

HISTORY
of
MID-VALLEY SOUTHERN BAPTIST ASSOCIATION to
1988

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Introduction

Southern Baptists had established work in the general Fresno area as early as in the 1930's.

Two Southern Baptist churches in this area were among the original 13 (or 14) that started The Southern Baptist General Convention of California. The oldest of these two, New Hope Baptist Church of Madera, organized in 1937, has ceased to function. The second is First Southern Baptist Church of Sanger, organized in 1938. One church in the present association is older but it did not become affiliated with Southern Baptists until after Mid-Valley Southern Baptist Association was organized.

Tracing the history of Southern Baptist work in the Fresno area is like trying to untangle a snarled fishing line. I hope you will enjoy the challenge as much as I have.

The major sources in this study have been the annual minutes of the associations involved and interviews with persons who participated in those historical events.

The name of the present association in the Fresno general area is Mid-Valley Southern Baptist Association. It was a large association the day it was organized and it continues to be one of the larger associations in California. Messengers from 39 churches met at Harvard Terrace Baptist Church of Fresno on October 14, 1965, to organize Mid-Valley Association. In a way Mid-Valley wasn't a new association when it was organized since it was the uniting of two associations that had existed simultaneously in the same area for fifteen years.

The book of minutes reporting the organization of the Mid-Valley Association includes the minutes of a series of three association annual meetings: the first annual session of the Mid-Valley Southern Baptist Association, the twenty-first annual session of the Fresno-Madera Southern Baptist Association, and the fifteenth annual session of the Fresno Southern Baptist Association. This may sound confusing and it's apt to get more confusing before it clears up.

The first of those three meetings, the fifteenth annual session of Fresno Southern Baptist Association was October 11, 1965, at West Park Baptist Church of Fresno. Vice-moderator Lyle Golden, a member of Clovis First Southern, presided over this meeting.

Bert York, pastor of the First Southern Baptist Church of Sanger, craved the report of the association's executive board and moved that the following recommendation be accepted:

"This is a motion to dissolve the Fresno Southern Baptist Association and the corporation and to pay the bills, the cost of liquidation, and to distribute the balance of the assets to the new non-profit corporation to be formed promptly, which corporation will serve as the corporate body for the association of Southern Baptist churches now located in the Fresno-Madera and the Fresno Association."

The second of the three meetings was the twenty-first annual meeting of the Fresno-Madera Association on October 12, 1965, at the First Southern Baptist Church of Madera. Vice-moderator Bennett P. Hainan, pastor at Herman, presided in the afternoon and Moderator Kenneth Hawkins, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church of Lemoore, presided at the evening session.

Tommy Helm, pastor of First Baptist Church, Mendota, made the following motion and it carried:

"That we dissolve the Fresno-Madera Southern Baptist Association and the corporation; to pay the bills and cost of liquidation; and to distribute the balance of the assets to a new non-profit corporation to be formed promptly, which corporation will serve as the corporate body for the association of Southern Baptist churches now located in the Fresno-Madera and Fresno associations of Southern Baptists."

In the third of the three meetings messengers from 39 churches in Fresno, Madera, and Kings counties met October 14, 1965, at the Harvard Terrace Baptist Church of Fresno in order to organize a new association.

John Ashcraft, pastor of Harvard Terrace Church and chairman of the city missions committee of the two former associations called the meeting to order.

B. N. Lumnus, active in the Southern Baptist work of the area for twenty years but then retired, made a motion and John Borden, former pastor of several churches in the area and at that time pastor of Madera Beacon Light, seconded the motion that "this body be declared a Southern Baptist Association." The motion carried.

The messengers elected William C. Smith moderator. He was pastor of First Southern Baptist Church of Clovis. They chose Philip Aaron, who was pastor of Templo Bautista Church of Fresno, as vice-moderator and Tommy Helm as clerk.

William T. Updike with the official title of Metropolitan Missionary had served as the association missionary for both of the previous associations and continued to serve as the missionary for the new association.

To understand the Mid-Valley Association one must look at its roots in three earlier associations with which its churches affiliated. They were the San Joaquin Valley Association, the Fresno-Madera Association, and the Fresno Association.

In tracing the roots and studying the progress of the Mid-Valley Association we seek the answers to the following questions. Who were the people who set up these association organizations and moved them along? Why did they establish the associations? What did they hope to accomplish? What did they accomplish? What were their major problems and how did they cope with those problems?

Two of the three oldest churches in Mid-Valley Association were organized in the late 1930's and became a part of the first California Southern Baptist association which was organized on April 13, 1939. That first association was named San Joaquin Valley Missionary Baptist Association. Those two Fresno area churches that were charter members of San Joaquin Valley Association were New Hope Baptist Church of Madera and First Southern Baptist Church of Sanger.

Mid-Valley Association has one church even older than these two which were involved in the first Southern Baptist association in California. The very oldest church in the association is the Slavic Baptist Church of Fresno which was organized in 1928 as a Russian Speaking Baptist Church. It affiliated with Southern Baptists in 1972 and is dually aligned with Southern Baptists and with The Pacific Coast Slavic Baptist Association.

Since Fresno area churches were involved in that first association, we shall begin with a brief look at it. Then we shall give closer attention to the two associations in the general Fresno area which were Fresno-Madera Association and Fresno Association. Finally, we shall concentrate on Mid-Valley Association.

San Joaquin Valley Association, 1939-1944

People's westward movement to California greatly increased during the 1930's.

Many came from the south and southwest. Most of these newcomers to California liked what they found but they held on to their social ways and their religious views. Among these people were thousands of Southern Baptists who tried to find their places in existing churches. However some did not feel comfortable nor find acceptance.

In the latter years of the 1930's Southern Baptists who moved to California began to organize their own churches so they could have the kind of worship services and church activities they had been used to "back home." The first of these was in Shafter where the Mouser family gathered with some friends and organized the Orthodox Missionary Baptist Church on Sunday afternoon, May 10, 1936, with 17 charter members. When the Shafter church sought a second pastor, it called Sam Wilcoxon who was pastor of Eastside Baptist Church in Paragould, Arkansas. With his family he arrived on the field January 9, 1938.

Under Wilcoxon's leadership this church refused invitations to join either the Landmark Baptists or the Northern Baptists, who came to be called American Baptists. The church did not become a part of any denominational organization until it helped organize the San Joaquin Valley Association.

The Shafter church was not the first Southern Baptist work in California. In the middle of the 1800's Southern Baptists had started work in California before it became a state. The Domestic Missions Board, later called the Home Mission Board, sent missionaries to California and the Southern Baptist Convention received regular support from churches in the state. However, that work died out toward the end of the century largely because of the terrible economic depression in the South after the Civil War.

The churches that organized in the 1930's brought a new beginning to Southern Baptist work in California. This work has

grown now to excell that of most denominations in the state.

The first denominational organization to be set up by Southern Baptists in California in this century was the San Joaquin Valley Missionary Baptist Association, organized on April 13, 1939. Messengers from four churches, Shafter, Oildale, Lament, and Taft, met at Shafter to organize the association. Wilcoxon of Shafter preached the sermon and Thurman B. Ellis, pastor at Taft. was elected moderator.

Several other Southern Baptist churches had been organized in the state and by the time the new association met in the fall for its first annual session, four more churches affiliated with it. One of these which was from what would later be the Mid-Valley area was New Hope Missionary Baptist Church of Madera.

The Madera New Hope Church called a pastor who greatly influenced the work in California and especially in the Fresno-Madera area. That man was B. N. Lummus.

Lummus, born in Texas in 1890, came to California in September, 1942, for a revival meeting and became pastor of New Hope Church about seven miles from Madera. He was a vigorous preacher greatly committed to winning the lost. He even preached evangelistic sermons at funerals with the hope of reaching some who were unsaved.

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As an an association missionary in Oklahoma Lummus organized 28 churches. Soon after he came to California, the state convention executive board elected him state missionary. In six years as a general missionary for the whole state of California he organized 40 churches and assisted in at least a dozen more.

Six months after the organization of San Joaquin Valley its executive board in April, 1940, extended the association boundary lines to include the whole state. The board also elected R. W. Lackey, who was pastor of the Bakersfield church, to be half-time missionary of the association. He accepted and continued serving the church on a half-time basis.

When the association met for its second annual session, September 12-13, 1940, six more churches affiliated with it bringing the total to fourteen. One of these six was the Southern Missionary Baptist Church of Sanger where B. H. Truhitte was pastor. He served the church for only a few years but he returned in 1946 for a second term of pastoral service which lasted two years.

In the 1940 session of the San Joaquin Valley Association the messengers adjourned for a short time during the afternoon session of September 13 for a historical item of business. They left the

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auditorium and reassembled in an upstairs room for the purpose of organizing the state convention. Messengers from thirteen of the fourteen churches were present for this significant action. R. W. Lackey, missionary of the San Joaquin Valley Association became the new state convention's first executive secretary.

\ Churches multiplied rapidly and they organized new associations as the work spread over the state.

j By the time of the state convention's second annual session which met in 1941, two more associations were organized. Calvary ! Association in Southern California and Golden Gate Association in the San Francisco Bay area. j

A fourth association was organized in April, 1943, in the San Diego area. Los Angeles Association became the fifth associ- | ation in November, 1943. The sixth association. Feather River I Southern Baptist Association, was organized October 1, 1944, and j one month later it changed its name to the Sacramento Valley South ern Baptist Association.

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Fresno Southern Baptist Association was the seventh to be organized in California. Its organization was called for by a group of Fresno area pastors attending the 1944 session of the San Joaquin Association meeting in Oildale.

This new association was the beginning of association work serving the Fresno area. It reached from Madera in the north to Porterville and Tipton in the south and to one church on the coast in Santa Maria.

The group of pastors asked the San Joaquin Valley Association to grant letters of dismissal to thirteen churches affiliated with that association in order that messengers from those churches might meet to formulate the new association which they had agreed to bring into existence.

Fresno-Madera Association, 1944-1950

During the sixth annual session of the San Joaquin Association in October, 1944 a group of pastors from the general area of Fresno met to organize an association for their area. This meeting was in Oildale.

These pastors elected the following two officers to be in charge of their special called meeting: moderator - A. P. Alcorn, pastor at Sanger, and clerk - L. R. Rhoads, pastor at Sultana.

They preceded then to elect officers for the new association.

Those elected were moderator - D. D. Talley, pastor of Bethel Southern Baptist Church, Fresno; associate moderator - John O. Scott, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church, Fresno; clerk -L. R. Rhoads, Sultana pastor; and treasurer - A. B. Sheffield, a messenger from Fresno First Southern.

Those in the meeting voted to name the new association the Fresno Southern Baptist Association. This can be confusing since another association, organized six years later, chose that same name. What happened will become clear in a later reference to the fourth annual session, 1948, when the name was changed to Fresno-Madera Southern Baptist Association.

The organizers of this new association instructed the clerk, L. R. Rhoads, to ask the San Joaquin Association to errant letters of dismissal to the following thirteen churches in order that they might formulate the new association. Seven (marked with asterisk*) became part of the Mid-Valley Association twenty-one years later:

Bethel Southern, Fresno*
Fresno Calvary, Fresno*
First Southern, Fresno*
New Hope, Madera*
Tipton Southern, Tipton
Ivanhoe Southern, Ivanhoe
Madera Southern, Madera*
Porterville, Porterville
Tulare, Tulare

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Woodlake, Woodlake
Sanger, Sanger*
Sultana, Sultana
Hanford, Hanford*

At the first association board meeting, Grover City petitioned acceptance and brought the total to 14 churches. The board decided that the southern boundary of the association would run east and west near Porterville and Tipton and agreed that the association should not try to tell any church what association it should be in. The board also voted to cooperate with the San Joaquin Valley Association in district mission work with B. N. Lummus serving as district missionary and agreed to pay half of the missionary's expenses to the state convention. Furthermore the new association adopted the same constitution as the San Joaquin Valley Association.

The statistical tables list First Southern, Exeter, along with the others that have been mentioned, to bring the total to 15 churches by the end of the first year. Together, these churches reported 1,529 members and 235 baptisms and a total income of about \$52,000.

The 1946 second annual minutes list 13 churches. Exeter and Santa Maria, two of the original 15, were not included. These 13 churches reported a grand total membership of 1,539.

General Missionary Lummus mentioned in his annual report preaching 372 sermons; conducting 11 evangelistic revivals, one stewardship revival, and one study course; and also helping eight churches in calling pastors.

The third annual session of the Fresno Association on September 19, 1947, at the First Southern Baptist Church of Porterville reported 16 churches. The three new churches were Kerman, Lindsay Yoder Memorial, and Porterville Mt. View. The total membership was 1737.

The Fresno Association met September 27, 1948, at First Southern Baptist Church of Sanger for its fourth annual session. James E. Carroll, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church, Fresno, was moderator, having succeeded D. D. Talley who had been moderator of the first three annual sessions.

The ninth item of record in the 1948 minutes reported that the messengers voted to change the constitution "so that Article I may read, 'This Association shall be called the Fresno-Madera Southern Baptist Association.'"

During *this* session of the association the messengers gave a rising vote of appreciation for the services of B. N. Lummus who had served six years as a general missionary of the state convention. He ended his service as one of the ten state missionaries by accenting the pastoral call of First Southern Baptist Church of Madera which he helped organize four years earlier in 1944.

The 1948 minutes reported 10 churches. Churches reported in the previous year but not in this year were Exeter, Hanford, I van-hoe, "Porterville, Lindsay, Tipton, Tulare, and Woodlake. These churches transferred their affiliation to Tulare-Kings Association which bordered Fresno-Madera Association on the south. New churches reported in 1948 were Calwa First Southern, Clovis First Southern, and Pinedale First. The ten churches reported a grand total membership of 1,537 and a total of 212 baptisms.

One of the speakers at the fourth annual session was John O. Scott, former pastor of Fresno First Southern Baptist Church. He was identified at this time in the minutes as "State Missionary." He preached on "Enlargement" from the text: "Lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes" (Isaiah 54:2).

B. N. Lummus, who now was pastor of Madera First Southern, became moderator of the association at its fifth annual session which met September 26, 1949, at the Olivet Southern Baptist Church in Fresno.

The association minutes carried the reports of 13 churches in 1949. No churches had dropped out during the year and three new ones affiliated with the Fresno-Madera Association as it was then known. The three new ones were Fresno Highway City; Madera Beacon Light; and Mendota First Baptist. These 13 churches reported a grand total of 1,841 members and 207 baptisms.

In 1949 R. W. Lackey, former state convention executive secretary, had succeeded Lummus as the state missionary whose area included Fresno-Madera Association. He reported preaching 155 sermons during the year and conducting 11 revivals, 22 schools of missions, and four study courses.

