



To witness to Jesus Christ in the world, and to follow his teachings through acts of compassion, justice, worship, and devotion under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

COVENANT DISCIPLESHIP QUARTERLY

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Top Ten Reasons United Methodists Need to Sing Charles Wesley Hymns

By Steven W. Manskar



Charles Wesley, John's younger brother, will be 300 years old in 2007. He was the poet of the Methodist movement. Whenever the early Methodists gathered in their societies, classes and bands they sang Charles' hymns. British Methodist historian Henry Rack tells us "Hymns, more than any other single source except the Bible, were the means by which the ordinary Methodist could obtain a knowledge of what Wesley thought Methodism taught" (*Reasonable Enthusiast: John Wesley and the Rise of Methodism*, page 414). Hymns were intended for singing at all Methodist gatherings and for personal reflection and meditation. Charles' hymns played a critical role in forming the faith of the people called Methodists.

The United Methodist Hymnal contains 55 of Charles Wesley's hymns. They may be found in nearly every section. This is a small sample of his vast body of work. The collection of Wesley hymns in our hymnal provide abundant choices for use in United Methodist worship and other occasions when members of the church gather.

I offer a modest proposal for this coming tercentennial year: Whenever the people called United Methodists gather, they shall sing at least one of

Charles Wesley's hymns. There are enough in the hymnal for congregations to sing a different Wesley hymn each week. Encourage the members to take the hymn home with them for study, reflection and meditation.

With apologies to David Letterman, here is the "Top Ten Reasons United Methodists Should Sing Charles Wesley Hymns Every Time They Gather." There is actually no order to this list. It is simple ten reasons why United Methodist Christians will benefit from regularly singing, learning, and memorizing the hymns of Charles Wesley:

10. Charles Wesley hymns communicate the gospel of Jesus Christ.
9. Charles Wesley hymns gets theology and belief into the head and the heart.
8. Charles Wesley hymns are beautiful and rich poetry that elevates the heart and mind toward God and out into the world.
7. Charles Wesley hymns helps people understand the dynamic of grace as prevenient, justifying, and sanctifying.
6. Charles Wesley hymns teach a vocabulary of Christian faith.
5. Charles Wesley hymns may be sung to a variety of common tunes. Many are written in meters that are meant to be easily sung.
4. Charles Wesley hymns, when made a regular part of worship, will create common identity that communicate and form community character.
3. Charles Wesley hymns help to teach the meaning of the sacraments.
2. Charles Wesley hymns help to teach the meaning of the seasons of the Church calendar.
1. Charles Wesley hymns are one of the Wesleyan tradition's great gifts to the Church of Jesus Christ.

CHARLES WESLEY HYMNS IN THE UNITED METHODIST HYMNAL

#57-59 "O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing"	#342 . . . "Where Shall My Wondering Soul Begin"	#449 "Our Earth We Now Lament to See"	#613 "O Thou Who This Mysterious Bread"
#88 "Maker, in Whom We Live"	#346 "Sinners, Turn: Why Will You Die"	#479 "Jesus, Lover of My Soul"	#616 "Come, Sinners, to the Gospel Feast"
#96 "Praise the Lord Who Reigns Above"	#355 "Depth of Mercy"	#501 "O Thou Who Camest from Above"	#627 "O the Depth of Love Divine"
#153 "Thou Hidden Source of Calm Repose"	#363 "And Can It Be that I Should Gain"	#513 "Soldiers of Christ, Arise"	#635 "Because Thou Hast Said"
#173 "Christ, Whose Glory Fills the Skies"	#372 "How Can We Sinners Know"	#541 "See How Great a Flame Aspires"	#650 "Give Me the Faith Which Can Remove"
#181 "Ye Servants of God"	#379 "Blow Ye the Trumpet, Blow"	#550 "Christ, from Whom All Blessings Flow"	#656 "If Death My Friend and Me Divide"
#193 "Jesus! the Name High Over All"	#384 "Love Divine, All Loves Excelling"	#553 "And Are We Yet Alive"	#699 "Come, and Let Us Sweetly Join"
#196 "Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus"	#385 "Let Us Plead for Faith Alone"	#554 "All Praise to Our Redeeming Lord"	#709 "Come, Let Us Join Our Friends Above"
#240 "Hark! the Herald Angels Sing"	#386-387 "Come, O Thou Traveler Unknown"	#561 "Jesus, United by Thy Grace"	#715-716 "Rejoice, the Lord is King"
#282 "'Tis Finished! The Messiah Dies"	#388 "O Come and Dwell in Me"	#562 "Jesus, Lord, We Look to Thee"	#718 "Lo, He Comes with Clouds Descending"
#287 "O Love Divine, What Hast Thou Done"	#410 "I Want a Principle Within"	#566 "Blest Be the Dear Uniting Love"	
#302 "Christ the Lord Is Risen Today"	#413 "A Charge to Keep I Have"	#594 "Come, Divine Interpreter"	
#312 "Hail the Day That Sees Him Rise"	#417 "O For a Heart to Praise My God"	#595 "Whether the Word Be Preached or Read"	
#332 "Spirit of Faith, Come Down"	#422 "Jesus, Thine All-Victorious Love"	#603 "Come, Holy Ghost, Our Hearts Inspire"	
#339 "Come, Sinners, to the Gospel Feast"	#438 "Forth in Thy Name, O Lord"	#606 "Come, Let Us Use the Grace Divine"	



