

Baptists in Georgia, 1733-2010

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Introduction

From their beginning, Baptists have actively favored the Lordship of Christ, the authority of the Bible rather than ecclesiastical tradition, believer's baptism, the priesthood of all believers, the gathered and congregational church, local church autonomy that encourages associationalism/connectionalism, the separation of church and state, and religious liberty. Nevertheless, from virtually the start here in Georgia, *diversity* has also marked Baptist denominational life--a fact that will be made clear as this essay continues.

Early Baptists

In 1733, one or two Baptists arrived on the boat with James Oglethorpe: William Calvert, a lay preacher, and his wife, who might have shared his faith. Others soon followed, totaling probably fewer than 140 by 1770. In 1772 the first continuing Baptist church, Kiokee near Appling, was founded; twelve years later the first Baptist association in the state, the Georgia Association, appeared. As the new century opened, there were about 4,700 Baptists, gathered in 72 churches, with 3 district associations that included 90 percent of the total Baptist population. When the new nation was formed in 1776, about .52 percent of all Georgians were Baptist. In 1800 the figure stood at about 3 percent.¹

Seventh-Day Baptists

It is often forgotten that the first Baptist church in Georgia was comprised of those who worshiped on Saturday. The Tuckaseeking Baptist Church (Effingham County) existed only from 1759 to about 1763, when persecution forced its members out of Georgia. No other Seventh-Day Baptist congregation was gathered in Georgia until 1938. Since then, 6 small congregations have been constituted, 2 of which are extinct. In 2010, 4 churches existed in the Metro-Atlanta area, containing 125 members. Two churches are affiliated with the Seventh Day Baptist General Conference founded in 1802 and headquartered in Janesville, Wisconsin, a national body sponsoring missionary, educational, and benevolent ministries.²

Georgia Baptist Convention (GBC)

After several failed attempts at union (1801, 1802, 1803-c.1810), the largest group of Baptists formed a general body in 1822 which gradually became statewide. Now called the Georgia Baptist Convention, this body supported, and continues to support, *The Christian Index* (the state Baptist periodical) and various state and national Baptist mission, educational, and publication projects. Georgia Baptists were significantly involved in the formation of the Southern Baptist Convention (Augusta, 1845). The Civil War and its aftermath severely curtailed all of the

convention's efforts. The founding of the State Mission Board and the employment of a professional leader, J. H. DeVotie, in 1877 proved to be significant as a means of rejuvenating broader Baptist ministries. Except for the depression years, thereafter expansion was usually steady. Membership in 2009 included 92 associations, 3,604 churches, and 1,385,234 members. Affiliated with the convention are 133 African-American churches and missions and 258 congregations speaking over thirty languages other than English. J. Robert White is full-time executive director-treasurer with headquarters in Duluth.³

Free Will Baptists

Also often forgotten is the fact that Arminian Baptists had an organized presence in Georgia in 1791 when the Hebron Baptist Church (Elbert County) was founded. Two other Arminian churches soon followed in Columbia and Hancock counties, the South Carolina-Georgia General Baptist Association existed briefly, and the whole enterprise in that part of the state disappeared about 1797.⁴

After a three-decade break in credible historical records, other Arminian churches--influenced by Cyrus White--founded the United Baptist Association in 1831, which was followed in 1836 by the still-active Chattahoochee United Free Will Baptist Association. State conventions starting about 1891 and in 1918 failed to be adequately supported. Since 1937 the Georgia State Association of Free Will Baptists has gradually gained strength, being composed of 10 associations, 120 churches, and 8,701 members in 2007. With principal strength in South Georgia, this body supports church development, ministerial training, summer camping, a children's home in Alabama, a monthly *Promotional Bulletin*, and a website. The state headquarters is in Colquitt, with William Smith as full-time executive secretary-treasurer. In cooperation with the National Association of Free Will Baptists (constituted in 1935 with headquarters now in Antioch, Tennessee), it supports foreign and home missionaries, a college in Tennessee, extensive publications, and a ministerial retirement program.⁵

In 1963, 5 churches in Southwest Georgia (at present having about 340 members) formed the regional Paul Palmer Fellowship Conference of Original Free Will Baptists. Two of the congregations are affiliated also with the Convention of Original Free Will Baptists (constituted in 1921 as the General Conference of Free Will Baptists; present name adopted in 1962; headquarters in Ayden, North Carolina), an organization sustaining missionary, educational, and benevolent ministries. The other 3 are independent of any national Free Will body.⁶

Ten Georgia district associations have existed as independent bodies prior to or apart from the state general association. None of these is currently active, although surely a few independent local churches still remain.⁷

African-American Missionary Baptists

The earliest all-Black congregations in Georgia were First African Baptist Church in Savannah (1777), Springfield Baptist Church in Augusta (about 1793), and Beaverdams Baptist Church in Burke County (about 1796). Early leaders in the state were David George, George Liele, Jesse Galphin, and Andrew Bryan. However, most African-American Georgia Baptists prior to the Civil War were slaves forced to hold membership in white-dominated churches. With the coming of freedom, the Zion Baptist Association (1865) was the first African-American general body in the state, followed almost immediately by Ebenezer Missionary Baptist Association and--over the years--by over 200 other associations. Statewide, Blacks organized the Missionary Baptist Convention of Georgia (existing from 1870 to 1915), a body which is perpetuated to some degree in three existing groups: the large General Missionary Baptist Convention (headquartered in Atlanta), the New Era Baptist Convention (headquartered in Griffin), and the Georgia Baptist

