

National Board of Pastor's Beulah Land Survey

Recently, in an attempt to understand the membership's persistent questions and attitudes about Beulah Land, the National Board of Pastors took a national survey that collected questions from their respective congregations. The survey was compiled and revealed a lot of questions that fit into one of six categories. (1) a misunderstanding of what Beulah Land is (2) a concern for the pace of development (3) concerns about management decisions (4) concern for the financial proceeds produced by the land (5) questions about how they could participate and (6) questions about the vision for Beulah Land.

Question 1 - What is Beulah Land; a farm or what?

In the early 1970's, the church was involved with a 24-acre farm in Belleville, MI. owned by a member. Members harvested crops and then organized giveaways to provide produce to people in the community who were in need. Since that time, the expectation and intent of the church was to purchase a farm that could grow, process and distribute food. However, the idea of purchasing a farm was put on hold to pursue a program of national expansion. When the Beulah Land Farm Project was introduced in 1981, it was based on our original intent to grow, process and distribute food. We researched a number of large tracts of land in many parts of the South. In 1999, when Beulah Land was purchased in Abbeville County, South Carolina, it became clear that it was not a classic crop-producing farm. If you have visited, you will have seen no crops being grown anywhere in the region. Beulah Land is located in the highlands, the piedmont (foothills) section of Blue Ridge Mountain Range. Similarly, you don't see many crops growing in northern Georgia, northern Alabama and northern Mississippi. There are no crops grown in and around Atlanta. You have to go further south to find large crop production. Highlands like Beulah Land grow grass, timber, and animals. They also have industry, mining, recreation, hunting, and fishing. Beulah Land can grow crops but it is not going to be a gigantic commercial crop producer like areas in the low country further south. If we want to grow crops it would be primarily for our own consumption. All market studies done on Beulah Land have concluded that the highest and best use of the land is animal production (cattle, horses, chickens, goats, fish, etc.), timber production and recreation, until opportunities for large-scale commercial development in industry and housing become available. The PAOCC has been planning and operating on the basis of these studies for years. In other words, Beulah Land is a 3 out of 10 for a farm but a 10 out of 10 as a ranch.

Question 2 Explain the pace of development.

The time it takes to develop a farm and make it operational depends on the state of the property when starting. In the case of Beulah Land, we were starting from scratch. Beulah Land was raw land when we purchased it. The former owner didn't sell us the developed section of his land holdings. We bought the back-end of his farm. There was no infrastructure, no buildings, roads, wells, utilities, sewage,

ponds, fences, housing, etc. There was no equipment, trucks, tractors, bulldozers, hay bailers, bush hogs, all-terrain vehicles, processing facilities, market studies or timber plans. There were no animals, horses, cattle, chickens, fish or goats. Millions of dollars were necessary to secure these things. Actually, the pace of Beulah Land development was pretty phenomenal the first five years. Since Beulah Land was an all cash purchase, we were able to put all of our investment and earnings into further development. We were ahead of schedule and the farm had productive business operations in a number of areas. In 2006, we even added on an additional 1,150 acres to increase pastures for our expanding cattle business. This additional land had to be acquired quickly, which meant we couldn't wait years to raise the money. We had to go to a bank and secure a conventional loan. That meant we now had a monthly mortgage note. The note was not a concern since our monthly contributions were almost twice the mortgage amount and our increased size would increase our annual income.

The problem in the pace of development occurred when members stopped giving due to the economic downturn. Monthly contributions dropped 80% (from \$25,000 per month to \$5,000 a month). One region stopped sending money altogether. Everything we had been able to do up to this point was made possible by a tradition of generous giving by members who shared commitment to our program. Since 2008, contributions from members have never returned to previous levels. Like every other industry in the country, Beulah Land suffered during the economic downturn. Timber prices plummeted due to a halt in housing construction. Drought conditions across the South adversely affected cattle production. Plans underway for permanent housing, a conference center, a horse barn, chicken houses and an agribusiness high school, were interrupted. As a result, a lot of planning and investment was lost. We sold cattle, vehicles and equipment to secure the funds to pay the monthly mortgage. Without the necessary equipment, ponds and pastures were reclaimed by nature. We had to borrow money and sell non-strategic properties to hold onto the land. And we held onto the land! That was a miracle in itself! The cattle manager worked for years while being paid a fraction of his salary until he got married had children and could not continue donating his labor. Without consistent investment consistent development is impossible. This is the challenge that will determine the future of Beulah Land.

