

*The*  
*Kentucky*  
*Baptist*  
**HERITAGE**

**Kentucky Baptist Historical Commission**

*Volume XX*

*November 1995*

*Number 1*

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Newsletter published by Kentucky Baptist Historical Commission & Archives, 10701  
Shelbyville Road, Louisville, Kentucky 40243. Permission is granted to reprint  
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## Editor's Chronicles/ KBC Archives

The Kentucky Baptist Historical Commission held it's spring meeting in May in conjunction with the meeting of Friends of the Kentucky Baptist Historical Commission and a church history workshop. These were held at Buena Vista Baptist Church, Owensboro, as they celebrated their 75th anniversary. The church had many interesting historical items on display in the parlor.

A planning meeting of KBHC is on December 5. We will welcome all new commissioners and go about the business of discussing and planning KBHC activities for 1996. All commissioners will receive a letter with the details, but mark your calendar now and reserve 12/5/95, 12:00 noon to be in Louisville.

Don't forget our spring meeting of Friends of KBHC and a church history workshop. It has been scheduled for May at Murray First Baptist Church. Check the February Friends newsletter for exact date, time and location.

If any of you have been at the Baptist building lately, you have noticed that the adjacent building is progressing nicely. As soon as it is finished and WMU moves to its new location, the "old" WMU area of the current building will be prepared for Archives. What a day it will be when Archives is able to expand into space approximately three times what it now occupies!

Beginning this year important information is being put on microfilm for research purposes. Many hours were spent cataloging associational annuals and church and association histories. We have 58 association and over 800 church histories in the collection.

Archives is seeing an increase in the number of researchers using the facilities and the number of letters and phone queries. We provide information and suggestions to churches requesting materials on history preservation and anniversary celebrations.



## **The Writing of an Associational History**

The Tates Creek Baptist Association is the fourth oldest in Kentucky. In 1993 it celebrated its 200th anniversary. A couple of years before that event, I was asked to write a history of the association. I write a local history column for the Richmond newspaper, but had never done a full book before. I work full time, so the project took me nearly the full two years.

In 1943, my father had co-authored a short history of the association. Using that as a beginning, I went to my primary source, the annual reports of the association. These were in the possession of the Director of Missions. Without these annual reports my history would have been sketchy or non-existent.

After gathering my material from the annual reports and other sources, I next organized the data. For me the following worked best. First, an introduction, then the first hundred years, the next fifty years, and modern times. I then covered doctrinal issues in the association. A large section was given over to the district missionary and his reports. Sections were then written on early churches and the women's work in the association. I then wrote about associational camps and mission churches. The final section was on the future.

In the introduction, I quoted J. C. Bradley of the Associational Administration Department of the Home Mission Board about the function of the association. In the first hundred years, I started with the fact that the early group were United Baptists, a merger of Separate and Regular Baptists. Much of this section was a listing of the changing membership of the association. I covered with some detail the anti-mission movement, the withdrawal of black members after the Civil War, and the Campbellism movement, during which entire Baptist churches went over to the Campbellites and left the association. Later sections covered the hiring of a district missionary, objections to women reading reports at the annual meetings, and other events of interest in the life of the association.

Doctrinal issues make for interesting reading. I covered the Campbellite division over baptismal regeneration, the anti-

missions movement, the censuring of Georgetown College for having a president who had not been re-baptized, local option elections, women reading reports at associational meetings, the leading of churches out of the association by pastors trained by Ashland Avenue Baptist, the holding of dances at Georgetown College, and fundamentalism.

The longest section was a study of the district missionary and his reports. This section showed the developing need for a coordinator of associational work and the ongoing efforts of the various missionaries. I quoted state board policies and various recommendations brought by the missionaries. This section ended with the job description for the director of missions.

Short histories were given of the three oldest church churches in the Bates Creek Association--Gilberts Creek (1781), Bates Creek (1786) and Viney Fork (1797). An early history of the Berea Baptist Church (1896) was also given. Much was said about disciplinary problems at Berea.

Mrs. Dixie Mylum Lusher wrote an interesting section on Women and the Women's Missionary Union for inclusion in the history. There were two associational camps run by the association from the 1940s through the 1960s. I wrote about the early one at Mallory Springs, Mrs. Lusher about the later one at Bobtown.

Under mission churches, I covered the development of the missionary group which outgrew the hardshell group and became the First Baptist Church of Richmond and the founding by First Baptist of five other churches. From Berea Baptist came four other churches, from Broadway Baptist came two, from Bethlehem Baptist came one.

The section on the future of the association came basically from a discussion paper written by current D.O.M. Hurstle Laxton in which he gave his dream for Bates Creek.

My history was 99 pages long. It was printed as a paperback and distributed at the bicentennial meeting for the cost price of \$3.00. Copies can be obtained from Bates Creek Association, P.O. Box 69, Berea, KY 40403.

*Fred A. Engle, Jr., Commissioner  
South Central Region, KBHC*

## Four Baptist Pastors of Early Kentucky

**Narrator:** The time is about 1800 or 1801. The place is Kentucky and the occasion is a meeting of one of the early Baptist associations. The meeting is fictitious and time has been stretched a bit out of shape to allow us to listen in on the conversation of four of this state's earliest and most influential Baptist ministers. In looking back at their lives and their accomplishments all four seem larger than life, but the primitive frontier times they experienced often required a superhuman effort just to survive and these men managed to do a great deal more than that.

There were of course other ministers who also made exceptional contributions to the early life of the Kentucky church. These four are presented for the variety of experiences they represent, the particular challenges they faced and the manner in which they met those challenges. In many ways they were typical men of the period, but in other ways they were very unique. Together they made a tremendous and lasting contribution to the church they represented and the God they served. They are foundation stones in the Kentucky Baptist church.

On this particular evening the associational meeting has just taken a break and our four pastor have arranged to meet outside on the porch during the interval. They are:

(1) Rev. John Whitaker, eldest of four and one of the first ordained Baptist ministers to settle permanently in this state, emigrated from Maryland to near Pittsburg then came to Kentucky in the spring of 1780. He participated in the founding of Kentucky's first church and was influential in the founding of most of the Baptist churches within fifty miles of Louisville that were gathered prior to his death.

(2) Rev. Elijah Craig, brother of the famous Lewis and the eccentric Joseph Craig. A man of rare intelligence and ability despite his limited education, Elijah began preaching in his own tobacco barn in about 1764. Although solemn he has been a popular and very talented preacher who emigrated from Virginia in about 1784. He is unusually capable in business.

(3) Rev. John Taylor, also a Virginian, grew up in a life



of hard work on a farm after his intemperate father lost the family's estate. He was converted to the Baptist faith at age twenty and worked almost constantly in and with the churches from that time until his death. He came to Kentucky with his family in the fall of 1783.

