

# The Oklahoma Baptist Chronicle



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# Restoration work continues on 1613 KJV ‘He’ Bible

*by Bob Nigh, Oklahoma Baptists’ Historical Secretary and Director of History*

Conservators have begun the work of repairing/restoring a 1613 King James Version “He” Bible, which was donated to the J.M. and Helen Gaskin Baptist Historical Library and Archives at Oklahoma Baptist University (OBU) by members of Oklahoma City, Shields Blvd. recently. OBU contracted with officials at the Museum of the Bible in Oklahoma City to perform the restoration, which began in July 2021.

The “Great He Bible,” refers to a typographical error in the third chapter of the Old Testament book of Ruth, verse 15, which uses the incorrect pronoun “he,” instead of the correct pronoun “she.”

The actual text reads: “he (Referring to Boaz) measured sixe (six) measures of barley and laide (laid) it on her; and he went into the citie (city).” The correct text should read “and she went into the citie.”

The Bible was donated several years ago to Shields Blvd. by Linda L. Drabik, who obtained it from the private collection of Mr. and Mrs. David C. Sprague of Oklahoma City. The Spragues procured it from the late W.A. Stewart, a collector in Pittsburgh, Pa.

The Bible’s title page shows that it contains “the Old testament and the New: Newly translated out of the original tongues: and with the former translations diligently compared and revised, by his majesties (sic) special commandment. Imprinted at London by Robert Barker, printer to the king’s most excellent majestie. Anno 1613.”

Barker was one of three printers—along with Bonham Norton and John Bill—authorized to print the 1611 King James Bible, a task that actually took three years to complete.

The Bible was picked up from OBU on July 21 by Christopher Price of the Museum of the Bible. Price packed it safely in a secure box, and it was delivered to the restoration area of the Museum of the Bible offices in Oklahoma City.

When the restoration work is completed, plans call for the Bible to be displayed in the OBU library.



Careful packaging was essential to delivering the Bible safely to the offices of the Museum of the Bible in Oklahoma City.

## **1922 A Pivotal Year for Oklahoma Baptists**

# **The death of W.D. Moorer**

### **WILLIAM DURANT MOORER, D. D.**

Born at Orangeburg, S.C., April 13, 1868 died at Shawnee, Oklahoma, May 8, 1922.

A.B. Furman University 1892; Th.B. Southern Baptist Theological Seminary 1895; D.D. Oklahoma Baptist College and Oklahoma Baptist University.

Came to Oklahoma 1902. Missionary Pastor under the Cooperative Boards, at Okarche and Anadarko. State Sunday School Secretary 1906-1920; Professor of Christianity in Oklahoma Baptist University from the reorganization 1915 to his death 1922.

He “fought a good fight, he kept the faith,” hence, he wears “the crown of righteousness laid up” for him. He was a scholar, an efficient teacher, and a denominational builder, but above all a good man. The challenge of his sacrificial service and the inspiration of his conquering faith abide in the spirit and organic genius of Oklahoma Baptist University. He loved the school; lived for it and virtually died for it. His students, fellow teachers, and brethren throughout Oklahoma and the Southern Baptist Convention cherish his memory and mourn his loss.

**This homage was dedicated to Oklahoma Baptist statesman W.D. Moorer and featured on the cover page of the 1922 BGCO Annual Report after his death on May 8.**

*by Bob Nigh, Oklahoma Baptists' Historical Secretary and Director of History*

Several events dominated U.S. and worldwide headlines during 1922, including the dedication of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. (May 30); the creation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (Dec. 30); the Five Naval Powers Treaty—also known as the Washington Naval Treaty—which limited the number of warships built by Britain, France, Italy, Japan, and the United States; the first use of insulin to treat diabetes (Jan. 11, in Toronto, Canada); the publishing of the first issue of *Reader's Digest* magazine (Feb. 5) and the discovery of the Tomb of Tutankhamen in the Valley of the Kings in Egypt (Nov. 4).

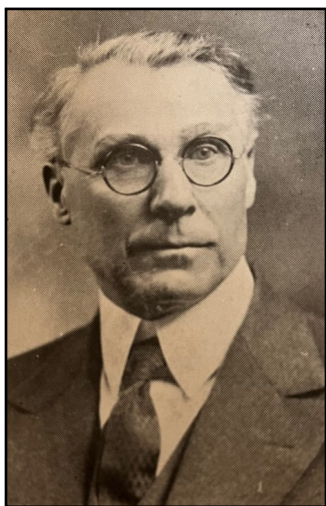
In Oklahoma Southern Baptist circles, two major events also dominated headlines and conversation: the death of Baptist General

Convention of Oklahoma (BGCO) Sunday School pioneer and Falls Creek Assembly co-founder William Durant (W.D.) Moorer on May 8; and the resignation on March 24 of F.M. McConnell as BGCO Corresponding Secretary and Superintendent of the Orphans Home.

Moorer had a relatively short ministry—only 28 years—but one which had a huge impact, especially in Oklahoma as the leading proponent of the importance of Sunday School.

E.W. Thornton points out in an article in the Autumn 1968 issue of the *Oklahoma Baptist Chronicle* that Moorer, “Was one of many young men who heard the call of the west at the turn of the century, when the Oklahoma country was the only frontier left in the United States.”

Moorer was born April 13, 1868 in Orangeburg, S.C. into a family of eight children. He was called into the gospel ministry while in high



**W.D. Moorer**

school at his mother's counseling and encouragement. He later pastored for eight years in South Carolina before he was appointed by the Southern Baptist Convention's Home Mission Board as a missionary pastor to the “frontier” in Oklahoma—serving first in Okarche.

“He attended Furman University, graduating in 1892. As a student he sharpened his mind by debating such subjects as woman suffrage with other members of the Adelphean Literary Society,” Thornton writes. “He was active in athletics; many years later he had to undergo surgery because of an old football injury at Furman.

“After college came the seminary at Louisville, Ky., and the ED. degree in 1894. His first pastorate was at Kingstree in his native state. It was there that he met the girl who later became his

wife, Miss Beatrice Graham, daughter of a Baptist deacon.

