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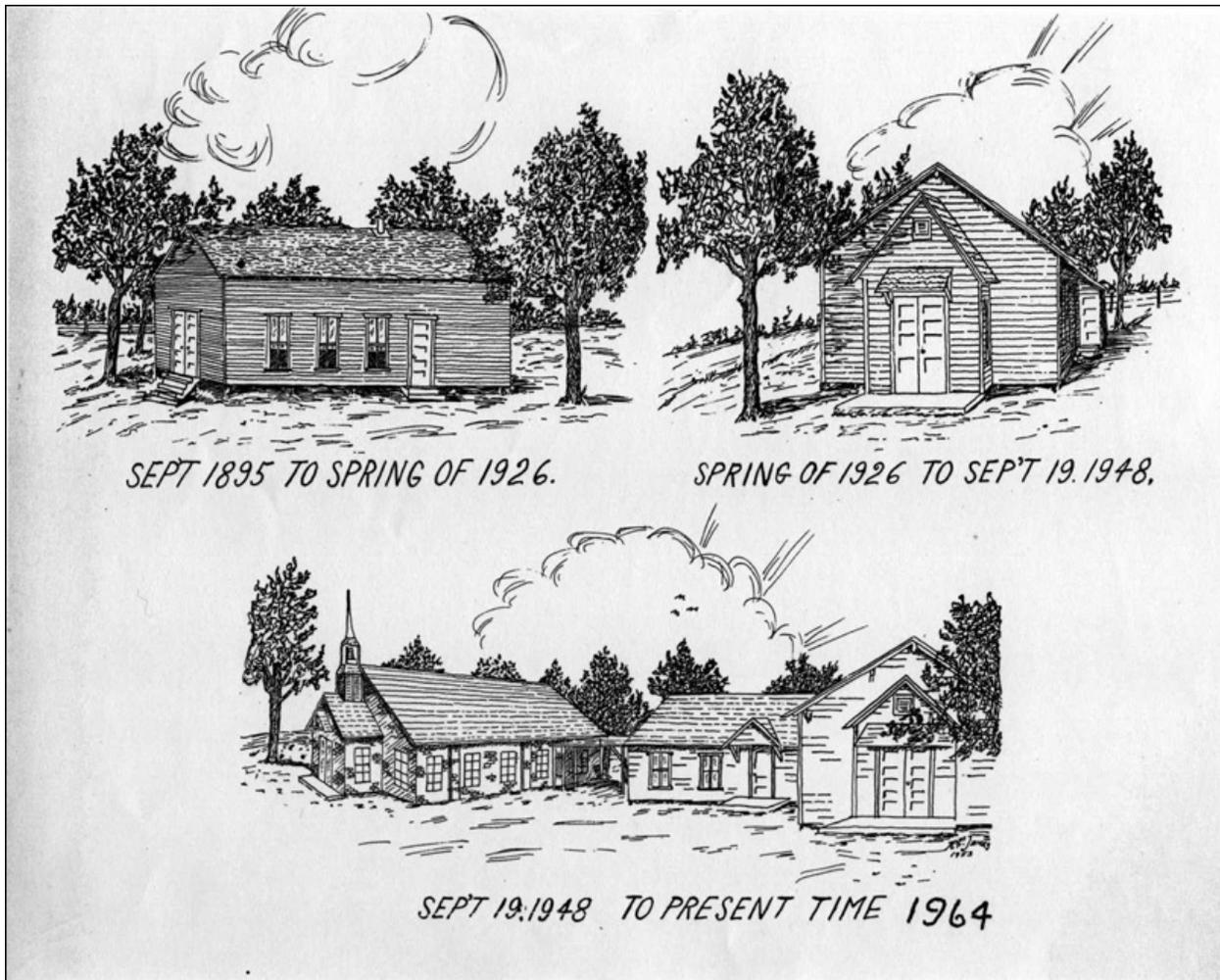
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A Brief Outline of the History of Tate Springs Baptist Church Arlington, Texas

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Unofficial Historian for the Church



Introduction and Forward

The presentation of the history of any institution, person, political unit, or any unfolding of human affairs is necessarily a subjective endeavor of the writer or committee of writers who put their hand to such a task. Much or most of the materials at their disposal is by its very nature made up of old records and notes which are themselves often second hand. These old accounts are mostly few and often vague in many respects, but have to be taken at face value for lack of any alternative. Whatever their lack of detail, these venerable documents give a feel for the era that they depict and draw our imagination back to the time that they describe.

