

# THE BIBLE METHODIST

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE BIBLE METHODIST CONNECTION OF CHURCHES VOLUME 53 | ISSUE 1



# SALVATION

HOW DO WE PRESENT TIMELESS TRUTH IN A CHANGING WORLD?

# FROM THE EDITOR



**G. Clair Sams**  
Editor

**This years intended focus is salvation. In conjunction** with Dr. David Fry, Dr. R.G. Hutchison and Dr. Steve Oliver, the goal is to focus on the foundational theology of the Christian faith. In a recent debate between Mark Lilla and John Milbank the reiteration of the importance of theology was illustrated with a statement that went something like this, “when theology is lost we will focus on hair dressings.” In other words, when a group turns from the embrace of foundational theology, the heart of the church is lost.

In a culture that is driving itself into subjective thought, it moves continually away from any objective foundation. Mikhail Bakunin (a political theologian of a previous generation who was an atheist) wrote, “The absolute right of every man and woman is to seek no other sanction for their acts than their own conscience and their own reason.” When the church and culture refuse objective truth that is outside oneself, it looses its balance and focuses on issues that are relatively unimportant.

By clearly and repeatedly returning to the truth of the Word of God and the foundational doctrines that rise from Scripture, we keep ourselves focused on what really matters. As you read the article in this issue you will be instructed and reminded of the core focus of the Lord God and the Church. There is deep value in rooting our faith, thought and lives deeply in the foundational theology of orthodox Christianity. ■

## THE BIBLE METHODIST

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# THE DOCTRINE OF SALVATION

## HOW DO WE AWAKEN TODAY'S CULTURE TO THE NEED OF SALVATION?



BY **DR. DAVID FRY** (HEARTLAND CONFERENCE),



**DR. R.G. HUTCHISON** (SOUTHERN CONFERENCE), &



**DR. STEVE OLIVER** (MID-AMERICA CONFERENCE)

**This is the first of four articles on the doctrine of salvation** written by three scholars within the Bible Methodist Connection of Churches. For this article we posed several questions in regard to connecting our Christian doctrine of salvation to today's culture. In subsequent articles we will hear their replies to three additional questions: "What does it mean to be saved?" "What role does the Church have in my salvation?" and "What do the sacraments have to do with my salvation?"

### WHAT CULTURAL CHALLENGES TO THE MESSAGE OF SALVATION DO WE FACE?

The first cultural challenge is biblical illiteracy and general ignorance of Christian doctrine. Not only does this factor exist among unbelievers, but it is present in the Church as well. Many studies have confirmed that biblical illiteracy is rising, but research published by Lifeway in September 2020 illustrates the resulting theological chaos. For example, 72% of Americans claim to believe in the doctrine of the Trinity, but 55% also believe that Jesus was the greatest created being

and 52% believe that He was only a human teacher. Obviously the math doesn't add up, which means that Americans hold contradictory beliefs about Jesus. When it comes to the Holy Spirit, 19% believe that the Holy Spirit may direct them to do something contradictory to the Bible. A solid majority (65%) believe that God accepts worship from a wide variety of religions. And 54% see theological beliefs as personal opinions rather than objective truth.

A second challenge is escapism or the idea that salvation is all about our future removal from this world. This is more of a church culture matter than a broad culture concern. Escapism is found in nearly every church sanctuary in America. A common form of it is the idea that Christians should circle the wagons and twiddle our thumbs until Jesus comes. There is, in this form of escapism, no concern for evangelism or missions. Another form is the idea that this earth is something to be exploited since God will burn it up and throw it away in the future anyway. We will show that the Bible teaches that the earth itself will be redeemed

and that the biblical doctrine of salvation is incompatible with this form of escapism.

A third cultural challenge is, for lack of a better word, “feel-goodism.” We are defining this as a person’s self-satisfaction with being a generally good person. One result of the loss of biblical literacy is the idea that humanity is incapable of saving themselves. The Christian idea of humankind is rotten to the core and is largely rejected. Instead, our culture feels like people are generally well-behaved and therefore well-deserving of a heaven-to-come, if there is one.

