

THE

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BIBLE METHODIST

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CONNECTIONAL OFFICERS

for the Bible Methodist Connection of Churches

From the Editor



This issue includes pictures and articles from the 13th General Conference of the Bible Methodist Connection of Churches. This event, held June 12–14, 2018, was graciously hosted by Alabama Regional Conference and Conference President John Parker. The Alabama people worked hard and long to be ready for the gathering of Bible Methodists from across the country. They had renovated the Hodge Center, where the business sessions were held, remodeled and built an addition to the Vernon house that will house the Alabama Conference Office and be the home of President John and Cathy Parker, as well as work on the Hedstrom Heritage Hall and other buildings on campus.

The community of Bible Methodist people express deepest thanks to President Parker and the people who follow his leadership. The whole of the Bible Methodist community and many others who gathered for the event express thanks and were blessed by the beautiful attitude and gracious hosting.

Newly elected Connectional Secretary, Duane Quesenberry has written a description of the General Conference, giving an overview of the work done by the delegates. You will see pictures of each Connectional officer, the delegates from each Conference, Connectional Committee, and the Connectional Missions Committee.

You will also read about the highlight of this particular General Conference. The Connectional Committee has worked in conjunction with the Alabama Regional Conference for the past several years to create a new Conference. The newly minted Mid-America Conference, led by Darrell Lee Stetler II, is the result.

This issue will also include highlights from each Annual Conference. You will see pictures of family camps and youth camps.

The next issue of *The Bible Methodist* will highlight the golden anniversary of this publication. We have had the privilege of having material prepared and presented consistently by quality editors. The paper has been in the hands of men like Blake Jones, Chris Hilling, Daniel Stetler, William Gale, and Lauren Miller. ■

G. Clair Sams
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BIRTHING A NEW CONFERENCE

By **Darrell Lee Stetler**

When representatives from the Mid-America Conference stepped onto the platform at the 2018 General Conference and accepted the vote that created a new conference, it was the culmination of a journey of decades.

While the Alabama Conference was under V.O. Agan's leadership, 3 churches in Kansas requested to be added to the Conference. While 2 of those churches later closed, it did provide a foothold for Bible Methodism in the Midwest.

Walt Hedstrom Has A Vision

In 1986 (when this author was only 6 years old!), Walt Hedstrom traveled out to the Mid-central region of the US for the first time. There were only a few licensed Bible Methodist pastors. He was armed only with a vision of connecting holiness churches, and building relationships with the hope of someday creating what no one else could see: a Mid-America Conference of the Bible Methodist Connection.

As Bro. Hedstrom visited with holiness people across the region, some first viewed him and his efforts with suspicion – perhaps he was here to recruit and steal away their pastors and congregations? But his assurances and the integrity with which he conducted himself, soon put those fears to rest. Bro. Hedstrom racked up miles on his cars. He networked, stopped by, dropped in, wrote cards, sent emails at 2 am, made phone calls... and built a network of holiness men and women that he knew across the midwest.

It is no exaggeration to say that without Walt Hedstrom, there would not be a Mid-America Conference. From all of us here in the Mid-America Conference: Thank you, Brother Hedstrom, for your vision, your commitment and your leadership!

The Alabama Conference Catches The Vision

Churches began to be added. Oklahoma City joined while under the leadership of Dale Redman. Todd and Marla Hurst planted Living Hope Bible Methodist Church (Salina, KS). Living Hope then joined the Alabama Conference under the Church Expansion Department. Darrell and Melissa Underwood planted Servant's Heart Chapel (Clovis, NM).

Bro. Hedstrom couldn't stay in the Midwest. But he went back and shared his vision with the churches and pastors in the Alabama Conference. Someone said, "Vision is one of the most powerful tools in a leader's toolbox," and Walt Hedstrom proved that to be true. He cast the vision, and by God's grace, the Alabama Conference caught the vision.

