

1965

A History of the Beginning of the Jonesboro Association of Missionary Baptist Churches

Elton McCann
Ouachita Baptist University

Follow this and additional works at: http://scholarlycommons.obu.edu/grad_theses

 Part of the [Higher Education Commons](#), [History Commons](#), and the [Religion Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

McCann, Elton, "A History of the Beginning of the Jonesboro Association of Missionary Baptist Churches" (1965). *Graduate Theses*. 38.
http://scholarlycommons.obu.edu/grad_theses/38

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Archives and Special Collections at Scholarly Commons @ Ouachita. It has been accepted for inclusion in Graduate Theses by an authorized administrator of Scholarly Commons @ Ouachita. For more information, please contact mortensona@obu.edu.

A HISTORY OF THE BEGINNING OF THE JONESBORO ASSOCIATION
OF MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCHES

A Thesis
Presented to
the Graduate Council of
Ouachita Baptist University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts in Religion

by
Elton McCann
August 1965

CHAPTER I
SECTION I
A HISTORY OF THE BEGINNING OF THE JONESBORO ASSOCIATION
OF MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCHES

APPROVED:

Carl Goodson
Major Professor

Vester E. Walker
Minor Professor

B. Everett Stewart
Member

Herman Dantford
Fourth Reader

Henry C. Lindsey
Director of Graduate Studies

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. INTRODUCTION	1
Statement of the Problem	1
Related Literature	2
Sources and Treatment of Data	5
Delimitation and Definition of Terms	5
II. BACKGROUND OF BAPTIST WORK IN THE JONESBORO- CROWLEY'S RIDGE AREA	9
Beginning of Missionary Baptist Work	9
Development and Progress of and Influences upon the Missionary Baptist Work from the the Organization of the Mt. Zion Associ- ation until Its Division in 1898	18
III. FACTORS LEADING TO THE CREATION OF THE JONESBORO ASSOCIATION OF MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCHES	22
Period of Division	22
Dissatisfaction with Mission Work in the Mt. Zion Association	25
Disagreement Concerning the "Four-mile Law"	27
IV. ORGANIZATION OF THE JONESBORO ASSOCIATION OF MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCHES	39
Action of the Excluded Churches	39

CHAPTER	PAGE
Leading Personnel	41
Committees	53
Churches	58
V. COURSES CHARTED BY THE NEW ASSOCIATION	69
Missions Program	69
Affiliations and Relationships	74
VI. SUMMARY	82
BIBLIOGRAPHY	85
APPENDIX	89

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

TABLE	PAGE
I. Associational Activity of J. M. Rains	66
II. Ministers Belonging to the Jonesboro Association With Addresses, Pastorates, and Places of Membership in 1898	67
III. Names, Places of Membership, and Principle Activities of Persons Indicated Present at the Organization of the Jonesboro Missionary Baptist Association in 1898	68
IV. Local Missionary and Local Mission Offerings for Each of the First Six Years of the Association	81

FIGURE	PAGE
1. Approximate Location of the Churches Composing the Jonesboro Association in 1898	8

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Written into the earliest constitution of the Jonesboro Association of Missionary Baptist Churches was a duty imposed upon the clerk to preserve the minutes of the proceedings of each meeting.¹ The action indicates that the early leaders of that body believed that the happenings of their meetings needed to be preserved for study and reflection in days to come. For some reason, however, it seems that such study has been neglected. There is no evidence that a systematic study of the history of the Association has ever been undertaken. Consequently, little, other than fragmentary bits of data, remains as relics of its past.

I. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem of the study is the discovery and organization of material into a readable and documented account of the beginning of the Jonesboro Association. In seeking the solution of the problem a survey was made of the available sources of data to gather necessary material. From the mass

¹Jonesboro Missionary Baptist Association, Minutes of the Missionary Baptist Mass Convention and the Organization and First Session of the Jonesboro Missionary Baptist Association (Jonesboro: Jonesboro Missionary Baptist Association, 1898, p. 7). Hereafter referred to as Minutes with date.

of information discovered, material was selected which was deemed to be both valid and pertinent to the study. Material which made a contribution to an understanding of the following problem areas was considered pertinent:

1. Background of Baptist work in the Jonesboro-Crowley's Ridge area.
2. Factors leading to the creation of the Jonesboro Association.
3. Organization of the Jonesboro Association.
4. Courses charted by the new Association.

The validity of material was judged by comparing the arguments of data sources with each other.

II. RELATED LITERATURE

Two works on the history of the Jonesboro Association have been discovered. One of these works is a sketch written by J. F. Manning in 1927. The sketch was included in the appendix of the minutes of the 1927 session of the Association. Manning's work lacks documentation; the only source of material referred to as a basis for his conclusions was W. F. Barrett. Manning said of Barrett, "I am indebted to Brother W. F. Barrett for the historical facts, and for furnishing me a copy of the first minutes of the

association."²

In Manning's sketch the purpose of its author seems to have been more apologetic than historical. After a very brief presentation of the causes for the division which created the Association and a few statements concerning the personnel and principles of the Jonesboro Association, the paper became a study of the difference between the conventional and associational methods of work rather than of the history of the Association.³

Manning's article does, however, make a contribution to the study at hand. It sets forth very clearly what he felt about his heritage; it also makes several assertions concerning the beginning of the Association which received further investigation and documentation in this study.

The other work on the history of the Jonesboro Association is a compilation of the minutes of the Jonesboro Association. In the compilation the author selected parts of each of the minutes of the Association and recopied the selection; he also prepared a table of the moderators, missionaries, and clerks who had served the Association

²J. F. Manning, "History and Principles of the Jonesboro Association of Missionary Baptist Churches," Minutes of the Jonesboro Association of Missionary Baptist Churches (Jonesboro: Jonesboro Association of Missionary Baptist Churches, 1927), p. 18.

³Ibid., pp. 18-29.

between 1898 and 1961. The author undertook no interpretation.⁴

While no other study was discovered on this subject, there were found studies of similar nature. J. H. Kitchens prepared a typewritten paper on the history of Mt. Zion Association which presented a brief sketch of the origin of various churches that formed the Mt. Zion Association and a biographical sketch of the early pioneers who led in the work.⁵ In 1948, J. S. Rogers wrote a history of Arkansas Baptists which included biographical sketches of leading personnel, histories of individual Baptist churches, histories of associations of churches, and other kindred facets.⁶

In the works by Kitchens and Rogers the Jonesboro Association was mentioned because of its relationship to their subject; but neither of these works does more than testify to the existence of the Jonesboro group and that it originated when a controversy over the "Four-mile" whisky

⁴Raymond Poteete, "History of Jonesboro Missionary Baptist Association" (An unpublished manuscript held in the files of the Historian of the Jonesboro Association, Jonesboro, Arkansas, 1961).

⁵J. H. Kitchens, "The History of Mt. Zion Association" (An unpublished manuscript owned by Mr. G. E. Fryer, Jonesboro, Arkansas).

⁶J. S. Rogers, History of Arkansas Baptists (Little Rock: Executive Board of Arkansas Baptist State Convention, 1948).

law divided the Mt. Zion Association.

III. SOURCES AND TREATMENT OF DATA

The primary sources of information for this thesis included the printed minutes of the Jonesboro Association of Missionary Baptist Churches, the minutes of the Mount Zion Baptist Association, the minutes of Macedonia Baptist Church, Acts of Arkansas, newspapers, and data gleaned in interviews with persons who qualified as living witnesses of the Association's activities. The interview, however, was used sparingly as a source of documentation.

As the study progressed, minutes of various groups in addition to those already named were reviewed in search for additional information.

The secondary sources for the study included such historical studies as Roger's History of Arkansas Baptists, Williams' History of Craighead County, Kitchens' "History of Mt. Zion Association," Manning's "History and Principles of the Jonesboro Association of Missionary Baptist Churches," and other books and sketches which had implication for the study. All material in these sources considered valid and pertinent was incorporated into the study.

IV. DELIMITATION AND DEFINITION OF TERMS

It was not the purpose of the study to give a

complete history of the Jonesboro Association. The study was limited to "the beginning" of the Association. This statement does not mean, however, that the study was not concerned with events which transpired after the organization. Many factors which began early did not have their complete effect for some time after the Association's organization. For example, the Association declared that it would carry out its mission work on the "gospel plan."⁷ That school of thought was supported in many sections of Arkansas at the time of the organization of the Jonesboro group, but it was not until 1901 that it and other issues led to a division in the State Convention.⁸ In the study, therefore, "the beginning" of the Association was defined as the period after the onset of Baptist work in the Jonesboro-Crowley's Ridge area until the Jonesboro Association was organized and its character was molded.

The Jonesboro Missionary Baptist Association was used in this study to mean the organization which several Baptist churches in the Jonesboro and surrounding areas formed to facilitate their working together in their several projects. Figure I, page eight, gives the approximate location of the

⁷Minutes, 1898, p. 6.

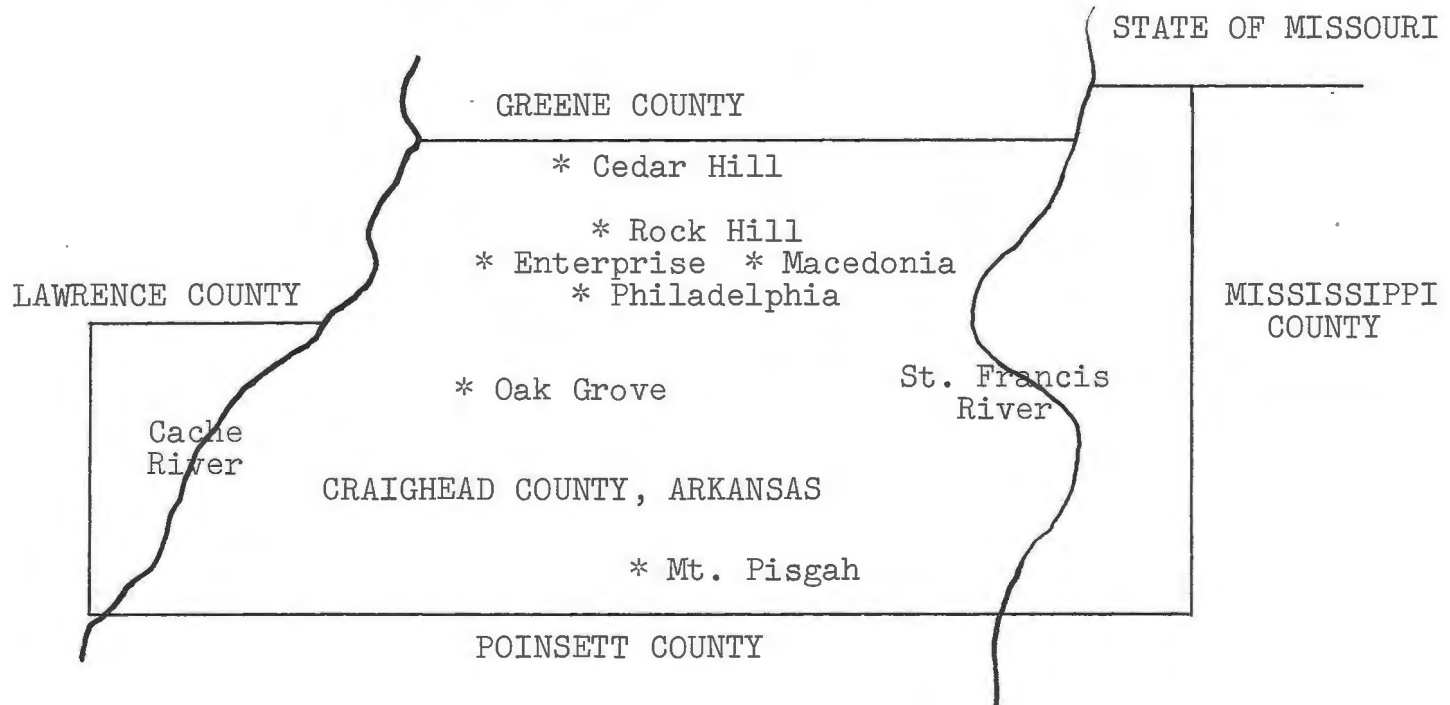
⁸Rogers, op. cit., pp. 596-597.

various churches which composed the Association in 1898.

The official name of the Jonesboro Association was changed from "Jonesboro Missionary Baptist Association" to the "Jonesboro Association of Missionary Baptist Churches" in 1926. Throughout this work the two official names and the shortened form "Jonesboro Association" have been used interchangeably. The shorter form of names for other groups was also frequently used.

FIGURE I

APPROXIMATE LOCATION OF THE CHURCHES COMPOSING THE
JONESBORO ASSOCIATION IN 1898



Legend: One inch equals approximately seven and one-half miles.
* Church site.

Source: The material in this figure is based primarily on an interview with
J. F. Manning, Nettleton, Arkansas.

CHAPTER II

BACKGROUND OF MISSIONARY BAPTIST WORK IN THE JONESBORO-CROWLEY'S RIDGE AREA

The purpose of this chapter is to prepare a sketch of the Missionary Baptist work in the Jonesboro-Crowley's Ridge area of Arkansas. This section will begin with the pioneer Baptist preachers and in summary form relate the beginning of organized Baptist work in that particular area, ending with the division of the Mt. Zion Association in 1898.

I. BEGINNING OF MISSIONARY BAPTIST WORK

The Missionary Baptist work in the Jonesboro-Crowley's Ridge area evidently began with the arrival of William Nutt who is believed to have been the first Baptist preacher to move into the vicinity.¹ Nutt began his work by making a "preaching tour" through the Crowley's Ridge section during the summer and fall of 1838.² He preached in several communities, two of which were Macedonia and Mt. Zion. Those communities became the home of the first Baptist churches on Crowley's Ridge. The preaching tour of

¹Harry Lee Williams, History of Craighead County Arkansas (Little Rock: Parke-Harper Co., 1930), p. 223.

