

## THE JOURNAL OF BAPTIST STUDIES

## THE JOURNAL OF BAPTIST STUDIES

Volume 4 (2010)

**Editor:** Keith Harper

**Associate Editor:** Nathan A. Finn

**Editorial Assistant:** Matt Emerson

**Board of Editors:** John Crowley, Curtis Freeman, Lloyd Harsch, Michael Haykin, Lydia Hoyle, Jason Lee, Michael McMullen, James Patterson, Kevin Smith, Delane Tew, Doug Weaver, Earl Waggoner

*The Journal of Baptist Studies* is an electronic, peer-reviewed journal dedicated to the study of Baptist history and thought. The journal is produced under the oversight of a Board of Editors representing numerous Baptist denominations and both religious and secular institutions. *JBS* does not advocate a particular theological or denominational agenda, but rather reflects the scholarship of individuals who identify with a number of positions and affiliations. The journal is available online for free and is independent of any institution.

For submission policies and other information related to *The Journal of Baptist Studies*, please visit <http://www.baptiststudiesonline.com>. Please direct all correspondence related to the journal to Keith Harper ([kharper@sebs.edu](mailto:kharper@sebs.edu)).

*The Journal of Baptist Studies* is one of many resources available at Baptist Studies Online (<http://www.baptiststudiesonline.com>), a website dedicated to the study of Baptist history and thought. The purpose of BSO is to facilitate the scholarly study of Baptists by making available to researchers and students an online scholarly journal, a primary source library, a comprehensive collection of Baptist history-related links, and a regularly updated list of announcements related to the field. BSO is a collaborative effort by Baptist scholars from a variety of traditions, with funding and technical support provided by Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, North Carolina. For more information about Southeastern Seminary, please visit <http://www.sebs.edu>.

**The Journal of Baptist Studies**  
Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary  
PO Box 1889  
Wake Forest, NC 27587

**THE JOURNAL OF BAPTIST STUDIES**

**Volume 4 (2010)**

Editorial..... 1  
Contributors..... 3

**Articles**

Origins of Black Baptist Associations in Southwest Georgia: A Focus on Thomasville, Southwestern, Camilla, and Macedonia  
By Warren C. Hope ..... 4

Who Forgot What? A Reply to Emir Caner  
By Paul Brewster ..... 30

Now Let Us Praise Famous Moderates: A Review Essay of Three Recent *Festschriften*  
By Nathan A. Finn ..... 46

**Book Reviews**

Barnett, Henlee Hulix. *A Pilgrimage of Faith: My Story*, reviewed by Gregory A. Wills ..... 69

Durso, Keith E. *Thy Will Be Done: A Biography of George W. Truett*, reviewed by Nathan A. Finn ..... 73

Johnson, Robert E. *A Global Introduction to Baptist Churches*, reviewed by Andrew Christopher Smith ..... 76

McSwain, Larry L. *Loving Beyond Your Theology: The Life and Ministry of Jimmy Raymond Allen*, reviewed by Edward R. Crowther ..... 82

Schwartz, Kathryn Carlisle. *Baptist Faith in Action: The Private Writings of Maria Baker Taylor, 1813–1895*, reviewed by April Armstrong ..... 87

Vaughan, Robert. *Materials Toward a History of Feet Washing Among the Baptists: Consisting of Historical References to the Practice Among the Missionary Baptists, Including Miscellaneous Notes on Other Groups*, reviewed by Keith Harper ..... 91

Upcoming Conferences..... 95

## FROM THE EDITOR

By Keith Harper

Ask children what they want to be when they grow up and their answers range from astronaut to zoo keeper. Rare, however, is the child who wants to be a Baptist historian. Too bad. Those of us who study Baptists either vocationally or as interested bystanders know that “our people” have a fascinating past. We also know that most facets of Baptist life would profit from fresh inquiry.

In this edition of *The Journal of Baptist Studies* we offer three articles for your consideration. First, we have Warren C. Hope’s “Origins of Black Baptist Associations in Southwest Georgia: A Focus on Thomasville, Southwestern, Camilla, and Macedonia”. The history of African-American Baptists stands as one of the richest, albeit largely untapped areas of Baptist life. As his title suggests, Hope’s essay charts the contours of associationalism among black Baptists in southwest Georgia.

Chronicling the past is only part of a historian’s job. Interpreting what they find is another matter. On August 28–29, 2009 the Georgia Baptist Convention held a history conference at the Georgia Baptist Conference Center in Toccoa. Emir Caner, President of Truett-McConnell College, gave the keynote address, titled, “The Forgotten Hour of How the South Was Won: The Legacy of Daniel Marshall, Pioneer Georgia Baptist Pastor.” Among other things, Caner argued that the south was “won” through evangelism. Paul Brewster’s aptly titled essay, “Who Forgot What? A Reply to Emir Caner’s Address, ‘The Forgotten Hour of How the South Was Won: The Legacy of Daniel Marshall,

Pioneer Georgia Baptist Pastor,’” offers a spirited rebuttal to Caner’s address that may spark further discussion. The full text for Caner’s address is available online at <http://www.christianindex.org/5861.article>.

Recent years have witnessed the retirement of several prominent Baptist scholars. Our third article, Nathan A. Finn’s review essay of three recent *festschriften*, provides a glimpse into the priorities of moderate Baptist historians and theologians. His essay highlights competing interpretations and emphases championed by various “camps” among moderate Baptists.

On a slightly different front, I call your attention to several matters. First, regular readers of this *JBS* will note a format change for this edition. We hope *JBS* will be easier to read and we welcome your comments. Second, I have received numerous inquiries and article submissions over the past several weeks. Apparently, the word about *JBS* is getting out and that, as they say, is a very good thing. Finally, I want you to know that we appreciate your readership. Please, continue to read. Tell others about us. Send us articles.

So, if you should ask a child what he or she wants to be when they grow up and they offer one of the “usual answers,” why not ask them to consider being a Baptist historian? Rest assured, they will probably give you a funny look. They may even laugh and say, “Why”? That will give you the perfect opportunity to tell them about all the great work that needs to be done. In other words, “Why not”?

## CONTRIBUTORS

Warren Hope is a Professor in the Department of Educational Leadership and Human Services at Florida A&M University. He is the Program Coordinator for the Educational Leadership Ph.D. Program and the author of numerous journal articles related to educational leadership and Baptist history.

Paul Brewster is the Pastor of Rykers Ridge Baptist Church in Madison, Indiana and serves as a Junior Fellow of the Andrew Fuller Center for Baptist Studies at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He is the author of *Andrew Fuller: Model Pastor-Theologian* (B&H Academic, 2010).

Nathan A. Finn is the Assistant Professor of Church History and Baptist Studies at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. He is the co-editor of *Domestic Slavery Considered as a Scriptural Institution* (Mercer University Press, 2008) and editor of a forthcoming updated edition of Robert Hall Sr.'s *Help to Zion's Travellers* (BorderStone, 2011).

## ORIGINS OF BLACK BAPTIST ASSOCIATIONS IN SOUTHWEST GEORGIA: A FOCUS ON THOMASVILLE, SOUTHWESTERN, CAMILLA, AND MACEDONIA

By Warren C. Hope

With slavery's chain broken and its absolutist traditions in retreat, Blacks began the arduous task of constructing their lives in the ideology of freedom and an economy in disarray. Although destitute of material fare, many left their previous state of servitude spiritually attired. For Blacks who had accepted Christianity, religion, like slavery, served as an organizing principle. Church membership and worship experiences afforded a modicum of stability and a means to endure chattel existence. Several advantages accrued to Blacks who attended the master's church. Although freedom had eluded them and slavery offered little to which they could cling, church membership inspired a sense of belonging, awakened in them the liberating ethos embedded in Christianity, facilitated the emergence of leaders, and crystallized a special relationship with God.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, for Blacks who embraced

---

<sup>1</sup> Katherine L. Dvorak, "After Apocalypse, Moses," in *Masters and Slaves in the House of the Lord: Race and Religion in the American South, 1740–1870*, ed. John B. Boles (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1988), 174.

Christianity, freedom was nothing less than a divine mandate akin to biblical stories of God's deliverance.<sup>2</sup>

Many slaves converted to Christianity during the antebellum period. In Southwest Georgia, Baptist churches conference minutes attest to Blacks' baptism and membership. Blacks' presence in Baptist churches increased precipitously from the early to middle nineteenth-century. Around the mid-1860s, former slaves in the region began to withdraw from the biracial fellowship. Their departure is known as "the exodus" and this phenomenon repeated itself in churches across the region. The superior-subordinate relationship between Blacks and Whites that solidified during slavery precipitated the movement.<sup>3</sup> Slavery had imprinted a heritage so deep in the minds of southern Whites that they could not willingly grant Negroes first-class citizenship rights,<sup>4</sup> or reorganize the church to extend equal rights and privileges to everyone regardless of race. Instead, Blacks were expected to continue as before—to sit apart in balconies and galleries, to cherish the faith as proclaimed by White clergymen, and submit to

the spiritual governance of Whites.<sup>5</sup> Such treatment was unacceptable to free Blacks. Walter Brooks captured this sentiment, asserting that slaves could never feel entirely at home in the White man's church because of its designated space for Negroes and that the privilege to fellowship depended upon observing the limits granted to him.<sup>6</sup> In freedom, Blacks' needs and aspirations were dramatically different from those of Whites. C. Eric Lincoln suggested that Blacks could not actualize their religious and broader social objectives while subject to Whites' scrutiny and supervision.<sup>7</sup> R. A. Carter concluded that "all racial aspiration for leadership, all striving for the intangible values of life, individually or collectively, would have been dwarfed and stunted if not destroyed under White preaching in White churches."<sup>8</sup> Hence, by the close of the 1860s, independent Black Baptist churches were born with regularity and spread across the Southwest Georgia landscape.

---

Donald G. Mathews, *Religion in the Old South* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), 194.

<sup>2</sup> Katherine L. Dvorak, *An African American Exodus: The Segregation of the Southern Churches* (Brooklyn, NY: Carlson, 1991), 25.

<sup>3</sup> Segregated Sabbaths were the rule in Baptist churches and Blacks faced prejudice and discrimination because of society's views and slavery. Although churches designated separate seating areas, Blacks were spoken to as Brother and Sister, participated in the Lord's Supper, and were members of the respective Baptist church.

<sup>4</sup> Clarence A. Bacote, "Some Aspects of Negro Life in Georgia, 1880–1908," *The Journal of Negro History* 43 (1958): 186–213.

---

<sup>5</sup> Kenneth K. Bailey, "The Post-Civil War Racial Separation in Southern Protestantism: Another Look," *Church History* 46 (1977): 453–73.

<sup>6</sup> Walter H. Brooks, "The Evolution of the Negro Baptist Church," *The Journal of Negro History* 7 (1922): 11–22.

<sup>7</sup> C. Eric Lincoln, "Black Religion and The Black Church: Mode, Mood, and Music-Humanizing The Social Order," in C. Eric Lincoln, *The Black Experience in Religion* (New York: Anchor, 1974), 2.

<sup>8</sup> R. A. Carter, "What the Negro Church Has Done," *Journal of Negro History* 11 (1926): 1–7.

### The Dawn of Black Baptist Associations

The church was the focal point of activity in southern Black communities during Reconstruction. Serving sacred and secular purposes, it evolved into an institution that helped Blacks to cope with economic, political, and social problems. The independent church, however, was not the only institution that Blacks in Southwest Georgia created in response to their religious and broader social needs. Reconstruction also witnessed the emergence of regional religious associations. The association, like the church, was a response to prevailing social conditions—Black churches sought wider avenues for fellowship, but were denied admission into White Baptist associations.<sup>9</sup> In the creative spirit prevalent in the Black community during Reconstruction, Blacks formed their own associations to promote mutual piety and fellowship among Baptist churches and to engage in social endeavors such as domestic missions, mutual aid, and education.<sup>10</sup> But there was more to Black Baptist associations than religious fellowship. Because of their former condition, the rhetoric of racial progress deeply influenced Black communities during Reconstruction. Thus, associations became venues from which the aspirations of racial improvement and advancement were heralded and sometimes manifested.

---

<sup>9</sup> Paul Harvey, *Redeeming the South: Religious Cultures and Racial Identity Among Southern Baptists, 1865–1925* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 62.

<sup>10</sup> James Melvin Washington, *Frustrated Fellowship: The Black Baptist Quest for Social Power* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1986), 28.

In post-Civil War Southwest Georgia, Blacks encountered a myriad of political, economic, and social obstacles. Landless and with no economic base, violence, segregation, discrimination, subordination, and outright contempt were weapons used against them. Baptist ministers recognized the need for a cooperative structure beyond the local church, which could articulate an agenda of interests for the denomination and community. Associations, religious in context, facilitated the growth of Black leadership, a necessary ingredient for racial uplift and advancement in this pivotal period. Like the independent church, which developed in Blacks a sense of pride and affirmed their capacity for self-reliance, the association had a similar effect.<sup>11</sup>

White Baptist associations such as Bethel, Bowen, Mercer, and Mallery were prominent in Southwest Georgia during the first half of the nineteenth-century. Through the years, a few Blacks had been chosen to participate in and become familiar with the dynamics of worship in biracial churches. Their mission was almost always to the church's Black membership. Similarly, Blacks were selected to attend association meetings where they learned how messengers conducted business.<sup>12</sup> Black Baptists in Southwest Georgia modeled their associations after those of their White brethren. Whites had assisted Blacks to establish independent churches and they also provided counsel in the establishment of associations. Whites were present at the first

---

<sup>11</sup> William Montgomery, *Under Their Own Vine and Fig Tree: The African American Church, 1865–1900* (Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 1993), 54.

<sup>12</sup> Thronateeska Chapter, D. A. R., *Albany Baptist Church Book 1860–1870*, (Albany, Georgia, Daughters of the American Revolution, 1959).

annual meeting of the Macedonia Baptist Association where they prayed, preached, and advised on printing the association's minutes.<sup>13</sup> Brother R. R. Terrell was present at the Flint River Baptist Association's inaugural meeting, but the minutes provide no insight into his participation. Association minutes illuminate an ongoing relationship between Black and White Baptists. This relationship was manifested primarily at annual meetings through the courtesy of sending and receiving association correspondents.

To form an association required the consent and willingness of churches in a geographical region to affiliate. A constitution, articles of faith, and decorum were the primary elements that legitimized the organization.<sup>14</sup> An appendage of the association, a local church maintained its sovereignty and could withdraw from fellowship by requesting a letter of dismissal. Still, member churches and pastors were subject to association discipline for misconduct and failure to adhere to Christian principles.

The association was a pioneering religious effort that emerged during Reconstruction. By 1900, the following associations had been organized in Southwest Georgia: Benevolence, Buena Vista, Camilla, Chattahoochee River, Flint River, Fowl Town, Greater Bethesda, Gum Creek, Kiokee, Little River, Macedonia, Mount Moriah, Mount Zion Weston, Mount Zion Missionary, Southwestern, and Thomasville.<sup>15</sup> Details illuminating direct

personal interactions and communications that led to their formation will probably never be known. Surely though, there were organizational commonalities among associations as well as unique events that relate to their founding. Perhaps word of an association's organization spread by ministers who like circuit riders of old brought the news to local churches. Newspapers, the dominant media of the day, may have carried an organizational notice of date, place, and time. Letters containing the announcement of an association's impending organization may have arrived at ministers' post office boxes.<sup>16</sup> Ministers familiar with each other and who served churches in the same vicinity could have discussed plans to organize an association. Maybe all of these methods were used to herald an association's beginning. While the written record about Black Baptist associations' organization is incomplete, that they were formed and became vibrant and important institutions in the region is undeniable.

### **The Thomasville Baptist Association**

Established in 1866, the Thomasville Baptist Association was the first Black organization of its kind in the region.<sup>17</sup> Details surrounding its formation are elusive as its presence in historical archives commences with the 1874 minutes. As a forerunner of

---

<sup>13</sup> Macedonia Baptist Association, *Minutes*, 1876, 5.

<sup>14</sup> See various Minutes of the Thomasville, Southwestern, and Camilla Baptist Associations meetings.

<sup>15</sup> See Appendix, "Black Baptist Associations in Southwest Georgia, 1865–1900."

---

<sup>16</sup> Black Baptist association Minutes list the name and post office box of its ordained and licensed ministers.

<sup>17</sup> Thomasville Baptist Association, *Minutes*, 1903, 5. Clarence Wagner, *Profiles of Black Georgia Baptists*, suggested that the Thomasville association was the second to form in Georgia.

associations, the interactions related to its beginnings can only be imagined. A record of individuals and churches responsible for launching this organization has not survived. In *Profiles of Black Georgia Baptists*, Clarence Wagner related that Baptist churches from Brooks, Thomas, and Lowndes counties organized the Thomasville Association.<sup>18</sup> The September 6, 1867 issue of the *Southern Enterprise* carried an advertisement for the Thomasville Baptist Association's second annual meeting announcing that a number of churches in various sections were involved.<sup>19</sup> Among the Black Baptist churches that had organized in Thomas County at the time were Ochlocknee (1848), Aucilla (1863), First African (1865), Springhill (1865), and Friendship (1866).<sup>20</sup> One of the earliest attempts to reconstruct the Thomasville Baptist Association's history occurred ten years after its birth. A committee was appointed to make a report, however, little more was presented than that Reverend Jacob Wade was the first moderator and Giles Price its clerk. The moderator was the association's leader and authority figure. The clerk was responsible for maintaining a written record of annual meetings.

---

<sup>18</sup> See Clarence M. Wagner, *Profiles of Black Georgia Baptists: Two Hundred and Six Years of Black Georgia Baptist History, One Hundred Years of National Baptist History* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1980).

<sup>19</sup> *Southern Enterprise*, 6 September 1867. Various sections could be a reference to parts of Thomas County. Thus all founding churches may have been from Thomas County.

<sup>20</sup> The Macedonia Baptist Church in Lowndes County was established in 1865. No records are available to establish that this church or messengers from it participated in the inaugural meeting. The New Jersey Baptist Church in the town of Pidcock, Brooks County was established in 1858; however, no records establish its presence at the inaugural meeting.

