

SPECIAL  
ISSUE

# THE BIBLE METHODIST

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE BIBLE METHODIST CONNECTION OF CHURCHES



REVIEW OF THE  
FOURTEENTH  
GENERAL  
CONFERENCE

JUNE 14–16, 2022

# FROM THE EDITOR



**G. Clair Sams**  
Editor

**The Fourteenth General Conference of the Bible** Methodist Connection of Churches was a special time in our history. Some highlights that you will have a chance to read about and see pictures of are:

1. Our recent Connectional Chairman, Dr. Michael Avery made history by being the only Chairman to chair three consecutive General Conferences. The first General Conference he chaired was hosted by Great Lakes. Dr. Daniel Stetler was ill, and Vice Chairman Avery filled the Chairmanship ably as he led the Conference through voting on the historic Discipline revision.

2. This Conference was historical because most of the Connectional Offices saw change in their leadership.

3. This Conference was historical because they ratified and received the newly merged Mid-America and Southwest Provisional Conferences as the new Southwest Regional Conference.

Please take a few minutes to reflect with us on what the Lord has done and is doing in the Bible Methodist Community. You can read, the Communion Homily presented by Duane Quesenberry, you can read about each of the Regional Conferences as well as peruse comments about General Conference.

The devotionals and messages, music and worship inspired each delegate and visitor to follow Christ more closely and to live with a passion for our heritage and ministry. ■

## COVER IMAGE

Newly elected Connectional Officers. Pictured left-to-right are Dr. R.G. Hutchison, Missions Director; Dr. Michael Avery, Communications Director; Rev. Blake Jones, General Connectional Chairman; Rev. Jack Hooker, Connectional Vice Chairman; Rev. Bob Blankenship, Secretary; and Mrs. Chelle Durr, Treasurer.

## THE BIBLE METHODIST

### GENERAL CONFERENCE 2022

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REPORT FROM THE  
**FOURTEENTH  
GENERAL  
CONFERENCE**  
OF THE BIBLE METHODIST  
CONNECTION OF  
CHURCHES



## TUESDAY EVENING

### **The Fourteenth General**

Conference of the Bible Methodist Connection of Churches was called to order at 7:00 PM, June 14, 2022, at the Franklin Bible Methodist Church by General Chairman Dr. Michael Avery. This General Conference was hosted by the Heartland Conference and so the body was then welcomed by Heartland Conference President, Rev. Chris Cravens, who gave instructions for matters necessary to our days together. Rev. John Parker, Southern Conference President, led the delegates in an opening prayer beseeching God for His blessing and help on the business to come.

The Order of the Day called for a service highlighting the work of Bible Methodist Missions. Rev. Timothy Keep, outgoing Missions Director, spoke and gave an amazing overview of what God has done for BMM in the last quadrennium. Prior to his speaking, Tim was honored and presented with a plaque for his 12 years of service as Director of Bible Methodist Missions.



## WEDNESDAY MORNING

**The Conference was called back** to order Wednesday morning at 9:00 AM. Rev. David Ward, President-elect of the Great Lakes Conference, gave a powerful devotional. The roll was called with 100 delegates answering present. The first matter of business was to approve a motion by the General connectional Committee to “receive the Southwest Provisional Conference as a full Regional Conference with all the rights and privileges thereunto pertaining.” The motion passed unanimously! The body celebrated with and for our new Southwest Regional Conference.

The remainder of the morning was dedicated to the reports of the General Chairman, Connectional Committee, Committee on Committees, Financial Review, Missions Director, Connectional Treasurer, Connectional Missions Treasurer, Mission Committee, Discipleship coordinator, Connectional Trustees, Editor of *The Bible Methodist*, and other standing committees of the General Conference. The General Conference recessed for lunch.





## WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON

**The Chair called the conference** back in session and the first order of business was the reports of the Regional Presidents. This was followed by the election of the General Conference officers. Dr. Avery was term limited so Rev. Blake Jones was elected as the new General Chairman. Rev. Jack Hooker was reelected as the Connectional Vice-Chairman; Rev. Bob Blankenship was elected as the new Secretary; Mrs. Chelle Durr was elected as the new Treasurer (Chelle is the first woman to serve as a Connectional Officer); Dr. Richard G. Hutchinson was elected as the new Missions Director; Mr. Nathan Brown was re-elected as the Discipleship Coordinator; and Dr. Michael Avery was elected as the new Communications Director.



