



Utah-Idaho Southern Baptist Convention

Our History

In the spring of 1887, two families arrived in the area of what is now Clearwater, Idaho, an area that is located about one-half way up the western side of the state. They had traveled from near Fort Smith, Arkansas and Cowlington, Oklahoma to make their homes in the Northwest.

The two families, the Manes and the Cowlings, missed the Baptist church they had attended back in the Midwest. So, they invited former pastor and friend, Rev. J.B. York to come to the Northwest and help them start a new work.

The York family arrived in the Clearwater area in November of 1887. One month later, on Christmas day, the first Southern Baptist Church was organized and began meeting in the log cabin schoolhouse at Clearwater.

Rev. York remained in the area and continued to serve for twenty-two years. He was a pioneer circuit preacher, traveling by horse all seasons of the year across the prairies and rivers where he established and pastored nineteen different ministries.

The original Clearwater work still exists today. In fact, Almon Manes—the grandson of the Manes family who helped begin the work—still resides in the area and is a member of the church his grandparents helped to establish.

The first work in Utah began with Nixon Beard, a Baptist from Lamesa, Texas who read that it was possible to stake a claim in the Red Wash area of Craig, Colorado. When he moved to the area with that in mind, he saw that the soil was full of alkali and not good for farming. He then moved on to an area near Vernal, Utah.

While there, one of the Beard children, Opal, met Harold Dillman from Roosevelt, Utah. He was the son of an atheist father and a Mormon mother. Harold and Opal dated for four years before becoming engaged. Not wanting his daughter to marry into a Mormon family, Nixon Beard sold his farm and moved his family back to Texas.

Harold followed Opal back to Texas where he began attending the Baptist church—the only place Mr. Beard would allow him to see Opal. Harold Dillman went to church to see Opal, but he met the Lord there.

Harold and Opal were married and eventually moved back to Utah where they helped to establish the Roosevelt Baptist Church, the first Southern Baptist church in Utah. Rev. Dillman later pastored several Utah churches.

From these widely diverse roots, the 49 churches and 3 missions of the Utah-Idaho SBC formed this Convention in October of 1964. Today, the Convention numbers three times that size and extends from southern-most Utah to northern-most Idaho. The Convention works with nine language and ethnic groups and has Baptist Campus Ministries work on 13 college and university campuses. The annual Cooperative Program gifts have grown from \$40,000 to \$500,000.

Though the human resources have always been limited, God has greatly blessed the work here. Our motto is **U and I Together with God**. Indeed, through the years the key to the growth of the work here has been the people of Utah and Idaho working together with God.

For more information: www.uisbc.org

NOTE; The state missions offering was re-named York-Dillman State Missions Offering in 2000.
It was previously known as the Dillman State Missions Offering.