

THE

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BIBLE MODIST

OFFICIAL

A HEALTHY CHURCH REQUIRES A

HEALTHY PASTOR

PAGE 3

From the Editor



This issue focuses on ministry, particularly pastoral ministry. There is a reprint from Dr. J. D. Young. Dr. Young was in the closing years of his ministry but faithfully expressed a deep desire to know and minister in the fullness of the Holy Spirit's anointing.

Dr. David Fry very clearly reminds us of the importance of pastoral health. This article is valuable for each person called into ministry but is also good for those who are blessed by the ministry of faithful pastors, teachers, evangelists and missionaries.

As a layman, you can strengthen your pastor(s) in several ways. 1: By faithfully and consistently giving tithes and offerings to your local church. Help the church pay your pastor a good salary. 2: By encouraging him to take time for himself and his family. 3: By kind words and supportive thoughts. A little note of thanks or word of encouragement will be helpful. 4: By praying for your pastor. Pray for his family and pray the Lord will continue to equip and strengthen him in his ministry. 5: Trust him. The Lord has placed him in a position of Biblical authority. Respect his place and submit to his Biblical authority.

Pastors need time to renew and refresh. Please, if your pastor has been ministering in your church for 5-10 years, give him a sabbatical! Pastoral transition often happens because the pastor needs time to renew, and the only avenue for that renewal seems to be a move.

Pastor, it is your responsibility to keep yourself vibrant with the love of Christ and the power of the Word. As you read and ruminate on the material written by Drs. Young and Fry, choose to keep your mind, body and spirit fresh and alive in Christ.

To all who are called to ministry, may I challenge you? You are a professional. Oh, I know that there is some push back on that thought, but before you discount it too much, think. Your calling to ministry is deeper than choosing a profession. It is God's hand on your life. In that regard you are more than a professional. But, from another point of view, you are a professional.

None of use would use an attorney or medical doctor who neglected the disciplines of their profession. When

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A HEALTHY CHURCH REQUIRES A HEALTHY PASTOR

By **Dr. David Fry**

Being a pastor is bad for your health, or so concludes a 2012 study reported in *Christian Century*.¹ Similar studies seem to verify the report. More importantly, personal experience makes it clear — pastors struggle with maintaining good spiritual, mental, physical and emotional health. Of course, fewer of us describe ourselves as unhealthier than we really are, yet every pastor knows that we live on the edge. Discouragement, depression, restlessness and poor family relationships are constant threats

in pastoral ministry. They are never far away. Their shadows loom on the horizon almost daily. That's our life; that's our calling: to live on the edge where hurts, pains and burdens are dropped on the shoulders of the pastor. Yet many of us live beyond the edge, in the realm of incessant stress from unrealistic expectations and overwhelming schedules. If we stay there, we are not healthy.

This is not to say that if we experience any of these (stress, restlessness, family tension, depression, etc.) on

some occasion we are unhealthy; after all, a healthy, fit person may contract a virus or a disease, but a healthy body is resilient and is able to fight off the infection. But an unhealthy person is frequently and even perpetually ill. I don't believe God calls us to be personally and perpetually unhealthy.

The Apostle Paul realized the hazards of Christian ministry when he admonished young Timothy to "endure suffering" (2 Tim 4:5) and that he himself had fought a good fight. Of course, in his case, his very life was in peril. But there are many facets to the good fight including the incessant battle for a sound mind, a light spirit, a fit body, and spiritual freshness. Every believer experiences these challenges, but much more the pastor whose life is frequently controlled by rising circumstances which cannot be ignored. The fight for health is a unique one for the pastor and sometimes it can only be described as "enduring suffering."

A healthy church requires a healthy pastor. The Apostle Paul understood this and prior to leaving the church at Ephesus, he admonished the local pastors first of all to "pay careful attention to yourselves...." It is not self-centered for a pastor to pay attention to his own welfare so that he may also "pay attention to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God" (ESV Acts 20:28). Caring for the church of God, which is the pastor's calling, requires taking care of our



own health as well as the health of God's flock. Burning ourselves out or being perpetually ill, feeble, drained, stressed, or spiritually dry is not virtuous and is counter to Paul's inspired instruction to pastors. Our culture may value workaholic lifestyles, but the Bible demands something different. God calls us to be examples to the flock (1 Peter 5:3), that is, healthy examples. A healthy church requires a healthy pastor. And an unhealthy church may be a reflection of an unhealthy pastor.

It may not be possible to pastor without experiencing some measure of hurt, discouragement, self-doubt and even depression. But those experiences do not make us unhealthy. What makes a pastor unhealthy is when we ignore it, others ignore it, and/or we fail to overcome it. A healthy body experiences colds, bruises and cuts, but it quickly heals itself. So it is with pastoral health. We experience periods of sickness or poor health, but when we have taken care of ourselves we are likely to be more resilient.