Twenty-two churches sent letters and messengers to the sixth annual session of the Fresno-Madera Association which met September 25-26, 1950, at the First Southern Baptist Church, Madera. Twelve churches participated which had not been included a year earlier: (Five of these, marked with an asterisk, were churches that transferred to Tulare-Kings Association in 1948.)

Alpaugh First Southern
Clovis Calvary
Fresno Harvard Terrace

Hanford First Southern* Ivanhoe
 Missionary* Madera Parksdale
 First Southern Porterville
 Mountain View* Tipton Southern
 Missionary* Tulare First
 Southern* Wasco First Baptist
 Woodville First Baptist
 Woodville First Southern

Upon the report of the nominating committee the messengers elected the following officers: moderator - B. N. Lummus; associate moderator - R. L. Harville, pastor of Sanger First Southern; clerk and treasurer - D. G. Davison, pastor of Highway City First.

On Tuesday afternoon in the closing session of the association's annual meeting A. F. Crittendon, executive secretary of the state convention, gave the devotion and brought the report of the work of the state convention. Two months later the state convention rejected Crittendon as executive secretary in an election where he and C. E. Wilbanks, the convention's former director of evangelism were the nominees. The vote was 234 to 195 in favor of Wilbanks. Tension had mounted all through Crittendon's five and a half years of service. The feelings in the Fresno area were reflected in the action of Fresno-Madera Association moderator B. N. Lummus, who nominated C. E. Wilbanks for the office of executive secretary. A year before that Lummus had commented in what seemed to be a spirit of hope, "We have the same secretary for the state that we had four years ago. Dr. A. F. Crittendon, from Oklahoma. The work has grown, in spite of all the Devil could do to stop it." (Lummus, Memories [published by Lummus], p. 76).

The reports of twenty-four churches are carried in the summary table of the annual association minutes. The grand total membership was 3401; number of baptisms, 548; and income of the 24 churches, \$115,746.

The association was organized in 1944 with the name Fresno Southern Baptist Association with 13 churches. Three years later in 1947 it had 16 churches and a total of 1,737 church members. In 1948 at its fourth annual session the association changed its name to Fresno-Madera Association and it lost eight churches to another association but gained three new ones to make a total of 10 churches and 1,707 church members. By the time of its sixth annual session in 1950 the association had 24 cooperating churches with a total of 3401 church members and 548 baptisms that year. This was a peak which no single association in the Fresno area would reach again for several years.

A month after this sixth annual session of the Fresno-Madera Association messengers from six churches in and near Fresno met to organize what they called the Fresno Southern Baptist Association. The next several chapters will be 5-year reports alternately tracing the history of these two associations that existed simultaneously in the same general area for about 15 years building up to 1965 and the organization of Mid-Valley Association.

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Fresno Association, 1950-1954

Baptists can disagree greatly before dividing. However, sometimes they cannot find peace except by separating and forming new groups where they can agree and work together.

Tension grew in the Fresno-Madera Association over the problem of how strict churches should be in admitting members from Baptist churches other than Southern Baptist churches.

B. N. Lummus expressed his concern in these words:

"We are having some trouble, with some of the preachers who are here, on the doctrines of the church. Some are taking into the fellowship of the churches those that come through Baptist churches that are not sound in the doctrine. In other words, some of these have been immersed by a church that receives alien immersion and practices open communion. Some of these churches do not believe in the inspiration of the Bible." (Lummus, Memories, p. 73).

On November 13, 1950, a month after the annual association meeting of Fresno-Madera Association, five churches that had participated in the meeting sent messengers to a called meeting at the First Southern Baptist Church of Fresno to organize a new association.

Floyd Looney, an early pastor in California and remembered as editor of The California Southern Baptist and Western Field representative of the Southern Baptist Annuity Board said later about the division back then among Southern Baptists: "The whole fracas grew out of brothers who were 'Baptist and a half.' They spent much time arguing over what they called 'alien immersion' and 'open communion.'"

He said another factor in setting up a new association was that some thought for an association to serve such a large area was like a lightning bug trying to light up the whole country.

These five churches that called for the organization of a new

association were:

Fresno, First Southern, James E. Carroll, pastor
 Clovis, First Southern, William Dawson, pastor Highway
 City, First Baptist, D. G. Davison, pastor Hanford,
 First Southern, L. A. Haddock, pastor Calwa, First
 Southern, Don McCoy, pastor.

The messengers asked Norman Fromm a messenger from Fresno First Southern, to be temporary chairman. He was also state convention director of Training Union (now called Church Training).

D. G. Davison was elected temporary clerk.

After the messengers were formally recognized and seated, they elected the following officers: moderator - James Carroll, vice-moderator - William Dawson, clerk and treasurer - D. G. Davison.

The messengers appointed the following committee to prepare the constitution and to suggest the name for the association: Don McCoy, Bill Dawson, Don Trollinder (a messenger from Calwa), and D. G. Davison.

By nominations from the floor the messengers elected the leaders for the church program organizations. They set the time for the monthly workers' conferences and charged the moderator, clerk and host pastor with the responsibility of planning the programs and working out the year's calendar of activities.

H. S. Rainwater, state missionary responsible for this area, expressed his desire to work with the association.

The following note was at the end of the minutes of the 1950 organizational meeting:

The organization of this association has not been in a spirit to restrict any Baptist church that wishes to cooperate but we feel that we can do a more effective work in the kingdom by limiting our bounds. There was a suggestion that we limit our area but that we don't bar any church that needs our fellowship. (Fresno Association Minutes, 1950-51, p. 28)

The constitution of the new association was identical with that of Fresno-Madera Association which was a duplicate of the old San Joaquin Valley Association. The constitution named the new association Fresno Southern Baptist Association. This was the same name adopted by those who organized an association in 1944 which reached from Madera south to Porterville. That association organized in 1944 with the name of Fresno Southern Baptist Association changed its name in 1948 to Fresno-Madera Southern

Baptist Association. Therefore the use of the name Fresno Association in 1950 was the second time for that specific name to be used.

The "new" Fresno Southern Baptist Association held its next meeting which it called its First Annual Meeting on October 4-5, 1951, at Olivet Baptist Church, Fresno.

The annual associational meetings of those days consisted of the reading of reports from various agencies of the state convention and the Southern Baptist Convention, reports from the association church program organizations, the election of officers, the approval of the calendar and the budget, and several sermons and devotional messages.

The messengers elected the following officers: moderator -L. A. Haddock, pastor of Highway City First Baptist Church; vice-moderator - D. G. Davison; clerk - James E. Carroll.

By the time of its first annual meeting the association had accepted its sixth church which was Olivet Baptist Church of Fresno. The six churches had a grand total of 1,374 members, 184 baptisms for the year, and total income of \$54,800.

The second annual association was October 7-8, 1952, at the Central Baptist Church, Fresno. With the addition of Central Baptist Church of Fresno and West Park of Fresno, eight churches sent messengers.

The eight churches reported 1,463 resident members and 142 baptisms.

The messengers elected L. O. Hall of Hanford, moderator; John O. Scott of Fresno, Central Baptist Church, vice-moderator; Art King of Highway City, First Baptist, clerk; and Miss Edna Bowling, treasurer. Miss Bowling, who later became Mrs. James Welch, was secretary of the Broadway Plan of Church Finance with the responsibility of working with churches in helping them to use this plan primarily in their building programs. People thought of the Broadway Plan as a "church bond program."

A guest introduced at this meeting was Harold K. Graves, who was the new president of Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, then located in Berkeley, California, and later in Mill Valley. Graves brought the closing message urging Christians to "remember they are servants of God through whom He is seeking to reconcile the world to Himself."

Also present at the meeting was S. G. Posey who had become

the executive secretary of the state convention's executive board the previous year.

H. S. Rainwater, one of the twelve state convention general missionaries, included the Fresno Association in his area. He reported attending 302 meetings during the year, preaching 124 sermons, surveying 17 communities and traveling 16,642 miles.

Fresno Association held its third annual session October 12-13, 1953, at First Southern Baptist Church, Calwa. The eight churches reported a total of 1,775 members and 186 baptisms.

The general officers were moderator - Don McCoy, pastor of Calwa First Southern; vice-moderator - C. E. Robertson, Fresno Olivet pastor; clerk - J. V. Springer, pastor of Fresno First Southern; treasurer - Miss Edna Bowling, a messenger from Fresno Olivet.

The messengers changed the constitution to bring it "into line with the Constitution of the California Southern Baptist State Convention in reference to Baptism and the Lord's Supper." The item referred to was Article *II*, Section 3 in the constitution of The Southern Baptist General Convention of California which was as follows:

"The Messengers shall be elected and certified by the churches to the Convention, provided that Messengers shall not be seated in this Convention from any church that receives persons with alien immersion or practices what is commonly called open communion." - Annual of The Southern Baptist General Convention of California, 12th Session, 1952, p. 9

P. Boyd Smith, president of California Baptist College, spoke about the needs and plans of the college, which had begun its fourth year and was functioning as a four-year, degree-granting college.

A. C. Turner, the state convention director of missions and stewardship preached the closing sermon.

In the fall of 1953 Fresno Association bought Eureka Springs Camp, a 100 acre tract at an elevation of 5,000 feet, about 50 miles north of Fresno. The association elected a board of directors to operate the camp. The board chairman H. S. Rainwater said the site had been bought "on debt and faith in God." Ten persons made the purchase possible by advancing \$250.00 each for which each received six lots at the camp valued at \$50.00 per lot. The first session was a camp for boys and girls in July 1954. By then the directors had built a kitchen, an office building and

eleven cabins and had employed a caretaker.

The Fresno Association's fourth annual session was October 21-22, 1954, at the First Southern Baptist Church, Fresno.

Fresno Harvard Terrace Baptist Church, formerly cooperating with the Fresno Madera Association, came into the Fresno Association and brought the total participating churches to nine. These nine reported 2,484 total members and 223 baptisms.

Officers for the year were moderator - C. E. Robertson of Fresno Olivet; vice-moderator - J. V. Springer of Fresno First Southern; clerk - H. S. Rainwater, a messenger from Highway City; treasurer - Miss Edna Bowling.

Fred DeBerry who had become the state missionary that included Fresno Association in his territory could not attend this meeting because of the death of his mother.

The constitution was changed so as to place the district missionary on the association's executive board.

John Watson of the Children's Home was present to discuss the needs and the progress of the home. One month earlier ground had been broken for the first building on a 27₁ acre site in the east Bakersfield area

As the Fresno Association began its fifth year, it had grown from the original five churches with 1300 members to nine churches with a total of 2,500 members. It had offered an association for churches that agreed basically with the state convention and other California associations on the requirements made for a church's admission to fellowship in the association. A major venture of the association was the purchase of Eureka Springs, a mountain camp near Yosemite National Park.

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Fresno-Madera Association, 1951-1954

The Fresno-Madera Southern Baptist Association started a decline following its sixth annual session in 1950 at which time it had a total of 24 cooperating churches with a total of 3,401 church members.

Disagreement had grown over how strict the association should be in its requirements for membership. The point of conflict was whether a church should receive members from Baptist churches other than Southern Baptist. This problem developed because churches in some other Baptist bodies, primarily the Northern Baptists, received members from non-Baptist churches and cooperated at various levels with other Christian groups and inter-denominational organizations .

Fresno-Madera Association met October 1, 1951, at Missionary Southern Baptist Church, Ivanhoe, for its seventh annual session.

Six churches that had been among the affiliated churches at the sixth annual session the year before had joined together to form a new association called Fresno Southern Baptist Association. These churches were Calwa First Southern, Clovis First Southern, Fresno First Southern, Fresno Olivet, Highway City First, and Hanford First Southern.

In 1951 the Fresno-Madera Association listed 18 churches and one mission, a loss of six from the high of 24 listed the previous year. Sixteen of the churches reported a total of 2,239 members and 259 baptisms.

The eighteen participating churches included two Fresno churches (Bethel and Harvard Terrace), four Madera churches (Beacon Light, First Southern, New Hope, and Parksdale First Southern). The other churches were scattered from near Fresno to the south as far as Porterville. These other churches included:

- Alpaugh First Southern
- Clovis Calvary
- Earlimart First
- Edison Manor Mission

Ivanhoe First
 Kerman Southern Missionary
 Pinedale First Porterville
 Mountain View Sanger First
 Southern Tipton Southern
 Missionary Tulare Calvary
 Wasco Missionary Woodville
 First Southern

The association officers were moderator - B. N. Lummus of Madera; clerk - Horace F. Burns, pastor of Fresno Harvard Terrace; treasurer - D. D. Tally, pastor of Fresno Bethel.

The eighth annual session of the Fresno-Madera Association met October 1-2, 1952, at the First Southern Baptist Church of Sanger.

Article III of the constitution in the 1952 minutes relates to the matter that divided people so greatly that six of the formerly cooperating churches organized a new association in 1950 which they named Fresno Southern Baptist Association. Here is that article:

Article III
 Membership

Section 1.

This Association shall be composed of messengers appointed by Southern Baptist Churches, of like Faith and Order, co-operating with and contributing to the work of the association, provided that the church or churches making such appointments shall have adopted Articles of Faith written by J. M. Pendleton, J. N. Brown or some similar Article of Faith and shall have subscribed to this constitution.

Section 2.

Messengers shall not be seated in this Association from churches which deny the Virgin Birth of Christ, or the Blood Atonement and the New Birth of the believer, or from any Baptist Church which accepts "alien immersion" or practices what is commonly called "Open Communion" or from any Baptist Church which recognizes as Scriptural and valid baptism administered by the authority of such churches, or from any Baptist Church that is affiliated with the World Council of Churches, the Federal Council of Churches or any similar organization or any organization growing out of such.

This article was aimed primarily at Northern Baptist churches which now are called American Baptist churches. It grew out of

the concern of some about the tendency of churches to accept members from Northern Baptist churches which received "alien immersion," practiced "open communion," and affiliated with inter-denominational agencies such as the World Council of Churches and the Federal Council of Churches, later called the National Council of Churches.

Those who opposed this position insisted that, even though Northern Baptist churches might err in their practice regarding "alien immersion," "open communion," and affiliation with inter-denominational agencies, the stated doctrine of Northern Baptists regarding baptism validated the baptisms they administered.

One of the problems was that pastors and churches were not always careful to make certain that membership candidates from Northern Baptist churches had been baptized by Baptist churches. The problem was compounded when some Southern Baptist churches did not always inquire to see if persons joining on the promise of letter from another Southern Baptist church had originally been baptized by a Baptist church. This would happen when a Southern Baptist church would not think to question new members since they were coming from a sister church.

