

H. Bramlette



**A Brief History**

**of THE**

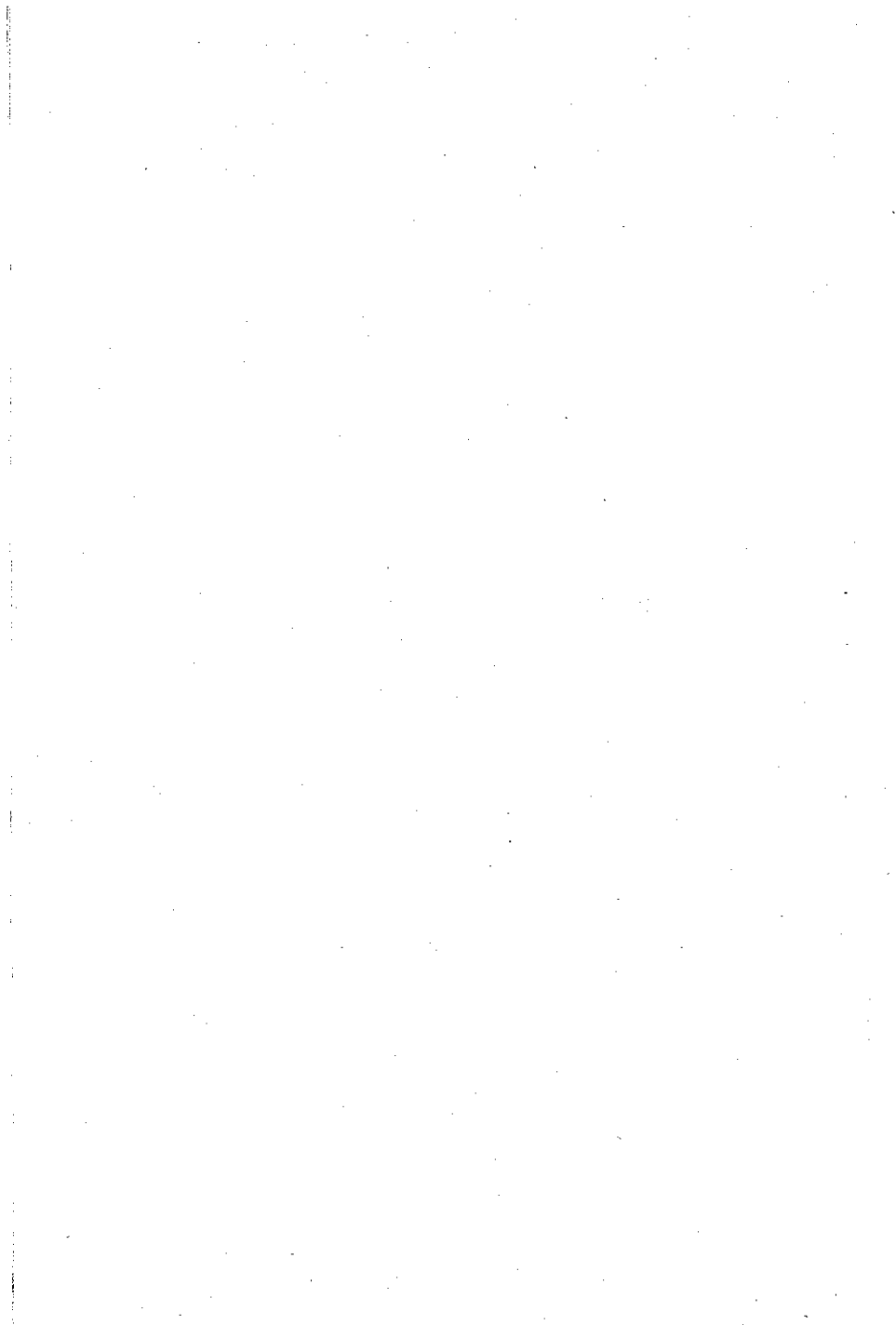
**BAPTIST**

**STUDENT**

**UNION**



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*Written by:*

Dr. John A. Held  
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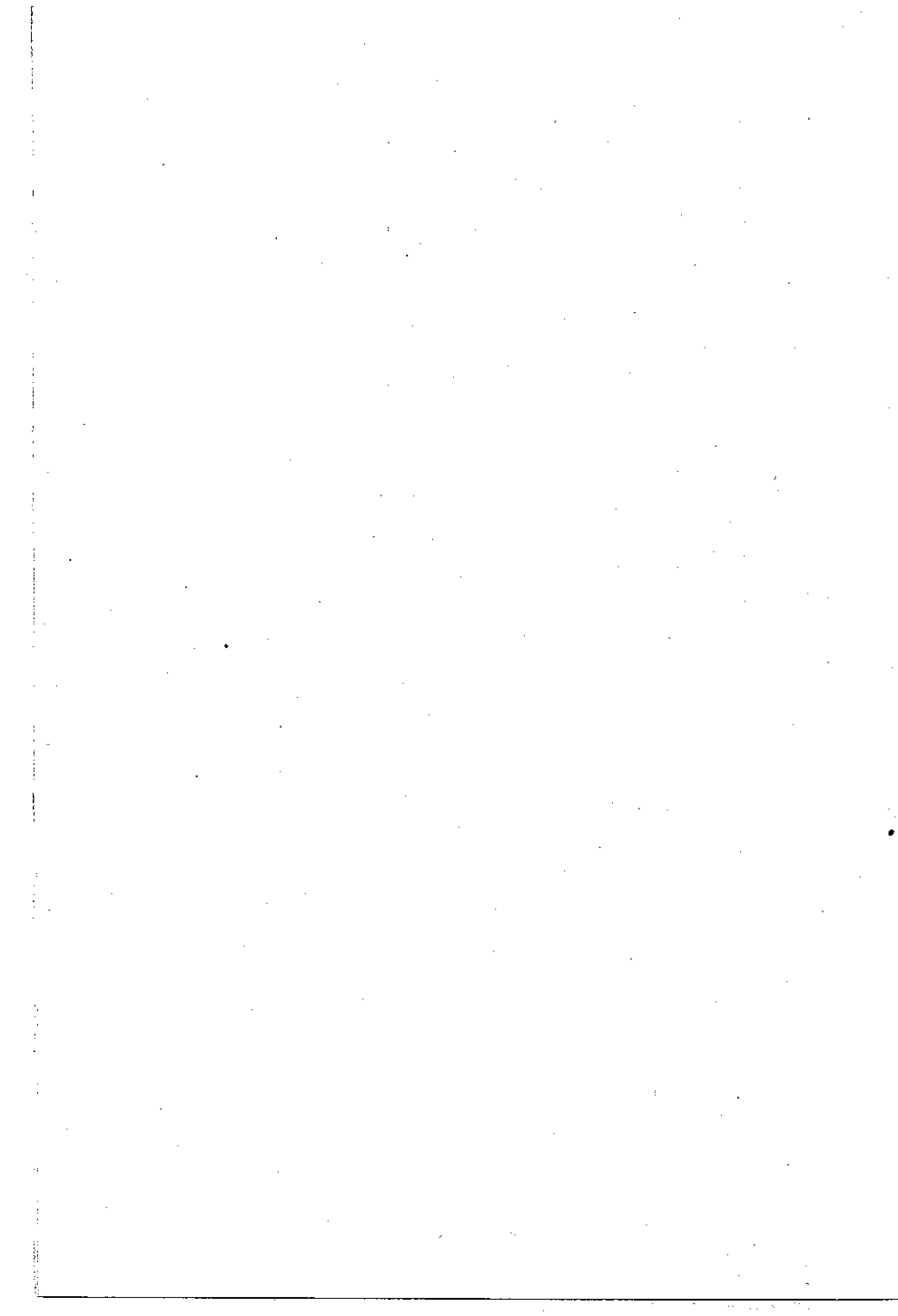
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## FOREWORD

In God's plan many great and mighty things have come from small beginnings. The Baptist Student Union of the Southern Baptist Convention is one among these. For many years it has been my desire to conserve the story of these beginnings in writing and to present it to our people along with other chapters which would complete the entire history of the movement.

