

**A Brief History of
the Church of Christ
in San Saba**

by

Ross J. Cox, Sr.

Updated by

James Johnston

Send corrections to sansabachurch@centex.net

/02/

A SHORT DEFINITION OF BELIEFS

The Churches of Christ although not a denomination but rather a brotherhood are located throughout the nation and are concentrated in the South and Southwest. There is no central headquarters and each church is organized with the local congregation being the highest authority for that church's affairs. Ministers are ordained rather than licensed and they hold tenure in their pulpits under mutual agreement with the elders of the churches in which they preach. A missionary program is carried on in seventy-five nations outside the United States and it includes over one thousand evangelists. The Church also maintains a quota of U. S. Army, Navy and Air Force chaplains.[\[1\]](#)

The beliefs of the Church are rooted in the plea for unity—a unity that is Biblically based. It is believed that the Bible is “the beginning place,” by which God-fearing people can achieve spiritual oneness. In matters concerning faith and morals, the belief is to “speak where the Bible speaks and to be silent where the Bible is silent.” Members recognize no other written creed of confession of faith.[\[2\]](#)

There is strict adherence to the New Testament pattern of worship; one which is simple and opposes instrumental music. Scriptural doctrines are conservative with a belief in the Father, Son and the Holy Ghost; the incarnation; Virgin-birth; and bodily resurrection of Christ. Strong emphasis is laid on the Church as the body and bride of Christ. Membership is contingent upon an individual's faith in Jesus Christ, repentance, confession of faith and baptism by immersion for remission of sins. Regular attendance in worship is stressed.[\[3\]](#)

PREORGANIZATION

Before the land of the San Saba was settled it was a wild, reckless and untamed place ruled by the will of the Indian and the harshness of nature. It is located in Central Texas north of the Llano Basin Region. This is where the Hill Country begins and extends southward, graced with the Llano, Colorado and San Saba rivers.[\[4\]](#)

The Spanish were first to come to the area after hearing the legends of El Dorado and cities of gold and silver. In 1732 the Spanish governor of Texas, Juan Antonio Bustillo y Ceballos, explored and passed through the area. By 1757 a mission had been established on the San Saba River with a garrison of twelve dozen soldiers, three miles upstream. This was short-lived for on 16 March 1758 two thousand Comanches attacked and utterly destroyed the mission.[\[5\]](#)

Other than the occasional trapper and trader eighty-five years would pass before the next attempt came to explore and settle the land. Europeans of the Society for the Protection of German Immigrants in Texas traveled northward from Fredericksburg in January 1847 to survey and occupy the territory. These Germans were successful with the deadly Comanche, which eventually led to a formal treaty of peace 2 March 1847. This was due in part because the Comanche did not consider the Germans as Americans. The land of the San Saba was now surveyed but was never ~~/04/~~ settled by the Germans. Later this section of the country would become part of Bexar County.[\[6\]](#)

Following the War for Texas Independence from Mexico and the completed German surveys, scores of new settlers began to arrive. They were for the most part Anglos from the old cotton South desiring to farm and cultivate the rich river valleys or to raise cattle between the spacious hills. Some were veterans that were awarded land for service in the Texas Revolution and later the Mexican War. As sturdy men came to this untamed land they brought with them their families, customs and religious beliefs. These would be key elements that would directly affect the future history and organization of San Saba County.[\[7\]](#)

In 1856 over nine hundred people were living in the area when the Sixth Texas Legislature created San Saba County. After the first elections were held and the county seat established, the town was surveyed and a courthouse built. The county became organized enough that on 21 May 1860 *commissioners'* court ordered a block of land given to each religious body in town.[\[8\]](#)

Fostering religion was no doubt a priority as this encouraged quality settlers into the new county. In the long term better settlers meant permanent settlers which were needed to subdue the Indians and develop the land. At this time there were four religious bodies: Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian and the Christian Church of San Saba (Church of Christ).[9]

/05/ ORGANIZATION AS CHRISTIAN CHURCH 1856-1904

The block of land donated to the Church by the county was held by the few, scattered and unorganized members until 1860. In that year the block was traded for a 50 x 100 foot lot across town owned by Daniel Cunningham. It is unknown whether Cunningham ever belonged to the Church. This new location was better suited for building and has remained in continuous ownership of the Church to this date. A small frame structure was erected becoming the first church building in San Saba belonging to a separate religious body. This structure was occupied until 1890 when it was destroyed by a windstorm.[10]

The first documented preacher of the Church was J. A. Henderson. A report from The Christian Record October 1874 states:

Bro. J. A. Henderson, of San Saba, Texas, reports a good meeting held by Brethren Keys and Tullis, continuing four days, and 17 were added to the Church, 13 by confession and immersion.

In November 1874 the same publication reported: "Elder J. A. Henderson has removed from San Saba, Texas, to Sandy, Blanco county, [sic] Texas." [11]

The first documented elders of the Church were J. W. Allen and Robert Hamilton. Their names appear on the original deed the Church received from *commissioners'* court filed 13 August, 1881. Although the exchange of the original block for the lot took place in 1860, Daniel Cunningham had a buyer for the block in /06/ 1884 but had never obtained a deed from the Church. The deed was filed and obtained 10 May, 1884 and

the block was promptly sold that day to W. I. Smith for one hundred fifty dollars. According to the deed records, J. H. Allen and Robert Hamilton were still elders at the time.[\[12\]](#)

During the 1860s the Church had no full-time preacher. Services were conducted under the guidance of the elders. Occasionally a traveling preacher would brave the many dangers, hardships and privations making his way to San Saba. These men were a hardy breed who not only carried a bible and a hymn book, but a trusty rifle for the “Redman.” For the most part the names of these men who carried the gospel have been lost to history. With the backdrop of a savage war for Southern Independence, a severe shortage of able-bodied men, and the receding frontier, the Church did well to survive in San Saba.[\[13\]](#)

After the war Yankee reconstruction came to Texas along with 51,000 troops. Soon these soldiers were used to subdue the Indians; thereby directly making the frontier a safer place for the Church. By 1870 the county population had grown to 1,281 and the Church was growing as well. By the 1880s the Indian had been driven away, his buffalo exterminated and a new economic boom began to take place with cattle. During these times the Church became alive with activity. According to The San Saba News 10 September 1881, the Church was meeting every Sunday at the city hail. In 1882 services were held every second Sunday of the month at the Presbyterian /07/ Church. It is unknown just why the Church met at another place while at the same time possessing its own building. By April 1883 services had been established every first Sunday in the month at 11:00 A.M. and the Saturday night before. Also in 1883 was the second recorded mention of a preacher. T. Huffaker served as preacher almost a full year as reported in The San Saba News 2 February 1884:

Elder Huffaker will preach at the Christian Church to night, tomorrow at 11 a.m. and tomorrow night. Subject for 11 o'clock, “Nicolaitanism;” at night, “Evidences of Pardon.” This Elder Huffaker last appointment in San Saba for the year. As a preacher, a scholar, and a social and religious instructor Elder Huffaker has been a success. He has a host of friends in our town, and has done all in his power to advance the Master’s cause, and wherever he may locate, he will carry with him the best wishes of his many friends. Everyone should hear him on this occasion.[\[14\]](#)

The tenor of the times *indicates* the women of the Church were taking an active role in maintenance of the building. In the personal column of The San Saba News 29 March 1884 it states:

The good ladies of the Christian Church have recently had their church cleaned out nicely, and everything looks as new as a new pin, and they wish us to say in this correction, that hereafter parties attending church addicted to the use of tobacco, will either prepare for themselves a spittoon or desist from the use of this filthy weed in the church, as the greatest trouble they had was in cleaning up among the miserable tobacco worms. They have spotted some of the “amen corner” brethren; and kindly request that this matter of forgetfulness be hereafter guarded against.[\[15\]](#)

By 1886 the Church was meeting regularly on the first and third Sundays of each month and the Saturday night before. This notice is found in The San Saba News /08/ both 20 March and 10 September issues of that year. J. S. Bradley was listed as pastor and was perhaps the circuit preacher in San Saba at that time.[\[16\]](#)

In 1890 a windstorm swept through San Saba and blew apart the church building. The membership responded by erecting another structure. This building served the Church for the next forty years until the current brick building was constructed in 1929-1930.[\[17\]](#)

The late nineteenth century witnessed a sensational era of religious debates that swept the country. In those days it was the way the Church did business in spreading the gospel. These debates continued and would be popular into the 1930s. Debates would occur between preachers of other religious groups. For the most part the debate was publicized in advance, was well attended and usually had a moderator. A debate would last sometimes for days depending on the season, location and crowd size. The first recorded debate hosted by the Church in San Saba occurred 13 April 1886. The Firm Foundation states:

Llano, Texas: There will be a debate at San Saba beginning April 13 between Mr. John Banta, Christadelphian, and the writer. The establishment of the kingdom will be the question for consideration. Felix G. Speck.

It is possible that Speck could have been the circuit preacher for the Church in Llano and San Saba since the notice originated from Llano. Speck was or later became a lawyer and no further record was found on him with the Church.[\[18\]](#)

/09/ The next known debate that came to San Saba County appears to have taken place at Salt Branch. It was between W. A. Schultz of Cherokee and J. S. Alvin of Dryland Holiness. This debate began 3 October 1896 and lasted for six days. It is likely the debate took place at Salt Branch as it was located exactly between Llano and San Saba. After the debate Schultz preached three sermons and baptized two into the Church. Schultz not only was a preacher but taught school at Cherokee.[\[19\]](#)

By the turn of the century the Church in San Saba had a membership of about one hundred. It was during this time a new preacher, Martin Luther Vaughn, Sr., settled in Lometa. Vaughn had a reputation of being successful with meetings and debates. He had just finished building his home when he came to San Saba in 1902. He was to debate Mr. Hicks on the subject of “Second Blessing Theory”. Hicks was a preacher in the Holiness Church and was to debate with Vaughn for several days. Due to *Vaughn’s* eloquence and thorough knowledge of the Bible, he won the debate by forcing it to a close in just two days.[\[20\]](#)

After the debate Vaughn went to the adjoining community of Fairview. There he held a meeting which lasted ten days resulting in eighteen baptisms. After the meeting on the last day he was escorted by throngs of people to the San Saba River in horse-drawn wagons, buggies, and on horseback. At the river a great crowd of people had gathered from San Saba on the opposite bank. As was the custom Vaughn preached a short but dynamic sermon and extended the invitation. An elderly woman, **/10/** who had been a Methodist all of her life, came forward and was promptly baptized. When she came out of the water she shouted “Glory Hallelujah I have obeyed my Lord and am happy!!” Vaughn later recalled this as one of his fond memories. “She knew how to shout bless her memory.”[\[21\]](#)

No matter how well things may have been for the Church at this time, division would soon arrive. Soon after the War For Southern Independence some churches in the north had started to use musical instruments. This produced division that eventually worked its way south. In an attempt to take a stand with the Restoration Movement, the Church acted publicly and legally in 1904. The elders whose names appeared on the first recorded deed were located with John H. Allen living in Goldthwaite and Robert Hamilton in Florida. The

current elders, William Scott and S. M. Usrey, obtained a restrictive deed from Allen and Hamilton for the sum of one dollar. This deed was specific: it conveyed all property to the current elders upon the expressed conditions that no organ or musical instrument would be used or kept by the Church. The deed also prohibited any fair, festival or any other practice unauthorized in the New Testament. It was also the first mention of the Church as the Church of Christ. This deed was made 10 May 1904 and was the first sign of an ensuing split of the congregation.[\[22\]](#)

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST 1904-1959

/11/ Religious revivals have always been popular in the rural South and San Saba was no exception. Until 1908 there were some worshipping with the congregation who differed concerning the use of musical instruments. These, or at least most of them, never did consider themselves members of the Church. It was during this year, 1908, that these individuals secured a preacher named Baxter Golightly to conduct a separate revival for them. As a result of this revival, another one was conducted a short time later by A. J. Bradley. Thereafter these people erected a tabernacle and since that time the two have been working as separate religious organizations. This group became officially known as the First Christian Church of San Saba.[\[23\]](#)

The 1920s were great years for the Church. Despite the break with the First Christian Church growth and stability would prevail throughout the decade. The first mention of Bible classes and Wednesday night song practice is found in The San Saba News, Thursday, 4 November 1920. Bible school met at 10:00 A.M., preaching 11:00 A.M., and song practice each Wednesday night was held at 7:00 P.M. The preachers during this decade were P. A. Conway, Jim Whitt and Clem Hoover.[\[24\]](#)

The decade also ushered in the annual summer revivals that were attended by some of the largest crowds in the history of San Saba. The first great revival occurred in May 1921 with Foy E. Wallace Jr. as evangelist and Tillit S. Teddlie as song leader. Wallace preached for ten days with hundreds attending from the surrounding area. Until this time there had never been a larger crowd in the city. At the end of the **/12/** meetings

there were thirty-two baptisms and twenty restorations. More importantly the Church was filled to capacity the following Sunday, enjoying the best prospects of its history.[\[25\]](#)