“After Kingstree there were pastorates in Little and Antreville before the departure for Oklahoma. Meanwhile, the family was enlarged by the birth of a son, William Durant Jr., and a daughter, Elizabeth. A second daughter, Margaret, was born after the move west.

“The eight years of pastoral experience in South Carolina was a time of developing maturity for the young minister. He gained valuable experience in churchmanship, built strong ties of personal friendship among Baptists of the state, and laid the foundation for the kind of leadership which was to find expression later in Oklahoma.”

Near the end of 1903, Moorer moved his family to Anadarko, a new town of about 3,500 people. He had already spent a month there canvassing for Baptists and had found more than 50 families.

During his two years at Anadarko, Moorer became concerned about the lack of the value and importance of the Sunday School and young people's work in the life of the church.

"At the turn of the century the Sunday School was looked upon generally by Baptists as an institution distinct from the church," Thornton writes. "It was tolerated and sometimes encouraged by the church, but it was, in Moorer's words, 'a side issue which a church might or might not do, as she felt inclined.' Few pastors in that day concerned themselves seriously with Sunday School or young people's work.

"These activities, largely independent in both financial support and leadership, were thought of as auxiliary organizations, not part of the church proper. Such also was the concept that Moorer had grown up with in South Carolina. But, under the frontier conditions of Okarche and Anadarko, he was led to place an entirely different emphasis on these 'auxiliary organizations.' This was new country with new people. Converts who were won had little background of church life; even former Baptists, Moorer discovered, were for the most part untrained in Baptist principles or polity. Above all, church members and prospects alike were almost all young people."

Moorer began to train his people in Bible study, church history, and the great Baptist principles "which the world needs to know." As he said, this could not be done from the pulpit alone, and he discovered that the Sunday School was the key to an effective church life.

"He also included in that same category the young people's organization known as BYPU (Baptist Young People's Union). Therefore it was necessary, he felt, to unify all the training and enlistment agencies of the church under one head and management. The day of the semi-independent Sunday School was over as far as he was concerned.

"Although taken for granted today, the program which Moorer developed at Anadarko represented a new emphasis in Baptist life. As he put his ideas into practice, he laid the basis for the work which he later carried out as Sunday School secretary for Oklahoma. Expanded and refined, it was something he continued to emphasize for the remainder of his life. It grew out of experience rather than theory.

"It (the Sunday School) secured me a congregation, prepared me an appreciative audience, gave me my first converts, furnished me the point of contact and entering wedge in many homes which were otherwise closed to me. Therefore I learned from personal experience its great possibilities and its true force in the church."

Thornton's account of Moorer's life and ministry reveals that, "In the spring of 1922, Dr. Moorer was approaching his 54th birthday. Throughout his life, he had exhibited remarkable vigor and energy, yet much of the time, he experienced ill health and physical pain. Numerous close friends have spoken of the inspiration which they

received from his example as they watched him working under physical handicaps.

"In April he was confined to his bed, presumably with the 'flu.' He wrote his daughter, Elizabeth, that he was improving enough to be sitting up and walking around some, and the doctor said he might go out for a drive in three days.

"But complications later developed and an operation was deemed necessary to remove fluid from the sinuses. In spite of it his strength continued to ebb and he passed away on May 8, 1922."

The passing of Moorer was a shock to Baptists across the state, and the unquestioned significance of his dedicated and faithful service as state Sunday School Secretary (1906-1920), and professor and head of the departments of Bible and religious education at Oklahoma Baptist University (OBU) was emphasized in several reports published in the *Baptist Messenger* and the 1922 *BGCO Annual Report*, including the Sunday School Report on page 95:

"Your committee on Sunday School work begs leave to submit the following report: In the going of Dr. W.D. Moorer, Oklahoma lost her great pioneer in Baptist Sunday School work. So effectively did he work at the task during his sixteen years as secretary of the Sunday School work in the state, and so unselfish was his life during this

"In the going of Dr. W.D. Moorer, Oklahoma lost her great pioneer in Baptist Sunday School work. So effectively did he work at the task during his sixteen years as secretary of the Sunday School work in the state, and so unselfish was his life during this period of time, that though he has passed on, his work shall continue to live throughout the lifetime of Sunday School teaching in the Southern Baptist Convention."

period of time, that though he has passed on, his work shall continue to live throughout the lifetime of Sunday School teaching in the Southern Baptists Convention. His sacrificial life is being reflected now in the work of many of our pastors and lay workers who have volunteered their services for one or more weeks of free service in the conducting of Sunday School training classes throughout the state.

"The task confronting us today is a tremendous one. In the south-land we have 20,420 Baptist Sunday Schools with a total membership of 1,966,610, but we still have nearly 2,000,000 of our more than 3,000,000 church members not yet enlisted in that one great church service having as its primary aim the teaching of God's word (sic). While largely through the efforts of our organized class work this condition is being bettered, there is still a vast army of considerably more than one-half our church membership in Oklahoma not attending our Sunday schools today.



"During the past year many new Sunday Schools have been organized; many have been graded; six have become standardized; many departments and organized classes within the schools have been graded and organized; and three classes have become standard. Mission Sunday Schools are being established and maintained by a large number of our churches, and gospel teaming by the organized classes has resulted in the salvation of many unsaved ones throughout our great state. Another item that has contributed materially to the development of our schools is the use of the six-point record system as a means of checking up on the training and development of each individual Sunday School member."

The Board of Directors' report concerning the death of Moorer in the 1922 *BGCO Annual Report* was somewhat terse, but no less heart-felt: "The going of Dr. W.D. Moorer, was a shock and a distinct loss that we feel cannot be replaced. His combination of abilities, his gentle spirit, his confidence inspiring personality, his reverence for the Divine and his confidence in men, won for him in this state probably the most universal respect and love of any Baptist that has lived within our bounds. He is mentioned in this report because of his distinct contribution to the work of this Board through the years."

Moorer's death probably affected one man more than any other—J. B. Rounds—who had walked side-by-side with Moorer atop "Buzzard Hill" as they envisioned the creation of an assembly grounds near Davis. Rounds penned an article on page one of the May 10, 1922 issue of the *Baptist Messenger* titled, "A mighty man has fallen."