It has been my privilege, therefore, to record in Section 1 of this brief history the actual and pragmatic genesis of the movement and my discussion deals primarily with that aspect of the movement which is foundational.

What has been said is not intended to detract from nor to minimize what was done by others in other places and in other ways before the actual steps were taken to bring this movement into being for I am quite sure that this, as many other movements, had many root beginnings. It has been my purpose, rather, to present an authentic account of the historic genesis of the Baptist Student Union, given from the standpoint of the one who in the providence of God took the initiative in bringing the matter to the attention of the State Mission Board of Texas.

Section 2, 3, and 4 of this volume, completing the history of the movement, have been written by three student leaders, each of whom has had great influence upon the early history and later development of the Baptist Student Union—Dr. Joseph P. Boone, first state student secretary; Mrs. R. L. Brown, whose husband served as the first local student secretary; and Dr. Frank H. Leavell, the first and present southwide secretary of the Department of Student Work of the Baptist Sunday School

Board. I wish to express my appreciation to these three for their contributions to this volume and to commend their untiring service and devotion to the promotion of this great work for the kingdom.

It is with great pleasure that this book is presented and with the hope that it may find its proper avenue of usefulness.

DR. JOHN A. HELD

## INTRODUCTIONS

The Baptist Student Union is one of the largest student movements of the nation and is reaching out to world proportions. It is considered by large numbers as the most significant movement launched by Southern Baptists in the last half century. Many have been the persons who have made far-reaching contributions to this movement, but Dr. John A. Held, Dr. Joseph P. Boone, Rev. and Mrs. R. L. Brown, and Dr. Frank H. Leavell have had more to do with the genesis and success of the Baptist Student Union movement than any other five Southern Baptist leaders.

It is truly significant, therefore, that this history is presented and that it be written by four of these five great student leaders.

DR. J. W. MARSHALL

It has long been recognized that an authentic statement of the beginnings and history of the Baptist Student Union movement was highly desirable, and certainly no more eminently qualified group could be found to present this factual narrative than those who contribute to this volume.

Although it is impossible for the writers to identify and trace the many "root beginnings" which greatly affected the origin and growth of B.S.U., they have given nevertheless a clear historical account of the movement, documented by personal experience and evaluated from the vantage ground of a perspective reaching back for a quarter of a century.

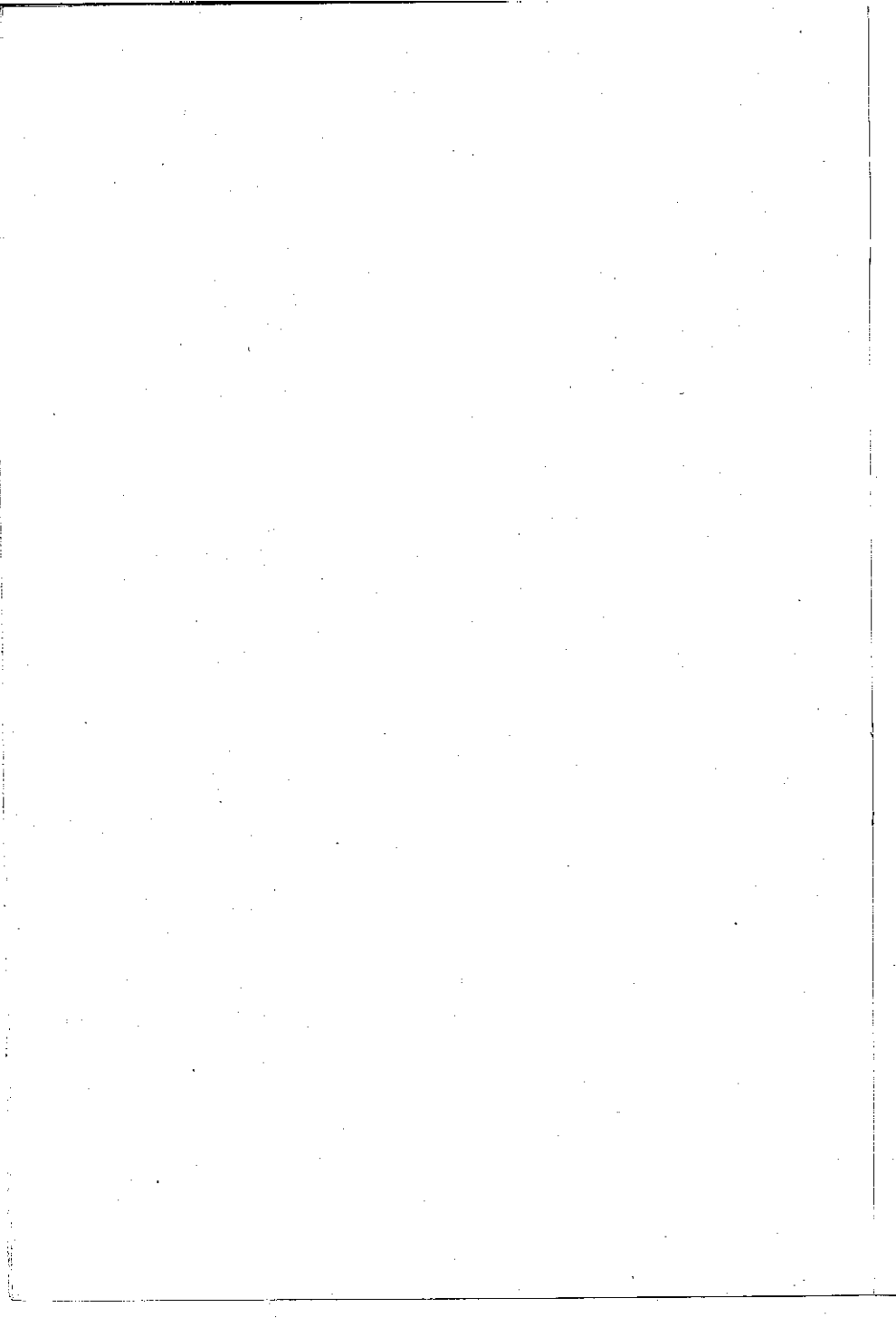
It is safe to predict that this authoritative work will be well received, both as a valuable contribution to Bap-

tist history and as a source book for each succeeding college generation of Baptist students who seek information concerning the origin of the Baptist Student Union movement which they will find militant on their campuses.

