

# OPEN FORUM

In the May/June/July issue of *Circuit Rider*, we featured suggestions of theologically-engaging novels to enjoy over the summer, and invited additional suggestions from readers. Here are a few more titles to consider!

*A Canticle for Leibowitz* by William M. Miller, Jr. A classic exploration of the interactions among religion, faith, civilization, and technology, told as a series of post-apocalyptic (and pre-apocalyptic!) vignettes. Leibowitz was first published almost fifty years ago, and still rings true (sadly) in our time.

## Gary Ball-Kilbourne

Pastor, St. Paul's UMC, Jamestown, N.D.

*Why I Wake Early* and *Red Bird*, both by Mary Oliver. Mary Oliver helps us here do the basic work of life—to pay attention. Jane Kenyon's *Otherwise* is poignant and powerful, the poetry of an honest journey of facing limits. And, I would invite folks to read William Stafford's *The Way It Is*—and to do so when they are alert and in a mood for fearless reflection, as this is a realistic glimpse of various personal, political, and cultural experiences.

## Rev. Wayne F. Albertson

Pastor, First UMC, Ada, Ohio

Thank you for the article on novels in the recent *Circuit Rider*. My church has an ongoing reading group called Novel Theology. Some of the books on your list we've read, some are excellent ideas. Here are a few others we've read:

*Plainsong* by Kent Haruf — An interesting study of family and the many forms it takes. It's just a good story of "plain" life.

*The Good Earth* by Pearl Buck — Even though it's been around a long time, our group loved it. Issues of rural vs. urban, wealth vs. poverty, beauty vs. function, among others!

*A Prayer for Owen Meany* by John Irving — My personal favorite! Set in the Vietnam era, it's a comic & heartbreaking novel of friendship and regret.

*The Sparrow* by Mary Doria Russell — A science fiction book, not well-received by our group, but well worth the effort. It's about a Jesuit mission to (of all places) Alpha Centauri!

## Dick Hooton

Pastor, Zwolle-Bayou Scie charge, Louisiana

These are not novels, but they are certainly right up there as two of the most important works of our time and deserve a special niche in Christian discipleship. I refer first to Naomi Klein's *Shock Doctrine*, published by Metropolitan Books. It is heavy reading, well documented, and takes a bit of time to read, but it is worth it! Wrap some discipleship around this! Another "must read" is *The Prosecution of George W. Bush for Murder*, by Vincent Bugliosi, published by Vanguard Press. The book is a helpful guide to thinking in terms of moral matters and is stimulating in terms of the gift of discernment—especially critical in this year for us as followers of "the Prince of Peace."

## George C. Brown

Retired, Pacific Northwest Annual Conference., Everett, Wash.

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