

Bethel Original Freewill Baptist Church History

Bethel was founded by the late Great Elder Alexander Calvin Speakman in May of 1971. Later on in Pastor Speakman's ministry, he was ordained as the 1st Vice-Bishop of the Original Free Will Baptist Middle Eastern Conference. The Lord gave this great man of God a vision of which he first communicated to others, and secondly, not only did he talk about the vision, but enacted on it by stepping "outside of the box" and did things that symbolized the vision, which included the church's first location, 590 Fraser Street, SE., Atlanta, Georgia. A one room mission opened its doors to the public, as the House of God Freewill Baptist Mission, with only the Speakman family: Elect Lady Mother Velma, Sheneece, Vincent, Vernon, and our current Pastor Victor Speakman.

It was there that God began to add to the church. Many souls were converted through the House of God Mission, and among those that were added from the church's beginning are Martha Morgan-Grissom and Deacon Willie Stevenson. Worship services continued at Fraser Street from May 1971 until June 1973. From Fraser Street, the House of God moved to 133 Atlanta Avenue, where the Lord added more members to the church at Wednesday night bible study and on Friday nights during prayer meetings.

One of the first musicians was named Bro. Kennedy, and Bro. Minor played the guitar. The choirs that began at the House of God were the Sunshine Band, and The Celestial Singers. Also, the House of God made their first recording, (You have brought me from a mighty long way). The first board of Deacons was established at this location and the first four Deacons ordained were: Deacon Albert Minor (Chairman), Deacon Willie Williams (Elder Dr. Williams), Deacon Willie

Stevenson, and the late Deacon Curly Murry. The first Mother's Board consisted of Mother Velma Speakman, Mother Carrie Harris, and Mother Geneva Murry. Worship services continued at this location until March 1980.

From Atlanta Avenue, the church relocated to 259 Richardson Street in the basement of a Senior Citizen High Rise, and afterwards to Snow White Nursery, 2107 McAfee Road, Decatur. While moving through the wilderness still seeking the church's "promised land", God placed on Pastor (A.C. Speakman's) heart to build a church. To the amazement of all, a piece of property became available for purchase, where a burned down Seven Eleven Store once stood, and became a blessing to the House of God. By the Grace of God, it is now a reality and the home of our current location, 1890 Second Avenue, Decatur, Georgia. Bishop Speakman reminded the members that Bethel means, the House of God, and the church is now known as Bethel Freewill Baptist Church.

Many have come this way and many have gone; many have stumbled and lost their way; many have found strength through Christ to start again; and we must continue asking the lord to revive us again. We are always celebrating the faithfulness of God Almighty. He was faithful to Israel in the Old Testament. He has been faithful to the church in the New Testament. He has been faithful to the church in the New Testament. He has been faithful to his children of all ages and He surly has been faithful to Bethel Freewill Baptist Church. Apart from the intervention of our Heavenly Father, we would not be in existence today. It is because of the Lord's mercy that we are not consumed, because His compassions faileth not, they are new every morning; Great is thy faithfulness. James 3:22-23