

**FRONTIERS:**  
The Story of the Missouri Baptist Convention

by  
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President, William Jewell College

with a Foreword by  
H. I. Hester

Jefferson City  
Missouri Baptist Historical Commission  
1983

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DEDICATED  
to my Colleagues of  
WILLIAM JEWELL COLLEGE,  
past and present and future,  
responsible  
good folks bold  
in seeking Frontiers of Excellence  
for Christian Higher Education



MISSOURI BAPTISTS BUILDING

# About Frontiers . . . And Folks Who Help Us Cross Them

This little book is about frontiers, past and present and future, and about those Missouri people called *Baptists* who have always managed to meet the challenges of the frontier at hand.

It is designed especially for individual reading by young people as well as us old folks, and for use in church study groups. Its immediate occasion is Missouri Baptists' celebration, in 1984, of the 150th anniversary of their state-wide organization.

This is supposed to be "a short history written in a popular style." The "short" part was easy. As to a "popular style," all I can say is that throughout the writing of the book I have been trying. ("Very trying," you may murmur.) I hang around academic and ministerial jargon so much that it oozes into my prose as a tar pit pollutes a stream. But I *was* trying.

The little book in your hand is not meant to substitute for the proper and definitive history of Baptists in Missouri which needs again to be written and which perhaps can come from the recently formed Center for Baptist Historical Studies, a joint project of the Missouri Baptist Historical Commission and William Jewell College.

I have sought to present here less of a chronicle and more of a story, even a drama, fastening on those elements of the history which speak to imagination and emotion as well as to factual logic. But, of course, even the Bible has its "begats."

Perhaps the greatest of my predecessors in the presidency of William Jewell College, Dr. John Priest Greene, wrote in 1904 an introduction to H. E. Truex's *Baptists in Missouri, being A Brief Account of the Early Struggles, the Organization, Etc., of the Denomination in the State* ("Price, 10 Cents"). He penned, among other good words, the following:

We may not live in the past, but the past lives in us. We should know our history.

The people that despise their past are ignoble, and there is no hope for them in the future; and the people that are ignorant of their past will not only make great blunders, but must also lack courage and inspiration in present and future struggles.

“The past lives in us,” and this story is told so that those of us who are Baptists might know ourselves better.

\* \* \*

Some ground rules, and some confessions. I have tried to set this story in the context of what was going on in the world and in America and in Missouri and in religion at any given time. Baptists don't operate in a vacuum, though some folks think they do, and though sometimes the records suggest that they do. I have had to leave out much of what was happening in many quarters of Baptist life at any moment—for example, what was going on in specific churches or associations, or what was working in the lively and vital black Baptist churches. This is the story of the Missouri Baptist *Convention*—a single, organized state denomination.

I have quoted much, to give the flavor of the times and the people. If a quotation is not identified otherwise from the context or a note at the end of the chapter, it is probably from an *Annual* of the Convention—yearly collections of minutes, reports, directories, statistics, rules, and audits. I have read *all* of them, since 1834—which is probably as close to Purgatory as a Baptist will ever get.

For the Missouri background, I have relied shamelessly on Paul C. Nagel's volume entitled *Missouri: A Bicentennial History*, sometimes tramping with my paraphrases on some lovely tracts of his lucid prose. Duane Meyer's *The Heritage of Missouri—A History* has also been helpful. Thomas A. Bailey's *The American Pageant: A History of the Republic* has served a good turn in helping me sketch out background matters from the national scene, as Clifton E. Olmstead's *Religion in America, Past and Present* has been helpful with what was going on in the churches. Major sources for Missouri Baptist history, other than the primary records themselves, have been W. Pope Yeaman's *History of the Missouri Baptist General Association*, completed in 1898, and R. S. Douglass' centennial *History of Missouri Baptists*, published in 1934.

\* \* \*

Even so modest a volume as this one comes to completion because many people help it happen. This is especially true when the writer is also trying to be a moderately good president of a very good college, a role not simple in these or any days.

I therefore wish to express appreciation to Dr. H. I. Hester, dean of Baptist historians and of Baptists in Missouri, for his guidance and encouragement; and to the two other members of the Missouri Baptist “book committee”

who set me on this task and read the manuscript at the end: Dr. Thomas Nelson, who has forgotten more about Missouri Baptists than most of us will ever know, and Dr. William Cuthbertson, who has forgotten more about history than most of us will ever learn. I am grateful to Dr. Adrian Lamkin and Mrs. Helen McNeill of the Center for Baptist Historical Studies, who checked some points of fact and researched some areas in which I had suspicions of information but no data. They also prepared the Index, with the good assistance of William Jewell students. I thank Mrs. Jo Anne Beasley for typing the manuscript and Mrs. Joan Lawrence for logistical support. And the Missouri Public Service Company, for keeping the lights on late at night.

Mostly, I am grateful to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for love and care and health and good tasks to do and good people to do them with. I am thankful for a special good kind of special good family. I am grateful for God's serendipitous grace, even for things that are such a little bit zany that "much madness is divinest sense": for the dawning of each new day (have you ever thought what it would be like if the sun, some morning, *didn't* make her scheduled appearance?); for layered petals of flowers and everbeckoning arches of churches that convey the beauty and mystery of God; for communion; for horse noses and hand crushers; for marmalade on hash browns or mustard on Christmas fruit cake, and for Christmas itself; for "la-la-la's" sung from a warm shower; for first snows of winter and first grass of springtime; for worship—or anything—that transcends the merely routine or boring.

Thanks a lot.

\* \* \*

I take, of course, full responsibility for the errors and dumb statements in this little book—all of them. In case anyone is wondering, I should say—in genuine humility and awareness of my limitations—that I know there are many, many, *many* persons who could have written this history better than I.

But, of course, they didn't.

J. Gordon Kingsley  
Liberty, Missouri  
December, 1982

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# FOREWORD

by H. I. Hester

When Dr. H. H. McGinty, long-time editor of *Word and Way*, retired in 1969, he was asked by the officials of the Missouri Baptist Convention to prepare a definitive history of the Convention. After getting settled in his home in Cape Girardeau, he began work on this project. He spent some time in research and began his writing. The long illness and death of Mrs. McGinty necessitated considerable delay in his work. In the meantime, his own health began to fail. So, after several years' work, he was forced to give up the project.

For several years a faithful minister, Lloyd Collins, was in the administrative offices of the Convention. He was interested in Baptist history. He knew Dr. McGinty and was sympathetic in the effort to produce a history of the Convention. It was only natural for him to be asked to take up the task begun by Dr. McGinty. At the time, he felt that he could do this and began his research. However, it soon became apparent that the task would require far more time than he could give to it, so he did no actual writing.

When Dr. Rheubin South became the Executive Director of the Convention, he became concerned about the need for progress on this project. By 1980, it was evident that a new start must be made. Accordingly, he appointed a special committee of three members—T. W. Nelson, H. I. Hester, and Doran McCarty (when Dr. McCarty moved from Missouri, Dr. William Cuthbertson was named in his place)—to assume responsibility for the project and to “get something done.”

This new committee began work at once. It was obvious that there was not time to produce the exhaustive history first contemplated by 1984 for the celebration of 150 years' history of the Convention. Instead, it was agreed to publish a brief volume written in popular style to be ready for distribution by early 1983. This new history could stimulate an interest in the sesquicenten-

nial celebration. The more exhaustive story of the Convention will be done later.

The committee was unanimous in its choice of a writer for the brief "people's" edition. Dr. Gordon Kingsley, a graduate major in Church History and a brilliant writer, agreed to have the manuscript ready by January, 1983. He went to work at once and has produced a volume which we are happy to offer Missouri Baptists. It is a scholarly work, written in popular style, and covers the thrilling story of Baptist life in Missouri.

H. I. Hester  
Liberty, Missouri  
December, 1982

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*“God made Missouri. Then he knew he couldn’t do no better. So he just settled down. In the Ozarks, I think. I don’t know where them Baptists come from.”*

*. . . an Ozark statesman*

## Prologue: Frontiers Unknown, Uncrossed

In the beginning was the land.

Broad, lazy, inviting rivers. Verdant woodlands. High plains and deep hollows. Springs and salt licks and rich soil and clear-running streams. All green—luxuriant green—save for the glory of autumn gold.

It was Missouri.

No white man’s tread crossed this “land of the big canoes.” Only red men walking simple Indian traces.

And the animals, wild and gentle.

And the silence.

Small wonder that early American settlers would call it an Eden, the Garden rediscovered. Small wonder they felt they had found the world anew, that they could begin life afresh, that the clutter of old civilizations had passed away.

It was Missouri. The new world of the New World.

But before the American “hello” came the Spanish “*buenos dias*” and the French “*bonjour*.” Perhaps in the person of Hernando DeSoto in 1541, whose men may have worshiped on the great mound near New Madrid. Most

probably in Marquette and Joliet and certainly in LaSalle, who in 1681 claimed all the lands drained by the Mississippi for France—from the Alleghenies to the Rockies, from the Great Lakes to the Gulf.

By the 1720's the French were establishing outposts in the Missouri territory, which they called Upper Louisiana, and in 1735 they founded the first Missouri town, Ste. Genevieve. In 1764 Pierre Laclede built a trading post on high ground near the conjunction of the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers; he named his village St. Louis and laid it out as a French town, with "Rue Royale" and "Rue de l'Église" among the streets. A few French trappers and traders plied rivers and forests, but get-rich-quick dreams of gold or jewels or passages to the Orient were much more important than thoughts of settlement.

So with the Spanish, who received the land from the French in a treaty of 1762, at about the same time that France was ceding lands east of the Mississippi to England. Most Spanish officials were, in fact, recruited from among the Frenchmen who knew the land, and Spanish influence was minimal. When the Missouri territory, surely the world's largest ping-pong ball, bounced back to France in a secret treaty of 1800, little change was noted by the few non-Indian residents.

The fact was, European rulers could not even conceive of the huge scale of this territory, let alone figure out how to use it or govern it. It was like owning a continent on another planet, and one could not take it very personally. Napoleon Bonaparte of France, who was nothing if he was not a big thinker, flirted for awhile with the notion of using his lands to build a great empire in America, but Thomas Jefferson's offer of \$15 million proved too tempting, and Missouri became a territory of the United States. The Louisiana Purchase was completed in December, 1803. America was as startled as Europe to learn the sheer size of what she had bought. But the 8,500 white and 1,500 black settlers in the territory yawned at yet another flag and continued their trapping and trading.

Meanwhile, folks on the Eastern seaboard had been dealing with problems of their own. Mother Country and Colonies had had a falling out, George Washington had led a rag-tag band of upstarts in a stunning defeat of red-coated English glory, a Declaration of Independence had been framed and a Constitution forged, and the grand experiment called the United States of America was begun.

A people called *Baptists* had no small part in these goings-on. In the Colonies, as in England, Baptists had at first been a small and despised sect, considered religious radicals of a most dangerous type because they did not support established state churches and were therefore suspect as "enemies" of political and social order. They were persecuted in Virginia, where thirty or more preachers "were honored with the dungeon," as well as in other states.

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They were annoying to their contemporaries, one of whom wrote that Baptists “cannot meet a man upon the road, but that they must ram a text of scripture down his throat.”<sup>1</sup>

But Baptists grew rapidly through the revivalism of the Great Awakening and after; they established an active missionary association in Philadelphia in 1707; they formed one of America’s earliest colleges (Rhode Island College, later Brown University) in 1764; and they were the chief voices in advocating liberty of conscience as a principle for the new Constitution and Republic. Their college was remarkable, for example, in its insistence on religious liberty: it did not have religious requirements for admission and insisted that places on the faculty be open to all denominations of Protestants. Religious liberty was foremost to Baptists, and Baptists were foremost in promoting such freedom.

By the end of the Revolutionary War, therefore, Baptists were as large as other religious bodies, were respected, and claimed in their membership persons of influence and wealth. They had no Old World ties to shed; their democratic organization was compatible with ideals of the new nation; they were well distributed throughout the country, from Maine to Georgia; and they had a national sense of mission.<sup>2</sup>

When the population of a new America began to spill over the mountains and into the wilderness areas of Ohio, Kentucky, and Tennessee, Baptist growth was nothing short of phenomenal. Baptists had a simple doctrine, easy for the common man to grasp; they had a democratic church organization; they did not have or need elaborate overhead machinery as either impediment or authorization; they did not have to wait for preachers or missionaries to be sent in order to “have preaching” or conduct “exhortations.” In short, “the Baptists found in America, and especially in frontier America, a soil suited to its peculiar genius.”<sup>3</sup>

And so it was inevitable, in due course, that the Baptists should come to Missouri.

But how did this land and these people come together? How did it happen that their stories should intertwine in a way that, by any standard of measurement, is a remarkable narrative of successes? How was it that Baptists helped settle the land, order its society, shape its values, form its new identity, build its colleges, grow its leaders?

The story is rich saga-stuff, the substance of ballads and chronicles.

It begins with the Baptist Farmer-Preacher.

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## Notes To The Prologue

<sup>1</sup>John Leland, *Writings*, edited by Miss L. F. Green (New York, 1845), p. 107.

<sup>2</sup>William Warren Sweet, *Religion in the Development of American Culture, 1765-1840* (New York, 1952), pp. 56-57.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 110.

*“Some churches sent their preachers. Some churches called them. The Baptists—they just had them there all the time. A feller farmed all week, just like the rest of us, and up and preached on Sunday. We knew him—if he was honest in horse swappin’ and if he cussed his wife and mule or not—and so we knew when it was straight gospel. It most often was . . .”*

1

*. . . a frontier farmer*

## The Wilderness Frontier: A Grizzly Gospel 1750–1821

### *The Baptist Farmer-Preacher*

“Here comes the preacher! Here comes the preacher!” The dirty-faced little boy would shout it, rushing from the edge of clearing or settlement where he had been playing to tell the news to sad-eyed mother or dour-faced father. The coming of the preacher—or any stranger—was a great event, a welcome diversion to a dreary and difficult life.

The frock-coated visitor would pull his worn Bible from his saddlebags and, thus armed with the badge and sword of his trade, would preach to the family and to neighbors if any existed—in the house, under the trees, wherever he could stand and be heard. He might solemnize a marriage, perform a baptism in a creek, help resolve a dispute, offer advice on getting to heaven or buying a horse. And off he would go to the next family or settlement, making his rounds now that his crops were laid by.

He was probably not educated in a school, for Baptists did not put much truck in book learning. They had seen too many “college-degreed, irreligious, morally careless” clergy of established churches back East, and they preferred to rely on “the call” rather than on the diploma. Jesus was not educated, the argument went, and theological training was not required of the

apostles. A simple gospel was easy to preach if one had felt it in his bones, and those "learned dunces and third-rate preachers" graduated from theological schools did not have the "fire." Peter Cartwright compared educated preachers to "pale lettuce growing under the shade of a peach tree" or to a "gosling that had got the waddles wading in the dew."<sup>1</sup>

But the farmer-preacher often worked very hard to improve himself. Jacob Bower wrote of how he labored on the farm all week and "tryed to preach on sundays."

I had no books besides my English Bible & a German Testament, and a small hymn book. After a hard days work, I would gather dry sticks, and read at night by fire light. Sometimes I would borrow books, and make the best use of them I could, while I had them.<sup>2</sup>

No formal education they had, and certainly no formal salary. Baptists were suspicious of a salaried ministry, too, and seldom paid with that scarce frontier luxury, money. Occasionally a gift would come in the form of an article of clothing, some salt or corn or wheat or pork or "flower" or tallow or sugar or even corn-in-a-jug (frontier scruples against drinking were not well-developed), or a night's lodging. Thomas Peyton Stephens conscientiously declared that he had preached for twenty-five years at Old Rocky Fork Church in mid-Missouri and that all he had ever received was "one scrub sheep and one drab overcoat." Baptists wanted their preachers poor and humble; if God would keep them humble, Baptists would keep them poor, says the old saw.

The preacher sustained himself by working on his land five or six days a week, except when he held a week-day meeting or conducted a funeral. Theodore Roosevelt remarked how "the Baptist preachers lived and worked exactly as their flocks . . . they cleared the ground, split rails, planted corn, and raised hogs on equal terms with their parishioners."<sup>3</sup> This meant, of course, that the preacher was there when needed, was a part of the community, and had opportunity to earn respect in daily living. This in contrast with the clergy of other churches, who had to be sent from headquarters or who rode a circuit.

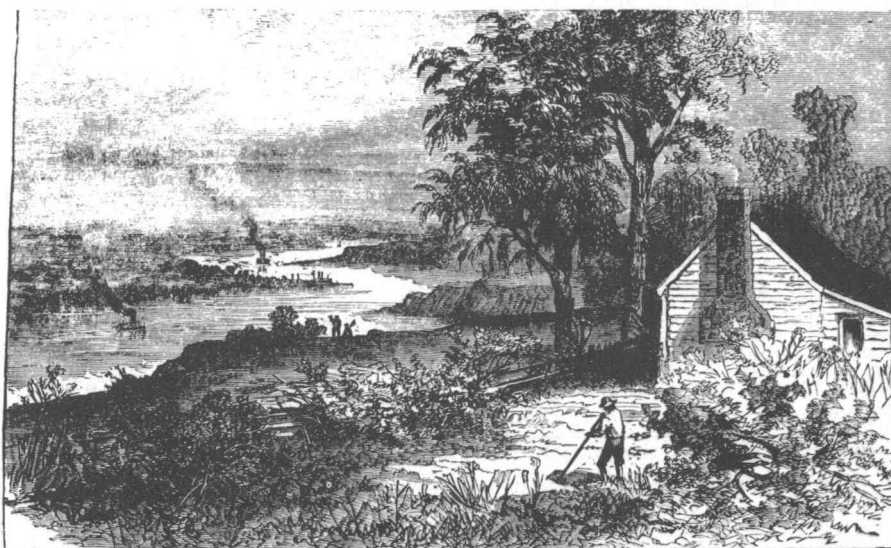
In late summer, during a slack farming season, or when called in need, the farmer-preacher would visit other churches and settlements, often serving as pastor to more than one congregation. His direct, simple sermons might be as Jabez Ham of Montgomery County described his own preachings in about 1826: "My sermons are like an old shotgun loaded with beans. When they go off, they're bound to hit somebody somewhere!"

The power of the farmer-preacher in frontier life can scarcely be over-

stated. He is a major reason that Baptists became, during the westward migrations, a prominent force in American religion and culture.

### *Life on the Missouri Frontier*

And needed he was, wherever he was. Frontier life everywhere, including in Missouri, was nasty and ugly and brief. Whereas the French had lived in small towns like St. Charles or Ste. Genevieve or St. Louis or Cape Girardeau, doing their farming in commonly-held fields outside the town, the American settlers lived independently on their own farm clearings, separated from other settlers and thus vulnerable to disaster. They resided generally in one-room log cabins, often twelve by twelve feet, with little or no furniture and a dirt or plank floor. Few roads existed, travel was slow and laborious and dangerous, and wild animals or Indians threatened constantly.



THE MISSOURI PIONEER'S HOME ON "THE GREAT RIVER."

In this kind of setting, far from "civilization," crude men and women reverted to states of semi-barbarism, sometimes even adopting Indian practices of scalping their victims slain in battles, duels, or feuds. Profanity was commonplace; great amounts of whiskey were consumed from home brew or open barrels in the stores or from purchase at twenty-five cents a gallon; entertainments were fist-fights and "rassling" and cock-fighting and dog-fighting and horse racing; sexual immorality was common. Frontier court records show large numbers of cases involving rape, divorce, bigamy, and adultery. It was a crude, gouging, biting, mean culture.

There were no mails, no schools, no libraries, and few books. Adults often

could not read or write, and children often were not taught. John Mason Peck, an early Baptist missionary in Missouri, spoke with people who had never seen a Bible or heard a sermon. He estimated that one-half the citizens of St. Louis were profane, immoral atheists who boasted that the Sabbath had never crossed the Mississippi and would never do so. Bible burnings and mock worship services were held in St. Louis and Ste. Genevieve, both as entertainment and as an expression of hostility to religion.

There was plenty of room for improvement!

### *Baptists Come to Missouri*

Under French and Spanish rule, Missouri was officially Catholic, and laws were especially strict under His Most Catholic Majesty the King of Spain. Non-Catholics were not permitted to settle in the territory or were expelled if they had already entered; any non-priest conducting a religious service was sent to the dungeon. In 1772 the Spanish governor, a man with the most un-Spanish name of O'Reilly, reported to the Bishop of Havana that he had expelled several Jews and Protestants from the territory.<sup>4</sup>

In point of fact, however, enforcement of these laws was often lax, especially as Spain decided for economic reasons that more immigrants were needed in her territory. After 1790 large tracts of land were given to settlers, including the famous Daniel Boone, and a very general questionnaire was devised which any nominal Christian could affirm, whereupon the Spanish government declared the settler "a good Catholic."

In 1798, therefore, Elder John Clark (a Methodist later to become a Baptist) crossed over the river from Illinois in formal defiance of Spanish law, preached in what is now St. Louis County—probably near the site of what is now Fee Fee Church—and recrossed the river to safe territory. It was probably the first non-Catholic worship service on Missouri soil.

On return trips, Reverend Clark—called "Father Clark" by the folk—had the informal indulgence of the Spanish officials. When a Baptist, Abraham Musick, asked Lt. Governor M. Trudeau in a *public* council meeting for permission to invite Clark to preach, Trudeau sharply refused. At a *private* lunch, however, the governor told Mr. Musick, "You must not put a steeple on your house or ring a bell or baptize infants unless a priest is there, but if Mr. Clark comes and some friends come to your house and you have conversation and sing songs and pray, why that is all right. You are good Catholics."<sup>5</sup> Later, whenever Clark was visiting the St. Louis area and was within two or three days of returning to Illinois, Trudeau would tell him that if he were found on Spanish soil after three days, he would be sent to the *calaboza*. It became a joke among Clark and his friends, and doubtless Trudeau, that "going to the *calaboza*" meant returning to Illinois. Clark was later pastor of Coldwater Baptist Church near St. Louis for twenty years.

Two other ministers are known to have preached in Missouri under Span-

ish or French rule: Thomas Johnson, Baptist minister from Georgia, visited near Jackson in 1799 and baptized a Mrs. Agnes Ballou in Randol Creek; and Reverend Thomas R. Musick of Kentucky preached actively in St. Louis in 1801, despite government threats. He helped organize Fee Fee Baptist Church in 1807.

In 1804 the territory to be called "Missouri" became part of the United States, and freedom of religion suddenly became the law. Immigration of Americans began in earnest, and Baptists from Kentucky, Tennessee, and Illinois were prominent in the movement westward. A period of great religious revivals in Kentucky and Tennessee was just ending in 1804-5, four years of active evangelizing during which something like 10,000 converts were made among Baptists. About twelve Baptist families had settled in the St. Louis area by 1804, and about six families near Jackson, in Cape Girardeau County.

Thus it was that the first Baptist churches were formed in the territory. Reverend David Green, fresh from the Kentucky revivals, visited southeast Missouri and formed the Tywappity Baptist Church, named for a nearby swamp, in 1805. Green left, and the church lasted only a few months (though it was later reconstituted). In 1806 Green returned and formed Bethel Baptist Church, near Jackson, on July 19, 1806. This was the first "permanent" non-Catholic religious organization west of the Mississippi River.

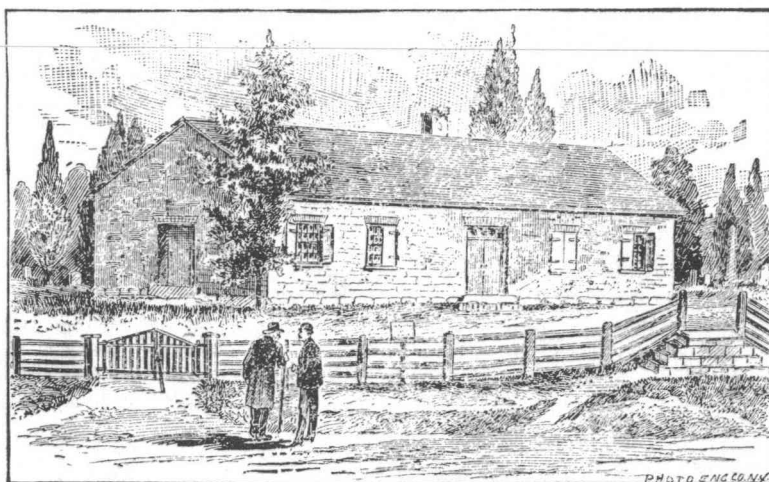


OLD BETHEL CHURCH HOUSE.

Bethel Church was very evangelistic and established "arms" in different locations, several of which later became separate churches. Each "arm" was quite small and met in private family cabins; total membership of the mother church and three "arms," in 1813, was 186. The first meeting house, built in 1812, was typical of the frontier church: it was a small structure, thirty-two by twenty-seven feet, made of hewn yellow poplar logs. It doubtless had a puncheon floor, splitlog seats, and a rough pulpit at one end. (Abraham Lincoln's father would help build a similar Baptist meeting house on Pigeon Creek, Indiana, in 1819.) As was the custom, men probably sat on one side and women on the other.

Unfortunately, Bethel developed anti-mission sentiments in 1826 and eventually died.

Not so with Fee Fee Baptist Church, organized in the next year after Bethel's founding. This church, its unusual name taken from Fee Fee Creek, has had continuous existence since 1807. Established with seventeen members, it grew rapidly and became a leading congregation of the entire St. Louis area, a role it sustains to this day.



OLD FEE FEE CHURCH-HOUSE.

By 1807, then, Spain and France were gone, "Missouri" was "American," settlers were coming in larger and larger numbers, and Baptists were forming the first non-Catholic churches in the newly opened territories. How and to what degree did Baptists influence life on this wilderness frontier?

#### *Taming the Frontier*

Baptists, wild and woolly though they were, played a major role in taming the barbarism of the Missouri frontier. They did this in three ways: (1) the

churches served as a model for orderly society in their own orderly processes, (2) the churches served as a kind of frontier court through the ardent disciplining of their members, and (3) revivalism settled the frontier down by calling some of the more rambunctious citizenry to "walk the straight and narrow." Ultimately, too, the churches created schools and colleges and newspapers as instruments of civilized enlightenment.

In an environment where "cussing" and hard drinking and low living and fights to the death were "normal," where books were rare and not missed, where frontier individualism meant "every man did that which was right in his own eyes," any sample of orderly behavior bordered on the marvelous. The churches *were* orderly. Even when they consisted of only a dozen persons or less, they laid out careful rules of organization and operation.

"Rules of Decorum" were generally the first items listed in the minute book of the newly-organized church. A doctrinal position often was laid out, followed by rules for conducting business. The typical frontier Baptist congregation would meet one Saturday of each month to conduct business, and attendance of every member was mandatory. The rules "emphasized the necessity of keeping order."

During business no member was to leave his seat without leave; all matters of church membership were to be decided by a two-thirds or unanimous vote, while temporal matters might be decided by a majority vote. The rules specified how motions should be made; how many times a person might speak on a question; while laughing, talking, or whispering in the time of public speech were prohibited.<sup>6</sup>

This model of orderliness was reinforced by the remarkable church discipline meted out by frontier Baptists. The record books read like catalogues of sins and sinners, as page after page tells of a brother or sister disciplined for stealing, gossiping, gambling, horse racing, fighting, drinking, or being sexually immoral. Family disputes and business agreements were presented to the church for settlement. The church as a court exercised watchful care over behavior, and it was not uncommon for five to ten per cent of the membership to be "churched" (excluded from fellowship) at any given moment. Scrutiny was given to the doctrinal positions of members and preachers, and when the inbred little churches went looking for heresy, they seemed to find it with amazing frequency. Heresy-hunters always do.

A scanning of the earliest record books of the Little Bonne Femme Baptist Church, located near Columbia, provides illustration of the concerns and style of these early Baptists. First we get down to business:

May the first Saturday 1820. The baptist church of Christ at this little bonfemme on the two mile Prairie attest at the house of Bro Woods according to appointment and after prayer to God for his blessing proceeded to business as follows . . .

Then we control access to our pulpit:

A committee shall be appointed to examin [sic] into the qualifications of all strange preachers who call themselves Baptist . . . before he be admitted to preach at our stated appointments . . .

And then we control our members:

January the first Saturday 1827. The church understood that Sister West had sent her daughter to a dancing party and the church agreed to send brethren . . . to see her on the subject. [The girl had gone on her own and Sister West agreed to try to control her daughter better.]

February the first Saturday 1827. The church received information that Sister Wilcox and Sister Fleming her mother were living in discord and they appointed brethren . . . to see them on the subject. [The brave brethren reported lessened discord.]

April the first Saturday 1827. The church received a report against the black brother Lewis the property of Sister Moss for immoral conduct. [The immorality of owning another human being had not yet, of course, become a part of the Christian conscience of the frontier.]

It appearing to the church that John Franc and Daniel Clendinin were in the habit of entirely omitting attending our meetings and also report said that their conduct was considered somewhat disorderly therefore the church appointed brethren . . . to see them on the subject.

And so it went. In July Brother Lewis was in trouble again, this time for swearing. Later, a sister was declared to have been “guilty of fornication, whereupon the church excluded her from the church.” Still later,

Brother George Bondurant stated to the Church, through the Moderator, that he has since the last meeting, had words of difficulty with a relation, which resulted in blows, for which he expressed deep contrition and sorrow of heart, whereupon he was forgiven.

Even later, a brother “guilty of selling property not his own” was “churched,” though he had prudently left the county already.

The church also tended to its day-by-day needs in its monthly meeting. For example, on June the first Saturday 1829 the Little Bonne Femme congregation “agreed to buy planks for a pulpit and also have it made if it can be done without involving the church,” and in April of 1845 the Treasurer was directed “to pay \$1.37 for a bible procured for the church.”<sup>7</sup>

### *Revivalism and Frontier Faith*

As important as the churches were in providing examples and disciplines for orderly living, they were even more committed to “saving souls” through revivalism. It is not too much to say that this was the major business of Baptist churches on the frontier.

The great revivals of the late 1700’s and early 1800’s began at college campuses along the Eastern seaboard and spread in every direction. It was a phenomenon among all evangelical denominations, though Presbyterians and Methodists led the way. On the frontier, particularly during the Kentucky-Tennessee revivals of 1800-1805, the evangelistic meeting of the towns became the “camp meeting” of the woodlands, the most important social event of the year as well as a source of great religious fervor. It was this kind of free-form revival in groves and copses and brush arbors that tumbled across the Great River and into Missouri.

At an appointed time in the summer, families would load themselves and food and what we would now call camping gear (though then it was the same utensils used day to day in their hovel of a cabin) and go to a wooded area designated for “the meetin’.” Careful organization prevailed, usually, though frontier exuberances and excesses were sometimes difficult to control: tents or wagons were placed in rows; stumps or platforms were made ready for the preachers (often several would preach simultaneously at different points of the camp); guards were appointed to control behavior on the grounds and during meetings; “runners” were selected to whip away dogs and hogs. Trumpets would sound to awaken people and call them to meetings, preaching and singing were emotional and enthusiastic, and many thousands of folk “prayed it through” and turned from their sins to lives of faith. It was an ideal method to reach individuals in a society where organization and communication were minimal.

Occasionally rowdies would try to break up the meetings, and the men of Zion would have to rally around to drive away the Philistines. One strong preacher wrote of “decking” a disruptive young man (who had come armed with a club and knife) by a blow to the side of the head; the preacher was not sure he should have struck so hard or at all, but he did note with pride that the offender was not able to get up and turn the other cheek!

Rousing songs of the camp meeting sometimes reflected denominational battles. The Methodists, for example, offered this sally in their woodland warfare with the Baptists:

We’ve searched the law of heaven,  
Throughout the Sacred code;  
Of Baptism there by dipping  
We’ve never found a word . . .

To plunge is inconsistent [sic]  
Compared with holy rites;  
An instance of such business  
We've never found as yet.

The Baptists were not to be outdone:

Not *at* the River Jordan,  
But *in* the flowing stream  
Stood John the Baptist preacher  
When he baptized Him.

John was a Baptist preacher  
When he Baptiz'd the Lamb;  
Then Jesus was a Baptist  
And thus the Baptist [s] came.<sup>8</sup>

When all the curiosities and excesses and eccentricities of the frontier revival have been toted up and discarded, the fact remains that the revival was a potent instrument for changing lives and changing a very crude society. Only a powerful and intense preaching in an intense revivalistic setting could have broken through the hardened hearts and wills of folks who grappled daily with death, alone and apart. Revivals "worked."

They have continued "working" through the full history of Missouri Baptists. H. E. Truex, in his short chronicle written in 1904, penned a tone poem of tribute to "the annual revival" as it continued through the nineteenth century.

The "annual revival" . . . was a great occasion, and is yet in many places. Farmers arranged their work three months ahead of it; mothers would do the same. "The meeting" got into the neighborhood chat; the young folks speculated privately, and otherwise, as to "who they would get this time;" the old men compared the preaching of to-day with what they had when they were boys—always to the detriment of the present. All talked about the preacher who was to help in the meeting, treasuring up the bits of news. So that when the meeting really did begin, it was a power. It would start up, slow-like. The songs and prayers, rather cold and formal. The brethren and sisters stood round the door saying the meeting was just what they wanted; they were polite to each other; the preaching was good. But no one was moved. Some got discouraged.

In nearly every church there is a good old man, or woman, who like Esther, saves the day. Some "Uncle" or "Aunt Somebody." Usually they say very little, are quiet and thoughtful, never get much excited, or much depressed. They always attend the meetings—specially the day meetings, and always look like they are not going to say anything. But when preachers and people are on the point of giving

up, this individual arises to “testify as to what the Lord has done for his soul.” He proceeds with the old, old story, clearing his throat as he talks, looking at the opposite wall or out of the window; he recounts God’s mercies and his own ill deserts; reaffirms his faith, covenants anew with the brethren; confesses his weakness, asks the prayers and the forgiveness of all, closing his talk with a tender reference to Heaven. His voice trembles, the tears are chasing each other down his cheeks and beard, but he is unconscious of it; the big, brown wrinkled hands are half lifted as he turns to his brethren and with shining face bids them meet him there. The work is done. People can weep now. They know there will be a meeting—and there is usually. What singing and praying! Not loud, but intense. And the unconverted come. It is easy. Scores are converted.

The Annual Revival! It has a history of its own. There was no Board, or Committee, or Association behind it; no majority—simply “Baptist Usage.” It had undisputed right of way, and God must have been in it. Probably if the numbering of Baptist hosts should include only those who have come in some other way, we would need fewer figures.

In the early days, people moved to the vicinity of “the meeting,” neighbors agreeing to take care of each others’ stock in turn. The preacher was an old-time revivalist. Leaving the wife and children to run the little farm as best they could, he had put his whole library, stock of sober sermons and wardrobe into the saddle-bags and mounted a resigned-looking nag, traveling forty or one hundred miles, expecting as remuneration food and shelter for himself and horse, and possibly, a pair of yarn socks. Peace to their ashes! Nobler men do not sleep under the sod.<sup>9</sup>

#### *Beyond the Wilderness Frontier*

Revivals helped tame the Missouri wilderness, as well as the wilderness in individual men and women. Revivals worked with church discipline to help bring some light of order to disorderly souls and un-ordered society. Other forces were at work as well: swelling tides of immigration into Missouri, America’s new land of promise; a growing sense of law and justice through government; the forming of towns and the muting of Indian warhoops; the establishment of settled farms and businesses to replace the nomadic ways of trappers and traders.

On August 10, 1821, President James Monroe proclaimed Missouri the twenty-fourth of the United States, and wilderness days were symbolically at an end. A year earlier, “amid the excitement over statehood,” the brave symbol of frontier virtues and abilities, Daniel Boone, had died. “The sad event was taken by Missourians as a solemn indication that their state must now put the pioneer phase of her life behind her and begin a mature and mighty career in the nation.”<sup>10</sup>

## Notes To Chapter 1

<sup>1</sup>William Warren Sweet, *Religion in the Development of American Culture, 1776-1840* (New York, 1952), p. 170.

<sup>2</sup>Jacob Bower, "Autobiography" (MSS), quoted by Sweet, *Religion on the American Frontier: The Baptists, 1783-1830* (New York, 1931), p. 41.

<sup>3</sup>Theodore Roosevelt, *The Winning of the West*, 4 vols., (New York, 1900), III, 101.

<sup>4</sup>R. S. Douglass, *History of Missouri Baptists* (Kansas City, 1934), p. 4.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, citing John Mason Peck's "Life of Father Clark."

<sup>6</sup>Sweet, *Frontier*, p. 48.

<sup>7</sup>Quotations are from the original manuscript minutes of the Little Bonne Femme Baptist Church, Archives of the Missouri Baptist Historical Commission, William Jewell College.

<sup>8</sup>George P. Jackson, *White and Negro Spirituals, Their Life Span and Kinship* (New York, 1943), pp. 55, 59.

<sup>9</sup>H.E. Truex, *Baptists in Missouri* (Columbia, 1904), pp. 80-82.

<sup>10</sup>Paul C. Nagel, *Missouri: A Bicentennial History* (New York, 1977), p. 48.

*“The Baptists don’t have a Pope, and nobody is in charge, and they seem to be going in all directions at once with no one knowing what anyone else is doing. And then, one day, you wake up to see that there is a Baptist at every corner, a Baptist behind every tree, a Baptist church or school on every hilltop. And they all seem to work together somehow. I don’t understand at all how it happens. Unless God is in it somewhere.”*

2

*... an admiring frontier priest*

## Frontiers of Organization: Getting It Together 1816–1865

It was heady to be in the new State of Missouri in 1821. The sky was the limit—literally!

President Thomas Jefferson had sent Meriwether Lewis and William Clark on a most amazing expedition in 1804–06 to explore the Missouri River valley, and their courageous work had opened the West, suddenly making “Missouri and its marvelous river the key to America’s western kingdom.”<sup>1</sup>

The rivers were *so* broad, the land *so* inviting—what untold riches lay to be grasped by the hand of the brave and the industrious! And so, with the New Madrid earthquakes of 1811–12 and the Indian Wars of 1812–15 behind, the immigrants began pouring into Missouri—so many from Kentucky and Tennessee that settlers joked about the disappearance of those two states.<sup>2</sup> The 10,000 white and black inhabitants of 1804 had become 20,000 by 1810, 67,000 by 1820, 700,000 by 1850, and over one million by 1860! The red men who had lived on the land were either driven off through the Indian Wars or

bought off: \$400 to the Sioux; \$7500 to the Iowa, Sac, and Fox; \$4250 to the remainder of the tribes. The Indians were moved out, and only place names hinted at their mighty stories.

Statehood in 1821 thrust Missouri into national prominence, both through the promise of the rich land and through the political hassles that accompanied it. The “Missouri Compromise,” boiling up over three sessions of Congress, kept a balance between slave and free states by admitting Maine and Missouri at the same time and by declaring that any new states formed out of the Louisiana Purchase territory above the southern border of Missouri—Missouri excepted—would forbid slavery. The Compromise lasted only until 1854; its significance here is that Missouri was formed as a state amidst turmoil over a moral issue.

Politics and morality aside, however—and most Missourians of the day found it not too difficult to put both aside—Missouri was a garden, a “second Eden” (hence the name of Eden Seminary, founded by German evangelicals in St. Louis in 1850). It was the “new West,” a new start, where the mistakes of the past could be corrected in this second America beyond the Mississippi River.<sup>3</sup> Daniel Webster, speaking at St. Louis in 1837, called the state an “infant Hercules,” with potential not yet dreamed. Ralph Waldo Emerson called the joining of the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers above St. Louis the world’s greatest crossroad.<sup>4</sup> Dreams of mining and fur trading dazzled many a mind. In 1822, William Becknell of old Franklin, Missouri, opened the Santa Fe Trail and saw, through the 50% to 100% profit made by his prairie wagon traders, the possibility of making Franklin rival St. Louis in splendor. When Franklin disappeared under a Missouri River flood, Independence succeeded her as “Queen City” for the western migrations across the “prairie ocean,” migrations made even more populous when the Oregon Trail became active by 1843 and gold was discovered in California by 1848. The combination of riverboat traffic and overland trails made Missouri the center of a new epoch in a new America.

All the while, a conservative, individualistic, simple brand of Jeffersonian politics was taking shape under the political genius of Senator Thomas Hart Benton. He was for “hard” (i.e., coined) money against “soft” paper money; he was against centralized government; he wanted cheap land and simple ways. Benton joined up with the politics of Andrew Jackson and supported an old-fashioned rural vitality against the complexities and corruption symbolized by the big eastern cities. When a depression of 1837 saw eastern banks failing and the Bank of the State of Missouri thriving (her banknotes proudly displaying the portrait of Benton, the “Gibraltar of the West”), the policies of Benton and Missouri seemed to be the only good ones in the nation.<sup>5</sup>

In and through it all, Missouri was organizing herself to work as an orderly society. The basic law which began a system of public schools was written in 1833. A public university was established at Columbia in 1839, though no

money was appropriated for its support. Towns were created, actually and as paper dreams, by land speculators. River travel grew markedly, and schemes for railroads were drawn up. The settlers were not all sure it was "progress"; the trappers and traders and Indians were sure it was not; but the process seemed inevitable.

It was in this environment that Baptists, too, began to organize themselves for actions beyond the local church and local settlements.

#### *The Associations: Getting It Together*

To be such individualists, Baptists have always liked to work together. Of course, there were many "brands" of Baptists on the frontier—Regular, Separate, United, General, Particular, Free Will, Primitive, Two-Seed-in-the-Spirit-Predestinarian, to name a few. But mainstream Baptists united on several basic principles: belief in (1) religious liberty, (2) personal conversion as the basis of church membership, (3) individual responsibility to God, (4) a democratic form of church government for each congregation, and (5) immersion as the scriptural form of baptism.

Independent believers who shared these convictions gathered together as Baptist churches, remote and widely-separated congregations which would bear names drawn from the Bible (Bethel, Gilead, Mt. Zion); from their wilderness location (Salt River, Indian Creek, Fox River, Pleasant Run, Mt. Prairie, Otter Creek, Elk Fork, Long Branch); or from the name of a town in which they formed, often a name with a classical or historical reference (Paris, Palmyra, Monticello, Hannibal).<sup>6</sup> Churches which shared these beliefs gathered together in voluntary "associations."

These "associations" were not synods or dioceses; they had no power over individual churches or Christians; they had influence only as individual churches or Christians chose to listen to their voices. But they were, and are, a way of "getting it together" for fellowship and to get some things done that local believers or congregations could not do by themselves.

An association would be formed whenever a group of churches wanted to form one. It did not require many churches, preachers, or members! Missouri Baptists had learned this method from their predecessors in England and "back East," and it was quite natural for the Bethel Church in 1809, shortly after its founding, to seek affiliation with an association—in their case the Red River Association in Kentucky. By 1816 the folks at Bethel decided it was time to form their own association with some of the churches that had grown out of their own "arms," along with some other churches in Missouri and Arkansas; and in September of 1816, at Bethel meeting house, the first Baptist association in Missouri was formed, not surprisingly called "Bethel Association." Seven churches, with four ministers, representing 220 members, made up this first group.

An association, like a church, would usually draw up a constitution and a

confession of faith. It would meet sometimes quarterly, sometimes annually. Sometimes it would gather in a church house, sometimes in a private home, sometimes in the woods. Meetings would last for two or three days, the public would be invited, three or four sermons would be preached on each day, and often revivals would “break out” at the associational gathering.

Churches would often ask the association questions about doctrine or church practice or interpretation of scriptures, and the “messengers” to the associational meeting would offer their combined advice to the inquiring church. A question to the Concord Association, for example, came from Salem Church at its first annual meeting in 1823: “Is it admissible for a church to license a sister to speak in public?” The association advised, “No.”<sup>7</sup>

Offerings would be collected for good causes, usually the spreading of the gospel within the boundaries of the association or neighboring territories. A “Circular Letter” would often be written for reading in the member churches: another Bethel Association, this one in northeast Missouri, had as its Circular Letter for 1835 a treatise on “Duties Devolving on Ministers of the Gospel,” and in 1840 one on “The Cold, Depressed State of Religion within the Bounds of Our Association.”<sup>8</sup>

As the work of associations grew, reports from their various projects (schools, missions, new preaching stations or churches) would be made at the stated meetings. “Corresponding Letters” would be received from, and written to, other associations, which often had “fraternal representatives” present for the meeting.

All in all, it was a rather efficient, yet highly informal way for Baptists to work together. It fit Baptist beliefs and the frontier spirit admirably, and it worked out unusually well in practice. It amazed—and still amazes—persons accustomed to more structured and more authoritarian churches, but a democratic society that survived by cooperation found it a “natural” way to go about its work. And so Baptists thrived.

The second association in Missouri was formed, not surprisingly, at the second center of Baptist church life, around St. Louis. The “Missouri Association” (later to be called the St. Louis Association) came into being on November 7–8, 1817, at the home of Thomas R. Musick. Thirteen persons were present, and \$12.75 was collected as the offering for associational work. The small size of the churches represented seems strange to the modern reader: Fee Fee Church had 52 members; Cold Water Church, 17 members; Boeuf Creek Church, 30 members; Negro Fork Church, 16 members; Upper Cuivre Church, 13 members; and Femme Osage Church, 14 members.

The third association was the Mt. Pleasant Association, founded in the Boone’s Lick settlement of Howard County on July 25, 1818, with five churches represented. The “Indian menace” was still real in this mid-Missouri area, and messengers came to associational meetings with a rifle in one

hand and the Bible in the other. Mt. Pleasant was to become a dominant association in Missouri Baptist life through much of the nineteenth century.

From these beginnings, associations sprang up all over Missouri, and over a period of years; the process of forming and re-forming associations continues, in fact, to the present day. Some have reflected specific issues or causes: the Freedom Association of 1858 was the direct result of controversy over slavery; the Baptist Indian Mission Association of 1846 had as a goal the conversion of Indians in western Missouri and nearby territories; others were organized to oppose or advocate missions. But these are another story, as we shall see later.

*The "General Association": Getting It All Together*

A most significant event in the life of Missouri Baptists occurred in 1834 and 1835 when a group of visionary folk formed an association which would ultimately unite Baptist life and work in the state. This was the founding of the "Baptist Central Society of Missouri," later to be called the "General Association of United Baptists in Missouri," later the "Missouri Baptist General Association," and still later the "Missouri Baptist Convention."

Its beginnings were anything but grand!



REV. JEREMIAH VARDEMAN.

