

# Offering Christ Today

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## Back to Our Basics: Recapturing Principles of Evangelism Espoused by John Wesley

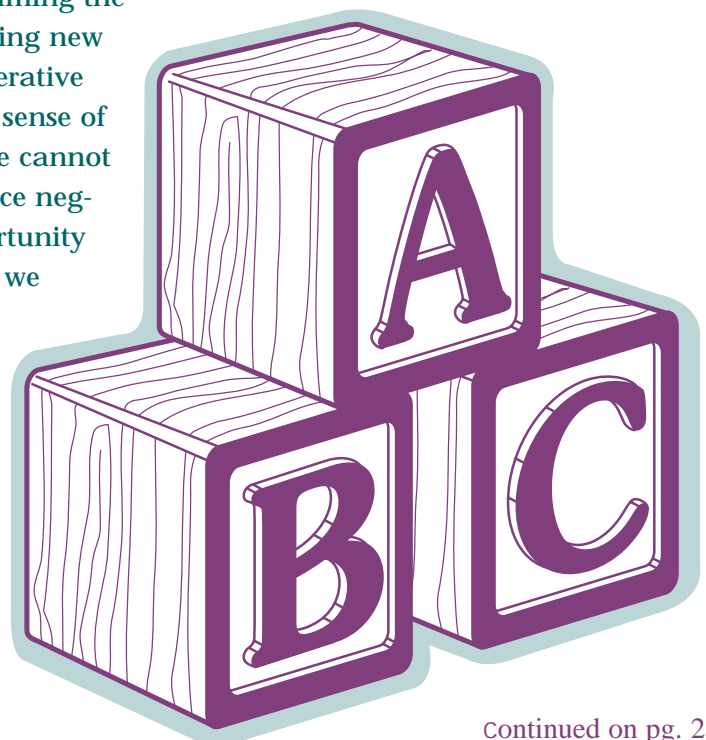
Wesley S.K. Daniel

**A**lthough I do not claim to be a John Wesley scholar, as a student of Wesley over the years I find that, in early Methodist history, there were two basic evangelism strategies that were repeatedly emphasized for the growth and vitality of the movement.

*First*, the early Methodist leaders were, in a sense, “possessed” with a zeal and passion to save souls for Jesus Christ. This zeal was manifested as John Wesley and others took to the streets, highways and byways, and open-air fields to boldly preach and proclaim the transforming power of the gospel. Whatever the cost, they undauntedly proclaimed conversion and brought thousands of souls into the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

For Wesley, proclaiming the Good News and making new disciples was an imperative task; he did it with a sense of urgency. He said, “We cannot with a good conscience neglect the present opportunity of saving souls while we live...” (*Works of John Wesley, Volume VIII, 310*). On one occasion when he was teaching his lay preachers, he said, “... you have nothing to do but to save souls....

Therefore, spend and be spent in this



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work.... It is not your business to preach so many times, and to take care of this or that society; but to save as many souls as you can; to bring as many sinners as you possibly can to repentance and with all your power to build them up in that holiness without which they cannot see the Lord” (Ibid.).

For Wesley and his followers, “saving souls” for Jesus Christ was at the heart of their ministry. Wesley possessed a deep and sincere passion to share the transforming power of the gospel, preaching the message of conversion unashamedly to the rich, the poor, and the downcast over and over again wherever he went. He frequently spoke of the advancement of this apostolic movement and was convinced that its expansion was designed to “save souls” and nurture and usher people into the gates of God’s kingdom.

What does all of this have to do with us today? In his book, *Rekindling the Flame*, Will Willimon talks about how, through history, contemporary United Methodists have basically abandoned the task of evangelizing their communities and societies. We have become so concerned about being mere caretakers of our own parishes and churches that we have gone from passionate disciple makers to passionately maintaining and nurturing our ecclesiastical systems. We have become experts at “servicing” our church and its processes; but we have neglected one of the most basic tasks for which God has called and anointed us, to proclaim the Good News with power and conviction, save souls, and call persons to repentance and discipleship with Christ. For a very long time this has not been at the heart of our denomination; however, I am elated to know that in more recent years we have begun to witness a fresh zeal and passion among our leaders and churches to once again courageously proclaim the transforming power of the gospel, call persons to Christian conversion, and invite persons to radical Christian discipleship.

*Second*, Wesley and the early Methodists placed a great deal of importance on new disciples gathering and forming in small groups for spiritual growth, nurture, Christian discipleship, and manifestation of their faith in action in the world. Wesley called these small groups “bands,” “societies,” and “classes.” They were crucial to the spread of the early Methodist movement and social reformation of 18<sup>th</sup>-century Europe.

Wesley believed that Methodism was different from other movements of his day; it had a fine balance between conversion and nurturing. He required new converts to be part of a “class” or “band.” Persons who joined the classes or bands made a covenant along with other persons in the group to: “do good,” “avoid all known sin,” and strive regularly to partake in the means of grace (through the reading of Scripture, daily prayer, fasting, the Lord’s supper, and regularly attending worship). They met weekly to report on their activities in regard to the three vows. They also met to care for one another’s burdens and for each other in genuine ways. The dynamism of the Wesleyan movement came from the small classes and bands. These regular meetings and accountability provided mutual support and nurture so that they were able to work toward reforming society through acts of love, mercy, justice, and peace. This small group strategy played a powerful role in the rapid growth of the Wesleyan movement. Wesley is known to have instructed his followers to preach in as many places as possible and to start as many classes as possible. Regrettably, this successful, foundational strategy has slipped into neglect for more than two centuries. Today’s church, must rediscover the effectiveness of this powerful evangelistic, disciple-making strategy in fresh ways.

