

BAPTIST BODIES

GENERAL STATEMENT

It is a distinct principle with Baptists that they acknowledge no human founder, recognize no human authority, and subscribe to no human creed. For all these things, Baptists of every name and order go back to the New Testament. And while no competent Baptist historian assumes to be able to trace a succession of Baptist churches through the ages, most of them are of one accord in believing that, if we could secure the records, there would be found heroic groups of believers in every age who upheld with their testimonies and, in many cases, with their lives, the great outstanding and distinctive principles of the Baptist churches of to-day.

As soon as the Reformation gave men opportunity to interpret the teachings of the Scriptures for themselves, and to embody their convictions in speech and act, persons holding Baptist doctrines immediately began to appear. In the first quarter of the sixteenth century, they were found in Germany and Switzerland, and were called Anabaptists (Re-baptizers), because they insisted that persons baptized in infancy must, upon profession of conversion, and in order to gain admission into church fellowship, be baptized again, although they do not appear to have insisted always on immersion. These early Anabaptists were in the main of high character, though in some instances they held doctrines which led to fanatical outbreaks which aroused no little prejudice against them.

Gradually, in spite of severe persecution, the Anabaptists grew in numbers. Some of them, driven from Germany, found refuge in the Low Countries and these were gathered, under the lead of Menno Simons, into the groups of Mennonites¹ who passed over into England, and doubtless played an important part in giving currency to Baptist principles. To their influence, in all probability, the English Baptists owe their first churches, established in Amsterdam in 1608 and in London in 1611. Glimpses of them appear in the days preceding the Commonwealth, and during the Cromwellian period they became more prominent. It was due to this Mennonite influence that the early Baptist churches in England were Arminian rather than Calvinistic in type, and were termed General Baptists, indicating belief in a universal atonement, in distinction from Particular Baptists, indicating a limited atonement. The first Calvinistic or Particular Baptist church was formed in London in 1638, its members seceding peaceably from an older Separatist congregation. In 1641 a further secession from the same Separatist church occurred, and the new group became convinced from study of the New Testament that the apostolic baptism was immersion. They sent one of their number to Holland, where he was immersed by a minister of the Collegiate church at Rhynsburg, where the practice of immersion had been introduced, and on his return the rest of the church were immersed. Gradually this practice was adopted by all the Baptist churches and became in the popular mind their distinguishing feature. The General and Particular Baptists were united in 1891.

The first Baptist church in America was probably established by Roger Williams, the "Apostle of Religious Liberty," in Providence, R. I., in 1639, although this honor is disputed by the First Baptist Church of Newport, R. I., organized, it is claimed, with John Clarke as its pastor, the same year or shortly after.

¹ See Mennonite Bodies, p. 842.

Roger Williams was a Separatist² minister who came to the Massachusetts Colony in 1631, and was banished from that colony because "he broached and divulged new and dangerous opinions against the authority of magistrates." Having established himself at Providence, he adopted essentially Baptist views and soon gathered a number of converts to this faith. As there was no Baptist church in existence in America at that time, he baptized Ezekiel Holliman, who thereupon baptized him. Williams then baptized 10 others, and this company of Baptist believers organized themselves into a church. John Clarke came from New Hampshire to Newport about the same time, and, apparently without any connection with the work of Williams, established a Baptist church in that town.

These early American Baptist churches belonged to the Particular, or Calvinistic, branch. Later, Arminian views became widely spread for a time, but ultimately the Calvinistic view of the atonement was generally accepted by the main body of Baptists in the Colonies. The divisions which now exist began to make their appearance at a relatively early date. In 1652 the church at Providence divided, one party organizing a church which marked the beginning of the General Six Principle Baptists. The Seventh Day Baptist body organized its first church at Newport in 1671. Arminianism practically disappeared from the Baptist churches of New England about the middle of the eighteenth century, but General Baptists were found in Virginia before 1714, and this branch gained a permanent foothold in the South. As a result of the revival movement, generally known as the New Light movement, which followed George Whitefield's visit to New England in 1740, the Separate Baptists came into existence and at one time were very numerous. The Free Baptists,³ in 1779, once more gave a general and widely accepted expression in New England to the Arminian view of the atonement.

Soon after the Revolutionary War, the question of the evangelization of the Negro race assumed importance, and a Colored Baptist church was organized in 1788. With the general revival movement at the close of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries, to which the Free Baptists owed no small part of their growth, there developed, especially in the mountain sections of the Middle West and in the Southern States, a reaction toward a sterner Calvinism, which, combined with the natural Baptist emphasis upon individualism, produced a number of associations strictly, even rigidly, Calvinistic, some of them going to the extent of dualism, as in the doctrine of the Two-Seed-in-the-Spirit Predestinarian Baptists.