(4) Rev. John Corbly, born in England in 1733, pledged four years of servitude in order to obtain passage to America. Following his period of indenture he settled in Virginia where he was converted to the Baptist belief by the Reverend John Garard. He is an outspoken man with strong opinions who has attracted both admirers and enemies. Of the four he is the only one who did not settle in Kentucky.

**Craig:** Just one more over-long presentation in that over-warm room and I would have been in danger of dozing off, so I'm very grateful for this break. Not only do I get to revive a bit but I am also privileged to meet with men whose names I hear mentioned so often whenever Kentucky Baptist history is discussed. John Taylor I know well but Mr. Whitaker and Mr. Corbly I know only by reputation.

**Corbly:** And I am delighted to finally meet you and Mr. Whitaker.

**Whitaker:** This is a great pleasure for me as well. And since one of today's speakers mentioned what is being called "The Traveling Church" I wonder if I might take advantage of this opportunity Mr. Craig to learn more about your connection with it? Would you tell us how in this world so many people ever came to agree on anything as momentous as leaving their homes in Virginia and moving to a primitive frontier like Kentucky?

**Craig:** Well, as you know, that happened back near the close of the Revolution. My brother Lewis was pastor of the church involved, the Upper Spottsylvania Church, and from what he has told me nothing ever surprised him so much before or since as the way that all came about. He never expected it.

Lewis was in his forties when he decided to move to Kentucky. He had done some scouting around, had the place for his new home picked out and was very excited about his prospects. Naturally he talked about all this to the people in his congregatin and first thing you know some of them started to think about moving themselves. From that point it just mushroomed until September of 1781 when Lewis and nearly six hundred people from his church left Virginia and set out for Kentucky. Nearly every single member. They brought the church's official books and records, the communion service, the pulpit Bible, everything they possibly could in order to continue their worship together with as little disruption as possible.

**Taylor:** I have had the pleasure of hearing your brother preach. Like yourself, he has a wonderful ability to impress his hearers. I would even call him magnetic. Isn't it true that some members of his church were actually imprisoned with him in '68 when he was arrested for preaching?

**Craig:** True indeed. In fact it was the first time Virginia actually imprisoned anyone for preaching, as they said, "contrary to law."

**Corbly:** And not the last time, unfortunately. Although they were certainly stretching a point with that "contrary to law" business. No one's law except those few aristocrats who formed to General Assembly and did all the lawmaking. It never had much popular support.

**Taylor:** I've always said it never works in the long run to have a state supported church. The Episcopal church in Virginia lost its zeal, lost its desire to go out and make converts. Why should they try when it was against the law not to attend their church?

**Whitaker:** Now that law would have been real hard to impose west of the Alleghenies where the first Kentuckians avoided all churches like they were some sort of plague. And I remember

well when the Virginia authorities imprisoned Lewis. The action was widely denounced, even Patrick Henry spoke in his defense. Of course that sort of adversity seldom hurts a church and Lewis' congregation at Upper Spottsylvania continued to grow.

**Corbly:** Elijah, I know you came to Kentucky yourself with the Traveling Church, but were there any other pastors besides you and your brother?

**Craig:** Actually I would say there were about a dozen. Our brother Joseph came along, also Rev. William Cave, Simeon Walton from Nottaway Church, Joseph Bledsoe of the Wilderness Church. But some, like myself, did not have their families with them.

**Whitaker:** Considering the danger from Indians in those days it must have been comforting to be part of such a large group. Saftey in numbers as they say.

**Craig:** It was definitely a comfort. I dare say many of the women would not have been convinced to come otherwise. And we were well organized. Captain William Ellis, who had been an officer in the Continental army, served as our expedition's military leader. In addition to being a soldier he was an excellent woodsman. Got up before sunrise every day to get us off to a good start.

It turned into a journey none of us will ever forget. Most of the people were on foot, the horses and mules being ridden mainly by the very old or very young. Little children were carried in hickory baskets swung to the sides of the horses. We had to even their weight by adding stones to the baskets of the smaller ones. And everyone carried as much as they possibly could. We loaded the animals and we loaded ourselves and then we started walking.

About the time we reached the mountains the weather turned to sleet and snow. Then for days it rained, swelling the rivers and making them harder to cross. When we came through Cumberland Gap things were so bad it took almost three weeks to

travel thirty miles. And I'll never forget Cumberland Fork where we waded in ice water breast deep. After that we passed through miles of cane breaks where we often lost runaway horses along with the supplies on their backs. That cane was so thick a man could become completely lost just a few feet from the trail. But as we came near our destination we found ourselves getting positively light hearted. We reached Gilbert's Creek in December, made a clearing in the woods and established Craig's Station. When we gathered for worship we used the old Bible we had brought from Spottsylvania. Many eyes were filled with tears that day.

**Taylor:** Wonderful to be a part of that. Hard of course, but so amazing to be part of the opening up of this beautiful country. To be among the first ministers on the frontier. The churches have been so important to many isolated people whose daily lives were filled with one threat or another. Some would travel for miles, bouncing about in horse-drawn wagons over dirt roads, just to hear a sermon and worship with friends.

**Craig:** My first experience with that was back in Virginia listening to Samuel Harris whose reputation drew such crowds that we called him the "Virginia Apostle." He led me to my own conversion. Then in 1771 when I took on the pastoral care of the Blue Run church the authorities took notice and put me in jail. That "contrary to law" thing again. Like most of us I just kept on preaching through the grates. You may have heard about the lawyer who said the Court should go on and release me because, he said, "The Baptists are like a bed of camomile; the more they are trodden the more they spread."

**Corbly:** Truth is, that lawyer was right. I often thought I had more effect on people when I preached from behind bars than nearly any other time. Not that the law actually prohibited preaching the Gospel. I was charged with "disturbing the peace" and "going into private houses and making dissensions."

**Craig:** But in spite of their intentions the Virginia Court probably did us more good than harm in the end. Upper Spottsylvania was not the only Baptist church to have members numbering in the hundreds. But talking about the “traveling Church” has reminded me that Br. Whitaker came to Kentucky with such a large family they might have seemed like a traveling church themselves.

**Whitaker:** Nothing like that I assure you, but it’s certainly true that I came here with a big family. Some were my brothers and sisters, grown by then, and the rest were my own. My wife Mary and I just about raised two families. My parents died in ’39 when I was seventeen, so as the eldest boy I took responsibility for the younger ones. Little Abraham was just two years old, Isaac was four, Catherine was six and so on. My oldest sister Mary was eleven and a lot of work fell on her young shoulders. Then when I married my own Mary two years later she became like another mother to the little ones. Our first son was born in ’42 so there was only a five year gap between my parents’ family and my own.

**Taylor:** For myself it was a bit different. I first came into Kentucky alone. That was in the fall of ’79. I crossed the Alleghenies on horseback. But the state of things here, and I don’t mean the primitive conditions although that alone was enough to discourage anyone, no, I mean the low state of religion. When I saw the thieving and promiscuity and general lawlessness going on I turned around and went back to Virginia.

