BAPTIST HISTORY & HERITAGE

Baptist History & Heritage

A FESTSCHRIFT IN HONOR OF BILL J. LEONARD

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Volume LVI | Fall 2021 | Number 3

A Festschrift in Honor of Bill J. Leonard

EDITORIALS

JOHN FINLEY 3
Executive Director's Note

ROB NASH 6
A Tribute to Bill J. Leonard: American Baptist Historian, Colleague, Mentor, and Friend

ARTICLES

ROB NASH 9
An Interview with Bill J. Leonard

ROB NASH 22
An Interview with Darryl Aaron

DARRYL AARON 28
Making an Entrance: A Sermon Based on Matthew 21:1-12

DOUG WEAVER 34
Baptists, the Holy Spirit, and the Threat of Women Preachers

GLENN JONAS 51
"He Lives Yet in Baylor University": John S. Tanner and Early Theological Education in Texas

ANDREW GARDNER 65
Religion, Sport, and Congregation: Dean Smith as Basketball Coach and Baptist Churchman

ABIGAIL C. PRATT AND ANDREW L. PRATT 81
Missouri Baptists: Freedom of Conscience and Unity

JOHN FINLEY 103
A Selected Bibliography of Works by Bill J. Leonard

BOOK REVIEWS

MELODY MAXWELL 117
Charlotte Atlee White Rowe: The Story of America's First Appointed Woman Missionary

SANDY DWAYNE MARTIN 118
Black Fundamentalists: Conservative Christianity and Racial Identity in the Segregation Era

CHRISTOPHER C. MOORE 120
A Holy Baptism of Fire and Blood: The Bible and the American Civil War

John Finley

Executive Director's Note

The Baptist History & Heritage Society continues in its mission of "helping Baptists discover, conserve, assess, and share their history." The past two years have been challenging ones for the Society because of the COVID-19 health emergency, as they have been for individuals, families, churches, non-profit groups, and countless institutions around the world.

Although the executive director's travel on behalf of the Society was abruptly halted in March of 2020, and our annual conference was canceled that year, we were able to sponsor our first totally virtual gathering in May of 2021. With the full cooperation of our staff and board of directors, the professional expertise of our digital and media consultants, and the generosity of a number of donors, an outstanding conference was held examining the impact of *Baptists and Public Advocacy*.

In spite of the limitations imposed by the health emergency, the work of the Society nonetheless continued throughout 2021. This included consultations with individuals and families regarding the preservation of personal papers and records relating to Baptist history, expanding the reach of the Society through new social media, and cultivating donors and new members in support of our work.

With the help of Lee Heidel, owner, design and development lead at Heideldesign, we launched a totally new Society website and then later adapted it for conference use as a virtual platform. We were able to release a new video by Mitch Randall, chief executive officer of Good Faith Media, on "Ministering Among Christian Nationalists," which he

presented as an address to the Fellowship of Baptist Historians during the annual conference. In addition, the Society took first steps in revising a series of printed pamphlets and converting them to digital files that may be downloaded as free resources from our website.

In the past year we have shared news about the Society on a regular basis through bi-weekly Constant Contact emails, and we have produced three outstanding issues of our peer-reviewed journal that are mailed to a wide readership throughout the United States and Canada and to more than a dozen other countries. I would thank Journal Editor Joe Coker, Book Review Editor David Holcomb, Copyeditor Jackie Riley, Graphic Designer Amy Cook, and our many contributing writers—some of whom were directly affected by COVID-19 themselves—for their exceptional, even heroic efforts under some of the most difficult circumstances imaginable over the past two years.

The Society is especially grateful for the support of our faithful members and partnering congregations, organizations, and educational institutions. Recent gifts include those received from Baylor University, Dallas Baptist University, the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship Global, CBF of North Carolina, and the Eula Mae and John Baugh Foundation. The Society also received one year ago a magnificent gift of $106,339 from the Dr. Harry P. Clause Marital Trust that has sustained the Society during difficult times. Dr. Clause was a cardiothoracic surgeon, a faithful member of the Bedford (Va.) Baptist Church, and a lover of Baptist history. The generosity of all these friends truly makes our work possible.

The Society's board of directors announced earlier this year that our next annual conference will be held May 26-27, 2022 on the campus of Samford University in Birmingham, Alabama. The theme of the conference will be *Baptists and Science*, examining the research and writing of Baptists who are scientists, the teaching of science in Baptist colleges and universities, controversies related to the teaching of evolution, debates among Baptists regarding the scientific protocols of the Spanish Flu Epidemic of 1918 and COVID-19, official Baptist statements on science, and other issues. We extended a call for paper proposals on October 1, with proposals being accepted until February 1, 2022. Make plans now to join us in Birmingham next May.

This issue of the *Baptist History & Heritage Journal* is a Festschrift honoring Dr. Bill Leonard, longtime church history professor and Baptist

historian at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Samford University, and Wake Forest University School of Divinity, whose life and career have influenced generations of college and seminary students and hundreds of congregations alike. Our thanks go to Dr. Rob Nash who served as the editor for this Festschrift, and to the several writers—all of them former students of Bill Leonard—who contributed articles for this issue.

Thank you for the great privilege of leading the Society during these challenging days and for the opportunity to join with all of you in this important work of "helping Baptists discover, conserve, assess, and share their history."

"Baptists and Science"

Baptist History & Heritage Society Annual Conference

Samford University
Birmingham, Alabama

May 26-27, 2022

Proposals accepted from BHHS members and non-members for individual papers, themed paper sessions, panel discussions, and creative sessions:

Due February 1, 2022

SAMPLE PROPOSAL TOPICS

- Research and writing of Baptists who are scientists
- The teaching of science in Baptist colleges and universities
- Controversies related to the teaching of evolution
- Debates among Baptists regarding scientific protocols of the 1918 Spanish flu epidemic and the COVID-19 pandemic
- Baptist statements and resolutions on science

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A Tribute to Bill J. Leonard:

American and Baptist Religious Historian, Colleague, Mentor, and Friend

Festschrift Editor

Rob Nash

Rob Nash is associate dean for the Doctor of Ministry program and is the Arnall-Mann-Thomasson Professor of Missions and World Religions at McAfee School of Theology.

I enrolled at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky in the Fall semester of 1982. To say that I was "wet behind the years" when it came to theological education would be a serious understatement.

I came bearing a recently-minted Master of Arts degree in American history, but with no real idea about my own vocational direction, except that it included "The Ministry," as my fundamentalist grandfather called it. Enter Bill J. Leonard.

He walked into Room 195 in Norton Hall, a huge room with enough seats for a legion of budding ministers, plopped down his lecture notebook, walked around to the front of the lecture table, folded his arms in front of him, and opened his mouth.

I was absolutely mesmerized, falling in love with the power of his words and his ability to make the history of the church come alive. As he delivered his lecture, an angel whispered in my ear, "This is what God wants you to do." Over the next eight years, Bill Leonard taught me most everything I know about how to resurrect the histories of religions in general and of the Christian faith in particular in ways that transform the church. He also modeled for me and for many others a deeply personal commitment to racial reconciliation that moved through friendships to solidarity and action.

On that first day, he encouraged us new seminarians to "make a nuisance of yourself" with a faculty member at the seminary so that, long after we had departed, someone would remain there who would remember us. The words, *Ecce homo*, came to my mind as he spoke: "Behold, the man." I determined at that moment that Bill J. Leonard would know my name when I graduated from the school.

Bill Leonard would indeed come to know my name, along with the names of many other students over his teaching career. He would direct my dissertation at Southern Seminary about the influence of American mythology on Southern Baptist foreign missions along with the dissertations of about ten other persons, including C. Douglas Weaver of Baylor University and Andrew Pratt of William Jewell University respectively, both of whom have contributed to this Festschrift. He would influence the teaching lives and careers of Glenn Jonas of Campbell University and John Finley of the Baptist History & Heritage Society, whose work is included here too. And, finally, a younger generation of scholars including Andrew Gardner, Faculty Associate of American Religious History at the Hartford Institute for Religion Research, and Abigail Pratt, Family Services Coordinator at Midwest Transplant Network, would study with Bill at the Wake Forest University Divinity School and go on to careers in theological education and ministry respectively. They too have contributed to this Festschrift.

Neither Bill nor I knew on that class day in 1982 that the fundamentalist takeover of the Southern Baptist Convention would dictate that he would not remain at the seminary. He departed Southern in 1992 after seventeen years on the faculty. The major portion of his career after Southern would be spent as chair of the religion department at Samford University and in creating a new and progressive divinity school at Wake Forest University. In hindsight, Bill's departure from Southern Seminary may have been the best thing that ever happened to his career! In a short period of time, he became a household name among American religious historians in general and Baptist historians in particular. He would write more than 25 books on Baptist History & Heritage, American religious history, and Christianity in Appalachia, in addition to numerous articles for *The Christian Century*, *Pulpit Digest*, and *Church History*, and deliver dozens of lectures at colleges and universities, including Baylor

University, Mercer University, the University of North Carolina, Wake Forest University and Harvard University Divinity School where he gave the prestigious William James Lecture on Religious Experience in 2015.

For his students, though, Bill Leonard will always be one of the greatest lecturers of religious history that Baptists have ever produced. He weaves history and life together in ways that mesmerize, transcend, empower, and motivate. History becomes a lived reality through the power of his speech. Whether recounting the life of Martin Luther King Jr. or of Teresa of Avila or of Francis of Assisi, Bill transforms his listeners by joining together their religious experience and ours in ways that demand reflection and then action.

When Bill and his family moved from Louisville, Kentucky to Birmingham, Alabama, they joined a predominantly Black congregation, the Sixth Avenue Baptist Church. In an interview with Bill, I explore with him the reasons behind that decision along with the previous life experiences that brought him to that point. I also speak with him about the ways in which his experience in the Black church has influenced his own faith and theological perspective on church, faith, Jesus, and grace. In a second interview, I speak with Darryl Aaron, the Leonards' pastor for several years at First Baptist Church, Highland Avenue, in Winston-Salem, also a mostly Black congregation.

The oral histories offered by both Bill and Darryl reveal the hope and possibility that emerge when we move beyond racial tensions to embrace otherness and difference in the church. I asked Rev. Dr. Aaron to share a sermon he has preached that brings Bill Leonard to his mind when it comes to Bill's role as a White member of a primarily Black congregation. Aaron chose to share one titled "Making an Entrance," based on Matthew 12:1-12, because it represents for him that pew upon which Bill, Candyce, and Stephanie have sat at First Baptist Church, Highland Avenue, for twenty-five years, waiting for the invitation to service and ministry in that historic church.

An Interview with Bill J. Leonard

(October 28, 2021)

Bill J. Leonard

Bill J. Leonard is Founding Dean and Professor of Divinity Emeritus at Wake Forest University School of Divinity.

Rob Nash: I once heard you speak at a CBF General Assembly in Fort Worth, Texas, where you said something like, "It was just a few blocks from here that I took my first drink—from a 'Blacks only' water fountain." That powerful word made me want to know more about your formative years in Texas and how your perspective on race and class was shaped by your family of origin and other friends and family and by the culture of the time. Can you tell us about your early years?

Bill Leonard: My dad worked at Everybody's department store in Fort Worth. The Leonard brothers (no relation) owned this discount store, and I used to go down there and hang out. My first paid job was stocking Dickies blue jeans and work clothes for a Dickies salesman who was a buddy of my dad's. My dad and I would ride the bus downtown together, and I would just hang out. As you might expect, the store had a good many Black employees and customers. That was back in the days of White and colored restrooms and when Black people still sat at the back of the buses. I was probably 10 or 11 years old at the time. When no one was looking, I went to one of the "Black Only" water fountains and climbed the little steps used by the kids. I eventually took a sip and realized "their water" tasted the same as "our water." That was a moment for me.

RN: How did the Civil Rights Movement shape your formative years? Did you have relationships with persons of color? I'm assuming you attended segregated schools—is that the case? Were you in school at the point of the integration of schools in Texas? Who were your mentors who helped you to "see" differently?

BL: I didn't know many Black people growing up because I never went to an integrated school, even though that had supposedly changed after *Brown vs. Board of Education*. There were Latinx students in my junior high school and high school, but no African Americans. My English teacher at Pascal High School in Fort Worth was Sue Coffman. She was quite young and close to our age and is now living in Dallas.

During my senior year when the nation was on the cusp of the Civil Rights Movement, she had us debate integration vs. segregation, and she assigned me the segregationist side. My best friend in high school, Emory Ricketson, was assigned the integrationist side. Hearing myself talk about supporting segregation in the way I did was also transformative for me. It shamed me. I had read about Martin Luther King Jr., but my world was so segregated that I didn't have to address the actuality of segregation until that cathartic moment.

While I was in college and then in seminary in Fort Worth, I worked at a Baptist church in Mesquite, Texas, where I served as the minister of music and youth. In the summer of 1968, I worked in the newly formed War on Poverty program in Dallas County to supplement my income at the church. The church had fallen on rough times. It was on the edge of a split over the pastor, and they had to cut back my salary. So I got a summer job in a White area in Dallas County and worked with kids and ran an outdoor recreation program.

It recently dawned on me that I may have been among the first White persons to work for Black people in Dallas County, Texas, because all my supervisors in that War on Poverty program were African American. Many were schoolteachers at African-American schools in Dallas. They were older than I and, in 1969, they asked me to serve as a summer program coordinator in three different regions of Dallas County, two of which were predominantly African American and one of which was very White. These were located in South Dallas, Lancaster, and Wilmer. The latter two towns were Dallas suburbs.

The program in Lancaster was based in an African-American community center, and a Mrs. Wilson was the local coordinator. She was a very kind, very direct Pentecostal woman. At our initial meeting, she said to me: "You know, it would have been better if one of our young people had been hired to do this. But since you're here, we will make the best of it." That was a very teachable moment that has stayed with me throughout my adult life, a moment in which I realized my privilege as a White person. She identified that privilege for me.

Each of the three programs received funds from the War on Poverty program and used the money in different ways. One program bought lawn mowers for young people, along with other kinds of tools, and trained them to make some extra money. Another program used its funds to build a basketball court. I was assigned the difficult challenge of finding a contractor who would build the court, but we got it done.

When the program was over, the women directors found out I was getting married and they gave us wedding presents, including a wind-up alarm clock from the Lancaster program that we used for years. The day I left Lancaster, Ms. Wilson looked me directly in the eyes and said, "You know, you really did well with our young people and we could see that you loved them." I think that is one of the most wonderful things anybody has ever said to me. The entire experience of working for Black people who were my supervisors was a very teachable moment in my life.

RN: Talk about your experience of church in your childhood and teenage years and early years as a youth minister. Where did you attend church as a child and teenager? How did that experience shape you in matters of race? Did your pastors preach about racial justice at all?

BL: Both the church we joined when we moved to Fort Worth and the church where I was the youth minister and was ordained no longer exist. They were essentially swallowed up by other churches. The church we joined when we moved to Fort Worth was the B.H. Carroll Memorial Baptist Church, named in honor of the first president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. It was only about a mile and a half from the seminary and had been founded in the 1940s as a church plant in that working-class neighborhood. I can't remember why we joined there

except that we came from Decatur, Texas, a small county-seat town north of Fort Worth, and it felt more comfortable for our family. That church nurtured me well through Sunday School and Training Union classes, revival meetings and youth retreats. It was a formative influence during my teenage years. Like many SBC churches, it also experienced a major split over Fundamentalism, anticipating divisions that overtook the entire denomination.

RN: Was your family like other White families in that day who hired help from the Black community to clean the house, cook, and care for the children?

BL: No, we were too poor for that. My mother worked at the Texas highway department, and my dad worked in the men's department at Everybody's department store. I don't know how much they made, but it wasn't very much. We lived in a two-bedroom tract house on the south side of Fort Worth and within walking distance of the Baptist seminary. Lots of seminary student families rented houses on our street. Again, segregation kept schools, neighborhoods, and churches separated.

RN: Talk about enrolling at Texas Wesleyan University. How did you make that decision, and what was the influence and impact of TWU on your life?

BL: I went to Texas Wesleyan because we didn't have the money for me to go anywhere else. Other schools were really expensive in terms of our economic level. I had saved money for college from a job in the parts department at Leonard's department store. We sold nails, screws, bolts, and filters for appliances carried by the store.

My plan was to go to Texas Wesleyan for two years and then transfer to Baylor University, the Baptist educational mecca where a lot of my friends went. But at the beginning of my sophomore year my parents separated and divorced. My dad had run up huge amounts of debt and hadn't told my mother about it, and she had to start paying off the debts. So there was no money for Baylor.

No one had ever talked to me about scholarships, so I had no idea that money was available to go to college. It wasn't until my third and fourth years at TWU that my major professor advised me to apply for

scholarships. That's when I received funding through a pre-minister scholarship. Somehow, I managed to avoid carrying any debts after graduation, largely because of my various jobs and the school's low tuition.

My mentor at TWU was the chairperson of the religion department, a woman named Alice Wonders, who at that time was perhaps the only female chair of a religion department in the whole country. None of my fundamentalist pastors at B.H. Carroll Baptist had told me I wasn't supposed to study the Bible with a woman, because they never imagined that would be possible. She was my first academic Bible teacher, and her classes changed my understanding of scripture, church, and Gospel.

I'm now part of an online group of folks who studied with, and were mentored by, Dr. Wonders. Frank Johnson, the group's founder, calls us "Stars of Wonders" and we Zoom together the first Friday of every month to talk about our lives since we left college, the ways in which Dr. Wonders impacted us, and the future of the university itself. I often say that the Methodists at Texas Wesleyan made a liberal out of me—it's their fault!

Dr. Wonders and a sociology professor named Jesse Lord were important mentors to me on issues of race and civil rights. I wound up doing a minor in social studies and took several classes with him. Lord raised our consciousness about race in the midst of the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. He shaped my knowledge, and, I hope, my understanding of that movement, profoundly, preparing me in many ways for the work in the War on Poverty. Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated a few weeks before I graduated from college, an event that impacted many in my generation.

RN: You then moved to Southwestern Seminary. Was that your only option in the sense that you really didn't think outside the SBC box in terms of a seminary to attend?

BL: With encouragement and influence from Alice Wonders, Texas Wesleyan invited Edwin Prince Booth, professor of historical theology at Boston University School of Theology, to give the Wilson Lectures during my junior year. He was so good that the school invited him to return the next year. The lectures centered in historical biography of persons such as Washington and Lincoln, Francis of Assisi, and John Wesley. I was undone by his ability to make history come alive in this

biographical series, and that's when Boston University got on my educational radar. Alice Wonders kept telling me during my senior year that I needed to look at Boston University and, of course, Jesse Lord kept telling me that Martin Luther King had done his doctorate at BU. All of that came together, and I applied for the M.Div. program at Boston University School of Theology.

But the U.S. was in the midst of the Vietnam War and when I filed my request for a religious deferment for divinity school, my Fort Worth draft board responded that it was no longer approving religious deferment for university divinity schools. That was followed by a letter from the Selective Service office calling me to take a physical for the draft. In those days if you passed the physical, you were considered 1A and drafted. I passed. In the meantime, I had also applied to Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. I was accepted, and this met the criteria required by the draft board. So, the primary reason I went to Southwestern was that the option of Boston University was shut down.

At Southwestern I encountered another set of mentors such as theologian William Hendricks (who would later become my faculty colleague at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville) and church historians Leon McBeth, Robert Baker, and William Estep. Estep, with whom I took numerous classes, became my primary mentor and professor. Estep, too, was an important advocate of racial justice and civil rights.

While at Southwestern I was privileged to hear a chapel presentation by Dr. J. Herbert Gilmore, the pastor of the First Baptist Church of Birmingham, Alabama, who had been terminated by that church for encouraging racial integration. It was a powerful presentation that captured the tensions present in White Baptist churches throughout the South. It seems strange now that Southwestern Seminary would have him, but the ethos of the times was such that the old Southern Baptist Convention had not been so galvanized by fundamentalism. So Southwestern had professors who were conservative but who were open on many of these cultural issues, and they brought Gilmore.

RN: You explained that your interest in Boston University for your Ph.D. work came as a result of knowing that MLK Jr. had written

his dissertation there. Talk about your transition from the context of Fort Worth to Boston in terms of the whole matter of racial justice.

BL: Really quite profound. I served as a graduate fellow for two professors who had taught Martin Luther King Jr. and I had occasion to hear presentations by Walter Mueller, the dean. Dr. King frequently referenced Mueller's impact on his life and thought. At BU I was in classes with more African-American students than at any previous time in my academic experience. One of those students, Jerome Delpino, began his Ph.D. program the same year I did and was in many of my doctoral seminars. We became good friends. He is now a bishop in the United Methodist Church.

The early 1970s were a time when there was much social unrest in America in general and Boston in particular. In September, 1971, I had to take a required German exam in the theological library. I had barely picked up my pen when a bomb threat led to the evacuation of the library. I did manage to pass the exam, but I remember standing on the quad by the chapel watching the protesters face off against police forces and their dogs. Much of that upheaval related to justice issues in general and civil rights protests in particular.

RN: You then went on to The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. Southern then and now might be described as a Lost Cause institution, meaning that it carried in its DNA the defense of the White southern way of life. When you went there, did you think of it as a progressive place to teach?

BL: Yes and no. Dr. Alan Russell, who taught in the religion department at Boston University, was a Baptist and a second reader on my dissertation. I was his grader for the undergraduate religion courses he taught. Russell had been hired at Southern Seminary in 1958 when the crisis occurred between the administration and thirteen faculty. He warned me to be careful about going to Southern because of the fact that I would have to sign the Abstract of Principles. He also mentioned that shortly after his arrival there he was invited to a dinner welcoming new faculty and held at the home of President Duke McCall. On entering the dining room, he realized they were to be served by a group of Black men, dressed in white jackets with towels on their forearms. He said he

looked around that room that night and thought, "This is straight out of *Gone with the Wind*." Thus, he cautioned me about the racial divide that he felt at Southern.

The seminary had been integrated for several years, and my first classes included a group of African Americans who became and remain good friends. These included Revs. Ronald Bobo, Ronald Brown, Wilbert Goatley, and Mack King Carter. I was their professor, and they were my teachers about African-American Baptists.

Ronald Bobo was the associate pastor of a church in West Louisville, and we talked often about the tensions in the city over race and poverty. He organized a demonstration at Louisville Gas and Electric, urging the company to stop cutting off electricity to citizens who could not pay their bills, especially during the winter. The event occurred on an absolutely frigid day in January, and Bobo insisted that I participate. It was the first public demonstration in which I ever participated. One of my faculty colleagues saw film of the demonstration on a local television station and told me, "I saw you and Bobo and the other communists at that demonstration."

Ron Bobo won the Francisco Award for Preaching and, in his sermon, he told this story about driving through the St. Matthews area of Louisville and being pulled over by the police for driving through town. Bobo said in chapel that "the only way they didn't take us in was because I told them that we were students at 'the White man's seminary.'" A guy down front who was a policeman and a student got up after Bobo said that and walked out of the chapel and shook the dust off of his feet at the door. And suddenly the implicit racism in the student body became evident.

When they graduated, several of the African-American students invited me to celebrate with them for lunch at a great restaurant in downtown Louisville. It was an occasion I shall never forget.

One of the failures of my time there was that I did not press the issue of slavery and its connection with Southern's history. This was brought to my attention when Southern, under the Mohler regime, released a 72-page report on racism at Southern Seminary. Obviously, some of those buildings have the names of slaveholders on them.

In the early 1960s, ethics professor Henlee Barnette led a group of young faculty radicals to march in demonstrations with Martin Luther

King Jr. and had been part of an effort to invite MLK to speak in chapel in 1961. The backlash was so explosive that the seminary administration chose to repudiate the invitation. President McCall said they lost at least $250,000—which would have been the equivalent of several million dollars. I remember joining with other faculty colleagues who told our classes, "It was money well spent." So, you had the dynamic of a brand of radical younger professors who saw the need to do that and the traditionalists who were concerned about the financial ramifications. All that to say that the experience at Southern Seminary was a very mixed one, with some courageous folks trying to initiate change over against very traditionalist forces. I will confess that, when I got there, I was too quiet about it when I did not encourage a thorough investigation of the slaveholding roots of the institution.

RN: It seems to me that no White persons—at least in Southern Baptist life—were thinking that way at the time. It was almost as if we didn't think we bore responsibility for slavery, even though we now know better.

BL: Yes, we did try to make some changes, but we barely acknowledged the full spectrum of the impact of slavery on Black persons. Now we realize that while we cannot repent *for* those actions, we can repent *of* them.

RN: Let me move to your years in Birmingham, Alabama at Samford University and later in Winston-Salem, North Carolina and your decision to join two predominantly Black churches in those cities, namely the Sixth Avenue Baptist Church and First Baptist Church, Highland Avenue. How did that happen?

BL: Candyce, Stephanie, and I were really quite wounded from the Baptist battles we'd experienced at Southern Seminary. We'd been in them from 1979 to 1992 when we left Southern. We'd struggled against fundamentalists and with the whole "moderate effort" to elect presidents of the SBC, and it had been all-consuming. We were just worn out as a family.

On arriving at Samford, I was invited to become a part of a minister's discussion group, founded in Birmingham in the 1920s. There were two African-American pastors in the group at the time. One was

a UCC pastor; the other was John Thomas Porter, who was pastor at Sixth Avenue Baptist Church. The church began on Sixth Avenue in downtown Birmingham. Three of the funerals for the four little girls killed in the bombing at Sixteenth Street Baptist Church were conducted at Sixth Avenue. Before we got to the city, the church had moved to Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard. MLK preached at Porter's installation as pastor. Many of the members had owned the Black funeral homes, insurance companies, and other businesses and were longtime leaders of the African-American community in Birmingham. Dr. Porter and I got to be friends, shared a meal or two, and, in the Fall of 1992, he invited me to be the speaker for the Wednesday night kick-off for their fall church programs.

That's when we started visiting Sixth Avenue Church. After several visits, one Sunday in the parking lot a longtime member of the church approached us and said: "Well, Reverend, you've been visiting for a while. Don't you think it's about time you walked?" (She meant "walk the aisle and join the church"). And it was like the Holy Spirit speaking! We made a family decision that, if we went to a White moderate Baptist church, we would just stay in the Baptist wars; we wanted a different kind of experience. So, the next Sunday we walked—all three of us!

Candyce had just received her doctorate from Indiana University, so when Dr. Porter stood to introduce us to the congregation, he said, "We are glad to have Dr. Leonard and Mrs. Leonard and Stephanie join today." And Candyce immediately shot back, "Dr. Leonard." The women in the church broke into spontaneous applause, and Dr. Porter apologized!

Our family attended the 8:45 a.m. service and, on one Sunday, when the church moved to its praise time, Stephanie looked over at Candyce and me and said: "Mom, Dad, time to raise our hands!" That Sunday, we knew then that we were home. Dr. Porter invited me to preach and teach at the church on a number of occasions. If memory serves, those were the first times I had ever preached in an African-American church. It was just transformative for me.

In March of 1996, the year I was hired as dean of the divinity school at Wake Forest, my dad died and we went to Texas for his funeral. We returned to Birmingham to discover that John Roderick Porter, Dr. and Mrs. Porter's son, the conservatory-trained organist at Sixth Avenue Church, had died while we were away. We attended the wake for John

Roderick the day before his funeral, and as we were leaving, Dr. Porter said to me: "Dr., please bring your robe to tomorrow's funeral and sit on the platform with the other ministers." So, I didn't have a speaking part in the funeral, but I was the only White minister on the platform. During the four years that we attended Sixth Avenue Baptist, Dr. Porter and I bonded deeply and he became a great mentor to me on many levels. When the International Conference of Baptist Studies was held on the Wake Forest campus, we invited Porter to be one of the speakers for the occasion.