I'm writing this after seventeen years of ministry and believing I was healthy. It wasn't the frequent migraines (they run in my family), or the ever-lengthening list of unfinished tasks at home or at church that suggested otherwise. Rather, it was God's Word. Specifically, it was one little word in Acts 6:4 – the word "give" (KJV). In preparation for a graduate course on the doctrine of the church, I began studying what the Bible expects me, a pastor, to really do. Then I came across this little English word (a sixteen-letter word in Greek!) that means "to attach oneself to." I have no problem attaching myself to many things – and therein lies the problem. I failed to notice that I should not be attached to any pastoral responsibility *more than* my devotion to prayer and the study of God's Word. As I become acquainted with new needs in our community, my devotion to them increased while my devotion to prayer and study remained the same or even decreased on some days. I never thought too much about it because I rarely struggled with consistent, daily prayer and Bible study. But suddenly my spiritual habit was not enough to maintain, much less to grow. I need to attach myself even more closely to prayer and the Word.

In my observation and experience, there are several contributors to poor health. I have experienced all of these and have included some ideas for countering them.

1. Most pastors are on-call 24-hours, seven days a week and therefore never experience a day of rest. Sunday is certainly not a day of rest for the pastor. A church should consider giving the pastor a day of rest each week. Arrangements should be made so that someone else is able to respond to an emergency. Perhaps a well-prepared and gifted lay minister can be present with people in need on this day. Of course, the pastor will not want to miss the most urgent emergencies, but those are not so frequent as we may think. The church can help by respecting the pastor's personal space, including the parsonage (even if it is owned by the church) as the pastor's home.

2. Many church members have unreasonable and/or unbiblical expectations of the pastor. Once such expectation is that the pastor is immediately accessible for their personal needs. Our ubiquitous presence on social media contributes to that expectation. If we cannot be reached on the home phone, try the pastor's cell phone. If he doesn't answer, send a text, and then add a FB message. If that doesn't work, call the pastor's wife. Our constant accessibility is bad for our health and the health of the church. It allows the church to become increasingly dependent on the pastor to do things that loosen his attachment to prayer and God's Word. I believe it is also helpful to have a written covenant or contract between the pastor and the church so expectations and compensation are in writing. This arrangement should be reviewed every year.
3. People look to the pastor to help them resolve a personal matter. Pastors are called upon to give all sorts of counsel: legal, marital, psychological, medical, etc. It is a pastor's nature to want to help people, but those who are especially gifted with empathy are likely to take on more than they can handle. Before long we have added unnecessary stress when we could just as easily advise the person to seek help from an expert in that field. This is one reason I have discouraged pastors who have solicited my input about getting more education in counseling. Unless God is calling you to a specific career in pastoral counseling, don't do it. All you'll get done is counseling. There are well-trained counselors we can recommend to our people.
4. Many pastors lack of a mentor or ministry friend who can help carry personal burdens. This is one reason team ministry (even in churches of less than 50) has gained immense interest among our own college students and recent graduates. Solo pastoring has unique challenges because every strength of the pastoral "team" is yours and so is every weakness. Pastors need someone that can sit across the table from them, look them in the face, and talk about tough stuff. Pastors need a friend-relationship where there is give and take with both parties. It is insufficient for a mentor or ministry friend to say, "If you ever need to talk, call me." That suggests, "I don't have time to think about you unless you get in my ear." Instead, a good mentor takes occasional initiative to reach out to his friend. If you are blessed with someone like that in your life, honor it with transparency and authenticity.
5. Another contributor is the inability to discern the unimportant from the most important. For those with a "driven" personality, the "need" to get things done now; for those with less-driven personalities, it may be uncertainty about what to do next. Both experience the paralyzing effect of having too much to do. It has been said that successful people say "No" to most things in order to stay focused on

the most important things. Are you stressed? Find something in your life that you've been saying "Yes" to and start saying "No."

