

# The Bible Methodist

FOCUS ON

# THEOLOGY



FROM THE EDITOR

# G. Clair Sams



**T**heology? You say, "really?" "You want us to think about and read theology!"

Yes. Every Christian is a theologian, the fact is every person is a theologian. By that I mean, each of us have some understanding of God. Each of our lives reflect our understanding of God. The actions, attitudes and direction of every life is influenced by the theology that is embraced.

Perhaps your response is, "My neighbor does not know God nor believe there is a God." My response is, "Some overarching philosophy directs the lives of every person."

Or you may say, "Theology is dry and technical, I want something that is alive and vibrant."

My response is, "theology is the study of God and how he has chosen to interact with humanity. It may be dry if poorly presented, but it may also be vibrant and thrilling when understood through the Incarnation and plan of redemption."

What a person believes about many things, and especially about God may or may not be founded on truth, but it will mark you, your family and the community in which you live. How you understand the great themes of Scripture and the great foundational themes of theology will have direct bearing on your life and your eternity.

Please, take time to read the articles by Dr. David Fry and Dr. Bill Ury. As you read, catch a sense of the richness that can be found in knowing and knowing about the Great Triune God who through eternal communion planned and provided for our justification and sanctification.

May your study of God leave a deep and beautiful mark on your life and your family. ■

## The Bible Methodist

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# THE PASTOR THEOLOGIAN

DR. DAVID FRY



## What is theology?

Theology, etymologically, simply means the study of God. But Christian theology is so much more. In a nutshell, theology is something we do, being “less theoretical than it is theatrical.”<sup>1</sup> While some people’s theology is more pie-in-the-sky, Christian theology is all about down-to-earth living. There are two aspects to Christian theology: doctrine and practice. Doctrine has to do with what we say about God; practice has to do with how that translates into living for God. Both are essential elements of Christian theology. Doctrine and practice go hand-in-hand in Christian theology. So much so that we might say that one does not truly know his doctrine until he knows how to live it. Kevin Vanhoozer writes, “Church without doctrine to direct it is blind; yet doctrine without the church to embody it is empty.”<sup>2</sup> Hypocrisy occurs when there is a disconnect between our doctrine and our practice. This disconnection is something less than God’s will for His followers.

## Why should a pastor read theology books?

First, pastors have a prophetic ministry, that is, we are tasked with delivering a message from the Lord. Those to whom we minister depend upon us for their understanding of God (doctrine) and how to serve Him (practice).

Second, pastors are theologians whether we claim to be or not. The question is not whether or not we are theologians, but whether we are good ones or bad ones. We talk about God, we read about God, we study about God, we preach about God, we call people to God, we share God, we pray to God, we witness to God, and so on. This all sounds like theological activity. In fact, I can’t think of a convincing reason why we shouldn’t think of ourselves as theologians, or preferably, “pastor-theologians.”

Third, we are responsible for maintaining the theological integrity of every aspect of local church ministry, including doctrine and practice. Lots of wrongdoing (some would say all wrongdoing) is linked to wrong thinking. Whether we realize it or not, every time we step into the pulpit we are shaping the thoughts and actions of our congregation. Nearly every pastor has experienced that moment when they realize that a parishioner’s life has been radically formed by something we’ve said or done. This ought to move us to be careful in our doctrine and practice.

Fourth, our people are reading theology. They may not realize it, but every time they pick up their Bible and read it, they are reading it through the lens of that radio preacher they listen to every day, or that best-selling author whose book they purchased from their local bookstore, or worse, their host of theological advisers on social media. We are only fooling ourselves if we think we can pastor without reading theology and reading theologically.

Finally, we are called to equip the saints for ministry. We are not merely to equip them with “practical” know-how, but also the “doctrinal” know-how, that is, why we minister in some ways and not in others. For example, why should or shouldn’t our parishioners engage in inter-faith humanitarian efforts? Or, how is it possible for a dying man to be saved without being baptized? These are five reasons (among others) why pastors should occasionally pull a theology book off the shelf and read it.

## “I’m too busy to read theology.”

There are certain kinds of theology books that pastors are too busy to read. It’s okay to leave that for others and attend occasions where we can receive the condensed version. From time to time I am asked by a fellow pastor to recommend a theology book. Since I am a pastor myself, I am well-acquainted with the

<sup>1</sup> Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Faith Speaking Understanding: Performing the Drama of Doctrine* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2014), 20.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 147.

time constraints of pastoring. So I have a couple of criteria that I use for making recommendations. I know that most pastors don't have the time or mental energy to read a 700-page theological dissertation so I recommend books that are less than 250 pages and contain chapters with short sub-divisions that can be read in 10-15 minutes. With these two criteria in mind, I will later share some good theological books that fit the bill.

### **What counts as theological reading and what counts as reading theology?**

A theology book is a book whose express purpose is to shape our thinking about God in doctrine and/or in practice. The richest theology books include both doctrine and practice. The most difficult ones to read deal only with the doctrine; and the shallowest only regard practice. Our job as pastor-theologians is to connect the dots between doctrine and practice (theology is both).

