

# **BAPTIST GROUPS IN AMERICA**

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# **BAPTIST GROUPS IN AMERICA**

## **I. REGULAR BAPTISTS (Northern-Oriented)**

### **A. Ecumenical Mainline**

#### **1. AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES IN THE U.S.A.**

- a. Founded: 1845, Reorganized in 1950.
- b. Membership 1,484,291
- c. Number of churches: 5,836 (2002)
- d. Former name(s): Northern Baptist Convention (1905-1950), American Baptist Convention (1950-1972).
- e. Headquarters: Valley Forge, PA.
- f. Website: [www.abc-usa.org](http://www.abc-usa.org)
- g. Government and history: The body has a 200-member general board of elected representatives. A general council of chief executives and staff of national program boards, chief executives of regions serves to coordinate the corporate affairs, under the leadership of the general secretary. In 1950, a greater share of authority was given to the regional bodies and local churches, with policy matters being ratified by a more democratic general board, composed of clergy and laity. There are 37 regional, state and city local associations across the United States.
- h. Doctrine: Theologically, American Baptists are broadly evangelical, with churches and pastors representing conservative, neo-orthodox and liberal traditions. They are less conservative than Southern Baptist Convention and have made gestures toward union with other national Baptist groups and accepts their baptism. In 1988 about 800 of the 5,805 churches were dually aligned with one or more of the Black Baptist or mainline protestant groups.
- i. Location: All 50 states.
- j. Schools and homes: There are six theological seminaries, 15 colleges or universities, and 122 homes, children centers and hospitals affiliated with the denomination.
- k. Periodical: *The American Baptist*.
- l. Sources: Yearbook of American & Canadian Churches, 2004; Handbook of Denominations in the United States, 11<sup>th</sup> ed., edited by Frank S. Mead; Dictionary of Baptist in America, edited by Bill J. Leonard (p. 122)

## B. Conservative Evangelical

### 1. **BAPTIST GENERAL CONFERENCE OF AMERICA**

- a. Founded: 1852
- b. Membership: 142,871
- c. Number of churches 902 (2002)
- d. Former name(s): Swedish Baptist Church in America. Swedish Baptist Conference.
- e. Headquarters: Arlington Heights, Illinois
- f. Website: [www.bgcworld.org](http://www.bgcworld.org)
- g. Government and history: In past, most of membership could trace their lineage to Sweden, but with 139 non-Anglo congregations and new leadership the churches appear to be cutting off from its past. Churches are located in 43 states and are divided into 15 districts. Largest area of membership is in Minnesota, Arizona and Southern California. The early purposes of the Conference were missionary and cultural support.
- h. Doctrine: Theologically conservative. Accepts Word of God and usual Baptist tenets.
- i. Location: North central and Pacific Northwest sections of the U.S.A. (Upper mid-west and Northeast).
- j. School: Bethel College and Seminary in St. Paul, Minn.
- k. Periodical: *BGC-World. The Standard*
- l. Sources: Handbook of Denominations in the United States, 11<sup>th</sup> ed., edited by Frank S. Mead (p. 50-51) ; Yearbook of American & Canadian Churches, 2004 (p.76-366); Dictionary of Baptists in America, edited by Bill J. Leonard (p.47); Baptist Around the World, edited by Albert W. Wardin (p.377-378); Historical Dictionary of the Baptists, edited by William H. Brackney (p. 48).

### 2. **CONSERVATIVE BAPTIST ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA** (CBAmerica)

- a. Founded: 1947
- b. Membership: est. 200,000
- c. Number of churches: 1,200 (2002)
- d. Headquarters: Littleton, Colorado
- e. Website: [www.cbamerica.org](http://www.cbamerica.org)
- f. Government and history: CBAmerica churches were formerly in the Northern Baptist Convention. When NBC would not tolerate a competing missionary agency within its structure in 1946, hundreds of NBC churches left the convention to form the Conservative Baptist Convention of America. There are about 25 state or regional associations which coordinate the ministries of the

- churches in camping programs, missionary conferences and ministerial placement.
- g. Doctrine: A voluntary fellowship of sovereign, autonomous, independent, and Bible-believing Baptist churches. Conservative Baptists tried to avoid traditional denominational structure and control by forming independent agencies, which explains why they insist on referring to their organizational work as a movement. Officers are elected at annual meetings; board of directors is made up of associational officials and 18 regional representatives.
  - h. Doctrine: Infallibility of Scripture, Trinity, each church is independent, autonomous, and free from ecclesiastical or political authority.
  - i. Location: Northern and Western USA
  - j. Schools: Seminaries are Western Seminary in Portland, Oregon, Denver Seminary (Colorado), and Eastern Conservative (Dresher, Penn.)
  - k. Sources: Handbook of Denominations in the United States, 11<sup>th</sup> ed., edited by Frank S. Mead (p.158-160) ; Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches, 2004 (p.101.); Dictionary of Baptists in America, edited by Bill J. Leonard (p.91) ; Baptists Around the World, Albert W. Wardin, editor (p.379-380).

### 3. **NORTH AMERICAN BAPTIST CONFERENCE**

- a. Founded: 1865
- b. Membership: 47,692
- c. Number of churches: 270 (2002)
- d. Former name: The General Conference of German Baptist Churches in North America.
- e. Headquarters: Oakbrook Terrace, Illinois.
- f. Website: [www.nabconference.org](http://www.nabconference.org)
- g. Government and history: A Baptist denomination of German ethnic heritage. Beginnings were in North America among German Baptist churches. German Baptists first settled in New Jersey and Pennsylvania, where Quakers offered the religious freedom they sought. The scattered churches later became the North American Baptist Conference. In 1865 delegates from the eastern and western conferences met in a General Conference in Wilmot, Ontario. A triennial Conference is now the chief administrative unit. Twenty-one associations meet annually to elect their own officers and committees to guide their own work. The Triennial Conference is made up of clergy and lay representatives from all the churches and superintends the work of publication, educational, international missions, and church planting. Approximately 60 missionaries serve in Brazil, Cameroon, Japan,

- Mexico, Nigeria, Philippines, and Russia.
- h. Doctrine: They hold to the basic Baptist position and follow the New Hampshire Confession (1832), stressing the authority of Scripture, revelation of God in Christ, regeneration, immersion, separation of church and state, and the congregational form of government.
- i. Location: Churches are in Kansas, Nebraska, Minnesota, the Dakotas and the western provinces of Canada. Thirty percent of the membership is in Canada and the denomination is currently the only one serving in a cross-border union.
- j. In 1935 they established a seminary of their own, a division of the Rochester Seminary, and relocated to Sioux Falls, S.D. in 1949 and took the present name North American Baptist Seminary.
- k. Periodical: *The Baptist Herald*.
- l. Sources: Handbook of Denominations in the United States, 11<sup>th</sup> ed., edited by Frank S. Mead (p. 58-59); Dictionary of Baptists in America, edited by Bill J. Leonard (p. 206); Yearbook of American Churches, 2004 (p. 137); Baptists Around the World, edited by Albert W. Wardin (p.380-382).

4. **SEVENTH DAY BAPTIST GENERAL CONFERENCE**

- a. Founded: 1802
- b. Membership: est. 4,800
- c. Churches: 80 (1995)
- d. Headquarters: Janesville, WI.
- e. Website: [www.seventhdaybaptist.org](http://www.seventhdaybaptist.org)
- f. Government and history: Local church autonomy; support of united benevolence and denominational budget. Their common bond of the Sabbath enabled them to avoid a split during the Fundamentalist-Modernist controversy in the 1920s. For most of its history, the denomination has been rural orientated, but has found in recent years its greatest growth in developing urban ministries. There are eight geographically located associations within the group. The World Federation of Seventh Day Baptist Conference, in 1991, reported a membership of around fifty thousand in eighteen countries.
- g. Doctrine: Adheres to worship on the seventh day (Saturday), claiming that the keeping of the seventh day was an inescapable requirement of biblical Christianity. They hold to salvation through faith in Christ; believer's baptism by immersion; intellectual and civil liberty; every person's right to interpret the Bible; only baptism and Lord's Supper as ordinances and practice open communion. Church membership is according to four prerequisites: regeneration, confession, believer's baptism and

Christian living. Laying on of hands at joining the church is often practiced, though not required. They participate in the ecumenical movement.

- h. Location: New York, California, Florida, etc.
- i. Schools: Seminary at Alfred University, est. in 1871.
- j. Periodical: *Sabbath Recorder*.
- k. Sources: Handbook of Denominations in the United States, 11<sup>th</sup> ed., edited by Frank S. Mead (p. 63-64); Yearbook of American Churches, 2004 (p. 152, 376); Dictionary of Baptist Churches in America, edited by Bill J. Leonard (p. 246); Baptists Around the World, edited by Albert W. Wardin (p. 383-384).

### C. **Separatist Fundamentalist**

The four groups included in this classification have historical roots in the Northern Baptist Convention. In their opposition to theological liberalism, they take a militant position, regarding the separation from any organization which tolerates liberalism as “redemptive.” They refuse to fellowship with other conservative evangelicals who, in turn, may have liberal or ecumenical relations. They stress biblical inerrancy. They are premillennialists and accept a dispensational interpretation of Scripture. The General Association of Regular Baptist Churches (GARBC) was the first Baptist group to separate from the Northern Baptist Convention. Because of the feeling of some of its members, that the GARBC was beginning to lose something of its historic position, a new fellowship has arisen from GARBC ranks, the Independent Baptist Fellowship of North America. The other two bodies came from the Conservative Baptist ranks. The first is the Fundamental Baptist Fellowship of America, who thought Conservative Baptists were not taking a more militant separatist position. Other militants formed a national association in 1965, the New Testament Association of Independent Baptists Churches. (Source: Baptists Around the Word, edited by Albert W. Wardin, p. 385).

- 1. **FUNDAMENTAL BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP OF AMERICA**
  - a. Founded: 1967
  - b. Membership: 600
  - c. Number of churches: Not composed of churches but pastors and other individuals.
  - d. Headquarters: Chicago, Illinois.
  - e. Website: [www.f-b-f.org](http://www.f-b-f.org)
  - f. Government and history: A movement of conservatives in the Northern Baptist Convention. In 1921 the group that came to be called the Fundamentalist Fellowship sought to rid Northern Baptists schools of liberal teachers. Meeting prior to the national conference of the convention, they planned a strategy for imposing their view on the denomination as a whole. To this end they



prepared a confession of faith known as the Goodchild confession, based on the Philadelphia and New Hampshire confessions. Their plans were shattered, however, by committee reports and parliamentary maneuvers. The Fundamentalist Fellowship never again had the opportunity to capture the convention. Several small groups emerged from the convention in the late 1920s, but the Fundamentalists Fellowship itself stayed within the denomination until the 1940s. In 1943 the fundamentalists, in protest to the policies of the convention's foreign mission society, organized the Conservative Baptist Foreign Mission Society and laid the foundation for the Conservative Baptist movement. A separatist wing among the conservatives continued the critical influence of the Fundamentalist Fellowship until 1965, when it withdrew and adopted the name Fundamentalist Baptist Fellowship.

