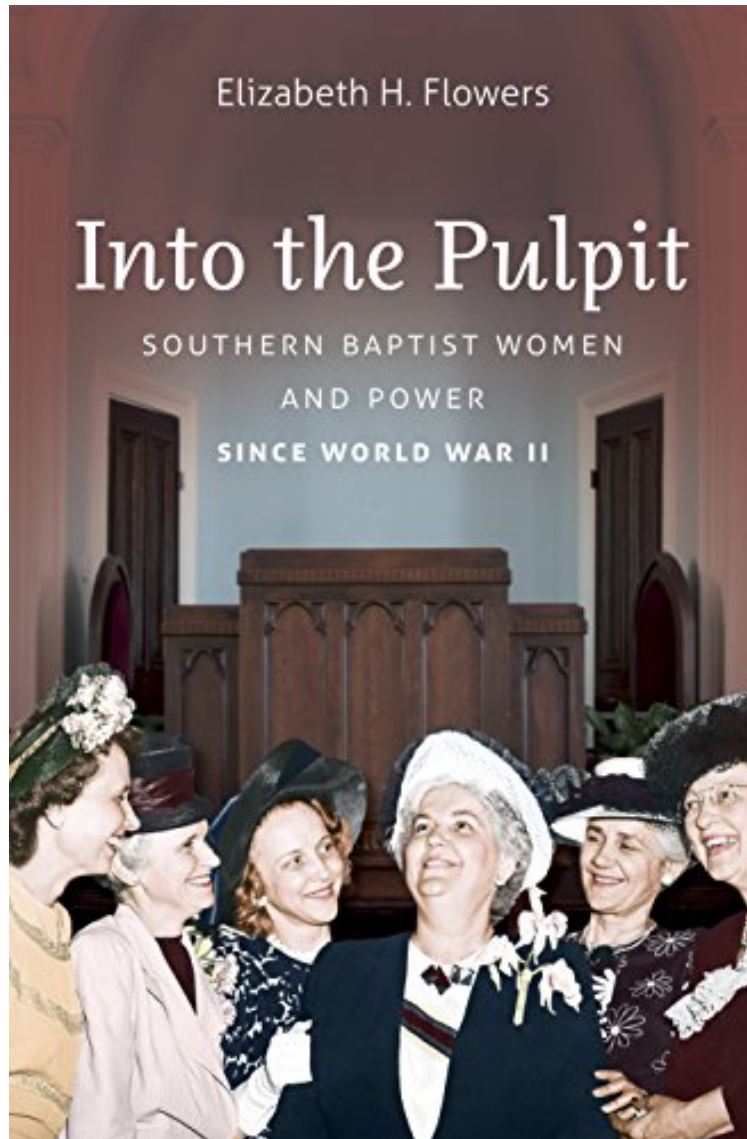


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Into the Pulpit: Southern Baptist Women and Power since World War II

Elizabeth H. Flowers

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This well-documented study narrates how the issue of women's ordination became a hinge around which many theological and cultural wars were waged in the second half of the twentieth century, especially among the Southern Baptists. A valuable addition to the study of religion in the South.

The debate over women's roles in the Southern Baptist Convention's conservative ascendance is often seen as secondary to theological and biblical concerns. Elizabeth Flowers argues, however, that for both moderate and conservative Baptist women--all of whom had much at stake--disagreements that touched on their familial roles and ecclesial authority have always been primary. And, in the turbulent postwar era, debate over their roles caused fierce internal controversy. While the legacy of race and civil rights lingered well into the 1990s, views on women's submission to male authority provided the most salient test by which moderates were identified and expelled in a process that led to significant splits in the Church. In Flowers's expansive history of Southern Baptist women, the "woman question" is integral to almost every area of Southern Baptist concern: hermeneutics, ecclesial polity, missionary work, church-state relations, and denominational history. Flowers's analysis, part of the expanding survey of America's religious and cultural landscape after World War II, points to the South's changing identity and connects religious and regional issues to the complicated relationship between race and gender during and after the civil rights movement. She also shows how feminism and shifting women's roles, behaviors, and practices played a significant part in debates that simmer among Baptists and evangelicals throughout the nation today.

Flowers has illuminated an important element of the Southern Baptist story.--West Virginia History
A serious read for those wanting to understand the nature of the debate over women's ordination in evangelical circles through the lens of the Southern Baptist denomination. But, it is also a delightful and heartfelt read for those who want to hear the voices and stories of women who were directly affected by a denomination's debates about women's roles and calling.--Religion and Gender
[Into the Pulpit] places a topic of acute contemporary concern in long historical perspective.--Christian Century
Flowers has convincingly unmasked the core issue of the 'Southern Baptist battles.'--North Carolina Historical
Highly recommended. All levels/libraries.--Choice
Reminded [me] that courageous women took great risks, spoke strong, prophetic words, and often led the way [in Baptist ministry].--Vocare
[A] concise and well-constructed history. . . . The contextual research of the book is impressive.--H-South
The writing itself is deft. . . . Without actually taking a clear political stance themselves, Blum and Harvey nonetheless map the habits of white racist sacralities in the face of a Jesus rendered increasingly rainbow. This is a thought-provoking book.--American Historical
Flowers' Into the Pulpit offers the most sustained and compelling analysis of gender and power, available to date, for understanding Southern Baptists of the late twentieth century.--Baptist History Heritage
A sound study.--Journal of American History
Into the Pulpit adds substantially to the literature on Baptists, particularly on the role the women's issue played in the late-twentieth-century turmoil among Baptists in the South.--Journal of Southern History
Flowers, Into the Pulpit "[Flower's] careful scholarship helps to fill a large gap in women' religious history."--Louisiana History
A welcome addition to work on women and religion, leaving the reader wondering if and when the 'women question' will arise in a different form during the twenty-first century.--Journal of Southern Religion
Both conservative and moderate Baptist women could read this book and feel like their perspective was fairly and thoroughly represented. Moreover, her book weaves the voices of women in leadership and women in local churches into a seamless whole. This book is an excellent work of scholarship on an important issue.--Register of the Kentucky Historical Society
A significant contribution to the body of historical scholarship on American religious women.--Church History
In this elegant examination of modern religious history, Elizabeth Flowers describes how the Southern Baptist Convention developed a new form of womanhood based on ideals of individual service, not gendered subservience. She then shows how these new conversations about and subsequent understandings of Christian womanhood framed sectarian debates within the SBC and contributed to a national and international rallying cry for Christian womanhood. Required reading for all students of contemporary politics seeking to access a denominational preamble to current debates about religious women in the public sphere.--Kathryn Lofton, Yale University
Elizabeth Flowers tells an important story about debates over feminism in the Southern Baptist Convention. Her sharp, consistent focus helps readers to see the utter ubiquity of women's issues in one very important source of conservative evangelical culture.--Margaret Bendroth, Executive Director, Congregational Christian Historical Society
About the Author
Elizabeth H. Flowers is associate professor of American religious history at Texas Christian University.