

SOUVENIR PROGRAM

NOVEMBER 2004

CELEBRATING

FLORIDA BAPTISTS



Florida Baptist State Convention
150th Anniversary 1854 - 2004

150
YEARS
of HERITAGE
and HOPE

FLORIDA BAPTIST
STATE CONVENTION

November 8-9, 2004

Held at the Prime Osborn Convention Center,
Jacksonville, Florida

“...Take twelve stones...
that this may be a sign
among you, when your
children ask in time to
come, ‘What do those
stones mean to you?’...

So these stones shall
be to the people of Israel
a memorial forever.”

- JOSHUA 4:4-7.

FOUNDATIONS LAYING THE STONES of FAITH

Laying the Foundation Stones of Faith

In Joshua's Old Testament account, God had led the Children of Israel into the Promised Land, and they were directed to build an altar with stones from the Jordan River. These stones of remembrance were to serve to remind Israel of the many blessings God had bestowed upon them.

In some ways, Florida Baptists have been laying foundation stones of faith for the past 150 years as they have sought to be God's heirs of promise in the Sunshine State.

In the year 2004, the Florida Baptist State Convention is observing the 150th anniversary of its founding in Madison, Florida, on November 20, 1854. The organization of the State Convention occurred as 17 delegates from churches gathered to discuss how Baptists could work cooperatively to do missions and ministry more effectively.

It was a historic event as God's people in faith laid the foundation stones for a mission and ministry organization to provide the means for sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ within this young state called Florida.

From those humble beginnings, the foundation stones of faith laid by those pioneer Florida Baptists provided the evangelism impetus of the past 150 years. As a result, more than 2,800 Baptist churches were established through 49 Baptist associations to minister across Florida. In the beginning, those pioneer church members only spoke English.

Today, Florida Baptists collectively share the gospel of Jesus Christ in 20 different languages. As each new

church has started, another stone of faith has been laid upon the foundation of mission and ministry created by those early Baptists.

Whether it is a state Baptist convention, a local Baptist association, or a local Baptist church, each benefits from the foundation stones of faith laid by the people who are our ancestors in faith in Jesus Christ.

And as Florida Baptists move into the future, they need to know and remember the foundation stones of faith laid by those early Baptist people of faith.

In May, 2001, the State Board of Missions authorized the appointment of a 150th Anniversary Observance Committee. This 30-member group was assigned the task to develop an appropriate strategy for the observance of the 150th anniversary of the Florida Baptist State Convention. This strategy sought to consider and implement ways to:

- 1) Remind Florida Baptists of their Baptist roots and heritage;
- 2) Provide an opportunity to celebrate the growth and diversity Florida Baptists have come to represent;
- 3) Serve as a time for Florida Baptists to renew their commitment to the great mission challenge that continues to exist in Florida and around the world; and
- 4) Celebrate and thank God for the numerous and varied blessings Florida Baptists have experienced individually and corporately during the past 150 years.

The Florida Baptist State Convention annual meeting being held November 8-9, 2004 is the culmination of that celebration and observance. The following are the members of the 150th Anniversary Observance Committee:

Dr. Jim Henry, Orlando,
Committee Chairman

Betty Jean Billingsley, Hollywood
Committee Vice Chair

Renaud Balzora, Fort Lauderdale

Ray Carvajal, Miami

Clysta DeArmas, Port Charlotte

Bill Floyd, Jasper

James Fortinberry, Orlando

Lady Ham, Lakeland

Lewis Lampley, St. Petersburg

Liz Traylor, Pensacola

Susan Warren, Brandon

Tommy Watson, Miami

Jerry Vines, Jacksonville

Jose G. Canes, Sarasota

James R. Davis, Wauchula

Nancy M. Grigsby, Niceville

Linda Gregory, Enterprise

Gary E. Laird, Milton

Joe H. Plott, Mary Esther

George A. Price, Jacksonville

Stan Lewis, Pensacola

John M. Wright, Altamonte Springs

Toni Clevenger, Pensacola

R.C. Hammack, Graceville

Patricia B. Parks, Jasper

Helen Yates, Apopka

Charles F. Hodges, Lakeland

Eddie McClelland, Jacksonville

Thomas A. Kinchen, Graceville

James A. Smith, Jacksonville

Support Staff – Florida Baptist Convention:
Dr. John Sullivan, Executive Director-
Treasurer; and Donald S. Hepburn, Director,
Public Relations Division

ILLUSTRATING HERITAGE and HOPE

FLORIDA BAPTISTS



Florida Baptist State Convention
150th Anniversary 1854 - 2004

Seeking to capture the spirit, focus and diversity of Florida Baptists drove the development of a unique logo mark designed for the Florida Baptist State Convention's 150th anniversary. The anniversary observance pays tribute to the Florida Baptist State Convention which was founded in Madison, Florida on November 20, 1854.

Illustrating the anniversary theme, "Celebrating Heritage and Hope," the logo mark features individuals of differing ages walking toward a stylized globe with a cross graphically positioned in the center of the world.

The logo mark also includes 19 language translations of the phrase, "Jesus Loves You," one for every language spoken in Florida Baptist churches.

Los Bautistas de Florida



Convención Bautista de Florida
150 Aniversario 1854 - 2004

The theme "Celebrating Heritage and Hope" was selected by the 30-member 150th Anniversary Observance Committee, which worked for two years to develop plans for the anniversary celebration.

The logomark was developed by the Public Relations Division, Florida Baptist Convention, and approved by the anniversary committee. Prominently featured on the logo are the globe and the cross which represents Florida Baptists' commitment to take the Great Commission to their state and the world.

The Florida Baptist State Convention was founded in 1854 to unite Florida Baptist churches to cooperate in proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ in the frontier territory known as Florida. The State Convention founders saw their corporate formation as a missionary endeavor.

When producing the logo, several key concepts were kept in mind. The mark needed to speak to both Baptist and non-Baptist audiences and the logomark had to identify Florida Baptists as a Christian people. Reflecting the convention's mission orientation, the logomark also seeks to reflect the diversity of the language and culture and age groups which comprise Florida Baptists. And finally, the logomark needed to enthusiastically reflect 'we are a family of Florida Baptists.'

The use of the 19 languages saying "Jesus Loves You," demonstrates the ethnic diversity of Florida Baptists. The members of the more than six hundred of the nearly 2,800 churches speak a language other than English. This would have been unimaginable to the State Convention founders. No doubt, it is a tribute to the glory of God that an organization was established that could become this ethnically and culturally diverse and dynamic. As a result, one of the anniversary's objectives was to encourage Florida Baptists to thank God for the numerous and varied blessings they have experienced individually and corporately.

The use of the phrase, "Jesus Loves You," was selected because of its simplicity. It speaks to the youngest among us and yet has profound meaning to the most seasoned Christians. When you get right down to it, that phrase reflects Florida Baptists' heritage for the past 150 years and their collective hope to share for future generations.

Florida's \$9 billion-a-year citrus crop influenced the selection of the logo's colors of lime green and yellow, complemented with navy blue. The goal was to use a color scheme that reflected freshness and appeared to be bright and lively. The logo has a tropical Florida appeal as reflected in the yellow globe that portrays the Florida sunshine!

Les Baptistes de la Floride



La Convention Baptiste de l'État de la Floride
150ième Anniversaire 1854 - 2004

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Florida Baptist State Convention
150th Anniversary 1854 - 2004

HERITAGE and HOPE CELEBRATING

GREETINGS

FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Dear Florida Baptists:

I thank the Lord for 150 years of faithful and fruitful ministry in the state of Florida. The impact of Florida Baptists through the years can only be measured in eternity. The consistent commitment to missions and evangelism has reaped a harvest of souls for the Lord. The growth of our fellowship of churches to number over 2,800 congregations and our total membership to over one million individuals serves as a powerful testimony to the faithfulness of the Lord. The presence of Florida Baptists in Cuba and Haiti has been instrumental in planting churches and reaching people for the Lord.

The history of our State Convention only prepares our churches for the future. The scope of our ministry reaches from the rural settings to the major cities of America. The population growth of our state continues to challenge us in planting churches and increasing our presence and witness for the Lord. Our greatest opportunities of ministry are in our future. I praise the Lord for the solid foundation of our past which has yielded a promising tomorrow for Florida Baptists.

The unity and strength of the Florida Baptist State Convention rests in the spirit of our cooperation in evangelism and missions. The leadership of Dr. John Sullivan, our executive director-treasurer, is a gift from the Lord. The Lord has blessed Florida Baptists through the direction that Dr. Sullivan has framed for our work. He has developed a convention staff that is without parallel among Baptist state conventions. The unity of our Florida Baptist State Convention can in large measure be attributed to his strong and consistent leadership.

Florida Baptists can be grateful to the Lord for our past and rejoice in a bright and promising future. The Lord has placed before us an open door which no man can shut. Our challenge continues to remain faithful in keeping the main thing the main thing. I celebrate that we are a part of the Florida Baptist State Convention and may we commit to continue the Biblical mandate of evangelism and missions until Jesus returns.