## WEDNESDAY EVENING

**The Order of the Day called for an** evening service where the General Chairman spoke. The service was marked by spiritual worship, preaching and wonderful fellowship. The General Conference Choir, directed by Mr. Garen Wolf, sang two beautiful songs after which Dr. Michael Avery spoke on the subject of “What Matters Most to God.” He challenged the General Conference to put “first things first.” The conference reconvened after the evening service to finish the elections of the day.



## THURSDAY MORNING

**The final session of General** Conference was called to order Thursday morning at 9:00 AM. Dr. R.G. Hutchinson gave a powerful devotional from 1 Corinthians 3:9a. The business of the morning was for the Regional Conferences to caucus and nominate representation to the General Connectional Committee and to the General Missions Committee. After this was finished, the new Connectional Officers were installed with a challenge by Dr. Michael Avery and prayer by Dr. Daniel Stetler.

The final act of the General Conference was a service of Holy Communion. Rev. Duane Quesenberry gave the Communion homily, and the Connectional leadership distributed the elements. The Delegates closed by praying the Lord’s Prayer in unison. The General Chair declared the 14th General Conference Adjourned!



# THE STRENGTHS

## OF THE BIBLE METHODIST CONNECTION OF CHURCHES

**The General Chairman's report was far too large to include here, but a section of his report that talked about the strengths of the Bible Methodist Connection is given below.**

- The General Connection in America has 90 churches, 4 Campmeetings, 4 Youth Camps, several Men's and Women's retreats, and 1 Christian School.
- The General Conference in Mexico has 22 churches, one Pastor's Retreat, and Ezra Biblical Seminary that offers both traditional and online classes.
- The General Conference in the Philippines has 104 churches, 4 Conferences, 2 Campmeetings, and 2 training schools.
- Our family camps are growing and are some of the healthiest Campmeetings in the Conservative Holiness Movement. We have good facilities on our campgrounds and, in some cases, have the finest campgrounds of all our peer denominations. These facilities are constantly being improved. It is also a positive thing to note that the demographic growth trend in our camps are younger families.
- Our Youth Camps are growing. Heartland now has one of the largest in the CHM.
- Most of our churches have very nice facilities and many of them are improving.
- All budgets are healthy and able to finance the work that we are called upon to do.
- We have one of the finest group of preachers within our tradition (balanced, biblical, expositors, evangelist, teachers, etc.). Maybe the best-read and best-trained ever.
- Our laymen are loyal and dedicated to the church and strongly support its programs with their time, finances, and attendance.
- Most of our churches have good worship services with quality music. Our people value the presence of God and make room for the Spirit to work. They enjoy good preaching and often seek the Lord for help at our altars and in our pews.
- Our churches and conferences are using technology effectively and wisely.
- According to a recent survey, over 80% of our people still read *The Bible Methodist* paper enthusiastically.

Their largest interest is conference news. That is good news! They want to know what is happening in the inner workings of the regional conferences.

- We have not fought among ourselves and become divided over tertiary matters.
- Our leaders are well respected in their communities and in the broader circles of the Church. They are sought after to lead organizations and chair boards.
- The trend of declining membership in the CHM is not holding true of the Bible Methodists. We will show an increase in memberships this quadrennial.
- In short, the average Bible Methodist Church is a place you would want to attend!! I am proud to be a Bible Methodist and seek no other home.





It was my privilege to serve as a delegate to the Bible Methodist General Conference 2022 representing the Southern Conference. I'm grateful for God's presence that was evident, the healthy discussions that were had, and the spirit of unity present among the delegates. Dr. Avery's report was the highlight of the Conference and made my heart sing and reminded me of why I am Bible Methodist. It was great to officially welcome the Southwest Conference into the Connection. I believe great things are in store for the people called Bible Methodist!