To all of those good folks in the Alabama conference, we'd like to say thank you! You have invested so much in us through the years. You have allowed us to borrow your leader. You have helped plant two of our churches. You supported and prayed for us as several of our churches went through years of not being financially able to contribute to conference asking, not being able to bring crowds to camp... and often, were unable to come to camp at all. You've put up with our churches being unable to send representatives to events, campground leaf-raking days (can't say I regret that one!), and camp cleanup days. You've sent crews and funds to help in the cleanup efforts after the tornado that decimated Moore,



OK, a few minutes from our church in OKC.

We know that without an Alabama Conference, there would not be a Mid-America Conference, and we deeply appreciate you! Thank you. Thank you for investing in our churches for the long term. Thank you for believing in the vision of holiness spreading across the continent. I believe your investment is about to pay dividends for the cause of holiness for decades to come.

A Key Meeting

On March 10, 2016, Bro. Hedstrom and four Mid-America pastors met together (with a 5th on conference call), to plan, pray, and lay the foundation for what would become the Mid-America Conference of the Bible Methodist Connection of Churches.

As a leader, it was a powerful moment for me, as I realized that we were participating in reaping the fruit of seeds sown before I was born – seeds of the contribution and giving and support of many people.

A committee was formed to oversee the transition to a Regional Conference.

The Vision Becomes A Reality

In a series of meetings, the details were hammered out. The 2018 General Conference would propose the creation of a category conference called a “Provisional Conference.” This category would allow the transition of a group of churches toward full Regional Conference status. The Provisional Conference would operate under the supervision of the Con-

nectional Committee, and would allow a new Regional Conference a chance for a “rolling start” to establish all the necessary mechanisms (financial policies, leadership structures, etc.) to operate in a stable manner. Each quadrennium, the Provisional Conference will be allowed to apply for inclusion as a regular Regional Conference, or continue for another quadrennium as a Provisional Conference.

In anticipation of this moment, the 2018 Strategy Meeting of the Mid-America Conference elected four conference officials:

- Darrell Stetler II, President
- Darrell Underwood, Vice President
- Todd Hurst, Treasurer/Secretary
- Steve Oliver, Outreach & Discipleship Director

This proposal was unanimously accepted at General Conference and the Mid-America Conference of the Bible Methodist Connection of Churches was created.

The Mid-America Conference officials joined Michael Avery, and the other General Conference officers on the platform to celebrate the creation of a new Conference. Walter Hedstrom was asked to join the others on the platform in recognition of the fulfillment of his years of investment.

Our Strategy Of Partnership

Our strategy for the future looks a bit atypical for a Regional Conference:

Connection of holiness people in the Midwest
Each spring, the Bible Methodists host the Heart for the

Picnic in Clovis, NM

We at Servant’s Heart Chapel, Clovis, NM had a community cookout. We made a lot of friends and gave away 70 hot dogs, chips, and drinks. Our goal was to make contact in the community. – Pastor Darrell Underwood



OKC Bible Methodist Partners With *In The Gap*

Darrell Stetler II, pastor of the Oklahoma City Bible Methodist Church, partnered with *In The Gap*, a group based in Oklahoma City, to have Bible Clubs in 3 parks across the city. (www.inthegap.org)



Shepherd Seminar for holiness pastors and church leaders in Ponca City, OK. Out of this comes our desire to connect holiness people in the region across denominational lines. We are investing time and resources in creating databases of holiness churches, working with organizations like Youth Challenge to bring youth events to the Midwest, and creating network relationships with other holiness denominations.

Partnership in large events

The Mid-America Conference isn't currently large enough to sustain some of the more expensive projects typical of the other conferences: Campgrounds, Youth Camps, and more.

At this stage, Mid-America does not plan to have a camp meeting of our own. Instead, our vision at this time is to partner with other events and camps already in place: the Kansas State Holiness Association, Heartland Holiness Association, and others. Todd Hurst (Salina, KS Bible Methodist Church) is founder and president of Kansas State Holiness Youth Camp, and our churches in Oklahoma cooperate with the youth camp in Ochelata, OK.

Connecting potential church planters

In our strategic planning, we have repeatedly returned to the fact that this conference has church planting in its DNA. Three of the 5 churches (OKC, Salina, and Clovis) were planted in the last 25 years. Oklahoma City has as part of its vision statement, "to help plant five churches in US cities," and one of those (Clovis) has already been planted.