6. The inability to rest at mealtime (three times a day) is another contributor. It may seem odd to include this in the list, but this list is from my experience. Specifically, my experience is that I frequently skip meals altogether because I'm too busy to stop and eat, or I eat something quick and easy (and often unhealthy) in order to get back to work. But as I have reflected on Scriptures regarding mealtimes, I have concluded that meals can serve three purposes: 1) should always provide nourishment; 2) should be a time of pausing and giving thanks to God; and 3) may be a time of fellowship among friends. The second point is where I have been most recently convicted. It seems God's Word has more in mind than a quick and thoughtless prayer; rather, it is a time to reflect on God's steadfast love (Psalm 136:25), to give glory to God (1 Cor 10:31), to recognize God's good gifts (Psalm 145:15-16; James 1:17) and provision (Psalm 111:4-6; 1 Timothy 6:17-18). It is a fitting occasion to ask God to increase our hunger and thirst for righteousness (Matthew 5:6) and to draw from his eternal water and receive heavenly bread (Isaiah 55:1-2); and to turn our mind toward the Great Supper being prepared for us (Revelation 19:9). In other words, every mealtime is an opportunity to nourish our soul by reorienting our thoughts to the Almighty. Regarding physical health, add one healthy habit to your physical life at a time – start with something like drinking water instead of sugary drinks on a regular basis.
7. Pastors frequently have, or feel that they have, insufficient time to study and prepare an outstanding sermon for Sunday (much less two or even three excellent sermons per week!) The Shepherd's duties of Ezekiel 34:15-16 alone are enough to stretch us to the breaking point. In my early years of pastoring I thought it was difficult to find time to prepare two excellent messages in a week. Now I'm more convinced than ever of that truth. Consequently, I usually preach once a week and on the occasions when I preach twice it is often "Part Two" of the same sermon. I started this while pastoring a church of 35 people. For those who preach on Wednesday evenings also, I suggest adding discussion questions to your sermon notes and making that your material for mid-week. A church can help their pastor by allowing him to stay focused on his primary biblical responsibilities as stated in Acts 6:4 and Ephesians 4:12—to devote himself to prayer and the ministry of the Word, and to equip the saints for the ministries of the local church.
8. Pastors often sacrifice their family time to help someone else. Yes, I've done it despite the good advice of ministry mentors. Although I believe my marriage is the most important human relationship

I have, I have often asked my wife to sacrifice what should have had more importance to me. This is a constant battle because she is the easiest person to presume upon and she's the most self-giving person I know. But I also know that I need the strength from a strong marriage or the sacrifice will be too much. I am noticeably healthier when Sarah and I are connected emotionally. I can go out into ministry as a healthier person giving more in less time.

A healthy pastor is one who has something in the tank to give. When our physical body is depleted and malnourished, it begins to attack itself, taking resources from parts of the body that the brains deems less important until it breaks down. When the pastor breaks down, the church suffers. The church needs healthy pastors; and healthy pastors help mold healthy churches. In *Cracking Your Church's Culture*, Samuel Chand notes that there are two kinds of people in our lives: givers and takers. In a pastor's life, he notes, "99 percent of their interactions are with people who make withdrawals." (Thank God he is exaggerating the percent, but the point is clear.) The constant call to give requires us to have something to give. People need our time, energy, attention, emotional support, advice, and much more. Exactly how are we to give any of that when we are emotionally or spiritually or physically sick? We've all preached when we didn't feel well; visited the hospital while masking a sickness; offered counsel when we needed it ourselves; and so on. And we love it! But that doesn't mean we *ought* to operate that way incessantly. The church is better off when the pastor takes care of his health.

Someone recently told me about a graduate student who approached Dr. Kevin Vanhoozer at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (my *alma mater*) with a question, "Dr. Vanhoozer, do you think I have what it takes to get into the PhD program or do you think I should just go pastor a church now?" Dr. Vanhoozer, always quick-witted, replied, "Well, it if you're ready for long days, little rest, lots of tests, time away from your family, and you have the fortitude to stick to it, finish the job while feeling inadequate, frequently overwhelmed, and still able to meet deadlines or suffer the consequences; if you're up to all of that you should definitely pastor a church; otherwise, just get your PhD." I have a PhD (and studied under Dr. Vanhoozer) and I pastor a church – the rigors are not dissimilar, just ask my wife!

Being a pastor can be bad for your health, but it doesn't have to be. Stress, restlessness, and self-doubt are more frequent than I care to admit. The wisdom of God tells us that we must devote ourselves, that is, labor to attach ourselves, to prayer and God's Word. That's where our help and health come from (Psalm 121). ■

1 Amy Frykholm, "Fit for Ministry," *Christian Century*, October 22, 2012 (<http://www.christiancentury.org/article/2012-10/fit-ministry>)

RENEWAL IN THE MINISTRY

By **Dr. J.D. Young**

Has preaching become a burden to me? Has ministering to people and their needs, their hurts, their peculiarities, their idiosyncrasies and their sins become burdensome and distasteful? Has the thrill of the days of early ministry evaporated? Does it seem that my constant work, doing and being, produces little, if any, results?

This is a time to sit down and let the Holy Spirit help me to examine myself and my ministry. In 1 Corinthians 13:5 Paul speaks of peiraazo (examining, testing, scrutinizing) ourselves. I believe God wants me to retain the thrill of preaching and the joy of touching lives until they are changed by the power of His Word through my ministry. The challenge to the ministry is not someone else's responsibility, but mine.

Dr. Martian Lloyd-Jones was trained as a physician and became assistant to the famous Lord Horder, physician for the royal family of England. When Dr. Jones was converted and called to preach, he gave up his medical career for a higher calling. For forty years, he gave himself to study of the Word as he previously had to his study of medicine.