Reverend Wade served as pastor of the First African Baptist Church of Thomasville and was probably licensed and ordained in a White Baptist church for the purpose of preaching to slaves. Fortuitously, he was prepared to lead the independent church that emerged from the biracial Thomasville Baptist Church. Well-known in the community, Wade was one of the ministers called upon to assist in organizing the Trinity Baptist Church of Boston in April 1867. He became the first pastor of the Beulah Baptist Church in Quitman, 1869–1871.<sup>21</sup> Jacob also served as chairman of the Thomas County Republican Congressional Party.<sup>22</sup>

Giles Price was a well-known freedman and blacksmith of considerable intelligence, a leader among the “colored” people of Thomasville, and had acquired the ability to read and write.<sup>23</sup> The 1870 census lists the value of Price's real estate and personal property at \$1000 and \$200, respectively. He was one of two individuals designated as collectors to receive funds to build a church for Blacks who withdrew from the Thomasville Baptist Church.<sup>24</sup> Recommended for appointment by an unnamed distinguished Southern citizen, Price was a member of the Board of Registration, which was established during military occupation to ensure Blacks the right to vote.<sup>25</sup> Price had a controversial legacy in the Black community and did not receive overwhelming support for his appointment to the board because of his voluntary

---

<sup>21</sup> *History of the Beulah Baptist Church, Quitman* (n.p., n.d.). Copy in possession of author.

<sup>22</sup> *Southern Enterprise*, 28 May 1867.

<sup>23</sup> *Southern Enterprise*, 7 June 1867.

<sup>24</sup> *Southern Enterprise*, 27 June 1866.

<sup>25</sup> *Southern Enterprise*, 7 June 1867.



contribution of money and other support to the Confederacy.<sup>26</sup> Price's literary skills made him an asset to the Thomasville Association.<sup>27</sup> He served as clerk of the Thomasville Baptist Association for two years, 1866–1867. His immediate successor is not listed in the association's historical table and his activity in the association can be traced only to 1874, when he was one of the delegates appointed to a committee to examine associational finances.

The Thomasville Baptist Association met in 1874 at the Beulah Baptist Church in Quitman. Reverend John A. Thornton of Bainbridge was the moderator and Wiley F. Tarver served as clerk. Thornton held the office of moderator from 1875–1877. Tarver was a teacher and lived in the vicinity of Quitman. What stands out about Reverend Tarver is his tenure as the association's clerk. He assumed the office in 1873 at the age of twenty and was reelected until his death November 4, 1923.<sup>28</sup>

In 1874, there were thirty-eight churches from seven counties, Baker, Brooks, Decatur, Echols, Hamilton (Florida), Lowndes, and Thomas in the Thomasville Baptist Association.<sup>29</sup> Churches with fifty members were entitled to two delegates and those with more than fifty could have one additional delegate. The 1876 constitution stipulated that the association "shall be composed of

---

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> The association clerk was responsible for recording the activities that transpired during association meetings and making sure that the proceedings were prepared for printing.

<sup>28</sup> Tarver may have been a teacher at the Simmons Hill School. This school dates back to 1873 and a log church building. Wiley Tarver's death certificate indicates a birth year of 1853.

<sup>29</sup> Thomasville Baptist Association, *Minutes*, 1874, 6, 9.

male members chosen by the different churches in its union."<sup>30</sup> The Thomasville union incubated leaders who would emerge later to have a significant role in founding two other Southwest Georgia associations. Reverend Charles Anderson, the association's second moderator, was instrumental in establishing the Macedonia Baptist Association, and John A. Thornton, who served as the third moderator, was pivotal in the formation of the Flint River Baptist Association.

The 1885 minutes reveal that Deacon R. Ponder was a founding member of the Thomasville Association. At the 1903, annual meeting, Reverend W. J. Gonaky reminisced about the associations beginning calling attention to its birth at the First African Baptist Church in Thomasville.<sup>31</sup> These minutes also reveal that Reverends J. T. Taylor and Robert Causton were associational founders.<sup>32</sup> Not much is known about these ministers, however, Taylor served as pastor to the Saint Mary Baptist Church in Thomasville, which was founded in 1870, and Causton led the Aucilla Baptist Church in 1875.

Archives do not contain minutes of the Thomasville Association's first eight annual meetings. Reflecting its spiritual nature, the association's first rule of order was to open with a song

---

<sup>30</sup> Thomasville Baptist Association, *Minutes*, 1876, 9.

<sup>31</sup> Thomasville Baptist Association, *Minutes*, 1885, 6; 1903, 1. Deacon R. Ponder, a founder of the Thomasville Baptist Association was the other collector designated by the church. Given 1866 as the association's founding date, it is plausible to suggest that the initial meeting was held in the White Baptist Church since Blacks had access and donations were still being collected to build the independent church.

<sup>32</sup> Thomasville Baptist Association, *Minutes*, 1885, 6; 1903, 1.

and prayer and close with the doxology. A significant amount of association business was conducted through committees. In 1874, those committees were education, finance, missions, nominations, preaching, printing, Sabbath schools, state of the churches, and temperance. All committees submitted reports for inclusion in the annual meeting minutes.

The Thomasville Association's historical table has been partially preserved and lists the moderators, clerks, places of meeting, and the name of ministers who preached the Introductory Sermon, arguably the most prestigious message delivered at the annual meeting. Interestingly, a certain Reverend Blue, a White man, preached the first introductory sermon.<sup>33</sup> Black Baptist church histories in the region describe instances of Whites rendering assistance to their Black brethren who withdrew to form separate congregations. Atticus Haygood in *Our Brother in Black: His Freedom and His Future* starkly reminded Whites of an obligation to help the Negro in his social and religious development.<sup>34</sup> Whites assisted Blacks by giving land, building materials, and advice on how to form an orthodox Baptist church. White preachers and deacons ordained Blacks for the same roles in Black Baptist churches and assisted them to write constitutions, articles of faith, and decorums. The Thomasville Association founders could have requested Reverend Blue's presence for advice on forming the organization and the conduct of business.

---

<sup>33</sup> *Historical Table of the Thomasville Baptist Association* (n.p., n.d.). Copy in possession of author. No first name appears in the historical table for Reverend Blue. The word White appears beside his name.

<sup>34</sup> Atticus G. Haygood, *Our Brother in Black: His Freedom and His Future* (New York: Phillips & Hunt; Cincinnati: Walden & Stowe, 1881), 54.

Out of appreciation they could have extended to him the opportunity to deliver the introductory sermon.

### **The Southwestern Baptist Association**

When representatives from ten Southwest Georgia counties met in 1870, a second association was born.<sup>35</sup> The first annual meeting of the Southwestern Baptist Association convened in 1871, at the Jackson Grove Baptist Church in Albany. A record of delegates and their churches has not been preserved. The planning and communications that occurred prior to the inaugural meeting is left to conjecture. The association's historical table survives and provides insight into the initial gathering. Reverend David Hines was elected moderator, J. M. Cooper, clerk, and Reverend Ralph Watson, treasurer. Hines and Watson were members of the biracial Albany Baptist Church and each led an exodus of Black members from that fellowship into separate congregations. Reverend Watson and his followers established Mount Zion, the first Black Baptist church in Albany, and Hines and his followers founded Jackson Grove Baptist Church.<sup>36</sup> J. M. Cooper, a White man served as the

---

<sup>35</sup> The Southwestern Baptist Association's history lists only nine counties represented at the inaugural meeting. Clarence Wagner in *Profiles of Black Georgia Baptists* identified Calhoun among the list of the ten counties. Speculation offers opportunity to select from among Dooly, Worth, Miller, Lee, and Houston as the tenth county. In 1873, churches from these counties are listed in the association's Statistical Table.

<sup>36</sup> Albany Baptist Church Book, 1959; The Albany Baptist Church Minutes describe a discussion during church conference on November 25, 1866, related to Blacks' withdrawal. A desire was expressed that Brother Watson and his followers remain with the church for another year. The Mount Zion Baptist

first clerk of the Southwestern Baptist Association. Cooper was also clerk of the Albany Baptist Church.<sup>37</sup> Evident here is White Baptists assistance to Blacks in their efforts at institutional organization. Cooper may have been retained because of his literary skills and associational experiences. Hines and Watson were acquainted with Cooper because of his role as the Albany Baptist Church's clerk for the separate Black conferences.<sup>38</sup> Reverend David Hines delivered the first Introductory Sermon and served as the association's moderator until 1879.<sup>39</sup>

Numerically, the Southwestern Baptist Association was the most prolific in the region. This association had forty-seven churches by its third year and during that annual meeting eleven new members were admitted. A year later, Southwestern claimed seventy-seven churches and by 1877, the number had reached ninety-two. This union of churches proved to be a leadership training ground. Several affiliated church ministers became founders and first moderators of other associations. Ministers instrumental in organizing an association of churches were Reverends Lawrence Solomon, Benevolence Baptist Association;

---

Church history relates its establishment as December 8, 1865. In February 1867, Reverend Hines and forty-four members requested and were granted letters of dismission from the Albany Baptist Church. Jackson Grove Baptist Church was initially established as the Second Colored Church.

<sup>37</sup> *The Albany Baptist Church Book* (n.p., n.d.).

<sup>38</sup> T. J. Coram served as clerk and kept the records for the newly established Benevolent Baptist Church until a Black member acquired literacy skills. J. M. Cooper served as clerk for the Albany Baptist Church "colored" conference October 14, 1866. Reverend Ralph Watson was acting moderator for the meeting.

<sup>39</sup> Content of Reverend Hines' address to the delegates is not on record.

Purnell Borders, Camilla Baptist Association; Willis Warren, Fowl Town Baptist Association; Madison Carter, Gum Creek Baptist Association; George T. Johnson, Kiokee Baptist Association; and Ralph Watson, Mount Zion Baptist Association.

Education was extremely important to Blacks during Reconstruction, and most associations in Southwest Georgia hoped to build a school to accommodate the educational needs of the race. Black ministers realized that they were indispensable to racial uplift and advancement. Few associations, however, were able to overcome the obstacles, unite, and accumulate the money required to purchase land and build a school. One of the great education success stories belongs to the Southwestern Baptist Association. A school had been under discussion for years and in 1885, a thirteen-acre parcel of land in Americus was purchased.<sup>40</sup> Yet it would take more than a decade for the project to come to fruition. In 1898, the association's Committee on Education announced that after "many years of persistent labor and constant toil, the Americus Institute, the creature of the Southwestern Baptist Association, is no longer an object of the imagination simply, but a reality." The first term began with nine students from nine Southwest Georgia counties and before it had concluded enrollment had reached sixty.<sup>41</sup> The Americus school was hailed throughout the region as a triumph and held aloft as testimony to Black Baptists collective work and desire to uplift and advance the race.

---

<sup>40</sup> Southwestern Baptist Association, *Minutes*, 1885, 11–12.

<sup>41</sup> Southwestern Baptist Association, *Minutes*, 1898, 37.

### The Camilla Baptist Association

Perhaps unnoticed but to a few, on Thursday before the third Sunday in November 1879, Blacks met at the Union Baptist Church in Mitchell County and formed the Camilla Baptist Association, which has been in existence for 131 years.<sup>42</sup> Clarence Wagner in *Profiles of Black Georgia Baptists* noted that the First Shiloh Missionary Baptist Association in East Georgia grew so large that churches eventually began to withdraw and form other associations. In 1877, the Southwestern Baptist Association had ninety-five member churches.<sup>43</sup> The sheer volume of affiliates could have been a catalyst behind the creation of the Camilla Baptist Association.

Written records of the participants and business conducted at the association's first meeting have not survived. The 1979 Souvenir Program for the association's 100th annual session identified some of the founders and churches represented on that historic occasion. The record lists Summerhill (Pelham); Oak Grove and Union (Camilla); St. Mary (Flint); and Mt. Zion (Damascus) as churches that sent delegates to the meeting.<sup>44</sup> The membership of the churches at that time can only be estimated from a later year. In 1882, Mount Zion had eighty-three members, Saint Mary's, twelve, Oak Grove 100, Union, 125. Summerhill Baptist Church is not listed in that year's Statistical Table the Churches.

---

<sup>42</sup> Camilla Baptist Association, 100<sup>th</sup> Annual Session Souvenir Program, October 1979.

<sup>43</sup> Southwestern Baptist Association, *Minutes*, 1877, 16–18.

<sup>44</sup> Camilla Baptist Association, 100<sup>th</sup> Annual Session Souvenir Program.

Reverend Purnell B. Borders ministered to the Summerhill and St. Mary's Baptist churches. The 1882 Statistical Table for the Camilla association lists Borders as pastor of the Mount Zion church.<sup>45</sup> It is possible that he was its leader when the association was formed. Reverend Collins James was pastor of the Union Baptist Church and Reverend George Washington led the Oak Grove congregation. These ministers were elected as the association's first leadership team. Reverend P. B. Borders, moderator, Reverend G. H. Washington, clerk, and C. T. James, treasurer.

These ministers were not strangers to an association; rather they were experienced participants. Reverends Borders, Washington, and James led churches that were members of the Southwestern Baptist Association. James' churches, Salem in Mitchell and Weldon Springs in Baker, were affiliates of the Southwestern Baptist Association two years into its inception. In 1877, all three ministers pastored churches in the Southwestern Association.<sup>46</sup> At the Southwestern Association's fourth annual meeting Reverend James preached the Sunday morning Missionary Sermon at the Wooten Grove Baptist Church in Leesburg. He served as chairman of the First District Sunday School and was elected as a messenger to attend the Black State Baptist Convention.<sup>47</sup>

Reverend Purnell Borders was a founder of the Mount Moriah Colored Baptist Association, which held its inaugural meeting in

---

<sup>45</sup> Camilla Baptist Association, *Minutes*, 1882, 17.

<sup>46</sup> Southwestern Baptist Association, *Minutes*, 1877, 16–18.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 5, 6, 9.

1870.<sup>48</sup> Borders was active in the Southwestern Association beginning with the fifth annual meeting in 1875. He preached the Missionary Sermon that year at the Sardis Baptist Church in Dawson, was appointed to the Committee on Preaching, and was elected as a messenger to the Black State Baptist Convention.<sup>49</sup> According to the Statistical Table of Churches George Washington pastored Pleasant Grove Baptist Church in Newton. His affiliation with the Southwestern Association began in 1877. At this meeting he was assigned to read letters from the churches during the second day's session. He was appointed to the Finance Committee, preached at the Cuthbert Court House at 3:00 P.M., Sunday October 7, 1877, and was selected as a correspondent to the Shiloh Baptist Association.<sup>50</sup>

Accounts of this association's earliest years are not archived. Proximity of churches and ministers to Camilla appears to be relevant. The core ingredients important to launch an association were also present. That is, leadership was embodied in the mature ministry of Purnell Borders, who preached during slavery and had association organization as a founder of the Mount Moriah Colored Baptist Association.<sup>51</sup> George Washington could read and write, a requirement for the clerk, and Collins James, who over time

distinguished himself as a man of integrity, thrift, and means, was entrusted with the association's finances.<sup>52</sup>

Differing from the Southwestern union, the Camilla Association began modestly with five churches. By 1882, the Camilla Baptist Association had grown to twenty-six churches encompassing six Southwest Georgia counties. Although churches from different counties comprised the association, all of the pastors lived in or close to Camilla.

The ability to read and write numbered among the most urgent desired of Blacks in the decades after the Civil War. Ministers of the Camilla Baptist Association were enthusiastic about pursuing educational opportunities for their people. The Committee on Education appointed at each annual meeting, made reports on the need for literacy. The association announced in 1882, that "people who disregard their educational interest must be content to suffer" and began to focus its attention toward building a high school.<sup>53</sup> During the 1884, annual meeting, education was deemed "as the most pressing need of our people."<sup>54</sup> A resolution was passed at the 1886 annual meeting that committed the association to proceed from rhetoric to the reality in establishing a school. What has to be one of the great disappointments for Black Baptists in the region was the Camilla association's failure to build a high school within its bounds. Unfortunately, this noble cause was abruptly abandoned in an 1893 resolution.

---

<sup>48</sup> Mount Moriah Colored Baptist Association, *Minutes*, 1887, 7; The Mount Moriah Colored Baptist Association held its first annual meeting in 1870.

<sup>49</sup> Southwestern Baptist Association, *Minutes*, 1875, 2-4.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 1-12.

<sup>51</sup> See the Mount Moriah Colored Baptist Association, *Minutes* 1887, 7; and the Southwestern Baptist Association Statistics of the Churches Tables.

---

<sup>52</sup> Margaret Spence and Anna M. Fleming. *History of Mitchell County*, 173.

<sup>53</sup> Camilla Baptist Association, *Minutes*, 1882, 9.

<sup>54</sup> Camilla Baptist Association, *Minutes*, 1884, 10.

### The Macedonia Baptist Association

Another union of churches joined Southwest Georgia's cavalcade of Black Baptist associations in 1876 when the Macedonia Baptist Association held its first annual meeting in Valdosta. Like the Camilla Association, Macedonia was formed with a few churches: Silver Run, Saint Johns, and Macedonia, from Lowndes County and Sweetfield, Brooks County. Fourteen Black Baptist men were present to launch the venture. The constitution permitted two delegates from each member church and one delegate for every twenty-five members over fifty. Macedonia had 146 members, Silver Run, thirty-two, Saint Johns, twenty-two, and Sweetfield, twenty-one. Reverend Charles Anderson was the driving force behind the Macedonia union and pastored the three churches in Lowndes County. Jasper Battles led the Sweetfield congregation and pastored the Trinity Baptist Church in Boston, a member of the Thomasville Association. It is significant to note that Battles was also a member of the Georgia House of Representatives.<sup>55</sup>

The Macedonia Association's birth was amid some travail. Adhering to protocol, the Silver Run Baptist Church in Ousley requested and was granted a letter of dismissal from the Thomasville Association in 1875. The minutes do not reflect the same for the Saint Johns and Macedonia Baptist churches, which became members of the Macedonia Baptist Association. Apparently, these churches failure to follow protocol led the newly formed Macedonia Association into conflict with the Thomasville Association.

---

<sup>55</sup> Edmund L. Drago, *Black Politicians & Reconstruction in Georgia: A Splendid Failure* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1992), 166.

