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## **The Baptist and Methodist Churches in Georgia**

### **Baptist Church in Georgia**

From its beginnings in the seventeenth century, the Baptist denomination has emphasized certain key tenets, including the leadership of God as revealed through Jesus Christ, the authority of the Bible over ecclesiastical tradition, believer's baptism, individual responsibility toward God, the congregational church, local church autonomy that encourages cooperation between congregations, the separation of church and state, and religious liberty. Nevertheless, diversity has also marked Baptist denominational life in Georgia. Because membership figures change constantly, and there is some overlap between Baptist groups, the exact number of Baptists in Georgia is unknown. The best estimate as of 2005 is that there are approximately 8,190 Baptist churches and missions with more than 2,100,000 members.

In 1733 one or two Baptists arrived in Savannah with James Oglethorpe, and others soon followed. Tiny Baptist centers were formed in the Savannah and Augusta areas. Tuckaseeeking Seventh-Day, in Effingham County, was the first Baptist Church in Georgia and existed from 1759 to about 1763. In 1772 the first continuing Baptist Church, Kiokee, was founded near Appling, Georgia. Twelve years later, the first Baptist association in the state, the Georgia Association, appeared with a membership of five churches in two counties. Thereafter other churches and associations were constituted as the population spread throughout the state.

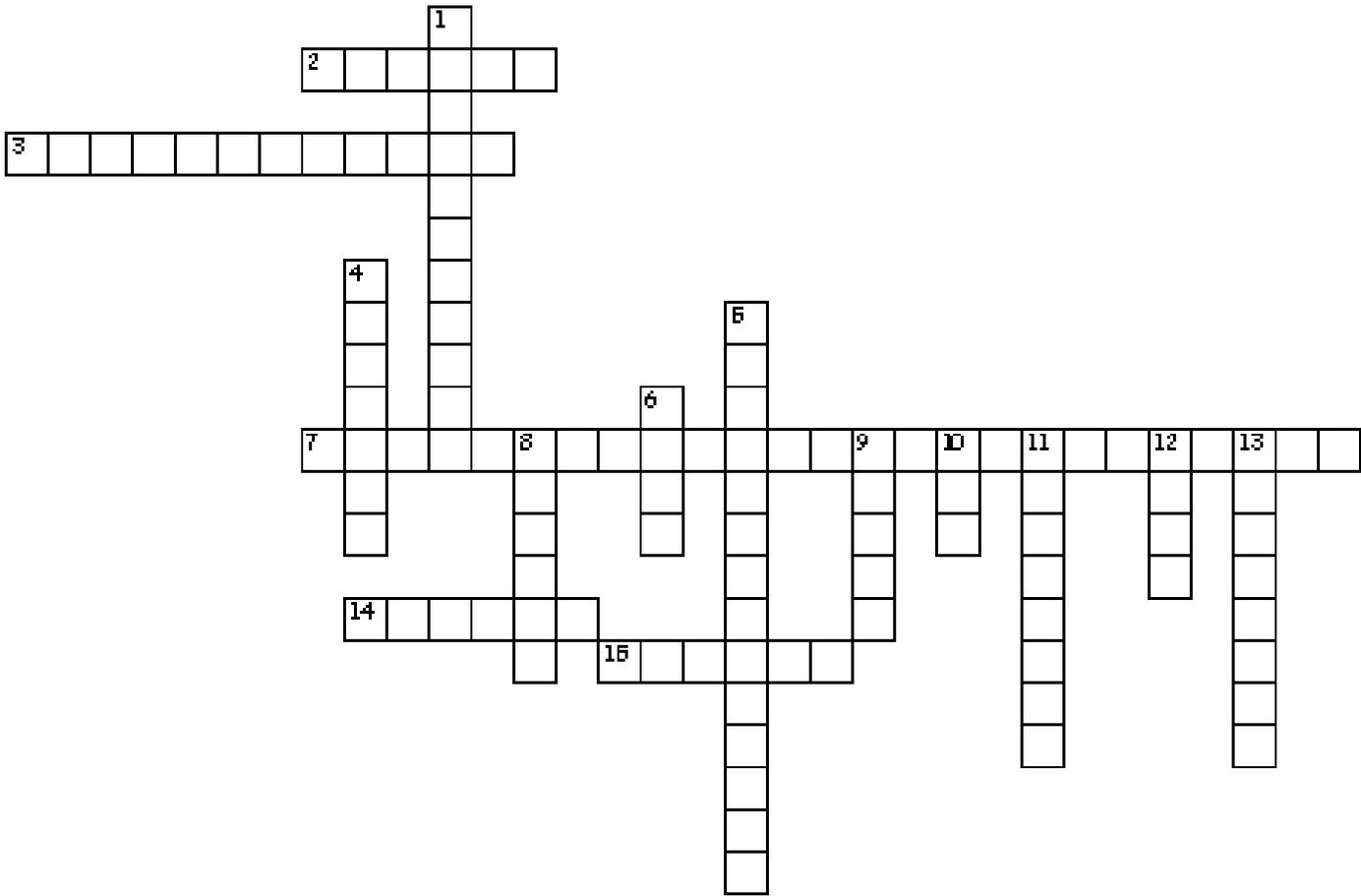
The earliest all-black congregations in Georgia, all founded in the late eighteenth century, were First African Baptist church in Savannah, Springfield Baptist Church in Augusta, and Beaverdams Baptist Church in Burke County. Early leaders in the state were David George, George Liele, Jesse Galphin, and Andrew Bryan. However, most African American Baptists in the state before the Civil War were slaves, forced to hold membership in white-dominated churches. With the coming of freedom, the Zion Baptist Association (founded in the Savannah area in 1865) was the first African American general body in the state; it was followed, over the years, by about 200 other associations.