*Rev. Jon Earls, Southern Conference*



Delegates  
to General  
Conference  
2022



# A CELEBRATION OF HOLY COMMUNION

## AS A BIBLE METHODIST FAMILY

**The 14th General Conference** concluded with the delegation coming together at the Lord's table for Holy Communion. Rev. Duane Quesenberry was asked to provide the homily for the service, and from 1 Corinthians 11 he identified and called the Church to observe five perspectives which this sacrament brings into focus, enabling the Church to faithfully pursue five key objectives which are an integral part of the Church.

When the Church gathers at the

Lord's table, this passage invites believers to:

**I. Look backward in commemoration of Christ.**

See vv. 23-25 – “in remembrance of me”

**II. Look sideward in participation as the Body of Christ.**

See vv. 17, 18, 20, 33 – “coming together”

**III. Look outward in proclamation of the death of Christ.**

See v. 26a – “you proclaim the Lord's death”

**IV. Look forward in anticipation of our Lord's return.**

See v. 26b – “until he comes”

**V. Look inward in examination of ourselves.**

See vv. 28 & 31 – “let a person examine himself”

At the Lord's table, believers collectively focus on five perspectives intended by our Lord to guide the Church in accomplishing five basic objectives to which Christ has called us.









# GENERAL CONNECTIONAL COMMITTEE

## *Front Row, Left-to-Right*

**Chelle Durr**  
*Treasurer*  
**Dr. R.G. Hutchison**  
*Missions Director*  
**Dr. Michael Avery**  
*Communications Director*  
**Blake Jones**  
*Chairman*  
**Bob Blankenship**  
*Secretary*  
**Jack Hooker**  
*Vice Chairman*

## *Middle Row, Left-to-Right*

**Richard Miles**  
**James Shiery**  
**Chris Hilling**  
**Dr. David Boardman**  
**John Parker**  
*Southern Regional Conference  
President*  
**Bob Pickett**  
**Michael Covington**  
**Clair Sams**  
*Southwest Regional Conference  
President*

## *Back Row, Left-to-Right*

**Deron Fourman**  
**David Ward**  
*Great Lakes Regional Conference  
President*  
**Chris Cravens**  
*Heartland Regional Conference  
President*  
**Wayne Fleming**  
**Dewey Murra**  
**David Armstrong**







I was so encouraged to sense God's presence and direction at General Conference as we worshiped and conducted business together with our Bible Methodist brothers and sisters. It was a special delight to welcome the Southwest Conference into the Connection and meet new friends from that region. I deeply appreciated hearing the heart and vision of our various leaders in their messages and reports. It made me feel so grateful to be a Bible Methodist.

*Rev. Mike Mater, Heartland Conference*



# IN MEMORIAM

**To Honor the memories of the Elders who** passed away this quadrennium, Rev. Blake Jones, Chairman of the Memoirs Committee, read the following names. The reading was followed by a time of quiet contemplation.

## **Great Lakes Regional Conference**

Michael Hobbs

## **Heartland Regional Conference**

Glen Reiff  
Robert Keep  
Michael Shiery  
Pieter Marais  
John Clough  
Jack Snyder  
Calvin Sones  
Glenn Wickard  
Jack Kabellar

## **Southern Regional Conference**

John Caine  
A. L. Kight  
Gerald Bragg  
Earl Baker  
Steven Stetler

I was challenged by all the messages and devotionals and was encouraged through fellowship with our extended church family that we don't get to see very often. I continue to appreciate one of the things that drew me to Bible Methodism—a good balance between structure and organization on the Connectional level and freedom of local churches and individuals who make up those churches to live and operate under the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

*Rev. James Durr, Great Lakes Conference*

# CONNECTIONAL MISSIONS COMMITTEE

***Front Row, Left-to-Right***

**Chelle Durr, Secretary**  
**Deron Fourman, Treasurer**  
**Dr. R.G. Hutchison, Missions Director**  
**Blake Jones**

***Back Row, Left-to-Right***

**Viola Durr**  
**Doug Eads, Chairman**  
**Chris Cravens**  
**David Ward**  
**Clair Sams**  
**Melba Sams**







This was my first general conference as a Bible Methodist, and I felt privileged to attend. The business was orderly, the fellowship was heart-warming, and the Holy Spirit was evident. I'm grateful to be a part of this larger community of believers.

