

THE OKLAHOMA BAPTIST CHRONICLE

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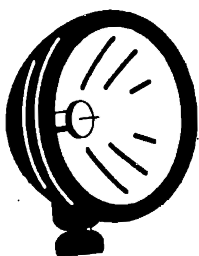
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Spotlight on...

Mission Giving Of Older Churches

How would you feel if I told you I know a plan that will help your church grow and survive the financial crunch? It just may be that some of our oldest churches in Oklahoma have found such a plan. It involves giving to the Cooperative Program, your local Baptist association, and allowing your church members to get involved in mission efforts.

The SBC national average for CP giving is 5.9%, while Oklahoma's is currently 8.8%. Oklahoma Baptist churches celebrating their 100th anniversary over the last two years have averaged **9.7%**.

In addition, while statistics are harder to obtain, associational giving by centennial churches is **5.84%**, which is regarded as well above the average Baptist church in Oklahoma. Every director of missions (association missionary) would be in "hog heaven" if their churches even averaged near 5.0%.

What this seems to imply is the higher percentage given to missions, the more the Lord will bless your work. I have also noticed these older churches have a great history of mission trips and starting new works. In reality, you can never out give God.

Lyle Garlow, former senior associate executive director, BGCO, once said, "God knows about inflation and recession long before it happens." If we trust God by percentage giving it will not hurt our churches financially. Frank Bishop, a deceased deacon from Crown Heights Baptist Church, Oklahoma City, used to say, "God can help you do more with your nine tenths than you can with tenths."

Out of the last 16 churches to whom I have given certificates, none gave less than **10%** to the CP and association combined. This

does not included additional gifts for special offerings and mission endeavors. One church gave **11% to CP and 11% to the association.** Another church gave **18% and 8% respectively.** The top five percentage givers (out of these 16) gave an average of **21.5%.**

One might say, "Well, they can afford it, but our church cannot." Are you saying Baptists don't have money? Or do we just not have a great vision of mission work? One Oklahoma fund raiser once told me, "If Oklahoma Baptist's money were water, we would all be drowning."

I say, try persuading your church to give more. I believe your church will last longer.

The Editor

OBU Gaskin Baptist History Award

The following paper received the OBU Gaskin Award for the best research paper submitted by a history student in the current academic year. The author, Amanda Abernathy, did a good job of organizing the theological concepts and conflicts of the era to which it addresses.

As always, the expressed opinions of any specific writer can never be viewed as the opinion of any other person or entity. The paper, in fact, does well in addressing that very subject. Not everyone would agree with the views of E. Y. Mullins, but history is like that. History reveals what was, but not necessarily what are the current thoughts or status. Mullins may be termed a moderate in some respects, but he was most concerned about the freedom of any individual to interpret the Bible according to their conscience.

The paper clearly states unbelievers and the secular world have a right to their opinions, and are not obligated to hold to Christian doctrine. As the author nicely points out, Mullins also held that Christian convictions should not be judged by the "court of biology."

The writing shows the theological influences of the 1920's, especially regarding evolution and "modernists", and Mullin's struggles to balance those views with a more moderate stance. It is a well-done work by Miss Abernathy.

The Editor

OKLAHOMA BAPTIST UNIVERSITY

E. Y. MULLINS: THE CLASSICAL INNOVATOR

RESEARCH PAPER
SUBMITTED TO
DR. JERRY FAUGHT

DEPARTMENT OF RELIGION

BY
AMANDA ABERNATHY

SHAWNEE, OK
7 APRIL 2011

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I. Introduction

Although the Baptists have historically been a factious group, seemingly craving controversy, they have stood united under one single plea – freedom. They have also rallied around a single mechanism through which that freedom is to be found and maintained: separation of those realms which are to remain free. This focus on liberty by means of separation is arguably the classic Baptist distinctive by which the very denomination has been defined by its founders. From Smyth and Helwys to Williams and Clark, Baptists have cried out for freedom, not only for themselves but for all people. But the Baptists have never had an easy battle; even after the fight for religious liberty was decisively won at the federal level, that victory has been challenged again and again and, furthermore, the battle for liberty continued to rage at the theological level. A prime example of the fight for freedom of theology – essentially freedom of conscience – arose in the midst of the Fundamentalist-Modernist Controversy of the twentieth century.

Though this controversy was broad in scope, one issue was quickly launched to the forefront: the evolution debate. As Darwinian evolutionary theory gained wide acceptance in the scientific community, talk of conflict and contradiction arose between the theory and the Christian doctrine of creation. The church felt threatened by the scientific community and reacted quickly. Those who felt the need to guard the “fundamentals” of the faith, the so-called Fundamentalists, began to call for doctrinal uniformity in the church so as to purge the institution of the dangerous theory. Moreover, they pushed for state legislation that would ban evolutionary theory from the education system. They sought to restrict freedom. During this time, a number of Baptists stood up in opposition to the Fundamentalists, waging once again the fight for liberty of conscience. One prominent leader of this group was Edgar Young Mullins, president of Southern Seminary.

Mullins was forced into a role of leadership in this debate because of his position in Baptist life, but, after some time of seeming reluctance to utilize his influence, he stepped up to the challenge and fought heartily for the classic Baptist distinctive. Mullins fought the Fundamentalists within his own denomination for the freedom of conscience, against the use of civil authority and of abusive creeds. Mullins quickly recognized that a Fundamentalist spirit within the denomination threatened the classically Baptist prize of separation between church and state and he responded. Furthermore, Mullins also recognized a different kind of threat. He saw the mutual oppression of religion and science against their respective status as independent fields of thought. In response, Mullins innovatively re-interpreted the classic Baptist distinctive in light of the infringement he witnessed upon intellectual freedom; he called for freedom not only for his own realm of religion but for freedom of other realms as well, that they must allow each other mutual liberty. And, in the historical Baptist tradition, Mullins sought to establish and maintain this freedom through separation – continued separation of church and state and respectful separation of fields such as religion, science, and philosophy. The purpose of this paper is to examine how Mullins demonstrated the classic Baptist ideal of freedom in both the political and intellectual sphere.