Missionary and Educational Convention (headquartered in Macon). Black Georgia Baptists were significantly involved in the formation of the National Baptist Convention of the United States of America (Atlanta, 1895). Over the years African-American missionary Baptist churches in the state have affiliated in one fashion or another with one or more of the four national bodies (National Baptist Convention, U.S.A, Inc. [constituted 1895]; National Baptist Convention of America, Inc. [constituted 1915]; Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc. [constituted 1961]; and National Missionary Baptist Convention of America [constituted 1988]). Since 1972 as many as 16 churches have been dually aligned with the American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A. and, more recently, about 130 churches and missions are dually aligned with the Georgia Baptist Convention. Virtually all of these Baptists are identified with national and state conventions sponsoring missionary, educational, and benevolent ministries. While recognizing the uncertainty of such figures, in 2000 there were about 526,318 persons in about 2,202 African-American Georgia Missionary Baptist churches.⁸

Cherokee Baptists

Associated chiefly with Duncan O'Bryant and Evan Jones, some Native Americans in Northwest Georgia became Baptist between 1825 and 1838. Under the former, the Tinsawatee church with branches in Dawson and Cherokee counties contained 31 members in 1828 and held membership in the Chattahoochee Baptist Association. Under the latter, the Valley Towns church in Cherokee County, North Carolina, contained 227 members in 1835, some of whom were aligned with branches in Georgia. The Trail of Tears in 1838 halted this phase of the activity in the East.⁹

Old-Line Primitive Baptists

With the formation of the national Triennial Convention (1814) and the Georgia Baptist Convention (1822), complaints of departure from time-honored doctrines and practices were increasingly heard in Georgia and elsewhere. Sternly Calvinistic Old-Line Primitive leaders, opposed to Sunday schools and money-based organizations, maintained command of some already existing churches and associations and proceeded to institute others if they were repudiated by the majority. The United Baptist Association (1828) was the first such body in the state, changing its name to Canoochie in 1830. Over the years about 90 other Old-Line associations have existed for varying periods of time. Many have emerged because of internal struggles concerning the extent of divine sovereignty and the purpose of preaching, the propriety of declaring bankruptcy, the necessity of footwashing, the power of associations, divorce, and membership in secret societies. Although no state structure exists, limited cohesion is achieved by the wide circulation of several popular Old-Line newspapers and by correspondence among various associations. Overall, numerical extent has gradually diminished. It is probable that about 212 churches with about 5,300 members are to be placed in this category. Still reflecting their rural origins, they continue to gather for worship, mutual encouragement, and the pursuit of limited, localized benevolent ministries. Some support mission work in India, Kenya, Uganda, and the Philippines.¹⁰

African-American Old-Line Primitive Baptists

During the antebellum years, Old-Line churches had contained some Black members, most of whom probably left as soon as conditions permitted. The Antioch Baptist Association was established in 1869, to be followed by about 20 others in the state. The movement peaked about 1910 with 14 associations and about 210 churches claiming almost 4,500 members. Presently, 12

associations are active, and the state contains about 97 churches with about 852 members. They focus on worship, mutual encouragement, and localized benevolences.¹¹

Absoluter Primitive Baptists

Probably by late-nineteenth century, some Primitive Baptists in Georgia were holding Absoluter views, insisting that God unconditionally elects sinners to salvation and extends his control over all areas of life—yet without being the author of sin (“the absolute predestination of all things”). For the first time about 1930 2 Georgia associations with 27 churches and 592 members openly adhered to this position. Their numbers have subsequently declined, and currently 4 churches with about 36 members meet monthly for worship and fellowship.¹²

African-American Free Will Baptists

Following the Civil War, Free Will Baptist churches tended to lose their African-American members. The first association seems to have been Spring Creek (1872), followed by at least 4 others. In 1906, 93 churches with 3,680 members were noted in the federal religious census. The number had shrunk to 54 churches with 2,081 members in 1936. Perhaps 50 churches with about 1,250 members are now active.¹³

Holiness Baptists

Asserting the reality of sinless perfection in this life, 4 new churches in and near Wilcox County formed the Holiness Baptist Association in 1894. Three other associations followed, one of which has already disbanded. Currently 3 associations hold about 50 churches with about 1,500 members. Although they share a common rural background and similar ethical standards, they have no organizational relationship with each other. Strict Sabbatarians, they abstain from tobacco, intoxicating liquors, tea, coffee, dances, gambling, public ball games, swimming pools, circuses, television, short hair for women and long hair for men, immodest attire, and secret societies. Some are pacifist and reject capital punishment. Some speak in tongues. A few women are recognized as preachers and pastors. At one time or another two periodicals, *The Gospel Standard* and the *Holiness Baptist Herald*, were issued, and two campgrounds continue to be maintained in Coffee County.¹⁴