Our daughter Stephanie graduated from Mountain Brook High School in Birmingham when she was 21, since persons with special needs are allowed to attend public school to that age. By that time, we knew that Candyce and I would be teaching at Wake Forest University. One of our last services at Sixth Avenue Church was a "Graduation Sunday," and the graduates were to wear their regalia and sit together in worship.

Following the service, a luncheon was held in their honor and every graduate was presented a check for $200. Each graduate shared about their next steps, and most were headed for college. When Stephanie stood, she said: "My name is Stephanie Leonard, and I am going with my parents to Wake Forest University!" So, she was welcomed and blessed on our way out the door. That was just one of many gifts, tangible and intangible, that we received as members of the Sixth Avenue Baptist Church.

RN: Would you say that the Black church saved church for you?

BL: Yes, yes, absolutely. And it taught me other ways of being Baptist. I went primarily as a listener and learner. I want to be clear that Black people are not required to teach White people anything. But, because they were church, they mentored me in a way I had not been mentored before.

When we came to Winston-Salem, we didn't even consider anything other than a Black Baptist church, so we started visiting First Baptist Church, Highland Avenue, which is the oldest African-American church in town, founded in 1879. People were so responsive to us and welcoming to us that we joined there. We joined during Easter season in 1997 and

have been members now for almost 25 years. We've just lost our third pastor since we've been members, and I'm one of six ordained minister church members who are filling the pulpit until we get an interim pastor.

The church has been a major nurturing and social context for Stephanie. The women at the church spoil her terribly with cards and jewelry and books. The church has taught me how to be a Christian and a Baptist in a different way, particularly the link between religious experience, dissent, and working for justice.

RN: It strikes me that part of the challenge for traditional White churches is that we prefer hosting people in our church rather than guesting in churches composed primarily of people who are different from us. You chose to be a guest in the Black church. Is there a sense in which you still feel like you are guesting at First Baptist Church, or have you been there long enough to feel like you are a host along with other members of the church?

BL: I may want to change the wording a bit from guesting. We're not guesting any more, but it seems to me that it is important for me to know the boundaries. I've tried not to push myself into church polity or governance but to do what I've been asked to do that could be helpful. We were the only White family in our church until about two years ago, though there are a number of interracial families who were already present when we became members. When our previous pastor came, he was very community-engaged around justice and racial issues that helped encourage at least two other White families to join the church.

I think that, as a White family, we have to tread lightly, but also to be able to speak and share when invited to do so. The welcome remains, and has been considerable, allowing us to develop important relationships. Stephanie is a major factor in that she is both one who is welcomed and who welcomes others. When Rev. Darryl Aaron was our pastor, he set up a committee of "welcomers" to greet people on arrival at worship. I'm told that when the proposal was brought to the deacons, one of them said, "Be sure and put Stephanie Leonard on the committee; she welcomes everybody." She wears her welcoming name tag each Sunday she attends.

RN: What you have done here is something I haven't heard much about, a White family joining a predominantly Black church—or at least I don't hear about it much in our White, moderate, Baptist world. What would you say to predominantly White congregations of our tradition that might be helpful to us as we struggle with issues of race and whiteness?

BL: The most important thing I've learned is the powerful link between spiritual experience and working for justice. These two things are not a dichotomy; they are inseparable from the gospel. The call and response, and the emotional and spiritual experience of the Black worship in particular, has really come home to me in ways that are beyond intellectualizing or dogmatizing. I have learned what it means to be Christian and to encounter the transcendent as present in the imminent.

As the White church, we cannot ignore issues of justice and reconciliation and compassion. The Black church does not get everything right. We are in a difficult time in our church now. But I had never before been part of a church where people were registered to vote at church until I became a member of a Black church. Conscience and Spirit are inseparable. Responding to issues that stretch the conscience and connect spirituality and dissent are lessons I have learned in the Black church.

I don't know that I'm a good person to give lessons to the White church. I don't know enough to do that. And I certainly don't know what it means to be Black. But I can be a kind of witness to the fact that this can happen. Surely we can find a way to be together in the life of a congregation. I can say with considerable conviction that our family has been nurtured spiritually and communally, ever seeking to discover the balance between religious experience and dissent for the sake of Jesus and justice. For that I am very grateful.

An Interview with Darryl Aaron

(November 2, 2021)

Darryl Aaron

Darryl Aaron is pastor of Providence Baptist Church in Greensboro, North Carolina.

Rob Nash: Let me begin with a simple question. What has your friendship with Bill Leonard meant for you?

Darryl Aaron: Bill is someone who has grasped the true nature of the Gospel. I have this question for all White people who seem to have somehow learned to interpret the text from the bottom up rather than the top down. They do hear Jesus when he says, "Suffer not the little ones from coming to me." In other words, the Gospel is for the little ones. I often wonder, "Where did that come from?"

I don't know if Bill Leonard was ever called "White trash," but I do know that he has some sensitivity to suffering that many White people do not have. The Gospel cannot be bought or sold when it comes to those who are on the bottom. It is rather like when you go fishing: you don't see it or hear it, but you feel the tug. And I believe that something tugs at Bill Leonard's inner parts that causes him to want to sit where he sits and to view the Gospel as he understands it.

RN: Why do you think Bill, Candyce, and Stephanie joined First Baptist Church, Highland Avenue?

DA: We always ask that question, "Why did they join FBC?" I am convinced they needed a cover. They had been in a storm. Southern Baptists had taken them through a dark valley, and we were a safe place to heal. He needed a safe place. In the Black church we do a lot of things that sometimes don't happen in the White church. In the Black church

you can cry and no one is going to wonder why you cry. Sometimes it is because you are going through hell. They had been through hell. They could bring Stephanie to church with her challenges, and it was never acknowledged or poked at or made fun of at First Baptist. She belonged to us. When we would have our people-to-people moments that other traditions call the Passing of the Peace, Stephanie would be all over the place. We would have to go grab her to get her back to her seat; I would be back at the pulpit, and she would still be shaking hands. No one had a problem with it. Stephanie is my sister.

Stephanie and I have ridden together many days in the backseat with Bill driving in the front seat. She would say, "No, no, Reverend, you cannot sit in the front seat. You sit in the back with me." We would sometimes drive all the way to Georgia that way.

Bill has spoken many times about feeling uncomfortable in the Black church. He understood he was not Black. We all know that Bill is not Black on Sunday morning. He never tried to pretend he was something other than White. Even during baptisms and the singing of spirituals, he recognized they were resistance songs to White supremacy. Bill was an image that could be seen in our church when we were singing those songs. And he would say that there were times he felt uncomfortable singing those songs. But there were shifts along the journey in which we gave him all the rights and privileges to sing those songs of sorrow and of freedom.

Even with preaching, I have run many sermons by Bill on his deck and I remember Bill saying one time, "Man, you all really believe this stuff." It was like he was saying, "After all that you have been through, this Jesus guy, he is not an object you are worshipping. Jesus is a way of being for you." It was like what Howard Thurman said, "Jesus had a religious life. And this shaped him to live the way he lived." I think belonging to a Black church opened new dimensions of who Jesus could be in Bill's life.

Bill would read scripture the way we witness Grandma in our own tradition read scripture. When Grandma would read you a nighttime story she would read the Bible to you as if it was a story. Bill did that! I went to Israel with Bill once, and I watched him read the Bible in locations like Galilee with the feeding of the five thousand. He would pull the text out and knew how to make the book talk.

He read the Bible with an interpretation without interpreting it. He could do it because of how many times he'd read it and familiarized himself with that text, but also because he had become what the Word says. It read him as much if not more than he read it.

RN: What role did Bill take in worship at First Baptist Church?

DA: Bill is certainly not the guy to stand up on Sunday morning shouting! He has wrestled with the "antics" of the Black church. We've been very honest with each other about things we like and don't like, and he has been careful not to share too much with me when he might think I am performing some of them myself.

He knew to be careful not to share too much of his discomfort if he had any. But nevertheless, he is also simply a lover of preaching. I used to say to him all the time, "You've heard a thousand bad sermons, and you get up and put on your clothes and go back to church Sunday after Sunday." He would know my sermon was a bad sermon, and yet he would have the audacity to tell me that my sermon was a good sermon. And I would tell him to quit blowing smoke up my rear end.

He recognized that White people have often abused religion, so Bill is always fighting that demon, always looking for a word from the Lord that will assist him in fighting that demon. I have seen him cry tears of joy and tears of sadness. I knew I could go to Bill and chew on thick pieces of meat and knew he could assist me in swallowing. He took my own experience, especially in raising a Black son, and he took that information and didn't bury it. He shared it with the world, not out of self-aggrandizement but I think he felt like he had been called to do so because I had shared it out of the depth of my soul.

I shared at the point of Trayvon Martin's death that, living in the neighborhood with Bill, I was afraid for my son. I told my son to always make sure he had a receipt when he left a store. And I remember once when my son chased my daughter out of a store and I told him he couldn't do that. I told him that I knew he went through the backyards of his friends' houses, but he couldn't go through the backyards of our neighborhood where Bill also lived. And I remember Bill crying as I shared that with him. Bill was one of the first I told I was leaving First Baptist. I knew he would do what he thought was best, even though we knew we would miss each other.

The biblical text speaks of how we must share one another's burdens. I think Bill was assisted in doing that by the Black church. That is not to say that Whites don't come to church with their burdens. But you are always aware that when you sit on the pew in a Black church, you are sitting with persons who are weighed down. At church we release our burdens, and so you hear those guttural cries.

One of the great gifts Bill has given to First Baptist Church is his openness to admit without reservation that grace is what has saved him. As a result, he has tried to participate in the grace that has saved him. He is constantly trying to share grace with all whom he meets. I think his favorite text is the one that says, "If you want to be someone, sit in the back of the room until someone calls you forward." That text just leaks out of him. I think he sees it as the gospel for the little ones. You can't interpret the text unless you are looking at it from the bottom up. He knows that to be true, and yet so much of his learning did not teach him that. He's been trying to figure out how to teach those who taught him something about that understanding of the gospel.

He mastered a gospel that is a gospel of invitation. I think the Black church assisted him with that. In the Black church, you can be flunking as a preacher and the church says, "Lord, help him, Jesus." Bill has taken that on and embodied that kind of rhetoric.

RN: Was Bill's gift in the Black church the gift of waiting to be invited forward?

DA: Listen... Bill is the best historian Baptists have ever produced, and yet Bill has never proclaimed that. He always sat in the back row. Bill's favorite time in church is during communion. He had a line that we always let him say, and he would say it with great grace and gravitas when he officiated: "Have we omitted anyone in error?" Every time he led in communion he would utter that line, and it was almost as if, because he had been included in the Black church, he could not exclude anyone else. He made sure that all had been served. That came from a deep place in him.

My daughter and I were talking the other day and she raised the question, "Are we too passive as Black people? We are always saying excuse me and thank you." Her grandfather could disarm with his politeness. But there is a dignity to that humility that cannot be tarnished.

There is no question that, as a White person, you are not going to come into a Black church every Sunday without people wondering why you are there. Bill never let anyone tarnish the dignity that was in him and why he had joined the Black church when someone asked that question.

Bill was always convinced that, in the words of Jesus, they knew not what they did. And they moved on, and he kept sitting in the church. And as a result, he has more mothers and fathers in that church than anyone else. And he has pastored that church more than once when pastors left. He has pastored the church, not officially, but spiritually.

RN: You mentioned leading communion and the interim periods as those moments when Bill was invited forward. Were there any other moments?

DA: It is so organic that it is hard to put your finger on. We had many politicians in the church, and they would call Bill to ask how to get the attention of folks across the street in the White neighborhood. I know I called him forward when we discovered my daughter had an auto-immune disease. I knew he had experienced those moments when he couldn't help his child and he had to live with a new normal. When elections came up, Bill had a different kind of presence. We would ask him to assist with crafting statements here and there in which we took particular stances. When I was going to speak publicly and needed to hear from the Holy Ghost because I was going to speak to the rights of those who have different lifestyles or love differently than I do, Bill would help me know how to do that and he would say, "You said it exactly like you needed to say it. You let the gospel speak instead of feeling like you had to speak."

I see that as an embodiment of sitting in the back. He didn't tell me how to do it. He told people that "When Aaron starts talking about his grandmama, then you know he is about to lower the hammer and give you some castor oil." Those were the moments when I was going to ask God's people to love without limits. I know that's risky, but that is the gospel.

RN: Do you have the sense that this is a very unusual thing for someone like Bill, a White preacher and historian, to join with the Black church? Is it as unique as it appears?

DA: Oh, God, yes. Bill can be in a pulpit 52 times a year. Every major CBF flagship church would have him in every Sunday. I think it is unique because he brings preaching and history to the table with all of the other stuff—growing up where he grew up, his and Candyce's experience with Stephanie, and his journey from the SBC to where he is now. This makes it unique for him. It is like being born again.

You have to shed some stuff and be born again multiple times. Bill's willingness to be born again has allowed this experience to be more influential and impactful for him. He carries every Sunday morning's experience in the Black church with him. He is always floating on the love and how he has been embraced and shaped and formed by the Black church. When his own mother died, for example, he reported that "I know what missionaries are supposed to do (referring to FBC). They came and brought cards and read scriptures and prayed." He believed he might not have gotten that in the White church.

You see, when he walks into the White church, he is Bill Leonard, the historian. When he walks into First Baptist, he is a sinner saved by grace. He gets to feel it and love it. He doesn't have to be Bill Leonard the dean and preacher. He gets to be just a regular old pew member, and I think that is where he discovered, "Oh, my God, this is a balm in Gilead." When he went into the White church he carried a mark, a scarlet letter. But the Black church was safe for him, and he was home.

He's had four pastors since he has been at First Baptist Church, and he is still there. And he will tell you that I am his favorite pastor, not because of my preaching, but because my story matched his story. We have always felt something tugging in our life, and we always knew it was a tug that pulled both of us closer to God.

Making an Entrance:

Matthew 21:1-12

Darryl Aaron

Darryl Aaron is pastor of Providence Baptist Church in Greensboro, North Carolina.

There is something to be said about making a grand entrance. We all have heard it many times growing up: "When you walk into a room you need to own that room." Some people would argue that an entrance is more important than an exit.

Take Maya Angelou, for example, who speaks on behalf of a people who have been forced across history to go around back and enter through the back door:

> Does my sassiness upset you?
> Why are you beset with gloom?
> 'Cause I walk like I've got oil wells
> Pumping in my living room.
> Just like moons and like suns,
> With the certainty of tides,
> Just like hopes springing high,
> Still I'll rise.[1]

There is something to be said about the way one enters a place. The coronavirus certainly made a grand entrance. It entered our rooms and moved in on us like a thief in the night. One morning we woke up and there it was, pilfering our dreams, suffocating our hopes, and silencing our aspirations. The fact is that, into all our lives, things enter unannounced,

unpredicted, often unprecedented. They change the whole structure of our living. They come alike to the poor and the rich, the good and the bad, the guilty and the innocent, often leaving terror and desolation in their wake.

And yet, there is a divine presence that also enters our lives, that makes holy alterations. The divine presence lifts what is sagging and gives life to dead places. Bad and awful realities are not the only realities that enter into our lives. The God of the universe also enters our lives and transforms them for the better.

The Bible depicts a God who enters the spaces and places of people's lives: "He stands at the door and knocks." "When he entered, the blind men came up to him and he healed them." "As was his custom he entered the synagogue." Jesus was constantly entering spaces and places.

Sometimes he finds us hanging out on a limb like Zacchaeus, and he invites himself to our house to rearrange and reorient our lives. Sometimes he enters our internal and external storms and speaks words of peace, and all becomes calm. Sometimes the Lord simply enters a location that others deem off limits, and yet God goes there to claim people like the Samaritan woman at the well who needs a different kind of water to eradicate a thirst.

This much cannot be denied; God does not simply hang out in heaven; rather, the Lord of heaven and earth is entering the spaces and places of our lives.

This morning we celebrate one of Jesus' grand entrances. This is Palm Sunday when Jesus rides into Jerusalem on a donkey. Yes, Jesus is headed to the cross. And on the way, Jesus has what the editors of the Good Book call a "Triumphal Entry." This is a parade with no permit, where persons are shouting and waving palms.

We must not downplay this entrance of our Lord. This celebration is not about kids waving palms on this Sunday. In this parade are persons who are shouting, "Hosanna," which means "we beseech you to save us." The crowd expects Jesus to be the warrior king on a white muscular horse, self-assured and prepared to decimate the armies of their Roman authorities. The powerful leader must compete for the underdogs by moderating force with greater force. And yet, what we have entering

Jerusalem is a humble God who rides in on a beast of burden, a jackass, a donkey even as that donkey carries the divine One possessed of great power. Yes, there is something to be said about how one enters a place.

Jesus did tell us that when we are invited to a party, we shouldn't enter the place with arrogance by sitting at the head table; rather, we should take a seat on the back row and be asked to come up front (Luke 14:8). This morning Jesus has entered our ranks with humility and meekness. The Bible tells us that when Jesus entered, the whole city was in turmoil. Does that not describe our condition? We live in the midst of turmoil.

This past week I read an article in the Greensboro *News and Record* that described our city as being in lockdown. I must say the choice of the word "lockdown" is interesting, because the poor, black and brown, are well acquainted with jails and lockdown. Oh, but this morning everyone is in jail at home, locked up with people whom we love, locked up with kids who have stepped on our last nerve, locked up with persons who don't eat certain things, locked up with people who can't go anywhere. Yes, our city, nation, and world are in turmoil. But the good news this morning is this: God is in the city. The Messiah has come with power and humility. This Messiah enters our space and offers a vision that no caesar or president can offer.

The modus operandi of Jesus the king is humility and docility. Strength, power, wealth, and influence are the usual qualifiers for those who are kings and presidents. A self-serving agenda is the norm for our day, but that is not the case with the One who rides in from heaven. When the city is in turmoil and our Lord enters the space, the rich do not get richer and the poor do not get poorer. When the city is in turmoil and Jesus enters the domain, the well-off don't get healthy while the underclass gets overlooked. When the Lord rides in, humility and meekness are on display. When the Lord comes into our lives, he brings gifts from above.

Now let me be clear: we cannot see humility and meekness as being weak. No, these are heavenly qualities. As a matter of fact, the lack of humility and meekness is what has made America weak at the knees, scrambling to catch up with what has happened since the coronavirus entered our cherished land of the free. The absence of humility and meekness is what has feebleminded persons hanging out on beaches

refusing to obey orders, and petty preachers holding worship services, and weedy businesspersons making money off this catastrophe. You and I must remain woke during this time because the arrogant and the self-important persons are active and agile this morning. Foreign policies and laws and rules that determine the have got(s) and the have not(s) are being made at this moment by baneful and boastful people. What we need more than ever is humility and meekness to enter our ranks, to walk up and down the streets of our nation to straighten out the crooked places in our lives and bring down the mountains of disparity and exalt the valleys of equity. Yes, I must repeat: How one enters a space and place is important.

Jesus has entered the city. But if you keep reading the gospel of Matthew, this Messiah and King, this One of humility and heavenly power does not simply ride up and down the street; rather, he enters our intimate spaces and places. The Bible says that Jesus takes his journey right up to the sanctuary of our lives. Matthew records that Jesus entered the temple and drove out all who were selling and buying in the temple, and he turned the tables of the moneychangers and the seats of those who sold pigeons.

Too often we have considered the nature of this move by Jesus as an indictment upon the church for using God's house for a marketplace, a commercial business, a capitalistic empire. Without a doubt, that is a worthy indictment. I believe, however, that there is a defining "spirit of the time," a *Zeitgeist*, as the Germans call it. Something is in the atmosphere, and the nature of this coronavirus pandemic requires another perspective on what is taking place in this biblical scene. This moment occurs during Jesus' last week.

Jesus is headed to the cross and will become the new temple and will rebuild it in three days. Jesus is driving out the spirit of the old age and is ushering in a new spirit. In this scene, Jesus takes a whip and drives out the beasts and sheep that were used for sacrifices. Animals were sacrifices used as offering for provisional atonement for sins. Therefore, when Jesus drives out the moneychangers and the animals from the temple, he is driving out a way of connecting to God. In other words, Jesus would now become the sacrificial lamb.

Matthew reports that Jesus "drove out those who sold and bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the moneychangers and

the seats of those who sold pigeons." This pandemic has overturned a great deal of what we have been counting on and what we have been placing our livelihood in—tables and seats of an old age. Post-pandemically we don't sit where we used to sit, and we don't count on what we used to count on. There is a mood, a spirit of this moment in history that requires us to do things differently, despite all that we hear about life returning to normal in a few weeks and months. No! We cannot go back to the way we were living. There is no way of return. We cannot go back to not knowing our neighbors. We cannot go back to providing healthcare according to one's salary. We cannot go back to partisan politics. We cannot go back to an inertia-practicing church. A lot has been driven out of our lives by this pandemic. And at the same time, space has been made for other life-giving practices.

When I was growing up, my siblings and I knew what would take place around this time of the year. Springtime meant spring cleaning. Spring cleaning meant all that you did not need was going to be thrown away. Even if it was your favorite item, it was going to the dump. My daddy would enter our rooms—our temples--and like a foreman, he would drive out bad attitudes, drive out old ways of behaving, and drive out selfish ideas. From Friday afternoon through Sunday evening, for three days the rooms were painted, the closets reorganized, and our spirits reoriented. My daddy was not playing. Everyone had a new lease on life in my house after spring cleaning.

I want you to know that Jesus is not playing this morning. God has come in this season to help us to stop counting on anything but power from heaven. God has come to help us to cease the frantic and frizzled way of living. Yes, God says God's house shall be a house of prayer. What are you saying, preacher? I am saying your life and my life ought to be houses of prayer. The sanctuary of your soul should be filled with peace, hope, faith, and joy. Your life should not be filled with anxiety and restlessness. Augustine is correct: We cannot find rest until we find rest in God. That great mystic Richard Foster says, "You and I must learn to endure spiritual weather of all kinds with serenity of the soul."

That cannot happen until our temples, our secret closets, our watchposts, become houses of prayer. God knows your address. God has come down your street, knocked on your door, and has entered your house this morning. And because God is present, you don't have to sit

where you used to sit and you don't have to count on what you used to count on. God has made his power available to you. You don't have to eat what you used to eat, and you don't have to drink what you used to drink, and you don't have to carry what you used to carry. Do I have any witnesses?

Zacchaeus says: "Yes, because when God came to my house, I gave half of my money to the poor. And I once was lost but now I'm found."

Do I have any witnesses?

Nicodemus says: "Yes, because I had many midnight questions. But after my encounter with Jesus, I learned that I could be born again. And it was at the cross where I first saw the light and the burdens of my heart rolled away. And it was there I received my sight, and now I am happy all the days."

Do I have any witnesses?

The Psalmist says: "Yes, because when God came into my heart I discovered how to come into his presence with thanksgiving; and make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise! Because the LORD is a great God, and a great King above all gods" (Ps. 95:2-3).

Thanks be to God, Jesus has entered your life and my life and things will no longer be the same. There is something to be said about how one enters a space and place. When God enters a space and place, God owns the place. God does not play when God enters our temples. Instead, God overturns tables and seats. God enters with humility and meekness. God calms fears, warms cold places, and brings life to dead situations. God's house shall be a house of prayer.

May we all embrace the Spirit of this moment that has entered our ranks to establish a better relationship with God. Amen.

Note

1 Maya Angelou, "Still I Rise," https://news.sunybroome.edu/buzz/the-monday-poem-still-i-rise-by-maya-angelou/ (accessed November 8, 2021).

Baptists, the Holy Spirit, and the Threat of Women Preachers

Douglas Weaver

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In 1984, Bill Leonard published the sermon, "Forgiving Eve."[1] I was working on a dissertation under his mentorship at the time, and I still remember what I said to him when I read the sermon. "Dr. Leonard, the sermon should be in the canon."

Such hyperbole was sincere, especially since the conservative resurgence agenda among Southern Baptists had just passed a resolution that declared women were ineligible for pastoral roles because Eve sinned first in the Edenic fall: "(Paul) excludes women from pastoral leadership to preserve a submission God requires because the man was first in creation and the woman was first in the Edenic fall."

In the sermon, Bill prophetically affirmed women's voices for pastoral ministry and dismantled the absurdity that women, and not us all, are responsible for sin. The one thing he got wrong was that women's ordination would not even be an issue in 50 or 100 years. It's now 35 years later, and women called to pastoral ministry are still considered an ominous threat to the patriarchs and their submissive supporters.

This essay happily acknowledges but does not primarily deal with the minority in Baptist history who prophetically spoke out for women's roles in the church, or the pioneers who filled those roles. It does, however, examine the enduring persistence of the opposition to

women's voices and how Baptist leaders argued their case in a way that sounds so familiar today—contending they were simply following biblical commands—against the threat of women's voices. It explores in particular how different perspectives of the Holy Spirit and women's roles intersected. To be Spirit-filled could mean freedom for women to preach, or it could mean female submission and silence to stop the threat.

The dominant attitude of Southern Baptists in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was that women should not preach or teach in front of men. In 1923, Kentucky Baptist pastor J.W. Porter compiled a series of essays, several of them written in earlier decades, titled *Feminism: Woman and Her Work*. The publisher, Baptist Book Concern, was closely tied to the *Western Recorder*, the fundamentalist paper of Kentucky Baptists, and had Landmarkist sympathies.

In an introduction, Victor Masters, the editor of the *Western Recorder*, offered reasons for why such a book was needed. He noted that in 1918, the Southern Baptist Convention took the disgraceful step of allowing women to be voting messengers at its annual meetings. The results were the inevitable heretical expectations that women should serve on convention boards and be permitted to speak to mixed assemblies of men and women. Masters lamented that most Baptists did not understand when they allowed women to be convention messengers that their actions would eventually produce sympathetic attitudes toward affirming women in the ministry of preaching. He was appalled that Baptists were imitating several other evangelical groups that had already affirmed women preachers. After detailing reasons for the delayed attention to the women's issue, such as not wanting to distract from the 75 Million Campaign, Southern Baptists' first major fund-raising effort that debuted in 1919, Masters offered a final commendation of the book attacking feminism: the misuse of the Scriptures had to be confronted and corrected because the "Feminist Movement" revealed a "spiritual kinship" with modernism and its tendency to "flout the Bible."[2]

The most prominent Baptist author in the collection was John Broadus of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. The Broadus chapter was a reprint of an 1880 pamphlet he wrote, *Should Women Speak in Mixed Assemblies?* Broadus' hermeneutic reflected that of his Confederate-supporting rationale for the Bible's support of enslaving Black people. He urged Baptists to follow the so-called simple, literal

meaning of Scripture, and warned that any positive assessment of taking historical context into account when reading biblical writers such as the Apostle Paul was the first step in the slippery slope toward infidelity and denying biblical authority. Other authors in the collection followed Broadus' hermeneutic.

Broadus' answer (and that of the other authors) to the question he posed—written when Southern Baptists were beginning to affirm women's mission societies—was a resounding "No!" For Broadus, the plain, non-contextual, literal reading meant that women should dress modestly with head coverings. They were permitted to speak to other women in public, since the Bible had not forbidden women from those settings, but strict boundaries had to be maintained on the crowds as not even male reporters or editors could be present. Such would function as a "wedge" and crack open that airtight seal of biblical restrictions on women.[3]

Throughout the essays, Broadus and other Baptist patriarchs highlighted several themes they believed supported the restriction on women preaching. One specific biblical passage they confronted was Acts 2, which speaks of the gift of the Holy Spirit to the church, with the promise that in the End Time women would prophesy.

