

THE

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BIBLE METHODIST

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COMMITMENT

Holding Fast Despite Adversity

From the Editor



This issue of *The Bible Methodist* focuses on the concept of commitment. The dictionary defines commitment as: 1. The state or quality of being dedicated to a cause or activity. 2. To be responsible, obligation, duty, tie, liability.

When you enter the word commitment in the search section of your Bible program the results are minimal. The word commit is most closely related to the word connect, in the spiritual sense, with the Biblical concept of covenant. When a person repents of their sins and enters the kingdom of God, that entrance opens the door to an eternal covenant or commitment.

Covenantal relationship is key to Israel's relationship with Jehovah God. That covenant is key as well, to the Believer's relationship with Christ and his body, the Church. Another way of thinking about commitment involves both covenant and vows. When a couple marry, part of the ceremony is the covenant of vows. Reading and responding to vows has much deeper meaning than simply expressing a ritual. When a covenant is made, when a vow is taken, a promise is made that carries deep spiritual and relational meaning.

The commitment that accompanies Christian faith and family, includes the choice to enter into covenantal relationship with the Lord Jesus and through that vow to enter into relationship with the Church. In other words, when a person is saved and embraces the covenant of baptism a commitment is made to the spiritual side of life and to the familial side of life.

Too often, in evangelical North America, we consider our spiritual life, simply a relationship between God and ourselves. Biblically entering into Christ through salvation means entering into the life of the Church and through that life, joining other Believers in the family of faith. Just as the commitment to marriage means the inclusion of a husband and wife in covenant, it also means joining two families and extended families.

Out of the joy of salvation then rises the balance of the vows to the Lord and the Church. Those vows mean one chooses to live a life committed to life in Christ and fellowship with the family of Christ.

The question we ought to ask ourselves occasionally is, "Am I keeping my commitments?" or "Are the vows I took when I was baptized and joined the Church up to date?" ■

G. Clair Sams
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CAN WE CHOOSE TO BE COMMITTED?

By **Terry Going**

Life is filled with choices. We choose when to eat, and what to eat. We choose what we will wear to work and to church. We choose a life companion. We choose where we will spend holidays. We even choose where we shall attend church, and the list continues on and on.

However, there has been a growing concern among Bible-believing Christians in recent years concerning some choices being made by many concerning church attendance, as it relates to spiritual growth and development.

A few years ago, when I was pioneering a new church, I worked bi-vocationally in a mortgage company office. One afternoon, during a break time, one of the older ladies in the office asked me several questions about the new church I was starting, and the denomination in which I served. I explained that we had begun because of a spiritual drift in the movement we had been in before, and that we were not out to condemn those we left behind; but there were some issues of biblical conviction and values that many of us felt needed to be addressed, but were being ignored. Then, she said, *“That sounds a bit like my church. We have canceled the midweek prayer service, and the leaders are considering dropping the Sunday evening service, because people have become so busy that they no longer attend those services.”*



Recently, that conversation came to my mind again, and I thought to myself, *“Isn’t that the very thing that is happening in some of our circles today? Have we become so busy, or preoccupied, that we think the midweek prayer meeting is not all that important? Is the Sunday evening service so tiring that we really don’t see the value of it? Why is it that so many people seem to think that they have fulfilled their Christian duty if they attend at least one church service per week?”*

I would challenge us to re-examine our personal commitment to Christ. What could be more important than taking time from our own agenda to attend prayer meeting? To pray together with others of like precious faith? To hear a devotional or a sermon from the Word of God? To testify of our personal redemption and sanctification? To speak a few words of encouragement to others within the body of Christ? To be uplifted by melodious songs? Is it asking too much to at least give a tithe of our time to worship and praise God?

Why not look to the Sunday evening service in holy anticipation of God’s rich blessings? To see it as an opportunity to bring new people to church, to be blessed by sacred music, and to feed together upon God’s Word, even praying that someone will find their way to an altar of prayer to seek the Savior? At times, the Sunday evening service can lend itself to an opportunity for Christian baptism, the Lord’s Supper, or someone seeking prayer for divine healing. Yes, these things can also happen in the Sunday morning service, and they should. But all too often, because the other two services are looked upon as less important, it isn’t long until Sunday morning becomes less normal, and the spiritual drift sets in.

The Scriptures remind us that Satan is the god of this world who has blinded the minds of those who believe not. It is not the eyes alone that he blinds, but the mind. When the mind is blinded, one no longer thinks correctly. When the thinking is clouded, one soon permits into his life many ways that are not truly spiritual. He may say that he believes in Christ, but he seldom thinks of the tremendous debt Jesus paid at the cross for man’s salvation and sanctification. He begins a downward trek that lacks commitment to the values of the Bible. His thinking is challenged, and he soon becomes worldly in attitude and

practice. Boredom sets in so that there is an inner vacuum that only Christ can fill. Because of the mental blindness, he begins seeking other outlets to satisfy his sense of emptiness. Church no longer satisfies, and church attendance becomes irregular.