In 1922 the Church was meeting every first and third Sunday and a quarterly report was being submitted to the local newspaper. The thrust during that time appears to have been *focused* with daily Bible readers and verses memorized. The report for January, February and March claimed. 1,023 present; 306 daily Bible readers; 15,581 chapters read and 297 memory verses.[\[26\]](#)

Another noted evangelist that came to the Church in San Saba was Cled E. Wallace. Wallace held revivals in 1923 and 1924. He was extremely successful and lived up to his reputation as a forceful speaker and logical thinker. His meetings always drew immense crowds which were complemented by fine singing led by W. E. Brightwell. In 1925 Wallace returned to San Saba for the summer revival. Until that time crowds were measured by the hundreds of people attending. In July of that year the Church built a large tabernacle in town and braced for thousands of people that were expected to attend from the surrounding counties and cities. Leading the singing was one of the greatest composers and song writers in the United States, Austin Taylor. At revival's end, twenty-five were added to the Church by baptism and eight by restoration. Although no exact reference can be found this may have been the largest crowd ever assembled in San Saba.[\[27\]](#)

/13/ The success of the slimmer revivals produced a growth that required expansion of the Church property. On 16 October 1926 the Church purchased the southeast corner of the block from Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Gareth and Mr. and Mrs. Ralph O. Newsom for the sum of thirteen hundred dollars. Eight hundred dollars was paid in cash and the remainder financed. The southeast corner of this block is where the current parsonage is located today. Mrs. Christina Burke, J. D. Estep and H. D. Tomlinson were listed as the trustees representing the Church during this transaction.[\[28\]](#)

The growth and success of the Church can be partly attributed to the attitudes of that day. It was simply a time of joining or belonging. This is not only reflected in the Church but with fraternal and civic organizations

as well. Along with the mobility of the new automobile a spirit prevailed that had a strong appeal to those frustrated by the war effort and believed the American social system was falling apart. It was not uncommon to belong to many different organizations and attend other local churches and revivals. There seemed to be a sense of urgency to make things right for the next generation.[\[29\]](#)

One of those urgent trends was the preservation of past history. Numerous articles were printed in The San Saba News about the development of the county in the late 1800s. An interesting article concerning those early ranching days included mention of a circuit preacher.

...Circuit Riders Noted.

Mr. Gray counted among his close, personal friends a number of /14/ the pioneer preachers of Texas. A particular friend of his in the Christian Church was Rev. John Meadows. This man was equally at ease in the pulpit or cattle camp. He was a general favorite among the cowboys. His sermons were of unusual interest whether delivered from the pulpit or under the shade of a live oak or some other tree with cowboys as his hearers.

Though his parents were Presbyterians and he was christened in that church, he says the Methodists have been among the most numerous in all the frontier settlements in which he has lived. Two incidents may show the spirit and purpose of the pioneer preacher. A number of immigrants were moving into the great West, where the ice had frozen well out from the bank on each side, while in the middle rolled a raging torrent more than 100 feet wide. One after another of the men shook their heads declaring it impossible to cross the stream. Among the immigrants was a minister who felt his Lord's business required him to cross the stream, whereupon he dismounted from his horse, cut a strong pole about eight feet long, then remounting his steed he put the pole on his shoulder and requested some of the men to push his horse out on the ice to where it would break. This was done. The horse and the daring rider plunged through the ice.

In breathless silence, the group of immigrants, as they lined the shore waited and watched for them to come up. Nor were they long to wait, for some distance down the stream the horse and rider rose to the surface, though numbed by the icy waters the rider *reined* his mount toward the opposite shore. After swimming to where it secured a good footing the horse began to wade towards the ice. On reaching this the preacher began to crush through it with the pole he carried until it was sufficiently strong to bear the weight of the horse, when the horse climbed out on the ice and walked to shore,... Can the cowboy of today do this?...[\[30\]](#)

In 1926 the first full time preacher was hired by the Church. Clem Wesley Hoover was forty years old, had a wife and two children and, most importantly, was educated. Until that time most of the preachers were of the "old-time" school; they were not considered the professional men that they are today. These were not big

preachers but rather godly men that all recognized as a messenger of God. With an age of the automobile, radio and better roads for travel, the times demanded an educated, /15/ full-time preacher to reach the more enlightened public. Clem Hoover was the right man at the right time. With his leadership the Church would grow in numbers, acquire more property and erect a magnificent church building.[31]

The Church in San Saba had apparently experienced a tremendous growth and was preparing for the future. On 9 January 1930 the Church purchased the north one-quarter block from E. F. Young for \$700.00. In May of that year, seven members established a private corporation on behalf of the Church. These members were Roy B. Bagley, W. T. Thorp, M. C. Gunter, W. R. Baxter, W. R. Payne, E. B. House and Mrs. J. H. Burke.[32]

Work on the new church building began in 1929. Although the records are sketchy, the membership performed most of the work and the building was finished by September 1930. The completion came at the right time as the two hundred member congregation was bulging in the old building. Fifty new members had just been added during the annual summer revival that June. The cornerstone was donated by W. S. Porch and inscribed are the following names: Clem W. Hoover, Minister; Elders: W. T. Thorp, E. B. House, M. C. Gunter, W. H. Darley; Deacons: W. W. Walker, A. R. Dockray, J. D. Estep and W. R. Payne. The total building cost was \$16,000 in which the Church financed \$8,000.00 for ten years from American National Insurance Co. of Galveston, Texas. A portion of the cost was recovered when the old building was sold to the Christian Church and was later moved two blocks away. That building remains /16/ in use to this day for the Christadelphian Church.[33]

Although the building was ready for worship services, it was by no means completely finished. Later the men dug the basement by hand, making room for the baptistery and some dressing rooms. At a later time the basement was expanded for the existing classrooms.[34]

The building is constructed of dark red brick and features a grand front entrance. There is a steep flight of outside steps that lead upward to a pair of heavy wooden doors. It is above these doors that a very tall, square bell tower protrudes into the city skyline on Wallace Street. It is interesting to note the tower has never contained a bell nor is there a way to enter it from the inside. Despite the absence of a bell, the building remains a splendid looking structure.[\[35\]](#)

It was during the construction that two women worked together contributing to the project. The minister's wife, Jessie Hoover, and Mrs. J. H. Burke had actively solicited the local people to contribute funds. This was accomplished by the contributor having his or the family name set in one of the many stained glass windows. As this was done it was realized that some of the names were not those of members. This later caused some dissension that would eventually lead to the removal of the names in about 1942. It was felt the names in the windows were not placed with the right spirit. Although there was never a danger of a split in the congregation it would remain a sensitive subject for many years.[\[36\]](#)