There are, of course, many other cultural considerations, but we will be conscious of these three as we answer further questions in this series of articles.

#### **WHAT DOES “SALVATION” MEAN TO PEOPLE IN TODAY’S CULTURE?**

We must not assume that people in our post-Christian culture understand what Christians mean by the word “salvation.” The average American does not understand or accept basic Christian concepts that underlie the doctrine of salvation: doctrines such as sin, the incarna-

tion of Christ, and the authority of Scripture. Instead, many people think in terms of liberation, preservation of rights or liberties, and reparation for past injustice. These are the themes of “salvation” that pervade our culture.

For instance, an example of liberation is the post-humanist scientific movement. “Post-humanism” is what it sounds like—an attempt to create a better human being. Millions of dollars are spent each year in research on how to render the human condition immortal. Now tell me if that doesn’t have the ring of “salvation” to it? Baseball legend Ted Williams’ body is stored in a freezer at the Alcor Life Extension facility in Scottsdale, Arizona, where post-humanist scientists believe they may be able to revive him one day. Ted paid a hefty fee for that possibility prior to his death in 2002. Salvation for a post-humanist means being liberated from human frailty and disease. They need to be shown that such a salvation has already been paid for by Christ on the cross.

Post-humanism may seem like an obscure theory, but the fear of losing individual rights and

liberties is felt everywhere. The fear is real and the loss is a real possibility, but Christian salvation is not driven by fear. The way this touches on the doctrine of salvation is that people feel compelled to “save” our rights and liberties. Now lest we be misunderstood on this point, we are as concerned as any Christian should about severe limitations in our legal privileges to live out our Christian faith.

However, protection of rights has become a religion in its own rite. God does not promise that we will not suffer for our faith; in fact, the Bible says quite the opposite: “To this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps” (ESV 1 Peter 2:21). When fear of suffering quells our willingness to suffer, we have ceased to understand the salvation of Christ. Some Christians in today’s culture are more eager to fight for civil rights than to suffer for Christian liberty. We pray and act civilly to preserve our freedoms, but the Christian doctrine of salvation compels us to embrace suffering over resorting to violence against our enemies.

**We suggest that these ideas—liberation, preservation of personal rights and liberties, and reparation—are three ways our secular society conceives of the need for salvation. It is important for us to recognize where these cultural concerns touch on themes within the Christian doctrine of salvation. The Christian doctrine of salvation does teach [them]. We do not need to ignore these themes as irrelevant, but as opportunities to introduce Christ and how He offers what these movements say they long for.**

A third social phenomenon that shapes our culture's concept of salvation is social justice and reparation for past wrongs. Social unrest and a history of civil injustice makes the idea of reparation prominent in today's cultural discussion. Whatever "reparation" means, advocates seem to believe in it with the same tenacity with which evangelical Christians have held to justification by faith.

We suggest that these ideas—liberation, preservation of personal rights and liberties, and reparation—are three ways our secular society conceives of the need for salvation. It is important for us to recognize where these cultural concerns touch on themes within the Christian doctrine of salvation. The Christian doctrine of salvation does teach liberation (liberation from sin), and personal freedom, ("Live as people who are free," 1 Peter 2:16), and repairing wrongs that have been done. We do not need to ignore these themes as irrelevant, but as opportunities to introduce Christ and how He offers what these movements say they long for.

### **WHAT CAN CHRISTIANS DO TO RAISE AWARENESS OF SALVATION IN CHRIST?**

First, Christians should introduce Jesus as a caring Savior. He fed people, healed people, and met physical needs, and all of this often before addressing any spiritual need. Likewise, Christians raise awareness of salvation when they simply offer Christian care for their neighbors.

