

HERITAGE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

THE HISTORY OF THE MAYFIELD CHURCH OF CHRIST
SALTILLO, MISSISSIPPI

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CH212 RESTORATION MOVEMENT

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Many men have shaped the history of the Lord's church in North Mississippi. The Mayfield church of Christ in Saltillo, MS is a congregation with a rich history of over 80 years. I want to begin by looking at the Christian church prior to the 1900's in the Saltillo-Guntown-Baldwyn area that seems to have a big impact on the church being established in this area. In the late 1860's to early 1870's, N.B. Patterson was one of the Elders of the Christian Church in West Point, MS. West Point is about 50 miles south of Saltillo. Brother Patterson also spent some time as the preacher for the church at West Point. He mostly evangelized in destitute places in Mississippi for over 46 years. Brother Patterson cited that the Guntown and Saltillo churches were about 55 years old, and have always been small congregations. Evangelists Larimore and Trumbull have held meetings for these congregations.¹

In 1868, B.B. Sanders moved from Texas to near Baldwyn, MS to teach school. Prior to this move, Sanders had served about four years as a soldier in the Confederate Army. Upon visiting with his parents in Lowndes County, MS he was persuaded by them to move from Texas to Mississippi. B.B. Sanders' parents were members of the Missionary Baptist Church. All of his relatives on both his father's and mother's side, as far back as he could trace, were also Baptist. His father was a Baptist minister. Sanders had many doubts concerning the Baptist's beliefs.²

Sanders' wife was also a member of the Baptist Church when they married. She was very devoted to her beliefs. She wanted her husband to be joined to the Baptist Church as well. So upon her request he attended a meeting, and even responded and took the preacher's hand and knelt down by the front bench. He was told by the preacher and others that he must "only

¹ Harmon, M.F. "History of Christian Churches In Mississippi." Pages 199-200. Aberdeen, MS 1929.

² Various Authors. "Restoration Reprint Library, From Darkness To Light." B.B. Sanders. Pages 1-10. Cincinnati, OH: The Standard Publishing Company, 1907.

believe” and the Holy Spirit would do the rest. Sanders just could not go along with it, he just didn’t “feel” this way. He thought there was something more.³

Time went on and Sanders finally “joined” the Baptist Church. He did this by being voted in, and was in full fellowship with the Baptist Church. Sanders began to lead singing and occasionally led prayer. He still was not satisfied with his religion. His dissatisfaction caused him to search the scriptures more. He told his wife that they were going to begin reading the New Testament through, alternating in verses. He said they would read one to two chapters a day then have prayers. His wife was excited about this because she wanted to study the Bible as a family too. As they were studying, they read scriptures that talked about belief, repentance, and baptism (i.e. Mark 16:15-16 and Acts 2:38). She just could not match that with her thinking. She said it must be a mistranslation. He continued searching scriptures and even had people telling him that “the Campbellites would get him”. He had NO prior knowledge of the teachings of the “Campbellites”.⁴

At the next meeting of the Baptist church, Sanders was asked to lead singing, and he did. A “Campbellite” attended this meeting, and ended up being invited to a member’s house along with Sanders. After seeing and talking with the “Campbellite” he wanted to continue his study more, and he did.⁵

Sometime in 1868 he finished out his time teaching school and engaged in a dry goods store in Baldwyn, MS for work. There was a Christian Church in the town, but Sanders was

³ Various Authors. “Restoration Reprint Library, From Darkness To Light.” B.B. Sanders. Pages 2-3. Cincinnati, OH: The Standard Publishing Company, 1907.

⁴ Various Authors. “Restoration Reprint Library, From Darkness To Light.” B.B. Sanders. Pages 5-8. Cincinnati, OH: The Standard Publishing Company, 1907.

⁵ Various Authors. “Restoration Reprint Library, From Darkness To Light.” B.B. Sanders. Pages 8-9. Cincinnati, OH: The Standard Publishing Company, 1907.

warned to beware of the “Campbellites”, and that their doctrine was dangerous. In this town lived the “Campbellite” named John who he had previously spent a night with him after the meeting at the Baptist Church. In 1869, R.B. Trimble was invited to the Christian Church in Baldwyn, MS to conduct a meeting. His subject was “The Establishment of the Church”.⁶

Some years rolled by, and a school was established by the Masons at Saltillo, MS. B.B. Sanders was offered a job there, and he accepted. Sanders then moved to Saltillo. Sanders stated there was not a member of the Christian Church there, and it could be that a Christian preacher had never preached there. The school grew, and Sanders was happy with his profession, but not his religion. After teaching in his school for a year, he told his wife that he was going to write for a Christian preacher to come hold a meeting and he was going to connect himself to the Christian Church. His wife told him this may cause him to need to change his profession of a school teacher, and he said he was willing to do that. Sanders wrote to Jesse C. Oliver to invite him to hold a meeting, and he did. Brother Oliver preached from Friday night to Sunday night. From this meeting, five people started the little Christian Church in the town of Saltillo, MS. In less than four years the church numbered about 250 people.⁷

