

HISTORY
GEORGIA BAPTIST CONFERENCE OF
THE DEAF



FIRST MEETING PLACE AT
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, COLUMBUS

1958-1998
40TH ANNIVERSARY

Georgia Baptist Conference of the Deaf Historical Highlights

1958

The Georgia Baptist Conference of the Deaf was organized Sunday afternoon August 3, 1958 at First Baptist Church, Columbus. Forty messengers representing five churches (First Baptist Church of Columbus, Calvary Baptist Church in Albany, Curtis Baptist church in Augusta, Inman Park and West End Baptist Churches in Atlanta) approved the Constitution and By-laws presented by Rev. Carter Bearden. Of those forty messengers several are with us here at Norman Park, Georgia. The minutes of this meeting and the Constitution and By-laws were included in the first issue of the Georgia Baptist Deaf News, September 1958.

1963

The 1963 meeting had more than 120 attending in Macon, Georgia at Mercer University. Rev. Neal Peyton, Missionary to the Deaf in North Carolina, Rev. Roote, Dr. Julian Pipkin, Rev. Earle Stirewalt of the Georgia Baptist Convention and Dr. Louie D. Newton contributed to the success of that conference. Sam Hinson served as president and was re-elected to a second term.

1964

September 27, 1964 "Light Unto My Path" began on Channel 2 at 7:00 a.m. in Atlanta. The GBCD was held again at Mercer University, Macon on June 20-21, 1964. Rev. Leslie Gunn, Missionary to the Deaf in Oklahoma was invited to be the guest minister. Charles "Al" Fanshaw, Minister of Education at the Morningside Baptist Church in Savannah began as Missionary to the Deaf in Georgia.

1965

January 1, 1965, Rev. Fanshaw was jointly employed by the Georgia Baptist Convention and the Home Mission Board. He and his wife, Wanda, started working with the twenty-one churches in Georgia that ministered to the Deaf. They served as Missionaries to the Deaf until 1975. "Al" usually preached on Saturday nights and gave a missionary report sometime during the weekend of the GBCD.

"Al" attended the Oklahoma Conference of the Deaf in June 1965. In August he attended Ridgecrest, North Carolina

Conference for Sunday School Workers and the Knoxville, Tennessee Conference for Rehabilitation Workers with the Deaf.

1966

In March of 1966 Rev. Fanshaw preached a revival for the deaf at Pascagoula, Mississippi.

1967

In 1967, Dr. Garrison received a letter of commendation and appreciation for the work of Rev. and Mrs. Fanshaw from the Superintendent of the Georgia School for the Deaf, Fred L. Sparks, Jr. He said, "like having another staff member at the school—counselor to the deaf, confidant of the Superintendent, a real help in all times of trials, troubles and in joy, too."

The GBCD met at Toccoa in 1967. Dwayne Carroll, recalls serving as recreation director for 1966-1967. From 1967 through 1981 the conferences were held at the Georgia Baptist Assembly in Toccoa, Georgia.

1968

The GBCD celebrated its 10th Anniversary June 22, 1968 with a beautiful cake and punch reception. The officers were Carroll Huddleston, Billie Sue Derrick, Ralph Benson, Jim Ponder and Helen Raiford. Rev. Carter Bearden was the speaker.

1969

In 1969 Carroll Huddleston from Atlanta was elected president, Mrs. J. Carl Brittain from Atlanta became vice-president, Mrs. Fred Jones from Carrollton served as secretary-treasurer and Mrs. Margaret Hayman from Savannah assumed the office of publicity chairman.

"Christ, The Only Hope" the theme for the Crusade of the Americas, was the program theme for GBCD at Toccoa, June 20-22, 1969. Clifford Bruffey, Missionary to the Deaf in Washington, D.C. taught lessons on personal soul-winning for the deaf and led several worship services. Garnie A. Brand, state Secretary of Church Training led a course on training in church membership.

1970

Rev. Jerry St. John, Missionary to the Deaf in Mississippi was the guest speaker. Walter Walsh, present historian, remembers Rev. St. John preached about Moses at the burning bush on Friday evening. The 1970 officers were Dwayne Carroll from Atlanta as president, Mrs. Julia Ponder from Atlanta as secretary, Miss Diane Graham from Rome as vice-president and Mrs. Shirley Covey from Albany as treasurer.