Second, since people are acutely aware of suffering and evil in the world, we have an opportunity to introduce people to a suffering Savior. Social justice movements, for example, assure us that the problem of evil will remain front page news. Yet for all the attention evil receives, the popular solutions fall short and have no sense that salvation comes through suffering. Suffering, on the other hand, is central to the Christian message

of salvation, after all, Jesus saves through his own suffering. Christians may raise awareness of salvation by having a more Christ-like attitude toward suffering, not by seeking out suffering for its own sake, but by enduring it as part of our identity with Christ. Rather than behaving like we must avoid suffering at all costs, Christians should count it all joy to endure suffering for Christ's sake.

Third, our culture values genuineness and authenticity. A self-proclaimed "Christian" who is rude and abrasive, or cheats and lies, or is generally selfish undercuts their witness. On the other hand, a Christian who never confesses wrongdoing, doesn't apologize or ever show remorse, or sounds spiritually arrogant hardly bears well the name of Christ either.

Finally, the Christian gospel is about hope in Christ. Jesus is the hope of the world because only He will bring perfect justice and righteousness in the world. Because Jesus arose from the grave we can be assured that what He says He will do, He will do.

### **WHAT ARE SOME WAYS TO PRESENT THE GOSPEL OF SALVATION TO TODAY'S CULTURE?**

We encourage Christians to get involved in the lives of the people around you, listen to their stories, share your own, and use those moments as segues through which you can share the gospel story in its beauty, simplicity, and power. Jesus tells us that it is the work of the Holy Spirit to "convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment" (ESV John 16:8). We share in the Spirit's mission when we make known the good news to the people in our sphere of influence.

It is important to note here that Paul was both a missionary and a church planter. He served in some of the great cosmopolitan centers of the gentile world, from Jerusalem to Rome, from the island of Malta (Acts 28) to Mars Hill in Athens. Paul was accustomed to interacting

with people from diverse cultural contexts—and some of whom were not at all oriented to his Jewish background and worldview. But whether he stood among fellow Jews in a local synagogue, among the philosophers in Athens, or among the pantheon of gods in Rome or Corinth, Paul still relied upon the message of the gospel itself to make people aware of their need of salvation (Rom. 1:16-17). The only thing that changed was the way in which Paul contextualized his proclamation of the gospel in order to make sure that his audience would be able to understand and receive the message.

### **ARE THERE EXAMPLES IN SCRIPTURE OF HOW TO CONNECT THE DOCTRINE OF SALVATION CULTURALLY?**

The gospel does not change and neither do God's requirements for salvation change. We must never let go of the eternal truth of Scripture. At the same time, our understanding of the gospel is shaped by the culture around us. The presuppositions we unconsciously accept affect our understanding of the gospel. For example, Paul challenges our individualistic understanding of salvation in Acts 16. He says to the Philippian jailer: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved." Then he continues with, "you and your household." We gloss over this too quickly. Why would Paul mention the jailer's household at that point? Did he mean that one man's decision to accept Christ would save the other members of his household? In that culture, the father was the unquestioned leader of his household. His decision would change the "official position" of the family, and his family members and servants would be likely to follow his lead. The cultural assumption ("where the father leads, the family follows") affected the presentation of the gospel ("if you accept Christ, your household will also be saved").

Paul demonstrates cultural

sensitivity again in Acts 17. Looking over the city of Athens, he found the city “wholly given” to idolatry, with little obvious opening for the gospel. Because he knew the culture, Paul was able to pick up on a specific religious/cultural aspect—the “unknown god”—and use it as a way to introduce the gospel (17:22). He even quoted pagan religious poets, using their work as a way to explain God to the pagans (17:28). Here is Paul’s pattern of presenting the Gospel: find the “redemptive” elements of culture and use them to present the Gospel. Redemptive elements are those elements that reflect some aspect of biblical truth and are redeemable for Christ’s sake.

## CONCLUSION

Let us summarize. How do we awaken today’s culture to the need of salvation? First, only the Holy Spirit can awaken a person to their need. The Apostle John says in John 1:9 that the True Light has enlightened every person. Paul told Titus (2:11) that the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared

to all people. This is the work of the Holy Spirit. Just as God did not leave ancient people outside of Israel without a witness (Acts 14:16-17), so has God given witness to all people today.