John Broadus and Kentucky pastor W.H. Felix took the standard fundamentalist approach that relied on cessationism to handle seemingly difficult passages where women spoke in public settings in the Bible. Cessationism was the belief that the Holy Spirit's work in miracles and extraordinary gifts such as speaking in tongues and prophecy were only operative in the days of the New Testament. These gifts had ceased to function after the church was established, and therefore were no longer relevant. Any claim to contemporary prophecy by women, cessationists argued, could not be attributed to the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit. Even if the book of Acts had women prophetesses, the gift had ceased for the church.[4] Cessationism became one of the major ways that Baptist patriarchs silenced the threat of women's voices in the church, especially in the pulpit.

T.T. Eaton, a Louisville pastor and editor of the *Western Recorder* prior to Victor Masters, interpreted Acts 2 in light of his view of biblical inspiration. According to Eaton, the Holy Spirit and the perfection of God had to inspire a plenary verbal—every word of the text—view of

the Bible. Since the Holy Spirit, according to the letters of Paul, forbade women from preaching, passages such as Acts 2 where women spoke in public must by necessity mean the audiences were all female. In particular, the presence of prophetesses in Acts and the specificity of women prophesying in Acts 2 must mean that these women were led by the Holy Spirit only to teach other women. The Spirit-inspired Scripture could not contradict itself.[5]

Throughout their condemnation of feminism, Baptist patriarchs used the story of Adam and Eve to justify their belief that women were not to speak in mixed assemblies. John Broadus and T.T. Eaton declared that women must not preach because Adam was the first in creation and Eve the first in transgression.[6] J.B. Hawthorne, pastor of First Baptist Church, Atlanta, elaborated that the restrictions on women were derived from the divine order of creation. According to Hawthorne, because woman "was made out of the man and for the man," submission is her natural, created function. Sin sealed the need for submission. Furthermore, preached Hawthorne, Adam was not deceived; Eve was, and submission was the penalty of her sin.[7] The woman having been deceived by the devil, Hawthorne contended, meant she could never be trusted "with the office of Christian ministry." With exasperation, he complained that women, just as Eve had, still wanted to "know too much." "I have always had some sympathy with Adam," Hawthorne chided, "because I know the bewitching power of female eloquence."[8] He intended his testimony to have added weight when he revealed that he had previously sympathized with women's desire to preach in mixed assemblies. Hawthorne ceased having internal conflict over his views when he finally submitted to "conscience, Paul, and the Holy Ghost."[9]

W.H. Felix concurred with Hawthorne's assessment of women's submission due to the order of creation. "The first feature of womanhood is subordination," Felix wrote.[10] Like Hawthorne, Felix said that Eve's transgression consigned women to submission and denied them any authority over men in spiritual matters. In a declaration that echoed a hierarchical Trinity, Felix declared, "The order runs thus: Christ is subordinate to God, man subordinate to Christ, and woman subordinate to man."[11]

Sally Neill Roach, a member of T.T. Eaton's congregation, found support for Eve's legacy of submission in the nature of men and women.

Roach echoed others such as John Broadus who viewed woman as the weaker sex—less rational and prone to emotion—because of Eve's transgression. Consequently Paul, under divine inspiration from the Holy Spirit, commanded women to be silent in churches and submissive in their home life (1 Cor. 14:34). Roach also mirrored the ideas of J.B. Hawthorne when she acknowledged that men, the stronger sex, had sinned in the Garden of Eden when Adam listened to Eve and ate the forbidden fruit, but he had only disobeyed and had not been deceived. Disobedience did not disqualify men for spiritual leadership, but being deceived had eliminated women from the trust of speaking in mixed church assemblies.[12]

All of the authors agreed that, as part of the order of creation, men and women were designed differently. Men and women were equally created in God's image, the patriarchs admitted, but they have different functions in life and in the church. W.P. Harvey, Eaton's business manager at the *Western Recorder*, had no issue with the "right of women to compete with men in areas that fit their nature," but preaching was outside the proper sphere of women's work. All the apostles were male, Harvey and others noted.[13] Some patriarchs like Felix added their disgust with the push for women's roles in public life outside the church. Support for women's right to vote in public elections reflected this attempt at usurpation, Felix wrote, and even participation in the good cause of temperance distracted from women's true purpose. According to Felix, women should honor the sphere of life they were created for, which was the home. Home is her workshop, he asserted: "if she never does anything else but 'nurse babies' she can do no grander work."[14]

J.W. Porter argued that men were superior in intellect and biology, but women were morally superior (though not able to have spiritual leadership!).[15] Like W.H. Felix, Porter emphasized that home and motherhood were the divine responsibilities set aside for women, and women who desired to preach were not called by the Holy Spirit but were usually impious, not married, or had failed at marriage.[16] Because feminism was rebellion against God's design for women, Porter exhorted that the best friend a woman could have is the "man who will tell her the truth about herself."[17]

Sally Neill Roach was the only author willing to applaud the teaching gifts of women. While she denied women the right of speaking in

churches—she too noted that Jesus had no female apostles—Roach was willing to listen to women outside the life of the church, and she admitted that women might be better public speakers than men. Yet Roach declared that the Bible was her final authority and the Holy Spirit did not allow women to preach or teach.[18]

Women who left their divinely ordained sphere, the argument went, were guilty of usurping spiritual authority given only to men. According to Boyce Taylor, the Old Testament judge, Deborah, was the only biblical exception of a woman exercising authority over men. In this case, however, men had failed the duties of their sphere and had become "sissies."[19] According to W.H. Felix, attempting to usurp authority over men by teaching in mixed assemblies was bald "infidelity, a rejection of the Word of God." The Holy Spirit, who spoke through Paul to exclude women from preaching, was "insulted with a flippancy unbecoming those who profess to be Christians."[20] For Baptist patriarchs, the question of women speaking in mixed assemblies was settled by the final authority of Scripture. As T.T. Eaton summed up, "if the Bible is not clear on this subject, it is not clear on anything."[21]

While the Baptist patriarchs constantly asserted their fidelity to biblical authority, they still resorted to denunciations of what today they would call gender confusion. For example, J.W. Porter, in his description of "the menace of feminism," derided the lack of femininity among women who were interested in speaking to mixed assembles as "the menace of the unwomanly woman."[22] "From the manish woman and womanish man, good Lord deliver us," Porter cried. Seemingly foreshadowing later conservative concerns about gender roles, Porter lamented: "Should the current craze continue, the grammarian will have to use three genders for the human race—he, she, and it."[23] W.P. Harvey also utilized gendered derogatory imagery to address whether women could preach. He asked, who is "the new man who flatters and toadies to the new woman?... He is of the namby-pamby brand. To call him a man would be a reproach to true manhood, and to label him effeminate would be an unpardonable reflection on the feminine gender."[24]

J.W. Porter's assessment encapsulated the Southern Baptist patriarchal view of the threat of women's preaching and the role of the Holy Spirit at the outset of the twentieth century. He asserted that liberalism and the acceptance of evolution led to destructive biblical criticism that

denied the Holy Spirit inspired the Bible. Such disregard for the Bible had led the Northern Baptists to elect a woman as their president. He worried that Southern Baptists were headed toward the use of women preachers and when they did so, a convention split would ensue. Porter concluded, "feminism has made more infidels among women than any single agency."[25]

In contrast to the dominant opposition in Baptist identity toward women preaching, some Baptists tied its affirmation to a compelling experience of the Holy Spirit. These Baptists were participants in the Holiness Movement of the nineteenth century. The Methodist, Phoebe Palmer, is often called the mother of the Holiness Movement. She emphasized the baptism of the Holy Spirit as a post-conversion experience of instantaneous sanctification—a dominant theme in the movement—but she also wrote a book, *The Promise of the Father,* that emphasized the biblical support for women preachers based on the Pentecost experience found in Acts 2 where women would prophesy in the End Times.[26]

Among White Baptists, conservative Northern Baptist holiness advocate A.J. Gordon also cited Acts 2 as support for women preaching. The Boston pastor and missionary advocate believed he was living in the era of the "dispensation of the Spirit," and reliance on the book of Acts and other passages that emphasized the miraculous undergirded his views on women preaching.[27] Gordon's support for women preachers in Baptist life threatened or angered most Baptists. T.T. Eaton took a cessationist approach and lampooned Gordon's insistence that the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit allowed women to preach. Eaton noted that Gordon did not espouse women's ordination because of a married woman's role at home, but in horror, Eaton said Gordon's view opened the door for childless widows or single women to preach.[28]

Among Black Baptists, most pastors also opposed women who preached. Anthony Binga of Richmond, Virginia was typical when he noted that women could teach Sunday School to women or vote in church matters, but could not, according to the Apostle Paul, exercise spiritual authority over men. Women who wanted to preach would be "throwing off that modesty that should adorn her sex."[29]

Black Baptists involved in the Holiness Movement, for example, A.J. Gordon, also tied the affirmation of women preaching to a compelling post-conversion experience of the Holy Spirit.

Virginia Broughton, who worked alongside Nannie Helen Burroughs in the National Baptist Convention, was a disciple of Joanna Moore, the holiness-influenced Northern Baptist missionary who ministered to African Americans in the South. Perhaps Broughton's most classic line was to her husband when she began to preach as an itinerant evangelist, and he questioned her right to do so. After he asked, when is "this business going to stop," Broughton told her husband: "I don't know; I belong to God first and you are next, so you two must settle it." Her husband soon supported Virginia's Spirit-led ministry, which not only advocated for a post-conversion Holy Spirit baptism of sanctification, but also affirmed a ministry of healing.[30]

Another evidence of the Moore legacy were the ministries of two of her mentees, African Americans Charles Price Jones and Sister Mary Sweet. Jones was pastor of Mt. Helm Baptist Church in Jackson, Mississippi, and Sweet was an itinerant holiness evangelist. Jones' support for the experience of Spirit baptism led Jackson-area Baptists to exclude him from their ranks. After a church split, he became the founder of the Church of Christ, holiness denomination. During his years as a holiness-supporting Baptist, he had conflicts with his friend, Mary Sweet, which revealed opposing notions about the acceptable boundaries of Spirit-led women in leadership. Sweet's travels took her to a church in Hazelhurst, pastored by one of Jones' friends, W.S. Pleasant, who became so enamored with Sweet's ministry that he told Jones, "Sis. Sweet is fairly raising the dead." According to Pleasant, "people fell out rigid, their eyes rolled and they became utterly helpless as if they had cataleptic fits. They would lie that way many hours." In later Pentecostal or charismatic history, that experience is called "being slain in the Spirit."

Jones became unsettled at the news and went to see for himself. He witnessed people being slain in the Spirit and felt a strong compulsion to fall as well. Jones said that he resisted the devil and remained standing, but only through the help of the Holy Spirit. He decided that "the nervous and weaker minded people" were those who had the slain experience. Jones had not opposed Sweet speaking to mixed church audiences, but tied the excessive emotionalism in her services to not operating under the proper male authority and she was thus deceived. Jones' holiness, Spirit-led ministry gave women more opportunities than

cessationists allowed, but he echoed other Baptists who never escaped the backdrop of their patriarchy and tied their opposition to women's leadership at the foot of Eve.[31]

The Baptist reaction to Pentecostalism in the early twentieth century often based its opposition to the upstart Pentecostals' openness to Spirit-led women preachers. When popular fundamentalist John Roach Straton began supporting the ministry of child evangelist, Uldine Utley, Victor Masters of the *Western Recorder* was livid. He bemoaned that a known voice for fundamental truths had slapped the Apostle Paul in the face with the support of women preachers.[32] Baptists concerned about women preachers were especially drawn to Aimee Semple McPherson, the evangelist who attracted national attention for her success in bringing Hollywood stars and dramatic flair into the pulpit and into her Angelus Temple in Los Angeles in addition to reports of a sexual affair with a member of her church staff.[33]

Baptists often equated Pentecostalism with McPhersonism and tied their disgust of her ministry to her gender. Fundamentalists, including Ben Bogard and J. Frank Norris, had a field day sexualizing her ministry. The cessationist Bogard said that the reported miracles in McPherson's ministry were dangerous because Satan produced "counterfeits [which] looked almost like the original." Leave it to the devil, Bogard warned, to have "the most attractive preachers in the world."[34] Norris had a verbal nuclear war with former protégé John R. Rice over the validity of holiness and Pentecostal ideas, with the arguments centered on McPherson.

Norris was a holiness-fundamentalist early in his ministry who affirmed the Holy Spirit in holiness terms of empowerment for evangelistic preaching, and he adopted a biblical literalism that practiced healing with anointing oil (James 5). He also spoke highly of McPherson as a preacher: she had the voice of a Hollywood movie star, and young seminarians should do well to skip their church history and theology lessons and listen to her sermons. But when Norris came into conflict with Rice in the 1930s, his weapons were a high-powered cessationism that repudiated anointing with oil and accused Rice of affirming McPhersonism, meaning a range of Pentecostal ideas. In case anyone had doubts that McPhersonism was demonic, Norris offered a hyper-sexualized caricature of Sister Aimee. She was biblical in one way, he admitted, since she was like the Samaritan woman in the gospel of John—"both had

a legion of husbands."[35] In reviewing a ministry led by a woman preacher, Norris retorted that he was not surprised that services of anointing with oil, where the women were doing the "rubbing," led to men and women having a "well day immediately after the 'healing process.'"[36] After an exhibition of emotional ecstasy in a so-called Spirit-filled revival, Norris roared, these McPherson households had more babies. No doubt, the fear of Eve lived on as Baptists looked down upon emerging Pentecostalism.

Blaming women for discomfort with how some people have appropriated the presence of the Holy Spirit blossomed in broader circles in the Charismatic Movement of the 1960s and beyond.[37] The typical strong cessationist opposition to tying the Holy Spirit to an experience of a Holy Spirit baptism was prevalent, and the opposition was quite willing to tie it to women. In 1975, when Baptist Press called the Charismatic Movement the lead story in Baptist life that year, Baptists all over the South grappled with how to deal with charismatics in their churches and their associations. One of the livelier stories involved Baptists in the Dallas area.

In the early 1970s, the Dallas Baptist Association had its eye on Beverly Hills Baptist Church and its charismatic pastor, Howard Conaster. In January of 1975, the church left its facilities, which would hold about a thousand worshippers, for the "Bronco Bowl" amphitheater that seated 2,500. Crowds came. The association anxiously observed the church holding monthly Saturday evening youth rallies and worried that Conaster was turning youth from other churches into young charismatics.[38]

W.A. Criswell, the pastor of Baptists' largest congregation, First Baptist Church in Dallas, got involved when he preached at an annual associational evangelism conference. Criswell was known of course as the spiritual patriarch of the fundamentalist family of the latter part of the twentieth century. His 1969 book, *Why I Preach the Bible Is Literally True*, foreshadowed that legacy. During the moderate-conservative "holy war" among Southern Baptists in the 1980s, Criswell made news when he bluntly said that, if a woman testified to a call to the pastorate, she was badly mistaken because God never did that. Criswell's blaming women had other manifestations.

Criswell, at least in the 1950s, can be classified as part of the holiness-fundamentalist legacy. His views of the Holy Spirit were similar to earlier exemplars such as A.C. Dixon, William Bell Riley, and the early J. Frank Norris. In 1953 Criswell, whom Joel Gregory has rightly called

the successor to Norris's flamboyant fundamentalist mantle, published *These Issues We Must Face* and insisted that Christians received the Holy Spirit at conversion, but they needed to seek and ask for subsequent fillings to have the "fullness of the Spirit" to witness and evangelize. He said that Pentecost in Acts 2 was the reception of the Spirit, but agreed that his affirmation of the subsequent fillings of the Spirit was what some people called the Holy Spirit baptism.

In 1973, during the heat of conflict over the Charismatic Movement in Texas, Criswell published sermons on the topic of the Spirit baptism and spiritual gifts. His views differed from his earlier reflections. He distanced himself from the phrase "baptism of the Holy Spirit," stating clearly that all believers were baptized into the body of Christ at conversion but still asserting that believers could be filled a thousand times. Criswell's 1973 book was a primer for dispensationalist cessationism about miraculous gifts, however, especially speaking in tongues which was tied to his disparagement of women's roles in the church.[39]

At the 1975 evangelism conference in Dallas, Criswell, in his characteristic bombast, preached on spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians 11–14, which included the debatable phrase, "let the women keep silent" (1 Cor. 14:34): "Either Paul has lost his marbles, or there is something there I need to know. These verses are imbedded in a chapter on speaking in tongues. She's not to do it." Criswell exhorted, "You stop the women from speaking in tongues, and the practice will absolutely disappear from the earth. The tongues movement is a woman movement. And when she's taken out of it, it perishes on the vine." After a round of "amens" and laughter from the audience, Criswell continued: "It is senseless, inane, and idiotic. They think I am naïve. They think they can fool me into thinking that gibberish is a language... If that is the Christian faith, then I am not a Christian. Exclamation point."[40]

In a Baptist Press interview, Jaroy Webber, president of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1975, said that Criswell's scathing remarks probably had the support of about 95 percent of Southern Baptist pastors.[41] Criswell's diatribe was about women and spiritual messages to the church via speaking in tongues, but the meaning was the same. He sexualized the ministry of women. He asserted that the intersection of women, spiritual leadership, and emotionalism were the key ingredients

of heresy. Said another way, his cessationism that cast away the discomforts of claims to the modern use of miraculous spiritual gifts had another bonus: it silenced the women.

The silencing of women preachers (or any spiritual leadership that might involve authority over men) in Baptist life has not been just a male activity. Scholars, most notably Elizabeth Flowers, have written about how conservative women supported their men in the takeover of the SBC in the late twentieth century.[42] The paragon of the loyal pastor's wife was Joyce Rogers, the spouse of Adrian Rogers, a major leader in the "conservative resurgence." Joyce Rogers' 1980 book, *The Wise Woman... How to Be One in a Thousand*, was a diatribe against the rising feminist movement, and in the context of the SBC, the development—although slow going—of women's preaching and gender equality.

Rogers' book revealed the rising popularity of conservative anti-feminists who offered an alternative of family life that glorified the Victorian model of motherhood as the biblical model: The mother was queen of the home and the spiritual glue that nurtured children in the Christian faith and supported with full submissive loyalty the husband as the head and breadwinner of the household. Marabel Morgan's 1973 book, *The Total Woman*, provided the popular foundation for this conservative Christian anti-feminist genre. According to Morgan, whose book found a place on the shelves of many Southern Baptist homes, women must "accept your husband as he is," testify "I'll support the man," and realize submission is good and solves potential conflict. Morgan echoed earlier affirmations of men and women holding separate spheres in life as a divine arrangement: "equal in status, different in function."[43]

The close ties between the language of the Holiness Movement and its intriguing prevalence as a counter or accommodation to the Charismatic Movement is evident in Beverly LaHaye's 1976 book, *The Spirit-Controlled Woman*. The holiness focus on being Spirit-led or baptized in the Spirit as empowerment for service and witnessing, without any Pentecostal reliance on speaking in tongues as the biblical sign of a post-conversion Spirit baptism, pervades every chapter. LaHaye testified to a distinct experience of grace—no extraordinary sign was needed—in which she received the filling of the Spirit. The Spirit-filled or Spirit-controlled woman will be happy at home supporting her husband

and his career, LaHaye said. She "will want to be totally submissive to her husband." The three primary results of the Spirit-filled wife will be "submissiveness," a "joyful heart and thankful spirit."[44]

In similar fashion to LaHaye, Joyce Rogers wrote in the era of the charismatic focus on the Holy Spirit. She also offered an alternative approach with a reliance on the Spirit without becoming charismatic (or Pentecostal). Her writings, moreover, revealed the women's side of a strong attraction among Southern Baptist conservatives to the holiness-influenced quest to be empowered for evangelism, purity, and victorious living.

Rogers urged Southern Baptist women to be "wise women" by relying on the Holy Spirit to support their husbands. She chided women for not being happy with homemaking and calling themselves by their husband's names. She wanted to be called Mrs. Adrian Rogers, not Mrs. Joyce Rogers. The holiness-fundamentalist language of her book is striking.[45] Rogers was no charismatic, but she resonated with the desire for the Spirit's presence and power in daily life. According to Rogers, the-one-in-a-thousand wise woman is one who is Spirit-led. She said that fading physical beauty, inevitable for all women, was "God's ugly shop," adding that "the Holy Spirit of God is the great beauty consultant. His beauty book is the Bible."[46]

Rogers never claimed a special baptism of the Holy Spirit, but like LaHaye declared that "the fullness of the Holy Spirit" changed her life. Her reliance on the language of the Spirit to draw a portrait of a submissive wife was most clearly seen in her extensive contrasts between spiritual and divine decontaminants. For example,

- The spiritual contaminant of the bondage of bitterness was the divine decontaminant—the love of the Spirit.
- The irritant of indecision was contrasted with the leading of the Spirit.
- The dirt of discontent was cleansed by the sufficiency of the Spirit.

In other words, Rogers suggested that the real evidence of being Spirit-led is not a charismatic experience, not a feminist awakening, not the false road of bitterness and discontent about women's roles or asserting a call to preach, and not the quest for spiritual leadership that usurped male headship.[47]

Rogers subtly went further than LaHaye who said the Spirit-led woman would want to be submissive, that submission was a result of being Spirit-led. Rather, without using the words "this is the unerring sign of being Spirit-filled," Rogers equated submission with being filled with the Spirit. Submission was the functional sign of a Spirt-led victorious life. Being Spirit-led, then, was to be submissive to the spiritual head of a woman's life, her husband, and to accept her role to support him fully. In other words, the woman knew she was Spirit-filled when she served God through distinctly female obedience—submission. Christian feminists said that the Holy Spirit called women and men to preach. For Rogers, it was the Spirit that silenced women except in their own restrictive submissive sphere of life. Submissive women could minister, even outside the home, but it was a women's ministry to other women that modeled submission in all walks of life.[48]

Openness to the Spirit and the role of women in Baptist life has increased, though seemingly in stops and starts. The African-American Lott Carey Baptist Foreign Mission Society recently hired Rev. Dr. Gina Marcia Stewart as its president after her tenure as pastor of the Christ Missionary Baptist Church in Memphis, Tennessee. My own church, Calvary Baptist in Waco, Texas, recently called its third woman as pastor, Hannah Marshall Coe. The story of how so many conservative Baptists have been threatened by the presence of the Holy Spirit regarding women in roles of spiritual leadership, especially preaching, is endless and ongoing, however.

Current Southern Baptists fight over Beth Moore and whether she is preaching or if she can, according to their presumed authoritative reading of Scripture. Al Mohler of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary says that only a male voice fits the pulpit. Hyper-complementarians such as Owen Strachan or the Reformed "theobros" on the Internet still find warmth in the Edenic fall of Eve or in the purported order of family life found in the story of the Creation and even in their disreputable doctrine of the Trinity that emphasizes the eternal subordination of the Son as proof of women's designated everlasting submission to men. The shadow of John Broadus and other early Baptist patriarchs looms large as contemporary arguments mostly replicate those of Baptist leaders who wrote aghast at the possibility that women might speak in

mixed assemblies. White Baptists don't often use Joyce Rogers' language and equation of being Spirit-filled with submission, but the conclusion is the same. Submission is the core of female orthodoxy.

Black Baptists also continue to debate the role of women preaching, often with more explicit attention to the Spirit. Bishop Paul Morton, founder of the Full Gospel Baptist Church Fellowship, ordained women, including his wife, Debra. While the group at times sounded as if ordained women still needed the "covering" of male leaders, Debra is senior pastor of Greater St. Stephen Full Gospel Baptist Church in New Orleans. Dwight McKissic of Texas, dually aligned with Southern Baptists and National Baptists, affirms the charismatic experience of a private prayer language in tongues and strongly defends women preaching, especially to his White Southern Baptist opponents. McKissic echoes somewhat the earlier holiness Baptist, Charles Price Jones, given he allows women preaching but will not affirm women as pastors.[49]

Baptists, the Holy Spirit, and the so-called threat of women preaching has many twists and turns at their intersections. Clearly, some Baptists continue to have fear of the boundary-breaking winds of the Spirit. Others find that the liberation of the Spirit overshadows even the long shadow of those who hide behind hyper-complementarianism, cessationism, and bombastic sexualized patriarchy.

Notes

1 The sermon appeared in the November 7, 1984 edition of the *Christian Century*.

2 J.W. Porter, ed., *Feminism: Woman and Her Work* (Louisville: Baptist Book Concern, 1923), 7-8. Other reasons for the delay, according to Masters, were preoccupation with the strains of WWI, and the recent attention given to the "apostasy" of the interchurch movement. Masters also admitted that the "traditional conservatism" of Southern Baptists made debate seem unnecessary.

3 John Broadus, "Should Women Speak in Mixed Assemblies," in Porter, *Feminism*, 45-53. On modesty, see also J.W. Porter, "The Menace of Feminism," in Porter, *Feminism*, 24-25.

4 W.H. Felix, "The Work and Sphere of True Womanhood," in Porter, *Feminism*, 79. Broadus, "Should Women Speak," in Porter, *Feminism*, 47-48.

5 T.T. Eaton, "The Bible on Women's Public Speaking," in Porter, *Feminism*, 100. See also W.P. Harvey "Shall Women Preach," in Porter, *Feminism*, 119.

6 Eaton, Ibid., 101. Broadus, "Should Women Speak," in Porter, *Feminism*, 48.

7 J.B. Hawthorne, "Women Speaking in Mixed Assemblies," in Porter, *Feminism*, 57-59.

8 Ibid., 58-59.

9 Ibid., 54.

10 Felix, "The Work and Sphere," in Porter, *Feminism*, 68.

11 Ibid., 69.

12 Sally Neill Roach, "Women Speaking in Church Assemblies," in Porter, *Feminism*, 149. Broadus, "Should Women Speak," in Porter, *Feminism*, 45.

13 Felix, "The Work and Sphere," in Porter, *Feminism*, 79. Harvey, "Shall Women Preach," in Porter, *Feminism*, 115.

14 Felix, Ibid., 83.

15 Porter, "The Menace of Feminism," in Porter, *Feminism*, 16-18.

16 Ibid., 22-23. Harvey, "Shall Women Preach," in Porter, *Feminism*, 115.

17 Porter, "The Menace of Feminism," in Porter, *Feminism*, 9.

18 Roach, "Women Speaking," in Porter, *Feminism*, 154-56.

19 Boyce Taylor, "Women Speaking in Mixed Assemblies," in Porter, *Feminism*, 141.

20 Felix, "The Work and Sphere," in Porter, *Feminism*, 70, 71.

21 Eaton, "The Bible on Women's Public Speaking," in Porter, *Feminism*, 102.

22 Porter, "The Menace of Feminism," in Porter, *Feminism*, 9.

23 Ibid., 28.

24 W.P. Harvey, "Shall Women Preach," in Porter, *Feminism*, 113. Harvey included a short preface in which A.T. Robertson wrote in support of the "plain meaning of Scripture" against women speaking in mixed assemblies.

25 Helen Barrett Montgomery was elected president of the NBC in 1921. Porter, "The Menace of Feminism," in Porter, *Feminism*, 43. J.W. Porter, "Arguments for Women Speaking in the Churches" in Porter, *Feminism*, 164.

26 C. Douglas Weaver, *Baptists and the Holy Spirit, The Contested History with Holiness-Pentecostal Movements* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2019), 3-7.

27 A.J. Gordon, *The Ministry of the Spirit* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1894), vii, 80. Scott M. Gibson, *A.J. Gordon: American Premillennialist* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2001), 110-14.

