

August 14, 1943

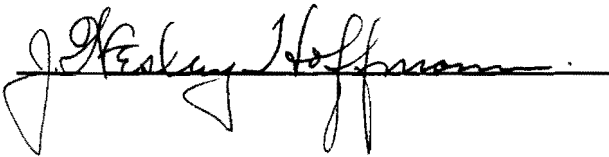
To the Committee on Graduate Study:

I am submitting to you a thesis written by H. C. Wagner entitled "History of Disciples of Christ in Upper East Tennessee." I recommend that it be accepted for nine quarter hours credit in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, with a major in History.


Major Professor

We have read this thesis
and recommend its acceptance:





Accepted for the Committee


Dean of the Graduate School

HISTORY OF DISCIPLES OF CHRIST
IN UPPER EAST TENNESSEE

A THESIS

Submitted to
The Committee on Graduate Study
of
The University of Tennessee
in
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the degree of
Master of Arts

by

H. C. Wagner

August 1943

FOREWORD

Any student of Tennessee history is aware of the fact that from the beginning the churches have played an important part in the development of the life of the state. The Disciples of Christ have been especially active in East Tennessee in the last 125 years, yet nothing has been written of their work. The purpose of this study has been to make a beginning on the research necessary for a full history of the Disciples of Christ in Tennessee. As such, it is largely a study in local church history, with a view to preserving the data and arranging them in usable form. At the same time, the aim has been to insert enough local color to make the work a readable narrative to anyone interested in the Disciples of Christ.

No attempt at interpretation has been deliberately undertaken. No one would deny that any religious group has social and economic influence wherever it operates. However, such influence is difficult to evaluate. This is especially true where each congregation is a unit and local autonomy is cherished as a privilege; such is the case among the Disciples of Christ. Then, too, this group has not been primarily interested in the social and economic aspects of Christianity. Their great emphasis has been upon a program of evangelism which advocated a reasonable approach to

salvation rather than an emotional one. Coupled with this, they have preached much on Christian unity as a prerequisite to an effective church. Therefore, the writer has not chosen to attempt, in this thesis, any interpretation of influences that might be possible upon further research.

The task of gathering local history is not an easy one. Church records have more ways of getting lost than a magician has tricks! In one city the writer discovered that the original record book for each of three churches had disappeared; one was stolen out of the clerk's car; another was burned by an irate woman; and still another was carried off to parts unknown when the church clerk decided to move! That was but typical of a day's work in gathering the data. The task would have been much more difficult without the cooperation of many of the writer's friends and acquaintances. Almost every minister in the Christian Churches in East Tennessee aided in some way. Many other interested church leaders gave valuable aid. Many of them wrote letters; some went to the trouble of writing out valuable information. H. H. Smith, of Blountville, Tennessee, S. A. Morton, of Johnson City, Tennessee, and R. B. Cassell, of Harriman, Tennessee, did so. Mrs. Mary Hardin McCown, Johnson City, Tennessee, generously allowed the writer the privilege of using her valuable collection of historical data on all phases of East Tennessee history. J. J. Musick, of Elizabethton, Tennessee, and

M. B. Miller, of Mountain City, Tennessee, also furnished valuable information. The writer is also indebted to Enos Dowling, Librarian of College of Religion Library, Butler University, Indianapolis, Indiana, for courteous help in gaining access to files of some old periodicals.

In the composition of the manuscript, the writer is also indebted to others. Professor Stanley J. Folmsbee, of the University of Tennessee, has been most considerate in reading the manuscript and making suggestions, going to the extent of reading two chapters in the original long-hand and another after it was typed before the writer had gone over it! Professor J. Wesley Hoffmann, of the University of Tennessee, also read the manuscript and made several valuable suggestions. Two of the author's colleagues, Professors H. R. Garrett and C. K. Thomas, of Johnson Bible College, also read parts of the original draft of the manuscript and gave either good suggestions or encouragement. Last, but not least, my wife has been most kind and considerate. She made the long-hand copies legible for the typist, did some typing, and spent several hours of pure drudgery in correcting my many mistakes and those of the typist on the rough draft. On the whole, no writer could ask for better cooperation or more kind consideration. Therefore, the author assumes full blame for the imperfections of the work.

H. C. W.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>Chapter</u>		<u>Page</u>
I	BEGINNING AND EARLY GROWTH OF THE DISCIPLES OF CHRIST.....	1
	Causes of the movement--James O'Kelly--Abner Jones--John Wright--Joseph Hostetler-- Barton W. Stone of Kentucky--Thomas Campbell --His break with Seceder Presbyterian Church --Declaration and Address--Alexander Camp- bell--Father and son agree on matters of church--Brush Run church--Union of Stone and Campbell movements--Status of Disciples of Christ in 1909.	
II	POST OAK SPRINGS CHRISTIAN CHURCH.....	27
	Location of the church--The marker--Lack of authentic data--Isaac Rice--E. D. Moore --Major John Smith--Acres and Long--Isaac Mulkey's leadership--Possible connection of Post Oak Springs and French Broad Bap- tist Church--The Randolphs--William J. Owings--Effect of Civil War--W. J. Owings and the socialistic experiment--Erection of present building--Uneventful history since --Post Oak Springs not in true sense the "Mother" church of the state.	
III	OLD CHURCHES OF UPPER EAST TENNESSEE.....	45
	James Miller possibly the first preacher of the Reformation in the section--His re- vival in Boone's Creek Valley--Boone's Creek Church of Christ organized--Hale's Chapel Church of Christ--Harrison's Chapel Church of Christ--Buffalo Creek Church of Christ--Union Church of Christ--Liberty Church of Christ--Sullivan County churches: Weaver's, Buffalo, Poplar Ridge, Central Holston Church of Christ, Blountville Chris- tian Church--Turkeytown Church of Christ-- Hampton Church of Christ--Valley Forge Church of Christ--Blount County--Mountain View Church of Christ.	

ChapterPage

IV LARGER CHURCHES AND CENTERS OF INFLUENCE..... 85

First Christian Church, Johnson City--
 Greeneville Christian Church--Morristown
 Christian Church--Second Church of Christ,
 Johnson City--Third Christian Church,
 Johnson City--Fourth Christian Church,
 Johnson City--First Christian Church,
 Elizabethton--East End Christian Church,
 Elizabethton--Southside Christian Church,
 Elizabethton--West End Christian Church,
 Elizabethton--Central Christian Church,
 Bristol--Erwin Church of Christ--Jonesboro
 Christian Church--Thorn Grove Christian
 Church--First Christian Church, Knoxville--
 Bearden Christian Church--Forest Avenue
 Christian Church--Rockwood Christian Church
 --Harriman Christian Church--Newport Chris-
 tian Church--Maryville Christian Church--
 Rogersville Christian Church.

V THE COOPERATIVE WORK OF THE CHURCHES OF
CHRIST IN EAST TENNESSEE.....132

Christian churches and ecclesiastical
 bodies--Early cooperative work in East
 Tennessee--Meeting at Boone's Creek, 1829
 --1843 meeting at Boone's Creek--1845
 meeting at Weaver's--1846 meeting at Buf-
 falo Creek Church--From 1846 till after
 the Civil War--1873 meeting at Bristol--
 1875 meeting at Turkeytown--1885 meeting
 at Johnson City--1888 meeting--1890 meet-
 ing at Bristol--1891 meeting at Hale's
 Chapel--Subsequent data scattered--Enlarge-
 ment of work--Meeting places since 1931.

VI EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS.....152

MILLIGAN COLLEGE: W. G. Barker--Buffalo
 Male and Female Institute--Josephus Hop-
 wood--Name changed to Milligan College--
 Josephus Hopwood's resignation--Henry R.
 Garrett, president--Frederick D. Kershner,
 president--Three short presidencies--
 Josephus Hopwood's second presidency--H. J.
 Derthick, president--C. E. Burns, president
 --Present status of Milligan College.

JOHNSON BIBLE COLLEGE: Ashley S. Johnson--
 Correspondence Bible School--Purpose to

<u>Chapter</u>	<u>Page</u>
----------------	-------------

VI (continued)

build a college--First building--Second building--First name of school--Name changed to Johnson Bible College--Purpose of the school--Burning of main building--Rebuilding period--Ashley S. Johnson's belief in prayer--Influence of Ashley S. Johnson and the school--Emma E. Johnson's presidency--Alva Ross Brown's presidency--W. O. Lappin, acting president--Robert Monroe Bell's presidency--Financial history of the college--Fiftieth anniversary celebrated.

BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	189
-------------------	-----

APPENDIX.....	197
---------------	-----

- I. Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery
- II. County Directory of the Christian Churches in Upper East Tennessee, with Dates of Organization of Each
- III. Map Showing Location of the Historic and Influential Christian Churches in East Tennessee

CHAPTER I

BEGINNING AND EARLY GROWTH OF THE DISCIPLES OF CHRIST

Back of every significant movement in the history of the church are causes buried in the religious and moral conditions of the time. To understand the people, known variously as Christian Churches, Churches of Christ, or Disciples of Christ,¹ it is necessary to sketch the religious and moral conditions in America at the end of the eighteenth century.

John Fiske felicitously described that time as "the critical period" in American history. It was also a critical period in the history of American Christianity. There is a tendency among American church people to glorify the past as the "good old days," the halcyon days, of the church. Such an outlook is wholly unwarranted by the facts of the case. At least that is true of the period of which we write.

By unanimous testimony, all writers on American church history bear witness to the unbelief and immoral living of the last years of the eighteenth and the early years of the nineteenth centuries. The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in 1798 issued a general letter in

1. Disciples of Christ is the legal and official title.

which the following language is used:

Formidable innovations and convulsions in Europe threaten destruction to morals and religion. Scenes of devastation and bloodshed unexampled in the history of modern nations have convulsed the world, and our country is threatened with similar concomitants. We perceive with pain and fearful apprehension a general dereliction of religious principles and practices among our fellow-citizens; a visible and prevailing impiety and contempt for the laws and institutions of religion, and an abounding infidelity, which in many cases tends to atheism itself. The profligacy and corruption of the public morals have advanced with a progress proportionate to our declension in religion. Profaneness, pride, luxury, injustice, intemperance, lewdness, and every species of debauchery and loose indulgence greatly abound. 2

Lyman Beecher, in his autobiography, speaking of this period said that "it was the day of the Tom Paine school, when boys who dressed flax in the barn read Tom Paine and believed him." Beecher graduated from Yale in 1797, and he says that the members of his class were known to each other as Voltaire, Rousseau, D'Alembert, etc.³

Another writer has this to say along the same line:

Thomas Paine was an idol, and his flimsy arguments against the Christ were almost universally accepted. In Yale University there were two Paine societies, and less than a half-dozen Christians. The College of William and Mary, Bowdoin College, and Transylvania University were little better. 4

2. Quoted by B. B. Tyler, History of the Disciples of Christ, p. 3.

3. Ibid., p. 2.

4. M. M. Davis, How the Disciples Began and Grew, p. 19.

Yet another writer sums up the religious condition of the period thus:

There never was a time, perhaps, in the history of America when spiritual religion was at as low an ebb as it was during the years immediately preceding the great revival outbreak of 1800. 5

However, there was another factor in the religious world of the early nineteenth century that is particularly pertinent to an understanding of The Disciples of Christ. I refer to the divided condition of the church and the extreme sectarianism of the day. Not only were churches divided into various denominations, but in most cases they were jealous of each other and actually warring with each other. Extremes of sectarianism, unknown in our day, were common then. For example, a Presbyterian contracted to build a church for the Episcopalians in Glasgow. He was warned not to do it by the dignitaries of the church, but he did not heed the warning. Charges were preferred, and he was brought before the Synod and condemned. The Synod held that building an Episcopal meeting-house was the same as building the "high places" of the Old Testament!⁶ Such sectarianism was not uncommon in America. One cannot read far in any old church record of the times without coming upon an account where someone was excommunicated for the "crime" of joining another church or

5. R. N. Price, Holston Methodism, p. 323.

6. M. M. Davis, op. cit., p. 21.

even for going to hear a preacher of another denomination.

Thomas Campbell, a Presbyterian minister of whom we will have more to say later, was censured by his presbytery for inviting other Presbyterians, not of the Seceder branch, to the Lord's Supper. He appealed the case to the Synod, but the censure was upheld by that body, leaving Mr. Campbell no other course to pursue, if he were to preserve his self-respect and Christian charity, but to withdraw from the jurisdiction of the Synod, which he did.

That suggests yet another factor in the religious conditions of the times pertinent to an understanding of the Disciples of Christ. The ecclesiasticism of the time was simply intolerable to many preachers and others, born and bred to the democratic frontier of American life. We will see later that this movement was in a real sense the application of the prevalent democratic spirit to the realm of the church. In a real sense it was the revolt from the ecclesiastical over-lords of the day.

Then, too, we must overlook "the tyranny of human creeds." They have been in our day largely relegated to the archives of the churches, but not so one hundred and forty years ago. No man could become a member of any church without vowing his allegiance to every detail of its creed. "Each creed was an iron bed, and the preacher was made to fit it. If too long, he was shortened, and if too short he was lengthened. The bed was greater than the man."⁷ In a

7. Ibid., p. 18.

country going through the birth throes of democracy, it was inevitable that someone would revolt from such a system.

One more factor in this religious background will suffice for our purpose. The prevailing theology of the American frontier was Calvinistic. It was firmly believed that a definite number of men were foreordained to everlasting life, regardless of belief or conduct. Those not so elected were everlastingly lost. Man could do nothing about his state. Every conversion was wrought directly by the Holy Spirit "in some miraculous, indescribable and irresistible manner." "Experiences," sights, sounds, sensations, dreams were the assurance of pardon and election.

The revolt from this theology and the proclamation of a simple, rational plan of salvation accounts for the rapid, almost phenomenal, growth of the Disciples of Christ during the first seventy-five years of their history. It seems also probable that the democratic frontiersman of America, who had done so much for himself and family in every other way, rather liked the idea that there was something he could do about his salvation.

With this brief background before us, we are better prepared to understand the beginnings of the people whom we are considering.

As in every religious crisis, there were good and sincere men concerned about conditions and seeking a remedy. Strange as it may seem, such men in at least five widely

separated places and independent of one another, reached essentially the same conclusion as to a remedy for the disturbed religious conditions. The remedy will appear as we briefly review these various movements.

In 1792 the first general conference of the Methodist Church of America was convened at Baltimore. At that conference one of the Methodist elders, James O'Kelly, of North Carolina, introduced a resolution framed in the following words:

After the bishop appoints the preachers at conference to their several circuits, if any one thinks himself injured by the appointment, he shall have liberty to appeal to the conference and state his objections; and if the Conference approve his objections, the bishop shall appoint him to another circuit. 8

After a heated and lengthy debate, the motion was lost, and O'Kelly abandoned his seat in the conference and his place among the Methodists.⁹ Methodist historians have interpreted this incident as due solely to the personal ambition of O'Kelly and his jealousy of Bishop Asbury.¹⁰ No doubt there is some truth in the assertion, but it is not likely the whole truth. There is evidence in the accounts that O'Kelly and his followers had sincere convictions about the danger of the growing ecclesiasticism in the

8. John J. Tigert, Constitutional History of American Methodism, p. 258.

9. Ibid., p. 260.

10. Ibid., Ch. XV. See also an account in J. M. Buckley, A History of Methodists in the United States, Ch. XI.

church. They certainly followed their convictions when, on December 25, 1793, they formed at Manakin Town, North Carolina, an independent church and took the name "Republican Methodists." Is there not a hint in the name, of the controversy raging in the politics of the day between "Federalists" and "Republicans?" It would seem so. A short while later this group adopted the name "Christian," and took the Bible alone as their rule of faith and practice. The group was never large in numbers, but their principle still lives.

The same idea was seen a few years later among the Baptists of New England. In 1800 Abner Jones, a physician and a member of the regular Baptist Church, established a congregation of twenty-five members at Lyndon, Vermont. This group simply took the name "Christian" and repudiated all human names and creeds. Some time between 1800 and 1803, two more such congregations were established¹¹ at Bradford, Vermont, and Piermont, New Hampshire. The ideas of Doctor Jones were soon accepted by a very successful Baptist preacher by the name of Elias Smith. This man carried the church to which he ministered at Portsmouth, New Hampshire, into the new movement. This influenced others and resulted in many converts to the new teaching¹² throughout the New England states. The same general

11. M. M. Davis, op. cit., p. 23.

12. G. K. Berry, The Eight Leading Churches, p. 27.

principle again appeared in Indiana between 1810 and 1820. In 1810 one John Wright established a Free Baptist Church, which adopted no human creed. By 1813 enough such churches had been established to form an association. This organization soon dropped the name Baptist and simply took the Bible as their standard of faith "without note or comment." In 1814 the distinctive Baptist Association was entirely dropped, and an Annual Meeting for worship and fellowship alone took its place. This group found a kinship of belief with fifteen German Baptist Churches (commonly called Dunkards), and a union was perfected. Joseph Hostetler was the leader among the German Baptists. In turn, this united body joined forces with the New Light, or followers of¹³ Barton W. Stone, of Kentucky.

To this Stone movement we now turn our attention. It was the largest and, in some respects, the most significant of the groups. The movements so far considered were revolts against creeds and the ecclesiasticism in the churches; the Stone movement was at first a revolt against the hyper-Calvinism of the Presbyterian Church. As such, it is the result of one man's experience with Calvinistic theology. That man was Barton W. Stone. He was born near Port Tobacco, Maryland, December 24, 1772. He was the

13. Dean E. Walker, Adventuring for Christian Unity, p. 19. See also C. W. Cauble, Disciples of Christ in Indiana, pp. 30-38.

youngest of a large family, the father of which died before the boy was old enough to remember. When the boy was seven, the mother moved to Pittsylvania County, Virginia. Here the boy grew up under the hardships incident to pioneer life.

Naturally a religious individual, Stone at an early age had his struggle with Calvinism. The thought of a God who would condemn men to "everlasting torment," regardless of what they did or how they lived, drove Stone to desperation. Later he wrote:

I shudder while I write. Blasphemy rose in my heart against such a God, and my tongue was tempted to utter it. Sweat profusely burst from the pores of my body, and the fires of hell got hold of me. 14

In his desperation, he turned to a study of the Bible. He became convinced of the falsity of Calvinism.

From this state of perplexity, he later wrote, I was relieved by the precious word of God. I became convinced that God did love the whole world, and that the reason why he did not save all was because of their unbelief; and that the reason why they believed not, was not because God did not exert his physical, almighty power on them, but because they received not the testimony given in his Word concerning his Son. 15

The whole outlook of Stone's life was changed. He became a candidate for the Presbyterian ministry; but at his ordination, when asked if he accepted the Westminster Confession of Faith, he replied: "As far as it is consistent

14. Quoted by M. M. Davis, op. cit., p. 108.

15. Ibid., p. 109.

with the word of God."¹⁶ This remark should be remembered when considering Stone's later relationship to the Presbyterian Synod.

Soon after his ordination, Stone heard of the strange revival that was in progress in southern Kentucky and Tennessee. He went down to observe the work. He was somewhat impressed with the revival and returned to his own work at Caneridge, Kentucky, with new zeal. He, in turn, started another revival at Caneridge which has been the subject of much discussion from both religious and psychological viewpoints.¹⁷ Stone's own description of this revival has been incorporated into every discussion of the matter that this writer has seen.

In his later ministry Barton W. Stone was aided by several other strong Presbyterian preachers of Kentucky. Among them were Richard McNemar, John Thompson, John Dunlavy, David Purviance, and Robert Marshall. These men all had repudiated Calvinism, and their preaching was, therefore, in direct conflict with the "Confession of Faith." They preached salvation for all on condition of obedience to the Gospel. For this they were tried for heresy in the Kentucky Synod. The charge was preaching un-Calvinistic

16. Ibid., p. 110.

17. There is a voluminous literature on these revivals; possibly the best reference is Catharine C. Cleveland, The Great Revival in the West, 1797-1805 (a doctoral dissertation, University of Chicago).

doctrines. McNemar was convicted and excluded from the fold of the Presbyterian Church. The other men then joined him and drew up a declaration of independence, withdrawing from the jurisdiction of the Synod, but not from the Presbyterian Church. Later this group organized a new presbytery, known as the Springfield Presbytery. In a letter to their churches they stated the reasons for their act and also declared "their objections to the Confession of Faith, and to all human creeds, and their determination to take the Bible, and the Bible alone, as their only rule of faith and practice."¹⁸

The logic of the position taken by these men soon led them to abandon their new organization. Within a year of its making, the body met and issued The Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery. This is a curious document, couched in the language of a legal will. Among other things, they "will" that all names of distinction, such as Reverend, etc., be forgotten; all delegated authority to make laws for the church cease; each congregation to be independent; and that people take the Bible alone as their guide.¹⁹ One smiles when he reads this document now, but those men who formulated it were in dead earnest and paid in personal sacrifice for following their convictions. Henceforth, these people were simply known as "Christians."

18. M. M. Davis, op. cit., p. 113.

19. See Appendix I for copy of this document.

They grew rapidly and expanded beyond Kentucky to Ohio, Indiana, Tennessee, and other sections. Their independent study of the Scriptures soon led them to abandon infant baptism. Thus they became more closely allied to the Baptists. Later, as we shall see, the majority of this group came to accept only immersion as baptism and were thus drawn still closer to the Baptists. This fact is important if one is rightly to understand the growth of the movement and its later union with the Campbell movement, which we must now consider.

The pursuit of our theme now takes us to Ireland and Scotland. It will be well to bear in mind the fact that similar religious and moral conditions existed in the Old Country as in America at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Thomas Campbell was born February 1, 1763, in County Down, Ireland. His grandfather, also Thomas Campbell, was a staunch Roman Catholic, but his father, Archibald Campbell, had rejected Romanism and united with the Episcopal Church. In turn, the cold formality of the Episcopal Church, which had prompted the work of John Wesley, caused the younger Thomas Campbell to seek fellowship with the Presbyterian group. In his fellowship with the Presbyterians, Thomas Campbell experienced sectarianism at its worst.

The Seceder Presbyterian Church, of which Thomas Campbell was a member, was a result of the first great

schism in the Church of Scotland - the schism of 1733. The Scotch Seceders came to the aid of the Irish Presbyterians who sympathized with them, and thus the division affected Ireland also. The strife had arisen over the place of the civil authorities in church government.

In Ireland, within a few years, the Seceders divided into two branches. The point of contention was the oaths required of the burgesses of the towns, binding them to support "the religion presently professed within the realm." Some held that the oaths sanctioned the very abuses in the National Church against which the Seceders had constantly protested. Both divisions of the Synod claimed to be the true church. Those who considered the oaths unlawful came to be called Anti-Burghers, the other party being termed Burghers. This division spread at once through the churches of Scotland and Ireland, and the controversy was maintained with considerable bitterness for ²⁰ many years.

In 1795 a further question as to the power of the civil magistrates in the church divided the Burghers into Old Light Burghers and New Light Burghers. The same controversy prevailed among the Anti-Burghers. So there were at that time no less than four bodies of Seceder Presbyterians, all professing to adopt one creed, the Westminster Confession of Faith.

20. B. B. Tyler, op. cit., p. 38.

Thomas Campbell, a man of deep piety and fraternal spirit, attempted to unite these factions, but to no avail. The net results of his work were to arouse within himself a great antipathy to sectarianism in any of its²¹ manifestations.

The health of Thomas Campbell became impaired; and, as was common in that day, his physician enjoined a sea-voyage. He decided to visit the new world. After a voyage of thirty-five days he landed in Philadelphia, May 27, 1807.

On his arrival, he found the Synod of the Seceder Presbyterian Church in session at Philadelphia. He reported to the body, was cordially received, and given an appointment to preach in Washington County, Pennsylvania. The growing city of Pittsburgh was the center of his territory.²²

Campbell had hoped that in this new and democratic country the old, bitter sectarianism would be forgotten. In this he was disappointed. All his antipathy to partyism had been brought with him, and this was soon to cause him difficulty.

Early in his American ministry, Thomas Campbell went up the Alleghany Valley to hold communion services among the Seceder Presbyterians. He found other Presbyterians not of the Seceder branch there, and out of his

21. Ibid., p. 39.

22. M. M. Davis, op. cit., p. 43.

fraternal heart invited them to partake of the Lord's Supper. For this he was censured by the next meeting of the presbytery. He justified his position as being in harmony with the Scriptures. This was not denied, but the censure was for violating the "usages" of the church.

Campbell appealed his case to the Synod of North America, the highest church court. He made a masterly appeal to the Synod, pleading for religious liberty as guaranteed by the Bible.

I plead the cause of the Scriptural and apostolic worship of the church, in opposition to the various errors and schisms which have so awfully corrupted and divided it. It is therefore because I have no confidence in my own infallibility or in that of others, that I absolutely refuse, as inadmissible and schismatic, the introduction of human opinions and human inventions into the faith and worship of the church. 23

His appeal was in vain; the censure was upheld. Thereupon Thomas Campbell declared his independence from all human tribunals and from the North American Synod in particular. However, he did not break with the Seceder Presbyterian Church at this time, but continued his ministry among his neighbors and friends, with whom he had great personal influence.

Sometimes these meetings were held in private houses, sometimes in shaded groves, during

23. W. T. Moore, Comprehensive History of Disciples of Christ, p. 102.

the summer season, but seldom in any meeting houses; as for the most part, these were shut against him by reason of what was supposed to be his heretical notions. 24

Soon a special meeting was called to consider the future course of the group. The meeting was held at the home of Abraham Alters, who was not a member of any church; but he was interested in the catholic position of Thomas Campbell. Thomas Campbell addressed the meeting, reviewing the course of events that brought them together. At the close of his address, he summed up the position of the group in a sentence which later became a popular slogan; viz., "Where the Scriptures speak, we speak; and where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent."²⁵

Later, on August 17, 1809, another meeting was held, at which they decided to organize a religious association to be known as "The Christian Association of Washington." A committee of twenty-one members, with Thomas Campbell as chairman, was appointed and instructed to draw up a document setting forth the aims of the association. The result was a document entitled The Declaration and Address.²⁶

The document is in reality a Declaration of Independence from all ecclesiastical organizations and an "address" setting forth the desirability of Christian unity

24. Ibid., p. 103.

25. Ibid., p. 105.

26. Ibid., pp. 109, 110.

and a proposed basis of union. The viewpoint is best given in the words of Thomas Campbell:

Dearly beloved brethren, why should we deem it a thing incredible that the Church of Christ, in this highly favored country, should resume that original unity, peace and purity, which belongs to its constitution and constitutes its glory? Or, is there anything that can be justly deemed necessary for this desirable purpose, but to conform to the model, and adopt the practice of the primitive church, expressly exhibited in the New Testament. Whatever alterations this might produce in any or all of the churches, should, we think, neither be deemed inadmissible nor ineligible. Surely such alterations would be every way for the better and not for the worse; unless we should suppose the divinely inspired rule to be faulty, or defective. Were we, then, in our church constitution and managements, to exhibit a complete conformity to the Apostolic Church, would we not be in that respect, as perfect as Christ intended we should be? And should this not suffice us? 27

Thus we have again found a proposed solution for the difficult religious problems of the day that is not basically different from the proposals of the other groups we have studied. It must also be borne in mind that these men were all working independently of one another and were ignorant of each other's ideas.

One other man must be considered. That is Alexander Campbell, the son of Thomas Campbell, whose career has just been sketched. Alexander Campbell was born near Shane's Castle, County Antrim, Ireland, September 12, 1788. He enjoyed good educational privileges in his youth. Two of his uncles, Archibald and Enos Campbell, conducted an

27. Thomas Campbell, Declaration and Address, p. 10.

academy at Ahorey, Ireland. After finishing primary school, Alexander Campbell attended this school. Later his father established a high-grade academy at Rich Hill. In this school young Campbell finished his English studies and did the necessary Latin and Greek for entrance into the university.

When Thomas Campbell sailed for America, he left his gifted son, now nineteen years of age, in charge of the school and family. About a year later, the father, having decided to stay in America, sent for the family. The family sailed in October, 1808, but the ship was wrecked not far off shore, and they were forced back. The group soon decided to remain in Scotland until the next year. During the stay Alexander Campbell completed his studies at Glasgow University - the alma mater of his father.

At the university Campbell was influenced by Robert and James Haldane, devout, independent religious thinkers of the day.

At the beginning of their benevolent career the Haldanes were members of the Church of Scotland, but they left that communion and became independent, attempting to conform, alone, always, and in all things, to the teachings of the New Testament. 28

Under this liberalizing influence, Alexander Campbell decided to abandon sectarianism and devote his life to the propagation of Christian union.

28. B. B. Tyler, op. cit., p. 43.

On September 29, 1809, Alexander Campbell and the rest of the family landed at New York. Almost immediately they started the 300-mile overland journey to Washington, Pennsylvania. The father met them on the way. Many things were discussed, "but the all-important subject discussed by the two men was the 'Declaration and Address,'²⁹ proof sheets of which Thomas Campbell had with him." It was the first thing that Alexander Campbell read on American soil, and he found it to be a statement with which he was in hearty agreement. This is all the more significant in view of the fact that the father and son had not corresponded with each other on the subject in the two years of their separation.

Henceforth, the two labored together for the same cause and ideal. Gradually the son assumed the leadership in the work. His great intellect, marvelous speaking ability, facile pen, and physical vigor were given wholly throughout his life to the one ideal.

The "Christian Association of Washington" had disclaimed being a church in any sense - only an association for the promotion of Christian union. Now they found themselves in the somewhat anomalous position of pleading for unity while on the verge of forming a separate religious group. This led them to consider an invitation from

29. M. M. Davis, op. cit., p. 48.

another Presbyterian Synod to join that group. In their application, they were careful to make clear their position, and as a result they were refused.

No other course seemed open; so, of necessity, in order to enjoy the privilege of worship they organized Brush Run Church, May 4, 1811, with a membership of thirty.³⁰ The spot was not far from where West Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Ohio now join.

Within a short time the Campbells, through an independent study of the Scriptures, were led to abandon sprinkling as a mode of baptism, and also infant baptism. The study was prompted by the birth of a daughter to Alexander and Mrs. Campbell. Their problem was simply this: if they were to "speak where the Bible speaks," should the child be baptized or not? Their investigation led them to believe that adult believers were the only proper subjects of baptism and that immersion only was sanctioned by Scripture.

Suiting action to belief, on June 12, 1812, seven members of the "Church in the Wilderness"; viz., Alexander Campbell and his wife, Thomas Campbell and his wife, James Hanen and his wife, and Dorthea Campbell were immersed in Buffalo Creek by a Baptist preacher named Luce.³¹

Within a very short time the Brush Run Church as a whole accepted immersionist views. Thus they were in line

30. Ibid., p. 72.

31. Ibid., pp. 76, 77.

for the next step in their history, which was union with the Baptist Church.

In 1813 the Brush Run Church was invited to join the Redstone Baptist Association. Anxious to avoid the appearance of deliberately forming a separate group, they decided to accept the invitation on condition that they be "allowed to teach and preach whatever they learned from the Holy Scriptures, regardless of any creed or formula in Christendom."³² After considerable debate in the association, they were received on that condition.