More recent and contemporary material exists in overwhelming abundance and presents the problem of what to include and what to leave out. Obviously the historian cannot venture down every highway and byway that beckon him to record every event, every action taken or word uttered in all circumstances. Therefore, without apology, this short and admittedly imperfect history of a people called "Tate Springs Baptist Church" and their endeavors to do God's will and further the gospel of Jesus Christ is presented with the hope that it will inspire the reader to emulate their faith and action.

Ray Gammon

[November 25, 1863]

The Federal armies drove General Braxton Bragg and the soldiers of the Confederacy off the heights overlooking Chattanooga Tenn. in an action called the "Battle of Missionary Ridge."

Chapter 1

THE FOUNDING OF TATE SPRINGS BAPTIST CHURCH

Several years after the war, five of those Confederate veterans decided that the Tate's Spring community needed a meeting house and a school. The site selected for the building reminded them of the site of that long ago battlefield, so they named it "The Missionary Ridge School and Meeting house". This building was replaced some years later by a new structure just to the west of the old meeting house, and was named "Little's School". The purpose of this building was to serve the children living on the west side of the community, just as the Joplin School served those on the east.

Church services were held at irregular intervals at both these school houses when it was possible to get someone to come and preach; often without prospect of pay. The only regular church services were the Methodist "camp meetings" that were held each summer in a shady grove of oaks down on the banks of Village Creek. People for miles around; eager to hear the gospel preached and also to enjoy the fellowship, would come in wagons and camp for several days at those Methodist meetings.

Many of the communities' young people were being saved at those meetings, and their families; being Baptist; felt that they should be acquainted with Baptist beliefs and brought up in a church with those of "like faith and order". So putting their faith and convictions into action; ten people met at the Joplin School on Sunday, Feb. 5, 1882 for the purpose of organizing a Baptist church in the community. Elder M. T. Walker who had been invited to help with the organization was elected as the first pastor, and E. C. Tate was elected to the post of church clerk. After the formalities, the

"door of the church was opened and five new members were added to the fellowship that same day.

Just a short distance east of the Joplin schoolhouse was a large spring flowing from the hillside called Tate's spring; so the congregation chose the name "Tate's Spring Baptist Church" for their new organization. [The entrance to the old Tate Spring Cemetery is located at the "S"curve on Pleasant Ridge Rd. one block east of Martin High School and until 1980 a large spring fed pond was adjacent to it--now filled in and paved over] On that day (Sunday Feb. 5, 1882) , the Ft. Worth newspapers reported heavy rains, and a cold 'norther' blowing. The faith and perseverance of that little group must have been sorely tested as their wagons made their way over those cold and muddy clay roads to Joplin schoolhouse. Surely God was leading them to do His will on that historic Sunday morning. He gave them a vision and they acted upon it; for " *where there is no vision the people perish*". [Proverbs 29:18]

Chapter 2

THE CHURCH BEGINS TO PUT DOWN ROOTS

The fledgling congregation began to meet once a month on a Saturday for business and preaching, and the following Sunday for a preaching service. It is uncertain whether they met at the Joplin School or the Missionary Ridge community building in the early years. We know that the observance of the Lord's Supper was a part of their worship services from the beginning, for the first recorded expenses were for linens, glasses, and a quart of wine.

Spring came on and the church ordained its' first deacon in March of '82, and by August of that year they were functioning well enough to send delegates to the Baptist Associational meeting being held at Grandview. The church had enough financial support from the members to make contributions regularly to the Baptist Mission effort--(always a Baptist priority), even though it took four months to gather enough contributions for a dozen "Him" books.

The new church was active from the start, holding revivals in the summertime; participating in Associational meetings; and continued to add members to the fellowship. However in the early part of 1886, a decline set in and "letters of dismissal" were granted at almost every service. Later historians attributed the declining membership and influence of the local church to the death in 1885 of E. C. Tate, a man who had been a strong bulwark and animating force in the church's early years. Newspapers of the time also report "not a drop of rain fell in west Texas from 1884 to 1887". Perhaps "*not a drop*" may be somewhat overstated, but no doubt a wide spread drought was afflicting the area farmers and many were moving away to seek better conditions elsewhere. The church was finally reduced to having to ask the association for aid in paying the pastor. Eventually the church declined to the point of being considered a Mission and a County Missionary had to be called on to hold preaching services.