W. F. HOWARD  
Texas Baptist Student Union Secretary,  
Dallas, Texas  
1946

## THE BAPTIST STUDENT UNION

*It is estimated there will be 400,000 college students to be graduated this year. Enrolment is at a record peak. Dr. John A. Held had much to do with the early days of Baptist work with college students. He has prepared this series by four individuals who have been in a position to see the work grow from the beginning.*



## THE GENESIS

*By John A. Held*



DR. JOHN A. HELD, editor of the *Gulf Coast Baptist*, was pastor of a college church when the need was seen for Baptist work with college students.

The movement now known as the Baptist Student Union of the Southern Baptist Convention had many root beginnings. Prior to 1919 when the first concrete action was taken in the state of Texas, there were many efforts

to organize and to promote Baptist student activities on various Southern school campuses but these singular efforts did not develop into a coordinated student movement or organization.

The writer was convinced while pastor of the First Baptist Church of Bryan, Texas, that such an organization was necessary and that definite and concrete action for such had to be taken by the State Board of Texas before anything effective could be accomplished. The vision of this necessity came through the responsibility placed upon his shoulders of doing religious work with the students and faculty of A & M College, located in Bryan, in addition to his work as pastor.

Dr. W. B. Bizzell, president of the college at that time, had requested the pastors of Bryan to aid him in reaching and enlisting the students in religious activities stating at the time that as soon as possible the religious work would have to be carried on by agencies outside the campus, since the school was state property.

Thus, along with the other pastors of Bryan, I was brought face to face with a serious demand which I felt my denomination ought to meet. The other pastors immediately went to work and enlisted their respective Boards. I felt constrained to do something to meet the demand for the Baptists.

Therefore, at the spring meeting of the Baptist State Mission Board of Texas in 1919, I made an earnest appeal for what I considered a matter of utmost importance. I pointed out the needs and opportunities of a coordinated student movement and called attention to the fact that other denominations had already taken action. Although the Board gave respectful attention to the plea, the matter did not make sufficient impression, for no action was taken. I was keenly disappointed for there seemed to be no one at the time who shared my interest in what I con-

sidered a peerless opportunity for reaching hundreds of young people.

#### ANOTHER APPEAL MADE

A few months later, Dr. F. S. Groner, executive secretary of the Board, suggested that I make another appeal. Encouraged by this friend who seemed to understand what was involved, I again appeared before the Board in a subsequent meeting and made another appeal, but with the same results. After the meeting, determined to gain success, I conferred with several of the Board members who promised to join in an appeal at the next meeting of the Board.

Here should be mentioned the fact that at the fall state convention the following resolution was brought by Dr. F. F. Brown, then pastor at Sherman, and adopted:

"A committee appointed by the Texas B.Y.P.U. Convention assembled at Palacios, July 11, 1919, submit to the Convention the following resolution:

"Resolved,

"1. That the Executive Board of the Convention select and direct one of the strongest and most capable men to be secured as Baptist Student Secretary for students of Texas. That this man give his entire time among the Baptist students of Texas emphasizing Baptist principles, interpreting Baptist life, creating and sustaining Baptist loyalty, enlisting and crystallizing a denominational spirit; virile, consecrated and active and that shall express itself through the local churches where students hold membership.

"2. That the Sunday School Board be asked to cooperate in the support of this Student Secretary and that it be understood that this man represents the whole Baptist program rather than any special department.

"3. In closing this recommendation the committee desires to express its approval of the Baptist Student Missionary Movement. The proposed Student Secretary would in no way conflict with that movement but would co-operate with and strengthen this as all other special efforts.

F. F. Brown,  
J. C. Hardy,  
Robt. Coleman, Committee"\*

At the fall meeting of the Board, I, for the third time, made an appeal, and the members who had agreed to join came to my aid. At first my request had been largely for A & M College because I feared the Board would not be willing to undertake the larger work. However, in the discussion that followed this plea, I enlarged the motion to include all the colleges in the state, both state and denominational. That motion was seconded by several members of the Board and carried unanimously.

I was then authorized to secure a student pastor for A & M College, and at the same time was appointed chairman of a committee to secure a state student secretary. In the search for a student pastor, and while in conference with Dr. O. P. Campbell of Austin, I learned of a young minister, R. L. Brown, who had just completed his Master of Arts degree at the University of Pennsylvania. I began correspondence with Mr. Brown immediately.

While waiting for this matter to mature, I called the committee together and discussed several recommended persons for the position of state student secretary. Upon the recommendation of Dr. Groner, Dr. J. P. Boone was unanimously agreed upon by the committee. This recommendation was given to the Board which elected him without debate. Dr. Boone became the first state student secretary in the South, in 1919.

\**Cf Texas Baptist Annual, 1919, p. 16.*

The following May, during the meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in Washington, D. C., Mr. Brown, in a conference with Dr. Boone and me, accepted the invitation to go to Texas to become the first local student secretary under the new organization. It was in July of 1920 that he came and Mrs. Brown arrived a month later. God and eternity alone will ever know what this good man and his noble wife have been worth to the student cause. Faithfully, they have remained at their post of duty, though larger salary, easier work, and greater prominence have called them elsewhere.

The magnificent work of Dr. O. P. Campbell who served for some time as teacher of the Bible Chair at the University of Texas should be mentioned, for in the early history of the Baptist Student Union, he, along with R. L. Brown and Dr. Boone, had much to do with shaping the trends and the program of what the Baptist Student Union later became.

Thus ends the story of the genesis of the Baptist Student Union. Others to follow shall write what perhaps is more interesting, but this is the root tree—the beginning of a religious student movement whose influence has been felt around the globe.

## THE EARLY HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT

*By Joseph P. Boone*



DR. JOSEPH P. BOONE, now dean of Baptist Chairs of Bible in Texas, has seen an early dream expanded in his present activities. Last year there were more than 2,000 students enrolled in Bible Course in eleven Texas schools.

The one convincing and incontestable fact regarding the Baptist leaders who have been consecrated Christians during their student days and in the years following have voiced the belief that God was calling Southern Baptists

for many years to promote a Baptist student religious program long before Texas Baptists were aroused to undertake this far-reaching and significant work.

The first student conference for the Southwestern states promoted by the Student Department of the International Committee of the Y.M.C.A., was held in Ruston, Louisiana, in 1903. Three young men from Baylor University attended. It was in this student conference that the vision of a denominational organization for enlisting and guiding the Baptist students of Texas first came into the life of the writer.

#### STUDENTS INTERESTED

On the 21st day of October, 1905, a group of six Baylor students, believing that God would lead in the launching of such a program for students, formed a prayer covenant, agreeing to pray for divine guidance in the life of each member and to pray that Texas Baptists might be led to assume responsibility for a religious program for Baptist students. They prayed that this program would include the calling out of Christian leaders in Christ's worldwide missionary program and provide a greater support in the Baptist churches for worldwide missions. Two of these six students were themselves planning to go as missionaries in a short time; Basil Lee Lockett to Africa, and Harry H. Muirhead to Brazil. The other four members of the covenant group were Julian H. Pace, Tandy Y. Adams, Joseph M. Dawson, and the writer.

By 1905, a movement promoted by the Student Department of the Y.M.C.A. had been launched in Texas to establish an Interdenominational Student Religious Organization. The position of General Secretary of this new organization was offered to me and I was urged by many prominent friends to accept this place of leadership. The

offer was refused, however, because of the prayer covenant and the conviction that Texas Baptist would at some time become aroused to their obligation to and responsibility for the Baptist students of Texas.

