

Dale and Opal Linebaugh Ministry History

Even before Dale and Opal Linebaugh were married they started their long and fruitful ministry together. On Saturdays, though Dale and Opal were busy ministering at Youth for Christ meetings, and Dale was still ministering in the Sunday evening services at South Owego Bible Church, they began to canvas the area in South Warren where a church had been closed for several years. They questioned those who lived near the church if they would like to see it repaired (windows broken out and the porch rotted off) and opened again for services. The answer was "Yes!" So during Dale's senior year at Practical they added this ministry to their services for the Lord.

When Dale was called in the spring of 1949 (the year he graduated) to the pastorate of the Worth Baptist Church near Jermyn, PA, Pastor Chaffee and Dale discussed asking George Jatko from South Apalachin Baptist Church, if he would be interested in taking over the ministry at South Warren Community Church. George and Helen were delighted to do so. Under their ministry the church continued to grow, a fellowship hall was added to the building, and they ministered there for fifty years. Also, God burdened George and Helen to take over the ministry of a church in Neath at the same time, pastoring both. The ministries there continue today for the glory of God.

While Dale and Opal were at Worth Baptist Church a radio ministry in Carbondale developed using many of the musical talents of that congregation. This continued for about three years.

While these ministries were going on, Lake Sheridan Bible Church of Factoryville, PA asked them to come to minister at their church services on Sunday afternoons and for Prayer Meetings on Tuesday evenings. Lake Sheridan started out with six or seven and grew in numbers and in the Lord. This kept Dale and Opal quite busy.

Their next church was Birchardville Baptist Church in PA. While they were there Bob Monell asked Dale to join him in the Youth for Christ ministry in Owego. While this was going on Bob Monell's farm was for sale. Dale asked him if he had ever considered starting a Christian ranch ministry. When Bob's land did not sell he decided that God was in it and they started the ranch ministry which became El Rancho de Paz and recently called Mapleridge Ranch. Dale and Opal worked there for nine years during the summer getting that ministry established, even donating her own dishes and furniture for the ministry. They did evangelistic work in the winter months. A couple from Corry, PA would help out at the Ranch during their vacations and encouraged them to come to PA to start a ranch ministry.

During the rest of the year Dale did evangelistic meetings at many churches. Opal developed her children's ministry, while Dale was reaching the adults she was ministering to the children. The Lord greatly moved during that time. People came to her many years later to tell her that she was the one who led them to the Lord. During the evangelistic meetings on Friday nights Dale would spin ropes and whips and apply the truths to God's Word. This advertised and helped to build the attendance at the Ranch.

Miracle Mountain Ranch was started at Spring Creek, PA as a result of the Corry's prompting and they were there about 15 years. God provided in so many ways. Their daughter Melodie and her husband Lew also were very involved in that ministry.

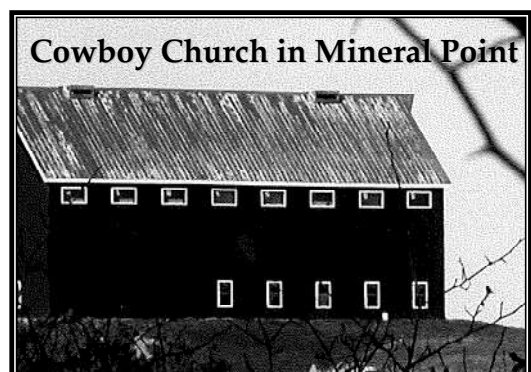
Dale felt God prompting him to go back to school so went to Bryan College in Dayton, Tennessee for his bachelor's degree. Also Opal was having health issues and the doctor felt it best for her to get a break from all the stress of the ranch. While at school he became the pastor of Cumberland Presbyterian which became Grace Bible Church and it grew to over 400 people in twelve years of ministry.

He continued on with his education to get his Masters at University of Tennessee at Chattanooga and his doctorate at Oxford Graduate School in Dayton, Tennessee. Part of his study was in Oxford, England.

After Dale's degree work he became the pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Bloomsburg, PA for two years. He was then asked to go to Practical Bible College (later Davis College) as their President to work on getting the school accreditation. He used his contacts in Tennessee with the former governor who was now the National Secretary of Education to get someone to be willing to come and review the schools facilities and curriculum for accreditation. The school did get their accreditation while Dr. Linebaugh was there.

The school had a policy of requiring their people to leave the campus at age 70 so he retired. But he did not retire from ministry. He filled in at many churches and helped many churches to get better established.

The clear leading of the Lord led Dale and the Elders with a group of twenty people, to start a "Cowboy" church in Mineral Point, Wisconsin. A barn type building was erected and the people began to come. The area was heavily populated with Ranches and horse-related people who were ready for such a ministry.



Five years later, Dale with the Elders sought and located God's next leader for the ministry. Dale and Opal, now in their eighties, moved to Keokuk, Iowa where their son and daughter-in-law, Jonathan, "Jed," and Debbie were in ministry. Dale began to teach the adult Sunday School class and fill the pulpit for "Jed," when he was away. Plans were made, including daughter Melodie and son-in-law, Lew, that Dale and Opal would live five months in Iowa, during the heat of summer; and, seven months in Oklahoma with Melodie and Lew during the cold of winter.



In Oklahoma, Dale was asked to become the Assistant Pastor in the Cowboy Country Church of Chickasha. He preaches at the early morning service at 9:00 AM and does the teaching on the weekly TV ministry of the church, "Cowboys in the Kingdom." Dale still loves horses and rides as he has time.

Their daughter Melodie and Lew developed a very successful ministry called Sermon on the Mount. They used their experiences at Miracle Mountain Ranch and now travel all over the world to schools and churches using an unbroken horse as an illustration. Lou actually breaks the horse during the message to show the comparison to people who need to give up control in their lives to the Lord.