

EMMANUEL SCHOOL OF RELIGION

A HISTORY OF
THE SALT CREEK CHRISTIAN CONFERENCE

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF EMMANUEL SCHOOL OF RELIGION
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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MILLIGAN COLLEGE, TENNESSEE

MAY 1976

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PREFACE

The purpose of this thesis is to provide a concise history of the Salt Creek Christian Conference. This network of Christian churches has provided Christian evangelism and Christian nurture for the people of many Southeastern Ohio counties for more than a century and a half. The author's love for history and the fact that he received his early Christian teachings in these churches make this subject particularly appealing to him. In addition, since the writer plans to return to that area to preach, this study should prove to be most helpful to his ministry because it will provide him with a better understanding of the conference.

The author wishes to express his gratitude to the Salt Creek Christian Conference for allowing the author to keep the five volumes of its minutes during the research and writing of this thesis and to Elon College personnel for their friendly and helpful cooperation while he researched their files concerning this project.

INTRODUCTION

This project considers the history of the Salt Creek Christian Conference. Organized in 1818, it continues to function to the present time. Its constituent churches have been located in the past throughout numerous southern Ohio counties.¹ Currently, four churches, three in Pike County plus one in Ross County, comprise this conference.

The development of this thesis takes the following order. Chapter I provides a look at the beginning of Christian conferences in general and shows how Salt Creek fit into that framework. Chapter II is concerned with the effect which Barton W. Stone and/or his teachings may have had on this conference movement and on the Salt Creek conference in particular.

Chapter III looks at such specific items as the structure of the conference and how it handled evangelism, church discipline, and support of the ministry from 1818 through 1865. Chapters IV and V treat the same type of subjects from 1866 to 1920 and from 1921 to 1974, respectively. These latter three chapters all have as their primary source of information the five volumes of minutes of the Salt Creek Christian Conference which have been maintained since 1822.

¹For a map of the counties which have had churches in the Conference, see appendix A, Map I (page 124).

Direct quotes have been lifted as is from their sources. Thus, numerous errors in spelling, grammar, punctuation, and capitalization exist in the quotations contained within this work.

CHAPTER I

THE BEGINNING OF CHRISTIAN CONFERENCES

Conditions When the Conference Began

To understand and appreciate fully the effort expended by Christian conferences in the areas of evangelism and Christian nurture, it is necessary to look at the times during which they developed. Milo T. Morrill¹ listed the earliest conference as one in Kentucky which began in 1804. The Declaration of Independence had been signed only twenty-eight years previously. The states of Ohio, Kentucky, and Tennessee were referred to as the West by the rest of the country and were little more than a frontier.

When the Salt Creek Christian Conference was founded in 1818, Ohio had been a state for only fifteen years. Conditions were hardly ideal for building churches and for gaining support for the ministry. Evangelists faced extreme difficulties when trying to convert souls to Christ. Indians still lived in Ohio.² The Mohawks had received some religious teaching in Canada, often sang familiar hymns in their own

¹Milo True Morrill, A History of the Christian Denomination in America (1794-1911 A.D.) (Dayton, Ohio: The Christian Publishing Association, 1912), pp. 121-2.

²Samuel T. Armstrong, The Missionary Herald, Vol. XVI (Boston: Crocker and Brewster, 1820) p. 102. General background information for opening paragraphs derives from Armstrong's account.

language, and were connected with the Methodist church. However, other Indian tribes were less fortunate. For example, one preacher wrote of his almost impossible task when speaking with two Indians who were awaiting execution for crimes which they had committed. He said that "of repentance, forgiveness, atonement, holiness, or prayer, they had no idea."¹ In fact, "their language had neither words nor phrases to express such ideas."²

Rev. Thomas Barr of Euclid, Ohio, once travelled to Chillicothe, Ohio's first capital, and labored for some time in the neighboring towns. (Ross County, in which Chillicothe is located, has frequently had churches in the Salt Creek Christian Conference.) His report was very discouraging. This section of Ohio had experienced very little formal education. He discovered whole families which lacked the ability to read with intelligence. Many of the schools were poor, with teachers combining immorality with gross ignorance. The level of religious education was even lower. Although some of the families in these southeastern counties were well informed concerning religious matters, in many families ". . . there was a degree of ignorance which placed them nearly on a level with the heathen of the wilderness."³

¹Ibid.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 104.

This deficiency in religious education meant that a great percentage of the people were unconcerned about their souls and about being prepared to meet God. Fortunately, in most of the places Rev. Barr worked, ". . . he found individuals who were anxious to know the truth that is unto salvation."¹ Therefore, probably one of the primary reasons for beginning the Salt Creek Christian Conference was to assist in providing the people of this area with the doctrinal and practical truths of the Gospel which they so greatly needed.

Why Christian Conferences Began

Basically, Christian conferences began in the early nineteenth century to conserve the Christian church movement which had been nurtured during the past few years by such men as James O'Kelly, Alexander Campbell, and Barton W. Stone. These men prized congregational freedom as opposed to denominational control of churches. However, despite its worthy aspects, this new system did create serious problems of its own. Because "both ministers and congregations multiplied like mushrooms",² little time was spared for needed organization within each church and among the various churches. This meant that there was no regulatory

¹Ibid., p. 103.

²Morrill, A History of the Christian Denomination in America (1794-1911 A.D.), p. 121.

body of broader scope than the local congregation to decide which candidates for the ministry were qualified and to present those who were qualified with licenses which would introduce them to other communities. Similarly, there was no larger governing body to pass judgment when charges were brought against those already engaged in the ministry.

When organized Christian conferences consisting of delegates from each of the Christian churches within a given area were suggested as a means for solving this problem, many people feared that these conferences would deprive both individuals and churches of their independence. Older men who remembered the high cost of gaining liberty from the denominations especially feared these conferences. However, they soon came to realize that some form of organization was necessary to safeguard the ministry and the churches, and the conference movement progressed rapidly.

This fear of the loss of liberty dictated the nature of Christian conferences. They were strictly voluntary associations with no individual or church compelled to join. Those who did attend were careful to preserve their own independence and that of the congregation which they represented. Hence, a "conference might discuss, admonish, advise, urge, but could not demand or legislate."¹ This meant that any manifestos which they might issue defining their faith

¹Ibid., p. 126.

or practice ". . . were in no sense obligatory upon individuals or conferences, but simply explanatory."¹

The goal of providing fellowship and discipline while maintaining congregational liberty was apparently met by these Christian conferences. The brotherhood's good name and integrity were preserved by cases of discipline and exclusion. Also, each conference's meetings provided fellowship for its delegates. Freedom was maintained because each conference, except for the exchange of fraternal messengers, had no connection with other conferences. Also, each conference agreed to respect the actions or declarations of sister bodies.

Uniformity was lacking among the conferences, each working within the framework of the laws which it felt best suited to attaining its objectives. An example of this variety may be seen in the three types of organization which these conferences employed.² In the first type, organization was only for one session at a time. The most conservative of the three, this type provided for election of a moderator and a clerk at the beginning of each meeting. Each session decided upon the date and place of the next conference and then ceased to exist. Ad interim there was no conference. Records of the conference were even destroyed to prevent their being considered binding enactments. The second type of organization allowed

¹Ibid., p. 127.

²Ibid.

for a permanent clerk with the moderator still being elected pro tem. Conference records were saved with the clerk serving as their custodian. The final mode of operation for conferences saw the choosing of officers for one year in advance. This made it possible for the conference to conduct its business the year round. Special meetings might be called at any time during the year to handle emergency situations or to discipline conference officers who violated their trust.

It is interesting to note which of these three plans the Salt Creek Christian Conference chose to use. In its early years it worked under the first type. For example, in 1822 the conference "being met after supplication proceeded to elect Benjamin Sanders Chairman and James W. Gustin Clerk."¹ Also, during the first four years of the conference (1818-1821) no records were kept because some of the brethren opposed such action.² However, the practice is quite different now, as the conference uses the third type of organization. At the close of the 1974 meeting, officers were elected to serve throughout the next year.³ Concerning the minutes, they are now recorded in great detail, and all previous minutes must be present at each annual conference session.⁴

¹Salt Creek Christian Conference Minutes, Vol. I, p. VII.

²Ibid., p. VI.

³Salt Creek Christian Conference Minutes, Vol. V, pp. 212-13.

⁴Ibid., p. 204.

The Growth of the Conference Movement

Conferences apparently became a foremost mode of unity among Christian churches. The number of local conferences increased greatly throughout the nineteenth century. Soon representatives from local conferences began to meet together in state conferences. Even national conferences were held from time to time.

The increased number of local conferences was a result of two factors. First, most of the states in the eastern part of the United States were involved in the conference movement. Around 1840 there were Christian conferences in at least the following fifteen states:¹ New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Vermont, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Virginia, Kentucky, Ohio, Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, and Wisconsin. Second, many of the states each soon came to have several conferences, often overlapping each other in the areas which were represented at their meetings. For example, by 1891 the counties which had once been included within the limits of the Salt Creek Christian Conference also had churches which sent delegates to the following five conferences:² Ohio Conference, Ohio Southeastern Assembly, Ohio Southern Conference, Ohio Central

¹David Millard (ed.), Christian Palladium, Vol. X (Union Mills, N.Y.: J. and R. P. Clark, Printers, 1836) pp. 200-10.

²J. J. Summerbell (comp), The Quadrennial Book, 1891, of the American Christian Convention (Dayton, Ohio: Christian Publishing Association, 1891), p. 91.

Conference, and Ohio Eastern Conference.

Christian conferences early began the practice of exchanging messengers who attended the meetings of other conferences. In addition, local conferences were soon sending delegates to state conferences. One such state conference was the General Conference in Ohio which met at Williamsport in Pickaway County on Wednesday, October 21, 1835. Elders Noah Clark and Samuel Darby represented the Salt Creek Christian Conference. Delegates were also present from the Ohio Central, the Miami, and the Deer Creek conferences. One of the delegates from Deer Creek was Elder David Purviance. Some of the subjects discussed at this conference were (1) a local conference and its duty, (2) the proper persons to comprise a Christian conference, (3) how a church ought to be constituted, and (4) how Gospel ministers are to be inducted into office.¹

A second state conference met at the same town on September 7, 1836, with Noah Clark again representing Salt Creek. This meeting, which changed the name of the state conference to The Union Christian Conference of Ohio, concerned itself more with the purposes of general conferences. It reasoned that general conferences were (1) to increase correspondence and union among Christians, (2) to assist in filling ministerial vacancies, and (3) to raise money for

¹Millard (ed.), Christian Palladium, Vol. IV, pp. 246-7.

ministerial support.¹

National conferences also began to meet early. What was intended to be a national conference began in New England as early as 1808, but communication and travel difficulties prevented it from begin attended by those outside the Eastern sector of the country. However, by 1819 the General Conference held in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, seated delegates from most of the local Christian conferences throughout the country.

On October 28, 1820, a General Conference was held at Windham, Connecticut. States reporting to this conference were Massachusetts, Virginia, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New York, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine.² On September 3, 1821, this General Conference met again, this time at New Bedford, Massachusetts. The Miami, Deer Creek, and Athens conferences represented Ohio.³ Salt Creek was not mentioned as having delegates at either of these national conferences. Since Salt Creek's minutes prior to 1822 have not been preserved, it is not known whether it merely failed to learn of these national conferences or if it had other reasons for failing to attend.

¹Millard (ed.), Christian Palladium, Vol. V, p. 221.

²Nathan Daboll, The Christian Register and Almanack - 1821 (New London: Samuel Green, 1821), pp. 17-18.

³Nathan Daboll, The Christian Register and Almanack - 1823 (Portsmouth, N. H.: Robert Foster, 1823), p. 46.

Similarities Between Salt Creek and Other Conferences

The organization and operation of the Salt Creek Christian Conference was apparently quite similar to that of most other Christian conferences. It began in the early part of the nineteenth century, a period in which many conferences began. As was true of several other conferences, Salt Creek received letters from elders and churches within its geographical area, annually elected a moderator and a clerk, and corresponded frequently with other conferences either by letter or by messenger. Even the name "Salt Creek Christian Conference" has much in common with other conferences. Most of them include the term "Christian Conference" in their titles, and "creek" is a common part of conference names (e.g., Deer Creek, Flower Creek, Sinking Creek, and Stamper's Creek).

As has been noted earlier, Salt Creek destroyed the records of its minutes during its early years because of a dispute over whether such records should be kept. The 1829 session of the Indiana Christian Conference reports that their minute books were "laid aside" for the present because they were opposed by some.¹ Also, in Virginia and North Carolina ". . . records were almost immediately destroyed, to hinder their becoming instruments of oppression."² It was feared by some that these records, if

¹Barton W. Stone and John T. Johnson (eds.), Christian Messenger, Vol. V (Georgetown, Kentucky: 1831), p. 39.

²Morrill, A History of the Christian Denomination in America (1794-1911 A.D.), p. 123.

preserved, might be used to infringe upon congregational autonomy or to replace the Bible as a rule of faith and practice.

A particularly striking similarity may be seen between the 1856 order of business of the Miami (Ohio) Christian Conference and the Salt Creek minutes of the same year. Miami conducted the following business:¹ (1) roll call of ministers, (2) invitations to visiting ministers and others to participate in the proceedings, (3) roll call of churches and reports from same, (4) complete unfinished business, (5) examination of standing and character of members of conference, (6) receive new members, (7) appoint messengers to other conferences, and (8) fix the place for the next session and appoint someone to deliver the annual sermon or address. With the exception of item six, Salt Creek also performed these same functions at its meeting.

¹B. F. Vaughan (ed.), A Centennial History of the Miami Ohio Christian Conference 1819-1919 (Dayton, Ohio: Christian Publishing House, 1920), p. 28.

CHAPTER II

BARTON W. STONE AND THE SALT CREEK CHRISTIAN CONFERENCE

Stone on Christian Unity

Barton W. Stone spoke and wrote at length concerning the desirability of Christian unity. Thinking that past efforts to unify Christians had failed miserably, he offered new solutions which he believed could rectify the situation. Likening Christians to cattle in this one respect, he said that both needed a yoke on their necks to channel all of their energies in the same direction so that the desired end might be attained. The yoke of Christ, if it may be termed as such, is the only one which will result in Christians effecting the salvation of souls throughout the world. To Stone, two yokes meant only divided allegiance. Or, in Jesus' words, ". . . every city or house divided against itself shall not stand."¹ Thus, party yokes, those "made by the wisdom, rather by the folly of man, by which various sects are united in their particular parties,"² are only a hindrance to the work of the church.

¹Matt. 12:25b.

²James M. Mathes, Works of Elder B. W. Stone (Cincinnati: Moore, Wilstack, Keys, and Co., 1859), p. 248.

Stone thought that the New Testament church had been united around only Jesus and that He is set forth in the Bible today. The problem was that men had devised other standards than the Christ which the Bible revealed. The result was numerous divisions of Christians who not only lacked unity but openly attacked each other, physically at first and later verbally. Therefore, Stone taught that Christian union could only be effected by the elimination of these false standards and the adherence to the true standard of Biblical teaching.

The nature and result of this Christian union were outlined by Stone in four lectures which he delivered late in life in Jacksonville, Illinois, in January, 1841.¹ If there was to be union, it must be discerned who were to come together. Stone's answer was that only true believers were to be united. To unite those of any other quality was both impossible and undesirable. Of course, this necessitated the definition of "true believer". For Stone, the true believer was one who actually believed for himself, on the basis of the testimony of the Bible, that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God. He also reasoned that anyone who so believed would be affected to the point of humbly submitting to God's will.

¹Ibid., pp. 252-70. The paragraphs following to the end of this section summarize and/or cite Stone on these matters.

Having decided who should unite, Stone then set forth the kind of union for which he believed that Jesus prayed. The oneness of Christians should parallel the union between the Father and the Son. This being true, Christians should be one in character, in spirit, and in operation. Because believers become more and more like Christ, that one character in which they are united is "meek, gentle, obedient, patient, forgiving as was the Son."¹ To be one in spirit would mean that all Christians would love and obey God and Christ, would sincerely love each other, and would work to save non-believers because they love them also. Being one in operation, all of God's people would strive to save the lost by implementing the means ordained by God.

Stone set forth, and showed the fallacy of, previous means of effecting Christian union. The Catholic church attempted to bring about union through everyone's ascribing to a certain creed. That union resulted was certain; that it was not Christian union is equally sure. Many people assented to the creed only to avoid the persecutions and anathemas of the church. Protestant creeds have fared much the same. Some people in Stone's time had seen the error of having written creeds and had made unwritten opinions of the Bible the tests of union. This practice he also saw as divisive. Thus, he arrived at the conclusion that the

¹Ibid., p. 258.

Bible believed in the heart and obeyed in the spirit was the only legitimate way of attaining Christian unity. This involved the relinquishing of pride in parties and the consequent adoption of the name "Christian" for all believers. Nor was delay in forming this union permissible.

Stone did not consider Christian unity to be an abstract ideal desirable only in itself. Rather, he cherished the effects which this unity might have upon the world. First, the genuine fellowship and brotherhood of a truly united Christendom would convince the world of the church's integrity. Second, a united church could devote its time, effort, and resources exclusively to the spreading of the Gospel without regard for party objectives. Third, this would be in accord with God's wish for a people united in service to Him.

Stone and Christian Conferences

One manner in which Barton Stone's desire for Christian unity manifested itself was in the formation of Christian conferences. Although it might at first appear that the banding together of churches into conferences would be in direct violation of that item in "The Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery" which states that ". . . each particular church, as a body, . . . never henceforth delegate her right of government to any man or set of

men whatever,"¹ such was not the nature of these organizations. As stated in Chapter I, they lacked authority, and the various members were most careful not to sacrifice their individual liberty, or to compromise the independence of their churches. Rather than legislation or commands, their sessions were limited to discussion, admonition, and advice.

A specific example of how conference actions adhered to Stone's thinking may be seen in the following incident. The first General Christian Convention in the West was in 1854 in Cincinnati. At this meeting a committee was appointed to draft a statement of belief for the Christian Church. After a period of deliberation, the chairman of the committee, Moses Kidder, presented the president of the convention with a Bible and stated that the Bible was that which the Christian Church believed. Undoubtedly, this would have greatly pleased Barton Stone because it agreed with his quest for unity without creed.

In 1826 Stone began to publish the Christian Messenger, a periodical which contained discussions of religious matters, Biblical expositions, and news items from various churches throughout what was then known as the West. Issues printed in 1828 and in 1831 contained the minutes of the meetings of many of the Christian conferences then in existence.

¹J. F. Burnett, The Origin and Principles of the Christians, p. 36.

The extensive geographical area from which these minutes flowed to Mr. Stone and the space he devoted to them illustrate at least his favor toward such organizations and possibly that he had been instrumental in their beginnings. For example, in addition to the minutes from three conferences in Kentucky, others included those from the Christian Conference in Giles County (Sinking Creek), Virginia, the Indiana Christian Conference in Orange County (Stamper's Creek), and the Missouri Christian Conference in Howard County (Retireing Valley).

Especially connecting the conference movement to Stone are the minutes of the Christian Conference held in Cynthiana (Harrison County), Kentucky, on September 16, 1831. As was customary, the report of the meeting listed the names of churches which had sent letters to the conference and the names of elders who were in attendance. One of the church letters was from "Cane-ridge", and one of the elders present was Barton W. Stone.¹

Stone's Influence on the Salt Creek Christian Conference

Although research for this project discovered no statements which credit Barton Stone with the founding of the Salt Creek Christian Conference or of any of its churches, it is quite probable that he and/or his co-laborers travelled and

¹Stone and Johnson (eds.), Christian Messenger, Vol. V, p. 261.

preached in that area both prior to and during the formation of the conference. In 1804 Stone journeyed to Meigs County, Ohio, to baptize a Presbyterian preacher. While there, he preached to a Baptist association which agreed to take only the name "Christian" and which desired to help in gaining Christian union. Thus, Stone was early spreading these two worthy tenets of his in southern Ohio.

