

THE

# BIBLE METHODIST

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# PSALMS

THE CHURCH'S  
ORIGINAL  
SONG BOOK



# FROM THE EDITOR

TRAVIS J. JOHNSON

**The Book of Common Prayer** had a significant impact on the spirituality of John Wesley and the early Methodists. Its influence on Methodist spirituality and piety has endured, remaining a powerful source of inspiration to this day. The profound imprint of its prayers and liturgies on our Methodist worship cannot be overstated. Published in 1549 by King Edward VI of England, the Book of Common Prayer was a product of the English Reformation, which led to a break with the Roman Catholic Church. However, it's important to note that it isn't the original "book of common prayer." So, what truly holds that distinction? In many ways, I would assert that the Psalms serve as the "original" book of common prayer, offering a timeless expression of praise and worship. These ancient

verses resonate with the human experience, encapsulating a wide spectrum of emotions—from exultant joy to deep-seated sorrow and lament. John Calvin described the Psalms as "an anatomy of all parts of the soul; for there is not an emotion of which anyone can be conscious that is not here represented as in a mirror." For thousands of years, the Psalms have stood as a timeless source of strength and comfort. They serve as a literary salve that helps to sooth the daily grit and grind of life. They have been our companions in moments of solitude, a source of inspiration during times of despair, and a well-spring of gratitude when life's blessings abound. Furthermore, they vividly depict the nature of God, providing insight into his character and attributes. As W. Robert Godfrey states in his book *Learning to Love*

*the Psalms*, "[The Psalms teach us that] God is always good in ways, completely compatible with his holiness and in his goodness, and he never fails in his love and care for those who belong to him."

This year, every edition will explore a different aspect of the Psalms. It will cover topics such as the act of singing them, their role in enhancing our worship, their expression of lament, and how to effectively incorporate them into our prayers. In this issue, Dr. Timothy Tennent enlightens us on the significance of singing the Psalms, shedding light on the longstanding tradition of this practice among both the Jewish community and the church spanning thousands of years. For further insights into singing the Psalms, you can explore additional information at [psalms.seedbed.com](http://psalms.seedbed.com). ■

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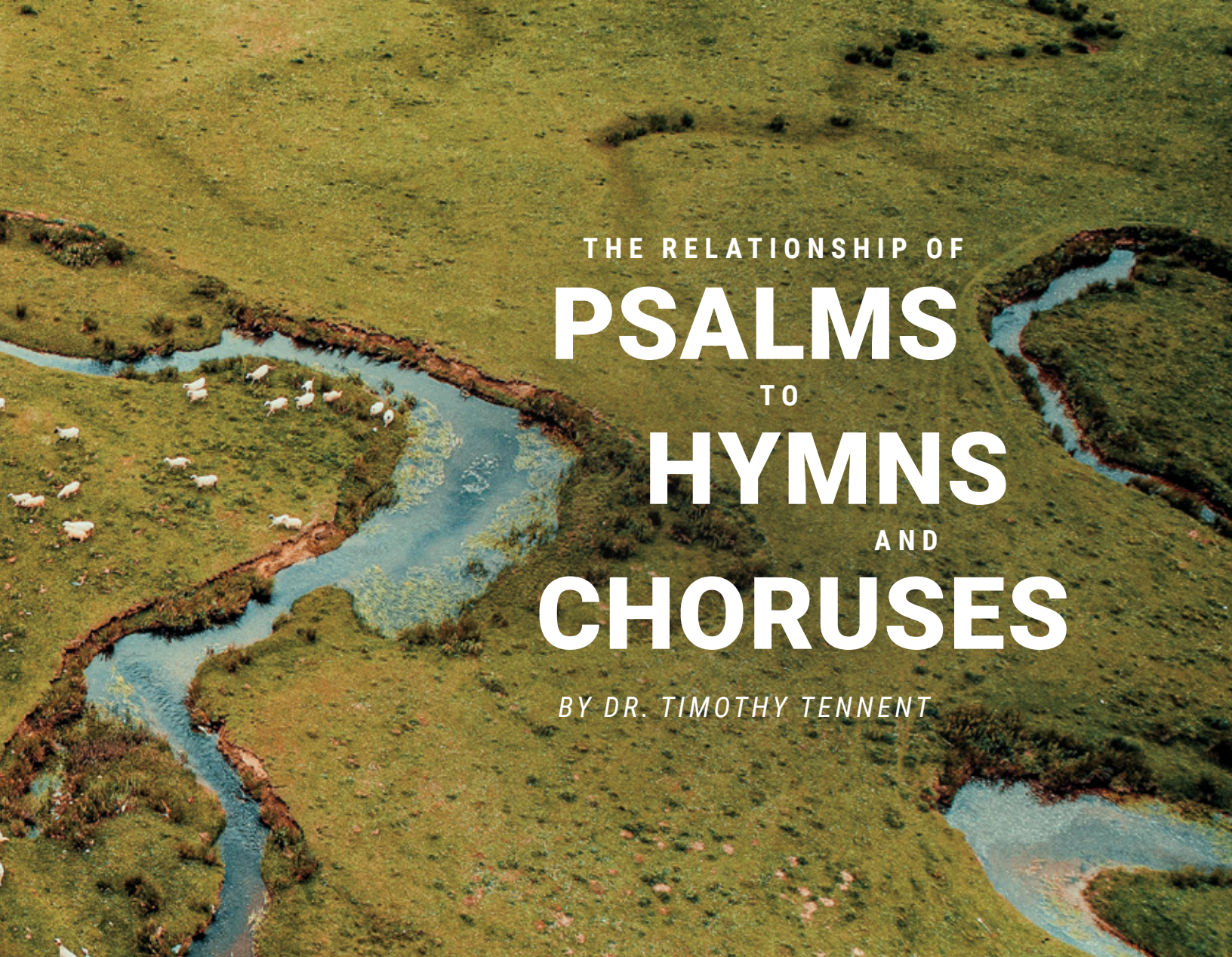
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THE RELATIONSHIP OF  
**PSALMS**  
TO  
**HYMNS**  
AND  
**CHORUSES**