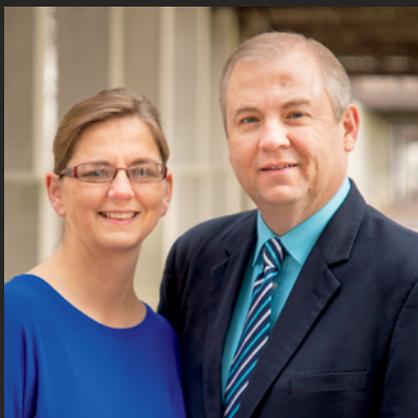
Preaching and ministry were more than a profession with Dr. Jones. In his words, "The work of preaching is the highest, the greatest and the most glorious calling to which anyone can ever be called." (Preaching and Preachers, Dr. D. Martin Lloyd-Jones p. 9). Preaching was not a chore but a glorious privilege. He never lost his thrill or excitement in the study of the Word.

As I sit here writing these lines, something within me pulsates with a holy hunger for a fresh visit of God's call to do my best to help men and women get ready for heaven. I think there are times when we need to go back to the basics and have a renewing of our desires and our purpose for being in the ministry.

In the early years of my ministry the writings of E.M. Bounds had a tremendous impact on my life and ministry. I remember reading where he said, "Prayer freshens the heart of the preacher, keeps it in tune with God and in sympathy with people, lifts his ministry out of the chilly air of profession, fructifies routine and moves very wheel with the facility and power of divine unction." (Preacher and Prayer, E.M. Bounds, p. 28). He goes on to say, "No earnestness, no diligence, no study, no gifts will supply its lack. The character of our praying will determine the character of our preaching. The sermon is full of divine unction because the man if full of divine unction."

Here and now, I bow at the feet of the Master and promise Him that, by His grace and my determination, I will go back to the basics. The call is as great or greater than it was forty years ago. The body is worn and aged, but I feel the spring of hope for renewal of my spirit in the greatest business and calling in the world. Would you like to join me on this trip of renewal? ■

Reprinted from the September/October 1997 issue of The Bible Methodist. Dr. J.D. Young was Conference President of Ohio (Heartland) from 1968 through 1984. He also served on the IHC Executive Committee as Chairman and served on the Bible Methodist Connectional Committee and Bible Methodist Missions Committee.



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RESPONSES TO JANUARY PRAYER FOCUS

Great Lakes Conference

Our church always appreciates beginning the New Year with the focus on prayer. God met us yesterday as we participated in the Pray Around the World. Several mentioned how meaningful this time was to them.

Chelle Durr
Walker, MI

Our Evert Church family experienced a wonderful service as we joined with others around the globe in prayer. We so appreciated the meaningful video presentation which directed our hearts and minds. God's Spirit came near.

Doug Derscheid
Evert, MI

The prayer focus made it feel like we were all working together for the same purpose - to see souls saved. It was very uplifting to hear international leaders pray for us! It made it more real.

Carol Woodard
Rock Lake, MI

The work Rev. Darrell Stetler II and others put into this campaign, not just the simulcast video but the many other resources provided, has been impactful and is greatly appreciated.

Pilgrim Bible Church
Cedar Springs, MI

We had a wonderful service, and really felt God's presence as we connected with Him in prayer. It was a great feeling to know we were praying with Christian brothers and sisters from around the world.

Steve Bills
Ontario, Canada

Heartland Conference

A young mother came to church last evening for the first time. She is a recovering addict. She has never attended church except for a few times as a child. As the prayer leader was thanking Jesus for salvation, she gave a clear outline of being forgiven of sins. In the prayer for the lost, Rose prayed with compassion and tears for those caught in addictions. At the conclusion, Beth went to speak to Melinda, who was still seated and quietly weeping. End result, Melinda gave her heart to Jesus, trusting Him for complete deliverance! Thank you for your leadership in providing this worldwide Prayer Service... It was an amazing tool and we appreciate the impact on our local church!

Pastor William Blair
Zanesville, OH

Southwest Conference

The best thing that happened in the prayer life of our church was knowing that we were connecting in a united time with other Christians.

James Dunegan
Durant, OK

Being in Oregon with family, meant we were away from our church family but we appreciated being connected to everyone by prayer. I deeply appreciated the prayers of the Mexican and Filipino pastors.

Dennis Cable
Tyler, TX

Missions

What was most striking to our group was that, at that same time, we were praying with brothers and sisters around the world. It was beautiful to hear the students mentioning in prayer the names of pastors and leaders whom they will probably never meet on earth.

Maricka Herrer
Shepherd's College, Philippines

Praying in unison with fellow Christian believers around the world is an overwhelming experience. To have fellowship together that is bathed with prayer is a blessing.

Jefferson Lucena
Shepherds College Administrator



WORLD MISSIONS

NEWS UPDATE

TIMOTHY KEEP | MISSIONS DIRECTOR



RUN JUSTINE!