- g. Location: 44 states with strength in North, West and South.
- h. Schools: San Francisco Baptist Seminary, Denver Baptist Bible College.
- i. Periodical: *Frontline*.
- j. Sources: Dictionary of Baptists in America., edited by Bill J. Leonard, (p. 125-126); Baptists Around the World, edited by Albert W. Wardin (p. 385-386).

## 2. **GENERAL ASSOCIATION OF REGULAR BAPTIST CHURCHES**

- a. Founded: 1932
- b. Membership: 129,407
- c. Number of churches: 1,415 (2002)
- d. Headquarters: Schaumburg, Illinois.
- e. Website: [www.garbc.org](http://www.garbc.org)
- f. History: Twenty-two churches of the American Baptist Convention left that organization in May 1932 to found the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches. Their protest was against what they considered the Convention's modernist tendencies and teaching, the denial of the historic Baptist principle of independence and autonomy of the local congregation, the inequality of representation in the assemblies of the convention, and the control of missionary work by convention assessment and budget.
- g. Doctrine: Fundamentalist in outlook. Requires each church to subscribe to New Hampshire Confession of Faith (1832) with a premillennial ending applied to the last article. Bible is infallible. There is an emphasis on biblical inerrancy. They are moderately Calvinistic, accepting security of the believer, but does not take a reformed stance on limited atonement. They oppose charismatic gifts such as tongues. They believe in the Trinity, the personality

of Satan as author of all evil and salvation through grace. Baptism by immersion and the Lord's Supper only approved ordinances. They do not ordain women to the ministry and are one of the most missionary-minded fundamentalist denominations. Their hallmark is emphasis on separatism. Dual fellowship or membership in fellowships or conventions is not permitted. Missionary work is conducted through six approved Baptist agencies that are completely independent of any convention and must be deemed orthodox. Only nine schools are approved. Government is congregational. Church sends six voting messengers to annual convention. A council of Eighteen is elected. The Council makes recommendations to the association for its work. Council's authority depends completely on the will and direction of the association.

- h. Location: Northern United States.
- i. Periodical: *The Baptist Bulletin, Energy Newsletter*
- j. Sources: Handbook of Denominations in the United States, 11<sup>th</sup> ed., edited Frank S. Mead (p. 53-54); Yearbook of American & Canadian Churches (p. 121, 371).

3. **INDEPENDENT BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP OF NORTH AMERICA**

- a. Founded: 1990
- b. Membership: 250
- c. Number of churches: Not composed of churches but individuals.
- d. Government and history: The Independent Baptist Fellowship of North America is a separatist fundamental Baptist fellowship for pastors and laymembers, which was formed in Oshkosh, WI in 1990 by individuals in the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches who felt the Association was drifting from its original strict separationist position. In 1993 the Fellowship ratified its constitution in Providence, Rhode Island. It is composed of individuals, not churches, although local churches may become financial supporters. About half of the members still have association with the GARBC, while the others have been simply independent. Members represent 106 churches of which 46 are with the GARBC.
- e. Sources: Baptists Around the World, edited by Albert W. Wardin (p. 388-389).

4. **NEW TESTAMENT ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT BAPTIST CHURCHES**

- a. Founded: 1965.
- b. Membership:
- c. Number of churches: 104

- d. Government and history: In 1965 messengers from more than one hundred churches, dissatisfied with Conservative Baptists for their lack of strict separation and the penetration of New Evangelicalism in their ranks, met at Beth Eden Baptist Church in Denver to consider establishing the New Testament Association. A provisional constitution and confession of faith was adopted. In the following year the association was formally organized at the Eagledale Baptist Church in Indianapolis. From 27 churches, the association today has 104 congregations, 23 of which are also members of other fellowships.
- e. Location: Its greatest strength is in Minnesota where about one-third of its church are located.. Others are in Indiana and Colorado.
- f. Periodical: *Testimonies*
- g. Sources: Baptists Around the World, edited by Albert W. Wardin (p. 388-389).

## II. **REGULAR BAPTISTS (ETHNIC)**

### A. Ethnic Bodies in General

- 1. **ASSOCIATION OF EVANGELICALS FOR ITALIAN MISSIONS**
  - a. Founded: 1899
  - b. Membership: n/a
  - c. Churches: n/a
- 2. **CZECHOSLOVAK BAPTIST CONVENTION**
  - a. Founded: 1912
  - b. Membership: 1,500
  - c. Churches: 7
- 3. **HUNGARIAN BAPTIST UNION OF AMERICA**
  - a. Founded: 1908
  - b. Membership: n/a
  - c. Churches: 11
- 4. **POLISH BAPTIST ASSOCIATION**
  - a. Founded: 1913
  - b. Membership: 140
  - c. Churches: 6
- 5. **PORTUGUESE BAPTIST CONVENTION OF NEW ENGLAND**
  - a. Founded: 1903
  - b. Membership: n/a
  - c. Churches: n/a

6. **ROMANIAN BAPTIST ASSOCIATION**
  - a. Founded: 1913
  - b. Membership: n/a
  - c. Churches n/a
  
7. **RUSSIAN-UKRAINIAN EVANGELICAL BAPTIST UNION**
  - a. Founded: 1919
  - b. Membership: 800
  - c. Churches: 21
  
8. **UKRAINIAN EVANGELICAL BAPTIST CONVENTION**
  - a. Founded: 1946
  - b. Membership: 3,500
  - c. Churches: 20
  
9. **UNION OF LATVIAN BAPTISTS**
  - a. Founded: 1950
  - b. Membership: 385
  - c. Churches: 8

\*All of the above bodies, except the Polish Baptist Association and Ukrainian Evangelical Baptist Convention, are in cooperation with the American Baptist Churches. The Polish Association is related to Southern Baptists, while five churches of the Ukrainian Convention are dully aligned with Southern Baptists and one church with the General Association of Regular Baptists. (Baptists Around the World, edited by Albert W. Wardin, p. 390).

## B. **HISPANIC BAPTISTS**

1. History: Hispanics compose the largest minority in the United States. Texas Baptists have shown an interest in evangelization of Hispanics since the early days of colonization in Texas. The Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention began work with Hispanics in 1906. The Mexican Baptist Bible Institute, founded in 1947 in San Antonio, is today known as the Hispanic Baptist Theological Seminary, an affiliate of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Mexican Baptists organized their own convention in 1910. The American Baptist Home Mission Society began work in Santa Fe, New Mexico in 1849. American Baptists also supported work in California. In 1884, work was begun in Key West, Florida. Following World War II, Hispanic congregations have spread like wildfire across the nation with work in practically every state. (Baptists Around the World, Albert w. Wardin, editor, p. 393).

### III. REGULAR BAPTISTS (Southern-Oriented)

#### C. Conservative Evangelical

##### 1. **SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION**

- a. Formed: 1845
- b. Membership: 16,247,736
- c. Number of churches: 42,775 (2002)
- d. Headquarters: Nashville, Tennessee.
- e. Government and history: During the latter half of the eighteenth century, Baptists in the South grew by leaps and bounds. In 1751 the Charleston Association (Regular Baptist) was formed, and in 1758 the Sandy Creek Association (Separate Baptist) was organized. They were the second and third oldest associations in the country, after the Philadelphia Association (1707).

Between 1770 and 1801 many Regular Baptists and Separate Baptists discovered they had much in common, and the churches which did unite often called themselves United Baptists and became the mainstream of the Southern Baptist denomination. Some churches in each group resisted union and continued to maintain their respective identities as Regular and Separate Baptists. After 1845 United Baptists became known as Southern Baptists but, in some instances, churches retained the designation of United Baptist and kept themselves distinct from the Southern Baptist Convention. All three groups, the Regular, Separate, and United Baptists, have maintained an existence to the present and are found largely in Appalachia.

In the formation in 1814 of the first national organization of Baptists – the Triennial Convention (more properly known as the General Missionary Convention of the Baptist Denomination...) – Baptists in the South participated wholeheartedly. It was not long before conflicting views on the slavery issue were injected into the deliberations of both bodies, and the question was raised whether slaveholding disqualified a person from being appointed as a missionary. By 1841 such questions were being debated with considerable heat and bitterness. Three issues contributed to the separation of the Baptists in the South from those in the North. The primary factor was slavery and abolitionism. For Baptists in the South, the crisis occurred in 1844 when the ABHMS refused to appoint a slaveholder as a missionary. As a result, the Virginia Baptist Foreign Missions Society invited Baptists to meet in Augusta,

Georgia, in May 1845 to discuss what action might be taken to promote foreign missions and other interests of the denomination. Besides slavery, two other issues played a part in the eventual organization of the SBC. Baptists in the South charged that their region was not receiving fair and proportionate number of missionaries appointed by the ABHMS. As a result, the Southern Baptist Home Mission Society was formed in 1839; and discontentment with the ABHMS continued. The other issue centered on individual paid dues to support missions – the Northern view, and association supported missions – the Southern view. As a result of the influence of these three issues, the SBC came into existence on May 8-12, 1845. When it was formed, this new body represented Baptists in 11 states, with 213 associations, 4,395 churches, and a membership of 365,000 persons.

The Landmark movement, under the dynamic leadership of James R. Graves, editor of the *Tennessee Baptist*, had a widespread impact on Southern Baptists, particularly after the Civil War and the territory west of the Appalachian Mountains. The term *Landmark* is taken from a booklet entitled *An Old Landmark Reset* (1854), written by J. M. Pendleton, who rejected pulpit affiliation with pedobaptists. Landmarkers emphasized the primacy of the local church, starting with the historical succession and unique validity of Baptist churches. They claimed that an unbroken chain of Baptist congregations could be traced from New Testament times through dissenting groups which had separated from the Roman Catholic Church. Because only Baptist churches could be regarded as true churches, other Christian bodies were viewed as defective and their ministers, authority, and ordinances as invalid. So, friendly pulpit exchange was repudiated, and the immersion of believers by such groups was called “alien” and not acceptable. Landmarkism ultimately advocated the practice of restricted communion, which limited participants in the Lord’s Supper to the membership of the local church in which it was being observed. In 1859 Graves urged that missionary work be undertaken directly by churches rather than through the board system. This gave rise in the 1880s to the Gospel Mission movement. In all of these matters Graves insisted that he was restoring earlier traditions of Baptists and thereby “resetting the old landmarks.”