### **Methodist Church in Georgia**

The Methodist faith was established by a pair of brothers, John and Charles Wesley, who were inspired by Reformation leaders such as John Calvin and Alfred Zwingli. The "formal introduction" of Methodism into Georgia occurred when church leaders assigned Beverly Allen to Georgia in 1785. Allen was an itinerant minister who had been elected elder at the Christmas Conference and ordained a year later. In 1786 Thomas Humphries and John Major, both of the Virginia Conference, were sent as missionaries to Georgia. Both likely began their work in Wilkes County. Bishop Asbury held the denomination's first annual conference in Georgia on April 9, 1788, at the fork of the Broad River, about twenty-one miles southeast of Elberton. Ten people were present, including Hope Hull, who was later recognized as the father of Georgia Methodism. In 1790 John Andrew of St. John Parish (later Liberty County), the father of Methodist bishop James Osgood Andrew, became the first native-born Georgian ordained as a Methodist preacher. The Georgia Conference reported 2,294 members in 1790.

The advance of Methodism in Georgia was aided by the interdenominational Great Awakening (circa 1790-1830), during which many Georgians converted to evangelical Christianity at outdoor revival services called camp meetings. By 1814 Methodist membership exceeded 10,000, a figure that almost doubled during the next fifteen years. Recurrent awakenings in 1835 and 1858 stimulated further growth, so that 97,000 Methodists lived in Georgia by 1861.

The awakenings quickened interest in missions (foreign and domestic), education, and benevolence. Georgia Methodists actively evangelized among slaves and, with the permission of estate owners, established missions on plantations. By the beginning of the Civil War (1861-65), membership among slaves had grown to 11,125 in the missions plus thousands more in churches. The total number of African American Methodists, of all denominations, in Georgia increased from 27,385 in 1860 to a reported 75,000 in 1875.



**Across**

2. Last name of the brothers who established the Methodist Church.
3. First name of the original Baptist Church in Georgia.
7. First all black congregation in Savannah
14. Most black Baptists in the state prior to the Civil War were \_\_\_\_\_.
15. First name of the Baptist Church established near Appling, Georgia.

**Down**

1. Methodist built missions on these farms to spread the Gospel to slaves.
4. Key tenet that produced the name "Baptist".
5. Evangelical movement that lasted from 1790-1830.
6. Number of churches in the 1st Baptist Association in the state of Georgia.
8. Last name of the first native born Georgian ordained as a Methodist minister.
9. Last name of the first Methodist minister assigned to the State of Georgia.
10. Number of people present at the first annual Methodist conference in Georgia.
11. The first Baptists came to this city with James Oglethorpe.
12. Last name of the man who is called the Father of Georgia Methodism.
13. Also called "camp meetings".