Landmark Baptists

Initiated in 1851 by J. R. Graves of Tennessee, the Landmark movement soon became a strong force throughout parts of the deep South. Graves and his colleagues produced a unique combination of ideas and practices, some of which were common to other Baptists as well. Local Baptist congregations were thought to be the only true churches, together comprising the Kingdom of God on earth and able to trace their lineage back to the New Testament through a succession of non-Roman Catholic bodies. Baptists should not accept the so-called baptism of other groups (not even their immersion), not share the Lord's Supper with them, not recognize their ordinations, and not permit their ministers in Baptist pulpits. Southwide and statewide mission boards were held to circumscribe the power of a local church; missionaries could properly be sent out only by a church, an association, or a district convention quickly responsive to the dictates of its constituent churches. Before the Civil War this point of view was influential in the short-lived Cherokee Georgia Baptist Convention of Northwest Georgia.¹⁵

Led by J. A. Scarboro and using the pages of *Our Missionary Helper*, a Baptist missions periodical in Georgia, the Landmark movement (this time named Gospel Missions) again

established a presence in the state by the turn of the century. The Miller and Baptist Union associations became Landmark by 1920. From this nucleus, two statewide general associations have been established in Georgia: the Georgia Association of Landmark Baptist Churches (1925-c.1933) and the Georgia State Association of Missionary Baptist Churches (1946-present). From 1921 to 1947, some Georgia churches were affiliated with the Florida general association. Each general association has cooperated with the American Baptist Association (constituted in 1905 as Baptist General Association; present name adopted in 1924; headquarters in Texarkana, Texas) which has made various claims of Georgia involvement over the years: 23 ordained ministers (1930), 16 churches (1967), and 23 churches (1975). In 2008 there were 17 churches and missions with about 2,175 members in this category.¹⁶

When a division came in the American Baptist Association in 1950, the Interstate and Foreign Landmark Missionary Baptist Association of America was founded with major strength in Louisiana and Mississippi. Briefly in the 1960s the Faith Way Baptist Association existed in the Atlanta area. One Georgia church with 11 members cooperated with the general association in the 1980s, but the church had disappeared from the record by 1998.¹⁷ Affiliated with the Baptist Missionary Association of America (constituted in 1950 with headquarters in Little Rock, Arkansas), the Baptist Missionary Association of Alabama and Georgia had 1 or 2 churches or missions in Georgia between 1967 and 2000.¹⁸ A recent study has discovered at least 37 unaffiliated Landmark churches active in the state.¹⁹

Progressive Primitive Baptists

Early in the twentieth century, Primitive Baptists were at odds among themselves concerning the use of musical instruments, prolonged revival meetings, regular ministerial support, Sunday schools, a cohesive denominational structure, and other "new" ideas and practices. Affirming these measures, the "progressives" gained control of some churches and by 1903 gained control of their first association. Their numbers gradually grew, chiefly in Georgia; and by 2007, 7 associations and 73 churches with 4,767 members existed in the state. The Primitive Baptist Foundation and the Southern States Primitive Baptist Bible Conference serve as loose state structures, and multiple ministries are offered: state missions, summer camps, ministers' schools, music camps, a ministers' wives association, a scholarship fund for college students, nursing and retirement homes at Vidalia and Millen, a history archives at Statesboro, a radio Bible study service, and the monthly *Banner-Herald*. For almost thirty years Birdwood Junior College at Thomasville was an agency of this body. While missionaries and funds were sent to Haiti for many years, mission work today is concentrated in the Ukraine and south Russia.²⁰

National Primitive Baptists

The Progressive Primitive movement appeared among African-American Baptists late in the nineteenth century and probably arrived in Georgia in the form of churches shortly thereafter. In 2000, 19 churches with about 1,264 members in 3 district associations were affiliated with the National Primitive Baptist Convention.²¹

Independent Baptists

Three kinds of Independent Baptists exist in Georgia. (1) From the first decades, Baptist churches in Georgia have existed apart from associations and (later) conventions. Prior to 1801, at least 13 such churches were probably in operation. Shortly after the Georgia Baptist Convention was initiated, churches and associations claimed to be missionary--not Primitive--but stood aloof from the convention. Some able historians have termed these Separate Baptists. Over the years at least

44 associations have occupied this classification for extended periods at one time or another. Often rural in their orientation, they favor temperance, feetwashing, theologically untrained ministers, and associational missions. For the most part, they focus on worship, mutual encouragement, and localized benevolences. Eight associations of this variety existed in 2010, containing an estimated 121 churches with 18,594 members.²²

(2) Another, and more recent form of independency is also found in Georgia, comprised of churches and pastors identifying themselves with one or more national or regional fellowships --such as Baptist Bible Fellowship International, Georgia Baptist Bible Fellowship, Fundamental Baptist Fellowship, Independent Baptist Fellowship International, Liberty Baptist Fellowship, Southwide Baptist Fellowship, and World Baptist Fellowship. These are congregations that are usually urban, occasionally charismatic, and ranging in size all the way from a tiny mission to a megachurch. Forms of ministry vary from fellowship to fellowship, but an emphasis is usually given to missions, evangelism, education, and publications. The Georgia Baptist Bible Fellowship sponsors a monthly fellowship meeting for its 91 churches, for six years published a monthly newsletter, and now maintains a website. Since the early 1990s an annual fellowship and preaching conference has been held that attempts to include all independent churches and pastors. One respected leader within this movement estimates that Georgia has about 1,000 independent Baptist churches with about 150,000 members in this second category.²³

(3) A third group of Independent Baptists is comprised of thorough-going independents, remaining completely separated from other churches. Perhaps 500 congregations with 50,000 members occupy this position.²⁴

