

The Bible Methodist

A CULTURE OF

Prayer



FROM THE EDITOR

G. Clair Sams

The three Regional Conferences and the Missions Department are calling our people to a concentrated prayer effort in January. We plan to take January 8-29 for a 21 day focus on prayer. One writer said, "Prayer is the work of the church."

It is so easy to focus on the stuff of Christian life and forget or minimize the heart of our relationship with the Lord.

Oswald Chambers wrote, "Our thinking about prayer, whether right or wrong, is based on our own mental conception of it. The correct concept is to think of prayer as the breath in our lungs and the blood from our hearts. Our blood flows and our breathing continues "without ceasing;" we are not even conscious of it, but it never stops. And we are not always conscious of Jesus keeping us in perfect oneness with God, but if we are obeying Him, He always is. Prayer is not an exercise, it is the life of the saint. Beware of anything that stops the offering up of prayer. Prayer without ceasing is maintaining the childlike habit of offering up prayer in your heart to God all the time.

Jesus never mentioned unanswered prayer. He had the unlimited certainty of knowing that prayer is always answered. Do we have, through the Spirit of God, that inexpressible certainty that Jesus had about prayer, or do we think of the times when it seemed that God did not answer our prayer? Jesus said, '...everyone who asks receives...' (Matthew 7:8). Yet we say, 'But..., but...!' God answers prayer in the best way, not just sometimes, but every time. However, the evidence of the answer in the area we want it may not always immediately follow. Do we expect God to answer prayer?

The danger we have is that we want to water down what Jesus said to make it mean something that aligns with our common sense. But if it were only common sense, what He said would not even be worthwhile. The things Jesus taught about prayer are supernatural truths He reveals to us."

By entering into prayer we have the rich and abundant privilege of entering into communion with the Trinity. As you gather with your family and with the community of faith in prayer, praise, intercession and thanksgiving you are joining with the Father, Son and Spirit in communion.

May I challenge you to not just talk about prayer but to pray? ■

The Bible Methodist

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BLAKE JONES

A CULTURE OF

Prayer

It is certainly true that we are who we are becoming! The priorities and values of our lives are painting the picture of whom we will be. Sure, we have ideals of what we would like tomorrow's picture to reflect. Yet, sadly, we seldom give ourselves to the change that is necessary today, so that the colors of tomorrow enliven the masterpiece of those ideals.

As Bible Methodists we desire to be people of prayer. But if that is to be posterity's assessment of us, then the "culture" of our lives and churches must be rich with the lingering aroma, the pervading atmosphere, and the dependent attitude of prayer. Daniel Henderson, in his book *Old Paths, New Power*, asserts that the time required to build this kind of culture resembles "more a crock pot than a microwave."

If prayer is not central in our private lives and corporate worship, then it is not truly a part of our value system. Actually, values and behavior define a culture. If prayer is simply a slot we fill in the program, it does not identify us as a people embracing a culture of prayer. If, during the time when someone is addressing the Lord God of Heaven, we set up props, direct participants, cut our fingernails or scurry around, we lack appreciation for those sacred “throne room” moments. Moreover, if our whole approach to corporate worship in the “House of Prayer” is slovenly, silly, fo-

ipation. He delights in leading us to live in ongoing conversation with the King of Kings. And, He is molding us for prayer to become a natural part of our response and interaction in any setting. I well remember watching Rev. Larry Smith standing on our camp ground conversing with a young man. Right there, Bro. Smith prayed a passionate prayer of adoration and petition -- out in the open for anybody to hear! What a profound mark it made on my heart! Why shouldn't talking to God be a natural part of our socializing? A prayer culture is being realized when,