Just eighteen ministers and thirteen laymen gathered at a country church, Providence in Callaway County, on August 29, 1834, "to deliberate upon the state of religion within the bounds of the churches to which they belong, and to consult if any special measures are necessary and practicable to promote the preaching of the gospel within the bounds of the state." Jeremiah Varde-

man, a giant of a man at six feet and three hundred pounds and a giant of a preacher who baptized more than 8000 people in his lifetime, was elected moderator.<sup>9</sup> Robert S. Thomas, later a professor at the University of Missouri and still later president of William Jewell College, was chosen clerk.

In Missouri at the time were just 150 Baptist churches, one hundred ministers, and thirteen associations. Many parts of the state were “destitute” of the gospel, and new settlers were pouring into new towns and territories every day. Many Baptists felt a need for a newspaper, to improve communication, and for a college, “to remove the standing reproach of Baptists that they were not educated.”<sup>10</sup> But even more, many felt a need for preaching the gospel in those parts of Missouri where it was not heard.

This was a special burden for three strong ministers, Thomas Fristoe, Ebenezer Rogers, and Fielding Wilhite, who constantly were traveling through central and north Missouri, preaching in homes and schoolhouses and the open air. In the autumn of 1833 they had met at the house of John Jackson in Howard County to pray about their concern, and they had then traveled through a large portion of the state preaching and sampling opinions of Baptists about a state-wide organization. Finally, they had sent an invitation to all 150 churches for the meeting at Providence.

And so it came to pass.

Folks at the Providence gathering looked at the needs of Missouri for gospel preaching and agreed that something should be done. They set a meeting for the following June at Little Bonne Femme church in Boone County, and they circulated a possible constitution for discussion throughout the state.

At the Little Bonne Femme meeting on June 6, 1835, the constitution was adopted and an offering of \$225.06 was “lifted” for the work of the new society. Its object?

To adopt means and execute plans to promote the preaching of the Gospel in the destitute churches and settlements within the bounds of the State.<sup>11</sup>

The first statewide organization of Missouri Baptists was, in fact, a “home missions” effort for their own territory. Further, the organizers stated that if the churches would do their proper jobs, no such central society would be needed and it could be disbanded!

An acting committee was authorized to hire preachers for traveling through the state, on missionary tours of no more than three months at a time, to preach and to receive contributions for the society. Their salaries were to be \$12.50 per month.

Several variations in employing preachers to do this missionizing were tried over the next several years, apparently with little success. A strong opposition from many quarters toward “hireling priests” or “money preachers” was a

major obstacle to organizing an effective corps of traveling evangelists. The simple lack of money on the frontier was another hindrance.

The small scope of these first efforts at a statewide organization can be seen in the small size of the churches which served as hosts for the annual Missouri Baptist "convention": Bethlehem Church in Boone County, 1836; Mt. Moriah Church in Cooper County, 1837; Big Lick Church in Cooper County, 1839; Chariton Church in Howard County, 1841; Walnut Grove Church in Boone County, 1847. The largest pre-Civil War meeting was in 1851, with forty-eight churches represented. Only seventy-five "delegates" attended the 1845 meeting, and only thirty-six in 1846. The thousands who attend annual convention meetings in modern years, often in convention centers, can scarcely imagine the cozy and quaint smallness of "statewide conventions" in days when travel was hard and population scant.

But the vision of these early Baptists was not small, however few their numbers. The "agents" or "missionaries" reported at each year's meeting their travels to various needy areas of the state. Brother A. F. Martin's report at the 1845 annual meeting in Columbia is typical:

In some regions we have mourned on account of declension in religion, but in others we rejoice to say that a bright cloud of heavenly mercy has stood over the camp of Israel, and refreshing streams of life-giving water have descended on the parched ground. I have labored three months, preached fifty-eight times, baptized eighteen persons and traveled 1,100 miles.

By 1842 the folks who came to meetings of the General Association were talking about establishing a newspaper and bookstores and libraries. The 1843 meeting was buzzing with talk of Dr. William Jewell's offer of \$10,000 to start a college. In 1845 and in following years, committees were active on the subjects of foreign missions, Indian missions, missions to German immigrants, Bible societies, Sunday schools, and ministerial education. Little or no attention was given, in these early years, to youth or women's work, and in fact little "religious education" of any kind was taking place in the churches save through the more or less regular preaching, usually one or two Sundays in each month.

A great Baptist leader of the last century, Dr. W. Pope Yeaman, in his 1898 history of Missouri Baptists, spoke of the hard times these early preachers of the gospel faced in wilderness Missouri:

The difficulties and privations of travel, the lack of newspaper communications, the tardiness and meagerness of the postal system, the want of church houses, an undeveloped spirit of Christian beneficence, and more than all the violent and almost vicious opposition of anti-missionary Baptists [of whom we shall read in the next chapter] imposed trials and burdens upon our church fathers in Missouri of which we can only have a faint realization.<sup>12</sup>

But despite all difficulties, the outlines of large works were there. The little society which was formed to shore up preaching in unreached areas of Missouri was, within ten years and despite its size, thinking in ways that would (1) serve the entire state; (2) draw all Baptist forces into one organization; and (3) carry out a worldwide program of Christian education, evangelism, and missions.<sup>13</sup>

The Texas War of Independence was blazing across borders to the south, Morse and Cooke were in 1837 revolutionizing communication by inventing the telegraph, some concerned church folks were in 1836 founding the American Temperance Union, and the brilliant intellectuals of Boston and Concord were forming the Transcendental Club in the same year. It was a time of great diversity and rapid change, of bold new beginnings in every part of American life. Baptists in remote Missouri, the “far West,” were part of that exciting process.

#### *Creating Colleges: Giving It Substance*

The main purpose of Missouri Baptists in forming their state society was the spread of the gospel, but they had scarcely got together at all before they wanted to create a college. The many who opposed education, claiming that the “call” was sufficient and that Jesus and his disciples had never been to college, were countered by others who pointed out that even though the God-man, Jesus, needed no schooling of men, he did teach his human disciples and commanded them to “Go . . . teaching.” As “civilization” kept encroaching on the frontier, Baptists joined other religious groups in founding schools, not only for the preparation of preachers but also to bring the enlightenment of education to laymen and women. It was *ministry*, as were evangelism and missions, and it undergirded evangelism and missions. Early Baptist leaders knew that education was important if Christian teaching were to have substance.

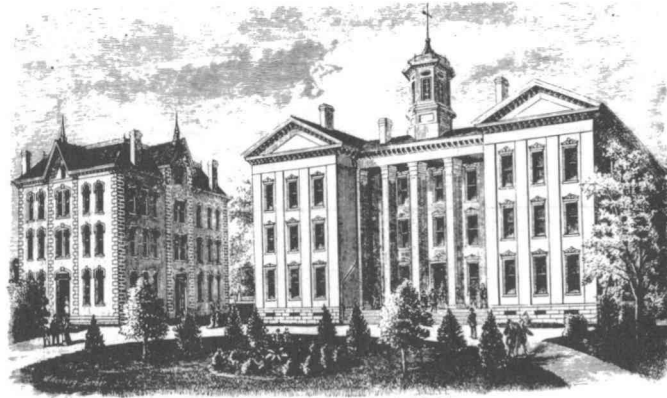
College-founding was, in fact, a popular frontier activity. Missourians had founded 85 colleges by 1860 (of which eight survive). As one historian put it, a “settler could hardly encamp on the prairies, but a college would spring up beside his wagon.”<sup>14</sup> Baptists were leaders in this endeavor: between 1849 and 1906, Baptists in various parts of Missouri founded more than one hundred different colleges, schools, or academies, all duly reported to meetings of the General Association.

A list of a few of these “colleges” will show how widespread was the urge to start Baptist schools: William Jewell College, Liberty, 1849; Lexington Baptist Female College, Lexington, 1855; Stephens College, Columbia, 1857; Mt. Pleasant College, Huntsville, 1857; LaGrange College, LaGrange, 1859; Hardin College, Mexico, 1873; St. Joseph Female College, St. Joseph, 1876; Grand River College, Edinburg, 1876; Pierce City Baptist College,

Pierce City, 1877; Southwest Baptist College, Bolivar, 1878; Mayfield-Smith Academy, Smithville/Marble Hill, 1878.

These Missouri Baptist “colleges” were of three different kinds. One kind, William Jewell being the example, was established by the General Association; others, such as Stephens, Mt. Pleasant, LaGrange, and Southwest Baptist, were founded by local associations; and still others, such as Hardin, Louisiana, and Lexington were established by individuals under “private enterprise” arrangements. Most of the schools were, in fact, academies offering what we would now call high school work, or less. Schools often died, either because the preacher-professor conducting them moved on, or because the building burned, or because funds were insufficient.

It will be seen, from the above incomplete list, that Baptists established three schools prior to the Civil War which endure, two of them still under Baptist auspices. This pre-Civil War era will be described briefly at this point, and we shall then resume the story of the colleges at later points in this volume.



WILLIAM JEWELL COLLEGE, LIBERTY, MO.

*William Jewell College*, founded in 1849, is the only school established by the Baptist state convention itself. When the Missouri Baptist Convention (“Central Society”) was formed in 1834, no public or Baptist schools were available in the state to which churchmen could send their young; the only school existing was a fledgling St. Louis University, a Catholic institution. If a Baptist youngster wanted to go to a Baptist school in Missouri, he or she was just out of luck!

After much informal discussion about starting a college, the General Association in 1843 received an offer of \$10,000 from Dr. William Jewell, dedicated layman and physician from Columbia, to get things moving. By 1848 enough subscriptions had been sold, each at \$6.00 a year for eight years, for

Baptists to dare accept the offer, and a special charter was received from Governor Austin King on February 27, 1849.

The college was to be located in the center of the state, but citizens of Liberty and Clay County gave land and \$7,000 to persuade a location in what is now a suburb of Kansas City (though Kansas City did not exist at the time). The college was located, as planned, near the Missouri River, the “interstate highway” of the day. William Jewell was the first men’s college west of the Mississippi River.

Classes were held in the Baptist church and rented rooms until a building, the construction personally supervised by Dr. Jewell, was completed in 1853. Jewell Hall was so well built that it is still the academic center of the campus. The college was closed during the Civil War, when Jewell Hall was used as a hospital for Union troops and a stable for Union horses, and the school survived several financial difficulties in its early years through the generosity of Baptists and other friends.



DR. WILLIAM JEWELL.

A Board of Ministerial Education was formed by the General Association in 1857 to examine ministerial students as to their Christian experience, to work with the Trustees of the college in arranging a boarding house for these

students, and to advise on curriculum. The ministerial students, who paid no tuition, were one part of the student body; “literary” and “scientific” students were another part.



REV. WILLIAM THOMPSON, D. D., LL.D.

The close ties between school and General Association can be seen in the careers of the first leaders of the college: E. S. Dulin, first “principal” (president) and professor, was active in the Missouri Baptist Indian Mission Association; he later was president of Baptist colleges at St. Joseph, Lexington, and Columbia. Robert S. Thomas, elected president in 1853, had been first clerk of the General Association, publisher of the first state Baptist newspaper, and a stalwart in Baptist life. In 1855 he became first pastor of the First Baptist Church in Kansas City. His successor, William Thompson, was called “one of the greatest pulpit orators of America.” This native born Scotsman preached for several years with great power in central Missouri. A Boston newspaper described “Western hunters and muledrivers standing with the tears streaming down their cheeks and with the agony of the cross delineated upon their faces” upon hearing Thompson preach, and the paper declared him “the greatest preacher of his time.”<sup>15</sup>

*Stephens College* was established in Columbia in 1856 as the “Columbia Baptist Female College,” and it early came under the supervision of the Little Bonne Femme Association. The “Campbellites” had formed their own college for women in Columbia in 1851, and the strong Baptists of mid-Missouri (by then the center of Baptist influence in the state) responded by forming a school to educate their daughters and keep them in the household of Baptist faith.

The “Baptist Female College” had struggles in its early years, as did most of the pioneer colleges; but it did manage to stay open throughout the Civil War. Families evidently considered their daughters safer in a boarding school than at home, and in a Missouri wracked not only by formal warfare but also by attacks from guerilla bands and out-and-out brigands, this feeling was probably accurate.

*Hannibal-LaGrange College* was chartered on March 12, 1859, as the “La-Grange Male and Female College” under sponsorship of the Wyaconda Association, then composed of churches in the four counties of the northeast corner of the state. At the suggestion of the Baptist Church in LaGrange, the Wyaconda group had voted in 1856 “to establish a male and female seminary [college] of the highest order in her bounds.”

The school was to be located at that place in the association which would raise the largest amount of money for building it up and sustaining it, and La-Grange outbid the town of Memphis in Scotland County by \$9,671 to \$6,512.

Classes actually began in September of 1858 in a partially-completed building, and the future looked promising for this co-educational school, one of the few such institutions on the frontier. But Civil War came, and the college endured those terrible hardships common to the times. Classes were suspended, and during part of the time the building was used by Federal troops as a hospital.

#### *“Publishing It”: Baptist Newspapers*

In addition to their desire for colleges, Missouri Baptists early on felt a need for a newspaper. Dr. S. W. Lynd, in a report to the General Association at Walnut Grove Church in 1847, told why:

1st. As an organ of notification. Here could be made known to Baptists in any particular section, the appointments of ministers and agents and important meetings . . .

2nd. An organ of information: Here could be conveyed to the brethren intelligence concerning all the Christian enterprises of the day, the societies engaged in them, the plan of their operations, the amounts of money received and expended in all the different departments, and what is passing on in the world.

3rd. As a means of exhibiting the great principles of our faith . . . but imperfectly understood . . . and often misrepresented, to the injury of the truth. Even

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among ourselves it is desirable by the discussion of important views to secure a large amount of uniformity in principles and practices.

4th. To supply to some extent, the want of pastoral labor.

5th. Especially to operate as an economical mode of promoting the object of the Association in diffusing the missionary work through the state. In no way can the cause of missions be advanced within our bounds so effectually as by a religious periodical.

Again, it is difficult for us, in our age of instant electronic communication with all corners of the globe, to realize how isolated folks were on the pre-Civil War frontier.

The *Western Pioneer*, a fortnightly paper, was published in Rock Springs, Illinois, by John Mason Peck and Thomas Parish Green between 1829 and 1841, and it carried news of Missouri Baptist life. In 1840 the General Association, lacking a newspaper of its own, adopted a resolution recommending a paper from Louisville, the *Western Pioneer and Baptist Banner* (now the *Western Recorder*).

But how to get a Missouri paper, printed *in* Missouri and *for* Missouri Baptists? It was not easy. Several were tried, but none were financially successful: *The Missouri Baptist*, published by I. T. Hinton and R. S. Thomas in 1842 in St. Louis, failed after one year, was reconstituted in the next year as the *Missouri and Illinois Baptist*, but still could not succeed. The *Western Watchman* was established in 1845 under the able editorship of S. W. Lynd, but it lasted only a year. John Mason Peck, who seemed to be everywhere doing all manner of good things, reorganized the *Watchman* in 1849 as a stock company with shares at \$10 each, and the paper resumed publication until the war killed it in 1861. It had by then come into disfavor with many Missouri Baptists by speaking out *for* "alien immersion" (accepting immersion from non-Baptist churches) and *against* slavery. "At that time the Baptists in Missouri were mainly slave holders. . . . They had inherited the institution and the slaves."<sup>16</sup> They did not choose to support a journal "that antagonized the sentiment and domestic interests of its readers."<sup>17</sup>

In 1859 a Missouri Baptist Publication Society was formed by several Baptists in central Missouri, who planned to publish "a religious newspaper to advocate our denominational principles and polity in the state of Missouri." On March 3, 1860, the first issue of the *Missouri Baptist* (using the same name as the short-lived paper from 1842) came from the presses under the experienced editorship of Dr. S. H. Ford.

The paper was very popular and showed great promise, but "the hopeful prospect vanished under a war cloud, June 15, 1861."<sup>18</sup> With the *Watchman* already dead, Baptists were again without a paper.

With the coming of Civil War, it was a time for living history, not chronicling it.

*“Sharing It”: Organized Missions*

Missouri Baptists “got it together” in the first place to become more effective in spreading the gospel at home: associations, a state-wide organization, colleges, and newspapers were all a part of this effort—a missionary effort. Missouri itself was a mission field, and a needy one. To churches in the settled states “back East,” in fact, Missouri was viewed as a *foreign* mission field.

Many early Baptist leaders in the state had, however, a vision not only of needs within their own borders, but of a missionary call as wide as the whole world.

Both dimensions—the sense of Missouri as a mission field and the sense on the part of Missourians that mission work extended to the ends of the earth—can be seen in the amazing career of John Mason Peck.



REV. JOHN M. PECK.

Peck was a native of Connecticut who became a Baptist at a small church in New York. An able, moderately well-educated, earnest young man, he came under the influence of the English Baptist missionary movement that had in 1793 sent William Carey to India. Luther Rice, who with Adoniram Judson had set out from America (as a Congregationalist) to join Carey in 1812, had

become a Baptist and returned in 1813 to raise support for organized missions among Baptists of the United States. He formed, in Philadelphia on May 18, 1814, a general foreign missionary society for Baptists of America, called the Baptist Board of Foreign Missions (also called the "Triennial Convention" because it met every third year). Rice's sermons on work among "the heathen" thrilled many people, including John Mason Peck.

The second annual report of this mission board, in 1816, said

Not only are missionaries wanting in lands involved in the darkness of heathenism, but also in those sections of our own country where laborers are not found. At the meeting of the convention of May ensuing, it is believed that the propriety of originating a Western Mission on a large scale, embracing the country beyond the Mississippi, will engage the deliberation of its members.

To this Peck responded

I learn that it is contemplated to establish a mission in the Missouri Territory. I have ever had my mind on the people west of the Mississippi. If it is my lot to labor among the heathen, the Louisiana Purchase, of all parts of the world, would be my choice.<sup>19</sup>

Peck soon packed up his young family and moved them, under appointment of the Philadelphia board, to St. Louis, arriving in the recently French/Spanish territory on November 21, 1817. The journey was difficult, lasting four months.

Having been joined by a classmate, J. E. Welch (who was himself to render great service in Missouri), Peck immediately linked up with the Baptists already present in the state to organize further mission work. In 1818 he preached the first missionary sermon west of the Mississippi in a legislative hall in St. Louis, proving himself a true Baptist by taking up a collection for missions. Peck and Welch organized First Baptist Church in St. Louis as a companion to churches already existing in the area, and they formed a Sunday school for St. Louis Negroes.

In September of 1818 Peck visited the then-lively Bethel Association in southeast Missouri and persuaded the brethren to "open a correspondence" with the Baptist Board of Foreign Missions in Philadelphia. In the next month he and Welch were in the Missouri Association (in the St. Louis area), making plans with the brethren for "The United Society for the Spread of the Gospel," its purpose being to

consult on the best measures to promote the Gospel and common schools; devise measures to assist ministers in obtaining an education, and to qualify school-teachers; consider the moral and religious welfare of the Indians, and devise means for their reform, and use every means in their power to send forth missionaries on the frontier and destitute settlements.

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Peck also began, in 1819, a short-lived academy in St. Charles; traveled over Missouri in 1824 organizing Sunday schools; in 1827 founded Shurtleff College as a Baptist institution in Illinois; promoted a Baptist newspaper, the *Western Pioneer*; helped form, in 1832, The American Baptist Home Mission Society in New York City; and in 1834 helped organize the Baptist Central Society of Missouri (which was, of course, the "General Association," later the "Missouri Baptist Convention").

His career so illustrates the early efforts at organized mission work, including the interconnections with education and publishing and organizing and associations of churches, that it offers a valuable picture of the times.

Organized missionary endeavors were carried forward by the state convention after its founding in 1834. By 1844 a disputed clause had been added to the constitution indicating a purpose to preach the gospel not only in Missouri, but also "to adopt such other measures as may be calculated to extend the kingdom of Christ in this state and throughout the world."

At the meeting in Columbia in 1845, a committee on foreign missions achieved adoption of the following resolution:

The General Association is an appropriate channel through which contributions may be made to foreign missions. Therefore be it resolved, first, that this association earnestly recommends to the churches and the brethren to send up annual contributions for the spread of the gospel throughout the earth; second, that ministers throughout the state, friends to the cause of missions, be requested to present its claims to their churches annually and to take up contributions for promoting its objects.

In the 1846 meeting a report stressed that the missionary endeavors of Missouri Baptists were not an innovation but were a continuation of 157 years of mission work conducted by English Baptists. The report added that English Baptist individuals, after paying every tax and tithe to the established church, had nevertheless given an average of one dollar each to missions, whereas Missouri Baptists had given an average of four cents, with over 13,000 Baptists giving nothing.

In 1847 the Association endorsed the new Indian Missions society, and in 1849 a resolution was unanimously adopted asking "the ministering brethren" to "preach in their respective churches once each year on . . . Foreign Missions, Home Missions, the Bible Cause, and Indian Missions." By this time a Foreign Mission Society of Missouri was formed as an integral adjunct of the General Association.

All the while, however, great storms of opposition to organized mission work raged throughout the state, directed early on against Peck, and later against the work of the convention. The anti-mission controversy was one of many which afflicted early- and mid-nineteenth century Missouri, and it is to this story of conflicts that we now turn.

## Notes To Chapter 2

<sup>1</sup>Paul C. Nagel, *Missouri: A Bicentennial History* (New York, 1977), p. 39.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 89.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 49.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 50.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 113.

<sup>6</sup>These church names are drawn from the roster of the Bethel Association of northeast Missouri, from which roll was called for their meeting at the Salt River Church in Ralls County in 1840. Archives of the Missouri Baptist Historical Commission, William Jewell College.

<sup>7</sup>Quoted in R. S. Douglass, *History of Missouri Baptists* (Kansas City, 1934), p. 64.

<sup>8</sup>Archives of the Missouri Baptist Historical Commission.

<sup>9</sup>I am indebted to Mr. William E. Partee of Hannibal, a descendant of Jeremiah Vardeman, who gave me some most interesting details about the first moderator of the association in an interview on March 26, 1981.

<sup>10</sup>Douglass, p. 107.

<sup>11</sup>Archives of the Missouri Baptist Historical Commission.

<sup>12</sup>W. Pope Yeaman, *A History of the Missouri Baptist General Association* (Columbia, 1899), pp. 74-75.

<sup>13</sup>The criteria for participation in this state denominational body have varied over the years, and modern readers may find the changes interesting. Originally, all who came to the annual meeting were "members," provided they were Baptists in good standing with their local churches. By 1847, they were obliged also to "contribute annually" to the funds of their local congregations. By 1858 each *association* earned a representative to the General Association by contributing funds to the state organization, representatives being permitted at five dollars a head. By 1862 each *church* could earn representation by contributing five dollars. By 1867 "*any brother or sister*" could become a member by contributing five dollars and a "life member" by contributing thirty dollars; a church could be represented for a ten dollar gift and could have an additional representative for each additional five dollar gift. It was not until 1915 that money payments were dropped as criteria for participation in the state convention.

<sup>14</sup>E. E. Calkins, *They Broke the Prairies* (New York, 1937), p. 84.

<sup>15</sup>Quoted in Douglass, p. 130.

<sup>16</sup>Yeaman, p. 301.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 303.

<sup>19</sup>Quoted by H. E. Truex, *Baptists in Missouri* (Columbia, 1904), pp. 92-93.

*“I always try to avoid fighting with the Baptists. They enjoy it too much.”*

*... a Methodist circuit-rider*

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## Frontiers of Conflict: Battling It Out 1800–1865

The years before the Civil War were a time of turmoil in Missouri, not only on the political front but in religion and society as well. And, of course, the state has never known—before or since—such disruption as was brought by the Civil War years themselves.

The marvel is that order was established in the new state at all, given the conflicts that raged across hill, valley, ridge, and river. Racial, ethnic, religious, political, economic, sectional, military—one can scarcely name a kind of dispute for which Missouri was not a battleground. And in most issues, as always throughout their history, Baptists did not shrink from controversy or conflict.

### *Peoples and Cultures in Collision*

It was unavoidable, when you think on it, that Missouri should be the scene for racial and nationalistic rancor. In her settlement,

Missouri represented the vanguard of America's frontier, building her culture therefore from the contribution of red, black, and white men and women. Out of New England, the Middle Atlantic region, the Ohio valley, the South, and Europe arrived such an assortment of settlers as would never melt into a bland mixture.<sup>1</sup>

American frontiersmen had little understanding of the French and Spanish

ways of a St. Louis or Ste. Genevieve; they scorned the European-inspired tendency to cluster in villages and to prize such things as fine cooking or nice clothing or rules of etiquette (a French, not an American word). The religious among the settlers objected to the casual Catholicism of the French and Spanish, and particularly to their "desecration" of the Sabbath through the European custom of making it a day of social enjoyment. The Europeans were not as combative as the Americans, however, and in a very short time were not nearly as numerous; French and Spanish ways became a memory evoked by lovely place names.

*Indians and Pioneers.* The Indians were another story, and not a proud one for the white settlers. Thomas Jefferson had at one time, when the land seemed limitless, thought out a scheme whereby all white men would occupy territories east of the Mississippi River and all red men territories to the west. He never carried out his plan, but many Indians were resettled into Missouri from eastern states as whites sought the land in those more populous regions.

Missouri's native Indian population was impressive. The original tribe of Missouri Indians had died out before 1800 as a result of disease and warfare, but the marvelous Osage, the Sac, the Fox, the Shawnee, and the Delaware numbered about 6000 in 1820.

White Missourians in their statehood year, 1821, asked the Federal government to stop Indian migration from the east, to remove tribes recently placed in Missouri, and to take away all Indian claims to land. This greed—in addition to the disease and alcoholism and violence brought to the Indians by the settlers—was a dominant note in treatment of the original Americans. Pushed farther and farther west, with a string of broken treaties and promises; pushed finally even out of the rich and fertile Platte lands in northwest Missouri, which had been pledged to the Indians "forever"; the Indians were finally expelled from Missouri. The boundary of the state was redrawn to include the Platte Territory, and Missouri hung out a sign which read, "For Whites (and Black slaves) Only."

It is not a happy story.

Where were the Baptists in all of this? Church records are silent on broken treaties and legally stolen land. Churchmen were a part of their culture, and they presumably saw little wrong in ousting semi-savages so that "real" people could use the land. Few voices were raised in outcry.

Isaac McCoy, in the same year that Peck and Welch came to Missouri, was appointed as missionary to the Indians and served chiefly in Illinois and Indiana. He became a Federal Indian agent, as well as missionary, and he proposed a humane scheme to give land to the Indians in places where they would be protected from whites and to give them self-government and representation in Washington. McCoy and his children were important in the early growth of Kansas City: McCoy owned the land on which much of the early city was built, and his log cabin was the first residence there. His sons and

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son-in-law were businessmen and political leaders, as well as missionaries. They did both good and well.

The Missouri Baptist General Association in 1847 endorsed a new Indian Mission Society, established by McCoy in Louisville, Kentucky; and for several years the cause of Indian missions was recommended to the churches. On August 31, 1846, a "Missouri Baptist Indian Mission Association" had been formed for the purpose of sending the gospel to the Indians, many of whom now lived just west of the state. This was an active body, supported by Missouri Baptist leaders; and it for several years raised and spent a goodly sum for those days—\$1000 annually—in the cause.

But one cannot, in honesty, claim work among Indians as a rousing success for the Baptists.

*German Immigrants.* With the 1830's came a tide of immigration from Germany, providing new and lively blood in a now very diverse state. These settlers set up their "new Germany" on the rocky hillsides along the river valleys, choosing land like that at home instead of the equally available, more fertile meadowlands. There they made their villages—their Hermanns and Westphalias and Wittenbergs—and planted their vineyards and studied their Classics and created tidy farms where it seemed nothing should grow. Europe, and especially Germany, was in turmoil during the third and fourth decades of the nineteenth century, and after the revolutions of 1848 even more Germans came, settling not only in the villages but in St. Louis as well. They ultimately became a major force in the cultural, intellectual, and political life of St. Louis and the state. Over 50,000 were in that city by 1860, bringing a disciplined energy to Missouri life that it had seldom seen.

Prejudice, of course, directed itself at those who were "different" and who tended to stay together. In the 1850's "fears were expressed that the immigration of Germans meant Missouri was being invaded by socialists and anarchists."<sup>2</sup> (By the time of World War I, the prejudice led to serious proposals for segregating Germans in special places and forbidding their use of strategic streets and bridges. Rumors spread that food served in German restaurants "held secret potions aimed at slackening the patriotism of unsuspecting patrons"!)<sup>3</sup>

Baptists shared many of the prejudices, and at the same time sought to do missionary work among the Germans as a means of converting them to "right" thinking. (The Germans, for example, opposed slavery, and many Baptists were slave-owners. On the other hand, the Germans stoutly defended their beer and wine, which to most Baptists were "immoral.") In 1849 the General Association had noted the need to form a special missionary organization for the Germans, and in 1853, at a meeting in Fayette, the Association reported success for the "German Mission Society." As a report from R. S. Thomas said,

Your committee have good reason to believe that there are now largely over a hundred thousand Germans in our state, and month after month increasing numbers flock to our shores. The German population of our state is destined to be very large, if not predominant. The 25,000 Baptists of Missouri must supply this starving multitude with the bread of life.

The committee reported that three missionaries had been active among Germans during the last year, that \$766.85 had been invested in the cause, and that a connection was being formed with Rochester University to provide "suitable men" to work among the German population. "Suitable men" meant, of course, Baptists who could speak German.

W. Pope Yeaman, writing forty-five years later, still saw a great need for missionary efforts to combat the influence of "German rationalism, German infidelity, and German Lutherism." Yeaman noted that the state then had 800,000 Germans and 125,000 Baptists, that the Germans were in fact increasing faster than Baptists.<sup>4</sup> What Yeaman and other Baptists did not mention was the fact that Germans in Missouri had founded in 1847 the Missouri Synod of the Lutheran Church, one of the most conservative, vital arms of Lutheranism in the world.

*Negroes, Slavery, and Thoughts of Freedom.* The Negroes were another major ethnic group in frontier Missouri, most of them having come—not of their own volition—as "guests" of the Southern white immigrants who owned them. Slavery was a strange institution in a state where individual liberty was so often proclaimed from pulpits and stumps, and consequently the controversy over chattel bondage was a very heated one in Missouri.

Slavery was never very large in these parts—only Delaware, among slave states, had a smaller percentage of slaves in its total population. And the percentage shrank, between 1820 and 1860, from 20% to 10%. Bondsmen were concentrated, however, in the highly influential central section of the state, where Baptists were also most prominent: in Howard County slaves made up 36% of the population in 1860,<sup>5</sup> and in the town of Columbia, about one-half of the 3200 residents were slaves.<sup>6</sup>

Controversy over slavery was a direct result of the state's diversity in population: it had welcomed Southern slave-holders, who were important in building up the economy and the cultural and educational institutions of Missouri; but also welcomed were the German and New England immigrants, who were ardent in their opposition to slavery.

Baptists found themselves on both sides of the issue, the majority accepting slavery as "the way things are" and a minority speaking out against human bondage as sinful. Those who defended slavery used a literal interpretation of the Bible, pointing out that slavery was accepted in both Old and New Testaments. When opponents said that slavery was against the *spirit* of Scripture, they were accused of "rationalism" and "humanism" and reminded

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that “nothing can stand against the plain teaching of the word of God.”

Segregation was not practiced extensively until after the Civil War, and blacks and whites were members of the same churches, under the same preaching, and subject to the same church disciplines. The leadership was always white, however, and the social codes of the day are reflected in innuendoes in church records—such as the omission of last names for black members, and the notations that they are the “property” of specified white members.

John Mason Peck’s Sunday school for Blacks in St. Louis became the “African Baptist Church” of that town. By 1858 a “Freedom Association of United Baptists” was organized including twenty-six churches in Polk, Webster, Dallas, Laclede, Hickory, and Greene counties. But by and large Baptists contented themselves with sanctifying the status quo on racial matters until agitation toward Civil War brought the issue to a climax.

#### *Religious Strife, External and Internal*

Turmoil in pre-Civil War Missouri was not limited to the clash of ethnic and racial groups. Religion got into the act as well, and that with an unholy vengeance.

*The Anti-Mission Controversy.* Strange as it seems to modern-day readers, Baptists of the second quarter of the nineteenth century were much more divided over organized missionary endeavors than over the morality of owning other human beings. Baptists were the only frontier churches to be wracked by anti-missionism—a doubtful distinction, at best—and the issue divided churches, associations, and even families. It was a major threat to the existence of organized Baptist life through the General Association.

In Chapter II we looked at the forming of the missionary system in Missouri, as it appeared in the career of John Mason Peck and in the activities of the General Association. But Peck, despite his magnificent successes, ran into serious and rabid opposition wherever he went.

For example, upon his appearance at the Bethel Association of southeast Missouri—the first Baptist association in the state—in 1818, Peck was countered by a visitor from the newly-formed Mt. Pleasant Association in central Missouri, William Thorp. The associational meeting was held at the home of John Duvall (which suggests the small size of the gathering), and the Bethel group established a relationship with the Baptist Board of Foreign Missions in Philadelphia. Nevertheless, Thorp and an associate “whispered about among a few of the brethren and shook their heads doubtingly,” wrote Peck, signifying their displeasure at the proceedings. Their whisperings and doubtings found ready audience among some of the brethren: in the next year Bethel withdrew their resolutions of cooperation with the Mission Board. Then, as a reflection of the deeply divided state of affairs, they renewed the relationship in 1820, only to drop it again in 1821. Bethel finally became anti-

missions in sentiment, the once proudly-evangelistic association began to wither, a new missionary association (Cape Girardeau) was founded in the area, and Bethel waned. The minute book of Bethel church, which for month after month reads, "The conference met . . . No business. Adjourned," tells the story graphically and plaintively. Nothing was happening. No life there.

Wherever Peck went he met opposition in his efforts at organizing mission societies, Sunday schools, Bible societies, Baptist newspapers, and Christian schools. That he had great success despite the opposition is clear, but the opposition severely divided Baptists in the state, as it was doing through the frontier.

What were the sources of this strange opposition to organized missionary efforts? (The opponents made clear that they were not opposed to *missions*, but to any organized *system* to carry out mission work.) Some of the opposition was based on the same kind of scriptural literalism that supported slavery: though slaves are mentioned in the Bible, mission boards, Sunday schools, newspapers, and colleges are not. "Jonah was not sent by a mission society," said the anti-missionists, "nor had he been to a seminary for his education." God calls people who are *already* qualified, and he doesn't need a board to send them out to work." Other opposition was theological, based on a hyper-Calvinism: as the respected Baptist, Dr. Ryland, said to young William Carey when he was enthusiastic about going as a missionary to India, "Sit down, young man. When God wants the heathen converted he will do it without your help."

Still other opposition was based on the alleged expense of missionary boards and societies, an especially strong argument to people who didn't pay their own preachers! Alexander Campbell, in his newspaper the *Christian Baptist*, gained wide circulation throughout the frontier for his accusations that missionary societies were extravagant, greedy, and guilty of stealing through embezzlement. (Campbell changed his views later, but the damage was done.)

Probably most opposition was based on the frontiersman's suspicion of "Eastern dudes" and what Kentuckian John Taylor called "the New England rat." It is to be remembered that the mission board which sent Peck was located in Philadelphia, and Peck himself was from Connecticut and New York. As one preacher put it,

We don't care anything about them missionaries that's gone amongst them heathens way off yonder. But what do they want to come among us for?

The moderator responded that this is a free country and that no one was forced to go hear the missionaries preach, to which the preacher answered,

Well, if you must know, Brother Moderator, you know the big trees in the woods

overshadow the little ones; and these missionaries will be all great, learned men, and the people will go to hear them preach, and we shall be put down. That's the objection.<sup>7</sup>

Further, the democratic values of the frontier led to suspicion of any central authority, whether in government or in church matters; some churchmen actually believed that societies, if formed, could impose taxes on them to support missionaries. Under the skilled leadership of John Taylor, who published the anti-missionary *Thoughts on Missions* in 1819; Daniel Parker, who wrote *A Public Address to the Baptist Society* in 1820; and Alexander Campbell with his newspapers, anti-missionism became a strident force all across the frontier.

It was inevitable that Missouri should be affected.

When Baptists met to form their state Central Society (later "General Association" and "Convention") in 1834, two visitors (in addition to Peck) were Theodoric Boulware and Thomas P. Stephens, respected preachers from the Mt. Pleasant Association nearby. Boulware had developed strong anti-mission feelings in Kentucky, reinforced by his close association with William Thorp in Missouri, and he and Stephens saw in the new state organization an example of the "ungodly, evil, modern system." Boulware, as he later said,

advised and entreated these brethren to disperse and not establish this cockatrice den among us, from which will emanate a serpentine brood, marring the peace of God's children and bringing much scandal on the cause of Christ, for we are assured you have in view more than the happiness of the church and the salvation of men. We fear you are somewhat deceptive.<sup>8</sup>

When the brethren went ahead to form the state convention and bring into the heart of Missouri Baptist life this "pernicious new system," local associations throughout the state began to split over the missions issue. Opponents of the organized missions movement, and of the Central Society, launched a "malignant warfare" denouncing those who formed the Society as "mercenaries," "hirelings," and "money-mad preachers." They used rumor, ridicule, threats, intimidation; and they sought to influence political figures to act against the "other" Baptists. These were not days of brotherhood.<sup>9</sup>

A sample of what was happening in many associations can be seen in the history of the important Mt. Pleasant Association, which at one time comprised all churches on either side of the river between St. Charles and St. Joseph.

Thomas Fristoe and Fielding Wilhoite of the Mt. Pleasant group were leaders in founding the new state body, and of course this brought them to cross purposes with Boulware, Stephens, and others in their own local association. Anti-mission forces gained a majority in Mt. Pleasant, and Fristoe was out-

ed from his role as moderator. One month after the preliminary organization of the Central Society at Little Bonne Femme Church, a query was sent to Mt. Pleasant Association by Salem Church: "We wish the association to advise us and the rest of the churches what to do with the missionary system that has made its appearance among us." In the midst of strident debate, the association rejected a resolution that "liberty of conscience should be granted"—thereby rejecting a deeply-held Baptist principle—before settling on a resolution which advised "that the subject of missions was one upon which Christians may conscientiously differ, but we advise the churches to keep it out of their bodies."<sup>10</sup>

No way. If there's a fight to be had, Baptists will carry it out to the end. Churches were split on the issue and sent opposing delegations of messengers to the annual association meeting, and the association itself split into two groups, each claiming to be the true Mt. Pleasant Association. Mt. Pleasant wasn't pleasant at all! This story of church and associational splits was repeated throughout the state, though usually when anti-mission forces prevailed the new association took a new name (as North Liberty was formed out of Fishing River Association, which went over totally to the anti-mission cause in 1823).

Once a split occurred, the courses of the anti-mission and mission-supporting associations were predictable. The anti-mission Mt. Pleasant Association, which began to call itself "Old School Baptist" or "Regular Baptist" to distinguish itself from "United Baptist," simply dwindled away. From being the largest of the two associations, it lost ground until by the mid-1870's it claimed only eight churches with a membership of less than three hundred. The missionary group, on the other hand, was active in beginning new churches, baptizing new converts, forming William Jewell College, aiding and examining young men for the ministry, employing traveling missionaries and ministers, and forming new associations out of its membership—all duly recorded in annual minutes. By the mid-1870's this group had fifty-six churches and over 4,000 members.

History resolved what church squabbling could not: the anti-mission elements died off, and those who cooperated in a fervor for education, evangelism, and missions lived and grew.

Baptists have never had an internal struggle more divisive than this one, but it was those who kept uppermost the call to cooperate in missionary efforts who survived to bear the name "Missouri Baptists."

#### *The Campbellite Controversy and Other Denominational Disputes.*

The anti-mission writings of Alexander Campbell have been noted above. Campbell was from 1813 to 1830 a Baptist minister, pastor of the Brush Run Church in Pennsylvania and affiliated with the Redstone Baptist Association. In 1823 he began publishing the *Christian Baptist*, which was succeeded

in 1829 by the *Millennial Harbinger*, ridiculing through these newspapers everything with which he did not agree: missionary societies, Bible societies, associations, creeds, confessions, church constitutions, “reverends,” “doctors of divinity,” and many other “unscriptural” innovations.

He was an entertaining speaker and excellent debater, and his many followers among Baptists called themselves *Reformers*—people dedicated to reforming their churches and associations. It was an age of public debates over religion, and huge crowds would listen to Campbell take on the best of his age.

Ultimately, Campbell left the Baptists and formed his own church, the “Christian Church” or “Disciples of Christ,” leading many Baptists into the new body. Though he worked chiefly in Virginia and Kentucky, Campbell did preach in Missouri and did have many followers within the state. In October, 1845, for example, he spoke at the University of Missouri in Columbia and offered his views on religion and education. The founding of Christian College (later Columbia College) in 1851 was not unrelated to Campbell’s visit and the stir he created.

Missouri Baptists were inevitably affected by the controversy with Campbell, particularly since his following tended to come out of Baptist churches. A major treatise written by the revered, self-educated, and scholarly A. P. Williams in 1866, entitled *Campbellism Exposed*, reflects some of the attitudes prevalent in the controversy. Williams had been moderator and preacher to the General Association, had founded Second Baptist Church in Liberty and First Baptist in Boonville, and was the most respected Baptist thinker in the state. Beyond Williams’ book, though, little is said in histories or church records about the conflict with Campbell and his followers. Beside the anti-mission conflict, this one paled in comparison.

So did disputes with other denominations, though public debate over doctrine was a major form of entertainment in a contentious age. Methodist Jacob Ditsler and Baptist J. R. Graves disputed for ten days in what became called the “Great Carrollton Debate” of the period, and other disputations were held with champions of other faiths, including a Roman Catholic bishop. The frontier Davids fought their Goliaths, the Christians contested with the lions, the would-be Samsons sought to slay erring Philistines. Sometimes with Samson’s weapon.

#### *The Mormon “Menace”*

Little is in church records, either, about the Mormons, though they were a major issue in western Missouri during the 1830’s, the decade when the General Association was founded and when anti-mission battles were at their peak.

Joseph Smith became certain that God had ordained Jackson County as

the place where his wandering Latter Day Saints should settle down to await the return of Christ. "Independence thus became the Saints' Zion," Kansas City being not yet founded, and by 1833 one-third of the county's population was Mormon.<sup>11</sup>

These newcomers did not "set well" with resident settlers, most of them from the South and many of them Baptist. The Mormons claimed to be the one true church, a claim which met with some disagreement. They were friendly to Indians, whom settlers saw as a threat; they opposed slavery in a society that held slaves; they were "clannish" and not-helpful neighbors; they were ultimately viewed as a military threat, with rumors of Joseph Smith's "Armies of Israel" running rampant through the state. Presumably Baptists were not offended by the Mormon opposition to whiskey and tobacco.

In 1833 attacks on the Mormons began, with skirmishes taking place mainly in Jackson, Clay, and Caldwell counties—the latter county created hastily by the legislature as a place to tuck the Mormons away. In 1838, after five years of on-again-off-again conflict, the Mormons attacked and looted Gallatin; they were in turn subjected to a brutal massacre at Haun's Mill and a plundering of the town of Far West, their "capital." The Saints were more sinned against than sinning, and their expulsion from Missouri in 1839 was more a matter of establishing the peace than of working out justice.

Though official Baptist positions and actions were not taken on the Mormon "menace," it is clear that many individual Baptists were a part of the frays as both victims and victimizers. These were passionate and crude times in Missouri, and the religious passions were often as crude as any other.

#### *Border War and Civil War: A State of Disruption*

Missouri bled and wept during the Civil War and the "Kansas Wars" preceding; Baptists bled and wept with her.

The story is one of nearly incredible suffering, violence, anarchy, and disruption of normal life. Towns and churches and families were split, and lawlessness often became the law. Missouri, which wanted to stay out of the conflict, was affected more fiercely than any other state save perhaps Tennessee and Virginia.

Scarcely had the Mormon troubles died down when border skirmishes with Kansans began, affecting the same persons in the same counties. The issue was the extension of slavery into Kansas and territories beyond. Though all this had supposedly been resolved with the Missouri Compromise of 1820, with slaves being prohibited in Kansas and lands west and north, folks were still agitated and agitating. Some slave-owners wanted to emigrate into Kansas with their slaves, and others living in the western parts of Missouri feared that a free Kansas would make it too easy for their slaves to run away. That

the issue was more emotional than “real” can be seen by the fact that of 1,200,000 Missouri citizens in 1860, less than 25,000 were slave-holders. But, then, emotions are the point in a situation of conflict.

These were years when Missouri should have been coming to her prime as a leading state in the nation; instead, political and spiritual energies were spent in fruitless and destructive battles over an immoral economic institution—slavery—and over the rights of a federal government as compared with those of state governments. The topics of debate at the March, 1849, meeting of the Lyceum in Columbia, for example, were “Has the Congress of the United States the constitutional right to legislate upon the subject of slavery in the territories?”<sup>12</sup>

In 1854 the Kansas-Nebraska Act did away with the Missouri Compromise and gave settlers in any territory the right to choose whether their region would be “slave” or “free.” It was this “squatter sovereignty” bill which let all perdition break loose. Western Missourians, spurred on by their now-rabid Senator David Atchison, determined that with “ballots and bullets” they would make Kansas a slave state. “Border ruffians” would rush into Kansas to vote, then return home to Missouri greatly satisfied with themselves over their greatly illegal activities. In the election of March, 1855, for example,

nearly 5,000 Missourians, including students from the university, marched into the area to vote with flags, firearms, knives, and whiskey. The American people watched an amazing outcome, which was not that the proslavery side won, but that more than 6,000 votes were cast in a territory boasting barely 2,000 eligible voters. Senator Atchison himself led a large group of these Missourians, who he claimed were acting to assure slavery’s safety across to the Pacific Coast and to preserve the principle of unrestricted territories.<sup>13</sup>

When the New England Emigrant Aid Society and other northern groups also appeared in Kansas, Atchison threatened these “Negro heroes” with “the Mormon treatment”—shooting, burning, hanging.

Yet Kansas was going anti-slavery in sentiment, despite all the Missourians could do. Kansans were experiencing a kind of mini-Civil War of their own, and in 1856 a Missouri vigilante group raided Lawrence, Kansas, looting the town and killing three persons. Angry Kansans, including the mad John Brown, retaliated with raids into Missouri, and further raids by Kansans calling themselves “Jayhawkers” kept the Missouri border in constant turmoil. No one felt safe, either in towns or on the scattered farms. No one *was* safe.

It is small wonder, as Pope Yeaman documents, that the work of the General Association during these years was in a state of decline.<sup>14</sup> Baptists in the west were preoccupied with survival; Baptists throughout the state were caught in the alarms that were sounding through the nation.

