



# BECOMING THE PEOPLE OF GOD

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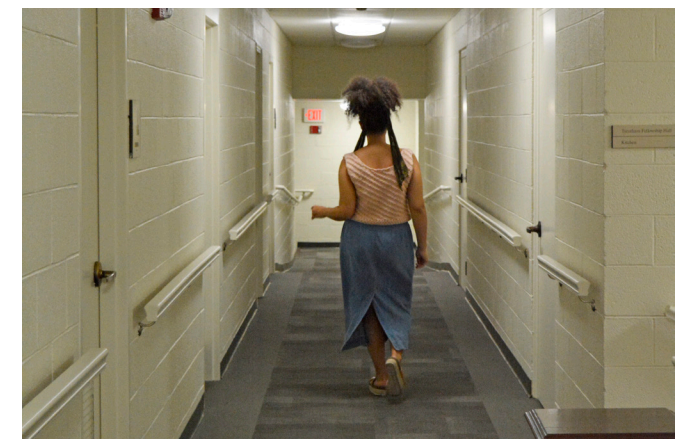


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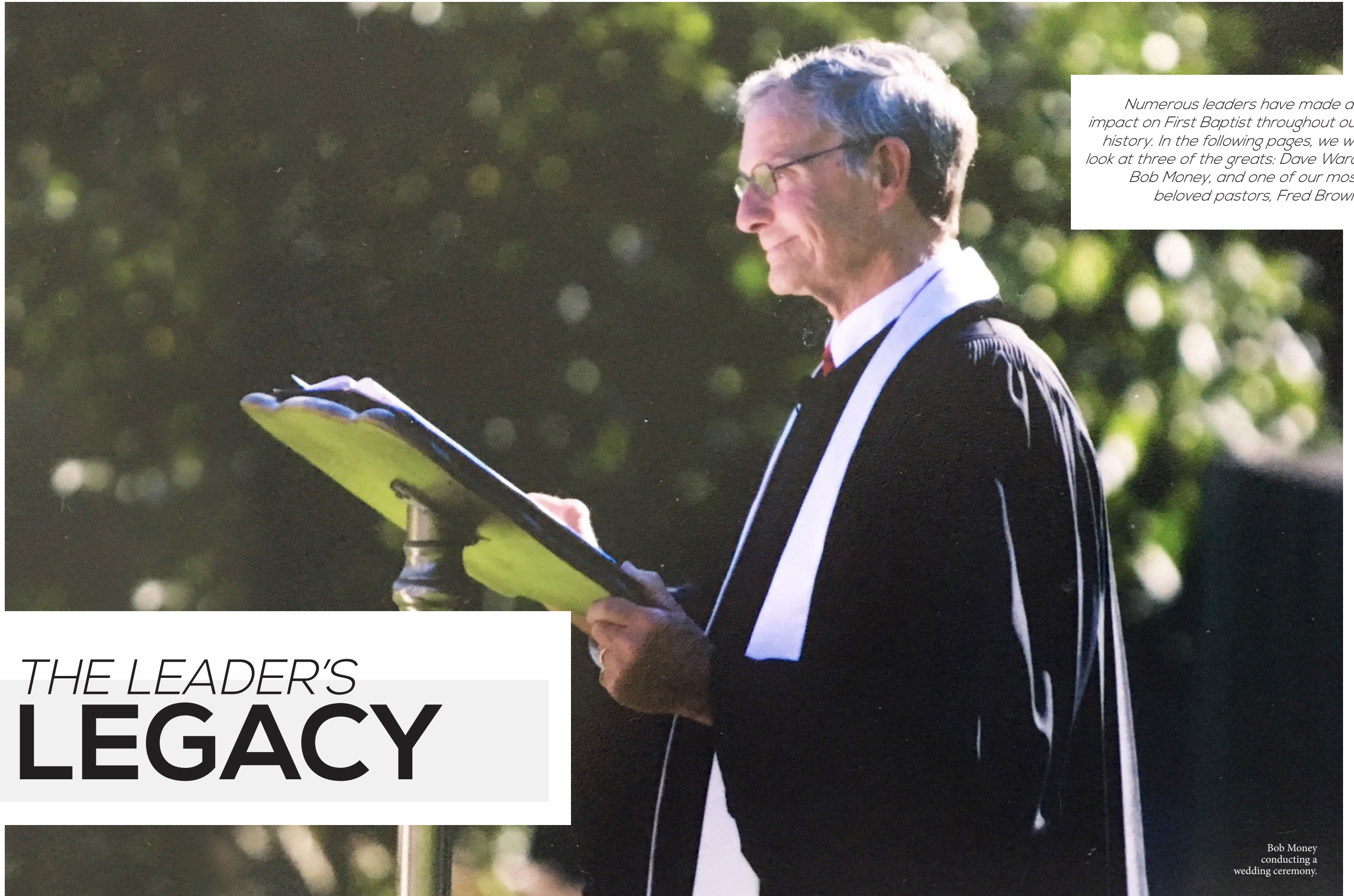
# NEWLY RENOVATED trentham hall



*Thanks to your generous donations, Trentham Hall has been thoroughly cleaned and has all new paint and carpeting, as well as a new projector!*

*You will also notice some changes on the rest of the ground floor in the Education Building. We've completed updates in the bathrooms and shower areas, as well as installed new carpet in the halls!*





*Numerous leaders have made an impact on First Baptist throughout our history. In the following pages, we will look at three of the greats: Dave Ward, Bob Money, and one of our most beloved pastors, Fred Brown.*

## THE LEADER'S **LEGACY**

Bob Money  
conducting a  
wedding ceremony.



# AS LIFE CHANGES

Dave Ward's own words on his journey through ministry

INTERVIEW BY PATRICK WALSH



**D**ave Ward, First Baptist's Minister Emeritus, is iconic, having served as Minister of Seniors for 54 years. He and his lovely wife, Jo, have contributed immeasurably to the life and fellowship of our church. His life story is fascinating. The following interview provides glimpses into his early life and his journey to ministry.

**P: Dave, when and where were you born?**

**D:** I was born in Chowan County, North Carolina, the eastern part of North Carolina on the Virginia border. There were no hospitals in the area, so the doctor came to the house and delivered me. I had a sister who died and was buried on the Saturday before my birth. I was born on the following Monday, August 27, 1929.

My dad was born and reared on a farm, and I was born and reared on a farm. I went to a country school. My mother and father had six children in six years, but only four lived through infancy. I had an older brother who passed away four years ago and was six years older than my kid brother

who passed away last year. My surviving brother, aged 90, is two years older than me and now lives in Virginia Beach. I will be 89 in August of this year.

**P: Do you ever return to your birthplace?**

**D:** Whenever I am in Eastern North Carolina, I always take an hour or two to stop by and see families we knew. My mother's sister is 95 years old and is the last of my mother's family.

**P: Tell me about your family's farm.**

**D:** We had 300 acres under cultivation. We raised corn, cotton, soybeans, watermelons, and cucumbers. The family worked from first light to darkness. Very early on, all of us had chores to do. My earliest chore was taking care of the dog, a bulldog named Nick, and he also helped with the chores by getting in the hogs and cattle in the evenings. My older brother milked the cattle. You see, everyone on the farm had a job to do even if it was running a glass of water to someone; we all did everything that was needed to keep

the farm going. We sold milk, butter, and cheese. We eventually sold the cattle.

**P: Your family must have been very busy running a 300-acre farm. Did you have help?**

**D:** My dad hired four black families, including their sons and daughters, who worked on the farm. Their presence was not an ownership thing at all. These families had a certain amount of acreage, and they could plant whatever they wanted. They owned their own hogs and cattle, so it was a family type of arrangement. The workers' children were our friends, and there was nothing about race in our relationship. I grew up not knowing anything about racial tensions. The worker kids were my playmates until we all got old enough to start doing chores. If I had

a pop and they didn't, I would give them a drink out of my bottle. We knew no difference between black and white. If a black child was ill, my mother would crank up the car, the only one on the farm, and take the child to the doctor. She would stop what she was doing, no matter if a child had a headache or something more serious and take that child to the doctor. She would take anyone to town to see the doctor, to go grocery shopping, or to go to school. We were all one big family. We shared everything. If the workers did not have corn or it was going to come in late, we would offer them a mess of corn and a piece of ham to go with it. This was just as normal for us as I am sitting here talking to you. If a family didn't plant strawberries and they wanted some, we would tell them to stop by our field and help themselves to all the strawberries they wanted. We were happy and got along well, and there was nothing we wouldn't do for each other. If we had an ice cream supper, everyone was invited. One person would bring the salt, another the flavoring, we would furnish the eggs, and everyone on the farm would eat the ice cream. There was a strong spirit of camaraderie on the farm, and we knew that each of us made all of us who we were.

On Saturdays, we would work from sunrise till noon time and then all go to town and shop. However, if there was a crop such as peanuts that needed to be gotten in and just a couple days' time could mean the difference between a good or bad harvest, we would all work to get it in, no matter if it was our time off. Of course, things are different now; but these are all things I remember as a child.

On Sunday we would all dress up and go to our respective churches in the neighborhood. We would sometimes

go to the black church and watch them shout. The black church would have usher marches. We were always welcomed at the black churches since we knew most everyone there on a first-name basis. My father respected all the churches; and when they had a revival, he would tell our help that they were to take time off and attend the revival.

**P: How close was the nearest town?**

**D:** It was Edenton, the county seat, which was about five miles away. That town was about 60 miles away from Kill Devil Hills and Nags Head, and we would deliver produce to the dock to be shipped by boat to Washington, D.C. and Baltimore. I remember very clearly loading the truck and then unloading it onto the ships.

**P: Was your farm mechanized?**

**D:** I was reared during the age of mechanization. I recall when the mules and horses were exchanged for a tractor. When I was a boy, we used mules and horses right up to about World War II. I remember when my dad got our first tractor. Of course, everyone wanted to see it. The tractor saved money. Instead of manning a plow and following it up and down the fields, the tractor did that.

**P: What kind of church did your family attend?**

**D:** It was a little church built in a cow pasture. It was open Sunday mornings and afternoons, and on Sunday nights we would have singing. If that church is still there, it would be a museum. All the local churches could not afford a preacher, so a local person would take the place of a preacher and perform the duties of a minister. That person would be a layman who could preach and say a prayer. Such a person was respected and was a part of the community and worked as a local businessman or some other profession. He would walk around



the town and call on people to attend the church he was to preach in.

**P: Was there prayer in your home?**

**D:** Regrettably, there was not a pattern of prayer. When there was a problem such as illness, that was when everybody felt the need to pray and call upon the Lord. It was a matter of respect as much as it was a formal prayer.

**P: Describe your Christian awakening?**

**D:** My parents did not discourage our partaking in religion, nor did they encourage it. They were not what you would call religious people, but they took part in church activities. If someone died, we would help shroud them and help the caretaker at the cemetery.

My oldest brother was dating a girl who lived in town and who was somewhat religious and went to Sunday school and church regularly. I was fascinated to hear about what her church was like and the things that went on there. I told my parents that I would like to start going to that church because that is where my school friends were going. My parents encouraged me to go. We had a good Sunday school teacher, who would kid around with us. I soon was in a day-to-day relationship with that church and its social activities. If I missed, someone would ask where I was. I was part of a greater family. At the age of 11 or 12, I started to think that baptism was something I wanted. I saw my friends being baptized.

