

General Board of Discipleship of
The United Methodist Church
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THE GENERAL BOARD OF
DISCIPLESHIP

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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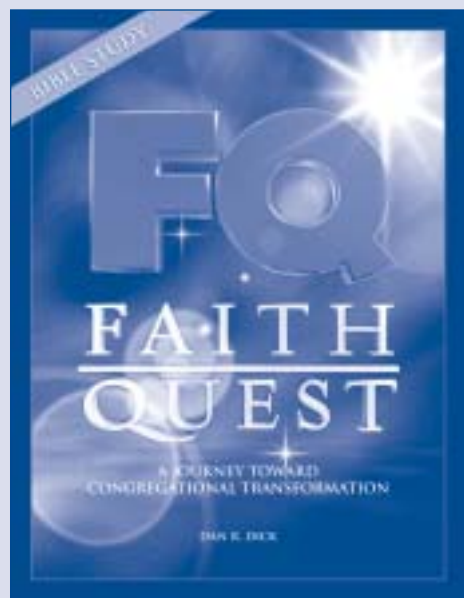
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*This is a periodic newsletter to resource
FaithQuest congregational leaders.*

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Special price for *FaithQuest Bible Study* (2000 printing)



Will you start new FaithQuest groups in January? The current edition of *FaithQuest Bible Study* is now available to currently enrolled congregations for \$20 per copy. Leader notes in a 3-ring binder will be available for \$30 until the stock is exhausted. Videos are available for \$49.95. To ensure that you have the materials on time and available for distribution at your orientation session, order by calling 877-899-2780, Ext. 7674.

FQ NEWS & NOTES FOR FAITH QUEST

LEADERS

THEME:
LEADING FQ
THROUGH
CHANGE!

VOLUME 3, NUMBER 6

NOVEMBER 2002

A Beginning IS Change

"Then God said, "Let there be light," and there was **change!** For the next five days, "God said," and there was **change!** Did you ever wonder why God waited until the sixth day to create people? Could it be that God knew that as soon as Adam and Eve were around there would be resistance to the changes brought forth from the chaos that existed?

Just imagine what the people might have said if they had been present! "Why do we have to have rocks? They hurt our feet." "Why do banana trees have to be so tall? We can't reach them without climbing." "Who needs mosquitoes and snakes and skunks? We were doing fine without them." "How about a four-day work week?"

Perhaps our preference for the status quo is inherent in the gift of free will, but there is clearly something in all of us that prompts us, when faced with change, to challenge and frequently to resist. Put us in a communal environment like a congregation, and that tendency is exacerbated. We often join a particular group, such as the church we choose to join, because it feels comfortable and becomes familiar. Change that, and the whole reason for joining is put to question—or so it seems.

In the past few months, many congregations have experienced profound change—the Cabinet has appointed a new pastor! Some people are questioning "Why?" They joined because of the pastor—the way she preaches, his wonderful manner when visiting, her vision for the future, his strong ability to teach from the Scriptures, her administrative skill, his absolute commitment to outreach ministries. You get the picture. Or do you? Are members shopping other churches to find the comfortable, familiar environment of the past?

How do congregational leaders prepare for the possibility that people will leave as a result of this "natural" tendency to resist change? Can we be proactive? Leaders must work together to communicate and to remind people that God is the One who creates wonderful gifts from what appears to be chaos.

Excepting only The Creation, the most profound change to the human experience occurred in and through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. He met resistance from every side. Even his own disciples resisted his vision of the kingdom of God, clinging to their traditional Messianic vision.



George Olive, Golive@aol.com, is a FaithQuest leader and national trainer who lives in Myrtle Beach, SC.

What did Christ do in response to the resistance to change? The answer is simple, though far from simplistic: Communication, Love, Patience, and Personal Example. How can congregational leaders apply this example to change within the congregation?