Rounds' affection for his co-worker and friend was evident in his moving tribute:

"Dr. W.D. Moorer . . . died Monday, afternoon at 2:30. For over twenty years he has given the best there was in him to Oklahoma. For a year or two, he was pastor of the Okarche and Anadarko churches, but his monumental work was rendered as Sunday School Secretary of our State Convention and Professor of Christianity at O.B.U. He was as reserved and timid as a child but his wonderful intellect won him recognition in whatever sphere he served. He leaves a widow, one son and two daughters bereaved and sorrowing. The life of this sweet-spirited man will leave its impress on Oklahoma Baptists through the coming generations, Truly a mighty man has fallen in our Baptist Israel and in behalf of the Baptists of this state I extend to his family our sincerest sympathies and love."

*Baptist Messenger* editor C.P. Stealey did not immediately learn of Moorer's death, however, because Stealey was on his way to Florida to attend the Southern Baptist Convention Annual Meeting in Jacksonville. Stealey expressed his sentiments on page 8 of the May 31, 1922 issue of the *Messenger*.

"They tell us Dr. W.D. Moorer is dead. We cannot realize it," he wrote. "Being out of the state at the time of his departure, we did not

know of it until we reached Jacksonville for the Convention. He had hoped to go in advance of the Convention with Mrs. Stealey and myself to look over Florida and we, together, talked of securing a little place where we would go and spend our old age. He was not able to start with us, but we were to look into the matter of a location where he felt that after his labors in O.B.U. were done, he might spend his remaining days in sunny Florida, but alas! it was not to be so. Yet, he has gone to a fairer land than that. Freed from the rack of pain and physical suffering, he rejoices in the presence of his Savior and in the perfect understanding of His will.

"Oklahoma Baptists suffer an irreparable loss and to me, his going brings unspeakable sorrow, for I loved him dearly and regarded him as one of the greatest men in those things that constitute real greatness, that I ever knew.

"He is not dead. We will realize the powerful influence of his consecrated life continuously and it seems that we must see him and hail him as we mingle with those with whom he delighted to associate. He was great in so many different ways, but I regarded him as one of the safest Bible expositors in all the world. He seemed to be able to harmonize the scriptures and understand their teaching without any effort or strain to force his point.

"He filled so many important places in our denominational life in Oklahoma that we do not know how we are to get along without him, and yet, we believe that God will, in some way, supply our need.

"We extend to the devoted wife and children our deepest sympathy, knowing that while they sorrow, they are comforted in the memory of the pure true husband and loving, companionable father who lived the gospel as few of us have succeeded in doing.

"We trust the suggestion in last week's paper from Professor Courtney will reach all our Sunday Schools and Baptists generally for we are confident that all who knew him will regard it a privilege to be permitted to co-operate in a memorial fund. Let the schools present the material and send the money to Professor Courtney; let individuals do likewise."

Moorer also was remembered in an article on page 12 of the May 31, 1922 issue of the *Baptist Messenger* by Fred A. McCaulley, who had succeeded Moorer as state Sunday School Secretary in 1920.

"Though he has departed this life, his sweet-spirited influence shall never depart. In the hundreds of Baptist Sunday Schools in Oklahoma we have living, growing, service-rendering, Christianizing monuments to the unselfish spirit of Dr. Moorer and those who cooperated with his leadership in this great work.

"His going is as the going of a mighty Moses, whose walk has been so close to God that his counsels have been invaluable. He pioneered in a great cause, with a great people. He sacrificed his life for the cause. In so doing he laid the foundation for one of the greatest Sunday School achievements among Southern Baptists.

"He took with him the love of Baptists throughout the entire

southland, for his name was known afar. In departing, he left in the companionship of his friends, a memory that shall sweeten their lives, increase their efforts in Christian service, and multiply their usefulness in Kingdom building.

"To the writer he has been a father, a teacher, a friend; a counselor, a guide, a companion. And now that he has gone, his influence ever lives as perhaps the greatest single influence towards Christian service ever coming into my life."

Almost immediately after Moorer's death, suggestions began to arise on methods by which his life could be memorialized. L.W. Courtney, general superintendent of Sunday School at Shawnee, First, wrote in the May 24, 1922 issue of the *Baptist Messenger* that the church's Sunday School organization had begun to accept donations toward a Moorer Memorial Fund.

"After talking the matter over with Brother Rounds and Brother McCaulley, and being assured that we should have their unqualified support in the matter, we decided to ask the Sunday school (Sic) children and workers throughout the state to make a personal contribution for the purpose of erecting a fitting monument to the memory of Dr. Moorer. He, more than any other man in our state, has furthered the interests of the Sunday school.

*"His going is as the going of a mighty Moses, whose walk has been so close to God that his counsels have been invaluable. He pioneered in a great cause, with a great people. He sacrificed his life for the cause. In so doing he laid the foundation for one of the greatest Sunday School achievements among Southern Baptists."*

*—Fred A. McCaulley*

"Briefly, the plan is this: We wish every Sunday school boy and girl and every teacher or

worker who will to make a small contribution to the fund. The children are to be asked for from one to ten cents each, teachers from ten cents to one dollar, no one person must give over a dollar. This fund will go to the purchasing of a full lot, coping for same, and a monument to Dr. Moorer, who was for nearly 17 years our Sunday School Secretary and who did so much toward making the Sunday schools of the state what they are today.

"A larger and fuller memorial should some day be erected to his memory. This is for the children and teachers primarily. His work in the flesh is over, but his memory and his influence can never die. There should be some public and general recognition of such a noble life, such a consecrated labor, and such an uplifting influence.

"The First Church Sunday school will give a minimum of \$100, most of which was pledged today, quite a bit was paid in cash.

"I was asked to act as treasurer of the fund for the time being. Any sums for this purpose may be sent to me direct or to the State National Bank of Shawnee, where the fund will be deposited under the entry 'Moorer Memorial Fund.'"

