



2013

## The First and the Last: A Confluence of Factors Leading to the Integration of Carver School of Missions and Social Work, 1955

Tanya Smith Brice  
*Baylor University*

T. Laine Scales  
*Baylor University*

Follow this and additional works at: <http://scholarworks.wmich.edu/jssw>

 Part of the [Social History Commons](#), [Social Work Commons](#), and the [United States History Commons](#)

### Recommended Citation

Brice, Tanya Smith and Scales, T. Laine (2013) "The First and the Last: A Confluence of Factors Leading to the Integration of Carver School of Missions and Social Work, 1955," *The Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare*: Vol. 40 : Iss. 1 , Article 6.  
Available at: <http://scholarworks.wmich.edu/jssw/vol40/iss1/6>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Social Work at ScholarWorks at WMU. For more information, please contact [maira.bundza@wmich.edu](mailto:maira.bundza@wmich.edu).



# The First and the Last: A Confluence of Factors Leading to the Integration of Carver School of Missions and Social Work, 1955

TANYA SMITH BRICE

Baylor University  
School of Social Work

T. LAINE SCALES

Baylor University  
Graduate School

*The Carver School of Missions and Social Work, affiliated with the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, was an all-female social work program that eventually became the first seminary-affiliated social work program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education. This article examines Carver's efforts towards racial integration during the late 1950s, which was a time of heightened racial tensions across the United States. This article is informed by a series of oral histories of the two African American women who integrated Carver in 1955.*

*Key words: African American women, racial integration, Southern Baptists, Council on Social Work Education, Women's Missionary Union*

In 1950s America, the fear of change was a daily worry. In terms of foreign relations, the United States was in the midst of a cold war with the Soviet Union (Tarantola, 2008). At home, the nation was moving toward an era focused on civil rights. Various groups enduring long-practiced inequities drew attention to their circumstances. By the end of this troubled decade, César Chávez had launched his work encouraging Mexican Americans to vote, eventually leading to the farm workers movement (Espinosa, 2007; Marquez & Jennings, 2000). After

Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare, March 2013, Volume XL, Number 1

more than a century of discriminatory labor and housing policies, Chinese and Japanese Americans were granted citizenship (Alexander, 1956; Scanlan, 1987; "The McCarran-Walter Immigration Act," 1953). Challenging the myth of "separate but equal," several progressive judicial rulings resulted in increased access of African Americans to civil rights, as granted by the U.S. Constitution. Issues of equal access to colleges and universities brought cases such as *Sweatt v. Painter* (Goldstone, 2006; "Heman Marion Sweatt versus Theophilis Shickel Painter et al," 1950) and *McLaurin v. Oklahoma State Regents* (U.S. Supreme Court, 1950) before the U.S. Supreme Court in 1950 to grant African Americans access to White institutions of higher education. The infamous *Brown v. Board of Education* case, a conglomeration of five state cases, granted African Americans equitable access to public education, in 1954 (Sanders, 1995). While these cases were instrumental in opening quality education to African Americans, the implementation of these rulings was often unhurried. Public universities were often forced to integrate by order of the U.S. Government. However, private, religiously affiliated institutions were generally unaffected by such orders. Consequently, many private colleges remained racially segregated for a decade or longer after these rulings.

As higher education opportunities became more accessible for African Americans, private and religious groups, including Southern Baptists, were forced to consider integration of their seminaries, colleges, and training schools. Access for African American Baptist women to the premier training school for missions and social work is the focus of our story. A brief history of the denomination's race relations will provide a context.

### Southern Baptist Convention

The Southern Baptist Convention, the largest Protestant denomination in the United States, has had a contentious history of poor race relations. Founded in 1845, this convention came into existence as a result of debate between Northern anti-slavery Baptists, and Southern pro-slavery Baptists. For instance, the Rhode Island Anti-Slavery Convention declared in 1836, of the role of the church in this debate:

...that the people have a right to expect of the ministers of Christ that they will cheerfully engage in the work of abolition, and to call upon them to proclaim the truth on this subject, as those who are bound to declare the counsel of God. (Fitts, 1985; Putnam, 1913)

Southern, slaveholding Baptists were offended by this declaration, maintaining that the institution of slavery was “established in the Holy Scriptures by precept and example” (Putnam, 1913). As a result of this heated discourse, the Northern Baptists withdrew fellowship and communion from the Southern Baptists, resulting in a mutually-desired split. In the 1844 General Convention held in Baltimore, MD, both groups agreed to divide into the Southern Baptist Convention and the Baptist Missionary Union.

