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officers	history	meetings	training
committees	purpose	churches	individuals
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A booklet about the Salem Association of Baptists

1. What is all this talk about the association?
What it is and what it does
2. Organization
officers, committees, meetings, etc
3. What's going on?
Activities, get togethers, groups, missions.
4. Our church is autanomus... autinomas... we do our own thing
5. How do I fit in?

The Salem Association has existed for over 200 years, and has helped the churches in this area in many ways. But what exactly is this association thing all about, anyway? If Southern Baptists allow each church to govern itself, why do we bother having an association? This booklet is meant to shed some light on what the Salem Association does, and what it means to the member churches and people. We'll tell you about the history, organization, and operation of the Salem Association. We hope to give you insight on the things that happen within the Association, how each church, and each person, can help.

What is all this talk about the Salem Association?

What is the Salem Association?

The Salem Association of Baptists, or any Baptist association for that matter, exists to help the member churches in ministering and fulfilling the Great Commission. This is done through offering training, resources, and other help.

In addition, the association allows the member churches to pool resources, either financial or materials, in order to get them where they are needed. The Salem Association consists of churches located in Meade, Breckinridge, and Hardin counties. For individual churches to reach out and help one another, it could be difficult for those that are located farther away from the others. By cooperating in the association, churches can work with each other much more easily. This makes it easier to get resources where they are needed. In Acts 2:44-47, you can read how the early church acted in a similar way. Those involved sold what they had and distributed the money to those who needed. That way, people in need were able to get help. Of course, that is only part of it; they also made time to get together. During these times, they worshiped, broke bread (perhaps that's why Baptists have food at most of their meetings), and thanked God for what they had.

Since that time, people have spread out more, and getting together can be difficult. Think how hard it can be to even get your own family together. Now imagine getting a few churches together, and how much harder that is. That is what makes this association so useful; churches have a way to get together with other churches and work as a team. This lets us work together in the same way as the early church. We are better able to meet the needs of those in our communities because we work with one another.

How does it work?

The Salem Association is comprised of the member churches, meet each fall at the Annual Meeting. This meeting includes messengers from each church, and the major decisions are made here. Besides conducting the business of the association, there is also special music from the churches, and a message delivered as motivation and direction. Between these Annual Meetings, the association's business is taken care of by the Executive Board. The Executive Board meets once a quarter, and is made up of people from the churches. The Board meets and makes the decisions necessary for the operations of the association. In addition to the Executive Board meetings, many "day-to-day" operations are conducted by committees, which we will detail in a little bit.

How does all of this help?

OK, we covered the general part of the association, so now you may be wondering what we mean by pooling resources. The obvious meaning is money, but there is more. We will briefly touch on the money aspect, and then move on.

Any money that is given to the Salem Association can be designated or undesignated.

Designated means that the giver wants the money to be used for a specific thing. Undesignated means that it can be used for whatever it is needed for. Money that is not designated for a specific purpose is used to do many things. It funds several missions that are run by the association, it pays the bills that we have (phone, electric, fuel for bus missions), the association has two paid employees, and there are other things, which we'll address a little later. If you want to know more about the amounts, you can look at the Treasurer's report. You can see this at an Executive Board meeting or in the Associational Annual that is available each year. We're not trying to make it hard to find, but not everyone likes looking at numbers. Plus, we have a lot more to tell you.

OK, enough about the money part for now. There are other resources that can be pooled. One big one is your time. As you will see in the rest of this booklet, there are many ways to help in the association. Your time can mean the difference between something getting finished or just sitting there. We realize that time is valuable, and understand that it may seem like there is not enough time to go around. However, we do appreciate any time that you can spare. If just two people helped for 30 minutes on something, they could do the same amount of work as one person could in an hour.

Another resource is materials. For example, if your church has a special Bible study, and would like to send the left over books somewhere they could be used again, the association can help get that done. Anytime you have books, curriculum, any kind of material like that, and would like to send it where it can help others, let us know. For example, we can help you send Sunday School literature to people that truly cannot afford it. That way you don't have to throw it in the trash. You may have supplies left after a special event (toys, prizes, that kind of thing) and don't want to throw them away or have them take up space. There is probably another church in the association that could use what you have.

