

Blalock, Reuben Young 1867 - 1962  
Excerpts from his autobiography

This article has been adapted from *Reuben Young Blalock- 1867 - 1962 His Missionary Life; an Autobiography* as published In *The Western Baptist* of Portland, Oregon, in 1950 - 1951. The editor at that time was John R. Blalock, son of Reuben Young Blalock.

***(I have excerpted the parts of the articles that pertain to Reuben Young Blalock's general childhood and life including his life in Tillamook County. Much of the original writings tell about the intricacies and details of many of the churches Reuben Y. Blalock served in as well as his remembrances of conversations with others about details in the Baptist church. The articles are very long, but if you would like to read the articles in entirety go to <[https://www.calmbc.org/calhac/biographies/bio\\_blalock\\_index.htm](https://www.calmbc.org/calhac/biographies/bio_blalock_index.htm)>. db)***

I was born in North Carolina, February 9, 1867, born again, 1880. I was raised by Christian parents, the 7th child in a family of 14 children. My parents were of English and Scotch-Irish extraction, early settlers in America.

Father, being a poor man and an ordinary farmer, was unable to give any of his children a college education, so what schooling we got above the common schools of that day was acquired by ourselves after we were grown.

In the spring of 1891, when I felt called to preach, I decided I would go west and get that idea out of my head. I came to Walla Walla, Washington, where I had a cousin, Dr. N. G. Blalock. I worked for him on a fruit farm just below the city. I attended the Baptist Church and put my membership in the church. I was elected clerk and treasurer of the Sunday School. That fall I attended school in Whitman College for a few months, and then I secured a position as an attendant in the State Insane Asylum at Fort Stillicum. This is 9 miles from Tacoma, where I attended church and put my letter in the First Baptist Church. I attended it and took part in the Young People's Society.

Bro. Walker, a good friend who was from Georgia talked with me and asked me if I ever felt called to preach. I confessed and denied not. He told me to go ahead and preach and said, "We need real God-called men that will preach the truth out here."

After the association and my two weeks vacation I went back to work, but could not rest. I could read my Bible and pray every night. One night I surrendered and said, "Lord, I will do the best I can."

I resigned my job and went back to North Carolina in the fall of 1893 and went to school to R.L. Patton, a great teacher and Baptist preacher in Morganton, North Carolina. I began to preach some then in school houses or wherever the Lord opened

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up an opportunity. I was licensed to preach by Bakersville Missionary Baptist Church in the spring of 1894.

I was ordained by Franklin St. Church at the close of school. Dr. John T. Christian, pastor of Broadway Baptist Church, preached my ordination sermon. Dr. H.C. Roberts was my pastor. Dr. Weaver of 22nd and Walnut St. was moderator of the council. As far as I know all the ordination council have gone to glory.

I came to Oregon the first week of June, 1895, and I preached my first sermon after being ordained in Wingville, Oregon, out west of Baker City on the second Sunday in June, 1895.

*(After the last paragraph Reuben Young Blalock wrote about pastoring in many, many churches.db)*

After pastoring the Dallas church for one year I went over into Nestucca Valley in Tillamook County. Here were two little churches, Hebo Baptist Church meeting in Knifong School House and Union Baptist Church meeting in Union School House. They were only about 3 or 4 miles apart, one on one side of Nestucca River, the other on the other side. In 1898 there were no bridges, and it was difficult to cross the river, especially in the winter time. The two churches called me as their pastor for one fourth time each. In the course of time I got them to unite, and they became the Cloverdale Missionary Baptist Church.

Here I preached in school houses about the county, and I held a week's meeting in Fairview School House 4 miles east of Tillamook. I stopped in the home of Mrs. Amanda Donaldson. They were Southern Methodists, old settlers from Georgia. Here I got acquainted with their daughter, Miss May Donaldson, who was a school teacher. We were married September 6th, 1899. She was a good Christian girl and had been converted in a Methodist camp meeting held near their home.

In teaching school in Beaver, Oregon, she boarded with a strong Campbellite lady who got her to be immersed by a Campbellite preacher. She had never heard a Baptist preacher, but she believed the Bible taught immersion for baptism. When she heard me preach a sermon on baptism one night in their school house, as I walked home with her she said if she ever got a chance she would join a Baptist church. I said, "If you join a true Baptist church, you will have to be immersed again." She said, "I would want to be. If I was baptized for the wrong purpose, I would want to be baptized for the right purpose." So in a few months after we were married she joined the Cloverdale Baptist Church and was baptized in the beautiful Nestucca River to show forth the death, burial, and resurrection of her Savior, by the hands of her husband, the pastor of Cloverdale Missionary Baptist Church.