The Southern Baptist Convention’s missionary purposes included evangelizing enslaved Africans from its beginnings. However, in plantation churches, where the enslaved were treated as second class citizens, they were forced to sit in the balcony or outside the buildings of White congregations (Knight, 1993). These plantation churches predate the 1845 split between the White Baptists, however, Southern Baptists considered the paternal oversight of the plantation churches part of their missionary efforts.

In addition to plantation churches, independent Black Baptist churches sprang up in the South as early as 1773 (Brooks, 1922). The leadership structure of these churches, often named African Baptist churches, ranged from Freedmen to enslaved men who served as ministers, to White ministers and laymen serving as overseers. While these African Baptist churches were relatively rare, they existed despite laws, known as Slave Codes, forbidding the assembly of Blacks without the presence of a White overseer as well as laws forbidding the distribution of Bibles to the enslaved (Goodell, 2003; Roberts-Miller, 2010).

After the Civil War, African Baptist churches expanded throughout the South, extending to the North and West. In 1886, African Baptists founded the National Baptist Convention, becoming one of eight autonomous African American denominations. The National Baptist Convention became the largest

Protestant denomination among Blacks in the U.S. However, the Southern Baptist Convention institutionalized their paternal relationship with Blacks through the development of the Department of Works with Negroes, which eventually became the Department of Works with National Baptists (Knight, 1993).

The Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) remained a largely segregated convention of mostly White members. It was not until 1951 that the SBC accepted its first African American congregation into its affiliation. In fact, "before 1954, few within the SBC challenged the segregationist practices of the denomination agencies and churches" (Knight, 1993, p. 171). There were some leaders of the SBC who were aggressive in their support of segregation, as reported below:

In speeches in South Carolina in 1956, W.A. Criswell, the "godfather" of SBC fundamentalists, called integrationists "a bunch of infidels, dying from the neck up," and he charged that they were "good for nothing fellows who are trying to upset all things we love as good Southern Baptists." (Knight, 1993, p. 177)

Southern Baptists were diverse in their attitudes towards integration. At the all-male flagship seminary, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, racial integration began unofficially in the 1940s. The Day Law, a Kentucky statute forbidding racially integrated education, had been in effect since the 1900s. The law read:

It shall be unlawful for any person, corporation, or association of persons to maintain or operate any college, school, or institution where person of white and negro races are both received as pupils for instruction. (P.L.4363-8; 1934, c65, ArtI,8. Eff. June 14, 1934; Scales, 1989, pp. 2-3)

The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary defied the Day Law, as professors bent and even broke the law to educate African American preachers in the community (Scales, 1989). The seminary established an extension program for African American students in 1949. And by 1951, a poll found that approximately 95% of the student body expressed a desire to

admit qualified African American students into the seminary's graduate programs (Sapp, 1958). In that same year, the first African American male students were formally admitted into seminary classes.

### Black and White Baptist Women Cooperate

Despite this racialized climate within the male-run Southern Baptist Convention of the 1950s, White and African American Baptist women had been engaged in interracial cooperative efforts to support missions for over fifty years. This cooperation had begun officially in 1904 when the African American women of the Woman's Convention Auxiliary to the National Baptist Convention and the White women of the Women's Missionary Union, Auxiliary to the Southern Baptist Convention, met together in Nashville (Higginbotham, 1994). The rationale for such efforts is best described in the 1916 Annual Report of the Women's Convention of the National Baptist Convention:

This whole race problem will be quickly and easily solved when white women teach their children around the fireside not to respect white women less, but to respect colored women more...The race problem will never be solved until white and colored women work together for mutual respect and protection. (Frankel & Dye, 1994, p. 157)