In Christ,



J. Thomas Green III, Th.D.

President, Florida Baptist State Convention, and
Pastor, First Baptist Church, Brandon, Florida



J. Thomas Green III, Th.D.

President, Florida Baptist
State Convention, and
Pastor, First Baptist Church,
Brandon, Florida

CELEBRATE HIS GLORY



FLORIDA BAPTIST
STATE CONVENTION

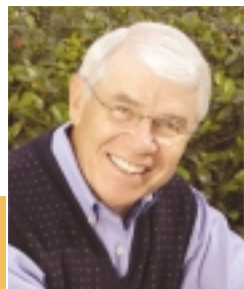
**143rd Annual Meeting
and
150th Anniversary
since Founding**

CONVENTION THEME:
Celebrate His Glory

SCRIPTURE:
**"...Christ in you,
the hope of glory."**
— COLOSSIANS 1:27 (KJV)



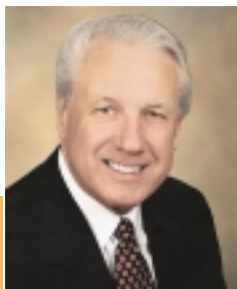
J. Thomas Green, pastor,
First Baptist Church, Brandon



Jim Henry, pastor, First
Baptist Church, Orlando



Gary L. Williams, pastor,
First Baptist Church, Mandarin



John Sullivan, executive
director-treasurer, Florida
Baptist Convention



Bobby Welch, pastor,
First Baptist Church,
Daytona Beach



Albert Mohler, president,
The Southern Baptist Theological
Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky

Monday Evening, November 8, 2004

J. THOMAS GREEN, presiding

SESSION THEME:
The Glory of His Revelation

SCRIPTURE:
**"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt
among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory
as of the only begotten of the Father,)
full of grace and truth."**
— JOHN 1:14 (KJV)

- 6:15 PM Musical Prelude: Florida Baptist Singing Men, Women, and Orchestra
- 6:30 PM Convention Convenes
President's Welcome/J. Thomas Green
- 6:35 PM Patriotic Observance
Color Guard; Pledge of Allegiance
Singing "National Anthem"; Prayer/Rick Shepherd
- 6:45 PM Congregational Hymns led by David Shenning
- 6:50 PM Special Music: Florida Baptist Singing Men, Women, and Orchestra
- 6:55 PM Baptismal Service
- 7:02 PM Scripture and Prayer/James L. Tatum
- 7:05 PM Enrollment of Messengers/Ronald C. Hobbs
Committee on Order of Business Report/Stam Lewis
Presentation of FBSC Officers and Parliamentarian
- 7:10 PM Special Music: Leo Day
- 7:15 PM* **Theme Interpretation / Albert Mohler**
- 7:35 PM *Florida Baptists' Missionary Vision and Commitment*
[video presentation]
- 7:40 PM Congregational Hymns led by David Shenning
- 7:45 PM Special Music: Leo Day
Introduction of President by Myles Dowdy
- 8:00 PM* **President's Message / J. Thomas Green**
- 8:25 PM Special Music: Florida Baptist Singing Men, Women, and Orchestra
- 8:30 PM *The Foundation Stones of Heritage and Hope*
[video presentation]
- 8:40 PM* Convention at Worship; Prayer / Sergio Rodriguez
Congregational Hymns led by Terry Williams
Special Music: Florida Baptist Singing Men, Women, and Orchestra
- 9:00 PM **Address/Jim Henry**
- 9:30 PM Closing Prayer/Craig Attaway

Tuesday Morning, November 9, 2004

THOMAS GREEN, presiding

SESSION THEME:
The Glory of His Redemption

SCRIPTURE:
**"Saying with a loud voice, worthy is the
Lamb that was slain to receive power, and
riches, and wisdom, and strength, and
honour, and glory, and blessing."**
— REVELATION 5:12 (KJV)

- 8:30 AM Musical Prelude: First Baptist Church Mandarin
- 8:40 AM Convention Convenes
Scripture and Prayer/Richard Ledgister
Special Music: Leo Day
- 8:45 AM State Board of Missions Report (#1)/
Gary L. Crawford
- 9:30 AM Congregational Hymns led by Carl Hodges
Special Music: Leo Day
- 9:40 AM* **Theme Interpretation / Albert Mohler**
- 10:00 AM* Election of Convention Officer (President)
- 10:10 AM Miscellaneous Business
- 10:15 AM Committee on Nominations Report/Forrest Pollock
- 10:25 AM Agency Report/Florida Baptist Witness/James A. Smith
- 10:35 AM Agency Report/The Baptist College of Florida/
Thomas A. Kinchen
- 10:45 AM Election of Convention Officer
(President Run-off/First Vice President)
- 10:55 AM *A Desire to Make a Difference for Missions*
[video presentation]
- 11:05 AM Memorial Service/James L. Tatum
- 11:10 AM Special Music: Leo Day
- 11:15 AM Congregational Hymns
Special Music: First Baptist Church Mandarin
- 11:30 AM* **Address / Gary L. Williams**
- 11:55 AM Closing Prayer / Jedaías Azevedo

*No later than

HIS CELEBRATE

Tuesday Afternoon, November 9, 2004

JAMES L. TATUM, presiding

SESSION THEME:
The Glory of His Resurrection

SCRIPTURE:

**"Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection,
and the life: he that believeth in me,
though he were dead, yet shall he live."**

— JOHN 11:25 (KJV)

- 1:30 PM Musical Prelude/Florida Ministers of Music
- 1:45 PM Convention Convenes
Congregational Hymns
- 1:55 PM Scripture and Prayer/Richard Ledgister
- 2:00 PM Special Music: Florida Ministers of Music
- 2:05 PM* **Theme Interpretation / Emanuel Roque**
- 2:20 PM Election of Convention Officer
(President Run-off/Second Vice President)
- 2:30 PM State Board of Missions Report (#2)/Gary L. Crawford
- 2:50 PM Agency Report/Florida Baptist Financial Services/
Eddie McClelland
- 3:00 PM Congregational Hymns
Special Music: Charles Billingsley
- 3:10 PM Election of Convention Officers
- 3:15 PM Miscellaneous Business
Presentation of Auxiliary Organizations New Presidents
- 3:25 PM *Celebrating His Glory Through Fulfilling God's Purpose*
[video presentation]
- 3:45 PM Special Music: Charles Billingsley
- 4:00 PM* Doctrinal Message: "The Resurrection"/John Sullivan
- 4:25 PM Concert of Praise/Florida Ministers of Music
- 4:35 PM Closing Prayer/Jean Moise



Ted H. Traylor, pastor,
Olive Baptist Church, Pensacola



Joseph L. Gaston,
Language Division, Florida
Baptist Convention



Emanuel Roque,
Language Missions, Miami
Baptist Association



Leo Day, musician, New
Orleans Baptist Theological
Seminary, New Orleans, Louisiana



Charles Billingsley,
music evangelist, Forest, Virginia

Tuesday Evening, November 9, 2004

RICHARD LEDGISTER, presiding

SESSION THEME:
The Glory of His Return

SCRIPTURE:

**"When the Son of man shall come in his glory,
and all the holy angels with him, then shall
he sit upon the throne of his glory:"**

— MATTHEW 25:31 (KJV)

- 6:05 PM *Year of Celebration* [video presentation]
- 6:20 PM Musical Prelude: Jacksonville Mass Choir
Soloist: Charles Billingsley
- 6:30 PM Convention Convenes
Congregational Hymns led by Tim Rigdon
Scripture and Prayer/James L. Tatum
- 6:35 PM* **Theme Interpretation / Joseph L. Gaston**
- 6:50 PM* State Board of Missions Report (#3)/Gary L. Crawford
- 7:00 PM Congregational Hymns led by Wes Dykes
- 7:05 PM Special Music: Jacksonville Mass Choir
Soloist: Charles Billingsley
- 7:10 PM* **Address / Ted H. Traylor**
- 7:35 PM Agency Report/Florida Baptist Children's Homes
Jimmy McAdams; *Celebrating 100 Years of Ministry*
- 7:50 PM Covenant Commitment by Agencies,
Florida Baptist State Convention
- 7:55 PM Presentation of New Florida Baptist State
Convention Officers
- 8:00 PM Prayer of Commitment/Allen Floyd
Congregational Hymns led by Rodney Brooks
Special Music: Jacksonville Mass Choir
Soloist: Charles Billingsley
- 8:15 PM* Convention Sermon/Bobby Welch
- 8:40 PM Altar Call
- 8:45 PM Concluding Remarks
Florida Baptist State Convention President
- 9:00 PM Closing Anthem
Benediction

**No later than*

PROGRAM PERSONNEL

Charles Billingsley, music evangelist,
Forest, Virginia

Gary L. Crawford, president, State Board
of Missions; pastor, Westside Baptist Church,
Gainesville

Leonard E. Day, assistant professor of
voice, New Orleans Baptist Theological
Seminary, New Orleans, Louisiana

Myles Dowdy, minister of counseling and
administration, First Baptist Church, Brandon.