²Kitchens, op. cit., p. 4.

Nutt is described by Kitchens:

During the summer and fall of 1838, Elder William Nutt, father of the late Granville Nutt of Greene County and R. N. and John Nutt of near Herndon, Ark. made a tour of that part of Crowley's Ridge, which afterwards constituted Mt. Zion Association. He crossed the Mississippi River at Memphis, crossed the St. Francis River, and struck Crowley's Ridge at Walnut Camp, now known as the Bond Farm, in Cross County. Here he found quite a settlement; among the families of this neighborhood were the Skinners, Thomases, Shavers, Tyers, Holders, Perrys, Mitchells, Standlees, Hamiltons, Newsoms, Bells, Condrays, Lanes, Harmons, Caldwelles, and Greenwoodes. A settlement in those days meant a radius of from ten to twenty miles.

Elder Nutt held a meeting of several days at Walnut Camp; the people were hungering for the gospel, and listened patiently and attentively to him at every service.

The next place he visited was in the neighborhood of Macedonia Church, then in Poinsett County, but now in Craighead.

Here he found a number of families: The Sutfins, Sanders, Brashears, Winfords, Erwins, Joneses, Nobles, and O'Guinns; all lived in this neighborhood.

He held a series of meetings here. It was their first Gospel Feast in the new country, and the congregations were large and attentive.

He then went to the Mt. Zion Neighborhood. Here he found Deacon Wiley Hutchins, who gave him a warm welcome; also other families, among others the Booths, Capps, Joneses, Crowleys and others. He held a meeting of several days in this neighborhood.

He then went to the Gainesville settlement. That was before the present town of Gainesville was located.

Here he found the Merediths, Woods, Kents,

McJunkins, and Shavers. He held a series of meetings in this neighborhood.

He then went over to the west side of the Ridge, into what was then known as Big Creek Neighborhood. Here he found the Winningshams, Merediths, Johnsons, Eagles, Harrises, Halcombs, Cliffords, and Bradshears. He held meetings on Big Creek and on Loftus Creek. At every place he went, he found people anxious to hear the Gospel.³

Upon completing the preaching tour, Nutt went back to Tennessee and prepared to move his family into Arkansas. Kitchen's manuscript indicates that he left Shelby County, Tennessee, in the fall of 1839, and arrived near "Jonathan Sutfins on what is now the Neal Louey Place." He lived here only one year and then moved to Green County in the old "Hurricane Neighborhood." He remained at that location until his death in 1845.⁴

Upon settling, Nutt began almost at once the work of "planting the gospel." He reportedly "preached all over the territory afterwards constituting Mt. Zion Association in the summer of 1840."⁵ In the fall of 1840 he organized the Mt. Zion Baptist Church, which according to Williams was the first Baptist church organized north of Forrest City on Crowley's Ridge.⁶

There is some evidence, however, of a church having

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid., p. 6.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid.; Williams, op. cit., p. 223.

been organized in Clay County at a prior date. E. J. A. McKinney, in an address concerning the history of Mt. Zion Church, made the following reference:

. . . A statement by Dr. W. A. Clark in 1896 may mean that another church was organized in Clay County between 1834 and 1836 or at least four years earlier than Mt. Zion. He says, 'Between 1834 and 1836 the Baptist banner was planted in territory now within Phillips, Clark, Saline, Washington, and Clay counties.' Since Dr. Clark was discussing the organizing of churches in the early days, I take it to mean that he meant that a church was organized in Clay County during the period named; but I do not know the basis of his statement. . . .⁷

If a church had been organized in Clay County at a prior time to Mt. Zion, it was of little consequence to the beginning of Baptist work in Craighead and Greene County because those churches were connected with Memphis and eastward, while a church in Clay County would probably have had an entirely different point of origin.⁸

Shortly after establishing the church in the Mt. Zion Community, Nutt, aided by Elder Winningham, organized a church in the Macedonia Community in 1841. The church is reported as the second Missionary Baptist church in the

⁷E. J. A. McKinney, "A Short Historical Sketch of the Mt. Zion Baptist Association," Historical Sketch of the Mt. Zion Baptist Church, Also A Short Sketch of Mt. Zion Baptist Association (Jonesboro: R. C. Medaris, 1927), p. 31.

⁸Ibid., p. 35.

Jonesboro area and the first Baptist church in the territory now known as Craighead County. Macedonia Baptist Church was located at a point "one mile east of Buck Snort Hill, and about seven miles northeast of Jonesboro."⁹

Kitchens reports a third church having been organized by Elder Nutt and Elder C. G. Stevens. The church was named Lebanon and was later called Hydrick.¹⁰

There is no other church existing today which dates its origin back to Nutt. However, there is evidence that he organized two other churches before his death. Kitchens cites an opinion of R. N. Nutt, son of the Elder William Nutt:

Bro. R. N. Nutt, his son, thinks that his father organized churches at Loftus Creek and at Big Creek. If he did, they never came into the Association, and the probabilities are that during the time after his death, before other preachers came in, and due to the fact that people moved from one settlement to another more than they do now, for the lands were at that time the property of the government and they only owned what improvements they might make, all the churches died except the first three. And when churches were organized in after years the first organization was ignored.¹¹

In addition to those two churches Kitchens also indicates that Nutt organized a short-lived church. The church was

6. ⁹Williams, op. cit., p. 224; Kitchens, op. cit., p.

¹⁰Kitchens, op. cit., p. 7; McKinney, op. cit., p. 33.

¹¹Kitchens, op. cit., p. 6.

named Bethel and was located in the lower part of Poinsett County, "west of the Hare farm." While there is no exact date given for the organization of the church, Kitchens believed that it was organized in 1844. The church ceased to exist in 1845 when all of the members except two withdrew and united with Lebanon Church. The two remaining members formed a new church by the name of Enon.¹²

The following quotation is a description of Nutt given by Kitchens:

Elder Nutt was a preacher of more than average ability in his day. He was plain and practical; he made his living by farming, and often walked to his appointments to keep from stopping a plow. He never exacted any salary from his churches; he was satisfied to work for what they gave him. He did a great work in Mt. Zion Association. In all the neighborhoods where he preached on his visit to the Association Territory, the Baptists have always taken the lead, except Walnut Camp.¹³

II. BEGINNING OF ASSOCIATIONAL WORK

The person who seemed to have made a notable contribution to the development of associational work was Elder John Pearce. According to Kitchens, Pearce came to Arkansas from Tennessee in 1848. He was very much interested in organizing an association of churches and "went to work at once" at the task.¹⁴

¹²Ibid., p. 9. ¹³Ibid., pp. 6, 7. ¹⁴Ibid., p. 9.

Pearce became pastor of both Mt. Zion Church and Macedonia Church. The two churches came together, evidently under Pearce's leadership, to organize an association in September of 1848. The following description of the organizational meeting by Kitchens seems to be the most complete account existing today:

September, 1848, at Mt. Zion Church in Green County, New Salem Association was organized. Mt. Zion Church was represented by Elder John Pearce and Wiley Hutchins. Macedonia Church by Thomas White, Jeremiah Erwin and David Blake. These were the only churches represented at this meeting. We have no record of the Covenant, rules of Decorum nor Articles of Faith Adopted, nor of who was elected Clerk. The body was in session two days; they had preaching two or three times a day by Elder John Pearce, as he was the only preacher present. Only one committee was appointed and that was on arrangements. The work this committee did is what is done by the committee on Divine Services. Macedonia was selected as the place to hold the next meeting.¹⁵

Elder Pearce labored diligently to keep the Association alive, but met with little success.¹⁶ At the second session Macedonia was the only church to elect messengers. Since no other church was represented, no organization was attempted. The group present, however, resolved to try to hold the meeting again in the coming year. There is no additional record of the New Salem Association until 1851 at which time

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Rogers, op. cit., p. 351.

the only church electing messengers was Lebanon.¹⁷

During the years from 1848 to 1851 Pearce continued to serve as pastor for Macedonia and Mt. Zion. In addition to that work he organized the Union Church located on the Maumelle Prairie near the present site of Lunsford¹⁸ and the Pleasant Valley Church in Jackson County.¹⁹

Pearce also visited other churches to persuade them to unite in the work of the Association and to be represented at an associational meeting in 1852.²⁰ The churches evidently repaid his efforts with success, because in September of 1852 several churches sent messengers to meet with the Mt. Zion Church.²¹ During the meeting, the messengers decided to abandon the organization of the New Salem Association and begin anew.²² The new organization was the beginning of the Mt. Zion Baptist Association.

There seems to be some confusion as to who was in the organization. Rogers says that there were six churches: Mt. Zion, Macedonia, Lebanon, New Hope, Philadelphia, and Bethabara.²³ McKinney, however, names only five churches:

¹⁷Kitchens, op. cit., p. 9.

¹⁸Williams, op. cit., p. 224.

¹⁹McKinney, op. cit., p. 35.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Rogers, op. cit., p. 351.

²²Ibid.

²³Ibid.

Mt. Zion, Macedonia, Lebanon, Union, and Pleasant Valley.²⁴ Rogers evidently is not correct. According to Kitchens, Bethabara was not represented in the Association until 1885, Philadelphia was organized in 1860, and New Hope was organized during or just after the Civil War.²⁵ If the dates given by Kitchens are correct, those three churches could not have been in the beginning of the Mt. Zion Association, for they were all organized after 1852.

Kitchens gives the following account of the organization of the Mt. Zion Association:

When the churches met on the fourth Saturday in September in 1852, their former work, as an Association, having been so unsatisfactory, they decided to organize anew, and to change the name of the Association.

So, Mt. Zion Association was organized on Saturday before the fourth Lord's day in September, 1852, at Mt. Zion Church in Greene County, Ark. Five churches were represented in the organization. The messengers from the different churches were as follows:

Mt. Zion Church, Greene County, Elder John Pearce, Wiley Hutchins, and Archibald Jones.

Macedonia, Green County (now Craighead), Elder G. W. Obear, and Thomas White.

Union Church, Poinsett County, Elder M. W. Lewis.

Lebanon Church, Poinsett County, Ajax Tyer, J. P. Hydrick and T. D. Lloyd.

²⁴McKinney, op. cit., p. 35.

²⁵Kitchens, op. cit., pp. 19, 21, 28.

Pleasant Valley, Jackson County, David May.

Only four preachers were present: John Pearce, G. W. Obear, M. W. Lewis and T. D. Lloyd.

Elder John Pearce was elected Moderator, and Ajax Tyer, Clerk.

The name Mt. Zion, for the Association, was suggested by Deacon Wiley Hutchins, and was adopted by the Body. The Articles of Faith, as printed in the Minutes of 1853, were adopted; Rules of Decorum, as printed in the Minutes of 1853, were adopted; a constitution was adopted, but was amended at the meeting in 1853, and, as amended, printed in the Minutes of that year. Only one committee was appointed, and that was on Arrangements; it had charge of all business which was done, as well as to say who should preach at each service. They had three services each day, and two preachers at each service. Sometimes each preacher talked an hour or more, and yet the bretheren [sic] and sisters did not become tired. They loved the House of God, they loved his service, they loved to hear the Gospel preached in its purity and simplicity. Sometimes it would be midnight before they got to their homes, and yet they often spent an hour, before retiring, in speaking of God and His dealings with men. Sometimes the sisters would cook supper after these long night services, and they would have a social feast; in fact they always had three square meals a day.²⁶

III. DEVELOPMENT AND PROGRESS OF AND INFLUENCES UPON THE MISSIONARY BAPTIST WORK FROM THE ORGANIZATION OF THE MT. ZION ASSOCIATION UNTIL ITS DIVISION IN 1898

During the first five annual sessions of the Mt. Zion Baptist Association there was an average of six churches

²⁶Kitchens, op. cit., p. 11.

represented at each session.²⁷ Elder Pearce was the only man that the Association endorsed as Missionary until after the Civil War.²⁸ It is not known whether he actually served as Missionary each year during that period. Concerning the missions program of the Association, Rogers stated:

. . . for the first 25 years of the life of the Association all mission work was entirely the responsibility of the preachers with no financial or other support by the members of the churches.²⁹

For all practical purposes Rogers is probably correct in his conclusion, but the minutes of the Association and the manuscript of Kitchens both indicate that the Association at least officially recognized Pearce as Missionary during that period.³⁰ However, there is no indication that the churches as an Association gave him any material support.

There is much evidence of the influence of J. R. Graves on the churches composing the Mt. Zion Baptist Association. Almost every year the Association endorsed some books or papers by Graves. At the fourth session Old Landmarks and The Great Iron Wheel, both books by Graves, were recommended.³¹ Kitchens, summarizing by memory the work of the Association in 1860, said:

²⁷Ibid., pp. 11-17.

²⁸Ibid., p. 10.

²⁹Rogers, op. cit., pp. 351, 352.

³⁰Kitchens, op. cit., p. 10.

³¹Ibid., p. 15.

The work was about the same as at the fourth and fifth sessions. They had about the same committees. They endorsed Graves' books and papers. . . .³²

Kitchens' summary indicates that the usual pattern of the Mt. Zion Association in its early days was to give a prominent place to Graves' works and suggests that his views were influential upon that body.

The period immediately following the Civil War seems to have been a time of growth for the Association's work. The Association claimed sixteen churches with a combined membership of approximately 650 in 1866.³³ The growth continued for a few years and the Association reached a peak of twenty-two churches with a combined membership of 792 in 1870.³⁴

According to Rogers, the years from 1870-1880 produced a number of adversities which caused the Association to fail in her progress. In 1880 the Association reported only eighteen churches in its affiliation with a total membership of 721.³⁵

An upward trend is seen with the decade beginning in 1890; the minutes of the Mt. Zion Association in 1897 reported thirty-four participating churches with a

³²Ibid., p. 18.