Interracial cooperation was seen by African American women as a tactic to fight racism. Each group was formed by breaking away from their male-run conventions and creating a missions organization with auxiliary status. In 1900, 21-year old Nannie Helen Burroughs delivered a speech to the general assembly of the National Baptist Convention entitled, "How the Sisters are Hindered from Helping" in which she proclaims:

For a number of years there has been a righteous discontent, a burning zeal to go forward in His [Christ's] name among the Baptist women of our churches and it will be the dynamic force in the religious campaign at the opening of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. (Burroughs, 1900)

This speech marked the beginning of the Woman's Convention (WC), which, promoted women's work for women, raised money, trained women, and otherwise supported the missionary enterprise.

In May 1888, the Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) was formed during an annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention. A group of women from Maryland drafted a constitution reflecting the primary purposes of the organization: fundraising and mission education (Allen, 1987). The preamble clearly specifies that this auxiliary unit was subordinate to the Southern Baptist Convention:

We, the women of the churches connected to the Southern Baptist Convention, desirous of stimulating the missionary spirit and the grace of giving among the women and children of the churches, and aiding and collecting funds for missionary purposes, to be dispersed by the Boards of the Southern Baptist Convention, and disclaiming all intention of independent action organize... (Cox, 1938, p. 67)

In an effort toward interracial cooperation, Annie Armstrong, the corresponding secretary of the WMU, was invited to address the 1901 Woman's Convention in Cincinnati, Ohio. As a result of that meeting, the WMU and WC drafted a policy of cooperation in funding two African American missionaries to work in the American South (Higginbotham, 1993). Consequently, S. Willie Layton, president of the WC, was invited to address the 1904 WMU convention in Nashville. A city wide convention of African American Baptist women simultaneously met in Nashville. Delegates from the WMU attended the African American Baptist women's convention resulting in the first interracial meeting among Baptist women. After the 1904 joint meeting, African American and White Baptist women solidified their efforts to continue to work cooperatively on the training and funding of missionaries (Higginbotham, 1993). These interracial cooperative efforts laid the foundation for the racial integration of WMU's training school in Louisville, KY.

## Training Women for Missions and Social Work

The Carver School of Missions and Social Work was the jewel of Southern Baptist women. Established in 1907 as the Woman's Missionary Union Training School of Christian Workers, the school was supported by the "widow's mite," small gifts from mostly poor rural women who saved their egg money and sold quilts to support women students training for missions and social work. The school emphasized preparation of women for both home and foreign mission fields and operated as a coordinate of the neighboring Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (Scales, 2000). Women took some courses at the seminary, while studying subjects considered appropriate for Baptist women such as nursing, domestic skills, music performance and elocution. To learn practical skills in social work and missions, a course called "Personal Service," later called "Social Work Methods," emphasized one-to-one evangelism and social services.

By the early 1950s, the WMU Training School experienced declining enrollment, as the seminary began enrolling women directly as students. In addition, the President of Carver School, Carrie Littlejohn, retired after 30 years of service, creating an opportunity for the WMU to evaluate its purpose and direction (Scales, 2000). Consequently, in 1952, the WMU voted to respond to this declining enrollment by making three organizational changes. In an effort to reflect the school's gratitude for W.O. Carver, one of the early professors and founders, as well as to de-emphasize the fact that it was a women's school, the WMU voted to change the school's name to Carver School of Missions and Social Work. In addition, they voted to open enrollment to male students and to "enroll students without regard to race or nationality" (Martin & Hunt, 1953, p. 395). As a result, the first African American women were enrolled in the Carver School of Missions and Social Work.

### *Breaking Racial Barriers*

Freddie Mae Bason and Verlene Farmer were admitted to Carver School in the Fall of 1955. They were both members of the National Baptist Convention's Women's Auxiliary. They were recruited to break Carver's racial barrier by Dr.

Guy Bellamy, the Secretary to the Department of Work with Negroes of the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. They were both daughters of the segregated South (Bason & Coons, 2003; Goatley, 2010).