About the same time, as missionary work became organized into societies, many of these associations opposed, not so much mission work itself, as its organization, through fear of a developing ecclesiasticism. These were variously termed "Old School," "Anti-Mission," "Hard Shell," and "Primitive" Baptists; but gradually the term "Primitive" became the most widely known and adopted. In contradistinction to these, the associations, or churches, which approved of missionary societies, came to be designated Missionary Baptists, though there was no definite denominational organization under that name.

The denominations mentioned, however, do not represent all who hold Baptist views, for during the revival period just referred to, the Disciples of Christ, or Churches of Christ, arose, who in practice are essentially Baptists, although they differ from the other bodies in some interpretations. With them also may be classed the Adventists, the Brethren (Dunker, Plymouth, and River), Mennonites, and certain other bodies. The Armenian and Eastern Orthodox Churches practice baptism by immersion, but do not limit it to those of mature years.

² See Congregational Churches, p. 453.

³ In 1926 the Free Baptist churches are included with those of the Northern Baptist Convention.

It thus appears that a survey of Baptist bodies should include not only those which make the term an integral part of their title, but some which are not ordinarily classed with them. It is also evident that among those who accept the name Baptists there are many differences, some of great importance. Seventh Day Baptists agree with other Baptists bodies except in regard to the Sabbath, but the distinction between Primitive Baptists and Free Will Baptists is much more marked than between Baptists and Disciples. Any presentation of the strength of Baptist denominations must take into account these divergencies.

By far the largest body of Baptists, not only in the United States but in the world, is that popularly known as "Baptist," though frequently referred to, and listed in the census of 1890, as "Regular Baptists." Other Baptist bodies prefix some descriptive adjective, such as "Primitive," "United," "General," "Free Will," etc., but this, which is virtually the parent body, commonly has no such qualification. Its churches, however, are ordinarily spoken of as "Northern," "Southern," and "Colored." This does not imply any divergence in doctrine or ecclesiastical order. All are one in these respects. It is rather a distinction adopted for administrative purposes, and based upon certain local or racial characteristics and conditions, the recognition of which implies no lack of fellowship or of unanimity of purpose. Should these distinctions cease to exist, there is nothing whatever to prevent the same unity in matters of administration which now exists in belief, fellowship, and ecclesiastical practice.

STATISTICS

The denominations grouped as Baptists in 1926, 1916, and 1906 are listed in the table below, with the principal statistics as reported for the three periods.

SUMMARY OF STATISTICS FOR BAPTIST BODIES, 1926, 1916, AND 1906

DENOMINATION AND CENSUS YEAR	Total number of churches	Number of members	VALUE OF CHURCH EDIFICES		EXPENDITURES DURING YEAR		SUNDAY SCHOOLS	
			Churches reporting	Amount	Churches reporting	Amount	Churches reporting	Number of scholars
1926								
Total for the group.....	60,192	3,440,922	52,281	\$469,827,795	54,145	\$98,045,096	47,889	4,654,241
Baptists:								
Northern Baptist Convention.....	7,611	1,289,966	7,297	185,370,576	7,380	34,318,486	6,999	1,052,794
Southern Baptist Convention.....	23,374	3,524,378	21,128	173,456,965	22,338	42,904,563	19,882	2,345,630
Negro Baptists.....	22,081	3,196,623	19,833	103,465,759	20,209	19,475,981	18,755	1,121,362
General Six Principle Baptists.....	6	293	6	20,500	5	3,046	5	229
Seventh Day Baptists.....	67	7,264	58	668,200	65	132,068	57	4,033
Free Will Baptists.....	1,024	79,592	765	1,156,743	872	252,613	643	38,199
United American Free Will Baptists (Colored).....	166	13,396	142	308,425	158	67,773	144	5,077
Free Will Baptists (Bullockites).....	2	36	1	1,500	1	100	1	15
General Baptists.....	465	31,501	353	706,325	440	113,825	295	18,797
Separate Baptists.....	65	4,803	43	63,650	41	9,292	37	1,782
Regular Baptists.....	349	23,091	233	647,550	223	55,610	65	4,690
United Baptists.....	221	18,903	139	144,665	147	15,094	30	2,005
Duck River and Kindred Associations of Baptists (Baptist Church of Christ).....	98	7,340	75	51,175	46	5,262	14	795
Primitive Baptists.....	2,267	81,374	1,037	1,730,348	776	166,847	5	181
Colored Primitive Baptists.....	925	43,978	87	171,518	111	39,419	24	2,278
Two-Seed-in-the-Spirit Predestinarian Baptists.....	27	304	24	19,350	20	473		
Independent Baptist Church of America.....	13	222	6	12,000	10	2,499	6	146
American Baptist Association.....	1,431	117,858	1,054	1,832,546	1,303	482,045	918	56,228

SUMMARY OF STATISTICS FOR BAPTIST BODIES, 1926, 1916, AND 1906—Contd.