Second, in his infinite wisdom God has chosen to use the foolishness of preaching to make people aware of their need. Bible-based, Christ-centered preaching is guaranteed by God himself to impact people (1 Cor. 1:18-2:5).

Third, like the sons of Issachar who understood their time and knew what Israel ought to do, we must be discerners of our times. This means communicating in language that is understood in our world without compromising the truth. We offered three concepts from today’s culture—liberation, freedom, and reparation—that are redeemable for Christ’s sake. We should affirm truth wherever it is and connect it to salvation through Christ.

Fourth, we must serve others as Jesus taught us to serve. We have that precious promise that when

we serve “the least of these” we are serving Jesus. Our service to one another should begin right in our local church because Jesus said, “By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (ESV John 13:35).

Finally, our testimony in the midst of suffering must not be underappreciated. Whether we suffer from natural causes or for our faith, our attitude in suffering is a tremendous testimony to the grace of God. “Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you” (1 Peter 3:12). ■

## 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



CHECK OUT OUR

# Weekly Video Devotionals



Hear a word of encouragement every week from Bible Methodist pastors, elders, and members!

New devotional videos are released every Wednesday morning.

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 [youtube.com/biblemethodistconnectionofchurches](https://youtube.com/biblemethodistconnectionofchurches)

 [facebook.com/bmethodistorg](https://facebook.com/bmethodistorg)

# WORLD MISSIONS

## NEWS UPDATE



**Timothy Keep**  
Missions Director

# EZRA BIBLICAL SEMINARY

## A VINE OF GOD'S PLANTING

BY **TIM KEEP**

**In 2016, Bro. Steve Stetler, the Muir's and I met with BMC leaders in Mexico to talk and to pray about the future of our Mexico work. We needed the Lord to help us know His heart and to develop a strategy for the health and growth of the work there. Though some congregations were experiencing the blessing of the Lord, many were in decline.**

I remember that at one point we went around the room asking each national leader to respond freely to this question: What do you believe is your greatest need as a ministry? Without exception, the answer of each board member and missionary had to do with the need for workers. "We need to train and disciple new leaders," was their common consent. This was confirmation of what the missionaries and I believed the Lord was saying to us too. Together, we agreed that the number one priority for Mexico must be praying for, discipling, and preparing young men and women for ministry. Without workers there could be no sending (Matthew 9:37-38). No sending would mean no evangelism or church planting (Romans 10:15). We must train

workers for the harvest.

But two years later, after doing everything we knew to do to encourage a vision for a Bible institute in Mexico, we were at a total loss. We had prayed and fasted, planned, and taken a few practical steps, but nothing seemed to be coming together. A training program seemed as far from reality as ever.

I'll never forget that after a particularly difficult meeting in Saltillo, the Muirs and I felt at such a loss (Steve and Beth had now been called to serve elsewhere). Personally, I felt weary, confused, and somewhat angry at the lack of action. I remember praying something like this: "Father, the need for workers in Mexico is so great, and there are so many young people here who want and need to be discipled, but we missionaries and leaders are failing to get it done. We've done everything we know to do, but we have failed. We've talked and prayed and planned, but things aren't moving. Our inadequate attempts have proven, Father, that if a Bible school is to be raised up in Mexico, You alone can help us. Please help us! Please stir our hearts

to rise up and work and to do what we believe You're calling us to do."

I could not have known that even then, the Lord had begun to plant the seed of Ezra Bible Seminary in the hearts of Brennan and Ivon, and that over the next few months and years He would begin to make it grow. When we were at our wits end, God began to work!

One day, not long after this disappointing Saltillo meeting, Brennan said that He and Ivon believed that God was calling them to start a training ministry out of their home in San Gabriel. The Lord had been growing their discipleship ministry among young people, and they had a desire to start a formal training program using Shepherds Global Classroom curriculum. Suddenly it made perfect sense! I sensed that this had been exactly what the Lord had been preparing them for and leading us too. A short time later Ezra Biblical Seminary was born!

