

Ryan Kristopher Giffin
*'Launched Upon Its God-Ordained Career': The
Founding of the Holiness Association of Texas*

Abstract:

The Holiness Association of Texas was one of several local, regional, and state holiness associations established during the Holiness Movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Active from 1900 to 1910, the Holiness Association of Texas should rank among the most historically important of these para-church associations. Its work was significant and its membership was noteworthy. This article provides a historical account of the association's founding. It offers a more extensive treatment than has yet been produced and corrects factual errors from previous accounts. Furthermore, unlike previous accounts, it engages with the original minutes of the association's meetings.

Keywords: Holiness Movement, Holiness associations, Holiness Association of Texas, Nazarene history, revivalism

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The Holiness Association of Texas was a voluntary, interdenominational group of Protestant Christians active in the Lonestar State from 1900 to 1910. Local, regional, and state holiness associations such as this one were common in the United States of America during the Holiness Movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.¹ As individuals participated in worship services, revivalistic camp meetings, and other aspects of religious life associated with this movement, many of these “holiness people” felt less comfortable within established churches. Others among them claimed to be recipients of open hostility and persecution from leaders and members of preexisting churches. Still others simply yearned to worship and experience community with like-minded believers. Holiness associations were intended to meet the needs generated by these dynamics without going so far as to create a new denomination, or until such time as a new holiness denomination could be established.

Looking back, the Holiness Association of Texas should rank among the most historically important of these para-church associations. In its decade of existence, it engaged not only in the typical association work of receiving members, licensing ministers, and providing oversight of local holiness bands, but it also founded a university, established a publishing house, supported an orphanage, and sustained a home for unwed mothers. Its members included several influential figures in what would emerge as the Church of the Nazarene, a global denomination of now over 2.5 million members with over 22,000 local churches and 700 missionaries serving in 80 world nations (Board of General Superintendents 2017: 5). Noteworthy members of the Texas group included Reuben “Bud” Robinson (a nationally-known itinerant evangelist), C. B. Jernigan (the first Nazarene district superintendent over churches in Oklahoma and Kansas), A. K. Bracken (president of what is now Southern Nazarene University), and future Nazarene General Superintendents Roy T. Williams and J. B. Chapman. These leaders were in the sunrise of their formation as ministers at the time of their participation in the Holiness Association of Texas. No doubt their involvement with this group during these impressionable years had a profound impact on their futures in positions of prominence.

Others have provided general accounts of the founding of this group (DeJernett 1911a: 6-7; 1911b: 6-7; Jernigan 1919: 97-108; Rogers 1944: 28-30; McConnell 1946: 41-42; Smith 1962: 161-166; Jones 2005: 248-249; White 2006: 36-37; Cunningham et al. 2009: 125-30; Giffin 2020: 41-43). However, none of those accounts approaches the length,

detail, or level of interaction with primary sources necessary fully to chronicle this epochal moment in the association's history. Additionally, while these general accounts are basically reliable, some contain factual mistakes related to dates, locations, decisions, and persons involved. My primary purposes for this article, therefore, are twofold. First and foremost, I seek to provide a more extensive treatment of the founding of the Holiness Association of Texas than has yet been produced. Second, I intend to correct the factual errors I have noticed in previous accounts. A key contribution to the fulfillment of both purposes will be a direct engagement with photocopies of the original minutes of the meetings of the association. To the best of my knowledge, no previous account has utilized this valuable source.²

The Merging of Three Regional Groups to Form the Holiness Association of Texas

Reminiscing several years after the events took place, Dennis Rogers, the inaugural president of the Holiness Association of Texas, relayed a simple summary of the association's founding:

The facts were that we had three small groups of people, working independently in adjoining territory. Rev. R. L. Averill had held a great meeting at Sunset on the west, where Brother C. A. McConnell lived. We had our little church adjoining them. Brother Jernigan was on the east with a few folks. So we decided to bring the three groups together and make one body of them (Rogers 1944: 29).

Although Rogers's summary represents an oversimplification of a series of events that would take more than two years to play out, it is nevertheless accurate in its essentials. The Holiness Association of Texas consisted largely of a merging of "three small groups of people": the Holiness Church Association of Texas (Rogers's organization), the Northwest Texas Holiness Association (the group Rogers associated with Averill and McConnell), and the holiness people of Greenville, Texas (the group Rogers associated with Jernigan). As Rogers indicated, the basic purpose of merging these three entities was "to bring the three groups together and make one body of them."

The oldest of the groups was the Holiness Church Association of Texas. This association represented the independent holiness churches known simply as the Holiness Church. The Holiness Church originated

in California in 1883 and was “one of the earliest come-outer groups to form within the Holiness Movement” (Cunningham et al. 2009: 123). Its work was established in Texas in 1886 by Dennis Rogers and his cousin, George M. Teel, with Rogers as “the acknowledged leader of the church” (Jernigan 1919: 92; on the establishment of the group in Texas by Rogers and Teel in 1886 see Cunningham et al. 2009: 124). In Texas, the Holiness Church Association was composed of about a dozen independent Holiness Church congregations. It hosted a camp meeting at Throckmorton and published a periodical, *True Holiness*. Of the three bodies that formed the Holiness Association of Texas, the Holiness Church Association of Texas appears to have been the most religiously conservative. They favored the autonomous government of each local church and opposed the use of musical instruments and the public collection of financial offerings in worship services.³

The second group, the Northwest Texas Holiness Association, came into existence on August 9, 1899, through the leadership of John T. Stanfield. Stanfield was a Cumberland Presbyterian minister who testified to the religious experience of entire sanctification in response to the preaching of R. L. Averill at the “great meeting at Sunset on the west” mentioned by Rogers.⁴ Stanfield began preaching the doctrine of entire sanctification and, as a consequence, was immediately suspended from his church. After his suspension, he continued to minister in and around Sunset. He organized his converts into nine holiness bands, served them as a circuit pastor, and established a campground in Sunset. The first camp meeting there took place in August of 1899, and on the ninth day of the month, Stanfield and thirty-five other people organized thirteen holiness bands into the Northwest Texas Holiness Association. C. A. McConnell, editor of both the local newspaper at Sunset (the *Sunset Signal*) and the official paper of this association (the *Texas Holiness Banner*), was a key layperson in this organization (on the Northwest Texas Holiness Association see Jernigan 1919: 94-96; Smith 1962: 163-164; Jones 2005: 252-253).

