



RELIGIOUS WORK DONE BY THE TEXAS BAPTISTS  
AMONG THE NEGROES IN TEXAS  
FROM 1836 to 1873

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A THESIS

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by

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### Purpose

It was the purpose of this study to offer information (1) pertaining to the religious work done by the Texas Baptists among the Negroes in Texas between the years 1836 and 1873; and (2) demonstrating the attitudes of the white Texas Baptists toward the spiritual condition of the Negroes of Texas during the same period.

### Methods

The methods used to obtain data for this study were (1) published and unpublished books, theses, dissertations, magazines, and minutes of local churches, associations, and conventions; (2) interviews; (3) correspondence with Baptist leaders and agencies.

### Findings

From the evidence presented in this study the following conclusions appear to be in order:

1. There was considerable religious work done by Texas Baptists among the Negroes in Texas between 1836 and 1873.

2. The attitude of Texas Baptists toward Christianizing the Negro was exemplified by their accepting the responsibility for the religious training and betterment of the colored population during the entire period included in this study.

3. The concern which Texas Baptists had for the spiritual welfare of the Negroes in Texas was demonstrated by the patience and persistence with which the Baptists worked among the colored people.

4. A comprehensive perspective of the religious work done by Texas Baptists among the Negroes in Texas could be formed by further study in the minutes of associations and churches (both Negro and white), and in the records kept by individual plantation owners of the Baptist faith.

Approved:

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Supervising Professor

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

In recent years an idea has developed in parts of the United States that white people have always oppressed the Negro. An attempt has been made to prove such an assumption incorrect in relation to the religious affairs of the Negro and white Baptists of Texas. Information has been presented pertaining to religious work done by white Texas Baptists among the Negroes in Texas generally demonstrating the genuine concern of white Baptists toward the spiritual condition of the Negroes.

The Negro constitutes a large and vital segment of the population in Texas. Church life has always been one of the most fundamental aspects of his life. The great majority of Christian Negroes in Texas are members of the Baptist Church. Extensive search has revealed very little written about religious work done by Texas Baptists among the Negroes during the early period of Texas history. It is hoped that this study will help fill this void.

Research has been limited to the activities of a group of Baptists in Texas known as missionary Baptists

and the relationship of these Baptists to the Negroes' spiritual welfare. Political, social, and economic factors are considered only insofar as they influence religious matters. The study begins in the year 1836 at which time Baptists were first legally free to preach the gospel and organize churches and concludes in 1873 near the end of Reconstruction in the state.

Biographical sketches of numerous Texas Baptists have been placed in the appendix. This will enable the reader to have an understanding of the education and accomplishments of those who were interested in the Negroes.

The following methods were used in obtaining data: (1) published and unpublished materials were consulted in the libraries of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Sam Houston State College, Texas A & M University, Prairie View A & M College, City of Houston, First Baptist Church of Huntsville, Texas, First Baptist Church of Bryan, Texas, First Baptist Church of College Station, Texas, and First Baptist Church, Navasota, Texas; (2) information was secured by personal interview; (3) material was acquired through correspondence with white and Negro Baptist leaders, with agencies of the Baptist General Convention of Texas and the Southern Baptist Convention, and



with the Baptist Standard magazine; and (4) the services of inter-library loan were used to obtain books and unpublished theses and dissertations. Valuable primary materials consulted included numerous Texas Baptist association and convention minutes, the minutes of selected churches, and the writings of certain pioneer Baptists. Minutes of the first and only Negro Baptist state convention prior to 1874 were also examined. Dr. Theodore S. Boone wrote a pamphlet entitled "A History of the Negro Baptist Church in Texas," but a copy of it could not be located.

The term "missionary Baptists" denotes the group of Baptists who promoted missionary endeavors, in contrast to the "anti-missionary Baptists" who opposed missionary work. The "local Baptist church" refers to a body of baptized believers, who, as individuals, have accepted Christ as personal Savior, and as a group believe in the principles of the Baptist faith. The "association" or "district association" is the organizational unit composed of several local churches. The "convention" is the largest co-operative effort of the churches in the state. Baptists believe each church is an independent body, therefore the district associations and state conventions have no authority over the

local churches. The larger organizations submit recommendations to the local bodies, but each church decides whether or not it will carry out the recommendations of the association and convention to which it belongs.



## CHAPTER II

### WORK BY THE BAPTISTS AMONG TEXAS NEGROES IN THE PRE-CONFEDERATE PERIOD

In order to determine what religious work was done by Texas Baptists among Negroes in the quarter century preceding the Civil War, it is necessary to consult the writings of pioneer Baptists and the minutes of the early Baptist churches, district associations, and state conventions. This material sometimes reveals impressive anecdotes concerning slaves and their religious experiences and at other times only a record of Negro church membership. The records relate the interest Texas Baptists had in the Negroes, their attitudes toward the slaves, and their religious activities among the colored people in Texas.

Almonte's statistical survey shows that there were five thousand Negro slaves in Texas at the time it gained its independence from Mexico. The number of slaves increased to 28,624 during the nine years of the Republic.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Johanna Rosa Engelking, "Slavery in Texas," unpublished Master's thesis at Baylor University, Waco, Texas, 1933, 39-40.

The Congress of the Republic passed several laws which dealt with slavery. In 1840 a bill was passed making it unlawful for any "free person of color" to emigrate to Texas. Free Negroes living in the Republic were given two years to leave. A slave was not allowed to sell anything of value without the written consent of his master, nor could he carry a gun without permission. Anyone who treated a slave "cruelly" or "unreasonably" and was convicted could be fined from two hundred fifty dollars to two thousand dollars.<sup>2</sup>

Besides their daily plantation work, slaves were often given patches of land of their own to cultivate. On this land they usually raised corn, cotton, and vegetables. Sometimes the slaves were hired out to neighbors. Under these circumstances they were boarded by the neighbor but clothed by their master. If it were necessary for the slaves to work on Sunday, they received one dollar in payment.<sup>3</sup>

Baptists began their work among the slaves in

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<sup>2</sup>H. P. N. Gammel, Laws of Texas 1822-1897, II, 172, 325-326, 345-346.

<sup>3</sup>Engelking, "Slavery in Texas," 39-40.

Texas with the formation of the first Baptist churches in the state. The history of the Negro Baptists is interwoven with the history of the white Baptists. The earliest records are found in the minutes of the older Baptist churches such as Providence in Washington County, Concord in Red River County, and Caldwell and Providence in Burleson County. These minutes record that regular services were held for the Negroes and that many of them were received and baptized into the Baptist churches.<sup>4</sup>

A group of Baptists from Tennessee, who settled near Nacogdoches, were holding prayer meetings in 1835 while Texas was still under the rule of Mexico which banned all Protestant religious services. In May of 1838 the group was organized into a church by Isaac Reed and R. G. Green. Two of the nine charter members were slaves.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>James Milton Carroll, A History of Texas Baptists, 253.

<sup>5</sup>Union Church or Old North Church, as it is now called, was the first church organized in East Texas, to be known in latter years as a missionary Baptist church. In 1852 Baptists in the area constructed the building which still stands at a location three miles north of Nacogdoches. "This church is the oldest Baptist church in the state, having had a continuous existence since May, 1838." Ibid., 121, and as cited by Chronicle East Texas Bureau, "Pioneers Defied Mexico, held Religious Services," Houston Chronicle, April 23, 1967, 19, and as cited in L. R. Elliot (ed.), Centennial Story of Texas Baptists, 81.

Another source of early Baptist history is the diary of James Huckins, the first Baptist missionary sent to Texas. Huckins wrote that five colored people joined the Galveston Church on February 9, 1840. In reference to their testimonies he writes, "There were no dreams, no wonderful sights or uncouth sounds of which they had to speak, but they told in their own way the work of the Holy Spirit on their hearts." The most interesting testimony was given by a blind Negro named Reuben. Huckins gives the following narrative:

"'Reuben, have you a wife?' said I.

"'Yes, massa.'

"'Is she a Christian?'

"And so painful was the thought of her living in sin, that at first he could not speak, but after a struggling pause of a few minutes he said:

"'No, Massa! No, Massa! But I pray every day and every night for her.'"<sup>6</sup>

Elders William M. Tryon and R. E. B. Baylor organized a church at Washington-on-the-Brazos in March, 1841.<sup>7</sup> Among the twelve original members were John and

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<sup>6</sup>Carroll, Texas Baptists, 144.

<sup>7</sup>Z. N. Morrell had established a church at Old Washington in 1837, but it was discontinued for lack of a preacher, Ibid., 253.



Matilda, slaves of J. F. Farquhar. A servant girl presented herself on profession of faith and was received into the church. The following day she was baptized by Elder Tryon. This was the first time the ordinance of baptism had been administered in the area.<sup>8</sup>

In a meeting held at the Old Washington church in September of 1841, three slaves of H. R. Cartmel were received into the membership of the church by baptism.<sup>9</sup>

Another incident which occurred at Old Washington was recorded in a letter written by Huckins dated November 10, 1841. The story concerned a Judge E., who was the chief justice of the county. He had studied deism for twenty years and having read everything he could find on the subject, felt that nothing could change his bitter hatred toward religion. The first person to be baptized at Washington by Judge Baylor was a Negro woman. The idea so infuriated Judge E. that he attended the service and insulted Judge Baylor before the entire congregation. Judge E. returned to his office with a heavy heart rather than with the feeling of exultation he had expected. On

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<sup>8</sup>J. B. Link, Texas Historical and Biographical Magazine, I, 171-172, and as cited in Carroll, Texas Baptists, 253.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

the following night he asked Judge Baylor to pray for his soul. Judge E. was converted and laid plans to preach as soon as his term as judge expired.<sup>10</sup>

The same year Huckins wrote that he had baptized George, the fisherman, the slave of a Mr. C. Shortly after George's conversion, Mr. C. planned a fishing trip on Sunday. George, being the fisherman, was indispensable to the trip. When his master called for him, George said he could not go fishing. Mr. C. asked George the reason for his being unable to accompany the group. George replied, "Dis de Lord's day, and me tell you, Massa, dat no good come of dis here fishing, or doing anything else on de Lord's day." Mr. C. did not force George to go and the fishing party was broken up.<sup>11</sup>

The following is an excerpt from a letter written by James Huckins on November 10, 1841.

"In a certain neighborhood in Milam County there is a population of about 500 souls. When God began to pour out his Spirit in that neighborhood a planter whose wife had become a subject of the work, began to feel his opposition arise. He sought the whole neighborhood to find some one to unite with him in his

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<sup>10</sup>Carroll, Texas Baptists, 163.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., 161-162.

hostility, but none were to be found but a little nephew and his servants. His object was to throw ridicule upon the good work, so he called his Negroes together and told them on the coming night he would hold a prayer-meeting with them. Some he commanded to groan, others to cry "amen;" some he ordered to cry "glory," and others to clap their hands. The time arrived. He opened his mock meeting by singing. This was followed by prayer.

"The Negroes at first, as he thought, performed their respective parts admirably. They groaned and shouted, and responded just as he had directed. But soon he began to feel an unearthly solemnity. The terrors of God were upon him, and he found himself pleading for mercy. The mock meeting was adjourned, and master, nephew and servants were seen the same night entreating the prayers of Christians.<sup>12</sup>

In 1843 Huckins wrote that he had several native Africans under his ministry. These Africans were slaves who had been brought to Texas before the revolution and who were in a "perfect state of idolatry." These Negroes accepted the idea of a God and the truths of the gospel with "eagerness and astonishment."<sup>13</sup> The missionary

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 163-164.

<sup>13</sup>W. D. Weatherford says that belief in God was universal in Africa. God was creator, supreme being, Father, and "Great Friend." Irrespective of the form the tribes believed their god to have, they all thought their creator was absent and indifferent, having left them to the mercy of good and evil spirits. Religion in Africa offered little moral uplifting power, but plunged the native into the depths of despair and fatalism. W. D. Weatherford, The Negro from Africa to America, 43-56.



expressed the hope that he could adapt his sermon "to the capacity of the Negroes," and at the close of the service he would give them the opportunity to hold a prayer meeting. Huckins wrote that the Negroes considered these meetings to be a kind of "jubilee."<sup>14</sup>

Immediately following the organization of the church at Anderson in 1844, the moderator, Brother Z. N. Morrell, called for members by letter.<sup>15</sup> Brother A. G. Perry presented the letter of Brother Ned, servant of James White. Brother Ned's letter and testimony were satisfactory and he was received into the fellowship of the church.<sup>16</sup>

In December, 1845, the Congress of the United States voted to admit Texas into the Union as a slave state. Under the laws of the United States slave holders could bring slaves into Texas and keep them permanently enslaved, therefore the status of the slaves in Texas was not

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<sup>14</sup>Carroll, Texas Baptists, 193.

<sup>15</sup>A letter, sometimes called a letter of dismissal, is a written statement issued by a Baptist church which declares the owner of the letter to be a member in good standing and eligible for membership in another Baptist church.

<sup>16</sup>Irene Taylor Allen, Saga of Anderson, 104-106.



changed by the annexation of Texas to the United States.<sup>17</sup>

During the fifteen years of statehood prior to the Civil War, Texas grew rapidly in wealth, culture, and population. Most of the people lived in East Texas and Central Texas. Many families were moving to Texas from other states. Those who owned slaves usually settled along the Trinity River or the lower Colorado or Brazos rivers. By 1850 there were 48,287 slaves in Texas. This number increased to 105,704 in 1855, and in 1860 there were 158,595 slaves in Texas which were valued at \$93,848,680.<sup>18</sup>

Z. N. Morrell related the following story concerning the conversion of a Negro boy in 1846:

At our first meeting after the organization at Leona, a very remarkable negro boy approached me on Saturday morning, and asked permission to join the church. Upon being asked if he believed that God for Christ's sake had forgiven his sins, he promptly answered in the affirmative; and after giving the clearest evidences of deep conviction and joyful deliverance, I told him to confer with his owner and present himself to the church. Jerry was prompt to the hour,

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<sup>17</sup>Prentis W. Chunn, Jr., "Education and Politics, A Study of the Negro in Reconstruction Texas," unpublished Master's thesis, Southwest Texas State Teachers College, 1957, 18-19.

<sup>18</sup>Joseph L. Clark and Dorothy A. Linder, The Story of Texas, 252-271.

and when an opportunity was given he presented himself for membership. In the hearing of all the congregation he told his simple story, in a few but earnest words. There was no dream, no voice, and no miraculous manifestations rehearsed; but with plain and heartfelt utterances he convinced the congregation, already in tears, that he not only had a soul, but that his spirit had been moved by the power of God. I baptized him with some others, and very soon he expressed an anxiety to learn to read the Bible. In this he was encouraged, and in his aptness to learn soon acquired what he sought. He was granted permission and encouraged by the church to preach to his people. Up to the war, and during the struggle, he deported himself with Christian propriety, and although a quarter of a century has passed since I baptized him, he still lives to declare the good news of salvation to his race.<sup>19</sup>

The same Z. N. Morrell organized the Little River Church in 1847, with six white members and one colored member.<sup>20</sup>

The June, 1848, minutes of the church at Anderson contained a resolution by Brother Barnes to the effect that the church requested Brothers Buffington and Creath to hold services for the Negro members on the second and fourth Sundays of each month at three o'clock.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>Z. N. Morrell, Flowers and Fruits from the Wilderness, 233-234.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., 238.

<sup>21</sup>Allen, Saga of Anderson, 104-106.

The Negro members were subject to the same disciplinary action of the church as were the white members. If it became necessary to discipline a member, he was excluded from the church; but when he repented, he was restored to full membership.<sup>22</sup>

In 1848 the Union, Colorado, Sabine, and Trinity River associations sent delegates to the church at Anderson, Grimes County, and formed the Baptist State Convention of Texas. Twenty-three churches were represented. At this organizational meeting of the Texas State Baptist Convention Elder Noah Hill was appointed chairman of the committee on the "Religious Condition of the Colored Population."<sup>23</sup>

Elder Hill and his committee noted that the Negroes had attracted the attention of the world and were a great concern to the nation. They should be of no less concern to Texas Baptists. There was a double incentive in converting the "blacks." Not only would they be converting those in America, but they were laying the foundation for spreading the gospel to Africa; since many Negroes were returning to their native Africa as missionaries. Hill

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<sup>22</sup>Ibid.

<sup>23</sup>Link, Texas Historical and Biographical Magazine, I, 257, and as cited in Carroll, Texas Baptists, 253.

recommended that Baptists use every means in their power to teach the truths of the Bible to their slaves.

The report continued by expressing the belief that slavery was fully sustained by the Bible and that it was the responsibility of the whites to make provision for the spiritual wants of their slaves. This responsibility had been neglected since there were great numbers of slaves who had not heard the gospel for years.

The committee recommended that one of the leading objectives of the Baptist State Convention of Texas should be to send suitable missionaries to preach to the slaves. Ministers already in the field were to use every opportunity to preach to their colored brethren. It was suggested that these preachers set aside a portion of each Sabbath for preaching to the Negroes, since this plan had been tried and had proved very successful.

It was further recommended that the preachers adopt the plan of reading and explaining, as simply as possible, the pure word of God. Stress should be placed on the soul's eternal welfare and future destiny. Experience had shown that Negro people appreciated efforts made in their behalf. Where time was set aside for their instruction,



many accepted the truths of the gospel and became devoted Christians.<sup>24</sup>

At the Baptist State Convention in 1850, P. B. Chandler reported that the Negro population was rapidly increasing. Each year thousands of slaves were being brought into Texas. In many places religious work among these slaves was neglected, but the neglect was not general. Where the ministers devoted a portion of their time to the instruction of the Negroes, the results were encouraging. The church at Galveston had a colored membership of about 65. Similar successes had been achieved at Houston and in many other places.<sup>25</sup>

In 1850 Brother J. H. Stribling reported on the "Religious Condition of the Colored Population" in the Colorado Association. He declared that the word was being preached to the Negroes in their association, large numbers had been converted, and some few had been "useful

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<sup>24</sup>Organization and Proceedings of the Baptist State Convention of Texas, held in September, 1848, with the Antioch Church, Anderson, Grimes County, 11-12, and as cited in Carroll, Texas Baptists, 253-254.