In the fall of 1930 eight families started meeting in the home of brother Jasper Rogers. This was the agreement from a conversation which took place in a cotton patch. This conversation led to the conclusion that the Christians in the area needed a place to worship the Lord. The beds in the home were taken down and planks were spread on stove wood blocks for seating. This was the beginning of what is now the congregation of the Lord’s church that is

⁶ Various Authors. “Restoration Reprint Library, From Darkness To Light.” B.B. Sanders. Pages 10-11. Cincinnati, OH: The Standard Publishing Company, 1907.

⁷ Various Authors. “Restoration Reprint Library, From Darkness To Light.” B.B. Sanders. Pages 14-17. Cincinnati, OH: The Standard Publishing Company, 1907.

known as the Mayfield church of Christ in Saltillo, MS. This has always been the name of the congregation in Saltillo. The name Mayfield was decided upon because of the community surrounding the building was called the Mayfield community. Before the date of 1930, which is when families began meeting in the home of brother Rogers, there is much history in the Saltillo and Baldwin area of the Christian Church which will be detailed later in this paper.⁸

In the spring of 1934 the first gospel meeting was held under the shade trees with brothers Jasper Rogers, Paul Murphy, and Frank Cole speaking. Ed Pardin and Elzy Skelton led the singing. In 1935 an old building was purchased, and men of the congregation tore down the building. Once the building was removed, the new place of worship was erected near the old Mayfield schoolhouse. The new congregation was named the Mayfield Church of Christ with 75 regular attendees. The first elders installed were brother Rogers and brother Marcus Smith. The first deacons installed were Rich Rogers and Doug Davis. Brother W.R. Wilcut held the first Gospel Meeting in the new building. At this time baptisms were conducted in local ponds and creeks. Marcus Smith, one of the original elders, moved and Willie Clark was ordained as the next elder.⁹

In 1950 two acres of land was purchased on Highway 145 in Saltillo, MS, and in the spring of 1952 a new building was erected which consisted of an auditorium and two classrooms. Opening Sunday consisted of all day services and dinner on the grounds. As time passed, an additional acre of land was purchased to begin adding to the current building. Four classrooms, two bathrooms, and a baptistery were added to the building. Brother Clyde Neaves became the

⁸ Mayfield Church of Christ Directory, compiled by various members over several years.

⁹ Mayfield Church of Christ Directory, compiled by various members over several years.

full time song leader and was ordained as an elder. As time passed, five more classrooms and a utility room were added. ¹⁰

The Mayfield congregation has had many ministers, elders, and deacons that have served and led her. In 1979, brother Charlie Rogers died and Johnny Brazeal was ordained as elder. In 1983, there were three elders and five deacons in the leadership of the Mayfield congregation. Also in 1983 the building was bricked, and in 1985 an educational building was constructed under the leadership of these men. ¹¹

In 1995, the elders decided to begin constructing a new building to conduct worship. The old building was sold and moved to a different location to make room for the new building. As the new church building was being built, the church met in the educational building. Worship began in the new building in the fall of 1995. ¹²

The following is a list of men who have led the flock at Mayfield as elders: Jasper Rogers, Marcus Smith, Charlie Rogers, Willie Clark, Clyde Neaves, Noval Clark, Johnny Brazeal, Lonnie Neaves, Oscar Buchanan, Shelby Lyons, Don Fox, Pete Worthey, Mike Stanford, and Mark Stiles. As of July 2016 the congregation has an average attendance of 160 with Adam Miller and Kevin Williams serving as ministers. The current elders are Lonnie Neaves, Mike Stanford, and Mark Stiles. The current men serving as deacons are Chris Carter, Zak Coats, Jason Kelly, Phillip Lansdell, and Mike Miller.

On July 5th, 2016 I had the privilege to sit down and discuss with brother Clyde Neaves about his early remembrance of Mayfield church of Christ. My family ate supper with his daughter and son-in-law, Mike and Linda Stanford. Mike Stanford is currently an elder at

¹⁰ Mayfield Church of Christ Directory, compiled by various members over several years.

¹¹ Mayfield Church of Christ Directory, compiled by various members over several years.