/17/ The completion of the new building came at the worst possible time of the year. The great depression had struck and the Church fell on hard times. Circumstances were so bad the notes could not be paid and the finance company was about to foreclose. Due to the efforts of Elder W. R. Baxter, the Church was spared an embarrassing repossession ordeal. Baxter traveled to Galveston and met with the loan company convincing them to extend the note. His argument was the loan company did not need a church building in the midst of a depression. The extension was granted 3 March 1934 for another ten years with the rest of the Church property used as collateral.[\[37\]](#)

In 1935 Hulen Jackson came to preach for the Church in San Saba. Jackson had just graduated from Abilene Christian College and in 1938 he married his wife, Gilly. In that same year the Church saw the need to construct a parsonage for Jackson and his new bride. An application was obtained from the Federal Housing Administration and a loan of \$2,600.00 was obtained from J. E. Foster & Son for nineteen years. The parsonage

was built on the southeast corner of the block where it stands to this day. Jackson remained in San Saba until 1940.[\[38\]](#)

During the Great Depression and World War II the thrust of the Church of Christ had been devoted to the development of better preaching. This was accomplished through the growth of Abilene Christian College. With the war over, servicemen returning home would take up the call for mission work. Many of those **/18/** servicemen who had been in foreign countries would return to those nations to preach on behalf of the Church of Christ. Mission work would be the thrust into the last part of the century. Although not foreseen at the time, the subject of mission work would lead to the next major split in the Church at San Saba.[\[39\]](#)

By 1950 the Church had now grown to two hundred twenty-eight members. The increase in membership had brought some corresponding problems. With most people in rural San Saba now owning an automobile, parking had become a problem. In 1955 the Church purchased a portion of the next block to the east for the purpose of constructing a parking lot. Four thousand dollars cash was paid to Mr. and Mrs. I P. McConnell for the west half of the northwest one-fourth block. Another expansion was made in 1957 as the northwest corner of the Church block was purchased for nine thousand dollars cash from Mr. and Mrs. C. M. McKneely. This purchase would later be used to construct the fellowship hall in 1997.[\[40\]](#)

Although the 1950s were years of expansion, they would end with a bitter division. In 1957 a new minister named Vernon Ripley was hired to preach. He was considered a good preacher and was popular with the congregation. However the seeds of division came with a controversy concerning the support of mission work. Ripley also objected to the organized financial support of other Church of Christ orphans and widows. Finally in 1959 he resigned his position and formed a separate congregation sixteen blocks west of the Church. He took with him about six to ten families and an **/19/** elder named James Clark. This church became known as the Westside Church of Christ. "The Church" then began to be known as Church of Christ 2nd & Wallace. This was the second and most bitter division that fell on the eve of the one-hundredth anniversary of the Church in San Saba.[\[41\]](#)

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST 2nd & WALLACE 1959 to 1997

The decade of the 1960s was somewhat difficult for the Church in San Saba. There was barely any measurable growth and the split with the Westside congregation was painfully obvious. Perhaps a partial explanation is the fact that there was a general decline in the county's population. During the 1950s it had dropped to about 8,600. By 1970 the county was at an all-time post war low of about 5,500.[\[42\]](#)

However the waning growth of the 1960s was more than made up for in the 1970s. In 1974 two additions were made to the church building. The south end of the building was enlarged for the expanding congregation, consisting now of the one hundred twenty children and staff of the Cherokee Home For Children. The Church would serve this group until 1984. The second addition was made to the west end of the building for a much needed library, minister's office and classrooms.[\[43\]](#)

The latest two property purchases made by the Church were acquired during the 1980s. On the west side of the parsonage stood a small white frame house on an 80 x 120 ft. lot. This was purchased from the estate of Carl and Maude Hamrick for thirty-seven thousand five hundred dollars on 1 November 1982. The house was then ~~/20/~~ renovated and used for a classroom and fellowship hall. With this purchase the Church now owned all but the southwest corner of the entire block. On 13 May 1988 additional property was purchased from Earnestine Norris and the parking lot on the next block was extended to the south.[\[44\]](#)

The current decade of the 1990s presented new challenges that the Church would address. A prison unit was built west of the city in 1994 which was privately operated for low risk adult inmates. It was in this year that the current minister, John P. Shero, was hired by the Church. He eagerly accepted the challenge from the elders and expanded the prison ministry. That year 285 baptisms were recorded. In 1996 the prison was changed from adult inmates to children under the control of the Texas Youth Council. The Church maintained its prison ministry and is still active at that institution to this date.[\[45\]](#)

The Church also takes an active role in supporting the Cherokee Home for Children. This is accomplished during the month of May when the “pack the pulpit” drive begins. This effort is accomplished through the congregation, gathering large amounts of food items that are later donated to the home. This is a combined effort with the community and other Churches of Christ. On the last Saturday in May each year, the home is presented with the donated items. This is known as “Cherokee Day.” At this time a large barbeque is held on the grounds as a token of appreciation by the home.[\[46\]](#)

/21/ Another effort the Church undertakes in supporting the community at large is the participation with the Meals On Wheels program. Working with other religious groups the Church takes turns throughout the year volunteering to deliver the meals to local senior citizens. A small but important fact is the Church enjoys a reputation for getting along with other local religious organizations. Although the current minister does not belong to the Ministerial Alliance, he and the eldership assist when needed on important community issues.[\[47\]](#)

The Church has always been interested in and has supported missionary work throughout the world. When Jerry Newberry was minister from 1987 to 1992 the Church supported his work in the former Soviet Union. Marvin Whitt was supported in the *Philippines* with a Bible College program. This work ended in December 2013 when Marvin returned to the United States. Financial contributions are also made to Will Goodheer who is president of the Eastern European Christian University in Austria. Another mission project is the support of Romero Serna in South Texas. There the Church sends basic items and food for the relief of the people living in squalid conditions on the border.[\[48\]](#)

The Church now has about two hundred members and the need for a new fellowship hall was realized in 1996. A plan was developed to construct a thirty-seven hundred square foot building on the west side of the church building. The total cost of the project was \$118,000.00 and by 1997 \$110,000 cash had been raised. The building */22/* was completed in May 1997 and on Sunday, May 4th an open house was held inviting the entire community. In an attempt to preserve the past, a special cornerstone was set that contained a time capsule including written details of each participating family. It was the intention of the elders that one day when the

building is taken down, future generations would have the knowledge and pride of the past history of the Church of Christ 2nd & Wallace.[\[49\]](#)

In summation, the Church at San Saba can be regarded as having remained true to the original restoration movement that began in America over two hundred years ago. Despite the hardships of early days in Texas including the War for Southern Independence, the San Saba Mob, the Ku Klux Klan, the Great Depression and divisional splits; the Church has never swayed from New Testament teachings. No matter what distractions or challenges were presented, the Church always found a suitable way to speak where the Bible speaks and to be silent where the Bible is silent.

