

**A Brief History of
Cave Springs Missionary Baptist Church**

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Compiled by Sister Susan Thurmond Scott
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As Submitted in Regular Business Meeting

History of Cave Springs Missionary Baptist Church

Sister Susan Thurmond prefaced her historical summaries to the current Cave Springs Missionary Baptist Church with the following writing. Susan Thurmond Scott and her family are members at the time of this writing:

“This is a summary of the history of Cave Springs Missionary Baptist Church as told from James Edrew Thurmond (known as Uncle Ed) to Raymond Wesley Thurmond and Leo Thurmond onto Susan Thurmond Scott. “

The New Testament assembly known as Cave Springs Missionary Baptist Church that has met in the Spring Bluff, Missouri area for the last century began in 1908. A discussion of the origin and current location of the building will help explain how the Cave Springs Missionary Baptist Church assembly started in 1908.

The original site of the building used by a “Cave Spring church” was along Old Spring Bluff Road on what many know as the old Schebaum Farm. It was a log structure, and Susan Thurmond was told the name, “Cave Spring,” came from a small cave and a spring nearby where the original site was located. There is a very small cave opening on the Dunn property across from where the church site was, but no one has yet pointed out where the spring is located.

According to Leo Thurmond, William Wesley Thurmond originally was a Presbyterian, but converted later and was immersed (baptized). He is known as a charter member of the old Missionary Baptist Cave Springs church. The book “A Century Passes The Story of Sullivan” makes reference to roll members being “received into Cumberland Presbyterian Church by neighboring Cave Spring in 1854.” This shows there were two separate congregations at this time, with one bearing the name “Cave Spring.” Sister Susan did find on the deed to the property there was a church in affiliation with the American Baptist Association called “Cave Spring” in this area.

According to Leo Thurmond, Presbyterian people had used the log structure as a Presbyterian Church until a Manion family bought the property.

The log structure was then dismantled and log by log was transported to the present site of Cave Springs Baptist Church. It was located right along the highway where the north driveway entrance is today. This relocation took place around the early 1900’s. There was a community cemetery already in existence next to it that later took on the name Old Cave Spring Cemetery.

Also, according to Leo Thurmond, after the building was relocated, a number of Methodists used the relocated log structure also which was possibly shared with the Cave Springs church. During the early 1900s, a doctrinal hodgepodge that resulted from the Methodists, possibly some Presbyterians and Baptists caused certain individuals to take a stand, seek doctrinal unity and become the permanent inhabitants of the current church building location. The Baptist group there held the majority evidently because at this point, the American Baptist Association and First Baptist Church in Sullivan, Missouri enter the scene, as Susan Thurmond stated to this author and current pastor in August of 2002,

“From what I found out from Leo Thurmond, the building was used while using the name Cave Spring. Also looking at the deed, Cave Spring was

associated with the American Baptist Association at that time. This document exists today. When and why we joined the Baptist Missionary Association¹, I don't know. I recall Grandpa saying that First Baptist in Sullivan had sponsored our church when it started. Raymond Thurmond never mentioned this part of history other than his grandfather William Thurmond who used to be Presbyterian, but converted to the Baptist faith.”

In 1930 James Edrew Thurmond (Uncle Ed), son of William Wesley Thurmond, purchased the land along Highway 185 from W.P. and Nellie Mattox for the site of our present day church building. James Thurmond used the land to build a new church building and created a cemetery. The trustees who oversaw the project were James Thurmond, T. J. Helms, and John Thurmond.

In 1930 the new church building was constructed and the old log structure was torn down. The cemetery later took on the name Payne Addition Cave Spring Cemetery in honor of a Ms. Payne who donated \$2000.00 for surveying into cemetery lots and upkeep. Two additions to the church building have since been constructed with the latest addition being completed in late 1980s. Indoor plumbing and bathrooms weren't installed until mid 1980s. A cistern supplied the water until early 1990s when a well was drilled. Baptisms were done at First Baptist of Bourbon and New Testament Baptist Church until our baptistery was installed in the mid 1990s.

Regarding the scriptural and doctrinal stance of the Cave Spring Missionary Baptist Church since 1908, Sister Susan Thurmond writes,

“It has always been my understanding that both the ABA and BMA will not take in and recognize any church body unless that body of members were all properly baptized according to the scriptures (water immersion, immersing a believer only). I know as a child that with many of the older members, before they passed on or moved their membership, insisted on re-baptizing before receiving someone into full fellowship if their baptism hadn't been done under the authority of a sister church or a church in the American Baptist Association (ABA) or Baptist Missionary Association (BMA). I called Leo Thurmond and he doesn't have anything written down, but as best as he knew from his research, all members who comprised Cave Spring Baptist Church when it first started were baptized according to this scriptural precedent and became Baptists. Based on all of this, it is clear that only the log frame structure was used by the Presbyterians then later used by Methodists and then ultimately the Missionary Baptists who still meet in this location almost 100 years later.”