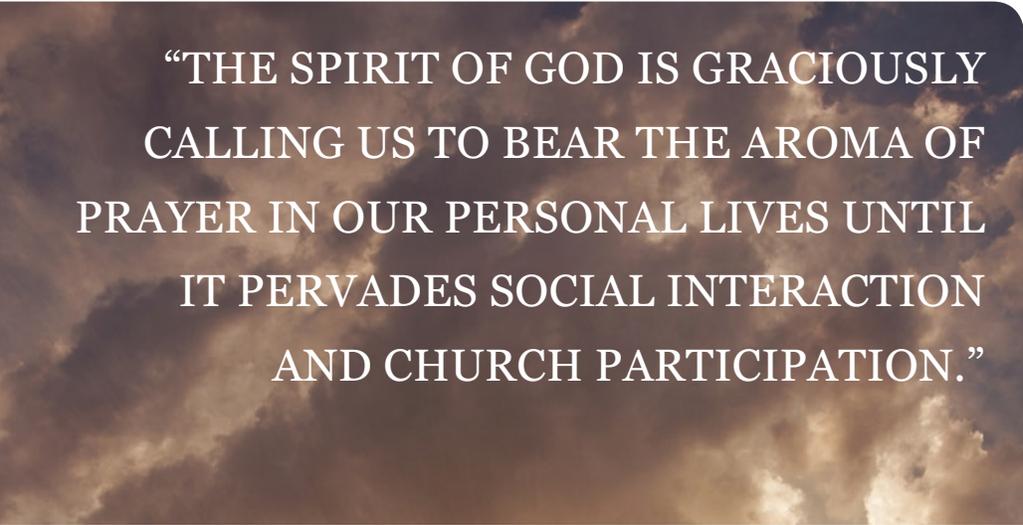
meeting in a corner. It was the lad's prayer team in session! When children and youth embrace this kind of focus, then prayer is becoming a part of the church's culture!

The lisping prayers of tiny children mark a prayer culture! Families may keep a prayer journal to record not just needs, but God's answers. Church bulletin boards may be used in prayer rooms or “war rooms” to highlight prayer victories. “I'm praying for you” should readily fall from our lips and mark our texts. Prayer meetings, at times, need to abandon a “shotgun” approach and zero in on one thing in united intercession. Weeks of focused prayer and fasting nurture growing environments of prayer.

Friend, I am not suggesting that prayer border on the monastic! Our prayer emphasis is not to be unbalanced and overbearing; nor is it forced and driven. It is the happy and holy response of a believer who is learning who God really is! A culture is ultimately shaped by its concept of God. That is true even in studies of secular cultures. And it is certainly true of a church culture! A culture of prayer reflects the glory of a God who is intimate, personal, holy, sovereign, majestic and graciously involved in our moments -- traumatic or mundane.

So, who will we be in tomorrow's history? Will we be remembered as a praying people? The answer depends on who we are today. Dr. Avery, our Connectional Chairman, has asked us to “lean into” a culture of prayer, holiness, and evangelism/discipleship. Leaning into a prayer culture will resemble a “crock pot” as the steady simmering consistently flavors our lives and churches. ■

Written from the conference president's discussion at their working retreat. It is a compilation of our chat. —Blake Jones



“THE SPIRIT OF GOD IS GRACIOUSLY CALLING US TO BEAR THE AROMA OF PRAYER IN OUR PERSONAL LIVES UNTIL IT PERVADES SOCIAL INTERACTION AND CHURCH PARTICIPATION.”

cused on the latest sports scores, and bears no regard for the holy, then how can we understand the attitude of prayer to be part of our “culture”? Henderson says that prayer “can become the very environment of the ministry.” How often, though, does a prayer meeting not even bear that kind of environment? A three minute “microwave prayer” covers the twenty minute prayer request time and dry spirits never soak in the “crock pot” of heavenly conversation and intercession.

The Spirit of God is graciously calling us to bear the aroma of prayer in our personal lives until it pervades social interaction and church partic-

ipating in the vestibule, talking on the phone, riding in the car, or even sitting at a restaurant table, we lift our brother's or sister's burdens to our Father. It may be that when “life moments” become moments of spontaneous praise or petition, prayer is truly the aroma of our lives.