Prior to the Macedonia Baptist Association's first meeting, November 17, 1876, Reverend J. Battles had acted as a correspondent to the Thomasville Association's annual meeting on October 19, 1876. The Thomasville brethren did not receive Battles, and a committee was appointed to investigate the status of the Macedonia Association. The committee's report informed that churches comprising the Macedonia Association did not properly withdraw from the Thomasville body and that there were unresolved animosities between that association's churches. The committee offered an olive branch to the Macedonia brethren noting that when its disturbances were settled recognition would be gladly extended.<sup>56</sup>

At the first annual meeting, Charles Anderson was elected moderator, Wiley Tarver, clerk, and Daniel Cooper, treasurer. Anderson had succeeded Jacob Wade as moderator of the Thomasville Baptist Association and served two years, 1872 and 1873. Born into slavery, Anderson demonstrated his leadership ability in founding Macedonia, the first Black Baptist church in Valdosta. When the first church building became unsustainable, Anderson hired himself to Whites in order to acquire the lumber to construct a new building.<sup>57</sup>

White Baptists were present and participated in the Macedonia Association's business affairs during the inaugural meeting. Reverends James McBride, A. L. Smith, R. A. Peebles, and Dr. Burtten represented the Mercer Baptist Association. McBride preached the Introductory Sermon. Dr. Burtten and A. L. Smith

---

<sup>56</sup> Thomasville Baptist Association, *Minutes*, 1876, 5.

<sup>57</sup> Macedonia First Baptist Church, *One Hundred Forty-First Anniversary Souvenir Booklet* (n.p., 2006).

read church letters and the names of delegates. On the second day's meeting, Reverend McBride also addressed the delegates on the subject of temperance. In the three-day meeting four sermons were preached, a decision was made to convene at the Sweetfield Baptist Church for the second annual meeting, and Reverend Charles Anderson was appointed to preach the introductory sermon. In other business, delegates requested that Reverend R. A. Peebles give a lecture on Sunday schools at the Macedonia Baptist Church on the third Sunday of December 1877. The treasurer's report was received. After all accounts were settled the association had a balance of \$18.25. The association dismissed by shaking hands and singing "blessed be the tie that binds."

### Conclusion

In the last half of the nineteenth-century, the association had tremendous appeal among Blacks in Southwest Georgia. Like the Black Baptist church, the association was a pioneering religious effort that gained momentum in freedom. The growth of associations in Southwest Georgia from 1865 to 1900 attests to their increasing importance among Black Baptists. In one sense the association was a cooperative endeavor that sought to bind adherents of the denomination together. In another, it was an extended family, a network of support, and for that pivotal time, an endeavor in unity. Their annual meetings had a positive effect on the communities where they convened. The meetings attracted large crowds of Blacks from near and far. They turned out, primarily on Sunday, to hear the gospel preached. The clerk of the Kiokee Association described the crowd on Sunday morning

October 19, 1891 as "near to one thousand people enclosed in the spacious and immense seating capacity of the Saint Paul Church."<sup>58</sup> Similarly, on the fourth day's session of the Mount Zion Weston Baptist Association meeting in 1892, "the house was filled to its utmost and doors and windows the same" to hear Reverend W. M. Dowd, the association's moderator.<sup>59</sup> In 1893, approximately one thousand people assembled at the Bainbridge courthouse to hear Reverend F. F. Fiveash.<sup>60</sup> "Long before services commenced, the house was crowded for seating capacity and seating room was at a premium" was the scene for worship at the Thomasville Association meeting Sunday October 25, 1896.<sup>61</sup> "On Sunday there was about 2000 people on the grounds"<sup>62</sup> and "there were on the ground 3,000 people"<sup>63</sup> also tell of the association's impact in communities. Thus, like the great camp meetings, the association was a once a year main event that stirred the spirit of the Black community.

Associations were training grounds for Black Baptist cooperation and a testimony to organizational sustainability. Black ministers recognized the power inherent in an affiliation of local churches and that combined resources could make a difference in the community. The association was also a vehicle that facilitated development of ministerial leadership. Black Baptist associations evolved into the most viable economic institution in the

---

<sup>58</sup> Kiokee Baptist Association, *Minutes*, 1891, 9.

<sup>59</sup> Mount Zion Weston Baptist Association, *Minutes*, 1892, 9.

<sup>60</sup> Camilla Baptist Association, *Minutes*, 1893, 10.

<sup>61</sup> Thomasville Baptist Association, *Minutes*, 1896, 15.

<sup>62</sup> Camilla Baptist Association, *Minutes*, 1891, 7.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 1892, 7.

community. Their support came from member church contributions and delegates. While not originally intended, they were a source of economic aid, donating money to aged ministers and widows. Association funds were also loaned to delegates, ministers, and churches that experienced catastrophe or other financial exigency.

Although only a few years removed from slavery, Black Baptists in Southwest Georgia succeeded in establishing an institution that figures prominently in the transition from slavery to freedom, and indeed what is called the Black Experience. The association testifies to Black Baptists' faith, works, and determination and should be recognized as a major factor in the uplift and advancement of Blacks in Southwest Georgia.

**APPENDIX**  
**BLACK BAPTIST ASSOCIATIONS IN SOUTHWEST**  
**GEORGIA, 1865–1900**

- |   |                        |
|---|------------------------|
| 1. Benevolence Baptist Association<br>meeting 1885 1 <sup>st</sup> Mod. L. Solomon                | 1 <sup>st</sup> annual |
| 2. Buena Vista Baptist Association<br>meeting 1879 1 <sup>st</sup> Mod. J. D. Donaway             | 1 <sup>st</sup> annual |
| 3. Camilla Baptist Association<br>meeting 1879 1 <sup>st</sup> Mod. P. B. Borders                 | 1 <sup>st</sup> annual |
| 4. Chattahoochee River Baptist Association<br>meeting 1887 1 <sup>st</sup> Mod. Rev. Maddox       | 1 <sup>st</sup> annual |
| 5. Flint River Missionary Baptist Association<br>meeting 1878 1 <sup>st</sup> Mod. J. A. Thornton | 1 <sup>st</sup> annual |
| 6. Second Flint River Baptist Association<br>meeting 1884 1 <sup>st</sup> Mod D. Carson           | 1 <sup>st</sup> annual |
| 7. Fowl Town Baptist Association<br>meeting 1873 1 <sup>st</sup> Mod. Willis Warren               | 1 <sup>st</sup> annual |
| 8. Gum Creek Baptist Association<br>meeting 1880 1 <sup>st</sup> Mod. M. C. Carter                | 1 <sup>st</sup> annual |
| 9. Kiokee Baptist Association<br>meeting 1886 1 <sup>st</sup> Mod G. T. Johnson                   | 1 <sup>st</sup> annual |
| 10. Little River Baptist Association<br>meeting 1890 1 <sup>st</sup> Mod W. Holt                  | 1 <sup>st</sup> annual |
| 11. Macedonia Baptist Association<br>meeting 1876 1 <sup>st</sup> Mod. C. Anderson                | 1 <sup>st</sup> annual |
| 12. Middle Georgia Baptist Association<br>meeting 1866 1 <sup>st</sup> Mod. Wilkes Flagg          | 1 <sup>st</sup> annual |
| 13. Mt. Calvary Baptist Association<br>meeting 1871 1 <sup>st</sup> Mod.                          | 1 <sup>st</sup> annual |
| 14. Mt. Moriah Baptist Association<br>meeting 1870 1 <sup>st</sup> Mod. George Bull               | 1 <sup>st</sup> annual |



- 15. Mt. Zion Weston Baptist Association meeting 1890 1<sup>st</sup> Mod. Wm. M. Dowd 1<sup>st</sup> annual
- 16. Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Association meeting 1878 1<sup>st</sup> Mod. Ralph Watson 1<sup>st</sup> annual
- 17. Southwestern Baptist Association meeting 1871 1<sup>st</sup> Mod. David Hines 1<sup>st</sup> annual
- 18. South-Western Union Baptist Association meeting 1879 1<sup>st</sup> Mod. P. Wilkinson 1<sup>st</sup> annual
- 19. Thomasville Baptist Association meeting 1866 1<sup>st</sup> Mod. Jacob Wade 1<sup>st</sup> annual
- 20. Union MB Association meeting 1872 1<sup>st</sup> Mod. Henry Taylor 1<sup>st</sup> annual
- 21. Greater Bethesda MB Association meeting 1900 1<sup>st</sup> Mod. A. J. Johnson 1<sup>st</sup> annual

**WHO FORGOT WHAT? A REPLY TO EMIR CANER<sup>1</sup>**

**By Paul Brewster**

Few questions in Baptist history have had the staying power as the ongoing debate about Baptist origins. In Southern Baptist life, this debate has at times been heated. W. H. Whitsitt (1841–1911), third president of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, discovered that this seemingly abstract historical question deeply touched live nerves. When he proposed that the Baptist practice of immersion could not properly trace an unbroken lineage back to Jesus and the Apostles, but was instead reintroduced to the world out of the seedbed of English Puritanism, president Whitsitt found himself the victim of a forced termination.<sup>2</sup>

At the time of Whitsitt’s proposal, successionism was the standard view of Baptist history on both sides of the Atlantic. In America, Landmark theology was shot through and through Southern Baptist churches and it gave a strong reinforcing boost to

---

<sup>1</sup> I appreciate the assistance of Michael A. G. Haykin of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary for his help in thinking through some of the issues involved in this paper.

<sup>2</sup> Whitsitt’s controversial views were published in *A Question in Baptist History* (Louisville: Charles Dearing, 1896). For a recent study of Whitsitt, see James H. Slatton, *W. H. Whitsitt: The Man and the Controversy* (Macon, GA: Mercer Univ. Press, 2009).

this position. Pastors long schooled within that system rose up to demand the resignation of the popular president and professor. After several years of denominational controversy and amidst much regret from Seminary administrators, students, and colleagues, Whitsitt resigned his positions at Southern in 1899. Whitsitt may have lost the skirmish within the denomination, but the soundness of his historical research largely won the day with the next generation of Baptist historians. More and more as time went on, the English separatist theory of Baptist descent gradually gained acceptance, eventually becoming perhaps the predominant view even in Southern Baptist circles.<sup>3</sup>

In recent years, however, the question of Baptist origins has come under renewed scrutiny. Several Baptist historians have begun to argue that Baptists are more directly descended from, or at least influenced by, the Anabaptists of the sixteenth century than they are the English separatists of the seventeenth century.<sup>4</sup> That thesis received a particularly strident and unusual expression in an address delivered to the Georgia Baptist Convention's history conference in the fall of 2009. Emir Caner, a former professor of Anabaptist studies at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and the new president of Truett-McConnell College, spoke on the truly overwhelming influence of the early Georgia pastor, Daniel

---

<sup>3</sup> Within a few generations of Whitsitt's dismissal, another Southern Seminary faculty member, W. Morgan Patterson, expressed similar views without difficulty. See W. Morgan Patterson, *Baptist Successionism: A Critical View* (Valley Forge: The Judson Press, 1969).

<sup>4</sup> Few works have made a greater impact in this regard than William R. Estep's *The Anabaptist Story: An Introduction to Sixteenth-Century Anabaptism*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., rev. and enlarged (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996).

Marshall (1706–1784). His address was later published in its entirety by the Georgia Baptist state paper, *The Christian Index*, as “The Forgotten Hour of How the South Was Won: The Legacy of Daniel Marshall, Pioneer Georgia Baptist Pastor.”<sup>5</sup> Caner's article has two primary objectives. First, he seeks to demonstrate that Georgia Baptists saw themselves as the spiritual heirs of sixteenth-century Anabaptists, not English Separatists.

The second point flows from the former: Caner believes that Georgia Baptists were, at best, only nominally tied to Calvinistic theology. Caner is transparent about what he sees as at stake in the pursuit of these two questions: “Our heritage as Georgia Baptists, and a proper understanding of Scripture and its Anabaptist descendents, requires us to abandon any theological framework that diminishes the call to salvation and removes the urgency of such an appeal. Our survival and future literally depends on holding fast to the foundation which was laid in Scripture and followed by our Georgia Baptist pioneers.”<sup>6</sup> In other words, Caner adds one more voice to the many who warn that the surge of Calvinism in contemporary Baptist life threatens the health and vitality of the denomination.<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> Emir Caner, “The Forgotten Hour of How the South Was Won: The Legacy of Daniel Marshall, Pioneer Georgia Baptist Pastor,” *The Christian Index* (September 24, 2009). The full text of Caner's address is available online at: <http://www.christianindex.org/5861.article> print.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> For more information about this theme see, Paul Brewster, *Andrew Fuller: Model Pastor and Theologian* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2010), 176, and more exhaustively, Thomas J. Nettles, *By His Grace and For His Glory: A Historical, Theological and Practical Study of the Doctrines of Grace*

The first section of Caner's address was given under the subhead: "A Term of Derision, A Term of Identity: Our Anabaptist Ancestry in Georgia." Caner attempts to link Georgia Baptists and the Anabaptist movement in the strongest of terms. He proposes nothing less than that Daniel Marshall actually self-designated his church as an Anabaptist church.<sup>8</sup> Caner writes, "It may be surprising to more than a few Georgia Baptists to know that the term first designated to us upon our formation was "Anabaptist," an opprobrious term that finds its origins in the 4<sup>th</sup> century."<sup>9</sup> It almost appears here that Caner's point is merely that early Baptists were derisively called Anabaptists by their ecclesiastical opponents. Yet that would hardly be surprising, so Caner pushes on to clarify his meaning: "... the first Baptist church to be officially incorporated in Kiokee called itself, according to their charter, 'the Anabaptist church on the Kioka.' The charter, submitted in 1789, uses the term Anabaptist four times within its brief incorporation..." After citing the pertinent sentences of the charter illustrating this usage, Caner rounds out this astonishing assertion, "The charter above was formed in [*sic*] fashioned in large part by the church's first pastor, Daniel Marshall, whose life

---

*in Baptist Life*, rev. and expanded ed. (Cape Coral, FL: Founders Press, 2006), 268–302.

<sup>8</sup> Caner is aware of the far-reaching nature of this claim. He actually explains in a footnote (number 7) that his purpose is neither to confirm nor deny a "lineal connection between the groups." Instead, his purpose is on a lower order, only to "demonstrate a spiritual kinship" between Baptists and Anabaptists. However, it is hard to read the conclusion in the main body of the paper—that Daniel Marshall thought and wrote of himself as an Anabaptist—as in keeping with this more modest purpose.

<sup>9</sup> Caner, "The Forgotten Hour."

personifies the very word he chose to be connected to—Anabaptist."<sup>10</sup>

So, according to Caner, Daniel Marshall thought and wrote of himself as an Anabaptist. If true, these claims might indeed argue for a deep spiritual kinship between Georgia Baptists and Anabaptists. It is easy to demonstrate, however, that Caner's research and conclusions are seriously flawed. First, Caner states that the Kiokee charter "was formed and fashioned in large part by the church's first pastor, Daniel Marshall."<sup>11</sup> He gives no evidence for this conclusion, which is hard to accept given that Daniel Marshall died in 1784 and the charter was not granted until 1789. It is possible, of course, that this document was composed by Marshall prior to his death and somehow delayed. However, a significant amount of historical documentation is traceable to Daniel Marshall, and specifically to the Kiokee Baptist Church. Included in this material are the original articles of faith of the Kiokee Baptist Church, dated to 1772, when the church was founded. These articles were composed by none other than Marshall himself, likely committed to paper with his own hand.<sup>12</sup> They unequivocally reveal Marshall's chosen designation for a denominational label: "An Abstract of the Articles of Faith and Practice of the Kiokee Church of the Baptist Denomination."<sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. The full text of this charter is available in Thomas Ray, *Daniel and Abraham Marshall: Pioneer Baptist Evangelists to the South* (Springfield, MO: Particular Baptist Press, 2006), 262–63.

<sup>11</sup> Caner, "The Forgotten Hour."

<sup>12</sup> Ray, *Daniel and Abraham Marshall*, 67.

<sup>13</sup> The Kiokee Articles are also available in Ray, *Daniel and Abraham Marshall*, 244–46. Ray includes the articles of faith as one of twelve enlightening appendices that make this a tremendous Baptist source book. His

Numerous other documents traceable to Marshall all follow the same pattern. They speak hundreds of times of Baptist churches, never of Anabaptist churches.<sup>14</sup> Baptist historians would be very interested in any evidence Caner might have that Daniel Marshall or any of his near contemporaries in the Baptist movement ever self-designated themselves “Anabaptists.”<sup>15</sup>

---

volume also includes a reprint of *The Memoirs of the Late Rev. Abraham Marshall*, given here to the public for the first time since their original publication in 1824. Abraham Marshall (1748–1819) was Daniel’s son, who followed his father in the pastorate at the Kiokee Baptist Church.

<sup>14</sup> Because of its storied place in Georgia Baptist history, The Kiokee Baptist Church has been the subject of much research. In 1952, James D. Mosteller published a study on the history of this influential church, *A History of the Kiokee Baptist Church in Georgia* (Ann Arbor: Edwards Brothers, 1952); republished under the same title (Washington, GA: Wilkes Publishing, 1972). That work was revised and published yet again as part of Waldo P. Harris III’s *Georgia’s First Continuing Baptist Church: A History of the Kiokee Baptist Church in Georgia* (Appling, GA: Kiokee Baptist Church, 1997). In over five hundred pages related to the history of the Kiokee Baptist Church, which is intertwined with Marshall’s ministry, there is no hint of Anabaptist influence or conviction, save for the charter under discussion.

