



General Association of

General Baptists

100 Stinson Drive • Poplar Bluff, Missouri 63901

General Baptist History

Though theologically similar to the General Baptists in England and early America, this body of General Baptists arose in the midwestern United States in the 19th century through the work of Benoni Stinson (1789-1869), a United Baptist minister first in Kentucky and then in Indiana. Stinson was ordained in Kentucky in 1821, and evidently was already leaning toward or embracing Arminian theology. Shortly after he moved to Indiana, in 1822 the Wabash District Association decided to divide into two bodies, for convenience sake. Stinson's church would be in the new body, and he labored to have a statement that "the preaching that Christ tasted death for every man shall be no bar to fellowship" would be included in the articles of faith.

The next fall, in 1823, the Liberty Baptist Church of Howell, Indiana was organized with 33 members, and Elder Stinson was called as pastor. Three other churches were soon organized, all in the Evansville, Indiana area. In October 1824, representatives from these four churches came together and organized the Liberty Association of General Baptists. This appears to be the first time the name "General" was officially associated with this movement.

A number of General Baptist local associations were organized from 1824 to 1870. During this period, some attempts were made by the Liberty Association to correspond with the northern Free Will Baptists, but this appears to have eventually proved unsatisfactory to both parties. In 1870, a convention was called to meet with Harmony church, Gallatin County, Illinois, with the idea of organizing a general association comprising all the annual General Baptist associations. Delegates from Liberty, Mt. Olivet and Ohio associations gathered and formed the General Association of General Baptists. This body has grown and developed until it now embraces about 60 associations, 816 churches and more than 73,000 members.

The denominational headquarters are located in Poplar Bluff, Missouri, where they operate Stinson Press. The official denominational publication is The General Baptist Messenger. The General Association oversees various ministries and boards as well as Oakland City University in Oakland City, Indiana. The General Association is a member of the National Association of Evangelicals and the Baptist World Alliance.