How Covenant Discipleship began in the Runcorn Circuit, United Kingdom

Rev. Juliet Wriglesworth

In May 2005, several people from across the circuit responded to an invitation printed on church newsletters to be part of a pilot Covenant Discipleship group. On 2 June 2005, seven people arrived at my manse to hear about the vision of Covenant Discipleship.



Alan Lightfoot, Sarah Beavon, Glynys Cadman, Nita Hodggett and Juliet Wriglesworth

This vision had first been revealed to me in 2002 as I was undertaking research for a Masters Degree. I was completing work on the Early Methodist Class Meeting and discovered that a key person I needed to make contact with was David Lowes Watson. Dr Watson graciously gave of his time, first by E-Mail and then by helping to secure an internship for me at Belmont United Methodist Church in Nashville, Tennessee early in 2004. Among the many rich experiences of that time at Belmont, I was invited to meet with different Covenant Discipleship groups and interview individual members. This alongside my literary research convinced me of God's call on my life to help the British Methodist Church rediscover a place of mutual accountability for discipleship.

After that first meeting in Runcorn, the seven interested people agreed to meet on Mondays for one hour. I suggested that each member read through Gayle Turner Watson's *Guide to Covenant Discipleship Groups*. After the initial meeting one person decided that she didn't feel able at this time to make the weekly commitment to the group. By the end of the summer there were five of us who had met most weeks. We finalised our Covenant early September 2005. The biggest challenge we faced as the new Methodist year began was finding an evening that we could meet!

Once agreed on, we took turns to lead each week. This continues to work well. Other challenges have included the Acts of Justice and a tension of trying to uphold the model of a one hour checkpoint for discipleship. Unlike the United States, we generally don't have an extensive adult learning programme. Once a month we stayed an extra hour for Bible Study. This hasn't been sustained and I am continuing to wrestle with this alongside the dilemma of trying to find time for more adult learning in a busy circuit diary!

As a group I believe that each of us has grown in our understanding of what it means to be a channel of God's grace. This has impacted on us in our contribution to the life of the church. A key strength of our group is that we complement each other. We come with different outlooks on Christian discipleship and this has been enriching.

We updated our Covenant in June 2006. We are currently praying about how we might encourage others in the Runcorn Circuit to join a group. After attending the Wesleyan Institute in Nashville in September, I am also considering whether to invite colleagues to join me in a clergy group. Watch this space!

Taking Your Spiritual Pulse

A Daily Check List

(Circle "Y" for Yes or "N" for No in answer to each question)

1. Have I prayed intently, by myself (Y/N) and at church (Y/N)?
2. Have I set aside time for prayer (Y/N) devotions (Y/N) Bible study (Y/N)?
3. Have I been open to the promptings of the Holy Spirit throughout the day (Y/N)?
4. Have I at the beginning (Y/N) and ending (Y/N) of the day prayed... for the days virtue?
5. In all I've done (Y/N) or said (Y/N) have I given consideration to the glory of God?
6. Have I after every pleasure immediately given thanks (Y/N)?
7. Did I in the morning plan the business of the day (Y/N)? Leaving room for God (Y/N)?
8. Did I in every action consider my duty as a Christian (Y/N)? Have I been simple (Y/N) and thoughtful (Y/N) in everything?
9. Have I been zealous in undertaking and active in doing what good I could (Y/N)? Toward others (Y/N)? Creation (Y/N)?
10. Have I visited (Y/N) or was I visited (Y/N)? Did I give consideration as to what end or to what means (Y/N)?
11. Has good will been and appeared to be the motive of all my actions (Y/N)? Toward others (Y/N)? Creation (Y/N)?
12. Have I been particularly thoughtful (Y/N), moderate (Y/N), and thankful (Y/N) in eating or drinking?
13. Have I had a conversation with anyone on matters of faith (Y/N)/ devotion (Y/N)?
14. Have I been or seemed angry (Y/N)?
15. Have I thought or spoken unkindly of (Y/N) or to (Y/N) anyone?
16. Have I felt or entertained (Y/N) or seemed to approve (Y/N) any proud, vain, selfish, or impure thought?