Pastors ought to read *theologically* as well as read theology. What's the difference? Theological reading is more about *how* we read than *what* we read. For instance, I am currently reading (more like struggling through) a novel by Rick Riordan written for teenagers. Riordan's novels put ancient mythology into a modern setting. I don't particularly enjoy the book, but I'm reading it *theologically* because several teenagers in my church have read it under the guise of pure amusement. I've only read one chapter so far—and I can affirm that there is plenty of material to provoke theological thinking. Riordan is not claiming to have written a theology book. But, I would argue, if one does not read his writing *theologically* then one may be unwittingly shaped theological. Now, this is not what we usually think about reading theology. But I'm just trying to point out the difference between reading a theology book and reading *theologically*.

So what counts as reading theology? There is no neat line that can be drawn. Does Riordan's mythological novel count as theology? Broadly speaking, yes, if we define a theology book as any book whose content involves God (or the gods, in Riordan's case). But as pastors that's rarely our concern. More narrowly, I define (for the time being) a theology book as a book whose express purpose is to shape our thinking about God in doctrine and/or in practice. Theological reading, then, is our purpose to read in order to shape our thinking about God in doctrine and practice.

Some popular books, for instance, Rick Warren's 1995 book *Purpose-Driven Church*, hardly qualify as a theology book. A pastor

who consuming a steady diet of books like this are probably theologically malnourished. I'm sure one could find something theological in Warren's book; you just have to work really hard to find it. Reflection on doctrine or practice is not Warren's purpose for writing. This is not to denigrate Warren's book. I have found it helpful on many points. But it is not a theology book in my understanding. But neither does a theology book have to be a dense work like John Zizioulas's *Being as Communion* (1997). So what is a theology book? A theology book is any book whose express purpose is to shape our thinking about God in doctrine and/or in practice. The best theology books include both doctrine and practice.

I am not sure that our greatest concern is that pastors are not reading theology books. Perhaps a greater concern is that pastors are not reading theology books *theologically*, or at least *theologically* well. People read theology books like David Platt's *Radical* (2010) without thinking much about its implicit teaching about God. [For full disclosure, I have not read the entire book. Someone asked me to read one chapter somewhere in the middle and I was abhorred by what I read. So with that caveat, and running the risk of alienating by radical friends...] I believe *Radical* is a good example of a theology book written for a popular audience while containing significant theological content (some of which should be very problematic for Wesleyans). Many books written for Christians and pastors emphasize the practice without getting much into the doctrine, yet while making huge doctrinal assumptions. The problem with this kind of theology book is that people often fail to read them *theologically* well. Oh, the irony! The point is that pastors especially should read theology whether it is David Platt or John Zizioulas, but we must read *theologically*. We read *theologically* when we purpose to shape our thinking about God in doctrine and in practice. We read *theologically* well when our thinking conforms to God's Word and is guided by the Holy Spirit.

In summary, pastors, we ought to read theology and we ought to read *theologically*. Obviously, theology books should be read *theologically*, but so also should our other reading material. And, pastors should read theology books whose express purpose is to shape our thinking about God in doctrine and in practice. For this reason, we should choose our books carefully.

### **Why should pastors read *Jacob Arminius: Theologian of Grace* (2012) by Keith Stanglin and Thomas McCall?**

I believe pastors should read theological books that are condensed and clear in its points. I believe this one fits the bill. It

is 210 pages in length with only four uber-focused chapters. The first chapter introduces Jacob Arminius. The value here is that many who call themselves Wesleyan-Arminian have read nothing or very little about Arminius. Here is a condensed, yet scholarly summary of our forefather. The other three chapters cover various aspects of his theological thinking. Each chapter is sub-divided into main points and sub-points that are easy to read for the busy pastor who may only have ten or fifteen minutes at a time to read. These frequent divisions make it easy to digest and easy to pick back up later. Beyond this, the book is co-written by a theologian who is well-acquainted with the Conservative Holiness Movement and the Wesleyan-Holiness tradition. Though it is published by Oxford and written for a broad audience, pastors within the CHM do not need to worry about being led astray by some esoteric or obscure theological oddity. This is solid theology all around.

**Why should pastors read *Adam, The Fall, and Original Sin (2014)* edited by Hans Madueme and Michael Reeves?**

This book exceeds the number of pages I would normally recommend for pastors (which is 250 pages or less). But the impact of this 321-page book is worth the extra effort. This work contains fifteen essays from various evangelical perspectives (Wesleyan, Calvinist, Lutheran, etc.). Parts 2 and 3 (Original Sin in History and Original Sin in Theology) are especially insightful. These sections together total less than 200 pages. If a person only reads these sections they will still be impressed by how much Wesleyans hold in common with other Protestant traditions regarding original sin. Of course, there are some differences, but Tom McCall gives an excellent account of the doctrine of original sin in the Wesleyan tradition. If you're REALLY short on time--just read Tom's article. Then later go back and read the chapters on Lutheran Theology and Reformed Theology.

**Why should pastors read *Arminian Theology: Myths and Realities (2006)* by Roger Olson?**

This book just comes under the page count limit at 246 pages. This book meets another important criterion for pastors—each chapter is subdivided into smaller sections which makes it conducive to reading in short clips. This book is about “Arminianism” beyond Jacob Arminius, and includes frequent references to John Wesley and his successors in the Wesleyan tradition. After a brief introduction to the history of “Arminianism”, Olson responds to ten “myths” regarding ten different theological issues.