With R. Dooley as his companion, Stone decided to preach and to baptize more in Ohio. On this mission he journeyed from Meigs County in eastern Ohio to Eaton, in Preble County, on the western border of the state. This trip quite naturally, with preaching engagements along the way, could have taken him through the counties of Vinton, Jackson, Scioto, Pike, and Ross.¹ It is these counties in which were primarily located the early churches of the Salt Creek Conference, the name being derived from one of its early meeting places in Scioto County. While in Eaton, Ohio, Stone baptized in Deer Creek, almost surely the same one which lent its name to the Deer Creek Christian Conference. In 1809-1811, Stone again ". . . preached and founded churches throughout the western states of Ohio, Kentucky, and Tennessee."² In 1843, he revisited his old friend David Purviance in Preble County, Ohio, and went to many other Ohio churches as well. It was

¹For an illustration of this probability, see appendix A, Map I (page 124).

²Barton W. Stone and John Rogers, The Biography of Eld. Barton Warren Stone (Cincinnati: J. A. and U. P. James, 1847), p. 67.

"reverend" as applying to preachers will be abandoned. A cover page of Volume I of the minutes of the Salt Creek Conference demands the following: "The title of reverend where it appears in this record to designate the office of ministers be stricken from these records."¹ This action was taken on several pages of the minutes. Also, Stone's concept of the Bible as being the only rule of faith and practice may be found throughout the conference minutes. The third point is derived from an article in the Christian Standard concerning Salt Creek's fellowship with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). It says that "these churches have been connected with the Christian-order movement since the days of Barton W. Stone."²

Conclusion

Barton W. Stone prized unity which was not based on written creed or man's opinions of the Bible. The Christian Conferences which sprang up in the early nineteenth century appear to be consistent with this goal. His publishing of their minutes and his membership in one such conference show Stone's approval of them. The Salt Creek Christian Conference was probably a part of this network of churches and was evidently either directly or indirectly influenced by Stone's teachings.

¹Salt Creek Christian Conference Minutes, Vol. I, Cover page.

²W. B. Taylor, "An Answer to Christ's Prayer for Unity", Christian Standard, September 16, 1933, p. 2887.

CHAPTER III

THE SALT CREEK CHRISTIAN CONFERENCE FROM ITS INCEPTION THROUGH 1865

1818 - 1822

The minutes of the Salt Creek Christian Conference begin by stating that no records of its meetings were kept during the first four years of its existence (1818-1821) "because of the difference of views of the brethren."¹ This reason for not keeping records will be elaborated later in this chapter under the subheading "1829."

Thus, the first meeting of the Salt Creek Christian Conference which was recorded in its minutes took place on April 6, 1822, at the home of William Graves. Although the primary annual session of conference has been held throughout the years in the late summer, usually in August, there have also been secondary gatherings in other parts of the year. This first recorded meeting was one of the spring conferences, usually held in April or May.

The official constituency of the conference meetings until 1967 were representatives of the various member churches. (Since 1967 all members of conference churches have been

¹Salt Creek Christian Conference Minutes, Vol. I, p. VI. (The primary source of information for Chapter III is the Salt Creek Christian Conference Minutes, Vol. I, pp. I-XXV and pp. 1-67.)

entitled to a voice and vote in the conference meetings.) These representatives were ministers, elders, deacons, or delegates. The latter were elected by the congregations to represent them at a particular conference meeting. At the April, 1822, meeting two elders, six preachers, ten deacons, and four delegates were present.

In the early years of the conference (no official conferential machinery existing from the adjournment of one meeting until the commencing of the next session), one of the first matters considered at each meeting was the election of officers. One was to be the person in charge of the meeting and was called the chairman, moderator, or president. The other officer was to record the happenings of the session and was known as the clerk or secretary. Benjamin Sanders, an elder, was elected Chairman, and James W. Gustin was elected Clerk at the April, 1822, conference.

A practice of the Salt Creek Christian Conference throughout its history has been to receive letters from each of its member churches at each of its meetings. These letters usually attest to the spiritual condition of the congregation and of its preachers, elders, and deacons. In addition, they may contain certain suggestions or requests. They are presented to the conference by a congregational representative at the meeting. At the April, 1822, session representatives from eleven congregations presented letters to the conference. These eleven representatives consisted of two elders, six deacons, and three delegates.

An interesting aspect of these early years was the Biblical names by which the churches were known. For example, the churches presenting letters to this conference had the following names: Sardis, Corinthian, Ephesian, Philadelphia, Salem, Hebrew, Mount Pisgah, Galatia, Roman, Colosian [sic], and Macedonia.¹

Two conference functions which continue through the present are evidenced in the first minutes. It has exercised a certain amount of control over who will be permitted to preach the gospel and over where it will be proclaimed. At this meeting the Philadelphia church requested that Downing Dawson be allowed to preach. The result was that "the conference sanctioning the same doth recommend him to the same giving him the liberty to labor in the gospel as the Lord may direct."² In addition, three men were ". . . recommended as regular Deacons and are therefore at liberty to preach the gospel."³ In connection with where preaching would occur, the conference members agreed upon the dates and locations of three camp meetings to be held during the coming year.

This spring conference in 1822 also illustrated communication and cooperation among the various Christian conferences. It was resolved that the clerk would write, or at

¹Ibid., pp. VII-VIII.

²Ibid., p. VIII.

³Ibid.

least sign, letters to be sent to the different Christian conferences. Also, it was resolved that the ordination of Martin Baker be considered at the next meeting. However, before the next meeting of the Salt Creek Conference, Mr. Baker had been ordained elder by the Deer Creek Conference. This ordination was accepted as being valid by Salt Creek because he is listed as one of the elders present at their next meeting.

It was decided at this session that there would be two conferences each year. Also, the practice of selecting location and date for the next conference was begun. It was to meet at the Roman church on Salt Creek on "the first Seventh day in October."¹

However, when the conference assembled again on September 7, 1822, at the Salem church, it was neither on the appointed time nor at the specified church. The reason for these changes was apparently so that the conference might meet in conjunction with one of the camp meetings which had been set by the April conference for September 6 at the Salem church. This practice of combining business sessions with evangelical meetings has been carried forward by Salt Creek to this day. Two- to five-day meetings featuring business sessions in the daytime and revival-type preaching at night have been a characteristic of Salt Creek conferences.

¹Ibid., p. IX. (The context of the minutes implies that the term "Seventh day" refers to Saturday, while "Sabbath" refers to Sunday.)

Three new churches (Bethlehem, Mount Olivet, and Mount Sion) were mentioned at this meeting, and more requests for ordination were received. Also, a new aspect of conference business was dealt with at this session. The (Mount) Pisgah church petitioned the conference for a ". . . freewill offering for the support of the gospel."¹ But instead of collecting an offering, the conference ruled in favor of congregational autonomy concerning this matter and sent letters to the various churches recommending that they deposit freewill offerings with their respective deacons for the support of needy preachers.

1823 - 1828

During these years the Salt Creek Christian Conference continued to be quite influential concerning who was permitted to preach and where preaching was to be done. It dealt with ordinations in two different manners. Having decided that an individual was worthy of ordination as a minister, an elder, or a deacon, the conference would either (1) have elders ordain him then, or (2) sanction him for ordination but refer him to his own congregation for the actual ceremony of ordination. In either case the conference gave the one ordained or to be ordained a letter recommending him to the congregation.

¹Ibid., p. X.

The ordination of Noah Clark is quite interesting. In 1824, at the request of the Corinthian church, he was sanctioned by the conference as a preacher of the gospel. However, in May of 1825, when the Salem church requested his ordination, it was postponed until the next conference, at which time (August 1825) the ordination ". . . being put to vote according to custom and decided as follows that Noah Clark be not ordained as an Elder of the Christian Church."¹ No reasons are recorded for his rejection.

The conference continued to set the date and place of preaching meetings when in 1824 it decreed when and where four yearly meetings were to be held. In 1827 it resolved that the conference meet quarterly. Although the practice of holding quarterly conferences has not been adhered to continually, it is used by Salt Creek at present. Also, in August, 1828, certain brethren of the conference were assigned to "take charge and attend"² specific churches of the conference. This apparently meant for them to serve as elders and ministers to these churches. Concerning where preaching would occur, the conference appointed (at the request of the Galatia church) a committee in 1827 to procure a tract of ground on which camp meetings might be held.

This time period might well be known as the "Trial and

¹Ibid., p. XXI.

²Ibid., p. 5.

Discipline" years as several cases were aired before and ruled upon by the conference. One such case involved an allegation by one elder against another. At the May, 1825, gathering Elder William Mcdold brought a "charge of an immoral nature"¹ against Elder John Strate. The conference appointed seven brethren as a committee to investigate the matter. Elder Strate was able to convince the committee that he was innocent.

Another seven-man committee met on August 11, 1827, to hear the case against Martin Baker, who was being ". . . tried for some misconduct."² He, too, was judged to be innocent.

The conference also apparently served on occasions as an appellate court. In August, 1823, Eve Dyke requested of the conference that her case be reheard in the Galatian church. Since she was "formerly a member"³ of that church, she had evidently been disfellowshipped on some charge. The conference selected six men to visit the Galatian church concerning her situation. The results of this hearing were not given in the minutes.

Nor did Salt Creek limit its jurisdiction to individuals. In 1823 it appointed a seventeen-member contingent to visit

¹Ibid., p. XX.

²Ibid., p. 2.

³Ibid., p. XII.

the Bethlehem and Antioch churches because they were ". . . in a suffering condition for the want of proper gospel order."¹ Also, in 1827 a two-man committee was sent to the Bethlehem church to settle some difficulty which had arisen within that congregation. The congregation at Bethlehem had requested the conference's assistance this time.

The cases to which the most space was devoted in the minutes of these years were those of John Hushaw who had been sanctioned by the conference as a preacher in 1823, and Benjamin Sanders.² Although the trials of these two men did not always coincide, they are presented as the same case here because they involved basically the same charges and results. The Salt Creek Christian Conference became involved in this matter when the Colossian church sent a letter describing one of its church meetings to the May, 1827, conference. At that church meeting, the members present had voted to silence Benjamin Sanders from preaching because he would not agree to cease his practice of ". . . preaching against the Constitution of the Christian Church and against them as a people."³ The allegation also involved his attitude toward the church book and the conference book. John Hushaw was a party to this meeting and apparently sided with Mr. Sanders.

¹Ibid.

²This was evidently the same man who had been elected chairman at the first recorded meeting in 1822.

³Salt Creek Christian Conference Minutes, Vol. I, p. XXII.

On May 27, 1826, conference appointed a committee to discuss this matter with Mr. Hushaw and Mr. Sanders. Having met with the two men and being unable to resolve their differences, the committee voted to withdraw the conference's recommendations to preach from both defendants.

The case was again considered at the August, 1826, meeting of Salt Creek. The conference resolved that Benjamin Sanders be given his recommendations again as an elder in the Christian Church and that they would ". . . fellowship him as a Christian without him being enrolled on any church book. . ." if ". . . he will not preach against them or scandalize them or preach against the Church."¹ John Hushaw was restored to fellowship and given the right to preach on the same conditions. Thus, it appears that the actual source of contention concerned whether it was necessary for an individual to be enrolled on a church book as a member of any congregation whatsoever.

Apparently, Mr. Sanders was not eager to agree to these conditions. On December 30, 1826, the conference further resolved that he ". . . shall not have his recommendations unless he come forward and agree to the conditions stated in this book at the conference last August."² And in May, 1827, the conference decreed that Benjamin Sanders was no

¹Ibid., p. XXV.

²Ibid., p. 1

longer a member of the conference. Finally, it appointed John Swaim and James Brady to visit him and to ". . . caution him not to administer the Lord's Supper nor administer under sanction of the Christian Church."¹

In 1827 John Hushaw incurred the wrath of the conference on another matter. Because he had sued Elder Joseph Baker before a justice of the peace, Mr. Hushaw was ". . . disfellowshipped unless he make satisfactory satisfaction for the above charge to his Brethren."² His penalty also included the withdrawal of his recommendations to preach. In an attempt to restore Mr. Hushaw, the conference sent Frisby Morris to talk with him. The results of this effort were not recorded in the conference records.

The minutes of 1823 revealed something of Salt Creek's thinking about the question of membership transfers from other bodies outside the conference. John Strate presented letters of recommendation from the Baptist Church to the conference. Upon the authority of these letters ". . . in regard to his conduct as a Christian and a preacher he was received as an Elder in the Christian Church and a member of this conference."³

Perhaps an attempt at religious education as such was made by the conference during these years. On August 11,

¹Ibid., p. 2.

²Ibid., pp. 1-2.

³Ibid., p. XII.

1827, Nathaniel Kinnison and William Smithan were sanctioned as teachers in the gospel. However, no description of their duties is listed.

During the years 1823-1828 the following eight new churches joined the conference: Antioch, Thessalonian, Thyatira, Beaver, Alexandria, Smyrna, Centre, and Pegamus. Added to the eleven churches which sent letters to the conference in 1822, and assuming that none of these earlier churches left the conferece, Salt Creek would have been comprised of nineteen churches in 1828. However, this assumption may be invalid since churches leaving the conference were usually not mentioned. Also, the maximum number of churches reported at any one meeting during this time was ten in 1824. In addition, it is difficult to ascertain the number of churches at any given time because a particular church might be referred to in any of three ways: by its name (e.g., Antioch), by its location (e.g., on Margret Creek), or by the name of the man in whose house the church met or who was its leader (e.g., the church at Samuel Darby's).

Salt Creek continued its correspondence with other Christian conferences during this period. At the August, 1828, meeting three brethren were appointed to attend the Athens Conference and four were appointed to attend the Brush Creek Conference. In addition, a three-man committee was selected to draft a letter to the Athens Conference.

Some other interesting aspects of these years follow:

1. Although not exactly constituting a blow for women's "lib", the names of Dorcas Kelly, Sarah Schooly, Christiana Brady, and Hannah Scott appear among the list of brethren present at an 1825 session of conference.
2. In 1824 it was resolved to make copies of the conference minutes and to send them to the deacons of every member church. It was the duty of these deacons ". . . to read or cause the same to be read in their monthly meeting."¹ This was quite a departure from the practice only three years before of destroying all conference records.
3. The August 11, 1826, day's meeting adjourned ". . . until tomorrow morning at Sun Rise at Andrew Kelly's barn."² The time and place would be considered unusual today.

1829

When the Salt Creek Christian Conference assembled on August 8, 1829, it listed the names of elders belonging to the conference. These elders were from Ross, Jackson, Pickaway, Athens and Gallia Counties.³

The conference included a new title among its list of representatives. This new position was that of "exortorer" [sic] and was filled by Junia Casstle. Salt Creek also resolved to send the minutes of that meeting to the Gospel Luminary, an Eastern periodical, for publication.

Two aspects of the thinking of the conference may be seen in its reference to Elder Downing Dawson. It resolved that

¹Ibid., p. XVIII.

²Ibid., p. XXIV.

³For a map of the counties represented at the 1829 meeting, see appendix A, Map I (page 124).

he should present himself to Salt Creek or to some other conference so that it might be determined whether he was still in good standing after an absence of four years from the conference. Thus, the conference was asserting the need for elders to be frequently sanctioned by a conference body while acknowledging that it would accept the authority of other Christian conferences in such sanctioning.

Although Salt Creek had preserved its records since 1822, the length to which it now went to defend this action shows the extent to which disagreement over the propriety of keeping such records must have gone. The outline of argument presented in the 1829 minutes in favor of such record keeping is as follows. The conference thought that both a record of church proceedings and of the names of church members should be kept. In addition to serving posterity, such records were necessary to the proper functioning of the church. Without them it would be impossible to administer the discipline necessary to maintain the spiritual health of congregations. Records were also necessary if ministers were to be presented with accurate letters of recommendation, a primary function of Salt Creek. If a preacher lost such a letter and records had not been kept, he could not obtain another one until conference convened again. Even then his recommendation would be dated only at this later date rather than from his original sanctioning by conference, and such would not give credit to his true length of service. The conference also reasoned

that the Lamb's Book of Life, from which God will discern the names of the faithful, is a record kept by the church because ". . . the heaven that is here mentioned is probably the church or congregation of believers and the book the church record in which their names are written."¹ Hence, the keeping of such books would be of the utmost importance.

The conference also cited previous examples of Jewish and Christian record keeping as justification for the recording of its activities. The Old Testament was primarily a history of the "Jewish Church". Without this record, it would be impossible for Christians to imitate the lives of Israel's virtuous heroes. The record known as the New Testament shows that Jesus was the seed of Abraham and provides the early history of the Christian Church. Thus, record keeping cannot be wrong.

Furthermore, the minutes state that, concerning the three thousand souls added to the church on the day of Pentecost, ". . . no doubt a record of their names was kept by the church at Jerusalem."² The apostle Paul was also seen as approving the keeping of records because he carried with him books and parchments.³ Even the use of the word "record" in the New Testament was seen as proof that records should be kept.

¹Salt Creek Christian Conference Minutes, Vol. I, p. 12.

²Ibid.

³The basis for this statement is II Tim. 4:13.

Salt Creek combined the Biblical precedent of record keeping with the authority for the holding of conferences. It referred to Paul's confrontation with Judaizers in Jerusalem as a conference and said that records of that meeting were kept.¹

The conference also argued that it was merely writing what those brethren who opposed written records were stating verbally. Therefore, to prove that they were not placing other records above the Bible, as they were accused of doing, the conference recorded in its minutes that it was taking ". . . the word of God and it only as the rule of our Faith and Practice."² The conference concluded its remarks on the propriety of keeping records by requesting that the individuals who still oppose this practice do not ". . . attempt to deprive us of this privilege for we deem it necessary or important to preserve a record of past transactions."³

The 1829 conference also dealt extensively with the subject of baptism. The section on baptism begins by stating the conference's view on this sacrament: ". . . we believe the Gospel rightly understood directs the penitent believer to reform and be baptized for the remission of sins."⁴ This position is then defended through various lines of reasoning. The individual is cleansed by repentance and baptism prior to

¹The account of Paul's visit to Jerusalem as recorded in Acts 15 and in Galatians 2 is meant here.

²Salt Creek Christian Conference Minutes, Vol. I, p. 10.

³Ibid., p. 13.

⁴Ibid.

receiving the Holy Spirit. New Testament examples are cited to show that repentance, baptism, and reception of the Holy Spirit occur in that order. Nor is it necessary that a time interval of six months or a year separate the decision to repent and repentance itself. The entire act of repentance and baptism often occurred in the New Testament in the same day.

Salt Creek also made two other assertions in an effort to clarify its position on baptism. First, it agreed that repentance was essential to salvation. That is, ". . . we do not intend to represent that we place more stress on baptism than repentance."¹ Second, it did not condemn those who misunderstood the truth concerning baptism. "We are aware that great allowance should be made for ignorance and tradition and that on this ground the Holy Spirit has been given to many who have neglected the command of baptism because perhaps they followed the best light they had."²

1830 - 1836

During this period Salt Creek continued to communicate with other organizations. In 1830 it again sent its minutes to the Gospel Luminary for publication in that periodical. It also continued to send visitors to other conferences. In 1831 brethren were appointed to attend the Deer Creek Conference, the Center Conference, and the Miami Conference. In

¹Ibid., pp. 15-16.

²Ibid., p. 14.

1836 delegates were again sent to Deer Creek. However, the records did not disclose visits to Salt Creek by representatives of other conferences. It was also during this time (1835 and 1836) that Salt Creek sent representatives to the Ohio state conference as noted in Chapter I. However, Salt Creek's minutes do not mention these state conferences.