Those who are observant have noticed that all across America; there has been a drastic change in the landscape of church during the last few years. Mega-churches have arisen with their entertainment atmosphere, with teams of leaders teaching almost anything except the deep, pungent, convicting message of the cross. Instead, various ideas are set forth about how to manage one’s money, or how to overcome some inner problem. The word “repentance,” may or may not be mentioned. In one formerly leading church in our community that had chosen to continue the traditional method, the doors recently closed, with the pastor stating, *“We could not keep up with the exodus to the more modern way of doing church.”*

Have we as holiness people examined ourselves recently? What do we think about the direction of our church? Do we ever tend to let the crowds dictate what we do? Do we cancel services because we know of a few who have other things to do? Are we ever concerned if a service seems to lack the anointing of the Holy Spirit?

Having pastored conservative holiness churches for more than fifty years, I cannot remember one service that I thought was unimportant? I constantly challenged my people to pray and prepare for the next service. To plan for the midweek service. To pray that the Spirit of God would move in His own special way upon every service. To come expectantly, with holy anticipation. Consequently, the records will show that not one church in all those fifty plus years dwindled, and most of the time our services were marked with the sense of God’s presence, not only on Sunday morning, but also on most Sunday and Wednesday evenings.

I will mention that one time all Sunday services were canceled on Christmas Day, because every person was going to be out of town. I learned that a man for whom I had prayed decided to visit that day, and was disappointed to find the church closed. He never attempted to come again.

Let’s keep the lights shining, and treat every church service as if that would be our last. ■



Retrieved from: uncoveredhistory.com/honduras/copan/copan-altar-a

GIVE OF YOUR BEST TO THE MASTER

By **Dr. Glen Reiff**

The Mayan Indians in Central America were known for the human sacrifices that they offered to their pagan gods. The picture on this page shows the altar in Copan, Honduras, that was used for human sacrifice. In the background you can see the stone statue that depicts the nature and characteristics of a god that would demand such an offering.

The round stone in the foreground was used as the altar for making human sacrifices. Notice the small round indentation of the top of the stone and the two little grooves on each side of this cavity. The back of the head of the person to be sacrificed was placed in this indentation, then the throat was slashed. The blood ran down the two grooves to the back of the altar where it was caught in a container and offered to the stone god in the background.

These Mayan human sacrifices were not forced on the people, but the victims voluntarily offered themselves! Furthermore, the Mayan people did not sacrifice just any person. In many places, slaves, sick or handicapped people were used for this purpose. However, this was not the case with the Mayan people in Honduras. They sacrificed their best! After one of the ball games (a combination of soccer and basket ball), the best players were offered as sacrifices to their god!

As I stood in front of this altar and heard the tour guide tell the story of these human sacrifices, I wondered how many talented young men had died on this very stone. I was also impressed by the fact that the Mayan people always offered their best young men. What are we as Christians doing today? Are we giving of our best to the Master?

We go to church and sing songs about surrendering our lives to God and about giving our hearts to Him, but are we really doing this? Do we really believe that there is no god compared to our God? My own heart was stirred as I looked on this altar, studied the grotesque stone god to which many good young men gave their lives, heard the tour guide tell about these sacrifices, and I wondered just what have I offered to my God and to what extent am I willing to give myself to Him? Can we give any less than these Mayan people give to their god? Maybe this is a good time to take spiritual inventory of our lives, our values, and what we are giving to God. He demands the best, but are we giving the best to Him?

Many people are using the best of their lives and talents to enrich themselves or to pursue their own goals. Then, what ever is left over is what they will consider giving to God. Our God is the best in the world, why not give Him our best? ■



A NEW CONFERENCE IS BORN

The seed for the Pilgrim Nazarene Church joining the Bible Methodist Connection was quietly planted several years ago. It was watered through subsequent discussions and finally began to take root and sprout a little less than two years ago. That's when the official boards and committees from each group began to take the appropriate action so that official talks could begin and follow up action could take place. On April 27, 2018, the Pilgrim Nazarene General Board voted to explore joining the BMCC. On May 5, 2018 I informed the General Connectional Committee that the PNC had interest in joining the Connection. On May 11, 2018 the first official meeting took place in Louisville, KY between Rev. Steve Snodgrass (then General Superintendent of the PNC) and myself. This meeting was primarily a sharing of information and an agreement to start down a set pathway of exploration to see where in the providence of God it would lead. The process continued on the part of the PNC with the election of Clair Sams as their General Superintendent with the clear mandate that he further explore the groups desire to join the BMCC.