The largest Baptist body in the United States with churches located in all 50 states. The members of the churches work together through 1,198 district associations and 41 state conventions. The Southern Baptist Convention has an Executive Committee and 12 national agencies – four boards, six seminaries,

one commission, and one auxiliary organization. The purpose of the SBC is “to provide a general organization for Baptists in the U.S. and its territories for the promotion of Christian missions at home and abroad and any other object such as Christian education, benevolent enterprises, and social services which it may deem proper and advisable for the furtherance of the Kingdom of God. The Cooperative Program is the basic channel of mission support.

Notable achievements have continued since 1950. In 1993 the SBC reached 15,400,000 members in 38,741 churches and 1,218 associations, located in all 50 states. Baptisms numbered about 350,000.

In recent decades the SBC has not been free from conflict. In the 1960s controversy arose over the publication of *The Message of Genesis*, a volume in which Ralph H. Elliott, professor at Midwestern Seminary, offered views which were at odds with many other Southern Baptists. Although Elliott was dismissed from the faculty, there was still a strong feeling that the SBC needed to take a stand on such doctrinal issues. In 1963 the SBC adopted *The Baptist Faith and Message*, a revision of the confession of faith approved in 1925. The new statement was proposed as information to the churches, and as guidelines to the agencies of the SBC and not as a confession binding on the churches. A sequel to the Elliott controversy occurred in 1970 when SBC messengers voted that *The Broadman Bible Commentary* volume on Genesis be rewritten “with due consideration of the conservative viewpoint.”

Controversy in the 1980's centered on the issue of “inerrancy of the Scriptures;” allegations that seminary faculties were too liberal in their theological views; and assertions that evidence of liberalism could be found in SBC publications. Those who countered such charges accused “fundamentalists” of trying to take over the SBC.

Beginning in 1979 with the election of a succession of conservative SBC presidents, inerrantist trustees were elected to boards of seminaries and other agencies. Consequently, “moderate” Southern Baptist leaders formed the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF) in 1991, while insisting they were still a part of the SBC. In 1993, at the third annual meeting of the CBF, 5,100 messengers were registered, 25 missionaries were commissioned, and a budget of \$5 million was adopted. Moderates also chartered the Associated Baptist Press and formed Smyth & Helwys Publishers. Still other Southern Baptists formed the Southern Baptist Alliance (today the Alliance of Baptists) in 1986 and opened a seminary in Richmond in 1991. It seeks relations outside Southern Baptist ranks and attempts to take more

- liberal positions than the SBC or the CBF.
- f. Doctrine: Southern Baptists have generally held to a more conservative theology than their northern relative. The Southern Baptist heritage is more definitely Calvinistic. One of the ironies of Baptist history is that the Southern Baptist Convention adheres more firmly to the New Hampshire Confession of Faith than do American Baptist Churches. Church polity and government are comparable in the two conventions. Membership and ministry have usually been exchanged in harmony and understanding. Churches may send to the SBC annual meeting up to ten messengers. The number is determined by the size of the church membership and the amount of money given to denominational causes.
  - g. Location: All 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, American Samoa, and the Virgin Islands.
  - h. Sources: Yearbook of American Churches, 2004 (p.153); Dictionary of Baptist in America, edited by Bill J. Leonard (p.254-255); Handbook of Denominations in the United States, 11<sup>th</sup> ed., edited by Frank S. Mead (p.64-67).

## 2. ALLIANCE OF BAPTIST CHURCHES

- a. Founded in 1987
- b. Membership: est. 64,000 in 130 churches (1999)
- c. Number of churches 130
- d. Headquarters: Washington, D.C.
- e. Website: [www.allianceofbaptists.org](http://www.allianceofbaptists.org)
- f. History and government: A confederation of Baptist congregations primarily in the South, that separated from the SBC during the conservative/moderate conflict of the 1980s. The Southern Baptist Alliance was organized to pursue objectives like freedom of individuals to interpret the Scriptures, freedom of the local church to determine its mission, support for cooperation with other Christian bodies, a servant leadership model, theological education based upon responsible scholarship and open inquiry, and actions to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ. The Alliance was renamed in 1992 the Alliance of Baptist. The body has three elected officers who serve no more than two years and a forty-member Board of Directors. Nine standing committees that supervise such areas as woman in ministry and interfaith dialogue. The annual meeting of the Alliance reviews all decisions of the Board..
- g. Doctrine: They stress individual and congregational autonomy, particularly in regard to biblical interpretation of missions. The alliance of churches and individuals are dedicated to the preservation of historic Baptist principles and social and economic



- justice and equality.
- h. School: Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond, VA
- i. Periodical: *Connections*.
- j. Women in ministry: Women encouraged to seek ordination and assume leadership roles in the Alliance and in congregations.
- k. Sources: Directory of Baptist in America, edited by Bill J. Leonard (p.19); Yearbook of American & Canadian Churches, 2004 (p.63); Historical Dictionary of the Baptists, edited by William H. Brackney (p. 4).

### 3. **COOPERATIVE BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP**

- a. Founded: 1991
- b. Membership: Not available.
- c. Number of churches: 1800 (2000)
- d. Headquarters: Atlanta, GA.
- e. Website: [www.thefellowship.info](http://www.thefellowship.info)
- f. Government and history: Congregations can hold joint membership with CBF or SBC.
- g. Doctrine: Historic Baptist values; local church autonomy, priesthood of all believers, and religious liberty; Baptist principles of faith and practice.
- h. Location: Primarily the South
- i. Schools: Has partnerships with 13 seminary and theological schools and helps found new schools of theology in historical Baptist colleges of the South.
- j. Sources: Handbook of Denominations in the United States, edited by Frank S. Mead (p.51-52); Cooperative Baptist Fellowship Website.

#### D. **Landmark Missionary Baptists**

The American Baptist Association, Baptist Missionary Association, and independent Landmark Missionary Baptist associations are direct heirs of the Landmark movement, which arose in the Southern Baptist Convention in the 1850s under the leadership of James R. Graves, James M. Pendleton, and Amos C. Dayton. There are also many Southern Baptists who, apart from Landmark views on cooperative work, hold to one or more Landmark Baptist tenets.

Like other Baptists, they believe that true Christian believers may be found in other denominations, but maintain a high church ecclesiology – the only true churches are Baptist churches. They consider other Baptists who do not follow their principles to be in a state of apostasy and non-Baptist congregations as simply human organizations. They deny the existence of the universal church, but believe in the perpetuity and historical succession of true gospel churches from the time of Christ. They reject “alien immersion,” that is, believer’s baptism

by immersion from non-Baptist congregations and from Baptist churches which accept such baptism. Their churches limit the observance of the Lord's Supper to members of the local church and refuse pulpit affiliation to anyone not adhering to their principles. Each of their churches, based on no financial requirements, send equal numbers of messengers to associational meetings. They are fundamentalist and premillennial in doctrine. Their churches often include "Missionary Baptist" in their names, a designation which they and other Baptists have used in the past to set themselves apart from the anti-mission Primitive Baptists. Today, however, generally only Landmark Baptists and Black National Baptists use "Missionary Baptist" in the names of their churches.

Although Landmark Baptists oppose conventions and boards, the messengers at their national associations elect "committees" or similar organizations which function as boards for various program. Both the American Baptist Association and the Baptist Missionary Association of America elect missionary committees which nurture the work of home missionaries as well as foreign missionaries, both American and foreign nationals. The local church and the national body must endorse the missionary, who is paid through the missions office from general or designated funds.

Landmark Baptist number about 500,000 and are primarily concentrated in the states of the Old Southwest – Arkansas, Oklahoma, Texas and Louisiana – as well as in Mississippi and California. Their roots are in the rural South, although like other Southerners, many of their members today live in towns and larger cities.

- a. Source: Baptists Around the World, edited by Albert W. Wardin, p. 401.

## 2. **AMERICAN BAPTIST ASSOCIATION**

- a. Founded in 1905
- b. Membership: est 275,000
- c. Number of churches: 1,760 (1998)
- d. Former name: General Association of Missionary Association Baptist Churches.
- e. Headquarters: Texarkana, TX.
- f. Website: [www.abaptist.org](http://www.abaptist.org)
- g. Government and history: Both the local congregation and annual meetings is congregational in nature. The formation of the American Baptist Association in Arkansas in 1905 was the culmination of the struggle of Landmarkism in the Southern Baptist Convention. In the 1850s Landmarkism, under the leadership of J. R. Graves, advocated an ecclesiology that emphasized the local church. Its tenets included that Baptist churches are the only true churches; the true church is a local, visible institution; Baptist churches have an unbroken historical succession back to the New Testament; missionary work is to be

done by the local church rather than convention boards. In 1899 landmarkers formed their first state association, the East Texas Baptist Convention, later known as the Baptist Missionary Association of Texas, with Samuel A. Hayden as its most prominent leader. The BMA was outspoken against the SBC and its method of carrying out missionary work through a convention rather than through local churches. In 1902 Arkansas' "anti-convention" forces rallied against the state convention and formed the General Association of Arkansas Baptists in 1902. An attempt by Ben M. Bogard, as leader, was made to convert the SBC to Landmark views and failed. Bogard's movement absorbed smaller Landmark bodies, including the BMA of Texas, and was renamed the American Baptist Association in 1924.

- h. Doctrine: Each congregation is an independent and autonomous body, being strictly fundamentalist and holding to belief in the virgin birth and the deity of Christ. They also believe the local church is the only unit authorized to administer the ordinances (baptism and Lord's Supper) and the congregation is an independent and autonomous body responsible only to Christ. They claim those Baptists organized in conventions are not faithful to Bible missions methods. They believe their faith preceded the Protestant Reformation, and indeed has a continued succession from Christ and the apostles. They believe the second coming of Christ will be physical and personal and are they are premillennial.
- i. Location: The South, southwest and west, with work in East and North.
- j. Schools: Missionary Baptist Seminary, Little Rock, AR; Texas Baptist Institute, Henderson, TX; Oklahoma Missionary Baptist College, Marlow, OK, Oxford Baptist Institute, Oxford, MS; and Florida Baptist Schools, Lakeland, FL.
- k. Periodical: Missionary Baptist Searchlight (1937-)
- l. Sources: Handbook of Denominations in the United States, 11<sup>th</sup> ed., Frank S. Mead (p. 47-48); Dictionary of Baptist in America, edited by Bill J. Leonard (p. 20-21); Historical Dictionary of the Baptists, edited by William H. Brackney (p. 5-6); Yearbook of American & Canadian Churches, 2004 (p. 63-64).