Freddie Mae Bason was born in New Boston, Texas, in 1929. Shortly after her birth, Bason moved to Oklahoma City, Oklahoma with her mother. Although she was an active participant in the Girl's Auxilliary, an organization of WMU, as a child, Bason stated the following: "I wanted to be in full time Christian service, but I knew that was only a dream" (Bason & Coons, 2003). She had only seen White women fulfill this dream. Bason went on to continue her education at Langston University, a historically Black college in Langston, Oklahoma; Oklahoma School of Religion, a National Baptist Convention supported institution that trained ministers, Christian workers, and laymen; and the University of Tulsa. Bason recounts when she was asked to integrate Carver School of Missions and Social Work:

... they wanted students to integrate Carver School, and he [Bellamy] asked me to do that. That's about it. I had finished the Oklahoma School of Religion, and I was working in Tulsa, and then he [Bellamy] knew about it and asked my pastor to pray all about it, so that's how ... he [Bellamy] encouraged me to go to Carver ... he [Bellamy] said that now if I'll already go to Carver, "I would expect that she would get a job when she finishes," and Dr. Bellamy promised that ... I was open to go because I felt that if I went to Carver School it could be a possibility that I would get a full-time job. (Bason & Coons, 2003)

Bason took a pragmatic approach to inform her decision to integrate Carver School. She was concerned with the economic impact of this decision. Specifically, she was concerned with whether this decision to attend Carver School would yield viable employment, a concern shaped by the sociocultural climate of the era. Despite advanced educational opportunities, African Americans found it difficult to find employment commensurate to their education. African Americans were often legally relegated to provide domestic and agricultural labor, particularly in the South (Bose & Spitze, 1987;

Carlton-LaNey, 1994; Carlton-LaNey & Burwell, 1996; Shaw, 1996). Despite Bason's educational accomplishments prior to attending Carver School, this integration experiment was viewed by Bason as an opportunity to gain meaningful employment commensurate to her academic training. However, Bason was very aware of the potential social ramifications of this experiment. She later recounts, "It was strange in that I knew I was gonna become a guinea pig" (Bason, 2011).

Verlene Farmer was born in Bridgeport, Oklahoma in 1933. She became interested in missionary work as a child. Her interest was a direct result of her experience with a White missionary who would "practice with the Negro children in the Black town" in preparation for missionary work in Africa. Farmer was one of those children. While a sophomore at Langston University and the Oklahoma School of Religion, Farmer met Bellamy while doing summer missionary work in the urban areas of several major U.S. cities. Farmer was asked to integrate Carver School of Missions and Social Work as she was entering her senior year. While she was not familiar with Carver School specifically, Farmer was very familiar with WMU, and the positive reputation of the white women's mission organization. Farmer recalls being very impressed with the reputation of WMU, noting, "It used to be a WMU school...anybody who was somebody would go to WMU Training School" (Goatley, 2010). Farmer's recollection of the invitation to attend Carver School suggests that she viewed this as an honor.

Both women agreed to integrate Carver together, and were supported by the WMU to do so. Margaret Fairborne, director of WMU Oklahoma, and missionary to Liberia, raised scholarship funds for both women. However, both women expressed some concern about moving to Louisville, Kentucky to attend the all-White Carver. Bason reports:

Definitely, I was quite apprehensive, because this was a new ... venture, and history at that point had not been very kind, and I just really didn't know what to expect ... I was afraid ... that Verlene and I would always be looked at and probably not treated very well, but we were willing to take the venture ... we would be making a definite contribution ... it would be an opportunity to go into some work that we knew we

could not get otherwise, ... we really wanted to be in full-time Christian service, and this was an avenue to which we could pursue. (Bason & Coons, 2003)

Farmer recalled having some concerns about being “a thousand miles away” from home. While she expressed some concerns about encountering racism in Louisville, she stated, “When you grew up in the black community and you’re black, and you got all this prejudice ... You just know it’s there. It’s going to a different level” (Goatley, 2010).