With the approval and direction of the General Connectional Committee, I continued meeting with the PNC leadership. I later met with the PNC pastors to give a simple overview as to the identity and governance of the Bible Methodists and answer any questions they might have. The process continued with the GCC voting in its January 2019 meeting to inform the PNC that such a move would be welcomed by the BMCC subject to the official approval of the GCC and the Regional Conferences and laid out a pathway for that to happen. The PNC General Board voted to hold a special called conference with two agenda items, one of which was for the General Church to vote on joining the BMCC. The General Church voted in June of 2019 to pursue joining the Bible

Methodist. The PNC General Superintendent sent a letter on behalf of the PNC requesting to join as the Southwest Provisional Conference. The GCC approved the request at its meeting on June 14, 2019 and sent the matter on to the Regional Conferences for a vote. The Regional Conferences gave overwhelming approval and I was privileged to send a letter of welcome and declaration to the new Southwest Provisional Conference of the Bible Methodist Connection of Churches at their annual camp that took place the last week of July 2019.

The new conference has 11 churches primarily in the Texas / Oklahoma region. Clair Sams is their Conference President. Their Conference officers include: Michael Covington, Treasurer, Mark Russell, Secretary. Their Conference Executive Committee is: G. Clair Sams, Michael Covington, Mark Russell, Stephen Snodgrass, Dennis Cable, Jim Dunegan, Jim Stafford and Todd Gardner. Their annual camp is held each year in Dixon , TN, July 28 through August 2, 2020.

The entire Bible Methodist family welcomes our newest members and bids the Southwest Provisional Conference Godspeed. ■

***Above:** Clockwise from bottom left: Tim Keep, Zane Hurst, Steve Oliver, Wayne Fleming, Jack Hooker, Chris Cravens, Monte Stetler Jr., Richard Miles, Darrell Stetler II, Michael Avery, Duane Quesenberry, John Parker, Steve Miller, Clair Sams, Dewey Murray, Blake Jones and Deron Fourman.*

The Connectional Committee met at God's Bible School and College on June 14. Part of the discussion was the request received from the Pilgrim Nazarene Church to join the BMCC. The Committee discussed the process and action and voted unanimously to recommend that each Annual Conference present the request for a vote of acceptance.



MEETING BETWEEN MID-AMERICA LEADERSHIP AND SOUTHWEST LEADERSHIP

It was a privilege to be a small part of the collaborative meeting between the Mid-America Conference of Bible Methodist Church and the Pilgrim Nazarene Church that was held in Oklahoma City on July 6th. The Darrell Stetlers graciously opened their home for a time of “meet and greet” and provided a wonderful breakfast.

Conference President Darrell Stetler, presented a conference update on MABMC, which included a detail of the current churches, officers and finances. He also updated the group on the prospective churches and gave a snapshot of the strategic goals of the conference. General Superintendent Clair Sams, introduced the current standing of the PNC and where they are in regards to the process of joining the Bible Methodist Connection of Churches. He reported that everything was on track and by camp meeting, on August 2nd, there would be an organization meeting. He also presented the current churches, and standings regarding the various missions of the church.

The rest of the meeting was spent developing ways for our two conferences to work together to address the various needs and opportunities in our region. These included addressing a request from Calvin McCasland in New Mexico for a visit. It was determined that several would arrange a visit to NM to assess the possibilities for support and development. Planting churches was discussed at length, with the avenue *goplantme.com* being presented in detail. Representatives from both conferences agreed that growth and development within our conference expansion is very important and pledged to seek ways to fulfill our vision. The PNC is currently planting churches in DeRidder, LA and Caldwell, ID, with a strong opportunity in Kingwood, TX.

Another way for the conferences to work together is Youth Challenge West. It was noted that this is already happening and we will continue to search for more ways to promote and grow this event. There was discussion on ways for the two conferences to promote foreign missions to our churches and it was agreed that Darrell Underwood and Steve Snodgrass

would develop something to present at the next meeting.

We moved our meeting to a local BBQ diner where we fellowshiped and concluded by Clair Sams presenting a pastoral care program. This would provide funding for crisis counseling expense, on-going education, marriage enrichment and support venues. This will be further developed and acted upon in the next meeting which is set for November 16th in OKC.

Our time together was edifying and productive. There was a general consensus of a positive meeting with a forward vision. God is moving and I’m excited to be a part of it!

~ Pastor Stephen Snodgrass

On Saturday, July 6, 2019, we met with representatives from Pilgrim Nazarene Church for the second time. Energized by a wonderful breakfast provided by Sis. Stetler, we gathered in a Sunday school room at Oklahoma City Bible Methodist Church. After introductions around the room, we settled into the agenda for the day.

After participating in discussions about missions, church planting and youth outreach, I couldn’t help but notice the excitement in the air. I was starting to see that our PNC brethren had the same heart for the lost as we did. In fact, one of the PNC men, Mark, shared an idea for a laundromat church service. I loved the idea. That’s exactly the kind of things we do at Servant’s Heart Chapel, and our people were all for it when I shared the idea with them.

I want to thank Rev. Darrell Stetler II and Rev. Clair Sams for orchestrating these meetings. I believe they are essential for all parties in the coming months.

