



THE
BIBLE METHODIST

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE BIBLE METHODIST CONNECTION OF CHURCHES VOLUME 52 | ISSUE 4

**DO WE
CARE?**

**HOW DO WE RESPOND
IN TROUBLING TIMES?**

FROM THE EDITOR



G. Clair Sams
Editor

In Diane J. Chandler's book, *Christian Spiritual Formation*, she writes, "In the Scriptures we observe the relational dimension within the Holy Trinity, whereby the Father, Son and Holy Spirit relate intimately. Each divine member is independent – they are eternally involved in mutual giving and receiving. For example, Jesus announced the unity between himself and the Father as being one (John 10:38; 14:10-11; 17:21), and the Spirit was sent by the Father in Jesus's name (John 14:26). Stanley Grenz suggests, "God is best viewed as the social Trinity." Hence, human relational reflects the relationally of the Trinity."¹

This issue of *The Bible Methodist* focuses on the Churches relational response to social needs of the culture and community where we serve. The church has historically carried the burden of the needs the community and culture. The early Church responded to Roman culture by showing the depth of their respect for human life and their deep care for the needs of the poor and ill.

"Dionysius wrote in an Easter letter around 260 A.D. that a substantial number of his presbyters, deacons, and laymen lost their lives while caring for others. His letter included the following:

"Most of our brother Christians showed unbounded love and loyalty, never sparing themselves and thinking only of one another. Heedless of danger, they took charge of the sick, attending to their every need and ministering to them in Christ, and with them departed this life serenely happy. Many, in nursing and curing others, transferred their death to themselves and died in their stead. The best of our brothers lost their lives in this manner; a number of presbyters, deacons, and laymen winning high commendation so that death in this form, the result of great piety and strong faith, seems in every way the equal of martyrdom."

He also described how the pagans responded:

"The heathen behaved in the very opposite way. At the first onset of the disease, they pushed the sufferers away and fled from their dearest, throwing them into the roads before they were dead and treated unburied corpses as dirt, hoping thereby to avert the spread and contagion of the fatal disease; but do what they might, they found it difficult to escape."

If we are to assess Dionysius' claims, it must be demonstrated that the Christians actually did minister to the sick while the pagans mostly did not. Large numbers of people died not directly from the disease, but from dehydration and lack of calories because they became too weak to obtain food and liquids. Modern medical experts estimate that conscientious nursing without any medications could cut the mortality rate by two-thirds or even more. Therefore, if the Christians nursed the sick, they would have had a far lower mortality rate than pagans."²

Diane Chandler wrote, "According to Joseph Hellerman, authentic Christian community comprises of four values: (1) sharing our stuff, (2) sharing our hearts, (3) staying, embracing the pain and growing

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ADDRESSING AMERICA'S

SOCIAL ISSUES

BY EMILY JONES

Social Issues. These two little words evoke varied, and usually strong, opinions when discussed on any platform. Some see social issues as simply side discussions while others see them as core to human existence.

Significant social issues have been rampant over the last several years, affecting some of us more than others.

- The death of Eric Garner in 2014
- The refugee crisis of 2015
- A turbulent election in 2016
- Harvey Weinstein sexual abuse allegations in 2017

- The implementation of a zero-tolerance border policy in 2018, resulting in the separation of families
- Jeffrey Epstein's arrest and death in 2019, resulting in an increase of sex trafficking awareness
- The novel Coronavirus in 2020

When looking at social issues it is easy to become quickly overwhelmed. There are many needs: worldwide, nationally, at state level, within our communities, churches, families and friend circles. Just as we each see social issues differently, we will see our responsibilities to them differently. Thankfully we have a clear guide

from Scripture where Jesus addressed every social issue we will ever encounter. Scripture repeatedly reveals God's heart for the poor, needy, orphan, widow, foreigner, those suffering injustice, and more. The church has a responsibility to respond to God's heart for these areas.

James 1:27 says, "Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world."

In Psalms 68:5 we read, "Father of the fatherless and protector of widows is God in his holy habitation."

Deuteronomy 10:18 says, "He executes justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the sojourner, giving him food and clothing."

Psalms 82: 3-4 says, "Give justice to the weak and the fatherless; maintain the right of the afflicted and the destitute. Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked."

We are privileged to be at a point in time where we are able to look back at the rich history of church involvement in social reform; homes for unwed mothers, adoption and foster care agencies, racial justice advocacy, providing of medical care, caring for orphans and widows, and

refugee aid. Many organizations throughout history had faults, some quite significant, but they are an important part of this history that paved the way for current organizations to be developed and improved over time. Today a vast array of organizations address these issues and more. Organizations like Bethany Christian Services who provide adoption, foster care, pregnancy support, refugee aid and other services domestically and internationally. Samaritan's Purse provides aid to disaster victims, both internationally and domestically. World Vision provides refugee aid, disaster relief, and child sponsorship around the world. Catholic Charities USA provides essential services to refugees and immigrants, nutritional and housing assistance to vulnerable populations, programming aimed at reducing poverty, and international disaster aid. The International Justice Mission works to free people trapped in labor and sexual slavery around the world, and additionally aids in the fight against land theft, police violence, sexual violence against children, and citizens rights abuses. These are just a few organizations actively

addressing important social issues of our times.

