

Mina Everett: Texas Bible Woman

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Young Mina Everett's heart soared as she heard the report of the Committee on Women's Work at the 1878 Southern Baptist Convention, meeting in Nashville, Tenn. "We hail it as a good omen that the women of our country have evinced such a desire to work in the missionary enterprise, and that they are realizing that the Great Head of the church is saying to them, 'Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature'" (SBC Minutes, 1878, p. 31-32). Full of joy at this affirmation, she had been sensing the call of God upon her life for some time.

Rumina Spencer Everett, called "Mina" from girlhood, was born in 1853 to Tillman and Mary Spencer Everett. Her father, a skeptic of all things Christian, taught her to be the same. As a young woman, however, she visited an aunt in Dublin, in Central Texas, and was radically converted. In the next few weeks, she led many young women to Christ and began to disciple them. Soon after, she traveled to Mexico on a mission trip, fell in love with the people and received her call to serve God through missions.

In 1885, Everett was the first single woman to be appointed as a missionary to Brazil by the Southern Baptist Convention's Foreign Mission Board. She served alongside William and Anne Luther Bagby, Texas Baptists' first missionaries. After Everett contracted yellow fever and beriberi—both life-threatening illnesses—she returned to the United States and, after a period of recovery, devoted her life to missions on the home front.

Texas women had begun organizing mission societies in 1878, which consolidated into the Texas Baptist Women Mission Workers in 1886, the year the Baptist state conventions, newspapers and colleges joined to form the Baptist General Convention of Texas. The women energetically helped build schools and orphanages, establish mission centers and appoint "Bible women" as agents. Everett served in this role, traveling the state and sharing the gospel with all who would listen.

In 1887, the BGCT appointed Mina Everett and Manuel Travino as missionaries to the Hispanics of Texas, and the dynamic duo began the first Spanish-speaking congregation in San Antonio that year. Everett was tireless, traveling the state speaking in churches, helping women organize for mission concerns and raising funds for church buildings. Two years later, she began service as corresponding secretary of the Woman's Missionary Union of Texas and led the women to take first steps toward a WMU building, a newspaper and a training school for women.

Later, Everett moved to New Mexico, where she lived until 1905, doing mission work with all cultures and forming five missionary societies—in Roswell, Alamogordo, Albuquerque, Las Vegas and Elida. She then worked in Kansas, California and Colorado, where her ministry continued to the end of her long and fruitful life.

Everett never married. She died in 1932 and was buried in the Pioneer Cemetery in Glenwood Springs, Garfield County, Colo. Her legacy remains strongest in Texas, however, where her vision, courage and dependence on God for direction and wisdom still live today in the hearts of Texas Baptists.