When national war did come, Missouri was wracked with anguish. Though she had voted a moderate ballot in the election of 1860, casting only 10% of her votes for the “northern” Lincoln, less than 20% for southern-oriented candidates, and 70% for candidates of compromise and peace, Missouri somehow found herself with a governor who demanded secession. Governor Claiborne Jackson did his best to take the state out of the Union and, when unsuccessful, he abandoned Jefferson City and formed a secessionist government in exile, which located itself first in Arkansas and then in Texas. War could not be kept out of Missouri’s borders, and more than one thousand battles and skirmishes were fought within the state. “Sixty percent of Missouri’s eligible men served in the war, with nearly three-fourths of them fighting for the Union.”<sup>15</sup> The largest formal campaign was led by General Sterling Price, a Missourian who sought to take the river valleys and major cities for the Confederacy; he was decisively defeated in the Battle of Westport at Kansas City in October, 1864.

Equally fierce as—perhaps more so than—the formal battles were the guerrilla actions that raged through the state. Evil men like Quantrill, Cole Younger, “Bloody Bill” Anderson, and later Jesse and Frank James rode the state with their gangs, robbing and killing. Further, within virtually every town and village there were supporters of both North and South, and one never knew when a neighbor he smiled at in the morning would be a masked raider shooting at him or burning his house at night.

Though church records often make no mention of the war (for example, the minute book of the famous old Courtois Church in Crawford County says nothing about it, even though the minutes are consecutive and uninterrupted, the battle of Pilot Knob occurred nearby, and Sterling Price’s raiding party passed not far away), the churches did suffer greatly.<sup>16</sup>

W. Pope Yeaman, who lived through the Civil War, remembered the circumstances when he was writing his history of Missouri Baptists in 1898. He described it, in the marvelous Victorian rhetoric of which he was so capable, in these words:

Neighbor breathed hostility towards neighbor, brothers in the flesh as well as in the church allowed sectional prejudice and political rancor to supplant natural affection and divide spiritual fellowship. Personal liberty, property rights and human life itself were deemed trifling as weighed against opinion and passion. The sword, the bullet and the torch usurped the place of reason, affection and justice. Old men, defenseless women and helpless children could offer no effective plea against the marauders’ bullet or the villains’ torch. The flames of the christian homes sent lurid rays athwart the warm corpses of fathers and grandfathers, while the moans of widows and shrieks of orphans mingled with the crackling timbers and roaring flames of homes abandoned in extorted obedience to licensed cruelty. Men were called from their beds at the dread hour of midnight and shot down in the doors of their own homes with none to care for the dying body but wailing wife

and frantic children. Peaceful farmers plowed and sowed and reaped in constant expectation of falling between the plow handles or from the seat of the moving mower, or to be hurried off to loathsome prison by the hands of militiamen or guerrillas. Demons in human shape who took license from the confusion and general demoralization of the times went forth robbing, burning and murdering. It is no exaggeration to say that in the irregular and viler incidents of war, Missouri suffered as did no other state.<sup>17</sup>

Small wonder it is that Baptist work in Missouri waned during the war years. Churches were seized and used as warehouses, hospitals, or "temporary encampments of prowling bands more heartless and merciless than ancient goths and vandals."<sup>18</sup> People tended to stay at home rather than endure the risk of being on the roads going to and from church services; many churches suspended services altogether. Men were away fighting. Homes of absentee owners might be burned.

The 1862 meeting of the General Association itself, at Rehoboth Church in what is now Slater, was interrupted during a Sunday sermon of the great preacher William Thompson by a detachment of Federal troops from Marshall. The soldiers ordered all men outside, searched them, and placed several under arrest. At this same meeting a circular letter was prepared to send to the churches, written probably by the venerated A. P. Williams, which spoke of this "hour of darkness" and which encouraged Christians to resist "the temptations to which we are peculiarly liable during such a time," which were specified as follows:

1. Insubordination to the powers that be.
2. Resentment, malice and revenge when we suffer personal wrongs.
3. Alienation of affection towards our brethren who may differ from us, particularly on national affairs.
4. General negligence touching our religion, church and denominational obligations.

It is a remarkable expression from a strife-torn church trying to make its way through times of trouble.

No report was made of missionary work done during the year, and no suggestions were offered for work during the next year. Total collections for work in the state were \$124.55. This was a typical report of the war years, when William Jewell and LaGrange Colleges were closed, mission work was suspended, and sheer survival was the order of the day. In 1864 the General Association was not able to meet at all.

As Dr. Yeaman reflected on "these scenes, so trying to Missouri for so many years," it seemed to him "almost a miracle that the cause of the Prince of Peace" should have had any success at all "among a people so distressed, divided, torn and tossed as Missourians were."

That christianity with its enterprises for progress were not forsaken illustrates the

superhuman energy of the Kingdom of Christ. That the progress of christianity was retarded goes without the saying, but that it fought on against great odds with weapons not carnal but mighty through God, leaves us historic evidence that our cause is not of man but of God, and that the gates of Hell can not prevail against the church builded upon a rock stronger than can be combined of all material substances.<sup>19</sup>

### Notes To Chapter 3

<sup>1</sup>Paul Nagel, *Missouri: A Bicentennial History* (New York, 1977), p. 85.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 99.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 99-100.

<sup>4</sup>W. Pope Yeaman, *A History of the Missouri Baptist General Association* (Columbia, 1899), pp. 91-92.

<sup>5</sup>Nagel, p. 91.

<sup>6</sup>John C. Crighton, *Stephens: A Story of Educational Innovation* (Columbia, 1970), p. 60.

<sup>7</sup>Quoted in T. Scott Miyakawa, *Protestants and Pioneers* (Chicago, 1964), p. 148.

<sup>8</sup>From Boulware's "Autobiography," quoted in Yeaman, p. 48.

<sup>9</sup>Yeaman, p. 49.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 102-103.

<sup>11</sup>Nagel, p. 120.

<sup>12</sup>Crighton, p. 33.

<sup>13</sup>Nagel, p. 126.

<sup>14</sup>Yeaman, pp. 114-115.

<sup>15</sup>Nagel, p. 129.

<sup>16</sup>R. S. Douglass, *History of Missouri Baptists* (Kansas City, 1934), p. 265.

<sup>17</sup>Yeaman, pp. 118-119.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 119.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 115.

*“His truth goes marching on. Sometimes in spite of everything we can do to halt it or turn it down some side road. I think that maybe the biggest proof of God’s hand in His work is the way it endures those of us who are trying to carry it on.”*

*... a back pew theologian from mid-Missouri*

4

## Frontiers Of Unity: Healing The Wounds 1865–1906

War’s end found Missourians trying to bring their state out of physical and spiritual ruins. The countryside had been laid waste in many places, and folks sometimes despaired of rebuilding—even after the war—because another raid by a band of thugs could come at any minute.

Ruined houses and stores and churches, splintered or reduced to circles of black ashes, were silent but eloquent symbols of broken relationships along byways and highways of the state. People did not trust each other; people still hated each other; people still feared each other.

The big question in rebuilding was whether people of the state—including Missouri Baptists—could join friendly hands again in acts of creating after a decade of raising angry hands in acts of destroying.

Baptists set about the task. Churches were rebuilt and services renewed throughout the state; annual meetings were scheduled for associations; in Liberty and LaGrange, trustees of the William Jewell College and the LaGrange Male and Female College began reassembling faculties and preparing buildings for a reopening in the fall of 1868; in Palmyra Dr. John Hill Luther began publishing, on January 8, 1866, a newspaper called the *Missouri Baptist Journal*, later to have a long life as the *Central Baptist*.

But Baptists still had to resolve the fierce hatreds that had led a nation to divide between north and south; and they still had to lay to rest a hostility, one that kept rearing its head in new forms, against a central organization.

*The "Ironclad Oath" of 1865*

As most Missourians had wanted moderation and peace before the war, so most wanted reconciliation and peace after. But a Missouri politician named Charles Drake, a United States Senator, wanted punishment of those who had been disloyal to the Union, and he manipulated the fears and prejudices of people in a way that carried the torments of war on into peacetime.

At a state constitutional convention in St. Louis in 1865, which received news while it was in session of Lincoln's assassination in Washington and renewed guerrilla gang violence in Missouri, the delegates did three major things: (1) they voted immediate freedom of slaves, as of January 11, 1865, making Missouri the first state to free bondsmen—who nevertheless did not get the right to vote and hold public office; (2) they voted an "Ousting Ordinance," vacating the positions of 800 judges, county clerks, county recorders, sheriffs, and circuit attorneys, so they could be replaced by "loyal" appointees of the governor; and (3) they voted the "Ironclad Oath" or "Test Oath," which insisted that voters, office holders, ministers, teachers, and lawyers had to swear themselves innocent of having done any of eighty-six separate things now labeled "disloyal" by the convention.

As it related to ministers, the actions of "Drake's Convention" stipulated,

nor . . . shall any person be competent as a bishop, priest, deacon, minister, or other clergyman of any religious persuasion, sect, or denomination, to teach, or preach, or solemnize marriage, unless such person shall have taken, subscribed, and filed said oath.

"Said oath" asked the minister to "solemnly swear . . . that I have never directly or indirectly done any of the acts . . . specified; that I have always been truly and loyally on the side of the United States against all enemies thereof, foreign and domestic . . ." And the "specified" acts included having ever "given aid, comfort, countenance or support to persons engaged in such hostility" or ever "by act or word" having shown "sympathy with those engaged in or exciting or carrying on rebellion." If one ministered—or voted—without taking the oath, he was subject to fine and prison.

Many Baptists—probably the majority in Missouri—had been sympathetic to the Southern cause, though not many had taken up arms for the Confederacy. But as ministers were quick to point out, this "Ironclad Oath" meant that if they had ever shown those sympathies, said a word to that effect, offered a cup of water or a spiritual ministry to those of the non-Union party, they were to be forever prohibited from carrying out their call as servants of God.

Missourians did not want to approve this radical constitution and in fact rejected it by one thousand votes, despite Drake's manipulations to keep "disloyal" people from voting. But the wily politician saw to it that appro-

priate absentee votes from Union soldiers came in, and the new law passed by a majority of less than two thousand.

In response to this new constitution and its Test Oath, Baptists held a called meeting in Palmyra and appointed a committee to draft a statement "on the relation of the churches to the civil authorities." The committee reported at a General Association meeting in Boonville on August 19, 1865, and their statement is an important one in the long history of Baptists' defense of religious liberty. They pointed out

That the Baptists hold no equivocal position on the relations sustained by the churches to the state. While they have taught for ages allegiance to the civil government, in all things belonging to the temporal power, they have likewise held, that the state has no right to interfere with the freedom of conscience, the relations of the ministry to their congregations, and the absolute liberty of the churches in all matters of faith, worship, and discipline.

The Baptists called the Test Oath a violation of the Federal Constitution, of the declaration of rights in the very constitution which contained it, and the New Testament. Then, in very forthright language, they presented these resolutions:

- Resolved*, 1. That it is our belief that civil government is of divine appointment, for the good order of society; that magistrates are to be prayed for, and conscientiously honored and obeyed, except in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the only Lord of the conscience and Prince of the Kings of earth.
2. That we, therefore, hold ourselves bound (this limitation understood) to be good and law abiding citizens.
3. That the requiring of this or any other oath of us, as a condition upon which we are to exercise our ministerial functions, is opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ.
4. That it is our solemn duty to decline it, choosing as the servants of God did in the primitive churches, to obey God rather than man.
5. That we do this in no rebellious or captious spirit, but in order to maintain a pure conscience in the sight of God, by whom we are finally to be judged.
6. That we earnestly request a modification of the constitution of the state in this particular, as we love our state and wish to remain in it and have a perfect harmony between its requirements and our ministerial duty.

The Baptists had taken a stand, and individuals would feel the effects of the law demanding an Ironclad Oath. John Hill Luther, who was in the process of founding the new Baptist newspaper, and the revered A. P. Williams were two among several who were "moved against" for violation of the law. Local justices of the peace, before whom initial hearings were held, tended to be lax in enforcement of the new constitution: some dismissed cases outright, and others delayed moving the cases on to courts of authority. The fact was,

the people of the state were not in sympathy with their new code. They wanted harmony, not vindictive punishment. The decision by the United States Supreme Court on January 14, 1867, that the Test Oath was unconstitutional led to great sighs of relief and gratitude all across the state. Drake resigned his Senate seat for a "safe" job in the judiciary, 75,000 Missourians had their voting rights restored, and political leadership passed to such persons as Frank Blair, Carl Shurz, and Gratz Brown, all national as well as Missouri leaders in reconciliation. The election of Brown to the governorship in 1870 symbolized the spirit of reconciliation in the state. But perhaps an even more powerful symbol, though it was not emphasized at the time, was the fact that on a single day in 1875 St. Louis played host to both Ulysses S. Grant and Jefferson Davis.<sup>1</sup>

Baptists now had peace in their relationships with the state, and the state itself was healing its political wounds. But could the Baptists who had sympathized with the North and those who had favored the South work together in harmony?

#### *Unity of Northern and Southern Factions Among Baptists*

It was an important question, and not an easy one to resolve. The Methodists, for example, did not settle the issue for many years, and well into the twentieth century one could find in some Missouri towns both the "Methodist Episcopal Church" and the "Methodist Episcopal Church, South."

At the end of the war it appeared that Baptists might go the same route of division within the state, as national Baptist bodies had done in 1845. Baptists had come into Missouri from both north and south—John Mason Peck, for example, was from New England and New York and was sent out by a Philadelphia-based board, whereas the founders of Bethel Association whom he visited during his first months on the field were from Kentucky. Some Baptists, particularly in the influential middle part of the state, had held slaves; others had been actively opposed to slavery. The harassments and tensions of war had not softened emotions at all, nor had the new constitution and the efforts to enforce the Test Oath.

It was not surprising, therefore, to find groups such as the Cedar (County) Association in 1864 ordering its churches to exclude "all disloyal persons" and threatening to ban from the association any church which kept Confederate sympathizers in the membership. The Freedom Association (of Polk, Dallas, Hickory, Camden, Laclede, Webster, and Greene counties) when it reorganized after the war in a meeting at Humansville, likewise declared non-fellowship with any church that harbored "disloyal" members. Though the Freedom Association withdrew this stipulation two years later, seven churches had in the meantime withdrawn to form the Old Path Association. Many other associations were divided in spirit, if not in structure.

More ominous for the cause of Baptist unity, however, was a meeting held

at Hannibal in September, 1865, in response to a resolution voted in May at a preliminary planning meeting at Second Baptist Church in St. Louis:

*Resolved*, that the loyal Baptist churches throughout the state of Missouri be requested to send their pastors and delegates to meet at Hannibal, on Friday, September 29, 1865, at the hour of 10 o'clock a.m., for the purpose of forming a Baptist State Convention.

The Missouri Baptist State Convention (not the present body which bears that name, of course) was indeed established in Hannibal, specifically to serve those persons and only those persons who could take the Test Oath as having been, and continuing to be, completely loyal to the Federal government. The report of their committee on "Religious Destitution," for example, says,

Before the war in this state there were 450 Baptist ministers and 750 Baptist churches, having 45,000 members. Perhaps there are now fifty qualified ministers and one hundred churches holding regular services.

The definition of "qualified" was very, very narrow—though very legal. Concerning the Wyaconda Association the same report reads,

Before the rebellion there were in this body thirty-two churches well supplied with ministers. Now most of these ministers are silenced by the new constitution oath.

Several distinguished brethren from northern states were at the meeting, and the founders were sincerely seeking to organize a state convention which could serve under the new constitution. They doubtless felt that the existing General Association would wither under then-current political pressures, and in any case they felt that any who sympathized with the Southern cause were not fully obedient to Christ. The new Convention made itself an auxiliary of the American Baptist Home Mission Society.

Affiliation with this New York-based organization was not new for Missouri Baptists. Co-founded by John Mason Peck in 1832, just two years before the establishment of the General Association, the Home Mission group was being called the "parent society" in Missouri Baptist minutes by 1844:

In the southeast corner of the state the Parent Society has three missionaries under the superintendence of the New Cape Girardeau Association. . . . It will be seen that the aggregate amount expended in Missouri by the parent society is \$760, a liberality which calls for our grateful acknowledgments, and is well worthy our imitation.

In 1845 the New York society was supporting T. W. Anderson in Cape Girar-

deau; J. S. Smith in Lewis, Clark, and Scotland counties; S. H. Ford in St. Louis; and A. P. Williams in Liberty, in amounts of \$100 or \$200 each per annum—not a large sum, but certainly not small in those days when many ministers received nothing as monetary reward.

In the same year, 1845, the Southern Baptist Convention was formed in Augusta, Georgia, the result of anti-slavery agitation in the North, the unsuccessful efforts of the New York and Boston-based home and foreign mission boards to maintain neutrality on the slavery question, and the rabid determination by Southerners to have their slaves and their mission efforts, too. At the 1846 General Association meeting, Dr. S. W. Lynd successfully proposed that Missouri Baptists express gratitude to the American Baptist Home Mission Society, that they still receive aid as the Society was able to offer it, but that the Missouri group affiliate itself with the new Southern Convention:

From the local position, the institutions of the state [a probable reference to the fact that Missourians could own slaves] and the general feeling of the people, it appears to your committee to be obviously proper that so far as union with any organization as an auxiliary is concerned, this Association will better harmonize with the views and the enterprise of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Missouri Baptists hoped much from the new Southern Convention. In 1850 a committee recommended a close relationship with the Domestic Mission Board of that Convention, which “can not only furnish us money, but what is more important still, men to occupy many of the important towns and neighborhoods in the state.” In 1851 the same committee reported,

Too close a union with the Southern Domestic Board can scarcely exist. Many of our important towns are in very pressing need of assistance, and a small amount of means, directing the labors of the right sort of men, would doubtless be attended with the most happy results. Your committee would present the capital of our state, together with Hannibal and St. Joseph: one the center of political influence, and the others large commercial points.

Cooperation with the Southern Baptist Convention continued until the disruptions of the Civil War, but the Palmyra meeting of 1865 renewed the relationship, as did the meeting at Roanoke in 1866.

The forming of the new, northern-oriented Missouri Baptist State Convention at Hannibal in 1865, then, is fully understandable, both as a continuation of a former set of relationships and as a response to the passions of war, a new constitution, and the decision of the General Association to retain affiliation with the Southern body.

Missouri now had two state Baptist organizations, the General Association founded in 1834, and the State Convention established in 1865.

In 1866 the new State Convention met at Walnut Street Church in Kansas City, reporting that it had collected \$16,297.19 for missions in Missouri. A closer reading, however, revealed that \$14,675.73 had been collected and \$13,751.80 expended in St. Louis; it was a very narrowly-based organization.

In 1867 the State Convention met at Jefferson City at a time when passions were cooling, the Test Oath having been declared unconstitutional, and reconciliation was in the air. The Convention voted to seek reunion with the General Association provided the Association would (1) affiliate again with the American Baptist Home Mission Society as well as the Southern Baptist Convention, (2) locate their executive board in St. Louis (it was in process of being moved from Fayette to Columbia), and (3) accept persons into fellowship without regard to race or color.

Discussions had already taken place with leaders of the General Association about a reunion, but these three conditions would have surely led to heated debate and a continuing of division. At the last moment, however, a statesman from the new State Convention, Dr. A. H. Burlingham of Second Baptist Church in St. Louis, recommended, "Let us make no demands, let us require no conditions. Rather, let us go to the General Association and knock, and they will receive us." A spirit of conciliation prevailed, and unity of the two state bodies was accomplished.

In 1869, out of deference to the spirit of renewed fellowship and to the members from the State Convention, the General Association in its Columbia meeting amended its constitution to drop the auxiliary relationship with the Southern Baptist Convention. Missouri now stood as independent of formal relations either north or south, but with considerable internal unity. All this had been accomplished within five years of war's end, a notable achievement given the turmoil and disruption of both the war and the post-war periods.

#### *The "Missouri Plan" for Supporting Missions*

But if you belong to no one, you may belong to everyone. So Missouri Baptists found out, for they suddenly became open territory for agents from all the major mission boards: the American Baptist Home Mission Society in New York, the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention in Atlanta, the American Baptist Missionary Union in Boston, and the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention in Richmond. The efforts of these agents brought a certain amount of conflict, for they were in fact competitors in the same "market." Dr. Pope Yeaman, who lived through this era, described the dilemma clearly:

The Baptists and the Baptist churches of the state, and the meetings of the district associations felt that the visitations of agents were so frequent that their own affairs and times of public worship were interfered with and interrupted more than

was to their comfort and the progress of the cause at home. This feeling was not without cause and the protestations were not groundless, particularly on the part of churches that hold services but one Sunday in each month. The coming of the four agents already designated would take one fourth of the Sabbaths in a year; and then in addition to these there would come the representative of the General Association; then a college agent, and now one half of their preaching days for the year were occupied by presentations of claims for money. Then a special agent must be heard occasionally.

The stronger of the district associations would be visited by all of these representatives, each feeling that his cause had special claims and was entitled to precedence of hearing and the "first fruits."<sup>2</sup>

In 1887, when the annual meeting was held in Maryville, Dr. S. H. Ford proposed discussions with the various boards looking toward their unification, or at the very least unity in their efforts within Missouri. It was the thought of Missourians, based on their experience, that Baptists all across the United States could reunite and not continue the divisions of Civil War days.

At the Clinton annual meeting of 1888, a delegation was dispatched to Washington (the meeting was later changed to Richmond) to talk with officers of the boards, which would be meeting together. The report of this committee was given at the 1889 meeting, held in the packed chamber of the house of representatives in Jefferson City, with the governor and other state officials present.

This significant statement said that the delegation had not been successful in persuading the four boards to work together in their solicitations: though the Southern Convention had agreed, the American Baptist Home Mission Society "claimed that it must be privileged to appeal to 'all the churches of Missouri.'" The Missouri committee therefore recommended that "we respectfully and earnestly request" that agents of the four boards be withdrawn from the state, that Missouri herself form a General Home and Foreign Missions board "to conduct its work in the way that will create the least possible friction, and with the full recognition of the fact that a very large majority of our members are in sympathy with the Southern Baptist Convention," that the Missouri board be instructed to respect the preferences of individuals and churches and associations in the designation of funds toward national mission boards of their choice, and that undesignated funds be divided in a fair way based on "the receipts in Missouri of the several boards for the past five years."

In short, the home-grown Missouri Board would do the work of the national agents for them. Missouri would have not only its single executive board to oversee missions work within the state (that body would now be called the Board of State Missions and Sunday Schools, and it would continue to be located at Mexico and to function as an executive board), but it

would also have the General Board of Home and Foreign Missions, located at Columbia.

A spirited debate included not only Missourians, but distinguished guests from the Atlanta, Boston, and Richmond boards. Upon a vote, "The Missouri Plan" was adopted. The new board was formed, an agent (called a "corresponding secretary") was appointed for home missions and another for foreign missions, and the national boards withdrew their men from the field.

The plan was highly successful in fostering unity in the state. As a report from the mission board said in 1890, "It means a unification of our mission work, a closer sympathy between the churches, a burial of sectional bitterness and an undoubted impetus to the mission cause." The 1891 report was equally enthusiastic, claiming, "We are setting an example for the nation."

Indeed, Missouri Baptists were. They had resolved problems of a divisiveness based on partisan opinions (which each believer held as "truth," whichever side he was on). They did this by keeping their hearts set on the things that brought them together in the beginning, the call to cooperate in evangelism and missions.

It was not easy, of course. It never is. Retrenchment came in the financially difficult days of the 1890's, and the two corresponding secretaries ("home" and "foreign") were replaced by a single executive. The remarkable minister and leader, Dr. H. E. Truex, filled this post between 1907 and 1915. Further, the whole concept of cooperative mission efforts came under attack again in the 1890's as it has periodically throughout Missouri Baptist history. The issue was still so much alive as late as 1934, when R. S. Douglass wrote his *History of Missouri Baptists*, that he felt it necessary to give several pages to a justification of mission boards and denominational agencies.

"The Missouri Plan" succeeded in meeting the needs of its time, however, and was a major advance. It continued until 1915, when the General Association voted major constitutional changes. But that is a story for another chapter.

#### *Attacks and Problems from Within*

While all these efforts were going on at achieving unity between Northern and Southern factions, the General Association itself was reeling from problems and conflicts within. For a while, in fact, it appeared that the state body would die as a result of its own internal bleeding. Not only did unity have to be achieved with the state government over the Test Oath, and among factions with old wartime loyalties; it also had to be established among the brothers and sisters within the camp.

Backgrounds for these internal squabbles were several. The anti-mission battles of the 1830's still had some influence. In the 1850's the "Landmark" teachings of Tennessee's J. R. Graves began to be felt: Graves taught that the

local Baptist congregation was the only true church, descended directly from Jesus, and that denominational agencies or boards which sought to coordinate the work of local churches were exceeding their scriptural authority.<sup>3</sup> Graves attacked the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, saying “no man has lower views of the authority of a Missionary Board . . . than we have.” Graves and his crowd eventually split the Southern Baptist Convention, a small group forming a new brand of Baptist denomination. Following out of Graves’ teachings was the “Gospel Missionism” of the 1880’s and 1890’s, a movement which insisted that only local churches should support mission efforts, doing that by direct payments to missionaries rather than through boards. The lively “independent Baptist” movement currently in Missouri and other states is linked to this “Gospel Missionist” theology. Add to these background factors what was probably the most important of all—the conflict of strong personalities among the rather small “club” that led affairs of the General Association—and the reasons for internal dissension become understandable.

As early as 1860 Reverend Nathan Ayers, serving as corresponding secretary for the denomination, lamented in his annual report a great “want of appreciation of the work.” Speaking of suspicion and ignorance on the part of many in the churches, he observed that

there are honest hearted brethren, who believe that the General Association is a *mighty wheel* to roll over them and deprive the district associations of power, and grind them to powder, and therefore they are in favor of withdrawing their cooperation for fear of being crushed.

In 1873, as the wounds of war were being healed, the meeting of the General Association in Macon heard great concern expressed over a lack of cooperation from many churches and district associations. And by the 1875 meeting in St. Joseph, the issues were all on the table, lying there on a sticky veneer of general mistrust toward any central denominational board. The issues were three in number:

1. Some felt that too much denominational money was going to administrative expenses and not enough directly to missions.
2. The General Association directed a campaign for Christian education, celebrating the nation’s centennial, entirely to support William Jewell College without including Stephens College and the regional Baptist schools.
3. The *American Baptist Flag*, a new journal published by D. B. Ray, was seeking endorsement by the General Association and, when unsuccessful, printed vicious attacks against the General Association and its leaders.

The financial management of the denomination was explored in depth at the 1876 meeting in Hannibal. The executive officer for Missouri Baptists,

then called the “Superintendent of Missions,” had collected from churches only \$241.58 more than his own salary and expenses for the year. He had personally received \$2,269 more than had been paid out to twenty-four part-time missionaries for their work, and “incidental and printing” expenses were only \$142 less than the amount paid to missionaries. Some missionaries were unpaid, and there were overdrafts in the bank account. No dishonesty was alleged, and the state was feeling the effects of the “financial panic” of 1873—what we would now call a depression—and so we should not be too harsh in judging the causes of the problem. There was simply not enough money to do the whole job.

But a large part of the work of the denominational executive in those days was to raise money and to manage it in such a way that missions causes were advanced. Many Baptists felt that at the very least the priorities had gone awry; the executive officer resigned, and Dr. Pope Yeaman led a study that would get the Association back on track. His report, offered at the Mexico meeting of 1878 (a meeting at which the famous Dr. John A. Broadus preached on missions), minced no words: he pointed out that only forty-six churches of more than 1,200 in the state were represented at the annual meeting; and only sixty-seven had contributed to the work of the General Association; and that the average annual contribution of the “white membership” in the churches was only two and two-thirds cents per person. He called for “a reform and advance movement in the work of state missions” as “the imperative demand of the present,” and he spoke for the board in acknowledging “the humiliating failure of the past” and “the embarrassments of the present.” The Association then appointed a committee which proposed a program of action: (1) that a more aggressive policy of fund raising be conducted, with a goal for the next year of \$5000 *to be spent directly on the field* for state missions; (2) that the board be moved from St. Louis to a central location in Mexico; (3) that a new corresponding secretary be appointed, to spend up to one-half time on the field (note that the work of the chief executive of the denomination was still considered part-time work); (4) that the corresponding secretary be paid out of “Butler Funds” (an endowment bequest) and designated gifts rather than out of money given for missions (this in response to those critics who rightly saw too much “mission money” being spent for overhead and administration); (5) that the board immediately appoint as many “efficient” missionaries as possible; (6) that the Association help “weak and destitute churches to become self-sustaining”; and (7) that any church have the privilege of designating its funds to any particular missionary (this in order to give churches as much choice as they wished to exert in how their mission money would be spent).

These very active measures literally saved the state-wide General Association. The Mt. Pleasant Association had been making plans to withdraw, under the leadership of their moderator J. M. Robinson (a former General As-

sociation employee who disliked current leaders and policies), and only a hurried visit by Dr. Yeaman to their annual meeting persuaded them to stay in the fold. If Mt. Pleasant had withdrawn, others would surely have followed suit, for Mt. Pleasant was the strongest association in the state.

Once the resolutions had passed, however, nothing happened for a full month. Then the board met, and only seven of nineteen were present. Some were resigning, presumably leaving what they thought to be a sinking ship, and a desperate board asked Dr. Yeaman to leave his role as president of the board (now we would call him president of the convention) to become corresponding secretary (now we would call him executive director).



From "The Baptist Encyclopedia."  
REV. W. POPE YEAMAN, D. D.

Dr. Pope Yeaman was a remarkable man. A Kentuckian, a lawyer, an editor, and a preacher, he had served a church in New York City, had been called to and served Third Baptist in St. Louis, had later founded and served Delmar Church in St. Louis, at one point published a Missouri Baptist newspaper, at another served as non-resident Chancellor of William Jewell College. Yeaman was a great orator and writer, and he entered on the work as executive of the denomination with zest. As Douglass described it in his *History*,

Being thoroughly convinced of the need, the necessity of missionary enterprise, he threw himself into the work of corresponding secretary with all the powers that were his. He traveled widely over the state. He preached the gospel in destitute

places, and he brought every influence possible to bear in favor of the missionary program of Missouri Baptists. It is not too much to say that the tremendous amount of labor which he performed in this field, his convincing arguments and his stirring appeals did more to arouse Missouri Baptists to the great cause of missions than anything else in our history.<sup>4</sup>

Under Yeaman's leadership the Association not only survived, but it began to prosper. In the 1880 meeting in Carrollton the annual report showed that Baptists had passed the psychologically important mark of \$5,000 in collections for state missions—the total was \$5,753. The messengers present dared breathe a hope for \$10,000, and in the next year, meeting at Third Baptist in St. Louis, the report showed \$11,200. In the next report, presented at the convention at First Baptist in Springfield, the amount was \$12,861, despite “the stringency of money matters in consequence of the almost total failure of crops in many sections of our state.”

Dr. Yeaman's great work was not without opposition. Part of this was the result of his strong insistence that funds raised in the campaign celebrating the nation's centennial in 1876 should go to William Jewell College, a story which we shall look at in the next chapter. Even more opposition was the result of conflict with other strong personalities, particularly the editor of the *American Baptist Flag*.

This newspaper had been founded in LaGrange in 1876 by D. B. Ray as the *Baptist Battle Flag*, the title suggesting something of the contentious spirit it displayed. In 1877, the paper was consolidated with the *Baptist Herald* of Lebanon and moved to St. Louis as the *American Baptist Flag*. It developed a wide circulation and was a direct rival of the *Central Baptist*, of which we shall read more in the next chapter.

Dr. Ray used his newspaper to argue for the Landmark views of J. R. Graves, to fight Catholics, and to attack the Missouri Baptist General Association and its leaders. He accused Yeaman, particularly, “with every manner of crime within the categories of fraud and oppression,” with covering up facts, lying, misusing the Lord's money, and using the board as a “ring” to achieve selfish goals.<sup>5</sup> Many readers, not knowing Yeaman and not knowing well the work of the General Association, became opponents of both and withheld cooperation and funds. Ray was a major reason the denomination almost failed to survive.

Ray and J. M. Robinson of Mt. Pleasant Association even led a movement to found a rival convention, which however died at the end of a year of “infantile inanition.”<sup>6</sup> All the while, Ray was asking the General Association to endorse his paper as a recommended journal for the membership, a step which the Association was understandably reluctant to take (though ultimately the *Flag* did receive such an endorsement).

Things became so ferocious that the board in 1880 felt the need to publish

“A Vindication of the Missouri Baptist General Association and the Executive Board, against the allegations of the *American Baptist Flag*.” The “Vindication” was endorsed by the Association at their 1880 meeting in Carrollton, several thousand copies were distributed through the state, and the controversy was quelled.

Work then moved forward, “The Missouri Plan” was adopted, and the once-threatened denomination began to thrive. The accumulated opposition to Yeaman led to his ouster as corresponding secretary in 1886 on a close vote of the board, but he continued as a denominational leader until his death in 1904.

*Two Celebrations: A Semi-Centennial and a Centennial*

The renewed unity and purpose of the General Association were highlighted in two major celebrations: a fiftieth anniversary “Jubilee” for the Association itself, held in 1884, and a centennial observance of Baptist church life in Missouri, feted in 1906.

The semi-centennial was with the First Baptist Church in Marshall, whose pastor, Dr. J. C. Maple, had served in Missouri for nearly thirty years—at First Church in Kansas City, at Chillicothe, at Springfield, at Cape Girardeau, and at Mexico. Excellent addresses, later printed in a memorial volume, were offered on the men who organized the General Association, the missionaries who had served from 1834 to 1884, the spirit and scope of state missions, the progress of the Association, the Baptist educational institutions of Missouri, ministerial education, leaders of the Association, and changes of the “last fifty years.” A long poem, “Our Jubilee,” was written by Mrs. Sarah S. Dodge of Commerce, Missouri; an excerpt catches the tone of high rhetoric that prevailed through the celebration:

Marshal your hosts, oh jubilee!  
Champions of peace, prepare!  
Missouri's trump sounds long and loud  
Ye tribes, oh gather near!  
Fling wide your portals, gates of praise,  
Redeeming love repeat;  
Let angel voices catch the strain  
Reverberations greet!  
Our jubilee an epoch crowns  
And as we joyful meet,  
Let retrospection backward turn,  
Our mercies past, repeat,  
Full half a century can claim  
Allegiance, loyal, true,  
And we would pause along the line  
The serried ranks review . . .

A cane made from the wood of Old Bethel Church, the first in Missouri, was presented to Moderator Yeaman; and a gavel and cane made from wood of Brick Providence Church, where the Association was organized, were given to Yeaman and Dr. Maple. The wood had been secured by Jeremiah B. Vardeman, son of the first moderator of the Association, who as a boy had been at the 1834 organizational meeting. Again, it is of interest to the modern reader to note the small size of annual meetings in the last century; for this Jubilee, 116 persons were present and formally photographed.

The centennial observance, not of the General Association but of the first Baptist church organized in the state, was held in 1906 in connection with the annual meeting at the First Baptist Church of Cape Girardeau, about ten miles from the site of Bethel Meeting House near Jackson.

On the day of celebration, October 24, a special train carried three hundred persons to Jackson, where services were held at the First Baptist Church of that town and in a grove of trees two miles away where Bethel Church had stood. Addresses were presented on "Old Bethel," changes in the domestic and religious life of Missouri over one hundred years, home and foreign missions, state missions and Sunday school work, and Christian higher education.

Several persons were present who had been at the 1884 Jubilee meeting in Marshall, including Dr. Maple, who wrote an introduction to the memorial volume printed after the occasion. A granite monument commemorating the founding of Bethel Church was unveiled on the site.

We define ourselves very much through our ceremonies, and these celebrations stated very clearly that Missouri Baptists saw themselves as a united people with a mission, a people with a worthy history and a promising future.

They were, meanwhile, making changes in their structure and in their ministries which would suit them for the twentieth century.

## Notes To Chapter 4

<sup>1</sup>Paul Nagel, *Missouri: A Bicentennial History* (New York, 1977), p. 143.

<sup>2</sup>W. Pope Yeaman, *A History of the Missouri Baptist General Association* (Columbia, 1899), p. 321.

<sup>3</sup>Walter B. Shurden, *Not a Silent People* (Nashville, 1972), pp. 74-75.

<sup>4</sup>R. S. Douglass, *History of Missouri Baptists* (Kansas City, 1934), p. 282.

<sup>5</sup>Yeaman, p. 179.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 178.

*Missouri is a most amazing place. It has two of the great cities of the world, and it thinks it is one huge farm. But the state has gone uptown, whether it knows it or not, just like the farmers all used to go to town on Saturday afternoon.*

*. . . a Chicago newspaperman*

5

## Towards The Urban Frontier: New Methods and New Ministries 1865–1906

Missouri has “always” had a picture of herself as rural. When she showed promise, in the 1820’s and 1830’s, of becoming a dominant state in the Union it was because of her marvelous river and rich land. There was so much of the land! “The best speller” at a “grand spelling match” in Warrensburg on May 20, 1875, was to receive—according to a report in the *Louisiana Journal* of April 23—“forty acres of land for a prize.” Missouri’s values were those of Thomas Jefferson, and she emphasized the importance of personal independence based on ownership of farms and small businesses—the land and property—as opposed to the dangers of wage-earning city life, of owing money to banks, and of “greedy big business.” It is not for nothing that her capital is named the City of Jefferson!

Thomas Hart Benton, her first great politician, and later Harry S. Truman, her first President, were consistent advocates of simple, rural values, however complex the decisions they faced. When the National Grange or Patrons of Husbandry was founded, it had its greatest numbers in Missouri—more than 2,000 local units in 1875. When the world began changing after the Civil War, Missouri resisted the headlong rush toward railroads and industrialization—to her severe economic detriment. The state stubbornly—some

would say “like a mule”—insisted on simple government, simple society, simple ways.

But, in fact, Missouri houses two of America’s largest cities, and she is more urban in fact—though not in sentiment—than most states in the Union. In 1810, the first census after Baptist work began, the state had approximately 20,000 persons; by 1860, she numbered over a million and was eighth in size among states in the nation; by 1900 she was fifth.

Baptists have suited the values of this independent, rural-thinking, conservative state very handsomely; what else would one expect from a people who derive from Bethel Meeting House and old Brick Providence Church, from frontier farmer-preachers who cleared the land with their own axes and built the churches from their own logs.

By 1874, when Baptist work was almost seventy years old and the General Association was celebrating forty years, there were very few Baptist churches in the state with more than one hundred members. Second Baptist in St. Louis was by far the largest with 600 in her congregation, and Carrollton was second with 449 persons.<sup>1</sup> These were considered huge churches for their day, most congregations having thirty to fifty members. Even in 1980, more than a century later, 1,639 of 1,881 Missouri Baptist churches and 73% of the members were in the countryside or cities of less than 50,000.

This historically rural denomination knew from early days, however, that it must minister in the towns and cities. The General Association was established to get the gospel to “destitute” areas of the state, and towns were among the most destitute of all. The agents and missionaries whom they sent—forerunners of our directors of missions today—went because churches and preaching were not there and because people needed the message of Christ.

Baptists did not always “go to town” gladly, partly because rural folk did not feel welcome in the towns and cities, partly because so many rural areas themselves had dire need, partly because they viewed towns as “the strongholds of sin and Satan.”<sup>2</sup> But the needs of the towns, and the influence of the towns on the territories around them, beckoned to a people who had a missionary vision.

Work in urban areas was therefore begun, and as society became more populous and complex, Missouri Baptists made changes in their methods and ministries to serve their new constituencies.

#### *Work in Centers of Population*

Missouri’s largest and one of her first cities, *St. Louis*, was also the site of some of the earliest Baptist work in Missouri, as earlier chapters describe. All through Missouri Baptist history *St. Louis* churches have played key roles; yet Baptists have always been a religious minority in that important metropolis, from the time of John Mason Peck’s remarkable works until the present.

Such a strategic city she was, and is! Located literally at the crossroads of America, where the two great rivers join to make it central between East and West, between Great Lakes and Gulf, St. Louis saw herself first as a gateway to the West and then as a possible door to a fabled trade route to the Orient. By the mid-1800's 170 riverboats at a time could tie up at her famous six-mile waterfront, and she was sure the new transcontinental railroads would come her way; after all, the rivers had taught her that all traffic went through St. Louis. In 1874, completion of the marvelous Eads Bridge—immediately a wonder of the world—doubled her assurance, though by then precious time had slipped away in the effort to attract rail lines.

At the fine Planter's House hotel in the 1850's, guests came from all over the world—"English noblemen, eastern speculators, steamboat captains, Indian chiefs, southern agriculturalists"—to marvel at the wonders of this city of destiny.<sup>3</sup> St. Louis was already in 1850 a commercial and industrial leader, and by the 1870's she was rivalling New York and Philadelphia as a manufacturing center. Population grew from about 20,000 in 1837 to over 350,000 in 1880. In many ways an Eastern or even European city, St. Louis formed the second symphony in the United States; began a professional theatre by 1835; established an opera company (before Chicago even existed, residents would point out); and founded a fine Mercantile Library which brought not only a good collection of books but also such lecturers as Dickens, Thackeray, and Emerson to its citizens.

Small wonder that Logan Reavis could publish a book in 1870 entitled *St. Louis, the Future Great City of the World*, and be fully believed by St. Louisians and many others. There was even talk of moving the nation's capital from Washington to St. Louis!

But St. Louis, as leading citizen Joseph Pulitzer pointed out, was a small state all its own, and its relations with rural Missouri were strained at best. St. Louis did not seem to "fit" what the state was. When St. Louis leaders pushed Missouri to build railroads, Missourians balked, feeling that people with a river like theirs did not need rail lines. The railroads therefore tended to pass Missouri by, despite a belated and disastrous plunge into the railroad-financing business by the legislature at mid-century, and Chicago rather than St. Louis became a national hub. Missourians were suspicious of the eastern orientation of their big city, of the money, of the industry, of the culture—and of the sin. A city with thirty-six breweries, and a city where the Sabbath was so desecrated, could scarcely be trusted!

When the 1880 census was tallied, St. Louisians were shocked to learn that upstart rival Chicago had surpassed them in population. After some important civic figures abandoned St. Louis for eastern cities, problems that were then formed did not have the leaders to solve them. Tenements, brothels, pollution, and filth all seemed to be ignored by the politicians, and St. Louis soon gained a reputation as one of the nation's worst-governed cities. Lin-

coln Steffens' exposé entitled *Shame of the Cities* gave St. Louis prominent treatment, to the chagrin of residents. Even by 1900 the movement to the suburbs had begun; the 1904 World's Fair was "way out in the country" at Forest Park and beyond.

Baptist work in this great metropolis began when it was little more than a village, when the Baptist Board for *Foreign Missions* sent Peck and Welch to minister. That Board later withdrew its support, in light of the needs on overseas fields, but Peck refused to leave. He raised his own money, and later he was aided by the American Baptist Home Mission Society, which he had helped to found. Missouri's second church, Fee Fee, was in the St. Louis area, as was the second association formed in the state.

By 1845 the work was still weak in St. Louis, and the American Baptist Society was providing \$200 a year to support S. H. Ford's ministry there. In 1852, meeting with the Bethel Church in Saline County (note the rural setting of a still very rural denomination), the Missouri General Association appropriated \$300 for work in St. Louis, along with special money for other "centers of population"; \$200 for Jefferson City, \$100 for St. Joseph, and \$75 for Waverly. Kansas City was not yet established. This grant followed a decision by the executive board in 1851 to provide funds for support of the pastor at a new mission church in St. Louis, Third Baptist.

In 1850 only one white Baptist church existed in the city, Second Baptist. Its outstanding pastor, Dr. J. B. Jeter, sought to expand the Baptist witness by founding new churches; but he ran into serious opposition in his own congregation, retired from the pastorate, and returned to his native Virginia. His ideas did take root, however, and out of his congregation came the Third and Fourth Baptist churches.

Third Church did not need support of the General Association for long. By the 1870's she was herself establishing other churches, including the famous Delmar congregation. Third Church had as pastors some of the most notable leaders of nineteenth-century Baptist life, including W. Pope Yeaman and John Priest Greene. By 1900 she was the largest and "most useful" church in the state, one of fourteen serving St. Louis at the turn of the century. The General Association had supported many of them in their early years.

The work of the General Association as supporter of church extension in St. Louis was typical of the effort to get the gospel to towns and cities, as well as to "destitute" rural areas, and therefore has been discussed at some length. "Urban" areas were of course much smaller in the last century than now, and some which had prominence then have faded, while others have grown.

In 1844, for example, in the tenth year of the General Association, a missionary agent filed a report indicating that

St. Joseph, situated on the Black Snake Hills, is a rapidly growing village, an im-

portant station, and should be immediately occupied by an efficient Baptist preacher, who could also attend at Savannah and James Town.

In 1846, it will be remembered, when the Association was affiliating with the Southern Baptist Convention, a major motive was to get help from that Convention for work in Hannibal, Jefferson City, and St. Joseph. In 1855, a committee of the Association was formed to aid "Feeble Churches," and in 1859 it was determined to aid such churches "located at important points." In 1860 this was elaborated: "churches located at important points in populous neighborhoods, in thriving villages or cities, situated in important and growing sections of our state, must have aid, or their existence will become jeopardized." In 1866 the committee called the attention of the executive board to the following such points: St. Louis, Mexico, Boonville, and Chillicothe.

In due course, aid from the General Association did go to that city "on the Black Snake Hills," *St. Joseph*, which in the mid-1800's was bidding fair to become the dominant city in the western part of the state. The Association helped found and support First Baptist, which grew into one of the leading churches of Missouri, and at least two other churches by 1900. First Church herself sent out a mission which became Patee Park Church, now more than a century old.

One of the earliest appropriations of the General Association for work in a "city" was in 1847, when aid was offered the church at the "City of Jefferson." The state capital was a difficult place to sustain a Baptist church. As the report of the board for 1869 describes *Jefferson City*, it was

a very important, yet one of the hardest fields in the state. They are now without a house of worship, but struggling hard to build one; have purchased a lot favorably located, and have a portion of the money for building. The little band has passed through severe trials, but are now hopeful and strong in faith.

Aid to sustain pastors continued for some years, until Dr. J. T. M. Johnston did his remarkable work in the city. During his tenure the church became self-supporting, became herself a contributor to state mission causes, built a new house of worship, and grew to about four hundred members. When he resigned in 1897 to become pastor of Delmar Church in St. Louis, the people of Jefferson City met in the chamber of the house of representatives to give him a "farewell ovation."<sup>4</sup> As one historian summarized this achievement, "The long and tedious and often discouraging work at Jefferson with the ultimate success, fully vindicates the wisdom of that missionary work that judiciously gives aid to feeble churches at centers of population and influence."<sup>5</sup>

In 1848 an appropriation was made by the General Association to support work in *Hannibal*, where a series of pastors had a difficult time in establishing a firm work. Gradually, however, the Fifth Street Church became one of

the strong ones in the state, and by century's end at least one other church had been formed out of Fifth Street with aid from the General Association. A similar story can be written of First Baptist in *Springfield*, which early on received aid, and the First Church in *Mexico*. In 1860, Reverend J. E. Welch wrote to the board that

Mexico is a hard field. The cause has been mangled by imprudent youth, and the board must make up their minds to "hold on to it" for several years, or they may as well give it up at once.