Even in these discouraging times, a tenacious "remnant of God's people" held on and continued to meet for worship and prayer and the church slowly began to grow again, and by 1890 it was once again an active viable body of believers carrying out the Great Commission in the Tate Springs community.

Chapter 3

THE UNION SUNDAY SCHOOL AND THE PRESBYTERIANS

The last decade of the nineteenth century witnessed a renewal of energy and commitment to God's service in the Tates Spring community as evidenced by the calling of J. R. Goode as pastor in August of 1895. Bro. Goode led the church to a new location, a one acre plot donated by one of the members, located at Pleasant Ridge and Littles School Road, and there they began the erection of a new building. A railcar load of East Texas pine lumber was shipped to Handley and hauled by wagon to the building site. Only enough funds were available to frame the building and finish the outside and to fashion several pews of the same rough pine lumber. Not content to sit on their hands, the church members later finished out the inside; and the building soon became the center of community life, as well as a place of worship for many years to come.

Records of the Tarrant Baptist Association, which convened Aug. 20, 1896 at the First Baptist Church Ft. Worth, lists Tates Spring Baptist Church address as a post office box at (Ferguson?) Texas; and a membership of thirty souls.

The Cumberland Presbyterian Church which had been organized in 1884 at the Littles School house, began to share the new building in 1898. Both congregations had a preaching service once a month and participated in bible study thru the Union Sunday School program. The Union Sunday School was an organization supported by several denominations for the purpose of fostering formal bible study and providing supporting literature. Despite doctrinal differences, the Union Sunday School served both congregations well, and peace and harmony prevailed: "*Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity !*" [Psalms 133]

The Presbyterians were granted permission in to install an organ in the building for use by both congregations, the first of it's kind in the community. Because of the closeness of the two bodies of worshipers, they met together annually for worship and a Thanksgiving celebration, a custom that was to endure unbroken for seventy years.

[a short footnote regarding the Presbyterians and their influence in the community]

The distinctive religious influence of the Scotch-Irish in America was not so much their Calvinist theology as such , but their idea that religion and character are synonymous. In most parts of the world ;religion is very likely to mean observance of some kind of ritual, or espousing some dogmatic creed, or performing some pious acts or a combination of all this. To the Scotch-Irish Presbyterians (who were on the cutting edge of our country's westward expansion) : saying that a man was religious person first of all meant that he was an upright citizen and had high moral values. These ideas were immensely reinforced by the Baptist and Methodist movements of the nineteenth century ; because they were teaching essentially these same ideas. The early colonial Presbyterian ministers began to experiment with new and unconventional methods of evangelism in order to reach a people who were fast losing interest in formalism and tradition, and also the Baptists who felt free to adopt new ways to promote the gospel message began to attract thousands of the descendants of these early Scotch-Irish pioneers. Thus the natural affinity of the early Baptists and the Presbyterians found them worshipping together in the Tates Spring community until they could each support a separate communion.

Chapter 4

DAWN OF THE 20th CENTURY

The first decade and a half of the Twentieth Century was marked by the part-time ministry of several (7) men of God who were called upon to “accept the care of the church” as the term was used then for calling a pastor. A pastor was called to serve one year at a time and then renewed at the will of the church. Of the first twenty five men called to Tate Springs Bro. J. R. Pool served the longest time, 1901-1908.

The church in those days only met once a month on a Saturday for a business meeting and a preaching service, and then again the following Sunday for regular monthly church services. The Presbyterians held meetings once each month alternating with the Baptists using the same building, and the combined Union Sunday School met every Sunday, so there was ample opportunity for those who wanted to attend church. Most of our early pastors preached part time at two or three churches and some supplemented their income as a *colporteur* (bible salesman) in the surrounding counties.

One of the men who left a lasting legacy for the church was Bro. E. D. Reece who pastored in 1915 and again in 1917-1919. Bro. Reece had a special interest in young people and this dedication to their Christian growth, led to the formation of the BYPU (Baptist Young Peoples Union) at Tate Springs. At first the BYPU met on Sunday mornings after Sunday School, but later began to meet on Saturday nights. A few years later, on June 29, 1924, by a majority vote the meeting time was changed to Sunday night, which appeared to be a permanent arrangement. Some years later the name was changed to BTU (Baptist Training Union) and included all ages in the training program. This training format was to last for half a century until a new system evolved whereby classes were formed (on Sunday night) to study a specific subject of your choice under a qualified tutor.