In 1952 Fresno-Madera Association continued to have 18 cooperating churches. However one church, Earlimart First, listed in 1951 was not included in 1952. A new church added to the list in 1952 was Reedley First Southern. Seventeen of the 18 churches reported a grand total membership of 2,649 and 245 baptisms.

Moderator B. N. Lummus presided at the opening session and D. D. Tally was the secretary or clerk.

The messengers voted for the moderator and clerk to serve through the annual session and for the newly elected officers to begin their service at the close of the annual session each year.

The association elected the following officers for the coming year: moderator - Arlie L. McDaniel, pastor of Fresno Harvard Terrace; assistant moderator - A. L. Craig, pastor of Pinedale First Southern; secretary - E. A. Shahan, pastor of Sanger First Southern; assistant secretary - D. D. Tally, pastor of Fresno Bethel; and treasurer - R. W. Lackey, pastor of Kerman First Southern.

Moderator Lummus appointed the following committee to revise the constitution: R. W. Lackey, Arlie McDaniel, and A. L. Craig. This committee recommended the next day that the constitution be changed to allow the earlier action of the messengers stating that the officers would begin their service at the close of the annual

session. They also recommended two by-laws that set up a board of five trustees to act for the association in property matters.

The budget adopted for the year was \$2,904.00.

Fresno-Madera Association held its ninth annual session on October 13-14, 1953, at Kerman First Southern Missionary Baptist Church.

The number of churches in the association increased to 19 with the addition of Lemoore Calvary Southern Baptist Church. The 19 churches reported a grand total of 3,039 members, 382 baptisms, and a total income in the churches of \$124,335.

Arlie McDaniel was reelected as moderator over his protest. The other officers were associate moderator - Marvin D. Kilman, pastor of Ivanhoe Southern; clerk - E. A. Shahan, pastor of Sanger First Southern; assistant clerk - Wayman Gulp, pastor of Reedley First Southern; treasurer - R. W. Lackey.

The association budget for the year was set at \$3,960.00

Fresno-Madera Association's tenth annual session was October 21-22, 1954, at Wasco Missionary Baptist Church.

In that year Fresno Harvard Terrace¹ Church transferred its affiliation from the Fresno-Madera Association to the Fresno Association. Its pastor was Arlie McDaniel who had asked not to be reelected as moderator at the previous year's meeting of the Fresno-Madera Association and then had been elected over his protest.

Two churches were added to the Fresno-Madera Association list, Tule River Southern Missionary and Mendota. This brought the number to twenty. The 20 churches had a grand total membership of 3,020, 361 baptisms and total expenditures of \$170,000.

With the loss of Arlie McDaniel as moderator, Marvin Kilman, pastor of Ivanhoe Southern Missionary Baptist Church, became the moderator.

Guy D. Newton, pastor of Tulare Calvary Southern, moved that the messengers discuss dividing the Fresno-Madera Association into two associations to have smaller geographic areas. In the discussion Ted C. Mouser, pastor of Wasco Missionary Baptist Church, moved that the association board meet at Tulare Calvary Baptist Church, October 28, six days later, to organize a new association and that the clerk be authorized to write letters of dismissal for churches wanting to go into any other association.

The new association that came from this meeting was called Tri-County Southern Baptist Association.

This division cut the Fresno-Madera Association in half, leaving ten churches to continue association work under that name.

The meeting had run past the time set for it and D. D. Tally won the favor of the messengers by declining to preach the sermon for which he had been scheduled as the closing feature of the tenth annual session.

Back in those days, as associations grew in number of churches, they tended to divide. Fresno-Madera Association experienced two divisions in five years from 1950 to 1954. One of these had to do with the exercise of authority an association might practice in relationship to churches regarding polity. Difference over this issue resulted in the establishment of Fresno Association which began with six churches from Fresno-Madera Association. The other division in that time frame was geographical aimed at helping churches in smaller areas to function more effectively in their cooperative work. This was the association organized by churches that had been in the southern part of Fresno-Madera Association. As mentioned in several paragraphs earlier, it took the name of Tri-County Association.

The result of the Fresno-Madera Association dividing in 1954 meant that the two associations in the Fresno area came to 1955 with an equal number of churches. Each association had ten cooperating churches.

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Fresno Association, 1955-1959

In November, 1950, messengers from five churches organized the Fresno Southern Baptist Association. In five years the number of churches doubled and the association was on its way to steady growth and to the development of programs and activities which would help the churches.

The churches initiating the organization of Fresno Association desired to concentrate more specifically on the Fresno area. They also wanted the association to recognize the autonomy of local churches in the acceptance of church members. This meant less effort by the association to control the churches. That would make room in the association for the strictest churches and also for those less strict. However, the association maintained the same polity statements in its constitution that the original San Joaquin Valley Association had used. <

The Fresno Southern Baptist Association held its fifth annual session at Central Baptist Church, Fresno, October 20-21, 1955.

Officers chosen for the coming year were moderator - H. S. Rainwater, pastor of Highway City First; assistant moderator - Dexter Ogan, pastor of Calwa First; clerk - James Walker, music director of Fresno First Southern; treasurer - E. K. Huddleston of Fresno Baptist Temple.

A newly organized church increased the number of cooperating churches to ten. The church was Fresno Baptist Temple, which had been organized by Gabriel Guedj, former pastor of Memorial Baptist Church of Fresno, an American Baptist church (formerly Northern Baptist) that had joined the Conservative Baptist Convention. Two hundred from Memorial joined Pastor Guedj to form Baptist Temple.

The ten churches reported a grand total of 2,614 members and 218 baptisms. The associational budget was \$4,000.

Fred DeBerry, missionary of the district which included Fresno Association retorted 255 visits in churches and missions.

During the year the association's executive committee took a step forward by authorizing the mission committee to pay a mission pastor's salary when the association finances made such an expenditure possible.

The Fresno Association's sixth annual session was at the Fresno Baptist Temple Church, October 8-9, 1956.

A new church brought the number of cooperating churches to eleven. The new church was Fresno Eastview whose pastor was J. V. Springer, a former pastor of Fresno First Southern. The eleven churches reported a grand total of 3,026 members and 290 baptisms. The association set its annual budget at \$6,500.

A noteworthy feature of the meeting was the annual sermon preached by Paul Brooks Leath, pastor of Fresno First Southern. Leath's sermon consisted entirely of quoted scripture. He often preached such messages.

Upon the recommendation of a nominating committee the messengers elected the following officers: moderator - Dexter Ogan of Calwa First; vice moderator - Gabriel R. Guedj of Fresno Baptist Temple; clerk - H. S. Rainwater of Fresno West Park; treasurer - Orvyl Johnson, a member of Fresno Baptist Temple.

George Poplin, a member of Fresno First Southern and secretary of the directors of Eureka Springs Baptist Camp reported that churches were sending work crews to improve the buildings at the camp and that the main road and parking space would be expanded and oiled.

Missionary Fred DeBerry reported delivering 220 sermons and other messages.

Churches reported the following four missions: Coalinga Baptist Mission, First Street Baptist Chapel, Herndon Baptist Mission, and West Side Mission Sunday School.

The association held its seventh annual session October 16-18, 1957, at Fresno Harvard Terrace Baptist Church.

Three newly organized churches brought the number of cooperating churches from eleven to 14. These were Coalinga, Lemoore, and Fresno Sierra Heights which started out with the name North First Street Mission. The 14 churches reported a grand total of 3,319 members and 221 baptisms.

The officers for the coming year were moderator - Dexter C. Ogan of Calwa; vice-moderator - J. L. Thomas, pastor of Hanford

First; clerk - H. S. Rainwater of Fresno Eastview; treasurer - Orvyl Johnson of Fresno Baptist Temple.

Moderator Ogan named a committee to confer with a committee from Fresno-Madera Association on the possibility of the merger of the two associations. That committee from the Fresno Association consisted of J. V. Springer, chairman, Paul Brooks Leath, Lyle Golden, J. L. Thomas, and H. S. Rainwater.

The directors of Eureka Springs Camp reported that the road had been improved and that plans for the coming year called for two more cottages, enlargement of the parking area, completion of the auditorium and construction of a dam for one lake.

The eighth annual session of the Fresno Association was October 22-24, 1958, at the Eastview Baptist Church of Fresno.

Fresno Bethel transferred its affiliation from Fresno-Madera Association to Fresno Association. This brought the total of churches in Fresno Association to 15 with a grand total membership of 3,939 and with 359 baptisms for the year, persons during the year.

The messengers elected as their moderator, Gordon Goodier, pastor of Fresno Baptist Temple.

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The Fresno Association had its ninth annual session October 21-23, 1959, at Fresno Bethel Baptist Church, with messengers present from its fifteen cooperating churches. The 15 churches reported a grand total of 3,854 members and 308 baptisms.

Among the newcomers to the association was Byron C. Todd, the new missionary for the area which consisted of three associations. Todd had been active in the state convention's work for years having formerly served two terms (1955, 1956) as the state convention president while he was pastor of the First Southern Baptist Church of El Monte. He preached at the second day's session on "Moving Forward with God."

In the opening session the moderator appointed a committee on constitutional changes.

H. S. Rainwater, chairman of the Eureka Springs Camp Board, reported a good use of the camp for five weeks during the summer.

Frank Halbeck was introduced during this annual meeting as a denominational representative who served as Home Mission Board director of Jewish Work. Halbeck continued through the years serving in various capacities in California.

Officers elected for the coming year were moderator - Gordon C. Goodier; vice-moderator - John Boykin, pastor of Fresno Bethel; clerk - H. S. Rainwater; treasurer - Orvyl Johnson.

The association approved the request of the Eureka Springs Camp board to borrow up to \$10,000 for debt retirement and needed improvements. The monthly payments were not to exceed \$100.00.

The messengers adopted an annual budget of \$5,091.92.

From 1955 to 1959 the Fresno Association grew from 10 churches with 2,614 members to 15 churches with 3,854 members. In 1957 an interest in reuniting the churches in the two associations serving the Fresno area was indicated in the appointment of a committee to discuss the matter. No immediate results came from this action. The Eureka Springs Camp continued to be a major project as the churches invested money in its improvement and use. This five year period ended with three associations cooperating in calling Byron C. Todd as area missionary.

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Fresno-Madera Association. 1955-1959

In the year of 1955 the Fresno-Madera Association continued to experience significant changes. Eight churches located in the southern end of the Fresno-Madera Association territory withdrew during the year to set up their own association, which started out with the name Tri-County Association.

This left ten churches in Fresno-Madera Association, the same number as in Fresno Association. These two associations, Fresno and Fresno-Madera, occupied basically the same general area around Fresno.

The Fresno-Madera Southern Baptist Association held its eleventh annual session at Fresno Bethel Southern Baptist Church October 19-20, 1955. Its ten churches reported a grand total of 2,315 members and 226 baptisms.

The ten remaining churches were: Fresno, Bethel Southern Ivanhoe, Southern Missionary Kerman, First Southern Missionary Madera, Beacon Light Southern Madera, First Southern Madera, First Southern of Parksdale Madera, New Hope Southern Pinedale, First Reedley, First Southern Sanger, First Southern

Amos L. Craig, pastor of Pinedale First, served the newly revised association as moderator.

R. W. Lackey reported on improvements at the association assembly grounds called Camp Sierra, a 43 acre tract near Auberry. The main buildings had been equipped, new cabins had been built and wells had been provided. A motion to use the camp in 1956 was defeated and tabled a year for further study.

The budget for the year was \$4,028 with over half of it for

the Assembly Fund.

Officers for the coming year were moderator - L. M. Martin, pastor of Ivanhoe Southern Missionary; associate moderator - Joe Davis, pastor of Herman First Southern Missionary; clerk - E. A. Shahan, pastor of Sanger First Southern; treasurer - R. W. Lackey, retired and a member of Fresno Bethel Southern.

On October 11-12, 1956, the Fresno-Madera Association met at Madera First Southern for its twelfth annual session. Its 10 churches reported a grand total of 2,484 members and 170 baptisms.

Treasurer R. W. Lackey reported an income for the year of \$7,445 and recommended a budget for the coming year of \$3,510.

The association made an allocation of \$50.00 per month for supplemental support for a pastor. The allocation was for Joe Davis, pastor of a new mission work at Selma, and was to continue until Selma became a church and then to be available for the purpose of starting other missions.

Messengers elected the following officers: moderator - L. M. Martin, Ivanhoe pastor; vice-moderator - Cleo Martin, pastor of Pinedale First; clerk - E. A. Shahan, Sanger pastor; treasurer - R. W. Lackey, retired and a member of Fresno Bethel Southern.

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The Fresno-Madera Association met October 8-9, 1957, at Madera Parksdale First Southern for its 13th annual session.

Ivanhoe First Southern dropped from the list of churches and Selma First Southern was accepted into the association fellowship as a newly organized church. This kept the total number of churches at ten.

The ten churches reported a grand total of 2,309 members and 144 baptisms.

The association elected the following officers for the coming year: moderator - Cleo Martin, pastor of Madera First Southern; vice-moderator - Burnett Whitaker, pastor of Pinedale First; clerk - John D. Boykin, pastor of Fresno Bethel; treasurer - R. W. Lackey, pastor of Kerman.

John Boykin moved that the moderator appoint a committee to meet with representatives of the Fresno Association to discuss combining the two associations for a more effective mission program in the area. R. W. Lackey moved an amendment to ask the Fresno Association to appoint a similar committee. With the messengers' approval the moderator appointed the following commit-

tee: John D. Boykin, chairman, Cleo Martin, Burnett Whitaker, Waymon Culp, and R. W. Lackey. The Fresno Association met week later and responded favorably by appointing a similar committee.

The 14th session of the Fresno-Madera Association was held Oct. 9-10, 1958. at Pinedale First Southern with messengers from 10 churches.

One church, Fresno Bethel, which had formerly cooperated with Fresno-Madera Association transferred its affiliation to Fresno Association.

Two months before the annual session a petitionary letter from the Trinity Southern Baptist Church had come to the August meeting of the association executive board. A group had left Bethel Church after a dispute over the ordinances and organized Trinity. This newly organized church sought to affiliate with Fresno-Madera Association. A credentials committee was appointed to study the petitionary letter and also the circumstances of the church's organization. The committee consisted of Burnett Whitaker, Joe Davis, and Russell Ward. The committee chairman reported at the annual session that it could not make a full report and asked that the committee be dismissed and a new committee be appointed to bring a report at the next annual meeting. This recommendation was approved.

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Then R. W. Lackey moved from the floor that the association receive Fresno Trinity Baptist Church into the fellowship. This motion carried and the number of churches stayed at ten.

The 10 churches reported a grand total of 1,966 members and 153 baptisms.