II. The Story

Even from the very beginning of Mullin's role as a Baptist leader, his circumstances were marked by controversy. W. H. Whitsitt, who preceded Mullins as president of Southern Seminary, had published a series of works which described inaccuracies in Baptist history – that English Baptists had probably not adopted believer's baptism until 1641, and that the widely revered Roger Williams had most likely been sprinkled. Whitsitt's acceptance of the inductive approach to history initiated a progression of attacks against him which culminated

in his graceful resignation. After Mullins took over the presidency, one of the individuals, a leading Fundamentalist who made incessant attacks against Whitsitt, T. T. Eaton, began leading “a group of trustees, known as the ‘smelling committee’ to the faculty, who periodically visited the Seminary searching for heresy” and renewed “his full attacks on the Seminary in 1901, after only a two-year respite.” Eaton continually provoked Mullins into publicly debating issues by printing article after article in the *Western Recorder* attacking the orthodoxy of Southern Seminary. In addition, at the time when Mullins took over the presidency of Southern Seminary, the institution was in a dire situation financially. Mullins worked tirelessly to raise funds for the seminary and much of that funding came from donors caught in the wave of fundamentalism. Mullins was specifically warned of one donor’s disapproval after Mullins invited Professor W. L. Poteat, who openly reconciled evolution and evangelical Christianity, to come speak at the seminary. Still, Mullins separated himself from the seemingly endless controversies as much as he could during these early years in his presidency, only defending his doctrinal positions in order to secure the seminary’s funding.

By the 1920s, evolutionary theory had emerged as the most prominent issue between Moderates and Fundamentalists. At the same time, Mullins emerged as the leading figure who opposed Fundamentalist attacks. John W. Porter and Victor Masters initiated an anti-evolution campaign from 1921 through 1922 through the *Western Recorder*. Mullins did not oppose their campaigning efforts, though he believed them to be mistaken, until two bills, the Rash Bill and the Ellis Bill were introduced into the Kentucky Senate and House, calling for legislation to ban the teaching of evolution. Mullins urged the Fundamentalist leaders to withdraw the bill, suggesting instead a substitute bill, which would simply prohibit theories that undermine religious beliefs, and also exhorted the Kentucky legislators not to pass legislation that would interfere

with the scientific endeavor. As Mullins fought efforts to ban evolution in schools, his pleas grew louder. He publicly renounced anti-evolution legislation and used his influence to make his arguments heard.

It seemed that Mullin's efforts to dampen Fundamentalist fire against evolution were successful at the Southern Baptist Convention of 1923. His presidential address included a section on "Science and Religion" in which he appealed to common ground between science and religion – a love of truth, and argued that there was no conflict between the two fields because they have differing purposes. This address was so heartily received that the Convention adopted it as their official stance. Furthermore, the Baptist Faith and Message of 1925, Southern Baptists' first confessional statement, incorporated Mullin's 1923 statement as an article. However, the leading Fundamentalists continued to clamor for a specific denial of evolution. In the Convention of 1926, George W. McDaniel rejected evolution in his presidential address, which was then officially adopted by the Convention, amending the prior Mullins statement. To secure the issue further, S. E. Tull pushed the Convention to make the anti-evolution statement essentially creedal – all employees of Southern Baptist institutions had to endorse it. Ultimately, despite the exhortations and arguments of leaders like Mullins, the Fundamentalist-Moderate battle was won by the Fundamentalists.

III. Evaluation: Mullins' Classically Baptist Appeal to Freedom

During his time of influence, Mullins had one theme he resounded again and again: freedom. Mullins relied upon this historic Baptist value and the means for achieving it – separation, to address the involvement of civil authority into the evolution debate, but also to address the involvement of numerous fields within the controversy, each attempting to assert power

of the others. Mullins appealed to freedom in seemingly every aspect of the controversies he encountered: he called for liberty of conscience, academic freedom, freedom of religion, and freedom for other fields of inquiry.

Perhaps the most basic appeal to freedom that Mullins made was the classic Baptist plea for liberty of conscience. This appeal lay at the heart of much of his other emphases. He was well-known for the weight he attributed to the role of individual experience. Mullins believed that experience offered a basic apologetic for each individual Christian that could not be refuted, and that it became to the one who experienced it, factual evidence of the truth of his faith. Furthermore, experience was necessary for understanding the truth of the Christian religion. Mullins wrote, "Our experience of the redeeming grace of God in Christ is necessary to a full understanding of Christian theology." Mullins believed that theology must be "spiritually interpreted," meaning that a simple intellectual consent of Christian doctrine is not sufficient for conversion and regeneration – there must be a certain affection brought about by personal experience. Mullins' emphasis on individual experience and subsequent appeal to freedom of conscience are based upon a larger elaboration, or reinterpretation, of the doctrine of the priesthood of the believer, which Mullins called, "soul competency." Soul competency is just that "Religion is a personal matter between the soul and God." Therefore, argued Mullins, "the idea of the competency of the soul in religion excludes at once all human interference." This basic doctrine, which Mullins calls an "axiom," implying that it is a self-evident principle, provides the basis for a number of other Baptist distinctives. Timothy Maddox explains:

When Mullins later developed more clearly the notion of soul competency in his *Axioms of Religion*, he considered other possible distinctives that might express the Baptist ethos: separation of Church and State, soul freedom, right of

private judgment, individualism, justification by faith, obedience to Christ's will. All of these have historically been concerns of Baptists, but, Mullins concluded, what makes Baptists distinct is their intuition that the individual can be a part of all of these.