By 1919, the Presbyterians had been able to build themselves a separate meeting place and the Union Sunday School had served it's purpose, so on Sept. 13, 1919 , a Baptist Sunday School was organized under the direction of J. W. Bradley. Henry Brannon (more about him later) was chosen as assistant to Bro. Bradley. Literature was ordered and a teacher was chosen by the members of each class to serve for six month terms.

The decade following the First World War was a time for change and innovation in the way the church sought to carry out its' mission to “*go to all people and make them My disciples; baptizing them into My Name, and the Father, and the Holy Spirit*” and teach them the commandments I gave to you”. As the Sunday School grew to about 50 average attendance, the old 1895 building, now 30 years old, needed to be torn down and a new and larger one built. A budget was adopted to cover the expense, though most of the work was done voluntarily under the supervision of Bro. Jim Busbee. By the next year (1926) another building was needed, so \$200 was borrowed and another building begun. The value of the new building must have been around \$1500, as that was the amount it was insured for. The former pastor having resigned; a new pastor (Bro. Henry Davis) was called at a salary of \$30.00 a month, and the new building was dedicated on Nov. 28, 1926. This building was in use for the next 40 years; eventually becoming known as the “Fellowship Hall” and functioned as a wedding chapel, dining room, and all around meeting place for social events.

Chapter 5

GOD CALLS HENRY BRANNON TO THE MINISTRY

Mrs. Mary Joiner, known affectionately as "Mother Joiner" was the church clerk, and records that at a meeting on Saturday July 2, 1927 the pastor announced that Bro. Henry Brannon had submitted to God's call to preach the gospel and the church invited him to give testimony of that call. Bro. Henry recited his innermost feelings and the struggle he had to find God's will for his life which resulted in his surrender to enter the ministry full time.

The clerk records that the next evening after BYPU, "our dearly loved brother Henry Brannon preached his first sermon, from the 8th chap. of Romans, and called it 'Letting God have a Chance". Afterwards there was a time of rejoicing and expressions of love and good wishes for Henry and Ola from all the congregation as they prepared to go off to Decatur Baptist College where Henry would begin studying for his new calling. Brother Henry was ordained as a minister of the gospel two years later on Dec. 2, 1928.

On April 21, 1929, Bro. T. W. Smith resigned as interim pastor and the church called Henry Brannon to serve the remainder of the church year. In September Bro. Henry was called to serve as pastor for an "indefinite" time. That indefinite time proved to be the next thirty two years!

Chapter 6

THE DEPRESSION YEARS

The 1930's were the years of the "great depression" and few escaped the economic suffering of that era. Despite the scarcity of money, the church adopted a budget of \$ 498.00 for the 1929/1930 church year. The spiritual life of the church continued strong and several members were added to the congregation.

An anecdote from the times: The service scheduled for Dec. 20, 1931 was called off because vandals had broken in and stolen the stove! (no central heat in those days)

In February 1932 the church celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of Tate Springs Baptist Church. Many former members and pastors attended and recounted the trials and triumphs of former years and encouraged the church to press forward in doing God's work. Inclement weather kept many away, but those who attended were filled with admiration for the accomplishments of their forebears and with a determination to keep up the work so nobly begun..... "*you need to persevere if you are to receive what God has promised*". Heb 10-36.

As late as 1934, the church was still being lit by lamp lite as there was no electric service in this rural area. In January, discussion began about purchasing a Delco Lighting system powered by DC batteries. Forty dollars was collected at the first meeting and four months later the purchase was made. An old rock fence was torn down and hauled to the church and a stone building erected to house the system. It resembled a small jail, with barred window and locked door to keep vandals out. The custodian had to be in constant attendance to keep the lights burning steadily, but however primitive, the church had electric lights.

On Sept. 2, 1934, the church voted to call Bro. Henry Brannon as "full time pastor", as he had been serving for several years on an "indefinite" basis. The salary was set at \$ 50.00 per month, and a

budget for the year of \$715.00 was adopted. In October a motion to build a parsonage carried, and plans begun for a home for Henry and Ola Brannon. Land was donated adjacent to the church and two small frame houses were donated to be torn down and incorporated in the new building. Ola Brannon was appointed to serve on the building committee so she could have some input about the design of the parsonage. When an indoor bathroom was included in the plan for the house, one lady remarked "Ola don't you know there will never be enough water around here to fill up a bathtub". On Feb. 27, 1935 the treasurer reported that \$301.05 in total had been spent on the parsonage and a letter of thanks was sent out to all who had contributed in so many ways to make it possible.