Apparently, it was about this time that Salt Creek reached its zenith in number of member churches. When it was resolved in 1830 that one member be chosen in each church to collect funds for the support of the gospel, twenty-six churches and their agents to collect this money were listed. In 1833 one church from Meigs County and four from Gallia County were added to the conference, and in 1836 one congregation each from Gallia and Lawrence Counties joined Salt Creek. Evidently, the conference was attempting to attract additional churches during this period because in 1833 it decided to hold an extra session of conference ". . . for the benefit of the different churches near the Ohio river that wish to be attached to the Salt Creek Conference."¹

The conference also persisted in administering church discipline from 1830 to 1836. In 1830 the conference received a letter from the Scioto Church stating that one Charles Rose, a minister and member of the conference, had been found guilty of misconduct and had denied being a member of Salt Creek. Therefore, the conference certified that

¹Ibid., p. 24.

he, in fact, was no longer a member of conference. Also, in 1833 due to Brother Calvin's "recantations," two brothers were sent to visit him. The result of this visit or the nature of this recantation is not recorded.

The quest by Salem Church for Noah Clark's ordination, begun in May, 1825, was pursued in this period. In May of 1830 the Salem Church again requested Mr. Clark's ordination. After some contention, action on this request was delayed until the August conference, at which time it decided ". . . that Brother Clark should stand as he was for six months."¹ Finally, in September of 1831 the conference ordained Noah Clark. In 1832 he was elected as moderator of conference!

Another interesting case concerning ordination was that of Peter Miller. A special conference was held on October 31, 1835, to consider the ordination of Peter Miller and Samuel Darby so they might become travelling ministers. Mr. Darby was ordained, but Mr. Miller was not ". . . on account of the two brothers being set forth at the same time by the church the conference considered it not done in order."² However, this did not seem to be the real reason for failing to ordain Mr. Miller because two men from the Shade River Christian Church had been ordained in 1832, and two men from the church in Liberty Township were ordained at the

¹Ibid., p. 19.

²Ibid., pp. 28-29.

next regular session of conference following this special meeting. In fact, in August, 1836, Mr. Miller's ordination was not approved by conference.

In 1832 an elder, Joseph Baker, apparently suggested that the act of ordination be administered by the local churches rather than by the conference. It was resolved ". . . that each individual Church should choose them Elders and Deacons in every church according to Apostolic example and have them ordained as soon as possible."¹ However, the conference did not cease to ordain.

Salt Creek's role in evangelism during these years resided in three areas: raising support for the ministry, deciding where and when preaching would occur, and appointing preachers. Money was gathered to support the ministry both by the conference and by men in each church appointed by the conference. This money was sometimes raised by subscription. Salt Creek often decreed that two-day meetings be held. These were frequently the result of requests from local churches. The conferences also appointed ministers to ride the circuit, usually for six-month periods.

Salt Creek has frequently failed to adhere to its own resolutions, an example being found in this time period. In 1830 the conference decided that anyone not a member of the conference would be barred from a seat in conference. But in

¹Ibid., p. 23.

1832 Friend Parker was invited to a seat in conference.

Some miscellaneous points of interest from this time period were as follows:

1. In 1834 it was resolved that Salt Creek would publish a hymn book, and a committee was appointed to this end. The records do not mention it again.
2. In May 1835, the name of the conference was changed to the Ohio Scioto Salt Creek Conference. However, it is now again referred to as the Salt Creek Christian Conference.
3. In August, 1834, the conference decreed ". . . that no Brother shall progagate any new doctrine that would tend to make a division in Conference."¹
4. In 1835 the conference formalized the method for accepting new members into conference. New members were admitted by their ". . . giving their hands as a manifestation of their attachment to the church and the Brethren to exort them to their duty and then as they come forward and claim their Fellowship by obedience they deal with them as members in full fellowship."²

1837 - 1845

The size and the activity of the conference seems to have been less during this period than previously. Salt Creek continued to appoint circuit preachers, to pass judgment upon requests for ordination, and to speak of plans for the support of the ministry. However, these seem to have been treated only as routine matters, and little else was accomplished. Perhaps the best example of this may be found in the May, 1840, minutes where it is recorded that ". . . nothing appeared to come under the notice of conference for

¹Ibid., p. 27.

²Ibid.

record."¹

The fact that a decrease in the size of the conference occurred at this time may be discerned by these two facts: (1) a mere eight members were present at the August, 1840, meeting, and (2) only nine congregations were listed as member institutions in May of 1842. Some of Salt Creek's churches may have joined some of the many other Christian conferences in Southern Ohio, or the conference may have experienced a split. This latter possibility seems implied in the resolution in 1837 that ". . . the South West part of said conference have the liberty of holding conferences among themselves to act and transact business in case of necessity."²

Despite the general lack of activity, the conference did have two cases of church discipline during these years. In 1842 it was concluded that John Murray ". . . should not have his membership in conference with out he should first reform."³ This period's second example of discipline was the trial of Henry H. Hamon. At a special church meeting held on May 18, 1844, the brethren decided to expel Mr. Hamon from the conference. When the conference convened on May 25, it officially resolved that ". . . Henry H. Hamon should be expeled from the Christian Church and Conference and him to be published in some paper as a man of deception."⁴ Neither the

¹Ibid., p. 36.

²Ibid., p. 32.

³Ibid., p. 39.

⁴Ibid., p. 43.

specifics of Mr. Murray's needed reform nor of Mr. Hamon's deception were expressed in the minutes.

Some miscellaneous actions taken by Salt Creek during this period follow:

1. In 1841 it was resolved that each licensed or ordained minister should be a member of some particular church and should be recommended by that church to each yearly conference.
2. Also in 1841, it was decided to publish the minutes of the conference.¹
3. In 1844 the conference voted that a treasurer should be appointed in each church.

1846 - 1853

Salt Creek continued to fellowship with other conferences in this period. In 1851 it voted to send three messengers to the Deer Creek Conference, and in 1853 the conference sent two messengers each to the Southern Conference and to the Deer Creek Conference.

The year 1847 provided insight as to the means used by the conference in ordaining. On May 30, John Bodkin was ordained ". . . by fasting and prayer and the laying on of hands. . ."2 by two elders.

In May, 1851, the rule that licensed or ordained preachers must be recommended to conference each year in order to maintain their license was invoked. John Swaim was sent to

¹The nature of this publication cannot be ascertained.

²Salt Creek Christian Conference Minutes, Vol. I, p. 47.

warn Jonathan Brine and Samuel Darby that they would lose their licenses unless recommended by their churches. In August, 1851, their licenses were revoked for their ". . . not being regularly recommended to conference as Moral Men and Sound in the Faith."¹ Curiously, Mr. Darby had served the conference as clerk for several years.

Still attempting to provide for the support of the ministry, the conference again resolved that each church establish a treasury and appoint a treasurer. In addition, the treasurer was to be paid from these funds for his trouble.

In 1851 Salt Creek's minutes mention the Christian Connection. Mr. Ti Heal, professing to be an elder in the Christian Connection, apparently wanted to join the conference as an elder. However, the conference did not acknowledge him as such because of various reports against him.

The circuit preaching appointments for 1851 reflect a need for versatility in these ministers. Cornelius Martinus was chosen as one of the circuit riders because he was ". . . a Dutchman and can preach in dutch as well as the English."² Henry Williams was selected as a second circuit preacher because he ". . . is a Welshman and can preach in the Welsh language as good as the English."³

In November, 1853, a possible case of church discipline

¹Ibid., p. 51.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

by the conference did not develop. At a special meeting on November 5, Henry Williams, who had been at odds with the Steammill Church, asked whether they would still fellowship with him. When the reply was that they would not, he withdrew from the conference rather than risk being expelled.

These years were a period of growth for the conference. In 1851 one church reported that it had received forty-five new members within two weeks and several other churches reported considerable additions. One new church, Waverly, in Pike County, joined the conference in 1851.

The statistics offered in the 1852 minutes reflect how the conference had grown over the last decade. Twenty-seven members were present in 1852 as opposed to eight in 1840. In 1852 eleven churches were listed with a total membership of 468, and the statement is made that several other churches were not represented. In 1842 only nine churches were listed as conference members. Of the eleven churches named in 1852, seven were from Jackson County, two from Vinton County, and one each from Ross County and Pike County. The number of members ranged from a low of twenty at Beaver Creek in Pike County to a high of ninety-five at Sugar Camp in Jackson County. Of the 468 total membership, 355 were to be found in the seven Jackson County churches.

1854 - 1859

This period saw some specific steps taken toward a supported ministry. In 1854 Joel W. Reynolds was appointed as the circuit preacher. In return for preaching three weeks out of every four, he was to be paid three hundred dollars per year. The next year Mr. Reynolds was again selected as the circuit minister, but the terms differed slightly. He was to receive \$282.25, which was to be paid quarterly.

Apparently finding it difficult to secure even this much money, the conference appointed a committee at the 1856 meeting to devise a means for raising the needed revenue. Realizing that ". . . many ineffectual efforts have been made to sustain a traveling ministry . . ." ¹ the committee suggested that a conference treasurer be elected and that he receive one dollar per year from each member of conference to be placed in a permanent fund for the support of the ministry. To facilitate collection of this money in 1858, a protracted meeting at Brother Blosser's was the appointed time and place for the brethren to bring their subscriptions.

In 1856 Salt Creek again had visitors from other conferences. Three men visited from the Eastern Conference, and one messenger was present from the Southeastern State Convention. Salt Creek reciprocated by sending a messenger to the Eastern Conference, in Morgan County, that same year.

¹Ibid., p. 58.

The size of the conference continued to increase during this period. Eleven congregations reported at the August, 1856, gathering. Of the eleven churches reporting, only four disclosed their number of members, but the membership of these four alone totaled 335 as opposed to the total of 468 for the eleven churches reporting membership only four years earlier. The largest branch reporting was Hamilton with 150 members.

This growth was, in part at least, caused by the conference's quest for additional members. In 1858 the conference's August meeting included a call for members, ministers, or churches that wished to unite with Salt Creek. At that meeting the Scioto Church joined the conference. The next year the church in Newton Township, Pike County, joined the conference. This was evidently the Bethel church, the addition of which underscores the westward movement of the conference. In 1856 application had been made for a new conference west of the Scioto River. This request was denied by Salt Creek.

During this period the churches of Salt Creek encountered an added responsibility. The report received by the conference from the Franklin church illustrated this requirement. "Pursuant to Law and public notice . . ." ¹ the Franklin church elected trustees to transact its business and to control its deeds and contracts. These trustees were " . . .

¹Ibid., p. 55.

to hold their offices during good behavior or until resignation or removal."¹

In 1854 the conference passed two other resolutions of interest. One was that each branch of the Church of Christ should elect a clerk and a treasurer. The election of a treasurer was not new, but the selection of a clerk was. Also, this was the first time that the term "Church of Christ" was used in lieu of "Christian" in the Salt Creek minutes. The second resolution was that it was necessary for each church thereafter to be represented at conference either by letter or by delegation.

Two other changes were attempted by the conference during this period. In 1855 the spring conferences were discontinued, but in 1859 it was resolved to resume them. Also in 1859, a committee was selected to draft a constitution for Salt Creek.

1860 - 1865

During these years, the time of the Civil War, little business was conducted by the Salt Creek Christian Conference. The meetings consisted of routine matters such as the reading of letters from the churches, ordinations, and the arrangement of preaching engagements. The extent to which the activity of the conference was limited during these years may be illustrated by the minutes of 1861.

¹Ibid.

The entire business recorded consisted of the election of a chairman and a clerk, the renewing of one license, and the determination of the date and place of the next annual conference.

Only two significant events seem to have occurred in the conference during the first half of the 1860's. The first was that in 1863 the conference met for the first time at the Bethel Church in Pike County, where its meetings are now convened each year. The second was the resolution to renew the practice of having a spring conference. Although this resolution had also been passed in 1859, it never had been put into effect.

Conspicuously, no mention whatsoever was made of the war. However, minimal attendance at these gatherings and the small amount of business transacted at them may well indicate that its members were physically and/or mentally occupied elsewhere because of the war. Also, no mention of the strife would likely be necessary because of any difference of opinion concerning the war. The area covered by the conference was relatively small and, therefore, the members of the conference probably shared nearly the same sentiments concerning its outcome.

CHAPTER IV

THE SALT CREEK CHRISTIAN CONFERENCE

FROM 1860 UNTIL 1920

1866 - 1874

By this time a major revision in the geography of the Salt Creek Christian Conference had occurred.¹ In 1852 eleven churches had reported to the conference. Seven of these eleven churches, with approximately three-fourths of the reported membership, were located in Jackson County. In 1866 only six churches presented letters to the conference, and five of them were in Pike County. All five were within a small area west of the Scioto River.

This shift in location also points to another related fact concerning the constituency of the conference. There was much turnover in its member churches. Of the eleven congregations reporting in 1852 only the Franklin Township church repeated in 1866. Likewise, the eight churches reporting in 1872 comprised an entirely different list from that of 1866. Of course, these facts may be somewhat misleading since not all churches reported to each session of conference and because it was not uncommon for a church to be referred to by different names in the Salt Creek minutes.

¹The primary source of information for Chapter IV is the Salt Creek Christian Conference Minutes, Vol. I, pp. 68-289, and Vol. II, pp. 10-57.

Also, the situation seems to have stabilized near the end of this period. Four of the five churches reporting in 1873 had reported in 1872, and all five of the 1873 churches were among the eight represented in 1874.

This post-bellum period began with a marked reduction in membership of the churches represented at conference. As noted earlier, in 1856 only four of the churches reporting disclosed the number of their membership, but these four totaled 335 members. The six churches in 1866 claimed only 168 members, and by 1873 the sum for the five listed branches had risen to only 183. However, through evangelism and the addition of three more churches, this figure had spiralled to 359 by 1874. A particularly striking increase in membership was experienced by Pike Run which grew from fourteen members in 1873 to eighty-three the next year.

Although the exact reasons for this growth during the latter years of this period are unknown, partial credit probably must go to a resolution of the 1872 conference. Realizing that there had been "... no regular ministry established heretofore in the Salt Creek Christian Conference and no way whereby it can be supported,"¹ J. R. Jacobs and John Leute demanded that these shortcomings be remedied. They reasoned that if a supported ministry were not established "... we will soon have neither churches nor

¹Salt Creek Christian Conference Minutes, Vol. I, p. 76.

conference."¹

Therefore, they recommended several steps of corrective action to be taken. One preacher was to be selected whose primary duty was to establish and nurture new congregations. This minister was to ". . . be so supported that he can spend all his time in Preaching and informing himself to preach."² In order to make this total support possible, the other ministers were not to expect financial aid from the conference. Other parts of this resolution to secure a paid ministry were that each church establish a treasury, that each church member be required to contribute to this ministerial support, and that the deacons of the various churches determine the amount which each person was able to give. Having proper church officers was also recognized as an integral part of establishing a "regular" ministry. Thus, this resolution also stated that each church would have one or two elders, that each congregation would have two or three deacons, and that a minister might serve as an elder only in a newly established church.

In conjunction with this resolution, others were passed. John Leute was selected as this evangelist, and a copy of these resolutions was sent to each of the member churches. A conference treasurer was elected who was to receive monthly deposits from the various church treasurers. Not ignoring

¹Ibid.

²Ibid.

the preaching needs of already-established churches, the conference resolved that each congregation should select ministers to hold meetings ". . . for which they shall be liberally rewarded. . ."1 by that church.

These resolutions were apparently long overdue because in 1867 only \$260.25 was subscribed to the conference for the support of the ministry. Also, in 1869 the method chosen to raise money for recompensing ministers was that ". . . each male member pay said treasurer one Dollar and each Sister pay in the Treasury fifty cents. . ."2 per year.

This period also had its trial. A charge was brought against Joseph Throckmorton, and his and Mr. Mullen's licenses were withheld until their differences were reconciled. This reconciliation occurred at a special meeting held October 24, 1868. Mr. Throckmorton was found guilty of accusing the other brethren of preaching false doctrine. In addition, it was asserted that it was he who ". . . held forth Spurious doctrine that the conference will not receive."3 Although the minutes are not entirely clear on this matter, Mr. Throckmorton was apparently teaching that a man might receive ". . . the remission of his Sins and the love of God shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost before he is baptized."4 At any rate, their differences were resolved,

1Ibid., p. 77.

2Ibid., p. 73.

3Ibid., p. 71.

4Ibid.

and the committee renewed Mr. Throckmorton's license.

The matter of license renewal was further considered during this period. In 1869 there was an attempt to abolish the requirement that a minister need be recommended by his church each year in order to secure his license for the coming year. However, the motion that a minister retain his license until charges sufficient to revoke it were brought against him lost. In 1873 the method of renewing the preacher's license was revised so that any minister who had not been recommended at conference might secure his license by presenting this recommendation to the conference clerk at a later date.

Mention was also made during this period of the method used to determine the number of delegates allowed each congregation. Each church was permitted one delegate for each ten members plus one for a fraction of five or more.

1875 - 1882

When the conference assembled in 1875, a committee of five was appointed to draft a constitution and by-laws. This committee completed its task quickly and presented the constitution and by-laws to the conference on the following day. These documents were adopted by sections after the conference chairman read each section aloud to be certain that it was understood by all. It was resolved that each church would receive a copy of this constitution and by-laws.

The preamble to this constitution began by stating that ". . . it has become necessary that the Salt Creek Christian Conference reorganise and establish a Constitution and regulations . . ." or "(. . . conference will go down)."¹ The constitution specified which officers should be elected and listed the duties of each. It also set forth the duties and powers of the conference and said that compliance with the constitution was necessary if a church were to have a voice in conference.²

However, the life of this constitution was very short. When the conference met the next year, it resolved ". . . that the constitution adopted by this conference. . . with all its Preamble and parts resolutions and bylaws be repealed. . ." and ". . . that this conference be governed by the Bible and the Bible alone."³ This resolution was passed by a vote of twenty-one to six, thus complying with the constitution's requirement that a two-thirds vote of the members present at a regular session was necessary for its repeal.

This hasty abolishment of the constitution would seem to have been unforeseen on two counts. First, the same five churches were represented at the session which approved the constitution as at the one which repealed it. Second, the

¹Ibid., p. III.

²For the complete text of this constitution and by-laws, see appendix B (pages 127-129).

³Salt Creek Christian Conference Minutes, Vol. I, p. 86.

constitution included within its framework adequate denial that it was attempting in any way to replace the Bible. The preamble included the statement that the conference took ". . . the word of god for our rule of faith and practice. . ." ¹ and Article Six said that any part of the constitution found to be in conflict with the Bible shall be null and void.

This period also saw Salt Creek escalate its use of committees. Previously, the conference had appointed committees only to handle specific problems as they arose. Thus, the committees usually lacked names. Now, however, the same predetermined committees were appointed each year. The following committees functioned during these years: examining, finance, credentials, grievance, publication, order of business, arranging preaching.

The examining committee was responsible for determining whether candidates were worthy of ordination. For example, in 1876 this committee decided that A. Kinnison should not be ordained because his church had not requested his ordination and had not attested to his moral character. The examining committee might also ask the candidate questions which it considered pertinent in determining whether his moral and doctrinal positions were acceptable.

The finance committee was in charge of raising money for

¹Ibid., p. III.

the conference. These funds were used primarily for the support of the ministry. Salt Creek seems to have had difficulty during this period in deciding whether the conference should hire and pay ministers or if these were the rights of individual congregations. The prevailing view taken by the conference during this period may be seen in the finance committee's report of 1876, which asserted ". . . that each church hire its own minister and. . . raise the money in any way that they shall think best to support the minister."¹ However, there were times, as in 1878, when the finance committee's report suggested returning to the previous practice of each member paying one dollar per year to the conference to support the ministry. It was in 1878 that this indecision came to be most obvious. Having already decided that the conference would support the ministry, as noted above, the conference then moved that each church would support its own ministry. This latter motion failed.