*Rev. Aaron Johnson,  
Southwest Conference*





# WORLD MISSIONS

## REPORT



**Timothy Keep**  
Missions Director

# BIBLE METHODIST MISSIONS HIGHLIGHTS

## FROM THE LAST QUADRENNIUM

**At the start of the last quadrennium, I outlined** several strategic goals for the next four years. During this General Conference we rejoiced at the specific ways in which each of these goals were met. Here are some of the highlights from my report:

### OVER THE PAST FOUR YEARS

We have witnessed a record number of baptisms, built numbers of new churches, and completed the “Gale Dormitory Project” on the campus of the Shepherd’s college in the Philippines.

Bible Methodist Missions has continued in a robust partnership with Shepherd’s Global Classroom. As the founding organization, BMM is guaranteed to have a representation of two members on the SGC board, and has also committed to giving \$10,000 annually to the ministry of SGC.

We have had the wonderful opportunity to help reach Buddhist and Communist Party children with the gospel by promoting partial scholarships for impoverished minority students at a learning center in China, where the T. family have served.

### 2019

A trained Mexican national missionary, David Martinez, was commissioned to serve as a teacher and trainer of other ministry workers and leaders in Mexico.

Ezra Biblical Seminary was founded in Mexico through the prayers, vision, and labors of missionaries Brennan and Ivon Muir, together with missionary David

Martinez. This seminary has already provided training (both online and in-person) to a total of 80 people in Mexico and 5 other countries.

### 2020

A strategic partnership between Bible Methodist Missions, Hope International Missions, and Shepherds Global Classroom was launched. This partnership has been named “Africa 85” and will address the massive need presented by fact that 85% of pastors in Africa have not been able to receive any kind of formal theological training. BMM Missionary Maricka Herrer is one of the key persons involved in the launch and development of this new partnership.

The “MCare” program was launched which will help to promote the well-being of our BMM missionaries and their children.

### 2022

A “partnership in principle” was approved between BMM and the Bible Fellowship Church (BFC) of Papua New Guinea. BFC of Papua New Guinea is a completely independent, indigenous ministry consisting of approximately 60 pastors and congregations, a Bible College averaging 20-30 students, and a small English training program for untrained pastors. BMM will be prayerfully exploring ways in which to work together with this ministry in the coming months.





## LOOKING AHEAD

As we move forward in this new quadrennium, I am excited to see how God will both deepen and expand the global impact of BMM. Our mission remains the same – to partner cross-culturally with the global church in making disciples of Jesus Christ. But while the mission remains unchanged, we also will continue adapting to the needs of the world into which Christ is sending us.

The future face of BMM will include an even more culturally-diverse blend of traditional and

non-traditional missionaries serving in a variety of roles alongside of fellow Christians around the world.

Our people will go as authentic Bible Methodists who are both deeply rooted in our historical and theological traditions, while also deeply-vested in partnerships with a diverse coalition of Christians in the global Church.

Deep roots. Strong convictions. Burning hearts. Broad reach. Long-term goals combined with flexible strategies and plans. Small experiments. Practical

steps. Frequent course corrections. Strategic pivots. Intercultural openness. Intergenerational respect and inclusiveness. International networks and bonds of fellowship. Inter-organizational collaboration and partnership. These are the kinds of things that we should expect to see in the future of BMM. And I invite you to join us in fervent prayer, collaborative conversation, rigorous planning, and sacrificial serving as we work together toward this end.