As I write this in early February 2021, Ezra Biblical Seminary is more than halfway through its second full year of operation. It is a vision from God, implanted in a couple whom He has prepared for such a





time as this. Brennan and Ivon have known struggle. They have suffered numerous disappointments and setbacks over the past 7 1/2 years. But they have persevered by His grace. Excitement for this ministry is real! The energy of the Holy Spirit is being poured out. And the blessing of God upon Brennan and Ivon, David Martinez, and their small team is a joy to witness.

This semester over 20 students from Bible Methodist Churches and several other denominations are enrolled at our San Gabriel campus,

and by the time you read this report, two other online satellite programs will be underway as well. David Martinez will be running these online programs, and, according to reports, there is a lot of interest in these satellite campuses as well.

Here are a few stats for our 4th semester:

Shepherd's Global Classroom  
courses offered: 4  
Enrollment: 22  
New students: 11  
Churches represented: 3  
Students active in ministry: 10

Please keep Ezra Bible Seminary in your prayers. The enemy has fought hard against this work, but by the grace of God he will not win! If the Lord will prosper this ministry there will soon come a day when prepared workers will be sent to the harvest and the work in Mexico will grow again. Let's carry this burden of prayer together, shall we? ■



# GREAT LAKES

## REGIONAL CONFERENCE NEWS



**Blake Jones**  
Conference President

### DAWN VALLEY – TUPPERVILLE, ONTARIO

Over 2020, here at Dawn Valley, we have been endeavoring to honor the principle found in Ephesians 5:16, “Making the best use of time, because the days are evil.” The beginning of the year started with much excitement and preparation over our planned 50th Anniversary Celebration and by then 23 members of our congregation that signed up on the bulletin board to read or listen through the Bible in 2020. Three of those were children and they finished not just once but twice! Unfortunately because of government restrictions and border closures we had to cancel our anniversary weekend.

Each week we passed out a Bible lesson, treats, and activity sheet to all of our kids and several in our rural neighborhood as well. We wanted to “make the best use of time” by reminding the kids

around us that they are valuable and special to God.

Starting on Christmas Day of the lock-down, we joined with area churches in “Lighting up the Night” by leaving all the church lights on Christmas Day and each Sunday night. The goal is to remind ourselves and our community that Jesus is STILL the Light of the world and to help offer hope to our community. As part of our praying that we will “make the best use of this time” our church shares several videos on our Facebook page (Facebook.com/dvbmcc) each Sunday, which include a Children’s Bible lesson, object lesson, a Sunday sermon, and special songs sung by children and adults. We thank God for the large number of people in our community that have been watching those each week.

Social distancing made our Christmas program smaller in attendance, but we are thankful that we were able to encourage those around us through our

live-stream and by going Christmas caroling. On January 3, 2021, one of those Sunday videos included an interview with Greg, who has read the Bible through in 2019 and committed to do it again in 2020. Greg worked through his Bibles 5 times and read an action Bible to his daughter 2 times in 2020. The shortest time through was 26 days. When asked why he read through the Bible so many times, he said: “it takes more than once through a year to really retain it and if you stop reading the Bible for a time you really miss it and so you get back doing it.”

During this past year one of the children from our church woke up and asked their mother: “Is corona over yet?” The effects of it and the lock-downs, etc. aren’t over and done with yet, but here at Dawn Valley we are so thankful that God reigns and rules overall and we place our trust in Him.



Top-left: Pastor Krhon’s wife Clarissa and their son Ashur, for whom they prayed a long time are pictured with the Christmas Program; Left: Greg Moulton, a newer convert receives his certificate for reading through the Bible multiple times in 2020; Above: Dawn Valley caroling group

## ROCK LAKE JOINS PRAY AROUND THE WORLD

**What a privilege to gather** around “one common mercy seat” as we joined with Bible Methodists around the world. God met with us as we surrendered ourselves to His will and purpose for us in our community.