Also, in 1878 Salt Creek initiated measures to insure that the one dollar per year per person was paid to the conference. Apparently realizing that some members would not pay their dollar, Salt Creek resolved that each church be responsible for supplying a sum in dollars for the support of the ministry equal to the congregation's total membership. Furthermore, "any church failing to comply with resolution shall lose their

¹Ibid., p. 86.

voice in conference."¹

The credentials committee's task was to determine which churches and, hence, which delegates, were entitled to a voice in conference. Evidently, a church was not eligible to participate in a conference session unless it had presented to the conference a letter stating its spiritual condition and attesting to the moral and spiritual standing of its preachers, elders, and deacons. In 1879 this committee decided that only two churches, Freedom and Mt. Pleasant, had met the specified requirements. However, the Pleasant Valley church was later reinstated, and ". . . those churches which were debarred from a voice in this session of conference. . . ." were ". . . considered as duly punished and the payment of this penalty satisfies all demands."²

The purpose of the grievance committee was, apparently, merely to report any problems which might arise. For example, in 1880 this committee reported a difficulty between I. W. Bunch and G. W. Masters, but another committee was appointed to settle this matter. However, this latter committee ". . . made no settlement whatever."³

The job of the publication committee was to suggest to the conference members certain reading material which they might find beneficial. In 1880 this committee reported the follow-

¹Ibid., p. 93.

²Ibid., p. 95.

³Ibid., p. 98.

ing as being commendable: "'Bible Banner', 'World's Crisis', 'The Christian', 'Christian Review', 'Herald of Gospel Liberty', and 'The Christian at Work'."¹ In 1877 the publication committee had served to further religious education by suggesting that the publications of Franklin and Rice of Cincinnati were best for the Sunday schools.

The committee on order of business determined which matters would be considered by a given session of conference and in which order. Although the sequence varied from year to year and was not always adhered to, the order of business of 1877 follows: (1) the report of the several committees, (2) the reception and reading of letters, (3) the ordination of ministers, (4) the issue and renewal of licenses to ministers, (5) financial matters, (6) miscellaneous business, (7) the election of officers for the ensuing year, and (8) determination of the time and place of the next conference.²

The committee on the arranging of preaching selected the minister(s) who would speak at each of the conference's preaching sessions. On Sunday three times of preaching were held: morning, afternoon, and evening. Also, more than one minister might be employed at any one session.

During this period no mention was made of Salt Creek's visiting any other conference. However, in 1876 a Mr. Bowser of the Southern Ohio Conference was invited to a seat with

¹Ibid., p. 97.

²Ibid., p. 88.

Salt Creek, and the next year a Mr. Winden, a United Brethren minister, was granted a seat in conference.

In 1878 Salt Creek dealt with the requirements which a church must fulfill before it could become a member of the conference.¹ Prior to being admitted to the conference, each applicant church needed to ". . . present by its delegates a certificate from a minister of the Salt Creek Christian Conference."²

Although the conference had previously refused to recommend certain preachers because charges had been placed against them, it failed to recommend Joseph Throckmorton and John Leute in 1881 for quite different reasons. Mr. Leute was not sanctioned because the congregation to which he had belonged no longer existed to recommend him and because of his ill health. Mr. Throckmorton was not sanctioned because his congregation had neglected to present the conference with a letter concerning his moral and doctrinal condition. However, both were invited to seats at conference and Mr. Leute was invited to preach that night.

Two other matters from this time period bear mentioning. In 1875 it was resolved that ". . . no member of this conference be allowed to speak over 10 minutes at one time on the same question nor no two to be allowed to speak at once."³

¹For a map showing the counties which had member churches in 1878, see appendix A, Map II (page 125).

²Salt Creek Christian Conference Minutes, Vol. I, p. 93.

³Ibid., p. 81.

In 1880 ". . . some discussion arose concerning the so called 'Soul Sleeping doctrine' but nothing decisive."¹

1883 - 1891

This period saw the appearance of yet another committee, the temperance committee, which functioned only in 1883. Apparently, its only accomplishment was to submit the following report to the conference:

Where as Intemperance is one of our greatest national curses and all feel, and realize its baneful effect, therefore be it Resolved That we as a body of Christians, do all within our power both by vote and otherwise to suppress this rising evil. Resolved that our vote and influence be strictly in harmony with our prayers, that the manufacture and use of Intoxicants as a beverage be forever prohibited in the State of Ohio.²

Another committee, that on publication, seems to have changed its function from that of previous years. Whereas in 1880 the publication committee's report had been a suggestion of reading materials which would be beneficial if read by the members of conference, in 1884 this committee stated that ". . . we will not publish, for we are not in the condition that we would be benefited much by it."³

During these years the finance committee was still attempting to decide whether each individual congregation should pay its preachers or the conference should collect the money used in support of the ministry. For the most part, the conference

¹Ibid., p. 97.

²Ibid., pp. 107-8.

³Ibid., p. 114.

had evidently decided to let each church hire and compensate its own ministers. This feeling even went to the extreme that in 1888 the motion that a finance committee be appointed lost for want of a second to the motion. However, a finance committee was appointed later that day, but it reported that each church should attend to its own financial affairs.

When a finance committee would suggest that the conference raise money to support the ministry, its plan was similar to that of the past. For example, the committee of 1887 said that two-hundred dollars should be raised by subscription and paid quarterly. The finance committee of 1889 did make two changes in this method of collection. A representative of the church was to visit each of its members quarterly to make the collection, and the donor was to be given a receipt.

Salt Creek continued to associate with other groups during these years although difficulty may have arisen with outsiders on at least two occasions. In 1883 five preachers from other conferences were granted seats with Salt Creek, and two of them were selected to preach the first night. J. B. Taylor, one of the two opening night speakers, proposed a method of reorganization to the conference. This reorganization probably meant combining with other churches, perhaps with another conference which Mr. Taylor represented. Although his proposition was apparently accepted by the conference at one time, it was later rejected, although no explanation was given for failure to reorganize. Mr. Taylor

was not mentioned as being present at the next annual conference.

Perhaps in an effort to show that it welcomed other ministers into its ranks while refusing reorganization, Salt Creek followed this vote against combining with other groups by stating how preachers might unite with it. Specifically, it extended an invitation to all ministers in good standing to labor with the conference in the gospel. Preachers wishing to join Salt Creek were to apply to the president and secretary.

In 1884 Salt Creek seemed to be reluctant to communicate with other conferences. A motion to send two delegates to both the Ohio Christian Conference and the Scioto Valley Christian Conference was defeated. However, two years later Salt Creek sent two representatives to the Eastern Christian Conference at Hamilton in Jackson County. A Hamilton church in Jackson County had once belonged to the Salt Creek Conference.

The second attempt at reorganization was proposed by John Q. Lawwill. Mr. Lawwill, first mentioned in the minutes in 1887, was admitted to a seat in the conference in 1889 and was selected to preach at a conference session for the first time in 1890, the year of his proposal for reorganization. Mr. Lawwill stated that because the churches which he represented were ". . . destitute of a shelter in conference. . ."1

¹Ibid., p. 137.

they desired to unite with Salt Creek if an agreement could be reached. A point of contention was apparently the name which the combined venture would assume. However, Mr. Lawwill's proposal that the name Church of God or Church of Christ be given to the reorganized conference would not seem to have warranted rejection of the undertaking. Nonetheless, his two-hundred member group was evidently not allowed to unite with Salt Creek. Although the minutes are unclear as to whether his proposal was accepted, no mention of Mr. Lawwill is made in the 1891 records.

Other evidence of turmoil within the conference may also be seen during the latter portion of this period. The Pleasant Valley church of Scioto County was not mentioned as being present at the conference after 1883. Thus, only the Bethel church in Pike County and Freedom church in Jackson County were members of Salt Creek for the greater part of this period. Bethel and Freedom had alternated as the site of the annual conference from 1878 through 1889. The fact that Bethel was chosen to host the 1890 conference after also hosting the 1889 conference may indicate some difficulty between the two churches. The Freedom church's absence from the 1890 conference makes this possibility more probable.

When Salt Creek met at Bethel in 1890, however, one other group was represented besides the home church. James Mullen, a long-time member of the conference, was recommended by Post No. 9, Corps Victoria, Western Division of Christian Crusaders.

Thus, the minutes state that two "churches" were present. There are many unfamiliar names in the 1890 minutes. One of these newcomers, a Brother P. A. Lawson, delivered a speech on Christian union.

The minutes of 1891 further support the contention that these were troubled years for Salt Creek. There were again many new names listed in the 1891 records, and a committee on organization was appointed. The fact that Bethel's membership decreased from fifty-six in 1890 to thirty-nine in 1891 may indicate that a split occurred within that congregation.

1892 - 1900

During these years, John Q. Lawwill exerted much influence upon the Salt Creek Christian Conference. Although his proposal for reorganization in 1890 had apparently been rejected, Mr. Lawwill began to play a major role in conference affairs in 1895. He was an elder of the Riverdale church, which joined the conference in that year. In 1895, he led in prayer twice, preached at one session of conference, and served on both the finance and the rules and order of business committees. That same year he was sent out by the conference as an evangelist, and he was elected as president of the 1896 meeting. By 1898 Mr. Lawwill was the minister of the Riverdale church and the clerk of the Bethel church.

Women also began to assume a more active role in the conference just prior to the beginning of the twentieth century.

In 1894 Sister Sarepta Throckmorton was selected as the assistant secretary for the next year. This is the first recorded instance of a woman holding office within the conference. In 1895 Elizabeth Mason represented her church as both the treasurer and a delegate. Three other women served as alternate delegates that year. In 1897 four of Bethel's nine delegates - Mary A. Crabtree, Sarepta Throckmorton, Anna Holobaugh, and Amanda Jones - were women. In that same year three women - Marian A. Crabtree, Ann Jacobs, and Jane Basye - made up the finance committee, the first recorded example of women on a Salt Creek committee. Finally, in 1898, Mrs. Mary A. Crabtree offered prayer during a session of conference.

The number of churches which were members of Salt Creek during these years was small, Bethel being the only constant member. From 1892 through 1894 Freedom, in Jackson County, and Bethel, in Pike County, were the only churches in the conference. In 1895 the annual meeting was held at the non-member church of Victory. This marked the first time since 1877 that the conference had met at a place other than Freedom or Bethel. Freedom was not present at the 1895 meeting, but John Lawwill's Riverdale church was added to the conference. Although the ministers' reports of 1896 state that conference preachers had spoken during the previous year at Victory, Bethel, Green Brier, Smith Hill, Brown's Schoolhouse, Mt. Joy, Howard, and Riverdale, only the Bethel and Riverdale churches

were actually members of conference. In 1897 the Morgantown church joined the association, and in 1898 the Freedom church returned to the conference. When the Dunlap and Camp Creek churches also were admitted to Salt Creek in 1898, the five churches present at that meeting were the most for any year during this period. The Pleasant Valley church returned to the conference in 1899, but Dunlap and Freedom were missing.

The reports of the different finance committees show varied attempts to raise funds throughout these years. The orderliness of the 1895 report is probably the result of Mr. Lawwill's being on the committee. The steward of each church was to visit his members once a quarter and to collect money from them according to their abilities. He was to give these collections to the church treasurer, who was allowed to make disbursements only upon authorization from the church. The 1896 and 1899 reports called for each male member of conference to pay ten cents and each female member to pay five cents per month to the church treasurer. However, ". . . any one Failing to comply with the above demands Shall give his or her Reasons and any lawful excuse will be accepted."¹ The 1898 report was quite similar to those of 1896 and 1899. Each male member was required to pay twenty-five cents and each female member twelve and one-half cents per quarter.

The most forcefully worded finance committee report was

¹Ibid., p. 166.

issued in 1900 by the committee foreman, John Q. Lawwill. It called for the elders to meet and to levy a tax on each congregation. The amount of the tax on each church was to be presented in writing to the secretary of the conference. Churches that failed to pay their taxes were to be ". . . debared a voice and vote in Conference untill Said Sum Be Payed."¹

In 1895 Salt Creek once more dropped its requirement of yearly renewal of ministers' licenses. Instead, their licenses were ". . . to be valid as long as they are in good standing."² However, this resolution was repealed in 1897, and the practice of yearly renewal was once again in vogue. Also, in 1900 a resolution was passed granting ministers older than fifty-five their licenses for life. This resolution suffered repeal the next year.

Also dealing with licensing was the case of James Mullen. In 1893 and in 1894 the conference secretary was authorized to give Mr. Mullen his license ". . . providing he requests them, and will furnish a letter of recommendation to be sound in the faith of the Gospel."³ Apparently, he had not met these requirements by 1896, but the conference passed a motion to send him a license which would be valid as long as he

¹Ibid., p. 196.

²Ibid., p. 151.

³Ibid., p. 147.

exhibited Christian character.

Concerning ordination, a committee was appointed in 1896 to investigate Abraham Bare and Charles Payton. Mr. Bare's request for ordination was approved, but the committee ruled that Mr. Payton was ". . . not worthy of being even a Licentiate let alone a Minister."¹

There was only one example during this period of Salt Creek's communicating with another conference. A three-man delegation was appointed in 1892 to visit the next session of the Ohio Conference.

The conference developed several new aspects during these years. New titles for officers were "stewards" in 1895 and "sextons" in 1896. The Doxology was sung at the 1895 meeting. That same year it was resolved to underline the words "'of the Church of Christ' in the minister's license showing to what Church they belong."²

Two new committees also came into being during this period. In 1895 a standing committee was begun, and in 1898 a committee was appointed to keep order throughout the session. The function of the committee to keep order seems obvious, but the reason that it was needed is not disclosed in the minutes. The purpose of the standing committee must have been quite general because it was appointed ". . . for the benefit of this society."³

¹Ibid., p. 168.

²Ibid., p. 151.

³Ibid., p. 152.

The year of 1895 was one of rules and order for the conference. It re-adopted, with two changes, the conference constitution, which had been passed in 1875 but repealed in 1876. The first alteration was to omit article five. This article had made compliance to the constitution mandatory for all churches having a voice in conference and was probably most responsible for the 1876 repeal of the constitution. The second change was to add clerks, treasurers, and stewards to the list of members of conference. These offices had not been a part of Salt Creek's structure in 1875.

No mention was made of re-adopting the 1875 by-laws. This was because a committee in 1895 drafted rules and an order of business which served the same purpose as the previous by-laws. In addition to providing an updated order of business and setting forth voting rules, this document outlined parliamentary procedure for the conference.¹

In 1889 Salt Creek instituted the keeping of a death roll. At first, only the names of deceased ministers and elders were placed on this list, but in 1927 the list was henceforth expanded to include the names of all deceased members of conference.

The minutes of 1896 provide two interesting puzzles. First, the minister's report of J. C. Holobaugh stated that he had accounted for thirty-two additions to the church but that

¹For the complete text of these rules and order of business as well as of this new constitution, see appendix C (pages 130-135).

he had baptized only one person during the previous year. Second, Gideon Crabtree reported that of the thirty-eight additions to the church which he had received, seventeen were ". . . Standing without a home in the church for the lack of organization."¹ The minutes fail to disclose the exact meaning of these accounts.

1901 - 1909

During these years the Salt Creek Christian Conference entertained the idea of consolidating with other groups but failed to do so. At the 1903 meeting the conference considered J. B. Taylor's letter requesting that Salt Creek appoint a lay delegation to investigate the possibility of consolidation with the Scioto Valley Conference. However, it was decided to ignore Mr. Taylor's propositions ". . . and pay no more attention to them."² That same year, and again in 1909, a committee was appointed to meet ". . . the regular Baptist Brethren to affect a consolidation if possible."³ No further information is given about either of these proposed meetings with the Baptists.

Salt Creek carried on a program of home missions during this time period. In 1902 the conference resolved to send Joseph Throckmorton and Gideon Crabtree into Jackson County ". . . to organize and build up Broken down churches."⁴

¹Salt Creek Christian Conference Minutes, Vol. I, p. 162.

²Ibid., p. 162. ³Ibid., p. 220. ⁴Ibid., p. 209.

Conference ministers also helped to organize other new churches. On August 13, 1904, Mr. Lawwill organized a church at Smith Hill in Pike County. In 1905 Gideon Crabtree organized the church known as Pleasant Valley No. 3. It included members from both Ross and Pike Counties. In 1908 Mr. Crabtree organized the Black Oak church near Sedan in Scioto County. Thus, Salt Creek organized churches in at least four counties during these years.

This time period provides better insight into some of the conference's doctrinal positions than do most other years. In his 1904 minister's report, Gideon Crabtree outlined what he had been preaching. He saw the need for these four steps in order: faith, conversion, baptism by immersion, and ". . . communion and showing the act of humiliation by washing one another's feet."¹

These latter three steps are also dealt with elsewhere in the minutes of this period. In 1903 Mr. Lawwill was sent to Morgantown to debate on the subject of feet washing. In 1905 it was apparently the practice of conference churches to observe the Lord's Supper once a year. Mr. Lawwill's minister's report states that he had "administered the sacrament" once each at Harmon and at Smith Hill during the previous year, and the Harmon Church's letter says that it had had one "communion meeting" during that year. However, this practice was

¹Ibid., p. 232.

changed in 1907 when it was resolved that each minister who was in charge of a church ". . . shall hold at least 4 Sacramental Suppers a year in the church."¹

Although never stated as such, the minister's reports leave the impression that the conference did not equate the term "church addition" with baptism. This time period provides many more examples (similar to the one mentioned in the previous section) of ministers reporting far more additions than baptisms. Although these additions could have been transfers of membership, this seems unlikely for that era.

One other doctrinal issue is dealt with during this period when the conference's disapproval of the use of the mourner's bench is clearly expressed in the case of Joseph Throckmorton. In 1906 a letter of accusation against Mr. Throckmorton was presented to the conference. It read, in part, that he had ". . . departed from the faith of this conference by practicing the mourners bench Services in his meetings thus introducing one of the relics of the theories of John Wesley and not of Jesus Christ."² Salt Creek declared that any minister guilty of this charge was to be expelled from the conference ". . . unless they can show gospel for it."³ Mr. Throckmorton withdrew from the conference. He was re-instated the following year.

¹Ibid., p. 277.

²Ibid., pp. 267-8.

³Ibid., p. 268.

Salt Creek seems to have been very active in the area of religious education during these years. In 1903 a Sunday School committee was appointed. Its report suggested that ". . . each church should be required to have a Sunday School at least throughout the Summer Season and the Supt. of such Sunday School must be a Christian man or woman."¹ One responsibility of the publication committee was to advise the conference as to what literature should be used in the Sunday Schools. It requested ". . . each superintendant of Sabbath schools in this body to use the Bible in their classes or schools and if necessary for using literature we recommend it be gotten from Dayton Christian publishing Co."² Also, in 1905 J. C. Holobaugh's minister's report read that he had done considerable Sunday School work.

By 1906 Salt Creek was appointing a literature committee to suggest publications to be used in its religious education program. In 1906 this committee thought it advisable to allow each church to select its own literature, but its reports of the next two years requested the use of Dayton Christian Publishing Company literature once again. In addition, in 1908, the literature committee recommended that ". . . each member or family use such wholesome literature as they think best in the homes of this church."³

¹Ibid., p. 217.

²Ibid., p. 219.

³Ibid., p. 287.

Salt Creek made a further attempt at religious education in 1906. A committee was appointed concerning the organization of a "Bible School." This committee suggested that the conference ". . . proceed immediately after this conference session closes to the organization of Said School and that this School shall be known as the S.C.C.C. Bible School."¹ Although this could have been only another term for Sunday Schools, the context of the minutes make this to appear not to be the case. Sunday Schools had apparently already been started again at least three years previously, and the 1906 literature committee had made its suggestion for literature to be used by the Sunday Schools prior to the motion being made to organize this Bible School. Regardless of its intended nature, it evidently did not succeed as it is not mentioned again in the conference records.

During this period Salt Creek continued to alternate between the conference's collecting funds to support the ministry and each church's caring for its own financial affairs. The most interesting financial aspects of these years are the meager funds used by the conference and the unusual means used in gaining them. The small amount of funds required and the difficulty experienced in raising them are nearly inconceivable. For example, in 1901 the secretary was paid seventy cents for recording and postage. The 1904 financial report

¹Ibid., p. 267.

showed a previous year's balance of ninety cents, \$1.70 collected as delegation fees (ten cents per delegate), and expenses of thirty cents. The delegation fee having been raised to fifteen cents per delegate, the additional five cents per delegate was given to the president, J. Q. Jacobs, to help defray his expenses. In 1906, near the end of Volume I, a special collection was taken to garner \$1.95 to buy a book in which to keep the conference minutes.