**Why should pastors read *The Bible Among the Myths (2009)* by John Oswalt?**

John Oswalt has become a familiar name within the CHM. As my former professor, I can't help but recommend this work which was covered in a Seminary class called “Myth and History.” Short of being able to take that class, I recommend this resource which condenses portions of that class into its 194 pages. Oswalt is an Old Testament scholar who has spent his academic career defending the historicity of the Bible and arguing for the importance of historical accuracy for Christian faith. His grasp of the issues comes through in ten chapters of reasonable length. If you are really limited on time, at least read chapters 3, 4, and 5.

**Why should pastors read *Called To Be Holy: A Biblical Perspective (1999)* by John Oswalt?**

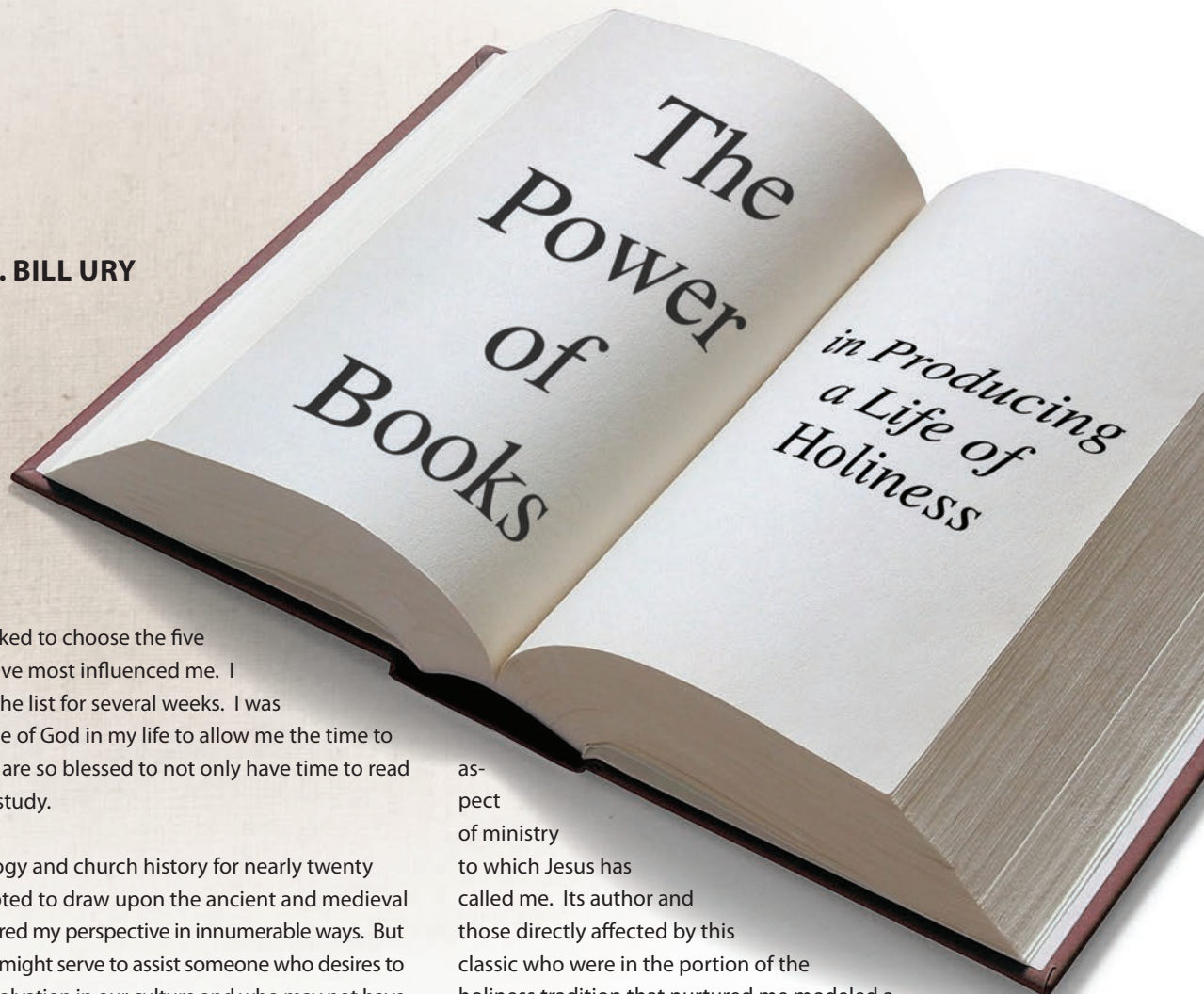
This is a biblical theology of holiness in less than 200 pages! Why shouldn't pastors read this? It is written by a Wesleyan-Holiness biblical scholar with whom we are familiar. It is divided into three parts: part one covers the Old Testament in seven chapters; part two covers the New Testament in five chapters; and part three is a single chapter on “Walking in Holiness.” This is not a systematic theology—in other words, don't expect to find references to theological terms that we may find helpful but are not present in the biblical text. This is simply an account of what the Bible has to say about being holy. Imagine that!