We are investing in the development of a website that will

allow holiness people who are interested in church planting to find others who are interested. We believe that connecting holiness people together will allow us to locate potential planters and plant churches more quickly and effectively.

A Vision For The Future

While the Mid-America Conference has not formalized a vision for church planting, I would like to ask your prayers for the fulfillment of this vision: That there would be a Bible Methodist Church planted in every one of the largest cities in the Mid-America region of the country; in places like Dallas/Ft. Worth, Austin, St. Louis, Tulsa, Kansas City, Wichita, Omaha, Denver, Colorado Springs, and more.

We know this will require God to raise up an army of church planters. But then, don't we serve the One who said, "Ask the Lord of the harvest to send forth laborers into his harvest field?" Don't we follow the King who said, "On this rock, I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not be able to stand against it?"

It could be that someone reading this will sense the call of God to be one of those church planters!

We face the future with confidence in our great King, and with gratitude for all those who have gone before us. I am quite confident that when the stories are told in glory, and the rewards are handed out, there will be churches that are planted and souls that are saved in the Mid-America Conference... and all our Bible Methodist family will share in the rewards and joy of that beautiful moment. ■

Salina, KS Celebrates Youth Camp

Rev. Todd and Marla Hurst, pastor of the Living Hope Bible Methodist Church in Salina, KS were honored for serving 25 years as the director of the Kansas State Holiness Youth Camp. This year KSHYC had a record breaking year of 88 campers! Many found Jesus at an altar of prayer. Bro. Nate Becker was the speaker. The Living Hope Bible Methodist Church had a good group of youth attend the camp.



New Conference Formed

Rev. Darrell Underwood, Vice-president, Rev. Darrell Stetler II, Conference President, Rev. Todd Hurst, Secretary and Treasurer and Dr. Steve Oliver, Director of Outreach and Discipleship are the new officers of the newly formed Mid America Conference.



GENERAL CONFERENCE REPORT

A REPORT FROM THE THIRTEENTH GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE BIBLE METHODIST CONNECTION OF CHURCHES

By **Duane Quesenberry**

Each year, the regional conferences of the Bible Methodist Connection of Churches come together for their Annual Conferences. But every four years, the regional conferences convene for three days of worship, fellowship and business at an event referred to as the General Conference. The primary purpose for this quadrennial event is to conduct the necessary business of the General Connection, the organization that provides structure and continuity for all entities that bear the name of The Bible Methodist Connection of Churches.

Every four years, the location for this event rotates among the regional conferences. This quadrennial, the thirteenth General Conference of the Bible Methodists took place on June 12-14 and was hosted by the Alabama Conference at their beautiful and spacious Camp & Conference Center, located in central Alabama. The pine trees and rolling hills of this southern state were enhanced by the sweet tea and regional cuisine, served with charming, deep-south hospitality to the delegates in attendance. Wednesday's Catfish Fry, with all off the "fixin's" was a memorable example of the gracious hosting provided by President John Parker and the Alabama Conference.

The Conference began on Tuesday evening with worship, as the delegation gathered in the spacious and climate-controlled Agan Tabernacle for singing, prayer and a challenging sermon delivered by Connectional Chairman, Dr. Michael Avery. There were two additional worship services during the Conference: one on Wednesday

evening, which featured a missional challenge from Missions Director, Rev. Tim Keep, and the Conference concluded on Thursday morning with Communion being received by the 250 plus in attendance.

Of course the primary purpose for the conference is to conduct the necessary business of the General Connection. This was done throughout the day on Wednesday and part of Thursday in the beautifully renovated Alvin Hodge Conference Center. Both days began with devotionals presented by Heartland Conference President Chris Cravens on Wednesday and by Great Lakes Conference President Blake Jones on Thursday. Both were marked by a refreshing awareness of God's presence.

After morning devotions, the delegates were capably led by Chairman Avery in the full agenda of business, which included the electing of Connectional Officers for the next quadrennium, receiving reports from Connectional officers and committees, and voting on new items of business (referred to as "Memorials") that are presented to the General Conference from Regional Conferences or the Connectional Committee.