28 Eaton, "The Bible on Women's Public Speaking," in Porter, *Feminism*, 104-106.

29 Anthony Binga, *Sermons on Several Occasions* (Richmond, VA: n.p., 1889), 98-99. E.C. Morris, leader of the National Baptist Convention, argued that women could be messengers to convention meetings. For the views of other Black leaders in the late 19th century, see Evelyn Higgenbotham, *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church 1880–1920* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994).

30 Virginia Broughton, *Twenty-Year's Experience of a Missionary* (Chicago: Pony Express), 42. See also Weaver, *Baptists and the Holy Spirit*, 77-79.

31 C.P. Jones, "Characters I Have Met," in Anita Bingham Jefferson, comp., *Charles Price Jones: First Black Holiness Reformer with a One Hundred Year Chronology of His Life* (Jackson, MS: n.p., 2011), 25-29. Weaver, *Baptists and the Holy Spirit*, 61-69.

32 Editorial Paragraphs: "Dr. Straton's Fourteen-Year-Old Girl Evangelist," *Western Recorder* (1 July, 1926): 13, 16.

33 For more on McPherson, see Weaver, *Baptists and the Holy Spirit*, 172-89.

34 Ben Bogard, *Bogard-McPherson Debate* (Dallas: Rock of Ages, 1934), 17-19, 31.

35 J. Frank Norris, "The Bottle of Oil," *Fundamentalist* (6 September, 1935): 1, 3.

36 J. Frank Norris, "Can True Fundamentalist Baptists Fellowship the Snake-Poison-Oily Crowd?" *Fundamentalist* (24 January, 1936): 1, 5.

37 For an overview of the Charismatic Movement, see Weaver, *Baptists and the Holy Spirit*, 207-258.

38 See Sandra Pratt Martin, *Bite Your Tongues: A Story about Beverly Hills Baptist Church and its Pastor, Howard Conaster* (Fort Worth, TX: Harvest, 1976)

39 For more on W.A. Criswell, see Weaver, *Baptists and the Holy Spirit*, 237.

40 "Charismatic Movement Draws Criticism of W.A. Criswell," *Baptist Standard* (23 April, 1975): 3.

41 "Weber Views 'Divisive' Move," *Baptist Standard* (18 June, 1975): 7.

42 Elizabeth Flowers, *Into the Pulpit: Southern Baptist Women and Power Since World War II* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012).

43 Marabel Morgan, *The Total Woman* (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1973), 54, 56, 69, 70.

44 Beverly LaHaye, *The Spirit-Controlled Woman* (Irvine, CA: Harvest House Publishers, 1976), 14, 71, 83, 170, 171. Quotations on pp. 71, 141.

45 Holiness had several versions. Baptists sometimes combined emphases from Wesleyan (focus on purity of heart and cleansing from sin) with Keswick holiness. Rogers and most Baptists mirrored the Keswick legacy of A.J. Gordon and denied that sanctification could be complete this side of heaven. Rather, the focus was empowerment for service but usually included a baptism of the Spirit experience and subsequent "fillings" of the Spirit form empowerment.

46 Joyce Rogers, *The Wise Woman... How to Be One in a Thousand* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1980), 18-19.

47 Ibid., 33-47.

48 Pentecostal women of the 1970s would not have considered themselves feminists just for believing that the Holy Spirit called them to preach. They would have thought it was biblically based submission to a specific call on their lives, despite the expected difficulties.

49 McKissic wrote, "It is time for the church to let Phoebe be Phoebe, Priscilla be Priscilla, and Phillip's four daughters conduct the ministries under God's authority, and God-ordained male leadership, as He has instructed them to do, even preaching in a Lord's Day Worship service." See Wm. Dwight McKissic, "Does the Bible Permit Women to Preach in Our Lord's Worship Service?" Ascol/McKissic Debate/Dialogue (Birmingham, 2019). See also McKissic, "From the Pastor's Pen: Questions Concerning Women in Ministry" (Cornerstone Baptist Church, Arlington, TX, 2 January, 1999).

"He Lives Yet in Baylor University":

John S. Tanner and Early Theological Education in Texas

Glenn Jonas

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In the Oakwood Cemetery in Waco, Texas, a grave marker erected in 1920 reads:

ERECTED BY
BAYLOR UNIVERSITY
IN LOVING MEMORY OF JOHN S. TANNER
1869–1901
DILIGENT STUDENT, PROFOUND SCHOLAR
UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR, PREACHER OF
RIGHTEOUSNESS, CHRISTIAN GENTLEMAN
LOVER OF TRUTH
HE LIVES YET IN BAYLOR UNIVERSITY[1]

The last statement on the marker, "HE LIVES YET IN BAYLOR UNIVERSITY," may have been true in 1920, but the name John S. Tanner is all but unknown to most on the Baylor campus today. He was only 31 years old when he died on March 21, 1901. His untimely death is the explanation for his relative obscurity today. But to his generation and those who remembered him in 1920, Tanner was a man who accomplished much in the short time he was associated with Baylor. Of particular interest was his concern about the lack of seminary-trained ministers in Texas. This article attempts to show that Tanner was influential in helping establish formal ministerial education in Texas.

Early Life and Education

Tanner was born in Athens, Texas on October 9, 1869, the youngest of fifteen children.[2] His father, John S. Tanner Sr., died six months before the child was born, so the responsibility for instilling the importance of receiving a good education fell to his mother. His father, well-educated for his day, had been a schoolmaster by profession. Though not formally educated herself, Tanner's mother, Delia, did what she could to convince her son of the importance of education. With the help of his family, Tanner completed his early schooling in Athens and Malakoff, Texas.[3] In a letter to John A. Broadus in 1892, Tanner spoke succinctly about his background:

> I was raised by a widowed mother in humble circumstances and with poor opportunities. From my earliest recollection I was impelled by an ambition for high attainment and a consequent determination to exertion. While at the academy with the legal profession in prospect I was converted to Christ and contrary to my inclination and purpose I was impressed and impelled by an irrepressible conviction of divine will to preach the Gospel. To this I yielded after six months of reluctance being nearly seventeen years old.[4]

Several months before his seventeenth birthday in 1886, Tanner entered Baylor University as a ministerial student. A precocious student by nature, he devoted serious attention to his studies. Samuel Palmer Brooks, Tanner's friend and later president of Baylor, said of Tanner: the "most characteristic thing about him was the intense sincerity that marked his face."[5] At that time Baylor allowed ministerial students to graduate with fewer credits than other students. Tanner did not accept the accommodation and instead took as many courses as he possibly could. According to Brooks,

> John Tanner's whole nature rebelled at the idea that a preacher should know less than other men. He put his notions into practice by taking all the mathematics ... all the science taught then in Baylor, all the Latin and Greek required for anyone, and by special courtesy of Prof. W.H. Long, Sr., he was permitted to read several courses in Greek not required. The same is true of Latin, by the help of Prof. S.E. Thompson.[6]

Tanner was not given to frivolity as a student. Brooks reports that he "studied incessantly," even to the point of reading while he walked from his dorm to class.[7] Further evidence of Tanner's desire for knowledge and his belief that ministers should possess knowledge in a variety

of disciplines is evident from a letter he wrote as a sophomore in 1887 to John Albert Broadus, soon-to-be-president of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. It states:

> Being desirous of having your very worthy and authoritative opinions on the following questions, I beg leave to ask: Does the mental training afforded by the study of Mathematics justify a ministerial student in pursuing a full mathematical course, or can he get such mental discipline from some other studies which will, at the same time, furnish him with more practical information?[8]

Despite Tanner's overzealous study habits, he did find involvement in several ventures as a student. He was an active member of the Philomathesian Literary Society, one of several literary organizations on the Baylor campus. Additionally, and perhaps more importantly, Tanner was one of the founders of the Adelphian Theological Society, an organization of ministerial students. The group organized on January 5, 1889, and two weeks after its organization elected Tanner as president and additionally passed a motion to organize a theological library. The Society was open to any ministerial student at Baylor with approval of the membership's vote. Honorary members, usually local pastors, were also invited to participate. The purpose of the group was to meet "for the discussion of theological subjects."[9] Tanner's part in the organization of the Adelphian Theological Society represents a benchmark in the history of ministerial education at Baylor. It provided ministerial students with an additional measure of theological instruction and a sense of community four years before the formalization of ministerial education with the introduction of the Bible Department.

Prior to the organization of the Adelphian Theological Society, there was no formal ministerial education at Baylor. Benajah Harvey Carroll, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Waco and chair of the university's trustees, had for years provided tutoring to Baylor's ministerial students. Jeff D. Ray indicates that as early as 1880 Carroll provided instruction, "a sort of embryonic theological seminary," for fifteen students and that his private tutoring of ministerial students had extended as far back as 1873. Ray recalled that the group gathered on Friday evenings. "We had one small textbook, the one teacher and once a week recitations, but the instruction covered or (to speak more accurately) touched upon nearly everything taught in seminary today."[10]

Along with Ray, one of Carroll's earliest and eventually most prominent disciples was William Buck Bagby (1855–1939). Bagby was converted through the preaching of Rufus C. Burleson, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Waco and president of Waco University (the antecedent to Baylor University). Carroll succeeded Burleson as the pastor of the Waco congregation and began informally educating the ministerial students from the university, including Bagby. Bagby, and his wife Anne Ellen Luther, became two of the first Southern Baptist missionaries to Brazil.[11]

Tanner graduated from Baylor with the A.B. degree in 1890. Upon graduation the university employed him to teach mathematics and Latin. Shortly thereafter he became engaged to Lida Hines. They were married in 1892, and Tanner began plans to further his education. He initially planned to attend Brown University and complete a master's degree in Greek, after which he would pursue a seminary education, but he encountered a few obstacles that caused him to reconsider his plans. To afford Brown, he and his wife agreed that she would remain in Texas and teach while he attended his first year at the Rhode Island university. This would provide the money needed to complete the second year. Unexpectedly, however, his wife became ill and died, opening a difficult period of grief for Tanner. He described the experience as the "dispensation which... darkened my way and left my heart very sad."[12] Additionally, the professor at Brown with whom Tanner intended to study retired that year.[13] In the midst of the grief over losing his wife and the unexpected change of events at Brown, Tanner decided to forego his plans and concentrated his attention toward finding a seminary to attend.

Two seminaries, both in his own Baptist tradition, interested Tanner. One was the Rochester Theological Seminary in Rochester, New York. Rochester interested him for two reasons: its academic reputation and the prospect of studying systematic theology under Augustus Hopkins Strong (1836–1921). The Rochester seminary was one of the leading theological seminaries among the northern Baptist tradition during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Strong was president and professor of systematic theology at the seminary for forty years, and the most prominent scholar of theology among American Baptists in that era. His most famous work, *Systematic Theology* (1907), was used as a

theology textbook for decades in scores of seminaries throughout the United States.[14] There is no doubt that studying with Strong was a very attractive possibility, especially for a young scholar of Tanner's ability and dedication.

The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky was equally appealing to Tanner. Because the Louisville seminary was in the South, Tanner thought it would provide him a better opportunity to form friendships and contacts with colleagues who would benefit his career plans. Additionally, Southern afforded him the opportunity to pursue Greek and New Testament studies under John A. Broadus, then one of Southern Baptists' premier scholars. Tanner struggled with the decision, but decided to attend Southern because, as he said, "I want to go where I can do the best for myself in preparing for a lifework in Texas."[15]

Tanner enrolled at Southern in the Fall of 1892. Believing he made the right decision, the following spring he wrote to the Adelphian Theological Society at Baylor, telling them "this is the place for you to take your theological course."[16] To support himself financially while attending the seminary, Tanner served as pastor of a church in Owenton, Kentucky, a position for which he was apparently well-suited. Just before his graduation he wrote to his Texas mentor, B.H. Carroll: "My success in the pastorate has been not only gratifying to me but surprising. I have become passionately fond of preaching and pastoral work, retaining, however, in full my former love for teaching."[17] Tanner also held a New Testament tutorship for the second two of his three years at the seminary. He was so successful in this effort that John A. Broadus wanted him to stay at the Louisville seminary to pursue a Th.D. with the offer of a faculty position. Tanner probably would have accepted the offer had Broadus not died suddenly on March 16, 1895.[18] Coupled with receiving his Th.M. from the seminary, Tanner remarried, this time to Mary David Barton on May 31, 1895.[19]

Tanner now turned his attention toward doctoral work. Because of the death of Broadus, he decided to leave Louisville and attend the University of Chicago. He applied for and received a fellowship in the divinity school. The net worth of the fellowship was $300 annually. Despite receiving the fellowship, Tanner had reservations about attending the University of Chicago. He wrote to B.H. Carroll and expressed one of his concerns, saying, "[s]ome of my most esteemed and most

influential friends advise me in the negative suggesting various and sundry other lines of procedure; more fearing . . . that I would take to the loose views reported to have a footing there."[20] Tanner's concern, of course, was theological. Under the leadership of William Rainey Harper, the University of Chicago's first president, the school and its divinity school became a center for progressive Christianity beginning in the 1890s, a trajectory that many Baptists in the North followed but Baptists in the South tended to reject.[21]

In addition to his concerns over the "loose views" reportedly taught at the Chicago seminary, Tanner was concerned whether it would be prudent to attend a school that was a rival of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Finally, he asked Carroll what areas of study he should emphasize should he decide to attend the University of Chicago.[22] Carroll must have provided Tanner with the answers he needed because the record shows that he enrolled at the University of Chicago in the autumn quarter of 1895. He concentrated in biblical studies, both Old and New Testaments.[23] According to Brooks, while Tanner's theology was more conservative than what he encountered at the University of Chicago, he nevertheless enjoyed his classes.[24]

Developing Theological Education at Baylor University

Tanner's greatest legacy concerns his efforts to provide opportunities for ministers in the Southwest to receive formal educational opportunities. In 1896, before completion of his doctoral degree, Baylor University offered him the opportunity to join the faculty. Brooks described the offer as coming from the board of trustees through B.H. Carroll, who "put the matter to him as a sense of duty."[25] Actually, the fact that the job offer came from Baylor was the only incentive that Tanner needed to leave Chicago before completing his doctorate. Though his ambition was to complete his Ph.D., his greater ambition was to return to Baylor. He shared this desire with B.H. Carroll: "I wanted to ask you about the present outlook for Baylor University and the developments of the past few years. While there is no commitment on either side, yet I have all along entertained the feeling that my work is in Texas in connection with Baylor."[26]

Tanner occupied a dual role upon returning to his alma mater. He joined the faculty of the Bible Department, newly organized in 1893 and in need of someone of Tanner's academic stature. He taught New Testament, Greek, Hebrew, and Mathematics.[27] His involvement in the Bible Department was crucial. In fact, Carroll announced in 1897 that Tanner would occupy a newly created Chair of Hebrew and Greek within the department, a testimony to the important role the young scholar soon occupied at Baylor.

Tanner's other responsibility at Baylor was to organize the Summer Bible School, which began in 1896. The Bible schools were designed to provide training to Texas pastors and lay leaders who might not have the opportunity to attend a seminary. They lasted for approximately one month during the summer. The school usually invited several denominational leaders to serve as guest faculty along with various Baylor professors.[28] The participants attended class six days per week at a cost of about $12.50 per person, which included tuition, room, and board. Books and other supplies were provided for an additional fifty cents. The library of the Adelphian Theological Society was open to the participants at no charge.[29]

The Summer Bible Schools were immensely popular and successful. In the first year of operation, 82 lay leaders and pastors from all over Texas attended the school, and the enrollment more than doubled the next year. In the summer of 1900, enrollment reached nearly 300, and 21 faculty members were involved. Special courses for women and child-care services for children were available. As a result of the Summer Bible School program, Baylor's fall enrollment increased as the participants saw the need for further education.[30]

The success of the Summer Bible Schools can be directly attributed to Tanner's involvement and organizational skill. Although B.H. Carroll was technically the director, he was mostly a figurehead leader. Tanner was the mastermind behind the organization and promotion of the program. Carroll's name and presence brought the notoriety needed for success, but Tanner supplied the planning and labor. Carroll received the credit for the success of the Summer Bible Schools, though it rightfully belonged to Tanner. S.P. Brooks confirms this, saying "Dr. Carroll was nominally the principal, but his own time was so taken up by other more pressing duties that the bulk of the work fell on Prof. Tanner."[31]

Tanner's concern for providing ministers with the best academic preparation did not end with the Summer Bible Schools. Almost as soon as he joined the faculty at Baylor, he encouraged a curriculum change so that ministerial students would be required to take as many credits for graduation as other students. This attempt was not done haphazardly. Brooks related that upon joining the faculty, Tanner acquainted himself with the catalogues from nearly one hundred universities and colleges in both the United States and Europe. As one might expect, his efforts were not exactly endorsed enthusiastically by some of the other faculty members at Baylor, perhaps since Tanner was so young and possibly a bit overconfident.[32]

Nevertheless, he was successful. By 1901, Baylor trustees approved a Bachelor of Theology degree that required more credits than other bachelor's degrees at the university. Only 42 credits were required for the standard bachelor's degrees, but the theology degree crafted by Tanner required 52 credits, the equivalent number of credit hours needed for a master's degree in other disciplines. The justification for the extra courses was that most of the ministerial students at Baylor would probably not have the opportunity to attend seminary because of the distance between Texas and Louisville, the location of the Southern Baptist Convention's only seminary at the time.[33]

While busy with the Summer Bible Schools and teaching in the Bible Department at Baylor, Tanner's mind was also cultivating a dream that would be a boost to the formal education of ministers in Texas. That dream involved the establishment of a Baptist seminary in Texas. As early as 1896, while a graduate student at the University of Chicago, Tanner wrote a letter to his friend R.N. Barrett in which he spelled out his dreams that Baylor offer seminary training:

> I want your ideas as to the practicability of establishing in the South a great Christian University which shall be to the South what the University of Chicago is to the North, and which shall be under the control of the Baptist denomination... I am looking forward with earnest expectation to the time when such an institution shall be founded. It should be up to date on all lines, and especially should it have a thoroughly equipped Bible Department. In this there should be taught not only the branches found in the average theological seminary, but there should be a Chair of Missions, covering the whole field of Church History, Comparative Religious Eclesiology [sic] and History of Missions... As to the location of such a university ... [i]n my mind Baylor University is preeminently the place.[34]

Tanner then provided four reasons why he considered Baylor to be the right location for such an endeavor: its distance from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville so as not to be in direct competition; its close location to Mexico, Oklahoma, and Native American territories, "whose sons might come here for training"; the strength of the Baptist General Convention of Texas to provide support; and the large number of uneducated ministers in the state of Texas.[35]

Further evidence that Tanner was dreaming of a seminary in Texas while a student at the University of Chicago comes from a letter to S.P. Brooks in which he said:

> As you know, the question of a Baptist education in the South and West has occupied my daydreams now for several years. I have now formulated more or less . . . a plan for an institution as I should like to see Baylor made in the next ten years, and what I am sure it can be made. At the risk of tediousness, I may attempt to lay this plan before you before long.[36]

According to Brooks, Tanner provided an elaborate plan so detailed that it occupied at least 25 pages but was lost by a mutual friend after Tanner's death.[37] Then, in another letter to Brooks, Tanner wrote, "I can see definitely outlined work for Texas Baptist education in general and ministerial education in particular, and it is soul-stirring."[38]

No one disputes that B.H. Carroll was the promoter and builder of the first Baptist seminary in Texas. Just when Carroll's thoughts turned to the establishment of the seminary is unclear. Robert Baker, author of the history of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, indicates that as late as 1899, "[i]t seems quite certain that he [Carroll] did not have in mind organizing a theological seminary at this time."[39] Alan Lefever, a biographer of Carroll, disagrees, stating that while "there is no record of Carroll openly suggesting a new seminary," in 1897 he certainly must have thought about the possibility.[40] It is unclear whether Tanner had the idea first in 1896 and his dreams were contagious enough to infect Carroll, or whether Carroll had the idea first and brought Tanner to Baylor in 1896 to help make the dream a reality. It cannot be denied that Tanner was instrumental in helping to formulate the idea that would eventually become the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary within the next few years. Referring to Tanner's importance, Baker said, "[n]ext to

Carroll himself, Tanner probably was the most influential individual in laying the groundwork for the new seminary in the Southwest."[41] Carroll explained the important role that Tanner occupied by saying:

> All the work of the Bible Department of this institution was virtually in his hands. My engagement in the field prevented my attention being turned in that direction, and I left it to him to secure teachers from all parts of the United States—the lecturers, the contracts with them, and the terms of the contracts.[42]

One is left to speculate what shape Baylor and Southwestern would have taken had Tanner lived. Lefever argues that if Tanner had lived, the academic stature of Baylor's theological department would have rivaled that of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville. Unfortunately, Tanner suffered an untimely death on March 21, 1901. The cause of his tragic, unexpected death seems to have been the result of influenza, a congenital heart problem, and infection from an abscessed tooth, all of which seems to have hit his body at the same time.[43]

Texas Theological Education After Tanner

Albert Henry Newman, professor of church history at McMaster University in Toronto, Canada, and one of Baptists' most knowledgeable church historians of his era, received an invitation to deliver the 1900 commencement address at Baylor and to remain for the summer as a faculty member in the Summer Bible School program. Baylor also awarded Newman the honorary LL.D. degree at the spring commencement exercises that year. Baylor's efforts to provide theological education needed scholars of Newman's stature, no doubt a need made more acute by Tanner's unexpected death in March 1901. Although a difficult decision for him, Newman left his comfortable position at McMaster and made the career change for Baylor in 1901.[44]

By 1905, the successful Summer Bible School program developed into the Baylor Theological Seminary boasting five faculty members (B.H. Carroll, A.H. Newman, Calvin Goodspeed, Charles B. Williams, and L.W. Doolan) and about 135 students.[45] Three years later, B.H. Carroll transitioned the Baylor Theological Seminary into Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and in 1910, the school severed ties with Baylor University and moved to Fort Worth, Texas. Within a decade of Tanner's

death, his dream of an institution to provide theological education for prospective ministers had come to fruition, although separate from Baylor University.

Tanner's influence upon the ministerial students with whom he came into contact stands as an example of the legacy he left. Joseph Martin Dawson and Walter Thomas Conner were two of Tanner's students who subsequently became leaders in Texas Baptist life. Dawson served for 35 years as pastor of the First Baptist Church of Waco. He then became the first director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, a Washington, D.C. lobbying organization concerned with the issues surrounding the First Amendment and separation of church and state. Conner spent most of his career as professor of theology at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Both men wrote of their profound respect and admiration for John S. Tanner.

Dawson declared that "Baylor has never seen his equal again."[46] On another occasion he recalled how Tanner had provided counsel during a period of intellectual crisis and doubt. He referred to Tanner as his "Moses," and then said, "I cannot think of ... [Tanner] without the deepest gratitude, because ... [by him] I was led out of the mazes of doubt along paths of light."[47] Conner recalled having Tanner as a professor for both religion and mathematics classes and praised him as "the most dynamic teacher I ever knew."[48] As for Tanner's influence on students, Conner declared: "a man did not study for him because he felt that he had to; he studied for him because he wanted to. I never thought of doing anything else. I might neglect some of my studies, but I never thought of neglecting his work.[49]

Historians love to speculate on the phrase, "what if?" What if Tanner had not died at such a young age? What would his influence have been? Would his influence have eclipsed that of B.H. Carroll? Probably not. However, if Tanner had lived into old age, Baylor Theological Seminary might never have been severed from Baylor University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary might never have been established. What if?

Notes

1 Henry Trantham, ed., *The Diamond Jubilee: A Record of the Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the Founding of Baylor University* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 1921), 56. I wrote an earlier version of this article in *Texas Baptist History: Journal of the Texas Baptist Historical Society* in 1995. The title of the original article was "He Lives Yet in Baylor University: The Life and Influence of John Stephenson Tanner." This article is a revision of that original article with some additional material.

2 Tanner had only five natural siblings. His father and mother both had lost their first spouse. His father had five children and his mother four from previous marriages. To these nine, Tanner and his five siblings were added.

3 R.N. Barrett and S.P. Brooks, ed., *The Baylor Bulletin: Tanner Memorial Edition* (July 1901): 19-22. This work represents the most complete biographical material on Tanner's life. It is located in the Texas Collection at Baylor University, Waco, Texas. Other biographical materials include Kent Keeth, "The Man Who Might Have Been President," *The Baylor Line* 52 (March 1990): 1, and the Oral History Memoir of Mrs. Aleph Tanner Carter, 1981, Texas Collection.

4 John S. Tanner to John A. Broadus, LS, 12 August 1892, John Albert Broadus Papers, Dargan-Carver Library, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky.

5 Barrett and Brooks, *The Baylor Bulletin*, 23.

6 Ibid., 24. Tanner once said: "A young preacher ought to be kicked who will be content to stand elsewhere in his classes than at the head. Shame upon the individuals and disgrace to the blessed cause if the young preacher can't show himself as strong in intellect and ambitious a student in every sense as much a man has his classmates who contemplate other life pursuits. He ought to count himself disgraced if he can't show as good a record as anybody in Mathematics, Greek, Latin, Sciences, Philosophy, and made himself dreaded by competitors in oratory and all other lines of intellectual labor." See John S. Tanner, "Letter to Adelphian Society," in Barnett and Brooks, *The Baylor Bulletin*, 44.

7 Ibid.

8 John S. Tanner to John A. Broadus, LS, 9 December 1887, Broadus Papers.

9 "Minutes of the Adelphian Theological Society," Book 1, p. 3, located in the Texas Collection.

10 Jeff D. Ray, *B.H. Carroll* (Nashville: Sunday School Board, 1927), 134.

11 Ibid.

12 Tanner to Broadus, 12 August 1892, p. 2.

13 The professor was Albert Harkness (1822–1907), a brilliant scholar of Greek languages and literature. From 1853–1955 he studied in Germany (Berlin, Bonn, and Göttingen), earning the PhD from the University of Bonn in 1854. He returned to Brown, his alma mater, in 1855 and served as professor of Greek, spending his career there until his retirement in 1892. During his long career he founded and served as president of the American Philological Association and served as a founder of the American School of Classical Studies in Athens, Greece. In 1860 he published *A First Greek Book* and, although he taught Greek his entire career, he nevertheless had expertise in Latin, publishing 14 Latin textbooks between 1851 and 1905. See: https://www.brown.edu/Administration/News_Bureau/Databases/Encyclopedia/search.php?serial=H0030 (accessed 28 September 2021).

14 William H. Brackney, *Historical Dictionary of the Baptists*, 3rd ed. (New York: Roman and Littlefield, 2021), s. v. "Strong, Augustus Hopkins (1836–1921)."

15 Tanner to Broadus, 12 August 1892, p. 2.

16 Tanner, "Letter to the Adelphian Society," in Barnett and Brooks, *The Baylor Bulletin*, 43. There is evidence that Tanner received an A.M. degree from Baylor in 1893, during his first year at Louisville. A.J. Armstrong, ed., *Baylor Bulletin*, vol. 23, no. 4, "A Directory of Ex-Students of the College of Arts and Sciences of Baylor University," August 1920. Also, Letter from Maxine Hunsinger Sullivan, Office of the Registrar, University of Chicago, to Glenn Jonas, 21 June 1994.

17 John S. Tanner to B.H. Carroll, LS, 29 May 1895, p. 2. Benajah Harvey Carroll Papers, A. Webb Roberts Library, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas.

18 Ibid., 3.

19 "Kentucky Marriages, 1785–1979," (https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:F4Q3-QLN: 23 February 2021), John S. Tanner, 1895 (accessed 15 October 2021).

20 John S. Tanner to B.H. Carroll, LS, 29 May 1895, 4-5.

21 See William R. Hutchison, *The Modernist Impulse in American Protestantism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), 115.