DENOMINATION AND CENSUS YEAR	Total number of churches	Number of members	VALUE OF CHURCH EDIFICES		EXPENDITURES DURING YEAR		SUNDAY SCHOOLS	
			Churches reporting	Amount	Churches reporting	Amount	Churches reporting	Number of scholars
1916								
Total for the group	57,828	7,153,313	50,716	\$198,364,747	51,797	\$40,027,119	46,168	3,946,886
Baptists:								
Northern Baptist Convention.....	8,148	1,232,135	7,748	94,644,133	7,848	16,082,462	7,517	1,028,952
Southern Baptist Convention.....	23,580	2,708,870	19,268	58,348,373	21,078	15,063,743	17,555	1,665,996
National Baptist Convention.....	21,071	2,938,579	20,117	41,184,920	19,988	8,361,919	19,909	1,181,270
General Six Principle Baptists.....	10	456	10	25,850	6	2,483	6	278
Seventh Day Baptists.....	68	7,980	59	307,600	64	67,095	66	5,005
Free Baptists.....	171	12,570	159	670,720	153	123,363	141	11,642
Free Will Baptists.....	750	54,833	656	517,240	612	75,835	390	22,421
Colored Free Will Baptists.....	169	13,362	164	178,385	168	36,647	87	4,168
Free Will Baptists (Bullockites).....	12	184	6	3,450	3	275	1	12
General Baptists.....	517	33,466	390	421,837	424	64,698	305	18,545
Separate Baptists.....	46	4,254	40	47,565	33	9,468	30	1,711
Regular Baptists.....	401	21,521	189	141,480	143	11,855	50	2,587
United Baptists.....	254	22,097	82	52,147	69	4,837	16	701
Duck River and Kindred Associations of Baptists (Baptist Church of Christ).....	105	6,872	49	40,600	67	2,518	8	399
Primitive Baptists.....	2,142	80,311	1,580	1,601,807	964	96,270	-----	-----
Colored Primitive Baptists.....	336	15,144	164	154,690	170	22,881	87	3,201
Two-Seed-in-the-Spirit Predestinarian Baptists.....	48	679	35	23,950	7	170	-----	-----
1906								
Total for the group	54,707	5,662,234	49,329	139,842,656	-----	-----	41,165	2,898,914
Baptists:								
Northern Baptist Convention.....	8,247	1,052,105	7,795	74,620,025	-----	-----	7,346	851,269
Southern Baptist Convention.....	21,075	2,009,471	18,672	34,723,882	-----	-----	14,371	1,014,690
National Baptist Convention.....	18,492	2,261,607	17,890	24,437,272	-----	-----	17,478	924,665
General Six Principle Baptists.....	16	685	13	19,450	-----	-----	9	414
Seventh Day Baptists.....	76	8,381	68	292,250	-----	-----	67	5,117
Free Baptists.....	1,338	81,359	1,092	2,974,130	-----	-----	1,059	65,101
Free Will Baptists.....	608	40,280	554	296,585	-----	-----	263	12,720
Free Will Baptists (Bullockites).....	15	298	8	6,900	-----	-----	1	25
General Baptists.....	518	30,097	380	252,019	-----	-----	230	11,658
Separate Baptists.....	73	5,180	59	66,980	-----	-----	45	1,962
United Baptists.....	190	13,698	75	36,715	-----	-----	21	1,360
Duck River and Kindred Associations of Baptists (Baptist Church of Christ).....	92	6,416	86	44,321	-----	-----	9	402
Primitive Baptists.....	2,878	102,311	1,953	1,674,810	-----	-----	-----	-----
Colored Primitive Baptists in America.....	787	35,076	501	296,539	-----	-----	166	6,224
Two-Seed-in-the-Spirit Predestinarian Baptists.....	55	781	32	21,500	-----	-----	-----	-----
United American Free Will Baptists (Colored).....	247	14,489	151	79,278	-----	-----	100	3,307

Certain changes are to be noted. Under the "Negro Baptists," in 1926, are included the former National Baptist Convention, now the National Baptist Convention, U. S. A., and the National Baptist Convention of America; the Lott Carey Missionary Baptists; and the colored Baptist churches that were formerly reported with the Northern Baptist Convention. The Free Baptists of 1916 are now a part of the Northern Convention. A new body has recently completed its organization, under the name Independent Baptist Church of America, and a new denomination has come out of the Southern Baptist Convention, called the American Baptist Association.