### 3. **BAPTIST MISSIONARY ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA**

- a. Founded: 1950
- b. Membership: 234,511
- c. Number of churches: 1,275
- d. Former Name: North American Baptist Association.
- e. Headquarters: Little Rock, AR.
- f. Website: [www.bmaam.com](http://www.bmaam.com).

- g. Government and History: The organization traces its structural origins to 1893 and the Texas Baptist Convention. There some churches voiced disagreement with convention policy regarding methods of missions and paid secretaries. The difference in methodology continued until 1900, when a large number of churches withdrew and formed the Baptist Missionary Association of Texas. By 1904 some 500 churches, mostly in east Texas, had aligned with the new group. A similar group in Arkansas began in 1901 as the State Association of Missionary Baptist Churches in Arkansas. The move can be dated to 1888 at the state convention of Arkansas Baptists, when the debate was also over boards and paid secretaries. In 1902 in Antioch Church in Little Rock twenty churches met and formed the General Association of Arkansas Baptists. A major leader of the group was Ben M. Bogard who had come from Kentucky to Searcy, Arkansas to pastor a church. In 1905 the Arkansas group joined in Texarkana with other groups from Mississippi, Texas and Oklahoma and adopted the name General Landmark Baptist Churches of the United States. In addition to the previous states mentioned, messengers came from Missouri, Tennessee, Colorado and Kentucky. A Statement of Principles was adopted, and over 500 churches accepted it. The break with the so-called Convention Baptists was completed in the 1920s. The Arkansas and Texas groups merged in 1924 and thereafter were called American Baptist Association.

Successive internal leadership disagreements in 1934, 1937, and 1949 led to a schism in the American Baptist Association in 1949. The division was partially a reaction to alleged violations of church sovereignty and authoritarian leadership in the A.B.A. Those churches departing from the ABA formed a new association in Little Rock in 1950 known as the North American Baptist Association. The NABA changed its name in 1969 to Baptist Missionary Association of America. The dispute was over the Articles of Agreement adopted in 1924 regarding voting messengers from the local churches: was a messenger required to be a member of the church being represented? Debates also arose over questions of support for colleges and seminaries: were they to be supported by the association or by one church? Both bodies are outspoken proponents of the fundamentalist and Landmark view.

- h. Doctrine: Thoroughly fundamentalist; emphasis on inerrancy of Scripture, Landmark, for the most part, and premillennial. This body carries on the Landmark Baptist movement, holding to the historic succession of independent Baptist churches from the time of Christ. Churches are completely autonomous in the Baptist

tradition and, regardless of size , have an equal voice in the cooperative missionary, publication, evangelical, and educational efforts of the association. Doctrines include: literal creation, the virgin birth and deity of Jesus Christ, his blood atonement, salvation by grace alone, and the personal, imminent return of Christ. “Missionary Baptist” as they are called, oppose open communion, alien baptism, pulpit affiliation with unacceptable ministers, conventionism, and unionism.

- i. Location: South and Southwest
- j. School: Baptist Missionary Association Theological Seminary, Jacksonville, TX
- k. Periodical: *The Gleaner*.
- l. Sources: Baptist Around the World, edited by Albert W. Wardin (p. 402-03), Dictionary of Baptists in America, edited by Bill J. Leonard (p. 49); Handbook of Denominations in the United States, 11<sup>th</sup> ed., edited by Frank S. Mead (p. 152-153); Historical Dictionary of the Baptists, edited by William H. Brackney (p. 5, 52); Yearbook of American & Canadian Churches, 2004 (p. 76-77).

4. **INDEPENDENT LANDMARK BAPTIST ASSOCIATIONS/Churches** (Direct-Mission)

- a. History: There are independent Landmark Missionary Baptist associations and churches which are independent of either the American Baptist Association or the Baptist Missionary Association of America, which follow the principles of Gospel Missionism, promoted by T.P. Crawford. These congregations practice direct missions, that is, they send missionary support directly to the missionary, who is not supervised by any home board. Such churches may be found not only in the South but also on the Pacific Coast. For instance, in the 1890s Gospel Missionism began to take root among some Baptists in Oregon, and today twenty-three small churches in this state follow these tenets. Unfortunately, there is no national survey of these congregations, and their numbers and location remain largely unknown.
- b. Sources: Baptists Around the World, edited by Albert W. Wardin (p. 403)

E. **SEPARATIST FUNDAMENTALIST**

There are at least five separate fundamentalist fellowships with Southern antecedents, whose members are known as “independent Baptists.” Their main

strength is in the South and the Midwest, but their churches are in every state of the union. With more than 4,500 congregations and a membership that is approaching 2 million, they are one of the most dynamic segments of the Baptist denomination in the USA. Their growth has come through aggressive church planting and evangelism, effectively utilizing the Sunday School, home visitation, bus ministries, and the mass media, including television, radio and printed publications. They have also established many educational institutions, primary Bible Colleges with a strong emphasis on Bible instruction and practical Christian training, and Christian day schools.

Unlike Landmark Baptists, whose churches are often confined to small towns and rural areas, Independent Baptist churches are often located in urban centers. Leadership in Independent churches is centered in the pastor. Independent Baptists are premillennial dispensationalists and are strongly opposed to theological liberalism and the ecumenical movement. They tend to stress a more traditional personal morality than many other Baptists.

In common with Landmark Baptists, Independent Baptists hold to the primacy of the local church and reject conventionism. Unlike Landmark Baptists, however, churches form no associations but cooperate through the participation of their pastors in state or national fellowships. Except for the Southwest Baptist Fellowship, which is composed of individuals and not churches, each national fellowship has a mission office through which churches may contribute support for missionaries, who, however, must raise their own support by deputation. They are much less concerned than Landmark Baptists with alien immersion and close communion and find their basis of cooperation, not on ecclesiology, but on common fundamentalist beliefs and methodology.

F. Source: Baptist Around the World, edited by Albert W. Wardin (p. 403-405).

#### 1. **BAPTIST BIBLE FELLOWSHIP INTERNATIONAL**

- a. Founded: 1950
- b. Membership: 1,400,000
- c. Number of churches: 3,400 (1994)
- d. Headquarters: Springfield, Missouri
- e. Website: [www.bbf.org](http://www.bbf.org)
- f. Government and History: The most dynamic fellowship of Independent Baptists is Baptist Bible Fellowship International (BBFI), formed in 1950 by members of the World Baptist Fellowship who separated from Norris' autocratic control. One of the major leaders was G. Beauchamp Vick, who had served as Norris' co-pastor of Temple Baptist Church in Detroit and president of Norris' school. In 1950 Vick became president of the newly established Baptist Bible College of Springfield, Missouri, which became the center of the new fellowship. With a new school, a paper (Baptist Bible Tribune), and a mission office, the BBFI embarked on an aggressive program. Many of the

congregations associated with the fellowship –First Baptist Church of Hammond, Indiana, and Thomas Road Baptist Church of Lynchburg, Virginia – claim to have some of the largest Sunday Schools and church membership in the United States. No formal statistics are kept. In 1972 the Fellowship reported churches in every state except two, and today is present in all fifty with an estimated membership of more than 1,400,000. A committee of 45, elected by pastors and churches within the states, sits as a representative body.

- g. Location: Greatest strength in urban centers of the Trans-Mississippi South, the Upper South, Florida, Kansas, the Great Lakes region, and California.
- h. School: Baptist Bible College, Springfield, MO
- i. Periodical: *Baptist Bible Tribune*
- j. Sources: Baptists Around the World (P. 405-406); Dictionary of Baptists in America (p. 42); Handbook of Denominations in the United States, edited by Frank S. Mead (p. 151-152); Yearbook of American Churches (p.75, 366).

## 2. **INDEPENDENT BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP INTERNATIONAL**

- a. Founded: 1984
- b. Membership:
- c. Number of churches: 540
- d. Headquarters: Arlington, TX
- e. Website: [www.ibfi-nbbi.org/](http://www.ibfi-nbbi.org/)
- f. Government and History: In 1984 Raymond W. Barber, pastor of Worth Baptist Church of Fort Worth, Texas, former president of the World Fellowship, and professor at Arlington Baptist College – after having engaged in serious controversy with the college, led in establishing the Independent Baptist Fellowship International (IBFI). At the same time, he led the IBFI to found Norris Bible Baptist Institute, which meets at the Worth Baptist Church, to open a mission office and begin publication of *The Searchlight*. One of its largest congregations is the Worth Baptist Church, with a membership of two thousand. In 1992 IBFI was supporting fourteen missionaries, beside spouses, in five countries.
- g. Doctrine: see [www.wholesomewords.org/ibfi.html](http://www.wholesomewords.org/ibfi.html)
- h. Periodical: *The Searchlight*.
- i. Sources: Baptists Around the World, edited by Albert W. Wardin (p. 406).

## 3. **LIBERTY BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP**

- a. Founded:

- b. Membership:
- c. Number of churches: 100
- d. Government and History: Liberty Baptist Fellowship is an outgrowth of the activity of Jerry Falwell, pastor of Thomas Road Baptist Church of Lynchburg, Virginia and his school, Liberty University. Most of the pastors of the churches in affiliation are alumni of Liberty University. Many of the churches are also related to other fellowships. Because of the unavailability of a directory for the fellowship, it is impossible to note the geographical distribution of the churches nor how many of them are related to some other fellowship. With its leading church and pastor affiliated with the Southern Baptists through the Virginia Convention, the future of Liberty Baptist Fellowship is unclear.
- e. Sources: Baptist Around the World, edited by Albert W. Wardin (406-407).

#### 4. **SOUTHWIDE BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP**

- a. Founded: 1956
- b. Membership: 1,847 individual members
- c. Churches: Members related to 912 churches
- d. <http://www.biblefortoday.org/bennett/aibn0902.htm>
- e. Government and History: One of the strong fundamentalist leaders in the southeastern states has been Lee Roberson, who began serving the Highland Park Church of Chattanooga, Tennessee in 1942. During his forty-year ministry, Highland Park became one of the largest Baptist churches in the country. In 1971 the congregation reported 31,000 members, including members of forty-three chapels. In 1983 it claimed more than 57,000 members with around sixty chapels. Robertson also established Tennessee Temple Schools, which began in 1946 with Tennessee Temple Bible School, but by 1951 included three other institutions – a seminary, college, and an elementary school. The schools were housed in buildings which clustered about the church. Because of criticism in 1955 from the Executive Committee at the Hamilton County Baptist Association for token cooperation with the Southern Baptist program, Roberson and his church withdrew from Southern Baptists.
- f. Sources: Baptist Around the World, edited by Albert W. Wardin (p. 407).