The board did "hold on to it," and by 1868 there were forty-five members and preaching two Sundays a month. By 1870 a house of worship had been built and the church was on its way as a self-supporting body.

So it was through the state—at Warrensburg, Fulton, Boonville, Kirksville, Joplin, Macon, Louisiana, Chillicothe, Weston, Canton, Marshall, Shelbina, Tipton, Clinton, Independence, Montgomery City, Cameron, Versailles, St. Charles, Poplar Bluff, Charleston, Knobnoster, Brookfield, Gallatin, Albany, Cape Girardeau, Maryville, Lebanon, Marshfield, Milan, and many other towns—that the General Association helped churches until they were able to stand on their own feet. In 1893, for example, the Association was assisting Tower Grove, Kirkwood, and Fee Fee in St. Louis and Wyatt Park in St. Joseph, churches that today are known for their vitality. Most of this help was done between 1850 and 1900, though that ministry continues in a small way today.

What of Kansas City, now the second largest in the state? It was not founded until 1854, when the little river villages of West Port Landing and the Town of Kansas were merged in a hopeful venture by city-planning land speculators. Independence was already a thriving town, joining nearby rival Liberty in a brisk trade of outfitting wagon trains for treks across the prairies. William Jewell College had already been opened by Baptists just twelve miles away, in a "suburb" of non-existing Kansas City. St. Joseph was apparently to become the "great city" of the region. When Deacon T. M. James personally urged the executive board to appropriate money for mission work in Kansas City, the board declined, noting the great importance of the City of Jefferson as a mission field and allowing as how Kansas City would never "be much of a place."<sup>6</sup>

But no one told the Kansas Citians that they would never be much of a place, and they went out and built a great one. Though smitten by border wars and cholera, Kansas City by 1860 had a population of 4,418, surpassing Independence by more than 1,200. Kansas Citians hurried to bring telegraph lines into their town, which helped them upstage rival St. Joseph to the north; they again hurried to finish a railroad bridge by 1869, which would tie them to the market centers of the midwest in Chicago, and through Chicago to the

eastern markets. It is interesting to note that Kansas City was emerging just as St. Louis was peaking and facing a period of decline; it is of further interest that Kansas City moved forward, in a time of new technologies, not by relying on the river but by bridging it.

Kansas City looked westward; at one point its citizens wanted to be annexed by the state of Kansas, and only the Missouri legislature prevented it. A vast area southwest, west, and northwest drained into Kansas City geographically and economically, and Kansas Citians defined "success" primarily in financial terms. They did not develop the cultural institutions that St. Louis had built, and they did not emphasize the spiritual or artistic sides of urban life. In the next century, largely through the work of William Rockhill Nelson of the Kansas City *Star*, of J. C. and Miller Nichols, and of Joyce and Don Hall of Hallmark, Inc., their very ugly frontier city became one of the most beautiful in the world, with boulevards and fountains and parks and a classic urban skyline. But this was the work of individuals, and the essential outlook of the city was still economic, not aesthetic; westward, not eastward; forward, not backward; and material, not spiritual.

As Kansas City grew—her population increasing by 70% in the 1870's and tripling in the 1880's—she became an important field for Baptist efforts. Two Baptist churches existed in the city in 1881, and a request from the Blue River Association led to aid from the General Association toward a third. This mission church was successful, and between 1881 and 1900 the General Association supported at least eight other new works in Kansas City, which by century's end held 200,000 people.

#### *New Methods and New Ministries*

As population increased, as cities formed and grew, as railroads and telegraph lines were constructed, as manufacturing and industry established their systems, life grew increasingly complex. We shall see this happening with a flourish in our next chapters, as we read about a century that saw the Wright Brothers developing their first glider in 1900 and witnessed successful space shuttle flights by the 1980's.

New circumstances call for new methods, and part of the story of Missouri Baptists during the last half of the nineteenth century is the story of developing a more complex organization for a more complex task.

In the first nearly-fifty years the General Association was led by part-time executives, often volunteers. The turnover in this role was very frequent, and it was difficult to sustain any kind of systematic program or to advance the work. There was no "headquarters" as such, no staff, no effort at "systems" or "management." The atmosphere was that of an informal fellowship, a coterie of highly committed persons who passed the leadership around among themselves. The casual nature of operations can be seen in a resolution offered at the 1873 meeting in Macon:

*Resolved*, That the board of the General Association be located during the next associational year in St. Louis.

The tone of the resolution is that the headquarters of the denomination could be picked up and moved at will, year by year, with a minimum of fuss—which, of course, was the case. (The location of the executive board was, in fact, moved from time to time. It was in Fayette from 1835 to 1866; in 1867 it moved to Columbia, in 1873 to St. Louis, and in 1878 to Mexico. In the twentieth century it would move again to St. Louis and to Kansas City in 1917, before finding its present and presumably permanent home in Jefferson City in 1949.)

One must remember the objection, in the early days, to paying *any* minister and the particular suspicion of agents who came in from outside the church or community to take away money. When in 1847 R. S. Thomas moved to amend the constitution so that the corresponding secretary might “receive compensation for his services,” the amendment passed; but immediately T. C. Harris secured approval of a motion to the effect that sustaining a general agent “by the funds of this Association, is incompatible with the interests of this body” and asking “twelve ministering brethren of our denomination to gratuitously devote one month during the ensuing year to present the claims of the General Association, and take up collections to promote its objects.” So instead of one *paid* leader for the following year, there were twelve *volunteer* leaders, each offering one month of service. The records for 1848 reveal very little success from the work of the twelve, and it is doubtful that some even managed to serve. Likewise, in 1850 Reverend J. E. Welch offered a resolution that a general agent be appointed and paid, with no results; Jeremiah Farmer was appointed at an annual salary of \$600 and necessary traveling expenses, but the records do not indicate that he accepted the appointment.

In 1858 and again in 1859 the Association considered appointing a full-time corresponding secretary, for as the 1859 report put it,

There is no estimating the good that, under the blessing of God, might be accomplished by the energies of one intelligent, pious mind wholly devoted with tongue and pen, to the accomplishment of infusing into the hearts of the Baptists of Missouri a proper missionary spirit. We are led to urge this policy from the success attending it in other states.

But Civil War came, and for six years no one led the work of the state denomination. Following the war came the many debates and contentions described in the last chapter, and when W. Pope Yeaman took the helm in 1878 it was for “up to one-half time” work at \$25 a month.

Things went so well under Yeaman’s leadership, however, that in 1880 the Association appointed him “for full-time at adequate salary.” When Yeaman was ousted in 1886, S. M. Brown was his replacement, serving until 1891

when he went to a mission church in Kansas City and later to found the *Word and Way* in that city. W. T. Campbell led the denomination for five years of national depression, and in 1897 T. L. West of Carrollton took the helm for a long period of outstanding service.

Meanwhile, in 1889 "The Missouri Plan" had made the simple machinery of the denomination more complex, setting up one board for state missions and Sunday schools in Mexico and another for home and foreign missions in Columbia. The times—and the methods—were changing.

### *New Ministries*

Part of the change could be seen in new ministries that were coming into prominence during the half-century under review, notably in Sunday schools and organized mission work by women.

*Sunday schools* had been around for a long, long time, but nothing much had come of them. The first in Missouri was evidently started by a Mrs. Eliza Murphy, widow of a pioneer minister in what is now St. Francois County near Farmington. In 1807—when the first Baptist church in the state, Bethel, was not yet a year old, and in the very year when Fee Fee Church was established—this remarkable woman settled the land with her family. She was shocked by the religious conditions on this raw frontier, and so she did her bit by gathering the children of the neighborhood in her home on Sunday afternoons to teach them Bible stories and lessons. When John Mason Peck and James E. Welch came to Missouri in 1817, they both were very active in organizing Sunday schools in St. Louis and central Missouri, as was Thomas Parrish Green both during and after his pastorate at Bethel Church in southeast Missouri. When the General Association was founded in 1834, it encouraged Sunday schools by recommending the work of the American Sunday School Union, an interdenominational society.

In these days a Sunday school was not usually connected with the program of a local church, but stood on its own. It therefore was often a joint effort by churches of several denominations in a town or area. It was a real *school*, helping children learn to read as well as to learn the Bible and moral lessons; after all, there was often no other place where the children could get an education, unless parents could teach them. An early statement from the Baptist Sunday School Board made the point:

A large proportion of the children of our country have now no means of learning to read but in the Sunday School, and experience has shown that they can there readily learn both to read and write. Parents need the help of the Sunday Schools in the moral and religious training of their children in these days of evil. And the numerous orphans, whose claims upon us are recognized by all, may find in the Sunday School a great orphan asylum, requiring no capital and little expenditure of any kind, interfering with no other scheme, but aiding them all.<sup>7</sup>

Sunday school was strictly for children; adults were not included.

The interdenominational American Sunday School Union sought to get a school in every neighborhood of the United States, so that children might be instructed in what the General Association report for 1845 called "the general principles of the christian religion." But several things hindered the work: because it "belonged" to all Protestant denominations, no single denomination tended to get excited about it; pastors did not lead out in forming Sunday schools, not seeing it as part of their work; church members equated "going to church" with hearing a sermon, and preaching was held only once or twice a month in many churches.

The General Association records, therefore, show a long string of laments at the lack of interest taken in Sunday schools. The 1851 report, from Reverend Welch, notes that "the efforts or recommendations of this association seem to have had but little influence in prompting the churches to more vigorous action in the Sunday School cause." In 1852 the report reads, "Your committee can not withhold an expression of surprise at the apathy of our churches upon this subject." In 1855, "We regard with deep solicitude and grief the condition of Sunday Schools in our state . . ." In 1863, "It is lamentable how few of our churches appreciate the moral power of the Sabbath School." Even in 1898 Pope Yeaman wrote,

So long as a pastor feels that his duty is discharged by the preaching of a few perfunctory sermons, and making a few socio-religious visits to the membership, with an annual protracted meeting thrown in for good count, so long will Sabbath School work be neglected.

And Harvey Truex, writing in 1904, spoke of Sunday schools as the major source of Bible study in a congregation, but then lamented, "The healthful influence of systematic, public, Bible study, by an entire congregation, is a power in religion as yet unknown among us, for it has never been tried." These are strange words to a modern reader, who knows of Sunday schools in virtually every Baptist church, for adults as well as for children, and who knows the power of Sunday schools in evangelism, church growth, and training.

But a major change came after the Civil War, as Baptists began to make Sunday schools their very own rather than lackadaisically "going along" with interdenominational efforts. The 1866 report hailed "with delight" the formation of the Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention and recommended use of their publication called "*Kind Words*, for little children"; the 1876 report added *Young Reaper* and *Child's Delight* to the list. By 1886 the General Association was resolving "that wherever practicable we will make our schools entirely denominational."

In 1867 a Baptist Sunday School Board for Missouri was organized, and its

executive for five years was Dr. S. W. Marston. He did remarkable work, increasing the number of Sunday schools in Baptist churches of the state from 74 to more than 800. By traveling more than 20,000 miles, giving more than 300 sermons and addresses, and writing more than 1,500 letters *each year*—a nearly incredible feat, considering the conditions of travel and communication in that day—he led more than two-thirds of the 1,300 churches to establish programs. Sunday school “conventions” were organized in many of the district associations to promote the work. Tracts and books were distributed in a “colportage” ministry, and Sunday school training institutes were held.

By 1878 Sunday school work was merged with the work of the General Association, rather than being conducted by a separate organization, and it has since taken several administrative forms within that Association. Even in the early twentieth century, however, the salary and expenses of a state Sunday school director were being paid by the American Baptist Publication Society and the Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. By 1906 there were 1,300 Baptist Sunday schools in Missouri with an enrollment of more than 100,000 pupils.<sup>10</sup>

*Women’s Missionary Societies.* An equally important development in moving the churches into positions where they could meet the needs of a more complex culture was the rise of organized work among women.

Though women have been mainstays of congregations from earliest days, a prejudice against women’s taking leadership roles stifled both their talents and their contributions throughout the nineteenth century. No women were on standing committees of the General Association until 1915, when a denominational “revolution” of a sorts occurred, of which we shall read shortly.

Many informal, local societies of women supported the work of the Adoniram Judsons and Luther Rice from the beginnings of the Triennial Convention—societies with such names as “the Female Burman Missionary Society of Pipe Creek” or the “Bethlehem Sewing Society.” “Mite boxes,” seasons of prayer, and regular giving were features of these societies. On the basis of contributions to missions, several women’s societies were able to appoint delegates—men—to the triennial meetings. Similar support went to missionary efforts of the Southern Baptist Convention after its founding, and in 1868 Mrs. Ann J. Graves of Baltimore convened a meeting of women attending the Southern Baptist Convention in her town to give them a report of her son’s work as a medical missionary in China. From that 1868 gathering a circular went to women throughout the South, suggesting

the plan of having mission boxes in our homes, each member being pledged to put in at least two cents a week, if convenient, on a set day, the Sabbath being preferred. Small sums voluntarily and regularly contributed are found to be more reliable in providing funds than subscriptions, being of greater benefit to the giver

by awakening an interest in the cause and cultivating the "grace of giving." We suggest the organization of branches in each state . . . and missionary circles in each church . . . to meet regularly for prayer and the dissemination of missionary intelligence.<sup>12</sup>

Perhaps in response to this circular, the first women's missionary society in Missouri was organized at Liberty in 1869, led by Mrs. O. P. Moss.

At the 1876 meeting of the General Association in Hannibal, a group of women held "a quiet and informal conference looking towards a general organization for a more active and systematic effort in the interest of foreign missions,"<sup>13</sup> and before the end of the year a meeting was held in Liberty to form a state organization. The plan was to study about and pray for missions, as well as to collect an average of one cent a week from the entire church membership for missionary support. When the new Missouri Baptist Women's Foreign Mission Society held its first meeting with the General Association, at Lexington in 1877, the Association welcomed "the grand rally of the sisterhood to this work." Thirty-six local societies were represented.

The state Society set its headquarters at Mexico and continued its work of praying for and promoting missions. In 1886, at the request of the General Association, the Society enlarged its scope to concern itself with foreign, home, district, and state missions, and with ministerial education. In the same year they "adopted" the first woman missionary to go from Missouri to China, Miss Emma Young, later helping to construct a building for the school Miss Young founded in Canton, South China. A monthly paper, "The Interchange," was established to improve communication among the local societies and, of course, to promote mission work.

When someone complained on the floor of the Associational meeting at Clinton in 1888 that the large number of women in attendance made the crowd too great, the Women's Society cooperated by having its annual meetings separated from those of the General Association, a policy followed until 1916. The "unseen" women were nevertheless heard from by the Association all through the 1890's: they were raising money for missions; they were helping call out people for mission service; they were keeping churches informed of the work and sacrifices of missionaries; they were sending boxes of supplies to families of frontier missionaries; they were leading out in a time of self-denial and thanksgiving, coupled with a missions offering, in March; and they were holding special weeks of prayer for missions. In 1894, as the state became more and more segregated and black members were leaving white churches to form congregations of their own, the women began supportive work with black Baptist congregations.

A reorganization in 1900 placed the missionary societies under the direction of a Woman's Central Committee, reporting to the state Baptist Board of Home and Foreign Missions. It was part of the general movement toward

centralization that adapted Baptists for a new kind of society. Expenses were now provided by the General Association; and a section called "The Interchange" in the *Central Baptist* replaced the separate newspaper, expanding, in effect, the spread of information on missionary work. A traveling library of missionary information was established, and increased attention was given to the "young ladies' societies and juvenile bands." At the turn of the century, at least eighty societies were active in the state, and they had collected since 1877 at least \$81,000 for missions.

#### *Visions and Revisions in Baptist Colleges*

For a people suspicious of learning and of educational institutions, as many early Baptists were and some still are, Baptists have built some remarkable schools. As the denomination moved toward ministering in an ever more complex society, leaders instinctively knew that education would be a key to success in evangelism, missions, and influence on society; and they encouraged their colleges accordingly.

In Chapter II we looked at the founding of several Baptist schools and their history through the Civil War. At war's end, LaGrange College and William Jewell were able to reopen by 1868; the Columbia Baptist Female College (later Stephens) had never closed.

*William Jewell College* had showed its determination to reopen and to succeed when, in 1867, the trustees elected Honorable John B. Wornall as chairman. A leading Baptist and Kansas City businessman, his name and presence gave credible substance to the school. Thomas Rambaut, new president, reorganized the curriculum after the pattern of the University of Virginia; a graduate of the schools of Latin, Greek, English and History, and Mathematics could gain a B.A., if he had also studied some Natural Sciences and Moral Philosophy. If he graduated from all schools—based on performance on examinations—he received an M.A. degree.

In 1869 the Jeremiah Vardeman School of Theology was established at William Jewell, with a \$40,000 endowment from members of the General Association. Named for the first moderator of the Association, the Vardeman School educated ministers for Missouri and the nation for many years, until seminaries came into prominence as the denomination's principle way of training its preachers. In 1871, when financial reverses were hitting the country, the Board of Ministerial Education faced the prospect of thirty ministerial students' having to leave the college because neither they nor the college had the funds for them to continue studies. The General Association, meeting in Clinton, not only sent money to victims of the recent "Great Chicago Fire," but also resolved "that it is the sense of this Association that we will sustain the young ministers in William Jewell College; and they *must not* be sent home." The students were sustained. Shortly after, the ministerial

students set up their own "Boarding Club" so they could live most economically.

All Baptist colleges in the state were suffering financial reverses in the 1870's, and when the American Baptist Educational Society proposed a campaign for Christian higher education as an appropriate celebration for the nation's centennial in 1876, Missouri Baptists joined in. W. Pope Yeaman believed that if the money were divided among all the colleges, none would receive enough to do much good, for there existed ten or twelve Baptist schools in the state. He believed that the General Association had primary responsibility to the college it had founded, he knew that some professors had resigned and that all had taken salary cuts in order to keep the school alive, and so he persuaded representatives of the other colleges and the Association that the money should be directed to the single school. After the centennial campaign, it was agreed, each college would have opportunity to solicit throughout the state. This created great hostility both toward Yeaman and toward William Jewell, for supporters of each college in each section of the state knew the needs of the local schools; Stephens College had been "adopted" by the Association in 1870 and was especially upset at this plan "to disinherit a part of the children of the Baptist Association for the sole benefit of William Jewell College, to grasp all the contributions of the State for its advancement and leave the Baptist Female Seminary . . . outside. . . ."14 The plan proceeded; Yeaman was appointed non-resident, fund-raising "Chancellor" of the college and worked with a committee of seventeen elected by the Association; and \$22,041 in money and pledges was presented to the college in 1876. The residue of ill will remained even though Yeaman later spent a year (a rather unsuccessful one) in raising money for Stephens College and still later a term as president of Grand River Baptist College. Sectional jealousy toward William Jewell, thus aroused, was (along with the conflict between the *Central Baptist* and *American Baptist Flag*) part of the disruption in the denomination which in 1878 almost split it apart.

But many things were creating distress in those years: such events as the nation wide financial panic of 1873, the grasshopper plagues of 1874-76, the defeat of General Custer at Little Bighorn in 1876, and massive railroad strikes in 1877. The college moved ahead, with Lewis B. Ely of Carrollton serving as a gifted and dedicated financial agent (fund raiser) from 1877 to 1897. The first dormitory was built in 1880; a new academic program was adopted in 1885, which divided the student body into the now-traditional freshman through senior classes; in 1892 a gift offer of \$10,000 from the American Baptist Education Society was matched by \$30,000 raised through Mr. Ely's efforts; Wornall Hall (an academic building) and the first Brown Gymnasium were constructed in 1896; and 1892 Dr. John Priest Greene, one of the greatest of the school's presidents, came to the college from the pastorate of Third Baptist Church in St. Louis.

Also in 1892 “the strong four-year colleges of the state formed the Missouri College Union, and agreed on common admission and graduation requirements. The charter members of this group were the University of Missouri, William Jewell College, Westminster College, Washington University, Central College, Drury College, and Missouri Valley College.”<sup>15</sup> At the turn of the century the college was in close accord with the General Association, was one of the seven academically “strong” colleges of Missouri, had an endowment of \$400,000 and was seeking funds to enlarge a library and construct a “scientific building.”

The *LaGrange College* building (colleges generally had only one structure in those days), begun in 1857, was finally completed in 1869, the same year that Dr. J. F. Cook began his noteworthy career as president. The first catalog was issued in 1868–69, and the first graduating class—seven students—held ceremonies on June 16, 1870.

The college was, like most in its time, divided into a preparatory and collegiate department, one doing what we would now call junior high and high school work, the other doing what might now pass for college work. Latin and Greek were the major subjects, with some study in the sciences. A standard degree took four years; one could take a “normal” course, to prepare for teaching, in three years.<sup>16</sup>

Regulations and discipline in LaGrange College were typical of those in nineteenth-century schools; some excerpts from the “Abstract of College Laws” may interest the modern reader, who is accustomed to a slightly different type of institution:

Every student shall attend the daily devotional exercises in the college chapel, also, public worship on the Lord’s day, at such churches as the parent or guardian may designate.

Students will not be permitted to be absent from their rooms after 7 o’clock at night without leave, except to attend religious service, or the literary societies connected with the college.

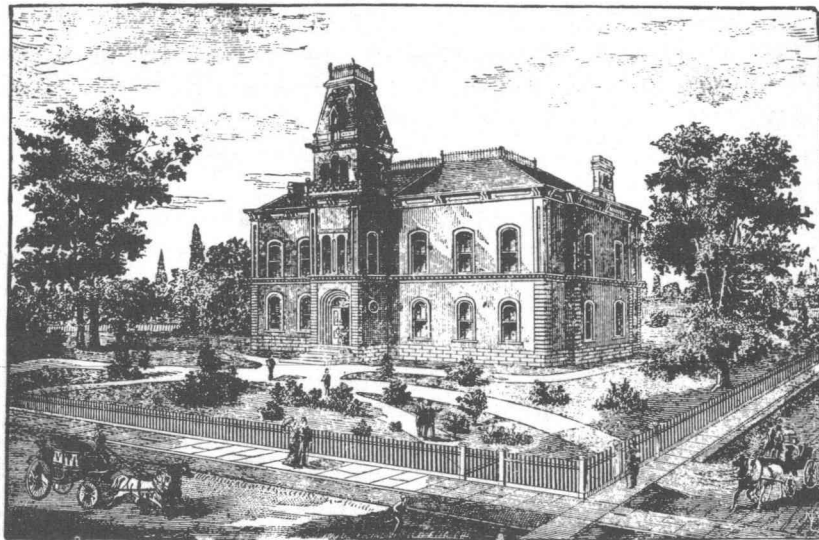
No student will be permitted to leave the city on any pretext whatever, during his or her connection with the college, without previous permission from the president or some member of the faculty.

No student shall carry deadly weapons, or attend any exhibition having an immoral tendency, nor frequent any bar-room or tipling house.

Students in the male and female departments are to have no communications, either verbal or written, further than true politeness requires.

Dr. Cook served as president until 1896; and his was an amazing record of keeping LaGrange College alive in the midst of financial difficulties that be-

set every school. As the college moved toward the new century, it expanded course offerings to include Business, Elocution, and Music, as well as a separate Theological department. By the early 1900's, the school was offering graduate work in addition to the A.B., B.L., Ph.B., and Ph.B.-Divinity degrees, though none of this work was yet "standardized" (accredited). At century's end the college remained affiliated with its regional sponsors but had not yet become connected with the statewide General Association.



SOUTHWEST BAPTIST COLLEGE, BOLIVAR, MO.

*Southwest Baptist College* in Bolivar did not have to survive the Civil War, for her founding date is 1878. Baptists of the southwestern part of the state desired a college for their region, conditions of travel all through the state making most schools of that day "local." Pierce City Baptist College had been established in 1877, but the Spring River Association nevertheless asked the cooperation of others nearby in establishing Southwest Baptist College in the following year, first locating it in Lebanon.

James Maupin was only twenty-six years old and a new M.A. graduate of LaGrange College when he took the helm as president of the new institution. He and a college roommate, A. S. Ingman, had talked as students of creating a Baptist college, and they had even corresponded with people in Oklahoma on a possible site. When the pastor in Rolla invited Maupin to the new endeavor in southwestern Missouri, Maupin and Ingman began riding on horseback throughout the region seeking money and students. Ingman, who had come from missionary work in the Indian Territory to help in the project, later remembered having "been in my saddle every day for four full weeks

together, and . . . at the end of two as hard years of work as I have ever done I had no more money than at the beginning."<sup>17</sup>

Maupin felt Lebanon not the best location for the school, and a committee of five persons from Bolivar—only one of them a Baptist—bid \$6,300 and six acres of land to get the college moved to their town, where classes were initially held in the Bolivar House hotel. The first catalog of sixteen pages, including five pages of advertisements by local merchants, indicates that the Lebanon location was “too far east” and then reassures parents:

The healthfulness of Bolivar is proverbial. The atmosphere is mild and salubrious, free from malarial poisons. . . . There is no place where the parent or guardian can more safely send his child or ward than to Bolivar. There is not a saloon in Polk County. . . . While free from the seductions of vice and idleness generally found in large cities and railroad towns, Bolivar enjoys all the advantages of pleasant residence in a thriving community.

Bolivar is described as accessible from the railroad at Springfield by a “daily stageline, both ways. The distance is 30 miles, the time is six hours. The stage runs comfortable coaches, and will carry students for half price.” Tuition was thirty dollars per year, and students could find “board in good families, with lights and fuel furnished per week, from \$1.50 to \$2.00.” Other costs would be minimal: “jewelry and fine clothes rarely go with good scholarship.”



REV. J. R. MAUPIN.

The 1881-82 catalog indicates that "it is not the aim of this institution to present a Theological Course," but to prepare ministerial students by means of a "Classical Course" to enter "the very best Theological Schools of the land." A school of business, the "Southwest Commercial College," was added in 1881, and the practical side of education was noted in an avowed goal of applying "science to agriculture and manufacture."

Maupin himself managed construction of "the college building," often working all day, then riding through the night to keep a preaching appointment. His exertions broke his health, but he wrote to Ingman that he "would rather the Ozark winds should sing their sad requiems over his grave than that the college should fail." He finally had to resign, edited the *Baptist Herald* in Lebanon for a year, tried to establish a Baptist paper in Kansas City, but died in 1885, at just thirty-three years of age. Ingman succeeded him, serving as president from 1885 through 1886.

Trials abounded. During the year of Maupin's death a typhoid epidemic hit the college, killing several in the faculty and student body. At one time the building was leased to J. E. Austin as a private academy. At still another time, in 1897, the trustees voted to drop the Baptist affiliation and become a municipal school, changing the name to Bolivar College. Baptists of the region resisted, however, and succeeded in restoring the original name one year later.

At the turn of the century Southwest Baptist College had managed to stay alive through twenty-two years of difficulties, but its future was by no means secure. Colleges of that era died more often than they lived.

*Other Baptist Colleges.* This high mortality rate can be seen in the fact that Baptists in various quarters of the state were in 1900 sponsoring several schools which have not endured: Lexington Baptist Female College; Hardin College, a dominant women's school until overexpansion and national depression killed it in 1932; Liberty Baptist College, a women's school on an opposite hill from William Jewell College; Grand River College at Gallatin, which had for a time the redoubtable Pope Yeaman as president; Will Mayfield College in Marble Hill; and doubtless others. Already dead were Mt. Pleasant College at Huntsville, a struggling child of a proud association; St. Joseph Female College; and other small, regional "colleges."

Facing such a situation of too many colleges and too much competition among them for the Baptist student and Baptist dollar, the General Association in 1893 formed a Board of Education to do some sorting out:

The Board of Education shall thoroughly investigate the condition and wants of all our denominational schools in Missouri and shall have power to raise money to afford temporary relief and to endow any Baptist school in Missouri. The said Board of Education shall make yearly reports to the Association of its doings and of the operations and finances of the schools, co-operating with the said Board of

Education. The Board of Education . . . shall consist of nineteen members, who shall be elected annually by the Association.

By 1898 Pope Yeaman, now in his elder statesman years, was suggesting a plan of integration:

It is not improbable that an effort to materially foster a large number of institutions of learning by a denomination in a state, tends to make weaklings of them all. If this be so, perhaps it would be a good plan to mould them all into one great denominational university, and utilize the different local properties as seminaries of training for the central university.<sup>18</sup>

The Board of Education in 1899 began examining ways that the many Baptist schools could be shaped into some sort of system, eliminating competition, providing adequate financing, and assuring some uniformly high standard for courses of study.

#### *Towards a United Voice: The Press*

Baptist newspapers in the nineteenth century, like Baptist colleges, tended to proliferate and compete. Each was essentially a free enterprise venture, not subsidized or sponsored by the General Association, though often endorsed by that state denominational body. As the century was one of great religious disputation and contention, so the newspapers were often instruments of propaganda and assault.

The several abortive efforts at forming a viable Baptist paper before the Civil War have been described in Chapter II. Immediately after the War a group of Baptist leaders issued a prospectus from Palmyra for a new *Missouri Baptist Journal*. On January 8, 1866, the first number of the paper came from the presses, even though the editor, John Hill Luther, and several backers were "out on bond" and under threat of further legal action for having preached without swearing their loyalty under the Test Oath. The paper had more than one thousand subscribers at its inception, through active canvassing in the state by its sponsors, and it was an immediate success.

Another newspaper began in St. Louis in September of the same year, called the *Record*—a publication of the new "Baptist State Convention" of churchmen loyal to the Union. Both it and the *Journal* were published for two years, after which time the growing spirit of union between the two Baptist groups—the General Association and State Convention—led to a union of the papers. The suggestion toward union came from the editor of the "loyalist" paper, the *Record*, "with the view to removing all occasion of friction of the two elements of the denomination . . . resultant of the war of 1861-5. The result did not disappoint the design."<sup>19</sup>

A printing and publishing company was formed to effect the merger, "The St. Louis Baptist Publishing Company"; a plant was established; and the

merged papers took new life as the *Central Baptist*, with Dr. Hill continuing as editor in chief and A. A. Hendrick—former *Record* editor—as an associate. Dr. Pope Yeaman, who seemed to be everywhere doing all things, had a hand in the enterprise as both editor and owner during the 1870's. The paper served the denomination well, and toward the end of the century was described as having “a strong hold on the denomination in the state, and [ranking] high in American religious journalism.”<sup>20</sup> Its battles with the *American Baptist Flag* were noted in the last chapter; the fact that it survived the attacks of its rival and outlived it are solid testimony of its value to Missouri Baptists.

With such a settled and accepted newspaper serving the denomination, it was surprising in 1896 to see the beginning of a new journal in Kansas City, the *Word and Way*, published by S. M. Brown and R. K. Maiden. Brown had been corresponding secretary for the denomination, a field agent for the *Central Baptist*, and a pastor in Kansas City. He founded the paper to stress some teachings which he felt were not being adequately addressed anywhere “in all the central west except [in] the *Western Recorder*,”<sup>21</sup> though the early issues of the *Word and Way* do not specify these issues and are not contentious in tone.

As the nineteenth century came to a close, Missouri Baptists were seeking to work effectively in a changing society. They had established work in major population centers, where the immediate future lay for shaping the destiny of the state. They had changed their methods, getting a full-time and paid chief executive to co-ordinate state work and organizing major work of home missions, foreign missions, state missions, and Sunday schools under two boards. The Sunday school movement itself had taken hold in the churches, with its resulting benefits in evangelism and training of members. Women's missionary support was well organized and effective. A denominational board was seeking to co-ordinate efforts of the fellowship. Baptists felt ready for the new century, knowing little of what was in store.

## Notes To Chapter 5

- <sup>1</sup>R. S. Douglass, *History of Missouri Baptists* (Kansas City, 1934), p. 272.
- <sup>2</sup>W. Pope Yeaman, *A History of the Missouri Baptist General Association* (Columbia, 1899), p. 271.
- <sup>3</sup>Paul C. Nagel, *Missouri: A Bicentennial History* (New York, 1977), pp. 78-79.
- <sup>4</sup>Yeaman, p. 281.
- <sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*
- <sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 282.
- <sup>7</sup>Report of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board of about 1866, quoted in William Wright Barnes, *The Southern Baptist Convention, 1845-1953* (Nashville, 1954), p. 87.
- <sup>8</sup>Yeaman, p. 256.
- <sup>9</sup>H. E. Truex, *Baptists in Missouri* (Columbia, 1904), p. 54.
- <sup>10</sup>Douglass, p. 455.
- <sup>11</sup>Barnes, p. 141.
- <sup>12</sup>Quoted in Barnes, p. 143.
- <sup>13</sup>Douglass, p. 428.
- <sup>14</sup>*Missouri Statesman*, October 22, 1875.
- <sup>15</sup>John C. Crighton, *Stephens: A Story of Educational Innovation* (Columbia, 1970), p. 139.
- <sup>16</sup>Kenneth H. Pope, "A Brief Review of the History of Hannibal-LaGrange College," (MSS), December, 1975.
- <sup>17</sup>Southwest Baptist College *Newsletter*, March, 1953.
- <sup>18</sup>Yeaman, p. 356.
- <sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 307.
- <sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 311.
- <sup>21</sup>Douglass, p. 476.

“You can always tell a Baptist, but you can’t tell him much.”  
... a Baptist who knew

6

## Frontiers Of The Modern Age: New Technologies And New Ways Of Thinking 1900–1934

The twentieth century dawned brash and bold, beautiful and bountiful. Many Christians felt that the coming together of spiritual enlightenment and new technologies would let the church create *the* Christian era—a kind of kingdom of God on earth. An important magazine founded at the time was even named the *Christian Century*, expressing these hopes in the title. A popular lecturer told his hearers to look in the mirror each morning and repeat, “Every day and in every way I am growing better and better.”

It *did* seem a time of miracles and marvels. The nation was bound together by ribbons of wire and steel, the first telegraph lines having linked the coasts by 1861 and the first railroads by 1869 (replacing the romantic but short-lived Pony Express out of St. Joseph). Alexander Graham Bell’s telephone (“making iron talk”), power generators placed by Westinghouse at Niagara Falls, the cash register, the typewriter (called a “literary piano”), trolley cars (displacing the mule), the electric light, Boston’s and America’s first subway, the phonograph, and even the “moving picture show” were harbingers of more wonders to come. Over 440,000 patents were issued between 1860 and 1890!

Big factories were making more goods than people ever thought possible, big cities were helping arts and culture flourish (the root word of *city* and *civilization* being the same), immigration was making America a true “melting pot,” scientific thinking was bringing further enlightenment, huge open-air Bible classes were attracting thousands to churches and city parks, and idealism was everywhere. America had a new sense of herself, who she was and

where she might be going. The dedication of the Washington Monument in 1885 and the Statue of Liberty in 1886 were fitting symbols of a new nation entering a new century.

Missouri and Missouri Baptists shared in this optimism, continuing to feel that Missouri by location and resources had a key place in the great destiny of a great land. As the minutes of the General Association for 1906 stated it,

Missouri is the most representative of all the states in the character of its population. It is neither north nor south, it is American. Here the streams of population flowing westward, meet and mingle into a citizenship that retains the best out of all that comes from any source.

In 1911 Baptists were asserting,

History shows us that Missourians had a large hand in bringing all that western country under the dominion of the stars and stripes. By the grace of God, we are having also a large hand in bringing [it] under the dominion of the King of Kings.

But somehow the dream turned bittersweet. Industrialization, urbanization, and immigration brought their curses as well as their blessings. Technology could be a demonic master as well as a useful servant. Within twenty years the nation would learn that wars could be fought on a world-wide scale, and within thirty years the word *depression* would have new and awful meanings. By the time Missouri Baptists celebrated their centennial in 1934, dreams were deferred and God was doing his work in the midst of “tribulation, distress . . .”

#### *Ministering in a New Industrial-Urban World*

They poured into the cities, by the thousands. White and black and red and yellow were their skins, hopeful were their faces, frightened were their spirits. They stood in lines at large industrial plants, eager to get jobs where they might work twelve or more hours a day under at best unpleasant conditions. The story of the first years of this century is the story of immigration and of new urban ways of life. One-fifth of America's citizens lived in cities in 1870; just twenty years later the fraction was one-third, and by 1930 it was one-half.

The rush to the cities was the result of American industrialization. Giants of industry such as Vanderbilt in railroads, Carnegie in steel, Duke in tobacco, and Rockefeller in oil established monopolies, built economic empires, and in a pre-tax era were able to amass astounding wealth. John D. Rockefeller (called “Reckafellow” by his enemies because of the way he squeezed competitors out of the market) was an earnest Baptist who, like his other peers in the new aristocracy of riches, gave great sums of money for good causes. Henry Ford was perhaps the master at applying technology to industry: his assembly-line roadster sold for \$260 in the 1920's, and by 1929 far

more automobiles were on American roads than on those of the rest of the world combined. The ripple effects on the oil, rubber, steel, and fabric industries, on gas stations and the transport industry, on the construction of highways, on the rise of suburbs and therefore the construction of homes, on mobility and morals and home life, can scarcely be calculated. The family—and America—would never be the same.

By 1919, 86% of wage earners were working in industry, chiefly in cities. Industry brought higher wages, and the cities brought excitement when compared to the monotony of life “back on the farm.” Skyscrapers and subways and bright lights and museums and galleries and symphonies and theatres were amusing—and to many, amazing. But the cities also brought slums, tenements with no plumbing, filth, and squalor. A visitor to a large American city

would have walked through traffic-congested, litter-strewn streets lined by bleak narrow structures in which “cliff-dwellers” carried on lonely existences in a fellowship of the unconcerned. He might have inspected the grimy tenements, breeding grounds for disease and crime, or he might have looked into the steaming sweatshops where refugees from eastern Europe labored long and dangerous hours for a mere pittance. There were advantages in the city, but there were also hazards and a host of new social problems to be resolved.<sup>1</sup>

“Muckraking” journalists were sensational but nevertheless told the truth when they wrote about *The Shame of the Cities*, *The Jungle*, and *The Bitter Cry of the Children*.

St. Louis was featured prominently in one of these books, as was mentioned in the previous chapter. By 1910 that great city was afflicted by its tenements, filth, smoke, violence, corruption, and an “amazing number of brothels,”<sup>2</sup> which its glorious 1904 World’s Fair had not been able to hide. Bad jails, bad water, bad hospitals, and citizen apathy were “normal.” Kansas City, on its part, had by 1920 become one of the most beautiful cities of the world, but it was also one of the most violent and crime-ridden in the land, its government becoming putty in the hands of political bosses and machine politics. Continuing immigrations swelled the populations of Missouri’s and America’s cities; in the early 1900’s, over 2,500 “tired,” “poor” persons a day were herded past the Statue of Liberty to join more “huddled masses” on America’s side of the ocean.

As living and working conditions became more fierce, the labor movement arose to protect employees. Over 23,000 strikes occurred between 1881 and 1900, and by then the movement was just hitting its stride! The unions of that era were seeking to gain a reduction in the workday from twelve to eight hours, some semblance of safety for workers, and some control over practices of exploiting child labor. A strike of street car operators in St. Louis in

1900 was not typical, yet not untypical in its violence which left fifteen dead and many injured.

Yet in it all Teddy Roosevelt was bullishly "rough riding" his way across American and international ranges by offering a "Square Deal" for business and labor and a lively "Manifest Destiny" for the United States. If the problems were magnified by new dimensions of social and economic life, so for many were the promises.

The churches of America responded to both the promises and the problems of their new circumstances. Some embraced a "Gospel of Wealth," teaching that prosperity is a sign of God's blessing. Russell H. Conwell, Baptist minister of Philadelphia and the most popular lecturer of his day, told audiences that "money is power and you ought to be reasonably ambitious to have it. You . . . can do more good with it than you could without it." Bruce Barton, in *The Man Nobody Knows*, painted Jesus as something of an early-day advertising and executive genius. Huge church buildings were constructed with new wealth, John Rockefeller founded a new Baptist school called the University of Chicago, and Andrew Carnegie's gifts went to many church causes, including a new library for William Jewell College in 1908.

Another response to the times, which came somewhat later than the "Gospel of Wealth," was called the "Social Gospel." As developed by Baptist theologian Walter Rauschenbusch, who had worked as a pastor in New York's wretched slum known as "Hell's Kitchen," the Social Gospel taught that the Christian must be active in changing society and the institutions of society because some evil is larger than individuals' choices or actions. Society, as well as the person, must be redeemed.

A reflection of this Social Gospel can be read in notable resolutions passed by the Missouri Baptist General Association in 1914, resolutions which called for the churches to take the lead in bringing social justice to their communities. Jesus was cited as the authority for using "any good methods," including new methods, to control liquor, prostitution, gambling, and "vile shows"; to provide for injured and aged workmen; to achieve a living wage for all; to establish "the most equitable division of the products of industry that can ultimately be devised"; to build community centers for rural districts; and to protect one day in seven for rest. A resolution in 1916 spoke out on behalf of the poor and children, and one in 1933 approved the "end of child labor."

By and large, though, Missouri Baptists continued to emphasize individual salvation more than social transformation. Their "show me" spirit came out in a tendency to "do something" practical and specific about problems rather than spending a lot of time creating theologies to fit new situations.

They responded to new technologies, for example, in such down-to-earth ways as seeking to establish churches in major "railroad towns," which were seen as new centers of influence. (They also negotiated reduced rates with the

railroads for travel to and from annual convention meetings and for travel by religious workers!) They conducted an interesting "Chapel Car" ministry, funded by the American Baptist Publication Society, which sent a "church on wheels" from town to town for preaching and church-founding. (The Frisco Line was duly thanked for pulling the Chapel Car gratis.) They even had a "stereopticon address" at the General Association meeting of 1907, electronic amplification of sound at their centennial celebration in 1934, and movies to promote Missouri Baptist Hospital in the same year.

On a more substantial level, they responded to urbanization by extensive programs of support for churches and pastors in the cities; most Missouri towns of any size appear at some point in the General Association's lists of churches aided until they could become self-supporting. Baptists conducted programs of "city missions," sent missionaries to work among the poor and the women and the children in the slums, and sought to build active ministries in cities and suburbs as well as in the rural areas of traditional strength.

Baptists of Missouri responded to immigration by first proclaiming a need, then by establishing specific missionary work in ethnic communities. In 1908 the report on state missions cites "Missouri As A Mission Field" and points out,

We have in our borders peoples from almost every nation, kindred and tongue under heaven. Germans, Swedes, Bohemians, Danes, Italians, Russians, and Greeks—in all, about one million, making nearly one-third of our population. This brings to our doors a gracious missionary opportunity, from which we may not turn away except at our peril.

The 1909 report warns, in the language of these not-very-tolerant times, "These people have come to us with their strange ideas and customs. If we do not lift them to our civilization, they will bring our civilization down to theirs." Work was actually initiated, from time to time, among Germans, Swedes, Negroes, Mexicans, Poles, and Jews (the 1932 convention being startled to hear that there were more Jews living in St. Louis than in Jerusalem). Many of the immigrants were Roman Catholics or Lutherans, and to many Baptists they needed "saving." Religious pluralism was coming to Missouri, but Baptists were not giving it a warm welcome.

Several Missouri Baptist institutions took shape in this first third of the twentieth century as ministries to meet newly-recognized needs.

*The Missouri Baptist Children's Home*, for example—then called the "Orphan's Home"—was chartered in 1883 in St. Louis, the result of a concern and of fund raising efforts by women of the Second Baptist Church. In the fashion of the day, the women held a bazaar, solicited gifts and bequests, and even received a legacy of \$2.50 from "Little Lucy May Bowser of Lafayette Park Baptist Church" who willed the money to the home from her

deathbed—a heart-rending story that matched in pathos the sentimental romances of the day’s popular magazines.

The home had difficult beginnings in downtown St. Louis, enduring a bank failure and a “cyclone” on the way to getting firmly established. Yet in the first six months, seventy-six children were admitted and twenty-five adopted into “Christian families.”

In 1905 a tract of fifteen acres was purchased (for \$10,765) adjoining Fee Fee Church, “eight miles from St. Louis on the St. Charles car line.” There a campus was constructed, consisting of cottages for the children and an administration building. Women supervised the work, both as managers and as board members—the board consisted of thirty-four women, with seventeen male “advisers.” Seven hundred women were enlisted to carry the message of the Home to Baptist churches in the state.

After the move to and construction at Pattonville, the Home had capacity to serve two hundred children, though it was many years before that number was in residence. Mrs. A. H. Eilers, who served as president from 1898 to 1933, was a strong leader in the work, pressing its claims before Missouri Baptists. Folksy annual reports from Alice K. Messerley offered helpful suggestions, such as these of 1922:

Our children eat potatoes, turnips, corn, apples—all good things you can spare. Then your society may send sheets, towels, soap, tooth-brushes, and tooth powder. . . .

A signed check will strengthen your belief. It will also strengthen the cause in which you believe.

The churches were asked to rally around in a special way in 1918 when the great influenza epidemic struck 104 children at the home, of whom two died.

The Home operated frugally, its total expenses for 1902 being \$4,773. A garden was kept, barrels of gifts in kind were received from the churches, contributions of services came from physicians and civic clubs, and a definite “family” atmosphere prevailed.

*Missouri Baptist Hospital* was organized in 1884 by Dr. Will Mayfield, prominent physician whose philanthropies did much for Baptist causes. The great suffering of a great city—St. Louis—touched his heart, and he founded on North Taylor Avenue what was first called the Mayfield Sanitarium, later the Missouri Baptist Sanitarium, and still later Missouri Baptist Hospital.

In these years when hospitals were not able to support themselves on the fees they charged, the institution ran up large debts and needed the generous gifts of such persons as Dr. Mayfield and Mr. A. D. Brown, of Third Church in St. Louis, to keep it going. Yet it showed steady fiscal progress, even while providing special service to charity patients and to people from Baptist churches. A training program for nurses was established (in 1905 it was a

three-year program, as it is now, with thirty-eight students under the tutelage of "Mrs. Fannie E. S. Smith, head nurse").

A new addition was reported to the 1915 General Association meeting in Trenton, a ninety-five room facility that cost \$150,000 and was "the last word in hospital building, not excelled west of the Mississippi River." Occupancy then was eighty-three patients. In 1923 a report to the convention at Poplar Bluff indicated that some porches were being closed in to create further rooms, making a 350 bed facility. In 1928 the name was changed from "sanitarium" to "hospital," and by 1933 its now five hundred beds made it "the largest general hospital in the southwest" under private control.

