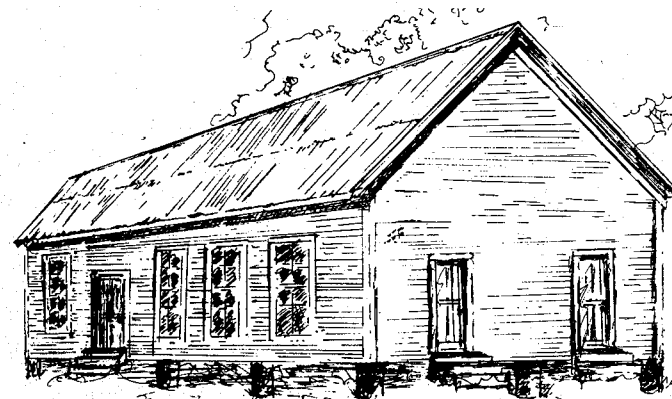


CENTENNIAL + 5

(History of Smyrna Baptist Church,
of Rusk County, Texas)

1873 - 1978



By

J. W. Griffith

Pastor

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DEDICATION

Smyrna Baptist Church happily dedicates this History to Bro. and Sister John F. Vaughn. Bro. John became a member of Smyrna Church in 1907, was ordained a deacon in 1931, and has never been a member of any other church. His father, W. T. Vaughn, was a faithful deacon of the church before him. Sister Helen has been a member of the church for over sixty years, and has served faithfully alongside her husband. Her grandfather, William M. Pruitt, was the second pastor of Smyrna Church. Her father, James A. Pruitt, was a faithful church member for many years. They live to bless and inspire our lives as Church and individuals. May the Lord God be praised for their ministry!

A History of Smyrna Baptist Church

By
J. W. Griffith

There is fascination in looking into the past history of people, places, and institutions. Such is true of the century plus history of the Smyrna Baptist Church, of Oak Flat Community in southern Rusk County. Long hours of research into the old records of the church have shown the present church the trials, hardships, joys, and victories of the church which have come to them as a precious and valuable heritage of men and women like them. They were human, they erred often, and the church dealt with error then as the Word prescribed. They were honored when occasion justified it, as the Bible warranted. There is much to be learned in these things and many examples, positive and negative, to be followed. These pages are penned, not for mere entertainment of the reader, but for the teaching and admonition of those who remain today, to the honor and glory of the God and Savior of all men in every century.

The Old Mt. Carmel Church

In a very real sense the Smyrna Baptist Church is the offspring of the Mt. Carmel Baptist Church. This old church which was dissolved in 1871 furnished many of the members who entered the membership of the Smyrna Baptist Church when it was organized in 1873. The Smyrna Church came into possession of the Mt. Carmel Church minutes for the years 1867-1871 (partial). Though the originals have been lost the church has copies, thanks to the handwritten copy made by Mrs. H. B. Woolverton in 1947.

From examination of the Mt. Zion Baptist Association minutes it has been found that Mt. Carmel Church was organized before 1858. The Church's letter to the Association reported that Bro. N. Conner was the pastor (he was also the first clerk of Mt. Zion Association); she sent as "delegates" Brethren Joel Elam, B. F. Stamps (second clerk of the Association), and William Howerton. She met on fourth weekends of each month; had baptized 7, received 6 by letter, accepted 2 by voucher, dis-

missed by letter 8, excluded 1, lost 1 by death. They reported a total of 65 members, gave \$5.00 for Domestic Missions, \$2.50 for minutes. The 1859 session of the Association was to meet with Mt. Carmel, "18 miles south of Henderson."

At that time Mt. Carmel Church listed as her post office, New Salem, and there is some evidence that it was located in the area of the old Devereaux Plantation. However, there is no Associational minute to indicate where it was meeting by 1867, the date of the earliest extant minutes of the Church. It actually appears that the Church had "no certain dwelling place." The records show that committees were constantly being set up to secure building sites, make building plans, etc. At that time Bro. John Sparkman was pastor of the Church, and his family were members. He lived at Minden, and it is believed that attempts were being made to re-establish the church in that area. At one time the committee chose "John Sparkman's well" as a building site, and the church approved it. A number of members withdrew their letters at that time because there was another church nearer to them. Plans to build here evidently never materialized.

By 1870 the Zion Hill Church had been organized under the leadership of Bro. Sparkman, and his family had moved their membership there. Bro. W. W. Albritton of Mt. Enterprise had become pastor of Mt. Carmel, and the church still had only temporary meeting places. For a time the church met at the Garland Schoolhouse, the location of which is now unknown. Building committees were still finding sites, seeking titles to the land, etc., but nothing seems to have come of it, and the membership must have despaired. Many had withdrawn their membership, and the remainder met on Saturday before the first Sunday of November, 1871, appointed Joseph Brandon moderator and R. P. Goldsberry church clerk. The only business recorded was, "On motion the church agreed to dissolve and granted letters to all who call (ed) for them."

Organization of Smyrna Church

Almost two years after the dissolution of Mt. Carmel Church, on August 16, 1873, a group met at Chinquapin Spring, about three miles east of Laneville, Texas, off Farm Road 1798. Here was erected a small log church house, which seems to have been shared with the Methodists. The Baptist Church constructed a baptistery in the spring, walling and flooring it with heart lumber. This old framework has not rotted through the decades and may still be seen on the DeWitt McCune Farm.

The organizational presbytery consisted of Brethren John Sparkman, moderator, John Deason, and F. O. Galloway, clerk. Seventeen persons, including six who were former members of the Mt. Carmel Church, made up the charter membership. Bro.

J. F. M. Reid was elected church clerk, and the church voted to "protract" the meeting for several days. During the "protracted meeting" ten more members were received. Of these were three more former members of Mt. Carmel. The two deacons of the church, Bro. W. M. Pruitt and Bro. James Chapman, were also among the ten. A total of 34 persons were members of Smyrna Church her first year. During the next year Bro. M. T. Wells was elected as the third deacon.



Old baptistery at Chinquapin Springs, first location of Smyrna Church, as it appears today.

At the end of the meeting Bro. John Sparkman was elected pastor, and he agreed to serve for the remainder of the year. In November he was called again for the ensuing year and agreed to serve "for a time." On August 31, 1873, the church elected messengers and sent a petitionary letter to the meeting of the Mt. Zion Association at New Prospect. Smyrna Church has subsequently represented in this association for 105 years.

John Sparkman Pastorate

The church records seem to imply a reluctance on the part of Bro. Sparkman to assume the pastorate in the beginning of Smyrna's history. However, it appears that the church was well pleased with him, and they called him over and over, year by year, as long as his health permitted him to pastor the church. In 1876, the minutes record that Bro. Sparkman was elected pastor "by acclamation which resulted by one consenting voice"; 1877, "unanimously"; 1878, "by unanimous vote"; 1879, "chosen pastor unanimously"; 1880, "chose Bro. John Sparkman pastor another year unanimously". Bro. Sparkman was recalled in 1881, but Bro. W. M. Pruitt was also chosen to preach one Sunday each month. In the minute of March, 1882, is recorded, "As our former pastor, Bro. Sparkman, is afflicted and not able to serve us, moved and seconded that we choose another pastor, which resulted in the choice of Bro. W. M. Pruitt unanimously." Bro. Sparkman died in October of that year and is buried in Zion Hill Cemetery.

Bro. W. M. Pruitt became a member of Smyrna Church three days after its organization, and may have already been a licensed preacher. He was ordained by the church, August 28, 1875. Bro. Pruitt often filled the pulpit during the years of Bro. Sparkman's pastorate, especially when Bro. Sparkman had

fallen into ill health. Others who filled his pulpit during those years, from sister churches, included Bro. John Deason, Zion Hill; J. F. M. Reid, who was licensed by the church July 14, 1877; Bro. A. A. King; E. W. H. Parker; E. S. Spivey; John Neely.

Different brethren were called from time to time to assist in a "protracted meeting". In the meeting of August, 1876, five brethren were invited as co-laborers in the effort, in addition to Bro. Sparkman; W. M. Gaddy, W. H. H. Hays, W. W. Albritton, E. W. H. Parker, and W. M. Pruitt. Results of the meeting were not recorded.

Smyrna Church started off very co-operative with her sister churches. In addition to faithful attendance at the local association, district meetings, fifth Sunday meetings, state meetings, the custom of inviting visiting brethren to their business meeting each month, were regular things of the early days. Smyrna regularly exchanged visiting brethren with sister churches, the most often being the churches at Zion Hill, Shiloh, Holly Springs, Cool Springs, Locklin, and Antioch.

Matters of inter-church fellowship were frequently the discussion in the district meetings and fifth Sunday meetings. Messengers were consistently referred to as delegates in the early minutes. These carried a query to the district meeting at Zion Hill in April, 1879, as follows, "Is it scriptural to call a minister without the consent of the church to which he belongs? And is it scriptural to call a minister from another church when they have a minister within their church?" Disposition of the question is not recorded. However, it appears that the church believed the first question should be answered negatively, for on several occasions she voted to grant Bro. W. M. Pruitt the privilege of pastoring the Antioch Church. On the other hand she continued to call her pastor, though he was a member of another congregation.

Questions of boardism (which led to the Convention Baptist churches of the area) were arising. In February, 1878, brethren were elected to meet with others at the Holly Springs church "in consultation whether the Mt. Zion Association and East Texas General Association would co-operate together or not." Again records do not reveal the outcome. Delegates to the district meeting at Harmony in May, or June, 1880, were instructed to vote against a division of the Mt. Zion Association. In June delegates were elected to a meeting of the General Association at Ennis, Texas, in July.

Strict discipline of the membership was practiced by the Smyrna Church during her early history. One of the orders of business adopted in her organization was to call for acknowledgments. Hardly a monthly business meeting passed without a case of discipline being presented. Members made

acknowledgments for using profane language, being intoxicated, misconduct, having a quarrel with a neighbor, nonattendance. Committees were appointed to investigate such charges as "being intoxicated with ardion (sic) spirits", "reasons for absence", "certain reports" of fellowshiping with those of other faiths, "being in disorder," which usually meant a man and wife were having marital difficulties, "unchristian conduct", "dancing and drinking", "committing fornication", "some complaint that is against him", which turned out to be leaving another brother security for his debt, "not giving satisfaction in regard to it." People were often excluded for these charges upon the report of the committee appointed.

The church had problems with hardshellism. In the business meeting of May 18, 1877, it was recorded, "The church agreed to wash feet when it is convenient." Evidently the foot-washing was not done, and the case of one brother became the subject of discussion for several months' business meetings until, finally, in October, he was excluded "for departing from the faith by joining the so called Primitive Baptist church." Others were excluded for "departing from the faith of the gospel", "departing from the baptist faith and attaching herself to the so called Cambelite church", "departing from the faith by joining the Methodist society."

Financial matters did not occupy much space in the early history of the church. Acts of benevolence occurred from time to time. One such interesting act occurred in May of 1878, when the church voted to "give to Sister Francis Allen and Sister (Minerva?) Allen 50 lbs. bacon and 10 gallons syrup that is in her treasure." The pastor appears to have been on freewill offering, receiving amounts as large as \$10.00 from time to time. In these days before formal organization of Baptist convention system in Texas, the Smyrna Church responded to requests of the "executive board", by making up offerings for missions. Such a request in November, 1879, netted \$10.25. Some pledged certain amounts for missions for the year. Offerings were also taken on occasion for old and needy ministers of the gospel.

The Pruitt and Hays Years

Bro. W. M. Pruitt served as Smyrna pastor from March, 1882 to November, 1883. He was recalled only once besides finishing out Bro. Sparkman's year. Bro. Pruitt was ordained by the Smyrna Church, and it may be that some thought it more scriptural to call a man from their own midst. However, there does not seem to be the unanimity in his call to the pastorate which existed in the case of Bro. Sparkman. The Pruitt family is still represented in the membership of Smyrna Church in the person of Mrs. John Vaughn, who is his granddaughter.

Bro. W. H. H. Hays was elected pastor of Smyrna Church on November 17, 1883 and was present for the business meeting in December. However, he is not noted as present again until May, 1884, Bro. Pruitt having moderated the intervening conferences. By this time Bro. Hays was a quite popular preacher, his services in considerable demand. On examination of the Smyrna records it is apparent that Bro. Hays' services were either beyond the reach of the Smyrna Church, or else exceeded their willingness to pay.



W. M. Pruitt, second pastor of Smyrna, (1882-1884) with wife and daughter.

Bro. Hays was a very fine evangelist, and the records reveal many baptisms during his pastorate. Lists of those received in the church upon profession of faith are found each summer for the several years of his pastorate. This pastor favored the move to boardism among Baptists, and he promoted it in the churches he pastored. Frequent missions offerings were taken and the funds turned over to him for distribution. He was also a zealous supporter of Sunday Schools in the churches.

Many of Bro. Hays' frequent absences from the church may have been due to his many other evangelistic activities. Permission was sometimes granted him to be absent from his appointment at Smyrna to visit some other church. The matter of his wages for pastoring was a concern of the business meetings. In February, 1886, the Smyrna Church voted to give Bro. Hays \$100 for the associational year. There is a list of 39 names who pledged a total contribution for this purpose of \$74.75, in amounts varying from 25¢ to \$5.00. Of these pledges a total of \$64.65 was collected. When Bro. Hays was reelected as pastor in October, it appears that he asked for a reckoning concerning his past year's salary. In December the church voted to "settle with Bro. Hays for his service last year." Then, in January, 1887, there was another vote to have Bro. William Parker "inform Bro. Hays that we under the present circumstances can not accept his proposi-

tion which was to serve us this associational year for one hundred dollars."

Bro. W. M. Pruitt was elected moderator **pro tem.** for the remainder of the year. Bro. M. L. Vaughn was elected to "see Bro. (C. H.) Gibson and invite him to meet with us at our next meeting." The report on this invitation indicated the decline of Bro. Gibson to pastor the church. Things went on with, usually, Bro. Pruitt moderating until October, when Bro. Hays was again elected pastor. Nothing more is said of the "salary settlement," but Bro. Hays was present as regular moderator in the meeting of January, 1888.

This final stint in the pastorate of W. H. H. Hays seems to have ended fairly soon, for records after March show other brethren serving as moderator in the business meetings. The church elected Bro. J. M. Mizzell, New Salem, as pastor in October, but he declined to accept. In February, 1889, Bro. John Isbell, of Mt. Enterprise, was elected pastor, and he accepted the call. Bro. Hays went on to become prominent in the work of the "board-party" (Convention) Baptists, and was the first moderator of their Rusk County Baptist Association, organized in 1901.

Smyrna's interest in associational co-operation continued in these years. The Mt. Zion Association met with Smyrna Church for the first recorded district meeting in 1882. This was not the regular meeting, but one of those special ones held from time to time. This was October, and there were other such meetings in February and April of 1883 at other churches. Smyrna delegates to the April meeting at New Salem were to get an answer to the query, "Was the funds that was collected when the Savior was on earth, for the support of the poor, or the support of the gospel?" The answer is not recorded, but one might detect a bit of anti-mission spirit in the wording of the query.

Smyrna Church received a program in November, 1883, concerning missions, recommended by Mt. Zion Association. She voted to adopt "the plan for raising funds for missionary purposes," and appointed Bro. W. J. Parker collector for Smyrna Church. He was instructed "to prepare a roll of the members of Smyrna Church and solicit said funds." Mass meetings continued to be held among the churches through the years, with the result not noted in the church records.

Church discipline continued to be stern. The membership list begun January 16, 1883, contained 106 names, of whom twelve were excluded for various reasons and many others made acknowledgement to the church to escape exclusion. On September 15, 1883, Bro. Stephen Yates was "liberated to exercise in public in any way the spirit of God direct him." Bro. Yates subsequently conducted "divine services" in the business

meetings of the church on several occasions. It appears, however, that the church decided Bro. Yates was preaching some things in a way the spirit of God did not direct him, for in the wake of the hardshell trouble, he was excluded for "departure from the faith as we teach and practice."

The church was concerned for the behavior of its membership and tried to exercise positive as well as negative discipline. On July 15, 1882, she voted to have the church covenant, articles of faith, rules of decorum, and membership list read in the next business meeting. On July 18, 1885, there was a vote that each member of the church act as a "committee to look after those who have absented themselves from the church." On March 17, 1888, a committee was appointed to notify a certain brother "that the church is dissatisfied in regard to him drinking too much whiskey" and to report to the next conference. The brother made the acknowledgements due.

Near the end of the period; in fact, on the very day Bro. John Isbell was called as pastor, the church voted to liberate another of her members, Bro. Thornton Vaughn, to preach the gospel.

Twenty-Two Formative Years and Six Pastors

From 1889 to 1910 Smyrna Church had six men as her pastor, under whom she progressed in total membership to approximately 150 members during the first decade of the twentieth century. One of these pastors was among the most prominent and popular preachers of his day, some of the others are all but forgotten today, though so few years have passed. They are but testimony to the brevity of man's duration on earth, especially in the memory of his fellow man. How thankful we may be that the Lord has said He "knoweth them that are his" (II Tim. 2:19).

Bro. John Isbell was recalled each fall until 1893. There is nothing to indicate the personal feelings the church may have held for Bro. Isbell, except continuing to call him for four years. Not much is now known about his ministry. He seems to lack the dynamism of leadership possessed by a Sparkman or a Hays. He lived in Mt. Enterprise, where a few people still have vague recollections of him. It is believed he organized the Isbell's Chapel Church, which existed for many years in the Sand Hill Community south of Mt. Enterprise and was named for him. He is believed to have had no children.

Bro. L. R. Heflin, who succeeded Bro. Isbell is almost as little known as Bro. Isbell. His pastorate continued to 1896, and the last year the church again undertook to pay a pastor's salary, in the amount of \$100 yearly. His three years with Smyrna Church seems to have been evangelistically successful for the times, as sixteen were received by letter and twenty-two for baptism. The clerk made an interesting note in the minutes for September,

1894, "After divine services Smyrna Church convened in conference and received Little Sister Achsa Holleman." Little Sister Achsa grew up to be Mrs. Hugh Lyles. At the time of her conversion she was only about ten years old, a very tender age in the eyes of that generation.

