

More Recollections of South Apalachin Baptist Church
By Pastor Jim Walter

Those of you who have read my books have read of these things that I have been saying about those early years of our association with South Apalachin Baptist Church. In them I go into more detail. Here I am just going to refer to several that had a definite effect on our lives.

The first I am going to speak about took place from 1956 to 1958. Our situation at that time I described in my first book with these words "We got hungry, we got tired, and we got irritable toward one another" (pg. 36 in *Fifty Years A Country Pastor*). "If it had not been for ... and the church that ordained and sent us out [SABC] inviting us to speak on three occasions and giving us freewill offerings that amounted to two weeks salary each time we would never have made it through, meaning we would have left the ministry" (pg. 42).

Here is what happened (you can read it in pages 188 and 189). I had gone to a Pastor's Monday Morning Prayer Meeting totally dejected and no money for groceries for the coming week. Gordon Hay said he would try to get South Apalachin Church to invite me to speak once again. They had invited me to speak twice before and gave me the equivalent of two weeks' salary each time. The church here did invite me to speak again with the same results.

I did not speak again at South Apalachin for the next 10 years (1958-68). When I did speak the next time, I ended up becoming South Apalachin's pastor for the next 27 years and am still speaking occasionally 17 years later. The last time at this writing was at Lev Harper's Memorial Service, October 9, 2013.

A Revival Service I Will Never Forget

It was held in that old little white church building at the corner of Pennsylvania Avenue and South Apalachin Road. The church was full, standing room only.

It was not the singing I remember about that meeting. I am sure it was great. It was not the preaching either. Although I don't remember a word the speaker said, I am sure it was good preaching as well. **It was the testimony time I remember!** Each was to tell where he met the Lord. One after another got up and told of the place where each had met the Lord. Everywhere from an old fashioned alter to a cow barn. Then came these words from a young man standing in the rear of the auditorium. Holding up his Bible he shouted emphatically, *I met the Lord in the Bible!*

When John Bensen, a classmate of Gordon Hay and myself (also of Bob and Patsy Holmes as well) at Practical Bible Training School (PBTS) spoke these words, I knew what John was trying to get across. I had discussions with John both before and after that time. He was not disparaging the past time-place experience that evening. He was just trying to get across the fact that no matter where one is geographically when one finds Christ; it was in response to hearing God speak to him from the only book wherein He has verbally revealed Himself. *Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the written word of God.* (Romans 10:17)

Those words "I found God in the Bible" that John Benson shouted out all those years ago in that little old white church across the creek and the South Apalachin Road still resonate in my ears. It's the way he said it. He was making it clear. You will find Him nowhere else to know Him in a personal way is what he was saying.

The Bible and its teachings were an integral part of my life from my earliest years. My mother and father along with my Sunday School teacher had instilled hundreds of verses in my memory. I learned many of the Biblical redemptive terms such as "born again", "saved", "converted", etc. but I did not know God. I was much like those to whom Christ was speaking in John 5:37-47. I knew the scriptures but I did not know the God of the scriptures now His son whom to know is Eternal Life (John 17:3). I was 19 years of age before I really met Christ in the Bible. Up until that time I knew a lot about Him I had gotten from the book others had taught me through the years. Then, like John Benson, I met (found) God (Jesus Christ) in the Bible. He not only forgave my sins but began a work in me that continues to this day and promises to complete when He presents me, along with all His redeemed children to Himself when He comes again. Here is my testimony I just wrote for a devotional booklet for Christmas.

***Christmas – The First and Second
My Testimony*** – Pastor Jim Walter

Scriptures – Hebrews 9:25-58, 1 Thessalonians 1:5-10, Revelation 22:20

He came that First Christmas to become the Lamb of God to "put away our sin by the offering of Himself." He is coming again "the second time apart from sin unto salvation to those who are looking for Him." (The Second Christmas)

Sixty two years ago, like those believers in Thessalonica 1900 years ago, I too in repentance and faith "...turned to God from idols (my sin and self) to serve the living and true God and to **wait for His son from heaven ...**" (The Second Christmas)

Sixty two years later I am still serving (however imperfectly) the True and Living God waiting for that Second Christmas, the return of His son to take us home to continue to love, serve, and worship Him there.

“Thank You oh my Father
For giving us your Son,
And sending us your Spirit,
‘Til your work on earth is done.”

“Behold I come quickly, Amen.”
“Even so come Lord Jesus.” (The Second Christmas)