John Q. Lawwill's minister's report of 1904 vividly illustrates both his zeal for the ministry and the meager compensation of that day. Laboring in four different churches that year, he had preached 143 sermons (resulting in 160 additions to the church), performed forty-seven baptisms, solemnized seven marriages, and conducted thirty-one funerals. His total income for this effort was \$181.89.

One of the more unusual means of securing money was devised in 1906. Each congregation appointed a penny collector. It was his job to ". . . ask each person present on each lords days morning to drop a penny in the penny box to defray the expense of the church."¹ In 1907 Salt Creek decided to take up annually a public donation at the forenoon service on Sunday at conferences, and a motion which would have prohibited ". . . all festivals being held for the benefit of churches"² lost.

¹Ibid., p. 264.

²Ibid., p. 277.

By 1909 the conference was calling a spade a spade. Still needing a book in which to record minutes and now desiring a case in which to keep the conference records, there was a motion carried which stated that "the beging com. while performing their duties beg also for case."¹ However, that same year the finance committee took a step in the right direction by recommending that the ministers of the various churches ". . . impress on the minds of their members that it is their Christian duty to contribute to the general conference funds."²

Some of the other occurrences of this period are as fascinating as the methods of raising revenue. In 1903 there was an unsuccessful motion to fine anyone ten cents for leaving the house without the chair's permission. In 1904 a motion carried which forbade the use of tobacco in the church house throughout conference. In 1909 a motion passed stating that anyone ". . . using insinuating language in debate. . ." was to ". . . be debared from vote and voice during the session in which it occurred."³ Also, in 1909 the Bethel Military Band was invited to provide the conference members with some music.

It was during these years that Bethel, the current site of the annual conference, became recognized as the center of the

¹Salt Creek Christian Conference Minutes, Vol, II, p. 15.

²Ibid., p. 16.

³Ibid.

association. In 1907 it was resolved that Bethel be the headquarters for the conference and that it meet there each year, and in 1909 it was decided to keep the conference records there. Although the resolution making Bethel the formal headquarters and meeting place was repealed in 1909, it continued unofficially in that capacity.

The conference sessions of this time involved much preaching. On Sunday, August 28, 1904, the following schedule was observed: 9:30 a.m., prayer meeting followed by preaching; 2:30 p.m., preaching by two ministers; 7:30 p.m., preaching by two more ministers. In 1909 J. Q. Lawwill was to preach on Saturday night ". . . with liberty to any or all to follow."¹

Salt Creek continued to exercise discipline upon its ministers during these years. In 1901 it withdrew the credentials of Hiram McCurdy and published in the county paper that he was no longer a minister of the conference. In 1902 it withdrew the license of Abraham Bare and notified the probate judge of Pike County and Ross County that he should no longer be allowed to solemnize marriage contracts. Also, in 1902 Salt Creek published these same statements concerning Mr. McCurdy and Mr. Bare in the Ohio State Journal. In 1908 the probate judge was also notified that A. L. Prichard was no longer a minister of Salt Creek, and in 1909 Mr. Prichard was likewise notified. A similar effort to oust J. L. Emmons in 1904 failed.

¹Ibid., p. 17.

Another example of dissension within the conference may be found in the minutes of 1905. The Pleasant Valley No. 1 church petitioned the conference to seat its delegates without a church letter because ". . . our church letter has been rejected through the contrariness of one man."¹ It also requested that Joseph Throckmorton and O. J. Brannan be investigated concerning this matter. The investigating committee was able to settle the differences between the two men. However, a motion carried which provided for disfellowshipping any minister who comes to conference ". . . all rapt up in a spirit of contrariness and fails to comply with the rules of conference."² Perhaps this incident led to the appointment the next year of a committee to keep order.

The conference had strict rules concerning its ministers and elders. Beginning in 1903 elders were to be lay members, no licensed minister being allowed to hold the office of elder. Nor was the elder of one church to exercise any jurisdiction over another congregation unless asked to do so by an elder of the latter congregation. An attempt in 1905 to repeal this rule was not successful.

Any minister failing to present the conference with a written record of his work for the prior year was to lose his voice in the conference. Ministers who had not notified the conference that they would be absent and those who had made no

¹Salt Creek Christian Conference Minutes, Vol. I, p. 248.

²Ibid., p. 249.

effort to discharge their ministerial duties were to lose their licenses.

However, these and other rules of the conference may not always have been adhered to. For example, in 1908 the motion ". . . that we suspend rules of conference for time being"¹ carried. This demonstrated how easily rules might be ignored.

1910 - 1916

No minutes are extant for the years 1910-1916. A notation in the conference records indicates that the minutes for these years were ". . . kept in manuscript form and not transferred. Said manuscript are lost."²

1917 - 1920

Salt Creek continued its efforts in religious education during this period. Reports from the various Sunday Schools became a part of the minutes beginning in 1917. In 1918 the Bethel Sunday School reported an average attendance of twenty-five pupils and an average collection of thirty-three cents. By 1920 Bethel's average attendance had risen to forty-five, and it had experienced one Sunday when 100 had attended. In 1920 the conference constitution called for a Sunday School Department.

¹Ibid., p. 284.

²Salt Creek Christian Conference Minutes, Vol. II, p. 21.

In 1918 Salt Creek deviated from previous practice. Instead of trying an offender, the conference voted to prevent the case of Brother White from coming before the conference.

Salt Creek also communicated with other groups during these years. In 1917 it appointed a committee ". . . to confer with committee from Ohio Conference in case said committee came."¹ The constitution adopted in 1920 described Salt Creek as being an auxiliary to the Ohio State Christian Association and the American Christian Convention and vowed that the conference ". . . shall cooperate and work in harmony with the plans and methods of same."² Also, following the constitution, the names of the officers and the address of the Board of Church Extension in Kansas City, Missouri, are listed. The conference also saw the need for electing a corresponding secretary in 1920.

Salt Creek organized a Missionary Society in 1920. Known as the Missionary Society of the Salt Creek Christian Conference, its officers were the assistant secretary, the vice-president, and the treasurer of the conference. Its specific goal and functions were not stated in the minutes.

The 1920 finance committee recognized that improvement was needed in its area. Its report included the admission that the many different ways devised by the conference to raise money throughout its history had ". . . wholly or partly

¹Ibid., p. 21.

²Ibid., p. 45.

failed."¹ Thus, the committee appealed to the conference members to view the proposed subscription of \$300 for the coming year as an ". . . opportunity to express the love they have for Christ and the Gospel."²

There were also other attempts at better meeting the financial obligations of the conference during this period. In 1920 the conference resolved to deposit the conference funds in a bank and established the Ministerial Aid Committee. This committee had the power to make withdrawals from the Special Conference Fund. This money was to be used to pay ministers and to meet certain other expenses. However, this committee was not to interfere with the business transactions of the individual churches.

In 1919 an unusual measure was adopted by Salt Creek. A committee of two was appointed which had the power to sell or rent church property in order to ease the conference's financial commitments. In 1920 this committee reported having sold the People's Chapel Church.

During these years the conference also resolved that salaries for its ministers be established. Ministers were to receive \$1.50 per sermon from the conference with a maximum amount of \$3.00 being drawn from the conference funds by any one minister per month for services at any one church. To make this possible, each church was to give the conference

¹Ibid., p. 35.

²Ibid., p. 36.

\$2.00 per year for each member, four-fifths of which was to be used to meet ministers' salaries.

The conference seemed to be undergoing a time of spiritual depression during these years. The Camp Creek letter of 1919 reported that most of its members had ". . . grown very indifferent. . ." with ". . . interest low."¹ Similarly, the 1920 Bethel letter said that its members were ". . . at a very low ebb spiritually."² This deteriorating condition existed despite the appointment in 1917 of an evangelist who was to conduct two days' meetings in each congregation to assist broken-down churches.

Although not citing any disfavor with its previous constitution and not stating any need for a better one, Salt Creek drafted a new constitution and by-laws in 1920. The preamble ably sets forth the position of the conference by stating that ". . . the Holy Scriptures is the only rule of faith and practice, that the Lord Jesus Christ is the head and door of the church: Christian the only name for his followers, Christian character the only test of fellowship, Individual interpretation of the Scriptures the right and duty of all and that all should labor for the union of the followers of Christ."³ This constitution stated the object of the conference, outlined the requirements of individuals and churches for conference mem-

¹Ibid., p. 31.

²Ibid., p. 34.

³Ibid., pp. 44-45.

bership, and dealt at great length with the subject of the conference's owning property. The by-laws included a twenty-one-point order of business and listed the conference's officers and provided for their election.¹

A significant feature of this constitution was Article Four which said that the conference would have seven departments, each of which would have its own secretary. These secretaries would be officers of the conference and would report to it. These seven departments were as follows: Missionary, Sabbath school, publishing, educational, Christian Endeavor, finance, and relief. Their functions were those which their names suggest.

The war which went on during these years was apparently treated by the conference the same as the Civil War had been. No mention whatsoever is to be found in Salt Creek's minutes of World War I.

¹For the complete text of this constitution and by-laws, see appendix D (pages 136-149).

CHAPTER V

THE SALT CREEK CHRISTIAN CONFERENCE

FROM 1920 TO 1974

1921 - 1928

As provided for in the 1920 constitution, the Salt Creek Christian Conference worked through its Sunday school and its education departments to furnish religious education for its members.¹ A major role in the Sunday school movement was played by Mr. I. N. Basye, who served as the conference's superintendent of Sunday schools. His job was to travel among the various churches promoting the Sunday school movement and organizing Sunday schools in each church each spring. For example, in 1922 he organized Sunday schools at Bethel, Smith Hill, and Sioux. His 1921 report listed five Sunday schools with a total enrollment of 170. He thought that the Sunday schools would prosper much more if better teachers could be enlisted and if parents would show a greater interest in this undertaking.

Mr. Basye was re-appointed as the general superintendent of Sunday schools in 1925 but had died before Salt Creek convened in 1926. Although the ministers had also helped with

¹The primary source of information for the years 1921 to 1934 is the Salt Creek Christian Conference Minutes, Vol. II, pp. 58-276.

the Sunday school effort, Mr. Basye's role in this area can be appreciated from the fact that the conference records do not mention Sunday schools from 1926 to 1928.

During these years, Salt Creek underwent a change in its ministerial personnel. Its preachers had labored for many years and, hence, were probably aged, and some of them were in ill health. In 1922 John Baker said that he ". . . had not been physically fit. . ." ¹ to preach more than a limited number of sermons, and Gideon Crabtree reported that ". . . my condition needs no remarks as to why I have not been in the work." ² Indeed, in 1924 the conference authorized the sale of a church to meet the funeral expenses of Mr. Crabtree.

The 1928 minutes also report the death of John Q. Lawwill. Mr. Lawwill had been a leader in the conference since 1892 and was evidently its most influential personality during most of this time. The conference showed its appreciation for his efforts by paying his doctor bill and his funeral expenses. In addition, it passed a moving resolution which attested to the abundance of his works and his faith.

With the conference ministerial ranks dwindling as they were, the Smith Hill choice of a minister in 1923 is not surprising. It selected its preacher for the coming year to be ". . . Bro. Lawhorn, if Convenient, if not. Bro. Lambour if

¹Salt Creek Christian Conference Minutes, Vol. II, p. 71.

²Ibid., p. 72.

he can't, Bro. Lawwill and if he can't any one that the conference may send us."¹ In order to solve this dilemma, the Ministerial Aid Committee was empowered to hire preachers from outside the conference. In 1923 two ministers who had been associated with the conference for some time officially became Salt Creek preachers. On April 18, 1923, Victor Hugo Lambour was examined and ordained at a special meeting of conference, and on October 8, 1923, William Lawhorn of Portsmouth, Ohio, was given a license to preach.

The need for ministers was also met from within the conference. On February 20, 1926, a J. N. Lawwill, probably the son of J. Q. Lawwill, was given license to preach and to exhort. However, he was denied ". . . the right to Baptize or to set forth the Sacramental Service."² The reason that he was not allowed these privileges is not given. Also, in 1925 Mr. Sherman Swogger was examined and ordained as a minister. He served in the conference until his death in 1974.

Perhaps as a result of the many new ministers being in the conference, Salt Creek passed a resolution in 1926 concerning the method of receiving new members into the church. If any preacher received a new member ". . . in any other way than he can show by example in the bible, . . ." said minister ". . . automatically ceases to be a member of the

¹Ibid., p. 84.

²Ibid., p. 120.

conference without any charges being preferred."¹ No elaboration is given as to this Biblical manner of receiving converts.

One of the new ministers, Mr. Lambour, seems to have experienced some difficulty in the conference. In 1923 he wrote that he had tried to reorganize the Harmon church and to establish a Sunday school there without success. He ". . . rejected them after a second and third admonition because . . ." they were ". . . hearers of the word, not doers of the word."² In 1928 the conference investigating committee reviewed Mr. Lambour's case because he was opposed by a deacon and had been expelled by one congregation. Neither the deacon nor the congregation was named. The committee decreed that the congregation had had no right to take such an action against Mr. Lambour and that he was still in good standing with the conference. However, it advised him ". . . to place his membership in some other class of the conference in order to avoid confusion."³

The conference continued to struggle with its financial problems during these years. A large portion of the 1920 pledges were still uncollected when the conference convened in 1921. A motion to grant a ten percent discount on any 1920 pledges paid before the adjournment of the 1921 conference lost. In an effort to devise a plan suitable to the con-

¹Ibid., p. 123. ²Ibid., p. 85.

³Ibid., p. 143. The term "class" is often substituted for "congregation" in the conference minutes.

ference members, the 1921 finance committee provided three plans from which the conference might choose one. The first plan was for each member to give a cash donation or a pledge supported by a note with approved security. The second option was tithing, and the third method was to tax each member a specified amount. Apparently, Salt Creek found none of these plans to its liking because later in that same session it resolved to distribute 3000 envelopes containing requests for money to defray the expenses of conference.

Not yet satisfied, Salt Creek appointed a Ways and Means Committee which was ". . . to devise means whereby this conference can be supported without throwing the burden on a few."¹ Nor was it successful. Reporting in 1922, this committee asserted that ". . . the means we arranged were sufficient if they had been carried out, but like all other plans they were ignored."² The plan of the Ways and Means Committee was known as the egg plan and the Christmas gift plan. The specifics of the latter plan were not given, but the details of the egg plan were quite clear. The conference members were ". . . to pay into the Con. tres. the value in money of all eggs lain on the 2nd Sunday of Oct. the 2nd Sunday of Jan. the 2nd Sunday of April and the 2nd Sunday of July."³ Members without eggs were to donate one dollar on each of these dates.

¹Ibid., p. 66.

²Ibid., p. 76.

³Ibid., p. 90.

The egg plan prevailed until 1925 when it was replaced by a plan calling for a one-dollar donation per family per quarter.

In 1923 and 1924 yet another means was used to raise money for the conference. The Harmon church building was rented to the Camp Creek township board of education as a school house.

Two items concerning other organizations may be found in the minutes of this period. First, in 1925 Stephen Throckmorton certified that he was present at the conference meeting on August 28, 1868, when ". . . one elder Brown et al, withdrew and afterward organized the Ohio, or Eastern Conference."¹ Second, in 1922 another attempt was made to consolidate with the Regular United Baptist Sulphur Spring Association of Scioto County. This union was to be based ". . . primarily upon Faith Repentance and Baptism for remission of sins."²

Salt Creek reaffirmed its stand on three matters during this period. The 1922 church letter from Camp Creek says that ". . . advocates of the wooden bench were met at the church door by our pastor with the open bible in hand."³ In 1926 the conference went on record as favoring prohibition and urged its members to vote accordingly. And in 1928 the conference passed a motion to strike the word "reverend" from its records ". . . as unbecoming for a minister to wear as a mark of office or distinction."⁴

¹Ibid., pp. 115-16.

²Ibid., p. 78.

³Ibid., p. 73.

⁴Ibid., p. 143.

1929 - 1934

The zeal of the conference was evidently at a very low point at the beginning of this period. Harmon's church letter of 1929 reported that it had terminated its Sunday school due to a lack of interest. That same year, Bethel reported that the absence of any leader had caused them to accomplish little. Again in 1930 and 1931 Harmon's letters confessed to little church work having been done by that class. It reported that the church was very weak, that it had had no Sunday school, and that it had received the benefit of preaching only about one-half of the time. Only Saturday night prayer meetings had continued throughout this time. The Camp Creek church was reorganized in 1930 after having no meetings for a year. Letters from other churches and ministers revealed this same general condition.

Finally, in 1933, a climax was reached. Two members of conference made an indicting motion concerning Salt Creek. This motion called for the dissolving of the conference and the organization of a new body. It asserted that the churches of the conference were suffering because ". . . it has been proven by abundance of testimony that for some cause The Salt Creek Christian Con. has ceased to function profitably for the cause of Christ, and has become a defunct body, not being alive and active."¹ However, not all members agreed, and the

¹Ibid., p. 250.

motion lost.

By the end of this period some new life was evident in the conference. Three new preachers - Harley Powell, A. W. Swogger, and Wade Sullivan - who had been granted licenses during these years were active in the ministry. In 1933 Bethel reported fourteen additions to the church, and in 1934 Smith Hill claimed seven new members. However, all of the conference's problems were not yet solved because a 1934 resolution to have a minister to serve as a field man was never carried out. No one would volunteer for the position.

Perhaps part of the difficulty experienced during these years is directly traceable to the economic conditions which prevailed. That Salt Creek felt the effects of the Great Depression is evident. Pastor Sherman Swogger's report of 1932 referred to ". . . hardships for the last three years. . .," ". . . these years of adversity. . .," ". . . privation and want. . .," and ". . . the days of trial and gloominess."¹ That same year the relief committee received three calls for help, and the finance committee suggested that no money be collected for the conference treasury ". . . due to the financial stress of our people."²

During the other years of this period, the finance committee continued to ask that each family donate to the conference one dollar per quarter. In addition, the 1929 fi-

¹Ibid., p. 233.

²Ibid., p. 238.

nance committee had proposed the Jubilee Plan. Each member of each church of the conference was to be sent a letter which contained ". . . a request for a Christmas gift to the Lord."¹ This plan grossed \$22.05.

This lack of revenue made conditions particularly adverse for the conference's ministers. In 1929 Mr. Lawhorn and Mr. Sherman Swogger both reported ministerial expenses which exceeded their incomes from preaching. Although this prompted Salt Creek to vote to compensate ministers for any deficits incurred, ministers were not provided with even a partial livelihood for their labors. Despite this apparent shortage of money, the 1930 finance committee proposed that no collection of funds be made in that year unless ". . . the present funds may be put into immediate use."² To make matters worse, the preachers were charged with the responsibility of reminding each congregation each quarter of its one dollar per family obligation. "Failure on the part of the minister to comply with said duty automatically releases the conference treasurer from any responsibility of such support."³

An interesting development of this period concerns one Chester J. Rhoden. The examining committee reported that Mr. Rhoden, who was applying for license as a minister in 1930, had been baptized in 1918, had been "absent from the Lord" until 1928, and had been a member of the Dry Run Christian

¹Ibid., p. 176.

²Ibid., p. 191.

³Ibid., pp. 179-80.

Church for only four months. Thus, it believed that he was not fully qualified for the ministry. However, the investigating committee proposed that he be allowed to begin his ministry on a trial basis. This apparently was an unwise decision because in 1931 the conference notified Mr. Rhoden not to preach any more on his present license until he had appeared before the conference. However, further investigation revealed that such notification was not necessary since Mr. Rhoden had merely been granted licentiate papers which expired at the end of the conference year.

This experience caused Salt Creek to create a Board of Observation in 1931. Composed of the members of the examining and the investigating committees, this board was to observe any minister of another church who had passed the questioning of these committees. Both his doctrine and his life style were to be scrutinized for six months. In addition, this board was to ascertain if he had been refused membership or ordination by any Christian church. However, the Board of Observation waived its power that same year by granting William H. Bailey his license to preach immediately. This proved to be a mistake. In 1932 the board admitted that it had regrettably acted hastily and recommended that Mr. Bailey's license be rescinded.