Rev. Clair Sams tells of finding a young boy looking in their camp ground storage building. When asked what he was doing, the lad responded that he was looking for a place for his prayer team to meet. Thrilled, Bro. Sams directed him to the prayer leader and, later, walked into the dining hall to discover a group of preteens and young teens



CONFERENCE PRESIDENT'S MEETING



Rev. and Mrs. Walt Hedstrom, AL Conference President, Rev. and Mrs. Blake Jones, Great Lakes Conference President and Rev. and Mrs. G. Clair Sams, Heartland Conference President (Pres. Sams taking the picture)

This year Michigan's fall glory was the setting for the Conference Presidents' meeting. Without question a rich bond of Christian unity has developed over the last sixteen years that we have worked together. We shared prayer times, sat around a lovely fireplace to visit, ate together and worked together. Here is a brief overview of items we addressed:

1. The conference leaders shared their excitement and support for the prospect of a Mid-American Conference.
2. Extensive time was given to drafting a working handbook for planning and preparing for a General Conference.
3. Combined Ministerial was reviewed with Dr. Avery via Facetime and we were blessed as our Connectional Chairman prayed for each of us individually.
4. Details for the January Prayer and Fasting Time were addressed
5. Arrangements for the new Web Page were reviewed.
6. Dr. Avery urged that we "lean into" developing a culture of prayer, holiness and evangelism/discipleship in our regional conferences. Recognizing that this was our most important task, we embraced the challenge of identifying what these should look like and how to promote them. The time spent was rewarding and blessed by the Holy Spirit's help.
7. The connectional committee had assigned us to update the Statistical Report. A number of recommendations were recorded in response to this task.

As is always true, responsibilities were calling us back to our places for the weekend. Sitting together with our wives, we prayed for each other, the conferences we represented and committed ourselves to God's care. ■



CONNECTIONAL MINISTERIAL

The Regional Conferences linked arms for a combined ministerial that was held at the Higher Ground Retreat Center in West Harrison, Indiana, October 11-13. The group of ministers and their wives numbered over 80 for the three-day event.

Dr. John Oswalt spoke in four of the five sessions on the theme of "Scriptural Holiness." His presentations were powerfully anointed and greatly used of the Lord to enrich those in attendance. Every minister there felt a renewed commitment to fervently proclaim our birthright message of Biblical holiness. Wednesday night's service was especially attended by the Divine Presence.

The services were held in a beautifully converted dairy barn whose acoustical qualities made the congregational singing something to remember. The beautiful voices of the ministers and their wives sounded absolutely majestic as they joyfully sang the great Hymns of the Church.

The afternoons were free for rest, reading, sporting events or just warm pleasant conversation. The evening afterglows were filled with fellowship, games, and lively theological conversations. Melba Sams prepared an amazing array of delicious treats for the enjoyment of all the afterglow participants.

The final service on Thursday morning was Holy Communion. It was a crowning moment as we were reminded of the significance of the feast by Dr. David Fry and then were lead to gather at the Lord's table by Dr. Michael Avery. The celebration of God's redemptive work in Christ brought to each of us a marked sensed of God's wonderful presence and a deep appreciation for our fellow laborers in the gospel. ■



"It was a great privilege to be able to once again attend our Combined Ministerial. Thanks to Bro. Avery and our Connectional leaders for their thoughtful choice of the central theme of Holiness as the focus of the Ministerial.

Dr. John Oswalt masterfully expounded the doctrine of holiness in both Old and New Testament with clarity and conviction. Indeed it was a time of worship, fellowship, education and renewal. Thank God for this time of special blessing!"

— Monte Stetler Sr.





Connectional Ministerial Photos:

- 1 Ministerial Speaker - Dr. John Oswalt
- 2 Conference President Blake Jones leading a service
- 3 Ministers and wives attending Ministerial
- 4 Meal time
- 5 Participating in Communion
- 6 Rev. Marc and Melody Sankey singing
- 7 Evening Fellowship

CONNECTIONAL COMMITTEES



Monday before Ministerial, the Connectional Missions Committee met for their biannual work.

Tuesday morning of that same week the Connectional Committee met for reports and business that impacts the larger community of Bible Methodist ministries.



Left to Right: Rev. G. Clair Sams, Heartland Conference President, Rev. Walter Hedstrom, Alabama Conference President, Rev. Blake Jones, Great Lakes Conference President and Rev. Michael Avery, Connectional Chairman

World Missions

NEWS & UPDATES

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SIX FRESH RECRUITS FOR GOSPEL LIGHT



Pictured are (from left): June Supnad, Noel Matias, Johnny Dulnuan, Jocelyn Tambis, Julie Inway, Myrna Dulnuan (wife of Johnny Dulnuan).

