

Proud of Our Baptist Heritage We Were and Are There

Our history of seeking to be faithful in following Jesus has been enfolded in persons as diverse as Roger Williams, Adoniram and Ann Judson, Luther Rice, Lott Carey, John Mason Peck and Isaac McCoy, Joanna P. Moore, Walter Rauschenbusch, Carl F. H. Henry, Jitsuo Morikawa, Martin Luther King, Jr., Edna Martin, Ralph Beaty, Adam Morales, Ed Tuller, Roger Fredrickson, Marion Boehr, Dan Fountain and Tony Campolo.

Each in his or her own way challenged or challenges the status quo for a deeper form of discipleship. Each was willing to turn from a cozy way to take a costly way, as each followed or follows our Lord.

Here are some outstanding examples of our faithfulness in doing the Lord's work here on earth:

In 1838 when Cherokee Indians marched and died on the "Trail of Tears,"

We were there. Our missionaries marched with the Cherokees. Later, we established the first institution of higher learning in the United States for Native Americans.

When newly freed slaves in the South needed help after of the Civil War,

We were there. We sent missionaries, such as Joanna P. Moore, and helped found many educational institutions, including Virginia Union University, Shaw University, Morehouse School of Religion and Spelman College.



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When women demonstrated and lobbied for equal rights,

We were there. American Baptists have long been advocates of the rights of women, with an ordained woman, Helen Barrett Montgomery, serving as the president of our denomination in the early 1900s.

When the U.S. interned Japanese Americans during World War II,

We were there. American Baptist missionaries voluntarily suffered internment along with their Japanese American friends.

When the Japanese invaded the Philippines in World War II,

We were there. Eleven American Baptist missionaries chose not to surrender, but to remain with their flock. In 1943, Japanese soldiers discovered their camp in the interior called Hopevale and moved to execute the missionaries. They asked for one hour to pray and then arose, and singing a hymn, said, "Now we are ready." They were lead away singly or in two's: the adults to be beheaded, the child to be bayoneted.

When Martin Luther King Jr. marched on Selma in 1965,

We were there. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was an American Baptist, and we carry on his work today around the globe through the defense of human rights, a core mission and ministry. For example, Luran Bethell works to cease the exploitation of women and children, and National Ministries inaugurated, in 2007, the J. Alfred Smith Prophetic Justice Institute, which seeks "to challenge, cultivate and equip a new generation of prophets who build their ministries with firm commitment to social justice."



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