<sup>25</sup>Proceedings of the Baptist State Convention of Texas, held in May, 1850, with the Huntsville Baptist Church, 6, as cited in Carroll, Texas Baptists, 255, and as cited in Link, Texas Historical and Biographical Magazine, I, 272-273.

in the gifts of exhortation and prayer." The Negroes were anxious to hear the gospel and appreciated efforts in their behalf. The report emphasized the fact that the preachers and churches needed to work with great diligence to supply the spiritual needs of the slaves.<sup>26</sup>

On August 24, 1850, Jesse Witt, Marshall, Texas, wrote a letter to The Southwestern Baptist, a denominational paper in Tennessee, in which he described the Negroes in his community. Witt said that there were large groups of colored people who attended the worship services and they listened with "becoming seriousness and decorum." He wrote that the work with the slaves had been so successful that he was planning to devote more time to their religious instruction by reading and explaining the scriptures to them.<sup>27</sup>

In 1851, Elder Noah Hill was appointed to work among the Negroes in Brazoria, Matagorda, and Wharton counties. The slave population was very large in these counties and many of the slave holders wanted him to preach to their

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<sup>26</sup>Minutes of the Fourth Annual Session of the Colorado Baptist Association, held in September, 1850, with the Rocky Creek Church, 10.

<sup>27</sup>Carroll, Texas Baptists, 301.

servants. Elder Hill began his work the first of April. In his report to the Baptist State Convention in June, he stated that he had traveled 567 miles, visited 16 families, delivered 4 lectures and 19 sermons, given 6 exhortations, and baptized 13 servants. In payment for his work Hill received \$100 from the State Mission Board, \$200 from the Board of Domestic Missions of the Southern Baptist Convention, and the remainder of his support from the churches at Wharton and Cedar Lake.<sup>28</sup>

The Baptist State Convention report on the "Religious Condition of the Colored Population" was given by Elder Hosea Garrett in 1851. The report said there was a great opportunity to give "the bread of life" to the slave population in Texas. Though these efforts might be "contemptuously" observed by the world, "there will be joy among the angels when one poor slave is converted." Elder Garrett reported that all the pastors in the convention, with the exception of three or four, were giving special attention to the colored population. Brethren Noah Hill and A. Buffington had devoted most of their time to this missionary endeavor and the results were encouraging. The

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<sup>28</sup>Minutes of the Fourth Annual Session of the Baptist State Convention of Texas, held in June, 1851, with the church at Independence, 17-18, and as cited in Link, Texas Historical and Biographical Magazine, I, 213, 275.

planters generally permitted the evangelizing of their slaves, and some contributed from fifty to one hundred dollars annually to those who preached to them. Occasionally pious owners assembled their servants on Sunday morning, read the scriptures to them, and gave oral instruction to the colored children.<sup>29</sup>

In 1851 the Colorado Association showed a total membership of 286 whites and 145 Negroes. The church at Wharton had 94 Negroes and 24 whites. There were 16 Negro members in the church at Austin and 22 in the church at Gonzales. The committee which reported on the work being done among the Negroes stated that the spiritual condition of the slaves was improving. Churches had been organized which were composed almost entirely of Negroes. The committee reported on Noah Hill's work among the colored population during the past year. He had visited six stations regularly and others "occasionally." He had brought about 225 Negroes into the churches, most of whom he baptized. There were still many of the slaves who had not had an opportunity to hear the gospel. Masters were encouraged to read the scriptures to their slaves every Sunday, to provide devotional exercises, and whenever

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<sup>29</sup>Link, Texas Historical and Biographical Magazine, I, 213, 275, and as cited in Carroll, Texas Baptists, 275.



possible, to provide worship services. Churches were urged to take a prayerful interest.<sup>30</sup>

In 1852 J. M. Maxcy presented the report on the "Religious Condition of the Colored Population" to the Baptist State Convention. He said that pastors were especially interested in the Negroes and recommended that they spend each Sunday evening instructing the slaves. In noting the urgency of this work the committee felt that they were obeying Christ's admonition to preach the gospel to the poor. They "rejoiced" that the planters were anxious to co-operate in improving the moral conditions of their slaves. Some master contributed fifty dollars annually and built houses of worship for their servants. Maxcy and his committee expressed their hope that the colored mission might increase in power and influence until the opportunity for salvation was within the reach of every slave. This would signify that Texas Baptists were solicitous of the spiritual welfare of Africans in America.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup>Minutes of the Fifth Annual Session of the Colorado Baptist Association, held in September, 1851, with Macedonia Church, Travis County, 13, and as cited in Carroll, Texas Baptists, 257.

<sup>31</sup>Minutes of the Fifth Annual Session of the Baptist State Convention of Texas, held in June, 1852, at Marshall, 13, and as cited in Link, Texas Historical and Biographical Magazine, 278, 282.

Elder Noah Hill was spending about half his time in the religious instruction of the Negroes. He reported that he had traveled 1,654 miles, preached 72 sermons, given 24 exhortations, and baptized 36 servants. He was employed for another year with the State Mission Board paying him \$100 and the Southern Baptist Convention paying \$200.

Elder A. Buffington was appointed to work among the Negroes in Grimes County. He had been doing missionary work without pay. It was recommended that his work be continued under the patronage of the Baptist State Convention. Brother Buffington continued his work, but he refused to accept money for his services.<sup>32</sup>

In 1853 the slaves in the Indian Creek Community of Jasper County completed construction of a church building in which they were to worship. Money for the building was given by Joshua Seale, a member of the Indian Creek Baptist Church whose slave, Richard, had been preaching to the Negroes around Indian Creek. The Seales and their slaves arrived in Jasper County in 1849 or 1850. Richard, better known as Uncle Dick, noticed that the colored people "had

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<sup>32</sup>Ibid., 15-16, and as cited in Carroll, Texas Baptists, 255-256.

no church, nor respected the gospel." Prior to that time the slaves had attended church with their masters. Joshua Seale told Uncle Dick he could preach to the Negroes. Uncle Dick held his first revival. The slaves came to hear the gospel preached and many were saved. Upon completion of the church building Uncle Dick named it Dixie Baptist Church<sup>33</sup> and initiated a program of conversion "which amazed the community." The slaves along Indian Creek "flocked into the wooden church each Sunday and dared not think of missing."<sup>34</sup>

At the Baptist State Convention in 1853, Jesse Witte reported on the "Religious Condition of the Colored Population." He said that within the last two or three years the different denominations had shown a "growing concern" for the religious welfare of the slaves. According to Witte, Baptists had been especially interested in the Negro's spiritual condition. Brother A. Buffington had agreed to continue his work with the Negroes another year

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<sup>33</sup>Dixie Baptist Church was finished in 1853. The original church still stands in the Indian Creek Community west of Jasper. It is the only institution that remains of what used to be a thriving community. William Seale, Texas Riverman - The Life and Times of Captain Andrew Smyth, 105-106, and as cited in "History of the Dixie Baptist Church," The Jasper Free Enterprise, January 19, 1967, and as cited in "Dixie Baptist Filled for Dedication Rites," The Jasper News Boy, January 19, 1967.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid.

and had sent nine dollars for African missions which had been contributed by the Negro members of the Anderson church.<sup>35</sup>

The Colorado Association report for 1853 called attention to the fact that the Negroes had been neglected during the past year, particularly those in the lower Colorado and Old Caney valleys. Noah Hill had been limited in his missionary activities by ill health and insufficient financial support. The report noted that in a few localities the ministers had three o'clock services at the regular monthly meetings which were specifically for the slaves. It was recommended that the association instruct the executive board to make additional arrangements for the gospel to be preached to the Negroes.<sup>36</sup>

John O. Walker headed the committee which reported to the Baptist State Convention in 1854. According to the report there was considerably more interest within the state concerning the religious condition of the slaves.

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<sup>35</sup>Minutes of the Sixth Annual Session of the Baptist State Convention of Texas, held in June, 1853, at Huntsville, Walker County, 19-20, and as cited in Carroll, Texas Baptists, 253.

<sup>36</sup>Minutes of the Seventh Annual Session of the Colorado Baptist Association, held in September, 1853, with the church at Seguin, Guadalupe County, 9.



Many pastors had preached to them on Sunday afternoons. The results were good, but there was a need for the pastors to preach to the Negroes in more locations. The committee asked the preachers to hold separate services for the Negroes and requested that in the future the churches make special reports about their Negro members at the Baptist State Convention. It was noted that Elder James Huckins had been preaching to the colored congregation in Galveston. The convention reappointed Brother A. Buffington to work with the Negroes in Grimes County.<sup>37</sup>

In 1854 a Negro church on the plantation of J. H. Jones, Matagorda County, successfully petitioned the Colorado Association to be admitted into the membership of the association. Elders Noah Hill and J. I. Loudermilk, white preachers, had been chosen as their delegates to the association. The association passed a resolution giving their executive board the authority to appoint a missionary to work among the Negroes and pledging the association to the liberal support of this missionary. A committee was appointed to see how this might be accomplished. The associational minutes recorded that Elders J. I. Loudermilk

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<sup>37</sup>Minutes of the Seventh Annual Session of the Baptist State Convention of Texas, held in June, 1854, at Palestine, Anderson County, 10, 14, and 15.

and W. L. Foster preached to a large group of Negroes, at the same time that other ministers were preaching to the whites.<sup>38</sup>

There is no way to determine exactly what portion of the slaves were members of Baptist churches in the state, since there were churches which never gave separate reports on the number of Negroes in their membership.

The following excerpts from the 1855 minutes of the church at Huntsville, Walker County, demonstrate the interest slaves around Huntsville had in the local church.

On January 20, 1855, a letter of dismissal was granted to Ann, servant of James Hogue. On February 18, 1855, Mitchell, servant of Mrs. Mosely, and Charles, servant of E. Wynne, "presented themselves and letters of dismissal from their respective churches and on motion they were unanimously received as members of this church." On March 18, 1855, "Rena servant of Dr. Thomason presented herself and letter of dismissal from Mount Zion Baptist Church in St. Clair County, Alabama and on motion she was unanimously received as a member of this Church." On April 14, letters of dismissal were granted to Hannah and

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<sup>38</sup>Minutes of the Eighth Anniversary of the Colorado Baptist Association, held in September, 1854, with the church at Old Caney, 4, 6, and as cited in Carroll, Texas Baptists, 257.

Pauline, servants of Dr. Kittrell, and Mason, servant of Mr. Munlin. On May 20, the church assembled at the pool near General Houston's former residence for the purpose of baptizing Nancy, servant of Mr. Edward Kibble; Susan, Flora, and Kattey, servants of Mr. White; and George, servant of Mr. Barnes.<sup>39</sup>

At the 1855 session of the Baptist State Convention Noah Hill reported that the religious condition of the colored people was not what it ought to be. Baptists were concerned with sending the gospel to Africa, while there were Africans within the state who had not heard the gospel in twenty years. In the cities and towns the pastors were devoting a portion of their time to the slaves, but these efforts were not enough. Christian masters needed to assemble their servants every Sabbath in order to read and explain the Scriptures to them.<sup>40</sup>

In 1855 the Colorado Association passed a resolution recommending separate churches for the Negroes. Each white congregation was to appoint a committee of five or more to attend the Negro services. It would be the responsibility of the committee to keep order and to make

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<sup>39</sup>"Minutes of the First Baptist Church," Huntsville, Walker County, 10-16.

<sup>40</sup>Minutes of the Eighth Annual Session of the Baptist State Convention of Texas, held in November, 1855, at Independence, Washington County, 17.

sure the services were conducted according to Biblical teachings. The activities of the Negro organizations were to be reported to the association separately from those of the white churches.<sup>41</sup>

The same year a Negro church located at Anderson in Grimes County, petitioned for membership in the Union Association. The application was referred to a committee of preachers and laymen. The committee recommended that the church not be received, since separate churches for the colored population was not in keeping with the proper relationship which should exist between slave and master; but that the Negroes be permitted to have separate services and be allowed to appoint their own deacons to maintain discipline. The services for the slaves were to be held in the "presence and counsel of some judicious white members."<sup>42</sup>

B. D. Arnold and his committee prepared the report on the colored population's religious condition at the 1855

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<sup>41</sup>Minutes of the Ninth Annual Session of the Colorado Baptist Association, held in September, 1855, with Bethany Church, Fayette County, 3.

<sup>42</sup>Minutes of the Sixteenth Annual Meeting of the Union Baptist Association, held in October, 1855, with New Year's Creek Church, Brenham, Washington County, 4-5, and as cited in Carroll, Texas Baptists, 257-258.



session of the Trinity River Association. They observed that while the town churches had regular services for the Negroes, there was a large portion of the rural slave population which did not have an opportunity to receive religious instruction. The committee recommended that those who owned slaves must make it convenient for the ministers to visit their servants, and that they should make contributions to aid the association in sending ministers to preach to the slaves.<sup>43</sup>

At the Baptist State Convention in 1856, A. Buf-fington reported that there were 40,000 Negroes in Texas.<sup>44</sup> He felt that the purpose of their importation to America had been to Christianize them by removing them from the "corruption of heathenism" and surrounding them with the influence of Christianity. Providence had placed them here "to learn the way of truth and life." Now the fanatical abolitionists were causing discord. Christians had to overcome this harmful influence by teaching these "sons of Ham" to be obedient to their masters and to become Christians.

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<sup>43</sup>Minutes of the Eighth Annual Session of the Trinity River Association, held in 1855, with the Little River Baptist Church, Milam County, 9.

<sup>44</sup>These statistics do not coincide with those given by Engelking.

Many slaves had been converted during the year. Slave owners, whether Christian or not, had contributed money and had co-operated with the missionaries. Buffington and his committee made three recommendations: first, that the pastors preach on the duty of masters to servants as Paul taught in Ephesians 6:5-7 and I Timothy 6:1-5; second, that all ministers and churches within the convention do all they could to provide the slave population with the means of salvation; and third, that the above be accomplished by urging Christian masters to co-operate with the missionaries by employing "discreet, pious, and tried" men to instruct these "excitable people" rather than arouse their emotions, and by selecting three missionaries specifically for the colored population.<sup>45</sup>

In 1856 R. T. Baylor reported that the ministry to the Negroes was being greatly neglected in the Trinity River Association. He made a plea for all ministers to preach to the slaves by special arrangement on Sunday evenings.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup>Proceedings of the Baptist State Convention of Texas, held in October, 1856, with the church in Anderson, Grimes County, 15-16, and as cited in Carroll; Texas Baptists, 256-257.

<sup>46</sup>Minutes of the Ninth Annual Session of the Trinity River Association, held in 1856, with the Baptist Church, Springfield, Limestone County, 9.

In 1857 the report concerning the spiritual condition of the colored population was read to the Baptist State Convention by Jonas Johnston. He said that the Negroes showed "more anxiety and a greater willingness to hear the gospel" than any other people, while more generally cherishing its truths and precepts than the more intelligent whites. The report called attention to the fact that there were a few places in the state where Negroes had separate churches over which white ministers presided, while in other areas these churches had Negro ministers and the services were attended by a committee of white men. Having personally heard their exhortations and prayers, Johnston felt that the slaves compared favorably with the white brethren in piety and zeal. The committee recommended that arrangements be made for the Negroes to use that portion of the church not occupied by the whites and that the white brethren be more faithful in attending the Negro services.<sup>47</sup>

In 1857 the Colorado Association reported that the Negroes had received the attention of the member churches and their pastors. The gospel had been preached to the Negroes on Sunday evening at which time the colored

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<sup>47</sup>Proceedings of the Baptist State Convention of Texas, held in October, 1857, with the Huntsville Baptist Church, Walker County, and as cited in Carroll, Texas Baptists, 257.

members were given religious instruction and an opportunity to obtain "church privileges." Many had been converted and received into the churches. As far as the committee knew there had been no disorders.<sup>48</sup>

The same year the Trinity River Association observed that the religious condition of the servants had been neglected by their owners and the ministers of the gospel. With only a few exceptions the subject had not received the attention that its importance demanded. Nothing should have been of greater concern to the association than the religious condition of the colored population. The gospel was adaptable to their capacities, when properly presented, and it promoted the best interests of both owners and servants. The reception of the gospel by the slaves made them content with their condition in life, made them faithful in the discharge of their duties, and afforded them comfort through the journey of life. It would also disrupt the designs of the fanatics in their attempt to undermine the institution of slavery. The committee recommended that owners secure ministers to preach to their servants and facilities for their

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<sup>48</sup>Minutes of the Colorado Association, held in September, 1857, with Navidad Church, Fayette County, 14.



workers, with church buildings either on their plantations or in their neighborhood; that all ministers present the gospel to servants within their area; and that a recommendation be brought before the Baptist State Convention to secure the services of ministers who would go to the various plantations and present the gospel. These ministers could be paid from the annual contributions to the State Convention.<sup>49</sup>

Jonas Johnston reported to Union Association in 1857. He said that all the preachers were holding religious services for their Negro congregations in the afternoons, and that these services had resulted in a rapid increase of Negro members. If more were to be accomplished there would have to be co-operation from the laity. Two recommendations were offered. First, a portion of the church should be reserved for the Negroes to enable them to hear twice as much preaching as they had formally heard. Second, the laity should attend the special services for the slaves, thus exhibiting an interest in their spiritual welfare and encouraging them to come to the white

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<sup>49</sup>Minutes of the Tenth Annual Session of the Trinity River Association of United Baptists, held in September, 1857, with the Baptist Church at Waco, McLennan County, 6-7.

brethren for advice and instruction in all their difficulties.<sup>50</sup>

At the Baptist State Convention in 1858 M. M. Callaway and committee reported that it was customary for the pastors to preach to the slaves one Sunday each month. These services had been successful. The committee urged the convention to appoint missionaries to work with the slaves. It was felt that the large slave holders would support "any God fearing man" who was appointed by the Baptist State Convention.<sup>51</sup>

O. D. Battle submitted a report to the Red River Association in 1858, which stated that there was a "great destitution of religious instruction" among the Negroes. Some of the pastors preached to large congregations of slaves at the regular monthly meetings; but Baptists needed to show greater effort, and pastors should devote a portion of each Sabbath to their religious instruction. The

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<sup>50</sup>Minutes of the Eighteenth Annual Session of the Union Association, held in October, 1857, with Bethany Church, Grimes County, 8-9.