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While here in Cloverdale, Oregon, I had two debates. When I first came there, an old man by the name of Butts sent me a challenge for a debate. He was a Spiritualist lecturer, (and) had been a Methodist preacher for some years. I saw he did not know what Baptists believed by his proposition for me to affirm. I changed my proposition as to what I was to affirm and sent it back to him. He was to affirm, "Spiritualism is a true philosophy, therefore a true religion."

We held four days and nights of two hours each day, 10 to 12, two hours at night, 7:30 to 9:30, speaking 30 minutes each alternately. I think if the Lord ever blessed me in a meeting, He did in this debate. There were three or four (who) claimed conversion from the debate. It was in Hebo School House which was packed with many spiritualists and infidels.

The other debate was in Oretown School House south of Little Nestucca Bay, some ten miles from Cloverdale. An old Campbellite by the name of Bales challenged me for a debate. We held four nights. He was very rough and abusive. I considered I won a great victory by my kindness to the old man in the face of his abuse.

After I married I took up a homestead on Big Nestucca River four miles above the Beaver Post Office, which was my post office for many years. I preached at Cloverdale once a month and in school houses all over the country. I organized a church in Brown School House just above where we lived, and I preached for them a few years. It was named New Hope Church. Deacon Moon sold out and moved to Calif., and some others moved away. The church disbanded, but she had done a good work. I baptized some converts into her that I expect to meet in glory.

I preached in Tillamook City. One time we organized a little church of six members there, but after a short time some of them moved away. They wanted letters so the church met and disbanded granting each other letters.

While I lived on my homestead and worked paying my own salary, I preached in 32 school houses of the county. I believe there were 40 school houses then in the county, and I preached in all but 8 of them. There are not so many now since roads and autos, and there are consolidations. I preached in communities where grown young people had never heard a Baptist preach and seldom heard anyone.

In 1901 I was called as pastor of Goldendale Baptist Church in Washington state. I went up there for a year, but came back to my homestead in Tillamook County and was called again as pastor of Cloverdale.

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In 1911 I was called as pastor of Condon, Oregon, Baptist Church. I moved up there for a year. That church had only 14 members and all of them women except one man who lived off in the country and was seldom there. They paid me \$25 a month for half time, two Sundays a month. They had a hard time paying that. I gave the other half time to mission work. I had a mission down in Rock Creek, north of Condon some 12 or 15 miles. While in Condon we lived rather hard. We had 3 children. We did not suffer from hunger, but at times we did not know where the next meal was coming from.

While in Condon in 1911, John R. Blalock was born. We gave him to the Lord and prayed God to make a missionary of him. He never knew *that* until after he surrendered to go to China as a missionary.

In 1912 we moved back to Beaver, Oregon, on our homestead. I lived here and worked on my homestead, preaching on Sundays at different places. I pastored a little church 7 miles northwest of Sheridan called Rock Creek, also in Sheridan, and old Union Church, 4 miles south of Sheridan *on Harmony Road*. I supplied these little churches at different times. Old Union Church is the only one still in existence today.

Those days I went on horseback or afoot up the Nestucca River and across a mountain trail to the head of Willamina Creek, down to Buck Hollow Schoolhouse, then across a ridge to Rock Creek, and down it to Rock Creek Schoolhouse where they held church. It was about 35 miles across a steep mountain from my place to Rock Creek. I made many hard trips across this rugged mountain trail, sometimes wading the Big Nestucca River. One time coming home I had to wade it, and I took cramps in my legs so I could hardly walk. I rubbed my limbs with some turpentine I had in my hand grip and managed to get down to D. Jones', about two miles, where I borrowed a saddle horse to ride home, some 12 miles farther. I think that was the last time I made that 35 miles on foot.

I went out there Saturday, preached over Sunday, and came back Monday. I seldom received more than \$2 or \$3 a trip. What moved me to make these trips? The money I got? I could have stayed at home and worked on the county roads and made twice that much. There was a deeper motive that moved me *more* than any earthly gain. Sometimes I would be away from home holding meetings for a week or two.

Once when I came home, my wife told me about a neighbor who came to see her who asked her where I was. When she told her, the woman said, "I would not have such a man who would go off and leave me for weeks." May said to her, "If I can stand it, my neighbors ought to put up with it." When she told me of this I thought how true the Proverb--"A good woman is from the Lord." A preacher's wife that cares for the

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children while he is away holding meetings is due double honor, and God will bless her in eternity.