**Why should pastors read *A Century of Holiness Theology: The Doctrine of Entire Sanctification in the Church of the Nazarene 1905 to 2004 (2004)* by Mark Quanstrom?**

The theology of holiness within the Conservative Holiness Movement—whether we like it or not—has been hugely impacted by Nazarene theology. In less than 200 pages, Quanstrom provides a historical-theological account of Nazarene thought on the doctrine of entire sanctification. The longest chapter is less than 40 pages, but each chapter is sub-divided into sections rarely longer than 5 pages. This makes it readable for always-on-the-move pastors who are more likely to fall asleep from exhaustion than to continue reading for more than 15 minutes at a time. This book is sure to provoke a reaction. The author does not write provocatively, but neither does he avoid the tough questions. If you want to be brought up to speed on what holiness people have thought about entire sanctification for the last 100+ years, here is your sourcebook. ■



DR. BILL URY



Recently I was asked to choose the five books which have most influenced me. I agonized over the list for several weeks. I was reminded of the grace of God in my life to allow me the time to read. We in the West are so blessed to not only have time to read but to reflect and to study.

Having taught theology and church history for nearly twenty four years I was tempted to draw upon the ancient and medieval authors that have altered my perspective in innumerable ways. But I thought that this list might serve to assist someone who desires to offer the Word of full salvation in our culture and who may not have a context where Gregory of Nazianzus might find a rousing "Amen!"

I also thought I might cheat a bit and mention the authors who have most influenced my perspective. But again, Theodore of Mopsuestia, Richard of St. Victor and Thomas Torrance are obscure enough that they might elicit interest but not an immediate movement to devour their work. So here is my hesitant, distilled and incomplete list. In my Wesleyan-Holiness context these works continue to form me as a firm believer in the inerrancy of the Word and the beauty of holiness of heart and life.

**Methodical Bible Study**, Robert A. Traina. Since 1979 this book has formed the way I come to the Word. It has helped more than any other Bible study method to allow the reason of revelation to guide me in prayerful worship and in teaching and preaching the Word. It is the basis of many spin-offs that have taken portions of it and made them more appealing but this book is an encyclopedia of the method which most discerns the care of the Holy Spirit in inspiring a text that has a rational foundation. He has given us His Word to understand the essence of all that truly matters. It behooves us to learn how to study inductively, prayerfully and carefully. Holiness is the God who lovingly reveals Himself verbally and incarnationally.

**Master Plan of Evangelism**, Robert A. Coleman. The profoundly Christocentric methodology of this book set the tone for every

aspect of ministry to which Jesus has called me. Its author and those directly affected by this classic who were in the portion of the holiness tradition that nurtured me modeled a tangible obedience to the Great Commission outlined in this book. No other work so clearly and winsomely invites us to implement what Jesus emphatically called each of us to join Him in reaching His world. Holiness supported by a substantial commitment to making disciples maybe the key component as to why we lost much of the power of the Holiness movement. Coleman's book is a must for anyone seeking to obey Jesus' command to live as He lived, to follow Him.

**Classic Christianity**, Thomas C. Oden. I was privileged to hear Dr. Oden read the initial chapters of this paradigm-setting work on the campus of Drew University. I had no idea how its breathtaking consensual emphasis would form the entirety of my spiritual life, graduate theological education and preaching. Originally three volumes, this *magnum opus* by one of our most prolific theologians and leaders transcend denominational idiosyncrasies while drawing the thoughtful student into the diachronic beauty of the Spirit's revelation to the Body of Christ. Oden was not raised in a Holiness tradition but I know of no modern systematic theologian more warm than he to the dogma of holy love as the grounding principle for all theology.

**Mere Christianity**, C.S. Lewis. Of the dozens of books by the Inklings that have formed my theological imagination it was this book that alerted me to the breadth of the Anglicanism which enabled the Wesleys to move beyond continental

Reformed thought. Here I found the themes of imaging the life of God, Trinitarian prayer and distinctive holy living couched in terms which could be broadcast through contemporary media to a culture in desperate need of the fullness of grace. No one is as clear and concise as Lewis. He had a profound doctrine of holiness which permeates much of his work. The reality of the presence of the Trinity in the human heart expelling sin and reclaiming the world for Christ sets Lewis apart from any Christian thinker in the twentieth century.

**Let's Start with Jesus**, Dennis F. Kinlaw. If one were to place a figure on the shoulders of the Wesleys and Asbury there would be no one more fitting than Dr. Kinlaw. This book encapsulates the trajectory which the early church, the best of the Catholic and Protestant traditions pointed. It is a life-changing work. For those who love this patriarch every page breathes the fruit of decades of tireless preparation shared in the beautiful spirit of one who woos us into the deepest truth of all time. I am convinced that the themes explored here will be reflected upon for many years. If entire sanctification is an important doctrine to proclaim in our day it is Kinlaw who offers us a framework for sharing that precious truth in the present context. It is a book to cherish and share.