<sup>51</sup>Minutes of the Texas Baptist State Convention, held in October, 1858, with Independence Church, Washington County, 7.

report asserted that some of the slaves had made "orderly members of the church."<sup>52</sup>

In 1858 members of the committee on the "Religious Condition of the Colored Population" in the Trinity River Association felt they could support two missionaries to preach to the slaves. One missionary was needed for McLennan and Falls Counties, one for Robertson County, and one or more on the Trinity River and in the interior. Baptists who were planting on the Brazos River were paying Methodist preachers to instruct their servants, but they preferred Baptist ministers. The association should do all in its power to supply this need. The committee announced that there were not enough ministers to fill the demand of the existing churches, therefore no recommendations were made. They reiterated the fact that the "spiritual enlightenment and training" of the Negro population rested upon those present, and all means must be taken to supply their wants.<sup>53</sup>

In 1858 Noah Hill reported that without exception

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<sup>52</sup>Minutes of the Red River Association of Baptists, held in October, 1858, with Concord Church, Red River County, 12.

<sup>53</sup>Minutes of the Eleventh Annual Session of the Trinity River Association of United Baptists, held in September, 1858, with Tehuacana Church, Freestone County, 7.

the ministers in Union Association had devoted time on Sunday evenings to the special instruction of the slaves. The gospel was "joyfully" received by the Negroes and many of them had been converted. Once more ministers were encouraged to provide a place for the servants to sit during the regular worship services while continuing their special services.<sup>54</sup>

In 1859 A. Daniel was chairman of the committee on the "Religious Condition of the Colored Population" at the Baptist State Convention. It was ascertained that a great majority of the churches were holding regular services for the Negroes, and the missionaries were preaching to them, too. As a result of these efforts, many were being saved and were becoming "orderly and useful" members of the churches. The committee recommended that laymen meet with the Negroes every Sunday to teach them the scriptures and to hold business meetings, thus enabling them to "learn the responsibility that rests upon them to watch over each other, to love, and to good works." It was also recommended

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<sup>54</sup>Minutes of the Nineteenth Annual Session of the Union Baptist Association, held in October, 1858, with the Mount Zion Church, Washington County, 7.



that missionaries be sent to the destitute areas to preach to the slaves.<sup>55</sup>

The need for work among the colored population in the Colorado Association was apparent from the report given in 1859 by J. T. Powell. He noted that the counties within the association contained 20,209 slaves, but there were only 172 Negroes on the church rolls of the association. There were only twenty-one Baptist churches to minister to these Negroes, and some of the counties with the most slaves had no minister. Brother Powell suggested that they "cease to enlarge the book of resolutions and reports and open the Book of Acts that these immortal beings may have the bread of eternal life distributed among them."<sup>56</sup>

The Trinity River Association report on the "Religious Condition of the Colored Population" was submitted by J. W. Speight and committee. The report began with an affirmation of their belief that slavery was of divine authority and a confirmation of their conviction that they were as responsible for the religious instruction of their servants

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<sup>55</sup>Minutes of the Twelfth Annual Session of the Baptist State Convention of the State of Texas, held in October, 1859, at Waco, McLennen County, 11-12.

<sup>56</sup>Minutes of the Colorado Association, held in September, 1859, with Old Caney Baptist Church, Wharton, 9.

as for that of their children. The committee suggested that the churches make certain that separate services were held for the Negroes, unless it was convenient to preach to the white and colored members at the same time. Missionaries could and would be supported in Falls, Brazos, McLennan, and Robertson Counties. A resolution was passed to request the Baptist State Convention to appoint three missionaries to those counties.<sup>57</sup>

In 1859 David Fisher and committee announced that the good work among the slaves in Union Association was continuing, and that the Negroes were appreciative of the religious work being done for them. Once more, laymen of the association were asked to be more co-operative with the ministers. The committee asked all churches to appoint an annual standing committee to help the ministers in their work with the colored population and to advise the Negro members in the procedure for conducting church conference.<sup>58</sup>

D. B. Morrill and committee reported to the Cherokee

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<sup>57</sup>Minutes of the Twelfth Annual Session of the Trinity River Association of United Baptists, held in September, 1859, with Salem Church, Limestone County, 8.

<sup>58</sup>Minutes of the Twentieth Annual Session of the Union Baptist Association, held from September 30 to October 3, 1859, with the Post Oak Grove Church, Grimes County, 10.

Association in 1860. Their report on the spiritual condition of the colored population noted that many of the churches and Christian masters within the association were making provision for the gospel to be preached to the slaves, and that the slaves responded readily. Work among the Negroes had been slowed by "northern fanatics" and "wicked incendiaries," but it should be earnestly continued.<sup>59</sup>

In 1860 R. T. Baylor acknowledged that the slaves had been given special attention in some parts of the Colorado Association, but that preaching had been "postively forbidden" in the remainder of the association. The report expressed the fear that the disturbances which had occurred in certain areas of the country might lessen religious interest in behalf of the slaves. This would be lamentable since it was their responsibility to preach the gospel to the Negroes. Brother Baylor's report was accepted with an amendment which placed that body on record as being in favor of providing religious instruction for the slaves.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>59</sup>Minutes of the Cherokee Baptist Association, held in October, 1860, with Knoxville Church, Cherokee County, 10.

<sup>60</sup>Minutes of the Colorado Association held in September, 1860, with Shiloh Church, Fayette County, 10.

In 1860 James Hogue and his committee observed that the spiritual condition of the colored people within the bounds of Tryon Association had been very encouraging, but "recent conditions" brought about the feeling that public services should not be held for the servants. It was the opinion of the committee that the slaves should be instructed in the principle of salvation and in the duties of servitude, because religion led to the purification of men's hearts, the regulation of discordant lives, and the strengthening of civil and social relations. Two resolutions were adopted. All masters and owners of slaves were to take their servants to church or to send them under the protection of an overseer, who would return home with them after church; and the ministers were to teach the slaves that their relation to their master was of divine appointment and their fidelity as servants was "a test of the genuineness of their Christian character."<sup>61</sup>

M. Ross, Noah Hill, and J. R. Stewart constituted the committee which reported on the "Religious Condition of the Colored Population" at the Union Association in

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<sup>61</sup>Minutes of the Tryon Baptist Association, held in August, 1860, with the New Salem Baptist Church, Polk County, 5-6.



1860. They felt that the religious instruction of the slaves was becoming more important. The Negroes needed to understand that slavery was of divine arrangement and as slaves they must "yield a hearty obedience to all God's requirements," thus securing their happiness, while learning to "obey their masters in all things." Ministers who were to work among the Negroes had to be those who understood the spiritual wants of the slaves and whose minds were not prejudiced against the divine institution of slavery. By preaching the gospel to the slaves "the machinations of the devil, through his emissaries, the deluded and mad fanatics of the North" would become frustrated and "God's name would be glorified in the salvation of men."<sup>62</sup>

Governor A. C. Horton of Matagorda, owned nearly three hundred slaves. He was deeply interested in their comfort and religious welfare. A large number of these Negroes were members of the Baptist Church at Matagorda. Governor Horton built a church house conveniently located between his plantations and employed a preacher to preach to the slaves. Noah Hill, who was Governor Horton's pastor, said that one of the most touching scenes he had

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<sup>62</sup>Minutes of the Twenty-first Annual Meeting of the Union Baptist Association, held in August, 1860, with Bellville Baptist Church, Austin County, 14.

ever seen was that of Governor Horton and his wife reading the Bible and praying for their servants.

R. C. Burleson wrote that while he was president of Baylor University he visited Governor Horton. At the Governor's special request Burleson preached to his slaves. Burleson was impressed by Governor Horton's sincere concern for his Negro servants. It was Burleson's contention that:

If the South had been full of such Christian masters as Gov. Horton, God never would have allowed the abolition fanatics to set the slaves free till they were Christianized and prepared for citizenship or to return home to Africa and colonize and Christianize the 'Dark Continent.' The African race would thereby have been a blessing to both continents.<sup>63</sup>

From 1836 to 1860 Texas Baptists took particular interest in the spiritual needs of the slaves within the state. It would be difficult to determine the number of Negro Baptists in Texas prior to the Civil War, because many of the churches did not file separate reports on their Negro members; but association and convention minutes verify that missionaries and local ministers preached to the slaves regularly. There were a few colored preachers in the state, but a majority of the slaves who were Baptist

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<sup>63</sup>Carroll, Texas Baptists, 498-503.

belonged to the same churches as the whites. The servants attended worship services with their masters and then the preachers would have afternoon or evening services which were specifically designed for their instruction. Many of the slave owners co-operated with the Baptists who wanted to preach to their slaves, and some masters built church houses on their plantations and paid for the services of a preacher. The associational minutes indicate that between 1856 and 1860 there were agitators who were trying to disturb the Negroes. These records suggested that all worship services for the slaves should be attended by a group of white men in order to prevent disturbances. This was the beginning of the ever increasing problems which were to be encountered by Texas Baptists in their work with the Negroes during the years of Civil War and Reconstruction.

### CHAPTER III

#### WORK BY THE BAPTISTS AMONG TEXAS NEGROES DURING THE CONFEDERACY PERIOD, 1861-1865

The coming of the Civil War added to the difficulties of Christianizing the Negroes. Preachers and missionaries were scarce, money was not available for the support of religious work for the Negroes, and many people objected to gathering of crowds of Negroes, even if it were for religious instruction. Texas Baptists continued to accept responsibility for the spiritual welfare of the slaves; but as the work continued, the obstacles encountered often appeared insurmountable.

By 1861 many Texans were in favor of secession. Therefore, on February 1, 1861, Texas seceded from the Union and joined the Confederate States of America. At that time there were 232,534 slaves in Texas. As the Northern armies overran the Southern states many of the slaves from those states were brought to Texas. During the four years of war the Negroes continued to work the crops and look after the livestock on the plantations as usual. The



slaves were faithful to their masters almost without exception.<sup>1</sup>

At the outbreak of the Civil War there were two general bodies of Baptists in Texas, twenty-four associations, and a church membership exceeding fifty thousand. During the four years of war one of the greatest difficulties encountered by Texas Baptists in their attempt to Christianize the Negroes, was the scarcity of preachers. At least half the white preachers were in the army, and there were probably not half a dozen Negro preachers in the entire state. Often the preachers who remained at home were old and weak and could preach only occasionally in their local communities.<sup>2</sup>

J. W. D. Creath was chairman of the committee on the "Religious Condition of the Colored Population" which reported to the Baptist State Convention in 1861. The report called attention to the fact that religious instruction for the Negro was being "sadly hindered" because of the circumstances brought about by war. There were only a few places where the ministers could assemble slave congregations. A small number of the brethren were instructing

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<sup>1</sup>Engelking, "Slavery in Texas," 79-80, and as cited in Clark and Linder, The Story of Texas, 252-273.

<sup>2</sup>Carroll, Texas Baptists, 328, and as cited in Norman Wade Cox (ed.), Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists, II, 1376.

their slaves at home. The committee was greatly concerned as to what course should be pursued. The convention passed a resolution recommending the continuation of religious services for the slaves and requesting that the white brethren attend these meetings.<sup>3</sup>

In the 1861 report to the Cherokee Association M. V. Smith remarked that the Baptists' obligations to God, concerning the Negro, had never been stronger. Slavery was an institution of divine appointment and Christians were pledged to its perpetuation. The spiritual welfare of the Negroes was committed to the Christians, therefore they must respond. Churches within the association were asked to hold regular services for the slaves.<sup>4</sup>

D. B. Morrill read the report on the religious condition of the slaves to the Baptist Convention of Eastern Texas. It was observed that generally some attention had been given to the spiritual welfare of the slaves, but there were areas in which the Negroes had been neglected. The report continued by explaining the spiritual condition of the Negro:

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<sup>3</sup>Baptist State Convention of Texas - 1861 Session, 8-9, and as cited in Carroll, Texas Baptists, 329.

<sup>4</sup>Minutes of the Cherokee Baptist Association, held in October, 1861, with the Jamestown Church, Smith County, 5.

'Here we meet with nothing but ignorance and the native depravity of the heart to prevent the effects of the preached word. Unlike many of those more highly favored in their generation who reject what benighted reason can not grasp, they learn to receive as truth the unvarnished teachings of Scripture. Their minds, being untrammelled with the perversions of science and the mysticisms of false philosophy, are susceptible of religious impressions, and are left no false refuges to which they can flee, with no infidel theories behind which to entrench themselves, and no stifling skepticism to arrest the sword of the Spirit. Free from the surfeiting cares which absorb the energies and engross the thoughts of the ambitious and covetous; free from the temptations of wealth and luxury; with no Pharisaical notions of human merit, they have no settled opposition to the humiliating doctrines of grace, but Ethiopia is stretching forth her hand to God. This department of our labor is invested with increasing importance by the peculiar circumstances which surround us.

'Other departments of Christian enterprise seem for the present to be crowded with formidable obstacles. A large portion of our citizens are being called to the tented field to guard our national interests or into battle line to lift the sword in defence of our invaded rights. News of approaching armies and threatening dangers keeps the populace in a continued state of excitement, and the thoughts, feelings and energies of our people all cluster around one common cause. But among our slaves we are gratified to find an unusual degree of calmness and quietude. Where they have been favored with regular and faithful ministry of the word, the results have been highly gratifying. Many in different parts of our bounds have been brought during the past year, to a saving knowledge of the truth. Among them there is at this time a marked evidence of a revival spirit. Your committee would earnestly recommend that our churches increase their efforts to bring our servants under the influence of the gospel. And that our



ministers avail themselves of this open door, and embrace the favorable opportunity to gather for eternity this ripe and inviting harvest.<sup>5</sup>

John Buckholts and committee reported to the Little River Association that many slaves had been saved during 1861. The Negroes were attentive and observed good order while attending services. J. G. Thomas had had a successful year as missionary to the slaves along the Brazos River. The committee acknowledged that in certain portions of the association the Negroes had been neglected and urged the pastors to continue services for them; but recommended that the ministers take a "committee of respectable citizens" with them when having worship services for the slaves.<sup>6</sup>

At the annual meeting of the Trinity River Association in 1861, J. J. Pope and committee reported that the colored population was in a destitute condition, and there was no way to remedy the situation unless the slaves' masters would take the matter in hand. The committee recommended that the association drop the subject "on account of the political condition of the country."<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Carroll, Texas Baptists, 329-330.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 331.

<sup>7</sup>Minutes of the Fourteenth Annual Session of the Trinity River Association of the United Baptist, held in September, 1861, with the Sterling Church, Robertson County, 10.



S. G. O'Bryan gave the report on the "Religious Condition of the Colored Population" to the Union Association in 1861. He said that the gospel was being preached regularly to the Negroes in portions of the association, but in other parts both the whites and the blacks were deprived of religious instruction. There were places where services had been suspended because of the political excitement. This had not been done to prevent the slaves from hearing the gospel, but to avert the gathering of large crowds. In some communities provisions for preaching to the Negroes had been expanded every year. Smith contended that preaching to the slaves would bring them to Christ and would remind them that their obligations to their masters proceeded from God. When the owners' permission could be obtained, the preachers should instruct the slaves on the plantations. In towns the ministers should preach to the slaves and then aid in quietly dispersing the congregation after the service. The people should be prepared to protect their ministers from the false accusations of enemies, should they arise.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Minutes of the Twenty-second Annual Meeting of the Union Baptist Association, held in July, 1861, at the First Baptist Church, Houston, Texas, 3-4, and as cited in Carroll, Texas Baptists, 328-329.

In 1861 T. P. Aycock and committee reported that the Waco Association did not have a missionary to work with the colored population at that time, and there was no hope for one. The report called attention to the fact that the social and industrial systems of the area furnished an opportunity for the salvation of the slaves. It concluded by saying:

We urge our churches and preachers to do all they can that 'thus may the voice of Christianity vindicate our social system as not inconsistent with civilization but as the appointed means by which Ethiopia shall stretch out her hand to God.<sup>9</sup>

George W. Baines, Sr. reported on the "Religious Condition of the Colored Population" at the Baptist State Convention in 1862. He said that the war was "the chastening judgements of God," because they had failed to give the gospel to the slaves. He reasoned that since

. . . it cannot be wrong to own slaves, may it not be that much of the present deep affliction is a manifestation of God's displeasure against us for our neglect to furnish the means of gospel grace, by which their souls may be saved?

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<sup>9</sup>Minutes of the Second Annual Session of the Waco Baptist Association, held in September, 1861, at the Baptist Church in Marlin, 8-9, and as cited in Carroll, Texas Baptists, 330.

He felt that these "evils" would not be removed until Christians repented and performed their duty of presenting the plan of salvation to the slaves.<sup>10</sup>

A committee of the Little River Association observed that regular services were being held for the slaves, but "destitution" still existed in some areas of the association. Owners were advised to provide an opportunity for their slaves to hear the gospel and pastors were to give religious instruction to the Negroes whenever possible.<sup>11</sup>

A. Ellis was chairman of the committee which reported to the Tryon Association in 1862. The pastors had been successful in ministering to the Negroes, but more work needed to be done among them. The Bible sanctioned slavery, but it also made the masters responsible for teaching their slaves "the means of grace." The committee recommended that pastors preach the gospel to the slaves when possible.<sup>12</sup>

In 1862 the report on the "Religious Condition of the Colored Population" in Union Association was given by

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<sup>10</sup>Baptist State Convention of Texas, 1862 Session, 6, and as cited in Carroll, Texas Baptists, 331-332.