The third group was the one Rogers referred to when he mentioned “Brother Jernigan ... on the east with a few folks”: the holiness people of Greenville, Texas. C. B. Jernigan, an itinerant evangelist, along with many more than “a few [holiness] folks,” had made their home in an area just two miles north of Greenville known as Peniel. This community, in fact, “became a thriving center for Holiness leaders” (Cunningham et al. 2009: 128) including R. L. Averill, A. K. Bracken, Bud Robinson, Roy T. Williams,

and E. C. DeJernett. Peniel was home to Texas Holiness University, an institution which boasted an enrollment of nearly 350 students in 1906 and “became noteworthy among Holiness people throughout the country” (Cunningham et al. 2009: 128-129). The holiness people of Peniel also supported a local orphanage, hosted the well-attended annual Greenville Holiness Camp meeting, and provided a publishing base for the *Texas Holiness Advocate* (later the *Pentecostal Advocate*) paper (On the holiness people of Greenville, see Smith 1962: 164-166; White 2006: 51-73; Cunningham et al. 2009: 128-130).

Members of all three groups received a call prepared by DeJernett and Jernigan to all the holiness people of Texas to assemble for a convention in Terrell on September 7-8, 1898 (Jernigan 1919: 97-98).⁵ The convention was to take place in conjunction with a camp meeting led by two of the most prominent holiness preachers of the day, Henry Clay Morrison and Bud Robinson. The purpose of the call, according to Jernigan, was “to provide a home for homeless holiness people of the South; or at least to organize them into an association for mutual protection, for the spread of scriptural holiness” (Jernigan 1919: 98).

A General Convention of All Holiness People: The Texas Holiness Convention in Terrell, September 7-8, 1898

Although Jernigan mentioned “the spread of scriptural holiness” as one of the purposes for the Texas Holiness Convention at Terrell, his firsthand account inclines one to believe that it was motivated more directly by the opposition he and other holiness people felt from other established groups. Jernigan indicated that “outspoken opposition” to the preaching of holiness as a second blessing existed “among all churches” (Jernigan 1919: 97). While one senses a measure of hyperbole in that last statement, Jernigan did provide evidence for such opposition. He highlighted the involuntary expulsions and voluntary withdrawals of various holiness preachers and laypersons from the Methodist Episcopal Church South and the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, along with the “turning out” of “hundreds” of ministers and laypersons from Baptist churches (1919: 97; Jernigan specifically mentioned the expulsions of Henry Clay Morrison, Bud Robinson, E. C. DeJernett, A. W. Rogers, and John T. Stanfield, and the voluntary withdrawals of C. M. Keith, J. W. Lively, Julian Woodson, and Ben Hines). Jernigan also spotlighted opposition to holiness camp

meetings, along with opposition from a Methodist Episcopal Church South bishop who “stated on the floor that they would stamp the ‘second blessing heresy’ out of their church if it took five years” (1919: 97). The portrait Jernigan painted is one of high-running tensions that had finally reached their boiling point. Agitation with the current state of affairs and an urgency to take decisive action filled the air as the holiness people marched toward Terrell. They were determined to belong to a church in which their message and experience of holiness was welcome, even if it meant creating their own.

Leaders from at least three already-established ecclesiastical groups represented themselves at the convention at Terrell: The Holiness Church (Rogers’s group), the Free Methodist Church, and the Methodist Episcopal Church (not to be confused with the Methodist Episcopal Church South). Each of these groups held hopes that the holiness people would unite with them. It is not clear, however, if any portion of the convention was taken up with formal petitions from their representatives. For various reasons, the holiness people refused officially to tie themselves exclusively to any one of them (see the discussion in Jernigan 1919: 99-100).

In the fourth of a series of articles written by E. C. DeJernett in 1911 for the *Pentecostal Advocate* paper on the history of organized holiness in Texas, DeJernett recalled that “some of the questions which were up for consideration” at the Terrell convention were these:

1. “What are our people to do for a church home who have been turned out of the various churches for professing holiness, or who have withdrawn from, or who no longer find agreeable fellowship in the various churches to which they have belonged or of which they are now members?”
2. “What are we to do with the new converts who have been brought to pardon by the revival meetings held by our evangelists?”
3. “What shall be done to give official recognition and appointment to those of our people who feel called to preach the gospel?”
4. “What is the holiness movement to do in order to protect itself against false professors and false preachers?” (DeJernett 1911b: 6; cf. Jernigan 1919: 98-99.)⁶

After what DeJernett referred to as “several days of deliberation,” the outcome of the discussion amounted to three general recommendations. The first pertained to persons who were already members of an established church. For these, it was recommended that they keep their membership in that church and continue to support it. They should continue to profess holiness at their home church even if it resulted in opposition, “enduring patiently the slights or open persecutions of their fellow members” (DeJernett 1911b:6; cf. Jernigan 1919:99).

A second recommendation applied to those who, for whatever reason, currently held no church membership. These were admonished to seek membership in whichever established church best suited them and then (presumably) to do what those who were already members of an established church were recommended to do: support that church and receive whatever opposition might come their way.

The third recommendation probably felt more substantive to the attendees than the previous two. This one called for the establishment, not of a new church, but of a state holiness union. This state organization, it was proposed, could serve as a parent organization for smaller county and local holiness unions or bands that could provide fellowship and sponsor evangelistic services and conferences. Rogers’s account suggests that this recommendation included organizing holiness bands and using John Wesley’s sermon on “Christian Perfection” as their statement of doctrine (1944: 29). Anyone who wished to join the proposed state holiness union would be required to demonstrate proof of membership in a local church or provide a “reasonable excuse” for not uniting with one (DeJernett 1911b: 7; cf. also Gassaway’s contemporary account [1898: 9]; Jernigan 1919: 100-101).⁷

However well-intended these recommendations were, they did not stick. The holiness people were no longer willing to tolerate opposition in existing churches. DeJernett indicated that the only churches in Texas which were friendly toward them were the three with representatives at the meeting. He reported that only a few of the unchurched holiness people united with these. The vast majority refused to do so for several reasons, including disputes over the use of instrumental music in worship services, appropriate dress, and staunch sectarianism (see DeJernett 1911b: 6; Jernigan 1919: 99-101; Smith 1962: 162). As for the recommended state holiness union, such a union was indeed organized in 1899 and a few local unions may have been established under its auspices.⁸ However,

this organization gained no real traction and did not even hold a second annual meeting. In their respective accounts, both Jernigan and Rogers labelled the organization “a failure,” and the “Historical” sections of the *Year Book* published by the Holiness Association of Texas for years 1903-1904 and 1904-1905 indicate that “the convention was soon forgotten” (Jernigan 1919: 101; Rogers 1944: 29; Holiness Association of Texas 1903: 3; 1904: 5).⁹ Jernigan placed the blame for this squarely on the requirement of membership in an existing church. He also reported that “there was a clamor for another convention to provide a home for the homeless holiness people” (1919: 101). The clamor was heard. Just one year after the Texas Holiness Convention at Terrell, another gathering was scheduled to take place in Greenville.

