

## The Missionary Bible Society

Missions have always been an emphasis in the Sale Creek Presbyterian Church, and this emphasis began very early in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. The first organized support for missions began in September of 1923 as the Sale Creek Missionary Society. Its influence carried over into the ladies' Sunday School class which was known as the Missionary Bible Class. The goal was the education of the local church people about the needs of missionary families as well as a means for the local members to contribute to the support of their chosen missionaries.

The charter members of the Missionary Bible Society were:

Licia Downey, wife of elder Ed Downey  
Mrs. Eliza Eldridge, mother of Thelma and Frankie Eldridge who were long-time members of the church  
Maggie Fleming, wife of elder Will Fleming  
Mrs. C.C. Hines, wife of Reverend C.C. Hines, pastor of the congregation at that time  
Mrs. William Irvin, wife of elder William Irvin (Confederate veteran and local carpenter)  
Gertie List, wife of elder Will List  
Mrs. Burleigh Downey, wife of Addison Downey  
Mrs. F. McDonald  
Stella Patterson, deaconess and wife of deacon John T. Patterson and mother of Katherine Sanders  
Tyda Richard, wife of local Dr. J. McClure Richard and aunt of Betty Ray and Mary Gray  
Miss Bertha Wall, local teacher and long-time member of the church

New members following included:

Florence Coulter, mother of elder Luther G. Coulter  
Addie Coleman  
Grace Harwood  
Mrs. John Hoffman, wife of John Hoffman, local carpenter, grandfather of Geraldine Starnes and Patty Iles  
Mrs. B.G. Sitton  
Bertha Coppinger, wife of E.O. (Oscar) Coppinger, deacon

The society met in the homes of the different members of the society, meeting many times in Mrs. Eldridge's home at the corner of Leggett Road and Railroad Street at the railroad crossing, Mrs. Irvin's house directly across the road, at the church manse on Patterson Road, at Burleigh Downey's house just north of Rock Creek, at Mrs. List's house on Patterson Road, as well as at Licia Downey's house near Coulterville Road and other homes as well.

The society brought in speakers to address topics such as the missionary needs and situations in Siam, conditions of the native Americans outside Tucson, Arizona, the raising and care of children in the African countries, and other similar topics. Their

activities included church beautification and the care and cleaning of the church building. They also were known as the sewing circle because they gathered several times a year to make quilts for the pastor, for newly wed couples, and for families who were in need or who had lost their homes to fire.

From its inception the purpose of the society was to raise the awareness of the needs of the missionaries as well as to contribute to their support. The ladies took up offerings at each meeting and maintained their own list of missionaries that they supported and contributed to the needs that were greatest at the time. There is no known date when the society ceased to function; however, it continued its ministry through the Ladies Missionary Bible Class that was originally led by Mrs. Licia Downey until she left Sale Creek to work for Columbia Bible College in Columbia, South Carolina in the late 1940's. Mrs. Gertie List continued as the teacher of the class until the late 1960's. Mrs. Neddo served as teacher of the class for many years after that.