³³Rogers, op. cit., p. 351.

³⁴Ibid., p. 352.

³⁵Rogers, op. cit., p. 352.

membership of 2,577.³⁶ It was at the meeting in 1897, however, that the Philadelphia Church was excluded from the Mt. Zion Association because of her relationship with Rains and West and her position concerning the "Four-mile Law."³⁷ That action was one of the first of a series of dramatic events that led to a division in the Mt. Zion Association and the creation of a new association of Baptist churches in the Jonesboro area in 1898 under the name of the Jonesboro Missionary Baptist Association.

³⁶The Mt. Zion Baptist Association, Minutes of the Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Association (Jonesboro: Mt. Zion Baptist Association, 1897), p. 20. Hereafter referred to as Minutes of Mt. Zion Baptist Association with date.

³⁷Ibid., p. 4.

CHAPTER III

FACTORS LEADING TO THE CREATION OF THE JONESBORO MISSIONARY BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

It is the purpose of this section of the study to discover the various factors which made division within the Mt. Zion Baptist Association imminent and led to the exclusion and withdrawal of the various churches which formed the new Jonesboro Missionary Baptist Association. An effort will be made to bring to light the less visible factors as well as the overt actions.

I. PERIOD OF DIVISION

The division of the Mt. Zion Association into two separate Baptist groups within the same geographical area was not strange in the light of the history of Baptist work. The period around 1900 seems to have been an age for division in the ranks of Missionary Baptists in most sections of the state of Arkansas.

This disturbing period . . . started about 1880 when there began to arise opposition to a Supervisor of Missions or a paid State Mission Secretary and to too much organization generally, as some brethren held. By 1901 there was opposition to the Convention and to Boards as well as to a State Secretary and some other methods.¹

¹Rogers, op. cit., p. 591.

In 1902 came the climax to such divisions when the Arkansas State Convention divided. In explaining why such a division could arise during that period Rogers said:

. . . Arkansas as a state was still new, a frontier state with many things more or less unsettled.
. . . The pioneers had not had time to get their bearings. . . Then Arkansas was and is as rural as a state can well be, and that meant that the citizens were scattered with limited facilities for keeping up with a progressive world. As Armitage says about a similar situation, 'the disjointed condition of the Baptist denomination unfitted it',² temporarily, for strong aggressive missionary work.²

In addition to the division already cited, other divisions and changes of affiliations in local sections were taking place in and about the time of the state division.³ Such actions were so numerous that by the time of the second session of the General Association of Arkansas Baptist Churches, there were approximately thirty local associations that had either withdrawn from or refused to co-operate with the State Convention and had endorsed the General Association.⁴

²Rogers, op. cit., p. 591.

³E. H. Acuff, Centennial History of the Bartholomew Baptist Association of Arkansas (Bartholomew Baptist Association, 1950), p. 18; Mt. Vernon Baptist Association, Condensed History of Mt. Vernon Baptist Association (Mt. Vernon Baptist Association, 1953), p. 15.

⁴General Association of Arkansas Baptist Churches, Annual of the General Association of Arkansas Baptist Churches (Searcy: General Association of Arkansas Baptist Churches, 1902), pp. 3-6.

Although some efforts were made for reconciliation of the two camps of Missionary Baptists, they all met with failure.⁵ Baptists had divided, and it seemed as though they were determined to stay divided. What created such spirit of division? Though it is not within the scope of this study to make a detailed analysis of the question in any area other than the Jonesboro area, a few comments should be made to present adequately the situation in the Jonesboro area. There were no doubt many different factors contributing to a spirit of division, but it seems that the major cause was a disagreement in methodology of missions or co-operative work. The General Association's people argued that since the commission (Matthew 28:18-20) was given to the church, the church must carry it out.⁶ That school of thought permitted several churches to work together in the support of a missionary or a project, but held that only a church had the authority to elect and send a man to carry out the work designated in the "great commission."⁷ The whole system of work adopted by the General Association was commonly referred to as "Landmarkism."⁸

⁵Rogers, op. cit., pp. 602, 603.

⁶General Association of Arkansas Baptist Churches, op. cit., pp. 10, 11.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Rogers, op. cit., p. 590.

The Arkansas Convention group held close to the argument of their dissenting brethren; they, however, not only permitted a group of churches the privilege of working together in the support of a project, but also permitted the representatives of the churches as a convention to select and send the men, choose the projects, and in several ways act for or on behalf of the churches. Also, the representatives were empowered to elect boards and secretaries to carry out the work on behalf of the churches.⁹

II. DISSATISFACTION WITH MISSION WORK IN THE MT. ZION ASSOCIATION

While on the state level the division over missions did not take place until 1901, Rogers indicates that there was a prior movement in that direction, or at least a prior dissatisfaction with "board missions," in some local groups.¹⁰ The dissatisfaction referred to by Rogers was present in the Jonesboro area. As a demonstration of that feeling, on July 16, 1898, Macedonia (one of the churches that went into the formation of the new Jonesboro Association) passed the following resolution:

Whereas a very great dissatisfaction among the members of this church exists in regard to the

⁹Rogers, op. cit., pp. 593, 594.

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 596, 597.

distribution of mission funds so much so that all efforts on the part of the church to raise a fund for missions had proved non-effective. Therefore be it resolved that we, the church at Macedonia make a greater effort to raise mission funds and that the said funds shall be held and paid out by the church and shall not be turned over to any board or commissioner except by the order of this church.¹¹

Also the record indicates that by the time of the organization of the Jonesboro group, one of the matters in which there was unanimity of opinion was with reference to the method they were to employ in carrying out their mission program. At the initial session the Association unanimously adopted "the Gospel Plan upon which to carry out her mission purpose."¹² Still further in evidence of the anti-board spirit of the Jonesboro group prior to the state division over the issue, the following is quoted from the minutes of the annual session of the Association in 1900:

We find from the minutes of the Southern Baptist Convention of 1900 that the Baptists of Arkansas paid \$2,321.22 for Foreign Missions. The membership of the Jonesboro Association is but the one-hundredth part of the membership of the Baptists of the State. However, we see from the statistics that our Association has paid one-seventeenth of the amount paid by all the Baptists of Arkansas to foreign missions; and yet there are thirty-nine Associations in the state larger than the Jonesboro Association and eight smaller. This is positive

¹¹Macedonia Baptist Church, "Minutes of Macedonia Baptist Church" (The unpublished record of the proceedings of Macedonia Baptist Church, Brookland, Arkansas, July 16, 1898).

¹²Minutes, 1898, p. 6.

proof that Baptists will do far more for missions under the Gospel Mission plan than under the Board plan, because, if the other Associations of Arkansas would have followed the example of the Jonesboro Association, and done the mission work on the Gospel plan, they would have given more than \$13,000 to the Foreign Missions instead of \$2,321.22, which they have given under the Board plan.¹³

The presence of a number of churches within the Mt. Zion Association holding "Land Mark" feelings is not surprising. In an earlier section of this thesis, reference is made to the position of influence given J. R. Graves,¹⁴ who is generally considered the "founding father" of the "Land Mark" movement.¹⁵

III. DISAGREEMENT CONCERNING THE FOUR-MILE LAW

Evidence discussed in the preceding section suggests there existed regarding the methodology of missions a gulf between the churches that were separated from the Mt. Zion Association and those remaining in that body. That gulf, however, was not the climactic factor that led to their division. "The straw that broke the camel's back" seems to have been the disturbance caused by disagreement over a license enactment known as the "Four-mile Law."

¹³Ibid., 1900, pp. 5, 6. ¹⁴Cf. ante, pp. 19, 20.

¹⁵Rogers, op. cit., p. 589.

In 1887 the "Four-mile Law" was passed to supplement the "dry season" which came as a result of the county's voting dry in 1886.¹⁶ The first section of the Act read as follows:

. . . It shall be unlawful for any person to sell or give away any alcoholic or any spirituous, ardent, vineous, malt or fermented liquors, or any compound or preparation thereof commonly called tonics, bitters, or medicated liquors or intoxicating spirits of any character, whatever, within four (4) miles of the common school building situated on block fourteen (14) of Knight's addition to the town of Jonesboro, in Craighead County.¹⁷

Though intended to limit sale of intoxicating drinks, the enactment apparently was received differently. Information gathered from interviews indicates that the Baptist Church in Jonesboro and a number of other churches of the Mt. Zion Association were in favor of the Act as a check on the license granted by the repeal of county prohibition. The same sources also indicate that there was a segment of the churches of the Mt. Zion Baptist Association which was not in favor of the Act. Those churches were located in the rural area surrounding Jonesboro. Their objection to the Act was based on their opinion that, instead of stopping the sale of intoxicants, the law merely forced the dealers out

¹⁶Williams, op. cit., p. 208.

¹⁷Acts of Arkansas, Acts of 1887, No. 66, Sec. 1, p. 92.

of town into the "country," which they felt was without adequate police protection. Those churches believed that, if the sale of intoxicants were to be legal, it should be in the town where it could be properly policed.¹⁸

The opponents of the "Four-mile Law" eventually found a means of forcefully making their opposition felt; that means was in the services of J. M. Rains and F. G. West.

Prior to 1898, Rains had been an active minister in the Mt. Zion Association and was looked upon as a "good preacher."¹⁹ He had been a member of the Philadelphia Church since the seventies.²⁰ Since he was a member of one of the rural churches adversely affected by the "Four-mile Law," he was well aware of their feelings toward it. In 1897 he decided to campaign for a senatorial seat representing the First District; and, during his campaign, he firmly committed himself to work for the repeal of the "Four-mile Law." He was elected and evidently was faithful to his promise, for in 1897 the Arkansas Legislature passed an act repealing the "Four-mile Law."²¹

¹⁸Opinions expressed by Mrs. Della Broadway and Mr. S. H. Penix, personal interviews.

¹⁹Kitchens, op. cit., p. 24.

²⁰Rogers, op. cit., p. 164.

²¹Arkansas Acts. Act of 1897, No. 11, Sec. 1, p. 16.

There is strong indication that the majority of people in the entire county were actively opposed to the "Four-mile Law." J. F. Manning records that 2,200 voters petitioned Rains and West for the repeal of the law while there were only 3,000 voters in the county.²² Manning's statement is in harmony with the Mt. Zion Association's report that Oak Grove Church was examined because her membership had signed a petition calling for the repeal of the "Four-mile Law."²³

The record indicates that Rains was aided by Mr. F. G. West in his opposition to the "Four-mile Law." West was a member of the Philadelphia Church, and, therefore, should have understood the feelings of the "country folk" toward the law. He, like Rains, was in a position to make his influence felt, as he was a member of the Arkansas House of Representatives. After the law was repealed, the Mt. Zion Association looked upon both West and Rains as being against temperance, and some within the Association believed that the Philadelphia Church should exclude them because of their work in having the act repealed.²⁴ While some in the

²²Manning, op. cit., p. 18.

²³Minutes of Mt. Zion Baptist Association, 1897, p. 9.

²⁴Ibid., p. 4.

Philadelphia Church were in agreement with the Mt. Zion Association, they were in the minority; consequently, the Church refused to exclude Rains and West. There was, however, sufficient strength in the opposition to bring charges against the men and to cause a division in the Church. Evidence of the division is cited in the following comment concerning a Mr. Alfred Pagan:

He [Mr. Pagan] moved out to north of Jonesboro, and united with Philadelphia Church. When the division came in Philadelphia Church, over the four-mile law, he went with the temperance side, and united with North Jonesboro Church, and remained a member of that church until his death.²⁵

The division evidently was of a minor nature, for the Philadelphia Church in that year experienced a burst of growth. The growth came in the face of the prediction by critics that the Church would soon diminish because of her stand on the "Four-mile Law."²⁶

After the Philadelphia Church indicated that she was going to support her two members who had worked for the repeal of the law, P. C. Barton formally brought the matter to the attention of the Mt. Zion Association in her annual session of 1897. Barton offered the following resolution:

²⁵Kitchens, op. cit., p. 29.

²⁶Opinion expressed by Mr. S. H. Penix, personal interview.

WHEREAS, There is reported to be an unsatisfactory condition of affairs in Philadelphia Baptist Church; and

WHEREAS, It is believed that this association should take knowledge of the matter and declare whether or not such state of affairs bar their fellowship in this Mount Zion Association. Therefore be it

RESOLVED, That a committee of five conservative brethren be appointed to investigate the matter and report their conclusions to this body.²⁷

Following the adoption of the resolution offered by Barton, the Association appointed a committee composed of P. C. Barton, E. J. A. McKinney, Giles C. Taylor, G. H. Faulkner, and Jesse N. Teats to investigate the objection raised concerning the Philadelphia Church. The committee made the following report to the Association:

1. That charges were brought against Brethren J. M. Rains and F. G. West for aiding in the repeal of the 'Jonesboro four-mile law.'

2. The said brethren admitted the charge but justified themselves in their actions.

3. That the said church sustained the said brethren.

4. That the church still maintains its position on the matter.

Therefore, we recommend that this body withdraw fellowship from the said Philadelphia church.²⁸

²⁷Minutes of Mt. Zion Baptist Association, 1897, pp. 1, 2.

²⁸Ibid., p. 4.

The report of the committee was adopted by the Association with a vote of forty-two to nine.²⁹

The action of the Association immediately produced repercussions. The other rural churches having similar feelings toward the old "Four-mile Law" passed resolutions endorsing the Philadelphia Church and censoring the Association for her action. The following resolution of Macedonia Church is indicative of the actions of the churches sympathetic with Philadelphia.