*The Baptist Home* at Ironton, originally called the "Missouri Home for Aged Baptists," was established in 1913 by Reverend and Mrs. Milford Riggs, who were then ministering to the church in Ironton. They rented historic Emerson house in the town, furnished it with their own belongings, and supplied the funds until they could enlist Baptists in the cause.

In 1917 the Home was "adopted" by the General Association as one of its agencies, and in 1919 a farm was purchased and major construction begun. The churches supported the Home only marginally, and that through such quaint devices as an "egg offering": as Mr. Riggs lamented in his 1919 report, the gratitude which was felt for the offering did not offset the fact that "we cannot run the Home on eggs alone."

Major construction and a declining economy saddled the Home with debt of \$278,000 in 1927, and the agency began to accept some persons who could pay their way rather than doing all work on a charity basis, as was previously the policy. It even began advertising itself as a hospital and charging hospital rates, allowing, however, that it did not do operations. In 1931 Mr. Riggs resigned, his own health impaired; the Home had overdrafts at the bank, no cash, and no food for the residents. The Depression was real and nearly fatal.

A new manager, D. J. Scott, arranged to repay loans at fifty cents on the dollar, with interest forgiven, and set out on a campaign to keep the Home alive. When Missouri Baptists celebrated their centennial in 1934, the issue was still in doubt.

A *Missouri Baptist Ministers' Aid Society* was yet another expression of social concern by the denomination. Formed in 1884 to help "old worn out preachers" who had given their lives to the ministry, had received little compensation, and were now in declining years without means of support, the society was only partially effective. It was dispensing only \$300 a year in the early 1900's, only \$800 by the 1920's, and was more significant as an ideal than in practice.

When at the 1930 meeting of the General Association in St. Joseph a committee of lawyers and another committee of twenty ministers and laymen found that "it is both morally right and legally possible for the funds of the Missouri Baptist Ministers' Aid Society to be transferred to the custody of the

Relief and Annuity Board of the Southern Baptist Convention,” the transfer was made and a program for ministerial retirement set on much better footing.

### *Confronting New Ways of Thinking*

Not only was the social order changing in the first three decades of the twentieth century, with the corresponding need for new forms of ministry; the world of thought was changing as well. Baptists—as did all Christians—had to respond to new departures in scientific thinking and new intellectual currents that made a “comfortable” faith less easy to come by.

A remarkable thing it is, and probably fortunate, that theological issues appear very, very seldom in records of Missouri Baptist life. The basis of fellowship has been evangelism, benevolence, education, and missions; and Baptists with sometimes differing views on specific doctrinal matters have cooperated to share the gospel.

A rare moment came in the 1923 General Association meeting in Poplar Bluff, when Senator W. C. Goodson gained adoption of a resolution on the subject of evolution. The resolution acknowledged “the greatness and value of the service which modern science is rendering to the cause of truth,” but attacked activities of “so-called scientists” who used scientific discoveries to discredit religion, who used natural and social sciences to set aside the supernatural, and who treated the “working hypothesis” of evolution as if it were fact and as if it denied the creative acts of God. “The supreme issue today is between naturalism and supernaturalism,” said the resolution, and “we stand unalterably for the supernatural in Christianity.” The very intelligent statement went on to express support for those teachers in Baptist schools who were “loyal to the facts of Christianity as revealed in the Scripture” and cautioned others concerning their teaching, particularly in light of “the present period of agitation and unrest.”

The “agitation and unrest” was a recurrence, all across America, of concern over the teaching of evolution in schools. It had begun in 1859 with Darwin’s publication of *Origin of Species* and had provided major cause for debate both in England and America through the closing years of the nineteenth century. Some ministers had sought to reconcile evolutionary theory with Biblical truth: John Fiske, in his *Outlines of Cosmic Philosophy*, had called evolution “God’s way of doing things,” and Henry Drummond had traveled with evangelist Dwight L. Moody preaching evolution as compatible with dynamic, Christ-centered religion. But extreme claims for “science” had led to many extreme responses on behalf of “religion,” and by the 1920’s conservative Christians were insisting that teaching of evolution be kept in proper, hypothetical perspective.

In the year before this 1923 resolution by the Missouri Baptist gathering, E. Y. Mullins of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary had addressed the

Southern Baptist Convention on "Science and Religion," his views finding favor with grass-roots Baptists and being printed in the Convention minutes as a guide for teachers in Baptist schools. In 1925, in addition to following, along with the rest of the nation, the dramatic Scopes "Monkey Trial" in Dayton, Tennessee, Southern Baptists modified their traditional New Hampshire Confession of Faith by adding ten sections addressing intellectual issues of the day, including evolution.

Evolution was not the only theological topic of concern to Baptists in the period. Scientific ways of thinking which achieved such technological wonders, which increased life expectancy from fifty to fifty-nine years during the decade of the 1920's, and which changed living styles for the Western world, were applied also to philosophy, history, literature, human behavior, and the Bible. The self-styled "higher criticism" had directed scientific-critical thinking toward Biblical texts; Friedrich Schleiermacher in Germany had looked for the essence of religion in personal experience, not Biblical authority; Josiah Royce reinterpreted Georg W. F. Hegel for Americans, emphasizing the importance of the rational element in life and thought; Albrecht Ritschl in Germany had described religion as intensely practical, something that "works," a theology which fit an American spirit of pragmatism given philosophical form by William James.

Theologians tried to reformulate doctrine to take new patterns of thought into account. William Newton Clarke, Baptist professor at Colgate, wrote *An Outline of Christian Theology* in 1898, offering what he hoped could be a system of doctrine for a new century. E. Y. Mullins prepared his *Christian Religion in Its Doctrinal Expression* in 1917 as a conservative theology which nevertheless recognized the new ways of thinking. Baptists were, again, at both ends of the theological spectrum: Harry Emerson Fosdick, Baptist minister of New York and a premier preacher of his age, led the "Modernists" who emphasized new formulations relevant to a scientific age; literally thousands of other Baptists numbered themselves among the "Fundamentalists" who opposed the innovations in theology and religion.

"Fundamentalism," a strident reaction to the new ways of thinking, took its name from a series of twelve little volumes published in 1909 by two wealthy Californians, Lyman and Milton Stewart, and entitled *The Fundamentals: A Testimony to the Truth*. The brothers circulated nearly 3,000,000 copies to laymen and ministers, the effect being to arouse militant opposition to liberalism. The "Five Fundamentals," basic beliefs laid out at the Niagara Bible Conference in 1895, are the infallibility of Scripture, the Virgin Birth of Christ, the substitutionary theory of the Atonement, the physical Resurrection, and Christ's imminent bodily return to earth. Most Missouri Baptists found themselves in close sympathy with the doctrines of Fundamentalism, but most did not feel comfortable with harsh battles over matters of doctrine. They had more important things to do in sharing the

gospel with their state, the nation, and the world; it was not uncommon to hear them say, "I have a fundamental faith, but I am not a Fundamentalist." Again it should be said that Missouri Baptist documents of the time contain very little about theological doctrines, but very much about missions, education, and ministry.

One common strand in the thinking of the day, whether it be Modernism or Fundamentalism or the Social Gospel, was a very strong idealism—a sense that God was doing good things in the world and could do more through willing servants. This idealism had its expression in such things as a Constitutional amendment establishing prohibition in 1919 and another giving women the vote in 1920, of which more will be said in a moment. But perhaps the most intense expression of America's idealism at the time was in popular attitudes toward World War I.

America did not want to enter the conflict, hating its very occurrence. Missouri Baptists reflected a national mood when, in 1904, they adopted resolutions opposing warfare and, at Trenton in 1915, expressed sorrow at the "dreadful war of the Nations" in Europe, with its "unparalleled carnage."

Baptists lamented the slaughtering of the manhood of Europe "while the heathen world is looking on"; the war, "satanic in its origin," was seen as a hindrance to the spread of the gospel. In a remarkable expression of support for a political figure, the 1915 convention of Missouri Baptists commended "our beloved president, Woodrow Wilson, for his careful judgment, his gentle forbearance, his undaunted courage in this great crisis"; the body thanked God for a President who with his Cabinet "falls upon his knees before Almighty God and prays that our nation may be kept out of war."

Wilson was successful, in fact, at the Democratic convention in St. Louis in 1916 when his supporters used the slogan, "He Kept Us Out of War"; and he was amazingly popular in Missouri even though he had earlier edged out Missouri hero "Champ" Clark for the Presidential nomination—winning on the forty-sixth ballot. A popular song of the day rang, "I Didn't Raise My Boy to Be a Soldier," the American Peace Society was active, and Andrew Carnegie in 1914 gave \$2,000,000 for the work of the churches toward peace. Teddy Roosevelt might justify war on Christian grounds, as he sought to do; but America wanted Wilson's "Peace with Honor" and an official national neutrality.

But, of course, America could not stay out of the conflict, and when German submarines sank the *Lusitania* with loss of 1,198 lives, the die was cast. "Damnable! Damnable! Absolutely hellish!" thundered evangelist Billy Sunday, and Americans agreed. Now the idealism shifted from a desire to avoid war to a crusade mentality, to fight this "war to end all wars" and "to make the world safe for democracy." Good must triumph over evil. John Henry Jowett preached in New York, "Fight to get God's will done!" Americans began singing "Over There" and "Keep the Home Fires Burning"; the

church folks knitted sweaters and socks; Missouri Baptist agencies invested part of their endowments in Liberty bonds; the nation ate “Liberty cabbage” (formerly sauerkraut) and Liberty steak (formerly hamburgers). The *Word and Way* in 1918 (a year in which Missouri Baptists did not convene because of a nationwide influenza epidemic) attacked “the odious prostitution of religion . . . found in the moral ideas and conduct of the Hun” (June 27), requested chaplains for the Army and Navy (July 4), and reported on the distribution of New Testaments to soldiers (July 11)—seeking “A Khaki Testament in Every Kit.”

As the war moved toward a successful conclusion, the idealism persisted: Wilson’s Fourteen Points for a moral peace, free of booty and imperialism, were endorsed by Christians everywhere—though not so enthusiastically by some politicians in America and abroad, who tended to sneer at the “fourteen commandments of God Almighty Wilson.” As France’s Premier Clemenceau put it, “God gave us His Ten Commandments, and we broke them. Wilson gave us his Fourteen Points—we shall see.”

When a Republican Senate would not endorse America’s participation in Wilson’s dream, a League of Nations (called by opponents a “League of Hallucinations”), the idealism began to fade in the face of a kind of “storm-cellular isolationism.” Missouri Baptists, nevertheless, expressed themselves at Moberly in 1921 as favoring disarmament and at Mexico in 1929 as favoring the Kellogg pact, which condemned war as a means of solving international controversies. At the same meeting they approved the goals of President Herbert Hoover, a devout Quaker and humanitarian who was a strong advocate of arms limitation—which in his day meant control of the number of battle-ships.

By the 1930’s Missouri and Missouri Baptists had come a long way from their dreams of an isolated rural paradise along the great American rivers. Their rivers carried them to the world, and the world to them; the results, even for an idealistic and convincingly Christian people, were often unsettling.

#### *Coping with a Secular Society—and a Depression*

The many forces swirling together in currents that made up the stream of life from 1900 to 1934 had the predictable outcome of a more secular society. Immigration, industrialization, urbanization, liberalization, war—all tended to open vistas, expand horizons, and break down traditions. Missouri Baptists had to confront, in the 1920’s and 1930’s, a Jazz Age boom that ended in a Depression bust.

The high-flying 1920’s provided a heady atmosphere to breathe. Never had the nation been more religious, and never more secular.

Missouri Baptists, ever conservative both as Missourians and as Baptists, hoped for much as war ended and as peacetime brought continued prosper-

ity. They had supported their governor of the early 1900's, Joseph W. Falk, in his nationally prominent "Missouri Idea"—the thought that the nation would be all right if honest leaders enforced simple laws, old values, and traditional methods. "Holy Joe Falk" mounted a crusade which cleaned up corruption in Missouri state government, closed the saloons and dog races on Sunday, and made him a possible candidate for the Presidency—until James Beauchamp "Champ" Clark unseated him with a superior political organization. Missouri Baptists had also worked very hard for state and national prohibition. Resolution after resolution in annual meetings, from 1909 on, commended the work of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, founded in Evanston, Illinois in 1873, and the Anti-Saloon League, founded in 1895. WCTU ladies were effective in direct action, often marching into saloons, conducting prayer meetings, and seeking to persuade proprietors to pour the drink into the gutter. Anti-Saloon League leaders were effective with political action, and by 1919 the combined "forces of righteousness" had passed a Constitutional amendment to ban alcoholic beverages in the United States. Closed were the "workingmen's clubs" that the saloons had become; and elevated, for many, were home life and the standards of both moral and financial living. Baptist preachments—through their annual meetings, sermons, newspapers, and pulpits—against "the drink curse," "the rebellious Bolshevistic, Un-American liquor bunch" with "their inborn lawless policies," had significantly helped the prohibitionist cause. Encouragements were expressed to public officials to control "the brewery regime" so that it could not engage in vote frauds, and Baptist voters were urged to elect "good, dry men" to office. The Kansas City *Star* was commended in 1915 for not accepting liquor advertising.

Liquor was not the only issue on which Baptists spoke out. Great concern was expressed over observance of the "Sabbath," particularly as European immigrants introduced their native custom of using Sunday for recreation. "The epitome of moral degeneration was to spend one's Sunday evening in a German beer garden," writes one historian;<sup>3</sup> and Missouri, particularly St. Louis, had plenty of such facilities available. A resolution of 1915 deplored the "Sunday theater, the Sunday motion picture show, and Sunday baseball," along with Sunday newspapers and "pleasure resorts." The 1920 convention meeting in St. Joseph expressed opposition to employers' requiring traveling salesmen to come into the office on Sunday to write reports, to having policemen and firemen on continuous Sunday duty, to drug stores and cigar stands remaining open, and to farmers' driving stock to town on Sunday for Monday's market.

At various times, Baptists expressed their displeasure with gambling, "vice in all forms," and "the menace of the movies." This latter "menace" became more intense through the 1920's as the new medium, which had been used for propaganda in World War I, then had been a romantic "silent" en-

tainment, became in 1927 the “talkies” with Al Jolson depicting *The Jazz Singer*. Movies became more explicit in their subjects, and “the scarlet sins of the silver screen” were attacked by more than one preacher in more than one church. But America did not stay away from movie houses; by 1930, a great year for “cinemaniacs,” 100,000,000 tickets (including repeaters) were sold to movies each week, when the national population was only 122,000,000!

It should be noted that Missouri Baptists were very forthright in taking stands on matters of personal moral conduct, but they were much less specific or expressive on larger matters of social and economic morality. They had absolutely nothing to say in their official records, for example, on the subject of votes for women, which became a Constitutional amendment in the year after prohibition succeeded. Baptist records are silent on gangsterism, which blighted American cities in the 1920’s—St. Louis and Kansas City not excluded. With lush profits from illegal liquor, police were bribed, and weapons such as sawed-off shotguns and “typewriters” (machine guns) were purchased in order to “erase” members of rival gangs. The Brooklyn newspaper could well have written about Kansas City, as it did about a sister town,

And the pistols’ red glare,  
Bombs bursting in air  
Give proof through the night  
That Chicago’s still there.<sup>4</sup>

Herbert Hoover’s nomination at the Republican national convention in Kansas City in 1928 was in part the result of his strong stand for law and order. (Baptists doubtless had a hand in his subsequent election to the Presidency, for in this first-ever radio campaign Hoover was opposed by Catholic Al Smith; and a whispering campaign not of Hoover’s making insisted that “A Vote for Al Smith Is a Vote for the Pope.”)

But if Baptists were silent on major *social* issues, there can be no doubt that ample *personal* immorality existed in American life, particularly as the Jazz Age introduced new freedoms. A society that had chided young women just twenty-five years before for playing croquet, because it gave occasion for ankles to show and flirtation to occur “amidst the wickets,” now saw one-piece bathing suits, skirts shockingly above the knee, and “flappers” with rouged faces and bobbed hair and cigarettes amouth. “Flaming youth” drank illicit booze, used automobiles as “sin houses on wheels,” seemed obsessed with sex, and in their disillusionment proclaimed that “only suckers work.” Hip-flasked legislators accepted their bribes and continued to vote “dry.”

It was a time of great expansiveness and idealism, as America sought to secure peace and prosperity in the world and sought to launch great humanitarian and missionary enterprises—subjects which we shall consider in future

pages. But it was also a time of disturbing trends, as summarized by Baptist historian Robert Torbet:

Yet withal, the religious forces of American life were faced with the severe competition of a growing secularism. The higher living standards of the new century had led many to place the premium of necessity upon luxuries. The materialistic philosophy of pragmatism gave to a large sector of the intelligentsia a *rationale* to justify their indifference to religion. Furthermore, in a world of vast commercial interdependence, economic thought was given the primacy belonging to religion in an earlier age. As men and nations grappled with the complex forces of supply and demand, the rightists experimented with fascistic totalitarianism, . . . while the leftists set forth the communist ideal . . . In the United States, an avowedly Christian nation, the traditional adherence to the principle of the separation of church and state had resulted in an almost complete secularizing of education and moral philosophy.<sup>5</sup>

And then came the Depression!

“Black Tuesday,” October 29, 1929, marked the crash. Hoover had been in office only seven months, but of course was blamed for the problems; American politics always declares villains of those who once were hailed as saviours. Soon bread lines and soup kitchens punctured the urban landscape. Homes and businesses were lost; churches and schools which had mounted large building programs or which had vulnerable savings—and most savings were vulnerable—lost everything in their turn. “Brother, Can You Spare a Dime” was now a refrain in popular song. A great glut of goods from over-production was nevertheless unavailable to people who had no money. When “The Star Spangled Banner” was officially declared our national anthem in 1931, it waved over the land of the free and the home of the brave poor.

Hoover spurned handouts from a Washington “giverment,” seeking at first to rely on local relief efforts and later to try aiding railroads, banks and industry so that the private sector could provide employment. This “trickle down” economic theory was not successful, however, and massive public works programs were necessary. Such public programs came into prominence with the election of Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1932, whose “New Deal” era began with the pronouncement that “the only thing we have to fear is fear itself.” In a dramatic initial “100 Days” he launched programs of “Relief, Recovery, Reform” through massive government spending. An American historian has described these developments by saying that “in the 19th Century, the hard-pressed American had gone West; now he went on relief.”<sup>6</sup> When in 1933 great droughts made a dust bowl of the plains, the tragedy seemed complete: “Okies” and “Arkies” were embittered, bedraggled symbols of an American dream gone bankrupt.

Little is said in official church records about the Depression, save for side-long references to economic hard times and declining financial resources.

Everyone knew what was happening; no one needed to write it down. Across America, collections in churches had declined fifty percent by 1932. Many Protestants saw the Depression as God's punishment for the sins of the Jazz Age; Fundamentalists saw the Second Coming of the Lord at hand. Greater growth was experienced by "other-worldly" groups, such as the Pentecostal and Holiness churches, than by mainline denominations. Missouri Baptists, like congregations throughout the land, endured great hardships—churches without ministers, pastors and professors unpaid or unemployed, missionary work cut back, two colleges (Hardin and Mayfield-Smith) closed, the Home for Aged Baptists and Orphans' Home and other colleges in dire straits.

A period which had begun with such turn-of-the-century promise now took on a pall of despair. Yet, as all the records show, Missouri Baptists were still sure of God's presence and of his purpose in their denomination. They faltered, but they did not flinch, nor was there even talk of failing.

## Notes To Chapter 6

<sup>1</sup>Clifton E. Olmstead, *Religion in America, Past and Present* (Englewood Cliffs, 1961), p. 123.

<sup>2</sup>Paul C. Nagel, *Missouri: A Bicentennial History* (New York, 1977), p. 168.

<sup>3</sup>Olmstead, p. 117.

<sup>4</sup>Quoted in Thomas A. Bailey, *The American Pageant: A History of the Republic* (Boston, 1956), p. 792.

<sup>5</sup>Robert G. Torbet, *A History of the Baptists* (Valley Forge, 1963), pp. 385-386.

<sup>6</sup>Bailey, p. 854.

*“The biggest business in the world is God’s business. It needs to be run like a business.”*

*. . . a layman, urban-side*

7

*“When Ezekiel saw them wheels within wheels within wheels—you know, way up somewhere in the middle of the air—do you think he was having a vision of a denominational headquarters? Seems to me there are lots of wheels there, and it has all got pretty complicated.”*

*. . . another layman, country-side*

## Frontiers of The Modern Age: New Machineries of Organization 1900–1934

Big business invaded the church. There was no other way. Though President J. B. Gambrell of the Southern Baptist Convention had once responded to a layman advocating “more business in religion” by harrumphing, “More religion in business,”<sup>1</sup> the increasing complexity of church activities demanded more organization and better management. The period from 1900 to the Missouri Baptist centennial in 1934 was marked by increasing concern for efficient organization and financial administration, consolidation of resources and effort, and expanding ministries. This chapter seeks to picture the internal activities of Baptists as they organized themselves to minister to a society undergoing the massive changes, tensions, and conflicts noted in Chapter VI. Little “romance” or “story” attaches itself to such mundane matters of day-to-day operations, but they are absolutely essential if great works are to be done.

*The Search for An Efficient Organization: New Alignments*

The General Association *Annual* for 1926 spoke of the good management required to guide “the many-sided and expanding life and work of our Missouri Baptist people.” This echoed the 1924 report, which assured “wise and strict business methods.” “We recognize,” wrote Baptist leaders, “that no business should be conducted in a more careful and prompt manner than the Lord’s business.”

A concern for “efficiency” had entered American life through industrialization, and the nation saw the growth of “big government” after World War I and particularly in the Depression years. In Missouri, Governors Herbert Hadley and Eliot Major, in the first two decades of the century, modernized state government to help meet expanding needs of citizens in health, environment, transportation, education, and public safety.

So it was that the informal, smile-and-a-handshake atmosphere that characterized the 1900 Missouri Baptist meeting in Columbia (where 382 “messengers,” sometimes called “delegates,” heard reports from schools and societies and benevolent agencies and took up collections for causes one by one and held a “mass meeting” for Baptist Young People’s Union and joined in the singing of “All Hail the Power of Jesus’ Name” in regular chapel services at the University of Missouri) changed substantially by 1934 when 3,947 met in St. Louis Municipal Auditorium to celebrate a centennial of a denomination now closely structured and tightly programmed. The term *efficiency* became a kind of watchword of denominational life: for example, a “School of Methods” conducted for ten days each spring from 1920 to 1954 on the campus of Southwest Baptist College quickly became known as the “Efficiency School.” It offered conferences on stewardship, doctrines, the rural church, Sunday school work, WMU work, enlistment, evangelism, and the Bible to upwards of three hundred persons a year.

A major change toward “management” began at the 1913 meeting in Hannibal when David Jones Evans of the William Jewell faculty proposed a committee of five “to investigate the efficiency of our organized denominational work . . . and . . . report . . . recommendations for the promotion of the efficiency of our agencies . . . .” In true Baptist fashion, Jones was appointed to chair the committee he had suggested, and the result was the new constitution of 1915 with major changes in organization. Before this date churches or associations had to pay contributions in order to be members of the General Association; the new constitution made basic representation depend on size of church. The two boards which had previously been directing work of Missouri Baptists—one for missions and one for Sunday schools and state work—were replaced by a single executive board, which was to oversee “missionary, educational, and philanthropic” activities. The board was to have thirty members, and in a revolutionary move it was voted to make one-third

of them women. Provision was made for an annual state budget, rather than catch-as-catch-can appeals, with apportionments for missions through Northern Baptists, Southern Baptists, and state bodies. No further fund appeals were to take place without approval of the General Association.

The reorganization was to help Baptists meet needs of a state still having large areas of "destitution"—with still nearly a score of county-seat towns having no Baptist church and large cities with very few—and the needs of a world beyond the Missouri borders.

By the meeting of the next year (1916) in Liberty, committees had been appointed for state missions, home and foreign missions, education, philanthropy, promotion, auditing, finance, Baptist history, and placement of ministers; a legal committee would be added in 1917. Headquarters had been moved from St. Louis to Kansas City, the state had been divided into three districts (St. Louis, Kansas City, Springfield) for administration of the work, and Joe Jacobs had come from the American Baptist Publication Society to serve as General Secretary. Though the organization was well-conceived, the Association had acted with unfortunate haste in electing its executive board: of thirty members, fifteen were from only six of the 1,800 churches in Missouri, and several were of Northern Baptist affiliation—including Jacobs—in a state that was predominantly in sympathy with Southern Baptists. The two outstanding leaders of the earlier boards, T. L. West and H. E. Truex, were by-passed in the shuffle, and the result of all these unhappy interactions was that Baptist work did not prosper despite its newly "efficient" organization.

Sentiment began to grow throughout the state for "single alignment" with the Southern Baptist Convention as a replacement for "The Missouri Plan" of dual alignment—a plan which had proved quite successful for its time and circumstances. The call for concentration of effort also had theological overtones: the "Modernist-Fundamentalist" controversy was active in the land, and Southern Baptists were seen as more conservative than Northern. The issue of "single alignment" was proposed for vote at the 1919 meeting at Third Church in St. Louis, and Baptists came in larger numbers than ever—1,224 as opposed to 306 at their previous meeting—to vote the issue. Single alignment with Southern Baptists was resoundingly approved on October 22, 1919, "with the clear and definite understanding that any individual or church preferring to co-operate with the Northern Baptist Convention is free to do so without hindrance or censure," keeping "full fellowship with the General Association." At the time, only sixteen churches of 1,853 in the state were wholly affiliated with Northern Baptists, and only 146 were dividing their support. A new burst of energy came with the resolving of this emotional issue and with added help from the Southern Baptist Convention: the Home Mission Board, for example, provided funds to enlarge state work in evangelism and enlistment by one-third for 1920.

A succession of able General Secretaries—O. M. Wood in 1920, Arthur Barton in 1924, J. B. Lawrence in 1927, Edgar Godbold in 1929—carried the work forward. Barton emphasized evangelism, replacing the “district superintendents” with “general missionaries”; Lawrence in turn replaced the evangelism and enlistment workers with Courts Redford, “a young man of splendid parts,” as “stewardship superintendent.” Godbold, of course, had the dubious honor of cutting back staff and programs during the Depression era.

### *New Ways of Financing*

Increased orderliness in organization was accompanied by more systematic plans for financial support to missions and agencies. The trend from 1900 to 1934 was from single-offering huckstering for specific causes to unified budget, regular weekly giving, and systematic stewardship programs.

The movement began by 1900, when efforts were made to organize solicitations according to a schedule so that each cause—district missions, state missions, home missions, foreign missions, education—would be represented by its agent in different sections of the state at different times. So many people were asking for specific offerings in the churches that when they all happened to come all at once, the problem was serious.

By the 1910 meeting in Nevada, great improvements had been made in the concept of church and denominational financing: the idea of a unified budget with specific apportionment to causes and specific requests of churches was introduced. As the “Committee on Apportionment” stated it,

A moment’s thought will convince any conscientious, intelligent Christian that obedience to the call of God to do his work in our state, country, and the world at large, should not be affected by the weather, or the condition of the country roads, or the accidental absence of church members from services when collections are taken, or the ability of the pastor or some representative of missionary interests to produce emotions which issue in spasms of benevolence.

Under the new system, a committee would ask each church for an amount of annual gifts which seemed reasonable, and the income would be allocated to the various programs and causes according to a specified formula.

This plan, which ultimately had the name “Cooperative Program,” was refined year by year, gained greater and greater acceptance in the churches, and resulted in major increases in giving for state and worldwide work. By 1924, when Missouri Baptists met at Brookfield, an annual and simultaneous every-member canvass was being scheduled for the first week in December, Biblical principles of stewardship and tithing were being promoted, pastors and churches were being encouraged to support “the whole program” as well as designating gifts, and recipients of cooperative funds were not to ask mon-

ey from the churches. The size and distribution of funds will interest the modern reader who knows Missouri Baptist life well: of \$430,250 projected for Missouri causes in 1925, 19% was directed toward state missions, 8% toward church building, 55% toward the six colleges, 6% each to the Home for Aged and Orphans' Home, 2% to the "Sanitarium" (hospital), 2% to Ministers' Aid, and 2% to the training of ministers and missionaries. Another \$320,000 was projected for missions and education beyond the state itself, in America and on foreign fields. The emphasis on stewardship gained ground under Redford's leadership after 1927, with stewardship revivals becoming a part of Baptist life.

The years just after World War I were prosperous ones, and Baptists joined the rest of the nation in seeing large visions and dreaming big dreams. The interdenominational Layman's Missionary Movement led out in plans for major strengthening of church institutions and missions throughout the world. Northern Baptists committed \$100,000,000 and Southern Baptists \$92,000,000 (exceeding a goal of \$75,000,000) for this bold new work. Missourians participated enthusiastically in raising their state goal of \$3,000,000, and the tone in the early 1920's was optimistic. An economic slump very early put the campaign in trouble, however—in the South it was the result of a fall of cotton prices from forty cents to ten—and only \$58,500,000 of the South's \$92,000,000 was collected. Because agencies and institutions had expanded or constructed buildings on the basis of their expected share of the larger sum, many were in danger of bankruptcy. Missourians conducted a "Reinforcement Campaign" in 1922 to help pick up the slack, and when things looked bleakest through a \$909,461 default by the treasurer of the Home Mission Board, George W. Truett came to the Cape Girardeau meeting of 1928 to request that a "Baptist Honor Day" offering be taken to help out. Baptist "honor" was saved, ultimately, when Reverend Frank Tripp of St. Joseph proposed (at the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in Washington in 1933) the formation of the "Baptist Hundred Thousand Club" wherein 100,000 Baptists would pay one dollar a month over their regular church gifts to pay off Southern Baptist debts. Creditors co-operated, debts were consolidated, and obligations were finally repaid by 1944.

Despite apparent "failure" of the Millions Campaign, it did create in Baptists new levels of responsibility in stewardship and new appreciation for careful accounting and auditing procedures. A feature of Missouri Baptist reports from 1916 on was, in fact, full financial audits as well as the traditional inspirational language.

#### *Literature, Press Agents, and Building Plans*

A marked feature of Baptist life in the early twentieth century was a renewed concern for spreading the gospel through Christian literature. "The

present is peculiarly an age of books and newspapers," rang a refrain in General Association meetings; from the 1914 meeting in Columbia came the observation that "What men once went miles to hear from the lips of the distinguished orator, is now read in the morning paper as one goes to his everyday task." A variation on the theme came during war years, when a committee militantly claimed, "The press is mightier than the machine gun. God inaugurated this method of warfare by giving us the Inspired Book."

In addition to the ministries of newspapers and denominational periodicals, which grew in popularity as Sunday schools and training unions expanded, Baptists ministered in the early years of the century through a "colporter's service." Wagons carrying literature would pass through towns and villages and countryside, sharing printed materials while the "agent" preached wherever he could find a hearing. In the 1905 convention, for example, "Reverend J. A. Jordan, Missionary Colporter, in charge of Colportage Wagon No. 43, spoke of his work in Southeast Missouri." In 1907, colporters were based out of Trenton, Independence, Joplin, Springfield, and Birch Tree. A brilliant modification of the colportage system was the already-described Chapel Car which went from place to place on the railroads.

In 1928 a "Book Department" was established, the first Baptist Book Store in Missouri being located on Grand Avenue in Kansas City. This ministry was cooperative with the Baptist Sunday School Board, just as the colportage and Chapel Car work was cooperative with the American Baptist Publication Society.

Another new ministry of the century was that of building great church edifices. More varied programs, formed out of efforts to meet a greater variety of human needs, led to the "institutional church"—a station not only for preaching, but also for education, community service, and weekday ministry. Also, churches were growing in sheer size: whereas in 1900 the vast majority of churches had between fifty and one hundred members, Third Church in St. Louis and Calvary in Kansas City being remarkable exceptions with 1,148 and 839 members respectively, by the 1930's many churches had sizeable memberships numbering in the hundreds and thousands.

A fund to assist churches in building programs was begun in 1908, when it was estimated that "between three and four hundred churches . . . have no houses of worship of their own." A report of 1924 spoke of a "growing revolution in church building plans and construction," and a 1925 statement at the convention in Carthage called for a "great revival" in church building for Missouri. The fund was being called upon with regularity: in 1926, for example, assistance went to LaGrange, Copeland, St. Joseph, Bolivar, and Southwest Church in St. Louis. Great interest toward raising \$200,000 for church buildings in Liberty and Columbia was voiced as early as 1921, chiefly to serve students who were being "turned away from the doors" of overcrowded sanctuaries. Motivation in Columbia was doubtless spurred by the

action of Methodists in creating a great church building near the University.

Yet another sign of new times was the arrival of overt press-agentry as a denominational activity. A "Press Committee" was established by the General Association meeting of 1922, with a Biblical basis claimed for such work:

The Scriptures approve and even enjoin the proper making known of good works. The Great Commission, itself, is a publicity command.

Doc Brydon was voted "press agent" at the 1925 meeting in Poplar Bluff, and each church was urged to form a press committee, with the sensible suggestion added that items sent to newspapers must be "real news," not propaganda. For some years Reverend Alvin G. Hause, pastor in Kansas City and a former newsman, served as an effective and unpaid press agent for the General Association. The good Baptist brethren of 1834 would have marveled at such goings-on in the church, but, then, this was the twentieth century!

#### *Religious Education: Coming of Age in the Churches*

It was a century when religious education came into its own as an activity of the local church and the organized denomination. Part of the explanation for such success lies in more frequent worship in many churches, for services every Sunday rather than once or twice a month led to more consistent sharing of church activities. Part lies in an increasing sense of need for training, in all sectors of society. And part lies in the theology and educational theory of the era, which emphasized personal experience and personal involvement in addition to sitting and listening to authoritative talks.

*Sunday school* work had fallen on hard times just before the turn of the century, with no one leading any statewide effort to advance this crucial program of learning and outreach. In 1899 Mr. Charles Rhoades, an able layman from Ohio, began four-years' service as Sunday School Missionary. He was succeeded in 1904 by H. E. Tralle of Louisville, whose salary was paid by the American Baptist Publication Society and whose assistant was funded by the Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. Yet the work suffered from lack of major attention until after the reorganization of the General Association upon its "single alignment" in 1919. By 1921 a vigorous leader, J. C. Hockett, Jr., took the helm as Sunday School Secretary, and he became a buzz saw of promotional activity, pushing new Sunday schools, training programs, and young people's work. In his 1922 report Hockett indicated that he had

spent every day of the past year in the office or on the field. He [had] traveled 20,295 miles, visited 117 churches, delivered 211 speeches and addresses, taught 23 classes in the Training Course and the B.Y.P.U. Study Course, conducted 57 conferences, attended 5 summer Assemblies and assisted in planning Training

Schools for 27 cities and towns. He [had] sent out from the office 6,690 letters, 6,799 circulars, and 1,080 parcels.

Whereas this may, on the one hand, seem a triumph of bureaucratic book-keeping, it on the other hand shows a rare kind of lively activity.

It paid off. By 1923 there were 1,650 Sunday schools in Missouri Baptist churches, with 180,000 in attendance. Standards of Excellence, graded and departmentalized schools, and well-trained teachers were being promoted effectively. By 1925 the religious census was being encouraged as a vehicle for enlistment, and Vacation Bible Schools were suggested for every town. By 1930 a denomination which in 1900 had barely begun to scratch the surface in the Sunday school method of training and evangelism could point to nearly twenty churches with Sunday schools enrolling more than 900 persons: Calvary and Fifth Street in Hannibal; First in Independence; First in Springfield; Maywood, First, Bales, and Kensington in Kansas City; First in Columbia; First in Moberly; First in St. Joseph; Euclid, Lafayette Park, Third, Tower Grove, and West Park in St. Louis; and First in Joplin. In 1934 some 1,500 Baptist Sunday schools in Missouri enrolled more than 200,000 persons.

*Young people's work* was closely allied with the Sunday school effort in design and promotion. A special effort to reach youth had begun at First Baptist Church of Brooklyn, New York, in 1867; in short order the Christian Endeavor and Baptist Young People's Union movements were very active across America. Missouri Baptists had begun youth programs in several churches in the 1890's, and in 1903 the Missouri Baptist Young People's Convention was organized.

Originally a movement to train young people for full-time church work, the idea spread to include a wider range of young people and ultimately to include adults. In recognition of the latter development, the name was changed in 1934 to Baptist Training Union Convention. Between 1921 and 1934 the growth in Missouri was from 200 to 950 churches and from 287 to 2,400 individual unions.

*Summer assemblies* were a major activity of the Baptist Young People's Unions. The Arcadia Baptist Assembly at Ironton was originally under the control of B.Y.P.U., before sponsorship was passed to the General Association in 1916. This beautiful 150-acre site had, by 1923, a tabernacle, nine stone buildings, nine screened cottages, nineteen "bunгаlettes," a girls' dormitory, and a pavilion.

Summer programs proved very popular, and in 1922 assemblies were conducted at "Van Buren, Ozark, Baptist Hill, and LaGrange," as well as at Arcadia. In the next year a summer assembly program was added at William Jewell. By 1932, however, assemblies were falling victim to the Depression, and the Arcadia acreage was sold after the buildings were dismantled and disposed of.

*Student work* at colleges and universities became a concern of the General Association as enrollments increased around the state. The YMCA and YWCA had led the way in working with college-aged young people, the former being of major service to troops during World War I and in America's cities before and after that war. An equally vigorous Student Volunteer Movement had mobilized interdenominational support for missions at an even earlier date. Growing denominational loyalties led to the formation of the Baptist Student Missionary Movement in 1914, which developed later into the Baptist Student Union of the Southern Baptist Convention under leadership of the legendary Frank Leavell.

Missouri Baptists, meanwhile, had in 1911 begun employing senior students to work with their fellows at the state university and in the teacher-training schools. In January of 1925 the first Missouri Baptist Student Conference was held in Mexico, with 114 students attending from seventeen colleges. In 1929 this conference requested a full-time secretary for the Missouri Baptist Student Union, a request granted in 1930 with the hiring of Philip Norvell of Kansas City, a graduate of William Jewell and a student at Harvard. The Depression made it necessary to vacate Norvell's position temporarily, but formal work with students had established itself in Missouri Baptist life.

#### *Laymen and Women at Work*

Perhaps no form of ministry among Missouri Baptists has had more consistent achievement than that of the Woman's Missionary groups. Initially denied direct representation in Baptist bodies, women nevertheless determined their useful niche and often shamed the men by the way they supported God's work both locally and far afield.

The early years of the new century saw many changes in the roles of women. Stenographers and telephonists ("hello girls") entered the work force by the millions, and Quaker Susan B. Anthony led suffragettes in claiming "Ballots for Both" sexes. The Women's Christian Temperance Union created an American moral leadership that blended into a call for equal status for women in the churches. Whereas few churches, including the Baptists, endorsed votes for women, the patriotic service of women during World War I (as "farmerettes," industrial workers, Navy "yeomanettes," or "Marinettes") led to equal voting rights in 1920.

Missouri Baptists had preceded this move by voting a new constitution in 1915 which placed ten women on the thirty-member executive board of the General Association. Great respect had been earned by women's support of all missionary enterprises, and their missionary endeavors became ever more closely interlocked with the general work of the Association itself.

Missouri Baptist women emphasized seasons of prayer, mission study, personal giving, personal service, work with young people, and support for mis-

sonary training schools. Women served as missionaries in the cities, particularly among other women and the children of immigrant populations in St. Louis. They worked in other difficult fields, as well: for example, the report of the General Association meeting at Hannibal in 1913 includes the following note:

Mrs. L. A. Hunt, Flat River, worked among the miners in the Lead Belt. A true servant of God. Board pays all her salary, \$240.

Women sponsored traveling libraries through the state, in yet another effort to reach people with the printed word: the 1906 report cites eighteen such libraries, consisting of ten volumes each, which could remain in a church or locality for a specified period of time before moving on.

The increasing influence of women in the General Association may be seen from the fact that the board of the Orphans' Home was composed entirely of women, with male advisers, and that the seven hundred representatives of the home in local churches were women. When Stephens College was seeking greater financial support from Baptists in 1907, they wrote,

We appeal to *the Baptist women of Missouri* to rally to this movement which would give the girls the same advantages as are now enjoyed by the boys. [Italics added.]

By the centennial year, 1934, Woman's Missionary Union organizations numbered 1,830: 663 were Woman's Missionary Societies, 277 were Young Woman's Auxiliaries, 226 were Royal Ambassador Chapters (for young men), 393 were Girls' Auxiliaries, and 271 were Sunbeam Bands (for younger children).

*Laymen* were not able to match the successes of their sisters. Though the Laymen's Missionary Movement, founded in 1906 out of inspiration from the Student Volunteer Movement, had great impact interdenominationally, and though men's movements began among Baptists in every state, never did they achieve the vitality that women's missionary groups sustained. Perhaps this is because laymen were the mainstays of all other activities in church and denomination and, having full opportunities for service in many forms, did not have so large a need for a separate organization.

In the early years of the century laymen introduced a striking feature into meetings of the General Association. For two-and-a-half hours on Wednesday afternoons a "Laymen's Conference" was held, with representative laymen from all parts of the state discussing topics of interest in church and denomination. ("Open Parliament" periods were more common in Baptist convention meetings of those days; the smaller numbers made free discussion more useful and practical.) Some of the one hundred topics for 1904 included the following:

Should Business and Religion be mingled? How?  
Is time devoted to the Lord's cause a paying or losing investment?  
Would it be an advantage to choose a fixed place in the central part of the State for the meetings of the General Association?  
Would a translation of the Bible according to Baptist teaching be of any advantage?  
Shall the Sunday newspaper be condemned?  
Is there a single rule or passage of Scripture which gives a clear and unerring guide to Christian believers on the question of amusements?  
Should we not pay more attention to the adornment of church yards, especially in the country?

For 1912, such questions as these were being addressed:

Why are there not more men in the churches?  
Are our pastors' salaries adequate?  
Ought church services be made more entertaining?  
How long should sermons be?  
Why ought we to increase greatly our offerings. . . ?

The stewardship question was an important one, and a report of the "Committee on the Laymen's Movement" for 1907 insisted that "ninety percent of the membership of any church with proper education and business methods can be led to contribute systematically and proportionately to the extension of the Kingdom of Christ."

The state was divided into thirty districts for the organization of the laymen's movement, and rallies were to be held in each district at least once each year. Few such conferences actually took place, however, and those were not rousing attended. Baptist laymen in Missouri were committing their time and energies to their churches in other ways, even after the organizations became known as the Baptist Brotherhood in 1928.

#### *Telling the Story: Newspapers and Histories*

The turbulent years of Baptist newspapering in Missouri, referred to in an earlier chapter, were over by 1900. Two newspapers, the mature and respected *Central Baptist* in St. Louis and the new *Word and Way* in Kansas City were reporting and promoting Baptist activities.

The General Association in 1912, concerned that efforts were being duplicated and that neither paper was denominationally controlled, sought consolidation of the papers or the transfer of one or both to the Association. The outcome was the sale of the St. Louis paper to the *Word and Way* for \$7,000, the merged journal being known for many years after as the *Word and Way and Central Baptist*. The paper was still a private venture, and this fact became "the newspaper problem" for several years, as various segments of

Baptist life felt inadequate representation through the pages of "our paper." Committees were periodically appointed by the General Association to advise the owner/editors on the "conduct and policy" of the journal.

In 1917 a "Baptist Bulletin" appeared as a promotional organ of the executive board, calling itself an "adjunct" to the *Word and Way*. In the 1920's the Association and the newspaper conducted a joint campaign to increase subscribers, and the Association began purchasing major blocks of advertising in order to promote denominational programs as well as to support the newspaper.

*The Missouri Baptist Historical Society*, founded in 1885, had a major role in meetings of the General Association in the early part of this century. The "Association" would recess, the "Society" would convene (with the same persons present), and a major historical address would inspire and instruct the messengers. Gradually, over the years, the historical emphasis was squeezed out by more current and "practical" matters, and the lessened time made history seem something of an afterthought.

In 1908 the Society's collection of historical records found a safe home in a special area of the new William Jewell library, "in commodious and convenient quarters," where it was presided over for many years by Professor R. P. Rider and Dr. H. I. Hester. In 1915 a circular letter was instituted to each district association, promoting the collection and writing of local Baptist history. In 1916 in the wake of major denominational reorganization, the Society yielded to a committee of the executive board which had "Baptist History" as its charge. The same year saw publication of the second of a series of volumes of *Baptist Biography*, sketches of prominent leaders in Missouri Baptist history.

#### *Consolidating the Colleges: A Futile Quest*

Major organizational energies of Baptists in the decades under study went toward achieving a coherent *system* of Missouri Baptist higher education, an effort which was doomed to defeat by Baptist democracy and sectionalism. No one had, or could exert, the authority to bring about a unified educational policy.

Several colleges did reasonably well on their own part, given the times and the number of Baptist schools around. Several others—Webb City College, Baptist Female College at Lexington, Liberty Ladies' College, Hardin College, Mayfield-Smith Academy, Grand River College, Pierce City Baptist College, Farmington College—were out of existence by 1934.

*William Jewell College*, having become firmly established by Missouri Baptists in the 1800's, was blessed in the first decades of the new century by achieving new levels of recognition. The General Association had a lofty vision for its school, "reaffirming," in a resolution of 1904, "the ideal for William Jewell College," that it conduct "literary, professional, and theological

departments” which would lead in the great Mississippi Valley. The college board of trustees shared in 1915 their determination to build “a great college that shall not only be a great blessing to the entire country but also the greatest asset of the Missouri Baptists.”

Many members of the faculty had done their doctoral studies in Germany, where the best graduate schools of the time were located. The excellent faculty was attractive to administrators of other schools, as for example when the University of Indiana in 1914 lured a William Jewell Latin professor to head their own department. The first Rhodes Scholar from Missouri was John Sherman Custer, a graduating William Jewell senior in 1907. By 1926 the college was one of only three in the state, including the University of Missouri, accredited by the North Central Association and the American Association of Universities and Colleges.

About one-third of the four hundred or so students were preparing for the ministry, and young preachers from the college “took the train” from campus to dozens of Missouri churches every weekend of the year. A rich resource for all ministers was added in 1905 when the college purchased the 7,000-volume personal library of the great London pastor, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, the cost being subscribed by Missouri Baptists at their annual meeting in Warrensburg. The Baptist colleges of the state then, as now, were great centers of evangelistic and missionary activity.