Bason expressed some concern that “they would equate me with my mother as just being a maid.” She goes on to say,

And I had to live beyond that, ... having to always be second in anything I did, the last on the bus, the last at everything, and to come into a situation where that did not exist was like being into another world. (Bason & Coons, 2003)

Bason and Farmer were not the first women of color admitted to Carver. There were students from Indonesia, Brazil, Korea, and Nigeria. Of those students, Bason recalls an incident where the Nigerian student, Deborah Dahunsi, needed an emergency appendectomy, but was denied admittance into Kentucky Baptist Hospital because of her race. Dahunsi’s husband, Dr. Emmanuel Dahunsi, was a teaching fellow and instructor at the neighboring seminary. He recalled several instances of discrimination when he addressed the Southern Baptist Convention in 1955, declaring that these hurtful instances “came from Southern Baptists through whose missionaries we had come to know Jesus Christ and whose support enabled us to be in the United States” (as quoted in Willis, 2005, p. 80). Although the Dahunsi family, and other international students, had been a part of the Carver community prior to 1955, Freddie Mae and Verlene were the first U.S. born African American students. This challenged the thinking of those Southern Baptists who were more willing to accept an international student from Africa than a black U.S. citizen. It was with this weight of responsibility that Bason and Farmer arrived at Carver School of Mission and Social Work.

*Arrival in Louisville*

Bason and Farmer were greeted at the Louisville bus station by two of their Carver classmates. One of those classmates, Reid Coons, recalls her motivation for wanting to greet the two incoming students:

I really felt it was an opportunity to go meet Freddie ... and I think, because of ... my relationship to the Lord, that it's been important to know that people are the same, and you don't want to make anybody feel badly about something, so it was special to meet Freddie. (Bason & Coons, 2003)

The women had different experiences with roommates at Carver. Farmer recalls having a great relationship with her roommate, Alice Gardiner, the granddaughter of W. O. Carver. Bason, on the other hand, reports of her roommate, "...she and I didn't get along, and so I asked to be by myself" (Bason & Coons, 2003).

The women recalled numerous instances of being denied entry to movie theaters, restaurants, and even some churches. Bason remembered, "it was on my birthday that I was taken out to eat, and one of the persons said, 'As long as you have a nigger in the car, well, then you can't eat here'" (Bason & Coons, 2003). Farmer remembers, "... things were so prejudiced then.... I couldn't go to the same places ... couldn't go to the same dentists (Goatley, 2010).

While the spirit of the institution of Carver School seemed prepared to accept its first African American students, the sociocultural climate of Louisville, Kentucky, was not.

*A Glorious Experience*

Despite this climate, both women expressed sincere gratitude for the opportunity to attend Carver School. Bason said of the experience,

the school was beautiful, and it was just ... indescribable the kind of feeling that you really had ... that I was just another person. It was a glorious experience—the beauty of the school, the beauty of the relationships, and then to get out of school ... still have some

relationships, to know that you were with world-class citizens. (Bason & Coons, 2003)

Farmer confirms this sentiment. She reflected, "They trained you for everything" (Goatley, 2010).

While there was a less than ideal start for Bason, she states that "...after about two months there, everybody had gotten used to everybody, and so that was that sense of rapport with everyone...we became as family" (Bason & Coons, 2003).

Carver School attempted to model family life for its students. Farmer recalled, "We had household chores. We learned to set the table. We had work to do ... but it was such a good experience. All of the Carver women shared meals together in the dining room, and did chores together" (Goatley, 2010).

### Learning by Doing

There were two degrees offered to Carver students: Bachelor of Missionary Training (two years) and Master of Missionary Training (three years) (Catalogue, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1907-08, Catalogue, Carver School of Missions and Social Work, 1955).

An important part of the Carver School curriculum was the hands-on field experiences in which students tried their wings as novice missionaries and social workers. Bason and Farmer worked alongside their White classmates doing fieldwork at Waverly Tuberculosis Hospital and at WMU sponsored community centers known "Good Will Centers." Following the late 19<sup>th</sup> century settlement movement, The Good Will Center at Louisville was founded in 1912 "to provide a clinic in social work as well as service to the community" (WMU Annual Report, 1952).