GENERAL BAPTISTS

STATISTICS

Summary for the United States, with urban-rural classification.—A general summary of the statistics for the General Baptists for the year 1926 is presented in Table 1, which shows also the distribution of these figures between urban and rural territory.

The membership of the General Baptist churches consists of those persons who have been admitted to the local churches (by vote of the members) upon profession of faith and baptism (by immersion).

TABLE 1.—SUMMARY OF STATISTICS FOR CHURCHES IN URBAN AND RURAL TERRITORY, 1926: GENERAL BAPTISTS

ITEM	Total	In urban territory ¹	In rural territory ¹	PER CENT OF TOTAL ²	
				Urban	Rural
Churches (local organizations)	465	41	424	8.8	91.2
Members	31,501	4,051	27,450	12.9	87.1
Average per church.....	68	99	65		
Membership by sex:					
Male.....	13,306	1,726	11,580	13.0	87.0
Female.....	18,188	2,325	15,863	12.8	87.2
Sex not reported.....	7		7		
Males per 100 females.....	73.2	74.2	73.0		
Membership by age:					
Under 13 years.....	601	198	403	32.9	67.1
13 years and over.....	19,056	3,117	15,939	16.4	83.6
Age not reported.....	11,844	736	11,108	6.2	93.8
Per cent under 13 years ³	3.1	6.0	2.5		
Church edifices:					
Number.....	354	41	313	11.6	88.4
Value—Churches reporting.....	353	40	313	11.3	88.7
Amount reported.....	\$706,325	\$166,800	\$539,525	23.6	76.4
Average per church.....	\$2,001	\$4,170	\$1,724		
Debt—Churches reporting.....	18	8	10		
Amount reported.....	\$22,823	\$13,575	\$9,248	59.5	40.5
Churches reporting "no debt" on church edifice.....	186	20	166	10.8	89.2
Parsonages:					
Value—Churches reporting.....	10	5	5		
Amount reported.....	\$35,000	\$16,000	\$19,000	45.7	54.3
Debt—Churches reporting.....	1		1		
Amount reported.....	\$1,138		\$1,138		100.0
Churches reporting "no debt" on parsonage.....	7	3	4		
Expenditures during year:					
Churches reporting.....	440	41	399	9.3	90.7
Amount reported.....	\$113,825	\$35,430	\$78,395	31.1	68.9
Current expenses and improvements.....	\$95,792	\$29,879	\$65,913	31.2	68.8
Benevolences, missions, etc.....	\$17,181	\$5,551	\$11,630	32.3	67.7
Not classified.....	\$852		\$852		100.0
Average expenditure per church.....	\$259	\$864	\$196		
Sunday schools:					
Churches reporting.....	295	34	261	11.5	88.5
Officers and teachers.....	2,064	350	1,714	17.0	83.0
Scholars.....	18,797	3,720	15,077	19.8	80.2

¹ Urban territory includes all cities and other incorporated places which had 2,500 inhabitants or more in 1920, the date of the last Federal census; rural territory comprises the remainder of the country.

² Per cent not shown where base is less than 100.

³ Based on membership with age classification reported.

The data presented herewith for the year 1926 represent 465 active General Baptist churches, with 31,501 members. The classification of membership by sex was reported by 464 churches, and the classification by age was reported by 235 churches, including, however, only 85 which reported any members under 13 years of age.

Of the 10 churches reporting the value of parsonages 9, valued at \$30,500, were in the State of Indiana.

Comparative data, 1890-1926.—Table 2 presents, in convenient form for comparison, a summary of the available statistics of this denomination for the censuses of 1926, 1916, 1906, and 1890.

