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Clarissa Bible Church Teaches truth verse-by-verse

by Karin L. Nauber



Pastor Peter Tranvik outside the Clarissa Bible Church just off Highway 71 in Clarissa.

The Clarissa Bible Church, located just off Highway 71 coming into Clarissa from the east, is not a glamorous church. It doesn't have huge spires or steeples to draw attention to itself. It is a fairly plain, white-painted building with a simple wooden banner modestly drawing little attention to itself. It is not the building that draws people to come to the services that are held there on Wednesday nights and Sunday mornings. It is what goes on inside and the truth of the scriptures that is taught that draws the believers in through the simple doors of the sanctuary. It is a non-denominational Bible church. There are many like it throughout the United States. Pastor Peter Tranvik has been the minister there for 11 years now.

Tranvik is a man who measures the important things in life by their significance in Jesus Christ. One could say that Tranvik's journey from Duluth to Todd County even holds some of the mysteries of Christ in it. He was born and raised in Duluth and went to the University of Minnesota in Duluth where he received a bachelor's degree in education teaching science.

Often, the relationship between science and religion is testy at best, but for Tranvik, he believes science and the Bible do not contradict each other. He taught high school science for 11 years in the Duluth area. "During that time of teaching, I enrolled in the Grace Institute of Biblical Studies. That was in 1992. I graduated in 1997," said Tranvik. While studying, he continued to teach science. He also began his ministry in Clarissa. "The church in Clarissa was without a pastor in early 1990s and some men at his home church in Duluth were asked to come and preach," he explained. Eventually, Tranvik found himself coming to Clarissa more and more. "I felt that the Lord was leading me to come to Clarissa more often than the others," he said. The church needed a minister on a more regular basis. He and his wife Cindy prayed about it. "We felt the Lord leading us. I quit my job and we moved here in 1997," he said. "Here," at the time, was to a farm in rural Eagle Bend. The Tranviks and their two sons live in Bertha now because the boys were already attending Bertha-Hewitt School while living at the farm. Tranvik also substitute teaches at the Bertha-Hewitt School on occasion.

However, his love, the thing that draws him to doing all of the things he does, is his love for God and for the church. The church (not just the Clarissa Bible Church but church as an organization) has historically and Biblically been called the "bride of Christ."

The doctrinal beliefs of the Clarissa Bible Church are all based on scripture. The first belief is that the Bible is the final authority of faith and practice (life). This is based on the teachings found in 2 Timothy 3: 16-17, 2 Peter 1:20-21 and John 16:12-13. "This means that we follow the Bible and what

the Bible says about life. It is not based on human tradition or personal opinion. The focus is on the Word of God, not on personal opinions," said Tranvik. The next doctrinal belief is the belief in the message of historical Christianity-that Jesus Christ, who is God, became a man and accomplished our redemption through His substitutionary and sacrificial death on the cross and literal, physical resurrection from the dead.

The accompanying scripture to back up this belief is in Ephesians 1:7, Hebrews 10:10-14 and Romans 3:24-25.

The third belief is that they believe that salvation is the gift of God offered to all by grace apart from works and received through personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ alone. The Biblical references can be found in Ephesians 2:8-9 and John 3:16-18.

"We are a grace-oriented Bible teaching ministry. We study the word of God verse by verse exalting the grace of our Savior, Jesus Christ," said Tranvik.

The Biblical basis for this is found in 2 Timothy 4:2, 1 Peter 2:2 and 2 Peter 3:18. The church, and especially Tranvik, also have a heart for overseas missions. Tranvik has been overseas five times with others from the church on short missionary trips in cooperation with other Bible churches.

"It is about reaching the world, not just our little corner," he said. Matthew 28:16-20 is called the Great Commission and gives the impetus or the force that makes something happen, like missions. Another doctrinal belief is that they believe that God eternally keeps His own once they have been redeemed by His grace. The Biblical background comes from John 10:27-30, Romans 8:35-29 and 1 John 5:11-13.

Tying in with the beliefs about grace, the church body also believes that good works should be the result of salvation for God's glory. The Bible reference is found in Ephesians 2:10. Tranvik said that everyone at his church learns that church is not about focusing on non-essential things but on focusing on things of the Spirit through the word of God.

The Clarissa Bible Church believes in adult baptism of believers. "They get baptized picturing and proclaiming by way of a public testimony that they have been saved," said Tranvik. The church also takes part in the Lord's Supper once a month in remembrance of their Savior (1 Corinthians 11:23-26).

Pastor Tranvik said he is always very willing to sit down with people to discuss the beliefs and teachings of the church further.

Church services are held on Sunday at 10 a.m. Wednesday night is a prayer meeting and Bible study with prayer beginning at 7 p.m. and the Bible study at 7:30 p.m.

If you are interested in learning more about the church and their beliefs, you can check them out on their website at: www.clarissabible.org or you can call Pastor Tranvik at: 218-924-2825.