22 John S. Tanner to B.H. Carroll, LS, 29 May 1895, 5.

23 Letter to Glenn Jonas from Maxine Hunsinger Sullivan, Registrar, University of Chicago, 21 June 1994.

24 Barnett and Brooks, *The Baylor Bulletin*, 33.

25 Ibid., 34.

26 Tanner to Carroll, 29 May 1895, p. 6. Although Tanner may not have known about it, B.H. Carroll wrote a letter to William Rainey Harper, president of the University of Chicago, in which he revealed that he had plans to bring Tanner back to Baylor in the future to join the faculty. B.H. Carroll, "A Prince and a Mighty Man," as cited in Barnett and Brooks, *The Baylor Bulletin*, 113. The address was delivered by Carroll at Tanner's funeral.

27 Keeth, "The Man Who Might Have Been President."

28 Kent Keeth, "Baylor's Seminary," *The Baylor Line* 53 (January 1991): 56 and Eugene Baker, *To Light the Ways of Time* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 1987), 91.

29 Baker, *To Light the Ways of Time*, 92.

30 Ibid.

31 Barrett and Brooks, *The Baylor Bulletin*, 51.

32 Ibid., 40.

33 Baker, *To Light the Ways of Time*, 92.

34 John S. Tanner to R.N. Barrett, as cited in Barrett and Brooks, *The Baylor Bulletin*, 59. The only date given for the letter is "1896."

35 Ibid.

36 John S. Tanner to S.P. Brooks, 24 November 1895, as cited in Barrett and Brooks, *The Baylor Bulletin*, 63.

37 Ibid.

38 John S. Tanner to S.P. Brooks, 3 November 1895, as cited by Barrett and Brooks, *The Baylor Bulletin*, 64.

39 Robert A. Baker, *Tell the Generations Following* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1983), 111.

40 Cited in Alan J. LeFever, *Fighting the Good Fight: The Life and Work of Benajah Harvey Carroll* (Austin, TX: Eakin Press, 1994), 97.

41 Baker, *Tell the Generations Following*, 100.

42 Carroll, "A Prince and a Mighty Man," 114.

43 See Keeth, "The Man Who Might Have Been President." In the *Baylor Bulletin*, 103, Barrett and Brooks describe his death: "During the latter part of March he suffered with grip, and with neuralgia in his tooth. The tooth was extracted but he took cold in his jaw, and suffered much pain, though there was nothing alarming about his condition. He was

absent from his classes for several days, but able to be sitting up most of the time. On the night of the 20th of March, just after rising to take a dose of medicine he fell back a corpse. Physicians have not yet accounted for the sudden collapse, for there were no dangerous symptoms observed. An older sister had passed away in the same manner, and there must have been some inherited tendency toward heart trouble that had escaped detection. God had other work for him and called him to perform it. We must submit."

44 See W. Glenn Jonas Jr. *A Critical Evaluation of Albert Henry Newman, 1852–1933, Church Historian*, (San Francisco: Mellen Research University Press, 1992): 28-31. William H. Whitsitt made an interesting comment to Newman at the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in Asheville, N.C. in 1902 just after Newman moved to Texas. Whitsitt said, "Dr. Newman, I am sorry you went to Texas. Those Texas cowboys will lasso you to death." See Frederick Eby, *Newman the Church Historian: A Study in Christian Personality* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1946), 50. The comment proved to be prescient because Newman ended up in a conflict with Carroll and left Southwestern Seminary in 1913 to return to Baylor. (See Jonas, p. 36).

45 Eugene Baker, *To Light the Ways of Time*, 114 and Robert Baker, *Tell the Generations Following*, 125. Frederick Eby, who taught philosophy and education at Baylor and was also A.H. Newman's son-in-law, taught an adjunct course in Christian education for the new seminary, making him the sixth faculty member. One of the more ironic twists in the story is that Samuel Palmer Brooks, the president of Baylor, was on a trip to Europe. He returned home in 1905 to discover that Carroll, the chair of Baylor's Board of Trustees, had severed the Baylor Theological Seminary into a separate institution without ever telling Brooks. See Robert Baker, *Tell the Generations Following*, 121.

46 Joseph Martin Dawson, *A Thousand Months to Remember* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 1964), 58.

47 Joseph Martin Dawson, *The Light That Grows* (Nashville: The Sunday School Board, 1923), 15. Dawson devoted the entire first chapter to a discussion of this period during his college days and how Tanner's influence provided guidance.

48 J.M. Price, ed., *Southwestern Men and Their Messages* (Kansas City, KS: Central Seminary Press, 1948), 42.

49 Walter Thomas Conner, "Some Outstanding Men I Have Known" (unpublished manuscript), as cited in Stewart A. Newman, *W.T. Conner: Theologian of the Southwest* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1964), 38.

Religion, Sport, and Congregation:

Dean Smith as Basketball Coach and Baptist Churchman

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In the twenty-first century, the United States has witnessed the emergence of popular athletes whose celebrity status revolved around their Christian faith.[1] Famed quarterback Tim Tebow typifies this trend, but athletes and coaches have utilized their platform to promote Christianity for decades.

In 1976, Frank Deford coined the term "sportianity" in a three-part series in *Sports Illustrated* analyzing the relationship between Christianity and sport.[2] Scholars have long noted the close cultural and even theological relationship between religion and sport in the United States through movements such as Muscular Christianity.[3] While the two have not always been the closest of allies, by the second half of the twentieth century evangelical Christians in particular came to view sport as a powerful vehicle for advancing the Christian message.

The commercialization and commodification of both evangelical culture and sports culture helped to lay the groundwork for Christian athletes and coaches to create powerful platforms with which they could testify to their faith.[4] The individualization of evangelical culture, however, perpetuated an image of Christian athletes and coaches who practice their faith in isolation, as Christian stalwarts in the secular world of sports. Parachurch groups such as the Fellowship of Christian Athletes provide a loose religious community among college and high school

athletes, but they do so untethered from local religious institutions and communities.[5] As a result, the Christianity in American sports can look very different from the Christianity practiced in American congregations.

This paper offers an alternative perspective for thinking about the relationship between Christianity and sports—one that is grounded within a local religious community. It analyzes the life and faith of Dean Smith, the legendary head coach of the University of North Carolina (UNC) men's basketball team. Smith is best known for winning two national titles and retiring as the all-time winningest college basketball coach in the history of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), a record that has since been broken. He also worked to integrate the school's basketball team in 1967 and had a 96.6 percent graduation rate among the student athletes he coached. In 2013, President Obama awarded Smith the Presidential Medal of Freedom for his lifetime of coaching. Smith is less well known for being a life-long Baptist and member of American Baptist Churches USA.

Less than a year after arriving in Chapel Hill as an assistant coach in the Fall of 1958, Smith and his family joined the newly-founded Binkley Memorial Baptist Church, which at the time met on the university's campus.[6] Binkley sought to be a college-town congregation committed to full racial inclusion. It was progressive for its time and has remained so. Throughout Smith's life and coaching career, he remained a committed and active member of Binkley. His membership there helped directly and indirectly shape his persona as one of the country's most recognized coaches.

By focusing on the relationship between Smith and Binkley, this article will build upon scholarship that shows how sport has become a tool for religious groups to build community and to advance their theological beliefs.[7] Smith's rise from a relatively unknown assistant coach to one of the most famous coaches in the United States did provide him a public platform. His use of that platform was shaped by the religious community at Binkley, which sustained and supported his religious convictions and also shaped his public stances on everything from civil rights and Vietnam to the death penalty and sexuality. Rather than thinking about Smith as a Christian in isolation from a local religious community, this study intentionally highlights his membership and participation at

Binkley Memorial Baptist Church, and thus resists the tendency to understand figures in American sports through an individualized, evangelical mode of Christian faith and practice.

A Baptist Upbringing in a Basketball Family

Born in Emporia, Kansas two years after the stock market crashed, Dean Smith was raised in a religious home and family. His grandfather had helped pour the foundation for one of the local Baptist churches, and on Sundays his mother served as their church's organist. During the week, both of Smith's parents were high school teachers at the local Emporia High School, but when he was younger, Smith's mother gave up teaching and served as the Bible School coordinator at the local American Baptist Church their family attended. In addition to teaching, his father also coached many of the school's sports teams. Church and sports were a regular part of Smith's childhood, but sometimes they conflicted within one another. Sundays in the Smith household entailed attending Sunday School and worship in the morning, followed by a return to church in the evening for a second service and youth group. When Smith began playing baseball, games sometimes conflicted with this Sunday routine. His father opposed playing games on Sunday, but as a youthful teenager, Smith was less committed to the Sunday routine. One Sunday, he snuck out of church to attend a game of his American Legion team. While upset, his parents determined that playing games on Sunday was permissible so long as they did not interfere with church activities. As Smith described the rules, when the two came in conflict, "I had to choose the church."[8]

The families' religious belief and practice, however, extended beyond the doors of the church. In 1934, Smith's father led his school's men's basketball team to a state championship with an integrated roster that included a young Black student named Paul Terry, the son of the school's janitor. While Smith was only three at the time and remembered little about the specifics that led to his father's decision, he knew how he was raised. In his memoir, Smith explained that his parents taught him and his sister Joan to treat "each person with dignity." While the local Baptist church his family attended did not have any Black members, Smith recalled his parents telling him "that was wrong." As Smith explained, "My parents were determined that we see every person

as valuable, unique, and particular—and equal before our creator."[9] His mother and father instilled in him many of the values and beliefs that he carried with him into his coaching career.

After graduation Smith went to the University of Kansas. His aspirations to play sports professionally (he thought his best chance at this would be baseball) slowly gave way to a desire to follow his father's example as a coach. He landed a position as an assistant coach at Kansas upon graduation before joining the Air Force. While in the Air Force, Smith met his wife Ann, an occupational therapist and fellow Kansan. Following a year and a half in Germany, Smith became the assistant basketball coach at the Air Force Academy in Colorado. During this period before arriving in Chapel Hill, Smith and Ann had three children—Sharon, Sandra, and Scott. In August of 1956, when Ann was nine months pregnant with Sandra, Sharon became ill with pneumonia and had to be rushed to the hospital. For Smith, this was a pivotal moment in his life. He described it as "a turning point." In his memoir, he acknowledged that since college he hadn't taken his "family or personal devotional time seriously in the way I had growing up."[10] During Sharon's time in critical care, Smith explained that he returned to more consistently praying and reading scripture. While she ultimately recovered, the ordeal occurred at a pivotal time in Smith's career.

Chapel Hill and Finding a Church

After serving as an assistant coach at the Air Force Academy for three years, Smith and his wife Ann uprooted their lives and moved to Chapel Hill in 1958 with their three children to serve as assistant coach of UNC's men's basketball team under head coach Frank McGuire. Two years before Smith's arrival, McGuire had led the team to both a national championship and an undefeated season. When Smith visited the campus, he immediately fell in love with Chapel Hill. It was early spring and the town "was in its full springtime glory with dogwoods and cherry trees in blossom and petals floating in the breeze and dusting the footpaths."[11] At that time, Jim Crow remained the law of the land in the southern United States. As a Kansan who had never lived in the South, Smith worried about how he would adjust to the overtly segregated culture of this southern college town. While he recognized that racism

affected the whole country, Smith recalled feeling "shocked" when he first saw a set of "dual drinking fountains."[12] Southern segregation rubbed against what his parents had taught him—to treat everyone with dignity and respect. Fitting into the new southern culture in which he found himself proved a challenge.

To ease their transition to North Carolina, Smith and his family made finding a church one of their "first orders of business." Having grown up in a more mainline American Baptist church meant that Southern Baptist congregations were an unfamiliar and different experience for Smith. After visiting several churches outside the Baptist tradition, Jim Cansler, the Baptist campus minister, invited Smith and his family to attend the recently-founded Olin T. Binkley Memorial Baptist Church. This young congregation had a progressive edge to its theology, as did its namesake, a prominent North Carolina Baptist seminary professor who later became the president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in nearby Wake Forest. At the time, numerous congregations in the South forbade the membership of Black persons, including Chapel Hill Baptist Church, the other White Baptist congregation in town out of which Binkley was established. Binkley's founders desired to establish a new congregation that would diverge from this southern tradition and be welcoming to any persons who wanted to join the church without respect to racial background.[13] Founded in the same year the Smiths arrived in Chapel Hill, Binkley remained a small congregation without a permanent meeting facility. For the first six years of its existence, the church met on the campus of UNC in Gerrard Hall.

In his autobiography, Smith recalls "so vividly [his family's] first visit to the Olin T. Binkley Memorial Baptist Church." He was particularly enthralled by Bob Seymour, who was delivering his "initial sermon" that Sunday in the small building on campus. Seymour was a young pastor who already had a progressive reputation within wider North Carolina Baptist circles. Although he grew up in segregated Greenwood, South Carolina, Seymour later attended Yale Divinity School where he suggested he had "something akin to a religious conversion" with respects to his views on race and racial segregation.[14] He chose to leave his pastorate at the affluent and established Mars Hill Baptist Church in western North Carolina to lead this young congregation precisely because of its stated commitment to working within the local community to fight against the realities

of segregation and the Jim Crow South. For many of Binkley's members in its early years (including Smith), Seymour was the primary reason they joined the small church plant. Binkley and Bob Seymour were both thrilled to welcome Smith and his family into the congregation. The two men quickly became good friends, perhaps in part because Seymour had "little interest in basketball" and saw beyond Smith's profession. Seymour's wife, Pearl, however, balanced out her husband, and became one of the Tar Heels' and Smith's most avid fans as his fame and success grew.[15]

Smith's Church Work

Just as his parents had been active in the church in which he grew up, Smith and his family became active members at the young Binkley. From teaching Sunday School to serving in the nursery to joining various congregational committees, Smith and Ann contributed widely to congregational life.[16] Their three children were also involved in congregational activities and events.

Seymour recognized the importance of Smith's position in the community, even if he was only an assistant coach at the time. Because Seymour was the only member of the ministerial staff, he did not have the time or energy to be the congregation's only representative within the community. Instead, he often enlisted the help of congregants to work in the local community on issues the congregation found important. Seymour tasked one congregant, Fred Ellis, with running for the local school board to help integrate Chapel Hill's public school system.[17] Seymour saw a similar opportunity with Smith.

Seymour enlisted the young coach in the work of fostering greater integration within the wider Chapel Hill community. Smith was happy to oblige. Before he had been a member of the congregation a year, Seymour asked Smith if he would accompany him to lunch with a Black theology student at The Pines, a well-known segregated restaurant that often catered pre-game meals for the basketball team. Although the 28-year-old Smith was just an assistant coach, he was familiar enough that the restaurant management knew him and his relationship to the basketball team. Despite the restaurant's policy on serving people of color, the three men were seated and enjoyed their meal without any trouble.[18]

Accounts of the story vary widely and have passed down into legend. A variation of the tale was included in the November, 1982 edition of *Sports Illustrated* that included a photo of Seymour as Smith's pastor.[19] The magazine recounted, "If the waitress and shocked customers didn't know who Smith was, the manager did. He nodded at the waitress, and she handed out the menus, and the day was carried."[20] Smith and Seymour remember different details, but both remarked in later writings that the story was embellished.

While the men certainly did not single-handedly integrate Chapel Hill, or even The Pines for that matter, as some accounts of the day chronicle, their act of defiance toward the policies of segregation was significant in shaping the young community of Binkley Baptist Church. The congregation encouraged its members to advance their understanding of God's kingdom through their own spheres of influence. For Dean Smith, that was basketball.[21] The story provided proof that the church was having an influence on the larger community.

When Smith became the head coach of the Tar Heels in 1961, he remained relatively unknown to the broader public. He followed in the footsteps of Frank McGuire, a large personality with a national coaching reputation. There were even rumors that the school's chancellor promoted Smith to have the "program de-emphasized."[22] Seymour and Binkley, however, were excited over Smith's hiring. They had plans for him in his new role. On the day the school made the announcement, Seymour called to congratulate Smith and immediately asked him about "recruiting a Black player." As Smith recalled the conversation, Seymour explained, "Now that you are head coach your primary church work is the opportunity afforded by your vocation. Go find a Black basketball player for the university."[23]

Smith's recollection of this conversation with Seymour highlights the close relationship Smith had with the congregation. It shows how Binkley encouraged its membership to use their "day-to-day" activities to serve as congregational work. Individuals with higher profiles in the community, while certainly not more important than any other congregant, provided the congregation a wider range of influence and more opportunities to affect change. Smith's active participation within such a congregation shows the ways in which his religious practice was tied to a community of faith.

Smith's early head-coaching days in Chapel Hill were not smooth sailing, however. Despite quickly becoming a high-profile member of the community, he did not always enjoy the town's support. In 1964, the men's basketball team opened the season nationally ranked. The fans were delighted. A few games into the season, however, the Tar Heels dropped from the rankings. After a four-game losing streak and a 22-point road loss to Wake Forest, Smith and his team returned to Chapel Hill to see his effigy dangling from a tree outside the Wollen gymnasium on campus. As the bus pulled up, one student recalled being "too appalled to move," whereas another remembered "tearing down the bus steps and running and grabbing the effigy, yanking it down and kicking it aside."[24]

The evening was equally traumatic for Smith. He called his sister and his pastor Seymour, questioning whether he was meant to be a head coach. Later that season another effigy was hanged after a loss to N.C. State.[25] This was one of the lowest points in Smith's career, but he persevered. Coaching success was only a few seasons away.

Recruiting Charlie Scott

Coupled with his coaching struggles, tensions over civil rights in Chapel Hill were rising, making the prospect of recruiting a Black player all the more difficult. In 1960, four Black students from North Carolina Agricultural and Technical College made national news when they held a sit-in at Greensboro's Woolworth lunch counter. Throughout the decade, the conflict over integration only intensified. By the time Smith became head coach in 1961, UNC had been admitting Black students for a decade, but they still accounted for less than one percent of the student body. The university's academic standards created difficulty for Smith when recruiting Black players, and he came to understand that the minimum score requirements on standardized tests such as the SATs were attempts "to hurt admissions for disadvantaged youngsters." It was clear, he later explained, that "the SATs were culturally and economically biased."[26]

After multiple failed attempts at recruiting Black players for the Tar Heels, Smith heard a high school scouting report about Charlie Scott, a talented Black player at a school in Laurinburg, South Carolina. After additional investigation, Smith and his assistant coaches concluded that Scott could be a viable candidate to integrate the basketball team. They began the recruitment process to entice him to come to Carolina.

Binkley remained committed to helping Smith recruit a Black player, and he leaned upon the congregation in luring Scott to UNC. Smith knew that Scott aspired to major in pre-med, so he reached out to fellow Binkley member Thal Elliot, a Black medical student. On a recruiting visit to Laurinburg, Elliot accompanied Smith to give Scott a better perspective on what life was like as a Black medical student living in Chapel Hill. Later, Scott traveled to UNC for a campus visit. For much of the weekend, Smith allowed the players to introduce themselves to Scott and show him around campus. It was not until Sunday that Scott and Smith spent a significant amount of time together, and Smith decided to take Scott to church with him.[27]

During the service at Binkley, Scott heard a sermon by Seymour about racial equality and also got to see Elliot again. Smith then introduced Scott to other members of the congregation, including a young Black couple, Howard and Lillian Lee. Over the years, the Lees fostered a close relationship with Coach Smith and with many UNC student athletes who came through the men's basketball program. Many former Tar Heels who turned professional basketball players later returned to Chapel Hill to ask Lillian if she could make them a carrot cake.[28] Howard, it should be noted, later served as the first Black mayor of Chapel Hill.

Determining how significant that Sunday morning service was to Scott's ultimate decision to attend UNC would be difficult. Scott later acknowledged that he had not been invited to attend church with any other coach who courted him. Sport historian Art Chansky has argued that inviting Scott to a mixed-race church service was part of Smith's "cutting edge" recruitment "tactics."[29] Perhaps one of the reasons Smith was so cutting-edge was that his Sunday invitation was less of a tactic and more of a means of living out the work of Binkley Baptist Church. This was part of Smith's assigned "church work." If Seymour and the congregation had pushed Smith to recruit a Black player to integrate UNC's athletics department, it was only fitting that Seymour and the congregation play a role in the recruitment process.

Following the weekend visit, Scott selected to attend UNC as the first Black scholarship athlete, and while Dean Smith should receive much of the credit for integrating the school's athletics, the faith community supporting Smith played a significant role also. Historians who look back on the role of Protestant Christianity in integrating American

sports often highlight the personal piety of the coach or manager. The most exemplary example of this dynamic was Branch Rickey, a devout Methodist who signed Jackie Robinson to the Brooklyn Dodgers and was hailed as a "progressive hero." While much can be made of athletes and coaches who make principled stands upon their faith, it remains important to understand how such faith stances were nurtured within faith communities. One may ask:

- How are athletes and coaches encouraged or discouraged to use their platform to advance congregational agendas?
- What role do religious leaders play in influencing athletes and coaches within a congregation?
- What role do fellow congregants play?

Dean Smith was not a lone Christian acting upon his personal moral compass; he was not living a lonely jeremiad. Smith's recruitment of Charlie Scott and his resistance to segregationist practices in Chapel Hill were shaped by a larger faith tradition and firmly rooted in the community of Binkley Baptist Church.[30]

Taking a Stand Beyond Civil Rights

Over the course of his 36 years as head coach of the UNC Tar Heels, Smith had the opportunity to speak out and address numerous pressing political and social issues beyond civil rights and segregation. He often chose to "guard [his] privacy tightly," recognizing that college athletics cast a spotlight on the actions and opinions of both himself and his players. Smith weighed how visible his opinion or support would be on any given issue. He attended anti-war vigils along with fellow Binkley members who opposed the Vietnam War, but explained that he "wasn't the kind who wanted to be a leader on the Vietnam issue or out front at a protest." He felt more comfortable at "a vigil or putting my signature on a petition."[31] Smith used his discretion in determining how he might use the podium of his position as head basketball coach for non-basketball-related issues. At times, however, he broke from his usual quietism. At the height of the Cold War, he took a "public stand calling for a verifiable nuclear freeze."[32] Later in his coaching career he spoke out against the North Carolina state death penalty.

Prior to the Supreme Court's decision to reinstate the death penalty in 1977, North Carolina ranked fifth in state executions.[33] In the early 1990s, members of Binkley and then-retired pastor Bob Seymour worked in cooperation with the North Carolina Council of Churches to help establish and support a local nonprofit called People of Faith Against the Death Penalty (PFADP). In 1994, the state was set to execute Kermit Smith Jr. for crimes he committed in 1980. The leader of the new nonprofit, Leigh Eason, in conjunction with organizational supporters, pressured the state and its predominantly Christian citizenry to ask themselves whether "the death penalty is Christian or not Christian. Is the death penalty right or wrong?"[34] Over the following years, PFACP and its Binkley supporters would regularly petition the governor to grant clemency to individuals on death row.

Smith was well aware of the challenges within the criminal justice system. As coach of the Tar Heels, he regularly took trips to Central Prison in Raleigh with student athletes to visit prisoners and death row inmates. Over the years he got to know John Noland, a prisoner on death row, who became an avid Tar Heels fan who never missed listening to their game on the radio. Noland looked forward to visits from Smith and some of the team's players.[35]

In 1998, a coalition of individuals from PFADP including both Smith and Seymour petitioned Democratic Governor Jim Hunt to stay Noland's execution. In a now-famous meeting between Governor Hunt and the PFADP coalition, Smith raised his finger toward the governor and declared "You're a murderer." He turned his finger slowly around the room repeating himself, "and you're a murderer, and you're a murderer, and I'm a murderer." Smith reasoned that the legal execution of a state citizen was a communal act that was neither morally justified nor effective in deterring criminal acts. While Hunt respectfully listened to the now former coach's request, he refused to grant the request.[36]

John Noland Jr. died by lethal injection on November 20, 1998. Smith phoned Noland the evening before the execution, and recalled being "moved by [his] deep gratitude and confident Christian faith" as he prepared for his death.[37] In a written statement composed hours before his execution, Noland similarly expressed gratitude for the outpouring of love and support by those who had fought to stay his execution. "Love surrounds me, comforts me, makes me very happy in my last hours." He

continued, "Love from our God, my family, members of Sisk Memorial Baptist Church, Binkley Baptist Church, [and] People of Faith Against the Death Penalty."[38]

Smith had been a leading figure at Binkley in petitioning against Noland's execution. At a vigil the night of the execution, one defiant protester held up a sign that read, "Dean Smith loves killers." Smith reflected in his memoir: "I do not condone any violence against any of God's children, and that is why I am opposed to the death penalty. That sign seemed a kind of confirmation. Actually, it was every person in this state of North Carolina, including me, who killed this man, since we set the laws."[39] Smith was not alone in advocating against the death penalty. Like his recruitment of Charlie Scott and the integration of the men's basketball team, Smith was supported and encouraged by a community of faith. Binkley was present alongside Smith in fighting for Noland's life.

Smith, Binkley, and Sexuality

Smith's membership at Binkley forced him to engage issues that he might not otherwise have had to face if he had been a member of another church. Few churches in Chapel Hill were as outspoken as Binkley on issues of civil rights or even the death penalty. At the same time, Smith's membership at Binkley signaled a willingness and a desire to engage challenging and unpopular issues. In the early 1990s, Binkley made national news when the congregation licensed John Blevins, a gay divinity student, to preach the Gospel.[40] The church took nearly a year of study to determine whether or not they should license Blevins, and the congregation's membership was far from unanimous. The decision resulted in roughly thirty families leaving the congregation and also Binkley's formal removal from the Southern Baptist Convention.

Over the course of the congregation's decision-making process, Smith makes no appearance within the historical record. One reason for this might have been that the height of the conflict took place between January and March, the heart of the college basketball season. Smith may not have been vocal regarding Blevins' licensure, but his family's decision to remain members of the congregation is revealing at a time when so many families chose to leave Binkley. Furthermore, less than a decade later in his autobiography, *A Coach's Life*, Smith articulated a

clear stance on issues of human sexuality rooted in his religious belief. He acknowledged that Jesus says nothing about homosexuality in the biblical text, but pushed further explaining that he did not believe "homosexual behavior could be called a sin." As he reasoned, "I may be wrong, but I do believe we are born with our sexual orientation."[41] Smith engaged questions of theology, gender, and sexuality precisely because of his membership at Binkley. He even expressed an implicit belief that God is bigger than a singular gender commenting on how the divine "hears his or her name" in prayers of thanks from athletes after a home run, touchdown, or other sporting success.[42]

While it may be a stretch to consider Smith an outspoken proponent of gay rights, his church was. His decision to incorporate this element of his faith so integrally into his autobiography provides another way to think about social advocacy among prominent public figures. Rather than considering these figures individually and in isolation, the communities in which they participate reveal much about their social attitudes. Smith was and remained in the early years of the twenty-first century one of the most recognizable figures within the state of North Carolina. His autobiography inevitably enticed a wide and diverse readership, few of whom would be reading to learn about Smith's theological convictions or his relationship with his church. The inclusion of such things serves to reinforce his close relationship to the community of faith at Binkley.

Binkley and Smith

Certainly, much of this article has cast Smith in a positive light, but situating him in relationship to Binkley Baptist Church better clarifies how his faith influenced his professional coaching career. Rather than understanding Smith as an enigmatic, larger-than-life figure who single-handedly integrated the UNC men's basketball team or pressured the sitting North Carolina governor, this article presents Smith in relation to a faith community. It explains how his religious convictions were shaped, sustained, and encouraged to manifest themselves within the public square.