I wrote this list out on my sixtieth birthday. I nearly wept with the grandeur of the goodness of God to me. I personally studied under four of these five men. I prayed with them, worshipped with them, heard them minister from the pulpit, watched them love their wives and their families. I know firsthand that theology of holiness works. It produces a keen awareness of the things that motivate the heart of our Triune God. It

produces a hunger to study the Word and everything else that helps to see the enscripturated Word more clearly. Traina and Lewis are in heaven but it is no less true of them to say that each of the authors on this list are passionate lovers of Jesus. They love to pray. They make disciples. They live in a supernatural reality. And they are hilarious. Their joy bubbles over in real intimate relationships. They do not hide their infirmities but they also do not preclude the sanctifying grace of God in any area of their lives.

Our tradition needs men and women of this caliber. Why has there been no one in our tradition that knows the postmodern mind well enough to write engaging prose in novel form like Lewis? Who is there who is willing to read voraciously and incessantly and then to allow the Holy Spirit to distill all of that material into the brilliance expositions of a Kinlaw or an Oden? I have met enough Bible Methodist students in my day to know that there are hearts and minds that have the basic gifts to become the next generation of imaginative and creative scholars. But, the Wesleyan/Holiness world has to come to some hard decisions. If we are going to make a difference we are going to have to set some folks free from evangelism and pastoring and support them while they study and write.

Other traditions have had that vision and their authors fill bookstores and Sunday School classes. We need to be formed by the classics but also we need to form the modern mind in biblical and theological ways. These five authors not only feed the mind but the exemplify ways in which the truth of the Holy One can be shared across cultures, ages, denominations and traditions. May their tribe increase. May you and I be a part of dreaming and enabling His servants to join their ranks in the days to come. ■



BECKY KEEP  
WITH TIM KEEP

THE LATEST  
BOOK BY  
BECKY KEEP

AVAILABLE ONLINE AT  
**amazon**

OR WRITE TO  
BECKY KEEP  
4473 FOREST TRAIL  
CINCINNATI, OH 45244  
\$15 + \$3 SHIPPING

IT'S ALL ABOUT  
OBEDIENCE  
ONE WOMAN'S DISCOVERY OF A  
FRUITFUL LIFE IN A FOREIGN LAND



*The Connectional Missions Committee met April 18th for their annual finance meeting.*

# World Missions

## NEWS & UPDATES

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### A BLESSED YOUTH CAMP IN MEXICO

BRENNAN MUIR

With sixteen of our young people from San Gabriel, we made our way to the Mexican Bible Methodist Youth Convention the last weekend of March. Our youth group had diligently worked for the previous couple of months to raise money for this event.



*Brennan with his team*

Together with the Bible Methodist church in Oaxaca City, we combined funds to be able to rent a shuttle which took the youth groups eighteen hours north to Saltillo. There in the mountains just south of the city, young people from many of our churches gathered. God blessed our time together and the three days were filled with teaching, singing, games and competitions. The guest speakers emphasized the truth that God has a plan for each young person and that when one is purposefully seeking and obeying Him, He can accomplish that plan and do mighty things through them. We rejoiced to see the responsiveness of the youth and to see how God worked, especially in the lives of some young guys from San Gabriel. It was a long, tiring weekend but was well worth the hard work as we saw the positive impact on many young lives.



*Steve Stetler with a group of young people*

### 47 YOUNG PEOPLE BAPTIZED IN GOSPEL LIGHT

R.G. HUTCHISON

Tim Keep and I were also blessed to be invited to help with the baptism of 47 new Christians—almost all of them young people in their teens or 20's. As we participated in that special occasion, I could hardly hold back the tears, realizing that God is still saving souls and transforming lives today.



*R.G. and Tim baptizing a young lady during the 2016 Gospel Light Youth Camp*

### A LIFE CHANGING TRIP TO THE PHILIPPINES!

JONATHAN HEATH

Over the years, you have probably heard a lot about the Bible Methodist work in the Philippines. But until you go, you really don't know how God is working.

It was a privilege to go and minister to our fellow Bible Methodist brothers and sisters in the Lord. It was a whirlwind trip as we visited 6 places in 8 days. We spoke at a youth camp with David Yucaddi and also spoke at a large gathering at the headquarters in Illagan. It was a particular joy to help dedicate the new chapel in Guyong-Guyong, Isabela, dedicated to the memory of Sis. Virginia Vernon. As a pastor, I have spent many hours hosting and talking with missionaries and I have visited several different mission fields. On this trip I discovered that our Bible Methodist work is one of the most developed and growing works that I have encountered. People are turning to the Lord, lives are being changed, and churches are planted on a regular basis. Truly this work is worthy of our continued support!





*The three Heath boys—Clayton, Nicholas and Christian—along with their father, Pastor Jonathan, Rev. Tim Keep and Rev. David Yucaddi just after their baptism (along with 44 other young people) in the Philippines!*

Tim Keep...has dedicated 20 years of his life to the Philippines and the maturity of the work shows his influence. He and his family have endured much sacrifice to bring leadership and organization to the work.

And we have every reason to be proud of our resident missionaries, RG and Sarah Hutchison. They are effective missionaries

and have earned the high respect of the Philippine leaders and people. RG has been diligent to learn the language and he is able to preach without an interpreter. God is allowing him to connect with the people. This sacrificial couple is humble and gracious in their love for the Philippine people.