My name is Thoby “Justine” Canceran, from the Ilocano tribe in the Philippines. I am the third sibling among five. I grew up in a poor family. My father is a junk vendor/collector and my mother a housekeeper. They were always busy, giving all their time to their work, so our family never went to church.

When I was twelve, I began to practice many vices: smoking, drinking, gambling, and even drugs. I didn’t respect my parents and always gave them problems. I would demand money, and then go with my friends to take drugs. After that, we would go to the beer house to drink. I was put in prison many times for making trouble.

But then! God worked in my life, and the impossible things became possible. God made a way to trap me with His amazing grace, to make my life valuable and useful for His glory.

Like apostle Paul in the book of Acts, when he had a personal encounter with Jesus, he went from being persecutor and anti-Christ to an apostle of Jesus.

God trapped me through a terrible situation. One day I came home from my friend’s house under the influence of drugs and alcohol and started making trouble. After I smashed a window and a door, my father called the police. When the police arrived in front of our house, my father told them that I was drunk and on drugs. He told them to go ahead and kill me. [This is not uncommon in the Philippines]. The police started to cock his gun, ready to shoot me, but my mother shouted to me, “Justine, run! Run! Go away! The police will shoot you and kill you! Please run!”

I ran without my sandals. I ran and ran until I came to the forest. The police hunted me. I tried to climb a

tree to hide, but then fell down in the tall grass. I fell asleep there, and the police didn’t find me because of the tall grass that covered me.

I had the desire in my heart to change my life from my evil deeds, and God answered that desire. God sent Pastor Jhun Bunuan together his wife and his assistant pastor, Jayson Gagarin. Jayson had been my trusted friend through elementary and high school. Before he was saved, he had always been my companion in sin, but God called him to be a pastor. God used Jayson to inspire me to go to the Shepherds College. I decided to study there, and to learn more about God, even though I was not yet saved.

I thank God because, not only did the Lord save me, but now I’ve graduated with a 4-year Bachelor of Arts degree in Bible and Christian Ministry, and I am helping Pastor Jhun Bunuan in Luna congregation. At the same time, we are pioneering a new church at Dolores, Quirino, Isabela.

I’m proud to say that I survived. And I’m thankful because God has poured out his blessings upon my family.

I thank God for protecting me from the hand of the police. If they had found me, they would surely have shot and killed me. Yet because of that trouble in my life, I had a desire to change, though I didn’t know how to escape from that terrible life and sinful world. I learned that we cannot change ourselves, by our own strength and effort! Only a Living God can change our lives!

Thank you for reading my personal testimony, and may the Lord bless you.



2020 Pastor’s Seminar in the Philippines

Every January for the past twenty years we have been conducting pastor’s conferences in the Philippines. Year after year these events have been times of learning, fellowship and spiritual refreshing. This year was no exception. Our theme was from the book of Jude, verse 20: Building Yourselves up On Your Most Holy Faith.

One of great joys of this 2020 conference was ordination of five men—Pastor Rodheaver Santiago, Pastor Jerry

Santiago, Pastor Edward Gitana, Pastor Michell Forto, and Pastor Richard Aquino. This service was led by Philippines BMC National President, Rev. Brendel Macadangang, and it was both a solemn and very meaningful occasion. We praise the Lord for these faithful men, for His grace upon us through the entire conference, for meaningful prayer services and anointed teaching and for the spirit of unity we felt among us.



Dedication of the New Shepherd’s College Men’s Dorm

While in the Philippines recently I had the privilege of participating in the dedication of the newly constructed men’s dormitory at the Shepherd’s College. On behalf of our missionaries, Shepherd’s Administrator, Jefferson Lucena, and the young men of the college training for min-

istry, thank you for all who shared in this project! Special recognition must be given to Sis. Alice Gale, along with a donor who wishes to remain anonymous, for their generous contributions which made this dorm possible. We are so grateful, especially the young men!

GREAT LAKES REGIONAL CONFERENCE NEWS

BLAKE JONES | CONFERENCE PRESIDENT



Bristolwood Church, Walker, MI

A Sunday evening outreach ministry to Grand Rapids inner city children has blossomed with the move from Sunday morning to Sunday evening. Sixty children in attendance marks the new ministry high. As with any growing work, new policies are being made. Snack overseers are in place. Disciplinary problems are brought to one point person who is not in a teaching position. This is helping classroom control and allowing deeper issues to be addressed. In order to sustain the work without burnout, one Sunday night per month there is no bus ministry.

On this Sunday that does not include an evening service, there is a noon potluck and service at a seniors' complex. At Christmas time 70 residents joined for the meal. Typically about 20-25 residents stay for the service.