/23/

LIST OF PAST PREACHERS

J. A. Henderson.....	1874
T. Huffaker.....	1883-1884
J. S. Brady.....	1886
M. L. Vaughn.....	1902
Bro. Dimmit.....	1900s
W. L. Swinney.....	1910s
Bro. Jones.....	1910s
P. A. Conway.....	1910s
Jim Whitt.....	1922
Clem Wesley Hoover.....	1926 -1931
Bela Watson.....	1932 -1935
Hulen Jackson.....	1935 -1940
Falvey F. Conley.....	1940-1941
Bill Coffman.....	1941-1943
Loye Ruckman.....	1943-1945
Clem Wesley Hoover.....	1945-1949
James A. Fry.....	1949-1952
J. D. Pinkerton.....	1952-1953
A. C. Knight.....	1953-1954
Robert V. Hamilton.....	1954-1955
Melvin Harbison.....	1955-1957
Vernon Ripley.....	1957-1959
Charlie Adams.....	1959-1962

J. D. Thomas..... 1962-1963

Haskell T. England..... 1963-1965

Harold G. Hunt..... 1965-1971

James Vinzant..... 1971-1975

Bela Watson (associate minister)..... 1971-1975

Charles Butler..... 1975-1981

Tommy Haynes..... 1981-1987

Jerry Newberry..... 1987-1992

Rodney Tedford..... 1992-1994

John P. Shero..... 1994-2004

Rocky Whitely..... 2005-2008

Casey Clement 2008-2009

James Johnston 2010- 2014

[1] Frank S. Mead, Handbook of Denominations in the United States. (Nashville, Tn.: Abingdon Press, 1951), 91-92.

[2] Bill Humble, The Story of The Restoration (Firm Foundation Publishing House, 1969), 1.

The Restoration Movement began over 200 years ago after the first English settlements in the New World had been established. After two centuries of colonial history many European denominations had been transplanted in America. It was against these first and older churches the Restoration Movement began. One of the first leaders of this movement was Barton W. Stone (1772-1844). Stone was the son of a wealthy Maryland planter. After his father died he moved to Virginia in 1779. He invested his inheritance in an education at David Caldwell’s Academy (Presbyterian). He later received his license to preach then travel to Nashville where he preached for two churches. In 1804 he left the Presbyterian Church and with preachers from other churches began the Restoration Movement. Another leader in the movement was a preacher named John Mulkey who had been a Baptist preacher in Kentucky. He associated with Barton Stone and later would baptize over 10,000 people. Thomas Campbell (1763-1854) was born in Ireland and was a faithful member of the Seceder Presbyterian Church before his migration to the US in 1807. He later broke with the Presbyterian Church and later wrote a document that would influence the Church of Christ greatly. This document was written in 1809 called The Declaration and Address. This was a plea that Christians should be as one and that the only way that this was to be achieved was for Christians to go back to the Bible. His son, Alexander Campbell, arrived in America two years later. He would become one of the great leaders of the Restoration Movement. He preached all over the United States and wrote many books and articles that influenced many people. He became acquainted with the famous of our country such as John C. Calhoun, Henry Clay, Andrew Jackson and many others.

[3] Ibid.

[4] The New Handbook of Texas, (Austin, Tx.: The Historical Association, 1996), vol. 5, 877. The county seat and its largest city, San Saba, is located ninety miles northwest of Austin and 110 miles southwest of Waco. San Saba County covers 1,136 square miles and has an elevation of 1,100 to 1,800 feet.

[5] Ibid. Cevallos found a stream near the present town of Menard in that county on Tuesday, 5 December 1732. Because it was the saint's day (or day of death) of Saint Sabas (San Saba in Spanish) the river was so named. Saint Sabas lived from A.D. 435 to 532. He was born in present day Turkey, became a monk, and migrated to Jerusalem. There he and his followers established a number of monasteries. It is said to be one of the most beautiful monasteries in the Holy Land. He was noted to be a great preacher and healer. On two occasions he went to Constantinople to consult and petition the great Roman Emperor, Justinian. After the Crusaders were driven from the Holy Lands in the twelfth century, his remains were taken to Venice. In 1965 Pope Paul VI carried the remains back to Jerusalem; The San Saba Papers, (San Francisco, Ca.: John Howell Books, 1959), xv-xvi. The Mission was under the direction of Father Fray Alonso Giraldo de Terreros which had approximately 400 persons, over 200 of them women and children, families of the soldiers. The Presidio was a crude and primitive affair. It was constructed of a log stockade with a couple of gun platforms and a number of mud and straw huts for living quarters. Colonel Diego Ortiz Parrilla was the commander of the garrison who opposed the whole project especially the separation between the Mission and his men. The Indians were not impressed with the size of the Presidio and did not settle in the Mission. So discouraging was the prospect of attracting new converts that three of the missionaries withdrew. The attack was only to the Mission and after further opposition to the San Saba site by Colonel Parrilla the project was finally abandoned in 1770.

[6] Alma Ward Hamrick, The Call of The San Saba, 2nd ed., (Austin, Tx.: San Felipe Press, 1969), 9, 18; Souvenir Program Fredericksburg, Texas 150 Years, 3 May 1996, 16-37. This treaty was signed in the present day Sloan community in San Saba County on FM 2732. In 1936 a historical monument was placed at this location 9.3 miles south of US 190 to commemorate this treaty which was never broken.

[7] Hamrick, The Call of The San Saba, 30-37; Jack Welch & Rick Canning, The Restoration Movement in Texas, video tape documentary, Abilene, Tx.: Abilene Christian University, 1986) 31 minutes running time. The influence of Stone, Mulkey and the Campbells was introduced into the Republic of Texas through a group known as the "Church On Wheels." This was an immigrant group that traveled by wagon train composed by members of the Church from northwest Alabama and western Tennessee. Some of these were neighbors of David Crockett and asked him to be their guide. Crockett led them into Arkansas before himself leaving to join with the Texas Revolution. The wagon train later arrived in Texas in January 1836, settling in eastern and northern Texas. The first Church was established in *Anticoch*, Texas in present day St. Augustine County. Another member of the Church On Wheels was Mansle Matthews who was a doctor and a preacher. He settled with the Church near Clarksville, Tx., but soon joined the Texas Army. Matthews was tending to Sam Houston's wound at San Jacinto when Santa Anna was brought in captive. He had been baptized by John *Mulky* in Alabama in 1825 and later established the largest Church in the Republic (150 members) in Hopkins County. He served as a Congressman of the Republic of Texas and was described as one of the most elegant preachers in all of the Southland. By the time Texas became a state in 1845 over 1,000 members worshiped in twenty-five congregations scattered through 16 counties making the Church the fifth largest in the state. Between 1845-1860 membership increased 600% to 6,000 members in one hundred sixty congregations.