In the June 21, 1922 issue of the *Baptist Messenger*, pastor William Smith of Shawnee praised Moorer and followed up on the idea



### **Moorer-Rounds Tabernacle at Falls Creek**

of erecting a fitting monument to Moor-  
er at Falls  
Creek:

"It has  
been my privi-  
lege, to know  
Dr. W. D.  
Moorer for the  
past 17 years,"  
Smith wrote.  
"He was the  
president of  
the council  
that ordained  
me to preach.  
In the associa-  
tion where I

was missionary, he held the first Sunday School training school ever conducted in Oklahoma. I have been in his home a great deal, and knew him and loved him as a father. He was one of the noblest and sweetest spirited characters it has been my privilege to know. He was a devoted Christian, a thorough scholar, a powerful preacher and teacher, and a loyal friend to all, especially to young people. He was one of God's greatest men, and has probably meant more to the work in Oklahoma during the past 20 years than any other one person.

"There is no other place in all the state where Dr. Moorer will be so greatly missed as at our Assembly on Falls' Creek. From the very beginning, he has been the one dominant character at the Assembly. He, with Bro. Rounds, selected and secured the grounds for the young people of Oklahoma. Each year he has worked untiringly for the success of the Assembly. The loss of his wise counsel and unbounded optimism will be keenly felt by the entire Assembly Management.

"Certainly if any man ever deserved a memorial erected to his honor, the life and work of Dr. Moorer deserves such recognition. Why not erect memorial auditorium on the Assembly Grounds at Falls Creek, built and named for Dr. W.D. Moorer? A more fitting

monument could not be erected to his memory. Think this over and then express yourself at the Assembly."

Those testimonials grew into a groundswell of accolades. These confirmed "a deeper influence than was apparent from his modest life," Thornton wrote. "These gestures by his friends all bore eloquent testimony to the feeling that a great debt was owed to him."

Thornton points out that less than a month after his passing, a movement began for the construction of a "Moorer Memorial Auditorium at Falls Creek. These plans were eventually incorporated with the Moorer-Rounds Tabernacle."

It took several years, but the drive to fund a memorial to Moorer (And co-Falls Creek founder J.B. Rounds) was "ushered to a successful climax," it was reported the 1929 *BGCO Annual Report*, which said, "The old assembly tabernacle was far too small to accommodate the growing crowds and the lack of seating equipment for the assembly attendance, which climbed from a bona fide paid registered attendance of five hundred and five in 1925 to an approximate attendance (without paid registration) of four thousand in 1928, causing a discipline problem which demanded a larger auditorium for its solution. In a campaign, which was put on through the B.Y.P.U. Department, there was raised \$3,200."

Additional donations to the fund came from individuals, churches and associations; they ranged from \$2 to \$150, and provided enough money—\$4,359.21—to build a 62-foot-by-90-foot structure named the Moorer-Rounds Tabernacle, which was dedicated during the 1929 assembly.

In Falls Creek's first year of 1917, 273 registered campers had gathered for classes under trees and for worship in a large 30-foot-by-50-foot tent. Work on the camp's first permanent tabernacle was begun in 1918. It was built and donated by oilman Frank Tripp, who had been pastor of Yale, First. Seating under this first tabernacle, known as the Tripp Pavilion, consisted of wooden benches.

Additional tributes to Moorer's memory ensued through the years, including one in the daily bulletin of the Falls Creek Assembly, together with the dedication of the Assembly Annual to his memory in 1922. At OBU, a bronze plaque was unveiled honoring the beloved teacher and friend; the 1923 yearbook—*Yanseh*—also was dedicated to his memory. On May 9, 1923, a year and a day after his death, a W.D. Moorer Memorial Edition of the *Baptist Messenger* was printed, which contained several pages of praise and appreciation for his life and influence.

Even decades later, Moorer's life work and influence were recognized. In 1950, OBU established the W.D. Moorer Memorial Scholarship Fund, a W.D. Moorer Apartment Building was built at Falls Creek in 1962, and his portrait was hung in the OBU library in 1965.

W.D. Moorer was inducted into the Oklahoma Baptist Hall of Fame in 2001.

## **1922 A Pivotal Year for Oklahoma Baptists**

# **McConnell moves to Texas**

*by Bob Nigh, Oklahoma Baptists' Historical Secretary and Director of History*

While the passing of W.D. Moorer certainly had a major impact on Baptist work in Oklahoma, that loss was compounded in 1922 by the resignation of another very important state Baptist leader—Franz Marshall (F.M.) McConnell—who passed the baton as Corresponding Secretary and Superintendent of the Orphans Home.

It was noted by editor C.P. Stealey on page 9 of the May 31, 1922 issue of the *Baptist Messenger* that McConnell was given a fine send-off at a reception.

### ***Farewell Reception to Dr. McConnell***

“A goodly number of Baptists from Oklahoma City and different parts of the state gathered in the First Baptist Church, Oklahoma City, Monday night, to bid farewell to Dr. F.M. McConnell who is leaving at once to take up his duties as President of Burleson College, Greenville, Texas. There were several brief talks expressing love for him and appreciation of his fine leadership during the past five years and more. The Board of Directors through Secretary J. B. Rounds, presented Bro. McConnell with a suit of clothes, saying that if he must go from us they wanted him to go back to Texas well dressed.

“The general workers through evangelist Hubert L. Sparks presented a large thermos bottle, expressing the hope that as he drank the cool water that it would contain, he might be refreshed as he also thought of those in Oklahoma who love him.

“The official family at headquarters through Miss Ethel Moss had prepared a beautiful picture of the Orphans’ Home which Dr. McConnell said he would rather have than any picture in the world.

“The Orphans’ Home girls served fruit punch.

“Let Dr. McConnell remember that though he has stepped across the border, we shall still count him as a great force in Oklahoma. No man ever worked harder for the cause than Dr. F.M. McConnell. He counted not his life dear unto himself, but freely placed it on the altar of service for the Christ whom he loves with a consuming passion. He was loyal to all the workers. They could count on his unlimited support. We pray that God may give him strength to “carry on” for many years as the good soldier he is. We will not say good-bye, Dr. McConnell, for we shall expect to see you often.”

Although McConnell had no need to present justification for his retirement, an explanation of the events leading up to his departure was presented in the Report of the Board of Directors in the 1922 *BGCO Annual Report*.