On a personal level, it was a blessing to see how God used the trip to impact my boys and give them a heart for the lost. They have now been exposed to life outside the American dream and I am excited to see how God is going to use them in the future. Thank you to everyone who prayed and supported our trip.

### **THREE STUDENTS GRADUATE FROM PHILIPPINE BMC SHEPHERDS COLLEGE IN MARCH**

The Lord has blessed us with three graduates of our Shepherd's College this year. Each of these young people has testified to their desire to live a life fully consecrated to God.



*The Three graduates with R.G. Hutchison*

### **TWO NEW CHURCHES DEDICATED IN APRIL 2016**



*Pantal Gospel Light BMC*



*Guyong-Guyong was dedicated April 29th in memory of Sis. Virginia Vernon*

G. Clair Sams  
Conference President  
171 Gibraltar Drive, Germantown, OH 45327



## FRANKLIN REACHES OUT TO LOCAL SCHOOL



On February 29th a 14 year-old student entered the cafeteria of the Madison Junior/Senior High School, Middletown, OH and started shooting. Four students were wounded before the gunman fled. Just a few doors down from the cafeteria one of our Franklin members, Janet Wells, was working. In another room the mother of one of our members was also working. Thank God neither were injured.

The church began to pray for the victims, the boy who shot them, and the students and staff of this local school. We also wanted to show them in a tangible way our prayer support. Our ladies volunteered to bake 1,000 cookies for the students and staff. Adam and Valerie Proffit,



Mark and Sarah Wells, Jeremy Swiger and Janet Wells presented the school with our gift of "love-a gift" that was much appreciated during the time of crisis.

combined service with all our families, bus ministry children and multiple guests worshipping the risen Lord. The rest of the day was family time as we gathered with our families and neighbors in restful fellowship. A blessed day indeed!

## EASTER AT FINDLAY



*Children at Easter Event*



*Pastor Cravens and Julie preparing to distribute gifts to children*

Around 300 attended our weekend of Easter events with lots of new faces! Good Friday Communion services started the weekend. Saturday hosted the Easter Truth Hunt at which many families and lots of kids gathered to learn the truth about Easter, collecting thousands of eggs, face painting and various prizes! Sunday morning started early with a Sunrise Service around our memorial cross in the Lobby surrounded by memorial lilies representing loved ones who "sleep in Jesus." This service was followed by our Fellowship Breakfast. At 10:00 A.M. we gathered for the Resurrection Celebration Service. This service is a

## EASTER EVENT AT GREENFIELD

The first Calvary Bible Methodist Church Community Easter Egg Hunt took place on Saturday, March 26th, at 1:00 in the afternoon. In the past, this has been a CBM Sunday School event, however this year was the first for it to be open to the community. The day began with Song-Time for the children, followed by Pastor Mike Mater giving a brief message of the gospel through the Easter Story and "Peter Cottontail" assisting Pastor in giving away two Grand Prizes, the children were then released to hunt for Easter Eggs. We had a great turn out this year and hope to double in number next year!



## ACTIVITIES AT VILLAGE PARK



Children's Pastor, Janae Welbaum, Sharing the Gospel with kids and their parents at our Easter Egg Hunt.



VP Ladies Choir sings "Because He Lives"



Lenten Offering for Conference Extension – Awesome Response again!



Family Game Night with Victory Chapel – Inner City Mission

## THERESA RITCHARDS LEAVES HER ESTATE TO HEARTLAND CONFERENCE



Rev. Chris Cravens and Sis. Ritchards

Theresa Ritchards was born in Straubing, Germany on the Danube River. She was 12 years old when WWII broke out.

In school, the Bible was taught, and Theresa loved and memorized many of the Bible stories. Her mother was a praying woman and her father was on the town council. He was arrested and put in prison because their family would not display the Swastika. Theresa felt it was in answer to her mother's prayers when her father was released from prison.

The war years were very hard on a family with four young girls with no father around. Many times they had to go hungry. When the American soldiers moved into Germany "IT WAS A GREAT DAY!" As the soldiers marched thru town, the people stood outside and waved their bedsheets – that's all they had to wave.

After the war, Theresa worked as a domestic in London. She recalled facing a real crisis in her life while in London. Her mother prayed for her and it was the mercy of the

Lord that kept her from ending her own life. Through this experience she came to know the saving grace of Jesus Christ.

While working in a doctor's home, she met a visiting American doctor from the Mayo Clinic. She inquired about going to America. The doctor told her that if she got to America he would see that she had a job, she did and he did! While working in Rochester, MN she and a girlfriend visited Benzonia, MI. While crossing Lake Michigan on a car ferry, she met Tom Ritchards. He worked on the boat. Later he proposed but she had some conditions. He had to buy a house with some acreage. He did, and they were married. Now she was in her glory, a cow, a goat, a pig and chickens, and a spade in her hand.

Theresa and Tom attended a Wesleyan Methodist Church where she heard about Holiness, and began to pray the song "I Would Not Be Denied" until the Lord answered her prayer. Later she heard Rev. Wm Gale and Dr. S.I. Emery. She was faithful to drive the twenty-five miles to church. Three services a week was not a problem to her in her red VW Bug with a blue hood. Later the church joined the Ohio Conference of the Bible Methodist Connection of Churches.