**P: When did you first consider Christian service?**

**D:** It occurred to me after I left the US Air Force. Two months after the military, Jo and I got married. I found that I enjoyed being around church people. Some people are not comfortable around church people, but that has never been the case with Jo and me. We had both completed college and decided that Christian work was how we wanted to make a living. We decided which seminary I should attend. I went to Southern Baptist Seminary in Louisville, while Jo continued to work and is still working to this day as a psychiatric social worker. I wanted to do something in the ministry that would count for something, but I did not want to be a regular pastor. I wanted to be a helpmate along the way of my service. I enjoy being around mature

people, so ministering to mature church members is a good fit for me. As we age our needs change, and I find fulfillment in helping meet the spiritual needs of our elderly members.

**P: What brought you to Knoxville?**

**D:** After seminary, my first placement was as an associate minister at First Baptist Church in Nacogdoches, Texas, where I served for two and a half years. We started our family there. Then we moved to serve at First Baptist Church in Corsicana, Texas, 40 miles southeast of Dallas. They needed someone to do what I did in Nacogdoches and to help the church grow. I later transferred to River Oaks Baptist Church in Houston, Texas, where I did the same work as an associate minister. It sounds like a lot of movement; but someone like me who was married, stable, and who had military experience was in demand to try to help churches grow.

A seminary professor with whom I was close asked if I had ever been to Knoxville and knew of First Baptist. He gave my name to Dr. Charles Trentham, who was also a graduate of Southern Seminary. We talked on the phone, leading to a visit here and a meeting with Dr. Trentham, and here I am. I knew who Dr. Trentham was before I came here since he was quite a spark plug in the [Southern Baptist] Convention, and it was a great honor to serve with him. Some people ask if I ever wanted to pastor a church, and I reply that my calling is to be a helper, not a pastor.

**P: What was your position when you came to First Baptist?**

**D:** I came here as an associate minister, a position which was formed to help Dr. Trentham, who had been here for 11 years at that time. (There was a part-time music minister and the pastor's secretary, but no one on staff for the University students although many were attending.) I was taking some of the workload from Dr. Trentham, and my job was to visit the elderly and keep them involved in our church. I have been doing so ever since. I have moved through life with many of our former members, as well as those who are still attending church here.

**P: Do you recall when Bob Money came aboard?**

**D:** Yes, I do. He came here about ten years after I arrived, and we became friends. He was from a farm in Alabama, and I was from a farm in North Carolina, so we could talk the same language. We got along fine together, and he ministered to the families of the church and to the college students.

**P: Do you consider this area to be your home?**

**D:** Yes, there is a great sense of community and belonging here for us. We have been here now for 54 years. We find a great sense of peace here. Our oldest son lives here, and he will soon be 60 years old. Our other son is 58 and lives in California. Some people ask me if I will retire. I hope not because I want to continue to be of service wherever and however I can. When the time comes that I can no longer serve, then I will get out of the way so that someone else can serve in my place. You know, as life changes, we need to be able to change along with it, and that is a large part of my work here—helping elderly members through their changes in life.

**P: Dave, thank you very much for sharing information about your interesting early life and your work here at First Baptist.** 🌈



Dave on First Baptist's front steps with Wayne Waller and Harley Bishop.



# the life & ministry of Bob Money

INTERVIEWED BY PATRICK WALSH

**B**ob Money, one of First Baptist's icons, served as Minister of Counseling and Family Life for 30 years. He and his delightful wife, Sydnor, have selflessly contributed to our church and the wider community. Bob's life story is fascinating. The following interview provides glimpses into that story, including his journey to the ministry and to First Baptist.

**P: Tell me about your upbringing.**

**B:** I grew up on a farm. I had chores that a young boy would typically have, such as milking cows and plowing fields. I used to walk behind a mule-drawn plow while tilling a 400-acre farm. I walked alongside Ease, who was our main farmhand. We prepared the earth for our peanut crop as well as for corn, cotton, and soybeans. Being so far down South in Alabama, the summer was long enough that we could grow two crops.

**P: I can easily picture a small boy walking alongside a large farmhand behind a plow with a plume of dust blowing away to the side as the till dug up the earth. That is a strong image that's easy to paint. Tell me more about Ease.**

He was a sharecropper with my dad. When I was eight or nine years old, I began working alongside him. We would walk for hours in the hot sun, and our job was to periodically clear the disks of entangled weeds. We were friends; and while tilling, we would talk about everything. He taught me about farming. Ease was the teacher, and I was the student. We were very close.

You see, the rules about farming were very different than the rules for school or for going to church or for going to someone's house. The rules in the field were that you didn't even think about racial differences. Ease was black, but he was not black in my mind; he was just my good friend, my plowing partner. Off the field, though, when Ease came to our house to eat, he would eat on the back porch while I ate inside at the table. When we broke for lunch, Ease went to his house and ate bread and cheese while I went home to a cooked meal.

There were no such rules about farm work, which was just plain work with everyone helping everyone else get the crops planted and harvested and to market. When we got a tractor, Ease and I still walked along behind it doing the same things we did when it was mule drawn. My brother drove the tractor, and Ease and I were his helpers. Some of the rows were very long, so Ease and I would sometimes sit under a shade tree while my brother ran the tractor.

**P: What became of Ease?**

**B:** Ease died after I had left the farm. He had a funeral in his home church. Of interest to me is that Ease and my daddy served in WWI in the same part of France.

**P: What was it like off the farm with your friends?**

**B:** With our black friends, we played together and played mixed team sports together... until the school bus came. I remember as a little boy thinking, "Why do they go there and we go here?" Off the farm,

there were rules for church, for school, for town, and for segregated facilities in town. That was just the way it was. In college, I never thought about racial issues. There were no blacks there. My guilt about this discrimination didn't become prominent in my thinking until I got into the ministry. I always thought discrimination was wrong, but I never saw anything being done about it. My Southern Baptist church said nothing, and this is my pain with the church. The government functioned as the leader in this area, but it should have been the church. Eventually, many years later, the Southern Baptist Convention apologized for supporting segregation.

**P: Did you ever bring Ease food from your table?**

**B:** Oh yes, all the time. I brought him whatever I wanted to bring him. Outside the house, the unwritten rules were not applicable, and he and I could do those sorts of things. Ease lived on our farm with his family, and one of his children was my best friend. I have a vivid memory of walking to his place. His daughter Queen was our cook.

**P: Did your father do anything besides farming?**

**B:** My dad was an entrepreneur. He owned a little country store and a fishing bait operation. I never remember being without food or clothes. In fact, we were the first among my peers to have a television. We also had an early refrigerator, which replaced the need for the ice truck to come by to provide ice for the icebox.



Top: Bob as a school-aged boy.

Bottom: Bob & Sydnor lighting the Advent Candle at First Baptist Knoxville where Bob had his longest term of service of 30 years.



**P: What was college like for you?**

**B:** It was idyllic. I liked to learn, I had the best friends I ever had, and there was no struggle there for me. After graduation, I went on to seminary. While there, Martin Luther King Jr. was invited to speak in chapel and to teach my ethics class. He was a powerful speaker and teacher. Dr. King would remain after class for an open question-and-answer period when we could ask him anything we wanted. Southern Seminary, one of five Baptist seminaries, was progressive. It was open to racial issues and to women in the seminary. There was a range of students from just out of college to those who had left the mission field to further their education. Blacks also attended the seminary. Although Howard College had taught me about the scriptures, seminary opened me up to the scriptures from a totally different perspective.

Word of Dr. King's seminary visit got back to Alabama; and it was made known to us students that if we had gone to hear him, we would never get a church in Alabama, which was still racially segregated. I then realized I had left the farm, my culture, my family culture. I no longer belonged there in terms of my theology and my perception of the way life ought to be in America. In a sense, I graduated from seminary and graduated from my family. I had become a person who could never go home again in terms of my beliefs.

**P: Describe your early church life.**

**B:** We were not a church family. Our church only had a monthly service. I don't ever recall seeing my dad go to church, even when I preached. My mother's father was a "hymn heister," who would sound a note in the proper key and who would assist the congregation by swinging his arm in time to the music. We met once a month in the afternoon; a full-time pastor from a local church would cycle among small-town churches that had no permanent pastor. We had no Sunday school, so there was only the monthly service. My brothers and sisters did not go often; yet for some reason, I was more open to going. Every summer we had a revival. That was something to go and see. It was called a protracted revival, meaning if it was originally scheduled for a week, as long as people were walking the aisle, it would be extended. There was singing, praying, preaching, and invitations. When a revival ended, chicken wire was strung taut between two trees at waist height to serve as a table on which was placed every kind of good food you could imagine. The children ate what was left after the adults finished eating.

Every summer, my mother would ask the revival preacher to come eat with us at home. We had





Left page: Bob and his siblings

Right page: The three churches where Bob served on staff besides First Baptist Knoxville: FBCs Darlington, SC, Florence, SC, and Mobile, AL.

a big table. Every time the preacher came, he had a group of people who came with him. Of course, my mother’s best friends would be invited. As usual, the adults ate first while the children played in the yard. Again, when the adults finished, we would eat what was left.

**P: Did you have a Christian awakening, or a “spark,” that made you aware of your desire to work in Christian service?**

**B:** I did have a spark. It was an instantaneous event rather than a slow realization that I wanted to enter Christian service. The awareness came to me when I was 15. I went with my mother to a revival, and I was sitting there with no intention of doing anything but watching. When the invitation was given, however, I knew right then that I had to walk the aisle. No thought or reasoning was involved; I just knew in the moment. You see, in churches that had Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, and weekly services, there was available the slow progressive and ongoing immersion in the teachings of the Bible and Christian service. My church experience did not have those opportunities, so I believe my “spark” came during the revival when I had that experience and I knew it was real. I also felt called to preach when I walked down the revival aisle. My conversion and the call to preach came at the same time. Conversion to me was to be like that man preaching up there. When I went home and told my family about my conversion, my mother was proud that her son was going to be a minister, but my father had little reaction. Neither of them had any idea of what to do about guiding me into the ministry. My dad

never brought the subject up again. So, I had to guide myself somehow. I remember lying on the bed one night crying, saying I knew what I wanted to do but no one was telling me how to do it. I was so isolated. At school, they started calling me “Rev.” My peers didn’t know what to do with me either. But since I played sports, I remained connected to them; so, the isolation wasn’t total. You cannot be isolated if you play sports. If I had quit sports in high school, that would have been a tremendous mistake and would have set me up to be perceived as “holier than thou,” something I never wanted. Even while growing up, I never wanted to be better than anyone. Fortunately, my friends didn’t change, and I still walked home with them. Sports normalized me with my peers.

When I was 15, I played sports and was good at it. Everyone expected me to continue and advance through several levels. When I was asked if I was going to continue playing in college, I said that I wasn’t and that I would become a minister. No one in my family had ever been to college. Church and higher education weren’t on the radar screen for me. With the realization I had about the ministry, I knew I had to get educated, but I didn’t know how to go about it.

I originally wanted to be a coach. That meant I probably would have gone to Troy or Alabama in order to become a teacher and a coach. There was a guy who came to all of our ball games and who was a great basketball player at the University of Georgia. He came to a game I was playing in and told my older brother, “That boy

has the most talent in the Money family, and I’ll be damned if he isn’t going to be a preacher.”