Give yourself one point for each yes in questions 1-13. Give yourself a point for each No in questions 14-16 (there is a possible 35) _____

SCORECARD

0 to 5 = Danger!

6 to 10 = Need Some Practice.

11 to 15 = On the way.

16 to 20 = Getting it.

21 to 25 = Practice Makes Perfect.

26 to 30 = Moving on to Perfection.

31 to 35 = Perfect!

Submitted by Rev. Greg Douglass, Monrovia UMC, Monrovia, California
*adapted from the Rev. John Wesley's journal checklist; see *The Elusive Mr. Wesley*, by Richard P. Heitzenrater, (Abingdon Press, 2003; 2nd Edition), pg. 59-62

COVENANT DISCIPLESHIP GROUPS AT FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, MEMPHIS, TEXAS



January 2006 began as most new years, quiet, a fresh start. I wondered what the New Year would bring to my church, First United Methodist Church, Memphis, TX. Our church has been blessed with growing numbers, professions of faith, and

confirmation classes. In our pastor's (Rev. Gary Boles) sermons, I began to notice new phrases, new ideas. In the weeks that followed, I listened as Gary talked about "spiritual growth." Rev. Boles told us we had to be "intentional" about our own spiritual growth. I learned of John Wesley, and his small groups. I heard how spiritual growth can come through small groups. His sermons were leading us to a special moment in the timeline of our church. Rev. Boles was preparing the way for Covenant Discipleship.

The new groups no longer need us, and are ready to begin their own spiritual journey. With the church congregation as witnesses, we will have a covenant signing service, January 21st, 2007. The invitation will go out again. I have no doubt that the Holy Spirit will call others to join us.
- Margaret

In February 2006, Rev. Boles issued the invitation for all who were interested in strengthening their faith and spiritual growth to sign up for CD. It was to be a year long commitment, once a week, for one hour. I admit I wasn't the first to sign up. I wondered how I would fit one more "to do" in my life. I also wondered if I really needed to be part of a Covenant Discipleship group.

Covenant Discipleship is a safe, comfortable place to share my weekly ups and downs. A place to pull strength from plus a straight-forward phone line to God. If I need something, like prayers, a hug or help in some way or another, I don't feel guilty asking for it because that is why we are a CD group, to nurture each other. I have a written covenant that describes our goals we strive to meet each week. This helps me to stay focused. It brings me back to that same loving, caring place every week. - Rhonda

There were six of us to commit to form a group, Stephen, Jim, Jana, Ronda, myself and the pastor. We have laughed, cried, and prayed over each other. We have felt the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives. We are humbled that we are becoming spiritual leaders. We struggle and encourage each other with the Acts of Devotion, Worship, Justice, and Compassion.

It is difficult to put into words the closeness, accountability, and level of responsibility in which we hold each other. It is a fellowship unlike any other. - Brenda

In October of 2006, we had a Covenant Discipleship workshop, led by Rev. Steve Patterson, of Friona, TX. He led the workshop on Saturday, and preached in worship on Sunday morning. Twelve people committed to join a Covenant Discipleship group that day. We divided them in 2 groups of six. Jana & Ronda, Stephen & I became their facilitators. Jim and Gary provided backup, when one of us had to miss a meeting. By mid-Dec 2006, the new groups had their covenant written.

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TRAVEL TO METHODIST ROOTS IN ENGLAND

Charles Wesley Tercentenary Pilgrimage

July 31-August 2007



Methodists and other Christians around the world will mark the 300th anniversary of Charles Wesley's birth in 2007. Duke Divinity School and the General Board of Discipleship have partnered to offer a ten-day pilgrimage in England to celebrate this important event and immerse participants in the legacy of this important Methodist founder.

Dr. Paul W. Chilcote (Visiting Professor of the Practice of Evangelism at Duke Divinity School and President of The Charles Wesley Society), Dr. Steve Manskar (Director of Accountable Discipleship at GBOD), and Dr. Tim Macquiban (Principal of Sarum College in Salisbury, England) will provide leadership for this once in a lifetime opportunity.

The Pilgrimage is designed to acquaint participants with the historical background and religious heritage of the Methodist movement and the life and witness of Charles Wesley. We will visit many sites associated with this great hymn writer — Epworth, his place of birth; Oxford, where he studied and taught, and where he founded the so-called “Holy Club”; Bristol, where he helped to form the first Methodist Societies and began to raise his family; and London, where he and his family spent the final years of his life, overseeing the expanding Methodist movement with his brother, John.