Smith was a flawed figure, as all people are. The 1982 edition of *Sport Illustrated* explained that he often tried to hide what he considered his flaws from the public eye. He notoriously smoked close to three packs

of cigarettes a day, and while he may not have abused alcohol, he would reportedly hide his glass of scotch whenever a minor entered the room. He would also never drink in front of his parents. In general, he disliked being vulnerable, which made his divorce in the early 1960s from Ann and his later remarriage difficult. At the time, Baptists had strong objections to divorce. Binkley helped shepherd both Smith and his wife Ann through this period, and the two remained members of the congregation for years afterwards, even after Smith had remarried. It was not simply that Smith's faith was important to him, but also his particular community of faith was important to him.[43]

Smith and Binkley provide another perspective with which scholars might consider the relationship between religion and sports—a relationship mediated by a religious community. Instead of considering the individual religious perspectives of athletes and coaches, it remains important to understand how congregational and denominational structures shape the convictions and actions of these individuals. Even whole teams and para-denominational athletic groups such as the Fellowship of Christian Athletes do not operate within a religious vacuum.

While the individualization of evangelicalism makes it particularly suited for an Americanized sports world that embraces individual athletic celebrity, there are additional ways in which the religious beliefs and practices of athletes and coaches are mediated. Dean Smith may provide understanding of religion and sport that is hyper-mediated through a community of faith, and he should not be considered an outlier. Instead, he provides another perspective through which we might interrogate the relationship between these important and often intertwined dimensions of American life and culture: religion and sport.

Notes

1 See Tom Krattenmaker, *Onward Christian Athletes: Turning Ballparks into Pulpits and Players into Preachers* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2010).

2 See Frank Deford, "Religion in Sport," *Sports Illustrated* (19 April 1976).

3 See Annie Blazer, "Religion and Sports in America," *Religion Compass*, vol. 6, no. 5 (2012), 287-297; Arthur Remillard, "Sports and Religion in America," *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Religion* (2016); Clifford Putney, *Muscular Christianity: Manhood and Sports in Protestant America, 1880–1920* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001); Robert Higgs, *God in the Stadium: Sports and Religion in America* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2015); Jeffrey Scholes and Raphael Sassower, *Religion and Sports in American Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2013); William Baker, *Playing with God: Religion and Modern Sport* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007). For works that engage more theological

engagement with religion, see Christopher Evans and William Herzog II, eds., *The Faith of 50 Million: Baseball, Religion, and American Culture* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002); Robert Ellis, *The Games People Play: Theology, Religion, and Sport* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2014); Andrew Edgar, "Sport as Liturgy: Towards a Radical Orthodoxy of Sport," *Studies in Christian Ethics*, vol. 25, no. 1 (2012): 20-34. Some scholars have even made the comparison of sports to religion. See works such as Joseph L. Price, *From Season to Season: Sports as American Religion* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2001); Eric Bain-Selbo and D. Gregory Sapp, *Understanding Sport as Religious Phenomenon* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016); Arthur Remillard, "From Muscular Christianity to Divine Madness: Sports and/as Religion in America," in *Faith in America: Changes, Challenges, and a New Spirituality*, ed. Charles H. Lippy (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2006); Bruce David Forbes and Jeffrey H. Mahan, eds., *Religion and Popular Culture in America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000). For more on theoretical approaches to the study of religion and sport, see Zachary Smith and Steven Waller, "Surveying the Landscape of Theories and Frameworks in the Study of Sport and Religion: An Interdisciplinary Approach," *Journal of the Christian Society for Kinesiology, Leisure and Sport Studies*, vol. 6, no. 1 (2018): 1-20.

4 Krattenmaker, *Onward Christian Athletes*. See also Gary Laderman, *Sacred Matters: Celebrity Worship, Sexual Ecstasies, the Living Dead, and Other Signs of Religious Life in the United States* (New York: New Press, 2009). For more on religion and celebrity, see Kathryn Lofton, *Oprah: The Gospel of an Icon* (Berkley: University of California Press, 2011).

5 See Annie Blazer, *Playing for God: Evangelical Women and the Unintended Consequences of Sport Ministry* (New York: New York University Press, 2015).

6 Binkley was founded as a Southern Baptist congregation and shortly thereafter also joined the American Baptist Churches USA. In the 1980s, Binkley joined the Alliance of Baptists. For more on the Alliance of Baptists, see Andrew Gardner, *Reimagining Zion: A History of the Alliance of Baptists* (Macon, GA: Nurturing Faith, 2015).

7 See Timothy Chandler and Tara Magdalinski, eds., *With God on Their Side: Sport in the Service of Religion* (New York: Routledge, 2002).

8 Dean Smith, *A Coach's Life: My 40 Years in College Basketball* (New York: Random House, 1999), 17-18.

9 Ibid., 1-7.

10 Ibid., 34-35.

11 Ibid., 44.

12 Ibid., 93.

13 Carolyn DuPont, *Mississippi Praying: Southern White Evangelicals and the Civil Rights Movement, 1945–1975* (New York: New York University Press, 2013).

14 Robert Seymour, *'Whites Only' A Pastor's Retrospective on Signs of the New South* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1991), 35.

15 Smith, *A Coach's Life*, 93-94.

16 "Yearbook 1960–1961," Reel 6, *BMBCA*.

17 Seymour, *'Whites Only,'* 87.

18 Smith, *A Coach's Life,* 95-96; Seymour, *'Whites Only,'* 103; Art Chansky, *Game Changers: Dean Smith, Charlie Scott, and the Era That Transformed a Southern College Town* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2018), 34-35.

19 "Long Ago, He Won the Big One," *Sports Illustrated*, 29 November 1982, 114.

20 Ibid., 116.

21 Smith, *A Coach's Life*, 97.

22 "Long Ago, He Won the Big One," 106.

23 Chansky, *Game Changers*, 53-54.

24 "Long Ago, He Won the Big One," 116.

25 Chansky, *Game Changers,* 71-74.

26 Smith, *A Coach's Life,* 98.

27 Chansky, *Game Changers*, 74-75.

28 Howard Lee, *The Courage to Lead*, 103.

29 Smith, *A Coach's Life*, 102; Chansky, *Game Changers*, 74-75.

30 See Jeffrey Scholes, "Religion, Race, and Sports," in *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Race in American History*, Paul Harvey and Kathryn Gin Lum, eds. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 304-317.

31 Smith, *A Coach's Life*, 114.

32 Ibid., 257.

33 Seth Kotch, *Lethal State: A History of the Death Penalty in North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2019), 7.

34 "Kermit Smith case is acid test for opponents of death penalty," *News and Observer*, 30 December 1994.

35 Smith, *A Coach's Life,* 263.

36 "Dean Smith takes stand against the death penalty," *Chapel Hill News*, 6 November 1998; "Ex-coach takes on a higher cause," *Chicago Tribune*, 9 February 2003.

37 Smith, *A Coach's Life*, 263.

38 Statement quoted in "John Thomas NOLAND Jr.," https://murderpedia.org/male.N/n1/noland-john-thomas.htm (accessed 14 February 2021).

39 Smith, *A Coach's Life*, 264.

40 Licensing is different from ordination. Ordination is typically reserved for individuals who have received a specific call to ministry, whereas licensing is often utilized for individuals who are in the process of completing a theological course of study and do not have a vocational ministerial position.

41 Smith, *A Coach's Life*, 268.

42 Ibid., 258.

43 "Long Ago, He Won the Big One," 114.

Missouri Baptists:

Freedom of Conscience and Unity

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Living in a border state, and specifically a state in which slavery was legal but that did not secede from the Union, Baptists in nineteenth-century Missouri found themselves in a constant tension of living, working, and worshipping as a community of anti-slavery Unionists, pro-slavery Unionists, and pro-slavery Confederates.

In the years leading up to the Civil War, the Missouri Baptist General Association (MBGA) refused to make the owning of enslaved persons a test of fellowship or even a moral issue. When the war ended, anti-slavery Baptists in St. Louis formed a new state organization, the Missouri Baptist State Convention (MBSC), that advocated the equality of all persons in the church, regardless of race or color.

But the MBSC also endorsed the Test Oath contained in the new state constitution of 1865 (a very "un-Baptist" action). Unfortunately, the furor surrounding the Test Oath overwhelmed the cause of equality. In August of 1867, the MBSC joined the MBGA with no conditions, abandoning its commitment to equality.

Histories of Missouri Baptists[1]

Three early histories of Missouri Baptists include accounts of the short-lived Missouri Baptist State Convention (1865–1868). R.S. Duncan, writing in 1882, characterized the MBSC as organized "under the influence ... of sectional feeling, and ... as an almost semi-political institution."[2]

W. Pope Yeaman observed in 1899: "It was manifest that the aim of the convention was to unite the 'loyal Baptists' of the state... by which we are to understand that none but the adherents to the union of the states and the then current Federal administration were qualified for membership... This all evidently meant the establishment of an ecclesiastical order upon a political basis."[3]

R.S. Douglas, writing almost seventy years after the Civil War, observed: "The organization of a new general body called the Missouri Baptist [State] Convention was but another outgrowth of the feeling on the part of Northern sympathizers that those who favored the South were traitors and not to be in fellowship with the loyal churches and Christians of the North."[4]

Missouri Baptist General Association

The Missouri Baptist General Association was founded in 1834 by persons who were white and resided from Columbia (Boone County) west to Kansas City (Jackson County). There were also influential persons from Hannibal and Palmyra (Marion County). These persons moved to Missouri primarily from Kentucky and Virginia, bringing with them their Baptist identity as Christians, their denominational structure, and their practice of slaveholding.

From 1834 to 1860, the annual meetings of the MBGA were held in the counties of Boone, Callaway, Clay, Cooper, Howard, Lafayette, Marion, Monroe, and Saline. All these counties border the Missouri River with the exception of Marion, which borders the Mississippi River, and Monroe, which does not border a river. These counties, where the MBGA was strongest, had significant populations of enslaved persons and were known as "Little Dixie."[5] The geographical identity of the MBGA was primarily rural.

Founders and early leaders of the MBGA owned enslaved persons. Rev. Thomas Fristoe of Howard County, considered one

of the four founders of the MBGA, is on record in 1850 as owning several enslaved persons: eight males and six females ranging in age from two to forty.[6] From 1834 to 1860, six of the nine moderators owned enslaved persons, as did at least five of the first nine recording secretaries and four of the first five treasurers.[7] Yeaman wrote,

> At that time [1849] the Baptists in Missouri were mainly slave holders. And whatever may have been their opinions of the righteousness or unrighteousness of the system of labor, it was an existing institution and all measures calculated to disturb the relation of master and slave were naturally irritating to the former. These slave holders were not slave traders. They had inherited the institution and the slaves.[8]

The money to support the MBGA and its mission work/missionaries came from business and agriculture that benefited from the labor of enslaved persons. Not all persons in the MBGA were owners of enslaved persons, but these churches, district associations, and the MBGA accepted, condoned, and profited from enslaved labor.

There was intentional effort at Association meetings to prevent the ownership of enslaved persons from being a topic of discussion/debate. At the 1854 meeting, W.M. McPherson, a member of Second Baptist Church in St. Louis, though not an owner of enslaved persons, introduced the following motion:

> Whereas, The objects of this Association being to promote the preaching of the gospel and the spread of Divine Truth in this state, Therefore: Resolved, That the appointment of committees be limited to the following subjects, viz.: On preaching, on nominations, on Sunday School, on list of ministers, on finance, on the best means of supplying the home field.[9]

Yeaman interpreted the motion as: "This action was taken, no doubt, in response to a feeling somewhat prevalent that the Association could not under its constitution consider any subject not immediately connected with the work in the state."[10] The motion silenced the voices of anti-slavery Baptists at MBGA meetings. In selecting the locations for its meetings, leadership, and procedures, the Association ensured that owners of enslaved persons were in control and that opposition to slavery was muted.

The Western Watchman

The Baptists of Missouri were able to engage the issue of enslaved persons in the pages of their Baptist state newspaper, *The Western Watchman*. In the decade preceding the Civil War, *Watchman* editors T.W. Ustick, John Mason Peck, and William Crowell published articles on the social and moral issues related to both free and enslaved African Americans. From November, 1850 to December, 1851, twelve items appeared in the *Watchman* dealing with Black Americans and/or slavery. More than half of these items discussed colonization. Topics included:

- Liberia as the best option for free U.S. Negroes
- colonization eliminating the West Africa slave trade
- colonization as the remedy for the evil of U.S. slavery
- the hostility of U.S. society to Blacks
- a success story of one American Black who colonized to Liberia
- arguments for moderation from the extremes of abolitionism and secession
- reason/patriotism/prudence in the face of growing division
- advice from a northern minister to a southern minister to be indirect and subtle when speaking of slavery
- condemnation for those in both North and South who wanted to abolish the federal government
- a faithful enslaved person who was rewarded with emancipation
- how Christian masters should treat enslaved persons
- refusal to obey fugitive slave laws not equivalent to civil disobedience
- equality of Blacks and Whites as impractical

Articles dealing with slavery were much less frequent in 1852 and 1853. Two of the four items supported colonization, and one featured the example of a "pious Negro." This item intended to portray a Black person in a favorable way. A final item described the life of enslaved persons in Cuba, indirectly arguing for humane treatment of enslaved persons in the United States. There were no items in *The Western Watchman* that advocated abolitionism or any radical anti-slavery positions.

Pro-slavery Baptists were dissatisfied with the newspaper and its editors. W. Pope Yeaman wrote that as early as 1851, MBGA leaders were dissatisfied with *The Western Watchman* because of its allegedly anti-slavery editorials, saying "It was not reasonable to expect hearty sympathy and active support of a journal that antagonized the sentiment and domestic interests of its readers."[11] Echoing Yeaman, Douglas wrote: "However, there was a growing dissatisfaction with this paper.... Many Missouri Baptists were slaveowners and Crowell's stand against slaves was unpleasing to many Baptists in the state."[12] As readership and subscriptions declined, Crowell rarely printed articles related to slavery.

The Western Watchman ceased publication in 1861. Both pro-slavery and anti-slavery Baptists were unsuccessful in their efforts to start another newspaper during the war years. In 1865, the MBSC began publishing the *Baptist Record*, while the MBGA launched the *Missouri Baptist Journal*. In 1868, in an effort to promote unity among Baptists in the state, these two papers merged to become *The Central Baptist*.

The War Years in Central and Western Missouri

The geographical area of the state in which churches in the Missouri Baptist General Association were also part of the state where military and guerilla activity was intense (i.e. the nine counties listed earlier plus Jackson County). This activity included the actions of "bushwackers" (pro-Confederate guerrilla groups based in Missouri who conducted raids into Kansas and in Missouri that were destructive and fatal) and the incursion of "jayhawkers" (pro-Union guerrilla groups based in Kansas who conducted raids into Missouri that were likewise violent and stole slaves). The presence of Federal troops to counter the guerrilla groups and enforce order, in addition to the 1864 military campaign of Gen. Sterling Price's Confederate army that moved through central and western Missouri before retreating into Arkansas, added to the militarized atmosphere of the region. This war activity disrupted all manner of life, including churches and denominational meetings. The itinerant violence created not only suffering, but also animosity between and within communities that made life after the war more difficult.

A pivotal event of the war years for pro-slavery Baptists came at the 1862 MBGA meeting at Rehoboth Church in Saline County. The meeting was interrupted by Federal soldiers. Yeaman recounts:

> The men of the congregation, ministers and all, were ordered out of the house and into line. Then commenced an inquisition. Each man was closely interrogated as to his name and place of residence. The person of each was searched, ostensibly for treasonable papers.... a number of good citizens who were put under arrest at the meeting house, were conveyed as prisoners to the Federal militia station at Marshall, twelve miles away.[13]

As a result of this incident, the MBGA appointed a committee of three to write a circular letter to the churches in the Association, giving guidance for Christian behavior in wartime situations. The letter counseled Missouri Baptists to obey civil authorities, resist malice and revenge, and to love the brethren with different views. The letter read:

> *To the Members of the Baptist Churches in the State of Missouri:*
>
> Dear Brethren: The undersigned were appointed, by the General Association at her recent meeting, held with the Rehoboth Church in Saline Ccounty, a committee to address to you the following Circular Letter, the design of which is to wish you Grace, Mercy and Peace, from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, and to offer a word of advice and exhortation. Then, dear brethren, suffer the word of exhortation.
>
> We are living in a period which our eyes, a few years since, never expected to see. It is a day of temptation and an hour of darkness. A day, therefore, when peculiar dangers, of a moral, as well as a physical nature, surround the child of God. One having no information or experience on the subject, would suppose that such a time would be favorable to personal piety, causing Christians to cleave more closely unto the Lord, and to prize more highly the consolations and hopes of religion; but it is not so. During such times the love of many waxes cold. (Matt. xxiv. 12.)
>
> The temptations to which we are peculiarly liable, during such a time, are:
>
> 1. Insubordination to the powers that be.
> 2. Resentment, Malice and Revenge, when we suffer personal wrongs.
> 3. Alienation of affection towards our brethren who may differ from us, particularly on national matters.
> 4. General negligence touching our Religion, Church, and Denominational obligations.
>
> Brethren, allow us to dwell a moment upon each of these specifications.
>
> Touching the first specification, we would say, let the Word of God be your rule, the Love of God your motive, and the Glory of God your end. Consult the following portions of Scripture: Rom. xiii. 1-8 inclusive; Acts v. 29; (Comp. Acts iv. 19); and I Cor. x. 31. Under existing circumstances, how much wisdom do we need! Well, if any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God. (James, i. 5.)
>
> Touching the second, consult the following texts: Rom. xii. 18, 19, 20, 21. Prov. xxiv. 17, 29. Eph. iv. 26, 27. I Peter, ii. 20, 21, 22, 23. Ponder these passages, brethren, and mingle your mediations with earnest prayer.

> Touching the third, consider John xiii. 34. xv. 12, 13. I John ii. 10, 11, iii. 14, 15. iv. 20. v. 1. Math. xxv. 39 and 40 inclusive. These passages teach two things which we wish particularly to note. 1. That the relation which Christians are brought into is superior to every other relation. Our brother in Christ sustains a relationship to us superior to father, mother, brother, sister, neighbor, citizen, etc., etc. 2. We should live and treat our Christian brethren just as we love and would treat our Saviour. ... Brethren, in a poor Christian we see a poor Christ; how do we treat Him in that poor Christian? ...
>
> Touching the fourth, allow us to say, 1st, we mean by our "religious" duties those which more immediately belong to us as individual Christians – our private duties. When we "lose our first love," or when our love begins to "wax cold;" here it may be first detected. ... Secondly, our Church duties are those which are obligatory by virtue of our being members of the Church. It is the duty of a Church member "not to forsake the assembling of himself" with the brotherhood. (Heb. x. 25.) ... He should avail himself of all the means of Grace, making that use of them which their Great Giver designed. (See Eph. iv. 11, 12, 13.)
>
> Thirdly, consider our denominational duties. These stand connected with all our denominational enterprises. O how greatly are these suffering! Some of our District Associations have ceased to meet; and our General Association was, last year this, almost a failure. ... Brethren, if it shall be possible, come to the next meeting of this body. ... And that we may have the opportunity, let us be earnestly and constantly engaged at the throne of Grace for the cessation of war, the establishment of Justice, and Equity, and Right, and Purity, and Union, and Peace, according to the will of God.
>
> *Committing you to Him who is his people's refuge and strength, and very present help in trouble, we remain, dear brethren, yours in Christ. A. P. WILLIAMS, WM. C. LIGON, THOS. FRISTOE.*[14]

The War Years in St. Louis

Galusha Anderson was pastor of Second Baptist Church in St. Louis from 1858–1866, and served as the first president of the Missouri Baptist State Convention. In an account of the war years in St. Louis, he characterized the city in 1860 as one where "pro-slavery sentiments prevailed" but the leading businessmen of the city were quietly, conservatively, yet positively, opposed to slavery."[15] The Baptists of St. Louis, like their brethren in the Missouri Baptist General Association, maintained a silence about the morality of slavery for the sake of peace in the churches. Anderson writes that preachers felt their work was primarily spiritual, so they remained silent on political issues so as not to divide their congregations where diverse views were present.[16] In chapter 8, "Pulpit and Press," Anderson recounts two situations that led him to speak from the pulpit about secession.

First, "At the Sunday morning service I usually prayed for the President and his advisers. So long as Mr. Buchanan was in office this appeared to be agreeable to all; but no sooner was Mr. Lincoln inaugurated than some began to object to this part of my prayer"[17] A layperson in his church said to Anderson, "Ah! That is just the sore point; they think that praying for Lincoln is partisan, that it is praying against the South; and can't you for the sake of peace forego it?"[18] Anderson resolved, "When the pews in opposition to good government go so far as to attempt to dictate the prayers of the pulpit and to repress all petitions for the President, the pulpit must either become subject to the pews or squarely assert and defend its independence."[19]

The second situation involved a secession flag. "It fluttered over Sixth Street, about half a square from my church." He explained, "going to and fro in the discharge of my duties, I was compelled to pass beneath it. ... I had reached the limit of my patience and could no longer mutely endure the flaunting of disloyalty. A fire was fiercely burning within my bones. I felt that it must have vent, or I should be consumed."[20] Anderson preached a Sunday evening sermon from Romans 13, "The Duty of Obedience to Established Government." When Anderson impressed upon his church members that Christians are enjoined by Scripture to obey civil government, secessionist members left Second Baptist Church.[21] Anderson rooted his decision to speak from the pulpit about secession in the Baptist principle of freedom of conscience. He also related an incident from the end of the war years:

> Thirty days after the assassination of Mr. Lincoln, the Baptist Missionary Societies of the North held, by urgent invitation, their May Meetings in our city... The churches of this great denomination had long been divided by slavery; but now the delegates from the churches of the North came to hold out the olive branch to their brethren of the South on what had been slave soil... Southern Baptists, except from the national capital, did not come to us. The olive branch seemed to be held out in vain. The brotherly act was misconstrued. The coming of these Northern missionary societies to our city was regarded as an unwarrantable invasion of Southern soil.[22]

The same week as the May Meetings of the Baptist Missionary Societies, a group of St. Louis pastors issued a call "that the loyal Baptist churches throughout the State of Missouri be requested to send their pastors and

delegates to meet at Hannibal, on Friday, September 29th, 1865, at the hour of 10 o'clock, A. M., for the purpose of forming a Baptist State Convention."[23]

Anderson discusses in detail the two state constitutional conventions held in St. Louis that bookended this period (1861 and 1865), noting that the Convention of 1861 was almost unanimously pro-slavery (no abolitionist delegates) and Unionist. However, within Unionism, there were conditional and unconditional positions. The primary "condition" for "conditional Unionism" was maintaining the legality of slavery in Missouri and in the seceding states. There was enough agreement for the 1861 convention to vote not to secede from the Union. The second state constitutional convention was held in St. Louis, January 6–April 10, 1865. On the fifth day of the convention, January 11, the delegates passed an ordinance eliminating slavery in Missouri.[24] The Convention wrote and adopted a new state constitution, which fostered deeper division and animosity in that it contained what was called an "Oath of Loyalty" that became known as the "Test Oath."[25]

Test Oath

The Test Oath was punitive and backward-looking. Any citizen of the state who was pro-Confederate, in any way or to any degree, was denied the right to vote, hold public office, or practice any number of professions. Article II, Section 9 of the new constitution stipulated:

> ... nor shall any person, after the expiration of sixty days after this constitution takes effect, be permitted to practice as an attorney or counsellor at law; nor, after that time, shall any person be competent as a bishop, priest, deacon, minister, elder, or other clergy man of nay religious persuasion, sect, or denomination, to teach, or preach, or solemnize marriages, unless such person shall have first taken, subscribed and filed said oath.[26]

If a minister preached in violation of the Test Oath, that minister was liable to a $500 fine and six months imprisonment, or both. If a minister took the Test Oath and then was found to have done so perjuriously, that minister could be imprisoned for two years.

The Missouri Baptist General Association called a meeting in Palmyra in the spring of 1865 in response to the Test Oath. The leaders appointed a committee to write a statement responding to the Test Oath.

The statement was to be presented at the Association's regular annual meeting in August of that year in Booneville. The statement carefully balanced obedience to government with separation of church and state:

> ... We can not, therefore, but express sorrow, that the new constitution of the state of Missouri requires of our ministry a certain oath before they can lawfully discharge the duties of their sacred office; for,
> 1. This ordinance they regard as a violation of the spirit of the Federal constitution.
> 2. It is inconsistent with the declaration of rights of the new constitution.
> 3. It presupposes the right of the magistrate to come between the minister and the Great Bishop and Shepherd of Souls, from whom alone the commission to preach is derived.
> 4. It is plainly averse to the teachings of the New Testament, which directs us to render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's.
> ... But let it be distinctly understood that while we submit this paper as the expression of the Baptist denomination, we do at the same time recognize the authority of the state in all temporal matters, and do exhort our brethren to hold them in honor who rule over us, and as much as lieth in them to live peaceably with all men. Therefore,
> Resolved,
> 1. That it is our belief that civil government is of divine appointment, for the good order of society; that magistrates are to be obeyed, except in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the only Lord of the conscience and Prince of the Kings of earth.
> 2. That we, therefore, hold ourselves bound (this limitation understood) to be good and law abiding citizens.
> 3. That the requiring of this or any other oath of us, as a condition upon which we are to exercise our ministerial functions, is opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ.
> 4. That it is our solemn duty to decline it, choosing as the servants of God did in the primitive churches, to obey God rather than man.
> 5. That we do this in no rebellious or captious spirit, but in order to maintain a pure conscience in the sight of God, by whom we are finally to be judged.
> 6. That we earnestly request a modification of the constitution of the state in this particular, as we love our state and wish to remain in it and have a perfect harmony between its requirements and our ministerial duty.[27]

There was clearly an issue of freedom of conscience regarding the Test Oath. A significant majority of ministers in the MBGA resisted the Oath on Baptist principles. Still, resisting the Test Oath allowed the ministers to bypass a substantive discussion of the morally repugnant practice of the enslavement of human beings and the need for repentance on their part. The "Circular Letter" affirmed that the MBGA advocated obedience to the

law while the "Report of the Committee on Relation of the Churches to Civil Government" made clear that, in the specific case of the Test Oath, Baptists must exercise freedom of conscience.

Missouri Baptist State Convention

In 1865 a small group of Baptist churches in Missouri, working in concert with the American Baptist Home Mission Society, formed a state organization separate from the Missouri Baptist General Association. The Missouri Baptist State Convention was similar to the Missouri Baptist General Association in its mission to evangelize the state and establish churches. There were two distinctions in its original preamble and resolution.