Officers for the coming year were moderator - Russell Ward, pastor of Sanger First Southern; assistant moderator - Joe Davis, pastor of Selma First Southern; clerk - Cleo Martin, pastor of Madera First Southern; treasurer - Herman Starr, pastor of Madera New Hope.

R. W. Lackey presented the financial report stating that the year's receipts amounted to \$2,404 and recommended \$3,250 as the coming year's budget. The messengers and visitors stood in appreciation for the work that R. W. Lackey had done in the association.

In 1958 the two associations, Fresno-Madera and Fresno cooperated in a joint clinic in January and in a Sunday School Training Course in May.

During the year the Fresno-Madera Association executive board

voted to have a paid camp manager only during the two months the camp was used.

The association tried to meet the growing problem of an acceptable meeting time for monthly Workers' Conferences by scheduling them on Saturdays for the coming year.

A constitution committee composed of Joe Davis, Waymon Gulp, Truman Gulp, John Boykin, and R. W. Lackey recommended a number of changes to the constitution and these were approved.

The committee pointed out that Article III, Section 2, appeared in the constitution in 1956 but there was no record of it being voted on. It was approved as follows without change:

Article III. Section 2

Each church in the association having fifty members or less may send its pastor and three messengers, and one additional messenger for every twenty-five members thereabove, provided that no church shall have more than ten messengers.

Article III, Section 3, also had no record of having been approved and it appeared in the constitution in 1950. It was amended to read as follows:

Messengers shall be elected and certified by the churches to the association, provided that messengers shall not be seated in this association from any church that receives persons with alien immersion or practices what is commonly called open communion.

A portion omitted from the former statement referred to baptism as invalid if it had been administered by churches cooperating with such inter-denominational agencies as the World Council of Churches or the Federal Council of Churches.

Article IV with its five sections was amended entirely to eliminate repetition from Article III and to concentrate on the steps in admitting a church.

Other amendments clarified and simplified the duties of officers and of the executive board.

The 15th annual session of the Fresno-Madera Southern Baptist Association was held October 8-9, 1959, at Sanger First Southern Baptist Church.

In February, 1959, the association executive board approved the Cantua Creek for fellowship and then the messengers formally

welcomed the church in their annual session. This brought the total churches to 11. Chowchilla First Southern Baptist Church was accepted in the annual session but it did not get its report in to be included in the statistical tables of the association minutes. Eleven churches reported a grand total of 2,212 members and 193 baptisms.

New officers were moderator - R. L. Ward, pastor of Sanger First Southern; assistant moderator - Cecil Reynolds, Fresno Trinity pastor; clerk - Bill Perdue, pastor of Madera Beacon Light; treasurer - H. E. Starr, pastor of Madera New Hope.

The association executive board report indicated some cooperation between the two associations, Fresno-Madera and Fresno, during the year. They had cooperated in publicity and in the fellowship meetings of a simultaneous revival.

In December, 1958, the executive board had considered a motion to look into the possibilities of selling the camp property but had defeated the motion by a vote of 7 to 3. In January, 1959, the executive board combined the treasuries of the camp and the association with the association treasurer having the duties of both.

The board also combined the duties of the association clerk and treasurer and elected H. E. Starr to both responsibilities.

In March, 1959, the board gave attention to the problem of water at the camp and voted to drill a deep well. This continued to be a subject of discussion until in August the board voted for the men who were members of the board to sign a note for a loan to dig the well. In September the board voted to ask the Brotherhood of each church to pay \$10 per month on the note for the camp well.

In that March meeting the board officially voted to call Byron Todd as its association missionary. Todd was asked to come as area missionary to serve three associations: Fresno-Madera, Fresno and Midway. At first Todd declined the invitation to serve the three associations and then later accepted with the plan to be on the field September 1, 1959. The board instructed the association mission committee to work with the committees of the other two associations to get ready for Todd's coming.

A month later in April, 1959, the board empowered the camp trustees to use their own judgment in digging the well, in May the camp trustees reported the need to clean up the camp ground and to put a fireguard around the camp.

Moderator R. L. Ward offered his resignation in April and

the board asked him to continue for a month. Then in May the board asked him to continue until the end of the year and in a standing vote pledged to cooperate with him in advancing the work of the association.

During the annual session the messengers adopted a budget for the coming year of \$4,370. The three largest items in the budget were \$900 for the camp manager and custodian, \$720 for the area missionary's salary, and \$600 for new missions.

Associations in general had experienced a decline in attendance at the monthly workers' conferences. Fresno-Madera Association had sought to meet this problem by having these conferences on Saturday but this had not proved to be an acceptable time and the messengers changed the time from Saturday to the second Tuesday of each month and scheduled the board meeting and the W.M.U. meeting at 5, the dinner at 6, and the conference to follow.

Fresno-Madera and Fresno associations came to 1955 with each having ten churches. However the Fresno Association gained a church at the 1955 session which brought its total to 11. The ten churches of Fresno-Madera reported in 1955 a grand total of 2,315 church members and 226 baptisms and the 11 in Fresno Association reported 3,026 church members and 290 baptisms.

Four years later in 1959 Fresno-Madera had 11 churches with a grand total of 2,212 members and 193 baptisms. Fresno Association had 15 churches with a grand total of 3,854 members and 308 baptisms.

Each of the associations owned an association camp used for assemblies of youth and children a week or two in the summer. The camps were rented to other associations and this meant an additional two to four weeks of use of a camp during the summer. The camps were a financial burden to each association and both camps aroused concern and discussion at the executive board meetings of each association. As some problems were solved, others increased and became acute. Someone compared the camps by saying that one was without water and the other was without electricity.

Camp Sierra, which belonged to Fresno-Madera Association, lacked water. The State of California required camps to have water enough to provide 50 gallons per day per camper, in the nearly 20 years of operation, 12 wells were dug at Camp Sierra and only two produced water. Other problems also plagued the camp. By a mistake the dining hall was built with an extremely low ceiling through the use of studs seven feet long rather than eight or preferably even longer. Another difficulty came from the sale of 50-year leases for \$50.00 with the promise "of adequate water to

lease-holders.

Eureka Springs, the Fresno Association camp, had water but no electrical service except that which it could provide through generators.

The two associations shared the services of an area missionary who was an employ of the state convention executive board. They cooperated in some church program training activities and in some evangelistic efforts.

The basic difference between the two associations was in their attitude about an association's responsibility toward churches that accepted members from some Baptist churches practicing things uncommon among Southern Baptists. These practices were actions Southern Baptists called "alien immersion" and "open communion" and also affiliation with inter-denominational groups such as the World Council of Churches and the Federal Council of Churches.

The Fresno-Madera Association refused to accept Southern Baptist churches that received members from Baptist churches that practiced such things as mentioned in the above paragraph.

The Fresno Association did not approve the offending practices but held that a church's doctrinal position determined the validity of its baptism rather than these offensive practices.

The experience through the years drew the two associations closer together at some points and at other points drove the wedge more deeply to divide them.

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Fresno Association, 1960-1964

Fresno Southern Baptist Association grew steadily in its first ten years, increasing from the original five churches which organized the association up to a total of 17.

For its tenth annual session Fresno Association met October 19-21, 1960, at Fresno Olivet Baptist Church. One church, Lemoore, dropped from the association's list and affiliated with Fresno-Madera Association. Three churches, Butler Park, Firebaugh First, and Riverdale were added to Fresno Association's list of cooperating churches.

The 17 churches reported a grand total of 3,952 members and 313 baptisms.

On the second day of the annual session the messengers approved Sanger First Southern Baptist Church for fellowship in the association. The Sanger church had been affiliated with Fresno-Madera Association. Its report did not get into the 1960 yearbook of the Fresno Association.

Treasurer Orvyl Johnson reported that the association began the year with almost \$4,000 on hand, received over \$6,800, spent \$7,292, and ended with a balance of \$3,488. The expenditures included \$1,200 for Eureka Springs Camp, \$600 for institutional ministry, and \$2,450 for missions and equipment.

The association executive board made several allocations to help Byron F. Todd move and begin work as the area missionary. The first reference to Todd's work in the executive board minutes (March, 1960) states he reported six missions had been started and two of them had possibilities of becoming churches.

The association board voted for Fresno Association to work with Fresno-Madera and Midway associations in a combined mission program with one mission fund for the three associations.

The association budget for the new year was set at \$8,136 with \$4.650 of it designated for the City Mission Program. The City

Mission Program was more than a program for the city of Fresno. It was a mission plan of the Home Mission Board which targeted ten types of mission work for attention.

A highlight on Thursday evening of this tenth annual session was a report by five persons on the work in about ten mission efforts "including church type missions, institutional missions, and other mission ventures.

Todd reported that in his area of three associations 25 missions had been reactivated or started, and that ten of these were preaching stations and 14 were institutional missions such as deaf service, rest homes. Juvenile Hall services, and jails.

During the year two Seminary Extension courses were taught.

Officers elected were moderator - John D. Boykin, pastor of Fresno Bethel; vice-moderator - Garland Walker, pastor of Firebaugh First Southern; clerk - Dexter C. Ogan, pastor of Calwa First Southern; treasurer - Orvyl H. Johnson, member of Baptist Temple.

Fresno Association's eleventh annual meeting was October 11-12, 1961, at Fresno First Southern Baptist Church.

One church dropped from the list and five were added. The one dropped was Eastview. Of the five added two were newly organized, Hanford Calvary and Madera Bethel. Three of the newly affiliated churches came to Fresno Association from Fresno-Madera Association: Mendota, Pinedale, and Sanger. Sanger was accepted at the previous year's session but its report did not show in that year's statistical tables. This increased the total churches in Fresno Association to 21. Kingsburg was approved by the executive board as a participating church but it did not send messengers or a letter of report to the annual session.

The 21 churches reported a grand total of 5,244 church members and 324 baptisms.

The association continued to improve the Eureka Springs Camp. During the year a new concrete swimming pool made the camp more attractive to other associations that wanted to rent it. With the increased use of the camp the directors reported the need for four more cabins before next summer.

Association treasurer Orvyl Johnson reported a total income for the year of \$16,200 which included a loan of over \$8,000 secured for the camp. The next year's budget was set at \$10,750 which included \$1,300 for Eureka Springs camp, \$600 for institutional ministry, and \$5,310 for City Missions.

The City Mission Program now included just the two associations of Fresno and Fresno-Madera.

Fresno Association reported eight permanent missions, five preaching missions, and 19 institutional missions. Fresno-Madera Association had seven missions during the year and in that time three were organized into churches. This left one permanent mission and three institutional missions. The total for the area was 10 permanent missions, five preaching missions, and 22 institutional missions, making a grand total of 37 missions.

One Seminary Extension course was taught in the year.

Fresno Association started a program of juvenile rehabilitation this year. The primary aim was to help children on probation.

The association met for its twelfth annual meeting October 11-12, 1962, at First Southern Baptist Church of Calwa.

Four churches were added bringing the total to 25. One of these was Kingsburg First Southern which had been accepted by executive board action over a year ago but did not report to the annual session. The other three were Fowler First Southern, Fresno Emmanuel Southern, and Reedley First Southern. Fresno Emmanuel Southern was a Spanish church. Reedley First Southern, a ten-year-old church affiliated with Fresno-Madera Association changed its affiliation over to Fresno Association.

These 25 churches reported a grand total of 6,041 members and 384 baptisms.

The association elected the following officers for the coming year: moderator - William C. Smith, pastor of Clovis First Southern; vice-moderator - Dean McCracken, pastor of Fresno Central; clerk - Bert York, pastor of Pinedale First Southern; treasurer - Dale Brister, member of Fresno Baptist Temple and business manager of the state convention executive board.

The messengers authorized a committee to determine three matters concerning Eureka Springs Camp:

1. The feasibility of increasing the loan on the camp to build a new kitchen and make other improvements required by law.
2. A budget for the money from such a loan.
3. A plan for operating the camp to make sure it would become self-supporting.

On the second day of the annual session the messengers acting upon a petitionary letter from Orange Cove Mountain View Southern Baptist Church accepted the church into the fellowship of the

association.

Dale Brister reported the year began with a balance of over \$2,000, had an income of over \$9,000, and closed with a balance of almost \$3,400.

In March, 1962, the association executive board appointed a committee to consider the merger of Fresno and Fresno-Madera associations. The committee was to wait for Fresno-Madera to take action also before making contact.

This year's improvements on Eureka Springs Camp included the completion of the swimming pool and the rest room building made of concrete blocks. New state laws required the building of another kitchen in the near future. State forestry regulations required the continual clearing of leaves, sticks and trash 30 feet from all buildings which meant employing a laborer for at least five months during camping time. Another association had reserved the camp for two weeks and the directors said that, if two more associations could be enlisted, the camp could be self-supporting.

The City Missions Committee, made up of members from both associations, reported 71 places of preaching and ministry as follows: Fresno-Madera Association - 10 churches and one preaching mission; Fresno Association - 28 churches, 2 mission Sunday schools, 10 preaching missions, and 20 institutional missions. During the year 15 new missions were started and five churches were organized. A total of 19 churches sponsored missions.

The thirteenth annual meeting of the Fresno Association was held October 10-11, 1963, at First Southern Baptist Church of Clovis.

One church, Mendota First Southern, dropped from the list and one changed its name. Butler Park became Lind Avenue, then changed back to Butler Park, and finally became East Fresno. One new church on the list was Fresno Cornelia Avenue, accepted by the association executive board in January, 1963. The board also voted to receive the Oakhurst Baptist Church into the association fellowship in November, 1962, but the church did not send messengers or a report to the annual session. These changes kept the total number of churches in the association at 25.

These 25 churches reported a grand total of 6,024 members and 339 baptisms.

The messengers approved the recommendation of the Eureka Springs Camp Board to make a \$25,000 bond issue for improvements

on the camp. The messengers also stood in a vote of appreciation for all of the efforts of H. S. Rainwater in behalf of the camp.

The association officers elected for the coming year were moderator - William C. Smith, Clovis pastor; vice-moderator - Don Fowler, Calwa pastor; clerk - Bert York, Pinedale pastor; treasurer - John Boykin, Fresno Bethel pastor.

Eureka Springs Camp continued to be a matter of concern and high priority. During the year the executive board moderator appointed a special committee to study the camp operation.

The City Missions Committee reported that nine new missions were started during the year in the two associations

Fresno Association adopted a budget of \$13,325. The larger items in the budget were \$1,300 for Eureka Springs Camp to be a monthly preferred allocation of \$108.34 from monthly receipts; \$1,200 for Eureka Springs Camp to be taken as needed from the balance in the camp fund and to be replaced by camp income; \$900 for B.S.U. rental; and \$7,125 for City Missions.

In 1964 Fresno Association held its fourteenth annual meeting October 12-13 at Fresno Baptist Temple Church. One church, Fowler First Southern dropped from the list. A new name, *East Fresno*, appeared in the list but it was the church formerly called Butler Park. The total remained at 25.