. . . Whereas Philadelphia Church was excluded from the Mt. Zion Association and whereas there is a great dissatisfaction among the church: Therefore be it resolved that we advise other churches to receive letters from Philadelphia Church as valid; furthermore be it resolved that this church advise the Mt. Zion Association to restore Philadelphia Church at her next regular meeting.³⁰

The record indicates that the feelings of Macedonia Church were completely in harmony with the preceding resolution.³¹

The lines were so sharply drawn between the protesting churches and Mt. Zion Association that one of the groups had to admit error or there could be no real unity between the parties. To admit fault would have been an impossibility; the Mt. Zion Association had acted in support

²⁹Ibid., p. 5.

³⁰Macedonia Baptist Church, op. cit., April 16, 1897.

³¹Ibid.

of prohibition and the rural churches had acted against the forced sale of whiskey in the unpoliced areas around them. Both groups were correct from their own position. An admission of fault, therefore, could not be realized.

The Mt. Zion Association apparently felt she must return the fire that the opposing churches had aimed in her direction. Upon receiving the resolutions passed by those churches, she passed the following resolution:

. . . Inasmuch as the following churches have, by resolutions, endorsed Philadelphia Church in her present condition, the same procedure be had as was had in the case of Philadelphia last year.

We further recommend that the same course be followed with Rock Hill Church, since (while not endorsing by resolution) she has instructed her delegation to vote for the restoration of Philadelphia Church in her present condition. . . .³²

While on one hand, the action of Mt. Zion Association was seemingly rather highhanded, the record strongly suggests that she tried to exercise as gentle a spirit as possible under the circumstances. In the recommendation to follow the course of action toward these churches that had been followed in regard to Philadelphia Church, a section was included which gave those churches one year to reconsider their stand.³³ Also, following their exclusion, the

³²Minutes of Mt. Zion Baptist Association, 1898, p. 3.

³³Ibid.

Association passed a resolution "to inform the five churches dropped from the fellowship of this Association as to the feelings of this body toward them":

Resolved:--that, if these churches will, and do, rescind, as Churches the resolutions in question, and will support the Association in her policy and work, they are not only eligible to membership, but will be cordially received into our fellowship on application so to do.³⁴

The cited resolution was "adopted unanimously by a standing vote."³⁵

Even though there apparently was a desire on the part of Mt. Zion Association to be understanding, the issues were too sharply drawn and too deeply felt for the churches to rescind their resolutions. The churches were sincerely convinced that they were right; for them to back down would be a denial of conviction. The Mt. Zion Association then offered the delegates an opportunity to take the matter back to their churches for reconsideration. Speaking for the delegates, Dick Gibson asked a few minutes leave of absence to consult together about asking for further time to consider the withdrawal of their resolutions;³⁶ the delegates promptly returned with the following statements:

We, the members of the following churches, to wit:
Rock Hill, Cedar Hill, Enterprise, and Mt. Pisgah,

³⁴Ibid., p. 14.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Ibid., p. 4.

submit the following:--We are unalterably of the opinion that the Association erred in expelling Philadelphia Church, and ask no further time to consider our action; and we believe that the Association has departed from its constitution, and that we have been debarred from fellowship illegally. Dated 10-7-1898.³⁷

Their statements constituted the withdrawal of the churches from the Mt. Zion Association. Some within the Association, however, were not content with dropping the matter in that state. The following resolution was presented by E. J. A. McKinney:

Whereas, Enterprise, Mt. Pisgah, Macedonia, and Cedar Hill Churches have persisted in their course in endorsing Philadelphia Church, therefore be it

Resolved:--That we do advise the minorities in those churches opposed to such action on the part of said churches, (if such minorities exist) to call a meeting, repudiate the action of said churches, and continue the Lord's work under their present names.³⁸

As a consequence of McKinney's resolution, the division seems to have taken on additional meaning. Not only did the excluded group hold divergent views concerning missions and feel that they were being mistreated over the "Four-mile" issue, but some of them felt that the historic principle of church autonomy was being threatened. The feeling that church independency was threatened was demonstrated to a degree when the new Association included the following statement in their resolution calling for the

³⁷Ibid., pp. 11, 12.

³⁸Ibid., p. 12.

organization: ". . . to perpetuate to ourselves and our children the grand principles of equality. . . ."39 Also the new Association passed a resolution reproaching Mt. Zion for her acceptance of the resolution offered by McKinney.40

Perhaps other issues were involved in the division of the old Association and the creation of the new Association, but one can safely conclude that the issues discussed would have brought about the incident irrespective of other issues. Had the mission issue been the only question, it is probable that the Association would have divided sometime shortly after the division of the State Convention in 1901. It is altogether possible, however, that if that question had been the only issue involved, it would have been almost entirely a different group of churches that formed the new Association. At least some who went into the organization would not have done so without the effect of other factors. This conclusion is evidenced in several churches' early return to the work of Mt. Zion Association after the death of the "Four-mile" issue and the hardening of lines over the missions controversy.

It is likely that the division within the Mt. Zion Association would not have come as early as it did had it

³⁹Minutes, 1898, p. 1.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 4.

not been for the controversy over the "Four-mile Law." It is also likely that without that issue the division would not have been as decisive as it was.

On the other hand, the "Four-mile Law" disturbance would probably not have been so insurmountable had there not been the discontent concerning the co-operative work. All of the factors obviously locked hands to create a new association that was destined to last, and grow, and make its own peculiar contribution to the Baptist cause in Northeast Arkansas.

CHAPTER IV

ORGANIZATION OF THE JONESBORO ASSOCIATION OF MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCHES

The purpose of this section of the study is to follow the movement begun by the disturbance within the Mt. Zion Association from the action of the excluded churches through the organization of the new Association. In seeking to carry out this purpose, the following areas will be explored: (1) the action of the excluded churches and their leaders, (2) the leading personnel in the organization of the new Association, (3) the committees of the new Association and their work, and (4) the churches composing the new Association.

I. ACTION OF THE EXCLUDED CHURCHES

The leaders among the excluded group began at once to conceive the idea of forming a new association of churches. The early movement is evident in that, within eight days after the exclusion of the churches, the Macedonia Church in conference spoke of "a prompt and united move being made . . . to organize a new association."¹ It is likely that Minton, Allen, and others had a new association in mind when

¹Macedonia Baptist Church, op. cit., October 15, 1898.

they reported to the Mt. Zion Association their intentions to persist in their position. Whether they did, the record indicates that by October 28, 1898, or within twenty-one days of the action of Mt. Zion Association, the Jonesboro Association had been organized.

The messengers from the excluded churches, therefore, had a great deal to report when they returned to their home churches. The following excerpt from the Macedonia Church minutes is indicative of the impact of those reports on the various churches:

We the Macedonia Baptist Church of Christ worshipping at Macedonia in conference assembled. . . . The messengers elected by the church to represent her in the Mt. Zion Association made their report to the Church. By their report the church became established in the knowledge of her exclusion from the Mt. Zion Association. . . . Therefore by motion and unanimous consent of this church the elected messengers of the Mt. Zion Association was [sic.] appointed and endorsed with power by this church to go forth and act in her behalf in the organization of a new association. . . .²

There is no record as to why or how, but Macedonia Baptist Church was appointed as the place for the churches to meet and organize the new Association. On October 28, 1898, those churches that had been excluded from the Mt. Zion Association met with the oldest church in Craighead County to form a new Association of Baptist Churches.³

²Ibid.

³Minutes, 1898, p. 1.

II. LEADING PERSONNEL

On the 28th day of October, 1898, at 10 o'clock a. m., a large congregation of Missionary Baptists assembled at Macedonia Church, Craighead County, Arkansas, as a conventional body, for the purpose of discussing the necessity of a new association. . . .⁴

Among the assembled congregation were a number of men who rose as leaders of the body. In this section, a sketch will be given of the men who became the leading personalities in the organization and beginning activities of the Jonesboro Association. The men will be discussed in order of appearance in the record of the organizational meeting.

J. M. Minton. The minutes state that J. M. Minton, the first person to speak to the assembled congregation, "arose and addressed the convention" making known "the cause and purpose of this meeting."⁵ There is no indication as to why he was selected for the role. It is obvious, however, that he was well qualified to offer the explanation since he was present when the Mt. Zion Association excluded the churches. Too, he evidently held membership in one of the

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

involved churches--Enterprise.⁶ Minton remained at the session of Mt. Zion even after the action excluding the said churches.⁷

At the time of the organization of the Association, Minton was not listed as pastor of any church;⁸ he had, however, served as pastor of various churches in the Mt. Zion Association prior to the division. Kitchens, who probably reflected the opinion of persons within the Mt. Zion Association, gives the following sketch of Minton: "Elder J. M. Minton served several churches as Pastor, was faithful in attendance at all his appointments, and did a good work in the Mt. Zion Association."⁹

After the creation of the Jonesboro Association, Minton was faithful to its cause. He acted during the initial session of the Association as a committeeman on literature;¹⁰ and, during the first year of the life of the Association, he apparently served as missionary for the churches.¹¹ In the years following, Minton continued to

⁶This conclusion is based on Minton's having served the Enterprise Church as messenger to the Association for several years. Vide Minutes, 1898, ff. Vols.

⁷Minutes of Mt. Zion Baptist Association, 1898, p. 15.

⁸Minutes, 1898, p. 3.

⁹Kitchens, op. cit., pp. 22, 23.

¹⁰Minutes, 1898, p. 3.

¹¹Ibid., p. 6.

attend the annual Associational meetings serving as messenger for Enterprise Church in 1898, 1899, 1901, 1903, 1905, 1906, and 1907.¹² From the beginning of the Association until his death, he served on some committee every year except 1900, 1904, and 1906.¹³ It is likely that he was not present in the years 1900 and 1904 as there is no indication of his presence according to the minutes of the Association during those years.

The primary ministerial work of Minton during the period after the organization of the Association seems to have been his pastoral work at Enterprise. Minton worked as pastor of that church from 1901 until 1904.¹⁴ Minton remained a member of Enterprise until his death in 1908.¹⁵ For some reason, a collection was taken for him during the Association's meeting in 1907. All the record states concerning that collection is: "At this time Brother R. L. Collins made a short talk in behalf of Eld. J. M. Minton, and a collection was taken which amounted to \$11.25."¹⁶ The wording of Collins' statement suggests that the

¹²Ibid., 1899, p. 9; 1901, p. 8; 1903, p. 10; 1905, p. 10; 1906, p. 11; 1907, p. 3.

¹³Ibid., 1898, ff. Vols.

¹⁴Ibid., 1901, p. 8; 1902, p. 14; 1903, p. 10; 1904, p. 9.

¹⁵Ibid., 1908, p. 5.

¹⁶Ibid., 1907, p. 10.

collection was of a benevolent nature; however, Minton's presence and activities at the 1907 meeting seemed to indicate that he was far from incapacitated. During the Association's session he preached one sermon composed of "a few and very effectual remarks";¹⁷ he was also selected as a correspondent to the Gainesville Association.¹⁸ However, his death occurring before the next annual meeting, it is possible that he was undergoing some physical difficulty for which reason the Association felt they should offer some assistance. Mrs. Della Broadway said that the offering was probably benevolent because in Minton's latter days he was fairly "poor and feeble" from both a physical and financial standpoint. According to Will Allen, he was frequently the recipient of such offerings from churches, particularly the Philadelphia Church.

A further indication of Minton's poverty lies in the Association's action of buying a tombstone to mark his grave. During the Associational meeting following his death, the obituary committee offered the following resolution concerning him:

Resolved, that the Moderator appoint a committee to take collections and pay for a tombstone and place the same at the grave of Bro. Minton, and

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 6.

report at our next meeting of this Association.¹⁹

The resolution was adopted and in accordance with its demands a committee was appointed as follows: "W. F. Barrett, T. C. Cole, and by motion the Moderator, I. Gibson, was made one of the three, to solicit funds to erect a monument to the grave of Bro. Minton."²⁰ The committee was unable to complete its work by the time of the 1909 session so more time was allowed.²¹ In 1910 the committee made the following report:

Your committee appointed two years ago to raise funds and to purchase and erect a monument to the grave of our honored and beloved Bro. Eld. J. M. Minton would respectfully report that we have completed the work at a cost of \$80.00.²²

J. B. Allen. Following Minton's opening address of the first session of the Jonesboro Association, J. B. Allen was elected as chairman of the convention. Allen was an active minister and a member of Rock Hill Church but he was not pastor of any church at the time of the organizational meeting.²³

Allen, having been elected moderator after the

¹⁹Ibid., 1908, p. 5.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Ibid., 1909, p. 8.

²²Ibid., 1910, p. 6.

²³Ibid., 1898, pp. 1, 4.

Association was organized, filled the office during 1898 and 1899.²⁴ In the following years he served the Association on various committees and was active in pastoral work. He was pastor of Rock Hill in 1900, Enterprise and Eight Mile Churches in 1901, Cedar Hill and Palestine in 1902, and Cedar Hill in 1903.²⁵ While he discontinued his pastoral work in the following years of his life, he continued to attend the Association's meetings through 1906.

From 1906 until his death in 1920 he attended the annual Associational meetings irregularly, but his participation in the activities of those meetings was markedly less. According to his son, Will, Allen declined in Associational activities and discontinued pastoral efforts because of a separation with his wife sometime between 1902 and 1909. Also between those years, Allen must have moved from Rock Hill to Lorado as the minutes record him as a messenger from Lorado Church in 1909.²⁶ Although Will Allen was not certain when his father moved, he estimated it as being in the winter of 1902 or 1903; he did say, however, that his father moved from Rock Hill to work a farm rented from W. N. Nutt.

²⁴Ibid., 1898, p. 2; 1899, p. 1.

