



**TWENTIETH-CENTURY
SHAPERS**

• OF •

BAPTIST SOCIAL ETHICS

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Chapter 12

C. ANNE DAVIS (1938–2006): SHAPING AN ETHIC OF “DOING THE WORD”

T. Laine Scales

Thirty years before the term “faith-based organization” was coined, Cora Anne Davis was training social workers to lead congregations and other church-related organizations doing social ministries. Davis, educated at the Carver School of Missions and Social Work in the late 1950s, was one of the first female members of the faculty at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky, and became its founding dean of the Carver School of Church Social Work. Davis led her colleagues to develop the concept of “church social work” and educated the generations of church social workers currently leading today’s Baptist congregations and faith-based organizations. She articulated an ethic of justice, as described in the Old and New Testaments, which mandates that God’s people minister with their communities and in the world.

A Faith-Filled Childhood

Cora Anne Davis was born on April 17, 1937 in Baskerville, Virginia, surrounded by a large extended family with over forty aunts and uncles living in her village. “There were just oodles of people to take care of you,” she recalled, “we rented farms right straight in a row and I could always find a home; I had seven or eight homes.”¹ This nurturing community of family shaped Davis’s understanding of relationships, particularly helping relationships. When she became an

adult, her agricultural experiences often set the stage for many of her sermons and speeches.

Davis’s extended family comprised the majority of the congregation in Ebenezer Baptist Church, which cooperated with the local Methodist church in a way that she described as “very ecumenical.” She said, “We were neighbors first and Christians second, so whatever made sense to us, we did. We didn’t think of people as being Baptist or Methodist. They were our neighbors, our friends. And when something special was going on at their church, we’d head over there.”² These early experiences of a church sharing resources and cooperating with neighbors would shape her understanding of how churches partner for helping ministries.

Ebenezer Baptist was “selectively related to the Southern Baptist Convention,” recalled Davis. “We used Southern Baptist Sunday School literature and we gave to the Cooperative Program, but we were too far away to let anything that the Convention was doing make any difference to us.... We never got tied up with rules and regulations. If we could afford it and it made sense to us and it didn’t hurt anybody, then away we’d go.”³ Ebenezer placed a high value on employing a preacher that was “seminary educated.” Cooperating with two other Baptist churches, they engaged a preacher for every second Sunday morning and fourth Sunday night.⁴ This arrangement required church members to lead the ministries on an ongoing basis: a model that would become an important part of her ecclesiology. Having a part time preacher also created opportunities for other church members, including Anne, to preach.

At age thirteen she was baptized and, at the same time, made a commitment to full-time ministry. Once she made a commitment to Christ and to vocational ministry, “life was different from then on.”⁵ Anne did not have a clear picture of what type of ministry she would do. “At that point, all I knew a woman could do was be a missionary to China,” she recalled. She did not particularly want to do that, “But

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

¹C. Anne Davis, interview with author, March 15 and 23, 2005, Waco, Texas, Baylor University Institute for Oral History.

I would have, if nothing else had opened up.”⁶ Anne would have to wait until her college years to discover other types of ministry that would shape her calling and career. However, as a young person she understood one essential truth about herself that would pull her toward social work: instead of mystical religious encounters, she experienced God’s love through relationships: “It did not fall my lot to have too many visions from God.... What I was going to know about God I had to find inside relationship with other people.”⁷

At Ebenezer Baptist Church, Davis had plenty of opportunities for leadership as a young person, and traditional gender roles did not always apply: “There were so few of us there was a job for everybody if we wanted to make this thing work.”⁸ A very determined woman in the church led the Girl’s Auxiliary (GA’s), the program for girls in Woman’s Missionary Union (WMU).⁹ These WMU networks that Davis established with the help of her GA leader would eventually lead to scholarship support for her college and seminary education. She forged a lifelong devotion to WMU and credits her early GA experience with providing “a window into the world.”¹⁰

In spring 1955 at the age of seventeen, Davis came home from college for Easter weekend and preached her first sermon at Ebenezer. She recalled, “They didn’t care whether I was a man or a woman. In that part of the country, everybody had to work; everybody had a role.”¹¹ Preaching would continue to be an important aspect of her ministry throughout the rest of the twentieth century as Southern Baptists fought over women’s roles in ministry, particularly preaching. Though she was a talented preacher, Davis would find her primary identification in another type of ministry: church social work.