<sup>11</sup>Carroll, Texas Baptists, 332.

<sup>12</sup>Minutes of the Tryon Association, held in September, 1862, at the Mount Aerial Church at Livingston, Polk County, 3-4.

Noah Hill. Hill related that in some localities Baptists had failed to give the slaves sufficient attention, and in other areas the Negroes had been completely neglected. The churches and the preachers were responsible for presenting the gospel to the slaves, while "having due regard for the laws of the state."<sup>13</sup>

Henry Rogers reported to Waco Association in 1862. He acknowledged that the slaves were in need of spiritual help, but the "distracted condition of the country" prevented their having a missionary; and there was no other way to remedy the situation.<sup>14</sup>

In 1863 S. T. Caldwell, T. J. B. Hadley, and A. G. Haynes were members of the committee which reported on the "Religious Condition of the Colored Population" at the Baptist State Convention. The report declared that the churches were "much interested in the religious improvement of the Negroes in their bounds." Some of the slaves worshipped with their owners in a portion of the church set apart for them, while others met in the churches

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<sup>13</sup>Minutes of the Twenty-third Annual Meeting of the Union Baptist Association, held in July, 1862, with the Brenham Church, Washington County, 9.

<sup>14</sup>Minutes of the Third Annual Session of the Waco Baptist Association, held in 1862, with the church at Bosqueville, 6, and as cited in Carroll, Texas Baptists, 332.



on Sunday afternoon and heard their pastors preach. The committee recommended that the pastors instruct the Negroes on three points. First, that slavery was scriptural, that the masters were the guardians of the slaves and the only one who sympathized and cared for him. Second, that the promises made to the Negroes by the Federals were politically motivated with a view of injuring the South rather than bettering the condition of the Negro. Third, if the Negroes joined the Federals, they absolved the obligation of their master to defend and protect them and they would be treated as enemies of the Confederate government. The committee said it would be necessary to obtain the approval of the leading citizens of a community before delivering such discourses and these sermons would have to be given with "great care and prudence."<sup>15</sup>

In 1863 the Cherokee Baptist Association noted that the slaves had been greatly neglected. Since the whites had reaped the benefits of their labours, they were responsible for presenting the gospel to the Negroes.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>Minutes of the Seventeenth Annual Session of the Baptist State Convention of Texas, held in October, 1863, with the Church at Independence, Washington County, 6, and as cited in Carroll, Texas Baptists, 333-334.

<sup>16</sup>Minutes of the Cherokee Baptist Association, held in October, 1863, with Larissa Church, Cherokee County, 5.

In 1863 W. I. Albright and committee reported to the Little River Association on the "Religious Condition of the Colored Population." The committee made the following declaration:

'That the sinful and foolish course which had been pursued for a number of years by the abolitionists of the North towards our slaves, and especially the state of things by which we are at present surrounded, make it necessary that great caution should be observed by us in our conduct towards our colored population. The unwarranted and wicked interference of the Yankees of the North with the Negroes of the South, under the false pretense of friendship and love for that race, has made it absolutely necessary for us, their owners, to be more rigid in our discipline towards our slaves, and to deprive them of many privileges which, before those interferences, we were extending to them so that, in point of fact, the abolitionists of the North, in place of being friends of the Negroes, are really their worst enemies. We think it is the duty of the pastors of the churches to give proper attention to the religious instruction of the slaves of their congregations, and we believe, in the main, this has been done, but, in the present state of things, and until that state of things passes away (which we trust in God may be soon), we can recommend no particular plan to be pursued.'<sup>17</sup>

Elder Thomas Eaton reported to the Trinity River Association that the Negroes were "neglected and overlooked." It was recommended that the churches find some

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<sup>17</sup>Carroll, Texas Baptists, 334.

better way of tending to the spiritual needs of the slaves.<sup>18</sup>

J. W. Barnes, Noah Hill, J. Parks, A. G. Haynes, and E. Uzzell constituted the committee which reported to the Union Association in 1863. The report said that when God ordained the institution of marriage, He also ordained the institution of slavery. He gave the children of Israel a slave-code, and the New Testament recorded duties of masters and slaves. The report continued by stating:

'We believe that our duty to the servants of our families is next to that of our children. Brethren, are they human beings, possessing immortal souls, such as our blessed Savior died to redeem? Then it is our duty to point them to the "Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world." But how can we best do this is the great, the perplexing question. We are imperfect beings, hence our best arrangements are not without objections, but we feel that we should not abandon a good cause on account of some evil or mismanagement incident to it, but labor prayerfully, with patience, to correct and improve. We believe, where it is practicable, that a separate apartment in the same house be prepared for the colored members of our families and that we take them and our children with us to the house of God, but when this cannot be done we recommend that special and stated meetings be held for them, and that the owners or overseers, as far as practicable, go with them, even if it should cause some sacrifices on our part to do so. And we are happy to state from

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<sup>18</sup>Minutes of the Sixteenth Annual Session of the Trinity River Association of the United Baptists, held in September, 1863, with the Tryon Church, Brazos County, 5.



the reports of our brethren, who have given this plan but a partial trial, that the most glorious and happy results have attended these meetings. Brethren, if a few only should be saved, who can estimate the worth of one soul? Christ, in reply to the inquiries of John, gave us as an evidence of His true Messiahship, that "the poor have the gospel preached to them." Brethren, let us give the same proof of our possession of the mind that was in Christ. Beloved brethren, if we fail to provide the gospel for these, where, oh where, are they to get it?<sup>19</sup>

J. J. Sledge reported to the Waco Association in 1863. He contended that God had placed the Negroes among the Christians to enable them to become civilized and Christianized. As Christians they were under obligation to all sinners, but more particularly to the Negro, because they had reaped the benefits of his labor and were solely responsible for him. Neglect of their religious obligations to the Negro and misuse of the products of his labor had been partially responsible for bringing on the war.<sup>20</sup>

By 1864 it was becoming difficult to have separate services for the Negroes. Many of the slaves were becoming unsettled because of the influence of "secret teachers."

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<sup>19</sup>Minutes of the Twenty-fourth Annual Meeting of the Union Baptist Association, held in August, 1863, at Plantersville Church, Grimes County, 4-5, and as cited in Carroll, Texas Baptists, 332-333.

<sup>20</sup>Minutes of the Fourth Annual Session of the Waco Baptist Association, held in 1863, with the Antioch Church, 12, and as cited in Carroll, Texas Baptists, 334.



There were only a few white men at home, and they were greatly outnumbered by the Negro men. Even leading citizens dreaded public meetings for the slaves, but in most places religious services were faithfully continued.<sup>21</sup>

Z. N. Morrell, R. E. B. Baylor, A. G. Haynes, and M. C. Rogers were the members of the committee on the "Religious Condition of the Colored Population" which reported to the Baptist State Convention in 1864. They reiterated that caring for the religious welfare of the Negroes was a serious responsibility. Where there were well organized churches, the slaves had afternoon services; and the Christian planters provided services for the slaves on the plantations. In other places within the state there were large numbers who never heard the gospel. The churches needed to make a special effort to give the Negroes solid religious instructions, proper ideas of their temporal relations, and a clear concept of their responsibilities to God.<sup>22</sup>

At the Union Associational meeting in 1864, W. M. Forester reported that there was a "warm religious interest"

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<sup>21</sup>Carroll, Texas Baptists, 335.

<sup>22</sup>Minutes of the Seventeenth Annual Session of the Baptist State Convention of Texas, held in October, 1864, at the Church in Huntsville, Walker County, 14-15, and as cited in Carroll, Texas Baptists, 335.

among the Negroes who heard the gospel. Some of the churches had made provision for the slaves to worship. There was no need to fear improper conduct at the Negro worship services, if they were properly attended by the white brethren. It was recommended that all churches provide services for the slaves at least one Sunday each month. These services were to be under the care of the white brethren and with the permission of the particular community. The Negroes could be promised a continuation of these meetings so long as they behaved properly.<sup>23</sup>

In 1864 Elder N. W. Crane reported that in the Waco Association some of the slaves attended the white worship services, some had regular services separate from the whites, and some did not attend any worship services. At that time there was not a missionary working among the Negroes, but one was needed as soon as the association could appoint one.<sup>24</sup>

Jesse Tubb reported that there were portions of the Trinity River Association in which the gospel was being

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<sup>23</sup>Minutes of the Twenty-fifth Annual Meeting of the Union Baptist Association, held in September, 1864, with Montgomery Church, 3-4, and as cited in Carroll, Texas Baptists, 335.

<sup>24</sup>Minutes of the Fifth Annual Session of the Waco Baptist Association, held in 1864, with the Church at Searsville, 19, and as cited in Carroll, Texas Baptists, 335.

preached to "large and attentive assemblies" of colored people, while in other places the slaves were being neglected. Pastors were urged to hold regular services for the Negroes, because their moral and religious interest had improved where this had been done.<sup>25</sup>

In 1864 J. F. James submitted the report to the Tryon Association on the "Religious Condition of the Colored Population." Religious interest had increased among the Negroes and many had professed faith in Christ. Never had they been more humble and obedient to their masters. Christianity made good servants of the Negroes and it was the duty of the masters to provide them with religious instruction.<sup>26</sup>

After studying the work done during the Civil War, J. M. Dawson concluded that Texas Baptists overcame the many obstacles of the war "to show, if possible, a deeper anxiety for the spiritual welfare of the Negroes."<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>Minutes of the Seventeenth Annual Session of the Trinity River Association of the United Baptist Church, held in September, 1864, with the Concord Church, Leon County, 6.

<sup>26</sup>Minutes of the Tryon Association, held in September, 1864, with the Laurel Hill Church at Cold Springs, Polk County, 4.

<sup>27</sup>Elliot (ed.), Centennial Story of Texas Baptists, 42.

Texas Baptists continued to show an interest in the spiritual welfare of the slaves during the Civil War. Slave owners were repeatedly reminded that it was their duty to provide their slaves with religious instruction. This instruction had two purposes: first, to present the way of salvation to the slaves; and second, to teach the slaves their duties to God and to their masters, because it had been observed that Christian Negroes made humble and obedient servants. Before the end of the war there were places where the political situation had caused unrest among the Negroes to the extent that worship services for them had been suspended, but generally their religious services continued. Texas Baptists had overcome many difficulties in their effort to Christianize the Negroes, but neither the whites nor the Negroes were prepared for the problems which Baptists were to encounter during Reconstruction.



## CHAPTER IV

### WORK BY THE BAPTISTS AMONG TEXAS NEGROES DURING THE EARLY PERIOD OF RECONSTRUCTION, 1865-1869

Religious work among the Negroes during the period immediately following the Civil War can not be viewed in its proper perspective without understanding the political and social situation which existed in Texas.

Many Texans had been killed during the war, and those who returned found their homes and farms dilapidated, their slaves freed, their horses and cattle scattered, and their families in want. Texas did not suffer so badly as did the other Southern states. There was still some gold and silver money in circulation due to trade that had been carried on between Texas and Mexico; and food was available, but only could be obtained by paying exorbitant prices.<sup>1</sup>

Immediately following the defeat of the Confederacy rumors spread through the state that the Federal army was planning to invade Texas in order to take control of the

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<sup>1</sup>Joseph L. Clark and Dorothy A. Linder, The Story of Texas, 278-279, and 295.

state and to punish those who had assisted in the war. Governor Pendleton Murrah and many other state government officials left the state, therefore Texas no longer had any state government.<sup>2</sup>

On June 19, 1865, General Gordon Granger and his Federal army arrived in Galveston. Granger immediately ordered the establishment of military government, the registration of all Texans who served in the Confederate army, the annulment of all laws passed by the state government during the war, and the freeing of all slaves in Texas.<sup>3</sup>

The Negroes left the plantations and roamed at will. They thought themselves free from work and yet expected the white planters to continue feeding and clothing them. The Negroes understood that the government was going to divide the plantations and give each freedman forty acres of land and a mule. After the excitement and misconceptions produced by their new freedoms subsided many returned to work, but their employers found them "irresponsible and unreliable." H. H. Bancroft said:

As a result of this change from slavery to political equality with the whites, not only was a conflict between the two races inaugurated,

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 281.

but the debased Negroes no longer debarred the use of spirituous liquor, under its influence incessantly, engaged in frays among themselves, which generally terminated in bloodshed. The number of murders committed during this period was unparalleled in any epoch of Texas history . . . and what was worse, the judiciary was inadequate to punish . . .

The Negroes were not prepared for the transition from slavery to citizenship. "Former slaveholders who were in many instances true friends of the Negroes, were not allowed to aid in the readjustment." The entire responsibility was given to the Freedmen's Bureau<sup>4</sup> which aroused within the colored people distrust for his former master

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<sup>4</sup>The Freedmen's Bureau was created by an act of Congress on March 3, 1865, for the purpose of managing freedmen, refugees, and abandoned lands in the conquered Southern States. The bureau did not begin operating in Texas until December, 1865, and its main activity consisted of supervising the interests of the freedmen. This supervision entailed court protection, education, relief work, and labor contract supervision. The function of the bureau which offended the white population was the process by which they protected the Negroes in court. Their method of protection blocked regular court procedure. "Insolent and officious bureau agents frequently withdrew the freedmen's cases from the regular courts and themselves assumed the rights of adjudication." The bureau had many conflicts with regularly constituted state authorities. The Freedmen's Bureau ceased to exist in Texas in 1868. Walter Prescott Webb (ed.), The Handbook of Texas, I, 644.



and persuaded him to join the Union League.<sup>5</sup> Many of the Southern white men joined the Ku Klux Klan<sup>6</sup> in an effort to counteract the influence of the Freedmen's Bureau and the Union League.<sup>7</sup>

In the first few years immediately following the war most of the Negroes left the established churches and formed all Negro churches. The majority of their preachers

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<sup>5</sup>The Union League or Loyal Union League was organized to achieve two objectives: first, to encourage the Negroes to become involved in politics, and second, to teach the Negroes loyalty to the Republican party. Some of the league leaders went far beyond the objectives of the organization and organized the Negroes into military companies in an effort to make their organization more effective. The influence of the Union League began to decline during Davis' administration. Ibid., II, 88.

<sup>6</sup>The Ku Klux Klan was a secret society organized to offset the influence of the Freedmen's Bureau and the Loyal Union League. The Klansmen wore long black or white robes with masks or hoods and their horses were covered with white robes. In order to frighten the Negroes they pretended to be the spirits of dead Confederate soldiers. If someone displeased the Klan, he would be warned and given a chance to change his ways, but if he persisted in displeasing the Klan, they would resort to whipping or using some other severe punishment on their victim. J. J. Reynolds, military leader in Texas, reported the Klan responsible for acts of intimidation, murder, and robbery in East Texas in 1868 and 1869. During E. J. Davis' administration there was very little Klan activity and in general it ceased to exist after 1871. Clark and Linder, The Story of Texas, 285-286, and as cited in Webb (ed.), Handbook of Texas, I, 974.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 278-279, 286, 294-295, and as cited in W. C. Nunn, Texas Under the Carpetbaggers, 254.



were illiterate and combined superstition with their scant knowledge of Christianity.<sup>8</sup> It was not unusual for a Negro man who had never become a Christian to start preaching. The ignorance and superstition which prevailed among the colored population often resulted in the establishment of churches which were disorderly and where confusion predominated.<sup>9</sup>

The question of separate churches for the Negroes became an increasingly perplexing problem. Although many of the colored people had already left the existing churches to form all Negro churches, the question arose

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<sup>8</sup>Immediately following the war there were few of the Negro ministers who could read. If they had any books they were elementary and had to be read to the minister by someone else. The stories in the books were not of a religious nature, but were given a spiritual interpretation. The ministers' misconception of theology was evident in some of the subjects used for their sermons. "Rolling Jesus Down the Hill" was the title for a sermon which described how the enemies of Jesus fastened Him in a barrel and rolled the Savior from the top of a high hill. "God's Children Floating through the Air" was the name given a sermon which depicted Christians dressed in white floating through the air in balloons. Sermons such as these brought about groans of pity, loud cries for mercy, sobs, and wails, or unrestrained manifestations of joy. The emotional state engendered in the minds of the Negroes often made them faint and friends would take them outside where it would take several hours to revive them. Elmer Grady Marshall, "The History of Brazos County, Texas," unpublished Masters thesis, University of Texas, 1937, 185-197.

<sup>9</sup>Carroll, Texas Baptists, 314-315.

as to whether the colored membership should be encouraged to form their own churches or to remain in the established churches.

In 1865 the report on the "Religious Condition of the Colored Population" at the Baptist State Convention was given by James W. Barnes, R. E. B. Baylor, and J. E. Paxton. The report acknowledged that their former slaves had become freedmen and asserted that Texas Baptists, being loyal citizens and Christians, must accept the Negro as being free. The report reiterated that the Negroes were not responsible for this change from slavery to freedom and that during the four years of war these slaves had remained faithful to their masters.<sup>10</sup> The churches had been interested in the spiritual welfare of the Negroes before and during the war, therefore they should not overlook their responsibility to the Negroes now.

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<sup>10</sup> Cranfill, editor of Carroll's A History of Texas Baptists paid tribute to the "fidelity and constancy" of the Southern Negroes. He said that while the men were fighting for the Confederacy, they left their women and children with their slaves, who knew they would be free if the North won, but would remain in slavery if the South was victorious. Even so the Negroes "kept tireless vigil at the doors of their absent masters and not among all these millions of blacks was there one who betrayed his trust. Not a white woman or white child was harmed during all those crucial and cruel years. There is nothing in human history comparable to this faithfulness of these Negroes." Carroll, Texas Baptists, 357.