~ Pastor Darrell Underwood

Above: Clockwise from bottom left: Caleb Crouch, Eric Going, Clair Sams, Stephen Snodgrass, Darrell Stetler, Todd Hurst, Mark Russell, Zane Hurst, Darrell Underwood, Michael Covington

WORLD MISSIONS

NEWS UPDATE

TIMOTHY KEEP | MISSIONS DIRECTOR



A New Thing in Mexico

July marked the opening of Ezra Biblical Seminary in San Gabriel, Mexico. It is a simple beginning, but it is, without a doubt, God's beginning! It seems clear to us now that the Lord has been preparing Brennan and Ivon for this vision for the last six years. And by the grace of God, I believe we are witnessing the "new thing" many have been longing and praying for.

There are no formulas for success in the scriptures, but there are certain factors which are almost always present when the Holy Spirit is at work: **1) The right man (person), 2) with the right plan, 3) in the right place, and, 4) at the right time.** We believe that each of these factors is present

in this new work of God in San Gabriel. The Lord has been preparing and equipping the Muir family for such a time as this and placing in their hearts a plan for the raising up of Christian workers for the harvest. And He has raised up a team of young national leaders to embark on this faith voyage with them.

We are not unaware of the dangers ahead. There will doubtless be many tests for this team to pass through; many challenges to their faith; many decisions to make in the days to come, but thus far the Lord has clearly led, and worked in ways that only He could have. Such favor is a promise that future favor is theirs for the receiving, and so today we want to pause to give Him the praise He alone deserves.

~ Tim Keep



Ezra Biblical Seminary

Ezra Biblical Seminary Mission Statement

Ezra Biblical Seminary exists to make disciples of Christ who accurately know God's Word, practically obey God's Word, and effectively share God's Word with others.

What is Ezra Biblical Seminary?

Ezra Biblical Seminary is a local Christ-centered theological training center dedicated to equipping the body of Christ and expanding the Kingdom of God. Shepherds Global Classroom is providing the curriculum.

Who is the Seminary for?

It is for anyone who recognizes the need to increase in the knowledge of God and grow in Christ-likeness.

Why Ezra Biblical Seminary?

In the Old Testament we learn from Ezra the scribe that through the preparation of one's heart, we can successfully know, obey and share the Word of God (Ezra 7:10). Following this example, we will be enabled to "walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God" (Col 1:10). Ezra Biblical Seminary will strive to prepare the student to achieve these goals:

KNOW: If we are not knowing God's Word, we cannot practically obey it.

OBEY: If we are not obeying God's Word, we cannot effectively share it.

SHARE: If we are not sharing God's Word, we are not accurately knowing it nor obeying it.



Eloy

Eloy has not only been a great help to us since coming to San Gabriel; he is also a good friend. He is extremely intelligent, funny, and a friend to everyone. He has always been deeply involved in the church since at the age of eight his mother began to take him and his sister to the services on Sundays. As a teenager he taught one of the Sunday school classes for the younger children. He is a biologist and teaches at the local High School. He is also a talented artist who can be frequently found doing projects for the local businesses. In addition, he is always ready to lend a hand to any church activity. Eloy has also been instrumental in the development of our local SGC training center and is currently taking two courses himself.



Perla

Perla is organized, methodical, and an excellent teacher to her first grade class in one of the San Gabriel Elementary Schools. More significantly, she was, for a long time, Raul's Sunday School teacher. God has greatly used her obedience in the lives of many in the current youth group. She is quiet and steady, but her intelligence and friendship have been invaluable to us. She has offered help with language, culture, church youth activities and anywhere else extra assistance might be needed. She often uses her Sunday afternoons to visit the elderly women of our church who can no longer make it to service, or she can be found reading God's word to Bro. Salomon, one of the first Christians in San Gabriel, who can no longer see. Perla loves Jesus, missions and is constantly wanting to grow and learn.



Raúl

Brennan has mentored Raúl, a very responsible leader in the San Gabriel youth group, for over a year now. Along with being Brennan's right hand assistant in the Shepherds Global Classroom (SGC) training center, he is also a trusted friend. He recently graduated from High School, plays guitar, piano, often leads singing at church, and has also taught a children's Sunday school class. He has a strong work ethic and will be assisting with proofreading, grading and finances for the SGC courses. Raul is always ready to serve and his desire is to prepare for ministry.



Left: Study time for Ezra Bible Seminary students; **Right:** Brennan and Ivon Muir and their children with Eloy, Perla, and Raúl; **Opposite Page:** Ezra Bible Seminary study area



GREAT LAKES REGIONAL CONFERENCE NEWS

BLAKE JONES | CONFERENCE PRESIDENT



Photos from Great Lakes Camp



SPECIAL NOTE FROM THE GREAT LAKES CONFERENCE

The Great Lakes Conference extends a warm welcome to The Southwest Provisional Conference and their leader, Rev. Clair Sams. We look forward to the joy of fellowship in our beloved Bible Methodist Connection. May God bless and prosper you as He builds His eternal kingdom through your ministries.