Bible Methodist Gospel Light (Philippines) has just commissioned six newly trained pastors to serve in their conference. They have completed five months of intense training under David Yucaddi, Sr. and others. Last week they completed their classes and were commissioned for service. Pray for these men and women as they enter the harvest!

GOD CHOOSES THE WEAK

BY BRENNAN MUIR

A short year and a half ago, our San Gabriel church suffered a devastating blow. Not only had it surfaced that the pastor had had a moral failure, but the church was also on the verge of a split after his removal. Eight months passed and a new pastor, Jose Cruz ("Chito"), came to San Gabriel. Shortly after his arrival, we received word that the man who had been filling in as interim pastor had also fallen into immorality. It seemed like the situation could not possibly get any worse.

Pastor Chito is a simple man but a man of integrity. He is a pastor who accurately preaches the Word, invests time in his family and strives to make disciples. Going to San Gabriel un-

der these circumstances was a monumental challenge itself. To make the situation even more discouraging, Pastor Chito one day received a phone call from the former pastor, a very talented and eloquent man. In a demeaning way he asked Chito if he was up to the challenge of taking the church, being a man of such simplicity.



From left: Isai, Graciela, Ivon, Brennan, Ruth & pastor "Chito"

Over these last several months, we have seen God work in an amazing way. We have been witnesses to the truth found in 1 Corinthians 1-2. God isn't concerned about us being "wise" and "powerful" according to "wordly standards" nor about our preaching with "words of eloquent wisdom." Rather, God chooses "what is foolish in the world to shame the wise." God chooses "what is weak in the world to shame the strong" so that our "faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God" (1 Cor. 1:17-2:5 ESV). What God desires is that we be obedient servants who fulfill the tasks we are given by depending on Him. Pastor Chito often expresses, to the congregation, "I can't do this without God." He emphasizes fasting and prayer each week because he recognizes that only God can remedy this desperate situation.

We give thanks to God for the stability He has brought to the San Gabriel church through His faithful servant, Pastor Chito. Recently we have seen more growth in the church on all lev-

els than before. Please continue to keep Pastor Chito in your prayers, as well as his wife, Graciela, and their children, Isaí and Ruth. There continue to be difficult situations that he and his family must deal with, but we rejoice in God's faithfulness and grace in their lives as they walk in obedience.

MUIR PROJECT THANKS:

1) We again want to express our thanks to each church and individual for your kindness in sending us gifts for little Brennan's arrival.

2) We want to thank those who have given over the past months for our children and youth ministries. Most recently, some of those funds were put towards helping to buy a guitar for the San Gabriel church and the youth that have had interest in learning to lead worship.

EDWIN AND RITA TOMES VISIT MEXICO



Edwin & Rita Tomes (center) with the Muirs and Stetlers

Steve Stetler reports a very successful General Conference in Mexico October 18-23, with pastors and lay delegates attending from nearly every established congregation. Nightly revival services were also held with Edwin and Rita Tomes, former missionaries to Mexico. The Tomes sacrificially invested many years in the Mexico BMC, and it was a great privilege to have them back on the field for several days of ministry!

SALVATION OF A BUDDHIST



A Buddhist in his 90's who recently became a Christian

We recently had an encouraging trip to Shangrila. A former monk (became like-minded) met with us ("T" family) a couple times and took us to a village. We met this like-minded man in his nineties. He became a believer about ten years ago. It was encouraging to think that people so late in life can still find forgiveness and new life! We should pray that many find Christ through the witness of his twilight years.



The "T" family on a recent trip to a part of the Asia Highlands with few believers

STOLEN BIKE REPLACED

Paul recently had his bicycle stolen, but because of the generosity of some supporters it was replaced! "We are very blessed", Paul says.



G. Clair Sams
Conference President
171 Gibraltar Drive, Germantown, OH 45327

BEACH CITY BAPTISMAL



Several people participated in the baptismal service at Beach City August 28th. Rev. Henry Miller assisted Pastor Joe Stephani in the service



Left to right: Youth leader Robert Johnstone, Audrey Yoder, Melanie Miller, Mariah Yoder, Keri Miller, Kyle Johnstone, Gerald Miller, Braxton Miller, Cameron Miller, Caden Miller, officiating Rev Joseph Stephani and Rev Henry Miller.