Question 3 - How are management decisions made?

The Farm Manager is in charge of day-to-day operations at Beulah Land. The Farm Manager is accountable to the CEO who is involved in strategic planning and negotiating with outside institutions. All contracts, partnerships, loans, purchases or sells of property require the approval of the PAOCC National Board of Directors. The Beulah Land Financial Report is submitted by the Farm Manager to the CFO each quarter. The CFO incorporates Beulah Land Financial Report into the national corporate quarterly financial report that must be submitted to all of the financial institutions with which we do business. For increased transparency, preparations are being made to put the PAOCC Quarterly Financial Report on the church's website.

Beulah Land is always involved in a number of large-scale business deals that are in some stage of negotiation. We try not to publically speculate on these deals because it promotes confusion among the membership. We are actively seeking deals large enough to remove the financial burden for Beulah Land off of church members. However, finalizing any of these deals require the approval of the Board of Directors.

Question 4 - What happens to the financial proceeds produced by the land?

Beulah Land produces income from cattle, timber, hay production, hunting leases, land leases, housing leases, and various government farm programs. This income fluctuates from year to year based on a number of factors. It takes approximately \$300,000 a year to operate Beulah Land effectively. The mortgage, taxes, insurance, equipment, pasture maintenance, fertilizer, reforestation, utilities, property maintenance and labor costs consume all of what is produced and more.

Beulah Land income is not steady. It does not come on a schedule every week, month or year. It comes when a deal is completed. While waiting on Beulah Land to complete a deal, it is necessary for the church to subsidize Beulah Land operations. Consequently, when other areas of church need support, we may use Beulah Land income to subsidize the church operations. Beulah Land has the potential to generate millions of dollars per year, but we have never realized that potential due to insufficient investment. Our goal is to enable Beulah Land to realize its earning potential in order secure economic security for the whole church.

Question 5 - How can members participate in the land?

The basic way for members to participate is to help Beulah Land is by investing in Beulah Land consistently. If 500 members nationally invested twenty dollars a week, we would have ten thousand dollars weekly to develop Beulah Land or half a million dollars a year. Within a few years, Beulah Land would not need investment from members to be productive. As a matter of fact, Beulah Land could begin to send money back to the churches to build up ministries, programs and facilities in the city.

As far as participating in use of the land, membership has its privileges. Members can utilize the land in anyway we want as long **as it doesn't interfere with the mission of the church.** Gardens, farmers markets, recreational activity, hunting, fishing, housing, hiking camping, horseback riding, etc. are all possible. Any requests that members have must be submitted to their local pastor who will forward their request to farm management and the National Board of Pastors.

Question 6 - What is the vision for Beulah Land?

We live in a dynamic ever-evolving world, and we are no different, we too are evolving to meet the needs of our people. The vision of Beulah Land has evolved and expanded since the Beulah Land Farm Project was announced in anniversary month 1981. After 17 years of experience in a very different kind of expansion

project, we now understand much more about the vision for Beulah Land, South Carolina is to make it the largest municipality in Abbeville County and also a place renown for being the pre-eminent expression of Black self-determination. We believe that Beulah Land can be an attraction for people and business. This will be accomplished in three distinct steps. First, establish the obvious business opportunities available by maximizing the cattle, timber, water, hunting, hay, granite and slate mining, and recreational activities. The second phase involves the development of industrial, technological and energy parks. These business operations would require housing allowing employees to live close to where they work. Increased population would require schools and other amenities. The third phase would involve establishing Beulah Land, South Carolina as a municipality. As a city, Beulah Land would have taxing and bonding authority as well as access to government entitlement funds necessary to provide public services to its residents. As a city founded on being a Black self-determination demonstration project, Beulah Land can be marketed internationally as a place that Black people own and control - a model independent Black community.