Clearing Away the Underbrush: The Convention in Greenville, November 23-24, 1899

As they did for the Terrell convention, DeJernett and Jernigan put out a call for all the holiness people of Texas to assemble in Greenville on Thursday and Friday, November 23-24, 1899. The Thursday sessions took place at a mission hall in town. On Friday, the holiness people continued their sessions in the spacious new dining room and chapel of Texas Holiness University in Peniel.¹⁰

C. A. McConnell’s contemporary report of this gathering gives one the impression that it was basically a repeat of the Terrell convention. DeJernett served as chair. Determining the kind of lasting organization to be established was, in McConnell’s words, “the meat of the whole matter” (1899: 7). Some still favored sticking to the established churches, which essentially amounted to upholding the outcome determined at Terrell. Others, including DeJernett, Jernigan, Dennis Rogers, Tom Rogers, and Noah J. Cooley, favored forming a wholly independent holiness denomination. No consensus was reached on the first day (McConnell 1899: 7).

During the morning session of the second day, representatives of each of the established denominations were granted the opportunity to make their case for why theirs was the most ideal church home for the holiness people. Early accounts expound only on the appeal of J. W. Lively, which probably suggests that his pitch was the one taken most seriously. Lively was the presiding elder of the Gulf Mission conference of the

Methodist Episcopal Church. DeJernett referred to his appeal as “a vigorous plea” (1911c: 6; cf. Jernigan 1919: 101). Lively emphasized the power, wealth, and stability of the Methodist Episcopal Church, an established organization in which the holiness people would have direct access to the church’s mission funds, building funds, church extension funds, and educational opportunities (McConnell 1899: 7; Jernigan 1919: 101). Lively prophesied that the day would come when the holiness movement would, in fact, almost exclusively come under the care of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and that “certain destruction” would come to any holiness work remaining outside of it (McConnell 1899: 7). A brand-new holiness church, Lively argued, simply could not be sustained. If all the holiness people were to unite under the banner of a new church “they would proceed to destroy each other” (McConnell 1899: 7). In his opinion, the church of Wesley was “the only logical home of every sanctified person” (McConnell 1899: 7). According to Jernigan’s account, Lively ended his impassioned speech with an invitation: “Come home, boys, to your mother. Methodism is the mother of holiness. Come home, and we will do as they used to do: give you a horse to ride, and a pair of old-fashioned saddlebags, with a Bible in one side and a Methodist hymn book in the other; and put some money in your pockets, and send you out to preach holiness” (1919: 101-102).

While Lively’s appeal did not persuade the holiness people to unite with his church, it seems to have had some impact on the outcome—or lack thereof—of the Greenville convention. Texas Holiness University president A. M. Hills cautioned the assembly against taking quick action toward starting a brand-new denomination. McConnell reported that some in the audience were, in fact, “strenuously opposed” to doing so. At one point during the meeting, McConnell himself was invited to explain the ministry plan of the Northwest Texas Holiness Association, although he does not report on how his explanation was received. In the end, two motions were made. The first was to form a committee of seven persons to craft a statement of doctrine and to hold another gathering in three years, at which said committee would report. The second motion was the same as the first, except this motion called for the gathering to be held in three *months* instead of three years. Neither motion passed. To put an end to the two days of passionate appeals, dead-end motions, merry-go-round discussion, and lack of consensus, Lula Rogers made a motion that the Greenville gathering adjourn *sine die*. This motion carried (see McConnell 1899: 7; Jernigan 1919: 102).

For all intents and purposes the Greenville convention ended the same way as the Terrell convention. The homeless holiness people of Texas would either need to remain homeless or find a home among one of the established churches. For “a large minority” of the attendees this outcome was unacceptable (Jernigan 1919: 102). For some among these, the *ad nauseum* deliberations of the two failed gatherings brought clarity. As McConnell reported, “during the two days discussion the underbrush was cleared away” (1899: 7). They were ready and determined to take decisive action toward either starting a new church or organizing some sort of association that could perform the basic functions of a church.

After the meeting adjourned in the dining hall at THU, either Jernigan found Dennis Rogers or Rogers found Jernigan and one of them said to the other, “Since the big folks won’t do anything, why can’t we little folks get together and do something?” Whoever was asked this responded with, “We can” (Rogers 1944: 29).¹¹ Wasting no time, Jernigan and Rogers huddled up with a few like-minded colleagues and, following a “hurried consultation,” made an impromptu decision to continue the conversation that very night at Jernigan’s house in Greenville (Jernigan 1919: 102).

The Little Folks Get Together: The Spontaneous Meeting at the Jernigan Home on November 24, 1899

C. B. Jernigan and his wife, Johnny, and their children lived in a home located at 271 North Wesley Street in Greenville.¹² According to McConnell, it was inside this house that “at night after the second day the Holy Ghost had right of way” (1899: 7). Those who longed for a home for the holiness people of Texas believed the Holy Spirit had thus far been barricaded from moving them toward this. The two larger gatherings at Terrell and Greenville only seemed to cement the blockades. In McConnell’s view, those obstacles were finally cleared at an informal nighttime get-together at the Jernigan home.