**P: Were there other “sparks” related to your conversion?**

**B:** There was another moment of conversion. When I was in high school, we were dismissed from class in order to walk to a nearby Baptist church in the city of Abbeville to attend a revival. At the end of the revival, we were told to bow our heads and close our eyes. The “call” was that if the Lord and the Spirit were working with you and you wanted to make a decision, you were instructed to raise your hand. I raised my hand without a thought. This was before my conversion the following summer when I knew I wanted to be a minister. You might say that this was a nudge in the right direction. Looking back on it now, I realize that nudge was one of the dots I can connect with my subsequent conversion.

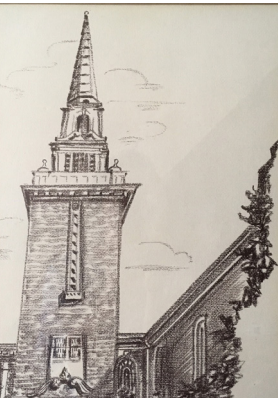
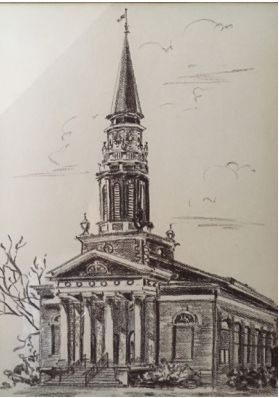
**P: I doubt that such a school excursion to a nearby church would happen today. What do you think was the goal of that trip?**

**B:** It was the same thing as a Billy Graham crusade but without the invitation. I left there knowing the experience was real, but it didn’t get activated.

**P: What happened next?**

**B:** Two weeks after my conversion in the Free Will Baptist Church, I got baptized in my daddy’s pond on the farm. They always wanted baptism to closely follow conversion so that baptism would be an extension of the conversion. Something mystical and mysterious had happened, and baptism is a very visual thing. There were others to be baptized, and they almost called it off since we had to walk far out in order to get deep enough and the bottom was thick mud, but we made it. The mud didn’t bother me since I always swam in the pond, but some of the others didn’t like the muddy bottom.

After this baptism, I got baptized again about a year later. My small home church had little in the way of resources, and I knew I needed more than it could offer. About three miles down the road was a community named Shorterville, which had a church that had weekly services; so, I began going there since I was driving by that time. I left the Free Will Baptist



instrument. My grandfather would say, “God is the music, and you are the instrument. All you have to do is play it.”

I immediately went home where the only literature I had was my mother’s bible. It didn’t even have a concordance. It was difficult that week to write a sermon and be ready to preach. That was my wilderness. I decided that people liked to hear stories, and I used the lost son as the basis for the sermon. My daddy had bought me a baseball glove when, as a high school freshman, I made varsity on the baseball team. One day, I left it on the stands when I caught the school bus. When I went back the next morning, it was gone; and I never saw it again. My Dad said, “Son, you get only one glove, and that’s it.” I used that story in the sermon. I lost a glove, and it was painful. Our God lost a son, and that loss was also painful. I preached for nine minutes. After the service was over, everyone shook my hand. The last man through said, “Son, you did a good

Church and joined the Shorterville Baptist Church. There was a major difference in my experience in the two churches. I was being mainstreamed. The minister there told me that since I was going to be a Southern Baptist minister, it would be good for me to be baptized in a Southern Baptist church. This was a theological issue, so I was baptized again. It didn’t have the same meaning as the pond. My two younger brothers were baptized at the same time. Shorterville church was where I was licensed and later ordained to be a minister after seminary.

When I was 16, we were having problems finding a pastor to preach at our church. One of the members came up to me and said that the church wanted me to preach the next Sunday. I couldn’t say no; so, I agreed.

**P: How could they ask you to preach if you had not been to college or seminary?**

**B:** I had received my calling to ministry at the revival, and that was enough for them. I entered what I called my personal “wilderness,” not one of temptation such as when Jesus was tempted. My wilderness was being asked to preach because I was going to be a preacher not because I was a preacher. Little country churches made such a request all the time. My grandfather, the hymn heister, would tell me that I didn’t have to go to college because if God called me he would tell me what to say, so I just had to be the

job; I look forward to hearing you tonight.”

When Jesus went into the wilderness, he was tempted and he struggled with what kind of messiah he was going to be. A wilderness is not so much temptation; rather, it is an area of life where you struggle with something challenging and unknown, where you have to grow to make it through. You are pushed beyond where you are. If you have no wilderness in your ministry, you do not grow. I had to write the Sunday night sermon in eight hours. Even now, I get a knot in my stomach just talking about it because I was the most alone I had ever been. During those hours, I didn’t struggle for creativity; I struggled to survive as a preacher. I thought, “If I don’t have anything to say, what kind of preacher will I be?” My grandfather, the hymn heister, had always told me that God would tell me what to say. I spent those eight hours thinking, but God wasn’t telling me what to say. So, I preached the same sermon and changed the sports story. I had some good stories from sports. I don’t remember that Sunday evening because I have blanked it out. I just remember feeling that when the man told me to preach the evening service it was as if I had been told I was going to be executed!

**P: Did anything happen to you between your conversion and your baptism?**

**B:** The revival preacher’s son and I became good friends. He introduced me to his friends. Other than that, nothing happened. I went back to my once-a-month church.

**P: How did you arrange for your seminary training?**

**B:** I didn’t know what a seminary was at that time. I didn’t even know that there were Baptist colleges to attend before seminary. The thinking then was that you could get into trouble at a big school, so you went to a little school and then on to seminary. My English teacher, Ms. Gregory, took an interest in my further education. She ordered a college catalog from Howard College (now Samford University), and she helped me apply. At Howard College, I majored in religion. All my professors had been to Southern Seminary, which was the best seminary out there. Howard College was a Baptist school supported by the Baptist Convention; the tuition rates were lowered through scholarships for students who were going to attend seminary. I blossomed at Howard in terms of getting the background and nurturing I needed to be a minister. It was a wonderful school. Since my professors were always talking about Southern Seminary, I decided to train there. All that I did not have I found at Howard College. I began to stabilize at Howard as a young man going into the ministry. By the time I finished college, I had been at youth revivals, I had preached, and I had become familiar with these and other related activities.

**P: After seminary, what was your first church assignment?**

**B:** I became a pastor of a small church while in seminary. I had been licensed in Shorterville but not ordained. I could still pastor a church before my ordination. A little church, Rockbridge Baptist Church, requested my ordination and Shorterville Baptist Church ordained me. I would preach at Rockbridge on Sundays, and they would feed me; then I would drive 60 miles back to seminary. I did this for two years, my second and third years in seminary.

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*Continued on page 33.*



# DR. FRED BROWN

the inspiring story of one of our most beloved pastors and leaders

BY LINDA WALSH

## *Great Heart of the Mountains*

To hear Dr. Brown quote, ‘I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help’ was to hear the rich resonance of a man whose soul was in tune with the God of the mountains. *(from the printed program distributed at the Fred Brown Chapel dedication service)*

First Baptist’s longest-serving senior pastor (1921-1946), Dr. Frederick Fernando Brown was among our church’s most beloved ministers. During the celebration of First Baptist’s 100th anniversary in 1943, Dr. Brown embraced the past, acknowledging the great men and women on whose shoulders our church was built. In our 175th year, we can turn to Dr. Brown’s legacy for inspiration and hope as we acknowledge this man who contributed so much to our church, community, and denomination.

### **Early Years**

In 1882, Frederick Fernando Brown was born in a cabin nestled in the heart of North Carolina’s Blue Ridge Mountains. After attending a one-room school in a secluded mountain cove, Dr. Brown studied at a private school in Asheville and then later at Mars Hill College, Wake Forest University (where he was on the football and debate teams), and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. During the five years after receiving his BA degree in 1908, he earned his MA, Master of Theology, and Doctor of Theology. Among the honorary degrees he was later granted was the Doctor of Divinity from Southern Seminary.

Dr. Brown began his ministerial career in 1910 in Kentucky. In 1916, he became the pastor of First Baptist Church, Sherman,

TX. When President Woodrow Wilson requested that Dr. Brown serve as chaplain with the Allied Army of Occupation in 1918, the church in Sherman granted him a leave. Later, Dr. Brown wrote of his service in France. Delighted when asked to preach in a small village, he said that he had preached “on the ship deck, in hotel lobbies, in barns, in barrack rooms, sometimes out in the open; but [he] had not been in a church since leaving America.” Of his experience in the small stone church, he wrote,

I was unable to read [the scripture] until I had brushed away the mist that dimmed my eyes and had gained control of my emotions. Tears were flowing down the cheeks of those strong men. In our minds, we were all home again!

After returning from WWI, he remained at First Baptist, Sherman until 1921.

### **Years at First Baptist, Knoxville**

Dr. Brown preached at First Baptist on Gay Street for the first time on May 1, 1921, delivering a sermon titled “Loyalty to Vision.” He later revealed that his knees shook when he stood before his new congregation. Yet, he served his church and denomination with distinction over the next 25 years.

### **Church Growth**

A little over three years after Dr. Brown came to First Baptist, the \$600,000 church on Main Street opened its doors with approximately 1200 members. On the Sunday that his 11th anniversary was observed, 26 members were baptized and 24 new members were received. A newspaper article acknowledging that anniversary was titled “Fred F. Brown Modeled as ‘Ideal.’” During Dr. Brown’s 25 years at First Baptist, 5,590 new members were added to the church roll, averaging more than 232 new members per year;

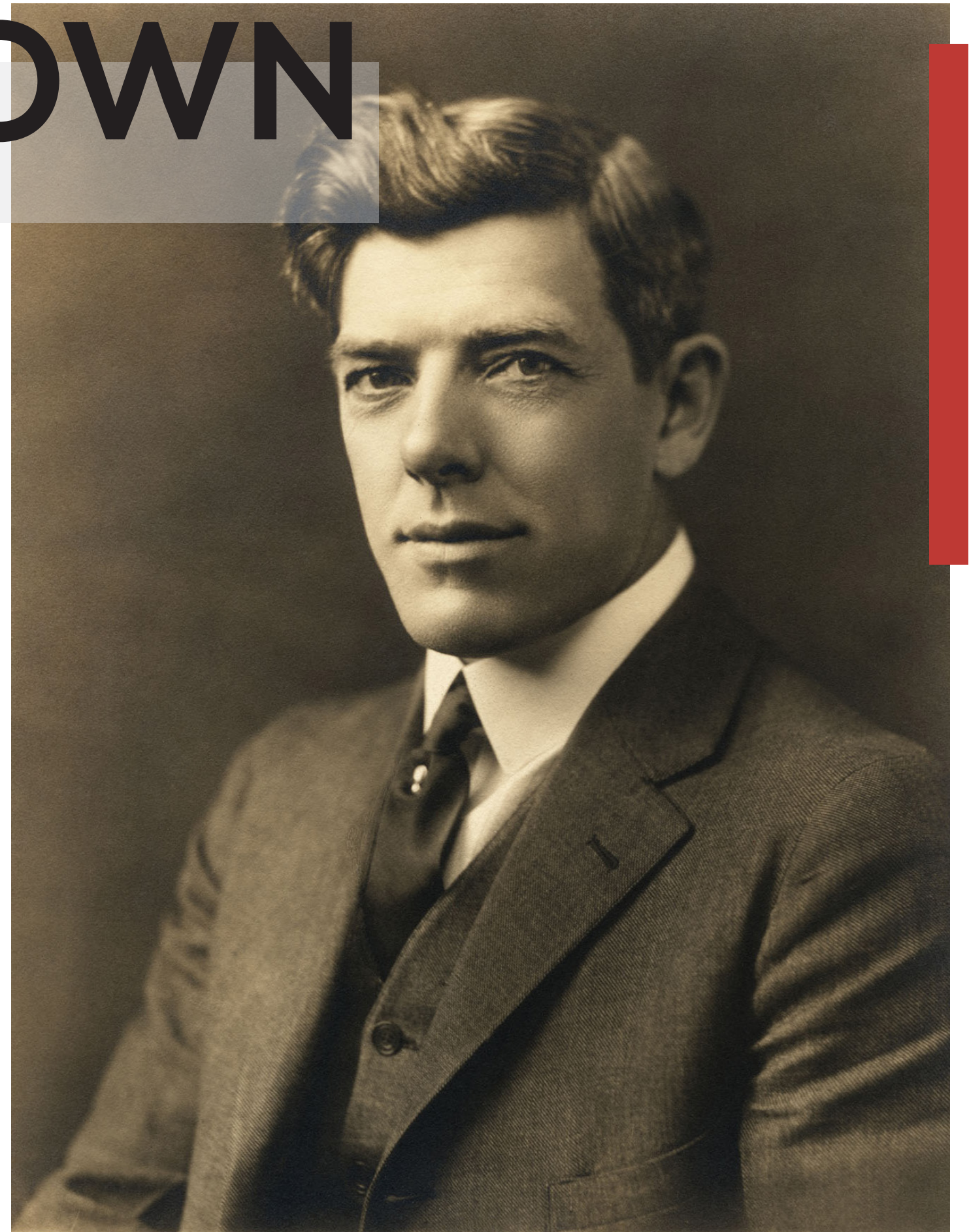
and the church gave \$1,707,457 to Baptist missions and institutions. When he retired, the membership was approximately 3,000.