BY DR. TIMOTHY TENNENT

**M**ost Protestant worship services devote a section of the worship service to congregational singing. Typically, a congregation will sing hymns, choruses, or some combination of these. Yet, for the vast majority of Christians throughout history, the primary act of singing would have been the Psalms, even if other songs were also sung.

One of the most important verses in the New Testament about worship is found in Colossians 3:16, where Paul says, “*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing*

*psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.*” This passage contains an important insight into the nature of worship. The New Testament anticipates the people of God writing new acts of worship but also assumes that the Psalms will remain at the core of Christian worship.

The early church took Paul at his word, as we see several Christian hymns emerging right in the pages of the New Testament. There are the obvious examples that have been carried over into Christian liturgy, such as Mary’s *Magnificat* (Luke 1:46-55), Zechariah’s *Benedictus* (Luke 1:68-79) and

Simeon's *Nunc Dimittis* (Luke 2:29-32). But there are many others, such as the Christ hymn of Philippians 2:6-11, the resurrection hymn of Ephesians 5:14, and the mystery of godliness hymn of I Timothy 3:16. Then, of course, there are many hymns found in the book of Revelation, which are sometimes referred to as the songs of heaven since they are found on the lips of the four living creatures (Rev. 4:8; 4:11), the angels (Rev. 5:9,10; 5:12; 7:15-17; 11:15; 12:10-12; 16:4-7; 18:1-3, 4-8, 16, 17, 19-24), the twenty four elders (Rev. 17:17, 18), the twenty four elders with the four living creatures (Rev. 19:4, 5), and the redeemed (Rev. 5:13; 7:10; 15:3, 4; 19:6-8). It is clear that heaven is filled with worship and singing. Therefore, since the church represents the scattered outposts of heaven on earth, the vibrancy of worship that we see in heaven should be anticipated in and through the hymns and spirit-filled utterances of the church of Jesus Christ.

Hymns and choruses have been written throughout church history. However, beginning with the 18th century, hymns gradually began to overtake the Psalms as the primary way the church worshipped. However, the Psalms were never meant to be supplanted by newer acts of worship. The Book of Psalms remains the only inspired worship book, and it serves as the ongoing foundation of

worship that unites the people of God, even as we experience the wonderful diversity of hymns and choruses that are also written and sung across the ages.

The Book of Psalms is like the church's public square, our shared space that emphasizes our unity with all Christians everywhere. Why are the Psalms so crucial as a foundation for worship? There are three reasons why the Psalms should be retained as the foundation for all other acts of worship.