Excellence was achieved in part through the perpetual financial campaigns conducted by the school, with especially significant gifts coming from Missouri Baptists and the Baptist Education Board in New York. Five major buildings were completed during the period—a chapel, dormitory, library, gymnasium, and science hall; and by 1925 the endowment had reached \$1,000,000.

The era was not without its troubles, however. A smallpox epidemic in 1905 turned the gymnasium into a makeshift hospital, and the college gratefully reported “none dead or disfigured.” In the wake of the plague, a “great work of grace” swept through the student body with several conversions resulting. Another more frequent plague was the annual year-end operating deficit, which struck all schools. In 1905

the trustees of Southwest Baptist College and of Grand River Baptist College made overtures to the board of trustees of William Jewell College, for the purpose of turning over the properties of these two schools . . . to be conducted as academies.

William Jewell sought to keep these two Baptist institutions alive by operating them as the Southwest Academy and the Grand River Academy of William Jewell College, and the General Association launched a \$1,000,000 campaign for the three schools. But the campaign fizzled, Grand River had to

close, and the Bolivar campus was offered for sale to a school for Negro ministers, Western Baptist College. The Kansas City-based William Jewell board did not take adequate account of the racial feelings in the Bolivar community, and their presumably well-intentioned efforts to keep a Baptist work alive were not warmly appreciated.

More troubles came in the form of World War I, when three hundred students enlisted in the Army, leaving less than two hundred on campus. Refunds of tuition left a \$27,000 deficit, until the government established military training programs on campus. Partly as a result of the loss of men to the military, the college in 1920 became officially coeducational, though male students in an informal poll voted 129-54 against admitting the ladies. In 1921, a professor was employed who did not have views compatible with those of most Baptists; and though his services at the college were ended after just one term, ill will was created. In 1928 a dispute between President Wayman and three senior faculty members, along with awareness that some of the academic degrees claimed for Wayman were not legitimate, put great stresses on the internal life of the school. And then came the Depression, with lessened enrollments and major salary cuts. The coming of Dr. John F. Herget as president in 1928 brought needed stability to a difficult situation. Dr. Herget, a child of Third Baptist in St. Louis, came from the pastorate of Cincinnati's Ninth Street Baptist Church.

*Stephens College* between 1900 and 1934 moved from a struggling to a very strong institution, at the same time dropping its affiliation with a Baptist denomination that did not support it significantly.



STEPHENS COLLEGE, COLUMBIA, MO.

Missouri Baptist rhetoric in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was strongly behind Stephens, but financial support was largely nonexistent. In a campaign around the turn of the century, for example, the secretary of the Board of Education for the General Association traveled "8,928 miles" seeking money for the school, his efforts raising only \$1,574.91 on a goal of \$170,000. Year by year the school went more deeply in debt, and in the 1911 Association meeting E. W. Stephens presented its plight, adding the fact that a Roman Catholic body had made overtures toward purchasing the property. Baptists were roused to action, pledged \$15,000 in that meeting, sang the Doxology, held Stephens Days in the churches, and put an agent in the field to raise money—but to no lasting avail. When James M. Wood became president in 1912 (a man described in the 1912 convention minutes as "a loyal Baptist of the prayer-meeting, Sunday School and church going type," "raised on top of the Ozarks"), the school was literally without students. Wood kept the tuition of the first young women he recruited in his own wallet so that he could return it if the school did not open for 1912–13.

Yet, remarkably, Stephens had achieved accreditation as a high school when the state university began setting standards in the late 1800's and early 1900's, and in 1910 it was one of the first schools in Missouri accredited as a junior college—though it had to quit giving the bachelor's degree for just two years of work. Wood became a national personage in the junior college movement, led in very creative curricular developments specifically for the education of women, rode the crest of an emerging women's movement, and made the college a great success. Full dormitories and classes, balanced budgets, major building programs, and a national reputation were achieved in a very short time.

Social patterns shifted with the times and with the broader recruiting base. In the early years of the century girls were allowed one date a month, on the fourth Monday between two and four p.m. Stephens "girls" joined "boys" from the university in celebrating when Boone County voted "dry." In 1921 the school reported hiring Miss Jessie Burrall to lead a department of "religious culture" for the students; she had taught a Sunday school class numbering 1,600 at Calvary Baptist Church, Washington, D.C., and she soon had 850 in her Sunday class in Columbia. "Every student attends church and Sunday school every Sunday," said the report, "in addition to prayer meetings four evenings a week." Yet students were also responding to the Jazz Age, and Stephens "women" were attracted to new notions of romantic love and feminine allure. By 1935 a Baptist pastor was asking Wood on the floor of the Joplin convention why Stephens College girls smoked and danced in public, and President Wood answered that he preferred it to their doing such things in secret. The answer was not satisfactory to the questioner.

Baptists, who as a state denomination had given very little money to the

school, despite repeated requests that the churches “keep faith” with and “keep promises” to the college, now began two simultaneous movements: a disclaimer of responsibility for the college, and an active investigation into its “practices, discipline, instruction, and management.” The college felt it had more liabilities than assets from its Baptist control, and by 1936 attorneys had worked out a mutual agreement whereby the college would no longer receive financial support from the General Association. Though the school for some years continued to label itself as “Baptist,” the organic tie with the denomination was severed.

*LaGrange College* celebrated the new era by changing locations and names, as well as by building up strong programs in teacher and ministerial education for its area.

In 1907 the college reported a move to the quarter system, a plan “particularly advantageous for young men from the farm and for school teachers.” A successful teacher training program for the summer months was promoted actively. By 1911 the college was “off the lease plan” (the old system whereby the college was operated as a private enterprise by a president who leased the campus) and was offering “four full years of academic high school and four full years of collegiate study.” Accreditation by the state university as a standard junior college came in 1917, and in 1919 the following programs of study were listed in the catalog:

- I. The Junior College.
- II. The Four-Year A.B. Theological Course
- III. The Academy
- IV. The State-Approved Teacher-Training College and Approved Summer School
- V. The Conservatory of Music
- VI. The School of Expression

The college raised good sums of money for buildings and endowments, and it sought to broaden its base of support by permitting Baptist associations other than the founding Wyaconda Association to have representation on its board: by 1920, nineteen associations were so represented, and five trustees were elected by the General Association itself. In 1926 the college came entirely under the General Association and began to receive regularly-budgeted funds from the state body.

The watershed event in *LaGrange College* history came in 1927 when the Hannibal Chamber of Commerce offered to raise \$175,000 and to donate one hundred acres of land for a new campus if the college would move to Hannibal. Seeing the proposed location as central to the territory it was serving, as “far more accessible to roads and railroads,” and as having a larger potential for support in students and funding, the college accepted the offer. The Wyaconda Association agreed, and after a court action by citizens of *LaGrange*

was resolved, the college took a new location and a new name—Hannibal-LaGrange College. Local citizens in fact exceeded their pledge by donating \$232,000 and 160 acres, and the college in its turn began to make a genuine contribution to the community: in 1931, for example, two-thirds of the students were from the local county.

Now in a new location and under new governance, the school was immediately confronted with a national Depression, and like all schools it had to cut back in expenses to stay alive. The academy was dropped in 1930, as the four-year A.B. theological course had been dropped earlier. Hannibal-LaGrange College celebrated the Missouri Baptist centennial in 1934 as a junior college with a clear sense of itself, a school at once “old” and “new.” Its new motto, “Knowledge for Service,” seemed especially fitting as it assumed a new location with renewed mission.

*Southwest Baptist College* opened the century as an academy offering mainly high school work, and its great days were still more than half a century in the future. But its sheer survival during these decades is a heroic story, and many patterns established between 1900 and 1934 defined the identity of the school for years to come.

The report to Missouri Baptists in 1912 carried these ringing words:

Southwest Baptist College has passed through many trials and finally the ordeal of fire. She has slept in ashes since two years ago the first of last June. Her resurrection morning has come. She bids fair to rise a glorified body.

Having begun the century with eighty-three students and a faculty “composed of six members, most of whom have had university training,” the college had escaped bankruptcy and foreclosure in 1905 only by deeding the property over to William Jewell College. When William Jewell could not raise the money to operate the Bolivar campus and sold the property in 1909 to Western Baptist College, Bolivar residents sued to block the sale. The court order made clear the concerns: “It is the spirit and intent of this order that the past uses of said property as an institution of learning for white males and females be continued . . .” But just as plans were being made to re-open, fire destroyed the college building. All seemed lost.

The “ordeal of fire” could not kill Southwest Baptist, however, and two years later she reopened to the accompaniment of a “New Greater Southwest Baptist College” campaign.

Financial struggles continued. Some help came in 1917 when the Home Mission Board adopted the college as part of its “Mountain School System.” In 1921 Southwest Baptist came under the statewide General Association, in the same year achieving standardization and accreditation by the University of Missouri as a junior college. By 1923 a dire need for dorms—the college had none—was met by building a residence for girls and purchasing a hotel

for boys. This pushed the college deeper into debt, officials saying that “we are trusting our brethren for funds to meet these obligations.” The pattern continued in 1925 with the building of a new gymnasium/chapel building, which also housed offices and music rooms: “Not all of the funds for the new building are in sight,” reads the report, “but we are trusting the Lord and our brethren in this emergency.” An effort to operate a farm and a broom factory as self-help programs was unsuccessful and had to be abandoned, as Hannibal-LaGrange also discovered in attempting a similar enterprise. Strong leader of the college during many of these difficult years was Dr. J. C. Pike, who served Southwest as president, teacher, and dean for twenty-eight years, including twelve as president.

By 1923 Southwest Baptist was emphasizing its role in education for church vocations, citing a high percentage of its students as training for “definite denominational service.” The 1930 report notes that one hundred of seven hundred Missouri Baptist ministers had attended the college. The 1932 report points to Southwest as the only Baptist school still conducting an academy, a service especially important to older men wanting to enter the ministry. The report also notes that the school was paying more money out in aid to ministers than it was receiving from Baptists. Depression cutbacks did not dim the vision of service to God’s servants.

Courts Redford took the helm of Southwest Baptist for a “Depression presidency” of 1930 through 1943, and he did a remarkable work in keeping the college viable. He established a teacher training program that would certify a public school teacher in two summers and one winter term, thereby attracting numbers of teacher trainees into the college. With a quartet of singing students he “stumped” the state, preaching in churches and seeking money and more students. Though in 1931 there were only 143 students in the college, including nineteen ministerial candidates, he pressed on, forming clubs of \$100 donors, asking preachers to send their revival love offerings to the school, promoting college days in the churches, and retrenching as necessary. (By 1941 he would succeed in paying off the entire financial obligation of the college, celebrating the miraculous achievement in a “day of days” ceremony.)

As the Missouri Baptist centennial year arrived, Southwest Baptist was laboring under a heavy burden of debt, but lines from the 1883 catalog reflected a firm sense of mission to deserving students, who were described in these terms:

In scholarship they are equal to the best;  
in labor they are excelled by none; in character they are our pride.

*Establishing a coherent system* among these and the other then-existing Baptist schools, as has been mentioned above, proved to be very difficult.

Eight separate attempts were made in thirty years, all of them failing to achieve their goals.

The first effort came in 1900-1901 when a Board of Education, active since 1893, reported "on the matter of the federation or affiliation of Baptist Schools in Missouri." The Board recommended that William Jewell be "the head school of the system" for young men and Stephens for young women, that schools pay off their debts by 1905, that the Board of Education be given power to veto placing debts on school properties or using endowments for building funds, that the Board be given power to combine institutions, and that the Board begin raising endowment funds as soon as five schools voluntarily joined the statewide Baptist system. But schools did not rush to join the federation, and by 1906 the Board was washing its hands of the effort:

We furthermore wish to express our gratification in the enlargement of William Jewell College and the growth of Stephens College. For our other schools and colleges we recommend that they work out their own salvation with fear and trembling, trusting that God may work in them both to will and to do of His own good pleasure.

A co-operative system, they wrote in 1909, was not possible.

The second attempt began in 1912 when the General Association passed a resolution lamenting the "confusion, conflict, and friction" caused by lack of a "harmonious" system of schools. An Education Commission recommended that the schools become "standardized" (William Jewell was an accredited senior college, Stephens and Hardin had junior college status, and the remaining schools lacked any accreditation), that the three women's colleges merge, and that a financial campaign be conducted for the schools. A Commission of Seven was to oversee the process.

The Commission of Seven in 1914 made the third attempt at bringing order to Baptist education, conducting a major study of existing schools and classifying them according to their programs: William Jewell as a senior college; Stephens and Hardin as junior colleges; Will Mayfield and Southwest Baptist as not-quite standard high schools; and LaGrange and Lexington as well below standard high school level. The Commission recommended that only "standardized" schools which would accept denominational control and submit candid financial and curricular reports should receive denominational aid.

The fourth attempt, in 1916, was the most sophisticated to date, relying on extensive data collected from the schools and on the advice of an outside consultant, a Dr. Padelford of the Northern Baptist Board of Education. Padelford talked straight, telling Missouri Baptists that they were trying to support too many schools ("two four-year colleges, four junior colleges and seven academies") and that "the futility of this effort must become apparent be-

fore any possible system can be worked out.” He could see no “system” at all, but rather locally supported institutions each “more or less jealous of the other.” He also saw a great need for standardization and for honesty in dealing with students: “no school can pretend to give what it cannot give.” The Education Committee followed his recommendations in advocating

that William Jewell is to be the standard four-year college for men, the three colleges for women are to be combined into one, leaving LaGrange, Southwest Baptist College and Will Mayfield to become academies and academies only for the present, and to become junior colleges and junior colleges only for the future.

An extensive fund-raising program was proposed to achieve the desired ends for each school. But the Committee confessed, in the next year’s report, that “all the work . . . to bring about a united effort among our schools for securing funds and establishing standards has been fruitless,” the victim of the ambitions of individual institutions, “provincial devotion to separate schools,” and a “spirit of disintegration.”

So the story went, year after year. A fifth attempt, in 1922, featured efforts by a fifteen-member committee “to correlate and coordinate the Baptist schools in Missouri”; this committee advocated warm-hearted support for the colleges and recommended an Education Secretary as a denominational officer. This committee and its successor in 1924 recommended the Executive Board as the proper body to co-ordinate the schools. A sixth attempt, in 1927, had the safeguarding of college property to Missouri Baptists as a major concern; a committee of lawyers studied the matter and assured Baptists that the charters protected the property for the denomination. In 1930, a seventh attempt at co-ordination opened fund-raising campaigns in various parts of the state as a “referendum” to see if Baptists in each area wanted to support their regional schools and keep them alive; the emphasis in this Depression era, as the 1931 convention meeting made very clear, was on “backing off” from the schools and making sure that financial liability rested in the individual institutions, not in the denomination at large.

An eighth effort at co-ordination, in 1931, was led by Lewis M. Hale of Springfield and featured very thorough work by a Committee of Ten which looked at the history of denominational involvement in higher education, at the present conditions of the six still-existing schools, and at socio-economic factors of a new-changed era. They pointed out that improved travel conditions had diminished the need for purely local schools; that “provincialism is passing”; and that education had changed in standards, costs, and availability of public schools. “the time has arrived,” wrote the committee, “when the Baptists of Missouri should define the limits of their educational activities and the scope of their educational program.” The Committee then urged strong support for William Jewell as a senior college and for Stephens,

Southwest Baptist, and Hannibal-LaGrange as junior colleges, provided that each would meet all accrediting standards, avoid operating deficits, reduce any present indebtedness, and scrupulously carry out terms of endowments and gifts.

By this point, strict financial accounting was being demanded from each institution as a necessary requirement for Baptist financial support, and the General Association was consistently though fruitlessly seeking to co-ordinate its educational efforts for greatest effects. A denomination which in 1834 had only a dream of a single college in the visionary heads of a handful of persons by 1934 had more colleges than it knew what to do with and was trying to consolidate its gains while reducing its losses.

#### *Celebrating a Centennial*

By 1934, Missouri Baptists surely felt that they had been through “the best of times, the worst of times.” Painfully aware of their problems, they nevertheless had great and mighty achievements to celebrate to the glory of God.

~~Celebrate they did, first in an August 29 pilgrimage to the site of Providence Baptist Church, where the General Association was organized on August 29, 1834, and then in October at massive meetings in St. Louis’ Municipal Auditorium.~~

To the hill in Callaway County, near New Bloomfield, where Providence Church had once stood went some 2,000 persons on the lovely August day. After hymn singing and the roll call of centennial churches and associations, the Honorable Hugh Stephens gave the first of several historical addresses. His grandfather, James L. Stephens, had endowed Stephens College; his father, E. W. Stephens, had been one of Missouri’s most honored gifts to the Baptist world, having served as president of both the Southern Baptist Convention and the General Convention of Baptists of North America and as vice president of the Baptist World Alliance.

Several persons who were descendants of pioneer Baptists, including the granddaughter of Jeremiah Vardeman, were introduced. A high moment came when Dr. H. I. Hester presented for opening a sealed receptacle from the Historical Collection at William Jewell College, containing records from the semi-centennial meeting of 1884. It was voted “to preserve the records both of this meeting and the former one in a similar manner to be opened at the meeting on this spot in 1984.”<sup>2</sup>

The October meeting in St. Louis had as its theme “A Century of Baptist Conquest, 1834–1934.” Dr. George W. Truett, pre-eminent Baptist preacher from Texas, offered devotional messages and presented the Centennial Address entitled “Charles Haddon Spurgeon.” Other messages addressed “Our Baptist Cooperative Program” (Louie D. Newton, Atlanta), “Our Baptist Heritage” (J. Clyde Turner, Greensboro), “A Century of Con-

quest in Education” (John F. Herget, Liberty); “A Century of Home Missions” (J. B. Lawrence, Atlanta), and “A Century of World Missions” (C. E. Maddy, Richmond). Dr. R. S. Douglass presented the centennial *History of Missouri Baptists* to the assemblage; and roll calls were held again of centennial churches and associations, pioneer Baptists, and missionaries from Missouri. A pilgrimage to the graves of John Mason Peck, John Clark, and Joshua Hickman, to Fee Fee Church, to the Orphans’ Home and Baptist Hospital occupied a late afternoon, and a pageant depicted “in a simple yet graphic way” the work of the General Association over the century. The celebration was also the occasion for seeking to enlist 30,000 new members in the churches and to increase state budget receipts by ten percent.

It was a grand celebration, and it dramatized as nothing else could have done the advances of Missouri Baptists, their efficiency of organization and dynamism of purpose, and their network of ministries around the world.

## Notes For Chapter 7

<sup>1</sup>William Wright Barnes, *The Southern Baptist Convention, 1845-1953* (Nashville, 1954), p. 222.

<sup>2</sup>R. S. Douglass, *History of Missouri Baptists* (Kansas City, 1934), p. 407.

*“Bob Junior grew up in our little church, and he was in Royal Ambassadors from the time he could whistle ‘The King’s Business,’ and he studied about all those countries overseas and the missionaries there, and all. Then he went off to our Baptist college, and I can’t tell you the good that did him. Well, after that, the war came. And he was in the army and went to some of those countries he had studied about, and he’s never looked at things the same way since. The folks in London or Rome or Tokyo are as real to him as the folks selling notions at Beggs’ Drug Store on our town square.”*

*. . . a Baptist mother*

8

## The World As Frontier: A New Vision 1900–1984

The Louisiana Purchase Exhibition of 1904 said it all. It was the St. Louis *World’s Fair*, and it marked a turning point from Missouri’s fascination with her frontier self to a fascination with—and by—the whole world.

St. Louis may have been having her troubles as a city, but she put her best smile on for this bash on 1,240 acres of Forest Park—twice the space, boosters proudly claimed, as Chicago had decked out for her Columbian Exposition in 1892. Sixty-two nations and all the states save Delaware had exhibits, “with living specimens of the world’s peoples from Pygmies to Patagonians.”<sup>1</sup>

This electrically-exciting event was opened by President Theodore Roosevelt’s push of a button from his Washington office on April 3, 1904. In its 184 days twenty million visitors came, viewing the Palaces of Electricity, Educa-

tion (where Missouri Baptists were represented by a William Jewell College exhibit), Transportation, Agriculture, Mines, Machinery, and other displays of the world's latest technology. They strolled by all types of architecture—an Alpine village, a Chinese Mandarin home, a French Trianon, Patagonian skin tents. They rode Venetian gondolas on lagoons, amazed at the reflections of the thousands of electric light bulbs which outlined major buildings. As a guidebook put it, "It may well turn out that the new age of Electricity—as in a sense superseding steam—will date from this Fair."<sup>2</sup> They marveled at the spectacle of a Fair which cost as much to put on as all the Louisiana Territory itself had cost a century before!

And they ate history's first ice cream cones, created by a waffle vendor, and drank history's first iced tea as they sang the number one hit song of the day:

Meet me in St. Louie, Louie,  
Meet me at the Fair,  
Don't tell me the lights are shining  
Any place but there.

We'll dance the hootchie-kootchie,  
I'll be your tootsie-wootsie,  
If you'll meet me in St. Louie, Louie,  
Meet me at the Fair.

Missouri Baptist women maintained two rooms in the Woman's Anchorage Building where people could rest and where meetings could be conducted. They passed out missionary literature, conducted prayer meetings and worship services, and had some success in ministering to visitors, some "Filipino scouts," and children from the American Indian schools.

But the important thing about the Fair was its scope—the world had come to Missouri, and Missouri to the world.

#### *"Civilizing" and Christianizing a Pre-War World*

Missouri was in these years striding along with America out of the wings and onto the world's stage. The United States, which had been a remote country an ocean away from the powers of the globe, had simply not mattered much to other nations until 1898. But the late nineteenth century saw an expansionist spirit of "Manifest Destiny" sweep across the land, and war with Spain was viewed not only as an act of national honor, but also as a crusade for God and right. Cuba, the Philippines, Guam, and Puerto Rico were saved from "corrupt and Catholic Spain." Most Americans agreed with Senator Albert Beveridge of Indiana that God "has marked the American people as His chosen nation to finally lead in the regeneration of the world."<sup>3</sup>

The claim seems arrogant today, but it was taken quite seriously at the turn

of the century. Reverend F. C. McConnell addressed the Missouri Baptist General Association meeting in the World's Fair year, 1904, on the topic, "State Missions in Missouri with a View to Missouri's Part in the Civilization of the World." Missions and patriotism became virtually one and the same.

Missouri Baptists plunged into saving the world with a characteristic determination and zest. In 1909 they were putting up a seminary structure in Shanghai, at a cost of \$18,000, as part of a joint Northern-Southern Baptist college building project. (The state was still, at the time, on the "Missouri Plan" for missions, working with both northern and southern bodies.) In 1911, thirty Missourians who had attended the Baptist World Alliance meeting in Philadelphia were visiting district associations, "bringing to them a wider, healthier view than they have hitherto had." The outcome was a body of pledges toward establishing a school in London and another in Russia, whenever the government of the latter country would tolerate such subversive people as Baptists in their land. Drs. Mayfield and Tyzzzer in St. Louis donated money for the Will Mayfield Hospital in Huchow, China. Women of the churches, celebrating in 1911 their jubilee of fifty years of organized work in foreign missions, were raising \$10,000 of a \$1,000,000 national offering to construct a building at the Woman's Missionary Training School in Shanghai, a missionary home in Huchow, a girls' school in the Philippines, and an addition to the Effie Sears Girls' School in Pingtu.

Schools in Brazil and Rome; work in Cuba, Panama, Beirut, and Argentina; the first medical mission to Nigeria; and ministries to mill and mining towns, seaports, city slums, and Indian reservations were other initiatives in which Missouri Baptists participated between 1900 and World War I. Their vision was now crossing oceans as well as prairies.

#### *After World War I: Large Dreams and Major Debts*

The "war to end all wars" didn't. But Americans meant for it to; and they stubbornly insisted that it would, even when the facts said otherwise.

We saw in Chapter VI the idealism that led the United States into and through World War I, and in Chapter VII we traced the spirit of generous optimism that led post-war Americans to pledge great sums of money toward rebuilding a war-wrecked planet—along with some of the problems that arose when an economic recession followed by the Depression left worthless pledges and unpaid loans strewn across the nation's pews.

The missionary enterprise shared in both the hopes and the losses. The General Association minutes for 1919 expressed the hope, describing "A Larger World, A Larger Task" for Missouri Baptists as they set out to raise \$3,000,000 of the \$175,000,000 being pledged by their brethren throughout the United States. The report says,

The war has proven some things which Christian statesmanship and Christian zeal

are heeding . . . We have found that God made of one blood all nations that live upon the face of the earth, and that no nation can live unto itself. . . . It is the business of advanced peoples to help and not to exploit the weaker. . . . We have all learned to think and give in larger measure. It seems to have taken the death of millions and the cries of other millions to plow up the hidden sympathies of men.

Thus called out of themselves and into the service of others, Missouri and American Baptists wanted to help rebuild war-torn countries and to strengthen their own institutions to meet new global challenges.

These worthy aims were thwarted by stark financial realities, as failed economies left debts galore, with institutions and agencies in default. Spiritual boom met fiscal bust. Baptists had taken on work in Tokyo, Hiroshima, and Nagasaki; in Palestine and Syria; in Yugoslavia, Hungary, Rumania, and the Ukraine. They had increased their work in Italy and in 1921 had picked up a work that Swedish Baptists had been conducting in Spain. All these were manageable in good times but impossible in bad.

As debts and crises mounted, the Home Mission Board of Southern Baptists called Missouri's chief Baptist executive, Dr. J. B. Lawrence, to guide them toward solvency. The story has been told in Chapter VII of Baptist Honor Day and of the 100,000 Club, the latter conceived by a St. Joseph pastor, as Baptists' means of repaying debts. Stringent economy measures, the cutting of staffs, the selling off of property—all were necessary.

Yet the work continued. In 1930, for example, Southern Baptists were still sponsoring 423 missionaries and 2,045 native workers on foreign fields, where they were also running thirteen seminaries and nine hospitals.

Governmental policy was less expansive. By 1930, even though America had been forced into the position of "banker to the world," with the dollar replacing the pound sterling as the standard of currency, the United States was trying to remain isolated from problems of other nations. Having "blundered" by getting into World War I, and having lost most of the money lent to allies in that way, the nation was determined to stay aloof. International chaos after the war led to totalitarian governments in Stalin's Russia, Mussolini's Italy, Hitler's Germany, Franco's Spain, and Hirohito's Japan—but still America remained isolationist and uninvolved. When Japan abused our missionaries and sank a gunboat, there was no appropriate response. When Japan invaded China, America accepted the Japanese description of the undeclared war as the "China Incident" and took no direct military action, just as there was no American response to Hitler's march across Europe. Though America ultimately rearmed herself and became a supplier of armaments to her allies—the "arsenal of democracy," Roosevelt called her—it was only a direct Japanese attack on American ships that brought the nation into another set of international entanglements.

Baptists—and the American churches generally—did not want to go to war

again. But they saw, as a Missouri Baptist convention resolution of 1941 put it, that “the only option is preparedness and defense.” Missouri-born theologian Reinhold Niebuhr helped American Christians see that imperfect actions are necessary in an imperfect world, and that we must trust God to use our efforts as part of his divine plan. Missionaries were evacuated from China and other danger zones as first the Japanese and later the Communists attacked. Many missionaries did not get out and were interned in prison camps.

In these painful days, Missouri Baptists contributed to major funds for “China Relief” and “Britain Relief,” helping in the latter case not only the mission stations operated by English Baptists but also the Britishers themselves.

#### *Another War, Another World, and a Bold Mission*

The attack on Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941, awakened the “sleeping giant” and brought Americans into a powerfully concentrated unity. The nation mobilized its resources with amazing speed and with awesome force.

For Baptists and other Christians, this was not an idealistic crusade as had been the war of 1917-18. It was, instead, a dirty job to be done. Editor Joseph E. Brown of the *Word and Way*, writing on the morning after the Japanese attack, recalled

the terribly tragic sacrifices in the last war which the writer observed at first hand. Sadly he remembered that it was a “war to end war”—or was supposed to be. . . . Somehow, while our gallant men are giving their last ounce of devotion on some far-flung battle line, we must be building the foundations of righteous peace.

God was invoked on the side of democracy; “there are no atheists in fox-holes,” said the soldiers. A popular song of the era was “God Bless America.” Another was “Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition,” suggesting reliance on both the deity and one’s own efforts.

Chances are that the ammunition so passed was made in Missouri, or at least in the large St. Louis ordnance district where ninety-five percent of all shells were produced. Missourians made boots, helmets, gun turrets, pharmaceuticals, propellants, bombers, aircraft engines, gliders (in the American Royal Building of Kansas City), landing craft, rifles, electronic equipment, clothes, cables, and dozens of other products for the armies. Missouri farmers, in heroic and short-handed efforts, raised grain and beef to feed the fighters. Senior citizens and women were dominant in the work force “for the duration”; “Rosie the Riveter” was celebrated in song. In all, 15,000,000 men and women were drafted into service, and \$330,000,000,000 was spent to sustain them.

During the war Missouri Baptists endured with others the rationing and scarcities; asked themselves “Is this trip really necessary?”; if it was, took the train or bus or drove their cars under the 35 mile-per-hour speed limit, if they could get the gasoline and tires to drive at all; planted victory gardens; bought savings stamps and bonds; and prayed for peace. They ministered to the “soldier boys” at Jefferson Barracks, Fort Leonard Wood, Camp Crowder, and other Missouri installations; and many of them became part of the corps of 1,042 Southern Baptist chaplains serving in army and navy.

They were shocked, as was the rest of the world, at the killing of 6,000,000 Jews in Europe, and they spoke out strongly on behalf of racial and ethnic justice. They were disturbed at losses on the mission fields—\$1,000,000 worth of property in China, \$500,000 worth in Europe. They were stunned at the awesome power of atomic bombs dropped on two former mission stations, Hiroshima and Nagasaki, to bring an end to World War II.

And at war’s end, they participated in huge relief offerings, sending money and supplies through a Baptist Relief Center in New Orleans. They called for a “just and lasting peace.” O.K. Armstrong guided a resolution through the 1944 meeting of the General Association which urged an absence of revenge or punishment, an end to military alliances and the “balance of powers”; and a beginning of justice, freedom, understanding, and cooperation.

Missionaries were able to move back into their fields much more rapidly than expected, though China did not long remain open and work shifted to Taiwan. Japan offered not an open door but “a whole wall caved in,” and missionaries acted to take advantage of the opportunity. As to Europe, a report to Baptists meeting in 1945 at St. Joseph indicated that “the number one problem . . . is keeping alive. Multitudes are starving.” Africa and Latin America had never closed their doors to mission work.

Southern Baptist foreign and home missions progressed steadily from the end of global hostilities to the present day, as this chart indicates:

<i>Year</i>	<i>Number of Missionaries</i>	<i>Number of Countries Served</i>
1950 . . . . .	1,828 . . . . .	28
1960 . . . . .	3,515 . . . . .	46
1970 . . . . .	4,723 . . . . .	76
1980 . . . . .	6,029 . . . . .	94

Missouri Baptists’ contributions to these efforts were \$359,546 in 1950, \$1,036,969 in 1960, \$1,880,597 in 1970, and \$4,773,666 in 1980. Missouri has also sent some of her finest men and women to minister on mission fields of the world.

This progress has been in spite of the turning of the world into an armed camp, with the United States as one of the chief adversaries. For the first time in history this nation has had to maintain standing armies and an advanced

state of military preparedness: missiles in their silos are as “normal” to modern America as their mirror images, the spires of churches or the towers of grain elevators and skyscrapers.

It was Missourian (and Baptist) Harry Truman who first set the “get tough with the Communists” policy; and his notion of non-appeasement has guided both Democratic and Republican Presidents ever since—with modulations in tone from time to time as the “Cold War” thawed or grew more chill. Soviet successes in atomic-hydrogen weaponry and rocketry, the falling of China—one fourth of the world’s population—to Communism, the landing of men on the moon and the hoisting of them in space capsules and shuttle craft, the Bay of Pigs fiasco, the Berlin airlift and Berlin wall, Korea and Vietnam, the environmental crisis, the energy crisis—all are scenes in an immensely frightful drama as Presidents Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon, Ford, Carter, and Reagan have sought not only to guide America, but also to sustain life on the planet by avoiding nuclear holocaust.

This backdrop of a changed world—a world that could literally blow itself apart or use itself up—has added new urgency to the mission enterprise. Missouri Baptists were hearing in 1950, at Third Baptist Church of St. Louis, that they could “win the world for Christ in this generation”—that the tools and open doors were at hand. In 1955 at Joplin they rejoiced that their foreign missionary force numbered over 1,000 for the first time. In 1957 at Columbia’s First Baptist Church they held a huge World Missions Conference in connection with their annual convention, taking an extra day to concentrate on an emphasis they felt was strongly needed in their churches. In 1968 at Wyatt Park Church in St. Joseph they accepted the challenge of a Crusade of the Americas, a hemispheric evangelistic campaign. In 1977 at Springfield they heard their executive director, Dr. Rheubin South, challenge them to a Bold Mission effort which “will give every person on earth the opportunity to hear the Gospel by the year 2000.” “Christ commands it!” said South, his words echoing a battle cry which has for centuries called people to crusades.

Baptists have often used crisis words to describe the task before them, for they are greatly dependent on their rhetoric to motivate churches and church members to voluntary action. In a “new” world which lives under the shadow of a mushroom cloud, however, the crisis has not been an invented one. The world missionary task has taken on a new and special urgency.

#### *Support from Baptist Women and Laymen*

In carrying out a new vision of missionary purpose, Missouri Baptists have had the remarkable support of women long committed to missions and organized laymen newly drawn to the task.

The increasing openness toward women’s taking public leadership roles in American society has had its influence even in such conservative circles as

Missouri Baptist churches. Whereas not many in those churches would identify themselves as “women’s libbers,” they are much more accustomed than were previous generations to women in business and professional life, women political leaders, sports for women, movements to achieve equal pay for equal work, and a generally wider appreciation for roles women can fill successfully. Several congregations have ordained women as deacons; Wyatt Park Church in St. Joseph ordained Kathline Thom to the gospel ministry in 1977; Wanda Haworth was in 1979 the first woman elected to major Convention office. Women’s taking major *responsibility* is not new; their receiving major *recognition* or credentialing is.

Baptist women of Missouri have been unusually consistent through the years in their methods of supporting missions: their 1970 report to the convention in Raytown summarized it as “Praying, Studying, Giving, Going.” Woman’s Missionary Union has fostered world awareness through mission study; development of the spiritual life through Bible reading, family worship, and special seasons of prayer for missions; Christian witnessing; sharing of possessions through tithing and mission offerings; educating youth in missions through graded programs for all age groups; enlisting people to serve as missionaries; training leaders in missionary education; and providing encouragement by reporting advancements in the missions cause.

It is a big program, and one in which Baptist women have been highly successful. The Missouri Woman’s Missionary Union membership in 1979-80, for example, was 49,052. In 1981 alone women were major leaders in seeking \$800,000 in Missouri for Home Missions through the Annie Armstrong Offering, \$1,800,000 for Foreign Missions through the Lottie Moon Offering, and \$450,000 for State Missions. Baptists—largely because of the work of women—have come to look on these large, special offerings for missions as routine.

The Baptist men’s organization has had a less single-minded identity over the years, but in the last decade it has fastened onto “missions and ministry” as its purposes. The “new turn” was noted in 1971 at the Springfield meeting of the Convention, when the phrase “Mission Action” gained currency with men of the Baptist Brotherhood.

In that year, also, as a pilot project carrying out the missions concept, teams of men went to minister each weekend at a camping resort area at Table Rock Lake. They visited with campers, sang hymns at their own campfire and drew others into the songfests, and held Sunday services. Between Memorial Day and Labor Day over 2,000 persons attended their meetings.

Prior to this emphasis on missions, Brotherhood promoted evangelism, the “Man-and Boy Movement,” the Cooperative Program, and church advertising. In 1948, for example, the state Brotherhood executive suggested “that the Brotherhoods throughout the convention see to it at once that a large and dignified neon sign is installed in front of each church building.”

Mercifully, he was not universally heeded. In 1957 responsibility for the boys' organization, Royal Ambassadors, was transferred from Woman's Missionary Union to the Brotherhood. In 1980, Brotherhood had 17,507 members in Missouri.

#### *Support from Christian Higher Education*

A Christian education does good things for the person who attains it, and it also enables that person to do good things. It is both an end and a means. Baptists have supported higher education in Missouri since 1849 for both reasons: to benefit the persons who go to their schools, and to call out a steady stream of leaders for churches and missionary work. An important part of the evangelistic and missionary vision of Missouri Baptists in the twentieth century has come from the Baptist colleges and the seminary located within the state.

At the 1981 meeting of the Baptist mission in Taiwan, for example, those missionaries who had served and suffered on mainland China before being expelled to the island were asked to come to the front of the Morrison Academy auditorium for recognition: three of the six were William Jewell College alumni. Through international exchange programs conducted by Missouri Baptist College and William Jewell, particularly with Japan and England; through the honored list of missionary alumni from Hannibal-LaGrange and the other schools; and through active work of students and faculty members themselves, the educational institutions have become a great mission force of Missouri Baptists. Southwest Baptist University, in particular, has sent many teams to plant churches and begin ministries in cities and rural regions of America, as well as in countries of the world.

A new dimension of world mission for Missouri began in September, 1958, when Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary opened in Kansas City as the sixth graduate theological school sponsored by the Southern Baptist Convention. Missouri Baptists lobbied actively for its location in Kansas City, particularly in their 1956 meeting, and their efforts have not gone unrewarded. The seminary has made a significant contribution to Missouri churches and denominational life, has brought the resources of a thoughtful theological community to the state, and has sent men and women out from Missouri to places of service around the world.

While carrying forward programs of ministry and witness, the schools have at the same time moved to new levels of academic strength in fulfilling their primary tasks of teaching. The period between 1934 and 1984 saw the origins of Missouri Baptist College as well as Midwestern Seminary, the renewed definition of mission at Hannibal-LaGrange, a continuing effort to blend Christian commitment and academic excellence at William Jewell, and a remarkable coming of age and flowering at Southwest Baptist.<sup>4</sup> The Convention continued—largely unsuccessfully—to seek some co-ordination of

its programs in higher education, and it struggled with questions of financing schools in a time of high costs and extensive government involvement. At the same time, Baptists supported their schools well, and they were rewarded with some excellent and loyal institutions.

*William Jewell College*, largely because it is Missouri's senior Baptist college and has had the support of the entire state denomination from its earliest days, entered the 1930's in a strong position and survived the Depression with minimal damage. In the next fifty years the college pursued a conservative policy which served it well, making it one of the leading Christian educational institutions in the nation by 1980.

The excellence came through an emphasis on its Baptist identity, on program quality, on endowments, and on controlled growth. William Jewell kept a close tie to its denomination when many schools of equal stature were "going independent," and the denomination responded with important spiritual and financial support. The college expanded as the "population explosion" and general national prosperity brought thousands more young people into colleges after World War II. Enrollment increased from 400 in 1940 to 1200 in 1960 to 1700 in 1980, the latter figure including students in an evening division formed in 1973 to serve metropolitan Kansas City. But the expansion was deliberate and did not include the "spasms of overbuilding" which many public and private schools fell victim to during the era. A decision to establish a waiting list for student admission—applications now outnumbering spaces—rather than to construct more costly dorms spared the school some huge debts and high interest costs, as well as raising academic quality in the student body. This decision was based on projections which showed that there would be many fewer persons of college age in the 1980's and that many college dorms would be empty ten years down the road.

Endowment grew from \$1,000,000 to \$12,000,000 during the fifty years, some major gifts coming from Mr. W. D. Johnson for endowments of the Bible and philosophy departments, Mr. E. S. Pillsbury for endowment of the physics department, Mr. Will Yates for endowment of the chemistry department, Mr. Charles Curry for endowment of building operations, Mr. Robert H. McKee for endowment of a chair in music, and the Hallmark Educational Foundation—the first million dollar gift to the school—for endowing an Oxford/Cambridge-style curricular program. Meanwhile, the campus was improved with the building of dormitories, a new library, a student union, an administration building, an athletic stadium, a music building, and a physical education center, and with the renovation of several structures on the 130-year-old campus.

Dr. John Herget saw the college through the Depression and the beginning of war before resigning as president in 1942. After the worthy interim presidency of Dr. H. I. Hester, Dr. Walter Pope Binns began a distinguished nine-

teen-year tenure. A Navy flight school for officers sustained the college through some lean wartime years until peace treaties and the GI Bill brought hundreds of veterans to campus following 1945. Veterans changed things: no longer would the school conduct dormitory room inspections, as Professor Wilbur Bruner had been assigned to do in 1941, with the college solemnly announcing "a high correlation between scholastic grades and the grades received for room condition."

When the Marquis Publishing Company reported an unusually high percentage of William Jewell alumni in their *Who's Who* listings, Dr. Binns began in 1944 an annual Achievement Day to recognize alumni accomplishments. Nationally-known speakers for this showcase day have included Presidents Truman and Johnson, Dr. Billy Graham, Dr. Wernher von Braun, and astronaut James Irwin. A Fine Arts Program, begun in the 1962-68 administration of Dr. H. Guy Moore, became a major cultural program of the Midwest, attracting such performers as Luciano Pavarotti, Marilyn Horne, Beverly Sills, Itzhak Perlman, and dozens more of like caliber to Kansas City.

The college suffered some internal problems in the late 1960's, with four presidents and acting presidents in four years, with some measure of unrest on the part of students and faculty, and with unfortunate tensions between the college and Missouri Baptists. Dr. Thomas S. Field helped resolve those problems when he came as president in 1970, announcing a "Decade of Greatness" and encouraging renewed spiritual, fiscal, and intellectual vitality on campus. Dr. Field, pastor of First Baptist Church in Springfield, was a leader and past president of Missouri Baptists. During his tenure a new curricular plan, "Education for Individual Achievement," was designed, which in the eighties led to an attractive, interdisciplinary "Foundations" program in general education. Overseas programs were established in England with Oxford and Cambridge Universities and Harlaxton College, with a Spanish educational center, and with a Baptist university in Japan. The 125th anniversary celebration in 1974, with Governor Christopher Bond proclaiming "William Jewell College Week in Missouri," gave faint but pleasant echoes to gala celebrations of the college centennial in 1949, when Missouri Baptists had helped raise \$250,000 toward a \$3,000,000 endowment goal. Dr. Field's tenure was saddened by a personnel dispute which arose following termination of a college staff member in 1977, for the dispute widened outward from campus to involve several pastors and churches, where it took the form of a theological issue. This caused great suffering for all parties concerned and was not helpful to individuals, the college, or the churches.

Dr. J. Gordon Kingsley succeeded Dr. Field in 1980. A Baptist minister, as have been all presidents of the college, he early on formed a Ministers' Advisory Council to keep the college in close touch with the churches and a Center for the Christian Ministry to serve church vocational students and pastors on

the field. These were similar to some “model” in-service and church relations programs at the college in 1951, and they were part of a continuing effort to integrate college life around the faith.

Since 1947 William Jewell had conducted periodic “Focus Weeks” as part of the campus ministry. This program, with a team of vibrant Christian personalities ministering throughout the campus for an entire week, became a strong enrichment to regular chapel in all the Missouri Baptist colleges, with William Jewell, Southwest, and Hannibal-Lagrange all reporting successes. An annual Pastors’ Conference began at Liberty in 1959 and Bolivar in 1967, the William Jewell sessions bringing such outstanding preachers as W. A. Criswell and J. D. Grey to Missouri. College choir tours witnessed across America and in foreign countries year by year, including a Concert Choir tour of Europe in 1968—with performances for Spurgeon’s College in London, the Baptist Youth Congress in Berne, Radio Spain, and Radio Zurich—under the direction of Dr. Wesley Forbis, later secretary of church music for the Southern Baptist Convention. Fellowship of Christian Athletes leaders became prominent on college athletic teams, which won a national championship in baseball and gained national rankings in small-college football and basketball. Ministerial students led nationally-ranked debate teams.

Like her sister colleges, William Jewell carried on a strong program of campus ministries—Bible study groups, prayer groups, vespers, music groups, puppet and drama ministries, ministries to senior citizens and inner-city youth, revival teams, and summer missionaries. Teams from the college went to Taiwan, Puerto Rico, Jamaica, Iowa, California, Florida, Boston, Texas, and Colorado, in addition to providing weekly ministries in Kansas City and Missouri.

In 1977 and again in 1983 *Changing Times* listed William Jewell as one of “50 good colleges in America with below-average costs,” and in 1981 Peterson’s Guides included the school in *The Competitive Colleges* (a book listing only 246 of the more than 3,000 colleges and universities in the nation). Additional recognitions came to Missouri Baptists’ oldest school for her Oxford and Cambridge programs and for her selection as one of the country’s nineteen “well-managed, successful small colleges.” The goal of William Jewell College, throughout this era, was to create a special blending of true educational excellence and true Christian commitment.

*Hannibal-LaGrange College* was motivated by that same goal when it moved to a new city in 1928. The school was excited about its prospects and blessed with \$232,000 donated by the good citizenry of Hannibal.

The Depression hit in the next year, however, and President Andrew F. Morris for a decade presided over a struggling institution with mounting deficits. A “Loyalty Campaign” was conducted in 1939 to clear a \$150,000 indebtedness; its failure cast serious doubt on the school’s survival. By 1941 the debt was \$200,000, and bond-holders determined to foreclose on September

6—three days before the opening of school. In a stirring bit of drama, new president A. E. Prince was able to place the repayment money in escrow with a bank at 2:00 p.m. on September 5, just hours before foreclosure was scheduled. It was no overstatement when he reported that “the school was barely saved.” Most of the faculty and students had gone elsewhere, and Dr. Prince had four days to recruit people as teachers and learners. It is a tribute to the college and its supporters that the school did open, with seventy-five students, and kept alive what it then defined as its special mission: to train teachers and preachers for rural northeast Missouri.

Immediately a new crisis came in the mobilization of the nation for war, with young men going to service and young women “taking positions with the Government at high salaries.” A flight training school kept Hannibal-LaGrange operating: Federal money was a major part of many school budgets in those days of crisis. By 1943 state accreditation, lost a few years before “because of indebtedness and incompetent instructors” (said President Prince), was restored; junior college accreditation by the North Central Association would come in 1958. Dr. Prince reported in 1943 that the college “specializes in high class intellectual training.” It also specialized in clean living, Dr. Prince insisting that no student “indulge on this campus in drinking, profanity, smoking, card playing, dancing, or any other evils too prevalent in other schools.”

In 1944, with debts just paid, the president immediately called for expansion “to meet the increasing demands for the service [the college] has to offer.” The catalog listed (1943) a “School of Theology,” offering ministerial students “a two years’ course of theological instruction in addition to the two years of Junior College work.” This theology school is described in catalogs for several years, finally appearing in a report to the General Association as the “LaGrange College of Religion” in 1949. But apparently the program was not conducted at this time; instead, it remained a hope and dream in the heart of Hannibal-LaGrange.