⁶Ibid.

⁷C. Anne Davis, “The Church and Helping Ministries,” Continuing Theological Education Conference, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville KY, July 12, 1972.

⁸Davis, interview with author, March 15 and 23, 2005.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Ibid.

Becoming a Church Social Worker

At age seventeen Davis went to Averett College, a Baptist school in Danville, Virginia. She was supported by WMU scholarships and worked in the college’s dining hall. She transferred to Westhampton College, the women’s college at Virginia Baptist’s University of Richmond, and again received WMU scholarships and worked in the music library. In her junior year she found her life’s work when she enrolled in an introduction to social work course. “It was like somebody was singing my song,” she remembered, “I just knew that was what I wanted to do.”¹²

As graduation from Westhampton was approaching, Davis remembered her commitment to ministry and decided to complete further social work education. In fall 1958 she enrolled at the Carver School of Missions and Social Work in Louisville, Kentucky, and was again supported by WMU scholarships. Carver School’s roots began in 1907 when Southern Baptist women established the Woman’s Missionary Union Training School to prepare women as missionaries and social workers. Previously reserved for white women only, the school began admitting men and people of all races in 1952 when it was renamed to honor W. O. Carver, legendary missions professor at the seminary.¹³

In the next phase of her professional development, Davis clarified her ideas about the nature of the church: experience was her teacher. Upon graduation from the Carver School in 1960, she went to work for the Home Mission Board of the SBC (HMB) and was placed in the Baptist Center in Lexington, Kentucky, where she worked for six years as executive director. “It was from the beginning a blessed thing,” recalled Davis. Volunteers in the Elkhorn Baptist Association bought an old house and created a dynamic Baptist Center under her leadership. The outreach was so successful that the group soon moved into a second building. “These people were remarkable Christians; I’ve never met another bunch like them,” she remembered, “it’s just endless what those people did. We were

¹²Ibid.

¹³T. Laine Scales, *All That Fits a Woman: Training Southern Baptist Women for Charity and Mission, 1907–1926* (Macon GA: Mercer University Press, 2000) 252–53.

having two thousand people a month in that center."¹⁴ Working with a strong group of lay leaders in the community, Davis refined her methods of social work and continued to develop her theology of helping.

During this period, Davis came to understand Christian social ministries as the role of every believer and the mandate of every church. Throughout her career, she often repeated, "The church, to be the church, *must* be involved in social ministries."¹⁵ Davis defined the role of the professional social worker as an equipper of church members carrying out the social ministry mandate. In later years she reflected upon three reasons why she gave her life to church social work: she was imitating the life and model of Jesus, she drew from scripture a "justice mandate" and a "priestly mandate" that called Christians to serve other people, and she understood social ministries to be "an integral part of the nature of the church: that Christians were to do what Jesus did until he comes again."¹⁶

Her work at the Lexington center helped Davis to refine her calling and role. She identified herself as both a "minister of the Gospel" and a social worker. She spoke of the first as her calling and the second as her profession.¹⁷ As Leon McBeth notes, after World War II Baptists broadened their uses of the word minister to refer to other church workers besides the pastor, opening new opportunities among Southern Baptists for women like Davis to refer to themselves as ministers.¹⁸ She articulated her own calling to ministry as an individual as well as her unique perspective on the dangers of responding to needs: "I am in this work not because of the needs of the world. I am in this work because I believe that as a Christian, I have no alternative but to be in this work. You see, it's not because of the sad condition of the world that the church needs to minister, it is

because it is inherent in the very nature of the church that it *MUST* do that, as much as bodies must breathe."¹⁹

Refining Social Work Knowledge and Skills

After six years at the Lexington Center, Davis was convinced that social work knowledge and skills were the best resources for "doing" church. She decided that she needed to earn a Master of Social Work (MSW) degree, both to enhance her skills and increase her credibility in the profession. She resigned from the HMB in 1966 and planned to enroll in the Raymond A. Kent School of Social Work at the University of Louisville. However, she was required to live in Louisville for two years to establish residency and pay a lower tuition rate. In 1966, moving back to Louisville, she found ministry employment on the staff of Crescent Hill Baptist Church. The suburban white church wanted to establish a Baptist center in an impoverished urban neighborhood called Portland. The church hired her to lead the congregation's social ministries as well as to establish and direct the new Portland Center.²⁰