After the completion of the parsonage the church entered a period of "rest from our labors". This was not to last for long as in July at a called conference, a motion was carried to enter into a building program to provide Sunday School rooms on the rear (east end) of the church and add a porch onto the parsonage. The church was moving forward and growing even in the depths of the Depression, as twenty new members were added at the summer revival and facilities were being built to minister to a growing congregation.

1936 saw the church enter into a contract with the Little's School Board to pipe running water to the church property and an application for rural electric service was approved and the church had electricity. Now the old Delco batteries could be retired and Ola Brannon would get water for her bathtub.

Henry Brannon with "Miss Ola" by his side led the church thru the war years and post war years until 1961 when he "retired". Tate Springs still retained it's rural character, but urban sprawl was seen on the horizon coming from the north (Arlington) at a rapid pace. Brother Henry saw that a younger more vigorous man was needed to meet this challenge so he resigned on his 65th birthday and accepted the role of "pastor emeritus" and served as such until his death.

Chapter 7

ROY BUCKELEW ASSUMES THE MANTLE

"...and Elijah asked what shall I do for thee....and Elisha said let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me."

Roy Buckelew was a young man, 22 years old in 1960 when he came to Tate Springs to succeed Harry Kong as Youth Director. Bro. Brannon who had been pastor of the church for three decades, took him under his wing and became his mentor in the service of the Lord. Bro. Henry; beloved by all, had announced that he intended to retire on his 65th birthday in Sept. 1961 and the church agreed that they should be looking for a young man with some pastoral experience to fill the vacancy. Soon after Bro. Brannon retired, the pulpit committee met with Roy and asked him to preach the next Sunday morning in view of a call. After the morning service the church voted to call him with only one dissenting voice--Reuben Dunkin. He told Roy later that afternoon, that he thought he was too young to assume the duties of pastor, but as the Church had called him, he would encourage and support him in every way. A short while later Bro. Dunkin went to Roy and said he had made a mistake and now felt that he would make a fine pastor for TSBC. Ola and Henry Brannon soon moved out of the parsonage to their nearby farm, and Roy and Louise moved in---- new era had begun.

The church entered a period of growth with many of the young couples who were moving into the community joining the congregation at Tate Springs. More room was needed; a nursery, (for these young couples were very much obeying the biblical command to “be fruitful and multiply) more class rooms were required, and a bigger sanctuary, besides upgrading the old facilities.

New meets the Old!

Bro. Buckelew urged the church to borrow the \$15,000 needed to immediately attend to the needs of the growing congregation. Brother Henry expressed the opinion that the church could never pay back so large a sum, and as the church had never gone in debt for anything it just was not biblical by quoting, “*Owe no man anything, but to love him*”. Bro. W. D. Cooke, chairman of deacons, afterwards met with Bro. Henry and gently reminded him that the church now had a new pastor, and it was unseemly for him to offer such opposition and lead others to do so. Roy said that late that afternoon, Bro. Brannon came to see him at the parsonage, quite upset and apologetic. He vowed to never attend another business meeting unless invited and never to interfere again. The church borrowed the \$15,000 for the needed improvements and paid it off in five months.

Roy Buckelew had also learned something from this experience. Later when the church needed a new 500 seat sanctuary at an estimated cost of \$200,000, Roy took the preliminary drawings and then the final plans to show to Bro. Henry, and as they sat on the back porch having a bowl of Miss Ola’s homemade ice cream and going over the plans, Buckelew said that Bro. Henry smiled and said “Brother Roy, “I like it and I think we ought to do it.” I’ll come to the business meeting and make the motion to go ahead” if you want me to. He did.

Brother Roy came to love and admire Henry Brannon, as a man loves his own father. He learned that some of his old ways that seemed outdated had a tremendous value in ministering to people. The pastor at the country church known as Tate Springs Baptist, was not only to minister to the nearly 300 members of the church, but was the de facto pastor to the whole community, church or not. Bro. Henry had for years gone to the hospital when someone was having surgery and met with them and their family for prayer before the ordeal began and stayed until it was over. Roy said it really took a lot of time, but he came to see what a wonderful opportunity it was to meet with scores of people that he would not have otherwise been able to meet and minister to.