The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship in Georgia

The disagreement in Southern Baptist life since 1979 has reached Georgia. The Southern and Georgia Baptist conventions have become increasingly fundamentalist in their theology, hierarchical in their structure, and unyielding in their opposition to women in pastoral roles. The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of Georgia was established in 1991 and holds fellowship and training meetings, cooperates in erecting structures for Habitat for Humanity and buildings for moderate churches, supports the Morningstar Baptist Treatment Services for children and adolescents with severe emotional problems, publishes two newsletter, *Visions* and *Re-Visions*, and supports ministries and missionaries worldwide in cooperation with the national Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, Inc., organized in 1990. E. Frank Broome is the full-time coordinator for the Georgia CBF with headquarters in Macon. About 125 churches and fellowships support the state CBF, of which about 25 congregations with about 12,000 members are aligned solely with the Fellowship.²⁵

The Alliance of Baptists

Constituted in 1987 as the Southern Baptist Alliance, this group is another form of protest against post-1979 developments within the Southern Baptist Convention. It is composed of individuals and churches interested in "the preservation of historic Baptist principles, freedoms and traditions" In addition to sponsoring annual convocations, publishing books and other materials, maintaining a headquarters in the District of Columbia, and supporting various mission and ministry causes, it contributes significantly to the Baptist Theological Seminary of Richmond, which it launched in 1989. The Alliance assumed its present name in 1992. Currently 6 congregations in Georgia are affiliated with this group, although all are associated with organizations discussed elsewhere in this essay.²⁶

Other Baptists

(1) Following the division of Baptists in 1845, those in the North and West continued to support separate societies for foreign and home missions and for the publication of Bibles and other religious literature. Prior to the Civil War, Northern churches helped to finance missionaries to Cherokees in Georgia and to publish literature used by some Georgia churches. After the war, the Northern presence in the state was chiefly in the form of evangelistic and educational work among African-Americans and the distribution of literature to churches that would order it. The Northern Baptist Convention, a centralized body, was formed in 1907. Further changes in structure and name occurred in 1950 and 1972, producing the present organization, the American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A., with headquarters in Valley Forge, Pennsylvania. Most Georgia member churches are African-American and aligned also with one or more of the National Baptist conventions. One integrated congregation in Fulton County identifies itself with this body.²⁷

(2) The Baptist General Conference, initially made up of Swedish immigrants starting in 1879, has remained theologically conservative but has gradually become Americanized. Its national headquarters is in Arlington Heights, Illinois. From 1979 to 1984 and 1994 to about 2005, a congregation existed in Fulton County.²⁸

(3) The CBAmerica (formerly the Conservative Baptist Association of America) sponsors a vigorous worldwide mission. Emerging in 1947 as a protest to the perceived liberalism of Northern Baptists, this general body with headquarters in Longmont, Colorado, claimed 1 or 2 churches in Georgia from 1976 to 1993, but claims none at present.²⁹

(4) Coming from the antebellum period, the Duck River and Kindred Associations of Baptists (Baptist Churches of Christ; General Association of Baptists) had a single church in Georgia in 1926 and 1936 with never more than 170 members. Presently 1 church with about 75 members is active in Catoosa County.³⁰

(5) The General Association of Regular Baptist Churches maintains an extensive missionary, educational, publication, and benevolent ministry worldwide. Formed in 1932 by churches that had withdrawn from the Northern Baptist Convention over doctrinal differences, it now has headquarters in Schaumburg, Illinois. At one time or another since 1957, 5 Georgia churches have affiliated with this group. Two churches, containing 600 members in 2000, are still active.³¹

(6) In 2002 a Meriwether County church with 83 members became dually aligned with the North American Baptist Conference and the Georgia Baptist Convention. Now maintaining its national headquarters in Oakbrook Terrace, Illinois, this once-German general body founded in 1865 sponsors a broad ministry around the world.³²

(7) Insisting on sanctification as an instantaneous work of God's grace, the baptism of the Holy Ghost with speaking in other tongues as evidence, feetwashing, and a strict ethical code for all members, Pentecostal Free Will Baptists were present in Georgia at least by 1933, when an independent association was founded in Taylor and Marion counties with 3 churches and 166 members. Toccoa provided a second site, perhaps as early as 1910 and certainly by 1958 when the local Free Will church held about 69 members and was cooperating with the Free Will Baptist Church of the Pentecostal Faith that now has its national headquarters in Turbeville, South Carolina. A third center was Atlanta, where in 1974 the Constitution church reported 73 members and was part of the Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Church, Inc., with national headquarters in Dunn, North Carolina. No doubt some Pentecostal Baptists are still active in Georgia, but nothing definite is known about them.³³

(8) Emphasizing the Calvinistic theology of many earlier Baptists, Sovereign Grace or Calvinistic or Reformed Baptist bodies emerged in America about 1949. Some churches appeared in Georgia by 1975, and their pastors have held frequent fellowship meetings with their Alabama

counterparts since then. Today there are at least 11 churches with at least 220 members in Georgia.³⁴

(9) Originating with Daniel Parker in 1826, the highly Calvinistic Two-Seed-in-the-Spirit Predestinarian Baptists entered South Georgia in the 1840s. Numerically the movement peaked about 1880 with about 7 Georgia churches and 90 members in the Suwannee River and Lookout associations of South and Northwest Georgia. Thereafter, decline was rapid; Lookout probably disbanded in the 1910s and Suwannee River soon after 1921. The last known Georgia church closed its doors about 1930. A few individuals still quietly espouse Two-Seed doctrines, but no organized churches or associations exist in Georgia.³⁵