Joseph L. Gaston, associate, Language
Church Development Department, Florida
Baptist Convention, Jacksonville

J. Thomas Green, president, Florida
Baptist State Convention; pastor, First Baptist
Church, Brandon

Jim Henry, pastor, First Baptist Church,
Orlando

Ronald C. Hobbs, recording secretary,
Florida Baptist State Convention; minister of
music, College Road Baptist Church, Ocala

Thomas A. Kinchen, president, The
Baptist College of Florida, Inc., Graceville

Richard Ledgister, first vice president,
Florida Baptist State Convention; pastor, Sierra
Norwood Calvary Baptist Church, Miami

Stan Lewis, chairman, Committee on Order
of Business; associate pastor, Olive Baptist
Church, Pensacola

Jimmy McAdams, president, Florida
Baptist Children's Homes, Inc., Lakeland

Eddie L. McClelland, president, Florida
Baptist Financial Services Inc., Jacksonville

Albert Mohler, president, The Southern
Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville,
Kentucky

Forrest Pollock, chairman, Committee on
Nominations; pastor, Bell Shoals Baptist
Church, Brandon

Emanuel Roque, Miami Baptist Association

James A. Smith, Sr., executive editor,
Florida Baptist Witness, Jacksonville

John Sullivan, executive director-treasurer,
Florida Baptist Convention, Jacksonville

James L. Tatum, second vice president,
Florida Baptist State Convention; and member,
First Baptist Church, Jacksonville

Ted H. Traylor, pastor, Olive Baptist
Church, Pensacola

Bobby Welch, pastor, First Baptist Church,
Daytona Beach

Gary L. Williams, pastor, First Baptist
Church, Mandarin

Terry W. Williams, director, Church Music
Department, Florida Baptist

HERITAGE and HOPE

FLORIDA BAPTIST STATE CONVENTION: 1854-2004

The history of Florida is a story of hope. Those who migrated to the Sunshine State have been diverse people who came in search of hope – hope of a new beginning; hope of better health; hope of economic opportunities; hope of religious freedom and expression; hope of self determination.

For the past 150 years, Florida Baptists have brought a different message of hope to the state they cherish – hope found in the Gospel message of Jesus Christ. It is the hope in Christ that gives meaning to all other searches of purpose. The commitment of Florida Baptists to share the Hope in Christ has not wavered for the past century and a half.

From those humble itinerant preachers who laid the foundation stones of faith and hope, Florida Baptists – God's heirs of promise – have become the one million-member Florida Baptist State Convention. The 2,800 cooperating Baptist churches and missions serve as guiding lights to their communities – founded on a heritage of faith and commitment to the cause of Jesus Christ. Those pioneer Florida Baptists laid a foundation of mission and ministry which today provides a heritage of continuing allegiance to the Kingdom's cause.

The year 2004 is the occasion for Florida Baptists to celebrate, to remember and to affirm their commitment and faithfulness as God's heirs of promise. This abbreviated chronology tells of a people called Florida Baptists who developed and expanded their heritage built upon hope.

Early Florida history – prior to 1800

1776–The United States is founded with the adoption of the Declaration of Independence, but Florida was still a territory under the control of the British
1784–Black Anabaptist held meetings in St. Augustine (first Baptist meetings in Florida)

1800 -1839

1812–Wilson Conner was the first Baptist minister who came to Florida
1814–Triennial Convention organized to implement cooperative missionary work among Baptists
1821–Pigeon Creek Baptist Church organized on January 7 as the first Baptist church in Florida; the following year (July 22, 1822) received as a church member the first African slave, whose name was Peter Lopers
1822–Florida became a territory of the United States; William P. Duval became first territorial governor
1825–Bethlehem (Campbellton) Baptist Church in Jackson County became the second Baptist church organized, but today is considered the first church because it is still functioning
1832–Future Florida Baptist layman and church leader Richard Johnson Mays came to Florida
1832–John Tucker was the first person ordained as a Baptist minister in the Florida territory and in 1845 was appointed by the Southern Baptist Board of Domestic Missions as the first missionary to Florida
1835–Original Suwannee Baptist Association begun; no longer in existence



1840 -1859

1843–Florida Baptist Association organized at Ebenezer Baptist Church, Jefferson County, as the first association in Florida to remain in continuous operation to present day
1843–First Sunday school started in Providence Baptist Church (Gadsden County) and the following year pastor G. G. Tripp started a Sunday school in Key West
1845–State of Florida on March 3 approved for statehood by the 28th Congress of the United States
1845–Southern Baptist Convention organized on May 10 in Augusta, Georgia
1847–Alachua Baptist Association organized
1847–West Florida Baptist Association organized
1848–Bethlehem (Campbellton) Baptist Church organized the first woman's missionary society
1848–The Baptist Telegraph and Florida Emigrant begun as Florida's first Baptist newspaper
1850–Former slave and ordained minister Rev. James Page organized the first Florida African-American congregation – Bethlehem Baptist Church at Bel Air in Leon County

1854–Florida Baptist State Convention organized November 20, in the Clifton Mansion home of Richard Johnson Mays, in Madison County. Thirty-three years after the organization of the first church in Florida, there are now 73 churches reporting 4,031 members and 441 baptisms



1857–Santa Fe River Baptist Association organized
1857–State Convention met in Thomasville, Georgia, the only time the convention has ever met outside of the state

1860 -1879

1860–First Baptist Church in Tallahassee had the largest church membership in the state with 382 members of whom the majority were African-American or other descent and 16 were Anglo
1861–Florida seceded from the Union and joined the Confederacy
1861-1865–Florida Baptist State Convention annual meeting not held during Civil War
1867–South Florida Baptist Association organized
1868–Florida readmitted to the Union
1868–Cuban and Spanish workers fled Cuba and 5,000 exiles took up residence in Key West creating a foreign mission evangelism opportunity for Florida Baptists
1869–Greater Orlando (originally Wekiwa) Baptist Association organized
1872–New River Baptist Association organized
1873–Suwannee Baptist Association organized
1873–State Convention appointed Kinsey Chambers as its first employed statewide evangelist
1876–Peace River Baptist Association organized
1876–Women Missionary societies organized in Florida Baptist churches: Paran, Hickory Grove, Shiloh, Saluda, Eliam, Beulah and Peniel
1877–St. Johns River Baptist Association organized
1879–State Convention marked its 25th Anniversary with 324 cooperating churches [reported as 221 Anglo and 103 African-American] and 22,132 total church members [reported as 13,211 Anglo and 8,921 African-American] led by 226 ordained ministers [reported as 152 Anglo and 74 African-American]
1879–Beulah Baptist Association organized
1879–Harmony Baptist Association organized
1879–Jacksonville Baptist Association organized

1880 -1889

1880–State Board of Missions organized December 12 and the Board elected Dr. W. N. Chaudoin (affectionately known as "Uncle Chad") as its corresponding secretary to give leadership to mission work and who served until 1901.

PE THROUGH TIME

1881—Appointment of Mrs. N. A. (Ann B. Hester) Bailey, first secretary of Woman's Work, who served until her death September 26, 1886

—Micanopy Woman's Missionary Society, oldest society with a continuous history, organized Children's Mission Band

—Women approved to serve as delegates to the State Convention

1882—Lake City was the site of first meeting of Florida Baptist Women's Missionary Society



1883—Florida Baptist church membership totaled 26,047, including 16,857 African-Americans and 9,190 Anglos

1883—DeLand Academy (the forerunner of Stetson University) founded by Baptist layman Henry A. Deland

1884—Florida Baptist Witness established and began publishing January 17 in Lake City

1885—State Convention commissioned Key West pastor William F. Wood as missionary to Cuba to "direct, encourage and foster various missions there." He was assisted by Miss Adella Fales.

1885—Pasco Baptist Association organized

1885—Marion Baptist Association organized

1888—Woman's Academy changed name to Deland University (the forerunner of Stetson University) forms fraternal relationship with the State Convention

1886—Louise "Lulu" Fleming, a child of a former slave, who had been born in Hibernia (Clay County), appointed as a foreign missionary to the Congo (now Zaire) by the Women's American Baptist Foreign Missionaries Society

1887—Pensacola Bay Baptist Association organized

1888—Woman's Missionary Union, Auxiliary to the Southern Baptist Convention, organized.