Excerpt from the Conference President's Report

We are gathered for our 25th Annual Conference as part of the Bible Methodist Connection of Churches. As I look back to 1994 and our trip to General Conference in Alabama, I have lots of varied memories! Ed and Heather Durham traveled with us from our Canadian Churches in Dawn Valley and Windsor. The transmission on my van went out in Bowling Green, Ohio! We arrived in hot and humid Pell City, but not to total strangers. Though we were the “new kids on the block”, I had attended Bible Methodist Ministerials and we had used Bible Methodist evangelists in our camp meetings. However, I remember the utter trepidation I felt trying to speak in one of the morning sessions. Yet, our welcome was warm and genuine. Bro. Agan led general conference with his stories and grace. Bro. Alvin Hodge, who just turned 90 this year, became the face of Bible Methodism for me. He made me feel

like I was part of the family. Dr. Keaton had lead us through the path of merger with his typical positive outlook and a wonderful air of hope. We came home feeling like we belonged to Bible Methodism not just in name, but we had been embraced like long lost brothers and sisters.

I began to learn the ropes and philosophy of Bible Methodism. Though we were the smallest conference, I was surprised to discover that we came to General Conference with representation and votes equal to the largest conference. I learned that Bible Methodism lead with a “hand on your shoulder” instead of a “finger in your face.” The philosophy of leadership gave latitude for grace and mercy without compromising tenets of truth. Others with differing opinions and convictions, whether more or less stringent, were not “unchristianized.” I discovered that Bible Methodism was not looking to clone carbon copies, but rather build thinking people of conviction and principle. I found people who embraced careful Christian lifestyles, but could give a new convert growing room, mercy and a place to belong and

participate. I watched as the presence of the Holy Spirit was honored and cherished. I listened as Bible Methodist preachers opened the Scriptures with clarity and faithfulness to truth instead of graceless bashing and riding hobbies and notions. Personally, I felt that when our new logo was adopted, it aptly depicted the conviction of Bible Methodism that Word and Spirit are the basis for what church is about and the utter realities upon which we depend! The words of Paul to the Thesalonians press me with conviction, “...our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction...” (I Thess 1:5) Thinking, Biblical balance and gracious Spirit dependence have joined hands in Bible Methodism.

So here we are today, twenty-five years later, without disappointment in where the years and fellowship of Bible Methodism have brought us. We are better and stronger for the communion of this Connection of Churches. To the leaders of the Connection and to our sister conferences, we say again, “Thank you for making us part of the Bible Methodist family!”

Great Lakes Honors Rev. Dennis Johnson

Rev Dennis Johnson has served the Great Lakes Conference for 20 years as Conference Vice President. Secretary Hilling presented him with a plaque and incoming Vice President, Rev. David Ward gave him a monetary gift on behalf of the conference. A reception was held after the service.

The Johnsons continue to bless Great Lakes with their love and warm support. They are serving their 50th year of ministry this year before retiring next July.

Clockwise from top left: Rev. Johnson with Eli Albring; L-R, Rev. and Mrs. Blake Jones, Rev. and Mrs. Dennis Johnson, Rev. and Mrs. David Ward; Rev Chris Hilling presenting Johnsons with a plaque; David Ward Presents a gift.



HEARTLAND REGIONAL CONFERENCE NEWS

CHRIS CRAVENS | CONFERENCE PRESIDENT



Heartland Family Camp

Each June, Beulah Grove Camp becomes a great gathering of our Heartland Conference family. This year was no exception. The week began with Annual Conference held for the first time in the newly air conditioned and refurbished Brugger Chapel. Highlights of conference included the dedication of the new Snack Shack which was completely donated. Monday night four ministers were ordained: Dwight Crosley, David Hartkopf, Aaron Wardlaw and Brian Wardlaw. Tuesday morning Elder John Manley preached a challenging conference sermon about the baptism of fire.

Campmeeting was truly blessed of the Lord as God anointed our workers: Rev. Rollin Mitchell, evangelist; Mr. Nathan Brown, Bible teacher; Matt and Joy Barnett, singers; Rev. David Hartkopf, youth evangelist; and Heidi Turner, children's worker. Special services included a Conference service on Saturday and a Missions Rally on Sunday afternoon with Missions Director Tim Keep and the Troyer family. We anticipate this fall beginning the Bathhouse Project on the campgrounds.





Hamers' Retirement

Pastor David and Bonnie came to McDonald in 1999 to fill in until a pastor could be found. They had no intention of making McDonald their stationary home. Pastor Dave had a Monday through Friday job in Newton Falls, Ohio, but they faithfully traveled to McDonald each weekend until he retired

in 2006. Just about that same time, they told us they would be leaving to do missionary deputation work with Wilfrid Voltaire and Mom Gibson Children's Home in Haiti. They planned to travel to the Midwest and to many outreaching areas where supporters were anxious to hear how the work in MGCH was developing. This forced us to seek another minister. That minister withdrew after a year, leaving McDonald Bible Methodist church once again in need of a pastor.