This union with the Baptists had the effect of widening the field of influence of the Campbells for a while, but friction soon developed. At the annual meeting of the Redstone Association in 1816, Alexander Campbell preached his famous "Sermon on the Law," in which he made a clear-cut distinction between the Old and New Testaments of the Bible. He clearly differentiated between the law and the gospel. For preaching the sermon, Alexander Campbell was tried for heresy by the Baptists, but acquitted. The strife continued; and the Brush Run Church, foiling a plot to exclude them in 1823, joined another association - the Mahoning Baptist Association of eastern Ohio.³³ Just before this, a second congregation had been established at

³². Millennial Harbinger, Third Series, Vol. V (June, 1848), p. 346.

³³. W. T. Moore, op. cit., p. 163.

what is now Wellsburg, West Virginia, and both became associated with the Mahoning Association. The fellowship in this group was more congenial. In due time the whole association adopted the views of the Campbells and came in line with their work.

This relationship with the Baptists is the basis for the somewhat popular and fallacious notion that the Disciples of Christ are a split-off from the Baptist Church. Alexander Campbell later said of the separation from the Baptists: ". . . all the world must see that we have been forced into a separate communion. We were driven out of doors because we preferred the approbation of the Lord to the approbation of any sect in Christendom."³⁴

As a matter of fact, there were fundamental differences in doctrine between the followers of the Campbells and the Baptists which made the two groups incompatible. The Baptists of the day were Calvinistic in doctrine, and the Campbells had repudiated Calvinism and substituted a rationalistic view of salvation. Had the difference been no greater then than now, it is safe to assume that the division would never have taken place. Alexander Campbell in his old age came to regret the division greatly.

This division, which was a gradual process during which the Mahoning Baptist Association adopted the views of the Campbells, became complete and final in 1830. In that

34. M. M. Davis, op. cit., p. 97.

year (probably August) the Association held its last meeting in Austintown, Ohio. At that meeting "it was unanimously agreed that the Mahoning Association as 'an advisory council,' as 'an ecclesiastical tribunal' exercising any supervision or jurisdiction over particular congregations, should never meet again." Instead, they simply agreed to meet the following August at New Lisbon, Ohio, for worship, fellowship, and reports of progress.

35

From the time of the union with the Mahoning Baptist Association, the Restoration movement, as it came to be called, spread quickly. Under the preaching of a growing number of ardent evangelists, the Western Reserve of Ohio, Kentucky, Virginia, western Pennsylvania, Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, and, to a lesser extent, Tennessee were evangelized. Many Baptist and some Methodist Churches as a whole accepted the new view and dropped their distinctive names and creeds. Coming in the wake of the Great Revival of the West, the new teaching, with its repudiation of all Calvinism, captured the religious thinking of the frontier as no other teaching had.

One more thought is pertinent to our purpose; viz., the union of these various forces into one body, consummated in Kentucky in 1832. It has already been noted that the Indiana group had found fellowship with the Stone movement

35. Editorial in Millennial Harbinger, Vol. I (September, 1830), pp. 414, 415.

earlier. It seems that the other smaller groups had found a similar fellowship, and there remained the two large groups - the followers of Stone and the followers of Campbell. In 1824 Barton W. Stone and Alexander Campbell met for the first time. They had much in common and found a congenial friendship easy. Stone said near the end of his life:

I will not say there are no faults in Brother Campbell, but there are fewer, perhaps, in him than in any man I know on earth; and over these few my love would throw a veil, and hide them forever from view. I am constrained, and willingly constrained, to acknowledge him the greatest promoter of this Reformation of any man living. 36

Alexander Campbell held Stone in similar high regard. Under such circumstances, it was inevitable that the two groups, almost identical in belief, should unite.

A preliminary meeting looking toward union was held in Georgetown, Kentucky, December 25, 1831. Another meeting was convened at Lexington, Kentucky, on January 1, 1832. It was, in effect, a great mass meeting of all classes of people, and not a meeting of church officials. One man from each party was chosen to speak. Stone and "Raccoon" John Smith, a self-taught pioneer preacher of Tennessee and Kentucky, were chosen. A private conference between the two resulted in an agreement that Smith should speak first. The tall, lean mountaineer preacher "from down where

36. Quoted by M. M. Davis, op. cit., pp. 115, 116.

the Raccoons live"³⁷ rose and delivered an address the like of which has seldom been duplicated. It was a masterly plea for unity of all Christians on the basis of conformity to the New Testament pattern. Mounting to a climax and carrying his audience with him, the preacher concluded:

Let us then, brethren, be no longer Campbellites, or Stoneites, or New Lights, or Old Lights, or any other kind of lights, but let us all come to the Bible, and the Bible alone, as the only Book in the world that can give us all the light we need. 38

Barton W. Stone responded with a very brief address. The two chosen speakers clasped hands in token of their willingness to unite, and different members of the two parties did likewise. The union of the two groups was virtually complete. It was not a union upon ecclesiastical pronouncement, but rather one based on love, fellowship, and common ideals.

One other action of the meeting is important. Smith and one other preacher named Rodgers were appointed by the group to travel among the churches and tell the news of the union and to aid and confirm the churches in cooperating with each other.

In the interest of historic accuracy, it should be recorded that a small group of churches of the Stone movement did not go into the merger. They struggled on in

37. A description that is said to account for his nickname.

38. Quoted by M. M. Davis, op. cit., p. 119.

separate existence as the Christian Connection Church until 1929, when they united with the Congregationalists to form the Congregationalist Christian Church.

The groups which united at Lexington, January 1, 1832, became variously known as Disciples of Christ, Christian Churches, or Churches of Christ. For seventy-five years they kept up an almost phenomenal growth. In 1909, at Pittsburgh, they held their centennial convention. At that time reports showed 11,614 churches, enrolling about 1,335,000 members, 6,861 ministers, and 9,207 Bible Schools. Twenty-seven colleges and universities were represented, as well as various boards of missionary, educational, and benevolent nature.

The growth of this communion has slowed somewhat in later years, as has every other communion, but the numerical status remains comparatively the same.

In the following chapters the development of this group in upper East Tennessee will be traced.

39. Centennial Convention Report, p. 10.

CHAPTER II

POST OAK SPRINGS CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Two miles east of Rockwood, Tennessee, on Highway No. 70, stands a neat frame church building. On a cast-iron marker in the yard is recorded the following data:

Post Oak Springs, Tenn.
Christian Church
The Mother Church in the State
Founded A. D. 1812.
Maj. John Smith, Acred and Long.
Followed by Isaac Mulkey 1830
The Randolphs 1840
W. J. Owings and J. H. Acuff 1850
Continued By.
Owings, Smiths, and Acuffs.
This Tablet Erected In Memory of
The Above Named Leaders
A. D. 1925

Unfortunately for the historian, to fill in the outline is not easy. Early records of the congregation have been lost. Present records go back to approximately 1876.

The only recourse for the one who would chronicle the story in detail is the memory, some of which has been written, of old descendants of the founders and early leaders. Three such sources are now available: Mrs. E. C. Wilson, of Rockwood, Tennessee, widow of the late Professor E. C. Wilson, who, as the granddaughter of both W. J. Owings and J. H. Acuff, has been reared in the traditions of the church. She is now seventy-three years of age and has a

remarkably clear memory. Her mother, Mrs. W. J. Owings, died in 1928 at the age of eighty-five. She had been reared in the Post Oak Christian Church also. So the lives of these two women cover a good portion of the history of the church.

The late W. E. McElwee, who was born April 16, 1835, has left an unpublished manuscript entitled "A Local Reminiscence of The Christian Church." The manuscript is quaintly written, but not badly so. It is, to all appearances, a true "Reminiscence," but has, in addition, some evidence of historical research. Captain McElwee, as he was known, was a member of a pioneer Roane County family of high standing. His parents were among the early settlers of the Post Oak Springs community. Thus he also was in position to know the facts and wrote either as an eyewitness or about that which was told him by his mother and others. He was a member of the Methodist Church until he died, as were his people. Therefore, his testimony is probably unprejudiced; and as such is well suited to corroborate¹ the story as told by members of the church.

John Staples, of Rockwood, Tennessee, is another member of the Post Oak Church whose memory, and some research, has contributed to the story as it will be told.

1. This manuscript is in possession of Miss Dorothy Tarwater, of Rockwood, Tennessee. When hereafter referred to, it will be designated simply as McElwee MS.

He is the grandson of Thomas Staples, who heard some of the early preachers at Post Oak between 1830 and 1840. It was he who assembled the data that are now on the marker in the churchyard. Such records as are preserved are in his possession. On anniversaries of the church in recent years, it has been Staples who has usually related the history of the church, but he has never written the story, speaking only from notes. He is a civil engineer and capable of discriminative thinking.

These three sources, coupled with corroborative material where it can be found, will have to suffice for what the writer believes will be a fairly accurate history of the first congregation of the Disciples of Christ in Tennessee. The story has an intrinsic human interest value, which it is hoped will, in a measure, compensate for any lack of exact historical data that, in itself, might not prove of interest.

The actual history of the Post Oak Springs Church seems to date from about 1812. Among the settlers who came to what is now Roane County after the Treaty of Tellico, 1805, which opened up the territory to the white man, was a group from Hawkins County, Tennessee. In this group Isaac Rice appears to have been the leader. He was accompanied by a brother-in-law, William Matlock, and Joseph Mee. The three families settled near the present site of Rockwood. Isaac Rice built his cabin on a small hill above the spring

which now supplies Rockwood with water. William Matlock and Joseph Mee built cabins nearby. These three men built a log meeting-house and organized a congregation about 1812. Rice was the preacher and leader in the church work. He held religious views contrary to the majority of his neighbors and proclaimed them in an enthusiastic and uncompromising manner. This provoked antagonism to his work, but he had some success and received a number of people into his fellowship. Among these were a family of Randolphs,² Sally McElwee, and Thomas Blake. The Randolphs later came prominently into the history of the church as leaders and preachers. The work of Rice did not long survive. Some time between 1814 and 1817 the church was burned. Of this fact there can be no doubt. The following entries in a deed book of Roane County substantiate the work of Rice: "Hugh Dunlop and John Kenley to John C. Haley. Begins on a Post Oak marked I H, west 133 1/3 poles to two posts marked I H, near Isaac Rice's meeting house." (June 7, 1814) Under date of February 3, 1817, another entry reads: "Hugh Dunlop to John C. Haley 433 1/3 a. land. Beginning³ on 3 post oaks near Isaac Rice's burnt meeting house."

Rice suspected an incendiary and indicted a man named Brooks. At the trial, testimony was produced to show that someone had camped in the house the night before the

2. McElwee MS.

3. Deed Book E, p. 139.

fire and left a fire burning. Brooks was acquitted, but Rice was never satisfied with the verdict. Within a few years Rice moved to McMinn County and settled at what is now Riceville. Shortly afterwards he died.⁴

The source of Rice's religious views is somewhat obscure. It has been generally assumed, with a large degree of probability, that he had been influenced by the teaching of Barton W. Stone. Some have thought that he may have personally heard Stone preach. That is not likely, but it is at the same time within the range of possibility. Nothing is known of Rice's history more than has been stated above. This question arises: could he have heard Stone in Tennessee?

That Stone preached in Tennessee is beyond question. In his Autobiography he has recorded that he and a companion preached and founded churches throughout the states of Ohio, Kentucky, and Tennessee.⁵ This work was done between May 30, 1810, when his first wife died, and October 31, 1811, when he married a second time.⁶ Unfortunately, he did not record the exact location of his labors in Tennessee. If his statement means that he established churches in Tennessee, and on the surface it seems to mean

4. McElwee MS.

5. Biography of Elder Barton Warren Stone. Written by Himself, p. 67.

6. Ibid.

that, those churches did not long survive. It seems most probable that the work was in Middle Tennessee. Stone's old home was at Caneridge, Kentucky. There was considerable communication between the two states in the middle sections. John Carr, who was a resident of Middle Tennessee, wrote in a reminiscent vein of many preachers who worked in Middle Tennessee near the opening of the nineteenth century. He said that he knew Stone well and paid tribute to him as a "great and good man." He had heard him preach often, and that he knew of his work is quite evident.⁷ That would indicate that Stone did considerable work in Middle Tennessee.

A little later Stone himself took up residence in Tennessee near Nashville. For many years, the exact time of his residence in Tennessee was in doubt. However, a recent biographer has shown that his stay covered the period from about November, 1812, to November, 1814.⁸ Of his work in this period, Stone himself wrote: "While I was in Tennessee my field of labors in the word was very much circumscribed, and my manual labors took up much of my time in fixing for living comfortably."⁹

Such evidence as we have would point to the conclusion that Stone worked almost exclusively in Middle

7. John Carr, Early Times in Middle Tennessee, p. 90.

8. C. C. Ware, Barton Warren Stone, p. 200.

9. Biography, p. 68.

Tennessee. So it seems highly improbable that Rice was directly influenced by Stone - at least by Stone's work in Tennessee.

With the present data, it is impossible to make a definite conclusion as to the source of Rice's religious belief. He may have been influenced by others who had been in touch with Stone; or he may have been one of those independent men of his time who came to his convictions unaided. This much only is certain: his beliefs were essentially those of Barton W. Stone, and the group which he was instrumental in organizing was soon in full fellowship with the Stone movement in Kentucky.

After Rice moved to McMinn County, the fate of the group which he organized is somewhat uncertain. All evidence points to the conclusion that at least some of Rice's followers became a part of a congregation at Post Oak Springs. It seems that Rice had also preached there during his residence near his first church. However, the problem centers around the leadership of the group there. It has generally been believed that Major John Smith was the active leader. Extensive research in the old periodicals of the time has brought to light the following news item:

Bro. Isaac Malkey [sic] of Roane Co., E. Ten. July 5 1834 . Thus writes: I moved to this place 8 or 9 months ago. There were here 16 or 17, old disciples, who had been congregated 15 or 20 years ago by bro. E. D. Moore. Last Sept.

we organized as nearly as we could with our knowledge on primitive grounds. On every first day we meet to break bread - we attend to the apostles doctrine, fellowship and prayers. In November I had the pleasure of seeing one neighbor come and confess the Lord; and from that time we have enjoyed glorious refreshing seasons - Between 90 and 100 have been immersed. 10

No doubt the item concerns the Post Oak Springs congregation. But who was E. D. Moore, and what part did he have in the organization of the church? Most probably he was some traveling evangelist who came along soon after Rice left and organized the group at Post Oak Springs. The indefinite "15 or 20 years ago" given by Mulkey leaves room for such a conclusion. Taking fifteen years from the date of Mulkey's moving to Roane County (1833) leaves 1818 as the probable date for the work of E. D. Moore. That is about the time that Rice left Roane County. Following Moore's work, the leadership probably devolved to local men.

Major John Smith owned a large tract of land near the Springs, and it was he who, although not a preacher, became the leader of the congregation. Through his influence the group was regularly called together for singing and prayer under some large oak trees near the spring. In this work Smith was joined by Acred and Long. Of these men little is known other than that they were interested leaders in the work. Long is thought to have come from Claiborne County and Acred from upper East Tennessee.

10. Christian Messenger, Vol. VIII (Sept., 1834), p. 282.

Long is reported to have been a Presbyterian and bitterly opposed to the new teachings. An only daughter married Alfred Owings, a member of the so-called "Schismatic" group, and through her influence Long was won over¹¹ and became an ardent supporter of the new view.

The exact site of worship for the church in these early years is somewhat in doubt. Some say that John Smith built a mill near the spring and that the congregation worshipped in the building in bad weather. Others say that early in the history of the church a log building located near Post Oak Springs was used. It is impossible to draw a positive conclusion, but in all probability both views are correct. The first frame building was constructed about 1842, and it seems unlikely that the group was without a church building for approximately twenty-five years. Therefore, it seems reasonable to suppose that the log church was constructed and used.¹²

At the death of John Smith, the land and mill came into the hands of Thomas Trower, a local Methodist preacher. Again the congregation was without a leader and possibly a place to worship. That the congregation had no legal title to property seems evident. The Roane County deed books from 1801 to 1860 show no transfer of property to trustees of the church. It is certainly possible that

11. McElwee MS.

12. The McElwee MS. tells of the mill, and John Staples of the log church, which he says burned.

they were without a church house after the death of Smith.

For a few years the church was more or less disorganized and without a leader. Occasionally some minister passing through would assemble the group and preach for them.

In 1833 a new leader appeared in the person of¹³ Isaac Mulkey. Mulkey came to Post Oak Springs from near Dandridge, Tennessee. It is generally believed that he was a member of the Baptist Church before he came to Post Oak.

In 1786 there was organized a Baptist Church in Jefferson County, Tennessee. The records of this old Baptist Church describe it as "The Baptist Church of Christ, constituted on French Broad River by Jonathan Mulkey and¹⁴ Isaac Barton."

Isaac Mulkey is said to have been the son of Jonathan Mulkey. That Jonathan Mulkey had a son Isaac, who was¹⁵ a Baptist preacher, is clear. It is highly probable that he was the Isaac Mulkey who preached at Post Oak Springs.

Among the charter members of this Baptist Church were a James Randolph and a Margaret Smith. James Randolph is said to have been the father of the Randolphs who became members of the church which Rice established. Margaret Smith

13. McElwee MS. See also Christian Messenger, Vol. VIII (September, 1834), p. 282.

14. The original copy is kept in the bank vault at Dandridge, Tennessee; typed copy in University of Tennessee Library.

15. J. J. Burnett, Tennessee's Pioneer Baptist Preachers.

was related to Major John Smith, also. So the families of French Broad Baptist Church and Post Oak Springs Christian Church seem to have been tied together.

Perhaps that will partially explain the following statement from McElwee: "The membership of this church, under the preaching of John W. Stone and 'Raccoon' John Smith, connected themselves with what is now the Christian Church." An attempt to verify that statement has not proved altogether satisfactory. The records of the old French Broad Church cover the years from 1786 to 1842. They give no hint of a division or serious disturbance in the church. However, this is not conclusive evidence that there was none, for the records are not complete; and then, too, the changes in the church could have come later than 1842. The records are equally bare of any reference to John W. Stone; but a certain John Stone was excommunicated¹⁶ from Beaver Creek Baptist Church in 1800. No hint is given as to the charges, but it was a frequent practice to excommunicate those who took up new ideas.

One more fact lends probability to McElwee's statement. "Raccoon" John Smith was born October 15, 1784, in Sullivan County, Tennessee. He became a Baptist preacher and later took up the views of Campbell and Stone. He spent several years in active evangelization in Kentucky and Tennessee. He baptized thousands of converts and, to use his

16. French Broad Baptist Records, p. 52.

own phrase, "capsized" even more Baptists.¹⁷ If he did not preach at Dandridge, Tennessee, and disturb the Baptists, it was simply because he did not have time to do so. In all probability he did, and McElwee's statement is true. At least someone had taught Isaac Mulkey the views of the Reformers.

Mulkey was a man of persuasive eloquence, and under his ministry the Post Oak Springs Church was reorganized. Just how long he labored there is not clear, but it was probably most of the time between 1833 and 1840.

Following the ministry of Mulkey, there was a period of ten or twelve years during which the church was without resident leadership. Among the itinerant preachers who came more or less frequently for services were the two Randolphs, Gilbert A. and Gilmore. Nothing of more than passing interest appears to have happened during these years. It was a period when the church was small and struggling to maintain its existence, with a flourishing Methodist Church nearby. This Methodist congregation became the largest and most wealthy church in Roane County just before the Civil War. Its old abandoned and neglected graveyard, just in front of the present Christian Church, bears mute testimony to its existence. Its relationship to this story will appear later.

About 1836, during the ministry of Isaac Mulkey, a man came into the fellowship of the church at Post Oak

17. J. A. Williams, Life of Elder John Smith.

Springs who was later to become an important factor in its history. That man was William J. Owings. Within a few years, apparently before the church was built in 1842, Owings was ordained to preach. The ordination took place in an open-air ceremony, under the oak trees in front of the present church. One of the Randolphs and two other visiting ministers took part in the ceremony. The ordination over, Owings preached his first sermon from the text,
 "Jesus said, Follow me."¹⁸ How literally he tried to follow his own preaching will be shown later. From about 1850 until well after the Civil War, Owings and his brother-in-law shared the active leadership of the church.

With the outbreak of the fratricidal war, both the Methodist and the Christian Churches at Post Oak were forced to suspend operations. As in most communities in East Tennessee, neighbor was pitted against neighbor and often brother against brother. John H. Acuff had four sons - two in the Confederate Army and two in the Union Army. One son was killed on the Confederate side.

After the war was over, each group attempted to reorganize, but it was not an easy thing to do. One succeeded; the other did not. John Acuff, whose experience with the war no doubt affected him greatly, led in the uniting of the Christian Church. He arranged for a communion service at the church on a Lord's Day. After a

18. McElwee MS.

service, at which he presumably presided and preached, he invited all people, of whatever communion, creed, or belief, to partake of the emblems in memory of the death of Christ. Two of his sons, one from the Union Army and one from the Confederate Army, came forward and sat down together. The wounds were thus healed and the church united again.

At the Methodist church a certain Rev. Hyden had called a like service. He then drew out the roster or roll list of members and called the roll. Eighty-four answered present. He then announced that he was going to organize a loyal church, and as he re-read the list of names he struck off sixty-one as being disloyal, leaving twenty-three to organize. 19

The expelled group left the house and assembled in the grove to consider their future. There was talk of their forcibly taking over the building as a majority. It was also suggested that they organize another Methodist Church. Others suggested that they go down to the Christian Church, where politics and old animosities had been ignored. This proposal was well received, and in time most of the excommunicated group found their way into the Christian Church. Thus the numerical status of the two churches was reversed. Further disagreement among the Methodists caused the abandonment of the building and the nailing up of its doors and windows for years.

The new-found harmony and prosperity of the Christian Church was short-lived. During the war W. J. Owings

19. McElwee MS. It is well to remember that McElwee was himself a Methodist.

had emigrated to Kentucky and gone into the mercantile business. He prospered and amassed a considerable fortune. After the war was over he returned to his old home near Post Oak Springs and again became prominent in the Christian Church.

In the meantime, Owings had become enamoured of the idea that the early church had all things in common.²⁰ He proceeded to put his beliefs into practice and established on a large farm about three miles from Post Oak Springs a community where the residents had all things in common.²¹ Several members of the church went with Owings from conviction. Many of the shiftless and lazy of the section gravitated to the community as a means of an easy living.

A large farmhouse was further extended into the proportions of a hotel, and, in addition, eight two-room cottages were built. A commodious room in the house served as the common dining room, while an adjacent smaller building was used as the kitchen. A second-story room was set aside for a place of worship. There Owings twice daily gathered his flock together for religious instruction and prayer. The farm and a mill seem to have been the extent of the enterprise connected with the experiment. It was a

20. Acts 2: 44, 45.

21. The details of this experiment were furnished by Mrs. E. C. Wilson of Rockwood, Tennessee, the granddaughter of Owings.

financial failure from the beginning and subsisted only on Owings' money. He gave it a thorough trial, however, and lost all of a comfortable fortune in the venture.²² The experiment, begun in 1867, lasted four or five years. Its actual break-up is a human-interest story, grounded deep in human nature. The wife of the elder Owings was industrious and had made for her cottage home fancy quilts and carpets for the floor. Other women in the community complained that she had things which they could not have. Owings took the matter up with his wife and pointed out that their ideals, if lived up to, must lead to her giving up her carpets and quilts. Her response is said to have been an emphatic "I ain't a gwine to do it!" Another Mrs. Owings, a daughter-in-law, knitted and sold the products to buy for herself a small handbag. This led to complaints and a similar refusal to give it up; this time with the reminder that if others were willing to work, they, too, could have nice things. An accumulation of such problems led to the disbanding of the community, and Owings was left penniless. Those who had gone into the experiment out of conviction came back into the fold at Post Oak Springs, and the shiftless drifted away. Owings admitted that his idea was impractical; and, having returned to the church, he spent the remaining years of his life an ardent supporter of his first views.

22. Staples says as much as \$60,000 or \$70,000.

While Owings was busy with his socialistic scheme, J. H. Acuff had held the other group of the church together and had preached for them. There seems to have been no real animosity between the groups; but for some time after the experiment failed they continued to worship separately. Those from the Methodist Church who were in Acuff's group opened the old Methodist building and they worshipped in it for some years until a new building, the present one, was constructed in 1876. One of the sons of W. J. Owings, who had been in the community experiment, furnished the brick for the foundation of the present building. This shows that their differences were either slight or that they were soon reconciled. When this building was constructed, the trustees for the church were William Smith, J. C. Hinds, and S. J. Acuff.

In the years just preceding the erection of the present building, among the leaders in the work were grandsons of Major John Smith, one or more of whom actually preached for the church. Others were James I. Anthony and J. H. Denton, who served as minister about 1874.

In the years since Owings' ill-advised venture, Post Oak Springs Church has carried on in much the same manner as most country churches. Various ministers have
23
served for short periods. Present members take some

23. The scattered records list the following men as having served as ministers: J. E. Stewart, 1892-1894; W. J. Shelbourne, 1897; C. P. L. Vawter, 1901-1902; George Phelps, 1904-1905; E.L. Wilson, 1910; Joseph Morris, 1912; H.L. Hays, 1912-1913; W.E. Daughtery, 1918-1919; and J.G. Wilson. Obviously, the list is incomplete. In recent years the

pride in relating that since the Civil War the Lord's Supper has been observed in the church every Sunday, with the exception of four or five. Those were days when few, if any, people were able to get to the church on account of bad weather. Scattered records give an incomplete and apparently uneventful history in recent years. B. F. Clay, of Kentucky, held the first revival meeting in the present building in 1882. Andy Bilingoty Whitney held a meeting in 1884; A. I. Myhr in 1890; and J. E. Stewart in 1892 and again in 1893.

Perhaps a word of explanation is necessary in conclusion. Post Oak Springs is called "the mother church in the state." That is true only in the sense of priority in time. In no sense were all churches in the state "mothered" by Post Oak. Only a few, such as the Rockwood church, have been directly influenced by this old congregation. This fact will be brought out more fully in later chapters of this study.

A backward glance over this material reveals the fact that Post Oak Springs Church has been for a century or more largely a family church. The most active leaders, at present Mrs. E. C. Wilson and John Staples, are both in the succession. The future alone will reveal how long the line will continue.

ministers who have served the Rockwood Christian Church have also served the church at Post Oak. Such is the case at present, with Stanley Dysart as minister.

CHAPTER III

OLD CHURCHES OF UPPER EAST TENNESSEE

In upper East Tennessee the Christian Churches have made a remarkable contribution to the religious history of the section. Just when the doctrines of the Reformation of the nineteenth century, as it was designated in the early days, were first proclaimed there is no definite knowledge. We have seen that Isaac Rice, who began the work at Post Oak Springs, came from Hawkins County; yet there is no evidence that he taught his ideas there.

According to the best available evidence, one James Miller was perhaps the first to preach the "Ancient Order of things" in the Boone's Creek valley of Washington County. In 1876 the East Tennessee and South Western Virginia Cooperation in session at Turkeytown, Carter County, appointed Samuel H. Millard and T. J. Wright to prepare an obituary notice and a biographical sketch of the late John Wright. In this paper is the following:

Some years prior to brother Campbell's separation from the Baptists brother Miller, who had been ordained by Barton W. Stone with brethren Shanklin and Lane commenced to preach in upper East Tennessee, and contending that party names tended only to divide the people of God.

At a subsequent period Jerial Dodge, David Duncan and John Andrew came to their assistance. 1

The separation from the Baptists mentioned took place about 1830.² This statement fits in with the other meager facts about Miller's life. He was received into the Sinking Creek Baptist Church "by experience" on October 16, 1824. On Saturday, April 16, 1825, he applied for and was granted a letter of dismissal from the Sinking Creek Baptist Church in Carter County, Tennessee.³ In 1826 he performed marriage ceremonies in Carter County and signed the certificates M. G. (minister of the Gospel).⁴ A search of the Baptist records of East Tennessee gave no evidence that James Miller ever preached for the Baptist Church. It seems clear that his first preaching was done for the Christian Church, but when and where he contacted Barton W. Stone and was ordained by him is not on record.

1. "Biographical Sketch of John Wright." The manuscript is in possession of Mrs. Mary Hardin McCown, of Johnson City, Tennessee. Mrs. McCown has a valuable collection of historical data of every sort on East Tennessee. This she graciously made available to the writer. Hereafter in this thesis it will be designated simply as the McCown Collection.

2. It is impossible to date the separation more accurately, because it was a gradual process by which the Mahoning Baptist Association took up the views of Alexander Campbell. See Chapter I.

3. Sinking Creek Church Records, pp. 85, 88.

4. J. W. West, Sketches of Our Mountain Pioneers, p. 47. Sketch of James Miller by Mary Hardin McCown.

Shortly after James Miller left the Baptist Church, he held a revival meeting in Boone's Creek Valley, Washington County, which had far-reaching consequences. Of that meeting and the preacher, Colonel E. E. Reeves has written the following, which I quote for its impartial viewpoint:

Once there lived a man in this country whom I knew three-quarters of a century ago. . . . He hailed from Maine. . . . He was a minister of the gospel in the Christian Church. Of heroic size, with a benevolent face and a dignity in his bearing, he was a commanding figure in any assemblage of people. The Rev. James Miller was a ripe scholar, a fluent speaker and withal a real logician. At first he was a school-teacher during the week and a pulpiteer on the Lord's day. However, soon he devoted his entire time to his holy calling, leaving the management of his extensive farm to his practical wife. Ere long he conducted a remarkable religious revival on Boone's Creek in this county, which in its scope and sweep, was a wonder in that day, for in that community nearly every soul was gathered into the Christian Church; and through the generations following to the present the Christian Church dominates all other churches in that community. The Boone's Creek Brick Church was the outgrowth of that eventful religious awakening, and was longer and more widely known, than probably any other in a large section of our country. From it have gone out men and influences which have proved the primal human cause of the development of the Christian Church into the commanding position it occupies in our section of the country. 5

The date of that revival can be put as the summer of 1826, from the facts on record. Miller left the Sinking

5. From an address prepared and read by Col. E. C. Reeves of Muncey Memorial M. E. Church, South, Johnson City, Tennessee, at a memorial service in First Christian Church, Johnson City, Tennessee (copy in McCown Collection).

Creek Baptist Church, April 16, 1825; he was preaching in 1826 as noted above. In 1827 the Holston Baptist Association appointed a committee to go to Buffalo Ridge Baptist Church to reconcile their differences.⁶ It is acknowledged by all historians of East Tennessee churches that Miller's meeting divided the Buffalo Ridge Baptist Church. In 1828 the committee reported to the Association that they found Buffalo Ridge a "divided people in principle and practice." Two parties of the church reported to the Association in 1828, and the Association recognized the party "who adhere to advise of the association."⁷ Under date of October 18, 1826, in the Sinking Creek Baptist Church records there appears the following interesting record:

We also declare against Molly Humphries for joining Miller's church. . . . We unanimously agree not to invite any of the people call'd Arians Socinian Unitarian or Sysmatics or that will not wright [sic] their creed to preach in our meeting house. ⁸

The conclusion that James Miller held his meeting in the summer of 1826 is inescapable in the light of this statement about "Miller's Church." However, it would not be wise to conclude that James Miller had actually organized a congregation as early as October, 1826.

6. Minutes of Holston Association for 1827. A complete set is in the Archives of Baptist Society of Historical Research, Johnson City, Tennessee.

7. Minutes of Holston Association, 1828.

8. Sinking Creek Baptist Church Records, p. 94. It should be noted that the charges in the above record were commonly, but groundlessly, hurled at the followers of Stone and Campbell in those early days.

