

## The South Apalachin Baptist Church and the Practical Bible Training School (PBTS) by Pastor Jim Walter

The South Apalachin Baptist Church has had a close relationship with Practical Bible Training School (PBTS) [currently Davis College] for all of the twentieth century. From the school's beginning in 1900, Practical sent out students to minister in many of the rural and small town churches surrounding the Triple Cities area. Many of these students became pastors of one or more of these rural assemblies. Some spent their entire lives tending one or two of these small churches. Most of the students during the first half of the twentieth century came from these rural churches.

South Apalachin was, and still is one of those local churches that has had pastors from Practical and has had many young people (and some not so young) attend Practical over the years. Some of those also became pastors and missionaries. Others returned to become workers in the church, much better equipped with knowledge of God's Word and more mature spiritually by the time spent under Godly teachers at PBTS.

I have already mentioned several of these in previous entries (Dale Linebaugh, Gordon Hay, and Robert Monell). There are several more that were, and several still are, a part of that relationship between South Apalachin and PBTS.

Over the next several weeks I will tell how each one was related to both PBTS and SABC. Their pictures are from the 1952 Theologue (Practical year book) and as well as several of the articles that will accompany the pictures.

### Early 1900's

One afternoon with Henry Hall (who lived in the big farmhouse on the end of Hall Road) in 1969 my first year as Pastor of South Apalachin Baptist Church, gave me a good picture of how the area between Little Meadows and Apalachin looked in the early 1900's. Pennsylvania Avenue was a gravel road; there were 14 milk producing farms between Little Meadows and Apalachin. He showed me pictures of the area. One I remember best was a picture of his six horse team hauling a wagon loaded with 100 cans of milk from those 14 farms to the railroad station in Apalachin. At that time all farming was done with horses.

I mention this in order to understand what it must of been like when someone from the SABC would pick up a PBTS student at the Apalachin Railroad Station early on a Sunday morning and bring him the four miles on Pennsylvania Avenue to South Apalachin to preach at the morning service. Afterward a family would take that

student home for dinner. Then it was back down Pennsylvania Avenue to the railroad station and back up to Practical. Usually it was an old Model T Ford that picked these students up and took them back to the railroad station, but on some occasions it was with a horse and buggy. From those early years the South Apalachin Church had begun known as Practical's Calf Pasture. Many a student from PBTS got his start as a preacher and pastor at South Apalachin. I say preacher and pastor as several of them became the pastor of the South Apalachin church. One of them was Charles Young.

When I was a student at PBTS Charles Young was on the board of Trustees at the school. At the time he was a traveling Evangelist. I heard him speak several times but never learned to know him personally. He was well known by the older people in South Apalachin when I came here as Pastor. Dale Linebaugh and Gordon Hay also knew him quite well.



Several important things I was told about him I record here. He came to PBTS as a student during hard financial times. At the time PBTS was selling off parcels of land to stay afloat. Upon learning this Charlie took his books into Dr. John Davis' office, laid them on his desk, and said he was graduating. What he did was go out and raise money by getting supporters for the school. He also started a Bible camp and Conference near Jersey Shore, Pennsylvania.

The most important thing to know about him here is that he was loved by both the people of the community and the church. He was a Pastor (Shepherd) as well as a preacher. Several of the older people told me of how many of his days were spent working with and for the people on their farms. Everyone knew that he not only preached Jesus Christ but loved him and his flock as well. When Gordon Hay, a student at PBTS, told Charlie Young he was going to South Apalachin as their pastor this was his response: "Gordon, you are going to love those people out there, they are the salt of the earth, just the salt of the earth."

Another young man who was a student at PBTS during the latter part of the Great Depression was Leroy Westbrook. He was also a student who was called upon to fill the pulpit many Sunday mornings during those hard financial years at PBTS. After graduating he was called to be the Pastor at SABC for several years. He also taught for some years at PBTS. That is where I came to know him. He was the teacher of the first class session of my first day at PBTS as a student. It was a class session I will never forget.



Upon entering the rear lecture hall in what had been the old White City Hotel at the turn of the Century, I was fascinated by a chart stretched across the front of the classroom. It was my first view of a Bible chart that told the story of God's activities from Creation to the New Creation, which is yet future. More about that later.

