

Hebron Baptist Church

Southern Baptists and WWI

The Great War began on July 28, 1914, following the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo. The murder of the heir presumptive to the throne of Austria-Hungary threw Europe into a war that lasted until November 1918.

“Prior to America’s entry into the war, there is strong antiwar sentiment (among Southern Baptists) that ‘we don’t need to get involved.’ But when President Woodrow Wilson, ‘who was favored by Southerners and Southern Baptists,’ recommended that America enter the war, Baptists ‘pretty much supported him.’” [Bill Sumners, director of the Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives, 2014]

During the war’s first two years, Germany repeatedly sank passenger and cargo ships, some with Americans aboard. The Germans justified their actions because the ships carried materials to be used in the war. In 1916, President Wilson demanded that Germany recognize “incontrovertible rights of neutrals.” (The British *Lusitania* ocean liner had been sunk by a German U-boat on May 7, 1915, with 1,959 passengers and crew on board – including 128 U.S. citizens.)

The military escalation made some Southern Baptists uneasy and concerned that they would soon find Americans involved in a “disastrous war.” Other Baptists elsewhere cautioned that military escalation might lead the U.S. into war.

In January 1917, Germany announced unrestricted submarine warfare against all shipping in violation of the pledge that no ocean liners would be sunk without warning and that the safety of all non-combatants would be guaranteed.

“Americans were very isolationist and didn’t want to get involved in other people’s conflicts. But when the United States entered the war and understood that it was not just European powers fighting themselves but a war of the autocrats against liberty, then to stand for liberty was something that was necessary. As people who stood for religious liberty, there was a ‘connection’ for Southern Baptists.” [Lloyd Harsch, professor of church history at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 2014]

Antiwar activists were few at the 1917 SBC annual meeting. A proposed resolution pledged support to President Wilson and the government.

Source: David Roach, “World War I remembered as ‘stand for liberty’ 100 years later,” Baptist Press, Aug 2014



In Remembrance



*Guy Bond
Earl Brock
Ken Broughton
Gil Clifton
Gene Conrad
Bill Davis
Jim Davis, Sr.
Frank Jones
Don Lainhart
Jim McConnell
Dan Noble
Asvil (John) McVey
Paulette Schalck
Art Schneider
Paul Sewell
Bob Skidmore*

May 29, 2023

Shavuot / Pentecost



The Jewish holiday of *Shavuot* begins this year at sunset on Thursday, May 25 and ends at sundown on Saturday, May 27. In Leviticus 23:15-22, this feast of the Lord is called “Feast of Weeks.” It is called the “Feast of Harvest” in Exodus 23:16.

During the days of the Tabernacle and the First and Second Temples, sheaves of barley (the winter crop) were brought to the Temple daily, beginning on Passover until *Shavuot*, the start of the spring wheat harvest 50 days later. The Jewish people celebrated the bringing of their firstfruits of their harvest to the Temple, thanking and praising God for His provision.

Since biblical times, *Shavuot* is also identified with the giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai. To commemorate the giving of the Torah there is a tradition of staying up all night studying Jewish texts. Because the holiday began as a grain harvest festival, the Book of Ruth is read on *Shavuot*.

On Sunday, May 28, 2023, Christians will not celebrate a grain harvest, but remember *Pentecost* – the coming of the Holy Spirit, as promised by Christ in Acts 1:4-5. The Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1) came 50 days after Firstfruits, so it always came during the Feast of Weeks – *Shavuot*.

“But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the *firstfruits* of those who have fallen asleep...But each one is his own order: Christ the *firstfruits*, afterward those who are Christ’s at His coming.” (1 Corinthians 15:20, 23)

Stars in the Window



A practice started during World War I, millions of families – one in five – displayed blue-star service flags in the front windows of their homes. Each star represented a son or daughter in military service. Many families displayed multiple stars.

If a loved one was killed, a gold star covered or took the place of the blue star. These service flags and stars reminded everyone of the enormous human cost of the war.

“There’s a Little Blue Star in the Window (And it Means All the World to Me)” was a World War I song written in 1918. Its lyrics were written by Paul B. Armstrong and its music by F. Henri Klickmann.

Armstrong and Klickmann also wrote “When the Little Blue Star in the Window Has Turned to Gold” in 1918.