In 1914 I was living on my homestead. I had it so "I could live at home and board at the same place." I had a two-story framed building with a kitchen off on the side. The building was sealed, clothed and papered on the inside and painted white on the outside. I took pride in my little home, but my time and affections were placed too much upon that home. So one cold morning it all went up in smoke. John and Harold were upstairs in bed. Their mother ran up to get them. I had hooked the garden hose onto the water pipe, but when I opened the door into the sitting room where the fire had started, I saw the flames going up the stairway and knew that May was cut off from escape with the children. I ran around the house to the west end window and called to May to bring the boys to the window and drop them down to me. She had had the two boys in her arms and started for the stairs, but seeing the flames coming up she thought all escape was gone. When she heard me call she came to the window and raised it and dropped the boys to me. However before she was able to get out her one hand and arm were burned very badly. The doctor later grafted skin on some places on her arm.

We sat down and wept. All was gone, clothes, books, pictures and keepsakes. But God, friends and neighbors helped us, and we built back a cheap, rough, bungalow house to live in. Bro. J. A. Chapman of Fossil, Oregon, sent a check for \$75. Other friends sent less amounts which all filled our heart with joy and gratitude to God for such friends in the time of need.

But we were led to trust more in God and to try to build more for Him, where fires would not burn. My dear wife was never so well after this experience.

After we built again on our homestead in 1915 we lived there until 1917, and I preached out at Sheridan and at other mission points on Sundays. In 1915 I started "The Western Baptist," a little, four paged, monthly paper. We hired that printed, 500 copies each month for \$15.

In 1917 Mrs. Blalock's health was so bad the doctor advised us to take her to a drier climate. We went to Redlands, California. I rented a little place two miles south of San Bernardino and we lived there for about eight months; but since her health got no better and she longed so to return to Tillamook, we then returned to our home on the Big Nestucca River.

I bought a printing press in Cloverdale and printed the "Nestucca Valley Enterprise" and moved down to Cloverdale. My oldest girl learned to set type and worked in the office. Besides, I hired a printer, a Mr. Goldsworthy, of Beaver, Oregon, to run the

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paper. I did real estate work, fire insurance and edited the paper and made very good money for a while.

On November 21, 1919, God took Mrs. Blalock home and left me with six children, the oldest 18, the youngest 3 years old. But He doeth all things well. We were left sad and lonely, but trusted in Him, feeling sure we should meet her on the golden shores of eternity. We went on at our work.

In the spring of 1920 I leased the paper and printing plant and decided to visit my father and mother in our old home in North Carolina, going in my Model T Ford, preaching along the way and accepting work where the Lord opened up the way. We left Cordie working in the print shop and Miles working in logging camps and took the four youngest in the car. We went to Mitchell, Oregon, and attended the Middle Oregon Baptist Association. The next week we went to the Eastern Association of California and Oregon, which met with a church between Lakeview and New Pine Creek, which is extinct now. At this association we met some messengers from Lake City, California, who wanted us to come over there. They were without a pastor.

We went over with them. The church called me as her pastor. I agreed to accept if they would let me off a month or six weeks to go back to North Carolina and visit my parents. They agreed to do that; so I left my Ford there, and we took the train from Alturas, California, the four children going with me.

My brother, T. L. Blalock, was home from China on furlow and had enlisted several missionaries to go with him back to China. They had a farewell fellowship meeting of three or four days and nights in Fairview Baptist Church, out east of Asheville some five or six miles. I attended this meeting and got acquainted with the missionaries that were going out.

We returned to Lake City just a month after leaving there. Here we had some great experiences with enemies, who dug a pit for me, but fell in it themselves. God was with me, and in the midst of it all I baptized 6 or 7 converts in the coldest water I ever baptized in. It frostbit my limbs.

In 1921 I resigned and went back to my home in Tillamook County, Oregon. The man who had my printing plant rented was giving it up, so I went back and printed the Nestucca Valley Enterprise for a few months. But times had changed, and it was not a paying business. So I quit printing the paper.

I moved the printing press onto my homestead near Beaver and then started printing "The Western Baptist" that we had suspended a few years before. I had just married

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Clara A. Bowden, who was a school teacher, a college graduate, and she and I set up the type and ran off The Western Baptist by hand.

At this time I was pastoring the Union Baptist Church near Sheridan. I would drive out there in my Model T Ford on Sunday morning and preach at 11 o'clock and at 3 p.m., then come home the same day. It was 40 miles to Sheridan and four miles from Sheridan to Union Church. One Sunday morning when we were nearly to Sheridan, there came up a little cloud, and we heard a sharp clap of thunder. We went on and preached at 11 .m., and after church someone came and told us that lightning struck a man's house two miles from there and killed the man. I knew the man. He had come to hear me preach years before then.

