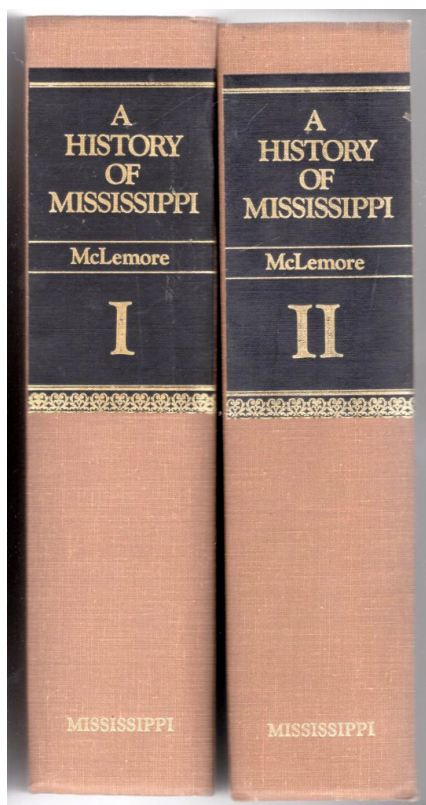


History of Baptists in Mississippi to be updated in new book

By Tony Martin
Associate Editor

The Mississippi Baptist Historical Commission (MBHC), in conjunction with the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB), is revising and updating the 1971 edition of Richard Aubrey McLemore's book, *A History of Mississippi Baptists, 1780-1970*.



Robert Rogers, who holds a Th.D. in church history degree from New Orleans Seminary, will be the author of the project. "I'm excited about the opportunity to revise and update *A History of Mississippi Baptists*," said Rogers. "The book is no longer in print and fifty years have passed, so it needs updating."

Rogers pastored for 33 years in Mississippi and Georgia, one

of those churches being First Church, Poplarville, for eight years.



McLemore

Richard Aubrey McLemore (1903-1976) was dean of Mississippi Southern College (now the University of Southern Mississippi) and also served a term as acting president. He was president of Baptist-affiliated Mississippi College in Clinton from 1957-1968, and director of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History from 1969-1973. He was the author of numerous history books and articles.

MBHC executive director Anthony Kay said, “The Mississippi Baptist Historical Commission wishes to provide a resource for all our churches and leaders that covers the entirety of our existence. The book will be written in narrative form with a readable flow. History is not a dead or past event alone. It breathes life from the past into the living of these days.”

Rogers pointed out that “Baptists are the largest denomination in the state of Mississippi; in fact, as far back as 1930, historian Jesse Boyd said we ‘have been blessed of God in making Mississippi a Baptist empire.’

“The fact that the largest denomination in the state has had no written history in 50 years is enough to merit a revision of the book. What is more, the humble story of Baptist beginnings should inspire future generations.

“When the first Baptists arrived in 1780, they had to hide from persecution by the Spanish Roman Catholic authorities of the Natchez District. In a day when fewer Baptists know their

spiritual roots, the stories of how Mississippi Baptists overcame obstacles, grew, and learned from both failure and success can be an inspiration to all those who serve Christ today in the Magnolia state," he said.

"The Scriptures repeatedly instruct us to remember what God has done. When we do, we'll be filled with gratitude for blessings received and a heightened sense of guidance for the days ahead," said Shawn Parker, MBCB executive director-treasurer.

"I'm praying that's precisely what this updated history produces. I'm thankful to Dr. Anthony Kaye and the Historical Commission for their leadership in this effort. I hope you'll join me in praying that the project will honor the Lord for His blessings on Mississippi Baptists," he said.

Rogers explained, "With the Mississippi Baptist Historical Commission's encouragement, I plan to edit the original book by putting many of the longer, primary source quotations in footnotes and appendices, to facilitate the flow of the book in a more narrative style.

"My desire is to emphasize the story of God at work, to glorify God by showing how He has worked through Mississippi Baptists for over 240 years," he said.

"We are excited to have this opportunity to enlighten Mississippi Baptists of their long and storied history," Kay added.