TABLE 2.—COMPARATIVE SUMMARY, 1890 TO 1926: GENERAL BAPTISTS

ITEM	1926	1916	1906	1890
Churches (local organizations)	465	517	518	399
Increase ¹ over preceding census:				
Number.....	-52	-1	119	
Per cent.....	-10.1	-0.2	29.8	
Members	31,501	33,466	30,097	21,362
Increase ¹ over preceding census:				
Number.....	-1,965	3,369	8,735	
Per cent.....	-5.9	11.2	40.9	
Average membership per church.....	68	65	58	54
Church edifices:				
Number.....	354	390	380	209
Value—Churches reporting.....	353	390	380	
Amount reported.....	\$706,325	\$421,837	\$252,019	\$201,140
Average per church.....	\$2,001	\$1,082	\$663	
Debt—Churches reporting.....	18	32	28	
Amount reported.....	\$22,823	\$17,362	\$6,999	
Parsonages:				
Value—Churches reporting.....	10	6	6	
Amount reported.....	\$35,000	\$11,100	\$8,900	
Debt—Churches reporting.....	1			
Amount reported.....	\$1,138			
Expenditures during year:				
Churches reporting.....	440	424		
Amount reported.....	\$113,825	\$64,698		
Current expenses and improvements.....	\$95,792	\$56,683		
Benevolences, missions, etc.....	\$17,181	\$8,015		
Not classified.....	\$852			
Average expenditure per church.....	\$259	\$153		
Sunday schools:				
Churches reporting.....	295	305	230	
Officers and teachers.....	2,064	2,140	1,520	
Scholars.....	18,797	18,545	11,658	

¹ A minus sign (—) denotes decrease.

State tables.—Tables 3, 4, 5, and 6 present the statistics for the General Baptists by States. Table 3 gives for each State the number and membership of the churches classified according to their location in urban or rural territory and the total membership classified by sex. Table 4 gives for selected States the number and membership of the churches for the three censuses from 1906 to 1926, together with the membership for 1926 classified as under 13 years of age and 13 years of age and over. Table 5 shows the value of church property and the debt on such property, for 1926 alone. Table 6 presents, for 1926, the church expenditures, showing separately the amounts expended for current expenses and improvements, and for benevolences, etc., and also gives the data for Sunday schools. Separate presentation in Tables 5 and 6 is limited to those States in which three or more churches reported the principal items shown (values or ex-

penditures), in order to avoid disclosing the financial statistics of any individual church. The States omitted from these tables can be determined by referring to the complete list which appears in Table 3.

Ecclesiastical divisions.—Table 7 presents, for each association of the General Baptist churches, the more important statistical data shown by States in the earlier tables, including number of churches, membership, value of church edifices, debt on church edifices, expenditures, and Sunday schools.

TABLE 3.—NUMBER AND MEMBERSHIP OF CHURCHES IN URBAN AND RURAL TERRITORY, AND TOTAL MEMBERSHIP BY SEX, BY STATES, 1926: GENERAL BAPTISTS

GEOGRAPHIC DIVISION AND STATE	NUMBER OF CHURCHES			NUMBER OF MEMBERS			TOTAL MEMBERSHIP BY SEX			
	Total	Urban	Rural	Total	Urban	Rural	Male	Female	Sex not reported	Males per 100 females ⁽¹⁾
United States.....	465	41	424	31,501	4,051	27,450	13,306	18,188	7	73.2
East North Central:										
Indiana.....	73	14	59	6,978	2,033	4,945	2,823	4,155	---	67.9
Illinois.....	60	5	55	4,126	484	3,642	1,691	2,435	---	69.4
West North Central:										
Missouri.....	138	8	130	6,936	396	6,540	2,913	4,023	---	72.4
Nebraska.....	7	---	7	102	---	102	44	51	7	---
East South Central:										
Kentucky.....	108	9	99	9,151	780	8,371	3,969	5,182	---	76.6
Tennessee.....	27	2	25	1,750	212	1,538	799	951	---	84.0
West South Central:										
Arkansas.....	35	---	35	1,898	---	1,898	833	1,065	---	78.2
Oklahoma.....	16	2	14	494	80	414	214	280	---	76.4
Pacific:										
California.....	1	1	---	66	66	---	20	46	---	---

¹ Ratio not shown where number of females is less than 100.