Contrary to what some may think about the need for the re-formation of small groups (covenant or cell groups) in our church today, when laypersons come together in small groups, pray together, and study God’s

Word together, bearing one another's burdens and caring for one another, they cannot help but grow in genuine Christian love and affection for one another. This then leads people to speak the truth in love and grow up into the likeness of Jesus Christ. God's redemptive action and transformation takes place in awesome ways in people's hearts. It happened in the Apostolic times; it happened in Wesley's day; and sure enough, it can happen more and more in our day!

Wesley said that there is no such thing as solitary religion. For him, the class meetings were his primary strategy to help persons become what they always wanted to be as followers of Christ; it was also to help disciples become all that God intended them to become in God's good creation.

As a result of these two very basic principles, non-Christians of Wesley's day were led to a genuine encounter with the living Christ; they were spiritually nourished and nurtured, and sent back from whence they came so that they could live out their Christian faith and witness and transform other lives for Christ. As a result, the Methodist movement grew at a rapid rate. Can this happen in our day? Yes! If it worked for Wesley, it can just as well work in our day!

Numerous resources are available to help local churches develop and maintain discipleship systems for covenant and small groups, for the purpose of one's own Christian formation with Christ. Here are a few of the excellent resources provided by Discipleship Resources ([www.discipleshipresources.org](http://www.discipleshipresources.org), 800-685-4370) for your consideration:

- *Cultivating Christian Community*  
by Thomas R. Hawkins
- *The Heart's Journey: Christian Spiritual Formation in the Life of a Small Group*  
by Barb Nardi Kurtz
- *The Christian Small-Group Leader*  
by Thomas R. Hawkins
- *Keeping in Touch* by Carol F. Krau

Other resources for your reading:

- Albin, Thomas R. "Inwardly Persuaded: Religion of the Heart in Early British Methodism," Ch. 2 in *"Heart Religion" in the Methodist Tradition and Related Movements*, ed. Richard B. Steele (Scarecrow, 2001).
- Henderson, D. Michael. *John Wesley's Class Meeting: A Model for Making Disciples*. Evangel, 1997.
- Manskar, Steven W. *Accountable Discipleship*. Discipleship Resources, 2000.
- Watson, David Lowes. *The Early Methodist Class Meeting*. Wipf & Stock, 2002.

I am encouraged to see God at work in our church today; many leaders and churches are returning to the basics of our faith and spiritual tradition; we are seeking and catching a fresh vision of what God can yet do in our day...in our time...in our world. I pray for the day when we, as a denomination, perhaps as never before, will recapture the spirit and zeal of the Wesleyan movement and the early Church; i.e., passionately preach conversion, "save souls," spread Scriptural holiness, make new disciples, and implement small group and discipleship systems in every local church for the purpose of personal growth, spiritual nurture, discipleship, witnessing, and conscientiously working to bring about reconciliation, peace, and justice in our world.

I believe if our church is to recover from decades of decline and apathy, we *must* return to our basics; with passion and a fresh enthusiasm we must recapture and implement these basic evangelism principles in our churches. If it worked in Wesley's day, it can and will work for us today! I pray the contents of these pages will ignite a new spark within you to undertake the task of disciple making with a renewed zeal and passion.



*Dr. Wesley S.K. Daniel, Editor of Offering Christ Today, currently serves as Director of Evangelism and International Church Development at the United Methodist General Board of Discipleship, Nashville, TN.*

## Back to Our Future: Every United Methodist an Evangelist

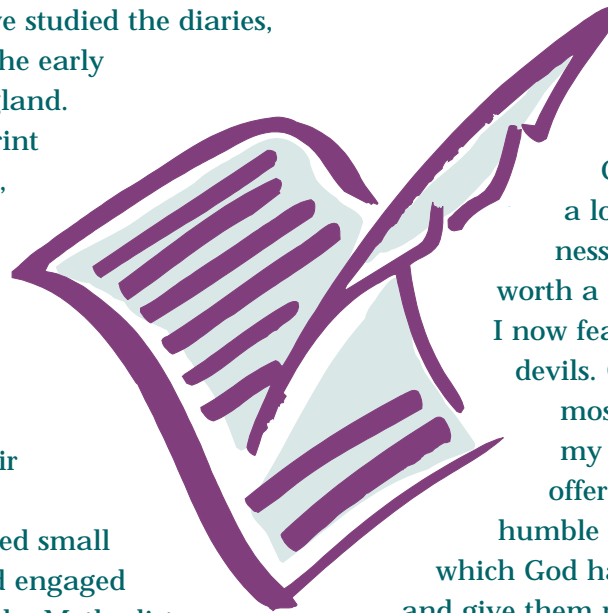
*Tom Albin*

While it is appropriate to celebrate this year in which John Wesley would have been 300 years old, it is also important to remember the role played by ordinary men and women in the early Methodist movement. Without the hundreds and thousands of ordinary people who joined the Methodist movement in the 18th century, John and Charles Wesley would have never made it into the history books.

For many years I have studied the diaries, letters, and journals of the early Methodist people in England. The evidence, both in print and in manuscript form, is absolutely clear—the real power of the Evangelical Revival in England came from the ordinary people, the working class men and women who opened their hearts and minds to the Methodist message, joined small formational groups, and engaged their hands and feet in the Methodist mission to the poor and the marginalized. These ordinary people were the ones who experienced the inward transformation of grace, then began to share the love of God with their family and friends. In over 70% of the times we can identify the person God used as a catalyst for conversion or the new birth, it was a lay woman or a lay man—not the Rev. John Wesley or the Rev. Charles Wesley or the Rev. George Whitefield or any other clergyperson.

