

A SHORT HISTORY

of

POST OAK MISSION

Indiahoma, Okla.

By

A. J. Becker.

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It was in the year of 1892 in the Alexanderwohler church in Kansas where our general conference was held, that the first time, a mission among the Indians was under consideration. Bro J, F. Harms and elder Abr. Schellengerg are especially to be mentioned for strongly supporting this move. Missinary H. R. Voth who worked among the Indians was called to our conference to give information and advice concerning mission work among the Indians. Thereupon Rev John Berg was asked to begin this work if his health would allow this work. Elder Schellengerg at the head of a committee of 10 from different states were to look after this new move.

At the conference in Minnesota in 1893 this move was dropped although a mission close to Cantonment where missionary Petter was working, was discussed, but dropped until the next conference.

1894 at a conference in Nebraska Elder Schellenberg made a strong plea for starting a mission among the Indians, and suggested a field in the neighborhood of Corn Church. \$150.00 was appropriated for Brother H. Kohfeld to start this work. Assisted by a committee of Elder Schellenberg J. Voth and C. P. Wedel.

Beginning.

1895 at a conference in S. Dakota Bro Kohfeld reported a place found among the Comanche Indian tribe. The place where Post Oak Mission now is located. The U. S. Government was to give 160 acres of land for this purpose \$500.00 for a church, \$300.00 for a house and \$500.00 salary was allowed by the conference.

1896 the carpenters from Corn came to build the church and house. The lumber had to be hauled from Marlow, 50 miles. Price of lumber was 10 to \$12.00 a thousand. At this time, in the summer of 1896, the Lord put it into the heart of Bro A. J. Becker to offer his help for 2 months at this mission free of charge. Elder John Voth from Hillsboro and others wished him God's blessing on the way. However no one could tell which way from Fort Sill, (then post office for Bro Kohfeld) the mission was located. From Rush Springs, 30 miles east of Fort Sill, he went along with the mail carrier to Fort Sill. There in the post office and other places he inquired for the direction of the Indian mission, but no one could tell.

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Some thought it about 10 miles west. West he went starting at 2:00 P.M. with 110 degrees heat, a bundle of clothes hanging on a stick over the shoulder following the big trail. After walking 10 miles no mission was in sight. So whenever he saw an Indian camp he inquired about a Jesus house and a Jesus man but no one seemed to understand. On he went with no Indians in sight any more. The great heat and no water, all the creeks dry and not knowing the way soon brought discouragement and exhaustion. Praying for strength and water, once more he went on west altho the mission might have been in any other direction as far as he knew now. Soon he found water in the Blue Beaver creek. Night overtook him in the wilderness, so under a tree in a ditch he slept. The coyotes howling everywhere. In the morning he saw a house and found Mexicans that could understand English and also knew where a new mission had been built - 7 more miles west and you are there. Glad news, he said, although it might be another mission. On he went with songs of rejoicing. Lifting up his eyes he saw about 200 wild steers on both sides of the road. It was too late to go back and stopping would make it worse. About 200 yards ahead was a tree. Swinging his bundle to scare them they all raised their heads high but did not move until he got through, then at once with one accord they all came and surrounded him in a circle with no opening left, some as near as 10 feet. He throw himself down on his knees with the hands lifted up and face towards heaven away from the wild steers. He cried to God for mercy and help as David cried when he felt himself in a horrible pit. The cattle stopped short in front of me, then I heard a roaring of many feet, looking I saw them all run in a stampede. Soon I saw nothing but dust for miles. I stayed on my knees and thanked the Lord for His wonderful help. 6 more miles and I was at the mission - Our Mission. Bro Kohfeld was very glad for my coming.

The Corn carpenters had left just two days ago. For 7 weeks the main work was hauling a barrel of water on a buggy every day from a distance of 4 1/2 miles as this was the nearest place of water. A well dug at the mission in the creek bed 20 ft deep had no water. Making friends with a few Indians and learning 75 words and helping here and there until the time came to go back home to Fairview. Riding on a little two year old Indian pony staying at David Schapanske at Corn over night. 6 more years at home and in school. It has been a very hard struggle for Bro Kohfeld for many years.