Deputation work completed and Wilfrid back in Haiti, we made our situation known to Pastor Dave and Bonnie who agreed in October of 2007 that they would take McDonald Bible Methodist Church as a full-time pastorate. They uprooted themselves from a home of many years in Newton Falls, Ohio, and moved to McDonald, Pennsylvania.

After moving to McDonald, Pastor Hamer and Bonnie were vigilant over the care of their flock. Pastor Dave always had busy hands and had an endless source of energy, always making repairs and improvements to the building, inside and out. His presence will always be with us as we can see the many areas of his handiwork.

Heartland Youth Camp

Two hundred and forty-five young people and over 200 support staff gathered at Beulah Grove for the Heartland Youth Camp. God certainly blessed the week with beautiful weather and a wonderful sense of His Presence. Rev. Mike Mater, Youth President led the camp activities and services. Rev. Rodney Loper, President of God's Bible School and College

challenged the youth to not run from God but move towards God, listen to His voice, and say yes to His call. A number of young people sought God's grace at an altar of prayer. The days were filled with fun and fellowship from early morning to late at night. Special recognition were given to the following campers: Bible Bowl Champion – Kyle Johnstone; Campers of the Year – Jayshaun Williams and Anna Tillis; and President's Award winner – Stewart Quesenberry. Please mark your calendar for Youth Camp 2020, July 20-24.



SOUTHERN REGIONAL CONFERENCE NEWS

JOHN PARKER | CONFERENCE PRESIDENT



The Alabama Conference Has a New Name

Our Conference name “The Alabama Conference” goes back to our Wesleyan Methodist days as a Conference when we were truly a State Conference with churches only within the state of Alabama. We adjusted the name of the conference to reflect our change to the Bible Methodist Connection of Churches when we, along with the Ohio Conference, formed that relationship. Later, numbers of churches joined our conference from other states as well as the Ohio Conference. Eventually the Ohio Conference changed their name to the Heartland Conference to better describe the region they represented. Conferences within the Bible Methodist Connection of Churches are now designated “Regional Conferences” rather than “Annual Conferences”, as they were originally, to reflect the fact that we have churches from multiple states within the Conferences. Currently our

conference has churches in 6 southern states (Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Virginia and Tennessee). I proposed to our Conference Executive Board that we change the name to accurately represent the fact that we are no longer a State Conference, but a Regional Conference. We discussed it and the board agreed it would be the proper thing to do. We also agreed that it seemed best to simply call the conference “The Southern Conference of the Bible Methodist Connection of Churches.” With their consent, I proposed this change to our recent annual conference and it was approved without dissent. It seems that we are in full agreement that this is a proper and fitting change to our name. It will take some time to get adjusted to it, and to change all the things that have “Alabama Conference” on them, but we are already at work on that! I have had numbers of those who have been a part of our conference from other southern states to express appreciation for the change and the feeling of inclusion it brings to them!

“I love how there are no strangers at youth camp! Everyone is your friend, even if you don’t know them.” ~ Jonathan Wilson (16)

“Skit night was funny, flag football was fun, and Mrs. Lenita’s cookies were very tasty!” ~ Alex Brown (12)

“I had a good time and made friends. Loved Mr. Johnson’s stories!” ~ Charity Cook (13)

“Hands down, the best youth camp ever!” ~ Zachary Pond (14)

“The youth activities before services were really fun! The food was great. The services were great.” ~ Hope Cook (11)

“I love skit night! It is always hilarious. The messages were very good.” ~ Jerrel Collins (14)

“Youth camp is just fun all the way around!” ~ Jacob Wilson (18)

Family Camp



“Loved camp this year and loved feeling the awesome presence of the Holy Spirit in our services!” ~ Tammy Potter

“Beautiful. Thank you for all your hard work to help make camp meeting happen. I felt like I was walking on Holy Ground. It was just what I needed and wanted.” ~ Judy Davis



“I went to camp this year anticipating a special week with my Father and He did not disappoint. I believe that every single message that I heard, from both the evangelists and Sis. Frederick was absolutely God-breathed. His sweet presence filled every part of the services. Also, as an educator in the public school system and a mom, it was such a blessing to see so many children and teens worshipping and serving God. I am excited for next year to get here.” ~ Laurie O’Dell



“We had an amazing week at Pell City with the lovely people of the Bible Methodist Southern Conference. John and Cathy Parker were gracious hosts and he provides passionate leadership over the conference. Mark Cravens and William Snider did some wonderful, thought-provoking preaching that dug deep. We got to spend time with old friends and meet lots of new ones too! And family joined us for the weekend. It was our great honor and privilege to be part of the ministry team. We loved every minute.” ~ Joy Barnett