**Corbly:** You weren’t the only one to go back. I know you’ve heard of Rev. David Rice who has become a leader among the Presbyterians. On his first trip here he took one look, turned around and went home and expected never to return. I was here myself for a short time then went back to the congregations I had started earlier near the Monongahela River. But after what happened to my wife and children there I spent many years wishing I had brought them down the Ohio.

**Taylor:** You know, I have heard several versions of what happened to your family. Would it be presuming too much to ask you to tell us about it?

**Corbly:** For a long time I would have avoided doing that. Talking about it was too difficult but I have decided it's best to try to tell it like it was.

It happened in May of 1782 near Garard's Fort. Today that's in Pennsylvania but back then there was some dispute about whether it was Pennsylvania or Virginia. My wife Betsy and I lived with our children in a cabin about one mile from the fort and about the same distance from the meetinghouse which was outside the stockade but only by about 400 yards. Like most meetinghouses it stood beside the local cemetery.

We left, my family and I, and started for church one Sunday with me thinking Betsy had our Bible, but I soon realized it had been left behind so I went back to get it. My mind was on the sermon I was to preach that day and if there were any signs of the tragedy about to happen, I never saw them. I returned to our cabin for the Bible while the rest walked on and as soon as I had retrieved it I commenced following them down the path with my mind still preoccupied. The next thing I knew I heard the most terrible screams and I ran toward the sounds trying to pick up something to use as a club while I ran, as I did not have even a knife on me. When I got within about forty rods of my family I saw they were being attacked by Indians. Betsy saw me and cried out to me to run and make my escape. About that time an Indian raised his gun and took aim at me so I turned and ran. I never thought the Indians would kill them, I thought they would be taken as prisoners, like so many other women and children had been, and then ransomed to the British at Detroit. But my wife and baby and one daughter were killed outright.

Men in the fort heard their cries and came running to the rescue but so much damage was already done. My son Isaiah died the next day. My daughter Elizabeth lived to be twenty one but had a head wound that never healed. Sometimes it would seem to

heal and she would be entirely well then suddenly it would re-open and her life would hang in the balance once again. She was engaged to be married when it broke open a final time and she died.

My daughter Delilah was the only child I have by Betsy who survived to live a normal life. My older children John Jr. and Margaret, children by my first wife Abigail, had gone on ahead of the little ones and had already reached the meeting-house, probably the only thing that saved them. I feel certain all of us would have died that day except for the intervention of men from the fort.

**Taylor:** What about the story that the men may have been white men dressed as Indians?

**Corbly:** Personally, I have never doubted that the men were Indians, but Elizabeth and Isaiah both believed they had been attacked by white men. Elizabeth believed that to her dying day. Of course I strongly supported the Revolution and believed we should break completely with Great Britain and establish our own freedoms. This formed a part of many of my sermons and, as you might expect, I made political enemies. But the Indians had recently gone to war to revenge the massacre of some of their own people and I believe they killed my family in an act of revenge. Only God knows the truth.

**Craig:** Knowledge of what happened to your family shocked us all and our people offered many prayers for you and them. It has been a hard thing for our families to have to face not only the dangers of life on the frontier but also the special trials we face as ministers of the gospel. My own trials as a minister have been of a different nature from yours. Kentucky is such a beautiful place and so ready for development of nearly any sort. The possibilities are endless and so, I think, are my own interests. I built a fulling mill and a rope walk at Georgetown and then a paper mill at the same place. I'm especially proud of the paper mill and also proud of producing something I have believed would aid in the great

necessity of being able to read and write, something the average man can not do these days to say nothing of the average woman.

We built the mill on a stone basement which supports two and one half stories framed in with wood, the best frame we knew how to build, and not one cut nail in the whole place. Even the shingles we put on with oak pins. That mill produced the first sheet of paper made in the west, all hand made and hand rolled. I also went into the retail trade with my brother Joseph, we owned a store together. But all of this took time away from my work in the church. The congregation became upset with me and rightly so.

**Whitaker:** Right they may have been, but all of us faced the problem of serving the church while at the same time we had families to provide for. I had always wanted to preach and serve the church but at age seventeen a family came to me ready-made. Then Mary and I had eight of our own and only one of those a girl which made things hard for Mary. Our Hannah is a good daughter and always worked with her mother but still there was so much we had to do just to survive. And the congregations didn't believe in paying a pastor. A pat on the back and a pair of knit gloves now and then are fine but we couldn't live on that. Sometimes I truly thought I would grow old before I could come to Kentucky and minister on the frontier. And from what I heard of the frontier it needed all the ministers it could get.

**Taylor:** It was not only a place without gospel but without law since the few laws that existed were seldom enforced. But while the times were hard, the rewards were often great. It was wonderful to see people willing to travel miles to attend a church meeting. Of course in the long run I suppose few men traveled more miles year in and year out than we preachers.

One event that impressed me so much while I was still young and living in Virginia was the time Samuel Harris traveled two hundred miles to administer Baptism. Fifty three were baptized in the South River that day with hundreds looking on who had never even seen the rite performed before. Afterwards we



had the laying on of hands which was still being practiced in that time on the newly baptized. This was in 1770. I believe you were also there, Elijah.

**Craig:** I remember it well. Bro. Harris was later named an Apostle for the south side of the James River. That was when the Association of Virginia Baptist became concerned about whether all the offices mentioned in Ephesians 4:11 were still in use in the churches. In consequence they elected three Apostles, Bro. Harris to the South River and Bro. John Waller and myself to the north. We had no real authority but served as Evangelists in those regions.

**Corbly:** It was said that you were the first Baptist Apostles since the original twelve. I always enjoyed debating that statement.

**Craig:** Actually, that position may have kept me in Virginia longer than I intended. I was a latecomer to Kentucky compared to the rest of you, but that was perhaps for the best since my greatest temptations came from the secular world after I came west. The ministry was always my first love and I never intended to abandon it but I also loved industry, still do, and I still find great pleasure in a good business deal. I've been so torn between the church and the world that I suppose I would have to admit that in the end my brother Lewis has worked to greater effect in the churches than I.

**Taylor:** Well, in speaking for myself, like Bro. Whitaker I also found it difficult to dedicate the necessary time to God's work while trying to support my family. Before coming to Kentucky I preached on and off for ten years at South River Church and they paid me nothing until I married, then they considered my past service and gave me \$100 with what seemed like real pleasure. And I can assure you that I received it with real pleasure. Then in 1783 my wife and I moved to Kentucky.

For us too it was an experience neither of us will ever forget. We didn't walk but came by river, first setting out on the

Allegheny at Redstone where I paid for passage on a poorly built flatboat filled with strangers. It took about seven weeks before we made landing at Beargrass Creek near the Falls of the Ohio. Not a soul was settled in those days between Wheeling and Louisville, a distance of over five hundred miles, and we spent not one of those miles in safety. The situation was so bad that when we arrived at Louisville the people were crowded into the forts despite the fact that it was winter which usually brought a respite from the Indians.