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Mayfield. Brother Clyde was born in 1921, and still attends worship regular at Mayfield. Brother Clyde was an elder overseeing the flock at Mayfield for some 30+ years. He also recalled when he was a young child (in the 20's) of attending some at the Saltillo Christian Church with his mother, Hettie Brock Neaves. He told how he remembered the Lord's Supper being passed around in one cup. Brother Clyde's mother and father later attended the Mayfield church of Christ where Clyde and his wife Agnus both attended. Brother Clyde led singing for many years for Mayfield. He also told of one time that he attended a worship assembly in the Hebron Community, close to Saltillo.¹³ On October 5th, 1925 Charley Nichols filled a regular appointment to preach at the Hebron Church. "Four from the "digressives" in Saltillo, and one from the Guntown church were there. All gave up digression and entered into full fellowship of the Hebron Church."¹⁴ W.T. Hines is recorded to have held a meeting in Saltillo, MS in 1928 as well.¹⁵ Hines also held a meeting in August in the Hebron community near Saltillo.¹⁶

There are also some recorded times in the 30's that men held meetings at the Mayfield church of Christ. One of those times was in May of 1935. David Owens held a meeting at Jacinto near Booneville, and then went on to Mayfield in Saltillo to hold a meeting. The (so called) Holiness people gave the church some competition during that meeting.¹⁷ Brother Owens also preached a meeting at Mayfield in April 1937.¹⁸ In October 1937, P.G. Wright preached two

¹³ Interview with Clyde Neaves on July 5th, 2016 at Mike and Linda Stanford's house.

¹⁴ Gospel Advocate. Nashville, TN; October 15, 1925. Page 992.

¹⁵ Gospel Advocate. Nashville, TN; May 3, 1928. Page 416.

¹⁶ Gospel Advocate, Nashville, TN; August 23, 1928. Page 810.

¹⁷ Gospel Advocate, Nashville, TN; May 23, 1935. Page 501.

¹⁸ Gospel Advocate, Nashville, TN; May 6, 1937. Page 428.

sermons at Mayfield, and had one added to the church.¹⁹ On August 7th, 1938, W.R. Willcutt of Fulton, MS began a meeting near Saltillo, MS. The meeting ended August 14th, with 25 being added to the church.²⁰ In August 1946, V.P. Black held a six night meeting at Mayfield.

“Attendance was splendid throughout the meeting, having more each night than could get in the house. Fourteen were baptized, thirty-two restored. Brother Black will be with us next year. H.P. Hunt, of Tupelo, conducted the song services.”²¹

To date, the Mayfield congregation does well with so many active members. Many great ministers have served the church at Mayfield. In 2010, the congregation began supporting two ministers. I came to Mayfield in February 2011, and ministered alongside another guy named Adam Miller. Yes, we had the same names! Adam had already been with Mayfield since 2007. Of course, we had a lot of fun with our names being the same. I was referred to as J. Adam and he was referred to as Adam T, along with a few other nicknames. Adam T. left Mayfield at the end of February 2015. Kevin Williams was hired in October 2015, and we currently work together as ministers at Mayfield. Other ministers that have served this congregation are Larry Lott, Clyde Mize, Lester Coats, Calvin Barber, Plato Black, Rodney Tate, John May, Ronnie Greenman, Brother Howell, and Al Franks.

The members at Mayfield are very active in the work of the Lord. This is one of the most encouraging congregations I have ever been associated with. It is a great honor to serve the church at Mayfield. Some works this congregation have engaged in are as follows: providing Thanksgiving meals to widows/widowers/shut-ins of the community, fruit baskets to the elderly during Christmas, and monthly visits to the nursing home to sing. We also meet once a month for

¹⁹ Gospel Advocate, Nashville, TN; October 14, 1937. Page 976.

²⁰ Gospel Advocate, Nashville, TN; September 1, 1938. Page 821.

²¹ Gospel Advocate, Nashville, TN; September 5, 1946. Page 852.

a fellowship meal. For years, this congregation has conducted one singing night a month, and encourages our young people to lead a song also, to help with the training of our young people. Many gospel preachers have preached meetings and seminars at Mayfield. For many years this congregation has been instrumental in helping preachers learn how to preach. This has been accomplished by supporting preachers at the Memphis School of Preaching, and having men wanting to preach to deliver a sermon on the 5th Sundays of the month as they roll around. One constant variable of success for Mayfield has been her strong leadership. This church has had elders now and in the past that stand on the word of God.

The church at Mayfield has a strong youth group as well. Many babies are being born, and much work goes on from our young people. We began the Lads to Leaders program in 2011, and we have seen our young people really grow. Prior to this program, Mayfield has brought along many young men to preach the gospel. Our young people are involved with many works at Mayfield such as visiting, inviting people to services, attending Bible class, and having a great VBS each summer. Much success at Mayfield has been due to the great leadership we have!

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