#### 5. **WORLD BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP**

- a. Founded: 1932
- b. Membership



- c. Number of churches: 945
- d. Former name: Premillennial Baptist Missionary Fellowship.
- e. Headquarters: Arlington, Texas
- f. Website: [www.wbfi.net/](http://www.wbfi.net/)
- g. Government and History: At the third semi-annual Premillennial Bible School in November 1932 at the First Baptist Church of Fort Worth, Texas, J. Frank Norris, pastor of the church, led the assembled gathering to approve the formation of a Premillennial Baptist Missionary Fellowship and to send money directly to three stations in China. In 1938 the organization received a charter as the World Fundamental Baptist Missionary Fellowship, but since 1950 has been called the World Baptist Fellowship (WBF). Because of Norris' dictatorial tactics, in 1950 a large number of pastors left to form the Baptist Bible Fellowship International. Because of the division and the death of Norris two years later, the fellowship has lost the momentum of its earlier years. In 1984 it was further weakened by a second division with the formation of the Independent Baptist Fellowship International.  
The WBF considers itself a missions agency. Its missionary work is headed by the Mission Committee, whose members are nominated by the existing committee and approved by the General Assembly in annual meeting. In 2003 the WBF has 85 approved missionaries, with Tommy Raley serving as the Mission Director. National Fellowship meetings are held twice per year.
- h. Location: Texas, Florida and Ohio.
- i. School: Arlington Baptist College.
- j. Sources: Baptist around the World, edited by Albert W. Wardin (p. 407-408)

### III. **REGULAR BAPTISTS – NATIONAL BAPTISTS (AFRICAN-AMERICAN)**

#### A. **NATIONAL BAPTIST CONVENTION OF AMERICA, INC.**

- 1. Founded: 1880
- 2. Membership: 1,700,000
- 3. Churches: 6,716
- 4. Former name: Foreign Mission Baptist Convention.
- 5. Headquarters: Shreveport, LA.
- 6. Website: [www.nbcAmerica.org/index\\_flashj.php](http://www.nbcAmerica.org/index_flashj.php)
- 7. History: The convention experienced a division in 1988 because of a struggle to keep the National Baptist Publishing Board independent. The convention became incorporated in 1986 and desired more control of the Publishing Board and its successful Sunday Church School and Training Union Congress. The convention formed its own congress, thus severing its relations with the Publishing Board. Those rejecting a proposed new charter and ownership of the publishing board withdrew from the National

Baptist Convention, USA, Inc. and formed the rival National Missionary Baptist Convention. It is difficult to obtain statistics for National Baptists since they do not keep a listing of members by church. There is widespread dual alignment with other state bodies among National Baptists.

8. Location: Mississippi, Texas, Louisiana, Florida, and California.
9. Periodical: *The Lantern*
10. Sources: Handbook of Denominations in the United States, 11<sup>th</sup> ed. (p.55-56), edited by Frank S. Mead; Yearbook of American & Canadian Churches, 2004; (p. 134); Baptist Around the World, edited by Albert W. Wardin (p. 414).

**B. NATIONAL BAPTIST CONVENTION, U.S.A., INC.**

1. Founded: 1915
2. Membership: 5,000,000
3. Churches: 9,000
4. Former name: Baptist Foreign Mission Convention.
5. Headquarters: Nashville, TN. (Only National body to build a central headquarters – the Baptist World Center in Nashville).
6. Website: [www.nationalbaptist.com](http://www.nationalbaptist.com)
7. Government and history: The body split with “of America” over disagreement over control of the publishing house of the denomination in 1915. Officers are elected annually and these officers and a Board of Directors with 15 members conduct the convention’s business. Presidential influence has been the “U.S.A.” body’s most visible feature. During tenure (1953-82) of president Joseph H. Jackson, he promoted the theory of racial uplift and he led the group to steer clear of political and social involvements, which placed the group outside the civil rights movement (1954-72) and another National Baptist schism occurred, out of which the Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc. was organized. Since that happened the “U.S.A.” body has shifted its practice and been more active in civil rights and voter registration drives and is today the largest body of black Baptists in the U.S.
8. Periodical: *Mission Herald*.
9. Sources: Handbook of Denominations in the United States, 11<sup>th</sup> ed., edited Frank S. Mead (P. 56-57); Yearbook of American & Canadian Churches, 2004 (p. 134, 373); Baptist around the World, edited by Albert W. Wardin (p. 414-415).

**C. NATIONAL MISSIONARY BAPTIST CONVENTION OF AMERICA**

1. Founded: 1988
2. Membership: est. 200,000

3. Churches:701
4. Former name: National Baptist Convention of America, Inc.
5. Headquarters: Los Angeles, CA
6. Website: [www.nmbca.com/new\\_page\\_1.htm](http://www.nmbca.com/new_page_1.htm)
7. Government and history: A separate entity from the National Baptist Convention of America, Inc., after a dispute over control of the convention's publishing efforts. They state their purpose is to serve as an agency of Christian education, church extension and missionary efforts.
8. Location: California, Texas, Oklahoma, and Indiana.
9. Sources: Handbook of Denominations in the United States, 11<sup>th</sup> ed., edited by Frank S. Mead (p. 57-58); Yearbook of American & Canadian Churches, 2004 (p. 135); Baptist Around the World, edited by Albert W. Wardin (p. 415).

**D. NATIONAL PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CONVENTION, INC.**

1. Founded: 1907
2. Membership: 250,000
3. Churches: 1,530
4. Former name: Colored Primitive Baptist Church.
5. Headquarters: Charlotte, North Carolina
6. Website: N/A
7. Government and history: Black population worshiped with white population in their churches. After emancipation white co-worshippers helped them establish their own churches, granting letters of fellowship, ordaining deacons and ministers, etc. Earlier members were opposed to all forms of church organization. Each congregation is independent, receiving and controlling its membership. Unlike the Primitive Baptists, since 1900 this group has been establishing aid societies, conventions, and Sunday schools, over the opposition of some older and more traditional members. With the organization in 1907 of a convention with boards and auxiliaries and the acceptance of Sunday Schools, musical instruments, and revivals, together with a departure from their Calvinistic tenets, this group has become much like other National Baptist conventions. Their retention of the rite of footwashing and use of the pastoral title "elder" remains as reminders of their early heritage.
8. Doctrine: Similar to the Primitive Baptists.
9. Location: Small churches in the South.
10. Sources: Handbook of Denominations in the United States, 11<sup>th</sup> ed., edited by Frank S. Mead (p. 58); Yearbook of American & Canadian Churches,

2004 (p. 135-136); Baptists around the World, edited by Albert W. Wardin (p. 415-416); National Primitive Baptist Convention Web Site.

**E. PROGRESSIVE NATIONAL BAPTIST CONVENTION, INC**

1. Founded: 1961
2. Membership: est. 2,500,000
3. Churches: 1,800
4. Headquarters: Washington, D.C.
5. Web Site: [www.pnbc.org](http://www.pnbc.org)
6. Government and history: The convention is largely an outgrowth of dissatisfaction with The Executive Secretary in the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., Inc. over civil rights and protest movement. The principle objective in the new movement was: “freedom fighters” in the civil rights movement. The convention was the focal point of the civil rights movement and they remain highly active in civil rights, social justice and political causes. The mission statement of The Progressive National Convention – an association of Baptist churches throughout the world committed to the mandate of making disciples for Christ. The convention is founded on the precepts of fellowship, service, progress and peace, and seeks to affirm the “priesthood of all believers.”
7. Doctrine: Ecumenical in spirit, seeking to work harmoniously with other Christian denominations
8. Periodical: *The Worker*
9. Sources: Handbook of Denominations in the United States, 11<sup>th</sup> ed., edited by Frank S Mead (p. 60-61); Yearbook of American & Canadian Churches, 2004 (p. 145); Progressive National Baptist Convention Web site.

**IV. REGULAR BAPTISTS (Southern-Oriented) – Primitivists**

**A. CENTRAL BAPTIST ASSOCIATION**

1. Founded:
2. Membership: 3,297
3. Churches: 35
4. Doctrine: This association rejects missionary and educational institutions, theologically trained ministry and they practice foot washing. They generally rejects Sunday Schools although some churches have them. Many congregations sing without instrumental accompaniment. Their ministers are generally addressed as “elder.”

5. History: The association separated from the Eastern District Primitive Baptist Association and has a tabernacle, children's home, and youth camp at Duffield, Virginia.
6. Location: Indiana, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia.
7. Sources: Baptists Around the World, edited by Albert W. Wardin (p. 418).

**B. DUCK RIVER AND KINDRED ASSOCIATIONS (General Association of Baptists)**

1. Founded: 1826
2. Membership: 10,672
3. Number of churches: 102
4. Headquarters: Tullahoma, Tennessee
5. Website: N/A
6. Government and history: A group of independent Baptists, the General Association of Baptists, is usually designated as the Duck River and Kindred Associations of Baptists. The Duck River Association, formed in 1826 by separating from the strongly Calvinistic Elk River Association of Primitive Baptists, has served as a nucleus of a group of associations which correspond with each other. They were often called the Baptist Church of Christ. In 1939 this body formed an associational body with the name it bears today. It is a comparatively small body of seven associations with its primary strength in lower Middle Tennessee and northern Alabama. It is the leading Baptist body in Moore County, Tennessee.
7. Doctrine: Moderately Calvinistic, observes foot washing as an ordinance, generally have Sunday schools, but supports no mission or benevolent institutions
8. Location: Middle Tennessee and Northern Alabama.
9. Sources: Baptists Around the World, edited by Albert W. Wardin; (p. 418); Dictionary of Baptists in America, edited by Bill J. Leonard (p. 106).

**C. OLD MISSIONARY BAPTISTS**

1. Founded:
2. Membership: 16,289

3. Number of churches: 73
4. History: *The Churches and Church Membership in the United States* (1990) recognizes the Old Missionary Baptist associations as a separate group. This study was able to obtain statistics from three associations – Enon, Siloam, and Wiseman. These Baptists refer to themselves as “old-time” or “old-fashioned” Missionary Baptists and, like many other Primitivists, practice footwashing as a rite.
5. Location: Middle Tennessee and Western Kentucky.
6. Sources: :Baptists Around the World, edited by Albert W. Wardin (p. 418-419); Glenmary Research Center. Churches and Church Memberships in the U.S., 1990.

**D. REGULAR BAPTISTS**

Regular Baptists are those who have chosen to maintain the old-time standards of faith and practice from which others have deviated. As most other Baptists, Regular Baptists are moderately Calvinistic. Like Primitivists, however, they have rejected modern methods and most mission, educational, and benevolent institutions. Scholars today note deviations among them and separate them into three groups – Old Regular Baptists, Regular Baptists, and Enterprise Baptists.