Dr. L. A. Foster’s twenty-year tenure as president began in 1950, and his administration brought a new stability and academic strength to the school. He sought to make campus facilities “available for 350 students,” and enrollment reached considerably more than that number in the heady days after World War II. A campus extension center opened in 1957 at Tower Grove Church in St. Louis, where it operated for eleven years, until the beginning of Missouri Baptist College. Meanwhile, a merger with the board of that new school had occurred in 1966, the new charter being issued to “Missouri Baptist College—Hannibal Campus—St. Louis Campus.”

The dual-campus concept, with one institution under one board and one president representing Baptist educational interests in eastern Missouri, was very attractive to all concerned. The St. Louis campus opened in 1968 with great promise, and in the next year enrollment at Hannibal was pressing an

all-time high of 663. But by 1972-73 deficits at the St. Louis branch had accumulated to \$300,000. The new president, Dr. Frank Kellogg, found that costs of building *and* operating a new college were much greater than anyone had estimated, and the optimism of the post-war boom in education was difficult to sustain as inflation became "normal." Dr. Kellogg felt strong measures were needed and proposed closing the Hannibal campus, thereby directing to one St. Louis campus the Baptist allocations that were presently being divided.

Reaction was immediate. Community leaders of Hannibal met on March 4, 1973, to urge a separating of the two schools. They began a "Save the College" campaign and in short order had raised \$224,000 in cash and pledges, all put into an escrow account pending division of the two campuses. Students and pastors of northeast Missouri joined in the drive, and the school was rechartered as a "New" Hannibal-LaGrange College with its own board. Dr. Gerald Martin came as president in 1973 to lead a restored and revitalized college community.

Dr. Martin established a firmly conservative theological posture for the school, and the college affirmed in the *Word and Way* of January 6, 1977, and in its 1977 and 1978 reports to the denomination that its theological distinctiveness and integrity would not permit its participation in the Missouri Student Grant Program, then an issue of great concern to the Missouri Baptist Convention. Subsequent developments made it possible for Hannibal-LaGrange students to seek the funding, and the college has not slackened in its forceful identification with its central affirmations. The programs of campus ministry described at William Jewell are typical of the excellent programs at Hannibal-LaGrange, and the college constitutes a major witnessing force for northeast Missouri.

Dr. Martin was able, before his retirement in 1980, to spur a major \$2,000,000 funding campaign for debt retirement, renovations, and other purposes. When Dr. Martin renewed the dream of the 1940's and Hannibal-LaGrange practices of the early 1900's in leading the school to offer four-year degrees, particularly in church vocational studies, the Executive Board of the Convention balked "for the reason that they did not want to obligate the Missouri Baptist Convention to support an additional senior college by a gradual process of adding courses and degree programs." Clearly the period of sky-wide expansiveness in education was over, as responsible denominational leaders counted costs before trying to match budgets to dreams.

But the principle of autonomous trusteeship prevailed, and in 1981 a new president, Dr. Larry Lewis, skillfully convinced the Executive Board and Convention to vote

that Hannibal-LaGrange College be recognized as a senior college by the Missouri

Baptist Convention, in accordance with the request of the college, with approval to offer such baccalaureate degree programs as the trustees shall deem financially and otherwise appropriate.

By 1982, Hannibal-LaGrange had significantly reduced indebtedness, had increased enrollment, and had achieved some major renovations. Dr. Lewis announced a student body of 500 in 1981-82, and enrollments grew with the addition of junior and senior classes. Endowment stood at about \$350,000. The college had strong and capable leadership, had survived financial and identity crises, and seemed ready to make even greater contributions to Missouri Baptist life.

*Southwest Baptist University*, meanwhile, was blazing new trails in making those contributions to Baptist life. Few schools have achieved the eminence of the Bolivar institution in devising programs of service to the churches, to the cause of missions and evangelism, and to the education of ministers and Christian workers. And the burgeoning of Southwest Baptist took place in a very short time! As the life cycles of colleges go, the distance between "New Greater Southwest Baptist College" of 1910 and "Southwest Baptist University" of 1981 is short in years, but long indeed in achievement.

Dr. Courts Redford, denominational statesman who served as president of the college from 1930 to 1943, left it to become executive secretary of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board. He departed a junior college campus not yet accredited by North Central Association, serving 400 students, modestly equipped, and enduring the doldrums of war years with declining enrollments. But, in a Herculean feat of determined fiscal magic, he left it debt-free. With his fondness for tennis, he must have considered that achievement a straight-set victory.

When he came back twenty-four years later, in 1967, to serve a year as interim president between the administrations of Dr. Robert E. Craig and Dr. James L. Sells, it was another place entirely. He returned to a senior college graduating 112 students in its first baccalaureate class; to a total twelve-month enrollment of nearly 1,200; to new dormitories and a dining hall and a library-science building and a field house and a president's home; to a 102-acre tract for a new campus—the Shoffner Campus; and to visions of a great future. The college was no longer free of debt, but there was certainly much more campus.

President S. H. Jones had succeeded Dr. Redford and seen the college through the war and immediate post-war years, with enrollments initially low and then so large that they taxed all facilities. Dr. John W. Dowdy began in 1948 to build up both the physical plant and academic strength. In addition to the construction projects completed under his leadership, the school in 1957 received North Central Accreditation as a junior college. Dr. Dowdy ran a

tight ship. According to the Bolivar newspaper, any student arriving in a car was obliged to park it in a lot, give the keys to Dr. Dowdy, and collect the keys when he was ready to go home again.

In 1961 Dr. Craig arrived in Bolivar, following Dr. Dowdy's resignation, to proclaim (in a speech to local Kiwanians) a need for "more ground" and to do the preparation for even greater expansion in the years just ahead. During his second year, in March of 1962, a major fire struck the campus, destroying Pike Auditorium—which included a gymnasium, pool, and music rooms, as well as a chapel/auditorium. Within just five days the Bolivar community had raised \$76,000 for rebuilding, and negotiations resulted in the purchase of the Shoffner property—expanding the size of campus by about six times. By 1969, thirty-four buildings would sit on the Shoffner and Stufflebaum (original) campuses, with fifteen of those constructed since 1962.

Two other decisions, under Dr. Craig's leadership, shaped the immediate destiny of the school: the beginning of an In-Service Training Program under Dr. H. K. Neely's leadership in 1963, with help from the Home Mission Board; and the decision by the board of trustees to become a senior college, the vote being taken on January 28, 1964. The Missouri Baptist Convention enthusiastically approved the request for four-year status in their Joplin meeting of 1964 (these were still expansive days for Missouri Baptists, before the caution of the 1970's set in), leading in due course to the first baccalaureate graduation in 1968. President Craig resigned in 1967 to go to Union University, and after Dr. Redford's interim year, Dr. James Sells moved from the deanship to become twenty-first president of the college.

Year by year reports from the school now began to show the rounding out of a full collegiate program—from plans for developing the new campus to new salary schedules for faculty to various academic designs to information on the Pastors' Conference to news about youth revivals to mention of a symphonic wind ensemble to notes of homecoming and Life Service Awards to schedules for the Cultural Series to progress in the latest fund-raising campaign.

The academic program gained full accreditation at the senior college level. New programs for faculty development, new fringe benefit packages, improved salary schedules, increased library holdings, strong music and teacher education programs, a center in Business and Community Leadership, and outstanding forensics programs are just some examples of vitality experienced in the Southwest academic program of the 1970's. Athletic opportunities for all students, with strong men's basketball and particularly outstanding tennis teams, brought national recognition to the school.

Growth in the physical plant is perhaps even more remarkable, with new student union, chapel, dining, library, science, and business buildings added to much renovation, campus development, and campus beautification. An excellent fund raising program was created in order to sustain the capital and

operational expenditures, though debt remained a factor to cope with and additions were desirable for an endowment which in 1982 had reached \$1,116,000.

Perhaps the most noteworthy success of the institution was in its programs of training for church vocational students, which since 1972 have come under the auspices of a "Courts Redford School of Theology." Southwest Baptist has had for many years a large population of ministerial students, as we saw in Chapter VII, and that trend received strong encouragement at the school in recent years. In 1960 for example, the Home and Foreign Mission Boards reported Southwest to be ranked first "in alumni serving as missionaries." In the centennial year, 1978, the college ranked second only to Oklahoma Baptist University in number of students preparing for the pastorate and second only to Baylor University in number of students preparing for church vocations; a total of 623 were reported in training at Bolivar for various ministries. Programs in church music, church recreation, evangelism, and other dimensions of ministry have been successfully established. A "Couriers" program was formed to maintain contacts in the churches, largely for recruiting purposes, and a "Curators" program brought pastoral advice and assistance into the Redford School.

Three other schools were formed within the college on the way to a "university" title for Southwest Baptist: a School of Music and Fine Arts, established in 1974, and a School of Arts and Sciences and a School of Business, Education, and Social Sciences, organized in 1975. When Southwest asked to be recognized as a university at the Missouri Baptist Convention meeting in 1980 at Springfield, significant opposition was expressed, based chiefly on the sense by some that Southwest had not been sufficiently open about its plans and on fears by others that a "university" would soon be asking the Convention to support expensive graduate programs. President Harlan Spurgeon, Dr. Sells' now having assumed the role of chancellor and chief executive officer, graciously served notice to the Convention that though there are "no plans at this time" for graduate work at Southwest, "there might be a dream . . . that sometime in this decade [graduate programs] might become a reality." The Convention approved university nomenclature by a vote of 571-392.

Southwest Baptist University by 1982 had an enrollment pushing 1600 and faced the future with several whirring hoppers full of ideas for creative extension programs, church planting ministries, campus-based academic offerings, and development of physical facilities. The school seemed to exhibit some characteristics of a Baptist college, some of a seminary, and some of a yet-to-be-defined kind of institution that places its resources at points of greatest utility or need. It was being closely observed not only by Missouri Baptists but by churchmen across the land.

*Missouri Baptist College*, which opened its doors in St. Louis on Septem-

ber 16, 1968, was the product of several historical influences sketched in this volume. The earliest work of earliest Baptists in this early center of Baptist work in Missouri, including the energetic establishing of schools by John Mason Peck, is one part of the background tradition. A short-lived "St. Louis Seminary for Women," founded at Jennings Station in 1871, is another. As is the rise of St. Louis as a major American city, by far the largest population center in Missouri. And a long-standing sense of need for a Baptist educational witness in that city, expressed by the Missouri Baptist Convention in 1953 when it resolved to consider forming "a Baptist Bible Institute of a high type in or near St. Louis." And the great fervor for college-birthings, both public and church-related, which swept across America like a baby-boom-grown-up wave in the 1960's, leading Baptists to begin new schools in Dallas, Houston, Mobile, Charleston, Baltimore, and Louisville, as well as in St. Louis. And the optimism of the times, when President Kennedy was establishing a Peace Corps and President Johnson was shaping the "Great Society" and Americans were orbiting the earth and walking on the moon and everything seemed possible.

Out of these several forces, and others, "the college that had to be" was born.<sup>5</sup>

"St. Louis Baptist College" was a name loosely given to a seminary extension program sponsored by the St. Louis Baptist Association in 1956-57 and a Hannibal-LaGrange extension conducted in Tower Grove Church from 1957 through 1968. Pastor Mack Douglas of the church, Dr. Homer DeLozier of the association, and President L. A. Foster of the college were main movers in the extension center, which was subsidized by Tower Grove, St. Louis Baptists, and the Missouri Baptist Convention.

Classes opened under Hannibal-LaGrange auspices in 1957 with 68 students, and the original design was to offer Bible courses for pastors, laymen, and young people. By the second term of instruction liberal arts courses were being sought and provided. Accreditation after 1960 was through Hannibal-LaGrange. When the successful extension center closed in 1968, final semester enrollment was 190.

Meanwhile, the Missouri Baptist Convention had considered in 1959 and adopted in 1960 a motion to "approve the establishment of a Baptist College in greater St. Louis." The Convention endorsed a campaign by the St. Louis Baptist Association to raise \$1,500,000 in the St. Louis area, approved the search for a site, and gave its blessing to the dream. The Convention also entered into an elaborate campaign, with outside consultants and a high-powered committee of leading Missouri Baptists, to raise \$12,000,000 for all its colleges, St. Louis included. The institutions and leaders were greatly disappointed when only \$1,350,000 was pledged.

A board of trustees was appointed, holding its first meeting in January

of 1964. In July of that year an attractive 81-acre site was purchased, in a prime location near Interstate 270 and Highway 40, at a cost of \$322,000. Missouri Baptists in October guaranteed \$1,250,000 in bonds, to be paid off by St. Louis Baptists, and a St. Louis area campaign in the fall of 1964 yielded pledges for that amount.

At this point the talks of merger with Hannibal-LaGrange began, leading to a consolidation of the boards in 1966 and a joint charter in 1967. Dr. L. A. Foster was president of the combined colleges. Ground-breaking for the first construction on the new campus was held on February 19, 1967, and the first class of 186 students entered in September, 1968, many of them from the Hannibal-LaGrange extension at Tower Grove.

Missouri Baptists included the new college in Cooperative Program disbursements from the beginning and made special donations in the first years; in 1969, for example, \$150,000 was committed to the St. Louis campus, in addition to \$450,000 appropriated to the dual-campus college. Enrollment was good, with 633 students at Hannibal and 230 at St. Louis. A nurses training program was moved from Hannibal to St. Louis, to take advantage of the proximity of Missouri Baptist Hospital.

Despite these positive signs, however, the deficits grew (as described previously in the chapter, in the discussion of Hannibal-LaGrange College), leading to a separation of the two campuses in 1973.

Though Missouri Baptist College by 1974 had established a fine record, graduating her first class, building four major buildings, and gathering a capable faculty and a stable student body, the operating deficits and interest rates on capital loans were becoming unbearable. Seeing no way to pay the bills, the trustees on August 17, 1974, voted "to suspend college operations." The news hit the state like a lightning bolt. President Frank Kellogg resigned, after four hectic years in his post; students and faculty began to disperse. It was almost a replica of the 1941 situation at Hannibal, when debts seemed to make the opening school term impossible.

But again, a miracle occurred. Between Thursday, August 22, and Sunday, August 25, Reverend J. Edwin Hewlett of Southwest Church conducted a whirlwind campaign among St. Louis churches that yielded \$400,000 in cash and pledges and led the trustees on August 25 to vote a resumption of operations. All of it—the closing, the campaign, the re-opening—had taken eight days!

Dr. Robert Sutherland, called as interim president and later as president, committed the college to economy of operations while sustaining the highest possible degree of educational quality. Dr. Sutherland inspired confidence in his integrity and his professionalism as an educator. A "Load Lifters Loan" plan was devised whereby friends would lend interest-free, seven-year money to the school to pay off existing debt; *Word and Way* of May 19, 1977, de-

pected success for that program, which had paid off \$517,000 in current interest-bearing obligations. In 1976 a "Foundation for the Future" campaign was announced, a \$1,600,000 effort which was completed successfully in 1980. An early Pillsbury Foundation gift of \$250,000 was important to the success of that fund drive.

Reduced Missouri Baptist Convention receipts in 1978, the result of a distribution formula based on enrollments, led to the first budget deficit since 1974; balanced budgets thereafter became more difficult to achieve. A new dormitory for men and one for women, completed in 1979, gave the college a capacity to serve more students, from outside as well as from St. Louis.

By 1982, when Dr. Sutherland retired and Dr. Patrick O. Copley came from a deanship at Southwest Missouri State University to replace him, Missouri Baptist College was a "place of pure potential." It had a solid academic design and a good concept of what a Christian liberal arts college of excellence could be. It had a prime location in St. Louis County, it had the demonstrated loyalty of St. Louis and Missouri Baptists, and it conducted programs of Christian ministry and witness which gave it a distinctiveness. It needed more students, just as more students needed what it had to offer. It needed more money, so that a faculty and staff which had labored sacrificially could breathe more easily. And it needed a respite from the day-to-day pressures and uncertainties that had dogged its steps. It was a noble vision, still working hard to achieve its destiny.

*The Convention and the colleges.* Helping colleges achieve their destinies is what Missouri Baptists have been about ever since they founded their first school in 1849. Through most of their history they have felt overburdened with "more colleges than we can support," but their democratic procedures have never given them adequate ways to control the growth of their institutions. And they have felt the schools too essential to their evangelistic and missionary endeavors to willingly let them die.

For a few years, in fact, Missouri Baptists had an educational "system" created by the closing of some colleges during the Depression. Hard times did what eight or more committees could not do. General Superintendent T. W. Medearis even called it such in his 1943 report to the denomination:

Missouri Baptists have every right to rejoice in their present educational system consisting of three colleges. Our two junior colleges—Southwest Baptist College at Bolivar and Hannibal-LaGrange College at Hannibal—are both fully accredited [he was stretching a point here, since North Central accreditation did not come until 1957 and 1958] and are strategically situated. Between them and our great senior college, William Jewell College at Liberty, there are the most cordial understanding and the utmost of cooperation.

Though some wished the senior college were at center state, as had been originally proposed in the 1840's, travel was now relatively easy and location less crucial.

The Depression had also created an ambivalence in the attitude of the General Association toward its schools. On the one hand, it wanted to control them fully, as is illustrated in a 1935 resolution that the executive board "take up with the various institutions . . . the matter of teaching and practices of these institutions . . . regarding dancing, card playing, smoking, teaching regarding the Bible, etc." On the other hand, it contributed only a small portion of the schools' operating costs, and it did not want to be financially liable when debts mounted: the report of the same 1935 meeting at Joplin spells out very clearly that "the Baptist institutions of Missouri are not owned and controlled by our General Association. . . . They are only affiliated with us. . . ." Nevertheless, the executive board did "take up" with the schools their teachings and habits, making a remarkably detailed inquiry into personal habits of students and staff people. One item on the questionnaire, "Name the chief problem your administration has with your faculty," doubtless was intended to uncover either moral or theological problems. Questioners were probably not expecting Southwest Baptist's serious answer, "Paying them," or Hannibal-LaGrange's "Keeping them paid."

By 1937 the denomination was seeking to step up to needs of the institutions by vigorous promotion of an ambitious Cooperative Program, at the same time asking the schools to refrain from solicitation in the churches. This pattern of strong support continued: a campaign in 1943 for the junior colleges; one in 1944 for William Jewell's centennial; another in 1946 for Southwest and Hannibal; the ill-fated \$12,000,000 effort in 1961; an expansively confident ten-year projection by Dr. Earl Harding in 1964, designed to meet college needs through Cooperative Program growth; the designating of 50% of Cooperative Program receipts above \$5,000,000 to the colleges for 1972-76; the distribution of money chiefly according to enrollment from 1976 onward; annual \$100,000 allocations to Christian higher education for capital and maintenance needs for twelve years beginning in 1978. While coming nowhere near to meeting the full financial needs of their schools, Missouri Baptists have nevertheless been far more generous than most denominations in providing support to Christian higher education. It is an admirable record, the envy of Christian colleges of other faiths.

If the Depression created an educational "system," prosperity and institutional pride were soon to destroy it. Two new junior colleges were formed in 1947, Moark Baptist College at West Plains and Missouri Baptist College at Popular Bluff. Neither received support from the General Association, and neither survives. Southwest became a senior college in 1964 with warm Convention support and took the name "university" in 1980 with less enthusiastic backing. Hannibal-LaGrange talked about a "School of Theology" during the 1940's, added senior college programs in the 1970's, and was recognized as a senior college in 1981. Missouri Baptist College came into being in the 1960's with full Convention approval and strong St. Louis

support. Baptists were again finding themselves with more than they could say grace over, or at least more than they could pay for.

And so, still further efforts were made at coordination. President Willard Bright appointed a Baptist Education Study Committee in 1966 to review the colleges and their needs, the membership including two pastors who would later head Missouri Baptist schools, Frank Kellogg and Thomas S. Field. This committee recommended better communication and coordination and suggested the possibility of a single Missouri Baptist university system, an idea originally proposed by Pope Yeaman in 1898. They further recommended a Division of Higher Education for the executive board and a consultant to advise on further development of a united system of denominational education. Another such committee, headed by Dr. Nelson Duke ten years later, gave superb formulation to the purposes of Christian higher education, defining relationships between the schools and the Convention under the rubric, "Baptist Colleges and . . . Convention: Laborers Together With God." The forceful statement is printed in each year's Convention *Annual* and *Book of Reports*. The "Duke Committee" also recommended employment of a staff person to work toward cooperation among colleges and with the Convention, a proposal at first adopted by the executive board, then reconsidered and defeated. Past editor of the *Word and Way*, Dr. H. H. McGinty, in an editorial of November 17, 1977, lamented the overlapping of programs, the competition, and the "tug of war" for funds which he saw among the schools, likening the situation to conditions which "existed sixty years ago." Editor Bob Terry on December 8 editorialized that such a staff person to coordinate college programs "is necessary if Missouri Baptists are ever to relate to a program of Christian Higher Education rather than to individual and sometimes competing institutions."

By 1982 the issue of coordination was still unresolved, though the Inter Agency Relations Committee of the executive board was making worthy efforts at achieving credible and consistent reporting, if not at shaping joint programs.

The 1966-68 Education Study Committee introduced to formal Convention thinking the issue which increased in importance as government became more and more a part of everyday routines. The committee disapproved of direct government grants to institutions, while conditionally endorsing loans, grants to students, and research or service contracts. Shortly thereafter, when the Missouri Student Grant program became law, the issue heated up and the executive board asked Dr. Hugh Wamble (head of its Christian Life Commission) and Reverend A. L. Palmer (head of its College Committee) to seek counsel on whether to test the law in court. The executive board was not willing, however, to file suit itself or to provide funding for litigation. The suit was filed, as *Americans United vs. Rogers*, ultimately yielding a decision that the Student Grant law is constitutional.

The Convention appointed a Special Study Committee on Baptist Colleges and Public Aid, hoping to unravel the issues. While they were still working, another suit was filed, this time alleging that the constitutionally-acceptable law was being *administered* in an unconstitutional way. This suit included William Jewell and Southwest Baptist, whose students were receiving the grants, among the defendants. It all became very complicated, with Baptist leaders suing Baptist colleges; the executive board, caught in the middle, “expressed full confidence in its committee.” That committee and its successor, a Committee on Public Aid and Government Involvement, described the trend “toward increasing involvement of government without respect to whether the agency is receiving government funds or not.” The report of the latter committee, chaired by Reverend Arnold Bickel, was adopted by the Convention in 1979. It said, in part,

Use of government funds by an institution or agency of the Missouri Baptist Convention shall be in keeping with the nature and purpose of that institution. No government funds shall be accepted that divert an institution from its distinctive Baptist nature and purpose.

The trustees of each agency were charged with implementing this policy.

In 1976 the issue of ownership of the institutions came up again, as it had done at least twice before in the history of Missouri Baptists, and the outcome was the same: Reverend Bart Tichenor, minister and attorney, reported that the institutions were not owned by the Convention, but that a deep and abiding covenant relationship exists between the churches and the schools and agencies they have founded. Moving the issue from legalism to relationship seemed satisfying to most Baptists, as it had been in past decades.

The next year saw a significant theological issue come to the floor for debate, for just the second or third time in Convention history, when a messenger proposed a resolution condemning unbiblical teaching in Baptist colleges. The background was an on-going debate in the Southern Baptist Convention over theories of Scriptural inspiration, a debate which had led to the dismissal of Dr. Ralph Elliott from the faculty of Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in 1962 and the withdrawal of a Genesis-Exodus volume of the *Broadman Bible Commentary* in 1970. Further impetus was supplied by the personnel and personality dispute alluded to in the discussion of William Jewell College, earlier in this chapter. The resolution to condemn was not sustained by the 1977 convention, but an instruction to the colleges introduced by Reverend Ron Moseley in 1978 won firm endorsement. It exhorted trustees

to assure that colleges receiving our support only employ, or continue the employment of faculty members who believe in the inspiration of the whole Bible, the inerrancy of the original manuscripts, the existence of a personal devil and a literal hell, the actual existence of a primeval couple named Adam and Eve, the literal oc-

currence of the miracles as recorded in the Bible, the virgin birth and bodily resurrection, and personal return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The tone of the resolution is similar to that of the interdenominational “five points of Fundamentalism” of 1895, noted in Chapter VI, though the substitutionary theory of the Atonement is omitted in Reverend Moseley’s formulation and some other dogmas are added. The resolution did not infringe on the autonomy of any pastor or church, however, and its sentiments were clearly and resoundingly those of the messengers to the convention.

In response, the trustees of the various colleges conducted their investigations on their campuses, and a joint statement from the four schools—with individual narrations from each institution—was presented to the 1979 convention in Raytown. Chairman Rudy Pulido spoke for the Inter-Agency Relations Committee and executive board in commending the colleges for their response to the concerns expressed, and Dr. Nelson Duke moved that the Convention receive the report as a “sufficient response.” Messengers voted affirmatively and were challenged to support their colleges with prayers, gifts, and students. It was clear that both the Convention and the colleges wanted to maintain doctrinal integrity and close working relationships.

Several of the issues—ownership, public aid, theological integrity, level of programs, degree of cooperation—relate directly to the reliance of Baptists on trustees to operate the schools and agencies. Reverend Bill Dudley of Moberly spoke for many at the 1979 convention when he successfully moved that

we affirm to all self-appointed committees, individuals, the Executive Board of the Missouri Baptist Convention and the Inter-Agency Relations Committee of the Executive Board the right of the duly elected trustees of each of our four Baptist colleges to administer the internal affairs of their particular institution.

Reverend Moseley echoed that sentiment in 1980 when he sought greater freedom for the Hannibal-LaGrange board, and Reverend Werner Strick stated it most vividly in the same session: Missouri Baptists should, he said, “trust the trustees, fix the funds, adopt the resolutions, and see where we go.”

Viewed from the largest and wisest perspective, these many efforts on the part of Missouri Baptist to define relationships, procedures, and parameters are expressions of love and support for their institutions. The relationship between churches and colleges, in particular, is a mutually sustaining one.

Baptists know that they could not see a vision of their world so clearly, nor witness to their world so ably, if it were not for their colleges and seminaries.

In crossing frontiers of their world, Missouri Baptists rely on their schools, probably more deeply than they know.

## Notes For Chapter 8

<sup>1</sup>Duane Meyer, *The Heritage of Missouri— A History* (St. Louis, 1963), p. 503.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 503-505.

<sup>3</sup>Clifton E. Olmstead, *Religion in America, Past and Present* (Englewood Cliffs, 1961), p. 135.

<sup>4</sup>Actually, the strongest Baptist school in Missouri from 1934 to 1949 was Stephens College in Columbia, though it was receiving no money from the state denomination during most of that time. It had, in 1935, what a panel of visiting experts called "the most vital and effective" program of religious education of any college in the country in its Burrall Bible Class ministry. The Burrall Class registered 3,600 of the 4,200 students studying in Columbia, including those at the state university, and it could not seat all who wanted to attend on any Sunday. It conducted a daily vespers program for Stephens girls, had a Sunrise Broadcast Service at 7:30 on Sunday morning, and sponsored a fine choir.

In 1944 Stephens had 2,170 students, as compared with about 335 civilians at William Jewell, 300 at Southwest Baptist, and 200 at Hannibal-LaGrange. The college was fiscally strong and nationally respected. Hugh Stephens, of its board of trustees, was seeking some way of defining Stephens as a "Baptist" college in General Association listings, even though the denomination was not providing money; Mr. Stephens argued that by history and by desire the school was Baptist. No agreements were reached, however, and after 1949 the college no longer offered reports to the denomination.

<sup>5</sup>Much of the data for this narrative of Missouri Baptist College history, as well as for some of the Hannibal-LaGrange history, is taken from L. A. Foster's "A History of Missouri Baptist College, The College That Had To Be" (MSS), undated. Dr. Foster served as president of both institutions.

*“They talk about a simple Gospel, and it is—I mean, a little child can understand it. But living it out in our kind of world is something else again. Like, Jesus said ‘Go teach’—and look at what’s happened: hundreds of thousands of Sunday schools and Vacation Bible Schools and study courses and colleges and seminaries and things like that. And He said to care for the sick and needy—and so there’s giant hospitals and old folks’ homes and children’s homes and programs to get rid of hunger. It all costs millions—maybe billions—of dollars, and there’s a big complicated organization behind each thing, and other big complicated organizations to connect all the different things together. And all of that just to do simple things Jesus said to do, and do them in our big old complicated world.*

*“It’s a simple Gospel, all right. But I’ll tell you what: that simple Gospel is not as simple as simple people like to think!”*

*. . . a preacher named Frank*

## Frontiers Of The Heart: Ministering To Missouri’s People 1934–1984

Though some will resent its being said, there was a lot of the Missouri Baptist in Harry S. Truman, and there are a lot of Harry S. Truman’s qualities in Missouri Baptists.

To be sure, he was a political figure, not a religious leader. He once told the Southern Baptist Convention, meeting in Kansas City, that he had been to Democratic Party and Baptist conventions, “and to tell you the truth, there’s not much difference.” But in twentieth century America, when politics and economics have been so split off from religion, Truman’s stock didn’t stand

so high with lots of preachers. After all, he said “Damn.” In public.

In the Middle Ages he might have been a bishop.

But Truman had what the Puritans had—a spiritual horsepower that would never quit.

He told the truth. When the press called him, “Give ’em hell Harry,” he replied, “I don’t give ’em hell, I just tell the truth and they think it’s hell.”

And he was tough. “If you can’t stand the heat,” he said, “get out of the kitchen.”

And he was willing to face hard places and hard decisions. “The buck stops here,” read the sign on his desk.

And he would fight, regardless of the odds, and usually win. He didn’t mind being Tom Pendergast’s third choice to run for Senate, or being considered a sure loser to Thomas E. Dewey in the 1948 Presidential campaign. He won both times, despite what the polls—he called them “the sleeping polls”—predicted. The picture taken of him at the Elms Hotel in Excelsior Springs, holding up a Chicago *Daily Tribune* banner reading “Dewey Defeats Truman,” will forever be a joy to those who like to see the underdog succeed.

And he spoke for simple values and personal integrity, doing his best as a Senator in Washington to clean up wartime corruption in business and government.

And he loved Missouri, gladly offering a poor rendition of “The Missouri Waltz” on the piano for whoever would listen.

And he stood by his friends and family, even when it hurt him. He invited so many Missourians to serve with him in Washington that at the Alfalfa Club in Washington in September, 1945, a satire was sung in his honor:

Don’t meet them in St. Louie, Louie,  
Meet them here not there,  
When the dear old White House called them,  
They dug up their fare.

They boarded Greyhound busses—  
Weren’t they the lucky cusses?  
You can’t meet them in St. Louie, Louie,  
They’re all here, not there.

And he had a large vision of what needed to be done in the world, based on some simple and fundamental principles.

And he cared for the “little people,” the needy and the dispossessed, for whom he wanted a “Fair Deal.”

And he loved the farms and the small towns and his walks around Independence.

And he said that he based all the principles of his life on his study of the Bible, a book he had read through several times while still a teenager.

And he made lots of mistakes. As they said at the time, “To err is Truman.”

He was the “last of the village Presidents,” and he was one of the first to make decisions that affected the whole world. This blend—the vision of the whole world, and a concern for the needs of folks close to home—has been a special quality of Missouri Baptists in the last fifty years. They share this trait with the one person from their number who has served their nation as its President, just as they share the determination and honesty and toughness and conservatism—and sometimes a proneness to mistakes and to mule-headed stubbornness.

In Chapter VIII we looked at the world vision of Missouri Baptists as it developed and expressed itself in the twentieth century. In this chapter we consider the ministry to Missouri’s own people, including expressions of concern for “the least of these my brethren.” The denomination after 1934 continued shaping its internal organization to increase its efficiency and to meet a larger array of needs in the churches and society. Baptists improved their hospital ministries greatly, though in fact the hospitals became self-sufficient and related to the Convention out of heritage and commitment rather than out of financial need. Baptists stood by their home for senior citizens and the children’s home as both adapted to changing trends in social structures and governmental activity. Baptists took a role in promoting racial justice, though they were less activist than most other denominations. They caused their influence to be felt on many social and moral issues through Convention resolutions and political persuasion. They evangelized, seeking to change society by changing people. The denomination was organized as a “Central Society” in 1834 primarily to alleviate the religious “destitution” of the state, “destitution” meaning then the absence of churches and Gospel preaching. But “destitution” takes many forms, and churchmen nearly 150 years later were being true to the original mission in seeking to minister to all spiritual and personal needs of people in their own state.

#### *Times of Stress and Change*

All of these actions by Missouri Baptists did not take place in a vacuum; their relevance, in fact, is rooted in the enormous changes that came crashing into American society after 1934, when the denomination had observed its centennial.

Missourians were just climbing their way out of the Depression, with WPA (Works Progress Administration) gangs and CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps—payment at \$30 a month, of which \$22 had to be sent to dependents back home) camps at the colleges and elsewhere, when the attack on Pearl Harbor mobilized the entire nation for battle. The 1940’s brought war and its aftermath, including the first tentative steps in getting used to the idea of living under threat of nuclear holocaust. This time, America took her place of

leadership in the world rather than retreating into isolationism. Remembering the chaos at the end of World War I when the United States would not enter the League of Nations, the Senate voted United Nations membership by a margin of 89-2. President Truman had to stand up to former allies, the Russian Communists, beginning in 1946: "I'm tired of babying the Soviets," he wrote in a private note. Winston Churchill, in a speech at Fulton, spoke of an "iron curtain" descending on the European continent, and the "Cold War" began. Truman's "Fair Deal" continued Roosevelt's "New Deal" of bigger and bigger government, seeking to meet the needs of citizens in an increasingly complex and difficult society.

In the 1950's, the nation was troubled by the Korean "police action," the Cold War having turned hot. But people "liked Ike" more and more as the Eisenhower era brought peace and prosperity. On May 17, 1954, the Supreme Court declared for integration, which led to such tragedies as the Montgomery bus boycott and the occupation of Central High School in Little Rock by paratroopers. It was 1957, Russia had orbited the first Sputnik satellites, and the world looked on in wonder as "the Soviets were occupying outer space while American troops were occupying the high school in Little Rock."<sup>1</sup> "Rocket fever" swept the nation, and it was the desire to make our schools first-rate again to compete with Russian scientists, as well as the effort to achieve social justice, that led to massive government involvement in education. The cities and suburbs grew. A religious revival swept the nation, led by Billy Graham; prayer breakfasts were held in capitals, "In God We Trust" was adopted as the nation's official motto, and religion was sanctioned as part of "the American Way of Life." Norman Vincent Peale, Fulton J. Sheen, and Rabbi Joshua Liebman were offering interdenominational "peace of mind." Blacks were challenging segregation in the churches. Pope John XXIII called the Second Vatican Council in 1959, seeking to renew the Catholic church.

The 1960's saw even more change, at even more rapid pace. Despite the recurring bigotry of a national election with a Catholic candidate, John F. Kennedy was elected in 1960 and energized America with his call to greatness, until his tragic assassination in 1963. The Cold War escalated, as illustrated by a Berlin Wall, a Bay of Pigs fiasco, and a Cuban missile crisis. The civil rights movement reached full force, with sit-ins, freedom rides, White Citizens' Councils, bombings, and racial murders. The 1964 Civil Rights Act brought the government again into institutions on behalf of social justice. Disturbances were everywhere: the riots of the late 1960's in black urban ghettoes, the beginning of a women's liberation movement, the assassinations of Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy, protests by college students against the Vietnam war, the rise of the counterculture with its drugs and communes and new cults. The church was dealing not only with these issues, but also with a "death of God" theology, "situation ethics," and

“the new morality.” Troubles on earth were partially offset by successes in the sky: John H. Glenn, Jr., was the first American to orbit the earth, in February of 1962; and on July 20, 1969, Neil A. Armstrong took “one small step for a man” but “a giant step for mankind” as the first man to set foot on the moon.

The 1970’s were a time of apparent “disillusionment, cynicism, and a groping for direction.”<sup>2</sup> The scars of Vietnam, cut deeper by the spectacle of Watergate and the first forced resignation of an American President, led to bewilderment in many quarters. The energy crisis and dangers to the environment seemed bigger than anyone or everyone, and people tended to turn inward toward personal rather than social concerns. Social activism faded. Most churches suffered membership losses. Various “technologies of the spirit” made their appearance—biofeedback, Transcendental Meditation, Oriental disciplines—along with such cultists as Reverend Sun Myung Moon and his Unification Church.

Never in history had so many things changed so rapidly and so unpredictably. Change itself had changed! Missouri Baptists faced many challenges in deciding where they should be going, as well as in determining how to get there.

#### *Organization for Ministry: Developments in the Denominational Structure*

There is a certain comfort in tinkering with the machinery. One can shut out the big world as one perfects his own little system and tidies his own little workshop. When one is seeking to “smile through the apocalypse,” it is a tempting activity.

Missouri Baptists resisted this temptation, however, as they continued to develop their denominational organization throughout this era. They also resisted the temptation toward excessive bureaucratization, a problem which plagued several other denominations. Their democratic processes helped in this regard: church officials who must lead a people by persuasion and example are more apt to be responsive than those who have authority over their followers.

The 1935 General Association meeting in Joplin hailed “the beginning of our second century” by pointing out the broader scope of denominational activity in the state. The district missionaries were no longer spending all their time in evangelistic preaching and in raising their own salaries, as had been the necessity in earlier days. They were now working with settled churches, leading them to teach the Bible to their members and to train in stewardship, Christian service, and methods of witnessing. “Success” was now being measured not only in baptisms but also in the strength and commitment of the churches. This is not to say that evangelism was taking a secondary role, as we shall see later in this chapter; it is rather to say that evangelism was being extended, undergirded, and amplified by education.

The 1930's also saw the acceleration of a movement that would bear rich fruit through the next half century—the strong promotion of the Cooperative Program in the churches and agencies. In 1937 General Superintendent Edgar Godbold reported that for “the first time we have recommended to you an adequate Cooperative Program plan for our causes and institutions.” Dr. Godbold encouraged seasons of prayer and fasting as preparation for stewardship decisions, and he must have been right in his urgings. The spirit of unity, efficient concentration of effort, and vitality of ministry created by the Cooperative Program plan of giving have been the envy of many other ecclesiastical groups. Though the churches grew somewhat restive under the pushing of several distinct denominational promotions, asking in 1938 “that the . . . Southern Baptist Convention . . . give us relief from the pressure of standardizing agencies and program makers,” orderliness was usually achieved by such devices as a “Committee on Coordination and Correlation” (as in 1938) or a “Church Channeling Division” (as in 1970) or an “Office of Program Coordination” (as in 1974).

In 1942 Dr. Godbold became president of Louisiana College, and Dr. T. W. Medearis succeeded him as General Superintendent. Dr. Medearis chafed under wartime restrictions, calling the churches great morale builders for the nation and arguing that “tires and gasoline should be made available for the work of the Lord.” But he certainly did not let such restrictions keep him from advancing Baptist work!

In the basic work of improving Bible knowledge through the Sunday schools and skills of Christian living through “Training Union” (a new name in 1935, which like its successor “Church Training” indicates the appeal of this program to all age groups and not just to the young persons originally served by Baptist Young People’s Union), active promotions enlisted new people and trained them according to high standards. When Mr. J. C. Hockett retired in 1944, after twenty-three years of building Sunday school work, he could look with satisfaction on a state in which virtually every church had Sunday school ministries and most had Training Unions. It was a far cry from just forty years before, when H. E. Truex was lamenting the lack of acceptance of the Sunday school program. Active promotion of Sunday school and Church Training work continued through the years, with special emphasis on leadership development and special outreach ministries. Some able leaders, including L. A. Foster (who was Sunday school secretary for six years before assuming the presidency of Hannibal-LaGrange College), Arthur Hicks, and Paul Thompson, have led the work.

The ministry to college students of Missouri, likewise, showed progress in Dr. Medearis’ era, despite there being fewer students on college campuses during World War II. Reverend W. O. Vaught had an outstanding career as state student secretary from 1935 to 1941, being described as “unquestionably one of the greatest student leaders the South has ever produced.” In

1940 he reported twenty-three Baptist Student Unions in the state, compared with ten in 1935, and he reported active participation in a state B.S.U. convention, prayer services and vespers on campuses, revival teams, and Christian growth through "Master's Minority Covenants." When he resigned to go as pastor to Bethany Church in Kansas City, Charles M. Roselle succeeded him. Thus began an impressive line of student secretaries who have served Missouri well, including A. Donald Bell, Elgin Lee, and Charles Johnson. A campaign in 1947 for \$100,000 to build a student center at University and Hitt Streets in Columbia was successful, the center and chair of Bible being dedicated in September of 1951. Similar centers and Bible-teaching ministries were established at other campuses, ultimately serving all the state schools and several private and junior colleges. Charles Johnson in 1975 mapped out a three-point strategy of extending a full ministry of Missouri Baptists throughout the state university and college system, reaching into the metropolitan complexes with active programs, and making services available to many smaller colleges of the state. That program was well advanced when in 1982 Johnson went to Nashville as student secretary for the Southern Baptist Convention.

In 1944, Dr. Medearis saw a second Baptist Book Store ministry begun, this one at 3709 Washington in St. Louis. By 1950 a store in Jefferson City had been added to those in Kansas City and St. Louis, and audio-visual and church library services were being offered to the congregations of the state. The concept of a Missouri Baptist Foundation was under study by 1944, as well. It was organized on June 28, 1946, and grew steadily, reporting assets of \$1,355, 797 in 1960, \$7,090,135 in 1970, and \$13,898,935 in 1980. In 1950 a new Church Music Department began giving encouragement and assistance to church programs, using music festivals, study courses, conferences, and associational meetings to develop awareness of music as both a means of worship and a tool for evangelism. Mr. Dale Brubaker was church music secretary for nineteen years, being succeeded by Mr. Bob Woolley in 1972.

As Missouri Baptists came out of the war and rebuilding periods of the 1940's, they were showing strength in the chief areas of their work together, in 1950 reporting new highs of 21,082 baptisms and \$843,128 in Cooperative Program receipts.

Baptists decided in 1947 to move their state headquarters from Kansas City to Jefferson City, completing the transfer to a new two-story building on Adams Street in July of 1949. As the central services of the denomination grew, more and more room was needed. A decision was made in 1964 to build a new Baptist Building, but in 1969 the Convention instead decided to purchase for \$586,156 the Missouri Motor Hotel at 400 East High Street, remodeling it into a headquarters facility both functional and beautiful.

Dr. Earl Harding came from a succession of good Missouri pastorates to succeed Medearis in 1954 as General Superintendent, beginning a most pro-

ductive nineteen-year ministry of administration. Several offices and departments formed during his tenure reflected new techniques of analysis, a respect for professionalism, and an enlarged scope of service. An office of promotion and publicity, for example, began in 1957 to handle media relations on a paid and professional basis, replacing the excellent volunteer work performed by Reverend Alvin Hause and others. The office also produced pamphlets, calendars of activities, statistical and annual reports, and exhibits at State Fairs and other public functions. Dale Carnegie, a native of Nodaway County, would have approved these efforts to "win friends and influence people." In 1966 a department of construction was available to assist church building programs, as was a church bond department. Survey, statistics, and research units served both the denominational headquarters and inquiring churches or associations. In 1956 the Convention authorized negotiations leading to the purchase of Windermere Baptist Assembly, a "central assembly" on the Lake of the Ozarks which would replace or augment "the state assembly at Hollister, and the sectional assemblies at Baptist Hill, Chillicothe, and Van Buren." Year by year development of Windermere as a denominational resource has been steady, under the leadership of the Arthur Koehlers, and by 1980 the assembly was serving more than 20,000 guests a year.

The issue of church-denominational alignments came to the fore again in 1959 at the 125th anniversary session of the "Missouri Baptist Convention," now sporting a new name since the change a year earlier from "Missouri Baptist General Association." Central Baptist Seminary in Kansas City, Kansas, which had for some years served and been governed by both American (Northern) and Southern Baptists, now aligned herself "definitely and positively" with the American Baptist Convention. (Midwestern Baptist Seminary, it will be remembered, had opened in Kansas City, Missouri, in 1958 as a Southern Baptist school.) Also, a small "Missouri Convention of American Baptists" was organized in May, 1959, including seventeen dually-aligned congregations among its membership. The Missouri Baptist Convention in response urged single alignment for all churches in its fellowship, in 1961 voting to admit no new dually aligned groups to its fold. This decision unexpectedly created considerable stress for the Convention in the early 1970's when Christ Memorial Church of St. Louis, a predominantly-white congregation which had united with the National Baptist Convention (Black) as a witness for racial equality, wanted at the same time to continue membership in the Missouri Baptist Convention and was denied admittance despite Convention appreciation for their stand.

By 1970 the denomination seemed to be thriving, with membership of more than half a million, Cooperative Program gifts of nearly \$4,000,000 and strong programs in all the institutions and missions causes. But stresses were showing, and they found focus in the leadership style of Dr. Harding.

One can trace through the records of the 1960's an increased emphasis on "big-name" personalities in the Convention, centering not only in the executive secretary himself but also in some elected presidents and "important" ministers who came year by year to make convention appearances as preachers. With upwards of 2,000 persons in the meetings, a mass psychology—sometimes perhaps a mob psychology—began to replace earlier, more personal fellowship. Standing ovations were frequently accorded Dr. Harding and others, just as murmurs and occasional jeers attended persons or speeches the messengers did not like. Covert "political campaigns" were sometimes waged for Convention offices, particularly the presidency, and a motion by Dr. Paul Lambert in 1965 to have officers nominated by the nominating committee "to prevent any political campaigns" was not successful. This is not to say that Convention leaders sought adulation; it is to say that such attitudes were expressed by large crowds and were accepted.

But mass approval is fickle, as the executive secretary found to his dismay; and when some apparent irregularities surfaced in Convention accounts, irregularities which could bear the interpretation that denominational funds had temporarily been appropriated for personal uses, reactions were swift and severe. Before the matter could be discussed on the Convention floor, Dr. Harding died of a heart attack on August 12, 1973. The 1973 meeting with First Church of Columbia heard many corrective motions, including a forward-looking one by Mr. Mel Carnahan of Rolla giving guidelines to a Structure and Reorganization Committee to correct "the difficulties, deficiencies, and defects experienced recently," and one by Reverend Don Wideman of North Kansas City that the executive board "undertake the preparation of a long-range plan for the achievement of the stated purpose of this Convention."

