponent.

Tichenor's personal and vigorous approach in Texas is indicative of several things. It demonstrates the type of leadership that he provided throughout the Convention. No longer was the Home Mission Board a distant overseer requesting money and deciding arbitrarily who would and would not get support. The corresponding secretary was now someone who took personal interest in each state and whom Baptists felt was one of their own. It illustrates the perceptive powers of insight that Tichenor had. He recognized the gifts of individuals like B. H. Carroll and he cultivated those gifts through offering significant opportunities. He predicted the potential strength of Southern Baptists in the Southwest and worked to plant for the harvest of that potential. Tichenor's efforts also consolidated Southern Baptist control of the growing American Southwest and solidified "Southern" values and relationships in this frontier region.

As beneficial as Tichenor's work was for the HMB, his work and the Board's financial support for Texas Baptists made an immediate impression in Texas. As stated above, by the early 1890s Texas Baptists had recognized significant gains in virtually every measurable category. Of the spirit manifested among Texas Baptists in 1890, B. F. Riley recorded in 1907:

The Baptists of Texas shared in the spirit of adventure and enterprise and kept pace with the advancing step of the commercial

column in all the spheres of denominational activity. . . . From a single representative in a colonial camp on the river, little more than sixty years before, they had come to be a mighty host. . . .

A mighty force, the Baptists of Texas enter[ed] on the work of the years of a declining century.²⁴

Thus, Tichenor's efforts were successful and Texas became a model for what he sought to do in other states in the years of his administration of the Home Mission Board. His methods, along with the improving economic situation of the South, dramatically revived the fortunes of the struggling Home Mission Board. He had helped Texas Baptists to identify themselves further as Southerners and helped Baptists outside Texas to see them in the same light. In his final report as corresponding secretary, Tichenor could proudly report that the receipts of the Board had more than tripled in his tenure and a new fund established for supporting church construction that raised an additional annual sum just shy of the annual receipts of the Board. He could also proudly proclaim that the number of missionaries of the HMB had increased almost twenty-fold. Perhaps most important for many Southern Baptists, the various state mission agencies and boards were no longer entertaining notions of unification with Northern Baptists and the Southern territory had been reclaimed for Southern Baptists. Texas was a centerpiece of this renaissance, and Tichenor had played a significant role in the recognition of the potential of Texas. No doubt it was because of these reasons that J. M. Carroll wrote of Tichenor, "No man out of Texas who has ever lived holds a warmer place in the memory of Texas Baptists than . . . Dr. I. T. Tichenor."²⁵

Michael E. Williams, Sr.
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Dallas, Texas

NOTES

¹Jacob Smilser Dill, *Isaac Taylor Tichenor: The Home Mission Board Statesman* (Nashville: Sunday School Board, 20).

²Michael E. Williams, Sr., "I. T. Tichenor as an Alabama Baptist: The Formative Years of a Southern Baptist Giant," *The Alabama Baptist Historian* 30 (July 1994): 2, 14-32; Michael E. Williams, Sr., "I. T. Tichenor: 'The Fighting Chaplain,'" *The Alabama Baptist Historian* 33 (January 1997): 1, 30-36; and Paul Gaston, *The New South Creed: A Study in Southern Myth-Making* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970), 18. See also Dan R. Frost, *Thinking Confederates: Academia and the Idea of Progress in the New South* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2000). Since the completion of this paper, the author's, *Isaac Taylor Tichenor: The Creation of the Baptist New South* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2005) has been released.

³*Annual, SBC, 1882*, 29 and Home Mission Board minutes, May 22, 1882, 113 and May 23, 1882, 114 on microfilm at the Southern Baptist Library and Archives, Nashville, Tennessee.

⁴*Annual, SBC, 1882*, 29; J. B. Lawrence, *History of the Home Mission Board* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1958), 64; *Annual, SBC, 1880*, 72; and W. W. Barnes, *The Southern Baptist Convention: 1845-1953* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1953), 77-78.

⁵Home Mission Board Minutes, July 3, 1882, 118; *Annual, SBC, 1883*, I, II; B. F. Riley, *History of the Baptists of Texas* (Dallas: By the author, 1907), 270; and Home Mission Board Minutes, August 1 1882, 121-22.

⁶H. Leon McBeth, *Texas Baptists: A Sesquicentennial History* (Dallas: Baptistway Press, 1998), 13, 14, 15, 19, 20, 22, 28, 42. Hereafter cited as McBeth, *Texas Baptists*.

⁷Rupert N. Richardson, Adrian Anderson, and Ernest Wallace, *Texas: The Lone Star State* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1993, sixth ed.), 240, 254.

⁸McBeth, *Texas Baptists*, 64.

⁹J. M. Carroll, *A History of Texas Baptists* (Dallas: Baptist Standard Publishing Co., 1923), 664-65.

¹⁰McBeth, *Texas Baptists*, 70.