These organizations have many different ways for YOU to get involved. First, consistently remember them and their work in prayer. Secondly, consider researching and then financially supporting the organization of your choice. Thirdly, consider employment or volunteer opportunities with one of these faith-based organizations addressing important social issues. Regardless of your skill set, there is some way that you can be involved in short or long term opportunities. Examples of in-person support are partnering with local foster and adoptive organizations to volunteer at events, provide birthday and Christmas gifts for children, provide transportation for children to appointments, or provide respite care. Opportunities to support refugee organizations may include, among others, providing transportation for new families to appointments, volunteering to show newcomers how to navigate public transportation or public facilities, or providing gifts and/or meals for holidays. Opportunities with Samaritan's Purse or World Vision may include volunteering to do short or long term domestic or international disaster work. Additionally they have field offices where they employ many different skill sets such as finance, construction, social work, teaching, nursing, etc. Organizations such as the International Justice System employ all these and more, including legal and criminal justice specialties.

Regardless of our viewpoints on the many different social issues facing our world today, what an honor it is to be called to join Him in this work of loving, caring for and engaging with hurting people. Scripture admonishes the church to, "seek justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God." Let's engage social issues boldly, as Jesus did, knowing that He who has called us will equip and send us. We need only make ourselves available. ■

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WHEN DISASTER STRIKES!

WHAT CAN BIBLE METHODISTS DO?

BY **REV. JOHN PARKER**

In our age of “live” video around the world, we can see first-hand the devastation of natural disasters as they strike, and often feel helpless to alleviate the hurt of those who suffer. There are times when the hurting are close enough geographically to quickly respond to help with creature comforts and necessities. We have sheltered people in our churches and camps and taken work teams of volunteers into those devastated areas to help in tangible ways. Bible Methodists are caring people! But often we are not equipped or prepared to respond

with proper aid and comfort to large-scale disasters, especially when they are not close by. What can caring Bible Methodists do in such situation?

Fortunately, we are not left without options. Let me make some suggestions based on past experiences and some specific training to serve as a Crisis Debriefer with NOVA (National Organization for Victim Assistance) during my years pastoring.

DISASTER RELIEF TEAMS

It is possible to organize Disaster Relief Teams when the Disaster is

of the magnitude that large-scale volunteer response is needed, and resources are available to put together the transportation, equipping, housing, and supervision of such an effort. This has been done several times with teams of Bible Methodist volunteers responding to assist in tornado recovery efforts in such places as Tuscaloosa, Alabama and Oklahoma City, Oklahoma as well as hurricane relief in DeRidder and Lake Charles, Louisiana. These efforts are most efficient when there are local Bible Methodist Pastors helping to coordinate the teams and

facilitate the processes involved in making it work. Don't ever hesitate to call your pastor or Conference President to volunteer or ask if there is an opportunity to volunteer when disaster strikes! Disasters are times when Bible Methodists can impact communities by being the hands of Christ to the hurting!

SAMARITAN'S PURSE

When it is not possible to effectively coordinate Disaster Relief Teams and send them to help the hurting, it is wonderful to know that we have devoted Christian resources that most likely are already on the ground serving to bring relief, counseling, shelter, food, medicine and a variety of other comforts to those who are devastated by disasters. At the very forefront of such effective, gospel-focused ministries is Samaritan's Purse! Founded by Rev. Franklin Graham, Samaritan's Purse does disaster relief that is unprecedented and unequalled. Having observed their ministry first-hand and seen the fruits of

their ministry, we have chosen to support their ministry for specific disasters as well as their general Disaster Relief ministry. They are not only doing effective ministry through Christian Disaster Relief here in the U.S. but all over the world. You can contact them for their magazine, or to support by these means:

- www.samaritanspurse.org
- Samaritan's Purse
P.O. Box 3000
Boone, NC 28607
- (828) 262-1980

THE SALVATION ARMY

Perhaps the largest and best known Christian Organization in the world, founded by those who embraced our Wesleyan beliefs, the Salvation Army is well known to most of us. There is usually a local Salvation Army Center that will be coordinating the collection of goods and funds for any significant disaster response. You can also contact them through these means:

- disaster.salvationarmyusa.org
- 1-800-SAL-ARMY (725-2769)

- Salvation Army Disaster Relief
440 West Nyack Rd.
West Nyack, NY 10994

MISSIONS ORGANIZATIONS

Often, as in the case of the devastating hurricanes that struck the Bahama Islands, or the Earthquake that destroyed much of Haiti, there are sister missions organizations already working in those areas who are able to coordinate volunteer teams of relief workers, as well as facilitate the transportation and distribution of goods and relief items to those who are hurting as a result of the disasters. Your Pastor will often know how to contact them, or who to connect with to get that information.