#### VISION BECOMES REALITY

Fifteen years passed before the vision became a reality. During those years, pastors who had been aroused during their student days and groups of students on the various campuses helped greatly to keep the fires of denominational responsibility burning.

On November 16, 1914, the Baptist Student Missionary Movement was launched in Fort Worth, Texas, in response to a conviction that Southern Baptists should propagate missionary information and call out their own missionaries. This movement gained great momentum and helped to arouse the denomination to the great need for a student program. Dr. Charles T. Ball and Dr. and Mrs. A. L. Aulick rendered a great service in the work of this movement, promoted by the Baptist Home Mission Board.

When the 75-million Campaign enlarged the program of Texas Baptists the opportunity came again for pastors and secretaries to make convincing appeals to the Baptist General Convention and to the Baptist Executive Board for a Student Department of Religious Work for the Baptist students of Texas. The pastors serving the denominational schools, Texas University, and A & M College did much to create sentiment and to bring recommendations before the state convention and the state board. The John C. Towns Chair of Bible was established in the Educational Building of the University Baptist Church, Austin, and Dr. O. P. Campbell became the first instructor. Dr. John A. Held, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Bryan, in response to a request made by Dr. W. B.

Bizzell, president of A & M College, made a strong appeal to the state executive board for a Baptist student worker at A & M College. He enlarged this motion to include all schools, both state and denominational.

The desire for a Baptist student program that had been in the hearts and prayers of the six covenanters for fifteen years was growing in the hearts of many Texas leaders. It was at the Houston Convention in 1919 that recommendation to establish a Student Department was made by Dr. F. S. Groner, general secretary. The Promotion Committee approved by the convention consisting of Dr. Millard A. Jenkins, Dr. F. F. Brown, Dr. J. C. Hardy, and Robert H. Coleman, also recommended the creation of a department of Student Work. The committee to recommend a secretary for the Student Department, of which Dr. John A. Held was chairman, having received Dr. F. S. Groner's strong endorsement of the writer, then pastor of the First Baptist Church of Waxahachie, unanimously recommended his election. I began my work in December, 1919.

#### FIRST SECRETARY CALLED

The acceptance of this call to be the first state student secretary of Texas, to work out a Baptist student program of religious work, and to create a Baptist student organization was the fulfilment of the call of the Lord that had come to me when a student in high school. After many months of careful study about the religious needs of Baptist students, both in the denominational and state institutions of Texas, and after weeks and months of prayer for divine guidance, a plan of organization was created. The first student conference for the consideration of the plans was held at Palacios, during the Summer Assembly of the B.Y.P.U. in 1920. The conference, composed of some fifteen students and five student religious

leaders, will go down in the history of Baptist student work as a history-making event. It was in this conference, after days of prayer and careful discussion, that the name "Baptist Student Union" was adopted. This name was approved by the Executive Board and became the official designation of the Baptist student organization. Later it was adopted by other states and accepted by the south-wide Student Department of the Southern Baptist Convention, on recommendation of Dr. I. J. Van Ness, secretary of the Sunday School Board.

There were many difficulties in getting the Baptist Student Union plan of religious work properly established in the schools. But the difficulties were not with the students. The European war had brought many perplexing conditions. The Y.M.C.A. and Y.W.C.A., because of their place of influence in the camps had become entrenched in some of the Baptist schools and many campus leaders felt little need for this new organization. For example, the struggle to supplant these organizations at Baylor University was keen, and hindered the acceptance of the Baptist Student Union program at the beginning. However, a group of consecrated students on the campus, through prayer and persistence of conviction, helped Dr. Samuel Palmer Brooks, the noble president, to open the way for the secretary of the Student Department to set up the Baptist Student Union in Baylor University.

#### ACCEPTED BY STUDENTS

In all the schools in Texas the secretary was received cordially by the students and by the pastors adjacent to these institutions. Slowly, B.S.U. councils, including the pastors of the churches near the colleges, the president's representative in our denominational schools, and a Baptist member of the faculty in the state institutions, were set up.

The first Baptist Student Union convention was held at Howard Payne College, October 22-24, 1920. All the denominational schools, the State University, the A & M College, the College of Industrial Arts, and five state normal colleges sent representatives. The spirit of the convention was inspiring and the spiritual heights experienced were abiding. The first summer B.S.U. conference for training leaders was held at Lampassa, Texas, in the summer of 1921. The Baptist Student Union was no longer an experiment. The enlistment and training of students for future religious leadership was felt in our churches the first year.

The first complete local B.S.U. Council was in Baylor College at Belton. The demonstration of the B.S.U. program by this council at the second state student convention, held at Baylor College, was remarkable in its revelation of the possibilities of the Baptist Student Union program. Dr. Frank H. Leavell, the new southwide student secretary, who began his work on January 1, 1922, attended this conference and witnessed this explanation and demonstration of the B.S.U. organization and program of religious work for all groups of Baptist students.

The first B.S.U. Manual was prepared and written by the writer, while student secretary of Texas, and published by the Baptist Standard Publishing Company of Dallas, in 1922. The object of the B.S.U. is stated in this Manual as follows:

“The winning of others to Christ and his church; the enlistment of Christians in Bible and mission study; the training of individuals in the practice of stewardship and service as taught in the New Testament; the calling out of the called for special service, the utilizing of Christian workers in denominational activity.”

The pioneer student secretaries assisting me, and leading in the B.S.U. work at some of the institutions were:

Rev. O. P. Campbell and Rev. John B. Caylor, successive instructors of the John C. Townes Bible Chair and student secretaries at the University of Texas; Rev. (and Mrs.) R. L. Brown, student secretary at A & M College who later organized a Baptist church at College Station, and has served as pastor up to the present time. Miss Elva Fronabarger, Canyon; Miss Edna Belle O'Neal, San Marcos; Miss Mildred Foster, Huntsville; Virgil Reynolds and John B. Crockett, Denton; Mrs. Louise Foreman Blount, Mrs. Olive Chaffee Boggs, Mrs. Alma Stack Persing, Mrs. Lucille Lloyd Meadows, and Mrs. Annie Lee Burns Littlejohn served well as field secretaries.

The annual state B.S.U. conventions were mighty assemblies of students, college teachers, and Baptist leaders.

In 1925, I was invited to speak on the B.S.U. program of religious work in several Baptist student conventions outside of Texas. It was on one of these visits to Alabama that the First Baptist Church of Tuscaloosa became acquainted with the writer and later called me to serve as pastor. In 1927, a Baptist chair of Bible was established at the University of Alabama by the writer. For three years it was my privilege to teach the Bible courses to large groups of advanced students of the university.

From the beginning of the Baptist student program, the writer had definitely in mind and in purpose to establish Baptist chairs of Bible adjacent to the campuses of the state educational institutions. This work in Texas was directed for six years by a committee of which the writer was chairman. In December of 1946, the work of establishing Baptist chairs of Bible in Texas was co-ordinated by the executive committee of the state board, with the Baptist Student Union Department. The name was changed to the Department of Student Work. Our executive secretary of the state board, Dr. J. Howard Williams, nominated the writer to take the place of lead-

ership in the Bible chair work. On January 1, 1947, I returned to the state headquarters at Dallas as Dean of the Baptist chairs of Bible for Texas.