Conclusion

In 2010, it is not known precisely how many Baptists are in Georgia. An astonishing number of national and state bodies are represented by congregations in the state. Their constituent membership figures are changing constantly, of course, and there is some overlapping. Many who are claimed as members have long since disappeared, and they and many others have become inactive. With appropriate reservations concerning the limitations of knowledge, it might be estimated that there are about 8,157 Baptist churches and missions with about 2,171,536 members in Georgia. It can be responsibly suggested that about 22 percent of all Georgians are at least nominally Baptist.³⁶

Statistical Summary for Baptists in Georgia (Estimation)

Date	Churches	Members	GA Population	% Baptists
1750	0	7	5,200	0.13
1800	72	4,690	162,686	2.88
1850	1,186	72,626	906,185	8.01
1900	5,099	504,118	2,216,331	22.75
1950	6,504	1,205,426	3,444,578	34.99
2000	8,010	2,141,255	8,186,453	26.16

NOTES

¹Robert G. Gardner, *Baptists of Early America* (Atlanta: Georgia Baptist Historical Society, 1983), 116-120, 326-335, 431; Robert G. Gardner et al., *History of the Georgia Baptist Association* (Atlanta: Georgia Baptist Historical Society, 1988/1996), 9-39. For a careful and detailed treatment of almost all Baptist general bodies in America, see H. Leon McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1987). For brief essays concerning many of the groups included in this essay, see *Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists*, 4 vols. (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1958, 1971, 1982; hereafter cited as *ESB*); *Encyclopedia of Religion in the South* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1984; hereafter cited as *ERS*); and *Dictionary of Baptists in America* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994; hereafter cited as *DBA*).

²*Seventh Day Baptist Directory*, 1998, B-33; Don A. Sanford, *A Choosing People: The History of Seventh Day Baptists* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1992); <http://www.seventhdaybaptist.org> (accessed May 4, 2010); *ESB*, 1195-1196, 1955, 2450; *ERS*, 687-688; *DBA*, 246; info@metroatlantasdb.org (accessed May 4, 2010); John J. Pethtel, e-mail to Robert G. Gardner, May 21, 2010.

³Information furnished May 4, 12, 2010, by Research Services, GBC; see <http://www.gabaptist.org/common/content.asp> (accessed May 4, 2010).

⁴*Quarterly Review* (Nashville, TN), December 1978.

⁵Georgia State Association of Free Will Baptists, *Minutes*, 2007, 20; Damon C. Dodd, *Marching Through Georgia: A History of the Free Will Baptists in Georgia* (N.p.: n.p., 1977); <http://www.gafwb.org> (accessed May 4, 2010); *ESB*, 506-507, 1725-1726, 2239-2240; *ERS*, 269-271; *DBA*, 122; J. Matthew Pinson, *A Free Will Baptist Handbook* (Nashville, TN: Randall House Publications, 1998); Pinson, "Free Will Baptists," <http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.com>; William F. Davidson, *The Free Will Baptists in History* (Nashville: Randall House Publications, 2001).

⁶Paul Palmer Fellowship Conference of Original Free Will Baptists, *Minutes of Quarterly Sessions*, 1990-1996, contain no membership figures (the estimation is based on David Still Blakely, GA, a deacon in the Zion Free Will Baptist Church, telephone conversation with Gardner, October 7, 1996); *ESB*, 1725-1726; *ERS*, 269-271; *DBA*, 122; Michael R. Pelt, *A History of Original Free Will Baptists* (Mount Olive, NC: Mount Olive College Press, 1996).

⁷Independent Free Will Baptist associations: Benjamin Randall (1926/1927-1942), Liberty (1861-?), Middle Georgia (1864/1865-c.1920), North Florida (1902-1949 or later), Ochlocknee (by 1920-1926), Old Line (1954/1955-c.1965), Salem United (1843-1851 or later), South Carolina-Georgia (1790-1796), United (1832-1880 or later), Unity United (1846-1876 or later).

⁸*Churches and Church Membership in the United States 1990* (Atlanta: Glenmary Research Center, 1992), 3, 17, 451-453, estimates 503,245 African-American Baptists in Georgia. This figure seems to include all African-American Baptists, including Primitive and Free Will. After making allowances for these smaller groups, Gardner estimates that 501,255 persons were members of Georgia African-American Missionary Baptist churches in 1990. Because no comparable research was done for the 2000 edition, the 1990 figures have been increased by 5 percent for 2000. Hence, the estimation for 2000 (also used here for 2010) is 526,318 members. Determining the number of black Missionary Baptist churches involves an even more precarious process. In 1936 (the most recent year for which a comparison exists) the average National Baptist Convention church in Georgia was 60.9 percent the size of the average GBC church (United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Religious Bodies: 1936, Volume II, Part I* [Washington, DC, 1941], 117; Georgia Baptist Convention, *Minutes*, 1936, 240). Carrying that proportion over to 2000, it may be estimated that the average NBC church had 239 members and the number of churches was 2,202. Clarence M. Wagner, *Profiles of Black Georgia Baptists* (Atlanta, GA: Bennett Brothers Printing Company, 1980); <http://www.gmbcofgeorgia.org> (accessed May 19, 2010); *ESB*, 942-945, 950-958, 1860-1861, 2363, 2427-2428; *ERS*, 528-530; *DBA*, 58-59, 198-199; Leroy Fitts, *A History of Black Baptists* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1985).