Every Methodist became an evangelist. Once people came to saving faith in Jesus Christ, love of God empowered them to witness to members of their family, their friends,

and to those who needed Christ most. Having experienced the love and grace of God for themselves, the early Methodist people were guided by the teaching of John Wesley and empowered by the music of Charles Wesley to become ambassadors for Christ and participants in his ministry of reconciliation.



Glory, glory, and thanksgiving,

and praise, be to

God forever, for

what he has done

for my soul! Now I

am happy indeed!

One moment of such

a love and such happi-

ness as I now feel is

worth a hundred worlds!

I now fear neither men nor

devils. Give my kindest and

most grateful love to all

my dear friends, who

offered up their faithful,

humble prayers for me,

which God has now answered:

and give them my thanks. Well

might they say,

'If all the world our Jesus knew,

Then all the world would love

him too!'

I am your new-born, happy

brother, T.B.

*(The Journal of Mrs. H.A. Rogers, p. 315)*

Early Methodist evangelism made room for God to work in a variety of ways. James Hall, a layman who would become one of the early Methodist preachers, came to faith in Christ, as did his brother. The difference in their religious experience became a source of spiritual wisdom for James and kept him from thinking that God would work in every life in the same

manner. James explained how the experience of his brother:

taught me many useful lessons, particularly that God was not confined to one method of bringing sinners to the knowledge of the truth. For while the Lord brought me down to the ground, under the most powerful convictions, He, at the same time, gently opened my brother's heart, as he did the heart of Lydia, and kindly drew him with the cords of his love, to the same degree of diligence in all the means of grace. This prevented me from fixing a standard to weigh or measure the work of God by, in the future period of time.

*(The Arminian Magazine, volume 16, pages 65-66)*

The role of women was important in the Methodist mission as well. Let me offer one brief account from the life of the girl who would one day become a significant spiritual leader and evangelist in the Methodist movement. The witness of the unnamed female servant reminds us how important it is to listen to the spiritual concerns of our children and grandchildren so that we, too, might share the Good News.

About this time there came a servant-maid to live with my father, who had heard, and felt some little, of the power of inward religion. It was among the people called Methodists she had received her instructions. Seeing the uneasiness my sister was under, she took some opportunities of conversing with her. I was at this season with my grandmother. On my return home, my sister repeated the substance of these conversations to me. I well remember the very spot we stood on, and the words she spake, which, though we were but a few minutes together,

sunk so deeply into my heart, that they were never afterward erased. My reflections were suited to a child not seven years old. I thought if I became a Methodist I should be sure of salvation; and determined, if ever I could get to that people, whatever it cost, I would be one of them. But after a few conversations, and hearing my sister read some little books which this servant had given to her, I found out, it was not the being joined to any people that would save me, but I must be converted, and have faith in Christ; that I was to be saved by believing; and that believing would make me holy, and give me a power to love and serve God.

*The Life and Faith of Mrs. John Fletcher (1848 ed., p. 15)*

In Africa and every country where The United Methodist Church is effective in its mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ, I find principles and practices similar to those introduced above:

- Every Methodist is an evangelist.
- Variety of God's work is celebrated.
- Witness and ministry of ordinary men and women are affirmed.
- Children are given appropriate spiritual guidance.

Perhaps we need to go back to the future. Can we find ways to help people experience for themselves the transforming love and grace of God, then help them share this experience with their family, their friends, and as many of the children of God as possible? I believe we can, and our history gives strong support to that hope.



*Dr. Tom Albin is a well-known Wesley scholar who currently serves as the Dean of the Upper Room Chapel in Nashville, TN.*

## A Core Curriculum for Discipleship

James T. Reuteler

“Enter through the narrow gate,” said Jesus, “For the gate is narrow and the road is hard that leads to life” (Matthew 7:13-14, NRSV). This is one passage we frequently ignore as we invite people into discipleship; instead, we talk about faith as if there were no demands made on it. I would like to suggest that the journey through the narrow gate is indeed rigorous, and not many of us find it or are willing to pay the price to pass through it.

For years I have assumed that the purpose of the Wesley quadrilateral was to help us make moral decisions, but I could never quite figure out how to make it work.

I have come to the conclusion that the real purpose is to guide us through the narrow gate.

A practical way of using the quadrilateral would be as an outline for constructing a core curriculum for discipleship. People need to be prepared as they pass through the narrow gate. We have not taken seriously enough the task of discipleship preparation. Let me show how the quadrilateral could be used as an outline in a core curriculum for discipleship.

Scripture. The first and most important step in Wesley’s quadrilateral is Scripture. While Bible study has long been one of the primary courses we have taught in the church, I have rarely come across anyone teaching the origin of the Scriptures. We have talked about the canon of Scripture and given some dates, but we have not gone in depth. (An example of what might be used is Barclay’s *Introducing the Bible*. This is a classic in helping us understand the origin

and development of Scripture). Before Scripture can be understood, we must understand why we call it Scripture. I would propose two courses: The Origin of Sacred Scripture and The Bible as Sacred History. To find our way through the narrow gate, we need to know how Scripture developed.

Tradition. The next logical step in creating a core curriculum is tradition, the interpretation of Scripture from the time of Jesus to the present. Obviously, we can find some serious distortions of Scripture,

such as gave birth to the Crusades, the Inquisition, and slavery. On the positive side, there are the Reformation under Martin Luther and the Evangelical Revival led by John Wesley. Other positive interpretations of Scripture can be found as well.