Smyrna Church called a young, unordained preacher from Bethany Church, Nacogdoches County, to succeed Bro. Heflin, Bro. J. R. Carmichael. Bethany Church was requested to ordain Bro. Carmichael. Meantime, following the scruples of the time, the minutes explicitly stated that Bro. Carmichael was called "as supply until he has been ordained and then as our pastor for the next year." Bro. Carmichael subsequently moved to Laneville and joined the Smyrna Church in 1897. His wife joined upon an experience of grace for baptism. He continued to be called to 1899, part of the time by acclamation and unanimously. His first pastorate was a good recommendation of him. Minutes of Mt. Zion Association list his post office at a later time as Omen, Texas.

Judging from the records Smyrna Church had a popular pastor in Bro. E. D. Blankinship, from 1899 to 1901. That is well, for in those years the church had problems of board-party and mission-party divisions in the churches and associations. During the Blankinship pastorate fifty-seven were baptized, seventeen received by letter, and three were restored to fellowship; two young men of the church surrendered to preach. Bro. Blankinship was called as pastor again in 1901, but he declined to accept. His popularity with the church did not end, however. He was called back for protracted meetings, to assist in ordinations, and one unsuccessful attempt was made to call him again as pastor, in 1904, offering him \$150 for a year, a very good salary for the time.

Bro. James A Long served as pastor from 1901 to 1904. Bro. Long was well liked in the Mt. Zion Association. The year he was called to pastor Smyrna, the messengers had recently heard him at the annual meeting and invited him to Smyrna for the divine services on Saturday, October 5. The next Sunday he was unanimously called as pastor. He pastored a number of the older Mt. Zion Association churches. When he died in 1927, Smyrna Church elected a committee to memorialize him with resolutions of respect, as was their custom for a time with deceased members of the church, though Bro. Long was not a member of Smyrna Church.

The last of the six who pastored Smyrna from 1889 to 1910 was the most prominent. Bro. J. F. McLendon, 1904 to 1910, lived most of his ministry in Clayton, Texas, though he moved for a year or so to a place between Laneville and Glenfawn while pastoring in this area. Bro. McLendon's was the longest

pastorate since Bro. John Sparkman. He was an outstanding pastor of his times, pastoring many different churches, and serving as moderator of Mt. Zion Association from 1890 to 1917, longer than any other man. He was doubtless instrumental in holding the Association for Missionary Baptists at the time of the Board Party schism. Other popular leaders left Mt. Zion and formed the Rusk County (Board Party) Baptist Association. Bro. McLendon was



J. F. McLendon and wife; McLendon pastored Smyrna (1904-1910).

very active in leadership positions in the associated work of Mt. Zion Association and Baptist Missionary Association of Texas. This progressiveness in mission work and association was instilled into the Smyrna people and continues to the present time. The records show forty-six baptized during his ministry. Bro. McLendon offered his resignation as pastor in the August meeting, 1910, and it was accepted.

There is far more to churches, however, than pastors. Over the decades names of families and individuals appear, and incidents emerge from the clerk's records that better portray the history than do pastoral sketches. During these years, the name of Pruitt continued to be prominent. Bro. W. M. Pruitt, the second pastor, moved in and out of the community, but when he was in he was much used to moderate business meetings, hold divine services, etc. in the absence of the pastor. His son, Bro. James A. Pruitt, was a very prominent leader in the church.

The Vaughn family was probably the most numerous among the membership of Smyrna Church. In these years the church liberated four of this family and ordained two to preach the gospel. Bro. V. T. (Thornton) was mentioned earlier. He served the church in many capacities and was ordained to the full work of preaching the gospel of Christ on February 16, 1902. A presbytery met to ordain Bro. V. T. Vaughn on December 1, 1901, and proceeded in regular order. The clerk reports that everything was found satisfactory except "on the one point, and that is, there is no demand for Bro. Vaughn's ordination." Perhaps it was an anticipatory move on the church's part, for by the following February the Isbell Chapel Church had called for his ordination, and it was promptly concluded. Bro. V. T.

Vaughn was a peacemaker. He served on many committees to bring about reconciliation and restoration to fellowship of wayward church members. Oftentimes Bro. Vaughn would intercede in behalf of the repentant member before the church, and the church would graciously hear him and restore the offender to fellowship. Bro. V. T. Vaughn finished his earthly labors October 14, 1915, and the church memorialized him on the pages of the minutes. Among the resolutions it is stated, "In the death of our dear brother, the church has lost a faithful minister, and an earnest and able worker."

Bro. W. W. (Will) Vaughn was the son of Bro. V. T. Vaughn. He was liberated by the church February 22, 1913. Though he was never ordained he occasionally held divine services on conference days. Bro. Will Vaughn was otherwise very active in the church also. He served the church as clerk for almost a quarter of a century, first from 1901 to 1905 and again from 1915 to 1935. He kept an exceptionally clear and legible record of church proceedings, and often incidentally let show some of his personal feelings in matters of difference.

Of all the Vaughns the name of M. L. Vaughn stands out most in the records of Smyrna Baptist Church. The first mention of him was in the minute of August 20, 1881, at which time he was about twenty-three years of age, when he was elected an alternate messenger to the Mt. Zion Association meeting at Cool Springs. Bro. Vaughn did not surrender to the ministry until February, 1897, at the age of thirty-eight. His ability with the Word of God must have already been considerably developed, for he was called to pastor the Sulphur Springs Church, who called for his ordination in the following September. He was ordained on the third Sunday in October, during the pastorate of Bro. J. R. Carmichael. Bro. Carmichael was assisted in the ordination by Bro. M. F. Spivey. Bro. Spivey's initials may be in error, for the only Spivey known in associational records is E. P. Spivey, who pastored various Mt. Zion churches. Bro. M. L. Vaughn lived until 1947, the ninetieth year of his life. Most of the com-



M. L. Vaughn, ordained minister and pastor, long-time member and leader in Smyrna Church (1858-1947).

mittees of the church during the years had as one of the members M. L. Vaughn, who often served on two or more at the time. Usually he was one of the messengers to the fifth Sunday meetings, Mt. Zion Association; year after year he attended the meetings of the Baptist Missionary Association of Texas in various areas of the State. He was a bold and willing leader of the church, and for the sixty-five years of his participation it is surely correct to say that Bro. M. L. Vaughn had a greater influence on Smyrna Church than any other person living or dead. His son, Ben F. Vaughn, was liberated to preach September 17, 1910, and exercised his gift before the church several times before his untimely death August 21, 1912.

During the period 1889 to 1910 Smyrna Baptist Church set aside two other young men to the ministry also. These were Brethren Roe T. Holleman and Edwin Stanford, both licensed (the word "liberated" was by now falling into disuse) in March, 1901. Both these young men were saved and baptized in August, 1900. Then in the following March in conference the church elected a committee "to investigate the matter in regard to Brethren Roe Holleman and Edwin Stanford's application to preach." The committee retired forthwith, evidently in consultation with the prospective ministers, came back and made their report in the same meeting, and the two were given "the privilege to preach."

Bro. Holleman was evidently more apt to preach of the two. He is first noted as conducting divine services in the conference of July, 1901, then again in August. He went on to enroll in Jacksonville College. A note in the minutes for March 15, 1901, stated that the church was sending a written certificate to Bro. Roe Holleman, "showing that he is a licensed minister, the college President of Jacksonville requiring this of young ministers." On October 18, 1902, Smyrna church considered the request of Bro. W. B. Perry, representing Mt. Enon Church, for ordination of Bro. R. T. Holleman to the full work of the ministry. Ordination of Brethren J. W. Bryan and J. A. Jones to the deaconship was already pending, the first date for the deaconship service not having been kept "on account of Providential hinderance (sic) in the form of rain." Consequently the two deacons and the minister were all ordained on December 21, 1902. Bro. J. A. Lee preached the ordination sermon; other members of the presbytery were Elders E. C. Rice, M. L. Vaughn, Wm. M. Pruitt, V. T. Vaughn, Jas. A. Long, and J. J. Burks.

It appears that Bro. Roe Holleman maintained his membership for the most part of the time in the Smyrna Church, though he was pastoring elsewhere. In later years some vacilla-

tion on his part began to appear with reference to Bro. Holleman's affiliation with Missionary Baptists. This may be the reason for the church's vote in February, 1905, to "receive the credentials of Bro. R. T. Holleman for the present by his request to wait for further developments." Subsequently the church voted to restore the credentials of Bro. Holleman on July 15 of the same year, and he thereafter presided in the absence of the pastor in the conferences and assisted in protracted meeting in the summer of 1907. However Bro. Holleman eventually cast his lot with board-party (Convention) Baptists.

Smyrna Baptist Church was very loyal to the Mt. Zion Association and, after the organization, to the B. M. A. (Baptist Missionary Association of Texas). The great schism in Baptist ranks in Texas occurred in the closing years of the nineteenth and opening years of the twentieth centuries. Those known as missionary Baptists were opposed to surrendering any authority of the church in associational matters to boards. Those who found no disagreement with the use of a board in such matters were in the beginning called board-party Baptists. Smyrna Church began to show her inclination to the missionary party as early as the pastorate of Bro. Hays. In the years now under survey in this history she was finally forced to take an open stand and declare her allegiance, which she readily did.

The "mass meetings" continued to be held from time to time, and Smyrna was often electing delegates to such meetings. There were stirrings in the grassroots of the Baptist association in Texas, especially in north and east Texas, and these meetings were some of them. Heretofore there had been little outspoken opposition to the Baptist Convention of Texas, for it was not much different then from State Associations of Missionary Baptists today. However there is but one reference in all the Smyrna records when she ever elected delegates to the State Convention. She did support the missionary programs and Baylor University. The extra-church boards were called in question by Smyrna Church as early as May, 1892, when the church, having received a letter from "Bro. Carroll" (evidently Dr. B. H. Carroll, a leading contender for the board party faction), and voted to invite the Brethren of the Board to have their next meeting with us." This invitation was doubtless ignored.

The one time that delegates were sent to the State Convention was in 1897, after Dr. Carroll had succeeded, with others, in asserting board authority over the churches of Texas, and after they had obtained the removal of Dr. R. C. Burleson (who had opposed the board-party power) as president of Baylor University. Pastor J. R. Carmichael and Deacon W. D. Wells were the delegates, and they were instructed to vote for (1) "restoration of Bro. R. C. Burleson to the presidency of Baylor university, and

(2) for retrenchment in the mission expences (sic)." The last instruction had to do with the loud outcry being raised against the high-salaried executives and secretaries of the boards and the resultant considerable reduction in the missionary list due to inability to pay the missionaries the salary promised them.

By 1899 an East Texas Convention was being promoted by many prominently opposed to the Texas General Convention. In the business meeting of March, 1900, Smyrna "Church refused to take any stock in the East tex. (sic) convention at present." In April, "By motion and second the consideration of an East Texas Convention was tabled." In May the church "appointed delegates to meet in a call (sic) session of the association at Clayton on Wednesday before the 2nd Sunday in June." This was evidently a special meeting of Mt. Zion Association relative to the troubled times, and it is regrettable that the outcome is unrecorded in Smyrna records.

Finally, by May, 1901, Smyrna Church had definitely severed herself from the convention system of Baptist cooperation. On that date she voted to cooperate with the Baptist Missionary Association of Texas and to appoint messengers to the meeting at Appleby in July. The first mass meeting following the permanent cleavage of the State Convention had been held with the Bethel Church at Appleby in March, 1900 (another had convened at Troup in July), and the people at Smyrna evidently were possessors of mistaken information concerning the meeting place in 1901. At the same conference Smyrna voted to make a missions offering to be sent to Bro. J. M. Newburn, Jacksonville, who was in process of establishing Jacksonville College for benefit of the churches composing the newly organized Baptist Missionary Association of Texas. In June the Church, having evidently learned their error concerning the Appleby meeting, voted that the messengers should "stand over to meet in Nov. or Dec." At the same June conference messengers and alternates were elected to a meeting of the B.M.A. "to meet with Horn hill (sic) church, Limestone Co. August 7, 1901." The meeting actually met on the old Confederate veterans' campground six miles west of Mexia, Texas, and is known in history as the Jack Creek meeting.

Unended bitterness resulted from this schism of Baptists. Especially was there strong feeling in the beginning. The most apparent case in the Smyrna Church was that involving Bro. Roe Holleman. After the untimely death of Bro. Holleman January 18, 1912 some desired to hold a memorial service in the Smyrna Church building, with Bro. Leland Malone, a Convention pastor, giving the message. This was not allowed until, on March 12, "on motion the church granted Elder Leland Malone the use of the church house to hold Bro. Roe Holleman's funeral service the third Sunday in April, 1912."-18.

The participation of Smyrna Church in associational affairs, both local and state, were considerable during these years. Regular offerings were made to various phases of missions, though unsystematically until May 17, 1902, when the Church in conference adopted a plan of systematic giving to missions, to be paid monthly. The monthly amount is not stated in the minutes, but collections before this had varied from about \$5.00 to \$10.70, which was not so negligible an amount for the times as it seems now. Oftentimes the messengers to the associational meetings made pledges to missions in the name of the church, and the church always responded by approval. An interesting note is found in the record for April 18, 1903, according to which the deacons were to redeem the pledge made at Jacksonville for State Missions from funds on hand, and "to buy one quart of wine for sacramental purpous (sic)."

In the annual meeting of the Mt. Zion Association in 1903 a resolution was passed requesting each church to appoint one member to constitute an executive board of the Mt. Zion Association. Bro. M. L. Vaughn was elected to the executive board. At the same time the church voted to endorse Bro. J. C. Johnson "as our next association missionary." The executive board was doubtless a lingering fragment of boardism from the board-party group. However, Smyrna Church, at least, regularly voted their approval or disapproval of the executive board's actions.

From time to time the missionaries came to Smyrna and preached. Others were invited, but evidently never came. Elder J. H. Roberts preached in the divine services of September 17, 1904, having just concluded, as the local missionary of Mt. Zion Association, a protracted meeting at the nearby Oak Flat schoolhouse. This meeting had harvested sixteen members for Smyrna church. On December 17, 1904 the church extended an invitation to Rev. Said M. Jureidini to visit at his earliest convenience to explain the needs of mission work in his native country, Syria. In the following January, however, the church voted opposition to support of Foreign Missionaries Jureidini to Syria and Yohanon to Persia. These two men had been endorsed by the Baptist General Association, made up chiefly of churches in Arkansas, but also including many churches in northeast Texas and other southern states.

There was some collaboration in those years between the B. M. A. of Texas and the General Association, in which Smyrna joined. On May 15, 1910 she voted to "send Foreign Mission Funds through the Baptist General Association of the United States. However this does not debar any individual member from sending their money through any channel they may choose."

Two other votes will illustrate how the Smyrna Church sought to maintain her local independence though in entire associated cooperation with other churches. The first was in connection with her election of messengers to the B. M. A. in 1905, when Smyrna voted to "instruct the messengers to vote for the consideration of the general body, provided it does not infringe on the liberty of any church." The entry is vague in one sense, but very clear in the matter of local church authority. Again, on October 17, 1908, the B. M. A. messengers were instructed to vote against the proposed amendment to the B. M. A. Constitution. The nature of the amendment is not related, but the prerogative of the church to oppose it is clearly illustrated.

It is not known from the records when Smyrna Church moved from Chinquapin Springs, but it must have been between June, 1892, and November, 1901. In 1892 a special act of the church was necessary to allow the Methodists the use of the church house on Wednesday night preceding the fourth Sunday in July. Upon removal to Redland, about two miles east of



Redland Methodist church house, as it appears today, was first a union church house; Smyrna Church met here several years.

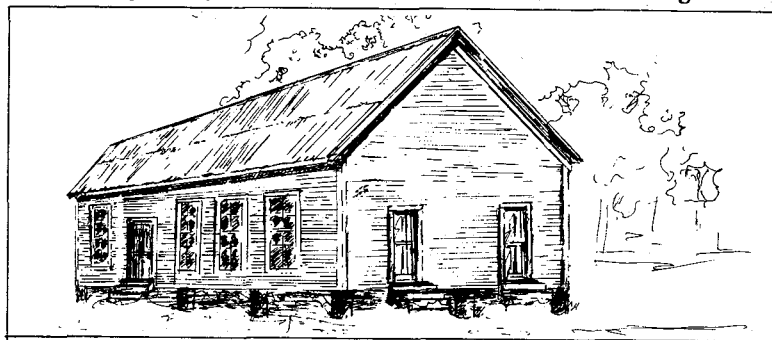
Laneville, the Baptists and Methodists shared the church building, as indicated by an act of conference on November 30, 1901 instructing the deacons to confer with "proper officers of the Methodist church and have a flu built for the stove." On April 15, 1905, the church agreed to request of the "Methodist brethren" arrangement of a "stage for the organ," while the Baptists appointed a committee to repair shutters of the church house doors.

Evidently tiring of this joint meeting house, the church took up the subject, August 19, 1905, of building a church house at Oak Flat Community and appointed a committee to select a place and secure building funds. The committee consisted of Brethren T. C. Jackson, R. T. Holleman, J. H. Fuller, C. W. Chapman, and B. G. Woolverton. The land was secured by January, 1906, but it was still lacking a house of worship on it in January of 1907. At that time Brethren M. L. Vaughn, Bud (W. T.) Vaughn, and Taylor (Z. T.) Lyles were added to the committee. By fall the church house was sufficiently complete to move in, and on October 19 the church voted to move to the church house at Oak Flat on next conference day. Thus, the clerk noted, November 16, 1907, that after preaching by Pastor McLendon the church "convened in conference the first time in her new building at Oak Flat."

Organization of a Baptist church in Laneville may have been partially the reason for the removal from Redland to Oak Flat. Between August, 1907, and January, 1910, forty-five members were granted letters of dismission, in groups as large as sixteen at the time. It is believed that most of these went into the Laneville Church.

Almost immediately there was difficulty with the Methodists concerning the Baptist equity in the Redland church house. On October 19, 1907, a committee was appointed to confer with the Methodist brethren "of Redland Church to see what they were willing to pay to the Bapstis (sic) for their part of church house at said place." The committee was to ask for \$100. In November the committee asked for more time, in December they were granted indefinite time. But again the amount of \$100 was insisted on for the Baptist half, "and they would settle of the old debt held against said house." On March 14, 1908, the committee made its report and the church discharged it. Unfortunately the substance of the committee's report is unrecorded.