Our primary purpose and desire in these windows of opportunity afforded us as a result of disasters and the hurt and destruction left behind, is to enable the love of Christ to be shared with the hurting, and Gospel of Hope and Healing to be given! Let this be the mission of all Bible Methodists. ■

CONSIDER A

LEGACY GIFT

TO THE BIBLE METHODIST CONNECTION OF CHURCHES

There are several ways to partner with one of the ministries of the Bible Methodist Connection of Churches that can make a long term financial difference in that ministry. You can make a *Memorial Gift* in someone's honor. You can leave a *Charitable Bequest* for a fixed dollar amount or a percentage of your total estate or percentage of the residual of your estate. You can make a *Planned Gift* through a revocable trust, a will, a gift of

real estate or from tax-deferred retirement assets.

Your gift to a local church, a Conference, a Camp or to a Missions project can make a huge difference!

If you are interested in talking to someone about this please contact **Michael Avery**, our General Connectional Chairman:

Phone – (513) 218-8502

Email – mavery@gbs.edu

Continued from page 2

together, and (4) reaching out beyond the nuclear family. The early church embodied these values (Acts 2:42-47: 4:32), both caring for one another but also eventually reaching beyond its perimeter (Acts 8:1). With hospitality as an earmark of God's people, Christian community should intentionally reach out to others through loving and listening well."³

I trust we can catch a fresh vision of opening our lives to others. Our homes, churches and culture can impact the lives of others. We must consider the thought of embracing and helping those who are bound by sin. If our hearts can be captured by people who have been taken advantage of and living under the delusion of sins devaluation of life, we can make a difference.

When I was in Bible school one of the students came from a family with quite a story. The young man's father had been unemployed and was in deep need when he began attending a holiness church in Chattanooga, Tennessee. The pastor offered to help the fellow. Together they started a painting business. The business grew and through prayer, persistence and hard work it became a very prosperous business. The pastor reached out and helped lift a family out of poverty and blessed both the family and ultimately the Kingdom of the Lord.

The history of the Methodists, the Salvation Army, the Church of the Nazarene are all deeply marked with intentional ministry among the disadvantaged. Wesley purposefully canvassed for offerings for the poor. William Booth and the early Salvationists built their entire ministry around the poor and addicted. The Church of the Nazarene intentionally built churches on the "wrong side of the tracks" because in those communities they found people in need and hungry.

Matthew writes in Chapter 25, "I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink;

I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me."⁴ The Lord is calling his followers to be aware of their involvement in the needs of people. He announces that involvement or lack of involvement with others and their needs influences Divine judgment.

Elizabeth Glass-Turner wrote, "The truth is that the Christian faith has never approached community as possible solely in the confines of an echo chamber. The Holy Spirit destroys feedback loops; if we quench the Spirit, we lose our saltiness. Scripture burns; affirming the Creed tugs us into alignment; the Eucharist keeps us all beggars in a bread line; works of mercy force us to learn names, not just repeat talking points. If you

approach community as a customer or a food critic, you will be hard-pressed to find it."⁵

My prayer is, Lord help us catch a fresh vision of reaching out. Lead us to embrace others, other Believers as well as those we consider lost, people who need Christ. May we invest in discipling and encouraging one another and lead the broken to find healing in Christ. ■

¹ Diane J. Chandler, *Christian Spiritual Formation*, 1989, Inter-Varsity Press

² <https://place.asburyseminary.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://www.google.com/&httpsredir=1&article=1074&context=firstfruitspapers>

³ Diane J. Chandler, *Christian Spiritual Formation*, 1989, Inter-Varsity Press

⁴ The New King James Version. (1982). (Mt 25:35-36). Nashville: Thomas Nelson

⁵ <https://wesleyanaccent.com/how-is-community-possible-a-note-from-nouwen/>

**"The truth is that the Christian faith has never approached community as possible solely in the confines of an echo chamber. The Holy Spirit destroys feedback loops... If you approach community as a customer or a food critic, you will be hard-pressed to find it."
– Elizabeth Glass-Turner**

WORLD MISSIONS

NEWS UPDATE



Timothy Keep
Missions Director

THE GOSPEL OF MARK & THE PERSECUTED CHURCH

BY PAUL T.

My family and I began our life in China in 2013. Persecution in China was real at that time and has only intensified since.

Although living in a nation like China has given us a unique perspective on persecution, I will say at the outset that I've never feared for my life as those living in Rome during ancient times or Christians living in places like Saudi Arabia today.

The largest fear we've faced is being interrogated and deported within 72 hours.