VILLAGE PARK PASTORAL INSTALLATION

President G. Clair Sams conducted a pastoral installation service at Village Park installing new pastor and wife: Rev. and Mrs. Duane Quesenberry



Front row left to right: Conference President Clair Sams and wife, Melba, Pastor Duane and Valorie Quesenberry
Back row left to right: VP church board: Dale Foster, David Potter, Dan Boardman, Rick Herring, Bob Pickett, John LaBaron



Conference President praying for newly installed Pastor Quesenberry

MEN OF INTEGRITY



Congregation of men worshipping



Men seeking the Lord's face



Dr. Michael Avery speaking



Left to Right: Daryl Muir, Dr. David Fry, Don Litchfield, Dr. Michael Avery - participating in a panel discussion.

In mid September some 145 men attended Men of Integrity Men's Retreat at Beulah Grove, Mendon, Ohio. The theme of the event was "The Deeper Life" and Dr. Michael Avery and Dr. Allan Brown were very effectively used by the Lord to call the men to a deep and intentional walk of Christlikeness.

Chairman Daryl Muir and his committee labored faithfully and effectively to make this year's event special. Mike Pennellatore prepared meals that were superb and Leland Lindahl lead in music that lifted our hearts.

FRANKLIN



Brad Snelling gives the children a wagon ride



Fun for all



Plenty auction items

The fall picnic and youth auction was well attended at the Franklin church. \$1500 was raised for Youth Ministries in the auction.



Scott Caplinger hands out balloons at Fallfest



Hannah Deuel helping in the Fallfest booth



Aubrey and Annie Proffitt, Scott and Suzanne Caplinger working in the booth

Franklin participated for the third year in the Franklin Fallfest. This is an event where Main Street is closed and a number of booths and vendors are set up for the annual event. During the two-day event the church handed out over 1,000 balloons, 750 imprinted cups, 70 pounds of candy, glowsticks, and approximately 1,000 tracts, children's booklets, and church brochures. A number of community people were contacted with the gospel message.



Walter Hedstrom
Conference President
PO Box 523, Pell City, AL 35125

WOMENS MISSIONARY SOCIETY:



WMS ladies that raised over \$200,000 dollars



WMS ladies attending over 50 years Left to Right: Maurine Wilcox, Connie Gandy and Gelene Hodge.

1ST GENERATION ALABAMA BIBLE METHODISTS:



1st Generation Bible Methodist lay and ministerial delegates given certificates for being a part of the Alabama Conference for 50 years! Left to right: Mrs. Edna Alldredge, Rev. Gerald Bragg, Rev. and Mrs. Earl Baker, Alvin Hodge, Rev. Dan Parker, Barbra Rush, Mrs. Janette Woodard

PELL CITY - COMMUNITY PRAYER WALKS:



Pell City, AL Bible Methodist Church co-operating with community "Prayer Walks" in the Public and Christian Schools of Pell City, AL. It was a very eventful night praying with other churches in the area schools and classroom. Teachers and administrators gave thanks for the interest and prayers.

WESLEY CHAPEL, CROSSVILLE, TN



Wesley Bible Church - Crossville, TN

Alabama Bible Methodist Church Expansion Church Plant, pastored by Rev. and Mrs. Earl Fields of 683 West Ave. Crossville, TN and the lovely church family extend an invitation for you to attend their services and let others know about their ministry. Phone: 865-771-0629

PASTOR APPRECIATION:



Pastor Appreciation for Rev. and Mrs. Dana Bentz, Friendsville, TN

The Bible Methodist Church is located downtown Friendsville just minutes from Pigeon Forge, Gatlinburg, and the Great Smoky Mountains. Pastor Bentz and the congregation would love to have you worship with them while you are in the Great Smokey Mountain Region. Apartments are available for lodging and great fellowship. Church address is: 108 N Farnum St. Friendsville, TN
Pastor Bentz cell phone: 865-850-9539

PELL CITY - TRUNK OR TREAT



Pell City, AL Bible Methodist Church, Pastor Don Shirk & congregation ministered to over 600 youth and adults for the Trunk and Treat Halloween night in the church parking lot.

