

President's Report to the Ruggles B.O.D.
Thursday, March 26th, 2026 (2nd Quarterly B.O.D. meeting of 2026)
The Mystery of Christ—Outside the Box

I write this on the day *before* our Board of Directors meeting (3/25/26). I was just reminded that one of our great pilgrims of faith at Ruggles turned 97 today--the one and only Lee Williams! For 97 years "*Mrs. Lee*" has been "*contending earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.*" (Jude 3)

I loved her reflection in our 150th Commemorative Magazine a couple of years ago: "*Oh how I love my time at Ruggles, so many memories. The children singing and laughing throughout the camp grounds.....I have to say one of my favorite things is the AFTERGLOW.... meeting up at the dining hall for a light snack and fellowship after each nightly service.*" If there is a word that reflects Lee Williams, I don't know of a better word than "GLOWING". Like Moses—I believe Lee Williams shines as she has walked and talked with our Lord all these years.

So, one of the common phrases in Christian circles is "*The Lord moves in mysterious ways.*" The very mission and ministry of Jesus is mysterious. The Virgin Birth is mysterious. The people "*were astonished at His teaching...not as the scribes.*" (Mt. 7:28) Jesus brought new teaching--"new wine" to the world and the old wineskins were failing in trying to contain its newness. (Mt 9:17) God is an "Outside the Box" God---working mysteriously in the affairs of us all.

In a way, the very nature of Camp Meeting is "Outside the Box", mysterious, even unorthodox. Brother Charlie Shoemaker shared a Camp Meeting article with me a few weeks back about the history of Camp Meetings. The lady who wrote the article is Ann Adams and she grew up in Camp Meetings in Georgia. She noted that the very idea of having "Church outside" was at first frowned on greatly by John Wesley. He writes about it in his Journal "*I could scarce reconcile myself at first to this strange way of preaching in the fields...having been all my life (till very lately) so tenacious of every point relating to decency and order that I should have thought the saving of souls almost a sin if it had not been done in church.*" (John Wesley, Journal—3/31/1739).

Preaching outside---was "outside the box" but Mr. Wesley soon realized the efficacy of reaching those who were outside. The Camp Meeting movement began a few years later and spread like wildfire. Ms. Adams described her Camp Meeting years, "*...little or no cell service, no televisions, and limited connection to the outside world, the distractions of everyday life fade into the background. In their place comes something increasingly rare in modern life, space to encounter God...generations return year after year around a shared pursuit of holiness.*"

Sounds like the mission of Ruggles. May we at Ruggles continue this Outside the Box witness and pursuit of holiness for Christ!