

A BRIEF HISTORY OF KNCSB

The ministry of Southern Baptists flourished in Kansas from 1845 until 1861. Its Home Mission Board operated the Pottawatomie Indian School near Topeka and the WEA Mission near Paola. Elizabeth McCoy, probably the first woman supported by the Home Mission Board, served both places.

Woodlief Thomas pastored the Delaware City Baptist Church near Leavenworth and organized the first association.

J. H. Luther (father of William Bagby and later president of Baylor University) came to superintend the mission interests, but due to the approaching Civil War never began his work. Southern Baptists did not reappear until 1911 when churches were started along the Oklahoma and Missouri borders.

In 1945, representatives from four of these small churches in south central Kansas met to discuss beginning Southern Baptist work in the state. They formed the Kansas Southern Baptist Fellowship and published a newsletter.

In March, 1946 representatives from these four churches plus eight additional churches organized the Kansas Southern Baptist Convention and called N. J. Westmoreland as their executive director.

In 1947 these twelve churches with 1600 members petitioned the Southern Baptist Convention for recognition. Their request was denied that year, but was accepted in 1948.

Work expanded to Nebraska in 1955 and found fertile soil in which to grow. Southern Baptists had come to Kansas and Nebraska from Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Missouri, and Louisiana to work in the oil fields of the west, the coal mines of the east, and aircraft and other industries in Wichita and Kansas City. Others were transferred to military installations in Wichita, Salina, Topeka, Kansas City, Olathe, Omaha, Lincoln and Grand Island.

To the preachers in those early days it was like reliving the book of Acts. As they went into the communities of Kansas and Nebraska they found a responsive group of displaced persons who were disenchanted with the churches in this new land and who were eager to have church like the one "back home." Many who had not gone to church "back home" were eager to fellowship with others of their kind and were responsive to the gospel in a way they probably would never have been had they not been uprooted. Many of these transplanted ones gave their lives to Christ in the "foreign lands" of Kansas and Nebraska.

Our churches grew rapidly in the 50's and 60's, becoming 197 with 51,902 members by 1968. However, that August, disaster struck the young growing convention. The Securities and Exchange Commission discovered that the Church Loan Association, an agency of the Kansas Convention, was insolvent to the extent of \$1,500,000. The Kansas Securities Commission decreed that the CLA was bankrupt and ordered both it and the convention be placed in voluntary receivership. A five-member management board was appointed to define the extent of the problem, control operation of the CLA, and offer the convention solutions for paying its debts. From September 1969 until April 1970, convention affairs were managed by this board and two staff persons.

By early 1970 the immediate crisis was passed and the management board began to look for an executive director with business and financial skills to restore confidence in the convention's ability to manage its affairs in a prudent, businesslike manner. The board found such a person in Pat McDaniel, loan officer in the church loans division of the Home Mission Board. In March 1970, he became the executive director.

By December of 1974, the convention had raised \$675,000 and was able to call all bonds and stop paying interest to the bondholders. The convention had, in effect, bought the loans of the churches from the bondholders. They established the Kansas-Nebraska Southern Baptist Foundation to receive the payments still owed on loans to the defunct Church Loan Association. The Foundation immediately established a revolving building and loan fund and received into it payments from the churches.

In May, 1977, McDaniel felt his work with this convention was done and resigned to become executive vice-president of the Southern Baptist Annuity Board. That November, the convention elected R. Rex Lindsay as its third executive director-treasurer. Dr. Lindsay had, since 1971, been director of the departments of missions, evangelism, and campus ministry. The committee, in recommending him to the convention, expressed a desire to continue an aggressive program of outreach and church planting.

In 2007, there were 393 churches and missions, worshipping in ten different language groups, cooperating with the Kansas-Nebraska Convention of Southern Baptists. In 2007, these churches gave over \$3 million to world missions through the Cooperative Program. Since 1999 more than 262 new churches and missions have been started toward a goal of 410 by the year 2010. The Baptist Foundation now has assets of \$5.5 million and gave \$176,000 to mission causes in the two states in 2007.

From the four small churches meeting in 1945 has come a strong, vibrant convention of churches with 95,680 members who share a commitment to world evangelization through cooperative efforts.

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