Davis notes that her contact with legendary Baptist pastor John Claypool helped to shape her theology. Claypool led the congregation toward activism with Louisville's African Americans during a time of racial crisis. Davis remembers standing in the fellowship hall of the church singing "We Shall Overcome" for the first time. During a season of riots, she had to be escorted by police to her work at the Baptist Center in Portland.²¹ As she had planned, after two years at Crescent Hill, Davis enrolled in the Kent School and pursued the MSW, continuing part-time ministry at Crescent Hill.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵C. Anne Davis, address, National Consultation on Community Ministries, Carver School of Church Social Work, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville KY, April 22, 1988.

¹⁶T. Laine Scales and Andrew Rawls, "Church Social Work in Rural America" (Louisville: Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1992) video recording.

¹⁷Davis, Address, National Consultation.

¹⁸Leon McBeth, *Women in Baptist Life* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1979) 164.

¹⁹C. Anne Davis, "Current Developments in the Field of Social Ministries," audio recording, 2 May 1979.

²⁰Davis, interview with author, March 15 and 23, 2005.

²¹Ibid.

*Integrating and Teaching Biblical Models
and Social Work Principles*

At Kent School, Davis continued reflecting on how to integrate her Christian tradition with what she was learning in social work. She explained in later years, "I was so excited because a profession was meshing with [my] Christian faith." She found parallels between social work helping models and the life of Jesus: "When I took my textbooks and when I opened up my Bible to where Jesus dealt with the woman at the well that it was step by step the very same process, you see there is only one way to redeem in this world and whether you get it out of a psychology book or whether you get it out of a social work textbook you can find it right here [in the Bible]."²²

Another social work principle that Davis described was this: The worker must not assume he or she knows what the client wants or need; rather, the client must express his or her wants and needs. "And my mind went back," recalled Davis, "to when the blind man approached Jesus and Jesus didn't assume that the man wanted to be healed of his blindness; do you remember what Jesus asked him? 'What do you want?'"²³ Davis continued, describing social work methods of gathering community resources, which reminded her of the biblical story known as the "feeding of the thousands": the disciples got so panicky. Five thousand people to feed and no money. Jesus said the very same things to them I had heard in the classroom. He said, "Go out to the crowd that gathered with the need, and they also have the resources; and your job as a disciple is to bring those resources and give them to God. They will be blessed and you can redistribute them." Community resources; just some loaves and fishes!²⁴

In 1970, after completing the MSW degree, Davis was recruited by Walter Delemarter as an assistant professor in the School of Religious Education at Southern Seminary. The social work program was a modified continuation of the Carver School from which Davis

had graduated in 1960. Unable to achieve accreditation without being housed in a college or university, the school had closed in 1963 due to declining enrollments. Carver School's assets were merged with Southern Seminary, under the protest of alumni, including Anne Davis.²⁵ Social work was an uneasy fit for the School of Religious Education, a union Davis would later describe as a "shotgun wedding."²⁶ In spite of these tensions, under Delamarter's leadership, the social work program was growing steadily when he left in 1973 for a sabbatical. Instead of returning, Delamarter accepted another position, leaving Davis to lead the program.²⁷

For the following two decades Davis would educate a new generation of Baptist church social workers. Her position opened the door for further preaching and speaking engagements, providing Davis opportunities to articulate for Baptists her ideas about church and social work. Dismayed when she saw that some Baptists utilized social ministry projects as merely a vehicle for proselytizing, Davis emphasized that social ministries were for all persons, saying, "I do not connect this kind of ministry solely with lost people. I believe there are many Christians who need social ministries; so I am talking not only about [social ministry] as an evangelistic effort but as a basic ministry effort."²⁸ In the classroom, in denominational workshops, and in continuing education events, Davis continued to emphasize the importance of helping others in the church's calling and mission. Furthermore, helpers must be competent and church leaders must lead the way. She suggested, "Any helping we do must be grounded in theological bases or presuppositions. For the Christian, theological questions are always the first questions: helping must find its purpose and its roots in theology.... Just as theology must be systematic,

²²Davis, "The Church and Helping Ministries."

²³Ibid.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Scales, *All That Fits a Woman*, 254; Anne Davis, "History of the Carver School of Church Social Work," *Review and Expositor* 85 (Spring 1988): 212-15.