**Whitaker:** Wasn't life in those forts a trial? They were so crowded, we often dressed and slept in the same room with people we hardly knew, the ladies holding blankets up for each other to try to maintain some modesty. But even worse was being dependent on a water source that often became polluted. Sometimes there was just one little spring for drinking, cooking, washing, you know how it was. Disease threatened to destroy us faster than the Indians could.

**Taylor:** Exactly. I took one look and decided to go the eighty miles further to Craig's Station in Lincoln County. After resting a few days we set out carrying just about everything we owned. I had three horses, two were packed and the other carried my wife plus all the lumber the beast could bear. The trace was so bad we had no choice but to wade through the mud in all the rivers and creeks we came to. At least our struggles kept us from worrying as much as we might have about the danger from Indians. After about six days we reached Craig's Station. This was just before Christmas. About three months had passed since we had left Virginia. Through all this rugged travel my wife was in a very helpless state, about one month after our arrival my son Ben was born.

Our danger on the journey was somewhat increased by my lack of skill with a rifle. I had one but it couldn't do me much good. That reminds me Bro. Whitaker, I have heard that your wife is quite a good shot.

**Whitaker:** She is indeed and fortunate that has been for me. Many's the time she kept watch with her rifle while I plowed. Plowing puts one in a very vulnerable position you know. A man can't plow and carry a gun and if the Indians come rushing at you while your gun is leaning against some tree you're out of luck. When we came to Kentucky in 1780 our family was grown and mostly married off, so the plowing was up to me and the watching was up to her.

**Corbly:** Then you were not a young man when you came?

**Whitaker:** No indeed. I was an old man truth to tell. I was born in 1722 and came to Kentucky in 1780, now that's how old I was. And while I wanted to come to Kentucky I might never have done it but for my boys who were all dead set on it. They heard all the tales you know, about how beautiful it was and land so rich anything you might stick in the ground would take root and grow.

**Corbly:** Is the story I heard about your son Abraham being able to carry a fence rail over his shoulder and still outrun any other man a true story?

**Whitaker:** It is true, and I thank you for giving me the opportunity to brag on one of my boys. He did it often, racing maybe fifty or a hundred yards.

My family and I had left the older more settled part of Maryland in 1771 and moved to near Pittsburg which in those days was a frontier region. From that time it seems there was constant war and fighting all around us. My sons, who were in their teens and early twenties, became hardened to it and as a result they would dare to do just about anything, especially Abraham and Acquilla. Both fought with General Clark as militiamen. In one battle with the Indians the army's situation had gotten desperate when Abraham spotted the Indian chief on horseback, ran out from his position, pulled the chief from his horse, shot him, and lived to tell the tale. With their leader dead

the Indians retreated which saved the army that day.

But we lived with too much bloodshed, too much violence. Men were quick to fight with little provocation. Quick even to kill each other in a moment of temper.

**Corbly:** Those times were hard on children and on parents trying to raise them.

In sitting here listening to Bro. Taylor tell of his journey to Kentucky I'm reminded of the first time I met him. He was traveling through the Monogahela area which was my neck of the woods and was visiting churches with another fellow who had the last name of Wood. Well Bro. Wood, who had only recently become a Baptist, liked to dress well and had a very serious look about him while Bro. Taylor dressed like a woodsman, was quite young and looked absolutely jolly, so of course everyone mistook Bro. Wood for the preacher.

**Taylor:** I remember. And sometimes I took pleasure in letting them believe he was.

**Craig:** *(speaking to Taylor)* Don't I recall your owning some land in Woodford County.

**Taylor:** I did for a time. In 1784 I moved to Woodford and soon was holding evening church meetings with our neighbors, what few there were, in one of our little cabins. Most Sundays I preached at the station. Kentucky was dotted with little stations even after the Indian threat was about past. Newcomers were always grateful for a place to stay. But in Woodford County my family's situation was difficult and I was considerably worried. We had to pack corn forty miles and then send our own mule to grind it at a mill before we could have bread. All the meat we had to eat came from the woods, and me as poor a shot as ever. I would take my rifle and go out with the hunters who let me share in the profits of the hunt but I was precious little help to them.

There was a fat old buck that had his lodge a few hundred yards from our cabin, which by-the-way was sixteen feet square

with no floor but the earth. Anyway, I kept trying to get a shot at that buck until one day I finally got lucky and killed him more by accident than anything else. We ate well for weeks which was a great treat to my family.

But as time went on we men in that area had so much to do just supplying our families with basic necessities that religion became less important rather than more so. We still had meetings but they lacked devotion, we talked generally of other things. At this time the only church established north of the Kentucky River was south Elkhorn where Lewis Craig was pastor. I became a member of that church and came to have great respect for Mr. Craig who was older than myself and treated me like his own son.

It was about this time that I began taking real pleasure in farm work. I put up my own fences, cleared many acres of good land, got the planting done. I was industrious enough but did little as a preacher. Then a change seemed to slowly come over the religious community.

**Whitaker:** I know the very change you speak of. In fact we witnessed the beginning of it together the spring you and I were at Hillsborough. We had a church meeting and two couples came forward wanting to be baptized. From that time onward our congregations increased even if sometimes not nearly so fast as we hoped they would. I traveled many miles and had the gratification of helping many churches get a start. But you know, I was never able to establish a church at Louisville even though it was something I dreamed of doing. Louisville was a fast-growing place with people coming and going all the time. I thought there would be a tremendous opportunity for spreading the Gospel and influencing people for Christ, but there was hardly a spark of interest. That has been one of my greatest disappointments.

But I was able to start a congregation east of Louisville on Beargrass Creek. As early as 1780, or maybe it was '81, I bapized the wife of Richard Chenoweth and two other ladies there. They may have been the first persons I baptized in Kentucky. Come to think of it, I believe I was in Louisville on one of

my failed attempts at revival when I first heard of Mr. Corbly's map.

**Corbly:** You know, so much has happened in the intervening years that I seldom think of that map. It was drawn in April of '79 when I was at the Falls and thinking perhaps I would bring my family there. The new town needed a plat map so I made one using a scale of 200 yards to the inch. It located the various town lots as they had been drawn off and numbered by the trustees. Later it was officially adopted and I suppose they still have a copy. Louisville has changed so much you would scarcely recognize it today by that little map.

Also, at about that time I first became acquainted with Bro. Whitaker's sons Abraham and Acquilla. We served together in William Harrod's militia company at the Falls.

**Whitaker:** I remember them speaking of you. Our whole family moved to Kentucky just after that, in 1780, and lived at Brashear's Station near the salt lick in Bullitt County. The salt licks were tough places in those days I can tell you that. Full of men fighting too much, drinking too much. I had purchased several treasury warrants before coming here and my boys were kept busy with locating and surveying our land. At that time very few people cared about going to church. Best I can remember there were just five of us ordained Baptist ministers in all of Kentucky county and as one of the few I was kept right busy performing marriages.