First, there was an assumption that the MBGA was defunct, noting that "neither of the Baptist state associations in Missouri have, to the best of our knowledge and belief held a meeting for the past two years."[28] The MBSC went on to describe the state of Baptist work in Missouri as "religious destitution." Second, there was the judgment that the new Baptist state convention be composed of "loyal" churches.[29]

Both of these distinctions raised the ire of the Baptists in the MBGA and fostered divisiveness among Baptist churches and associations in the state. The leaders of the MBSC stressed their loyalty to the U.S. government and to the State of Missouri. Rev. W.S. Ingham proposed the following resolution at the 1865 meeting:

> That the Missouri Baptist Convention, now in session in Hannibal, rejoice in the restoration of peace and the return of civil reign throughout our beloved country to a very great extent, but cannot withhold an expression of our unalterable attachment to our Government, both National and State, and here and now do tender to the Governments of the United States and of the State of Missouri the assurance of our unwavering fidelity.[30]

When he refers to "blunders" made by the MBSC, R.S. Duncan means the degree to which partisan perspectives influenced the Convention.[31] The rush to judgment of fellow Missouri Baptists on the basis of a Test Oath promulgated by civil government and using that Test Oath to decide fellowship within the Baptist community lacked thoughtfulness and prompted questions as to its motivation. The MBSC appeared to be siding with the radical Republican element at work in the state. It also

appeared to be rejecting the Baptist principle of freedom of conscience and separation of church and state. A paragraph in the report of the Committee on Religious Destitution came back to haunt the MBSC:

> Before the war there were in this State, 450 Baptist ministers, and 750 Baptist churches, having 45,000 members; now there are, perhaps, 50 qualified ministers, and 100 churches holding regular services. From this meagre statement it will be seen that the destitution is great, and this Convention will find an ample and needy field opening before it.[32]

In 1866, the term "religious destitution" was softened when this committee was renamed the Committee on the Condition of Churches.[33]

In what may be its most remarkable idea, the MBSC sought inclusion with regard to race and color. At the 1865 meeting a resolution titled "The Freedmen" resolved:

> That the many thousands of Freedmen in Missouri, a large majority of whom are already Baptists, either by profession or preference, and who have shown a commendable degree of enterprize [sic] and liberality in the maintenance of their religious institutions, demand and should receive the sympathy and fostering care of this Convention. 2. Resolved, That the Colored Baptist Churches of this State are hereby invited to send delegates and represent themselves in this body, and to cooperate with us in our work of evangelization.[34]

The Report of the Executive Board for 1866 included a section, "The Colored Churches," that urged the MBSC to fund evangelists, assist churches to buy land and erect buildings, and provide for ministerial education.[35] The Report of the Executive Board for 1867 again stressed the need for church buildings and ministerial education.[36] Time was allotted at this meeting to discuss the question, "The claims of the colored people of the State and what more can be done to carry them the Gospel, and to elevate their ministry?" The minutes note that Black ministers were present and participated in this discussion. A resolution was adopted:

> Resolved, That we deem an educated colored ministry of vital importance to the interests of the colored churches of the State; that measures should be at once adopted to seek out young colored brethren who are called of god to the ministry, and to give them a thorough education, and to give those already in the ministry such education as may qualify them to instruct those under their care.[37]

The experience of Galusha Anderson and other ministers of Baptist churches in St. Louis during the war years yielded a model for Baptist church work in the city that included racial equity. When Baptists of the MBGA did not participate in the May 1865 meetings of the Baptist Missionary Societies of the North held in St. Louis, the St. Louis pastors decided to expand their model of church work over the entire state. In its founding constitution the MBSC stipulated that two-thirds of the thirty members of its executive board be from St. Louis, ensuring that the St. Louis perspective was dominant on the board.[38]

Unity for Baptist Organizations in Missouri

After the 1866 meeting in Kansas City, individuals within the Missouri Baptist State Convention began conversations with similarly-minded persons in the Missouri Baptist General Association regarding merging the two organizations. Both organizations were struggling. Continued competition would render both incapable of effective ministry. At the 1867 Convention meeting in Jefferson City, the report of the executive board included the following paper that proposed consolidation with three conditions:

> 1st. A continuance of such auxiliary relation to the American Baptist Home Mission Society as shall secure their sympathy and aid in our work as a consolidated society. 2nd. A continuance of the location of the board in St. Louis, as the only proper and most effective base of operations. To neglect making this demand, we believe to be a betrayal of the trust imposed in us as a state organization for evangelizing purposes. 3rd. A clear recognition of the baptistic doctrine that all Baptists, without reference to race or color, have an equal right to a participancy in our counsels, immunities and privileges. While this question is pending your board believe it to be their duty to adhere to the principles already adopted as a rule by the board – to avoid all possible collisions with the General Association and its friends, and to cultivate the things that make for peace.[39]

Before adjourning, the Convention passed a resolution appointing a committee to attend the Association's meeting in Lexington the next month and to formally negotiate a union. In these conditions are found the ongoing frustration of the St Louis Baptists with the General Association: its sole attachment to the Southern Baptist Convention in neglect of the

American Baptist societies; its dogged commitment to be focused on the rural parts of the state and not to invest money and missionaries in the growing urban centers of the state; and its willingness to tolerate slavery.

When representatives of the MBSC attended the MBGA meeting in Lexington in October of 1867 at the urging of A.H. Burlingham—pastor of Second Baptist Church, St. Louis, and a member of the Convention's negotiating committee—all the conditions were dropped, and the Association agreed to the merger with the MBSC.[40] Histories of Missouri Baptists hint that the Lexington meeting was not without tension. Yeaman writes,

> Inasmuch as many of the good citizens of the state were under the humiliating embarrassment of civil disenfranchisement by operation of the new state constitution, and in inasmuch as the bitterness engendered by the late war of the states had not been entirely removed from all hearts, it is not strange that there were some unpleasant aspects to the Lexington meeting. That meeting was, however, the beginning of the better day.[41]

Douglas notes that "There were some unpleasant things but it was evident that peace and returning prosperity were to be expected. The fact that the Missouri Baptist [State] Convention did not meet again and that its former members were received into the Missouri Baptist General Association— not only received, but gladly welcomed—was an indication of a new order of things in Missouri."[42]

Conclusion

There are several ways to assess the results of the merger between the Missouri Baptist State Convention and the Missouri Baptist General Association. Regarding leadership, the persons named in leadership for the MBSC do not appear in positions of leadership for the MBGA. The leadership for the Association continued to come from the geographical district associations as before. Seven persons served as moderator of the MBGA from the time of the merger to 1896. Of those seven, at least five formerly owned enslaved persons. Three persons from the MBSC were appointed to the William Jewell College Board of Trustees: A.H. Burlingham, Nathan Cole, and D.L. Shouse. Burlingham and Cole were from St. Louis, rarely attended Jewell board meetings, and left the board soon after election. Shouse, from Kansas City, had a long and significant service on the Jewell board.

Regarding auxiliary affiliation with American Baptist societies or the Southern Baptist Convention, at its 1869 meeting in Columbia the MBGA "voted to drop that part of the constitution which made the Association auxiliary to the Southern Baptist Convention." Douglas understands this action to be the result of "the presence in the association of representatives of the former State Convention."[43] For thirty years the MBGA did not have an official auxiliary relationship with a national mission society. In 1899, the Association adopted the "Missouri Plan" that divided "offerings for Home and Foreign Missions among the Northern Baptist Missionary Societies and the Missionary Boards of the Southern Baptist Convention."[44] The Missouri Plan remained in place until 1919 when the MBGA adopted a policy of single alignment with the Southern Baptist Convention. Several churches, including Third Baptist Church in St. Louis, and William Jewell College continued to be connected to both national organizations.

Regarding the location of the Association's executive board, at the annual meeting of the MBGA in Macon in 1873 the Association resolved that "for the next year the Executive Board be located at St. Louis ..."[45] The executive board remained in St. Louis at least until 1878. Yeaman comments on this move, saying, "subsequent results did not meet expectations nor vindicate the act of removal."[46]

Regarding the Association's connection with rural communities, from the time of the merger to its semi-centennial in 1884 there were eighteen annual meetings of the MBGA. Of these meetings, two were held in St. Louis, one in Kansas City, and fifteen in the counties of central and western Missouri known as Little Dixie or in other rural counties.

Regarding the state convention's call for all Baptists, without reference to race or color, to be allowed to participate in the meetings and councils, the minutes of the annual meetings of the Association following the merger with the state convention begin to mention mission work with colored churches in the same manner as the minutes of the Convention annual meetings, though the references are condescending and paternal. In 1868, a resolution at the Association's annual meeting recommended that Black churches form their own General Association.[47]

William Jewell College re-opened in 1868, and in 1871 a Board of Ministerial Education was established by the MBGA to financially support ministerial students at the college. This opportunity was not available to

Black churches because Jewell did not admit Black American students until 1960. R.S. Duncan's earliest history of the Baptists in Missouri devotes the last four or so pages (of 932 total) to the African-American churches of Missouri.

The State Constitutional Convention of 1865 and its Test Oath broke wide open a divide already present within Missouri Baptists. The Missouri Baptist State Convention formed and functioned within the "destitution" that was Missouri Baptist life in the years following the Civil War. The goal of the Convention was to reshape Baptist mission and church work in Missouri to a St. Louis model, a model that was urban-focused and included a new way for Baptists of all races and colors to work and worship together. However, the group's embrace of the Test Oath was un-Baptist and overshadowed the goodness of their model. The things about which the MBSC was passionate seem to have been lost or reduced in light of the push to re-unify Baptists in Missouri. The MBGA had little interest in the St. Louis model. Among Missouri Baptists, unity took precedence over the difficult work of resolving conflict and division. Placing more value on liberty of conscience than unity may have allowed the leaders of the MBSC to bless broken ties in hopes of becoming more diverse, inclusive, and loving (and probably smaller) communities of believers.

Notes

1 Five histories of the Missouri Baptist General Association were written, three in the first 60 years of its existence, one at its centennial, and one at its 150th anniversary. R.S. Duncan, *A History of the Baptists in Missouri: Embracing an Account of the Organization and Growth of Baptist Churches and Associations; Biographical Sketches of Ministers of the Gospel and Other Prominent Members of the Denomination; The Founding of Baptist Institutions, Periodicals, etc.* (St. Louis: Scammell & Co. Publishers, 1882). *Semi-Centennial Memorial (1834–1884) Missouri Baptist General Association: Containing Sermons, Addresses, Etc., in Commemoration of Its Fiftieth Anniversary* (Columbia, MO: The Herald Printing Establishment, 1885). W. Pope Yeaman, *History of the Missouri Baptist General Association* (Columbia, MO: E.W. Stephens Press, 1899). R.S. Douglas, *History of Missouri Baptists, Published by the Executive Board of the Missouri Baptist General Association* (Kansas City, MO: Western Baptist Publishing Co., 1934). J. Gordon Kingsley, *Frontiers: The Story of the Missouri Baptist Convention* (Jefferson City: Missouri Baptist Historical Commission, 1983). This was a popular and readable history of Missouri Baptists written by a president of William Jewell College endorsed by the Missouri Baptist Historical Society. The minutes of MBGA annual

meetings and the annual reports of local Baptist associations are accessible in the Partee Missouri Baptist Archive at William Jewell College. The Archive contains issues of Missouri Baptist newspapers *The Western Watchman, Central Baptist,* and *Word and Way.*

2 Duncan, *Baptists in Missouri*, 687.

3 Yeaman, *General Association*, 134-35.

4 Douglas, *Missouri Baptists*, 238.

5 A View of the Slave Population of Missouri 1860–1869 (map), https://dl.mospace.umsystem.edu/umsl/islandora/object/umsl%3A31624.

6 Records of MO Slaveowners 1850, Howard County, p. 15, https://s1.sos.mo.gov/records/archives/census/pages/slave.

7 Records of MO Slaveowners 1850 by County: Moderators: James Suggett, Callaway Co.; Urial Sebree, Howard Co.; Roland Hughes, Howard Co.; William Carson, Marion Co.; David Hickman, Boone Co.; R.E. McDaniel, Saline Co. Recording Secretaries: R.S. Thomas, Boone Co.; William Carson, Marion, Co.; Jordan O'Bryan, Cooper Co.; Wade M. Jackson, Howard Co.; M.F. Price, Lafayette Co.; W.M. Bell, Saline Co. Treasurers: Samuel C. Major, Howard Co.; Roland Hughes, Howard Co.; Wade M. Jackson, Howard Co.; Lewis B. Ely, Carroll Co. https://s1.sos.mo.gov/records/archives/census/pages/slave.

8 Yeaman, *General Association*, 301.

9 Ibid., 4.

10 Ibid.

11 Yeaman, *General Association*, 301.

12 Douglas, *Missouri Baptists*, 472.

13 Yeaman, *General Association*, 120.

14 W.C. Ligon and Thomas Fristoe were owners of enslaved persons. For Fristoe, see note 6. For Ligon, see Records of MO Slaveowners 1850, Carroll County, p. 2, https://s1.sos.mo.gov/records/archives/census/pages/slave. A.P. Williams was not listed as an owner of enslaved persons. Unfortunately for the Baptists of Missouri, Williams, a gifted and respected leader, died in a horse-riding accident in 1868. Here is the Circular Letter in full:

To the Members of the Baptist Churches in the State of Missouri:

Dear Brethren: The undersigned were appointed, by the General Association at her recent meeting, held with the Rehoboth Church in Saline county, a committee to address to you the following Circular Letter, the design of which is to wish you Grace, Mercy and Peace, from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, and to offer a word of advice and exhortation. Then, dear brethren, suffer the word of exhortation.

We are living in a period which our eyes, a few years since, never expected to see. It is a day of temptation and an hour of darkness. A day, therefore, when peculiar dangers, of a moral, as well as a physical nature, surround the child of God. One having no information or experience on the subject, would suppose that such a time would be favorable to personal piety, causing Christians to cleave more closely unto the Lord, and to prize more highly the consolations and hopes of religion; but it is not so. During such times the love of many waxes cold. (Matt. xxiv. 12.)

The temptations to which we are peculiarly liable, during such a time, are –

1. Insubordination to the powers that be.

2. Resentment, Malice and Revenge, when we suffer personal wrongs.

3. Alienation of affection towards our brethren who may differ from us, particularly on national matters.

4. General negligence touching our Religion, Church, and Denominational obligations.

Brethren, allow us to dwell a moment upon each of these specifications.

Touching the first specification, we would say, let the Word of God be your rule, the Love of God your motive, and the Glory of God your end. Consult the following portions of Scripture: Rom. xiii. 1-8 inclusive; Acts v. 29; (Comp. Acts iv. 19); and I Cor. x. 31. Under existing circumstances, how much wisdom do we need! Well, if any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God. (James, i. 5.)

Touching the second, consult the following texts: Rom. xii. 18, 19, 20, 21. Prov. xxiv. 17, 29. Eph. iv. 26, 27. I Peter, ii. 20, 21, 22, 23. Ponder these passages, brethren, and mingle your mediations with earnest prayer.

Touching the third, consider John xiii. 34. xv. 12, 13. I John ii. 10, 11, iii. 14, 15. iv. 20. v. 1. Math. xxv. 39 and 40 inclusive. These passages teach two things which we wish particularly to note. 1. That the relation which Christians are brought into is superior to every other relation. Our brother in Christ sustains a relationship us superior to father, mother, brother, sister, neighbor, citizen, etc., etc. 2. We should live and treat our Christian brethren just as we love and would treat our Saviour. According to the parable of the Virgins, we shall be judged at the last day with reference to the question, have we oil in our vessels? Have we Grace in our hearts? According to the parable of the Talents, we shall be judged with reference to our fidelity to our trust. But, according to the last text referred to above, the question will be, how have we treated Christ in his people? Since our national troubles have commenced, we have known instances of the violation of the law of brotherly love which must have gone to the heart of the Redeemer, and they must be registered for the assizes of that great day, and the utmost stretch of our imaginations can not anticipate what will be his wrathful frown when he shall say: "When I was—ye did so and so unto me." Brethren, in a poor Christian we see a poor Christ; how do we treat Him in that poor Christian? And so we see in a hungry, or thirsty, or sick, or imprisoned Christian, a hungry, thirsty, sick, or imprisoned Jesus! Are we, O! are we worrying, distressing, devouring each other? Forbid it, O, Eternal God!

Touching the fourth, allow us to say, 1st, we mean by our "religious" duties those which more immediately belong to us as individual Christians—our private duties. When we "lose our first love," or when our love begins to "wax cold;" here it may be first detected. A Christian who is truly pious and has the love of God glowing warm in his heart, is faithful and punctual in the performance of his private duties. Then, brethren, suspect yourselves whenever you become indifferent, reluctant, or negligent with respect to these. Secondly, our Church duties are those which are obligatory by virtue of our being members of the Church. It is the duty of a Church member "not to forsake the assembling of himself" with the brotherhood. (Heb. x. 25.) He should attend the house of God, if in his power, every Lord's day. He at least should attend every stated meeting of the Church, whether it be for business, preaching, or prayer. He should avail himself of all the means of Grace, making that use of them which their Great Giver designed. (See Eph. iv. 11, 12, 13.)

Thirdly, consider our denominational duties. These stand connected with all our denominational enterprises. O how greatly are these suffering! Some of our District Associations have ceased to meet; and our General Association was, last year this, almost a failure. The Minutes will show you its present status. They will also show you where the next meeting (if the Lord will) will be held. Brethren, if it shall be possible, come to the next meeting of this body. Come to the Minister's and Deacon's Conference, which will convene on the Thursday preceding the meeting of the Association. And that we may have the opportunity, let us be earnestly and constantly engaged at the throne of Grace for the cessation of war, the establishment of Justice, and Equity, and Right, and Purity, and Union, and Peace, according to the will of God.

Committing you to Him who is his people's refuge and strength, and very present help in trouble, we remain, dear brethren, yours in Christ. A. P. WILLIAMS, WM. C. LIGON, THOS. FRISTOE."

15 Galusha Anderson, *The Story of a Border City in the Civil War* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1908), 9.

16 Ibid., 21. Anderson observed, "Laypeople were also 'nervously anxious to keep the peace.'" 127.

17 Ibid., 124ff.

18 Ibid., 125.

19 Ibid., 126.

20 Ibid.

21 Ibid., 129.

22 Ibid., 365-66. Anderson continued: "Forty years had to pass away, a generation had to die in the wilderness, before, in St. Louis, during the progress of the May Meetings of the same societies, Northern and Southern Baptists, standing face to face, truly fraternized with each other and sang heartily: 'Blest be the tie that binds Our hearts in Christian love.'"

23 *The First Annual Report of the Missouri Baptist State Convention Assembled at Hannibal, Missouri*. September 29-30, 1865 (St. Louis: Clayton & Babington, Book and Job Printers), 6. [Hereafter *Hannibal*]

24 Anderson, *The Story of a Border City*, 343. Anderson's history shows that in 1861, when the first Constitutional Convention was held, the governor and state legislature were secessionist. In 1865 when the second Constitutional Convention was held, the governor and state legislature were majority radical Republican.

25 Article II, Section 3 stated, "At any election held by the people under this constitution, or in pursuance of any law of this state, or under any ordinance or by-law of any municipal corporation, no person shall be deemed a qualified voter, who has ever been in armed hostility to the United States, or to the lawful authorities thereof, or to the government of this state; or has ever given aid, comfort, countenance, or support to persons engaged in such hostility; or has ever, in any manner, adhered to the enemies, foreign or domestic, of the United States, either by contributing to them, or by unlawfully sending within their lines, money, goods, letters, or information; or has ever disloyally held communication with such enemies; or has ever advised or aided any person to enter the service of such enemies; or has ever, by act or word, manifested his adherence to the cause of such enemies, or his desire for their triumph over the arms of the United States, or his sympathy with those engaged in exciting or carrying on rebellion against the United States; or has ever, except under overpowering compulsion, submitted to the authority, or been in the service of the so-called 'Confederate States of America,' with the purpose of adhering to said states or armies; or has ever been a member of, or connected with, any order, society, or organization inimical to the government of the United States, or to the government of this state; or has ever been engaged in guerilla warfare against loyal inhabitants of the United States, or in that description of marauding commonly known as 'bushwacking;' or has ever knowingly and willingly harbored, aided, or countenanced any person so engaged; or has ever coming into or left this state for the purpose of avoiding enrollment for or draft into the military service of the United States; or has ever, with a view to enrollment in the militia of this state, or to escape the performance of duty therein, or for any other purpose, enrolled himself, or authorized himself to be enrolled by or before any officer, as disloyal, or as a Southern sympathizer, or in any other terms indicating his disaffection to the government of the United States in its contest with rebellion, or his sympathy with those engaged in such rebellion; or having ever voted at any election of the people in this state, or any other of the United States, or in any of their territories, or held office in this state, or in any other of the United States, or in any of their territories, or under the United States, shall thereafter have sought or received, under claim of alienage, the protection of any foreign government, in order to secure exemption from military duty, in the militia of this state, or in the army of the United States; nor shall such person be capable of holding

in this state, any office of honor, trust, or profit, under its authority; or of being an officer, councilman, director, trustee, or other manager of any corporation, public or private, now existing or hereafter established by its authority, or of acting as a professor or teacher in any educational institution, or in any common or other school; or of holding any real estate, or other property, in trust for any church, religious society, or congregation. But the foregoing provisions in relation to acts done against the United States shall not apply to any person not a citizen thereof, who shall have committed such acts while in the service of some foreign country at war with the United States, and who has, since such acts, been naturalized, or may hereafter be naturalized, under the laws of the United States; and the oath of loyalty hereinafter prescribed, when taken by such person, shall be considered as taken in such sense." Cited in Duncan, *Baptists in Missouri*, 916-17. The actual Oath of Loyalty read as follows: "I do solemnly swear, that I am well acquainted with the terms of the third section of the second article of the constitution of the State of Missouri, adopted in the year eighteen hundred and sixty-five, and have carefully considered the same; that I have never, directly or indirectly, done any of the ats in said section specified; that I have always been truly and loyally on the side of the United States against all enemies thereof, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the United States, and will support the constitution and laws thereof as the supreme law of the land, any law or ordinance of any state to the contrary notwithstanding; that I will to the best of my ability protect and defend the union of the United States, and not allow the same to be broken up and dissolved, or the government thereof to be destroyed or overthrown, under any circumstances, if in my power to prevent it; that I will support the constitution of the state of Missouri; and that I make this oath without any mental reservation or evasion, and hold it to be binding on me." Cited in Duncan, 917-18.

26 *Journal of the Missouri State Convention* (January 6–April 10, 1865): 258-60. Cited by Duncan, *Baptists in Missouri*, 918.

27 Yeaman, *General Association*, 126-28. Here is the Palmyra Statement in full:

That the Baptists hold no equivocal position on the relations sustained by the churches to the state. While they have taught for ages that Christians owe allegiance to the civil government, in all things belonging to the temporal power, they have likewise held, that the state has no right to interfere with the freedom of conscience, the relations of the ministry to their congregations, and the absolute liberty of the churches in all matters of faith, worship and discipline. For these principles they have suffered in every country. The religious history of Great Britain, the annals of New England, the criminal records of the South, and the present trials of Baptist in Europe all bear witness to the steadfastness of our brethren in maintaining the liberty of the conscience, absolute religious freedom for themselves and for all men.

And the progress of these principles in other religious bodies and in the popular mind, shows that they are not only of divine origin, but that statesmen have discovered their wisdom in ingrafting them upon the laws ordained for the government and order of society.

We can not, therefore, but express sorrow, that the new constitution of the state of Missouri requires of our ministry a certain oath before they can lawfully discharge the duties of their sacred office; for,

1. This ordinance they regard as a violation of the spirit of the Federal constitution.

2. It is inconsistent with the declaration of rights of the new constitution.

3. It presupposes the right of the magistrate to come between the minister and the Great Bishop and Shepherd of Souls, from whom alone the commission to preach is derived.

4. It is plainly averse to the teachings of the New Testament, which directs us to render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's.

We do then most solemnly protest against the enforcement of this oath, and hope that all the ministers of our denomination will remain true to our glorious history, faithful to the express will of our fathers in the associations of olden time, and steadfast in our devotion to our divine master, who has provided us with laws, not only for the government of our churches, but for our guidance in every private trial, in ever public emergency.

But let it be distinctly understood that while we submit this paper as the expression of the Baptist denomination, we do at the same time recognize the authority of the state in all temporal matters, and do exhort our brethren to hold them in honor who rule over us, and as much as lieth in them to live peaceably with all men. Therefore,

Resolved, 1. That it is our belief that civil government is of divine appointment, for the good order of society; that magistrates are to be obeyed, except in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the only Lord of the conscience and Prince of the Kings of earth.

2. That we, therefore, hold ourselves bound (this limitation understood) to be good and law abiding citizens.

3. That the requiring of this or any other oath of us, as a condition upon which we are to exercise our ministerial functions, is opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ.

4. That it is our solemn duty to decline it, choosing as the servants of God did in the primitive churches, to obey God rather than man.

5. That we do this in no rebellious or captious spirit, but in order to maintain a pure conscience in the sight of God, by whom we are finally to be judged.

6. That we earnestly request a modification of the constitution of the state in this particular, as we love our state and wish to remain in it and have a perfect harmony between its requirements and our ministerial duty."

28 Duncan, *Baptists in Missouri*, 683.

29 Ibid.

30 *Hannibal*, 12.

31 Duncan, *Baptists in Missouri*, 687.

32 *Hannibal*, 10.

33 *The Second Annual Report of the Missouri Baptist State Convention Assembled at Kansas City, Missouri*. September 28-29, 1865 (St. Louis: Clayton & Babington, Book and Job Printers), 13. [Hereafter *Kansas City*]

34 *Hannibal*, 11.

35 *Kansas City*, 10.

36 *Minutes of the Third Annual Meeting of the Missouri Baptist State Convention, Held at Jefferson City, Missouri*, September 27-29, 1867 (St. Louis: Baptist Record Printing House), 8. [Hereafter *Jefferson City*]

37 Ibid., 14.

38 *Hannibal*, 4.

39 Some pages of *Jefferson City* found in the Partee Baptist Archive are incomplete. Fortunately, R.S. Duncan includes quoted material from these pages in *Baptists in Missouri*, 685-687. "CONSOLIDATION WITH THE GENERAL ASSOCIATION Soon after the last annual meeting of our society, several brethren connected with the state convention became engaged in correspondence with brethren connected with the General Association, relative to the issues between the two wings of the Baptist denomination in this state. Out of this correspondence grew an informal conference of brethren unofficially representing both bodies, which met in St. Louis and adjourned to meet in Lexington. At this adjourned meeting the brethren of the state convention came in contact with a large number of the prominent brethren of the General Association. The objects of this convention were clearly vindicated in that conference to be the building of our wasted and suffering Zion within the limits of this state—by the collection and efficient distribution of

evangelizing instrumentalities secured by the auxiliary relation to the American Baptist Home Mission Society—this work being done by the efficient agency of a board, scattered as to membership over the entire state, but located as to base of operations in the proper operational center—the city of St. Louis. It was demonstrated that the state convention had no ulterior or selfish object in view, but simply to secure the spread of the gospel and the upbuilding of the Master's kingdom in Missouri. These representations were accorded a respectful hearing and evidently made a strong impression for good upon the minds of many connected with the General Association. Your board are clearly of the opinion that in considering any propositions for the consolidation of Baptists, into one state organization—a consummation devoutly to be wished—there are three things to be strenuously insisted upon by the state convention."

40 A handwritten note by A.H. Burlingham included in the papers of the MBSC preserved in the Partee Missouri Baptist Archive reads, "State Convention & General Association History, Dr. Burlingham at Hannibal—Oct 19/76 "The State Convention dissolved between 1867 &/8 and some said what shall we demand—shall we not require some conditions—I said no! Go to the General Association and knock and they will receive us. We did so and were received."

41 Yeaman, *General Association*, 140.

42 Douglas, *Missouri Baptists*, 240-41.

43 Ibid., 242.

44 John F. Herget, *John Priest Greene: Pastor, Preacher, College President* (Liberty, MO: William Jewell College), 22.

45 Yeaman, *General Association*, 153.

46 Ibid. Yeaman seemed to recognize that the state convention was correct in its criticisms of the MBGA's rural focus. He included a chapter in *General Association* titled "Centers of Population." Yeaman also addressed the problem of auxiliary relationships in the chapter "Agents and Agencies."