Theresa learned English by reading her German Bible against the KJV. Her habit was to read the Bible thru once a year. When testimonies were called for, Theresa would be the first one on her feet. She never failed to mention how thankful she was to be invited to the Bible Methodist Church where she heard the Word preached. She loved the church at Grawn, MI and the Conference that encouraged that church. As a result of her love she willed her estate to the Conference.

Blake Jones  
Conference President  
PO Box 5, Cedar Lake, MI 48812



## PASTOR ADDRESSES MINISTERIAL



Rev. Nathaniel Tucker regularly meets with about thirty Port Huron, MI area pastors for prayer and breakfast. On a recent occasion the group

was discussing transgender issues that were arising in the school locker rooms. Pastor Tucker interjected into the discussion that the ground work for this kind of moral decay had started years ago and offered some of Ken Ham's observations. The group invited him to address them the following evening.

So it was that the next evening found Bro. Tucker at what had formerly been a

Pilgrim Holiness Church, addressing some pastors and leading laymen on the topic of "Foundations." He proposed to them that while the enemy is shooting at foundations we commonly aim merely at flags (a Ken Ham illustration). Recognizing the impact of humanism on our culture and the need to engage the enemy, Pastor Tucker urged his listeners to first examine their own relationship with God. He referenced Isaiah's revelation of God, then of his own need and finally of the need of others.

In conclusion, Bro. Tucker sang "There's More with Us than be with Them". As he sang several stood to their feet and openly praised the Lord.

## TROYER'S FAREWELL

Great Lakes was privileged to provide housing for the Paul and Esther Troyer family on the Rock Lake Camp Grounds while they were on medical furlough. As their stay came to a close, before returning to CHINA, Paul's family was able to all be present in a farewell service at the Rock Lake Church. Rev. Tim Keep and his wife, Becky were present. The Rock Lake Church family presented the Troyers with a gift of \$1,000 and Rev. Keep brought the morning message. A meal was shared in honor of the Troyers. In the afternoon service Paul presented his family's prayer needs and Rev. Keep prayed over the family. Later in the week, the Rock Lake Church family



## PASTOR'S WIFE LAUNCHES CHILDREN'S MINISTRY WEBSITE

Clarissa Krohn, the pastor's wife at the Dawn Valley Bible Methodist Church in Ontario, is offering children's resources through her new website. "Teach His Way" is designed to be a blessing to those who are involved in children's ministry. This website offers creative, completely planned out themes and continued stories for affordable prices. The Bible is exciting so let's show that excitement to the children we share Jesus with! Some example themes are; LEGO, Glow-in-the-Dark, Rollin' On, Blast Off with Jesus, A Child of the King and many more. Check out the site for sample lessons!

**[teachhisway.wordpress.com](http://teachhisway.wordpress.com)**

shared a game night with Paul and Esther before their packing was finalized and they said their final good-bye's.



## CAMP GROUND IMPROVEMENTS



*Doug Derscheid and Brian Bailey working on Whispering Pines' trusses.*



*Whispering Pines Dorm roof nearing completion*



*Dining Hall's new look after installing furnace, air conditioning, insulation and drywall. Now ready for trim and chair rail.*



Walter Hedstrom  
Conference President  
PO Box 523, Pell City, AL 35125



## PLANS FOR A NEW CONFERENCE

At a recent planning meeting Pastor Darrell Lee Stetler, Rev. Walter Hedstrom, Pastor Darrell Underwood, Pastor Todd Hurst, Pastor Ron McCormick, (not pictured but on speaker phone) and Pastor David Mahin, made plans for a

new Conference. The exciting meeting was held at Ponca City, Oklahoma. After four hours of strategic planning, an organizational name, plan and vision was formulated.

The name is the Mid-America District (future Conference). The vision is to promote personal holiness, endeavor to

plant new churches west of the Mississippi and mature the churches to form a Regional Conference in the future.

The following is information concerning the number of churches and licensed ministers that are part of the Mid-America Bible Methodist District.

Pray for these ministers and churches as they work together to plant new churches and co-operate in various ministries to Build the Kingdom in the region west of the Mississippi. Conference President Hedstrom has been traveling through these states ministering to the churches for nearly 30 years and working extensively the last 15 years with the Mid-America District to impact several States west of the Mississippi River.

