

In 1937, Wayman Presley, a native of Jackson County, was walking and conversing with his friend Reverend W. H. Lirely. The two spoke about the need for a place where people of all denominations could gather for worship. As they pondered the possibilities, their attention was drawn to Bald Knob Mountain in rural Alto Pass, IL. The result of that initial conversation was the first Easter Sunrise service in 1937. There was a small, but enthusiastic crowd of 250 in attendance. Attendance grew the following years into the thousands. The popularity of the Easter sunrise service led to a plan being put in place to purchase the property.

From 1948 to 1951 Presley secured 116 individuals who would be willing to commit \$100 each to purchase the land (that commitment approximates \$890 in today's money). The 116 individuals were the first members of a newly formed not-for-profit organization which purchased the land. They were from 34 communities in 5 states.

By 1953, funds had been raised to construct the foundation of the western hemisphere's largest Cross. The Cross began receiving national support when the when Wayman Presley was featured on the wildly popular nationally syndicated program, This Is Your Life. Even though contributions to the effort increased, it was still not enough. Wayman took leave of absence from his postal service position to throw himself completely into fundraising. A strategy was devised to challenge people to raise pigs, sell them, and turn the profits over to the Cross. A staggering \$30,000 was raised through the campaign.

The formal groundbreaking ceremony was held in conjunction with the 1937 Easter Sunrise Service. The framework of the Cross stood for

several years until enough money was raised to cover the superstructure. The Cross was completed in 1963 when the last of over 900 heavy gauge steel panels with a bright white porcelain veneer were affixed to the

framework creating a spectacular night sight which could be seen for 7500 square miles after it was illuminated with 40,000 watts of lighting.



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After the legal proceedings were settled in 2008, a court appointed transitional board led the organization during the enormous task of fully restoring the Cross structure. Now that the Cross structure itself has been completely restored and paid for, **the priority is to continue to improve the grounds and facility to keep the cross shining brightly and remain a place where all people can unite to experience the presence of God.**

The board is asking every church in the region and beyond to receive an offering from each of their congregants of one dollar. That is \$1 for every man, woman, and child. The \$1 campaign is called “**One for the Cross.**”

The Cross was both originally built and then restored by the donations and sacrifice of thousands of people from all backgrounds and that’s the idea behind the “**One for the Cross**” campaign. Please help the Cross continue to shine brightly by giving “**One for the Cross.**”

All donations can be sent to:
Bald Knob Cross of Peace, Alto Pass, IL 62905
www.baldknobcross.com



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