### **FIRST, THE PSALMS CONNECT US TO THE ENTIRE BIBLE.**

The Psalms are more than mere songs of praise. They are also filled with the theology of the whole of Scripture, which becomes embedded into the worship of God's people. This why the Psalms have sometimes been called the "sung Torah." The Psalms draw from all across the Law, the historical books, the wisdom literature and the prophets. Likewise, the Book of Psalms is the most quoted book in the New Testament. Thus, by reading or singing the Psalms, you are encountering the entirety of Scripture, but within the context of worship.

### **SECOND, THE SCOPE OF THE PSALMS IS FAR WIDER THAN LATER SONGS OF WORSHIP.**

If you reflect on what is typically sung in churches, whether hymns or choruses, they, broadly speaking, fall into the category of "praise and worship," which take a similar amount of time to sing. However, there are several ways that the poetry in the Psalms is quite different from what we are accustomed to in our normal Sunday worship.

First, the **thematic scope** of the Psalms far exceeds what we normally encounter in hymns and choruses. The 150 psalms are like a collection of 150 separate spiritual journeys, some short, some long; some for individuals, some for the entire congregation. These journeys take us through a stunning array of human experiences, including praise, lament, thanksgiving, penitence, recitation of history, wisdom for life, worldview of the wicked, questions (even accusations) directed toward God, imprecations and curses, messianic aspirations, instruction and admonition.

It is precisely the breadth of this genre that makes the Psalms seem, for some, so odd and even unsuitable for a Sunday morning worship service. Indeed, the more transparent, sometimes disturbing, subject matter has

led the modern church to either diminish or eliminate the Psalms completely from modern worship. Others tend to “cherry pick” a few “praise and worship” verses that may occur in a psalm but ripped out of its larger, sometimes painful, context. Yet, when we only sing or recite a few psalms, or select the more comfortable portions of a particular psalm, we lose the impact of the whole journey and therefore miss the formation that would happen within us along the way. Each psalm in its entirety is part of the inspired word of God. The Psalms are unfolding for us a vast cartography of authentic life in tension with the real world, yet all within the larger context of unwavering trust in God who is guiding all of those journeys.

Second, the scope of the Psalms is broader than contemporary songs of worship through the **myriad of voices** in the Psalms. The Psalms contain many more voices than we are accustomed to in ordinary hymns and choruses. In the Psalms we find the voice of God to His people, the voice of the psalmist to God, the voice of the psalmist to the people, the voice of the psalmist to his own soul, the voice of the psalmist to the wicked, and even the voice and thoughts of the wicked themselves. Frequently, these voices can shift even within a single psalm.

The Psalms seem to be very interested in building within the believer an entire worldview that understands not only the character and will of God (which we might expect) but also the character and intentions of the wicked (which may surprise us).

Third, the **length and timing** of a psalm is another way that the scope of the Psalms is quite different from that of a hymn or a chorus. We are all creatures of time, and we all carry an inner sense of the “appropriate length” of various things we encounter in our lives. Whether we are watching a movie, waiting for a red light to turn green, anticipating the coming of spring, or listening to a sermon, we have certain internal ideas about how long various experiences should normally be. This same expectation comes into worship as well. Many of the well-known hymns that we sing in churches were originally written with as many as 10 or 15 verses. But modern hymn books generally only present four or five verses at the most, because the idea of singing 10 or 15 verses of a hymn seems to exceed the unspoken but widely held idea about the appropriate length of an act of worship. Hymns and choruses rarely last beyond five minutes.

A psalm must be approached as a different kind of worship vehicle than a hymn or a chorus. If we think we

are singing a hymn or chorus, we will have unnecessary dissonance. With a psalm, the journey of the words is the primary driver of the worship, and the music carries you on the journey. Some journeys like Psalm 117 are quite short and would be considered very short by a hymn or chorus standard. Other psalms, like 78, are much longer. The point is to experience the full journey, whether short or long, and not have any set expectation as to how long a psalm “should” be. Just as in life, some journeys are short (to the convenience store) and some are long (traveling to see the Grand Canyon), but both journeys have their own internal integrity.

I encourage you all to spend more time with the Psalms. They will change your life. But you have to approach them as something quite different from the normal hymns and choruses we sing. ■

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# WORLD MISSIONS NEWS UPDATE

R.G. HUTCHISON, MISSIONS DIRECTOR

## TROYER FAMILY MOVING TO NEPAL [1]

Many of you have been praying for Paul and Esther Troyer, that God would open a door for them to return to their ministry in the Asia Highlands region. We are happy to announce that the Troyer family will move to the country of Nepal in November of this year, where their ministry focus will be on reaching Tibetan people with the gospel. Why Nepal?