²⁵Ibid., 1900, p. 9; 1901, p. 8; 1902, p. 14; 1903, p. 10.

²⁶Ibid., 1909, p. 11.

When Allen moved from Rock Hill, he placed his membership in the Cedar Hill Church; here he was a member for three or four years, after which he became a part of the Lorado Church where he remained a member until his death.²⁷

In discussing Allen, Mrs. Garland Arrington, his granddaughter, said that he could not be considered as having had outstanding ability; but, judging from the minutes of the Jonesboro Association, it is concluded that, excepting for his latter years, he was faithful to his charge. He died at the age of seventy-four and was buried in the Philadelphia Cemetery.²⁸

T. C. Cole. Mr. T. C. Cole was elected as clerk of the "Mass Convention" in 1898.²⁹ Cole was not a minister, but evidently was an active member of the Macedonia Church. The minutes of the Association show him to have been clerk for his church during the years 1898, 1899, and 1900.³⁰ He was also a messenger for Macedonia Church at the organizational meeting of the Jonesboro Association.³¹

²⁷Ibid., 1920, p. 11.

²⁸Reverend J. B. Allen, Monument, Philadelphia Cemetery, Jonesboro, Arkansas.

²⁹Minutes, 1898, p. 1.

³⁰Ibid., 1898, p. 3; 1899, p. 9; 1900, p. 9.

³¹Ibid., 1898, p. 3.

Cole was elected as the permanent clerk of the Association after its organization, but he only filled the position for one year.³² In 1899 he served on the obituary committee.³³ After 1899 Cole did not regularly attend the Association. In an interview, J. F. Manning stated that Cole died with cancer after a long illness.

J. M. Rains. After the convention was organized and preliminary activities were completed, Elder J. M. Rains offered the following resolution:

Whereas, the Mt. Zion Association in its annual session at Harrisburg in October, 1897, expelled Philadelphia Church from its fellowship because the said Philadelphia Church failed and refused to expel two of its members for a purely political action,

And whereas, six sister churches at a later day, by resolution endorsed the said Philadelphia Church and thereby condemned the action of the Association,

And whereas, the said association in its annual gathering at Mt. Zion Church, Greene County, in October, 1898, expelled the said six sister churches,

Therefore be it resolved, that it is the sense of this mass convention for the glory of God and the salvation of men, and in order to perpetuate to ourselves and our children the grand principles of equality as held by the Baptist fathers and that grand distinguishing principle, viz., the eternal divorcement of Church and State, that these churches so expelled, with all other Baptist churches who sympathize with and believe them right in the premises to take immediate steps to form themselves

³²Ibid., p. 2.

³³Ibid., 1899, p. 2.

into an association. Who ably defend the resolution and the old land mark practices of our Baptist fathers.³⁴

Rains' resolution was adopted by unanimous vote.

Rains was perhaps the most controversial figure at the organization of the Association because of his political activity connected with the "Four-mile Law." Kitchens gives Rains the credit for having created the Jonesboro Association:

When the Jonesboro Association was formed, he went into it, in fact, he was the sole cause of its being formed; because of his instrumentality in repealing the four-mile law, which prohibited the sale of whiskey within four miles of the Jonesboro Academy.³⁵

Rains was a relatively active political as well as religious figure. According to Marcus Halbrook, Director of Arkansas Legislative Council, he served one term in the Arkansas House of Representatives from Craighead County at the 1887 session. Then in 1897 Rains represented the First Senatorial District, consisting of Clay, Greene, and Craighead Counties in the Arkansas Senate. He did not serve as senator after 1899.³⁶

On a local level Rains served in several political offices. The following news article pictures the local

³⁴Ibid., 1898, p. 1.

³⁵Kitchens, op. cit., p. 24.

³⁶Marcus Halbrook, Director of Arkansas Legislative Council, personal letter.

political life of Rains:

Judge J. M. Rains is one of the most prominent citizens of the county. He has served efficiently as county judge for two terms and as State senator. He is now a candidate for railroad commissioner, being one of two others who will direct and control the railroad business of the State.

Judge Rains has every prospect of being elected to this office. Aside from being a State senator himself, he served as sergeant-at-arms of that body for the two past terms, and the friends he made among the leading men of the State gives him every assurance of victory in the present contest.

Beside [sic.] being a farmer, lawyer and politician, Judge Rains is also a minister of the gospel in the Baptist Church, and an ardent worker in the church.

No man has more friends or stands higher in this city and county than Judge J. M. Rains. He is true and loyal to a friend, kind and generous to a foe and fair to all men.³⁷

Rains was a member of the Philadelphia Church at the time of the organization of the Jonesboro Association, and he had been a preacher for a number of years. Kitchens, speaking of him as a minister, gives the following description:

J. M. Rains made a good preacher, and was pastor of several churches in the association.

When the Jonesboro Association was formed, he went into it. . . . After two or three years, he lost interest in his ministerial work, and did not preach much in his last years.³⁸

³⁷[Jonesboro] Weekly Times Enterprise, (An Illustrated Supplement, April 12, 1906), p. 53.

³⁸Kitchens, op. cit., p. 24.

While Rains did become active as a local politician, it seems incorrect to conclude that he lost all interest in ministerial work. The minutes of the Jonesboro Association suggest that he was very active in its work for at least twelve years after its organization. In fact, there is more mention made of Rains in the minutes of the Association than of any other man who led in the organizational meeting. To give a more complete picture of his associational activities, a table summarizing his activities appears at the end of this chapter.

Reference to Table I, page 66, reveals that Rains served the Association as missionary from 1907 until the session of 1909; he was moderator of the Association from 1904 until 1906. The table also shows that he continued to attend and participate in the Association's activities until 1910. After 1910 there is little evidence of Rains' ministerial work. Part of the decline was, no doubt, due to his law activities; but, as the end of his life approached, he had a health problem. According to Mrs. Garland Arrington, Rains had a long illness and was incapacitated for several years before his death.

Kitchens was probably justified in saying that Rains lost interest in ministerial work, if he had in mind only the type of work done by a pastor, for the record does not show Rains to have been a very active pastor. The only

churches that he served as pastor after the organization of the Jonesboro Association were Oak Grove and Herman, which he served simultaneously for one year.³⁹

According to the dates on Rains' monument, he was born in Tennessee in 1850 and died in Arkansas in 1922. Evidently, there is some confusion concerning the date of his death for the minutes of the Jonesboro Association list him in the obituary report in 1921.⁴⁰ Since the stone which marks the grave of Rains appears to be rather new, it is concluded that there was a slight mistake on his tombstone.

The men treated in this section were not the only persons present, neither were they the only ones making real contributions to the work of the Association, but they seem to have been the outstanding figures who led the group toward the formation of a new association and through the organizational session. Table II, page 67, lists all ministers that the minutes indicate as holding membership in the churches at the time of the organization. Table III, page 68, lists all persons indicated present at the 1898 session. Of course, there were a host of men and women present who had no official role, and consequently, were not mentioned. The minutes, however, do testify to their presence in the following manner:

³⁹Minutes, 1907, p. 14. ⁴⁰Ibid., 1921, p. 11.

Visiting brothers and sisters were invited to set [sic.] with us in council and all ministers belonging to the churches of this association or in sympathy with this union.⁴¹

III. COMMITTEES

Seven committees were appointed to serve the Association at the time of its organization.⁴² Little research work was required of most of the committees; their chief function was simply the expressing for the body its opinion in a given area. The types of committees begun in 1898 propagated themselves in the life of the Association and many times committeemen merely refer back to the previous minutes and recopy a prior report. There are instances, however, where such committees have attempted to deal with pressing issues.

The committees of the first session were somewhat different from their modern counterparts in that they had no prior minutes to which they could refer unless they went back to the minutes of the Mt. Zion Association; therefore, they were probably more original and invested more thought in their declarations. Some of the committees of the organizational meeting had a tremendous task, such as the

⁴¹Ibid., 1898, p. 3.

⁴²Ibid., 1898, pp. 2, 3.

constitutional committee, missionary committee, and resolutions committee who were responsible for the drafting of documents that were to direct the life of the Association for an indefinite period of time.

Divine Services Committee. The Divine Services Committee was appointed for the purpose of making arrangements for the speakers during the periods of worship while the Association was in session. C. V. Baker, Jessy Lambert, and J. W. Turner were appointed by the moderator to serve as the committee. The following ministers were selected to deliver the sermons: (1) E. Walraven, Friday at "early candle light," (2) J. M. Rains, Saturday at 11:00 a.m., (3) J. F. Clark, Saturday at "early candle light," (4) Oscar Reynolds, Sunday at 11:00 a.m. With the completion of those arrangements and their adoption, the committee ceased to exist.⁴³

Constitutional Committee. The committee to prepare a constitution, articles of faith, and rules of decorum was composed of the following men: R. P. Watkins, J. E. Clark, W. H. Cole, the moderator, and the clerk.⁴⁴ The work drafted by those men was amended before its adoption; however, the nature of the amendments was not stated in the minutes. The first constitution along with the articles of

⁴³Ibid., pp. 2, 3.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 3.

agreement and rules of decorum are included in the appendix of this thesis.

Committee for Associational Missions. The following men were appointed as a committee for Associational missions: I. Gibson, W. H. Cole, and J. W. Turner.⁴⁵ However, only one of the men served on the committee, as the submitted report was signed by J. H. Bishop, W. H. Cole, and S. J. Lambert.⁴⁶ The committee offered the following report which was adopted by the Association:

Whereas, as there is much destitution in the bounds of the Jonesboro Association, we recommend that this association support at least one missionary in the field. We further recommend that this be left to the churches composing the Jonesboro Association. We recommend that we rise in the power of our might, open up our hearts and our pocket books and pay according as the Lord prospered us.⁴⁷

The phrase in the committee's report stating "that this be left to the churches. . ." reflected an anti-board and anti-secretary spirit; subsequent action of the Association amply justified this conclusion.⁴⁸ The subject of missions will be treated further in another section of this study.

Temperance Committee. J. F. Clark, J. M. Penix, and

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 5.

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 6, ff. Vols.

J. T. Elrod were appointed to serve as the committee on temperance.⁴⁹ The committee prepared the following report:

We, your committee on Temperance, beg leave to submit the following: That the use of intoxicants is the cause of nine-tenths of the crime with which the land is cursed, and is the cause, directly or indirectly, of most of the poverty and distress; also brings most of the taxation which the people have to pay; also the use of intoxicants transmits criminal tendencies to the offspring of the users; therefore be it

Resolved, That all our churches do all in their power to discourage the use and traffic in alcoholic drinks; and that all churches who encourage the traffic be considered unsound in Christian practice, and we recommend that the churches in the association do all in their power for the cause of Temperance.⁵⁰

The minutes stated that "the above report was received, discussed and adopted and the committee discharged."⁵¹

There is no indication that the report did not reflect the actual feelings of the churches composing the Association. All references to prohibition or temperance in the record of the Jonesboro Association present a picture of a people heartily in support of prohibition.⁵² However, due to their position on the "Four-mile Law," the Mt. Zion Association viewed them as being a hindrance to the progress of prohibition in the Jonesboro area. Some in the Mt. Zion group went

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 3.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 5.

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²Ibid., ff. Vols.

so far as to call it "The Little Brown Jug Association."⁵³

Committee on Resolutions. The committee on resolutions was composed of W. L. Silman, R. G. Cothorn, and J. W. Caldwell.⁵⁴ The following resolutions were included in the report:

Whereas, the Mt. Zion Association at her annual gathering at Mt. Zion Church, Green County, Ark., did pass a resolution instructing minorities, if such minorities exist in these seven churches, to meet in conference and repudiate the action of these churches and declare themselves the church, thereby as we understand introducing lawsuits in churches; therefore be it

Resolved, that this association advise said churches to pass such by unnoticed; be it further

Resolved, that we tender our thanks to this church and community for their hospitality during our stay among them.⁵⁵

The report indicates that the committee felt that Mt. Zion had over-stepped its authority by the action in 1898.

Committee on Finance. The committee on finance, composed of J. R. Cooper, I. Gibson, and J. M. Penix, reported the following: "We have received of the messengers from the different churches composing this Association the

⁵³Statement by Mrs. Della Broadway, personal interview.

⁵⁴Minutes, 1898, p. 3.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 4.

sum of \$12.00."⁵⁶ A motion was passed that the amount be given to the clerk to pay for the printing of the minutes.⁵⁷

Committee on Literature. Those serving as the committee on literature were E. Walraven, J. M. Minton, and R. P. Watkins.⁵⁸ The report by the committee was as follows:

We, your committee on literature, beg leave to submit the following:

First of all, the reading of the Bible with a prayerful heart. We believe it is the duty of every church to have a live Sunday School in it, because it trains the rising generation and creates within them a greater desire to know more about God. We also recommend periodicals of the American Baptist Publication Society. We further recommend as a religious paper "The American Baptist Flag," edited by J. N. Hall, St. Louis, Mo. We also recommend the reading of "Arkansas Baptist," edited by W. A. Clark, Little Rock, Ark.⁵⁹

The reports of all the committees, when reflecting an opinion, usually give accurate pictures of the thinking of the Jonesboro Association as a body. Before adoption all reports containing debatable material were thoroughly discussed and amended if considered necessary.⁶⁰

IV. CHURCHES

Seven churches, Macedonia, Philadelphia, Rock Hill,

⁵⁶Ibid., pp. 2, 4.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 4.

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 3.

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 5.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 4.

Oak Grove, Enterprise, Mt. Pisgah, and Cedar Hill, formed the Jonesboro Association.⁶¹ All of those churches are existing today except Enterprise and Cedar Hill, both of which were apparently absorbed by new churches; Cedar Hill became Lorado Church, and Enterprise evidently became New Enterprise Church.