The surviving records are somewhat muddled on just how many people showed up at the Jernigan house that night, but it was not a large group.¹³ No doubt the excitement in the room was less fuzzy to the attendees than the headcount. At some point during the gathering McConnell was asked to lay out the form and plan of organization adopted just four months earlier by the Northwest Texas Holiness Association (Jernigan 1919: 102;

McConnell 1946: 41).¹⁴ Those in the house moved to adopt the same plan but to increase its scope to encompass the whole state. Furthermore, those present from the Holiness Church (Rogers's group) presented the idea of modifying their own discipline and rules with an eye toward uniting themselves with the Northwest Texas Holiness Association ahead of the proposed state association (McConnell 1899: 7).

This scenario apparently satisfied the hopes of everyone in the room. They planned their next steps. Those at Jernigan's house would go back to the local groups they represented, and these groups would send delegates to a follow-up meeting in Greenville set to take place just one month later on either December 22 or 23, 1899. As Christmas day approached, these delegates would gather with the intent of gifting the holiness people of Texas with a present: the formation of a holiness association chartered under the laws of the state.

A Few Heard the Wail of the Unchurched Holiness People: Another Meeting in Greenville on December 22 or 23, 1899

The December meeting was not well attended. According to the *Holiness Association of Texas Year Book 1903-4* and *1904-5* only three people showed up (1904: 3; 1905: 5). Smith indicates that "Rogers, Jernigan, McConnell, and a few associates met in Greenville in December" (1962: 164) but there may not have been any associates. Jernigan recalled that there were "only a few present" and gives the following reason why: "the most conservative leaders had decided that nothing could be done; and many talked of would-be leaders, and self-appointed Moseses. Such talk frightened many away from the December convention" (1919: 102). Although a way forward was found at the Jernigan home, on the heels of the failed gatherings in Terrell and THU, the idea of congregating for a third "convention" may well have seemed like an exercise in futility.

The December gathering took place either on Friday the 22nd or Saturday the 23rd.¹⁵ With more than a touch of irony, in light of his reference to "self-appointed Moseses," Jernigan employed exodus imagery to describe the gathering: "there were a few who had heard the wail of the unchurched holiness people and were determined to follow the pillar of cloud and fire and provide a home for these excluded people" (1919: 102-103). The practical purpose of the meeting was to follow up on the idea generated at the nighttime meeting in November of forming a state-

wide association by uniting the Holiness Church with the Northwest Texas Holiness Association.

The small meeting in December produced two outcomes. The first was the formation of a North Texas Holiness Association (Holiness Association of Texas 1904: 4; 1905: 5). McConnell's report of the meeting at Jernigan's house mentioned a determination on the part of the attendees to form a "North Texas Association" (1899: 7). Those at the December meeting acted on this. Jernigan served as its president.¹⁶ He indicated that holiness bands were rapidly organized under its auspices (1900: 8). Other than that, little else is known about this regional association. It seems likely that it never had a plenary gathering and was discarded when it met in joint session with the Northwest Texas Holiness Association and Rogers's Holiness Church group the following April. The scheduling of that meeting was the second outcome of the December meeting. The Holiness Church was already scheduled to meet in April at their Holiness Park campground in Collin County, seven miles north of McKinney, Texas, for its semi-annual gathering. Those at the December meeting hoped that at the April gathering the Holiness Church would formally unite with both the Northwest Texas Holiness Association and the freshly-minted North Texas Holiness Association (See Holiness Association of Texas 1904: 4; 1905: 5; Jernigan, 1919: 104; Smith 1962: 164; Cunningham et al. 2009: 126).¹⁷ Their hopes would be realized.

Drafting a Statement of Doctrine and Form of Organization: The Meeting at Holiness Park Campground on April 3-4, 1900

At a meeting of the Northwest Texas Holiness Association, D. F. Redding read aloud a letter from Jernigan requesting that their association send delegates to meet with other holiness groups at Holiness Park campground on Tuesday, April 3, 1900 "for the purpose of organizing a state association" (Harvey 1900: 4). A notice from Dennis Rogers was also published in the March 1900 issue of the *Texas Holiness Banner* indicating that "three Associations" would gather at their campground in Collin County "to form the Texas Holiness Association" (Rogers 1900: 4).¹⁸ In the same issue, Jernigan published a correspondence indicating that he and his North Texas Holiness Association colleagues were "looking forward to the state convention in April with fond hopes" (1900: 8). McConnell's editorial in the April issue published just ahead of the gathering contained an earnest

exhortation: “Let all God’s people pray mightily that the Holy Spirit may be in power in the conference, and the will of our Master Jesus be done in His cause” (1900: 4). Anticipation ran high as delegates representing each of the three groups set out for Collin County.

The photocopies of the handwritten minutes of the Holiness Association of Texas begin with this meeting at Holiness Park. They constitute the opening pages of the collective minutes of the annual sessions of the association until the final annual session in 1910.¹⁹ These minutes offer direct evidence for what took place at Holiness Park and all subsequent annual gatherings of the association. The minutes of the Holiness Park meeting opened with this report:

Pursuant to a call in the *Texas Holiness Advocate*, the North Texas Holiness Association and the Northwest Texas Holiness Association met in joint session with the Holiness Church association at Holiness Park 7 miles north of McKinney, Tex April 3rd 1900.... After a season of worship of prayer and praise and old-time shouting, the house was called to order by Bro. Dennis Rogers, President of the Holiness Church association (Holiness Association of Texas. (1910: 1)

The large sessions of the meeting took place under a tent (Holiness Association of Texas 1910: 3). At least thirty-two people were present.²⁰ After noting the elections of Rogers as meeting chairman, Jernigan as secretary, and J. T. Stanfield as assistant secretary, the minutes then record the purpose of the meeting: “All present agreed that the purpose of the meeting was to get the homeless holiness people together in a body for the purpose of unity of action and more aggressive work in the future” (Holiness Association of Texas 1910: 1).

Following a discussion of “the present situation of the Holiness Movement,” Rogers moved to appoint a committee “to formulate some statement of doctrine and rules of government for the association” (Holiness Association of Texas 1910: 2). Eleven persons were appointed to this committee, and the meeting adjourned until the committee could report (Holiness Association of Texas 1910: 2).²¹ The minutes record no further activity or action on the first day.