God has blessed the Bristolwood church with two new families. As well, Pastor Durr had the privilege of meeting with the mayor to discuss the church's impact on the community along with some of the initiatives the city is introducing. This has been a wonderful open door of communication on the local community level.



Daystar Academy, Evart, MI

Daystar Christian Academy is an integral function of the Evart Bible Methodist Church. It is in its 39th year of ministry after it was founded in 1981 with nine students as the result of parents wanting to provide Christian-based education for their children. The Christian school assists parents in educating and training young people in a Christian environment while utilizing the Accelerated Christian Education (ACE) curriculum and being recognized for its “Model Status”.

Daystar Christian Academy has flourished through the

years as a result of dedicated and sacrificial parents and teachers. Daystar is led by Administrator/Pastor, Brian Bailey and Principal, Linda Derscheid. Currently, 41 students are enrolled in Pre-school through 12th grade.

After 39 years of ministry, the rewards continue to grow as we watch former students and graduates find their way into active roles in their churches and various ministries while impacting their families and communities for Christ. We give God praise!



Northern Lights Youth Retreat

This year marked the 4th annual Northern Lights Youth retreat in Evart, Michigan. As another retreat passes, we are so grateful for the help and leadership of the Holy Spirit. While our activities and sports usually revolve around the winter of Northern Michigan, God seemed to micro-manage the details, including the weather? The warm weather Friday was countered by an indoor snowball contest, broomball, mini-hockey and volleyball. Winter came in all its fury Saturday, but the electricity stayed on, and even forced a Sunday morning service in the gym which

seemed to be God-ordained.

Dorcas Hallam, our guest speaker, did a wonderful job inviting the youth to “stir up the gift that is in them.” Dorcas concluded each message by dividing the youth up into small groups to discuss and pray about the message. A special highlight of the weekend was the Saturday afternoon service which began with a number of youth standing to testify that they were a follower of Christ.

Special thanks to Doug and Mary Derscheid and the staff at Pineview Boys Home for hosting again!

HEARTLAND REGIONAL CONFERENCE NEWS

CHRIS CRAVENS | CONFERENCE PRESIDENT



Heartland Conference Ministerial

A number of Heartland ministers and their wives gathered at Higher Ground Conference Center for our annual Ministerial. For the second year in a row through the generosity of the conference and several sponsors, the Ministerial was provide free to everyone who attended. Special speakers were: Dr. James Keaton, Dr. Tim Cooley and Dr. Marlin Hotle. Other speakers included Garen Wolf, Dr. Tim Barber, and Janan Miller. Matt and Joy Barnett

provided the special music. Recognition was given to several Heartland ministers for special achievements. Bibles were also awarded to each of the ministers who were ordained in June. During the Ministerial we also celebrated President Cravens' 50th birthday with a reception and a card shower. This event continues to make a powerful impact on our ministers, their churches and the conference.





Bathhouse Project, Beulah Grove Campground

The Bathhouse Project continues at Beulah Grove. Presently, we are preparing for the rough plumbing to be installed. After that, blocks will be laid and the roof will be constructed.

Pray Around the World

Churches across the conference participated in the annual Prayer around the World Day. Pictured are services at Findlay and Franklin.



Live Nativity, Zanesville, OH

For the 11th year the Zanesville church held a Live Nativity. Around 800 people visited the nativity during the two nights in December. Pastor Blair and his people are sharing the Christmas message their community.



SOUTHERN REGIONAL CONFERENCE NEWS

JOHN PARKER | CONFERENCE PRESIDENT



Southern Conference Ministerial

Our Southern Conference Ministerial was a wonderful time of fellowship and challenge! We gathered in the beautiful Conference Facilities and were helped greatly by the ministry of Dr. Philip Brown and Rev. Richard Miles. The Ladies met in the lounge of the Crawford Cottage for a number of special sessions and joined

us for fellowship and refreshments in the Conference Office and Parsonage. They did some fun things together as well! We strive to provide a relaxing and refreshing time for our busy and burdened pastors to be nurtured and encouraged as well. It was truly an uplifting, encouraging and edifying time for us all!



Rev. Walter Hedstrom

Rev. Walt Hedstrom is finding much to do for the Lord in his retirement! He is busy in the Columbus, GA community connecting with many! He was recently honored to speak for the March for Life Rally at the Government Center! He continues to lead by example!



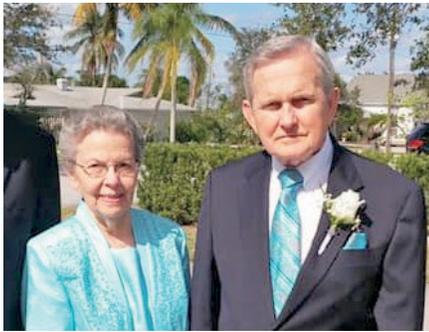
Rev. John & Dorothy Ingram Celebrate 50th Anniversary

Stanton Bible Methodist Church celebrated the Ingram's Golden Anniversary with them while they were visiting in Alabama. Congratulations to the Ingrams!