## IRONWOOD BIBLE METHODIST CHURCH WINTER BAPTISM

**The Ironwood Church** near Anderson, Indiana, celebrated a winter baptismal service the first Sunday of January. Pastor Jason Lindahl had secured an area church for the evening and Conference President, Blake Jones, sent a video greeting to the candidates for baptism. The Pastor’s daughter, Lake Lindahl, Vince Stapleton and Mya Murphy each were baptized in this lovely setting.

## PILGRIM BIBLE CHURCH HOSTS GREAT LAKES PASTORS

**Rev. David Ward, Conference Vice President**, and the pastor of Pilgrim Bible Church in Cedar Springs, MI, hosted a winter Holiday Supper for Great Lakes pastors and their families. Other area pastors were invited as well to share in this time of fellowship. It was a rich blessing to be able to laugh, visit and pray together. We extend a warm thank you to each one who made this evening and meal possible.





# HEARTLAND

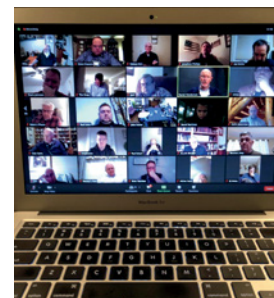
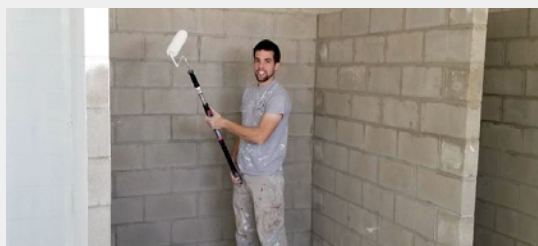
## REGIONAL CONFERENCE NEWS



**Chris Cravens**  
Conference President

### BEULAH GROVE CAMP GROUNDS UPDATE

**Interior and Exterior painting is finished!** The metal roof system is complete! The interior electrical work is done! The HVAC systems are installed! A lot of concrete sidewalk poured! We will be running the main electrical cable soon and then finishing up the interior installations. We are excited about completing this project soon! We are also renovating the flag pole area with new landscaping and lighting! We removed a dead tree and created a stone pad to set up a large storage container!



### SALEM, OHIO

**God continues to work at the Salem Bible Methodist Church!** We had a wonderful Sunday representing the conference. There is a great spirit of worship and ministry of prayer going on at Salem. Special thanks to the pastoral leadership and hospitality of Pastor Crosley and his incredible family!

### MINISTERS' ZOOM MEETING

**Heartland hosted its second Ministerial Zoom** Conference January 19 with author and revival speaker, Daniel Henderson! Our first ministerial Zoom meeting was in the Fall with Dr. Mark Smith! This is a special time for our ministers to come together for instruction, challenge and fellowship! We were privileged to have ministers from other conferences and our missionaries participating as well.



## DANVILLE , OHIO

**Danville Bible Methodist Church honors Interim Pastor, Rev. Jack & Jane Hooker for their faithful ministry!**  
The conference was represented and a fellowship meal was enjoyed!

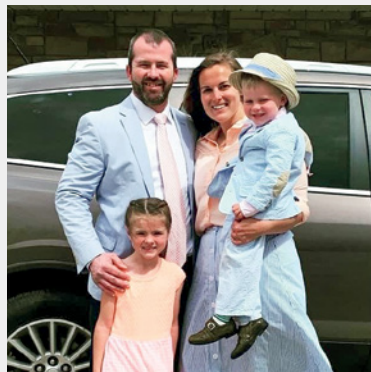


## VOICE OF VICTORY – WAYNESFIELD , OHIO

**A wonderful Sunday was enjoyed at Voice of Victory Bible Methodist Church.** The conference was represented, along with some singing and preaching. We had wonderful fellowship with Pastor Baker and the congregation!

## OUTSIDE THE CONFERENCE

**So many of our ministers pastor independent churches.** It is always a delight to fellowship with them and work alongside them in ministry! Here are some photos at Thomasville, NC, Emmett, ID, Muncie, IN, Frankfort, IN and Bedford, IN to name only a few!





