

INTRODUCTION

The year 2007 marked the 50th Anniversary of the Bethel Missionary Baptist Association. Initiated by a meeting of three churches, Bethel, Faith & Kokomo Missionary Baptist Churches at Bethel Missionary Baptist Church in Indianapolis, Indiana on September 28, 1957, this Association was formed and held their first meeting on October 19, 1957 at Faith Missionary Baptist Church in Franklin, Indiana. Joined by North Side Missionary Baptist Church (Grace MBC), these four churches were the charter members of the Bethel Missionary Baptist Association. By request of the Association at our 50th Session in 2007, these minutes include a summary history of our Association.

Much could be written about the churches of the Bethel Association however the history of the Association is necessarily limited to the three days each year when we meet in three separate sessions. As has often been stated by many brethren over our 50 year history, the Association has no authority over any of its member churches and further to this point the Association does not exist except by consent of its member churches. So to this end, at the conclusion of each session, the messengers of the Association that are in attendance, adjourn the session and authorize when it will meet again. We even adjourn for lunch, dividing each session into a morning and an afternoon session. Simply stated, our Association only exists when we are in session. Therefore the history of the Association consists of only those events that are transacted while in session.

This summary history consists of the following sections:

1. Introduction
2. Organizational History
3. Historical Summary
4. Concluding Thoughts

The Organizational History is a photocopy of the minutes that were taken when the discussion of organizing an Association took place as well as the minutes of the very first meeting. It is a valuable reference and a tribute to the men and churches that were looking ahead as they labored to serve our God.

The Historical Summary is really the heart of this history. It is a record of the churches, ministers, visitors, subjects, singing, praying and devotionals that were such a big part of our Association throughout the years. Purposely avoided were the officers of the Association and the preachers who preached to us as this record is recorded and updated in each year's minutes. What are included are the other parts of our Association that are just as much a part but have not been summarized for us. It is hoped this section will bring joy and encouragement to all who read it as you walk back through the 50 years of the Bethel Missionary Baptist Association. Just an editor's note – There are undoubtedly mistakes in this section and hopefully they will not detract from its usefulness to you. Only God has the accurate record of all we do for Him. The mistakes could have come from the clerk who recorded the minutes, from the printing company that printed the minutes or from the one who has read each of the minutes and compiled this history. Please overlook our mistakes and enjoy the record for what it does provide. Speaking for all who have contributed to the mistakes, there was no intention to slight anyone nor to misrepresent the facts of history.

Finally, this summary history ends with Concluding Thoughts. There is no conclusion to our Associational history as the history of this Association is not yet concluded. If it is God's will, perhaps it will continue until our Savior returns. However, there are a few thoughts that one comes to after reading all 50 years of our Associational history and hopefully they will put this history into some perspective for us.

Enjoy!

Elder John A. Keen, Jr.