TABLE 4.—NUMBER AND MEMBERSHIP OF CHURCHES, 1906 TO 1926, AND MEMBERSHIP BY AGE, 1926, BY STATES: GENERAL BAPTISTS

STATE	NUMBER OF CHURCHES			NUMBER OF MEMBERS			MEMBERSHIP BY AGE, 1926			
	1926	1916	1906	1926	1916	1906	Under 13 years	13 years and over	Age not reported	Per cent under 13 ¹
United States.....	465	517	518	31,501	33,466	30,097	601	19,056	11,844	3.1
Indiana.....	73	77	73	6,978	7,497	6,671	287	5,686	1,005	4.8
Illinois.....	60	62	48	4,126	4,410	3,621	41	2,812	1,273	1.4
Missouri.....	133	168	186	6,936	8,857	9,043	107	3,781	3,048	2.8
Nebraska.....	7	9	6	102	244	103	2	18	82	---
Kentucky.....	108	108	98	9,151	8,663	6,881	130	5,230	3,791	2.4
Tennessee.....	27	32	27	1,750	1,789	1,108	11	779	960	1.4
Arkansas.....	35	36	54	1,898	1,227	2,035	23	670	1,205	3.3
Oklahoma.....	16	25	26	494	779	630	---	14	480	---
California.....	1	---	---	66	---	---	---	66	---	---

¹ Based on membership with age classification reported; not shown where base is less than 100.

**TABLE 5.—VALUE OF CHURCH PROPERTY, AND CHURCH DEBT, BY STATES, 1926:
GENERAL BAPTISTS**

[Separate presentation is limited to States having 3 or more churches reporting value of edifices]

STATE	Total number of churches	Number of church edifices	VALUE OF CHURCH EDIFICES		DEBT ON CHURCH EDIFICES	
			Churches reporting	Amount	Churches reporting	Amount
United States.....	465	354	353	\$706,325	18	\$22,823
Indiana.....	73	71	70	289,100	6	8,163
Illinois.....	60	56	56	88,950	1	3,400
Missouri.....	138	80	80	109,525	2	5,400
Kentucky.....	108	101	101	166,050	5	4,935
Tennessee.....	27	25	25	25,000	1	75
Arkansas.....	35	17	17	20,600	2	450
Other States.....	24	4	4	7,100	1	400

**TABLE 6.—CHURCH EXPENDITURES AND SUNDAY SCHOOLS, BY STATES, 1926:
GENERAL BAPTISTS**

[Separate presentation is limited to States having 3 or more churches reporting expenditures]

STATE	Total number of churches	EXPENDITURES DURING YEAR					SUNDAY SCHOOLS		
		Churches reporting	Total amount	For current expenses and improvements	For benevolences, missions, etc.	Not classified	Churches reporting	Officers and teachers	Scholars
United States.....	465	440	\$113,825	\$95,792	\$17,181	\$852	295	2,064	18,797
Indiana.....	73	73	48,799	39,155	9,644	-----	65	571	5,622
Illinois.....	60	59	16,604	14,722	1,889	13	45	321	2,411
Missouri ¹	138	133	22,812	20,536	2,276	-----	84	550	5,161
Nebraska.....	7	6	316	259	37	20	2	9	70
Kentucky.....	108	101	18,719	15,624	2,388	707	65	410	3,538
Tennessee.....	27	27	3,076	2,403	561	112	13	71	654
Arkansas.....	35	28	3,076	2,764	312	-----	17	110	1,086
Oklahoma.....	16	13	423	329	94	-----	3	15	155
California.....	1	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	1	7	100

¹ Includes the figures for expenditures reported by 1 church with 66 members, located in California but affiliated with the New Liberty Association of Missouri.**HISTORY, DOCTRINE, AND ORGANIZATION¹.****DENOMINATIONAL HISTORY**

The General, or Arminian, Baptists trace their origin as a distinct denomination to the early part of the seventeenth century. Their first church is believed to have been founded in Holland in 1607 or 1610 and their first church in England in 1611. During the latter half of the seventeenth and the first half of the eighteenth centuries many of the Baptist churches in New England held Arminian views, and early in the eighteenth century there were also a number of General Baptists in Virginia. These sent a request for ministerial aid to the General Baptists of London, in answer to which Robert Nordin was sent to Virginia in

¹ This statement, which is substantially the same as that published in Part II of the Report on Religious Bodies, 1916, has been revised by J. O. Cox, editor and publisher of "The Messenger," Owensville, Ind., and approved by him in its present form.