# SOUTHERN

## REGIONAL CONFERENCE NEWS



**John Parker**  
Conference President



### TALLADEGA, ALABAMA

**Talledega Bible Methodist Church** is growing these days! They have been blessed with some beautiful, healthy babies! Pictured left to right are Rachel Calderon, Jacinda Crawford and Megan Crawford.



### MEMORIAL

**Pastor John Earls** presents the "Soldier of the Cross" memorial marker to the daughters of Rev. G.J. Bragg on behalf of the Conference Executive Committee. The memorial was given by the Committee to celebrate their father's ministering in the Conference!

### INDOOR CAMP

**Indoor camp meeting** has been a long standing tradition in our Conference. It had to be canceled last year due to COVID and has been postponed this year for the same reason! We are praying and hoping we will be able to gather by April for this time.



### BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

**Mrs. Louise McCoy** with daughters Mary McCain and Judy Horton at her 99th birthday celebration, January 14.





## **CONFERENCE EXTENSION CHURCHES**

**Rev. Walter Hedstrom,**  
Conference Extension Secretary



### **BLAND, VIRGINIA**

**Pastor Brian Consley and family,**  
at Bland Bible Methodist Church,  
Bland, Virginia.



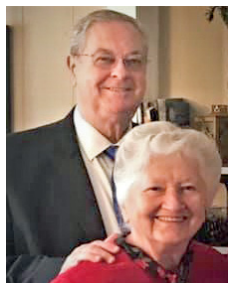
### **CROSSVILLE, TENNESSEE**

**Pastor, Rev. and Mr. Earl Fields**  
at Wesley Bible Church, Crossville,  
Tennessee



### **COLUMBUS, GEORGIA**

**Pastor, Dr. and Mrs Michael**  
Williams at Faith Bible Methodist  
Church, Columbus, Georgia.





# MID-AMERICA

## PROVISIONAL CONFERENCE NEWS



**Darrell Stetler II**  
Conference President

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

**Mid America Bible Methodist's** Executive Committee (L-R Eric Going, Todd Hurst, Dr. Steve Oliver, Darrell Underwood and Darrell Stetler II) met with the Executive Committee of the Southwest Conference to finalize plans for merging the two conferences. The meeting was very productive and God's presence was felt in the proceedings.



### SERVANT'S HEART CHAPEL – CLOVIS, NEW MEXICO

At **Servant's Heart Chapel**, our Kingdom Kids combines Bible lessons with life skills such as cooking and chess.



### CELINA, KANSAS

**Tyrel Hurst, son of Rev. Todd Hurst**, is a recent graduate from Hobe Sound Bible College with a BA in Music. He completed his internship at his father's church, Living Hope Salina BMC.

He directed the Christmas Program, organized and participated in special songs and led congregational singing. God has great things in store for this young man.



# JOINT PRESS RELEASE

## MID-AMERICA & SOUTHWEST PROVISIONAL CONFERENCES' EXECUTIVES

**January 21-23, 2021**

The Executive Committees of the Southwest and Mid-America Conferences of the Bible Methodist Connection of Churches met, under the direction of the Connectional President, Michael Avery, for a Leadership Retreat, Thursday through Saturday, at Arrowhead Camp & Retreat Center in Cleburne, Texas. The retreat was another step in the Pathway to Merger that began in June of 2019, and has proceeded in a planned process designed to preserve unity while assuring progress in the merging of our two conferences. The respective Conference Presidents, G. Clair Sams and Darrell L. Stetler II, along with Connectional Chairman Avery, had previously mapped out a working agenda for the retreat which provided guidance and direction. The two Executive Committees worked as a

single body by forming into focus committees that converted the task at hand into work projects.

The Committee on Finance amalgamated the financial statements from both conferences and prepared a working budget to be brought into use following the Merging Conference on June 19, 2021. The report from this committee testified once again that if we are diligent in our planning, God will be faithful in supplying resources for Kingdom work.

The Committee for Conference worked through plan details to ensure that the merging conference duties would be anticipated to the extent possible and proceedings would be orderly and sufficient. A nomination ballot was prepared for presentation to the conference body when called upon for report.