1971

The theme for the 13th conference held on June 18-20, 1971 was "Christ for My Neighbor - Through Me." Rev. Neal Peyton, Missionary to the Deaf in North Carolina was our conference pastor. Mable White Memorial Baptist Church in Macon presented a meaningful drama "Then Jesus Came." They gave out printed programs showing the characters and the seven scenes. Priscilla Young was the narrator.

1972

On June 16-18, the 14th Conference theme was "This Is My Song" with Donald Otwell, Missionary to the Deaf in Florida and Dr. Paul McCommon, Secretary of the Department of Church Music of the Georgia Baptist Convention.

1973

No program is available for the 1973 Conference. The Minutes show that vice-president Ralph Benson presided in the absence of President Sam Hinson.

1974

"Improving Ourselves for Christ" was the theme of the 16th meeting June 14-16. The program featured a biographical sketch of the speakers, Rev. George Joslin of Virginia and Rev. Waldo Woodcock of the Georgia Baptist Convention, along with pictures of the speakers, Al Fanshaw and the officers.

1975

The 17th GBCD, June 20-22, had Rev. Carter Bearden as a guest workshop leader and speaker. "Sharing Together With Christ" was the theme.

1976

The 18th annual GBCD, June 11-13, celebrated the Bicentennial with a red, white and blue program and a costume parade and awards and the theme "Freedom in Christ." Reverends Harold Sangster, Dwayne Carroll, and Wilber Huckeba were the speakers. About 200 were in attendance.

1977

"Love Thy Neighbor" was the theme for the June 10-12 meeting. A choir sang for each worship service from Crusselle-Freeman Church of the Deaf in Atlanta, Curtis Baptist Church in Augusta and Mable White Baptist Church in Macon. Guest speaker was Clifford Bruffey, Chaplain at Gallaudet College and Southern Baptist Missionary to the Deaf in the Washington, D.C. area. He showed "Bruffey's Trip to Israel in 1977."

1978

Our 20th Conference, June 23-25 was the first meeting our new Language Program Leader, Rev. Jerry K. Baker and his wife Brigitte shared with us. He was our speaker for the weekend. The theme was "Share Christ Together." Kerry Thomas of Sylvester was president.

Rev. and Mrs. Jerry Baker came from Fresno, California where they were serving as Missionaries to the Deaf for the state of California. Jerry was born in Wichita, Kansas and grew up in Southern California. Brigitte was born in Linz, Austria and grew up in Bismarck, North Dakota. They met at the Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary.

1979

"Meeting the Challenge of the 80's With Christ" was the theme for 1979. William "Ed" Davis, superintendent of the Tennessee School for the Deaf at Knoxville, Tennessee was the speaker. This was the first year the printed program was provided through the Georgia Baptist Convention, Language Missions Department.

1980

The 22nd Conference on June 20-22 has as its theme "Bold Mission thrust" with Charles Butler, a deaf layman from Portland, Oregon as guest speaker. We were privileged to have Miss Dorothy Pryor from the WMU for a workshop. The Workers with the Deaf were very fortunate to have Rodger K. Bufford, Ph.D. of the Psychological Studies Institute, Atlanta to lead morning and afternoon workshops on Counseling.

1981

In 1981 GBCD used the theme "Me and My Church." Our guest speaker was Rev. Rodney Webb, Home Mission Board Language Missions Department and supply preacher at Crusselle-Freeman Church. He also led a workshop "Role of the Interpreter." Rev. Jerry Baker led two of the other workshops for the Deaf Ministry Workers.

1982

At Norman Baptist Assembly, Norman Park in 1982 GBCD used the theme "God's Family at Work." The guest speaker was the Rev. Jerry St. John. George Joslin led a "Leader's Workshop." Other workshop leaders included Rev. Jerry St. John, Gerry Garrison, Ernie Pirkle and the Rev. Jerry K. Baker.

The Conference began its annual offering for the Wanda F. Fanshaw Scholarship Fund. In 1988, the amount available in the fund was \$3,148.

1983

The 25th anniversary of GBCD was celebrated in 1983 at the Georgia Baptist Assembly, Toccoa. The theme was "25 Years With Christ: Our Strength for the Past, Our Challenge for the Future." The Rev. Carter Bearden was our guest speaker. On Saturday night, there was a banquet and program honoring GBCD's anniversary. The entire program and weekend was really a blessing to all who had a part in it.