I'll never forget September of 1781. They were planning a double wedding at Linn's Station. Now that was on Beargrass Creek, quite a distance from Bullitt's Lick, and they needed a minister so Bland Ballard, and Kentucky never had a better man than Bland, left Linn's to come get me. He hadn't gone far when he saw signs that many Indians had recently passed by, so he turned back, warned the settlers at Linn's, then went up to Boone's Station and warned the people there.

Well, Boone's was not as large or so well fortified as Linn's and most of the folks there decided to run for it. They left

Boone's in a line that became too strung out and when they got to Long Run Creek the Indians attacked. Seven settlers were killed but the Indians were driven off and by nightfall most of the group managed to straggle in to Linn's.

I know you all remember what happened next. John Floyd gathered the militia to pursue the Indians but, at a point not far from where the earlier attack had occurred, the Indians decoyed them onto a ridge. Of Floyd's twenty six men, sixteen were killed. We've called it Floyd's Defeat ever since that day.

**Taylor:** News of it spread like wildfire through the settlements. It was a disaster that made us all feel defeated for a time.

**Corbly:** My own brother-in-law, Peter A'Sturgus, was killed that day. He was a Captain with Floyd's militia and was married to Betsy's sister Nancy. Most of us had large families and too often we knew friends or had relatives who were fighting either Indians or some dreadful disease. We stayed worried about someone all the time. Still do, I suppose.

I have been sitting here thinking about families who have several members in the ministry but I can't recall a family other than the Craigs that has three brothers in the Baptist ministry, and all of them pioneer Kentuckians as well. Just think Elijah how much the three of you have seen and accomplished.

**Craig:** It has always seemed so natural that I've given little thought to it. We are not together as often as we would like, but on those few occasions we do seem to have a great deal to talk about. Of course my brother Joseph gives everyone a great deal to talk about. He is quite eccentric as I am sure you know. I even went into a partnership with Joe and set up a store in hopes of getting him out of the ministry. He is younger than Lewis and myself, and a wonderul fellow in many ways, but Joe can be so downright odd that people tend to concentrate on his oddities rather than on his message.

For instance back in the days when pack horses were even more in demand than they are now Joe was preaching at an

outdoor meeting in the woods and right during his sermon he looks upwards into the trees and says, "Brethren, there is a fork that would make a good pack-saddle." Then he picked right back up on his sermon like he had said nothing out of the ordinary.

**Corbly:** You know, I heard one story about Joseph that always makes me chuckle. I hope you won't mind my repeating it. It is said that Brother Joe was talking with a woman who was supposed to be at the point of death and he said to her, "Think of your husband and all the children you have to raise. If you die now it will be the meanest thing you ever did in your life." And from what I hear, she actually recovered.

**Craig:** And that's a true story. In fact, the woman was our own niece.

So you can understand that my brother Lewis became concerned that Joe might be doing at least as much harm as good and wanted to persuade him to leave the ministry. So Lewis went to Joe and said, "You have been trying to preach twenty years and I have never known of your being instrumental in the salvation of but one person." "Well, thank God," Joe told him, "if Christ has saved one soul by me, in twenty years, I am ready to labor twenty more for the salvation of another." Of course after that there was nothing more to say.

**Whitaker:** I guess we've all heard about Joe and had a good laugh at one time or another. But whatever is said, he was certainly convicted of his beliefs and never wavered as many of us have from time to time. And he certainly came into Kentucky when it was still a wilderness and required any man to face danger and even death before it would be conquered.

**Taylor:** Did you hear about Henry Bottorff, the Lutheran minister who disappeared last year? He lived not far from Louisville and was riding home alone one night after performing a marriage when he just disappeared. It is said that when his friends went searching for him all they found were the buttons from his



clothes.

**Whitaker:** Do they think it was Indians or maybe thieves?

**Taylor:** No. They believe it must have been a wild animal since neither Indians nor thieves would have left the buttons.

*A bell sounds.*

**Corbly:** As reluctant as I am for this meeting to end I believe I just heard the bell calling us back inside.

**Craig:** That you did Bro. Corbly, but I do want to say what a pleasure it has been to be with all of you and have this chance to chat.

*All four shake hands, express their good-byes and readers return to their original seats.*

**Narrator:** There is much more to know about these men than could be revealed in this short time. For instance you may be wondering whether Rev. Corbly ever married again. He did. His third wife was Nancy Lynn. By his three marriages John Corbly was father to seventeen children. His active life was filled with crusading for causes both religious and political, whenever he believed the controversy to be worthy of his efforts, with the result that he is probably the best known of all the pioneers in Greene County, Pennsylvania.

The tragic loss of his second wife and a large portion of his family was widely publicized at the time. While it was not the only tragedy he experienced it was probably the greatest. His first wife died in Virginia in 1768 perhaps following the birth of their fourth child. His marriage to Betsy took place in about 1773. Rev. John Corbly died in 1803 and is buried in the Garard's Fort Cemetery with Betsy and this third wife who survived him by twenty three years.

John Taylor, who had been penniless until about the time of his marriage, inherited some property from an unmarried uncle, survived the rigors of being a pioneer in Kentucky and pastored a number of churches. His final church home was at Buck Run in Franklin County which he helped constitute in 1818 at the age of 66. He traveled and preached and attended seven or eight association meetings every fall until his death in January of 1836 at the age of 83 years. Like Elijah Craig he had little formal education but was nevertheless literate and intellectual. He possessed sound judgement and is remembered as a wise, conservative counselor.

Elijah Craig is said to have been the finest preacher of the three Craig brothers but after coming to Kentucky his interests in the church became second to his interests in business. He bought one thousand acres of land and laid off a town called at first Lebanon and later Georgetown. He erected a saw and grist mill, then the first fulling mill, the first rope works and the first paper mill in Kentucky. However his success in business was accompanied by an increasing inability to work effectively in the church. Despite this conflict he remained active and continued preaching until his death at about age 60. His greatest contributions to the church were made in his younger days in Virginia.

The ministry of John Whitaker was first mentioned in 1772 by a Baptist missionary to Ohio who passed through western Pennsylvania and reported three candidates for the ministry whose names he gave as John Corbly, John Swingler, and John Whitacre. In 1773 Rev. Whitacre organized the church later known as Peter Creek Baptist Church where he preached until coming to Kentucky. After a year or two at Bullitt's Lick he moved up Salt River to near present Mt. Washington and established Whitaker's Station near the mouth of a creek known from that time as Whitaker's Run. In 1784 he and Rev. James Smith gathered the Baptist Church on Beargrass, today Beargrass Christian Church, east of Louisville. He preached there for the next

ten years and continued to ride the circuit as well. In about 1788 he moved to Shelby County south of present Finchville where he lived until his death in 1798. The patriarch of a large family, he left a sizeable estate for his time and many descendants.