The second day began with the report of the appointed committee. The report contained seven articles of faith and seventeen articles related to the association’s form of government. The articles of faith included

statements on “The Godhead,” “Man’s Nature and Destiny,” “Conviction,” “Repentance,” “Justification by Faith,” “Sanctification by Faith,” and “Ordinances.” The articles on the form of government addressed issues such as voting and elections, membership eligibility and requirements (including ethical and behavioral requirements relating to the prohibition of opium, buying and selling alcohol, renting pews, violating the sabbath day, etc.), and licensing ministers. Each article was discussed and adopted one at a time (See Holiness Association of Texas 1910: 3-9).

The next section of the minutes records a description of the leadership offices of the association and their duties. The established offices consisted of a president, a vice president, a secretary-treasurer, and “seven directors or trustees, all of whom shall possess the Scriptural qualifications as set forth in Acts 6:3, Titus 1:6-9, Titus 3:1-4” (Holiness Association of Texas 1910: 10). The minutes then note the elections of Dennis Rogers as president, J. T. Stanfield as vice president, and C. B. Jernigan as secretary-treasurer (Holiness Association of Texas 1910: 12).²²

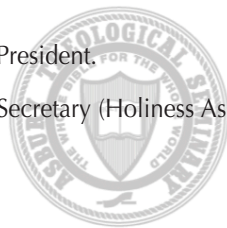
Next, the minutes transcribe the text of the form of minister’s license adopted by the association:

This to certify that _____ is a member of the Holiness Association of Texas and is a recognized minister of the gospel, duly licensed and ordained; and we recommend _____ to the love and fellowship of the saints everywhere. _____ is entitled to the benefits and privileges due to _____ calling.

Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. Mark 16:15. Good for one year _____ date.

_____ President.

_____ Secretary (Holiness Association of Texas 1910: 12).



The minutes of the Holiness Park meeting concluded with two action items. First, the delegates decided the new association should publish its statement of doctrine and rules of government. A financial offering of ten dollars was

collected toward this end. McConnell was to oversee the publication. The statement of doctrine and the rules of government were published in the May issue of the *Texas Holiness Banner* (Anonymous 1900: 5).²³ Second, the newly-formed association scheduled their “next annual meeting” in Sunset on November 13, 1900 at 10:00am (Holiness Association of Texas 1910: 12-13).

If the Sunset meeting was to be their “next” annual meeting, the delegates must have considered this gathering at Holiness Park the first official annual meeting of the Holiness Association of Texas. It surely felt like that for the participants as they named their new association, elected their leaders, drafted a statement of doctrine, and established a set of governing rules. Jernigan contrasted the Holiness Park meeting with the previous ones at Terrell and Greenville: “At this gathering, things worked more smoothly, since those who did not want anything remained away, and left those who did want an organization to go ahead with their work” (1919: 104). Go ahead with their work they did, and the outcome was precisely what they had been hoping and praying would result. Later historical statements of the association published in their *Year Book* identified the Holiness Park meeting as the one at which the union of the three holiness groups crystalized (see, e.g., Holiness Association of Texas 1906: 5; 1907: 5; Jernigan 1919: 104). From this meeting forward, the homeless holiness people of Texas had an organizational roof over their head.

Kindling Fire for Others to Warm By: The Meeting in Sunset on November 13, 1900

Seven months later, on Tuesday, November 13, 1900, members of the Holiness Association of Texas assembled in Sunset, Texas for what the minutes, recorded by Jernigan, refer to as their “regular annual session” (Holiness Association of Texas 1910: 22).²⁴ At the first business session at 2:30pm, association president Dennis Rogers called the house to order. Rogers opened with “a suitable talk on kindling a fire for others to warm by, saying we are dealing for future generations. Perhaps God often chooses little men to accomplish great ends” (Holiness Association of Texas 1910: 22).

Much of the Sunset meeting was taken up with roll calls, reports, and elections. Roll was called for the “original members of the association.”

Names were added to the roll where no local bands were organized. The reports of eleven local holiness bands were received. Seven ministers gave formal reports. Recognitions of calls to the ministry were approved for twenty-two individuals. The treasurer's report was read and approved. Rogers, Stanfield, and Jernigan were reelected to the offices of President, Vice President, and Secretary-Treasurer. Seven local directors were also elected (for all this see Holiness Association of Texas 1910: 23-27).

Following these business items, the delegates devoted time to discussing "what can be done to advance the work" (Holiness Association of Texas 1910: 28). Nine motions were passed. The most consequential were the adoption of the *Texas Holiness Advocate* as the association's official periodical and the appointment of a committee to produce and distribute the association's *Year Book* and minister's licenses. The delegates also set the third Sunday in November as the date for its annual meeting (see Holiness Association of Texas 1910: 28-29). Each of these decisions impacted the Holiness Association of Texas from this meeting until its final one in 1910.

The two most important outcomes of the Sunset meeting were the decisions to incorporate the association and to revise the statement of doctrine and form of government drafted at Holiness Park. Jernigan shared with the delegates his view that incorporation was necessary, and Rogers appointed a committee to have the association incorporated under the laws of the state (see Holiness Association of Texas 1910: 27). The final item noted in the minutes prior to the reading of the minutes and adjournment is the appointment of seven persons to a "committee on revision of Statement of Doctrine and Form of Government" (Holiness Association of Texas 1910: 29).²⁵ Neither the minutes of this meeting, the Holiness Park meeting, nor the minutes of the following meeting at Greenville where the revised statement was presented and approved provide any information on why the delegates believed the original version needed revising. All that is known is that a revision committee was appointed at Sunset, and that a revised version of the statement drafted at Holiness Park was adopted at Greenville.²⁶ More will be said about the revisions in the discussion of the Greenville meeting below.

Given Every Function of a Church: The Articles of Incorporation Granted on December 31, 1900

For the association to have legal standing, hold property, and receive recognition from the railroad bureaus it was necessary for them to seek incorporation with the state of Texas. The advantages of incorporation were well understood by Jernigan, who recorded the following note in the minutes of the Sunset meeting:

On chartering the association C. B. Jernigan reports necessary to incorporate to have legal standing and holding property and getting R. R. courtesies.

President then appointed a committee of Incorporation as follows to have the Holiness Association of Texas incorporate and to secure charter and seal –

Dennis Rogers

Chas. A. McConnell

C. B. Jernigan

A freewill offering was then taken and \$9.50 was raised and turned over to Dennis Rogers chairman of incorporation committee (Holiness Association of Texas 1910: 27).