1984

The theme used for GBCD at Norman Baptist Assembly was "What The Second Coming of Christ Means To Me." The Rev. Robert Parrish was the guest speaker. Workshop leaders included Mrs. Ann Rich, Dr. William Clinton, the Rev. Robert Parrish, Mrs. Joyce Smith, Mrs. Jimmie Davis, Mrs. Laura Harris, Mr. Brice Grayson, The Rev. Wilber Huckeba and the Rev. Jerry K. Baker.

1985

The theme of the 1985 GBCD which met at Georgia Baptist Assembly in Toccoa was "Involving Christian Families In Missions." The guest speaker was the Rev. Jerry Jamison. Workshops were taught by Mrs. Joyce Smith, Mr. Billy Brumbelow, the Rev. Jerry K. Baker, the Rev. Jerry Jamison, Mrs. Laura Harris, Mrs. Martha Brown, the Rev. Wilber Huckeba, the Rev. Jeff Ayers, Mrs. JoAnn Daniel and Mr. James Peterson.

1986

The Conference used the theme "Fruits of the Spirit" for its annual meeting at Norman Baptist Assembly. The workshop leaders included Mrs. Nell Reed, the Rev. James Booth, the Rev. Wilber Huckeba, Mrs. Dean Pritchard, Mrs. Pam Nicholson and Mr. Roger Hauser. The Rev. James Booth was the guest speaker for the conference. The first Education Extension Class for the Conference was taught by the Rev. Carter Bearden of the Home Mission Board. The book studied was "Understanding the Bible."

The Conference voted to take three offerings during the GBCD each year: an offering for the Crusselle-Freeman Center of the Deaf on Friday evening, one for the Wanda Fanshaw Scholarship Fund on Saturday evening and the third offering is to be taken on Sunday and used for the expenses of the Conference. The Conference voted to accept the new Constitution and By-laws.

1987

In 1987 the theme for our GBCD was "Helping God's People." The Conference met at the Georgia Baptist Assembly in Toccoa. The Rev. James Fair, pastor from Houston, Texas was the guest speaker. Workshops were led by the Rev. Chuck Woody, the Rev. Bill and Mrs. Rhetta Haynes, the Rev. Jimmy Lewis, Mr. Billy Brumbelow, the Rev. Jerry Baker, Mrs. Ruth Newsome, the Rev. James Fair, Mrs. Dorothy Bugg and Mrs. Shirley Covey.

1988

Our 30th anniversary celebration (1958-1988) was the highlight of the 1988 Conference at Norman Assembly, Norman Park. The Rev. Clifford Bruffey, Home Missionary to the Deaf in West Virginia, served as the pastor for the weekend. The workshop "Prayer for Spiritual Awakening" was led by the Rev. Jerry Jamison, pastor of the San Antonio Baptist Deaf Mission, San Antonio, Texas. Other workshop leaders included the Rev. Wilber Huckeba, Miss Jimmie Chappell, the Rev. Clifford Bruffey, Mr. Jessie Henderson, Mrs. Susan Claxton, Mrs. Ann Rich, and Miss Donna Jo Benefield. A banquet was held on Saturday night in observance of the anniversary. The theme for the weekend was "All Deaf People In The World Need To Know Jesus."

1989

The theme for 1989 was "God's Word..Go and Do." The conference met at the Georgia Baptist Assembly in Toccoa. The Rev. Arthur Craig was the speaker. The Rev. Buddy Burgess taught the Education Extension course, "Great Doctrines of the Bible." Nurse, Mary Ann Weeks presented a program about Aids entitled "Understanding and Helping." Workshop leaders were the Rev. Jack Smith, Evangelism Training; John Crews, new Christian Training; Gerald Edmondson, Marriage Enrichment; Lance Cole, Singles Live for Christ; and Ann Rich, Jr. GBCD.

Other workshops and their leaders were: Dialogue with a Deaf Person, Robin Titterington; The Joy of Interpreting, A Survivor's Perspective, Shirley Herald; Teaching and Leading Deaf Awareness program by Mrs. Willie Lamb. Robin Price was elected President. We had 268 present from 42 churches. GBCD was scheduled to meet in Norman Park in 1990, but due to a booking error we were asked to meet in Toccoa again next year and Norman Park would give GBCD a 10% discount in 1991.

1990

"Jesus the Rock" was the theme and the Rev. Kevin Kruetzer was the speaker. GBCD met in Toccoa, Georgia Baptist Assembly on June 22-24, 1990.