"The strenuous days of 1922 have demanded Divine strength for their tasks. So heavy was the strain of Oklahoma's tremendous program that Dr. F. M. McConnell was obliged to relinquish his hold upon it. During the months of December to May he battled with these heavy obligations in the grip of a fearful financial panic. Early in the year he sought rest and recuperation by being out of the office for a few weeks but it became apparent that the strain, if continued much longer, might permanently impair his health and wholly unfit him for any further usefulness whatever.

"After much prayer and consultation with his physicians he decided he must resign. His resignation was presented to the Board on Friday, March 24. The Board voted not to accept it but upon his insistence his resignation was accepted with regrets. At the night session J. B. Rounds was elected to succeed Dr. McConnell, both as Corresponding Secretary and Superintendent of the Orphans Home."

McConnell had succeeded the BGCO's first Corresponding Secretary, J.C. Stalcup, who had led the way in the unification of the Baptist General Convention of the Indian Territory and the Oklahoma Baptist State Convention. It was decided that the two groups should meet at the same time in Shawnee in 1906, and there they would attempt final unification.

In Shawnee the two conventions "became one amidst singing and tears of rejoicing on all sides," it was reported in the Autumn 1967 issue of the *Oklahoma Baptist Chronicle*, in an article titled "Periods of Controversy in Oklahoma Baptist History," by Jesse W. Hodges, Oklahoma pastor and denominational statesman.

"The new convention was called 'The Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma,'" Hodges wrote. "It had taken more than 50 years to bring the various discordant elements in the two territories into organizational unity. It would take another decade, at least, to live down the emotional divisions and differences which lingered on in the hearts of many Baptist people."

One of those divisions was ended in 1914, when the BGCO—led by Stalcup—voted for single alignment with the Southern Baptist Convention.



**F.M. McConnell**

"For three years prior to that decision, the vote on the question of alignment had been quite thoroughly discussed by committees representing the Home Mission Board (South) and the Home Mission Society (North), by the Southern Baptist Convention itself (1912), and repeatedly by leaders within the Oklahoma convention.

"The resolution adopted by the BGCO Board of Directors in 1914 made it clear that Oklahoma held no ill will toward any of the societies of Northern Baptists, but rather that good will was felt toward all. Notice was taken of the immeasurable contribution which the Home Mission Society had made to Oklahoma Baptists over a period of three quarters of a century, and appropriate words of appreciation were expressed for this continuing service. But in the interest of a more complete fellowship and co-operation among the churches in Oklahoma, it seemed best to vote single alignment with the Southern Baptist Convention."

Stalcup resigned his position in August 1916, and he was succeeded that fall by McConnell, labeled "a Texan of unusual ability and dedication. It seemed that the time had come for launching a truly forward-looking program, and it was thought that McConnell was just the man to lead it. With McConnell's coming, hopes for a truly great period of development and expansion of Baptist work in Oklahoma ran high."

Stalcup lauded his successor's abilities in a front page article in the Sept. 6, 1916 *Baptist Messenger*:

"... It is my opinion that he possesses the qualities of mind and heart that preeminently qualify him for the position to which he has been called," he wrote. "He is a great preacher with strong evangelistic spirit and gifts and with a rich secretarial experience, having served the state of Texas as secretary for five years, and the Department of Evangelism for the Southwestern Seminary for the last 14 months. I ask for him the same loyal support which you have given to me. I believe you will give it. He has spent thirty years in active work in Texas, coming to us with ripe experience and at the fullness of his strength and power."

The announcement that McConnell had accepted the position of Corresponding Secretary also was published on the front page of the Sept. 16, 1916 issue of the *Baptist Messenger* in a letter from him titled "To My Baptist Brethren in Oklahoma."

"It was a genuine surprise when I received Bro. Stalcup's telegram informing me of the action of the Board of Directors, accepting his resignation and electing me to succeed him as Corresponding Secretary. By the time this is in print, I will be on the field at work. It was necessary for me to go at once, if at all, to put my children in school and to meet as many of the associations as possible. I am in Oklahoma to render all the service I can in promoting the progress of every interest fostered by the Baptist General Convention. The Bible says 'Let not him that putteth on his armour (sic) boast himself as he that putteth it off.' I will therefore let events speak for them-



selves as they come along. I have carefully studied the plan of work of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma and am in most hearty accord with it all. I am taking my heart with me to Oklahoma and hope to be "immediately received into full fellowship" by all the brethren. All that I am, or may be by the grace of God, is at your service to advance His cause."

Unfortunately, those lofty hopes of denominational development and cooperation soon crashed to Earth. The first half of McConnell's six-year tenure was hampered by limitations placed on the churches by the strains and stresses of World War I. The other three years were filled with strenuous efforts to enlist the pastors and churches in the adoption of broader visions and "more noble undertakings in the work of the Lord."

One such undertaking was the "75 Million Campaign," which was launched by Southern Baptists soon after the war ended, and Oklahoma Baptists were called upon to pick up the gauntlet of that challenge. McConnell was one of the most enthusiastic supporters and promoters of the movement, and pastors and churches of the state—following his leadership—oversubscribed their suggested quota for the campaign.

During the 1919-1924 campaign, members of every church were asked to sign pledge cards and give over a five-year period to cooperatively fund missions efforts, education and other benevolence causes in the wake of the "War to End All Wars." Prior to that time, special fund drives had commonly been held twice a year, one to support Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) causes, and the other for needs in the states.

An unprecedented \$92,630,923 was committed during the campaign, but pressing economic issues—the price of cotton dropped from 40 cents a pound to 10 cents a pound, for example—led to actual receipts amounting to only \$58,591,713. Still, that amount equaled 80-90 percent of the total given by Baptists since the formation of the SBC in 1845!

Another reason for the failure was the SBC allowed many agencies to expand their work based on the pledged amounts and not on actual cash receipts, and when the economic recession hit in 1920, collections waned. SBC agencies, their hopes buoyed by the campaign's early success, began programs of expansion, outlaying money they did not yet have, and borrowed thousands of dollars in anticipation of the receipts. As a result, they found themselves \$6.5 million in debt.

Oklahoma's established quota for the 75 Million Campaign was set at \$2.5 million; however, in the end, only \$1.5 million was given.