Following the historic Baptist tradition, Mullins used the concept of soul competency to argue that the rights of conscience are inalienable and no authority should force religious beliefs, including specified interpretation of doctrine, upon any person. In Curtis W. Freeman's commentary on Mullins' conception of soul competency, he notes, "No one can tell the competent soul how to interpret the Bible or how not to interpret the Bible." Likewise, Mark Rogers, when describing Mullins' interpretation of the priesthood of believers explains, "Mullins was jealous to maintain the integrity of religion as personal experience between the individual and God, uninterrupted by bishops, priests, creedal enforcement, or government power." Mullins quickly recognized and declared that the theory of evolution and corresponding interpretation of Genesis was no exception – both believers and non-believers should have the freedom to accept or reject the theory by their own competent judgment. Therefore, he adamantly opposed those who would purge evolutionary theory by creedal or civil authority. In a correspondence between Mullins and the famous evangelist, Billy Sunday, Mullins explained his reasoning for opposing anti-evolution legislation in schools. He argued that anti-evolution legislation would necessarily mandate a specific interpretation of Genesis, to which he commented that "it is contradictory to Protestant principles to get legislatures to interpret the scriptures for us." In addition, Mullins asserted, it is not right to force a Protestant interpretation of Genesis upon the public school system when Protestants would not wish for groups such as Catholic or Mormons to do the same. Thus, Mullins vigorously fought the anti-evolution legislation as he

perceived it to be a general violation of the separation of church and state and, therefore, liberty of conscience.

Not only did Mullins raise the flag for freedom of conscience as it concerned anti-evolution legislation, but he also called for that freedom against the extensive creedalism that the Fundamentalists clamored for. At the 1923 Convention, when Mullins' statement on science and religion was so well-received, there was not an urgent need to speak against this abuse. Still, a statement was made which stressed the "voluntary" and "purely advisory" nature of the Convention's purpose. In 1924, this statement was re-printed. Regarding this re-printing, Pleasants comments, "That this statement was made two years in a row reveals the extent of the conflict within the SBC both over evolution and its own identity as a developing denomination." She continues to point out how "the statement is also evidence of Mullins' desire to protect his faculty, and all faculties, from limits on their teaching imposed from outside the academic institution." Likewise, in the 1925 Convention, Mullins refused to require teachers to pledge specific scientific beliefs, only mandating that they confess an evangelical Christian faith. Mullins certainly believed that religious liberty entailed the right of religious groups to express their beliefs and even discriminate against those who did not agree with their doctrine, evidenced by his requirement of faculty to confess Christian faith. At the same time, he said that Baptist confessions were not "doctrinal strait-jackets like Catholic creeds" and have "never compelled anyone in the denomination to accept the Baptist confessions of faith" Thus, Mullins believed that the Tull Resolution was a mistaken use of the right to issue confessions and he initially refused to sign it. It was only under the threat of withholding funds from Southern Seminary until the creed was signed that Mullins relented, making his severe disapproval clear all the while.

In his efforts to battle anti-evolution legislation, thus maintaining the traditional Baptist fight for separation of church and state, and also his opposition toward the use of creeds to enforce doctrinal uniformity, it is easy to recognize how Mullins might be clearly called a Baptist, in the classical sense. However, Mullins might also be called a classical Baptist for his advocacy of freedom for all fields of inquiry, most prominently including religion, science, and philosophy. Just as Baptists pleaded not only for their own freedom, but for the freedom of all, Mullins not only cried out for freedom for his own religious beliefs, but urged his own community to allow others, namely, the scientific community, the same freedom they desired for themselves. Again, in order to secure this freedom, Mullins encouraged, to some extent, separation between these fields based upon their differing purposes.

Although much of the attention given to Mullins focuses on his defense of scientific inquiry, Mullins gave utmost priority to pleading for the freedom of religion, which he perceived as being increasingly oppressed. In his work, *Christianity at the Crossroads*, Mullins claims, “No affirmation is more needed today than that of the freedom of autonomy of religion.” The oppression of the freedom of religion, Mullins explained, stemmed from invasion of principles from other fields: “And yet this inalienable right of freedom to pursue its own ends *in its own way*, and *by its own methods*, is being constantly denied to religion by the scientific, philosophic, and religious radicals of our time.” The denial of religion to pursue its own ends in its own way refers to the imposition of principles foreign to religious inquiry – primarily, naturalism. Mullins happily granted that naturalism is an appropriate, even necessary principle of science, but that scientists were mistaken to impose naturalism upon religious inquiry, thus oppressing the freedom of religion. Concerning this principle, Mullins asks,

Has religion no rights of its own? Is it to be brought into the court of biology and tried there before it can hold up its own head? Nay, verily. The Christian religion welcomes every proof supplied by biology and the other sciences, but it does not obtain its credentials from them. Mullins chastised scientists who repudiated Christianity or theism in general for its supernatural elements. For Mullins, the facts which emerge from historical criticism of the Bible are just as verifiable as scientific facts. In his apologetic work, *Why Is Christianity True?*, Mullins asserts, We hold that eternal facts, the most solid of all realities, are the contents of our Christian faith. We maintain that the only adequate hypothesis to account for a vast mass of facts is the Christian hypothesis, and that verification in all its legitimate forms in the person and moral realm may be applied to the hypothesis successfully.

Summarizing Mullins' views about the scientific nature of religion, Thomas J. Nettles writes, "Out of history and experience a recognizable, verifiable, and defensible order of facts emerges. From this order of facts, derived inductively, one may organize an explanation of the Christian religion." He also criticized scientists who presented naturalistic theories as factual, consequently denying the possibility of the supernatural. Mullins made these criticisms clear in his statement on science and religion, which was incorporated into the Baptist Faith and Message of 1925:

But we do protest against certain unwarranted procedures on the part of some so-called scientists. First, in making discoveries, or alleged discoveries, in physical nature, a convenient weapon of attack upon the facts of religion; second, using the particular sciences, such as psychology, biology, geology and various others as if they necessarily contained knowledge pertaining to the realm of the Christian religion, setting aside the supernatural; third, teaching as facts what are merely hypotheses.

On the other hand, just as scientists should not force naturalism upon religion, religious individuals should not restrict science by enforcing supernatural beliefs upon them. Mullins granted science the same freedom he requested for religion:

Science is autonomous. It has its own laws, its own aims, its own criteria of truth and explanation. Its supreme right is freedom to investigate, to discover, to proclaim truth.