In 1933 Salt Creek entered into fellowship with a Disciple church at Jackson, Ohio, represented by W. B. Taylor, who attended the conference that year. However, the nature of

this cooperation is not clear as the conference minutes do not seem to coincide with Mr. Taylor's account of the matter. Salt Creek's records state that the conference moved to ". . . continue the discussion on evangelistic cooperation with the Disciple Church of Christ Brethren. . ." ¹ and that a committee of five was appointed to confer with the Disciples concerning this cooperation during the coming year.

Mr. Taylor's story in the September 16, 1933, issue of the Christian Standard implies a much stronger bond between his church and the conference. His article, as illustrated by its title, "An Answer to Christ's Prayer for Unity," ² indicated that he thought that the two had become one. However, such was not the case. In 1934 a conference minister, Victor Labour, went on record as opposing the association with the Disciples. Also, no further dealings with the church at Jackson were mentioned except for Mr. Taylor's being present at the 1934 conference.

1935 - 1939

During this period only three churches were active members of the Salt Creek Christian Conference. ³ The Bethel, Harmon, and Smith Hill churches continued to send delegates to con-

¹Ibid., p. 257.

²W. B. Taylor, "An Answer to Christ's Prayer for Unity," Christian Standard, September 16, 1933, p. 2887.

³The primary source of information for the years 1935 to 1945 is the Salt Creek Christian Conference Minutes, Vol. III, pp. 1-293.

sect. Also, the Harmon church admitted in 1938 that it was not actually an organized church because it lacked both elders and deacons. The conference ministers during this period were Harley Powell, Sherman Swogger, Alonzo Swogger, Victor Lambour, and William Lawhorn.

Throughout these years the finance committees continued to recommend that each family pay one dollar per quarter to the conference. In 1937 the resolution was passed that this manner of collecting funds remain in effect until repealed. At various times the conference also raised money by solicitation and appointed individuals in each church to collect the one dollar per quarter "dues." Interestingly, despite a balance of only \$168.62 in the treasury, the 1937 finance committee saw ". . . no need of any special effort to raise funds. . ." because the conference ". . . had not made any use of moneys collected last year. We feel that hoarding of money (is) wrong."¹

The conference records of 1939 mentioned the Lord's Supper. A motion was passed which required the ministers to report to conference the number of times which they had been requested to administer communion services.

Concerning the licensing of ministers, in 1935 the examining committee recommended that Roy Brannon not be licensed until he gain a clearer understanding of the conference's doc-

¹Salt Creek Christian Conference Minutes, Vol. III, p. 60.

trine. That same year Salt Creek notified the probate judge of Scioto County that the preaching license of William Bailey was null and void.

The conference Sunday schools continued to provide religious education during this period. With few exceptions, the three churches maintained active Sunday schools. In 1937 a committee was appointed to report on Sabbath Schools. Its report in 1938 dealt with attendance, literature, and cooperation among the three Sunday schools. Also, in 1936 the committee of business advisers recommended "instruction of the youth."

In 1936 the ministerial aid committee was revived and was challenged to perform its duties fully. Its report included the following items. Conference ministers were to preach wherever and whenever given the opportunity. Each church was to choose its own ministers, but the ministerial aid committee would provide funds, if needed, upon request for regular services or revivals. In addition, conference preachers might petition this committee for money if necessary to enable them to preach the gospel.

In 1937 Salt Creek appointed an advisory committee which was to consider the general welfare of the conference churches. This committee stated that ". . . the different classes of this body have become lax in the cause of Christ due to possibly more than one cause."¹ Thinking that the hearing of the

¹Ibid., p. 58.

word of God was necessary to renew interest in the church in the hearts and minds of Christians, the advisory committee recommended the two-day plan. Each quarter each conference church was to host a two-day meeting. Each minister and each member of the conference churches were obligated to attend. Transportation was to be provided for those who could not otherwise attend.

In 1938 the advisory committee dealt with quite a different matter. The usual meeting house of the conference had been rented as a store. Thus, Salt Creek needed to construct a building in which to meet by the date of the next conference. By August of 1939 a new church had been built at a cost of \$281.78.

Two members of the conference compiled what was referred to as "The Origin and History of the Christian Church"¹ in 1939. This report covered twenty-three pages in the conference minutes for that year and included a summary of the beginning of Christian churches in general, a brief history of Salt Creek, and the text of "The Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery."

During this period the conference was presented with a book which contained the records of the Bethel church from 1859 to 1893.² The greater part of these records consisted of the list of church members and the minutes of the annual church meetings. These meetings consisted primarily of the

¹This may be found on pages 136-158 of the Salt Creek Christian Conference Minutes, Vol. III.

²Ibid., pp. 77-114.

selection of a minister for the coming year, the election of delegates to the annual conference, and recommendations of the prior year's ministers to the conference.

These records of the Bethel church also contained some highly entertaining accounts of church trials. On February 9, 1878, the church met to hear the charge which one John Slagle laid against Mary Slagle, his wife. He accused her of ". . . treating him in an unchristian like manner and for leaving his bed and board without any cause on his part and for reporting things on him which are not true."¹ Counter charges and further testimonies resulted in confusion, and the church decided to arrive at no conclusion. However, on July 29 a further attempt at reconciliation was made. Before the church could arrive at a decision, husband and wife agreed on a compromise. Mr. Slagle agreed to give Mrs. Slagle ". . . free access to the keys of the smoke house and . . . to let one of her girls come and live with them."² In 1893 Mr. Slagle requested that his name be dropped from the church role.

In 1885 the Bethel church once again found it necessary to hold church trials. One member, accused of drunkenness, was received back into fellowship after he made certain acknowledgments. A second person, accused of going to plays, was acquitted when the charge was dropped. Two others had been

¹Salt Creek Christian Conference Minutes, Vol. III, p. 98.

²Ibid., pp. 99-100.

charged with attending dances. The case of one was delayed, but the other requested that his name be removed from the church book because ". . . he could not quit his dancing and such like."¹

1940 - 1945

During these years some members of the Salt Creek Christian Conference came to realize that the conference was deficient in its service for Christ. For example, Bethel reported in 1941 that it had held preaching services when it was convenient for the ministers and had conducted Sunday school when the weather permitted. Two statements in particular illustrate a desire to improve the conference's condition. The Smith Hill letter of 1940 challenged the assembly with the following lines: "What will you make of this gathering? Shall it be like those of the past few years? We pray God that it may be a success, and that 3 months after its close will not find us lukewarm and forgetful of the plans and pledges here made."² And in 1945 pastor Sherman Swogger criticized conference members thus: ". . . Many seem to think that they might have graduated and received a diploma for the righteous acts of past years and have refrained from going to church almost entirely and are as self satisfied and complacent as well fed lambs in the fold."³

Financial conditions remained mostly unaltered during this period. The one dollar per quarter per family plan of sub-

¹Ibid., p. 106. ²Ibid., p. 161. ³Ibid., p. 275.

scription remained in effect, and an additional request for money from the sale of eggs was made in 1940. Also, 1000 envelopes containing requests for donations to the conference were distributed in 1941. This method grossed \$32.65. A motion passed in 1940 to sell property near Morgantown was later reversed. In 1941 the conference began to pay the four dollars per month rent of one of its ministers.

Four of the five preachers mentioned in the last time period continued to serve Salt Creek throughout these years. The fifth, William Lawhorn, who had been a conference minister since 1922, died on November 25, 1942. In 1945 Oakley O'Brien was ordained to the ministry by Salt Creek.

Smith Hill, Bethel, and Harmon continued to be the conference's active churches. Salt Creek ministers sometimes spoke at the Camp Creek church, but it was denied a voice in the conference because it was not organized. Its lack of organization stemmed from the influence which the Jehovah's Witnesses sect had had on the congregation. Evidence of this may be found in Mr. Lambour's letter to the conference in 1941. The Camp Creek church had been reorganized on a Saturday, but on Sunday ". . . the Watchtower propagandists came in . . ." and ". . . they voted us down and gave the Watchtower people the right of way, so their sacred pledge they signed became a piece of scrap, in short notice."¹

¹Ibid., p. 186.

Mr. Lambour had spoken previously of disputing with Jehovah's Witnesses, Latter Day Saints, and Seventh Day Adventists in 1940. In that same letter he had shown concern over the presence of other religious sects within the United States. He mentioned Father Divine, the Four Square gospel, and the "I am's." In addition, he wrote that there was ". . . even Holiness copperhead and rattlesnake religion in our country today."¹

Salt Creek improved its physical facilities during this period. In 1945 a cooking and dining building was completed at a cost of \$194.30. In 1942 each of the conference churches, aided financially by the conference, installed electric lights. In 1945 Salt Creek provided funds to assist Smith Hill in painting its church, Harmon in repairing its belfry, and Bethel in buying a stove.

In addition to Sunday schools, the conference attempted a different kind of religious education beginning in 1941. Fearing that there soon would be an inadequate supply of ministers to serve Salt Creek, the conference passed a resolution to ". . . establish a free school of instruction for any of our young people that we can instruct in taking up the ministry."² Classes were to be held twice a month, and instructors were to serve without pay. Deacons and elders were responsible for securing students for the school.

¹Ibid., p. 166. ²Ibid., p. 201.

Students were to be tested after a one-year course. Those deemed deficient after the first year were to continue in the course of study. A Board of Three was appointed to select the instructors and curriculum. In 1942 this board reported its selection of three teachers and the outline of a course of study which allowed the teachers much freedom. However, the conference minutes did not mention this school again.

Unlike the conference records which covered the years of the Civil War and those of World War I, the minutes of 1940-45 referred often to World War II and related subjects. The Smith Hill letter of 1940 spoke of "wars and rumors of war, strife and confusion. . .,"¹ and Mr. Sherman Swogger's letter of the same year said that "it had been a year full of trouble for the world. . ." with ". . . wars and rumors of wars."² The records of 1942 told of ". . . violence and destruction of human beings and other material things of God's creation and handiwork"³ and of sorrow and trouble for the people of the world.

Three conference ministers mentioned the war in the 1943 records. Harley Powell looked forward to the time when "this cruel war" would be over. Victor Lambour told that his son had been knocked unconscious in North Africa by a concussion shell which also killed three others. Sherman Swogger made

¹Ibid., p. 161.

²Ibid., p. 167.

³Ibid., p. 199.

the motion to ". . . send personal greetings to our boys in the armed services."¹

At least one conference minister saw God's hand in the events of the war. Victor Lambour wrote in August of 1945 that only God ". . . could restrain the axis power . . . in their research and use of this mighty destructive force called the atomic bomb."² But he also wisely expressed fear as to what the future would bring when all nations had gained access to this annihilating weapon. He reasoned that the only escape for the world was to accept God's standards as a way of life. Thus, he criticized Russia for desiring the ". . . brotherhood of man, without the Fatherhood of God."³

1946 - 1956

Only Bethel, Smith Hill, and Harmon were active member churches of the Salt Creek Christian Conference during these years.⁴ In addition, in 1956 Harmon failed to hold a church meeting to elect delegates to conference, and, therefore, was not officially represented until the conference chose two members of the Harmon church as its delegates. The Camp Creek church began this period by sending a letter to the conference in 1946. However, that church did not have deacons or elders and did not send official delegates to the

¹Ibid., p. 245. ²Ibid., p. 277. ³Ibid., p. 186.

⁴The primary source of information for the years 1946-1967 is the Salt Creek Christian Conference Minutes, Vol. IV, pp. 1-486.

conference. Although conference ministers spoke at Camp Creek and various attempts were made to add it to the Salt Creek organization, it apparently was never a formal member during these years.

The five conference preachers at the beginning of this period were Harley Powell, Alonzo Swogger, Sherman Swogger, Victor Lambour, and Oakley O'Brien. However, by 1956 only Mr. Powell and Mr. Sherman Swogger remained as Salt Creek ministers. Mr. Lambour evidently was never active in the ministry during this period due to ill health and passed away in 1950. The next year Alonzo Swogger withdrew from the conference to join the Jehovah's Witnesses group. Concerning his church letter of that year, the conference voted to ". . . reject the whole matter and return the license."¹ Mr. O'Brien was no longer active in the conference ministry by the end of this period. Two visiting ministers, David Myers and Hassel Justice, assisted in revivals at the conference churches and attended some of the annual meetings during the latter portion of this period. However, they were not officially preachers of the conference.

Although there were exceptions to both aspects of this rule, the churches at Bethel and at Smith Hill usually had Sunday school during these years, but the Harmon church often did not. However, Harmon held the first recorded Daily Vacation Bible School classes at a conference church in 1954 and

¹Salt Creek Christian Conference Minutes, Vol. IV, p. 100.

1955. Mr. Dale Beery of the American Sunday School Union helped to conduct both of these efforts at religious education. In 1954 Miss Lois Bauman of Moody Bible Institute also worked in these vacation Bible classes.

During these years the conference churches conducted many revivals with the financial assistance of Salt Creek. In 1947 the minutes included a declaration that ". . . the different classes of the Salt Creek Christian Conference are in dire need of reanimation, which can only be obtained through the preaching of the Word."¹ Thus, it was decided that each congregation was to hold a revival of at least two weeks' duration. In 1949 the nighttime portion of the annual conference meeting was extended as a revival for another week. Beginning in 1952 the conference began to set the dates of revivals for each member church and in 1953 began to supply each church with from \$50 to \$100 to be used to further the teaching of the gospel. These stipends were almost always used to hold revivals.

Not coincidentally, the years of holding revivals by the conference churches were also years when several members were added to these congregations. Although all additions were not reported in the minutes, thirty-three new members were listed during these years. The Smith Hill congregation experienced the majority of this growth with twenty-four additions. Nine

¹Ibid., p. 36.

of these came during a four-week revival in 1954. Thus, the Smith Hill church requested two revivals for 1955, and six more souls were added to the church. The presence of these new members caused Salt Creek to conduct its business ". . . for the benefits of young converts who were not familiar with the work."¹

Salt Creek also experienced a time of inflation during these years. At the beginning of the period the recording secretary was paid five dollars per year and each of the women who cooked lunches for those attending the daytime sessions of conference were paid six dollars. By 1956 each of these three employees was receiving twelve dollars per year. Conference ministers also enjoyed increased compensation. For example, Harley Powell received an average of approximately forty-seven dollars per year from 1946 through 1948 but was paid \$1029.61 in 1955. The cost of maintaining church property was increasing, and, as mentioned previously, Salt Creek was annually providing funds for holding revivals in each of the member churches.

These increased disbursements caused the finance committees of these years to request more money from conference members. In 1946 the standard of the past several years of four dollars per family per year was maintained. However, in 1947 "dues" were increased to six dollars per year with more requested. In 1950 each member was asked to give five dollars within sixty days, and in 1952 each family's donation was to be ten dollars per year. Frequent freewill offerings were also solicited dur-

¹Ibid., p. 168.

ing these years. Finally, in 1955, Salt Creek ". . . set a goal of \$1000 to be raised for the benefit of conference to further the cause of Christ by aiding the few remaining classes."¹ A pledge card was circulated to gain this financial support.

In 1953 Salt Creek recognized the possibility for growth which was presented by the construction of an Atomic Energy Commission facility in Pike County. "Seeing the influx of people in all the surrounding communities. . ." the conference considered that it ". . . should make some effort to inform those of like faith of our whereabouts; and their welcome to worship with us."² To this end, in 1954, Salt Creek advertised by stating the location of each church, the schedule of services for each congregation, and the following doctrinal position: "We have no rituals of faith no book but the Bible."³

Salt Creek stated its position on the subject of usury in 1946. Victor Lambour had borrowed three dollars and had repaid it with two dollars interest. After some discussion, the conference voted to return the interest because it considered that God's word taught against the taking of usury.

In 1952 a conference minister spoke out on a worldwide issue. Sherman Swogger urged the members of conference to ". . . go on record as being unalterably opposed to the naming or sending a special representative envoy to the Vatican in

¹Ibid., pp. 193-4.

²Ibid., p. 151.

³Ibid., p. 183.

Rome. . ." ¹ by the United States.

A long-time member and staunch supporter of conference, B. E. Crabtree, tried to alert the conference assembly to its responsibilities by asking this question in 1955: "Is the conference important to us and do we want to continue holding it?" ² In response, a motion by Robie Williams ". . . that we continue the conference as in previous years" ³ was carried.

That same year the conference decided to identify each of its churches with a marker giving the name of the church followed by the words "Church of Christ (Christian)." However, this decision was overturned by a special session of the conference held on October 15, 1955. This gathering decreed that the original name, Salt Creek Christian Conference, was to be the sole means of identification. This disagreement concerning nomenclature was the forerunner of a chasm which came to exist between two factions of Salt Creek.

1957 - 1967

The Salt Creek Christian Conference was comprised of the same three churches - Bethel, Smith Hill, and Harmon - during these years as during the previous period. However, the case of the Smith Hill congregation(s) was somewhat unique. The difficulty mentioned in the last paragraph of

¹Ibid., p. 135.

²Ibid., p. 190.

³Ibid., p. 192.

of the previous section occurred primarily within the Smith Hill class. The exact cause of the disagreement and the specific positions assumed by the opposing factions are not spelled out in the conference minutes. However, the problem evidently centered around the question of who owned the Smith Hill church property. The answer to this question would determine, of course, who had the right to control the church's doctrine, selection of ministers, and election of officers.

This dispute also involved the matter of whether Smith Hill would remain as a member of Salt Creek. When the conference convened in 1957, several of the Smith Hill contingent were missing, including the president of the conference. By 1958 the split had become full-blown; Smith Hill neither elected church delegates nor sent a letter to the assembly. To circumvent this problem the conference voted that ". . . the Brothers and Sisters of the Smith Hill class, who so desire, be given a seat with us in our deliberations and that they shall be recognized as the delegated body of the above named class."¹ The remainder of the Smith Hill congregation had chosen to separate itself from the conference.

However, the solution was not to be that simple. Two groups of members of the Smith Hill church, each claiming the right to meet and transact business there, then existed. Beginning in 1959, the minority body began the practice of meet-

¹Ibid., p. 259.

ing in a home or another church to elect delegates and to draft a letter to the annual conference. In addition, it elected its own trustees for the church.

With two sets of trustees, each claiming rightful ownership to the Smith Hill church property, the conference took steps to protect its interests. A motion was passed stating that ". . . no transfers of property shall be made by the trustees of the conference unless authorized by the unanimous consent of conference."¹ Salt Creek also declared its entire board of trustees vacant and elected five new members. In addition, alleging that conference officers who were not present had failed to execute the duties which their offices demanded, the conference passed a motion saying that ". . . any official position now filled by anyone who is no longer of us, be declared vacant and that said vacancy be filled at the regular election of the officers of conference."²

The struggle for control of Smith Hill culminated in a court case. A stamp on the inside front cover of Volume IV of the Salt Creek Christian Conference Minutes attests to the fact that said volume was exhibit number five in the Common Pleas Court of Pike County, Ohio, on October 11, 1963. However, the court failed to hand down a decisive verdict, and both sides still claimed the church property. The final direct evidence of the dispute came in 1964 when the conference passed

¹Ibid., p. 262.

²Ibid., pp. 262-3.

a motion to pay its attorney.

Other more subtle reminders of the conflict may be seen in the conference records, however. A safe was purchased in which to store the conference's records. The annual Smith Hill letters written to the conference continued to thank Salt Creek for the welcome the Smith Hill minority had received in the other conference congregations. Both Bethel and Harmon experienced several transfers of membership from the Smith Hill congregation.

This experience also apparently caused the conference members to fear that their annual meetings might be terminated. As early as 1958 they passed a motion designed to preserve the legal standing of Salt Creek as an organized Christian body even if annual business sessions were to cease. Should it become impossible to meet, the ". . . officers presently elected during this business session. . . shall hold their offices indefinitely or until suitable arrangements are made for the continuance of this conference body."¹ Also, in 1959 Mr. B. E. Crabtree's last letter to the conference before his death outlined plans for continuing the conference and challenged its members to this end.