1889—Treasure Coast (originally Indian River) Baptist Association organized

1889—Deland University became John B. Stetson University by authorization of the Florida Legislature on May 8

1890—Walton County (originally Graves) Baptist Association organized

1891—Lafayette Baptist Association organized

1894—Florida Woman's Baptist Missionary Union organized on January 12 as an auxiliary to the State Convention

1900-1919

1900—Middle Florida Baptist Association organized

1901—L. D. Geiger elected corresponding secretary-treasurer of the State Board of Missions, and served until 1909

1901—Baptist layman William S. Jennings elected as 18th Governor of Florida serving 1901 to 1905

1903—Florida Baptist Historical Society organized

1904—State Convention celebrated its 50th Anniversary with 491 cooperating churches and 26,141 church members

1904—Florida Baptist Orphanage opened February 1, in Arcadia

1904—Frank J. Fowler, Florida's first Southern Baptist foreign missionary is appointed to serve in Argentina

1906—Florida Woman's Missionary Union made self-governing

1907—Santa Rosa Baptist Association organized

1907—Florida Baptists establish Colombia College as state Baptist school; later closed in 1918

1908—First State Mission Week of Prayer in Florida held

1909—S.B. Rogers elected corresponding secretary of the State Board of Missions, and served until 1926

1909—First Royal Ambassador chapters (boys missions education) in Florida established by WMU

1909—Miami Baptist Association organized

1911—Mrs. A. J. Terry, Florida's first woman Southern Baptist foreign missionary appointed

—Southern Baptist tithing system introduced

1911—Tampa Bay Baptist Association organized

1911—Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting held in Jacksonville, with 1558 messengers, the first SBC meeting to be held in Florida

1912—First Chinese language ministry started in Florida at First Baptist Church, Jacksonville

1913—Black Creek Baptist Association organized

1913—First WMU statewide Baptist assembly or encampment was held at Columbia College, in Lake City

—Woman's Missionary Union of Cuba organized by Florida Baptist WMU secretary Mrs. H. C. Peelman

1914—Florida Baptist Convention statewide offices established in Jacksonville

1914—Seminole Baptist Association organized

1917—Baptist preacher Sidney J. Catts, elected 22nd Governor of Florida, having previously served as pastor of First Baptist Church, DeFuniak Springs

1919—Twenty-fifth Anniversary of the Florida WMU

1919-1924 — Southern Baptist Convention Seventy-five Million (dollar) Campaign, which preceded the creation of the Cooperative Program in 1925

1921-1939

1921—Florida Baptist Orphanage name changed to Florida Baptist Children's Home

1921—Baptist layman Cary A. Hardee elected 23rd Governor of Florida

1923—First deaf language ministry started in Florida at First Baptist Church, Jacksonville

1923—Okaloosa Baptist Association organized

1923—Lake County Baptist Association organized

1924—Holmes County Baptist Association organized

1924—Southwest Florida Baptist Association organized

1924—Florida Baptist first owned statewide offices located at 216 Church Street, Jacksonville are occupied

1925—Southern Baptist's unified giving approach — The Cooperative Program — launched

1925—Chipola Baptist Association organized

1925—Baptist layman John W. Martin elected 24th Governor of Florida

1926—C. M. Brittain elected corresponding secretary-treasurer of the State Board of Missions, and served until 1941

1928—The "Okeechobee Hurricane" struck South Florida in September becoming the nation's second deadliest hurricane with a death toll of 2,500 and the State Board of Missions authorized financial assistance

1929—State Convention celebrated its 75th Anniversary with 760 cooperating churches and 114,199 church members; 5,546 baptisms reported;

1929—Baptist layman Doyle E. Carlton, Sr., elected 25th Governor of Florida

1932—Orange Blossom Baptist Association organized

1933—Suncoast (formerly Pinellas) Baptist Association organized

1933—Fortieth Anniversary of the Florida WMU

1934—Northwest Coast Baptist Association organized

1936—The First Seminole Indian Baptist Church in Florida was organized on June 7

1937—Florida Baptist Children's Home expanded ministry from orphanage to providing social work services.

1938—First state WMU summer camps for girls held

1938—Northeast Florida Baptist Association organized

1938—Palm-Lake Baptist Association organized

1940-1959

1940—First mission for Hispanics was established in Key West

1941—C. H. Bolton elected corresponding secretary-treasurer of the State Board of Missions, and served until 1944

1943—Florida Woman's Missionary Union fund raising efforts underwrite the building of Fowler Memorial church in Mendoza, Argentina

1943—Florida Baptist Institute (FBI) begun August 3, in Lakeland under the auspices of the South Florida Baptist Association

1944—Homer G. Lindsay, Sr., pastor, First Baptist Church, Jacksonville, named to serve as interim executive secretary-treasurer, State Board of Missions, from July, 1944 to January, 1945

1945—John H. Maguire elected executive secretary-treasurer of the State Board of Missions, and served until 1967

1945—First Hispanic church established in Ybor City

1945—Florida Baptist Institute's name changed to Baptist Bible Institute (BBI) on April 2

1947—Florida Baptist Foundation organized on April 1

1947—Florida Baptist Children's Home relocated to Lakeland from Arcadia and started network of foster homes

1948—Gulf Stream Baptist Association organized

1949—Baptist layman Fuller Warren elected 30th Governor of Florida

1950—Shiloh Baptist Association organized

1950—First camp for Seminole Indians organized by Florida WMU

1951—Apalachee Baptist Association organized

1953—Brevard Baptist Association organized

1953—Baptist Bible Institute moved to Graceville

1953—Baptist layman Charley E. Johns, while serving as president of the Florida Senate became the 32nd Governor of Florida upon the untimely death of Governor Daniel McCarty

1954—Ridge Baptist Association organized

1954—State Convention celebrated its Centennial year with 1,038 cooperating churches and 369,294 church members; 20,196 baptisms reported; \$1,404,607 given through the Cooperative Program

1954—Sixtieth Anniversary of the Florida Women's Missionary Union celebrated

1955—First WMU-sponsored camps held for African-American boys and girls

1955—Big Lake Baptist Association organized

1957—State Convention assumed ownership of Baptist Bible Institute

1957—Florida WMU relinquished missions training of young boys (Royal Ambassadors) to the Brotherhood Department



HERITAGE and HOPE THROUGH TIME

1958—Halifax Baptist Association organized
1958—Taylor Baptist Association organized
1958—Royal Palm Baptist Association organized
1958—Florida Baptist Children's Homes began an expansion program that eventually added campuses in Miami, Tallahassee, Ft. Myers, Pensacola and Jacksonville
1958-59—Political, economic and religious refugees — over 100,000 — fleeing from the Cuban revolution escaped to Florida
1959—New Florida Baptist Convention statewide office building occupied on Hendricks Avenue in Jacksonville
1959—Choctaw Baptist Association organized



1960-1979

1961—Gadsden County Baptist Association organized
1962—Lake Yale Baptist Assembly and camping ministry begun
1967—Harold C. Bennett elected executive secretary-treasurer of the State Board of Missions, and served until 1978
1968—Florida Keys Baptist Association organized
1968—Florida WMU became a program department of the Florida Baptist Convention
1974—Lois Virginia Reaves Parker is first woman to serve as president of the Florida Baptist State Convention
1974—First Haitian congregation (Emmanuel Haitian Baptist Church, Miami) affiliated with State Convention
1977—Manatee Southern Baptist Association organized
1977—New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary established an ethnic branch in Miami to train Hispanic and Haitian church leadership
1978—Florida Baptists began three year involvement in evangelistic crusades in Korea
1978—State Convention entered into state-to-state partnership with Pennsylvania-South Jersey Baptist Convention which continued for 23 years
1979—State Convention celebrated 125th anniversary year with 1,549 cooperating churches, 128 church-type missions; and 772,252 church members; 26,505 baptisms reported; \$10,025,185 given through the Cooperative Program
1979—Dan C. Stringer elected executive director-treasurer of the State Board of Missions, and served until 1989

1980-1999

1987—State Convention entered into state-to-state missions partnership with the Dakota Southern Baptist Fellowship which continued until 1999
1987—State Convention entered into state-to-state missions partnership with the Montana Southern Baptist Fellowship
1988—BBI changed its name on September 6, to Florida Baptist Theological College

1989—T.G. (John) Sullivan elected executive director-treasurer of the State Board of Missions, and currently is serving
1991—A military coup in Haiti resulted in thousands of Haitian refugees arriving in Florida
1991—Florida Baptist Foundation was re-organized into the Florida Baptist Financial Services, Inc.,
1992—Sumter Baptist Association organized
1992—Hurricane Andrew devastated South Florida — leaving 200,000 people homeless and causing \$15 billion in damages — and mobilized Florida Baptists and Southern Baptists into a major relief effort
1993—State Convention entered into foreign missions partnership with the Baptist Convention of Tanzania for a three-year period
— State Convention entered into foreign missions partnership with the Caribbean Baptist Convention for a three-year period
1993—Florida became first state to create an administrative division exclusively for language missions
1994—Florida became first state to create an administrative division exclusively for African-American ministries
1994—For 47 weeks, 22 Florida Baptists volunteers served in relief efforts in Tanzania to minister to Rwandan refugees who had fled a civil war in their homeland.
1995—State Convention entered into foreign missions partnership with Baptists on the Island nation of Haiti
1995—State Convention and Stetson University severed their fraternal relationships
1996—Florida Baptist Historical Society is re-organized to end its status as an agency of the State Convention and assigned to operate under the auspices of the State Board of Missions
1996—State Convention revised its governing bylaws by approving a new "Bylaw 2" which defines a cooperating local church, becoming first Southern Baptist state convention to make such a declaration
1996—State Convention authorized entering into foreign missions partnership with Baptists in the western regions of the Island nation of Cuba
1996—State Convention recognized First Baptist Church, Orlando, for its five consecutive years of gifts to the Cooperative Program totaling over one million dollars annually and which was the most ever given by any Southern Baptist church
1997—State Convention entered into foreign missions partnership with the Baptists in the France-Benelux Baptist Mission that primarily served the country of Belgium
1998—Elroy Barber, pastor, Westside International Baptist Church, Hollywood, became the first African-American elected president of the Florida Baptist State Convention