Philadelphia. Kitchens gave the following account of the organization of Philadelphia Church:

Philadelphia Church was organized in 1860. Thomas White and wife, Coulson Sharp and wife and Maston Albright and wife, were among the charter members.⁶²

Philadelphia Church ceased to be represented in the Jonesboro Association in 1918. According to Mrs. Broadway, a life-long member of Philadelphia, the Church went back into the Mt. Zion Association because the old leaders passed from the scene and younger ones took their places. She said that the new leaders were more progressive, more educated, and, consequently, wanted a progressive and educated minister to lead their church, one of whom the Church felt was not available in the Jonesboro Association. Therefore, they returned to the Mt. Zion Baptist Association.

Of course, Philadelphia did not leave the Jonesboro Association without objection from some of her members.

⁶¹Ibid., pp. 2, 3. ⁶²Kitchens, op. cit., p. 21.

Most of the objectors remained within the membership of the Church, but there were several whose feelings were so involved that they moved their membership to churches still affiliated with the Jonesboro group.⁶³ Rains, for example, changed his address and probably moved his membership in 1918, which was the last year Philadelphia was represented in the Jonesboro Association.⁶⁴

Mt. Pisgah. Little is known concerning Mt. Pisgah Church. Kitchens lists it as one of the churches attending the Mt. Zion Association in 1879 with Ben Owens as an only messenger.⁶⁵ The Church was located a few miles north of Poinsett County and south of Jonesboro at Dee, Arkansas.⁶⁶ Mt. Pisgah continued to be listed in the minutes until 1923, but the records indicate that for several years prior to this date the Church had not been active in the Associational work. Many times they were only represented at the Association by letter. Their last statistical report in the Jonesboro minutes shows them to have had a membership of only twenty-five.⁶⁷

According to Rogers, Mt. Pisgah was listed as one of

⁶³Opinion expressed by Will Allen, personal interview.

⁶⁴Minutes, 1918, p. 6. ⁶⁵Kitchens, op. cit., p. 26.

⁶⁶Minutes, 1898, p. 3. ⁶⁷Ibid., 1920, p. 14.

the churches affiliated with the Mt. Zion Association in 1948.⁶⁸

Macedonia. Macedonia Church was the oldest church to join in the formation of the Jonesboro Association. According to Kitchens she was organized in 1841 by Elder Nutt and Elder Winningham.⁶⁹ At the time of the organization of the Jonesboro Association, she reported a membership of 166, which made her the largest among the churches going into the organization.⁷⁰ Macedonia has continued in the Jonesboro Association to the present date.

Kitchens gave the following sketch of the Church:

Macedonia Church was organized April, 27th, 1841 by Elder William Nutt and Elder Winningham. The charter members were, David Blake and wife, John Sanders and wife, Robert Brashear and wife, Jeremiah Erwin and wife, Jim Jones and wife and Thomas White; eleven in all.

In 1853, she reported twenty-two members to the Association; in 1865, twenty-five members; in 1870, forty members; in 1880, one-hundred and twenty-three members.

She has had for pastors, William Nutt, John Pearce, G. W. Obear, M. E. Clemments, T. D. Lloyd, Noah Cate, J. M. Minton. She had some noble laymen in her membership, such as Thomas White, Coulson Sharp, Simpson Albright, William and R. S. Cooper, Dutch McEwen.

This Church is the second oldest church in the

⁶⁸Rogers, op. cit., p. 353.

⁶⁹Kitchens, op. cit., p. 8. ⁷⁰Minutes, 1898, p. 9.

Association, and up to 1860 was one of the best. Since that time she has been a prominent Church, but has not held her place as she did before that time. The first thing that caused her to lose her place was the removal of [sic.] the membership some of their most active members, Deacon White, Simpson Albright and others to Philadelphia Church. Her members have been comparatively poor, so she has not had the strength financially that her numerical strength would indicate. She has never been a strong missionary church.⁷¹

Cedar Hill. There is a slight air of mystery connected with Cedar Hill Church as to what exactly happened to her. Just as she disappeared, another church named Lorado came into existence a short distance from Cedar Hill's old location.⁷²

The last year that Cedar Hill was mentioned in the minutes was 1904, at which time she had membership of 116. Oscar Reynolds was her pastor, and her address was given as Lorado.⁷³

At the next annual Associational meeting no reference was made of Cedar Hill, but Lorado was listed as one of the churches for the first time. There is no indication that Lorado presented a petitionary letter to the Association, but she was automatically considered a member.⁷⁴ From this information it is concluded that Cedar Hill merely moved and

⁷¹Kitchens, op. cit., p. 8. ⁷²Minutes, 1905, p. 10.

⁷³Ibid., 1904, p. 13.

⁷⁴Ibid., 1905, p. 1.

changed her name to Lorado; if Lorado had been a new church, it would have been necessary for her to have petitioned the Association for membership; however, as an old church with a new name, a petition would have been unnecessary as she would have retained her membership from the past.

An incident bearing similar marks occurred in regard to a church that came into the Association in 1904. In that year Lakeview Church joined the Association giving Claunch as its address.⁷⁵ Henson Chapel, evidently already considered a member, was represented at the Association in 1905 with its address listed as Claunch.⁷⁶ Then, in 1906, Walnut Grove Church, with the same address, appeared as a member of the Association.⁷⁷ From an interview with a member of Walnut Grove, it was learned that the names Henson Chapel and Walnut Grove referred to the same church.⁷⁸ The person interviewed, however, did not remember the church's being called Lakeview, but confessed the possibility since the Baptists of the community may have met with the Lakeview Methodist Church until they were able to erect their own building.

⁷⁵Ibid., 1904, pp. 3, 13. ⁷⁶Ibid., 1905, p. 10.

⁷⁷Ibid., 1906, p. 11.

⁷⁸Opinion expressed by Mrs. Ida Vanhook, personal interview.

Enterprise. Enterprise was probably organized in 1883 as Kitchens refers to it as a "new church" coming into the Association in that year.⁷⁹ The minutes indicate that Enterprise gradually ceased to function. In 1912 she was listed in the minutes as having thirty-eight members and no pastor; in 1913 she was not recorded as an affiliated church; in 1914 and 1915 she was again listed and reported forty-two members; in 1916 and 1917 she was recorded in the minutes, but there were no statistics given.⁸⁰ She was not listed again as a part of the Jonesboro Association.

In 1948, however, a church under the name of New Enterprise appeared in the minutes.⁸¹ This church did not petition the Association for membership which would indicate that she already had some relationship with the Association. Since New Enterprise is located only a short distance from the original site of Enterprise, it is concluded that New Enterprise was a revival of the old Enterprise Church.

Rock Hill. Rock Hill was listed among the churches of the Mt. Zion Association for the first time in 1885. Of that session Kitchens says that six new churches joined the

⁷⁹Kitchens, op. cit., p. 28.

⁸⁰Minutes, 1912, p. 10; 1914, p. 10; 1915, p. 8; 1916, p. 12; 1917, p. 9.

⁸¹Ibid., 1948, p. 32.

Association.⁸² Rock Hill was probably one of those "new churches." Since the organization of the Jonesboro Association, Rock Hill has continuously been within its affiliation. Located in the hills of Crowley's Ridge north of Jonesboro, Rock Hill is a small church with a present membership of ninety-eight.⁸³

Oak Grove. Kitchens made the following remarks about Oak Grove Church:

Oak Grove Church, Craighead County was organized about 1871. It was located west of Jonesboro about seven miles, on the old Jacksonport road. The leading members were Leroy Gibson, Dick Gibson, William Bishop. This was and is a prominent church in the Association.⁸⁴

Oak Grove has been a part of the Jonesboro Association from the organization of the Association down to the present date. The minutes of the Jonesboro Association reveal that Oak Grove Church has a present membership of 340, an annual budget of \$4,973.27, and property valued at \$30,000.⁸⁵

⁸²Kitchens, op. cit., p. 28.

⁸³Minutes, 1964, p. 30.

⁸⁴Kitchens, op. cit., p. 22.

⁸⁵Minutes, 1964, pp. 20, 21, 30.

TABLE I

ASSOCIATIONAL ACTIVITY OF J. M. RAINS

YEAR	ACTIVITY	MINUTE PAGE	YEAR	ACTIVITY	MINUTE PAGE
1898	Presented resolution creating Jonesboro Assn.	1	1907	Messenger from Philadelphia	14
	Preached Sat. at 11:00	3		Pastor of Oak Grove and Herman	14
	Divine Service Committeeman	3		Preached introductory message	2
	Messenger to White River Assn.	3		Literature Committeeman	3
1899	Preached Fri. Evening	1		Temperance Committeeman	4
1900	Messenger from Philadelphia	9		Resolutions Committeeman	5
	Chairman of Arrangements Com.	2		Messenger to Spring River Assn.	6
1902	Messenger from Philadelphia	14		Conducted "Divine Service" Fri.	4
	Temperance Committeeman	3		Recommended as Missionary	8
	State Missions Committeeman	4	1908	Conducted opening devotional	3
	Minister and Post Office Committeeman	4		Messenger to Current River Assn.	5
	Preached Fri. Evening	4		Reported Missionary work for yr.	4
1903	Messenger to Big Saline Assn.	3	1909	Preached introductory message	1
1904	Messenger from Philadelphia	13		Arrangements Committeeman	1
	Moderator of the Assn.	1		Served as missionary during yr.	5
1905	Messenger from Philadelphia	10	1910	Preached Sun. Morning	10
	Moderator of the Assn.	1	1915	Preached Fri. Night	3
1906	Messenger from Philadelphia	11	1918	Minutes recorded his address having been changed to Bay	6
	Moderator of the Assn.	1	1921	Obituary Com. reported his death and listed him as a member of Herman at time of death	11

TABLE II
 MINISTERS BELONGING TO THE JONESBORO ASSOCIATION WITH
 ADDRESSES, PASTORATES, AND PLACES OF MEMBERSHIP
 IN 1898

MINISTER	ADDRESS	PASTORATE	PLACE OF MEMBERSHIP*
Allen, J. B.	Jonesboro, Arkansas	None	Rock Hill
Clark, J. F.	Herndon, Arkansas	Rock Hill Cedar Hill	Cedar Hill
Minton, J. M.	Jonesboro, Arkansas	None	Enterprise
Osment, J. W.	Stottsville, Arkansas	Mt. Pisgah	
Reynolds, Oscar	Brookland, Arkansas	Philadelphia Oak Grove Macedonia	
Stokes, B. T.	Jonesboro, Arkansas	Enterprise	
Rains, J. M.	Jonesboro, Arkansas	None	Philadelphia
Walraven, E.	Dee, Arkansas	None	Mt. Pisgah
Watkins, R. P.	Jonesboro, Arkansas	None	Oak Grove
Williams, Thos.	Lorado, Arkansas	None	

* The conclusions concerning places of membership have been based primarily on the Association's record of messengers.

TABLE III

NAMES, PLACES OF MEMBERSHIP, AND PRINCIPLE ACTIVITIES OF PERSONS
INDICATED PRESENT AT THE ORGANIZATION OF THE JONESBORO
MISSIONARY BAPTIST ASSOCIATION IN 1898

NAME	PLACE OF MEMBERSHIP	ACTIVITY	NAME	PLACE OF MEMBERSHIP	ACTIVITY
Adams, J. N.	Cedar Hill	Messenger	Hankins, E. G.	Philadelphia	Messenger
Allen, J. B.	Rock Hill	Moderator	Ishmeal, W.	Rock Hill	Messenger
Baker, C. V.	Rock Hill	Messenger	Lambert, S. J.	Philadelphia	Messenger
Berry, James	Rock Hill	Messenger	Mays, A. C.	Philadelphia	Messenger
Bishop, J. H.	Oak Grove	Messenger	Mays, Alex	Macedonia	Messenger
Bishop, W. P.	Oak Grove	Messenger	Minton, D. B.	Enterprise	Messenger
Brook, D.	Philadelphia	Messenger	Minton, J. M.	Enterprise	Messenger Missionary
Caldwell, J. W.	Cedar Hill	Messenger	Mosier, H.	Philadelphia	Messenger
Clark, J. F.	Cedar Hill	Messenger	Nutt, R. M.	Cedar Hill	Messenger
Cole, T. C.	Macedonia	Messenger Clerk	Penix, J. M.	Philadelphia	Messenger
Cole, W. H.	Macedonia	Messenger	Rains, J. M.	Philadelphia	
Cooper, J. R.	Macedonia	Messenger	Selman, W. L.	Oak Grove	Messenger
Cothorn, R. G.	Macedonia	Messenger	Tolbert, G. M.	Macedonia	Messenger
Elrod, J. T.			Turner, J. W.	Rock Hill	Messenger
Freeman, G. E.	Cedar Hill	Messenger	Walraven, E.	Mt. Pisgah	Messenger
Gaskins, C. W.	Macedonia	Messenger	Watkins, R. P.	Oak Grove	Messenger
Gibson, I.	Oak Grove	Messenger	West, F. G.	Philadelphia	
Green, John	Philadelphia	Messenger	Wiles, R. E. L.	Enterprise	Messenger
Guest, Robert	Cedar Hill	Messenger			

CHAPTER V

COURSES CHARTED BY THE NEW ASSOCIATION

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the directions the new Association began to move upon the completion of its organization, and, in seeking to carry out this purpose, the sources will be surveyed to answer the following questions: (1) What courses did the Association chart for her missions program? (2) What courses did the Association chart in her affiliations and relationships with other Baptist groups?

I. MISSIONS PROGRAM

An effort will be made in this section to study the earliest concepts of missions held by the Jonesboro Association and to explore factors which led the Association to change its concepts.