The 25 churches reported a grand total of 6,125 members and 304 baptisms.

The messengers made several changes in the constitution. One was to change the number of members on the Camp Committee from five to three and to change their terms from five years to three. Another change eliminated the Foundation Committee which promoted the work of the state convention Foundation. An additional change set up an Institutional Ministry Committee to function in the area of working with persons related to institutions.

Officers for the coming year were moderator - Dean McCracken, pastor of Fresno Central; vice-moderator - Don Fowler, pastor of Calwa First Southern; clerk - Bert York, pastor of Pinedale First Southern; treasurer - John Boykin, pastor of Fresno Bethel.

William T. Updike, the new missionary in the City Missions Program serving the two associations, gave a report and delivered a message at this annual session. The association executive board had approved Updike in July, 1964. He was pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church, Ridgecrest, California.

The Eureka Springs Camp Committee reported that the camp had been used for five weeks and several weekends during the year. Three associations had used the camp. These were Fresno, Kern County, and San Fernando. Over 50 volunteer workers had nearly completed the lodge and had provided new equipment such as tables, folding chairs, mattresses and a refrigerator. Much more work was needed to bring the camp up to state and county codes in order that the camp could operate the next year.

The association budget for the coming year was \$14,100 with the larger allocations as follows: Eureka Springs Camp - \$2,700; B.S.U. rental - \$900; Institutional Ministry - \$500; City Missions - \$7,875.

In this period of five years Fresno Association grew from 17 churches to 25 with several of these being churches that moved their affiliation from Fresno-Madera Association. The Fresno Association was greatly involved in local mission work ranging from church-type missions to a variety of institutional missions. It invested money, volunteer efforts, and time in the development and use of Eureka Springs Camp. It cooperated with Fresno-Madera Association in expanded mission efforts through the City Mission Program jointly supported by the two associations, the state convention, and the Southern Baptist Convention Home Mission Board. The coming of Bill Updyke as the area missionary in the City Mission Program seems to have been a catalyst precipitating an intensified interest in the uniting of the two associations.

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Fresno-Madera Association, 1960-1964

The Fresno-Madera Association began the 1960's with some signs that it might recover from the loss of churches which resulted when a number of churches withdrew in the 1950's to help establish two new associations.

For its sixteenth annual meeting the Fresno-Madera Association met October 13-14, 1960, at New Hope Southern Baptist Church of Madera.

Two new churches in the association brought the total to 13. Chowchilla First Southern was approved for fellowship the year before but did not report its annual statistics. Lemoore was accepted into the fellowship by the association executive board in January, 1960.

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These 13 churches reported a grand total of 2,496 members and 185 baptisms.

Officers for the coming year were moderator - Cecil Reynolds, Fresno Trinity pastor; assistant moderator - W. E. Dittmer, pastor of Madera Parksdale; clerk - R. B. Reeve, member of Madera First Southern; treasurer - H. E. Starr, pastor of Madera New Hope.

These officers were elected upon nominations from the floor except for the clerk. After two declined to be nominated, the moderator ruled out of order a motion to refer the election of a clerk to the executive board. Three more were nominated but they all declined. Finally the messengers elected H. E. Starr to serve both as treasurer and as clerk.

Burnett Whitaker, pastor of Pinedale, made the following motion which was seconded by Fred Travis, pastor of Sanger:

"That the Fresno-Madera Association cease to meet as an association and that we join the Fresno Association in all of our missionary activities; that we retain the camp ground as it is and that the churches which now compose the Fresno-Madera Association will, for legal purposes only, have the

name, Fresno-Madera Association until suitable arrangements are made between the combined associations concerning the camp ground" (Fresno-Madera Association minutes, 1960).

Whitaker suggested that this motion not be discussed until the next day and then be discussed and voted on.

W. E. Dittmer, pastor of Madera Parksdale, asked if this motion was in order and requested that a statement of the purpose behind the motion be made.

J. P. Kessler, pastor of Chowchilla First Southern, asked if the motion had been brought before the churches and said that the churches themselves would have to act on it since they had voted themselves into the association.

A. T. Abercrombie, a messenger from Madera Parksdale, pointed out that no reason had been given for the motion and asked for an explanation.

Whitaker answered that the reason had to do with the City Mission Program and that combining the effort would cut the work in half and produce greater results.

Abercrombie moved that Whitaker be given time to speak on the motion and his motion carried.

Whitaker said there were not enough people to staff the offices of two associations in the same area and that combining the associations would result in better work.

Harry Harrison, a messenger from Selma, asked why Fresno-Madera Association should be dissolved since any church could leave it and join the other association if it chose.

Whitaker responded, "It would leave a worse spirit of disunity than there is now."

With that the motion was put aside until the next day.

The association executive board reported on several matters it had taken care of in its monthly meetings.

In November, 1959. the board approved the motion of R. W. Lackey "to go on record" to cooperate with the City Mission Program. Also in that meeting the board voted to check out the camp's well before considering the need to repair the dam.

A month later the board named R. W. Lackey to lead a campaign

to enlist 400 people to donate \$5.00 each to pay back money borrowed for camp expenses.

In April, 1960, the board voted to give P G & E the right of way to put a power line across the camp property.

Byron Todd of the City Missions Program reported that the churches were operating 25 missions. Ten of these were preaching stations and 15 were institutional missions. Also during the year two seminary extension courses were taught, a theology course by H. S. Rainwater with seven enrolled and a religious education course taught by Dean McCracken with four enrolled.

In the closing session of the annual meeting the messengers discussed the motion offered earlier for the Fresno-Madera Association to disband in order to unite with the Fresno Association.

Upon the motion of L. H. Waldroup, pastor at Reedley, the words, "join with the Fresno Association in our Mission Activities," were deleted. This left the motion simply urging a more closely combined effort for a greater mission work. The motion in that form was criticized for not being clear enough and it was defeated 36 votes to 12. Mrs. J. A. Williams, a messenger from Reedley made a motion that the messengers vote to retain the Fresno-Madera Association as it was with a unanimous vote. Whitaker pointed out that such a vote was impossible since he was not for it. However the motion was put to a vote and it carried but not unanimously.

Before the adjournment Bob Reeve, a messenger from Madera First Southern, volunteered to take the position as clerk which had not yet been filled. Herman Starr, who had agreed to serve only until someone else could be enlisted, promptly resigned and nominated Reeve who was elected.

The seventeenth annual session of the Fresno-Madera Association was held October 9-10, 1961, at Fresno Trinity Southern.

Three churches that formerly cooperated with the association did not send representation. These were Cantua Creek, Pinedale, and Sanger. The Cantua Creek church had dissolved during the year. Lemoore continued to be listed but sent no report. Tranquility, a new church, joined the association but sent no report for this year. The list of churches included two missions, one at the Fowler Grange Hall in Fowler and one at the American Legion Hall in Parlier.

The nine churches sending reports to the association had a grand total of 1,845 members and 169 baptisms.

Officers were nominated from the floor and elected by acclamation. They were moderator - Cecil Reynolds, pastor of Fresno Trinity; assistant moderator - L. H. Waldroup, pastor at Reedley; clerk - Henry R. Samples, pastor of Madera New Hope; and treasurer - B. N. Lummus, messenger from Fresno Trinity.

In its report the association executive board indicated problems had arisen in getting ready for Southern Baptists of the area to host the state Training Union meeting scheduled for Fresno, May, 1961. In its February meeting the board voted to cooperate with the Fresno Association in hosting the meeting. It also requested that Fresno-Madera Association be included in plans for an area-wide school of mission the next year in 1962.

The association camp kept having financial problems and in its March meeting the association executive board rescinded its previous action of not selling lots to non-Baptists. The board hoped in this way to raise more money for the camp. In April Herman Starr resigned as chairman of the camp program and B. N. Lummus was elected to succeed him. Later that year the board considered a proposal offered by Lummus for Fresno-Madera Association and South Tulare Association to become co-owners of the camp and postponed action until all parties could be informed and come to agreement.

The association in this 1961 session adopted a budget of \$2,560. The largest items were \$600 for new work. \$600 for City Missions, and \$600 for a camp manager.

Byron Todd, superintendent of City Missions for the two associations, reported ten permanent missions, five preaching missions, and 22 institutional missions. Of this number the Fresno-Madera Association had two permanent missions and three institutional missions.

(Writer's note: A fire at the association office in 1981 destroyed the collection of association annual minutes. Many have been replaced but the Fresno-Madera Association minutes for 1962, 1963, and 1964 are missing. The following report for those years came from the statistical tables in the state convention annuals for those years. For further information on the fire see page 64).

In the 1962 state convention annual ten churches of Fresno-Madera Association reported a grand total of 1,867 members and 113 baptisms

In 1963 eleven churches reported a grand total of 2,362 members and 143 baptisms.

In 1964 twelve churches reported a grand total of 2,617 members and 213 baptisms.

During the first half of the 1960's Fresno-Madera Association suffered a further slight decline and then climbed back up almost to where it started at the beginning of that period. In that time the association increased its cooperation with Fresno Association and several persons spoke up with the hope that the two associations could be united. However, the majority seemed to feel that if any churches or pastors were interested in uniting the two associations, let them go affiliate with the other association.

Two major factors seemed to influence those who wanted to keep Fresno-Madera Association as a distinct entity. They wanted to preserve the purity of Baptist polity and practice as they saw it. They also felt a commitment to the Sierra Camp. These two factors involved pride in heritage and also an investment of finances and labor on the part of individuals and churches.

The City Mission Program which led the two associations to cooperate in various efforts greatly influenced them in the direction of uniting the associations.

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Mid-Valley Southern Baptist Association, 1965

In 1965 the Fresno-Madera Association and the Fresno Association merged to form the Mid-Valley Association. For several years persons in the two associations had talked of the possibility of this merger. Finally it came about with the diligent efforts of Metropolitan Missionary William T. Updike who succeeded Byron F. Todd, director of the City Missions Program. For several years this program had involved the two associations in working together in cooperative mission activities in the general Fresno area.

The merger occurred in October, 1965, with the dissolution of the two associations in order that the churches cooperating in each association might send messengers to meet and organize a new association. This action required three separate meetings.

The first of these three meetings was October 11, 1965, at West Park Baptist Church, Fresno. This was officially the fourteenth annual session of Fresno Southern Baptist Association.

The following three churches were recognized as newly cooperating churches in the association: First Spanish in Sanger; Templo Bautista and Providence, both in Fresno. Providence was a black church whose pastor was Reuben Scott.

The regular church program organization reports and the association camp report were given in the afternoon. During the year the camp committee recognized the financial burden the camp was to the association and began to investigate the possibility of selling it.

In the evening session the motion to dissolve the association in order to organize the new association was made and passed. The final session of Fresno Association was adjourned after the annual sermon by Murray Boyd, pastor of Fresno Sierra Heights.

The second meeting was one day later on October 12, 1965, at First Southern Baptist Church, Madera. It was officially the twenty-first annual session of Fresno-Madera Southern Baptist Association.

Reports of the church program organizations were given in the afternoon. The Fresno-Madera Association camp committee also gave its report. The year had seen many improvements at the camp, including improvement of the dining hall and several cabins, bringing the camp up to health and fire codes, purchasing a private camp as a home for the manager, and beginning of work to winterize the dining hall and several cabins. Water supply was still a major problem even after digging four more wells. The association had begun to buy back private lots from individual owners.

In the evening session Tommy Helm, Mendota pastor, made the motion to dissolve the Fresno-Madera Association and it carried. Motions were made for the trustees and treasurer to continue to act until they could turn their responsibilities over to the proper officers of the new association.

Metropolitan Missionary William T. Updike, who had completed a full year of service to the two associations reported a busy year in which administration had taken a major portion of his time. He said, "Much of the missionary's time has gone into preparation for the merger of the two associations." He concluded his report with these words: "The primary needs of the work at this time are for a greater understanding and fellowship along with a greatly enlarged and strengthened program of starting missions and strengthening the smaller churches."

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B. N. Lummus, perhaps the most active one person in the work and business of Fresno-Madera Association, made the motion that this final session of the Fresno-Madera Association be adjourned.

The third meeting, two days after the second meeting, was October 14, 1965, at Harvard Terrace Baptist Church. This was the organization session of the Mid-Valley Southern Baptist Association. Messengers came from Southern Baptist Churches in Fresno, Madera, and Kings counties for the purpose of organizing the new association.

John Ashcraft, chairman of the City Missions Committee of the Fresno-Madera and Fresno Associations and also pastor of the host church, called the meeting to order.

After a song and a prayer Ashcraft thanked the committees that had served and then presented Metropolitan Missionary Updike. Updike read a statement of purpose declaring that the messengers from the churches had come together for the purpose of forming a new association.

Frank Weedon, pastor of Fresno Central, made the motion that the messengers from the churches be recognized as the body gathered

to do business.

B. N. Lummus made the motion that the assembled body be declared a Southern Baptist Association. Lummus had been active in Southern Baptist association work in the Fresno area ever since coming to California in 1942. He had participated in the original San Joaquin Association, the early Fresno Association which changed its name to Fresno-Madera Association, and then in Fresno-Madera Association in a number of offices and on many committees. John Borden, who had been a pastor of several churches in the area, seconded Lummus' motion and it carried.

Mid-Valley Southern Baptist Association came into existence and it began as a large association. The statistical tables included reports from 39 cooperating churches. These 39 churches reported a grand total of 8,829 members and 494 baptisms for the past year along with 800 other additions to the churches. The total given for local expenditures was \$435,231; for the Cooperative Program, \$41,614; and for association missions, \$14,006

The association directory of churches and pastors listed 41 churches and six missions.

Ashcraft and William C. Smith, pastor of Clovis First Southern, were nominated as moderator and Smith was elected.

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Smith presided over the election of the other officers who were vice-moderator - Philip Aaron, pastor of Fresno Templo Bautista, and clerk - Tommy Helm, pastor of Mendota First.

The work of Philip Aaron and his constitutional committee pleased the messengers who adopted the constitution unanimously without changing it.

In the spirit of the group's enthusiasm the messengers voted to invite the state convention to meet in Fresno in 1967. In working out the plans the date came to be 1968.

Missionary Updike preached in the evening session on "Looking Ahead," using Philippians 3:7,14 as his text.

Grady Cothen, who was in his fourth and last year as state convention executive secretary, brought the closing message on "The Conditions in which We Work."

Lyle Golden, a layman active for years in the Fresno area association work, made the motion that the organization meeting of the Mid-Valley Southern Baptist Association be adjourned.