The effect of Miller's work on the Buffalo Ridge Baptist Church has been noticed by Baptist historians. J. J. Burnett states that the Buffalo Ridge Church was reduced from 350 members to fourteen by the "Arian heresy as taught by Barton Stone and Alexander Campbell (both of whom denied the deity of Christ)."⁹ Dr. S. W. Tindell, however, points out that much of the loss of membership at Buffalo Ridge can be accounted for by the formation of five new Baptist churches between the years 1818 and 1828.¹⁰ This is no doubt true, but the fact remains that the Reformation as preached by Miller took a heavy toll from Buffalo Ridge Baptist Church and, as will be pointed out later, from Sinking Creek as well. In 1827 Buffalo Ridge Church reported 110 members to the association, as against 183 in 1825. In 1828 the party accepted as the church by the association¹¹ reported only twenty-three members. In the light of these facts, it seems obvious that Boone's Creek Christian Church was at first composed largely of former members of the Buffalo Ridge Baptist Church.

The question now arises as to the date of the organization of the Boone's Creek Christian Church. In

9. J. J. Burnett, Sketches of Tennessee's Pioneer Preachers, p. 537. Burnett's parenthetical statement is wholly untrue and serves to show how far religious prejudice is sometimes allowed to influence historical writing.

10. Samuel W. Tindell, The Baptists of Tennessee, Vol. I, p. 33.

11. Holston Baptist Association Minutes for 1825, 1827, 1828.

September, 1934, the church celebrated the centennial of its organization. The date was arrived at from the following data in the church record:

We the members of The Church of Christ at Boone's Creek Have met Together on the Twentieth day of September in The year of our Lord One Thousand Eight hundred and Thirty four and according to the Acts of The Apostles The church have chosen from Among us seven men of honest report and ordained them Elders of the church. And Daniel Fox a member of the church was appointed clerk of the church on The Same day and year above mentioned.

Elders
James Miller
Jacob Miller
Jacob Range
Daniel Snider
John Elry
Jeremiah Bacon
Jesse Hunt
George Grisham

Deacons
William White
Daniel Isenberger
John V. Hoss

Then follows the membership of the church listed in a novel way: "Brothers Members of the Church" is one heading, followed by forty-four names. Among these are several Negroes listed as "Ned J. a man of col"; "Leo a man of coler"; "Peter a man of col." "Henry Key a man of col," etc. Another list is headed "Sisters Members of the Church."¹² Ninety names appear on this list.

In preparation for the centennial, the date of September 20, 1834, seems to have been taken as the date of the first organization of the church. However, it is not

12. These old records are in possession of Miss Mary Keefauver, Jonesboro, Tennessee. The above data were copied from the first pages of one of the books. There are two.

so stated in the records. In fact, the records contain evidence that the church was functioning as early as 1831. The evidence is a receipt, which reads:

Received of Brother Wm. White \$30 in full for my labours at Boon's Creek the past year this the 7th of October 1832

Wm. Stewart

This would indicate a working organization in October of 1831. Inasmuch as the Buffalo Ridge Baptist Church reported to the association as two parties in 1828, one must conclude that Boone's Creek Church of Christ was organized some time between August, 1828, and October, 1831. No doubt the party which was not recognized by the association of 1828 as the Buffalo Ridge Baptist Church soon organized themselves into a Church of Christ. Such a large group would not be apt to delay formal organization long. Therefore, it seems valid to conclude that Boone's Creek Church of Christ was organized about 1829, or possibly late in 1828.

While it is not the purpose in this thesis to give any detailed history of individual churches, but rather to preserve the history of beginnings, yet there are items of more than passing interest worthy of chronicling.

First, a word about the growth of the church: in 1834 the record contains 134 names. In September, 1841, John Wright, James Miller, James I. Tipton, and David T. Wright were associated in a revival meeting at Boone's Creek Church which resulted in "fifty-six bowing to the

yoke of prince Emanuel" - to use John Wright's phraseology in reporting the meeting. At that time the congregation¹³ numbered 156 members.

A tabulation of the membership rolls in the Boone's Creek records showed the following: in February, 1842, there were 238 names on the roll; in July, 1842, there were 259 names listed; and by August, 1843, 299 names appear as members of the church. At the outbreak of the Civil War Boone's Creek had 318 members. In the old records there are two lists dated 1865. One shows forty-four members; the other, fifty. Likewise, there are two records dated 1869 - one shows a membership of sixty-eight; the other, seventy-three. This is no doubt indicative of the havoc wrought in all churches of the section by the Civil War.

Of interest also are the ministers who have been sent out by the Boone's Creek church. The records show that on August 23, 1842, Jerial Dodge, after having been excommunicated in May, 1834, by both Boone's Creek and Buffalo Churches, was restored to fellowship on "satisfactory confession" and was then "dismissed in mutual fellowship and recommended as a servant and teacher of the Christian Religion." Dodge labored for many years in upper East Tennessee as a minister and was instrumental in the spread of the Restoration doctrines in the section.

13. News item, Millennial Harbinger, New Series, Vol. V (December, 1841), p. 590.

On February 17, 1866, Hesiker¹⁴ (sic) Hinkel, a Negro, was ordained to the ministry and sent out to preach to his people. It seems that Hinkel was a mulatto who actually preached for the Boone's Creek Church of Christ several years before he was ordained. Not until he agreed to go among his people and preach would the elders at Boone's Creek consent to ordain him.

The father and mother of S. A. Russell (colored minister living at Jonesboro, Tennessee, who had preached over fifty years) and many other Negroes came into the Boone's Creek Church under the preaching of Hinkel. The father of S. A. Russell died June 26, 1902, at the age of eighty; his mother was buried June 26, 1922. She was eighty-six years old at her death. Both of these people came into Boone's Creek Church in the early years of its existence. The elder Russell was a brick mason and in 1855 constructed the church building at Boone's Creek which still is being used.

Hinkel had a great influence among the Negroes. It is said that at one time there were 180 Negroes in the Boone's Creek Church. In 1866 Hinkel organized the colored Church of Christ at Bristol, and the next year he organized the church at Washington College. He was also responsible for the organization of the colored church in

14. Probably a misspelling of Hezekiah.

Jonesboro and possibly the colored Christian Church in Johnson City.¹⁵ In the years following his ordination he often returned to preach for the Boone's Creek Church. There are those still living who remember his preaching there.¹⁶ All things considered, Hinkel must have been a man of considerable ability and character.

Other preachers sent out were W. C. Maupin,¹⁷ August 17, 1867, and John Ellis, a nephew of Maupin. W. C. Maupin was an influential minister, who "preached over much of Tennessee, Southwest Virginia, Western North Carolina, Kentucky, and Northern Missouri."¹⁸ He was the minister for five years in Johnson City while the church was being built. "He had to do, in many instances, with beginnings. He did not seek places of ease, but places of service."¹⁹

One other influential man should not be forgotten. He was "Uncle" George Grisham, one of those who left the Buffalo Ridge Baptist Church, whose name appears as one of

15. The information about Hinkel and his work, other than his ordination, was furnished by S. A. Russell, of Jonesboro, Tennessee, in a letter dated September 13, 1942.

16. Interview with Mrs. J. D. Keefauver, Jonesboro, Tennessee, September, 1942.

17. From a sketch of the Boone's Creek Church written by A. Preston Gray on the celebration of the centennial and published in the Jonesboro Herald and Tribune in installments from March 30, 1938, to May 4, 1938. Mr. Gray had access to one record book since lost.

18. J. W. West, Sketches of Our Mountain Pioneers, p. 50.

19. Ibid., p. 51.

the elders of Boone's Creek Church in 1834. He was influential in establishing the Boone's Creek Church and preached²⁰ much for the church and at other places. There is no record of his formal ordination, but much preaching among the early Reformers was done by elders and other capable leaders in the churches; so there is nothing strange about his preaching without ordination.

The influence of Boone's Creek Church has also manifested itself in the formation of new congregations. Some of the charter members of First Christian Church in Johnson City were from the Boone's Creek Church. This will be more fully treated in another chapter of this thesis.

Hale's Chapel Church of Christ, located about four miles from Boone's Creek Church and near the site of the old Buffalo Ridge Baptist Church, has direct connections with the Boone's Creek Church. About 1885 W. C. Maupin, James Scott, and A. M. Ferguson held a meeting in a store building not far from the present site of the church. Chamberlain Hale, at that time not a member of any church but an attendant at the Buffalo Ridge Baptist Church, asked that the meeting be held there. This was refused; so the old store building was fitted with seats and used as a place of worship. "Loon" Cash, a member of Boone's Creek Church, was also interested. He agreed to get a preacher

20. Interview with Miss Mary Grisham, a descendant of George Grisham, Jonesboro, Tennessee, September 13, 1942.

for the meeting if Hale would procure a building. During the subsequent meeting Chamberlain Hale and many other influential citizens of the community were converted. Again Buffalo Ridge Baptist Church lost members to the Christian Church. These, plus the new converts and several members from the Boone's Creek Church, were organized into a new congregation at the close of the meeting. Later Chamberlain Hale gave a beautiful site for a new church and grave-²¹yard. A new building was erected and dedicated in 1889.

In 1891 the East Tennessee Annual Meeting was held at Hale's Chapel Church of Christ. At that time A. M. Ferguson was pastor of the church and A. J. Gray, A. C. Fox, and Samuel Keebler were elders. One hundred and three²² members were reported.

Harrison's Chapel Church of Christ, located just off the Johnson City and Kingsport highway near Brown's Mill, is another church to which Boone's Creek has contributed. This church was organized as Eden's Chapel, October 9, 1897. John H. Edens, of Hampton, Tennessee, came and held meetings on his father's farm in a log shed - hence the name Eden's Chapel.²³ The church was organized with

21. Information from Mrs. J. M. Martin, Johnson City, Tennessee, September 14, 1942. Mrs. Martin is a daughter of Chamberlain Hale.

22. Minutes of the East Tennessee Annual Meeting for 1891 (McCown Collection).

23. A picture of this old building is in possession of Clyde Broyles, Johnson City, Tennessee, Route 3.

twelve charter members. N. L. Edens and Charles Davis were the first elders; John Broyles and John Carethers were the first deacons. T. S. H. Edens was the church clerk.

In 1897 a new building was proposed and started. James H. Shipley, Matilda Shipley, and Rachel Shipley gave the land, December 3, 1897.²⁴ James Shipley had a son named Benjamin Harrison Shipley who had died. In honor of this deceased son, the new building was designated Harrison's Chapel Church of Christ. The new building was dedicated, August 21, 1898, by A. I. Myhr, state evangelist. A few cents over twelve dollars was raised on dedication day. A remaining debt of about ten dollars was assumed by individuals, and the building was dedicated free of debt. On that day John A. Broyles was ordained as elder of the congregation.²⁵

Closely associated with Boone's Creek Church in point of time and fellowship was Buffalo Church, located on what is now the campus of Milligan College. No records of the organization of Buffalo are now extant. Therefore, its exact date is problematical. The only scrap of record is two leaves from an old treasurer's report, which states that Michael Hyder was chosen treasurer of Buffalow (sic) Creek Church in either September or November of 1834. The first

24. Washington County Deed Book No. 74, p. 273.

25. Information taken from church records in possession of Miss Virgie Fitzgerald, Johnson City, Tennessee, Route 3.

of the word is torn away, leaving only "-ember" as a cue
²⁶
 to the month. This date was taken from the oldest extant
 record and placed on the cornerstone of the new Hopwood
 Memorial Church.

Obviously, however, the church is older than that.
 Correspondence between the Buffalo Creek Church and Boone's
 Creek Church respecting Jerial Dodge was begun May 26,
²⁷
 1834. The following item was written in 1876 by Samuel
 H. Millard and T. J. Wright concerning John Wright:

On the 24th day of June 1832, five months
 after the union at Lexington he united with the
 congregation that brother Miller and others had
 organized at Buffalo Creek, Carter Co. Tenn.,
 and was the same day ordained by Elders James
 Miller and David Duncan. ²⁸

This would indicate that James Miller, who was responsible
 for Boone's Creek Church, was also the leading spirit in
 the organization of Buffalo Creek Church.

There is a tradition around Milligan College that
 James I. Tipton organized Buffalo Creek Church. In the old
 treasurer's report he is listed as a contributor in 1835.
 Two facts prove beyond a doubt that Tipton had nothing to
 do with the organization of the church. That Buffalo Creek
 Church was a growing organization in 1832 is clear from the
 following news item reported by John Wright: "Our congrega-
 tion at Buffaloe [sic] Creek, Carter County, in nine months

26. This paper is in possession of Samuel J. Hyder, Mil-
 ligan College, Tennessee. Certified copies are in the McCown
 Collection.

27. Boone's Creek Records.

28. Biographical sketch of John Wright (McCown Collection).

has increased from about forty to near one-hundred." The report was written March 30, 1833.²⁹ In an obituary notice of the death of James I. Tipton, written by T. J. Wright, whom he had baptized, it is stated that Tipton did not accept the Restoration doctrine until 1833.³⁰ Therefore, he could not have established Buffalo Creek Church.

The date of 1828 has been assigned for the organization of Buffalo Creek Church, but the source of the information is not given.³¹ Some dates given by this author are obviously erroneous, but there are circumstances which make the above date probable.

It is fairly well established that many of the first members of Buffalo came out of the Sinking Creek Baptist Church, which is located only two or three miles distant from Milligan College. James I. Tipton's father was a minister of the Baptist Church, and his second wife, Joanna Gourley, was a member of Sinking Creek. The marriage ceremony was performed by Rees Bayless, minister of Sinking Creek Church.³² It was noted above that James Miller was also a member of Sinking Creek. No doubt there were others also.

29. News item, Millennial Harbinger, Vol. IV (May, 1833), p. 237.

30. Ibid., Series V, Vol. IV (April, 1861), p. 180.

31. John T. Brown, ed., Churches of Christ, p. 281.

32. J. W. West, Sketches of Our Mountain Pioneers, p. 255. Sketch of James I. Tipton by Mrs. Mary Hardin McCown.

The disturbance in the Sinking Creek Baptist Church over the teaching of the Reformers is a matter of record. As early as November 14, 1824, there was a controversy over the baptism of one Fanny Rentfo. She had been baptized by Jerial Dodge, who, the records say, "is not of our union."³³ This act led to a prolonged controversy, which resulted in the excommunication of at least eight persons from the church for "justifying the baptism of Fanny Rentfo."³⁴ On October 18, 1826, a special meeting of the Sinking Creek people was held at the home of John Dunlap. This was evidently one faction of the divided church which did not have access to the building. New trustees were appointed in an attempt to get lawful possession of the building.³⁵

In 1826 the Holston Baptist Association appointed a special committee to investigate the difficulties at Sinking Creek.³⁶ At the meeting of the association in 1827 the committee reported that they found Sinking Creek

a divided people in principle and in practice and recommend to the party who hold to the principles and practices that they were constituted upon, to withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and will not accede to advice given by the association on the point. ³⁷

33. Sinking Creek Records, pp. 85, 86.

34. Ibid., p. 94.

35. Ibid., p. 94.

36. Association Minutes, 1826. These minutes in long-hand are arranged chronologically and not consistently paged.

37. Ibid., 1827.

To anyone familiar with the differences between the Baptist Churches and the Churches of Christ 100 years ago, it is plain that the disturbing element in the Sinking Creek Church was the teachings of the Restoration preachers. That this teaching influenced even those who remained in the church is equally patent. On October 15, 1831, the "church covenant was produced and read and it was motioned and seconded that reference in it to the Philadelphia Confession of faith be expuged [sic] from the church covenant."³⁸ This item is signed by Thomas D. Love, clerk. Thereafter all minutes of the church recorded by him are headed: The Church of Christ on Sinking Creek. These items are revealing in the light of the Restoration preacher's strenuous opposition to written creeds and human names for the church.

In the light of this division in the Sinking Creek Church in 1827, it seems probable that the organization of the Buffalo Creek Church was perfected as early as 1828.

Little more can be said of the early history of Buffalo Creek Church. The old treasurer's record carries twenty-nine different names, all of whom had contributed. That would probably allow, as a conservative estimate, a membership of from ninety to 100 between 1834 and 1840.

In August, 1841, the following report of the church is on record:

38. Sinking Creek Records, p. 112.

On Friday following we commenced at Buffalo, Carter County, and in two visits to that place we have gained for the King fifty-three; a part of these from the world, the rest from the Methodists, Baptists, Lutherans, and one from the Universalists. This church numbers one hundred and fifty members. At Buffalo we had the assistance of brother James Miller, from Washington County.

39

John Wright

Nothing more of the history of Buffalo is on record until comparatively recent date. That is beyond the scope of our thesis.

Another of the traditionally old churches of upper East Tennessee is Union Church of Christ in Washington County on Cherokee Creek. No records of this church are extant. In July, 1935, a centennial celebration was observed. The basis of this was the date of 1835 given by J. H. Roulhac in his very short sketch of Tennessee Christian Churches. As in the case of all other dates given in this sketch, no source of information is given. On the occasion of the centennial Stephen A. Morton, then minister of the church, prepared and gave orally what history of the church he could gather.

40

41

The first work done in the community that is spoken of is a meeting held by S. H. Millard in Hartsell's

39. News item, Millennial Harbinger, New Series, Vol. V (December, 1841), p. 590.

40. John T. Brown, ed., Churches of Christ, p. 282.

41. Morton has more than passing interest in the history of our old churches and made a rather thorough search for data. Most of his material came from old citizens now dead. The writer had access to his notes and an interview with him in September, 1942. If not otherwise indicated, the history as given came from Morton's notes.

mill. If this is the first preaching by the Restoration preachers in the community, then the church was not established in 1835. By his own statement, S. H. Millard⁴² preached his first sermon, July 20, 1845. However, it is not necessary to conclude that it was the first preaching there.

Mrs. Pauline Eliza St. Clair stated in 1935 (she was then ninety-one years of age and is now deceased) that her father, Jefferson Perkins, gave the land for the site of the present church. As a matter of public record, Joseph Hunter and Jefferson Perkins sold to Absolem Scott, Jacob Hyder, and Isaac Hartsell, trustees for the Church of Christ, the land for the consideration of six dollars on August 6, 1856.⁴³ The first log church was built about 1855. It was located just back of the present building. Jefferson Perkins gave the poplar logs for the building, which was constructed by donated labor for the most part. It was a large rectangular building used both for a church and a schoolhouse. Before this building was constructed, worship was conducted in Hunter's Schoolhouse.

The present brick structure was built about 1876. The brick are said to have been made by Isaac Hartsell from the same yard as those in the Hartsell home nearby.

42. From the manuscript of an address delivered by Millard at Weaver's Church, Sullivan County, July, 1895, on the occasion of his fiftieth anniversary in the ministry.

43. Washington County Deed Book 45, p. 438.

Some of the early members of Union Church were: Jefferson Perkins, his wife and two daughters, Eliza and Hanna; Isaac Hartsell and his family; William Denton and family; Thomas Scott and family; John and Daisy Boring; Absalom Scott; "Uncle" Billie Walters; and Samuel E. Feathers. It seems that J. I. Scott, J. M. Beckett, and Isaac Hartsell as elders in the Union Church did much of the preaching for the congregation in its early days. Beckett was said to have been a fairly able preacher; and Scott to have been a good influence through his forgiving spirit. Hartsell seems to have had more ability than the others - a very frank man yet able to bring tears or laughter from a congregation at will.

This further bit of authentic history has been gleaned from the fragments. J. H. Jones united with the church at Union in 1868 during a meeting held by a Brother Shelor. He was baptized by A. M. Ferguson, who no doubt was the minister at that time. Dora Hartsell, later the wife of J. H. Jones, joined the church at Union in 1874⁴⁴ under the ministry of a Brother Star. That data of this type is worth recording appears in the fact that J. H. Jones was for many years a much beloved physician and citizen of Jonesboro and community. Until his death, he was a leading member in the Union Church of Christ.

44. These two were the parents of Mrs. Minnie J. Cargille, from whose scrapbook the data were taken.

In 1891 the Union Church reported a membership of 205 and \$155.63 total money raised for the year. A. M. Ferguson was the minister at that time. ⁴⁵

A critical word about the early history of Union Church of Christ should be noted. There is some reason to doubt the validity of the early date of 1835 for its organization. It has already been noted that wherever the Restoration preachers went in the early days they caused serious disturbances in the Baptist churches. Such was not the exception but rather the rule.

The Union Church of Christ is not far distant from the second oldest Baptist church in Tennessee, Cherokee Baptist Church. A thorough reading of the records of the Cherokee Baptist Church showed no disturbance over "Campbellism" until March 5, 1853. Under that date appears the following:

On the request of sister Matilda that the church should not withdraw their fellowship from her and her husband L. Hunter for having gone off and uniting with the Campbellites that they have an idea of coming back to the church. The request was granted. Brothers W. Andes and N. L. Hartsell were appointed a committee to ascertain the names of those who had gone off under excitement and united with the Campbellites and to report the same to the church at the next meeting, all of whom should be considered Ripe for exclusion at that time unless they should set themselves right before the church. ⁴⁶

At the next meeting, Friday, April 29, 1853, the following minute was recorded:

45. Minutes of the East Tennessee Annual Meeting for 1891 (McCown Collection).

46. Records of Cherokee Baptist Church, p. 97.

On motion expelled 11 for having gone off and uniting with another people to wit - the Campbellites. The names of those who have gone off are Jackson Orr, Rebecca Orr, Hetta Orr, Rebecca Hartsell, Elvira Laws, Francis Denny, Nancy Brumit, Elizabeth May, Catharine Leach, Rebecca Hayse and Anna Hutchins. 47

In 1855, 1856, and 1857 four more were excommunicated for
48
the same offense.

In view of the fact that this disturbance took place in the Cherokee Baptist Church in 1853 and that the log church was built in 1855, the land being deeded in 1856, one is inclined to believe that Union Church of Christ was organized in 1853 and not in 1835. The transposition of the last two figures of the date would have been a natural and easy error. At least there is a question which leaves the date undecided until further data are available, which is highly improbable.

Johnson County is the seat of another old church - Liberty Church of Christ. Unfortunately, again the old records have been lost or not kept, and much of the history cannot be adequately written.

The date assigned to this church is 1835. 49 The nearest confirmation of that date is the old deed to the trustees of the church, made February 9, 1838. Thomas McQueen gave "title Bond" to "Andrew Wilson, Stephen Jackson,

47. Ibid., p. 98.

48. Ibid., pp. 102, 104, 107.

49. John T. Brown, ed., Churches of Christ, p. 282.

James Blevins, and John Minks, trustees and their successors one square acre of land . . . for the purpose of building a meeting house for divine worship for the Christian Baptists and all other Christians that is in good standing in their churches, is to have liberty to preach in said house except on the days of appointments by the above named baptists.⁵⁰"

Further conditions in the deed were that said trustees or their successors build a meeting house on the land and keep it in repair for public worship.⁵¹ In the light of what happened later, it should be noted that this deed was duly registered on March 18, 1843.

A log church was soon constructed on the land and used as a place of worship till after the Civil War. In accord with the deed, all groups had access to the building.

Practically nothing can be reconstructed of the early history of Liberty Church. In August, 1841, John Wright reported that he, James I. Tipton, and David T. Wright held a meeting there with thirteen additions by baptism and two restored. He further added: "This congregation numbers about eighty members."⁵²

In an old record of the church roll it is written that Wm. E. Johnson, Orphea Ann Johnson, Wm. H. Johnson, and

50. Johnson County Deed Book I, p. 350.

51. Ibid.

52. News item, Millenial Harbinger, New Series, Vol. V (December, 1841), p. 590.

Elizabeth Johnson were baptized in 1851 by a man named Love. Nothing more is on record concerning the Liberty Church in its early days.

The present frame building was constructed in 1875. Jack Wilson of Mountain City helped construct it at the age of fifteen. He was born in 1860.⁵³

An interesting bit of history concerning the property is a matter of public record. J. S. Arnold and his wife, Belle Arnold, came into possession of the old McQueen farm, from which the original church land was deeded. Claiming that the Christian Church people had no title to the property, the Arnolds sold the property to trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church, of which they were members, for the consideration of three hundred dollars - fifty dollars in cash and two notes of one hundred and twenty-five dollars each, which were later paid and the mortgage cancelled.⁵⁴ After considerable altercation between the parties concerned, on June 14, 1914, the Methodists gave a quit-claim deed for the property to trustees of the Christian Church for the consideration of two hundred and fifty dollars.⁵⁵

53. Interview, August 24, 1942.

54. Johnson County Deed Book No. 26, p. 315.

55. Ibid., No. 30, p. 95. In addition to the previously mentioned evangelists, the following incomplete list of men who have served as ministers or evangelists in Liberty Church was compiled from a few scattered records of the church. H.H. Tomison was one of the early evangelists, J.R. Scott preached for the church in the 1880's, C.C. Coffey in (see next page)

Situated in Sullivan County, Tennessee, are three old churches of Christ; viz., Weaver's, Buffalo, and Poplar Ridge. In point of origin, these churches are closely related.

Weaver's Church has been variously dated. Taylor⁵⁶ dates it "about 1842." Roulhac gives the date as about 1830.⁵⁷ Taylor gives David T. Wright as the minister in charge of the organization.

Weaver's Church seems to be on the site of one of the churches organized in 1780 by Samuel Doak, a pioneer Presbyterian preacher of Tennessee. Regarding this, Taylor says: "Upper Concord is now known as Weaver's - Frederick Weaver having given three acres of land, the ground around⁵⁸ the church being used as a graveyard."

1886, W. M. Johnson and J. M. Cross in 1892; J. L. Berry was ordained by the church in 1893; L. L. Greene, W. C. Maupin, 1894; Ephrim Buck, Jonathan Miller, G. W. Wise, 1899-1900; J. C. Bass, 1903; W. C. Greer, 1882, and again in 1905; Lacy, 1911; Campbell, 1908; J. N. Shepherd, 1911 and 1921; Harmon, 1923; K. H. McKorkle, 1926; E. Roy Gentry, 1919.

56. Oliver Taylor, Historic Sullivan, p. 182.

57. John T. Brown, ed., Churches of Christ, p. 282.

58. Oliver Taylor, Historic Sullivan, p. 178. It is worthy of note that Taylor says (p. 176) that the first church on Tennessee soil was called "Taylor's Meeting-House," located four miles west of Blountville and organized by Jacob Lake, a Presbyterian minister. This church dates prior to 1777. Taylor had documentary evidence enough that Philip M. Hamer accepted his statement. See Hamer, Tennessee A History, Vol. II, p. 803.

The Church of Christ there was first known as
⁵⁹Concord also. The name was changed sometime after
⁶⁰Weaver gave the land.

Taking Taylor's date as a basis, the Weaver's Church celebrated its centennial in August of 1942. However, there is some reason to believe that Weaver's Church is even older than 1830, the date given by Roulhac. Samuel H. Millard, who was born November 1, 1820, two miles south of Weaver's Church and lived for seventy-five years within twenty miles of the church, wrote in 1895:

The church was reorganized the 9th (of Aug. 1842) - an organization had been formed here 20 yrs. before by Jerial or Jonal Dodge - but was not in working order at this time - 40 or more united during the 3 days meeting - These and the former members constituted the new organization.

He further states the "first discourse I remember to have
⁶¹heard was here delivered by bro. Jas. Miller."

These statements, if accepted at face value, would give the Concord Church (now Weaver's) the date of 1822 and make it antedate Boone's Creek by about eight years. It would also make Dodge the first preacher of the Restoration doctrine in upper East Tennessee. This view is somewhat substantiated by the fact that Jerial Dodge baptized people

59. Reported as such in 1843 at the Annual Meeting held at Boone's Creek Church. Boone's Creek Records.

60. Weaver deeded the land on June 21, 1823. Sullivan County Deed Book 10, p. 4.

61. Millard Manuscript. An address delivered July, 1895, at Weaver's, celebrating fifty years of service in the ministry by Millard.

contrary to the Baptist practice as early as November,
⁶² 1824. This was six months before James Miller left the
⁶³ Sinking Creek Church. There was also some disturbance
 in the Double Springs and Buffalo Ridge Baptist Churches
 prior to the meeting of the Holston Association in 1825 "re-
⁶⁴ specting the doctrine of Arianism." Inasmuch as the Bap-
 tists invariably charged the early Christian preachers with
 teaching Arianism, this looks as if the Reformation prin-
 ciples might have been preached in upper East Tennessee
 before Miller's meeting on Boone's Creek. However, if the
 honor of priority in point of time goes to Jerial Dodge,
 the honor of a greater influence and character must go to
 James Miller.

Since there are no extant records of the early
 years of Weaver's Church, little more can be written. In
 1843 this church sent delegates and reported to the Annual
⁶⁵ Meeting held at Boone's Creek a membership of 109. Of
 more than passing interest is the fact that one man, Samuel
 H. Millard, preached monthly for this church for a period
⁶⁶ of thirty-three years. It was Millard who "attended and
 kept alive during the much to be regretted war of 4 years"
⁶⁷ Weaver's and Poplar Ridge Churches.

62. Sinking Creek Records, p. 86. 63. Ibid., p. 88.

64. Holston Association Minutes for 1825.

65. Boone's Creek Records.

66. Millard MS.

67. Ibid.

Data on the Buffalo Christian Church in Sullivan County are even more meager than on Weaver's.⁶⁸ About one half mile from the mouth of Beaver Creek in Sullivan County was located an old log schoolhouse. In the early days, about 1850, it was called Buchanan's Schoolhouse. Later it became well known as Buffalo Schoolhouse. This old log schoolhouse was used as a place of worship by Methodists, Baptists, Christians, and others farther back than the oldest inhabitants of the community can remember. It was in this building and near this site that the Buffalo Christian Church was organized and has continued to function. From available data any date set for the organization of Buffalo Church of Christ in Sullivan County would be mere conjecture. It may be worth recording that this church was sometimes called Beaver Creek Church.⁶⁹

In the year 1890 or 1891 a frame building, known as Buffalo Christian Church, was erected about 250 yards northeast from where the old log schoolhouse stood, which is still used as a house of worship.

Poplar Ridge Church of Christ is located about three miles northeast of Piney Flats in Sullivan County.

68. Homer H. Smith, attorney, of Blountville, Tennessee, has made diligent search for data on the old Christian churches of Sullivan County, with little reward for his labor. He gave the historical sketch at Weaver's centennial in 1942. He generously prepared a nine-page manuscript for the author in August, 1942. All information concerning Buffalo Christian Church is from this manuscript.

69. So called in the Millard MS. and in the minutes of the Annual Meeting for 1891.

Roulhac dates the organization of this church in 1846.⁷⁰

The evidence seems to point to an earlier date than that.

H. H. Cross, Sr., who was born and reared within one and one half miles of the church and died in the summer of 1942 at the age of eighty-six, said the old log Christian Church was standing as far back as he could remember.⁷¹

In 1843 there was reported to the Annual Meeting held at Boone's Creek Church a "Fork" Church from Sullivan County, with a membership of forty-three.⁷² The section of Sullivan County north of the Watauga River and south of the Holston River was years ago, and still is, known as the "Forks." Since the Poplar Ridge Church is in this section and the other Sullivan County churches are not, it seems evident that the "Fork" Church reported in 1843 was the Poplar Ridge Church of today. The church is, then, at least 100 years old. It was one of those churches nurtured and kept alive the first years of the Civil War by Samuel H. Millard. Millard ministered to the Poplar Ridge Church monthly for twenty years. The last year of the Civil War, W. G. Barker took over the care of the church.⁷³ If all of Millard's ministry was prior to the last year of the Civil War, then 1843 may be taken as the best available date for the organization of Poplar Ridge Church. The present frame

70. John T. Brown, ed., Churches of Christ, p. 282.

71. H. H. Smith MS.

72. Boone's Creek Church Records.

73. Millard MS.

building was constructed about 1887, two or three hundred
feet west of the site of the old log church.⁷⁴

The relationship between the old Weaver's church and the other Sullivan County churches is not clear. No doubt members from Concord (now Weaver's) were responsible for, or at least contributed to, both Buffalo and Poplar Ridge, though this is not a matter of record. This much is clear: ministers to one of the churches more frequently than not ministered to the other also.