⁹Chattahoochee Baptist Association, *Minutes*, 1826-1831; Robert G. Gardner, *Cherokees and Baptists in Georgia* (Atlanta: Georgia Baptist Historical Society, 1983), 59-72, 163-164.

¹⁰*The Primitive Baptist Church Directory* (Cincinnati, OH: Baptist Bible Hour, Inc., 2000), 35-55; *Religious Congregations & Membership in the United States 2000* (Nashville, TN: Glenmary Research Center, 2002), 20. The per-church membership estimation (25) is based on printed and verbal figures comprehending almost 85 percent of all Georgia churches. Emerson Proctor, "Georgia Baptists: Polarization and Division, 1803-1838," *Viewpoints: Georgia Baptist History* 3 (1972); John Crowley, *Primitive Baptists of the Wiregrass South, 1815 to the Present* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1998); Crowley, "Primitive Baptists," <http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.com>; <http://www.carthage.lib.il.us/community/churches/primbap/> (accessed May 5, 2010); <http://www.primitivebaptist.org> (accessed May 5, 2010); <http://www.baptistbiblehour.org> (accessed May 5, 2010); *ESB*, 1114, 2425-2426; *ERS*, 612-613; *DBA*, 226.

¹¹Relatively current Georgia statistics are as follows: **Antioch Primitive Baptist Association**: 25 churches / 175 members (*Minutes*, 2006); **Flint River PBA**: 9 / 67 (*Minutes*, 1999); **Little Lotts Creek PBA**: 4 / 47 (*Minutes*, 2006); **Mount Calvary PBA** (constituted 1890): 5 / 58 (*Minutes*, 2005); **Mount Calvary PBA** (constituted 1980): 3 / 35 (estimation for 1999 made by Gardner); **Mount Olive PBA**: 5 / 49 (*Minutes*, 2005); **Mount Pleasant PBA** (constituted 1887): 3 / 20 (*Minutes*, 2005); **Mount Pleasant PBA** (constituted 1977): 3 / 30 (estimate for 1999 made by Gardner); **Mount Ramah PBA**: 8 / 90 (*Minutes*, 2005); **Ocmulgee District PBA**: 7 / 32 (*Minutes*, 2004); **Salem PBA**: 7 / 84 (estimation for 1998 made by Deacon Jessie Phelps, Macon, GA, clerk of the Mount Ramah PBA, telephone conversation with Gardner, August 30, 1998); and **Union PBA**: 18 / 165 (*Minutes*, 2005). Probably 2 other churches with a total of 15 members are unassociated. Robert G. Gardner, "African-American Primitive Baptists in Georgia," *Viewpoints: Georgia Baptist History* 17 (2000); <http://www.calvaryprimitivebaptist.com> (accessed May 5, 2010).

¹²Albert W. Wardin, ed., *Baptists Around the World* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1995), 421; McBeth, 719-720; <http://www.predestinarian.net> (accessed May 5, 2010); Elder Louie Hornsby, Carrollton, GA, telephone conversation with Gardner, May 4, 2005. Absoluter associations in Georgia are or have been Conecuh River, Oconee, Western A, Western B, and Yellow River.

¹³Department of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of the Census, *Special Reports, Religious Bodies: 1906, Part II* (Washington, DC: 1910), 158-160; Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Religious Bodies: 1916, Part II* (Washington, DC, 1919), 119-120; Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Religious Bodies: 1926, Volume II* (Washington, DC, 1929), 162-164; *Religious Bodies: 1936, Volume II, Part I* (Washington, DC, 1941), 178-180; Robert G. Gardner, "African-American Free Will Baptists in Georgia," *Viewpoints: Georgia Baptist History* 19 (2004). Georgia churches are not affiliated with the Florida-centered United American Free Will Baptist Church (<http://uafwbc.org> [accessed May 5, 2010]). The Original Free Will Baptist Conference of America, with L. N. Forbes as general bishop, has at least 3 church in Georgia (<http://www.faihtemple2.com> [accessed May 5, 2010]; *Original Free Will Baptist News* [Forestville, MD]). William Smith, executive secretary-treasurer of the Georgia State Association of Free Will Baptists, estimates that there are at least 100 African-American Free Will Baptist churches in Georgia, most of small size and restricted program (telephone conversation with Gardner, August 26, 2005).

¹⁴Estimation based on Baptist Purity Baptist Association, *Minutes*, 1982; Calvary Holiness BA, *Minutes*, 1999; Holiness BA, *Minutes*, 1983; Charles O. Walker, *History of the Holiness Baptist Association of Georgia* (Jasper, GA: Pickens Area Vocational-Technical School, 1968); J. L. Sellers, Jr., a Calvary Holiness leader, Broxton, GA, telephone conversation with Gardner, July 29, 2002.

¹⁵*Viewpoints: Georgia Baptist History* 2 (1969), 3 (1972), 4 (1974), 5 (1976), 6 (1978).