### **Finances**

His pastorate in Knoxville included the 1922 economic recession, the “boom and bust” of the late 1920s, the Great Depression of the 1930s, and WWII. During those financially stressful years under Dr. Brown’s leadership, First Baptist never missed a payment to the bank or to denominational entities. Typical of his selfless service, Dr. Brown cut his own salary twice, once to avoid reducing a custodian’s salary.

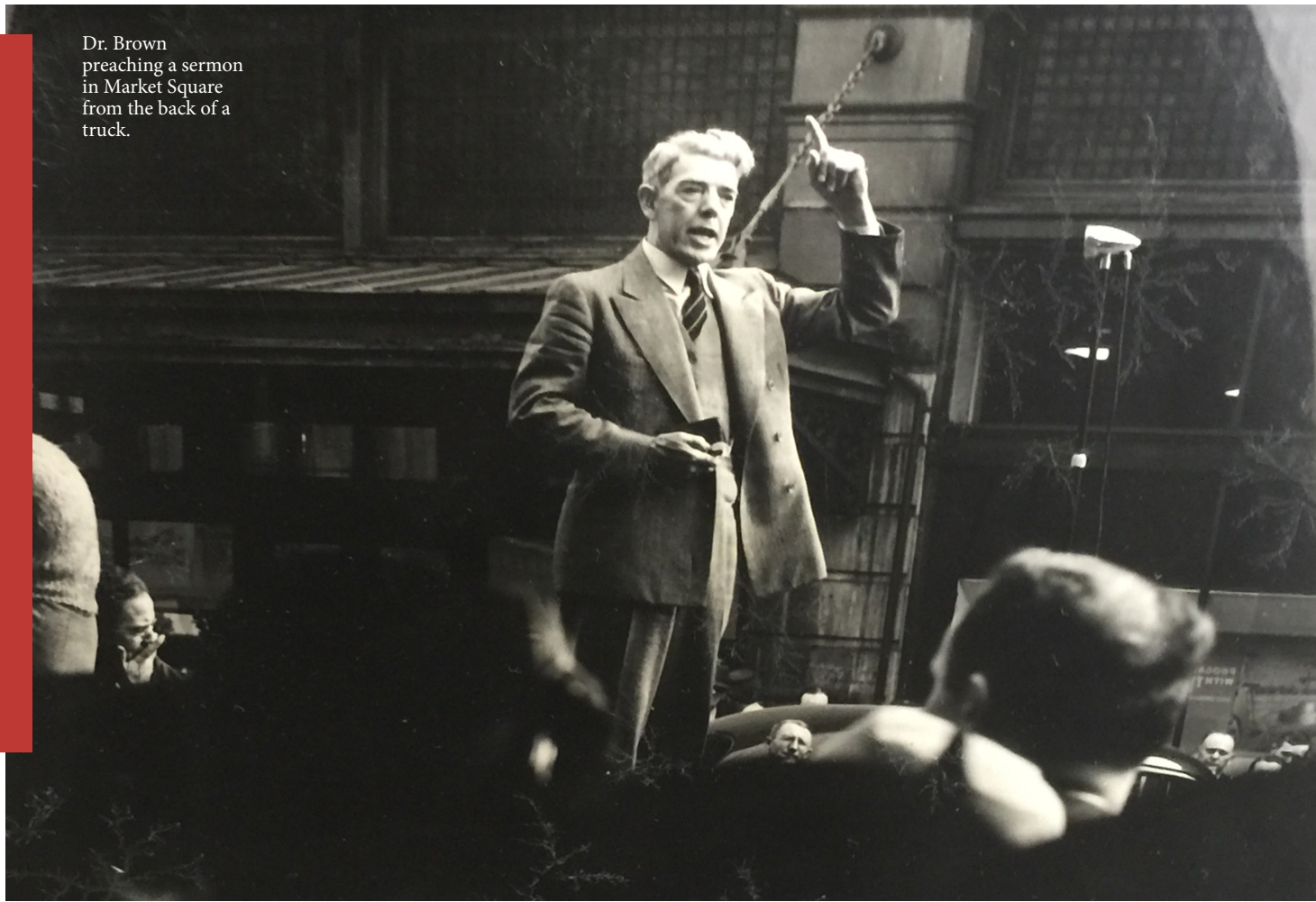
On discussing church finances, Dr. Brown once commented, “I don’t raise money. I just talk about how good God has been to us, and people give money.” However, Fred Kaserman, Dr. Brown’s grandson and a current church member, reveals that he used additional tactics. For example, during a fundraising meeting, Dr. Brown rigged a wealthy church member’s seat with a buzzer. Asking who would give the first \$10,000, Dr. Brown pushed a button sending a small shock through the man’s seat. When the gentleman jumped up, Dr. Brown thanked him and asked who would make the next donation.

Seeing the University of Tennessee as a mission field, Dr. Brown wanted to build the first Baptist Student Union on campus. Speaking to the Tennessee Baptist Convention’s Executive Committee he said, “If you do not build it, then our church will; and we will take the money from our mission funds and designate them to this student ministry.” Driving a hard bargain, he knew that the state organization depended on the church’s funds to pay its staff because First Baptist was the Tennessee leader in donations at the time. He likewise advocated building East Tennessee Baptist Hospital.





Dr. Brown preaching a sermon in Market Square from the back of a truck.



### Denominational Service

Suffering from the Great Depression's devastating effects, the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) was six million dollars in debt by 1931, posing a funding threat for missionaries and Baptist-sponsored institutions. That year, Dr. Brown traveled throughout the Convention's region from Maryland to Arizona as executive secretary of SBC's Promotion Committee. Preaching in "associational meetings, state conventions, local churches, and other venues, attempting to enlist one million tithers..." he became "the most-traveled man in the SBC, as the fiscal viability of the SBC and the lives of missionaries were held in the balance." Supporting Dr. Brown in this endeavor, First Baptist gave him a year's paid leave and a Hupmobile to drive. After returning to his pastorate, he continued promoting the effort to financially revive the SBC, working to the point of exhaustion and often speaking in a hoarse whisper.

Elected SBC's president for 1933, Dr. Brown was the youngest to hold that position. When asked about his feelings regarding his election, he answered in one word, humble, giving his wife and church the credit. Although he was unable to preach the convention sermon because of poor health, "the fruit of his efforts resonated ... throughout the Baptist world."

Dr. Brown worked in many other denominational capacities including being a member of the board that organized what became the Southern Baptist Cooperative Program and serving as

trustee of Carson Newman, Southern Seminary, East Tennessee Baptist Hospital, and Tennessee Baptist Orphanage. By the time of his death in 1960, he "had dedicated a half century to his Lord and his denomination." Quotations in this section on denominational service are from The Sacred Trust: Sketches of the Southern Baptist Convention Presidents by Emir Fethi Caner and Ergun Mehmet Caner.

Ironically, Dr. Brown's conversion came during a "protracted" service, which was deemed a failure because only two people were converted. Yet his conversion and call to the ministry led to his success at the church level and denomination wide.

### Knowing the Man

#### View of Ministry and Life Philosophy

When asked why he became a minister, Dr. Brown replied, "I couldn't help myself." Although he had originally planned to be an attorney, he realized during college that he was destined to enter the ministry and that he "would never be happy doing anything else."

In discussing his view of the ministry, he once said,

The preacher is the most privileged man in society. Every home is open to him, .... He has an opportunity to develop some of the most intimate friendships in the world. He can be of service to people in their times of greatest need.

At the time of his 19th anniversary at First Baptist, Dr. Brown described his ministry with humility and insight:

My ministry is just that of the average pastor who touches people passing through all kinds of experiences. ... who stands in the pulpit, goes in and out of hospitals and homes where people are sick, marries daughters, stands by graves, and listens to people's troubles. A pastor's life is largely made up of experiences ... where people are passing [through] great crises; and those experiences are new to every person they come to, and the preacher who cares never lets familiarity with the particular problem take away any of its reality.

Through his ministry, Dr. Brown lived out his life philosophy: "With moral courage, unfaltering faith, and tireless work, to discover life's meaning and to find self-realization in unselfish, sacrificial service in the name and spirit of my Saviour."

#### Mrs. Brown

Dr. Brown frequently acknowledged indebtedness to his wife, Nona Lee Dover Brown. Mrs. Brown was an exceptionally gifted Bible teacher, who was in demand within the church and beyond. (Fred Kaserman has said, "She was actually a better Bible scholar than Granddaddy.") She selected the scriptures adorning our sanctuary. As Fred Kaserman noted, the selection of those scriptures required careful consideration given the designated space.

#### Selflessness

In a message to the Men's Fellowship Club, Dr. Brown described a longing, which his ministry clearly fulfilled:

There is an unutterable longing in my heart to move—not away from Knoxville or First Baptist—but into the unbounded field of unselfishness. ... serving in the name of Christ, serving among those with whom I live. ... It is mystic and idealistic, yes; but it is possibly more real than anything we touch or handle in this world.

Rev. O. E. Turner, who served as associate pastor at First Baptist, said that Dr. Brown was "the most selfless, generous person" he had ever known, citing, among other examples, that on numerous occasions

he gave his only overcoat at the time to a homeless person on the street. Other ministers recalled attending a funeral at which there were not enough chairs. Giving up his chair, Dr. Brown sat on the floor.

Dr. Brown also taught his children selflessness by example. After Dr. Brown's son expressed disappointment over not receiving a bicycle one Christmas, Dr. Brown announced they were going somewhere. Fred Jr. thought he was about to get his bicycle after all. Instead, they went to a riverfront shanty, where Dr. Brown conducted a baby's funeral. Afterward, Dr. Brown gently placed the baby in an orange crate and took him to be buried because the parents couldn't afford a burial. Fred Jr. never mentioned the bicycle again.