IN THIS ISSUE

- Chaos and Change
- A Meditation for Advent
- Advent Resources
- Changes for FaithQuest

See back page for special pricing



Order "2000 Edition"
FaithQuest
materials toll-free:
877-899-2780,
Ext. 7674.

Leadership Lines and Links

a new monthly e-letter for
congregational leaders

To subscribe free of charge,
send your email address to
jnewell@gbod.org and
ask to receive the e-letter.

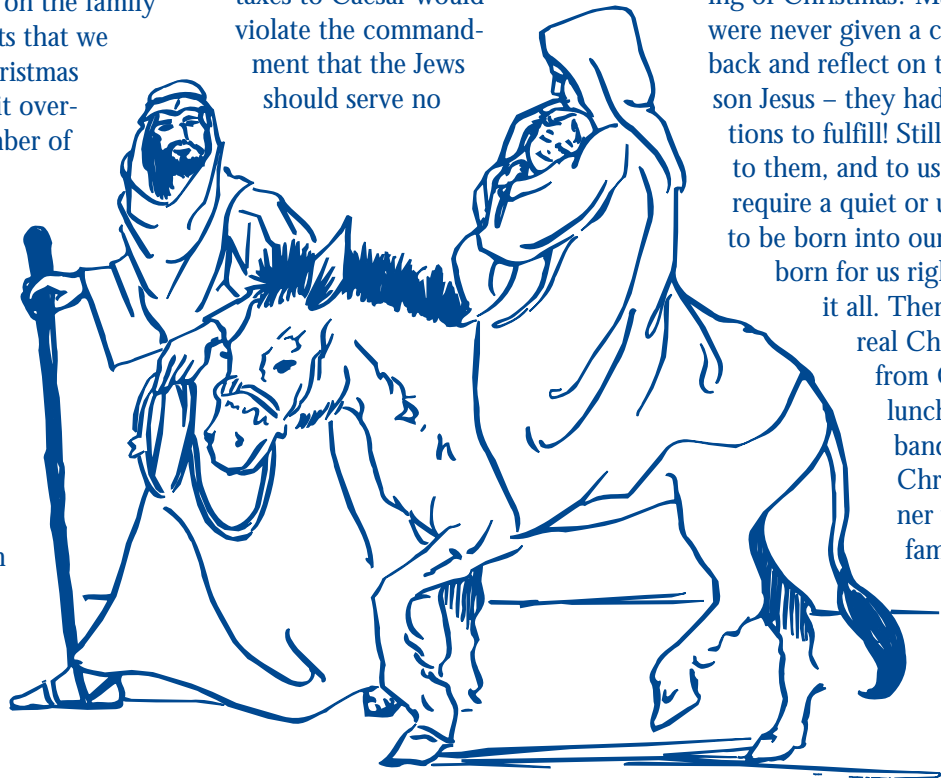


A Meditation for the Overwhelmed

My wife, Joan, reminded me recently to put on the family calendar all the events that we are to attend this Christmas season. I became a bit overwhelmed by the number of obligatory events listed and reflected that if we didn't have so many obligations at church, at her job, or with family, we might be able to better enjoy Christmas. I mused nostalgically about a quiet, unhurried Christmas with much time for leisurely reflection on the meaning of this special day.

Then into my golden reverie plunged the unsettling thought that Mary and Joseph probably didn't want to fulfill all their obligations that first Christmas either! They would have preferred to have their new baby in familiar surroundings, unaffected by a busy world out there. But that busy world refused to allow them their quiet time to reflect on the meaning of their child's birth and demanded that they make a 60-70 mile journey to fulfill a bureaucratic whim. On top

of this, they were required to travel through a rebellion-torn country. Josephus, the first-century Jewish historian, tells us that the census under Quirinius caused a great revolt. A rabbi named Judas the Galilean proclaimed that paying taxes to Caesar would violate the commandment that the Jews should serve no



as they would be on the first Good Friday.