²⁶Davis, "History of Carver School," 216.

²⁷Anne C. Davis, "A History of Christian Ethics, Church and Community, and Social Work at Southern Seminary," *Review and Expositor* 82/1 (Winter 1985): 97.

²⁸Davis, "Current Developments."

helping must be systematic; people think anyone can do it, but there is a way of going about it."²⁹

Davis noted often in her sermons that the gospel message must be accompanied by an action ethic: "Witness is always word and event." She suggested, "As you read about the life of Christ, something is said and something is done. The word was made flesh and dwelt among us. I do not see as much of the local church becoming flesh in the world as I would like to see.... I am saved, I am being redeemed, I must then demonstrate to the world through doing something, the nature of the effect of that redemption on me."³⁰

A Model and Support for Baptist Women

Davis, like many Baptist women of her generation, had grown up in the arms of WMU, participating in women's mission activities from her childhood. Her college and Carver School education had been supported by WMU. Carver School's predecessor, the WMU Training School, had been established in 1907 by the women's organization. When Davis arrived in 1958, control of the Carver School had been transferred from WMU to Southern Seminary. However, WMU influences still permeated the school; the curriculum included studies of WMU methods as well as a strong extracurricular program of WMU organizations. Davis and other Carver students visited with WMU leaders who came to campus. Soon Davis had distinguished herself to WMU leaders and was invited for speaking engagements. She would continue a close relationship with WMU throughout her career and into retirement when she would serve as a consultant for the organization.

While exploring theological questions concerning social ministries, Davis also made significant contributions to the ongoing dialogue in the SBC about the role of women in ministry. Beginning her career in 1960, Davis was in the first generation of Southern Baptist women that used the word "ministry" to describe their calling

²⁹C. Anne Davis, "The Director of Missions" (audio recording) Louisville: Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, January 19, 1982.

³⁰Davis, "Current Developments."

and work.³¹ In 1976 she articulated for SBC audiences the dilemma of the woman who is called and prepared to minister, but cannot find ministry employment within the SBC. She described the "painful paradox" experienced by seminary women: "It is hard to handle the difference between the encouragement one received up to the point of seminary graduation and the mixed response she then received in her attempts to secure employment."³² As the SBC entered a deep schism in the 1980s, Davis and other women faculty would continue drawing attention to the matter of women's role in the ministries of the church.

Building Carver School of Church Social Work

As Davis continued teaching social work she became concerned, partly due to her own experience, that graduates who earned a Masters of Religious Education degree with a major in social work "were always going to have one hand tied behind them until they get accreditation."³³ Davis began to imagine the possibility of finally establishing an accredited MSW program at Southern Seminary. This was a revival of a dream she and other alumni had carried for the Carver School when accreditation had been impossible.³⁴

In 1979 Davis and her faculty team convinced Seminary Provost Roy L. Honeycutt that they could demonstrate the feasibility of creating an accredited MSW program. After conducting a thorough self-study, the faculty team proposed a plan in which the seminary would establish an independent school of social work.³⁵ The social workers found support among the seminary faculty. Davis recalls that Dr. Henlee Barnett, professor of ethics, was particularly supportive and saw the ethics and social work departments as partners.³⁶ Meanwhile, Davis had been earning a Ph.D. in higher education,

³¹McBeth, *Women in Baptist Life*, 164.

³²Anne Davis, "Women and Seminaries," *Contempo* (January 1976): 15.

³³Davis, interview with author, March 15 and 23, 2005.

³⁴Scales, *All That Fits a Woman*, 254; Anne Davis, "History of Carver School," 212-15.

³⁵Davis, "History of Christian Ethics," 97.

³⁶Davis, interview with author, March 15 and 23, 2005.

completing the degree in 1984 at the University of Louisville. That same year, Southern Seminary President Roy L. Honeycutt opened the new Carver School of Church Social Work, naming Davis the founding dean. She and her faculty team immediately developed a curriculum that they would submit for accreditation from the Council on Social Work Education. At the core of the new program was the concept of church social work.