Upon learning about a young boy with a club foot who lived in the mountains, Dr. Brown arranged for him to go to Memphis to have his foot corrected and then went there to drive the boy home. When asked how he found time for his many good deeds, he replied, "What one wishes to do, he always does." In discussing Dr. Brown's attitude, Dr. Louie Newton, another revered Baptist minister, observed, "Love is like that. It finds a way and does not count the cost to self."

#### Far-Reaching Appeal and Impact

*My greatest wish for my people is that we may have an old-fashioned, spiritual church, which, in a membership like ours, with some people who are wealthy and some the poorest in the city, one may feel as much at home in our service as the other, while I thank God for all of them!*  
- Dr. F.F. Brown

A church member recalled that Dr. Brown "had the ability to make everyone feel he was the one person in all the world he was most interested in—and it came straight from the heart."

In an article entitled "The Dean of Baptist Ministers," George Dempster provided additional insight by telling a story about Fred Brown serving as a student pastor in a country church. An orthodox Jew, who had loaned Fred college money, would go listen to him preach and stare out the window "when the sermon conflicted with his own faith." Concluding the story, Dempster said, "While neither the older Jew nor the young Protestant student ever influenced, in the slightest, the belief of the other, they

remained fast friends. ... [Fred Brown had the] ability to make enduring friendships with persons of all ages and in all walks of life."

Another factor contributing to the appeal of Dr. Brown was his insight into people. Recounting his experience as a chaplain during WWI, Dr. Brown noted, "I ate and lived with soldiers under all kinds of conditions. In those experiences, I learned that you cannot judge a man by the airy remarks and surface behavior. You must look deeper to find the real man." Regarding that comment, Rev. Turner observed,

He was always looking deeper; and in the worst of people, he had eyes to see the hidden splendor of God. They not only loved him for it, but it made them want to stand a little taller when they were in his presence.

After an interview with the beloved pastor in 1932, Frank H. Leavell summarized the secret of Dr. Brown's power and popularity:

It is a silent force. ... From the strong character-fiber of the Southerner and the mountaineer, there has been produced by the polishing process of education and Christian experience a finished human product. .... refined and cultivated to the highest human polish. What are his characteristics? ... rugged sincerity, unflinching loyalty, superlative modesty ....

Underscoring that "superlative modesty," Fred Kaserman recalls that his grandfather regretted not insisting that his congregants refer to him as Pastor Brown rather than Dr. Brown.

Described as "a rugged individualist," Dr. Brown was innovative in preaching on Saturday nights from the back of a truck on Market Square, long before Saturday evening services became a nation-wide trend. During a county-wide revival, a newspaper article entitled "With Truck as His Pulpit, Dr. Brown Follows his Master's Example" included a caption referring to "hundreds of hearers, some leaning from poolroom windows, to heed the Gospel."

Fifteen years into his Knoxville ministry, Dr. Brown was called to pastor a church in North Carolina. First Baptist's deacons unanimously passed a resolution urging Dr. Brown to stay. An editorial entitled "Keep Doctor Brown" underscored Dr. Brown's impact on Knoxville: "There is



little doubt but that every man, woman, and child in Knoxville and vicinity would raise their hands in favor of the question to keep Dr. Fred.” Referring to the “widespread alarm expressed ... throughout [the] city, and among all classes of [the] citizenship,” the editorial ended, “We cannot afford to lose him.” (Dr. Brown was known throughout Knoxville for not only his work at First Baptist but also his affiliation with many organizations including the Red Cross and the Community Chest.) Described as “the earnest and popular divine” of what was then Knoxville’s largest congregation, Dr. Brown had requested time “to think and pray” about this call. Before he could finish announcing in a worship service his decision to stay, the choir and congregation broke into song: “Praise God from whom all blessings flow, ...” The following year (1937) he was named Knoxville’s Outstanding Minister based on a poll of Knoxville ministers.

Of all that has been said and written about Dr. Brown’s appeal, perhaps Rev. Turner summarized it best:

For two and half years, in the old church on Gay Street, for six and a half months in the Bijou Theatre, and for more than twenty years in the sanctuary [on Main Street], he preached to capacity crowds .... People came to hear him, not only because he fed their minds on the Word of God but because they felt the warmth of his spirit when he was preaching and because his chief appeal was always to their hearts. ... Whether he was preaching before the Southern Baptist Convention or from the back end of a truck on Market Square, visiting in the most palatial home on Kingston Pike or in the poorest home on the riverfront, pitching horseshoes at a men’s picnic or conducting a funeral, he was always the same Fred Brown.

Dr. Brown’s influence also reached beyond Knoxville and the SBC. For example, during the Great Depression, Georgia’s Secretary of Agriculture invited Dr. Brown to speak to thousands of farmers at a statewide convention to “lift their spirits with a warm-hearted sermon about God.” In a three-week speaking tour for the Northern Baptist Convention, he “thoroughly captivated his Northern audiences with his pathos, humor, and inspiration.” In 1940, Dr. Brown delivered the invocation before President Roosevelt’s address dedicating the Smoky Mountains National Park at Newfound Gap. His prayer acknowledged the setting:

Here, where all of our surroundings speak of Thee—Thy infinite power; Thy infinite wisdom; Thy everlasting love; Thy steadfast, enduring purposes—here it is easy to lift our thought to Thee ... we pray that something of the massive strength, the varied beauty, and the serene nobility of these majestic mountains may slip into our feverish, restless spirits, bringing poise, peace, and outlook.

**Humor**

Dr. Brown was known for his sense of humor and for being the source of humor as revealed in various accounts.

Shortly after Dr. Brown arrived in Knoxville from his church in Texas, the deacons hosted a dinner for him at a local hotel. During dinner, some strangers entered and began shooting, driving the Baptists under tables. Later discussing the incident, he quipped, “...it made me feel right at home. I come from Texas!”

He good-naturedly served as head waiter at a WMU dinner. At

the end of the evening, the ladies presented him a \$1500 “tip” to cover expenses of his upcoming trip to Stockholm for the Baptist World Alliance. While in Stockholm, Dr. Brown wrote to a church member, “The only familiar language I’ve heard since I landed was a Ford automobile horn and a baby crying—both of those noises were in plain English.”

Fred Kaserman recalls that his grandfather was not a very good driver. He would drive with his left hand on the wheel and his right hand flung over the back of the seat while turning his head to talk with his passengers. When riding with him, Fred always kept the door unlocked, clasping the handle in case he needed to exit quickly. On one occasion, Dr. Brown and a friend were traveling to the same city but declined traveling together because they didn’t trust each other’s driving. Upon arriving in their separate cars, they crashed ... into each other!

In discussing fishing, Dr. Brown said, “I have learned how to fish, but not how to catch fish!” He assured an interviewer that “his fishing exploits [hadn’t] influenced his capacity for truth and veracity at all.”

One night, the Browns heard a burglar downstairs. After Mrs. Brown arose from bed to investigate, she returned, saying she had locked the burglar in the basement. Responding that it was cold down there and that the intruder would freeze, Dr. Brown told her to go let him out.

Dr. Brown’s humor in dealing with people is illustrated in an incident described by Knoxville’s long-time journalist Bert Vincent. Two men had run for City Council in a hard-fought battle, resulting in the two not speaking to one another. Dr. Brown was determined to resolve their hostility. The two men attended a Red Cross luncheon, where Dr. Brown had arranged to sit between them. After eating, he stood; pointed to a large red cross on the wall in front of them; and said, “Right now is a good time to forget it, boys. Right here at the foot of the cross. Suppose you shake hands.” The men clasped in friendship and from then on greeted each other cheerily by their first names.

**Tireless Dedication**

Dr. Brown was tirelessly dedicated to his congregation. In 1927 alone, Dr. Brown’s efforts included 931 visitations (with the sick, the elderly, and both new and prospective members); 89 addresses; 56 funerals; 54 conferences; 48 weddings; and more than 1,000 hand-written personal notes. (Dr. Brown’s correspondence with his congregation included birthday cards to children 16 years and younger as well as anniversary, congratulatory, and sympathy notes—handwritten and signed, “Your pastor, F.F. Brown.”) The list of activities in 1927 does not include the three regular services each week, church committee meetings, and other church functions—all within 10 months because Dr. Brown was ill the other two and unable to work. That same year, he also began devoting four hours a week to “spiritual welfare conferences” for those needing one-on-one time with him.

During his voyage to Stockholm for the Baptist World Alliance in 1928, he wrote, “Great trip, calm sea, four days of fog .... I haven’t been so relaxed in 15 years ... am resting, resting way down deep.” Yet, in the next sentence, he added, “I have written a big stack of cards to the members of the church which I am

sending back to New York by a sailor to be mailed.” Later, Rev. Turner observed, “Every member of the church received a personal note from him while he was on that trip. But he was ‘resting, resting way down deep!’”

Dr. Harry E. Fosdick of NYC’s historic Riverside Baptist Church once observed Dr. Brown was “burning the candle at both ends.” Dr. Brown responded, “I had rather burn out than rust out.”

Speaking at Dr. Brown’s funeral, Rev. Turner described yet another example of the beloved pastor’s dedication to his congregants:

More than once I have heard it said of his preaching, ‘I could tell by Dr. Brown’s sermon this morning right where somebody called on him for help.’ But people loved him all the more for his unfailing interest in their personal welfare, and what he did say in his sermons meant far more to them than a more finished sermon could have meant without his devoted attention to their personal needs.

**Timeless Messages**

The following excerpts reveal the enduring quality of Dr. Brown’s messages:

*Advice to Young People*

“Try to think of yourself at the close of life, and make the decisions now that will stand the test of the years and be satisfactory to you and to Christ when life is ended. Let this thought control, as you decide what you will be and what you will do.”

In describing a Christian character, he emphasized that “numerous qualities stand out: faith, integrity, courage, simplicity, love, a worthy purpose, and hard work.”

*Returning to Prosperity*

In an article entitled “Spiritual Recovery Must Precede Any Return to Prosperity,” based on Matthew 6:33, Dr. Brown admonished his audience:

To our modern world—to us—[Christ] is saying, ‘You’ve tried everything else. Put the Kingdom first.’ ... I think it is well for us to recognize that there will never be any permanent economic recovery



until there is first of all spiritual recovery, .... the recapture of the great centralities of Christianity—faith in God; loyalty to Jesus Christ; confidence in each other; respect for personality; reverence for God, for His Book, for His Day; a sincere Christian attitude .... These are old-fashioned, but they are indispensable and fundamental.

*The Role of the Christian Home*

In preaching “The Home as an Elim,” based on Numbers 33:9, Dr. Brown explained, “In the plan of God, the right kind of a home is a ‘brook by the traveler’s way,’ a spring in the desert of life, an unfailing fountain by the wilderness path.” He ended with these

instructions:

Build a home ... where love lights the fire and ministers at the hearthstone—a home where God is worshiped, where Christ is enthroned. .... where parents and children with mutual faith and love and service find their souls replenished and invigorated. Yes, build it—for it is one of God’s Elims without which we cannot make the wilderness journey

Dr. and Mrs. Brown created such a home for their son and four daughters. (Their family eventually grew to 17 grandchildren and more than 30 great-grandchildren.)



Leaving a Legacy

Ministers’ Recollections

The following recollections are from three of the many ministers who praised Dr. Brown.