The next thing that took us all back were the first words from Leroy Westbrook after he introduced himself and took each of our names for the attendance record: "Get out a sheet of paper and your pencils, we are going to have a test. Just one question: "Who is God?" We had the entire class period to write our answer, sign them and turn them in. For the next ten weeks we would be studying Bible Doctrine, mainly the attributes of God, starting with the Sovereign attributes that only He possesses. After that, the moral attributes that He shares with His people and longs to express through His redeemed, regenerated children in whom He dwells.

At the end of the semester Mr. Westbrook gave another test with the same question. Who is God? This time with questions about all those Sovereign attributes (Eternality, Omniscience, Omni-presence, Omnipotence, Immutability) that the one and only true God possesses. Then there were all those moral attributes (love, grace, mercy, holiness, etc.) that he manifested while He was here on this earth and wants to express through us. I am sure as a young pastor here at South Apalachin he preached and taught the Bible as Revelation to know God just as he taught the Bible to us students years later.

He had to move to a drier climate in 1953 because of a disease he had which demanded blood transfusions several times each month. He had a sale of many of his books and office furnishings before he moved. I still have an old antique dictionary stand that I bought at his sale, 60 years ago.

Much better than that he left me with a deeper knowledge of our super big, all knowing, all powerful, wise, loving, holy, just, eternal God who is before all things and by whom all of His creation holds together. HOW BIG IS HE?

How Big is God

How Big and wide His vast domain

To try to tell

This tongue can only start

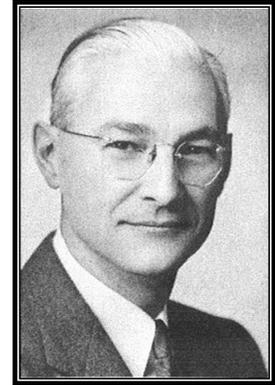
He's Big enough

To fill His mighty universe

Yet small enough

To live within my heart.

Another PBTS student who came out to South Apalachin to preach was Marmion L. Lowe, probably in 1917 or 1918. He was a farm boy from western PA who upon graduating from PBTS went into the pastorate for a number of years after which he was called to teach Bible at PBTS. This he did until his home going in the 1970's. I can say without reservation that Dr. Lowe, through his manifested love for Jesus Christ and His Word had a greater influence for Gods Glory on PBTS students than any teacher in the schools entire history.



Shortly after we came to South Apalachin as Pastor I invited Dr. Lowe for a week end Bible Conference. I had him for Bible Conferences in both Windham Summit and Trumansburg in years gone by. We had just moved into the new parsonage. The new church building had been built just six years before in 1965. Upon arriving at South Apalachin he got out of his car and just stood there looking all around. His first words to me were: "Are you sure this is South Apalachin?" He then recalled what the area was like all those years before, when he first came out to South Apalachin to speak.

Shortly after that time the Lord called him home, after a life time of teaching Gods inspired Word, ALWAYS HOLDING JESUS CHRIST IN PREMINENCE.

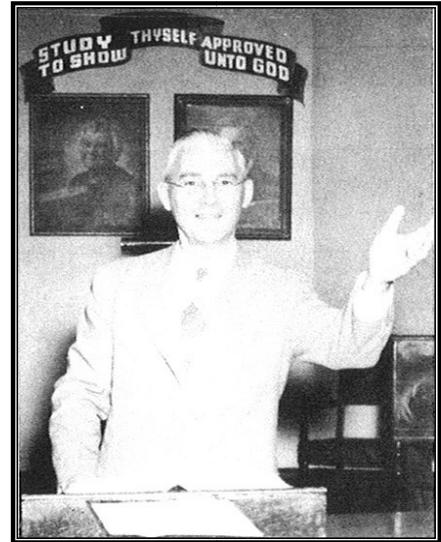
Here is the closing paragraph from the dedication of my first book *Fifty Years a Country Pastor* to Dr. Lowe: "To this moment I can hear his closing prayer after our week end Bible Conference on the subject *CHRIST IN ALL THE SCRIPTURES*. His prayer was short and to the point: Father, Forgive us for so often making your Beloved Son merely a fire escape from Hell. We really don't mean to do this. Let us just love Him and Serve Him faithfully until we see Him face-to-face."

I can still see the tears of love and joy in his eyes as he sang "off tune" our closing song, *My Jesus I Love Thee*. I have heard him saying more than once in one of our classes that he could not wait for the redemption of his body when he would get redeemed vocal cords and be able to sing His Redeemers praise ON TUNE with the Heavenly Chorus.