"Gospel plan" of missions. In the organization of the Jonesboro Association the body adopted the method of missions entitled the "gospel plan."¹ That plan, as revealed in the minutes of the Association, involved the following steps: (1) The Association recommended a party or

¹Minutes, 1898, p. 6.

parties to the churches as missionary or missionaries.²

(2) The churches who were willing to support the party or parties recommended would give their endorsement to the recommended party or parties and begin sending offerings directly to the missionary or missionaries.³ (3) The missionary or missionaries were responsible to no one but the churches and no party was directly responsible for his support except the local churches. There was no board or secretary to unify the work. Neither was there a definite salary promised the missionary.⁴

Table IV, page 81, gives a survey of the mission work of the Jonesboro Association for the first six years. During the time from 1898 through 1904 the Association on a local level operated her missions almost entirely according to the "gospel plan," but in 1905 there seems to have been a slight change of direction.

Factors leading to change. Several factors were working to bring about a change in the mission program of the Jonesboro Association. The program of the General Association of Arkansas Baptist Churches was having a leading influence on the Jonesboro Association. Though the General Association had renounced the "board plan" of

²Ibid. ³Ibid., p. 5; 1899, p. 4. ⁴Ibid., p. 5.

missions and set up its own program, it had, however, adopted measures to unify its work to an extent.⁵ The first reference the Jonesboro group made to the General Association was that "a large number of churches in the state have adopted as we believe a scriptural basis to preach the gospel to the world."⁶ Later reference to that body emphasized that the missionaries of the General Association were God-called and Church sent."⁷

By 1904 a minor but significant change was made in the Jonesboro Association's report on the General Association's missions. The following excerpt from the report demonstrates the change: "We recommend that all our churches take collections for this work and send the money to W. C. C. Dorough at Sheridan, Arkansas."⁸ Exactly what official position Dorough held in the General Association is not known. It is obvious that for the Jonesboro Association he was serving as a Secretary of Missions, and here-to-fore this position had not existed in their economy of missions; according to their "gospel plan," offerings were to be sent directly to the missionaries.

⁵General Association of Arkansas Baptist Churches, op. cit., p. 10.

⁶Minutes, 1902, p. 5.

⁷Ibid., 1903, p. 6.

⁸Ibid., 1904, p. 3.

Another factor which possibly led the Jonesboro Association toward slight changes in her mission program was her apparent failure to have a missionary during the associational year of 1904-1905.⁹

Changes in the mission program. At the 1905 session the Jonesboro Association elected her first missionary committee. The committee grew out of the report of the Committee on Associational Missions. The report after its adoption read as follows:

We find that there is a great destitution in the bounds of our Association that needs the pure gospel preached to them, and as we believe it is our duty as well as our privilege as missionary Baptists to do a great work along this line, we now recommend that the Moderator appoint a committee of three here and now to select a missionary, to be approved of by the churches of this Association, and set apart according to Acts 11-22, and that each church notify the Clerk of this Association and he notify the missionary, if he be accepted, that he may go forth to do duty in such local fields as the Holy Spirit shall direct him.¹⁰

The minutes indicate that the report as first offered to the body produced some debate. The minutes simply stated: "The report on Associational Missions was presented, and, after some amendments accepted by the committee, was adopted. . . ."¹¹ Y. A. Cole, J. W. Turner, and W. F. Barrett

⁹Ibid., 1905, pp. 6, 7.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 7.

¹¹Ibid.

were appointed as the Missionary Committee.¹²

The Association in the session of 1906 again used a missionary committee which was composed of W. R. Marshall, G. B. Cole, W. L. Watkins, T. C. Cole, and I. Gibson. The Committee was to confer with one member of each church in the Association and employ an associational missionary.¹³ Evidently the Committee was successful in its selection for in 1907 the report on associational missions included the following description of the work done during the year:

. . . We find further that under the services of our Associational Missionary, Elder J. G. Henson, there have been 32 professions and much other good done. The churches have paid \$71.02; collected on field, \$31.45 making a total of \$102.47.¹⁴

The plan of work for the next year (1907-1908), however, did not include a missionary committee. The following resolution offered by Oscar Reynolds seems to have been as true to the original idea of missions according to the "gospel plan" as possible:

Whereas, as there is much destitution in the bounds of our Association, and as God has put the responsibility of preaching the Gospel on His Churches,

Resolved: That it is the sense of this body here and now, that there ought to be a Missionary in our territory, and also that this Association ask the

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid., 1906, p. 9.

¹⁴Ibid., 1907, pp. 7, 8.

Churches composing this body to endorse Elder J. M. Rains as Missionary, and further that Philadelphia Church, of which he (Rains) is a member, endorse, and send him out to preach for this Association.¹⁵

There is no indication of the Association's using a missionary committee again until 1914; however, the "ice had been broken" by the action in 1905 and 1906. The trend was to continue gradually until the Association had a rather sophisticated missionary committee and a comparatively aggressive program of local missions.

II. AFFILIATIONS AND RELATIONSHIPS

"For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself" (Romans 14:7). These words of Paul can be applied to an Association of churches as well as to men. The history of the Jonesboro Association is a history of births and deaths of relationships and affiliations with other Baptist groups.

Mt. Zion Baptist Association. The earliest group of Baptists connected with the Jonesboro Association was the Mt. Zion Baptist Association. Their early relationship grew out of Mt. Zion Association's being the mother body of

¹⁵Ibid., 1907, p. 8.

Baptists within the Jonesboro area.

After the division of the Mt. Zion Association and the creation of the Jonesboro Association, the relationship between the two independent bodies seems to have rapidly deteriorated. The only evidence of an effort to reunite the two bodies appears in the minutes of the 1905 session:

There was a resolution read and some talks made in regard to uniting the Mt. Zion and Jonesboro Associations, and on motion there was a committee of seven appointed, composed of Bros. Y. A. Cole, T. C. Cole, I. Gibson, J. W. Turner, J. W. Caldwell, J. L. Wiles and Elder J. B. Allen, to confer with a similar committee which was appointed at the last annual session of the Mt. Zion Association in regard to this meeting.¹⁶

There is no evidence of the committee's functioning, and there is no mention of an additional effort for unification being undertaken by either group.

Except for individuals of the Mt. Zion Association visiting in the meetings of the Jonesboro Association, there is no indication of their dealing with each other in any way after the session in 1905.

Arkansas Baptist Convention. One body of Baptists, which has had much influence on the Jonesboro Association but with which the Jonesboro group has had little positive relationship, was the Arkansas Baptist Convention. There is

¹⁶Ibid., 1905, p. 2.

no indication that the Association ever strictly affiliated with the Convention; however, there were some projects of the Convention which received support from the Jonesboro Association. Two primary projects which received their support were an orphans' home in Monticello and the Woodland College in Jonesboro.

Concerning the orphans' home, the Association passed the following resolution in 1904:

One of the most prominent works enjoined by the Scriptures and there is perhaps none more Christlike, is the providing for the orphans and as the Orphans Home at Monticello belongs to the Baptists of Arkansas and as we, the constituents of Jonesboro association, constitute a part of the Baptist host of this State, therefore, we recommend that all our churches help sustain said institution with their contributions and prayers¹⁷

Support to the orphans' home in Monticello continued through 1906.¹⁸ In the annual meeting of the Jonesboro Association in 1907, however, it was recommended "that the churches take collections to assist the State Association to locate an orphans' home at some suitable place in the State and help support same. . . ." ¹⁹

During the 1909 session the "committee on Orphan's Home" more completely directed the churches toward

¹⁷Ibid., 1904, p. 5.

¹⁸Ibid., 1905, p. 7; 1906, pp. 3, 6.

¹⁹Ibid., 1907, p. 11.

supporting the "Land Mark" orphanage in Texarkana:

. . . the Land Mark Baptists have bought a home for orphan children located at Texarkana, Ark., and we further state that this home is not paid for in full and we further insist that Land Mark Baptist churches of the Jonesboro association take a collection to help finish paying for said home and feed and clothe and care for the children that are there in every way that is needful²⁰

The support given the Woodland College in Jonesboro continued for a longer period than that given the orphanage. The endorsement given the college in 1904 seems to have been enthusiastic:

. . . we heartily recommend to our brethren Woodland College of Jonesboro, Arkansas, as a Baptist institution worthy of your confidence and support. The teachers and instructors in this institution are all thought to be Christian men and women consecrating their lives to the uplifting of our youths. So no parent or guardian need be afraid to entrust their boys and girls in their care.²¹

In succeeding years the Association continued to give the college an opportunity to present her needs to the body of messengers. Opposition to the support of the college, however, began to manifest itself by 1922. The Association as usual permitted L. D. Summers "time to make a speech in interest of the Jonesboro college." Summers evidently presented his cause effectively for, when the committee on education read its report, the body amended it to endorse

²⁰Ibid., 1909, p. 4.

²¹Ibid., 1904, p. 8.

"the Jonesboro college as represented by Brother Summers."²² However, the effectiveness of that action was short lived; on Sunday morning during the same Associational meeting, J. F. Manning presented a resolution which sounded the death toll for all official recognition of the Woodland College by the Jonesboro Association. A portion of Manning's resolution was:

RESOLVED, That we, as an association, endorse no other school or college in this state, as true Baptist of the old type, and worthy of our support, except the Missionary Baptist College at Sheridan, Arkansas, and that the act of endorsing the prospective Jonesboro College is rescinded by adoption of this resolution.²³

For two years after the adoption of the preceding resolution, the Association continued to extend to Summers the courtesy of permitting him to address the body of messengers in interest of the College.²⁴ But the trend was clear; the Jonesboro Association was becoming less willing to have any part in anything that was in affiliation with the State Convention. In 1923 the Association passed a series of resolutions which, in effect, severed any relationship that might have existed between the Jonesboro Association and the State Convention:

Resolved, 1st. That we stand by our college at Sheridan, Ark., with our support and that we adhere to and support no other.

²²Ibid., 1922, p. 5.

²³Ibid., p. 8.

²⁴Ibid., 1923, p. 3.

Resolved, 2nd. That we stand by our Orphans Home at Texarkana, Ark., and contribute to same, and that we as churches, contribute to no other.

.

Resolved, 4th. That, since the Southern Baptist Convention has gone on record as being against Landmark Baptists, and means to separate us from their association, (see minutes of Southern Baptist Convention of 1922, page 511), each church in the Jonesboro Association be asked to watch conventionism in all its forms as its worst enemy and treat it as such.²⁵

The General Association. The state work with which the Jonesboro Association chose to affiliate was the General Association of Arkansas Baptist Churches. The General Association was not formed until after the division of the State Convention in 1901,²⁶ and in 1902 the Jonesboro Association passed a resolution clearly declaring her sympathies to be with the General Association.²⁷

In reviewing the minutes of the 1902 session of the General Association, it is observed that several leading figures of the Jonesboro Association were messengers.²⁸ Their presence would indicate that the leaders of the Jonesboro Association were actively interested in the

²⁵Ibid., 1923, p. 15.

²⁶Cf. ante, p. 23.

²⁷Minutes, 1902, p. 5.

²⁸General Association of Arkansas Baptist Churches, op. cit., pp. 4-6.

formation of the General Association. In an interview, J. F. Manning stated that J. M. Rains was the first man he knew of to speak of the General Association. As a further token of the affiliation of the Jonesboro group with the General Association, it is noted that Ben M. Bogard, editor of the "Landmark Baptist" and a leader in the General Association, was a frequent, and evidently welcome, visitor at the meetings of the Jonesboro Association.²⁹

In affiliating with the General Association the Jonesboro group was identifying herself with the "Land Mark" movement. While many aspects have changed in the original courses charted by the Jonesboro Association, she has remained constant in that she has continued as a part of the body of Baptists referred to as "Land Mark."

²⁹Minutes, 1903, p. 1; ff. Vols.

TABLE IV
LOCAL MISSIONARY AND LOCAL MISSION OFFERINGS
FOR EACH OF THE FIRST SIX YEARS
OF THE ASSOCIATION

YEAR	LOCAL MISSIONARY	LOCAL MISSION OFFERING
1899	J. M. Minton	\$ 85.47
1900	Thos. Williams J. F. Clark	57.78
1901	Thos. Williams	114.01
1902	Thos. Williams	78.60
1903	Oscar Reynolds	62.60
1904	None	

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY

The beginning of the Jonesboro Association of Missionary Baptist Churches reaches back through the corridors of time to the early work of the pioneer Baptist ministers. The minister who first began the work of proclaiming the Baptist message and beginning churches was William Nutt. While only one church within the fellowship of the Jonesboro group was organized by Nutt, many others grew out of the seed he planted during his "preaching tour" and pastoral-missionary activities.

The next pioneer figure who led the Baptist work a step further in development was John Pearce. As Nutt began the work of organizing churches and evangelizing communities, Pearce began the work of organizing the various churches into an association. His first project was to get the churches united in the New Salem Association, but that effort was not successful. However, from the work begun in the New Salem Association grew the Mt. Zion Association which has become one of the leading regional bodies of Baptists in Arkansas.

On the noble heritage of Baptist work in the Jonesboro-Crowley's Ridge area, however, came a blight in

1898. Such a controversy developed that it resulted in a split of the body. Several factors brought the Association to the division; one factor was the spirit of the period. As records of churches and associations of the period around 1900 are reviewed, one discovers a great deal of unrest. A number of divisions and changes were sweeping the State--it was a time in which Baptists were ripe for division. Also within the Mt. Zion Association there were divergent views concerning mission work. It was, therefore, only natural that a cleavage developed as those holding such views became more bold in their stand. The climactic factor which divided the Mt. Zion Association was a controversy which arose in her midst concerning the "Four-mile Law."

No single factor named would have produced a permanent schism in the Mt. Zion Association, but all of the factors working together produced insurmountable disruptions to its unity. Following the disruption of fellowship among the churches, the Association excluded a group of rural churches. In response to that action the excluded churches organized a new association under the name of the Jonesboro Missionary Baptist Association.