This is a fascinating history because it was shortly before this period of time that J.R. Graves, Pendleton and other influential Missionary Baptist preachers from the

¹ The American Baptist Association split in 1950, with many Missionary Baptist Churches in the northern states forming the “Baptist Missionary Association.” This associational division was over messenger representation at annual association meetings, how starting new churches should happen and other organizational issues. Doctrinally, they are still in agreement today, with the exception of two critical biblical truths that have been fundamental Missionary Baptist Doctrines, that are now “optional” in the Baptist Missionary Association.

Midwest and Southern states defined the four landmark doctrines that had been the distinctive teachings Baptists and their spiritual heritage had carried from the time of Christ to the present day. Namely, these were (1) the doctrines of salvation by grace through faith without works, baptism or church membership required; (2) scriptural baptism can only come by another scriptural church or one holding to these four tenants; (3) that the church is always and only a local, visible assembly and that a “universal church” was totally a Catholic (“universal”) fabrication; and (4) that the Lord’s Supper and Baptism were the only two ordinances of the true church institution, and they are only pictorial with no “spiritual powers” associated with them other than God’s blessings to the obedient who observe them. And since the “church” is always and only that *local assembly*, only members are allowed to partake of the Lord’s Supper memorial ordinance. Those who allowed these four “landmark” teachings to create doctrinal division were called “Landmarkers” or “Landmark Baptists.” A stand on these doctrines caused many churches in the early 1900s to come forth like Cave Springs and to have a clear and unified doctrinal stance amidst multiple, differing groups using the same building. These stands were taken to eliminate the confusion that was created by multiple groups using the same building or of different groups using the building and having no doctrinal distinction.

This confusion still exists today as “Christian churches” look, act and sound the same, but they are most certainly not and you can find out how different they really are by asking each church for a doctrinal statement. Question a pastor of any “church” about why he believes this or that, and you will immediately find the passion for what that church believes, whether right or wrong. Believe no one who says, “We all believe about the same thing, let’s just get along.” Missionary Baptists continue to be accused of being “narrow minded” and “old fashioned” because they continually maintain their direct link to the Anabaptists of Europe, Wales and England who are clearly the spiritual descendents of the Western Europe New Testament assemblies started and fortified by the Apostle Paul. (See the Trail of Blood, by Dr. J.M. Carroll). They maintain this link ***by doctrinal distinction, succession of scriptural baptisms of members, and unwavering commitment to the four teachings above.*** Since a non-Catholic and non-Protestant view of church succession is by the continuance of persons being biblically baptized (immersion only, a born again believer must be a candidate, it must be done by a New Testament assembly with a proper beginning and holding to these four teachings) and New Testament assemblies starting from assembled and committed believers with scriptural baptism, then Missionary Baptists have also been known for accepting only Missionary Baptist baptisms and on occasion, and baptisms from doctrinally sound Southern or Independent Baptist Churches.

Concerning charter members, Sister Ollie Klein was the oldest living member of Cave Springs Missionary Baptist Church at the time this history was written but has since passed on to meet her Lord. Sister Ida Thurmond, Sister Susan Thurmond Scott’s grandmother, passed away into the care of our Lord in September of 2000. There are a handful of current members who have been members for many years, and the current pastor has served for ten years, the longest pastorate to date.

The current direction of Cave Springs Missionary Baptist church is the same as it was when it started in 1908. We are seeking to make disciples of all nations, teaching them first and foremost of the grace and love of God that brings eternal salvation to those who will accept Jesus Christ freely and willingly as the Savior of Mankind. The church teaches these believers must be identified with Jesus Christ through water immersion at

the hands of a scriptural New Testament assembly. A scriptural assembly is one that has the doctrinal emphasis the current Cave Spring church has had, and that as God's people together we should be studying and examining the scriptures that we might know all things the Lord God would have us know to be obedient to Him, both in our personal lives and collectively as a fully authorized New Testament assembly. (Matthew 28:18-20).

Next: Sister Susan and Brother Brian will be compiling the list of pastors, what members have been here and what actions this church body has taken in the past in business meetings that have preserved the doctrinal clarity and health of this body.