Workshop leaders this year were Cindi Young, Nita Miller, Nancy Holdren, The Rev. Carter Bearden, The Rev. Buddy Burgess, Marie Griffin, Jimmy Tallant, The Rev. James Howard, Bobbie Carter, The Rev. Wilber Huckeba and The Rev. John Cooper.

Jimmy Tallant was elected President and Mrs. Janice Ivey led the music.

1991

GBCD met at Norman Park, Georgia Baptist Assembly on June 21-23, 1991. The theme was "The 1990's - Accepting the Challenge." Guest speaker was the Rev. Bob Moore, pastor to the Deaf at First Baptist Church, Charlotte, N.C. John Crews was elected President. We had 280 present from 42 churches. Workshop leaders were The Rev. Jerry St. John, Severa Trevino, John Crews, The Rev. Bill Harrison, The Rev. Jerry Baker, Christopher Shirley, Donna Benefield, The Rev. Wilber Huckeba, Nancy Holdren, Laurel Gahan, Vernee Burriss and Robin Price. Jeff Ayers was Jr. GBCD leader.

D.O.O.R. Ministries presented special music and a drama.

1992

Our theme was "Success in Christ" when we met at Georgia Baptist Assembly, Toccoa on June 26-28, 1992. The guest speaker was the Rev. Tim Bender, pastor of the Erlanger Baptist Deaf Mission in Erlanger, Ky. The Rev. Steven James taught the Education Extension class. The topic for this course was "The Holy Spirit." Other workshop leaders were Jeff Ayers, Jr. GBCD; Children's Coordinator was Marie Penland; Gloria Todd-Twiggs led a workshop on "Forgiven and Free: You Can Succeed."; Interpreter Workshops were led by Tammy Cantrell, Barbara Porter, Laurel Gahan and Dawn Norton. We had 225 people attend from 39 churches.

Beth Rosenzweig was elected as president.

1993

GBCD celebrated its 35th anniversary. "Seeing His Light", John 8:12 was the theme for the Georgia Baptist Conference of the Deaf. The Conference took place at the Georgia Baptist Assembly, Toccoa, GA, on June 18-20, 1993. Conference pastor was Rev. Rocky Shiflett from Hartford, Connecticut. The president was Beth Rosenzweig. Deaf Ministry Workshop, four courses were taught. The Workshops led by Nancy Holdren, James Gregory and Kevin Clark. The names for those workshops were "Spiritual Living" "Witnessing" and "Understanding the Bible." Jr. GBCD program guests were Robert Stamey, Don Owensby and Dennis Rogers. The Musical Drama, "The Fields" led by the Visual Effects Group. The guest speaker was Carter Bearden. On Saturday night GBCD celebrated the 35th anniversary with a big banquet. The president elected was Gary Stump.

1994

"Open My Heart to See", Ephesians 1:18 was the program theme for GBCD that year. The conference was held at the Norman Baptist Assembly in Norman Park, GA, June 24-26, 1994. The president was Gary T. Stump. The program guests were Jerry K. Baker, James Gregory, Vernee Burris, Bill Harrison, Steven James, Dan Lewis and Rodney Webb. The guest speaker was Steven James from First Baptist Church of Tallahassee, FL. He led the worship services every night. On Friday the theme was "Open My Heart for God's Word." On Saturday, "Open My Heart to God's Love." On Sunday, "Open My Heart to See the World." Mr. Michael Gahan was elected president for 1994-95. There were 168 people presented representing 46 churches with deaf ministries throughout the state. Friday offering: SBCD World Missions Funds. Saturday offering: Wanda Fanshaw Scholarship. Sunday offering: Georgia Baptist conference of the Deaf.

1995

Georgia Baptist Conference of the Deaf was held at the Georgia Baptist Assembly, Toccoa, GA, on June 23-25, 1995. The theme was "Lord, Teach Us..." Rev. Samuel C. Marsh was the guest speaker, pastor from Deaf Baptist Mission in Danville, KY. The Interpreter Training Program theme was "Deaf Culture" taught by Brenda Marsh. The Deaf Ministry Workshops leaders were Mike Self, Brenda Marsh, Sherry Croft-Icoz, Alfred Jackson and the Visual Effects Group (bringing the Choreographic and Interpreting Music). Continuing Education Classes were taught and led by Rev. Tim Bender from Louisville, KY. Sherrill Self led the Children's Program. They enjoyed a Prayer Time, Bible Studies, Talent Show, Free play, etc. The president was Mike Gahan.