Although some efforts were later made to reunite the two associations, they were futile. The Jonesboro Association found ample justification for its continued existence through identification with the "Land Mark" movement.

This study has presented a story of a changing group of Baptists. During the life of the Jonesboro Association, she has changed her mission program from the simple concepts of the "gospel plan" to a much more elaborate plan employing such agencies as a missionary committee and a secretary-treasurer. Though a changing and relatively small body, the Jonesboro Association has carved a place among Baptists of Northeast Arkansas and has been able to make its own peculiar contribution to the Baptist work in that section.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. ANNUALS

- Arkansas Missionary Baptist Association. Minutes of Arkansas Missionary Baptist Association. Little Rock: Arkansas Missionary Baptist Association, 1962.
- General Association of Arkansas Baptist Churches. Annual of the General Association of Arkansas Baptist Churches. Searcy: General Association of Arkansas Baptist Churches, 1902.
- Jackson, D. N. (Ed.). Department of Research and Public Relations of the North American Baptist Association. North American Baptist Association Directory and Handbook. An annual report containing information on the work and workers of the churches of the North American Baptist Association. Jacksonville: Research and Public Relations Committee, 1964.
- Jonesboro Association of Missionary Baptist Churches. Minutes of the Jonesboro Association of Missionary Baptist Churches. Jonesboro: Jonesboro Association of Missionary Baptist Churches, 1898-1964.
- Manning, J. F. "History and Principles of the Jonesboro Association of Missionary Baptist Churches," Minutes of the Jonesboro Association of Missionary Baptist Churches. Jonesboro: Jonesboro Association of Missionary Baptist Churches, 1927, pp. 17-30.
- Mount Zion Baptist Association. Minutes of the Mount Zion Baptist Association. Jonesboro: Mt. Zion Baptist Association, 1897-1898.
- North American Baptist Association. Yearbook. North American Baptist Association, 1952.

B. BOOKS

Acuff, E. H. Centennial History of the Bartholomew Baptist Association of Arkansas. Bartholomew Baptist Association, 1950.

Medaris, R. C. Historical Sketch of the Mt. Zion Baptist Church, Also A Short Historical Sketch of Mt. Zion Baptist Association. Jonesboro: R. C. Medaris, 1927.

Morton, H. D. A History of the White River Baptist Association. Salem: White River Baptist Association, 1954.

Mt. Vernon Baptist Association. Condensed History of Mt. Vernon Baptist Association. Mt. Vernon Baptist Association, 1953.

Rogers, J. S. History of Arkansas Baptists. Little Rock: Executive Board of Arkansas Baptist State Convention, 1948.

Williams, Harry Lee. History of Craighead County Arkansas. Little Rock: Parke-Harper Co., 1930.

C. LAWS

Arkansas Acts. Act of 1887, No. 66, Section 1, p. 92.

Arkansas Acts. Act of 1897, No. 11, Section 1, p. 16.

D. NEWSPAPERS

[Jonesboro] Weekly Times Enterprise. An Illustrated Industrial Supplement, April 12, 1906.

E. UNPUBLISHED MATERIALS

Kitchens, J. H. "The History of Mt. Zion Association." An unpublished manuscript owned by Mr. G. E. Fryer, Jonesboro, Arkansas, [n.d.].

Macedonia Baptist Church. "Minutes of the Macedonia Baptist Church." Unpublished minutes, Macedonia Baptist Church, Brookland, Arkansas, 1897.

Poteete, Raymond. "History of Jonesboro Missionary Baptist Association." An unpublished manuscript held in the files of the Historian of the Jonesboro Association, Jonesboro, Arkansas, 1961.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

CONSTITUTION, RULES OF DECORUM, AND ARTICLES OF FAITH ADOPTED BY THE JONESBORO MISSIONARY BAPTIST ASSOCIATION UPON ORGANIZATION

I. CONSTITUTION

1st. The Jonesboro Association shall be composed of members chosen by the different churches in our union who on presenting their letters shall be entitled to seats.

2nd. The members thus chosen and convened shall be known as the Jonesboro Missionary Baptist Association, which shall have the privilege to enact and carry out missionary purposes in all their gospel meanings, yet so as that the churches and individual members are left free, and the giving or withholding shall not be a bar to fellowship.

3rd. All churches composing this association shall be entitled to three messengers and no more.

4th. The association shall usurp no authority over the churches in our union, or infringe on any of their internal rights, but shall merely be considered an advisory council in all matters relative to their external concern; nevertheless, it becomes necessary in some cases to have a uniform rule of procedure; if one church commit an offense against another it shall be the duty of the offended to labor with the offender for satisfaction. If she fail of success she shall call the aid of two more churches in our union to assist in laboring for satisfaction, and if final satisfaction in the opinion of the help thus called be not obtained, the aggrieved may bring the case before the association, which shall be taken up and decided upon according to its merits.

5th. If a serious difference should arise in an individual church which, upon due labor can not be reconciled, she shall call the aid of two or more sister churches to assist in the work, and if a reconciliation be not effected, the help so called or the church may bring the

case before the association to be acted upon according to its merits; but the association will take no cognizance of any case of the above kind unless a due course of procedure shall have been previously pursued according to the economy of the church discipline found in the 18th chapter of the gospel by St. Matthew and other parts of the scriptures which define the nature of offenses and the manner of bringing offenders to trial.

6th. The churches in our union shall transmit to every annual session of the association written communications specifying the names of their messengers, their number in fellowship, baptised, received by letter, restored, dismissed, excommunicated, deceased since the last session, which shall be read and minuted accordingly.

7th. Other churches may be admitted in our union by messengers bearing petitionary letter, if upon examination they be found orderly and orthodox. The moderator shall manifest their admission by giving their messengers the hand in token of christian fellowship.

8th. The association when convened shall be governed by a regular and proper decorum which she is authorized to form and amend according to her own views.

9th. At every session of the association a moderator shall be elected by private ballots of the messengers present, whose duty it shall be to see that the rules are strictly observed and take the voice of the association on all subjects legally introduced. A clerk shall also be elected by private ballot, whose duty it shall be to take proper and correct minutes of the proceedings.

10th. The association shall furnish the churches with the minutes of every session.

11th. Every query sent by any particular church must be included in her letter certifying that she has endeavored to reconcile it, but failed. In such case the association shall take it under consideration and the voice of the majority shall be considered an advisory answer which shall be entered on the minutes.

12th. Queries which immediately concern the general union of the churches sent by a particular church or introduced by a proper motion shall be taken up and decided on as soon as practicable.

13th. The association shall have a fund supplied by the voluntary contributions of the churches, and all moneys thus contributed shall be transmitted from the churches by their messengers and be paid over to the committee on finance. This committee shall be appointed annually, whose duty it shall be to take charge of the association fund and dispose of the same agreeably; to order and make at every session a fair report of their collection.

14th. It shall be the duty of the clerk of the association to keep a regular file of the printed minutes of every session of this association.

15th. The association shall not adjourn any session until she shall have finished all business on hand except in extraordinary cases.

16th. The minutes of the association shall be read and corrected if necessary, and signed by the moderator and clerk before the session closes.

17th. The association shall in all cases be governed by a majority vote of the members present.

II. RULES OF DECORUM

1st. A moderator and clerk shall be elected by private vote of the members present.

2nd. The moderator shall take the chair at the appointed hour and shall proceed to business. It shall be his duty to keep order and shall be entitled to the same privilege of speech as other members, provided he appoints one of the members to fill the chair during the exercise of that privilege, and in no case shall he give a vote unless the association be equally divided.

3rd. Only one member shall be allowed to speak at a time, who shall rise from his seat and address the moderator by the appellation of "Brother Moderator," and while speaking shall confine himself strictly to the subject in question, and shall not be disturbed unless he digress from the subject and shall in no wise reflect on any other speaker so as to make remarks on his slips, failings or imperfections, but shall fairly give his own views of the case without sophistry or criticism.

4th. No person shall speak more than three times on the same subject without leave from the association.

5th. No member shall absent himself from the association without obtaining leave therefrom.

6th. No member shall address another by any other term or appellation except that of Brother.

7th. The moderator shall not interrupt a member or prohibit him from speaking until his speech is finished unless he break the rules of decorum.

8th. The names of messengers of the association shall be enrolled by the clerk and called over as often as the association may require.

9th. Any member who shall willingly violate any of the foregoing rules shall be reprovved by the association in any way they may think proper.

III. ARTICLES OF FAITH

1st. We believe only in one true living God--Father, Word and Holy Ghost, and these three are one.

2nd. We believe that the scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the Word of God and the only rule of faith and practice.

3rd. We believe that by one man sin entered into the world and death by sin and so death passed upon all men for that all have sinned.

4th. We believe that Jesus Christ by the Grace of God tasted death for every man. Through his meritorious death the way of salvation is made possible for God to have mercy on all that come unto him upon gospel terms.

5th. We believe that being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

6th. We believe that such only are true believers as endure unto the end; that their persevering attachments to Christ is the grand mark which distinguishes them from superficial professors; that a special providence watches over their welfare and they are kept by the power of God through

faith unto salvation.

7th. We believe there will be a resurrection of the dead and a general and universal judgment, and the happiness of the righteous and the punishment of the wicked will be eternal.

8th. We believe that the visable church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men and women who have covenanted with each other and given themselves to the Lord and each other having agreed to keep up the Godly discipline according to the rules of the gospel.

9th. We believe that Jesus Christ is the head of the church and the government thereof is with the body.

10th. We believe that baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances of the gospel and to be continued until his second coming.

11th. We believe that true believers are the only fit subjects of baptism and that immersion is the only mode.

12th. We believe that only regular baptised members have a right to commune at the Lord's Table.

13th. We believe that the Lord's Day should be observed and set apart for the worship of God and that no work or worldly business should be transacted thereon--works of piety, mercy and necessity excepted.

We do not desire to impose these articles of faith on any church as a rule, but have given them as our views of our scripture doctrine.

J. B. Allen, Moderator

T. C. Cole, Clerk

ABSTRACT

A HISTORY OF THE BEGINNING OF THE JONESBORO ASSOCIATION
OF MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCHES

An Abstract of a Thesis

by

Elton McCann

August 1965

A HISTORY OF THE BEGINNING OF THE JONESBORO ASSOCIATION OF MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCHES

I. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Study of the History of the Jonesboro Association has apparently been neglected; there is no evidence that a systematic study of its history has ever been undertaken. Consequently, little, other than fragmentary bits of data, remains as relics of its past. The purpose of this study is to discover and organize material into a readable and documented account of the beginning of the Jonesboro Association.

II. PROCEDURES USED IN GATHERING DATA

The primary data for this study has been gathered from the minutes of the associations and churches which were involved in the beginning of the Jonesboro Association. In addition to minutes, the manuscripts of Kitchens and of Manning, Rogers' History of Arkansas Baptists, Williams' History of Craighead County, and interviews with persons who were living witnesses of the Association's early activities were used. Other sources having less import for the study were also employed.

These sources were surveyed to discover material

pertaining to the history of the beginning of the Jonesboro Association. From the mass of information discovered, material was selected which was deemed to be both valid and pertinent to the study. Material which made a contribution to the following problem areas was considered pertinent and was therefore organized and incorporated into the study: (1) Background of Baptist work in the Jonesboro-Crowley's Ridge area, (2) Factors leading to the creation of the Jonesboro Association, (3) Organization of the Jonesboro Association, and (4) Courses charted by the new Association.

III. SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

The beginning of the Jonesboro Association of Missionary Baptist Churches reaches back through the corridors of time to the early work of the pioneer Baptist ministers. The minister who first began the work of proclaiming the Baptist message and beginning churches was William Nutt. While only one church within the fellowship of the Jonesboro group was organized by Nutt, many others grew out of the seed he planted during his "preaching tour" and pastoral-missionary activities.

The next pioneer figure who led the Baptist work a step further in development was John Pearce. As Nutt began

the work of organizing churches and evangelizing communities, Pearce began the work of organizing the various churches into an association. His first project was to unite the churches into the New Salem Association, but that effort was unsuccessful. However, from the work begun in the New Salem Association grew the Mt. Zion Association which has become one of the leading regional bodies of Baptists in Arkansas.

On the noble heritage of Baptist work in the Jonesboro-Crowley's Ridge area came a blight in 1898. Such a controversy developed that it resulted in a split of the body. Several factors brought the Association to the division; one factor was the spirit of the period. As records of churches and associations of the period around 1900 were reviewed, a great deal of unrest was observed. A number of divisions and changes were sweeping the State--it was a time in which Baptists were ripe for division. Also within the Mt. Zion Association there were divergent views concerning mission work. It was only natural that a cleavage developed as those holding such views became more bold in their stand. A controversy which arose in her midst concerning the "Four-mile Law" was the climactic factor which divided the Mt. Zion Association.

No single factor named would have produced a permanent schism in the Mt. Zion Association, but all of the

factors working together produced insurmountable disruptions to its unity. Following the disruption of fellowship among the churches, the Association excluded a group of rural churches. In response to that action the excluded churches organized a new association under the name of the Jonesboro Missionary Baptist Association.

Although some efforts were later made to reunite the two associations, they were futile. The Jonesboro Association found ample justification for its continued existence through identification with the "Land Mark" movement.

This study presents a story of a changing group of Baptists. During the life of the Jonesboro Association, it has changed its missions program from the simple concepts of the "gospel plan" to a much more elaborate plan employing such agencies as a missionary committee and a secretary-treasurer. Though a changing and relatively small body, the Jonesboro Association has carved a place among Baptists of Northeast Arkansas and has been able to make its own peculiar contribution to the Baptist work in that section.