PASTORAL INSTALLATION:



Assistant Pastor Installation Service for Rev. Joshua Cravens (left) and (right) Pastor Appreciation Sunday for Rev. and Mrs. John Ingram at Stanton, AL Bible Methodist Church

GOLDEN GROVE - PASTOR INSTALLATION:



Rev. and Mrs. Leonard Collins family was in an installation service at Golden Grove Bible Methodist Church on Wolfe Creek Road in Pell City, AL.



Blake Jones
Conference President
PO Box 5, Cedar Lake, MI 48812

DAWN VALLEY, TUPPERVILLE ONTARIO



One of the pies

“Prayer, Praise and Pie at the Parsonage” happens once a month (usually the 3rd Wednesday). We move our midweek prayer meeting from the church (Dawn

Valley Bible Methodist Church) to the parsonage and have 10 minutes of singing/praise, 10 minutes of prayer, and 10 minutes of Bible study. We then spend the remainder of the time (however long anyone wants to stay) in fellowship, eating pie, and drinking coffee. Our goal is to invite our community to a service that is more informal where we can show them that we love them and help point them to Jesus. Many sinners fear churches - whether it is because of bad experiences of the past or they are afraid of the unknown (3 out of 4 Canadians don't love and serve Jesus). So “Prayer, Praise and Pie” has been our focus to invite people for a once a month home Bible study and fellowship time. Over the last several months we have had several neighbours come out to join us. We thank God for having 30 people for PPP around a campfire with pie and s'mores in September. Our prayer is, as we share pie; we can show our love for people and point them to Jesus.

VANDERCOOK BIBLE METHODIST CHURCH



Trunk or Treat took on Bible Themes as the Vandercook church filled their parking lot with Bible story themes.



Pastor and family at church trunk or treat

GREENVILLE BIBLE METHODIST CHURCH



A total inside makeover has taken place in the Greenville Bible Methodist Church. Painted walls, new windows, new carpet and new chairs to replace the old pews has created a lovely fresh house of worship.

IRONWOOD BIBLE METHODIST, FRANKTON, IN

The Ironwood congregation put the “hallow” back in Halloween on October 31 as we hosted our first ever “Tract or Treat.” With God’s help, we were privileged to distribute more than one hundred children’s Gospel tracts, along with some delicious home-baked goodies, bags of candy, and cups of cider and hot chocolate.

Also related to outreach, the Ironwood church has been planning and working in recent months towards the purchase of a full-size bus. The details should be finalized within the next few days. We

are excited about the potential for this new tool in the work of God's Kingdom in our area. To Him be the glory!

ROCK LAKE BIBLE METHODIST CHURCH

In keeping with the National Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church, the Rock Lake missions service was held in the hushed atmosphere of a darkened classroom. With a few glowing lamps, the group sang its worship and shared memorized Scripture verses of hope and comfort. How rich and powerful those verses suddenly became! In a staged effort to create awareness, men burst into the room and "arrested" the pastor while the group was singing. The chilling reality left people in tears and, naturally, the pastor's wife struggling with the trauma of even a mock event. After those intense moments, prayer was lifted for our persecuted brothers and sisters, for our own spiritual resolve, and for our nation.

HILLTOP CHAPEL BIBLE METHODIST CHURCH



The completion of a three phase project was celebrated in a fall service of praise and rejoicing. A lovely sound booth, a spacious family restroom on the main level and a barrier free front access marks the building updates. The picture shows the raised front yard with a new circle drive and beautiful approach.

EVART MICHIGAN



Evert Youth Group at Youth Challenge



A full basement remodeling was finished at the Evert Bible Methodist Church in time for them to host the ACE Junior Convention.



CHRISTMAS CARDS *for our* MISSIONARIES

Each year we encourage everyone to send a Christmas card and a small love gift to each of the Mission Department personnel. This annual project has proven to be a great help to them for many years. Let them know that we support and appreciate them.

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21 DAYS OF PRAYER

January 8–29, 2017

PRAY AROUND THE WORLD

January 29, 2017
at 6:00 PM EST

January 30, 2017
at 7:00 AM Philippines

