



A Cause to Celebrate

By Min. Sharon M. Prather

At that time Solomon held a feast, and all Israel with him, a great assembly from the entrance of Hamath to the Brook of Egypt, before the Lord our God, seven days and seven more days—fourteen days. On the eighth day he sent the people away; and they blessed the king and went to their tents joyful and glad of heart for all the good that the Lord had done for His servant David, and for Israel His people. 1 Kings 8:65-66 (NKJV)



In seminary three of my classmates and I were afforded the opportunity to study in Oxford, England. We were overcome with joy and excitement when we learned of our acceptance into the program. But more importantly, we thanked God for His favor upon us.

Our experience was memorable! Each day was full of activity. Mornings were spent in the classroom learning about religion and politics in the U.S. and England. Our afternoons were filled with walking tours, exploring museums, visiting great libraries and 15th century buildings, punting on the Thames River (a popular boating pastime), sampling the British food stuffs, and shopping. The culminating event of our two-week stay was our dining at High Table in one of the school dining halls replete with dark-paneled walls on which portraits of solemn-faced dignitaries and former students proudly hung. Here we celebrated our completion of the program and received recognition for our individual achievements. Truly, it was cause to celebrate.

I share this illustration with you as it relates to a recent occasion that we, The People's Community Baptist Church, established by Dr. T.J. Baltimore, had cause to celebrate – 40 years of worshipping, working and witnessing in Montgomery County, Maryland!

The celebration of this milestone began in July. The theme of the anniversary was, “It’s time to RISE! Equipping & Empowering the NEXT GENERATION,” taken from Joshua 1:1, 9 and 3:6. Like our Oxford experience, the month was full of activities which included great preaching, worshipping at Kennedy High School which served as TPCBC’s first worship center, a missions conference, Tribal Family community outreach projects, and the annual church picnic. Our IMPACT Ministry, comprised of persons ages 18-35, took the lead during the third week of July, beginning with a program entitled, “This Is How We See It,” followed by a Meet and Greet reception and an Equipping the Next Generation worship service.

The 40th anniversary celebration culminated with a banquet held at “The Hotel” on the University of Maryland campus in College Park, Maryland. There, we feasted on food and entertainment for our physical bodies as well as for our souls. As I sat, I was reminded of the biblical account where Solomon called together all of Israel – a great assembly – after completion of the Temple for the Lord’s name. Truly a cause to celebrate! A great feast was held for 14 days (1 Kings 8:65). And “on the eighth day, he sent the people away; and they blessed the king and went to their tents joyful and

glad of heart for all the good that the Lord had done for his servant David and for Israel, His people” (8:65-66).

The Lord did a marvelous work for The People’s Community Baptist Church by giving us 40 years of beautiful memories and a time to celebrate. Thus, after a month of celebration and a full Sunday of high praise, the benediction was given and, like the Israelites, the people of People’s retreated to their tents for a period of rest and relaxation, only to return to prepare to equip the next generation to RISE! and carry on the work of the Lord.

No, the month of July 2018 was not exactly like my Oxford experience; it was much better, because my trip to Oxford ended. But, the spirit of the 40th Anniversary of The People’s Community Baptist Church will last forever. Indeed, it was an even *greater* cause to celebrate.