Christians make a mistake when they invade the scientific sphere and seek to impose alien principles and criteria and to make demands based on unwarranted assumptions.

Mullins based this call for mutual freedom upon his perception that there should be a certain separation between fields like science and religion because of their contrasting purposes. While science deals with “nature,” “sequences and causes” and philosophy “seeks to find satisfaction for the reason,” religion “differs from science and philosophy in that its chief quest is for God and salvation from sin...religion works with the principle of personality” Mullins is careful to point out that the differing aims of these fields does not entail that they do not overlap, but “that there is no conflict between science and religion, or philosophy and religion. If science works with the principle of causality, and philosophy with rationality, and religion with personality, it is evident that they pursue different tasks.” Still, “all of them seek to know the truth,” but they each pursue different angles of that reality. In this apologetic, Mullins’ strategy is reminiscent of classical Baptist thought regarding separation. Smyth and Helwys declared that the king had no right to dictate matters of conscience because the spiritual realm simply has a different purpose than the political realm. Religion is necessarily a personal matter concerning personal salvation while government is necessarily a corporate matter concerning corporate order and security. The two often overlap but operate according to different principles and

seek different ends. Mullins insightfully applied the same general logic and corresponding response to the conflict which saturated his own generation.

III. Conclusion

Through his active resistance against anti-evolution legislation and creedalism in the Southern Baptist Convention and his numerous publications addressing the relationship between science and religion, E. Y. Mullins demonstrated classical Baptist beliefs. Not only did he call for religious freedom and separation of church and state when it was clearly fitting during the Fundamentalist campaign to keep evolution out of schools, but he also adapted those same Baptist principles so as to apply them to a conflict to which they likely seemed unrelated. E. Glenn Hinson, in an article entitled, “E. Y. Mullins as Interpreter of the Baptist Tradition” describes Mullins as one who was keenly aware of the need for the Baptist tradition to be interpreted and adapted to the changing times. The principle remained the same – voluntariness – but the appropriation varied. Mullins offered a reminder to the Baptist denomination that the historical Baptist love of freedom does not need to be limited to the political arena. This classical Baptist value is relevant in the strictly intellectual sphere, where the search for truth is the only aim. Baptists should insist upon the freedom of religion to pursue truth in its own right – truth about God and his relationship to humanity. But Baptists should also respect and even promote freedom for all fields pursuing knowledge of the truth. History has proved that out of this freedom of inquiry – out of disagreement and innovation – facts will be more swiftly discovered and known with greater assurance. And, as Mullins noted, “Facts can never be unwelcome to the Christian who understands his faith.”

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Amanda Abernathy

**THE
OKLAHOMA
BAPTIST
HALL OF FAME
2011
INDUCTEES**

JAMES FACTOR

Inducted 2011

James Factor, a Seminole Indian, was born sometime during 1798. The name Seminole comes from “Semanoli” which means “Separatist” or “Renegade.” The Seminole Tribe of Indians is that group of the Creeks and Hitchitis on the lower Chattahoochee River who left the main body about 1762-68 and removed to the peninsula of Florida. In 1843, the Seminole removed from Florida to Indian Territory. However, this was only after two bitter wars with the United States (1817-18 and 1835-42). The latter was the fiercer and it was at the close of this war that their removal was made to Indian Territory. It is probably due to this turmoil that so little about James Factor’s early life is known. The breaking of treaties by the United States government, and the bloody conflict that followed, bred deep hatred into the hearts of many Seminole toward all white men. This made it very difficult to blaze mission trails among these people.

It was probably when the Seminole came west in 1833-36 that James Factor came to Indian Territory. The Seminoles in Indian Territory passed strict laws against the Christian religion.

A “free Negro” named Monday Durant made many preaching visits to the Negroes in the Seminole nation – a church was organized by him in 1854. It was while attending this church that James Factor was converted. He was the first Seminole Christian. He had already become prominent among the Seminoles and had become a close friend with the Chief – John Jumper. Being prominent, his conversion created a storm of persecution. He was arrested and imprisoned. Chief John Jumper had secretly become interested in becoming a Christian. Chief Jumper succeeded in having Factor’s trial put off from time to time until the excitement subsided. Chief Jumper finally secured a repeal of the law and his friend Factor was never tried and was released.

James Factor's conversion to Christianity was destined to exert a great influence for the future of Baptists work among the Seminoles. Factor was expelled from the Council of the Seminole because he was "bewitched" (converted). In consequence of this charge, investigation was made (Chief John Jumper being one of the investigators). As a result, the Chief was converted and was destined to become an outstanding figure among the Seminole as a Baptist. When converted Jumper joined the Presbyterian church, but in 1860, he grew unhappy over the question of baptism. James Factor had been serving as an interpreter for Joseph Samuel Murrow, a Baptist. Both Factor and Jumper were baptized into the fellowship of the Ash Creek Baptist Church, near what is now the town of Sasakwa, Oklahoma. The church was the first church organized among the Seminole. Rev. J.S. Murrow organized this church in 1860.

In 1865, John Jumper and James Factor were both ordained to the gospel ministry at the same time. John Jumper, who had nothing but malice and hatred toward the white man before his conversion, had a complete attitude change. Like the Apostle Paul, after his conversion Jumper set about seeking to have missionaries among the Seminole.

James Factor may not be as well known as John Jumper, but like Andrew, the Apostle Peter's brother, he was the man who brought the John Jumpers to Jesus. James Factor died on November 6, 1896 and was buried 11 miles southwest of Wewoka, Oklahoma.

Submitted by Robert E. Haskins

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HERSCHEL H. HOBBS

Inducted 2011

Dr. David Dockery, President of Union University in Jackson, Tennessee, stated that Herschel Harold Hobbs, “by any account, was one of the most influential and shaping leaders in Southern Baptist life in the 20th century. His role as chairman of the 1963 “Baptist Faith and Message” committee, coupled with his tireless efforts to formulate and articulate Southern Baptist doctrine and distinctives for almost four decades have cemented his position in history. Hobbs, as preacher, author, denominational statesman and pastor-theologian, has often been called ‘Mr. Southern Baptist.’”