Conceptualizing "Church Social Work." While Davis shares credit with her faculty for reviving and shaping the concept "church social work," the term as conceived and promoted at Carver School clearly reflects Davis's strong influence in two areas: her own ecclesiology, shaped by her work experience with congregations, and her confidence that social work was the best degree for church leaders doing social ministry. The term "church social work" had been used in the Carver School in the 1950s and again in the early 1970s under Delamarter.³⁷ Davis and her faculty refined the term as they established the new program. Throughout her career she had identified herself as a minister of the gospel and a professional social worker. She led students to embrace their callings to church social work, expressing this dual identity.³⁸

Building on the concept of church social work, Davis led the Carver School faculty to create a unique curriculum for professional leaders. The vision was that Southern Baptist church social workers, called to ministry and credentialed by their profession, would lead the social ministries of the denomination's local churches and social service agencies. These workers would also lead the ministries of Southern Baptist agencies such as children's homes, Baptist centers, weekday ministries, and homeless shelters.³⁹ The church social worker would need one year of theological preparation coupled with two years of masters-level social work courses. The social work courses included consideration of the contexts of local church or

denominational agency as well as consideration of one's own faith formation and calling.⁴⁰

The new program was potentially controversial, both within the denomination and within the social work profession. Some Southern Baptist critics feared that an emphasis on social services would eclipse a focus on evangelism. On the other hand, the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) questioned the school's ability to train professionals in a seminary context that added a ministerial calling into the mix. Fortunately, Southern Baptist critics were few in the 1980s and the new Carver School had strong support from agencies such as the Home Mission Board and Woman's Missionary Union. Davis prepared herself for the controversy within the social work profession; the test would be whether or not professional gatekeepers would accredit the school. With firm belief in the Carver School's fitness for accreditation, Davis went to Washington, DC, to the headquarters of CSWE, accompanied by the seminary's lawyers. After long discussion of the school's purpose and methods, Davis emerged with the victory for Southern Seminary. In 1987 the Carver School became the first and only MSW program in the world to be located in a seminary and accredited by CSWE.

Church Social Work: Influencing the SBC and the Social Work Profession. After achieving accreditation, Davis led the Carver School in an intensive growth period as the school's graduates went to work in churches, SBC agencies such as the Home and Foreign Mission Boards, Baptist children's homes, and other social service organizations.

While many denominational agencies and churches benefited from the growth of church social work, the HMB, seat of the SBC's social ministries, was perhaps one of the strongest supporters and partners. Davis had launched her career in 1960 with the HMB and had a strong reputation and excellent contacts at the agency. She and her social work faculty colleagues secured student scholarships from the HMB and included agency representatives as advisors to the

³⁷Davis, "History of Christian Ethics," 97.

³⁸Davis, "Church Social Work."

³⁹Patricia Bailey, "Southern Baptist Programs of Church Social Work," *Review and Expositor* 85/2 (Spring 1988): 285.

⁴⁰The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, "Self-Study Report for Candidacy for the Master of Social Work Degree," Louisville KY, March 15, 1987.

Carver School. The HMB provided internships for Carver School students as well as jobs after graduation.

Students and faculty gave back to the HMB and to the denomination by providing manuals and models for practice. For example, in 1987 Davis and Carver faculty member Patricia Bailey collaborated with others on a manual of operations for Baptist Centers called *It's OK to Care*, published by the HMB.⁴¹ Student interns prepared *Models for Ministry*, a series of manuals that enlarged the knowledge base of HMB workers. The strong relationship between Carver School and the HMB led directly to service opportunities for Carver graduates. In Davis's vision, church social workers, called to ministry and trained for service, would lead the denomination's social services by populating HMB supported leadership positions in agencies and local churches all over the nation.

In addition to making a significant impact on the denomination, the Carver School convinced the social work profession to consider the church as a viable context for social work practice. This was no easy task. Carver faculty member Diana Garland remembered social work of the 1970s as "rather allergic to the church,...lack[ing] any framework for considering a marriage between the profession and religious organizations."⁴² Davis and her faculty worked to build the needed framework. By 1995, the National Association of Social Workers included church social work as an entry in its *Encyclopedia of Social Work*. This entry, authored by Garland, signaled the profession's acceptance of this specialized area of practice pioneered by Davis and the faculty and students she led.⁴³

Separate Roles for Church and State

As the Carver School flourished, Davis focused her scholarship on one of her favorite topics: the calling and role of the church in the

⁴¹Patricia Bailey, et al., *It's OK to Care: Manual of Operations, Baptist Centers and Pastor Center Ministries* (Atlanta: Home Mission Board, 1987).