Dr. Louie D. Newton, pastor of Atlanta’s Druid Hills Baptist Church for four decades

Among the speakers at the Fred Brown Chapel’s dedication service, Dr. Newton eloquently stated in his opening comments, “... we are thinking about a man, about a life, about a spirit, about an influence that was as majestic as the hills, quiet and powerful as a river, glorious as a sunset on a May evening.” He then shared some of his soul-stirring memories of Dr. Brown. Recalling when he first met him in 1919, Dr. Newton said, “I knew that I had looked at a great man.” From then on, Dr. Newton “loved him more and more.” When Dr. Brown spoke at Druid Hills, “... he stood and the people knew that something was about to be said that they would never forget. He looked out over the congregation and said, ‘When peace like a river, ...’” In speaking at a fellow minister’s funeral, Dr. Brown quoted Tennyson’s “Crossing the Bar,” beginning “Sunset and evening star and one clear call for me ...,” reflecting his love for great literature. (Dave Ward recalls as a teenager attending a revival Dr. Brown preached in North Carolina. That night, Dr. Brown quoted Shakespeare. When Dave told his English teacher the next day, she attended the revival that night.)

Perhaps the most touching story Dr. Newton told was about when, in 1931, he insisted on driving Dr. Brown home from Georgia late one night so that his friend could preach a funeral in Knoxville the next morning. Exhausted from three days of SBC work, Dr. Brown fell asleep almost immediately with his head on Dr. Newton’s shoulder and with a hot water bottle at his feet because the Hupmobile’s heater wasn’t working. In the midst of a sleet storm, Dr. Newton stopped at a lighted shack in hopes of getting some coffee. The “dive’s” owner, a gambler and a drunkard, immediately recognized Dr. Newton, who had preached his mother’s funeral. After scurrying his gambling buddies out the back door, he prepared ham, eggs, whole wheat bread, and coffee for his visitors who were huddled by a small stove. As they ate, the man announced, “I think the Lord sent you here tonight.” Putting down his tin cup with coffee dregs in the bottom, Dr. Brown said, “Dear friend, do you know what you just said?” In describing this encounter, Dr. Newton added,

... the greatest sermon I ever heard Fred Brown preach was in that shack that night after midnight with the sleet beating down on the old flat, tin roof. He talked with him until that man ... cried out, ‘Oh Lord, have mercy on my soul!’ Then Fred Brown started singing, ‘Oh happy day that fixed my choice on Thee, my savior and my God.’

Describing their departure from the new convert that cold wintry night, Dr. Newton said, “... as far as we could see the little light back there, we could still see him waving to us.” They reached Knoxville; and “just at the early streak of dawn,” Dr. Newton boarded a train to return to Georgia. A month later, Dr. Newton received a call from the man’s wife, saying her husband had died

and had left a note requesting that he and Dr. Brown preach his funeral. The woman added,

I want to tell you something, Preacher. If I ever had any reason to doubt the religion of the Lord, Jesus Christ, you knocked it all out of me when you and that preacher from Tennessee led my husband to Christ that stormy night.

Dr. Newton completed his narrative by noting,

I have heard him standing before the Southern Baptist Convention and moving those people as the wheat fields are moved by the passing breeze and have seen the tremendous influence he had as pastor of this great church; but still it was Fred Brown, in that midnight hour on a wintry night, who knew how to tell a gambler and a drunkard the way home! What is our denomination? .... It is Fred Brown going until he didn’t have any strength left, talking with governors, pleading with bankers, and preaching to gamblers.

Rev. O.E. Turner, First Baptist’s associate pastor for 16 years during Dr. Brown’s tenure

With deep admiration, Rev. Turner described getting to know Dr. Brown:

... as we walked down the street together, we had not gone three blocks until I had the feeling I had known him for years. ... His love for people, his sincerity, and the warmth of his friendship made it easy to know him. And to know him was to love him. ... If I have ever accomplished any good, ..., I am deeply and everlastingly indebted to him for it. .... His consuming devotion to his church and to his denomination, his belief in the Bible as the incontestable Word of God, the conviction and fervor with which he preached it made his influence felt for good in the lives of many thousands of people.

Dr. Charles Trentham: Senior Pastor of First Baptist, Knoxville (1953-1974)

When Charles Trentham was a boy growing up in Knoxville, his parents ran a lunch counter on Main Street one-half block from First Baptist, which, in his words, “pointed its spire heavenward reminding us of our origin and our destiny.” Helping his parents after school, Charles routinely overheard customers discussing Dr. Brown, including his sermons’ influence, “how greatly admired and dearly loved he was, but most of all how much he loved people.” (Dr. Trentham told an amusing story involving Mrs. Brown, who along with her husband, ardently supported prohibition and would not patronize establishments serving beer. One day she stopped by the lunch counter and asked, “Do you serve beer in here?” Not realizing who she was, Charles Trentham’s father replied, “No, ma’am, but you can get it in the restaurant across the street.”)

Although Charles Trentham did not attend First Baptist growing up, Dr. Brown—whose “name was spoken in reverence”—served as his role model and influenced his call to the ministry. At Dr. Brown’s funeral, Dr. Trentham described Dr. Brown as “supremely a shepherd of souls.” Dr. Trentham added, “I shall never move beyond his strong, constructive influence. All of us here join with his children to rise and call him blessed.”

Later Years

On May 1, 1946, after serving FBC for a quarter century, Dr. Brown retired because of failing health. Knowing when to step aside, he did so with dignity and grace. In a lengthy letter informing the church family of his retirement “after months of prayerful consideration,” he expressed his conviction:

... the larger interest of the church, which all of us love, can best be conserved and promoted by a pastor who has the physical strength for sustained, rigorous, hard work. ... When the program and progress of the church are threatened or hindered, all personal considerations must be pushed into the background. Looking into the face of Christ there must be but one thought with all of us—the church of Jesus Christ!

With his typical humility, he lamented, “God forgive me that I have not done it better.” He also reflected on First Baptist’s past and future: “The abundant blessings of God have been upon the witness and testimony of the First Baptist Church. ... This church, with the New Testament in Her hand, will continue to declare the sufficiency of Christ for every human need.” In his retirement sermon, he declared, “My farewell word to my congregation is ‘Hats off to the past; coats off to the future.’”

Upon his retirement, many tributes were paid to Dr. Brown. For example, one of his Wake Forest professors wrote to him saying,

You have not sought to gain a name for yourself by eloquence (though you have your share of that) nor by a semblance of great profundity of thought. You have been content to preach the simple gospel, the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

Dr. Brown was also named First Baptist’s Pastor Emeritus in a resolution, stating in part,

... earnestly, spiritually, understandingly, and with complete abandon, he has given himself to the work of the church .... Meeting its demands...from the power of his great loving heart long after a tired body required rest. ... No words can express the feelings which flood our beings at this time. Twenty-five, faithful fruitful years with us! Unnumbered experiences of joy and sorrow shared; soul-stirring experiences as men, women, and children have found salvation as he has led them to the Christ; experiences of deep fellowship ... shared in worship—in giving—in communion; the full happiness of sympathetic companionship with one always pointing toward the Master. These things and the thousands of intimate helpful services he has given to each one of us make words grossly inadequate to express our love and gratitude.

Dr. and Mrs. Brown remained in Knoxville, where he served as a supply pastor, preached revivals, and continued supporting the denomination he loved.

After an extended illness, Dr. Brown passed away in 1960 and was laid to rest in Knoxville. A resolution issued by the City Council and signed by Knoxville Mayor John Duncan included the following:

The City of Knoxville is a much better place because Dr. Fred Brown was here. His contribution to the spiritual and

civic well-being of this community is immeasurable in its effectiveness. He was a humble man who spent his life in preaching a simple message of love to a people needing salvation.

Five years later, the Fred Brown Chapel was dedicated. The dedication service’s printed program stated, “To this great heart of the mountains, we affectionately dedicate this chapel as a quiet haven of rest where weary people can get their souls back by remembering things that are more enduring than the mountains.” (The \$95,000 for the chapel was received not through an organized funding campaign, but “spontaneously out of [individuals’] heart of love.”)

Three decades later, Michael Card,\* another of Dr. Brown’s grandsons, recorded “For F.F.B.”—a song memorializing his grandfather and included on his album Poima. The tribute begins with a recording of Dr. Brown preaching:

‘Verily, verily I say unto thee except a corn of wheat falling to the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.’ I hold a grain of wheat in my hand. It is small and hard and narrow and self-contained. And yet at its heart, there sleeps the mystery of life; and that is a parable.

Then, Michael sings of his grandfather, beginning with the following lyrics:

*Just a simple preacher from the Carolina hills  
Born in just the perfect place and time,  
A gentle loving mountain man  
With warm and sparkling eyes  
And a face that wrinkled from a constant smile.*

*From you I learned the kind of faith that looked up to the mountains.  
From you I saw just what I’d like to be.  
Oh, Granddad, I wish you could be here to tell me what to do  
For I first saw the light of Christ in you.*

The song continues with acknowledgment of Dr. Brown’s selflessness and with Michael’s spiritual connection with his grandfather. At the end of the recording, Dr. Brown’s voice is heard again: “I have no hope except that I believe that Christ died for my sins according to scriptures. I expect to swing out into eternity on that.”

Thus, within the church on Main Street and far beyond, the legacy of “this great heart of the mountains” lives on. 🌈

\*Michael Card has recorded over 37 albums, authored over 27 books, hosted a radio program, and written for numerous magazines. He has had over 19 #1 hits, including “El Shaddai,” “Love Crucified Arose,” “Immanuel,” and “Joseph’s Song.” His many accolades include three Gospel Music Association Dove Awards. “For F.F.B.” can be accessed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yV6lMbvljRI> and on iTunes.

Information for this article was gathered from First Baptist’s archives unless otherwise noted.



# GOD CHOSE YOU

and other thoughts on women in ministry

BY SUSAN ROBERTS

One Thursday as I was leaving work, I remarked offhandedly to a colleague that I was headed to a deacons meeting. A puzzled expression passed over my friend's face. About 20 years my junior, she attends a large conservative church in Knoxville.

"You're going to Micky's deacon meeting?" she asked incredulously.

It was my turn to be confused. What did Micky have to do with anything?? Then it dawned on me. "I'm a deacon," I explained. "Micky is too."

"But wait, I thought you were Baptist."

"I am. We have women deacons at First Baptist."

My colleague was speechless.

Historically the Church's relationship with women has been a touchy one, and women have often found themselves subject to roadblocks when trying to serve God in a specific ministerial role. But, Baptist history is full of women who served God fearlessly and relentlessly, sometimes working within the strict dictates of the current culture and tradition, sometimes not.

The stories of our own women in ministry have a special poignancy as a lesson in following God. Here is a glimpse into the ministry stories of mother and daughter, Ann Love and Andrea Wheeler – longtime members of our congregation.

Ann Love has been an integral part of our music, children's, and youth ministries for years, but she did not know God was preparing her for ministry until after she had graduated from UT. Newly married with a degree in music performance, she found a church, settled in and started a youth choir. When the adult choir director left a short time later, she was asked to assume his position.

"I was honored and nervous all at the same time," she says. "My father was a band director so I was very familiar with directing and made an A in conducting at UT, but directing a church choir was totally different."

In navigating this new role, Ann leaned on her experience growing up in the music program at First Baptist Bristol.

"I had the most wonderful choir director," she says. "Miss Joann Feazell was an inspiring influence in my life, especially in my high

school years. I had never been around someone with such strong faith! She taught me how important it was to sing from your heart and how God uses us to spread His message through song. So when I began my position as choir director, I realized I was teaching my choir as Miss Feazell taught us. She definitely had a great influence not only in directing music but also in my faith walk."