<sup>15</sup> One scholar who has done a tremendous amount of research on the relationship of Baptists to Anabaptists is James Edward McGoldrick. His findings are presented in: *Baptist Successionism: A Critical Question in Baptist History* (Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, 1994). He concludes that “suggested similarities between Anabaptists and Baptists are superficial and do not indicate that the latter derived their origins from the former” (116). In a phone call on Dec. 5, 2009, the present researcher asked professor McGoldrick if he was aware of any instance in Baptist history where a Baptist pastor applied the name “Anabaptist” to themselves or their church. He stated that he was aware of no such example in Europe or America. Along the same vein, Mennonite historians have claimed that even Anabaptists themselves refused to accept the moniker. Harold S. Bender writes in an entry in the *Global*

What then shall be made of the Kiokee Charter of 1789 with its fourfold use of the Anabaptist label? The existence of this document has long been known to Baptist historians, yet to the present researcher’s knowledge, none have interpreted it as has Caner. The reason is not far to seek. This church charter is one of several granted by the state legislature of Georgia, a state which at that time supported an established church. As in England of old, dissenters were allowed to establish churches, but the authorities often disdained their existence. From the church’s perspective, a charter was desirable in that it legitimized titles to land and buildings. It appears that in the case of the Kiokee charter, local authorities granted a charter, recognizing that a church at that site had *de facto* existed “for many years past.”<sup>16</sup> Following a common

---

*Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online*, “It was never used by the Anabaptists themselves but often vigorously objected to by them because of the opprobrium and criminal character attached to the name.... Abundant citations could be given showing that the term ‘Anabaptist’ in all its forms and translations was always essentially one of condemnation as of grievous heresy and crime.... This completely evil connotation of the name, which makes it truly an opprobrious epithet, carried through the 16<sup>th</sup> century and on down through the following centuries until modern times.” See Harold S. Bender et al, eds., *Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online*, s.v. “Anabaptist,” available online at <http://www.gameo.org/encyclopedia/contents/A533ME.html> (retrieved February 14, 2010).

<sup>16</sup> See the full text of the charter in Ray, *Daniel and Abraham Marshall*, 262–63. Though a clear deed to the church property was desirable to the Kiokee Baptist Church, gaining the approval of the state to start a church was of no concern to Daniel Marshall. A wonderful anecdote of his reply to the magistrates when they instructed him to cease preaching is found in Jesse Mercer, *A History of the Georgia Baptist Association* (Washington, GA:

pattern in the day, they referred to it derisively as an Anabaptist church, recognizing the fact that this group of believers would not accept the infant sprinkling of the state church as valid baptism at all and thus “rebaptized” new members who came from the parish system. The actual charter itself was not composed by anyone in the Kiokee church, but was a product of the legislature. This fact is driven home by noting it was signed by three state officials: the house speaker, the senate president, and the governor. No member of the Kiokee Baptist Church signed the document; they could only receive the document as given and as sufficient for their purpose of legitimizing land and property claims. No doubt they bore the scorn implied in the label given them as part of the reproach to be expected from the world. Several other instances of Baptists disdainfully being called Anabaptists by colonial or state officials can be produced from about the same era. These occasional references clearly reveal the prevailing prejudicial attitude toward Baptists, but reveal nothing about any link between early American Baptists and sixteenth-century Anabaptists.

Caner’s second point, that early Georgia Baptists were opposed to Calvinistic theology, rests upon even shakier ground than his treatment of the question of Anabaptist kinship. Regardless of one’s opinion of Calvinism, a person cannot read far in early Georgia Baptist historical documents without finding overpowering evidence that for early nineteenth-century Baptists, Calvinistic theology was the norm, not the exception.<sup>17</sup>

---

Georgia Baptist Association, 1838; facsimile reprint, Washington, GA: Georgia Baptist Association, 1979), 372.

<sup>17</sup> Among many sources that might be sought to verify this claim, I would especially commend two. First, Jesse Mercer’s irreplaceable *A History of the*

Caner argues that the Calvinism surrounding Daniel Marshall and the Separate Baptists was only the vestigial remains of creedal Baptist expressions leftover from a previous generation. For example, he states, “To Daniel Marshall, Reformed doctrine was anything but essential to the churches.”<sup>18</sup> He further adds that with the exception of eternal security, “Other [Calvinistic] doctrines were undefined and usually ignored.”<sup>19</sup> Recognizing that many Separate Baptist church confessions of faith were decidedly Calvinistic in their language, Caner writes, “Thus, at times Sandy Creek confessions would adopt some words from more Reformed doctrines—words such as ‘effectual calling’ and ‘particular redemption’—but would leave these terms undefined.”<sup>20</sup>

This common reading of Separate Baptist views on Calvinism is no longer tenable, if it ever was.<sup>21</sup> While much has been made of the differing streams of tradition that came together to form the Southern Baptist Convention, it is a mistaken notion that the Sandy

---

*Georgia Baptist Association*. Then, a secondary source which sets Mercer in context: Anthony L. Chute, *A Piety above the Common Standard: Jesse Mercer and the Defense of Evangelistic Calvinism* (Macon, GA: Mercer Univ. Press, 2004).

<sup>18</sup> Caner, “The Forgotten Hour.”

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> See Terry Wolever, “Introduction,” in Ray, *Daniel and Abraham Marshall*, ix–x. Wolever correctly states that “the documentation in this book should lay to rest the concept that the Separates as a body were anti-confessional. Whatever the views of other of their contemporaries and successors, Shubal Stearns, Daniel Marshall and Abraham Marshall were all in the Confessional Calvinistic tradition.”

Creek tradition was not Calvinistic.<sup>22</sup> In fact, one can only maintain that position by following Caner's thesis that the Separate Baptists used carry-over Calvinistic phrases which they had divested of their theological content.

Regarding Daniel Marshall, the evidence does not indicate that he carelessly aped Calvinistic language. The articles of faith of the Kiokee Baptist Church were composed by Marshall in 1772, at the founding of the church. They include the following sentiments:

According to God's appointment in his word, we do in his name and strength covenant and promise to keep up and defend all the articles of Faith, according to God's word, such as the great doctrine of election, effectual Calling, particular redemption, Justification by the Imputed righteousness of Christ alone, sanctification by the spirit of God, Believers Baptism by Immersion, the saints absolute final perseverance in Grace, the resurrection of the dead, future rewards and punishments, &c., all according to scripture which we take as the rule of our faith & practice,

---

<sup>22</sup> Among several Calvinistic confessions of faith associated with the Separates, the preface to the Sandy Creek Church Covenant (1757) and the Grassy Creek Baptist Church Covenant (1757) are two easily found examples which reveal the Calvinistic underpinnings of the movement. Both documents are believed to be traced to Shubal Stearns himself, see Robert Devin, *A History of Grassy Creek Baptist Church From its Foundation to 1880: With Biographical Sketches of its Pastors and Ministers* (Raleigh, NC: Edwards, Broughton & Co., 1880; facsimile reprint, np: Church History Research & Archives, 1977). Devin summarizes the doctrinal differences between the Regulars and Separates this way: "There was but little difference in their views of doctrine and church order. The leading sentiments of both parties were Calvinistic" (61).

with some other doctrines herein not mentioned, as are commanded & supported by that Blessed Book....<sup>23</sup>

While it is true that these affirmations are not fleshed out here in lengthy articles, it is not the case that they are undefined. In fact, following the semicolon in the above citation, the articles go on to clarify the author's clear Calvinistic intent in polemical terms: "... Denying the Arian, Socinian & Arminian errors, & every other principle contrary to the word of God."<sup>24</sup> It is clear that Marshall used his terms precisely and with a good understanding of what they both affirmed and denied. He took pains to make sure that he was not considered Arminian in his position and it is unwarranted to fail to take his language at face value.

It is also pertinent to remember that Daniel Marshall was converted in a Congregational church in Connecticut, where he also served as a deacon for twenty years. Further, he served as a Congregationalist missionary to the Mohawk Indians until tribal warfare caused him to move south. These experiences assure us that he was theologically informed, especially about the Calvinistic implications of the terms in question. Further, when Marshall became a Baptist at the not-so-impressionable age of forty-eight, reliable sources indicate that he only consented to that momentous step after "a close, impartial examination of their faith and order...."<sup>25</sup> While modern Baptists may give only cursory review to

---

<sup>23</sup> The full text transcription of these articles can be found in Ray, "Appendix F: Articles of Faith of the Kiokee Baptist Church," 244-46.

<sup>24</sup> Ray, *Daniel and Abraham Marshall*, 244..

<sup>25</sup> Abraham Marshall is the source of this detail. He also states that the Virginia Baptist church into whose membership Daniel was baptized belonged

a church's articles of belief prior to joining, it is anachronistic in the extreme to conclude that this practice was found among nineteenth-century Baptists.

Caner's article also questions the Calvinistic commitments of early Georgia Baptists by maintaining that Daniel Marshall's son and successor to the pastorate of Kiokee Baptist Church, Abraham Marshall, was "never considered a predestinarian."<sup>26</sup> As Thomas Ray has shown, this was Jesse Mercer's description of Abraham Marshall with regard to his desire to avoid theological controversy.<sup>27</sup> The evidence surrounding Abraham Marshall's life and ministry demonstrate that in no way should Mercer's description be interpreted to mean that Marshall was anything less than soundly Calvinistic in his convictions. For example, the Georgia Baptist Association, whose history is so tightly intertwined with the Kiokee Baptist Church, adopted a statement of faith in 1792. Abraham Marshall was then the moderator and had a significant hand in drafting the document. Consider its clear Calvinistic sentiments:

3d. We believe in the fall of Adam, and the imputation of his sin to posterity. In the corruption of the human nature, and the impotency of man to recover himself by his own free will—ability.

---

to the Philadelphia Baptist Association, well-known for its stalwart Calvinistic convictions and strict doctrinal accountability. See Mercer, *History*, 371.

<sup>26</sup> Caner, "The Forgotten Hour." See the letter by Jesse Mercer which gives this description in its full context in Charles D. Mallary, *Memoirs of Elder Jesse Mercer* (New York: John Gray, 1844; facsimile reprint, Paris, AR: Baptist Standard Bearer, 1997), 201.

<sup>27</sup> Ray, *Daniel and Abraham Marshall*, 66.

4<sup>th</sup>. We believe in the everlasting love of God to his people, and the eternal election of a definite number of the human race, to grace and glory: And that there was a covenant of grace or redemption made between the Father and the Son, before the world began, in which their salvation is secure, and that they in particular are redeemed.<sup>28</sup>

These are not the carelessly chosen words of men who are lackadaisical about doctrinal precision. The evidence is clear that Abraham Marshall was, like his father Daniel before him, a committed Calvinistic Baptist.<sup>29</sup>

Finally, notice must be given to what appears to be a very confused reading of Baptist history in "The Forgotten Hour of How the South was Won." Caner writes: "In 1845, as the Southern Baptist Convention is being formed in our [Georgia Baptists'] backyard, Separate Baptists pass the *Declaration of Faith* which advocates openly through Article Six, 'the Freeness of Salvation' that nothing prevents the salvation of the greatest sinner on earth,

---

<sup>28</sup> Mercer, *History of the Georgia Baptist Association*, 30.

<sup>29</sup> One other interesting piece of evidence about the depth of Abraham Marshall's Calvinism is found in a letter which Juriah Harriss composed while serving as pastor of the Kiokee Baptist Church, in 1859. In that letter, Harriss fondly reminisces that he sat under Abraham Marshall's preaching from 1807 to 1819. He writes of Marshall's habit of citing others in his sermons: "Dr. Gill and Dr. Doddridge were, I suppose, his favorite theological authors: for he quoted from them more frequently than from any others." William B. Sprague, *Annals of the American Pulpit: Vol 6 Baptists* (New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1860), 170–171. See also Thomas Ray, *Daniel and Abraham Marshall*, 42.

except his own voluntary refusal to submit to the Lord Jesus Christ.”<sup>30</sup> Several replies are in order.

First, by the time the SBC was formed in 1845, the Separate/Regular Baptist distinction had long since ceased to be a mainstream issue. Terms of union for the two groups, usually along associational or state convention lines, had been reached and the old labels no longer applied. A typical perspective was that expressed by the Virginia Baptists, who said, “Upon these terms we are united; and desire hereafter that the names Regular and Separate, be buried in oblivion.”<sup>31</sup> It is true that a few Separates maintained their identity—and indeed do so down to the present—but they are far outside the mainstream of Baptist life in the South and were not a part of the formation of the SBC.<sup>32</sup>

Second, since Caner fails to document what he calls the Separate Baptist *Declaration of Faith* of 1845, one cannot verify its contents.<sup>33</sup> However, the snippet of that statement of faith which

---

<sup>30</sup> Caner, “The Forgotten Hour.”

<sup>31</sup> The terms under which they united (in 1787) were the adoption of the Philadelphia Baptist Confession of Faith, together with an important proviso that every Baptist was free in his conscience regarding minor scruples with that declaration. William L. Lumpkin, *Baptist Foundations in the South: Tracing through the Separates the Influence of the Great Awakening, 1754–1787* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1961), 141.

<sup>32</sup> It is reported that there are still 94 of these churches with a combined membership of 8,716. They are organized into a General Association of Separate Baptists in Christ. See Frank S. Mead, *Handbook of Denominations in the United States*, 13th ed, edited by Craig D. Atwood and Samuel S. Hill (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2010), 74–75.

<sup>33</sup> My research has been unable to find any statement of faith from 1845 that might be attributed to Separate Baptists. I suspect this is just a citation error and that the document to which he refers is the 1833 New Hampshire Confession of

he cites is identical to the language of the New Hampshire Baptist Confession (1833). In any event, the point Caner attempts to make by this citation is not clear. The Baptists who formed the SBC in 1845 were in no state of disagreement about the need to preach the gospel to all who would hear them. Nor were they in any state of doubt that any who believed on Jesus Christ would be saved.

In conclusion, Daniel Marshall, the Kiokee Baptist Church, and the majority of early nineteenth-century Georgia Baptists were consciously and intentionally Calvinistic in their theological orientation. They derived neither their name nor their soteriological convictions from the Anabaptists. Marshall’s generation of Baptist preachers were both committed Calvinists and aggressive evangelists. That some deem theological Calvinism and aggressive evangelism as “irreconcilable” suggests a profound shift in the way contemporary Baptists apply theology.<sup>34</sup> In short, the South was won by men of the same theological stripe as those who founded the modern Baptist missionary effort in the late-eighteenth century. Rather than deny or attack their theology and

---

Faith, as indicated in the body of this paper. If there is an 1845 Separate Baptist Confession, it must be attributable to one of the few churches or associations that maintained a Separate Baptist identity, mentioned above. Even then, it is obvious they were adopting the language of the earlier New Hampshire Baptist Confession of Faith (1833), which was widely used by Baptists of many types. More likely, Caner is making reference to a local edition of the New Hampshire Baptist Confession, which was often reprinted with a customized title page specifying the local church for which it was being produced, as in this example: *A Short Summary and Declaration of Faith of the Baptist Church in Concord, to which is Added the Church Covenant*, (Concord, MA: Young & Worth), 1837.

<sup>34</sup> See J. I. Packer, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1961).



missiology, present day Baptists would do well to seek understanding of their theology and follow their evangelistic example.

**NOW LET US PRAISE FAMOUS MODERATES: A  
REVIEW ESSAY OF THREE RECENT  
*FESTSCHRIFTEN***

Nathan A. Finn

Jolley, Marc A. with John D. Pierce, eds. *Distinctively Baptist: Essays on Baptist History*, Festschrift Walter B. Shurden. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2005.

George, Timothy and Eric F. Mason, eds. *Theology in Service of the Church: Essays Presented to Fisher H. Humphries*. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2008.

Williams, Michael E. Sr. and Walter B. Shurden, eds. *Turning Points in Baptist History: A Festschrift in Honor of Harry Leon McBeth*. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2008.

**Introduction**

Among Southern Baptists and those with roots in that tradition, the theo-political kerfuffle known as “The Controversy” dominated the last two decades of the twentieth century. The Controversy surrounded efforts by conservative dissenters to unseat what they perceived to be inappropriately progressive personnel from the denomination’s paid leadership. For these insurgents, The

Controversy represented a “Conservative Resurgence,” a return to Southern Baptist first principles. Denominational loyalists, many of whom were less conservative than the dissenters, rallied around SBC institutions and defended the Convention’s status quo against the onslaught. The more progressive faction somewhat begrudgingly took on the name “moderates” and argued The Controversy was a “Fundamentalist Takeover” that paralleled the Reagan Revolution in secular politics.<sup>1</sup>

During the 1980s, conservative dissenters won every important victory and gained control of the Convention’s denominational machinery. During the 1990s, they consolidated their power, remade the SBC’s institutions in their image, and emerged as the new status quo. In response to these changes, the moderates became the new dissenters. They formed new networks and proto-denominations such as the Southern Baptist Alliance, Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, Mainstream Baptists, and Baptists Committed. They founded new seminaries and divinity schools and promoted special advocacy ministries committed to women in pastoral ministry, pacifism, and strict separation of church and state. Some moderate churches left the SBC completely, while most simply quietly disengaged and remained nominally Southern Baptist. Moderates focused their energies on their own networks, the Baptist World Alliance, and the state conventions, though by the

---

<sup>1</sup> For examples, see James C. Hefley, *The Conservative Resurgence in the Southern Baptist Convention* (Hannibal, MO: Hannibal Books, 1991), and Robison B. James et al, *The Fundamentalist Takeover in the Southern Baptist Convention*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Macon, GA: Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of Georgia, 2007).

2000s moderates were pulling away from the latter as The Controversy moved increasingly to the state level.<sup>2</sup>

Historians, sociologists, and other scholars offer differing interpretations of The Controversy. Some, such as Albert Mohler, Jerry Sutton, Grady Cothen, and Walter Shurden, utilize a two-party paradigm, though they disagree over which faction represented the majority of Southern Baptists and/or the best of the Baptist tradition.<sup>3</sup> Others, such as Nancy Ammerman, Bill Leonard, Barry Hankins, and David Dockery, recognize a spectrum of positions within the SBC and offer more nuanced interpretations of the conflict.<sup>4</sup> At the end of the day, virtually

---

<sup>2</sup> See Walter B. Shurden, ed., *The Struggle for the Soul of the SBC: Moderate Responses to the Fundamentalist Takeover* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1994), and Cecil Sherman, *By My Own Reckoning* (Macon, GA: Smyth and Helwys, 2008), 131–250.

<sup>3</sup> R. Albert Mohler Jr., “A Conflict of Visions: The Theological Roots of the Southern Baptist Controversy,” *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* (Spring 2003): 4–11; Jerry Sutton, *The Baptist Reformation: The Conservative Resurgence in the Southern Baptist Convention* (B&H, 2000); Grady C. Cothen, *What Happened to the Southern Baptist Convention? A Memoir of the Controversy* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 1993), 1–18. Walter B. Shurden, *Not a Silent People: Controversies that have Shaped Southern Baptists*, updated ed. (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 1995), 83–112.