What disciples need is an understanding of Jesus, his teachings, and an overview of the entire story [history] of the Church. Courses for this aspect of the quadrilateral would be *The Sermon on the Mount* and *The Story of the Church*. It would be best to study Methodism (or any other denomination) in the context of the Story of the Church and not as a subject of its own.

Experience. The third step in the quadrilateral as an outline for a core curriculum is experience. Experience is to the individual what tradition is to the whole Christian community. Wesley’s own vivid religious experience took place in a religious society on Aldersgate Street. While he considered religious experience a personal matter, he never considered it private. There was plenty of sharing going on in those early Methodist



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# Sermon Preparation Begins with Spiritual Formation

Safiyah Fosua

One day, a woman stopped me to ask a question: “Can anyone learn to preach, or are some people just spiritually gifted?” The questions that arose in my heart from her innocent but provocative question continue to haunt me. When is a sermon or a preacher *good*? Can indeed *anyone* preach an effective message?

Sermon preparation begins with spiritual formation. An important aspect of spiritual formation is coming to terms with the human condition. The Bible whispers that we are all human, and we are all subject to human foibles—yet it counters that grim pronouncement with the good news that we may be redeemed and reformed by the power and grace of God. Preaching then becomes the act of sharing those fresh revelations, like a herald with a message too hot to hold. Consider the following suggestions:

- *Approach the text with empty hands and an open heart.* Leave your previous ideas about the text behind. Let the text speak to you first. Later, consult commentaries, lexicons, and other resources.
- *Let formation precede information.* What about this text speaks to human need? What builds character? What increases faith? What brings hope?
- *Approach the text prayerfully.* Both the preacher and the congregation have spiritual needs. God may use the text to speak to your personal needs as well as those of the congregation.



*The eloquence of the sermon is not nearly as important as the relevance of the message and the sincerity of the messenger.*

- *Approach the text with humility.* Think of the people in your congregation and the best ways to help them truly hear what you have just heard. The message comes from God; you are the messenger.

When is a sermon ‘good’ and what makes a preacher effective? For most people, relevance and authenticity win over sermon delivery skills. They respect the words of a person who regularly struggles with the text and emerges from the encounter with a word that he or she believes has come from God. The eloquence of the sermon is not nearly as important as the relevance of the message and the sincerity of the messenger. My answer to the original question: though some are indeed gifted in preaching, any Christian who takes spiritual formation seriously can preach an effective sermon.



Dr. Safiyah Fosua is the Director of Invitational Preaching at the General Board of Discipleship, Nashville, TN.

# Creating a Healthy Core Group

Craig K. Miller

**W**hat expectations do you have for someone who is a leader in your church? A leader is anyone who is responsible for the spiritual formation of others in your congregation. A quick list of leaders would include people on committees and boards; teachers for adults, youth, and children; and people responsible for outreach ministries such as a soup kitchen or a tutoring ministry.

Churches that pay attention to the spiritual health of their leaders are putting first things first. Before you start that new worship experience or launch that new outreach ministry, you need to check on the nature of the relationships among your leaders. Are you praying for each other? Do you have a spirit of encouragement? Do you hold one another accountable for your spiritual growth?

As United Methodists we have a wonderful tool for spiritual formation. It is called *means of grace*. Found in the *2000 Book of Discipline*, Paragraph 103, page 74, they are as follows:

- The public worship of God
- The ministry of the Word, either read or expounded
- The Lord's Supper
- Family and private prayer
- Searching the Scriptures
- Fasting or abstinence
- Christian conferencing

Through these practices Christians become leaders who share their faith in a way that builds up the whole body of Christ. How does a congregation create a healthy core group? It starts by encouraging leaders to live out their faith on a daily basis. Where do you start? Have a group of your leaders complete the *Spiritual Leader Checklist* below, then discuss how they can improve in their spiritual disciplines. After all, leadership starts with what's in the heart.

## Spiritual Leader Checklist

Complete the following survey, giving yourself 10 points for each "yes" answer.

### POINTS

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. I say grace before each meal.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. I set aside a time to pray each day.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. At least once a week, I pray out loud with another person. (With a family member, a friend, a person at work or church)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. I read at least one verse of scripture every day.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. I attend worship at our church at least three times a month.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. At least twice a month I meet with a group of people to pray, reflect on scripture, and build one another up. (Small group, Sunday school, prayer group, etc.)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. I take communion at least once a month.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. At least once a month I give of myself to others. (I volunteer at a homeless shelter or soup kitchen, visit in a nursing home, tutor a child, visit a prisoner, mow a neighbor's lawn, etc.)

- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. I fast once a week (I give up food for a period of time, or do a media fast and go without electronic media—TV, radio, etc.—for a day.)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. As part of every meeting at church, we spend 10-15 minutes praying together and reflecting on a scripture passage.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Total

Which of these are the most attractive to you?

Which of these practices can you add to the ones you are already doing?

As you reflect upon your score, where can you improve?



Dr. Craig K. Miller currently is the Director of New Church Development at the General Board of Discipleship, Nashville, TN.

## A Model of Witnessing Through Praise

Francine Taylor-Thirus

A few days ago I was asked, “Where has God’s grace appeared in your life recently?” I was able to recall that I had had an “angel moment” a few days before. An “angel moment” is one of those unexpected God-given experiences that leaves you knowing you have been in the presence of God.

Not long ago, I was sitting on a small plane going over my presentation. We were almost ready to take off when a young lady boarded and asked if could she take the seat next to me. I invited her to take the seat. She was obviously somewhat disturbed and agitated. As she settled down, she looked at what I was doing and asked if I was a recruiter. I have no idea what she saw that made her think I was a recruiter. Sharing with her that I worked for The United Methodist Church opened the door for her to give me an abundance of information about herself.