Another strong female influence was Christian singer, Sandi Patti.

"I have always loved singing, especially in church. But when I heard Sandi Patti for the first time, I realized how God could use me through singing," says Ann. "Bringing people closer to God through my voice has meant more to me than anything else. I thank God that He gave me that gift and to use it for His glory means everything to me."

Ann directed both the adult and youth choirs for a year and then was asked to start a children's choir as well. This expanded responsibility came with an expanded view of what her ministry was all about. When she saw children accepting Christ and youth growing in their faith, she realized God had called her to more than just choir directing.

Since then, in different cities and in different churches, Ann has been actively teaching children and youth. I am grateful both of my children benefited from her leadership in choir, where those annual musicals are one of my favorite memories. Ann also led them in Sunday School and countless youth retreats and mission trips.

When asked about obstacles she's encountered over the years, Ann remembers having to work hard to earn the respect of the elders in her first church. Being a female and being so young, she had to prove herself capable. In addition, her first few years were made challenging by the chair of the Worship Committee, a woman, ironically, who took issue with Ann being in a leadership position. Despite the unique challenges of being a woman in ministry, Ann says, "I don't think I would do anything differently. I feel God had the wheel and I just pushed the gas pedal!! I have done to the best of my ability everything He has asked me to do."

Unlike her mother, Andrea Wheeler determined early on that she was headed into ministry. By fifth grade she knew she wanted to be a counselor of some sort, and at a youth retreat in ninth grade,

the powerful message of the camp pastor opened her eyes to the hurting and sadness of the kids around her.

"That's when it clicked," says Andrea. "I said OK, this is how I'm going to help. I want to work with youth."

For as long as she can remember, Andrea has been deeply enmeshed in the life of the church, and her call to ministry has been a natural result. When she wasn't attending Colonial Heights Methodist with her dad, she was at First Baptist with her mom.

"I had good influences in both places," she says. "Plus I got the perspectives of both Baptists and Methodists. Our youth group at Colonial Heights was very small, about 10 youth, and so I got to be a leader when I was a sophomore, and that was a great experience for me. But at First Baptist, I had the big group experience where we could go on mission trips and see the world."

Andrea believes one of the things she learned at First Baptist was that it's ok to ask questions. "Michael [McEntyre] and Lee [Fox] and Ben [Winder] all encouraged us to ask questions. They were very accepting and never looked down on us because we were young or because of the kinds of questions we asked."

First Baptist has allowed Andrea to explore her calling by giving her the opportunity to be a ministry intern for two summers. Working with Susan Tatum one year and then Ben Winder the next helped her decide that she loved working in small groups with high schoolers where "you can dig a little deeper."

"The only obstacle I've encountered so far has been me - my issues, what I think other people think," says Andrea. "So far, being looked down on because I'm a woman hasn't happened, because I've grown up at First Baptist."

Andrea has just finished her junior year at the University of the Cumberland where she is working on a degree in youth and family counseling with a minor in psychology. There, she has also found encouragement and support in pursuing her call. Her mother couldn't be more proud.

"I cannot wait to watch how God uses her," says Ann. "She has a passion for youth ministry and will do a fantastic job leading youth to Christ and helping them in their walk with Christ!"

And what advice would Ann offer Andrea and other young women considering ministry as a vocation? First, she says to

choose a seminary that supports female ministers.

Second, Ann says to remember that there will be obstacles but God is the one who you to ministry! She advises young women to "stay strong" because "God chose you!!"

Preach, sister. I think those are good words for all of us, regardless of our gender or vocation.

For many years now, I have taken for granted how First Baptist supports women in ministry. Raising my children here, it never really occurred to me to have conversations with them about how other churches and denominations may view women. I am grateful that seeing women in positions of leadership is such a commonplace thing at our church that no one gives it a second thought. I am also grateful for the way our church actively supports future ministers, men and women alike, through our intern program. May it ever be so. 🌈



Ann Love and Andrea Wheeler - mother and daughter - worshipping beside one another at the 175th Anniversary Kick-Off.



# THE INTERIM

## EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW

*Dear Church Family,*

An important transition in the life of First Baptist Knoxville has begun. With a vacancy in the senior pastor role and other staff departures, we embark on a season of change, preparation, and expectation for what God has in store for us. As your ministerial staff, we want to share some important information about how this interim will affect our regular rhythms as a church. We love you, are here for you, and look with hope to our shared future in God's Kingdom work.

*Where We Are*

### Interim Leadership

At the recommendation of the Personnel Committee and the affirmation of the Deacons, an "Interim Pastor Search Committee" is being formed by Jim Bailey, our Deacon Chair. This committee will determine the scope and responsibility of the Interim Pastor, as well as decide who to hire for the role. Upon hiring an interim pastor, this search committee will have completed its work and will disband.

Search Committees have also been formed to secure interim leadership for our mission ministry and youth ministry. They hope to have more to share soon. Until then, lay leaders and staff members are providing leadership for those areas.

### Until an Interim Pastor Arrives

As you can imagine, it's difficult to know when exactly an interim pastor will be in place. Until then, we as a ministerial staff have been asked by the Personnel Committee to develop a plan to lead and maintain the church ministries. These plans will be reevaluated with an interim pastor upon his/her arrival.

### Items to Know Going Forward

**Preaching Schedule** – The Personnel Committee will supply the pulpit until the Interim Pastor Search Committee completes its work. We welcome your input and feedback as we think about men and women who could speak to us during this important time. The preaching schedule is as follows:

**Aug. 19:** Scott Claybrook

**Aug. 26:** Dr. Bill Ireland, Former Pastor, FBC Dalton, GA

**Sept. 2:** Scott Claybrook

**Sept. 9:** Rick Bennett, Field Coordinator, Tennessee CBF

**Sept. 16:** Scott Claybrook

**Sept. 23:** Dr. David Hull, Former Pastor, First Baptist Knoxville

**Sept. 30:** Scott Claybrook

**Oct. 7:** Pam Neal

**Councils and Committees** – Councils and Committees lacking a current staff liaison have been addressed, as can be seen in the Quick References on the following page.

**Pastoral Care / Minister on Call** – A modified schedule for hospital visitation and minister on call has been adopted:

Mondays – Volunteer Pastoral Care Team (church members)

Tuesdays – Susan

Wednesdays – Scott

Thursdays – Richard

Fridays – Pam

Dave remains willing and available for pastoral care and visitation as needed throughout the week.

Contact the Minister on Call after office hours or, by calling the church at 865-546-9661, and choosing option 9.

**Wednesday Evenings** – Scott will lead Wednesday Night Bible study for the foreseeable future. Activities will kick-off on August 29, featuring Vince Vawter. September 5, will feature a special visit from our D. Family Central Asia Missionaries. On September 12, Scott will begin a study exploring Jesus' method and approach to making disciples.

**Bridge** – The Bridge has been on hiatus while renovation work in Trentham Hall took place in July and August. The ministerial staff has agreed to keep it on hiatus during the initial weeks of the interim. This will be reevaluated and assessed once an interim pastor arrives. We hope to relaunch The Bridge with a "Grand Re-Opening" in future days.

**First Notes** – First Notes will continue on its regular weekly schedule. If you have not already, you can sign up at [fbcknox.org/subscribe](http://fbcknox.org/subscribe) to receive those weekly emails.

*We are grateful for each and every one of you. Please do not hesitate to reach out if we can support you in the days ahead. We continue to pray for you and look toward these coming days with expectation for the work God will do.*

**Additional Needs and Responsibilities** – The ministerial staff currently meets on a weekly basis to specifically address needs, opportunities, and challenges related to the interim.

We stand ready to help with any ministerial or pastoral needs you may have. Please don't hesitate to reach out to any of us by phone, email, or in person. We love you and care about you.

### *What to Expect / How You Can Help*

We believe times of transitions – whether in the life of an individual, family, or church – can be some of the most opportune times for God to grow, challenge, and change us. Transitions are never easy, and we ask you to be in prayer for the church, staff, and fellow church members. While it may seem obvious, it's important to note that multiple staff vacancies mean our ministerial staff is currently at half-capacity. The staff is committed to leading and serving with passion, but we need your help.

### Extend Grace

First and foremost, we need your help in offering grace to one another. During this time things will inevitably be missed, miscommunicated, or misunderstood. While staff and lay leaders alike are working diligently to lead well, mistakes will be made. Be gracious and expect the best of one another. Seek to understand before you seek to be understood. The words of James 1:19 are particularly powerful in transition: "My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry..."

### Offer Your Gifts & Talents

Second, many of you have already stepped up to fill in "holes" or have offered your gifts and talents for future needs. We are grateful. If you have not already, please take the time now to begin reflecting and praying about how God may stretch or grow you during this time of transition.

### Communication

Third, let us say a word about communication. We have been and will continue to work to increase our

communication with you during this interim time. Transitions bring questions, and while we will do our best to anticipate those questions and provide answers, please help us. If there are questions you have or areas of information you perceive as lacking clarity, please let us know. We don't know everything, but we will know how to help get you the information you desire.

In turn, please help us by sharing accurate information. Both lay leadership and the ministerial staff will be working with Rachel Bell, our Media and Communications Coordinator, to provide regular communications both digitally and in print. Please help us by steering fellow church members to these regular communications as a way to help us all stay "on page."

During the day, we encourage you to call the main church number (865-546-9661) and speak with the individual answering the phone. You can communicate the urgent nature of your situation and ask that a message be quickly delivered to a given minister. For less urgent needs, the individual answering the phone can connect you with a minister's voicemail. If you need a minister after work hours or over the weekend, feel free to utilize the Minister on Call. We want to make sure you can reach a minister when you need one.

We are grateful for each and every one of you. Please do not hesitate to reach out if we can support you in the days ahead. We continue to pray for you and look toward these coming days with expectation for the work God will do.

With grace and peace,

*Richard Buerkle, Scott Claybrook, Pam Neal,*

*Susan Tatum, Dave Ward*



# INTERIM PASTOR SEARCH

## THE PROCESS OF FORMING THE COMMITTEE

### Church Family,

In the past three weeks, several actions have been taken by Chairs of Deacons and Personnel and the Deacons and Personnel Committee toward naming an Interim Pastor Search Committee. These actions are summarized as follows:

#### Personnel's Recommendation

On July 27, 2018, the Personnel Committee sent to the Chair of Deacons a Recommendation on Interim Pastor Search Committee to the Deacons for First Baptist. This document did several things including identify that First Baptist will seek out an Interim Pastor, that the Chair of Deacons would work with the Former Deacon Chairs to appoint an Interim Pastor Search Committee from the church membership, that this be done as soon as possible, and that the members of this search committee be eligible to serve on the Pastor Search Committee. I sent this recommendation on to the Voting Deacons asking for their vote to proceed as recommended. The deacons voted to proceed.

#### Candidate Recommendations

On July 30, 2018, the Chair of Deacons sent a memo out to 19 adult, youth, children, college and young adult Sunday School leaders and teachers to obtain the names of two individuals from their respective areas and classes to be considered as candidates for an Interim Pastor Search Committee. From that request, the names of 26 individuals were provided.

#### Casting the Vote

On August 3, 2018, the Chair of Deacons sent to the Former Deacon Chairs a listing of those individuals named asking for a ranking of their preferences for ten individuals from the list to be considered as well as asking them to add any others they felt should be considered. From that request, 18 additional names were added. The responses from the Former Chairs were listed in a table that was populated with the Former Deacon Chairs' votes. From that listing, seven individuals with the most votes and five others as backup were identified.

