

William Henry Melton was born January 25, 1934, on Cherry Hill, Florence, Alabama, to C.P. and Annie Melton, the third of five children.

Henry attended Maud Lindsey Kindergarten, Brandon Elementary, Appleby Junior High School, Coffee High School, and graduated from Florence State Teacher's College in 1956 with a B.S. in math and chemistry.

In Auburndale, Florida, Henry gave his life to the Lord and was saved on December 22, 1955.

Henry went into the Army as a Lieutenant in the Chemical Corp. at Fort McClellan, Alabama, in the fall of 1956.

Henry eventually met Clara Jean Kirby and married September 20, 1958. The following year, in the spring of 1959, Henry was called to the ministry and was honorably discharged from the Army.

In November of 1959, Henry assumed the pastorate of Faith Tabernacle in Florence. At that time, Faith Tabernacle had approximately 50 members. The church grew to 125 members in the mid-70's, and a new church building was built on Thompson Street to seat 325 people. After continued growth, the church relocated to Florence Boulevard in 1983, to a building which seated approximately 1,000.

Henry Melton is a senior shepherd and Christian statesman in the Shoals and Tennessee Valley. He is loved by all who know him, regardless of religious persuasion. It has been said that he has done more to bridge the gap between Evangelicals, Charismatics and the main line Protestants in the Shoals than any other man in this generation.

In the mid-1960's, Henry was a charter member of the East Florence Ministers Fellowship which consisted of several churches in the East Florence area (Salvation Army, St. James Methodist, Weeden Heights Methodist, Central Baptist, Weeden Heights Baptist, Fairview Baptist, Assembly of God). The Fellowship had three functions each year, attended by the combined congregations of these churches: a sunrise Easter service, a Thanksgiving service, and a Senior Citizens' Banquet.

For many years, as Pastor of Faith Tabernacle, Brother Henry hosted an annual camp meeting to which he invited all, as well as provided lodging and meals for full-time ministers from outside the Shoals.

Henry has been involved in the Florence Ministerial Association, and initiated fellowship with area churches. They dismissed Wednesday services at Faith Tabernacle to attend other churches' services, holding revivals, and inviting area pastors to speak each night and have their congregations take part in the services at Faith Tabernacle.

Brother Henry has also been involved in "March for Jesus" events and Minister's Prayer Meetings, among his many other services, activities, and responsibilities within the Christian community of the Shoals Area. He has been a faithful participant in the Minister's Prayer Fellowship of the Shoals from its beginning.

On February 24, 2002, Brother Henry retired as Senior Pastor of Faith Tabernacle, having touched countless lives and making a tremendous impact for the Lord in the area. He continues a very active life as Pastor Emeritus and is still very much involved in the life of the church and the city.

Henry and Clara have three children, Janine Holley (Mrs. Dwight Holley), William Paul Melton, and Mary Amanda (Mrs. Matthew Stansell). They also have seven grandsons.

Henry Melton is above all a servant of Jesus Christ and a servant to all. No task is too small or menial for him. Whatever he does, he does with joy.

2004 SPIRIT OF THE SHOALS AWARD RECIPIENT:

Henry Melton