The committee wanted to make definite recommendations, but "the frequent change of military orders and their uncertain future action, together with the various conditions and dispositions of the blacks" made planning difficult. It suggested that the churches furnish men to preach to the Negroes, and that the local church members allow the Negroes to use their houses of worship. The committee recommended that the state convention remain neutral on the question of separate churches for the Negroes.<sup>11</sup>

F. M. Hays and the committee reported to the Cherokee Baptist Association in 1865. They considered the subject of the "Religious Condition of the Colored Population" with feelings of "pleasure and embarrassment." They were pleased that the Negroes had been "peculiarly subject to religious impressions," but they were embarrassed because of the confusion and difficulties surrounding the Negroes' status under the military government. As slaves the Negro's mind had been freed from the numerous responsibilities and cares of this world, thus allowing him to be concerned with his life after death. The committee feared

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<sup>11</sup>Minutes of the Eighteenth Annual Session of the Baptist State Convention of Texas, held from September 30, to October 3, 1865, at the church at Anderson, 13-14, and as cited in Carroll, Texas Baptists, 337-338.



that the Negroes' new found freedoms would be accepted as freedom from responsibility and work. If this occurred, it would be very difficult to help them spiritually or materially.

Realizing that the Negroes were illiterate and uninformed in church organization and polity, the committee recommended that they remain in the churches with the whites until they were capable of conducting church procedures in a proper manner. Pastors were urged to instruct the Negroes as they had previously done.<sup>12</sup>

James D. Whitten was chairman of the committee which reported to the Colorado Association in 1865. Because of the "unsettled conditions" it presented no recommendations, but appealed to the churches to do everything possible to help the Negro in his "helpless and dependent condition." The report concluded that slavery had found the Negro "a benighted being, bowing down to wood and stone, and left him worshipping the 'true and living God.'"<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>Minutes of the Fourteenth Annual Session of the Cherokee Baptist Association, held in October, 1865, at the Hopewell Church, Smith County.

<sup>13</sup>Minutes of the Colorado Association, held in October, 1865, at the Wharton Baptist Church, Wharton County, 4-5, and as cited in Carroll, Texas Baptists, 339-340.



The political and social conditions of the colored population had changed; therefore the San Antonio Association recommended that a committee be appointed to report on their Negro memberships at the next associational meeting.<sup>14</sup>

The "Committee on the Religious Condition of the Colored Population" in the Trinity River Association expressed grave concern for the spiritual welfare of the Negroes, but considered any action taken to correct the situation "difficult and dangerous" under the existing circumstances. The group advised that the churches comply with the former resolution of holding separate services for the Negroes and preaching to them regularly. According to the report money had been collected to pay for a missionary to work with the Negroes, but the money had become worthless; therefore the association was unable to keep a missionary in the field.<sup>15</sup>

S. G. McClenny, S. Lacy, and C. M. Perry made up the committee which reported on the "Religious Condition of the Colored Population" to the Tryon Association in 1865. Prior to this time the association had had a special

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<sup>14</sup>Carroll, Texas Baptists, 340.

<sup>15</sup>Minutes of the Seventeenth Annual Session of the Trinity River Baptist Association, held in September, 1865, at the Fairfield Church, Freestone County, 4, 6.

interest in the spiritual welfare of the Negro and had provided them with religious instruction, but the circumstances then existing left the committee at a loss as to what should be done. They merely recommended that the churches and pastors continue the course they had previously pursued until future developments necessitated a change.<sup>16</sup>

In 1865, the "Report on the Religious Condition of the Colored Population" was given to Union Association by a committee consisting of F. M. Law, A. G. Haynes, and W. A. Montgomery. The committee made special mention of the fact that the Negroes had become free and were no longer the property of the white men. The whites' responsibilities as masters had ceased, but their obligations as Christians had not changed. The report continued by saying, "If the Negroes have friends on earth they are among the Christians of the South." The Baptists were instructed to do all they could for the relief and improvement of the Negroes. Specific plans for assisting the freedmen were left to the individual churches.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>Minutes of the Eighth Annual Session of the Tryon Association, held in September, 1865, at Bethel Church, Polk County, 9.

<sup>17</sup>Minutes of the Twenty-sixth Annual Meeting of the Union Baptist Association, held in September, 1865, at the Washington Church, 4, and as cited in Carroll, Texas Baptists, 338.

In 1865 the Waco Association "Report on the Religious Condition of the Colored Population" was given by J. W. Speight, W. A. Dunklin, and Elder Fortune. The report said that the changes which were brought about by emancipating the Negroes had not lessened the duty of the churches to provide religious and moral instruction for them, but "it need not be expected that former masters will contribute liberally as heretofore to colored missions." The committee thought it inadvisable to inaugurate a plan for colored missions, because of the "unsettled condition of society" and because the association had no money with which to pay a missionary. The subject of organizing separate churches for the Negroes was mentioned, and the committee suggested that it might be better to organize Negro churches "separate and distinct" from the white churches.<sup>18</sup>

While indecision existed among the whites on the question of separate churches for the Negroes, many of the colored brethren were withdrawing their letters from the existing churches and forming churches of their own.

Forrest Hooks, a Negro preacher who lived in

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<sup>18</sup>1865 Minutes of the Waco Association, 4-5, and as cited in Carroll, Texas Baptists, 338-339.

Northeast Texas, had been preaching to the slaves for about ten years. After the war Hooks was ordained and was asked to preach to a group of Negro Baptists. Aided by two white men, he organized the Negro Baptists into a church. Twenty-eight were baptized the day the church was formed, and within a month there were one hundred members in the church. According to Pegues, this was the first all Negro church in Northeast Texas.<sup>19</sup>

In 1866 the church at Washington reported a membership of one hundred eighty-five. One hundred twenty-five of these were Negroes. During the year all of the colored members withdrew to form their own church leaving a membership of sixty-two whites.<sup>20</sup>

The First Baptist Church of Jasper wrote a letter to the Bethlehem Association in September of 1866 in which it asked the association to consider what position the colored members should occupy. The letter mentioned that for the past year the Jasper church had allowed

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<sup>19</sup>A. W. Pegues, Our Baptist Ministers and Schools, 270-271.

<sup>20</sup>Minutes of the Thirty-third Annual Meeting of the Union Baptist Association, held in August, 1872, with Oakland Church, Grimes County, 26-27.



their Negro members separate services and control of their own discipline.<sup>21</sup>

The 1866 minutes of the Colorado Association indicate the indecision that was prevalent on the subject of separate churches for the Negroes. The report is given in its entirety.

Majority Report on Colored People, as Adopted

A portion of your committee appointed to report on Instruction of Colored People would, in brief, report, that as a general rule, they would not advise any organization of the colored people into separate churches, for the following among other reasons, viz:

1st. They do not believe that, as a mass, the colored people possess sufficient intelligence and education, especially in Bible learning, to keep the doctrines and ordinances in God's work pure and unmingled with human error, when unaided by the superior intelligence of the whites.

2nd. Because separation involves, as a consequence, the ordination of colored people unfitted to the work of the Gospel Ministry; and finally the organization of separate Associations; and from the first reason given, this is inexpedient and unwise.

3rd. That it is manifestly our duty to aid them in arriving at as high a standard in education, and especially that of a religious character, as they are capable of attaining; and we honestly believe that the best way to procure this, is by the maintaining our present united condition, modified to suit altered circumstances.

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<sup>21</sup>Minutes of the First Baptist Church, September, 1866, Jasper, Jasper County.

We, in conclusion, would recommend the adoption of the following resolution, viz:

Resolved, That we, believing it to be not only a religious duty, but an imperative necessity, for our people to afford the colored people full opportunities of attaining the highest possible religious standard, would therefore recommend that, while the colored people still be retained as members of our churches, yet that, where it is practicable, thus shall have separate and stated meetings and preaching; that at these meetings, a committee of whites shall attend to assist them in holding conference; that they shall therein be trained to receive and discipline their own members; and that in all cases they shall have a white preacher, whom they themselves may call. And that no colored person shall be permitted to act in any capacity as a Gospel minister, without possessing the Gospel prerequisites, and being regularly authorized by both white and black members of the churches.

Respectfully submitted,  
 P. B. Chandler,  
 C. E. Stephen,  
 E. E. Blackwell,  
 J. I. Loudermilk,  
 R. T. Baylor,  
 W. P. Hatchett,  
 Lee Green,  
 Joel Peoples,  
 B. L. Stevens.

Minority Report on Colored People  
Which was rejected, but ordered to be  
printed in the Minutes.

Dear Brethren: your committee, appointed during the present meeting to make a report in relation to the course which this body ought to pursue, in aid and support of the religious condition of the colored population within the bounds of the Colorado Association, make the following report:

The time has been sufficiently long since the former relation ceased to exist between the races, to satisfy us that a separation ought to take place in every department of life, to give satisfaction and liberal contentment to each. We have seen sufficient manifestations of this in our own households, with our neighbors, and throughout the country generally; that the colored people are not satisfied to remain with their former masters in a state of civil freedom. We therefore conclude, both from reason and observation, that the same objection would prevail in a church relation, because they never have been, and we presume never will be, permitted to exercise equal rights, immunities, and privileges with the white members of the Church; and we add another reason, and that is, they know and feel their inferiority to the white race, and consequently cannot enjoy that religious freedom and happiness which they would if associated in a separate organization entirely their own.

Therefore we advise them, or as many of them who may deem it advantageous to their spiritual welfare, to form their own separate organization, where their population and number of members justify it, and where they can procure competent ministers to preach the gospel to them, and instruct them in the way of righteousness when organized; thus, with pastors of their own choosing, with deacons of their own setting apart, in houses of their own building, and exclusively under their own control for worship, a much greater number doubtless would hear the Gospel preached, and become converted under it, than under the present system. If this course is adopted, we should advise that every auxiliary in our power should be immediately put into energetic operation to accomplish it. We seriously apprehend that the time is near when we shall see and feel that which we have felt and passed through in the last few years, if we fail as a denomination to use the means, or in some way to accomplish the object above suggested. Northern fanaticism



(we say to all the world) we have cause to fear and guard against, will raise its hideous monsters amongst us, dressed in heaven's livery, to make our condition worse, both civil and religious, in pandering to the prejudice and ignorance of the colored population of our country, in sowing the seeds of discord amongst them.

Respectfully submitted

A. King, Chairman

After considerable deliberation, the minority report was rejected by a vote of 14 to 5, and the majority report was accepted.<sup>22</sup>

Upon their request the First Colored Baptist Church of Houston was admitted into the Union Association. The Negro church agreed to adopt the articles of faith of the First White Baptist Church of Houston, and it was understood that their future delegates to associational meetings would be white men in good standing with the white church of Houston.

In 1866 Union Association recommended Noah Hill as a suitable man to give instruction to the Negroes. During the associational meeting Elders Link and Stribling

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<sup>22</sup>Minutes of the Colorado Baptist Association, held in September, 1866, at the Hallettsville Baptist Church, Lavaca County, 5-7, 19, 20.



preached to the whites in the Baptist Church while Elder Hill preached to the Negroes in the Methodist Church.<sup>23</sup>

At the Waco Associational Meeting the delegates decided to incorporate the "Committee on Negro Missions" into the "Committee on Missions." The "Committee on Missions" reported that for several years there had been no funds available to support missionaries. It was recommended that one or more missionaries be employed to work with the whites and the Negroes, that the churches pledge a specific amount to be paid quarterly for the support of these missionaries, and that "monthly concerts of prayer" be held for missions in order to revive the spirit of missions. These recommendations passed and several churches pledged specific amounts of money for the support of missions.<sup>24</sup>

G. E. Nash, T. F. Waller, A. Green, W. W. Hollomon, and Thadeus Snow reported to the Trinity River Association in 1866. Upon inquiring throughout the entire association the committee found that in some settlements the Negroes listened to counsel from the whites and attended the

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<sup>23</sup>Minutes of the Twenty-seventh Annual Meeting of the Union Baptist Association, held in August, 1866, at the Brenham Church, 9, 11, 15, and as cited in Carroll, Texas Baptists, 341-342.

<sup>24</sup>Minutes of the Seventh Annual Session of the Waco Baptist Association, 3, 4.

preaching of the white ministry, but in many communities they had forsaken the ministry and churches of the white men. Many of the Negroes worshipped by themselves and some claimed to have been called into the ministry. Some of these Negroes receiving a call to preach had never been church members. The situation was so bad that in many places the church members were living "in open transgression." The committee appealed to the Negro churches to use "strict discipline" and to "guard well the doors" of their churches. The committee suggested that the Negroes refrain from meeting at night. They asserted that the white people were not responsible for the present condition of the colored people, but that the Negroes did deserve their "sympathies and earnest prayers." The committee pleaded for Baptists to make "one united effort to convince them that the Southern people are their best friends."<sup>25</sup>

A brief report was given to the Tryon Association in 1866. B. F. Ellis, J. R. Mainer, and J. Y. Marsh announced that good results had come from preaching the

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<sup>25</sup>Minutes of the Eighteenth Annual Session of the Trinity River Baptist Association, held in September, 1866, at Lost Prairie Church, Limestone County, 6-7.

gospel to the Negroes and recommended that preaching for them be continued.<sup>26</sup>

S. T. Harrison was chairman of the "Committee on the Religious Condition of the Colored Population" who reported to the Cherokee Association in 1866. They acknowledged that they were perplexed as to what course should be taken to assist the Negroes in spiritual affairs, and recommended that the churches handle the situation with "prudence and moderation."<sup>27</sup>

The "Committee on the Religious Condition of the Colored Population" at the Baptist State Convention in 1866, consisted of F. M. Law, H. Garrett, E. G. Mays, W. A. Dunlin, and J. Stamps. They reported that large numbers of Negroes had shown evidence of true conversion, but too often they were moved by impulse and superstition rather than by the "pure precepts of Christ." The obligation of the church to give religious instruction to the Negroes had increased. The Negroes' need for mental and moral elevation was greater in their present state than

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<sup>26</sup>Minutes of the Tryon Baptist Association - Ninth Annual Session, held in September, 1866, at the Calvary Church, Trinity County, 3.

<sup>27</sup>Minutes of the Cherokee Baptist Association, held in October, 1866, at the Palestine Church, 9.

it had been when they were slaves. The committee made two recommendations. The first was a request for the brethren to co-operate in supporting Sabbath schools and day schools for the Negroes, because the education of the colored people was an important auxiliary to their evangelization. The second recommendation was for members of the association to support J. F. Hillyer in his work with the Negroes.<sup>28</sup>

At the Baptist State Convention the following year J. J. Sledge and committee reported that the religious condition of the Negroes in Texas was deplorable. They would not listen to the white ministers and had only a few of their race competent enough in religious training to instruct them. They were easily swayed by "fanaticism, superstition, and animal magnetism" and tended toward "barbarism and idolatry." The committee stated that these inclinations toward false worship had to be stopped, but they made no definite suggestions as to how this was to be done. The report concluded by saying that Christians

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<sup>28</sup>Minutes of the Nineteenth Annual Session of the Baptist State Convention of Texas, held in October, 1866, at the Church at Independence, 24, and as cited in Carroll, Texas Baptists, 340-341.



must try to elevate the Negroes both morally and religiously.<sup>29</sup>

D. D. Foreman was chairman of the "Committee on the Religious Condition of the Colored Population" who reported to Tryon Association in 1867. They observed that the condition of the Negroes in some localities of the association was encouraging, while in other places the situation was bad. In those places where the colored people had men to preach to them regularly, they refrained from "the many extremes of error, into which they, as a race, seem prone to fall." The future was still uncertain, but pastors and missionaries were urged to continue their efforts to improve the spiritual, moral, and mental condition of the Negroes in the association.<sup>30</sup>

While some of the associations were opposed to Northern "intervention" in the effort to educate the Negro, Union Association took the opposite view. William C. Crane, J. L. Farquhar, James Garnett, and D. W. Carter formed the committee which reported to the Union

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<sup>29</sup>Minutes of the Twentieth Annual Session of the Texas Baptist State Convention, held in November, 1867, at the Gonzales Baptist Church, 22-23.

<sup>30</sup>Minutes of the Tenth Annual Session of the Tryon Baptist Association, held in October, 1867, at the Oak Shade Baptist Church, Tarkington's Prairie, Liberty County, 7-8.

Association in 1867. It said that religious instruction of the Negro was "vital to the welfare of civil society;" but the state was in such an impoverished condition it was difficult for the association to provide the necessary instruction. Anyone, including Northern societies, who would help in the work of giving religious instruction to the Negro was invited to do so, provided this work did not jeopardize "the inalienable rights and privileges of the Caucasian race." If Northern organizations would furnish the Southern Christians with the means for instructing the Negroes, the Southerners would put their entire strength into an effort to educate the colored population. The association passed a resolution urging the brethren to conduct day schools and Sabbath schools for the freedmen.<sup>31</sup>

In 1867 the Negro members of the Anderson church in Grimes County formed a church. The December minutes of the Anderson church indicated that letters of dismission would be granted the Negroes upon request.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>Minutes of the Twenty-eighth Annual Meeting of the Union Baptist Association, held in August 1867, at Providence Church, Chappell Hill, 5-6.

<sup>32</sup>Allen, Saga of Anderson, 105.