**1. OLD REGULAR BAPTISTS**

- a. Founded 1892.
- b. Membership:15,000
- c. Number of churches: 326 (1990)
- d. Government and history: Most of the Old Regular associations descend from the New Salem Association or its offshoots. New Salem was organized in eastern Kentucky in 1825 as a United Baptist association but in 1854 changed its name to Regular and then in 1892 began using the designation of Old Regular. The Old Regular Baptist congregation ranges in size from four to nearly two hundred members, although they average between thirty-five to forty-five. They meet monthly and often attend the services of other Old Regular Churches on the Sundays their church does not meet. There is a total of sixteen Old Regular Baptist associations. Some of them are in communication with each other, but not one is in communication with all. Each association has an annual meeting which serves as a business meeting, extended church service, and a homecoming for families who have moved away from the region.
- e. Doctrine: These Baptists have kept the older practices of Regular

Baptists more faithfully than the other Regular Baptist groups. They expect their ministers to preach by inspiration and not from preparation, engage in lined-singing without musical instruments, observe foot washing, reject Sunday School and mission organizations, and refuse to share pulpits with ministers outside their own fellowship. They deny women any role of leadership and oppose their following modern fashion in hairstyle and dress. The Old Regulars pride themselves on the belief that their church is the most closely representative of the early Christian Church of the New Testament.

- f. Location: Kentucky, Virginia, West Virginia and Great Lakes region.
- g. Sources: Baptists Around the World, edited by Albert W. Wardin (p. 419); The Old Regular Baptists of Central Appalachia: Bothers and Sisters in Hope by Howard Dorgan (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1989).

## 2. **REGULAR BAPTISTS**

- a. Founded:
- b. Membership: 4,000
- c. Number of churches: 41 (1990)
- d. Government and history: The group is made up of five local associations, located in the same area as Old Regular Baptists.
- e. Doctrine: Regular Baptists are much like Old Regular Baptists in doctrine but are more open to change in worship and lifestyle. They have allowed Sunday Schools, revivals and occasionally use hymnals and even musical instruments. They have retained the rite of feet washing.
- f. Location: Three associations, mostly in North Carolina, are in correspondence – Little River, Little Valley and Mountain Union (708 members in 15 churches in 1999). Two others are in isolated areas and not connected to the first three – East Washington in Arkansas (1560 members in 10 churches in 1999) and Enterprise in Ohio, Kentucky and bordering areas (4,288 members in 63 churches in 1999).
- g. Sources: Baptists Around the World, edited by Albert W. Wardin (p. 419); Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia (a Web site).

## 3. **ENTERPRISE BAPTISTS**

- a. Founded: 1894
- b. Membership: 4,700
- c. Number of churches: 58
- d. Website: [www.ebaptists.org/](http://www.ebaptists.org/)
- e. History: The Enterprise Baptist Association in the past have been listed with other Regular Baptists. Today it does not correspond with any Regular Baptist association but only with United Baptists. Some of their churches now refer to themselves as Enterprise Baptist rather than Regular Baptists. Their worship is more open than the Old Regular Baptists.
- f. Location: North Carolina
- g. Sources: Baptists Around the World, edited by Albert W. Wardin (p. 419-420).

**E. PRIMITIVE BAPTISTS**

- 1. Founded: 1827
- 2. Membership; est. 72,000
- 3. Churches: 1,000
- 4. Headquarters: Thornton, AR
- 5. Website: [www.pb.org/](http://www.pb.org/)
- 6. Government and history: No administrative body beyond the local church. Never been organized as a denomination. This Movement originated in nineteenth-century protest against money-based mission and benevolent societies. Fellowship with other churches based on agreement with printed minutes of articles of faith, constitutions, and rules of order. They are intensely evangelistic and their preachers travel widely and serve without charge.
- 7. Doctrine: Strictest and most exclusive of all Baptist churches. Local autonomy of the church. Hyper-Calvinism; rejects all modern revival methods and all organized mission efforts for conversion of sinners. Believes in verbally and infallibly inspired scripture; two biblically authorized ordinances are the Lord's Supper and baptism by immersion; all church societies are human inventions. Some, but not all, practice foot washing.
- 8. Location: Concentrated in the South
- 9. Periodicals: *Baptist Witness*, *The Christian Baptist*, *The Primitive Baptist*, *For the Poor*.



10. Primitive Baptists are divided into three groups:
- a. **Absoluters**
    - (1) Absolute Primitive Baptist believe in God's election to salvation and God's control over all areas of life. They number between six and seven thousand, and are concentrated in Virginia and North Carolina.
  - b. **Old Liners**
    - (1) More moderate than Absoluters in respect to predestination recognizing that individuals are responsible for their daily conduct. They are the most widely dispersed group of Primitive Baptists. In 1992 there were 1,411 churches located in Georgia, Alabama, Tennessee, Virginia and Texas plus churches throughout the South and the Midwest and Pacific Coast.
  - c. **Progressives**
    - (1) Beginning in the early twentieth century, a progressive movement in Georgia produced the Progressive Primitive Baptists, who have accepted musical instruments, Sunday Schools, Bible conferences, homes for the aged, and organizations for men, women and youth.
    - (2) They are still strict Calvinists and practice footwashing. Other Primitive Baptists still recognize them. Strongest in Georgia.
11. Sources: Handbook of Denominations in the United States, 11<sup>th</sup> ed., edited by Frank S. Mead (p. 59-60); Yearbook of American Churches & Canadian Churches, 2004 (p. 144); Baptists around the World, edited by Albert W. Wardin (p. 420-21); Dictionary of Baptists in America, edited by Bill J. Leonard (p. 226).

F. **TWO-SEED-IN-THE-SPIRIT PREDESTINARIAN BAPTISTS**

1. Founded:
2. Membership: 70
3. Number of churches: 3 (1991)
4. Website:www.fact-

index.com/t/tw/two\_seed\_in\_the\_spirit\_spirit\_predestinarian\_baptists.htm  
1

5. Government and history: The progenitor of this Primitive Baptist group was Daniel Parker (1780-1844). Among his accomplishments, in 1833 he led a congregation from Illinois into Texas - The Pilgrim Predestinarian Regular Baptist Church, the first Baptist church in the territory. Earlier he had become a leading spokesman against organized missions, publishing in Indiana in 1820 a "Public Address," strongly attacking the Triennial Convention. In 1826 he reinforced his anti-missionism by adopting the "two-seed" doctrine.
6. Doctrine: The doctrine of "two-seed" teaches that individuals are born with either (with the good seed of God or the bad seed of Satan—based on Gen. 3:15) the good seed, which God implanted in Adam and Eve, or the evil seed, which Satan, himself an eternal being, implanted at the fall. The seeds are "in the spirit" and not in the flesh. Since one's eternal fate is determined by the seed he or she has received, mission activity is useless. (Those with the good seed God prompts to repentance; those with the evil seed receive no such prompting. This is present at birth and beyond alteration.) Followers of this doctrine also reject a future corporeal resurrection. Christ Himself came in a spiritual body and did not suffer death or a physical resurrection. God resurrects His children spiritually as they die to the flesh, and after death their spirits go to God. After death, the spirits of those possessing the evil seed will remain eternally in a spiritual hell. The Two-Seed Baptists have been confused with the Primitive Baptists since their practices are the same. In addition, their doctrinal statements generally include no explicit two-seed doctrine and almost without exception their associations never included "Two-Seed" in their names.
7. Location: The three remaining churches are: Little Hope near Jacksboro, Texas (42 members), Otter Creek in Putnam County, Indiana (20 members) and Concord near McMinnville, Tennessee (8 members).
8. Sources: Baptists Around the World, edited by Albert W. Wardin (p.422); Dictionary of Baptists in America, edited by Bill J. Leonard (p. 270-271).

#### G. **UNITED BAPTISTS**

1. Founded:
2. Membership: 54,248
3. Number of churches: 436 (1990)
4. Doctrine: In atonement doctrine they vary from general atonement

coupled with pure free will to a limited atonement with limited free will.

5. Church Polity: In worship practices, church governance and degrees of insularity they tend to be less closed and traditional than are Appalachian Primitives and Old Regulars. They practice foot washing, natural water baptism, rhythmically chanted sermons and lined singing.
6. History: A denomination that had its origin in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century “uniting” of several Separate Baptist and Regular Baptist associations in Virginia and Kentucky.. While most Baptists have dropped the designation of United, this group has retained the name. They maintain local associations but do not participate in any national Baptist convention. There are differences among them as to the acceptance of progressive measures. Some are more open to programs of Christian education and a trained ministry than others. Many of them practice foot washing.
7. Location: Eastern Kentucky, eastern Tennessee, southwestern West Virginia, the Ozarks of Arkansas and Missouri and southern Ohio.
8. Sources: Baptists Around the World, edited by Albert W. Wardin (p. 422-423); Dictionary of Baptists in America, edited by Bill J. Leonard (P. 473-474).

H. **Other Primitivists** include numerous independent associations, often in isolated areas outside the mainstream of Baptist life, it is difficult at times to locate and classify them. When a number of associations correspond with each other or recognize each other as belonging to a certain foundation of faith and practice, one can then list them as a separate Baptist entity. On the other hand, there are small associations which are isolated from almost everyone else. It would be foolish to list them as separate Baptist groups in the country. There is also the need to study further some church bodies so as to place them in the right category. For this reason this study does not treat individually the Barren River Missionary Baptist Association, Interstate and Foreign Landmark Missionary Baptist Association, Jasper Baptist Association, Pleasant Valley Baptist Association, New Hope Baptist Association, Truevine Baptist Association, and Wayne Trail Missionary Baptist Association – totaling 216 churches and 27,430 members, even though they are listed as separate bodies in *Churches and Church Membership in the United States (1990)*. Their statistics, however, are included in the total for Baptists in the USA.

## V. **FREE WILL/GENERAL BAPTISTS**

The name General Baptist distinguished them theologically from those who were Particular Baptists. The difference between the two had to do with the gospel call for sinners to be saved. Free Will and General Baptists believed that God desired for all men everywhere to be saved and that the call was issued generally for a whosoever will. This is in contrast to those who believed that some people are predestined to be saved, and

some are predestined to be lost, and that they have nothing to do with it. They believe in the possibility of falling from grace. They believe God calls all men to repentance, but whether or not they are saved has to do with the exercise of their free will. So as a matter of decision, people began to call them Free Baptists or Free Will Baptists.