TABLE 7.—NUMBER AND MEMBERSHIP OF CHURCHES, VALUE OF EDIFICES, DEBT, EXPENDITURES, AND SUNDAY SCHOOLS, BY ASSOCIATIONS, 1926: GENERAL BAPTISTS

ASSOCIATION	Total number of churches	Number of members	VALUE OF CHURCH EDIFICES		DEBT ON CHURCH EDIFICES		EXPENDITURES DURING YEAR		SUNDAY SCHOOLS	
			Churches reporting	Amount	Churches reporting	Amount	Churches reporting	Amount	Churches reporting	Number of scholars
Total	465	31,501	353	\$706,325	18	\$22,823	440	\$113,825	295	18,797
Bethel (Ky., Tenn.)	4	140		(¹)			4	241		
Cherokee Home (Okla.)	8	292					8	201	1	50
Eastern Union (Mo.)	9	397	3	4,800			9	752	6	318
Flat Creek (Ind.)	21	1,441	19	48,100	1	3,000	21	7,574	19	1,337
Freedom (Ind., Ky.)	11	902	11	18,800	2	600	11	1,386	7	382
Free Union (Ky.)	13	1,035	12	11,350			12	1,424	6	265
Galilee (Mo.)	10	541	10	21,000	1	5,000	10	4,067	6	293
Green River Union (Ky.)	5	283	3	2,000			4	216	1	30
Holly Grove (Ark.)	7	242	3	3,500			7	566	5	309
Liberty (Ill., Ind., Mo.)	38	3,903	34	197,300	2	2,900	37	36,113	32	3,121
Long Creek (Ky.)	15	1,175	13	14,600			15	1,697	12	541
Missouri (Mo., Ark.)	44	2,544	17	17,400			43	3,332	26	1,237
Moark (Mo., Ark.)	21	1,316	19	32,975	3	850	21	8,256	17	1,574
Mount Olivet (Ill.)	16	980	15	21,750			16	3,975	12	576
Mount Union (Ky., Tenn.)	24	1,335	23	32,600	2	1,535	24	2,566	11	663
New Hope (Nebr.)	3	57					3	219	2	70
New Liberty (Mo., Ky., Tenn., Calif.)	33	2,263	30	40,100	2	475	33	8,578	24	1,799
North Liberty (Mo.)	1	40								
Northwest Nebraska (Nebr.)	4	45		(¹)			3	97		
Ohio (Ill., Ky.)	19	1,274	18	27,400	1	3,400	19	3,470	11	701
Oklahoma (Okla.)	8	202		(¹)			5	222	2	105
Old Liberty (Mo.)	2	78		(¹)					2	110
Portland (Ky., Tenn.)	18	1,088	18	23,200	1	1,500	18	2,269	10	339
Post Oak Grove (Ark.)	10	674	5	4,000			8	307	6	382
Union (Ky.)	43	4,616	43	90,400	1	1,600	38	11,148	29	1,722
Union Grove (Ind., Ill.)	26	1,965	24	35,700			25	4,524	23	1,126
United (Ind., Mo.)	26	1,845	23	48,050	2	1,963	26	10,261	23	1,472
West Liberty (Mo.)	7	177		(¹)			7	175	1	40
White River (Mo., Ark.)	14	512		(¹)			11	137	1	35
Wolf Bayou (Ark.)	5	189								
Combinations ²			10	10,700			2	52		

¹ Amount included in the figures shown on the line designated "Combinations," to avoid disclosing the statistics of individual churches.

² The figures for value and expenditures represent data for churches in Bethel, Northwest Nebraska, Oklahoma, Old Liberty, West Liberty, and White River associations.

1714. Nordin is supposed after his arrival to have organized at Burleigh the first Baptist church in Virginia, although it is possible that he found it already established. Later other Baptists churches were organized, and the movement spread into North Carolina, where a flourishing yearly meeting was formed, and to other colonies of the South.

As the Calvinistic Baptists, who had better educated and more aggressive leaders, increased in numbers and strength, the majority of the Arminian Baptist churches, both in New England and the South, became affiliated with them, although the General Six Principle Baptists of New England and a small body of churches in the Carolinas continued to hold the doctrines of the General Baptists. Later the Free Baptists of New England, who held essentially the same principles, attracted many who would otherwise have formed General Baptist churches. The small group of General Baptist churches in the Carolinas, being reinforced by Free Baptists from the North, in time became known as "Free Will Baptists," and included most of those holding Arminian views in that section of the country.

The historical origin of those Baptist bodies in the United States that bear the appellation "General Baptists" at the present time is somewhat uncertain, but it seems probable that they represent colonies sent to the Cumberland region by the early General Baptist churches of North Carolina. The first very definite information concerning them is that in 1823 a General Baptist church was organized in Vanderburg County, Ind., by Benoni Stinson and others. The following year Liberty Association was organized with four churches. The movement gradually extended to Kentucky, Illinois, Tennessee, Missouri, Arkansas, and Nebraska. More recently churches have been established in Oklahoma, California, and Michigan.