Even my friends in China have far more to lose than ourselves. From interrogation, to torture, and long jail terms, my friends have faced and continue to face a heavy cost for their faith.

Recently, it occurred to me that the gospel of Mark was written about a time of persecution, in a place of persecution, to a people being persecuted, by a persecuted person.

John Mark wrote a gospel about John being imprisoned, Jesus being executed, and the very human failings of the disciples in the face of opposition. Mark himself may have been the man fleeing persecution having lost his clothing toward the end of Mark.

Mark likely wrote his gospel in Rome where the persecution of Christians was infamous, remembered even today for its ferocity.

Gentiles becoming Christians

was a large reason for persecution in Rome. Historically, Rome had largely left the Jewish faith alone. They tolerated Judaism because it didn't tend to proselytize a great deal. However, Christianity was causing quite a stir and was viewed as a growing threat.

I've often been asked and have wondered myself what the reason is for persecution in the Peoples Republic of China. Interestingly, I think it is similar to the reason for persecution in ancient Rome. Christianity liberates the soul and the intellect. It tells us that we have only one true, ultimate authority—Jesus Christ. The powerful growth of Christianity and the revolutionary nature of Christianity is the reason the communists fear it and dispense so much time and energy trying to destroy it. They recognize that Christianity revolutionizes its followers and ultimately society itself. The party wants its citizens to submit their lives and thoughts to them; therefore, they cannot stand the growth of any liberating religion.

Let's open our Bibles to the gospel of Mark and read some verses thinking about how they may speak to us about persecution.

Mark 1:1-3—*The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in Isaiah the prophet, "Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your*

way, the voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,'"

John the Baptist was a man sent by God. His life is also an example of how to live life in the face of persecution.

John preached repentance and forgiveness of sins. He testified of Jesus. John was not afraid to confront the sinfulness of Jewish leaders. This boldness ultimately cost him his life.

In China, I've seen believers struggle with whether they should confront the evils of their leaders. It is often a very difficult decision to make, and wisdom is needed to make these decisions. Even John the Baptist and Jesus, while confronting the religious leaders and Herod, had little to say about the tyranny of Rome. One way that we can pray for persecuted Christians is for them to know when, and how to confront evil authorities.

Eventually, John becomes depressed, despondent and even begins to doubt Jesus. He sends some of his own disciples to ask Jesus whether he is the Messiah, or should they seek someone else.

Facing persecution brings deep depression for many. I have seen this among my friends and within myself in China. I remember one day in China when our supervisor of the school made an announcement. She said, "everyone hide your

Bibles, some authorities are coming to inspect our school today.” As pressure mounted, and we had to spend less time pursuing ministry opportunities with our students, I became depressed. So much so, that I shared this feeling with the school principal. Her comment was yes, my husband gets depressed after every interrogation. I don’t feel that way she said, but it always happens to my husband.

Depression and questions about suffering are common to persecuted people. Jesus did not rebuke John for these feelings, but neither did he ever use his power to bail John out. We must pray for persecuted Christians that they will remain strong through the dark times, that they will not be overcome by doubt. Pray that they will intensely know the value Jesus places upon them, although they feel human rejection from their own leaders.

Mark 1:14-15 reads, *Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.”*

Jesus declares that the prophecies have been fulfilled. The good news of Salvation has arrived. The kingdom of God is beginning. Now is the acceptable time to turn from our sins and believe in the Good news of Jesus.

We are living during the kingdom of God. We, similar to Isaiah, have the revelation that Jesus will come again when the trumpet sounds. We do not know how much time must elapse before this final consummation of the world, but we know it is coming. Therefore, we must stay awake and be ready for his coming. We look forward in hope not despondency.

Let’s look at the encounter between Jesus and the Leper in Mark 1. This encounter is very relevant to the issues raised by the pandemic, and surprisingly, it also has relevance to persecution, which I will try to bring to light.

And a leper came to him, im-

ploring him, and kneeling said to him, “If you will, you can make me clean.” Moved with pity, he stretched out his hand and touched him and said to him, “I will; be clean.” And immediately the leprosy left him, and he was made clean. And Jesus sternly charged him and sent him away at once, and said to him, “See that you say nothing to anyone, but go, show yourself to the priest and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded, for a proof to them.”

Two situations in life have made this miracle more meaningful to me personally. The first is that I saw leprosy for the first time in China. We were walking into Old Town Lijiang when we saw beggars by the wayside. They had cardboard boxes which people were putting money in.

Seeing beggars is a common occurrence, but this time the sight of these men was stunning. You could literally see their muscle and bone. Their flesh was rotting right off their bodies. I was so shocked by the sight, and they acted as if they were not in pain.

It was so grotesque that I could hardly believe my eyes. It was like the opposite of seeing a terrible Halloween decoration. For a moment you think it is real but then realize it is fake. Only in this instance, I at first thought it must be fake and then came to the realization that it was all too real. I felt repulsed and pity at the same time. I passed them, stopped, scrounged around for some money, and gave to them, something I very rarely do.