A major problem in the merger of the two associations was the question of what would be done with the two camps since each association had owned and operated its own camp. The decision of Fresno Association to sell its camp solved that problem at least temporarily. The new association set up a camp committee consisting of nine persons with each committee member serving for three years and one-third to be elected each year.

Regarding the matter of qualifications for churches to become participating churches the constitution set forth the following directions in Article III (Mid-Valley Southern Baptist Association Minutes, 1965, p. 10) :

Section 2

This Association shall be composed of messengers elected by the Southern Baptist Churches who are friendly to this Association, sympathetic with its purpose and work, provided that the churches have adopted Articles of Faith generally accepted by Southern Baptist Churches.

Section 3

The messengers shall be elected by the Churches to this Association, provided that messengers shall not be seated in this Association from any church that receives persons with alien immersion or practices what is commonly called open communion.

The constitution defined the authority of the Association and also its limit in Article X (M-V Assoc. Minutes, 1965, pp. 13-14).

Section 1

This Association shall never exercise any authority whatsoever over any church, nor shall it interfere in any way with the constitution of any church or with the exercise of its functions as the only ecclesiastical body, but will always cheerfully recognize and uphold the absolute independence of the churches.

Section 2

While this Association does not assume any authority over the churches and their members, it does reserve to itself the right to withdraw the hand of fellowship from any church which shall become corrupt in faith and practice.

Mid-Valley started off as one of the strongest associations

in California and continues to be in that group.

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Mid-Valley Association, 1966-1970

The new association, called Mid-Valley, got off to a strong start during its first year and came to its first annual session in a high spirit.

During Mid-Valley Association's first year its executive board voted to negotiate a loan of \$14,200 to consolidate the indebtedness on Sierra Camp and to improve it. Sierra was the camp that had belonged to Fresno-Madera Association. Another action of the board was a vote to sell Eureka Springs Camp, which had been the property of Fresno Association, to a Church of God group for \$35,000."

Mid-Valley Southern Baptist Association met for its first annual session October 10-11, 1966, at Trinity Southern Baptist Church in Fresno.

Eight churches and missions were added to the list of those carried in the previous year's statistical tables for a total of 47 but that was the same number listed in the directory of churches and pastors in the previous year. Two churches were welcomed as newly cooperating churches in the association: Ashview of Chowchilla and Fellowship, a black church of Fresno.

These 47 churches and missions reported a grand total of 8,296 members and 399 baptisms.

The association adopted a budget of \$16,531.40, almost \$2,000 less than the year before. Over \$9,000 of the budget was for salaries, office rent, and Camp Sierra (\$600). Almost \$7,000 was for missions, ministries, and church program services.

John Ashcraft, pastor of Fresno Harvard Terrace, was elected to succeed William C. Smith who asked not to be nominated to serve as moderator for another year.

Mid-Valley Association held its second annual meeting October 9-10, 1967, at Madera Bethel Southern Baptist Church. Moderator John Ashcraft Presided.

The other association officers were vice-moderator - Murray Boyd, pastor of Fresno Sierra Heights; clerk - Mrs. Violet Cudd; treasurer - Curt J. Lucas.

The association's list of churches and missions included 44 churches and five missions. These churches and missions reported a grand total of 8,510 members and 598 baptisms. The number of baptisms increased in 1967 by 50% over the number in the previous year. This increase in baptisms resulted largely in the Spanish churches from the work of Roy Douglas, a Home Mission Board missionary on leave from Panama.

The association budget for the coming year was set at \$16,993 with \$9,578 for salaries and office rental and insurance. Other major budget items were mission projects - \$2,500; office expenses - \$1,670; and Fresno Institutional ministries - \$500.

The association held its third annual meeting October 14-15, 1968, at Fresno Sierra Heights Southern Baptist Church.

Three new missions during the year brought the total number of churches and missions up to 44 churches and 9 missions. These reported a grand total of 9,951 members and 558 baptisms which is just a few less baptisms than the previous year.

In the opening session of this third annual meeting the roll call of the churches was done by slides which showed the work of the various church projects.

The first session which was on Monday night was closed with a benediction spoken first in English by Robert Lumkey, pastor of Stratford First Southern, and then in Spanish by Jesus Rios, pastor of Sanger Primera Iglesia Bautista.

The association adopted a budget of \$22,430. This included \$10,694 for salaries and for rent and utilities for the Southern Baptist Religious Center. Other large items were \$3,600 for mission projects, \$1,670 for office expense, \$1,000 for the association Youth Program (\$450 of it raised by the youth), and \$600 for Fresno Institutional Missions.

The item of "Southern Baptist Religious Center" in the budget refers to a building on a corner lot across Shaw Avenue from California State University of Fresno. The property which was rented served as the association office and as the Baptist Student Union Center. The association bought the property about five years after this while Ron Chandler was Director of Missions for the association.

The messengers expressed their appreciation for Metropolitan Missionary W. T. Updike and his wife as they left to go to a new place of responsibility with the Home Mission Board in Atlanta, Georgia.

The final session of the 1968 association meeting was closed with a benediction by Alan Johnson who prayed first in Spanish and then in English.

The fourth annual meeting of Mid-Valley Association was October 13-14, 1969, at Calwa First Southern Baptist Church in Calwa, a community in the southeast part of Fresno.

Villa Baptist Church of Clovis was welcomed as a new church in the association fellowship. Four churches dropped from the list: Chowchilla Ashview, Fowler First Southern, Fresno Emmanuel Southern, and Orange Cove Mt. View Southern. This brought the total to 41 churches and 7 missions. These churches and missions reported a grand total of 10,106 members and 377 baptisms.

This was the first annual meeting for the new Metropolitan Missionary Ronald Chandler. Before coming to the Fresno association position he was pastor of First Baptist Church of Lakeside, a large Southern Baptist church in the San Diego association. Chandler, a native of Louisiana and the son of Mr. and Mrs. DeWitt W. Chandler, grew up in Fresno. He was saved and baptized in Memorial Baptist Church which was affiliated with the Conservative Baptist Convention. As a teenager he joined Fresno First Southern. Because he was baptized in a Baptist church that wasn't Southern Baptist, Chandler could not have joined several of the churches in the Mid-Valley Association which according to their constitutions would not accept persons for membership who had been baptized by Baptist churches which were not Southern Baptist.

The messengers adopted a resolution "to meet the challenge presented to us by our missionary and pledge our full cooperation and prayerful support to the projects "and missionary endeavors of our Association."

The association voted to underwrite a loan of \$20,000 for the Spanish Mission of Highway City Church to buy the property and buildings of Highway City First Southern Baptist Church.

A letter from the Herman church was read in which the church opposed the sale of the camp and the letter was acknowledged.

Before the camp committee report the messengers voted to delete the camp committee and then after the report they voted to re-establish the Sierra Camp Committee as long as needed.

The budget for the coming year was \$21,269 including \$13,374 for salaries and for the rent and utilities of the Southern Baptist Religious Center. The salary allocations included supplements for two mission pastors. A new allocation in the budget was \$780 for the Mid-Valley Training Center. This Center was a new format for the old, traditional association workers' conference. Its purpose was to be an ongoing association training program for church workers. The plan was for a meeting to be held nine months a year at the same place. The place was First Southern Baptist Church of Fresno. Average attendance ran from 100 to 150 people. The plan worked well for a year and then died in the second year.

New officers were moderator - Wayland Jackson who was on the staff of Fresno First Southern; vice-moderator - B. LaVern Lewis, pastor of Fresno Trinity; clerk - William C. Smith, pastor of Clovis First Southern; and treasurer - Bill Keplinger, a member of Fresno First Southern.

The association's fifth annual meeting was October 12-13, 1970, at Hanford First Southern Baptist Church.

As one of the first items of business the messengers received two churches into the association fellowship: First Spanish Baptist Church of Highway City and Easton Southern Baptist Church. Two churches dropped from the list: Clovis Mt. Moriah, a black church, and Kingsburg Calvary. The congregation that had formerly been Highway City First Southern moved and took the new name of Shaw Avenue of Fresno.

The total number of churches was 42 and the number of missions was four. These churches and missions had a grand total 10,260 members and 364 baptisms.

One of the resolutions adopted was to express abhorrence of the profane language that was beginning to creep into usage on radio and television programs.

A special Camp Study Committee recommended that the association sell Sierra Southern Baptist Assembly for not less than \$20,000 net. A motion to do this was voted on by ballot and it carried.

According to the committee's recommendations proceeds from the sale of Fresno-Madera's Sierra Camp would be used to supplement Mid-Valley's camping program. Proceeds from the sale of Fresno Association's Eureka Springs Camp would help purchase an office building for the Mid-Valley Association.

The new budget (1970-71) was \$22,074 with \$13,804 going for

salaries, for rent and utilities on the Southern Baptist Religious Center, and for mission salary supplements. The Mid-Valley Training Center was to receive \$500; the Institutional Ministry, \$400; the Camping Program, \$500; and other mission projects, \$150.

The new officers were moderator - Wayne Creel, pastor of Fresno West Park; vice-moderator - Tommy Helm, Mendota pastor; clerk - William C. Smith, pastor of Clovis First Southern; treasurer - Bill Keplinger, member of Fresno First Southern.

Mid-Valley Association had developed organizationally during this five year period. The direction of the development was for the leadership of the association to administer the work of the association so as to coordinate and facilitate the cooperative activities of the churches. The major problem in the association was to work out the best resolution of the camp situation. The two associations, Fresno-Madera and Fresno, had merged with an unofficial, tentative agreement that the Eureka Springs Camp of the Fresno Association would be sold and the Sierra Camp of the Fresno-Madera Association would be kept. When the two groups became one association, Mid-Valley, they finally agreed to sell both camps.

Mid-Valley Association had become a denominational agency with a number of ongoing activities in missions, ministries, and services to help local church programs. '

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Mid-Valley Association, 1971-1980

Mid-Valley Southern Baptist Association was organized by messengers from 39 churches. However it listed 41 churches and six missions in the report of its organization meeting. It reached a peak in its third year, 1968, with 44 churches and five missions. The association started its sixth year with 42 churches and six missions and a grand total of 10,260 church members.

Five years after Fresno-Madera and Fresno Associations had become Mid-Valley Association, the new association was a well-functioning, large association with several programs such as mountain missions, institutional ministry, church-type missions, and a summer camp program for children and youth. The maintenance and operation of the summer camp ground became a greater problem.

Mid-Valley Association met October 18-19, 1971, at Fresno Shaw Avenue Baptist Church for its sixth annual meeting. The association directory listed a total of 42 churches and three missions. These reported a grand total of 10,366 members and 394 baptisms. These churches and missions received a total of almost \$730,000.

The trustees of the association recommended that "all monies received from the sale of Eureka Springs be deposited in a savings account with First Federal Savings and Loan Association until used in the manner previously prescribed by this association." The messengers approved this recommendation.

Officers for the coming year were moderator - Jim Morrison, pastor of Fresno Olivet; vice-moderator - Jim Salmons, pastor of Fresno Bethel; clerk - William C. Smith, pastor of Clovis First Southern; treasurer - Bill Keplinger, member of Fresno First Southern.

The association set its 1971-72 budget for \$20,461 which provided \$13,876 for salaries. Southern Baptist Religious Center rent and utilities, and mountain missions; \$400 for Institutional Ministry; \$500 for camping program; \$200 for other missions; and \$1,600 for office expenses.

The association's seventh annual meeting was October 20-21, 1972, at Trinity Southern Baptist Church of Fresno. Two churches were received into the association during the year. One was Clovis Mt. Moriah, a black church, which had previously been listed but had not been counted for two years. The other, although new to the association, became the association's oldest church the day it joined. This was the Slavic Baptist Church of Fresno which was organized in 1928. One church, Kingsburg Calvary, dropped from the list.

The association reported 43 churches and three missions for a total of 46. These churches and missions had a grand total of 10,685 members and 526 baptisms which was a gain of 34 per cent over the previous year.

Several changes were made in the Constitution.

The statement of purpose was modified to provide clearer definition. It had previously read as follows:

"its purpose shall be to furnish a means by which the Southern Baptist Churches in their sovereign capacity can work together in promoting all denominational enterprises which they deem necessary in carrying out the Great Commission."

The change inserted the following words immediately after the phrase which reads, "its purpose shall be: "

"to provide fellowship among the churches, to promote Christian education, and. . . "

Other changes moved the article on the nominating committee from the constitution to the by-laws and added two new articles on financial policies and on the superintendent of missions.

Officers for the year were moderator - Jim Morrison, Fresno Olivet pastor; vice-moderator - Ramon Martinez, pastor of Templo Bautista of Fresno; clerk - William C. Smith, Clovis First Southern pastor; treasurer - Bill Keplinger of Fresno First Southern.

The association met for its eighth annual meeting October 19-20, 1973, at First Southern Baptist Church of Calwa in Fresno. Since Moderator Jim Morrison had moved, Ramon Martinez, vice-moderator, became moderator and presided over the meeting.

The Bio la Mission was not in this year's list and so there were 43 churches and two missions. These reported a grand total of 11,823 members and 480 baptisms.

The budget for 1973-74 totaled \$24,196 with \$18,171 for preferred items including salaries, mountain missions (\$1,300), and expenses on the Southern Baptist Religious Center. The balance of the budget was distributed on the basis of percentage of income with the major portion going to the work of the church program organizations. Other percentage items included \$500 for the Camping Program, \$300 for the Missions Committee, and \$1,700 for association office expense.

New officers were moderator - A. V. Richey, pastor of Sanger First Southern; vice-moderator - Floyd Hixson, Clovis First Southern member; clerk - William C. Smith, pastor of Clovis First Southern. With the move of Richey during the year, Hixson became the moderator.

In 1974 Ronald E. Chandler resigned as Superintendent of Missions for Mid-Valley Association to become the state convention Director of Stewardship Education and Cooperative Program Promotion.

The Association Executive Board met in October to elect Jack L. Duke Superintendent of Missions. He came from the San Diego Association where he had been a pastoral missionary. Duke was a graduate of University of Corpus Christi and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He also had a Certificate for Spanish language study from the Mexican Baptist Bible Institute.

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The association met at Fresno Harvard Terrace Baptist Church for its ninth annual meeting October 18-19, 1974. Two churches had been received into the association fellowship during the year: Crestview of Auberry and Mountain View of Orange Cove. This brought the total number of churches and missions to 47.

These 47 churches and missions reported a grand total of 11,485 members and 436 baptisms.

After several changes the 1974-75 budget was set for \$31,126 with \$20,651 of that for Preferred Items which included salaries; Mountain Missions (\$2,600); Southern Baptist Religious Center payments, utilities and other expenses. Percentage Items included \$1,400 for evangelism, \$1,000 for youth, \$900 for Camping Program, \$3,000 for association office.