As a very young Youth Director, Buckelew had wanted to start a soft ball team. A team was formed with Weldon Ussery as coach and they joined a church league in Ft. Worth. They played for ten years with such players as Johnny Hoskey, the Haney brothers and many others. About half the men were not Christians when they joined the team, but as time went by every one of them made a profession of faith and became members of the church. Years later out of a list of 12 deacons of the church, 10 of them had started attending church when they began playing on the softball team. The church eventually built and lighted two softball fields on the premises for all the kids in the surrounding community. In the summer there was someone playing there five nights a week. It continued for five years and introduced many people to new Christian friends. Who knows what far reaching influence that had?

Laymen led revivals were introduced as part of the worship schedule. One outdoors in the Spring and the next year indoors in the summer. They were led by different laymen who preached each morning and evening from Sunday through the next Sunday morning. There was a tremendous response to these revivals.

During the ten years of Roy Buckelew’s pastorate, the church really began to be more youth oriented and reach out to the new generation of young people moving into the community. As an

example of youth participation in the church, Ann Duncan was only 16 and played the piano and Sherry Arnold was 15 and served as church organist. They both married men in the church--Don Dunkin and Jerry Arnold and served faithfully for many years.

Music was always an important part of the worship at Tate Springs, and a great many people gave of their time and talents, often with little or no remuneration to "make a joyful noise unto the Lord". Ivan Hollingsworth is especially remembered for his service as music director for 20 years. Then there was Joe Mabry for 11 years after that, and many others who served in various capacities in the music program either in the choir or playing an instrument or singing solo. Cecil Gill who had been with the Light Crust Doughboys years before would often bring his guitar and sing old time hymns on Sunday night. Bro. Roy Buckelew was also a talented singer and often would present "Sermons in Song" as he called it. He continues even to this day [1999] to teach, and preach, and sing at Ouachita Baptist University, Arkadelphia, Arkansas. Before Roy Buckelew was called to a new field of service in California in 1971, he urged the church, which was debt free and had \$30,000 in the bank, to take the money and buy several 5 acre plots around the area with the view of starting mission churches there when the time was right. His vision far outreached most of the congregation at the time and the proposal was rejected. Years later three of the sites were eventually bought at a much inflated cost. Bro. Roy called this the most "abysmal failure" of his tenure as pastor of Tate Springs Baptist Church. [1961-1971]

Chapter 8

1971

[GOD CALLS BUCKELEW TO CALIFORNIA.] DAVE FILLPOT FILLS THE BREACH

Dave was a lovable, open Christian pastor who came to a still conservative mostly rural church to preach/teach in a more open and liberal manner than the congregation was ready for. His eighteen months stewardship of the church gained him many friends and few if any opponents. While Dave was here, the church composed and adopted a written constitution – established a system of deacon rotation, and firmly instituted the practice of open communion to all professing believers. Teaching was the calling that beckoned Dave elsewhere in July of '73 and he left to serve in a Presbyterian ministry in another state. His leaving was in no way a reflection on the value of his ministry to TSBC, but instead was in the long tradition of pastors from the 1880's thru the 1920's when none of them served over two years except Bro. J.R. Pool, who served from 1901 thru 1908.

Chapter 9

1973--2000

CHARLES CLARY BEGIN HIS MINISTRY which is to last over a quarter century

Bro. Chas. Clary was called as pastor to Tate Springs to succeed Dave Philpot and continued to serve into the new millennium. The history of the church under his leadership awaits the publication of his memoirs (to be included with other pertinent materials) in order to properly assess the more important events in the life of the church under his leadership.....

Charles and Alice Clary moved from Arlington to Ruidoso, New Mexico with the intentions of retiring there, but it was not to be. Charles found a new place of service there and began the establishment

of a “Cowboy” church in that community which demanded much of his time as a result; his personal memoirs were never forthcoming for inclusion in this history. Mrs. L. D. Mayo spent many hours with the church records and printed a detailed account (twenty type written pages),of the activities and actions of the church from 1973 thru 2000 AD. Most of the following narrative was excerpted from that source.

Bro. Charles began immediately to exercise his leadership of the church in the direction that the Lord laid on his heart. Some of the highlights concerning many of the more significant actions and decisions of the church body under Charles’ leadership for the next quarter century are as follows, in no particular order of importance.

Plans for a spring revival and renovations to the education building and parsonage begun.

An architect was engaged to draw up plans for future growth and a master plan for growth

Proposal submitted for sale of parsonage and compensate the pastor with an annuity in lieu of providing housing for him and his family, so he could acquire some equity in the property, pending his retirement.