Though Smyrna Church now met in a new building at Oak



The "new" church house at Oak Flat; Smyrna moved here from Redland in 1907.

Flat, there remained much still to be done to make it as comfortable as it needed to be. On May 16, 1908, a committee was appointed to solicit funds to paint the building. This matter took seven months, and on January 16, 1909, the committee was instructed to contract with a painter and proceed with the painting of the house. By March the task seems to have been done, for the committee gave its final report, received a vote of thanks, and was discharged.

The painting committee evidently hindered the success of another committee already at work. On November 16, 1907, a committee was appointed to solicit funds to purchase a stove and flue for the new church house. This committee was continued in the December meeting, and is not mentioned again until March 20, 1909, when it was formally released. It is hoped that the newly painted church house had some kind of heating by that time, though it is not revealed in the records.

To light the new building the church bought a lamp from the Farmers Union at Oak Flat for \$5.00. In the same conference, June 19, 1909, a committee was appointed to solicit funds to have lumber dressed to ceil the church and to get the lumber carried to the planer. This committee made a partial report in July, and is not mentioned further in the records.

Smyrna entered into other innovations during these years also. In April, 1895, the church voted to organize a prayer meeting to convene twice a month. In November of 1899, Bro. James Pruitt was elected to have charge of the prayer meeting on its regular meeting days. In August, 1900, the deacons were authorized to "hire a janitor to attend to sweeping the house and trimming (sic) the lamps." By August, 1903, however, the janitor must have been discontinued for a committee was appointed "to keep the lamps in burning order during protracted" meeting.

On February 21, 1909, the church endorsed "the action of the people in organizing a sunday school (sic) and will go ahead and organize." One might logically suspect that there were those who had acted without church authority on this occasion. A very interesting thing occurred a year later, February, 1910. The first mention of ladies appointed to a committee of the church is made. Sisters Lela Pruitt, Evie Vaughn, and Mary Lyles were to solicit funds for the Orphans Home. Hereafter ladies were frequently elected to fund-raising committees. Evidently they made the best money collectors.

Smyrna continued her reputation as a strict disciplinarian throughout these years. By way of comparison by pastorates, there were sixteen times when disciplinary matters came up in thirty-six business meetings in the Isbell pastorate; thirteen out of thirty-six in the Heflin pastorate; thirteen out of thirty-six in the Carmichael pastorate; fifteen out of twenty-four in the

Blankinship pastorate; nineteen out of thirty-two in the Long pastorate; twenty-nine out of sixty-eight in the McLendon pastorate.

Most disciplinary cases had to do with irregular church attendance, especially conference. This was usually satisfied by explanation of reasons for absence, but often someone was excluded for persistent failure to attend services. During the years, 1889 to 1910, the church dealt with nineteen cases of dancing, fifteen of drunkenness, ten for raffling, ten for unchristian conduct in general, ten for departure from the faith, six for profanity, two for adultery, and one each for refusing to live with one's wife, fighting, falling out of brothers, non-fellowship with the church, and selling lemonade on Sunday.

The problem with raffling was persistent and evidently hard to deal with, as there was obvious reluctance to exclude one brother for this sin. In February of one year a committee was appointed to call upon a certain brother for having engaged in raffling. In March the committee reported and was discharged, but another committee was appointed instead of it. In April the committee was continued. In May this committee also reported and was discharged, but action was deferred. In June action was deferred "until some future time;" in July "the church defered (sic) acting on the (name withheld) case at present." In November the charges were changed to non-attendance, "which was not unanimous (sic)." In December the case was deferred again, and finally in January, eleven months after the matter was commenced, the brother was excluded for non-attendance. It is not hard to understand why he ceased attending.

Anything considered dancing, by name, brought one into contempt of the church. "Playing after music" was placed in the category. One was liable to church discipline for playing musical instruments while others danced, or "played", also. The clerk recorded for April, 1900, "Committee appointed to arrange a plan which reach daning (sic) or playing after music." He inadvertently omitted some words in his record, but it is obvious the church felt a plan was needed to discourage the practice of dancing, or playing after music. The committee was "granted further time to arrange plan" at the May meeting. Finally, in September the church requested the committee arranging "plan by which to reach church members indulging in dancing or playing after music" to submit their plan in writing. By November the plan was formulated and presented and the committee discharged. Not one word does the clerk give to enlighten the curious as to what the plan was. However, it was obviously not successful, for through 1910 a number of others were excluded on the same charges, or made confession of fault and were forgiven by the church.

Two Decades of Bro. John Waller, 1910-1930

After extending Bro. McLendon's pastorate on annual basis for three years, Smyrna Church, September 15, 1907, gave him an indefinite call. His resignation in August, 1910, must not have come as a surprise, for the church promptly called Bro. J. H. Waller, of Mt. Enterprise, the same day, and voted to pay him \$100 annually. Bro. Waller reported to the September conference that he would accept, and there began the longest pastorate, by far, of any in Smyrna's history.

Mostly, the Waller years were peaceful years, domestically, though the first World War was very much impressed into the church's records. Bro.



John H. Waller, with wife and daughters, pastored at Smyrna for twenty years (1910-1930).

Waller enshrined himself in the hearts of Smyrna's people, and it could hardly be otherwise when an entire generation came up having known no other pastor. Today, nearly a half century since, there are those who remember him well, and those who cannot remember have known him through the great respect accorded him by their elders. Year after year, until 1922, Bro. Waller was recalled as pastor. The clerks record that he was elected "unanimously," "by acclamation," "by unanimous vote;" not one time is there expressed opposition to him. Finally, August 12, 1922, he was unanimously elected indefinitely.

Through the twenty years of Bro. Waller's pastorate Smyrna Church received into membership 105 people by baptism, 26 by letter, five by statement, and five were restored to fellowship after having been excluded. The "protracted meeting" of August, 1922, had resulted in baptism of 24 people, and it was at the end of this meeting Bro. Waller received his indefinite call. Since that date only one other pastor has been called indefinitely by Smyrna Church. Smyrna had some outstanding evangelists during these years, though much of the time Bro. Waller, himself, was the evangelist. Among these was Dr. H. B. Pender, in 1921, who was widely known throughout the South, and who would become the second President of the American Baptist Association. Bro. F. L. Dupont, another widely known evangelist and

author, preached in the protracted meeting of October, 1925. Still another was Bro. A. W. Luper in 1926. Bro. J. O. Hearne, at one time manager of Texas Baptist Orphans Home, Waxahachie, Texas, preached in the protracted meeting in 1930.

During Bro. Waller's two decades Smyrna Church became one of the leading churches among Missionary Baptists of East Texas. This is reflected in the names of great men who preached there from time to time, as well as those who would become great, and some whose prestige is now faded and forgotten. In this varied number are found the names of J. V. Vermillion, who played a major part in the establishment of Jacksonville College (1918); W. H. Perry (1919); R. E. Day (1924); A. J. Kirkland, who would for many years be President of Texas Baptist Institute and Seminary, in Henderson (1927). Dr. Pender was extended an invitation to "lecture on the kingdom and the second coming of Christ" 4th Sunday and Saturday night before in April, 1928.

Smyrna's influential position in Mt. Zion Association was at least partially due to her continued regular and consistent participation in the local and state associational meetings and support of the cooperative work of the associations. In none of her cooperation, however, did Smyrna Church deviate from her earlier insistence on local church sovereignty and independence. She regularly maintained her representative on the Mt. Zion executive board, unhesitatingly instructing him how to vote and often showing approval or disapproval of the board's propositions. On the same date, September 28, 1913, the church instructed her board member to vote for a full-time missionary on the field and her messenger to the State Association to vote against any amendment.

Early in 1914 Smyrna began planning a mission rally to be hosted by the church in April, and a committee was appointed to "arrange the programme." By November her desires for a local missionary full-time were realized, and she voted to endorse the action of the executive committee meeting at Friendship Church, in their endorsement of a missionary on the field. A notation in the minutes for January, 1916, may pertain to state missionaries. She voted to endorse the present method missionaries are working under: "that they use their judgement as to amount of time they put in on the field." But in May another vote was to "favor granting our associational missionaries time they deem necessary for holding protracted meetings."

The associational missionary must not have been altogether satisfactory. On December 15, 1917, the church voted to instruct their "executive committee man to vote for putting a strong man on the field in the Mt. Zion Association." Again, in 1918, the church voted to "instruct her executive committeeman to advocate putting a strong man as missionary in the bounds of Mt.

Zion Association.”

A national association of Missionary Baptist churches still had not been effected by 1919, and a general movement with strong leadership had gotten underway to work out a reconciliation between the Missionary Baptist churches and those who were then aligned with the State Convention. Smyrna voted to cooperate in the effort, and elected Brethren M. L. Vaughn and M. B. Holleman, messengers, and Bro. W. T. Vaughn, alternate, to a mass meeting of Texas Baptists in Dallas, March 5, 1919. Minute records for March 15, 1919, state the messenger to the mass meeting of Baptist Missionary Association and Baptist General Convention “made a favorable report of the meeting. Committee reported a harmonious meeting.” No unification resulted from the meeting, of course. The Convention soon launched a multimillion dollar campaign to enlarge its missionary endeavors. The B.M.A., not to be outdone any more than they could prevent, promptly endorsed a “Million Dollar Campaign”. Smyrna fell in with the effort and appointed “an enlisting committee to work on the million dollar campaign (sic).”

Organization of a national association of Missionary Baptist Churches did not come until 1924, when efforts were underway to unify the work of the Baptist Missionary Association of Texas and the Baptist General Association of churches mainly in Arkansas, but including many also in Northeast Texas, Oklahoma, Mississippi, and perhaps other states. From the minute of February 9, 1924, we read, “Motion and second that we, as a church, indorse to unification meeting to be held at Texarkana, Ark.-Tex., Mar. 4th, 1924, and that we give some member authority that can and will go, to represent this church.” The minute of July 12, 1924, follows up, “By motion and second, we accept the articles of agreement as adopted by the unification conference of Missionary Baptist Churches, held in Texarkana, Ark.-Tex., Mar. 4, 1924 and accept the name of ‘The American Baptist Missionary Association of churches’.”

Committees were regularly appointed to solicit funds for the work of state missions. It was the purpose of such committees to enlist as many of the church members as possible in promises to contribute a stated amount for missions. Sometimes the soliciting committee sought funds for the work of the B. M. A. in general, though she did not always approve of some, as noted in a vote of November 13, 1926, “that we, under the present conditions, are opposed to putting the five men on the field as enlistment men, for our B.Y.P.U. work.” On the other hand, Smyrna worked hard to do her share for the Orphans Home at Waxahachie. On January 9, 1926, she voted, “we try to pay for one-fourth acre of land on the land deal for the orphan’s home.” On October 8, 1927, a committee was appointed “to see how

much produce we can get to send to the orphans Home at Waxahachie.”

In the decade of the twenties the Baptist Missionary Association had a thriving foreign mission field in Portugal. One of the native missionaries, Bro. Olivera, came to Texas and visited widely among the churches, being well received. On April 13, 1929, Smyrna Church voted to invite him “to meet with us some time in the near future.” If Bro. Olivera ever visited at Smyrna no notice of it was preserved in the minutes.

Several more young men of the Smyrna Church announced their call to the ministry and were licensed and ordained by the church. The first of these was Bro. W. W. (Will) Vaughn, son of Bro. V. T. Vaughn, on February 22, 1913, and whose “liberation” was noted earlier. Bro. Howell McCune was liberated February 27, 1915. Bro. McCune preached several times for the Smyrna Church and represented her in various meetings, but moved out of the community, transferring his membership to another church, before his ordination. Another young man of the community, Bro. Ellis Woolverton, surrendered to the ministry in 1921. However, he had moved to Maple Grove Church about the same time, and in granting him a letter of dismissal the clerk was instructed to “include with Bro. Ellis Woolverton’s letter a resolution extending to him our appreciation of him entering the ministry and also extending to him our prayers.”

On April 7, 1923, there was a motion to liberate Bro. Raymon R. Scruggs “to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ,” but the motion was deferred to the next meeting of conference. It was duly passed May 12, 1923. Bro. Scruggs’ services were soon called for by the neighboring church at Dewey, who called for his ordination on September 8. The church set the ordination for September 30, 1923. Those officiating in his ordination were: Bro. W. T. Vaughn, spokesman for the church; Bro. J. R. Welch, sermon; Bro. J. H. Waller, examination; Bro. J. R. Welch, charge to Bro. Scruggs; Bro. M. L. Vaughn, charge to the church.

During Bro. Waller’s pastorate Smyrna Church continued her policy of strict discipline of the membership. However, there were evidences also of growing laxity. For example, there were three associational years in which no disciplinary matters were dealt with in the conferences. The two decades started off strongly with a total of twenty matters in 1911, but at the end, in 1930, there were none. A few are of notable interest, for they illustrate the greater concern of the older brethren, our forebears, for a pure church membership. In one case a brother and sister called for letters of dismissal, but no letters were granted until the brother involved had made reconciliation with another brother of the church with whom he was out of fellowship. Another brother sought a letter, perhaps to escape disciplinary action, but the

letter was denied, and he was excluded from the membership.

The church was strict as to divorce and separation of couples in the membership. On one occasion a committee was "appointed to investigate county records in regard to Sister (name withheld) making contradictory affidavits in regard to her and her husband parting." The committee found that there was, indeed, contradictory evidence; charges were preferred against her for false statements, and she was subsequently excluded from membership. Sometimes a brother made acknowledgements to the church out of conviction of a guilty conscience. One brother did so in 1921, making acknowledgment "for being intoxicated, while in France during the World War." In most cases the church tried to be lenient with the offender. In 1919 a committee was appointed to see a brother in regard to his non-attendance. At the next conference the committee brought his excuse before the church, who voted to receive this statement "as satisfactory for the present, and we give the brother more time to reinstate himself." During the twenty years under consideration, Smyrna church dealt with 101 items of discipline; yet only 22 people were excluded from the membership. Of these 22 several subsequently made necessary acknowledgments and were reinstated in the membership.

Matters of general business perhaps showed the real inside of Smyrna Church more than did her disciplinary cases, associational projects, etc. The matter of raising the pastor's salary, though the amount seems so minimal in these days of inflation, were major efforts then. Having learned that the lady members were good fund raisers, the church elected five of them for a finance committee in January, 1914; Mrs. Leona Woolverton, Mrs. Jane Holleman, Miss Ollie Bane, Miss Lelia Pruitt, and Miss Alice Vaughn. As the end of the associational year approached in 1921 the \$100 promised Bro. Waller had not been reached, so a committee was appointed to help the deacons raise "the said back salary" by September 30, end of the associational year. Subsequently and nonetheless, the church voted in the same meeting to pay him \$12 per month for the coming year, a substantial raise. The church was behind with the salary at the time of Bro. Waller's resignation in September, 1930, and a committee was appointed to raise the balance due him.

Friction in the membership concerning the annual cemetery day gathering at the church house arose as early as 1913. In May of that year "it was moved and seconded that the church never allow any cold drink stand on the church premises." But the motion was "left over until Sunday for its disposure," when it "was lost by a standing vote." Finally in May, 1915, a motion was passed to allow no cold drink stand on the church ground, followed by a subsequent motion "that the church will not have any all

day singing this year." The minutes do not reveal when the practice of annual singings was resumed, but in March, 1926, the church voted to have a church reunion the second Sunday in May and Saturday before.

A custom was adopted in Smyrna Church during these years and extended for some three decades of electing committees to write resolutions of respect for deceased members of the church. Usually these were approved in a subsequent meeting and sent to various periodicals for publication. Two of the memorials were made a permanent part of the minutes, that of Bro. V. T. Vaughn, who died October 14, 1915, and that of Bro. Homer L. Holleman, who died April 5, 1922. Bro. Holleman was only 29 years of age, unmarried, and had made his livelihood by school teaching. He was a veteran of World War I, having served in France, and many believed that may have precipitated his mental breakdown and untimely death. The resolutions show the high regard and loving esteem in which he was held. Some quotations from the resolutions read, "It can be truthfully said of him that he was an honest, upright Christian gentleman, numbering his friends by his acquaintances; and they were many."

Other evidences appear in the minutes which show the church's prayerful concern for the nation and her own boys during the War. As the community's young men went to war their spiritual condition came into serious consideration. Two of these, other than Homer Holleman, are of further note, Brethren Elton Chapman and Tine Vaughn. Bro. Chapman had not made a profession of faith until the eve of his departure, when he joined the church as a candidate for baptism, May 18, 1918. The Lord brought Elton back safely and he has lived a long and useful life in service of Christ. Bro. Tine had already been used in several offices, as church clerk and Sunday School Superintendent before being called into service. In July, 1918, the church passed two resolutions, one to Bro. Tine, who was then in training at Camp Travis, the other "expressing our interest in our boys who have been called to fight in the battles for the world's freedom." Both resolutions are preserved in the minutes. Bro. Vaughn had wrote to express his interest in the protracted meeting being held that summer. The clerk's resolution expressed appreciation of the church for his interest, "and that we assure him that we remember him in our prayers and pray that the comforting Spirit of Christ may be his guide and protection until we meet again." The second resolution was sent to all the "soldier boys" from Smyrna. It read, "Resolved: that we (Smyrna Church) take this method of expressing our interest in our soldier boys who have gone from us to fight the world's battles of freedom. We pray that each may be faithful to Jesus and that they may stand for the

right at all times. We also pray that if it is God's will, they may return to us ere long."

There was a constant need to maintain and equip the church building and property. In February, 1916, a committee was appointed to assist the deacons in raising funds to purchase a larger and better stove. This matter was disposed of promptly, but not so the matter of new lamps. The committee seemed unable to secure lamps to their satisfaction, or so they reported in September, 1922. In October they were ready to recommend buying Coleman lamps, but still had found none satisfactory. The church instructed them to buy the best available Coleman lamps as soon as enough funds were collected. Still it was January, 1923, before the lamps were secured and installed. The committee reported that they had left on hand about 65¢ worth of cord, "which will be sold for money."