With this combination of theological, academic, and hands-on experiences, Farmer summed up Carver School's thorough preparation:

I know that Carver School prepared me for the mission field, because they had all those mission classes and it was just a blessing to be there, and to see how they prepared you ... everything was geared towards missions and missionaries ... they had mission days,

and missionaries would come by .... W. M. Burton [a missions professor] taught you how to work on the level with churches and young people. (Goatley, 2010)

Bason further recalled of the training at Carver, "one thing special about the training school and the Carver School is that the leaders would come and you would get an opportunity before graduating to get to know some of the folks that were leaders in Baptist life" (Bason & Coons, 2003).

As they moved into full time Christian service, both women utilized their Carver School training to fulfill their callings during one of the most racially charged periods in U.S. history.

#### *Utilizing a Carver Education for Christian Service*

Although educated in a school that had previously been for whites only, both Bason and Farmer used their Carver education to serve with their African American brothers and sisters. While Bason was employed by the Southern Baptist Convention, she was assigned to work with African American families. Farmer joined the National Baptists to serve overseas. A brief look at their professional careers demonstrates how the lessons from Carver informed their life's calling and work.

Upon graduating from Carver in 1957, Bason moved to Atlanta, Georgia to begin work at the Magnolia Street Good Will Center, an operation of the Home Mission Board of the SBC located in an African American neighborhood. After ten years, Magnolia Good Will Center closed. The Home Mission Board sent Bason to the nearby Memorial Drive Baptist Center, where she served low income families and children, providing afterschool and family support programs. In addition to her work with the Home Mission Board, Bason worked as a volunteer with the Women's auxiliary of the National Baptist Convention as mission coordinator, as the managing editor of *The Mission* magazine, and as editor of *The Worker*, under the leadership of Nannie Helen Burroughs.

Meanwhile, Farmer interrupted her Carver work to return to Langston University and complete degrees in criminal justice and sociology. After earning the undergraduate degree she returned to Carver to complete her graduate degree in religious education. In the midst of that matriculation, she was

“called to the mission field.” With the support of Shiloh Baptist Church in Columbus, Ohio, and supporters in Kentucky and Ohio, Farmer was sent to Suehn Industrial Missions, a missions project supported by the National Baptist Convention, in Liberia, West Africa. Before she left, Farmer participated in Burroughs’ ten week program, in Washington, DC, to learn “how to do Christian work the National Baptist way.” Culminating with a blessing for Farmer led by Burroughs and the WC at the general assembly of the National Baptist Convention in San Francisco that year, Farmer began her missionary work in Liberia. After serving for seven years in Liberia, where she taught typing classes, third grade, and seventh grade Language Arts, Farmer returned to Oklahoma for medical reasons and continued her work in Christian service at Langston University, where she taught religious education classes and directed the Baptist Student Union for the next 25 years (Goatley, 2010).

### The First and the Last

The story of Bason and Farmer’s educational preparation resulted from a confluence of factors that created the almost perfect climate for the integration of Carver School of Missions and Social Work. While the nation was struggling with the notion of legally mandated integration of educational institutions at all levels, the Southern Baptist Convention, despite its racialized history, found progressive racial attitudes at its flagship seminary and a trend toward inter-racial cooperation in special committees such as the Committee on Negro Works. As the former WMU Training School was faced with declining enrollment, Southern Baptist women had a new option to matriculate directly into the seminary. Bason and Farmer were admitted to Carver School in order to address each of these factors.

Not only would Freddie Mae Bason and Verlene Farmer be the first African American women to attend Carver School, they would also be the last, as the school would soon close. Carver School continued to experience declining enrollment and in 1957, facing financial crisis and closure, the school became the property of the Southern Baptist Convention. The convention expressed a desire to expand Carver’s curricular offerings and

to seek Council on Social Work Education accreditation for its social work program, however the school was denied this accreditation because it was not part of a college or university. In 1963, Carver School was closed, with some of its courses being merged into the seminary.

### *Theological Tensions with Social Ministries*

It was not until 1984, after both Bason and Goatley had been serving over two decades, that the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary resurrected a full social work program when it created the Carver School of Church Social Work. The school was the first in the nation to be housed in a seminary and to achieve Council of Social Work Education (CSWE) accreditation in 1987, flourishing for another decade until it was closed in 1997 during conflict over the role of social ministries (Garland, 1999, Scales, 2000).