¹⁶American Baptist Association, *Minutes*, 1930, back; *Year Book/Yearbook*, 1967, 200-202; 1975, 250-252; Georgia State Association of Missionary Baptist Churches, *Minutes*, 1998, 1999; Toby Cribbs, *Georgia State Association of Missionary Baptists: Fifty Years of History* (N.p.: Georgia State Association of Missionary Baptist Churches, 1996); Florida State Association of Missionary Baptist Churches, *Minutes*, 1995, 7-9; Albert Garner, *A History of the Florida State Association of Missionary Baptist Churches* (Lakeland: Florida State Association of Missionary Baptist Churches, 2000); Steve Reeves, ABA, Texarkana, TX, telephone conversation with Gardner, October 26, 1999; <http://www.abaptist.org/general.html> (accessed May 5, 2010); *ESB*, 36, 757, 1565, 2080; *ERS*, 25-26, 399-401; *DBA*, 20-21, 49, 166-167; Conrad N. Glover and Austin T. Powers, *A History of the American Baptist Association, 1924-1974* (Texarkana, TX: Bogard Press, 1979); Georgia State Association of Missionary Baptist Churches, *Minutes*, 2008; Baptist Union Association of Missionary Baptist Churches, *Minutes and Yearbook*, 2008.

¹⁷Interstate and Foreign Landmark Baptist Association, *Minutes*, 1984, 1998 (Corinth Baptist Church, Conley, Clayton County).

¹⁸Baptist Missionary Association of Alabama and Georgia, *Minutes*, 1995, 1996; *B.M.A.A. Directory and Handbook*, 1996-2000; *ESB*, 757, 984, 1597, 2105-2106; *ERS*, 88-89, 399-401; *DBA*, 49, 166-167; John W. Duggar, *The Baptist Missionary Association of America, 1950-1986* (Texarkana, TX: Baptist Publishing House, 1988); <http://www.bmaamissions.org> (accessed May 5, 2010).

¹⁹Robert Vaughn, Mount Enterprise, TX, printed list, March 29, 2001; e-mail to Gardner, April 24, 26, May 9, 2001; *Unaffiliated Landmark Baptist Churches Survey* (Mount Enterprise, TX: Waymark Publications, 2001). Gardner estimates that these churches average 50 members and are somewhat smaller than other Landmark churches in the state.

²⁰2007 *Minutes of Primitive Baptist Associations*, R. Keith Hamilton, ed.; Jerry A. Newsome, *A Modest History of Primitive Baptists in the United States* (N.p.: n.p., c.1976); *ERS*, 613; *DBA*, 226; Patrick R. McCoy, Culloden, GA, e-mail to Gardner, May 22, 2001; Emerson Proctor, Statesboro, e-mail to Gardner, May 29, 2001, June 15, 2005.

²¹**South Georgia Primitive Baptist Association**, 9 / 805; **New Mount Pleasant PBA**, 7 / 290; **Middle Florida-Georgia PBA**, 3 / 169 (Robert G. Gardner, *National Primitive Baptists in Georgia* [Macon: Georgia Baptist Historical Society, 2004]); *Religious Congregations and Membership in the United States 2000*, 19. See <http://natlprimbaptconv.org> (accessed May 10, 2010); *ESB*, 946; McBeth, 721; Wardin, 415-416. In 2000, 16 Georgia churches were affiliated with the Georgia Primitive Baptist Convention and 3 Georgia churches, with the Florida Primitive Baptist Convention.

²²Gardner et al., *History of the Georgia Baptist Association*, 527-528 (nos. 1, 3, 4, 7, 9, 16, 18, 21, 26-29, and 31). Statistics for the associations included in this study are as follows: **Chestatee BA**: 13 / 2,991 (*Minutes*, 2008); **Coosawattee BA**: 11 / 2,385 (*Minutes*, 2009); **Ellijay BA**: 4 / 1,068 (*Minutes*, 2009); **Jasper BA**: 22 / 3,931 (*Minutes*, 2008); **New Hope BA**: 20 / 2,020 (*Minutes*, 2009); **Original Smyrna BA**: 17 / 1,186 (*Minutes*, 2007); **Pleasant Grove BA**: 24 / 3,589 (*Minutes*, 2009); **Pleasant Valley BA**: 10 / 1,424 (*Minutes*, 2008).

²³The estimation comes from Rev. Raymond Hancock, secretary, Southwide Baptist Fellowship, Stockbridge, GA, telephone conversations with Gardner, October 28, December 12, 1999. For **Baptist Bible Fellowship International** see: *ESB*, 113, 2099; *ERS*, 84-85; *DBA*, 42-43; Billy V. Bartlett, *A History of Baptist Separatism* (Springfield, MO: Baptist Bible College, 1972); Billy V. Bartlett, *The Beginnings: A Pictorial History of the Baptist Bible Fellowship* (Springfield, MO: Baptist Bible College, 1975); <http://www.bbfi.net> (accessed May 5, 2010); for **Georgia Baptist Bible Fellowship** see <http://webpages.charter.net/gbbf/> (accessed May 5, 2010); for **Fundamental Baptist Fellowship** see: *DBA*, 125-126; for **Independent Baptist Fellowship International** see: "Our History," <http://www.ibfi-nbbi.org> (accessed May 5, 2010); Wardin, 406; for **Liberty Baptist Fellowship** see: Wardin, 406-407; for **Southwide Baptist Fellowship** see: *Religious Congregations and Membership in the United States 2000*, 20; *DBA*, 150-151, 257; Wardin, 407; for **World Baptist Fellowship** see: *ESB*, 515, 2562-2563; *DBA*, 57, 295; Earl K. and Virginia C. Oldham, *ISS-WBF: Sail On* (Arlington, TX: Arlington Baptist College, c.1992); <http://www.wbfi.net> (accessed May 5, 2010).