Bob Ross points out in his historical treatise on the BGCO titled *The Two Became One, The Story of Oklahoma Southern Baptists* that, "Of that amount, \$566,666 was to remain in the state, allocated for Oklahoma Baptist University. The OBU Board of Trustees had designated the first \$200,000 received through the fund-raising effort

as endowment for the university. A permanent endowment fund was a necessary requirement for the university if it were to receive accreditation by the North Central Association."

Initially, the 75 Million Campaign was hugely successful.

"Pledges at the national level easily exceeded the \$75 million goal," Ross writes. "Zealous mission-minded Baptists promised a total of \$92,630,923. Oklahoma Baptists with that same generous spirit also oversubscribed their quota by more than a half million dollars, pledging \$3,031,639 to the campaign."

By 1921, several Oklahoma pastors were blaming McConnell for over-selling the churches on the 75 Million Campaign, and for his supposed "unwise guidance of the convention and its Board of Directors." The pastors argued that he had led the convention to expand its operations too rapidly, and was foolishly throwing it into debt. In other words, the secretary was blamed for the failure of the pastors and churches to make good on their pledges.

This sort of criticism almost wrecked Oklahoma's part in the 75 Million Campaign. Even many of the most enthusiastic pastors became discouraged and confused by the criticisms heaped upon McConnell. The result was that still further declines in offerings were experienced by the churches. In some areas, little was done after 1921 to encourage the churches to raise the quotas which they had pledged.

To make matters worse, it was in the midst of these critical years that Alonzo A. Nunnery, publisher of *The Baptist Worker*, an independent statewide newspaper, began to insinuate that McConnell and his "clique" were guilty of gross mismanagement of the convention's affairs. Nunnery circulated his paper and his criticisms generally throughout the state, and was able to prejudice further many of the pastors and churches against McConnell and the Board of Directors.

"Nunnery's editorials were saturated with scathing sarcasm directed at McConnell," Ross points out. "He insinuated that the corresponding secretary was nothing more than a political hack who manipulated Baptist people to build his own reputation. He called him 'the bishop of Baptist hierarchy' and those who sided with McConnell were labeled as the 'gang of conventionites.' He questioned McConnell's theological orthodoxy and moral integrity and even accused him of gross mismanagement of convention affairs."

Another development led to the rancor between McConnell and Nunnery reaching new heights occurred in 1919, when the BGCO voted unanimously to purchase the *Baptist Messenger*, a private paper published by Stealey, and to make it the official publication of the Convention to give McConnell a platform to counter Nunnery's incessant attacks.

The result was that by the fall of 1921, certain influential pastors in the state were ready to challenge McConnell's leadership in the convention itself.

"Well do I remember the convention of that year. It met in an atmosphere of unrest and of criticism," Hodges wrote in his article. "One of the pastors led a movement to censure the secretary for his supposed mismanagement, and in one of the sessions held the floor against him for an embarrassingly long time. In the end, the convention wisely refused to censure its secretary; but the attacks made upon him so crippled his work that his administration was unable to recover from the damage done.

"The next summer (1922) McConnell resigned and returned to Texas, where, after a few years in denominational school work and in evangelism, he was honored with the editorship of the . . . *Baptist Standard* (The state paper of the Baptist General Convention of Texas). In this capacity he served with distinction from 1928 to 1944, a period of 16 years."

Inducted into the Oklahoma Baptist Hall of Fame in 1995, his profile pointed out that, "McConnell was born in Missouri, educated in Arkansas, admitted to law practice in Georgia, and surrendered to preach in Texas after receiving his call to the ministry in New Mexico."

McConnell retired from the *Baptist Standard* at the age of 82 and died three years later on Sept. 1, 1947 at the home of his daughter, Mrs. L.E. Lamb, in Nacogdoches, Texas.

# ***Indian Falls Creek celebrates 75th anniversary this year***

“300 Attend All-State Okla. Indian Assembly,” it was reported on page 11 of the July 3, 1947 issue of the *Baptist Messenger*.

“June 14-20 marks the beginning of an assembly at Falls Creek enlisting Indians of all tribes found in Oklahoma. More than 300 were enrolled. Led by missionaries, pastors and other consecrated Indian Baptists, this assembly reports many saved and many lives reclaimed.

“Classes in the three departments of Baptist education were offered all ages. The Oklahoma WMU contributed financial aid and also the services of Mrs. Berta K. Spooner to assist in the planning and execution of Assembly plans.”

“We had no selected speaker and no theme for that first encampment,” Lewis Hancock—one of the IFC organizers—said in 1997, during the camp’s 50th anniversary. “The planning committee, which consisted of John Davis, A.W. Hancock, Edward and Sumaria Leader, Bertha Spooner, (Victor) Kaneubbe and me, urged a curriculum of Sunday School and Training Union study courses along with a missions study.”

The constitution for Indian Falls Creek was drafted by Kaneubbe, Lewis Hancock and Louise Hendricks. Article II states:

*“The objective of this assembly in its annual meeting shall be to foster and promote Christian training, inspiration, fellowship, evangelism, and missionary zeal among the Indians in their Baptist church life.”*

The first assembly saw 26 professions of faith, 12 for special, service, and 26 rededications. Fifty years later, the registration totaled 3,338, with 133 professions of faith and 78 rededications.

More than 50 tribal nations from across North America and more than 250 churches have been represented at Indian Falls Creek for encouragement and training. The camp’s average registration is now more than 3,000.

IFC is widely anticipated each year and has become a tradition for many churches and families. Worship services, classes, and activities are designed to engage people of all ages—preschool to adult. A Health Fair and other ministry organizations also offer opportunities for individuals and churches to build up and expand their learning and ministry. Generations of families attend IFC together each summer.

Several factors have limited attendance the past few years, including COVID-19. Still, lives are being changed at IFC. Attendance last year was 1,122, with 27 professions of faith recorded.

IFC will celebrate its 75th anniversary this year July 31-Aug. 4.

## **OHC OKs nominees, special awards**

Members of the Oklahoma Baptist Historical Commission (OBHC) approved nominees to the Oklahoma Baptist Hall of Fame and recipients of special awards during their fall meeting held Sept. 16, 2021 at Oklahoma Baptist University (OBU) in Shawnee.

