

Kathy Hillman: Mary, Lottie, Annie, BGCT and Baptist-ese

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Do you speak Baptist-ese? More specifically, do you understand Texas Baptist-ese? My family has spoken it for generations, so I learned the language along with English.



Kathy Hillman We batted Mary, Lottie, Annie, BGCT and CP around the dinner table. As I moved into leadership positions, my vocabulary expanded to convention committee acronyms like CNBAM, COCB and CNEB.

In early August, a 22-year-old student from the Czech Republic moved into our home for a month to research Czech heritage in Texas. Alice Luňáková speaks Czech, French and English, but not Baptist-ese. One morning, I explained I was traveling to Dallas for a CNBAM (pronounced SIN-BAM) meeting. She quizzed me as if my “sinful” words created alphabet soup. They did.

When a Texas Woman’s Missionary Union (WMU) friend mentioned “the three ladies,” I asked, “Who?” She replied, “You know: Lottie, Annie and Mary.” Time was, most Baptists knew about Lottie Moon, Annie Armstrong, Mary Hill Davis and the Cooperative Program. Our son Marshall



encountered CP at a missions fair.

The Lottie Moon historical marker is on State Route 49 in front of Crewe Cemetery in Nottoway County, Va. (Kathy Hillman Photo) While eating ice cream, he learned how the program enables local churches to support missions and ministries of Texas Baptists as well as the national convention with one monthly check. Afterward, his face proudly appeared in a giant CP cutout.

Baptists understood December brings the Week of Prayer for International (Foreign) Missions and giving to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering. They quickly comprehended that, in March, churches commemorate the Week of Prayer for North American (Home) Missions and promote its companion Annie Armstrong Easter Offering.

When I teach Girls in Action, a 4-foot-3-inch GA portrays Lottie Moon. One year, our daughter, Holly, was dwarfed beside the 6-foot adult playing Annie Armstrong. I explain that Lottie Moon (1840-1912) was tiny. Yet she earned one of the first master's degrees awarded a woman in the South and

served as an early single female missionary. She suggested in 1887 that Baptist women emulate their Methodist sisters by observing the week before Christmas “as a time of prayer and self-denial for missions.” The women responded. She died on Christmas Eve 1912, having served 40 years in China. In 1918, Annie Armstrong recommended the offering receive Moon’s name.



Kathy Hillman’s son Marshall with a Cooperative Program poster. (Kathy Hillman Photo)The GA girls talk about the height contrast and learn how Annie Armstrong (1850-1938) helped organize WMU in 1888. Although never a missionary, Armstrong served as WMU’s corresponding secretary and ministered in her hometown, Baltimore. In 1895, she led Baptist women to collect an offering for home missions and in 1934 allowed the addition of her name to “help the Lord’s work.”

Although all Southern Baptists claim Lottie and Annie, fewer have Mary Hill Davis in their Baptist-ese dictionary. She’s Texas’ exclusive. My husband’s high school classmate Danny Andrews tells about their friend Blaine Smith leading a group of Royal Ambassadors. He asked the name of the September missions offering. His son Patrick enthusiastically answered, “Mary Tyler Moore.” Mary, right. Three names, right. Answer, wrong.



Kathy Hillman with a life-size cut-out of Annie Armstrong. (Kathy Hillman Photo) Mary Hill Davis (1860-1934) served as president of Texas WMU from 1906 to 1931. She gave sacrificially, encouraged missionaries, implored churches to provide financially for retired ministers, promoted orphan care, pressed for support of Mexican Baptist churches and border ministry, and raised funds to build Woman's Memorial Dormitory at Baylor University, to which she gave her beautiful silver service. She urged Texas Baptists to "go forward in higher and greater achievements."

The Mary Hill Davis Offering for Texas Missions serves as a living memorial for this one who led the Baptist General Convention of Texas to establish a state missions week of prayer. This year, we'll observe the Week of Prayer

for Texas Missions Sept. 13-20, although offerings are accepted any time. The 2015 goal is a much-needed \$4.2 million. In 1935, Texas WMU renamed the offering in Davis' memory.

Even as we honor Mary Hill Davis, the BGCT Memorials Committee prepares a presentation at the annual meeting, recognizing those who passed away the previous year. The occasion always brings tears. Sometimes, I know those identified as pastor, musician, missions leader, Sunday school teacher or deacon. Sometimes, I don't but rejoice in their faithfulness.

Last year, the list included my mother and father-in-law among other friends and co-laborers. To include someone, e-mail a high-resolution picture to ladonna.renfro@texasbaptists.org by Sept. 25 and provide name, church home, and church or denominational position or service.

As we approach the memorials at the annual meeting and the Week of Prayer for Texas Missions, we pray, we give and we remember work produced by faith, labor prompted by love and endurance inspired by hope in Jesus Christ (1 Thessalonians 1:3).



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