### WHY NEPAL?

- Paul and Esther’s burden while serving in the Asia Highlands has always been to reach Tibetan people with the Gospel.
- The Tibetans are an Asian ethnic group found in various parts of China and Nepal (and several other countries).
- According to The Joshua Project, Tibetans are among what we know as the Unreached People Groups (or Least-Reached People Groups) in the world.
- While the door to their previous ministry base in Asia seems closed at this time, the door is open for Paul and Esther to serve in Kathmandu, Nepal, where

many Tibetan people make their home.

## MINISTRY FOCUS IN NEPAL

Paul intends to use his training in TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) as a means by which to have conversations with Tibetan people while providing them with much sought-after English tutoring.

- They will network and cooperate with other churches and ministries in Nepal, while developing their specific ministry focus among Tibetan peoples in Kathmandu.

## CHURCHES PLANTING CHURCHES IN THE PHILIPPINES [2]

At the end of last year, a new church building was dedicated in the village of Pinnugo, which is the municipality of Banaue. This has been called a “miracle church” because it was planted in a place that has been known as a stronghold of paganism and demonic opposition. Pastor David Yucaddi, Jr. has been laboring in this place over the past few years,

and the Holy Spirit has opened hearts to the preaching of the gospel. Now, this year, Pastor David, together with members from this new congregation, are beginning evangelistic efforts in the nearby village of Kinakin. They are praying that God will help them plant yet another church there.

## FELLOWSHIP AND TRAINING WITH PASTORS IN THE PHILIPPINES [3-4]

Dr. R.G. Hutchison recently made a trip to the Philippines, accompanied by Tim Keep, Tim Keep, Jr., Maricka Herrer, and Johnathan Arnold. They ministered in a two-day pastor’s conference in the Bible Methodist headquarters in Ilagan City. Immediately following the conference, Tim Keep led a two-day SGC workshop for training trainers on how to teach the SGC curriculum. Tim, Maricka, and RG also worked with the national leadership on initial plans for establishing a non-formal training program in the Philippines that will make biblical training more accessible to emerging leaders at the local

level. The team also traveled to Banaue where they enjoyed a rich time of worship and fellowship with Pastor David and Margie Yucaddi and the pastors of the Bible Methodist Gospel Light conference.

## AFRICA 85 [5-6]

God continues to open doors for Maricka Herrer, together with Glen and Stephanie Gault, to train trainers in countries throughout Africa as part of the ongoing efforts of the Africa 85 Initiative. Several training trips are being planned for this year. Recently, Pastor Allegri conducted training with trainers in two different locations at

the Mayukwayukwa Refugee Camp in Zambia. He reported, “we had a fruitful meeting with these representatives of 24 students, 12 of which are Portuguese speaking former refugees from Angola. The other 12 are English speaking and some are working as teachers and as I was told others are farmers and government workers. This will be another center in Mayukwayukwa, a few kilometers from where we have another center. As God is expanding His work, we see the need to train them and hope that we get to have some joining the teaching staff as teaching assistants. We need divine wisdom to choose the right ones. Once we open this center on March 1, we will have 52 Christian Leaders in total enrolled.”





# GREAT LAKES CONFERENCE NEWS

DAVID WARD, PRESIDENT

## GREAT LAKES CONFERENCE NEWS [1-3]

The Great Lakes Conference had the privilege of welcoming two new pastors to our churches.

Rev. Christopher Blankenship is now the pastor at our Ironwood Church in Frankton, IN. Pastor Blankenship is returning, having served here previously, and God is blessing his ministry to this congregation and community.

Rev. Donald Newport is joining the Rock Lake Team as an Associate Pastor. Rev. Newport brings a wealth of pastoral experience and

is already having a positive impact. He and His wife are a welcome addition and a blessing to Pastor Jones.

The ladies of the Rock Lake congregation presented the Newports a handcrafted quilt as a welcoming gift.

## ANNUAL PASTOR'S HOLIDAY DINNER [4-6]

The Great Lakes Annual Pastor's Holiday Dinner was well attended, offering a warm atmosphere for fellowship. Pilgrim Bible Church hosted the event, inviting not only Great Lakes Pastors and Executive Committee members

but also welcoming other area pastors who wish to join in the fellowship.