Beulah Land is not just a place. It is a programmatic concept of owning and controlling land for the purpose of building self-determination for Black people. As Beulah Land, South Carolina becomes productive, we will seek to invest the proceeds in additional Beulah Lands in America, the Caribbean and in Africa that produce the products that are natural to that location. In Liberia, we plan to have a Beulah Land that concentrates on rubber production. Each Beulah Land will include a total community with everything people need to strive and flourish. Together, these Beulah Lands will constitute a network of complimentary operations that form the basis of an independent economic system. They will allow for us to redevelop and expand our institutional infrastructure in the cities and provide education, jobs, job training, housing and enterprises that allow for black dollars to turn over within our communities expanding our control of our own destiny. When a person joins the PAOCC they join are joining more than a church, but a communally owned global corporate conglomerate that provides power and economic security for an ever-expanding number of Black people. This is the Beulah Land Model. We seek to replicate it around the world. Beulah Land, South Carolina is just the first of many such operations. Beulah Land is not just a part of our program, it is our program of liberation and empowerment for Black people everywhere. We are only at the beginning of a long multi-generational process of building institutional power that provides hope, inspiration and constructive alternatives to frustration and blind rage preventing blood in the streets. Let the Black Nation rise!

Ultimately, we must always remember, the mission of the PAOCC has been initiated by God and is the contemporary expression of the movement of God through the history of our people. Slowly, steadily and inexorably, Black people have labored generation after generation to reverse the devastating effects of the grave and diabolical crimes perpetrated against us. Each generation has moved the dial

advancing us toward our God-ordained restoration. Today, the PAOCC participates in this movement of GOD through our many ministries and institutions, none being more significant than Beulah Land. Beulah Land is a game-changer. However great the monetary opportunity Beulah Land offers, its chief value is not economic but psychological and spiritual. By developing the full potential of Beulah Land we can strike a devastating blow to the myth of black inferiority that still shackles the minds of many Black people and informs the attitudes and behaviors of others toward Black people. We can offer hope to a generation of young people who feel that their only hope is to beg for employment from corporations that have already proven they don't want them. We can produce the wealth that allows us to be a rallying point and chief financial benefactor to those grass-root programs and organizations that have a proven track record at being effective in changing conditions. We can provide educational opportunities for thousands of children and camps of all kinds for thousands more. We can become a visible symbol to people everywhere that we can build for ourselves and compete effectively in a competition society. Beulah Land is the tangible expression of the self-reliance, self-determination and self-realization philosophy that can overturn the culture of victimization and low expectation that confines many to lives of mediocrity. Jaramogi Abebe Agyeman was right, *"Beulah Land can prophesy to the world more effectively than anything we could ever say."*

As Best-Self Christians engaged in a Best Self Movement, we are charged with rising to the occasion afforded us through the instrument of the PAOCC. We are created to be human agents of divine will and earthly governors of the divine order. We are guided and supported by the "ALL" - the Cosmic Energy and Creative Intelligence that is the source and substance of the universe. Our struggle is the corrective process of restoring God's intention to the world. The very forces of nature and laws of the universe undergird us. The revolutionary Holy Spirit is born anew in each generation. We cannot possibly be stopped! The only way we can be defeated is if we choose to stop. Day-by-day, year-by-year and generation-by-generation a new world is emerging. The civilization of lies, myths, distortions and institutionalized injustices is crumbling at its foundations. We only have to do God's will each day as we have the power to discern it. And inspire our spiritual descendants who will build on our contributions because they will have the power to discern divine will all the more.