Commission members were updated on the progress of repairing/restoring a 1613 King James “He” Bible, which was donated to the J.M. and Helen Gaskin Baptist Historical Library and Archives by members of Oklahoma City, Shields Boulevard last year. OBU has contracted with officials at the Museum of the Bible in Oklahoma City to perform the restoration, which began in July.

Nominees approved for inclusion into the Oklahoma Baptist Hall of Fame for 2021 included Teala Mae Goddard, long-time cook for Royal Ambassadors at Camp Hudgens and other meetings; state pastor and denominational statesman Robert Neal Hammons; and popular “evangelistic comedian” Lester Leo “Les the Mess” Reed.

The 2021 Distinguished Service Award was approved by commissioners for Walter A. Wilson, Oklahoma Baptists’ African American Affinity Ministry Partner, and pastor of Lawton, Friendship.

The 2020 Gaskin Church History Award was approved to go to the sole entry received during the year from Okmulgee, Calvary, with a special “honorable mention” designation given to a “Historical Tribute to Valley View Baptist Church in Tulsa.”

The HOF nominees were inducted, along with the presentation of the DSA to Wilson, during the Oklahoma Baptists’ Annual Meeting at Oklahoma City, Southern Hills in November 2021. The award-ees were presented with special certificates, and the church history award was presented, during an Historical Commission luncheon during the annual meeting. More than 40 people attended the luncheon, the first time it had been held during the annual meeting, with the intent to make it an annual event.

Oklahoma Baptists’ Historical Secretary Bob Nigh said anniversary activities by state churches in 2021 were slightly on the increase after being severely curtailed during 2020 because of the Covid-19 pandemic. Only six Oklahoma Baptist churches conducted celebrations or observances for their anniversaries during 2021. They included Ardmore, Emmanuel and Cheyenne, First (125th), while centennial celebrations were held at Bartlesville, New Harmony; Letitia; and Shawnee, University. Tupelo, First celebrated its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

In early January, the Historical Secretary mailed letters and response cards to more than 60 Oklahoma Southern Baptist churches celebrating a milestone anniversary during 2022.

NECROLOGY

Jan. 1–Dec. 31, 2021

**Amos, Charles** died June 16. During more than 60 years of ministry he was pastor of four churches, including Lindsay, Banner; Oklahoma City, Meridian Ave. and Oklahoma City, Rancho Village, where he served for 21 years before his retirement in 1990. He served as a chaplain for the Oklahoma City Fire Dept. and taught for nine years at the Baptist Bible Institute.

**Archer, Wana** died Nov. 22. He was pastor of Collinsville, First for 23 years, retiring in 2003. He served in pastoral ministry for 47 years, beginning with Gore Mission of Webbers Falls, First in 1957. He also was pastor at Duncan, First Liberty Mission; Duncan, Parkview; Seminole, First and Woodward, First.

**Ballinger, Bill** died Feb. 22. He was associate pastor at Midwest City, Sooner, was a member of the Singing Churchmen of Oklahoma and directed performances of the Oklahoma Baptist Children's Choir.

**Beddow, Tom** died Dec. 18. He was the coordinator of Oil Patch Chaplains and served as director of counseling and family ministry at McAlester, First.

**Bond, Donnie** died Sept. 13. He pastored churches in Oklahoma, Mississippi and Montana and he and his wife, Dimple, served the IMB as missionaries in Antigua and Vienna, Austria.

**Bowen, Doyle** died July 1. He was the stepfather of Shari Henderson, the wife of Griff Henderson, Oklahoma Baptists Northwest Regional Ministry Partner.

**Branch, Valerie** died July 14. She served more than 20 years in student ministry in Blanchard, Ringling Oklahoma City, Trinity and Ada, Oak Ave.

**Bristow, Robbie** died June 21. She was a partner in ministry with her husband, Wayne, as he was engaged in global ministry of evangelism and missions and served as Director of Evangelism for the BGCO.

**Brown, Wayne** died Jan. 12. He was pastor of numerous churches, including Checotah, First; Purcell, First and Purcell, Johnson Road.

**Burnett, Samuel** died June 6. He pastored churches in Texas, Michigan and Oklahoma, most recently at Tulsa, Garnett Rd., where he served for 14 years. He also was an IMB missionary in Southeast Asia.

**Chaffin, Don** died Nov. 3. He pastored churches in Texas and Oklahoma, including Rush Springs, Vimy Ridge; Alex, Southern; Lawton, Immanuel; Snyder, First; Guymon, First and Gore, First. From 1983-2000, he was director of Sooner Alcohol and Narcotics Education (SANE). He first vice president of the BGCO in 1980.

**Coleman, Duane** died April 3. He was the brother of Chad Coleman, Oklahoma Baptists Collegiate Ministries Associate.

**Coleman, Tina** died Oct. 20. She was the mother of Chad Coleman, Oklahoma Baptists Collegiate Ministries Associate.

**Conchos, Josefina** died Aug. 24. She was the wife of Antonio Conchos, retired Oklahoma Baptists Hispanic Ministry Strategist.

**Crespo, Angel** died June 2. He was the father of Julio Crespo, pastor of Oklahoma City, Iglesia Bautista Central, the Hispanic congregation at Oklahoma City, Quail Springs.

**Custar, Carla** died April 7. She was the wife of Jay Custar, pastor of Sharon, South Persimmon.

**Dance, Ken** died Aug. 3. He was the father of Mark Dance, Oklahoma Baptists Regional Ministry Partner.

**Dennis, Debbie** died May 21. She was the wife of Steve Dennis, pastor of Checotah, First, where she was the pianist.

**Ellis, Gary** died May 7. He was most recently associate pastor at Edmond, First, retiring in 2015.

**Gentry, Bill** died Dec. 21. He pastored churches in Byng, Hastings, Lindsay, Roosevelt and Newcastle, from which he retired in 2002 after 20 years.

**Gentry, Joyce** died March 18. She was the mother of Tim Gentry, Oklahoma Jail and Prison Ministries, and former BGCO Evangelism Specialist.