#### Contacting the Candidates

On August 5, 2018, the Chair of Deacons met with six of the former chairs (several were out of town) to get their combined comments and reach agreement in proceeding to contact the top seven candidates. Based on the discussion,

the Chair of Deacons proceeded to make contact with the seven asking if they would be willing to serve on the Interim Pastor Search Committee. In addition to describing the general tasks and adding that the Chairs of Deacons and Personnel would meet with them in an ad hoc capacity, the Chair stated that the seven would be contacted to set an initial meeting for the purpose of identifying their tasks more specifically including selection of a chair or spokesperson. By Wednesday evening, August 8th, the seven receiving the most votes had been contacted and gave their acceptance to serve. The alternates have not been contacted.

#### The Search Committee

In alphabetical order by first name those accepting this call:

**Brannon Hulsey**  
**Dianne Rairdon**  
**Jim Damewood**  
**Jim Decker**  
**Mark Palmer**  
**Susan Higdon**  
**Sydnor Money**

#### Communicating Results with the Church

On August 11, 2018, an e-mail was sent to the voting deacons asking for their concurrence on the seven individuals who had been asked to serve on the Interim Pastor Search Committee and for them to indicate their preferences for communicating to the congregation. Based on feedback from the Deacons, a decision was made to make an announcement following the August 19 services and introduce the Search Committee members with the intent that the Church body would support these individuals by name in prayers as they meet in the days ahead to identify an Interim Pastor who will lead us in this interim period.

Sincerely,

*Jim Bailey*

Chair of Deacons

and on Behalf of the Interim Pastor Search Committee:

*Brannon Hulsey, Dianne Rairdon, Jim Damewood, Jim Decker, Mark Palmer, Susan Higdon, and Sydnor Money.*

# QUICK REFERENCES

## Staff Leadership

**Preaching** – Personnel Committee and Interim Pastor

**Wednesday Night Bible Study** – Scott Claybrook

**Bridge** – Suspended until arrival of Interim Pastor

**Pastoral Care Needs** – Contact Pam Neal

**Minister on Call** – 865-546-9661, Option 9

## Monthly Weekend Rotation

1st weekend - Richard

2nd weekend - Susan

3rd weekend - Scott

4th weekend - Pam

## Ministry Assistants

Regan Edonmi: [redonmi@fbcknox.org](mailto:redonmi@fbcknox.org)

Assists Susan Tatum & Richard Buerkle

Vanessa Moore: [vmoore@fbcknox.org](mailto:vmoore@fbcknox.org)

Assists Scott Claybrook & Pam Neal

## Committee & Council Leadership

Committee/Council	Chairperson	Staff Liaison
<b>Deacons</b>	Jim Bailey <a href="mailto:j2bailey1@aol.com">j2bailey1@aol.com</a>	Pam Neal <a href="mailto:pneal@fbcknox.org">pneal@fbcknox.org</a>
<b>Discipleship Council</b>	Brannon Hulsey <a href="mailto:brannon.hulsey@gmail.com">brannon.hulsey@gmail.com</a>	Scott Claybrook <a href="mailto:sclaybrook@fbcknox.org">sclaybrook@fbcknox.org</a>
<b>Facilities Committee</b>	Gary Nunley <a href="mailto:nclan@comcast.net">nclan@comcast.net</a>	Pam Neal <a href="mailto:pneal@fbcknox.org">pneal@fbcknox.org</a>
<b>Community Council</b>	Elizabeth Pemberton <a href="mailto:epembert@tennessee.edu">epembert@tennessee.edu</a>	Susan Tatum <a href="mailto:statum@fbcknox.org">statum@fbcknox.org</a>
<b>Finance Committee</b>	Bob Calloway <a href="mailto:bcalloway@comcast.net">bcalloway@comcast.net</a>	Pam Neal <a href="mailto:pneal@fbcknox.org">pneal@fbcknox.org</a>
<b>Long Range Planning Committee</b>	Janice Hodge <a href="mailto:jhodge217@comcast.net">jhodge217@comcast.net</a>	Scott Claybrook <a href="mailto:sclaybrook@fbcknox.org">sclaybrook@fbcknox.org</a>
<b>Mission Council</b>	Patrick Carmichael <a href="mailto:pcarmich7955@gmail.com">pcarmich7955@gmail.com</a>	Richard Buerkle <a href="mailto:rbuerkle@fbcknox.org">rbuerkle@fbcknox.org</a>
<b>Nominating Committee</b>		Pam Neal <a href="mailto:pneal@fbcknox.org">pneal@fbcknox.org</a>
<b>Personnel Committee</b>	Matt Lyon <a href="mailto:matthew_lyon@yahoo.com">matthew_lyon@yahoo.com</a>	Pam Neal <a href="mailto:pneal@fbcknox.org">pneal@fbcknox.org</a>
<b>Worship Council</b>	Mark Palmer <a href="mailto:markalanpalmer@gmail.com">markalanpalmer@gmail.com</a>	Richard Buerkle <a href="mailto:rbuerkle@fbcknox.org">rbuerkle@fbcknox.org</a>



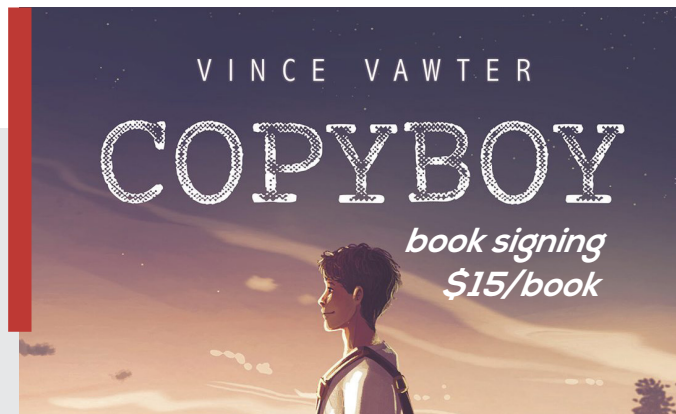
# upcoming events

MORE INFO  
[FBCKNOX.ORG/EVENTS](https://fbcknox.org/events)



**AUGUST 29, 5:45 PM | TRENTHAM HALL**

Our Children's Choirs and Mission programs are great ways for your children to learn about music and mission. Join us for pizza & ice cream, meet your children's teachers, and rotate through their classes with them. The youth will even have their first mid-week Bible study. Come see what it's all about!



**AUGUST 29, 6 PM | TRENTHAM HALL**

Join us after dinner as we kick-off a new year of Adult Bible Study with a book signing and talk from our very own Vince Vawter. Vince will introduce his highly anticipated new book, and inspire us with a study on the four-fold mission of our church as it relates to the book. We have made a special purchase from the publisher, and extra proceeds will go directly to First Baptist.



## YOUTH FALL RETREAT

**SEPTEMBER 28-30**

A weekend in the mountains designated for our youth to reconnect with God and each other by making crazy videos, worshipping together, and studying God's word in a beautiful place. This is our youth's most popular annual event!

## FIRST BAPTIST KNOXVILLE CHRISTMAS SHOP

**VOLUNTEER MEETING**  
**SEPTEMBER 9 | NOON | 242**

CONTACT SUSAN TATUM  
FOR MORE INFO:  
[STATUM@FBCKNOX.ORG](mailto:statum@fbcknox.org)



## we are the



**175**  
years

a **church-wide** birthday celebration  
featuring the children of first baptist

**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 30**

**12 PM**

**LUNCH, CAKE, ICE CREAM**

**[FBCKNOX.ORG](https://fbcknox.org)**





**Sunday, October 28**  
**4 - 6 PM | Lower Parking Lot**

Rain Location: Trentham Hall



## GET INVOLVED

Last year we reached over 680 people with our annual Trunk-or-Treat! We've even had the opportunity to connect with some of these families and children in other events throughout the year. Help us keep making an impact in our community! Check out all the ways you can volunteer:

### *Concessions*

Work our popcorn machine and help pass out drinks and snacks. We usually have a big crowd, so come with a smile.

### *Face-Painting*

Help complete children's costumes by face painting.

### *Candy Donations*

We will need candy donations consisting of pre-wrapped candy only. Please do not bring nut products. Drop your donations off in the baskets in the 2nd & 3rd-floor crossovers.

### *Host a Trunk*

Have fun dressing yourself up and dressing your car up by hosting a trunk this year. You'll get to interact with all the children and their families from our community!

### *Inflatables*

We'll need a few vigilant adults to supervise the giant bounce house and slide. Help us ensure our kid's safety while they have fun.

### *Sign-In Team*

Perhaps one of the most important teams of the day, the Have parents fill out an information card so we can follow up with them regarding future events and opportunities.

Contact Susan Tatum to get involved today at [statum@fbcknox.org](mailto:statum@fbcknox.org).



I CAN ONLY  
IMAGINE

**OCTOBER 5 | 6:30 PM**

We are transforming our front steps into a giant movie screen! Pack up your lawnchairs and bring your friends & family to this FREE community event for fun, photobooths, and food trucks starting at 6:30 pm followed by the movie & popcorn at dusk!

11.18.17

**LOVE  
FEAST**

**175<sup>th</sup>**  
**ANNIVERSARY**  
year-end celebration

**David Hull**  
Sunday, September 23

**Bill Shiell**  
Sunday, November 11

Sunday, September 23

Sunday, November 11

**P:** How did you learn about First Baptist Knoxville?

I liked sitting down with people and dialoguing with them instead of preaching to them. When we left Darlington, I entered the clinical program at North Carolina Baptist Hospital in Winston-Salem and spent four years training. Then I received a counseling license at the same time I obtained a Master's degree at Wake Forrest, which was another "wilderness" for me. I was going to school, was on-call at the hospital as a chaplain, had two children, and spent two nights a week on duty sleeping at the hospital. Thus, Sydnor assumed even more of the parenting role at home. At this point, I knew I didn't want to be a chaplain in a hospital, but I wanted to be a pastoral counselor. During my last two years in Wake Forrest, I spent most of my time counseling under supervision at the counseling center next to the hospital.

My primary mentor at the hospital, Dr. Swan Haworth, had grown up in First Baptist, Knoxville, where his mother and grandmother were teachers in the children's department. The CEO of the hospital where I was working left; and Mahan Siler, who had also grown up in First Baptist, took that position. When I finished my program, Mahan knew that Jess Fletcher, the pastor at First Baptist, Knoxville, was looking to hire an associate pastor to serve in the area of hospital visitation and that sort of thing. At the time, the church was booming under Dr. Fletcher, who was gregarious. The church was on television then, and Jess offered counseling to anyone in the community. The church was inundated with calls. Mahan called him and asked if he had thought about hiring a counseling minister and told him about me. Jess climbed in his plane and flew over to North Carolina to meet me. Later, Sydnor and I traveled to Knoxville for an interview with the personnel committee, who recommended me to be hired as the Minister of Counseling and Family Life. And that is how I came to Knoxville. Sydnor's paternal grandfather called these sorts of connections between people "the kind hand of Providence."

**P:** So, you came from being a young man and raising your hand at a revival during a high school excursion, to where you are now - retired after a long and successful career doing what you knew you wanted to do. Thank you for sharing your Christian travels.

**B:** You are very welcome. 





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FIRST BAPTIST

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KNOXVILLE

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Knoxville, TN 37902  
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865-546-9661