Throughout the tenure of Carver School, the Southern Baptist Convention had dealt with the tensions between social ministries and a more conservative theology that placed evangelism and personal responsibility above the church's role in addressing social problems. During the 1950s and 1960s, as Freddie Mae Bason and Verlene Goatley were educated among Southern Baptists and launched their careers, the SBC and its agencies were more open to a type of social ministry that held society, including churches, responsible for the care of its poor. Social work, largely a woman's profession, in addition to missionary training, was considered a good preparation for Baptists to lead social ministries.

By 1979, in response to perceived liberalism in the SBC denomination, a group of male fundamentalist leaders gained control of the SBC, resulting in a more "masculine Christianity" (Holcomb, 2002) which was accompanied by a social conservatism of personal responsibility trending nationally in the Reagan years. By the mid-1990s, the shift toward social and theological conservatism in the denomination and its seminaries led President R. Albert Mohler to fire the social work dean, Diana Garland, in 1995 and to officially close the Carver School of Church Social Work in 1997. With that closure, a ninety-year history of preparing Baptist women like Verlene Farmer and Freddie Mae Bason came to an end. Reflecting upon the closure two years later, Mohler recalled:

[Social work] is committed to a worldview and a principle of moral neutrality and non-judgmentalism. When it comes to the church and moral issues, there is no way that I could see that being consonant with the responsibility of the church and the responsibility of a seminary. (Mohler, 1999)

Mohler's views are representative of the SBC leadership who saw social work's commitment to "non-judgmentalism" as something that could not be reconciled with evangelicalism. For some Southern Baptists, this tension between social responsibility and evangelicalism still exists today, though other Baptist groups have flourishing BSW and MSW programs located in their colleges and universities (Baylor University School of Social Work, 2012). Several Baptist programs are affiliated with the North American Association of Christians in Social Work, which has as its mission "to equip its members to integrate Christian faith and professional social work practice" (North American Christians in Social Work, 2012). In other words, many Baptists do not agree with Mohler's statement that social work and Christian ministry are incompatible.

### Conclusion

The integration experiment of 1955 was a progressive idea, but did not allow the Carver School to meet its immediate goal, to increase enrollment. However, this experiment yielded far reaching results for missionary and social work efforts in the African American community through the lives of these two extraordinary women. The surprisingly early integration of the Carver School, a private, religious institution associated with one of the most racially intolerant denominations of the era, reminds us of an important distinction: we must examine women's policies and practices within a group in addition to the more publicized and discussed narratives of male-run institutions, such as the Southern Baptist Convention. The women's school introduced a progressive timeline, integrating quickly in the early 1950s as U.S. Supreme Court decisions mandated public, but not private schools, to provide equal access. Many private colleges in the South would stay segregated for decades to come.

Acknowledgements: The authors would like to thank Mrs. Verlene Farmer Goatley and Ms. Freddie Mae Bason for sharing their story with us. We would also like to thank Mrs. Reid Coons for her support in this effort.