⁴²Diana Garland, "Tribute to C. Anne Davis," Baylor University, Waco, TX, 4 April, 2002.

⁴³See Diana Garland, "Church Social Work," *Encyclopedia of Social Work* (Washington, DC: NASW, 1995).

world. In the 1990s church leaders, social workers, and policy makers debated the role of the church in social welfare. In Baptist life, the SBC, under conservative leadership, sought a diminished role for social services in favor of an evangelism focus. On the national scene politicians were touting the "faith-based organization" as a key player in America's social welfare system. The national landscape was changing, so Davis made her message relevant. As she addressed a gathering of community ministers and church social workers, Davis predicted the uneasy mix of church and social welfare that would emerge in the twenty-first century. She warned her audience that they must carefully consider the role of the church in social welfare: "Many of the services you [church social workers] are providing *should* be provided by the public services of a democratic society on behalf of its people as a right and not a privilege."⁴⁴ She explained that while the church has been obliged to become a primary service provider in times of need, this role should not become a permanent solution to social welfare problems. "This is a great and dangerous distortion of the role of the church in social work and social welfare," she noted. Davis argued further that while the church definitely should do social ministries, "we should make it abundantly clear that it is a temporary role and that we will clearly couple it with the role of advocacy and empowerment designed to influence public policy.... The church collectively does not have the resources to meet the need," she warned, "even if we assume the church had the will to do it."⁴⁵ As the role of faith-based organizations has grown in the twenty first century, Davis's prophetic words continue to inspire those who advocate for government, rather than churches, to take the responsibility for permanent social welfare efforts, while churches supplement with social ministries.

A Dream Deferred

Under Davis's leadership, the Carver School prospered for twelve years. However, as her retirement years were approaching, the SBC was embroiled in controversy as conservatives took over

⁴⁴Davis, "Church Social Work."

⁴⁵Ibid.

leadership of the denomination and attempted to turn the denomination to the right. Southern, the denomination's flagship seminary, became a battleground as conservatives gained control of its Board of Trustees.⁴⁶ Davis predicted trouble for the Carver School. Though she had hoped to retire in the coming years, she feared a vacancy in the dean's office might provide conservative trustees with a chance to close the school. It seemed better to get a strong dean in place while President Roy L. Honeycutt was still at the helm. She announced her retirement in 1993, the same year Honeycutt announced his.⁴⁷

In fall 1994 R. Albert Mohler assumed the presidency upon Honeycutt's departure. As Baptist historian Bill Leonard noted, Mohler argued that Calvinism was the dominant theological tradition in the SBC, and he advocated a return Calvinistic thinking.⁴⁸ Davis predicted that the new president's theological beliefs would come into conflict with social work values, saying:

If you believe in election and that some people are foreordained before God to either be saved or damned...then to try to change a person's life situation is trying to act like God.... And I saw redemption as an ongoing, never ending, never-give-up-hope proposition for any person,...that we're people of free will.... Jesus didn't die for just a few select elect but for everybody, and I knew as soon as he got on board and started talking the way he was talking that there wouldn't be any room for social work with his theology.⁴⁹

As Mohler assumed the presidency, Davis had returned to the classroom full time. Her colleague Diana Garland had been appointed dean to lead the Carver School through the transition. In a storm of controversy in 1995 Mohler fired Garland from her position

⁴⁶ Bill Leonard, "Seminary Crackdown," *Christian Century* (May 10, 1995): 500-501.

⁴⁷ Davis, interview with author, March 15 and 23, 2005.

⁴⁸ Leonard, "Seminary Crackdown," 501.

⁴⁹ Davis, interview with author, March 15 and 23, 2005.

as dean, accusing her of "a breach of personal and confidential communication" after she publicly objected to his deviating from institutional hiring policies, which led to rejection of a faculty candidate; the central issue was the role of women in church leadership.⁵⁰ In April 1995 Southern Seminary trustees appointed a subcommittee to study what should be done with the Carver School. Several months later, the trustees voted unanimously to close the Carver School, stating that the theological direction of the seminary and social work education were incongruent with one another.⁵¹

By 1995 Davis and other seminary faculty were weary of the battles. In her role as chair of the faculty club she approached the president in February 1995, before Garland was fired, and asked if the seminary would negotiate a buyout of contracts. "We don't want to be here, you don't want us here, but we can't just be kicked out," they argued. Davis and twelve other faculty retired in the buyout plan in 1995.⁵²