This young lady was about thirty and had experienced a disconnection with churches and Christians for a long period of her life. She was now attending a church that she was very excited about; she was offered numerous experiences where she could *experience* the living presence and power of Christ. Prior to this church experience, her impression of church consisted of seeing people reading, memorizing, and singing in a detached and habitual way. She felt a disdain for this and could not connect with it.

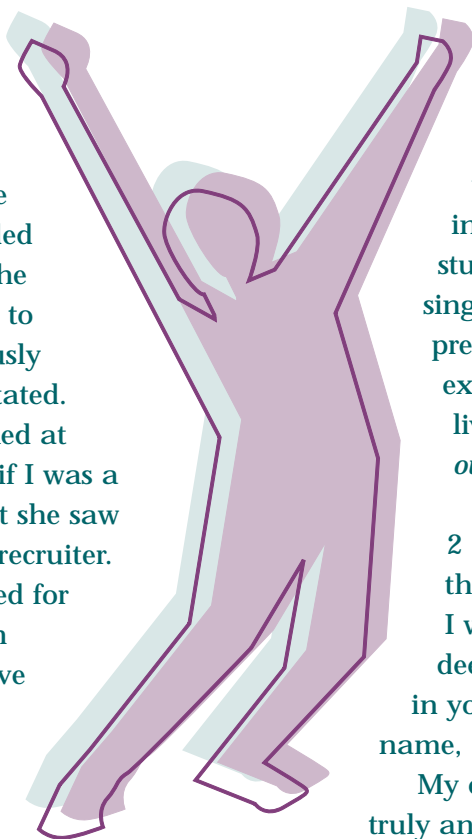
Her new church welcomed, nurtured, loved, and reached out to her. In addition, she believed that they were willing to be vulnera-

ble and to live out God’s reign in their lives each day; they shared their genuine love in powerful ways. This touched her in a way that invited her to be excited, energetic, committed—a witness and a disciple for her church and for God. She was living these experiences as easily as breathing. This was truly a turning point in her life.

Her faith modeled an important component of an experiential relationship with Christ and how it relates to the work of disciple-making—praise. In addition to Bible study, reading, attending classes, singing, praying, fasting, and preaching, there must be a real experiential relationship with the living Christ that is just as strong *outside* church as it is *inside*!

I am reminded of Psalm 9:1-2 (NRSV): “I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart: I will tell of all your wonderful deeds. I will be glad and exult in you; I will sing *praise* to your name, O Most High.”

My conversation with her was truly an “angel moment” for me, a feeling of being surrounded by Christ’s presence. One of the natural ways of making disciples is by praising God through witnessing. We naturally want to tell others about our joy in the form of praise. It is authentic and real. In this sense, you could say that I am a recruiter, she is a recruiter, you are a recruiter, and all of God’s children are recruiters... for God!



Dr. Francine Taylor-Thirus currently serves as Director of African American Ministries at the General Board of Discipleship, Nashville, TN.

## Does Your Church Want Company?

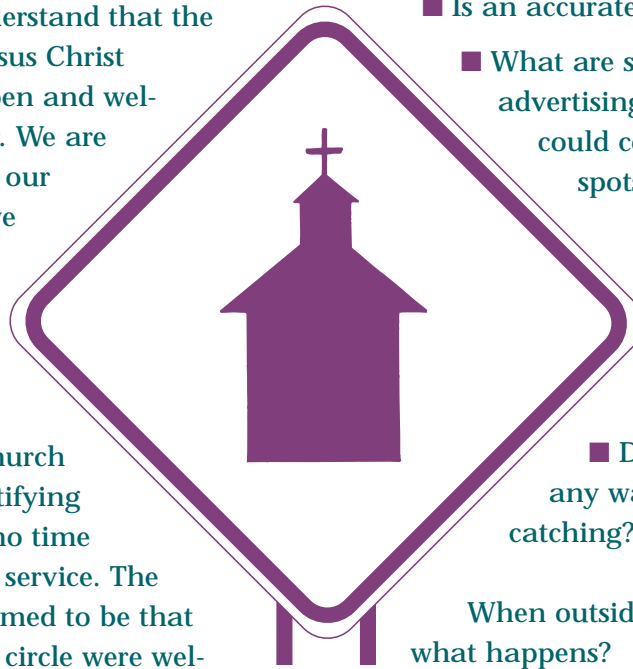
*Richard C. Looney*

**M**ost of us understand that the Church of Jesus Christ should be open and welcoming to the outsider. We are to open our doors and our hearts, but too often we send other messages. While on vacation recently we found it very difficult to locate a place to worship. In several towns, some church buildings had no identifying name and a few had no time posted for the worship service. The unwritten message seemed to be that only folks in the inner circle were welcome. Several miles from where we live, a small church has a 'welcome visitor' sign that is a work of art, but nowhere on the premises or building is there a time of service posted.

Something for your church leaders to consider... Ask a small group of leaders to spend some time on the premises as 'outsiders'.

- Are the building and grounds well maintained and inviting?
- Is the sign large enough to be read from the street?
- Are there inviting words and a schedule posted?
- Are there reserved parking places for guests?
- What is it that says clearly that this congregation expects and welcomes guests?

Ask the same group of leaders to look at your listing in the phonebook. New persons under the age of forty rely heavily on this kind of information.



- Is an accurate schedule posted?
- What are some other forms of advertising and marketing you could consider (website, radio spots)?
- Is there anything distinctive about your congregation that invites interest in attending your church?
- Does your ad stand out in any way... is it attractive? eye-catching?