I have never been able to look at Jesus’ dealings with lepers the same after this incident. Even in the 21st century with no feelings of having to keep mosaic cleanliness laws, my stomach was turned, and I did not dream of touching them. Jesus would have shocked us in the modern world by touching lepers, but for the ancient world, it must have felt like an earth-shattering moment.

The people must have thought, “Can you believe what you just saw?” I think it is significant that all the synoptic gospels mention this miracle,

and each one says Jesus touched the man. This must have made a big impression on the disciples.

The second incident that has made this miracle more meaningful is the pandemic itself. Lepers were supposed to social distance and those coming in contact were supposed to do so as well. The way Jesus disregarded social norms seems more real after our recent experiences. Jesus displays immense power and fearlessness.

By coming to Jesus this man is doing what lepers were not supposed to do. They were commanded to keep their distance and cry unclean, unclean. Jesus rewards this man by doing what was not lawful. He tenderly touches the man and heals him.

Ponder this question a bit. What is the significance of this man asking for cleansing rather than healing? Being ceremonially clean may have been more important to this man than simply feeling better. There is not necessarily a lot of pain, but there is shunning and deep loneliness. It actually probably reveals a lot about the culture, nature of the disease, and the longings of this man.

Jesus doesn’t just address his physical need, but also his need for belonging and value. Jesus tenderly touches a man that may not have felt a healthy man’s touch for many years.

In reading this account, one obvious question comes to mind. And, I believe the answer has ramifications for persecution. The question is: “What are we to make of Jesus commanding these men to tell no one?” The time was not right to proclaim the miracles of Christ.

Some missionaries in China appreciate and take to heart that sometimes it is not wise to share their faith. Don’t cast your pearls before evil men who will only use it as a pretense to arrest you. In creative access countries, we must constantly seek guidance as to when it is the right moment to share our faith. Perhaps it is surprising to us that God sometimes says don’t witness of me right now.

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GREAT LAKES

REGIONAL CONFERENCE NEWS



Blake Jones
Conference President

FRANKTON INDIANA BIBLE METHODIST CHURCH

Ironwood Bible Methodist Church bagged up tracts and treats as usual, but this year they tried to remind people that October 31 is also another very special day—Reformation Day! Notice Martin Luther (Pastor Jason Lindahl) nailing up his “theses.”



GREAT LAKES FALL FOCUS

Rev. Rodney Loper was the guest speaker for a conference Fall Focus weekend on the Rock Lake Camp Ground. His ministry was warm and challenging. He called us to take off the black robe of judicial

posturing and clothe ourselves with the white coat of a physician as we reach to broken and hurting people around us. Bro. Loper, thank you for the uplift of your ministry as we embraced a beautiful autumn together.

During the weekend we gathered in the pavilion to pray for our nation.

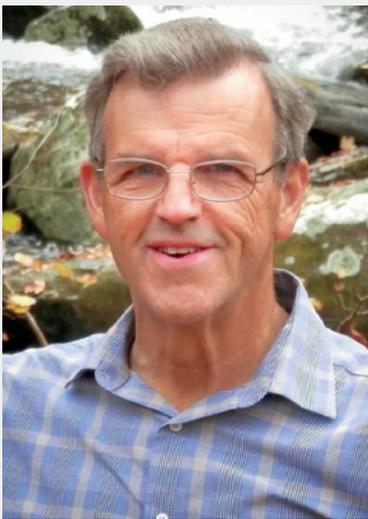


SPECIAL PRESENTATION

Great Lakes Quilting Ladies presented Sis. Esther Scherer (right) with a personalized quilt for her ninetieth birthday. She and her late husband, Chet, lead much of the Rock Lake Camp improvements in its earlier years. Sis. Carol Brookens (left) leads the quilting program.

ROCK LAKE CAMP GROUNDS

This fall the dining hall was given a new steel roof. With the help of a great crew of volunteers, including children, the work was accomplished in three busy days. This makes six camp buildings that now have steel roofs.



GREAT LAKES ELDER'S HOME GOING

Rev. Michael Hobbs, of Hobe Sound, Florida, passed away unexpectedly on October 15th. It is not hard at all to think of Bro. Hobbs as “present with the Lord,” but it is very difficult to think of him as “absent from the body!” His lively spirit and his ability to give you his whole attention, seem hard to put in past tense. So I am simply envisioning Bro. Mike’s warmth, life and vitality in the glory world, with exuberant expressions that we can’t truly fathom.

Years and years of fruitful, pastoral ministry preceded Rev. Hobbs’ transfer as Elder to the Great Lakes Conference. Though his work and efforts have been “long distance” from our northerly state, we have been honored to identify with his passion and work for Hope International Missions and Florida Evangelistic Association.