New officers were moderator - H. William Parr, pastor of Fresno First Southern; vice-moderator - Lee Finley, pastor of Fresno Central; clerk - William C. Smith, pastor of Clovis First Southern.

The association's tenth annual meeting was October 17-18, 1975. at Trinity Southern Baptist Church, Fresno.

Almost from its beginning Mid-Valley Association regularly held what it called a Mid-Annual Meeting in May. The churches sent messengers to this meeting and they took care of some business but no record or report of the meeting appeared in the annual minutes until 1975.

In the Mid-Annual meetings the association elected its officers who related to the church program organizations and this action was recorded in the 1975 minutes. Also in the 1975 May meeting a committee called the Special Office Study Committee requested and was granted additional time to complete its work.

In the annual meeting in October the messengers voted to accept La Iglesia Bautista Evangelica as a cooperating church. Since Auberry Crestview was not carried in this year's list of churches and missions, the total remained at 47. The grand total of church members was 11,611 and there were 500 baptisms.

The Credentials Committee, composed of R. L. Harville, Floyd Looney, and Basil Horton, recommended that the Providence Baptist Church of Fresno be declared out of fellowship with the Association. This was a black church whose pastor was Reuben Scott, a dynamic preacher often called on as a special speaker. The committee made this recommendation because the church had ordained a woman to the deaconship and then had failed to respond to the committee's request for a defense of the action. The association voted to refer the matter back to the committee and instructed the committee to enlist the help of Ralph Longshore, associate executive director of the state convention's executive board, and Jack O'Neal, the state convention's liaison officer with black churches.

Jack Duke, who was about to complete his first year as Director of Association Missions, thanked Mrs. Carol Climer, the new office secretary for her work in preparation for the annual meeting.

The association budget for the 1975-76 ahead was \$37,186 and it appeared in a new form, divided into three major sections. The first section was Administration and included salaries and office promotion for a total of \$19,786. The second section was Operating Program and included missions and ministries (\$4,300), departments, and program aides for a total of \$11,650. The third section was office property for a total of \$5,750.

Officers for the new year were moderator - H. William Parr, Fresno First Southern pastor; vice-moderator - Harry Leon Branham, pastor of Lemoore First Southern; clerk - William C. Smith, Clovis First Southern pastor.

In May, 1976, the association met for its Mid-Annual Meeting at First Southern Baptist Church of Clovis.

Floyd Looney brought the report of the Credentials Committee which had been asked to work further with the Providence Baptist Church of Fresno regarding the matter of its ordination of a woman to the deaconship. He reported that three meetings were held with representatives from the church and with the church. Since the church maintained it had done nothing contrary to the scripture, the committee agreed the church's views were not compatible with those of most members of the churches cooperating with the association. Upon the motion of Al Engelman the association voted that "the Providence Baptist Church by its action has separated itself from this association." Without discussion the motion carried.

In December, 1975, the Association Executive Board approved the sale of the property at 2111 East Shaw which had been called Southern Baptist Religious Center. The property sold and the association netted \$8,565 from the sale.

In April, 1976, the Board employed Ron Climer as part-time Director of Ministries. Climer had been converted from a life heavy into drugs and therefore could communicate well with youth who were having trouble. As a part-time employee he enrolled at Fresno State University where he majored in social studies. Climer had already been serving as chaplain of Juvenile Hall and had reported several times to the association about his work.

Mid-Valley Association met October 14-15, 1976, at Baptist Temple Church of Fresno for its eleventh annual meeting.

The association directory included 44 churches and 3 missions for a total of 47. The grand total of church members was 12,792 and of baptisms, 517.

Ron Climer made his first appearance before the association at this annual meeting as Director of Ministry.

The association set its 1976-77 budget at \$44,373 which provided \$22,573 for administration (salaries and office work); \$16,125 for the association operating program which included \$7,900 for missions and ministries. \$6,975 for departments such as Sunday School, W.M.U., and B.S.U; \$1,250 for program aides; and \$5,675 for office lease and insurance.

A paragraph appeared at the beginning of this budget defining the work of the Director of Missions as follows:

"The Director of Association Missions is responsible for coord-

inating and administratively directing the total program, the calendar, the staff, the budget, association committees, and special ministries of the association. He meets with special groups of the local churches as requested. He gives assistance to pastorless churches, meeting with pastoral church committees and giving pastoral leadership, when requested. Works with pastors and other staff members for counsel and problem solving. He represents Southern Baptists at civic and religious meetings in the area and serves as public relations officer for the association and denomination. The association office is the denominational information center for the area." -1976 Minutes of the Mid-Valley Southern Baptist Association, p. 16

The association director of missions is responsible not only to the association but also to the state convention executive board and to the Southern Baptist Convention Home Mission Board since all of these participate in paying his salary. From a practical standpoint he functions primarily as an employee of the association.

The Nominating Committee had planned to recommend Levi Price, Jr., as moderator but changed the nomination since word came that the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board expected to appoint him as a missionary within a couple of months.

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The new officers were moderator - Terry Gayle, pastor of Fresno Baptist Temple Church; vice-moderator - Pete Crabtree, pastor of Madera First Southern; clerk - William C. Smith, Clovis First Southern pastor.

The association's twelfth annual meeting was October 13-14, 1977 at Harvard Terrace Baptist Church of Fresno.

The minutes listed 48 churches and missions. These reported a grand total of 12,266 members and 372 baptisms which was the lowest number of baptisms since 1970.

The Missions Committee reported making a loan of \$500 to Madera Parksdale to help it secure property in the Madera Ranches area as a site for a new church.

At the close of the first session on Thursday night Pastor Simon Cho of the Korean congregation of Baptist Temple Church led the prayer in Korean.

Director of Missions Jack Duke reported on the increased direct mission involvement of the association. In three years the budget allocation for such had increased from \$2.800 to \$8.850.

The 1977-78 budget was \$49,690 with \$25,370 for administrative expenses such as salaries and office operation; \$17,085 for association operating programs such as missions and ministries (\$8,850), work of the departments (\$6,785), and program aids (\$1,450); and \$7,235 for office lease and insurance.

The same officers were elected to serve for another year.

Toward the end of 1977 Ron Climer gained official recognition as chaplain at Juvenile Hall.

In December, 1977, the association executive board granted mission pastoral aid of \$150 per month for one year to the Baptist Temple Korean Mission and of \$100 per month to the Harvard Terrace Chinese Mission. Then in June, 1978, aid to the Chinese Mission of Harvard Terrace was increased \$50 per month through September.

The association met for its thirteenth annual meeting October 19-20, 1978, at First Southern Baptist Church of Fresno.

Two churches dropped during the year. These were Clovis Villa and Fresno Central. Fresno Central sold its property, divided the money between the church at Oakhurst and California Baptist College, and disbanded. Clovis Villa gave its property to the association which paid the remaining debt of \$1,700 out of savings and asked the Missions Committee¹ to recommend what should be done with the property.

The association directory listed 42 churches and 5 missions for a total of 47 congregations. These had a grand total of 12,414 members and 433 baptisms, a gain in baptisms of almost 20 per cent over the previous year.

The 1978-79 budget was \$55,343 with \$27,543 for administration which included salaries and office work; \$20,640 for association operating programs (\$12,510 for missions and ministries, \$7,130 for departments of church work, and \$1,000 for program aids such as rallies, clinics, and audio-visuals); and \$7,160 for office lease and insurance.

The new officers were moderator - Pete Crabtree, raster of Madera First Southern; vice-moderator - Richard Greaves, pastor of Selma First Southern; clerk - William C. Smith, Clovis First Southern pastor.

In September, 1979, the association executive board offered for the Mid-Valley Association to serve as a partner-association with Mount Baker Association in the Northwest Convention. This relationship has continued through the years with the exchange of

personnel for special activities such as simultaneous revival crusades. In addition to this a regular offering was taken at the Mid-Valley association meetings to help in the work that Mount Baker Association was doing.

The board approved the recommendation of the Missions Committee that the Villa Church property be sold and that the association seek a church to sponsor the starting of a new church in the area Fowler and Shields in Clovis.

The association met October 15-16, 1979, at Templo Bautista Church of Fresno for its fourteenth annual meeting. Three churches added to the association fellowship during the year were First Baptist Church of Firebaugh, First Baptist Church of Oakhurst. and Village Baptist Church of Madera which was a satellite congregation of Madera Parksdale Church.

This brought the total to 45 churches and five missions. These reported a grand total of 13,094 members and 468 baptisms.

The messengers defeated a motion which would have deleted Article III, Section 3, which stipulated that messengers would not be seated from churches that received persons with alien immersion or that practiced what was commonly called open communion.

The budget for 1979-80 was \$62,322, 'providing \$30,677 for administration (salaries and office work); \$24,285" for such items as missions and ministries (\$15,230), departments (\$7,830), and program aides (\$1,225); and \$7,360 for office lease and insurance.

Officers elected for the coming year were moderator - Pete Crabtree, Madera First Southern pastor; vice-moderator - Richard Greaves, Selma First Southern pastor; clerk - Newell Taylor. retired military Chaplain.

In this decade the Mid-Valley Southern Baptist Association developed in its work along the line of a body of cooperating churches conducting programs of training and fellowship to help the churches and also programs of missions and ministries that were beyond the ability of most individual churches. The work of the Director of Missions became primarily the administration of these programs and yet preserved some of the old, traditional concepts of the association missionary as a helper of local churches and missions.

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Mid-Valley Association, 1980-1988

Mid-Valley Southern Baptist Association came to the 1980's as a well-functioning organization supported by the churches of the area as a way to work together for the advancement of the cause of Christ. Through the association the churches conducted missions and ministry programs beyond the ability of the individual churches to conduct. By cooperating in this way the churches also provided resources and activities for their mutual good.

The churches not only worked together in joint mission activities but also individually undertook both mission and ministry actions. At the mid-annual meeting in May, 1980, Director of Missions Jack Duke reported that two churches, Madera Parksdale-Village and Fresno Harvard Terrace, had sponsored refugees from the Southeast Asia war zone.

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He also reported that in cooperation with the Southern Baptist Convention Seminary Extension program the association was offering courses in Bible and Bible "related areas at Fresno Fellowship Church.

In its mid-annual meeting the association elected the following to serve for the coming year as moderator - Don Shannon, Oakhurst pastor; vice-moderator - Steve Williams, pastor of Easton Baptist Church of Fresno; clerk - Newell Taylor, retired military chaplain.

In its June, 1980, meeting the association executive board voted to recognize Woodward Park Baptist Church as a cooperating constituency in the association. In the same meeting the board granted the request of Shaw Avenue Baptist Church of Fresno to terminate its status as a church cooperating with the association.

The pastor of Shaw Avenue Church was Jerry Fleming, a grandson of B. H. Truhitte, pastor of the Sanger church in 1940 when it became one of the fourteen churches in the San Joaquin Valley Association just before messengers from those churches organized The Southern Baptist General Convention of California. The Shaw Avenue Church had come under criticism for slackness in accepting

members.

The first pastor of the Woodward Park Church was former Missions Director Ronald Chandler who served it for five years under the title of interim pastor. In that time he helped the congregation develop its organization, grow in numbers, find property and get ready to build.

The fifteenth annual meeting of the Mid-Valley Association was October 13-14, 1980, at Trinity Southern Baptist Church of Fresno.

With the dropping of Fresno Shaw Avenue and the adding of Fresno Woodward Park, the association listed 45 churches and seven missions for a total of 52 congregations. These had a grand total of 13,223 members and 527 baptisms.

In addition to the new Woodward Park Church two missions were started during the year: Clovis First Southern started Miramonte with Steve Morse as pastor and Fresno Baptist Temple started Auberry Mission with B. E. Pitts as interim pastor. Jack Duke worked closely with the sponsoring churches in getting these missions started.

The 1980-81 budget was \$71,190 with \$43,060 for Administration which included office expenses and salaries of the director and the secretary; \$18,250 for Mission Ministries which included the salary and expenses of the Director of Ministries and \$10,500 for direct missions; and \$9,880 for Church Services Ministries.

Bill Whaley became vice-moderator to replace Steve Williams who moved.

In the mid-annual meeting of April, 1981, the messengers elected the moderator, vice-moderator, and clerk to serve another year.

At this meeting the messengers approved the following motion made by Bill Shackelford, pastor of Fresno Sierra Heights, regarding the situation of the Shaw Avenue Church which had withdrawn from association fellowship in 1980:

"Whereas Shaw Avenue Baptist Church was organized and constituted as a Southern Baptist Church in Highway City and has cooperated with Southern Baptist causes as well as supporting financially Southern Baptist causes over many years, and,

"Whereas the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention loaned Shaw Avenue Baptist Church the money to purchase the land and building at the present location as a

Southern Baptist Church:

"Be it resolved that Mid-Valley Southern Baptist Association affirm the fact that Shaw Avenue Baptist Church was established by Southern Baptist members for the purpose of being a Southern Baptist church and supporting Southern Baptist causes;

"Be it further resolved that we authorize the Director of Missions and the Chairman of the Trustees to testify in or out of any court of law to the foregoing information."

William C. Smith, Clovis pastor, formally reported for the trustees that the association office had been destroyed by fire and that a new office had been temporarily established in the Baptist Building which belonged to the state convention.

The association office had been located on West Shaw for five years. The fire occurred at night and destroyed all that was in the office. Losses from the fire included the office furniture, association records, a complete collection of association minutes, and the libraries of Director of Missions Jack Duke and of Christian Social Ministries Director Ron Climer.

The association approved the following recommendation which Smith offered from the Trustees and the Office and Personnel Committee:

"We recommend that the association look with favor upon building an office building on the property of the former Villa Baptist Church in Clovis. We further recommend that the Trustees be authorized to seek if needed a change in Clovis city plans so that the property might be rezoned for an association office with the anticipation that we will recommend the construction of said office at the annual meeting of the association October 12 and 13, 1981.

Jack Duke reported that the insurance covered the losses of the association in the fire.

In its June meeting the Association Executive Board voted to recognize the Village Baptist Church of Madera as a church cooperating with the association. This church grew out of an extension of the Madera Parksdale Church under the pastoral leadership of Al Engelman.

The Mid-Valley Association met October 12-13, 1981, at Baptist Temple Church of Fresno for its sixteenth annual meeting.

The name of Madera New Hope Southern Baptist Church, which

was the first Fresno area church to participate in the new Southern Baptist work in California in the 1930's, disappeared from the association directory in 1981. It was organized in 1937 and was one of the churches in the original San Joaquin Valley Southern Baptist Association which existed before the state convention was organized in 1940. New Hope was one of the fourteen churches in the association when the association adjourned its own meeting in 1940 in order to reassemble to organize the state convention. Thirteen churches had messengers at that organizational meeting and Madera New Hope was one of them.

