

## Baptist Personality: Eula Mae Henderson

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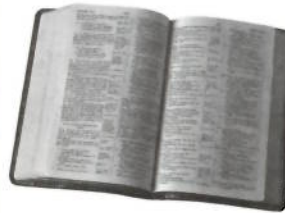
*“The Lord is always more than adequate for every situation.”*

**T**hese words hung on the wall of Eula Mae Henderson’s office for many of the 34 years she served in leadership of Woman’s Missionary Union of Texas. Elected in 1946 as State Young People’s Secretary, she became what was then called Executive Secretary/Treasurer in 1947, and served until the end of 1980. (The title was later changed to Executive Director.)

“More than adequate...” That was true when she became a Christian at the age of nine.

Overcoming the reluctance of childhood, she walked down the aisle of her home church in Oklahoma City. “I didn’t understand all the theology involved; I just knew that something connected me to Jesus and the cross” she later said.

It was true several years later when, as a Y.W.A., she attended the Southern Baptist Convention in Oklahoma City, and heard a message by Dr. Baker James Cauthen, who later headed the Foreign Mission Board. “It was the first time I understood the many ways a person could participate in missions...I didn’t know what I would do, but I did know the Lord would lead me.”



Her lengthy tenure was characterized by a strong and creative emphasis on training at all levels; one example would be the Texas WMU HouseParty (now Texas Leadership Conference) begun in 1954. She stressed the total educational program of the local church, not just WMU, and was a Sunday School worker in her church for more than thirty years.

She built strong relationships with other Baptist leaders, and frequently wrote pastors expressing gratitude for their support of the Cooperative Program or mission offerings. Also, she helped to make national mission offerings church-wide, and made the Mary Hill Davis Offering an integral part of Texas Baptist life.

She was a pivotal figure in the beginning of the River Ministry, the involvement in Minnesota/Wisconsin, and the enlarged work with ethnic minorities.

It is a tribute to her leadership that nine of her former staffers became WMU workers on the state level, including Joy Phillips Fenner, who followed her as Executive Director/Treasurer.

One of her former staffers summed up Eula Mae Henderson’s career with these words: “She modeled many of the qualities we look for in leadership, and became a legend in her own time because others made her so.”

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