²⁴Estimation made by Gardner after consulting with Raymond Hancock.

²⁵Conferences with E. Frank Broome, Macon, GA, August 31, 1999, and later; *Visions* (Macon), April/May 2010; *DBA*, 93-94; <http://www.cbfga.org> (accessed May 5, 2010); Robert G. Gardner, *A Decade of Freedom and Faithfulness: The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of Georgia, 1992-2002* (Macon: Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of Georgia, 2002); Gardner, "Cooperative Baptist Fellowship," <http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.com>.

²⁶*DBA*, 19; <http://www.allianceofbaptists.org> (accessed May 5, 2010). The Church of the Savior, Roswell, gives its primary denominational allegiance to the United Church of Christ.

²⁷American Baptist Churches, *Supplement Directory*, 1972-1973, 52; *Directory*, 1982, 172; 1992, 186; 1996, 169; <http://www.abcis.org/public/ChurchSearch.asp> (accessed May 5, 2010); *Religious Congregations and Membership in the United States 2000*, 19; *ESB*, 36-42, 1565-1568, 2080-2081; *DBA*, 21-26; McBeth, 392-412, 563-608. Oakhurst Baptist Church, Decatur, is the integrated congregation.

²⁸*Churches and Church Membership in the United States 1980* (Atlanta: Glenmary Research Center, 1982), 13, 71; Richard K. Bloom, Arlington Heights, IL, e-mail to Gardner, June 20, 2001; James M. Smith, Norcross, GA, telephone conversation with Gardner, June 20, 2001; <http://www.convergesoutheast.org/churches.asp> (accessed May 5, 2010); *Religious Congregations and Membership in the United States 2000*, 19; *ESB*, 1343-1344, 2102; *DBA*, 47, 264-265; McBeth, 561, 728-731; Wardin, 377-379.

²⁹Conservative Baptist Association of America, *Directory*, 1975, 1979, 1982, 1993, 1994; CBAmerica, *Directory*, 1999-2000; <http://www.cbamerica.org> (accessed May 5, 2010); *ESB*, 311, 1664-1665, 2171; *DBA*, 91; Bruce L. Shelley, *A History of Conservative Baptists* (Third edition; Wheaton, IL: Conservative Baptist Press, 1981).

³⁰Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Religious Bodies: 1926, Volume II*, 193-195; United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Religious Bodies: 1936; Volume II, Part I*, 209-211; Mount Pleasant No. 1 Baptist Association, *Minutes*, 1996; *Religious Congregations and Membership in the United States 2000*, 19; *ESB*, 380; *DBA*, 106; Elder Kenneth Brown, Jr., telephone conversation with Gardner, January 2006.

³¹<http://www.garbc.org> (accessed May 5, 2010); *Religious Congregations and Membership in the United States 2000*, 20; Daria Greening, Schaumburg, IL, telephone conversation with Gardner, November 19, 1999; *ESB*, 1137, 2435; *DBA*, 129-130; McBeth, 755-758; Paul N. Tassell, *Quest for Faithfulness* (Schaumburg, IL: Regular Baptist Press, 1991).

³²*Newnan Times-Herald*, May 11, 2002; Rev. Winston Skinner, Newnan, GA, e-mail to Gardner, June 18, 2002; <http://www.nabconference.org> (accessed May 15, 2010); *ESB*, 984-985, 2378; *DBA*, 206; McBeth, 731-735; Wardin, 380-382 (Mount Zion Baptist Church, Meriwether County).

³³(a) Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Association, *Minutes*, 1933; (b) Toccoa newspaper clipping, 1958, Vol. 75, No. 49; Ray Hutto, Turbeville, SC, telephone conversation with Gardner, January 17, 2005; Arthur C. Piepkorn, *Profiles in Belief* (New York: Harper & Row, 1979), 3:161-162; (c) Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Church, Inc., *Minutes*, 1975; Herbert Carter, Dunn, NC, e-mail to Gardner, February 10, 2005; <http://www.pfwb.org/history.htm> (accessed May 15, 2010); Piepkorn, 3:159-160.

³⁴Rev. Gene Breed, Jonesboro, GA, e-mail to Gardner, December 28, 1999; *DBA*, 233; McBeth, 770-776; Mark Sidwell, "The Reformed Baptists: A Fundamentalism File Research Report," http://www.bju.edu/library/collections/fund_file/refobap1.html (accessed May 15, 2010; photocopy located at Jack Tarver Library, Mercer University, Macon, GA). Gardner has estimated that Georgia churches average half the size (20) of all churches in this general body (Wardin, 430).

³⁵John Crowley, "The Two Seed Baptists of Georgia," *Viewpoints: Georgia Baptist History* 16 (1998); *ESB*, 1433, 2028-2029; *DBA*, 270-271.

³⁶The estimated Georgia population in 2008 was 9,685,744 (http://wiki.answers.com/Q/What_is_georgia's_population_of_2009 [accessed May 4, 2010]).

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