*Joellen Tyler Johnston*

*Prepared for the Kentucky Baptist Historical Commission  
May 1995*

# **Revolt on the Borderland**

## **The Exodus of Tennessee Baptist Churches from the Bethel Baptist Association in 1871**

### **A Case Study in Baptist Ecclesiology**

According to J.C. Bradley, there have been eight descriptive periods in the life of Southern Baptist associations. Bradley has designated the period 1845-1917 as “the rise of state conventions and the Southern Baptist Convention, and the decline of associations and societies.” In describing this period, Bradley has stated that “there were significant changes in the association’s role...which involved shifting from a doctrinally based fellowship of churches to an implementing agency of the denomination.”<sup>1</sup>

The area of Middle Tennessee that borders the southern Kentucky state line (principally Montgomery, Robertson, Stewart, and Sumner counties) presents the possibility of a case study concerning this phase in Southern Baptist history. The Baptist churches found in this area were all originally members of associations that were affiliated with the General Association of Baptists in Kentucky (now the Kentucky Baptist Convention). But in the time period 1870 to 1892 these Tennessee churches formed new associations that were composed entirely of churches located in Tennessee and were independent of connections with the Kentucky General Association.

Today, this area is composed of the Bledsoe, Cumberland, Nashville, Robertson County, and Stewart County Associations in Tennessee. The pivotal association in this matrix is the Cumberland, since each of these associations have roots in that body.

According to an article found in the Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists, the Cumberland Association was founded in 1803. This article gives the following account of the association’s history:

Organized about 1803 with 15 churches from Mero District Association which had been organized about 1796. Dating from Mero, Cumberland shares with Concord the rank of oldest association in middle Tennessee. However, either the original Cumberland Association disbanded or was temporarily absorbed by other associations,

for the oldest minutes of Cumberland Association available are dated 1870, and current minutes refer to that year as the date of organization.<sup>2</sup>

This is a fallacy that has continued to the present day. The date of the Association has been continued as 1803, or items have been written in such a way to give the impression that the Cumberland being discussed in this paper is the same as that one organized in 1803.<sup>3</sup>

In 1803 a Cumberland Baptist Association was organized that still exists to this time. It is now known as the Cumberland Association of Primitive Baptists and is centered around Williamson County, Tennessee. In 1992 this association held its 190th annual session at Big Harpeth Primitive Baptist Church in Franklin, Tennessee.<sup>4</sup>

The primary reference material for the history of any Baptist association is its annual printed minutes. The earliest extant minutes for the Cumberland Association are the 1874 minutes. According to that year's minutes the Association was observing its fourth anniversary. With that year as a guiding point, one is able to determine the date of the first annual meeting of the organization as 1871.<sup>5</sup>

In order to understand the origins of the Cumberland Association it is necessary to go to other sources of data. The origins of the Cumberland can be reconstructed from the minutes of the Bethel Association, various newspaper accounts, and the writings of W. G. Inman.

Bethel Baptist Association of Kentucky was formed from the Red River Association in 1825 over the issue of missions involvement. After 1825 the Red River became a Primitive Baptist association and went into decline, with the last known meeting held in 1930.<sup>6</sup>

Bethel Association was established by eight churches with a membership of about 700. Bethel continued to grow until the time of the Civil War when it had a membership of 62 churches with more than 7000 members.

In 1866 Bethel voted to enter into an auxiliary relationship with the Kentucky General Association. Bethel consisted of

churches in both Kentucky and Tennessee, with a majority in Kentucky. This relationship would allow the General Association of Kentucky to assign missionaries in the bounds of Bethel, and mission funds collected by Bethel would be forwarded to the General Association to pay for the mission activity. This was a method being promoted throughout the state of Kentucky at that time in order to strengthen mission work across the state, and it would increase the strength of the General Association over the district associations.<sup>7</sup>

Apparently strong opinions arose against the auxiliary relationship quickly. At the 1869 meeting at New Providence Church, Montgomery County, Tennessee, the association instructed the churches “to express through their letters next year, their wishes relative to our connection with the General Association.” This vote was to be by churches, not by the churches’ messengers.<sup>8</sup>

The vote at the next annual meeting, 26-28 July 1870, was divided as follows:

To abide the decision [sic] of the Association.....	2
Leaving it to their Messengers.....	2
Churches silent.....	8
For conditional continuance.....	2
For unconditional continuance.....	8
For dissolving unconditionally the Auxiliary Relationship.....	30

The minutes give no clue for the reasoning of the member churches concerning the dissolution of the auxiliary relationship.<sup>9</sup>

A news item appeared in the 16 August 1871 edition of a Clarksville, Tennessee newspaper concerning the organization of a new association from churches “within the bounds of Bethel and Concord” Associations. The article mentions a meeting held in Springfield, Tennessee on 1 November 1870 that consulted “as to the propriety of forming a new Association” (this meeting would have been five months after the vote at the Bethel Association). This conclave was to meet on 13 September 1871 “in the Presbyterian meeting house” in Springfield.<sup>10</sup>

Before the September 1871 meeting, nine congregations requested letters of dismissal from the Bethel Association at its August 1871 meeting. These congregations--Bethany, Bethlehem,

Harmon, Hopwell, Pleasant Hill, Red River, Rock Spring, Springfield, and Station Camp--are all to be found in Robertson County, Tennessee (with the exception of Station Camp, Sumner County, Tennessee).<sup>11</sup>

There are three known extant newspaper accounts of the inaugural meeting of the Cumberland Association. Two of the three accounts are paragraph size in content and contain little detail fo the conclave.<sup>12</sup>

The third account is found in the 15 September issue of the *Nashville Union and American*. This article covered the usual committees and program personalities involved with such meetings, including the following statement:

A constitution was reported, which is about the same in substance as associations generally adopt, but very condensed form. The first article in the constitution fixed the name of the association as "Cumberland," in honor, I suppose, of the river bounding the territory of said association of three sides.

The article stated that there were fifteen churches in the organization--but mentions only one by name, New Bethel--and that the introductory sermon was preached by Dr. A. D. Sears, pastor of First Baptist Church, Clarksville, Tennessee.<sup>13</sup>

Unfortunately, none of the news items give any of the motivation or reasoning behind the founding of the Cumberland or a listing of the membership of the new association.

Another source of information on that organizational meeting is a manuscript that was written by W. G. Inman. Around 1896 Inman, a pastor in West Tennessee, wrote a manuscript titled "The Planting and Progress of the Baptist Cause in Tennessee." It was presented to the Tennessee Baptist Convention, but it was never printed.<sup>14</sup> Inman had been a minister in the bounds of Bethel, Concord, and Cumberland Associations before moving to West Tennessee.