The influence of old Concord Church on other churches in the county is fairly well established. About the year 1877 the old log church at Concord was wrecked by a hurricane. At that time, it seems, most of the members lived farther east, near Beech Forest Schoolhouse. The seats from the wrecked building were moved to the school-
house and for several years services were held there.⁷⁵

In 1888 the Beech Forest Church reported to the Annual Meet-
ing.⁷⁶ Still later the church worshiped at Bidleman's Schoolhouse farther east. During this time services were frequently held at the former sites of Concord and Beech Forest. In 1907 or 1908, under the ministry of John N.

74. Smith MS.

75. This information furnished by Stephen A. Morton in a letter of September 1, 1942, concerning Central Holston Church. Morton's people have been in this community from the above date and before. They were charter members in Central Holston Church. All information about Central Holston is from this letter.

76. Annual Meeting Minutes, 1888 (McCown Collection).

Shepherd, the site of the present Central Holston Church of Christ was secured and a building erected. Since that time Central Holston Church has grown into one of the most influential country churches of upper East Tennessee.

The influence of Weaver's and Poplar Ridge Churches was also exerted in the organization of First Christian Church of Bristol, Virginia, in 1856. Some of the charter members of this church were from Weaver's and Poplar Ridge.⁷⁷ In turn, the Bristol, Virginia, Church gave up members to form Central Christian Church of Bristol, Tennessee, which will be treated in another chapter.

The Christian Church at Blountville, Tennessee, is directly connected with the Buffalo Christian Church. From 1890 to 1900 three attempts to plant a Christian Church in Blountville failed. About 1890 a man by the name of Rodgers, from Kentucky, preached there; about 1896 Ephraim Buck, then District Evangelist, preached for one week with no results; about 1900 Antony Ferguson preached for several nights with no results.

In February and March, 1913, a meeting of three weeks' duration was held in the courthouse in Blountville by J. T. McKissick, then secretary of the Tennessee Christian Missionary Society, assisted by E. Roy Gentry. On March 2, 1913, the organization was perfected, and twenty-

⁷⁷. Yearbook and Directory of First Christian Church of Bristol, Virginia, 1931.

eight were enrolled as charter members, most of whom had been members of Buffalo Christian Church.

In 1920 an excellent lot was purchased, and in the summer of 1924 a neat and attractive building was erected. It was dedicated on November 16, 1924, by George E. Prewitt, free of debt. Since then the congregation has⁷⁸ grown to about 150.

Another church of Christ in upper East Tennessee that is thought to have passed the century mark is Turkeytown Church in Carter County. Roulhac assigns the date of⁷⁹ 1840 for the planting of this church. This date is probably correct. Under date of September 8, 1841, John Wright reported the following:

On Friday before the second Lord's day in August last we held a four days' meeting in Turkeytown, in Carter County; and during the meeting five persons confessed that Jesus is ~~the~~ Christ the Son of God, and were planted together in the likeness of His death. There have been some fifteen others added to this congregation this season, and it now numbers about ninety members. 80

However, in 1843 the church reported only sixty-four mem-⁸¹bers to the Annual Meeting held at Boone's Creek Church.

78. Information from H. H. Smith MS.

79. John T. Brown, ed., Churches of Christ, p. 282.

80. News item, Millennial Harbinger, New Series, Vol. V (December, 1841), p. 590.

81. Boone's Creek Records.

The first place of meeting of this congregation⁸² was called Thompson's Meeting House. That such a building existed is confirmed by a deed in the Carter County records dated September 15, 1865. It contains the descriptive phrase, "near Thompson's Meeting House."⁸³ Evidently at that time the building was something of a landmark.

This old building was burned near the close of the Civil War or shortly after. The present brick building was constructed in 1866 and 1867 about one half mile southwest of the site of the Old Log Church. George Persinger deeded the land to John Hendrix, Wm. B. Campbell, and Elkanah D. Range, trustees, February 28, 1868. That the building was constructed at that time is clear, for the deed contains the phrase, "a lot of ground on which⁸⁴ said meeting house now stands."

An interesting tradition concerning the burning of the old church and the building of the new one has been handed down in the community. The story is that a group of counterfeiters, who were operating in the woods nearby, hired a Negro to burn the church. They were afraid that people attending the church might discover their hideout.

When it came time to rebuilt, the members could not agree upon a site for the new church. Finally, the

82. Information from George Mattern, perhaps the oldest member of the congregation living, August, 1942.

83. Carter County Deed Book P, p. 453.

84. Ibid., p. 119.

leading members, Mattern, Smalling, Hart, Persinger, and others, agreed to start each from his own home and wherever they met there build a church. They converged under the old oak tree which still stands in front of the church on the land of George Persinger. There the church was built. 85 Just how much credence can be put in the story is left to the reader.

Only one other Christian Church in East Tennessee can trace its lineage back approximately a century. That is the Christian Church at Hampton in Carter County. The following is part of the records of the church:

The church was first organized at the home of W. M. Snyder. The first preaching was at the home of John Hill, Bros. D. T. Wright and J. I. Tipton in the year of 1842. Second Lord's day in April. When Wm. Snyder, John Hill and his father confessed Christ followed by others. We then erected a house of worship. Called it Mount Pleasant it was attended for about Seven years by T. J. Wright as paster [sic]. Also with the aid of other ministers as helpers as follows. S. H. Millard, A. Campbell, John Wright, Jas. I. Tipton and R. Ellis. From Mount Pleasant we moved to Fishers old Field where the church grew rapidly for a season. After being here for some time the Brethren moved to a house on the Bank of Doe River near Hampton called Locust Grove. Bros. W. G. Barker and T. J. Wright were the ministers for the church at this time. After being here for Some time the House of worship was burned to the ground, it has always been supposed by the liquor interests. 86

85. From a letter of W. G. Mattern, grandson of the Mattern in the story, to the writer, September 4, 1942.

86. Copied from the church records in September, 1842. This document is not the original; it is written in a type of church Record Book which is not more than forty years old. There is every indication that it was copied into the present book from an older one, a common practice with church records. Since there is little motive for falsification, the author accepts it as authentic. The men mentioned as evangelists (continued)

It seems that about 1887 a new building was erected in the village of Hampton. It was dedicated in 1891⁸⁷ and has served the congregation since that date. In 1942 it was in the process of a thorough remodeling.

In connection with the old Locust Grove congregation, it is appropriate to touch upon another church - the Valley Forge Church of Christ. It was organized November 9, 1872, by L. A. Campbell. Charles Headrick and John Grindstaff, who had been ordained as elders at Locust Grove on "the third Lord's Day in Nov. 1871," were chosen elders. David Chambers and Wm. G. Bowers were chosen deacons. John B. Williams was chosen clerk and Elijah Williams⁸⁸ secretary and treasurer. The covenant of this group is interesting as well as revealing of their faith. It reads:

We the undersigned Disciples of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ do this 9th Day of November, 1872 mutually agree to take the Bible as our man [sic] of council it being the only bond by which Christian union can be perpetuated and promoted as it is the only infallible rule both for faith and practice. 89

and ministers are authentic for the period, a fact known by few people even a generation ago. Also, Locust Grove Church reported to the Annual Meeting in 1881 and 1885. All things considered, there is little reason to reject the evidence.

87. Interview with Mrs. Nat Burchfield, Elizabethton, Tennessee, September, 1942.

88. Data from the church record in possession of Paul Headrick, Valley Forge, Tennessee.

89. Ibid.

The Valley Forge Church of Christ was reorganized by A. Preston Gray "between Feb. 22d, 1914 and March 9th, 1914."⁹⁰ The present brick building was erected in 1925 and now serves a congregation of about 250 people.

Two more churches are of sufficient age to warrant including them in this sketch of old churches. The year 1850 has been given for their organization. One of these is Mount Bethel Church of Christ in Greene County, near Limestone, Tennessee; the other is Liberty Church of Christ in Blount County, some four or five miles from Maryville,⁹¹ Tennessee.

In regard to the Mount Bethel Church, a question about the date can be raised. In 1935 old citizens in the community informed M. B. Miller, who was then conducting a revival service in the church, that there had been an organization there as early as 1838 and that a goodly number of people belonging to the Christian Church had lived in the community for some years even before that.⁹²

However, the date of 1850 has the confirmation of the old deed to the church, made October 14, 1850. This deed has enough of human interest in it to warrant quoting in part. It reads:

90. Ibid.

91. John T. Brown, ed., Churches of Christ, p. 282.

92. From a brief sketch of the church written by M. B. Miller in 1935, in which names of the old members are given. Now in possession of Mrs. U. G. Bolton, Limestone, Tennessee.

I Jacob Miller senior of Washington County and State of Tennessee have this day bargained and do hereby transfer and convey to William Laws of Washington County and Henry Bolton of Greene County and state aforesaid, Trustees for the Christian Society and their successors or trustees forever for the consideration of the love and affection I have for the society I do hereby acknowledge myself fully satisfied. 93

It must be admitted, however, that this deed, dated as it is in 1850, is not proof positive that there was not a church organization at Mount Bethel before that time. That the church was built before the deed was made is evident, because in the description of the property the deed contains the phrase, "including Mount Bethel Meeting⁹⁴ house." But just how long it was there before the deed was made is a matter of conjecture, for the oldest extant record of the church dates from 1891.

The date for Liberty Church of Christ in Blount County is one of the few that can be absolutely verified. "The church at Liberty in Blount County Tennessee was established by Elder Matison Love Dec. 25th, 1850. Elders and deacons were appointed. The two Elders being. John A.⁹⁵ Hannah and John McClever."

This record, though accurate, is all too brief to tell the story of the old church. No doubt there was much human interest there, as in all old churches, but it has

93. Greene County Deed Book No. 25, p. 592.

94. Ibid.

95. Copied from the old church record now in possession of Mrs. G. R. Miller, Maryville, Tennessee, Route 1.

been lost in the oblivion of time. It is reported that the old church was of logs, with a large fireplace in one end. Some of the old preachers to minister there were a Dr. Lawson, Uncle Sam Willocks, and George Martin. No doubt there were many others. In later years Ashley Sidney Johnson and Dr. Maddren preached for Liberty Church. Perhaps dozens of young preachers from Johnson Bible College have "practiced" their sermons on old Liberty Church, yet it lives on! Indeed the vitality of these old churches in the midst of the changing years is the most amazing thing about them. They live when by every human criterion they should die and cease to be.

As has happened in most cases, Liberty Church has given birth to at least one other. In 1906 many of the members of Liberty Church swarmed, as it were, and formed the Mountain View Church of Christ some three or four miles away. C. E. Wilson was the man in charge of the dedication
96
services.

After the coming of the aluminum plants to Alcoa, Tennessee, and the subsequent increase of population in the vicinity of Mountain View, the church has developed into a thriving rural congregation.

Thus ends the chronicling of the beginnings of the really old Christian Churches of East Tennessee. The

96. Information furnished by Alvia L. Swaney in a letter to the writer, August 25, 1942.

record is of necessity incomplete and somewhat disappointing. Scanty records have made it so; but the influence of a church is not measured by its records kept. Alas, how impotent most churches, if it were so!

CHAPTER IV

LARGER CHURCHES AND CENTERS OF INFLUENCE

While the century-old churches discussed in Chapter III still live and serve their communities, they have been displaced in influence and size by younger churches located in the cities.

Among these, First Christian Church of Johnson City is the largest - in fact, it is one of the largest Christian churches in the South. November 12, 1941, marked the seventieth anniversary of the church. The first work of any Christian minister in Johnson City dates back to shortly after the Civil War. In 1867 the Science Hill school building was erected in what was then known as Johnson's Depot. This building served as a meeting place for all religious groups until churches were built.¹ A union Bible school was conducted in this building, and John Wright, an elder and minister of the Christian Church, was the first superintendent. Wright was a Confederate sympathizer and had served as a recruiting officer during the struggle, being too old for active duty. In 1863 he was driven from his farm in Carter County by the persecution

1. Seventieth Anniversary of First Christian Church of Johnson City, Tennessee, p. 3. Unless otherwise indicated, all data for First Christian Church are taken from this document.

of "Bush-Whackers."² He took refuge in the village of Johnson's Depot and thus brought the influence of the Restoration Movement to what later became Johnson City. Besides Wright, W. C. Maupin, W. G. Barker, J. M. Beckett, James Miller, J. R. Scott, and others did occasional preaching in the schoolhouse.

The formal organization of the First Christian Church was perfected November 12, 1871, at the home of W. H. Young. That was near Cedar Street, in what is now the southwest addition of Johnson City. In that home the church continued to meet until June 24, 1872, when Young became sick. After his death the meetings were resumed.

In February, 1874, James Miller, the preacher who began the Restoration Movement on Boone's Creek, made his will. In it he designated a lot on Main Street, fifty by ninety feet, to be

set apart as a site for a Christian Church, provided said church shall within six years from date erect a good and comfortable church building thereon, but should said church fail to do so, then said lot or part thereon so designated shall revert to my said wife. 3

Pursuant to the will, a building committee was appointed March 20, 1874, to lay plans for the building.

2. Mary Hardin McCown, A Brief History of the First Christian Church Bible School of Johnson City, Tennessee (unpublished manuscript).

3. Will Book 2, p. 291, Washington County, Tennessee. (Copy of the will in McCown Collection.)

The committee was composed of John Wright, W. C. Maupin, H. H. Crouch, and J. C. Hardin. Through the efforts of this committee a brick building, fifty by thirty feet, was erected and dedicated December 4, 1879. The dedicatory services were conducted by Dexter Snow, of Wytheville, Virginia. The site of this building is now occupied by Goldstein Brothers and Hart's Jewelry Store.

During the building period W. C. Maupin preached for the congregation. He was a cabinet-maker by trade and made the walnut pulpit for the church.

In 1875 the church had a membership of forty; three elders and one deacon. They paid that year thirty-five dollars for preaching and twenty-four dollars for "evangelism." In that year Josephus Hopwood came to East Tennessee and took charge of Buffalo Institute, which later became Milligan College. Since that time President Hopwood and many other teachers at Milligan have served the church. The affiliation between the college and the church has been close through the years.

Just after the building was dedicated, a Bible School was organized in First Christian Church. The organization was set up December 7, 1879. J. C. Hardin was made superintendent; J. Worley Millard, assistant; and Miss Mollie Kitzmiller, secretary. The first teachers were Mary J. Millard, J. W. Millard, Miss Amner Millard, and S. W. Hendrix. During the first quarter in the life of the school

the attendance averaged twenty-one. Miss Kitzmiller served as secretary from the organization of the school until her death in February, 1933.⁴

From 1871 to 1899 the Christian Church in Johnson City had a slow but steady growth. During that period fifteen different men held the pastorate, and some ten different evangelists held special meetings.⁵ A. I. Myhr became State Evangelist for Tennessee in 1891. In three meetings which he held for the Johnson City Christian Church more than one hundred were added to the membership. His work began the rapid growth which was to characterize the church for many years.

On July 1, 1899, A. A. Ferguson became minister of the church; he closed his ministry in 1903. Soon after his coming, he held a meeting which added fifty-two to the congregation. In addition, during his ministry J. Spencer, of Lexington, Kentucky; R. Lin Cave, of Nashville; and Wallace Thorp, of Crawfordsville, Indiana, held successful evangelistic meetings for the church. Under the ministry of A. A. Ferguson, the church building was remodeled and the seating capacity almost doubled.

In October, 1903, J. Lem Keevil, of Brooklyn, New York, was called to Johnson City as pastor of First

4. Mary Hardin McCown, op. cit.

5. The pastors were: W. C. Maupin, S. H. Millard, W. F. Rucker, F. F. Bullard, P. B. Hall, C. L. Maddox, J. Hopwood, S.T. Willis, A.M. Ferguson, D.T. Buck, E.C. Buck, E.P. Grow, W.P. Crouch, G.C. Stocker, G.W. Thompson. The evangelists were: W.C. Maupin, S.H. Millard, J.D. Hamaker, J.H. Wingo, A.M. Ferguson, C.C. Cofer, D.M. Breaker, J.A. Spencer, A.I. Myhr, and William Burleigh.

Church. He closed his pastorate in May of 1908. May 2, 1905, the church building was completely destroyed by fire. For more than a year following the fire, services were held in the old Jobe's Opera House. Later a tabernacle was constructed at the corner of Main and Roan Streets, where services were held until a new building was erected.

The old lot was sold and the site of the present building purchased. A new building was erected and dedicated on June 10, 1906. The dedicatory services were conducted by Z. T. Sweeny, of Columbus, Indiana. During Keevil's ministry three evangelistic campaigns were conducted. James Small held one meeting, with sixty-five added to the church; the Brooks brothers conducted the first meeting in the new church, with 140 added; Keevil, himself, conducted another campaign, which resulted in seventy additions.

Following Keevil as minister, came John T. Brown. A meeting conducted by Brown brought another 150 into the church.

In 1910 W. S. Buchanan became minister to the church. His pastorate lasted until 1912. During this period S. M. Martin conducted an evangelistic campaign which resulted in 186 additions to the church.

Following Buchanan's ministry, R. R. Hamlin, of Wichita Falls, Texas, was called to the church in 1912. His ministry was cut short by his untimely death.

In 1913 J. N. Jessup, of Little Rock, Arkansas, took the pastorate. Jessup held one meeting, which added 125 to the church. After a ministry of a little short of two years, he resigned because of illness.

Louis D. Riddell was the next minister of the church. His term of service was from 1915 until 1920. The evangelistic fervor of the church continued in this period. Crayton S. Brooks held one meeting, which increased the church membership by 160; W. M. Briney held another, with eighty-seven new members. At the end of Riddell's ministry, the membership of the church numbered 800 - a net gain of 500 in seventeen years.

William E. Sweeny came to the church as minister in June, 1920. In eight and one half years of his ministry the church increased its membership from 800 to 1700. The evangelists during the period, with the results of the meetings, were: Kellems and Richards, over 200 added; S. S. Lappin, eighty-five added; Virgil Wallace, 240; R. E. Snodgrass, 130; J. H. O. Smith, 125. During Sweeny's ministry C. H. Richards was assistant pastor and choir director part of the time.

In 1921 leaders of the brotherhood of Christian churches, working through the Standard Publishing Company, of Cincinnati, sponsored what was known as a Group Evangelism Campaign. In March of that year one of the "Group Evangelism Congresses" was held in Johnson City, Tennessee.

Out of that came what was known as the "Five-Year Campaign of First Christian Church." Its object was to strengthen weak churches and establish new ones in adjacent counties.

The first fruit of that campaign was two evangelistic meetings, simultaneously held in Greeneville and Morristown, Tennessee. J. S. Raum was engaged as an evangelist to enter Greeneville. Charley Clark assisted him as singer and Miss Sells as pianist. D. Emmett Snyder was the evangelist in Morristown, and his assistants were Miss Ella Price, organist of the Johnson City church, and C. H. Richards, the choir leader. The meetings began September 8, 1921, and closed October 16.

In Greeneville the final result was ninety-one additions and a church and Bible School organized toward the close of the meeting. In Morristown, 104 were gathered together into a church. A lot was purchased; and the construction of a building began on October 13, before the meeting closed. December 11 was set as dedication day.⁶

The Greeneville congregation met for about a year in the Court House. S. W. Traum, of Milligan College, preached for them. In March of 1922 a lot was purchased and plans made for a new building. The basement was built and roofed over. This first unit of the plant was first used July 23, 1922. J. N. Shepherd preached for the group

6. News item, Christian Standard, Vol. LVII (November 5, 1921), p. 2839. W. E. Sweeny reported the meetings.

on that day.⁷ A few years later a lovely Gothic super-
structure was erected on the foundation.⁸

A further result of this "Five-Year Campaign" was the extension of the work in Johnson City. Lots were purchased in the Carnegie section of the city, and J. S. Raum was engaged to hold a tent meeting there. He began in July of 1922 and continued for three weeks. The nucleus of this new congregation, established at that time, was a group of men and women from the First Church. A building was later constructed by the two congregations. The First Church group held title of the property until 1940, when a transfer was made to trustees of the Second Church of Christ. This church has grown into a splendid congregation, numbering about 300. It is now free of debt and well-
⁹
housed in a remodeled building.

In what is known as the "Y" section of Johnson City another mission was started in 1922. D. Emmett Snyder later held a meeting there, and a church was organized. This is known as Third Christian Church of Johnson City, Tennessee. In the spring of 1929 the old building was moved to the present site and remodeled, at a cost of about ten thousand dollars. Under the leadership of Joe McCormick,

7. Ibid. (August 5, 1922), p. 3833.

8. The writer ministered there from 1933 to 1939.

9. The writer ministered there from June, 1939, to June, 1941, and spoke at the mortgage-burning ceremony, May 23, 1943.

a deacon in First Church, the debt on this splendid brick building was liquidated in 1940. Since then the congregation¹⁰ has been self-supporting.

Another part of this Five-Year Campaign was the building of a Bible School annex to the First Church building. Extensive improvements were also made on the building proper. The annex was dedicated, January, 1923, by George L. Snively.

A Fourth Church of Christ in Johnson City dates from November 1, 1927. On the evening of that day a number of people, living in the section of the city known as Miller's Hill, met at the home of O. A. Dulaney, 1501 Virginia Street. William Sweeny, minister of First Church, and D. Emmett Snyder, associate minister, were present. Out of that meeting came a suggestion for a house of worship for a new congregation. The suggestion met with favor, and D. Emmett Snyder took charge of the project. The lot across the street from the Dulaney home was secured and November 19, 1927, set as the day for construction to begin. Volunteer workers gathered on that day and roughly built a small frame building. Another day, November 24, was given to finishing the building. The first Bible School session was held in the building on December 11, 1927. The building

10. Documentary data on Third Church were not available. The above facts were given by Adam Crouch, elder in First Church, who had much to do with the "Five-Year Campaign."

was dedicated December 18.¹¹ As in the case of other churches, First Church furnished some of the charter members for this congregation.

J. J. Whitehouse came to the pastorate of First Church March 17, 1929, from Parkersburg, West Virginia. He closed his work in 1933. One outstanding event of his ministry was the meeting conducted by the pastor which resulted in 237 additions to the church.

George Mark Elliott ministered to the church from January 1, 1934, to October 1, 1936. For fourteen months following his resignation the church had only supply preaching.

December 1, 1937, Earl H. Fife became the minister. His ministry lasted until December 1, 1940. In this period the basement of the church was remodeled at a cost of three thousand dollars and the pipe organ rebuilt at a cost of two thousand dollars.

The present minister of the church is Joseph H. Dampier, who came to the church July 6, 1941, from a ministry at McKeesport, Pennsylvania. Since his ministry began a long-standing debt of about twenty thousand dollars has been paid, and the church has enjoyed a constructive but not spectacular growth in every way. The church now lists¹² a membership of 1,441.

11. "Sketch of the History of the Church" in the church records.

12. Yearbook Disciples of Christ (1942), p. 517. Hereafter to be designated simply as Yearbook.

First Christian Church of Elizabethton is perhaps in point of influence the next most important church in upper East Tennessee. The early years of its history are somewhat obscure. Its actual beginning is recorded in the minutes of the East Tennessee Cooperation for 1891.¹³

Elizabethton Church

Organized Aug. 8, 1891; elders Samuel Shell and J. A. Jones; deacons J. B. Miller and James L. Wilcox; clerk Mrs. Jet. Membership 14; amount paid state board \$11.52; church expenses \$5.; pledge for state work \$5.; pastoral work \$50; J. A. Jones and Samuel Shell delegates.

For about twelve years the church had no house of worship of its own, but held its meetings in the Presbyterian Church and in the "Episcopalian Chapel."¹⁴ Evidently those were years of struggle, and only occasionally did ministers visit them. Among those so doing were: "Wm. Barker, W. C. Maupin, David Ellis, Bro. Cheris, Prof. Thomas, E. C. Buck, A. I. Myhr, and probably others."

By September, 1903, the membership numbered about fifty-two. In that month a lot was purchased for one hundred and twenty-five dollars, and a meeting held in the office of J. W. Williams to lay plans for a building. On October 6, 1903, the cornerstone was laid by "Sister Elliott,

13. Printed copy in McCown Collection.

14. Historical Sketch of First Christian Church of Elizabethton, Tenn. (A leaflet furnished by the minister). Unless otherwise stated in the notes, all data regarding the church are from this source.

an earnest disciple and one who encourages the work." Four months later the congregation first occupied the new building. On February 14, 1904, a Bible School was organized. Fifty-four were in attendance. On May 29, 1904, the new building was dedicated by L. L. Carpenter, of Wabash, Indiana. It was recorded of the event that "Brother Carpenter came with Bro. Buck and many other ministers and about two thousand people from many points, and there was after morning service plenty of refreshments on the ground." A. I. Myhr, state evangelist, held the first meeting in the new building in the fall of 1904.

The church continued to function much as other small churches, with nothing exceptional happening until recent times. Pastors came and went; evangelistic meetings were held; the church held its own.¹⁵ In 1929 J. J. Musick became minister of the church. A new era dawned for the church in that year. Plans were soon laid for a complete new plant. Considerable money was accumulated as a building fund. This was all lost in a bank failure a year or two later. Undaunted, the congregation changed its plans. Instead of a new plant, they remodeled and enlarged the old one. Most of the labor was donated by unemployed

15. Some of the evangelists before 1929 were: A. I. Myhr, Will Crouch, J. Randall Farris, William Burleigh, J. Lem Keevil, "Brother" Campbell, J. T. McKissick, Percy George Cross, R. E. Snodgrass, Gilbert E. Chandler, and probably others. Men who have held regular ministries are: E. C. Buck, A. M. Ferguson, George Phelps, S. A. Morton, A. A. Ferguson, A. Preston Gray, Roy J. King, J. C. Reynolds.

members of the congregation. The result was a church plant that few would recognize as a remodeled building.

This congregation has grown in every way through the years since 1929. A consistent evangelistic program has been maintained. The minister has held several meetings. In addition, W. H. Book, J. T. Watson, W. E. Sweeny, Basil Holt, and A. W. Gray have conducted evangelistic campaigns. At the close of his thirteenth year, the minister reported 672 additions to the church, 348 by baptism and 324 by letter or statement.¹⁶ The church lists a net membership now of 413.¹⁷

During the same period the money contributed by this congregation has increased year by year. The financial report of the church for the year ending June 30, 1942, showed a total of \$8563.51. Of this amount, \$2272.54 was for missions. Such a record is remarkable in the light of the fact that the congregation is made up entirely of working class people. Comparatively few of them own their homes. The congregation has for several years supported a living-link missionary in the foreign field.

In addition, the church has sponsored a missionary program at home that has resulted in three other Christian churches in the city of Elizabethton. In December, 1932, the church opened the East End Mission in a store building.

16. Letter from J. J. Musick to the writer, June 27, 1942.

17. Yearbook (1942), p. 512.

A meeting was held by the minister of First Church and a Bible School organized. This work has grown into an active church. Many of the members from First Church who¹⁸ live in the section have gone into this new church. In the spring of 1933 the Southside Mission was opened. A tobacco barn was turned into a church to house the mission. M. B. Miller, Appalachian District Evangelist, held a meet-¹⁹ing in the barn in the summer, with several additions. This mission was formally organized into a church in 1935²⁰ by John B. Hall, during a meeting held by him. The West End Church of Elizabethton was organized in February, 1933, by the minister of First Church following a few weeks' meetings. The charter membership consisted of twenty-three. M. B. Miller held another meeting in the fall of the same year, with twenty-five added. With the aid of First Christian Church finance, a new building was constructed in the same summer. In addition, First Church²¹ gave some members to the new congregation. This group has continued to grow, and in 1942 completely remodeled and enlarged its building.

18. Christian Standard, Vol. LXVIII (December 30, 1933), p. 1051 (A report of the missionary activity of the church by J. J. Musick).

19. Ibid.

20. Letter from J. B. Hall to the writer, September 23, 1942.

21. Christian Standard, Vol. LXVIII (December 30, 1933), p. 1051.

All things considered, the First Christian Church of Elizabethton, Tennessee, has made a commendable record in the past fourteen years.

Among the Sullivan County churches, Central Christian Church of Bristol, Tennessee, is the largest and most influential. The lineage of this church goes back through the First Christian Church of Bristol, Virginia, to the old²² historic Weaver's Church. The First Christian Church of Bristol, Virginia, was established July 19, 1856. By the close of the nineteenth century, it numbered about 400. It was made up from people living on both sides of the state line. The cities were expanding, and there seemed need of a church on the Tennessee side of the twin-cities. The first step was an afternoon Bible School in the old Y.M.C.A. building at Fifth and Shelby Streets.²³ Early growth necessitated better facilities. Accordingly, the meeting place was transferred to the Good Templars Hall, where the Lutheran Church now stands. Later it was moved to the Masonic Hall, on State Street; and, finally, to the Tennessee Court House, on Eighth Street. There the growth of the Bible School was very rapid, and many began to think about the possibilities of a church. Finally a committee from the

22. See Chapter III for this history.

23. Gilbert H. Easley, A Historical Sketch of Central Christian Church, Bristol, Tennessee. All data about this church, unless otherwise stated, are taken from this source.

Bible School was appointed to consider plans. It held its first meeting August 9, 1903; a second was held August 30; and a third, on September 20. This committee considered two items: the location of a lot for a church building and the calling of a minister. Upon recommendation of A. I. Myhr, State Evangelist, W. P. Crouch, of Johnson City, was extended a call. He replied favorably on September 20, 1903. Actually, the first minister was called before the church was formally organized. After the coming of the first minister, about forty-five members of the Bristol, Virginia, Church and twenty-five others whose membership was elsewhere met in the Tennessee Court House, October 25, 1903, and effected the organization of Central Christian Church. The new minister immediately began a revival meeting in the Court House. The congregation continued to worship there for eighteen months. During that time a lot costing about three thousand dollars was paid for and a building with a seating capacity of 250 erected. This building was only a temporary "Sunday School room." It was first used on Easter, 1905. Within three years of the organization, a church house was built costing two thousand dollars. This was made possible by the aid of the State Board and a loan from the Church Extension Board. The building was dedicated on March 10, 1907. President T. E. Cramblet, of Bethany College, officiated at the ceremony.

After almost five years of service with the church, W. P. Crouch tendered his resignation on August 11, 1908, effective September 1, 1908. It was reluctantly accepted by the congregation. In that period the Bible School attendance doubled and the church membership increased by one hundred per cent.

Acting again on the recommendation of A. I. Myhr, the church called J. Randall Farris from a ministry at South Bend, Indiana, to be their minister. He took up his work September 29, 1908. His ministry lasted four years. In that period the church continued to grow in all of its departments. The Bible School outgrew its quarters. The Men's Class undertook to build a room for themselves in one day. The feat was accomplished completely and the room dedicated that evening with a banquet in the building. During this ministry the evening audiences at the church were unusually large - perhaps the largest in the history of the church.