Indoor Camp

The **Indoor Camp Meeting** hosted by Ada Chapel Bible Methodist church was blessed of the Lord and an encouragement to our people! Dr. Michael Avery was our speaker and Jerry and Becky Glick provided the music. The crowds were wonderful and the spirit of the services was uplifting! Friday evening was a Youth Night with a Fellowship afterward in the Family Life Center. A large group also came for the Pray Around The World event on Sunday evening before the closing service!



**Mr. Jimmy E.
Wilcox**
Nov. 4, 2019

Jimmy Wilcox, a dedicated Christian and charter member of the Talladega Bible Methodist Church, passed away November 4th at the age of 83. He was married to Maudine Wilcox for 61 years. Bro. Wilcox had served the church in many capacities which included the positions of treasurer, S.S. superintendent, trustee, and board member. He was retired from Woodland Parts and Service which he owned with his brother-in-law, Leslie Crawford. For 25 years he had served on the Board of Trustees of God's Bible School and College. Bro. Wilcox was a faithful church attendee, generous supporter and committed follower of the Lord. He left a great example for his family, friends and church.
~ *Pastor Bob Blankenship*



**Mr. Tom E.
Sulser**
Nov. 15, 2019

I was very honored to pastor such a great man as Bro. Tom Sulser. He was always willing to help in any capacity where he was needed at the Greensboro Bible Methodist Church. He helped remodel the church sanctuary and build the fellowship hall. He served as a very efficient church treasurer, a wonderful song leader, and a great board member. He was an encourager and a gracious example of a Christian man. His love for the Lord was exemplified in his prayer life, in his study of God's Word, and in his love for others. He especially loved his wife, Maxine, his daughters, their families and his church family. ~ *Pastor Steve Vernon*



**Mr. Jimmy
Marsh**
Dec. 16, 2019

Bro. Jimmy Marsh won his brief battle with cancer and gained eternal healing just before Christmas! Jimmy was a man who loved God and his family! He enjoyed good country and bluegrass gospel music. He married Jonna Barrick, an educated school teacher and converted her to a southern, bluegrass loving lady! They have two sons, a daughter and a loving tribe of grands! The Pell City Bible Methodist Church is their home church. Pastor Mark Stetler ministered to Bro. Jimmy throughout his illness and preached his funeral! May God sustain and strengthen Jimmy's family! ~ *John D. Parker*



Living Hope Church, Salina, KS

As of this writing, Living Hope Bible Methodist Church of Salina, Kansas is under contract to purchase their first church building. God has worked in miraculous ways to help them get this church for about 50% of its appraised value. On top of that, God prompted a non-local donor to fund 33% of the purchase. The church comes fully functional and fully furnished. God is on the move in Salina, Kansas.



Living Hope Church Christmas Program

For their Christmas Program, Living Hope Bible Methodist Church photoshopped pictures of the Kids Klub children into Bible scenes showing the many things Jesus is called in the Bible. Many parents were in attendance.





AN INTERVIEW WITH GARY BRUGGER

The Bible Methodist: Please describe your conversion.

Gary Brugger: My parents attended church off and on when I was a child. They were saved when I was in my early teens. Their lives changed, but my heart wasn't. At age 14 I attended, alone, a Sunday evening service of a camp meeting. I had borrowed a Bible from my great aunt and I walked to the camp. As the preacher, Brother Rankle, preached it seemed he was telling everyone what I had done. Conviction fell on me and I made my way to the altar. All changed that night. As I prayed, I felt better and started to get up, but a precious man pushed me back down and told me to pray and get to the bottom. God saved me thoroughly.

Please describe a defining event or time that gave direction to your life.

All my life I hand practiced and worked hard at being the best baseball player I could be. But under the leadership and preaching of my pastor, Don Glenn, God began to put an inner persuasion into my heart. I sensed He was leading me into the ministry. When an agent for a professional baseball team came to my high school in my senior year to present a contract to play baseball, I was so in love with Jesus that I didn't even look at the contract. I refused the offer and chose to follow Christ. I attended Kentucky Mountain Bible College and later attended God's Bible School and College where I graduated with a Bachelors Degree in Theology.

What motivated your long term ministry?

God so changed my life and my life goals, that all I ever wanted to do is to love Him more and more. My desire has

been to serve Him and please Him as I tell the message that Jesus saves.

Describe briefly what or who brought you to the Bible Methodist family.

I had met Dr. J. D. Young through my wife's family. He stopped to visit the Wesleyan church where I was pastoring. During the visit he gave me an invitation to join the Ohio Conference of the Bible Methodists. Later an invitation came to pastor in the Alabama Conference of the Bible Methodists, which I accepted and joined the great family.

What or who inspired you during your years of leadership?