## THE CALL AND WORK OF FIRST LOCAL SECRETARY

*By Mrs. R. L. Brown*



DR. AND MRS. R. L. BROWN have worked with students at Texas A & M College for many years.

It was during the winter and spring of 1920 that R. L. Brown, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Ridley Park, Pennsylvania, received letters from three Texas Baptists asking him to come to their state to set up a religious program for the Baptist students enrolled in Texas A & M College in Bryan. One was from Dr. John A. Held, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Bryan, Texas, who was serving as the chairman of the committee appointed by the Executive Board of the Baptist General Convention to secure a worker for A & M College; another was from Dr. Joseph P. Boone, secretary

of the Baptist Student Work of Texas; the third was from Rev. O. P. Campbell, instructor of the John C. Townes Bible Chair at the University of Texas, a good friend and former college and seminary mate.

Through subsequent correspondence, plans were made for a conference with Dr. Held and Dr. Boone during the meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in Washington, D. C., the following May.

During the convention he conferred first with Dr. Held. Later Dr. Boone joined them and the three went into a thorough discussion of the opportunities and possibilities of a Baptist program at A & M College. After several conferences Mr. Brown agreed to consider the proposition and give them his answer at an early date. The challenge, the great opportunity, and the unlimited possibilities of this new field made a strong appeal to him and the writer, both of whom were interested in a mission program. He accepted the work and we made plans to go to Texas during the summer. Mr. Brown arrived in Bryan the last of July and supplied the pulpit of the First Baptist Church there for a month while the pastor was on his vacation. I joined him the last of August. We were the first Baptist Student Union workers elected to serve on a local campus. We attended the first B.S.U. convention in Brownwood, Texas in October, and took a delegation of students from A & M College with us. One, or both of us have attended every state and Southwide student conference and convention since that time. Both of us attended the International Baptist Youth Conference in Prague, Czechoslovakia, in 1931, and I was present at the meeting in Zurich, Switzerland, in 1937.

#### WORK DISCOURAGING

The work at A & M College beginning with the opening of the fall term in 1920, was most discouraging

at first. From the time of the organization of the college until 1920, there had been no vital church program nearer than Bryan, five miles away. Lack of transportation made it impossible for many to attend the services of this church. The new student secretary's work was made more difficult since he was forced to live in Bryan the first four years. During the fall and winter of 1924, however, a home was built for us on a three-quarter acre plot just north of the campus, which had been purchased during the summer of 1923.

The first services of the Baptist group were held in Guion Hall, the largest college auditorium, and consisted of one B.Y.P.U. followed by a short worship hour. We did not organize a Sunday school during the first year, since the Sunday school program had already been worked out by the Y.M.C.A. for that year. A W.M.S. was organized during those first months.

The sum of \$200 was contributed for all objectives through the Baptist organization and some of the local people marveled, for before the Baptist work was started on the campus no public offering for denominational purposes had ever been taken.

At the beginning of the second year the Baptist freshmen were organized into a class in the Union Sunday School and taught by Mr. Brown. The beginning of the third year found the Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian freshmen meeting together in one of the college buildings, and taught by their own leaders. The Baptist group was divided and Mr. Brown and I served as teachers of the two classes. The various pastors served in turn as superintendent of this combined group.

The Baptists were given the use of the Electrical Engineering Building for their program at the beginning of the fourth year. It was a happy hour when the Baptist freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and a few local people

met to organize their first Sunday school. For several years the Baptist program was carried on in this building, with the preaching services in the auditorium, and the Sunday school classes and Training Unions in the classrooms.

The First Baptist Church of College Station, Texas, was organized on Sunday, March 18, 1923, with ninety-one charter members, most of whom transferred from the First Baptist Church of Bryan. This was, and is, the only church in the Southern Baptist Convention to be the outgrowth of the Baptist Student Union work on a college campus.

The church services were held in the campus buildings until February, 1929, at which time the Baptist group moved into a temporary church building, erected on the lot just off the campus and adjacent to the parsonage. This building was constructed largely by volunteer help from students and local members. The wiring, for example, was done by an electrical engineering student, W. D. Neff.

#### NEW BUILDING NEEDED

At the opening of the fall term, 1939, the walls of this temporary building literally had to be pushed out to accommodate the large congregation. In one week's time the auditorium was enlarged to seat 700, and in another week additional classrooms were built to take care of the large Sunday school attendance. This building was used until the summer of 1941 when it was moved to the back of the lot to make room for the new church auditorium. The local people and students paid for moving the old building and reconditioning it for educational purposes. The new building was made possible by a donation of \$50,000 from the executive board of the Baptist General Convention of Texas. It included an auditorium seating

a thousand people, the pastor's study, several offices, and small departments for the Primaries, Juniors, and Intermediates. The local people gave the furniture and equipment for the church, and the students, alumni, and friends donated a beautiful Hammond organ.

The new church building, though not completely finished, was opened for services on February 22, 1942, with Dr. George W. Truett as guest preacher for a week's revival. The building was completed by July 12, 1942. The program on this occasion included messages by Dr. W. W. Melton, then executive secretary of the state board; Dr. A. D. Foreman, president of the Baptist General Convention of Texas and chairman of the committee which had helped construct the new building; R. A. Springer, treasurer of the convention; Dr. J. W. Marshall, state student secretary; Dr. John A. Held, who was instrumental in getting the work started at A & M College; Dr. T. O. Walton, president of A & M College; and F. M. Law, chairman of the board of directors of A & M College. Many alumni, students, parents of students, and friends were present for this occasion.

In retrospect the enrolment of the college in 1920, the year we came to Texas, was about 1,500. Of that number, 325 were Baptists, or preferred the Baptist church. In 1947 there were 9,728 students, with 2,430 stating that they were Baptists or preferred that church.

The total of the contributions for 1920-1921 was \$200. The total for the year 1945-46 was \$22,891.57 with \$7,023.48 going for missions and benevolences.

The church now has a graded and well-organized Sunday school, an active Training Union, a fully graded W.M.U., with six circles and five junior organizations, and an active student program. The church is anticipating a much larger program. Plans are being made for a Student-Young People's building to house all the activities

of the students and young people, and an educational building to care for the enlarged program of the local people.

We carried on the work unassisted until the coming of Mr. and Mrs. Walter Johnson in the fall of 1938. Mr. Johnson directed the music and helped with the educational program of the church for two years. In September, 1940, Rev. Harvey Hatcher became music and educational director, and served in that capacity until he was called into service two years later. Mrs. Hatcher remained with the church as secretary and helped with the educational program until Rev. C. Roger Bell came in January, 1943.

Through the years, the Baptist student work at Texas A & M College has presented a great challenge to us and to the church as a whole. It has been our happy privilege to provide a church home for hundreds of students, to minister to their spiritual and social needs and to guide them in Christian growth.

At present, as many young men are returning from their years in service to complete their college courses, and as the college enrolment is consistently increasing, an unparalleled opportunity is presented in this situation and in others in meeting the magnified spiritual needs of throngs of students as they wend their way to the college campuses of the South.

## A CHRONOLOGICAL NARRATIVE

*By Frank H. Leavell*



DR. FRANK H. LEAVELL is now secretary of the Student Department of the Baptist Sunday School Board.