The matter of repainting the church house was an even more difficult task. A committee was appointed to solicit funds to paint the church house on June 9, 1923. In July, August, and September the committee asked for and was granted more time to raise the funds. A year after commencing, June 7, 1924, the funds had been raised, the first committee discharged and another enlisted to arrange for the painting. In August this committee was also granted more time. Finally, December 13, 1924, the committee reported that the church house is "painted and paid for." In April, 1926, there was a vote to "recover our church house with galvanized roofing." This task was reported as accomplished on November 13, 1926. It took two months to get fifty new song books, June to August, 1927.

An example of deacons' action in behalf of the church, with the expectation of the church's approval, is seen in an entry of the minute dated January 7, 1928. The church voted to "endorse the action of our Senior Deacon, W. T. Vaughn, in buying 4/10 of an acre of land, from H. B. Woolverton, to add to our church ground."

An interesting example of Christian concern and benevolence is seen in an act of the church on January 10, 1920. The church appointed a "soliciting committee to raise some funds to help the First Baptist Church at Rock Port, Tex. to build a church house, on account of their building having been blown down in the late tropical storm."

After the resignation of Bro. A. A. Scruggs as church clerk in November, 1912, the church elected Bro. S. L. (Levi) Vaughn, who resigned in June, 1915. The church refused to accept his resignation at the time, but reconsidered the next month and elected Bro. Tine Vaughn. Bro. Tine held the office until he went away to school in September, at which time Bro. W. W. (Will) Vaughn was elected.

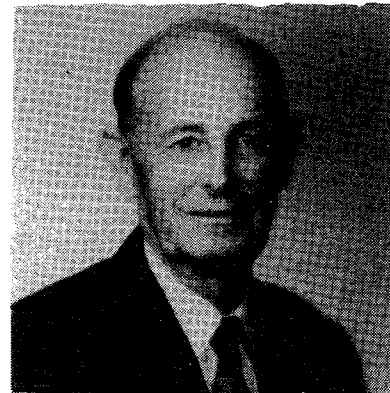
The church seems to have rather gradually accepted the responsibility for an organized Sunday School, and began electing the superintendent sometime before 1916. The first mentioned superintendent was W. T. Vaughn, who resigned in September of that year. A motion was made to "dismiss the school for awhile," but this lost. However the new superintendent is not named. Others who served during these two decades were Brethren Tine Vaughn, H. B. Woolverton (at two different times), M. L. Vaughn, W. W. Vaughn, R. R. Scruggs, and Ed P. Bradberry. The only class teachers noted as selected by the church were for the "card class." The older classes were probably allowed to select their own teacher. Ladies who served as card class teachers included Mrs. Ruth Vaughn, Mrs. Vera Derrington, Miss Tina Chapman, and Mrs. Sarah Jackson. On Sunday, January 14, 1923, the church first voted to organize a Baptist Young People's Union.

One last note for these two decades: sometimes the church did not convene because of it being too cold (the weather, that is). The clerk noted in the minutes, February 9, 1929, "No church meeting today on account of extremely cold weather and sleet and freeze."

Through Seven Pastors and a Crisis, 1930-1950

During the next two decades of Smyrna's history the relative calm of the Waller years became years of general turbulence, in the world and the church. It would probably be too much to expect of human nature that even church members could adapt with absolute ease from twenty years of the same pastor to a variety of men, the longest pastorate of which was less than five years, and the shortest just seven months.

The seven men who served as pastors to 1950 were of very varied temperament and differed in ability and success. The first



W. G. Griffith
Smyrna pastor (1930-1933)

of these was Bro. W. G. Griffith, of Panola County. A friendship between Bro. Griffith and Bro. Raymond R. Scruggs resulted in the selection of Bro. Griffith as the new pastor. He subsequently moved into the community, with his wife, four sons and one daughter, and lived there until the end of his pastorate in 1933. He was the first pastor to live in the community since Bro. J. R. Carmichael, in 1897.

The clerk recorded of the call of the new pastor, Elder W. G. Griffith was chosen pastor by a small majority. Considerable opposition to Bro. Griffith remained throughout his three-year pastorate. No special note is made of his recall as pastor in the fall of 1931, but in 1932 the clerk notes that W. G. Griffith was selected as pastor another year, but declined to accept "with as large minority as there is." Bro. R. R. Scruggs was elected moderator protem "for the next short while in the absence of our pastor." Bro. D. J. Collins was invited to preach for the church "sometime in near future at his convenience," whether as prospective pastor or not is unclear.

These things occurred in September, and the following month one of the contributing factors to the pastor's dissatisfaction appears when the church invited native son, Bro. Ellis Woolverton, to preach on Saturday night before the date set to call a pastor. A considerable rivalry over the pastorate of the church had arisen between those who preferred Bro. Woolverton and those loyal to Bro. Griffith. The vote on the next day was by ballot and the clerk records that each man received half of the votes. Nonetheless, a majority voted to make it unanimous for Bro. Griffith, who "accepted the call after the last vote."

Bro. Woolverton preached at Smyrna frequently during the succeeding year, including the summer revival in August. Many converts were received in the revival meeting, at the close of which Bro. Woolverton was called as pastor by a vote of 60-0. Some however thought the vote was hasty and the church rescinded the call and voted again in September. This time Bro. Woolverton received 60 votes with three votes for Bro. Joe Jones and two for Bro. Waller.

Evangelically the Griffith pastorate at Smyrna could be judged successful. There were 11 additions by letter, three by statement, one by restoration, and 41 by baptism. His influence in the community has not yet ended; two of his sons married young ladies from the church.

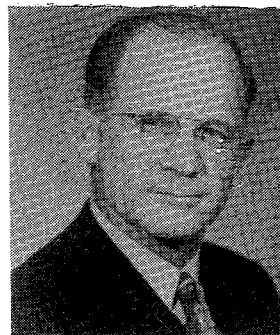
From the clerk's records it appears that Bro. Woolverton's efforts on behalf of the Smyrna Church were more successful before he became pastor than after. Soon after his re-election as pastor in September, 1934, there occurred a breach of fellowship between him and another brother of the church, over a matter not related to the church. Nevertheless, it became a matter of serious disruption of the entire church fellowship, which dragged on without settlement (although the brother was eventually excluded) until the fall of 1935. Bro. Woolverton was victimized by the affair. He offered his resignation in January as pastor, but the church



Z. E. Wolverton
Smyrna pastor
(1933-1935)

rejected it. At the regular pastor calling time in September, a majority called him again, but he declined to accept. Bro. W. W. Vaughn, the long-time clerk, had also become implicated in the matter. He also resigned, and Bro. A. A. Scruggs became clerk a second time.

Very shortly after this the church extended a call to Bro. E.



E. D. Keller
Smyrna pastor (1935-1938)

D. Keller as pastor. At the time Bro. Keller was enrolled as a student in Jacksonville College. He profited from five cushioning years since the Waller decades and remained as pastor for three years, very well liked, and left to go on to greater things on his own initiative. Many conversions occurred during his pastorate, and the church prospered and remained at peace.

Another Jacksonville student, Bro. Gerald D. Kellar, followed Bro. Keller in the Smyrna pastorate. Bro. Kellar was quite young at the time, but was a well-loved and successful pastor. Again there were conversions and progress in these pre-World War II years. Bro. Kellar went on to eventually rise to the presidency of Jacksonville Baptist College, North American Baptist Seminary, and the American Baptist Association while still a relatively young man.



Gerald D. Kellar
Smyrna pastor (1938-1941)

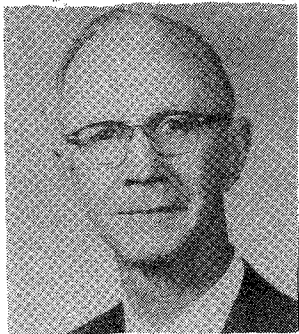
Smyrna had one other Jacksonville student as pastor, Bro. D. C. Dunson, 1941-1944. Bro. Dunson pastored the Cushing Church at the same time he pastored at Smyrna, the church still not having advanced from quarter-time (one weekend per month) preaching. He, too, enjoyed the good will of the people, and had a substantially productive pastorate. He labored at Smyrna during the World War II crisis, when many of the community's young people were called away into the service of the country and many of those left behind moved away to work in defense plants for the duration. Bro. Dunson's pastorate marked the beginning of decline in Smyrna Church, as in most rural churches, that left them much fewer in numbers in the end.

By 1944 the dissension in the state and national associations

of Missionary Baptists was heading for a climax. Many churches found themselves squeezed in the middle. Smyrna was one of these. The membership reflected the rift in call of pastor and otherwise. Many times the people were more prone to follow well-beloved leaders, regardless of their position associationally, rather than to seek out the real basis of the differences. In a general sense the problem had to do with how much control the association could have over the church's choice of messengers, but there were differences in the use of money designated for one purpose being used for another, the question of misappropriation of other funds held in trust for Jacksonville College, and the growing question whether a church's mission money should be used to support the teaching of secular subjects in a church-owned college.

This division of feeling was manifested when Smyrna Church came to call a successor as pastor to Bro. Dunson. There were thirteen votes for Bro. Claud Banks, of Jacksonville College, and fourteen votes for Bro. R. E. Rodgers, of Henderson, who had attended Missionary Baptist Seminary, Little Rock, Ark. Missionary Baptist Seminary was a one-church owned seminary teaching Bible and Bible related subjects only. This Seminary would, with Jacksonville College, be right at the center of the approaching schism of the associations. Nevertheless, the Smyrna Church very graciously voted to make the call to Bro. Rodgers unanimous.

Bro. Rodgers turned out to be one of the most-loved pastors Smyrna has ever had by most of the membership. His pastorate lasted for almost five years and was the longest of the two decades. He was recalled in 1945 and 1946 "unanimously", in 1947 "by acclamation;" in 1948 by a vote of 34 to 7. These seven represented the Jacksonville oriented group, and in the vote to make it unanimous a few continued to dissent. Bro. Rodgers announced his resignation from the pastorate in July of 1949, but remained through August until another pastor was called.



R. E. Rodgers
Smyrna pastor (1944-1949)

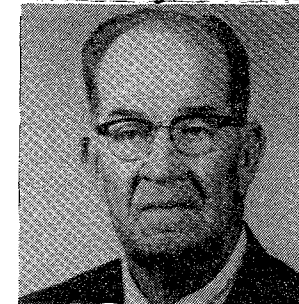
Most of the people who had favored the Jacksonville side in the associational controversy had moved their membership by this time. The church called Bro. G. D. Walters by a vote of 33 to 16 for Bro. Hubie Bradbury, a native son of the Smyrna Church. Bro. Bradbury and Bro. Walters were on the same side of the issue associationally, and Bro. Bradbury was beloved of the

church and community. However, the sad experience with an earlier native son, Bro. Woolverton, had caused many to vow never to vote for another home boy for pastor.

Bro. Walters was an interim pastor, remaining only eight months, until it was clearly apparent that the Smyrna Church would remain with the Mt. Zion Association locally and the American Baptist Association nationally. The Baptist Missionary Association of Texas had been held by the Jacksonville group, and eventually there would be organized the Missionary Baptist Association of Texas. Smyrna would vote to co-operate in the new state association. These things weakened the church numerically. Families and neighbors were divided and passions aroused which still produce strained feelings among Missionary Baptists. Perhaps all worked for the best on both sides, as the writer has heard good and noble men on both sides of the question say, but the Scriptures still contain the words, "God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all churches of the saints" (I Cor. 14:33).

The decades 1930 to 1940 saw some great changes in customary ways of carrying on the church affairs, but it is also surprising that the church was long in parting from some of her pioneer ways. The summer protracted meeting continued to be called just that for most of these years. And these meetings also reaped the great majority of converts received into the church during this time as in the foregoing history of the church. During the first summer meeting of Bro. W. G. Griffith's pastorate fourteen were received by baptism, and Bro. and Sister Z. E. Woolverton were received by letter (he as an ordained minister, also). In 1932 there were ten received for baptism, one by restoration and one by statement. In 1933, when Bro. Woolverton was the evangelist, seventeen came for baptism, four by letter, three by statement.

Another period of many converts came during the pastorate of Bro. E. D. Keller. In 1936 protracted meeting sixteen people were added to the church by baptism and one by letter; three were received for baptism in 1937. In 1939, during Bro. G. D. Keller's pastorate five were baptized; in 1940, three; in 1941 seven. During Bro. Dunson's pastorate the trend seems to be changing; of seven baptized most came at times other than during the protracted meeting. Five were accepted for baptism in the meeting of 1946, after Bro. Rodgers became pastor; in 1947 six



G. D. Walters
Smyrna pastor (1949-1950)

were baptized and two received by letter; five in 1948; seven in 1949.

In her periods of revival Smyrna Church also experienced other outstanding blessings. In 1932 Bro. Jim Scruggs made acknowledgments for unchristian conduct and asked the church to liberate him to preach, which request the church honored. However, in the summer meeting Bro. Jim admitted that he had not been saved and joined the church for baptism. Subsequently, the church re-affirmed his liberation to the ministry, but Bro. Scruggs did not continue to preach.

During the 1936 protracted meeting Bro. Heaton Griffith was granted a license to preach. Heaton was the son of former pastor, Bro. W. G. Griffith, and had married Miss Alice Bradbury of the Oak Flat Community. They were then making their home in the Community. He preached his first sermon on August 1, 1936. Bro. Heaton preached on several occasions in his home church, until the New Salem Church called for his ordination in 1938. The presbytery which met to ordain Bro. Heaton Griffith, on August 28, 1938, consisted of these names in official capacity: Bro. Jairo, moderator; Bro. M. L. Vaughn, spokesman for the church; Bro. W. G. Griffith to preach the ordination sermon; Bro. E. E. Jones to question the candidate; Bro. L. M. Sauls to deliver the charge; Bro. Z. E. Woolverton to pray the ordination prayer.

On the same day that Bro. Griffith was ordained the church liberated Bro. Gilford Vaughn to preach. Bro. Gilford was the grandson of Bro. M. L. Vaughn. Both these young preachers went away to further their education at Jacksonville College. Bro. Vaughn was ordained by the church on January 27, 1940, with the following brethren serving on the presbytery in official capacity: Bro. Hubie Bradbury, spokesman for the church; Bro. Prescott, ordination sermon; Bro. C. R. Meadows, to question the candidate; Bro. M. L. Vaughn, to deliver the charge to the candidate; Bro. Brown, to deliver the charge to the church; Bro. Vada S. Lyles, to present the Bible.

The church acquired several new deacons during these two decades. The senior deacon, Bro. W. T. Vaughn, who served the church long and well, passed away early in 1931, and the church selected two young men for ordination in May of that year. One of these, Bro. John F. Vaughn, was the son of the deceased Deacon Vaughn; the other was Bro. Earl F. Scruggs, son of Bro. A. A. Scruggs. In the ordination presbytery, which met for the service on May 31, Bro. Joe S. Jones delivered the sermon; Bro. W. G. Griffith questioned the candidates; and Bro. J. R. Welch delivered the charge. Bro. Scruggs was a good and faithful deacon until his death in 1961; Bro. Vaughn still lives to bless the church with frequent attendance in her services, in 1978.

In February, 1937, the church voted to set aside Brethren

Hubie Bradbury and Charley Vaughn for ordination to the deaconship. However, Bro. Vaughn did not allow the church to proceed with his ordination. Bro. Bradbury was ordained on March 28, with the following officiating men on the presbytery: Bro. J. W. Harper, to preach the ordination sermon; Bro. Z. E. Woolverton, to question the candidate; other names not listed. Bro. Bradbury moved to Dallas during World War II, subsequently served in the armed forces, and afterward was licensed and ordained to preach the gospel in another church.

Bro. Homer Glenn was received into the membership of the church in July, 1942, and was subsequently received as an ordained deacon in February, 1943. Bro. Glenn continued in this office until his death in 1965.

The most trying events of the Smyrna Church during the period now being considered was the associational rift. While there were large factions on both sides of the controversy, they continued to support the mission enterprises, especially in Mt. Zion local association and the B.M.A. state association. In planning the mission program for 1930-1931 a finance committee was elected and instructed to aid the deacons in raising funds for all purposes of the church, and to ask each member of the church to contribute one dollar during the year for state missions. The office of the church treasurer was revived; Bro. W. W. Vaughn having held the position along with his job of church clerk, resigned, and Bro. H. B. Lyles was elected as treasurer, while Bro. Vaughn retained the clerk position only.

Discovery of a large oil field in northwest Rusk County, raised oil fever to highest temperature during these years. The deacons leased the church grounds in early 1931 and voted to put the money on their Orphans Home land pledge made during Bro. Waller's pastorate. For several years, also, the church continued to solicit produce offerings to send to Waxahachie for the Orphans Home. In September, 1942, Home Manager C. B. Stanley paid a visit to Smyrna, preaching and receiving an offering of \$9.95.

Smyrna Church elected messengers to the Mt. Zion Association every year of this two-decade period. As a matter of interest, the name of Bro. C. G. Bradbury appears as a messenger or alternate not less than thirteen times of the twenty. It is also interesting that the first lady messengers elected to represent the church at the association were elected in 1939. These were Sisters Alice Holleman and Nell Bradbury, who were alternates to the meeting, being held with the Glenfawn Church. After this ladies were elected regularly.

In October, 1934, the church endorsed a plan for putting a missionary in the bounds of the Mt. Zion Association, stating that we "favor employing missionary from this association if this

can be done." In 1937 the church elected Bro. W. P. Holleman her mission board member and voted to pay two or more dollars per month to the mission fund. Yet the church was not always happy with the work being done in the name of local missions. In the 1939 meeting her messengers were instructed "to favor a missionary to do real mission work." In 1941 the church voted to reject the man selected by the messengers for local missionary. In 1945 she voted to take regular offerings to support Bro. Obie Barton for local mission work. Bro. Barton was working in Henderson, where the Calvary Baptist Church was organized under the leadership of Bro. R. E. Rodgers. In 1946 the church's vote was "to cooperate in a mission program for Mt. Zion Association, so long as real mission work is done." This was in September prior to the associational meeting. Subsequently, in October, the church voted to support Bro. W. G. Griffith as associational missionary. An offering for the purpose was to be taken on Saturday night before each first Sunday.