“Together we build” program was instituted and a contract let for \$275,000 to build a new fellowship hall. The Sunday school attendance reached it’s highest (435) average in the history of the church, and expansion of the physical plant was badly needed.

The church constitution was amended to require yearly rotation of committee members and preclude serving on more than one committee at a time.

In 1976 the Training Union was moved to Wednesday night along with other church activities and a meal was prepared for those who wanted it in the new updated kitchen, also along with all the name changes, Sunday School was now named Bible Study.

1977 brought another change to the constitution which did away with the necessity for the church as a whole to approve every year, the appointment of teachers and placed this responsibility in the hands (church approved) department heads.

Attendance had increased so much that the church staff recommended that there be two services on Sunday morning at 8:30AM and 10:30AM, beginning in Sept.

Much discussion of money matters re: paying off debt and then beginning construction of a new sanctuary, or delaying action to a later time. More room is obviously needed.

1978 saw the approval to let a contract for a new sanctuary to seat 1000 people. The old parsonage was torn down and a new hexagonal auditorium was planned to arise in it’s place.

The Kindergarten which had been in existence for years kept growing at a fast pace to include more grades, more personnel, more facilities and of course more money.

The rationale for the expansion and growth of an educational institution was presented to the church as an *outreach* tool as well as providing a Christian education for children in the community. The church approved with the later adopted proviso that it be financially independent.

In Nov. 1979, the church purchased land about five miles south on Hwy 287 to begin a mission church. This was the beginning of Bro. Charles' dream of establishing several mission churches in the area to spread the Gospel ["first in Jerusalem,and to the uttermost parts of the earth"].

Eventually, several missions were started, some of which became – South Oaks, Rush Creek, Cornerstone, and Walnut Ridge Baptist churches. Some were destined to grow larger than Tate Springs, the mother church. In order for these to become established, there was a "calling out" for Tate Springs members to transfer to the new mission churches to help them become a viable congregation that could stand alone without further help. Many families left for the mission churches, which left a somewhat spiritual leadership and financial void which had to be overcome.

The church had added so many members under Bro. Charles' care, that it was felt that more deacons were needed to minister to these people and a ratio of three deacons for every one hundred members was decided upon, which necessitated an amendment to the church constitution. A problem arose! Baptists had traditionally chosen deacons who had never put away their wife thru a divorce, but the membership in Baptist churches had become more and more to resemble society as a whole; where divorce was approaching 40% so it was decided that being divorced would no longer be a barrier for ordination as a deacon, or any other office in the church.

The church was growing so fast that the decision to purchase property on the north east corner across the street was easily passed. Roy Buckelew told the congregation years before when Tate Springs was still a rural community that a tidal wave of buildings and people would soon sweep over this area, many of whom would be Southern Baptists looking for a home church – so be prepared to receive them. They came!

Charles continued to preach the gospel "and the Lord added daily such as were being saved" [Acts 2:47] The challenge to carry the message of Christ to those in need in our present society demanded an ever increasing commitment of each of his followers, often on his purse. Baptists have always been mission minded and continued to meet every challenge in carrying out the Great Commission.

The Tate Springs Christian School was bursting at the seams with 20 classes, 25 people on the staff and 268 enrolled students. It appeared that the school was headed toward the status of a permanent Baptist denominational institution. The *outreach* mission of the school seemed to be successful, as the great majority of the pupils were not members of TSBC.

In 1994 the deacons recommended that the church go back to one Bible Study and one preaching service on Sunday morning. Four Deacons Emeritus were elected from those men who had spent a lifetime in service to the Lord and his flock. Ivan Hollingsworth, Jim Webster, A. B. Hatcher, and Harold Busbee will long be remembered as such men.

Ernie Nelson came on staff as the new Education Minister and presented a five year strategy for church growth to be implemented in September. Sadly, Ernie's aggressive approach to a somewhat radical new program set him at odds with a mostly conservative executive staff at the church, and resulted in his resignation (dismissal?) after only a few months on the job.

By the late '90s; the church which began as a rural congregation had slowly morphed into a large and growing urban institution with many of the attendant problems associated with modern society. In an effort to be "all things to all men" and minister to a congregation ranging from young professionals with small children, to a coterie of seniors whose conservative views had to be

considered, many changes were tried out and either worked, or were eventually abandoned. Some of the issues that came before the church were: changing the names of things, i.e.; Sunday School to Bible Study; Revival to be called Transitional Services; choir director to be called Minister of Music; Spiritual Gifts Committee to be New Members Committee; etc., etc. As always, money matters and how to spend it was a concern: pay down debt; buy office equipment; remodel church plant; hire more staff; support new missions; increase salaries; enlarge and expand the school system. All these matters, and the responsibility as Christ's Under-Shepherd fell to Bro. Clary to try to lead the people in the right direction. Only much prayer for strength and guidance enabled him to carry these burdens and continue to preach the gospel and point men to Christ.