[8] Minutes of San Saba County Commissioners Court, 21 May 1860. The early days of the Church revealed that it was not called the Church of Christ but rather the Christian Church. The term Christian Church was used until 1904.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Hamrick, The Call of The San Saba, 148; Deeds of Record, County Clerk's Office, San Saba County, Texas, vol. 3, 455.

[11] The Christian Record, October 1874, 471, Ibid., November 1874, 525.

[12] Hamrick, The Call of The San Saba, 148, 149, 145; Deeds of Record, County Clerk's Office, San Saba County, Texas, vol. 3, 455. In the deed the Church block was described as block no. 44; Deeds of Record vol. L, 637, 638, 639, 640.

[13] Hamrick, The Call of The San Saba, 148, 149, 145. As San Saba was on the extreme frontier of Texas, the life of the traveling circuit preacher was always in constant danger from the Indian. If his rifle failed him at a critical time, his scalp would dangle from a chieftain's belt. As the Church of Christ did not keep records in those days it is uncertain I. how many preachers may have lost their lives. The Methodists did keep records as revealed on 23 May 1859, Jonas Dancer and a local deacon (from Llano) lost their lives within a short distance from their home by Indian attack. The Indian threat was so bad that the Methodists issued rifles to their preachers. It would be years before settlers would leave their homes and travel to San Saba for a Sunday worship service. During this period many people would hold services with neighbors in their homes. The election returns for San Saba County 23 February 1861 confirmed that the county was for secession by a vote of 113 to 60. When The War For Southern Independence began in 1861, many local men answered the call to arms. This further created problems on the frontier as Indians raided undefended homes and settlements. As the war advanced and the Confederate soldiers returned home on leave, they were pressed into frontier service to combat the Indians. The manpower was never enough and the outposts failed to provide the needed protection.

[14] A. Ray Stephens and William M. Holmes, Historical Atlas of Texas, (Norman, Ok.: University of Oklahoma Press, nd.), 473. The key to rid the Indians was to exterminate their buffalo. The buffalo hunter was given but four misses per day as rounds were in short supply. If he missed his shots, he was then sent back to the skinners. This was a very undesirable job. The animals were left to rot without the hides turning the whole country into a stinking litter-land from San Saba to Brownwood. In later years the bones would be collected, ground, and sold as fertilizer. By 1875 there were very few free Indians left in the county. Though the Indian problem was gone, other menaces would threaten the area; the outlaw, the cattle rustler and the San Saba Mob.

[15] The San Saba News, 29 March 1884, n.p.

[16] The San Saba News, 20 March and 10 September 1886, n.p.

[17] 17 Harnrick, The Call of The San Saba, 148; Tommy Haynes, The History of The Church of Christ 2nd and Wallace Street San Saba, Texas 1856-1984, (San Saba, Tx.: n.p., 1984), 1. A major problem the Church suffered through was the presence of the San Saba Mob. From about 1880-1900 the San Saba Mob was the strongest social and political influence in the county. After the Indians were conquered cattle became the reigning economic empire. However the Indians were quickly replaced by the organized rustlers and outlaws. Their influence came about due to weak law enforcement and poor courts. Oral legend has it that seven wealthy cattlemen came together and formed the San Saba Mob. Their identities have never been known. The Mob was organized like a lodge meeting once a month at Buzzard's Waterhole by the light of the full moon. The organization worked exclusively at night with members wearing black hoods to conceal themselves. The objective of the Mob was to exterminate the outlaws and rustlers. This was quickly accomplished and there was much popular support for the Mob at first. Churches even supported the Mob from the pulpit thereby lending credibility to the organization. Later the leaders learned what alt other vigilante mobs eventually learned--that they could no longer control what they had created. By 1896 the Mob had a membership that was just as bad as the rustlers. The members developed strife with each other and acts of lawlessness were perpetrated against innocent citizens. Personal enemies were killed off and their lands were taken. Over two hundred people fled

the county in fear of the Mob leaving behind their property and possessions. Over forty-three people were murdered with most of the killings taking place in the northern part of the county. Finally by 1896 the situation was so bad the Texas Rangers were called in to San Saba to put down the Mob. It is difficult to describe but people were frightened to even speak to one's neighbor for fear of offending him and being killed. A person couldn't even attend church without the knowledge of perhaps sitting next to a Mob member. The local political and social life was virtually controlled by the organization. Even elections were fixed with members becoming sheriffs, judges and other ranking officials. Under the leadership of Ranger Captain Bill McDonald and his company of men the Mob was finally crushed. Although other churches supported the Mob it can be said the Church went on about its business of preaching the gospel and continuing the Restoration Movement.

[18] Firm Foundation, (Austin, Tx.: Firm Foundation Publishing House, 7 April 1896) vol. 12,7.

[19] Firm Foundation, (Austin, Tx.: Firm Foundation Publishing House, 8 December 1896), vol. 12, 5; Interview with Clyde Yarbrough 21 May 1997; Interview with Goldie Conley 22 May 1997; C. R Nichol, Gospel Preachers Who Blazed The Trail, (Austin, Tx.: Firm Foundation Publishing House, 1911), 168; K. D. Pittman, Martin Luther Vaughn, Sr.—Biographical Sketch, (n.l.: n.p., n.d.), 5. Salt Branch was never a town but a one-room school building located three miles east of Cherokee. The school was used for religious meetings and debates until it was moved to Cherokee in the early 1940s as the school there had burned. Salt Branch likely was used as the location of the debate as it was situated exactly between San Saba and Llano. In 1884 Schultz was described as a great gospel preacher and debater. At a debate in McGregor, Schultz showed up late wearing breeches too short and a fillin [sic] of the socks. He was a bit stoop-shouldered and was wearing a Prince Albert coat that had been black. The coat had turned green and a hole was in the back where the seam had torn loose. Born in Kansas City, Mo. 24 July 1866, Schultz began preaching at the age of seventeen. He came to Texas from Arkansas in 1894 and settled in Bell County. He preached in the surrounding counties later settling in Uvalde County.

[20] Haynes, The History of the Church of Christ, 1; Pittman, Martin Luther Vaughn.Sr., 8-9.

[21] Pittman, Martin Luther Vaughn, Sr., 9-10. Vaughn remained in the San Saba area until 1914. In 1919 he moved to Abilene and did construction work building over two-hundred homes. He remained active in the Church there until his death in March 1973.