It was the 1921 session of the Southern Baptist Convention, meeting in Chattanooga, Tennessee, that voted unanimously to create the necessary organization to begin and promote a southwide program of Baptist student re-

ligious activity.\* Thus was born the Baptist Student Union of the Southern Baptist Convention.

The Convention suggested that the work be promoted under the direction of an Inter-Board Commission, the members of which should be the secretaries of the four general boards of the Convention and of the Woman's Missionary Union. Hence, the first members of the Inter-Board Commission were Dr. B. D. Gray, Chairman; Dr. I. J. Van Ness, Dr. J. F. Love, Dr. W. C. James, and Miss Kathleen Mallory.

In October, 1921, the Commission decided upon the writer, who was then state B.Y.P.U. secretary of Georgia, for the position of executive secretary of the Commission. I accepted the position and agreed to begin the work on January 1, 1922.

To locate the offices of the Commission in a city in which none of the Convention boards held headquarters seemed wise because it would be impartial. Memphis, Tennessee was chosen. Thus began this new movement in a single room in the Madison Avenue Building, corner of Madison Avenue and Third Street, and on the bank of the great Mississippi River. It was an humble beginning—one room, two desks, a typewriter, a stenographer, and an executive secretary. But it was undergirded by a tremendous conviction on the part of a few, and by the prayers and the resources of the great Southern Baptist Convention.

Even the few who had vision and faith in the new undertaking were not sufficiently credulous to believe that within the brief space of a decade and a half this movement would become one of the leading student activities of the nation and would extend itself to several other continents of the globe. But, at a luncheon at the Hotel

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\**Southern Baptist Convention Minutes, 1921.* pp. 405-406

Gayoso in Memphis on the occasion of the first meeting of the Inter-Board Commission, Dr. I. J. Van Ness prophesied a great future for the work. He reminded the group that the Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention itself began with a single desk and a single secretary only a comparatively short time before. He quoted his former teacher, Dr. Boyce, as having said, "It is well to observe carefully the beginnings of movements." And that day the members of the newly organized Inter-Board Commission were so doing.

The first report of the Inter-Board Commission to the Southern Baptist Convention, covering only four short months, was read in May, 1922.\* In surveying the scope of the work it pointed out that there were at that time 119 Baptist schools and colleges with an enrolment of 30,000 students, while there were more than that number of tax-supported and privately endowed schools, with approximately 60,000 Baptist students. None would have prophesied then that by the year 1940 the number of Baptist schools of the South would have decreased to 66 and that the number of Baptist students would have increased to 140,000.

In keeping with instructions from the Inter-Board Commission, and the earlier reports to the Southern Baptist Convention, two forward steps were soon taken. In September, 1922, Miss Louise Foreman became the first associate secretary of the Inter-Board Commission and began her work as a traveling representative of the Commission. In the same month there appeared the first issue of *The Baptist Student*, the twenty-four page monthly magazine, published primarily for students.

From this time forward progress was magic. The students themselves, college administrators, and denomina-

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\*Cf. *Southern Baptist Convention Minutes, 1922.* pp. 58-60

tional leaders caught both the idea and the spirit of the movement. With less rapidity, however, did the rank and file of Baptists apprehend what it was all about. And throughout the history of the movement this has been a distinct problem in promoting the work.

### SOME MEANS OF PROGRESS

This movement was born in a convention age. Furthermore, no student movement has ever progressed without conference or convention. When and where there are seekers after truth, it proves mutually encouraging for them to come together for the sharing of ideas, convictions and vision. Student conferences early became a part of the program of the Inter-Board Commission and have always played a large part in its progress.

With not sufficient sentiment or organized activity to undertake a state gathering, or a southwide meeting, it was wisely decided to promote at first three regional Baptist student conferences. They were to be conferences and not conventions. No officers were to be elected; no machinery set up. For the western, central, and eastern regions of the South such conferences were held as follows: In Shreveport, Louisiana, from March 30 to April 1, 1923; in Chattanooga, Tennessee, from April 11 to 13, 1923; and in Greensboro, North Carolina, from April 27 to 29, 1923.

The quality of faith which was necessary to embark upon such a program amidst such uncertainties is intimated by a recorded statement of the secretary of the Commission to the associate secretary as they were leaving Memphis for the first meeting at Shreveport. He asked in a plaintive voice, "Do you expect anybody will come?" But come they did. The state meetings held previously in Texas were a great help, for in them a host of students of that state had experienced the thrills of a distinctive

Baptist student conference, planned and promoted for their own needs. The recorded attendance at the Shreveport meeting was 250. A group picture was taken upon the roof of the First Baptist Church of Shreveport, in which church the meeting was held. Today, this picture speaks volumes for it shows the pioneers who had met to proclaim the coming of a new and mighty movement destined soon to encircle the globe.

Encouraged by the success of the first three conferences in 1923 and the steady march of the movement leaders and students alike approached the three regional conferences in 1924 with more assurance. The meeting places of the next three were: Shawnee, Oklahoma, with Oklahoma Baptist University serving as host college; Murfreesboro, Tennessee, with Tennessee College as hostess; and Raleigh, North Carolina, with Meredith College and near-by Wake Forest College jointly extending hospitality.

#### STATE CONVENTION NEXT

By this time it was safe to make an advance step in the program of student gatherings. A sufficient number of local Baptist Student Union organizations had been perfected on the campuses of the South to cause the students themselves to ask for state rather than regional meetings. Thirteen such meetings were planned for the following year. Some of the smaller states held joint meetings with larger states. Now it was necessary for the financial budget to be divided into thirteen parts, rather than into three. Registrations fees paid by visiting students increased, however, and made the meeting financially possible. The time for the meeting was moved from the spring to the fall months of October and November. This allowed the inspiration of the meetings to vitalize immediately the campus program for the entire current year.

Another radical and forward-looking step was taken when the states organized themselves into conventions rather than conferences. Officers were elected and permanent state organizations were set into motion. Twenty-four hundred students attended these first thirteen state meetings. Encouraged by the rising spirit a small but courageous group of Florida students asked that they have their own convention the next year. They had held a joint meeting with Georgia that year. They separated. So did others until the number of state organizations was increased to seventeen, as it is today. Maryland and the District of Columbia alone among the states hold joint meetings annually.

#### A SOUTHWIDE CONFERENCE

So enthusiastic were the first two state student conventions in the fall months of 1924 and 1925 that a new idea was born. It was the idea of one colossal southwide gathering of Baptist students. Such a meeting would afford not only local inspiration but worldwide vision, interpretation of world conditions, and knowledge of world missions. The state leaders agreed with enthusiastic unanimity to merge the next year's seventeen state meetings into one southwide gathering of great proportions and power.