When outsiders visit your church, what happens?

- Are there any directional signs?
- Does someone meet guests in the parking lot to greet, welcome, guide, and introduce them to others in the church?
- Are they introduced to people near their seat in the sanctuary?
- Is there immediate follow-up that day from someone in the congregation?
- The guests have reached out to your congregation, but how do you intend to reach out to them? A very large percentage of people will return if visited or a contact made within the first thirty-six hours after the initial visit.

Many churches are convinced that they are models of friendliness, but closer examination might reveal that such warmth is only extended to "the family" while outsiders are frozen out!



*Bishop Richard C. Looney serves as the President of The Foundation for Evangelism, Lake Junaluska, NC.*



# 12 Free Downloads

*We invite you to use these resources as free leaflets or handouts for new members, for study groups, for hospital or nursing home visitation, in the church foyer, as discussion starters . . . any way you feel they will be of help to persons seeking information and inspiration!*

**Ministry in My Community** Jesus tells us to love God and neighbor. Who is my neighbor? How can I know and serve my neighbor, following Jesus' example?

**You Can Make a Difference** This leaflet for new leaders in your congregation (or past leaders with new responsibilities) encourages persons to act to genuinely make a difference, and to invite and inspire others to do the same.

**What's Next for New Members?** Now that I'm a member of this congregation, what can I expect? And what is expected of me? A brief description of commitments we make as members of a congregation and as disciples of Christ.

**25 Ways to Build Up a Church** 25 practical suggestions for strengthening and nurturing the life and work of the congregation.

**Accepted: Understanding Our Relationship with God** Four truths that can bring your life new joy, meaning, and purpose.

**"As We Forgive Others"** An examination of this challenging phrase from The Lord's Prayer . . . what God's forgiveness means and what forgiveness of others can mean for us as Christians.

**Caring for Others** Care is as essential to human life as food and drink. We are called and empowered by God to support and care for others, following Jesus' example.

**How to Live at Your Best** Ten steps toward a healthier, more spiritual life.

**How God Answers Prayer** Does God hear and answer our prayers? How God Answers Prayer is an assurance of God's love and response to faithful prayer.

**How to Pray for the Sick** When we pray for the sick, we are inviting God's Spirit to reach and heal.

**Stewardship Nuggets** Content and discussion questions to help parents guide children in their understanding of money and giving.

**Elder Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation** How can I recognize it? What can I do about it? How can I raise awareness?



DISCIPLESHIP RESOURCES

[www.discipleshipresources.org/downloads.asp](http://www.discipleshipresources.org/downloads.asp)



Available for purchase January 2004

**NextChurch.Now Revised Edition**

With Updated Statistics and Instructional DVD

Craig Kennet Miller

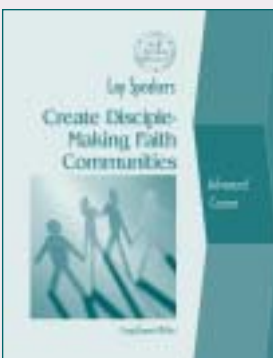
NextChurch.Now states that the primary evangelistic strategy for the 21st century is the creating of disciple-making faith communities. Using the experience of the New Testament church at Ephesus as a guide, Miller challenges new and existing churches to rekindle a passion for ministry in the midst of a rapidly changing world. New with this updated edition is a DVD ideal for training leaders in key concepts from the book. Led by Miller, the DVD features five 15-20

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1. What Is a Faith Community?
2. Who Are Your People?
3. Creating a Discipleship System
4. Creating Experience-Based Worship
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**Lay Speakers Create Disciple-Making Faith Communities**

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By Herb Miller

Financial giving is an important element of our spiritual relationship with God. There are twenty financial stewardship themes that recur and evolve in the Old and New Testaments. Full Disclosure identifies these themes, lists their historical importance, and illustrates contemporary applications for each theme. The themes fall into three categories: (1) Why should we give? (2) How does giving benefit us? and (3) How should we give?

(DR411) ISBN 0-88177-411-1 • 128 pages; \$17.95



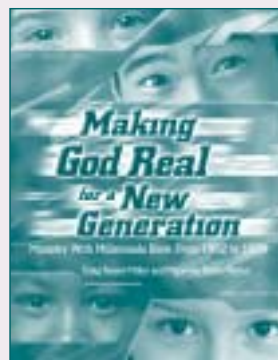
**Faith & Money**

Understanding Annual Giving in Church

By Michael D. Reeves and Jennifer Tyler

Grounded in the gospel, Faith & Money

- Identifies the challenges of fund development in local congregations,
- Develops a consistent theological foundation for fund development, and
- Guides congregations in building worthy expectations and attitudes on how to fund ministry. (DR410) ISBN 0-88177-410-3 128 pages; \$17.95



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Ministry With Millennials Born

From 1982 to 1999

Craig Kennet Miller and

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Marie White Webb

In this practical manual, Webb shares her understanding and insight into ministry with the homebound and those living in continuing-care retirement communities. Equip yourself with valuable information designed to enrich your ministry with the frail elderly. This resource includes:

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  - Helpful advice for organizing and implementing a visitation ministry;
  - Suggestions for leading worship in care facilities;
  - Guidance in dealing with grief, fears, and end-of-life issues;
  - A model for training volunteers.
- (DR403) ISBN 0-88177-403-0 • 64 pages; \$9.95



**La niñez**

Presente y futuro de la iglesia: Manual de estudio para el desarrollo de ministerios con la niñez

Liana H. Pérez-Félix

La niñez: presente y futuro de la iglesia es un recurso del Plan Nacional para el Ministerio Hispano. Este manual de estudio está diseñado para capacitar a maestros(as) y a líderes de la iglesia local encargados de organizar, desarrollar y dirigir ministerios con la niñez en los ministerios hispanos y comunidades de fe.