[22] Bill Humble, The Story of the Restoration, (Austin, TX.: Firm Foundation Publishing House, 1969) 50-62. Problems in the Restoration Movement began in the North after the War For Southern Independence 1861-1865. As the country had been divided so now was the Church on the issue of instrumental music. In 1866 Alexander Campbell had died and his unifying influence was gone. There was sectional bitterness between Northern and Southern Christians sparked by The American Christian Review and Ecclesiastical Reformer. The use of instrumental music was never discussed or practiced in the early days of the Restoration Movement The first congregation to introduce instrumental music into worship was the Midway, Kentucky Church. Another issue that began to divide the Church was support of missionary societies. Through publications, debates and revivals divisiveness began to work its way from the liberal North to the conservative and faithful South.

[23] Hamrick, The Call Of The San Saba, 149; Christian Standard, (n.p.,: 23 October 1909), 1885. R. W. Mills was the minister of the First Christian Church at that time and submitted the following to the Standard:

...San Saba is the county-seat of San Saba County and offers many inducements to those seeking a business life. The town is destined to become a city of no mean proportions. At present it has a population of about fifteen hundred persons. The Christian Church is very weak here, having only eighteen members, meeting in a nice little tabernacle 40 x 60,

with mother earth as the floor. They meet every Sunday to break bread and to have Bible school. The writer preaches for them-twice a month. In writing me please enclose stamp.

R. W. Mills,
Minister Christian Church
San Saba, Tex.

[24] The San Saba News, 4 November 1920, n.p.; 16 February 1922, n.p. James Thomas Whitt was born 8 August 1874 in Kentucky. With family he came to Texas young, reaching Georgetown, Texas, the day Garfield was elected president. At the age of 17 he entered West Texas Normal and Business College where he completed the course with honors. He taught public school in Cherokee and Lockney Christian College. He later served as principal of the West Texas Normal and Business College for five years. He was recognized as one of the strongest preachers in Texas during the 1920s.

[25] Ibid. 19 May 1921, vol. 47, 1; 26 May 1921, 1; 21 June 1921, n.p. Tillet S. Teddlie was born in 1885 and grew up working on the berry farms of Golding, Texas. In 1903 he joined the Church and by 1914 published his first song "Heaven Holds All To Me." He was a prolific song writer who later wrote over one hundred inspiring songs for the Church. Teddlie died in 1987.

[26] Ibid. 20 April 1922. Even though the summer revivals were growing in popularity religious debates in the county continued. On the first page of The San Saba News dated 5 October 1922 it States:

Religious Debate At Harkeyville.

There will be a religious debate begin at Harkeyville school house Friday night before the third Sunday in this month, Oct. 13. The debaters will be Elders J. T. Whitt and E. E. Geisler. Elder Whitt will affirm that the Kingdom was set up at Pentecost and Elder Geisler will affirm that it will be set up at the second coming of Christ. Elder Geisler will also affirm that man is wholly mortal, while Elder Whitt will affirm that man has a spirit that survives the death of the body.

Assurance is given that the debate will be conducted in a spirit of fairness and good will and the people are invited to hear the discussion...

[27] Ibid. 22 May 1924, n.p.; 10 June 1924, 1; 3 July 1924, 1; 17 July 1924, 1; 2 April 1925, n.p. 25 June 1925, 1; 2 July 1925, 1; 18 July 1925, 1. Although Austin Taylor was a great song writer of his day few of his songs remain in the current song book used by the Church. Cled E. Wallace continued to preach for the Church in San Saba and Cherokee in 1925. He was strictly an evangelist living mostly on the road in hotels. Cled was also the brother of Foy Wallace who preached for the Church. Foy had a home in Oklahoma City, Ok. Both were great preachers but never worked together.

[28] Deeds of Record, County Clerk's Office, San Saba County, Texas, vol. 86, 94. Mrs. Christina Burke's name appears on the Deed of Record dated 16 October 1926 as a trustee of the Church when the southeast corner of the block was purchased. This is very rare as women are not permitted to serve the Church as preachers, elders, deacons, song leaders, or to be a leader in any way. An explanation may be in the fact that Mrs. Burke was from a wealthy oil family of Corsicana and a strong financial supporter of the Church. The family owned a large ranch between Cherokee and San Saba. Her daughter, named Christina, married a wealthy ranch owner named Paul Sloan who owned the adjoining ranch.

[29] J. Dexter Sammons, "The Ku Klux Klan and Texas Masonry Part II," Transactions Texas Lodge of Research A, F, & A, M., vol. 20 (1985):121. A footnote to local history involves the Ku Klux Klan in the San Saba area. The KKK was known to visit area churches as found in The San Saba News 4 May 1922. The organization was very strong in the area with a chapter in Richland Springs. Even local businesses advertised

supporting them. An example of this is found in The San Saba News 1 February 1923 on page 6. It reads: “Ku Klux Klan is coming with the black hoods and McCaskill and Kirkpatrick is coming with low prices etc.” The 1920s were the most fruitful years for the KKK as even preachers supported them from the pulpit. At that time many of the leading men of any Southern community belonged and its membership grew from 5,000 in 1920 to 5,000,000 in 1925 nation wide. Unlike the San Saba Mob the KKK during that time was a respectable organization. It was like a fraternity appealing to those men who wished to preserve Christian teachings, restricted immigration, separation of church and state, public and free schools, sanctity of home, chastity of women and enforcement of law. The Klan would not tolerate members who were bootleggers, gamblers, libertines or violators of the moral and civil law. At the national level the Klan was powerful enough to re-elect President Calvin Coolidge in 1922 and force Congress to pass stricter immigration laws in 1924. By 1925 Texas had 450,000 members. The Klan was like the San Saba Mob in one way as it dominated the social and political life in the area. The main difference was a lack of violence and killings. It was considered as a social organization working to preserve the American ideals for the next generation. The Church during this time went on about the business of preaching the gospel, holding debates and revivals and not taking a public stand one way or another concerning the Klan. Indications are other churches in the area supported the Klan from the pulpit. This was not true with the Church of Christ in San Saba. (Additional note: racism is always wrong—RW.)

[30] The San Saba News, 8 June 1922, n.p.

[31] Interview with Maurice Hoover April 1997; Earl Irvin West, In Search Of The Ancient Order, (Indianapolis, In.: Religious Book Service, 1979), vol. 3, 57. As the twentieth century began some believed the old-time preachers were no better than the modern ones. They lived under different conditions socially and religiously. The preacher’s life was difficult at best. Most were farmers with large families. They traveled into the most rural and obscure places and preached for little money. Consequently they were always appealing for funds. His education was meager and his knowledge of the Bible was self-taught. As one generation passed and another took their place the modern emphasis was on the college educated and permanent preacher. Clem W. Hoover was born 12 April 1886 in Burnet County, Texas. He and his wife had four children. Two died at childbirth. He began preaching at Meridian, Mississippi in 1905. He received dental surgery training from Dr. O. Gordon Martin at Meridian Male College. He later served the Church at Goldthwaite 1931-1935, 1943-1946, Kingsville 1935-1937 and a second time at San Saba 1946-1948. One cannot underestimate the stabilizing effect Clem Hoover had when he was preaching at San Saba the first time. Under his leadership the building was completed during the depression and was also saved from repossession. He was a guiding force during some of the most troubling days of the Church history.