In Birmingham, Alabama, on April 28 to 31, 1926, met the first All-Southern Baptist Student Conference under the auspices of the Inter-Board Commission. There had been previous southwide gatherings of great power under other leadership, the contribution of which was a significant factor in this one. The registered attendance was 1,531; however, the registration was voluntary and many came of whom no record was secured. The conference was a mighty triumph for the yet young movement of Southern Baptist student religious activities. In fact, so successful was it that it was decided to hold such a

meeting quadrennially, thereby affording such an opportunity for each college generation. The quadrennial meetings held up to 1940, with places, dates, registered attendance, and keynote are as follows:

At Birmingham, Alabama, 1926, with 1,531 messengers

Keynote: *Christ, Master of My Generation*

At Atlanta, Georgia, 1930, with 1,864 messengers

Keynote: *Christ, My Only Necessity*

At Memphis, Tennessee, 1934, with 1,997 messengers

Keynote: *Making Christ My Master*

At Memphis, Tennessee, 1938, with 2,689 messengers

Keynote: *My Maximum for Christ*

Because of war and postwar conditions preventing such a great gathering no quadrennial session has been held since 1938 to the time of this writing. The next one will be scheduled for the first convention year.

#### NEW ERA ACTIVITIES

The Birmingham Conference in 1926 proved epochal. It introduced a new era for the Baptist Student Union Movement.

Like buds in spring, a cluster of new projects developed shortly thereafter which were to become permanent factors in the rapidly advancing program. It was in this meeting that the suggestion emerged, unplanned and unintentionally, from which sprang the Master's Minority Movement which, without organization or promotional pressure, has found its way around the world.

Shortly thereafter the first edition for southwide use of the book of techniques, *The Baptist Student Union* was

released from the press. It will be remembered, however, that in Texas a book of B.S.U. methods had been released previously.

Rapidly other new literature was released, including the series of attractive "Cap and Gown" pamphlets promoting Baptist Student Union inspiration, information, and techniques.

#### A SUMMER CONFERENCE—THE STUDENT RETREAT

It was in the summer of 1926, following the Birmingham meeting, that the first summer meeting of students was held at Ridgecrest, North Carolina. The Ridgecrest Assembly was then under the direction of the Educational Board and Dr. J. W. Cammack, the secretary of that Board, was the first to suggest such a meeting. It was small but powerful. Only fifty students came for what was even then called a "Student Retreat" in the mountains. The purpose of this meeting was to be mutually uplifted through Christian fellowship and planning for the rapidly growing movement of the Baptist Student Unions. From the original fifty the attendance at this annual gathering grew each year until in 1935 it was necessary, due to limited accommodations, to limit the attendance to 1,000. That number came. Each year since 1935 the attendance has been strictly limited to the capacity of the hostelry. The number attending the past three years has been around, or above, 2,500, reaching a maximum attendance of 2,950 in 1947.

#### A NEW SECRETARY COMES

Another need, made apparent by the Birmingham conference, was the augmenting of the traveling force of the Inter-Board Commission. It was on June 1, 1927 that William Hall Preston, then president of Hall-Moody

College at Martin, Tennessee, came to the Commission in the capacity of associate secretary. From that day until the time of this writing, 1947, he has served in that capacity.

In December, 1927, Miss Louise Foreman resigned her position with the Commission in view of her approaching marriage to Rev. Oscar Blount. As her successor came Miss Ethel McConnell. Miss McConnell had served with conspicuous efficiency as local Baptist student secretary at Rice Institute in Houston, Texas. She served until June 1, 1932, when she left work to be married to Rev. Owen F. Herring of Kentucky.

#### THE SUNDAY SCHOOL BOARD TAKES THE WORK

An Efficiency Committee had been appointed at the 1927 session of the Southern Baptist Convention, whose duties were to survey all organized work of the convention and make any needed recommendations. At the 1928 session of the convention, held in Chattanooga, the same city in which seven years before the Inter-Board Commission recommended and the Convention ordered that the student work be transferred to the Sunday School Board and that the headquarters be moved to Nashville, Tennessee. Interesting and encouraging were the words of this Efficiency Committee:

"Your committee recognizes the importance of the work of the Inter-Board Commission, but in view of the financial condition of Southern Baptists, we recommend:

"First, that the work of the Inter-Board Commission be transferred to the Sunday School Board and all financial obligations be assumed by the same.

"Second, that this be recognized as the agency for student activities of the Southern Baptist Convention and that the other agencies of the Convention be requested to cooperate with it."

Accordingly, on October 1, 1928, the headquarters of the student work was moved from Memphis to Nashville. Simultaneously, therewith, the Inter-Board Commission ceased to function and the Department of Student Work of the Sunday School Board was born. This transfer of the work proved a stabilizing and helpful move for the student work. From that time on it continued to grow, to prosper, and to increase in prestige. The protecting and stimulating influence of the Sunday School Board was upon it and about it.

#### MISS BRAME JOINS DEPARTMENT

It was on February 1, 1933 that Miss Sibyl Brame came to the Department of Student Work. A native of Mississippi, Miss Brame was a graduate of Blue Mountain College where she had been retained, since graduating, as a member of the faculty. She came equipped with an excellent educational background and endowed with a charm of personality which enabled her to render outstanding service among the students of the South. She served the Department until June, 1936, when she was married to Dr. Carl Townsend of Raleigh, North Carolina.

#### EVIDENCES OF GROWTH AND EXPANSION

By the time of the second All-Southern Conference in 1930 there was a number of advancements and new features adopted in the program of the Baptist Student Union which greatly stabilized and strengthened it.

In order to further unify the work of the South a "Calendar of Events" was put in use from border to border of the territory of Southern Baptists. This calendar featured annual events on stipulated dates. Through these the students of the various campuses and states were given a consciousness of a unified program of which each

was a part. Maryland would keep step with New Mexico. Florida was in unison with Missouri. All were marching together. An evidence of this beautiful co-operation is the fact that for two decades the seventeen annual state B.S.U. conventions have been financed as a unit (no one of them costing any state mission board a dollar), have used the same keynote, and each has had, with very minor adaptations, the same program in all details.

#### STATE MISSION BOARDS ACCEPT PROGRAM

Another signal advancement of the work was the acceptance and promotion of the work by the various states, the establishment of departments for same, and the employment of state student secretaries to carry forward the work. This was and is marked progress. It was the beginning of the realization of a great dream of years. By 1940 all states had so accepted the work, and by 1946 all states had state student secretaries giving their time exclusively to the promotion of B.S.U. work.

The vacancy caused by the going of Miss Brame was filled by Miss Mary Nance Daniel. Having served as a leader of the B.S.U. work on her local campus while a student, and having served in the capacity of local student secretary for four years on the campus of Louisiana State University, she was well prepared to become an evangel of student religious activity throughout the South. Efficiently and well she held that position until 1944 when she left the department to be married to T. M. Rea of Dallas, Texas.

#### BAPTIST STUDENT UNION BECOMES INTERNATIONAL

Not only had this significant movement found its way into the life and affections of Southern Baptists and their students, but its success had taken it to other lands also.

It was in 1935 that Dr. Charles E. Maddry, secretary of the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, made his first missionary visit to the Orient. While visiting churches he visited also the schools and colleges in both Japan and China. He found great need for religious work with the young people in all realms. He felt that the next great religious movement in China would probably be some great youth movement. There was an apparent need for conserving the religious teaching and the spiritual development of the college students in the missionary schools as well as schools and colleges of all other types. Through Dr. Maddry the invitation came to the Sunday School Board for someone to be sent to work with the young people, college students and all others, of Japan and China and the secretary of the Department of Student Work was asked to go.

On March 5, 1936 the writer sailed from San Francisco aboard the *S. S. Chichibu Maru*. Five months were given to young people's work, including the B.S.U., in Japan and China.