We often complain about all our commitments at Christmas time and how busy we are. Have we ever thought that it might be in the thick of all this that we find the true meaning of Christmas? Mary and Joseph were never given a chance to just sit back and reflect on the birth of their son Jesus – they had too many obligations to fulfill! Still, Jesus was given to them, and to us. Jesus does not require a quiet or undistracted time to be born into our lives. He can be born for us right in the heart of it all. There might be more real Christmas in rushing from Christmas noon lunch with the husband's family to Christmas night dinner with the wife's family than in any number of quiet hours spent sipping eggnog before a fire contemplating the Christmas tree.

lord but their one God. Eventually the Romans would crucify 5000 of the rebels along the roads surrounding Jerusalem. All those sentimental images we see on Christmas cards of Joseph leading a donkey carrying Mary down a dusty road should show the road lined with crosses! Crosses were as present at the first Christmas

This Christmas, may you find the newborn Christ *right in the heart of all your hurried activities.*



Raymond R. Newell is a FaithQuest leader and pastor serving Riverside United Methodist Church, Columbia, TN.

Spiritual leadership is a special type of leadership. Webster's dictionary defines leadership, in general, as the ability to go with others in order to show them the way—to influence and guide. Spirit refers to God. Spiritual means the way of God. Simply put, spiritual leadership specifically means to go with people, showing and guiding them on pathways that lead to God and the way of Love.

Kevin Witt, General Board of Discipleship, Director of Camping and Retreat Ministries

New Direction for FaithQuest



In January 2003, FAITHQUEST Bible Study and Leader support will be updated! The changes have been listed in the past two issues of this newsletter. Camino de Fe will be available for Spanish-language congregations.

■ FaithQuest Bible Study and Camino de Fe will be ordered through Discipleship Resources, www.discipleshipresources.org, 800-685-4370. The January 2003 Discipleship Resources catalog will describe the new ordering process.

■ English-language leader helps will move to an updated website where you will be able to download and save or print them. The current 3-ring leader notebook will not be reprinted. A print leader guide is available for Camino de Fe.

■ A new one-day orientation to FaithQuest will be offered across the United States. The current 3-day training will no longer be required. You can always call for support and resources (toll-free 877-899-2780, Ext. 7075).

There is an increased emphasis on the spiritual growth of leaders with a new step in each lesson, "Reflective Moments Along the Journey." FQ participants will find that these reflections enhance their preparation, and the leader will be able to incorporate this material into the weekly meeting. Directions for exploration exercises have been clarified, instructions for group discussion are more focused, and helpful editorial changes have been added. The FaithQuest principles for assessing current reality and continuous improvement have been applied to FaithQuest!

Camino de Fe:
Juego de dos videos
DR400; \$49.95

Camino de Fe:
Guía del Líder
DR297; \$9.95

Camino de Fe:
Manual del
Estudio Bíblico
DR298; \$24.95

FaithQuest
Bible Study
DR399; \$24.95

FaithQuest
Video Set
DR258; \$49.95

Resources for Advent & Christmas

Alternatives

See www.simpleliving.org/catalog or call 800-821-6153.

Without realizing it, most people began preparing for another overwhelming and commercialized

Christmas last December 26th!

Alternatives offers a "Christmas Campaign Kit" with plans and tools for a simpler celebration. The materials are based on themes such as "Bearing Gifts Does Not Make Us Wise," "Buy Me Nothing I'll Still Love You," and "Whose Birthday Is It, Anyway?" The Christmas Campaign Kit is also available on *30 Years of Alternatives* CD for only \$15!

While We Wait:
Living the Questions of Advent
by Mary Lou Redding
Upper Room Books, 2002

This group study offers participants an opportunity to focus on their own faith questions about the Christmas story. It is a complete study with a

weekly theme article, daily reflection pages, and a guide for 5 group sessions. Order from www.upperroom.org/books, 800-972-0433.