Smyrna elected messengers to the Baptist Missionary Association of Texas eleven years out of the twenty. Most of the time the pastor was one of the messengers; often one of her young licensed preachers was also a messenger. Bro. M. L. Vaughn was a messenger many times, until his advancing age made it no longer possible for him to attend.

The main concern of the church in the state association seems to have been to resist the changes being proposed in the constitution and practice which were driving the wedge that would eventually divide the state work. On September 8, 1934, "On motion this church reject the unification constitution as proposed." Information to identify this "unification constitution" is not now at hand, but it does preview the coming dissension, and factionalization of the State Association.

The church continued to make contributions to the state mission work in spite of these things. In February, 1937, she voted to take a "twenty-five dollar share in the elicquidation (sic) of obligations of Baptist Missionary Association." In February, 1939, Bro. E. L. Stewart, missions secretary of the B.M.A. was invited to the next meeting of the church in the interest of state missions. In March following the church voted to reject the resolutions from the Central Heights Church of Dallas. Again information is not at hand to identify the nature of the resolutions, though it is fairly certain that they pertained to the proposals being advanced in the State Association. The next year, 1940, the messengers were instructed "to vote against any change in our State Constitution." Following the meeting at Jacksonville in November, the Church voted to "pay our State mission money to Dr. Danniels on note." This was in reference to a note to Dr. Z. L. Daniels of Gary, for money he had loaned to the State Associa-

tion. Then, in December the same year, came still another emphatic resolution from the church: "Motion was made to adopt a resolution that Smyrna Church go on record being opposed to the association having any power of judgment over the moral character of any member of our independent church." However, on vote this motion was lost. This may have been a victory for the Jacksonville group. If so, it was short-lived, for in June, 1941, the church voted to recognize Bro. J. W. Harper, who had gone forth, with church sanction only and without state association endorsement, as state missionary. There had already been a vote favorable to support of Bro. Harper with a monthly offering in May. That fall the messengers to the state meeting in Lamesa were instructed "to stand by the constitution as it now is."

With the coming of Bro. R. E. Rodgers' pastorate in 1944, the trend away from the new B.M.A. proposals was more decided. Resolutions from Forest Hill Church (location uncertain to writer) were adopted. A special meeting was convened at Jacksonville in 1947 with reference to differences among the churches, and Smyrna authorized "anyone that can go" to represent her there. In electing the messengers to the meeting in Port Arthur in November, they were instructed to "go on record as in favor of the recommended changes to the *Baptist Progress*." The *Baptist Progress* was the state newspaper of the B.M.A.

In 1948 those opposed to the many moves for change in the work of the B.M.A. and to reported misappropriation of funds in trust at Jacksonville College met and organized the Texas Baptist Institute, under the approval and sponsorship of Calvary Baptist Church, at Henderson. Pastor R. E. Rodgers had been elected by the Calvary Church the first president. On October 16, 1948, the Smyrna Church made a major move in the direction she would finally go in the controversy, when she voted "to endorse the Texas Bible (sic) Institute of Henderson." On April 16, 1949, the church voted to set the next church day "to discuss and vote on the change of constitution of the Missionary Baptist Association" (the clerk inadvertently reversed the words "missionary" and "Baptist" in the record). Then on April 30 came the vote "that the church go on record as being against any change in the constitution of the Missionary Baptist Association (name again inverted—Author) and of the American Baptist Association." Finally, October 15, 1949, the church voted "to reject invitation of the Baptist Church, Carthage, to form a new association, and that we remain in the Mt. Zion Association." So the issue was settled as to where Smyrna Church would stand in the upcoming schism of the American Baptist Association and Baptist Missionary Association of Texas. The messengers to the state association were again instructed "to vote against any

change in the constitution of the association."

Local interest in the sessions of the American Baptist Association was slow coming to Smyrna. The meeting was held at Fort Worth in March, 1935, and the church authorized any member who could go to represent the church. There is no indication that anyone went. In 1941 Pastor G. D. Kellar and Bro. Heaton Griffith were elected messengers to the meeting in Texarkana. The first notice during these decades of offerings sent to A.B.A. missionaries is in May, 1948, when the church voted that the Saturday night offering of that date be given to Interstate and Foreign Missions. Perhaps this was through the influence of Bro. A. T. Powers, a former secretary-treasurer of A.B.A. missions who was present and who preached in the services. In October of 1948 Interstate Missionary T. L. Duren visited the church and preached in a Saturday evening service. In December, 1949, a special offering was taken for interstate missions.

Many months before April 1950 the warring factions in the American Baptist Association were working earnestly to win the climactic vote that would decide which group would control the Association and its missions and publications work. The meeting was far removed from East Texas, in Lakeland, Florida, but in February the church voted to send messengers. Those elected were Brethren E. F. Scruggs, Bill Woolverton, and Sister Lena Milstead; Sister Tishia Bradbury was elected as an alternate. The church voted to take a special offering to help pay the messengers' expenses, and when this did not seem sufficient a second offering was also taken.

If there can be said to be winners in such a contest as this was, then Smyrna can be said to have been on the winning side when the votes were counted at the national Association meeting. She also was on the majority side in the local Mt. Zion Association, but was among the losers in the Baptist Missionary Association of Texas. The dissenting churches in the local association and in the national association went forward promptly with organization plans for new associations. Likewise, the losers at the B.M.A. meeting eventually organized a new state association at Longview, December 14, 15, 1950.

The more everyday problems of the church are oftentimes more interesting than those which involve many churches and are more complex. It is time now to look at some of these. As in her previous history Smyrna Church found it difficult to pay her pastor even the minimal amount expected in the early days, but this was moving toward a greater ability as the period drew to a close.

The records do not show when the Church finally succeeded in raising the balance due Bro. Waller on his salary. But for Bro.

Griffith's second year, 1931-1932, in the very bitterest years of the Great Depression, she voted to pay the pastor "not less than \$100 during this year." By Bro. E. D. Keller's first year, 1935-1936, this had been raised to \$125 per year again. By 1940, during the pastorate of Bro. G. D. Kellar, the church was thinking of going to half-time preaching (two weekends per month). A committee was elected in August "to contact the residential members of the church to see how much they will pay on half time for our pastor." Another committee was charged with the task "to contact all non-residential members to see what they will do." "What they would do" is not revealed in the minutes. In January, 1944, the church voted to raise Pastor Dunson's salary to \$160, per year supposedly. During December, 1947, the church elected a secretary-treasurer of the church and voted to take an offering every service to pay the pastor a set amount, "and all above be used as the church sees fit." The amount set was \$50 per month, "with a raise if funds permit." Bro. Rodgers was then pastor, and Mrs. C. L. Vaughn was elected secretary-treasurer.

In July, 1932, the church took a carbide light plant from Bro. J. H. Waller on his proposition "that if we get no service out of it we owe him nothing for it." Bro. Earl F. Scruggs was appointed to take care of the light plant. How well the plant worked is not indicated by the record. By 1938 the R.E.A. was moving into the rural areas, and in August the church "agreed to sign up for the high line." In April, 1939, a committee was elected "to solicit funds for light wire." The clerk recorded in November that "the high lite committee made their report" and was discharged.

The church house which had been erected by Smyrna and occupied in November, 1907, does not seem to have ever come up to the state of satisfaction desired by the membership. They were continually re-doing something. In 1938 there was a need to floor the building. A committee was appointed, but was dismissed two months later, with no note whether the job had been done. In October 1941 the deacons were instructed "to see to the buying of a heater for the church;" in February, 1942, they were instructed to sell the timber on the church land, and in April to use the timber money "for repairs on the house."

Finally, in 1944, the church began a campaign to raise money to build a new house of worship. Sister Mae Chapman was elected secretary-treasurer to receive funds for the purpose in February. In June the vote was "to start a building campaign to get funds to build the church over." A committee made up of Brethren W. P. Holleman, C. G. Bradbury, and H. B. Woolverton was instructed "to see what it would cost to rebuild the house." The committee appointed to solicit funds was J. T. Vaughn, Nannie Holleman, Ray Chapman, Evelyn Scruggs, and the deacons. By September the clerk listed 46 parties who had

made building fund pledges totalling \$914, and in October the church voted to begin rebuilding the church house at once.

In March, 1946, the church voted to take the money in the treasury to be used in building fund. In April the building and fund-raising committees were discharged and given a vote of thanks. An expression of thanks was also extended to the church's "many friends for helping on the building of the church." The clerk notes in the minutes, "The first sermon was preached in the new church, Saturday morning, April 20, 1946, by the pastor, Eld. R. E. Rodgers."

The new church house needed new equipment, and one of the first things was new song books. These were donated by Bro. Hubie Bradbury, who was sent a letter of thanks. In December the deacons were authorized to dispose of the old benches and go



Smyrna Church building, erected in 1946, as it appears today.

ahead with the building of new benches of new lumber. By February, 1947, nothing seems to have been done, so Brethren W. P. Holleman and C. G. Bradbury were appointed a committee to get lumber and have the benches built. In March the committee reported no progress made "owing to bad weather and not being able to find anyone to do the work." The clerk reported of the committee in April, "he thinks they will be completed in a few days and ready for finishing." The committee was retained to dispose of the old benches. In May Bro. Holleman reported that the lumber for the benches had been ordered, but had not yet been delivered. The benches were finally finished by June, but the church did not like the color and "voted to paint the benches a darker color."

A new heating system was also installed and the committee discharged in April, 1947. The church had voted in February that the "next check received from a certain unknown friend, who has been making regular contributions, be applied toward paying off the heating system." A committee consisting of Sisters Tishia Bradbury, Lena Milstead, and Mae Griffith was elected to purchase new blinds. By June the new building was ready for dedication, and the clerk records for June 26, 1947, "The message dedicating our new building was delivered by Bro. A. J. Wall."

A miscellany of events of interest include the changing of Sunday church services, in October, 1936, from the morning hour

to the afternoon. This was done to accomodate the pastor, who pastored another church, which required Sunday morning services. This arrangement continued for fifteen years, to 1951. Also in 1936, the church voted to sell the church organ, an old foot pump style, after the purchase of a piano. It was sold to Bro. W. P. Holleman for \$5.00.

In September, 1938, the church set the first Saturday in each quarter for taking the Lord's Supper, a practice which continues to the present. The practice, however, seems to have probably been neglected for a time, for the clerk again records that on April 17, 1948, the church voted to observe the Lord's Supper "every three months as we have in the past."

In February, 1940, the church finally rescinded an act which was first precipitated by the board-party Baptist schism of the early years of the century, voting that "the doors of this church was (sic) opened to anyone wishing to hold a funeral in the house."

World War II produced its resolutions in the church business meetings also. On May 23, 1942, "A resolution asking the Government to prohibit the sale of intoxicating drinks to the soldier boy was passed by the church." Again, on October 24, came a vote to "indorse (sic) the resolution against the sale of intoxicating Liquor to the Army men."

The community was touched with sadness at the untimely death of native son and former pastor, Bro. Z. E. Woolverton, early in 1945, and in February voted to "take an offering to help pay Z. E. Woolverton's home out."

Smyrna Church finally progressed to half-time church services in November, 1946, and also agreed that conference should remain open throughout each regular meeting. Two significant events occurred in 1947. The church hired some of the young girls to keep the building clean, and accepted Mrs. Evelyn Scruggs' voluntary offer to take care of the funds and to pay the young ladies. In September, Bro. H. B. Woolverton's wise move to have the old church minutes preserved for future reference was enacted. The church has a complete minute record of her history, possibly as a result of passing this motion.

In September, 1949, the church gave the school building committee permission to move the lunch room on the church ground. In February, 1950, the church voted to extend electric and gas lines from the church to the little house moved on the church property. This small building still stands on the site to which it was moved and is utilized by the church for storage.

The custom of writing resolutions of respect for deceased members of the church continued almost to the end of the period. It was probably ended by the changing policy of religious papers,

which no longer published such obituary memorials. Yet it seems a shame that the custom was ended. It was a reminder to readers of future generations that these faithful members were loved and missed when God called them from the walks of mortals. It would be too much to list them all here, but a few should, perhaps, be noted. Former Pastor J. H. Waller was called upon to write the memorials of respect upon the decease of Deacon W. T. Vaughn, called "our deceased brother and senior deacon." Certainly this was appropriate, for the elder and the deacon had labored together for twenty years. Resolutions were adopted by the church in respect of Bro. Waller, himself, upon his death in 1937. Resolutions of respect were adopted in 1947 for Eld. M. L. Vaughn, who had finally come to the end of his long service for the church he loved so well.

The names of visiting ministers and singers appear throughout the records. One of the most interesting occurred during the years of deepest distress of the Depression, while W. G. Griffith was pastor. The clerk notes, June 19, 1933, that preaching was by Bro. Webb. Bro. Webb was a tramp preacher, known as "Walking Webb." He walked, or caught rides, tramping around from church to church, carrying a pack, living off the people. The author well remembers his arrival at the Griffith home, when the children were at home alone. The three youngest were in the house playing, and were frightened when he came in and made himself at home. Byron, the second son, was plowing in a close by field, and the arrival of the old tramp was soon reported to him. He left his plow and came to see what was up. The old preacher was thoroughly questioned as to his name, business, and intentions. At last Bro. Webb was so infuriated at this teen-aged boy's impertinence he angrily grabbed up his pack, stalked out, muttering that he would not stay at a place where there was such a smart-aleck boy. Byron yelled after him, "Well, go on then, and don't come back."

However, Walking Webb did return and spent longer than his welcome with the Griffith family. He was dirty and uncouth, and reportedly had only about three sermons he preached. When Bro. Griffith's grandmother and aunt came for an extended visit, he had to go, and Bro. L. R. Padgett was prevailed upon to keep him until he could be carried to another church which had not yet enjoyed his visits.

Disciplinary action against members of the church almost ceased during the decades, 1931-1951. During Bro. Griffith's pastorate, there were four cases, three of which were forgiven after acknowledgments and the fourth excluded for departing from the faith. There were two cases during Bro. Woolverton's pastorate, and as previously noted, one contributed to the eventual resignation of Bro. Woolverton. Perhaps the church erred

in appointing a committee to investigate the matter and bringing into the church a problem which did not concern it. Undoubtedly many of the members thought so, or at least came to such a conclusion later. The committee appointed to bring about reconciliation of the parties delayed for a time, during which statements of various parties in the church business meetings served to fuel the fire. People began to take sides, and the majority refused to allow an investigating committee. Clerk W. W. Vaughn was on the minority side, adding his own note to the record, that he and "quite a number" others favored the motion, which "was lost as the minutes state." Charges were eventually preferred against the brother for fighting and the majority voted to exclude him. The moderator protem ruled that the "motion lost for want of a unanimous vote." Upon this, the church promptly voted that the unanimous rule "be done away with". This led to withdrawal of fellowship of the offending party on a majority vote.

These things occurred during February, 1935. In March a motion was made to rescind the action of doing away with the unanimous rule, but it lost. The matter continued to come in church, until June 8, 1935, there was a vote to effect, "that the differences existing in this church, not be mentioned any more, and that to mention them will be considered contempt of the church." Clerk Vaughn appended, "With reference to the motion about not mentioning the differences in the church, I, W. W. Vaughn, was opposed to the motion, also M. L. Vaughn, and also, a good large minority of others." Bro. Vaughn's successor added another note, "The motion referred to means the difference between Z. E. Woolverton and (name withheld) that has been going on for some eight or ten months."

One more attempt was made to rescind the anti-unanimous rule, in September, 1937, but it lost, too. There were no more disciplinary acts on the part of the church until the ministry of G. D. Kellar, when charges were preferred against two for disorderly conduct. One was excluded, the other made acknowledgments and was forgiven. The church exercised no more disciplinary censure through this period. Perhaps the shattering affair which victimized Bro. Woolverton's pastorate caused the church to relax her disciplinary strictness unduly.

The resignation of Bro. W. W. Vaughn, disappointed over the vote to set aside the unanimous rule and the course of the matter involving Bro. Woolverton, brought to an end the labors of an unique church clerk. His records were precise and explanatory. There is an apparent pride in his job, and his little notes are always interesting also. At the end of 1931 he wrote, "I suppose there was no meeting in December as there is no minute. W. W. Vaughn." From this appears that Bro. Vaughn laid the

minutes aside until some future time to record them in the permanent record. Another reads, "No conference in January, 1933, on account of bad weather."

To succeed Bro. Vaughn as church clerk, Smyrna Church elected Bro. A. A. Scruggs, who had previously been clerk (1909-1912) and he served until 1945. After him were Lula Ray Chapman (1945-1946), C. L. Vaughn (1946-1948), and Mrs. H. B. Woolverton (1948-1950). Those who served as Sunday School Superintendent during these years included (with the year of their election): L. R. Padgett (1932), Charley Vaughn (1934), Heaton Griffith (1935), Hubie Bradbury (1936), J. V. Lyles (1941), E. F. Scruggs (1947). Obviously, the name of the Superintendent did not always get into the minutes.

To the Present, 1950-1978

Smyrna Baptist Church has counted nine pastors during the last 28 years of her history. These might be called the Texas Baptist Institute pastors, for all nine have been graduates, or have attended, Texas Baptist Institute and Seminary, Henderson. At least seven of these were students while pastoring the church, and the present pastor is an instructor and official of the Institute and Seminary. This does not mean that the Institute (as popularly called) controlled the Church, or that the Church approved of everything done in the school, but she has been a constant and liberal supporter of it.

Two weeks after Bro. G. D. Walters' resignation Smyrna Church called Bro. George B. Crawford as pastor, by a vote of 27 to 4 for Bro. O. W. Leisinger. He was re-elected in the annual call in September and again in 1951, "without opposition". Nevertheless, on December 22 Bro. Crawford offered his resignation, which was accepted. Bro. Crawford was pastoring a full-time church at the same time he was devoting Saturdays and Sunday afternoons to Smyrna. After he finished Texas Baptist Institute he went on to become instructor, and at one time registrar and vice-president of the School. He has pastored some of the best churches in Texas, presently pastoring Longview Missionary Baptist Church. He is also a part-time instructor in Texas Baptist



George B. Crawford
Smyrna pastor (1950-1952)

Institute at the present. He is a well-beloved teacher, preacher, and pastor wherever he is known.