Following the resignation of the second minister, to take up the work of Educational Director for the Southwest section under the National Educational Committee, there were a series of short pastorates at Central Church. The first of these was that of H. G. Bond, who ministered for a little less than two years. The financial support of the church waned in this period; and, in the face of the fact that the notes to the Board of Church Extension would soon

fall due, Bond resigned in the summer of 1914.

Gilbert H. Easley then ministered to the church for one year. He first came under a temporary agreement to execute a ten weeks' campaign to pay the church debt. This ended successfully with the burning of the mortgage on the church. The church board then extended the call for the rest of the year.

The next minister to the church was J. N. Harker, who came from the Columbus, Mississippi, church about February 1, 1916. A goodly number were added to the church under his ministry, but he resigned about September, 1917. Later he left the Christian Church and became a Baptist minister.

Frank H. Scattergood was called to the church as minister in October, 1917. "Friction developed when the business of marrying run-away couples from Virginia began to occupy a large place in the pastor's program." At the end of the second year, the ministry ended; and the pastor, who had formerly been a Presbyterian, entered the seminary to complete his training for the Presbyterian ministry.

E. E. Briggs, of Kansas, was the next minister. In all, he served the church for thirty-two months, closing his ministry November 1, 1922. "He was an acceptable preacher, a good pastor and very active in evangelistic work both in the local church and in surrounding territory."

W. Clyde Smith became the next minister in November, 1922. During his ministry the Sunday School Annex to

the church was built at a cost of sixteen thousand dollars. It was dedicated by George Snively, February 4, 1923. Ex-Governor Alf Taylor was the speaker in the afternoon of the dedication day. Smith closed his ministry in May, 1926.

In September, 1926, R. M. Sims came to the pastorate. He served the church continuously for almost ten years. In that time the church debt was again paid and the membership of the church reached the 700 mark. In 1936, when R. M. Sims closed his ministry, more than half the membership of the church consisted of those who had come into fellowship with the congregation during his ministry.

In the fall of 1936 J. Randall Farris was called to his second pastorate with the Bristol Church. In the first six years of this second ministry, 302 members were added to the church. The finances of the church have also been improved to the extent that "gratifying surpluses are the rule." Early in 1943 Farris closed his second ministry with Central Church. The present minister, Roy O. Respass, came to the church from a ministry at Reidsville, North Carolina. He assumed his work at Bristol on April 5, 1943.²⁴ The membership of the Central Christian Church in 1942 was²⁵ listed as 710.

Erwin, Tennessee, is the site of another of the larger Christian churches in East Tennessee. The actual

24. News item, Tennessee Christian, Vol. XXXVI (May, 1943), p. 2.

25. Yearbook (1942), p. 710.

time of beginning of this work is not known. The first notice of the church is in the minutes of the East Tennessee and Southwestern Virginia Cooperation for 1888.²⁶

Nothing is there recorded except that a church at Erwin reported to the Convention. However, the church at that time could not have been large, for it was without a building. In 1891 the Erwin Church reported again to the Convention meeting at Hale's Chapel.²⁷ At that time J. P. Miller and James Linker were the elders and W. C. Maupin the pastor. A membership of thirty-one was reported. The sum of \$41.30 was paid the pastor; \$25.00 was paid for "transient preaching"; and \$2.50 was given to the poor.

As the story was reproduced by one of the charter members of the church,²⁸ and confirmed somewhat by documentary evidence, the facts seem to be as follows: at first the congregation seems to have met in a log church building at the edge of town, belonging to the Baptists. Later, a union church house was built in the town. Denominational friction resulted, and the Baptists declared that no other group could use the building. A few of the Christian Church group decided to build a house of worship. Accordingly, on January 22, 1892, John R. Love and wife, Sarah J. Love, deeded to James Loveless, James A. Linker, J. R. Love,

26. Copy in McCown Collection.

27. Ibid.

28. Interview with Mrs. James Madison Love, September 12, 1942.

P. J. Williams, and W. C. Emmert, trustees for the Christian Church, a lot, on condition that a brick building be built on it before January 1, 1893.²⁹ On September 25, 1893, E. C. Buck, of Johnson City, reported holding a meeting at Erwin, with thirteen additions. He reported a membership of eighty-seven and added that the congregation had "recently built a new church costing about \$4000."³⁰

To complete the building, James Madison Love borrowed \$800, to be repaid in three years. He was not a member of the church when it was built. At that time there was no Presbyterian Church in town. A Presbyterian preacher and teacher came in and soon organized a church. This group talked of constructing a new building, but decided that it would not be necessary, believing that the Christian Church would be sold for the debt and they could buy it. This may have been an incentive to J. Madison Love, for he sold a newly built home which had cost \$1100 (reported to have been the best home in Erwin at that time) for \$800, and with the money he paid the church debt.

Families connected with the church in the early years of its history were those of Jacob Love, John R. Love, Ike Love, Will Love, and James Madison Love - all brothers - and John Huskins and wife.

29. Deed Book No. 4, Unicoi County, Tennessee, p. 473.

30. Christian Standard, Vol. XXIX (October 7, 1893), p. 801.

W. G. Barker was the first pastor after the building was constructed. Others who preached for the church in its early years were Samuel Millard, J. D. Hamaker, Samuel Shelbourne, who lived in Erwin and operated a boarding house for several years, A. M. Ferguson, and Chester A. Bullard.

No consistent history of the Erwin church can be reconstructed from the available data. From very incomplete church records a few facts only have been gleaned. A "Brother" Fowler was minister in 1915. On June 12, 1916, A. A. Ferguson was called to the church at a salary of \$1200 per year. S. B. Morviel was minister from October 1, 1917, until at least June of 1919. In 1921 a "Brother" Ferguson (presumably A. A. Ferguson) was again minister. In 1925 J. J. Musick became minister; he closed his work on June 26, 1927. In that period plans were laid for a completely new church home. A lot was purchased and plans approved for the new building; but the project was dropped, and the church still occupies the original building and uses an old parsonage as a Bible School Annex. On November 6, 1927, J. C. Reynolds was called at a salary of \$1900 per year. S. O. Redacre took up the work, December 1, 1930, and had the longest ministry in the history of the church, closing his work August 31, 1941. The present minister is Lonnie E. Deaver, who began a promising ministry September 1, 1941.

31

In 1942 the church listed 375 resident members.

The Jonesboro Christian Church is neither large nor influential, but its history, as far as it can be ascertained, is of more than passing interest. The first fixed date relative to this congregation is February 5, 1873. On that date John F. Grisham deeded to "George E. Grisham one of the elders of the Christian Church in Jonesboro" a lot³² for the church. How long the congregation had functioned

before that is not known, but it probably was not long. On August 3, 1873, George E. Grisham willed "to the Christian Church of Jonesboro, Washington county, Tennessee, lately organized without any creed but the Bible" a lot and building to be used "in educating young men of sd church for the ministry..."³³ From the phrase "lately organized" it seems safe to conclude that the Jonesboro church was organized early in 1873. It seems clear that the chief men in the church in its early years were the two Grishams named above and William Madison Grisham. Wilson G. Barker was the preacher most interested in the Jonesboro church. When the building was being constructed the small congregation ran out of funds. Barker then made a tour through parts of Tennessee, Kentucky, and into Cincinnati, Ohio, soliciting funds from individuals and churches for the project. He

31. Yearbook (1942), p. 517.

32. Deed Book No. 43, Washington County, Tennessee, p. 456.

33. Will Book No. 2, Washington County, Tennessee, p. 285.

took pictures of the incompletd building with him and
 was successful in securing the necessary funds.³⁴

Barker was also interested in carrying out the will of George E. Grisham cited above. For some years in the eighties he ran what was known as Martin's Academy in Jonesboro.³⁵ Nothing much can be found out concerning the school. Old residents of Jonesboro report that relatives attended the academy under Wilson G. Barker and that the building burned. The project evidently failed. The East Tennessee Cooperation minutes for 1891 record the appointing of Dr. Jacob Leach and J. J. Scott as trustees to act with Nat Grisham in disposing of the property.³⁶

Scattered records of the church at Jonesboro indicate a checkered career. At one time it seems to have closed and the building was used by the Negroes as a place of worship. J. A. Grisham, a son of one of the older Grishams, returned and was largely responsible for the reopening and repairing of the church building. A reorganization was effected on October 31, 1896. J. B. Buck and J. A. Grisham were made elders; W. M. Grisham and George C. Grisham, deacons; and Dr. Jacob Leach was made trustee and

34. Mary Lyon Peebles, "Wilson G. Barker" in J. W. West, ed., Sketches of Our Mountain Pioneers, p. 245. "Barker's Scrap Book," p. 29, has a clipping from some paper which reports Barker's tour, with names of contributors and amounts.

35. Ibid., p. 246.

36. Copy in McCown Collection.

clerk of the church. The organization seems to have functioned for several years and then declined again. On May 9, 1909, another reorganization was effected.³⁷ Nothing more of interest is in the records except a few reports of revival meetings. The congregation has continued to function through the years with a part-time ministry which has changed almost yearly. The membership is still small, possibly not exceeding 100 active members. In August of 1942 the church was host to the Annual Meeting of the East Tennessee churches. The high school building was used to accommodate the crowd. The entertainment by the church was all that could be desired.³⁸

The oldest congregation of Disciples of Christ in Knox County, Tennessee, is the Thorn Grove Christian Church. Little can be written about its history. Fortunately, the date and a few names are known. It was organized in 1869 by Dr. R. L. Lawson, who pioneered for the Restoration Movement in Knox, Blount, and neighboring counties in Tennessee. Among the original members were John Adcock, W. T. Adcock, W. B. Smith, and W. T. Pilant. The present building was erected in 1899 and dedicated by a man

37. Record in possession of J. A. Vines, Jonesboro, Tennessee. A.J. Trusler, J.B. Buck, and C.E. Euster were the new elders; J.A. Vines, J.T.E. Williams, W.D. Gray, J.L. Hilbert, Elias Vines, and Ralph Depew, the deacons; A.J. Trusler, John Grisham, J.B. Buck, J.A. Hilbert, J.A. Vines, and C.E. Euster were also to serve as trustees.

38. The writer served as President of the Convention.

named Stone, who had also dedicated the first building. The date of the first building is not given. It is generally believed in the church that in all of its history no Lord's Day has passed without some sort of service being held by the congregation.³⁹ This group has remained small and essentially rural in character, but it has given to the Christian Church one of her best-known ministers, Adam K. Adcock, who is also an author of note among the Disciples of Christ.

The largest congregation of the Disciples of Christ in Knox County is that known now as First Christian Church of Knoxville, located at the corner of West Fifth Avenue and Williams Street. The first organization of this church came about by the untiring effort of a few members of the Christian Church who came to Knoxville in the years immediately following the Civil War. Alexander Campbell Bruce came to Knoxville from Nashville, Tennessee, about 1869 or 1870. N. R. Hall was a native of Knox County, Tennessee, who married a wife from the Church of Christ in Kentucky. Through her influence, this non-Christian husband came into the fellowship of the church in Kentucky and later became one of the charter members in Knoxville. George T. Rhoades came to Knoxville from Virginia and T. P. McDaniel from Georgia.⁴⁰ From 1869 to 1874 these men and one woman

39. Data furnished by Adam K. Adcock by letter, June 22, 1942.

40. Lewis Tillman, A Brief Account of the Planting of the Church of Christ in Knoxville, Tennessee, and Something of its Subsequent History, an unpublished manuscript, read by the (continued)

were the only interested members of the Christian Church in Knoxville. They had to be content with hearing only occasional preaching by itinerant men of their faith. Among these, two names are recorded: a "brother" Berry, of North Carolina, and L. R. Lawson, who seems to have been most responsible for the church in Knoxville. Some attempt was made by him at organization in the old Methodist Church on Church Street previous to 1874, but it failed. Finally, in 1874, in an upper room at the corner of Depot and Broad Streets, a little Bible School was organized by the persons above mentioned. In September of that year L. H. Stine, a graduate of Bethany College, who had come to Knoxville some months before, guided the group in a formal church organization. Eighteen people entered into a covenant, which reads:

We the members of the Body of Christ living at Knoxville, Tennessee, do resolve to organize ourselves into a congregation to worship God according to the Holy Scriptures, to be known as the Church of Christ worshipping at Knoxville, Tenn.

Done this First Lord's Day of September A.D. 1874.

The charter members, as L. H. Stine left them in his own handwriting, were:

Alex C. Bruce
Newton R. Hall
N. O. Cooley

Geo. T. Rhoades
Lewis Tillman
L. H. Stine

author, a charter member of the Church, April 26, 1914, at the last service held in the Park Avenue Church of Christ. All data concerning the church up to 1914 are taken from this manuscript.

A. L. Hall	Sarah A. Rhoades
T. P. McDaniel	L. Madden
H. M. Brother	Mary M. Lebow
Sarah E. Roberts	Emma Robbins
Levinia J. Robbins	Philip Hufft
E. Haynes	

In July of 1875 it appears that

A. C. Bruce, Elder, and George T. Rhoades, N. R. Hall, Deacons, gave to Bro. Stine, who then severed his connection, a letter full of appreciation of his work, and prayers for his future.

In January of 1879 A. C. Bruce moved to Atlanta, and N. R. Hall and Lewis Tillman were made elders of the congregation. At the same time T. P. McDaniel and George T. Rhoades were chosen to serve as deacons.

From 1875 to June, 1910, the records of the church were kept by Lewis Tillman, the author of the history from which these facts are taken.

The forty years from 1874 to 1914 were years of hardship and struggling for the small congregation. During the first twenty-one years of the life of the church, they had regular preaching "for some seven years." When ministers were not present, the congregation assembled on each Lord's Day for worship, Bible study, and the communion service. Exhortations were often delivered by the elders which were, for all intent and purpose, preaching. "The Elders visited the sick, and gave what comfort they could, and sometimes even, when a minister was not to be had, conducted the funeral service."

The congregation has worshiped at four different places in the city. The first four years they occupied the upper room at Depot and Broad Streets. In 1878 they purchased from the Baptists a church building on McGhee Street. There they worshiped for eight years. On December 5, 1886, a new church on Park Street was first occupied. T. M. Myers of Asheville, North Carolina, dedicated the building on that day. April 26, 1914, saw the last service in this building. The next service was held on the site of the present plant in an old dwelling house which had been moved to the back of the lot and prepared to house the congregation until the new building could be completed.

The lot on Park Street cost \$1600, and its value increased more than \$500 per year for a period of thirty years. The sale of that property made possible the new building on Fifth Avenue.

Because of the inability of the struggling congregation to provide reasonable support for a minister, the church was forced to get along for many years with a series of short ministries.⁴¹ This hampered the growth of the church.

A new day dawned for Park Avenue Church of Christ when J. Lem Keevil came to the pastorate, November 11, 1911,

41. The men who served the church from its beginning until 1911 in order were: L.H. Stine, Ashley S. Johnson, G.J. Ellis, J.E. Briney, N.G. Jacks, S.T. Willis, H.W. Stewart, J.B. Mayfield, R.M. Giddens, P.T. King, Robert Stuart, and J.N. Harker.

from a ministry at Sherman, Texas. After nearly six years of work with the congregation, he closed his work September 26, 1917, to take up the work with Forest Avenue Church in the same city.⁴² In those six years the old Park Street edifice was sold and the new plant constructed on Fifth Avenue. At three services, conducted on February 9, 1915, \$21,000 was subscribed and the building dedicated. William J. Wright, of Franklin, Indiana, preached the dedicatory sermon at the final evening service of the day.

It is of interest to note that two charter members of the Knoxville congregation, Lewis Tillman and T. P. McDaniel, broke ground for the new building March 19, 1914.

After the removal of the church to Fifth Avenue, the congregation has been known either as Fifth Avenue Christian Church or First Christian Church, the latter being the recognized name of the church at present.

On January 4, 1918, Ritchie Ware came from Lynchburg, Virginia, to begin a ministry with the First Christian Church of Knoxville. This ministry was not terminated until January, 1927. After his work began the church continued to grow in all its departments. The audiences greatly increased; a more active educational program was manifest; and the church became more active along missionary lines, supporting regularly a missionary in India.

42. "Scrap Book of First Christian Church, Knoxville, Tennessee." Kept by Miss Winona Roehl, church secretary. All subsequent data taken from this source.

After Ritchie Ware closed his ministry, T. H. Johnson, instructor at Johnson Bible College, supplied the pulpit for several months until a new minister was called.

The new minister was J. E. Gorsuch, who took up the work September 11, 1927. Another building program was launched under his leadership. It was the present educational plant of the church, erected at a cost of \$75,000. It was dedicated May 4, 1930; C. W. Cable, of Indianapolis, Indiana, preached the dedicatory sermon. Another highlight in the ministry of J. E. Gorsuch was an evangelistic campaign of three weeks in October, 1930, conducted by A. B. McReynolds, which added over 300 to the congregation. The fruitful ministry of Dr. Gorsuch came to a close May 8, 1932, when he retired from the active work of the ministry.

The work at Knoxville was taken up May 15, 1932, by Harry R. Cooke, who is the present pastor. The eleventh anniversary of his work with the church was celebrated May 16, 1943. The church bulletin for that date admirably states the results of his eleven years of ministry:

So much has been accomplished during these years - our Building debt has been reduced from \$70,000 to \$29,000, and we are looking forward to another reduction of \$5,000 next Sunday. However this is not the important part of Dr. Cooke's ministry; during the years nearly every home has had some sorrow or problem which has been lighter by his word of sympathy and prayers; not only the Youth of our own church have sought his guidance, but young people outside of the church. Across the years, literally hundreds have been helped. Because of his many interests in civic affairs and

speaking for numbers of organizations, he has made legions of friends throughout the community, and because of his many contacts, he has drawn many people into the church.

The little band of eighteen meeting in an upper⁴³ room in 1874 has grown into a congregation numbering 920. The struggling group, unnoticed by the community in the early years, has changed into a large congregation wielding a great influence in a growing city.

In point of time the next oldest Christian Church in Knoxville is the Bearden Christian Church. It seems to have been connected with the older church in Knoxville in that the minister who served there was responsible for the first organization at Bearden. The date is given as about 1876, when L. H. Stine held a community meeting at what was⁴⁴ then simply called Brin Station. Some friction arose and the members of the Christian Church formed their own organization. About 1880 Adolph Roehl gave the ground on which a small frame church was later built. The church has functioned most of the time through the years, but at times it has been completely closed. Since 1893 most of the preaching for the small congregation has been done by students of Johnson Bible College. The membership has remained small, perhaps because of inefficient and inexperienced leadership. In the past three years the little group has maintained full

43. Yearbook (1942), p. 514.

44. Record Book of Bearden Christian Church.

time preaching and an average attendance at both Bible School and church of about fifty is upheld. A small addition has been built to the church, and the prospects for growth are good.

The year 1897 marks the birth of another Christian Church in Knoxville. In April of that year J. L. Had-dock held a meeting in a hall over Prince and Richards Store on Western Avenue, then Asylum Street.⁴⁵ Out of that meeting came a congregation known as Asylum Street Christian Church, with twenty-seven charter members. John Holmes, the first minister, served about one year. E. C. Wilson, of Mountain City, was called as the second minister. Under his ministry the present church building was constructed.⁴⁶ It was first occupied in September, 1901. When the congregation moved into its new building at Seventeenth and Forest Avenue, the name of the church was changed to Forest Avenue Christian Church.

In 1918, while J. Lem Keevil was minister, lots adjoining the building were purchased, looking forward to enlargement. Later, under Pierce Blackwell's leadership, the brick Bible School Annex was constructed.

45. Yearbook and Directory, Forest Avenue Christian Church, 1939. All data, unless otherwise signified in notes, are from this source.

46. News item, Christian Standard, Vol. XXXVII (September 14, 1901), p. 1185.

The ministers of Forest Avenue Church have, for⁴⁷ the most part, served short terms. This possibly has been a hindrance to the growth of the congregation.

Three men have gone out from the ranks of this congregation into the active ministry. They were Tom⁴⁸ Belcher, Edgar Broome, and Earnest Fritts. This congregation has grown slowly through the years. In 1942 it had⁴⁹ a membership of 213.

The youngest Christian Church in Knoxville is the Lonsdale Christian Church. It had its inception in October, 1903, in a Ladies Aid society meeting at the home of Mrs. T. J. Adcock on Tennessee Avenue. Plans were there laid for the church. The first step was an afternoon Bible School, organized by David Howell and two men from the Forest Avenue Church: Edgar Broome and E. C. Wilson, the minister. At first the school was held out of doors under the trees near the sulphur spring. In bad weather it was moved to the Old Schoolhouse in Lonsdale, where a Presbyterian mission was being held. The Presbyterians abandoned the field, leaving it to the Christian Church group. The Bible School continued to meet in the schoolhouse until 1905.

47. The following men have served the congregation: John Holmes, E.C. Wilson, a Mr. Marshall, a Mr. McHale, T.H. Johnson, C.E. Burns, a Mr. Burris, Lambreth Hancock, J.Lem Keevil, Earnest Fritts, Pierce Blackwell, R.S. Depew, H.F. Hanlin, Hugh E. Steele, C.A. Vaughn, E.B. King, and the present minister, D.L. Askew. Of these, Wilson, Fritts, and Hanlin have each served two terms as minister.

48. Interview with W.T. Roberts, Knoxville, Tennessee, June 18, 1943.

49. Yearbook (1942), p. 514.

Captain John R. Brooks, who was interested in the development of the Lonsdale suburb, made an offer of a lot to any church group who would construct a building on it at a minimum cost of \$600. To receive the lot, A. I. Myhr, J. S. Loveless, T. H. Adcock, and E. C. Wilson acted as trustees. A small building was constructed on the lot with money from the Tennessee Missionary Society and contributions from members. The building was dedicated in October, 1905, by A. I. Myhr. Ashley S. Johnson, of Johnson Bible College, was invited to have part in the program but could not attend. However, he preached the next Lord's Day for the congregation. Even after the church was built, the Bible School continued to be held in the afternoons. In the fall of 1905 E. E. Edens, of Kentucky, held a meeting in the building and ordained the first elders and deacons. The church was thus formally organized, with a charter membership of thirty-four. In the following May, Edens returned for another meeting, which increased the membership to eighty and the Bible School to 114.⁵⁰

Ministers who have served the church have been, for the most part, students or faculty members of Johnson Bible College.⁵¹ An item of some interest is the fact that

50. All data from the Lonsdale Church Record (in possession of Mrs. Henry Leopold, Fountain City). Subsequent data from an interview with Mrs. Leopold, June 18, 1943.

51. Among these were: Morton Ault, Woolsey Couch, U.J. Murry, L.W. Buckley, C.E. Burns, McKever Lamb, A.I. Kirk, Homer Sperry, George Delemer, P.B. Hall, Edgar Broome, A.T. Fitts, A. A. Hyde. The present minister is Frank Williams, who lives on the field. He began his work May, 1941.

one of the ministers who served the church, A. I. Kirk, cashed his Liberty Bonds after World War I and purchased a lot for the church on which the parsonage now stands. Still another item of interest is that Mrs. Will Keller, well-known musician of Knoxville, served the small church as organist for the first six or eight years of its existence. This is another church that has remained small in numbers.⁵² Its present membership is estimated at 129.

In Roane County, Tennessee, in addition to the oldest Christian Church in the state, Post Oak Springs, there are located two other important congregations. One is in Rockwood and the other is in Harriman.

The seed of the Rockwood Christian Church was planted about the time the Roane County Iron Company began to operate. In March of 1868 the first furnace was erected. On June 3, 1868, a Baptist minister preached the first sermon in a sawmill shed, "which stood where the coke ovens are now located."⁵³ On the following Lord's Day, Elder J. H. Acuff, of the Post Oak Springs Christian Church, preached in the same building. "He stood behind the head block and the congregation sat on the log carriage." Throughout the summer of that year Elder Acuff continued to hold occasional

52. Yearbook (1942), p. 515.

53. Directory of Christian Church, Rockwood, Tennessee, 1901. Including a brief history and financial reports of the various departments of the church, p. 3. All data about Rockwood Christian Church, unless otherwise stated in the notes, are taken from this source.

meetings at the sawmill. A union Sunday School was also organized, with Riggs Forsythe as superintendent. Forsythe was superintendent of Roane County Iron Company, and through his instrumentality, in September, 1868, a church building was constructed known as the "Frame Church."⁵⁴

The union Sunday School moved to this building. Elder Acuff was made the superintendent and, in addition, for a period of one year preached once a month for the group. Following the death of Acuff, J. H. Denton, a preacher of the Christian Church, held regular services. He also taught a school in Rockwood, where he made his home.

The growth of the town brought several members of the Christian Church into the community, and some of them decided to form an organization. B. F. Clay, of Kentucky, came and held a revival meeting in the "Frame Church." He encouraged the scattered members to erect a building and organize a church. A lot was purchased from Captain J. W. C. Wilson and the house built in 1885. B. F. Clay preached the dedicatory sermon and formally organized the church. The organization at first consisted only of members who transferred from congregations at other places. Among these were: "W. J. Owings and wife, Mrs. T. J. Brown, Mrs. J. F. Tarwater, J. B. Smith and wife, Annie Billingsley, and J. C. Hinds and wife." Another source adds to the list

54. Dorothy Tarwater, History of the Rockwood Christian Church (an unpublished manuscript), p. 1.

of charter members, Miss Rilla Hinds (Mrs. E. T. Ingram),
 Mrs. J. A. Irvin, Mrs. F. D. Owings, and William Ragen.⁵⁵

J. H. Denton ministered to this church from 1885 till 1887, "when James Billingsley, Jr. the first called pastor began his work." He labored with the group for three years. "This period was one of the most prosperous in the history of the church."

In 1890 J. R. Hoover preached for a few months at Rockwood. In 1891 J. A. Hamby served the church for "a short while." James E. Stuart, of Virginia, was called in 1892 and "for nearly three years did an excellent piece of work." The church grew in spite of many hindrances.

On November 30, 1894, the church building was destroyed by fire. A larger and better building was erected on the same site in 1895. During the rebuilding period, services were held in the Presbyterian Church and later in the "Rockwood Inn."⁵⁶ The dedicatory services for the new building were conducted by A. I. Myhr.

W. J. Shelbourne, of Virginia, became minister of the church in June, 1896. For two years he kept up a prosperous ministry at the church. "The church during his ministry was elegantly furnished with pews," and every department prospered. In 1899 C. B. Reynolds, another Virginia man, was called to be the pastor. The first year of his

55. Ibid.

56. Ibid.

ministry saw all debts of the congregation paid, and the church continued to prosper in every way. The second year a home for the minister was built at a cost of \$1500. The lot on Kingston Avenue was given by the Roane Iron Company. In 1921 this property was exchanged for a residence next
57
to the church which still serves as a parsonage.

Following C. B. Reynolds, the ministers who have served the Rockwood church are: A. A. Ferguson, 1903-1908; W. P. Shamhart, 1909-1915; Leland Cook, June, 1916-September, 1926; J. Lapsley Alderson, September, 1926-September, 1930; Charles E. Jackson, March, 1931-January, 1937; H. Stanley Dysart, April, 1937-to date of this writing, June,
58
1943.

In 1915 the church building was remodeled. At the same time a pipe organ was installed at a cost of \$3,000. The organ was a gift of Mrs. Sewell Howard and Mrs. J. F. Tarwater.
59

For a good many years the Rockwood Christian Church ranked about sixth in size of membership among the Christian churches of Tennessee. Following the closing of the Roane Iron Company after the financial crisis of 1929, an exodus of population from Rockwood greatly affected the church. In recent years some gains have been registered.
60
The church now lists a membership of 480.

57. Ibid.

59. Ibid., p. 1.

58. Ibid., p. 2.

60. Yearbook (1942), p. 515.

The Christian Church of Harriman had its beginning along with the city. In 1890 the East Tennessee Land Company laid out the city of Harriman. It was a prohibition city. Every lot sold had a clause in the deed forfeiting the land to the original owners if at any time liquor was sold on the premises. At the celebration of the second anniversary of the founding of the city, February 26, 1892, 4,000 people took part.⁶¹

Among the newcomers to the city many were members of the Christian Church. In March, 1890, L. S. Scholl and T. D. Salyers found thirty-five or forty such members.⁶² Henry C. Hanks and family had come from Ghent, Kentucky, along with his son-in-law, T. D. Salyers. J. E. Gordon and family were from Bowling Green, Kentucky. These and others began to meet for worship in a section of Harriman which at that time was known as "Shacktown." The actual place of meeting is differently stated. The only documentary evidence says:

The first services were held in the Pilgrim Tabernacle, located in what is known as "Shacktown," and a Sunday-school was organized and met regularly in Sister Hanks' dining-room. As is usually the case in new towns the membership is largely floating and at times the number of the faithful was reduced to three or four. Still they

61. From an article entitled "A Prohibition City," in Christian Standard, Vol. XXVIII (June 4, 1892), p. 488.

62. News item, Christian Standard, Vol. XXIX (August 12, 1893), p. 633. This is a story of the establishment of the Harriman Church.

kept up regular meetings for the purpose of "breaking the loaf," and occasionally some local preacher would come along and preach for them. 63

Judge H. B. Cassell, the only surviving charter member of the church, as of June, 1943, said that the first meeting was "in a warehouse in 'Shacktown' located about one half mile west of the present City Hall."⁶⁴ In all probability the first writer had in mind the meetings of the Sunday School, and Judge Cassell was thinking strictly of the church. The meetings in "Shacktown" did not long continue. After meeting there

four or five times with John H. Denton conducting the services - we then moved about two or three hundred yards toward town, meeting in the East Tennessee Land Company Exposition Building, now occupied by Cudahy Packing Co. . . . there was no way to heat this building, so we moved uptown to the school building on the corner of Trenton and Crescent streets. 65

This move into the schoolhouse took place in October, 1890. There J. E. Denton continued to preach for the church part-time.⁶⁶ Previous to that, the church had been formally organized in August, 1890, at the home of Henry C. Hanks on Carter Street.⁶⁷ The first officers of the church

63. Ibid.

64. From an Outline of the History of the Harriman Christian Church, furnished the author in June, 1943. When cited hereafter, it will be designated simply "Cassell Paper."

65. Ibid.

66. Christian Standard, Vol. XXIX (August 12, 1893), p. 633.

67. Cassell Paper.

were: Henry C. Hanks and J. E. Gordon, elders; and "Brethren Adkisson and Salyers were chosen deacons."⁶⁸ Judge Cassell does not mention Adkisson, but says that he and Salyers were the deacons chosen.

At the meeting where the church was organized, plans were laid for a building. R. B. Cassell was made chairman of a building committee, with instructions to procure a lot.⁶⁹ The lot on which the church now stands was donated to the congregation by the East Tennessee Land Company.⁷⁰

Among the early members of the Harriman church, other than officers, as given by Judge Cassell, are the following names and families: Captain and Mrs. Isaac A. Hill and family, Colonel and Mrs. L. Tyter Davis and family, Mrs. McCoy, Miss Blanche McCoy, Mrs. Nell Hallum, Mart Shanley, Mrs. Hall, Mrs. Duncan, Mrs. George Shaw, Mrs. Cyrus Hanks, and her daughters, Jennie and Alta Hanks.