“This was year 6 for us and it was by far the best year yet! There wasn’t a service that we attended that our eyes stayed dry, and that means God was fully there! We created more bonds this year than ever before. And we deeply enjoyed and needed the prayer groups and the people in them with us! I could keep going but you didn’t ask for a book.” ~ Meri Graben Smith

MID-AMERICA PROVISIONAL CONFERENCE NEWS

DARRELL STETLER II | CONFERENCE PRESIDENT



Heartland Holiness Camp

The Mid-America Conference doesn't have an official camp. Our strategy is partnership with conservative holiness camps in our region. We strive to be really good partners with what God's already doing. Heartland Holiness Camp (Glencoe, OK) was well attended this year, with over 160 people staying on the grounds. Nathan Becker ministered to a great group of teens each day. Over 50% of the people on the grounds are under the age of 25. Each year, we do a "25 and Under" picture to show people that there is a future for God's Kingdom in the Midwest!



Kansas State Holiness Association Camp

This year Rev. Todd Hurst became the President of the Kansas State Holiness Association. This was KSHA's 132nd annual camp meeting. We were blessed by inspired preaching and above average attendance. Over 50% of those in attendance were under 25. Archived Sermons can be found at kshacamp.org/sermons.



Kansas State Holiness Youth Camp

Rev. Todd Hurst has been the director of KSHYC for the past 25 years. This year the reins were handed over to his son, Zane Hurst. This year we had a record attendance of 105. Rev. David Fulton was our Evangelist and we saw many wonderful victories around the altar.



Holiness Church Planters Use Technology to Make Connections

Let's begin with a hypothetical situation: there's a man named John who is a preacher and lives in Birmingham, AL. He has been thinking about planting a church in San Antonio, TX. He's been praying about it and the burden isn't going away. He wants to begin working toward that goal but doesn't know anyone who would be interested in sharing this adventure. Then, there's Alex and Maria. They've been living in San Antonio ever since Alex, a military member, was stationed there. They consider themselves holiness people, but there's not a holiness church anywhere in or around the city. They'd love to help start one but don't know anyone interested in such an endeavor.

This hypothetical scenario is happening all over this country, right this moment. There are lots of people who have the same dream and never meet. Until now.

Now, we have **goplantme.com**.

According to the introduction video, it's "a website that connects people who are interested in planting holiness churches." But it's more than that; it connects anyone with a heart for church planting (and that should be everyone). In our hypothetical, John, Alex and Maria can now go to goplantme.com, create a profile and find others with similar goals. They can connect with each other, another group who wants to financially support the project or yet another group who want to pray for the project.

It all started with someone thinking "There has to be a better way." Eric Himelick, director of Urban Ministry at Evangelistic Faith Mission, said, "There are some of us out there that are connecting, and many of those connections are anecdotal. As in, 'Hey, this person should be talking to this person' but whether or not they actually do is questionable."

In 2015, Eric had this discussion with Darrell Stetler II. "I said to Darrell in one of our conversations in passing, 'Hey, wouldn't it be cool if we could set up some way that people who are interested in a city ministry could connect?' I was thinking mainly of city ministries, but he was thinking broader than that."

Darrell explained the importance of goplantme.com. "The task of church planting – in the holiness movement – is too large for denominations to tackle by themselves. There ought to be cross-denominational help. We ought to be able to work together. And everybody says that, but there was no way for that to happen. Now, there is."

I asked Darrell where he sees this website down the road, and he replied, "I think that five years down the road our hope is to see a good list of people that are connected together for the purpose of church planting because of this website."

If you haven't already, check out goplantme.com and sign up. Whether it's prayer support, financial giving or direct participation in a holiness church plant, there is something for everyone on this website - but it will only be useful if people actually use it. Six years ago, I planted a church, and I wish we had had this resource back then.

Perhaps now John, Alex, and Maria can start that church in San Antonio.

~ Darrell Underwood



Pilgrim Nazarene Church Joins the Bible Methodist Connection of Churches

The past Conference year has been one of excitement, prayer and anticipation. Toward the end of camp 2018 the Pilgrim Nazarene General Board met. During that meeting action was taken to continue discussion regarding the possibility of joining the Bible Methodist Connection of Churches.

In Board Meetings, that were in connection with Preacher's Meeting, (February 27 through March 1) the Board unanimously voted to incorporate as the Pilgrim Nazarene Church International. The purpose for that action was to clarify confusion over two previous incorporations that had not been kept current and were crossing one another. The Board also unanimously recommended that confirmation of the incorporation at a Special General Conference. In the same meeting, the Board voted unanimously to recommend a resolution to join the Bible Methodists be affirmed and sent to a Special General Conference. Following the Board meeting, letters, emails and texts were sent to each church, pastor and elder informing them of the action and the plans regarding the business that had been done and that was to be considered.