Although Jernigan's note states that Rogers was appointed to the incorporation committee, all other records, including the original articles of incorporation submitted to the Texas Department of State and the certificate of incorporation issued by the Department of State, indicate that the three incorporators were McConnell, Jernigan, and DeJernett.²⁷ These three leaders appeared personally before C. L. Elder, a notary public in Hunt County, on Friday, December 21, 1900 to present him with the articles of incorporation. Elder placed his official seal on the document, which was subsequently filed with the State department on New Year's Eve, Monday, December 31, 1900 under the hand of Texas Secretary of State I. D. H. Hardy in Austin (Holiness Association of Texas 1900).²⁸

The articles of incorporation declare that “the purposes for which [the association] is formed are the support of public worship, the dissemination of the gospel, and for the purpose of binding more closely together the Holiness people and promoting the Holiness movement at home and abroad” (Holiness Association of Texas 1900). As McConnell later noted, “The charter granted by the state gave the association every function of a church, even to the ordaining of elders and licensing preachers” (1946: 42). Rogers echoed the same sentiment: “We were practically functioning as a church. We had our association incorporated and had a state seal with which we stamped the license of our preachers” (1944: 30).

Launched Upon its God-Ordained Career: The Session in Greenville on May 29-30, 1901

On May 29-30, 1901, five months after it was officially incorporated with the state, the Holiness Association of Texas held what the minutes refer to as its “semiannual session” in the tabernacle of the Greenville Holiness Campground (Holiness Association of Texas 1910: 32).²⁹ DeJernett remembered there being “a large and enthusiastic attendance at this meeting” (1911c: 6; cf. Jernigan 1919: 105). The first order of business at the 10:00am session on Wednesday, May 29, was to suspend regular business and hear the report of the committee on the revision of the statement of doctrine and form of government. The committee requested further time and the addition of more persons to its roster. President Rogers granted the request and added four names to the committee: W. B. Huckabee, R. L. Averill, A. G. Jeffries, and C. M. Keith. The committee was given until 9:00am the next day to complete their report. After this, and a few welcoming remarks from Rogers, the association dispensed with all other official business for the day. The delegates spent the remainder of the opening day hearing sermons and anticipating the report of the revision committee (for all this see Holiness Association of Texas 1910: 32).

At the 9:00am session on Thursday morning, Dr. J. W. Harvey, secretary of the revision committee, read their report one article at a time. The association adopted each in turn. Noteworthy changes included the addition of articles on the actual name of the association (“This association shall be known as the Holiness Association of Texas”) and its objective: “The object of this association shall be the promotion of the doctrine and experience of Scriptural Holiness throughout the world.” The revised

statement removed the article in the original statement on “The Godhead” and replaced it with the full text of the Apostles Creed. Noticeably absent from the new edition are the statements from the original version on the nature and destiny of humanity, baptism and the Lord’s Supper, the forbiddance of singing certain types of songs, buying and selling alcohol, taking another member of the association to court, using houses of worship for other activities, and renting pews. Noticeably present in the new version, unlike the original one, are explicit statements that ministerial members “shall be in the experience of holiness” and that elected officers “shall be in the experience of entire sanctification.”³⁰ When the two statements are laid side-by-side, one senses that a motivating factor in the decision to revise the document was the desire for unity within the association around the doctrine and experience of Christian holiness and entire sanctification. Many statements which could lead to division were removed. Statements encouraging harmony in holiness were added.

Jernigan’s later reference to this Greenville gathering as “the constitutional meeting” of the association suggests that revising and adopting the statement of doctrine and form of government was its primary purpose. The Holiness Association of Texas was now, in Jernigan’s estimation, “fully launched” (1919: 105).³¹ The remainder of the meeting was occupied with more customary business such as appointing persons to various committees, receiving new members, and licensing preachers. Thirteen individuals were listed in the minutes among the new members received into the association. Twenty-one persons were recorded as having been granted a license to preach (Holiness Association of Texas 1910: 38-41). Included on both lists is Reuben “Bud” Robinson, arguably the most famous evangelist of both the Holiness Movement and the Wesleyan-Holiness tradition (Holiness Association of Texas 1910: 39).³² Nine years later Robinson published a tribute in the *Pentecostal Advocate* paper on the occasion of the association’s ending (Robinson 1910: 3). Here, in Greenville, the association was only beginning. As the “Historical” sections of most of the surviving editions of its *Year Book* stressed, it was in the tabernacle on the Greenville Holiness Camp Grounds that “the Holiness Association was launched upon its God-ordained career” (Holiness Association of Texas 1904: 5; 1906: 5; 1907a: 5).³³

Summary

In this article I have attempted to provide a more extensive treatment of the founding of the Holiness Association of Texas than those previously offered. By consulting photocopies of the handwritten minutes of this group I have also tried to clarify factual mistakes found in previous accounts. In future studies I intend to explore the lives of the leaders of this important group, the key events of its history, the various ministries it supported, and the circumstances which led to its end.

End notes

*Dr. Stan Ingersol and Dr. Mary Lou Shea read and responded to an initial draft of this article. An earlier iteration of the section "The Merging of Three Regional Groups to Form the Holiness Association of Texas" was also submitted to Dr. Robert D. Smith for the graduate course "History, Missions, and Polity of the Church of the Nazarene" at Olivet Nazarene University in Fall 2021. I thank all three historians for their valuable feedback. Remaining glitches in this final version are, of course, my sole responsibility.

¹ For a historical survey of the Holiness Movement see Kostlevy 2009: xxxiii-xl. On the prevalence of holiness associations see, e.g., Chapman 1926: 21-22; Peters 1974: 49-50. Peters indicates that by 1888 there were twenty-six holiness associations of state or local character in the USA and two in Canada.

² Two sets of unbound photocopies of the ledger book containing the handwritten minutes of the meetings of the Holiness Association of Texas are housed at Nazarene Archives in Lenexa, Kansas and one set is housed at the Fred Floyd Archives at Southern Nazarene University (Holiness Association of Texas: 1910). A handwritten note dated December 1986 from one "Joe Wilson" to Dr. Paul Gray, founder of the Fred Floyd Archives, is included with the set housed at SNU. The note claims that Wilson and "the pastor from Pittsburg" made the copies from the original book owned by a "Mrs. Rankin." According to the note, "Mrs. Rankin still says she will give up the books someday. But she did let us copy them." The other ledger book contains various ministry reports from members of the Holiness Association of Texas. Photocopies of its pages are also housed at Nazarene Archives and at the Fred Floyd Archives at Southern Nazarene University (Holiness Association of Texas: 1907b). If the original books still exist it is not known where they are located. See Giffin 2020: 45-46 n. 24.