The Committee on Vision was

tasked to look at opportunities for our future. The prospects are numerous with each one having a merit all its own. Their report spoke on Education and Discipleship, Evangelism and Outreach, a Ministerial Care Program, Scholarships, Church Fellowship, and Ministerial Recruitment.

Each evening everyone enjoyed refreshments provided by the ladies and spent time in fellowship.

On the final day of the Retreat a special time was devoted to worship by commemorating the Celebration of the Lord's Supper. The fellowship was warm and friendly, the work was exhilarating, and the prospects for impacting lives for God in the Southwest Conference are extremely optimistic.

Respectfully submitted,  
Mark Russell  
*Reporter*



# SOUTHWEST

## PROVISIONAL CONFERENCE NEWS



**G. Clair Sams**  
Conference President



### TREASURE VALLEY – CALDWELL, IDAHO

**Thanksgiving Sunday was an** extra special time as we gathered to celebrate the one-year anniversary in our church building. We were especially grateful to host Conference President Clair Sams for the occasion. The question considered was the one which David pondered in I Chronicles 17:16, “Who am I, Oh Lord God and what is my family, that you have brought me this far?” We had a great time of worship and sacred communion followed by a fellowship dinner with great attendance. We are humbled by

the goodness and faithfulness of God and thankful for our Bible Methodist family.

Treasure Valley Bible Methodist church made waves with their Christmas program this year. Radio waves! We parodied a famous radio & television interviewer of years gone by. Our budding journalist, Larissa Queen of L.O.V.E radio, interviewed the animals that were in the stable the night Jesus was born. This “Manger Tales” special went live on December 20 at 11:00 AM with 64 in attendance in our studio audience and many others viewing the performance online. The stable was packed out with 24 children and young people by the

closing scene.

We continued our celebration of advent as well, wrapping up with a brief sermon about God’s love as the final word of our advent quartet sermons.

At the close of our service, we revealed our Christmas project this year which was to help a young couple in our church with the burden of adoption finances. Together with friends, family and local businesses, we were able to raise \$5,000 for this very worthy cause.

We are so grateful for the presence of Jesus throughout this most wonderful season and for His hope, peace, joy and love that is ever reaching out to all of us!





## WHITEHOUSE, TEXAS

**Pastoral installation is a special** time of joy for the Conference and church. January 10th Conference President Clair Sams had the privilege of installing Eric Going as pastor of the church in Whitehouse, Texas.

During the service the church honored Andrew and Angie Blankenship for their ministry to the congregation in the months between Pastor Cable's resignation and Pastor Going's installation. Following the special service a very nice fellowship meal was presented.



## DERIDDER, LOUISIANA

**God came and met with us** during our Communion service and Christmas program. It was a time of rejoicing and praise! God helped each one that had a part—but of course the children were the cutest. We're blessed beyond measure at how the Lord is helping us at DeRidder Bible Methodist Church!

## PASTOR'S CHRISTMAS MEAL

**On December 18, 2020, several** pastoral families met at the lovely Celebration Restaurant, Dallas, Texas for a very nice dinner and extended time of fellowship. The pastors that were unable to attend were missed.

Pictured left to Right: Jim and Charol Stafford, Clair and Melba Sams, Chuck and Jamie Dodd, Dennis and DeJuana Cable, Stephen and Connie Snodgrass and Mike and Junie Covington.

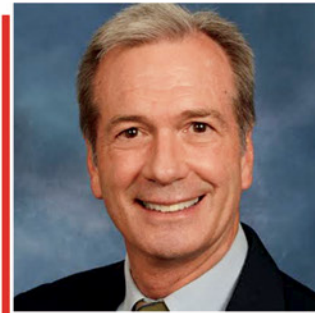


# Bible Methodist Connection Ministerial

MARCH 16–18, 2021



**Dr. John Oswalt**  
SPEAKER



**Dr. Bill Ury**  
SPEAKER

THEME: **Spirit-Filled Ministry**