## References

- Alexander, R. C. (1956). A defense of the McCarran-Walter Act. *Law and Contemporary Problems*, 21(2), 382-400. doi:10.2307/1190510
- Bason, F. M. (2011, October 29). *Oral history interview with Freddie Mae Bason*. Carver School Oral History Project. Baylor University, Waco, TX.
- Bason, F. M., & Coons, R. (2003, February 22). *Oral history interview with Freddie Mae Bason and Reid Coons*. Carver School Oral History Project. Baylor University, Waco, TX.
- Baylor University School of Social Work (2012). *About us*. Retrieved from [www.baylor.edu/socialwork](http://www.baylor.edu/socialwork).
- Berea College v. The Commonwealth of Kentucky, 211 U.S. 45 (1908).
- Bose, C., & Spitze, G. (1987). Employment for professional Black women in the Twentieth Century. *Ingredients for women's employment policy* (pp. 73-92). Albany: SUNY Press.
- Brooks, W. (1922). The evolution of the Negro Baptist Church. *The Journal of Negro History*, 7(1), 11-22.
- Burroughs, N. H. (1900). How the sisters are hindered from helping. *Proceedings of the Annual Sessions of the National Baptist Convention and Women's Convention, 1900*. Rochester, NY: American Baptist Historical Society.
- Carlton-LaNey, I. (1994). Training African-American social workers through the NUL fellowship program. *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare*, 21(2), 43-54.
- Carlton-LaNey, I., & Burwell, Y. (1996). Introduction: African American community practice models: Historical and contemporary responses. *Journal of Community Practice*, 2(4), 1-6.
- Espinosa, G. (2007). "Today we act, tomorrow we vote": Latino religions, politics, and activism in contemporary U.S. civil society. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 612, 152-171.
- Fitts, L. (1985). Creative forces in historic Black Baptist religion. *A history of Black Baptists* (pp. 19-39). Nashville, TN: Broadman Press.
- Frankel, N., & Dye, N. S. (1994). *Gender, class, race, and reform in the progressive era*. University Press of Kentucky.
- Garland, D. R. (1999) When professional ethics and religious politics conflict: A case study. *Social Work and Christianity*, 26(3), 60-76.
- Goatley, V. F. (2010, December 10). *Oral history interview with Verlene Farmer Goatley*. Carver School Oral History Project. Baylor University, Waco, TX.
- Goldstone, D. (2006). Heman Sweatt and the racial integration of the University of Texas School of Law. *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, (54), 88-97.

- Goodell, W. (2003, June 29). *Education prohibited*. Retrieved May 27, 2011, from <http://www.dinsdoc.com/goodell-1-2-6.htm>
- Heman Marion Sweatt Versus Theophilis Shickel Painter et al. (1950). *The Journal of Negro Education*, 19(4), 512-515.
- Higginbotham, E. B. (1994). *Righteous discontent: The women's movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880-1920*. Boston, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Holcomb, C. (2002). *Gender and fundamentalism*. Paper presented at the American Academy of Religion, Southwest Region, Dallas, TX, March 9-10.
- Knight, W. (1993). Race relations: Changing patterns and practices. In N. T. Ammerman (Ed.), *Southern Baptists observed: Multiple perspectives on a changing denomination* (pp. 165-181). Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press.
- Marquez, B., & Jennings, J. (2000). Representation by other means: Mexican American and Puerto Rican social movement organizations. *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 33(3), 541-546. doi:10.2307/420856
- Martin, M. G. R., & Hunt, A. (1953). *Women's Missional Union Annual Report to the Southern Baptist Convention*.
- Mohler, R. A. (1999). Oral history interview with R. Albert Mohler by Barry Hankins. 13 August, 1999.
- North American Association of Christians in Social Work. (2012). *Mission*. Retrieved from [http://www.nacsw.org/2008/2008\\_about.htm](http://www.nacsw.org/2008/2008_about.htm)
- Putnam, M. B. (1913). *The Baptists and slavery, 1840-1845*. Ann Arbor, MI: George Wahr Publishers.
- Roberts-Miller, P. (2010). *Fanatical schemes: Proslavery rhetoric and the tragedy of consensus*. University of Alabama Press.
- Sanders, F. (1995). Brown v. Board of Education: An empirical reexamination of its effects on federal district courts. *Law & Society Review*, 29(4), 731-756. doi:10.2307/3053920
- Sapp, P. (1958). *The long bridge*. Christ, The Church, and Race: 1958 Graded Series of Home Mission Studies. Atlanta, GA: Home Mission Board, Southern Baptist Convention.
- Scales, T. L. (1989). *Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and the Kentucky Day Law: Ethical questions*. Unpublished manuscript.
- Scales, T. L. (2000). *All that fits a woman: Training Southern Baptist women for charity and mission, 1907-1926*. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press.
- Scanlan, J. A. (1987). Why the McCarran-Walter Act must be amended. *Academe*, 73(5), 5-13. doi:10.2307/40250082
- Shaw, S. (1996). *What a woman ought to be and to do: Black professional women workers during the Jim Crow era*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- The McCarran-Walter Immigration Act. (1953). *The Social Service Review*, 27(1), 102.