<sup>4</sup> Nancy Tatom Ammerman, *Baptist Battles: Social Change and Religious Conflict in the Southern Baptist Convention* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1990); Bill J. Leonard, *God’s Last and Only Hope: The Fragmentation of the Southern Baptist Convention* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990); Barry Hankins, *Uneasy in Babylon: Southern Baptist Conservatives and American Culture*, *Religion in American Culture* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2002); David S. Dockery, *Southern Baptist Consensus and Renewal: A Biblical, Historical, and Theological Proposal* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2008), 1–14.

everyone agrees the pre-Controversy personnel leading the SBC were less theologically conservative, or at least willing to employ and defend those who were less conservative, than their post-Controversy counterparts. Many moderates championed interpretations of Baptist history and identity that emphasized individual liberty of conscience and the autonomy of local churches as the central Baptist convictions.<sup>5</sup> In the words of one noteworthy book, for many moderates, “being Baptist means freedom.”<sup>6</sup>

Recent years have witnessed the retirement and/or death of many key pastors and scholars who were heavily invested in The Controversy. Among conservatives, these were the pastors who were elected to ecclesiastical high office and used their influence to transform the SBC into a thoroughly conservative denomination. Among moderates, these leaders represented the first-generation of a post-SBC moderate Baptist tradition in the South, one that arose from within the Convention but developed largely as a response to changes in the denomination. This essay examines three recent *festschriften* dedicated to first-generation moderate scholars Walter Shurden, Leon McBeth, and Fisher Humphreys. These volumes help us to understand some of the priorities that have shaped first-

---

<sup>5</sup> See Walter B. Shurden, *The Baptist Identity: Four Fragile Freedoms* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 1993); Grady Cothen and James Dunn, *Soul Freedom: Baptist Battle Cry* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2000); Charles W. Deweese, ed., *Defining Baptist Convictions: Guidelines for the Twenty-First Century* (Franklin, TN: Providence House, 1996); Bruce T. Gourley, *THE GODMAKERS: A Legacy of the Southern Baptist Convention?* (Franklin, TN: Providence House, 1996).

<sup>6</sup> Alan Neely, ed., *Being Baptist Means Freedom* (Charlotte, NC: Southern Baptist Alliance, 1988).

generation moderates as well as new emphases that are being embraced by some second-generation moderates.

### **Walter Shurden: Shaper of Moderate Baptist Identity**

Walter Shurden is a church historian with expertise in Baptist history and denominational identity. During the course of his career, Shurden taught at McMaster Divinity College, Carson-Newman College, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, and Mercer University. During the early years of The Controversy, he served as dean of the School of Theology at Southern Seminary, an institution that was at the center of the storm, much as it has been for nearly every theological controversy in Southern Baptist history. From 1983 until his retirement in 2007, Shurden served as chair of the Roberts Department of Christianity at Mercer and then founding executive director of Mercer’s Center for Baptist Studies.

Shurden was arguably the key public intellectual of the moderate movement until the early twenty-first century. His books and essays, many of which were shaped by denominational conflict, articulated the freedom-oriented vision of Baptist identity that characterized virtually all first-generation moderates.<sup>7</sup> Shurden

---

<sup>7</sup> In addition to the previously cited works by Shurden, see Walter B. Shurden, *The Doctrine of the Priesthood of Believers* (Nashville, TN: Convention Press, 1988); Walter B. Shurden, ed., *Priesthood of all Believers, Proclaiming the Baptist Vision* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 1993); Walter B. Shurden, ed., *The Bible, Proclaiming the Baptist Vision* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 1994); Walter B. Shurden, ed., *The Church, Proclaiming the Baptist Vision* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 1996); Walter B. Shurden, ed., *Religious Liberty, Proclaiming the Baptist Vision* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 1994);

was a polemical historian who used his interpretation of the past as a key tool in forging the convictions that buttressed the early moderate movement, particularly the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. He is widely regarded by many second-generation moderate historians, and his views permeate the Baptist History and Heritage Society, which is strongly influenced by Shurden's protégés.<sup>8</sup> Second-generation moderate theologians have been somewhat less sanguine in their view of Shurden, particularly

---

Walter B. Shurden, ed., *Baptism and the Lord's Supper*, Proclaiming the Baptist Vision (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 1999); Walter B. Shurden and Randy Shepley, eds., *Going for the Jugular: A Documentary History of the SBC Holy War* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1996); Walter B. Shurden, *Not as Easy Journey: Some Transitions in Baptist Life* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2005).

<sup>8</sup> For several years, a group of moderate historians have met with Shurden annually for a primary source reading seminar. These scholars, many of whom are serving or have served in leadership roles in the Baptist History and Heritage Society, recently released a document titled "An Affirmation of Common Baptist Themes," which is available online at <http://www.baptisthistory.org/bhhs/affirmationbaptisttheme.html> (accessed December 1, 2010). This document was drafted in response to a proposal that the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of North Carolina revise its foundational statement to reflect Bapto-Catholic emphases. See Bob Allen, "State CBF Proposal Sparks Debate about Baptist Identity," Associated Baptist Press (September 19, 2010), available online at <http://www.abpnews.com/content/view/5708/53/> (accessed December 1, 2010). An additional group of moderate scholars and pastors, including Shurden, have subsequently endorsed "An Affirmation of Common Baptist Themes." See "Common Baptist Themes: Additional Endorsements," available online at <http://www.baptisthistory.org/bhhs/commonbaptistthemesendorsements.html> (accessed December 1, 2010).

those who embrace the so-called Bapto-Catholic vision of Baptist identity.<sup>9</sup>

In 2005, Mercer University Press published a *festschrift* dedicated to Shurden titled *Distinctively Baptist: Essays on Baptist History*. The volume, edited by Mercer University Press director Marc Jolley and *Baptists Today* editor John Pierce, includes a personal tribute, fourteen historical essays, and a bibliography of Shurden's publications. Many of the essays bear the marks of Shurden's particular understanding of Baptist identity and strongly negative assessment of the post-Controversy Southern Baptist Convention. This is especially true of the essays written by contributors who were educated under Shurden and/or served in a Southern Baptist context during the 1980s and 1990s. Like a number of other works written by many of these same authors, *Distinctively Baptist* is a work of historical apology for a freedom-centric moderate vision of Baptist life.

Many essays advocate a moderate view of Baptist identity. For example, an essay on the ministerial use of Baptist history, written

---

<sup>9</sup> Bapto-Catholicism is a term used to describe a group of second-generation moderate theologians and historical theologians who have rallied around a 1997 document titled "Re-Envisioning Baptist Identity: A Manifesto for Baptist Communities in North America," available online at <http://baptiststudiesonline.com/wp-content/uploads/2007/02/reenvisioningbaptistidentity2.pdf> (accessed December 1, 2010). This so-called Baptist Manifesto has been republished in a number of different venues. The original authors were Mikeal Broadway, Curtis Freeman, Barry Harvey, James McClendon, Elizabeth Newman, and Philip Thompson. For a scholarly introduction to Bapto-Catholicism, see Cameron H. Jorgenson, "Bapto-Catholicism: Recovering Tradition and Reconsidering the Baptist Identity" (Ph.D. diss., Baylor University, 2008).

by Charles Deweese, ends with a Shurdenesque call to educate Baptist people about Baptist history so they will not be duped by conservative Southern Baptists, who apparently are ignorant of said history. The implication is that moderates are the true heirs of authentic Baptist identity.<sup>10</sup> Doug Weaver makes a similar argument in his essay on how the Second Baptist Church of Atlanta understood its identity in the nineteenth century. Predictably, the church is cast as a moderate congregation that valued the Bible over creeds and individual conscience over community orthodoxy, though Weaver concedes the church adopted a confession of faith and was in fact characterized by orthodox doctrine.<sup>11</sup> In an essay dedicated to the eighteenth-century British Baptist pastor Robert Robinson, Karen Smith argues that Robinson was a leading defender of freedom of conscience, as evidenced in his own embracing of Unitarian-like views while remaining a Baptist minister.<sup>12</sup>

Other essays articulate moderate criticism of the contemporary SBC. In an essay on Baptist responses to global pluralism, Bill Leonard contends that conservative Southern Baptists have responded inappropriately to pluralism by maintaining a commitment to the exclusivity of the Christian faith. Leonard

---

<sup>10</sup> Charles W. Deweese, "Baptist History as Ministry," in *Distinctively Baptist: Essays on Baptist History*, Festschrift Walter B. Shurden (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2005), 60–73.

<sup>11</sup> C. Douglas Weaver, "Second Baptist Church, Atlanta: A Paradigm of Southern Baptist Identity in the Nineteenth Century," in *Distinctively Baptist*, 75–97.

<sup>12</sup> Karen Smith, "The Liberty Not to be a Christian: Robert Robinson (1735–1790) of Cambridge and Freedom of Conscience," in *Distinctively Baptist*, 151–70.

suggests that in a pluralistic context, Baptist soteriological particularism represents a potential threat to the historic Baptist commitment to religious liberty.<sup>13</sup> In an essay on the mid-twentieth century bureaucratization of the SBC, Glenn Hinson bemoans the structural changes in the Convention that created the very system conservatives used to gain control of the denomination. Most troubling to Hinson is that moderates, who ought to have known better, were the ones who led the Convention to modernize and expand.<sup>14</sup>

Still other essays provide a positive spin on moderate emphases. In an essay on Baptist women in America prior to 1800, Pam Durso focuses on the ways women have served Baptist churches, including leadership roles.<sup>15</sup> The role of women in ministry, of course, remains a major point of contention between Baptist conservatives and moderates. Carolyn Blevins writes a similar essay about Baptist women in seventeenth century England.<sup>16</sup> Merrill Hawkins authors a history of the religion department at Carson-Newman College, a place where authentic education and Baptist freedom flourished during the final quarter of the twentieth century, in spite of conservative efforts to squelch

---

<sup>13</sup> Bill J. Leonard, "Changing a Theology: Baptists, Salvation, and Globalism, Then and Now," in *Distinctively Baptist*, 7–15.

<sup>14</sup> E. Glenn Hinson, "Oh, Baptists, How Your Corporation Has Grown!" In *Distinctively Baptist*, 17–33.

<sup>15</sup> Pam Durso, "Baptist Women in America, 1638–1800," in *Distinctively Baptist*, 193–218.

<sup>16</sup> Carolyn DeArmond Blevins, "Baptist Women in Seventeenth-Century England," in *Distinctively Baptist*, 219–35.

these noble emphases.<sup>17</sup> William Hull takes a similar approach in his essay on William Whitsitt, adopting the common moderate interpretation that Whitsitt was a champion of academic freedom and truthful historical inquiry who was professionally martyred for his old-fashioned Baptist integrity. In short, Whitsitt was a good moderate under fire from the fundamentalists of his own day, a role model for today's beleaguered but faithful Baptists.<sup>18</sup>

On the whole, those chapters of *Distinctively Baptist* written by moderate Baptists in the South provide an excellent starting point for those who wish to understand the way many first-generation moderates understand Baptist history and identity. These essays are a fitting tribute to Shurden as they reflect his freedom-driven, highly individualistic understanding of Baptist history and identity, a view that continues to characterize many contemporary moderate Baptists.

### Leon McBeth: Moderate Denominational Historian

Leon McBeth is a church historian who, like Shurden, has focused most of his attention on Baptist history. McBeth spent his entire career with one institution, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, where he taught from 1962 until 2003. Whereas Shurden is primarily concerned with Baptist identity, McBeth emerged as arguably the most influential denominational historian

among Southern Baptists during the final quarter of the twentieth century. Following his Southwestern predecessors W. W. Barnes and Robert Baker, McBeth penned a Baptist history textbook titled *The Baptist Heritage: Four Centuries of Baptist Witness*. In addition to other works, he has also written histories of the Education Commission of the SBC, Baptist women, and Texas Baptists.<sup>19</sup>

As a scholar dedicated to institutional and denominational history, McBeth has done more than perhaps any other historian to popularize a moderate interpretation of Baptist history. For example, McBeth advocates an egalitarian understanding of gender roles in his monograph and numerous articles about the history of Baptist women, though as a historian he does so less overtly than many other Baptist egalitarians.<sup>20</sup> In journal articles dedicated to Baptist fundamentalism, McBeth paints SBC conservative dissenters as modern fundamentalists who are the heirs of arch-

<sup>17</sup> Merrill M. Hawkins Jr., "A History of the Department of Religion at Carson-Newman College," in *Distinctively Baptist*, 115–35

<sup>18</sup> William Hull, "William Heth Whitsitt: Martyrdom of a Moderate," in *Distinctively Baptist*, 237–78.

<sup>19</sup> H. Leon McBeth, *The History of Southern Baptist Higher Education* (Nashville, TN: Education Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1966); H. Leon McBeth, *Women in Baptist Life* (Nashville, TN: Broadman, 1979); H. Leon McBeth, *Texas Baptists: A Sesquicentennial History* (Austin, TX: Eakin, 1999).

<sup>20</sup> In addition to *Women in Baptist Life*, see H. Leon McBeth, "Role of Women in Southern Baptist History," *Baptist History and Heritage* 12, no. 1 (January 1977): 3–25; H. Leon McBeth, "The Changing Role of Women in Baptist History," *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 22, no. 4 (Fall 1979): 84–96; H. Leon McBeth, "The Ordination of Women," *Review and Expositor* 78, no. 3 (Fall 1981): 515–30; H. Leon McBeth, "Perspectives on Women in Baptist Life," *Baptist History and Heritage* 22, no. 3 (July 1987): 4–11.

fundamentalist J. Frank Norris.<sup>21</sup> The most controversial example is McBeth's commissioned institutional history of the Baptist Sunday School Board, which was never published after that entity's trustees determined the book reflected a moderate bias.<sup>22</sup> *The Baptist Heritage*, which remains a popular textbook a quarter century after its initial publication, introduced thousands of collegians and seminarians to a moderate reading of The Controversy and related issues.<sup>23</sup>

In 2008, Mercer University Press published a *festschrift* dedicated to McBeth titled *Turning Points in Baptist History*, co-edited by Shurden and Michael Williams of Dallas Baptist University. *Turning Points* is noteworthy because, rather than representing new scholarship, each of the essays is introductory in nature and is written for a broad audience. The book could easily be used as a textbook in a Baptist History course, which seems an appropriate way to honor a scholar who often used his gifts to popularize Baptist history for students and laypersons. Not surprisingly, a number of the essays articulate a moderate

---

<sup>21</sup> See H. Leon McBeth, "Baptist Fundamentalism: A Cultural Interpretation," *Baptist History and Heritage* 13, no. 3 (July 1978): 12–19, 32; H. Leon McBeth, "Fundamentalism in the Southern Baptist Convention in Recent Years," *Review and Expositor* 79, no. 1 (Winter 1982): 85–103; H. Leon McBeth, "John Franklyn Norris: Texas Tornado," *Baptist History and Heritage* 32, no. 2 (April 1997): 23–38.

<sup>22</sup> For a moderate interpretation of this controversy, see Cothen, *What Happened to the Southern Baptist Convention*, 245, 329–31. For a conservative view of the situation, see Sutton, *The Baptist Reformation*, 295–305.

<sup>23</sup> H. Leon McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage: Four Centuries of Baptist Witness* (Nashville, TN: Broadman, 1987), 679–701.

interpretation of Baptist identity and past events, especially those essays dealing with Southern Baptist history.

Significantly, Shurden is tapped to do much of the writing about Baptist identity. In an essay on freedom of conscience, Shurden casts the earliest Baptists as freedom-loving individualists. Regrettably, he downplays the fact that early Baptists such as Thomas Helwys and John Clarke specifically wanted freedom to follow the Scriptures in those areas where they believed the state churches were neglecting biblical precepts.<sup>24</sup> In a brief closing essay titled "Baptists at the Twenty-First Century: Assessments and Challenges," Shurden succinctly summarizes some of the main contours of the individualistic theology that characterizes most first and many second-generation moderate Baptists in the South.<sup>25</sup> Brad Creed's essay on church-state separation advocates a strict separatist approach, which most moderates embrace, but this view is also held by some conservatives as well.<sup>26</sup>

Moderate interpretations also characterize many of the historical essays, especially those written by scholars with roots in the SBC. Karen Bullock and Pam Durso each offer essays on

---

<sup>24</sup> Walter B. Shurden, "Baptist Freedom and the Turn Toward a Free Conscience: 1612/1652," in *Turning Points in Baptist History: A Festschrift in Honor of Harry Leon McBeth*, eds. Michael E. Williams Sr. and Walter B. Shurden (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2008), 22–33.

<sup>25</sup> Walter B. Shurden, "Baptists at the Twenty-First Century: Assessments and Challenges," in *Turning Points in Baptist History*, 302–08.

<sup>26</sup> J. Bradley Creed, "Baptist Freedom and the Turn toward Separation of Church and State," in *Turning Points in Baptist History*, 153–66. For a discussion of the varying perspectives on church–state separation among SBC conservatives, see Hankins, *Uneasy in Babylon*, 107–64.

Baptist women that, like McBeth, adopt an egalitarian understanding of women in ministry (though this is less pronounced in Bullock's chapter).<sup>27</sup> In a chapter on the Baptist World Alliance, Glenn Jonas briefly summarizes The Controversy before criticizing SBC "fundamentalists" for disrupting worldwide Baptist unity by pulling out of the BWA in 2004.<sup>28</sup> Glenn Hinson positively gushes over Baptist Social Gospel advocates such as John Clifford and Walter Rauschenbusch; such a reading would be less likely among more conservative scholars.<sup>29</sup> Not surprisingly, by far the most anti-conservative chapter is Doug Weaver's essay on conservative Southern Baptists and the Baptist Faith and Message 2000.<sup>30</sup> For many moderates, the revised Baptist Faith and Message represents anti-Baptist emphases and a creedal imposition against individual conscience.<sup>31</sup>

---

<sup>27</sup> Karen Bullock, "Baptists and Women and the Turn toward Gender Inclusion," in *Turning Points in Baptist History*, 204–21; Pamela R. Durso, "Baptists and the Turn toward Baptist Women in Ministry," in *Turning Points in Baptist History*, 275–87.