In his chapter on “People of the Book” in *Baptists Why and Why Not Revisited*, Hobbs affirmed that the Bible is inspired, truthful, inerrant, and authoritative in all areas, including not only matters of religion, but areas such as science and history as well.

Many agree with Dockery that one of Hobbs greatest services was as chairman of the committee for the revision of “The Baptist Faith and Message.” He is not only credited with writing the preamble to the document, but he also wrote a commentary on the entire confession.

Of this leadership role Dr. Hobbs stated, “I have been asked many times what I consider my greatest privilege of service in the Southern Baptist Convention has been. My answer is the privilege of being chairman of the committee which drew up the 1963 statement of ‘The Baptist Faith and Message.’”

Dr. Anthony Jordan, Executive Director-Treasurer, BGCO, once said that Dr. Hobbs, "Was a consummate pulpiteer, biblical scholar, beloved pastor, Christian gentleman, and respected statesman. For more than 23 years he was pastor of First Baptist Church, Oklahoma City."

As preacher for the *Baptist Hour* radio program he was heard by thousands each week, and at some times reached over 100 million listeners. His books, commentaries, and Sunday school helps were read by millions. He was one of the most respected and influential men ever to be a part of the Southern Baptist Convention.

He pastored several churches in Alabama, Indiana, Kentucky, and Louisiana, before coming to Oklahoma City in 1949. Dr. Hobbs served 11 years on the SBC Executive Committee, served as president of both the SBC (two terms) and the BGCO, and was elected vice-president of the Baptist World Alliance in 1965.

He had an earned PhD from Southern Seminary and received six honorary doctorates. The list of his awards are too numerous for inclusion in this article. Two of the more prominent recognitions included the Knight Great Band of the Liberian Humane Order of African Redemption, the highest award conferred by the Liberian government, and his induction into the Oklahoma Baptist Hall of Fame,

Hobbs was born October 24, 1907 in Coosa County, Alabama, the son of Elbert and Emma Hobbs. He married Frances Jackson in 1927 of Birmingham, Alabama. The Hobbs had one son who died in infancy, and another son Jerry, who was born in 1939. He was ordained at Ensley Baptist Church, Birmingham, Alabama in 1929, and began his first pastorate at Vinesville, Alabama that same year.

Hobbs when home to be with the Lord on November 28, 1995 at the age of 88, while at the Baptist Hospital in Oklahoma City.

Materials on Hobbs life are available in numerous libraries, and special displays can be seen at the Herschel H. Hobbs Leadership Center at the Baptist Building in Oklahoma City, and at the Herschel H. Hobbs History and Heritage Center at the Oklahoma Baptist University Library.

Submitted by Bill Ascol

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The files of the *Baptist Messenger* 3rd floor BGCO.

John Allen “J. A. “ Pennington

Inducted 2011

J. A. Pennington was born near Hugo, Oklahoma on October 6, 1903, the sixth of seven children born to John Allen Pennington and Martha Annie (White) Pennington. He grew up on a small 40 acre farm west of Hugo where his father provided for the family as a farmer and a merchant. J.A. could often be found selling green vegetables, watermelons and buttermilk from the back of a farm wagon.

He came to Christ during a brush arbor revival in 1914 at the age of eleven. He was baptized in Nubby Creek near Hugo and joined Forrest Home Baptist Church.



Pennington served his country as a member of the Oklahoma National Guard, serving from April 1921 until March 1926. He gained the rank of Master Sergeant in Field Artillery.

In 1923, J.A. graduated from Hugo High School. He had felt God's leading to full-time Christian service early in his life but spent the first years after high school graduation working in the lumber business. Bro. T.H. Tharp, who was serving as pastor in Hugo, urged him to enter Southwestern Seminary to train for religious education work, which he did from 1929-1930. In 1930 he followed Bro. Tharp to Conroe, Texas, and served the church there as association pastor. In 1932, he returned to Oklahoma serving as the associate pastor of Northwest Baptist Church in Oklahoma City.

He married Virginia Van Dusen on March 27, 1927, and they were blessed with three daughters: Juanita, Norma and Beverly. Mrs. Pennington served alongside her husband until September 21, 1991, when the Lord called her home after 64 years of marriage.

His first pastorate was a half-time position at Valiant, First. In 1934 he moved to Portland Avenue Baptist Church in Oklahoma City and in the five years that he served there, the church's membership swelled from 38 to 600. He baptized 260 during his ministry there. Bro. Pennington then served as a missionary for the East Central District and for the State Convention before returning to the pastorate at Mangum, First and then Tulsa, Nogales Avenue.

In 1948, under the leadership of Executive Director Andrew Potter, the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma felt led to establish the Evangelism and Brotherhood Department. Since Bro. Pennington was well known for his love for evangelism and his organizational abilities, Bro. Potter approached him with the offer of helping create this new area of ministry in the state. J.A. stated that he was interested in the evangelism position but didn't really know anything about brotherhood work. It is said that Bro. Potter replied, "No one else does either so we'll learn together." He served in this position for over 25 years.

God prospered his work in evangelism and Pennington became a respected leader in this field throughout the Southern Baptist Convention. He was a strong proponent of revivals. In 1948, he introduced the idea of simultaneous revivals to Oklahoma Baptists. In his own words, "We encouraged churches to have two revivals a year, a two-week meeting in the spring, and an eight-day revival in the fall." The spring revival meetings were to be held in every church across the state during the same two weeks each year. In 1993, Pennington was interviewed by Dana Williamson for an article in the *Baptist Messenger*. When he was asked what advice he would give to a new evangelism director, he shared that he would again emphasize two-week revivals. "People took time for revival back then. Evangelists were strong in preaching on sin, repentance and faith—on heaven and hell. We used to spend the first week of the revival preaching to church members, building up the spirit of revival, and then the second week preaching to the lost." In a four-day revival, there isn't time to build up the spirit of revival, Pennington said, and "until you have revival, it's hard to bring lost people to Christ." He was also an advocate for an annual religious census and week-long cottage prayer meetings.