As a conference we send Sis. Daryl Hobbs and the Hobbs family our warmest affection and sympathy. May our Father sustain you and hold you close to Himself.

– Blake Jones, Conference President

HEARTLAND

REGIONAL CONFERENCE NEWS



Chris Cravens
Conference President

WE ARE GRATEFUL TO GOD!

We thank God for His blessing on the Heartland churches even in the midst of COVID restrictions. Our pages represent a sampling of the exciting things God is doing across our conference.



FRANKLIN, OHIO

The congregation at Franklin sponsored a special Trunk or Treat event in the church parking lot. On November 1 the church celebrated their 65th anniversary.



MCDONALD, PENNSYLVANIA

The church recently had a baptismal service and welcomed several new members. The church also completely repaved their parking lot.

FORT WAYNE, INDIANA

The congregation of Wesleyan Redeemer Bible Methodist Church moved their services outdoors during Covid restrictions. The church recently was blessed with a “face lift” on the church exterior.





GAS CITY, INDIANA

Community Bible Methodist Church started a new outreach ministry in the midst of the pandemic. “Baby Pantry” supplied lotion, wipes, diapers, a Bible and a gospel tract to 30 families. The church also sponsored a “Light the Night” event.



BEULAH GROVE CAMPGROUND

The church recently had a baptismal service and welcomed several new members. The church also completely repaved their parking lot.



GREENFIELD, INDIANA

Calvary Bible Methodist Church has been active sponsoring a Harvest Celebration, a baptismal service and a revival with Rev. Duane Quesenberry.



PORT CLINTON, OHIO

The congregation of Port Clinton prepared gift bags and reached out to 100 people.

SOUTHERN

REGIONAL CONFERENCE NEWS



John Parker
Conference President



OUR MOST SENIOR CONFERENCE ELDER PROMOTED TO HEAVEN

Rev. Earl Baker, was promoted to Heaven on September 10, 2020 at the age of 92. He was a mentor and

encourager to all of us! He and his wife, Margaret Ruth, predated our Bible Methodist history, serving in the Wesleyan Methodist denomination previously. They'd served as song evangelists, children's workers, pastors and evangelists for many years together! Sis. Baker predated Bro. Baker in her heavenly arrival a couple years ago. They'd been married for 69 years at the time of her passing. Bro. Baker loved the Bible Methodist Connection! He was not hesitant to express his love and appreciation for our leadership and was a faithful supporter of Missions and every Bible Methodist event. A few days after his passing I received an envelope with a check from him for Bible Methodist Missions. He was a faithful Bible Methodist. The Bakers were faithful supporters and attenders of their local Bible Methodist church at Friendsville, TN. They loved their pastor, Rev. Dana & Debbie Bentz. He would always give a glowing report of the ministry of the church and pastor when we spoke by

phone. Bro. Baker has been a solid, reliable, consistent support of the conference and our leadership. He will be greatly missed!

Rev. Baker was preceded in death by a son, Michael Lynn Baker; grandsons, Wiley Wiggins, Gareth Baker and Braxton Bragg as well as his wife, Margaret Ruth. He is survived by his son, Gary Baker; daughter, Linda Bragg (Steve); 8 grandchildren; 24 great-grandchildren, with Chrissy and Chloe being the ones that could always put a smile on his face; 4 great-great-grandchildren; several nieces; and many lifelong friends. The Memorial Service was conducted by his Pastor, Rev. Dana Bentz, and Rev. Walt Hedstrom, officiants. Conference President, John Parker spoke on behalf of the Southern Conference. Burial was be in Lakeview Cemetery following the service. In lieu of flowers, memorials were made to Bible Methodist Missions, 40 Skyview LN, Pell City, Alabama 35125 in honor of Rev. Baker.

MOTEL ROOMS AVAILABLE

Looking for a warmer place to spend some time in the winter? Due to the closure of our Christian School here on the campground, and the availability of beautiful, year-round facilities, we have motel rooms with private baths, and a few apartments available to Bible Methodists for short-term stays this winter. There is also the possibility of exchanging your help with maintenance and janitorial for the cost of lodging.

Contact us: Southern.Conf@BibleMethodist.org for more info.





PASTOR TOM DAVIS – CHATTANOOGA, TENNESSEE

Pastor Tom Davis joined his beloved wife Judy on Heaven's shores on September 26th, 2020 from complications after very serious heart surgery. Bro. Tom was a wonderful Pastor! A Servant-Shepherd! His faithful, loving, committed, sacrificial service to God's Kingdom will not be forgotten. He had served as Pastor of the Temple Bible Methodist Church in Chattanooga for 34 years. In his early years as pastor there he led the ACE Christian School, worked secular jobs to support the ministry and pastored the church as well as fulfilling his responsibilities as a father to his family! His Obituary is as follows:

Reverend Tommie Cordell "Tom" Davis, 80, of Jamestown, TN passed away on September 26, 2020 but had lived in Chattanooga for 34 years. Rev. Davis was the pastor of Temple Bible Methodist Church for 34 years. He served in the United States Army and was a custodian at the Air National Guard. He enjoyed gardening.