Dr. Lowes greatest contribution to the rich history of SABC was not made by the times he came to speak and hold weekend meetings over the years. His greatest influence on the history of SABC along with many other local churches and as well a number of mission fields around the world was done in the front lecture hall at PBTS. To this day I can see and hear him discipling us future pastors, missionaries and servants of the Heavenly Shepherd, his favorite name for our wonderful Lord and Savior. His title was

“Professor of English Bible” but he was far more than that. He was a Pastor-Teacher who God gave to His church “for the maturing of the saints for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ” Ephesians 4:11-12.

Over the next several weeks I will give some of the truths I heard from Dr. Lowe that God used to change me and I taught to you which God used to mature and unify the church at South Apalachin. Here’s the first one - looking us in the eye he passionately spoke these words to us: “Young men, prayerfully and faithfully preach the Word, lifting up The Lovely Lord Jesus and the Old Rugged Cross and God will chase His Own unto Himself.” I did that at South Apalachin and watched Him draw many of you unto Himself and make us one in Him: an eternal living, loving relationship.



I was not in very many classes at PBTS until I recognized something about Dr. Lowe’s teaching that was different. It was The Spirit he manifested as he spoke of the Lovely Lord Jesus. The best way I can describe him as he stood before us day after day, what I saw was a man who not only knew and believed The Book he was teaching, but he also **loved** The Lord Jesus Christ whom The Book was all about, and it was evident he wanted us to love Him too.

Here are his own words of how he saw the Bible that he so often referred to as The Loving and Active Word of God through which He is transforming us repentant believing sinners in Adam’s fallen likeness into God centered children in the likeness of His Well Beloved Son (II Cor. 3:17-18).

The Bible is *one* Book (“in the volume of the book”), made one by one Author (the Lord Jesus Christ). Christ is *the one Person* of the Book, its center, its theme, its Chief Actor. His blessed face is on every page and the perfume of His divine loveliness makes fragrant the entire “volume of the book.” Not one book of the volume of the sixty-six books but what points to God’s Well-Beloved, throwing the light of inspiration on His divine brow, illuminating His sublime character, unfolding to His people the depth and riches of His transcendent personality.

This is the Holy Spirit’s own method of Bible Study - to find Christ in all the Scriptures. When the believer takes up a portion of God’s Book, be it book, chapter, or page, he should ask the Spirit to open his eyes to see Jesus in that

portion. He should ask himself: "How is Christ seen in this passage?" for he has it from Christ's own lips that He is "in all the scriptures." The object of all Bible study is first, to find Christ, and then, that the beauty of Jesus be found in the believer.

Hey, I have an idea. Let each of us who profess to love our Lord Jesus do what Dr. Lowe says about Bible study and see if more of His Beauty will be seen in us. I've been reading Colossians 3 for about a month now. Let's just take the first four verses and get them into our minds and hearts and see if the things of earth grow a little dimmer and His Beauty a little brighter.

*For Thine is the Kingdom and Power and the Glory forever, Amen.* What do these, the closing words to what we call *The Lord's Prayer* have to do with the relationship between SABC and PBTS?

It's that possessive pronoun THINE (YOURS). The Kingdom is His, all Power is His, and all Glory belongs to Him. The Biblical Church is His Church, His Body, His Temple, His Flock, His Family, His People, and His Bride. All mankind are His by right of Creation. Only repentant believing sinners are His by Redemption. We, repentant believing sinners, He calls Saints throughout His Word. At Calvary He purchased us to be His eternal possession. He saves us for Himself. *He gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity and purify us unto Himself a people for His name zealous of good works* (Titus 2:14).

We are not our own, we are bought with a price (His own blood) to glorify God in our bodies and spirits which are His (I Cor. 6:19-20). Paul's instructions to Elders [Pastors, Shepherds]: *Take heed therefore unto yourselves and to all the flock [The local church] over the which the Holy Ghost has made you overseers, to feed [tend] the Church of God, which He has purchased with his own blood* (Acts 20:28).

Throughout the years, at least the first half of the 20th century, this is what PBTS taught concerning what the church is, and what a Pastor [Shepherd] is. SABC received the benefit of having Pastors from PBTS who understood and preached a Biblical World View where God created all things for Himself and His Glory, and at Calvary purchased us (His Church) for His Eternal possession and Glory. The song writer saw this clearly when he penned these lines: *The Churches One Foundation is Jesus Christ her Lord. She is His new Creation by Water and the Word. From Heaven He came and sought Her to be His Holy Bride, and with His Own Blood He bought Her and for her life He died.*

Gordon Hay and I were standing on the porch of the Old White City Hotel Building which had become the main building of the PBTS campus some forty years before...