Pennington wrote several tracts and booklets during his ministry including: "The Climax of All Christian Endeavor:" (1949), "Practical Methods in Evangelism" (1955) and "A Program for Winning Oklahoma for Christ" (1955). In addition to these materials written for the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, he wrote the tract, "Now You Belong" for the Brotherhood Commission in 1956. In 1956, he also served on a committee to revise and rewrite the book, "The Southern Baptist Program of Evangelism."

On September 30, 1969, Bro. Pennington retired from his position of leadership within the Baptist General Convention. He had served for 22 years as director of the evangelism and brotherhood department and another three years as evangelism director after the departments were divided. During this time, it is estimated that Pennington conducted 1,163 revivals with 3,600 baptisms reported as a result of these revival meetings. He also conducted special preaching tours in Alaska, the Washington-Oregon Convention, Washington D.C., California and Canada. In 1963, he preached revivals in Japan and Hong Kong.

Upon his retirement, Pennington joined the staff of Village Baptist Church in Oklahoma City in January of 1970. In 1987, the church celebrated his 17th anniversary with these words in the church newsletter: "Dr. Pennington has personally touched the lives of hundreds in the church family through his loving, caring concern in times of illness and sorrow, as well as in times of joy. He has a friendly greeting and handshake for each man, woman and child he sees on Sunday. "

On November 3, 1995, the Daily Oklahoman announced that "Dr. John A. Pennington passed on to be with his beloved wife and his Lord on November 2, 1995." The obituary also contains this comment: "Brother Pennington dedicated his life to God and to doing God's work. He conducted revivals in many Oklahoma Baptist churches and served as pastor of many churches in Oklahoma. He retired from the Baptist General Convention in 1969 as secretary of the department of brotherhood and evangelism. Following retirement, he served as associate and interim pastor of the Village Baptist Church of Oklahoma City, where he gave love, and received love, from its members."

Services were held at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, November 4, 1995, at Village Baptist Church. Burial followed at Memorial Park Cemetery.

Perhaps the scripture that best sums up the life and ministry of Bro. J.A. Pennington is found in Proverbs 11:30: “The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise.”

Submitted by Michael Dershem

Bibliography

“Operation Baptist Biography Data Form for Living Person”

The Daily Oklahoma—November 3, 1995

Baptist Messenger articles (Assorted 1948—1995)

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Oklahoma Baptist Historical Society

**9:00 a. m., October 15, 2011
Wichita Baptist Church in Cache, Oklahoma**

Dan Wimberly, Society President, called the meeting to order.

Eli Sheldon, Historical Secretary, led the song, "When we all Get to Heaven."

Del Allen, Society Member, led in prayer and Dan Wimberly read Philippians 1:1-6.

Host pastor, Leonard Presley, brought a greeting from the church.

In the absence of Bill Ascol, Vice Chairman of the Commission, Lynn Gray brought the Historical Commission Report. He announced that next year's meeting would be at the Nogales Avenue Baptist Church in Tulsa, October 13, 2012. Bro. Gray also reported on the progress of the work on the Falls Creek Memorial Park project. Eleven of the original memorial stones have been found, one is still missing, and they will be placed in the Memorial Park at Falls Creek.

Eli Sheldon recognized new Commissioners: Bill Ascol (who was unable to attend), Lynn Gray, and Martha Ray. Michael Dershem, and Dan Wimberly were presented certificates of appreciation for their years of service.

Eli Sheldon presented the Historical Secretary's report. It included a power point presentation of his attendance at churches which received anniversary certificates in 2011. Dr. Sheldon wrote the *History of Hispanic Baptists in Oklahoma* this year (you may receive a copy by requesting it by e-mail from the Historical Secretary's Office.). Toward the end of this year, he will begin working on a book about Asian Baptist work in Oklahoma.

Dan Wimberly called for the election of society officers. Officers elected were Bob Ross as President, Martha Ray as Vice President, and Carolyn Ellenbrook as Secretary. Dan Wimberly led in prayer for the new Society Officers.

The winner of the Distinguished Service Award, Mike Maxwell, was announced. Mr. Maxwell ministers by building churches with volunteer help and works with the Oklahoma Baptist Disaster Relief. He created a ministry called "Truss and Obey."

The winner of the Church History Award was Bryan Baptist Association for their history entitled *Cooperating Churches Under God, Vol. II*. The co-writers were Skip Robinson and Delores White Kiser. Both are well-known writers from the Durant area. Eight churches had submitted church histories in 2010 to the historical secretary's office.

Del Allen, member of the society, pointed out that no place was on the printer program for new business. Eli Sheldon apologized and new business began. A motion, by Del Allen, was made and seconded that we retain our membership with the Baptist History and Heritage Society. The motion carried.

Del Allen moved, and the motion carried, that we revise the "Handbook" with the following two changes:

I. Page 54: **Article III**, Section 3, lines 5 through 8:

Line five currently says: museum items and all other forms of its historical materials, said historical...

To be changed to read: *museum items and all other forms of its historical materials*. (The proposal is to place a period after the word "materials". In addition, the rest of the paragraph is to be deleted.

II. Page 54: **Article III**: It is proposed that a "Section 4" be added to read:

4. *The J. M. and Helen Gaskin Baptist Historical Library and Archives shall be housed in the Oklahoma Baptist University Library, Shawnee, Oklahoma.*

Del Allen proposed that the financial statement of the Historical Society be given out at every annual society meeting. This apparently was expressed more as an opinion rather than a motion, and was not seconded or voted on. Bro. Allen also expressed his concern that, "The minutes of the annual BGCO meetings are not being put in print. It's a violation of the constitution if they are not." He further stated he wants the statement released in the Baptist Messenger saying that "The Historical Commissioners shall retain the right to employ a Historical Secretary" be in writing from the BGCO.

After a short break the meeting continued.