2000-Present

2000—Florida Baptist Theological College changed its name to The Baptist College of Florida
— An energetic church starting strategy resulted in 174 cooperating churches being started
— State Convention entered into missions partnership with West Virginia Convention of Southern Baptists
— State Convention extended participation in foreign missions partnerships with Baptists in Cuba and Haiti
— Florida Baptist churches reported a record 37,559 baptisms being conducted
2001—An energetic church starting strategy resulted in 140 cooperating churches being started
— Florida Baptist churches reported a record 36,478 baptisms being conducted
— State Convention extended participation in its foreign missions partnership with Baptists in the France-Benelux Baptist Mission that primarily served the country of Belgium
— A reported 54,174 Florida Baptist volunteers from 1,018 churches participated in hands-on missions activities in the State Convention's partnership states and countries
2002—State Convention extended participation in its state-to-state missions partnership with the Montana Southern Baptist Fellowship
— An energetic church starting strategy resulted in 159 cooperating churches being started
— Florida Baptist churches reported a pacesetting 37,234 baptisms being conducted
— Another 50,486 Florida Baptists volunteers from 1,080 congregations participated in hands-on mission activities in the State Convention's partnership states and countries
2003—An energetic church starting strategy resulted in 147 cooperating churches being started

Sesquicentennial Year 2004 Benchmarks

Florida Baptist State Convention celebrates 150th anniversary year with 2,800 cooperating churches and missions; over 1,100,000 church members; over 37,000 baptisms reported; and \$35,000,000 given through the Cooperative Program

- **State Board of Missions** completes 124 years of providing leadership to Florida Baptists mission and ministry causes
- **Florida Baptist Witness** celebrates 120 years of publishing Baptist news
- **Florida Baptist Children's Homes** celebrates 100 years of child care ministry
- **The Baptist College of Florida** marks 61 years of providing Christian higher education
- **Florida Baptist Financial Services** observes 57 years since being founded as the Florida Baptist Foundation
- **Florida Baptist Association** (Leon, Jefferson, Franklin and Wakulla Counties) observes 161 years as the oldest Baptist association in the state in continuous operation

HERITAGE of FAITHFUL SERVANTS

As Florida Baptists we stand on the shoulders of hundreds of leaders who preceded us in commitment, service and sacrifice.

We celebrate today because of their faithfulness. The Florida Baptist Historical Society has compiled a list of 150 leaders that somewhat represent that long line of servants who have gone before us in the last 150 years. Other names could be added but these 150 men and women tell a story of courage and hard work in missions, church and denominational service. They represent years of labor and we stand in appreciation as we remember them, their families and their work. One criterion was that the persons on this list had to be deceased. A biographical compendium on these individuals is available from the Society.

Ralph W. Acree	Edward Manlove Clayton Dunklin	John Henry Maguire
J. Dean Adcock	Earl B. Edington	A. M. Manning
William Sims Allen	J. Ollie Edmunds	Clifford Marity
Guy P. Anderson	John Thaddens Entzminger	Rhydon Grigsby Mays
Charles Roy Angell	Willard P. Everson	Richard Johnson Mays
A. P. Ashurst	Adella Fales	Thomas V. McCaul
Julius Hillier Avery	Frank Faris	James McDonald
Ann B. Hester Bailey	John Thomas Fillinghim	W. H. McIntosh
Napoleon Alexander Bailey	Louise Cecilia Fleming	Joshua Mercer
Joseph S. Baker	Hinton Floyd Folsom	Ismael Negrin
Elroy Barber	John Franklin Forbes	Clyde Nelson
James T. Barber	Frank James Fowler	W. D. Nowlin
John Lynn Bartlow	Leon Mason Gambrell	James Page
Fleming Bates	A. E. Gammage	Henry Allen Parker
B. M. Bean	Joshua M. Garvin	Charlotte Rinkenberger Peelman
Jeannie Bean	Lorenzo Dow Geiger	John Lee Pelham
Adolph Bedsole	Rufus Gray	E. T. Poulson
Harold Clark Bennett	J. Harrison Griffin	S. M. Provence
Bill F. Billingsley	Nancy Cone Hagan	James N. Reid
William J. Blewett	John Halderman	Edwin Hansford Rennolds, Sr.
Benjamin B. Blitch	C. Wesley Hamil	Cooley Sumner Reynolds
T. S. Boehm	Charles C. Hancock	Edmund H. Rice
Charles Houston Bolton	Thomas Hansen	John Bethel Rodgers
Ernest Doyle Boyer	F. C. Hawk	Stuart Beggs Rogers
Charles Mercer Brittain	James Henry Hayman	John Leonidas Rosser
Edwin B. Browning	Jeremiah M. Hayman	Jeff Rousseau
Max Eugene Cadenhead	James M. Hendry	William Ira Sanders
Elijah Hosea Callaway	John Wright Hendry	James A. Sawyer
Albert L. Carnett	William Andrew Hobson	Robert E. Sawyer
Sidney Johnston Catts	R. V. Hogarth	John Walton Senterfitt
Kinsey Chambers	Adoniram Judson Holt	Edward Davis Solomon
Caroline Frensley Chaudoin	Carl Alonzo Howell	James Southerland
William Newell Chaudoin	Lincoln Hulley	Jennie Lucena Spalding
Ann Elizabeth Billups Chipley	Marquis Dewitt Jackson	Arthur Stainback
Joe Coats	Thomas Maxwell Johns	Marvin V. Stedham
David Coffield	William Johnson	W. G. Stracener
W. R. Coggins	Edward Earl Joiner	Lucina Beach Telford
Wilson Conner	Josephine Proctor Jones	Lulu Sparkman Terry
James F. Conway	John Jumper	J. Earl Tharp
William Brauner Cooper, Sr.	Edward Kimber	John Henry Tomkies
Samuel C. Craft	Henry Monroe King	Alexander Travis
Genus Crenshaw	N. B. Langford, Jr.	J. E. Trice
Harrison Crews	T. E. Langley	G. G. Tripp
Lewis A. Curtis	Charles C. Lewis	John Tucker
Henry Cypress	Harry M. Liechty, Sr.	John Powell Tucker
Elam Jackson Daniels	Homer Gentry Lindsay, Jr.	G. W. S. Ware
A. D. Dawson	Homer Gentry Lindsay, Sr.	Jacob Lee White
Alberto Diaz	B. Durwood Locke	Mack James Williams Sr.
John Dicks	C. H. Lyons	William F. Wood
Claude Walker Duke	Clyde Merrill Maguire	Allen E. Young

HERITAGE of SE

Since 1880 the State Board of Missions has been responsible for carrying out the mandates of the Florida Baptist State Convention. The focus of these efforts is evangelism, missions and ministry development, and church starting. To give leadership to these mandates, the Board employs staff led by an executive director-treasurer, a post which has been filled by ten men during the past 124 years.

W. N. Chaudoin

1881-1901



(born in Middle Tennessee, Aug. 20, 1829; died LaGrange, Florida, Jan. 22, 1904).

Affectionately known as "Uncle Shad," William Newell Chaudoin was a common, unpretentious and unassuming man who became recognized for his devotion, faith, energy, tact, skill and constructiveness in leading Florida Baptists through their infancy.

In 1881 Chaudoin was employed as the first corresponding secretary by the State Board of Missions of the Florida Baptist State Convention. During the ensuing 20 years, Chaudoin traveled the state to encourage and motivate Florida Baptist pastors and churches. The focus of his emphasis was missions' commitment and starting new churches. Chaudoin championed the cause to have every church in the State Convention, no matter how weak, contribute regularly to missions.

In the role of encourager, Chaudoin often preached from the pulpit of the churches he was visiting. His sermons, according to his contemporaries, neither reflected great preaching skill nor profound theology. But "his greatest and most effective proclamation of Jesus was in his own daily life, from which the very Spirit of Christ exhaled," wrote J. F. Forbes of Rochester, New York.