Structure and reorganization were clearly needed, and the committee charged with recommending it had excellent leadership in the person of Mr. Gerald Sprong, business executive from St. Joseph. Mr. Sprong's committee presented sweeping recommendations at the 1974 meeting in Joplin and the 1975 gathering in Cape Girardeau. A new constitution and by-laws were offered, as was a specific "Business and Financial Plan"—the products of years of business and ecclesiastical acumen, hours of conferences and hearings, and months of work as a committee. Dr. Hugh Wamble, then president of the convention, did not agree with several provisions of the new documents and chose the convention floor as the arena for negotiating changes. He was an effective leader, and several significant changes were made. Though the Convention found itself voting some provisions that contradicted what it had voted earlier, the necessary reconciliations were ultimately made and, with modifications year by year as dictated by experience, the governing documents brought new orderliness and controls to denominational work. From 1976 on, great care has been taken to achieve a sense of

openness in Convention business. Detailed reports on budgets, sources of income, purposes of expenditures, procedures, job descriptions, and decisions have been either offered without the asking or available for the asking.

After an excellent term of service by Dr. Thomas Nelson as interim executive secretary, Dr. Rheubin South came in 1975 from an Arkansas pastorate to lead Missouri Baptist work. A spirit of unity and trust were renewed, perhaps best symbolized at the 1976 convention in Independence when President Nelson Duke offered a message on "Baptist Togetherness," messengers sang "We Are One In the Bond of Love" and "A Sweet, Sweet Spirit," and Dr. South led in prayer. That spirit continued in a "Good News Missouri" and "Bold Mission Taiwan" campaigns, discussed in the next chapter, and in successful efforts to repay a \$1,040,000 debt to the building fund left over from the previous days of difficulty. A long-standing and sometimes rancorous Convention debate on increased lay participation found some resolution in the 1976 meeting with the election of Mr. Milton Morales, well-known and highly-respected layman of Independence, as Convention president, and later in the voting of a stipulation that no more than two-thirds of the membership of any board will be either laymen or ministers—thereby assuring at least one-third membership by laymen on every board. (Some sentiment remained however, for scheduling conventions on weekends, as had been the pattern in the denomination from 1834 until about 1886, so that more "working laymen" might participate.) "Freedom and Fellowship"—the theme of the 1976 convention—sounded a theme for a new day in the denomination as well. As months passed, the great work which Dr. Harding had done in his nineteen years as executive secretary was again given full credence and recognition.

Denominational organization as of 1980 was patterned as follows: the executive board maintained five standing committees to carry forward the cooperative work of the churches: Administrative, Church Development, Mission Development, Communications, and Inter-Agency Relations. These committees were prescribed in the new by-laws presented by the Structure and Reorganization group, as were the four major divisions of the Baptist Building staff: Church Development, Missions Development, Business Services, and Communications. Some sense of the large range of programs led by the denominational staff can be grasped from a listing of the areas of responsibility for each division:

*Church Development* oversees Sunday school work, Church Training, Church Music, Brotherhood, Woman's Missionary Union, and programs in Church Administration and Church Recreation.

*Missions Development* works with the associational directors of missions; language ministries—including work with ethnic groups, particularly Hispanics and

Asians, in St. Louis and Kansas City; interfaith witness; programs for refugees; small church programs; church extension; Christian social ministries; special mission ministries and community and family ministries—including work with single adults, senior adults, the handicapped, nursing home residences, prisoners, and vacationers at resorts; and chaplaincy programs.

*Business Services* provides support in accounting; annuity and insurance; church planning, and finance; data processing; printing; and the administration of Win-dermere Baptist Assembly.

*Communications* monitors “legislative and moral issues of concern to Missouri Baptist churches,” researching and lobbying and mobilizing public opinion to achieve desired political action; and it helps create “the immense amount” of printed materials and advertising used by departments of the executive board staff. Some of the same personnel, under a different organizational arrangement, publish the *Word and Way*.

The ministry of Evangelism is directed from a separate office, reporting directly to the executive director—attesting the importance of this work to Missouri Baptists. Cooperative Program and stewardship promotion has the same relationship, as does program coordination.

Trends in Missouri Baptist Convention life of the last twenty years can be seen in the following chart:

	1960	1970	1980
Number of churches	1,771	1,835	1,940
Number of members	443,168	515,383	593,049
Number of baptisms	17,448	15,418	20,574
Sunday school membership	345,978	333,583	333,045
Training Union/Church Training membership	104,985	95,797	73,910
W.M.U. and auxiliary membership	72,905	59,875	49,052
Brotherhood and R.A. membership	25,178	18,278	17,507
Cooperative Program gifts	\$ 2,450,711	\$ 3,919,082	\$ 9,050,156
All Missions gifts (including designated)	\$ 4,237,438	\$ 6,733,044	\$17,691,737
Total gifts for all purposes	\$22,293,105	\$38,831,139	\$94,690,379

Just as Missouri and America have seen astounding increases in population and complexity of social organization since 1834, when Baptists of the state first banded together, so have denominational ministries increased in number, scope, and complexity of organization. The sheer size of annual Convention meetings is illustrative: a denomination that in 1834 could convene in a little rural meeting house by 1980 had to seek auditoriums that could seat 2,000 persons in cities that could provide motels and restaurants and parking for those

persons, and 6,000 square feet of space for displays and promotion. Officials from other denominations sometimes speak of the “genius for organization and promotion” that Southern Baptists exhibit; they doubtless see also that such “genius” is motivated by a strong commitment to evangelism and to meeting the needs of an ever-more-complicated world.

#### *Current News and Historical Records*

“Long negotiations for the purchase of the *Word and Way*” were completed in 1945, when the journal was purchased from The Western Baptist Publishing Company for \$17,500. Since that time the newspaper has supported the work of the denomination not as a cooperating independent entity, but rather as an owned subsidiary. Dr. H. H. McGinty became editor in 1947, after thirteen years as pastor of First Church in Cape Girardeau, and he served for twenty momentous years. He saw subscriptions grow to 67,000, more than double their number in 1945. In 1967 Dr. Ross Edwards came to the editorship from a twenty-year pastorate at Swope Park Church in Kansas City. In the turbulent months surrounding the effort to clarify Dr. Harding’s relationship to denominational funds, the *Word and Way* and its editor came under some attack, a motion being offered at the 1973 convention to search out an editor “with journalistic experience” and, when such a person should be found, to declare the editorship vacant for the replacement. A movement grew to have the newspaper under a separate board rather than under the executive director and executive board, proponents saying that this would give the journal more independence and more credibility with church members. The Convention decided, however, to keep the newspaper integrally related to its denominational structure and to have it report to the executive director through a Communications Committee of the board.

In due course, Dr. Edwards chose to retire, and he was succeeded in 1975 by Dr. Bob Terry, who came from the editorial staff of the *Western Recorder* in Kentucky. Dr. Terry emphasized the reporting of Missouri Baptist news as well as general denominational stories and promotion. By 1980 the *Word and Way* was giving more column inches to news of its own state than any other major Baptist paper and had won many awards, including recognition as the best news publication in the Southern Baptist Convention. Subscriptions, which had lagged somewhat early in the decade, were by 1980 again at a high mark of 67,684.

While the *Word and Way* was both reporting and making current history, the Historical Society was helping Baptists preserve their records and appreciate their heritage. An appropriation was requested in 1954 to enable a history of Missouri Baptists to be written for the 125th anniversary in 1959, but regrettably that volume did not materialize. Persons attending the 1956 convention in Cape Girardeau made a pilgrimage to the location of Old Bethel Church, near Jackson, and found inspiration for high rhetoric

at the historical site, surrounded by the burial places of many of those, and members of their families, who planted the Baptist faith west of the Mississippi River, and under the towering trees that brought sacred memories of redeeming grace as proclaimed by our forefathers, and where in 1806 there were 15 Baptists, in 1906, two hundred six thousand Baptists and now there are 410,000 Baptists in our great state. . . .

The memories connected with Old Bethel made it not surprising that at the 1969 meeting in Cape Girardeau, host pastor W. T. Holland invited the Convention to return in 1984 to celebrate its sesquicentennial.

A major advance occurred in 1962 when the voluntary Historical Society yielded to a Historical Commission of nine persons elected by the Convention, operating with a modest budget from the Convention. Missouri Baptists were active in providing monographs for the first Southern Baptist Encyclopedia in 1956, and in 1970 the Commission offered volume 6 of *Missouri Baptist Biography*, edited by H. I. Hester. Volume 5 had appeared in 1925, and the updating was sorely needed. Issues of a *Journal of Missouri Baptist History* were released in 1971, 1972, and 1976. Under the chairmanship of Reverend Douglas McGlaughlin of Elsberry, the Commission in 1978 conducted a statewide conference in Oral History, directed by Dr. David O. Moore; held a 1979 conference at Windermere on "Appreciating Our Baptist Heritage"; and in 1980 set plans in motion for a historical volume and program to celebrate the sesquicentennial anniversary of the "Baptist Central Society of Missouri."

In 1981 another major initiative was introduced at the St. Louis convention with the presentation of Dr. Adrian Lamkin as director of a new Center for Baptist Historical Studies at William Jewell College. This joint project of the Commission and the school brought the first professional, full-time leadership to the Convention's historical work.

Chairman McGlaughlin, in his 1976 report to the Convention, quoted Oliver Cromwell's self-answering question, "What are all histories but God manifesting himself?" By the time of their sesquicentennial, Missouri Baptists were seeking to preserve and present the records of God's "manifesting himself" through their fellowship.

#### *Benevolence: Ministries to Families, the Aged—and to Ministers*

God manifested himself in Christ by caring for those who were sick and needful of his help. Missouri Baptists have sought to minister in like spirit to people of their state through local church ministries and through their benevolent institutions.

"*Missouri Baptist Orphans Home*" gave its "Golden Anniversary Report" to the convention of 1936, the Home having been organized in 1883 and opened in 1886 by "a few good Baptist women in St. Louis." The report pointed with gratitude at the 6,500 children cared for physically and spiritu-

ally through five decades. As we saw in Chapter VI, the Home was managed and operated by women; in 1936 a place was made on the board for men—up to one-third of the membership—the women playfully assuring the General Association that they had “practically no objections” to this development.

In 1940 the Home was still a retreat-like, almost rural place which looked after orphans in residential cottages. A typical report indicated in 1944 that “a farm horse has been purchased and a wagon.” The Home cared for 163 children in 1940, using thirty-one foster homes as well as the campus. The annual budget of \$34,765 came from the Cooperative Program, birthday offerings in the churches, a Thanksgiving offering, and the annual Strawberry Festival, plus private gifts. A new vocational guidance program was beginning and a workshop was under construction; a newspaper—“The Messenger”—was published; and a Christian Education Fund was supporting youngsters from the Home who wanted to go to Baptist colleges (one was at Southwest Baptist and one at William Jewell.)

So the program continued for several years, with planting of a victory garden and ministering to “warphans” of World War II, regular improvements and additions in the facilities, the purchase of a farm, some advantageous business deals as St. Louis expanded and firms wished to lease land owned by the Home, all these activities supporting an essentially residential program. Appreciation was expressed to the local schools and to Fee Fee Church for their help, and reports of new programs in “Christian homemaking,” of music lessons for all the children, of a new swimming pool, and the like—often presented through such films as “Where Love Is” in 1954 and “These Are Your Children” in 1958—were happily received by Baptists through the state.

About 1960 a new turn was taken. Responding to changed patterns in society, the Home had more calls for help from older children and the victims of broken homes. Under the excellent leadership of Dr. Edgar E. Blake, the Home became a leader in foster home care programs: by 1961, the seventy-fifth anniversary year, it was providing services in group living, foster homes, ministries to unwed mothers, and adoption. It also had a western office in Kansas City and had extended the foster home program through the state. In 1970, 131 youngsters were in the Home, 183 were in foster homes, and ninety-four adoptions were arranged. A model day care center was instituted in the next year, again responding to societal changes which had created more single-parent families and more working mothers.

Reverend Howard Meyer succeeded Dr. Blake in 1974, and the programs expanded rapidly from residential care of children to statewide services for families. The first full-time psychologist, Dr. J. Tom Trimble, created as a ministry of the Home the Christian Psychological and Family Services, a counseling network with centers in thirteen Missouri cities. The 1976 report of the Home emphasized “preventive and therapeutic family and church

ministries,” indicating a considerably enlarged mission for what had once been an orphan’s residence. Unfortunately, expansion came too fast and with too much commitment of borrowed and reserve funds, and by 1978 the continued existence of the Home was in question. The *Word and Way* for May 25, 1978, reported cuts of fifteen staff positions and the elimination of the day care program. Reverend Meyer was quoted as saying,

Hind sight is always 20–20. Had we been able to anticipate the [unexpected] renovation of the campus, we would not have purchased a new home for the administrator or committed memorial funds for a \$40,000 sports pavilion or built the new gazebo.

In 1979 less than 1% of the children served were orphan; most were over thirteen years of age, the victims of “emotional famine” and often of physical or sexual abuse. Only thirty-six were living at the Home itself, a campus that in the early 1900’s had been prepared to serve two hundred children. Reverend Raymond B. Kenison assumed the administrator’s role and was able to lead in the repaying of a major debt load by 1981. Christian Psychological and Family Services was separated from Home-sponsored programs, and though Reverend Tom Sneed spoke for the Convention in 1979 in expressing a need for a statewide Christian counseling service, no funding was made available at the time. Reverend Kenison and the board of the Home began setting new directions for the future, committed to the task “of providing the best possible services to children and their families with whom we are entrusted.”

The “*Home for Aged Baptists*” was in 1935 sold at the courthouse in Iron-ton, a victim of Depression debts. The efforts toward saving it, which we reviewed in Chapter VI, seemed of no avail.

The purchaser, however, was sympathetic to the ministry being provided at the Home, and a complex set of legal arrangements over a series of years finally restored the ministry to formal Baptist control. By 1940 the Home was operating in the black, paying off its debts, and making some improvements. A total of \$8,067 was received that year from the Cooperative Program toward operating expenses of \$25,253, with an Easter offering providing another \$10,619. A new dairy herd of Herefords and a Duroc swine herd enabled the Home to produce all its own milk, butter, beef, and pork. Hopes were expressed in the 1940 report toward completion of the top story of the main building.

The top story was not completed until 1953. In 1950 an average of 72 residents were in the home each day. “We haven’t a pay patient in the home, and none who have children who can and will take care of them,” said the annual report. Budget for the year was now \$45,650, of which \$32,000 came through the Cooperative Program. By 1959 average daily occupancy was 115 and a waiting list had begun.

The 1960's were a time of expansion for the Home, as for most institutions. A new building was completed in 1963, enabling care for twenty-five to forty more persons; construction of another new wing was approved in 1966; in 1976 a medical unit was begun, at an estimated cost of \$900,000. A proposal had been made to the General Association in 1953 that it consider establishing another home north of the Missouri River, and in 1969 Reverend Bill Wehmeyer renewed that proposal for a feasibility study. By that year, however, the mood of expansiveness in the Convention was shifting to one of stabilizing or retrenchment, and the study committee reported in 1970, "We are reaching the point where the Convention is becoming over institutionalized, with little increase in financial support available." No further steps were taken toward a second facility until the early 1980's.

Needs at "The Baptist Home"—the new name as of 1978—were many, for in 1981 the waiting list was sixty persons and the average waiting time eighteen months. Reverend Edward C. Goodwin had succeeded Reverend John H. Burney as superintendent in 1974, and he led the Home through its licensing under the Omnibus Nursing Home Act of 1980 and its reconsideration of its role in a time when government is more active in regulating and providing care to senior citizens. Longer life expectancy, lower assets of entering residents, inflation, and the cost of complying with government regulations were leading the board and Reverend Goodwin, in 1982, to study alternative financial arrangements and criteria for admission.

*Aid to Ministers* has been a concern of the denomination since well before the establishment of the "Missouri Baptist Ministers' Aid Society" in 1884. As we saw in Chapter VI, this local relief effort was subsumed under programs of the Annuity Board of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1930. The state Baptist body promoted participation by ministers in the retirement annuity program, encouraging churches to match their pastors' contributions and making contributions from the state treasury itself. Year by year the program expanded and improved, moving into various forms of disability and health insurance, and by 1980 the Annuity Board was paying out several million dollars a year in benefits to ministers and their families. The retirement program, like several other phases of organized Baptist life, was a "success."

Meanwhile, concern began to appear for assistance toward ministers who were experiencing crisis: those who wanted counseling, those who needed help in placement, those who had financial problems, and the like. In response to this need, Missouri Baptists in 1980 created the position of Church-Minister Relations Consultant, employing Reverend C. D. Butler of Senath to fill the post.

#### *Healing: Ministry through Hospitals*

As Missouri Baptists celebrate their sesquicentennial in 1984, they will also be noting the 100th anniversary of the "sanitarium" Dr. Will Mayfield found-

ed in 1884 in St. Louis. Baptists have sought to provide a healing ministry through this institution, through work for a few years at the Missouri State Sanatorium for tubercular patients in the mid-1940's, and through Baptist Memorial Hospital in Kansas City, which began operations in 1960.

*St. Louis—Missouri Baptist Hospital.* The 500-bed establishment on North Taylor Avenue struggled to get out of debt during the Depression years, finally announcing in 1942 that it was free and clear and could advance its "mighty ministry of healing." The hospital experienced the rapid escalation in medical costs that the nation felt throughout the last generation, a result of expensive technology and policies of pricing. In 1940 the hospital budget was \$377,168; in 1950, at still the same size, the hospital spent \$1,500,000; in 1960 the figure was \$3,220,365. Then it began to get costly. The \$4.45 per day patient cost of 1940 seems like fiction to the reader in the 1980's.

The hospital conducted a cadet nurse corps during World War II, gradually expanding its teaching programs to X-ray technology, medical technology, nursing, and residencies for physicians. A nursing home was completed in 1946 and a psychiatric unit in 1953.

By the diamond jubilee year, 1959, two major developments were taking place: the hospital was essentially self-sufficient through payments by patients and insurers, the Convention therefore no longer allocating operating funds; and the hospital was planning a new facility in west St. Louis County. In 1961 ground was broken for the new hospital on Ballas Road, near Interstate 270 and Highway 40, a carefully-planned structure featuring "every labor-saving and cost-reducing device, and Progressive Patient Care."

The hospital and the Convention came to a fraternal parting of the ways in 1966, after several years of discussions and at the request of the hospital, because of that institution's "increasing involvement with health, education and welfare programs of the federal government." The hospital pledged, graciously, to continue its service to the Children's Home and Home for the Aged, as well as its training program with Hannibal-LaGrange College. No report was filed with the Convention between 1967 and 1976, when administrator Norman McCann began again to foster the relationship between denomination and institution.

Reports of recent years have emphasized the benefits of high technology and the problems of high costs, as well as issues related to the role of government in health planning. An \$8,500,000 West Wing was completed in 1981, and as Missouri Baptist Hospital looked toward its centennial, it was offering a multi-faceted program of health care for St. Louis. The description of the hospital as a "healing, preaching, and teaching institution," offered in the 1958 report to the Convention, was being fulfilled admirably.

*Kansas City—Baptist Memorial Hospital,* on the other side of the state, admitted its first patient on January 20, 1960. Kansas City Baptists had in

1944 organized a hospital board, beginning formal work toward a facility for their region; and after some differences on First Amendment matters had been worked out, ownership of the corporation was accepted by the General Association in 1955. By 1963 a 300-bed hospital was experiencing 100% occupancy, under the capable administration of Hamilton Reid, and hospital chaplains were ministering to upwards of 6,000 persons a year.

The twentieth anniversary of the board's founding (1964) was celebrated amid planning toward making the hospital a full medical complex, just as the twentieth anniversary of the opening (1980) took place amid planning to develop a multi-faceted health care corporation. Articles of Incorporation had been changed in 1979, permitting Baptist Memorial "to develop and maintain a system of medical and health related services throughout an appropriate area where there is a demonstrated and justifiable demand." Mr. Dan Anderson was the new administrator selected to lead the hospital into its new era.

Major expansion programs, beginning in 1966, had led to a Charles F. Curry Educational Wing, an Arthur Land Critical Care Unit, and a Goppert Family Care Center. Teaching programs were instituted, from year to year, in nine areas, including residency programs for physicians, a nursing program with William Jewell College, and a Clinical Pastoral Care program with Midwestern Baptist Seminary. In 1981 Chaplain Dale Wright brought honor to himself, the hospital, and Missouri Baptists by his election as president of the College of Chaplains, American Protestant Hospital Association.

As Baptist Memorial Hospital entered its third decade in 1980, Mr. Anderson had committed it to leadership in health care and to a full expression of the Christian and Baptist ideals which motivated its founding.

#### *"Justice for All": Missouri Baptists and Social Concern*

In a time of social revolutions—sexual, domestic, racial, economic, international—Missouri Baptists continued to concentrate on issues of personal morality and to be less involved than most church groups in political activism or Christian social ministries. Their deep conservatism made them greatly suspicious of change, and change was the order of the day. It was unfair of outsiders to say that Baptists had an answer for every moral question, and the answer was "Don't do it"; but as stereotypes go, there was probably more truth than not in this caricature.

Nevertheless, they made some strong strides between 1934 and 1984 in work with Negroes and in extending ministries toward some whom society would neglect. The coming of Dr. Ira Peak to lead a program of action on Christian Moral Concerns for the 1980's was a major forward step in mobilizing the resources of the denomination.

As a state body, Baptists tend to express themselves on social issues—or any other matter—in three ways: by resolutions, by political action, and by

programs of ministry. A resolution is an expression of a given body of people at a given convention at a given time; it has no force of control, though of course it often has considerable influence. Baptists have in the last fifty years passed resolutions on virtually everything from Alcohol to Zion. Political action is a more recent approach by Missouri Baptists, and it consists usually of legislative research, molding public opinion, and lobbying. It has been used chiefly on issues relating to liquor, gambling, and Sunday sales. Programs of ministry are on-going efforts by staff persons to lead in the achievement of worthy Christian ends. Examples are staff work with Blacks and special ministries to the deaf, the handicapped, senior citizens, and refugees.

A cataloguing of resolutions adopted in annual Missouri Baptist meetings since 1934 yields an interesting profile of what has been on the minds of churchmen year by year. A constant has been opposition to the liquor industry and to various forms of personal vice: gambling; prostitution (a special concern of 1941, with particular reference to Army camps); violence and sexual permissiveness in the movies, and after 1950, on television; obscene literature; narcotics and marijuana. Concern for the family was a particular theme of the 1940's, particularly with "the dislocation of millions of men and women in military service and war industries"; the concern for the family appeared again in resolutions of 1981. Sabbath desecration was chided in a 1940 criticism of the government for having WPA gangs building roads and bridges on Sunday and in a 1977 opposition to a repeal of blue laws. Homosexuality and abortion have been addressed in resolutions adopted since 1977.

Resolutions favoring peace and opposing war were frequent during the 1930's and early 1940's, as the nation was drawn into conflict; the issue surfaced again in 1981 under the category "peace and global security." The 1930's also saw resolutions on behalf of just relations in industry, a 1936 resolution advocating "the fullest cooperative control and ownership of industry and . . . natural resources" and a 1938 statement proposing the Golden Rule as a solution for labor-management conflicts. This topic has not appeared since. Concern for world hunger was expressed in 1946, 1969, 1975, 1977, 1979, and 1981, attesting to a deep feeling on the subject; even more persuasive expressions have been the annual offerings taken to alleviate the plight of the starving. Only once—in 1978—has the changing role of women been noted in a resolution, and that in a statement advocating "equal pay for equal work." Likewise, direct expression of interest in "the plight of the poor and needy" came only once, in 1981, when messengers voiced the hope that President Reagan's new economic policies would not adversely affect "the truly needy."

Only two other issues have called out statements from Baptists as often as has the "liquor problem": one is the whole category of church-state relationships, and the other is relations among the races.

In 1938 and again in 1941 the General Association adopted resolutions on behalf of "religious freedom." In 1962 greetings were sent to Pope John XXIII, along with the expressed hope that the Vatican Council might act to increase religious liberty. In 1962 the Convention expressed support for the Supreme Court decision banning prayer in public classrooms, and in 1977 a proposed Constitutional amendment permitting such prayers was opposed. Federal aid to parochial schools and tuition tax credits were resisted in resolutions of 1970, 1978, and 1981. The Missouri Student Grant Program was branded as an "arrogant law" in 1971, the same year the Convention urged that tax exemptions for churches should continue.

Racial prejudice was deplored at the 1937 meeting in Mexico and the 1938 session in Columbia, the specific focus being Nazi anti-Semitism and similar prejudice "gradually seeping into our own land." Following the Supreme Court decision of 1954 on integration of public schools, a resolution was adopted urging that Missouri Baptists "face up to the Constitution's guarantee of equal rights." In 1963, after the bombing of a Black Baptist meeting house, Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Reverend Warner Wilson of Kearney led the Convention to take up an offering for the congregation. A resolution on racial justice in 1981 called for Missouri Baptists "to promote harmony among the races" and to work toward "governmental laws and policies which insure 'justice for all.' "

Putting action to their pronouncements, Baptists in 1955 employed a full-time staff member to work with Negro churches and increase Black-White dialogue. In 1970 a publication, "Together," was being circulated; a Baptist Student ministry at Lincoln University was being supported; W.M.U. Councils of National and Missouri Baptists were active; and programs were being conducted at a youth assembly near Poplar Bluff. Support continued for Western Baptist Bible College, a Negro school in Kansas City. The 1976 "Freedom and Fellowship" Convention meeting in Independence featured evening sessions held jointly with Black Baptists—in a Latter Day Saint temple. In an especially stirring service, Dr. John W. Williams of Kansas City's great St. Stephen Church presided; a Bicentennial Heritage Festival was presented by William Jewell musical organizations; and Dr. W. A. Criswell preached.

#### *The Gospel for Missouri: a Basic Commitment*

In 1980, Baptists as a denomination were conducting organized work in Missouri with single adults, senior adults, persons in nursing homes, prisoners, handicapped persons, truckers, folks in inner cities, persons in remote rural areas, forty groups using ten different languages—Korean, Mandarin, Cantonese, Taiwanese, Japanese, Vietnamese, Laotian, Spanish, American Indian dialects, and American Sign Language; refugees from Rumania, Iran,

and elsewhere; persons of other faiths; Negroes—and of course with the usual populations of Missouri's cities and countryside.

The basic motivation in all these works was to share the love of Christ and to share "good news." The Convention was formed to get the gospel to all parts of Missouri, and that ideal has permeated the varying Missouri Baptist ministries since. Baptists have always felt that the greatest favor they can do for another human being—the greatest ministry they can render—is to share the Gospel.

This effort has always entailed direct witnessing, including revivalism. The annual meeting or "camp meetin'" of the Frontier has become the "simultaneous crusade," with media support and toll-free telephone numbers for communication—and for a kind of community.<sup>3</sup> A simple listing of the "crusades," "campaigns," "thrusts," "ventures," "missions," and "revivals" to which Missouri Baptists lent their full support between 1934 and 1984 leaves one breathless!

Missouri's "state evangelist" of 1940 encouraged city-wide or area-wide campaigns, which occurred that year in Springfield, St. Louis, St. Joseph, and the Caldwell-Ray Association. He quoted, however, a plaint by Roland Q. Leavell: "This has been the most difficult year of my ministry to win souls—the people are talking war!"

Wartime is notorious for its bad effects on religion, and the 1940's saw Missouri Baptists giving special attention to the "soldier boys" at Jefferson Barracks, Fort Leonard Wood, and Camp Crowder; to airmen at bases near Knobnoster, Vichy, and Malden; and to persons at "the internment area at Camp Clark, near Nevada." The dislocation of defense workers from rural to urban locations and the "craze for pleasure" caused by a "plenitude of money" were special causes for evangelical concern. The interest in military personnel continued as America maintained her military preparedness after World War II; a 1962 report to the convention on work at military centers, offered by Reverend Edwin Peoples, expressed the continued interest.

"Pioneer" mission work around Hollister, Bunker, some counties of the northwest, and in Stoddard County was being done in 1950, but the real excitement of that year centered in simultaneous evangelistic crusades held west of the Mississippi River in April and to be conducted east of the River in 1951, with "thousands of people won to the Lord and our churches in Missouri." "A Million More in '54" was a slogan for Sunday school enlistment beginning in 1952, and "Southwide Simultaneous Revivals" of April, 1955, resulted in several thousand Missouri baptisms. In 1957 the denomination was promoting a "30,000 Movement," designed to establish that many new churches and missions in America.

Missourians' concern for missions was expressed very directly in the founding of Southern Baptist work in the neighboring State of Iowa in 1954. The initial Baptist religious services had been held in Iowa in 1834 near what

is now Danville, and Baptist work had existed in the state for 120 years. The established Baptist work was in something of a numeric decline, however, when Southern Baptists began their ministry near Anamosa, organizing their first church (now Fairview Baptist Church of Great Rivers Association) on June 12, 1954.

Bruce Maples of the Missouri Baptist Convention staff was instrumental in beginning the "mission" work in Iowa, as were Avery Wooderson of the North Grand River Association, Everett Bryant of the Missouri Convention staff, and Pastors Wayne Rosecrans of Trenton, Harry Clifton of Princeton, and Clarence Dowell of Lancaster, Missouri.

David T. Bunch of the Home Mission Board served Iowa as Director of Missions from 1968 through 1978, during which time Southern Baptist work in that state grew extensively. In much of the work in Iowa, as in much of the work in Missouri, Webster Brown of the Missouri state office provided logistical support and wise counsel, as well as a deft administrative touch.

As a result of these labors, the 1984 sesquicentennial of the Missouri Baptist Convention will likely coincide with the formal organization of a state convention by Iowa Southern Baptists—that formal organization being on the 150th anniversary of the beginning of Baptist work in Iowa and in the 30th anniversary year of the formation of Southern Baptist work in the state.

In preparation for simultaneous revivals of 1959, a great evangelistic rally on Thursday evening of the 1958 convention in Springfield featured music led by Reverend Harold Souther, prayer by President Ross Edwards, and the famous sermon "Pay Day, Some Day" by Dr. R. G. Lee. Evangelistic meetings for five years, a "Baptist Jubilee Advance" leading up to the sesquicentennial of the Triennial Convention in 1964, were conducted across America, as well as in Missouri, by various Baptist bodies. In the 1967 convention at St. John, planning was proceeding toward a "Crusade of the Americas," a hemispheric evangelistic effort labeled "the opportunity of the century" and "the greatest single evangelistic thrust in modern Christian history." By 1971 emphasis was on lay evangelism, with "TELL," "WIN," and Lay Evangelism Schools providing the support. The ultimate in evangelistic ambition—at least until extra-terrestrial creatures are objects of attention—came in the dramatic "Bold Missions Thrust" program, designed to give every person in the world an opportunity to hear the Gospel within twenty-five years. Such an ambition would have been idle dreaming a generation or two before; now, with new technologies of communication, it had become entirely credible.

First steps for Missouri in this Bold Mission endeavor were "Good News Missouri" campaigns of 1979 and a "Bold Mission Taiwan" effort of 1981-83. To that story we now turn.

## Notes To Chapter 9

<sup>1</sup>Thomas A. Bailey, *The American Pageant, A History of the Republic* (Boston, 1971), p. 992.

<sup>2</sup>The summary of trends in America between the 1950's and the 1970's is drawn chiefly from Jackson W. Carroll, Douglas W. Johnson, and Martin E. Marty, *Religion in America, 1950 to the Present* (New York, 1979), pp. 6-7.

<sup>3</sup>A "simultaneous revival" is a joint effort by all or several churches in an area to conduct evangelistic meetings at the same time, thus gaining some in visibility and potential impact on a city or geographical region. It has been a major strategy of Southern Baptist evangelism over the last fifty years.

*"I used to take the train from seminary in New Orleans to preach on my church-field near Grenada, Mississippi. I rode all night on a mail train. Last summer I went to Taiwan to be Bible preacher for the Baptist mission meeting, and the jet trip took exactly the same amount of time—exactly—as that train ride used to take. I'm still dazzled by it."*

10

... the writer

## Frontiers of Space and Time: Witnessing To Neighbors In The Global Village 1980-

John Mason Peck left Litchfield, Connecticut, for St. Louis on July 25, 1817, and arrived on November 21—the journey took four months. In the same year, the people of St. Louis “were astonished” at the arrival of a steam-driven boat, the *Zebulon M. Pike*, which had traveled from Louisville at the incredible speed of three miles an hour. In 1858, the Butterfield Overland Stage “delighted Missourians by offering transportation to San Francisco in only twenty-five days of jolting and jarring.”<sup>1</sup> The Pony Express in 1860 was a wonder of human speed—delivering mail from St. Joseph to Sacramento in ten days.

Such was the Missouri of our Baptist forebears, for whom small distances were large barriers. Easier it is to cross a continent or ocean in our day than to cross a county or swollen river in theirs.

The technology of communication and travel has shrunk the world to the size of a very small town, what Marshall McLuhan has called a “global village.” The Hannibal and St. Joseph Railroad trains, steaming across northern Missouri for the first time in 1859; the telegraph of 1861, connecting Missouri to the west coast—when the Indians didn’t cut the wire; the telephone—Missouri’s first exchange and the world’s second appearing in Hannibal in 1878; the automobile, first registered in Missouri in 1903 with the speed limit set at nine miles per hour; radio, arriving in Missouri via Station WEW, St. Louis University, in 1921; “talking pictures,” Colleen Moore starring in Missouri’s first, entitled “Lilac Time,” in 1928; television, beginning in the state with KSD-TV, St. Louis, in 1947; all these developments made spaces smaller and the time between them shorter.<sup>2</sup>

And air travel. St. Louis was an early leader, with the “St. Louis Aero Club” sponsoring “Great American Air Meets” beginning in 1907. St. Louis had one of the first air fields; became the home of the “Army aeronautical corps” in 1916, just thirteen years after Kitty Hawk; was a base for the first regular air mail service; and sponsored America’s “instant hero,” Charles Lindbergh, in his 33½-hour solo flight from New York to Paris on May 20-21, 1927—flying, of course, “The Spirit of St. Louis,”<sup>3</sup> McDonnell Aircraft Corporation in St. Louis helped America into the space age, constructing Banshee, Demon, Voodoo, and Phantom jets for the Navy and Mercury and Gemini spacecraft—the former being the capsule which carried Colonel John Glenn on his earth orbits of February, 1962.<sup>4</sup> Rocketdyne of Neosho also had a part, constructing the rocket engines for Thor, Atlas, and Saturn rockets.<sup>5</sup>

The launching of Telstar in July, 1962, the first of many communications satellites, made the global village very, very cozy. Now one could flash across nations and oceans in jet airplanes, arriving at virtually any part of the globe in less than a day; and if one chose the supersonic Concorde, one scarcely had time for a nap while crossing the Atlantic. Or one could direct dial a friend in England or Japan as easily as one could call next door, and much more easily than a resident of Columbia could call Centralia in 1900. Or one could view an image and hear a message bounced off a satellite from Israel or the Falkland Islands, having a better view on the television screen, a better hearing of the sounds and words, and as instant an apprehension as a person standing at the spot.

And John Mason Peck took four months to get from Connecticut, having a hard time of it all the way! And couldn’t call home to tell the folks he had arrived!

### *The Message and the Medium*

Baptists have not been slow to see the potential in the new media of communication and new modes of transportation for the spread of the Gospel. It

is these technological triumphs, in fact—and others yet undreamed, yet to come—which make it thinkable to achieve the Bold Mission goal of carrying the Gospel to *everyone on earth* by the end of the twentieth century.

As early as 1930 the editor of the *Word and Way* wrote in some musings of July 31 the following quizzical blurb:

We note that in California experiments are being carried on in the field of religious “talkies” especially prepared for the Sunday night worship service. It is said that sentiment is growing in their favor. An organization has been formed with offices in Hollywood for the purpose of creating a corporation which will produce and market these films. It sounds all right as an entertainment proposition, but to our minds it would be a disaster of the first order to replace local pastors with mechanical programs.

More seriously, a report to the 1934 Missouri Baptist General Association meeting in St. Louis asserted that

the motion picture is the greatest single educational force in the country. The movies are for the masses; books are for the few. The printed word can never measure strength with the moving picture.

Those who remember earlier reports to the General Association will recognize that we have now come in Missouri Baptist history from a reliance on speaking and oratory, to an assertion that the printed word is the vehicle of power over the masses, to the assertion that electrically-produced images have the ascendancy. As the images moved out of the artificiality of movie sets and theaters and into the realism of documentaries or news reports telecast into the intimacy of one’s living room or study or bedroom—closer than one’s neighbor—the potency of the “pictures that move” became clearer.

In 1938 the Radio Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention conferred with a group from Missouri “in regard to the larger use of radio service by Southern Baptists.” S. F. Lowe, chairman of that Committee, wrote of “The Five-Fold Challenge of Radio to Southern Baptists,” saying some remarkable and most interesting things about the medium:

1. It is a divine instrument . . . God Almighty planned radio and tucked it away in the mysteries of the ages, reserving it for a special blessing to us in our day.
2. It (along with the Press and the Movies) is a powerful instrument.
3. It is a Baptist instrument . . . peculiarly adapted to the Baptist way of extending the Kingdom of God, by proclaiming the Gospel message. The radio carries no ritualism and formalism . . .
4. It is an available instrument.
5. It is a timely instrument . . . as an extended arm.

Missouri Baptists were able to make some effective use of radio. Two William Jewell alumni, "Ted Malone" (Alden Russell) and Dr. M. Sayle Taylor, the "Voice of Experience," were national network personalities, and they were happy to give favorable exposure to the home folks: Taylor gave eleven BSU students from the state an opportunity to appear on his Columbia Broadcasting show in 1938, when they were on one of the Ridgecrest and Washington trips sponsored by W. O. Vaught. Missourians raised money—\$1,350 in 1941—so the state might be included in *The Baptist Hour* network, making certain that such pioneer and powerful stations as KMOX in St. Louis and WDAF in Kansas City were included. It was pointed out to Missourians in 1943 that they had witnessed to 1,600 persons for every dollar invested in the program. A state network for Missouri-produced Baptist programs was considered in 1949, the thought being that the new FM stations might be available for a Baptist connection.

The Radio Committee reported in 1953, however, that "the overwhelming idea of today is television, which has already become the greatest means of communication of ideas the world has ever known." With 250 stations in existence and others abuilding, "in five years every home in America will have access to the seen as well as the spoken word." By 1958 the Radio and Television Commission had thirteen color films available for television. By 1961 this Southern Baptist agency was presenting *The Baptist Hour* on 471 stations with 22,000,000 listeners, had begun *Master Control* as another radio series, was broadcasting the *International Sunday School Lesson*, had *The Answer* on 116 television stations with a viewership of 4,000,000 persons, and had Director Paul Stevens on world tour filming new sequences on location and negotiating for broadcasting rights in other countries. By 1982 Dr. John Hughes, pastor from Independence, was chairman of the Radio and Television Commission and was leading a program which would use new technology to establish a network of television stations for carrying a Baptist witness across the nation.

Meanwhile, Missourians were furthering their own media ministries. In 1972 Missouri Baptists produced six radio spots over 352 stations, one television commercial over all Missouri stations, and a film entitled "Me and Tom and the River." Dr. Robert Werner, pastor of First Baptist in Ferguson, became a national leader in offering a television ministry from a local church, his programs winning professional Emmy Awards and reaching thousands with the gospel. A media campaign produced under Dr. Bob Terry's leadership in 1978 aired 1,400 half-minute radio and television spots during a three-week emphasis in August and September. This led directly to Good News Missouri, Missouri Baptists' true entry into the evangelism of the electronic age.

*The Gospel on Airwaves and Jetwings: Good News Missouri and Bold Mission Taiwan*

Calling it “our message, our challenge, our dream,” Dr. Terry introduced Good News Missouri to messengers at the 1979 Missouri Baptist Convention session in Raytown. Television, radio, newspapers, billboards, banners, bumper stickers, lapel pins—all available media were used to saturate the state with the pronouncement, “God Loves You.” Scripture passages were quoted by Jack Stanton, Robert Werner, A. L. Palmer, Carl Garrett, and John Gilbert as part of the presentation to the Convention, and the premiere screening was made of television spot announcements for use prior to and during the simultaneous crusades of the spring of 1980. Missouri Baptists joined in prayer for a great revival effort.

One year later in Springfield, a report was offered on the Good News Missouri effort, and it became a restrained victory celebration for a campaign the likes of which the state had never seen. Phase I, the “God Loves You” media campaign, had employed toll-free telephone numbers for audience response to the billboard, newspaper, radio, and television ads. Responses had come from 3,348 persons. Phase II, revival preparation, under the able leadership of Dr. George E. Worrell and Reverend Larry Wood of the state Evangelism office, had led the churches in “prayer, participation, preparation, and preaching” by means of a manual and training sessions. A pre-revival telephoning campaign made contact with “thousands of homes” and located “multitudes of prospects.” Phase III, simultaneous revival crusades, were held in 1,100 churches and yielded 3,381 professions of faith. For some time after the event one could see “God Loves You” bumper stickers and lapel pins all around the state, symbols of an effort that reached into every corner of Missouri with a basic message of care. It was the first time in Missouri history that such resources had been concentrated in the purpose of sharing the faith. Jeremiah Vardeman, that first moderator of the Central Society at Providence Church in 1834 and Little Bonne Femme Church in 1835, would have been amazed at what was going on.

But more was to come!

At the same meeting in Springfield, before the Good News Missouri report was given, Reverend John Gilbert of Poplar Bluff presented for the executive board a proposal that Missouri Baptists accept “the joint invitation of the Foreign Mission Board and Taiwan Baptists to enter into a three-year cooperative project, 1981-1983, in church growth and evangelism with the Baptist Convention of Taiwan.” Thus began a program of personal missions entirely dependent on jet aircraft, transoceanic telephone, and careful organization. It was a program that could only happen at this stage of technological devel-

opment, and it would make Taipei and Taichung as familiar to many Missourians as St. Louis or Moberly might be.

Bold Mission Taiwan, as the project was called in Missouri, had three major goals: strengthening Taiwan's churches, presenting the gospel to every resident of the island, and establishing fifteen churches and thirty new chapels over the three-year period. The goals seemed both grandiose and modest: modest in that forty-five new churches and chapels are not many for a nation of 18,000,000 people, and grand in that the task of presenting the gospel to that many persons in a three-year's span is formidable. But new technologies and new media of communications made them reasonable goals, carefully worked out by planning teams of missionaries, Chinese Baptists, and Missouri Baptist leaders: Rheubin South, George Worrell, Webster Brown, Harold Souther, Harlan Spurgeon, and Bob Terry, the latter serving as coordinator for the program.

Groups of Missouri Baptist pastors and laymen began traveling to Taiwan in 1981 to work with the 120 Baptist missionaries and 13,000 Chinese Baptists on the island. The 127 Chinese Baptist churches and chapels—averaging only twenty-five to forty persons in attendance—seemed small by American standards and seemed few in a nation of 2,500 Buddhist temples. It was like pioneer Missouri all over again, with churches few in number and small in size—but this time in a state teeming with people and in an era when communication with masses could be achieved instantly.

Missouri Baptist visitors worked to strengthen these churches through training in Bible study, stewardship, and church administration. Special work with youth and student groups, training in evangelistic methods, evangelistic concerts and training for church musicians, "target" evangelism for specific professional groups, and ultimately a harvest of evangelism through personal witnessing and media campaigns were part of the carefully-planned activities of Bold Mission Taiwan.

Through 1982, fifteen different groups with 210 participants made the jet journey from the "Show Me State" to the "Beautiful Island" as representatives of Christ and Missouri Baptists. In 1983, beyond the time of this writing, two hundred more persons were scheduled to make the missionary trek.

It was by far the largest, most globe-encompassing effort ever conducted by the Baptists of Missouri. It dramatized, when contrasted with the travels and work of the Baptist farmer-preachers in the early 1800's, how the gospel had taken wings in a century and a half. Baptists could now dream dreams heretofore impossible; and they had the resources, expertise, and technology to make those dreams come true.

But Bold Mission Taiwan also demonstrated anew that the gospel of Christ is a personal call from God to his people. No exotic travels and no electronic programs could substitute for personal obedience and personal sharing of the "good news."

Whatever the century, whatever the social conditions, whatever the media, it remains “not by might, nor by power,” but by the Spirit of the living Lord that renewal comes to the earth and its people.

## Notes To Chapter 10

<sup>1</sup>See Duane Meyer, *The Heritage of Missouri—A History* (St. Louis, 1963), p. 746.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 472, 602-603, 746.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 478.

<sup>4</sup>In the Missouri Baptist Convention *Annual* for 1962, Colonel Glenn is noted as a model for Sunday school workers in that he (1) had a mission to fulfill, (2) was a member of a team dedicated to a task, (3) was inspired by a record of earlier achievement, and (4) was in a program in which all participants depended on each other.

<sup>5</sup>Meyer, pp. 747-749.

*“Yes, God is in the hills. And the trees and lakes and streams. But mostly God is in the folks . . .”*

*. . . an Ozark philosopher*

## Epilogue: Frontiers Faced and Conquered

In the end were the people.

Friendly, vibrant people. Hard working. Honest, mostly. Have to be shown.

They're from Missouri.

People with the smile of God stamped on their faces and God's sun shining through their eyes. People hurting, for want of a friend. People hungry. People ashamed.

People.

People with a wilderness behind them and a world before them.

People who have heard—and said—“God loves you.”

People who have faced the frontiers and found God there.

God's people.

The story of Missouri Baptists is a story of some of God's people.

It is a story worth the telling, if for no other reason than that it gives more proof that God will work with and through his people, whatever obstacles are put in their way. How else can one explain the meaning of a story that begins with a handful of people at a country church on a rugged frontier, getting together because folks in their state needed to hear the gospel, and that moved to a climax and a pause—without ending—at an international program of teaching and preaching that squeezed continents into the space once occupied

by counties. How else, except to say that God was doing his thing, and Missouri Baptists happened to be walking along beside when he was doing it.

It is a story of remarkable successes, but no Missouri Baptist should strut or preen. God does the work.

It is story of some dismal failures, but no Missouri Baptist need despair. God is in the forgiving business, and God makes up our lack.

The center of population for North America entered Missouri in 1976, making Missouri literally as well as symbolically the heart of America. If George Gallup's predictions are accurate—"Evidence is mounting that the United States may be in an early stage of a profound religious revival, with the evangelical movement providing a powerful thrust"—that heart may quicken beyond all it has known till now.<sup>1</sup>

But no wonder of it, and no worry at it.

God has crossed every frontier before us, and it is in crossing the frontiers with him that we find him closest.

The future is his. And by his grace, it is ours.

## Notes To The Epilogue

<sup>1</sup>George Gallup, Jr., "Afterword: A Coming Religious Revival?" in *Religion in America, 1950 to the Present*, by Jackson W. Carroll, Douglas W. Johnson, and Martin E. Marty (New York, 1979), p. 113.

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