47 "Resolved, That although in the providence of God, the colored people do not sustain the same relation to us as formerly, and we cannot reach them now as then, and although they seem inclined to worship by themselves and to give ear to preachers of their own color, yet we feel that our duty towards them has not ceased because of these changes. In order, therefore, to discharge the duty which we own them, we recommend that the Association hereby instruct the Executive Board to seek out and employ some colored minister of sufficient talent, who shall organize colored churches, and encourage them to form a General Association of their own and to connect with it a Minister's Institute, and that some of our ablest brethren be from time to time appointed to meet with them, and given them such theological instruction as may best qualify them for their duties." Minutes of the 1868 Missouri Baptist General Association, p. 10.

A Selected Bibliography of Works by Bill J. Leonard

Compiled by John Finley

Bill J. Leonard began working in American religion with a particular interest in religious experience, as seen in awakenings, conversion processes, and revivalism.

His Ph.D. dissertation dealt with American mysticism in its twentieth-century forms as evident in the multidenominational pilgrimage of the preacher/writer, Joseph Fort Newton, who moved through six discernable denominations, bringing his mysticism with him—Southern Baptist, Disciples of Christ, "Peoples Church movements," Universalism, British Non-conformity, and the Episcopal Church. Leonard's faculty address following the granting of tenure at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary was titled "Getting Saved in America: Conversion Event in a Pluralistic Culture." Other areas of research were often shaped by the times and circumstances. Leonard's earliest published articles often grew out of assignments invited by the *Review and Expositor*, for which he wrote numerous articles on various aspects of American religion.

Leonard never really intended to move toward Baptist history until, in his words, "the Baptists went dysfunctional on me and the country and I began to write about all that." His research soon led to numerous monographs on things Baptist. About 1980, an SBTS student connected him to the Appalachian Foxfire series of books, and he was invited to write the introductions to the Appalachian groups featured in Foxfire 7. That prompted an invitation to teach in summer programs sponsored by the Appalachian Ministries Educational Resource Center (AMERC), then based in Berea, Kentucky, which in turn led to additional research and writing on Appalachian religion. Also in the 1980s, Leonard started to write reports from the annual gatherings of the Southern Baptist Convention for *The Christian Century* and other publications, serving as their official press representative on those occasions. As he describes it,

> Being able to write about, and not simply mourn, the fragmentation of the SBC, kept me reasonably sane in those years, and led to my 1990 book, *God's Last and Only Hope: The Fragmentation of the SBC*, a book that I believe sketched, even predicted, the trajectory of the SBC from 1845 to 2021.

In recent years, a decade-long association with Baptist News Global has presented Bill Leonard an opportunity to reflect twice a month on issues confronting American churches and culture, made even more poignant and problematic in the twenty-first century. BNG articles are not listed in the following bibliography, but may be accessed at https://baptistnews.com/article/author/billleonard/.

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Best Sermons 4. New York: Harper & Row, 1991.
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"The Exercise of Gifts in the Early Church." *Illustrator* (Winter, 1979): 75-77.

Conference/Lecture Papers

"Teaching Dissent: The Witness of the Minority." Bill Johnson Lectures, Crescent Hill Baptist Church, Louisville, KY, March 2019.
"Teaching Dissent: The Witness of the Minority." Baylor University, October 22, 2018.
"William James and the Protestant Conversion Crisis" William James Lectures on Religious Experience, Harvard Divinity School, March 29, 2015.
"Sex, Class, and Religious Freedom: Daniel Featley vs. the Early Baptists." Religious Liberty Lecture, Baylor University, March 24, 2015.
"Joel Osteen and the Non-Denominationalizing of American Religion." H.I. Hester Lectures, International Association of Baptist Colleges and Universities, Charleston, SC, June 1, 2014
"A Hart Cheareing and Affecting Surmond": Appalachian Preaching and Global Implications, Craddock Center Lectures, Cherry Log, GA, October 6, 2014.
"Losing Privilege, Regaining Voice: Southern Religion in a New Community." Beloved Community Lectures, Mercer University, February 9, 2012.
"Baptist Identity and the Future." Keynote Lecture, Theology Conference, American Baptist Churches USA, San Juan, Puerto Rico, June 2011.
Stagg-Talbert Lectures, Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of Louisiana, 2011.
"Ordination." Lecture, Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, Charlotte, NC 2010
"An Audacious Identity." Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, Charlotte, NC 2010.
"The Baptist Future." Associated Baptist Press, Houston, TX, 2009.
"Baptist Identity and the Future." Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of North Carolina, Greensboro, NC, 2009.

"The Prosperity Gospel." Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, Washington, DC, June 2007.
"Protestant Reflections on the Holocaust." Spirituality and the Holocaust: Sixty Years Later, Aspen, CO, June 2007.
"Signs of the Times: Contemporary Religion in Historical Perspective." Zabriskie Lectures, the Church of All Souls, Asheville, NC, May 2007.
"Baptists and Women in Ministry." Baptist Seminary, Bucharest, Romania, March 2007.
"Signs of the Times: Contemporary Religion in Historical Perspective." Baptist Theological Seminary, Richmond, VA, 2006.
"Signs of the Times: Contemporary Religion in Historical Perspective." Smith Lectures, Mercer University, Macon, GA, 2006.
"Baptist Use of the Ten Commandments." National Association of Baptist Professors, American Academy of Religion/Society of Biblical Literature meeting, November 2006.
"Baptist Lectures." American Baptist Conference, Green Lake, WI, 2006.
"Signs of the Times: Contemporary Religion in Historical Perspective." Moravian Lay Seminary, June 2006.
"Spirituality in America." North Carolina Humanities Lecture, June 2005.
Lectures on Preaching, Wilshire Baptist Church, Dallas, TX 2005.
"Baptists and Pluralism." Romanian Baptist Seminary, Bucharest, Romania, March 2005.
"Baptists and Conscience." Baptist Conference, Samford University Center, London, UK, 2004.
Lectures on American Religion, Bellamy Lectures, Mt. Tabor United Methodist Church, Winston-Salem, NC, 2003.
"Baptists and Synodality." International Conference on Synodality, Bruges, Belgium, September 2003.
"Changing a Theology: Baptists, Missions, and the New Globalism." National Association of Baptist Professors of Religion, presidential address, American Academy of Religion, Atlanta, GA, 2003.
"Historical Consciousness among Baptists in the South." Historical Consciousness Section, American Academy of Religion, Toronto, Canada, 2002.
"Religious Life at Wake Forest University." Church-related colleges seminar, American Academy of Religion, Toronto, Canada, 2002.
"Baptists in Appalachia." Baptist Historical Society, Carson-Newman College, 2002.
"American Religion and Global Media." Third International Crossroads in Cultural Studies Conference, University of Birmingham, Birmingham, UK. June 21-25, 2000.
"Baptists Together." Eastern College, St. David's, PA, July, 1999.
Southern Historians' Circle, Samford University, February, 1997. (respondent)
"Baptists in the South: A New Connectionalism." International Baptist Studies Conference, Regent's Park College, Oxford, UK, August 1997.
Religion and Disability Group, American Academy of Religion, San Francisco, CA, Nov 1997.
"Hologram Preaching and Disposable Communion..." American Academy of Religion, New Orleans, LA, November 1996.
"Baptists and Higher Education." National Association of Baptist Professors of Religion, Gainesville, FL, March, 1995.
Alabama Historical Association, February 1995. (respondent)
"Fundamentalism in the South." Southern Historical Society, Louisville, KY, November, 1994. (respondent)

"When Symbols Matter: Religious Rituals and Father-Identity in Parenting a Special Needs Child." American Academy of Religion, Chicago, November, 1994.

Christian Educators' "Think Tank," Richmond, Virginia, June, 1994 (respondent)

"Profiling Southern Religion." South Carolina Baptist Historical Society, November, 1993.

"Converts, Clones, or Disciples: The Conversion Crisis Among American Evangelicals." American Academy of Religion, November, 1993.

"Southern Baptists and the Denominational Center." Lilly Center, Louisville Presbyterian Seminary, March, 1993.

"The Hermeneutics of Serpent-Handling: Literalism, Ritual, and Spirituality in an Appalachian Sect, American Academy of Religion." San Francisco, CA. November, 1992.

"Profiling Southern Religion Toward the Year 2000." Southern Experience Conference, Samford University, Birmingham, AL, April, 1992

"Appalachian Religion." American Academy of Religion, New Orleans, LA, November, 1990.

"The Southern Baptist Controversy." American Society of Church History, New York City, December, 1990.

"Baptist Confessions: Dogmatic Ambiguity." Denominational Heritage Week, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY, 1990.

"Southern Baptist Relations with Independent Baptists." Southern Baptist Historical Society, April 23, 1990.

"Religion and Media." Journalism Conference, Louisville, KY, October, 1990.

"Denominationalism, Fundamentalism, and Fragmentation in the Southern Baptist Convention." American Academy of Religion, Charlotte, NC, March 17, 1990.

"Religion in Appalachia." Appalachian Ministries Educational Resource Center Conference, Berea College, October 8, 1989.

"Improvising Grace." Southern Baptist Convention Forum, San Antonio, TX, June, 1988.

"Censorship and Theological Education." American Association of Theological Librarians, Lexington, KY, June 22, 1988.

"A Theology for Racism: Southern Fundamentalists and the Civil Rights Movement." American Academy of Religion, December 7, 1987.

"Southern Religion and Southern Culture." North American Society for Social Philosophy, University of Paderborn, Paderborn, West Germany, July, 1986.

"Southern Baptists and Conversion." American Academy of Religion, Atlanta, November, 1986.

"Independent Baptists: From Sectarian Minority to 'Moral Majority." American Society of Church History, Chicago, December, 1986.

"Southern Baptists and Laity." Symposium on the Laity, Nashville, TN, May, 1985.

"Women in Christian History." Women's Symposium, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY, November, 1984.

"Evaluation Among Evangelicals." Conference on Evaluation, American Theological Studies, November, 1984.

"Southern Baptists and Southern Culture." The Forum, Baylor University, Waco, TX, April, 1984.

"We Have This Treasure." Christian Life Commission Seminar, March, 1983.

"Joseph Fort Newton: Peace and Politics." American Society of Church History, Spring, 1982.

"Captive and Canaan: American Churches Choosing to Be Free." Faith and Order Conference, Indiana Council of Churches, November, 1982.

"Unity, Diversity, or Schism: The S.B.C. at the Crossroads." Florida Baptist Historical Society, May, 1981.

"The Southern Baptist Denominational Leader as Theologian." Southern Baptist Historical Society, Spring, 1980.

Invited Lectures

Convocation Lecture, School of Divinity, Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, NC, August, 2017.

Visiting Professor Lecture, Baylor University, Waco, TX, March, 2017.

William Self Lectures on Preaching, McAfee School of Theology, Mercer University, Atlanta, GA, February, 2017.

Currie Lectures, First Presbyterian Church, Kerrville, TX, April 2015.

William James Lecture on Religious Experience, Harvard Divinity School, Cambridge, MA, March, 2015.

Pinson Lecture on Religious Liberty, Baylor University, Waco, TX, March, 2015.

Greene Lectures, Gardner-Webb University, Boiling Springs, NC, March, 2015.

Craddock Center Lecture on Appalachian Preaching, Cherry Log, GA, October, 2014.

Hester Lectures, International Association of Baptist Colleges and Universities, June, 2014.

Pinson Lectures, University of Mary Hardin Baylor, Belton, TX, March, 2014.

Daniel McGee Lecture, Baylor University, Waco, TX, October, 2011.

Stagg-Talbert Lectures, Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of Louisiana, September, 2011.

Keynote address, Theology Convocation, American Baptist Churches USA, June, 2011. Christianity Lectures, Berea College, Berea, KY, September, 2010.

Keynote Lecture, Baptist History & Heritage Conference, Georgetown College, Georgetown, KY, 2010.

Samuel Hill Lecture, University of North Carolina, Asheville, NC, 2010.

Appalachian Conference Lecture, Piedmont College, Demorest, GA, 2010.

Thomas Merton Lecture, Cathedral of All Souls, Asheville, NC, 2008.

Helen Lewis Lecture, Craddock Center, Cherry Hill, GA, 2008.

Parchman Lectures, Truett Seminary, Baylor University, Waco, TX, October, 2008.

Keynote Lecture, Centennial Anniversary of the British Baptist Historical Society, International Baptist Seminary, Prague, Czech Republic, 2008.

Baptist History Lectures, Union University, Jackson, TN, 2007.

Carlyle Marney Lectures, Carson-Newman College, Jefferson City, TN, 2006.

Fine Arts Lectures, Carson-Newman College, Jefferson City, TN, February, 2004.

Baptist Heritage Lectures, Belmont University, Nashville, TN, March, 2004.

"Baptist Polity." Synodality Conference, Bruges, Belgium, September, 2003.

"Evangelicals in the American South." Bishops' Conference, Montgomery, AL, November, 2003.

"The Left Behind Series: Revisiting Premillennialism in America." Clergy Workshop, Lutheran Synod of NC, October, 2003.

"Religion in America: Trends and Future Possibilities." Salem Presbytery, NC, October, 2003.

"Christianity in Appalachia." The Staley Lectures, Lees-McCrae College, Banner Elk, NC, 2003.

"Spirituality in America: From Roman Catholics to Serpent-Handlers." Fall Convocation, Texas Wesleyan University, Fort Worth, TX, September, 2001.

Preaching Lectures, University Baptist Church, Baltimore, MD, January, 2000.

Baptist Heritage Lectures, Northminster Baptist Church, Jackson, MS, January, 2000.

The Staley Lectures, Shorter College, Rome, GA February, 2000.
Baptist Heritage Lectures, First Baptist Church, Asheville, NC, February, 2000.
Baptist Heritage Lectures, Watts Street Baptist Church, Durham, NC, February, 2000.
Lectures, Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of Florida, Jacksonville, FL, March, 2000.
Baptist Heritage Lectures, South Main Baptist Church, Houston, TX, March, 2000.
Lecture, American Religion, Conference, African Methodist Episcopal Church, Zion, Salisbury, NC, May, 2000.
"Theological Education in the US and Canada." Association of Theological Schools Bi-Annum, Toronto, Canada, June, 2000.
Baptist Heritage Lectures, First Baptist Church, Orangeburg, SC, July, 2000.
Lecture, Baptists and Religious Liberty, Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, Washington, DC, September, 2000.
Baptist Heritage Lectures, Friendship Missionary Baptist Church, Charlotte, NC, October, 2000.
Pastors' Conference, Asheville, NC, February, 1999.
The Staley Lectures, Lyons College, Batesville, AR, March, 1989.
Lectures, Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of Virginia, March, 1999.
Lectures, Baptist History, Mid-America Baptist Seminary, Memphis, TN, March, 1999.
Lecture, Home Moravian Church, Winston-Salem, NC, April, 1998.
Baccalaureate Speaker, Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, NC, May, 1999.
Center for Congregational Leadership Conference, Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, NC, June, 1998.
The Staley Lectures, Anderson College, Anderson, SC, September 1998.
The Staley Lectures, Greensboro College, Greensboro, NC, September, 1998.
Eastern Carolina University, Greenville, NC, October, 1998.
Moravian Pastors' Conference, September, 1998.
Second Baptist Church, Memphis, TN, January,1997.
Brewton-Parker College, Mt. Vernon, GA, February, 1997.
Medical/Dental Fellowship, Charlotte, NC, March, 1997.
Shamrock Drive Baptist Church, Charlotte, NC, March, 1997.
Baptist House, Duke Divinity School, Durham, NC, April, 1997.
First Baptist Church, Henderson, NC, April, 1997.
First Baptist Church, Charleston, SC, May, 1997.
Wayne Oates Institute (In honor of Dr. Wayne Oates), Louisville, KY, June, 1997.
Wake Forest Alumni Council, Sea Island, GA, July, 1997.
Brooks Hayes Memorial Lectures, Pulaski Heights Baptist Church, Little Rock, AR, September, 1997.
First Baptist Church, Greenville, SC, September, 1997.
Nelson Lectures, Samford University, Birmingham, AL, October, 1997.
Unitarian-Universalist Church, Winston-Salem, NC, November, 1997.
Baptist-Catholic Dialogue, Raleigh, NC, February,1997.
"Appalachian Religion." The Staley Lecture Series, Milligan College, Johnson City, TN, 1996.
"Wilderness or Paradise." Earth Day Conference, Birmingham, AL, April, 1995.
Ministers' Conference, University of Richmond, June, 1994.
"Getting Saved in America." University of Alabama at Birmingham, April, 1994.
Dotson Nelson Lectures, Samford University, Birmingham, AL, October, 1994.
"Conversion in America." Baptist Center for Ethics, October, 1994.
Northminster Baptist Church, Jackson, MS, October, 1994.
"Appalachian Religion." The Staley Lecture Series, Eastern Mennonite College, Harrisonburg, VA, February, 1993.

The Carlyle Marney Lecture Series, First Baptist Church, Austin, TX, May, 1993.
Pastors' School, Furman University, Greenville, SC, June, 1993.
Awards Convocation, Samford University, Birmingham, AL, May, 1993.
Senior Adult Conference, Louisiana College, Pineville, LA, July, 1993.
"Retelling The Biblical Story. "The Staley Lecture Series, Palm Beach Atlantic College, West Palm Beach, FL, March, 1993.
"Religion-in-Life Series." Furman University, Greenville, SC, October, 1992.
"The Future of Denominations." Baptist Medical Center, Birmingham, AL. October, 1992.
"The University of Baptist Identity." Baylor University, Waco, TX, October, 1992.
"Retelling the Biblical Story." The Staley Lecture Series, Campbell College, Buies Creek, NC, November, 1992.
"American Religion." The Staley Lecture Series, Louisiana College, Pineville, LA, March, 1992.
"Profiles in Christian History." The Staley Lecture Series, Cumberland College, Georgetown, KY, April, 1992.
"Ecumenism and American Religion." Bellarmine College, Louisville, KY, October, 1991.
"Southern Baptists and Fundamentalism." The Brooks Hays Lecture Series, Pulaski Heights Baptist Church, Little Rock, AR, March, 1991.
"Retelling the Biblical Story." The Staley Lecture Series, Mobile College, Mobile, AL, November, 1991.
Baptist History Lectures, Millbrook Baptist Church, Raleigh, NC, November, 1991.
Convocation Speaker, Lexington Theological Seminary, Lexington, KY, February, 1991.
Convocation Speaker, Gardner-Webb College, Boiling Springs, NC, 1991.
Convocation Speaker, Howard Payne University, Brownwood, TX, September, 1991.
Convocation Speaker, American Studies Seminars, University of Charleston, Charleston, WV, September, 1990.
Inaugural Lecturer, T.B. Maston Lectures on Baptist Heritage, Carson-Newman College, Jefferson City, TN, April 2-3, 1990.
"Evangelization Among Southern White Subcultures." Glenmary Conference, Eastern Kentucky Speaker, Pastors' School, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY, August, 1989.
"Spirituality: A Radical Faith." Theological Fellowship Lecture, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, TX, November, 1989.
Dean's Conference, Southern Baptist Education Commission, July, 1987.
Faculty Convocation, Mercer University, Macon, GA, September, 1987.
"Southern Baptists and Conversion." The Hobbs Lecture Series, Oklahoma Baptist University, Shawnee, OK, March, 1986.
"American Religion, The Church and the Churches." The Staley Distinguished Lecture Series, Anderson College, Anderson, SC, February, 1984.
"Out of One, Many: American Religion and American Pluralism." Theological Lectures, Stetson University, DeLand, FL, February, 1984.
Lectures on Preaching, Continuing Education Conference, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY, March, 1982.
"American Religion and Right-Wing Politics." Virginia Intermont College, Bristol, TN, April, 1981.
"Peace and Freedom." Ecumenical Service, 200th Anniversary, Yorktown, VA, October, 1981.

Book Reviews

Book Review Editor

J. David Holcomb

J. David Holcomb is Professor and Director of the Honors Program and London Studies Program Coordinator in the History and Political Science Department at the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor. (900 College St., Box 8014-A, Belton, TX 76513 / 254-297-4184 / dholcomb@umhb.edu)

Charlotte Atlee White Rowe: The Story of America's First Appointed Woman Missionary. **By Reid S. Trulson. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2021. 248 pp.**

It wasn't Ann Judson, Harriet Newell, or Hannah Liele. Instead, Charlotte Atlee White (later Rowe) was "the first American woman appointed by any sending body to serve in international, cross-cultural mission" (p. ix). Previous missionary wives such as Judson and Newell had not been appointed but had only volunteered as "assistant missionaries," as Trulson explains, effectively making his case with this and other arguments. As I read this book, I wondered how I had missed such an important historical figure as Rowe. Trulson has admirably filled a gap in scholarship by introducing readers to her.

Trulson carefully documents the details of Rowe's life in a book filled with historical details. Additional analysis and argumentation would strengthen the volume, especially given Rowe's historical significance. Still, Trulson tells a fascinating story.

Young widow Charlotte Atlee White, likely inspired by early American missionary efforts, applied to the Baptist Board of Foreign Missions in 1815 for service in Burma. The board appointed her as a missionary teacher the same year, although some leaders expressed reservations. Arriving first in India, White met and soon married Joshua Rowe, a widowed British Baptist missionary. Together they served in the British Baptist mission, with Charlotte teaching children and writing Hindi

teaching aids. After Joshua's death in 1823, Charlotte entrepreneurially funded her own mission work since the Baptist Missionary Society did not appoint female missionaries. She managed a mission station herself, unheard of for women during this period, and demonstrated thoughtful missiology. Remarkably, indigenous Christians even called her "their pastoress" (p. 131). In 1827 she petitioned British Baptists to appoint her as a missionary, but they refused to take this controversial step. Without sufficient funds, she returned to the United States, where she taught school. In her own time and in later missions histories, Rowe's missionary service was generally overlooked rather than lauded, as Trulson documents.

Trulson's book is well-edited and organized, although it would benefit from an introduction and conclusion to reinforce its contents and their significance. The book is a welcome addition to recent scholarship on Baptist women by those such as Elizabeth Flowers, Susan Shaw, and Regina Sullivan. Scholars and students alike will appreciate Trulson's contribution to the history of women in missions.--*Reviewed by Melody Maxwell, Associate Professor of Christian History, Acadia Divinity College*

Black Fundamentalists: Conservative Christianity and Racial Identity in the Segregation Era. **By Daniel R. Bare. New York: New York University Press, 2021. 261 pp.**

Daniel R. Bare's well-researched *Black Fundamentalists* is a fine and valuable contribution to American and African-American religious and general history. Focusing on the years 1915–1940, Bare superbly defends his thesis that there were indeed Black fundamentalists during this era who engaged among themselves and with the wider culture on the major elements represented by fundamentalism, elements such as adherence to the doctrines of the deity and virgin birth of Christ, substitutionary atonement, the literal resurrection of the crucified Lord, the literal reality of miracles, Christ's second coming, and a fervent conviction that modernism or liberalism represented direct danger to the essence of Christianity.

The author with solid documentation demonstrates that this Black embrace of fundamentalism was consistent with, and was regarded as indispensable to, the pursuit of the political and economic liberation of

African Americans. In other words, both the integrity of Christianity and the battle for racial freedom are dependent on fundamentalist faith, whereas modernism, which rejects the above-listed doctrines, poses a hazard to both faith and racial liberation.

Professor Bare, commendably, updates our understanding about the nature of, and relationship between, Black Christianity and fundamentalism, documenting Black churches' engagement with American religious thought. More precisely, *Black Fundamentalists* demolishes the misconception that the fundamentalist-modernist conflict was limited to White Christians, that African-American Christians took no public and sustained interest in the controversy. While Whites, generally speaking, conversed or debated among themselves, Blacks had parallel exchanges among themselves. Sadly, too little scholarly attention has followed the Black conversation.

With clarity, precision, sensitivity to all sides and participants whether Black or White, and with probing analyses and questions, Bare, between his Introduction and Conclusion, sets forth a compelling, even definitive, case in five chapters. These chapters illustrate that:

- Fundamentalist and modernist approaches appeared in both Black and White communities as observable in written records in newspapers, other publications, and sermons.
- The establishment and operation of the American Baptist Theological Seminary in Nashville, Tennessee, by the National Baptist Convention, USA, Incorporated, and the Southern Baptist Convention illustrates one example of Black-White fundamentalist cooperation.
- Black fundamentalists regarded their theology, Americanism, and ongoing commitment to racial freedom as inextricable.

Professor Bare's work opens the window to many points of interest, including further exploration in the fundamentalist-modernist debate among Blacks, both in reference to the church itself and to discussions between religious conservatives, on one hand, and religious liberals, agnostics and atheists, and adherents of non-Christian faiths, on the other hand.

Black Fundamentalists is an excellent resource for individual study and textbook use in studies of religion and in American, Black American, and Southern history and culture.—*Reviewed by Sandy Dwayne Martin, Professor of Religion, University of Georgia*

A Holy Baptism of Fire and Blood: The Bible and the American Civil War. **James P. Byrd. New York, Oxford University Press, 2021. 376 pp.**

"The Bible saturated the Civil War," writes James P. Byrd (p. 1). For Byrd, the significance of this saturation extended beyond the copious citations found in wartime diaries, correspondence, speeches, and newspapers. More broadly speaking, the Bible provided many Americans with a vocabulary for interpreting—and coming to terms with—both unprecedented slaughter and the inscrutability of Providence. By highlighting the scriptural passages that Northerners and Southerners appealed to the most, Byrd hopes to demonstrate "how Americans enlisted the Bible in the nation's most bloody and arguably most biblically infused war" (p. 2).

Byrd takes both a chronological and thematic approach as he surveys the protean application of scripture in antebellum and wartime America. Of course, some nineteenth-century scriptural appeals were unsurprising: Abolitionists believed that the Exodus justified emancipation, Northerners argued that Romans 13 forbade rebellion, and White Southerners insisted that Paul endorsed slavery. Other scriptural arguments relied on less popular stories, such as Northerners accusing Southerners of being rebellious Absaloms (2 Samuel 13–18), and Southerners accusing Northerners of being intractable Rehoboams (1 Kings 12). Whether the biblical connections were clear (e.g., enslaved persons locating themselves in the Exodus) or suspect (e.g., white Southerners locating themselves in the Babylonian Exile), countless Americans refracted their experiences through a biblical lens.

Byrd pays special attention to theological concepts that informed much of the religious thinking in wartime America: providentialism, millennialism, martyrdom, the jeremiad, and blood sacrifice. The war shook the theological underpinnings of many Americans, especially those who believed there existed some divine—if mysterious—purpose

to the conflict. "Without the Bible," Byrd writes, "God's providence was a riddle that people had no chance of solving" (p. 149). Again, the Bible functioned not as a citation sourcebook, but as a way of articulating meaning in a context of seemingly meaningless carnage.

A Holy Baptism of Fire and Blood is a sweeping volume, as thorough as it is ambitious. The book is a welcome addition to the growing literature on religion and the Civil War, and Byrd frequently dialogues with the research of Mark Noll, George Rable, James McPherson, and Drew Gilpin Faust. Utilizing state-of-the-art research methods for compiling citations, Byrd provides a near exhaustive treatment of the ways Americans marshaled biblical passages to advance their religious and political worldviews. His work also catalogues how Americans North and South appealed to the same scriptures, only to come up with radically differing conclusions.

One wonders, then, if the versatility of scripture was a strength or a liability. How could the Bible mean anything at all if the Bible could mean *anything at all*? Likely anticipating these questions, Byrd directs our attention to Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address, in which the president observed: "Both read the same Bible, and pray to the same God; and each invokes His aid against the other." That the Bible could play a role in the preservation of chattel slavery and the prosecution of internecine bloodshed baffled the president. Byrd's excellent book will leave readers grappling with the same mystery.–*Reviewed by Christopher C. Moore, Associate Professor of History and Religion, Catawba Valley Community College (Hickory, NC)*

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