Del Allen moved, and it was seconded, that a sentence be added to the end of **Article V - Officers**, Section 1. President, which reads:

The president will serve with reimbursement as an ex-official member of the Historical Commission. Historical Secretary Sheldon commented that the society presidents are always invited to attend the Historical Commission meeting, and if they chose to come, they are reimbursed. The motion carried.

It was noted that according to the *Handbook*, page 56, **Article VIII – Amendments**: All amendments must be submitted one year in advance and must lay on the table one year, or published at least one month in advance to provide society members an opportunity to give due study to any proposed amendments. Therefore, all amendments must be voted on in the 2012 annual society meeting before they become binding.

Oklahoma Baptist Hall of Fame

The inductees to the Oklahoma Baptist Hall of Fall were presented. Those inducted included:

James Factor –Pioneer preacher and Indian missionary. The monograph was written by Bob Haskins and presented by Martha Ray.

J. A. Pennington –Long time pastor and denominational worker. The monograph was written and presented by Michael Dershem.

Herschel H. Hobbs –Well-known denominational figure. The mon-

ograph was written by Bill Ascol and presented by Lynn Gray.

In further discussion, it was mentioned that the *Baptist Messenger* article about the new proposed Constitution for the state (BGCO) was incorrect regarding the procedure for employing the historical secretary and his relationship to the BGCO. Historical Secretary Sheldon said he had already talked to Ron Fannin regarding this issue. Also it was mentioned that the historical secretary will not be on the state convention program this year, so Skip Robinson and Delores Kiser will be recognized by the historical secretary at the annual meeting of the Bryan Association, October 23rd. Mike Maxwell will receive his Distinguished Service Award, November 20th, at Central Baptist Owasso.

Society President Wimberly asked how one might access the Archives now that they are located at OBU. Sheldon said they are in a locked area of the OBU Library and access is monitored, but visitors can contact Dr. Richard Cheek, OBU Director of Library, for entry and research.

Respectfully Submitted,
Carolyn Ellenbrook, Secretary
Oklahoma Baptist Historical Society

2011 DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD WINNER

MIKE MAXWELL



This year's Distinguished Service Award winner is Mr. Mike Maxwell, of Owasso. Each year the Historical Commission selects one person who is often not well-known throughout the state, but has exhibited over the years an unusual dedication to the Lord in some specific manner that impacts thousands of lives. Mike Maxwell fits that description.

Mr. Maxwell is the owner of M. E. Maxwell Enterprises, a mechanical contractor company located in the Tulsa area. Owing to his business expertise, he created the Christian organization called TRUSS & OBEY BUILDERS.

This Baptist based group of volunteers framed their first church in Overland Park, Kansas, in 1987. In the last 24 years the group has grown and worked on 31 projects in six states. The TRUSS &

OBEY membership now includes workers from eight states. His laborers ask only that the churches provide meals for the crew and materials for the building. For years he has been heavily involved with mission efforts out of the Tulsa Baptist Association.

In addition, after the 911 tragedy, Mr. Maxwell became involved in Oklahoma Baptist Disaster Relief efforts. Mike comments, "As a volunteer with the feeding unit, the chainsaw crew, and as an assessor, I've chased hurricanes, tornados, floods, and ice storms. Hurting people are the same everywhere. It is a privilege to be a part of a group uniquely positioned to offer hope and consolation to people in their time of need. When I show up as an assessor, the loss and pain is new and raw, and I do what I can to console those who may have lost their home or a loved one. I couldn't do it without God's help."

Mike also works with the youth group of his home church, Central Baptist, Owasso, and has taken them several times to help rebuild churches and homes after disasters. The youth have gone three times to New Orleans, once to Galveston, and this year went to Joplin, Missouri. They have also completed several projects in and around Northeastern Oklahoma and Tulsa.

Concerning the youth, Mr. Maxwell stated, "I'm very excited about this group because they have a heart for missions and are the future leaders. The kids call me The Boss, but we all know the Lord Jesus Christ is in charge."

Mike has been married to his wife Dixie for 42 years, and they have two children, Jennifer and Mike.

2010 CHURCH HISTORY AWARD CO-WINNERS

Dolores Kiser and Horace “Skip” Robinson

The Church History Award winner this year was the Bryan Baptist Association with the new book entitled *Cooperating Churches Under God, Vol. II*.

This fine work was co-authored by Dolores Kiser and Skip Robinson. The Director of Missions is Terrell Suggs.

While the two people cited above were the writers of the book, much else must be done to produce a good quality history. In this case, the credit for the work of getting the finished history typed, in proper order, and printed in the great acceptable fashion to which it was presented, goes to **Patricia Hatcher** for her printing efforts and **Dee Dee Pena**, Secretary of Bryan Baptist Association. The history of Bryan Baptist Association is an excellent book.



Dolores Kiser

Dolores White Kiser attends Silo Baptist, which is located about 9 miles northwest of Durant. Dolores' interest in writing not only included helping with the Bryan Baptist Association (BBA) history, but she also aided her pastor in writing assignments and has written a devotional book for youth to be used on mission trips. In addition, she has written ten books, a mission program for the Edna McMillan State Mission emphasis, and been published in *Mature Living* and *Missions Mosaic*.

Mrs. Kiser's contributions to the Lord's work are quite extensive. She is heavy involved in the annual "Operation Christmas Child", teaches senior ladies in Sunday school, is on the missions outreach team of her church, and attends and gives devotions at two assisted living centers. She also worked for over 50 years in VBS, was the Associational GA Director, has sewn dresses for girls in several foreign countries, and been a church pianist. Dolores enjoys working in the prayer garden at her home.

Dolores and her first husband, Roy O. White, were married for 37 years before he went to be with the Lord. Roy was a Southern Baptist pastor, and they have four children. She married Burrell Kiser on October 1, 1999, and they enjoyed a life of serving the Lord together until his death on Mother's Day in 2003.



Horace “Skip” Robinson

Skip Robinson, co-author with Mrs. Kiser of the Bryan Baptist Association history, is the director of the Center for Rhetoric and Professional Development at Southeastern Oklahoma State University. Mr. Robinson is a member of Calvary, Durant, where he has been a Sunday school teacher for over forty years.