## A. **FREE WILL BAPTISTS**

### 1. **NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FREE WILL BAPTISTS**

- a. Founded: 1935
- b. Membership: 204,617
- c. Number of churches: 2466 (2000)
- d. Headquarters: Antioch, TN
- e. Website: [www.nafwb.net](http://www.nafwb.net)
- f. Government and history: The denomination had its beginnings on two fronts at the same time. In the South, the Palmer movement traced its history to the year of 1727, when Paul Palmer organized a church at Chowan, North Carolina. Palmer ministered in New Jersey and Maryland, having been baptized in a congregation which had moved from Wales to northern Pennsylvania.

The Northern line was known as the Randall movement, and had its beginnings with a congregation organized by Benjamin Randall, in 1780, in New Durham, New Hampshire. Both lines of Free Will Baptists taught the doctrines of free grace, free salvation and free will, although at first there was no organized connection between them. The Northern line began work in the West and Southwest. In 1910-1911, this body of Free Will Baptists merged with the Northern Baptist denomination, taking along with it more than half its 1,100 churches and all denominational property. In 1916, at Pattonsburg, Missouri, representatives of the remnant churches of the Randall movement reorganized into the Cooperative General Association of Free Will Baptists.

Free Will Baptists in the Southeastern United States, having descended from the Palmer movement, had often shown an interest in cooperating with the Randall movement, but the Slavery question and the Civil War prevented formal union between them. The churches of the Southern line were organized into various associations from the beginning and had organized the General Conference in 1921. These congregations were not affected by the merger of the northern movement with the Northern Baptists.

Now that the remnants of the Randall movement had reorganized into the Cooperative General Association and the

Palmer movement had organized into the General Conference, it was inevitable that fusion between these two groups of Free Will Baptists would finally come. In Nashville, Tennessee, on November 5, 1935, representatives of these two groups met and organized the National Association of Free Will Baptists. Government is congregational.

- g. Doctrine: They are Arminian and conservative in theology and hold to three ordinances: baptism by immersion, open communion and feet washing.
- h. Location: primarily the South.
- i. School: Free Will Baptist Bible College, Nashville, Tennessee
- j. Source: Yearbook of American & Canadian Churches (2004); Handbook of Denominations in the United State, 11<sup>th</sup> ed, edited by Frank S. Mead; National Association of Free Will Baptists Web site.

## 2. **ORIGINAL FREE WILL BAPTISTS**

- a. Founded: 1961
- b. Membership: 33,066
- c. Number of churches: 236
- d. Headquarters: Ayden, North Carolina
- e. Website: [www.ofwbheadquarters.org](http://www.ofwbheadquarters.org)
- f. Government and history: This group divided with the National Association over polity with the majority of Free Will Baptist in North Carolina upholding the right of an annual conference to discipline a local church, educational support and control of the press. The North Carolina Convention developed along slightly different polity from the Midwestern and northern Free Will Baptists. They had a more connectional form of government, and believed the annual conference could settle disputes in and discipline a local church. This view, different educational philosophies, and the desire of the North Carolina convention to operate its own press and Sunday School publishing created tensions that ended in division. The majority of Free Will Baptist churches in North Carolina withdrew from the National Association, while the minority withdrew from the State Convention to maintain affiliation with the National Association. Original Free Will Baptists do not consider their denomination “exclusive,” but recognize the faith and work of Christ of other Christian denominations; those that are faithful to the teaching of

the Holy Scriptures.

- g. Location: North Carolina
- h. School: Mt. Olive College, North Carolina.
- i. Periodical: *Free Will Baptist*
- j. Sources: Baptist Around the World, edited by Bill J. Leonard; Original Free Will Baptist Web site; Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia.

3. **INDEPENDENT FREE WILL BAPTIST ASSOCIATIONS**

- a. Founded:
- b. Membership: 22,000
- c. Number of churches: 295
- d. History: Maintains an independent existence outside the National Association.
- e. Location: Tennessee, Indiana, Oklahoma, Alabama, North Carolina, South Carolina, Kentucky.
- f. Source: Baptists Around the World, edited by Albert W. Wardin (p. 426-427).

4. **PENTECOSTAL FREE WILL BAPTIST CHURCH, INC.**

- a. Founded: 1959
- b. Membership: Not given
- c. Number of churches: 150 (2002)
- d. Headquarters: Dunn, North Carolina
- e. Website: [www.pfwb.org](http://www.pfwb.org)
- f. Government and history: The body has a General superintendent. The Pentecostal experience came to the Cap Fear Conference (North Carolina), early in 1907. As a result the great holiness revival that broke out following the Civil War among Methodists there were formed holiness conventions. Blackmon Crumpler was the leader of a convention called the North Carolina Holiness Convention. That Wesleyan Holiness emphasis influenced the Cape Fear Conference of Free Will Baptists to adopt Sanctification as a second definite work of grace in the heart of a fully justified believer, subsequent to and separate from regeneration. This prepared the hearts of the ministers and members for reception of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit when the Pentecostal revival came to North Carolina.

- g. Doctrines: Regeneration, sanctification, the Pentecostal baptism of the Holy Spirit, the Second Coming of Christ, and divine healing.
- h. School: Heritage Bible College, Dunn, North Carolina.
- i. Periodical: The Messenger.
- j. Source: Handbook of Denominations in the USA, 11<sup>th</sup> ed., edited by Frank S. Mead; Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Web site.

5. **UNAFFILIATED FREE WILL BAPTIST** local associations

- a. History: A number of local Free Will Baptist associations remain independent of any national Free Will association.
- b. Membership: 22,000
- c. Number of churches: 300 plus
- d. Source: Baptist Around the World, edited by Albert W. Wardin (p. 423).

6. **UNITED AMERICAN FREE WILL BAPTIST CHURCH**

- a. Founded: 1901
- b. Membership: 50,000
- c. Number of churches: 250
- d. Headquarters: Kinston, North Carolina
- e. Website: [www.uafwbc.org/church\\_history.htm](http://www.uafwbc.org/church_history.htm)
- f. Government and history: Free blacks and black slaves were members of predominantly white Free Will Baptist Congregations of the south. African-Americans organized their first separate congregation, Shady Grove Free Will Baptist Church, at Snow Hill, Greene County, North Carolina in 1867. The first annual conference was organized in 1870, and the first association in 1887. The first General Conference for United Free Will Baptists convened at St. John's church in Kinston, North Carolina on May 8, 1901. The greatest strength of this body is in North Carolina, where it maintains headquarters and a tabernacle and operates Kinston College in Kinston, NC. There are about 50,000 members in 250 churches. The General Conference has published a book of discipline since 1903, and publishes a periodical called The Free Will Baptist Advocate. The United American Free Will Baptist Church is a member of the National Fraternal Council of Negro Churches (org.1934).
- g. Location: North Carolina

- h. School: Kinston College, Kinston, North Carolina
- i. Periodical: *The Free Will Baptist Advocate*
- j. Source: Baptist Around the World, edited by Albert W. Wardin, Jr. (P. 427); Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia.

7. **UNITED AMERICAN FREE WILL BAPTIST CONFERENCE**

- a. Founded: 1968
- b. Membership:
- c. Number of churches: 35 (2003)
- d. Headquarters: Lakeland, Florida
- e. Website: [www.uafwbc.org](http://www.uafwbc.org)
- f. Government and history: African-American. This group of churches withdrew from United American Free Will Baptist Church in 1968. In 2003, the United American Free Will Baptist Conference had approximately 35 congregations, mostly in Florida, but also in South Carolina, Louisiana, and Arkansas. In addition to the annual meeting of the General Conference, there are six regional conferences that meet annually – South Carolina Annual Conference, Louisiana/Arkansas Annual Conference, East Florida Annual Conference, West Florida Annual Conference, South Florida “A” Annual Conference, and South Florida “B” Annual Conference.
- g. Doctrine: Observes baptism, Lord’s Supper, footwashing and anointing with oil for the sick.
- h. Location: Arkansas, Florida, Louisiana, North Carolina.
- i. Source: United American Free Will Baptist Conference Web site; Baptists around the World, edited by Wardin, Albert W. Wardin, Jr. (p. 423).

B. **GENERAL ASSOCIATION OF GENERAL BAPTIST CHURCHES**

- 1. Founded: 1870
- 2. Membership: 73,000
- 3. Churches: 816
- 4. Headquarters: Poplar Bluff, MO.
- 5. Website: [www.generalbaptist.com](http://www.generalbaptist.com)
- 6. Government and history: This association claims its name and origin in John Smyth (ca. 1570-1612) and Thomas Helwys (ca. 1550-c.1616) and



the group of Baptists organized in England and Holland in 1611. Roger Williams (ca. 1603-83) is held to be the first minister in the American Colonies. General Baptists in the Colonies along the Atlantic coast were at first overwhelmed by the influence of Calvinism (General Baptists have always been Arminian), but their work was reopened by Benoi Stinson (ca. 1798-ca. 1870) in 1823 with the establishment of the Liberty Baptist Church in what is now Evansville, Indiana. They spread into Illinois and Kentucky, and a general association was organized in 1870. There are 60 associations in 16 states. Churches of a common area organized into local associations, which in turn are organized into a general association. A peculiar feature of the General Baptist church lies in the use of a presbytery, into which the ordained members of local associations are grouped; they examine candidates for the ministry and for the diaconate. Ministers and deacons are responsible to this presbytery, which exists only on the local level. They are members of the Baptist World Alliance and the National Association of Evangelicals.