The 21st century dawns and Bro. Charles Clary announces his plans to retire and recommends that a committee be formed to investigate and present a resolution with reference to TSBC relationship with the Baptist General Convention of Texas. This was basically a dispute between theologians, revolving around the issue of *"who was most nearly adhering to the basic tenets of orthodox evangelical Christianity"*. Bro. Clary's influence and insight into the matter guided the church to a vote on Aug. 5, 2001 to amend the constitution (again), affiliate with an organization called The Southern Baptist of Texas and withdraw financial support from Baptist General Convention Of Texas.

After months of searching, Bart McDonald was called in late Nov. as the new pastor of TSBC and the quarter century era of Charles Clary's care of the church came to a close.

Chapter 10

2001

BART MCDONALD ANSWERS GOD'S CALL TO LEAD TSBC INTO THE 21ST CENTURY

After a long search lasting over a year, the pulpit committee found the man they believed God had chosen to assume the leadership of the people of Tate Spring and the people concurred. He and his family were welcomed into the family of TSBC with enthusiasm and he began his leadership with all the vigor and optimism of a young man of forty years of age. He was well equipped to address the financial affairs of the church, having been involved in banking for several years before being called to the ministry. Bart was also an accomplished pianist, having played professionally with his family group for many years. Under his leadership, the church was able to restructure the church's assets and became completely free of debt within the first year of "putting his hand to the plow". Bro. Bart brought a new vision of the work God had set before us in this community – pray that the people will share that vision. [Prov. 29:18] "where there is no vision, the people perish".

TSBC was the first pastorate for Bro. Bart and he set about instituting the new methods of presenting the gospel that had been learned at the seminary. Many visual aids including various props with Power Point presentations on the two large movie-type screens became a regular part of the preaching service. A new Music Minister was put on staff and the era of "contemporary" singing began with accompanying drums, bugles, trombones, flutes etc. in the orchestra. The Baptist hymnal was forgone in favor of what was sometimes referred to as "7/11" tunes which featured simple repetitive compositions, repeated as many times as the music director chose, at his own discretion. These innovations prompted many

churches to hold two worship services on Sunday morning, a traditional format and a “contemporary” type service which catered to the younger people. TSBC never saw fit to divide the people in such a way, and continued with only one service for the whole congregation.

Bro. McDonald oversaw many changes at TSBC, including an extensive remodel of the existing church buildings. The church proposed to buy the adjacent public school property, as more space was needed for Bible Study classrooms and for what became known as Childrens Church which began to need more room. The purchase was never made, as the asking price was considered out of reach.

A decade into his pastorate, bro. Bart found that his duties as a full time pastor precluded spending much time with his young daughters and giving as much attention to his music as he felt was necessary. He also desired to continue with his ecclesiastical studies at Southwest Seminary to pursue a doctorate, so he accepted a position at Walnut Creek Baptist church as financial manager, a post for which he was eminently qualified, and submitted his resignation to the church. Even though he was gone from TSBC, he was often called back to preside at funerals by those families who had grown to love and admire him over the years. God will bless and prosper this fine Christian man who continues to serve Him wherever he is.

Chapter 11

THE PASTOR’S SEARCH COMMITTEE IS LED TO CRIS SHIRLEY AS GOD’S MAN TO TAKE THE REINS AT TSBC.

A young man from Frost Texas accepts the call to service at Tate Springs Baptist church, which is much larger than the church where he had formally served.

Note from the County Coordinator:

Ray Gammon sent this updated history to me some time in 2012, but I could never open the file with my software. My attempts with Ray to find a solution to this problem hit a brick wall. Recently, I ran across the file again and was able to open it. I didn’t remember the update and thought it was just a copy of what was already online. A couple of weeks ago I compared it to the original and realized what I had found. Apparently a new computer and updated software on my end allowed me to open a once untouchable file.

The original history that Ray Gammon contributed was posted on Tarrant County TXGenWeb on February 9, 2003. This 2012 update was posted April 30, 2016.

– Rob