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1897 at a conference in Minnesota it was decided to send Bro A.J. Becker to our Indian mission as school teacher for the Indian children, \$400.00 was appropriated for a start. However it was found that it had to be a boarding school which was too expensive and given up. Sister Mary Regier of Buhler, Kansas was sent as deaconess to Kohfelds and two years later also sister Katie Penner from Hillsboro, Kansas.

1901 again at a conference in Minnesota it was decided to send Bro Becker and wife as assistants to Bro and sister Kohfeld with \$300.00 for a house and \$400.00 salary (this being the salary for the next 10 years). A young man, D.C. Peters, was hired to take care of Bro Becker's old father and mother for one more year. Bro Becker fell in love with this young man who was not yet a Christian. He called him to his home at the mission to help. He soon got converted thoroughly after much praying and many trials, being brought up 7th day Adventist. Then also during that time was breaking sod among rocks, mesquite brush and stumps. He was baptized by Bro Kohfeld June 8th 1902. This was the first baptism at the mission and therefore worth mentioning. This dear brother Peters stayed in Bro and Sister Becker's home and on their farm near the mission for 12 years and has been great comfort to each other through many hardships and trials of life also both of them for one more year after their marriage. Especially in 1914 when Bro Becker and three of their children were sick with typhoid fever.

1906 again at a conference in Minnesota Bro and Sister Becker asked to be released as missionaries as one family is enough at the station. Bro A. Richert, M.M. Just and P. Richert were appointed to look into the matter. Together with Elder Abr. Schellenberg they went to our Indian mission, also called missionary Deyo from the neighboring Baptist mission who was well acquainted with both of our missionaries and their work. It was then decided to release Bro Kohfeld after 12 years of hard labor. However Bro Becker refused to accept the work. Bro Deyo said: Bro Becker, we prayed over this matter for the Lord to guide us, do you believe the Lord guided us? It is a dangerous thing to refuse. Bro and Sister Becker then accepted the position until the next conference only. The responsibility before them brought down on their knees in earnest prayer, asking the Lord if it was His will for them to stay to answer their prayer for two things: first to send an interpreter, the kind the Lord wanted. As in the past it had been impossible to get an interpreter and those that could be had for about \$3.00 an hour were mostly cowboys

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with leather suits and spurs; second :souls that would accept Christ as their Savior and be baptized. So far no visible fruit of Bro Kohfeld's hard labor of 12 years was seen by having the joy of baptizing Indians that were saved.

Answer to this prayer.

In spring 1907 the very first Sunday Bro Becker went heavy hearted to church to preach, and just before going on the pulpit, a fine young man (Herman Asenap) came to him and said:"Bro Becker,I always have refused you and Bro Kohfeld when you wanted me to interpret, I could not rest and was very much troubled, if you can use me I will interpret for you every Sunday without any money." Then Bro Becker embraced him and they cried together. How wonderful the Lord answered prayer. For many years he interpreted every Sunday.

Second answer: 6 baptisms before the next conference (7 members). We pitched up our gospel tent in a big Indian camp called by them "The Stinking Town." (pesa nadama) for three weeks we held day and night meetings. One time sister Becker went a ways off crying,an Indian woman (Wieper) followed her asking what she cried for, sister Becker told her how long we missionaries had labored so hard and no one wanted to take the Jesus road, so soon they both cried. That was the breaking of ice, this Indian woman got saved (the wife of our deacon George) and was baptized. However before these 3 weeks meetings one Indian man was baptized, but there was no real revival yet. Oh what wonderful meetings they were. Soon chief Quannah Parker and others cried out, not to go to our meetings, we were dangerous white people, because we started baptizing. "If God is for us who can be against us" was true here. Prayer and tears started the answer in prayer in both cases. "Oh Lord give us more tears!" As Bro Becker was not yet ordained he had to ask the mission board for permission to baptize.

So before the next conference in 1907 7 grown Indians were baptized. During this time a daughter was born to us and was called "Herwanna" which means "Dawn of Day". This was also the name of one of the Indian sisters that was baptized. From many weepings and hardships to such great joy "Her-wan-na" "Dawn of Day"!!

So that from 1907 to 1931 they could add to the church 203, of these 123 are living and is the present membership of the church. Never missed a year where not from 3 to 21 were baptized.

These last three lines cover 25 years (membership 1932 is 145)
Before 1907 covers 12 years