In his account of Cumberland Association, Inman gives a listing of churches that joined the new association. The nine churches that received letters of dismissal from Bethel Association are listed. Three churches--White's Creek (now Union Hill), Edgefield, and New Bethel--came from Concord Association and were located in Davidson County (there appears to have been no

controversy in Concord Association, these churches probably joined as a matter of convenience). Nashville, First Church was an unaffiliated church, but it had been a member of Concord in the past. At this time it is undetermined as to which association, if any, that Marrowbone (Cheatham County) or New Hope (Sumner County) were previously members.<sup>15</sup>

In his discussion, Inman also gives insight concerning the motivation for the organization of the Cumberland. Referring to the auxiliary question in the Bethel Association, Inman writes:

The question had been agitated in the churches and many good brethren, not understanding it, or giving the matter thoughtful attention, became alarmed, for fear their liberties were being stolen, and deploring the situation and anxious to free themselves and their churches from the strife, moved in the policy of organizing a new Association to be composed of the Tennessee Churches. Rev. A. D. Sears was appointed to make publication to the churches. He, however, after second thought declined to take the step, but in connection with the churches at Nashville and Edgefield did move in the matter and the result was the formation of another Association.<sup>16</sup>

Inman recognized the primary motivation for the organization of the Cumberland as revolving around the auxiliary question in the Bethel Association. It is interesting to note that although nine churches left the Bethel Association, fifteen Tennessee churches did not. One of the fifteen was the First Baptist Church of Clarksville, Tennessee, whose pastor was Dr. A. D. Sears.<sup>17</sup>

It is also of interest to note that according to the advance notices of the meeting, Dr. T. G. Jones of Nashville was to preach the introductory sermon. Both Inman's manuscript and the *Nashville Union and American* state that Sears preached that first introductory sermon.<sup>18</sup>

Achilles DeGrasse Sears, D.D., was the pastor of First Baptist Church of Clarksville, Tennessee from 1866 to 1891. W. G. Inman was the pastor at Clarksville Church immediately preceding Sears and makes no mention of any change in plans.

Why did Sears change his interest in the new association as Inman states? Why did Sears not lead his congregation into a new association that he was heavily involved in organizing?

The 31 August 1872 issue of the *Clarksville Chronicle*



helps to partially explain the problem. The front page was taken out as an advertisement with the title "The Difficulty in the Baptist Church in Clarksville." The writer of this advertisement (which took up the vast majority of the first page), Dr. B. N. Herring, was excluded from the membership of Clarksville Church and was printing his side of the story. According to Dr. Herring, Sears had instigated Herring's dismissal from the congregation after Herring had opposed Sears in leading the church out of Bethel Association and into the new association. Herring states:

... a new Association being formed to be composed partly of churches of Bethel Association, and Eld. S. [Elder Sears] having been appointed to preach the introductory sermon at its organization, was very desirous his Church at Clarksville should go into it. I and others were opposed to this move. Eld. S. also disliked to ask Bethel Association for a letter of dismissal for his Church because he had felt himself agrieved with the Association, and so expressed himself; and at a meeting of this Body in 1870 he became so offended with certain parties that he left the Association during its session, declaring he would never again affiliate with it. He stated that the Churches of Bethel Association in Kentucky received all the credit for what was done by the Churches of this Body in Tennessee, and he had long desired a separation of the Churches in Tennessee from Bethel Association, and had so declared.<sup>19</sup>

In 1890 several Tennessee churches left the Blood River Association of Kentucky and formed the Dover Furnace Association in Stewart County, Tennessee. In the 1891 minutes of Dover Furnace a historical sketch is appended to the document that gives the motivation for the organization of that new association:

Dover Furnace Association is composed mainly of churches in Steward and Montgomery counties that have heretofore been connected with strong associations in Kentucky. Under the present system of missionary work, which strictly observes State lines, our feeble churches were dying and our destitution was neglected.<sup>20</sup>

Also in 1890, the last major wave of Tennessee churches left the Bethel Association. Big Rock and Cross Creek Churches (Steward County), and the Blooming Grove, Kirkwood, New Providence, and Reuben Ross Churches (Montgomery County) were accepted:

under the watch-care of Cumberland Association, until they could

procure letters of dismission in due form. A. D. Sears moved that the churches named be received, with the understanding that they procure letters from Bethel Association at the coming meeting.<sup>21</sup>

It would seem that the auxiliary issue and the perceived dominance of the Kentucky General Association combined to form a “revolt on the borderland” for Tennessee churches. Realizing that this period came in the aftermath of the U. S. Civil War and the subjugation experienced by Tennesseans at the hands of military government (1862-1865), it is not unreasonable to surmise that the Baptists of Tennessee feared that their “liberties were being stolen” as W. G. Inman wrote.

The next question that needs exploration is whether or not the fears of the Tennesseans were justified. In order to answer this question it is necessary to research the minutes of the Kentucky General Association and the Bethel Association as they concern the use and deignation of missionary funds and personnel.

The following table is compiled from the respective years of minutes of the Bethel Association (the Kentucky General Association’s reports merely duplicate the material). The only exception is 1870 which does not give a detailed report (the 1870 statistics are taken from the Kentucky General Association minutes).<sup>22</sup>

	<u>Number of Missionaries Appointed in Bethel</u>	<u>Number Assigned to Tennessee Churches</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
1866	4	2	50
1867	5	4	80
1868	7	4	57
1869	4	3	75
1870	4	2	50
1871	<u>5</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>60</u>
Total	29	18	62

At any given period of time, at least 50% of the missionary force of Bethel Association was assigned to churches in the Tennessee portion of the Association. Normally the distribution was greater than the 50 percentile, with an average assignment rate of 62%. With this evidence it would seem that the fears of the Tennesse-

ans were unjustified concerning the usurpation of their freedoms.

It is also of interest to note that from the time period 1866 to 1870 that Dr. A. D. Sears was a missionary assigned to the Clarksville Church. According to the 1871 minutes of the Kentucky General Association:

Elder A. D. Sears continued his labors under our appointment, at Clarksville, until Jan. 1st, 1871. Since that time he has been amply supported by his church, which is now one of the most flourishing and prosperous congregations in the bounds of the Bethel Association. He has given us no summary of his labors.<sup>23</sup>

Further research in this area is necessary around the person of A. D. Sears. This author has not been able to locate any personal papers at this time to continue this line of the research.

With a 62% appointment rate of missionaries among Tennessee churches associated with the Bethel Association one is not able to substantiate the fears of those churches that organized the Cumberland in 1871. As Inman wrote it would seem that the auxiliary relationship was misunderstood, and many became alarmed at the threat of the loss of their liberties.

It is not always easy to understand the shift in Baptist ecclesiology that Bradley speaks of concerning the "rise of state conventions and the Southern Baptist Convention, and the decline of associations and societies." But it must be remembered, as Walter Shurden has written, that "an obvious fact about the early associations is that they were theologically, rather than geographically, constructed. Churches joined associations for reasons of theological affinity and not geographical proximity."<sup>24</sup>

It is generally assumed that in order for an association to be fully effective in its work and ministry that it is necessary for the association to be limited in geographical scope. But this was not a thought current during the 1870's. The 1871 minutes of Bethel listed eight counties as part of its jurisdiction.<sup>25</sup>

Today one generally associates the association as an implementing arm of the denomination, in cooperation with a particular state convention. During the time period in question, state conventions were not only gaining strength at the expense of associations, but they were also being created. Even though the Kentucky General Association was organized in 1837, the Ten-

nessee Baptist Convention was not created until 1874. Many sought to avoid the centralizing tendencies inherent with the establishment of a state convention.

