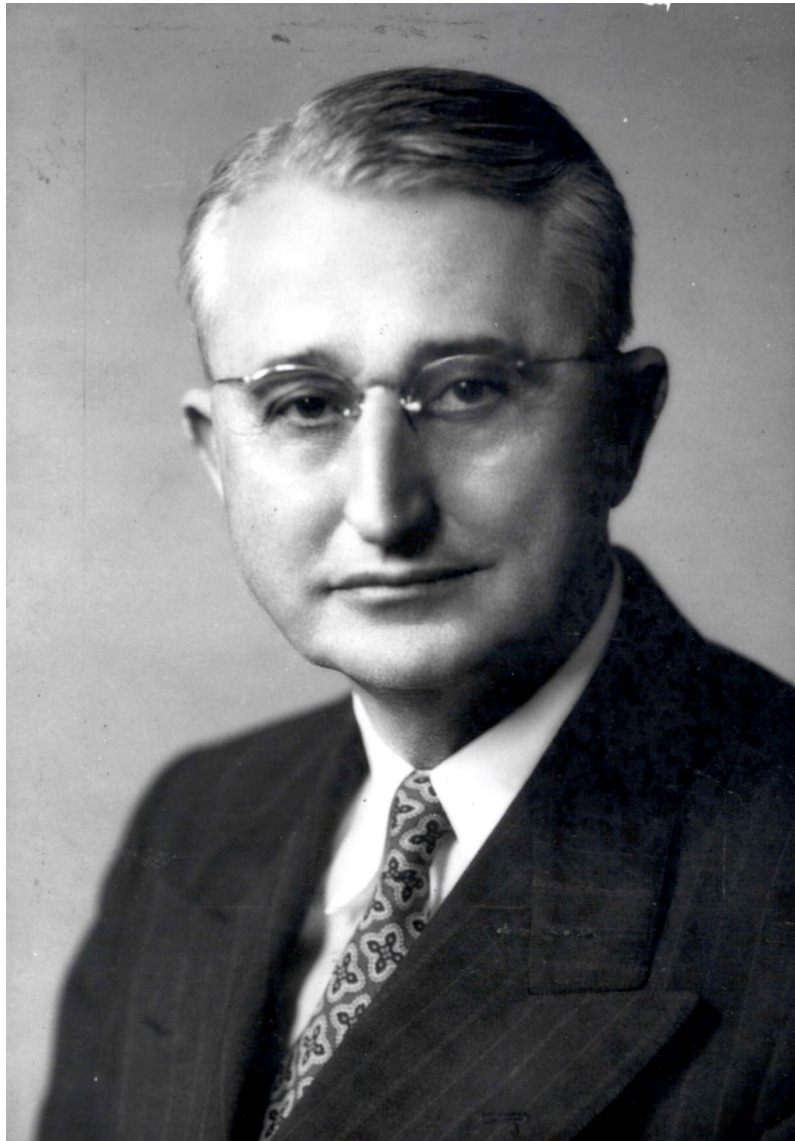


JOSEPH MARTIN DAWSON

COLLECTION

AR 115



Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives

July, 2012

Joseph Martin Dawson Collection

AR 115

Summary

Main Entry: Joseph Martin Dawson Collection

Date Span: 1935 – 1954

Abstract: Southern Baptist clergyman, Christian statesman, and denominational leader. Dawson served as Executive Director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs from 1946-1953. The collection includes letters, notes, pamphlets, and clippings concerning the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs.

Size: One box (60 items)

Collection #: AR 115

Historical Sketch

Joseph Martin Dawson was born in Ellis County, Texas, June 21, 1879. He was ordained to the ministry at First Baptist Church, Waco, Texas in 1900. Dawson attended Baylor University and received a B.A. degree in 1904 and a D.D. in 1916. He also received an L.L.D. in 1936 from Howard Payne College. Dawson was married to Willie Turner Dawson June 3, 1908, and the couple had five children.

J. M. Dawson was a pastor, denominational leader, author, civil libertarian, and public affairs executive. He was pastor of First Church in Hillsboro, Texas from 1908 till 1912; First Church, Temple, Texas, 1912 – 1915; and First Church, Waco, Texas, 1915 – 1946. Dawson was recognized as an ardent and articulate defender of religious liberty and the separation of church and state in America. He was the first Executive Director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs in Washington, D.C. and served in that position 1946 – 1953.

Dawson was a prolific author, penning 12 books and contributing to many others. His work in the denominational field included: editor, Baptist Standard; founder, Hillcrest Baptist Hospital; chairman of the committee that created the Southern Baptist Convention Relief and Annuity Board; chairman of the Executive Committee in 1945; and chairman of the SBC committee on World Peace. He also served on the boards of trustees at Baylor University and Bishop College.

Dawson represented Baptists at the founding of the United Nations in San Francisco and presented a petition that called for a declaration of religious liberty to be incorporated in

the charter of the United Nations. He was a passionate civil libertarian and was a member of the Baptist World Alliance Commission on Religious Liberty, the Department of Religious Liberty of the National Council of Churches, and the American Civil Liberties Union. In addition, he helped found Protestants and Other Americans United for the Separation of Church and State. In honor of its distinguished alumnus, Baylor University established the J. M. Dawson Studies in Church and State graduate degree program and the J. M. Dawson Church-State Research Center.

J. M. Dawson encountered a great deal of controversy because of his deep convictions for the rights of people and his commitment to religious liberty. But because of his Christian faith, in addition to his passion for social justice, civil rights, world peace, free society, and public morality, he faced controversy unafraid.

J. M. Dawson died July 6, 1973 in Corsicana, Texas.

Scope and Content Note

The J. M. Dawson Collection consists of five notebooks of notes, clippings, pamphlets, and letters concerning the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, the separation of church and state, home influences on certain important leaders, religious liberty, and George W. Truett. The material covers the years 1935 – 1954 and also includes subjects such as the funeral address of Rufus W. Weaver; the article, “Do We Believe in Regeneration;” notes on Isaac Backus, Thomas Jefferson, John Leland, James Madison, Walter Rauschenbusch, Luther Rice, and Roger Williams; and a memorial address by J. M. Dawson at Ridgecrest after the death of George W. Truett.

Arrangement

Arranged in alphabetical order by folder title

Provenance

Donated to Southern Baptist Historical Commission (Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives) by Dr. Joseph M. Dawson in 1954.

Preferred Citation

Joseph Martin Dawson Collection, Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives, Nashville, Tennessee

Access Restrictions

None

Subject Terms

Truett, George Washington, 1867 – 1944
 Religious liberty
 Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs
 Church and state

Related Materials

“The Legacy of Joseph Martin Dawson: 1879 – 1973,” *Journal of Church and State* (1973), by James E. Wood, Jr.

Container List**Box 1**

- 1.1 Associated Committees on Public Relations, 1939
- 1.2 Attitude of churches toward separation of church and state – notes, 1954
- 1.3 Concern for the maintenance of principles: The Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs
- 1.4 Factors in the home life of leaders of the American movement for religious liberty and the separation of church and state – notebook, 1954
- 1.5 Protestant and other Americans United, 1954
- 1.6 Synopsis of address by Dr. Jim Dawson before American Federation of Teachers, 1951
- 1.7 Truett, George W. – An Authentic Voice – notebook
- 1.8 Waging the battle for religious liberty, by J. M. Dawson
- 1.9 Walter Rauschenbusch and a righteous society – notebook, 1954