L. D. Geiger

1901-1909

(born Old Town, Fla., Oct. 18, 1854; died Jacksonville, Fla., Apr. 20, 1909). Lorenzo Dow Geiger served as corresponding secretary to the State Board of Missions from 1901 to 1909.

During his brief tenure, L.D. Geiger confronted two major problems: the lack of financial resources and the shortage of ministers to serve all of the State Convention's churches. Both of these problems affected each other and resulted in much concern over the widespread spiritual destitution within Florida. The State Board found it impossible to employ and pay much needed missionaries. Despite the Convention's indebtedness and limited financial resources, Geiger demonstrated a giftedness and great skill in administering and managing the financial resources provided by Florida Baptists.

When L.D. Geiger became executive secretary in 1901, Florida Baptists consisted of 484 churches which reported 23,139 church members and 277 ministers. By 1908, it was reported that the number of churches had increased to 599, reporting 3,424 baptisms, with 37,027 total members. The number of ministers had increased sixty percent to 430.

Geiger's service was cut short when he died suddenly on April 20, 1909.



S. B. Rogers

1909-1926



(born near Macon, Ga., Sept. 18, 1866; died Atlanta, Ga., Aug. 16, 1926). Stuart Beggs Rogers took the helm as executive secretary of the State Board of Missions just as the effects of the 1908 drought began to place a severe financial strain on the churches that ultimately resulted in less mission dollars being given. Rogers instituted management efficiencies to make the Convention live within its resources.

Earlier in 1907, the State Convention had opened its own institution of higher learning, Columbia College. Pledge commitments to financially underwrite the school never materialized which resulted in the college having to close in 1918 and the Convention assumed \$50,000 in debt. To address the sluggish missions giving and the heavy debt, Rogers developed a unified missions' funding plan. The effort proved successful, as the Convention's debt was finally paid off. As the Convention's income improved, Rogers led the Convention to build its first office building in Jacksonville. He started, in cooperation with the WMU auxiliary, an annual offering for state missions which focused upon Florida's mission needs.

C. M. Brittain

1926-1941

(born Coyners, Ga., Dec. 16, 1873; died Fort Myers, Fla., Jan. 12, 1943). Charles Mercer Brittain was employed by the State Board of Missions as the executive secretary-treasurer and served from 1926 to 1941.

C. M. Brittain's tenure was affected by the hurricanes of 1926 and 1928, the Great Depression and the beginning of World War II. These multiple outside influences created a spiritual inertia among many churches. Brittain proved to be a positive, resilient and stable leader. He promoted the missionary spirit as an antidote to the depressed condition of many churches. Brittain heavily stressed the priority of evangelism and encouraged the churches to make the sharing of the Gospel a priority. To complement the spiritual emphasis, he led the Board to provide financial assistance to over 550 churches. The Convention also earmarked funds for students in ministerial education. As a result of failing health, Brittain resigned in 1941.



C. H. Bolton

1941-1944



(born Belgreen, Ala. Sept. 13, 1886; died Thomasville, Georgia, Nov. 11, 1973). Charles Houston Bolton served as executive secretary-treasurer of the State Board of Missions from 1941 to 1944.

During his brief three-year Florida service, Bolton oversaw the liquidation of debt on the Rogers Building (convention offices). He led in the development of a plan of rural and city mission work, initiated in cooperation with the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, which set a new direction in mission work within the state. A financial reserve fund was established for the Convention while the foundations were laid for better relations between Stetson University and the State Convention.

RELEVANT LEADERS



Homer G. Lindsay, Sr. – Acting Executive Secretary

1944-1945

(born Coal Creek, Tenn., Feb. 2, 1903; died Jacksonville, Fla. Sept. 5, 1981). Homer Gentry Lindsay was named as acting executive secretary by the State Board of Missions because two other candidates turned down the leadership position. At the time of his appointment he had been serving as chairman of the Board since 1940. During his seven-month tenure, Lindsay led the Convention to nearly double its reserve funds in an effort to move the Convention to operate on a cash basis. Later, in 1964, Lindsay was elected president of the Florida Baptist State Convention. He served as pastor of First Baptist Church, Jacksonville, for 33 years.

John H. Maguire

1945-1967

(born in Indian Territory, Okla., February 25, 1900; died Jacksonville, Fla., December 18, 1987). John Henry Maguire served as executive secretary-treasurer of the State Board of Missions from 1945 to 1967, the longest tenure of any executive secretary.

During his 22-years service, the number of churches cooperating with the State Convention grew to 1,426 from 826 and the number of Florida Baptist church members grew from 184,140 in 1945 to more than 600,000 when Maguire retired in 1967. He diligently worked to achieve the goal of having every Florida Baptist church contribute to missions through the Cooperative Program.

Maguire led the State Convention to assume ownership and expansion of the Baptist Bible Institute in Graceville; established the Florida Baptist Retirement Center in Vero Beach; and supported the expansion of the Florida Baptist Children's Homes to a statewide ministry. He led in the establishment of the Florida Baptist Witness Commission and the Florida Baptist Foundation. Maguire pushed for the development of the Lake Yale Baptist Assembly and an assembly in West Florida. During his tenure, the WMU transitioned from an auxiliary of the State Convention to a Convention program department.



Harold C. Bennett

1967-1978

(born Asheville, N.C. July 30, 1924; died Nashville, Tenn. July 27, 2003). Harold Clark Bennett was employed as executive secretary-treasurer from 1967 to 1978 by the State Board of Missions.

As the eighth executive secretary, Bennett led Florida Baptists through significant growth and remarkable expansion. During his tenure, the work of the State Convention focused on the priority of starting 400 new churches and missions within ten years. These efforts were complemented by the establishment of a Church Site Committee to locate property sites and a Bond Plan to assist churches in building needed facilities. The Convention also developed a new cooperative agreement with the SBC Home Mission Board, which resulted in increased support and effectiveness of Florida's total mission program. Churches were enlisted in a major evangelistic missions' effort in Korea.

Bennett implemented re-structuring of Convention staff to enhance their job performance and accountability. He led in the expansion of the Convention's assembly resources with the purchase of property for the construction of the Blue Springs Baptist Assembly and additional property for the Lake Yale Baptist Assembly.

Dan C. Stringer

1979-1989

(born Cordell, Okla., Nov. 7, 1927; resides in Scottsdale, Arizona). Daniel Carmichael Stringer was employed in 1979 by the State Board of Missions and served until 1989 as executive director-treasurer.

During his tenure, Stringer led churches to more than double their gifts through the Cooperative Program. By 1985 Stringer was able to lead the State Convention to budget Cooperative Program receipts on a 50-50 percentage basis distribution between the State Convention and the Southern Baptist Convention.

Stringer also led Florida Baptists to recognize the priority of evangelizing and ministering to Florida's growing ethnic populations. He established two new program departments — language missions and ethnic education — to assist local churches in responding to these mission opportunities. A new work assistance program was developed to provide a comprehensive strategy for starting new churches among African-Americans, ethnic groups, suburban and inner city communities. This emphasis upon evangelism led to Florida's baptism total ranking second among all state conventions. He led in the formation of foreign mission evangelism partnerships and state-to-state partnerships with Baptist conventions in Pennsylvania-South Jersey, Montana, and North and South Dakota.



T.G. John Sullivan

1989-present

(born Ansted, West Virginia, Oct. 20, 1936). T.G. "John" Sullivan was employed by the State Board of Missions as executive director-treasurer on January, 1989, and continues to serve.

Within the first year of coming to the Florida leadership post, Sullivan defined three priorities that would dictate the personnel, budgetary and calendar commitments of the Convention: evangelism, intentional church starting, and developing stronger existing churches. This emphasis, during the past 15 years, resulted in over 506,350 baptisms by churches and 1,830 new churches started. Growing out of the priorities has been the creation of two program divisions targeted at two major segments of the Florida population: African-Americans and language and ethnic groups.

To train ministers and church leaders in theology and doctrine, Sullivan instituted a program of theological education and distance learning. Over 500 ministerial students are enrolled in studies while simultaneously serving on the Florida mission field. An emphasis upon hands-on missions' experiences for Florida Baptists has resulted in the establishment of foreign partnerships with the countries of Cuba, Haiti and Belgium. State-to-state partnerships have been expanded to include Indiana, West Virginia and Nevada. As a result of this emphasis upon missions, Florida Baptists have given over \$420 million through the Cooperative Program.

HERITAGE of MINI

Throughout the past 150 years, the Florida Baptist State Convention has been a dynamic entity energized by its members to seek to meet the spiritual needs of an ever-changing society. The Convention established the following agencies and institutions, supported through the Cooperative Program, to meet specific and diverse needs in the state.

The BAPTIST COLLEGE of FLORIDA



*The
Baptist College
of Florida*

Graceville, Florida

In the early 1940's a group of concerned pastors joined together with a common burden and vision to help pastors and other church leaders who needed seminary-type training but did not have college degrees. Their vision was to establish a school to provide a mixture of Bible and general education courses for these God-called men and women who served Florida Baptist churches. The result in 1943 was the founding of the Florida Baptist Institute in Lakeland, later called Baptist Bible Institute.