A "Report on the Church Relation of the Colored Population" was read to the Waco Association in 1867. The committee did not feel competent to advise on this difficult subject; but suggested that each church be governed by what appeared to be best for their local situation, while retaining all the moral and Christian influence over the Negro that they could. Preachers in the association were asked to preach the gospel to the colored people, to hold regular church conferences for them, and to assist them in adhering to gospel discipline.<sup>33</sup>

In 1868 F. M. Law, B. B. Baxter, J. G. Thomas, O. Brown, and E. F. Ross reported to the Baptist State Convention. This "Committee on the Religious Condition of the Colored Population" suggested that sympathy and aid be given the Negroes and recommended that the board of directors employ one or more missionaries for them.<sup>34</sup>

John B. Bass, S. H. Russell, and A. B. Corley

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<sup>33</sup>Minutes of the Eighth Annual Session of the Waco Baptist Association, held in August, 1867, at the church at Marlin, Falls County, 9.

<sup>34</sup>Minutes of the Twenty-first Annual Session of the Baptist State Convention of Texas, held in October, 1868, at the Independence Baptist Church, Washington County.

reported to the Cherokee Association in 1868. These men observed that the Negro Baptists in their association were in a deplorable state, and recommended that the Negroes be given religious instruction, since they would eventually separate from the established churches and form churches of their own.<sup>35</sup>

W. J. Morris was chairman of the committee which reported on the religious condition of the colored people in the Colorado Association in 1868. The committee recommended the formation of a special board to be called the "African Mission Board of the Colorado Association." It would be the responsibility of this board to control all matters pertaining to missionary labors among the Negroes in the association. This board was established, and it was located at La Grange.<sup>36</sup>

At the 1868 meeting of the Union Association the "Report on the Religious Condition of the Colored Population" was made by F. M. Law, F. Kiefer, and G. M. Kearse. These men reported that the Negroes were

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<sup>35</sup>Proceedings of the Seventeenth Annual Session of the Cherokee Baptist Association, held in October, 1868, at Ebenezer Church, Smith County, 8.

<sup>36</sup>Minutes of the Colorado Baptist Association, held in October, 1868, at Bethany Baptist Church, Fayette County, 8-10.



withdrawing into churches and associations of their own. The committee felt that this should be encouraged. It reported that some of the Negroes had been asking for the help of white men. A Negro Baptist association composed of approximately twenty churches had been formed in the area. These churches had several ministers who had been ordained and who possessed "a good degree of intelligence and some little education." The committee suggested that the executive board be instructed to appoint a missionary to work with the Negroes in the Union Association. The First Colored Baptist Church of Houston was removed from the rolls of the association.<sup>37</sup>

In June, 1868, the Baptist Church at Jasper granted letters of dismission to seventeen Negro members, who wished to form their own church. In their yearly report to the Bethlehem Association the minutes of the Jasper Baptist Church stated that the colored brethren had withdrawn from them and "on the second day of last August they were organized into a church of the Baptist faith and order called the first (sic.) Colored Baptist Church at Jasper by Elders E. L. Phelps and W. C. Southwell . . ."

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<sup>37</sup>Minutes of the Twenty-ninth Annual Meeting of the Union Baptist Association, held in September, 1868, at the Huntsville Church, Walker County, 4-5.

Phelps and Southwell were white preachers who assisted the Negroes in forming their church. Brother Belk (white) was appointed by the Negro church to make arrangements with the white church for the use of the church sanctuary by the Negroes. In March, 1868, the white church voted to let the Negro Baptist Church use the church building one Sunday a month until November, provided "they take care of the house and not damage it. Scour it out between now and then and conduct their meetings in good order."<sup>38</sup>

By 1868 it was evident to most of the white Baptists that the Negroes who had previously been a part of their churches were determined to form their own churches and associations. In some instances these Negro organizations would ask the white Baptists to help them, while on other occasions all help offered by the whites was refused. When given the opportunity, the white churches were ready to help the Negroes organize their churches.

M. V. Smith, M. J. Maxey, J. M. Sterling, and A. G. Haynes constituted the committee on the "Religious Condition of the Colored Population" which reported to the Baptist State Convention in 1869. They said that the more

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<sup>38</sup>Minutes of the First Baptist Church, Jasper, Jasper County, June 22, 1868, and March, 1869.

"thoughtful" Negroes were encouraging the white churches to provide instruction for them and their children. Religious work among the Negroes was proving to be the most "inviting field of Christian labor" which had been offered Texas Baptists. It was resolved that the pastors and missionaries preach to the Negroes when they could, and that the board of directors of the Baptist State Convention extend as much aid as was practical.<sup>39</sup>

B. Walker was chairman of the committee on the "Religious Condition of the Colored Population" which reported to the Waco Association in 1869. This committee called attention to the fact that an association of colored Baptists had been organized during the year and that the association looked very promising. Many of the Negroes from other denominations were becoming Baptists. The Eutaw Baptist Church, which was all Negro, had ordained one Negro minister. The ordination was performed with the concurrence of the Blue Ridge and Union Baptist Churches (white). In general the Negro Baptists had been very anxious to receive instruction in church matters. The committee stressed that the association must meet the

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<sup>39</sup>Minutes of the Twenty-second Annual Session of the Baptist State Convention of Texas, held in October, 1869, at the First Baptist Church, Galveston, 20-21.

needs of the Negroes immediately or they would become receptive to Catholicism.<sup>40</sup>

In 1869 the Trinity River Association heard a report on the colored population from a committee composed of F. M. Law, John Clabaugh, and J. W. Hargrove. The committee observed that in most instances the freedmen had withdrawn from the existing Baptist churches. They had formed one association which extended to the coast and occupied part of the territory in Trinity Association. The committee contended that separate churches and associations for the Negroes were required, because of the "peculiar state of things in the country." The white ministers and missionaries were asked to aid and encourage them in planning their churches.<sup>41</sup>

S. B. McJunkin, J. W. Barnes, and E. J. Ross noted that in some parts of Union Association the Negroes were organizing their churches according to the requirements stated in the scriptures and were requiring their preachers

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<sup>40</sup>Minutes of the Tenth Annual Session of the Waco Baptist Association, held in August, 1869, with the Cow Bayou Church, 5-6.

<sup>41</sup>Minutes of the Twenty-first Annual Session of the Trinity River Baptist Association, held in October, 1869, with the Bethel Church, 12.



to have some knowledge of the scriptures. This had not formerly been their practice. Too often their preachers had harangued them rather than preach to them, and superstition had been prevalent in the Negro churches. It was the opinion of the committee that prior to this time the Negro had shown no desire to receive instruction from the white brethren. In places they had withdrawn from the churches unceremoniously and had set up their own churches in a disorderly manner. The committee suggested that the situation could be remedied if the white brethren would try harder to help the Negroes. It asked, "Does it become necessary for us to visit their churches uninvited?" Their reply was, "If no people had received the gospel until asked for, who would have been saved?" The report closed by asking all Baptists to take immediate action to help their colored brethren.<sup>42</sup>

At Soda Lake Associational Meeting in 1869, E. P. Marshall and committee gave the report on the "Religious Condition of the Colored Population" within their association. They believed that the Negroes were "susceptible" to religious training as long as they were under

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<sup>42</sup>Minutes of the Thirteenth Annual Meeting of the Union Baptist Association, held in September, 1869, at Navasota Church, Grimes County, 2-3.

the care of the white ministers and churches, but in no instance were they able to set up and maintain churches without supervision from white men. The committee declared the withdrawal of the Negroes from the care of the established churches to be "one of the greatest evils resulting from their emancipation." It was recommended that the churches ordain no Negro minister who was uneducated in the principles of the Baptist faith; that the churches encourage the Negroes to organize their own church where there were enough of them to constitute a church and provided they could and would employ the services of an ordained minister; and that the churches retain the Negroes in the established churches where there were not enough of them to form a separate church.<sup>43</sup>

Brother Riley Williamson, a Negro, was licensed to preach by the Caldwell Baptist Church on the fourth Sunday in May, 1869. He was commissioned to spend his time in "preaching and exhortation among the Colored People." The white Baptist church advised the Negro Baptist church to enforce discipline, hold conferences, and subject

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<sup>43</sup>Proceedings of the Twenty-second Annual Session of the Soda Lake Association, held in September, 1869, with Walnut Creek Church, 12.

themselves to the assistance and advice of the members of the white Baptist church.<sup>44</sup>

V. C. Renfro, L. Sparkman, and John Eason reported to the Cherokee Association in 1869. The report was read but was laid on the table sine die. The association did not consider themselves responsible for the welfare of the Negro people.<sup>45</sup>

St. Paul's Baptist Church, a Negro church located at Victoria, petitioned for admittance into the Colorado Association in 1869. The matter was referred to a committee consisting of P. B. Chandler, J. I. Loudermilk, and S. C. Orchard. These men said that "the intermixture of white and colored churches in the same Association is entirely inexpedient." Since the Negroes preferred to withdraw from the existing churches and form their own churches, the committee felt that "it would be best for them to form separate Associations," as was the practice of the Negro Baptists in the North. The association

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<sup>44</sup>H. P. Cobb, History of First Baptist Church Caldwell, Texas, 1843-1943, 13.

<sup>45</sup>Proceedings of the Eighteenth Annual Session of the Cherokee Baptist Association, 1869, 3.

adopted the report, thus refusing to admit the Negro Baptist church.<sup>46</sup>

In 1868 there were three hundred fifty-four Negro members in the churches of Colorado Association. In 1869, there were one hundred eighty-six Negroes, and by 1871, there were no Negroes remaining in the churches of the association.<sup>47</sup>

By the end of 1869, a majority of the Negroes had left the established churches and were attending all Negro churches. They had organized one association and had some "fairly good" Negro preachers. The white Baptists helped them whenever possible by giving them counsel, becoming pastors of their churches, sending teachers and preachers to them, and by paying the salaries of competent Negro preachers.<sup>48</sup>

As soon as the Negroes were freed they began to leave the established Baptist churches and form all Negro

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<sup>46</sup>Minutes of the Colorado Baptist Association, held in October, 1869, at Hebron Baptist Church, 1-3.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., 16, and Minutes of the Colorado Baptist Association, held in 1868, 17, and Minutes of the Twenty-fourth Annual Session of the Colorado Baptist Association, held in October, 1871, at the Osage Baptist Church, Colorado County, 14.

<sup>48</sup>Carroll, Texas Baptists, 349-350.



churches. The associations recommended that the local churches encourage the Negroes to remain in the churches with the whites, and that the white preachers and missionaries continue special services for their religious instruction. Some associational minutes mentioned that the "unsettled conditions" made it difficult to determine exactly what course should be followed in order to help the Negroes, but a majority of the associations agreed that it was still the responsibility of the whites to present the gospel to the Negroes.

The white Baptists were unsuccessful in persuading the Negro Baptists to stay in the established churches. Associational minutes indicate that the churches formed by the Negroes were based on superstition rather than on the scriptures, and that the Negro preachers were often illiterate and uninformed on Baptist doctrine. The whites felt that they should guide the Negroes into a better understanding of the scriptures and Baptist doctrine, but often the Negroes refused to accept help. By 1868 some of the Negroes were demonstrating a desire to receive religious instruction. Each year brought better relations between the two groups of Baptists and it appeared that the Negro Baptists were preparing to accept more instruction on religious matters from the white Baptists.

## CHAPTER V

### WORK BY THE BAPTISTS AMONG TEXAS NEGROES THROUGH THE END OF RECONSTRUCTION, 1870-1873

The convention and association minutes of the early 1870's record a continuation of the work started by the white Baptists at the time the Negroes left the established churches. Regardless of the attitudes of the Negro, the white Baptists persisted in accepting responsibility for their spiritual and moral enlightenment.

In 1870 the Baptist State Convention heard a report on the religious condition of the colored population given by a committee composed of S. G. Mullens, R. B. Jarmen, W. H. Crank, J. E. Paxton, and B. B. Phipp. The Negro was described as "impressionable and imitative" with strong religious feelings. The committee stated that it was their duty, "not merely as the white and superior race, but as Baptists" to train the Negro in the "pure paths of Christianity." There were no resolutions made.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Minutes of the Twenty-third Annual Session of the Baptist State Convention of Texas, held in October, 1870, with Brenham Baptist Church, 9-10.

Associational missionary J. S. Lambert organized two Negro churches in the Central Baptist Association in 1870.<sup>2</sup>

J. L. Miles was chairman of the "Committee on the Religious Condition of the Colored Population" which reported to the Central Baptist Association in 1870. It was the committee's contention that any action on the part of the whites would be usurping the rights of the colored brethren and their churches, therefore no resolutions were made.<sup>3</sup>

The Cherokee Association reversed its attitude toward the Negroes. The 1869 report had said that the association was not responsible for the Negroes, but in the 1870 report the religious condition of the colored population was considered to be of great importance and a subject that required immediate action. The report said, "Let the dead past bury its dead, let us press forward, guided by divine truth." The "Committee on the Religious Condition of the Colored Population" felt that it was

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<sup>2</sup>Minutes of the Twenty-third Annual Session of the Central Baptist Association, held in September, 1872, with the New Hope Church, Sabine County, 5.

<sup>3</sup>Minutes of the Central Baptist Association, held in September, 1870, with Corinth Church, San Augustine County, 5.

their duty to deal with the Negro as "an accountable and responsible being," to give him the gospel, and to do what they could to elevate him as a "moral and intellectual being." The following recommendations were submitted:

1. The associational missionaries and preachers were to instruct the Negro at every opportunity, because there were no competent Negroes to instruct their people.

2. The Negroes should be required to support the missionaries who labored with them.

3. The churches were instructed to ordain only those colored preachers who possessed all the qualifications required by the scriptures.<sup>4</sup>

In 1870 the Colorado Association voted to discontinue the African Mission Board; because it could not agree as to what should be done and could not collect the funds necessary to continue this work.<sup>5</sup>

Martin Haggard was chairman of the committee which reported to Trinity River Association in 1870. The report

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<sup>4</sup>Proceedings of the Nineteenth Annual Session of the Cherokee Baptist Association, held in October, 1870, with Myrtle Spring Church, Cherokee County, 8.

<sup>5</sup>Minutes of the Colorado Baptist Association, held in October, 1870, at Enon Baptist Church, 5-6.



recognized that since the Negro was accountable unto God, and since the Christians were commissioned to "preach the gospel to every creature," it was their duty as Baptists to care for the colored race. Two resolutions were made. First, the pastors and missionaries were advised to preach to the Negroes whenever possible, giving special instruction in the doctrine and discipline of the Baptist Church. Second, the churches were to give encouragement and support to their ministers because "Catholicism and other superstitions" were becoming so strong.<sup>6</sup>

T. R. McGrorey and committee reported on the religious condition of the colored people in the Tryon Association in 1870. The committee was concerned with the threat of Catholicism to the Negroes. They reported that the Catholics were training colored priests and had Catholic teachers ready to teach in the Negro schools. The association recognized the merit of having Negroes preach to their own people and authorized the executive board of the association to hire Brother Willis Hogue, a Negro preacher, as missionary to the colored people in

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<sup>6</sup>Minutes of the Twenty-second Annual Session of the Trinity River Baptist Association, held in October, 1870, with Mount Pisgah Baptist Church, Freestone County, 8-9.

the Tryon Association. Ministers and members were urged to co-operate with the colored missionary.<sup>7</sup>

The committee on the "Religious Condition of the Colored People" which reported to Union Association in 1870 was composed of J. E. Paxton, Jonas Johnston, and V. H. Pace. Its report began with a brief history of the Negro's efforts to form separate churches and associations, and recalled that after the war most of the Negroes left the existing churches and formed all Negro churches pastored by Negro preachers. In most cases their preachers had not been qualified and confusion had been prevalent in their churches. The colored people had been misled by men who had political aspirations and who had organized "loyal leagues" rather than churches of Christ. These men had promoted strife and prejudice to the extent that it had been impossible for the Southern white ministers to preach the gospel to the Negroes. The report acknowledged that this situation was changing, because there were some of the Southern white ministers who preached to the Negro congregations. The committee suggested that the white Baptists teach the Negroes the

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<sup>7</sup>Minutes of the Thirteenth Annual Session of the Tryon Association held in October, 1870, at Mount Ariel Baptist Church, Livingston, Polk County, 8-9.

discipline and doctrines of the Baptist Church; that they persuade the Negroes to establish Bible schools, to build school houses, and to hire qualified teachers to educate their children; that they distribute Bibles, Testaments, and tracts to the colored brethren; and that they encourage the more intelligent Negroes to take advantage of the school provided for them by the American Baptist Home Mission Society.

The association passed the following resolutions:

1. That the missionary board hire capable men to work with the Negroes.
2. That the ministers and laymen work with the Negroes to accomplish the suggestions mentioned above.
3. That the report be discontinued under the name "Religious Condition of the Colored People" and be incorporated into the report on "Destitution."<sup>8</sup>

In 1870 several Negro churches applied for membership in the Waco Association. A committee consisting of Z. N. Morrell, R. C. Burleson, F. F. Bloodworth, and R. More was appointed to consider the matter. These men

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<sup>8</sup>Minutes of the Thirty-first Annual Meeting of the Union Baptist Association, held in September, 1870, with the Independence Church, 16-17.

advised the association to accept the Negro churches since they were orthodox and orderly. They recommended that the Negro churches be organized into an association of their own as soon as possible and that "the most cordial feeling and correspondence be maintained" between the white and colored brethren. The moderator appointed Z. N. Morrell, J. V. Wright, and R. W. Kinnard as a committee to carry out the recommendation.