(DR340) ISBN-088177340-9 96 páginas; \$13.95



### **Partnersteps**

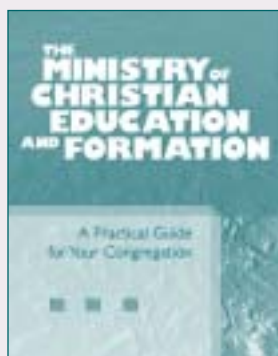
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Edward A. Kail

Leaders are seeking more and better ways to pursue the church's ministry through shared or cooperative partnerships. This is a valuable tool for local church leaders and judicatory leaders responsible for the life and ministry of the church in transitional and missional areas. Partnersteps works from a process perspective to help the reader consider typical problems encountered in designing cooperative ministries, then suggests exercises that

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(DR357) ISBN 0-88177-357-3 • 96 pages; \$15.95



### **The Ministry of Christian Education and Formation**

A Practical Guide for Your Congregation

Practical suggestions for building and guiding a ministry team through the many tasks and responsibilities of forming, informing, and transforming others as Christian disciples, including:

- Background information on the primary task of Christian education and formation, the means of grace, the vision and mission of the church in making disciples, and Christian practices;

- Guidance for developing a shared congregational vision for teaching;
- Helps for planning settings for teaching/learning;
- Suggestions and methods for forming partnerships with others;
- Identify effective teachers;
- Helps in selecting curriculum resources;
- Tools for planning your ministry, including 25 sample letters and forms, charts, checklists, job descriptions, meeting outlines, and more—all reproducible;
- A resource list and much more.

(DR395) ISBN 0-88177-395-6 • 128 pages, \$17.95



### **Nuestros votos de membresía en la iglesia Metodista Unida**

Mark W. Stamm

Traducción y adaptación por Liana H. Pérez-Félix

Traducción y adaptación del librito Our Membership Vows in The United Methodist Church. Este librito es un recurso excelente para las personas que están considerando ser miembros de la Iglesia Metodista Unida, y para quienes desean repasar los votos de membresía que aparecen en la Disciplina de la Iglesia Metodista Unida y explora las implicaciones del cumplimiento de

los mismos en la vida cristiana a través de una comunidad de fe u el mundo. (solamente en paquetes de 10)

This adaptation of Our Membership Vows in The United Methodist Church is an excellent resource for persons considering becoming church members or members who want to review their vows.

(DR332) ISBN 0-88177-332-8 • 48 pages; \$19.95 per set of 10 (only sold in sets of 10)



### **Director's Manual for Weekday Ministries**

Barbara Snell McLain

Many congregations want to start, expand, or find new ways to meet community needs through a weekday ministry. McLain addresses:

- The role of the program director
- Licensing and accreditation
- How to get started
- How to set up and manage in the available space
- How to implement and maintain a quality program

- How to create a safe environment
- Financing
- Managing enrollment
- Initial training and continuing education of staff
- The role and duties of board of directors
- Getting the word out into the community

Includes reproducible handouts.

(DR383) ISBN 0-88177-383-2 • 128 pages; \$17.95



### **103 Questions Youth Workers Ask**

John O. Gooch

In response to questions frequently asked by youth ministry workers, Gooch provides practical information on how to do youth ministry. 103 Questions addresses questions in the following areas:

- Building community
- Dealing with discipline
- Topics/resources (finding and selecting)
- Long-range planning and youth ownership
- Getting youth involved
- Balancing spiritual growth, learning, and fun

- Characteristics of a good youth counselor
- Recruiting and training volunteers
- Involving parents
- Getting support from the congregation
- Ways to combat youth resistance against Sunday school
- How to stay in touch with the problems youth are experiencing

(DR405) ISBN 0-88177-405-7 • 128 pages; \$17.95



### **A Perfect Love**

Understanding John Wesley's

"A Plain Account of Christian Perfection"

Modern-Language Version and Notes

by Steven W. Manskar

Study Guide by Diana L. Hynson

Manskar has updated Wesley's work for today's reader in simple, straightforward language. A Perfect Love includes in-text definitions and notes that provide explanations of names and terms used by Wesley. It also includes hymns by Charles Wesley describing the work of grace in human lives that leads to perfection in love. In

addition, a study guide, by Diana Hynson, for individual or small group studies is included.

(DR388) ISBN 0-88177-388-3 • 96 pages; \$15.95

## Online Resources/Discipleship Ministries Websites



**Adult Ministries: Single, Younger, Middle, Older**  
[www.gbod.org/adult](http://www.gbod.org/adult)

**Bridging FaithWalks**  
[www.gbod.org/adultministriesinstitute](http://www.gbod.org/adultministriesinstitute)

**Camping & Retreat Ministries**  
[www.gbod.org/camping](http://www.gbod.org/camping)

**Center on Aging**  
[www.aging-umc.org](http://www.aging-umc.org)

**Children's Ministries**  
[www.gbod.org/children](http://www.gbod.org/children)

**Ethnic Local Church Concerns**  
[www.gbod.org/ethnic](http://www.gbod.org/ethnic)

**FaithQuest**  
[www.gbod.org/faithquest](http://www.gbod.org/faithquest)

**Family Ministries**  
[www.gbod.org/family](http://www.gbod.org/family)

**Generational Studies: Boomers, GenXers, Postmoderns, Millennials**  
[www.gbod.org/generation](http://www.gbod.org/generation)