Salt Creek also had dealings with other churches during this period. Although motions were made to repair and to use the Camp Creek church, this was not successful. Finally, in

¹Ibid., p. 272.

a motion to pay its attorney.

Other more subtle reminders of the conflict may be seen in the conference records, however. A safe was purchased in which to store the conference's records. The annual Smith Hill letters written to the conference continued to thank Salt Creek for the welcome the Smith Hill minority had received in the other conference congregations. Both Bethel and Harmon experienced several transfers of membership from the Smith Hill congregation.

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¹Ibid., p. 272.

1967 a quarterly conference of Salt Creek decided to investigate the reason for a "For Sale" sign's being on the Camp Creek church as the conference did not intend to sell it. However, the question of ownership was again the problem, and another group sold the Camp Creek church property. Also, the 1964 minutes contain the first Salt Creek mention of a church at Frankfort, Ohio. Known as the Bray's Hill church, it later joined the conference.

Salt Creek came into close fellowship with the Christadelphian sect during these years. Shortly before 1960 some members of the Christadelphian belief came to Piketon, Ohio, and soon began to lecture and to disseminate literature in the conference churches. From this beginning a close bond of fellowship developed between the people of the conference and the Christadelphian representatives. In 1962 Charles Wheeler, a Christadelphian minister from Greenville, Ohio, wrote a warm letter to the conference. In it he sympathized with Salt Creek's problems, admonished its members to remain steadfast, and expressed the belief that his views on the Scriptures were similar to theirs. Dennis Ford, a professor at the University of Pittsburgh, was the other Christadelphian who most often attended services of the conference churches. His untimely and tragic death in an automobile accident seemed to lead to the termination of Salt Creek's relationship with the Christadelphians.

Salt Creek began this period with only two preachers,

Harley Powell and Sherman Swogger. The former chose to leave the conference with the Smith Hill majority before the 1958 conference. Thus, the conference had the benefit of only one minister until it granted a license to Elmore Burkitt in 1961. Two years later the conference records mention Commie Lee, the minister of the Bray's Hill church referred to previously. In 1966 he was examined and accepted as a Salt Creek pastor.

Believing that ministers from outside the conference had contributed to the trouble at Smith Hill, Salt Creek became very cautious concerning who it allowed to fill its pulpits. For example, the Bethel church letter of 1959 stated that ". . . none shall preach more than 3 sermons without standing before the examining committee."¹ And in 1966 a motion was passed that ". . . no one individual be allowed or permitted to engage ministers other than members of the Salt Creek Christian Conference to preach at our regular annual session."²

Religious education by the conference during this period was mostly limited to Sunday schools. For the most part, Bethel and Harmon maintained their Sunday schools during these years. In addition, the Bethel church did hold some evening meetings for the youth beginning in 1962.

The finance committee reports from 1957 through 1967 were very consistent. Each year during this time span, with

¹Ibid., p. 279.

²Ibid., p. 430.

the exception of 1960 when no request for money was officially made, the finance committee suggested that each family donate approximately ten dollars per year to the conference treasury. Another means of raising money was used in 1957. The trustees of the conference were authorized to sell all conference property which was not needed. Just how much property, if any, was sold was not disclosed.

The records of these years revealed why the conference was able to function with very little cash. Church projects often became community undertakings, with many people donating labor and/or materials. The best example of this is found in Harmon's church letter of 1965. Two men donated land for a road to the cemetery, another cleared the right of way, and a fourth built the road and furnished the gravel for it. Community donations for the repair of the building included paint, lumber, and money. A total of eleven individuals contributed free labor to these jobs.

In 1965 Salt Creek established a special fund to ". . . give comfort to those in need."¹ Disbursements from this Helping Hand Fund were made to individuals who needed assistance in times of personal tragedies.

In 1960 a motion was made to abandon the system of sending delegates from the various member churches to the conference. Instead, it was proposed that every member of the con-

¹Ibid., p. 413.

ference churches was to have a voice in the conference proceedings. Whether this motion passed is not disclosed in the minutes, but apparently it failed because the churches continued to select delegates to conference until 1966. In that year Article 7, Section 5 of the 1920 by-laws, which provided for the sending of delegates to conference, was repealed. It was replaced with a by-law containing the following: "When Conference shall convene in annual business or in quarterly session of Conference, each member of the church classes shall have a voice or vote in all business or right to hold any office that he or she might be named to fill."¹

1968 - 1974

The Salt Creek Christian Conference began this period with its sesquicentennial meeting.² At a quarterly conference in May a three-member committee was appointed to advertise this event. The result was an article which appeared in the local newspaper³ about a week prior to the conference. This article featured a picture of the conference members about 1935 and another picture of the people assembled for Sunday school at Bethel in July, 1968. In addition, it provided a brief history of the conference, a partial list of its past ministers, and an announcement of the dates for the 1968 meet-

¹Ibid., p. 478.

²The primary source of information for the years 1968-1974 is the Salt Creek Christian Conference Minutes, Vol. V. pp. 1-213.

³Waverly Watchman, 8 August 1968.

ing. All readers were ". . . invited and urged to attend this special celebration meeting."¹

Religious education by Salt Creek churches during these years took the form of Sunday school, youth meetings, and Daily Vacation Bible School. All of the conference congregations, with the exception of Smith Hill, whose members met with Harmon or Bethel, had Sunday schools during this period. Harmon reported the holding of youth meetings in 1968 and 1969. Daily Vacation Bible School for the entire conference was held at Bethel in 1973 and 1974. D.V.B.S. committees were appointed by the conference in 1973 and 1974 to plan for the following year. In 1974 Salt Creek voted to provide twenty-five dollars for D.V.B.S. if the churches needed it.

During this period a fourth church was added to the conference alignment. After having been granted an advisory seat in 1968 and 1969, the Bray's Hill church located at Frankfort in Ross County, Ohio, was accepted into the conference in 1970. It had formerly been a member of the Kentucky State Christian Conference at Flatwoods, Kentucky. Its minister, Commie Lee, was already a Salt Creek preacher. In September of 1972 the church at Frankfort sold its old building and moved into a new one in November. The church at this new location is known as the Antioch Christian Church.²

¹Ibid.

²For the geographical locations of the four congregations which comprised the conference in 1974, see appendix A, Map III (page 126).

Salt Creek began this period with three preachers - Sherman Swogger, Elmore Burkitt, and Commie Lee. In December of 1971 James Mossbarger was examined and ordained by the proper conference committees as a Salt Creek minister. In 1974 the conference membership was saddened by the death of Sherman Swogger who had been a conference minister for half a century. In addition, he had served as the president of Salt Creek for many years and had been its honorary president since 1969.

In 1968, 1970-72, and 1974 the conference finance committees suggested that each family donate ten dollars per year to the conference treasury. In 1968 and 1969 they requested that each conference member set aside whatever change he might have in his pocket at the end of each day and donate it to the conference at the next annual meeting. And in 1973 the finance committee recommended that every member's annual monetary gift to Salt Creek should be one day's pay. The conference also continued to maintain a separate treasury for the Helping Hand Fund, and in 1969 Salt Creek transferred seventy-five dollars from its general fund to this special fund.

The records of these years fail to disclose much Salt Creek monetary support of revivals. There is no mention of money being given to assist the churches in this cause from 1968 through 1970. In 1971 and 1972 the conference provided each church with fifty dollars to be used for holding revivals. However, this was reduced to twenty-five dollars per church

in 1973, and a motion in 1974 to once again provide fifty dollars per church to support revivals failed.

The 1974 minutes provide the following information. The Harmon church reported the construction of a baptistry. The conference passed a motion to allow its record books to be loaned for use in completing this project ". . . on the condition that the books are present at each annual conference session."¹ Salt Creek also voted to spend a maximum of one hundred dollars to have its older records copied.

During the final year of the Salt Creek Christian Conference covered by this work, the conference experienced an average attendance of nearly forty-six for its nighttime preaching sessions. This included a high of fifty-eight for the Friday night service and nineteen people who attended all four nights.

Mr. Delmar Burkitt was elected to serve as the president of the 1975 conference. This marked the sixth consecutive year that he had been entrusted with this responsibility.

¹Salt Creek Christian Conference Minutes, Vol. V, p. 204.

CONCLUSION

The Salt Creek Christian Conference was organized in 1818. It was similar to the many other Christian conferences which were also begun during the first part of the nineteenth century. Their initial purpose was to provide fellowship and stability for the immature and inadequately organized Christian congregations which characterized that era. As individual churches became able to handle their own discipline, evangelism, etc. problems, many of these conferences dissolved because they were no longer needed. However, Salt Creek has met every year since its inception and is still functioning in 1974.

A major reason for Salt Creek's survival in its present form is that it has remained, for the most part, isolated from other organizations. Fearing that it would lose its identity, Salt Creek has not united with other conferences or associations. In an attempt to maintain its doctrine unaltered, Salt Creek has been very cautious with those who would attach themselves to the conference. Whether this has resulted in the conference's benefit or in its harm cannot be decided beyond doubt. The Salt Creek minutes of 1939 ably presented the two sides of this matter. The conference's aloofness has produced members who are of the same faith as their forerunners of 150 years ago. "They have not permitted spurious doctrine to establish itself in their ranks as, we are sorry to say, some

have."¹ Yet, if this doctrine was pure, it should have been taken to others. However, "... by their aloofness, they have become isolated and have never spread out as the others have."²

The geographical location and the doctrinal stand of Salt Creek make probable the proposition that the conference was influenced by Barton W. Stone and/or his teachings. It is certain that Stone at least travelled through some of the counties which contained early Salt Creek churches, and his friend, David Purviance, came in contact with Salt Creek representatives. The minutes of the conference contain many examples of Stone's doctrine as well as the complete text of the "Last Will and Testament of Springfield Presbytery."

This project has dealt with the many aspects of the conference from 1822 to 1974 as revealed by its minutes. It is believed that the author, as a minister to the people of the Salt Creek Conference area, has benefited from this effort. It is hoped that both he and any conference members who might read this paper would strive to continue the worthy accomplishments of the conference while being determined to avoid repeating the mistakes which Salt Creek has made.

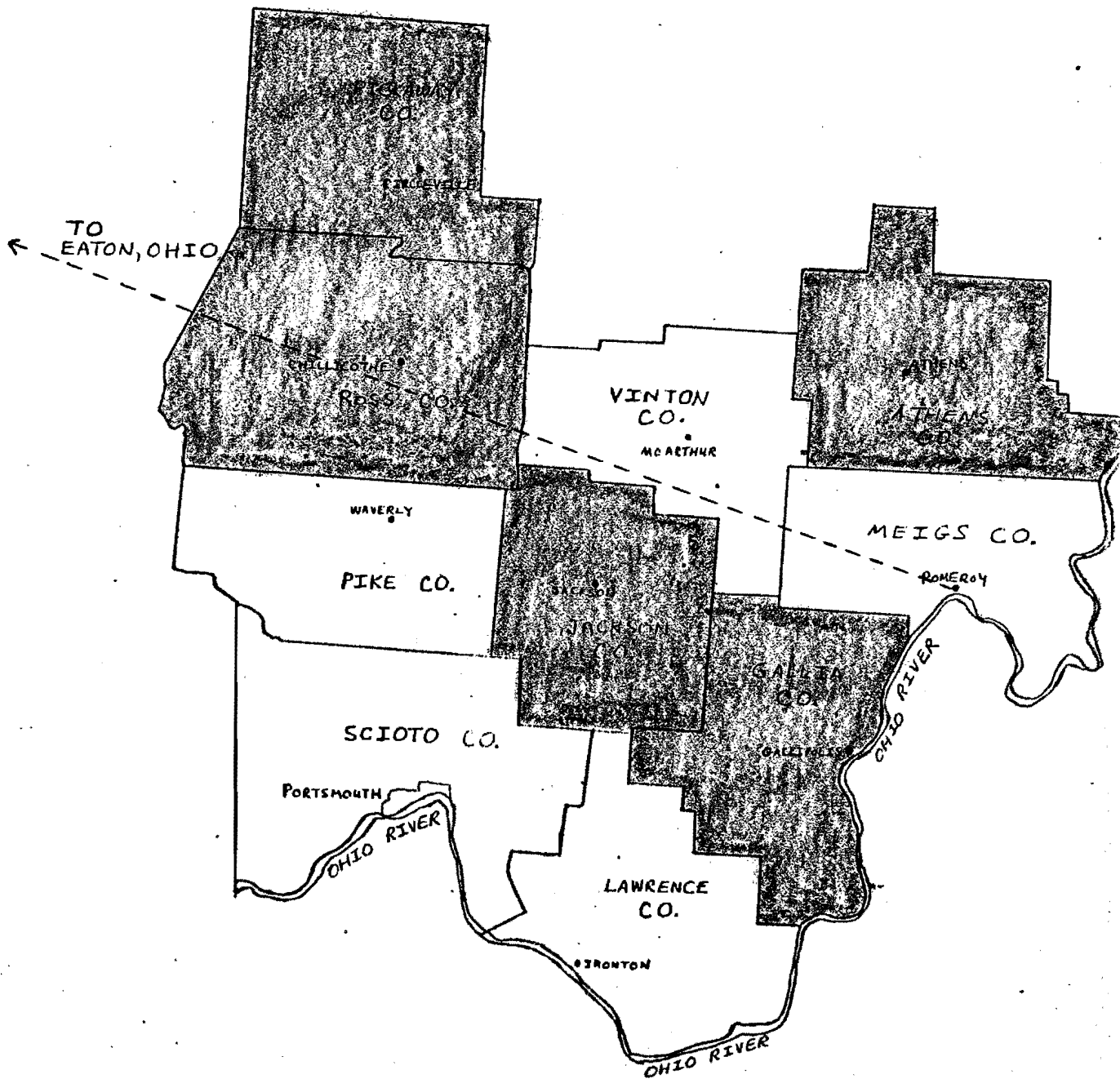
¹Salt Creek Christian Conference Minutes, Vol III, p. 150.

²Ibid.

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

MAP I



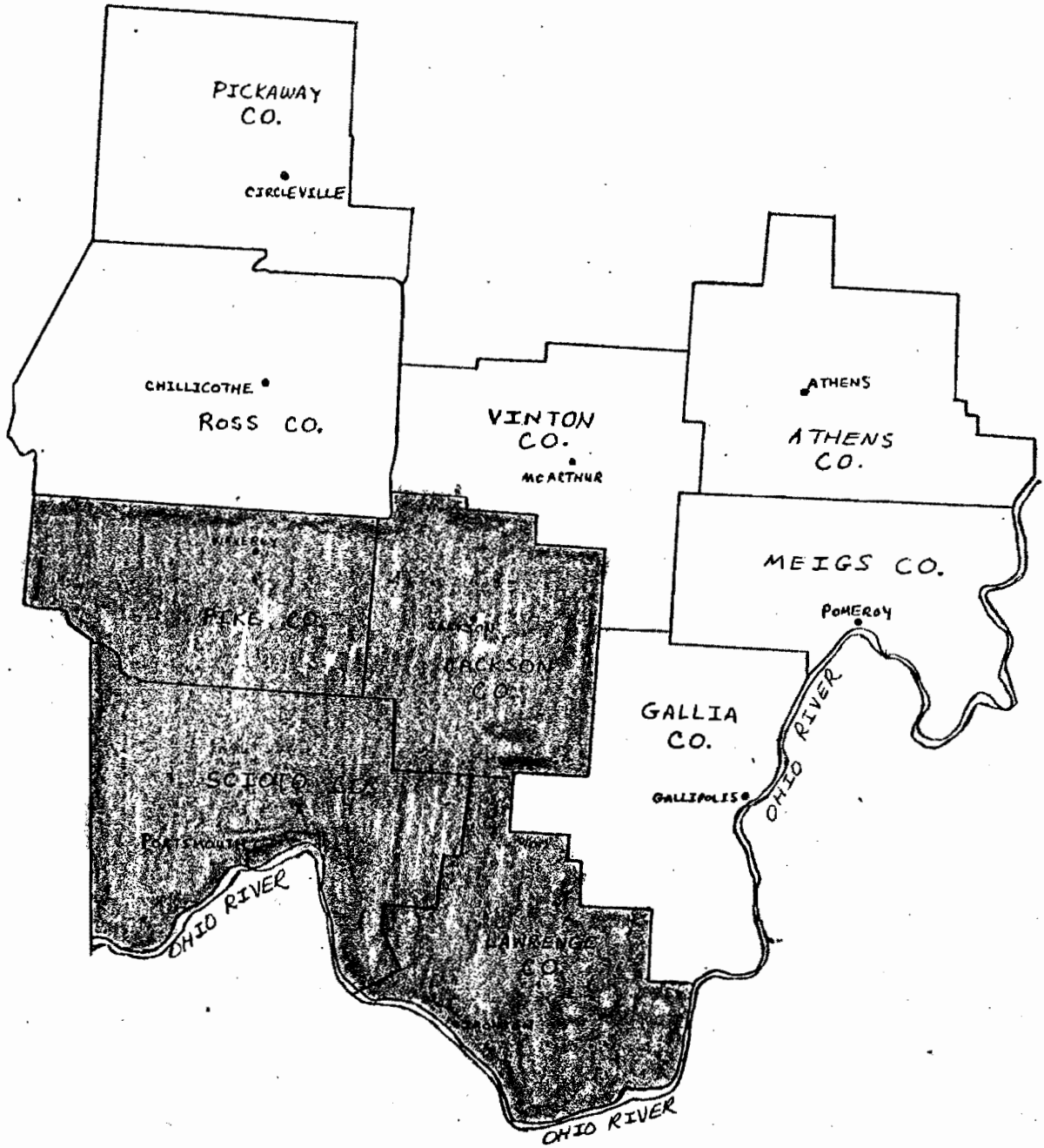
These ten counties have had churches which have been members of Salt Creek.

---- Direct route from Meigs County to Eaton, Ohio



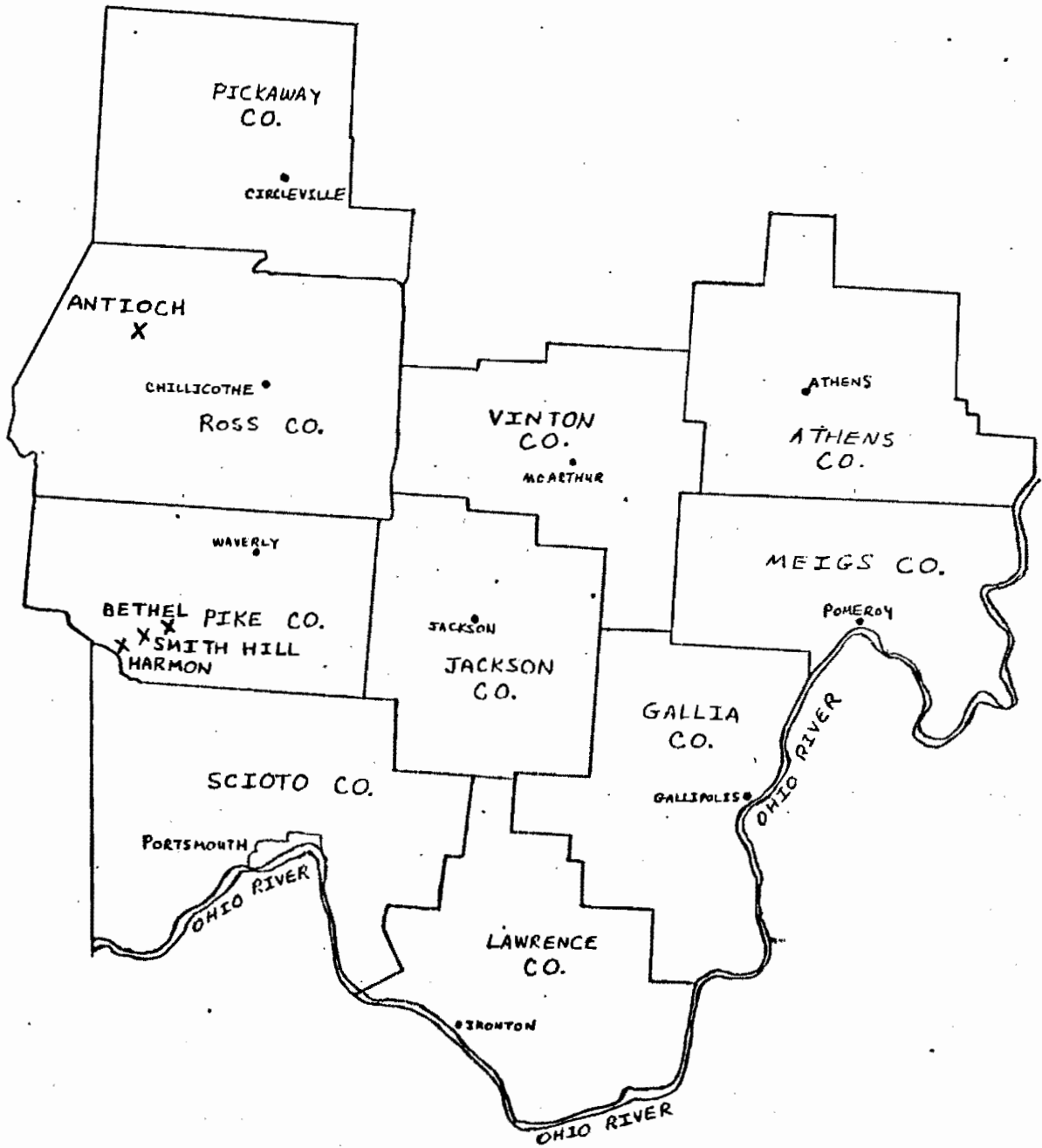
Counties represented at the 1829 conference

MAP II



Counties represented at the 1878 conference

MAP III



X - Member churches of Salt Creek in 1974

Waverly Ohio August 27th 1875

Whereas it has become necessary that the Salt Creek Christian Conference organize establish a Constitution and regulations (for if so doing Conference will go down).