When she left the faculty of Southern Seminary, Anne Davis had witnessed the closing of her beloved Carver School twice: once in 1963 when it was merged with the seminary and again in 1995. The first time, she was a former student grieving the loss of her *alma mater*. At the second closing, she mourned the loss of the school she had resurrected. She and her faculty team envisioned the MSW degree, implemented its curriculum, and celebrated the impact of church social work on the denomination and the social work profession, only to witness the demise of the Carver School in the midst of denominational battles. For Davis, the closing of the Carver school signaled the SBC's abandonment of its commitment to social ministries, a commitment that Davis had seen flourish in the 1970s and 1980s and recede in the 1990s.

As Garland noted, we must look beyond the events of the Carver School closing to understand its place in history and Davis's

⁵⁰ Diana Garland, "When Professional Ethics and Religious Politics Conflict: A Case Study," *Social Work and Christianity* 26 (Fall 1999): 60-76; Scales, *All That Fits a Woman*, 254-55.

⁵¹ Garland, "Professional Ethics," 60-76.

⁵² Davis, interview with author, March 15 and 23, 2005.

influence: "If one puts one's evaluation in human organizations, this looks like tragedy. But if you look at the leaders for congregations and for church agencies that got their start in the classrooms and mentoring of Anne Davis,...if you look at the baccalaureate and now graduate [social work] programs that have been given courage and vision by the work of Anne Davis and those she led, what a legacy!"⁵³

Supporting the Next Generation in Ministry

As Davis departed from Carver School she sought ways to continue serving among Baptists. As conservatives gained control of the denomination's agencies, the HMB's priorities shifted. The social ministries division of the HMB had been closed to forge the new North American Mission Board and the social ministries division was dismantled.⁵⁴ Disillusioned with the SBC, Davis served as a consultant to Woman's Missionary Union. Organized as an independent auxiliary to the SBC, WMU had escaped capture by denominational leaders who had reshaped other SBC agencies and seminaries. Davis launched a series of Bible studies called *Come Go with Me*, which were published in a book of the same title, for WMU audiences. She worked as a consultant to various social work and Baptist-related agencies for three years, traveling constantly until it became wearying. Realizing she was a "homebody," she looked for a place to settle and rest. In 1998 she moved to Waco, Texas, where two of her friends and former Carver School colleagues had settled. Davis served as director of operations for Advocacy Center for Crime Victims and Children, an agency directed by her former student, Carver School colleague, and friend Patricia Bailey. Davis also worked as a consultant to Baylor University School of Social Work, designing a new MSW curriculum with her former colleague Diana Garland. Garland had moved to Baylor in 1998 to continue the Carver School dream of preparing social workers for work in agencies, now called "faith-based organizations." In 2003 Davis

retired from social work and lived in Waco, Texas, where she was a member of Seventh and James Baptist Church. She died 9 November 2006 after an extended illness.

Significant Contributions to an Ethic of Social Responsibility

C. Anne Davis left a tremendous legacy for Baptists concerned about social ministry: a legacy for laypersons, churches, church social workers, and for women in ministry. For Christian laypersons, Davis provided insightful theological reflections on what Christian scripture has to say about helping relationships. She articulated a biblical basis for helping and a reminder that every Christian is called to minister to other human beings.

In addition, her sermons and writings urge Baptist churches to take seriously their social responsibility in the world and their obligation to provide community leadership for important social and ethical issues. For Southern Baptist women seeking ministry positions through the 1970s and 1980s, Davis served as a model and a source of encouragement: she was a skilled preacher, the first woman dean in an SBC seminary, and provided written and oral encouragement for other women seeking ministry careers. Finally, for social workers called to professional ministry, Anne Davis provided a model for integrating that calling with professional social work preparation. Her experience of working on her own as a student toward that integration led to her commitment to provide an educational structure for church social work that continues as a model for professional social workers preparing to work in churches or other faith-based organizations.

⁵³ Garland, "Tribute."

⁵⁴ Martin King, "HMB Job Offers, Terminations Begin NAMB Staffing Process," *Baptist Press News*, April 3, 1997; Jennifer Davis, "SBC Agency Reports to WMU Recap Upcoming Restructuring," *Baptist Press News*, January 20, 1997.