<sup>28</sup> Glenn Jonas, "Baptists and Global Unity and the Turn toward the Baptist World Alliance: 1905," in *Turning Points in Baptist History*, 222–34.

<sup>29</sup> E. Glenn Hinson, "Baptists and the Social Gospel and the Turn toward Social Justice: 1898–1917," in *Turning Points in Baptist History*, 235–48.

<sup>30</sup> C. Douglas Weaver, "Baptists and Denominational Identity and the Turn toward Creedalism: 2000," in *Turning Points in Baptist History*, 288–301.

<sup>31</sup> See "What's All the Fuss About: An Analysis of the 'Baptist Faith & Message' Statement

and What It Could Mean for You and Your Church" (Atlanta, GA: Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, n.d.), available online at <http://www.thefellowship.info/Files/About-Us/fuss.aspx> (accessed December 2, 2010), and Robert O'Brien, *Stand with Christ: Why Missionaries Can't Sign the 2000 Baptist Faith and Message* (Macon, GA: Smyth and Helwys, 2002). For

Despite the clear moderate bias in most of the essays, *Turning Points* differs some from *Distinctively Baptist* in that several chapters succeed in providing less ideologically driven treatments of their respective topics. Charles Deweese's chapter on regenerate church membership and Lloyd Allen's essay on believer's baptism by immersion are less overtly moderate and, in fact, would receive agreement from many scholars of more conservative inclinations.<sup>32</sup> William Brackney's essay on Baptist theology and Jerry Faught's contribution on the Downgrade Controversy, both of which could provide easy fodder for some moderate interpreters, steer clear of direct criticisms of SBC conservatives.<sup>33</sup> Fisher Humphreys' essay on Baptist confessionalism is arguably contra mainstream moderate interpretations; Humphreys underscores the importance of confessions in Baptist history, a clear rejection of the oft-repeated moderate assertion that Baptists have no creed but the

---

more scholarly works along this line of thought, see Jeff B. Poole, ed., *Sacred Mandates of Conscience: Interpretations of the Baptist Faith and Message* (Macon, GA: Smyth and Helwys, 1997), and Jeff B. Poole, *Against Returning to Egypt: Exposing and Resisting Creedalism in the Southern Baptist Convention* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1998).

<sup>32</sup> Charles W. Deweese, "Baptist Beginnings and the Turn toward a Believers' Church: 1609/1612/1633/1639," in *Turning Points in Baptist History*, 13–21; Wm. Lloyd Allen, "Baptist Baptism and the Turn toward Believer's Baptism by Immersion: 1642," in *Turning Points in Baptist History*, 34–48.

<sup>33</sup> William H. Brackney, "A Turn toward a Doctrinal Christianity: Baptist Theology, a Work in Progress," in *Turning Points in Baptist History*, 74–90; Jerry Faught, "Baptists and the Bible and the Turn toward Theological Controversy: The Downgrade Controversy, 1887," in *Turning Points in Baptist History*, 249–60. While Brackney is not a Southern Baptist by background and is admittedly more centrist in his approach than most self-confessed moderates, he previously taught at Baylor University, a moderate-sympathetic school.



Bible.<sup>34</sup> This bodes well for historians of all theological stripes who want to study Baptist history and theology but wish to be cautious against inappropriately reading present convictions into past events and/or use history as an apologetic for present convictions and emphases.

With a couple of exceptions, the essays that comprise *Turning Points in Baptist History* are somewhat less overtly critical of Southern Baptist conservatives and/or the post-Controversy SBC. This is possibly due to the textbook nature of the *festschrift* and the fact that some of the essay topics do not lend themselves to flagrant denominational polemics. Whatever the reason, the less abrasive tone appropriately reflects McBeth's own approach, which was openly moderate but less polemical than that of Shurden.

### Fisher Humphreys: Centrist Moderate Theologian

Fisher Humphreys is a theologian who has spent much of his career articulating a moderate Baptist theology that is

---

<sup>34</sup> Fisher Humphreys, "Baptist Confessions of Faith and the Turn toward Public Theology: 1644," in *Turning Points in Baptist History*, 49–62. The idea that Baptists embrace biblical authority to the exclusion of creeds and confessions was expressed by William B. Johnson, the first president of the SBC, but the term better characterizes the Campbellite tradition than mainstream Baptist thought. For a second-generation moderate scholar who openly challenges the anti-confessional attitude of many of his fellow moderates, see Steven R. Harmon, *Towards Baptist Catholicity: Essays on Tradition and the Baptist Vision*, Studies in Baptist History and Thought, vol. 27 (Bletchley, Milton Keynes, UK, and Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster, 2006), especially chapters 1, 2, 4, and 8.

simultaneously centrist, ecumenical, and evangelical. Humphreys taught for many years at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary before becoming a founding faculty member at Beeson Divinity School, a nondenominational evangelical school associated with Baptist-affiliated Samford University. Humphreys' writings demonstrate a wide interest in matters such as systematic theology, the Trinity, miraculous spiritual gifts, the atonement, biblical inspiration and authority, Baptist historical theology, Calvinism, and fundamentalism, among other topics.<sup>35</sup>

For most of his ministry, Humphreys was less controversial than Shurden or McBeth. This is in part because he taught from 1988 on in a more ecumenical and evangelical context, but this is also likely related to his centrist theology and the mostly irenic

---

<sup>35</sup> Fisher Humphreys, *Thinking about God: An Introduction to Systematic Theology*, rev. ed. (New Orleans, LA: Insight, 1994); Fisher Humphreys, "Father, Son, and Holy Spirit," *The Theological Educator* 12, no. 2 (Spring 1982): 78–96; Fisher Humphreys, "The Revelation of the Trinity," in *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 33, no. 3 (Fall 2006): 285–303; Fisher Humphreys and Malcolm Tolbert, *Speaking in Tongues* (New Orleans, LA: Insight, 1973); Fisher Humphreys, *The Death of Christ* (Nashville, TN: Broadman, 1978); Fisher Humphreys, "The Baptist Faith and Message and the Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy," in *The Proceedings of the Conference on Biblical Inerrancy* (Nashville, TN: Broadman, 1987), 317–29; Fisher Humphreys, "Biblical Inerrancy: A Guide for the Perplexed," in *The Unfettered Word: Southern Baptists Confront the Authority–Inerrancy Question*, ed. Robison B. James (Dallas, TX: Word, 1987), 47–60; Fisher Humphreys, *The Way We Were: How Southern Baptist Theology Has Changed and What it Means to Us All*, rev. ed. (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 1994); Fisher Humphreys and Paul E. Robertson, *God So Loved the World: Traditional Baptists and Calvinism* (New Orleans, LA: Insight, 2000); Fisher Humphreys and Philip Wise, *Fundamentalism* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2004).

tone of his writing. Even when addressing controversial subjects, such as miraculous gifts, inerrancy, Calvinism, and fundamentalism, Humphreys is rarely combative, even if some of his readers believe he is wrong in his assessments. Humphreys also seems to couple an appreciation for the revivalistic conversionism of grassroots Southern Baptists with an interest in ecumenical dialog, especially with Roman Catholics.<sup>36</sup>

Not surprisingly, Humphreys' *festschrift* includes the most diverse group of contributors. *Theology in the Service of the Church*, published by Mercer University Press in 2008, is co-edited by Southern Baptist historical theologian Timothy George and American Baptist biblical scholar Eric Mason. Some contributors affirm inerrancy such as George, New Testament theologian Frank Thielman, homiletics professor Robert Smith, and ethicist Richard Land. Other contributors identify with moderates, including historian Bill Leonard (the only contributor to all three *festschriften* under consideration), pastors Gary Furr and Philip Wise, and biblical scholar Norfleete Day. At least three

---

<sup>36</sup> Fisher Humphreys, "A Theology of Salvation," *One in Christ* 17, no. 3 (1981): 219–30; Fisher Humphreys, "Salvation: A Southern Baptist Perspective," *Review and Expositor* 79 (Spring 1982): 279–89; Fisher Humphreys and Mark Heath, "Salvation: An Epilogue," *Review and Expositor* 79 (Spring 1982): 290–92; Samuel S. Hill, ed., *Encyclopedia of Religion in the South* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1984), s.v. "Altar Call (Invitation)"; Hill, *Encyclopedia of Religion in the South*, s.v. "Conversion"; Fisher Humphreys, "Salvation," in Laos: All the People of God, eds. Fisher Humphreys and Thomas A. Kinchen (New Orleans, LA: New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 1984), 20–38; Fisher Humphreys, "The Roman Catholic–Southern Baptist Dialogue," *Ecumenical Trends* 18 (December 1989): 172–74.

of the contributors are moderates who identify with the Bapto-Catholic movement: Steven Harmon, Curtis Freeman, and Ralph Wood; devotees of this brand of moderate Baptist theology were noticeably absent from the other two *festschriften*.<sup>37</sup> Contributors come from at least three different denominational traditions: Baptist, Presbyterian, and Roman Catholic.

Most of the chapters in *Theology in Service to the Church* are either original scholarship or relate theology to other disciplines. In light of the present review essay, two characteristics of the Humphreys *festschrift* stand out. First, the moderate contributors do not all come from the same "camp," and they are almost completely devoid of any reference to The Controversy. Freeman, who writes on Trinitarianism, and Harmon, who writes on ecumenical theology, are each key leaders in the Bapto-Catholic movement whose respective chapters represent interests shared by Humphreys (who is not openly identified with the Bapto-Catholics).<sup>38</sup> Furr and Wise author thoughtful essays on theology

---

<sup>37</sup> The absence of Bapto–Catholic contributors from the Shurden *festschrift* is perhaps understandable. When "Re–Envisioning Baptist Theology" was first published in 1997, Shurden and Curtis Freeman debated the future of moderate Baptist identity in the journal *Perspectives in Religious Studies*. As noted above, many of Shurden's protégés and others sympathetic with a freedom–centric vision of Baptist identity reject the Bapto–Catholic movement as an aberration that fails to represent historic Baptist identity. See Curtis W. Freeman, "Can Baptist Theology be Re–Envisioned?" *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 24, no. 3 (Fall 1997): 273–302, and Walter B. Shurden, "The Baptist Identity and the Baptist Manifesto," *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 25, no. 4 (Winter 1998): 321–40.

<sup>38</sup> Curtis W. Freeman, "Back to the Future of Trinitarianism?" In *Theology in the Service of the Church: Essays Presented to Fisher Humphreys*, eds. Timothy George and Eric F. Mason (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press,

and the arts and the virtue of friendship, respectively.<sup>39</sup> Wanda Lee, executive director of the necessarily centrist Woman's Missionary Union, writes on the mission of God and the Great Commission.<sup>40</sup> Day writes on spiritual theology for evangelicals, while Wood focuses on radical Christian themes in literature.<sup>41</sup> Even Leonard refrains from criticizing (or even mentioning) The Controversy, which marks a departure from his chapters in the other two *festschriften* under consideration.<sup>42</sup>

---

2008), 36–61, and Steven R. Harmon, “Remembering the Ecclesial Future: Why the Church Needs Theology,” in *Theology in Service of the Church*, 82–95.

<sup>39</sup> Gary Furr, “Theology, Worship, and the Arts: Dorothy Sayers and the Trinity,” in *Theology in the Service of the Church*, 127–42, and Philip Wise, “Friendship as a Theological Virtue,” in *Theology in the Service of the Church*, 248–70.

<sup>40</sup> Wanda S. Lee, “Into all the World: The Missionary God Who Calls and Sends,” in *Theology in the Service of the Church*, 143–56. The national WMU remained officially neutral throughout The Controversy and in ensuing years because of a desire to work with Baptists from all perspectives. Conservatives have often interpreted this stance as pro-moderate and have pressured WMU to abandon auxiliary status and become an official convention agency. These efforts have consistently been rebuffed by WMU and the wider Convention. See David Roach, “Messengers Reject Recommendation Asking WMU to Reaffirm SBC Loyalty,” Baptist Press (June 13, 2006), available online <http://www.bpnews.net/bpnews.asp?id=23460> (accessed December 6, 2010).

<sup>41</sup> J. Norfleete Day, “Spiritual Theology for the Evangelical Church,” in *Theology in the Service of the Church*, 96–112, and Ralph C. Wood, “‘Jesus Thrown Everything Off Balance’: Emily Dickinson, William Faulkner, and Flannery O’Conner on the Necessity of Christian Radicalism in the Study of Literature,” in *Theology in the Service of the Church*, 199–227.

<sup>42</sup> Bill J. Leonard, “Why Study Church History? Listening to Saints and Sinners,” in *Theology in the Service of the Church*, 62–81.

The second noteworthy characteristic is the inclusion of several conservative contributors, even conservative Southern Baptists such as George and Land.<sup>43</sup> To be fair, both of these men are close friends of Humphreys and George was Humphreys’ dean at Beeson. And it bears repeating that Humphreys’ scholarship has been more irenic and centrist than that of McBeth and especially Shurden. But personal considerations aside, this *festschrift* points to at least three interesting trends among some moderates.

First, some of the second-generation moderates focus upon different scholarly interests than those championed by most first-generation moderate scholars; this is especially true of the Bapto-Catholics.<sup>44</sup> Second, some moderates, though maintaining an identity separate from the more conservative SBC, are pursuing a post-Controversy scholarly agenda that is not preoccupied with the fallout resulting from the battles of the late-twentieth century.<sup>45</sup> Third, for some moderates such as Humphreys and many of his second-generation theological colleagues, it remains possible to maintain relationships and perhaps even collaborate in some ways

---

<sup>43</sup> See Timothy George, “Introduction,” in *Ibid*, 1–17, and Richard Land, “Moving toward the Kingdom of Racial Reconciliation,” in *Theology in the Service of the Church*, 184–98.

<sup>44</sup> See Jorgenson, “Bapto-Catholicism: Recovering Tradition and Reconsidering the Baptist Identity.”

<sup>45</sup> There are at least two other initiatives that are moderate-led, but mostly post-Controversy in tone and interests. The first is the Young Scholars in the Baptist Academy Program, jointly sponsored by Georgetown College in Kentucky and Regents Park College, Oxford University. The second is the Paternoster Press series *Studies in Baptist History and Thought*. Bapto-Catholic scholars are involved in both.

with theologically conservative Southern Baptists, real differences notwithstanding.<sup>46</sup>

valuable information from the essays (and there is much there), but also to seek to understand the past, present, and possible future(s) of the moderate Baptist movement.

### Conclusion

Like their conservative counterparts, moderate Baptists are in a time of transition. The first-generation of leaders is retiring or passing away, including Shurden, the primary popular shaper of moderate identity, and Cecil Sherman, the leading moderate political strategist and institution-builder. Tensions exist between freedom-driven individualists and Bapto-Catholics, traditionalists and “Baptimergents,”<sup>47</sup> centrists and progressives, and those still reeling from The Controversy and those who desire to articulate a post-Controversy identity.<sup>48</sup>

The various chapters included in these *festschriften* provide an informative glimpse into the convictions and priorities that animated many first-generation moderates and demonstrate how those emphases have been owned and, in some cases, adapted by second-generation moderates. Baptist historians and theologians would do well to read these important volumes, not only to glean

---

<sup>46</sup> *The Journal of Baptist Studies* is one such project. The editorial board of this peer-reviewed journal includes conservative Southern Baptists, freedom-oriented moderates, and Bapto-Catholics, as well as Baptists who come from backgrounds outside of the Baptist South.

<sup>47</sup> Zach Roberts, ed., *Baptimergent: Baptist Stories from the Emergent Frontier* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2009).

<sup>48</sup> For an example of the generational tensions among moderates, see Vicki Brown, “Young CBFers, Responding to Sherman, Call for End to Bitter Anti-SBC Rhetoric,” Associated Baptist Press (June 25, 2008), available online at <http://www.abpnews.com/content/view/3375/53/> (accessed December 2, 2010).

## BOOK REVIEWS

**Barnette, Henlee Hulix. *A Pilgrimage of Faith: My Story*. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2004. Pp. xxviii + 291. \$35.00, hardback.**

Henlee Barnette shaped a generation of Southern Baptist pastors as professor of ethics at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, where he taught from 1951 to 1977. Barnette was among the surge of professors hired to teach the growing hordes of students in postwar higher education. Southern Seminary, like other seminaries and colleges in the era, expanded its faculty rapidly to meet the demand.

The new professors brought a new spirit to Southern Baptist colleges and seminaries. For seminary professors, the professionalization of higher education since the 1930s meant, among other things, close identification with their professional class and endorsement of the profession's academic standards. A fundamental element of those standards was commitment to antisupernaturalist historical criticism. Barnette, like most of the postwar faculty, sought to train young Baptist preachers to interpret the Bible according to the rules of this historical criticism and the growing body of scholarship based on it.

Barnette's theological progressivism began at Wake Forest University, where sociology professor Olin T. Binkley promoted progressive theological and ethical views. Barnette gained special appreciation for the thought the Walter Rauschenbusch, the Northern Baptist theologian who became known as the father of the social gospel. In many respects Barnette became a classic

liberal. Fundamentally he held that divine revelation was mediated subjectively through individual experience, and that the Bible constituted the theological reflections of its authors regarding their experience.

Barnette naturally rejected any notion of the Bible's inerrancy. The doctrine of inerrancy, Barnette said, was a "heretical view" (153). Barnette affirmed Southern Baptists' confession of faith, the Baptist Faith and Message, however, by construing it to reject inerrancy. It affirmed that the Bible has "truth without any mixture of error for its matter," but Barnette construed the word "matter" to refer exclusively to Jesus Christ, who alone was the inerrant Word (150). Following the trajectory of postwar Southern Baptist higher education, Barnette's liberal views of revelation and inspiration, coupled with his acceptance of naturalistic biblical criticism, led him to revise traditional orthodoxy extensively. He rejected the historicity of Adam and Eve, to give one example. He told the Peace Committee that Adam in Genesis 1 referred generically to humanity, not to an individual (152). His progressive views led him to scruple signing Southern Seminary's confession of faith, the Abstract of Principles, until another professor told him that signing the confession did not mean thorough agreement with it, but rather the acceptance of its general principles (76).