¹¹*Annual, SBC, 1892*, 10 and McBeth, *Texas Baptists*, 65, 66, 67. See McBeth, *Texas Baptists*, 67ff for a description of these various bodies.

¹²HMB minutes, July 3, 1882, 119; *Proceedings of the Baptist General Association of Texas, 1882*, 18, hereafter cited as *Proceedings, BGA of Texas*; HMB minutes, August 1, 1882, 121. Riley, *History of Texas Baptists*, 270, reports that Tichenor at the July 1882 BGA meeting at Sulphur Springs, Texas, where these overtures were made. However,

the author was able to find no record of Tichenor's attendance at a BGA meeting until the following year at Cleburne, Texas. See *Proceedings, BGA of Texas*, 6, 13.

¹³*Minutes of the Baptist State Convention of Texas, 1882*, 5, 22, 42, hereafter cited as *Minutes, BSC of Texas*; and HMB minutes, November 6, 1882, 127-28, September 25, 1882, 124, January 12, 1885, 194, and December 4, 1893, 312.

¹⁴HMB minutes, September 25, 1882, 125; McBeth, *Texas Baptists*, 84-87; Carroll, 576-77, 665; and Robert A. Baker, *The Blossoming Desert: A Concise History of Texas Baptists* (Waco: Word Books Publisher, 1970), 143.

¹⁵*Minutes, BSC of Texas, 1883*, 6; *Minutes, BSC of Texas, 1884*, 5; *Proceedings, BGA of Texas, 1883*, 7, 9, 13; and *Proceedings, BGA of Texas, 1885*, 8.

¹⁶HMB minutes, May 25, 1885, 201-02 and *Minutes, BSC of Texas, 1885*, 22.

¹⁷Carroll, 664-665; *Annual of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, 1887*, 8; *Annual, BGCT, 1889*, 9; *Annual, BGCT, 1891*, 9; *Annual, BGCT, 1894*, 33; and *Annual, BGCT, 1895*, 11. For more information on the significance of B. H. Carroll, see Alan J. Lefever, *Fighting the Good Fight: The Life and Work of Benajah Harvey Carroll* (Austin: Eakin Press, 1994).

¹⁸Lefever, 59, 60 and B. H. Carroll, "Speech to the SBC in Richmond," May 12, 1888, Appendix III in Lefever, 145.

¹⁹Lefever, 60.

²⁰*Annual, SBC, 1892*, XII.

²¹*Annual, SBC, 1894*, 42-43.

²²McBeth, *Texas Baptists*, 95.

²³Richardson, Anderson, and Wallace, 256-57, 263-65 and Roy R. Bradley, et al, eds. *The New Handbook of Texas 2*: (Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1996), s. v. "Census and Census Records."

²⁴Riley, 334-335.

²⁵*Annual, SBC, 1899*, LXXV and Carroll, 665.

TEXAS BAPTIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Minutes

2002 Annual Meeting

November 11, 2002

The Texas Baptist Historical Society met Monday, November 11, at 10:00 a. m. at the First Baptist Church, Waco, Texas, with approximately forty people present.

Alan Lefever, Dallas, presented the annual membership and financial report. For 2002 the Society had a membership of 147 with 2 non-member journal subscribers. During the year, the Society received income from journal sales and dues totaling \$8,130.00 with expenditures of \$1,549.00. On November 11, the checking account balance was \$26,587.32.

The Society members endorsed the recommendations of the Nominating Committee and elected the following officers for 2002-2003: Carol Holcomb, Belton, president; Van Christian, Comanche, vice-president; and Alan Lefever, Fort Worth, secretary-treasurer. James Pace, Fort Worth, was elected to serve a two-year term on the Executive Committee.

Lefever presented the following budget for 2002-2003:

INCOME

Historical Council, BGCT	\$6,000.00
Membership Dues & Journal Sales	3,000.00
Luncheon	300.00
Total Income	\$9,300.00

EXPENSES

Journal Printing	\$4,500.00
Journal Postage	400.00
Journal Labor	2,000.00
Journal Supplies	300.00
Newsletter Printing	100.00
Newsletter Postage	300.00
Awards	600.00
Speaker's Honoraria	600.00
Miscellaneous Supplies	50.00
Luncheon	300.00
Total Expenses	\$9,150.00

Rosalie Beck, Waco, presented the 2002 Church History Writing awards to the following:

Thomas Potter for *Faithful in East Texas* [Kildare, Texas]

First Baptist Church, Austin, for *Into His Marvelous Light* accepted by Vi Marie Taylor on behalf of the church

Terry Lee Rioux for *G. W. Carroll*

Royce Measures, Pasadena, presented an overview of the life of Abner Smith and early Primitive Baptists in Texas. The meeting adjourned at 11:30am.

Respectfully submitted,
Alan J. Lefever
Secretary-Treasurer
Texas Baptist Historical Society