[32] Deeds of Record, County Clerk’s Office, San Saba County, Texas, vol. 91, 367, 368, 475. The Church may have suspected future problems with paying bills as the depression arrived. Generally a corporation is formed to avoid being sued personally. Mrs. J. H. Burke appears on the resolution to form a corporation. Again this is uncommon for a woman to take such a leading role in Church affairs and business. She was described as a gentle well-bred woman who took an exceedingly active role in support of the Church. Her daughter attended San Saba High School and later went on to graduate from Abilene Christian College. The family later sold their property in San Saba County and returned to Powell, Texas located in Navarro County. E. B. House also served as county commissioner.

[33] The San Saba News, 26 June 1930, 1; 17 July 1930, n.p.; 28 August 1930, n.p.; 4 September 1930, n.p.

[34] Letter from Christine Sloan to Maurice and Gordie Hoover, 20 April 1997.

[35] Interview with C. E. Stewart, April 1997.

[36] Interview with past preacher Hulen Jackson, April 1997; Letter from Christine Sloan to Maurice and Gordie Hoover, April 1997. When the Church began to secure pledges from members to construct the building, Deacon J. D. Estep promised \$1,000.00. Then Mrs. Paul Sloan's father, J. H. Burke, said he would match that of Estep's pledge. Finally Estep was persuaded to double that amount and so did Burke. Later Estep reneged on his promise and gave only \$1,000.00. When Burke considered doing the same, his wife held him to the \$2,000.00. J. H. Burke was never a member of the Church of Christ.

[37] Deeds of Trust, County Clerk's Office, San Saba County, Texas, vol. 32, 560 & 561.

[38] Ibid. Vol. 101, 154 & 155.

[39] Jack Welch & Canning, The Restoration Movement in Texas, video.

[40] Deeds of Record, County Clerk's Office, San Saba County, Texas, vol. 127, 379 & 340; vol. 129, 407; vol. 52, 553. The purchase of the northwest corner of the Church block was done in two separate transactions. The first purchase was in July for \$7,000.00 and the second was in November for \$2,000.00. Jim C. Clark loaned the Church \$2,000.00 for the November purchase.

[41] Interview with Otto W. Bynum, April 1997. The Westside congregation never had over fifty members and about 10 to 12 members attend services on any given Sunday today.

[42] Stephens & Holmes, Historical Atlas of Texas, 473; Interview with John P. Shero May 1997. The Church began working with other local religious groups in the 1950s by rotating the high school baccalaureate service. This may have been the only community involvement the Church participated in during the 1960s.

[43] Haynes, The History of The Church of Christ, 1; Interview with John P. Shero May 1997. The Cherokee Home For Children was conceived by B. A. Hays, J. E. Epperson, J. C. Bristo, Hilly Walker and Haven Miller. In May 1956 the Church of Christ of Cherokee accepted the responsibility to begin the home. The concept of the home was to care for Latin children who came from desperate and unwanted homes. The first cottage was completed on 23 September 1958 and a second cottage was added in September 1960. In 1965 a third cottage and administration building was built and by 1970 a multipurpose building was added. A fourth cottage was added in 1972 and a year later an administration building was added. In 1974 the board of directors at large decided to move the children and staff from the Cherokee Church to the Church at San Saba. In 1984 the group resumed worship services back in Cherokee. The home is now overseen by the elders of the Austin Avenue Church of Christ in Brownwood. This came about in 1979. The home is located two miles north of Cherokee on State Highway 16 in San Saba County, Texas. The Children attend school at Cherokee Independent School District and the home is now open to children of all races.

[44] Deeds of Trust, County Clerk's Office, San Saba County, Texas, vol. 177, 705. When the property to the east of the Church block was bought there was no mention made in the deed of the purchase price; Interview with Larry Conners July 1997. Larry Conners is a local minister with the Richiand Springs Church of Christ in that community. In 1984 he conducted a study for credit at Sunset School of Preaching. Gerald Paden was course instructor. The study reflected the Church of San Saba comprised of a mixture of members that was similar to the community regarding social-economic status i.e. annual income, education level, job level, etc. At the time of the study attendance reflected the following: total membership 120, Sunday a.m. Worship 100, Sunday p.m. Worship 65, Wednesday p.m. Worship 40 and Sunday a.m. Bible class 80. The study also indicated a large portion of contributions, eighty to eighty-seven percent, that was spent on local building and ground up-keep, renovation and the local preacher's salary. Local mission work (gospel meetings, etc.) was the next largest fund allotted. Benevolent works and contributions would be equal to or just below local missions in funding. Foreign missions would be the next largest and domestic missions the least. San Saba fit in with other

typical congregations of the time as most money was spent on the local congregation by far. This was about the norm for Churches of Christ of that size, location and time.

[45] Haynes, The History of The Church of Christ, 2. The prison ministry was first begun by Lyle McCullum of the Church in Killeen. At the time the prison was established Rodney Tedford was preaching in San Saba. He never had the full opportunity to activate the ministry due to the loss of both of his parents, killed in an automobile accident in Ennis. John C. Felts and Otto W. Bynum deserve much of the credit for keeping the ministry alive until the arrival of John P. Shero.

[46] Interview with John P. Shero April 1997; Interview with Thomas Edward Ragsdale April 1997.

[47] Ibid. The Church also collects coats in October each year which are distributed to deserving and needy local children in the community.

[48] Interview with Sylvia Stewart June 1997; Interview with Thomas Edward Ragsdale June 1997.

[49] Interview with Thomas Edward Ragsdale June 1997. The Church operates today with a budget of about \$10,000.00 per month. Approximately 100 attend Sunday Bible school with nearly 180 present for the worship services. Currently serving as elders are Burton R. Doran, Kenneth W. Kuykendall, Otto W. Bynum and Thomas Edward Ragsdale. Serving as deacons are Paul Dwayne Bishop, Johnny W. Clawson, John C. Felts, Paul W. Golding, Charles L. Key, C. E. Stewart and J. C. Wall. Song leaders are Paul Dwayne Bishop, C. E. Stewart and Dale L. Rogers. The preacher is John P. Shero.

[Return to "Articles & Studies"](#)