Barnette's memoir provides insight into the character of postwar Southern Baptist denominational leadership and the events that shaped them. The passage of years at times added luster to Barnette's memories. His mistakes, embarrassments, and changed opinions are kept out of view. He overlooks for example his strong antagonism toward Roman Catholicism in the 1950s, though this was common among the era's Protestants, whether conservative or

liberal. He argues unconvincingly that an anti-Catholic tract that he published in the 1950s was not really anti-Catholic. And looking back over forty years, he praises John F. Kennedy but omits to mention that, like most other Southern Baptist moderates, he no doubt voted for Nixon—if he had voted for Kennedy he would not have failed to mention the fact.

He also insinuates that his antigovernment sensibilities extended back to the 1950s, when he was first investigated by the FBI as a suspected communist sympathizer (though he did not know of these suspicions until much later). But he fails to mention that he relied upon and trusted J. Edgar Hoover's anticommunist pronouncements. In 1953, at the height of McCarthyite red-baiting, he revoked his support of James Dombrowski and his Southern Conference Educational Fund, when he discovered that Hoover considered Dombrowski's organization a Communist front. Barnette even urged his friends not to support the group because it was "on the pinkish side." Dombrowski protested correctly that anyone who worked openly to end desegregation in the South was called a communist.

Barnette nevertheless claimed broad credit for ending the Cold War. In 1957 he toured the Soviet Union with a group of Americans. When they met with Krushchev, the Soviet leader accepted their suggestion that he establish a student exchange program between the Soviet Union and the United States involving 5,000 students. Barnette astonishingly believes that "this program of exchange between our two countries was the beginning of the end of the Cold War," despite the fact that very few students participated (96, 267).

Barnette contributed most significantly to Southern Baptist life by redirecting the denomination's moral sensibilities, especially regarding race. He was part of the generation of Southern Baptists who repudiated segregation, and he played a leading role in that achievement. Barnette retained the confidence of most Southern Baptists because he generally affirmed the canon of the southern race-moderates—the goal was racial justice, the solution the South's problems had to come from southerners rather than from government, labor unions, or outsiders, and individual conversion to Christianity was the chief engine of social change. Racial integration was the Christian ideal, Barnette told a Florida WMU group in 1950, but the separation of the races was a practical necessity for the present. It was the message of southern white moderates.

But Barnette pressed for racial justice in ways that broke the unspoken conventions of racial segregation. His words and actions unnerved social conservatives and alienated many laypersons and denominational leaders, but they served to stir the uneasy conscience of the race moderates who largely constituted southern white evangelicalism. Barnette provoked considerable criticism for example when he promoted the integration of public schools in a report to the 1957 annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention. He also helped bring Martin Luther King Jr. to speak in the chapel of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in 1961, an act that provoked some Deep South churches to stop sending money to the denomination.

Segregationists had long intimidated white race moderates, but Barnette refused to be intimidated. That made him different. He showed an admirable and selfless courage in the face of

segregationists' threats. He was not content merely to ease Christian consciences by appeals to practical social necessities. The Christian ideal was justice and integration, and Barnette labored for their advance.

The victories of the civil rights movement and the disillusionment of the Vietnam War era drew Barnette and many Southern Baptist progressives to support a wide range progressive causes. Among others Barnette supported homosexual rights, the ordination of women, and abortion rights. In these areas Barnette had less success in shaping the Southern Baptist conscience.

I am deeply grateful for Barnette's achievements in leading Southern Baptists to endorse integration. I am grateful also that Southern Baptists refused to follow his lead in most other areas.

Gregory A. Wills

The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

**Durso, Keith E. *Thy Will Be Done: A Biography of George W. Truett*. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, and Atlanta, GA: Baptist History and Heritage Society, 2009. Pp. x + 377. \$35.00, hardback.**

George W. Truett was arguably the most important Southern Baptist leader during the first half of the twentieth century. He served for almost fifty years as pastor of the influential First Baptist Church of Dallas, Texas. His fundraising ability was legendary, and he applied those skills to causes such as Baylor University, a Baptist hospital in Dallas, and numerous Southern Baptist programs and initiatives. He served three terms as Southern

Baptist Convention president and represented Baptists the world over during his tenure as president of the Baptist World Alliance. He vocally championed Baptist convictions, and like his contemporary E. Y. Mullins, Truett emphasized religious liberty as the Baptist gift to the wider world. Truett's leadership shaped the SBC during a generation when the Convention was emerging as a modern, national denomination with influence beyond the historic Baptist strongholds of the South and Southwest.

Despite Truett's status as a prominent pastor and denominational statesman, for decades the only biography of Truett was a 1939 biography written by his son-in-law Powhatan James. Understandably, James's treatment is largely anecdotal and filiopietistic, intended for a general Southern Baptist audience who admired the then-still-living pastor. The few scholarly studies of Truett consist of doctoral dissertations focusing upon his homiletical skills and a handful of historical journal articles. Fortunately, Keith Durso has filled this lamentable lacuna with *Thy Will Be Done: A Biography of George W. Truett*. Like James's earlier biography, Durso's study evidences considerable appreciation for Truett. Durso writes of his subject, "By any standard of measure, Truett's life was not only abidingly interesting by nobly good" (267). But *Thy Will Be Done* is also a critical study of Truett in which Durso demonstrates the many ways Truett was influenced by and contributed to some of the key events of his era. What emerges is an evenhanded portrait of the most influential Baptist preacher of his generation.

*Thy Will Be Done* is divided into eight chapters, each of which is organized chronologically. The first chapter discusses Truett's early years, including his rearing in a devout Baptist home in

Western North Carolina, his conversion, his early teaching career, his developing oratorical skills, and his reluctant acceptance of ordination to the Baptist ministry after relocating to Texas. Chapter two focuses upon Truett's fundraising acumen on behalf of Baylor University and the Texas Baptist Memorial Sanitarium, his own studies at Baylor, his early pastoral experience, his call to and first decade of service at First Baptist Dallas, and his growing fame among Baptists in Texas and elsewhere. Chapter three highlights Truett's fruitful pastoral ministry, his ability to inculcate a generous missions-minded spirit among his parishioners, his influence in Dallas, especially upon social issues such as race and prohibition, and his emergence as a prominent preacher and statesman among Southern Baptists and the wider Baptist world. Chapter four deals with Truett's ministry during World War I, with special emphasis on his YMCA-sponsored preaching tour among the Allied forces in Europe.

Durso's fifth chapter covers the 1920s, including Truett's role in the Seventy-Five Million Campaign, advocacy of the Eighteenth Amendment, the fundamentalist-modernist controversy, and his famous 1920 religious liberty address, delivered to upwards of 15,000 people from the steps of the US Capitol. Chapter six discusses Truett's world travels during the 1930s, his presidency of the Baptist World Alliance from 1934–1939, and his tumultuous relationship with fundamentalist leader J. Frank Norris. The seventh chapter is devoted to Truett's final years, which were devoted to pastoral ministry and characterized by declining health. The final chapter highlights Truett's key contributions and notes several ways his memory has been honored, particularly in the George W. Truett Memorial Hospital (now Baylor University

Medical Center), churches and other buildings named for him, and the many published volumes of sermons, most of which were edited by Powhatan James.

*Thy Will Be Done* is a helpful contribution to our understanding of Baptist history during the generation prior to World War II. Durso's research is extensive, yet he has managed to write a biography that will be appreciated by scholars and ordinary Baptists alike. This long-overdue volume complements similar recent biographical studies of some of Truett's contemporaries, including B. H. Carroll, L. R. Scarborough, J. Frank Norris, and E. Y. Mullins. *Thy Will Be Done* will no doubt become the starting place for other scholars who wish to conduct more nuanced research into Truett's denomination-building, his commitment to an evangelical Social Christianity, or his theological convictions.

Nathan A. Finn

Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary

**Johnson, Robert E. *A Global Introduction to Baptist Churches, Introduction to Religion Series*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010. Pp. xxvi + 444. \$32.99, paper.**

Baptists are rather unusual among Protestants for their comparatively heavy reliance upon their history as a primary source of their identity. Landmark Baptists of the nineteenth-century, for instance, justified their rejection of pulpit affiliation with other Christians by appealing to a reading of Baptist history that bypassed the Reformation completely. More recently, Doug Weaver of Baylor University has authored a textbook treatment of



the Baptist story emphasizing that Baptists have been a people *In Search of the New Testament Church*, while Bill Leonard of Wake Forest's Divinity School sought to show in his volume *Baptist Ways* that while Baptists are indeed a people of diverse ways, these ways can be explained as the result of a set of dialectical tensions that have characterized Baptists from the beginning.

Taking its cue from Baptist historians' apparent need to interpret as well as describe, Robert Johnson's *A Global Introduction to Baptist Churches* functions in two ways. As a textbook, Johnson's volume serves to introduce the reader to the wide variety of Baptist churches and traditions that exist throughout the globe. As a scholarly monograph, however, the book seeks to challenge the interpretive impulse implicit within the Baptist tradition (and made explicit in treatments of Baptist history) as inadequate. These two aspects of the volume are related in that Johnson's catalogue of Baptist communities worldwide is intended to reveal the limitations of interpretations of the Baptist movement that tend to focus only on the experiences of Baptists living in a particular place or time.

In fact, Johnson dismisses in the book's first section the idea that the meaning of the worldwide Baptist movement can be exhausted in a single attempt at interpretation. Rather than continuing to be defined by its origins in eighteenth-century English Separatism, the Baptist movement has been reshaped countless times as it has moved throughout the world. Transformed not only by their need to adapt to new environments, Baptists have also been shaped by their overt appropriation of cultural elements that Baptists in other parts of the world might find unusual or even unacceptable. Citing postmodern thinkers such as Derrida and

Foucault, Johnson claims that the Baptist movement is "polycentric" owing to its having been molded by innumerable and often contradictory cultural "traditioning sources." Because no statement of Baptist identity can include all of these sources, Baptist attempts to define the meaning of the Baptist movement necessarily involve reading some Baptists out of the tradition. Johnson recognizes that the Baptist search for a usable identity is endemic to the movement, but he implies that these identities only have value for those groups of Baptists that frame them.

In the next three sections of the book, a summary history of Baptist communities existing all over the globe, Johnson surveys a staggering amount of material. In the first of these sections, dedicated to "Emerging Baptist Denominational Traditions," the author describes the "early Anglo" origins of the Baptist movement, briskly summarizing Baptist history to 1792 in little more than forty pages. Within this survey, Johnson dedicates significant space to African-American and Native traditions that helped to shape the Baptist movement. Although the information provided on early African-American influence over the Baptist tradition will seem familiar to those acquainted with the work of Albert Raboteau, Mechal Sobel, Donald Mathews, and others, it is doubtful that any survey of Baptist history has ever placed such emphasis on this aspect of Baptist history. Additionally, Johnson provides separate sections on Anglo, African-American and Native women; this practice reflects Johnson's contention that women, no less than men, differed in their approach to Baptist faith according to their cultural background. For instance, Johnson explains that women among native tribes in North America lacked the emphasis on female submissiveness that women of British ancestry brought

with them to the continent. As a result, Baptist communities among Native Americans included women in leadership positions in a way that Baptists of European descent would have found unusual. Johnson provides material on women in each of his three central sections.

The next section describes Baptists' "Frontier Age;" while Baptists in the United States dealt with a literal frontier throughout this period (1792–1890), British Baptists engaged the frontiers of a changing culture even while Baptist missionaries around the world pressed frontiers of their own. With an eye towards showing how the Baptist movement has been subject to many different traditioning sources over its history, Johnson shows that people of European descent were not the only people moving to their own frontiers during this period. For example, Johnson describes the experiences of Asian persons who, upon moving to the west coast of the North America, encountered the Baptist witness but found it difficult to know how to appropriate it in ways that were culturally acceptable.

The spread of the Baptist witness throughout the world begins to come to fruition in the final descriptive section of the volume. The longest section of the book, Johnson's description of the age of "Proliferating Traditioning Sources" tells the story of increasing tension between missionaries and native people who have increasingly claimed their right to shape their faith according to the dictates of their own conscience and cultural needs. Baptists in Africa came to reflect more indigenous concerns and, sometimes, a nationalistic outlook. Baptists in China dropped the Baptist name entirely, while many Koreans accepted the Baptist way as a method of embracing Western values. Johnson also provides a

description of Baptists in the United States at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

Johnson provides information that cannot be found in any other survey of Baptist history. For example, Johnson explains that the first woman ordained by Baptists in Canada was of African descent, and that the first Baptists in Guyana were of Chinese ancestry. In his introduction, Johnson asserts that a survey of these unexplored corners of Baptist life will reveal the inadequacies of familiar descriptions of Baptist identity. In his last section on "Baptists' Beliefs and Practices," however, Johnson provides a description of Baptist faith and order that seems not to have undergone major revision. Baptists are still people that affirm "responsible freedom of conscience exercised in Christian community and informed through personal relationship with God in faith in Christ through the illuminating power of the Holy Spirit and guided by the Bible's revelation" (388).

Johnson's book is groundbreaking among surveys of Baptist history for two reasons. First, his inclusion of Baptist traditions existing around the world is unique in its scope, and reveals influences on the Baptist movement that remain muted in other surveys. Johnson's treatment of Johann Oncken's work in Europe, for example, shows clearly the route by which nineteenth-century European Pietism influenced at least some Baptist communities in North America. Second, Johnson's review of the reception of the Baptist witness by people around the world also shows that North American emphases on either freedom or confessional fidelity as keystones of Baptist identity might not fully explain the faith of Baptists outside the West.

Despite the book's strengths, Johnson is unable to escape the prescriptive temptation to which he sees other interpreters of the Baptist movement succumbing. Johnson opens his text with a description of Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech, noting that King, like John Smyth before him and so many Baptists between the two, was a dreamer. For Johnson, Baptists are those that dream of the freedom to worship and read the Bible free from ecclesiastical oversight, of freedom from enslavement, and of the ability to practice their faith without raising suspicions among hostile government authorities. In short, Baptists are people that dream of a better life. Johnson shows through his survey of Baptist communities around the world that Baptists are often the bearers of the hopes and dreams of oppressed people, a neglected aspect of the Baptist movement that only becomes clear when Baptist communities outside of the United States are given the extensive treatment that Johnson has offered them. At the same time, Johnson's unqualified description of Baptists as dreamers necessarily commits him to criticizing those Baptists who have "ossified" their dreams into structures that "enslave or deny the dreams of others" (9). Baptists that have stood in the way of many other Baptists' dreams of gender equality receive especially heavy criticism. Whether this criticism is deserved is not the point; its presence in the book highlights an unresolved tension in Johnson's analysis. While the author criticizes the use of pithy statements of Baptist identity as yardsticks by which all Baptists must be measured, that tendency is still present between the lines of Johnson's own work.

Historians of the Baptist movement and of Christian missions will find in Johnson's work a cache of facts perfect for classroom

use, and students of Baptist history will find summary treatments of many important events. Additionally, Johnson's emphasis on continuing, culturally-driven change in the Baptist movement as an important source of Baptist identity deserves serious scholarly attention.

Andrew C. Smith  
Vanderbilt University

**McSwain, Larry L. *Loving Beyond Your Theology: The Life and Ministry of Jimmy Raymond Allen*. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2010. Pp. 255, hardback.**

Jimmy Raymond Allen is a well-known figure to Baptists and historians of U.S. evangelicalism in general. In this new biography, Larry McSwain, Associate Dean and Professor at the McAfee School of Mercer University and a long-time friend and colleague, chronicles Allen's career from his birth in 1927 to 2008, when Allen played an instrumental role in establishing the New Baptist Covenant. Because Allen's career spanned the conservative resurgence in the Southern Baptist Convention—he was the last "moderate" convention president—any characterization of Allen runs the risk of partisanship. A strength of this volume is McSwain's acknowledgement that he is a friend and admirer of Allen and that his own interpretation of what it means to be Baptist and Allen's are quite similar. Apart from recording Allen's life, sometimes in an almost hagiographic tone, McSwain's portrays Allen as a Baptist, whose early commitment to the social gospel makes him a representative figure of that influential subculture

within the Southern Baptist faith through the twentieth century, as described in David Stricklin, *Genealogy of Dissent* (1999) and Keith Harper, *Quality of Mercy* (1996). At the same time Allen's theology remained rooted in the Bible, even as his belief stretched to confront massive social, demographic, denominational change, alongside of painful personal experiences. The title of the book is illustrative of the theme.

To focus on that theme, McSwain treats the conservative resurgence/takeover of the Southern Baptist Convention between 1979 and 1990 only in passing, referring readers to Barry Hankins, *Unease in Babylon* (2002), along with works by Paul Pressler, Jerry Sutton, Walter Shurden, and Cecil Sherman, for context and competing interpretation. And the major implications for that change for Allen appear only in the discussion of Allen's work with the Radio and Television Commission of the SBC, where Allen's visions did not enjoy conservative support. McSwain is content to characterize the divergence visions for the Radio and Television Commission as the result of philosophical differences and Allen's own over-reaching and quickly regains the target of Allen's long career.

Born in Hope, Arkansas, in 1927, to a devout family, Allen spent a few years in Detroit, before moving to Dallas, where Allen's father shortly began to exercise his calling as a preacher. Active in Royal Ambassadors and beginning to feel the call to preach as a high schooler, Allen also met Clarence Jordan, the founder of Koinonia Farms. This encounter began to transform his regionally-typical attitudes toward race. Allen's movement toward the social gospel and racial inclusiveness continued after high school graduation in 1944. He matriculated at Howard Payne

College. Here, through the Youth Revival Movement, he became committed to evangelistic endeavors. His social Christianity and commitment to the Great Commission were "the heart and expression" of his long career (65).

Moving to Southwestern Seminary during the turbulent 1950s, Allen found powerful influences in the ethical teaching of Professor T. B. Maston and the preaching of George W. Truett. The former emphasized applied Christianity and the latter the vehicle of the local church as the proper locus for its expression, two ideas that made a deep imprint on Allen's career. With the unsettling of traditional racial mores in the 1950s and 1960s, Allen found his work with Royal Ambassadors and then with the Christian Life Commission of the Baptist General Convention of Texas required him to confront racism and its impact on Christianity rather directly.