*Opposite Page: Missions Director Dr. R.G. Hutchison with outgoing Director, Tim Keep, and former Directors, John Parker and Dr. Michael Avery.*

*Left: Rick and Joan Hutchison – R.G.'s parents, Sarah and R.G. Hutchison, and Tim and Becky Keep.*

*Above-Left: Tim and Becky Keep*

*Above-Right: Sarah and R.G. Hutchison*

# GREAT LAKES

## REGIONAL CONFERENCE REPORT



**Blake Jones**  
Conference President

# ONE GAZE

**In the kind providence of Almighty God,** Bible Methodism has been brought to such a time as this. Though the Bible Methodist Connection is our beloved fellowship, our allegiance is ultimately to the Eternal One. Thus, our lives and ministries have only one worthy focus—the Triune God. To the Everlasting Father we pledge our filial reverence and awe. To the Majestic

Christ we lift our adoration in wonder and praise. To the Holy Spirit we submit our all in humble gratitude. To fix our eyes on anything else will leave us sidelined and stymied. From an all encompassing vision of the Three in One everything else will find its proper place, its proper emphasis, and its proper balance.

My brother is a chiropractor. He taught us that for a healthy posture, we needed simply to lift our heads. From that physical stance, our shoulders would fall in place and our backs would be more properly aligned. Obviously, with nerve function working more optimally, general health would be more easily pursued. Spiritually, may we not slouch and pine with

our head down and our shoulders slumped. Let us lift our heads and our enraptured vision to the Author and Finisher of our faith! Any lesser vision will leave us floundering and feuding. Holiness can only be “our watch word and song” as we keep in eye contact with the Holy God.

Friends, Bible Methodism’s one focus must be God and God alone. In His face we will find the passion for people, the glory of holiness, the beauty of Holy Writ, the carefulness for living, the grace for unity and the strength for endurance. Living face to face will bring conquest and triumph! Let those who call themselves Bible Methodists join in one intentional gaze on the holiness and transforming beauty of our God.





# HEARTLAND

## REGIONAL CONFERENCE REPORT

### ABOUT THE HEARTLAND CONFERENCE

**Chairman Avery, General Conference Delegates and honored guests:**

I greet all of you on behalf of the Heartland Regional Conference. Let me express the honor it is to host this 14th General Conference of the Bible Methodist Connection of Churches. I wish to give recognition to those stepping aside from leadership in the General Connection. Chairman Mike Avery, President Blake Jones, Missions Director Tim Keep, Editor Clair Sams, and Connectional Treasurer Monte Stetler, Jr. have served us with integrity, dignity and grace.

The Heartland Regional Conference welcomes the Southwest Regional Conference in becoming the fourth established Bible Methodist Regional Conference in America. Congratulations and welcome aboard we look forward to serving with you!

The Heartland Regional Conference has four pillars of purpose that define why we exist and what we are to be doing. 1) To Equip & Ordain Licensed Clergy to Influence the Church Scripturally! 2) To Encourage & Engage Local Churches in Impacting their Communities Redemptively! 3) To Unite & Support the General Connection and to Increase Missions Globally! 4) To Invest & Provide the Local Conference a home—Beulah Grove!

I will now report our statistics over the past quadrennial:

#### STATISTICS FOR 2018–2022

• Churches on the roll	29
• Ministers on the roll	100
• Ministers deceased	10
• Ministers Ordained	9
• General Membership	504
• Baptism	91
• Attendance Averages	<i>Consider COVID impact!</i>
» Sunday School	748
» AM Worship	1,216
» PM Worship	509
» Mid-Week	439
• Campmeeting Attendance	700+ (4-yr. average)
• Campmeeting Budget	\$70,000 (+ special projects)
• Youth Camp	220 (4-yr. average)
• Men of Integrity	150 (4-yr. average)
• Ministerial Attendance	92 (4-yr. average)
• Conference Miles	169,600 (excl. air travel)
• Conference Askings	\$500,412
• Total “Missions” Giving	\$526,853

Regarding pastors and churches; we need a generation of men and women who will forsake all and go to empty pulpits and lost people groups at home and around the world. Regarding revitalizing struggling churches; Conference Extension must become a process and not merely an identity. We are praying about church planting. The cry is for “laborers” who will go! Thank you all for allowing us to belong and to partner with you in God’s great kingdom work!