We were watching and listening to several boys who were playing in the parking lot in front of us. We were being entertained by these boys, not by what they were doing, but by their language. They were not speaking to each other in English, but rather Spanish. Every now and then I would recognize a word as I had taken a year of Spanish in High School. We were fully engrossed with these little guys. Then a person also standing near us told us that those kids were the children of our Foreign Missionary speaker who was home on furlough. These were new terms to us. Neither Gordon nor myself had heard a real live Foreign Missionary in the churches where we grew up in South Western Pennsylvania. He was the first one we heard at PBTS.

Over the next three years we were there we would hear many of these Foreign Missionaries and also Home Missionaries (Pastors) all doing the same thing, preaching and teaching God's living Word through which He might call a people unto Himself and transform them for His own. Most of those Missionaries and Pastors were graduates of PBTS and most of us students would become the same and spend our lives doing the same thing, just simply disciples who loved our Lord making disciples who would grow to love and serve Him too.

Who was that Foreign Missionary? Who was the father of those funny sounding kids, by whom Gordon and I were so fascinated some 62 years ago? It was Herman Turner who, with his wife Mildred spent their lives making disciples in Guatemala. He was one of those students in the late 1930's and the early 1940's who came out to South Apalachin and a number of other area churches to speak and raise support so they could become Foreign Missionaries. The South Apalachin church supported them financially and many of us with our prayers throughout their entire years of serving God in Guatemala.



For the greater part of PBTS's history, its teachers were mostly former pastors, retired pastors, or area pastors that volunteered their time to teach classes at PBTS. Numerically the school grew very little during those years as a Bible Institute, but the majority of its graduates became evangelists preaching the message of Jesus Christ calling lost sinners to repentance and faith; pastors teaching, discipling, maturing believing repentant sinners to live for the glory of God; or missionaries taking that same message around the globe.

I first met David Holden the first week of October in 1955. I had just taken the pastorate of the Windham Summit Community Church. We were to have Dick Markell (founder of Mount Echo Bible Institute) for two weeks of Evangelistic meetings. Some of us older people remember Rev. Markell because the South Apalachin Church supported Mount Echo for many years. David Holden attended our meetings with Dick Markell and invited us (Dick Markell and myself) to come over to Bible Lighthouse to speak at their Monday morning Bible broadcast. The next Sunday David, Eleanor, and their daughter Cheryl were back to our Sunday School and morning and evening services. For the next 40 years he called me his pastor. The truth is for at least those 3 ½ years in Windham Summit he was my pastor. Without him and a few others that I mention in one of my books we would never made it to Trumansburg and South Apalachin for the next 40 years. I will explain that statement next week.

One of those pastors who taught at PBTS was the pastor of the Little White Church in Conklin. His name was Frances Holden, also an early graduate of the school. One of the benefits he was given as a teacher at PBTS was that his son could attend classes free of charge. That son's name was David Holden who became well known in South Apalachin during the last 35 years of his life. He with his wife Eleanor drove from Sayre to Apalachin for many years and faithfully taught the adult class in South Apalachin much of that time.



P.S. I am still reading and meditating on Colossians 3:1-4. Are you too? What is Christ to us in this passage? Compare this to Galatians 2:20.

I am greatly indebted to many, many people that God has brought into my life over the past 63 years since God brought me to Himself through His Word. Those include some of you who are reading this now there at South Apalachin. I have mentioned some of their names at the close of the last chapter of my book, *GOD IS BUSY FIXING THINGS*. That list continues to grow.

Here, I am only going to speak of two of them, both now in Glory with our Heavenly Father. They are David and Eleanor Holden. Without them we never would have made it through 1955 to 1959, our four years in Windham Summit. I am only going to speak of two of the many things they did for us here, one of them this week and one next week, both very humbling experiences.

My wife and I were just one year out of PBTS when we went to Windham Summit. I had graduated with all bills paid, a house full of new furniture, and a little money in the

bank. We were only in Windham Summit a short time until our savings were all gone and they were three weeks behind on our \$30 a week salary. It was then that David and Eleanor Holden would give us a \$5 or \$10 bill many weeks so we could buy groceries, they did this for several years. Without them, (That Old Lighthouse) where would this ship be?