Bro. Crawford tells with amusement of the time, when he was pastor, Smyrna Baptist Church was having her annual election of Sunday School officers and teachers. There was a group of older men who were not much given to attending Sunday School, and who spent the Sunday School hour outside under the oak trees. After all the other teachers had been elected, Bro. Crawford asked whether there should also be elected a teacher for the class under the trees. One of the "pupils" spoke up, saying, "Aw, Preacher, we'll take care of that class."

As try-outs for pastor after Bro. Crawford's resignation, the Church invited Brethren Chasteen Hobson, Morris Cloud, and Dan Griffith. In February a call was extended to Bro. Griffith by



A. D. Munsinger
Smyrna pastor (1952-1954)

a vote of 11 to 10 for Cloud. Bro. Griffith declined the call, whereupon the call was extended to Bro. Cloud, who subsequently declined to accept also. Finally, in March, a unanimous call was given Bro. A. D. Munsinger, who accepted. Bro. Munsinger was not pastoring any other church, so in April Smyrna voted to change meeting time back to Saturday night, Sunday morning, and Sunday night. Bro. Munsinger was called again in the annual elections of 1952 and 1953 and continued through the associational year to September, 1954, when he offered his resignation as pastor. He was, and still is, extremely well-liked by the Smyrna people. No other pastor has been invited back for so many funerals, and he has been called as evangelist in several summer revivals, the last as recently as 1976. The minutes show much progress of the church during his pastorate. He presently pastors Memorial Baptist Church, Rusk, Texas. He is a Bible student and able to discourse on the doctrines with great intelligence.

In October, 1954, the church made choice of a new pastor between Brethren Jack W. Smith and Donald S. Miller, with Smith being chosen. He was subsequently re-called in 1955. Bro. Smith was a promoter, and some of his promotions were too new to some Smyrna people to be readily acceptable. One of the most memorable events of his pastorate was his hiring of a loud

speaker attached to his automobile, to drive over the community announcing the Smyrna revival then in progress. Most of the people already knew of the revival, but the commotion aroused by the scared cows, mules, and chickens gave him some adverse publicity with some people. Bro. Smith left the pastorate of Smyrna the last Sunday in December, 1955, after the church failed to respond favorably to his request that they build a pastor's home.

The following January 18, 1956, Smyrna Church elected Bro. Luther Crawford pastor without opposition. Bro. Luther was the

younger brother of former pastor, George Crawford. He was elected again without opposition in September, but after another year as pastor he declined to continue. Like with many smaller churches, Smyrna often trained young pastors to move on to larger and greater pastorates. For this she doubtless receives the blessings and favor of God. Bro. Luther Crawford has gone on to pastor some of the largest Missionary Baptist Churches in Texas. He served two years as Moderator of the state association, serves as trustee of A.B.A. youth camps, and presently fills the office of



Luther Crawford
Smyrna pastor (1956-1957)

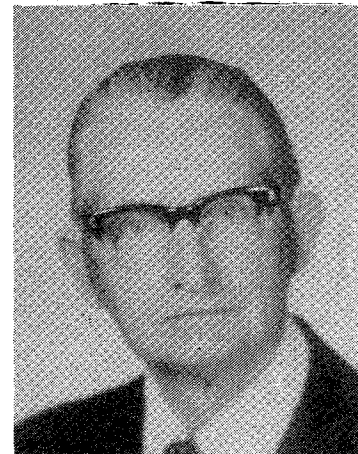
Corresponding Secretary-Treasurer of Missions of Missionary Baptist Association of Texas. He lives at Corsicana.

During the Jack Smith pastorate Smyrna Church ordained two more young men as deacons, Brethren Charlie L. Vaughn and Bill M. Woolverton, both descendants of pioneer members of the Church. Both are grandsons of Bro. M. L. Vaughn. The ordination took place on March 18, 1955, and the officiating brethren of the council were: Questions, George Crawford; prayer, J. W. Griffith; sermon, R. E. Rodgers. Both these men still ably serve the Church.

During Bro. Luther Crawford's pastorate Smyrna ordained Bro. Leo Griffith to the ministry, the only ministerial ordination of these years. The ordination members officiating were Brethren J. W. Griffith (his uncle), questions; C. L. Foster (aunt's husband), prayer; O. H. Griffith (father), sermon; W. G. Griffith (grandfather), charges to candidate and church; R. R. Scruggs (member of Beacon Church, Tyler, which called for his ordination), presentation of the Bible.

On October 13, 1957, the church met to call a pastor. Bro. James T. Clark was nominated and elected "by rising vote", without opposition. Bro. Clark's pastorate had a promising beginning. He was young, zealous, a good student in the Institute and anxious to move the church forward. His downfall occurred with reference to a disciplinary problem, with which the immature and inexperienced pastor was unable to cope. When he was unable, by his methods, to get a move to withdraw fellowship from those he held in contempt of the church, he appointed a moderator and made the motion himself. When the church refused to act upon his motion, Bro. Clark offered his resignation "effective at once," and the church accepted. He had pastored the church from October, 1957 to July, 1958.

Those heard while the church was considering the call of a new pastor in 1958 were Brethren C. L. (Leo) Griffith and G. P. Ehl. Bro. Leo Griffith was elected pastor on October 5, without opposition, but declined the call. On the following November 2, the church called Bro. Barney A. Grant, without opposition. Bro. Grant was an older man than the previous young pastors, his seminary studies were mostly behind him, and he remained as pastor for eleven years, until 1969. His is the second longest pastorate in the history of the Smyrna Church, being surpassed only by the twenty years of Bro. John H. Waller. Bro. Grant was recalled "without opposition in 1959, but in August, 1960, he offered his resignation. One week later the Church voted to reject



B. A. Grant
Smyrna pastor (1958-1969)

his resignation, and in September duly recalled him for pastor another year. Year after year till his resignation the records reveal that Bro. Grant was called again "without opposition", "by acclamation", "by standing vote", "unanimously", "with no opposition".

Bro. Grant pastored during the years when the post-World War II decline of population in the rural areas really began to be felt. Yet Smyrna Church, though much smaller in numbers, advanced in ability and willingness to give to the cause of missions, Christian education, and other phases of associational work. Her mission work was vastly expanded during these years. Bro. Grant possessed the touch of a pastor, and was much loved by his people at Smyrna. He now lives in pastoral retirement (Smyrna being his last pastorate) at Hen-

derson, Texas.

From the number of preacher trials it appears that Smyrna Church found it hard to settle on a man following the long pastorate of Bro. B. A. Grant. Among those heard were Brethren Max Owens, Wilbourne Lee, J. L. Hill, James R. Young, Glenn Haecker, and Gale Wineinger. On November 16, 1969, Bro. Wineinger was elected without opposition. Clerk V. S. Lyles recorded, "Bro. Wineinger accepted the call of the church for the ensuing year on a voluntary offering base—as we call on Faith for his support." Bro. Wineinger had not pastored before, so the church called for his ordination by the Calvary Baptist Church of Henderson.

Bro. Wineinger was unanimously re-elected pastor in September, 1970, upon which he requested the church to give him an indefinite call. The church complied with his request by an obviously reluctant and unenthusiastic vote of six for and one against. He has been the only pastor given such a call in the history of the church aside from Brethren J. F. McLendon and J. H. Waller, and both these brethren had been pastor many years before receiving such a call. Bro. Wineinger continued under this call to the end of his pastorate. He resigned the church May 13, 1973, to take up a new pastorate in Arkadelphia, Ark.



Gale Wineinger
Smyrna pastor (1969-1973)

Smyrna did not call a new pastor until September. During

the interval many preachers were heard. A call was extended to Bro. Ralph Simmons in August, which he declined. On September 2 a call was given Bro. R. E. Walters. He asked for two weeks to consider the call, after which he declined. In the meantime, Bro. R. M. Thompson had preached in the quarterly mid-week service with Sulphur Springs Church and was invited to preach at regular Sunday services. On September 23, 1973, Bro. Thompson was unanimously elected pastor. He was a member of the Zion Hill Church, to whom the Smyrna Church applied for Bro. Thompson's ordination.

Bro. Thompson was re-elected pastor in September of 1974 and again in 1975, the last time Clerk Lyles records, "without a dissenting vote." He displayed his conscientious feeling for his place of service by requesting that the church allow him to report

his activities each month, which was granted. On April 4, 1976, he announced that he had accepted a call to pastor the Brown Chapel Church, and Smyrna Church accepted his resignation. Bro. Thompson's ministry at Brown Chapel was relatively short. His health deteriorated, and he returned to California, his home state, where he could be near the Naval Hospital at San Diego. His condition has improved at the present, so that he is able again to pastor, this time a church in the State of Washington.



R. M. Thompson
Smyrna pastor (1973-1976)

Once again Smyrna tried several times, unsuccessfully, before getting a new pastor. Bro. Harry Matlock preached, but was called by another church before Smyrna acted. Then Bro. Kenneth McInnis of Fred, Texas, was heard and was called as pastor on May 30th. He declined to accept. Brethren J. R. Boyd, Kirbyville, and C. O. Hopson, Zavalla, were heard. Bro. J. W. Griffith was heard on June 6th, and on June 23rd was elected pastor by acclamation. Bro. Griffith teaches in Texas Baptist Institute, and had given up pastoring for the previous two years. Homesick for pastoring again, and feeling very definitely the leadership of the Holy Spirit in the call to Smyrna he accepted the call on June 27, 1976. His pastorate of the church, for him, has been two years of joyful blessing with a small church who manifests a great love for the Lord's work.



J. W. Griffith
Smyrna pastor (since 1976)

Though Smyrna's pastors of the past 28 years have played a major role in her leadership faithful families have maintained the Lord's work by the sacrifice of time, money, and talent throughout the years. These include the families of the deacons, Brethren John Vaughn, Charlie Vaughn, Bill Woolverton, and their wives Sisters Helen Vaughn, Adelaide Vaughn, and Gladys

Woolverton (also the Woolverton son, Joe). Other faithful couples include Obie and Frances Chapman, Odis and Peggy Chapman (and two sons), Hubbard and Ray Barlow (and Billy Barlow), Vada and Tina Lyles, and Mrs. Lottie Johnson. In recent years have been added to the church these other faithful: Lewis and Sue Vaughn, Robert and Diane Gholson (and son). These people fill most of the offices, with the pastor's wife and son, in the church. Some of them hold several positions. Bro. Robert Gholson was received as a deacon, having been ordained in the church of his previous membership.

Many other preachers preached in Smyrna Church during these years. The summer revival meeting was always held, and most of the time a visiting evangelist was invited. Those who have filled this place are Brethren George Crawford, 1950 and 1951; A. D. Munsinger, 1952, 1960, 1971, 1973, and 1976; Albert Garner, 1954; J. B. Powers, 1955 (June); J. W. Smith, 1955 (October); L. Chester Guinn, 1957; R. E. Rodgers, 1958; B. A. Grant, 1959 and 1961; Frank Summers, 1962 and 1963; Dan Griffith, 1964; W. H. Bradbury, 1965 and 1967; W. A. Simmons, 1966; J. R. Alexander, 1967; Paul Owens, 1968; G. D. Walters, 1969; Gale Wineinger, 1970; J. A. Lyles, 1972 and 1973 (November); R. M. Thompson, 1974; Chuck Shirley, 1975; J. W. Griffith, 1977.

The revivals did not result in the large number of additions witnessed in the early years of Smyrna's history. This was the result of the fewer people living in the community and the fact that new members were apt to be received at any time of the year moreso than in the early decades. Some of the clerk's comments about the revival efforts are interesting. Bro. W. H. (Hubie) Bradbury was scheduled to preach the revival beginning the third Sunday in July, 1967. On Monday night he had not arrived, and Bro. J. R. Alexander preached. By Tuesday night, the clerk reports they had learned that Bro. Bradbury had "miss set" the time for the meeting and could not come until the following week. The church voted to continue with Bro. Alexander preaching through Saturday night, then continue another week with Bro. Bradbury preaching. The clerk records, "There were no additions, but a good meeting."

In 1968, with Bro. Paul Owens preaching, the record states, "The church was revived with good preaching, but no additions." With Bro. G. D. Walters, in 1969, "There were large crowds and a lot of visitors, but there were no additions." In 1971 Bro. Munsinger used the revival theme, "The Truth of God's Word," and Clerk Lyles reports, "He did real good preaching, but there were no additions." In 1972, with Bro. J. A. Lyles preaching, "He did some great preaching, and the church is revived." Bro. Lyles was back in November, 1973, and the record states, "The church was revived with good preaching, good singing, and the study of

God's word." With Bro. Chuck Shirley in 1975, "The revival meeting was well attended, and Bro. Chuck Shirley did some good preaching, and appreciation was expressed." Of Bro. Munsinger, in 1976, "He preached great messages throughout the week." Of the revival and Bro. J. W. Griffith, 1977, he records, "His messages blessed our hearts, and we sang and praised the Lord for his wonderful Love and Grace." Such expressions as these are not meaningless space-fillers. The people at Smyrna are stirred by preaching of the gospel, and Bro. V. S. Lyles, the clerk, accurately records their feelings.

The number of additions to the church for the latest period of Smyrna's history reflects the sparse population now residing in the rural area. Most newcomers to the community leave their church membership where they came from, or have no interest in the Lord. The pastorate of Bro. George Crawford saw the addition of three to the church for baptism; that of Bro. A. D. Musinger, five for baptism and five by letter; Bro. J. W. Smith, seven for baptism and two by letter; Bro. Luther Crawford, two for baptism and five by letter; Bro. James T. Clark, three by letter; one for baptism after Clark's resignation; Bro. B. A. Grant, eleven for baptism, fourteen by letter, and one by statement; Bro. Gale Wineinger, five for baptism and 4 by letter; Bro. R. M. Thompson, eleven by letter; Bro. J. W. Griffith, four for baptism and seven by letter to date.

With few exceptions disciplinary action by the church has ceased. This is far from the days of old and is doubtless as wrong in the sight of God as the possible over-emphasis on discipline practiced by our forefathers. A committee to revise the church roll was appointed in April, 1951, which resulted in the exclusion of two for departing from the faith by joining another denomination. In 1957 another was dropped from the roll, "as she said she was not saved when she united with us." The disciplinary debacle which occurred during the Clark pastorate was the most serious of the last 28 years. The church voted to send a committee to see non-attending members, but no committee was appointed. A special motion was made "that any member may make acknowledgements to church for any unchristian act that they have committed." There was even a special confessional service, in which fourteen regular members made acknowledgments, evidently intended to persuade the supposedly guilty party to respond, all to no avail. In the end there were no exclusions, and the pastor resigned. Only one act of discipline has occurred in recent years, with the dropping from the roll of one "for departing from the faith in joining the Methodist church."

Many long faithful members passed away during the last 28 years, and others have moved away. Bro. Charley Bradbury and Sister Tishia, his wife, have passed away, she in 1965, he in 1970.

Bro. Earl F. Scruggs passed away in 1961, having served as a deacon for thirty years, as church clerk for nearly eleven years. His wife, Evalyn, moved away.

After the death of Bro. Earl Scruggs, the church elected Bro. Mack J. Woolverton as church clerk. He continued in this office until he moved his membership to Calvary, Henderson, in 1965. Since that date Elder V. S. Lyles has kept the church record. Bro. Lyles keeps a full and interesting record of church business.

Bro. Bill Woolverton has served as church treasurer since 1956; Bro. Hubbard Barlow as building fund treasurer since 1961. Bro. Houston Milstead was Sunday School Superintendent in 1950; Bro. Bill Woolverton served in that office from 1951 to 1961, since which time Bro. V. S. Lyles has been Sunday School Superintendent. The Baptist Training Course was organized at Smyrna in January, 1955, and Bro. Houston Milstead was elected the first director.

Smyrna Church has regularly represented in Mt. Zion Association, Missionary Baptist Association of Texas, and American Baptist Association through the late years. There have been messengers to the Mt. Zion Association each year without fail, though none were sent to the A.B.A. for ten of the 28 years and for seven years to the state meeting. Usually the pastor has served as a messenger, but Bro. Bill Woolverton and wife, Gladys, probably hold the record. Bill's name appears on the messenger lists fourteen times and that of his wife, 21 times. Bro. V. S. Lyles and wife, Tina, have also served as messengers on numerous occasions, and some others more than a few.

Smyrna continued to sound her voice in associational affairs. Shortly after the division of associational Baptists in 1950, the church voted to go on record as opposing any preacher of the North American Baptist Association "occupying our pulpit without permission of church and pastor." After helping with messenger expense to the Florida meeting of the A. B. A. in 1950, for several years Smyrna voted a certain amount for messengers to meetings when required to be away overnight. After a few more years it became a matter of course that the church regularly paid the expenses of her messengers. The A. B. A. controversy over the purchase of land and relocation of the Publications Office and Business came to vote of the churches in 1970. On September 6 Smyrna voted against the building program. In November, 1971, the church passed a "Motion, that we oppose: Section 6, Article 7 of the Constitution of the American Baptist Association, because it is taking away the authority of the churches." In the December meeting the resolution was re-worded, replacing the words "taking away" with "undertaking to take away." A letter with this information was sent to Bro. A. L. Patterson (Secretary-Treasurer of Missions) "letting them know our position on the matter."

Smyrna's contributions have covered every phase of co-operative mission work, but she has usually chosen her own independent way of dispersing her mission funds. In May, 1951, she chose to give 10% of offerings to missions, but in September, 1952, she adopted a plan which has been followed, with some variation, to the present. Special offerings were to be taken for state, foreign, interstate, local missions, incidentals, Texas Baptist Institute, and orphans home. Whatever is given on the designated date in that offering goes to the stated phase, which is announced before the offering is taken. At times special points of the work have been recipients. Some of these include churches and missions in San Antonio, Austin, Denton, California, Oklahoma, Australia, Hawaii, Arlington, El Paso, Canada, College Station, South Houston, Tennessee, and Rockdale.