T. F. Lockett, W. M. Mathews, R. M. Turner, and J. Cornelison gave the "Report on Colored Missions" to the Waco Association in 1870. They recommended that a missionary be appointed to visit the Negro churches to aid them in setting their churches in order and to preach to them. The matter was turned over to Z. N. Morrell and committee.<sup>9</sup>

At the 1871 meeting of the Baptist State Convention F. M. Law and committee called attention to the fact that the Negro constituted a large and important element in the state. They maintained that in some sections of the state the Negroes had been willing to accept the religious instruction of the white ministers, while in other

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<sup>9</sup>Minutes of the Eleventh Annual Session of the Waco Baptist Association, held in August, 1870, with Salem Church, 2-4, 13.



places they had refused to accept help. This refusal had probably been brought about by a few politicians working for partisan purposes. Baptists needed to stand "above and independent of partisan political issues." They should preach Jesus and teach the principles of Christianity to the Negroes. The convention collected \$12.50 to help pay for the Negro church in Bryan.<sup>10</sup>

J. B. Henderson, J. S. Bledsoe, W. A. Bradford, F. M. Mount, J. H. L. Wesley, and John Greene made up the committee which reported on the religious condition of the colored people to the Cherokee Association in 1871. The committee decided to erase this subject from their books and to disregard any responsibility toward the Negroes, but after reconsidering it realized that this was a missionary enterprise they could not neglect. The committee testified that these immortal souls were "destitute" of correct religious training and if left to themselves, they would soon degenerate into formal, ceremonial worshippers. It was recommended that the associational missionaries instruct the Negroes, and that

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<sup>10</sup> Minutes of the Twenty-fourth Annual Session of the Baptist State Convention of Texas, held in September and October, 1871, at Bryan Baptist Church, 11.

the colored people be encouraged to help support these missionaries.<sup>11</sup>

The report on the religious condition of the colored people was submitted to the Trinity River Association by J. G. Thomas, Z. J. Anderson, and W. D. Anderson. This committee asserted that the religious and social condition of the Negroes was deplorable. The Negro Baptists knew nothing of church policy and discipline. It was only occasionally that a Negro could be found who was willing to learn the doctrines of the Baptist church and then teach these doctrines to other Negroes. The associational ministers and missionaries were asked to preach to the Negroes and to teach them "the principles of our holy religion, and of church orders."<sup>12</sup>

In 1871 the meeting of the Tryon Association heard a report by D. D. Foreman, John Lee, and W. C. Meece. Their report related that the Negroes in the association had shown no advancement in religious knowledge during

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<sup>11</sup>Proceedings of the Twentieth Annual Session of the Cherokee Baptist Association, held in October, 1871, at Dover Church, Smith County, 11.

<sup>12</sup>Minutes of the Twenty-third Annual Session of the Trinity River Baptist Association, held in October, 1871, at Prairie Grove Baptist Church, Limestone County, 12.

the past year. There were numerous "so-called" Baptist churches and ministers, but these groups were entirely illiterate and used a "wild, ungoverned imagination" as a basis for their religion. The Negroes believed that their ministers were inspired by God to preach by visions and dreams. They had separated from the white Baptists in their method of worship and in doctrine. There were only two regularly organized Negro Baptist churches in the association with authorized colored ministers. A resolution was passed requesting every minister in the association to hold services on Sunday evenings for the colored people and to encourage the Negroes to have their children taught to read the Bible.<sup>13</sup>

In 1871 R. P. Snelling, J. A. Rentz, and Moses Warner maintained that the Negroes in Waco Association were not "ripe to receive labors" of the white brethren, but that the association must continue to work for their good. The committee recommended that the churches in the association do everything possible to show the Negroes that the Baptists had a sincere interest in their welfare. Whenever the Negroes requested aid, the whites should help

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<sup>13</sup>Minutes of the Tryon Baptist Association, held in October, 1871, with the Bethel Baptist Church, Louisiana Settlement, Polk County, 4-5.

them in organizing their churches and then continue to guide them in church matters. A special committee was to be appointed to carry out the recommendation, and the associational missionary was to be permitted to assist the Negroes, provided they showed a desire to be instructed.<sup>14</sup>

According to the report at the Baptist State Convention in 1872, the Negroes were imputed to be "religious," but their religion was a "mixture of superstition and presumption, with some grains of truth interspersed." It was assumed that there were true followers of Christ among them, but most of them were in a state of religious retrogression. The convention felt that something should be done to help the Negroes, but no resolutions were made.<sup>15</sup>

R. W. Billups gave the "Report on Colored Population" to the Red River Association in 1872. The report testified to the fact that there was a large number of

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<sup>14</sup>Minutes of the Twelfth Annual Session of the Waco Baptist Association, held in August 1871, with the East Waco Church, 7.

<sup>15</sup>Minutes of the Twenty-fifth Annual Session of the Baptist State Convention of Texas, held in October, 1872, at the Independence Baptist Church, 15.



Negroes in the association and that they would be "an element of power for good or evil" depending on whether or not they were educated. The following resolutions were made:

1. It was the association's duty to God, the Negro, and themselves to evangelize the colored population.

2. The association was to encourage every "laudable" means of giving the Negroes the pure word of God.

3. The ministers and laymen in the Red River Association were to assist the Negroes in the organizational meeting of a Negro association which was to be held at the Clarksville Baptist Church the following Thursday.<sup>16</sup>

W. H. Parks, W. D. Anderson, and M. Williams reported on the religious condition of the colored population to the Trinity River Association in 1872. The committee was concerned with the element of superstition that was growing in the Negro churches and with the fact that their preachers were poorly educated. They were "blind leaders of the blind." There would either have to be a change in their present teachers or more training given them "in the way of the Lord." The committee recommended

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<sup>16</sup>Red River Baptist Association, held in September, 1872, at the Baptist Church at Clarkesville, 12.

that the pastors within the association preach to the Negroes at least one time each month.<sup>17</sup>

W. J. Galloway and B. F. Ellis, Jr. observed that there had been no improvement in the religious condition of the Negroes in the Tryon Association. The Negroes preferred their own preachers and had no desire to receive instruction from the whites. They showed little true and genuine piety and had many mistaken ideas. The Negro preachers appeared to be the most ignorant and illiterate of all. No recommendations were made.<sup>18</sup>

In Waco Association in 1872, a committee composed of A. H. Jackson, R. W. Turner, and W. J. C. Graham suggested that they not wait for the Negroes to request aid on spiritual matters but call for volunteers to work with them. The volunteers were to appeal to the whites and the Negroes for financial support. If necessary, this missionary endeavor was to be financed entirely by the whites; but the committee felt confident that once the Negroes

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<sup>17</sup>Minutes of the Twenty-fourth Session of the Trinity River Baptist Association, held in October, 1872, with Bedai Church, Grimes County, 9.

<sup>18</sup>Minutes of the Fifteenth Annual Session of the Tryon Baptist Association, held in October, 1872, with Mount Capers Baptist Church, San Jacinto County, 7.

realized the importance of the work, they would contribute liberally to its support.<sup>19</sup>

The committee on the "Religious Condition of the Colored Population" which reported to the Baptist State Convention in 1873 consisted of R. H. Taliaferro, A. J. Holt, T. J. Pilgrim, and J. W. D. Creath. The report expressed embarrassment that for the past several years they had not established any missions or schools for the Negroes, nor had they provided missionaries for them. There were no funds available for these purposes, therefore it would have to be the responsibility of each minister and local church member to give the colored people aid and encouragement and to tell them about Jesus whenever possible.<sup>20</sup>

In 1873 the Trinity River Association passed a resolution asking the ministers to preach to the Negroes and to furnish them with Bibles and Baptist literature.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>Minutes of the Thirteenth Annual Session of the Waco Baptist Association, held in August, 1872, with Blue Ridge Church, Falls County, 7.

<sup>20</sup>Minutes of the Twenty-sixth Annual Session of the Baptist State Convention of Texas, held in November, 1873, with the Austin Baptist Church, 5.

<sup>21</sup>Minutes of the Twenty-fifth Annual Session of the Trinity River Baptist Association, held in November, 1873, at the Cotton Wood Church, Bryan, 5.

The Tryon Association acknowledged that education was the only cure for the ignorance that was prevalent among the Negroes, but no definite recommendations were made by the association.<sup>22</sup>

Z. N. Morrell, D. K. Moreland, M. V. Smith, J. W. D. Creath, and B. B. Baxter formed the committee on the "Religious Condition of the Colored Population," which reported to the Union Association in 1873. The committee realized the Negro had "the same relation to God and to us as other nationalities," therefore it was necessary for the white Christians to help the Negroes every way they could. The committee asked the missionaries and pastors in the association to help the colored brethren whenever the Negroes permitted them to do so.<sup>23</sup>

The pastor of the colored Baptist church at Brenham attended the Union Association meeting in 1873, and after the report on the colored population was given, the Negro preacher was asked to make a statement on "the spiritual condition of his race and its churches." He

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<sup>22</sup>Minutes of the Sixteenth Annual Session of the Tryon Baptist Association, held in October, 1873, with the Moscow Baptist Church, Moscow, Polk County.

<sup>23</sup>Minutes of the Thirty-third Annual Meeting of the Union Baptist Association, held in August, 1873, with Brenham Church, Washington County, 14.



gave his report in a "becoming and respectful manner" to the satisfaction of the associational body.<sup>24</sup>

A colored preacher by the name of Brother Denson and other members of his church were given permission to observe the proceedings of the Waco Associational meeting "for the purposes of their instruction."<sup>25</sup>

J. W. Speight and committee recommended that the ministers, deacons, and brethren in Waco Association use every occasion to give proper instruction to the Negroes and to convince the Negroes that the white Baptists were interested in their welfare.<sup>26</sup>

The committee on the "Religious Condition of the Colored Population" at the Neches River Association in 1873 noted that there had been definite signs of improvement in the religious condition of the Negroes. They were accepting the Bible as a basis for their religious beliefs rather than relying on old customs and traditions based on superstition. The colored brethren had organized an association called the Palestine Association. Their

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

<sup>25</sup>Minutes of the Fourteenth Annual Meeting of the Waco Baptist Association, held in August, 1873, with the Marlin Church, Falls County, 13.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid.

association consisted of Negro Baptist churches in Anderson and Houston counties, and portions of Henderson, Trinity, and Polk counties.<sup>27</sup>

The associational minutes indicate that the white churches were anxious to assist their colored brethren in church matters, and by 1873 there was a growing desire on the part of the Negro Baptists to accept assistance from the whites. One of the most outstanding examples of cooperation between the Negro Baptists and the white Baptists was in the formation of the "Texas Freedmen's Missionary Baptist Convention," the first Negro Baptist state convention in Texas.

On December 13, 1873, a group of Negro men representing forty-one Negro Baptist churches met at the Friendship Baptist Church in Navasota, for the purpose of forming an all Negro Baptist state convention. White ministers who were present at the Navasota meeting included J. B. Link, Jonas Johnston, F. M. Law, M. V. Smith, J. W. Terrell, W. H. Robert, Allen Thompson, Ira M. Camp, Lewis Brook, Joseph Lawson, G. W. Solomon, and Henderson Bonner. Although the colored brethren were in positions of leadership, the white men were invited to take part in the

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<sup>27</sup>Carroll, Texas Baptists, 355.

proceedings of the convention. J. B. Link was asked to address the convention, and he made a short talk on the importance of the work to be undertaken by the group. He was also asked to record the proceedings of the convention in his paper. Joseph Lawson was appointed to the committee on credentials and was placed on the board of directors. F. M. Law was appointed chairman of the business committee to be assisted by W. H. Robert and Jonas Johnston, white preachers, and by J. J. Reinhardt and Johnson Rice, Negro preachers.

The convention voted to hold ministers' institutes to train their preachers. The board of directors asked Elders F. M. Law, I. S. Campbell, J. B. Link, W. H. Roberts, W. C. Crane, and H. Howard to prepare lectures for the first institute. All these preachers were white except I. S. Campbell.<sup>28</sup>

At the Baptist State Convention in 1874 Brothers Law, Link, Smith, and Johnston reviewed the work which had been done by the Negroes in having organized the following: a state convention with a constitution on the same order as that of the Baptist State Convention, a Ministers' Institute to teach preachers the basic doctrines

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<sup>28</sup>Griggs, "Proceedings of the First Session of the Baptist Missionary and Educational Convention of Texas," entire pamphlet of approximately 14 pages.

of the Baptist church, and a "school of high grade" for the education of the colored ministry and other Negro youths. The report recalled that the Negroes had invited numerous white men to attend the organizational meeting of the Negro state convention, and then they had asked several white preachers to instruct the Negroes at ministers' institutes. The committee suggested that the white Baptists be prepared to meet with the Negro Baptists in order to counsel and advise them on church matters, if such counsel was sought, but it would be "impolite to press our advice, counsel, or other aid, uninvited, upon them."<sup>29</sup>

The formation of the ministers' institutes was described by Carroll as having been "the mightiest of all human agencies for the uplift of the colored preachers." These institutes were led by such outstanding Baptist preachers as J. B. Link, F. M. Law, W. H. Robert, R. C. and R. B. Burleson, W. H. Robert, B. H. Carroll, R. C. Buckner, and William H. Howard. These men would spend days teaching and training the Negro preachers who attended the institutes.

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<sup>29</sup>Minutes of the Twenty-seventh Annual Session of the Baptist State Convention of Texas, held in October, 1874, at the First Baptist Church, Galveston, 7.



Carroll proclaims that the "patience and persistence" shown by the white Texas Baptists toward the Negroes during the "trying conditions" of the Civil War "are things at which to marvel." The Negroes' attitude toward the whites changed as the Reconstruction period ended<sup>30</sup> and as the number of ministers' institutes increased. They regained their confidence "in the real friendship of the Southern whites, especially in the unselfishness of their religious work among them."<sup>31</sup>

During the first three years of the 1870's there were places in which the Negro Baptists continued to be resistant to the assistance offered by the white Baptists, but there was a desire among many of the Negro Baptists to have the whites help them organize churches, set their churches in order, ordain their preachers, and instruct them in the Bible and in Baptist doctrine. Practically all the association minutes evidenced a willingness of the member churches to help the Negro Baptists, provided they were given the opportunity.

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<sup>30</sup>Reconstruction ended in Texas on January 17, 1874, when Richard Coke replaced E. J. Davis as governor. Webb (ed.), Handbook of Texas, II, 446-447.

<sup>31</sup>Carroll, Texas Baptists, 356-357.

Probably the most significant event during this period occurred at the first Negro Baptist state convention at which time the Negroes voted to hold ministers' institutes to educate the colored preachers. White ministers were asked to teach in the institutes. The formation and continuation of the ministers' institutes appears to have been a major factor in bringing the white and Negro Baptists into a more co-operative spirit in church affairs.

## CHAPTER VI

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Texas Baptists began to show an interest in the spiritual welfare of the Negroes as soon as the first Baptist churches in the state were organized. At that time the Negroes worshipped with the whites and were gladly received as members of the churches. Many churches had special afternoon or evening services which were specifically for the instruction of their colored members. Some of the slave-owners built church houses on their plantations and hired preachers to preach to their Negroes.

At the organizational meeting of the Baptist State Convention of Texas in 1848 it was recommended that the sending of missionaries to preach to the slaves should be one of the leading objectives of the state body. By providing missionaries, the Negroes in Texas would be converted and the foundation would be laid for sending the gospel to Africa, where many American Negroes were returning as missionaries. The recommendation of the state convention was carried out by such men as Noah Hill and

A. Buffington, who served as missionaries to the colored people for many years. The work of these men and others like them was reinforced by associational missionaries and local preachers, most of whom tried to have regular services for the Negroes in their vicinity.

Association and convention minutes proclaimed that slavery was scriptural and asserted that the duties of slaves to their master and master to his slaves were recorded in the New Testament. The scriptures required the master to provide "the means of salvation" for his slaves, and required the slave to submit to his master. According to the minutes the slaves who became Christians not only received eternal life, but were happier with their temporal life and became more obedient to their masters.

Immediately preceding and during the Civil War the minutes referred to "northern fanatics" and "wicked incendiaries" who were exciting the Negroes and impeding the efforts of the Baptists in their attempt to Christianize the slaves. People in some of the communities felt that the Negroes should not be permitted to congregate for public meetings because of the "unsettled conditions," but those who reported on the religious condition of the colored people encouraged Baptists to continue having their regular worship services for the servants. In order to



prevent disturbances it was suggested that these services be attended by a group of white men who would aid in dispersing the crowd.

During the four years of the Civil War, many of the missionaries and preachers were either in the army or serving as missionaries to the Confederate forces, and most of the money designated for missions went to those who were ministering to the soldiers. The preachers who remained at home were urged to continue presenting the gospel to the Negroes at every opportunity. The general contention was that the Southerners had received the benefits of the Negroes' labor, therefore they were responsible for leading the Negroes to Christ. If the Southerners did not present the gospel to the servants, in all probability the Negroes would not be saved. Along with the message of salvation the preachers were to explain to the Negroes that the Southerners were their true friends and that they must not be disillusioned by the false promises of the "Yankees of the North." Texas Baptists overcame many difficulties in order to continue their religious work among the colored population until the end of the war.

In the first associational and convention meetings following the war the major question was whether the

Negroes should be encouraged to remain in the churches with the whites or to separate and form all Negro churches. Most Texas Baptists felt that the Negroes were not well enough informed in Baptist doctrine or literate enough to have worship services without the aid of the white men; therefore, the whites encouraged the freedmen to remain in the established churches. It was soon evident to the whites that the majority of the Negroes wanted churches and preachers of their own. At this point the whites offered to assist the Negroes in organizing their churches. In some areas this help was readily accepted, but in many places the Negroes preferred to organize their churches without the advice of the whites. The white Baptists were appalled at the superstition and ignorance which prevailed in a great number of the Negro churches but were unable to correct the condition.

When the political situation in Texas began to improve so did the relationship between the whites and the Negroes. In 1873 several white preachers were invited to assist the Negroes in the formation of the first Negro Baptist state convention. At this convention the Negro preachers asked the whites to aid them in holding ministers' institutes to educate the colored ministry. The whites spent many days in training and teaching Negro

preachers. These ministers' institutes were a major factor in restoring an amiable relationship between the two groups of Baptists.

Texas Baptists showed patience and persistence in their religious work among the Negroes from 1836 to 1873 and consistently demonstrated a genuine concern in their spiritual welfare.