June 6, 2019 the Special General Conference was held in Duncan, Oklahoma with representatives from all but three churches present, two of which had expressed desire to be

Bible Methodists. During that Conference the vote to incorporate as the Pilgrim Nazarene Church International was unanimous. Following that vote, a vote to approve the Resolution to join the Bible Methodist Church was overwhelmingly in support of the action.

In the weeks between the Special General Conference and camp meeting, each local church has had the opportunity to call their membership to vote on the action of the Special General Conference to join the Bible Methodists. The results of that vote is as follows, Two churches voted to not be Bible Methodist and one church did not respond to any communication for over a year. The remaining 10 churches and one mission have expressed desire to be Bible Methodist.

At camp, Tuesday, July 30, the Board met and certified the action of the Churches. Wednesday, July 31 an organizing conference was held. It is with great anticipation that we face the future. The Lord has led us and will continue to order our steps.

Saturday morning we had the distinct privilege of ordaining Caleb Crouch. Rev. Rodney Loper preached, the Larry Jewetts sang and following the covenants and prayer the Crouch family sang. It was a blessing to have Caleb's parents and his siblings, as well as a large number of friends to witness the ceremony.

Camp ended with high expectations for the coming years and excitement in partnering with the other Bible Methodist Conferences.





Pilgrim Nazarene Church Camp

What a monumental week of camp and conference! Once again we gathered in the beautiful rolling hills of Tennessee at Camp Garner Creek, anticipating God's presence and Divine guidance...and He did not fail us. God truly blessed us with a sense of His presence and blessing, as well as a sweet spirit of unity and fellowship among our members.

As an organization, the Pilgrim Nazarene Church, Intl. voted earlier this year to join the Bible Methodist Connection of Churches. Our Resolution was completed by the conference body and confirmed by the General Board. Bro. Clair Sams was unanimously elected as our Conference President. We are grateful to the Bible Methodist Connectional Committee for receiving our request to join and for the individual Conferences for approving this action. We looking forward to joining forces for the furtherance of God's great kingdom! Plans are already being formulated for combined efforts of missions and evangelism. It was our privilege to be welcomed into the Bible Methodist Connection by Dr. Michael Avery via video presentation, and by the other Conference presidents as well. We are anticipating great days ahead as we get to know each other better.

Our camp meeting was marked by the anointed preaching of Dr. James Keaton (former Bible Methodist Connectional Chairman) and President Rodney Loper (President of God's Bible School and College), and the singing

ministry of the Jewetts. Dr. Keaton delivered his heart with some of his classic and fundamental Holiness sermons. His ministry was accompanied with precious alter services and spiritual victories. Our hearts, minds and spirits were challenged and inspired by the ministry of President Loper. His spirit and conviction will not be soon forgotten. It was a blessing to experience the complimentary ministries of these godly men at both ends of the age spectrum. Of course, we were again blessed by the unforgettable music ministry of Larry and Trish Jewett. We always enjoy their beautiful singing and spirits! If anyone is interested, the camp services are available for viewing on the Southwest Bible Methodist Connection of Churches Facebook page.

Bro. Harrold Taylor did an excellent job again this year as the Children's worker. He always provides the children with engaging biblical programs, scripture memorization, singing and craft activities. The children appear to definitely enjoy it all. The Sunday morning Children's program is always a highlight. Thank-you to all the others who also helped with the children's services.

We rejoiced Saturday morning with the Ordination of Bro. Caleb Crouch. Bro. Crouch has been faithfully pastoring in Duncan, OK, and completed the requirements for ordination. We were privileged to have the extended Crouch family with us to share this blessing. Bro. Crouch was also the Youth worker for our camp. I know the young people were blessed by the services, activities and even zip-lining! We trust that God will continue to bless our youth and raise them up for His glory.

We were also challenged and inspired by evangelistic efforts of both foreign and home missions. We were blessed by a slide presentation given by Sis. Shirley Fogleman. She has served in Papua New Guinea for the past several years, primarily in the Tega Bible School. Our organization has contributed to building a duplex for teacher housing. This house will be a great benefit to the efforts of the school. Many of our people have gone over there to construct this building, and it was such a blessing to see pictures of our people involved in this project. More money was raised for the completion of the building. We also enjoyed pictorial presentations by Bro. Rick Bork of Caldwell, Idaho and Bro. Don Steele of DeRidder, Louisiana. These men are faithfully planting new churches. We were excited to see how God is working in these churches with evangelistic outreach. Both of the churches are in the process of acquiring new church properties with the help and investment of our new conference. We are anticipating great days ahead for these faithful pastors and their congregations.

We extend a great big "thank-you" to the Sams, the evangelists and camp workers, and everyone else who labored to make this another great camp and conference. The staff of Camp Garner Creek were so amazing and helpful again this year. We certainly appreciate their hard work and the friendships that we have built. It is such a blessing to be a part of God's great family, and to labor together in His Kingdom.

To God be the Glory! See you next year at camp!

~ Dr. David Boardman

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