Those elected to serve on the Connectional Committee throughout this quadrennium are:

Connectional Chairman

Dr. Michael Avery

Connectional Vice Chairman

Rev. Jack Hooker

Connectional Secretary

Rev. Duane Quesenberry

Connectional Treasurer

Mr. Monte Stetler, Jr.

Connectional Missions Director

Rev. Tim Keep

**Connectional Discipleship
Coordinator**

Mr. Nathan Brown

**Connectional Editor of
The Bible Methodist**

Rev. G. Clair Sams

In addition to these men, the Connectional Committee also includes the Presidents of the Regional Conferences, along with two Elders and two Laymen from each regional conference.

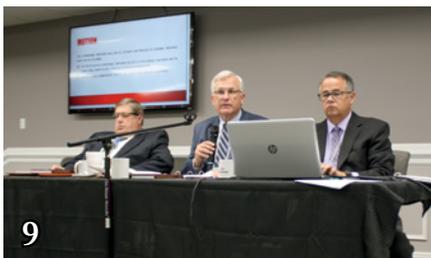
Interspersed with the electing process were the reports from the various Committees which facilitate the business of the General Connection, including most notably, reports from Connectional Chairman Michael Avery, Missions Director Tim Keep and each of the three Regional Conference Presidents.

Of significance was the reception of the newest regional conference to the Bible Methodist Connection of Churches: the Mid-America Provisional Conference. The term provisional is a new classification passed by General Conference used to identify any group of churches that wish to become a Regional Conference but are not ready numerically or financially for that designation and the independence it brings. A provisional conference is amenable to the direction of the General Connection during its ongoing development. The new Mid-America Conference is a Provisional Conference.

This provisional conference is comprised of five Churches located in Kansas, Oklahoma and New Mexico, all of which were previously connected to the Alabama Conference, but due to travel distances, desired to establish a regional conference. The provisional conference is directed by President – Rev. Darrell Stetler, II and Vice President – Rev. Darrell Underwood.

The thirteenth General Conference was punctuated by characteristic unity which expressed itself in joyful fellowship, unified decisions and contagious optimism, resulting in the Conference adjourning with renewed expectancy and missional commitment to the purpose of the Church.

The fourteenth General Conference is scheduled to be hosted by the Heartland Conference in 2022. ■



1: Heartland Conference, 2: Alabama Conference, 3: Great Lakes Conference, 4: Mid-America Conference, 5: Connectional Committee, 6: Dr. Avery with Mid-America and Walter Hedstrom, 7: Connectional Chairmen former and present: (left to right) Dr. Daniel Stetler, Dr. James Keaton, and Dr. Michael Avery, 8: Missions Directors former and present: (left to right) Tim Keep, Dr. Michael Avery, and John Parker, 9: (Left to Right): Vice Chairman Jack Hooker, Chairman Dr. Michael Avery, and Secretary John Parker, 10: Recording Secretary Melba Sams, 11: Delegates to General Conference.

ALABAMA REGIONAL CONFERENCE NEWS

JOHN PARKER | CONFERENCE PRESIDENT



Alabama Camp



1: Pastor Mike Pepple preached the Conference Sermon, 2: Camp President, Rev. Doug Eads, 3: Camp Evangelist, Rev. James B. Keaton, 4: Camp Evangelist, Rev. Tim Keep, 5: Camp Song Evangelist, Rev. Daniel Edwards family, 6: It was nice to have Dr. R.G. and Sarah Hutchison home for camp meeting, 7-9: Children's Program led by GBSC Child Evangelism Team, 10: Camp Meeting Band, 11: Honoring those who've attended Alabama Camp for more than 50 years! Two of them have attended 80 years! 12: Sunday Morning Communion.



13: Annual Conference Monday and Tuesday, 14: Camp service, 15: Bible College Alumni gathered for a picture, 16: Prayer Groups met daily to share burdens and pray for one another, 17: The new Conference Office on campus was dedicated to faithful supporters, Mr. Jimmy & Maudine Wilcox, 18: Sporting the spirit of July 4th, 19: The Three Heath Brothers in Fourth of July Concert.