The account of the organization of the Cumberland Association fits well within J. C. Bradley's framework of the development in the life of Baptist associations. The fears and anxieties over the centralizing tendency of the auxiliary relationship between the General Association of Baptists in Kentucky and the various district associations is an excellent example of "the rise of state conventions...and the decline of associations."

**ENDNOTES and BIBLIOGRAPHY are not being included. If a copy is needed, please contact editor.**

*Timothy Mohon*

*Member, Friends of the Kentucky Baptist Historical Commission*

# **Forward in Faith**

## **One Hundred Twenty Five Years**

### **Madisonville First Baptist Church**

One hundred twenty-five years ago a brave band of thirty-two dedicated Baptist people met in the Cumberland Presbyterian Church building on North Main Street and organized the First Baptist Church. That was January 26, 1870. Since then, God has led in a growing ministry which has enabled this congregation to reach out to the ends of the earth with the Gospel.

During the past thirteen decades three buildings have been built. The first one was completed and dedicated in 1877. When it was outgrown another was constructed on the same site on North Main Street across from the post office. The first service, in this second building, was held on October 12, 1913. Later an educational building was added in 1926.

The third, our present building, was occupied in 1954. To this building a Special Ministries addition was dedicated and occupied September 7, 1975. It included a large activities room/gymnasium, new kitchen, fellowship room and offices for pastor and staff. A multi-phased series of renovation projects was completed in 1982. The most recent remodeling project was completed in the Fall 1990. This added nine classrooms, two restrooms, game room and storage areas to the existing facility.

While providing for its own needs, the church has also been involved in mission outreach. Three mission points were established, two of which have become churches. One of these became the Second Baptist Church in 1947 and the other became Park Avenue Baptist Church in 1972.

Our church continues to be deeply involved in missions. Since 1985 church members from FBC has ministered in Chile; China; Paraguay; Kenya; Honduras; Brazil; Russia; Philippines; Utah; Ohio; Idaho; Montana; Amelia Island, Florida; and Miami, Florida. During this Anniversary year our pastor, minister of music/youth and minister of education/administration will be part of mission teams to Russia, assisting in training church leaders in

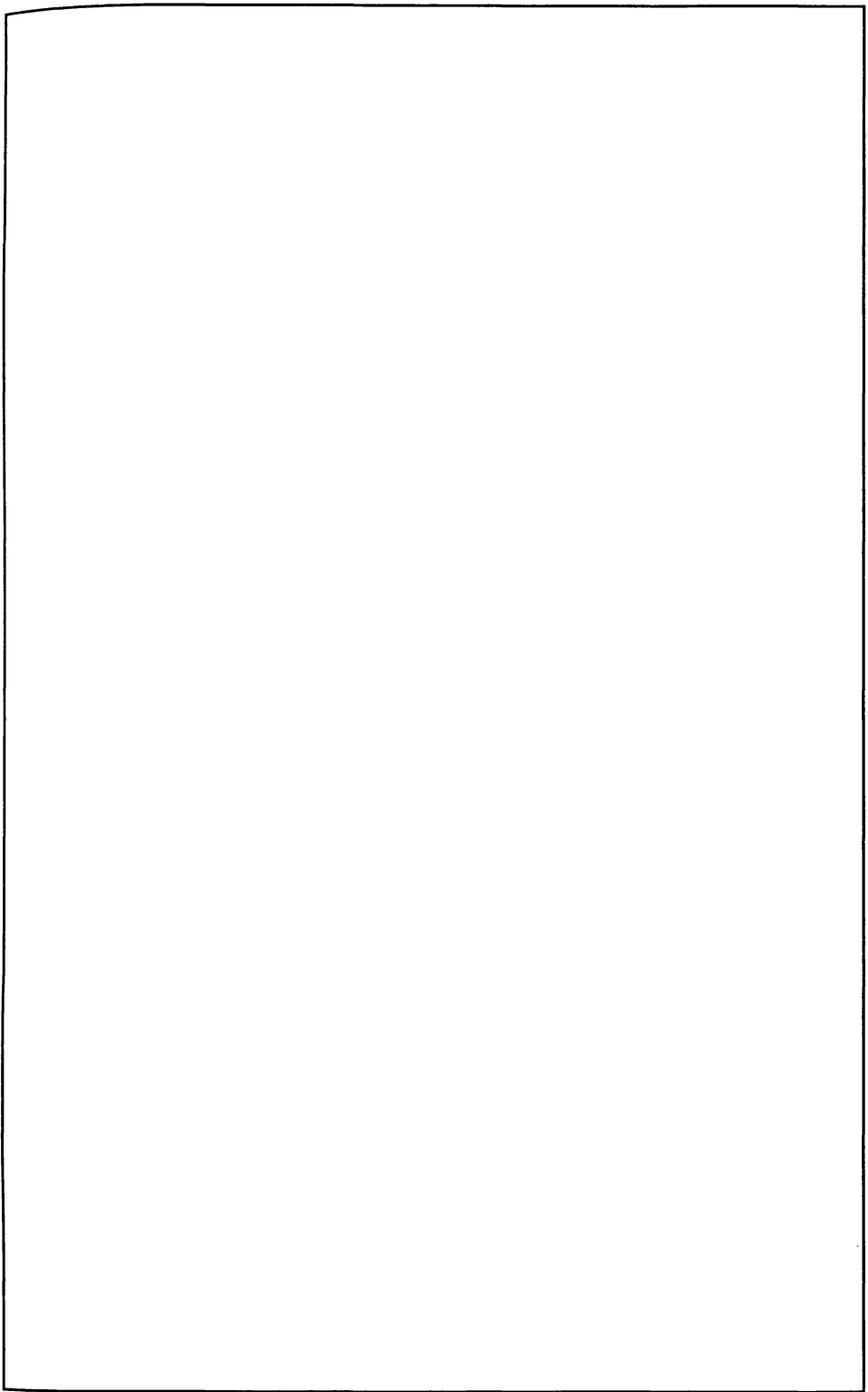
their home country.

FBC youth are involved in missions too. Our youth have conducted Backyard Bible Clubs, remodeled churches, taken part in door to door visitation and concerts in Ohio, Indiana and Florida. Summer 1995 our youth will be involved in a day camp for Haitian children at West Palm Beach, Florida Mission Fuge.

Since 1976, FBC members have contributed \$3,513,304 through special mission offerings and the Cooperative Program to support missions around the world. Also there were 568 baptisms.

First Baptist Church is a loving and caring church. As we move FORWARD IN FAITH, we are united in Christ and committed to the task of sharing the Good News of our Savior Lord Jesus Christ.

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