In 1953, BBI leaders moved the school to Graceville and in 1957 the Florida Baptist State Convention assumed ownership and control. Over the years the institution's leadership has continued to expand and strengthen academic resources.

Throughout its history, the school never lost sight of its original target group – men and women, frequently called later in life, who are in need of college training that will lead them directly into Christian ministry. To broaden the curriculum, BBI added in 1976 a baccalaureate degree program and later in 1998 added an associate degree program.

As the curriculum and degree programs expanded, an increasing number of students have been attracted to this Christian institution of higher learning. To reflect the college's present academic character, the name of the institution was changed in 2000 to The Baptist College of Florida. Under the leadership of President Thomas A. Kinchen, the college has experienced unprecedented growth.

The college's main campus is still located in Graceville and extension centers are located in Jacksonville, Orlando, Brandon, Pensacola and Tallahassee. Students can also pursue their studies with several internet options. With 652 students enrolled in the Fall 2004 semester, the college offers two-year and four-year degrees in theology, church music, Christian education, music education, teacher education, child development, resident childcare, Christian counseling, leadership and missions.

FLORIDA BAPTIST CHILDREN'S HOMES



Lakeland, Florida

Florida Baptist Children's Homes provides safe, stable Christian homes for boys and girls in crisis who have been neglected, misdirected, abandoned, abused or caught up in family turmoil.

In the year 2004, the Florida Baptist Children's Homes celebrate its centennial anniversary of ministry to children and families which began in 1904 as the Florida Baptist Orphanage in Arcadia. Under the leadership of Superintendent B.M. Bean, 23 children were cared for that first year. Changing its name in 1921, the Florida Baptist Children's Home was moved to Lakeland in 1948 to garner more broad-based support from Florida Baptists. At that time, 140 children were in the home's care. Later, additional campuses were opened in Miami in 1958 and Tallahassee in 1973.

Today, group-care facilities, or campuses, are located in six locations around the state – Miami, Lakeland, Fort Myers, Jacksonville, Tallahassee and Pensacola. Social work offices are located in Gainesville and Hollywood. The organization, accredited by the Council on Accreditation of Services for Families and Children, Inc., ministers to 700 children annually, including 100 in foster care. Since its beginning 23,000 children have been served through this benevolent ministry.

The FBCH is committed to the Florida Baptist State Convention's emphasis on the Sanctity of Human Life. A specialist on the staff works with pastors, pregnancy care centers and pregnant, unwed teen-age girls to help prevent abortions. The organization also serves developmentally delayed adults.

The Florida Baptist Children's Homes is supported by the Cooperative Program and the annual Mother's Day Offering. Jimmy McAdams became the organization's eighth president May 1, 2002.

FLORIDA BAPTIST FINANCIAL SERVICES



Jacksonville, Florida

Florida Baptist Financial Services, Inc. was originally incorporated as the Florida Baptist Foundation in 1947 under the leadership of then Executive Secretary of the Florida Baptist Convention John Maguire. The primary purposes of the agency was to "solicit, encourage, motivate and facilitate the making of gifts, donations and benefactions by deed, will, gifts and annuity contracts" to benefit the Florida Baptist State Convention and its churches.

After the creation of the Florida Baptist Credit Union in 1986, the directors of the Foundation put into place a new corporate structure under the umbrella organization now known as Florida Baptist Financial Services Inc. (FBFS). This expanded ministry organization consisted of the Foundation, the Credit Union and a new corporation called the Church Growth Investment Fund, Inc. At the end of 1996, three additional corporate entities were added: the Church Growth Investment Fund, the Baptist Investment Group and Florida Baptist Retirement Center. These entities combined assets over \$61 million.

Eddie L. McClelland was named president of the corporate organization in 2001.

The vision of a few dedicated Baptists 57 years ago, has evolved into a corporate entity that is fully capable of providing Florida Baptists with banking services, trust and estate planning services, investment services, church loans and senior adult housing and healthcare provisions. As a result of these ministries to individual Florida Baptists and their churches to meet their stewardship needs, FBFS generates millions of dollars to support the Lord's work in Florida and around the world.

FLORIDA BAPTIST WITNESS



Jacksonville, Florida

The *Florida Baptist Witness* is the official weekly news journal of the Florida Baptist State Convention. The *Witness* publishes a variety of church, associational, statewide and national news and editorial reflections covering the issues of concern to Christians about ministry, theology and ethics. Under the leadership of Editor James A. Smith, Jr., Southern Baptist missions remains at the core of the *Witness*' news and commentary coverage.

The need for a statewide news medium had been voiced by pioneer Florida Baptists even before the State Convention was organized in 1854, but they were not financially strong enough to start their own paper. In 1873 Hugh McCallum became the publisher of the *Florida Baptist*, which served as a forerunner to the *Witness*. In 1883, the State Convention assumed responsibility for the publication, changed its name to the *Florida Baptist Witness* and published its inaugural issue on Jan. 17, 1884.

During the next 50 years various entrepreneurs were enlisted by the State Convention to publish and distribute the fledgling and often financially troubled newspaper.

In modern years, the *Witness* was brought to Jacksonville and a *Witness* Commission was appointed by the State Convention to take control. After employing Edward D. Solomon to serve as editor from 1931-1949 subscriptions began to increase with the development of the church budget subscription plan. Subsequent editors W. Guy Stacener (1949-1971) and Edgar R. Cooper (1971-1983) led the paper through unparalleled subscription growth that resulted in over 89,000 persons receiving the weekly newspaper.

Today, Florida Baptists can read the *Witness* in its weekly printed edition or view select articles and photographs on its internet web site at www.floridabaptistwitness.org.



The Foundation of Pioneer Churches

While Florida was still a territory, Baptists migrated into this frontier region to establish a new home and embark on a new beginning. Many of these Baptists brought their faith tradition with them and sought to establish a Baptist witness. Itinerant preachers also entered the territory for the purpose of sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ wherever they found a settlement of people. The following are the earliest Baptist churches established in the Florida territory prior to the organization of the Florida Baptist State Convention in 1854 and which continue to function in 2004.



PIGEON CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH



ELIZABETH BAPTIST CHURCH

1820s

Nassau County: Pigeon Creek Baptist Church — January 7, 1821
Campbellton: First Baptist Church (formerly Bethlehem) — March 12, 1825
Jacksonville: Long Branch Baptist Church — 1825
Grand Ridge: Shady Grove Baptist Church (formerly Sardis) — July 1, 1825
Monticello: Ebenezer Baptist Church — 1828
Tallahassee: Indian Springs Baptist Church — July 18, 1829

1830s

Monticello: Elizabeth Baptist Church — 1831
Monticello: Olive Baptist Church — January 8, 1831
Westville: Limestone Baptist Church — 1832
Jasper: First Baptist Church (formerly Concord) — June 9, 1832
Brooker: New River Baptist Church — August 24, 1833
Lake Butler: Old Providence Baptist Church — July 13, 1833
Madison: First Baptist Church (formerly Hickstown) — 1835
Jacksonville: First Baptist Church (formerly Bethel) — July 1, 1838

1840s

Baker: Yellow River Baptist Church — 1840
Wewahitchka: First Baptist Church — 1840
Callahan: First Baptist Church (formerly Sharon) — 1841
Madison County: Concord Baptist Church — 1841
Monticello: First Baptist Church — 1841
Tallahassee: Aeon Baptist Church — 1842
Quincy: Providence Baptist Church — 1843
Key West: First Baptist Church — March 11, 1843
Ocala: Fellowship Baptist Church — 1844
Ponce de Leon: Sandy Creek Baptist Church — 1844
DeFuniak Springs: Cluster Springs Baptist Church — 1845
Brooksville: Eden Baptist Church — 1845

Hilliard: Ephesus Baptist Church — 1845
Greenwood: Greenwood Baptist Church — 1845
Callahan: Live Oak Baptist Church — 1845
Milton: First Baptist Church — 1845
Cottondale: Pilgrim Rest Baptist Church — 1845
Vernon: Ebenezer Baptist Church — 1846
Cottondale: Bethlehem Baptist Church — 1847
Pensacola: First Baptist Church — May 2, 1847
Fort McCoy: First Baptist Church — 1849
Greenville: Greenville Baptist Church — 1849
Tallahassee: First Baptist Church — 1849

1850s

Lithia: Alafia Baptist Church — 1850
Middleburg: Beulah Baptist Church — 1850
Greenville: Mt. Gilead Baptist Church — 1850
Ocala: First Baptist Church — 1850
Branford: Walker Creek Bethel Baptist Church — 1850
Live Oak: Antioch Baptist Church — 1851
Apalachicola: First Baptist Church — 1851
Lake City: Bethlehem Baptist Church — 1851
Brooksville: First Baptist Church — 1852
Micanopy: First Baptist Church — 1852
Century: Pine Barren Baptist Church — 1852
Palatka: Peniel Baptist Church — July 19, 1852
Hawthorne: First Baptist Church — 1853
Thonotosassa: East Thonotosassa Baptist Church — 1854
Sopchoppy: Mt. Elon Baptist Church — 1854
Bartow: Peace Creek Baptist Church (Formerly Peas Creek) — 1854

November 20, 1854: Florida Baptist State Convention organized.