In January, 1891, C. E. Colston and family moved to Harriman from Missouri. He seems to have been a preacher, or a leader who served in that capacity. He "conducted the social services" for some months and "several were added to the congregation."⁷¹

68. Christian Standard, Vol. XXIX (August 12, 1893), p. 633.

69. Cassell Paper.

70. Christian Standard, Vol. XXIX (August 12, 1893), p. 633.

71. Ibid.

"About the first of May, 1891" J. A. Spencer, of Bristol, Tennessee, became pastor of the Harriman church. The work of erecting the building was immediately begun, and in the fall of the same year the building was dedicated.⁷² J. A. Spencer remained with the church until July 1, 1892, "when he resigned to take charge of the church at Bristol, Tenn." In October, 1892 R. M. Giddens became the full-time minister of the church. Under his ministry the congregation⁷³ grew in numbers and in prestige with the community.

The first thirty years of the Harriman church saw a succession of comparatively short ministries.⁷⁴ R. M. Bell has held the only long pastorate in the history of the church. He began his work in November, 1923, and continues till now. In those twenty years a slow but consistent growth has been manifested in all phases of the church life. Much improvement has been made on the plant. Sunday School rooms have been added; a basement excavated and rooms provided therein; a new steam heating plant has been installed; and in recent years the inside of the auditorium has been considerably altered by moving the organ, baptistry, and

72. Ibid.

73. Ibid.

74. Judge Cassell listed, besides the three men previously mentioned, the following men in the approximate order of their service: James E. Stuart, John B. Dixon, P.B. Hall, William G. Burleigh, W.T. Wells, F.D. Kershner, W.H. Warren, Richard Jones, James T. McKissick, W.P. Shamhart, Roy B. Powers, and E. H. Broome.

pulpit. Plans have also been laid for a new addition to the building, and some money has been raised on a building fund. The present membership of the congregation is about 250. In 1941 R. M. Bell was called to the presidency of Johnson Bible College, but he has continued to preach for the Harriman church. However, the burden of his new work has made it inadvisable for him to continue this work; so he has resigned, effective at the close of a full twenty⁷⁵ years ministry with the church.

Four other county seat cities in East Tennessee have small but influential Christian churches. Newport is one of these. The Christian Church there is young in years. It grew out of the Group Evangelism Congress held in Johnson City, Tennessee, in March, 1921.⁷⁶ Ashley S. Johnson, President of Johnson Bible College, was interested in the group evangelistic effort, and the college was responsible for one evangelistic team in the area adjacent to the college. C. L. Organ, of Des Moines, Iowa, and his party were secured for the work. On June 13, 1921, the party moved into Newport with a large tent, which was pitched on the Courthouse yard. The meetings opened the following Saturday night and continued until August 8, 1921. The final result of the meeting was a church of 104 members and a temporary

75. Interview with R. M. Bell, June, 1943.

76. A. S. Johnson, "Group Evangelism in Tennessee," in Christian Standard, Vol. LVI (August 27, 1921), p. 2589.

77

frame church building. During the meeting on July 20, 1921, a committee was appointed to see what could be done about a meeting place for the permanent work of the congregation. On July 25 lots on Church Street were purchased and the deeds recorded. On Sunday, July 31, about one thousand dollars was raised for material, and the following day volunteer workers erected the frame building, which was thirty-two by forty-eight feet.⁷⁸ This congregation is now housed in one of the most beautiful and complete church plants in the city. Its influence on the religious life of Newport should increase with the passing of the years.

Another of these small county seat churches is the Christian Church at Mountain City. This congregation grew out of the evangelistic efforts of J. Randall Farris, during his first pastorate with Central Christian Church, Bristol, Tennessee. In August, 1909, he held an evangelistic meeting in the Courthouse. This meeting resulted in the organizing of a small congregation and "plans to build a splendid house in the fall on the best site in town."⁷⁹ Evidently the building was not completed until 1912. That is the date on the cornerstone of the present brick building, the only house of worship the congregation has had.

77. Ibid.

78. Newport Christian Church Records.

79. News item, Christian Standard, Vol. XLV (August 21, 1909), p. 1483.

This congregation has radiated an influence for good in the city and in Johnson County through the years.

Maryville, Tennessee, has a small Christian Church which was organized in March, 1912, by M. B. Miller, then a student at Johnson Bible College. In the fall of the same year it began plans for a new house of worship.⁸⁰ The congregation has remained small, but has continued faithful. For the most part, it has been ministered to by men connected either as students or faculty with Johnson Bible College. Professor A. A. Hyde, of the College, is the present pastor, and the influence of the congregation is being exerted perhaps more widely than at any other time in the history of the church.

One of the youngest Christian churches in East Tennessee is located in the old town of Rogersville. It seems fitting to close this chapter with a statement concerning this young but energetic congregation. This church is part of the fruit of the cooperative work in East Tennessee. In November, 1939, M. B. Miller, evangelist for the Appalachian Mountain Evangelizing Association, held a meeting in the Courthouse at Rogersville. As a result, on December 3, 1939, a small congregation was organized.⁸¹ This

80. News item, Christian Standard, Vol. XLVIII (September 28, 1912), p. 1595.

81. From Rogersville Christian Church Records, in possession of Francis Shanks, Rogersville, Tennessee.

group soon purchased an abandoned Methodist church building and redecorated and, to some extent, remodeled it. This church also has been ministered to, for the most part, by Johnson Bible College men, either students or faculty. It has continued to grow and function in a splendid way as a small congregation. The present minister is Professor C. K. Thomas, of Johnson Bible College. Under his leadership, the influence of the church is being manifested in the community in an increasing manner. The future of this young church seems to be propitious.

CHAPTER V

THE COOPERATIVE WORK OF THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN EAST TENNESSEE

One of the cardinal principles of the reformation led by Barton W. Stone and the Campbells was the repudiation of all ecclesiastical bodies claiming jurisdiction over the local congregations. Acting on that principle, the Mahoning Association of Baptist Churches, with which the Campbells were connected, in 1830 disbanded "as an advisory council" or "as an ecclesiastical tribunal exercising any supervision or jurisdiction over particular congregations." The body simply agreed to meet for worship¹ and reports of progress the following year. Previous to that action, in 1814, the Indiana reformers, led by John Wright, had dissolved their Baptist association into an² Annual Meeting.

These acts seem to have been taken as precedents. Soon the people known simply as Christians were everywhere meeting in convenient groups for worship, fellowship, and reports of progress. Such meetings were sometimes on a state-wide basis, but more often on a contiguous territorial

1. Editorial, Millennial Harbinger, Vol. I (September, 1830), pp. 414-415.

2. Dean E. Walker, Adventuring for Christian Unity, p. 19.

basis. A reading of the news items and notices in the magazines of the Restoration Movement will disclose scores of such meetings in almost every state and in Canada. They were variously called Annual Meetings, Christian Conferences, or Cooperations.

One of the earliest of these meetings was organized in East Tennessee and Southwest Virginia. It is still in existence, meeting each year on the Thursday before the fourth Lord's Day in August and continuing through the Lord's Day.

It would be impossible to prove the continuity of this organization through the years; it would be equally impossible to disprove it.³ Some think it is the oldest organization within the brotherhood of the Christian churches. The writer is inclined to agree with this view, but definite proof is lacking. Assuming the continuity of the organization, there is little doubt as to the fact.

It is evident that some cooperative work was undertaken in East Tennessee almost as soon as three or four congregations existed. In an old magazine of the time the following notice gives the first historical data concerning the organization:

3. No consistent minutes of these meetings have been kept through the years. A few copies only of printed minutes are extant. News items and notices in magazines furnish the only data for early history of the organization. Of necessity, the history is incomplete, with many gaps; in fact, more gaps than facts exist. This chapter is an attempt to preserve such facts as have been discovered.

Notice. - The Christian Church met in conference, at Boon's Creek meeting house, E. Tenn. Aug. 17, 1829. The Elders present were Jas. Miller, Jerial Dodge, Robt. M. Shankland, John Wallace, and Wm. Slaughter, Jun. [sic] The number of members, composing the Christian Churches in this section of the country, were ascertained to be 472. After conferring comfortably together, we agreed to meet again at the North Fork Church, Washington county, Va. on Saturday before the 3rd. Lord's day in August, 1830.

4
Wm. Slaughter, Jr.

That notice does not, of course, tell when the organization began, but it is valuable in two ways. First, it confirms the early date for the organizing of Boone's Creek Church, which otherwise can be established only by conjecture. Secondly, it dates the cooperative work in East Tennessee almost contemporaneously with the beginning of the Restoration Movement there.

The next meeting of the churches on which we have data was in 1832. A letter to the editors of the Christian Messenger gives us our only information:

Elizabethtown, Aug. 23, 1832

Dear Brethren Johnson & Stone:-

Our annual meeting commenced at Buffaloe Creek, Carter county, East Tennessee, on Friday the 17th and ended on Monday. The meeting was numerously attended. We had a great and glorious time - 37 united with the congregation. On Saturday and the Lord's day, Elder John Wright immersed 15. On Monday, I immersed 12. During the meeting before this, 17 made the good confession,

4. News item, Christian Messenger, Vol. 4, No. 9 (August, 1830), p. 216.

and I immersed 10. On the next Lord's day we expect several will be immersed, and probably some may make the good confession. In about 4 months I think 60 have been added to the congregation, and small additions have been made to some other churches. In our annual meeting we assumed no authority to control the churches. We considered them independent, and authorized to do their own business independently of any foreign jurisdiction. Our next annual meeting will commence on Friday before the 3rd Lord's day in Aug. 1833 at Boon's Creek, Washington county, East Tennessee.

5

James Miller.

Again two things of importance can be ascertained from the letter. It is obvious that the Annual Meeting of that year took on something of the characteristic of a camp-meeting or revival meeting. The emphasis on evangelistic preaching is clear in the number of additions which grew out of the meeting. Secondly, the note about assuming "no authority to control the churches" is characteristic of all these Annual Meetings in the early years of the Restoration Movement. They were simply meetings of the brethren for mutual fellowship and encouragement. They were essentially preaching and evangelistic conventions or rallies.

Under date of September 27, 1834, there appears in the old Boone's Creek Church records a letter regarding Jerial Dodge, who had been excommunicated by both Boone's Creek and Buffalo Creek churches. In it this statement

5. Ibid., Vol. 6, No. 10 (October, 1832), p. 298. These news items, etc., are incorporated verbatim in the thesis because of their interest and because copies of the magazines are very rare.

appears: ". . . we have attended our Regular Annuel [sic] Meeting. . ." Evidently, by 1834 the Annual Meeting had become an established institution among the Churches of Christ in East Tennessee.

By 1841 the organization was employing an evangelist. A notice signed by John Wright simply says: "Brother D. T. Wright is engaged to ride as our Evangelist in these three eastern counties for one year."⁶ Whether the churches had employed an evangelist in cooperation before that is not known. After that year, several references to evangelists employed to "ride" for the churches are to be found.

In the year 1843 the Annual Meeting again met at Boone's Creek Church. In the old minutes of the church, brief minutes of the meeting are on record.

The churches having met threw [sic] there delegates at Boons Creek Washington county on the 18th Day of August 1843 at there Annuel Meeting for the purpose of consulting to gether for the advancement of the gospel form the following Resolutions 1st that Bro. Jno W. preside as chairman.

2d that Brother D. T. write [sic] act as secretary

3d that the meeting so far as relates to the advancement of the gospel thro [sic] the ministerial labors of some evangelist be refered to the buffalo creek church to comence on saturday before the 4th Lords day in September next

The following Churches of Jesus Christ viz,

6. News item, Millennial Harbinger, New Series, Vol. V (December, 1841), p. 590.

Boon's Creek Washington co.	235
Buffalo Creek Carter co.	221
Concord Sullivan co.	109
Mt. Pleasant Carter co.	91
Turkeytown " "	64
Liberty Johnson co.	74
Fork Church Sullivan co.	43
Kendrix Creek, Washington co.	39
Lick Creek Green co.	18
	<u>895</u>

The meeting then so far as implied in these Resolutions adjourned to meet at the place and time therein mentioned.

John Wright Chairman
David T. Wright secretary

In all, nine churches from Tennessee were represented in the meeting. At the first meeting in 1829 at Boone's Creek Church, it would seem that some Virginia churches were in the fellowship, for they agreed to meet the next year at North Fork Church, Washington County, Virginia.⁷ Later, as we shall see, some Virginia churches were again in the cooperation and again dropped out.

The third resolution in the above minutes seems to indicate that the question of employing an evangelist was discussed in 1843 and referred to the next Annual Meeting to be held the following year at Buffalo Creek Church. It is obvious also from those minutes that the leading churches in that year were Boone's Creek, Buffalo Creek, and Concord Churches.

7. News item, Christian Messenger, Vol. 4, No. 9 (August, 1830), p. 216.

In 1845 the Annual Meeting was held at Weaver's in Sullivan County. At that time D. M. Buck was engaged to evangelize for one year. Samuel H. Millard was ordained at that meeting, and shortly after his ordination he and D. M. Buck "visited (on horseback) the counties of Granger, Anderson, and Roan . . . as far west as Postoak Springs preaching at various points and visiting the scattered membership." In the spring of 1846 the same team "visited and preached in Lee, Scot, Russel, and Washington counties, Va." Work was also done in Johnson, Carter, Sullivan,⁸ Washington, and Greene counties of Tennessee.

It is interesting to note here that Millard stated in 1895 that he had served part of thirty-five years as evangelist under the auspices of the Annual Meeting, "traveling mainly on horseback as far as Chattanooga and Livingston in Middle Tennessee and Christianburg, Va. twice." He enlightens us on his salary by recording that he "Recd⁹ first year one dollar & Pair of Ky. jeans pants."

The fullest report of any one Annual Meeting in the early years, which we have, is for the year 1846. It follows:

According to appointment, the annual meeting of the Disciples of our common Lord in the extreme Eastern part of Tennessee, took place on the 24th day of August, 1846, at Buffalo Creek, in the county

8. Millard MS.

9. Ibid.

of Carter. Eighteen congregations were represented including three in Washington and Russell counties in western Virginia, and one in Horse Creek. in Ash county N. Carolina; embracing in the aggregate 954 Disciples in Tennessee, 429 in Virginia, and 20 in Carolina.

It was unanimously agreed to sustain 2 Evangelists in the bounds of the churches, the ensuing year; and arrangements were made to procure means for their support. Our Evangelist who rode the last year, (David M. Buck), made a very satisfactory report to all the Disciples, that he had delivered 164 regular discourses, had witnessed 122 confessions, and enlisted in a late tour to Russell county, Va., two "Preachers" who have a good report from their own brethren, James Bays, an ordained minister from the Methodist E. church, the other Abraham Campbell, a licensed minister from the Baptist. This accession to the ministry will sustain the "ancient Gospel and order of things" in Russell county, Va. with flattering prospects.

Much brotherly love was manifested during the meeting. On Lord's day we had the happiness to see some 300 brethren seated around the Lord's Table.

David M., S. H. Millard, Daniel McIntorff, J. Wright, J. J. Tipton, Ab. Campbell, J. Countess, M. Love, and T. J. Wright were the proclaiming brethren present. During the meeting there were forty added to the faithful.

We have engaged D. M. Buck, Elizabethtown, and S. H. Millard, Papersville, our Evangelists to ride under the patronage of the churches in Carter, Washington, and Sullivan counties, Ten. and those churches above alluded to in Va., and Johnson and Horse Creek, N. Carolina, till August, 1847. By order of the brethren.

10

John Wright

10. News item, Bible Advocate, Vol. 4 (September, 1846), p. 214.

That news item indicates that the Annual Meeting by 1846 had become an institution vitally connected with the life of the Christian churches in East Tennessee and the neighboring territory of Virginia and North Carolina.

No further notice of any one session of the Annual Meeting has come to the writer's attention previous to the Civil War. However, it is clear that it continued to meet and employ evangelists. A letter, dated October 13, 1860, from John Wright to S. H. Millard complains that

We have allowed our Evangelists for the last twenty years to labor mostly among the churches, and they have effected but little in comparison to what we did before when our labors were in the midst of vituperation and opposition. 11

On September 5, 1873, the Annual Meeting convened in Bristol, Virginia (then known as Goodsons). At that meeting "P. P. Williams offered his resignation, which was accepted, and a vote of thanks tendered him for his efficient and punctual service as secretary for the last twenty-¹² five years." If the phrase "the last twenty-five years" is taken at its face value as consecutive years of service, then the Annual Meeting continued to function even through the troublesome years of the war between the states.

11. Letter in McCown Collection.

12. Barker's Scrap Book, pp. 34-35. The book was kept by Dr. Barker and is now in possession of the First Christian Church of Bristol, Virginia. The item cited is a printed clipping from some paper.

At that time ten churches were represented by delegates and "various others . . . by their pastors." The institution then bore the title, South-Western Virginia and East Tennessee Convention. Its growth and importance is indicated by two facts. W. K. Pendleton, President of Bethany College, attended and preached at the Presbyterian Church on the Lord's Day. This indicates the importance of the meeting to the brotherhood, for W. K. Pendleton, as President of Bethany College, was one of the main leaders at that time, having succeeded Alexander Campbell at the latter's death in 1866. The inward growth of the Convention is seen in the fact that it now was more completely organized, with both an evangelizing and an educational board.¹³

On September 1, 1876, the Annual Meeting met at Turkeytown, Carter County, Tennessee.¹⁴ In 1879, on September 5, it convened at Liberty Church in Johnson County, Tennessee.¹⁵

The 1885 meeting convened at Johnson City, Tennessee, August 21, with Dr. N. E. Hyder as chairman and J. W. Shoun as secretary.¹⁶ At that time the organization

13. Ibid.

14. "Biographical Sketches of John Wright" in McCown Collection.

15. News item, Christian Standard, Vol. XIV (August 16, 1879), p. 260.

16. Minutes of the Meeting, printed copy in possession of M. B. Miller, Mountain City, Tennessee. All information about the 1885 meeting is from this source.

was still the East Tennessee and Western Virginia Cooperation. The whole area had been divided into four districts which had met in separate conventions previous to the general meeting. Each of these districts reported the minutes of their meeting to the general convention.

District Number One was composed of the congregations in Sullivan and Washington Counties, Tennessee; District Number Two appears to have composed the churches in Unicoi and Carter Counties, Tennessee; District Number Three embraced Washington and Russell Counties, Virginia; and District Number Four included Johnson County, Tennessee, and some other undefined territory. The first district reported eleven churches represented at its meeting; the second, nineteen; the third, seven; and the fourth, nine. Districts Two and Four were in some measure employing evangelists, and District Number One had made "repeated and fruitless efforts to employ a regular evangelist." These evangelists were, for the most part, simply taking whatever compensation the churches gave them for their services. For example, J. P. Miller, working under District Number Four, reported:

I entered the field Oct. 4, 1884. Visited during the year twenty-one places; preached 220 discourses; added to the church by confession and baptism, restoration, from the Baptist etc., 156; received from brethren, sisters and friends \$120.50, including \$5 I pledged myself and \$45 my wife paid out of her own means. Thirty-one dollars of individual pledges remain unpaid.

C. M. Birchfield, working under District Number Two, reported "that he had labored all the year, preached 223 discourses, added to the church by baptism, 66; otherwise, 62; organized two churches; received \$92.50."

As evangelists for the general convention, A. M. Ferguson and S. H. Millard fared little better. Ferguson was employed at forty dollars per month, "to be collected by him out of pledges" made for evangelizing. For three months' work he received \$97.25. S. H. Millard reported:

My traveling expenses, separate from my regular work, have been \$9.35. I used \$7.44, a contribution that was in my hands. Mount Bethel paid me \$9; received of J. C. Hardin, Treasurer of the E. T. and Va. C., \$5; seventy-five cents from gentleman of world.

However, it should be noted that Millard's "regular work" was preaching monthly for Poplar Ridge, Mount Bethel, Bristol, and Concord churches.

An item of interest in the minutes is the report of the Committee on Public Worship for the Lord's Day of the Convention.

Elder T. D. Butler was to preach at the Christian Church at 7 P. M.; Elder Loos at the M. E. Church South at 11 A. M.; Elder Lin Cave at the Christian Church at 11 A. M.; J. B. Dillard at the Baptist Church; and A. M. Ferguson at the M. E. Church.

That is rather significant in the light of the denominational rivalry of the day. The Convention adjourned "to meet at Bristol on Friday before the fourth Lord's day in August, 1886."

The next extant minutes of the Cooperation are
¹⁷
 for the year 1888. No material change in the organization is in evidence. Dr. N. E. Hyder was chairman and C. H. Price, secretary. The Cooperation was still divided into four districts, holding separate conventions before the general meeting. Twenty-three churches sent delegates, and sixteen pastors were listed. These were paid a total of \$325.16. The evangelizing board reported a total of \$8.20 and added: "This is all the means that has been at our command. You can easily see the embarrassed condition of the Board for lack of means to prosecute the work."

In 1890 the Cooperation met at Bristol, Tennessee, on August 22. A significant change in the organization took place that year. A. I. Myhr, who had recently become evangelist for the Tennessee Christian Missionary Society, reported the Convention. His report contains this item: "The Churches of Southwest Virginia will hereafter cooperate in the Virginia work. The Churches of East Tennessee will help in the cooperative work of our state."
¹⁸

In 1891 the cooperative met at Hale's Chapel, Washington County, Tennessee. According to the agreement of 1890, the minutes designate the organization as The East
¹⁹
 Tennessee Co-operation. J. J. McKorkle was moderator

17. Printed copy in McCown Collection.

18. News item, Christian Standard, Vol. XXV (September 6, 1890), p. 587.

19. Printed copy in McCown Collection.

that year and George T. Williams continued as secretary. Twenty-two churches sent delegates and reported to the convention. Two new churches were admitted by vote of the group assembled: viz., Elizabethton Church and Dry Creek Church, Washington County, Tennessee. Some idea of the attendance at the meeting can be had from the fact that on Saturday morning S. H. Millard was appointed to preach in the house and W. C. Maupin in the grove.²⁰

Alvin Jones, reporting the convention, has left the following statement:

In the afternoon, under the head of New Business, a resolution was offered to the effect that this convention declare itself in cooperation with and under the direction of the State Missionary Convention. After arguments pro and con, the word "under" was cut out and the resolution carried. 21

In the light of the later independent course of the churches of upper East Tennessee, that action is somewhat significant.

August 29, 1892, marked the close of the Annual Meeting for that year. It was held in Johnson City, Tennessee. J. W. Rogers, reporting the convention, commented on a great improvement over the past - "more work done, more money raised than in any previous year."²²

20. News item, Vol. XXVI, Christian Standard (September 19, 1891), p. 798.

21. Ibid.

22. News item, Christian Standard, Vol. XXVII (September 10, 1892), p. 776.

Border View Church in Carter County was host to the convention for 1894. A. I. Myhr reported it as "certainly the best convention ever held in this district." Seven counties of upper East Tennessee then had forty-five churches, with a combined membership of 3100. This represented a net gain of 1000 in four years.²³ At that meeting J. E. Crouch was made secretary. He served in that capacity for ten years and then was elected chairman of the convention. In that capacity he served for another eighteen years, closing his connection in any official position in August, 1922.²⁴

The convention convened at Allentown (now Hampton), Tennessee, in August of 1896. A. I. Myhr reported "a very interesting convention in First District at Allentown, Tennessee." Two hundred and seven additions were reported by the evangelists and one new congregation organized. E. C. Buck was one of the evangelists. A. I. Myhr described him as "popular and he will continue his work."²⁵

No further data concerning the meeting place of the Annual Meeting have been discovered until 1908. However, that it met seems well established by the testimony of

23. News item, Christian Standard, Vol. XXX (September 22, 1894), p. 943.

24. Letter from J. E. Crouch, June 15, 1943.

25. News item, Christian Standard, Vol. XXXII (September 5, 1896), p. 1150.

of J. E. Crouch, cited above. In 1908 a "good meeting" was²⁶ reported as being held August 20-23 at Bristol, Tennessee. In 1910 Joseph Galyon reported that the Annual Meeting was held at Watauga, Tennessee, on August 25-28. At least four hundred delegates reported and \$1000 was raised "as a guarantee fund to back the State Board in support of an evangelist in East Tennessee."²⁷ In 1911 John M. Shepherd took up the work as evangelist for the First District. He continued to serve until 1918. In 1921 he took up the²⁸ work again and served until 1925, a total of eleven years.

Under the date of September 5, 1914, someone reported the First District Convention as "recently" held at Hampton, Tennessee. It was "largely attended," and E. H. Koch, new State Secretary of the Tennessee Missionary Society, was present.²⁹ A news item, September 13, 1919, states that "A. A. Ferguson recently spoke at a large Annual Meeting at Turkeytown, in East Tennessee."³⁰

Data concerning the cooperative work for the next few years continue to be scattered. As we noted above,

26. Ibid., Vol. XLIV (August 20, 1908), p. 1477.

27. Ibid., Vol. XLVI (September 10, 1910), p. 1597.

28. Letter from J. N. Shepherd, June 18, 1943.

29. News item, Christian Standard, Vol. XLIX (September 5, 1914), p. 1563.

30. Ibid., Vol. LIV (September 13, 1919), p. 1242.

J. N. Shepherd served a second term as evangelist from 1921 to 1925. In the last-named year J. J. Musick became associated with the work in an official capacity as a member of the Evangelizing Board and has continued to serve in some way ever since.³¹ In August, 1928, at the convention meeting at Turkeytown, O. L. Mankamyer was called to be the district evangelist. He served for two years, resigning to accept the pastorate of Second Church of Christ, Johnson City, Tennessee. During his term two new congregations were established: the Highland Church of Christ, Washington County, Tennessee, and the Shakesville, Virginia, Church. In addition, "about sixty" meetings were held and "several hundred" added to the churches.³²

Following O. L. Mankamyer, M. B. Miller was called as evangelist in 1930. He began his work October 1, 1930, and has continued to serve in that capacity ever since.³³ In 1935, at the Central Holston meeting, J. J. Musick was elected secretary-treasurer of the organization.³⁴ He continues in that position.

The cooperative work of the East Tennessee churches was enlarged to include portions of other states

31. Letter from J. J. Musick, June, 1943.

32. Letter from O. L. Mankamyer, June 22, 1943.

33. Miller's yearly reports from October 1, 1930, to August 19, 1943, show this.

34. Letter from J. J. Musick, June, 1943.

in 1937. At a business meeting of the First District Evangelizing Board, held August 20, 1937, at Valley Forge, Tennessee, J. W. West was present and presented the matter of consolidating the work of First District Tennessee and the Mountain States Evangelizing Association. The latter organization had been organized and promoted by J. W. West several years before. After thoroughly discussing the matter, the Board "voted to recommend such action to the convention at its regular Business session Saturday, Aug. 21st."³⁵

At the business session of the convention the matter was again thoroughly discussed and put to a vote.³⁶ One dissenting vote was cast. The new organization, under the name Appalachian Mountain Evangelizing Association, went into effect January 1, 1938. M. B. Miller was elected president and general evangelist; J. W. West became field secretary; and J. J. Musick, secretary and treasurer.³⁷ These men continue in the respective offices.

It should be noted that the Annual Meeting of the First District churches continues to function as such. It has its separate officers and meets each year on Thursday before the fourth Lord's Day in August. For several years previous to 1939 Marion F. Glover, business man of Bristol, Tennessee, served as the congenial chairman of the convention.

35. Minutes of the Board meeting.

36. The writer was present.

37. Letter from M. B. Miller, June, 1943.

Serious illness prevented his serving in 1938, but he was elected as honorary chairman in that year. Death alone removed him from his office. The writer of this history functioned as chairman of the convention from 1939 to 1942. At the 1942 meeting in Jonesboro, Tennessee, Thomas Gray, minister of Second Church, Johnson City, Tennessee, was chosen to the office.

Something of the scope of this cooperative work can be gathered from the following facts and figures: the enlarged organization functions in the mountain sections of seven states; viz., Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia, Kentucky, and Tennessee. A tabulation of the reports of M. B. Miller over a period of twelve years, from October 1, 1930, to August 19, 1942, shows a total of 118 meetings held, besides much work that is not strictly evangelistic. These reports show a total of 1372 added to the churches by baptism and 2407 otherwise. Twenty-one new churches have been organized and twenty closed churches opened and reorganized. This is not a complete tabulation of all the work done by the cooperative effort of the churches. Other men have served as part-time evangelists. John Meridith served half-time from 1939 to 1941.³⁸ No reports of his work are available. In addition, several other men have served under the auspices of the

38. Minutes of the Convention from 1939 to 1941.

cooperative efforts as evangelists for individual campaigns, and numerous ministerial students from Milligan College, Johnson Bible College, and Grayson Normal Institute have labored through the summer months in various years.

A tabulation of the Treasurer's reports since the consolidation of the two organizations, January 1, 1938, shows that a yearly average of \$10,239.91 has been expended in various ways. Over four years of the five included, the churches of East Tennessee have contributed a yearly average of \$2,165.01.⁴⁰

These incomplete reports give only a limited idea of the scope of what is recognized by many as one of the most fruitful home missionary organizations among the Christian churches in the United States.

As a matter of preserving historical data, we close this chapter with a list of the meeting places of the Annual Meeting in the past twelve years.⁴¹

Mountain City, Tennessee	1931
Highland Church, Washington County, Tennessee	1932
Bluff City, Tennessee	1933
Erwin, Tennessee	1934
Central Holston Church, Sullivan County, Tennessee	1935
Oak Grove Church, Carter County, Tennessee	1936
Valley Forge, Tennessee	1937
Boone's Creek Church, Washington County, Tennessee	1938
Elizabethton, Tennessee, First Church	1939
Kingsport, Tennessee, First Church	1940
Johnson City, Tennessee, First Church	1941
Jonesboro, Tennessee	1942

40. Reports in possession of J. J. Musick, Elizabethton.

41. Data from various documents, such as programs, minutes, news items, etc.

CHAPTER VI

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

The Disciples of Christ have been from the first interested in education. Thomas and Alexander Campbell were both scholarly men, and they set the pattern that has been eagerly followed for more than a century. Alexander Campbell organized Bethany College in 1841. Previously to that, he had operated Buffalo Seminary in his home for a few years. A full history of the Disciples of Christ in the following century would record more than a score of colleges organized. Some of them flourished for a few years and then ceased to function for various reasons. Others have grown into colleges which are nationally known. The most of them have continued to serve their local communities and the Christian Churches throughout the country. Two in the latter category are located in East Tennessee and are an integral part of the history of the Disciples of Christ in that section. The following account is a brief history of the two schools.

MILLIGAN COLLEGE

The East Tennessee pioneer of education among the Disciples of Christ was Wilson G. Barker. He was born on

December 25, 1830, in Washington County, Virginia, "the son¹ of Colonel Joel N. Barker, and Jamima Kendrick Barker."

Being well educated for his day, Wilson G. Barker took up the one profession most readily open - teaching. However, he soon combined with his teaching the Christian ministry. On June 20, 1858, he and his wife took membership with First Christian Church, Bristol, Virginia. In this same church on February 4, 1866, he was ordained as a preacher² by William J. Pendleton and Samuel H. Millard.

"Some time prior to May, 1866" Barker came to Buffalo Creek, Carter County, Tennessee, and opened a school in the old Buffalo Creek Church.³ The old log church house was soon renovated with ceiling on the inside and weatherboarding on the outside. A coat of white paint finished the conversion of the building into a schoolhouse for week-day use and a church on the Lord's Day.