I printed the Western Baptist for about two years and then turned the subscription list over to the Baptist and Commoner and edited a page in that for a time.

In the winter of 1923 I went to Meridian, Idaho, and preached, gathering a little church there. I came back home in Tillamook for Christmas. The next spring we sold our personal property, loaded our family in the old Ford, and moved to Meridian, Idaho. Here we lived for about a year, preaching for the little church and doing missionary work. The church moved to Moro Schoolhouse, a few miles east of Kuna, as most of the members lived in that community.

I traded my homestead in Tillamook, Oregon, for a man's equity in a 40 acre ranch near Middleton, Idaho, some 6 miles north of Caldwell. Here we lived for some 2-1/2 years, farming and preaching. I saw I could not pay the mortgage on the place, so I put it up for sale or trade.

At this time Elder J.H. Whitmire, a grand old Baptist preacher, came from Arkansas and settled in the Moro district. He and I became fast friends and worked together until his death, when I preached his funeral here in California.

We organized a little Baptist Church in the school house, and I did some missionary work in and around Jerome, Gooding, and Twin Falls, Idaho, while I lived in that state.

We traded our farm near Middleton for an apartment house in Caldwell, Idaho, and moved there. There was a big debt against it, but we lived there a few years and paid the monthly building and loan payments. I preached in the city hall, and we organized the Antioch Missionary Baptist Church of Caldwell there in the city hall. I served then as missionary pastor for several years. We bought a house and lot on Denver Street for a church building. We lived a while in the house, and held Sunday school and church in it.

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I had lost the apartment house. Times were hard. The W.P.A. was put on to give people work. I worked some on it. My son, Harold, joined up and went into a C.C.C. camp to help us to live. The government gave us \$25 a month for his services, and gave him \$5 for his use. He often gave us that.

I went on through Tennessee and over into North Carolina and visited my old home. After my visit with my mother and some brothers and sisters, I came on back through Kentucky, Illinois, and Colorado, preaching some in each of these states on my way back to Caldwell, Idaho. I was satisfied the Lord wanted me to stay a while longer in Idaho.

We stayed on in the work, trusting the Lord to care for us. Sometimes it looked dark, but we worked and trusted Him who cares for His own.

One winter, when we were about out of everything to eat, and it was cold and snow was on the ground, I had rheumatism in my limbs, and I did not know what to do. I prayed and thought of different friends who might send us help, but none came from them. One morning I went down to the post office and got my mail. There was a letter from a man in southern California, of whom I had never heard before with a check for one hundred dollars saying, "Here is a little I am sending you to help in your mission work in Idaho." He sent me a few smaller checks after that. When I came to California a few years later, I learned he had gone to glory. You know when I get to heaven, I want to look up P. M. Bangle and tell him how he cheered my heart when he sent me that hundred dollar check.

I did not start any work in Yucaipa, but came back to Taft, *California*, and spent Christmas with old Brother and Sister Moore. They were fine old people and true Baptists. I came from there to Ceres and stopped with Brother and Sister S.F. Moon over New Years day, 1935. Brother Moon and I went out into his strawberry patch and picked a fine box of ripe strawberries, which we had for dinner. *(Note that Brother and Sister S.F. Moon were Seth Franklin and Alice Eva SWITZER Moon who lived on Moon Creek northeast of Blaine, Oregon. Moon Creek is named after their family. Seth and Alice Moon attended the New Hope Church that met in the Brown School building off of what is now Borba Road on the old Blaine Road. Reuben Young Blalock had preached to that Baptist Church that met in the schoolhouse before the Moons moved away and the church closed. db)*

I went from there to North Carolina and spent ten days visiting my brothers and sisters in the flesh and preaching. I came back through Tennessee, Arkansas, and Texas, preaching some on the way, and arrived home in time to attend our Northern California Missionary Baptist Association at Oroville, 1947.

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Soon after this, while reading a paper, sitting in a chair leaning back, I went to sleep and fell backward striking the back of my head on the floor. I had a headache for a few weeks and then passed out. I had some kind of a stroke. They took me to the hospital. My children came to see me, and I did not know any of them. For two or three months I did not know anyone. My back all broke out with bed sores. My back felt like wild cats running up and down, scratching and biting. I suffered intensely for months. My wife, by patiently doctoring and rubbing with rubbing alcohol, caused the sores to heal, but they left great scars on my back. My right arm and leg became partly paralyzed and are not yet entirely well.

So this November 23rd, Thanksgiving day, 1950, I am still in bed. By the time you read this I may be in glory. Hope to meet you all there.

THE END