## WALK THROUGH BETHLEHEM [7-10]

In collaboration with the local ministerial association, the Rock Lake Church annually hosts a "Walk Through Bethlehem" at the Great Lakes Campground. The images showcase some of the stations that welcomed hundreds of friends and neighbors from the community. The Nativity story came to life through a dramatic portrayal, providing a detailed depiction of the birth of Christ.









# HEARTLAND CONFERENCE NEWS

**CHRIS CRAVENS, PRESIDENT**

## HEARTLAND MINISTERIAL [1-7]

Each November, Heartland organizes a vital event in our conference calendar—the annual Ministerial Convention. Once again, pastors and their wives gathered at the Higher Ground Conference Center. Through the generosity of sponsors, the Ministerial, lodging and meals are completely free of charge. Evening speakers were Dr. R.G. Hutchison and Rev. Mark

Cravens. Jonathan and Jalena Glick provided the music. Rev. Travis Johnson led in devotions each morning. Rev. Jack Hooker gave his life story. Mrs. Becky Keep spoke to the ladies. Other speakers included Rev. John Manley, Rev. Bennie Durr, Sr., Dr. David Fry, and Rev. Tim Throckmorton. Hosting the event were Rev. Chris and Julie Cravens. We thank God for his blessing on these important three days in the lives of our pastoral families.



## BEULAH GROVE UPDATE [8-14]

God is certainly blessing the construction of the Rev. J.D Young Memorial Building. It will serve several functions, including a Children's Chapel, Youth Camp lodging, and a large storage and maintenance facility. The exterior is now completed and work has begun on the interior. Volunteers constructed a platform

for the Children's Chapel. The New Life Community Church donated several chairs for seating. Special thanks to God's Bible School and College for loading and unloading the chairs, as well as providing the delivery of the chairs. Your continued donations to this project are greatly appreciated. All are welcome to join us for the dedication service during camp on June 22, 2024 at 1:30PM.





# SOUTHERN CONFERENCE NEWS

DOUG EADS, PRESIDENT

## SOUTHWEST CONFERENCE NEWS

**Pastoring a church can be a very heavy load.** Here in the Southern Conference we have some men and women that carry the load very well. They sacrifice and give of themselves for the sake of others. We are blessed!

Ministerial is a time for pastors to come and rest awhile. It is at this time that fellowship, worship, and training occur. It is an absolute must for someone in the ministry. God blessed us this year with some outstanding sessions and camaraderie. David and Christina Black, along with Richard Miles poured out their hearts for the building up of our ministry families. I believe everyone that was here left encouraged and strengthened.

## CAPTIONS

- 1 Rev. David Black
- 2 Rev. Richard Miles
- 3 Christian Black ministering to pastor's wives.
- 4 Miranda Sankey, Kay Vernon, and Joy Budensiek enjoying an afternoon of fun.
- 5 A great group of people!
- 6 Linda Scarbrough.
- 7-8 Dining Room fellowship is always good for the soul!





# SOUTHWEST CONFERENCE NEWS

**G. CLAIR SAMS, PRESIDENT**

## TREASURE VALLEY, IDAHO [1-2]

Treasure Valley BMC took part in their city parade with a float to match the ugly sweater theme and passed out thousands of fliers to a crowd of precious souls, and hosted an open house brunch at the parsonage.

## OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLAHOMA [3-5]

Ronald and Joanna Pauleus hosted the OKC Youth Group for a Christmas party.



1

OKC hosted 3 performances of a Live Nativity Story in the church parking lot.

## SHERMAN, TEXAS [6-8]

The Church took part in the community Christmas parade, hosting a float. The children rode, some of the adults passed out flyers and candy to the people watching.

## DURANT, OKLAHOMA [9]

Durant BMC hosted a New Year's Eve party with food, fellowship and games.

## LEADERSHIP RETREAT [10-11]

Connectional leaders and their wives met for a leadership retreat.



2



3



# CAMP SCHEDULE

## SUMMER 2024

### Great Lakes Conference

CONFERENCE &  
FAMILY CAMP  
July 12-21

YOUTH CAMP  
July 24-28

### Heartland Conference

CONFERENCE &  
FAMILY CAMP  
June 17-23

YOUTH CAMP  
July 15-19

### Southern Conference

YOUTH CAMP  
June 3-7

FAMILY CAMP  
July 1-7

### Southwest Conference

YOUTH CAMP  
June 24-28

CONFERENCE &  
FAMILY CAMP  
July 22-28