The earliest record found of Mr. Barker's labors at Buffalo Creek date May 28, 1866 when he gave a receipt to George D. & S. W. Williams for \$5.87 paid in 9 bu. of oats at .50 and \$1.37 in cash, on a bill of \$18.50 tuition fees. This left a balance of \$12.63 to be paid. The tuition fees were for George Taylor Williams - \$7.50, Rhoda J. Williams - \$7.50, and for Ida Anderson - \$3.50. 4

1. Mary Lyon Peebles, "Wilson G. Barker" in J. W. West, ed., Sketches of Our Mountain Pioneers, p. 244.

2. Ibid.

3. Mary Hardin McCown and Mary Lyon Peebles, "Buffalo Institute - Milligan College" in ibid., p. 301.

4. Ibid., p. 302.

This school was chartered as Buffalo Male and Female Institute by the thirty-fourth General Assembly of the State of Tennessee, December 10, 1866.⁵ An enlargement of the school came the next year. Dated June 7, 1867, the following subscription list is extant:

Trustees of Buffalo Male & Female Institute propose to build on the site near the church, donated by Joshua Williams, a brick house sixty by twenty-five feet, one story high. All friendly to the enterprise are solicited to subscribe. Each subscriber promises to pay the sum annexed to his name.

Seventy-seven names are on the paper, with pledges ranging from one dollar to one hundred dollars. Three pledges only are for less than five dollars, and two are for one hundred dollars each. A total of \$1533.00 is pledged, an average of almost twenty dollars per person.⁶ That is most generous support for the times and must be indicative of the esteem and confidence in which Wilson G. Barker was held by his friends and neighbors.

Just when Barker terminated his connection with Buffalo Institute is uncertain. He moved to Johnson City and taught at Science Hill for some time.⁷ Some years after that he ran Martin's Academy at Jonesboro, Tennessee.⁸

5. Ibid.

6. Copy in McCown Collection.

7. Mary Lyon Peebles, op. cit., p. 246.

8. See Chapter IV in connection with the Jonesboro church.

"About 1872 Mr. Pendleton, of Virginia took charge" of Buffalo Institute "and built a house near the Institute, where others were later built." Among other instructors at Buffalo Institute were Benjamin Akard, Miss Julia Young, and a Mr. Turner, from Virginia.⁹

Buffalo Male and Female Institute became the Milligan College of today. The transformation took place under the leadership of Josephus Hopwood, who came to Buffalo in August, 1875.¹⁰ This college is the result of a determined desire in the heart of Josephus Hopwood to build a college in some needy section of the South. His first attempt was at Sneedville, Tennessee, as head of an academy there.¹¹ The place proved unsuitable for his purpose; and, hearing of Buffalo Institute, he made the necessary connections and took up the work there. His first agreement with the trustees of Buffalo Institute was that he would pay interest on the debt of \$1250 against the building for the use of it.¹² The new head of the school canvassed the community for subscription students and secured enough to have a "happy and enthusiastic school year." The first, and many

9. Mary Hardin McCown and Mary Lyon Peebles, op. cit., p. 303.

10. Josephus Hopwood, A Journey Through the Years, An Autobiography (St. Louis: The Bethany Press, 1932), p. 48.

11. Ibid., Ch. III, pp. 34-44.

12. Ibid., p. 49.

subsequent, vacation periods were utilized by Doctor Hopwood in canvassing for students. "Riding Morgan, my blood-ed Kentucky horse, I traveled twenty to forty miles in every direction."¹³ John Preston McConnell, then president of State Teachers College, East Radford, Virginia, in the introduction to his autobiography, described Hopwood as "a missionary to every section and every home that he could reach persuading and urging, and it might be said cajoling both old and young in the interest of education." His efforts were so successful that every institution in the territory adjacent to his college was forced to adopt some similar tactics to enlist students.¹⁴

In the summer of 1878 Doctor Hopwood "leased the entire property for twenty-two years." New buildings were put up, a well dug, and living quarters for sixty students arranged. The announcement for the year 1878 was entitled:

Circular Announcing the New Beginning
Buffalo Institute
Carter County, Tennessee¹⁵

The circular carried, among other things, these items of interest:

5. Board is from \$1.50 to \$1.75 a week.
6. Tuition is from \$12 to \$36 a school year of thirty-six weeks. Contingent fees \$1.50 a year.
7. We educate for the real duties of life.

13. Ibid.

15. Ibid., p. 51.

14. Ibid., p. 9.

The school grew. Plans were laid for new and larger buildings. In April, 1881, the ceremony of laying the cornerstone of a new college building was held. Colonel N. G. Taylor was engaged to give the address of the day. He was unable to come, and Doctor Hopwood spoke, "dedicating the building to the cause of Christian education, announcing the name, Milligan College." The name was in honor of the late Robert Milligan, of Kentucky University, whom Hopwood designated "the purest and best man I have¹⁶ known."

In the fall of 1881 the college entered its new building, and in May, 1882, granted diplomas to ten students. The first graduates of Milligan College under its new charter were: Lula Crocket, Lucy Hardin, George Hardin, James H. Smith, A. A. Ferguson, J. H. Rutrough, C. B. Armin-¹⁷trout, Charles Carson, George Boren, and James A. Tate.

Something of the high moral purpose of the college in its early years can be gathered from the fact that each day's work was opened with a chapel exercise called the "Morning Class." It was a period of worship followed by the "discussion of practical morals." After one such discussion, Mrs. Hopwood wrote on the board a motto which she¹⁸ had formulated: "Christian Education the Hope of the World."

16. Ibid., p. 56.

17. Ibid.

18. Ibid., p. 62.

That motto has continued with the college through the years.

The first decade of the life of Milligan College apparently passed without any serious setbacks or any significant advances. Small classes were graduated each year except 1886, when there was no class.¹⁹

.In 1893 the college became heavily involved in debt. No money could be raised because of the business depression. As a way out until business revived, the property was deeded to D. D. M. Showalter, who furnished the money to pay the debts. Showalter held control of the school for one year, operating it under the name of Joseph-²⁰us Hopwood. In turn, Showalter deeded the property to J. P. McConnell, W. J. Shelbourne, and J. V. Thomas. These men borrowed the money to pay Showalter, paying as high as 12 per cent interest for some of it. After another year or so, Henry R. Garrett took the place of W. J. Shel-²¹bourne in the trio of supporters. J. P. McConnell and Mrs. Hopwood managed the school until 1896.

In that year Doctor Hopwood had been prohibition candidate for governor of Tennessee. Part of the year he spent in Nashville, conducting a prohibition paper with the aid of James A. Tate. At the close of the election, Doctor Hopwood returned to Milligan College. He then wrote out

19. Ibid., Appendix, p. 197.

20. Ibid., p. 84.

21. Interview with Henry R. Garrett, June, 1943.

unsigned notes of \$250 each and sent them to a number of friends of the college, asking them to sign and return the notes. No one was obligated to pay unless the whole sum was pledged. A sufficient number signed the notes, and payment was called for. Thus the college was freed from debt and the deed in escrow canceled.²²

In 1903 Josephus Hopwood resigned as President of Milligan College. The circumstances back of his resignation were somewhat peculiar. In 1902-03 the religious group known as the Holiness movement penetrated East Tennessee. In some degree Hopwood became enamored of this highly emotional group and attended some of their meetings. This provoked criticism at Milligan, both among citizens of the community and the board of trustees. This led to calling a group of representative men of the brotherhood together at Milligan College on February 8, 1903, to discuss the matter. Hopwood seems to have been wholly exonerated by the group and the matter was dropped. However, the President immediately began to consider the wisdom of his continuing in the office. As he pondered the problem, friends and former students invited him to go to Lynchburg, Virginia, to investigate a property that was for sale, with a view to establishing another school. The result was that Doctor Hopwood went to Lynchburg, contracted for the property, and

22. Josephus Hopwood, op. cit., p. 85.

returned to resign as president of Milligan College. For the place, he recommended Henry R. Garrett, "a graduate of Milligan and . . . for several years an able and much loved teacher in the school."²³

Several teachers and a good number of students from Milligan College went with Doctor Hopwood into his new venture. This precipitated something of a crisis in the life of Milligan. Henry R. Garrett took up the presidency of the college in this crisis. Under the capable leadership of Professor Garrett, the faculty and enrollment at Milligan College were soon built back. The high "moral and spiritual atmosphere was maintained" and money was raised for a much-needed new building. After five years of service, Professor Garrett relinquished the burden in 1908. Ill health made it advisable for him to seek a different climate in Texas.²⁴

The next president of Milligan College was Frederick D. Kershner, "a native of Maryland and a graduate of Kentucky University and of Princeton." He took over the presidency of the college in the spring of 1908 and resigned soon after the opening of the session of 1911-12. His resignation took effect October 31, 1911. To fill his place,

23. Ibid.

24. The Buffalo Range, Vol. II (January 29, 1940). This is the alumni paper of Milligan College. The issue cited was in honor of H. R. Garrett.

the board of trustees elected the dean of the college, Tyler E. Utterback. He was a native of Kentucky, a graduate of Kentucky University, Central University of Kentucky, and Columbia University. At the close of the school year 1913, Utterback's resignation took effect, having been offered a year before. At the same time E. W. McDiarmid, a graduate of Bethany and Hiram Colleges, was elected president of Milligan College. McDiarmid was succeeded by James T. McKissick, "a native Tennessean and a graduate of Texas Christian University, the College of the Bible and of Harvard University." McKissick took up the work in 1914. ²⁵

Evidently things were not going so well for Milligan College in those years during which the presidency changed so rapidly. In the spring of 1915 Doctor Hopwood was urged to return to Milligan. The president of the board of trustees wrote: "We see no chance for Milligan to live unless you come and take hold of the work for this year at least." ²⁶ Accordingly, Doctor Hopwood returned as president of Milligan in the summer of 1915 and guided its destiny for another two years. In that period the college lost by fire a boys' dormitory known as Mee Hall. Temporary barracks were arranged, and the school went on with little interruption. At the close of the school year, 1917,

25. Milligan College Yearbook for 1915, pp. 13-14.

26. Josephus Hopwood, op. cit., p. 118.

Doctor Hopwood resigned the work at Milligan. H. J. Derthick²⁷ was elected to fill his place.

A new building program which had been planned was soon completed. A new dormitory for boys, a completely new water system, and a new administration building were all completed by August, 1920. In addition, extensive renovation of the girls' dormitory was also completed. The new administration building was begun in July, 1919. It²⁸ was dedicated September 19, 1920.

In 1924 the Cheek Activity Building, containing a gymnasium, swimming pool, and bowling alleys, was constructed. It was named in honor of J. O. Cheek, a friend²⁹ of the college through the years.

H. J. Derthick resigned as president of Milligan in 1940, and C. E. Burns became acting president September 1, 1940; about nine months later he was elected president.³⁰ The war has seriously disrupted the routine life of the college. In fact, civilian education has been entirely discontinued for the present. Beginning July 1, 1943, the facilities of the school will be entirely devoted to the new V-12 Naval Program. About 400 trainees will be cared

27. Ibid., p. 124.

28. News item, Christian Standard, Vol. V (August 28, 1920), p. 1177.

29. Letter from C. E. Burns, president of Milligan College, June 28, 1943.

30. Ibid.

31
for. It is presumed that after the war the college will again open its doors to civilian students and resume its normal functions.

JOHNSON BIBLE COLLEGE

Someone has said that institutions are but the lengthened shadows of men. If the thought were ever true, it is true of Johnson Bible College, located twelve miles east of Knoxville, Tennessee, on the banks of the French Broad River. The founder of the school was Ashley Sidney Johnson, the son of Jeremiah Crockett Johnson and Barbara Johnson. He was born June 22, 1857, in a log cabin in Knox County, Tennessee. There was nothing unusual about his early life. He attended the common schools of the county until he was seventeen years of age. At that time, by examination, he secured a teacher's certificate and taught part of the following year. In the fall of 1875 he entered the University of Tennessee, where he studied for a time, and then entered the law office of J. C. J. Williams, of Knoxville. He had a genuine ambition to become a lawyer, but sacrificed the ambition for the sake of preaching the
32
gospel.

31. Ibid.

32. Ashley S. Johnson, The Story of a Check for \$100 or the Witness of the School of the Evangelists to a Prayer Answering God (Knoxville, Tennessee: Ogden Bro's. & Co.), p. 8. This is a 42-page booklet giving the early history of the school. It will be cited hereafter as The Story of a Check.

The religious experiences of Ashley S. Johnson are perhaps best told in his own words:

My religious surroundings were chiefly Baptist. My father and mother had both been members of that communion. My father had drifted into skepticism and my mother into comparative indifference. I was never at Sunday-school until I began to think myself almost a man, although my parents occasionally took me to church. I had a desire to be a Christian when I was about twelve. I had no one to "guide me," and in consequence became profane and godless. Early in my life some of the proclaimers of the Ancient Gospel, notably Dr. L. R. Lawson, Jno. Adcock, Gilmore Randolph, and W. B. Smith began to preach the truth in our neighborhood, and they planted in my mind the seed of all I am and all I hope to be. I give particular credit to Jno. Adcock, who used to unfold the way of salvation to an audience of probably not over six persons. . . . I held the truth - what I knew of it - in unrighteousness. My parents became disciples. I tried to be indifferent. My friends were all of "other kinds." In October, 1871, soon after I was twenty, I attended a Baptist revival of the old mourner's-bench variety. In the midst of the great excitement which prevailed, the thought came to me like a bolt from a clear sky at noonday: "Here I am, trifling my time away, knowing the truth, and these people are drifting to judgment in ignorance; I will turn over a new leaf and be a preacher." My mind was made up. I went home and told my parents. I began to study the New Testament under my father's help and when I was fully convinced as to what I ought to do, I wrote to a preacher to come and was immersed by Elder John Adcock on the 14th day of October, 1877. On the following Saturday I went to Thorn Grove to attend a meeting. The brethren knew my intentions and Dr. Lawson asked me to preach. I had never prayed in public. My effort was well received and from that day to this, night and day, by voice and by pen, I have given myself unsparingly and unceasingly to one object of my life - the proclamation of truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. 33

Following his conversion, Ashley S. Johnson taught school for a few months, and continued to study the Bible

33. Ibid., pp. 8-9.

and the writings of Alexander Campbell. "In 1889 or 1890" he began to publish a magazine which he called The Christian Watchman. This had a fair circulation and made him many friends. In 1881 he wrote his first book, The Great Controversy. This book gained for him an invitation to go to South Carolina, where as state evangelist he did his best work as a preacher. One summer he went to Canada to attend the summer session of a School of Oratory. While there he met his future wife, Emma Elizabeth Strawn. They were married December 31, 1884. The following year the couple returned to South Carolina. Ashley Johnson was struck with the appalling need of preachers in the South. How could the need be met? Let him tell the story:

One night I was sick, in the cabin of a good man and I got up and built a fire and sat by it and thought, and suddenly as came my resolution to preach came the thought that I could train men to preach by mail - and the Correspondence Bible College was born. 34

The enrollment in this new Correspondence Bible College soon ran up to 200. The preaching in South Carolina had to be given up. The Johnsons moved to Augusta, Georgia, where he preached and continued to teach by mail. The work continued to grow, and Ashley Johnson decided to give up regular preaching and devote his entire time to the correspondence school. He moved to Knoxville, built

34. Ibid., p. 9.

a home and prospered from the income of his Correspondence Bible College.³⁵

The larger enrollment in the correspondence school revealed to Ashley Johnson the large number of young men who desired to preach but were too poor to pay for an education. He began to dream of a school for the education of preachers. He endeavored to find a suitable location in Knoxville but failed. He finally purchased his "old homestead," the site of the present school, and moved to the country, where he built a home.

While in Augusta and Knoxville, Ashley Johnson had taken into his home a young man, Albert T. Fitts, in order to train him for the ministry. Soon after moving to the country, he invited another to share his home and be taught. This was John B. Dickson. Of the two, Doctor Johnson wrote: "Thus my little school of the prophets contained two students - the noblest of God's handiwork."³⁶ To John B. Dickson, Ashley Johnson confided his desire to build a college where a poor young man who desired to preach could help himself. The two built "air colleges" on different hills of the farm.

In the fall of 1892 Ashley S. Johnson went to Bearden, Tennessee, to preach. After the sermon he spoke to the people about his desire to build a college. He did not

35. Ibid., p. 10.

36. Ibid.

ask for money but for encouragement. After the benediction, William F. Crippen spoke to him thus: "Go ahead, and when you get started, I will give you \$100."³⁷ Ashley S. Johnson had received his commission. From then on, nothing could deter him from his purpose. Within a few days another \$150 was pledged by his father, his brother George, and W. T. Adcock of Thorn Grove, Tennessee. In his enthusiasm Ashley S. Johnson sent an appeal to many of his friends and acquaintances, asking each for one dollar. Then he went ahead and contracted for material to construct the main building. He later wrote of the experience:

I had a great shock and disappointment. I sent out my first appeal, feeling that my brethren would see the need of trained advocates of our cause as I saw it. I received about \$35.00.³⁸

The work had been started, and May 13, 1893, was set apart for the laying of the cornerstone. How could it be continued? Previous to this time, Ashley S. Johnson had written three books. He had on hand several thousand copies of them. He wrote of their decision:

After consulting with my wife we decided to dedicate a few hundred books to the work and sell them for the purpose. . . . After we dedicated the book business to the cause it grew very rapidly, and the lumber-pile and the Brick-pile grew correspondingly.³⁹

37. Ibid., p. 13.

38. Johnson Bible College News Letter, Vol. VIII (October, 1916), p. 1.

39. The Story of a Check, p. 15.

The work went on, and the cornerstone was laid on the appointed day. At the ceremony Lewis Tillman, a lawyer of Knoxville, spoke. On that day he gave to Ashley Johnson a book in which he had written: "Presented to the School of the Evangelists, May 12, 1893, by Lewis Tillman. The first book for the Library." About two years later, Ashley Johnson turned to the book and found it to be The Life of Trust; being a narrative of the Lord's dealings with George Muller, written by himself.⁴⁰ He read the book, and it is not too much to say that it was the greatest single influence in the life of the founder of Johnson Bible College.

The first building was completed in January, 1894, and the first session opened February 3, 1894, "with about forty pupils."⁴¹ The following May the building was formally dedicated. For the occasion the steamer Onega was chartered to bring people from Knoxville. Including the student body, about 400 were present. C. P. Williamson, of Atlanta, preached the dedicatory sermon, "Emphasizing three facts (1) The Fatherhood of God, (2) The Brotherhood of man, (3) The gospel is the power of God unto salvation."⁴²

On the same day the cornerstone of the second building was laid. This was a dormitory called "Industrial

40. Ibid., p. 16.

41. Ibid., p. 33.

42. News item, Christian Standard, Vol. XXX (June 9, 1894), p. 564. Albert T. Fitts reported the event.

Hall." It still stands. "As an appreciation of Bro. Johnson's work, the spectators voluntarily raised money enough⁴³ to insure the School of the Evangelists for one year."

Regarding the first name of the school, Ashley S. Johnson explained it thus:

We call it the School of the Evangelists because it was modeled, in a sense, after the old time Schools of the Prophets, institutions in which the prophets lived with their students, and lifted them to higher things. 44

The growth of the school into the status of a college prompted the change of name to Johnson Bible College. It⁴⁵ was so changed by charter in March, 1909. During the first eight years of the history of the school it was unchartered. Presumably it gave no degrees but simply diplomas. The first charter was granted June 13, 1901, "for the purpose of training young men to preach the gospel, with power to confer degrees and do such things as pertain⁴⁶ to such an institution."

The purpose, as stated in that original charter, existed before it was granted and has been the steadfast policy of the school for fifty years. In the oldest extant catalogue of the college, Ashley Johnson wrote: "We want it

43. Ibid.

44. Johnson Bible College News Letter, Vol. V (January, 1913), p. 1.

45. Knox County Charter Book No. 214, p. 283.

46. Ibid., No. 164, p. 245.

distinctly understood that this school is for the training of young men to preach, and not for anybody else."⁴⁶ The determined moral objective of Ashley S. Johnson is indicated in the same catalogue in a section entitled, Our Three "Ifs":

1. IF you use tobacco in any form, do not write to us about coming here, for it will be a waste of time. It is not a question of coming here to quit - if you use it you cannot get in.

2. IF you are a wild, unsettled boy this is no place for you. We are not in the work of reforming bad boys, but in the work of developing pious young men into preachers of the gospel.

3. IF you are too lazy, or too "nice," or too sick to work, this is no place for you. This is not a charity. We can only give you a chance to earn an education and get it at the same time. 47

The one exception to this rule to train ministers only came in 1900. In that year Ashley S. Johnson announced his decision

simply as a help to the work financially, to admit ten young men or boys next year who want an education simply, or who are too young to decide the question of preaching, providing they are free from the tobacco habit, and providing they are willing to pay for it.

The tuition for one year was \$85.00, payable in advance,⁴⁸ for non-ministerial students. How many came on the proposition is not known.

46. Catalogue of the School of the Evangelists, Announcement 1896-'97, p. 6.

47. Ibid., p. 11.

48. Seventh Annual Announcement of the School of the Evangelists, 1900-1901, p. 8.

This one purpose was chiseled in marble and placed opposite the entrance of the new building in 1905. It reads:

School of the Evangelists
 Founded 1893 - rebuilt 1905
 Open day and night to
 The poor young man who
 Desires above every other
 Desire, to preach the
 Gospel of Christ

In 1913 Ashley S. Johnson wrote relative to the purpose of the school:

We are in reality running two institutions here; one is the college with ordinary college equipment, kept up to date as best as we can keep it by human energy and application. The other is a great effort made to demonstrate the truth of the promises of the Almighty God: and to a wicked generation that he does answer the prayers of those who cry unto Him. We consider this a greater institution than the institution that can be seen by men. 49

No better statement of the purpose of Ashley S. Johnson and the school which he built has been made than the words of Ritchie Ware at the funeral of Doctor Johnson. In part, he said:

There is no other institution like this one in the world so far as I know. There is no other school among the disciples of Christ where every man who comes must declare first his desire to preach the Gospel. It was the noble desire of this noble man to make all things subordinated to the promotion of the work of making preachers. Every pig that was raised, every potato that was grown, every cow that was milked, every song that

49. Johnson Bible College News Letter, Vol. V (January, 1913), p. 2.

was sung, every prayer that was offered, every sermon that was preached, and every lesson that was taught, was subservient to and contributory to the passion of this noble man that all men who came this way might become better men and servants of God, and that all men everywhere might know the unsearchable riches and power of Christ. 50

The school has not deviated from that purpose since the death of its founder. The latest published catalogue still carries on its title page the motto: "A Preacher-Training Institution in a Preacher-Growing Atmosphere." It further states that "in order to become a student in Johnson Bible College a young man must declare his purpose to become a preacher. . ."⁵¹ This singleness of purpose has been the most characteristic thing about Johnson Bible College through its fifty years of history.

Now it is necessary to turn to chronicling some specific happenings in the growth of the school. The first decade of the life of the school seems to have been rather uneventful. In 1904 the first great calamity befell the institution. As the students sat down to the evening meal on December 1, the report of fire was sounded. The result was a complete loss of the main building estimated to have cost \$20,000 with equipment. The chapel, classrooms, dining hall, kitchen, and most of the library were completely lost. Most of the students who lived in the building lost

50. Ritchie Ware, Ashley S. Johnson Funeral Oration (an unpublished manuscript).

51. Johnson Bible College, Forty-Eighth Year, p. 15.

all their personal belongings. As one of them, Miles Day, dragged his trunk down the steps, he remarked, "This means⁵² a brick building." He spoke the truth, for on the site was erected the following year the substantial brick building which still is being used. Around the smoldering ashes Professor Martin Pierce gathered the students for a prayer meeting, giving thanks for past blessings and petitioning⁵³ for a new building.

At the time of the fire Ashley Johnson was in Indiana in the interest of the school. While at the home of H. H. Harmon, he received a telegram from his wife, informing him of the disaster. He took the message to Joseph I. Irwin, who a few hours before had refused to make a gift to the college, and received the initial \$2,000 on a new⁵⁴ building. Ashley S. Johnson's first reply to the telegram from his wife was, "Cheer up, sweetheart; God reigns. The School of the Evangelists lives and will live. Home tomorrow."⁵⁵ Having received the \$2,000, he wired her again, "Cheer up, sweetheart. Two thousand dollars toward a new building. More in sight. Lovingly."⁵⁶ Later in the

52. "Account of the Great Fire," by an eye-witness, in World Wide Witness, Vol. I (April 1, 1905), p. 1.

53. Ibid.

54. Johnson Bible College News Letter, Vol. VIII (October, 1916), p. 3.

55. From a letter of Ashley Johnson to his friends, dated December 5, 1904, asking for money to rebuild. These letters have come to be known as "Appeals." When cited hereafter, they will be so designated.

56. Appeal, January 1, 1905.

day he sent this word to Professor Martin Pierce: "Let the Heights be glad. The word fail is foreign to His eternal purpose in us. Amen! Never felt so much like going on."⁵⁷

Ashley Johnson arrived home on Sunday following the fire to find seventy-five young men lined up on both sides of the walk leading to his home, singing "My Faith Looks Up to Thee."⁵⁸

Ground was broken for the new and larger building⁵⁹
April 3, 1905. Of this rebuilding period Doctor Johnson wrote:

I pushed the big enterprise with all possible speed, having a pay roll including students of probably thirty, and yet such was our Partner's care and love and liberality that at times the money came faster than we could spend it. For weeks the mails brought from \$60 to \$75 a day and up to \$500 in a single mail. We discharged our financial agent and depended on God, our brethren and ourselves. Money came from everywhere, much of it from strangers, men and women who had never given before. A devout Roman Catholic gave me \$250. For twenty-three months I did not sleep out of my own bed. Incidentally during this rebuilding time I wrote a book, and handled thousands of brick with my own hands. Brother W. J. Wright, then Secretary of the American Christian Missionary Society, dedicated the building. He estimated it to be worth \$60,000. 60

The next important building was erected in 1912. It was the Irwin Library, named in honor of Joseph I. Irwin,

57. Ibid.

58. Ibid.

59. Appeal, undated except the year, 1905.

60. Johnson Bible College News Letter, Vol. VIII (October, 1916), p. 3.

who gave the first \$2,000 on the main building and continued to give to the school throughout his life. The dedicatory services were announced for May 12, 1913, twentieth anniversary of the founding of the college.⁶¹ In the summer of 1915 a large modern dairy barn was constructed to house the prized herd of registered Holstein cattle. At least two letters were sent to friends of the school, asking for one dollar gifts for the building.⁶²

In a similar manner, seven modern houses have been built through the years for faculty members; a central heating plant, complete waterworks, and numerous other improvements have been made. The physical plant of Johnson Bible College, including the farm, is estimated to be worth at least \$250,000. In 1929 a new administration building, to cost \$150,000, was planned.⁶³ The financial crisis in the fall of the same year made the undertaking impossible.

Enough has been said so far to indicate that Ashley S. Johnson believed that God answered his prayers, but no history of Johnson Bible College would be complete without specific reference to this belief. He believed that every dollar which came to him for his work was in some way an answer to prayer. To him the history of the college was

61. Appeal, April 1, 1913.

62. Appeal, August 10, 1915; September 18, 1915.

63. Minutes of the Board Meeting, January 9, 1929.

adequate proof that God heard and answered his prayers.

He once wrote:

I assure you that Ashley S. Johnson, a sinner saved by the grace of God, and kept by a love which no man has told or can tell, and Johnson Bible College, are a living protest against doubt, a living monument to the faithfulness of Jehovah who hears and answers those who in faith and self-forgetfulness call upon Him. 64

Yet Ashley S. Johnson was not a fanatic. He was always practical and business-like. For some time he carried on his college stationery this motto:

We pray as if everything depends upon Prayer:
We work as if everything depends upon work:
We trust as if everything depends upon trust:
We wait as if everything depends upon waiting:

His own experiences led him to this belief. His writings are saturated with incidents similar to the following:

When we bought the farm across the river and I had the first note to pay on it, I lacked \$490.00 of having the amount to cancel it. I prayed, "Lord, send me some money in a way that I shall know that it comes from thee." In a few days I got a check for \$500.00 from an unknown source, and to this day I do not know who gave it. 65

Ashley S. Johnson estimated that in the first twenty-three years of the school he had spent three hundred days of ten hours each praying for the work. Then he added:

No mortal tongue or pen can describe the agony and the glory of it all. It is equivalent to, and a much greater drain on physical,

64. Quoted by A. R. Brown, Standing on the Promises, p. 131.

65. Appeal, August, 1920.

intellectual and spiritual forces than one sermon a day for 20 years. 66

Such was the belief of Ashley S. Johnson in prayer. Let this generation do with it as it will; it cannot alter the historical fact that the founder of Johnson Bible College believed profoundly that God heard and answered his prayers.

Every man who has given himself wholeheartedly to the cause of education has multiplied his influence. The influence of Ashley S. Johnson is almost beyond calculation. Ten years before his death, the editor of the Christian Standard was of the opinion that he had done more for the cause represented by the Christian churches than any man of his generation.⁶⁷ This influence was largely wielded through his Correspondence School, the College, and his books. From 1884 to 1912 almost 3,000 had enrolled in the Correspondence School.⁶⁸ Many of those were the leading preachers and educators in the Christian Church a generation ago.

The influence of Johnson Bible College is difficult to estimate. No complete list of the graduates is available. The first six graduating classes total thirty-

66. Johnson Bible College News Letter, Vol. VII (October, 1916), p. 2.

67. Christian Standard, Vol. L (August 14, 1915), p. 1507.

68. Johnson Bible College News Letter, Vol. IV (January, 1912), p. 1.

nine, representing twenty states and countries.⁶⁹ In connection with the early graduates, an item of interest is connected with the first class, that of 1896. It has been currently taken for granted that Albert T. Fitts and John B. Dickson composed the first graduating class; whereas the first list of the classes has it that Albert T. Fitts of South Carolina and Clarence Henderson of Kansas were the first graduates.⁷⁰ Lowell C. McPherson, who delivered the commencement address to the first class and later wrote a news item about the school, reported also that Fitts and Henderson were the first graduates.⁷¹ How the confusion arose is not known.

In his twentieth anniversary Appeal, dated May 12, 1913, Doctor Johnson summarized the work of the college:

Here is what, with God and our brethren, we have done: Raised from our books, the farm, contributions and other sources \$250,000; taught counting annual enrollments 2500; a plant worth \$100,000 to 150,000; sent out 25 books every day. . . . the whole brotherhood influenced in varying degrees. . . ; largest enrollment of preacher-students in the church; a chance any day for the young man, money or no money, who has made up his mind to preach, and we have never had a mortgage on anything.

In 1916 Doctor Johnson estimated - emphasizing that it was only an estimate - that 1,000 men then in the ministry

69. The School of the Evangelists, Annual Announcement, 1901-1902, p. 7.

70. Seventh Annual Announcement of the School of the Evangelists, 1900-1901, p. 3.

71. Christian Standard, Vol. XXXII (August 15, 1896), p. 1051.

had come under his influence.⁷³ Since part of the records have been lost, it is possible only to estimate the total number of graduates of the school. A conservative figure would allow ten for each year, or a total of 500. The present alumni mailing list has approximately 750 names on it.⁷⁴ Not all are graduates, but all have been enrolled. Almost all of the number are in the ministry of the Christian Church. We have noted that the school opened its first session with forty students; in 1910 there were 186 enrolled.⁷⁵ During the first twenty-seven years of the school there was an average enrollment of 110.⁷⁶ About the same average has been maintained since that time. This seemingly small enrollment must be evaluated in the light of the fact that each young man who comes is pledged to the Christian ministry. Truly, the influence of Ashley S. Johnson was great.