Associations Cooperating with the Florida Baptist State Convention

Frontier Baptist churches in Florida affiliated with Baptist associations in Georgia and Alabama as early as the 1820s. Four associations were organized in Florida prior to the organization of the Florida Baptist State Convention in 1854. Since the State Convention was organized, churches and associations have worked cooperatively as partners in mission and ministry endeavors within Florida. Currently 49 Baptist associations are mission partners with the State Convention and are listed as follows by the year organized:



EBENEZER BAPTIST CHURCH



OLIVE BAPTIST CHURCH

YEAR ORGANIZED FOR EACH ASSOCIATION

1835 Suwannee (extinct)	1879 Jacksonville	1914 Seminole	1951 Apalachee
1842 Florida	1885 Pasco	1923 Okaloosa	1953 Brevard
1847 Alachua	1885 Marion	1924 Lake County	1954 Ridge
1847 West Florida	1887 Pensacola Bay	1924 Holmes	1955 Big Lake
1857 Santa Fe River	1889 Treasure Coast	1924 Southwest Florida	1958 Halifax
1867 South Florida	(formerly Indian River until 2002)	1925 Chipola	1958 Taylor
1869 Greater Orlando	1890 Walton County	1932 Orange Blossom	1958 Royal Palm
(formerly Wekiwa until 1977)	(formerly Graves until 1998)	1933 Suncoast	1959 Choctaw
1872 New River	1891 Lafayette	(formerly Pinellas)	1961 Gadsden County
1873 Suwannee	1900 Middle Florida	1934 Northwest Coast	1968 Florida Keys
1876 Peace River	1907 Santa Rosa	1938 Northeast Florida	1977 Manatee Southern
1877 St. Johns River	1909 Miami	1938 Palm-Lake	1992 Sumter
1879 Beulah	1911 Tampa Bay	1948 Gulf Stream	
1879 Harmony	1913 Black Creek	1950 Shiloh	

CELEBRATION

HERITAGE of

“Celebrate with Praise” is the official anniversary anthem composition commissioned by the 150th Anniversary Observance Committee. This anthem can be used by churches as a tangible means to participate in the 150th Anniversary celebration of the Florida Baptist State Convention. Copies of the anthem and full orchestra score are available free of charge from the Florida Baptist Convention’s Public Relations Division.



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Meet the Music Composer and Arranger

Betty Jean Billingsley

The words and music for the anthem were written by Betty Jean Billingsley. A member of Sheridan Hills Baptist Church, Hollywood, Mrs. Billingsley is a pastor’s wife, church pianist, music teacher and Sunday school leader. She holds a piano performance degree from Florida Atlantic University and has done additional study in music composition. Broadman Press has published three of her songs.



Betty Jean Billingsley
Composer and Arranger

Meet the Music Arranger and Orchestrator

Ed Dickinson

The orchestration score for the anthem was developed by Ed Dickinson. Since 1987, Mr. Dickinson has led the instrumental music ministry at First Baptist Church in Jacksonville, Florida. A graduate of Florida State University, Reverend Dickinson is nationally known as an arranger and orchestrator of music for church orchestra.



Ed Dickinson
Composer and Orchestrator

Anniversary Anthem

Celebrate one hundred, fifty years,
Joyfully your voices raise.
Celebrate our Baptist heritage,
Celebrate with praise!

1. We’re Florida Baptists, God’s people on mission,
We’re called by His spirit, a family of faith.
We’re drawn by His vision to Christ’s Great Commission,
To Bring in His Kingdom, throughout our great state.

Diverse in our cultures, and rich in our color,
Yet we are united in God’s family,
One in our purpose, stronger together,
Serving in love and unity.

Churches and missions,
Our strong convention,
Working together for the Lord.

2. We pause to remember God’s blessings upon us,
The faithful who’ve led us, still lighting our way;
The stones of remembrance they laid for our future,
inspire our obedience to share Christ today.

Faithful tradition,
Firm our Foundation,
Jesus, the Truth, the Life, the Way.

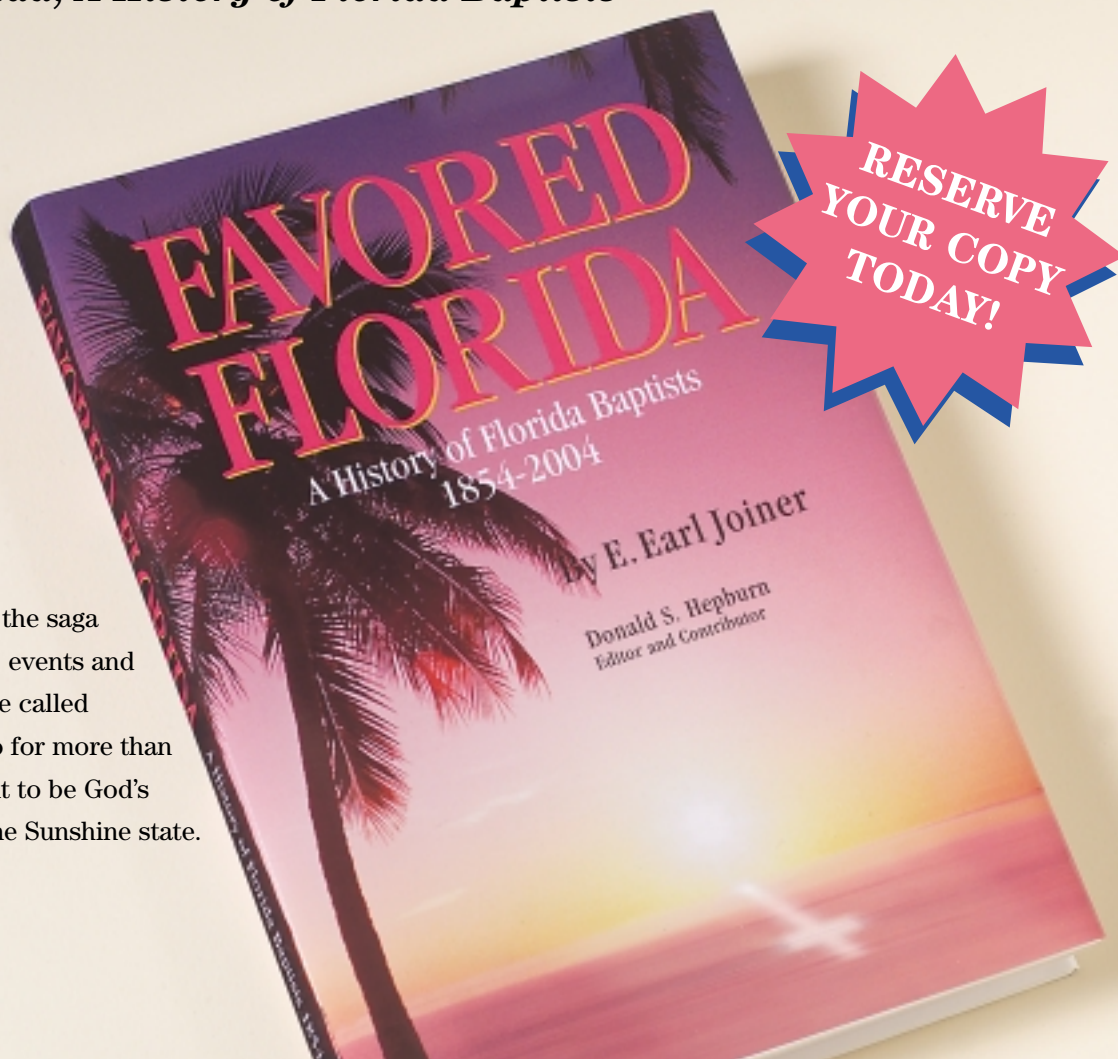
Christ called us to serve Him, bring light to the darkness,
So may we be steadfast, and serve faithfully.
Show forth His greatness, march through the darkness,
Carry the Light that makes men free!
Show forth His greatness, march through the darkness,
Carry the Light that makes men free!

Celebrate one hundred, fifty years,
Celebrate one hundred, fifty years,
Joyfully we celebrate with praise!

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“That being justified by
His grace, we should be
made heirs according to
the hope of eternal life.”

- TITUS 3:7

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“You also, like living
stones, are being built
into a spiritual house
to be a holy
priesthood, offering
spiritual sacrifices
acceptable to God
through Jesus Christ.”

- 1 PETER 2:5



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Celebrating Heritage and Hope
1854 - 2004

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