Two distinct influences appeared early in these churches, one for greater denominational emphasis, the other for union with other Baptist bodies, such as the Free Will and the Separate Baptists. Various efforts for such union were put forth, but without conspicuous success. One association united with the Free Will Baptists in 1868, but withdrew in 1877. In 1881 two associations had a conference with an association of "Missionary Baptists," as they were called, to distinguish them from Anti-Missionary or Primitive Baptists, but it failed to produce results. More recently a union with a Separate Baptist association caused some disturbance, but this also was not permanent. Notwithstanding the hindrances attending these discussions, the denomination has made progress, establishing churches and organizing missionary societies and Sunday schools. In 1915 the General Association of General Baptists formed a cooperative union with the Northern Baptist Convention.

DOCTRINE

The confession of faith of the General Baptists consists of 11 articles which, with but two slight changes, are identical with those formulated by Benoni Stinson in 1823. The distinctive feature of this confession is the doctrine of a general atonement (whence the name, "General Baptist"), which is that Christ died for all men, not merely for the elect, and that any failure of salvation rests purely with the individual. Other clauses state that man is "fallen and depraved," and can not extricate himself from this state by any ability possessed by nature; that except in the case of infants and idiots, regeneration is necessary for salvation, and is secured only through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ; that while the Christian who endures to the end shall be saved, it is possible for him to fall from grace and be lost; that rewards and punishments are eternal; that the bodies of the just and unjust will be raised, the former to the resurrection of life, the latter to the resurrection of damnation; that the only proper mode of baptism is immersion, and the only proper subjects are believers; and that the communion, or Lord's Supper, should be free to all believers. Some of the churches practice foot washing.

ORGANIZATION

In polity the General Baptists are in accord with other Baptist bodies. The local churches are independent, but are united in local, State, and general associations, of advisory character, with no authority over the individual church. No association can legally form an organic union with any other denomination without the ratification of each individual church, and any local church wishing to withdraw from any association may do so, while any local association may withdraw from a State or General Association.

When a church desires the ordination of one of its members, it makes recommendation to a body composed of the ordained ministers and deacons of the various local churches, corresponding closely to the councils of Congregational

churches, though sometimes called a presbytery. This body conducts an examination of the candidate and, if he is found worthy, ordains him, acting as the representative of the church. It has, however, no authority except such as is given to it by the local church. The vote of the local church on the reception of members must be unanimous.

In 1870 a General Association was organized to bring "into more intimate and fraternal relation and effective cooperation various bodies of liberal Baptists." With this most of the local associations are connected through delegates. While this general association is a General Baptist institution, its constitution permits the reception of other Baptist associations whose doctrines and usages harmonize with those of the General Baptists. This constitution states that the name can never be changed, and that no less than three-fourths of its trustees shall be members of General Baptist churches. It has general supervision over the college and educational interests of the denomination, the home and foreign mission work, publication interests, literature, etc.

WORK

A home mission board is maintained under the direction of the general association, its object being to support home missionaries, establish churches in new fields, assist in building houses of worship, etc. Its funds are secured through voluntary contributions of individuals and churches. The various local associations also have boards which do similar work within their own territory, and which cooperate with the general board. The home mission board of the Liberty Association of Indiana has a permanent fund of several thousand dollars, and has been the means of advancing the interests of the association and of the denomination as much perhaps as any other one agency. Largely through its efforts the present publishing house of the denomination was established.

For many years the General Baptists cooperated with the Free Baptists in foreign mission work, but, since this was found to be not entirely satisfactory, a foreign missionary society was organized in 1904, under direction and control of the general association. In order that the foreign work to be undertaken in future years might be successful, the society began at once to raise a permanent endowment fund of \$10,000.

Through the foreign mission board work is now being carried on in the Island of Guam, where in 1926 there were several stations, occupied by 2 American missionaries and several native helpers. There are 2 organized churches, with 75 members. The amount contributed for this work in 1926 was about \$5,000. The value of property belonging to the denomination in foreign fields is estimated at \$10,000, and there is an endowment of \$3,500.

The General Baptists have one educational institution, Oakland City College, in Indiana, which includes a theological department. It has a faculty of 15 teachers and an average attendance of about 350 students, property valued at \$100,000, and an endowment of about \$250,000. The amount contributed for the support of the school during the year was about \$20,000.

The publishing house at Owensville, Ind., issues the "Messenger," the church organ, which was established in 1886, and has assisted largely in building up and strengthening the denomination and its institutions.

Sunday schools, women's missionary and aid societies, and Christian Endeavor societies are maintained in many of the churches.