Local mission contributions have been directed to various places also. In October 1951 the church "voted in favor of putting an associational missionary on the field," and set fourth Sunday in each month to take an offering. In April, 1952, the church approved the purchase of land at Lone Star, Texas, by the Mt. Zion Association for a church and took offering for the same. In November the church "endorsed Bro. Hugh Sollis as associational missionary, promising to help support him." Beginning in August, 1957, the church made offerings to Beacon Church, Tyler, as a local mission project. In November, 1959, this offering was changed to Grapeland Missionary Baptist Church. During the sixties the Mt. Zion churches supported the Wheelless Lane Church, Austin, as a local project, but in 1968, Smyrna started sending her offering to Edgewood Missionary Baptist Church. In the early seventies the support went to the Troup Mission. This mission was sponsored by First Baptist Church, Arp, and news came to Smyrna which caused them to suspect that the mission was not getting Smyrna's offering. Consequently, the church voted to "hold up our offering to the Troup Mission until we get the trouble settled." A committee of investigation was sent to confer with the Arp church and reported back that a lack of communication between the church at Arp and the mission had caused the misunderstanding, that the mission had received all the offerings sent. Nevertheless, thereafter, all offerings were sent directly to Troup. In June, 1977, Bro. Tom Beene, the mission pastor, visited at Smyrna and announced the closing of the Troup work. The offering was then designated to the Hallsville mission. After the Hallsville work was shortly discontinued, also, the church voted to put local missions offerings in savings account for future local missions work.

Smyrna Church has engaged in many special mission projects and benevolent causes. Some of these include missionary revivals conducted by Pastor Munsinger during his tenure with

Smyrna. One of these meetings was in Houston, another at Days Chapel in the Anderson County Association. Bro. Munsinger was authorized "to receive and baptize any one coming on profession of faith at Days Chapel, a mission point." State Missionary H. E. Rhodes was sent an offering to help buy chairs for his work. Help to purchase a building was sent to a church in Holly Grove, Ark., in 1956; a brother in Kentucky received an offering to help on a proposed mission effort in Korea. Bro. Sam Goin, missionary in Hawaii received several offerings to help him both on the field and in going and coming to the mainland. Mexican Missionary Larry Romero received an offering to help him purchase a pickup truck for his work in 1966. Deaf Mission Work in Little Rock, Ark., received an offering. Other areas receiving help were Utica, Mich. (1967); Conroe, Tex., mission; Longview mission land fund; Boise, Idaho; Korean mission effort in 1978. Smyrna voted to endorse Texas Mission Development in 1978.

Christian education offerings have been sent regularly, since November, 1950, to Texas Baptist Institute, when the church voted to take a monthly offering for Texas Baptist Institute. Smyrna has helped T. B. I. in many other ways. In March, 1952, she voted to invite one of the preachers "that have no church to preach on Saturday night and Sunday that is not regular church days." In June she voted to raise a pledge of \$50 made to the school. In August, 1953, she voted "to raise \$100 on building of dormitory for Texas Baptist Institute." In 1957 Smyrna youth helped raise money to buy an adding machine for the Institute. A special offering was taken in April, 1972, "for the Texas Baptist Institute Memorial Auditorium, which is in memory of Dr. A. J. Kirkland." When a non-Bible course in handwriting analysis was taught in T.B.I. buildings in 1975, by one not connected with the Institute, Smyrna voted to write a letter voicing "opposition of it teaching or condoning graphoanalysis."

In February, 1971, Smyrna Church began regular support of the A. B. A. Mexican Baptist Institute, McAllen, Texas. This support continues every month to the present. For a time in 1977, Smyrna also made contributions to the Landmark Mexican Baptist Institute, Juarez, Mexico.

Many and varied have been the acts of benevolence on the part of Smyrna Baptist Church. For example, in October, 1961, a freewill offering was voted for a hurricane-stricken church in Texas City; members of church families, stricken with heavy hospital expenses were helped in 1962, 1973, 1975, 1978; in the terminal illness of former pastor, R. E. Rodgers, 1967; in the case of severe illness of Texas Baptist Institute students wives and children, 1971 and 1973. Finally a benevolence fund was set up by the church in June, 1977, from surplus treasury funds.

Smyrna Church voted to go to full time services August 24,

1952, on the proposition of Pastor Munsinger, which specified that he was to receive a salary of up to \$35 per week on a freewill offering. The paying of pastor's salary by freewill offering continues to the present. On an average the church pays more to her pastor by this method than do most churches of a comparable membership, who pay a set salary. The change over from Saturday night to Wednesday night services came during the pastorate of Jack W. Smith, in 1955. A radio program was instituted in 1955 also and continued until November, 1956, during the Luther Crawford pastorate. Smyrna entered into a joint fellowship meeting with the Maple Grove, Landmark (Mt. Enterprise), and Sulphur Springs churches, on a quarterly basis in March, 1957. This meeting continues to the present, though only Smyrna and Sulphur Springs now participate. In June, 1963, Mrs. Frances Chapman was hired as full time janitor at \$7 per month out of the building fund. Subsequently this was raised to \$15, then to \$25.

Smyrna Church has co-operated with other churches in the projects of the youth fellowship and has hosted the meeting regularly. Her young people, though fewer than once, still give parts and hold positions of responsibility from time to time in the youth work.

Gospel singing has always been a strong runner-up in interest to preaching among Smyrna people. After the church voted to go to full time services, they voted to dismiss regular preaching services on the cemetery homecoming day, second Sunday in June each year. From time to time services have been suspended for special song services. A few times these have been in the old Sacred Harp music, which several members of the church are still able to sing.

The racial strife of the sixties aroused the people of Smyrna, and on April 11, 1965, the church voted to send letters to Congressmen Joe Pool and Lindley Beckworth and to Senators John Tower and Ralph Yarborough, "to let them know that we were opposed to the marches in Alabama, or any state, that was sponsored by Martin Luther King, and was not in favor of the Legislation before Congress now, 'Entitled Rights Act of 1965'."

Though Smyrna Church started this era of her history with a new building she has constantly made improvements to it. First a new heater was bought (1950), then a clock (1952), new song books as need arose. The next major improvement was May, 1953, when a committee was appointed to get the building painted and add a porch on the front. The work got underway in September.

On September 11, 1954, Smyrna Church started a fund to build Sunday School rooms. Bro. Munsinger was still pastor then, but the building was accomplished in the ministry of Bro. Jack Smith, in 1955. Much of the money was raised by a special

first Sunday offering, but in April, 1955, the church voted to take all the money from the general fund treasury to apply on it, except for \$100. The church authorized procedure with building plans on March 27, 1955, and in April authorized Bro. Earl Scruggs to oversee the building. This writer's father-in-law remarked to him during the time that "people at Oak Flat have got as contrary as Bessie's old cows, and every Sunday School teacher has to have a separate stall." However, there seems to have been no overt opposition to the building.

It was a different story with another of Bro. Smith's proposals, however. In November, 1955, a committee was appointed "to investigate possibility of building a house for pastor." Smith resigned as pastor in December, and nothing ever came of the proposal.

Such items as repainting the house, repairing the venetian blinds, tuning the piano were taken up several times as need arose. In March, 1957, the church purchased another piano, for \$130, from Bro. Sam R. Goin, who was returning to Hawaii to do mission work.

Fans were bought for the Sunday School rooms in 1958. On October 16, 1960, the church voted to "put tile on the floor", and Deacons "C. L. Vaughn, Bill Woolverton, and E. F. Scruggs were elected to see about getting the job done." In June, 1961, Sisters Frances Woolverton, Gladys Woolverton, Ray Barlow were elected as a committee to check on the price of carpet for the pulpit. Though not recorded in the minutes both the tile and the carpet were installed.

During the fall of 1964, when the Redland Methodist Church ceased to function, the Smyrna Church made a bid of \$600 for the benches and got them. Part of the money had to be borrowed from the Mt. Enterprise bank, the first record of the church having borrowed money on a note to accomplish any of her projects. Over the years dissatisfaction with the paint on the benches arose. It had a tendency to rub off on the clothing of those who sat on them. In March, 1971, there was a "motion that Charlie and Bill contact paint companies to see what can be done to our pews." In April there was a "motion to try lime and soda to clean the pews." In May it was reported that the lime and soda method was too expensive. The church then voted to use paint and varnish remover instead and set Saturday, May 15, as a work day to get the job done. Natural color was chosen for re-doing the pews, with instructions "that Charlie and Bill contact a paint contractor for the job." This was done.

The building was recovered in 1965; in 1967 the fans were stolen, and new ones had to be purchased; "a new large heater was bought for the church" in 1967 and "installed in the front of the church"; in 1968 Mrs. O. H. Griffith made offer to purchase a

new sign for the church, which was erected; there were new screen doors in 1969, repair of steps in 1970, wrought iron hand rails installed on steps in 1971 and 1972, new light fixtures in 1973, insulated building in 1973, a new propane gas tank purchased in 1977, finished the front entrance in 1978.

A major undertaking in 1970 was the leveling of the church building. The church voted to make a concrete footing all around the building with a brick curtain eight brick high at a cost of \$1,250, and that the brick be white or buff in color. About the same time Mrs. Lewis Vaughn made contribution of cash and paint to paint the building, and Mrs. Lena Milstead purchased paint for the inside of the building. The inside color was to be light beige, with window trim of white or antique white.

In April, 1972, the church voted to add restrooms on the front of the church building, add air conditioning and central heating, and pipe the church for water. Cost estimates were to be secured. A vote to reconsider was passed in May; in June the men of the church were requested to meet on Thursday night to discuss improvement plans "and see if we can come up with a plan or an agreement on a recommendation to the church to adopt." The Thursday night meeting was dismissed with no recommendation. On August 6 there was another motion to install air conditioning and central heat, but delay same until April, 1973; until then "give all we can on the building fund." Promptly on April 1, 1973, a committee was authorized to proceed with plans for air conditioning and central heat. Bids were secured and one approved in amount of \$3,523, and the task was accomplished.

On August 4, 1974, the church voted to get "approximate cost to build rest rooms inside of the building and the cost to build rooms in front of the building for rest rooms." In October, the church chose to build new rooms "in front of the building to put the rest rooms in; the plans and time to be worked out." A committee was elected to proceed with the work. However, in December, the church voted to remove the two windows in front of the new part of the building because of "an imbalance look." All the work was finished by April, 1975, at which time the church voted to have the ladies rest room on the right and the men on the left.

The latest project of major proportion relative to the building has been the installation of carpet throughout the auditorium. In May, 1977, a committee was elected to investigate the carpeting; red color was specified, with jute backing. It was installed in July at a cost of \$1,334.69. Forthwith a committee was elected to purchase a vacuum cleaner. After some deliberation, they were instructed to purchase a Kirby Brand vacuum cleaner. Special contributions were given on these projects in memory of former pastor (and father of the present pastor) W. G.

Griffith and wife and of Bro. and Sister Charley G. Bradbury.

Postscript

The foregoing account is considerably longer than anticipated in the beginning. It is a record which reveals the intricate working of a church dedicated to upholding the truth of the Scriptures, mindful of its ancestral legacies, bound together in the Christian bond of love. Such detailed procedures as those seen in the history of Smyrna Church in her business meetings, may be considered inappropriate by most churches today, or even unnecessary in any church. However, the writer of these lines believes this is one reason why the church maintains such harmony and unity of purpose. It is believed many lessons can be learned from this church by others.

How did this celebration come about? When Smyrna called J. W. Griffith as pastor, they got a history "bug" in the deal. His leadership in associational work of History and Archives Committees led to the planning of a special display of history in commemoration of the country's Bi-centennial celebration in 1976. Mrs. Peggy Chapman headed up a committee to plan Smyrna's display for the Mt. Zion Associational meeting that year at Hopewell Church. Much interest was aroused among the church members. The church had passed over her centennial in 1973 without commemoration, and since 1978 was the 105th anniversary, it was suggested that such an observance be held at that time.

On August 7, 1977, the church elected Pastor Griffith and Brethren V. S. Lyles, Charlie Vaughn, Bill Woolverton, and Odis Chapman to submit plans. Bro. Vaughn had been elected the church's member on the Mt. Zion History and Archives Commission. The committee recommended (1) the date for observance be Sunday, August 13, 1978; (2) all former pastors and members be invited, with one of the former pastors preaching at 11:00 A.M., dinner served on the grounds at noon, the afternoon given to fellowship and short talks by former pastors and older members of the church; (3) begin summer revival on Sunday night to run through August 19; (4) print a book on the history of Smyrna Church, with pictures of former pastors, if available, and a complete list of members and former members of the church. The church adopted the program in November and chose former pastor, G. D. Walters, for the 11:00 A.M. message. In December Bro. J. A. Lyles, converted and baptized in Smyrna Church, was chosen as revival evangelist.

Many of the present members of Smyrna Baptist Church are direct descendants of the earliest members of the church. W. M. Pruitt was the first deacon in the church and became the second pastor, also; Mrs. Helen Vaughn (wife of Deacon John) is his

grand-daughter. James Chapman, the second deacon and first church treasurer, is the great grandfather of Mrs. Ray Barlow and Mrs. Mae Griffith (the pastor's wife); Harris Sanders, who became a deacon in 1876, and was second church treasurer, is the great grandfather of Brethren Charlie Vaughn, Bill Woolverton, Sisters Lottie Johnson, Ray Barlow, and Mae Griffith. Even the pastor had early ancestors in the church, Bro. John L. Holleman who was a member in 1877, was the father of his grandmother, Minnie Heaton. Descendants of charter member C. M. Holleman, still in the church, include the Obie Chapman family, Adelaide Vaughn, Ethel Peters, Ray Barlow, and Mae Griffith. Griffith.

The first members of the Lyles, Vaughn, Moore, Johnson families were in the church before the end of her first decade. These names, with those already mentioned, still dominate the list of Smyrna Church members.

The Smyrna Baptist Church, of Oak Flat Community, has reached this milestone in her existence by the enabling grace of Jesus Christ. She will continue in the same manner, if she continues. We would say as Samuel, when he erected his Ebenezer, the "stone of help", "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us" (I Sam. 7:12). This work is commended to the glory of God, with the prayer that it will bless the lives of its readers as He wills.

APPENDIX

1. Pastors and Tenure

John Sparkman	Aug. 21, 1873 - March 1882
W. M. Pruitt	March, 1882 - March, 1884
W. H. H. Hays	March, 1884 - Jan., 1887; Oct., 1887 - Feb., 1889
John Isbell	Feb., 1889 - Aug., 1893
L. R. Heflin	Aug., 1893 - July, 1896
J. R. Carmichael	July, 1896 - Aug., 1899
E. D. Blankinship	Aug., 1899 - Oct., 1901
James A. Long	Oct., 1901 - Oct., 1904
J. F. McLendon	Oct., 1904 - Aug., 1910
J. H. Waller	Aug., 1910 - Aug. 14, 1930
W. G. Griffith	Oct. 11, 1930 - Sept. 10, 1933
Z. E. Woolverton	Sept. 19, 1933 - Sept. 7, 1935
E. D. Keller	Sept. 7, 1935 - Sept. 24, 1938
G. D. Kellar	Oct. 23, 1938 - Sept. 20, 1941
D. C. Dunson	Sept. 20, 1941 - Sept. 23, 1944
R. E. Rodgers	Sept. 23, 1944 - Aug. 20, 1949
G. D. Walters	Aug. 20, 1949 - April 8, 1950
George Crawford	April 23, 1950 - Jan. 26, 1952
A. D. Munsinger	April 12, 1952 - Sept. 25, 1954
Jack W. Smith	Oct. 10, 1954 - Dec. 11, 1955
Luther Crawford	Jan. 18, 1956 - Sept. 15, 1957
James T. Clark	Oct. 13, 1957 - July 2, 1958
B. A. Grant	Nov. 2, 1958 - Sept. 14, 1969
Gale Wineinger	Nov. 16, 1969 - May 13, 1973
R. M. Thompson	Sept. 23, 1973 - April 18, 1976
J. W. Griffith	June 17, 1976 - Present Pastor

2. Seventeen Charter Members

T. O. Galloway	Martha Moore	Rebecca Parker
Nannie E. Goldsberry	C. A. E. Parker	W. J. Parker
Robert P. Goldsberry	E. S. Parker	J. F. M. Reed
C. M. Holleman	G. A. Parker	Mary V. R. Reed
G. W. McNew	Jasper Parker	E. Wells
Martha McNew		M. T. Wells

3. List of Former Members

Angeline Allen
 Bell Allen
 Beulah Allen
 Blackford Allen
 Edward Allen
 Frances Allen
 Georgia Allen
 J. M. Allen
 Lewis Allen
 Mary A. Allen
 Minerva Allen
 Rufus Allen
 Wylie Allen
 Camile Allred
 Billie Armstrong
 Bonnie Mae Armstrong
 Dorthy Armstrong
 Loyd Armstrong
 Delton Baird
 Hubbard Baker
 Jesse Baker
 John H. Baled
 John Ballard
 Sarah Ballard
 Americus Bane
 Arch Bane
 Fannie Bane
 Heartie Bane
 Lois Bane
 Lou Bane
 Ollie Bane
 Cecil Beddingfield
 Grace Beddingfield
 Sybil Beddingfield
 Ethel Billingsley
 Eunice Billingsley
 John Billingsley
 R. M. Billingsley
 J. A. Bishop
 M. J. Bishop
 Columbia Blair
 Henry Blair
 Josephene Blair
 Josie Blair (Wood)
 Sarah Blair
 V. Blair
 Wilma Blair
 Edna Ruth Blanton
 Bobbye E. Blevin
 Elizabeth Blevin

Charlie Bradbury
 Ed P. Bradbury
 Ethel Bradbury
 Hazel Bradbury
 Hubie Bradbury
 Ione Bradbury
 Lonnie Bradbury
 Lonzie Bradbury
 Nell Bradbury
 Newton Bradbury
 Tishia Bradbury
 Willie Bradbury
 Clara Brightwell
 Homer Lee Brown
 Ross Brown
 Susie Brown
 Ada Bryan
 Betty Bryan
 Douglas Bryan
 Ethel Bryan
 Eugene Bryan
 J. W. Bryan
 Lula Bryan
 Martha Bryan
 Murphy Bryan
 John Burns
 Lee Burns
 Sarah Burns
 John Burrow
 Lela Burrow
 Mollie Burrow
 Jim Busby
 Dana Bush
 Wanda Bush
 G. W. Burton
 Lucinda Burton
 Savanah Burton
 J. R. Carmichael
 Mrs. J. R. Carmichael
 Catherine Cavan
 Ruth Chambers
 Allen Chapman
 Alvin Chapman
 Annie Chapman
 Austin Chapman
 Bert Chapman
 Bessie Chapman
 Charlie Chapman
 Clifford Chapman
 Dempsie Chapman