You are invited to participate in this ten-day adventure and avail yourself of the opportunity to

- Immerse yourself in the ministry, theology, and spirituality of Charles Wesley through daily prayer and worship, visiting historic sites, plenary and small group teaching moments
- Understand the essential role of Charles Wesley's hymns in Christian formation in the Wesleyan heritage
- Have fun!
- Learn and pray where Charles Wesley prayed and served
- Reflect, pray, and build relationships in small groups

- Be equipped to share and articulate what you learn
- Make a connection between the Wesleyan/Methodist heritage and the life and ministry of your home congregation today

For details and to reserve your place, go to <http://CharlesWesley300.gbod.org> or contact Steve Manskar (email: smanskar@gbod.org, telephone: 877-899-2780, ext. 1765) or Becky Caudill (email: bcaudill@gbod.org, telephone: 877-899-2780, 7059).

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EVERY 30 SECONDS, A CHILD IN AFRICA DIES OF MALARIA

United Methodists are working to stamp out malaria, one community at a time through the Community-Based Malaria Control Program. The initiative focuses on the health of entire communities by addressing the factors that allow this mosquito-borne illness to spread.

ACTS OF COMPASSION

United Methodist health clinics, schools, church

buildings, pastors and members of congregations are being organized to develop a community-based model of malaria education, prevention and treatment that can be replicated in other countries.

The program was launched in Sierra Leone, a nation that not only bears the brunt of malaria's burden, but also has a United Methodist community mobilized to act.

Support this vital health outreach called Nothing But Nets Campaign by going to www.nothingbutnets.net

The "Nothing But Nets" campaign was heavily promoted during the Global Young People's Convocation and Legislative Assembly held recently in Johannesburg, South Africa. In his sermon during the Sunday morning worship service Bishop Eben K. Nhiwatiwa of Zimbabwe praised the intent and work of the "Nothing But Nets" campaign. He encouraged the young people to support the work by purchasing nets and the "Buzzkill" tee shirts.

ACTS OF JUSTICE

Bishop Nhiwatiwa then challenged them to go further. "Nothing But Nets" addresses

a symptom of a much deeper problem. Malaria is killing children every 30 seconds because the vast majority of them live in poverty. He challenged the young people to become agents of justice, to follow Jesus' mission to "bring good news to the poor" (Luke 4:18b).

Bishop Nhiwatiwa's challenge to the young people of The United

Methodist Church applies also to members of Covenant Discipleship groups who are wondering what they can do for justice, how they can bring "good news to the poor." Here are some of suggestions:

1. Support and get involved with the "Make Poverty History" campaign. To learn about this, go to <http://www.makepovertyhistory.org>
2. Contribute to and write letters for Bread for the World: <http://bread.org>
3. Sign up to be part of UMPower through the General Board of Church and Society web site at <http://www.umpower.org> to communicate regularly with your elected representatives in Washington, DC on issues of justice and peace.



The Poor as Jesus' Bosom-Friends

by Charles Wesley

The poor as Jesus' bosom-friend,
The poor he makes his latest care,
To all his followers commends,
And wills us on our hands to bear;
The poor our dearest care we make,
And love them for our Savior's sake.

Whate'er thou dost to us entrust,
With thy peculiar blessing blessed,
O make us diligent and just,
As stewards faithful to the least,
Endowed with wisdom to possess
The mammon of unrighteousness.

Help us to make the poor our friends,
By that which paves the way to hell,
That when our loving labor ends,
And dying from this earth we fail,
Our friends may greet us in the skies
Born to a life that never dies.



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The United Methodist Church

Sprouts Confront Racism

By Edie Harris

In my garden every time I think I have finally pulled out all the weeds and defeated all the parasites, a new weed or a different bug appears. It seems to be a never-ending process. The same thing happens with my spiritual life. Every time I think I have overcome some shortcoming, a new one pops up.

Evidently, I'm not the only one. Occasionally, society congratulates itself on having overcome racism, only to find it popping back up in an various forms.

The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. once said, "We are called to play the Good Samaritan on life's roadside, but that will be only an initial act. One day the whole Jericho Road must be transformed so that men and women will not be beaten and robbed as they make their journey through life." In the fall 2005 CDQ I wrote about the difficulty of doing justice and included an addition to the



story of the Good Samaritan, detailing how he went back and helped make the road to Jericho safer. With that added scenario, the parable describes both kindness and justice.

Last summer, I wrote about exclusion and prejudice, but I'm writing about it again because we still struggle with these sins.

These are important issues that can be addressed with Sprouts groups. Racism and prejudice are a justice issues many children encounter every day. They are also sins that the church must regularly confront. Your Sprouts group could learn how to be inclusive and how to confront bigotry, and encourage your congregation to deal with this issue.

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