Now therefore we the delegates appointed by the several Churches of said conference as a Christian body taking the word of God for our rule of faith and practice do in conference assemble Ordain and establish the following constitution known as the Constitution of the Salt Creek Christian Conference.

Article First
Section 1st Conference shall be composed of the several ~~Churches~~ Preachers ministers Elders Deacons and delegates from each ch. Sec. 2nd Each Church shall be entitled to one delegate for each ten members & one for the fraction of six and over

Article Second, Sec 1st

Each member shall be entitled to a vote

Art 3 Sec 4th It shall be duty and powers of Conference to grant Licenses Ordain Ministers & to devise some syst. of finance whereby the ministry shall be supported To transact all business of a general nature &c and to hold at least one regular session each year

Sec 1st Shall be the duty of local elders of each ch

To see that their minister preach no other doctrine than that preached by Christ and his apostles and in case any minister does preach what said elders believe to be other doctrine said elders are required to report

them to a committee of five appointed

Article fourth } Sec 1st The Officers of

Conference shall consist of President

Secretary & Assistant and i

Each to be elected annually at a regular session of conference

Sec 2nd } It shall be the duty of President to preside at all meetings of conference to preserve order & c. Said duties are incumbent on vice President in case of absence of President

3^d } It shall be duties of Secretaries to record all transactions of conference and so on

4th } It shall be the duty of Treasurer to receive all funds paid into or to be paid into his hands and he shall keep an account of same and he shall pay out no funds except on orders of conference

Art. 5th } Any church or churches refusing or failing to comply with the constitution or any part of it or any of the requirements or acts of conference shall be debarred the privilege and right of a voice in conference until said church or churches shall comply

Art. 6th } If any part of this constitution shall be found to conflict with the Bible said part shall be null and void

Art. 7th } This constitution or any part of it is subject to amendment or repeal a vote of two thirds of the members present at a regular session

By Laws

First All voting shall be by acclamation except it be necessary to take the yeas and nays then it shall be by standing

Second It shall require a vote of two thirds of the members present to pass a bill or measure or an act.

Third Each church shall be required to recommend to conference by letter their ministers also giving the names of their Elders deacons and delegates and number of members said ~~letter~~ letter shall be presented to conference at or before the afternoon session of Friday of each conference

Fourth The order of business shall be as follows. (1) the reception and reading of the letters of the several churches so that the secretary may make a report of the members of conference

(2) the appointment of committee (3) the ordination of ministers (4) call for of local Elders concerning ministers (5) Issue and renewal of licenses to be valid for one year only

(6) Take up financial matters

(7) Election of officers for the ensuing year

(8) Miscellaneous business

Fifth the foregoing by laws or any part of them are subject to amendment or repeal on a vote of two thirds of members present

John Lute

St. M. Jacobs

David Williams

St. E. Jacobs

William Throckmorton

Committee on
Constitution and
by laws

1895 RULES AND ORDER OF BUSINESS AND CONSTITUTION

Report of
committee
on rules
and order
of business

Let your committee on rules
of business and order, beg leave
to report as follows.

Now therefore we the members
of the Salt Creek Christian Conference
of the Church of Christ, taking the
word of God for our rule of
faith and practice in all things
pertaining to Godliness, do in
Conference assembled ordain and
establish the following rules of
business and order known as
the rules of business and order
of the Salt Creek Christian Conference
of the Church of Christ.

Rules of business

- Sec. 1st All voting shall be by acclamation, except it be necessary to take the yeas and nays, then it shall be by standing.
- Sec. 2nd It shall require a vote of two thirds of the members present to pass a bill, or measure, or matter.
- Sec. 3rd X It shall be the duty of each Church to recommend to Conference by letter their ministers, give the

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Letters to be Presented

names of their elders, deacons, and clerk, treasurer, steward, and delegates, and also number of members. Said letter shall be handed to the secretary at the first session of each Conference session.

Sec. 4th
Duties of Ministers

It shall be the duty of the ministers of this Conference to make an annual report, in writing of their ministerial labors to the secretary at each annual session of Conference.

Sec. 5th

The order of business shall be as follows;

Order of Business

- 1st Report of ministers,
- 2nd The reception and reading of letters,
- 3rd Reading of minutes of last session,
- 4th Admitting ministers of sister churches to an advisory seat with us in Conference,
- 5th Appointment of committees
- 6th Report of committee any time called for,
- 7th Financial business
- 8th Ordination of ministers
- 9th Issue of license
- 10th Miscellaneous business
- 11th Election of officers for ensuing year,
- 12th Time and place of next annual Conference session.

Rules of order

Sec. 10th

The Salt Creek Christian Conference of the Church of Christ shall be opened with singing and prayer by the president or some one

- under his direction, and close by singing and benediction.
- Sec. 2nd Only one person shall be allowed to speak at a time, who shall arise to his feet, and address the president.
- Sec. 3rd No person shall be permitted to speak more than twice on the same subject without liberty from the Conference.
- Sec. 4th Any one thus speaking shall not be interrupted by any one except the president.
- Sec. 5th The president shall strictly adhere to the subject, and in no wise make remarks of the failures or imperfections of him that spoke before; but shall fairly state the case so as to convey his meaning.
- Sec. 6th The person on making his motion shall arise to his feet and the second shall do likewise.
- Sec. 7th The president shall have the same liberty of speech as other members provided the chair be filled; but shall have no vote unless the Conference be equally divided.
- Sec. 8th The secretary shall have the same right of speech as other members, and also the right to vote.
- Sec. 9th No person in time of business shall abruptly break off or absent himself without leave of the president.

Constitution as amended reading as follows.

Pike, Wis. Aug. 24th 1895.

CONSTITUTION

Whereas it has become necessary that the Salt Creek Christian Conference reorganize and establish a constitution and regulations (for without so doing Conference will go down), Now therefore we the delegates appointed by the several Churches of said Conference as a Christian body taking the word of God for our rule of faith and practice do in Conference assembled ordain and establish the following constitution, known as the Constitution of the Salt Creek Christian Conference.

Art. 1st

Conference

Members of

Sec. 1st Conference shall be composed of the several ministers, elders, deacons, clerks, treasurers, stewards and the delegates from each church.

Sec. 2nd Each church shall be entitled to one delegate for each ten members and one for the fraction of six and over.

Art. 2nd

Sec. 1st Each member shall be entitled to a vote.

Art. 3rd

Conference

Duties and Powers of

Sec. 1st It shall be duties and powers of Conference to grant licenses, ordain ministers, to devise some system of finance whereby the ministry shall be supported, to transact all business of a general nature etc, and to hold

at least one regular session each year

Duties of local Elders

Sec. 2nd It shall be the duties of local elders of each church to see that their ministers preach no other doctrine than that preached by Christ and his Apostles, and in case any minister does preach what said Elders believe to be other doctrine, said Elders are required to report the same to a committee of five appointed.

Art. 4th

Officers of Conference

Sec. 1st The officers of Conference shall consist of, president, vice president, secretary, and assistant secretary, and treasurer, each to be elected annually at a regular session of Conference.

Duties of President

Sec. 2nd It shall be the duty of the president to preside at all meetings of Conference, to preserve order etc. Said duties are incumbent on vice president in case of absence of president.

Duties of Secretary

Sec. 3rd It shall be the duty of the secretaries to record all transactions of Conference and so on.

Duties of Treasurer

Sec. 4th It shall be the duty of treasurer to receive all funds paid or to be paid into his hands, and he shall keep an account of same, and he shall pay out no funds except on orders of Conference.

Art. 5th

Sec. 1st If any part of this constitution shall be found to conflict with the Bible said

part shall be null and void,
 Art. 6th Sec. 1st This Constitution or any
 part of it is subject to amend-
 ment or repeal by a vote of two
 thirds of the members present
 at a regular session.

Subject
 to
 Amendments

1920 CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

Constitution

Whereas we believe that the Holy Scriptures is the only rule of faith and practice that the Lord Jesus Christ is the head and door of the Church: Christian the only name for his followers, Christian character the only test of fellowship. Individual interpretation of the Scriptures.

the right^d duty of all^d that all should labor for the redemption of the followers of Christ; therefore we adopt the following constitution for our government in Conference work.

Article 1st. Name. Sec. 1st. This organization shall be known as the Salt Creek Christian Conference and shall be auxiliary to the Ohio State Christian Association and the American Christian Convention and shall cooperate and work in harmony with the plans and methods of the same.

Article 2nd Sec. 2nd. Object.

Its object shall be to consider and adopt measures for the promotion of the cause of Christ. To advise and consult on matters of interest to our common good. To exercise brotherly care and Christian discipline over its individual members, ministers and churches. To secure, hold or disburse, all kinds of property for religious and benevolent purposes and to do any other works proper for a religious body to do in the furtherance of our Object as a Corporation not for profit.

Article 3rd. Membership

Sec 1st. The membership of this Conference shall consist of such ministers and churches as shall be associated together in accordance with the provisions here after named, and such persons as may be selected to office by the Conference provided that such persons shall be members in good standing in a Church having membership in

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conference
 Sec. 2nd Each Church belonging to this conference shall be represented in each annual session by not more than three delegates as provided for by the act of conference. Said delegates to be members of the Church they represent.

Article 4th Departments.

Sec. 1st The departments of this Conference shall be seven in number and known as follows. Missionary, Sabbath School, Publishing, Educational, Christian Endeavor and Finance Departments, also Relief Department.

Sec. 2nd The Mission Department shall have general supervision of all mission work inaugurated in or endorsed by this Conference.

Sec. 3rd The Sabbath School Department shall embrace the work of gathering statistics of the Sabbath Schools of the Conference and otherwise promoting the Sabbath School interests.

Sec. 4th The Relief Department shall provide for the wants of the widows and orphans and the wants of the Church.

Sec 5th The Publishing Department shall include the publication of tracts, minutes, ^{and} such other matter of information ^{and} utility as maybe consistent with the general well fare of the body.

Sec 6th The Educational Department shall include any kind of work consistent with the purpose established and build up such interest.

Sec 7th The Christian Endeavor Department shall include the supervision of the Christian Endeavor work within the bounds of the Conference ^{and} the cooperation with like departments in other religious bodies.

Sec 8th The Finance Department shall be the repository of all funds of the Conference subject to the rules as shall be established or is provided for in the bylaws.

Article 5th The officers of this Conference shall consist of a president ^{and} vice president ^{and} the secretary of the general conference. And the secretaries of each of the seven departments to: wit;

- Clerk of Missions
- Clerk of Sabbath Schools
- Clerk of Publications
- Clerk of Christian Endeavor
- Clerk of Relief
- Clerk of The Educational ^{and}
- Clerk of The Finance

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and a board of trustees who shall be members of the general conference and shall hold their offices for such term of years as shall be provided for in the by laws of conference.

Sec. 24. Vacancies occurring in any of the offices of this conference may be filled by the official board till the next session of conference. Then such vacancies shall be filled by the conference to fill all ^{the} ^{positions} ⁱⁿ ^{the} ^{same}.

Sec. 25. The president and conference secretary together with the department secretaries and one trustee shall constitute the official board. whose duties shall be to hold regular quarterly sessions and have the general supervision of the conference's work and to execute the commands of conference to which its records shall be submitted at each annual session for approval or rejection. provided that in all cases where immediate action is necessary the vote shall be final.

Sec. 26. The President, Vice President and secretary shall perform the duties devolving upon them respectively and the department secretaries shall supervise the work in their respective departments. and report the same to each annual session of conference and member-

- ship in this Conference.
- Article 6th Ministers and Churches shall
- Sec. 1st make annual reports to the Conference of their labors during each year and shall be held accountable for a character worthy of the relation which they hold.
- Sec. 2nd This Conference being an incorporated body by the laws of the state not for profit may acquire and hold and sell and convey real and other property in pursuance of its objects provided that when real estate is to be conveyed the trustees shall make and sign the deed. Having first obtained an order for the transfer from the Conference or the official board other property may be conveyed in the usual manner on the order of the board.
- Sec. 3rd This Conference may accept and hold by its trustees deeds of Church property and such other commitments of property of any kind that congregations or individuals may see fit to invest in the Conference. Subject to the limitations and regulations here in provided.
- Sec. 4th When Churches deed property to the Conference the same shall be held by the conference in trust for the exclusive use of the Church so deeding it. During its vitality as a Church the same to be controlled by local board

Sec. 5th Of the trustees of the church with all rights and privileges unmolested in Church property thus deeded to it during the visible existence of the church so deeding the property. Therefore the Conference will not hold itself responsible for repairs or damages to the same. But may if it deems best make such appropriations of availables as will save the property from destruction.

Sec. 6th A Church deeding its property to this conference shall be deemed to have lost its visibility when it ceases to occupy the property for regular religious services for a period of three years. The Conference may then proceed with full right to take possession of the property and sell the same as good as it shall deem advisable. The Conference may take action sooner than above stated if the Church shall formally give up its claim.

Sec. 7th The money obtained from the sale of said Churches shall be placed on interest or otherwise invested where it will bring an income to the conference and the principal shall be kept for a period of seven years subject to the existing rules. If a new church shall be built in the same locality where one has been sold

by the conference within the period of seven years then the proceeds of the former sale may be placed in the new houses or any part thereof, provided the deed for the new property be vested in the conference, subject to the rules of this article and the above sections. If at the end of seven years the money is not returned for the benefit of new property then the proceeds shall be placed to the credit of the general fund of the conference.

Sec 8th Church property falling into the hands of the Conference by a simple clause in the deed making the property revert to the Conference shall be subject to the rules of this article, Modified only by such limitation as the deed may impose.

Sec 9th All bequests and donations accepted shall be dealt with and appropriated according to the request of the giver. But if not restricted by the giver the gift in money or its proceeds shall be converted into money and placed to the credit of the general fund of the conference. And in cases where church property is deeded to a board of local trustees and become extinct the conference trustees shall be the custodian of such property.

Article 7th By Laws.

Sec 1st. This Conference shall have the right to make by laws and create an order of business and to change and amend the same at the will of the conference

Article 8th Amendments.

This Constitution can only be changed or amended by two thirds vote of all the members present at the regular annual session of conference. Three month notice having been given of any changes contemplated.

By Laws.

Sec 1st This body shall hold annual sessions at such places as the official board shall determine commencing at nine o'clock A. M. Thursday before the third Sunday in August and so on until its legitimate business is disposed of.

Sec. 2nd Election of Officers.

The officers shall be elected at the annual sessions and shall hold their respective offices for a period of one year or until their successors are elected. Excepting trustees, who shall hold their offices for a period of five years. Providing one is elected each year

Sec. 3rd

Officers.
The officers of this body shall be president, Vice-president and secretary and the secretaries

of the departments. Together with the board of five trustees.
Sec. 4th Secretaries

There shall be nominating committees whose duty it shall be to recommend to the president of conference persons suitable for the various department secretaries. But however the judgment of the president shall be final.

Sec. 5th (Representation).

Each church of this conference shall be entitled to three delegates as shown on church reports or a majority fraction thereof.

Sec. 6th (Identification of Membership)

Delegates shall be enrolled upon the authority of church letters indorsed by church clerk.

Sec. 7th (Membership of Ministers)

Ordained and licentiate ministers are members of the conference. And if they are in good standing they shall receive license annually.

Sec. 8th (Applicants for Membership)

All applications for membership must be in person.

Sec. 9th (Applicants for Ordination)

Any person presenting himself for ordination must first be examined in such a manner as the conference may direct. And if the applicant pass a satisfactory examination and has been a member of the

Christian Church for at least one year, and of good repute are entitled to ordination at the hands of this body.

Sec. 10th - Licentiate license may be issued to reputable and worthy persons looking forward to the ministry.

Sec. 11th (Church Membership).

Churches asking for admission must be referred to the committee on churches. And upon a proper recommendation, they shall be submitted to Conference for a final decision.

Sec. 12th (Conference Funds).

Each Church is requested to pay into the treasury annually one dollar to be applied to the general conference fund.

Sec. 13th (Duty of Churches)

It shall be the duty of each Church to furnish the various department secretaries such information as they may request relative to the welfare of the church and its auxiliaries under its management. And to annually report to Conference.

Sec. 14th (Stationary)

The secretary of the general conference is hereby invested with the power to purchase such blanks and stationary as shall be needed for the use of Conference in all its departments and is authorized to draw out of the

- Conference treasure for the payments of the same.
- Sec. 15. (Minister's Report)
 Each minister is required to make a report each annual session of Conference, the work done in the Conference year closing and if they fail so to do for two consecutive years licenses shall be withheld until he does report or give satisfactory reasons for not reporting.
- Sec. 16th (Appointments by Chair).
 The president is hereby empowered to appoint as he may deem necessary for the legitimate transaction of the business.
- Sec. 17th (Quorum)
 A majority of the members shall constitute a quorum to transact business.
- Sec. 18th (Indequorum)
 Any member leaving the house in time of business without permit of the chair may be called in question for indequorum. And may be punished as the Conference may direct.
- Sec. 19. (Hours of Meeting)
 The Conference shall be called to order at nine o'clock A. M. and shall be adjourned at eleven o'clock A. M. reassembling at one thirty P. M. and adjourn at four P. M.

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Sec. 20th All questions of order arising under this constitution that is not herein provided for shall be governed by Roberts rules and Order,

Sec. 21st The official board shall meet upon the call of the pres. and secretary.

Sec. 22nd All business coming before the Conference must be presented to the secretary in writing and before the action is taken the president must refer the matter to the proper committee.

Sec. 23rd The annual address shall be delivered on the first session day.

Order of Business

- 1st Call to order by the chair.
- 2nd Call of roll.
- 3rd Call of ministers.
- 4th Churches
- 5th Delegates
- 6th Reading of minutes.
- 7th Appointment of committees.
- 8th On divine services
- 9th On Churches
- 10th On ministry
- 11th On Sabbath School.
- 12th On Education.
- 13th On Finance.
- 14th On Missions.
- 15th On Christian Endeavor.
- 16th Report of committees.
- 17th Unfinished Business.
- 18th Resolutions.
- 19th Petitions.

20th Miscellaneous business
These by laws may be
amended at any regular session
of conference by a majority vote.
11th Election of officers for
ensuing year.

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