7. Doctrine: General Baptists have always been Arminian with a confession of faith similar to Free Will Baptists: They believe: Christ died for all and failure to achieve salvation lies completely with the individual, humankind is fallen and unable to save itself; regeneration is necessary for salvation; salvation is by faith and repentance in Christ; Christians who persevere to the end are saved; wicked punished eternally, possibility of apostasy, the dead, both the just and unjust, will be raised at the judgment. They are sometimes called "liberal" Baptists because of their emphasis on the freedom of man. Two ordinances are baptism and Lord's Supper. They practice open communion and some practice footwashing.
8. Location: Midwest.
9. School: University of Oakland City, a liberal arts college with a theological department at Oakland City, Indiana.
10. Periodical: *The General Baptist Messenger, Capsule, Voice, Church Talk, Pastor Talk.*
11. Sources: Handbook of Denominations in the United States, 11<sup>th</sup> ed. (p. 52-53); General Association of General Baptist Churches Web site; Yearbook of American & Canadian Churches, 2004 (p. 121)

**C. GENERAL ASSOCIATION OF SIX PRINCIPLE BAPTIST CHURCHES, INC.**

1. Founded: 1670
2. Membership: 140
3. Number of churches: 2 (1995)

4. Headquarters: Opelika, Alabama
5. Website: [www.baptists.web.com](http://www.baptists.web.com)
6. History: The oldest General Baptist group in the United States is the General Six Principle Baptists. In 1670 Six Principle Baptists in Rhode Island began a yearly meeting, the first associational body of Baptists in America. Since the nineteenth century, the Six Principle Baptists have declined. They were little effected by the First and Second Great Awakenings. They failed to maintain themselves in urban centers, never engaged in cooperative missions or publication work and where handicapped by lack of trained ministers who lived in the vicinity of their charges. In 1955 there were only three churches in Rhode Island with 254 members and two small churches in Pennsylvania. In 1984 the Maple Root Church in Coventry suspended its participation in the Rhode Island Conference, leaving only the Wood River Church in Richmond and Stony Lane Church in North Kingston to hold the last meeting (the 314<sup>th</sup>) of the Rhode Island Conference. Since then, the Maple Root and Wood River churches dropped Six Principle from their names and are simply Independent Baptist congregations whose pastors fellowship with the Conservative Baptists. The Stony Lane Church, which has around 120 members, is now the only Six Principle congregation in the Rhode Island Conference. The Pine Grove Church near Nicholson, Pennsylvania, with around twenty members, is the only Six Principle congregation left in the Pennsylvania Conference. After almost three and a half centuries of existence, the body became extinction in the mid 1990s when the Stony Lane and Pine Grove Church dropped the name of Six Principle Baptists and became independent Baptist churches. Saddened by the dissolution of the historic Six Principle Baptists, some ordain ministers began a reorganization of the movement on January 2, 2003, which became established as the General Association of Six Principle Baptist Churches, Inc. All of the ministers serve as missionaries of the General Association..
7. Doctrine: They hold to the six principles as outlined in Hebrews 6:1-2, which they interpret as including the rite of confirmation, or the laying on of hands, after baptism for the reception of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. This group made laying on of hands a test of fellowship. In 1771 the church dropped its requirement of the laying on of hands for participation in the Lord's Supper. The distinctive doctrine of the Six Principle Baptists is the laying on of hands – laying on of hands after baptism to receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit. There is no ecclesiastically binding creed.
8. Location: Rhode Island and Pennsylvania
9. Sources: Baptist Around the World, edited by Albert W. Wardin (p. 428-29); Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches, 2004 (p. 371).

D. **SEPARATE BAPTISTS IN CHRIST** (General Association of Separate Baptists)

1. Founded: 1912
2. Membership: est. 10,000
3. Number of churches: 101 (2001)
4. Headquarters: Columbus, Indiana
5. Website: [www.separatebaptist.org/index.php](http://www.separatebaptist.org/index.php)
6. Government and history. The first Separate Baptists arrived in the U.S. in 1695 from England. During the First Great awakening many Baptist churches split into revivalistic (Separate) and anti-revivalists (Regular) factions. They were especially active during the days of the preaching of George Whitefield (1714-70) in the early eighteenth century and in the conflict between the Old Light and the New Light sects. Many revivalistic New Light Congregationalists also became Separate Baptists. In 1787, Separate and Regular Baptist churches in Virginia merged into the United Baptist Churches of Christ in Virginia. Additional mergers and gestures toward union arose in New England and other states, but a few Separate Baptist churches maintained their independence. Separate Baptists do not claim to be Protestants: "We have never protested against what we hold to be the faith once delivered to the saints." Notable pastors included Isaac Backus, the leading advocate for religious freedom in Massachusetts, and Richard Furman, leader of the influential Charleston Association and first president of the Triennial Convention (1814) Shubal Stearns and Daniel Marshall began the first Southern Separate Baptist church (1755) and association (1755) at Sandy Creek, North Carolina.

Differences between Regular and Separate Baptists were pronounced in the South, but barriers to fellowship eroded near the end of the eighteenth century. At that time most Separate Baptists moved toward a stronger Calvinism, adopted the Philadelphia Confession and entered Regular Baptist associations. Churches rejecting that union organized six associations in Tennessee, Kentucky, Indiana and Illinois. These formed the General Association of Separate Baptists (1912), which in 1975 added the Christian Unity Association (of North Carolina and Virginia). In 1979 they numbered ninety-eight churches with about 9,000 members. Seven associations comprise the General Association of Separate Baptists. Separate Baptist have been largely a rural people, served by theologically untrained pastors whose main income has come from secular work.
7. Doctrine: All creeds and confessions of faith are rejected by Separate Baptists. However, there is an annual statement of articles of belief by the

several associations and the general association. These include statements of faith in the infallibility of the scriptures and in the Trinity; regeneration, justification and sanctification through faith in Christ; and the appearance of Christ on judgment day to deal with just and the unjust. They reject the election, reprobation, and fatality of Calvinism. They observe three ordinances: baptism, Lord's Supper and foot washing. They support missions through a mission program called Separate Baptist Missions, Inc. They practice "nine rites." They do not believe in trained or paid preachers. Those who endure to the end will be saved. No thousand year reign of Christ. Their emotional worship services typically end with invitations for salvation.

8. Location: Indiana, Ohio, Kentucky, Tennessee Virginia, West Virginia, Florida and North Carolina.
9. Women are allowed to preach.
10. Sources: Handbook of Denominations in the United States, 11<sup>th</sup> ed., edited by Frank S. Mead (p. 62-63); Dictionary of Baptists in America, edited by Bill J. Leonard (p. 246); Yearbook of American & Canadian Churches, 2004 (p. 155).

## **VI. CALVANISTIC (REFORMED) BAPTISTS**

### **A. REFORMED/SOVEREIGN GRACE BAPTISTS**

This group of Baptists claim they are seeking to return to the Puritan heritage of Regular Baptists of the seventeenth century. They endorse the First London (1646), Second London (1689), and Philadelphia (1742) Confessions of Faith. They oppose, on the one hand, the evangelistic techniques of modern evangelicalism as too superficial and, on the other hand, reject the hyper-Calvinism and anti-missionism of the Primitive Baptists as too sterile. With their adherence to Calvinist tenets, they tend to oppose premillennialism and also reject the tenets of Landmarkism. They approve revivals, if properly conducted, foreign missionaries, Sunday Schools, Bible and pastors' conferences, the publication of literature, and Christian schools. They advocate the independence of the local church and avoid most other denominational structures. Some churches practice a plurality of elders, while others have only one pastor. The movement also seeks to recover the observance of church discipline, a practice which most Baptist churches have lost. With roots both in the North and South, Reformed/Sovereign Grace Baptists began to appear in the middle of the 1950's. Probably the first formal organization expression of the movement occurred in 1954 when Henry Mahan, pastor of the Thirteenth Street Baptist Church of Ashland, Kentucky, and an alumnus of Tennessee Temple College of Chattanooga, Tennessee, convened at his church the first meeting of the Sovereign Grace Bible Conference.

The Reformed/Sovereign Grace movement, however, has divided into two

camps. One group generally takes the name of Reformed Baptist, while the other is more apt to use the designation of Sovereign Grace Baptist. Churches are generally very small. It is estimated that the two groups of Reformed Baptists are about equal in number of congregations and membership.

## 1. **REFORMED BAPTISTS**

- a. Founded: 1967
- b. Membership: 8,000
- c. Number of churches: 200
- d. Website: [www.vor.org](http://www.vor.org)
- e. Government and history: Organically, they may be traced to the influence of Rolfe Barnard, a Southern Baptist evangelist and theology teacher at Piedmont Bible College. In a Sword of the Lord Bible Conference at Toccoa Falls, Georgia, in 1949, Barnard brought about a split in the conference by preaching on “Sovereign Grace and Mercy” from Romans 9. Barnard’s numerous appearances in the churches in the following years increased the number of ministers adhering to the “doctrines of grace.” One center of Reformed Baptist strength is in Pennsylvania and surrounding areas. In 1967 the Grace Baptist Church of Carlisle, Pennsylvania, began holding annual pastors’ conferences under the leadership of its pastor, Walter Chantry, a graduate of Westminster Theological Seminary. A few years later an annual Reformed Baptist Family Conference was begun, which met on Labor Day weekend. Ten churches, adopting the Philadelphia Confession, established a Reformed Baptist Association.
- f. Doctrine: Sovereign Grace Bible conferences and the distribution of literature are the movement’s major methods of propagating doctrinal distinctives.
- g. Location: Pennsylvania, Delaware, and New Jersey.
- h. Sources: Baptists Around the World, edited by Albert W. Wardin (p. 430-431); Dictionary of Baptists in America, edited by Bill J. Leonard (p. 233).

## 2. **SOVEREIGN GRACE BAPTISTS**

- a. Founded: 1980
- b. Membership: 4,000
- c. Number of churches: 350
- d. Headquarters: Media contact: Jon Zens, P.O. Box 548, St. Croix

Falls, WI 54204.

- e. Website: [www.searchingtogether.org](http://www.searchingtogether.org)
- f. Government and history: Sovereign Grace Baptists are a result of differences within Reformed Baptists, which began about 1980, over certain doctrinal points. Sovereign Grace Baptists relate more closely to the First London Confession (1646) rather than the Second London Confession. They are more critical of Covenant theology and place greater stress on the New Covenant. They are less puritanical. This movement is a spontaneous phenomenon concerning reformation at the local church level. Consequently, there is no interest in establishing a Sovereign Grace Baptist “Convention” or “Denomination.” Each local church is to administer the keys to the kingdom. Membership procedures vary from church to church but all require a credible profession of faith in Christ, and proper baptism as a basis for membership.
- g. Location: Midwest, South, and West.
- h. Periodical: *Searching Together*.
- i. Source: Baptists Around the World, edited by Albert W. Wardin (p. 431-432); Yearbook of American & Canadian Churches, 2004 (p. 155).

## B. STRICT BAPTISTS

- 1. Founded:
- 2. Membership: n/a
- 3. Number of churches: 3
- 4. Website: [www.strictbaptisthistory.org.uk/private/strictbapt.htm](http://www.strictbaptisthistory.org.uk/private/strictbapt.htm)
- 5. Government and history: Most Strict Baptists are in England, where they separated from the Baptist Union for its toleration of broad theological views and practices and departure from Calvinistic tenets. Also called Gospel Standard Baptists.
- 6. Location: There are presently three congregations in the USA: Zion Strict Baptist Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan (1947), Hope Baptist Church of Sheboygan, Wisconsin and Old Paths Strict Baptist Church of Choteau, Montana.
- 7. Sources: Baptists Around the World, edited by Albert W. Wardin (p. 432); Dictionary of Baptists in America, edited by Bill J. Leonard (p. 262).

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Original Free Will Baptists Web site.

Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Web site.

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Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia Web site.