³ For a firsthand account of the Holiness Church in Texas and the Holiness Church Association of Texas see Rogers 1944: 14-30. For general accounts see DeJernett 1911a: 7; Jernigan 1919: 91-93; Redford 1948: 130-31; Jones 2005: 572-573; White 2006: 35; Cunningham et al. 2009: 123-124. On the preference of the Holiness Church for congregational

autonomy see Cunningham et al. 2009: 124. On their opposition to musical instruments see Jernigan 2019: 101; Cunningham et al. 2009: 124. On their opposition to public collections see Jernigan 1919: 104.

⁴ The doctrine and religious experience of entire sanctification is a hallmark of the Holiness Movement and its modern expressions. This doctrine generally teaches that a person can have an experience following conversion—a “second work of grace”—in which God makes them free from the inclination to sin and moves them into a state of full devotion to God. On the importance of holiness teaching and the doctrine of entire sanctification for the Holiness Movement see, e.g., Hunter 1983: 26-27; White 2006: 25-26; Kostlevy 2009: 105-106.

⁵ Jernigan erroneously stated that the convention took place in August. For these exact days of the convention see DeJernett and Reinhardt 1898: 6. That it took place in September is further confirmed by Holiness Association of Texas 1904: 3; 1905: 5; as well as Henry Clay Morrison’s camp meeting calendar anonymously published in the *Pentecostal Herald* (1898: 5), which dates the camp meeting in Terrell with which the convention was connected to September 2-13.

⁶ DeJernett provided further context for each of these questions. For example, the question pertaining to what to do with new converts drew some significance from the viewpoint that “they are not, as a rule, welcomed into the churches; nor do the new converts themselves desire to seek fellowship in the church with those members.”

⁷ According to Smith (1962: 162), the proposal for the state holiness union came from Henry Clay Morrison.

⁸ Some sources indicated that no local unions or bands were organized (e.g., Holiness Association of Texas 1904: 3; 1905: 5; Rogers 1944: 29). However, both DeJernett (1911b: 7) and Jernigan (1919: 101) stated that “not a half dozen local unions were organized under its constitution,” suggesting that at least one local union may have been organized somewhere.

⁹ For more on the annual *Year Book* produced by the Holiness Association of Texas, four editions of which are known to exist, see Giffin 2020: 46-47.

¹⁰ Jernigan indicated that the call was “drawn up by” DeJernett, and that he (Jernigan) “vigorously pushed” it (1919: 101). In his autobiography written decades later, C. A. McConnell recollected that Jernigan issued the call (1946: 41). For the venues see Jernigan 1919: 101. In his invaluable contemporary report of the meeting for his paper, McConnell relayed that the Friday sessions were held at “the splendid new building of the Holiness College” at the invitation of THU president A. M. Hills (1899: 7).

¹¹ Smith indicates that Rogers said these words to Jernigan (1962: 163, followed by White 2006: 53), but Rogers’s firsthand recollection was that Jernigan said them to him.

¹² In his autobiography, Jernigan cited this address as the location of the home where he and Johnny lived and where all their children were born (Jernigan 1926: 35). In his history of the holiness movement in the South, Jernigan recounted that the meeting was held “at his home on North Wesley street” (1919: 102).

¹³ DeJernett reported that there were seven men present: Jernigan, McConnell, Thomas Rogers, Dennis Rogers, C. M. Keith, William Jenkins, and “Bro. McGowan” (1911c: 6). Jernigan also reported that there were seven present and spiritualizes the headcount by referring to it as “the Bible number” (1919: 102). All four surviving editions of the Holiness Association of Texas *Year Book* agree with this number (Holiness Association of Texas 1904: 3; 1905: 5; 1906: 4; 1907a: 4), as does McConnell’s later autobiography (1946: 41). Jernigan did not mention Thomas Rogers or McGowan but does include his wife, Johnny Jernigan, in the headcount (1919: 102). McConnell’s contemporary account said “a number of preachers, evangelists, and workers met at the home of Bro. Jernigan,” giving the impression that perhaps many more than seven persons attended (1899: 7). This impression is somewhat vindicated by Rogers’s recollection that “thirteen of us gathered at his house” (1944: 29), although it must be recognized again that Rogers’s account came decades after the events.

¹⁴ Jones cites the “Form and plan of local organization of the Northwest Texas Holiness Association, Adopted by the Association, Sunset, TX, 1899” (2005: 252). In Smith’s brief discussion of the Northwest Texas Holiness Association he also cites the “Form and Plan of Local Organization, Adopted by the Association” and adds, “the only copy I have seen is in the possession of M. L. Locke of Bridgeport, Texas” (1962: 371 n. 19). If the copy mentioned by Smith or another copy still exists it would provide the details of what McConnell shared at Jernigan’s home.

¹⁵ McConnell recorded that the meeting was to take place on December 23 (1899: 7). Jernigan indicated that it did in fact take place on that day (1919: 102, followed by Redford 1948: 131; Smith 162: 163; White 2006: 36, 53). However, the Holiness Association of Texas *Year Book 1903-4* and *Year Book 1904-5* both record that the meeting took place on December 22 (1904: 3; 1905: 5).

¹⁶ Jernigan is identified as president of the North Texas Holiness Association in an article in the *Texas Holiness Banner* referencing the call to the meeting at Holiness Park (Harvey 1900: 4).

¹⁷ Jernigan indicated that it was decided to meet in May at Holiness Park but all other sources, including the surviving minutes of the Holiness Park meeting themselves, indicate that the meeting took place on April 3 (Holiness Association of Texas 1910: 1).

¹⁸ The notice is attributed to “Dennis Roberts” but is signed “Pres. H. C. A. of Tex.”; since Dennis Rogers was the president of the Holiness Church this is clearly a simple misprint. In his later account, Rogers mistakenly listed Throckmorton (approximately 180 miles west of Collin County) as the place of meeting (1944: 29).