Paul Claggett, a great friend and the treasurer of the Ohio Conference, was a man I had strong confidence in and fully trusted. There were others who helped and encouraged me. Milt Jewett, Jack McMann, Robert Golding and all who cooperated with and encouraged me. Most of all, I could say the biggest and best inspiration came as I walked and talked to God every morning. He held me up and kept me steady through everything.

Please give the number of years you have served in pastoral ministry.

I have spent 38 years in pastoral ministry. Those years included: 4 in the Wesleyan church, 5 in the Alabama (Southern) Conference, 14 in the Ohio (Heartland) Conference and some 15 years in independent churches.

How many years did you serve as Conference President and what might be a highlight of those years?

Ten years of my life were spent as Conference President for the Ohio (Heartland) Conference. The highlights of those years were the purchase and payoff of Beulah Grove, the Heartland Camp Grounds. I consider the work on and the development of the camp facilities a labor that was a privilege. Working with and encouraging pastors in their growth and development was also a rich privilege.

How many years did you serve as Bible Methodist Missions Secretary (Director)?

My years as Missions Secretary (Director) were great years. I served in this capacity in conjunction with the service as Conference President. I was appointed by the Connectional Missions Committee when Dr. Michael Avery resigned to serve God's Bible School and College. Was elected by the next General Conference and served a total of about 7 years.

What would you say to the Bible Methodist people?

Please, don't allow the spirit of the world to take your focus off of following and serving Jesus! Don't take anything off your altar of sacrifice. Keep your heart in tune with Christ and your focus on your eternal goal! The nearer I get to eternity the more precious it is that Jesus saves. I constantly think, it will be worth is all to be in the Lord's presence. ■

SOUTHWEST PROVISIONAL CONFERENCE NEWS

G. CLAIR SAMS | CONFERENCE PRESIDENT



Southwest Conference Ministerial

Dr. David and Marilee Bubb were the featured speakers and they were used of the Lord to encourage each of us in our Christian lives and witness. Wednesday afternoon while the men were studying “Ministering in the Post Modern World,” the ladies met at the Covington’s home and talked with Marilee about life in the parsonage as they enjoyed tea.

Wednesday morning Pastor Aaron Johnson led prayer time. Thursday morning Pastor Caleb Crouch led prayer. We enjoyed special music from the Darrell Stetler II family, the Caleb Crouch family, Pedro Anaya and Pastor and Connie Snodgrass.



Treasure Valley Church, Caldwell, ID

It was a privilege to dedicate a newly renovated church building. Conference President Sams held the first revival in our new building and dedicated it on Sunday morning.

We were happy to host the first wedding in our new building on January 8th 2020. Congratulations to the

Swenson’s! They’ve been attending our church for close to a year now. We proud of how they are allowing God to bless and guide their family.

What a joy to accept into membership two young ladies during the special services with the Sams.



Rock Springs, NM

Pastor Darrell Underwood from Mid-America Conference and Conference President Clair Sams from Southwest Conference had the privilege of interacting with and ministering to Pastor Calvin McCasland

and the people of Rock Springs Holiness Mission. The Mid-America and Southwest Conferences have been working with and are in discussions about the possibility of partnering with each other.



Sherman, TX

Pastor Snodgrass and the church joyfully received two new members into the church fellowship. They are Vince and Tonya Tarver.



Lakewood Church, Denver, CO

Pastor Aaron Johnson and the church recently received as members Hector and Dalia Laczano. Hector is leading a Hispanic congregation which meets on Sunday afternoons in the Lakewood church.

Recently this Spanish speaking congregation invited other Hispanic leaders to join them in a day of prayer and strategizing. Their goal is to effectively reach the Spanish speaking people in their part of the Denver metroplex.

Continued from page 2

your people meet and interact with you they should be pleased and properly proud that you professionally represent their church in the community. Your ministry is much deeper and of much greater value than it may appear on the surface. Treat the people you pastor with dignity. Interact with your community with integrity. Handle the Word of God with the deepest attentiveness. Lead the service and especially public prayer intentionally.

The ministry is one of the great tools God uses to influence the world. May we uphold and support the message of the Gospel with dignity and integrity. ■

G. Clair Sams
Editor

LEGACY GIFTS

There are several ways to partner with one of the ministries of the Bible Methodist Connection of Churches that can make a long term financial difference in that ministry. You can make a **Memorial Gift** in someone's honor. You can leave a **Charitable Bequest** for a fixed dollar amount or a percentage of your total estate or percentage of the residual of your estate. You can make a **Planned Gift** through a revocable trust, a will, a gift of real estate or from tax-deferred retirement assets.

Your gift to a local church, a Conference, a Camp or to a Missions project can make a huge difference!

If you are interested in talking to someone about this please contact:

Michael Avery

General Connectional Chairman
(513) 218-8502 | mavery@gbs.edu