Rev. Davis was preceded in death by his parents, Allen and Lora (Smith) Davis; 1st wife, Wanda (Smith) Davis; 2nd wife, Judy (Zimmerman) Davis; brother, David Davis.

Survivors include his children, Regina Gray, Robin Davis, Jerry (Paula) Davis, Lance (Dafnie) Davis, Lynette (Matthew) Holmbeck; brother, Walter (Maudeen) Davis; 8 grandchildren, and 3 great grandchildren.

Pastor Davis' life was celebrated at the South Crest Chapel of the Lane Funeral Home in Rossville, GA by Rev. John Parker – Conference President, Rev. Walter Hedstrom and Rev. Rob Cravens. He was laid to rest with his family in a Military Graveside Service at Fentress Memorial Gardens in Jamestown, TN.



A DEAR SAINT, SIS. MAGGIE INGRAM – CORDELE, GEORGIA

Maggie Martin Ingram, 89, of Cordele, GA went to heaven on August 5, 2019.

Sister Ingram was a devout Christian! A renowned Prayer Warrior! She served the Lord faithfully for many, many years through hardships and trials, and maintained a victorious testimony to God's grace! She was a Charter Member of the Cordele Bible Methodist Church for over 45 years. She donated the land the church was built on. She faithfully supported the church with her attendance, financial support and her prayers. Pastors have verified that the church could not have survived without Sis. Maggie's prayers and support. She was preceded in death by her husband, Adair Ingram; her parents, Joe Abb Martin and Annie Ruth Poole Martin. She is survived by her son, Joe Ingram and his wife, Karen, of Sebring, FL; two daughters, Kay Ingram and Debbie Kennedy and her husband Ronnie of Cordele; a brother, William Martin of Cordele; two Sisters, Marie Crawford of Cordele and Ruth Morrison of Dallas, TX; a granddaughter, Michelle Priest of Cordele and three great-grandchildren, Logan, Drake and Caleb Priest. Heaven alone can calculate or reveal the impact of her life and prayers!

MID-AMERICA

PROVISIONAL CONFERENCE NEWS



Darrell Stetler II
Conference President



MILTONVALE, KANSAS

Rev. David and Diane Mahin have accepted the call to be the pastor of the Miltonvale Bible Methodist Church. They are replacing Rev. David Turner who is retiring.



SALINA, KANSAS

Salina Living Hope Bible Methodist youth group went on our 4th annual trip to the Pumpkin Patch for fun, food and a hay ride.

OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLAHOMA

The Oklahoma City church did a drive-through Trunk or Treat, presenting a Gospel message in English and Spanish, through decorated stations. The line of cars stretched down the block and around the corner, and continued steadily for 3 hours.



Continued from page 9

I heard of one missionary who was teaching English among a large group. She noticed a newcomer who was seeking information for the government. The newcomer blurted out in front of the whole class. What is your religion? My missionary friend knew that by answering 'Christian' she would have to leave.

And then this verse came to her mind, "*True and undefiled religion is to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.*" This was the answer she gave, and the newcomer looked frustrated that he could not get more useful information.

On the other hand, at other times, God may require us to boldly witness for him in ways that will cost us dearly. He may say go and proclaim me in the synagogue right after a miraculous release from prison, as in Acts, so the key is hearing the voice of the Spirit as to whether it is time to speak or remain silent.

Therefore, it is of great importance to pray for believers suffering persecution that the Spirit will inform and guide them as to when to keep silent or to speak out boldly.

Also, sometimes those suffering persecution fail in this area. They may remain silent when they should have spoke boldly. They will feel guilty and condemnation for not witnessing of their Savior. These people need forgiveness and restoration.

Therefore, we should pray for those who fail in the face of persecution that God will forgive, comfort and restore them. We see a prime example of this in the life of Peter.

Let's move on to verses 1:45 and 2:1-2. *But he went out and began to talk freely about it, and to spread the news, so that Jesus could no longer openly enter a town, but was out in desolate places, and people were coming to him from every quarter.*

This man makes the mistake of freely talking about Jesus when he had been expressly commanded not to do so.

His disobedience made the

ministry of Jesus more difficult.

I have seen instances in China where some people were so bold about their faith that it caused harm to other believers. Some have had the mentality that they wanted to be a martyr, so they do that which will endanger themselves. However, no one lives in a vacuum, so their actions can endanger an entire Christian community.

An example of this that I remember is a man who often spoke boldly about his faith in the classroom. As a result, the police began to follow him about in order to try to find his network of fellow believers. As a result, some believers disassociated from him for fear of persecution.