Before his death Doctor Johnson sought to insure the ideals and original purpose of Johnson Bible College by legal enactment. He deeded the farm on which the college was built to the trustees of the college upon certain conditions. First, his wife was to become president if he should

73. Johnson Bible College News Letter, Vol. VII (October, 1916), p. 1.

74. The writer is Secretary of the Alumni Association.

75. Appeal, February 17, 1910.

76. Christian Standard, Vol. LV (August 28, 1920), p. 1200.

die first; second, the two together, or the survivor, was to have the power to appoint the next president, who must be a graduate of Johnson Bible College and whose tenure of office should extend for life; third, there should be a board of trustees of the college, appointed by the president, nine in number including the president, two thirds of which must be graduates of the school; fourth, the president who succeeded the Johnsons was to have the power to appoint his successor in office, a graduate of the school, with the approval of the board of trustees.⁷⁷

In accordance with the wishes of Ashley S. Johnson, upon his death, which occurred January 14, 1925, Emma E. Johnson, his wife, was recognized as the president of Johnson Bible College by the board of trustees.⁷⁸ She held the office until her death, May 30, 1927.

Of this remarkable woman, one who knew her well wrote:

She was a beautiful character: more striking than her rich brown eyes and expressive face was the beauty of soul which these revealed. Many times did her husband say that she was the purest-minded person he had ever known. Ever careful about her person, extremely chaste in her selection of words, and painstaking in every action, she was a fit woman to talk to young preachers about the glory of Christian service and culture.⁷⁹

77. Knox County Deed Book 365, pp. 280-281.

78. Minutes of Board Meeting, January 25, 1925.

79. A. R. Brown, op. cit., p. 217.

She was thoroughly conversant with the task of operating the college, having kept the books most of the years of its history. During her two years' administration of the college, it was carried on as the founder had carried it on. Some improvements were made on the property, and at least one significant addition to the faculty, in the person of Henry R. Garrett, was made. His Christian character, thorough scholarship, and sound judgment have been a stabilizing influence on the school. Mrs. Johnson also brought back to the school as a Bible teacher Albert T. Fitts, one of the first graduates of the school. He made his own unique contribution to the college for many⁸⁰ years.

No doubt the most significant act of Mrs. Johnson as president of Johnson Bible College was her choice of her successor. At a meeting of the board of trustees, May 23, 1927, it was revealed that, according to the powers granted her by the deed to the property, she had appointed Alva⁸¹ Ross Brown to succeed her as president. A. R. Brown was then a very young man, only twenty-one, doing graduate work in the University of Michigan. At a called meeting of the board, June 9, 1927, after the death of Mrs. Johnson, this appointment was recognized. Some members of the board felt

80. The writer is indebted to both of these men for much of his training.

81. Minutes of the Board Meeting, May 23, 1927.

that he was too young for the task, and various suggestions were made to solve the problem. Among them were these: that a chancellor or financial secretary be appointed to work with the young president; or that an acting president be appointed for a period of five or six years, with the understanding that Alva Ross Brown would succeed him. None of these were acted upon, and in the end the appointment⁸² by Mrs. Johnson stood. Alva Ross Brown took up the work, certainly one of the youngest men ever to assume the presidency of a college. Time soon proved the wisdom of the choice. After one or two changes in the faculty, the school settled down to the determined pursuit of its old policies. Many permanent improvements were made on the property, and the quality of the academic work of the school was improved. Long before his unexpected death, Alva Ross Brown had been recognized by the Christian Church brotherhood as one of her outstanding young scholars and educators. Following his death on March 2, 1941, the editor of the brotherhood's most influential paper wrote:

Probably no message of death, of recent years, will prove to have been more startling to the brotherhood. . . . Brother Brown has done an arduous piece of work. . . . He is summoned in his youth, for he was but thirty-five years of age. . . . Many brethren were startled when the management of the school was turned over to a mere youth by the provisions of Brother and Sister Johnson.

82. Ibid., June 9, 1927.

But in almost a decade and a half, including all the years of the depression, and years very distressful for the brotherhood, this youth has led the school on, enlisted support, won confidence . . . and produced a creditable group of preachers. 83

To fill the place left vacant by Alva Ross Brown, the board of trustees selected W. O. Lappin, dean of the institution, to serve as acting president until such time as a permanent president could be located. The action took place on March 5, 1941. 84

On June 10, 1941, the board of trustees met at the Sinton Hotel in Cincinnati, Ohio, and elected R. M. Bell as permanent president of Johnson Bible College. 85 Acting-President W. O. Lappin relinquished the work, and R. M. Bell took it up, July 1, 1942. Mr. Bell is a graduate of Johnson Bible College and was at one time an instructor there. At the time of his election to the presidency he was an instructor in the University of Tennessee and pastor of the Christian Church at Harriman, Tennessee. At the time of this writing he has just begun his third year in the office.

No history of Johnson Bible College would be complete without some specific note made of the manner by which

83. Editorial, Christian Standard, Vol. LXXVI (March 8, 1941), p. 236.

84. Minutes of the Board Meeting, March 5, 1941.

85. Ibid., June 10, 1941.

it has been financed for fifty years. In a large way during the first years of the school, it lived off the profits from the sale of Ashley S. Johnson's books. Every cent of profit from such sales was put into the school after it was started in 1893. In 1916 some 245,000 copies of his books⁸⁶ had been printed. The only generous contributor to the college in its early years was James T. Robinson, of Ohio. He was won as a friend through a copy of the first letter which Ashley S. Johnson sent out announcing his purpose⁸⁷ to build a college. His first gift was five dollars. He continued to give throughout his life. In the first eighteen years of the life of the school he gave more than any other person, outside of Ashley Johnson himself.⁸⁸

For years the college had no endowment whatever. In fact, the founder was opposed to an endowment of any sort for many years. In 1904 he wrote:

We have never sought and do not now seek an endowment in money for two reasons. First, we desire to keep the work in vital touch with the Lord and His people, which would be impossible if we had a certain and regular income; and second, we desire to train "our boys" up in an atmosphere where they are liable to come to want and thus teach them dependence on God, and to pray expectantly to Him. . . . Our endowment is the promise of God. 89

86. Johnson Bible College News Letter, Vol. VIII (October, 1916), p. 1.

87. Story of a Check, p. 14.

88. Johnson Bible College News Letter, Vol. III (January, 1911), p. 1.

89. The World-Wide Witness, Vol. I (January, 1904), p. 1.

As late as 1913, Ashley S. Johnson was still of the same opinion, except that he might possibly favor endowing certain chairs in the school. However, he emphasized at that time that he did not favor endowing the institution⁹⁰ as such or even endowing the presidential chair.

Within a few years he had so completely changed his mind as to enter a campaign to raise an endowment of⁹¹ \$250,000. It was specified that this fund could only be used to pay teachers' salaries. Another fund of \$35,000 was ultimately raised to endow the president's salary also. One of the last acts of Ashley S. Johnson was the writing of an appeal, asking for \$14,000 to complete that fund. Significantly, he added: "I know from my own experiences that no man can make a living and carry the burden of the⁹² institution."

The proposed fund to endow the teachers' salaries was never raised in full. On May 20, 1929, a total endowment of \$141,300 was reported in the minutes of the board meeting. A few thousand dollars have been added to the fund in recent years from bequests for that purpose, but the income does not by any means pay the salaries of the teachers.

90. Johnson Bible College News Letter, Vol. V (January, 1913), p. 2.

91. Minutes of the Board Meeting, May 22, 1919.

92. Appeal, December 25, 1924.

In the final analysis, Johnson Bible College has lived and functioned through the years on the small gifts of thousands of interested friends. Perhaps most of the money given to the institution has been in amounts of one to five dollars, with more one-dollar gifts than any other amount. More often than not, Ashley S. Johnson asked his friends for only one-dollar gifts for a specific purpose. Gifts in amounts of \$500 or more have been rare. The two largest gifts to the school have been \$15,000 and \$18,000. In 1934 Mrs. Russell Errett, of Cincinnati, Ohio, gave \$15,000 unconditionally to the college;⁹³ in 1936 the college received a bequest from the estate of J. T. Smith, of Memphis, Tennessee, of \$18,000. A fraction of that was given back to the widow of the donor, because it appeared that the husband had failed to transfer certain insurance to her.⁹⁴

The college has usually operated throughout its history with certain outstanding debts, sometimes running up to several thousand dollars, which were always paid when the money was obtained. During the difficult years following the financial crisis of 1929, the indebtedness of the school mounted until it was necessary to borrow \$22,000 from the trust fund of the college to pay pressing bills.⁹⁵

93. Minutes of the Board Meeting, May 22, 1934.

94. Ibid., May 20, 1936.

95. Ibid., May 9, 1933.

This did not pay all debts, and they continued to accumulate. Subsequently, another \$10,000 was obtained from the trust fund to pay salaries and current bills. The financial condition of the country made it almost impossible to raise money for the school. The current expense bills again accumulated until at the death of Alva Ross Brown an indebtedness of \$35,817.65 was reported.⁹⁶ Subsequent calculations revealed another "item of indebtedness not previously stated."⁹⁷

Under the administration of Acting President W. O. Lappin, a substantial amount was paid on the indebtedness. From March 15, 1941, to June 10, 1941, \$18,370.90 came into the treasury of the college. Current expense of the school was paid out of this, but the greater part of it went to liquidate "interest-bearing indebtedness."⁹⁸ Under the administration of R. M. Bell, the balance of the current debt was paid by January 1, 1942, and the college has since operated on a cash basis.

The funded indebtedness of \$32,000 alone remained. Early in 1943 a campaign was launched to raise that amount by May 12, 1943, the fiftieth anniversary of Johnson Bible College. On that date President Bell announced at the celebration that the goal had been reached. Thus Johnson Bible College began its fifty-first year of service free of debt and with a propitious opportunity before it.

96. Ibid., March 5, 1941. 98. Ibid., June 10, 1941.

97. Ibid., March 19, 1941. 99. Blue and White, Vol. XV (June, 1943), p. 1.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books:

- Berry, G. K. The Eight Leading Churches. St. Louis: Christian Board of Publication, 1930.
- Brown, John T., ed. Churches of Christ . . . in the United States, Australasia, England and Canada. Louisville, Ky.: John P. Morton and Company, 1904.
- Burnett, J. J. Sketches of Tennessee's Pioneer Baptist Preachers. Nashville: Marshall Bruce Company, 1919.
- Buckley, J. M. A History of Methodism in the United States. (Vol. V, American Church History Series, ed. by various men). New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1900.
- Brown, Alva Ross. Standing on the Promises. Knoxville: S. B. Newman and Company, 1928.
- Carr, John. Early Times in Middle Tennessee (title page missing).
- Cauble, C. W. Disciples of Christ in Indiana. Indianapolis: Meign Publishing Company, 1904.
- Cleveland, Catherine C. The Great Revival in the West. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1916.
- Davis, M. M. How the Disciples Began and Grew. Cincinnati: Standard Publishing Company, 1915.
- Hopwood, Josephus. A Journey through the Years An Autobiography. St. Louis: The Bethany Press, 1932.
- Moore, William T. Comprehensive History of the Disciples of Christ. New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1909.
- Price, R. N. Holston Methodism. Nashville: Publishing House of M. E. Church, South, 1904.
- Stone, Barton Warren. Autobiography of Elder Barton Warren Stone, with Additions and Reflections by Elder John Rodgers. Cincinnati: J. A. and U. P. James, 1847.
- Taylor, Oliver. Historic Sullivan. Bristol, Tenn.: King Printing Company, 1909.
- Tigert, John J. Constitutional History of American Methodism. Nashville: Publishing House of M. E. Church, South, 1904.

Tindell, S. W. The Baptists of Tennessee. Kingsport: Southern Publishers, Inc., 1930.

Tyler, B. B. History of the Disciples of Christ. Louisville: Guide Printing and Publishing Company, 1909.

Walker, Dean E. Adventuring for Christian Unity. Printed in England, 1935.

Ware, C. C. Barton Warren Stone. St. Louis: Bethany Press, n.d.

West, J. W., ed. Sketches of Our Mountain Pioneers. Salem, Va.: Scott Printing Company, 1939.

. Williams, John Augustus. Life of Elder John Smith. St. Louis: Christian Board of Publication, n.d.

Young, Charles Alexander, ed. Historical Documents Advocating Christian Union. Chicago: Christian Century Company, 1904.

Church Records:

Bearden Christian Church Records.

Boone's Creek Christian Church Records.

Cherokee Baptist Church Records.

French Broad River Baptist Church Records.

Fourth Christian Church Records, Johnson City, Tennessee.

Hampton Christian Church Records.

Harrison's Chapel Church of Christ Records.

Jefferson County Baptist Church Records.

Jonesboro Christian Church Records.

Liberty Church of Christ Records.

Lonsdale Christian Church Records.

Mount Bethel Christian Church Records.

Newport Christian Church Records.

Post Oak Springs Christian Church Records.

Rogersville Christian Church Records.

Sinking Creek Baptist Church Records.

Valley Forge Christian Church Records.

Collections:

McCown, Mary Hardin, Johnson City, Tennessee. A valuable collection of data on all phases of East Tennessee history.

Interviews:

Bell, R. M., Kimberlin Heights, Tennessee, June, 1943.

Burchfield, Mrs. Nat, Elizabethton, Tennessee, September, 1942.

Crouch, Adam B., Johnson City, Tennessee, September, 1942.

Grisham, Miss Mary, Jonesboro, Tennessee, September 13, 1942.

Leopold, Mrs. Henry, Fountain City, Tennessee, June 18, 1943.

Love, Mrs. James Madison, Erwin, Tennessee, September 12, 1942.

Martin, Mrs. J. M., Johnson City, Tennessee, September 14, 1942.

Mattern, George, Watauga, Tennessee, August, 1942.

Roberts, W. T., Knoxville, Tennessee, June 18, 1943.

Staples, John, Rockwood, Tennessee, August, 1941.

Wilson, Mrs. E. C., Rockwood, Tennessee, July 3, 1942.

Wilson, Jack, Mountain City, Tennessee, August 24, 1942.

Letters:

Adcock, Adam K., Thorn Grove, Tennessee, June 22, 1943.

Burns, C. E., Milligan College, Tennessee, June 28, 1943.

Crouch, J. E., Johnson City, Tennessee, June 15, 1943.

Hall, John B., Elizabethton, Tennessee, September 23, 1942.

Johnson, Ashley S., various letters to his friends.

Mankamyer, O. L., Newport News, Virginia, June 22, 1943.

Mattern, W. G., Watauga, Tennessee, September 4, 1942.

Miller, M. B., Mountain City, Tennessee, June, 1943.

Morton, Stephen J., Bristol, Tennessee, September 1, 1942.

Musick, J. J., Elizabethton, Tennessee, June 27, 1942;
June, 1943.

Russell, S. A., Jonesboro, Tennessee, September 13, 1942.

Shepherd, J. N., Milligan College, Tennessee, June 18, 1943.

Swaney, Alvia L., Maryville, Tennessee, August 25, 1942.

Minutes:

Minutes of the East Tennessee Annual Convention of Churches of Christ, 1939-1941 (in possession of J. J. Musick, Elizabethton, Tennessee).

Minutes of the Advisory Board of the Appalachian Mountain Evangelizing Association, August 20, 1937 (in possession of J. J. Musick, Elizabethton, Tennessee).

Minutes of the Board Meetings of Johnson Bible College Trustees (at Johnson Bible College, Kimberlin Heights, Tennessee).

Minutes of the Holston Baptist Association, 1825-1828 (complete set in archives of Baptist Society of Historical Research, Johnson City, Tennessee; early copies in long-hand, later ones printed).

Minutes of the East Tennessee and Southwest Virginia Cooperation, 1885, 1888. Cincinnati: Standard Publishing Company.

Minutes of the East Tennessee Cooperation, 1891. Cincinnati: Standard Publishing Company.

Pamphlets and Leaflets:

Campbell, Thomas. Declaration and Address. Coraopolis, Pa.: Record Publishing Company, 1909.

Easley, Gilbert H. A Historical Sketch of Central Christian Church, Bristol, Tennessee.

Historical Sketch of First Christian Church of Elizabethton, Tennessee (a leaflet).

Johnson, Ashley S. The Story of a Check for \$100 or the Witness of the School of the Evangelists to a Prayer Answering God. Knoxville: Ogden Brothers and Company, 1901.

Seventieth Anniversary of First Christian Church of Johnson City, Tennessee. Johnson City: Campbell Press, 1941.

Periodicals:

Bible Advocate, John R. Howard, ed. In 7 vols. (1842-1848), Paris, Tennessee.

Blue and White. 15 vols. (1928-1943), Kimberlin Heights, Tennessee.

Buffalo Range. 5 vols. (1938-1943), Milligan College, Tennessee.

Christian Messenger, B. W. Stone, ed. 14 vols. (1826-1840).

Christian Standard. 78 vols. (1865-1943), Cincinnati, Ohio.

Jonesboro (Tennessee) Herald and Tribune.

Johnson Bible College News Letter, 1908-? (Scattered issues extant).

Millennial Harbinger, A. Campbell, ed. 35 vols. (1830-1865), Bethany, Virginia.

Tennessee Christian. 36 vols. (1907-1943), Nashville, Tennessee.

The World-Wide Witness, 1904-? (Only scattered issues extant).

Public Records:

Deed Book 25, Greene County, Tennessee.

Deed Books 1, 26, 30, Johnson County, Tennessee.

Charter Book 214, Knox County, Tennessee.

Deed Books 164, 365, Knox County, Tennessee.

Deed Book E, Roane County, Tennessee.

Deed Book 4, Unicoi County, Tennessee.

Will Book 2, Washington County, Tennessee.

Deed Books 43, 45, 74, Washington County, Tennessee.

Reports:

Centennial Convention Reports. Cincinnati: Standard Publishing Company, 1909.

Reports of M. B. Miller, Evangelist, Appalachian Mountain Evangelistic Association, 1930-1942.

Reports of J. J. Musick, Treasurer, Appalachian Mountain Evangelizing Association, 1937-1942.

School Catalogs:

Catalogue of the School of the Evangelists, Announcement 1896-1897.

Johnson Bible College, Forty-eighth Year 1941-1942.

Milligan College Yearbook for 1915.

Seventh Annual Announcement of the School of the Evangelists 1900-1901.

The School of the Evangelists Annual Announcements 1901-1902.

Scrapbooks:

Barker's Scrapbook, kept by Dr. Barker, of Bristol, Tennessee (in possession of First Christian Church, Bristol, Virginia).

Scrapbook of First Christian Church, kept by Miss Winona Roehl, church secretary (in possession of First Christian Church, Knoxville, Tennessee).

Unpublished Manuscripts:

Cassell, H. B. Outline History of Harriman Christian Church (in possession of H. C. Wagner, Kimberlin Heights, Tennessee).

McElwee, W. E. A Local Reminiscence of the Christian Church (in possession of Miss Dorothy Tarwater, Rockwood, Tennessee).

Millard, Samuel H., and Wright, T. J. Biographical Sketch of John Wright (in McCown Collection).

Morton, Stephen A. Notes on Union Church of Christ (in the Church Records).

Smith, Homer H. Sullivan County Churches. (in possession of H. C. Wagner).

Tarwater, Dorothy. History of Rockwood Christian Church (in possession of Miss Tarwater).

Tillman, Lewis. A Brief Account of the Planting of the Church of Christ in Knoxville, Tennessee, and Something of Its Subsequent History (in possession of First Christian Church, Knoxville, Tennessee).

Ware, Ritchie. Ashley S. Johnson Funeral Oration (at Johnson Bible College).

Yearbooks:

Yearbook and Directory of First Christian Church of Bristol, Virginia, 1931.

Yearbook and Directory of Forest Avenue Christian Church, 1939.

Directory of the Christian Church, Rockwood, Tennessee. Including a Brief History and Financial Reports of the Various Departments of the Church, 1901. Rockwood: Times Republican Press, 1901.

1942 Yearbook of the International Convention of Disciples of Christ. Indianapolis: Yearbook Publication Committee, 1942.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX - PART I

The Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery

THE PRESBYTERY OF SPRINGFIELD, sitting at Cane-ridge, in the county of Bourbon, being, through a gracious Providence, in more than ordinary bodily health, growing in strength and size daily; and in perfect soundness and composure of mind; but knowing that it is appointed for all delegated bodies once to die: and considering that the life of every such body is very uncertain, do make, and ordain this our last Will and Testament, in manner and form following, viz:

Imprimis. We will, that this body die, be dissolved, and sink into union with the Body of Christ at large; for there is but one Body, and one Spirit, even as we are called in one hope of our calling.

Item. We will, that our name of distinction, with its Reverend title, be forgotten, that there be but one Lord over God's heritage, and his name One.

Item. We will, that our power of making laws for the government of the church, and executing them by delegated authority, forever cease; that the people may have free course to the Bible, and adopt "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus."

Item. We will, that candidates for the Gospel ministry henceforth study the Holy Scriptures with fervent prayer, and obtain license from God to preach the simple Gospel, "with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven," without any mixture of philosophy, vain deceit, traditions of men, or the rudiments of the world. And let none henceforth take this honor to himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.

Item. We will, that the church of Christ resume her native right of internal government - try her candidates for the ministry, as to their soundness in the faith, acquaintance with experimental religion, gravity and aptness to teach; and admit no other proof of their authority but Christ speaking in them. We will, that the church of Christ look up to the Lord of the harvest to send forth laborers into his harvest; and that she resume her primitive right of trying those who say they are apostles, and are not.

Item. We will, that each particular church, as a body, actuated by the same spirit, choose her own preacher, and support him by a free will offering, without a written call

or subscription - admit members - remove offences; and never henceforth delegate her right of government to any man or set of men whatever.

Item. We will, that the people henceforth take the Bible as the only sure guide to heaven; and as many as are offended with other books, which stand in competition with it, may cast them into the fire if they choose; for it is better to enter into life having one book, than having many to be cast into hell.

Item. We will, that preachers and people, cultivate a spirit of mutual forbearance; pray more and dispute less; and while they behold the signs of the times, look up, and confidently expect that redemption draweth nigh.

Item. We will, that our weak brethren, who may have been wishing to make the Presbytery of Springfield their king, and wot not what is now become of it, betake themselves to the Rock of Ages, and follow Jesus for the future.

Item. We will, that the Synod of Kentucky examine every member, who may be suspected of having departed from the Confession of Faith, and suspend every such suspected heretic immediately; in order that the oppressed may go free, and taste the sweets of gospel liberty.

Item. We will, that Ja_____, the author of two letters lately published in Lexington, be encouraged in his zeal to destroy partyism. We will, moreover, that our past conduct be examined into by all who may have correct information; but let foreigners beware of speaking evil of things which they know not.

Item. Finally we will, that all our sister bodies read their Bibles carefully, that they may see their fate there determined, and prepare for death before it is too late.

Springfield Presbytery,
June 28th, 1804. L.S.

Robert Marshall,	
John Dunlavy,	
Richard M'Nemar,	
B. W. Stone,	Witnesses
John Thompson,	
David Purviance,	

APPENDIX - PART II

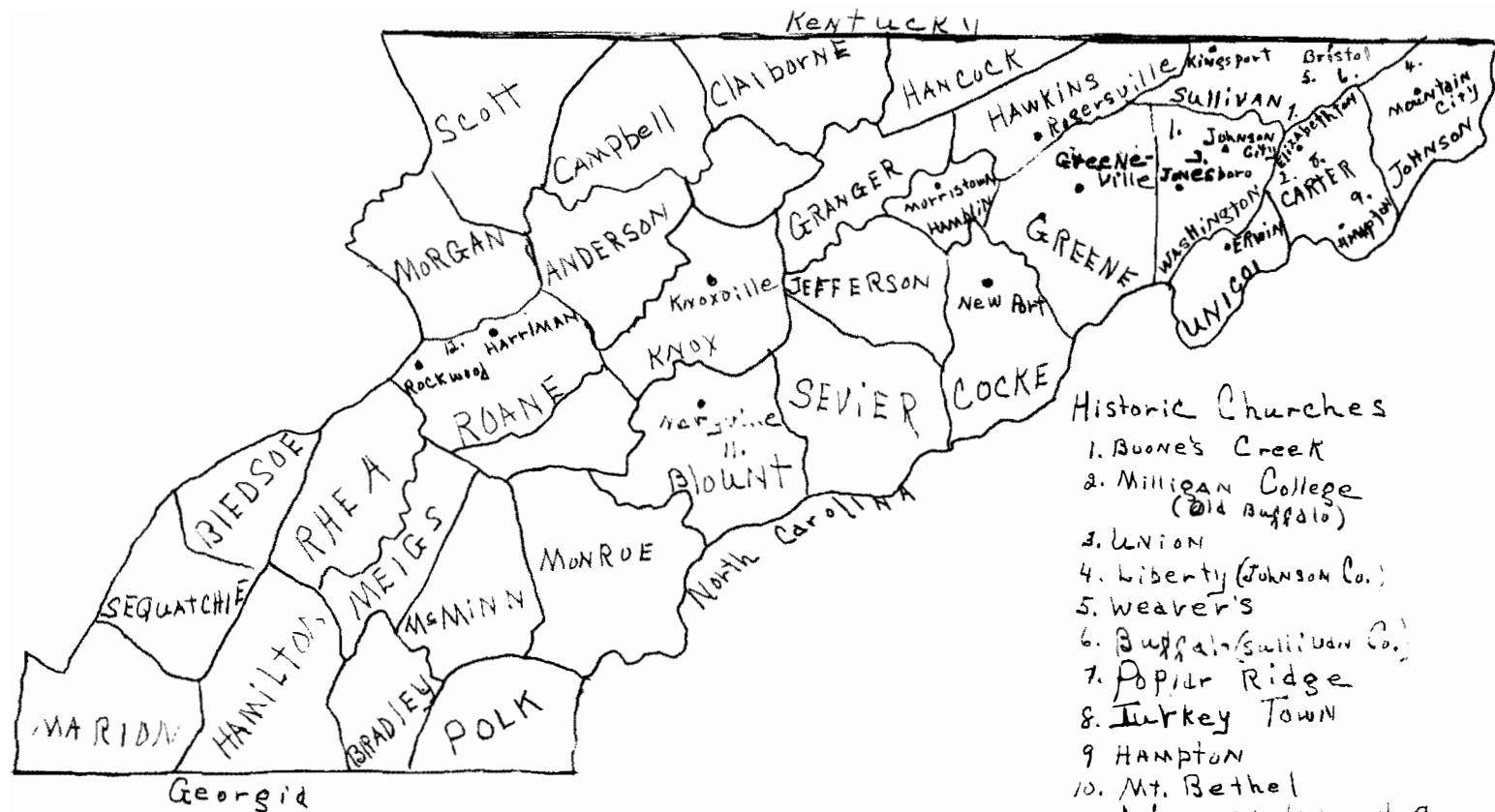
County Directory of the Christian Churches in Upper East Tennessee, with dates of organization of each where known.

NAME OF CHURCH	DATE OF ORGANIZATION
Blount County:	
Liberty	December 25, 1850*
Maryville	March, 1912*
Mountain View	1906***
Carter County:	
Big Springs	
Blue Springs	
Border View	1871***
Brick Church	About 1840**
Buffalo Valley	
Campbell's Chapel.....	December 1, 1923*
Carter.....	May, 1935*
Center View	
Central Chapel.....	About 1892***
Elk Mills	
Elizabethton (First).....	August 8, 1891*
Elizabethton (West End).....	December, 1932*
Elizabethton (East Side).....	1935*
Elizabethton (South Side).....	February, 1933*
Gap Creek	February, 1913*
Hampton.....	1842*
Lick Creek.....	June 21, 1914*
Milligan College.....	About 1828**
Oak Grove.....	About 1885***
Piney Grove	
Shell Creek.....	July, 1915*
Sunrise View	
Upper Shell Creek	
Valley Forge.....	November 9, 1872*
Watauga.....	October 7, 1905*
Cocke County:	
Long Creek.....	1867*
Newport.....	July, 1921*
Raven's Branch.....	Unknown

-
- * Date from reliable documents, such as church records, periodicals, or minutes.
 ** Date arrived at by calculation and comparison with other known data; fairly reliable.
 *** Date from memory of interested persons or from some source considered not very reliable.

NAME OF CHURCH	DATE OF ORGANIZATION
Greene County:	
Greeneville.....	September, 1921*
Mount Bethel.....	About 1850**
Mount Olivet.....	May 11, 1911*
Hamblen County:	
Morristown.....	September, 1921*
Hawkins County:	
Antioch.....	January, 1904***
Macedonia.....	February 8, 1910*
New Hope.....	
Rogersville.....	December 3, 1939*
Johnson County:	
Akerson Creek.....	1900*
Butler.....	September, 1891*
Center View.....	About 1885***
Dewey.....	January 21, 1932*
Hammon's Chapel.....	About 1870**
Harmon's Chapel.....	
Liberty.....	About 1835**
Mountain City.....	August, 1909*
Pleasant View.....	
Knox County:	
Bearden.....	About 1876***
Gap Creek.....	Summer of 1928*
Kimberlin Heights (Johnson Bible College).....	1894**
Knoxville (First).....	September 1, 1874*
Knoxville (Forest Avenue).....	April, 1897*
Knoxville (Lonsdale).....	Fall of 1905*
Thorn Grove.....	1869*
Roane County:	
Glenallice.....	Early in 1891***
Harriman.....	August, 1890*
Post Oak Springs.....	1812 or 1813**
Rockwood.....	1885*
Sullivan County:	
Blountville.....	March 2, 1913*
Bluff City.....	February 1, 1931*
Bristol (Central).....	October 25, 1903*
Buffalo.....	Unknown
Bunker Hill.....	

NAME OF CHURCH	DATE OF ORGANIZATION
Sullivan County (cont.):	
Central Holston.....	About 1908***
Flora's Chapel.....	
Kingsport.....	About 1920***
Poplar Ridge.....	Before 1843**
Rock Hill.....	About 1887*
Weaver's.....	Between 1822 and 1830**
Unicoi County:	
Erwin.....	About 1888**
Lillydale.....	July 23, 1921*
Limestone Cove.....	
Love's Chapel.....	July 24, 1932*
Unicoi.....	
Washington County:	
Bethel.....	1891***
Boone's Creek.....	About 1828**
Hale's Chapel.....	About 1885***
Harrison's Chapel.....	October 9, 1897*
Highland.....	July, 1929*
Johnson City (First).....	November 12, 1871*
Johnson City (Second).....	July, 1922*
Johnson City (Third).....	1922***
Johnson City (Fourth).....	November, 1927*
Jonesboro.....	1873**
Lone Oak.....	December 15, 1894*
Union.....	About 1853**
Negro Churches:	
Bristol (College Avenue).....	
Johnson City (West Main).....	1869***
Jonesboro (Depot Street).....	1878***
Knoxville (East Vine).....	1890*
Rogersville.....	
Washington College.....	1859***



MAP OF EAST TENNESSEE

Numbers indicate sites of Christian Churches nearly 100 years old or over. Cities marked are sites of other important Christian Churches.