¹⁹ The pages of the ledger book in which the minutes of the Holiness Association of Texas were recorded are numbered 1-271, although there are intermittent gaps in the numbering. The minutes of the Holiness Park meeting were recorded on pages 1-13.

²⁰ The minutes record that the following persons were present: W. E. Bates, A. P. Mahand, Clayton Roger, Jannie White, Sophia Naoh, Eva Rogers, Jena White, Dennis Rogers, Ollie Rogers, J. T. Stanfield, C. B. Jernigan, Thomas G. Rogers, Lula B. Rogers, Noah J. Cooley, Charles Davis, D. D. Adams, J. W. Pierce, J. W. Bowers, Martin Stilger, J. M. Henry, M. L. Henry, Lenada Medcalf, "Bro. Naoh," "Sister Humphreys," William Jenkins, S. J. Dickens, Thomas Broad, J. M. Wommick, J. H. Jones, W. S. Hill, J. W. Minton, and W. E. Walden. See Holiness Association of Texas 1910: 1-2. The historical sections of *Holiness Association of Texas Year Book 1903-4* (Holiness Association of Texas 1904: 4) and *Holiness Association of Texas Year Book 1904-5* (Holiness Association of Texas 1905: 6) underestimated that "there were about twenty delegates present."

²¹ The minutes name the following persons appointed to this committee: C. B. Jernigan, J. T. Stanfield, William Jenkins, W. S. Hill, J. W. Bowers, James W. Pierce, Thomas G. Rogers, Thomas Broad, J. M. Henry, Dennis Rogers, and T. J. Moore. Curiously, although T. J. Moore is named as a member of the committee he is not listed among the attendees of the meeting.

²² Instead of Stanfield, Dennis Rogers erroneously stated that C. A. McConnell was elected vice-president (1944: 30).

²³ Other sources indicate the statement of doctrine and form of government were also published in book form. See Holiness Association of Texas 1904: 4; 1905: 6.

²⁴ The minutes of the meeting end with the signature, "C. B. Jernigan, Sect." (page 30). Jernigan recorded November 13 as the date of the meeting (page 22). The meeting is wrongly dated to November 12 in Holiness Association of Texas 1904: 4; 1905: 6. Other sources simply record that the meeting took place in the month of November (Holiness Association of Texas 1906: 5; 1907a: 5; Jernigan 1919: 104; Smith 1962: 164; Cunningham et al. 2009: 127).

²⁵ The seven appointed were McConnell, Jernigan, Stanfield, Dennis Rogers, E. C. DeJernett, J. W. Harvey, and J. W. Bowers.

²⁶ Some early sources indicated that the statement of doctrine was "revised" at the Sunset meeting and subsequently "adopted" at the next meeting in Greenville on May 29-30, 1901 (e.g., Holiness Association of Texas 1904: 4; 1905: 6). Other early sources indicated that a constitution and statement of doctrine was "drawn up" or "prepared" at Sunset and ratified at Greenville (Holiness Association of Texas 1906: 5; 1907a: 5; DeJernett 1911c: 6; Jernigan 1919: 104-105, followed by Redford 1948: 132; Smith 1962: 164; White 2006: 36; Cunningham et al. 2009: 127). It is clear from all sources—including the minutes—that the revised statement

was *adopted* at the Greenville meeting. However, the minutes of the Holiness Park meeting, the Sunset meeting, and the Greenville meeting are also clear that the original statement was drawn up at Holiness Park, and that the only action pertaining to it at the Sunset meeting was the appointment of the committee of seven for its revision. The minutes of the Greenville meeting indicated that at the 10:00am session on Wednesday, May 29, the revision committee “asked for further time” and that it “was given till 9 a.m. Thursday to complete report” (Holiness Association of Texas 1910: 32). All this reveals the value of the handwritten minutes for correcting factual errors in the printed sources: The statement of doctrine and form of government was drafted at the Holiness Park meeting, and both the revision itself and its adoption took place not at the Sunset meeting but at the Greenville meeting.

²⁷ Photocopies of the original “Articles of Incorporation of the Holiness Association of Texas” and the certificate of incorporation are available at the Fred Floyd Archives at Southern Nazarene University, and at Nazarene Archives (Holiness Association of Texas 1900). For DeJernett, Jernigan, and McConnell as the three incorporators see also Holiness Association of Texas 1904: 4; 1905: 6; 1906: 5; 1907a: 5; DeJernett 1911b: 7; Jernigan 1919: 105; McConnell 1946: 42.

²⁸ Both the Articles of Incorporation and the certificate of incorporation record December 31 as the incorporation date. This date was correctly cited in the *Holiness Association of Texas Year Book 1903-4* (Holiness Association of Texas 1904: 4), but *Holiness Association of Texas Year Book 1904-5* erroneously cited the date as “Dec. 13, 1900” (Holiness Association of Texas 1905: 6). Only the month and year (December, 1900) are cited in Holiness Association of Texas 1906: 5; 1907a: 5; Jernigan 1919: 105.

²⁹ Cunningham et al. (2009: 127) erroneously name Pilot Point as the location of this meeting.

³⁰ All of these changes are reflected in the revised statement recorded in Holiness Association of Texas 1910: 33-38.

³¹ On the ratifying of the statement of doctrine and form of government at this meeting see Holiness Association of Texas 1904: 5; 1905: 6; 1906: 5; 1907a: 5; Smith 1962: 164; Cunningham et al. 2009: 127.

³² Robinson was received into membership in the association at this same meeting and is listed as belonging to the Methodist Episcopal Church and residing in Greenville.

³³ Among the surviving editions, only the *Holiness Association of Texas Year Book 1904-5* did not include this phrase.

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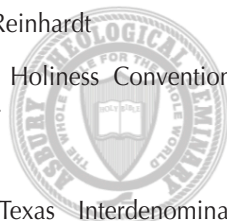
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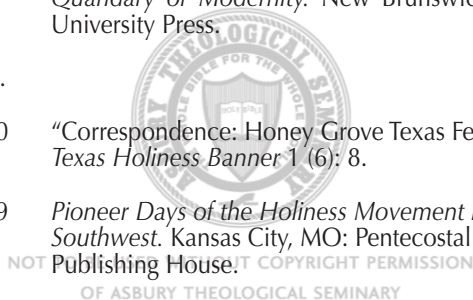
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