#### IT GOES TO EUROPE

In August of 1937 there was held in Zurich, Switzerland, the Second World Conference of Baptist Youth under the auspices and direction of the Youth Committee of the Baptist World Alliance of which Committee I was secretary. While this conference was not one which recognized nor featured the separate units of youth activity, the B.S.U. workers became familiar with, and a part of it. A goodly number of them attended the Zurich Conference. From it the B.S.U. received much stimulation in the way of world vision, international outlook, and definite missionary information. The B.S.U. is a part of the world organization and international Baptist youth activity.

## IT GOES TO LATIN AMERICA

During the year 1938 Dr. Maddy visited the mission stations of the South American republics. There, as in the Orient, he found an appalling need for definite work with and for young people. Upon his return, there came to the Foreign Mission Board a request from the educators, both native and missionary, for a visit by someone who would help, especially in the work with college students. The Sunday School Board again made possible such a missionary trip and the secretary of the Department of Student Work was asked to go. I sailed from New Orleans, Louisiana on February 22, 1939 for South America via Cuba and the Panama Canal Zone. Sixteen mission schools were visited and B.S.U. work was organized in each of the sixteen. Work was done also in the churches and in schools other than the Baptist mission schools. In the latter, however, organizations were not so easily perfected.

## THE ORIENT AGAIN

In response to an invitation from Chinese Baptist leaders, as well as from the Southern Baptist Missions of China, two other messengers visited Japan and China in the interest of youth work. This time it was Rev. and Mrs. J. W. Marshall of Dallas, Texas. Mr. Marshall was at that time the state Baptist student secretary of Texas. While the war years veiled the full import of that visit in 1940, the impact of it upon the young people's work, the B.S.U. along with the other organizations, is quite obvious.

## MY COVENANT SERIES

Further progress was marked in 1940 with the appearance of the *My Covenant Series* of Christian culture books, based on the covenant of the Master's Minority Movement.

This was significant. It blazed the way for B.S.U. publications of a similar nature in the years to come.

#### DR. CLAUDE U. BROACH JOINS THE STUDENT DEPARTMENT

On September 1, 1942 Dr. Claude U. Broach came to the Student Department from the pastorate of the First Baptist Church of Covington, Virginia. Dr. Broach, a graduate of the University of Georgia and of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, brought to the department a rich background of experience and training along with an appreciation of and a devotion to the B.S.U. springing from his own experience therein. He served the students of the South faithfully and well until 1944 when he resigned to return to a pastorate, this time to the St. John's Baptist Church of Charlotte, North Carolina.

#### THE WAR YEARS

With the coming of the second World War and the entry of the United States into the conflict in 1941, a greater challenge than ever before confronted the Baptist Student Unions on the college campuses over the South. It was a time of confusion and bewilderment. It was a period of great adjustment and rapid change. Student work, along with every other department of our church program, felt the effects of the war. Hundreds of Baptist youth, oftentimes the religious leaders on their campuses, left the schools for the armed services. Many training units were placed on college campuses bringing new problems and new tasks for local B.S.U.'s. The ranks of local and state student secretaries were depleted with the entry of many of them into the service of their country and vacancies were sometimes difficult to fill. The department in Nashville was also understaffed. Dr. Broach's position had not been filled.

In the early part of 1945 Mrs. T. C. Clark, Jr., came to serve as an associate in the department while her husband was overseas.

The war years were indeed difficult ones, but despite the many obstacles students, student secretaries, and pastors retained their enthusiasm and zeal for the work, accepted the opportunities and responsibilities of the day, met the new problems in faith and carried on in a magnificent way. The end of the war found the Baptist Student Union on the college campus not dead nor weakened but alive and alert for the tasks just ahead.

#### 1945-47—YEARS OF MARKED PROGRESS

In 1945, three new associates were added to the staff of the Department of Student Work in Nashville. Robert S. Denny, graduate of the University of Kentucky and former student secretary at Louisiana State University and at Baylor University, came to the department in August, 1945. He fell immediately into southwide popularity as proved by the multiplying demands for his services.

In September, 1945, Miss Jenny Lind Gatlin, graduate of Alabama College and former student secretary at Madison College, began her work as an associate, and served effectively and admirably in this capacity until April, 1948 when she resigned to become Mrs. W. Malcolm Fuller.

Miss Frances Barbour came to fill a needed position on the staff in September, 1945 as an associate, specializing in B.S.U. work in hospitals, business colleges, and professional schools. A graduate of Union University and former student secretary at Baptist Memorial Hospital; Ouachita College, and Missouri Baptist Hospital, she came well equipped for this new emphasis and under her capable and pleasing leadership marked progress has been made.

In October and November, 1946, were held seventeen state student conventions and the attendance upon these meetings was, by conservative count, 9,000—a 33 1/3 per cent increase over the previous year, due largely to the unprecedented number of students in college.

During 1946, the twenty-sixth year of *The Baptist Student* magazine, the circulation surpassed that of any previous year, the approximate subscription for the year being twelve thousand.

The number of students volunteering through denominational channels for summer service has grown to tremendous proportions. The Vacation Bible School Department reported 10,140 students participating in 1946. The Home Mission Board employed in its program 203. Greater numbers than ever before participated in youth revivals and many worked in the departments of Sunday School and Training Union as promoted by the state mission boards. By conservative estimate twelve to fourteen thousand students participated in volunteer summer work through the various agencies of the denomination. This work by students has grown to be a tremendously important factor in the program of the Baptist Student Union.

#### FURTHER INTERNATIONAL B.S.U. EXPANSION

A marked feature of the progress of B.S.U. is the continued interest and expansion on the foreign fields where Southern Baptists have missionary activities. In South America there is definite progress, two missionaries having been designated for the student work in that country. In China organizations are being perfected. A great impetus to the work in China resulted from a contribution of \$2,423 given by the Baptist students of the South to furnish a Baptist Student Center at the University of Shanghai.

The visit to Hawaii in December of 1946 by an evangelistic team of students from Texas, accompanied by William Hall Preston of the Department of Student Work and W. F. Howard, state student secretary of Texas and the going of the second student evangelistic team in the summer of 1947, proved a tremendous lift to the student work in the Hawaiian Islands, especially in the city of Honolulu.

In August, 1947 three members of the Department of Student Work, several student secretaries from over the South, and quite a number of Baptist students attended the Congress of the Baptist World Alliance at Copenhagen, Denmark. At the time of this writing definite plans are being made for a large number of Southern Baptist students and youth leaders to attend and participate in the Third World Baptist Youth Congress at Stockholm, Sweden, August 3-9, 1949. This meeting is promoted by the officers of the Youth Committee of which Dr. T. G. Dunning of London is chairman, and the writer is secretary. The anticipated attendance upon this meeting is four thousand youth and youth leaders from all of the nations of the world.

#### GRATITUDE TO GOD

With abiding gratitude for the privilege of working with college students and the educational institutions of the South, the Department of Student Work is humble and grateful for the obvious blessings of God upon the efforts of the years. Our gratitude is extended also to the students themselves, to college administrators, to denominational leaders, and to the Baptist Sunday School Board of which our work is a part. It is not our purpose to allow the success of yesterday to be our standard for tomorrow, but to forge forward toward ever expanding horizons of sacrifice and service.