So, once again, it is doubly important to know the will of the Spirit as to when is the appropriate time to boldly witness.

I want to conclude with probably the most important aspect of persecution.

The Bible makes it clear that all Christians will suffer persecution: "*Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.*" 2 Tim. 3:12

Mark 8:34-38 says: *Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it. What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels."*

The most important prayer for those suffering persecution, is that they will persevere and not fall away. And, if they do fail that repentance and restoration will follow.

Glenn Penner says, "The Christians in Rome at the time of Mark's Gospel were experiencing persecution

under the Emperor Titus. Some had abandoned their faith or even betrayed others. The Christians of Mark's time could likely identify with the weakness, hesitation and unbelief of the disciples. Yet, they could also see these traits as a sign of the power of God's grace of forgiveness and a means of hope to walk in the footsteps of Jesus even after failure."

In chapter 13, Jesus assumes a restored relationship with those He recognizes will fail Him. Looking ahead to the future, He warns them to "watch" (13:33-37), even though He knows that they will fail to watch in Gethsemane (14:37). He warns them that they will be handed over to "councils" (13:9) just as He will be. He warns them that they will appear before governors and kings (13:9) just as He will. Even though they ran from this possibility at His passion, Mark anticipates that each reader will decide for himself how he will respond to the persecution facing him. Will he flee or obey? Will he doubt God or trust Him? The reader is left with a choice. How will his story end?[14]

I would like to conclude by praying for those who are suffering persecution right now.

Dear Father, please give a fresh filling of your Spirit upon all those who are suffering persecution. Comfort them and strengthen them.

May your Spirit inform and guide them as to when to keep silent or to speak out boldly.

Help them Lord to persevere and not fall away. And, if they do fail, gently lead them to repentance and restoration. Help those that fail to be encouraged that although John experienced doubt, and all of the disciples fled from Jesus, you still offer grace and forgiveness. You can give a second chance and powerfully equip us through the Holy Spirit.

In the dark moments of the soul, set a bulwark around them that they may not be overcome by doubt.

***In Jesus Name,
Amen ■***

SOUTHWEST

PROVISIONAL CONFERENCE NEWS



G. Clair Sams
Conference President



YOUTH CAMPING TRIP

In September the Wesleyan Bible Church of Lakewood, Colorado (A Southwest Bible Methodist Congregation) hosted a youth camping trip. Pastor and wife, Aaron and Melissa Johnson escorted a group of nine young people to a dispersed camping area in Guanella Pass. Although the temperatures were quite cold and there were still patches of snow on the ground the group pressed ahead. Upon arrival at the campsite 4-wheelers were

unloaded and promptly on their way up the mountain with a load of excited young people. Despite snow covered trails presenting difficulties a few made it to the top and thoroughly enjoyed the view of the snow-covered pass. That evening a supper of hamburgers and hotdogs was eaten under the stars. The milky way spread overhead provided the perfect atmosphere for a fireside devotional presented by Pastor Caleb Crouch, Southwest Youth President. The evening progressed with rousing conversation and a small debate or two until everyone

succumbed to the cold and found their sleeping bags.

Morning came with sunshine and slightly warmer temperatures. Following breakfast and devotions, the 4-wheelers were back up the trail for a final run, or two, or three. After a little hiking, more rousing conversation, lunch and clean up the group reluctantly made their way back down the mountain with plans to repeat the adventure in the near future, preferably without the snow and cold. Everyone had a fantastic time and the trip was deemed a success.



TREASURE VALLEY BIBLE METHODIST – CALDWELL, IDAHO

The people gathered at the church in the evening of October 31st. Over 30 of the regulars were there and had a great time of celebration and offering thanks to God for another harvest season. They were able to pass out many invitation flyers to the families of the community and make new friends. Many children and some adults indulged in costume fun and there were crafts and activities for the children. Two campfires were started allowing people to gather around and visit. A good time was had by all and we trust God for the final harvest of souls.



WHITEHOUSE, TEXAS

Sunday the 18th of October the church at Whitehouse celebrated in a special way. The church honored interim Pastor Andrew Blankenship and his wife Angie with gifts expressing their appreciation. Later in the service was the celebration of the reception of two new members. Rockland and Wanda Miller were received into membership by Conference President G. Clair Sams, at the request of intern Pastor Andrew Blankenship. Following Millers joining the Church each of the present members gathered at the altar and renewed their membership vows.

The church also hosted a fellowship meal under the cover for the drive way.



JANUARY
**PRAYER
FOCUS**

21 DAYS OF PRAYER

JANUARY 4-24, 2021

PRAY AROUND THE WORLD

JANUARY 23 – 7 AM, THE PHILIPPINES

JANUARY 24 – 6 AM (EST), US & MEXICO



BibleMethodist
CONNECTION OF CHURCHES



Check Facebook each day
for a prayer-focused devotional
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