During the 1970s, Allen served with distinction as Pastor of First Baptist Church, San Antonio. Here, his vision of social Christianity included not only the issues of race and ethnicity, but also with outreach activities at Lackland Air Force Base and the beginnings of incorporating television broadcasting of church activities and worship services. FBC San Antonio, which McSwain characterizes as "the most effective congregation in the SBC in the quantitative measures of evangelistic success," led the SBC in baptisms in 1973 and 1974 (119). New buildings and increased budgets including upping the dollar amount and percentage of budget contributed to the Cooperative Program were other hallmarks of Allen's success as pastor.

Always active in the affairs of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, Allen soon was elected President of that body, where he

spear-headed the Urban Strategy Committee to help Baptists keep abreast on the on-going rural to urban migration during the 1970s. Allen also directed an interracial gathering of Baptists at the Astrodome, which at the time was the “largest Baptist meeting” to that date in U. S. history (136). These enterprises propelled Allen to the presidency of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1979.

With the vantage of hindsight, the collision of Baptist visions and its immediate outcomes in the Southern Baptist Convention are clear. Allen’s social Christianity took the form of continuing and enlarging the Bold Mission Thrust endeavors of the Convention in the 1970s. Allen’s own ties to Jimmy Carter made him a highly-visible Southern Baptist, but it also brought criticism of Allen’s “blurring the lines of church/state separation,” especially when Allen approached Carter for assistance in funding the Mission Service Corps. Allen’s first year presidency (1978) represented the apex of influence of the applied Christianity of many seminary-trained moderates, represented by Convention-level and state-level agencies addressing social, cultural, and racial issues in a time of dramatic change. In that year, attempts to affirm biblical inerrancy as the Convention position failed. The following year, Conservatives led by Paul Pressler and Paige Patterson, were successful in garnering support for a more doctrinally-based Baptist faith, rather than subordinating doctrine to the myriad Convention activities in support of evangelism, which would result in moderates like Allen losing influence and ultimately seceding from the Southern Baptist Convention and creating the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

The final portions of McSwain’s book deal with the personal challenges Allen faced, which forced him to test his belief system. His wife, Wanda, suffered from severe clinical depression and then died of cancer in 2003. His oldest son suffered from mental illness. Through his 1995 book *Burden of a Secret*, Allen revealed the pain of losing a daughter-in-law and two grandchildren to AIDS, the result of a blood transfusion. Through the founding and support of Bryan’s House and as an advocate for a Christian response to the AIDS crisis, Allen used tragedy as an outlet for faith-based service. Another of Allen’s son suffers from AIDS as a gay man. While Allen maintains a traditional approach to biblical morality, he queried whether “Christians [could] overcome ... prejudices and *love past our theology* to help meet the needs of dying people” (212). All the while, Allen spent much of the 1990s and 2000s seeking employment and trying to recover from bankruptcy, resulting from his decision to fund severance packages to his employees when he resigned from the Radio and TV Commission. He helped establish the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship in 1991 and served as resident chaplain for the ecumenical fellowship at Big Canoe, Georgia from 1992 to 2002.

McSwain’s Allen is the sum of characteristics labeled “*transparency*,” “*extrovert*,” “*whistler*” in the face of anxiety, “*preacher*,” “*networker*,” and “*survivor*” (229–32). The author hopes Allen’s life’s story might enrich that of readers. For those perusing McSwain’s book for more scholarly reasons, his life of Allen provides an illustration of social Christianity as understood by theologically moderate white Baptists in the modernizing South after World War II and into the twenty-first century, as those ideas and their programmatic expression moved from the long-time

harbor of the Southern Baptist Convention into new and evolving personal and organizational expressions of a Baptist Christianity.

Edward R. Crowther  
Adams State College

**Schwartz, Kathryn Carlisle. *Baptist Faith in Action: The Private Writings of Maria Baker Taylor, 1813–1895*. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina, 2003. Pp. xxx + 399.**

In *Baptist Faith in Action*, Kathryn Carlisle Schwartz presents an edited collection of the letters, journals, and other personal writings of a nineteenth-century Southern Baptist woman of the slaveholding class, Maria (pronounced with a long *i*) Baker Taylor. Schwartz draws upon both archival and private collections to piece together a set of documents and photographs spanning most of the nineteenth century and four different locations in South Carolina and Florida. Despite the fact that Taylor was from a prominent Southern Baptist family, the granddaughter of Richard Furman, she has thus far been a relative-unknown to scholars. Schwartz was able to gain extensive access to Taylor's papers as a direct descendant, although Taylor was as unknown to Schwartz as to the scholarly world until the late-twentieth-century. Schwartz provides narratives for each section of selected papers to give context for the reader, and fills in major gaps with letters from others of Taylor's acquaintance. As such, the path through the text is a reasonably smooth one, and where and at what stage in life Taylor was writing a particular piece is very clear.

Taylor grew up on a 3,000-acre plantation in Sumpter District, South Carolina. She received formal education until at least the age

of eighteen, both as a young girl in Woodville, and as a teenager in Charleston. Her education gave her religious and moral grounding that would last throughout her life. Suitors entered the picture at around age sixteen, and by eighteen included the man Taylor would marry in March 1834, John Morgandollar Taylor. In the years immediately following their marriage, the Taylors lived in Beaufort District, South Carolina. They contemplated moving to Georgia, then settled upon Marion County, Florida, a land that at first appeared to be paradise. Taylor continued the life of privilege and Baptist religiosity in marriage she had previously known as a single woman. The couple had thirteen children, seven girls and six boys. Like her parents, Taylor and her husband believed education was very important for their offspring, and much of Taylor's writings concentrate on this theme, as she taught both her children and grandchildren. Taylor continued to improve upon her own education and read widely. In later life, she wrote small pieces for a few Baptist newspapers. As was the case with most nineteenth-century families, the Taylors experienced their share of sickness and death, and Taylor worked hard to accept her losses. The deaths of her young children were most difficult for her to bear. As a plantation mistress, Taylor also took the responsibilities of clothing and providing religious education for the family's slaves. She believed wholeheartedly in the institution of slavery and resented abolitionist efforts to eradicate it. The Civil War resulted in severe financial losses for the Taylors. They never fully recovered from this. She and her husband also had their share of relational difficulties, as he showed signs of a deepening depression as he aged, and she grew increasingly frustrated by his malaise. Having been widowed in 1872, in 1876 Taylor moved to Gainesville,

Florida to be near five of her seven married children, where she spent the rest of her long life, concentrating her energies on reading, writing, and serving her family.

As Schwartz herself notes in her introduction, Taylor's writings will provide insights and examples for historians studying a wide variety of topics relating to the nineteenth-century, including plantation life, religion in the American South, evangelicalism, childrearing and education, gender roles, grief processes, and private reflections upon historical events (most notably the Civil War and its aftermath). To Schwartz's list, I would add methods of nursing and medical care, interfaith relationships, and the lives of the elderly. Taylor was not a revolutionary, and as such lived a quiet life that garnered little notice beyond her contemporaries in her own small community until Schwartz brought her into focus for our own generation. *Baptist Faith in Action* is thus an invaluable resource for those seeking to learn more about ordinary women who considered it their duty to maintain society as it was, rather than overturning its expectations. Schwartz urges us to view this sense of mission as being as compelling to women like Taylor as the social reformer's zeal for change, since "like the social reformer, she believed fervently in a great idea—for her, salvation—and stove tirelessly toward it for herself and her family" (337).

Indeed, Schwartz has chosen to emphasize Taylor's religion in the book's title, which reflects the overall argument of Schwartz's narrative arc. Southern Baptist theology and culture influenced every aspect of Taylor's life, from her girlhood education to her long marriage to John Morgandollar Taylor to her service to her children and grandchildren in her advanced age until her death in

1895 at the age of 82. Schwartz gives nuance to the demands of Taylor's faith, as with her belief in her duty to submit to her husband's leadership while maintaining her own moral reasoning and intellectual engagement with the Bible and other religious texts. Schwartz believes that the general reader may relate to this working out of Taylor's Baptist commitments. The argument that Taylor lived with constant guidance from her Baptist faith is well supported with the material Schwartz presents, and I agree that general readers of similar religious commitments may find Taylor relatable in many ways. However, although it would hardly be an issue of concern for readers of the *Journal of Baptist Studies*, who would naturally gravitate toward titles containing the word "Baptist," I believe Schwartz has done a disservice to her work by choosing a title that may limit her audience unnecessarily. The argument, which I think is very well supported and serves as a useful unifying thread, could easily be presented under another title. Schwartz provides explanations of the doctrinal outlook that grounded Taylor's life both in the body of the text and in her endnotes that will render Taylor's theological commitments comprehensible for those unfamiliar with Baptists. Schwartz also gives broader historical context for almost every aspect of Taylor's life, showing that she is aware of the potential applicability of Taylor's writings to scholars researching other themes. The sheer breadth of possible areas of scholarly contribution detailed above suggests that foregrounding the more universally relevant aspects of Taylor's life might have been wise.

*Baptist Faith in Action* will be best used by those seeking primary sources on the various aspects of southern history prominent within Taylor's writings. Substantial endnotes and an

index that includes both names and major themes will make it an easy source to consult, and its bibliography will give those seeking further reading an excellent starting point. The endnotes are of particular benefit in defining the many nineteenth-century medicines and nursing methods that appear in Taylor's journals. While the book is somewhat too long to assign in its entirety for undergraduate and seminary classroom use in most cases, those teaching courses with material that overlaps with its themes will find selections useful as examples for their students. Graduate seminars on a variety of topics will find discussion enriched by the addition of *Baptist Faith in Action*. Overall, Schwartz has done us a great service in making us aware of an ordinary woman's journey through the nineteenth century and should be commended for her efforts.

April C. Armstrong  
Princeton University

**Vaughn, Robert. *Materials Toward a History of Feet Washing Among the Baptists: Consisting of Historical References to the Practice Among the Missionary Baptists, Including Miscellaneous Notes on Other Groups*. Enterprise, TX: Waymark Publications, 2008. Pp. 228 + appendices. \$21.99, paperback.**

Studying Baptist history is not for the faint-hearted. Baptist polity, or, how one "does church" lends itself to a certain latitude in practice that makes for a confusing, sometimes contradictory trail through time. For instance, most Baptists claim two ordinances,

baptism and the Lord's Supper; others add feet washing. Robert Vaughn's *Materials Toward a History of Feet Washing Among the Baptists: Consisting of Historical References to the Practice Among the Missionary Baptists, Including Miscellaneous Notes on Other Groups* offers a measure of insight into this neglected aspect of Baptist life.

Washing feet as a church ordinance can be found among Baptist groups as theologically diverse as the Calvinistic Primitive Baptists and the Arminian General Baptists. Originally, Vaughn wanted to demonstrate that a small minority of Missionary Baptists also wash feet. However, he soon discovered that feet washing defies all attempts at categorization, beginning with nomenclature. Although Vaughn chose to discuss "feet washing," it is common to find sundry groups speaking of the same rite as "foot washing" and "washing saint's feet." Further, agreeing on a reason for practicing the right is almost as challenging as agreeing on terminology. That is, even those groups who practice feet washing do so for different reasons. Vaughn offers four possible reasons why certain Baptists continue to wash feet ranging from simplicity of worship style and apostolic example to traditionalism and liturgy. Ultimately, Vaughn discovered that feet washing is practiced by more Baptist groups and under markedly different circumstances than he originally imagined.

As for method, Vaughn begins by citing biblical references to feet washing, both Old and New Testaments, and then cites numerous references to the practice from church history, including the early British Baptists. Readers should be cautioned that a significant number of Vaughn's quotes are culled either from secondary sources or the internet. Even so, one need not read long



before discovering that the history of feet washing is both long and complex.

There is much one could say about *Materials Toward a History of Feet Washing Among the Baptists*. On the one hand, this book is not for scholars looking for the definitive statement on washing feet. It was not vetted through the usual academic process and thus does not stand as a scholarly treatise on feet washing. There is no cutting-edge analysis. There is no critical reflection on the existing literature. Vaughn argues neither for nor against feet washing. Rather, the title reflects the book's real purpose; *Materials Toward a History of Feet Washing Among the Baptists* is a simple compilation of quotes and musings from a variety of sources, all of which address feet washing. On the other hand, Vaughn never intended to produce an academic treatise, per se. Rather, he wanted to demonstrate that feet washing is more widespread than commonly believed. Additionally, as his title suggests, Vaughn wanted to gather material *toward* a history of feet washing and to that end, this work is a gold mine. In addition to the other "materials," Vaughn includes a substantial bibliography of pertinent works and a helpful index. Vaughn has done a lot of useful spade work in some obscure places and anyone who wants to study this practice seriously would be well-advised to spend time with this book.

In the end, *Materials Toward a History of Feet Washing Among the Baptists* will not settle the issue of whether or not Baptists should incorporate foot washing into current church life, much less practice it as a church ordinance. However, it is fair to say that Vaughn wants to point interested parties to pertinent resources and explore the issue for themselves. As such, this book

is a valuable resource. It is available from Waymark Publications, 3528 CR 3168 CR W, Mt. Enterprise, TX 75681, for \$21.99. In today's market, that is a bargain.

Keith Harper  
Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary

## UPCOMING CONFERENCES

### **BH&HS 2011 Annual Conference, May 19–21, Dallas Baptist University Theme: “Baptists and Education”**

Education has long been important to Baptists, and this year’s annual Baptist History & Heritage Society conference explores the topic of Baptists and Education from a variety of angles.

Featured speakers will be Stephen Stookey and John Ragosta. Stookey is Professor of Christian History at Dallas Baptist University. Ragosta is a historian and lawyer who is currently an instructor at the University of Virginia School of Law. He is author of the newly-published *Wellspring of Liberty: How Virginia’s Religious Dissenters Helped Win the American Revolution and Secured Religious Liberty* (Oxford University Press, 2010). Collectively, Stookey and Ragosta will explore the challenges of teaching historical Baptist principles and identity.

In addition, breakout sessions will explore a wide range of Baptist educational topics, including international education, contributions of African American Baptists, theological education, gender issues, Baptist contributions to American education, and much more.

Also, there will be a panel discussion of “What is a Baptist University?” featuring:

Bill Bellinger (Baylor University)  
Brad Creed (Samford University)  
Sherilyn Emberton (East Texas Baptist University)  
Sheila Klopfer (Georgetown College)  
Gail Linam (Dallas Baptist University)  
Mark Tew (Howard Payne University)

The conference is open to the general public, and BH&HS members receive a discount on conference registration. Program information, registration instructions and hotel information is available on the BH&HS website (<http://www.baptisthistory.org/bhhs/conferences/2011conference.html>).

## **THE ANDREW FULLER CENTER FOR BAPTIST STUDIES 5th ANNUAL CONFERENCE Baptists and War September 26–27, 2011**

The fifth annual conference of the Andrew Fuller Center for Baptist Studies will be held on the campus of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary September 26–27, 2011. This year’s conference theme is “Baptists and War.”

This year’s plenary speakers include Anthony Cross (Regent’s Park College, Oxford University), Larry Kreitzer (Regent’s Park College, Oxford University), Keith Harper (Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary), Paul Brewster (Rykers Ridge Baptist Church and the Andrew Fuller Center for Baptist Studies), Jamie Robertson (McMaster University), Robert Linder (Kansas State University), Maurice Dowling (Irish Bible College), and Nathan Finn (Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary).

There will also be a panel discussion on “Interpreting the American Civil War.” The panelists include George Rable (University of Alabama), James Fuller (University of Indianapolis), and Tom Nettles (The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary). The moderator will be Greg Wills (The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary).

To register for this conference or for other information related to the conference, please visit the Fuller Center’s website (<http://www.andrewfullercenter.org>).

**International Conference on Baptist Studies VI  
Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary  
Wake Forest, North Carolina  
11–14 July 2012**

Following five successful International Conferences on Baptist Studies at Oxford in 1997, Wake Forest University Divinity School in 2000, IBTS Prague in 2003, Acadia Divinity College (Canada) in 2006, and Whitley College Melbourne, there will be a sixth at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary (North Carolina, USA), from Wednesday 11 to Saturday 14 July 2012. All of these conferences have taken Baptists as their subject matter, but participation has not been restricted to Baptists, either as speakers or attendees. The theme this time is 'Mirrors and Microscopes: Historical Perceptions of Baptists', which includes Baptist self-appraisals, the views of others about Baptists, and the treatment of Baptists in historiography of all types. What have been the different and sometimes conflicting ways in which Baptists have understood themselves and their mission? How have other contemporaries looked at the Baptists? How have historians represented – and misrepresented – the denomination? The theme will be explored by means of case studies, some of which will be very specific in time and place while others may cover long periods and more than one country.

A number of main papers will address key aspects of the subject, but offers of short papers, to last no more than 25 minutes in delivery, are very much welcome as well. They should relate in some way to the theme of 'Historical Perceptions of Baptists'. The proposed title should be submitted to Professor D. W. Bebbington, School of History and Politics, University of Stirling, Stirling FK9 4LA, Scotland, United Kingdom (e-mail: d.w.bebbington@stir.ac.uk). Papers from the first conference appeared as *The Gospel in the World: International Baptist Studies*, edited by David Bebbington, and volumes representing the subsequent conferences have been published in the series *Studies in Baptist History and Thought* (Paternoster Press) or are currently being prepared for publication. We intend that a volume containing many of the papers will again appear after the sixth conference.

Thanks to the generosity of the seminary, full board over the three days will be provided. All other charges will be kept as low as possible. Programs and application forms will be available shortly. For further information contact Professor Richard Pierard (e-mail: charrichp@aol.com), a member of the international continuation committee that co-ordinates the conference.

We want to keep you informed about what we are doing at Baptist Studies Online. If you would like to receive email updates from BSO whenever new *JBS* articles, book reviews, and primary sources are added to the website, please send an email to *JBS* editor Keith Harper (kharper@sebts.edu). Your confidentiality is guaranteed; BSO will never share your email address or any other personal information with any third party for any reason.

If you would like to submit an article to be considered for publication, or if you have any questions about *The Journal of Baptist Studies*, please feel free to contact us.

Keith Harper, Editor  
The Journal of Baptist Studies  
Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary  
Post Office Box 1889  
Wake Forest, NC 27588

kharper@sebts.edu