**Hispanic Ministries/  
Caminemos con el Pueblo**  
[www.gbod.org/hispanic](http://www.gbod.org/hispanic)  
[www.gbod.org/hispanic/enespañol](http://www.gbod.org/hispanic/enespañol)

**Keeping in Touch**  
[www.gbod.org/keepingintouch](http://www.gbod.org/keepingintouch)

**Lay Ministries**  
[www.gbod.org/laity](http://www.gbod.org/laity)

**New Congregational Ministries**  
[www.umcncd.org](http://www.umcncd.org)

**Small Membership Churches**  
[www.gbod.org/membership](http://www.gbod.org/membership)

**Sprouts**  
[www.sproutsnet.org](http://www.sproutsnet.org)

**Stewardship Ministries**  
[www.gbod.org/stewardship](http://www.gbod.org/stewardship)

**Teaching & Learning**  
[www.gbod.org/education](http://www.gbod.org/education)

**Worship & Music Ministries**  
[www.gbod.org/worship](http://www.gbod.org/worship)



## Upcoming Events for 2004

**January 5-8, 2004**  
**Congress on Evangelism 2004:**  
**"Awaken the Nation!"**

Opryland Hotel, Nashville, TN  
Contact: Wesley S.K. Daniel  
877-899-2780 Ext. 7049 n wdaniel@gbod.org  
[www.gbod.org/congress04](http://www.gbod.org/congress04)

**January 20-23, 2004**  
**Large Church Initiative Conference**

Houston, TX  
Contact: Nancy Dunlap  
877-899-2780 Ext. 7141 n ndunlap@gbod.org

**February 10-13, 2004**  
**Bridging FaithWalks in Adult Ministries**

The Westin, San Francisco Airport, Millbrae, CA  
Contact: Soozung Sa  
877-899-2780 Ext. 7083 n AMI2004@gbod.org  
[www.gbod.org/adultministriesinstitute](http://www.gbod.org/adultministriesinstitute)

**August 5-10, 2004**  
**School of Congregational Development**

Tipp City, OH,  
Ginghamsburg United Methodist Church  
Contact: Deborah Carvin  
877-899-2780 Ext. 7051 n dcarvin@gbod.org

**February 3-5, 2004, Las Vegas, NV**  
**February 27-29, 2004, Birmingham, AL**  
**March 26-28, 2004, Baltimore, MD**  
**Connecting...Seminars:**  
**Making God Real in a Fragmented World**

Contact: Deborah Carvin  
877-899-2780 Ext. 7051 n dcarvin@gbod.org  
[www.gbod.org/congregational/connecting](http://www.gbod.org/congregational/connecting)

**April 14-17, 2004**  
**Joint Conference on Aging**

Hilton Hotel, San Francisco, CA  
Contact: Rodney Jackson  
415-974-9643 n registrar@asaging.org  
[www.agingconference.org/jc04](http://www.agingconference.org/jc04)

# May We Assist You in Your Task of Disciple Making?

Please send me more information on the following topics (be specific):

Forming New Faith Communities

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Reaching the Millennial Generation

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Congregational Revitalization

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Making Disciples/Faith-Sharing

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Reaching Young Adults

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Reaching Children and Families

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Other

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My name and address:

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Mail to:  
Wesley S.K. Daniel  
General Board of Discipleship  
PO Box 340003  
Nashville, TN 37203-0003  
Email: wdaniel@gbod.org

*Core Curriculum continued from pg. 6*

Societies and Class Meetings. The early Methodists had the opportunity to exercise what Wesley called *the spiritual senses*. Our core curriculum would have to include courses focusing on religious experience. I would suggest two: *The Spiritual Senses* and *The Nature of Religious Experience*. (There is writing related to spiritual senses. Both John and Charles Wesley mention them in their sermons, but do not go into any detail. Richard B. Steele's *Gracious Affection and "True Virtue" According to Jonathan Edwards and John Wesley* (Scarecrow, 1994) and Greg Clapper's *John Wesley on Religious Affections* (Scarecrow, 1989) are recommended readings.

Reason. The final step is the use of reason. It is not the first step, nor can it ever be. "Man left to himself," said Wesley, "will reason his way to hell" (Robert Tuttle, *On Giant Shoulders*, p. 120). Reason by itself will never take us through the narrow gate, but it will help us answer the questions our discipleship raises in modern society. The Apostle Peter's advice is just as relevant today as it was in the first century:

"Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect...." (1 Peter 3.15-16). There are two things that must be carefully reasoned out, that would make important courses for discipleship: *The Christian Faith [or Theology]* and *Christian Ethics*.

There are many other courses that are important for Christian discipleship, but these make up the core curriculum. These courses need to be offered in every church. One should not have to take them in the order in which I have listed them. Since they are all basic courses, they can be taken in any order. Without an awareness of the content of these courses, we do not have the basics, and we need the basics to guide us through the narrow gate to fullness of life in this world and eternal life in the next.



*Dr. James T. Reuteler currently serves as Pastor of Christian Discipleship at Grace United Methodist Church, Denver, CO.*

General Board of Discipleship of  
The United Methodist Church  
PO Box 340003  
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Karen A. Greenwaldt, *General Secretary*

Vance P. Ross, *Unit Administrator*

Wesley S.K. Daniel, *Editor*  
Email: wdaniel@gbod.org

**Editorial Team:**

Ralph Bauserman

Safiyah Fosua

Craig K. Miller

Soozung Sa

Francine Taylor-Thirus

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Toll-free 877-899-2780, Ext. 7141

Fax: 615-340-7015

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