Dr. Robinson’s writing has not been limited to the award winning association history. His work at the university requires extensive writing and consideration of written materials. He is the author of a novel entitled “Bloomfield”, and is finishing work on an English grammar handbook called “Proper Form, Pure and Simple.”

Skip has been married for 48 years, to Wilma Graves Robinson. She is the youngest sister to the late well-known preacher, humorist, and Baptist denominational leader, Charlie Graves. The Robinsons have two children; Cynthia Robinson Fuller, a pediatrician in Owasso, and Scott Robinson, who is with Blue Cross of Tulsa and who lives in Skiatook. Skip and Wilma also have four grandchildren.

J. A. “Jay” Eddington

1932 – 2011



J.A. Eddington, 78 died July 22 in Bixby. A native of Fox, Eddington was a graduate of Southeastern Oklahoma State University. He retired from Tulsa, Sequoyah Hills in 1994 as minister of education and administration, and was serving as a building consultant for the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma and as a member of the Historical Commission of the BGCO at the time of his death.

Prior to accepting the position at Sequoyah Hills where he served 23 years, He had been employed by Skelly Oil Company and the Sun-ray DX Oil Company.

Eddington wore many hats in his work as a minister of education and administration. He served as president of the Oklahoma Baptist Religious Education Association and the Tulsa Baptist Religious Education Association, was director in Sunday School Enlarge-Growth campaigns, led conferences at Glorieta Baptist Conference Center, New Mexico, was a special consultant for the Sunday School Board's (now Lifeway) Church Training Department of the Southern Baptist Convention, wrote articles for the *Church Training* magazine, and served as chairman of Long Range Planning Committee, Tulsa Baptist Association.

In retirement, Eddington served as part-time minister of education for several years. His goal was to assist churches in education and various missions projects. Jay and his wife, Geneva, have five children, 12 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

Jack Stone

1937 -2011



Delmer Durwood “Jack” Stone, 73 , died in Anadarko. A native of Byars, Stone graduated from Capitol Hill High School in Oklahoma City and earned a bachelor’s degree in journalism from Oklahoma Baptist University in Shawnee in 1959. He married Margaret Jean “Peggy” Gunn on August 14, 1959 at First Baptist Church in Oklahoma City. They were blessed with two children and four grandchildren.

Jack began his career in journalism as an intern in the advertising department at *The Anadarko Daily News*. After graduating from OBU, he returned to the *Daily News* before going to the *Tulsa Tribune*, where he covered the police beat. He returned in seven months to Anadarko, where he worked for over 38 years at the *Daily News*. He retired as executive editor of the paper in 1996. His column, "The Cornerstone," appeared in more than 7,000 editions of the *Daily News*.

Stone was inducted into the Oklahoma Journalism Hall of Fame in 2010. He also won the Oklahoma Press Association's Beach Musselman Award in 1973. The award was established in 1969 to recognize and encourage quality journalism in practice, education and research. In addition Jack received numerous other awards for his work.

He was a member of the OBU President's Council; the Oklahoma Baptist Historical Society; the University of Oklahoma school of journalism advisory board; and First Baptist Church of Anadarko, where he served in many positions over the years.

He enjoyed his hobbies of fishing and drinking coffee with his friends at Indian City Lanes bowling alley. At the time of Jack's death, he was serving a three-year term on the Oklahoma Baptist Historical Commission of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma.

Memorial Gifts

On September 8, 1998 by vote of the Historical Commission, a memorial fund was established whereby a gift of \$25 or more may be made to the Gaskin Historical Archives and Library Forever Fund in memory of a deceased relative or friend.

James Ball, Claremore;
Given by Lemuel Ball

Margie Ball, Claremore;
Given by Lemuel Ball

Bob Burrows, Amarillo, Texas;
Given by Marlin and Patsy Hawkins

Pluma Cantrell, Sallisaw;
Given by Del & Ramona Allen

E. Farrell Dixon, Tulsa;
Given by Curtis & Betty Dixon

Donald R. Dunn, Chickasha
Given by Jimmie L. Dunn

Virginia Ann Fry, Claremore;
Given by Lemuel Ball

Joseph Alexander Gaskin, Cartersville;
Given by J. M. Gaskin

Jim Glaze, Montgomery, Alabama;
Given by Marlin & Patsy Hawkins

George Hill, Coalgate;
Given by Margaret Hill

George Hill, Coalgate;
Given by J. M. Gaskin

Mrs. Carrell Hooper, Durant;
Given by J.M. & Helen Gaskin

Carleen Jones, Oklahoma City;
Given by Marlin and Patsy Hawkins

Nadean Justice, Oklahoma City;
Given by J. M. Gaskin

Murray Leath, Plano, Texas;
Given by Marlin and Patsy Hawkins

Dick Lovelady, Bethany;
Given by Marlin & Patsy Hawkins

Clara Lueddecke, Weatherford, Texas;
Given by Marlin and Patsy Hawkins

Charles Mackey, Durant;
Given by Mrs. Robert Mackey

Robert Mackey, Durant;
Given by Mrs. Robert Mackey

John H. Morton, Durant;
Given by Bill J. Morton

Emma L. Shoemate Morton, Durant;
Given by Bill J. Morton

Memorials

John D. Riggs, Durant;
Given by J.M. Gaskin

Todd Sheldon, Dallas, Texas;
Given by the Oklahoma Baptist Historical Commission

Todd Sheldon, Dallas, Texas;
Given by Marlin & Patsy Hawkins

William G. Tanner, Belton, Texas;
Given by Marlin & Patsy Hawkins

Thelma Townsend, Oklahoma City;
Given by Marlin and Patsy Hawkins

Lawrence Van Horn, Oklahoma City;
Given by Marlin and Patsy Hawkins

H. Alton Webb, Anadarko;
Given by J.M. & Helen Gaskin

Almeda Welch, Durant;
Given by J.M. & Helen Gaskin

Hazel Marie Williams White, Wilburton;
Given by Del & Ramona Allen