The new Village Baptist Church which was accepted in June, 1981, by the association executive board had messengers at this annual meeting. Village Church was formed by the extended congregation from Madera Parksdale. Another new church in the association was Grantland Avenue of Fresno which some of the members from Shaw Avenue Church had helped to form.

The association listed 45 churches and nine missions for a total of 54 congregations. These reported a grand total of 12,843 members and 495 baptisms.

When the Credentials Committee made its recommendation that Grantland Avenue Southern Baptist Church be accepted as a cooperating church of the Association, Floyd Looney moved that the wording be changed to "cooperating constituency" and the motion was adopted.

The association approved the recommendation of the trustees that the Villa property be sold with the interest from the money being designated for the missions portion of the budget, that space for an office be leased with approximately 800 square feet, and that as much as \$7,000 of the insurance money on the previous office be spent for office equipment.

On the motion of Danny Coker, pastor of Fresno Sierra Heights, the messengers directed that the proceeds from the Villa property be invested with the California Baptist Foundation.

The budget for 1981-82 was \$79,116 with \$44,355 for Administration including office expenses and salaries of the director and secretary; \$21,556 for direct missions and for the salary of the Director of Missions; and \$12,955 for Church Services Ministries.

The moderator, Don Shannon; vice-moderator. Bill Whaley; and clerk- Newell Taylor, were re-elected to serve for another year.

The association which maintained its office in the Baptist Building of the State Convention, after its office on West Shaw

burned, leased an office complex of 850 square feet, at 4766 North Cedar in northeast Fresno near Fresno State University.

At the Mid-Annual meeting in April the association elected these officers for the coming year: moderator - Bill Whaley, pastor of Fresno Cornelia Avenue; vice-moderator - Jerry Tillman, Fresno Trinity pastor; and clerk - Newell Taylor, retired military chaplain.

The messengers at the mid-annual meeting approved the 1982-83 budget of \$92,797 with \$48,420 for Administration; \$28,423 for Mission Ministries including 13 ministries and the salary and expenses of the Director of Christian Social ministries; and also \$15,954 for Church Services Ministries.

On June 1, 1982, Ron Climer, who graduated from California State University, Fresno, in May with a Master's degree in Social Work, became full-time Association Christian Social Ministries Director for the state convention with his primary work to be in Mid-Valley Association. Ron was employed jointly by the association, state convention, and Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. As part of his responsibilities he became institutional chaplain for Fresno County Juvenile Hall and C. K. Wakefield School.

Mid-Valley Association's seventeenth annual meeting was October 11-12, 1982, at Bethel Southern Baptist Church of Fresno.

The association's list of churches and missions included 46 churches and eight missions for a total of 54. Madera New Hope appeared on the list again, reporting a pastor but it did not send a letter with a report for the statistical tables.

These churches and missions reported a grand total of 14,447 members and 662 baptisms for a new high of baptisms in one year.

During the year of 1982-83 the association executive board voted for the association to participate in Association Strategy Planning with the Home Mission Board and the state convention at a cost \$1,500 in the year of 1984. The board also employed James Staten as temporary, .full-time B.S.U. Director for the association. Through the years the association had cooperated with the state convention in employing part-time B.S.U. leadership.

The executive board responded helpfully to the crisis situation created by the Coalinga earthquake. The Home Mission Board sent \$4,000 in disaster relief and the churches of the association gave \$4,740. This was used to meet personal needs of people and also to help construct a new church building.

At the mid-annual meeting in April, 1983, the association elected the following officers for the coming year: moderator -William Thornton, pastor of Fresno Grantland Avenue; vice-moderator - Jerry Tillman, Fresno Trinity pastor; and clerk - William C. Smith, pastor of Clovis First Southern.

The Villa property continued to need attention. No sale had been completed up to this point. The messengers at this mid-annual meeting approved the sale of the property to a church for \$150,000 with payments increasing each year and the balance due to be adjusted upward with the rising cost of living. However, this sale did not work out.

Mid-Valley Association had its eighteenth annual meeting October 10-11, 1983, at Calwa Baptist Church of Fresno.

The Credentials Committee reported that First Southern Baptist Church of Lemoore had withdrawn from the association in order to affiliate with the Sequoia Southern Baptist Association. This brought the number of churches to 45 and the churches reported ten missions

These 55 churches and missions had 12,792 members and 566 baptisms for the year.

Missions Director Jack Duke reported that Ron Climer, Director of Ministries, and Ron's wife, Carol, had been commissioned as home missionaries by the SBC Home Mission Board in a unique arrangement with the association.

The budget for the year of 1983-84 was \$98,032 with \$50,556 for Administration; \$28,472 for Direct Missions; and \$19,004 for Church Services Ministries.

At the mid-annual meeting in April, 1984, the association accepted Great Valley Metropolitan Chapel into its fellowship. This congregation was started under the pastoral leadership of Hugh Bay, a member of Fresno First Southern for years. Its target area was in the northwestern part of Fresno.

The Villa property kept on needing attention as indicated by the messengers' approval of its sale for \$130,000 with a down payment of \$13,000 and ten percent interest to be paid monthly with the balance to be paid within ten years. The association finally sold the property for cash and realized \$120,000 after expenses were paid.

The association's nineteenth annual meeting was October 18-19, 1984, at Olivet Baptist Church of Fresno. The annual minutes

listed 46 churches and 10 missions.

These 56 congregations reported a grand total of 12,629 members and 457 baptisms.

The 1984-85 budget was about \$5,000 less than that of the previous year and about \$5,000 more than the undesignated income for that year. In the 1983-84 year the association received \$88,409 in undesignated income and \$37,405 in designated income for a year's total of \$125,814. The 1984-85 budget was \$93,570 with \$53,446 for Administration; \$27,700 for Direct Missions; and \$12,404 for Church Services Ministries.

Officers for the coming year included the following: moderator - Jerry Tillman, Fresno Trinity pastor; vice-moderator - Clyde Skidmore, pastor of Reedley First Southern; clerk - Betty Jones, pastor's wife of Fresno Olivet.

With the end of 1984 Jack Duke completed ten years as Director of Missions for the Mid-Valley Southern Baptist Association. The association executive board expressed the association's appreciation with a gift of \$2,500 to be used by Jack and Ruth Duke for a trip to Hawaii.

The association also expressed its appreciation to Carol Climer with a gift of \$500, presented to her at the annual meeting for her ten years of service.

The board combined the Villa trust and the camp trust at the California Baptist Foundation for a trust of \$140,000 with the interest of about \$1,200 monthly going into the association budget.

During the year the board authorized the expenditure of \$2,600 to set up a master recording studio for Baptist Telnet (BTN) to be located at First Southern Baptist Church of Fresno.

The Mid-Valley Southern Baptist Association held its twentieth annual meeting October 17, 1985, at Harvard Terrace Baptist Church of Fresno.

The association reported 46 churches and 10 missions. These 56 congregations had a total of 14,272 members and 571 baptisms.

The association's undesignated income was \$97,380 which exceeded its budget by \$4,000. Its designated income was \$41,202 which made a total income of \$138,583.

The 1985-86 budget was set at \$99,604 with \$56,006 for Administration, \$33,398 for Mission Ministries, and \$10,200 for Church Services. The decision was made to change the budget to the cal-

endar year. Therefore the budget which was set up for 12 months was projected upward for 15 months which worked out at \$124,505.

The same moderator, vice-moderator, and clerk were elected to serve for the next year (Tillman, Skidmore, and Jones).

The association executive board approved the recommendation from the office and personnel committee to extend the lease on the office on Cedar Avenue for three more years.

The twenty-first annual meeting of the association was October 16, 1986, at the First Southern Baptist Church of Clovis.

The Madera New Hope Baptist Church which had not sent a report to the association for years was no longer listed in the association directory. The directory listed 44 churches and 11 missions for a total of 55 congregations. These 55 reported a grand total of 15,293 members for an all-time high and 579 baptisms for the third highest in the association's history.

Early in the meeting Missions Director Jack Duke reported that the year was one of the best financially. Two years earlier the association had been in the red by \$4,000 but now it was in the black by \$7,000. Then he pointed to the need for new work and the need to grow.

Duke reported that three churches had established their own BTN (Baptist Telnet) capability. He encouraged churches that did not have their own BTN capability to subscribe to the BTN service of the association. For about \$200 per year churches had access to "the very best training and informational material available."

The association elected the following officers for the coming year: moderator - Bill Whaley, pastor of Fresno Cornelia Avenue; vice-moderator - Doy Jones, pastor of Fresno Olivet; clerk - Betty Jones of Fresno Olivet who was re-elected for another year of service.

The budget for 1987 was set at \$106,754. This was the first time for it to rise over the \$100,000 mark. The budget included \$58,861 for Administration, \$36,248 for Mission Ministries, and \$11,645 for church services.

At its April, 1987, Mid-Annual Meeting the association voted to accept the Second Baptist Church of Fowler as a cooperating church.

The Mid-Valley Association met for its twenty-second annual meeting, October 15, 1987, at the Sierra Heights Baptist Church

of Fresno. The meeting consisted of two sessions, an afternoon session and an evening session.

The church at Fowler brought the total number of churches in the association to 45 and the number of missions increased to 13 for a total of 58 congregations. Ten of the missions might be classed as ethnic or cultural missions.

These 58 congregations reported a grand total of 12,954 church members for a total of about 2,000 less than the year before. This drop probably occurred from several churches adjusting their own totals to more realistic figures and also possibly from some mistakes in reporting. They also reported 404 baptisms.

One of the resolutions passed was "that we encourage our churches and people to reach out and win the various ethnic and culture groups that live in our areas."

Missionary Jack Duke preached in the afternoon session on "New Dreams." Then he said in his report:

"I have been writing in the Missionary Mailer (the association's news bulletin) about churches needing a new dream to progress on through the 80's into the 90's. I am serious about this. I believe we progress in life in relation to our dreams. We set goals for our lives and our church based on our dreams. It is important to have a dream that includes evangelism and missions as top priorities."

The 1988 budget was set at \$111,485 with \$62,527 for Administration, \$36,418 for Mission Ministries, and \$12,540 for Church Services.

The messengers re-elected the moderator (Bill Whaley), vice-moderator (Doy Jones), and clerk (Betty Jones) for the coming year.

In its twenty-three years Mid-Valley Association has grown steadily. It started out in 1965 with 39 cooperating churches and by 1987 it had 45 churches and 13 missions for a grand total of 58 congregations. Its budget has increased from \$14,000 to \$111,485. In these years it has helped the churches in their various on-going church programs and activities. It has developed an extensive institutional and personal ministries program under the leadership of Ron Climer.

Association missions directors are unusual persons but Mid-Valley Association has one of the most unique of all. Jack Duke almost overdoes it in refraining from impressing people. However,

he greatly impresses those who come to know him. His wit and humor make people care for him. His wisdom and understanding help both churches and individuals. His optimism, which isn't flashy and explosive, inspires people because it is made strong by a patient tenacity. The final chapter of this history will be a message from Missions Director Jack Duke.

Mid-Valley Southern Baptist Association keeps moving forward.

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A MESSAGE

FROM DIRECTOR OF MISSIONS JACK L.

DUKE

As I write this final chapter. I can't help reflecting on Elmer Gray's remark in the preceding chapter: "Jack Duke almost overdoes it in refraining from impressing people." In light of this remark, I wonder how much you will be impressed by what I have to say, or should I say be underimpressed.

What prompted the writing of this short history of Mid-Valley Southern Baptist Association? I believe you should ask yourself this question. The answer is, it grew out of my message to the association during the afternoon of the 1987 association annual meeting. The title of the message was "A New Dream." The theme was: California Southern Baptists have been a part of God performing a miracle in California. What God has done through us in this state in just under 50 years is amazing. Also in the sermon I reminded Mid-Valley Southern Baptists how God has used us to His glory in our association. We have achieved. I also stated we would do well to celebrate the past in 1988, dream and plan for the 90's in 1989, and aggressively enter the 90's determined to follow the theme "The 90's - California the Miracle, Again." This history and the 1988 annual meeting are a part of our attempting to carry out this simple challenge.

It is my belief that God can do the miracle again in California in less than 50 years. It will take a dream that is challenging and achievable on the part of California Southern Baptists. Also, associations and local churches must accept the challenge to believe in the dream and become a part of fulfilling the dream.

Mid-Valley Southern Baptists have progressed in many areas since 1965. We are not who we were in 1965. Competent leadership, both paid and volunteer, in the association have contributed to the progress in the association. But, where the real progress has occurred is in the local churches. We are now a multicultural group of churches reaching out into all areas of life. We have

mountain churches, city churches, town churches, and small town churches effectively ministering in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in their setting. These churches are not all the same, but they are effective Southern Baptist churches.

I believe the 90's will be another challenge that will be faced victoriously by our churches. To be sure, there will be changes. There always are, especially when progress is being experienced. At the time of this writing exciting things are happening in Mid-Valley churches. New buildings are being built and planned, high attendances are common, outreach to ethnic groups continues to grow, new churches are petitioning the association for membership, finances for the association are at an all time high, the association is actively involved financially in mission outreach, and church members as a group are excited. It is a great time to be serving the Lord. I believe God is providing all of these blessings to help us prepare for even greater victories in the 90's.

Well, I have probably under impressed you to the point where you are ready to stop reading this book. Wait! Read on just a little longer.

As we celebrate the past through this book, let us remember the past gives us a foundation on which to build for the future. The names and events of the past recorded in this book represent what God was doing in lives of people during those years. Our lives and events will be the past very soon, and people will be reading about us and our service for our Lord. We have the opportunity to determine how that history will read as we live today. Let us accept the challenge "The 90's - California the Miracle, Again." Let Mid-Valley Southern Baptists take an active leading role in the miracle happenings.

Acknowledgments

Several have looked at the first draft of this history and have made helpful suggestions. Their suggestions have primarily been additional information. I thank the following for their help:

- Ron Chandler, former Mid-Valley Association Missions Director and now state convention Director of Stewardship Development and Cooperative Program Promotion
- Jack Duke, Director of Missions for the Mid-Valley Southern Baptist Association, Fresno, California
- Lyle Golden, a church member active in the Southern Baptist association work of the area for years
- Martha Gray, wife of the writer and proof reader of of the copy!
- Floyd Hixson, a church member active in the Southern Baptist association work of the area for years
- Dorothy Rusted, a church member active in the Southern Baptist association work of the area for years
- Floyd Looney, retired, former area pastor, editor of The California Southern Baptist, Field Representative of Southern Baptist Annuity Board
- William C. Smith, former pastor of Clovis First Southern and also one who has served in most of the general offices of the association over a period of time W. T. Updike, former Mid-Valley Missions Director