Elton Chapman
 Epsie Chapman
 Fannie Chapman
 Francis Chapman
 General Chapman
 Ida Chapman
 Irene Chapman
 J. C. Chapman
 James Chapman
 Jennie Chapman
 Jim Chapman
 Joseph Chapman
 Lamar Chapman
 Mrs. Lamar Chapman
 Leon Chapman
 Letha Chapman
 Luell Chapman
 Marie Chapman
 Martha Chapman
 Mary Chapman
 Nannie Chapman
 Pen Chapman
 R. R. Chapman
 Roy Chapman
 Robert Chapman
 Wayne Chapman
 Mrs. Wayne Chapman
 Weaver Chapman
 William Chapman
 Willie Chapman
 Amanda Clark
 Claudie Clark
 E. M. Clark
 H. W. Clark
 Harriet Clark
 Eld. James Clark
 Mrs. James Clark
 Jimmy Clark
 Mary R. Clark
 Prudy Clark
 Stella Clark
 Venie Clark
 W. H. Clark
 G. W. Clayton
 S. H. Clayton
 Mattie Clifton
 Mary Lou Collier
 Martha Creel
 Sallie Creel

Eld. Luther Crawford
 Mrs. Luther Crawford
 Charlie Davis
 Susie Davis
 E. Davis
 M. Davis
 Arthur Derrington
 Vera Derrington
 Cuba Draper
 Elizabeth Easley
 Ida B. Enly
 Jennie Enly
 July Feemster
 Vinnie Ferguson
 Mary A. Fisher
 Benjamin Y. Franklin
 Martha Frazier
 Faye Freeman
 R. L. Freeman
 Docia Fuller
 Elmer Fuller
 J. H. Fuller
 Jasper Fuller
 Lela Fuller
 Sarah Fuller
 Velma Mae Fuller
 Elbert Fussell
 Judd Fussell
 Alice Gage
 Dale Gage
 Don Gage
 Jerry Gage
 Trudie Gage
 A. H. Galloway
 Mary Galloway
 Annie Garrett
 D. S. Garrett
 Eddie Garrett
 Elbert Garrett
 Elizabeth Garrett
 Ernie Garrett
 Lillie (Black) Garrett
 Ophelia Garrett
 Ross Garrett
 Simeon Garrett Jr.
 Arlene Gatlin
 Barbara Gatlin
 Fillmore Gatlin
 Joseph Gentry
 Matilda Gentry
 Clovis Glenn
 Donald Glenn

Homer Glenn
 Vera Glenn
 Virginia Goodman
 Mayora Gould
 Missouri Gould
 Eld. B. A. Grant
 Mrs. B. A. Grant
 Doyle Grant
 Jamie Grant
 Sally Grant
 Robert Green
 Allen Grice
 Elbert Grice
 Lena Grice
 Robert Grice
 Alice Griffith
 Byron Griffith
 Ethel Griffith
 Heaton Griffith
 Leo Griffith
 Mrs. Leo Griffith
 Norris Griffith
 Phil Griffith
 Mrs. Phil Griffith
 Eld. W. G. Griffith
 R. E. Grissum
 Sarah Grissum
 Mollie Guy
 Nora Hallbrooks
 Alvie Ham
 Cara Ham
 Cora Ham
 Ellie Ham
 Ettie Ham
 Gus Ham
 Homer Ham
 Houston Ham
 Lavelle Ham
 Marshall Ham
 Mollie Ham
 Ollie Ham
 Oscar Ham
 Ruby Ham
 Tom Ham
 Gilbert Hancock
 C. W. Harley
 M. C. Harley
 A. J. Harmon
 Beulah Harmon
 Ella Harmon
 Lillie Harmon
 Maud Harmon

Columbia Harper
 Nora Harris
 Roxie Henson
 Aaron Hinson
 Elizabeth Hinson
 Nancy Hinson
 R. Hinson
 Alice Holleman
 Arrie Holleman
 Audie Holleman
 Benjamin Holleman
 Bert Holleman
 Billie Holleman
 Cumile Holleman
 Ed Holleman
 Eliza Holleman
 Eva Jo Holleman
 Frances Holleman
 Francis Holleman
 Fred Holleman
 H. W. Holleman
 Homer Holleman
 Imon Holleman
 J. J. Holleman
 John L. Holleman
 Joseph G. Holleman
 L. A. Holleman
 Lucy Holleman
 Malinda Holleman
 Martha Holleman
 Martha Ann Holleman
 Mary E. Holleman
 Moody Holleman
 Moody V. Holleman
 N. J. Holleman
 Robert Holleman
 Roe Holleman
 Tisha Holleman
 William W. Holleman
 Willie Holleman
 R. W. Houston
 Fannie Huff
 J. N. Huff
 Annie Hughes
 Bonnie Irwin
 Cora Irwin
 Lucinda Irwin
 Claudie Jackson
 Eliza Jackson
 Eva Jackson
 Lois Jackson
 Lucille Jackson

Rebecca Jackson
Sarah Jackson
T. C. Jackson
W. J. Jackson
Annie Johnson
Arthur Johnson
Bernice Johnson
Beryl Johnson
Edna Johnson
Essie Johnson
Fannie Johnson
Francis Johnson
George Johnson
Lola Johnson
Loyd Johnson
Lula Johnson
Mary Johnson
Martha A. Johnson
Michael Johnson
Minerva Johnson
Norma Johnson
Rayford Johnson
Rena May Johnson
Sarah Johnson
Vera Johnson
Wilson Johnson
Alex Jones
Alexander Jones
Camelia Jones
Crawford Jones
Eliot Jones
Emma Jones
Harriet Jones
J. A. Jones
Jennie Jones
Joe Jones
John Jones
John P. Jones
Matilda Jones
Ophelia Jones
Otho Jones
R. L. Jones
S. F. Jones
T. C. Jones
Thaddeus Jones
Willie Jones
Elizabeth Jordon
Molly Jordon
R. H. W. Jordon
Faye Keeling
Eld. Oliver A. Kipp
Mrs. Oliver A. Kipp

G. A. Lam
Janie Lench
Francis Lock
Josie Lock
Kate Lock
M. O. Lock
M. Z. Lock
Alice Lowe
Glen Lum
A. D. Lyles
Alice Lyles
Arch Lyles
Axie Lyles
Berline Lyles
Cam Lyles
Cassie Lyles
Cornelia Lyles
Dena Lyles
Donia Lyles
Dorothy Lyles
T. E. Lyles
Ennis Lyles
Essie Lyles
Florence Lyles
Francis Lyles
Grace Lyles
Homer Lyles
Hugh Lyles
J. A. Lyles
John Lyles
Juanita Lyles
Latisha Lyles
Laura Lyles
Lorene Lyles
Ludie Lyles
M. V. Lyles
Martha Lyles
Martha L. Lyles
Mary Lyles
Naomi Lyles
Nila Lyles
Odis Lyles
Penila Lyles
Preston Lyles
Sudie Lyles
Taylor Lyles
Verlon Lyles
Z. T. Lyles
N. D. McCrary
Beatrice McCune
Bell McCune
Bob McCune

Colie McCune
Ennis McCune
Hartie McCune
Hubbard McCune
Howell McCune
Irma McCune
Irmie McCune
J. W. McCune
James McCune
James McCune Jr.
John McCune
Leonard McCune
Lizzy McCune
Mary J. McCune
Maybelle McCune
Medie McCune
Molly McCune
Nonnie McCune
Nettie McCune
Reneta McCune
Richard McCune
Sylvester McCune
W. O. McCune
Wesley McCune
W. Lenard McCune
E. C. McGuire
George McIlvane
Fannie McMichael
A. J. McNew
C. E. McNew
Demp Mashburn
Mattie Mashburn
Myrtle Mashburn
Verlin Mashburn
Wilma Lou Mashburn
Ida Maddox
William Maddox
Isaac Masson
Ida Masson
Gene Milstead
Gladys Milstead
Gwyndol Milstead
Houston Milstead
Lynda Milstead
Quinton Milstead
Tammy Milstead
Lola Monroe
Amanda Moore
Christine Moore
Cleburn Moore
Emma Moore
Ida Moore

Isaac Moore
J. B. (Pat) Moore
J. R. O. Moore
Jack Moore
Julia Ann Moore
Martha E. Moore
Mary Moore
Monnie Moore
Nora Moore
S. W. Moore
Lige Morris
Roxie Morris
E. L. Mullican
Eugene Mullican
J. W. Mullican
Julian Mullican
Loneta Mullican
M. E. Mullican
Pearl Mullican
R. E. Mullican
S. M. Mullican
W. A. Mullican
Eld. A. D. Munsinger
Mrs. A. D. Munsinger
R. Hazel Munsinger
Alice Needham
Annie Needham
Catherine Needham
James Needham
W. H. Needham
Sue Neely
Nannie Newton
W. T. Newton
Ada Owens
E. Owens
Daniel Owens
L. R. Padgett
Venie Padgett
Zora Padgett
Jeffie Page
Ruthie Page
Virgil Page
Cumile Palmer
Ernest Palmer
Bert Parker
C. A. Parker
Della Parker
Ed Parker
Floy Parker
Georgia Parker
Jack Parker
Lola Parker

M. V. Parker
S. A. Parker
Sarah Parker
Sue Parker
Susan Parker
Betty Peraites
Amanda Peters
Barton Peters
Allie Pierce
James Price
Carrol Propes
A. J. Pruitt
Bunk Pruitt
Emmer Pruitt
H. H. Pruitt
Henry Pruitt
J. A. Pruitt
J. W. Pruitt
James A. Pruitt
Jennie Pruitt
Lela Pruitt
Mary E. Pruitt
Mattie Pruitt
Monie Pruitt
Nancy Pruitt
S. A. E. Pruitt
Sarah Pruitt
Sarah E. Pruitt
W. M. Pruitt
W. S. Pruitt
M. E. Rainwater
Elizabeth W. Reed
L. V. Reed
Joe Rice
Sam Rice
Isbell Roberts
B. T. Ross
George F. Ross
Alfred Sanders
Ann Sanders
Charley Sanders
Columbia Sanders
Ethel Sanders
Florence Sanders
H. Sanders
John Sanders
M. F. Sanders
Martha Sanders
Matt Sanders
Nancy Sanders
Ollie Sanders
Sarah Sanders

Willie Sanders
Asa A. Scruggs
Annie R. Scruggs
Betty Scruggs
Capitola Scruggs
Earl Scruggs
Earlene Scruggs
Ella Scruggs
Evelyn Scruggs
Grover Scruggs
Howard Scruggs
Ida Scruggs
Imogene Scruggs
J. P. Scruggs
Jim Scruggs
Lou Villa Scruggs
Mary Scruggs
Maud Scruggs
Nell Scruggs
O. B. Scruggs
Ora Scruggs
Raymond Scruggs
Renie Scruggs
Rilla Scruggs
Wilma Jo Scruggs
Eliza Seagroves
J. W. Seagroves
M. J. Seagroves
Martha F. Seagroves
Thomas Seagroves
Johnnie Seaton
W. A. Simmons
Willie Simmons
Mrs. Simmons
Eld. Jack W. Smith
Mrs. Jack W. Smith
May Sorrell
T. M. Sorrell
Allie Sprayberry
Lorene Sprayberry
C. P. Stanford
Cumile Stanford
Edwin Stanford
J. W. Stanford
John Stanford
Lizzie Stanford
M. A. Stanford
Minnie Stanford
Norah Stanford
Perry Stanford
Robert Stanford
W. O. Stanford

W. W. Stanford
 George Stars
 Ozelle Still
 Bish Studdards
 Allen Swinney
 Lucinda Swinney
 Alice Thompson
 David Thompson
 Faith Dawn Thompson
 Portia Day Thompson
 Eld. R. M. Thompson
 L. D. Thrash
 L. H. Thrash
 Leona Thrash
 Mary Thrash
 W. A. Thrash
 Cecil Trawick
 Richard Truitt
 Ada Vaughn
 Alice Vaughn
 Ben Vaughn
 Calvin Vaughn
 Carolyn Vaughn
 Dora Vaughn
 Eliza J. Vaughn
 Emma Vaughn
 Eugenia Vaughn
 Evie Vaughn
 George Vaughn
 Georgia Vaughn
 Gilford Vaughn
 J. C. Vaughn
 J. F. Vaughn
 J. Rue Vaughn
 James Vaughn
 Jennie Vaughn
 July Vaughn
 John Vaughn Jr.
 Mrs. Lanie Vaughn
 Lena Vaughn
 Levi Vaughn
 Lucy Vaughn
 Marshall L. Vaughn
 Mary Vaughn
 Minnie Vaughn
 N. J. Vaughn
 Nancy Vaughn
 Nannie Vaughn
 Ruth Vaughn
 Sarah R. Vaughn
 Suda Vaughn
 Tine Vaughn

Tip Vaughn
 Thomas Vaughn
 V. T. Vaughn
 Viola Vaughn
 William Vaughn
 Willie Vaughn
 Wyatt B. Vaughn
 Mary Wallace
 S. C. Wallace
 W. A. Wallace
 Ola Walker
 Georgia L. Watson
 Grover Wells
 Henry Wells
 Homer Wells
 Laura Wells
 Mabel Wells
 S. E. Wells
 Sarah Wells
 Sarah Elizabeth Wells
 William D. Wells
 Ethel Wesson
 Jennie Wesson
 Americus Whitehead
 John H. Whitley
 Alice Williams
 Annie Williams
 Joesph Williams
 M. E. Williams
 Mattie Williamson
 Earl Wilson
 Lonnie B. Wilson
 Mary E. Wilson
 Stella Wilson
 Eld. Gale Wineinger
 Mrs. Gale Wineinger
 Kimberly Wineinger
 Ada Wood
 Betty Wood
 Houston Wood
 Jim Wood
 Pearl Wood
 Warren Wood
 Ezell Woods
 Mozelle Woods
 Ada Woolverton
 B. Woolverton
 Bluford Woolverton
 Buford Woolverton
 Clara Woolverton
 Claudie Woolverton
 Delia Woolverton

Eddie Woolverton
 Effie Woolverton
 Ellis Woolverton
 Emma Woolverton
 Mrs. Francis Woolverton
 Francis Woolverton
 Hollis Woolverton
 Horace Woolverton
 Horace E. Woolverton
 J. D. Woolverton
 Jane Woolverton
 Jean Woolverton
 Jo Ann Woolverton
 Leona Woolverton
 Mack Woolverton
 Mason Woolverton
 Molley Woolverton
 Ophelia Woolverton
 Ralph Woolverton
 Rebecca Woolverton
 Tommie Woolverton
 Verna Neal Woolverton
 W. T. Woolverton
 William Woolverton
 Hanner J. Yates
 Homer J. Yates
 Stephen Yates

Membership of Smyrna Church January 15, 1978

Mary Armstrong
 Brenda Arnold
 Dorothy Blackmon
 Lewis Blackmon
 Mary Blackmon
 Billy Barlow
 Ray Barlow
 Hubbard Barlow
 Francis Chapman
 Odis Chapman
 Peggy Chapman
 Kim Chapman
 Ruby Chapman
 R. O. Chapman
 Myrtle Chapman
 Anita Gail Flanagan

Ronald Flanagan
 Diane Gholson
 Robert Allen Gholson
 Vera Glenn
 Eld. J. W. Griffith
 Mae Griffith
 Mark Griffith
 Maud Ham
 Lottie Johnson
 Billy Lyles
 Tina Lyles
 Vada S. Lyles
 Lena Milstead
 Lyndol Milstead
 Susan Milstead
 Opal Moore

Ethel Peters
 Jim Peters
 Ella Propes
 Mrs. Joe Rainwater
 Lewis Vaughn
 Sue Vaughn
 Helen Vaughn
 Adelaide Vaughn
 Steva Vaughn
 Roe Vaughn
 Charlie Vaughn
 John Vaughn
 Bill Woolverton
 Joe Woolverton
 Gladys Woolverton

4. Church Clerks and Tenure

J. F. Reid, August, 1873-January, 1878

Wm. J. Parker, February, 1878-October, 1888

W. D. Wells, March, 1889-October 1889; February, 1892-February, 1901

J. P. Scruggs, February, 1890-(uncertain) 1891

W. W. Vaughn, April, 1901-January, 1905; September, 1915-September, 1935

T. C. Jackson, February, 1905-April, 1906

A. J. Harmon, May, 1906-September, 1907

W. G. Scruggs, September, 1907-February, 1909

A. A. Scruggs, March, 1909-November, 1912; October, 1935-September, 1945

S. L. Vaughn, December, 1912-July, 1915

Tine Vaughn, July, 1915-September, 1915

Lula Ray Chapman, October, 1945-December, 1946

C. L. Vaughn, January, 1947-July, 1948

Mrs. H. B. Woolverton, July, 1948-August, 1950

E. F. Scruggs, September, 1950-June, 1961

Mack Woolverton, June, 1961-August, 1965

V. S. Lyles, September, 1965-Present

5. Deacons (approximate dates on some)

W. M. Pruitt, from 1873
James Chapman, from 1873
M. T. Wells, from 1874
Harris Sanders, from 1876
John J. Holleman, from 1877
George W. Burton, from 1881
W. T. Vaughn, 1897-1931
W. D. Wells, from 1897
J. A. Jones, from 1902
W. D. Wells, 1902-1923
W. W. Vaughn, 1910-c. 1938
John F. Vaughn, 1931-Present
Earl F. Scruggs, 1931-1961
Hubie Bradbury, 1937-c. 1942
Homer Glenn, 1943-c. 1965
C. L. Vaughn, 1955-Present
Bill Woolverton, 1955-Present
Robert A. Gholson, 1977-Present