Pastoral Recommendation

I would like to recommend to you Rev. Greg Fox for preaching and singing ministry. Pastor Greg is a passionate and gifted preacher and singer. He is centrally located on the border of Indiana and Kentucky near Madison, IN. He will be a blessing to your church. His contact info is:

Greg & Stephanie Fox
5063 Peck Pike
Milton, KY 40045
Phone: (502) 269-0086

GREAT LAKES REGIONAL CONFERENCE NEWS

BLAKE JONES | CONFERENCE PRESIDENT



Family Camp

We love camp! Monday morning while we were packing and cleaning, Tobin, our five-year-old, watched as the last of the campers pulled away and waved goodbye. With quivering lips, he said, "It is so sad that camp is over." I thought to myself with a mixture of empathy and amusement, "Yep! The last one has been 'bitten' by the love-for-camp bug!" Over the years, each member of our family has come to love family camp. We prepare for camp with eager anticipation. We leave each year, some with quivering lips and some with quivering hearts, but all with a deep appreciation for the memories we have made and the messages we have heard. – *Joyce Bowen*



1: Dr. David Fry - Evangelist, 2: Rev. Nathan Purdy - Evangelist, 3: Emerald Singers (left to right: Jody and Josh Emery, Heidi and Seth Wetherald), 4: Camp workers with their children, 5: Youth and Children of Great Lakes, 6: Youth Choir, 7: Children's presentation under the direction of Rev. Gene and Angie Davis, 8: Family Night Afterglow was a International Missions Market highlighting countries where we have missionaries.

Youth Camp



Top Left: Conference Youth Director, Mr. Doug Derscheid and Youth Camp Evangelist Rev. Jonathan Slagenweit. Also Pictured: Youth Camp teams.

HEARTLAND REGIONAL CONFERENCE NEWS

CHRIS CRAVENS | CONFERENCE PRESIDENT



Heartland Family Camp

A beautiful camp ground welcomed Bible Methodists from around the Heartland Conference as they gathered for Family Camp 2018. The camp again was filled with adults, youth, and children, each ministered to by faithful evangelists. Dr. Daniel Stetler and Dr. R.G. Hutchison preached the Word, Rev. Aaron McCarty ministered in music, Rev. Wes Holden challenged our youth, and Angie Marriott shared the gospel with our children. God also blessed in giving with a generous offering. Preceding camp was our Annual Conference in which God helped the business of the conference to progress smoothly. Rev. Chris Cravens was re-elected as Conference President to a four-year term. Thank you to everyone who works so diligently throughout the year to make the family camp such a memorable event.



1: Dr. Daniel Stetler, Camp Evangelist, 2: Dr. R.G. Hutchison, Bible Teacher, 3: Rev. Aaron McCarty, Song Evangelist, 4: Camp congregation, 5: Rev. Aaron McCarty, Rev. Mark Fultz, Rev. Travis Johnson, and Rev. Mike Mater, 6: Angie Marriott working with the children, 7: Youth worshipping in the Brugger Chapel, 8: Conference table, 9: Honoring Melba Sams for 16 years service as Conference Missionary President.

Youth Camp

Youth Camp bulged with 230 campers packing the dorms, cabins, ball fields, and tabernacle! It was a week of fun, teamwork, and spiritual impact. There were a number of young people seeking God at the altar as PVBI President Dan Durkee encouraged everyone to seize the moment and listen to God's voice. So many pastors, parents, volunteer staff, along with our Youth President, Mike Mater provided us a youth camp event not soon forgotten.



1: Rev. Dan Durkee, Youth Camp Evangelist, 2: Rev. Mike Mater, Youth Camp President, 3: Bible Bowl Stars with Bible Bowl Moderator, Rev. Jack Hooker, 4: Tug of War, 5: Volleyball competition, 6: A Youth Camp team, 7: Youth Camp fun, 8: Enjoying Youth Camp, 9: Stars and Stiffs game.