There really is a lot you can do individually and that your church can do. What we put above is just some general ideas. If you have an idea, let us know and we will do our best to help you get it started. Going back to Acts 2, everyone pitched in, so don't be afraid to toss out an idea.

Organization

Now for some details on the Salem Association. We're going to put the information in a list format, so that you can quickly find what you're looking for.

Officers

Moderator- Conducts the meetings of the Salem Association, keeps them moving and maintains order.

Assistant Moderator- Takes the moderator's place in the event of their absence.

Clerk- Takes notes during the meetings, distributes copies at each meeting.

Assistant Clerk-

Treasurer-

Assistant Treasurer-

Secretary-
Assistant Secretary-

Committees

Brotherhood-
Sunday School-
Historical-
Program-
WMU-
Time and Place-
Nominating-
Communications- maintains the website, helps get the word out through the internet
Music-
Missions Development-
Public Affairs-
Youth-
Deacon-

Meetings

We touched on these earlier, but we will recap what we said.

Executive Board- the Executive Board meets during the year between the Annual Meetings and takes care of the Salem Association's business.

Annual Meeting- this is the time that the whole association comes together and meets to take care of the major decisions that face the Salem Association.

Anyone who is a member of a church that belongs to the Salem Association is welcome to serve as an officer, messenger, or committee member. We invite you to come to a meeting and learn more. It never hurts to have a fresh set of eyes look at something.

What's going on?

The association holds other activities besides the meetings. We mentioned liking food, and we make sure to find time to eat and have fun. Here are some of the regular activities that you can participate in.

Track Meet
Hymn Sing

That's all well and good, but my church does its own thing.

It is welcome to do that; in fact, that is one of the major beliefs that Southern Baptists hold. Each local church answers to Christ, who is the Head of the Church (we capitalized Church to

signify the Body of Christ, as opposed to a local church). We are not trying to tell you how to do things. We want to help, not boss. Even though we all live in similar communities, each one has something that sets it apart from the others. Your church is on the front lines in your community, so you will know how best to work in that community. All we want to do is make sure you have what you need, whether it is materials, people, or direction.

We talked about how you can share materials that your church no longer needs, but you may go to a church that needs materials. We want to help you get those materials. We want to work with you so that you may minister to the community and share the gospel.

We also mentioned sharing time. There are several small churches in the association that don't have enough people to carry something like Vacation Bible School. We don't like to see that happen, and will help you connect with people willing to work with you.

OK, this may seem like we're back-pedaling a little here, but we want to help you move in the right direction. We just said that we aren't going to tell you what to do, and we mean that, but we don't want you spinning your wheels and getting nowhere. If you need help on getting classes, programs, things of that nature started, we want to be that help. There are people who have been there, done that, got the T-shirt. They can give you guidance in getting these things going.

Besides those we just listed, we can help your church in these areas:

- Sunday School
- Websites
- Missions
- Discipleship
- Youth
- Music

In any of these areas, if we cannot give you the help you need, we can point you in the right direction of where to find the help you need.

What am I supposed to do now?

You probably agree that all of this is great, but at the same time, you may be wondering why we even spent the time to write all of this. The answer is, it can be really useful.

I'm going to guess that if you are reading this, you got it from one of our member churches, or somebody in the Salem Association, which means you also probably go to a member church. With that presumption, I'd say that you are serving in some capacity or will serve at some time. I would also venture to guess that you would be glad to get some help. That's what we want to do; get you that help. Like we just said in the previous section, we can help you connect with people who have been where you are. They can give you suggestions as to how best meet the needs of your position.

Of course, it would be somewhat hypocritical of us not to say that we'd like it if you helped us. As you have seen throughout this booklet, there are many things the Association does, and none of it would be done without people. The officers, committees, groups, they're all people. There is always a place that you could help us. It does not matter if you are a been-there-done-that, a never-been-there, or a how-do-I-get-there, we'd be glad to have you. If you can organize people or things, motivate others, remember details, teach, lead, breathe, you can help us help others. Please let us know if you would like to help. We have a nominating committee that selects people to bring before the Annual Meeting to be voted on. We'll make sure that you get in touch with that committee.

You may have spent years in church, or you may have just started. You may be young, you may be mature. The truth is, everyone can help in some way.