**Chris Cravens**  
Conference President





# SOUTHERN

## REGIONAL CONFERENCE REPORT



**John Parker**  
Conference President

### ABOUT THE SOUTHERN CONFERENCE

**Here is some general information** regarding the Southern Regional Conference:

- Our Christian School on the Campground was closed due to COVID impact after 51 years.
- We have 32 Churches (2 of them under Conference Extension) in 6 States. Four of our Churches at last General Conference have helped to form the new Southwest Regional Conference.
- We have 52 Elders and 11 Conference Preachers (after transfer of ministers to the new Conference).

- We have an annual Ministerial Retreat for Pastors and a new smaller conference venue for continuing education.
- We have an annual Deeper Life Conference in February (Feb. 16-18, 2023) with Dr. Michael Avery.
- We have approximately 450 members and lay leaders.
- We estimate our average Sunday morning attendance to be about 868.
- Our beautiful Campground has 28 buildings including the Agan Tabernacle which seats 800+, built in 2000; very comfortable with its padded seating and air conditioning; The Hodge Conference center which seats 200 and is equipped with latest technology; A newly refitted Children's Chapel; The Hedstrom Hall – with Motel Rooms, a Laundry with new commercial

- machines, and large family rooms upstairs. We now have 17 RV sites and are planning to expand these as young families prefer RVing. We are hosting an increasing number of events outside of our own conference events! We have a Camp Administrative Manager who maintains an office on Campus and oversees all events and operations. This is working very well for us.
- Our Family Camp (held the first week of July) is well attended. Specialized breakout sessions. Excellent Youth and Children's Ministry. We are witnessing a remarkable increase in young families attending!
- The Conference enthusiastically supports Missions, giving \$229,776 through our Women's Missionary Society last year, while giving largely to other missions as well.





# SOUTHWEST

## REGIONAL CONFERENCE REPORT

### ABOUT THE SOUTHWEST CONFERENCE

**It was a joy to participate in the 14th General Conference in Franklin, OH.** One highlight was the Conference's unanimous vote to receive the newly merged Southwest Conference as a full Regional Conference. Thanks to Dr. Michael Avery, Connectional Chairman, each Annual Conference and the members of the Connectional Committee for their help, prayers and leadership through this process.

Special thanks to Stephen Snodgrass, formerly General Superintendent of the Pilgrim Nazarene Church International, and to Darrell Stetler II, who was Conference President of the Mid-America Conference, for their leadership. Together these men and their Executive Committees led their people to agree to merge into the Southwest Conference.

With anticipation, some 12 Elders and 11 Laymen from the Southwest Regional Conference attended and participated in General Conference. For all but two of the delegates, this was their first General Conference with the Bible Methodist Connection of Churches.

We bring to the Connection churches and ministries primarily in the west-southwestern United States. All but one of our churches are west of the Mississippi River and spread as far west as Idaho.

There are 25 Elders on our roll with Bryan Robledo honored with ordination this Annual Conference. There are 11 Conference Preachers on our roll with two men being added this Conference year.

The Conference has 17 churches, two of which are under Conference Extension.

The Conference is investing in Missions. We have hosted Missions Director, Tim Keep and Mexico Missionaries, the Muirs, in our churches. Historically many of our churches have supported Missionary Shirley Fogleman and her work among the Bible Fellowship Church of Papua New Guinea. We are

looking forward to what God has in store for continued support of Bible Methodist Missions.

The Executive Committee has embraced a Scholarship/Internship program for Bible College students.

We have a Pastoral Care Department that offers help to pastoral families facing difficulties.

We also encourage and support an active Youth Department that hosts an annual youth camp as well as participating in Youth Challenge West.

Our Family Camp is in late July. We rent Arrowhead Retreat Center in Cleburne, Texas. The Camp is a great place to build friendships, share spiritual burdens, respond to spiritual instruction, as well as be strengthened in the Lord.

Ministerial is a highlight of the year. We invest in the pastors and their ministries by an annual gathering that is filled with encouragement, information, spiritual emphasis, and fellowship.

Again, it was an honor to participate in General Conference and to be received as a full conference into the Bible Methodist Connection of Churches.



**G. Clair Sams**  
Conference President





**THE BIBLE METHODIST**

Melba Sams *Subscription Manager*

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# GENERAL CONFERENCE 2026

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