**Goodman, Rick** died Feb. 1. He was pastor of Oklahoma City, Knob Hill.

**Griggs, Clayton** died Aug. 21. he was youth pastor and pastor at several Oklahoma churches and served as DOM in Muskogee Association.

**Guffey, Bill** died Feb. 1. He served 33 years in full-time ministry, most recently at Oklahoma City, Quail Springs as minister of education, retiring in 1998. He and his wife, Jerry, served the IMB in the Turks and Caicos Islands

**Haile, Kimberly** died Oct. 12. She was the wife of Mark Haile, pastor of Muskogee, Brushy Mountain.

**Hagar, Jimmy Earl** died Oct. 19. He was the father of Cris Hagar, DOM at Central Association.

**Harle, Sandra** died June 12. She was the mother of Kurt Bloomstadt, pastor of Cole, First.

**Hinson, Sue** died March 22. She was the widow of Bob Hinson, retired pastor of Midwest City, First.

**Howe, Ronald** died Aug. 7. He was a music minister for 40 years, serving at Mannford, First; Muldrow, First; Cushing, Park Place and Poteau, First. He was a member of the Singing Churchmen of Oklahoma.

**Hulet, Clayton** died March 6. He was an IMB missionary in Brazil for 15 years, served as pastor at Arcadia, First and El Reno, Southern Heights and as associate pastor of Oklahoma City, South Lindsay and Del City, Sunnyslane.

**Hunt, Everett** died Oct. 18. He was the father of Buddy Hunt, Oklahoma Baptists Regional Ministry Partner.

**Hawkins, Roy** died Nov. 10. He was a career IMB missionary, serving from 1973-2008, then was a church planter for Oklahoma Baptists from 2010-2015.

**Jones, Anita** died Jan. 25. She was the wife of Don B. Jones, first pastor of Owasso, Central and a member of the Falls Creek For the Sake of the Call fund raising committee. She was a member of the Singing ChurchWomen of Oklahoma for more than 30 years.

**Jorgenson, Gene** died Feb. 1. He served as pastor of Marlow, First (1987-93) and with the Home Mission Board (NAMB) as a consultant for planning evangelistic events. He served in 24 interim pastorates in Southern Oklahoma.

**Kendrick, Bob** died June 23. He was DOM in Pittsburg Association (1992-2000) and pastored churches in Blue Jacket, Savanna, Madill, Choteau, Adamson and Carney. He also served as a volunteer builder and disaster relief coordinator.

**Kishketon, Manuel** died Jan. 9. He served in ministry for 30 years, pastoring at Talihina, Green Hills; Ardmore, Indian; Ardmore, Many Nations; Lone Grove, Cheek and for the last 13 years at Cromwell, First.

**Leslie, Brandon** died July 10. He was pastor for six years at St. Louis Church near Asher.

**Love, Bill** died March 2. He and his wife, Thelma, served the IMB in Malaysia and Singapore. He also served as pastor of Rush Springs, Cox City.

**Mayfield, Bob** died March 4. He was BGCO Sunday School/Adult Discipleship Specialist.

**McGee, Rick** died Jan. 7. He had served as pastor at Wayne, First since 2003. He also served in youth and music ministry at churches in Shawnee, Lindsay, Noble and Wayne.

**Morris, Kathleen** died Oct. 10. She was the mother of Rowdy Morris, BCM Director at Connors State College.

**Morton, Robert "Bob"** died April 13. He was the father of Brandon Morton, longtime youth minister at Cleveland, First and pastor of Cleveland, Westport.

**Palmer, Corene** died July 11. She was the wife of Melvin Palmer, pastor at Thessalonian Church in Sana Bois Association.

**Parker, Rickie** died Oct. 12. He served as pastor at Oklahoma City, Sharon.

**Presley, Florence** died Jan. 6. She was the mother of Janet Hays, wife of Kim Hays, pastor of Perry, First.

**Richardson, Carl** died July 12. He served more than 70 years as a bivocational music minister for several churches, including Oklahoma City, Grand Blvd.; Oklahoma City, Liberty; Mustang, First; Oklahoma City, Carey Heights and for more than 30 years at Oklahoma City, Southern Temple.



**Ritchie, Don** died Dec. Feb 4. He was retired DOM of Central Association and father of Kent Ritchie, pastor of Orlando Church.

**Rogers, Jolene** died March 15. She was the wife of Don Rogers, retired DOM in Cherokee Strip Association and pastor of Billings, First.

**Rowan, Glen** died Nov. 15. He retired as pastor of Hulbert, First in 2019 after nearly 48 years in ministry in Oklahoma.

**Ryan, David** died Nov. 5. He served as greeter at the Baptist Building for 12 years.

**Scott, Gerry** died Dec. 21. He was the father of Jordan Anson, Falls Creek Guest Experience Leader.

**Sharp, Linda** died Sept. 16. She was the wife of Phillip Sharp, pastor of Oklahoma City, Heavenly Heights.

**Spriggs, Delbert** died June 4. He was pastor of Oklahoma City, Faithworks.

**Turner, Donald** died June 6. He was manager for the LifeWay Christian Resources Bookstore for more than 30 years.

**Webb, Andy** died Aug. 9. He was a multi-vocational pastor, serving at Webbers Falls, Green Valley; Muskogee, Lawrence St. and Fort Gibson, South Ridge.

**Welton, Agnes** died June 12. She served as ministry assistant for the BGCO director of state missions.

**Whaley, Vernon** died Aug. 18. He was pastor at several Oklahoma churches, including Cedar Valley in Caddo Association; Boynton, First; Canute, First and Marshall, First.

**White, Roger** died Oct. 13. He was pastor of Cushing, New Pathways, which he planted in 2016, and the father of Justin White, pastor of Terlton, First.

**Wilson, Audrey L.** died Oct. 5. He was the brother of Walter Wilson, Oklahoma Baptists African American Ministry Partner.

**Young, Deb** died Oct. 31. She was the wife of Clay Young, former CrossTimbers Children's Camp director.

# Memorial Gifts

On Sept. 8, 1998 by vote of the Oklahoma Baptist 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. The following list includes those gifts in alphabetical order for those honored.

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