Pastoral Installations

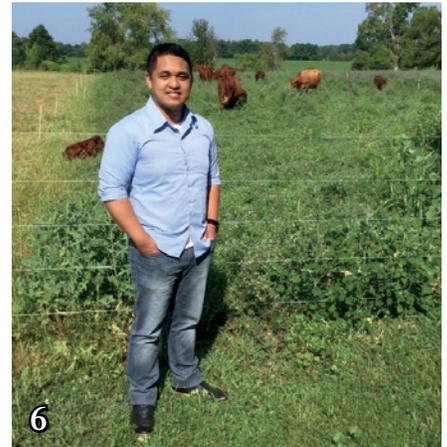
Rev. Travis Johnson was installed as Senior Pastor of the Findlay Bible Methodist Church. Rev. Mark Cravens was installed as Senior Pastor of the Kenwood Bible Methodist Church.



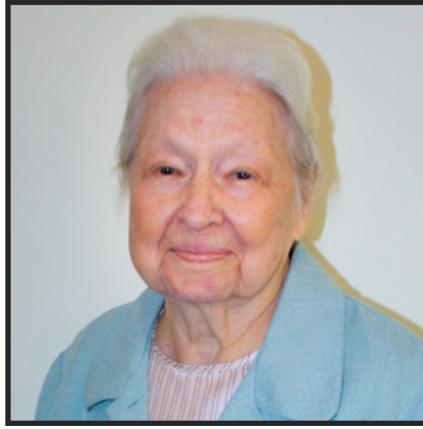
WORLD MISSIONS

NEWS UPDATE

TIMOTHY KEEP | MISSIONS DIRECTOR



1: David Martinez working with Brennan Muir on a small improvement project, 2: David with a small group of young people from our San Gabriel congregation, 3: David teaching youth this summer in San Gabriel, 4: Judah Yucaddi, 5: Judah playing guitar for the Alabama camp mission's service, 6: This summer Judah visited an American farm for the first time, 7: R.G. and Sarah Hutchison, missionaries to the Philippines, 8: Alabama Camp mission's service.



MRS. MARY MADELYN “DOT” BROWN

The following is an interview with Sis. Mary Madelyn “Dot” Brown, charter member and adult Sunday School teacher in the Pell City, AL Bible Methodist Church.

The Bible Methodist: Has Pell City, Alabama always been your home?

Mary Madelyn Brown: Early in life I lived in Coal Valley, AL but we moved to the Pell City, AL area where I grew up.

Please tell us about your family.

I was married to William (Bill) Brown in 1950. We had two children – Janeen, who is a nurse and lives in Pell City, and a son Leslie, a policeman, now retired as an FBI agent. Leslie worked for the Montgomery Police department, the District Attorney’s office, and the FBI. Janeen has worked in nursing across the years.

When did you get saved?

I was saved at 24 years of age under the ministry of Brother and Sister J.A. Treese. It was actually through attending a Bible study lead by Sister Treese that I came to know Christ and began attending church. That was in the Wesleyan Methodist Church. When the Bible Methodist began in 1965, I was part of that change.

How has the Lord used you in the church?

I have served in almost every office of the local church from song leader to Sunday school teacher.

What has been your occupation beside being a wife and mother?

I taught in a Christian school for several years. I had always wanted to be a nurse so at 45 years of age I applied for college

and graduated with a degree in nursing. It is interesting that I graduated the same year my daughter Janeen graduated from nursing school. The years working as a nurse were in the public health system. At Michael Avery’s request I also worked at God’s Bible School and College as school nurse and dean of women.

What is your greatest joy in life?

My greatest joy in life has been leading a weekly Bible study through which several young couples have found Christ including Kenny Rich. In fact, most of the young couples in the church are the fruit of those years of Bible study.

Editor’s Note: It is obvious Dot loves the Scripture and does an excellent job teaching the adult class at the Bible Methodist church in Pell City.

What is your greatest regret?

If I have any regret it is that I didn’t get saved earlier in life.

What would you like to say to the Bible Methodist Family?

A Christian must keep focused on the Lord. You can get into a form if you are not alert. Several times in my life the Lord has had to remind me about my focus. Keep your focus on God’s grace and presence. We must feel His presence from time to time. Living in Christ is the only way to live. Living in His presence is the exclusive way to life.

What is your philosophy for life?

Not to question “Why?” but to trust in God to teach me what I need in my life. ■

THE BIBLE METHODIST

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