

THE HISTORY OF WORLD WIDE NEW TESTAMENT BAPTIST MISSIONS

“America’s Eden, Paradise Lost” was the title of an article in a February issue of the Saturday Evening Post, February, 1964. I was sitting in Wilbur Hughes’ barbershop in New Bern, North Carolina and I picked up the magazine and began to read. The article was in reference to an area in the western Pacific known as Micronesia, that is, “little islands.” It is comprised of the Marshalls, Carolines, and Marianna Islands.

As I read the article, my heart was strongly burdened for these people. Leaving the shop, I went to the nearest motel, purchased a copy of the article, and devoured its contents.

In the months that followed, I gleaned all the information I could find about these precious people. Information was scarce. The area had long been under the tight “security wraps” of our navy. The U.S. Navy had been in charge of this area since we liberated it in World War II. Now it had been made a trusteeship of the United States through the United Nations and was open to visitors.

In the same year, I wrote to the radio stations that were mentioned in that article to see if they would air our radio programs. Yet, I received no answer. Many nights I prayed, wept, and asked the Lord for direction. At one point I offered to go too as a missionary. A missionary group started to raise funds for a vessel to do the work in those islands; however, it seemed that the Lord was saying “No” to my going as a missionary.

This continued for seven years. Never was the burden far from my heart. In February of 1971 I again wrote the stations. This time I received immediate replies from two of them. One station was on Pohnpei in the East Carolines, the other was in Yap in the Western Carolines. They would air our programs!

I immediately began to receive correspondence from the listening area of WSZD, Pohnpei. At last an actual contact! Through the correspondence of an American school teacher in Pohnpei, Mr. Charles Massey, I made contact with a Mokilese pastor, Brother Isamo Welles. He was and is a true soldier of the cross. He is a fundamentalist who loves and serves God. Brother Welles, as a drunken college student, met the Lord as his Savior in the same month of my burden—February, 1964. He had since gone to Bible school and had returned home to establish a work for God.

We had corresponded only a short time when both Brothers Welles and Massey wrote of problems there and their need of help. As Hezekiah in times of old, I spread these letters before the Lord and prayed for wisdom in His will. It was settled: I would go if the Lord provided. That was on Monday morning. On Wednesday I shared my burden with the dear folk of our church, Calvary Baptist Church in New Bern, North Carolina. Many were stirred to pray. The next morning, a man who had been saved only a few weeks walked into the area where we were working on our new building. He extended

his hand toward me and said, "Go make that trip." When I looked at the roll of bills, I discovered that it was \$1,000! God had provided and I would go.

One of our deacons, Brother Jerry Gurganus, who would serve as both a missionary and representative with our mission, offered to go with me. He said, "Pastor, I believe God would have me go with you." Through a process of definite acts of our Heavenly Father we journeyed to that far away beautiful groups of islands, Pohnpei, E.C.I.

Space is inadequate to tell of the numerous miraculous blessings with which our Lord blessed us. At the request of Brother Welles and the approval of our church, Brother Welles was examined, found qualified, and ordained. Many souls were saved and the Calvary Baptist Church of Pohnpei was organized. On the way home, God made His will clear to Brother Gurganus: God wanted him to be a missionary. When we returned, he resigned his job, sold his house, moved to Greenville, SC, and entered Bob Jones University; upon his graduation, he served the Lord faithfully.

Since no Baptist mission boards were working in that area of the world, we called a group of godly men together for prayer and counsel. It was their opinion that we should organize a work in that area of the world. Thus, World Wide New Testament Baptist Missions was organized in 1971.

The Offices of WWNTBM were originally located at the Calvary Baptist Church in New Bern, NC. However, as our agency grew we saw the need to find a more centrally located facility, with greater ease of access to interstate travel. We located a property in Kings Mountain, NC, in 1997, and on March 27, 1999, we held a dedication service for the new facilities. Since that time the Lord has continued to bless the ministry. We would ask you to pray that we will be faithful to Him until He comes or calls.

Dr. Bill Wingard
Founder