The data collected for this study indicate that the religious work done by Texas Baptists among the Negroes in Texas from 1836 to 1873 included preaching the gospel, instruction in the scriptures, providing missionaries for them, building houses of worship for them, assisting them in forming their own churches, ordaining Negro ministers, and holding ministers' institutes to educate the Negro ministry.

Before and during the Civil War the white Baptists showed considerable concern for the spiritual welfare of the Negroes in Texas. They used the Bible to substantiate slavery and as a guide to the relation of masters and servants. The scriptures used required Christian masters to present the "means of salvation" to their slaves and instructed Christian servants to be obedient to their masters.

After the war the white Baptists did not consider the majority of Negro Baptists well enough informed in church doctrine and procedure to organize and operate churches of their own, therefore they encouraged the Negroes to remain in the established churches.

When the Negroes formed separate churches the whites expressed concern for the superstition and ignorance which prevailed in many of the Negro Baptist churches and continued to show their concern for the spiritual welfare of the colored people by constantly offering to guide the Negroes in organizing their churches and in setting their churches in order. In the opinion of the white Baptists the Negro Baptists needed more assistance in spiritual affairs as freedmen than they had needed as slaves.

The concern which Texas Baptists had for the spiritual welfare of the Negroes in Texas was expressed in the association and convention minutes and demonstrated by the patience and persistence with which they worked among the Negroes.

In order to form a comprehensive perspective of the work done by Texas Baptists among the Negroes in Texas



between 1830 and 1873, further study is needed in the minutes of the associational meetings of Brazos River, Judson, and Sabine associations; records of the Negro associational meetings between 1866 and 1873, local church records, and records kept by individual plantation owners of the Baptist faith.

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1865-1871.

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1860, 1865, 1866, 1868-1870.

Red River Association - 1858, 1872.

Soda Lake Association - 1869.

Trinity River Association - 1855-1859, 1861, 1863-1866,  
1869-1873.

Tryon Association - 1860, 1862, 1864-1867, 1870-1874.

Union Association - 1855, 1857-1870, 1873.

Waco Association - 1861-1867, 1869-1873.

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Minutes of the First Baptist Church, Jasper, Texas.

## APPENDIX

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

Baines, George W., Sr. was editor of Texas Baptists' first newspaper, The Texas Baptist, from its founding in 1855 until 1861. He held numerous pastorates, served as a missionary, taught natural science at Baylor University, was president of the board of trustees of Baylor Female College, and served as president of Baylor University. Carroll, Texas Baptists, 135, 239, 276-277, 280-281, 305-308, 393-394, 467, and 535.

Barnes, General J. W. was converted in 1847 and was made a deacon within a year. He was treasurer of the Baptist State Convention from the time of its organization in 1848 until he joined the Confederate Army. He was treasurer of Union Association and Baylor University. Barnes was probably the most effective individual promoter of The Texas Baptist and the Texas Baptist Herald. He assumed principal responsibility in organizing the International and Great Northern Railroad. Carroll, Texas Baptists, 252-253.

Baylor, Robert Emmett Bledsoe was born in Kentucky in 1793. He served in the War of 1812, was a member of the Kentucky legislature and of the U. S. Congress before coming to Texas in 1839. During the existence of the Republic, Baylor served on the Supreme Court as judge of the Third Judicial District. He was a member of the Constitutional Convention following the annexation of Texas. With the help of Tryon and Huckins, Baylor prepared and secured the passage of the act establishing Baylor University. Baylor held court by day and preached the gospel by night. He never accepted payment for his preaching. During the period of the Republic, Baylor was considered Texas Baptists' most outstanding personality. Cox (ed.), Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists, I, 150, and as cited in Elliott (ed.), Centennial Story of Texas Baptists, 31-32, and as cited in Carroll, Texas Baptists, 194-197.



Buffington, A. came to Texas from Tennessee in 1835, served throughout the Texas Revolution, and participated in the Battle of San Jacinto. He was a member of the group who formed the first Missionary Baptist church in Texas. Buffington was ordained after coming to Texas and was the second missionary to be appointed by Texas Baptists. He started preaching to the Negroes before the Civil War and continued working with them until his death in 1879. Carroll says that Buffington's labors among the Negroes were "abundant and fruitful" and were given entirely free until the day of his death. Carroll, Texas Baptists, 63, and 256.

Campbell, I. S. was born in Russillville, Kentucky, in 1815. He was converted in 1836 and began preaching the same year. Campbell was ordained in Canada in 1855. In 1866 he was sent to Texas as a missionary to the Negroes by the Ohio Convention. Campbell organized the first Negro Baptist association in Texas, formed the first colored presbytery in Texas to ordain a Negro Baptist preacher, and led in the formation of the Negro Baptist state convention. This prominent Negro is known as the "Father of the Negro Baptists of Texas." A. R. Griggs, "Proceedings of the First Session of the Baptist Missionary and Educational Convention of Texas," entire pamphlet, and as cited in Jordan, Negro Baptist History U.S.A. 1750-1930, 14, and as cited in Cox (ed.), Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists, II, 1378.

Crane, William Carey was born in Virginia in 1816. He was educated at Columbian College, Washington, D. C. and Madison University, New York. Crane came to Texas in 1863 to be president of Baylor University and was known in Texas as an outstanding educator. He led in establishing Sam Houston Normal Institute and the University of Texas, and in reorganizing the public school system following Reconstruction. At Mrs. Houston's request Crane wrote the life of General Sam Houston. Elliot (ed.), Centennial Story of Texas Baptists, 98, 153-156, and as cited in Cox (ed.), Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists, I, 328.

Cartmel, H. R. came to Texas from Tennessee in 1835. He was one of the Baptists who was in the organization of the Old Washington Church in 1837. Cartmel is frequently mentioned in the early Baptist records. Carroll, Texas Baptists, 64.

Chandler, F. B. came to Texas from Georgia in 1846 under appointment of the Domestic Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. He went to La Grange as pastor. Carroll described him as a sane, safe, sound, sweet spirited, and a spiritual preacher who was of such a quiet nature that he did not command the attention of the historian. Elliot (ed.), Centennial Story, 34-35, and as cited in Carroll.

Creath, J. W. D. came to Texas in 1846, under the appointment of the Southern Baptist Domestic Mission Board. In 1851 he became "General Agent" for the Baptist State Convention in which capacity he preached, organized churches, and raised money for church buildings and missions. Creath was vice-president of the Southern Baptist Convention, president of the Texas Baptist Convention, and president of the board of trustees of Baylor University. Carroll, Texas Baptists, and as cited in Cox (ed.), Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists, I, 330.

Farquhar, J. F. was a Baptist layman who served as the first treasurer of the Education Society and who was one of the original members of the board of trustees for Baylor University. Carroll, Texas Baptists, 229-230, and 238.

Garrett, Hosea came to Texas from Alabama in 1842. He was successful as a preacher and a farmer. Garrett probably gave more money to Baylor during the time it was located at Independence than did any other individual. For over forty years Garrett was a member of the board of trustees of Baylor and was president of the board most of these years. Carroll, Texas Baptists, 202-203, and as cited in Elliot (ed.), Centennial Story of Texas Baptists, 86-87.



Green, Robert came to Texas from Tennessee in 1838 just in time to help Reed organize Union Church. He moved farther west and assisted in the organization of the old Plum Grove Church in 1839. Records indicate that Green settled on the Colorado River and affiliated almost exclusively with the anti-missionary Baptists. Carroll, Texas Baptists, 113.

Haynes, A. G. came to Texas from Mississippi in 1851. He was a member of the church at Independence and was on the first board of trustees at Baylor University. Haynes was sought after by the evangelists of his day as a singer for revivals. He owned a number of slaves, and his name appears repeatedly on committees reporting on the religious condition of the colored population. In 1856 Haynes was elected to the State Legislature. Elliot (ed.), Centennial Story of Texas Baptists, 249, and as cited in Carroll, Texas Baptists, 507-513.

Hill, Noah came to Texas from Georgia in 1846 under appointment of the Southern Baptist Convention's Domestic Mission Board. He was stationed at Matagorda where he was to devote his time to evangelizing the Negroes. Elliot (ed.), Centennial Story of Texas Baptists, 34, 36, and 90.

Hillyer, John F. was born in Georgia and educated at the University of Georgia. He gave up medicine to preach. Hillyer came to Texas as a missionary in 1847. He taught mathematics and natural science at Baylor during the Civil War. After the war Hillyer pastored the church at Galveston, and he taught and preached in Milam, Burleson, Travis, and Bastrop counties. Elliot (ed.), Centennial Story of Texas Baptists, 145.

Hooks, Forrest was born in Alabama in 1835. At fourteen he was brought to Texas. His master taught him to read and spell, and he learned to write while driving his master's children to school. Hooks was converted in 1855, and immediately started a "praise meeting." He continued to preach to the slaves and through his efforts many were saved. Besides being a preacher, Hooks was the first colored teacher, school director,

magistrate, and county commissioner in his part of the state. He accumulated considerable property and wealth. A. W. Pegues, Our Baptist Ministers and Schools, 270-271.

Horton, A. C. came to Texas from Alabama in 1835. He served with Fannin and Houston in the Revolution, was elected to the first Congress during the Republic, was elected lieutenant-governor with Governor J. P. Henderson, and served as governor while Henderson was fighting in Mexico. Horton was a deacon at Matagorda, helped draft the constitution for the Baptist State Convention, and was a trustee and patron of Baylor University. He died in 1858. Carroll, Texas Baptists, 498-503, and as cited in Joseph L. Clark and Dorothy A. Linder, The Story of Texas, 394.

Huckins, James was born in New Hampshire in 1808. He was sent to Texas under the auspices of the American Baptist Home Mission Society. Huckins organized the First Baptist Church at Galveston and the First Baptist Church at Houston. It was he who suggested the need for a Baptist university in Texas. He helped in the organization of Union Association in 1840, the Texas Baptist Education Society, Texas Baptist Home Mission Society, Baylor University, and the Texas Baptist Convention. Dr. Carroll considers Huckins to be one of the most important "foundation-layers" in Texas Baptist history. Cox (ed.), Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists, I, 658, and as cited in Carroll, Texas Baptists, 197-199.

Johnston, Jonas was born in Beaufort District, South Carolina, on March 11, 1821. He moved to Texas in January of 1851 and settled in Grimes County. He pastored churches at Plantersville, Montgomery, Anderson, Ebenezer, Danville, Huntsville, Bedias, and Waverly. Johnston was particularly interested in association and convention work. For many years he served on the executive board of Union Association, as a trustee of Baylor Female College, as a member of the executive board of the Sunday School Convention, and as a member of the board of directors of the Baptist State Convention of Texas. From 1878 to 1881 he was business manager of the Texas Baptist Herald. Link, Texas Historical and Biographical Magazine, I, 206-209.



Law, Francis Marion came to Texas from South Carolina in 1859. He was educated as a physician but began to preach at twenty-six years of age. Law was described as a faithful gospel preacher and a solicitous pastor. He was president of the board of trustees of Baylor College for a number of years and was one of the men most helpful in giving religious instruction to the Negroes in Texas. Elliot (ed.), Centennial Story of Texas Baptists, 97, and as cited in Carroll, Texas Baptists, 928.

Link, J. B. was sent to Texas in 1865 as a missionary by the Southern Baptist Board of Domestic Missions. He established a denominational newspaper called the Texas Baptist Herald. Later he had two volumes of his Texas Historical and Biographical Magazine published. These volumes record biographical sketches of early Texas Baptists and the histories of the early churches and associations in Texas. Elliot (ed.), Centennial Story of Texas, 365.

Morrell, Z. N. came to Texas in 1836. In 1837 he organized the first Missionary Baptist church in Texas at Old Washington. The story of his life in Texas is recorded in his book, Flowers and Fruits from the Wilderness. He was an outstanding frontier preacher who fought Indians and Mexicans and organized a great number of churches and associations. Cox (ed.), Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists, II, 925, and Carroll, Texas Baptists, 86, and as cited in Elliot (ed.), Centennial Story of Texas Baptists, 25.

Morrill, D. B. came to Texas from New York when a boy. He entered Baylor University as a student about 1848. In 1859 he was the General Agent and Missionary for the East Texas Baptist Convention and corresponding editor of The Texas Baptist. He devoted much of his life to evangelistic meetings and pioneer missions. Morrill rivaled Z. N. Morrell in organizing churches and winning souls. Elliot (ed.), Centennial Story of Texas Baptists, 83-84.

O'Bryan, S. G. was a graduate of Wake Forest College. He came to Texas about 1851 as professor of mathematics

at Baylor University and as pastor of the church at Independence. Later he went to Waco where he pastored the First Baptist Church and organized a school for boys which eventually became Waco University. Elliot (ed.), Centennial Story of Texas Baptists, 144, and 156-157.

Perry, A. G. served in the Texas Revolution and was a delegate to the general Council or Consultation in 1835. His name appears frequently in early Baptist records. Carroll, Texas Baptists, 72.

Pilgrim, J. T. was born in Connecticut and educated at Hamilton College. He came to Austin's colony in 1828 as a young school teacher. He was employed to translate Spanish laws for Stephen F. Austin. In 1829 Pilgrim organized the first Sunday school in Texas at San Felipe. The school was brought to the attention of the Mexican authorities, who promptly suppressed it. Pilgrim settled in Gonzales in 1839, where he engaged in banking, farming, and teaching until his death in 1877. Elliot (ed.), Centennial Story of Texas Baptists, 20-21, 128, 309, and 370.

Reed, Isaac came to Texas from Tennessee in 1834. He was a leader among the Baptists in west Tennessee and was evangelistic and missionary minded. East Texas records show that he owned 7,000 acres of land and numerous slaves. He preached and taught school in one of the first combined meeting and school houses, other than Catholic, in Texas. Reed organized several churches in east Texas. He was a successful preacher and soul-winner. Elliot (ed.), Centennial Story of Texas Baptists, 81, and as cited in Carroll, Texas Baptists, 119-122.

Reinhardt, Jerry J. of Navasota was among the first converts in Texas during slavery days. He could recall when he and the other men sat with their backs to the preacher and their rifles in hand to protect themselves from the Indians during worship services. Reinhardt was admitted to Old Baylor University at Washington. He completed the arts course and would have received a degree had he not been a slave. He was an outstanding student of Greek and Latin. In



1882 Jerry Rienhardt was the oldest Negro Baptist pastor living in Texas. Theodore S. Boone, A Social History of Negro Baptists, 82, and as cited in Jordan, Negro Baptist History U.S.A. 1750-1930, 14.

Seale, Richard was born about 1798 in a slave pen in Virginia. In 1835 he was bought by Joshua Seale, When Seale obtained a tutor for his children, Richard asked if he might learn to read and write. Seale gave him permission to learn provided he did not neglect his work in the field. After he learned to read he started preaching to the slaves. When the Seales moved to Texas, Richard was overseer of their slaves. He was known as "Uncle Dick" to both the whites and Negroes. Often he was called to the deathbed of whites and Negroes to read from the Bible and pray. After the Civil War Uncle Dick continued to work for the Seales. He pastored Dixie Baptist Church until his death in 1875. He was buried beside Joshua Seale. William Seale, Texas Riverman--The Life and Times of Captain Andrew Smyth, 105-106, and as cited in "History of the Dixie Baptist Church," The Jasper Free Enterprise, January 19, 1967, and as cited in "Dixie Baptist Filled for Dedication Rites," The Jasper News Boy, January 19, 1967.

Smith, Martin V. was born in South Carolina in 1838. He was educated in Texas. Smith was ordained to the ministry when twenty-one years of age and had successful pastorates at Belton, Anderson, Brenham and Chappell Hill. He served as a missionary to the Confederate soldiers during the Civil War. Smith worked continuously for the Baptist cause in Texas. He served on numerous committees and his business counsel was often sought. It was in the home of M. V. Smith that Morrell wrote his book, Flowers and Fruits from the Wilderness. Just prior to his death he and J. B. Cranfill bought The Western Baptist and changed the name to The Texas Baptist Standard. Elliot (ed.), Centennial Story of Texas Baptists, 34, 100, and 461, and as cited in Carroll, Texas Baptists, 461, 472, 539, 608, 642, 650, 686, and 909-911.

Speight, Joseph W. settled in Waco in 1853. He was converted in 1857 and united with the First Baptist Church in Waco. Speight was president of the first board of trustees of Waco University and one of the men who worked for the merger of Waco and Baylor Universities. When this merger occurred Speight donated his beautiful homesite in Waco as the permanent home of Baylor University. Elliot (ed.), Centennial Story of Texas Baptists, 256-257.

Stribling, J. H. came to Texas from Alabama about 1841. At the age of twenty-one he was baptized by W. M. Tryon and was licensed to preach soon after his baptism. Stribling was the first ministerial student to study at Baylor University. He was one of the few early Baptist preachers whose only support was his ministry. Carroll, Texas Baptists, 719-721, and as cited in Elliot (ed.), Centennial Story of Texas Baptists, 93.

Taliaferro, R. H. was born in Kentucky in 1824. He was educated at Granville College in Ohio, and at Western Baptist Theological Institute in Kentucky. Taliaferro came to Texas in 1847, under the appointment of the American Baptist Home Mission Society. He organized the First Baptist Church, Austin, and pastored the church at Galveston. Elliot (ed.), Centennial Story of Texas Baptists, 34-35, and 98-99.

Tryon, William Milton was born in New York City in 1809. He graduated from Mercer and in 1841 was sent to Texas by the American Baptist Home Mission Society. Tryon assisted Baylor and Huckins in drafting the charter for Baylor University, served as chaplain for the Texas Congress, pastored and organized numerous churches, led in the organization of the Texas Baptist Education Society, and was recognized as the outstanding leader of Texas Baptists when he died in 1847. Cox (ed.), Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists, II, 1431, and as cited in Elliot (ed.), Centennial Story of Texas Baptists, 30-31.



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