*Christ Is Risen* - Let those of us who are risen with Him do what His Word tells us to be constantly doing: "Seeking those things that are above where He is seated at the Father's right hand, and setting our affection on those things and not on things that are on earth." Colossians 3:1-2

David Holden had graduated from PBTS in 1936; I graduated from Practical 18 years later in 1954. I became a benefactor of those 18 years because now in 1955-1959 we were going through the same things he and his wife had gone through during those previous 18 years. Because of this he was able to understand our situation and sympathetically lead and guide us through those years. I say sympathetically, but not always. David Holden and I, from our first meeting both realized we had one major thing in common. We both loved to study and preach the Word of God and we spent many hours discussing the things the Holy Spirit was teaching us.

It was during one of those times together he made a statement (really a stern rebuke, and not to diplomatically) that would be life changing for me. Quoting from my book *Fifty Years A Country Pastor*, here is what took place that day in 1958 when we were near the end of our rope, both financially and emotionally.

David Holden: "Pastor, can you take something if I tell you?"

My answer: "I do not know, try me and see."

His blunt response: "Alright, I will tell you what I see. You have quit preaching for the Glory of God, you are just firing at these people. You are getting bitter because of the way they have treated you and your family".

David Holden continued that rebuke which cut like a knife with these words: ***Don't get me wrong, everything you are preaching is true. It is the Word of God. It is your motives and attitude that are bad.*** I was about to defend myself until he continued with these words spoken out of a broken heart. ***I'm telling you this because I was once in your shoes. I was a young pastor in a small country church. I got so angry and upset at some of the people in that little church that I got up one Sunday morning and read my resignation, determined that I was through preaching God's Word. I retained***

*that angry bitter spirit for almost a year. Then there was a little baby born into our home. Ten days later God took that little baby from us. It was then and there I cried out to God for forgiveness for the angry bitter spirit I carried for nearly a year. I was then ready to preach God's Word again. Don't cause God to have to deal with you as He had to deal with me because of your angry attitude.* He knew I wanted out of that church and was ready to do just what he had done 18 years before. We also had a little baby at the time, a baby we had been sure we could never have, born nearly six years after we were married.

God used that rebuke from David Holden to put me on my knees praying the Psalmist's prayer! *Search me God and know my heart, try me and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.* After two days and two nights wrestling with God, He showed me David Holden was right. I did have an angry bitter spirit that was about to destroy the ministry God had given me of preaching and teaching His Word for my entire life. That was 57 years ago and that angry bitter spirit has never returned. Thank you Lord and thank you David Holden for being my shepherd through those early years in our ministry.

*Follow peace with all men . . . lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled.* Hebrews 12:14-15

My memories of South Apalachin Baptist Church go back about 50 years. I attended SABC while still a babe in my mother's womb and have attended and been a member here the rest of my life. My earliest memories go back to the **old church** that was on the corner of Pennsylvania Avenue and South Apalachin Road. I don't have many of the building as a church but I will share what I remember ... The Sunday School was held downstairs and classes were divided by white curtains and one of my earliest memories is seeing all these BIG black shoes on the other side of the curtain that would have been an adult Sunday School Class. I also recall my own Sunday School teacher (can't remember who) had made a prop to go with the Bible story that day, I believe it was about the Children of Israel and their wandering in the desert for 40 years and how their clothes and shoes never wore out. It was a cardboard sandal tied with twine. I remember she had us draw straws and whoever had the shortest straw got to wear the shoe and walk around our table. I was the lucky one who got the short straw! My one other memory of the old church as a Church was a Christmas program and I remember all of us kids coming up the center aisle to the front playing musical instruments and I played the triangle. Most of my other memories of the old church are when we used it as a gym before our existing one was built - more on that later!

I will attempt to keep these in chronological order; we'll see how I do! My next memories are of **Junior Church** in the new building. Walter Bridges was the leader of

the Junior Church downstairs the second half of the service for children ages 4-12. I remember Mr. Bridges having us sing, he'd have an object lesson and a Bible lesson for us. He would belt out the songs in his beautiful voice, teaching us to sing and love music like he did. I was saved in Junior Church under the ministry of Walt Bridges when I was a child of about 8 or 9 years old. I remember him finishing the Bible story and asking us all to bow our heads. He lead us in the sinner's prayer and I asked Jesus into my heart.