Presently there are five Churches in the Mid-America District

1. Miltonvale, KS
2. Salina, KS
3. Ponca City, OK
4. Oklahoma City, OK
5. Servant's Heart Chapel, Clovis, NM

Elders that live in the Mid-America District

- Rev. Paul Hoerner, Ottawa, KS
- Rev. John Copeland-Oklahoma City, OK
- Rev. David Mahin - Miltonvale, KS
- Rev. Steve Stetler, Edinburg, TX
- Rev. Darrell Lee Stetler II, Oklahoma City, OK
- Rev. Dale Redman, Katy, TX
- Rev. Ron McCormick, Ponca City, OK
- Rev. Steve Sturtevant, Beaver City, NE

Conference Preachers live in Mid-America District

- Rev. Gary Jackson - Drumright, OK
- Rev. Todd Hurst, Salina, KS
- Rev. Shirl Rosengreen, Flagstaff, AZ - pastoring new independent church plant



A new Board is formed for the Mid-America District — Left to right: Rev. Ron McCormick - Member and Pastor of Ponca City, OK Bible Methodist Church; Rev. Darrell Underwood - Vice Chairman and Pastor of Servant's Heart Chapel, Clovis, N M; Rev. Darrell Lee Stetler - Chairman and Pastor of Oklahoma City, OK Bible Methodist Church; Rev. David Mahin - Member and Pastor of Miltonvale, KS Bible Methodist Church; Rev. Walter Hedstrom - ex-officio Chairman and Conference President, Pell City, AL; and Rev. Todd Hurst - Secretary/Treasurer and Pastor of Salina, KS Bible Methodist Church

Rev. Clinton Ritchey, Stevensville, MT  
 Rev. David Turner-Arkansas City, KS  
 Rev. Darrell Underwood, Farwell, TX  
 Rev. Mike Sutton, Independence, KS

**Additional Ministries**

Rev. Todd Hurst is president of a wonderful Youth Camp in Kansas with well over 80 youth attending. Rev. Darrell Lee Stetler is president of the Heartland Holiness Association with a growing Camp Meeting in Oklahoma. Several ministers are actively involved in the Kansas State Holiness Association Camp and hold offices on the camp board.



*Annual Event*

The Stagecoach Restaurant provides a wonderful barbecue meal each year for the Mid-America Ministerial and lay leaders. It is an annual highlight that includes seminars, classes, a rally and fellowship. The event starts on the second Friday of March around 10:00 a.m. and lasts until mid-night! Several drive in from hours away to enjoy instruction, inspiration and fellowship!

**HEART OF THE SHEPHERD**

Mid-America Heart for the Shepherd Seminar was held at Ponca City, OK. Rev. Chris Cravens was the special speaker.

The Seminar room was packed with 68 people who attended from nine different states. Cheryl Brewer spoke to the ladies about Child Evangelism.

2017 Heart for the Shepherd Seminar is scheduled for March 10th. Rev. David Taylor is the scheduled special speaker. The subject is "A Caring Ministry." The plan is to meet at the Ponca City Free Will Baptist Church.



*Ministers in session*

**HAZEL GREEN CHURCH GETS A FACELIFT**



Hazel Green, AL Bible Methodist Church recently remodeled their sanctuary. The remodel included: sheet rock on the ceiling and new light fixtures. Pastor and Mrs. Andrew Crofts have impacted this community. They have ministered through` fellowship events, services in the church and have also ministered to families who did not have a pastor speaking at their loved ones funeral. New people are attending the church.

**GROUND BREAKING**



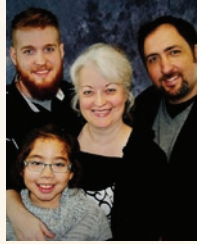
Chattanooga First Bible Methodist Church held a Ground Breaking Ceremony, May 1st. They plan to have a new fellowship hall ready for dedication by October. Connectional Chairman Mike Avery and Conference President Walter Hedstrom participated with Pastor Greg Fox and his board. The Chattanooga Temple church attended the ceremony to help celebrate the occasion.

# Heartland Beulah Grove Camp

605 BARBER WERNER ROAD  
Mendon, Ohio



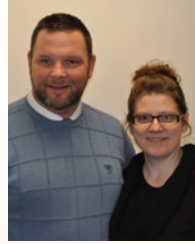
**Don Davison**  
Evangelist



**Mark Fultz Family**  
Song Evangelists



**Nathan Becker**  
Youth Speaker



**Eric Strong Family**  
Children's Workers

Camp Leader  
**G. Clair Sams**  
513-267-6717

**June 21-16, 2016**

Registrar  
**Kandi Boardman**  
317-777-3389

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# Alabama Camp Eden

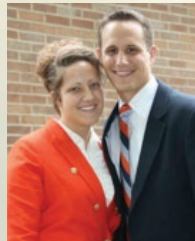
Pell City, Alabama



**David Fry**  
Evening Services



**John Zechman**  
Youth Services



**Jonathan Glick Family**  
Singers



**Mark Calderon**  
Youth Worker



**Joanna Stratton and the Hobe Sound Bible College VBS team**  
Children's Services

Information: **Walter Hedstrom**, 205-338-2743 or 205-812-6271

**July 5-10, 2016**

# Great Lakes Rock Lake Camp

Vestaburg, Michigan



**Mark Cravens**  
Evangelist



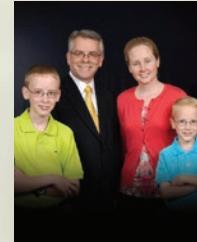
**Steve Stetler**  
Evangelist

Registrar  
**Chelle Durr**  
616-785-9478

Camp Phone  
989-268-5172



**Larry and Trisha Jewett**  
Song Evangelists



**The Gene Davis Family**  
Children's Evangelist

Camp Leader  
**Blake Jones**  
989-944-1404

**July 8-17, 2016**